

Fisher Family CDDRL Honors Program 2018-19

Students

Sima Biondi
Isabela Bumanlag
Ben Gardner-Gill
Ribhav Gupta
Anjali Katta

Ayano Kitano
Shivonne Logan
Sophia Pink
Lucas Rodriguez
Michael Rover

Jayaram Ravi
Carson Smith
Gabriela Torres-Lorenzotti
Alex Trivella



Sima Biondi

Hometown: Palo Alto, California

Major: Political Science

Thesis Advisor: Lisa Blaydes

Thesis Title: The Mixed Courts and Egyptian Nationalism (1878-1906)

Why is this topic important to the field of democracy, development, and the rule of law? Inspired by policy questions on solutions to failed states in the Middle East, my thesis will quantitatively grapple with the role of courts in colonial governance and rise of Egyptian nationalism. I hope to apply lessons from my research to shaping the U.S. policy approach to developing inclusive and coherent governance frameworks in countries like Iraq and Afghanistan.

What attracted you to the CDDRL undergraduate honors program? As a student with diverse scholarly interests, I was attracted to the interdisciplinary nature of the CDDRL honors program.

Future aspirations post-Stanford: Exploring more of the world!

A fun fact about yourself: I am a student guide at Stanford's Cantor Museum.



Isabela Bumanlag

Hometown: Harlingen, Texas

Major: Human Biology

Thesis Advisor: Karen Eggleston

Thesis Title: Exploring the Impact of Healthcare Decentralization on HIV/AIDS in the Philippines

Why is this topic important to the field of democracy, development, and the rule of law? At Stanford, I have grown to appreciate the complexity and depth of global health. I soon

realized that the factors that impact health went beyond the clinical sphere. Development and rule of law is inherently tied with issues of healthcare.. The HIV/AIDS epidemic is not unique to the Philippines and continues to be an issue in many developing and under-resourced countries. The emerging HIV epidemic is a useful lens to understand the current state of a devolved government system in the Philippines and the Southeast Asian region.

What attracted you to the CDDRL undergraduate honors program? The CDDRL honors program is unique in that it embraces interdisciplinary thought on issues of democracy, development, and rule of law. As a Human Biology student with a background on epidemiology (the population-based study of disease), I am thankful to be able to study how issues of DDRL can affect and influence issues of population health. CDDRL provides its students with the flexibility to use their own academic backgrounds to research a topic in DDRL. More importantly, I've met so many brilliant students in various fields in this program and I am excited to learn more from my peers and their own interests.

Future aspirations post-Stanford: I would love to work for an intergovernmental organization like the UN and pursue my passion in global health. I hope to attend medical school after my gap year, with the goal of contributing to public health efforts.

A fun fact about yourself: My earlier childhood (teenage?) (early 20s?) aspiration was to be an international spy slash pop-songwriter.



Ben Gardner-Gill

Hometown: Mountain View, CA

Major: History

Thesis Advisor: Anna Grzymala-Busse

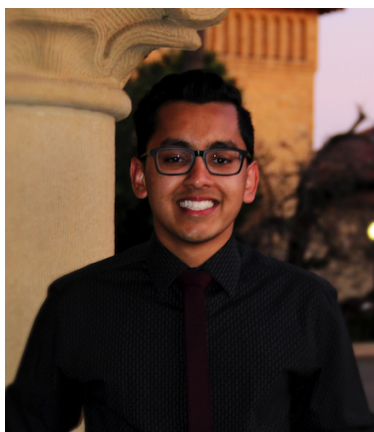
Thesis Title: Crossing a Bridge of Memory: Historical Memory in Contemporary Populist Political Rhetoric in the Czech and Slovak Republic

Why is this topic important to the field of democracy, development, and the rule of law? The most recent wave of successful populists in Europe has attracted widespread attention. Populists have existed for many decades, however. In the Czech and Slovak Republics, populism has been present in some form since the restoration of independence. I ask how politicians have employed historical memory in their populist rhetoric. The question is relevant to the three themes at hand because it examines the development of democracy in the two subject countries through a specific lens. Furthermore, because populists in power may pose threats to the rule of law, the question has implications for understanding how populists come to power, and why they do what they do once in power.

