

**‘Flying High Beneath the Wings of Red Dragon’
Cats-paw States and Rising Chinese Hegemony in South Asia**

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Introduction

In the geopolitical globality, the stability of a certain global hegemony is not realistic when a leading state cannot keep the control over proxy states. The proxy states are more or less in persuading power in their own terms and strategies in a dynamically competitive geopolitical agenda. The ‘Proxy’ refers to the alternative agents who can be instrumented momentarily with a greater stand point of *strategic-opportunisms* of capitalist world power.

Generally, this kind of research identify the fact that magnetising, weakening states and their politics to be ‘*unconditionally opportunistic*¹’ in persuading power and neo-liberal economic prosperity. This study objectifies the role of China which is the Communist head with Capitalist body. Some of the existing literatures also provide an imperative access to this statement (e.g. see: Foot, 2006; Callahan, 2008; LUE, 2010). Recent experience from China-Sri Lanka bilateral relationships indicates that how China uses ‘*its aid – the dragon kiss*’ (material and normative forms of power) to cripple the intensity for better cooperation along with the neighboring states in South Asian region.

¹ Make use of immediate opportunities, especially regardless of planning or principle and no matter what else happen.

Objectives

Objectives of this study are delivered through two equivalently important portions. Initial portion intend to identify the Chinese position and power within the geopolitical arena of South Asian nations. The second portion is to examine the nature of relationship between China and Sri Lanka within the post-war context and its repercussions to the regional integration of South Asia.

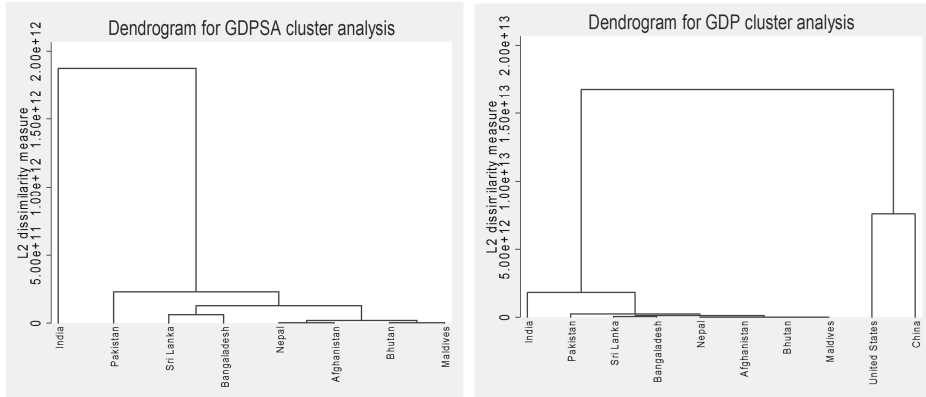
Methodology

This study basically depends on secondary data and use '*Hierarchical Cluster analysis*' to identify material and normative powers of China as an uprising hegemony in the South Asia. Hierarchical cluster analysis is a method to find relatively homogenous clusters of cases based on measured characteristics. This study constructs a '*Dendrogram*' which is a branching diagram that represents the relationship among a similar group of entities. In addition to that, we use recent statistical evidences to identify the post war political economic discourses in Sri Lanka to verify the role of cats-paw states beneath the supremacy of Chinese power. Study uses GDP, Total population and Military expenditure in an average from 2002-14. The sample group comprises all South Asian countries, the United States and China. Required data are obtained by the World Bank, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) and the CBSL.

Results and Discussion

From the Hierarchical Cluster analysis, everything is set to recognize the impact of various forms of material and normative forms of powers of China as well as South Asian countries. For this purposes we use separate Dendrogram for each material force.

