

ANNUAL REPORT

2023-2024 Academic Year

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message from the director

The future of democracy across Asia remains an urgent global priority. The Varieties of Democracy (V-DEM) project continues to track significant weakening of democracy in various corners of Southeast, East, South and Central Asia. India, Afghanistan, and Hong Kong were among the world's top-10 autocratizers in the 2023 V-DEM data, while Indonesia and South Korea showed troubling signs in spite of stronger overall democratic health. China-US competition further challenges democratic reforms.

At the same time, Asia remains home to some of the largest scale, vibrant democratic participation in the world. Highly competitive elections took place in several corners of Asia in 2024, with well over a billion individuals headed to the polls across the continent just in the year's first six months, as several of CAD's student reports document. Timor-Leste is among the world's greatest democratizers in V-DEM's 2023 data, while Malaysia and Nepal show marked improvement.

The mission of the Center for Asian Democracy, established in 2006, is to promote research, student opportunities, and community engagement that advances our understanding of democracy in this diverse region. The 2023-24 academic year saw CAD expand its extensive activities pursuing this mission. The rest of this report details those initiatives.

In the 2023-24 academic year, CAD returned to near full staffing, event and research activities. In 2024-25, we will continue to build on this momentum. We are especially thrilled to welcome the new Endowed Chair in Asian Democracy, Dr. Anirvan Chowdhury, in the Fall 2024 semester.

We invite you to join us in the work ahead.

David Buckley, PhD

Director, Center for Asian Democracy
Paul Weber Endowed Chair of Politics, Science & Religion



Emily Rasmussen
Coordinator

Emily Rasmussen joined the Center for Asian Democracy in January 2021. Emily is responsible for coordinating events and programs for the center. She also manages CAD's budget, purchasing, and hiring processes



Chaireth Coffman
Administrative Associate

Chaireth Coffman joined the Center for Asian Democracy in January of 2024. Chaireth assists the Center through handling all communications and marketing efforts for all events, reports, and workshops. Chaireth also manages the CAD social media pages as well as our "Inside Asia" Podcast.

our **team**

In the 2023 -2024 academic year, the Center for Asian Democracy expanded its administrative team to support its growing activities.

our mission

convene
research
educate



The mission of the Center for Asian Democracy, established in 2006, is to promote research and teaching about democracy and the prospects for democratization in Central, South, Southeast and East Asia. Through publications, conferences, workshops, visiting scholars programs, colloquia, and research support, the Center creates a forum for studying political dynamics in this vital region.



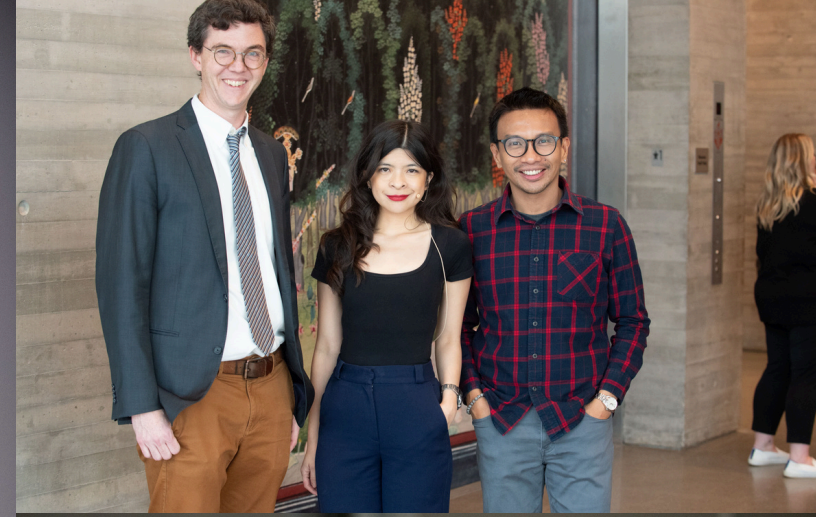
ANNUAL LECTURE ON ASIAN DEMOCRACY

Patricia Evangelista

Some People Need Killing: A Memoir of Murder in My Country

On Tuesday, March 5, the Center for Asian Democracy hosted the 2024 Annual Lecture on Asian Democracy with trauma journalist and investigative reporter, Patricia Evangelista. The event centered on Evangelista's debut book *Some People Need Killing: A Memoir of Murder in My Country*, which was awarded Time Magazine's Best Book of 2023 and a New York Times Top 10 Book of 2023.

