

Cheerleading Without Fans: A Low-Impact Domestic Information Operation by the Royal Thai Army

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1 Summary

On October 8, 2020, Twitter announced the takedown of 926 accounts targeting Thai Twitter users in a domestic information operation. Twitter attributed these accounts to the Royal Thai Army and shared the accounts with the Stanford Internet Observatory on September 24, 2020. Of the 926 accounts, only 455 actively tweeted, producing a total of 21,385 tweets in the takedown. The network was used primarily to promote pro-government and pro-military positions and accounts on Twitter and to attack political opposition, particularly the Future Forward Party and Move Forward Party (FFP and MFP, respectively). This was a coordinated but low-impact operation: most accounts had no followers and the majority of tweets received no engagement (calculated as the sum of likes, replies, retweets, and quote retweets). This might be due in part to the operation's limited duration: most of the accounts were created in January 2020 and the network largely stopped tweeting by March 2, 2020. Activity was heavily concentrated in February 2020 with notable spikes around the Korat shooting, a mass shooting in which a soldier killed 30 people, and the dissolution of the FFP.

To the best of our knowledge, this is the first time a social media company has suspended a network of accounts linked to the Royal Thai Army. It is the first instance of Twitter including activity originating in Thailand in its state-backed information operations [archive](#). However, it is not the first time the military has been accused of running information operations. In February 2020, the Future Forward Party [accused](#) the Prime Minister and Minister of Defense of conducting information operations with the aim of attacking opposition candidates on Facebook. A series of leaked [documents](#) and [interviews](#) with a whistleblower from the Army in early 2020 support this account, and suggest that the information operations began prior to the 2019 elections. The whistleblower who came forward was disillusioned that taxpayer dollars were used to sow discord and hatred online. The alleged operation on Facebook supported the Army, commented negatively on opposition members' Facebook Pages, and spread false information and graphics attacking political [opposition members](#). Although we have no indication as to whether this Twitter takedown is linked to the Facebook information operation previously reported, the Twitter takedown dataset reveals similar tactics and aims, especially a reliance on posts that promote the Army and critique opposition party members.

1.1 Key Takeaways

- The removed network engaged in a domestic information operation that promoted the Royal Thai Army and criticized Future Forward Party and Move Forward Party candidates.
- Tweets often focused on particular events, such as court cases over a loan to the Future Forward Party (resulting in its subsequent disbandment) and the Korat shooting. In the latter case, the network tried to redirect criticism away from the Army, distance the Army from the shooter, and highlight how well the Army responded to the crisis.
- Most of the 926 accounts were created in either December 2019 or January 2020, and most tweets were from February 2020. Only two

accounts continued tweeting after March 2, 2020. We believe Twitter caught the operation relatively soon after creation.

- This was a relatively unsophisticated social media information operation with limited reach. The network's overall Twitter engagement was low: 684 accounts had no followers, and average engagement per tweet was just 0.26 engagements.
- The accounts tended to rely on a few basic tactics, such as replying en masse with supportive messages to tweets from Army PR accounts and dogpiling onto tweets from opposition-aligned accounts. Overall, the accounts were thinly backstopped: many of them had empty bio sections and used stolen profile pictures.

2 Political Context

Thailand's recent political history has been marred by prolonged instability and turbulence. Between 2005 and 2020, the country endured two military coups, six elections, seven prime ministers, four constitutions, and numerous violent social upheavals. The turmoil has deeply divided the society into two mobilized partisan camps.

On one side of the political divide are the royalist conservatives. The royalist conservatives tacitly supported the 2006 coup through the mobilization of the People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD)—known locally as the yellow shirts—and more forcefully backed the 2014 coup through the People's Democratic Reform Committee (PDRC). They believe in a “democracy” with strong and powerful non-democratic institutions of the monarchy and the military. In their vision of democracy, the de facto elected governments are kept in check by unelected, dominant royalist conservatives.

On the other side is the burgeoning, upwardly mobile lower sections of the middle class, also known as the red shirts. The red shirts' surge in political and economic power has been stunted by long-standing structural inequalities in Thailand. While decades of economic development contributed to the increase in wealth, mobility, urbanization, and political empowerment of the lower sections of society, their improved socioeconomic standings were not met by increased political empowerment. The red shirts mobilized in protests against the “robbery” of their political rights following the ousting of Thaksin Shinawatra in the 2006 coup and subsequent judicial and institutional measures to repress their voice.

As the reds went back to the polls in 2011 to vote in Yingluck Shinawatra and her party, Pheu Thai, to continue programs that would further their cause, the yellow shirts, mobilized under the banner of the PDRC, pushed instead for the return of the military in politics. Using large-scale protests as a pretext for legitimizing extra-constitutional interventions, the military staged a coup in May 2014, and its leader, General Prayuth Chan o-cha, ruled Thailand for nearly five years.

Deep-seated political divisions and the red shirts' unresolved grievances provided structural conditions for new pro-democracy groups to emerge. One notable opposition movement formed, embodying the discontent of

young people who sought to challenge a rigid social hierarchy, an illiberal political system, and entrenched inequality. This movement engaged in subversive activities such as displaying anti-dictatorship messages during major university soccer matches and organizing pro-election flash mobs.

What began as a network of mostly university-based pro-democracy groups eventually evolved into the Future Forward Party (FFP) in March 2018. The FFP was built around youth aspirations for a more equal, progressive, and inclusive Thailand; the *average age* of its founding members is only 31. The FFP remained a fringe alternative party and was not taken seriously by the political establishment until early February 2019, when its leaders' popularity began to widen substantially both on social media and offline, triggered by a viral *hashtag* on Twitter and an impressive performance during a TV debate. The extraordinary success of the party, having become the third largest political party in Thailand within a year of its establishment, has made it a real threat to the royalist conservative forces that supported General Chan o-cha's continuation of power.

2.1 Social Media and the Thai Military

Social media became a major tool for political participation in the early 2010s as internet and social media penetration greatly expanded. The Facebook-fuelled political protests of the PDRC highlight the importance of social media as a platform to facilitate *anti-democratic mobilization*. Importantly the PDRC protests brought to the fore how indispensable social media is in building narratives, driving discourses, and recruiting and mobilizing a support base to achieve specific political gains, no matter how radical the ideas. On May 22, 2014, the Thai military staged the first “*cyber coup*,” announcing their intent to overthrow the government via Twitter and Facebook. This marked the beginning of the military’s digital engagement era, in which the military took seriously its relationship with the online society. For a vertically hierarchical and deeply traditional organization like the Thai military, social media offers new avenues to connect with people, rebuild its image, and directly communicate with the public. It is no surprise that a number of military-related official Facebook Pages, such as the Army PR Center [Page](#), were created in 2014 in the wake of the coup.

The military sees social media as an integral part of its broader information warfare strategy. While information control as a matter of national security was put in place by the previous military-led government following the 2006 coup through the passage of the Computer-Related Crime Act 2007 (CCA), early efforts were focused on overt forms of control such as the censoring, blocking, filtering, and arresting of regime critics. Given the successful mobilization of the nationalist-royalist movements of the yellow shirts, social media was used to attack its red-shirt adversaries for being “anti-monarchy,” “disloyal,” and “pro-republic.” Leveraging Thailand’s draconian *lèse-majesté* law, which prohibits defamation of the royal family and the monarchical institution, a number of regime critics were targeted and *punished* for their activities on social media in the post-2006 coup period.

It was not until late 2010s that social media was seen as a platform for bolstering popular support for the military and a space for public opinion manipulation.

This shift from hard forms of censorship to online manipulation follows the global trend in which social media is increasingly used, particularly by **authoritarian regimes**, to monitor, manipulate, and marginalize critical voices. Part of the Thai military's fear is a formation of underground groups seeking to **subvert** the Thai nation, particularly to overthrow the monarchy. Social media is problematic for authoritarian regimes because it is a domain where they may lack control: they constantly have to negotiate with platform owners, who are often Western technology companies with their own sets of policies, operational practices, and vested interests that may or may not align with key political institutions where they operate. Most recently, Facebook **plans** to sue the Thai government for forcing it to shut down access to a popular group critical of the monarchy.

Twitter became a prominent platform for political mobilization in the lead-up to the March 2019 national elections, thanks largely to anti-government critics and FFP members who strategically took advantage of a less surveilled platform to coordinate, organize, and mobilize for change. The shift towards Twitter as a space for discontent also coincides with the significant increase in **uptake** of Twitter by young Thais, particularly those between 18 and 24, in the past few years. The FFP used Twitter heavily to reach out to youth voters—their main support base. Following the controversial and flawed elections, the military successor party, Palang Pracharath, under the leadership of General Prayuth Chan o-cha, managed to cobble together a grand **coalition** of 19 parties to form a government. Thailand thus continues with its political leadership of Chan o-cha and a conservative, royalist military-backed government. However, the surprising electoral success of the FFP and its relentless challenge to the military made the party and its supporters “enemy number one” for the government, despite the party not being the most popular opposition. Throughout 2019 and in the lead-up to the FFP dissolution in early 2020, there were a number of fake news **accusations** and threats of lawsuits between FFP and members of the Palang Pracharat Party.

