

The Unprecedented Social Response to the Emergence of Femtwits in Thailand's Waves of Pro- democratic Movement

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Abstract.

The paper aims to explore the digital prospects of feminist voices in the contemporary pro-democratic movement in Thailand. Since 2020, the unprecedented movement, led mainly by the youth, demanded for the reformation of the junta government and monarchy. The young crowd in this wave of protests used online space for several progressive agendas along with their expressions of political discontent. Thai feminists took the opportunity to demand equal gender rights including, the amendment of the abortion law, same-sex marriage, and the end of sexual harassment across Thai institutions. Although gender equality seemingly aligned with the movement's progressive nature, many pro-democratic protestors challenged the feminists and their objectives. By examining the online textual data through Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA), this paper analyses the online feminist movement in Thailand and its relationship to pro-democracy initiative. As the social network sites (SNS) provides the opportunity for Thai feminists to effectively share their own experience through authenticity and perceived relatability, the term 'femtwit' was immediately constructed to delegitimise the current online feminist movement. This paper collects data from Twitter and Facebook to reveal the prospects and challenges of the feminist movement in this crucial period of Thailand's political and social transition.

Keywords: femtwit; hashtag activism; online misogyny; activism; generation Z

1. Introduction

The new wave of pro-democratic movement, led by the youth, relied heavily on the social network sites (SNS) such as Twitter and Facebook, as the main channels of communication. Despite the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, flash mobs and public demonstrations were constantly seen on the streets of Bangkok throughout 2020. While Thailand has frequently witnessed waves of political resistance in many decades of history, these new waves of protests signified a significant cultural shift in Thai society. Whereas in

the past 17 years, the conflict arose from the issues of political factions, this wave of protest directly challenges Thai monarchy, which has long been portrayed as a sacred and untouchable institution (Loos, 2020). This current wave of protests centred on three core demands; the resignation of current Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-Ocha and his cabinet, the revision of the 2017 Constitution drafted by the military junta government, and the reformation of the monarchy (Free YOUTH, 2020).

This wave of youth protests is notable through the significant amount of participation from women and girls and their attention drawn to gender-related issues. The shift in women's status and participation in politics is a sharp contrast to the past when it was predominantly male dominated. The diverse crowd, in this wave of protests, has given a space for other progressive agendas, particularly on gender equality and feminist concerns. In *The Politics of Protest and Gender: Women Riding the Wings of Resistance* by Tasia Matthews (2022), the author explores the issues brought up by the Thai feminist movement during the wave of political resistance. The article suggests that rape culture in Thailand, LGBTQ+ rights, and women's reproductive rights are the main issues that the Thai feminist movement highlighted. However, the feminist voices in this pro-democratic movement have largely met with strong opposition in the form of online anti-feminist and misogynistic groups and content. The term 'femtwt' was then coined by these anti-feminist groups to paint a negative picture of irrational or fake feminists who are too embarrassed to reveal their real identities and use mainly SNSs to voice themselves out.

1.1 Purpose and Objectives

The upsurge in anti-sentiments amongst pro-democratic activists' results in the emergence of the term 'femtwt' as a new label for irrational feminists. The strong reactions from people who are anti-femtwt's reflect the normalisation of misogyny in the online discourse. The main objective of this paper is to explore the online discourse surrounding this phenomenon. The scope is to discover femtwt voices and the criticisms against them in the period of the pro-democratic movement that occurred in 2020, by exploring Twitter which is the most popular Social Network Site (SNS) used by the Thai youth.

1.2 Methodology and Approach

The feminist critical discourse analysis (FCDA) will be used as a framework to explore gender discourses produced by the pro-democratic circles. The CDA is originally used to analyse language at the syntax level. In other disciplines outside linguistics, CDA is used to analyse discursive patterns and characteristics in texts. CDA concerns how the pattern of language usage shapes the understanding of social phenomena and how it upholds and reinforces societal power relations, such as examining what ideas texts transmit; what values and norms are reflected through the text. CDA highlights the Foucauldian assumption of the

