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for Leadership & Public Policy

COLOMBO, SRI LANKA

2025 SCALES OF GOVERNANCE

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON LEADERSHIP &
GOVERNANCE CHALLENGES IN SOUTH ASIA

SCIENCES PO - PARIS, FRANCE & BALPP - COLOMBO, SRI LANKA

JULY 22ND & 23RD

BMICH - COLOMBO - SRI LANKA

ENTRANCE FREE

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PROGRAM

DAY 1 – TUESDAY, 22ND JULY 2025

10:00 AM – 10:30 AM | OPENING SESSION

WELCOME REMARKS

BY TARA DE MEL - EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/BALPP

OPENING ADDRESS

BY H.E. CHANDRIKA BANDARANAIKE KUMARATUNGA

(CHAIRPERSON/BALPP) &

ALEXANDRE MARIANI

(CO-DIRECTOR OF THE SCIENCES PO SOUTH ASIA PROGRAM)

10:30 AM – 12:00 PM | PANEL 1

PROCESSES OF (DE)DEMOCRATIZATION IN SOUTH ASIA

CHAIR/DISCUSSANT: NIRA WICKRAMASINGHE

(CHAIR/PROFESSOR OF MODERN SOUTH ASIAN STUDIES AT LEIDEN UNIVERSITY
AND PROGRAM CHAIR IN SOUTH AND SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES)



SRI LANKA

RAJNI GAMAGE

RESEARCH FELLOW | INSTITUTE OF SOUTH ASIAN STUDIES (ISAS)

POPULIST POLITICS AND LOCAL GOVERNANCE IN SRI LANKA



PAKISTAN

MOHAMMAD WASEEM

(LAHORE UNIVERSITY OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES/LUMS)

**THE HYBRID REGIME IN PAKISTAN: A MODEL OF ESTABLISHMENTARIAN
DEMOCRACY**



BANGLADESH

MIRZA HASSAN AND TARIQ OMAR ALI

(BRAC UNIVERSITY)

**RUPTURE AND REFORM IN BANGLADESH: REFLECTIONS ON THE JULY
INSURRECTION AND THE POLITICS OF THE POST-INSURRECTION STATE
REFORM**

PROGRAM

12:00 PM - 2:00 PM | LUNCH BREAK

2:00 PM - 3:30 PM | PANEL 2

FEDERALISM AND VARIANTS OF DECENTRALIZATION

CHAIR/DISCUSSANT: **CHRISTOPHE JAFFRELOT**
(CERI - SCIENCES PO/CNRS)



SRI LANKA

PAIKIASOTHY SARAVANAMUTTU

(EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE CENTRE FOR POLICY ALTERNATIVES)

**OBSTACLES, IMPEDIMENTS AND POSSIBLE OPPORTUNITIES? - VARIANTS
OF FEDERALISM AND DECENTRALIZATION IN SRI LANKA**



PAKISTAN

ASMA FAIZ

(LUMS)

**FEDERALISM, INTER-GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS AND PROVINCIAL
AUTONOMY IN PAKISTAN**



INDIA

PROMA RAYCHAUDHURI

(KREA UNIVERSITY - INDIA)

**SUB-NATIONALISM AND (GENDERED) SOCIAL WELFARE REGIMES: A
STUDY OF WEST BENGAL UNDER THE ALL-INDIA TRINAMOL CONGRESS
GOVERNMENT**

PROGRAM

DAY 2 – WEDNESDAY, 23RD JULY 2025

10:00 AM – 10:10 AM | INTRODUCTION TO THE SECOND DAY

WELCOME REMARKS

BY SAMITHA HETTIGE - HEAD OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS/BALPP

10:15 AM – 11:45 AM | PANEL 3

STRENGTHENING URBAN AND LOCAL BODIES

CHAIR/DISCUSSANT: **NADEERA RAJAPAKSE**
(ASSISTANT PROFESSOR – UNIVERSITY PARIS 1, PANTHEON-SORBONNE)



SRI LANKA

MOHAMED FASLAN
(LECTURER IN POLITICAL SCIENCE AT UNIVERSITY OF COLOMBO)
**POPULISM AND THE PROSPECTS FOR RADICAL DEMOCRATIC
TRANSFORMATION IN SRI LANKA'S LOCAL GOVERNMENT: A
CONTEMPORARY REVIEW OF NPP'S POLITICS**