What attracted you to the CDDRL undergraduate honors program? I was chiefly attracted by the cohort. I greatly anticipate the discussions I'll have with the other students in the program, and forming an intellectual community.

Future aspirations post-Stanford: Something invigorating!

A fun fact about yourself: I like trams and will talk to anyone about the postwar death of the American streetcar.



Ribhav Gupta

Hometown: Apple Valley, MN

Major: Biomechanical Engineering

Thesis Advisor: Gary Darmstadt

Thesis Title: Impact of Missing Gender-Disaggregated Data on AIDS-Focused Interventions

Why is this topic important to the field of democracy, development, and the rule of law? A key component to long term, sustainable development is improving public health. However, without a thorough understanding of key opinions for people across all demographics, including gender, our understanding of a community's situation is skewed and heavily limited in its applications. Using skewed information to develop campaigns, such as that for AIDS intervention, may limit the potential impact seen. By gaining a better understanding of the sources of gender-biased information and the way missing data can alter proposed intervention strategies, we can assess some key weaknesses in public health work.

What attracted you to the CDDRL undergraduate honors program? The fact that the CDDRL program pulls students from across a variety of disciplines fascinated me as it gives me a chance to explore issues outside of my major and to interact and learn from students of all fields, each of who have a different outlook on a research topic.

Future aspirations post-Stanford: I plan to go to medical school and hopefully split my time in research and as medical practitioner.

A fun fact about yourself: I don't know if this is a fun fact but I really enjoy rock climbing. I'm not great at it, but so far it's been a blast!



Anjali Katta

Hometown: Vancouver, Canada

Major: Engineering Physics

Thesis Advisor: Jeremy Weinstein

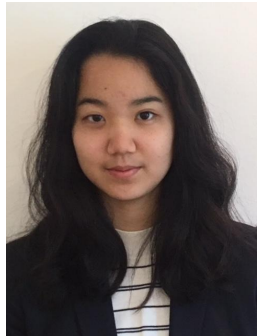
Thesis Title: Transformative Tech? Evaluating Empowerment Outcomes of Connectivity for Refugees in Dzaleka

Why is this topic important to the field of democracy, development, and the rule of law? Connectivity, through cell phones and the internet, can provide refugees with greater access to information and a stable mode of communication with family and those who they are separated from. Moreover, connectivity can bridge the gap between refugees and refugee service providers such as UNHCR. Information, communication, and accountability are all key factors in development and democracy and analyzing the impacts of connectivity with an emphasis on these factors can reveal how to further empower refugees to take charge of their own lives.

What attracted you to the CDDRL undergraduate honors program? It's interdisciplinary nature! I liked how a person any major could approach a relevant topic from any direction. I appreciate the way I can bring all the skills I've learned, whether that's more technical or more qualitative, to create something that is a combination of all my interests.

Future aspirations post-Stanford: I want to work at the intersection of technology, climate change, and women's rights

A fun fact about yourself: I can name the capitals of all the countries in the world



Ayano Kitano

Hometown: Tokyo, Japan

Major: International Relations

Thesis Advisor: Karen Eggleston

Thesis Title: Assessing "Silver Preference": Japan's Social Security Policy in a Time of Population Ageing

Why is this topic important to the field of democracy, development, and the rule of law? My thesis will analyze how Japan's social security system has evolved in parallel to its rapid population ageing—specifically, whether policy outcomes have exhibited a "silver preference" towards the elderly generation. This topic is important to the field of democracy because population ageing has led to the coining of the term "silver democracy," a situation in which politics prioritizes the interests of the elderly over the young. By analyzing the trends in per capita state expenditures, I hope to shed light on whether silver democracy is increasingly becoming a reality in Japan.

