

Boys Love (Yaoi) Fandom and Political Activism in Thailand

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Introduction

Thailand has experienced political turmoil for over two decades. Since 2005, a political crisis in Thailand was fuelled by two opposing camps—the Yellow Shirts and the Red Shirts.^[1] The polarisation between these groups has centred on a divisive figure—Thaksin Shinawatra, the prime minister of Thailand from 2001 to 2006. According to Duncan McCargo, Thaksin's Thai Rak Thai party won electoral majorities because of their notable policy initiatives which drove economic growth. Thaksin gained most of his popularity among Thais living in the North and Northeast of Thailand, where the average income level is lower than the rest of the country. He was also warmly welcomed by Thai elites. However, from late 2005, Thaksin has been perceived as a threat to the royal institution. Anti-Thaksin demonstrators used yellow shirts—the colour associated with King Bhumibol, the Thai King at that time, as their symbol. After Thaksin was ousted from his position by a military coup in 2006, pro-Thaksin protestors adopted red shirts as a symbol of their movement which centred on promoting democracy and equality.^[2]

Thaksin was exiled from Thailand in 2006 after the military coup. Despite living outside the country, he continues to have influence on Thai politics. In 2011, Thaksin's younger sister Yingluck Shinawatra became the first female prime minister of Thailand. In November 2013, Yingluck proposed an amnesty bill that would protect anyone who had been accused of political crimes since the 2006 coup. This action was perceived as an attempt to bring Thaksin back to Thailand. The PDRRC^[3] responded by protesting in the streets and asking for Yingluck's resignation.^[4] Yingluck dissolved the parliament and called for general elections. Nonetheless, the PDRRC's supporters boycotted the elections and asked for constitutional reforms before the election of the new government. To stop overdue protests, Prayuth Chan-ocha launched a coup and declared martial law on 22 May 2014.^[5]

After the 2014 coup, Prayuth Chan-ocha's government deployed popular culture (such as the song *Return Happiness to Thailand*) to emphasise the necessity of military rule. As implied in the song, the military seized state power because they needed to stabilise national security and return happiness to the Thai people. They promised to step down from their leadership positions after the country was under control. Many people hoped that the new elections arranged in 2019 would return democracy to Thailand. However, after the 2019 general elections, Prayuth Chan-ocha was returned to power as prime minister by the Palang Pracharath party and its allies. McCargo argues that the 2019 election results emerged from 'a deeply flawed process'^[6] as the Election Commission of Thailand failed to investigate election law accusations filed against Palang Pracharath. The unelected 250-member senate was also allowed by the new constitution to select a new prime minister.^[7] Moreover, the Future Forward Party, which was popular among Thai youths, was dissolved by court order in February 2020. This action, along with the state of Thai democracy, brought despair among many young Thai voters. Eventually, this lack of hope led to a youth movement on Twitter and youth protests in the streets.^[8]

Although Thai students were actively involved with politics in the early 1970s, student activists played only supporting roles in the country's political movements between the 1980s and 2000s.^[9] However, from 2020, Thai youths have played an increasingly important role in the pro-democracy movement.

Liberal values have also become increasingly important and they have been embraced by this camp. LGBTQ+ activists who support gender equality and same-sex marriage have subsequently joined the pro-democracy movement and helped it to gain momentum.^[10] Twitter has become a digital space in which each of these aspects has become intertwined, with political movements, identity politics, popular culture and the fandom community.

Tactics that youth demonstrators use in Thailand are different from those of their predecessors. Thailand's youth protesters typically utilise popular culture in their movement. They have used the three-finger salute which appears in *The Hunger Games* film series (2012–present) as a pro-democracy gesture. In July 2020, an anti-government group arranged a Harry Potter-themed rally. Many people who joined this activity dressed up as Harry Potter and demanded the resignation of Prayuth Chan-ocha's government.