INDIA

LALITHA KAMATH & AMITA BHIDE
(TATA INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES/TISS)
**REVISITING INDIAN MUNICIPAL GOVERNANCE THROUGH THE LENS OF
POLYCRISIS**



BANGLADESH

SALINA AZIZ & MIRZA HASSAN
(BRAC UNIVERSITY)
**DYNAMICS OF LOCAL GOVERNANCE UNDER AN AUTHORITARIAN
DOMINANT PARTY STATE - THE CASE OF BANGLADESH 2014-2024**



PROGRAM

11:45 AM - 12:00 PM | CLOSING SESSION & CONCLUSION

REFLECTIONS ON KEY INSIGHTS FROM PANELS

VOTE OF THANKS

BY AESHANI PEREIRA - CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER/BALPP

ABSTRACTS

THE MAKING OF A MASS MOVEMENT

DR. MIRZA HASSAN AND DR. TARIQ OMAR ALI

In the context of the 2024 July mass insurrection of Bangladesh, this paper will examine how does a movement focused on a relatively narrow set of demands for quota reform became a mass uprising demanding justice and accountability. Using oral histories of protestors and supporters this paper would aim to gain a sense of when and why they joined the movement and how their demands and sentiments changed

DYNAMICS OF YOUTH POLITICS IN THE POST JULY BANGLADESH:

SYEDA SALINA AZIZ AND DR. MIRZA HASSAN

The regime-toppling July 2024 mass insurrection was led by and composed primarily of a large youth movement, now coined the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement (ADSM). Soon after the unprecedented success of the movement, the ADSM announced the formation of a new civil society actor, called the Jatiya Nagorik Committee (JNC), which translates to 'National Citizens' Committee'. The de-facto leadership of the movement had announced in late November of 2024 that the ADSM and JNC, in conjunction, are slated to launch an independent formal political party by February of 2025. This party is said to provide a new political outlet for the Bangladeshi people, with a "balanced" approach to their ideological framework that is promised to be separate from those of the traditional parties thus far. This paper aims to understand the evolution, dynamics, and direction of the student led political formations. The research aims to document the process of the political formation of the ADSM, JNC, and the prospective new political party - tracking the formation of leadership, organizational structure, organizational operations, and their interactions, negotiations, bargaining, with the interim government, other political parties, and the citizens.

SUB-NATIONALISM AND (GENDERED) SOCIAL WELFARE REGIMES: A STUDY OF WEST BENGAL UNDER THE ALL-INDIA TRINAMOOL CONGRESS GOVERNMENT.

DR. PROMA RAYCHAUDHURY

The proliferation of social welfare regimes in the form of direct benefit transfers in countries of the Global South has been a significant phenomenon of the contemporary neoliberal socioeconomic order.

In the context of Indian federalism, widely perceived as electorally viable, such welfare regimes have also emerged as sites of fierce political contestation among the central and state governments. The welfare governance(s) of opposition-ruled states have often been characterised as progressive expressions of subnational solidarity and juxtaposed in popular media against what is interpreted as the paternalist gender discourse of the welfare regime sponsored by the central government. With its focus on the All-India Trinamool Congress-led government of West Bengal, this paper will undertake an interpretivist engagement with the nature of the gender discourse informing its subnational social welfare regime. Tracing the subterranean gendered discursive congruities that underlie the respective welfare regimes of the central government and the state government of West Bengal, the paper indicates the shared interdiscursive space that is inhabited by both the governmental entities in the administration of their respective social welfare regimes.

REVISITING INDIAN MUNICIPAL GOVERNANCE THROUGH THE LENS OF POLYCRISIS

LALITHA KAMATH AND AMITA BHIDE

This paper asserts that being in a polycrisis is not new for Indian municipalities. A revival promised by a constitutional amendment for decentralizing governance in 1993 has been largely quashed except for some symbolic actions. On the other hand, an ad hoc, centralizing urban reform agenda since the late 90s has introduced solutions that promise more challenges than those it seeks to redress. The contemporary moment of intensified pressures from deteriorating urban climates only magnifies the need for greater local capacities to respond to urban crises of various kinds and scales. But in a time when the need for decentralized democratic governance is urgent, municipalities seem shorn of the institutional knowledge, and political and financial power to take on intersecting governance challenges. This paper discusses how incapacity differently hobbles both large cities, like Mumbai, as well as smaller towns that form the bulk of the Indian municipal experience and why this should concern us.

