

## K-Pop Fandom and Political Activism in Thailand's 2020 Student Uprising

PENCHAN PHOBORISUT\*

JIWOO PARK<sup>1</sup>

California State University, Fullerton, USA

Korean popular culture has taken the world by storm with the recent rise of Korean entertainment globally, such as *Squid Game* on Netflix and the Oscar Award-winning *Parasite*. Fans of Korean popular culture have formed coalitions in Asia, North and South America, and other parts of the world. These coalitions or fandom groups go beyond merely meeting up, exchanging paraphernalia, or posting photos of their pop idols on social media; their enthusiasm has thrived in the realm of social activism. This research examines K-pop fandom activities during Thailand's 2020 Student Uprising, tracing the operationalization of fandom, the transfer of skills and affective fandom practices into political engagement, and the role of digital proficiency in their fan-driven, collective movement.

*Keywords: K-pop fandom, fandom, fandom in activism, Thai K-pop fandom, student-led activism 2020*

With the recent meteoric rise to a global scale, such as Netflix's *Squid Game* (Hwang, 2021) and the Oscar Award-winning *Parasite* (Bong, 2019), the Korean entertainment industry has taken the world by storm. Scholars have explored the practices of international K-pop fans in terms of their content consumption, participatory approach, and sociocultural identity (Han, 2017; Keith, 2019; Oh, 2020). K-pop fandoms are not only associated with the success of their favorite artists, music, or any other object of interest. They have also evolved as a powerful force in political activism. The fandom groups have not stopped at meeting up, exchanging paraphernalia, or Instagram posts of their pop idols. More importantly, they have formed coalitions in Asia, North and South America, and other parts of the world. K-pop fans have proven capable of uniting in a highly organized, systematic way to amplify social movements and demand change (Bruner, 2020; Coscarelli, 2020). They have embraced the overlap between fandom and politics, engaging in online political activism as collective fandom. These fans trended social media hashtags to create awareness around social or political issues and a more prominent presence for their causes. An example is the case of BTS' fandom, the Adorable Representative M.C. for Youth (ARMY), which has become globally connected and involved in Black Lives Matter (BLM) activism in the United States. Whereas previous scholars

---

Penchan Phoborisut: pphoborisut@fullerton.edu

Jiwoo Park: jiwopark@fullerton.edu

Date submitted: 2023-09-30

<sup>1</sup> The authors thank the journal editors and the anonymous reviewers for their insightful comments.

Copyright © 2024 (Penchan Phoborisut and Jiwoo Park). Licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution Non-commercial No Derivatives (by-nc-nd). Available at <http://ijoc.org>.

focused on general K-pop fandoms in different regions and local contexts, this research examines K-pop groups' fandoms in Thailand by tracing their operationalization and how the practice of fandom may inform their civic actions. By examining K-pop fans' involvement in political activism, we argue that the influence of K-pop fandoms is not only confined to supporting their idols but has also expanded to political awakening and participating in political phenomena, particularly in the 2020 student-led protests in Thailand. We hope to unravel how being a fan shapes individuals' participation in democratic activities and their understanding of citizenship by providing the contextual complexity surrounding K-pop fans' engagement in political issues. The findings of this study illuminate how the practice of fandom shapes citizenship and engagement in democratic activities. Thai K-pop fans' experience and their practice of fandom helped them gain insights into contemporary issues, citizenship, and personal agency. They enhanced their understanding of citizenship, human rights, and Thailand's political landscape. Our argument is drawn from fan accounts that describe their experiences navigating multiple identities using Twitter to engage with a spectrum of social and political issues and affectively supporting social causes while expressing political views.

### Fandom

It is highly possible that we are fans of something—movies, music, sports, or celebrities (Booth, 2010; Gray, Sandvoss, & Harrington, 2017). Fandom refers to affective engagement with popular culture or objects that fans love, such as movies, television shows, books, sports teams, or celebrities (Abercrombie & Longhurst, 1998; Busse & Gray, 2011). Fandom is grounded in the intense fan experience—an emotional and affective connection that fans have with their objects of fandom (Hinck, 2019).

Fandom has been researched with differing emphases on communication, cultural studies, audience analysis, and psychology (Booth, 2010). In communication, Tulloch and Jenkins (1995) studied the fan experience. Scholars, such as Abercrombie and Longhurst (1998), studied fans as a type of audience. Bacon-Smith (1992), Bury (2005), and Penley (1997) examined the works of fans, such as fanfiction and online discourses, while Gray et al. (2017) and Hellekson and Busse (2006) paid particular attention to collective fan communities in digital communication. What is evident is that these scholars treated fans as active participants (Booth, 2010; Shefrin, 2004).

Fans' intense engagement can sometimes be deemed unfavorable or irrational. The term "fans" derives from the derogatory meaning of "fanatics" (Jenkins, 1992, p. 12). In Thai, the modern term referring to fans is *ting* (艇), which means a protrusion or an appendix. The Thai Web board Sanook defines *ting* as fan clubs of celebrities and musicians; they are irrational and oblivious to the manner and the world, except for their (favorite) artists. A similar term in Korean *Sasaeng* (사생팬) refers to an obsessive fan who stalks or invades K-pop idols' privacy. These terms connote the negative aspects of fans, similar to those of "fanatics." Such negative portrayals of fans as undifferentiated and easily duped have been highlighted since the early days (Bennett & Booth, 2016; Duffett, 2013; Hills, 2002). However, fans' active engagement in social movements, seen in Thai fandoms, warrants examination as it affords fans the ability to contribute their advocacy in civic engagements—a departure from the monolithic views of fans as being active or passionate.

### ***Popular Culture and Fandom in Activism***

In addition to political or social institutions, popular culture can guide civic action and serve as a prolific source of ideas for envisioning social justice and social change. For example, the comic strip *V for Vendetta* (McTeigue, 2006), later made into a motion picture, featured a political and visceral affect that inspired people to opt for Guy Fawkes masks in activism, including the online hacktivist group Anonymous (Ott, 2010). The masks were later adopted by the protesters who joined the Occupy Wall Street movement but did not want to reveal their faces or risk losing their jobs (Murphy, 2011). Furthermore, the hand gesture of the three-fingered salute that signifies solidarity in the fictive dystopia Hollywood blockbuster *The Hunger Games* (Ross, 2012) has inspired freedom fighters in Thailand. Since 2014, Thai protesters have adopted this symbol of solidarity and resistance to the oppressive junta regime and military-led government (Phoborisut, 2016). Recently, the three-fingered salute was adopted by young protesters in Myanmar in their fight against the dictatorial regime (Quinley, 2021).

Popular culture, including fandom, has been explored in relation to the tension between power and representation. It has been interpreted through de Certeau's (1984) concept of tactics used by the disempowered against the dominant strategies of the media industry, particularly when fans subvert and appropriate mainstream popularity. Fandom involves more than mere fandom itself; it encompasses collective strategies to form interpretive communities that may diverge from what the power bloc defines (Fiske, 1989). The interplay between popular culture and political communication is evident in how consumers of various popular cultures create spaces for political discourse and debate (Van Zoonen, 2005). These spaces also make visible civic and political engagement originating within fan culture in which they respond to shared fan interests, using established fan practices and relationships and often incorporating metaphors from popular culture (Brough & Shresthova, 2012; Kligler-Vilenchik, McVeigh-Schultz, Weitbrecht, & Tokuhama, 2012). Fans may focus on preventing show cancellations or rallying support for film projects. These activities have solidified social connections among fans, clarified their shared interests, and influenced their public standing. When these fan groups define an issue, identify decision makers, devise strategies, and educate and mobilize supporters, they fulfill all the necessary steps for engaging in activism (Jenkins, 2014). Inspired by *Harry Potter* (Columbus, 2001), the Harry Potter Alliance (HPA), with 60 HPA chapters worldwide, is a notable example of fan-based activism that connects popular fiction with real-world issues. They mobilized millions of fans to support social causes like fair trade or marriage equality (Hinck, 2020). U2's frontman Bono also inspired fans to organize their "Bono Street Team" using social media platforms to advocate for Bono's work in Africa (Bennett, 2012). Similarly, BTS' fandom employed social media to support social and political causes. The K-pop fandoms' advocacy became prominent when they mobilized support and participated in global and political activism during the 2020 pandemic.