These activities were initially perceived as simply fan-based activities. The protesters were recognised as young fans of popular culture and their movement was thought to be limited to the fandom community. However, surprisingly, these fan-based activities moved pro-democracy arguments onto the transnational stage. In April 2020, for example, Vachirawit Chiva-aree, a popular Thai Boys' Love (BL) star, was denounced by nationalist Chinese trolls after he retweeted an image with a caption calling Hong Kong a country. Nonetheless, *yaoi* fans in Thailand, Hong Kong and Taiwan supported him. Eventually, the hashtag #MilkTeaAlliance was used to show solidarity between Thailand, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. This hashtag was overwhelmingly popular and became an anti-authoritarian symbol.^[11]

Fans of popular culture in Thailand who support the pro-democracy movement regularly express their solidarity by participating in protests through their fandom. Traditionally it has been popular for K-pop fans to fund 'Happy Birthday' billboards at Bangkok Mass Transit System (BTS) and Metropolitan Rapid Transit (MRT) stations in Bangkok to celebrate their favourite idol's birthday. However, the BTS and MRT stopped their operations during a Thai youth protest in October 2020. This 'inconvenienced protesters and normal citizens from getting home and putting them in danger [sic].'^[12] Fans of the famous K-pop boyband BTS responded by posting to the band's Thailand fan page and collectively decided that the fandom should stop sponsoring billboard signs at BTS and MRT stations. Instead, the fans spent money on Tuk-Tuk (a three-wheeled motorcycle taxi) advertising spaces. This action illustrates a blend of fandom participation with political activism. To further examine fan-based activism in Thailand and its close connection to politics, this paper uses the theoretical framework of fan-based citizenship and fan culture to analyse a case study of political activism initiated by a fandom community.

Theoretical framework

Academics define fans and fandom in a variety of ways. According to Paul Booth, fandom can usually be defined as an identity where individuals have an emotional attachment to someone or something or as a practice when fans produce their own meanings and texts.^[13] Matt Hills indicates that fan cultures are complex. While fans are consumers of the media industry, they also have the power to resist consumerism and become producers of their own content. Anti-commercial ideologies and commodity-completist practices, therefore, co-exist in fan communities.^[14] Moreover, Hills argues that fan cultures are not simply communities but they also have social hierarchies. While fans share a common interest, they compete to access fan knowledge, the object of fandom and status.^[15] This competition associates with cultural capital (i.e., the habits, knowledge, and tastes we acquire because we belong to a specific social group).^[16] In a fandom community, fans who acquire specific knowledge and skills related to a fan object would assume dominant roles. Nonetheless, Hills argues that Pierre Bourdieu's explanation cannot explain fandoms thoroughly. He suggests further investigation into 'fan social capital,' which he defines as 'the network of fan friends and acquaintances that a fan possesses, *as well as* their access to media producers and professional personnel linked with the object of fandom'.^[17]

The complexity of fan cultures has intensified in the digital age. Social media provides opportunities for media professionals to maintain the loyalty of their fans by engaging with them more actively. It also provides great opportunities for their fans to 'play' with media content and create meme, parody and/or fan pastiche.^[18]

'Playing' occurs when fans interpret media text according to their ideologies^[19] and use the object of fandom as a symbol to proclaim their ideologies publicly. This relates to the term 'fan-based citizenship' coined by Ashley Hinck. According to Hinck, fan-based citizenship is 'public engagement that emerges from a commitment to a fan-object.'^[20] She argues that young people tend to engage in civic action through popular culture rather than traditional civic institutions. For example, the Harry Potter Alliance (HPA) was established by Harry Potter fans in 2005. These fans believe that Harry Potter fights for justice in the fictional world. They deploy popular culture of Harry Potter in the real world by initiating campaigns to mobilise millions of fans in order to create social movements.^[21]

To analyse fan-based citizenship, Hinck proposes the following theoretical framework. First, as popular culture texts have multiple meanings, Hinck suggests that it is crucial for media scholars to analyse how the texts are interpreted and adopted among fans. For example, it is not necessary to interpret that Harry Potter fights for justice. However, fans of the franchise adopted this meaning and used this interpretation as the rationale for their establishment of the HPA. The second question that needs to be answered is what the dominant interpretation is and how this interpretation relates to the ethics or political belief of fandoms.^[22] Finally, Hinck argues that 'popular culture functions as a resource that is not universally available and requires power to exercise,'^[23] it is important to know who is able to access popular culture and exercise their power within a fandom community.