existence of power asymmetry and structural inequality within domains such as politics and media. The feminist CDA does not only apply the gender lens to the CDA framework, but it is also "fundamentally driven by developments in critical feminist theory" (Lazar, 2014, p. 182). FCDA's central concern is to examine "the complex, subtle and sometimes not so subtle ways in which frequently taken-for-granted gendered assumptions and hegemonic power relations are discursively produced, sustained, negotiated and challenged in different contexts and communities" (Lazar, 2007, p. 142). The perspective is rather comparative than universalising, as it needs to be "inflected by the specificity of cultural, historical and institutional frameworks, and contextualised in terms of women's complexly constructed social identities" (Lazar, 2007, p. 149). Therefore, the framework can be used to practically navigate the discourse within specific contexts. Lazar (2007, 2014) articulated the FCDA's five key principles as theory and practice: (1) feminist analytical activism, (2) gender as ideological structure and practice, (3) complexity of gender and power relations, (4) discourse in the (de)construction of gender, and (5) critical reflexivity as praxis. In this paper, FCDA is used to examine the gender-related discourse being produced within the online pro-democratic movement, how certain gendered beliefs and practices are being sustained, and how they are being deconstructed.

2. Literature Review

2.1 #Hashtag Activism - Online Gender Movement

While the online gender movement or 'femtwtit' discourse is a recent development in Thai SNS, the wave of online misogyny and anti-feminism has been observed alongside the online feminist movement on a global scale. Baumgardner (2011) identifies the current 'wave' of feminism (or the "fourth wave" feminism) to be centred around the concept of intersectionality while having the internet and SNSs incorporated as a major part of its movement. Intersectionality, the term coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, refers to the analytical framework that race, class, genders, and other political and social identities can 'intersect' and overlap with each other and create different experiences of privileges and discriminations (Runyan, 2018).

SNSs such as Twitter have become an important medium in advocating for social changes. The term 'hashtag activism', which first appeared in 2011, refers to the use of hashtag functionality on Twitter that is employed to advocate issues regarding identity politics (Jackson et al., 2020). Jackson et al illustrate through the example of multiple movements within the United States (#MeToo, #WhyIStay, #GirlLikeUs, #BlackLivesMatter) that hashtag activism served an effective medium for historically marginalised groups to counter existing narratives and advocate for social changes. Apart from the #MeToo movement that sparks grand transformation and new cultural understanding of sexual harassment and gender in the English-speaking world and the Western sphere, other case studies of hashtag activism in non-Western

society have also been documented. These examples include, #EverydaySexism in the United Kingdom (Eagel, 2015), #aufscheri in Germany (Drüeke & Zobl, 2016), #NiUnaMenos in Argentina (Belotti, Comunello, & Corradi, 2021), #naneun-feminist-ipnida (#iamafeminist) in Korea (Kim, 2017), and more.

In examining the transnational use of hashtag activism in feminist advocacy, hashtag feminism can build women's solidarity on shared interests and experiences (Mendes et al, 2018). The main criticism, however, is that online activism does not actualise tangible policy changes (Meyer & Workman Bray, 2013). Furthermore, critics also suggested that the internet is a vulnerable place for feminist activism due to unequal access to the internet and the authoritative power that shapes cyberspace (Yilmaz, 2017). Online activism also largely focuses on inclusion and individuals rather than systematic sexism which affects the capability of facilitating fundamental changes (Banet-Weiser et al., 2019). Despite these mentioned criticisms, it can be said that hashtag activism is able to accumulate mass political participation (Yilmaz, 2017) and that marginalised groups utilise online space with the purpose to counter and advocate their concerns (Jackson et al., 2020). Particularly, the 'call-out' culture of the internet challenges systematic and structural sexism where online platforms became a place that offer unique "communities of conversations" among women (Mendes et al, 2018). Consequently, this offers a transnational effect, which is evident in various hashtag feminism that took place throughout the world. In Lou and Zhang's (2021) *Scandal, Social Movement, and Change: Evidence from #MeToo in Hollywood*, their findings indicated that after #MeToo, there are meaningful changes to address gender inequality in Hollywood producers. Thus, although not direct policy shifts, hashtag feminism can result in changes that address the issues of gender inequality,

Alongside the rise of feminist hashtag activism, the backlash against the movement and online misogyny has also been on the increase. Ging and Siapera (2019) define a current form of online misogyny "as a symptom of the current historical juncture, in which dissenting female voices and experiences are violently silenced" (p. 10). Banet-Weiser & Miltner (2015) used the term 'network misogyny' to describe growing support system of men to spread sexist and misogynist narrative online to response to the 'network feminism' of women online community where they support and empower each other. Online misogyny led to consequences on women through verbal attack, online abuse, rape, and death threats, leaking online personal information; potentially leading up to offline abuse of stalking and harassment. (Filipovic, 2007; Citron, 2014; Vickery and Everbach, 2018). While online misogyny is a worldwide occurrence, most studies previously mentioned mainly explored the trend within the Western countries. Different social and cultural context, therefore, deemed necessary. As a result, this paper aims to fill the literature gap by studying the proposed online movement on Thai social media.