### ***K-Pop Fandoms in Political and Global Activism During the Pandemic***

In the past, various artists' fans had been associated with wide-ranging supportive activities for their artists. Recently, social media platforms have offered a new way for celebrities and their fans to interact, building on the greater intimacy formed between them. Managing a K-pop fandom is all about the connections that fans can make in their interactions with K-pop idols. While fans are more motivated to support their idols in any way possible—sharing memes, artist-uploaded selfies, and clips from livestreams

everywhere they can—K-pop idols are also very active, often responding directly to fans. Unlike past fan clubs for other celebrities, more fans than ever view themselves as active consumers through these types of interactions. They never feel one-sided because knowing that their favorite idols could potentially see their posts makes the experience even more meaningful, enabling them to develop a strong loyalty to their favorite K-pop idol groups.

More importantly, K-pop fandoms demonstrate their prominent participation in activism. A remarkable example is the case of BTS' ARMY and their fans' civic actions during the pandemic when new challenges and social issues arose. BTS' ARMY has grabbed global media attention by accomplishing several records with a massive scale of its activities, such as promoting votes for different awards and increasing YouTube views. On August 21, 2020, ARMY worked to break the record for the most-viewed YouTube video in 24 hours for BTS' single "Dynamite" with 101.1 million views (HYBE LABELS, n.d.). On May 21, 2021, ARMY worked again to break the record held by Dynamite in 24 hours for BTS' new single "Butter," with 108.2 million views in 24 hours (HYBE LABELS, n.d.). In this context, it is difficult to comprehend the global success of BTS without crediting ARMY's active social media engagement.

While ARMY has become one of the most visible fandoms on social media, capable of supporting BTS records by streaming their music on YouTube, in the summer of 2020, ARMY proved their ability to use their unique social media proficiency to amplify their June 2020 #MatchAMillion campaign, in which they raised more than \$1 million for the BLM movement. On June 4, 2020, BTS released a tweet stating, "We stand against racial discrimination. We condemn violence. You, I, and we all have the right to be respected. We will stand together" (BTS, 2020). This tweet went viral among K-pop fans and was retweeted approximately 1 million times within the first week of its tweet (CBS News, 2020). Besides the statement of support, BTS donated \$1 million to the BLM movement, which inspired ARMY to begin a hashtag campaign, #MatchAMillion, to match BTS' donation. Within a day, ARMY raised and matched BTS' \$1 million donation. ARMY's #MatchAMillion campaign is particularly notable because these fans were able to organize themselves to advocate the BLM on an unprecedented scale without BTS directly asking them to participate in it.

Also, to hinder the anti-BLM movement, ARMY and several other K-pop fandoms hijacked the hashtags #WhiteLivesMatter and #WhiteoutWednesday by linking the hashtag to fancams (fan-recorded videos) of their favorite K-pop stars, in effect diluting any actual offensive content (Bhandari, Doyle, & Coates, 2020). When President Trump took his stance against the BLM movement, many K-pop fans, along with TikTok users, sabotaged President Trump's rally in Tulsa, Oklahoma, by reserving extra tickets with no intention of attending the rally (Reddy, 2020) to protest Trump's support for white supremacists. As a result, President Trump canceled his speech to an expected overflow area outside because of too many empty seats caused by a successful ploy by many K-pop fans and TikTok users. These cases are glimpses of the infinite possibilities of their capabilities to unite in a highly organized, systematic way for their political activism.

### ***K-Pop Fandom's Activism in Southeast Asia During the Pandemic***

Like the K-pop fans' involvement in the BLM campaign and President Trump's Tulsa rally in the United States, the powerful influence of fandom-based political mobilization has also been observed in Southeast Asia. K-pop fans in Indonesia and Thailand have made headlines in the national media because of their visibility in political movements in 2020. In Indonesia, on October 12, 2020, they made headlines for donating 8,735

mangrove trees planted in Central Java to celebrate Jimin's birthday, one of BTS' members (Andini & Akhni, 2021). They also raised funds to help victims of the West Sulawesi earthquakes and other natural disasters and participated in Twitter and offline strikes using the hashtag #TolakOmnibusLaw to reject the controversial omnibus law that could harm workers' rights and the environment (Samboh, 2020). As a result, Omnibus Law-related hashtags became a worldwide trending topic on Twitter.

Like fans-driven activism in Indonesia, Thai K-pop fans showed strong support for the 2020 youth-led democratic movement following the Constitutional Court's dissolution of the Future Forward Party by flooding Twitter trends through #WhatsHappeningInThailand and #หยุดคุกคามประชาชน (stop harassing people) hashtags to attract other supporters around the world (Andini & Akhni, 2021). In addition, K-pop fans organized birthday messages by buying advertising space on TukTuk taxis instead of billboards at railway stations to advertise for their favorite K-pop artists so that they could help drivers earn extra income during the pandemic (Sharma, 2021). This campaign, initiated by K-pop fans, symbolized fan activism protesting railway operators for halting train services during the anti-government protests (Wangkiat, 2020). According to the Thai Lawyers for Human Rights, K-pop fans even helped prodemocracy demonstrators arrested by the Thai government stay out of jail by raising thousands of dollars to provide pro-bono legal assistance (Rawnsley, 2021).

### Methods

To trace the operationalization of fandom and how the digital skills of K-pop fans transfer to their engagement and mobilization in political actions, the authors drew from the analyses of K-pop fandoms in Thailand's 2020 student-led uprising and interviews with six fans who manage six different fandoms in Thailand. Since fan communication, text, artifacts, and fan communities exist primarily in the digital terrain, this posed challenges to our studies because it is "a constantly changing patchwork of perpetual nowness" (LaFrance, 2015, para. 1). However, since the online content seemed permanent, we archived digital artifacts, such as tweets, social media posts, and fan interactions, by saving them on our computer's hard drive, an external hard drive, and a cloud service.

In addition, we employed the qualitative research method, emphasizing the central techniques in ethnography: close observation of the online community, social media posts, and exchange of information. We applied snowball sampling by interacting with a few fans who recommended other fans and administrators of fan social media pages. Participants were interviewed via voice chat services, such as Line and Zoom calls, from October to November 2022. We posed the following research questions:

*RQ1: How did Thai K-pop fandoms' experience and their affective practice of fandom translate to political activism during the 2020 student-led protests in Thailand?*

*RQ2: How did their digital proficiency play a role in their fan-driven, collective movement to act on a massive scale in their political activism?*

The findings from this research include the accounts contributed by the six participants, with informed consent and confidentiality of their identities. Pseudonyms were used in the discussion.