FEDERALISM, INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS AND PROVINCIAL AUTONOMY IN PAKISTAN

ASMA FAIZ

Federalism in Pakistan is shaped by patterns of both cooperation and conflict between the centre and provinces. A key aspect of this federal system is the interaction that takes place at the intergovernmental level. This presentation will attempt to analyze the nature of federalism in the country through the lens of intergovernmental relations (IGR).

I will focus on two critical junctures in the constitutional history: the 1973 Constitution and the 2010 18th Amendment. The 1973 Constitution set up the architecture of intergovernmental relations in Pakistan through creation of conflict-management mechanisms, especially the Council of Common Interest (CCI). The 2010 18th Amendment sought to transfer 40 out of 47 legislative subjects from Islamabad to provincial capitals and enhanced the latter's share of the divisible pool from 46% to 56%, followed by 57.5% for the subsequent years. My presentation will map the trajectory of the federation-province interaction, with a particular focus on Sindh. In this context, I will analyze the downturn in Islamabad-Karachi relations in the light of the controversy about water distribution between the two provinces of Punjab and Sindh which was triggered by the federal project of digging up six canals from the river Indus in the first quarter of the year 2025.

THE HYBRID REGIME IN PAKISTAN: A MODEL OF ESTABLISHMENTARIAN DEMOCRACY

MOHAMMAD WASEEM

The 2024 elections in Pakistan fully brought out the defining variables of the prevalent democratic setup in terms of a diarchic arrangement for sharing power between the political class and the military establishment. In recent decades, a military takeover has been discounted in favour of democracy for being the only game in the town, given the appetite for ballot in the mass public. In this model, the establishment supported certain leaders and parties, e.g. Imran Khan and his party Pakistan Tehreek Insaf (PTI) in 2018 and Nawaz Sharif and his party Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N) in 2024 as part of a party alliance Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM). Pursuant upon the Sharifs' traditional claim to Punjab as their stronghold, the choice of Nawaz's younger brother Shehbaz Sharif as prime minister was a foregone conclusion. In Sindh, the PPP was given a relatively free hand in elections as part of the envisioned post-election coalition government. In the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), the PTI's immense popularity ensured that its march to electoral victory and formation of government was incontrovertible. However, the establishment found in it a mechanism of control by way of developing the party's stakes in the system. In Balochistan, the election was allegedly outsourced to the mainstream parties PPP and PML-N at the gross expense of ethnic parties.

POPULISM AND THE PROSPECTS FOR RADICAL DEMOCRATIC TRANSFORMATION IN SRI LANKA'S LOCAL GOVERNMENT: A CONTEMPORARY REVIEW OF NPP'S POLITICS

MOHAMED FASLAN

Local government institutions occupy a pivotal role in the processes of democracy and democratization.

In contrast, Uyangoda (2015) critiques the local government system in Sri Lanka, asserting that it has largely failed to facilitate social inclusion and democratization. In this context, the question arises: can the National People's Power (NPP) government facilitate a radical democratic transformation of local government institutions through its brand of populist politics? Following its electoral victories in the 2024 presidential and parliamentary elections and the 2025 local government elections, the NPP has positioned itself as a political force capable of redefining the existing order. Unlike the populism associated with the Rajapaksa regime and other previous administrations, the NPP's approach appears to bring a new class of actors from the socio-economic periphery into the political center. Nevertheless, local government bodies in Sri Lanka have historically functioned more as administrative extensions of the central government rather than as genuine instruments of devolved governance. They have frequently been associated with corruption, patronage politics, and the exclusion of marginalized communities—both socially and democratically. Although the NPP has not yet made significant strides toward meaningful devolution of power, particularly in relation to the country's longstanding ethnic conflict, it has demonstrated a commitment to combating corruption, promoting social inclusion, and challenging entrenched patronage networks. Achieving a transformative shift in local governance will require a radical reimagining of democratic practices. The adoption of a radical democratic framework, which emphasizes equality, justice, and the empowerment of marginalized groups, may offer a viable pathway toward this transformation. While the NPP's attempt to balance neoliberal economic policies with leftist ideological commitments may appear contradictory, this synthesis has the potential to foster a more inclusive and democratic local governance structure in Sri Lanka.

POPULIST POLITICS AND LOCAL GOVERNANCE IN SRI LANKA

DR. RAJNI GAMAGE

The politics surrounding power devolution and sub-national governance in Sri Lanka have played a critical role in state formation and state society relations (Uyangoda, 2013; Bastian, 2025). Local political representatives serve as the most immediate point of contact between the state and its citizens. [1] In Sri Lanka, the main sub-national governance measures emerged often in response to demands for greater power devolution, in the context of conflict over political rights and unequal distribution of resources from the centre to the peripheral regions (Matthews, 1994; Kelegama, 2015). However, in practice, the formation, structure, and conduct of local governance have often ended up reinforcing the power of the national government.