3 Summary Statistics

3.1 Accounts

Twitter removed 926 accounts from its platform as part of this takedown. With five exceptions, the accounts were all created between April 2019 and March 2020. Account creation, however, was not evenly distributed, but instead heavily concentrated on a few specific days in December 2019 and January 2020. For example, 106 of the accounts removed in the takedown were created on December 8, 2019, and 105 were created on January 9, 2020. Creation dates were similarly concentrated for the subset of the accounts in the dataset that produced tweets. This appears to be a relatively recent operation that Twitter identified shortly after the network’s formation.

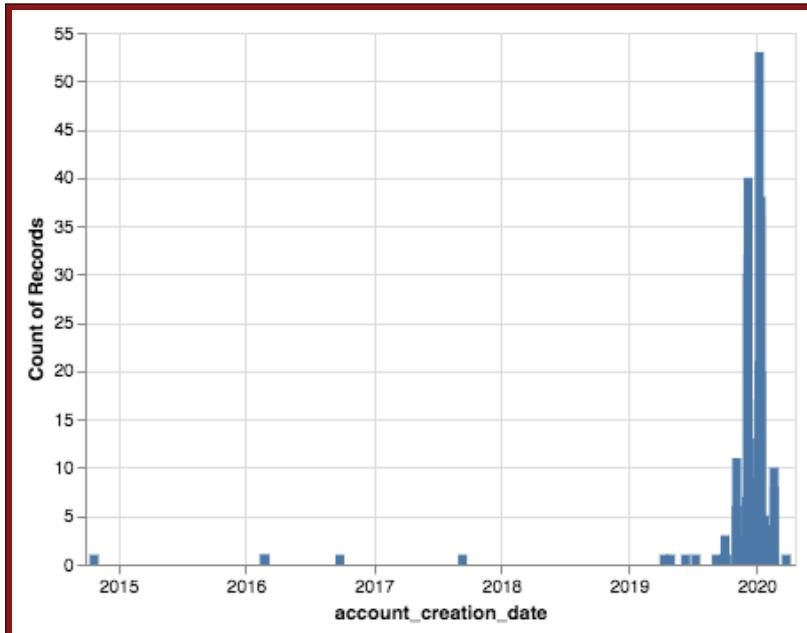


Figure 1: Account creation over time for accounts in the takedown dataset that produced tweets.

Number of Accounts Created	Date
106	12-08-2019
105	01-09-2020
88	01-14-2020
72	12-07-2019
71	01-13-2020
52	12-09-2019
50	12-06-2019
46	01-15-2020
24	01-08-2020
17	02-21-2020

Table 1: Ten most popular dates for account creation, including number of accounts created. Nearly one-third of accounts in the dataset were created on the three most popular dates.

Accounts in the dataset had very few followers and followed very few accounts. The average number of followers per account in the dataset was 2.47 for those that tweeted and 1.28 for the dataset as a whole. The most popular account had only 66 followers.

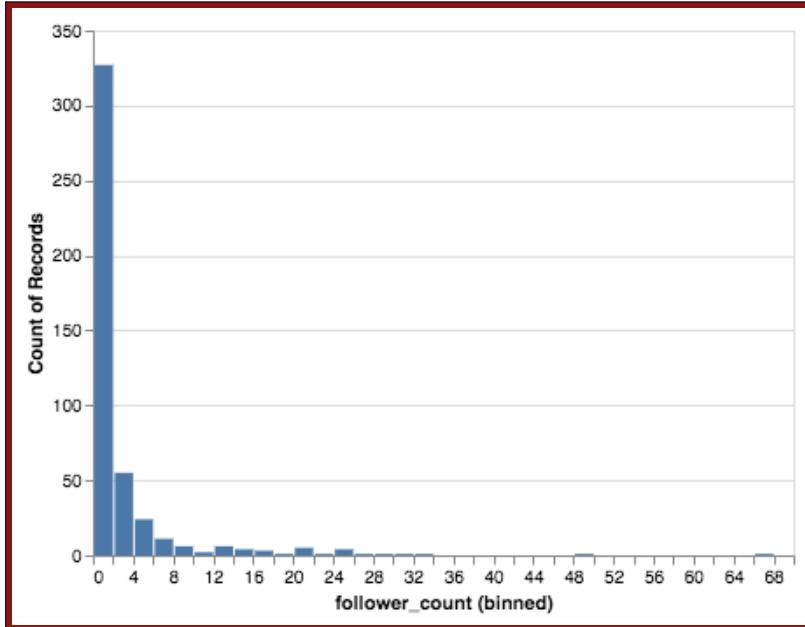


Figure 2: Follower count for accounts in the dataset that produced tweets or retweets.

3.2 Tweets

This network was relatively inactive, producing only 21,385 tweets from 455 accounts; 471 accounts never tweeted.¹ Most accounts were created between December 2019 and January 2020, and began tweeting shortly thereafter. The 21,385 tweets were heavily concentrated from late January through the end of February 2020. While the first tweet in the dataset was from October 2015, one user is responsible for all tweets before March 2019.

The active accounts often commented or retweeted content about particular events, resulting in several activity peaks. For example, an early relative peak occurs in December 2019 around the Royal Barge Procession, an event marking the completion of King Vajiralongkorn’s coronation (King Rama X). This is one of the most significant royal events in Thailand, marking the country’s official transition into a new reign. Activity increased dramatically after the Korat shooting, a gun rampage on February 8-9, 2020, in which a soldier killed 30 people and injured 57 at a shopping mall in Nakhon Ratchasima province (also known as Korat), Thailand. A significant amount of activity also spiked in mid to late February during court cases that successfully disbanded the Future Forward Party. We briefly describe activity around several of these events in Section 4.

¹Note: While accounts without tweets in the takedown may have deleted their tweets before they were removed, we did not find significant evidence of archived tweets in the Wayback Machine from those accounts.

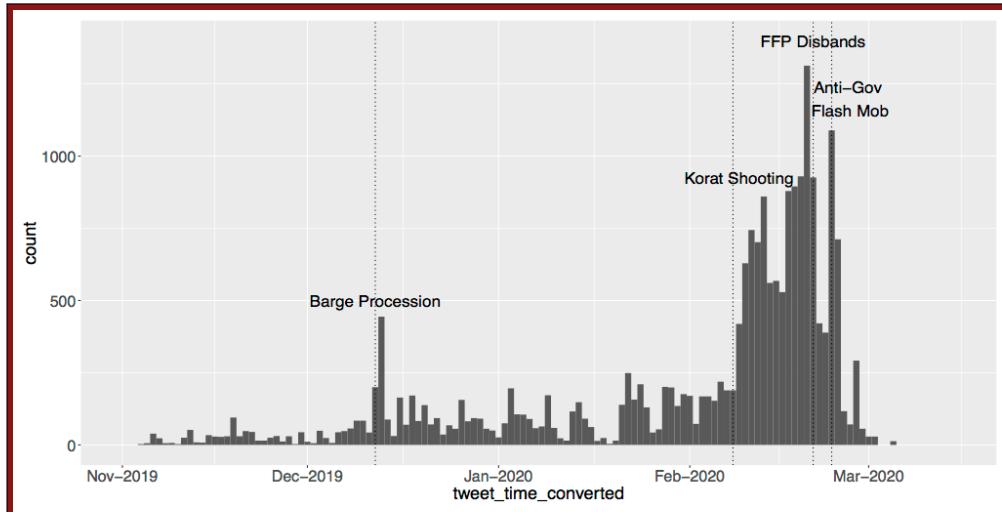


Figure 3: Plot of number of tweets over time, for the activity that occurred from November 2019 to March 2020.²

Tweets included in the takedown received extremely low levels of engagement: the average engagement per tweet was less than 1 (.26 engagements) and the tweet with the highest number of engagements received only 427 engagements. As shown in the cumulative frequency table below, 89.4% of the tweets received 0 engagement, and 97.4% received 2 or fewer total engagements.

# of Engagements	# of Tweets	% of Total
0	19,112	89.37%
1	1187	94.92%
2	532	97.41%
3	211	98.40%
4	138	99.04%
5-10	176	99.86%
10<	28	1
100<	1	1

Table 2: Cumulative frequency of engagement per tweet.

3.3 Hashtags

Many of the hashtags most frequently referenced by the dataset related to the Army, the Move Forward Party/Future Forward Party opposition, and news sites. Sometimes the hashtags represented general cheerleading for the Army, e.g., #กองทัพบก (translated: “#Army,” used 389 times in the datasets) and their associated slogans such as #ทหารช่วยเหลือประชาชน (translated: “#Soldiers helping the people,” used 58 times), #กองทัพบกเพื่อประชาชน (translated: “#Army for the people,” used 75

²Note: This graph excludes the extremely low level of activity that occurred before November 2019 and after March 2020.

times) and #กองทัพบกเพื่อชาติศาสน์กษัตริย์และประชาชน (translated: “#Army for the nation, religion, king and the people,” used 68 times). Other times they referred to specific military events, such as #เริ่มแล้วหุ่มานการเดือน2020 (translated: “#HanumanGuardian2020,” used 193 times, referring to joint US-Thai military training exercises).