### **The Case Study: Thai K-Pop Fandoms in Political Activism**

In Thailand, the early popularity of K-pop derived from Korean dramas broadcast on Thai television stations, such as ITV and Channel 7, and the Thai record companies' distribution of K-pop musicians (Siriyuvasak & Shin, 2007). K-pop's popularity continued to flourish when Thais debuted as members of the K-pop groups: Nichkhun "Buck" Horvejkul of 2PM, a popular boy band; Lalisa "Lisa" Manobal of Blackpink, the most successful Korean girl group on the global scale; Kunpimook "BamBam" Bhuwaku of GOT7, a hugely successful boy group; and Kunpimook "Ten" Bhuwaku of NCT, a popular boy group.

In the early days, K-pop fans gathered to share information, exchange paraphernalia, go to concerts, and greet their idols at airports (Siriyuvasak & Shin, 2007). However, today's digitally networked communication makes it possible to connect with other fans and their artists and develop a strong bond with them. They can arrange activities to highlight their collective fan identity and organize events of unprecedented scale and speed. More recently, these activities have traversed mobilization for social and political causes. This research explains the factors that facilitated such actions. This study's findings elucidate how fandom informs citizenship and their engagement in democratic activities.

### ***The Practice of Fandom***

Fandom practices can be a crucial factor influencing "the place-making activities of domestic and familial life" (Duncan, 2022, pp. 3–4). Fans' experiences, especially in the mediated digital network, can impact their worldviews and political lives. Drawing from this study's interviews with K-pop fans in Thailand, we argue that fandom practice, particularly the Thai fan experience on Twitter, informs their political life and may help them form political expressions and participate in civic actions. Our argument is derived from the accounts of fan experience interacting with multiple identities, their use of Twitter that traverses social and political issues, and their affective engagement in social causes and political expressions. The following sections discuss the three aspects of Thai fandom practices that inform their citizenship and civic actions.

#### *Fan Experience: The Multiplicities of Identities*

In the West, fan culture afforded young people alternative ways to discover their gender, sexuality, or identities as non-binary (Ewens, 2020). Similarly, K-pop culture facilitates fans to envision alternative identities and practices situated in their social conformities, hierarchies, and disparities (Kim, 2013). Fans, characterized by their personal attachment to a fan object, differ from fandom, which involves fans' collective participation in a community (Jenkins, 2018). A community is essential to fandom (Busse & Gray, 2011; Jenkins, 2018), serving as the habitus of fan experience in which they connect, interact, and share information and pictures with others. Thai fans' experiences in fan communities intersect with fluid identities in three aspects: interweaving their individual fan experiences, imparting their connection with their objects of fandom, and showcasing their collective identity. The interaction with these dimensions of identity informs their citizenship, which refers to the fundamental democratic attribute of being a member with rights and obligations to a group and as citizens of a state (Isin & Turner, 2002).

First, fans express individual agency within their fan communities. Although fans participate in activities initiated by the group's administrator to highlight their collective fan identity, each fan is far from being a passive individual fan and being confined to the fandom group's activities. Fans of the same artists exert their autonomy to personalize their fan accounts by curating specific content or initiating their own "projects" to support their idols in their preferred ways. For instance, Alisa, an interviewee, took photos of her idols to share on her Twitter account. She argued that "no one can tell me what to post or feature on my space." As they navigate their fandom independence, fans opt to partially reveal their real-life identity or keep their K-pop fan identity discrete because of the adverse views of K-pop fans (Prasitmee, 2018). Alisa, for example, chose to remain anonymous to circumvent potential conflicts, jealousy, anti-fan sentiment, and potential "dramas." "I never tell other fans I met at events about my fan account on Twitter," she added. The autonomy and discretion exercised in online communities transfer to political expression. In Thailand, where a draconian law suppresses criticism against those in power, the option to remain anonymous enables fans to express dissent without fear of government suppression. By navigating the autonomy of fan identities, Thai fans can maintain their individual worldviews while challenging oppressive norms and engaging in political discourse. This illustrates the complex interplay between individual expression within fan communities and broader societal dynamics, highlighting fandoms' role as spaces for personal autonomy and resistance.

Second, fans emotionally resonate with their artists' struggles with personal identities and social issues. These interviewees revealed that they are growing up along with their artists and learning to navigate conformities and social issues, such as people's rights, boundaries, patriarchal views, body shaming, and mental health issues.

I used to share the artists' whereabouts or where they bought the apartment. But then I learned about the right to privacy. So, I stopped. I might share what cities they will visit but won't mention the date and time. (Saranya)

At one point, I learned more about rights and social issues through my fandom experience. Some fandoms called out one artist who made discriminating comments. The artist might not have known about racism or body shaming. The fandom of the other artists questioned that celebrity's stance. I think it was constructive criticism. The artists and fans are learning about the issues they might not have known before. (Thaniya)

In addition, Mananya learned from her favorite artist, who challenged the patriarchy in Korean society. "She believed in herself and decided not to conform to others' expectations. I admire her for being brave and being herself," she added.

Another notable example is BTS' "emotional resonance at a precarious time of aspirations for self-empowerment and self-discovery" (Kim, 2021, p. 16). The band's discussion on the importance of self-love and mental health has helped Korean youngsters and other young people worldwide grapple with their mental health. Rawiwan revealed that BTS' song "Magic Shop" (BTS, 2018), which features comforting words, saved her life.

The words in this song were precisely what was on my mind. It was like they conveyed my feelings. I no longer felt alone and aspired to keep going . . . I felt that they (BTS members) were human. We can see other aspects of their lives, not just what is onstage. Sugar (BTS member) spoke about how society might expect us to have dreams, or the elders might expect young people to subscribe to conformities. He said that it was okay if we did not have dreams. Just be yourself and live in the moment. He was not just saying it to look good, nor acting like a life coach, but he was depressed, and he survived. I think he's true to himself, not just portraying a good image. (Rawiwan)

Third, as fans feel emotionally connected to the artists, they form coalitions using hashtags to exert their collective identities in the name of the fandom. These collective identities galvanize force with more connections or "followers" to create impactful collective actions, such as charity donations or strategic votes for the bands. Such solidarity leads to a stronger sense of citizenship as fans, belonging, and pride. Thaniya added, "We can show the world that the band we love has its fans' back." To mobilize collective actions, Alisa mentioned that fans bracket their individual differences to collaborate in the name of their fandoms. With digital communication, fans' collective identities and actions transgress beyond borders. Rawiwan, an administrator of another K-pop band, said that her fandom community can instantaneously and powerfully connect with other fandoms on a global scale to show solidarity or raise funds in the name of their band.

With these examples of fans' experiences interacting with different identities, Thai K-pop fans learned about modern-day issues, citizenship, and agency in fandom, thereby facilitating their understanding of citizenship, human rights, and Thailand politics, which has been beleaguered by two-decade-long political conflicts.

#### *Traversing Political Life on Twitter: Breaking the Code of Silence*

Twitter has been an everyday medium for consumption, socialization, and entertainment. According to Twitter Insight, the latter was more prominent when K-pop tweets reached 7.5 billion globally in 2021. Thailand ranked fourth globally for the most tweets about K-pop and sixth for the most K-pop fans (Kim, 2022). Social media plays a crucial role in building fan communities, enabling more accessible communication among fans and connecting them with broader networks of people (Riddick, 2022). Thai fans use Twitter to create communities, exchange information about the artists, share content and news translated from Korean and English into Thai, post their own photos of the artists, curate the band's pictures from other sources, and mobilize for fan actions. On Twitter, fans traverse political life and witness the Thai people's struggle for democracy—breaking the code of silence and criticizing the institutions of power. The Thai criminal code, *lèse majesté* or Article 112, prohibiting criticism against the monarchy with three to fifteen years of prison term, has effectively silenced dissent. Previous vocal critics against the monarchy had been arrested, imprisoned, and, in several cases, made to disappear, leading to a pervading fear in the country (Chachavalpongpun, 2022). However, despite the option of remaining anonymous and mitigating risks, Thai netizens used Twitter to express their political discontent. In 2019, Thai netizens tweeted their frustration about the royal motorcade that stopped the Bangkok traffic for over an hour to make way for the motorcade of the privileged.



