

**IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF SINO-INDIAN COMPETITION ON SMALL STATES OF
THE INDIAN OCEAN REGION**

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LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

I certify that this dissertation entitled “Impact Assessment of Sino-Indian Rivalry on Small States of the Indian Ocean Region” was prepared by Bibhu Sharma under my supervision. I hereby recommend the dissertation for final examination by the Research Committee Master’s in International Relations and Diplomacy, Tribhuvan University, in fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of MASTER’S IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND DIPLOMACY.

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Approval

Declaration

I hereby declare that this dissertation is my own work and that it contains no materials previously published. I have not used its materials for the award of any kind of any other degree. Where other authors' sources of information have been used, they have been acknowledged.

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Abstract

The intricacy of the relation between China and India has been remarkable in contemporary international politics. As much as the different dimensions of their bilateral relationships have been studied in academia and media, the impact of their competitive relation on other states has received comparatively scarce attention. However, the impacts of Sino-Indian competition have been vivid within the small states of the Indian Ocean Region, given that the economic and military ambitions of both the rising states have been significantly prolific on the naval front. Among the countries within the region, being geographically closer to the Sino-Indian dyad, the Maldives and Sri Lanka have experienced the impact of the competition on a profound level.

To assess the impact, this research has considered Sino-Indian competition and the impacts to have a cause and effect relationship. Ontologically the research ponders upon foundationalism while it utilizes realism as the epistemological position. This further facilitates the research to study the influence within the context of the international structure. Moreover, competition is an independent variable within the study, while different dimensions such as geo-economics, IR, foreign policy, and security are the dependent variables. The design of the research has been implemented using two relevant approaches: descriptive approach and case study approach. For the assessment of the impact of Sino-Indian competition, the Sino-Indian relation has to be unambiguously discussed through theoretical and historical means. As mentioned above, the epistemological position within the research being realism, the paradigm of offensive realism, and the theory of Enduring International Rivalry (EIR) has been considered suitable theoretical viewpoints to model the Sino-Indian relation. Through the offensive realist lens, China can be considered a potential regional hegemon, taking into account the military and

economic capabilities. Moreover, China having authoritarian leadership and pushing for transnational connectivity through Belt and Road Initiative further corroborates the status of China as a potential regional hegemon. In such a scenario, India takes the role of offshore balancer for another regional hegemon United States to balance the aggression of China, giving rise to the nested security dilemma.

Through the exploration of impacts on the small states, the research has developed a picture of the forms of impacts that are inflicted and has also revealed the historical as well as the contemporary context of those impacts. The research findings suggest profound impacts upon economic, political, foreign policy and security dimensions of the small states. These evidences of the impact of influence were corroborated by the comparative study of Sri Lanka and the Maldives. Interestingly, both the countries shared striking similarities in their experience corresponding to the same time frame. Besides, the research has also delineated the Sino-Indian relation from theoretical as well as historical perspectives. The findings from this research can be the foundation for understanding the regional implication of the competition.

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List of Abbreviations

BOP	:	Balance of Payment
BRI	:	Belt Road Initiative
BUCG	:	Beijing Urban Construction Group
CSR	:	Coastal Service Radar
EIR	:	Enduring International Rivalry
FDI	:	Foreign Direct Investment
FOCAC	:	Forum on China Africa Cooperation
FTA	:	Free Trade Area
GDP	:	Gross Domestic Product
IPKF	:	Indian Peace Keeping Force
INIA	:	Ibrahim Nasir International Airport
IMF	:	International Monetary Fund
LTTE	:	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
LSSP	:	Lanka Sama Samaja Party
MEP	:	Mahajana Eksath Peramuna
NEFA	:	North Eastern Frontier Agency
PLOTE	:	People's Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam
PPP	:	Purchase Power Parity
RAF	:	Royal Air Force
RAW	:	Research and Analysis Wing
SLFP	:	Sri Lanka Freedom Party
UPA	:	United Progressive Alliance
UNP	:	United Nationalist Party
VLSSP	:	Viplavkari Lanka Sama Samaja Party

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background

Recent years have seen a significant shift in the global economy, owing to the unprecedented growth of two Asian giants- China and India, which has even corroborated the notion of ‘Rise of the Rest’. The authoritarian-capitalist model of the Chinese economy is predicted to surpass the United States economy by 2029(Bremmer, 2017), whereas considering the GDP growth rate, India is only second to China, among major economies of the world (IMF, 2018). Appending to their economic superiority, the avenue paved by their huge population, vast geography, military capability, resources, political influence and most notably the vehement intent of both the nations to upsurge their global status, have already threatened the proponents of the contemporary global status quo.

However, their bilateral relationship does not project the same optimism as projected by their growth and escalation. In his words, the former defense minister of India George Fernandez, accused China, not Pakistan, as “the number one threat of India” (Burns, 1998). Apparently, the capricious nature of Sino-India relations became evident just within a decade of the formal establishment of diplomatic relations(Zhu, 2011). On 29 April 1954, China and India signed “Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence”, regardless of which, a brief border war erupted just eight years later in 1962, taking relating to the nadir (Bajpae, 2015). A state of mistrust and belligerence erupted out of the Chinese claim of Aksai Chin and India’s decision of granting asylum to the fourteenth Dalai Lama (Guha, 2012). It was followed by a series of military clashes in 1967 between India and China in Nathu La and Cho La (Patranobis, 2018) during which more than a hundred Indian soldiers and Chinese soldiers of similar numbers were found casualties (Fravel, 2008). Consequently, the relationship faced further atrocities for several more

years. In addition to that, during the Cold War, the rivalry internationalized when India signed the Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Co-operation with the Soviet Union, amidst the Sino-Soviet split, while the United States and China aided Pakistan during the India-Pakistan War of 1971 (Zhu, 2011).

As China had already tested the nuclear device by 1964, becoming the first Asian nation to acquire nuclear capability, India followed and launched a nuclear test in 1974 (Guha, 2012). The period was harshly antagonistic for the bilateral relationship and even exposes the shift from Jawaharlal Nehru's pacifist foreign policy to Indira Gandhi's 'hard realism' (Jain, 2004), exacerbating the situation further. However, Gandhi soon realized the pressing need of mending relations with the neighbor and as such, it resulted in the restoration of diplomatic relations with Beijing in 1976 after a gap of 14 years and the effort to normalize even continued under Morarji Desai's leadership in 1977 (Jain, 2004). Deng Xiaoping even proposed that China would acknowledge the claim of India over the North Eastern Frontier Agency (NEFA) if India would do the same for Aksai Chin (Guha, 2012).

The contentious border issue is one among several reasons why the prospect of peace and cooperation faced impediments and could not ever materialize. For instance, when the seventh round of border talks was being held in 1986, tension flared around Sumdorong Chu Valley in Arunachal Pradesh where China accused India of occupying China's 90,000 square miles of land (Sali, 1998). The world community was fearful of the prospect of war due to belligerence demonstrated by both nations (Jain, 2004). It was not until August of 2017 the two nations engaged in similar standoffs and this time around the China-Bhutan border where Indian forces stood opposed to the Chinese. It was claimed that the acrimony faced by the Sino-Indian relations during that event was unmatched since the war of 1962 (Jash, 2017).

Relying only upon the instances of antagonism, it would be inappropriate to delineate the relation as purely rivalry. There have also been frequent efforts by both sides to appease the relation and forge a better and proliferative relation. Various approaches such as reciprocal state visits, bilateral agreements, strengthening bilateral trades have been undertaken (Chong, 2016). However, issues such as that of Dalai Lama or that of the border, deliver complications and positive efforts do not find a solid conclusion. History of the Sino-Indian relation reveals crests and troughs in their bilateral relationship and that attribute of relation apparently has profound impacts internally and externally. Not only that their growth has been hindered, but the internal and external political dynamics of other states in the region seem to be directly or indirectly affected by the spillover effect.

As numerous events suggest, the spillover of the Sino-Indian rivalry has expanded from bilateral to a regional level and the maritime domain can be the appropriate site to assess the “nested security dilemma” between these two nations (Gilboy & Heginbotham, 2012). While India considers the Indian Ocean her strategic backyard(Blake, 2017), expansion of the Chinese Navy towards the Indian Ocean, from the Indian perspective is considered as aggression (Holmes, 2017) or more specifically the “strategic encirclement” (Chong, 2016). On the other hand, as mentioned earlier, China considers maritime development as a cardinal tool to foster economic gain and to advance her international position; the Indian Ocean region is the most appropriate site to manifest these aims. Economically, China performs 70% of her trade through the Indian Ocean, while 80% of her petroleum imports also travel through important choke points of the Indian Ocean (Karim, 2017). With these perspectives, there seem to be conspicuous interests for both India and China within the region.

The conflict of interest of both parties within the region does not seem to perish but apparently is growing and has produced a spillover effect over the countries of the region and the effect is more significantly perceivable within the small states of the region. As Chinese advancement within the region became more conspicuous, the aberrations within various aspects of the small states began to surface. This variance further staggered when India recognized her waning pertinence and officiated several resistances against the advancement. It is not at all unusual that the small states which were barely recognized by the international media attracted unprecedented attention. Small states of the region such as Comoros, Djibouti, Maldives, Mauritius, Madagascar, Sri Lanka and Seychelles found themselves amidst the international focus as the great power competition took its course. Interestingly, these states share a striking resemblance regarding how the impacts were experienced. Therefore, this study attempts to construct a relevant connection of the competition of China and India, in a historic as well as contemporary context, with the small states of the region, based upon the commonality that was just mentioned.

1.2 Statement of Problem

Power transition theory posits that the dominant powers have a high probability of entering into a conflict(Organski, 1958). And based upon the prevalence of influence relation between dominant actors and regional small states, the probability of such rivalries inflicting impacts on the small states of the region is equally plausible(Miller & Kagan, 1997). Similarly, the Sino-Indian rivalry has become a regional phenomenon and is affecting the domestic and foreign affairs of countries within the region. The effect of rivalry is more evident in the Indian Ocean Region and countries within. The rivalry undoubtedly has profound impacts upon the region, however, scrupulous assessment of the impact of the competition would not be possible without

an articulated study of policies and policy-based actions of both the nations, considering the contemporary political dynamics. How has the Sino-Indian competition impacted the small South Asian island nations in the Indian Ocean? Through such assessments, the study attempts to address the historical and contemporary context of the Sino-Indian competition along with its impact upon the small states of the region.

1.3 Research Questions

Specifically, the research aims to explore the following questions:

1. Why/How has the Sino-Indian competition come to the fore in the Indian Ocean region?
2. What are the historical impacts of Sino-Indian competition on small states?
3. How has the Sino-Indian competition affected the security and economy of small states?

1.4 Objectives

The study primarily aims to delineate the long-term implications of Sino-India competition on countries around the Indian Ocean Region, through impact assessment of contemporary as well as historical events, ideas, and documents. The specific objectives of the study are:

1. To delineate the historical and contemporary context of the Sino-Indian competition
2. To analyze the historical impacts of the Sino-Indian competition on the small states of the Indian Ocean Region
3. To assess the effect of competition in security and economy of small states

1.5 Hypothesis

The study hypothesizes that both China and India have continued to exert significant influence in the region around the Indian Ocean. The nature of influence post-second world war

has been more prominent and relevant. The competition has generated benefits to the states on a short-term basis but exacerbated political and social unrest in the long-run.

1.6 Delimitation

Geographically, Indian Ocean Region refers to a vast region encompassing numerous countries and a myriad of geographical features. The vastness of the region has incorporated numerous elements and with them the existence of a number of issues. The research mainly focuses on the countries which intersect the Indian Ocean Region with the region of South Asia. This means that the scope of the research confines within Maldives and Sri Lanka, the two small Indian Ocean states which are geographically closest to the Sino-Indian dyad, and both enduring astringent political turmoil lately. However, the intrinsic challenge associated with this delimitation is to derive a profound insight regarding the small states of the region based on the case studies of two countries. This can be ensured when special attention is given to the methodology so that the validity of the case studies can be maintained.

1.7 Significance of the study

There is an array of publications in both the mass media as well as academics regarding the topic of this sort. A glut of arguments addressing the subject is available within those publications. But most of these studies constrict themselves with the historical context of China and India, while very few studies also consider the context of small states. Moreover, a significant quantity of literature, mainly within the popular media, ponders merely upon the events, while there is a shortage of studies that consider a proper theoretical framework to synthesize the arguments. This study attempts to eschew such theoretical paucity by ensuring the proper placement of the argument in the framework along with the evidence. On the one hand, this assignment makes the argument systematic and pertinent, while on the other, it lays an

opportunity to condition the theory with the real application. The significance can be bolstered even more for the theory of offensive realism as it is rarely accustomed with the study of small states. Therefore, the significance of the study can be projected towards both directions, as mentioned.

1.8 Organization of thesis

The thesis basically consists of the introductory contents, body contents and the final portion that basically addresses the implications and conclusions. Chapter 1 consists of the introductory contents, which prepare the proper foundation to introduce the topic as well as the study. The review of the existing and relevant literature is placed within Chapter 2. It is followed by Chapter 3, research methodology, which describes the theoretical and methodological frameworks relevant to the study. The body section begins with Chapter 4 which concerns the historical and theoretical assessment of the Sino-Indian competition. Chapter 5 consists of the historical pretext behind the impacts of Sino-Indian competition on the small states. The final chapter of the body, Chapter 6, comprises the explanatory aspect of the impact, where meticulous assessment is performed. The final Chapter 7 comprises the discussion, implication and conclusion. In this section, delimitation and summary are also included. The final section comprises of the Appendix and Reference.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Most of the existing literature converges on the fact that the Indian Ocean is going to be even more significant strategically and economically in the 21st century. In his book “Monsoon”, Kaplan(2010) argues that the Indian Ocean is going to be a nexus of global power in the 21st century. Taking into consideration world history, where the Indian Ocean could be considered a concourse for the colonial powers such as British, French, Dutch, and Portuguese, the region has mostly been a pivot to international politics. Although being well-disposed with the historic and contemporary significance of the region, there is an evident dichotomization within the established literature regarding the nature and the prospect of the situation in the region. Most of the recent literature has been dominated by studies pertaining to the involvement of China and India within the region.

The most popular argument considers the involvement of China in the Indian Ocean as an extension of the “string of pearls” strategy (Chellaney, 2017; Chong, 2016; Ghosh 2015). It deems Chinese involvement to be Chinese aggression and a threat to the world order and peace. Among the scholars, Brahma Chellaney, a professor of Strategic Studies at the New Delhi-based Center for Policy Research, has been an ardent advocate of such arguments. He even claims the Chinese notion of the “21st Century maritime silk road” to be the rebranding of the “string of pearls”(Chellaney, 2018). Chellaney has even insisted democracies such as Japan, India, Australia, Indonesia, and the United States contain Chinese aggression within the Indian Ocean Region (Chellaney, 2017). Jawaharlal Nehru himself had proclaimed that Indian independence relies on the power that controls the Indian Ocean region (Raina, 2014). Failure to instigate control over the region, India would be facing challenges from China from both North

and South. With the South China Sea gradually being within the Chinese sphere of influence, scholars fear for a Sino-centric Asia (Chellaney, 2017).

Another author Chong interprets China pushing her relation with India's neighbors as an attempt to establish bases for the "strings"(2016). This notion originates from the fact that geographically, China is quite far from the Indian Ocean, while for India, the Indian Ocean appears to be a backyard, both figuratively and literally. Another author Ghosh blames China of encircling India strategically (2015). On one hand, China has been expanding her bilateral relation with littorals and on the other she has been advancing her naval capability. The argument deems China as a threat to peace and considers China as challenging the order of the region for their intention of emerging as a regional hegemon. Another Indian scholar Anand Kumar augments the "string of pearls" argument further by considering the direct involvement in the Maldives not only to encircle India but to aid her global military and strategic ambition(2012).

Another argument, specifically articulated by Beijing, dismisses the so-called rightful claim of India over the Indian Ocean with a notion that it is the Indian Ocean and not India's Ocean (Dasgupta, 2015). It regards Chinese involvement to be the balance of Power in the region. Also, President Xi Jinping considers maritime power to be one of the cardinal elements of his "China dream"(McDevitt, 2016). The Chinese stability relies on her growth and China's growth is closely related to securing her Sea Lines of Communications (SLOCs) (Upadhyaya, 2017). China has become the world's largest importer of petroleum products and most of her petroleum products pass through choke points of the Indian Ocean, such as the Strait of Malacca, Strait of Hormuz and Bab-el-Mandeb (US Energy Information Administration, 2016). Therefore, securing the Indian Ocean region is considered primary for the growth and survival of China.