2.2 Feminist movement in Thailand

The feminist movement in Thailand has risen alongside the student movement against the dictatorship in the 1970s and later consolidated in the form of NGOs and feminist academics (Phumessawatdi, 2019). The feminist movement in Thailand has largely adopted using the liberal feminism framework, adapted from the Western framework (Songsampan, 2011; Buranajaroenkij, 2017). The movement largely emphasised the liberal principle of gender equality, with a focus on legal and formal changes such as laws on domestic violence and quotas for women in certain electoral bodies (Songsampan, 2011). However, the past movement has been criticised for overlooking social and cultural struggles for women through an intersectional lens, which were specific to women across different socioeconomic levels. In recent years, despite the increased political conflict in the country, women have been increasingly engaged in the political sphere where official political spaces were previously reserved for those with higher socio-economic status or higher education (Iwanaga, 2008). Buranajaroenkit (2016) argue that women's participation in the Red Shirt and Yellow Shirt political conflicts offered new political spaces and participation, unlike before where the participation was rather restricted due to different socio-economic backgrounds. This proactive women's participation in politics serves as an evidence in the current wave of political protest in Thailand, where groups such as youth, women, and LGBTQ+ occupy more political spaces and leadership roles within the pro-democratic movement, both online and offline.

While the pro-democratic movement is pushing for human rights and other progressive agendas, there are many figures in the movement who are dismissive of gender-related issues and equality. Mostly carried out by Generation Z, aged under 25, this wave of protest reflects the change in ideology on hierarchical society and politics (McCargo, 2021). While systematic authoritarianism is being publicly discussed and criticised, feminist organisations and protestors highlight the deep-rooted patriarchy that existed in all social institutions in Thailand. In addition, the feminist group also demands amending the abortion law, rights for same-sex marriage, increasing accessibility to sanitary products, and ending sexual harassment across Thai institutions. Although gender equality seemingly aligned with the movement's progressive nature, many pro-democratic protestors find themselves reluctant to support of the feminist objectives (Teeratanabodee, 2021).

2. Findings

1. Reconstructing the Resistance: 'Femtwit' VS Patriarchy

The gender inequality discourse in the pro-democratic movement online is wide-ranging. Twitter has become one of the most popular SNS platforms that are used for political advocacy and movement

2nd International Conference on Gender Studies and Sexuality

One of the agendas they advocated for is for people to recognise that Thailand is still a patriarchal society. Most share grievances and experiences from this patriarchal social structure they are familiar with on Twitter. In figure 1, a user asks people to share the comments they have heard that reflect patriarchal ideology in Thai society. The tweet in figure 1 received a high social media reach, with 30.5k retweets, 1,716 quote tweets, and 6,426 likes (Solotov, 2020) with many sharing their own experience as seen in figure 2. One of the messages in these tweets reflects the common belief that having a daughter is like having a toilet in front of the house, meaning that parents must take special care of the daughter because any 'deviant' behaviour, such as being promiscuous or getting pregnant out of wedlock would result in 'smelly' (in the same meaning with 'notorious') (Bonussiie, 2020). Another femtwit share that people would often say that her parents were lucky to also have a son, so they would be able to 'carry the yellow robe' (ITRC, 2020). This reflects the Buddhist belief that parents would gain good karma from the son ordaining as a Buddhist monk, something that a daughter could not do. The Twitter thread continues the day after with high retweets. Further replies included concerns about common stereotypes of women, for example, women are often assumed to be inherently bad drivers or women are only good at housework. These personal experiences from these Twitter users illustrate the deep-rooted patriarchy within Thai society that manifested in daily experiences.

Figure 1: One of the highest-reach tweets during the pro-democratic movement that triggered the 'Femtwit' movement

"I want to ask people on Twitter. What are the sentences that make you think 'This is patriarchal thought that is highly oppressive to women?'"