# of Tweets	Hashtag	Translated Hashtag
389	#กองทัพบก	Army
327	#กองทัพภาคที่2	Army 2
235	#อนาคตใหม่	Future Forward Party
193	#เริ่มแล้วหุ่มานการเดือน2020	Hanuman Guardian 2020 <i>(Note: Joint Thai-US Army Exercises)</i>
193	#กองทัพบกไทยศึกร่วมกองทัพบกสหรัฐฯ	Joint Thai-US Army training
185	#กราดยิงโคราช	Korat shootings
131	#ทหารเป็นที่พึ่งของประชาชนในทุกโอกาส	Soldiers are the foundation of Thailand <i>(Note: a Thai military slogan)</i>
129	#ขบวนพยุหยาตราทางชลมารค	Royal Barge Procession
129	#ข่าวจริง	Real News
116	#สปริงนิวส์	Spring Newsday
111	#Springnews	Spring News
93	#บุบพร็อกอนาคตใหม่	Dissolve Future Forward Party
83	#จ้าวหัว	Headlined
75	#กองทัพบกเพื่อประชาชน	Army for the people
68	#กองทัพบกเพื่อชาติศาสน์กษัตริย์และประชาชน	Army for the nation, religion, monarchy and people
60	#ไวรัสโควิด	Coronavirus
58	#ประชุมสภา	Parliamentary meeting
58	#ทหารช่วยเหลือประชาชน	Soldiers help Thai people
55	#ประชาชน	The people
54	#ThaiPBS	Thai PBS
52	#COVID19	COVID19
45	#RoyalThaiArmy	Royal Thai Army
44	#ทรงพระเจริญ	Long live the king
44	#กองทัพบกช่วยเหลือประชาชน	Army helping the people
43	#ทหารเป็นที่พึ่งของประชาชนในทุกโอกาส	Thai people can always rely on soldiers

Figure 4: Top 25 hashtags referenced in the dataset, ranked by frequency.

3.4 Frequently Mentioned Accounts

Tweets in the dataset often referenced the same accounts. For example, @army2pr—the most frequently mentioned account by the dataset—was referenced 2,494 times in the takedown; at least 1 in every 10 tweets included in the dataset mentioned @army2pr. We define mentions as the number of times a user is referenced in a tweet—whether as a retweet, quote tweet, or tag in an original tweet.

In the table below, we show translated account descriptions as well as our manual coding of account types for the top 15 most frequently mentioned accounts in the dataset. (See Section 7 (the Appendix) for account descriptions in Thai.) Most accounts in this list are either Army accounts or news sites. The 15 accounts mentioned most frequently by the dataset were all live on Twitter at the time of the takedown. Analysis of the dataset—along with assessment of a longer list of the 50 top mentioned accounts—suggests that accounts in the takedown were not primarily engaging with each other’s tweets, but instead were attempting to amplify or disparage existing content from established, likely authentic, Army PR, opposition party member, and news accounts.

# of Mentions	User Screen Name	Account Biography (Translated)	Coding
2494	@army2pr	A public relations channel to promote various news of the Second Army Area, provide recruitment information for the Second Army Area, Suranaree Camp, Nakhon Ratchasima Province prarmy2@gmail.com.	Army
1610	@armypr_news	N/A	Army
922	@WassanaNanuam	N/A	Journalist
832	@1st_Army_Area	For the nation, the religion, the monarchy and the people.	Army
780	@SpringNews_TV	#Real news, Spring News	News (Pro-Government)
502	@ThaiPBS	Official Twitter Thai PBS television station Thai Public Broadcasting Service (Thai PBS) Follow news, important announcements and fun activities for all the Twitter people.	Public Broadcaster
440	@weloverta	We love the Royal Thai Army (RTA). We disseminate news and articles to promote national unity and protect the monarchy.	Army Fan Page
352	@political_drama	A land without unity is a land ruled by tyrants that will never prosper. IG: http://Instagram.com/tripper2world	Pro-Government online community
349	@prayutoofficial	Prime Minister of Thailand	Prime Minister of Thailand
280	@MatichonOnline	Matichon Online is committed to delivering accurate and fast news / opinions that are diverse and well rounded, 24 hours a day.	News (Neutral)
280	@FWPthailand	When Thais are equal is when they will catch up to the world.	Future Forward Party
254	@Thairath_News	#Thairath the most up to date news #breakingnews #livenews #Thairathnews #ITnews #crimenews #lottonews #ThairathTV live and archived news and more	News (Neutral)
233	@VoiceTVOFFICIAL	Voice TV	News (Opposition)
222	@workpointTODAY	Official account for workpointTODAY. What Works Today. Knowledge for Today.	News (Commercial)
217	@Rorscha24745488	Revere Nation, Religion, King.	Royalist Account

Figure 5: Top 15 accounts most frequently mentioned by the network.

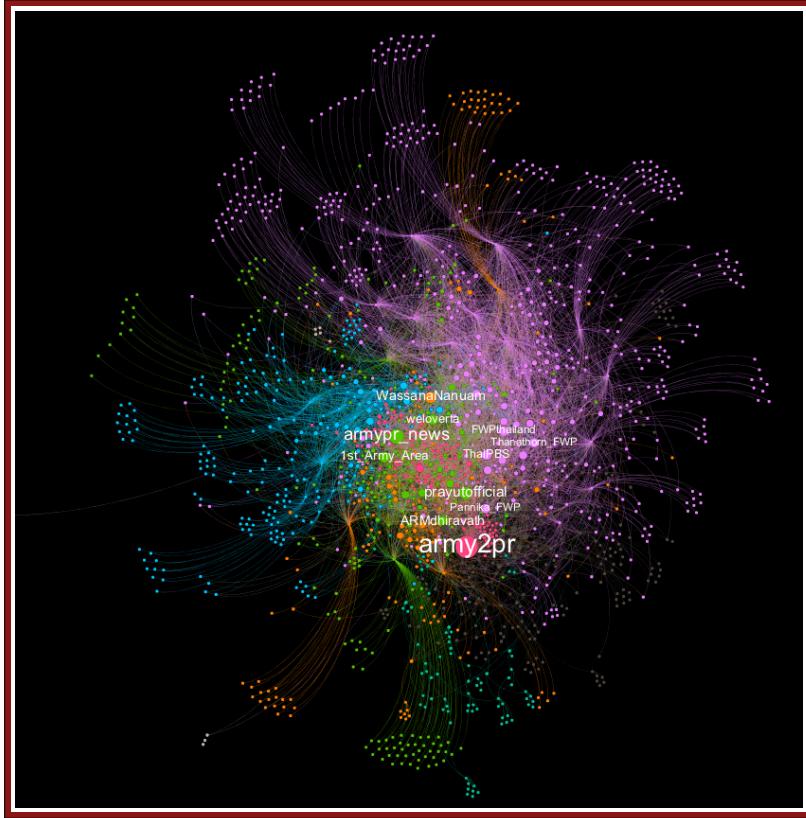


Figure 6: Gephi graph of mentions in the dataset, weighted by in-degree. We see some clustering between accounts that mention Army PR accounts, fan page accounts and the Prime Minister’s account (green), and accounts that mention opposition party members (purple).

4 Themes

4.1 Cheerleading for the Army

The official PR account of the Thai Army and its associated divisions were first established on Facebook largely following the 2014 coup. The Army is the most significant force of all the Thai military branches and the most involved in politics: the Army tends to lead military interventions into Thai politics (i.e., coups), command the biggest budget, and hold the greatest political clout. The 2014 coup brought to power former Army General Prayuth Chan o-cha, who also serves as the current prime minister. The military dictatorship that lasted from 2014 until the 2019 election witnessed a great expansion of the military’s cyber engagement, especially the Army, into social media.

Accounts in the dataset seem to primarily cheerlead for the Army. The two accounts most frequently mentioned by the dataset are @army2pr (2,494 mentions), the account for the Second Army Area, and @armypr_news (1,610 mentions), the official account of the Royal Thai Army. Accounts mentioning @army2pr are mostly retweets. The account @1st_Army_Area is the fourth most frequently mentioned account (832 mentions) and @welovera — a military fan page — is the seventh most frequently mentioned account.