Regardless of the intent, the attempts to influence Indian Ocean countries by both China and India is evident through various events. Chinese government sources claim that the country is willing to forge strong bilateral ties with countries around the region (Zhu, 2011). China establishing a military base in Indian Ocean country Djibouti is a prominent example of China expanding her maritime security horizon (Upadhyaya, 2017). Similarly, Chinese President Xi Jinping and President Ikililou Dhoinine from Comoros reached an understanding to cooperate in various fields (Xinhua, 2016).

Seychelles, for instance, a small island state within the Indian Ocean, comprising of a population of 90,000 people, has been a concourse of Sino-Indian rivalry. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi had announced the plan to establish the first Indian overseas military base at Assumption Island, an island within Seychelles during his tour on March 20 15(Mishra, 2018). However, that 20-year agreement signed between India and Seychelles received substantial atrocities, especially from the opposition, and with the opposition coalition having a majority of the National Assembly seats, the agreement could not be ratified (Saberin, 2018). There was a claim that The Republic of Seychelles had issued an open invitation to China to establish a base to counter the piracy (Bennett, 2011). However, the claim was later denied by the government sources, clarifying that there would be no foreign military base allowed in the small island state (Uranie, 2014). Moreover, India and Seychelles have agreed to work together in a joint project, after which, India handed over a Dornier aircraft and \$100 million for corroborating their defense (Chaudhary, 2018).

On the other hand, China built her overseas military base in another Indian Ocean state of Djibouti, threatening India and even the United States as a military base is just 6 miles away from U.S. military's only permanent base in Africa (Cheng, 2018). Whereas, China has also

decided to write off a loan worth \$5.5 million to Seychelles, aiming to corroborate the small state's economy (Seychelles News Agency, 2018).

The scenario is much alike in other islands of the region as well. Even in Mauritius, one of the most stable and prosperous small states within the Indian Ocean region, an apparent Sino-Indian tug-of-war can be perceived. Being labeled 'Little India' by Indira Gandhi in 1983, a similar notion was voiced by Narendra Modi in his 2015 visit (Brewster, 2015). Since 1983, that is to say after a suspected failed coup attempt by Paul Berenger, the then Mauritian Finance Minister, Mauritius has been under the Indian security umbrella (Brewster, 2015). That undoubtedly provides a conducive background for India to extend a runway and strengthen port facilities in Agaléga, an archipelago in Mauritius. But the notion is facing a row of suspicion from the majority of residents of the archipelago (Pilling, 2018). They fear that their land may face a similar fate as that of Diego Garcia, an island where the US built their military base during the cold war, a site for tussle among the great powers of the region. However, what makes the matter intricate is the role of China within the state. For a country characterized by a majority of Indian origin population, Mauritius has been receiving a considerable amount of economic and technical assistance from China. China has assisted the advancement of Mauritius' International Airport and also built an economic and trade zone called Jinfei Economic, Trade and Cooperation Zone (Lal, 2018). Within the heart of the Jinfei Zone, the flamboyant display of Eden Garden Culture & Entertainment Square has been even termed as a symbol of Mauritius' march towards modernity by Xinhua (2018), a Chinese official state-run news agency, bolstering the Chinese intention towards the archipelago as well as the region itself.

Not quite further from Mauritius, the state of Madagascar shares a similar influence-induced narrative. As voraciously as China is expanding her business in the African continent,

Madagascar by not any means is different. There are more than 800 Chinese companies conducting business on the island, making China the biggest trade partner of the country(Agence France-Presse, 2016). Meanwhile, the notion could not eschew a backlash; the Chinese economic activities induced protests among citizens (Asia News, 2016). While some regard protest as being resulted from economic activities that undermine the environment, the local economy and national sovereignty(Asia News, 2016), others regard political manipulation behind hatred against the Chinese(Agence France-Presse, 2016). Nevertheless, for a country with more than 90 percent of the population living below the poverty line, Chinese presence has brought unprecedented growth in the development of infrastructures. With Chinese involvement being at apogee, India's recent attempt to initiate collaboration with the island can be seemingly perceived as being in the game. The recent visit of Indian President Ram Nath Kovind was the first time any President or Prime Minister of India had ever visited the island(First Post, 2018). Along with the visit from the Indian head of state, India decided to loan Madagascar 80.7 million US dollars for agricultural and technological development(Ministry of External Affairs, India, 2018). Indian Navy has already been operating a Coastal Surveillance Radar (CSR) station within Madagascar(The Indian Express, 2007). This recent and sudden attempt to strengthen the bilateral relation, amidst a glut of Chinese projects and Chinese presence within the island, can be perceived as a part of Sino-Indian competition in the Indian Ocean.

While considering the impacts of Sino-Indian competition on domestic and foreign affairs of small states of the Indian Ocean, the assessment would be inadequate without mentioning the accounts of Sri Lanka, Indian Ocean states where the imprints of Sino-Indian influence on various dimensions are more distinct. Having proximity with the Sino-Indian dyad, not only from geographical aspect but also from the political, socio-cultural and economical aspect, the

flow of influence follows a similar route. For instance, the Indian role of engagement and disengagement regarding Sri Lanka's civil war is undoubtedly evident and has dispensed irreversible impacts upon both states. Beneath the shadow of the "Indira Doctrine" during the early 1980s, the Indian side strengthened and supported Tamil rebel groups by providing training and military assistance (Destradi, 2012). On one hand, it signified support for the separatist movement, whereas, on the other hand, it marked a sense of the dominance of India within her sphere of influence. Later, after the assassination of Indira Gandhi, her son Rajiv Gandhi took a different stance of neutrality and interrupted military support which later resulted in his assassination. After that, India took the stance of non-intervention and only later, during 2007, India took a different stance of supporting the Sri Lankan government to take an offensive stance to crackdown on the rebels (Destradi, 2012).

With India changing her stance, the government of Sri Lanka was engaged in something else with China. China had become a major weapon supplier of Sri Lanka, with 80 percent of the supply coming from China (Destradi, 2012). Similarly, the trade relation between Sri Lanka and China grew in such a way that, China surpassed Japan as the largest aid donor with an annual aid package of \$1 billion (Pant, 2010) and also became the largest trade partner (Destradi, 2012). It can be observed for Sri Lanka that it has been yet another site within the region where India intends to exercise influence by considering it as her strategic backyard, whereas China challenges the fundamental predisposition and initiates a new course of influence-based relation. Regardless of that, it is without a doubt that the series of actions and counteractions from China and India has clearly had profound impacts on the small states of the region and it has been a major determinant for the prospects of the region.

Regardless of the blames and speculations over the intention, China has relied upon trade as a medium to foster her relationship with countries of the region. Within the Maldives, Chinese state-owned companies have focused on two projects: a bridge connecting capital Male with a major island and expansion of the capital's airport (Kumar & Stanzel, 2018). In a similar fashion, Sri Lanka has also hosted numerous Chinese projects such as \$1 billion Hambantota Development Zone project, \$1.4 billion Colombo Port City Project, \$1.35 billion Norochcholai Coal Power Plant project, etc. (Ramachandran, 2018). As progressive as it may seem, the involvement of China in the multi-billion-dollar project around the region has been seen by many as a step in subjugating the state by bringing them into debt trap (Abi-Habib, 2018; Safi & Perera, 2018; Kumar, 2012). As of 2018, 70 percent of the national debt of Maldives is covered by Chinese loans (Fernholz, 2018). While in Sri Lanka, the Sri Lankan Finance Ministry expects the revenue generation for the year 2018 to be \$14.8 billion, and \$12.3 billion is scheduled to be paid to lenders all around the world, most prominently China (Abi-Habib, 2018).

Regarding future implications for the region, there is a similar dichotomization as mentioned above. With a challenging economy and an ambitious Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), one argument sees China faring better in the region. On the contrary, another argument regards India as having geographical, historical and cultural advantages over China, and therefore an upper hand in the competition. Geographically, the Indian Ocean is enclosed by land and various choke points. In such a condition, the countries having jurisdiction over the choke points have a relative advantage over the region. Relatively, India has better control over these choke points (Brewster, 2015) and therefore a better advantage than China. Moreover, China has numerous geographical barriers to be crossed for overland connection with the ocean. As such, David Brewster claims, that the Indian Ocean may be the only strategic dimension, where India has a

clear advantage over China (2015). However, it is all not pessimistic for China. The rapid development of the Chinese Navy is seen as changing the balance of global navy power (US Congressional Research Service, 2014). Qualitatively and quantitatively, the Chinese navy surpasses that of the Indian navy (Brewster, 2015). Moreover, with the so-called Chinese strategy of the string of pearl, a chain of islands would facilitate better control and coordination over the region. There have been Chinese companies building infrastructures in ports around the region such as Pakistan's Gwadar port, Sri Lanka's Hambantota port and Myanmar's Kyaukpyu port (Brewster, 2015) and if properly coordinated, this capability could eschew geographical hindrances. This illustrates that both nations have their relative advantages and disadvantages.

As a number of the literature suggests the Sino-Indian competition attributing to a plethora of fluctuations within the state affairs, other similar instances of the influence of major power competition over the small states have been highlighted in various works. One of the intensive analyses has been performed by Benjamin Miller and Korina Kagan (1997). They have studied the impact of competition, cooperation, dominance and disengagement of great powers in Eastern Europe and the Balkans from the Post-Napoleonic era to the Post-Cold War era. Among various forms of the relationship between great powers, the competitive relation and its impact is relevant to this study. They state that the great power competition based on power occurs when the corresponding states have equal capabilities but have conflicting interests. Their major deduction in regards to the small states is that this great power competition intensifies the regional and local conflicts and destabilizes the security with high intensity. However, as compared to cooperative relation between the great powers of the region, where the autonomy of small states is substantially low when great powers compete, the small states enjoy a "high positive autonomy". Miller and Kagan claim that this autonomy can even manipulate the great

powers. They used the reference of Cold War, where regional actors had the capability of manipulating the great powers and it catalyzed the local conflicts (Miller & Kagan, 1997). The claim was also corroborated using the cases in the Balkans during the 1920s and early 1930s in the lights of competition between France and Italy.

This interesting phenomenon of small states influencing the great power when there is competition has also been highlighted by Ksenia Efremova (2019). Based on the game theory she asserts that the “win-lose” game of great power competition can be transformed into a “win-win” game by small states. She takes a rather constructivist stance that the concept of “great power” and “small states” is sustained merely by the so-called small states and a reverse influence has a sufficient possibility. However, traditional theorists argue that the great power competition limits the maneuverability of small states to either form an alliance or to align with the threatening power (Lake, 2009; Thorhallsson & Steinsson, 2017). This view takes into consideration that the small states have limited capability to protect themselves from the belligerence posed by the great power competition.

The contention of the small states being affected by the competition relies fundamentally on the belief that the major powers of the region are competing. The same condition can be assumed for the small states of the Indian Ocean region where the existence of a Sino-Indian competition is the first conviction. As the issue attracts a glut of studies, the stance that the Sino-Indian relation can be construed as competition has been shared only by the authors relying upon a certain theoretical perspective, while others have opposed it. As most of the literature adheres in accordance with the realist frameworks (Li, 2009; Malik, 2011, Zhu, 2011), only a few undertake liberal perspectives (Acharya, 2008; Holslag, 2010). As Mohan Malik in his book “China and India – Great Power Rivals” (2011) claims the term “Chindia” (appeasement of the

Sino-Indian relation with a prolific cooperative relation) to be propaganda as the temporal factor behind the fierceness in their relationship would hinder that prospect. Zhiqun Zhu takes a neoclassical approach and blames the incongruity in attitude and perception for the prevalence of a security dilemma even though there has been an unparalleled flux in trade and other exchanges (2011). While Li Li also complies with the neoclassical framework, her argument is driven predominantly by the change in security perception, which she argues has eased the bilateral ties (2009). She even claims that the ultimate growth of China and India would depend largely on their cooperation.

The nature of the Sino-Indian relation has also been abstracted through the concept of “Enduring International Rivalry”. The conviction resides upon theoretical standing provided by Renaud Egreteau in his paper “The China-India Rivalry Reconceptualized”(2012). Egreteau considers the China-India dyad to be governed by Enduring International Rivalry (EIR). The Sino-Indian interaction post-1940s demonstrates threefold characteristics of EIR: an evident path to the formation, peak (1962 war) and the consolidation of the rivalry and thus demonstrates the predisposition towards EIR (Egreteau, 2012).

The notion of EIR suggests Sino-Indian rivalry to have begun in the late 1940s. However, the perceivable impact of the influence on the small states is a rather recent phenomenon. Therefore, it has been inferred that the rise of China as a major power in the region might have activated the occurrence that was aforesaid within the section. Therefore, several pieces of literatures have also been assessed to explore the impact of rising China on Sino-Indian relations. Evidently, the anticipated outcome regarding the rise of China is different along with the different schools of thought. As power transition theory suggests a potential conflict when a rising power has accumulated sufficient power and is dissatisfied with the status quo (Organski,

1958), the rise of China has been viewed as conflictual for the relation of China with the dominant world powers and the regional powers (Rapkin & Thompson, 2003; Tammen & Kugler, 2006).

The views aligning with similar outcomes have been shared by the proponents of offensive realism as well. As a state grows her power capabilities, the state pursues expansion to achieve regional hegemony in order to ensure the maximization of security (Labs, 1997; Mearsheimer, 1990; Mearsheimer, 2001). Therefore, regarding the rise of China, Kaplan (2009) has commended the United States to act as an offshore balancer and pass the buck to India. He acknowledges the substantial gap between India and China regarding economy and military, thus urges the US to support India in becoming a balancer to China in the region. India as a potential balancer to China has been highlighted not just by realists but even by revered liberal scholars like Joseph Nye (2001) and G. John Ikenberry (2008). Nye argues that the USA should refrain from containing China and leave it up to the balancers in Asia itself.

Apparently, the policy prescription of various scholars regarding the balancing strategy seems to be pertinent with the actual policies and events. R.C. Mohan notes the shift in Indian foreign policy, which was traditionally critical to the US foreign policy, towards the more cordial and cooperative stand, as the rise of China became more evident (2006). As T. V. Paul mentions in his book “The China-India Rivalry in the Globalization Era”(2018) of India pursuing a quasi-military alliance with the US through the transfer of cutting edge weapons, sharing each other’s naval facilities for repair, security agreements and several joint naval exercises. The US foreign policy of containing China by remaining as an offshore balancer has been supported by the official document published by the Department of Defense titled “Indo-Pacific Strategy” (U.S. Department of Defense, 2019). As US policy stance is evident to some extent, the important

question at this point is: what would be the response of India towards this? T.V. Paul argues that the probable options for India would be soft balancing or limited hard-balancing. This corroborates the surfeit of arguments that align with the prospect of a conflictual relation between India and China with the rise and expansion of China.

Chapter 3: Conceptual Framework and Research Methodology

3.1 Conceptual Framework

The ontological premises of the research reside upon the nature of influence China and India's competition have been able to inflict upon the small states of the Indian Ocean Region. In order to comprehend the nature of influence, interstate relationships, both bilateral and multilateral would be the major source. The research design construes influence from Sino-Indian competition and impacts in various dimensions within the small states as having a cause and effect relationship respectively. Through the study of change in various dimensions in those countries, a holistic scenario comprising of a short-term and long-term prospect for the region can be constructed.

While the study depends upon influence as a causal factor, the notion of influence is contentious from the point of view of the research. It instigates from the fact that the influence while being existent and observable, is not directly measurable. Therefore, the research resides on the ontological position of foundationalism and the epistemology of realism. Realism can ensure propriety as epistemology advocates the causal relationship of the structure with the factors while negates any possibility of being able to observe and quantify such relationships directly (Marsh & Furlong, 2002). In this instance, the influence can be comprehended as such a phenomenon that exists but should be studied contextually with the international structure.

Regarding the conceptual framework, as the influence of the Sino-Indian competition on small states is the independent variable, the notion of influence can be dichotomized into two kinds: influence emanating from the bilateral exchange between small states and China/India or the influence actually pertaining to the Sino-Indian competition. Therefore, the study needs to comprehend the influence along with the different factors and also differentiate the influence.