On October 1, 2019, the hashtag *#kabuansadet* (*#royalmotorcade*) trended on Thai Twitter, questioning societal inequality (BBC News Thai, 2019). In another incident during the COVID-19 pandemic, Thai K-pop fans learned from *Dispatch*, the Korean media, that the Thai king spent his time at an exorbitant residence in Germany while Thai people were struggling with limited medical supplies. The hashtag *#Dispatch* trended on Twitter, featuring sarcasm referencing K-pop and K-drama (Yim, 2020). Subsequently, political expression on Twitter surged as students took to the streets in the fall of 2020, with hashtags about the protests trending on Twitter almost daily. The student-led anti-government protests were “the first large-scale prodemocracy protests in Thailand mediated on Twitter” (Sinpeng, 2021, p. 192). In late 2020, Thai K-pop fans began tweeting about the government’s violent crackdown on the protests, breaking the code of silence and challenging the censorship of political criticism.

I think it has been more frequent to see that if we spoke up, we could have been charged and silenced by Article 112. The government’s crackdowns on these students are too harsh . . . We’ve got to push for changes, for example, justice and transparency. We can accomplish these changes, but it might take a long time. (Alisa)

K-pop fandoms’ Twitter feeds, which featured celebrities’ photos, were punctuated by tweets on student-led protests. Encountering these tweets, Rawiwan expressed that she was politically awakened. She realized that politics was everyone’s affair. She understood that protesters took to the streets to call for better lives and living conditions and learned that people had the right to speak up. Rawiwan added, “I tweeted about the political gatherings on my fandom account and shared how people can donate . . . I have never seen any adverse reactions to these political tweets. We believe that we do our society a service.”

Saranya decided to tweet about the protests as she witnessed the government’s responses to the student-led protests.

When the government’s crackdown violated international measures, for example, using high-pressure water trucks at the protesters, I tweeted about it. I retweeted when the government shut down the rail systems to hinder protesters’ commute to the protest sites. I also retweeted other information about the protests. (Saranya)

Another K-pop administrator, Mananya, expressed frustration with the government’s repression of dissent.

We can’t criticize those in power, nor the government. When we do, we get arrested. It’s just our criticism. Why can’t the government listen to us, the people? In South Korea, there’s a long history of protests. I can see that the Korean government listens to its people. The (Korean) government didn’t crack down on the protesters (like ours did). Instead, their government designated specific locations, such as parks, for people to protest. (Mananya)

While some K-pop fans retweeted political gatherings, others collectively “speak up” by tweeting political hashtags to trend on Twitter—the space where fans practice tweeting and retweeting with hashtags to support their causes or fandom objects. They collectively tweeted the hashtag *#WhatsHappeningInThailand* to trend on Twitter to garner international attention and pressure the Thai government to stop using force against

protesters (Black, 2020; see Figure 1). On protest days<sup>2</sup>, the Twitter Trends in Thailand juxtaposed political discontent, venues of the rallies, K-pop celebrities, and popular dramas (see Figure 2). Thaniya and her allies tweeted specific hashtags about the protests to trend on Twitter. She said, "Every single day, we share hashtags about the rallies and information about the protests." The hashtag trends also illuminated the support for vocal political activists (#saveLawyerArnon, #SavePanusaya, #saveParit), the themes and venues of protests of the day, such as #Sept19ReturnPowerToPeopleMob, #Oct21Mob, and the netizens' political discontent seen in #ThaiRepublic, #LetItEndInOurGeneration.

When the crackdown on the students turned violent, BTS' ARMY in Thailand denounced the government's use of violence on the protesters (see Figure 3). Saranya and Mananya felt the need to speak up on their K-pop fans' Twitter accounts.

I feel that it's not just my own voice that is present. I think I should say helpful things to others, such as the crackdown that violated international standards, the water cannons, and the closure of the MRT transit system, which benefited from fans like us who bought its advertising spaces. (Saranya)

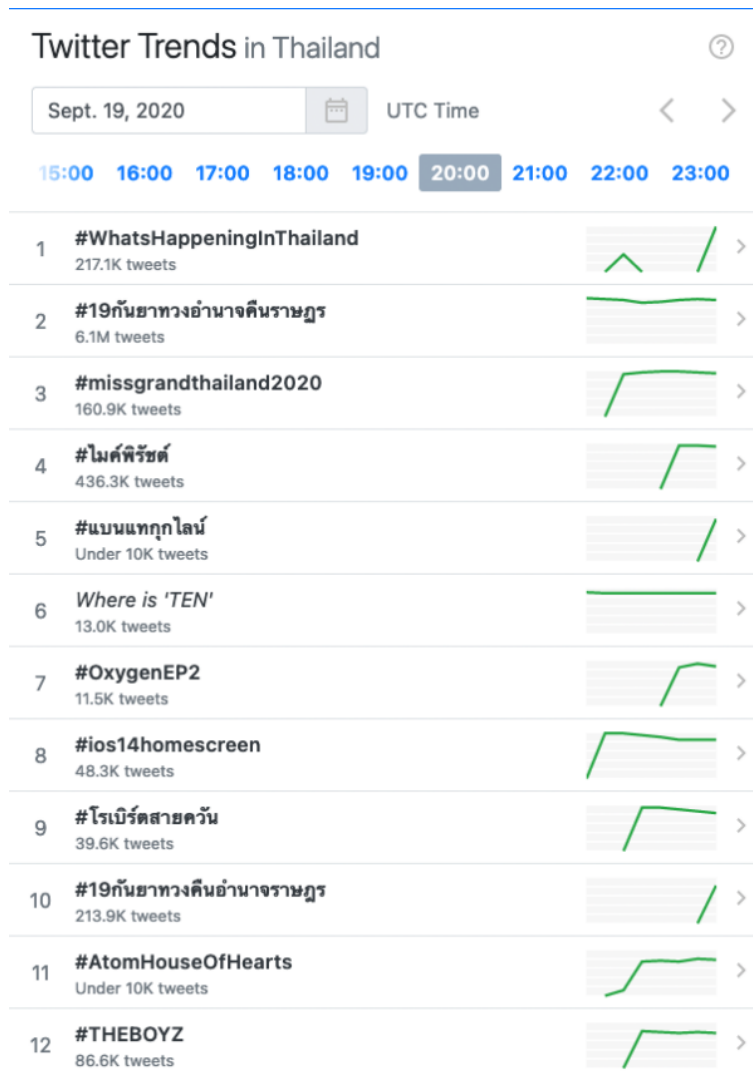
I featured the reality of what has happened. I didn't incite anyone. I exercised my rights by sharing information on where the rallies were and the Twitter accounts that people can donate. (Mananya)



**Figure 1. BTS Thailand retweeted the government's crackdown on the protesters in English to communicate with the global communities with #WhatsHappeninginThailand, explaining the situation in English and other languages (BTS Thailand, 2021a).**

<sup>2</sup> The protests were initiated by decentralized individuals and groups. They organized their own gatherings every few days, every weekend, and later every few weeks, starting from the major rallies in August 2020.

Notably, K-pop fans were active in speaking up against the Thai government's use of violence and spreading their messages using their digital proficiency. This was a phenomenon as K-pop fans and Thai political discontent were no longer mutually exclusive.



