

ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT

VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT BRUSSEL *Sep 2023 - Present*
Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions Postdoctoral Fellow, Brussels School of Governance

UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN *Jan 2022 – Aug 2023*
Postdoctoral Researcher, Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, Department of Political Science

EDUCATION

CORNELL UNIVERSITY *Dec 2020*
Ph.D. & M.A., Government
Subfields: Comparative Politics, Peace Studies, Methodology
Dissertation: *Resilience of Contentious Movements under Repression: The Role of Bystander Protection and Disruption*
Committee: Thomas Pepinsky (Chair), Nicolas van de Walle, Matthew Evangelista, Jeremy Wallace

WESLEYAN COLLEGE *May 2012*
B.A., International Relations & Economics. *Summa Cum Laude.*

PUBLICATIONS

*: lead author; °: PhD student

Peer Reviewed

2024. “Strange bedfellows or trusted comrades? Digital solidarity-building among Myanmar’s revolutionaries.” *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 54 (5): 887–912. Megan Ryan*°, **Mai Van Tran***, and Swan Ye Htut°.
2024. “Democratic backsliding disrupted: The role of digitalized resistance in Myanmar.” *Asian Journal of Comparative Politics* 9 (1): 133-158. Megan Ryan*° and **Mai Van Tran***.
2023. “Provoking civilian disruption against popular protests: Myanmar military’s counter-mobilisation strategies.” *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 54 (4): 573–595. **Mai Van Tran***.
2023. “Organic online politics: Farmers, Facebook and Myanmar’s military coup.” *Big Data & Society* 10 (1). Hilary Faxon*, Kendra Kintzi°, **Mai Van Tran**, Kay Zak Wine, and Swan Ye Htut°.
2023. “Enabling activist resilience: Bystander protection during protest crackdowns in Myanmar.” *Asian Politics & Policy* 15 (2): 205-225. **Mai Van Tran***.

Book Review

2023. “Return of the junta: why Myanmar's military must go back to the barracks.” *International Affairs* 99(6): 2544–2545. **Mai Van Tran***.

Public Scholarship

Book chapter

2022. “Pro-democracy struggle in the age of social media: Evolution of military and resistance strategies in post-coup Myanmar.” In *Myanmar after the Coup: Resistance, Resilience, and Re-invention*. Giuseppe Gabusi and Raimondo Neironi (Eds.). Turin: Torino World Affairs Institute. Megan Ryan*° and **Mai Van Tran***.

Blog posts

2023. “Farmers, Facebook and Myanmar’s Coup.” *New Mandala*. Hilary Faxon*, Kendra Kintzi*^o, **Mai Van Tran**, Kay Zak Wine, and Swan Ye Htut^o.
2022. “Digital Contention in Post-Coup Myanmar.” *New Mandala*. Megan Ryan*^o and **Mai Van Tran***.
2021. “Myanmar’s Military Has a History of Using Deceptive Tactics against Protesters. Now It Has Social Media, Too.” *The Washington Post*. **Mai Van Tran***.
2021. “To Understand Post-Coup Myanmar, Look to Its History of Popular Resistance, Not Sanctions.” *The Brookings Institution*. **Mai Van Tran***.

Podcasts

2023. “Bystanders and the Resilience of Myanmar’s Pro-Democracy Movement.” *Myanmar Musings*. **Mai Van Tran***.
2022. “The Politics of Protest in Myanmar, with Van Tran.” *The Nordic Asia Podcast*. **Mai Van Tran***.
2021. “Activist Resilience under Repression.” *Gatty Lecture Rewind Podcast*. **Mai Van Tran***.

Dataset

2024. *Pro-democracy platform advocacy: A dataset of project-related content*. Zenodo.
<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.14471006>. **Mai Van Tran***, Tuwanont Phattharathanasut, Haymarn Soe Nyunt, Nalinthip Ekapong, Lewis Young, and Peosamnang Soth.