30.5 Retweets, 1,716 Quote Tweets, 6,426 Likes

Source: (Solotov, 2020)

Figure 2: The responses to figure 1 from femtwits

<i>Tweet Messages</i>	<i>Number of retweets</i>
<i>'Having a daughter is like having a toilet in front of your home. I've heard this since I was a child and I hate it. (Bonussiie, 2020)</i>	9,371
<i>'Good, at least [your parents] have a son, so they can carry the yellow robe.' I'm angry and hate this sentence from every angle. And the people who said this are not my parents. It's other people, mind your own business. (ITRC, 2020)</i>	5,239

'Going home late is fine. If people like you were to get raped by a man you would be glad' (the person who said this was my old boss, who wanted me to work overtime without compensation. (Bluesherbet, 2020)

Source: (Bonussiie, ITRC, Bluesherbet, 2020)

The long thread went viral for days and Twitter became the new trendy space for many female users to share their stories. Feminist activists have started using Twitter as a platform to advocate for feminists' agenda. As the mob rallies took the streets, the discussion of patriarchy and gender inequality within SNS has increased. Among these discussions, people who disagree with the new wave of feminists or their advocacy of gender equality, began to use the term 'femtuit' to label users that tweet advocating feminist issues in a negative light.

2. Surging waves of anti-femtuit

Figure 3: A femtuit at the mob rally on the 15th of October 2020 where she holds up a paper with the #femtuit written on it

"A femtuit is a feminist who uses Twitter. Feminism is based on the idea of equality. We exist. We make our demands, and we go on the streets. We are here today, and we are one of the citizens who is fighting alongside everyone else" said the user who proved to the Twitter world that she is a real feminist with a real voice ((closed), 2020).

Alongside femtuits' concerns, the anti-feminist sentiment has increased. Different groups of users started to label femtuits as irrational feminists with irrational demands. One of the most outspoken online groups called *The Sanctuary of Byou-Ship-Hai* started to identify femtuits as Twitter users who raised the issues of gender inequality with strong language and neurotic behaviours (ปราสาทแดก). The term 'Prasart-Daek' (ปราสาทแดก) is used in a derogatory

manner. The term itself comes from the perceived negative consequence of having neurosis, such as chronic overthinking, and being delusional. This term reflects the negative understanding Thai society has about mental illness, and some have considered the term to be ableist. Furthermore, the group also criticised that femtuits only expressed their radical opinions online, therefore not comparable to actual feminists in terms of theoretical grounds and activisms (Manager Online, 2020). Unlike 'traditional' feminists who fight on the street, 'femtuits' are only vocal on SNSs. This group expressed distaste for femtuits by blaming them for being neurotic and overthinking minor issues. The term feminist in the Thai context is accepted with a positive connotation. On the other hand, the radicalness of femtuits is being

criticised. The common discussion in the group is often a mockery of femtwits of how they are extremely sensitive about sexual harassment. One of the tweets ridiculed that femtwits would arrest the man for having consensual sex with his girlfriend (Manager Online, 2020).

Figure 3: Anti ‘femtwit’ comments

"Most femtwit that I encounter, there not many of them that are not neurotic. There are very few. And only a few understand feminism. From observation, there are few femtwits that are feminists. Most advocate for things that are not about equality, but neurotic issues."

"I understand that femtwit does not equal feminist. Good feminists that I've seen advocate with love and care for the welfare and rights of females, but are not oppressive towards men and can pull men into the movement. But femtwit only have madness and hatred, but use feminist theories as a mask. The nature of these two groups is fundamentally different."

"If #feminist gets to rule the country, I think there would be "sh (sexual harassment) police" or something along that line. Out of the blue, they would barge in your door while you are having sex with your girlfriend, and capture the boyfriend for rape. And if the woman said it's consensual, she'll also get arrested. #OatPramote #FemtwitNeurotic #FemtwitTrashOfTheSociety"

These comments reflect the negative perceptions of people towards femtwits of being neurotic and sensitive, which is not a new phenomenon. Feminists have already faced the stigmatisation of hating men, being intolerant towards criticism and incapable of questioning their existing assumptions (Moi, 2006). This aggressive, irrational, misandrist image of feminists is used to deter many women from a feminist identity or deviating from feminist ideas. Similarly, femtwits in Thai online space are facing similar treatment that invalidates their arguments and movements.