[1] Local councils are primarily involved in regulatory and administrative functions related to roads, housing, public parks, and similar areas.

Sri Lanka has witnessed a rise in populist politics, particularly since 2005, characterized by deeply polarizing narratives that shape national discourse (Jayasinghe, 2020). At times, local elections reveal the limits of these dominant national narratives. This is largely due to countervailing electoral dynamics such as grassroots realities, material conditions, and the personal networks of candidates, which tend to play a more significant role in local political contests. Although national political narratives shape the direction and intensity of political polarization, local government elections are also influenced by on-the-ground conditions and candidate relationships within communities.

At a time of growing populism and heightened polarization during election cycles, as seen in Sri Lanka in recent years, local governments present a valuable opportunity to examine how populism operates. They illustrate the interaction between bottom-up support and top-down efforts to promote populist politics, driven by both demand side pressures such as economic crisis, widening inequality, and cultural backlash, and supply side influences including polarizing leadership and divisive communication technologies. This paper critically examines the the 2025 local elections in Sri Lanka, with a focus on the impact of populist politics on local government structures. It explores both the implications and manifestations of populism in the local electoral context, in an environment increasingly defined by heightened, zero-sum political competition and shifting dynamics of political alliance formation alongside increasing fragmentation of the political party system.

OBSTACLES, IMPEDIMENTS AND POSSIBLE OPPORTUNITIES? - VARIANTS OF FEDERALISM AND DECENTRALIZATION IN SRI LANKA

DR PAIKIASOTHY SARAVANAMUTTU

Federalism has been a controversial idea and issue in Sri Lankan politics.

It was first mentioned in articles by former Prime Minister S.W.R.D Bandaranaike in the 1920s and then espoused by the Up Country or Kandyan Sinhalese in constitutional discussions. It surfaces again in 1957, after the Sinhala -Tamil communal riots in the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayagam Pact, which sought to resolve issues between the majority Sinhala and minority Tamil communities, but abandoned in the face of majority Sinhala opposition. In the intervening period ethnic relations worsened leading to the outbreak of the civil war in 1983. In 1987, it surfaces yet again with the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord and the subsequent 13th Amendment to the Constitution. Once again it was mooted in the peace talks between the Government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

The Provincial Councils Act which the Accord gave birth to established Provincial Councils in Sri Lanka within the confines of the unitary state. The Northern and Eastern Provinces were to merged subject to a referendum with police and land powers given to the province – police powers up to a Senior Superintendent. The latter two powers have yet to be devolved anywhere in the country and the referendum was never held. The merger of the Northern and Eastern provinces has been dissolved through the Courts. Currently, the minimum political demand of the Tamil polity is the full implementation of the Thirteenth Amendment, despite the de-emphasis of it in Indo-Sri Lankan bilateral communiques of 2025 and the vote of the population in the north and east for the current Janata Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) /National Peoples' Alliance (NPP) in the last general election of November 2024. This result changed in the Local Government Elections of May 2025 with a resurgence of the Tamil political parties' vote.

Federalism also surfaced in the peace talks between the Sri Lankan government and the Tamil Tigers at the end of 2003 when both sides agreed to explore a settlement based on federal lines. The LTTE responded for the first time with its proposed political settlement – the Interim Self -Governing Authority (ISGA) based more along confederal rather than federal lines and the Sri Lankan President in turn dismissed ministers in the cohabitation government with the United National Party (UNP) resulting eventually in the general election of April 2004 at which the UNP was trounced and the ruling party returned to power with a parliamentary majority including some 39 JVP members.

The frustration of the Tamil polity with regard to the full implementation of the Thirteenth Amendment, in effect their minimum demand for a lasting settlement, has seen sections of it vowing to go further, backed by elements of the Tamil diaspora. The current government has promised a new constitution in the third or fourth year of its term and it remains to be seen as to how much more it would agree to in terms of Tamil political demands.

The principal issue with regard to the acceptance of federalism as the form of government in Sri Lanka is the majority Sinhala community's fear that it constitutes the stepping stone to secession. As the political history of the country records, federalism has been presented in the political discourse as the basis for the resolution of the ethnic conflict and not as a constitutional system for the whole country. This has been somewhat compounded by the Tamil name of the Federal Party which includes the word "state". The exception to this was the Government's constitutional proposal in August 2001 to establish a Union of Regions which was preceded by an island-wide public education campaign on its proposed contents. This was however, rejected by the Opposition in Parliament.