Patricia Evangelista came of age in the aftermath of a street revolution that forged a new future for the Philippines. Three decades later, in the face of mounting inequality, the nation discovered the fragility of its democratic institutions under the regime of strongman Rodrigo Duterte. Evangelista's reporting put the tragic human costs of Duterte's Drug War in vivid detail.



The Center for Asian Democracy's Annual Lecture on Asian Democracy is a flagship event bringing leading thinkers, writers, activists, and diplomats to discuss pressing topics in democratization in the region. The event brings the University of Louisville together with the general public and frequently involves collaboration with local institutional partners.



2023 - 2024

SPEAKER SERIES

The Center for Asian Democracy Speaker Series brings leading scholars to the University of Louisville to present their ongoing research into the most pressing areas of democracy and human rights across Asia.

Religious Nationalism in Sri Lanka and India

Prof. Neil DeVotta, Wake Forest University

Sri Lanka and India, two of Asia's oldest democracies, feature powerful religious nationalist movements. Prof. Neil DeVotta explained the rise of Buddhist and Hindu nationalisms in South Asia.



Islam and Indonesian Democracy: Institutions and Moderation

Prof. Alexandre Pelletier, Université Laval

How does Islam interact with democracy and political violence in Indonesia? And what institutions might help restrain violence and encourage mobilization against extremism. Alexandre Pelletier took up these crucial topics.





Political Paths out of Civil War? Myanmar's Conflict in Comparative Perspective

Prof. Jacques Bertrand, University of Toronto

Since February 2021, Myanmar has descended into one of the worst periods of its long-lasting civil war. After two years of intense conflict, are there pathways out of civil war? In this event, Jacques Bertrand analyzed the current prospects for political resolution and drew on insights from other civil wars in Indonesia and the Philippines.



Islam and Democracy and Citizenship in Indonesia

Prof. Robert Hefner, Boston University

Indonesia is the world's largest Muslim-majority country, and a vibrant democracy. Its February 2024 elections brought well over 100 million Indonesians to the polls. How does Islam impact democracy and citizenship in the country? And could new trends challenge established patterns of pluralism?



Outsourcing Repression: Everyday State Power in China

Prof. Lynette Ong, University of Toronto

How do states coerce citizens into compliance while minimizing backlash? The Chinese state regularly engages in local economic and political coercion, yet seems to have provoked minimal recent social turmoil. Ong joined CAD to discuss how state authorities deploy local thugs and power brokers to pursue state interests while maintaining public support.

INDIAN DEMOCRACY BETWEEN ELECTIONS

Dr. Lisa Mitchell



On Wednesday, October 30, The Center for Asian Democracy partnered with Asia Institute Crane House for “Indian Democracy Between Elections” with Dr. Lisa Mitchell, Professor of South Asia Studies, University of Pennsylvania.

Mitchell presented remarks drawing on her recent book, *Hailing the State: Indian Democracy between Elections*, which demonstrates how India’s citizens, especially marginalized groups, mobilize at the grassroots to hold government accountable. A multidisciplinary panel of experts responded to her analysis of citizen engagement in this vital context.

Panelists



Prof. Srimati Basu
University of Kentucky



Prof. Karl Swinehart
University of Louisville



Prof. David Buckley
University of Louisville



Prof. Lisa Björkman
University of Louisville

supporting scholarship

Faculty Support
Visiting Scholar
Post Doctoral Fellow



The Center for Asian Democracy is proud to support the world-class research of several associated scholars at the University of Louisville



Dr. David Buckley

CAD supported Dr. David Buckley's ongoing research into religion and democracy in the Philippines. This year, CAD supported Buckley's analysis of the role of religious leaders in the country's 2022 election, and convened an expert workshop to discuss his draft book manuscript (with Prof. Steven Brooke, University of Wisconsin-Madison) on religion and community protection from violence during the Philippine Drug War.