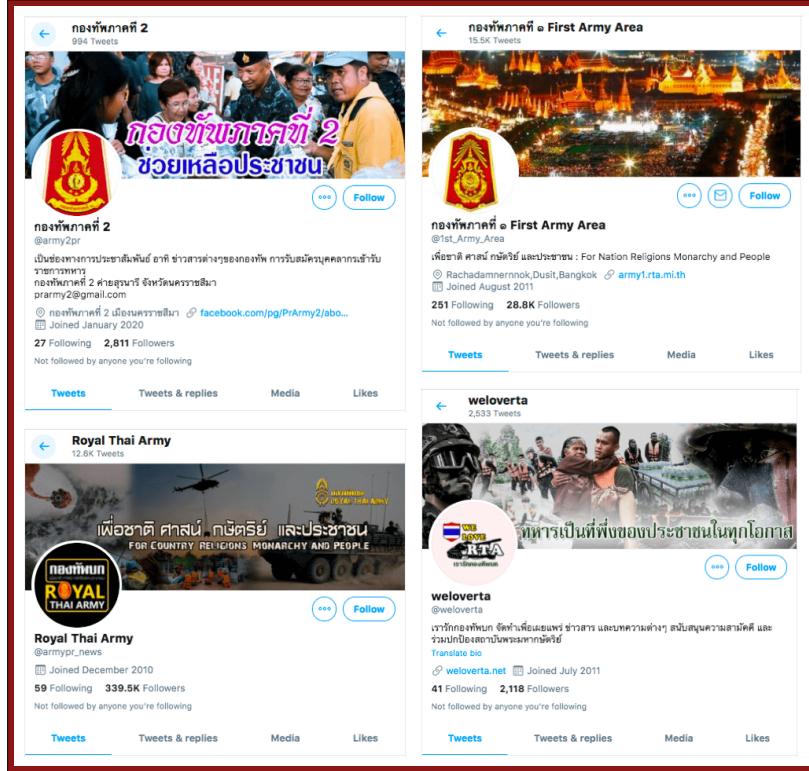


Figure 7: Twitter profiles for @army2pr, @1st_Army_Area, @armypr_news, and @weloverta. The first three are Army PR pages and the fourth is an Army fan page; all were frequently mentioned by accounts in the dataset.

Many of the tweets in the dataset about the Army are general cheerleading, praising Army soldiers for their various forms of service to the community. This is exemplified by the 131 uses of the hashtags “#Soldiers are the foundation of Thailand” (original: #ทหารเป็นที่พึ่งของประชาชนในทุกโอกาส), a Thai military slogan suggesting that the military can be depended upon for all occasions. Other cheerleading hashtags include “#Army for the people” (original: #กองทัพยกเพื่อประชาชน, used 75 times), “Army for the nation, religion, monarchy and people” (original: #กองทัพยกเพื่อชาติศาสนาธิเบศร์และประชาชน, used 68 times) and “Army helping the people” (original: #กองทัพนักช่วยเหลือประชาชน, used 44 times).

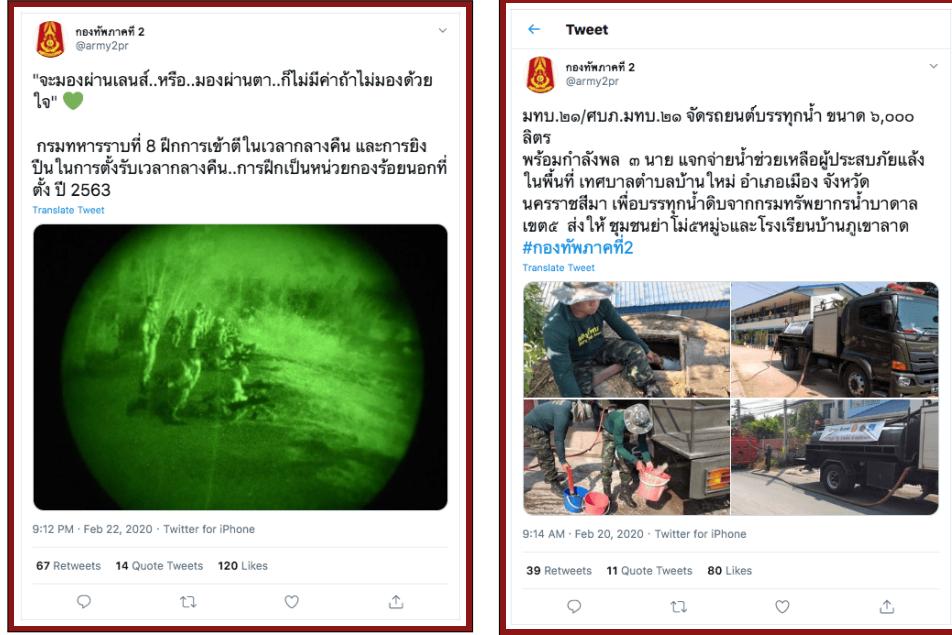


Figure 8: Tweets from @army2pr. Left: A tweet about night training was retweeted by 57 different accounts in the network between February 23 and February 27, 2020. Source: Twitter/archive.org. Right: A tweet about service to the community was retweeted by 50 accounts in the network between February 21 and February 25, 2020. Source: Twitter/archive.org.

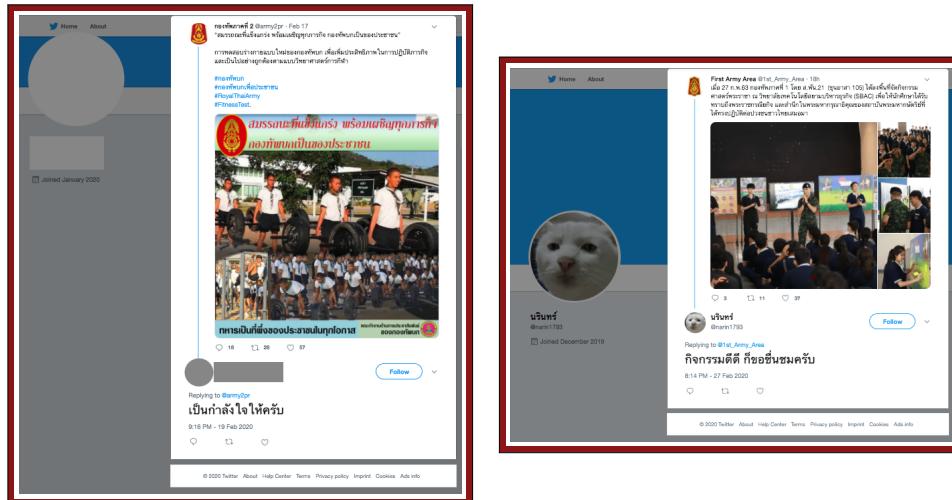


Figure 9: Left: An account in the takedown commenting “I am encouraged” (translated) on an @army2pr tweet about the Royal Thai Army’s fitness test. Right: An account in the takedown tweeting: “Good activities are appreciated” (translated) in response to a @1st_Army_Area tweet about its promotional activities at the Siam Business Administration Technological College (SBAC). Source: archive.org.

Some of the Army-related content also focused on specific events, such as Thai-US Army exercises. The fourth and fifth most popular hashtags in the dataset were #HanumanGuardian2020 (original: #เริ่มแล้วหนุนการเดี่ย, used 193 times), and “#Thai Army Exercises with the US Army” (original: #กองทัพบกไทยฝึกร่วมกองทัพบกสหรัฐฯ, used 193 times). According to U.S. Pacific Command, “Hanuman Guardian is an annual exercise, now in its tenth

iteration, that is designed to enhance U.S. Army and Royal Thai Army capabilities, build strong relationships between both armies and increase mission readiness, enabling regional security and stability in the region.” (See Figure 17 on page 24 in the Tactics Section of the report for a tweet about the exercises shared by the network.)

4.2 Neutralizing Criticism After the Korat Shooting

In early February 2020, a Royal Thai Army soldier perpetrated the largest mass shooting in Thai history, killing 30 people and wounding an additional 57 in Korat. The perpetrator was a soldier who stole equipment from the military base in Nakhon Ratchasima before indiscriminately shooting at people at a popular shopping mall.

The Korat mass shooting was seen as politically destabilizing for the military, especially the Army. At the time, the military was looking for new ways to shore up political support and goodwill after the controversial 2019 elections and during a period of rising anti-military sentiment. Instead, the Korat shooting brought sharp public criticism of the military and government, with “#Reform the Military” and “[Prime Minister] Prayuth RIP” hashtags trending on Thai Twitter. The [push](#) for broader reform in the military, triggered by this event, was to increase transparency in, and accountability of, one of the country’s most powerful institutions, whose operations are shrouded in secrecy and rigid institutional hierarchy.

As shown in Figure 3 on page 9, the accounts in the takedown rapidly increased their tweet output after the Korat shooting. Content related to the shooting was present in tweets with relatively high engagement, in popular hashtags, and by highly active accounts. For example, the sixth most popular hashtag—used 185 times in the dataset—was #กราดยิงโคราช (translated: “#KoratShootings”), which trended in Thailand in the days following the incident.

Two main narratives about Korat stood out in the dataset. First, accounts amplified tweets that deflected blame from the military. There was some public criticism towards various media outlets in the coverage of the Korat shootings. Some of the tweets from the takedown accounts redirected focus away from the tragedy and towards the media, blaming them for spreading fake news and being unethical in their reporting.

