

Civil Society Politics in Public Legal Space: A Case Study of the Internet Law Reform Dialogue B.E.2009-2020



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The study titled "Civil Society Politics in Public Legal Space: A Case Study of the Internet Law Reform Dialogue 2009-2020" has the following research questions: (1) What laws restricted freedom and political expression in Thailand during 2009-2020? (2) How did the Internet Law Reform Dialogue engage with civil society politics between 2009-2020? (3) What roles did the Internet Law Reform Dialogue play in collecting, campaigning, promoting, or monitoring laws and enhancing civil society politics during 2009-2020? The objectives of the study were (1) to investigate Thai politics during 2009-2020 that impacted the enforcement of laws related to public spaces for political expression, (2) to study the role of the Internet Law Reform Dialogue in promoting people's politics in Thai society during 2009-2020, (3) to examine civil society organizations that could collect, campaign, promote or monitor laws during that period. The study employed qualitative research methods, utilizing documentary research and in-depth interviews. Related documents of the Internet Law Reform Dialogue and relevant laws were studied. Interviews were conducted with 30 samples: six project staff, four academics, and 20 general public.

The findings showed that the Internet Law Reform Dialogue included three main roles: (1) supporting expression of opinions in public political spaces and supporting political movements of the people, (2) building a legal database and driving political movements in important public political spaces, especially collecting data on political movements during 2019-2020, and (3) supporting civil society politics that allowed the public to participate in driving social policies and monitoring laws. The study also found that political power relations limited the public political spaces for the people, especially the restriction during 2009-2020 when the state selectively enforced many laws limiting political expression and activities.

Therefore, it is crucial to support organizations that build public understanding of laws and political expression in public spaces, similar to the Internet Law Reform Dialogue, in Thai society.