Yaoi fandom and politics in Thailand

Digital platforms have been used for political movements since the beginning of Facebook in 2004 and the launch of Twitter in 2006. However, it is generally believed that online activism is easier than offline activism. Eve Ng suggests that this is a misconception. Although people who 'like' and 'retweet' do not put themselves at physical risk like those who protest on the street, they similarly risk arrest by the authorities.^[24] Moreover, online and offline activism complement each other and are not in competition.^[25]

Previous studies have shown that social media users based in Thailand have communicated using online spaces for over a decade. Most studies explain the network of communication that fans are using to support their favourite idols but disregard political movements in Thai fandom communities. Nonetheless, online political movements are also driven by social and cultural capital like what has happened in fandom communities. For example, Arthit Suriyawongkul studied culture and politics on Thai online social networks from 2010–2012. He found that online political movements were closely related to offline political movements, and the online celebrities who possessed social and cultural capital were the primary producers of quotes, memes and other content that drove offline political engagement.^[26]

Moreover, several scholars have tried to explain the hashtag #MilkTeaAlliance and its relation to the yaoi fandom community. Adam Dedman and Autumn Lai argue that the #MilkTeaAlliance movement unites groups of people who are marginalised by Chinese hegemony.^[27] Wolfram Schaffar and Prapakorn Wongratanawin point out that this transnational movement targets Chinese-led globalisation.^[28] Veluree Metaveevinij suggests that the #MilkTeaAlliance phenomena is fuelled by Thai-Chinese who feel alienated from patriarchal traditions and are provoked by anti-China sentiments following the COVID-19 pandemic.^[29]

The above-mentioned studies can provide an analytical framework for better understanding the complexity of Thai yaoi fandom. According to Natthanai Prasannam, this fandom began in the 1990s when Thai female readers were drawn to the intimacy between male characters in Japanese comics.^[30] In the 2000s, yaoi culture became part of popular culture, thanks to websites and online messaging boards that enabled the community to grow.^[31] Eventually, this community moved to new social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook.

Yaoi fans currently use hashtags to discuss their interests online. The use of hashtags has become part of the fan practice of creating yaoi couples (Khy-Y or คู่เวร). Fans use hashtags with the names of their favourite yaoi couples to circulate content for appreciation of the couple's imaginary relationship ('ship' ชิป in the Thai fandom community). Charlie Yi Zhang and Adam K. Dedman call this form of relationship in the Thai BL industry 'hyperreal' love. The on-screen couples are committed to perform real dating relationships. They go on vacation together and post their intimate moments on their social media. This practice fulfills the imagination of fans by erasing the line between reality and artistic performance. With this hyperreal love, BL fans follow and capture the intimate moments of their idols offline and online. Moreover, this hyperreal love can result in hashtags that mobilise political movements transnationally. The BL online community has become a catalyst for the pro-LGBTQ+ and pro-democracy movements which challenge both sexual norms and political power in Thailand.^[32]

Table 1. Categories of hashtags used in the Thai yaoi fandom community

| Categories | Examples |
|--|---|
| Hashtags with the title of a series, film, or novel | #notmeseries #2gethertheseries #2getherthemovie #TheMiracleofTeddyBear |
| Hashtags with the title of an episode from a yaoi series | #notmeseriesep1 #2getherep3 #คุณหมီးป5 |
| Hashtags with a yaoi couple | #offgun #brightwin #innjob |
| Hashtags supporting yaoi actors | #gunnatthapan #winmetawin #InSarin |
| Hashtags that are not directly related to a series but initiated from the fandom community | #MilkTeaAlliance |
| Hashtags related to cancel culture | #แนนnotme |

Source. Data collected by author.

As shown in Table 1, there are six main categories of hashtags used in the yaoi fandom community. The first category includes hashtags that come from the title of a yaoi television series, film, or novel. Fans normally use these hashtags to discuss general yaoi content. In the case of a series, fans use hashtags to discuss each episode as it is released. They often include the episode number with the series title (e.g., #notmeseriesep1). On-screen couples are discussed using hashtags with their names such as #offgun. Fans also use hashtags with their favourite actors' names (or actor's name) such as #gunnatthapan. Some hashtags emerge based on issues not directly relate to the series such as #MilkTeaAlliance. Also, there are hashtags created to either support or oppose a series.