The framework below explains the variables that will be looked at:

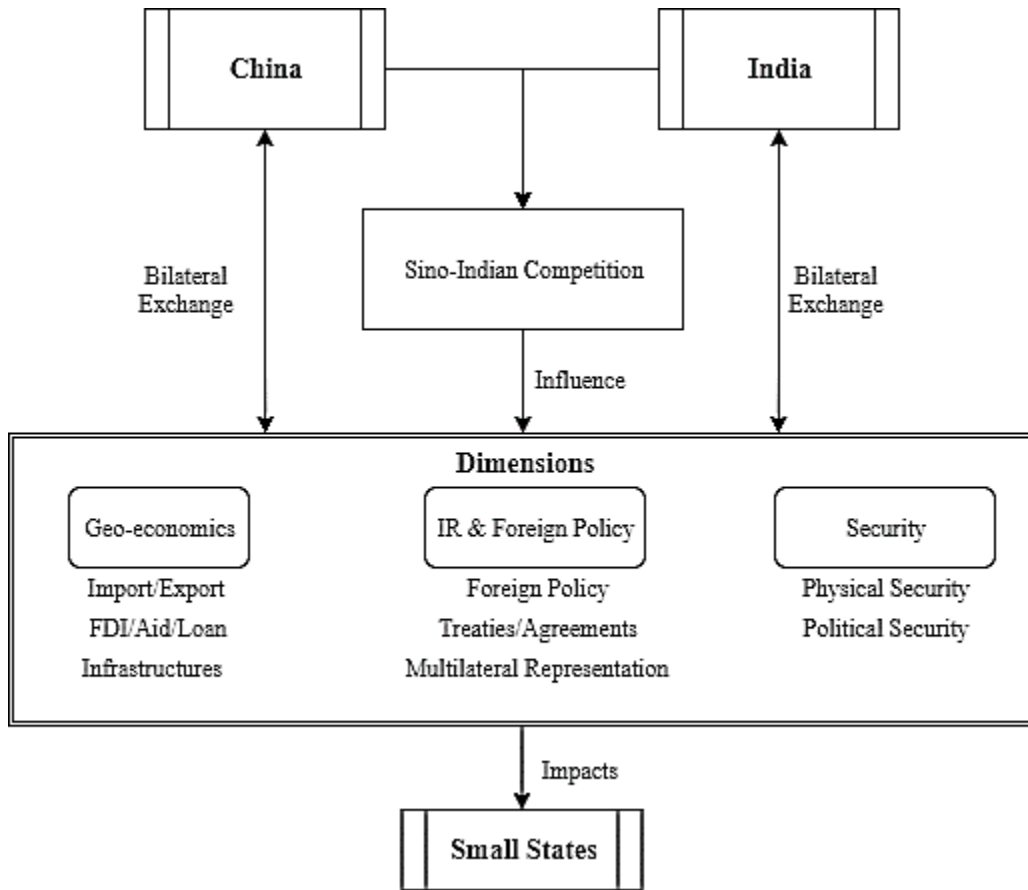


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Research

As the influence due to Sino-Indian competition is considered as the independent variable, the dependent variables are considered to be the different dimensions such as Geo-economics, IR, foreign policy and Security. The actual study would be regarding the different sub-factors under the dimensions. The research is designed in such a way that the influence on each dimension would be studied to determine the nature and the validity of the narrative of influence.

3.2 Theoretical Framework

The doctrine of realism has been prominent within the positivist realm of international relation theories. The prevalence and prominence of this notion throughout the antiques till the contemporary practice and academics can provide evidence of the prominence. This contention

can be further corroborated by observing how realism has succeeded to transcend not just the time but geographical boundary as well; from Thucydides, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Cardinal Richelieu in the West to Kautilya, Sun Tzu in the East, all of them fostered some form of realism. The theoretical framework of Realpolitik is also associated to some extent with realism. Realism as an international relations theory postulates certain assumptions concerning the world view. First of all, the international system is regarded as anarchic; the states being the central actors lack any supranational authority for law enforcement (Goodin, 2010) . It also assumes these actors to be rational to achieve their interest and the primary interest is self-preservation through self-help (Goodin, 2010). Through these viewpoints, realism becomes a theoretical and methodological model to comprehend, interpret and even predict the dynamics of international relations.

As an approach in international relations, realism was introduced by Hans Morgenthau in the post-world war II period. However, a similar viewpoint was maintained by other authors such as E.H. Carr, Rienhold Niebuhr, and Nicholas Spykman in the pre-World War II period as well. The realists of that era are collectively regarded as Classical or Traditional Realists. Classical realism associates itself with the ideas of Niccolo Machiavelli and Thomas Hobbes mainly regarding the source of the pursuit of power and struggle between the states. Animus dominandi, an inherent human instinct to dominate others, supersedes the human level and is reflected in the behavior of the states (Morgenthau, 1948). It is to say that the behavior of a state is a reflection of the behavior of an individual who is greedy for power. Thus, the struggle between the states is merely a pursuit of power which is perceived in a relative sense within international politics which is governed basically by a zero-sum game.

However, the philosophy of realism was dichotomized as neorealism when Kenneth Waltz in his book “Theory of International Politics” posited the structural perspective (1979). The international structure envisioned by Kenneth Waltz is defined in terms of anarchy and the distribution of power. Anarchy, as Waltz posits, is the ordering principle of the international structure (Waltz, 1979). Waltz inferred anarchy through the inquiry among different levels of analysis. Waltz formulated three characteristics that differentiate different levels: the ordering principle, the functional differentiation of units and the distribution of power among units. A domestic system is characterized by hierarchy, while an international system is deprived of any supranational authority to form a hierarchy. The second tier of functional differentiation can be nullified within the international system as the units under anarchy rely basically upon self-help. However, the states can be differentiated by considering the distribution of power, which is relative in nature and is different among different states.

Through this general understanding of the international system, Waltz illustrates certain practical scenarios within international relations. First of all, anarchy leads any state to pursue defensive policies where the states prioritize maintaining their position rather than the maximization of power (Waltz, Theory of International Politics, 1979). Similarly, regarding a potential aggressor, Waltz argues that such units would be counterbalanced by other units. As Jack Snyder argues that the international system most probably punishes the aggressor than rewarding it (Snyder J. , 1991). It was also inferred accordingly that the act of balancing in the international system is more common than the act of bandwagoning.

The idea mainly ponders upon the defensive approach rather than the offensive approach. This defensive approach was challenged by John J. Mearsheimer, through his notion of offensive realism, which is delineated in his book, “The Tragedy of Great Power Politics” (2001). The

basic tenets of his theory comply with the tenets of structural realism, as posited by Waltz. But it departs significantly from defensive realism when it comes to the accumulation of power. As defensive realism rests on the assumption that the states maintain the appropriate amount of power that is required to attain security, offensive realism contradicts the concept of the “appropriate amount of power” (Mearsheimer, 2001). This is basically due to two reasons: uncertainty regarding the amount of relative power a state needs to possess over her rival in order to be secured and also the uncertainty about how these power dynamics would formulate after a certain time frame.

Therefore, any state would attempt to amass more power than less because more is obviously better than less. The theory opposes Waltz regarding the prevalence of status quo states; as Waltz argues of the prevalence of a number of status quo states, offensive realism posits that a state cannot attain status quo unless it completely dominates the system (Mearsheimer, 2001). The states are obligated to take advantage of one another and also to check if another state does not gain power at the expense of oneself. This leaves the system in a state of constant competition.

And when discussing power, offensive realism takes primarily into account the relative power of a state over others rather than their absolute power. The states behave differently regarding the pursuit of relative power or absolute power. Relative power is vital for offensive realists because a state can let go of the prospect of achieving a large amount of power (absolute power) if the act rewards the rival with an even greater amount of power. The states in the pursuit of absolute power are not motivated by the notion of balance of power as they are just focused on their own gain.

Furthermore, the offensive realists also criticize the defensive realist’s claim that the aggression is balanced or punished and the act of aggression rarely succeeds. According to

Mearsheimer, in the events from 1815 to 1980, the initiator had 60% of the success rate. Taking into consideration the Nazi conquest, Mearsheimer concludes that the success or the failure of the conquest of great power depends upon determining when to advance or when to restrain (Mearsheimer, 2001).

Another distinctive feature of offensive realism is the understanding of the concept of the hegemon. Global hegemony is achieved only when a state is unchallengeable by any powers throughout the world. Mearsheimer argues that the existence of a global hegemon is far from possible. Although the United States is a powerful country, but cannot be considered a global hegemon because the US does not dominate Europe or Asia, the way she dominates America (Mearsheimer, 2001). In spite of the US amassing unimaginable power, the hegemony is limited only up to her own region, which signifies that the highest a state can achieve is the status of a regional hegemon.

As it is plausible, when a power achieves the status of a regional hegemon, checks other regions for a possible regional hegemon, for the potential threat. That is a possible explanation for the reason why the US confronted Wilhelmine Germany, Nazi Germany, Imperial Japan and the Soviet Union. Regional hegemon possesses another advantage of remaining an 'offshore balancer'. In the pursuit of a state to be the regional hegemon, other powers of the region attempt to balance the advance. When the regional powers are unable to bring down the aggressor, the balancer can step in and change the balance.

Another important aspect is the prioritization of the factors. Factors refer to kinds of goals that a state constantly pursues. Mearsheimer puts survival in the highest priority. Apparently, states have been promoting ideas such as ideology, religion, human-rights, etc. in international arena, but they come secondary when it is a matter of survival or security. Many of the times

these non-security goals complement the primary goal but when it encounters incoherence with the balance of power, it comes to priority. Although the position of economy is very high among the national goals, it comes only second to survival.

However, Mearsheimer's theory faces self-contradiction when it comes to the notion of security dilemma. Security dilemma has been a banal notion among all the realists. Yet, offensive realism fails to accurately portray the position of security dilemma within the international system. First of all, Mearsheimer generalizes all the states as being revisionist and refutes claim made by Waltz about most of them being status quo. This contradicts with one of the bedrock assumptions which mentions about states being unknown of each other's intention. If all the states are revisionists, then they are well known of each other's intention.

Glen H. Snyder, in his review of Mearsheimer's 'The Tragedy of Great Power Politics' has accused Mearsheimer of becoming "too confrontational" in correcting Waltz's status-quo bias (2002). While Waltz filled his theoretical world completely with status quo states, Mearsheimer filled his world with all the revisionist states. Snyder believes that Waltz's theory and Mearsheimer's theory should complement each other; Waltz's theory should explain status quo powers and Mearsheimer's theory should explain the revisionist powers. A certain state has potentiality to behave aggressively in some situations and defensively in others. If both of the structural realist tenets are considered in an adaptive form, a more accurate picture of the real scenario can be constructed. Peter Toft elucidates similar prescription in his take of Mearsheimer's theory (Toft, 2005). Toft states that, Mearsheimer, through his theory has opened an avenue for offensive and defensive realism to assimilate, illustrating how the international structure provides incentive for both defensive and aggressive behavior of the state. The

following sections will base the analysis with the theoretical foundations as delineated in this section, as far as possible.

One of the junctures where the discipline of foreign policy analysis dichotomizes from the discipline of international relations has been the concept of level of analysis. As Kenneth Waltz, in his book *Man, the State and War*, mentions about the three levels of analysis: the individual level, the state and the international system (1961). The international relations theory basically ponders upon the international system, while foreign policy analysis has basically concentrated over the individual and the states (Morin & Paquin, 2018; Hudson, 2014). To put it in another perspective, the foreign policy analysis adheres itself to the microscopic approach, as a result of the level. But the structural approach to the analysis takes a macroscopic approach. It posits that the constraints projected by the international system onto the actors, dictate the maneuver of the actors. This notion has enticed not just the structural realists but the advocates of the World System theory and that of the International Society theory as well. Before 1970, there was a preconceived notion that the dynamics of international relations was a product of the behavior of the states (Kaplan, 1966), which shifted along the neorealist tenets of Waltz and the world system theory of Immanuel Wallenstein. Waltz specifically saw international system as comprising of structures and agents; structures pose as constraints while agents provide the freedom to maneuver within the available space (Waltz, 1979).

Nevertheless, the structural approach for foreign policy analysis faces a gamut of criticism from various schools of thought. Structural theorists have been accused of failing to understand the behavior of a state by perceiving a state as an opaque, monolithic, billiard ball, which ignores the internal structure (Fordham & Asal, 2007). Rather than billiard ball, Fordham and Asal urged to adapt a snowflake model to represent the states; the major forces of gravity and wind affect

them but the individual multidimensional characteristics differentiate their trajectory with others. Waltz himself refrained from using neorealist approach to predict the foreign policy decisions, as Waltz considered his approach to be highly general and abstract (Waltz, 1979). He unequivocally advocated the distinction between international politics and foreign policy analysis. However, it was Waltz himself to claim the cold war of being entrenched in the post-war international politics and would prevail as long as the structure prevails (Waltz, 1989). And it was also Waltz himself to rely upon a few foreign policy examples to justify his neorealist paradigm (Morin & Paquin, 2018).

In spite of such moot argument, structural theory would be under skepticism and scrutiny if it fails to draw a connection between the behavior of state and the structural theory. In this perspective, Randall Schweller considers the division between structural theory and the foreign policy analysis to be detrimental to the production and development of knowledge (2003). He further corroborates his conviction of testing and evaluating the theory by suggesting the study of the actual behavior of the states using the conditions as dictated within the theory (Schweller, 2003).

The studies as suggested above should mark a causal relationship between the structural assumption and the incentives of a state without swaying from the logical conditioning (Morin & Paquin, 2018). Such logical conditioning cannot be achieved unless the multidimensionality of foreign policy analysis methods is adapted. While it seems like structural approach completely disregards the individual decision-makers, it can be contrarily argued. Similar to the behavior of a state being constrained by the structure, the same structure-agent relation is imposed upon an individual as well. In cumulative sense, the decision-making of either the individual or the state, will resemble that of a state (Prifti, 2014). This notion is coherent with the Poliheuristic Theory

of foreign policy analysis as well. Poliheuristic combines rational choice theory and scientific realism. Rational choice theory facilitates the prediction process while scientific realism helps to identify and comprehend the decision-making process (Morin & Paquin, 2018). Basically, the decision-making process according to the theory, can be divided into two phases: the first phase involves eliminating politically unviable or unfavorable policy decisions and second phase involves taking rational approach as in rational choice theory from the remaining options (Mintz, 2004). Moreover, the most significant strength of Poliheuristic theory, as Morin and Paquin have pointed out, is the ability to combine with different theoretical viewpoints. So, the most valid pathway for amalgamating structural theory with foreign policy analysis, as mentioned above, would be to articulate meticulously the connection between structural relationship and incentive.

3.3 Methods

As we consider interstate relations to be the basis of comprehension, the basic tool to delineate it would be through events and documents within the periphery. The strategy would be to construct the cause and effect relationship between events and developments. The research studies how events shape up and use it to understand political dynamics as well as the prospect for the region.

The following methods will be employed in order to fulfill the research objectives and to provide a mechanism for the conceptual framework to operate in the direction of the research.

- Descriptive approach based on historical analysis: Although not quite prevalent in contemporary political research, this method can still be effective to comprehend the historical roles of China and India in small states of the region. It will provide a descriptive background so that a relation can be established between the dependent and

independent variable of the framework. Based on the foundation, parochial studies on specific variables can be conducted.

- **Case Studies:** As aforementioned, the research will base upon case studies of Sri Lanka and the Maldives. With case studies, similarities and dissimilarities between the relation of independent variable and dependent variable can be scrutinized. It can corroborate the research objective by determining whether an event or phenomenon within the state can be considered as an evidence of influence or not. The study of similarity in influence can even be generalized over the region and assessed so that a holistic sketch of the region can be drawn. To ensure this, the series of relevant events within the small states have been discussed within the literature review. The inclusion criteria are the congruency in time-frame and the nature of the events. With a general perspective of the scenario, the case of Sri Lanka and Maldives has been meticulously studied and compared along this understanding. The perceivable and inferable commonality formulates the basis for the thorough understanding of the region and therefore realizes the objective.

The methods have been prescribed to serve the requirements to fulfill the research objectives.

This study does not comply entirely with the dichotomization of quantitative and qualitative research. Among several approaches, two of them have been selected, as they fulfill both the necessary as well as sufficient prerequisite as obliged by the objective. While descriptive approach, adhering to exploratory attitude, attempts to address the "what" question of the historical as well as contemporary events, the case study method commutes through the explanatory line, aligning theories and evidences with the case at hand. This ensures a prolific ground for conducting the study and augments the convenience in drawing the conclusion.

3.4 Tool

The research relies upon both the qualitative and the quantitative inquiry to address the research questions.

3.5 Materials

All of the methods and tools require information and data as a material to implement the mechanism. Statistical analysis can be done through different statistics from verified sources such as national/international studies, organizations, articles, books, etc. Historical study and case studies can be done through the study of historical events, treaties, journal articles, newspaper sources, historical documents, historical and contemporary studies/analysis, etc. As illustrated in the conceptual framework, the independent variable is the influence and the effect of influence is the main interest of study. The factors of influence would be studied through the study of exchanges between China/India and the small states. The materials mentioned above are the sources from where the transnational exchanges can be comprehended. For example, the amount of loan China issues towards Sri Lanka can be found within the materials, the interpretation would be the task for the research.