2.2.1 The normalisation of online sexual harassment: the case of ‘sweet-smelling’

The beginning of anti-feminist discourse against femtwit started with the call to recognise online sexual harassment in response to the widespread use of the slang ‘fragrant’ (ห อ ม) and ‘big’ (คือลือ) on SNS platforms (Manager Online, 2020). The term ‘ห อ ม’, literally ‘fragrant’ or ‘sweet-smelling’ in Thai, stylistically typed with whitespaces in between each character, is a slang commonly used among the aforementioned groups to tease women with sexually harassing tones. Similarly, ‘big’ (คือ ลือ) is a slang that deviated from the Thai Northeastern dialect *ae-lue* (อีลือ), translating to big, which in this context means women with noticeably big breasts. These terms are known to be sexually suggestive and when the terms become more widespread, some women expressed their concerns in having the term being nonchalantly used under women's posts since it has a sexually suggestive undertone. In response, male users said that 'sweet-smelling' does not have a sexual connotation and they do not consider it to be verbal sexual. Many men also point out that women also comment sexually

suggestive comments about men's pictures, therefore only calling men out as sexual harasser is hypocritical. Some men go as far to mock women who expressed their discomfort with the term and wanting the term to be banned as 'going too far' and using the stylistic type of white space between each character with different words other than 'sweet-smelling', such as 'thank you krub' (ท ข บ ค ฅ ฌ ฎ ฏ ฐ ฑ ฒ ฑ ฒ ฐ ฒ) as a response.

This argument reflects the difference in societal understanding of sexual harassment between men and women. Puchanakij and Rhein (2021) *Student Perceptions of Sexual Harassment in Thailand: Origins and Impact* suggests that sexual harassment is perceived differently based on gender differences. As male participants largely agree that physical touch is considered sexual harassment, most women included verbal and sexual harassment that occurs on social media as well. Within the Thai context, the authors suggested that the differentiated conceptualisation of sexual harassment largely contributed to the socialised patterns that are based on Thai gender stereotypes and norms. Where women receive different standards and messages around sexual harassment, men faced fewer repercussions for perpetuating the harassment. In Thai SNS, sexually suggestive comments toward women are extremely common. Most of the time the language used to 'tease' women are not direct, easily allowing for the excuse of "they didn't mean it like that", refusing to acknowledge the obvious intended meaning. Some defend it saying that people are 'too sensitive' after many women (and men) express their discomfort towards these types of comments and that they are not welcomed (Manager Online, 2020). While verbal sexual harassment online also has women as a perpetrator, many use it as a justification for the action to be normalised rather than acknowledging that using unwelcomed sexually aggressive words can be problematic regardless of the gender of the perpetrators.

Femtwits' criticisms against the term 'sweet-smelling' have also been deliberately taken out of context, with many understanding that femtwit advocates for the word 'sweet-smelling' to be banned regardless of context. By doing this, femtwits' criticisms against the normalisation of sexual harassment were further labelled as overly sensitive and irrational, which serves to delegitimize their denunciation of the normalization of unwelcome sexually suggestive statements. This can be interpreted as an attempt to regain control in expressing unfiltered sexually charged comments towards women that are normalized within Thai society and reflected in the widespread occurrences on SNSs.

Figure 4 Comments on SNS captured by Manager Online

"I'm secretly wondering why a phrase like 'big' and 'sweet-smelling' are becoming normal words in many people's vocabulary", "Not everyone likes to have these words being spoken to", "True, but when we express our discomfort, we all get berated."

“The word like ‘buem’ (another term for ‘big’) too. Because it is harassment. But when people treat using these terms as normal, when we feel harassed, it turns out that we are sensitive”

“Then with advertisements of perfume, fabric softeners, or any scented things, we cannot use the term ‘sweet-smelling’ to describe it, or else it becomes sexual harassment, right? (laughing)”

"I feel like people who viewed it as harassment is too sensitive",

"I agree, lately, it's been too much, little things are considered harassment",

“The drama is so retarded, living our lives has to become this nitpicky? Do you think the developed countries will care about these little things? I hate Thai people's values”,

2.2.2 Democracy first, gender equality later

The new narrative within the pro-democratic movement emerged to suggest that gender equality serves as a secondary concern to the overall pro-democratic and human rights agendas. This consensus is most apparent when examining the development of the marriage equality act. On 8th July 2020, John Winyu Wongsurawat, a well-known former actor and now journalist and YouTuber, stated in his show ‘Daily Topics’ that “If the rights of general people have not been achieved, the rights of LGBTQ+ probably would not be achieved first” (Daily topics, 2020). His statement refers to the reaction toward the Civil Partnership Bill that was proposed to allow same-sex couples to be able to register as civil partners, adopt children, have the power of attorney on behalf of injured or dead partners in legal proceedings, jointly own property, and right to alimony in the case of bigamy (ilaw, 2020). The bill is approved by the Cabinet and further waits to go in Parliament. However, the Civil Partnership has been criticised by NGOs and LGBTQ+ activists as having separate legislation still lacks the same rights that heterosexual partners would have in marriage legislation, such as taking the partner’s last name, receiving benefits from the partner’s social security fund, or having foreign national partner eligible for a marriage visa. The bill can also be seen as relegating the LGBTQ+ community to second-class citizens, furthering the stigma for the people in the community. This led to #NoCivilPartnershipBill (#ไม่เอาพรบคู่ชีวิต) trending on Twitter at the beginning of July 2020.