TEACHING & SUPERVISION EXPERIENCE

Teaching

- Fall 2023 – Present MA GLOBAL GOVERNANCE & MEDIA, VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT BRUSSEL
Guest Lecturer
Digital Authoritarianism & Dissent, Digital Censorship in Authoritarian Contexts, Mixed Methods Research Design
- Fall 2022 DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE, UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN
Instructor
Challenging Authoritarianism: Politics of Protest in East and Southeast Asia
- Summer 2016, Fall 2021 INYA INSTITUTE, YANGON, MYANMAR
Instructor
Introduction to Social Research Methods, Academic Writing in the Social Sciences
- Fall 2015 – Fall 2018 DEPARTMENT OF GOVERNMENT, CORNELL UNIVERSITY
Teaching Assistant
Introduction to Comparative Politics, Introduction to American Politics, Human Rights at War, China’s New Economy, Politics of Poverty in the U.S.
- Winter 2017 – Spring 2018 YANGON SCHOOL OF POLITICAL SCIENCE, YANGON, MYANMAR
Instructor
Introduction to Comparative Politics, Politics of Development

Supervision

- Fall 2023 – Present MASTER THESIS IN GLOBAL GOVERNANCE & COMMUNICATION STUDIES, VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT BRUSSEL
Supervisor
Supervision for eight Master theses on politics in the digital age across South & Southeast Asia, North & West Africa, Eastern Europe, and South America

Spring 2022 – NORDIC INSTITUTE OF ASIAN STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN
Spring 2023 **SUPRA Program Mentor**
One-on-one mentorship for MA and PhD students studying East, Southeast & South Asia

AWARDS AND PRIZES

<i>Southeast Asia Council Designated Panel</i> , Association for Asian Studies	2024
<i>International Research Working Group Member</i> , Folke Bernadotte Academy	2023
<i>Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions Postdoctoral Fellow</i> , European Commission	2022
<i>SEAREG Fellow</i> , Southeast Asia Research Group	2022
<i>Best Paper Award</i> , Young International Scholars Category, Myanmar-Europe Research Network’s International Conference	2022
<i>Myanmar Fellow</i> , University of British Columbia - IDRC	2021
<i>Asia Workshop’s Fellow</i> , American Political Science Association	2019

SKILLS

SOFTWARE: STATA & R (Statistical analysis), ATLAS.ti (Qualitative analysis), Python (Computational analysis – Natural language processing, Software programming – Chatbot development)
LANGUAGES: English (fluent), Burmese (advanced), Mandarin Chinese (intermediate), Vietnamese (native)

RESEARCH ACTIVITIES (SINCE 2023)

Working papers

“Pro-democracy platform advocacy: Resisting Big Tech-mediated authoritarianism in Southeast Asia.”
Pre-print at *Open Research Europe*. **Mai Van Tran***, Tuwanont Phattharathanasut, Nalinthip Ekamong, Haymarn Soe Nyunt, Lewis Young.
“Responding to digital repression: Vulnerability and resilience of marginalized dissidents in Myanmar, Thailand, and Cambodia.” In *East Asia and Southeast Asia Youth Activism* book project. Ming-sho Ho and Lev Nachman (Eds.), under contract with SUNY Press. **Mai Van Tran***.
“Social media’s algorithmic affordances for authoritarian repression: Evidence from Myanmar.” **Mai Van Tran***, Tom Willaert, Haymarn Soe Nyunt, Lewis Young.

Research trips

Thailand: 2023, 2024
Cambodia: 2024

PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

Fall 2023 – Present	VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT BRUSSEL Professional Development Supervising Bachelor’s and Master’s theses, Coaching for growth, From conflict to resolution, Decolonising research and knowledge production
Fall 2023 – Present	DATA CAMP Natural Language Processing Introduction to natural language processing, Supervised learning with scikit-learn, Linear classifiers in Python, Sentiment analysis in Python

Fall 2023

VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT BRUSSEL

Digital Methods & Innovation

Data capture with YouTube Data Tools and Zeeschuimer, Data analysis with 4CAT, Data visualization with RAWGraphs and Inkscape

GRANTS

“Pro-Democracy Platform Advocacy: Fostering Social Media's Accountability to Dissident Voices under Authoritarianism.” European Commission’s Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions Postdoctoral Fellowship. EUR 191,760. September 2023 – August 2025.