Chapter 4: Sino-Indian Competition

This chapter attempts to answer the first research question of the form and the context in which Sino-Indian competition molded. The basic worldview has been constructed through the offensive realist school of thought, while the Sino-Indian relation has been defined as an EIR. The target is to establish the contextual relevance of the theory with the subject. Moreover, the theoretical consistency of these two notions with each other also require meticulous examination.

4.1 Sino-Indian Competition and Offensive Realism

Offensive realism, as a theoretical paradigm, is apt to be tested for the extent of its validity in the real scenario. The tenets of the paradigm, which predominantly support the absolute reflection of the material capabilities of an entity with the power of the entity, further eases the prospect of the application of empiricism. Mearsheimer, in a lecture he delivered at Yale University (2017), has verified this approach. He deliberates his conviction that a theory of international relations should be less abstract and must have the capability to mold itself into a model. The model can then be verified with the historical evidence, where it has to exhibit an acceptable level of accuracy. Accordingly, Mearsheimer has applied this framework in illustrating the scenario of Imperial Japan, Wilhelm Germany, Nazi Germany, Soviet Union and United States during the Cold War. Although he did not present any case study regarding China or India, his views can be found scattered within his gamut of work.

To understand the preliminary predilection of an offensive realist, the following lines of Mearsheimer from “The Tragedy of Great Power Politics” is significant:

Despite currently being militarily weakened and economically inferior, China is likely to rise and if that happens it will inevitably seek to expel the US from its backyard and establish itself as the dominant great power in Asia, making life difficult for America. (Mearsheimer, 2001, p. 83)

Interestingly, the argument made by Mearsheimer in 2001, seems to be materializing at the recent course of international politics. Moreover, the title of another article written by Mearsheimer, "China's unpeaceful Rise" (2006) summarizes his view on the subject. Mearsheimer claims that, similar to United States, Imperial Japan or Imperial Germany, China is nationalistic, unethical and concerned highly with survival. Therefore, there exists no ramification why China does not pursue becoming a regional hegemon. Mearsheimer wraps up the article with an audacious claim that, the international politics becomes nasty and dangerous whenever a potential hegemon emerges from Eurasia.

The rise of China is supposed to have a profound implication for other major powers of the region including India. On the other hand, the fact that India herself is rising as an emerging power, generates a question regarding the actual behavior and the corresponding classification of the power entities within the region according to offensive realism. This inquiry can be answered through the theory itself; as aforementioned, an emphasis on material capabilities aids the identification of the behavior.

A potential hegemon, as compared with other great powers of the region, has a bigger economy and a larger army. The size is such that there exists a significant gap between the potential hegemon and the second most powerful entity of the region (Toft, 2005). The potential hegemon can also be identified by evaluating whether it has capability to surmount other great

power neighbors, may be sequentially and not necessarily together (Mearsheimer, 2001). Therefore, it is plausible to analyze the region based on their military and economic capabilities. In the global economy, China and India both have a significant position. From the point of view of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on a nominal basis, China is the second largest while India is the fifth largest (IMF, 2019). On a Purchase Power Parity (PPP) basis, the GDP of China is the largest while that of India is the third largest (IMF, 2019). The economic scenario in a regional perspective has been depicted in the figures below.

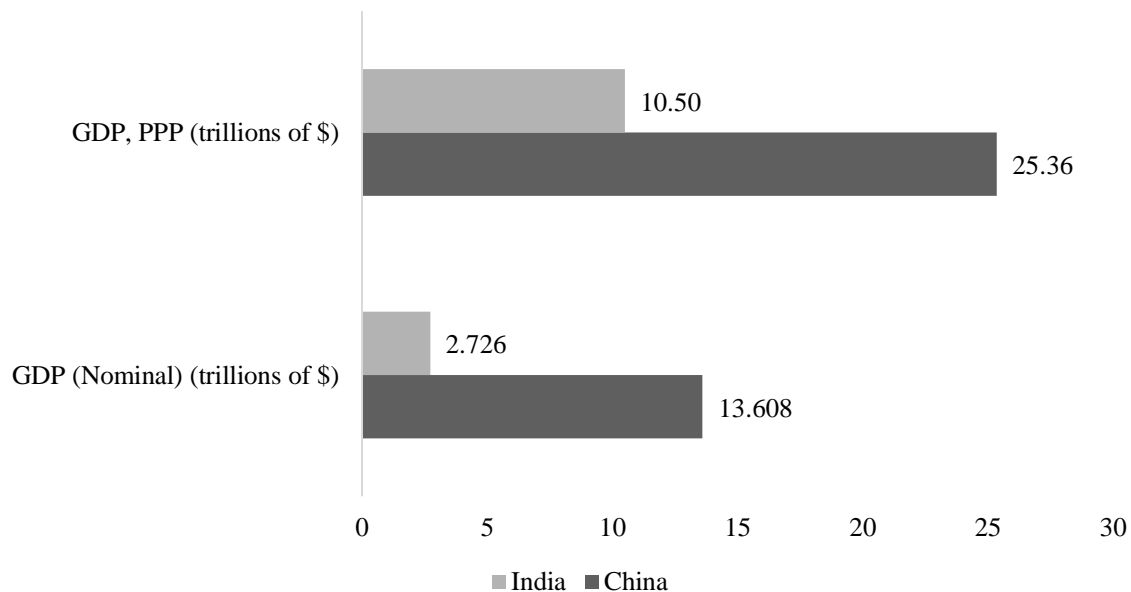


Figure 2: Comparison of the GDP of the great economies in the region (World Bank, 2019)

In a regional perspective, China constitutes an enormous share of the economy. Even the aggregate of the GDP of the top five economies of the region cannot surpass that of China in both nominal and PPP bases. The GDP of China on a nominal basis as per 2019 is 4.78 times that of India. According to the forecast of IMF, Chinese economy would reach 20 trillion by 2024 while that of India would reach 4.6 trillion (2019). However, Indian economy is facing severe impediments, as the growth rate has been constantly plummeting from the end of 2018,

which, by the October, 2019, reached less than 5% (Agrawal & Salam, 2019). Moreover, China has a working age population of about a billion (Fickling, 2019), which is a significant number to fuel the economy further. From the observation, it can be concluded that the Chinese economy cannot be transcended by other great powers of the region for several years to come.

The comparison of economy of the countries is a necessary condition to determine potential hegemon but it is not sufficient. For offensive realists, security resides higher than economy and therefore military strength would be of highest priority. There are numerous criteria associated with military might but most important would be budget, human resource, technology, and equipment. But as offensive realism has a central position for nuclear capability, it is vital for the consideration of the nuclear warheads possessed by the great powers as well. The comparison should also consider all the terrains of warfare such as terrestrial, sea and air. However, other non-traditional aspects of modern warfare such as cyber or space is fundamentally challenging to adjust within the study. However, beyond the traditional quantitative criteria of military strength, the domestic environment must also be taken into account. The domestic environment would refer to the political stability, terrorism, regime type, assertiveness, ideology, etc.

Table 1 illustrates the data of the military capability of the great powers: China and India. Apparently, from the military capability point of view, China stands out as distinctly more powerful. From the military point of view, it is not feasible for India to emerge as a challenger for China with these resources.

Table 1

Comparison of the Military Strength of the great powers of the region

Factors	China	India
Active Personnel ^a	2,183,000	1,362,500
Defense Budget(\$ billion) ^a	224	55.2
Foreign Reserve(\$ billion) ^b	3,236	409.8
Total Aircraft ^c	3,187	2,082
Tank Strength ^d	13,050	4,184
Total Naval Assets ^d	714	295
Labor Force ^b	806,700,000	521,900,000
Nuclear Inventory(no.) ^c	290	140

Note: a: (CIA, 2019)b: (World Bank, 2019) c: (WDMMA, 2019) d: (Arms Control Association, 2019)

Even when considering the domestic scenario, China fulfills the criteria to be a potential hegemon. China has an assertive leader, a hierarchical ruling party with autocratic regime, poor democratic practices and the state-controlled media. It means that the decision of the party or the leader meets insignificant resistance from other entities with the country. Contrastingly, in India, Japan or Korean Republic, the decisions of the government are well circulated within the public and political realm. Throughout the world history, most of the regional hegemon have emerged from authoritative or undemocratic regimes. Therefore, domestic scenario as well provide conducive environment for China to proceed as a potential hegemon.

As the argument of China being a potential hegemon is supported by various evidences pertaining to capability, another significant factor is the intention of China in dominating the region. After 2005-2006, the approach made by China has been different around the region. China has expanded the economic and diplomatic ties within South Asia and Africa. The assertiveness shown at the South China Sea can illustrate the intention as well. Not just the

intention but the horizon of the ambition became vivid after the Belt and Road Initiative was announced. It is obvious that China has a conducive grounds based on the capability and their intention in behaving as a potential hegemon.

In “The Tragedy of Great Power Politics”, Mearsheimer points out two consequences for Asia: one where Japan remains the largest economy of Asia (according to the contemporary condition) so there is a balanced multi-polarity in Asia and the other case where China supersedes Japan. If second case occurs (as it has occurred now), Mearsheimer predicts that China would yearn for a full hegemony while other powers, mainly United States would engagement in encirclement of China. In such a condition, Mearsheimer prescribes United States to do anything to slow down the growth of China. Coincidentally, the events unraveled similar to the second case as stated by Mearsheimer.

Under these circumstances, when potential hegemon is gaining ground, the United States is bound to take the role of an offshore balancer. Offshore balancing can be considered as using both the buck-passing and balancing strategy (Snyder, 2002). It can also be interpreted as: not involving directly, passing the buck to other neighbors and intervening when absolutely necessary in order to maintain the balance. In that light, there is a glut of evidence that point this role of United States within the region with a similar motive.

In June 1, 2019, the Department of Defense of the United States published a document titled Indo-Pacific Strategy Report which clearly illustrates both the strategies as well as the change in perspective of US towards the region. The strategy which has gained quite a popularity and has raised a gamut of speculations is referred to as Indo-Pacific strategy and it particularly has been significant since 2017. It can also be inferred as an extension of the policies laid out by Obama administration such as pivot or rebalance to Asia. However, Obama administration was

quite composed while formulating policies, especially while mentioning China, even if the policy was commonly comprehended as an alliance formation and balancing against China. The new Indo-Pacific strategy adamantly describes China as a revisionist power (U.S. Department of Defense, 2019). The document clearly asserts that the US wants to forge an alliance across the region in such a way that it has asymmetric advantage which would remain unchallenged in the entire region. Undoubtedly, the Indo-Pacific strategy maintains the US stature as an offshore balancer in the region, as the policies delineated within the document complies with the conventional definition of an offshore balancer within the literature of offensive realism. Under these circumstances, the Sino-Indian relation could be better understood by also incorporating the theoretical framework of rivalry studies. Among different concepts of rivalry studies, the notion of EIR would be quite compelling as its strong empirical methodology properly complements offensive realism.

Amidst a climate of international hostility, the survival of China relies on her growth and that would also refer to a continued attempt of China to accumulate her relative power and in a direction which points towards attaining the status of regional hegemon. As John Mearsheimer argues, the system does not allow a global hegemon, the highest a nation can become is a regional hegemon (Mearsheimer, 1990). As China attempts to maximize her power, another regional power, India, feels threatened. Thus, a notion of nested security dilemma can be perceived (Gilboy & Heginbotham, 2012). Taking the Indian Ocean Region as our domain of study, both India and China aims to become a hegemon of the domain. The states aim to maximize their power, and it is evident through the activities of Sino-Indian rivalry within the domain.

4.2 Sino-Indian Relation from EIR perspective

While modeling Indian Ocean region from the lens of offensive realism, there is a challenge that impedes the representation of Sino-Indian relation. Although structural realism as a whole advocates the historical continuity of a theoretical model, some paradigm shifts in the course of history brings discrepancies within the analysis. In this case, there are two different natures of China within the period marked by the end of the Second World War. The difference in characteristics refer to the changes that are seen when China began the pursuit of the strategic and economic ambition. The main argument is that, Sino-Indian relation had numerous crests and troughs during both the periods but along with the shifts in the behavior of China, the relationship structure also has had a shift. This shift in the structure is a conundrum for offensive realism as it tends to simplify the relation dynamics. Therefore, to understand the trend through the historical perspective, theoretical tenets from rivalry school have been adapted within the offensive realist school of thought.

While offensive realism seems stringent in considering a constant dissension within the Sino-Indian relation, both countries are open for cooperation, dialogue, economic deals and transactions as well. That is why some researchers prefer to use the phrase 'conflict-cum-cooperation' to describe the Sino-Indian relation (Malone & Mukherjee, 2010). But this approach is theoretically as well as historically insufficient to neither understand the evolution nor to analyze the spillover effect of the relational dynamics. This insufficiency invokes the need to consider EIR which advocates the presence of the dynamic phenomena within the relation between the countries which have experienced numerous conflicts with each other.

The concept of EIR was first posited by Gary Goertz and Paul F. Diehl in their paper titled, "Enduring Rivalries: Theoretical Constructs and Empirical Patterns" (1993). Basically, EIR is a

concept within the conflict studies, but attempts to eschew the typical blame on the theories of conflict studies of being ahistorical. EIR considers historical events to describe repeating pattern of competition of states over tangible or intangible goal. More importantly, the goal might be static (as in the case of Israel-Palestine dyad) or might be dynamic (Japan-China dyad). As mentioned in the previous section, the China-India dyad is considered as an enduring international rivalry based upon the analysis of Egretau (2012).

EIR basically distinct by the existence of repeated disputes within the historical frame. Another idea within this framework which complies with structural realism is threat-perception. Although not congruent but the fundamental ideas of threat-perception are consistent with that of security dilemma. It concerns with the psychological factor of uncertainty pertaining to the behavior of another country which might be perceived as a potential threat regarding the security and wellbeing of oneself. This adds another dimension to the reason why the conflict prevails and repeats within the dyad along with the main reason regarding the competition over certain goal. The threat perception adds psychological dimension which instigates and promotes deleterious image of another country which surpasses the temporal bounds making it enduring.

These factors can be systematically articulated as critical factors, temporal factors and psychological factors. While psychological factor refers to the idea of threat perception as discussed, the critical factor constitutes the existence of contentious issue or the competitive goals within the dyad. While the temporal factor regards the phenomena where an event of rivalry is depicted as a lesson in history and carries the idea onto other generations. All of these factors contribute to a three distinct phases within a certain EIR dyad: formation of rivalry, consolidation of rivalry and termination of rivalry.

Regarding Sino-India relation, the three factors of EIR have a significant presence. As mentioned in previous sections, there are various contentious issues ranging from that of the Dalai Lama to the existence of border disputes, which contribute the critical factor. These factors are still at large which supports the existence of temporal dimension and also the psychological dimension. With the existence of all the factors associated with the EIR, it is certainly pertinent that the three phases within an EIR dyad should be also be relevant for the case. Therefore, Sino-Indian relation must experience the initiation of rivalry, consolidation of rivalry and the termination as well. Egreteau has argued that the initiation of Sino-Indian EIR initiated in 1950s when China subjugated Tibet, while the culmination occurred in 1962 due to the Sino-Indian war.

As the empirical evidence within EIR literature suggests, the rivals do not enter full-fledged war after the culmination, which can also be verified from the Sino-Indian dyad. Moreover, there have been various efforts made from both fronts regarding amelioration of the relation. Yet, there is a pattern of an appeasement process being followed by some malicious events causing subsequent exacerbation within the history starting from 1962 itself. The exchange of letters between Nehru and Chou En-lai was followed by the border clashes in 1967, 1971 and 1975. (Li, 2007). Same kinds of patterns were observed during the tenure of Indira Gandhi as well as Rajiv Gandhi.

Another interesting pattern was observed starting at around the beginning of this millennium. There was an appeasement process led by the Foreign Minister of India Jaswant Singh, following the tenure of bellicose Georges Fernandes, which witnessed an ecstatic relationship in the early 2000s (Guang, 2004). The relationship reached new heights in both diplomatic as well as economic fronts. It included two presidential visits (K.R. Narayanan and Pratibha Patil) and two

Prime minister visits (Atal B. Vajpayee and Manmohan Singh) to China (Chong, 2016) and a trade of over USD 51 billion in 2009 (World Bank, 2019). Even from the Chinese side, Prime Minister Zhu Rongji, Wen Jiabao and President Hu Jintao made their visits to India (Holslag, 2010). There were even speculations that the termination of the rivalry has found some solid grounds (Egreteau, 2012).

What the researchers could not sense at that time was the evolution of China in regards to their world outlook and ambition. China was diverging out of her geographical limits, which brought threat perception into the context. Therefore, the relation plunged again, witnessing the traditional pattern repeating itself. During this period, Chinese belligerence was more apparent around South China Sea, Spratly Island and Sentaku Island, but the real threat perception for India could be the Chinese expansion into South Asia and the Indian Ocean Region. It is because India considered these regions to be her strategic backyard.