Second, accounts glorified the military’s response to the crisis, reemphasizing the military’s responsibility “to serve and to protect the people” in the aftermath of a mass shooting by one of its own. By praising the military’s response to the incident or boosting positive narratives, these tweets attempted to shift the public conversation about the shooting away from criticism of the military. In both cases, tweets were overwhelmingly retweets, indicating that accounts were primarily attempting to amplify existing messages rather than create their own narratives.

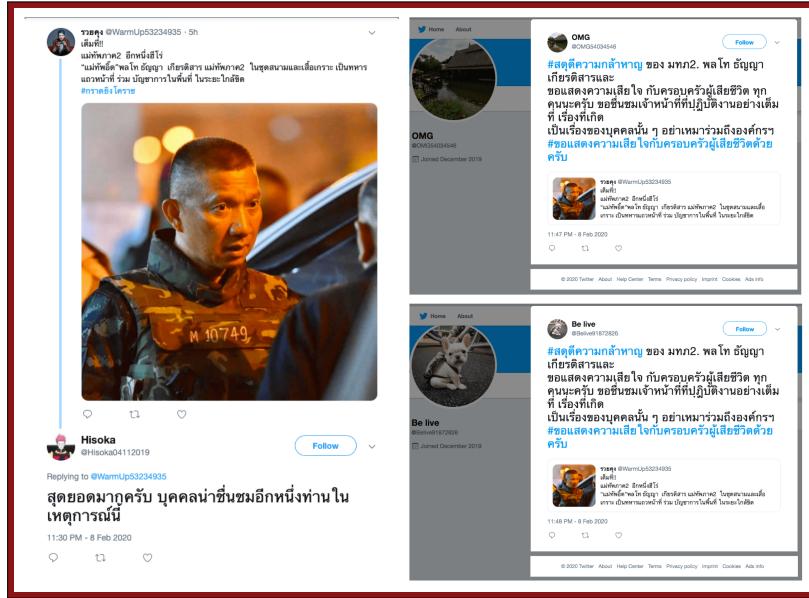


Figure 10: Multiple accounts in this takedown commented supportive messages on an image of a general on the front lines. Source: [archive.org](#); [archive.org](#)



Figure 11: Right: One post from @army2pr was retweeted 29 times by accounts in the dataset; the post included photographs of a general handing out awards for service in the aftermath of the Korat shootings. Source: [archive.org](#).

4.3 Critiquing the Future Forward Party/Move Forward Party

A leading theme in the dataset was the disparagement of Future Forward Party (FFP) and Move Forward Party (MFP) candidates. As described in Section 2, the FFP was a progressive opposition party founded in 2018. In the 2019 elections, the party demonstrated its popularity with the Thai public, particularly young voters, winning 80 seats in the House of Representatives (out of 500 total seats) and six million votes. However, on February 21, 2020, the Thai constitutional court ruled that a loan to the FFP from its founder, Thanathorn Juangroongruangkit, qualified as a donation and thus violated finance rules. The Court dissolved the FFP and banned its leaders from politics for a decade. Human rights groups including [Amnesty International](#), [Human Rights Watch](#), and [ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights](#) have condemned the decision as politically motivated, many citing that criticism of the military-led government was a key element of FFP's platform.

Following the dissolution of the FFP, the Move Forward Party (MFP) stepped into the FFP's former role within the Thai political landscape. Founded in

2014, the MFP opposed the National Council for Peace and Order, the military junta that ruled Thailand until 2019. While the party was previously not well known, its popularity was boosted by the 55 FFP Members of Parliament (MPs) that migrated to the MFP in March. The shift included MFP's current party leader, Pita Limjaroenrat, a former FFP MP.

While some accounts in the takedown leveraged specific accusations relating to the political motives and legal challenges of the FFP, we observed vague attacks (“low education,” “hate you so much,” “useless,” “Enough,” “Do not”) in many posts. For reasons that are not clear, a small but non-concentrated amount of the commentary appeared to be positive, although still nonspecific (“Great,” “Yes,” “Yes, I agree”). At least nine Twitter accounts of FFP or MFP candidates were mentioned more than 50 times each in the dataset. The spokeswoman for the FFP, Pannika Wanich (@Pannika_FWP), received 184 mentions, the most of any FFP or MFP candidate.

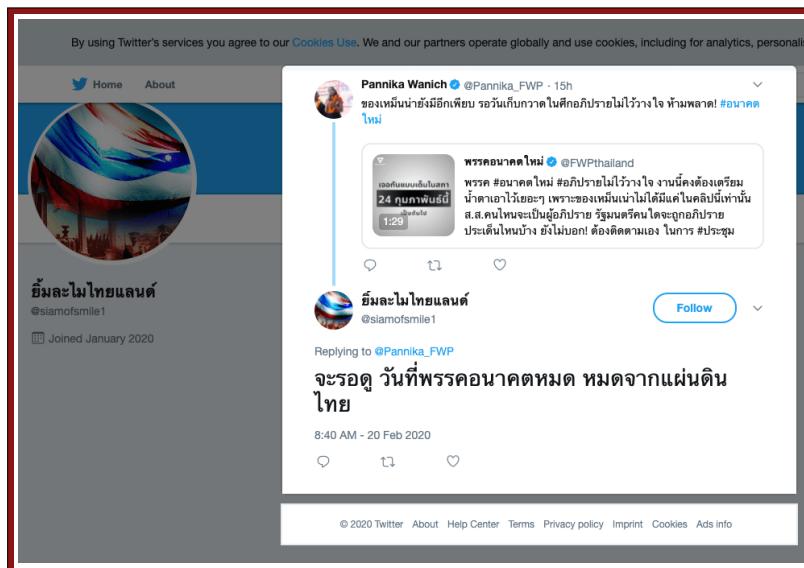


Figure 12: An account removed in the takedown says that they are waiting for the day that the FFP is removed from Thailand, in response to a tweet from Pannika expressing support for the FFP in an upcoming debate.

Thanathorn, the founder of the FFP, was the third most frequently mentioned FFP or MFP official by removed accounts. Some tweets in the dataset criticized his role in FFP.

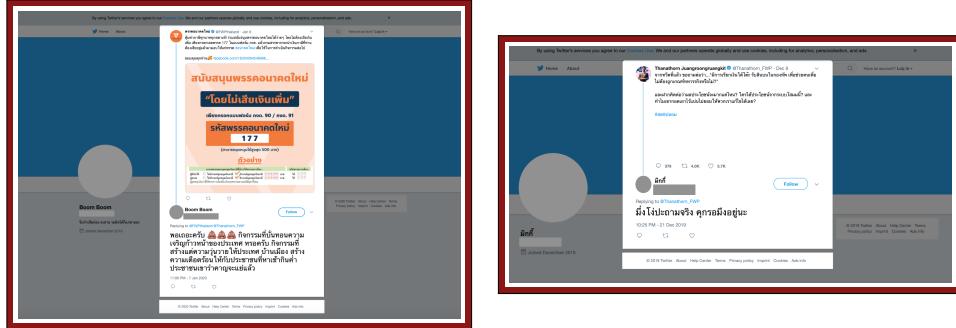


Figure 13: Left: Tagging @Thanathorn_FWP, a removed account accuses the FFP of undermining the progress of Thailand. Right: In response to Thanathorn's post criticizing the Army, a removed account tells him that prison is waiting for him.

Tweets tagging FFP and MFP affiliates often referred to the court cases leading up to the dissolution of the FFP. Accounts in the network supported the Constitutional Court's ruling against the FFP, attacked the FFP's criticism of how their cases were handled, and celebrated the end of the growing power of the opposition party:

- @3R0SOPyUEui5RtO (01-11-2020): “@Rorscha24745488 กฎหมายระบุว่าผิด ศาลตัดสินว่าผิด มันก็คือผิด จบปะ” (translated: “@Rorscha24745488 Law states that it is wrong. The court decided that it was wrong. Then it's wrong, the end.”)
- @CandyCo20314571 (02-22-2020): “@thematterco แฉลงก็แค่นั้นแหละค่ะ ศาลตัดสินไปแล้ว” (translated: “@thematterco The statement was just that. The court had already decided.”)
- @YwFeStp57kThm1x (02-22-2020): “@ARMdhiravath สำหรับผม ผมว่าศาล อ่านคำตัดสินได้ขาด นะ แต่อนาคตใหม่งง” (translated: “@ARMdhiravath For me I think the court's decision was decisive but FFP's reactions to it were immature.”)
- @singhaordoggy (02-19-2020): “@JuahuaHeadline สรุปเอง นักเลงพอ...ศาลท่านยังไม่ตัดสิน พีกกะปี แฉลงปิดคดีเอง เก่งจริง ๆ #ยุบพรรคอนาคตใหม่” (translated: “@JuahuaHeadline Drawing your own conclusion, that's very thuggish. The court hasn't decided yet but Kapi already announces the case is closed. That's terrific #DissolveFFP.”)