“Platform advocacy: Fostering social media’s accountability to dissident voices in Thailand.” University of Wisconsin-Madison’s Article 112 Project research grant. USD 500. February – May 2024.

“Enabling resilient resistance against digital authoritarianism in Asia.” University of Copenhagen’s Asian Dynamics Initiative research grant. DKK 10,000. February 2023.

“Facilitating the next generation of Burmese scholars: Research mentorship on contentious politics.” Women in Southeast Asian Social Sciences’ collaborative grant. USD 1,000. August – November 2022. (with Dr. Terese Gagnon)

“Democratic backsliding disrupted: The role of digitalized resistance in Myanmar.” Suntory Foundation’s research grant. USD 800. February 2022. (with Megan Ryan)

University of British Columbia - International Development Research Centre’s Myanmar Fellowship. USD 2,000. October 2021.

“Digital Literacy, Demographics and Misinformation in Myanmar Research.” Facebook’s Foundational Integrity research grant. USD 99,960. September 2020 – December 2021. (with Dr. Hilary Faxon)

“Studying Myanmar military’s political narratives on its 2021 coup.” APSA Asia Workshop Alumni Professional Development Grant. USD 1,000. November 2019.

“Resilience of Contentious Movements under Repression: The Role of Bystander Protection and Disruption.” Cornell University’s Sage Fellowship’s Dissertation Write-up Grant. USD 58,758. January – December 2019.

“Resilience of Contentious Movements under Repression: The Role of Bystander Protection and Disruption.” Cornell University’s Thak Chaloemtiarana Summer Dissertation Write-up Grant. USD 2,500. June – August 2019.

“Building Backlash Against Authoritarianism: Case Studies on Myanmar’s Than Shwe Dictatorship.” Cornell University’s Government Department’s Summer Supplemental Support. USD 1,600. June – August 2017.

“Authoritarian Legacies and Voting Behavior in Myanmar’s 2015 Elections.” Cornell University’s Graduate School Travel Grant. USD 2,000. December 2016.

“Variation in Ethno-Nationalist Violence during Democratic Transition in Burma.” Cornell University’s Southeast Asia Program’s Research Travel Award. USD 2,000. January 2015.

“Variation in Ethno-Nationalist Violence during Democratic Transition in Burma.” Cornell University’s Einaudi Center’s Research Travel Grant. USD 2,000. June – August 2015.

PRESENTATIONS

Invited Presentations

United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute’s Roundtable on Online Violent Extremism in the Global South. RightsCon Summit. February 2025.

Roundtable Discussion: Between academia and activism: Responsibility, positioning, and normativity. The German Institute for Global and Area Studies. October 2024.

“Platform advocacy and social media’s accountability to dissident voices in Thailand.” The Article 112 Project. University of Wisconsin-Madison. May 2024.

“From self-censorship to self-help: Resilience of marginalized dissidents to digital repression in Southeast Asia.” Youth and Student Movements in East and Southeast Asia Workshop. National Taiwan University. April 2024.

“Strange bedfellows or trusted comrades? Digital solidarity-building among Myanmar’s revolutionaries.” Folke Bernadotte Academy Research Day. Stockholm, Sweden. September 2023.

“Doing political fieldwork.” EUVIP Methods Skills-Building Workshops. UC Louvain, Belgium. September 2023.

“Strange bedfellows or trusted comrades? Digital solidarity-building among Myanmar’s revolutionaries.” Myanmar Research Centre Dialogue Series. Australian National University. June 2023.

Roundtable Discussion: Southeast Asia Political Futures. London School of Economics’ Southeast Asia Forum. May 2023.

“Overcoming authoritarian counter-mobilization: Evolution of pro-democracy mobilization in urban Myanmar from 1988 to 2021.” Nordic Institute of Asian Studies. May 2023.

“Myanmar’s pro-democracy activism in the digital age.” Swedish South Asian Studies Network Symposium. Lund University. May 2023.

“Enabling activist resilience against repression: Bystander protection during protest crackdowns in Myanmar.” University of California Los Angeles. May 2023.