This argument can be concluded into some inferences that would be relevant in the study within the paper. First of all, the Sino-Indian competition saw a new set of rivalry after 2010 when the Chinese expansionist ambition became apparent. This downfall has seized any opportunity of the rivalry reaching termination for few years, because the critical, historic and psychological dimensions of EIR has replenished. More importantly, it can also be construed that the impacts of Sino-Indian competition on small states of Indian Ocean including Maldives and Sri Lanka can be truly assessed during this period. As Indian suspicion and counteraction around the region initiated when China began to operate in the Indian Ocean (after 2010), the real impacts from competition can be differentiated from non-competitive impacts within those countries. This is critical because China and India has an elaborate history in this region and the actions and policies regarding the region may or may not be out of a sense of competition.

Another relevant inference is that the Sino-Indian competition in this region can be considered to be started when China increased her active involvement in the region. Thus the role of India within the competition has been that of a counter-action to the Chinese action. Therefore, through the extensive theoretical analysis, a theoretical model of the scenario in the Indian Ocean Region has been constructed, which can be used to conduct the further assessment.

Chapter 5: Foreign Policies of Sri Lanka and Maldives

In order to understand the influence of Sino-Indian competition on various dimensions of the small states, the context should be explored sufficiently. Therefore, this chapter is dedicated in exploring the exchanges of China and India with the small states so that the context can be outlined appropriately. As the study of overall history of the states is not within the scope of the research, the history of the international relations, and more specifically that pertaining to the relation with India and China is described within this chapter. The topic of IR and foreign policy can basically span throughout the majority of dimensions, therefore the study circumscribing the subject can be sufficient to address the research question. At first the chapter describes the history of IR of Sri Lanka, while that of Maldives is discussed in the latter half.

5.1 Foreign Policy of Sri Lanka

International relations and foreign policy of Sri Lanka in a historic sense can be studied effectively by dividing it into two phases: pre-independence and post-independence (before and after 1948 respectively). This approach also allows the foreign policy to be studied from an evolutionary vantage point, focusing basically on continuity and changes. The notion of continuity and changes may not eschew conspicuousness, might even indicate plainness, but they are unique and interesting in this case. On the one hand, foreign policy is obliged to endure the tide of time, while on the other, it is expected to haul several dispositions from the past. The historical approach to Sri Lankan foreign policy would contribute to determining the factors which define the national character that is distinctive to her foreign policy. With the determination of historical continuity in the foreign policy, changes can be scrutinized and dissected through a cause-effect paradigm.

5.1.1 Pre-Independence International Relations of Sri Lanka

The evolution of Sri Lankan foreign policy is a testament to the notion that foreign policy cannot exist in isolation and emerges and shapes along the axis of interaction with the outside world. This can be justified through the observation of one of the most significant factors within Sri Lankan foreign policy- Buddhism. Apart from geography, Buddhism has been one of the continuous elements, which has been contributing tremendously to the foreign as well as domestic affairs. The emergence, existence and primacy of Buddhism in Sri Lanka is an evidence of her prehistoric intercourse with the outside world. Anuradhapura, the most prominent city-state within the island, received several missions on behalf of Indian Emperor Ashok, who was responsible for disseminating Buddhism throughout the region. He even sent his son Mahinda to Sri Lanka and sent the bodily relics of Buddha as well as the Bodhi tree to the rulers of Anuradhapura (Peebles, 2006). This initiative from Ashok not just consolidated the spread of Buddhism but it also shaped the national characteristic and outlook of Sri Lanka for years to come (Mendis, 1994).

The relation of Buddhism with Sri Lanka is quite an intriguing phenomenon; unlike the apparent and widely conceived monastic nature of the religion, at various instances across history, it has infiltrated through to the states affairs. This phenomenon has been termed by Jonathan Young as "Virtuous Governmentality"(2016). It refers to the act of amalgamating governance with virtuosity, dominantly in the mentality of the regime. Something remarkable about this phenomenon is how it has emerged repeatedly in history. This can be exemplified by a striking similarity between the involvement of Buddhist monks in governance in pre-colonial Kandy(Peebles, 2006) and the rise of Sinhalese-Buddhist nationalism in contemporary political sphere (Beech, 2019).

This rise of Buddhist nationalism in Sri Lanka is being marked by violence against Muslim minority led directly by the senior Buddhist monks and some have argued that the Theravada form of Buddhism might have attributed this behavior among Buddhists in Sri Lanka and Myanmar (Young, 2016). However, there is an outright contradiction in how Theravada Buddhism has operated in international realm as compared to the activities and intentions demonstrated in domestic domain.

In regards to the pre-colonial Sri Lanka, Buddhism had been a thread, connecting with China, India and Southeast Asian countries. Sri Lanka relished a harmonious relation with the Maurya Empire in India and Tang dynasty in China (Peebles, 2006). The relation with China culminated during fifth to eighth century, when over sixteen diplomatic mission help brace the relation. During the Gupta and Mughal reign of India, Buddhism approached nadir in India. Henceforth, Sri Lanka shifted her focus from Indian subcontinent to Southeast Asian countries and forged religious relation with the Kingdom of Burma and Thailand (Peebles, 2006). This diplomatic behavior of Sri Lanka has been considered as "Buddhistic Diplomacy" of "Ashokan" kind (Mendis, 1994).

Apart from Buddhism, Islam also has had tremendous impact in her national personality. Although an island country, Sri Lankans were quite unaware of the oceanic technology and culture and it was not until their interaction with Arab traders, they adapted the oceanic lifestyle (De Silva, 1981). They formed the first Muslim settlement in the island and Sri Lanka acted as a hub of trade within the Indian Ocean. This harmonious relation with the Muslim world is seen as the reason why Sri Lanka did not suffer from the Mughal invasion (Mendis, 1994).

Apart from the dimension of religion, geographical dimension is unequivocally a cardinal determinant of foreign policy of any country around the world. The case of Sri Lanka does not

dodge the geographical reality too. It is an island separated with the Indian subcontinent by a narrow Palk Strait. Palk Strait has been geopolitically compared with the English Channel, which divides Britain and France (Mendis, 1994). Geographically, Sri Lanka is equidistant with East Africa and Southeast Asia and for a certain historical timeline, served as a trade hub between China and Persia (De Silva, 1981). It was historically a part of the popular notion of silk route (Mendis, 1994). Moreover, as an island, the most significant attribute is the ocean that surrounds. Indian Ocean has always been a geopolitical center, because of which, Sri Lanka has always directly been affected with global phenomena such as colonization or globalization.

Other dimensions which are worth discussing are the relation of Sri Lanka with South-India and the impact of colonialism. Although both the events are completely unrelated and distinct, they can be analyzed using the same lens from the perspective of Sri Lanka. Similar to the competition between colonial powers such as British, Dutch, French and Portuguese for the influence, the South-Indian powers and their politics struggled for their influence. The South-Indian politics from 5th to 14th century was broiling with the competition between three dynasties: Pallava, Pandya and Chola. One of the continuity components of Sri Lankan foreign policy was demonstrated in her relation with these three South-Indian power houses, and the same behavior was also reflected in regards to the colonial power.

When the Pallavas were in power, Sri Lanka was a loyal ally of them. She abide by her loyalty till the Pandyaans came into prominence and thereby the loyalty shifted but did not dwindle until the colonial powers arrived (De Silva, 1981). The interaction with colonial powers demonstrate similar shift and adherence. Initially, Dutch were supportive of the Buddhist missions; they used to aid transportation of Sri Lankan monks to Southeast Asian region (Peebles, 2006). But gradually the struggle between Dutch and the Portuguese brought a turmoil

which benefited the British (Mendis, 1994). Similar to how Sri Lanka adhered with Pandyan, they adhered with British even years beyond the independence (Peebles, 2006). One of the major forces emerging after the independence, United National Party (UNP), was blamed of catering the pro-west agendas a long time after the independence (Kodikara, 1973). Regardless, the main idea from the couple of historical examples is how Sri Lanka successfully utilized the machinery of opportunistic shift and adherence policy in her foreign policy.

5.1.2 Post-Independence Sri Lanka's International Relation

The post-independence foreign policy is relatively more intricate as compared to the previous one because the domestic and global political variables augmented substantially in that period. Therefore, the event-based study of foreign policy could widen the quantity and quality of the study. This can be eschewed by operating through an element-based study; the dominant dimensions of the foreign policy pertaining to the period can simplify yet suffice the objective of the study. The noteworthy elements that affected Sri Lankan foreign policy directly or indirectly during the period are: independence, decolonization, socialism, non-alignment, regionalism, multilateralism, liberalization and globalization. Although most of the elements are not objectively unique, the emergence, experience and implications are quite distinctive.

Independence as an elemental paradigm of foreign policy sketches mainly the policy activities and stance in relation with Britain. As compared to other colonial states, absconding Sri Lanka was certainly easier for Britain (DeVotta, 2010); consolidated democracy through functional parliament and Soulbury constitution, prominent politicians from elite families who were acquainted with democratic process, transportation and administrative infrastructures, were some of the features that relieved the pressure from Britain (Peebles, 2006). The only concern of Britain and that of the UNP was a Marxist fringe which seemed docile at that period

(Amarsinghe, 1998). D.S. Senanayake, the first Prime minister of Sri Lanka and the leader of UNP even signed a defense pact with Britain in 1947 (Mendis, 1994). The terms were laid out such that Sri Lanka had to provide the military facilities and bases to Britain, while Britain was supposed to aid Sri Lanka in her defense against external threats (Wilson, 1980). This action served mainly two purposes: (i) as Senanayake considered India as aggressor, it was to prevent any possible threat, (ii) to have a positive-term with Britain and other Western countries (Wilson, 1980).

5.1.3 Foreign Policy under S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike

However, this international stance was dissolved during the S.W.R.D Bandaranaike's regime later by refraining from the defense pact of 1947 and urging British Naval forces to terminate the bases within Sri Lanka (Wilson, 1980). Foreign policy under the government led by S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike diversified the priorities and it was among the most dynamic foreign policies ever to be enacted in Sri Lanka since independence. It can even be argued that the actual decolonization did not accomplish until the Bandaranaike government. The dimensions such as decolonization, socialism, regionalism, non-alignment were some of the features of the foreign policy of Sri Lanka during the period. One of the notable shifts in Bandaranaike foreign policy from the UNP government, as mentioned, was redefining relation with Western powers, and has various explanations for that behavior. While some interpreted that as an adaption to the cold war arrangement(Wilson, 1980), others saw it as an influence from the left parties that were aligned with Bandaranaike(Amarsinghe, 1998).

The first argument basically invokes non-alignment, decolonization and regionalism to some extent. Regardless of the argument, a certain thing is that S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike was aware of the susceptibility to belligerence during the cold war, as due to 1947 pact, Sri Lanka

would be the only country within South Asia to be on either poles (Bjorkman, 1985). Another major factor was India; rather than relying on distant Britain for insurance, Sri Lanka could rely on friendship with India and close neighbors. After all, the visions of Prime Minister Bandaranaike concerning the political condition of region were quite similar with that of Prime Minister of India Jawaharlal Nehru. During the hostility of cold war, Nehru believed non-alignment could be the key to survival, while Bandaranaike envisioned Sri Lanka to be a neutral country with an image as that of Switzerland of South Asia (DeVotta, 2010). Bandaranaike termed this "dynamic neutralism" (Wilson, 1980). The evidence of a Bandaranaike-Nehru friendship can be evident from the instance when Bandaranaike was assassinated and Jawaharlal Nehru ordered all the public offices of India to be closed for half day (Wilson, 1980).

The second argument, which considers the socialist influence over S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike, is quite compelling as well. During the national election of 1956 the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) belonging to Bandaranaike had allied with Viplavakari Lanka Sama Samaja Party (VLSSP) to form the Mahajana Eksath Peramuna(MEP) (Amarsinghe, 1998). VLSSP led by Philip Gunawardene was a splinter group from Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP) which was a firm supporter of Trotskyism (Amarsinghe, 1998). Most of the socialist leaders were influenced by the doctrine when they were studying in London and they are even credited for setting agenda for free-education and free-health services (Lakshman, 2010). With an incorporation of socialist element in his ideology and even his government, Bandaranaike revised deals with the British, extended relation with other socialist countries, supported Egypt for nationalizing the Suez Canal and forged a formal diplomatic relation with China (Amarsinghe, 1998; DeVotta, 2010; Lakshman, 2010).

5.1.4 Foreign Policy under Sirimavo Bandaranaike

After the assassination of S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike, his wife Sirimavo Bandaranaike became Prime Minister through the election, as a first female Prime Minister the world had ever seen (Peebles, 2006). Her tenure was recognized for continuation of her husband's vision of "dynamic neutrality" and pushing it even further. She maintained that the concept of non-alignment was glaringly different from non-involvement and advocated it to be the tool to fulfill the international roles of militarily weak countries (Dhanapala, 2010). Similar to her husband's policy of appeasement of close neighbors, she was quite focused on relation with China and India. In fact, during the 1962 Sino-China war, she served as a mediator (Dhanapala, 2010). Considering the relation with India to be of utmost priority, she decided to reach an agreement with India over the stateless Tamil population residing in Sri Lanka which can be considered as one of the underpinnings in India-Sri Lanka relation (Kodikara, 1973). The agreement was called as Sirimavo-Shastri pact which decided to provide Sri Lankan citizenship to 300,000 people and repatriation of 525,000 number of people to India (De Silva, 1981).

Her premiership was even more anti-colonial, anti-pact and anti-militarist than that of her husband (Kodikara, 1973). She was firm on her bold stances on issues such as: granting official recognition to East Germany, North Korea, North Vietnam, and the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam, opposing Anglo-American communication center in Indian Ocean, opposing American troops in Vietnam, condemning Israel for belligerence upon Palestine, etc. (Phadnis, 1971). The nationalization of oil during 1961 exacerbated the relation with West to its nadir. It led the United States in amending her Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 where the foreign assistance was supposed to be suspended for any country which nationalizes any property owned by the U.S. citizen or corporation (Kodikara, 1973). Under her leadership, Dominion of Ceylon

was converted into Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka and the status of Queen Elizabeth II as a head of state of Sri Lanka was discontinued (Dhanapala, 2010).

5.1.5 Foreign Policy under UNP regimes

While the foreign policy under SLFP during the cold war oscillated between neutrality and anti-west stance, adhering almost always to regionalism prioritizing neighborhood at foremost, the UNP government primarily asserted a differing position. During both the tenures of UNP (1948-1956 and 1977-1994), mainly under D.S. Senanayake, Dudley Senanayake, Junius Jayawardene, Ranasinghe Premadasa, and Ranil Wikremesinghe, the foreign policy can be characterized as being pro-west (DeVotta, 1998; Peebles, 2006; Wilson, 1980). The pro-west position was also demanded by their economic policy; as an advocate of trade liberalization and open market, being pro-west would facilitate necessary accommodation to perform international trade. Taking the stance of this kind during the Cold War would be tantamount to inviting the Western involvement not merely in trade but also in politics, security and foreign relations of a country. On the other hand, this was quite an unfavorable foreign policy position of Sri Lanka from the perspective of India.

In fact, every UNP government before 1994 had an aggravated relation with both China and India. Although the relation of Sri Lankan Premier Junius Jayawardene with his Indian counterpart Morarji Desai was marked by profound understanding and cooperation, India's foreign policy was not in favor of Western involvement in the island. As Rohan Gunaratna in his book *Indian Intervention in Sri Lanka: The Role of India's Intelligence Agencies* quotes an interview with one Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) official: "induction of Mossad and the top secret American National Security Agency has left New Delhi with no option but to escalate the tension on Sri Lanka." (Gunaratna, 1993). Indian foreign policy has been blamed sometimes

as being captive to the covert intelligence operators (Manchanda, 1993) and the events surrounding 1977-1994 regarding the Indo-Sri Lanka relation can be a testament to that conviction. As RAW provided training and weapons to the rebels, the environment of the island exacerbated and Jayawardene's government brought the matter with the Indian leadership but those efforts were futile (Gunaratna, 1993). The relation of Jayawardene with Indira Gandhi was audaciously parsimonious and there was an environment of mistrust between both the sides (Gunaratna, 1993). However, the attempt of both sides to appease the Tamil problem in Sri Lanka, an accord was signed between Jayawardene and Indian Prime minister Rajiv Gandhi in 1987 called the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord. This accord delegated certain power to the provinces, provided official recognition to the Tamil language, vowed the return of Sri Lankan troops from Northern and Eastern provinces, along with India pledging to end support for Tamil rebels and finally the rebels vouching for disarmament (Marasinghe, 2008). Unfortunately, the reception of the peace accord was not as anticipated and became the cause for the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi. While major forces such as Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) were kept out of the talk process, terminating the Indian support for rebels and most importantly the entry of Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) in Sri Lanka were not perceived well by the rebels (DeVotta, 1998).