**Figure 2. The Twitter Trends in Thailand, primarily featuring entertainment and celebrities, were juxtaposed with political tweets #WhatsHappeningInThailand and #Sept19ReturnPowerToPeopleMob. They were trending on September 19, 2020, when the Thai protesters took to the streets to mark the military coup d'état in 2006. The latter hashtag, shown at no. 2, was tweeted 6.1 million times (getdaytrends, 2021).**



**Figure 3. BTS Thailand responds to the government's crackdown by tweeting, "At every protest, the violence comes from the government. If the govt wants to silence people, resort to violence, oppress, and force people to succumb to its power, stop saying that the country has democracy. It is not democratic. Stop using democracy as a façade. It's appalling #mobAug7" (BTS Thailand, 2021b).**

### *Affective Engagement*

Fans share intense feelings for their fan objects and affective engagements with their objects of fandom (Spence, 2014). They forge allies and communities to affect others and to be affected. Fans also strongly commit to their favorite artists, mobilizing support for their artists' success, raising funds for their artists' charity interests, and organizing events that acknowledge their collective action, power, or political agency. These actions crisscross the terrain of political participation.

When K-pop success is defined by the number of hits on the music chart, the greatest number of views on streaming services, album sales, and entertainment awards, fans feel a sense of commitment to being an integral part of their artists' success. Such competitions prompt fans to set goals to achieve (Tinaliga, 2018), creating strategies to act for their bands. For example, Rawiwan crafted the "playbook" of how to be a fan, detailing insights on how to watch YouTube or listen to Spotify to drive up the number of plays or how to vote for bands to win music awards strategically. Other actions to support their artists are visible in the fans' tweets with specific hashtags to trend on Twitter, which are achievable activities for fans to participate in. "That's what we can do well," confirmed Thaniya. "We devoted our time, labor, and love," she added. Such devotion is evident in "birthday projects," where fans spend money and energy publicly expressing their love by featuring their artists' photos on advertising billboards to wish them a happy birthday. These fans' affective devotion or labor can lead to affective responses from other fans and intensify as they circulate (Ahmed, 2004). This was apparent in the shift in the BTS fans' birthday projects following the authorities' violent reactions to the student protests (see Figure 4). The act led other fans to participate affectively.

After the mass transportation shutdown to deter prodemocracy protests in October 2020, BTS' ARMY boycotted those companies and began advertising with Tuktuk, a local Bangkok three-wheeler taxi service. They stopped supporting businesses that hindered people's political participation. Other fandoms, like Super Junior, also shifted their birthday projects to Tuktuk's advertising (see Figure 5), helping drivers affected by the COVID-19 shutdown. BTS fans tweeted that these drivers were grateful for the support (Poetry of Bitch, 2020). BTS' birthday advertisement on Tuktuk continued to generate income for drivers when the project organizer invited fans to ride these *Tuktuks* (nuna\_vmin, 2020a).



**Figure 4. BTS fans in Thailand advertised birthday projects for Kim Taehyung on the 15 Tuk-tuk advertising spaces. The money directly supported the drivers who had suffered from the COVID-19 shutdown (nuna\_vmin, 2020b).**



**Figure 5. Other K-pop fans like Super Junior affectively engaged in the Tuktuk advertising space (thisisaPAM, 2020).**

Boycotting public train systems was a committed action, as fans expected adherence to their stance. Mananya noted that MRT even hired social media influencers to persuade fans to advertise with them. She added that K-pop fans' "birthday projects" were diversified from big corporations' advertising space to other alternatives, such as street food vendors' spaces (see Figure 6).



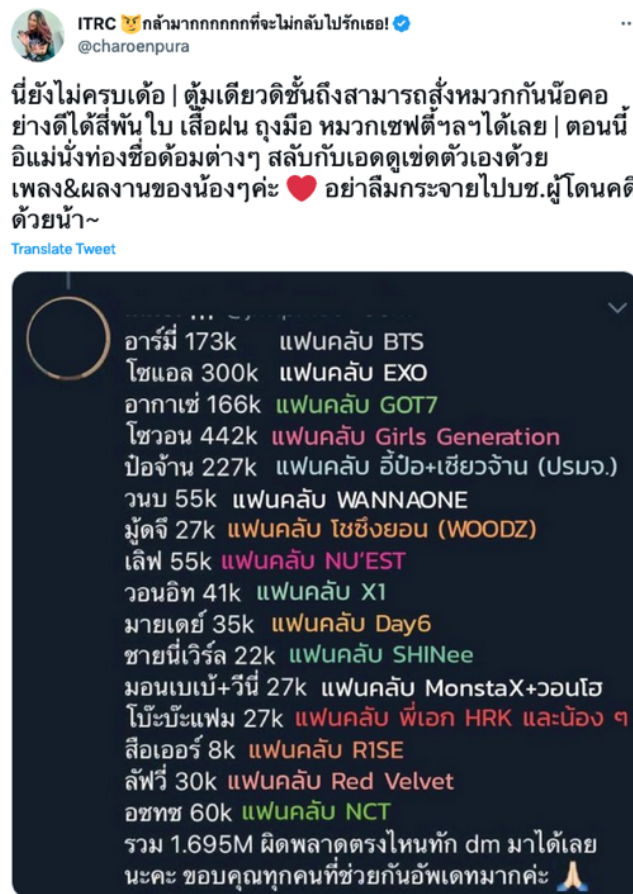
**Figure 6. The fans of Blackpink's Rose advertised their birthday projects in alternative spaces, supporting street vendors in earning extra income following the pandemic (thisisaPAM, 2021).**

Another affective engagement was the fans' mobilization for charity under their artists' names. The sheer number of fans, ranging from 10,000 to over 1 million followers connected through fans' Twitter accounts, made it easy for fans to mobilize funds for their "projects." For example, Rawiwan noted that they raised money for four Thai foundations last June. This collective action showcases the fandom's pride and influence. Thai actress Sai Charoenpura, who provided food, drinks, and necessary supplies to the protests, highlighted fandoms' instantaneous and transparent fundraising. She tweeted the infographic detailing the amount raised by different fandoms in Thailand (see Figure 7). The tweet encouraged further contributions and competition among different fandoms. At the same time, the actress transparently shared details of donations and purchases, such as 4,000 helmets and other safety gear.

Transparency in fundraising is a common practice among fandoms, reinforcing their role as supporters or *thornamliang* (pipeline) for the student-led protesters. This financial disclosure counters pro-government claims that political parties funded the youth-led movements. Thaworn Senniam, Deputy Minister of Transport at the time, alleged that student protesters were manipulated by the Future Forward

Party to undermine the monarchy (Workpoint Today, 2020). Similar accusations arose in 2009 to delegitimize the Red Shirt movements and rural protesters, portraying them as citizens without political agency—allegedly paid by deposed former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra to orchestrate disruptive mass protests against the government.

As illustrated above, K-pop fans who affectively engaged in these activities demonstrated their collective power to accomplish things to support their idols. More importantly, transparency in fundraising and fund allocation for fandom projects influenced fundraising practices in the 2020 political protests.