In short, hashtags have created digital spaces for accumulating cultural capital in fandom communities. Through the use of hashtags fans gain access to online discussion related to the fandom objects. However, as I will discuss later in this paper, this accumulation can also be interrupted.

Case study of the series 'Not Me': From cancel culture to fan-based political activism

The growing number of yaoi fans has motivated producers to create more yaoi television shows. These shows typically take place at a school (either high school or university) and revolve around the students. This kind of content successfully attracts teenagers who are the main target group of yaoi series. Nonetheless, the success of yaoi television shows has exposed a new audience to the genre. This wider audience, both locally and transnationally, requests to see new content that deviates from stereotypical yaoi plots. Yaoi fans actively involved with the LGBTQ+ and pro-democracy movements have additionally requested more 'serious' works that include contemporary issues.^[33]

Faced with the pressure to expand their narrative, yaoi series have begun to escape from repetitive romantic plots. For example, *I Told Sunset About You* (แปลรักฉันด้วยใจเธอ in Thai) (2020) is a coming-of-age yaoi series in which the teenage characters come to terms with their identities. Additionally, *The Miracle of Teddy Bear* (คุณหมิปาฏิหาริย์) (2022) is not only a romantic-drama-fantasy about a teddy bear turning into a real boy, but it also includes symbols that relate to Thai politics.

Not Me was a yaoi series that exemplifies the evolution of the genre. It was promoted as a television show 'full of social issues'^[34] highlighting the injustice and privilege in Thai society.^[35] It was a promising project from the highly celebrated transgender independent filmmaker Anucha Boonyawattana. Previously, Anucha has made various provocative films that touch on LGBTQ+ issues, such as *The Blue Hour* (อนธการ) (2015) and *Malila: The Farewell Flower* (มะลิลา) (2017). She is also actively involved with the LGBTQ+ and pro-democracy movements in Thailand. Many yaoi fans therefore anticipated that *Not Me* would be a provocative high-quality series.

Not Me (2021–2022) (เขาไม่ใช่ผม) was loosely based on the yaoi novel called *Not Me dek thoi rak ching* (Not Me เด็กถ้อยรักจริง) by ++saisioo++. Nonetheless, before the series was released, heated conversations occurred online. Many yaoi fans believed that the novel was a fan fiction, based on the famous Korean boyband, GOT7. To comprehend this argument, it is important to understand the difference between a 'fan fic' (แฟนฟิก) (fan fiction) and an 'ori' (ออริ) (an original novel) in the Thai online novel community. Fan fiction often includes main characters who are based on celebrities or on-screen couples. Most readers enjoy reading fan fiction because it can fulfill their fandom imagination. On the contrary, original novels have newly introduced main characters. Although there is no written rule, it is widely believed in the online novel community that fan fiction writers should not exploit well-known characters for business. They should only write and exchange their work for free among the online

community. With this non-commercial practice, writers and readers believe that they do not exploit their favourite idols and do not violate copyright law. Anyone who does not follow this rule is denounced and, consequently, cancelled in the fandom community.

The writer, ++saisioo++, claimed that she used her experience studying at a technical school as inspiration. Hence, this novel is an 'ori' in which the copyright belongs to the writer. Nonetheless, Ahgase,^[36] a GOT7 fan community, believed that the writer ++saisioo++ directly borrowed images of GOT7 members as characters for her novel. They argued that the novel is a 'fan fic' that should not be commercialised. Hence, #แบนnotme (ban [the novel] Not Me) was a hashtag adopted in December 2021 by GOT7 fans and other netizens in an effort to cancel the novel *Not Me*.