Similarly, UNP's pursuit of pleasing west aggravated the relation with China as well. The anti-communist stance of UNP was demonstrated vehemently in diplomatic relation. During the second tenure of Dudley Senanayake, diplomatic articles of Chinese embassy were forcefully examined and confiscated (Kodikara, 1973). The atrocity escalated in such a way that Red Guard sat for demonstration in Ceylonese Embassy in Peking in 1967. China blamed Sri Lanka of following U.S. imperialists by supporting the creation of two-China, which was evident by Sri

Lanka attempting to forge a strong tie with Taiwan in number of diplomatic exchanges (Kodikara, 1973). The pessimism associated with Sino-Sri Lanka relation was suspected to cloud the Chinese renewal of rice-rubber pact of 1952 as well. The rice-rubber pact was an agreement that guaranteed China sending rice to Sri Lanka in return for the rubber sent by Sri Lanka (Daily News, 2017). However, not only during that period, but throughout the modern history of Sri Lanka's diplomatic relation, China has treated trade relation and diplomatic relation as distinct instruments for foreign relation.

Although the UNP government pledged to abide by the non-alignment movement similar to the SLFP government, there is evidence of the shift from non-alignment policy towards a rational choice. When Britain took over Falkland, Jayawardene asked the Sri Lankan delegates to vote in favor of Britain which was clearly against the position of majority of other non-aligned states (DeVotta, 1998). Relying on the historical trend, realist foreign policy has been favored by UNP, with a slight predisposition towards the Western countries. There is no better example of the adherence of UNP with the realist policy than the policy stance during the tenure of Ranil Wikremesinghe across the various stretches of the Sri Lankan politics. His first tenure from 1993-1994 complies with his staunch historical parsimony with India (DeVotta, 2010), while his tenure from 2015 was solely dedicated to mend and consolidate the Indo-Lanka relation.

5.1.6 Sri Lankan Foreign Policy under Mahinda Rajapaksa

The eventfulness within the Sri Lankan foreign affairs during the cold war period could not be carried over to the post-cold war period. Therefore, the periods of premiership of even Sirimavo (1994-2000) or Ranil Wikremesinghe (2001-2004) were relatively insignificant as compared to any other premiership throughout the history from the perspective of foreign policy. This may be due to several reasons: 1) End of polarization with the cold war plummeted the

interest of great powers over the small states, 2) End of the bipolar world meant that the movements such as non-alignment and its actors lost their significance. 3) The events following the 2001 terrorist attack shifted the global focus, 4) India's role and involvement was transformed after the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi.

However, this virtual silence was soon broken during the tenure of Mahinda Rajapaksa, from 2004-2005 as the Prime Minister and from 2005 to 2015 as the President. Historically, the tenure marked some distinguished breakthroughs in domestic and foreign affairs. Evidently, his leadership eradicated the twenty-six years long civil war by sweeping the LTTE along with its leader, Velupillai Prabhakaran. It also brought a glut of allegations on the government regarding the violations of human rights and numerous war crimes. Interestingly, the overall foreign policy throughout the period could be observed as going through a roller coaster.

The Indo-Lanka relation of Rajapaksa era before 2009 was cordial, strengthened by a strategic coordination and cooperation regarding the insurgency. Despite the dire consequence as that of the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi, India could not overlook Sri Lanka for various reasons: 1) the issue of Tamil minority in the island had an effect on the politics of Tamil Nadu which was directly related to the politics of central government of India. 2) India did not want any other foreign actors to be involved in the island. Indian government provided military assistance including a compact radar system, MI 17 air fighter helicopters, military vessels and a variety of arms and ammunitions (Epa, 2011). This act might have been influenced by the fact that India was being governed by the United Progressive Alliance(UPA), which was led by Sonia Gandhi, the wife of Late Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. The belligerence towards LTTE could be connected to their orchestration of the assassination of her husband. Nevertheless, India

remained parallel with Sri Lanka, despite the outcry from the Tamil community within India (Nalankilli, 2007), and the insurgency was contained ruthlessly.

In addition, China was also not far behind to assist Sri Lankan army against the LTTE insurgency; the assistance came in the form of fighter aircraft, armored personnel carriers anti-aircraft guns, air surveillance radars, missiles, along with the training (Pant H. V., 2009). After the war officially ended in 2009, China provided the biggest post-war development loan worth USD 1.6 billion (Mendis, 2012). As Sri Lanka had drifted away from the West by disregarding any possibilities of the peaceful settlement of dispute, China being a permanent member of the UN Security Council, appealed as a dependable support. The polarization was further corroborated when India supported the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) resolution to investigate alleged human rights violations by the state against the Tamil rebels in 2009, 2012 and 2013 (Chaudhary, 2015).

During the period of 2010-2015, China-Lanka relation was proliferated in multiple facets. China was involved with numerous projects such as the Norochcholai Coal Power Plant, Mattala International Airport, Katunayake Airport Expressway, the Southern Expressway, Hambantota Port, the Lotus Pond (Nelum Pokuna) Performing Arts Theatre and the expansion of the Colombo Port (De Silva, 2018). On one hand, economical and infrastructure development was being advanced, on the other, military and strategic aspect was of a specific concern for West and for India. The development of Hambantota Port might have been necessitated by the economy of Sri Lanka or the election campaign of Rajapaksa, but it was perceived by the West and India as a pearl in the Chinese string of strategic encirclement (Brewster, 2016). The alarming concern culminated when Chinese submarine of nuclear capability made an unexpected visit in 2014 (Brewster, 2016; De Silva, 2018). All of the proceedings brought hostile

environment for Rajapaksa, internally and externally, and despite the unambiguous support from China, he lost the presidency to his former colleague, Maithripala Sirisena.

5.1.7 Post 2015 Sri Lanka

The presidency of Sirisena was undoubtedly coherent with the Indian interest and with the premiership of Ranil Wikremesinghe, there was an anticipation that the Sri Lankan foreign policy would "take a U-turn" and prioritize India over China (Brewster, 2016). However, Sirisena government has been able to append by a relatively balanced foreign policy between India and China.

As the events following the 2015 General Election suggests, Rajapaksa had antagonized India economically and militarily, while even his domestic image was muddled with allegations such as promoting nepotism, favoritism, unaccountable corruption, violations of human rights, etc. The plethora of shortcomings sufficed the consolidation of anti-Rajapaksa forces inside and outside the island. Apparently, the forces had accumulated enough momentum to convince SLFP leader Sirisena to contest for presidency while Wikremesinghe, a spearhead of UNP, to contest for the post of Prime Minister. The phenomenon of the assimilation of dissimilar forces might have been the reason why the actual contestants for the election were contended as being India and China (Chellaney, 2015). This contention coincides with the indictment made by The New York Times that the election campaign of Rajapakse was being funded by the Chinese government (Abi-Habib, 2018). However, in an article written by Rajapaksa himself, he denied the claim and termed it a "political mudslinging campaign" which was targeted merely at assassinating his character (Rajapaksa, 2018).

Under these circumstances, it seemed obvious that the foreign policy position under Sirisena government would have distinct asymmetry, by prioritizing India while detaching from

the Chinese paradigm. After all, the advocates of the debt-trap diplomacy had been using Sri Lanka (Hambantota Port specifically) as a display of how China squeezes political gain out of an economical deal (Abi-Habib, 2018; Chellaney, 2017). At the beginning of their tenure, Sirisena-Wikremesinghe duo hinted at reverting the developments with China and mending ties with India, West and the multilateral organizations. The first hint was when Sri Lanka discontinued a USD 1.5 billion Chinese real estate project in Colombo based on the charge that it was lacking transparency and was eschewing the environmental protocols (Pant, 2016). In March 2015, Narendra Modi visited Sri Lanka and offered a loan of USD 380 million for railway sector development and pledged to develop Trincomalee as a petroleum hub. However, against the popular consensus of Sri Lanka coming out of Chinese influence, the Hambantota Port was handed over to a Chinese firm on a 99 year lease for business purpose (Abi-Habib, 2018). This even has been a "poster-child" of the rhetoric of "debt-trap diplomacy". This might be the execution of debt-trap diplomacy, as most of the Western and Indian media and scholars suggest (Abi-Habib, 2018; Chellaney, 2017; Roy-Chaudhury, 2019), or it might be a boost in productivity of an under-utilized port facility, as Sri Lankan and Chinese media, politician and academics suggest (De Silva, 2018; Moramudali, 2019; Zhou, 2019), but in a result-oriented observation, this is a balancing act that has been long considered an ideal foreign policy stance for a small state.

A balanced strategy is undoubtedly an ideal foreign policy stance for a small state and this need has been emphasized lately. As a matter of fact, the balanced stance also complies with the traditional roots of Sri Lankan foreign policy such as Buddhism, panchasheel and NAM.

5.2 Foreign Policy of Maldives

As compared to the Sri Lankan foreign policy, Maldivian foreign policy is substantially limited from both the temporal and spatial points of views. Since the geographical proximity with her neighbors, India and Sri Lanka, it has played a vital role in shaping the foreign as well as domestic policy throughout the history.

5.2.1 Pre-Independence International Relations of Maldives

It is believed that the first human settlement in the island was during the same period as that of Sri Lanka and it was the same wave of migration that took over the island as well (Maloney, 2013). Just as Sri Lanka, the pre-colonial period of Maldives was dominated by Buddhism and during this period, most of the national identity associated with Maldives such as language, script, architecture, institutions, customs, cultures, etc. emerged. The archaeological evidence pertaining to Theravada Buddhism suggests that most of the Buddhist influence in the country arrived from Sri Lanka. While a glut of discoveries related to Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhism suggests that some influence must have directly arrived from the subcontinent (Maloney, 2013). Therefore, Buddhism can be considered as the foremost medium for Maldives to interact with the outer world.

However, the presence of Arab traders throughout the Indian Ocean brought Islam within Maldives at around 12th century. The last Buddhist king Dhovemi was converted into Islam and thereafter Islam has been the most influential religion (Visweswaran, 2011). After the conversion, Buddhist influence gradually faded, and in contrast to Sri Lanka, it had negligible influence in her foreign policy.

With the wave of colonization and the activity of colonizers within the Indian Ocean, Maldives had to succumb to some extent. Similar to Sri Lanka, Maldives was first influenced by

Portuguese. The Portuguese had already colonized Goa and from Goa they were expanding their sphere. The influence could not properly materialize and was taken over by the Dutch imperialist. However, they were also not quite effective and Maldives became British protectorate by 1887 (Romero-Frias, 1999). In the sense of foreign policy, this meant that the government of Maldives gave up their sovereign authority over the foreign policy decision-making. The intentions of British were unambiguous as they did not allow Maldives expand her horizon of foreign relation any further than the closest neighbors (Phadnis & Luithui, 1981).

With the death of Sultan Majeed Didi, Maldives became a republic through a referendum making President Mohamed Amid Didi the first elected President of Maldives. The active British presence prevailed even after that; British operated Royal Air Force Station (RAF) Gan in the southernmost Addu Atoll (Phadnis & Luithui, 1981). The presence of foreign army within the territory was not welcomed by the democratically elected government and they entered a new agreement by 1960, which imposed several restrictions towards the British government (Phadnis, 1980). The pressing agenda for Britain was that the British army was just ousted from Trincomalee and Katunayake in Sri Lanka and establishing a facility in Maldives was a viable option.

5.2.1 Post-Independence Maldives

The opening up and modernization of Maldives is often credited to President Ibrahim Nasir, who led the establishment of the first international airport in 1966. Similarly, Maldives took the membership of United Nations under his leadership. His presidency was followed by that of Mamoon Abdul Gayoom who associated Maldives with the Bretton Woods Institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank. One of the noteworthy events during Gayoom's presidency was the failed coup attempt by the PLOTE Tamil Militant group

who arrived with 80 armed militants. However, the attempt was successfully eschewed by the Indian military under Operation Cactus (Naseem, 2015). The reign of Gayoom, which began in 1978 went on for another 30 years and ended in 2008 with an election. His tenure was even considered as a form of dictatorship by many (Dharmawardhane, 2015; Naseem, 2015). But from the perspective of international relations, Maldives relished a cordial relation with India and few of the important Islamic countries, during those times.

The first democratically elected President of Maldives was Mohamed Nasheed and he was elected from the election of 2008. The highlight of his tenure was the internationalization of the threat of climate change on the country. Nasheed pledged to make Maldives Carbon-neutral (BBC News, 2012) and also organized the world's first underwater cabinet meeting (Reddy, 2009). As Nasheed had led the country during the transition from authoritarianism to democracy, the dissatisfaction was quite relentless and it resulted in the end of the tenure of Nasheed in 2012. His resignation played an indirect role in tainting the Indo-Maldives relation; India was the first country to acknowledge his resignation, thus, infuriating the Maldivian democrats (Naseem, 2015). His tenure was followed by Mohammed Waheed, who remained in the office for a year from 2012 to 2013. Waheed was responsible for further exacerbating the Indo-Maldives relation by terminating the agreement with Indian infrastructure giant GMR, regarding the management of the only international airport, the Ibrahim Nasir International Airport (INIA) (Dharmawardhane, 2015).

Nevertheless, the tenure of Mohammed Waheed was succeeded promptly by that of Abdulla Yameen, half-brother of former president Gayoom. The tenure of Yameen, and especially his foreign policy ought to be studied keenly as it marked several pitfalls which could directly associate with the Sino-Indian competition. As Indo-Maldives relation was deteriorating,

the Sino-Maldives relation on the other hand was reaching a new height. Beijing had just established the embassy in Male during the tenure of Nasheed (Bosely, 2012). While Narendra Modi refrained from visiting Maldives during his visit to several other Indian Ocean countries (The Economist, 2015), Xi Jinping made the first ever official state visit to Maldives (Xinhua News Agency, 2014). China had pledged support in sectors such as economy, tourism, military, infrastructure, etc. Although both the Male and Beijing denied the allegation, but China was blamed by few of using Maldives to expand her military in Indian Ocean (Samanta, 2013). India was especially worried in June 2015 when they claimed that the Chinese military submarine had entered the Maldivian water (India Today, 2015).

Moreover, the Sino-Indian rift appeared ostentatious when the former President Mohamed Nasheed was arrested in February 2015. Mohamed Nasheed enjoyed amicable relation with India; this contention can be corroborated by a secret memorandum he signed with India about resisting any powers that intended potential hostility towards India (Bobin, 2012). Therefore, it was obvious for India to condemn his arrest. However, China was seemingly unbothered, referring to it unequivocally as a 'domestic affair of the Maldives" (Krishnan, 2015).

The five-year presidency of Yameen can be summarized as pivoting towards Beijing while furthering from her closest neighbor India. There were some glaring concerns about succumbing to the Chinese strategic and economic ambition while compromising the relation with India. Yameen has been reprimanded for his decisions such as obtaining loans from China which amounted up to \$3 billion and making possible ratification of a free trade agreement with China (Panda, 2018). Furthermore, Yameen asked India to take back the gifted helicopters and banned Indian workers from entering Maldives (Upadhyaya, 2019). The dissatisfaction against Yameen finally culminated in February, 2018 when he declared a state of emergency, sent troops to the

Supreme Court to arrest judges who had overturned criminal conviction against nine of the Yameen's opponents (Moosa & Gettleman, 2018).

Amidst this flaring tension, the election of 2018 saw Yameen defeated against Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, whose primary agenda was the amelioration of relation with India and the revision of the Chinese deals. The election of 2018 was perceived by many as a proxy election between China and India (BBC News, 2018). As Solih won the election, and the basis was to appease the Indo-Maldives relation, Solih attempted to restore the historical relation which had been derailed. Therefore, it was not mere coincidence that Modi's first ever visit to Maldives was during the swearing-in ceremony of Ibrahim Solih's presidency. During the event, Solih pledged to corroborate the existing relationship with India, which was aggravated by Yameen (Panda, 2018).

As committed by Solih, the Indo-Maldives relation following the election of 2018, swiftly ameliorated. President Solih has since had a couple of visits to India: in December, 2018 and April, 2019. During the visit of December, 2019, India and Maldives signed various documents mainly pertaining to the ease in visa for Indian nationals to Maldives and Indian assistance for agribusiness and information technology business (Sun, 2018). The visit of April was comparatively informal, as the President was in India to attend a cricket match in Bangalore and to discuss the construction of a cricket stadium in Hulhumale, Maldives (Sun, 2019). And it was not much of a surprise when Narendra Modi was awarded the Order of the rule of Izzudeen, the highest award to be given to any foreign national by Maldives (Avas, 2019).