What attracted you to the CDDRL undergraduate honors program? Across different parts of the world, threats to democracy have increasingly undermined the stability of political systems. In light of this situation, I was drawn to the CDDRL program because my thesis aims to shed light on whether instances of democratic recession can be identified in ageing Japan. CDDRL's policy related focus also allows me to combine academic research and policy analysis. I am looking forward to using my research findings to provide concrete policy recommendations for the future.

Future aspirations post-Stanford: I would like to obtain a Juris Doctorate degree and ultimately pursue work at the intersection of law and international relations.

A fun fact about yourself: I had a British accent when I first started speaking English!



Shivonne Logan

Hometown: Palo Alto, CA

Major: International Relations

Thesis Advisor: Lisa Blaydes

Thesis Title: Women and Peace: Theory in Action in Israeli Civil Society

Why is this topic important to the field of democracy, development, and the rule of law? In Israel and Palestine, the eventual resolution of the conflict will be the fundamental basis for the development of the state(s) and government(s) there. Thus, the negotiations to get there are the most essential element of facilitating democracy and allowing for increased development and the rule of law in the region. Without equal representation in the peace process and in the governments or states that it produces, those governments and states will not be based on the foundational elements of democracy. Further, women's involvement in the peace process facilitates the improvement of the rule of law there, and paves the way for further development in both states (or whichever states emerge from the process). Since there have been both few women involved in formal peace politics and few recent formal negotiations, my work has evolved to focus largely on the role of civil society feminist actors.

What attracted you to the CDDR undergraduate honors program? My thesis advisor and mentor, Lisa Blaydes, advised me to apply because she thought it was the best program to help me pursue my interests in the Middle East and its conflicts.

Future aspirations post-Stanford: I want to work with refugee rights and transitional justice.

A fun fact about yourself: One of my life goals is to visit every country.



Sophia Pink

Hometown: Washington, DC

Major: Product Design

Thesis Advisor: Robb Willer

Thesis Title: Think like a Scientist: Interventions to Reduce Politically Motivated Reasoning

Why is this topic important to the field of democracy, development, and the rule of law? When we are faced with information about political issues, our ability to reason is easily hijacked by our biases. We often have a conclusion in mind and use the information to justify our pre-existing views. This is called “politically motivated reasoning.” If our society wants to continue to have the meaningful political discussions essential for a functioning democracy, we need tools to defend ourselves against these biases.

This thesis includes a thorough literature review of the research on motivated reasoning with hypotheses for interventions that may reduce motivated reasoning. It also tests an intervention to reduce politically motivated reasoning with a experimental study. Instead of blaming individuals, we need to design tools to equip people to analyze political information without biases getting in the way.

What attracted you to the CDDRL undergraduate honors program? I was excited to learn from the cohort of amazing students. Working with students from different departments over the course of a year helped me produce stronger research and be a better colleague.

Future aspirations post-Stanford: I hope to use the tools of ethnographic research, behavioral science, and data science to design experiences that help people make better decisions and live more fulfilling lives.

A fun fact about yourself: When I'm bored or nervous, I fold paper cranes out of Post-It notes.



Lucas Rodriguez

Hometown: Miami, FL

Major: Economics; Political Science

Thesis Advisor: Gavin Wright

Thesis Title: Democracy for Some or Democracy for None? The Effects of Disenfranchisement in the Jim Crow South on Public Education

Why is this topic important to the field of democracy, development, and the rule of law? This topic is important to the field of democracy, development, and the rule of law for a number of reasons. Most critically, I'm studying a period of time during which democracy seriously struggled to take hold in a region of a country that purports to be a bastion of democracy. Additionally, my thesis gets at the inherent connection between democracy and economic outcomes. Specifically, I'm examining the effects of disenfranchising large swaths of a population (the african-american and low-income white populations in the case of the Jim Crow South) on public education. My hope is that the final product comes to some sort of conclusion as to how the ability to vote may help individuals advance their position in society.