**Figure 7. Thai Actress Inthira "Sai" Charoenpura tweeted the funds raised by Thai fandoms to support the prodemocracy movement (Charoenpura, 2020).**

### Discussion and Limitations

K-pop fandoms' experience and their practice of fandom can transfer to political activism because these fans have a strong love for their artists and share core values with them. Alisa said, "If I see my



friends do something and I don't contribute, I'll feel guilty. So, we donate and make merit in the band's name." Rawiwan stated, "We are inspired by our band, which reacts to social issues. The band spoke up against Asian Hate and used their voices effectively." In this context, the band's values and advocacy clearly played a big part in fandom's collective actions. However, it is essential to acknowledge that not all K-pop stars are vocal about sociopolitical issues. It is possible that civic action might not be consistently enacted when it does not align with the fandom's love of their objects (Hinck, 2019). During the 2020 student-led protests, when Nichkhun Buck Horvejkul, a Thai member of 2PM, and another Thai K-pop singer, Got7's BamBam, tweeted in support of the Thai protesters (see Figures 8 and 9), others remained silent. This led the Thai fandoms to ask their K-pop groups to speak up and support the Thai protests using the #WanneeDaraCallOutRueYoung or #HaveTheCelebritiesCalledOut on the issue. This was explicitly directed at the Thais in the K-pop industry, particularly Blackpink's globally well-known Lalisa "Lisa" Manobal. The fandoms urged her to voice support for the Thai protests publicly.



**Figure 8.** 2PM's Nichkhun "Buck" Horvejkul tweeted, "Violence is what I can't stand. Violence can never help anything. Stay safe. HOTTEST. Do take care of yourself" (Khunnie, 2020).



**Figure 9.** Got7's BamBam stands with the protesters. He tweeted, "Violence cannot solve any problems. Stop using violence against the protesters. Opening your heart and respecting people's rights and freedom are the first steps to a solution. Please take care of yourself!" (BamBam, 2020).

However, Lisa did not respond. While her silence outraged certain K-pop fandoms, prompting them to launch #BanLisa on Twitter, BLINKs, Blackpink's fandom, eagerly defended Lisa, arguing that she must follow the conditions set by the contract, which might prohibit her from voicing political opinions (JOEYsu, 2020). Her disengagement may be because the K-pop music industry desires global capital, which requires a pledge to apolitical neutrality to achieve mass commercial value (Fedorenko, 2017, p. 499). Rather than risk offending fans by engaging in a political issue, it is better to take no position because K-pop idols are required to be "transnational, apolitical symbols of pan-Asia" to achieve global popularity (Fedorenko, 2017, p. 511).

Other K-pop fandoms who shied away from tweeting in support of student movements explained that they are obligated to advocate for what is aligned with their bands' values. Alisa said, "I look up to my band. If the fan sites in South Korea do not tweet about politics, I do not tweet about the Thai protests on my fandom site." It seems that these K-pop music companies are guided by the expectancy violation theory, suggesting that the more significant the gap between expected behavior and actual action, the more severe the reaction people have toward corporate sociopolitical communication (Özturan & Grinstein, 2022, p. 73).

Despite fandom's powerful collective actions, many fandoms follow their artists' stance that politics and entertainment should be mutually exclusive. Many such cases demonstrate the complexity of K-pop fandom interactions, and it is necessary to acknowledge that not all K-pop groups and their respective fandoms are wholly positive proponents of social/political issues; some may remain exclusive sometimes.

Our study has potential limitations. Although we provided recent examples of K-pop fandom activism, the scope of the study is limited to Thailand because all the interviewees were Thais. Furthermore, since the number of interviewees was in a smaller sample size, we note the limitation of generalizing findings from six interviewees to represent the perspectives of the entire Thai K-pop fandom. The results could obtain a more varied and comprehensive representation if future studies employ more interviewees from Thailand. Lastly, as K-pop fandom is massive and transnational by nature and fan-based mobilization is happening everywhere, examining more cases of K-pop fan activism in a range of diverse countries will enrich our understanding of K-pop fans' power of collective mobilization in the sociopolitical world and help further verify our findings.

### **Conclusion**

Based on our discussion, the current phenomenal practice of Thai K-pop fandom and its efficacy in mobilizing funds for specific "projects" dedicated to their K-pop idols are evident. It is a valuable resource that could be harnessed to support social and political causes, foster democratic activities, and shape individuals' understanding of citizenship. Thus, although the possibility of their participation rests on whether civic actions align with fans' commitment to or love for their objects of fandom, it is worth noting that K-pop fandom is powerful in their collective actions through their digital proficiency. This could result in a highly organized, systematic way of supporting sociopolitical causes beyond the genre of "K-pop."

While previous works on K-pop fans have provided insights into international K-pop fans' practices from the perspective of consumption patterns and participatory practices (Han, 2017; Keith, 2019; Oh, 2020), our study focuses on K-pop fandom's activism in Thailand, which is geographically and culturally

distant from K-pop's place of origin. The case of K-pop fandom during Thailand's 2020 Student Uprising warrants examination. For the first time in the history of the country's pro-democracy movements, Thai K-pop fans publicly emerged at the forefront of mobilizing financial support for the 2020 student movements we discussed. In summary, our study highlights K-pop fandom's power for political mobilization outside the conventional arena of politics, contributing to existing studies on K-pop fandom. Furthermore, our findings illuminate how being a Thai K-pop fan shapes individuals' political and social worldviews, which transfer to their participation in democratic activities and understanding of citizenship.

### References

- Abercrombie, N., & Longhurst, B. (1998). *Audiences: A sociological theory of performance and imagination*. London, UK: Sage Publications.
- Ahmed, S. (2004). Affective economies. *Social Text*, 79(2), 117–139.
- Andini, A. N., & Akhni, G. N. (2021). Exploring youth political participation: K-pop fan activism in Indonesia and Thailand. *Global Focus*, 1(1), 38–55. doi:10.21776/ub.jgf.2021.001.01.3
- Bacon-Smith, C. (1992). *Enterprising women: Television, fandom and the creation of popular myth*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- BamBam [@BamBam1A]. (2020, October 15). *Khamrunraeng maisamart kaepanhadaidaidai yachai khamrunraeng kapprachachon khanpoetchairapfang laekhaorop* [Violence cannot solve any problems. Stop using violence against the protesters. Opening your heart and respecting] [Tweet]. Retrieved from <https://x.com/BamBam1A/status/1317348712075513858?s=20>
- BBC News Thai. (2019, October 2). *Chak #khabuansadet thung #SaveTwitterTH koetaraikhunkap thawitphopthai nairop 24 chuamong* [From #Royalmotorcade to #SaveTwitterTH What happened in the Thai Twitterverse in 24 hours?] [Tweet]. Retrieved from <https://www.bbc.com/thai/thailand-49904528>
- Bennett, L. (2012). Fan activism for social mobilization: A critical review of the literature. *Transformative works and fan activism* (Special issue). *Transformative Works and Cultures*, 10. doi:10.3983/twc.2012.0346
- Bennett, L., & Booth, P. (Eds.). (2016). *Seeing fans: Representations of fandom in media and popular culture*. New York, NY: Bloomsbury.
- Bhandari, A., Doyle, G., & Coates, S. (2020, July 15). The mobilizing power of the BTS ARMY. *Reuters*. Retrieved from <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-global-race-bts-fans/the-mobilising-power-of-the-bts-army-idUSKCN24G0Q0>