Dr. Lisa Björkman

CAD has supported Dr. Lisa Björkman's research in various ways, especially in relation to her forthcoming book *Drama of Democracy: Political Representation in Mumbai* (University of Minnesota Press, 2025). The Center has contributed funding towards research for her book, as well as conference participation to present the research to national and international audiences.



Dr. Charles Ziegler

CAD supported the production of Dr. Charles Ziegler's new book, *Russia in the Pacific: The Quest for Great Power* by hosting a book launch event with Dr. Rajan Menon.

Faculty Support

VISITING SCHOLAR

Dr. Jayeel Cornelio



Dr. Jayeel Cornelio was a Visiting Professor for the Center for Asian Democracy during the Spring 2024 semester. Cornelio was on sabbatical from the Ateneo de Manila University (Philippines) where he is Professor of Development Studies and Francis E Reilly, SJ Professorial Chair.

While at CAD, Professor Cornelio worked on his new book project on religion and public life, paying attention to some of the most divisive issues in Philippine society: divorce, the war on drugs, gender equality, and the death penalty.

He is also co-leading two projects, both funded by the British Academy. The first is a three-country study on the role of local faith actors in peacebuilding in Burundi, Sri Lanka, and the Philippines. The second is the Religion and Public Life in the Philippines (RPLP) Mentoring Program, which advances the interdisciplinary study of the dynamic relationship between religion and public issues in Philippine society.

At CAD, Cornelio delivered a public address, took part in workshops and events, and traveled to multiple US universities to present his ongoing research.

POST DOCTORAL FELLOW

Dr. Taha Rauf



Taha Rauf (Ph.D., University of Michigan) serves as the Center for Asian Democracy's Postdoctoral Fellow. Dr. Rauf studies the divergent implications of historical religious institutions for long-run development and democratic performance. His research involves the use of census-level administrative data from multiple sources across decades to develop large observational village-level datasets for Sufi Khanqahs in India. This allows for rigorous statistical analysis and causal inference with multiple placebo tests and instrumental variable analysis, illuminating the channels of persistence. In addition to quantitative methods, he employs multi-site and multi-method qualitative fieldwork, including archival research, participant observation, and in-depth interviews, to elaborate on the institutional differences in coordination mechanisms.



INSIDE ASIA **PODCAST**



FALL 2023

EP. 1

Inside the Deterritorialized Tibetan Nation with Dr. Ishani Dasgupta

EP. 2

Inside Pakistan's 2024 Election with Dr. Niloufer Siddiqui

EP. 3

Inside Muslim Institutions and Indian Democracy with Dr. Taha Rauf

EP. 4

Inside the Abe Assassination, Religion, and Japanese Politics with Dr. Levi McLaughlin

EP. 5

Inside the 2024 Bangladesh Election with Drs. Shabab Enim Khan and Geoffrey Macdonald

SPRING 2024

EP.1

Inside the Myanmar Civil War with Dr. Jacques Bertrand

EP.2

Inside Religion and Politics in Marcos' Philippines with Dr. Jayeel Cornelio

EP. 3

Inside Religion, Nationalism, and Academic Freedom in Malaysia with Dr. Ahmet Kuru

EP. 4

Inside the 2024 Indian Election with Dr. Anirvan Chowdhury

REACHING LISTENERS

WORLD WIDE

*CAD's PODCAST BRINGS SCHOLARLY EXPERTISE TO
TIMELY ISSUES FACING DEMOCRACY IN THE REGION*



2k +
DOWNLOADS

30 +
COUNTRIES REACHED



Mikaella Tañales

Mikaella Tañales is a senior at the University of Louisville majoring in Political Science and Finance with a minor in Chinese. Tanales has conducted research support for Dr. Buckley with a particular focus on her native country, the Philippines.

In Summer 2024, Tanales served as an intern at the U.S. State Department in Washington, DC, where she was accepted into their prestigious two-year internship program. She has also received a Boren Award to continue her Chinese language study, as she pursues her future career in international affairs.