This hashtag was part of the cancel culture on social media. While mainstream media uses the term 'cancel culture' in general and often in negative terms, Ng argues that the term 'cancel culture' is too generic and proposes the term 'cancel practices.' According to Ng, cancel practices are defined as posts either directly or indirectly withdrawing public support from the cancel target. Cancel practices are usually caused by misbehaviour of the cancel target. Social media users post specific hashtags to proclaim that they no longer support an individual, brand, or company on social media. Hashtags that are normally used for cancel practices include #[Celebrity-name]iscancelled or #[Celebrity-name]IsOverParty.^[37] Cancel practices are similar to 'anti-fandom' to some degree. Jonathan Gray argues that anti-fandom is motivated by dislike, contempt and similar feelings. The negative evaluation of media content or celebrity could be a response to racism or sexism.^[38] For example, J.K. Rowling, the author of Harry Potter, was cancelled after tweeting support for a female researcher who was perceived as transphobic. J.K. Rowling, therefore, was criticised as a person holding a transphobic point of view.^[39]

I argue that fan fiction can be recognised as a type of cultural capital that fans consume to access their fandom objects. However, as in the case of *Not Me*, when a writer refuses to declare a clear connection between their novel and the fandom object, the process of cultural capital accumulation can be interrupted. This is what ultimately led to the rejection of the novel *Not Me* by the GOT7 fandom community.

Moreover, Ng argues that cancel culture is followed by a 'cancel discourse' or 'discussions and commentary about cancel practice and their aftermath.'^[40] For example, after J.K. Rowling was cancelled, fans of Harry Potter further discussed whether they would still support her work. Other relevant parties, such as the cast of the Harry Potter movies and her publishers were also involved in this deliberation. Their reactions were closely watched and evaluated by social media users.

After the novel *Not Me* was cancelled, there were reactions from B2S Thailand, its main distributor, and Anucha Boonyawattana, who had adapted the novel into a television series. B2S Thailand, one of the biggest bookstore chains in Thailand, apologised to GOT7 fans and decided to take the novel off their shelves and other selling platforms.^[41] Anucha, however, argued that the TV series was only loosely based on the novel. While the main plot of the series was the same, other details (such as the characters) were different. Therefore, although some fans view the *Not Me* novel as a fan fiction, the series *Not Me* is a separate piece of work. Anucha also apologised on her Facebook page for not realising that the novel *Not Me* was possibly a fan fiction beforehand.

Anucha's comments reduced the number of calls on social media for her series to be cancelled. As a Thai transgender director who had received several international film awards and was an outspoken LGBTQ+ advocate, many yaoi fans believed that Anucha would be able to produce a good drama out of fan fiction. Some fans who used #แบนnotme insisted that they only cancelled the novel but supported the series and the director. I argue that although the GOT7 fandom community terminated their connection with the novel *Not Me*, Anucha Boonyawattana, who has gained a positive reputation, can rebuild trust in the fandom community with her own cultural capital.

The series *Not Me* premiered in December 2021 and received a positive response from Twitter users. #notmeseries was used to discuss the series, particularly how it related to Thai political activism.

In the first episode, the main character 'White' disguises himself as 'Black,' his twin brother who is in a coma. White wants to discover the truth behind his brother's coma, so he goes to the university where Black was studying and tells everyone that he is Black. The most remarkable scene in this episode is when White joins Black's classmates (who were studying law) and they begin to discuss whether Thailand is 'rule of law' or 'rule by law.' While one student agrees that Thailand is a country with 'rule of law', the other disagrees and argues that unfair treatment exists in the Thai juristic system and powerful people can exploit the law for their own benefit. The student explains:

Rule of Law means all laws apply equally or we call it *Nititham* in Thai, and the countries where rule of law applies are called *Nitirat*. Rule of Law is the highest and most sacred law, the whole state is subject to law, and everyone is equal under the same law. Thailand is under Rule by Law. Citizens are governed by law. Governing authorities make and enforce laws to benefit themselves. They interpret laws to prosecute people who oppose them. This is called *Double Standard*. (*Not Me the Series*, Episode 1)

This scene, of course, is not in the novel. After the first episode, many tweets applauded the way Anucha Boonyawattana criticised Thai society. As Tyrell Haberkorn argues, in modern Thai history, the use of the justice system by the state has frequently become a form of repression against Thai citizens. The law has often worked in a way to make it easier to prosecute people who oppose state power, while making it more difficult to prosecute state officials.^[42] Another scene that mentions the Thai justice system and went viral was in Episode 6. In this scene, White, pretending to be his twin Black, discusses with another character about crossing a road:

You cross the street in a crosswalk without looking right or left because you're sure it's the right thing. You don't care if the approaching car is going to stop or not. It hits you to death. Can your life even prove anything? Who would know that you did it to prove what's right, that the car must stop to let people cross, as the law says? People will just say you're dumb not to look before you cross it. (*Not Me the Series*, Episode 6)

This scene was widely shared online because it was coincidentally similar to what was happening in real life. In Thailand, at the same time, there was a case of a female doctor who was crossing the road on a crosswalk. She was hit by a policeman riding a motorcycle and she died. Thai netizens were outraged about this incident because the victim was being lawful by crossing the road on a crosswalk, yet she was still killed by a policeman who should have been protecting people instead of breaking the law by not stopping for a pedestrian. Concern was also voiced on whether the police official would receive an unbiased trial within the Thai courts.^[43]

Another scene that was mentioned widely online was in the seventh episode of the series and involved activists protesting on the street and advocating for a same-sex marriage bill. Although Thailand is generally perceived as LGBTQ+ friendly, there is no official law that confirms the marital status of same sex couples. Many LGBTQ+ activists have fought to pass same-sex marriage legislation. Activists have also compromised with conservatives and promoted a civil partnership bill. This bill is similar to legislation that passed in France and allows same-sex couples to manage their assets and receive tax and pension rights, but it does not give them the same rights as a married couple. The civil partnership bill was widely debated within the LGBTQ+ community.^[44] However, in *Not Me*, it is clear through the use of the term 'สมรสเท่าเทียม' (literally means equally marriage right) that what the characters in the series want is the legalisation of same sex marriage, not a bill legalising civil partnerships.

In the last episode of the series, there is a scene that discusses the enforced disappearance of Thai activists. Amnesty International defines victims of enforced disappearance as 'people who have literally disappeared, from their loved ones and their community. They go missing when state officials (or someone acting with state consent) grab them from their homes and then deny it or refuse to say where

they are.'^[45] Since the 2014 military coup, many Thai political activists have had to leave Thailand. Some of these activists living in neighbouring countries have been reportedly abducted. The most famous case was the disappearance of Wanchalearm Satsaksit, who was abducted in Phnom Penh in June 2020.^[46] Mainstream media in Thailand paid very little attention to this abduction. *Not Me* was the first drama series to reference the abduction of Thai political activists. In a scene referencing abduction, one-character states in their emotional dialogue: 'If I die, my mom could understand. But, if I just disappear, it would be very cruel to my mom' (*Not Me the Series*, Episode 14).

Later, Anucha was invited by Amnesty Thailand to discuss laws that can prevent enforced disappearance. It can be argued that Anucha has social capital gleaned from her involvement in the media industry and her association with international organisations. Eventually, this social capital has moved the series *Not Me* from controversy to being celebrated for its promotion of democracy and freedom.

Conclusion

The phenomena of political activism in the yaoi fandom community can be analysed as a type of fan-based citizenship. Fans tend to engage in civic action through popular culture rather than traditional civic institutions. As Hinck argues, popular culture has multiple meanings. It is therefore crucial to analyse who has the power to access and interpret meanings and turn these meanings into dominant interpretations for supporting their political agendas.^[47]

In the case of the series *Not Me*, fans initially showed resentment towards the novel in which it was based. Although this resentment was reported in the mainstream media, the sentiment was limited to the GOT7 fan community. Arguably, this was because the differences between 'a fan fiction' and 'an original fiction' are blurred. This is especially true in a world where popular culture can be picked and revised to be a meme or any other kind of content online. Alternatively, when the director Anucha adapted the novel and made it into a TV series that criticised Thai society, the series was overwhelmingly welcomed. I argue that, within the Thai yaoi fandom community, directors and producers of the yaoi series are more powerful than fans in interpreting meanings and using these meanings to support their political agendas.

Hills uses Bourdieu's cultural capital and social capital to argue that fan communities have a hierarchy based on their members' background and combined cultural/societal capital.^[48] Anucha Boonyawattana, the director of the series *Not Me*, has long been recognised as a transgender director who supports gender equity and the pro-democracy movement. Therefore, the series *Not Me* was widely praised on social media when it addressed the political activism happening in Thailand. The social issues portrayed in the series were more aligned with public sentiment than with fan fiction.