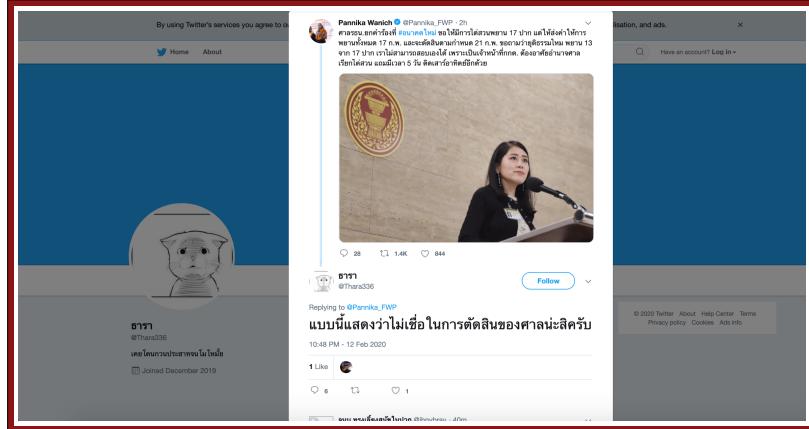


Figure 14: @Thara336 accuses Pannika of not respecting a ruling made by the court.

4.4 COVID-19 Content

The first reported case of COVID-19 outside of China was in Thailand; on January 13, 2020, Thailand's Ministry of Public Health [reported](#) a case of COVID-19 from a tourist from Wuhan, China. Despite that early case, as of October 2, 2020, Thailand reports only 3,575 confirmed cases of the virus and 59 deaths. The country controlled the spread of the virus with strict lockdown measures, including banning almost all incoming flights and declaring a state of emergency. This effort took a significant toll on the Thai economy, given its reliance on the tourism industry.

Accounts in the takedown that discussed coronavirus primarily retweeted the government's COVID-19 messaging or praised the Army's efforts to combat COVID-19. We observed the use of a number of COVID-19 hashtags in the dataset: the two most popular were #ไวรัสโคโรนา (translated: "#coronavirus," 60 uses) and #COVID19 (52 uses). Others included #ไวรัสอุบัติ (translated: "#WuhanVirus," 36 uses), #ไวรัสโคโรนาสายพันธุ์ใหม่2019 (translated: "#NewCoronavirus2019," 29 uses), #ไวรัสโคโรนา (translated: "#coronavirus," 28 uses), and #ไวรัสโคโรนาสายพันธุ์ใหม่2019 (translated: "#NewCoronavirus2019," 24 uses).



Figure 15: A tweet from the Prime Minister on COVID-19 that was shared by 12 accounts in the dataset. Source: Twitter/archive.org

In addition to promoting the Prime Minister and official statements, the network also commented on Army efforts specifically. For example, 13 accounts retweeted a video by @armypr_news, the second most frequently mentioned account in the network, which included the caption, “Produce a cloth face mask for the public. The Royal Thai Army continues to help fight the virus in all aspects. Recently, the 9th Infantry Division, Surasi Camp, produces cloth masks for distribution in Kanchanaburi” (translated). Others shared the video with positive comments, saying “Thank you!” (translated).

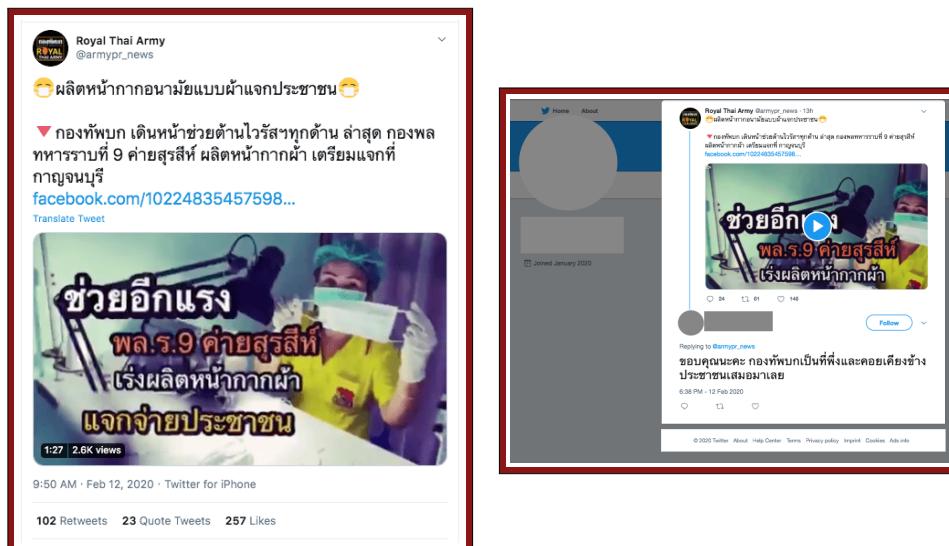


Figure 16: Left, a video shared by the takedown network on Army efforts to produce masks. Right, example of a comment from a user in the takedown on the video thanking the Army for its efforts.

5 Tactics

The accounts in this network tended to rely on a few uncomplicated tactics to push the narratives discussed above: they replied en masse to tweets from Army-adjacent accounts, dogpiled onto tweets from their ideological opponents, and pushed hashtags that aligned with these priorities. Despite these clear goals, it should be noted that many of the accounts did comparatively little to backstop their identities as purported ordinary Thai Twitter users: many of the accounts had randomly generated usernames (typical of those assigned by Twitter when a user first creates an account) and apparently stolen profile pictures, and at times they tweeted in bursts that are uncharacteristic of normal Twitter users.

Perhaps the most salient tactic used by these accounts was replying en masse to Army-related tweets, likely with the intention of boosting the Royal Thai Army's presence on Twitter. Out of the top 20 most replied-to tweets in the dataset, 14 belong to Army PR accounts:

Account of replied-to tweet	# of replies	Category of account
@army2pr	37	Army PR
@army2pr	28	Army PR
@Alitsarah	25	Opposition
@armypr_news	23	Army PR
@armypr_news	21	Army PR
@TLHR2014	21	Opposition
@ktnewsonline	20	Business Media
@army2pr	19	Army PR
@1st_Army_Area	18	Army PR
@army2pr	18	Army PR
@Army4PR	17	Army PR
@army2pr	17	Army PR
@army3news	17	Army PR
@1st_Army_Area	16	Army PR
@1st_Army_Area	16	Army PR
@armypr_news	16	Army PR
@prayutofficial	16	Prime Minister of Thailand
@weloverta	16	Army Fan Page
@NationTV22	15	Pro-Army/Pro-Gov't Media
@Army4PR	15	Army PR

Table 3: Top 20 tweets by number of replies from accounts in the takedown. Seventeen of the top 20 replied-to tweets are from Army PR accounts or Army-aligned accounts.

Unsurprisingly, replies to the tweets from Army PR accounts were supportive. A tweet from @army2pr about marksmanship training at night, shown below, received 28 replies from the accounts in this network, including:

- @rungsit (02-25-2020): หมื่นฝึกฝนให้เกิดความชำนาญ เพื่อเพิ่มศักยภาพที่ดีในการปฏิบัติภารกิจ ขอเป็นกำลังใจในการรับการฝึกด้วยนะครับ (translated: “Continue to upskill our abilities to enhance our operational missions. All the best with your training.”)
- @l2eallycrazy (02-24-2020): กองทัพไทยไม่น้อยหน้าใคร (translated: “The Thai army is not inferior to anyone.”)
- @เยี้ยฟ้าท้าดิน (02-23-2020): เยี่ยมมากครับ...เป็นกำลังใจให้ครับ... (translated: “That's excellent....we are here to support you...”)



Figure 17: A tweet from @army2pr that was replied to 28 times by accounts in the network.

Some tweets from @army2pr and other Army PR accounts that are still accessible and feature replies from many suspended accounts would seem to

show the extent to which replies from these accounts might have been able to achieve some position in the discourse around these tweets:

กองทัพภาคที่ 2
@army2pr

#เริ่มแล้วหนุนการ์เดียน2020 #กองทัพบกไทย ฝึกร่วมกองทัพบกสหรัฐ

10:11 PM · Feb 23, 2020 · Twitter Web App

65 Retweets 14 Quote Tweets 145 Likes

This Tweet is from a suspended account. [Learn more](#)

· Feb 27

สุดยอดครับ

This Tweet is from a suspended account. [Learn more](#)

· Feb 27

เป็นกำลังใจให้ทุกท่านครับ

This Tweet is from a suspended account. [Learn more](#)

· Feb 27

เห็นด้วยครับ

This Tweet is from a suspended account. [Learn more](#)

· Feb 27

ใช่ครับ

Figure 18: A February 23, 2020, tweet from @army2pr showing replies from suspended accounts.