Tristin Black

Tristin Black is a recent 2024 graduate from the University of Louisville. Black graduated with a bachelors of science in Political Science and a minor in Pan-African Studies. He has conducted research with CAD since his sophomore year and published briefings on elections in South Korea, the Philippines, and Nepal. Since graduation, Black has interned in the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo, as he continues his career in international affairs.

Black was the 2024 recipient of the Woodcock Medal, the most prestigious recognition of an undergraduate in A&S, awarded each year to an “outstanding senior whose personal characteristics and superior scholarship give promise to constructive leadership in society.

promoting
student success

*The Center for Asian Democracy
engages Graduate and
Undergraduate students in research
projects and career development*

2023/24 student research reports



BANGLADESH GENERAL ELECTION 2024 PRE-ELECTION REPORT

Toree Doll
Undergraduate Research Assistant

December 2023

2024 Bangladesh National Election
Toree Doll, December 2023



INDIA GENERAL ELECTION 2024 PRE-ELECTION REPORT

Wade McGuire
Undergraduate Research Assistant

April 2024

2024 Indian National Election
Wade McGuire, April 2024



HONG KONG DEMOCRACY REPORT

Taylor Martin
Graduate Research Assistant

May 2024

2024 Hong Kong Democracy Report
Taylor Martin, May 2024



INDONESIA GENERAL ELECTION 2024 PRE-ELECTION REPORT

Tristin Black
Undergraduate Research Assistant

February 2024

2024 Indonesian National Election
Tristin Black, February 2024



SOUTH KOREA GENERAL ELECTION 2024 PRE-ELECTION REPORT

Lorena Gil Sanchez
Undergraduate Research Assistant

2024 South Korea National Election
Lorena Gil Sanchez, April 2024



Taylor Martin was a Graduate Assistant for the Center for Asian Democracy for the Spring 2024 semester. During her time with CAD, Taylor produced a Hong Kong Democracy Report, where she traced the cycle of protest and legal crackdown on the pro-democracy movement in Hong Kong.



Will Wigginton was a Graduate Assistant for the Center for Asian Democracy for the Spring 2024 semester. During his time with CAD, Will assisted with the CAD's "Inside Asia" podcast.

Will interned for the World Affairs Council of Kentucky & So. Indiana in summer 2024, and recently accepted a position as the WAC's Program Coordinator.



Toree Doll '23 was a Graduate Assistant for the Center for Asian Democracy for the Fall 2024 semester. During her time with CAD, Toree assisted with editing and producing CAD's "Inside Asia" podcast, and researched upcoming elections in Asia to produce election report briefings.

CAD supported Toree in securing an internship with the World Affairs Council of Kentucky & So. Indiana. Since graduating in December 2023, Toree accepted a full time position with the World Affairs Council of Kentucky & So, Indiana as their Exchange Program Coordinator.

graduate assistantships

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

AAPI FACULTY & STAFF ASSOCIATION



CAD supported the AAPI Faculty and Staff Association's AAPI Heritage Week as a cosponsor of its keynote lecture. Chef Edward Lee joined the University of Louisville for an address entitled, "Breaking Down Barriers through Culinary Experience."

ASIA INSTITUTE CRANE HOUSE



CAD joined Asia Institute Crane House for a cosponsored event with Dr. Lisa Mitchell, "Indian Democracy Between Elections." CAD also works with Asia Institute Crane House to connect CAD events to Louisville's vibrant and diverse Asian-American communities.

LOUISVILLE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS



CAD is pleased to work with LCFR on speakers who share a focus on foreign policy in Asia. In 2023-24, LCFR and CAD worked together to bring Prof. Rajan Menon to Louisville to discuss foreign policy in Asia, with particular attention to Russia's role in the region.

WORLD AFFAIRS COUNCIL OF KY & SO. IN



CAD is happy to work with the World Affairs Council on promoting local events focused on democracy and governance in the region. Multiple CAD research assistants also now play a part as staff and interns at WAC.

JOIN OUR WORK

The Center for Asian Democracy continues to expand events, research support, student engagement, and policy outreach. We actively seek local, national and international partners dedicated to our work. Contact Dr. David Buckley to explore future collaboration.