- Black, J. (2020, October 22). Thailand's protesters want the world to know #WhatsHappeningInThailand. *The Diplomat*. Retrieved from <https://thediplomat.com/2020/10/thailands-protesters-want-the-world-to-know-whatshappeninginthailand/>
- Bong, J. (Director). (2019). *Parasite* [Motion picture]. South Korea: Barunson E&A; CJ Entertainment.
- Booth, P. (2010). *Digital fandom: New media studies*. New York, NY: Peter Lang.
- Brough, M. M., & Shresthova, S. (2012). Fandom meets activism: Rethinking civic and political participation. *Transformative works and fan activism* (Special issue). *Transformative Works and Cultures*, 10. doi:10.3983/twc.2012.0303
- Bruner, R. (2020, July 25). How K-Pop fans actually work as a force for political activism in 2020. *Time*. Retrieved from <https://time.com/5866955/k-pop-political/>
- BTS. (2018). Magic shop. On *Love Yourself: Tear*. South Korea: Big Hit Entertainment.
- BTS [BTS\_twt]. (2020, June 3). 우리는 인종차별에 반대합니다 [We stand against racial discrimination. We condemn violence. You, I and we all have the right to be respected. We will stand together.] [Tweet]. Retrieved from [https://twitter.com/bts\\_twt/status/1268422690336935943?lang=en](https://twitter.com/bts_twt/status/1268422690336935943?lang=en)
- BTS Thailand [BTS\_Thailand]. (2021a, July 18). *Thailand is a land of compromise? #mob18karakada #WhatsHappeningInThailand* [Thailand is a land of compromise? #mobJuly18 #WhatsHappeningInThailand] [Tweet with infographic]. Retrieved from <https://x.com/VsignTHAILAND/status/1416709405316313090>
- BTS Thailand [BTS\_Thailand]. (2021b, August 7) *Thukkhraangthimikanchumnum khamrunraeng koetkhunchak chaonathiratthangsinsin thachapitpak chaikhamrunraeng* [At every protest, the violence comes from the government. If the govt wants to silence people, resort to violence] [Tweet]. Retrieved from [https://x.com/BTS\\_Thailand/status/1423977695679901699](https://x.com/BTS_Thailand/status/1423977695679901699)
- Bury, R. (2005). *Cyberspaces of their own: Female fandom online*. New York, NY: Peter Lang.
- Busse, K., & Gray, J. (2011). Fan cultures and fan communities. In V. Nightingale (Ed.), *The handbook of media audiences* (pp. 425–443). Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.
- CBS News. (2020, June 8). *Fans match K-pop group BTS \$1 million Black Lives Matter donation*. Retrieved from <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/george-floyd-protests-kpop-bts-1-million-dollar-black-lives-matter-donation-fans-match>
- Chachavalpongpun, P. (2022). Kingdom of fear: Royal governance under Thailand's King Vajiralongkorn. *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs*, 41(3), 359–377. doi:10.1177/18681034221111176

- Charoenpura [@charoenpura]. (2020, October 17). *Niyangmaikhropdoe tumdiawdichanthsamart sangmuakkannokyangdidaisiphanbai* [This is not all of it. One shot and I got enough to order 4,000 quality helmets] [Tweet]. Retrieved from <https://x.com/charoenpura/status/1317663016842784769>
- Columbus, C. (Director). (2001). *Harry Potter and the sorcerer's stone* [Motion picture]. Los Angeles, CA: Warner Bros. Pictures.
- Coscarelli, J. (2020, June 22). Why obsessive K-pop fans are turning towards political activism. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/22/arts/music/k-pop-fans-trump-politics.html>
- De Certeau, M. (1984). *The practice of everyday life* (S. Rendall, Trans.). Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Duffett, M. (2013). *Understanding fandom: An introduction to the study of media fan culture*. New York, NY: Bloomsbury.
- Duncan, C. (2022). Fandom, homes and families: Home as an overlooked site of fannish practice. *Journal of Fandom Studies*, 10(1), 3–17. doi:10.1386/jfs\_00047\_1
- Ewens, H. (2020). *Fangirls: Scenes from modern music culture*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Fedorenko, O. (2017). Korean-Wave celebrities between global capital and regional nationalisms. *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 18(4), 498–517. doi:10.1080/14649373.2017.1388070
- Fiske, J. (1989). *Understanding popular culture*. Boston, MA: Unwin Hyman.
- Getdaytrends. (2021, September 19). *Twitter trends in Thailand*. Retrieved from <https://getdaytrends.com/thailand/2021-09-19/20/>
- Gray, J., Sandvoss, C., & Harrington, C. L. (Eds.). (2017). *Fandom: Identities and communities in a mediated world* (2nd ed.). New York: New York University Press.
- Han, B. (2017). K-pop in Latin America: Transcultural fandom and digital mediation. *International Journal of Communication*, 11, 2250–2269.
- Hellekson, K., & Busse, K. (2006). *Fan fiction and fan communities in the age of the Internet: New essays*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co.
- Hills, M. (2002). *Fan cultures*. New York, NY: Routledge.

- Hinck, A. (2019). *Politics for the love of fandom: Fan-based citizenship in a digital world*. Baton, MA: Louisiana State University Press.
- Hinck, A. (2020). Fan-based social movements: The Harry Potter Alliance and the future of online activism. In N. Crick (Ed.), *The rhetoric of social movements: Networks, power, and new media* (pp.191–206). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Hwang, D. (Producer & Director). (2021). *Squid game* [Television series]. South Korea: Siren Pictures. Retrieved from <https://www.netflix.com/title/81006919>
- HYBE LABELS. (n.d.). *Home* [YouTube Channel]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/@HYBELABELS>
- Isin, E. F., & Turner, B. S. (2002). Citizenship studies: An introduction. In E. F. Isin & B. S. Turner (Eds.), *Handbook of citizenship studies* (pp. 1–10). London, UK: Sage Publications.
- Jenkins, H. (1992). *Textual poachers: Television fans and participatory culture*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Jenkins, H. (2014). Fan activism as participatory politics: The case of the Harry Potter Alliance. In M. Ratto & M. Boler (Eds.), *DIY citizenship: Critical making and social media* (pp. 65–74). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Jenkins, H. (2018). Fandom, negotiation, and participatory culture. In P. Booth (Ed.), *A companion to media fandom and fan studies* (pp. 13–26). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Blackwell.
- JOEYsu [joe\_ysu]. (2020, November 15). *Try to calm down and try to think this way, Thai People. #BanLisa #LoveLisa*. [Tweet with Image]. Retrieved from [https://twitter.com/joe\\_ysu/status/1327989405760458753?ref\\_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwterm%5E1327989405760458753%7Ctwgr%5E9297ec2aa24771162f4a8ad1dac61ba3a2b31785%7Ctwcon%5Es1\\_&ref\\_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.thaienquirer.com%2F20803%2Fcalls-to-b](https://twitter.com/joe_ysu/status/1327989405760458753?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwterm%5E1327989405760458753%7Ctwgr%5E9297ec2aa24771162f4a8ad1dac61ba3a2b31785%7Ctwcon%5Es1_&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.thaienquirer.com%2F20803%2Fcalls-to-b)
- Keith, S. (2019). K-pop fandom in Australia. In C. Lam & J. Raphael (Eds.), *Aussie Fans: Uniquely placed in global popular culture* (pp. 49–60). Iowa City, IA: University of Iowa Press.
- Khunnie [@Khunnie0624]. (2020, October 15). *Kanchaikhamrunraeng pensingthiphom thondumaidai khamrunraeng maikhoeichuayarai* [Violence is what I can't stand. Violence can never help anything] [Tweet]. Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/Khunnie0624/status/1317340536861159427>
- Kim, Y. (2013). *The Korean Wave: Korean media go global*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Kim, Y. (2021). Introduction: Popular culture and soft power in the social media age. In Y. Kim (Ed.), *The soft power of the Korean Wave: Parasite, BTS and drama* (pp. 1–38). London, UK: Routledge.