In addition to replying with supportive messages to tweets from Army-adjacent accounts, the accounts dogpiled onto tweets that were perceived as hostile to the military, possibly attempting to create for other Twitter users the impression that the ideas expressed in these tweets were unpopular. For instance, a February 15, 2020, tweet from @Alitsarah (an FFP-aligned influencer) that criticized the government and called for reform was replied to 25 times by accounts in the network. Like the tweet above, this tweet currently shows replies from suspended accounts that could have belonged to this network:



Figure 19: A tweet from @Alitsarah showing replies from suspended accounts.

These replies tended to be short, blunt, and hostile:

- เลิกสร้างความวุ่นวายสักทีพากເລວ (translated: “Stop creating chaos, bad guys”)
- ປັນຍາອອນ (translated: “Idiot”)
- ອານາຄດເນາ (translated: “Rotting future”)

Similarly, a tweet from @TLHR2014 — the account for Thai Lawyers for Human Rights — that commented on the detainment of an anonymous popular Twitter user who had posted anti-monarchy content was replied to 20 times, with similar hostility: “You deserve it,” one account wrote.

Hashtags were also an important part of the tactics used by this network. Like its use of replies, the network’s use of these hashtags was heavily tilted towards pro-Army messaging — see analysis in Section 3.3 above — but it did coalesce at times around anti-opposition hashtags. Thus, the third most popular hashtag in the dataset is #อนาคตใหม (translated: #FutureForwardParty), which the accounts retweeted frequently and tacked on to tweets criticizing that party. Likewise, the accounts pumped the hashtag #ບູນພຣຣຄອນາຄດໃໝ່ (translated: #DissolveFutureForwardParty), often in tweets directed at the Future Forward Party itself or at influential Twitter accounts.

What were these accounts like for those encountering them on Thai Twitter? It is likely that they seemed like anonymous or bot-like accounts. Many of them had randomly generated handles (such as @f1YVJqV1aFoWFb), and almost three-fourths of the account had no descriptions in their bios. Likewise, many of them seemed to have profile pictures that had been reappropriated, such as the account @HurtLinsi, which appears to have used a picture of the Russian singer Angelina Dalinova:

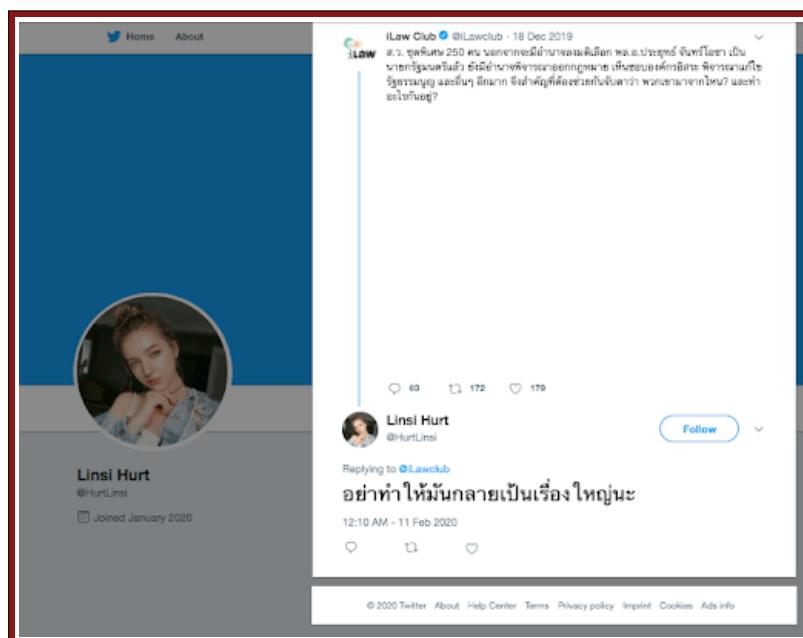


Figure 20: An archived tweet from the account @HurtLinsi showing a profile picture that appears to be of Angelina Dalinova.

What’s more, the accounts’ behavior did not always resemble that of ordinary

Twitter users. At times, there was a businesslike approach to this amplification: accounts would sometimes tweet in short bursts, replying with supportive messages and retweeting Army PR accounts. On February 25, 2020, for example, @Pariya83663188 sent over 40 tweets in 40 minutes, almost all of which mentioned or retweeted Army PR accounts. Incidentally, these were @Pariya83663188's last tweets, which suggests that Twitter removed the account after this mass-tweeting spurt.

user_screen_name	tweet_text	tweet_timeConverted	is_retweet	total_engagement
Pariya83663188	@armypr_news ขอบคุณการท่าทางของข้าพี่ที่ทุกๆคนเห็น	2020-02-25 9:22:00	FALSE	3
Pariya83663188	ขอบคุณการท่าทางของข้าพี่ที่ทุกๆคนเห็น	2020-02-25 9:22:00	FALSE	0
Pariya83663188	@armypr_news ดีใจคันน์	2020-02-25 9:23:00	FALSE	5
Pariya83663188	ดีใจคันน์ เพื่อความสืบสานรัฐธรรมูญ	2020-02-25 9:23:00	FALSE	0
Pariya83663188	@armypr_news เป็นการดีที่มีคนนิ่งเงียบ	2020-02-25 9:24:00	FALSE	7
Pariya83663188	เป็นการดีที่มีเพื่อนร่วมบ้านที่เดียว	2020-02-25 9:24:00	FALSE	0
Pariya83663188	เป็นการดีที่มีเพื่อนร่วมบ้านที่เดียว	2020-02-25 9:24:00	FALSE	0
Pariya83663188	@armypr_news ชื่อยอดคัน จิตใจ เพื่อส่วนรวม	2020-02-25 9:25:00	FALSE	6
Pariya83663188	@armypr_news https://t.co/5Qo5vk17lr	2020-02-25 9:25:00	FALSE	4
Pariya83663188	โพลล่า เพื่อส่วนรวม	2020-02-25 9:25:00	FALSE	0
Pariya83663188	@armypr_news เป็นก้าวต่อไปให้เจ้าหน้าที่ทุกๆคนเห็นคัน	2020-02-25 9:26:00	FALSE	0
Pariya83663188	ทราบดีที่สื่อของนายกรา	2020-02-25 9:26:00	FALSE	0
Pariya83663188	@armypr_news กองทัพไม่เคยหักในปะรำยานเชิร์จ	2020-02-25 9:27:00	FALSE	0
Pariya83663188	เป็นก้าวต่อไปให้เจ้าหน้าที่ทุกๆคนเห็นคัน	2020-02-25 9:27:00	FALSE	0
Pariya83663188	กองทัพไม่เคยหักในปะรำยานเชิร์จ	2020-02-25 9:27:00	FALSE	0
Pariya83663188	@armypr_news https://t.co/UdL89ST4ay	2020-02-25 9:28:00	FALSE	0
Pariya83663188	RT @armypr_news: ญี่ปุ่น: ทหารที่อยู่ในแนวหน้ารู้สึกขาดแคลน	2020-02-25 9:28:00	TRUE	0
Pariya83663188	@armypr_news https://t.co/qRGIc1DEQ	2020-02-25 9:30:00	FALSE	0
Pariya83663188	RT @armypr_news: ไฟฟ้า @พลท. อรุณ คงกระพัน พล. แห่งกองพลที่ ๔	2020-02-25 9:30:00	TRUE	0
Pariya83663188	@1st_Army_Area https://t.co/mxMioB1LP1	2020-02-25 9:44:00	FALSE	0
Pariya83663188	ทราบดีที่สื่อของนายกรา	2020-02-25 9:45:00	FALSE	0
Pariya83663188	@1st_Army_Area กองทัพนักที่เพื่อประชาชน	2020-02-25 9:45:00	FALSE	0
Pariya83663188	กองทัพนักที่เพื่อประชาชน	2020-02-25 9:46:00	FALSE	0
Pariya83663188	@1st_Army_Area https://t.co/WmtquXG6pU	2020-02-25 9:47:00	FALSE	0
Pariya83663188	RT @1st_Army_Area: ทราบดีที่สื่อของนายกรา	2020-02-25 9:47:00	TRUE	0
Pariya83663188	@armypr news ชื่อยอดคัน	2020-02-25 9:49:00	FALSE	4
Pariya83663188	ชื่อยอดคัน ที่ทำภารกิจเพื่อคัน	2020-02-25 9:49:00	FALSE	0
Pariya83663188	@armypr ทราบดีที่สื่อของนายกรา	2020-02-25 9:50:00	FALSE	4
Pariya83663188	ทราบดีที่สื่อของนายกรา	2020-02-25 9:50:00	FALSE	0
Pariya83663188	@armyprnews ชื่อยอดคัน	2020-02-25 9:51:00	FALSE	2
Pariya83663188	@armynews ชื่อยอดคัน	2020-02-25 9:52:00	FALSE	2
Pariya83663188	RT @armyprnews: ทราบดีที่สื่อของนายกรา	2020-02-25 9:52:00	TRUE	0
Pariya83663188	เพื่อพัฒนาภารกิจและเป็นแบบเค้ากัน	2020-02-25 9:52:00	FALSE	0
Pariya83663188	@Army4PR ถูกขอพัฒนา	2020-02-25 9:53:00	FALSE	1
Pariya83663188	RT @Army4PR: ทราบดี กำกับ ดูแล และเป็นวินัยของทหารต้องเห็น	2020-02-25 9:53:00	TRUE	0
Pariya83663188	@Army4PR ขอคุณช่วยเหลือที่คันน์	2020-02-25 9:54:00	FALSE	2
Pariya83663188	ขอบคุณด้วยที่คันน์	2020-02-25 9:54:00	FALSE	0
Pariya83663188	สนใจดีของรัฐบาลที่คันน์ไว้	2020-02-25 9:55:00	FALSE	1
Pariya83663188	@Army4PR สนใจดีของรัฐบาลที่คันน์ไว้	2020-02-25 9:55:00	FALSE	0
Pariya83663188	@WassanaNanum @Army4PR จัดไปคัน	2020-02-25 9:56:00	FALSE	1
Pariya83663188	RT @WassanaNanum: ท้ารัช ย้อน "มน. พ." ลัง แมลงฯ ต่ำๆๆ"	2020-02-25 9:56:00	TRUE	0
Pariya83663188	@weloverta ทราบดีเจ็บ	2020-02-25 9:58:00	FALSE	2
Pariya83663188	ทราบดีเจ็บ	2020-02-25 9:58:00	FALSE	0