The salience of federalism in the political discourse has diminished somewhat in the face of the Aragalaya- the mass movement which led to the resignation of President Gotabaya Rajapaksha from office- and campaign against corruption. In addition, the apparent reduction in the role of India re the 13th Amendment and the rise of economic factors in the bilateral relationship, can also be cited. However, as the local government election results attest, it has not disappeared and lies beneath the surface.

The extent of devolution or decentralization in the Sri Lankan context is bounded by the Thirteenth Amendment and the Provincial Councils Act. What is important to stress is that devolution is permitted as long as it does not exceed the bounds of Article 2 of the Constitution which declares Sri Lanka to be a unitary state. The Supreme Court of Sri Lanka so determined by a majority of one.

The majority community's obsession with the unitary state stems from a fear that secession would lead to even greater Indian influence in Sri Lanka - although the LTTE for instance was resolutely opposed to this. Greater interdependence with India is the invariable outcome of recent agreements between Colombo and New Delhi and the probable economic trajectory of the future decade. It is ironic that the most anti-Indian political party in the country, the JVP, which launched an armed insurrection against the Accord and the stationing of Indian Peace Keeping Forces in the country in 1988/89, should once in government take Sri Lanka deeper into the Indian camp of influence and interest. Economic interdependence could conceivably prevail where political initiatives have failed.

Devolution in the Sri Lankan context is a direct consequence of Tamil political demands and the Thirteenth Amendment, which also made Tamil an official language, has been seen as being under the aegis of India. In addition, whilst there was no demand for federalism or greater devolution elsewhere in the country since independence, devolution in Sri Lanka is island wide. In effect the powers granted under this Amendment are similar and do not exceed the powers of an Indian state.

Under this system, the nine provinces each have an elected Provincial Council with a Chief Minister who commands the support of the majority of the Council and a Governor appointed by the Executive President at the Centre. The Governor as the appointee of the President is in effect the real power confirming that the balance of power of devolution in Sri Lanka is firmly weighted in favour of the Centre. Many Chief Ministers have confirmed this. In addition, whilst there are three lists of powers- the National in the hands of the Centre, the Provincial in the hands of the Provincial Council and the Concurrent over which both the Centre and Province are supposed to share power. In practice the Centre always prevails, using national policy to trump provincial authority.

Originally, when the system was created and devolution granted to the entire country, the minority predominant Northern and Eastern Provinces were merged into one Council with the President given the discretion of polling the east on their preference of a merger and its permanence. This referendum was never held but Court action has deemed the merger unconstitutional and therefore the North and East constitute two separate provinces, respectively.

Decentralization through a tier of local governance predates the system of provincial devolution. Constitutionally though local government falls under the remit of the Provincial Councils. There are quotas for youth and women in local councils. Whilst local government elections were finally held on the 6th of June after years of delay, provincial elections are still pending for over a decade. The consequences of this is that government is run entirely from the Centre.

The arguments for federalism and decentralization are those of subsidiarity in general and a degree of autonomy to the ethnic minorities in the provinces where they are the predominant part of the population. The latter argument is at the heart of the majority community opposition to federalism and more devolution on the grounds that it would facilitate secession. For instance, there is ingrained opposition to the full implementation of the Thirteenth Amendment where the province is accorded powers over land and over policing up to a certain level. The fear here is of an armed police force serving as the basis for another insurgency. The counter-arguments are of course that the historical record of government entirely from the Centre led to an almost 30 -year civil war and that now, given that there is some devolution, there is no going back.

Despite the commitment to “system change”, the current government’s emphasis on anti -corruption and a united, one Sri Lanka, results in it overlooking the political demands of the minorities. In this it was buoyed by the results of the 2024 general election in which it won majorities in the north over the traditional ethnic parties. Consequently, greater devolution and indeed provincial council elections are up to debate.

The future of federalism is therefore bleak; decentralization too could suffer a similar fate. It should be noted that in the local government elections the president declared that non-JVP councils could face problems with regard to resources on the grounds that they would have to be vetted more diligently for corruption and malpractice.

In this respect, the culture and structure of power in Sri Lanka is indeed vary unitarist with power and authority consolidated at the centre.

