

MAI VAN TRAN
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ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT

VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT BRUSSEL

MSCA Postdoctoral Researcher, Brussels School of Governance

Sep 2023 - Present

UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN

Postdoctoral Researcher, Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, Department of Political Science

Jan 2022 – Aug 2023

EDUCATION

CORNELL UNIVERSITY

Ph.D. & M.A., Government

Dec 2020

Subfields: Comparative Politics, 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

B.A., International Relations & Economics. *Summa Cum Laude.*

May 2012

PUBLICATIONS

Peer Reviewed

2024. "Strange bedfellows or trusted comrades? Digital solidarity-building among Myanmar's revolutionaries." *Journal of Contemporary Asia*. (with Megan Ryan and Swan Ye Htut)

2024. "Democratic backsliding disrupted: The role of digitalized resistance in Myanmar." *Asian Journal of Comparative Politics* 9(1): 133-158. (with Megan Ryan)

2023. "Provoking civilian disruption against popular protests: Myanmar military's counter-mobilisation strategies." *Journal of Contemporary Asia*.

2023. "Organic online politics: Farmers, Facebook and Myanmar's military coup." *Big Data & Society* 10(1). (with Hilary Faxon, Kendra Kintzi, 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.

Book Review

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

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. (with Megan Ryan)

Blog posts

2023. “Farmers, Facebook and Myanmar’s Coup.” *New Mandala*. (with Hilary Faxon, Kendra Kintzi, Kay Zak Wine, and Swan Ye Htut)
2022. “Digital Contention in Post-Coup Myanmar.” *New Mandala*. (with Megan Ryan)
2021. “Myanmar’s Military Has a History of Using Deceptive Tactics against Protesters. Now It Has Social Media, Too.” *The Washington Post*.
2021. “To Understand Post-Coup Myanmar, Look to Its History of Popular Resistance, Not Sanctions.” *The Brookings Institution*.
2013. “Understanding Malaysia’s Pivotal General Election.” *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*. (with Vikram Nehru)
2012. “Building Peace in Southeast Asia’s Conflict Areas.” *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*. (with Vikram Nehru)
2012. “More Hills to Climb for Aung San Suu Kyi.” *East Asia Forum*. (with Vikram Nehru)

RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

Work in progress

“Platform advocacy and social media’s accountability to dissident voices in the Global South: Evidence from Southeast Asia.”

“Social media affordances for cross-platform authoritarian censorship: Evidence from Myanmar.”

“From self-censorship to self-help: Resilience of marginalized dissidents to digital repression in Southeast Asia.”

Research trips

Myanmar: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020

Thailand: 2023, 2024

Cambodia: 2024

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
<i>President Scholar</i> , Wesleyan College	2009-2012

PRESENTATIONS

Invited Presentations

“Resisting digital censorship: A grassroots approach.” Pint of Science Festival. Brussels. May 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.

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

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

Critiquing Big Tech: A Humanities Perspective	2024
GIG-ARTS Conference	2024
Association for Asian Studies Conference	2024

Folke Bernadotte Academy Research Day	2023
Annual Political Science Workshops of the Low Countries	2023
Technology in Movement, Movement in Technology International Conference	2023
UC Berkeley-UCLA Southeast Asian Studies Conference	2023
Danish Political Science Association's Annual Meeting	2022
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
European Association for Southeast Asian Studies Conference	2022
Norwegian Network for Asian Studies's Asianet Conference	2022
Social Movement in Comparative Perspective Workshop by University of Copenhagen	2022
Myanmar-Europe Research Network (MyERN) International Conference	2022
Democratic Backsliding in Southeast Asia Special Issue Workshop	2021
Canadian Council for Southeast Asian Studies Conference	2021
American Political Science Association Annual Meeting	2021
Beyond Essentialism: Workshop by University of Essex-University of the Philippines, Diliman	2021
Association for Asian Studies Conference	2021
American Political Science Association's Asia Workshop	2019
Tsinghua University's Area Studies Forum	2019
Cornell-Stockholm PhD Conference	2017
Midwest Political Science Association	2017
International Burma Studies Conference at Northern Illinois University	2016
Burma/Myanmar Research Forum at Cornell University	2015

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.

“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 Chaloeintiarana 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.

SKILLS

SOFTWARE: STATA, ATLAS.ti, Python

LANGUAGES: English (fluent), Burmese (advanced), Mandarin Chinese (intermediate), Vietnamese (native)

TEACHING & SUPERVISION EXPERIENCE

Fall 2023 –
Spring 2024 MASTER THESIS IN COMMUNICATION STUDIES, VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT
BRUSSEL

Co-supervisor

Supervision for four MA students’ theses

Spring 2024 MASTER OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION, VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT BRUSSEL
Guest Lecture, Platform and Algorithmic Governance in Europe
Digital Censorship in Authoritarian Contexts

Fall 2023 MA NEW MEDIA & SOCIETY IN EUROPE, VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT BRUSSEL
Guest Lecture, Internet Censorship, Control & Governance
Digital Authoritarianism & Dissent

Spring 2022 –
Spring 2023 NORDIC INSTITUTE OF ASIAN STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN
SUPRA Program Mentor
One-on-one mentorship for MA/PhD students studying Asia

Fall 2022 DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE, UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN
Instructor
Challenging Authoritarianism: Politics of Protest in East and Southeast Asia

Fall 2021 INYA INSTITUTE, YANGON, MYANMAR
Instructor
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- YANGON SCHOOL OF POLITICAL SCIENCE, YANGON, MYANMAR
Spring 2018 ***Instructor***
Introduction to Comparative Politics & Politics of Development

SERVICE

June 2021- VIRTUAL FEDERAL UNIVERSITY, MYANMAR
Present ***Course Content Reviewer***

Fall 2022 RESEARCH MENTORSHIP ON CONTENTIOUS POLITICS FOR BURMESE
SCHOLARS
Organizer & Mentor

May 2016- SOUTHEAST ASIA PROGRAM, CORNELL UNIVERSITY
May 2017 ***Co-Chair, Graduate Student Committee***