“Resistance and Revolution in Digitalized Myanmar.” EUVIP Young Researchers Workshop. Palacky University Olomouc, Czech Republic. March 2023.

Book Launch Panel: One Year After the Coup: Resistance, Resilience, and Re-invention. International Development Research Centre Conference: Exchanging Ideas for a Democratic Myanmar. Bangkok, Thailand. November 2022.

“Democratic Backsliding Disrupted: The Role of Digitalized Resistance in Myanmar.” Myanmar Research Centre Dialogue Series. Australian National University. November 2022.

“Bystanders, Digital Activism, and Revolution Solidarity in Myanmar’s Democratic Struggles.” Myanmar University of Social Science and Technology. November 2022.

Roundtable Discussion: How to Study Pro-Democracy Movements in Asia. V-Dem East Asia Regional Centre Webinar. January 2022.

“Pro-Democracy Struggle in the Digital Age? Military vs. Dissident Rhetoric in Post-Coup Myanmar.” Burma (Myanmar) Country Seminar. Cornell University. December 2021.

“Myanmar’s Anti-Coup Resistance: Dynamics and Dilemmas in the Digital Age.” Department of Southeast Asian Studies Seminars. National University of Singapore. October 2021.

“Engineering Public Hostility Against Popular Movements: Tatmadaw’s Suppressive Repertoire in Urban Myanmar.” Center for Southeast Asian Studies Brown Bag Seminar Series. Yale University. September 2021.

“Uncharted Territory: Fieldwork Methods and Ethics in Myanmar.” Institute for International and Area Studies. Tsinghua University. May 2021.

“Reflections on Myanmar’s Pro-Democracy Movement.” Panel Discussion on The Myanmar Coup: Causes, Popular Resistance, and International Intervention. University of Chicago. May 2021.

“Myanmar Social Media Research: Ethics in Practice.” Workshop on Digital Methods in Post-Coup Myanmar. National University of Singapore. May 2021.

“Activist Resilience under Repression: The Role of Civilian Protection in the Burmese Pro-Democracy Movement.” Southeast Asia Program Lecture Series. Cornell University. March 2021.

“Update on Myanmar’s Digital Cultures: Myths and Facts.” Myanmar Digital Rights Forum. February 2020.

Conference Presentations (selected)

Decrypting Digital Authoritarianism Conference, European University Institute	2024
American Political Science Association Annual Meeting	2024
European Association for Southeast Asian Studies Conference	2024
Association for Asian Studies Conference	2024
UC Berkeley-UCLA Southeast Asian Studies Conference	2023
German Association of Peace and Conflict Studies’ Workshop	2022
Nordic NIAS Council’s Generation Asia Conference	2022
Southeast Asia Research Group’s Summer Conference	2022
Myanmar-Europe Research Network (MyERN) International Conference	2022
Canadian Council for Southeast Asian Studies Conference	2021

SERVICE

June 2021 – Present	REFEREE SERVICE <i>Journal Manuscript Reviewer</i> Democratization, Comparative Political Studies, Journal of Contemporary Asia, Journal of Burma Studies <i>Conference Submission Reviewer</i> International Communication Association, Association of Internet Researchers <i>Course Content Reviewer</i> Virtual Federal University (Myanmar)
October 2024	EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE <i>Panel Discussant</i> , Decrypting Digital Authoritarianism Conference Digital Authoritarianism and Surveillance
March 2024	ASSOCIATION FOR ASIAN STUDIES CONFERENCE <i>Panel Organizer</i> Control and Contention across Civic Spaces in Southeast Asia
October – November 2022	RESEARCH MENTORSHIP ON CONTENTIOUS POLITICS FOR BURMESE SCHOLARS <i>Organizer & Mentor</i>
August 2022	NORDIC NIAS COUNCIL CONFERENCE <i>Panel Organizer</i> Generations of Resistance and Revolution in Myanmar
May 2016 – May 2017	SOUTHEAST ASIA PROGRAM, CORNELL UNIVERSITY <i>Co-Chair & Organizer</i> Graduate Student Conference