What attracted you to the CDDRL undergraduate honors program? I was attracted to the CDDRL undergraduate honors program because of its interdisciplinary and collaborative natures. CDDRL's interdisciplinary set up allows me to combine my intersecting interests in Political Science and Economics in ways other programs would not. Furthermore, I was very attracted to the idea of being a part of a thesis cohort, and learning from my peers and their research regularly.

Future aspirations post-Stanford: I hope to attend law school and pursue a public-interest legal career; hopefully one that gets at the intersection of law and policy.

A fun fact about yourself: I've seen the West Wing 5 times through in full.



Michael Rover

Hometown: Mount Kisco, NY

Major: Political Science

Thesis Advisor: Christophe Crombez

Thesis Title: Immigration in the European Union: Politicized Phenomenon or Driving Force of Euroscepticism? A case study on the French Front National.

Why is this topic important to the field of democracy, development, and the rule of law? Has the Front National in

France profited from rising anti-immigrant sentiment driven by actual immigrant inflows? Or has it helped foment that very anti-immigrant sentiment, and thereby gained political support without the need for real immigrants to precipitate the backlash? This question strikes at the heart of key challenges facing democratic systems that seek to uphold the rule of law within their borders. Far-right, anti-immigrant parties pose an existential threat to the European Union, which has come to shoulder much of the responsibility for Europe's future as a set of democracies governed by equitable legal systems. It is plain to see that these far-right parties, most notably the French Front National, German Alternative für Deutschland (AfD), and British United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), among others, support policies that may directly conflict with European democracies' commitments to human rights, equal treatment under the law, and nondiscrimination. However, what is perhaps even more important is the seemingly simple fact of their Euroscepticism. The future of the EU and its many institutions and frameworks relies on the ability of its member states to address challenges posed by immigration. If immigration is tearing away at the pro-EU consensus, then better solutions are needed. If the current climate of animosity towards immigrants and international institutions was created by successful political campaigns timed to take advantage of relatively less significant real immigration inflows, then that is essential information for European policymakers and voters to know as well.

What attracted you to the CDDRL undergraduate honors program? This program sits at the nexus of several threads that have tied my undergraduate academic pursuits together, namely international relations, interdisciplinary cooperation, and policy research. I leapt at the opportunity to watch my peers delve into topics that lit fires under their seats, that merit far more than a year's worth of diligent research. I hope that I will be able to use a CDDRL honors thesis to hone my analytical skills so that when I return to public service for my career, I will be both better informed and more effective.

Future aspirations post-Stanford: I hope to attend law school and pursue a career in international law and American government.

A fun fact about yourself: I thought long and hard about majoring in Computer Science. I am something of a computer geek. I've fixed every computer my family has owned since I was a teenager (both hardware and software). If you see me walking around campus, there is a greater than 50% chance I will be carrying a bag of miscellaneous display adapters and cables just in case I need to set up a presentation. Haven't you ever wished you had the right cable?



Jayaram Ravi

Hometown: Issaquah, Washington

Major: Political Science

Thesis Advisor: Larry Diamond

Thesis Title: Voting Out Authoritarianism in the 1977 Indian General Election

Why is this topic important to the field of democracy, development, and the rule of law? Underlying explanations of transitions to and from democracy, there is a tension between those that emphasize the role of individuals and those that emphasize the role of structures. The 1977 general elections in India marked the end of a 21 month period of authoritarianism known as the state of Emergency Rule. I hope to use this election as a case study to evaluate how individuals and structures shaped India's return to being a liberal democracy, and affect transition processes more broadly.

What attracted you to the CDDRL undergraduate honors program? Ever since joining Stanford, I took a number of classes with distinguished faculty at CDDRL and I wanted the opportunity to work more closely with the program. I also wanted a rigorous research experience in democracy studies and this thesis program was the perfect opportunity.