Figure 21: @Pariya83663188 tweets and retweets, primarily mentioning various Thai Army-related accounts.

The network of accounts taken down by Twitter and attributed to the Royal Thai Army had comparatively simple aims — it sought to glorify the Army, to neutralize criticism of the Army, and to attack the Future Forward Party/Move Forward Party, which was seen as a threat to the power of the Army — and it used comparatively simple tactics to these ends. Its accounts flooded tweets from Army-adjacent accounts with supportive, cheerleading replies, and at times bombarded opposition tweets with hostile replies. And they latched onto hashtags — positive and negative — that aligned with these aims as well. But it is clear that the network did not invest heavily in giving these accounts the appearance of authenticity, which likely affected their ability to carry out these objectives.

6 Impact Assessment

In our assessment, this was a low-impact operation. As documented in this report, the accounts had few followers, the tweets received very low levels

of engagement, and the magnitude of tweets is unlikely to have effectively diverted public attention (e.g., by inauthentically boosting hashtags to the point where they trend).

There are at least three complicating factors to this assessment. First, it is difficult to assess the effect that simple but coordinated voices may have on giving false impressions of public support for a position, and/or stifling genuine Thai users from sharing counterviews. Driving up retweet numbers, for example, may give ostensible public support for the Army in a way that has a difficult to measure effect from the takedown data alone, and hostile replies to opposition tweets may give ordinary users the impression that these tweets are more unpopular than they actually are. Likewise, dogpiling onto tweets with negative replies could have the effect of chilling speech on Twitter.

Second, the accounts may have engaged in other activities that we cannot observe from tweets alone. For example, we have not been able to observe whether and in what manner accounts in the takedown “liked” tweets from Army PR accounts that, like retweets and comments we observed in the dataset, may have presented exaggerated support.

Third, it is often difficult to assess in real-time the scope of social media influence operations that engage with authentic users. In our assessment, Twitter identified the accounts in this takedown shortly after they were created, likely contributing to the network’s lack of followers. At the same time, there are accounts on Twitter with seemingly similar attributes to accounts removed in the takedown: no- or low-follower accounts, often with random numbers and letters for user screen names, tweeting simple, supportive messages on Army PR accounts or liking Army PR tweets. It is difficult for us as independent researchers to determine whether (or which of) these accounts might be linked to the Army information operation detailed in this report. We hope that future research will further analyze this network and widen the aperture, examining possible connections to networks on other platforms and attempting to distinguish among accounts that may still be live.

Any discussion of the operation should explicitly recognize the assessment of the operation’s low impact. Writing about low-impact information operations poses a dilemma: on the one hand, exposing operations allows researchers to better assess how actors pursue inauthentic behavior and develop strategies to increase early detection and mitigation. On the other hand, writing about a low-impact operation risks inflating or exaggerating its impact, or having outsized second-order effects by reducing trust in social media discourse or the news more broadly. Because of the state-linked nature of the operation and efforts to provide inauthentic popularity to Army positions, we believe the positive benefits of public knowledge of the operation outweigh the risk of exaggeration; nevertheless, we encourage other researchers to note the low-impact nature when engaging with this report.

7 Appendix

# of Mentions	User Screen Name	Account Biography	Coding
2494	@army2pr	Bio: เป็นช่องทางการประชาสัมพันธ์ อาทิ ข่าวสารต่างๆของกองทัพ การรับสมัครบุคคลากรเข้ารับราชการทหาร กองทัพภาคที่ 2 ค่ายสุราษฎร์ จังหวัดครรชสima prarmy2@gmail.com Translated Bio: A public relations channel to promote various news of the Second Army Area, provide recruitment information for the Second Army Area, Suranaree Camp, Nakhon Ratchasima Province prarmy2@gmail.com	Army
1610	@armypr_news	Bio: N/A	Army
922	@WassanaNanuam	Bio: N/A	Journalist
832	@1st_Army_Area	Bio: เพื่อชาติ ศาสน์ กษัตริย์ และประชาชน: For Nation, Religion, Monarchy and People Translated Bio: For the nation, the religion, the king and the people: For Nation, Religion, Monarchy and People	Army
780	@SpringNews_TV	Bio: #ข่าวจริงสปอร์ตингนิวส์ Translated Bio: #Real news, Spring News	News (Pro-Government)
502	@ThaiPBS	Bio: Official Twitter สถานีโทรทัศน์ไทยพีบีเอส Thai Public Broadcasting Service (Thai PBS) ติดตามข่าว, รายการ ประกาศสำคัญ และกิจกรรมสนุก ๆ เพื่อชาวทวิตเตอร์กันค่ะ Translated Bio: Official Twitter Thai PBS television station Thai Public Broadcasting Service (Thai PBS) Follow news, important announcements and fun activities for all the Twitter people	Public Broadcaster
440	@weloverta	Bio: เรายกกองทัพบก จัดทำเพื่อเผยแพร่ ข่าวสาร และบทความด้างๆ สนับสนุนความสามัคคี และร่วมปกป้องสถาบันพระมหากษัตริย์ Translated Bio: We love the Royal Thai Army (RTA). We disseminate news and articles to promote national unity and protect the monarchy	Army Fanpage

Figure 22: Top 15 accounts most frequently mentioned by the network (1-7).

352	@political_drama	Bio: เมืองได้ไว้รักสมัครสมาน เมืองนั้นอันธพาลจะคุยกับเมืองใดได้รักคนตีครองเมือง เมืองนั้นจะฟุ่ฟ่องได้อย่างไร IG: http://Instagram.com/tripper2world Translated Bio: A land without unity is a land ruled by tyrants that will never prosper. IG: http://Instagram.com/tripper2world	Pro-Government Online Community
349	@prayutofficial	Bio: นายกรัฐมนตรีไทย Translated Bio: Prime Minister of Thailand	Prime Minister of Thailand
280	@MatichonOnline	Bio: “มติชนออนไลน์” ผู้มั่นนำเสนอ ข่าวสาร ที่ถูกต้อง รวดเร็ว/ ความเห็น ที่รอบด้าน หลากหลาย ตลอด 24 ชม. Translated Bio: Matichon Online is committed to delivering accurate and fast news / opinions that are diverse and well rounded, 24 hours a day.	News (Neutral)
280	@FWPthailand	Bio: คนไทยเท่าเทียมกัน ประเทศไทยเท่าทันโลก Translated Bio: When Thais are equal is when they will catch up to the world	Future Forward Party
254	@Thairath_News	Bio: #ไทยรัฐ ทันทุกเหตุการณ์ #ข่าวล่าสุด #ข่าวตุน #ข่าววันนี้ #ข่าวไทยรัฐ #ข่าวโลก #ข่าวอาชญากรรม #ข่าวหุ้ย #ไทยรัฐทีวี สดและย้อนหลัง และอีกมากน้ำย	News (Neutral)
233	@VoiceTVOfficial	Bio: Voice TV	News (Opposition Media)
222	@workpointTODAY	Bio: Official account for workpointTODAY. What Works Today. สาระความรู้เพื่อวันนี้ Translated Bio: Official account for workpointTODAY. What Works Today. Knowledge for today.	News (Commercial)
217	@Rorscha24745488	Bio: เทอดทุน ชาติ ศาสนา พระมหากษัตริย์ Translated Bio: Revere Nation, Religion, King	Royalist Account

Figure 23: Top 15 accounts most frequently mentioned by the network (8-15).



The Stanford Internet Observatory is a cross-disciplinary program of research, teaching and policy engagement for the study of abuse in current information technologies, with a focus on social media. The Observatory was created to learn about the abuse of the internet in real time, and to translate our research discoveries into training and policy innovations for the public good.