On the other hand, ex-president Mohamed Nasheed, who surprisingly became Parliamentary speaker after the election, has engaged himself in a row of verbal antagonism against China. Nasheed accused China and Yameen-led government of misinforming the loan amount to be

\$1.5 billion, whereas, the real amount was nearly \$3 billion (Avas, 2018). Therefore, according to the accusation of Nasheed, China wants to 'enslave' Maldives, using debt-trap similar to that of Sri Lanka. Chinese ambassador to Maldives, Zhang Lizhong, has refuted the claim, referring to it as being "deeply exaggerated" and wish to seek audience to enlighten 'misinformed' Nasheed (Avas, 2018). Nasheed even went on to claim that the government could abort the free trade agreement done by the Yameen government (Avas, 2018). In contrast, the government has been cautious enough not to wither the Sino-Maldives relation. During the visit of Maldivian Foreign Minister Abdulla Shahid to China, he expressed unmitigated support for One-China Policy, while rendered Maldives as a close partner and a supporter of the Belt and Road Initiative (Shahid, 2019). He further expressed his gratitude over the assistance in the construction of China-Maldives Friendship Bridge (Sinamale Bridge) and other infrastructure projects. The Sinamale Bridge connects three Maldivian islands- Male, Hulhumale and Hulhule. As Hulhule consists of Velana International Airport, the mega-construction in the ocean has contributed to the multiple aspects of the country. Most of the investment in the bridge came as an aid from China (Avas, 2019). In another instance, the Chinese firm Beijing Urban Construction Group (BUCG) was able to acquire the assignment of the Madivaru Airport development project (Rehan, 2018). As Constantino Xavier, a foreign policy fellow at Brookings India illustrates, that the Sino-Maldives relation, despite of the claims made by the leaders, would not deter but deepen, as the Chinese financial power would lure Maldivian leaders to enhance the ties (Ives, 2019). It can be said that, although the past 3 years has seen several pitfalls in the Maldivian foreign policy, Maldives has been able to balance the course with both the India and the China.

Chapter 6: Comparative Analysis of Impacts

As chapter 5 was concerned with the exploratory section of the study, this chapter has an explanatory approach. Therefore, this chapter attempts to analyze the impacts on the small states from the Sino-Indian competition. The fundamental difference between Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 is that, chapter 5 was descriptive and historical while chapter 6 is predominantly theoretical-based. Besides, the process of inquiry and analysis can be profoundly structured and systematic if the approach is comparative. Thus, the analysis of the impacts on various dimensions would be juxtaposed between Sri Lanka and Maldives. One of the major advantages of a comparative method in this study is that the arguments made about the influence of Sino-Indian competition can be verified in both the countries. This way the validity of the argument can be further ensured.

6.1 Comparative Foreign Policy Analysis

The value and relevance of any analysis may detriment if the subject is not defined suitably beforehand. Therefore, defining foreign policy before conducting foreign policy analysis would not allow the analysis to derail from the focus area. Morin and Paquin in their book *Foreign Policy Analysis: A Tool Box* has defined foreign policy as "a set of actions or rules governing the actions of an independent political authority deployed in the international environment"(2018). In this definition, independent political authority primarily refers to the sovereign states. While this definition considers both actions and rules as the elements of foreign policy, other scholars have differing outlooks. For example, Frankel considers foreign policy as comprising of actions, reactions or inactions in a repeated or ad hoc manner (1963). However, this paper takes into account the Morin and Paquin's definition for it is specific yet sufficient. Considering that, foreign policy analysis can be interpreted as not merely the process of

comprehending decision-making process but also a tool to assess the continuous interaction between actors and the environment. Similar to other tools of research, it also assesses the interaction between independent and dependent variables. The dependent variable in this case is the foreign policy itself. Regarding the method of analysis, a comparative approach has been found to be suitable. As James Rosenau states that the understanding of external activities of a national system would not be reliable unless it is compared with other systems and previous policies and activities (Rosenau, 1968). In this case, international relations and foreign policies of Sri Lanka and Maldives are assessed from a comparative as well as historic sense.

Structural realism has often faced the accusation of being a euro-centric theory (Buzan & Little, 1978) and offensive realism of having a parochial view limited to the great power politics (Prifti, 2014). The paper attempts to converge the triad of foreign policy analysis, offensive realism and the foreign policy of Indian Ocean states under the light of Sino-Indian Competition. As mentioned before, offensive realism focuses primarily on a regional hegemon and Indian Ocean is an appropriate region for the theory to be assessed in action. In order to maintain the viability of the assessment, it would be limited to the purely foreign policy analysis, which would mean that several events or examples would be used to justify the argument.

First of all, it is worth mentioning the advantage of taking into consideration both Sri Lanka and Maldives. If the characteristics of the two countries are compared, the differences are significant. Sri Lanka being a Buddhist country, has a larger and a heterogeneous population. Maldives being an Islamic country, has a significantly less and homogeneous population. The economic frameworks and patterns have quite a contrast. Even the realities of their foreign policy has major differences.

In spite of all the differences in their attributes, the phenomena or the sequence of events that laid out, have striking similarities. Despite the traditional ties with India, both the countries inclined with China. Coincidentally, both the states comprised of leaders with slight predisposition towards totalitarianism, were prone to violating human rights and lacked economic transparency. Both of them received Chinese assistance, aids, loans and performed mega construction projects. Similarly, the relation with India for both the leaders did not fare well during the period. Finally, amidst the criticism, especially regarding debt burden on the country and violation of human rights, they were ousted from the office by candidates whose main foreign policy goal was to ameliorate the relation with India. This common chain of events within their domestic and international affairs for the past few years can be linked to one of the major common identity shared by these countries: being small island state within the Indian Ocean region.

The notion of the connection between being a small island state of Indian Ocean region and congruency in the events cannot be justified without considering the context of power play within the region. It is evident through the previous discussions that China is expanding her influence within the Indian Ocean region, which typically was considered India's backyard. As history suggests, India has had political, cultural, economic, influence over several countries within the Indian Ocean region, including Sri Lanka and Maldives. Similarly, Western powers including United States have their own motives, which mainly aims at resisting the advancement of China. Therefore, the power dynamics prevailing the region and congruency in events occurring across two dissimilar countries of the region can strengthen the contention that the tumultuous political scenario can be credited to the Sino-Indian competition.

Under these circumstances, foreign policy analysis from Sino-Indian competition perspective can be performed appropriately if some decision making steps are analyzed within this time frame. The main idea would be to determine the role of structural constraint and the incentive within the decision-making thought process. First of all, the decision of both the states to incline towards China literally brought a paradigm shift in their foreign policy. Secondly, despite the opposition securing victory on the basis of appeasing India, both the states ended up making decisions that benefited China. Also the decision of the opposition to take pro-India or anti-China stance before the elections can be an interesting juncture for foreign policy analysis.

The analysis will begin by studying the decision making process that moved the traditionally India-inclined foreign policy to predispose towards China. Regarding Sri Lanka, the move was anything but subtle. As Peter Popham writes in "The Independent", that Sri Lanka found a new "sugar daddy" as China, in the place of West during the bloody events of 2007 (2010). As US halted the military aid, China approached with donations, military arsenals, and more importantly a firm support within the UN Security Council. Therefore, shaking hands with China would directly translate to the material gain for the Rajapaksa government. It can even be argued that Rajapaksa lacked any other alternatives than to comply with the Chinese or would have been bound to face the wrath of the international system.

For Maldives under Abdulla Yameen, it was a different scenario but similar methodology in decision-making process. Interestingly, the Sino-Maldives relation flourished when China endeavored the pursuit of regional prominence (Kumar, 2016). The first event that marks the commencement of Chinese intent can be considered as the visit of President Gayoom to China in 2006. It occurred the same way around when China was beginning to seek a role in Sri Lanka. Understandingly, President Xi visited Maldives in 2014, his first visit to South Asia, in order to

deepen the tie while further consolidating the strategic interests. Subsequently, Xi and Yameen made a joint statement where Maldives pledged a support for the 21st century Maritime Silk Road (Kondapalli, 2014). Similar to that in Sri Lanka, China came with a gamut of gifts: aid of a USD 15.4 million, scholarship to Maldivian Students in China and decision for direct flight to Maldives (Xinhua, 2015). China was subtle to take Maldives into confidence which later resulted in Maldives having no choice in decision making. Similar to Sri Lanka, apparently, the constraints allowed very limited space for Maldives to maneuver in the decision-making process. From Maldivian point of view, while complying with China, the benefit exceeded the risk.

As the course of events followed, Mahinda Rajapaksa was ousted out of the office through an election in 2015, while similar fate followed with Abudulla Yameen. The factors behind election results can be intricate and vast, so the scope of this research does not comprise of that aspect. However, a similarity has been mentioned earlier regarding the pretext of both the elections regarding the agenda of the opposition; both of the winners of the elections pledged to balance the foreign policy by appeasing India. It is not that the leaders did not demonstrate an early sign of darning the ties with that of India. However, both the governments of Maithripala Sirisena and Ibrahim Solih were subjugated to the Chinese interest in one way or the other.

As earlier, this event also signifies a similar route of the decision making process. When the structure of the international system, resulted from the vast difference in material capabilities, is imposed upon a weaker entity, it is left with a scanty space for political maneuvering. It can be better understood if the scenario is visualized when Sirisena was approached by China to transfer the Hambantota Port on a 99-years lease. In such a situation, the choices of decision would be either to agree with the terms or to reject the proposal. If the Chinese proposal had been rejected, taking into consideration the economic stronghold of China upon Sri Lanka, it would have been

counterproductive for Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka would obviously not have any support from other countries, owing to the harsh reality of the international system. Moreover, the significance of the port is negligible for Sri Lanka when compared with how significant it is for Mahinda Rajapaksa, China, India or the West. For Rajapaksa Hambantota port relates to his domestic political ambition as it lies within his constituency. And regarding China, the port can be a valuable asset at the disposal for economic, military or even merely a symbol of power projection within the Indian Ocean region. On the other hand, for India or West it is a potential threat as they construed it as a quest of regional dominance by China. Therefore, the decision-maker could scrap the prospect of rejecting the Chinese proposal and lease the port which was a rational choice under the given structural circumstances.

At the beginning of their tenure, Sirisena-Wikremesinghe duo hinted at reverting the developments with China and mending ties with India, West and the multilateral organizations. The first hint was when Sri Lanka discontinued a USD 1.5 billion Chinese real estate project in Colombo based on the charge that it was lacking transparency and was eschewing the environmental protocols (Pant, 2016). In March 2015, Narendra Modi visited Sri Lanka and offered a loan of USD 380 million for railway sector development and pledged to develop Trincomalee as a petroleum hub. However, against the popular consensus of Sri Lanka coming out of Chinese influence, the Hambantota Port was handed over to a Chinese firm on a 99 year lease for business purpose (Abi-Habib, 2018). This even has been a "poster-child" of the rhetoric of "debt-trap diplomacy". This might be the execution of debt-trap diplomacy, as most of the Western and Indian media and scholars suggest (Abi-Habib, 2018; Chellaney, 2017; Roy-Chaudhury, 2019), or it might be a boost in productivity of an under-utilized port facility, as Sri Lankan and Chinese media, politician and academics suggest (De Silva, 2018; Moramudali,

2019; Zhou, 2019), but in a result-oriented observation, this is a balancing act that has been long considered an ideal foreign policy stance for a small state.

The decision making process of these specific events are of special interest for this study because this fulfills the objective of this study. The main aim of foreign policy analysis of Sri Lanka and Maldives on the lights of Sino-Indian competition is to comprehend how the foreign policy has been affected through the competition. Foreign policy can undoubtedly have implication on the international affairs but as the cases suggest, has a profound impact on the domestic conditions as well. As foreign policy analysis relies on a theoretical viewpoint, this analysis takes into consideration the historical sequence of events and can assist the framing up of a future prospect. The main verdict of this study is the comprehension of how the Sino-Indian competition brings paradigm shift in the foreign policy of the countries. From a broader offensive realist sense, it demonstrates how a small state is bound to have excessive fluidity in their foreign policy when the great powers of the region are competing for dominance. The relative power of an entity directly translates into the range of foreign policy options an entity is allowed to possess.

6.2 Economic Dimension

The economic dimension of the impact of the competition is more quantifiable as compared to other dimensions which relied mainly upon certain theoretical frameworks. This attribute of the dimension also contributes to confirm other relational aspects within other forms of impacts. For example, when discussing the diplomatic aspect of Chinese influence over the Indian Ocean states, the inflow of the Chinese aid or donations is an interesting marker. Furthermore, the international political economics is highly reflective of the international relations and the economic dimension is pivotal to the argument and the overall study. The study of the economic

dimension is structured in such a way that the individual transactions of Sino-India would be assessed for both the Sri Lanka and Maldives. The transactions may be defined as foreign direct investment (FDI), loans, assistances, donations or even export and import. When the trend within each aspect is observed along the years, it can attribute to certain implications that would be paramount to the argument.

6.2.1 Sino-Indian Competition and the Sri Lankan Economy

As Sri Lanka is often cited as an example of how China conducts the “debt-trap diplomacy”, this study requires a serious consideration in order to explore the validity of such popular arguments. Compared to other countries, Sri Lanka is quite relevant to assess the economic impacts of the Sino-Indian competition because of various factors. First of all, Sri Lanka has a high economic engagement with both India and China. Compared to Maldives, which does not have high engagement in that level, Sri Lanka has the highest import/export relation with India and the second highest with China (World Bank, 2019). Apart from trade, Sri Lanka has been receiving high amount of grant assistances, non-financial assistances, loans and investments from various governmental and non-governmental sources within India and China. Therefore, this high level of economic engagement is prone to be affected by the competition between the two countries.

First of all, it is imperative to consider the political turn of events when considering the events pertaining to economy. It is worth mentioning that the period of study is after 2010. As discussed, the government of Mahinda Rajapaksa had a tainted relation with India but was forging a cordial relation with China because of several factors as discussed. China had started their engagement with Sri Lanka through the military assistance they provided to the Sri Lankan army in their conflict with the LTTE in 2007.

Concerning macroeconomics, Sri Lanka has been considered one of the fastest growing economy (U.S. Department of Defense, 2019). After the civil war ended in 2009, Sri Lankan economy accelerated with a tremendous pace, at an average of 5.6% per year. The GDP amounted to USD 88.94 billion in 2018, which is more than a double from what it was in 2009 (World Bank, 2019). The growth can be visualized from the graph below.

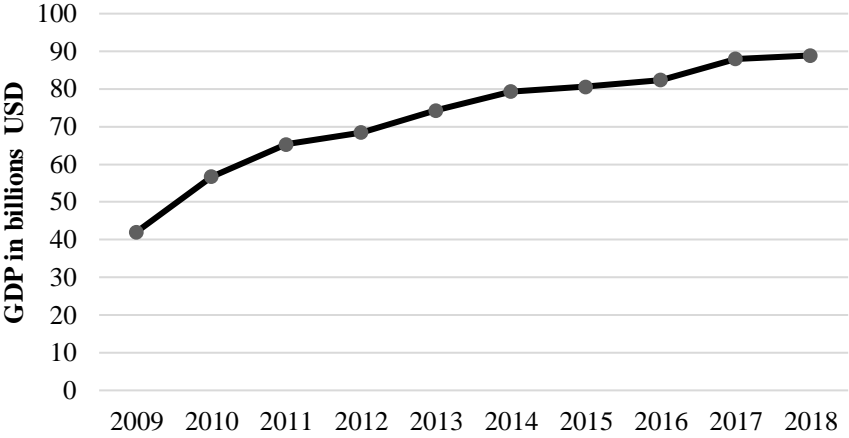


Figure 3: Trend of GDP of Sri Lanka (2009-2018) (World Bank, 2019)

Compared to the neighboring countries, the economic performance of Sri Lanka cannot be commended enough. The per capita income of the country is USD 4,102, staggering high as compared to other South Asian countries, which is USD 1,902, according to 2018 data (World Bank, 2019). It makes Sri Lanka the upper middle income nation, along with just Maldives in the South Asia. A national economy is related to an array of factors, one of the major factor has been their engagement with India and China.

After the end of the war, there has been an exceptional growth in the net foreign direct investment (FDI) inflow in Sri Lanka. The inflow was about USD 400 million in 2009, which reached USD 1.6 billion by 2018 (World Bank, 2019).