Nevertheless, cancel practices initiated by fandom communities can promote accountability of writers, directors and other relevant parties. For example, as mentioned earlier, the director of the series *Not Me* declared how the series *Not Me* is different from the novel. This response illustrates that fan-based citizenship is limited not only in its power to access and interpret meanings as Hinck argues, but also in its power to engage in conversation. Arguably, political activism in the yaoi fandom communities has started from the moment yaoi fans use hashtags to engage in conversation with people producing yaoi novels and series. This conversation eventually makes people in the yaoi industry morally obliged to take action in response to concerns of the yaoi fandom communities.

Notes

^[1] These groups have subsequently fragmented into additional groups.

- [2] Duncan McCargo, 'Southeast Asia's troubling elections: democratic demolition in Thailand,' in *Journal of Democracy* 30(4) (October 2019): 119–33, pp. 120–21, doi: [10.1353/jod.2019.0056](https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2019.0056).
- [3] The PDRC is the acronym for the People's Democratic Reform Committee or the Thai People's Committee for Absolute Monarchy with the King as Head of State
- [4] Claudio Sopranzetti, 'Thailand's relapse: The implication of the May 2014 coup,' *The Journal of Asian Studies* 75(2) (2016): 299–316, p. 303, doi: [10.1017/S0021911816000462](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021911816000462).
- [5] Sopranzetti, 'Thailand's relapse: The implication of the May 2014 coup,' p. 299.
- [6] McCargo, 'Southeast Asia's troubling elections: democratic demolition in Thailand,' p. 119.
- [7] McCargo, 'Southeast Asia's troubling elections: democratic demolition in Thailand,' pp. 125–26.
- [8] Penchan Phoborisut, 'The 2020 student uprising in Thailand: A dynamic network of dissent,' *ISEAS Perspective* 129 (2020): 1–10, p. 3.
- [9] Kanokrat Lertchoosakul, 'The white ribbon movement: High school students in the 2020 Thai youth protests,' *Critical Asian Studies* 53(2) (2021): 206–18, p. 207, doi: [10.1080/14672715.2021.1883452](https://doi.org/10.1080/14672715.2021.1883452).
- [10] Phoborisut, 'The 2020 student uprising in Thailand: A dynamic network of dissent,' p. 5.
- [11] Adam K. Dedman and Autumn Lai, 'Digitally dismantling Asian authoritarianism: Activist reflections from the #MilkTeaAlliance,' *Contention* 9(1) (2021): 97–132, p. 104, doi: [10.3167/cont.2021.090105](https://doi.org/10.3167/cont.2021.090105).
- [12] Caitlin Ashworth, 'K-pop fan funded billboards move from BTS and MRT stations to tuks tuks to support protestors,' *Thaiger* (December 2020), accessed 10 Jul. 2022.
- [13] Paul Booth, *Playing Fans: Negotiating Fandom and Media in the Digital Age* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2015), p. 3, doi: [10.2307/j.ctt20p58ks](https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt20p58ks).
- [14] Matt Hills, *Fan Cultures* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 4, doi: [10.4324/9780203361337](https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203361337).
- [15] Hills, *Fan Cultures*, p. 20.
- [16] Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (London: Routledge, 1984); Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990).
- [17] Hills, *Fan Cultures*, p. 30.
- [18] Booth, *Playing Fans: Negotiating Fandom and Media in the Digital Age*, pp. 15–24.
- [19] In this paper, ideology means a set of ideas and beliefs, especially when related to political activism of fandom communities.
- [20] Ashley Hinck, *Politics for the Love of Fandom: Fan-based Citizenship in a Digital World* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2019), p. 6.
- [21] Hinck, *Politics for the Love of Fandom: Fan-based Citizenship in a Digital World*, p. 9.
- [22] Hinck, *Politics for the Love of Fandom: Fan-based Citizenship in a Digital World*, pp. 36–38.
- [23] Hinck, *Politics for the Love of Fandom: Fan-based Citizenship in a Digital World*, pp. 39.
- [24] Eve Ng, *Cancel Culture: Critical Analysis* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022), p. 43, doi: [10.1007/978-3-030-97374-2](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-97374-2).
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