- Kim, Y.-J. (2022, January 27). #KpopTwitter reaches new heights with 7.8 billion global Tweets [Blog Post]. *Twitter Insights*. Retrieved from [https://blog.twitter.com/en\\_us/topics/insights/2022/-kpoptwitter-reaches-new-heights-with-7-8-billion-global-tweets](https://blog.twitter.com/en_us/topics/insights/2022/-kpoptwitter-reaches-new-heights-with-7-8-billion-global-tweets)
- Kligler-Vilenchik, N., McVeigh-Schultz, J., Weitbrecht, C., & Tokuhama, C. (2012). Experiencing fan activism: Understanding the power of fan activist organizations through members' narratives. *Transformative works and fan activism* (Special issue). *Transformative Works and Cultures*, 10. doi:10.3983/twc.2012.0322
- LaFrance, A. (2015, October 14). Raiders of the lost web. *The Atlantic*. Retrieved from <https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2015/10/raiders-of-the-lost-web/409210/>
- McTeigue, J. (Director). (2006). *V for vendetta* [Motion picture]. Los Angeles, CA: Warner Bros. Pictures.
- Murphy, T. (2011, October 27). Guy Fawkes gets a last laugh, 500 years later. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from [http://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/30/fashion/guy-fawkes-mask-is-big-on-wall-street-and-halloween.html?\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/30/fashion/guy-fawkes-mask-is-big-on-wall-street-and-halloween.html?_r=1)
- Nuna\_vmin [@Nuna\_vmin]. (2020a, November 30). *Armykhonnai sonchai maorottuktuk rapsongpaiprojectwankoet phichinkaptete thakma* [Any ARMY interested in hiring these tuktuks can DM] [Tweet with image]. Retrieved from [https://x.com/nuna\\_vmin/status/1333427731279749121](https://x.com/nuna_vmin/status/1333427731279749121)
- Nuna\_vmin [@Nuna\_vmin]. (2020b, November 30). *Khopkhunpaisuaysuay chak @thisisaPAM* [Thank you for the beautiful work, @thisisaPAM] [Tweet with image]. Retrieved from [https://x.com/nuna\\_vmin/status/1333374381314035712/photo/2](https://x.com/nuna_vmin/status/1333374381314035712/photo/2)
- Oh, C. (2020). From Seoul to Copenhagen: Migrating K-Pop cover dance and performing diasporic youth in social media. *Dance Studies Association*, 52(1), 20–32. doi:10.1017/S0149767720000030
- Ott, B. L. (2010). The visceral politics of V for Vendetta: On political affect in cinema. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 27(1), 39–54. doi:10.1080/15295030903554359
- Özturan, P., & Grinstein, A. (2022). Impact of global brand chief marketing officers' corporate social responsibility and sociopolitical activism communication on Twitter. *Journal of International Marketing*, 30(3), 72–82. doi:10.1177/1069031X221104077
- Penley, C. (1997). *Nasa/Trek: Popular science and sex in America*. London, UK: Verso.
- Phoborisut, P. (2016). *The visualization of protests in the digital age: The Rhizomatic activism in Thailand* (Doctoral dissertation). The University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT.

- Poetry of Bitch. (2020, December 2). *They are delighted. At least we could help them a bit* [Facebook status update]. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/poetryofb/photos/pcb.1762664873936738/1762663530603539>
- Prasitmee, A. (2018). *Online behavior and identity of Wanna One's fan club in Thailand* (Master's thesis). Thammasat University, Thailand. Retrieved from [http://ethesisarchive.library.tu.ac.th/thesis/2018/TU\\_2018\\_6023110064\\_8109\\_10055.pdf](http://ethesisarchive.library.tu.ac.th/thesis/2018/TU_2018_6023110064_8109_10055.pdf)
- Quinley, C. (2021, February 8). Three-finger salute: Hunger Games symbol adopted by Myanmar protesters. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/feb/08/three-finger-salute-hunger-games-symbol-adopted-by-myanmars-protesters>
- Rawnsley, J. (2021, March 4). How K-pop fans are helping Thai protesters stay out of jail. *The New Statesman*. Retrieved from <https://www.newstatesman.com/world/2021/03/how-k-pop-fans-are-helping-thai-protesters-stay-out-jail>
- Reddy, S. (2020, June 11). K-pop fans emerge as a powerful force in U.S. protests. *BBC*. Retrieved from <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-52996705>
- Riddick, S. (2022). Points of contact between activism, populism, and fandom on social media. *Media and Communication*, 10(4), 191–201. doi:10.17645/mac.v10i4.5738
- Ross, G. (Director). (2012). *The hunger games* [Motion picture]. Santa Monica, CA: Lions Gate Entertainment.
- Samboh, E. (2020, February 24). Guide to omnibus bill on job creation: 1,028 pages in 10 minutes. *The Jakarta Post*. Retrieved from <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2020/02/21/guide-to-omnibus-bill-on-job-creation-1028-pages-in-8-minutes.html>
- Sharma, A. (2021, May 24). Billboard Music Awards 2021: BTS makes history, the weekend wins big, and all the highlights. *Lifestyle Asia*. Retrieved from <https://www.lifestyleasia.com/sg/culture/events/bts-kpop-billboard-music-awards-2021-the-winners-and-highlights/>
- Shefrin, E. (2004). Lord of the Rings, Star Wars, and participatory fandom: Mapping new congruencies between the Internet and media entertainment culture. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 21(3), 262–280. doi:10.1080/0739318042000212729
- Sinpeng, A. (2021). Hashtag activism: Social media and the #FreeYouth protests in Thailand. *Critical Asian Studies*, 53(2), 192–205. doi:10.1080/14672715.2021.1882866



- Siriyuvasak, U., & Shin, H. (2007). Asianizing K-pop: Production, consumption and identification patterns among Thai youth. *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 8(1), 109–136. doi:10.1080/14649370601119113
- Spence, J. (2014). *Labours of love: Affect, fan labor, and the monetization of fandom* (Doctoral dissertation). The University of Western Ontario, Canada. Retrieved from <https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/etd/2203>
- thisisaPAM [@thisisaPAM]. (2020, December 17). *Riwiewpai thiraophalitkha sonchaithampai sopthamdai talodnakha #rappthampai #paitittuktuk* [A compilation of our work. Contact us for more information #vinylsigns #vinylsignsfortuktuk] [Tweet with image]. Retrieved from <https://x.com/thisisaPAM/status/1344909243078434817/photo/1>
- thisisaPAM [@thisisaPAM]. (2021, February 3). *Suksanwankoet nongrose kha pairotkhennongyunai surawong suantuktuknongyu MRT* [Happy birthday to Rose. You can find these images at food vendors on Suravong Road and tuktuk trucks at MRT] [Tweet with image]. Retrieved from <https://x.com/thisisaPAM/status/1356990267014828032/photo/1>
- Tinaliga, B. (2018). "At war for OPPA and identity": *Competitive performativity among Korean-Pop fandoms* (Master's thesis). The University of San Francisco, CA. Retrieved from <https://repository.usfca.edu/capstone/768/>
- Tulloch, J., & Jenkins, H. (1995). *Science fiction audiences: Watching Star Trek and Doctor Who*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Van Zoonen, L. (2005). *Entertaining the citizen: When politics and popular culture converge*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Wangkiat, P. (2020, December 7). What K-pop can teach us about politics. *Bangkok Post*. Retrieved from <https://www.bangkokpost.com/opinion/opinion/2031059/what-k-popcan-teach-us-about-politics>
- Workpoint Today. (2020, November 24). *Porchorpor. Phuyuboenglangmob phungpaolomsathaban* [Dem. Unveils those behind the mob to topple the monarchy]. Retrieved from <https://workpointtoday.com/03-88/>
- Yim, H. (2020, March 30). Thai K-pop fans trending #Dispatch to vent frustration at monarchy. *The Korea Herald*. Retrieved from <https://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200330000935>