Future aspirations post-Stanford: Philanthropy

A fun fact about yourself: I love hiking in the Pacific Northwest.



Carson Smith

Hometown: Chicago, IL

Major: Political Science

Thesis Advisor: Greg Ablavsky

Thesis Title: Indigenous Conflict Resolution Mechanisms and Their Jurisdictional Impact in the US and Canada

Why is this topic important to the field of democracy, development, and the rule of law? I hope to look at how these conflict resolution mechanisms are allowing tribes to expand their jurisdiction into state and federal arenas. Because of my thesis's focus on questions of jurisdictional powers and ultimately tribal sovereignty, it directly impacts our understanding of the 'rule of law' in Indian Country.

What attracted you to the CDDRL undergraduate honors program? I really enjoy the interdisciplinary approach of this program. For example, CDDRL gave me an opportunity to work with professors at the law school, who have the most expertise in my area of research. Additionally, because we all study separate subjects, I have learned about a wide-range of methodologies and areas of research from my peers.

Future aspirations post-Stanford: Working with an NGO focused on indigenous human rights or court

A fun fact about yourself: I collect coffee mugs with historical figures on them. My first mug had Theodore Roosevelt riding a moose with party hats on its antlers. (Bull Moose Party pun)



Alex Trivella

Hometown: Caracas, Venezuela

Major: History

Thesis Advisor: Beatriz Magaloni

Thesis Title: The Communal State and the Collapse of Constitutional Order in Venezuela

Why is this topic important to the field of democracy, development, and the rule of law? As Venezuela faces a new political era of single-party dictatorship, the future of the country remains uncertain. It is still unclear how the party will proceed in its consolidation of power and what institutions will remain relevant. Studying the evolution of Communal State structures exposes the political framework available to the Venezuelan government and may reveal a path to redemocratization.

What attracted you to the CDDRL undergraduate honors program? The CDDRL honors program provided me the opportunity to engage with some of the complex questions I had about the socioeconomic collapse of my country. I was also excited for the new perspectives available through the program's multidisciplinary focus.

Future aspirations post-Stanford: I would like to pursue a Master's in International Policy and possibly work in something relating to democratization. I also hope to help rebuild Venezuela in the future.

A fun fact about yourself: Last summer I decided to backpack across Eastern Europe for three months and visited a total of 22 countries.



Gabriela Torres-Lorenzotti

Hometown: Brooklyn, New York

Major: International Relations

Thesis Advisor: Stephen Stedman

Thesis Title: The Past, Present, and Future: The Impact of Recurrence on Genocide Prevention

Why is this topic important to the field of democracy, development, and the rule of law? Statistical quantitative trends reveal that a country's history of genocide is a predictive factor to determine its risk of future genocide. Despite this correlation, it is

unclear what are, if any, the causal mechanisms that make a pattern of violence more likely to instigate future atrocities. Democracy, development, and the rule of law are all active components to the field of genocide prevention; understanding genocide recurrence is crucial to the field of prevention. Given that a country's history with genocide could potentially influence its future, it is imperative that we better understand how instances of recurrence are related, if at all. Ultimately, policymakers can use these findings to inform plans that comprehensively address risk in countries with a history of genocidal violence.

What attracted you to the CDDRL undergraduate honors program? I wanted to pursue writing an honors thesis through the CDDRL undergraduate honors program because of the department's interdisciplinary approach. Understanding mass atrocity cannot be done solely through a historical, statistical, or political lens, rather it requires a holistic evaluation of multiple academic perspectives and insights.

Future aspirations post-Stanford: After graduation, I have been awarded a Fulbright award to teach English in Madrid at the university level and pursue an independent project fostering the economic empowerment of refugees. Eventually, I plan to attend law school and pursue a career in international human rights law.

A fun fact about yourself: A couple of years ago I spent part of the summer in Bonaire where I became a certified scuba diver!