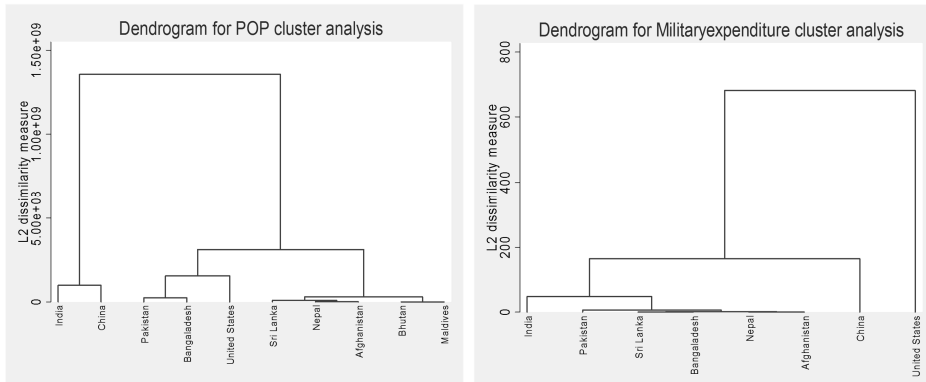
Figure 1 and 2: Cluster analysis for GDP without and with China



Source: Authors preparation using the World Bank data

Figure 3 and 4: Cluster analysis for Population and Military

Expenditure



Source: Authors preparation using the data from World Bank and SPIRI

In the above graph, 1st panel of Figure 1 and 2 shows the cluster analysis of GDP without China and 2nd panel shows with China. Economic growth of a country will stimulate the sector vice production, facilitation and the degree of feasibility to connect with the world. As in Figure 1, Indian GDP is substantially different from the distribution of remaining South Asian countries and opening the trail for India to be a hegemonic state in South Asia. On the other hand, Figure 2 shows

how South Asia differs from the United States and China. It is clear evident that China is fit to be the next world dominant and with most influential characteristics in near future. Therefore capitalist power may transfer from a particular hegemony to another. However, stability of certain hegemony may produce similar results on subordinate states likely the recent impact from China.

Figure 3 and 4 represents the cluster analysis for population (panel 1) and military expenditure (panel 2) for all the countries which were included in the sample. Higher population in a country will lower the average wage rate and higher the competition among people to be employed. As in panel 1, size of the population separates the South Asian countries to different clusters. China and India have been clustered under the same clade and exceeds the United States from the size of population. Therefore both China and India got more advantage from the population to materialize their power in numerous ways. Then China intends to send their cheap labor to neighboring countries. Panel 2 illustrates that the superiority of military power of United States when compared to other countries. Military power is one of the major components that determine the material power of hegemony. Hence, we can observe that all Hegemonic states such as United States, China and India are in higher position of military strength compared to other countries.

The second part of analysis uses some vital statistical facts from China-South Asia relations under the Sri Lankan post war context. As mention in Figure 1 in Annexure, China was the largest lender to Sri Lanka which had 65 percent of its total pledge assistance fulfilled. However other countries in South Asia received proportionally lower shares with compared to Sri Lanka. Therefore these kinds of evidences reveal the fact that, Chinese aid had become the major solution for Sri Lankan post war strategies. Hence this provides an easy access for China to manipulate Sri Lankan strategies and uses Sri Lanka as a cats-paw state to establish the origin in South Asian region to expand their power and assistance confront to the United States. Whereas United States uses indirect proxies such as Pakistan for this purposes. As in Figure 2 in

Annexure, the growing foreign debt is a serious economic concern for Sri Lanka. In the context of total debt, Chinese contribution demonstrates an increasing trend. In addition to that, Sri Lankan government intend to use more and more foreign borrowings, specially debts to resolve the balance of payment difficulties caused by the widening trade deficit.

Conclusion

The study concludes that the dominant global ideology which demonstrates global hegemonic stability comprehensively stabilizes the power architecture and well-off the subordinate states, is nothing but an ideological *fiasco*. The study formulate a counter argument that uprising global hegemony, whether the China accumulate and extend its power through a great opportunisms of power in keeping subordinate states under the rule of various material and normative powers of their own terms. Hierarchical Cluster Analyze results verify that the Chinese opportunism become a super power within the South Asian region is real, which confronts India.