AUTHORS & PANELISTS

Proma Raychaudhury presently works as an Assistant Professor of Politics at Krea University, India. She completed her PhD at the School of Law and Government at Dublin City University under the EU Marie Curie ETN Global India Fellowship. Her thesis is titled, 'Gender and Political Parties: Pathways to Women's Political Participation'. Her research interests involve gender and politics, feminist Institutionalism, populism, and right-wing politics. She has published peer-reviewed papers and public articles in several fora.

Lalitha Kamath is an urbanist who works at the intersection of urban infrastructure, urban planning and governance and the environment. She teaches at the Centre for Urban Policy & Governance, Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai.

Amita Bhide teaches at the Centre for Urban Policy & Governance at Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. Her recent work studies changes in urban local governance.

Asma Faiz is Associate Professor of Political Science at Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS), Pakistan. She is the author of *In Search of Lost Glory: Sindhi Nationalism in Pakistan* (Hurst Publishers, 2021). Dr. Faiz is the 2025 Charles Wallace Fellow at University of Nottingham, UK.

Mohammad Waseem is Professor Emeritus in Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS), Pakistan. He is the author of *Political conflict in Pakistan* (Hurst, 2021).

Nira Wickramasinghe is Chair/Professor of Modern South Asian Studies at Leiden University and Program Chair in South and Southeast Asian studies. Before moving to Leiden, she was for 19 years a senior lecturer and professor in the Department of History at the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka. Her research centers on issues of belonging and everyday life under colonialism in Sri Lanka and the Indian Ocean. She has been, inter alia, a Fellow at the Davis Center for Historical Studies at Princeton University, a British Academy Visiting Professor at the University of Oxford a Fulbright Senior Scholar at New York University, a fellow at the Gilder Lehman Center for Slavery Resistance and Abolition at Yale, and a member at the School of Historical Studies at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton. She is presently heading a large scale 4 year Dutch research foundation project called *Forgotten Lineages: Afterlives of Dutch Slavery in the Indian Ocean World* and writing a world history of cinnamon for St Martin's Press (Macmillan).

Nadeera Rajapakse is a member of the research department PHARE, which specialises in the history of economic thought at the University of Paris 1, Pantheon-Sorbonne. It is interdisciplinary (at the intersection of economics, history, philosophy, literature and social sciences). Nadeera has been working on three major research topics recently:

- 1) development and identities, exploring identity politics in colonial and post-colonial settings and their impacts on development trajectories,
- 2) migration and its representation in economics, for which she has used Amartya Sen's capability approach to discuss the nexus between migration and development. She has also focused on the concept of vulnerabilities relating to women migrant workers, markets and their role in ensuring freedoms, as well as the social value of low-skilled (migrant) work.
- 3) global mobilities and freedoms, discussing hierarchies and power relations that shape freedoms and restrictions to movement.

Christophe Jaffrelot is Senior research fellow at CERI-Sciences Po/CNRS, Professor of Indian Politics and Sociology at the King's India Institute (London), President of the French Political Science Association and Chair of the British Association for South Asian Studies. In 2023, he was appointed co-director of the Sciences Po South Asia Program. He is also a Non Resident Fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and a Permanent Consultant at the Centre for Policy Planning Staff of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He's currently part of three research projects on "Shared sacred sites in South Asia", "Muslims in India" and "The Indian Media".

Paikiasothy Saravanamuttu is the founder Executive Director of the Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA), was a member of the Foreign Policy Advisory Group to the Foreign Minister of Sri Lanka and the Board of the Lakshman Kadirgamar Institute for International and Strategic Studies. He currently is a member of the Board and Bureau of South Asians for Human Rights (SAHR), a member of the Board of the South Asia Regional Office of Amnesty International and on the Advisory Committee of the Bandaranaike Centre for International Studies (BCIS). Dr. Saravanamuttu is a founder director of the Sri Lanka Chapter of Transparency International and a founding Co- Convener of the Centre for Monitoring Election Violence (CMEV), which has monitored all the major elections in Sri Lanka since 1997 and the civil society alliance the Platform for Freedom.

Mohamed Faslan is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Warsaw, Poland, and a lecturer in political science at the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka. He has taught ERASMUS undergraduates at the University of Warsaw from 2021 to 2023. He worked as a researcher at the International Centre for Ethnic Studies (ICES), Colombo Sri Lanka. His research interests cover ethnic politics, identity politics, religious politics, and radicalization. He was awarded an IDUB research grant from the University of Warsaw in 2023 and a research grant from the University of Zurich, Switzerland, in 2022.