Examining Winyu’s statement reveals the hierarchy of concerns. It suggests that the rights of LGBTQ+ people are secondary to "general people", implying that LGBTQ+ people are not part of common people. Many pro-democratic protestors shared this line of reasoning that gender rights and issues should wait until after true democracy is achieved. An opinion article from Way Magazine reflects this mentality by defending Winyu’s statement “John

Winyu's statement merely suggested that LGBTQ+ rights are part of the common people rights that should not come before other rights", "LGBTQ+ group are becoming untouchable, cannot be touch, cannot be criticized", "In a society where human rights violation occurs daily (...) suddenly homosexuals are getting marriage rights similar to the first world countries,

Furthermore, the deeper underlining concern of the protestors is the popular justification and acceptance that the current government would claim from legalising same-sex marriage. The attention drawn from the same-sex marriage campaign could be used as a tool for the current government's acceptance, as many pro-democratic activists were afraid of. This comment suggested that, even among the pro-democratic protestors, gender rights are not categorised within the major rights that were more openly discussed, such as the restriction on freedom of expression inflicted upon by the monarch institution and authoritarian government officials. The gender dimension of systematic oppression is not being recognised and rather viewed as an add-on right, rather than inherent human rights since women and LGBTQ+ members are still seen as the marginalised group within Thai society.

3. Discussion/Conclusion

The recent surge of youth movement in Thai politics has been driven by the value of human rights and democratic values, which reflected in the focus on reformation of monarchy institution or military dictatorship. This movement has largely been operated online, which provided platforms to marginalised groups that lack representation from mainstream media in the past. Along with theme against systematic oppression and inequalities on the rise, Thai feminists started using Twitter and other SNSs to push feminist agendas online.

Thai feminists shared their struggles and negative experience under the patriarchal society. Using their platform to discussed numbers of issues, such as normalisation of sexual harassment. Examining the text presented, Thai feminists use informal language to tell their personal experience on the issues. Through this approach, these tweets can be perceived as authentic and relatable. This helps to attract a large number of interactions, such as retweets and replies, and help the message to reach wider audience.

In response to the growing voices of users expressing their frustration under patriarchy, the online misogyny grew alongside it. Anti-feminist groups online started labelling current wave of online feminists as 'Femtwit'. Throughout the discourse presented, femtwits are viewed as neurotic, overly sensitive, and irrational, in contrast to 'actual feminist'. Issue of normalization on online sexual harassment is viewed as issue that femtwit exaggerated and even refer to as misandry. The discourse constructed to delegitimize femtwits and their agendas is similar to how feminist is labelled as angry, irrational, and undesirable throughout Western media and within the online space (Moi, 2006; Aadnesgaard, 2020).

Although online gender discourse in Thailand shared many similarities with the transnational feminist movement, it is important to view online-mediated feminist movement

in Thailand within its sociocultural context. Arguably, the upsurge of online feminist movement can be contributed to space given by the pro-democratic movements that supposedly uphold the principle of equality and democratic values. Examined through the textual analysis, gender equality is viewed among a number for pro-democratic movement supporter as 'secondary' and 'add-on right'. Throughout recent history, it is a common perception that Thai women's rights and status are better in comparison to other societies (Phumessawatdi, 2019), and issues of gender inequality are never emphasised within the cultural and social dimensions (Songsampan, 2011; Phumessawatdi, 2019). This wave of online misogyny in the pro-democratic crowd reflected that even within the space that promote social equality, gender equality concerns are largely dismissed. The youth-led pro-democratic wave has opened the door for further discussion and development on issues that has previously been refrained. Although online space has resulted the feminist movement with upsurge in interest and awareness, the backlash and wave of online misogyny femtwit has faced could lead to legitimate threat against the people within the movement. The wave of anti-feminist within the pro-democratic movement simply reflected the lack of consideration still has been given to issue of gender inequality in the present-day Thailand.

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