When we critically examine the post war economy of Sri Lanka, it clearly express that the situation of ‘looking for opportunities’. The ‘looking for opportunities’ operates as a dichotomy where the country has to decide what the opportunities are and who offers them. This is the same conjunction where, as the study argues, the country’s political economic process became a proxy or tracked into a ‘Cats-paw’ status.

The study foresees that the contemporary status and the path-forward of the country as a hegemonic proxy which could be ended up in a *catastrophe*², where beyond our perception and visualization at this moment. Ultimately, this may plant a common threat within South Asia while undermine and weakening the regional integration and make it very easy for China to persuade their power over Asia, and over the whole world in the future.

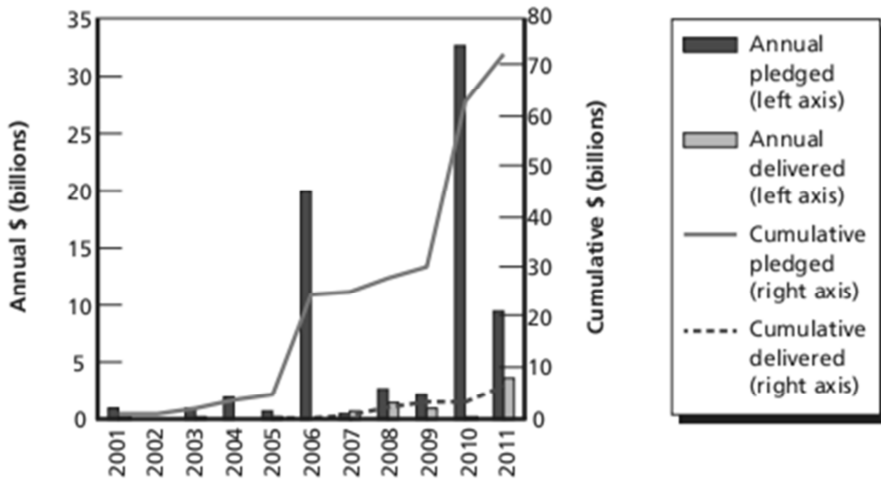
² A momentous tragic event ranging from extreme misfortune to utter overthrow a ruin. Simply, it is an event causing great and usually sudden damage or suffering.

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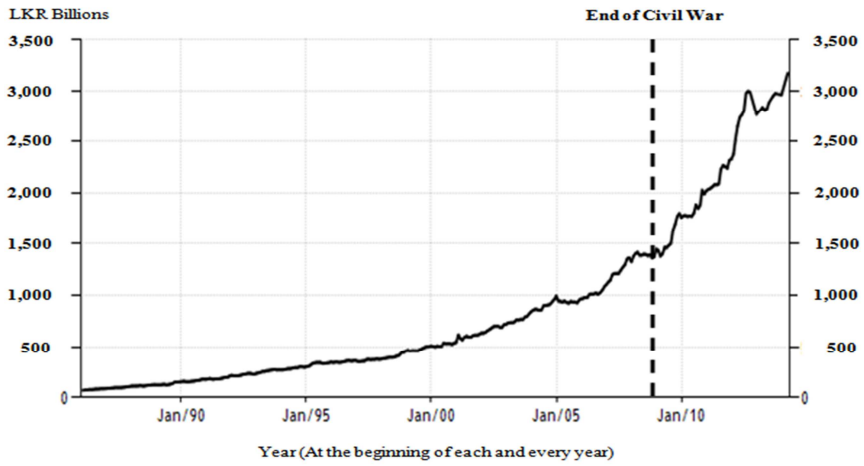
Annexures

Figure 1: Annual and Cumulative Estimates of Pledged and Delivered Foreign Aid and Government-Sponsored Investment Activities from China to South Asia.



Source: wolf et al. 2013

Figure 2: Sri Lanka's External Debt in LKR Billions from 1986-2014



Source: www.tradingeconomics.com | Central Bank of Sri Lanka