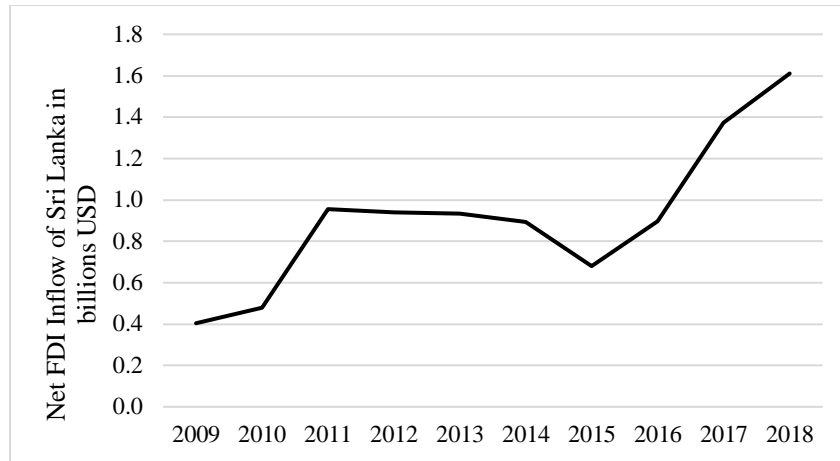


Figure 4: Net FDI inflow of Sri Lanka from 2009 to 2018 (World Bank, 2018)

There is a direct contribution of the FDI growth in the GDP growth. This was also verified through a study done by Mustafa and Santhirasegaram (2018). Through the multiple regression method, the GDP of Sri Lanka was found to correlate the FDI inflow with the significance at the level of 5%. This implies that FDI has been the backbone of the economic growth of Sri Lanka. Therefore, it is imperative to investigate further over the FDI inflow from India and China. The graph shown below gives a clear picture of the scenario.

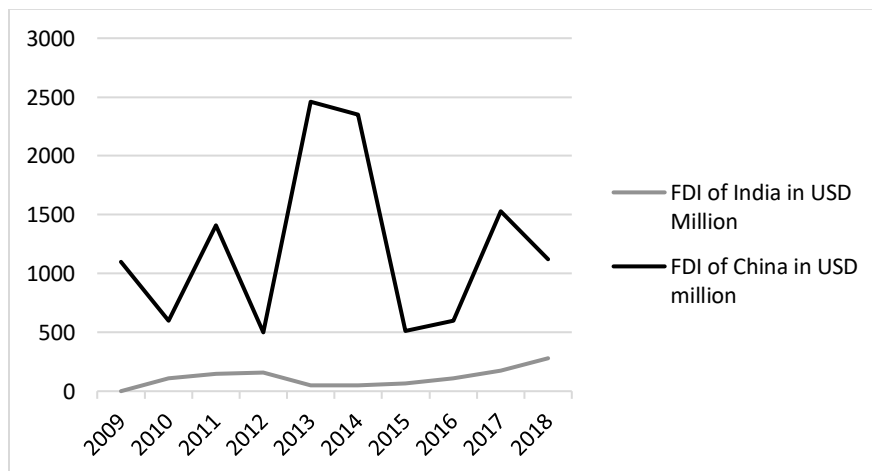


Figure 5: FDI Inflow in Sri Lanka from China and India (AEI, 2019) (High commission of India, 2018)

Undoubtedly, China is the biggest source of FDI in Sri Lanka. The major sectors of the investment have been energy, transport, telecommunication, construction, automobile and shipping. More importantly, there has been an extraordinary growth in Chinese FDI only after the year 2005 (AEI, 2019). Compared to the Chinese investment, the Indian investment has yet to provide a significant contribution to the Sri Lankan economy. Another noticeable information from the graph is the elevation in the Indian investment just after 2015. The Indian investment, which had reached nadir during the period of 2013-2015, probably owing to the exacerbation in the bilateral relation, gradually ameliorated through 2015 and forward.

The Indian interest towards investment in Sri Lanka implies a certain degree of influence from the tremendous financial interest of China. In a way, this can be inferred as an impact of the competition. This can be evident by studying the Indian FDI inflow in Sri Lanka before 2009, which was quite negligible (High commission of India, 2018). As it has been established for a number of times, the Chinese investment has been due to their strategic and economic needs, the Indian interest has been primarily to counter the Chinese presence from her supposed “backyard”. Another area of financial transaction that requires some focus is the trade.

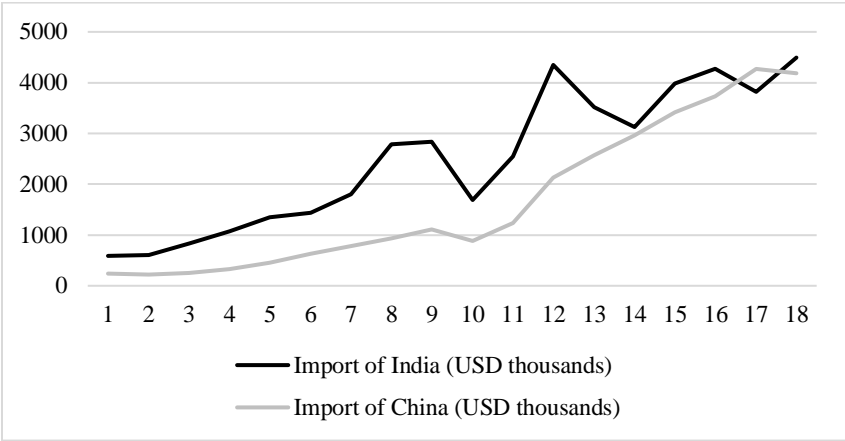


Figure 6: Imports to Sri Lanka from China and India (World Bank, 2019)

This graph of import shows a growth in the import from both India and China. There is also another perspective of looking at the import data which contributes to the argument.

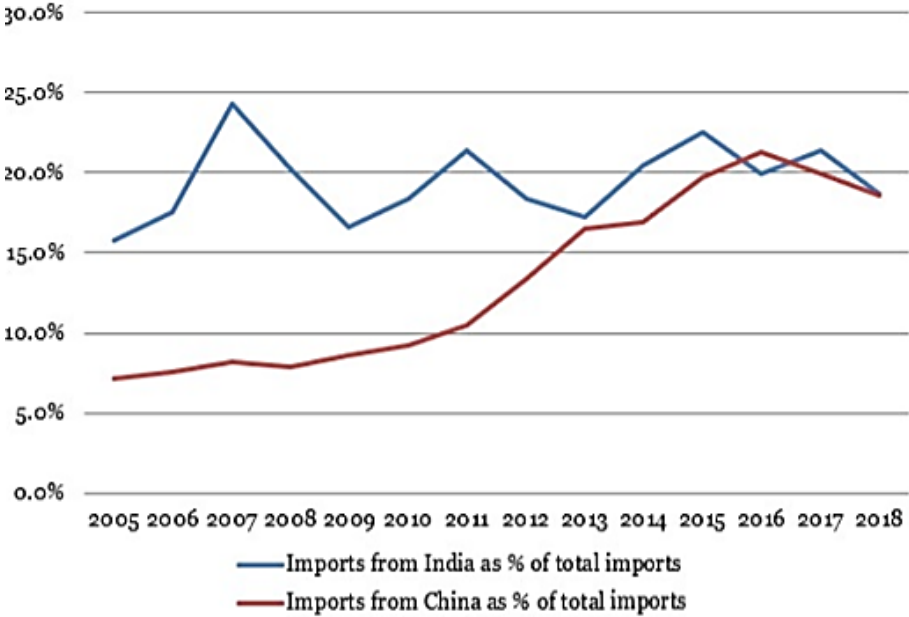


Figure 7: Comparison of imports from China and India as a percentage of total imports (Board of Investment of Sri Lanka, 2019)

As the import percentage demonstrate, there has been a tremendous increase in Chinese import from 2000. The Chinese import which accounted for 3.5% in 2000, increased to 20% in 2017. Especially after 2009, there has been an extraordinary growth in the percentage share of the import, which for the first time exceeded that of India, which can be seen in the both graphs. Another noteworthy point from the graph is that the substantial growth has been seen after 2009 and also from 2011 to 2018. This demonstrates how the political scenario has translated into the economic realm. An article in ‘The Diplomat’ also contributes to this argument by stating that a remarkable competition has been seen in the investment as well as import of China and India within Sri Lanka (Moramudali, 2019). The arguments in the article also contribute to the contention that the Indian economic engagement has been more of a reaction to the burgeoning Chinese presence within the island.

The Chinese interest after 2005 is supported by the fact that the Official Development Assistance (ODA) provide by China to Sri Lanka increased from USD 10.5 million in 2005 to USD 12 billion in 2015. India, which was Sri Lanka’s second largest provider of ODA in 2005 (after Japan), representing 7.3% of total ODA received by Sri Lanka, just reached USD 1.9 billion in 2015 (Bhatia, Kulkarni, Lee, & Gayakwad, 2016). Although the amount is quite significant, it is just one-sixth of what China had been providing.

On the one hand, the growth of China’s commitment and involvement validates the conviction of the increasing Chinese interest over the island, on the other, studying the trend of Indian Grant Assistance (GA) and the Line of Credit shows an interesting trend.

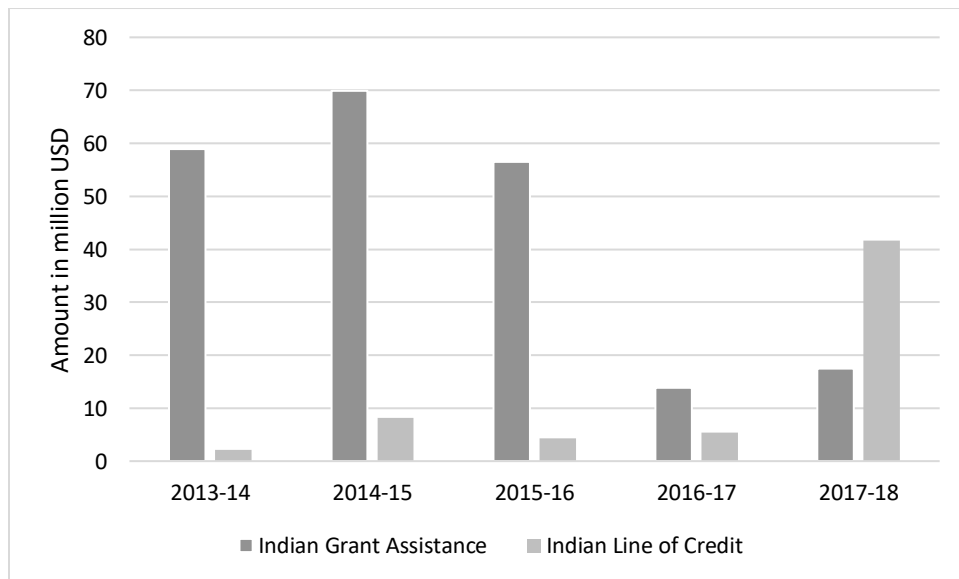


Figure 8: Indian GA and LoC from 2013-2018 (Ministry of External Affairs, India, 2018)

This data from the Ministry of External Affairs of India gives a clue of the Indian intention with Sri Lanka. Realizing the growing Chinese involvement within the island during the Rajapaksa regime, the government of India seems to be providing a substantial amount in grants, compared to the line of credit. And with the change in government, this trend arrantly

transposed. This is a noticeable alteration and vividly signifies the intention of the Indian government in appeasing the Mahinda Rajapaksa administration against the growing Chinese influence. Besides, the sudden seize in the size of the grant, which was sustained over the next year of the Sirisena government, corroborates the argument. The concern of the decrement in the assistance to Sri Lanka has been highlighted in another official report by the Ministry of External Affairs (2019). The Committee on External Affairs within the Parliament of India (Lok Sabha) had questioned Ministry of External Affairs over the reason of why the assistance towards Sri Lanka was decreased. The ministry gave the reason that it was due to the delays imposed by the government of Sri Lanka. However, this reasoning attempts to conceal the actual power play within the reality.

Despite all the discussions regarding the positive aspects of the Sri Lankan economy, the mainstream political spectrum has painted the picture of the economy in a bleak fashion. As a result of the unprecedented Chinese engagement, it is believed that Sri Lanka has amassed an enormous debt towards China and is regarded as “debt-trapped” by Western and Indian media and academics. The popular notion has been that the China has gained a strategic and political leverage over Sri Lanka through an economic threat. This argument should be delineated to picture the scenario properly.

As discussed, the presidency of Mahinda Rajapaksa enticed a glut of projects funded by China. Some of the major ones are:

Table 2

Projects assisted by China

	Title	Financial Model	Amount (USD million)
1	Norochcholai Coal Power Plant	Loan	450
2	Colombo-Katunayake Expressway	Loan	248.2
3	Hambantota Seaport	Loan	809
4	Mattala Airport	Loan	292
5	Southern Expressway	Loan	1263
6	Colombo Port City	FDI	1400

Note: Retrieved from AEI (2019)

These are some of the major projects but all of the projects assisted by China has been included in the appendix section. As it is evident, most of the projects is owed to China as a loan. The total outstanding external debt of China, which was USD 44.839 billion in 2014 rose up to USD 46.586 billion in 2016 which reached 79.3% of the total GDP by 2017 (Sankyana Mandiraya, 2017). Therefore, in 2017, government was obliged to spend 83% of the total revenue on the debt repayment (Bhandari & Jindal, 2018). Under these circumstances, the Sirisena government converted the debt into equity and transferred the Hambantota to China Port Holdings. This is the most popular example that is illustrated while discussing the negative aspect of BRI. The external debt is construed as a cause and the handing over is construed as the effect, while overall process has been interpreted as being pushed by the strategic intent of China.

As this argument is disseminated superfluously, a close look at the overall scenario is much more complicated than that. For instance, Abdul Samad in Colombo Telegraph argues that the percentage of debt to GDP of Sri Lanka is quite benign and it is inappropriate marker for economic crisis (2017). He asserts that other countries such as Japan, United States or Singapore has significantly higher percentage, while other South Asian neighbors such as India and Pakistan have the 69% and 64.8% debt as a percentage of GDP (Samad, 2017).

In another article published in “The Diplomat”, Umesh Moramudali has a much more elaborate take on the subject from a different perspective (2019). According to Moramudali, the loans pertaining to Hambantota port amounted to less than 5% of the total foreign debt repayments and the debt was converted into equity due to the crisis of balance of payment (BOP). The cost of external debt servicing had been rising while the trade was reduced and there was significant shortage of the foreign reserves and the servicing payment could not be performed so the port was leased to increase the foreign reserves (Moramudali, 2019). Therefore, the debt problem is not just limited bilaterally with China but is a bigger phenomenon.

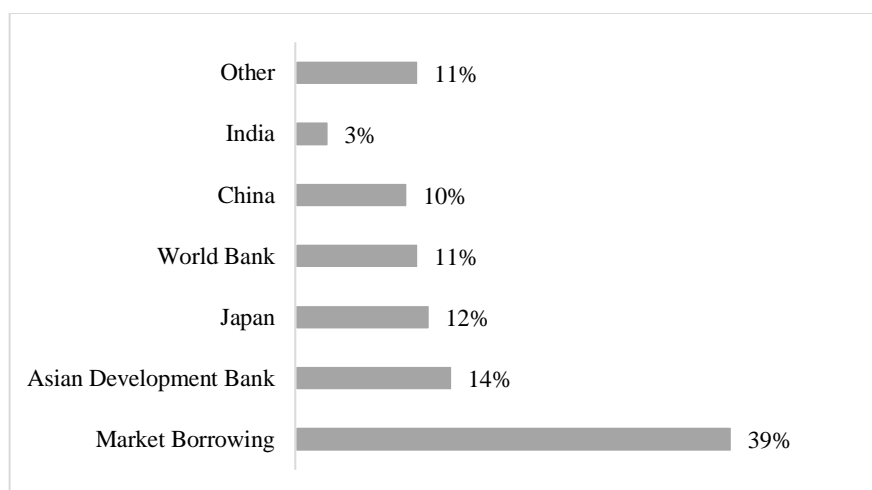


Figure 9: Debt Stock by Lender (Sankyana Mandiraya, 2017)

The diagram shows a much vivid picture, as China merely accounts for 10% of the debt stock in 2017. The real concern is associated with the market borrowing which can also be perceived as the international sovereign bonds. These high-interest loans belong primarily to the commercial banks from Europe and America, increased from 4% in 2007 to 33% by 2018 (Sautman, 2019). Compared to the 2% interest loan on the funds to Hambantota port, these sovereign bonds require 6.3% of interest at average (Moramudali, 2019). The repayments of these debts require the reserve of foreign currency. Therefore, the crisis would not have been avoided even if the government had abstained from taking any loans from China. This clearly demonstrates a “counter encirclement” the Chinese projects have been facing from the Indian and the Western media, scholars and the politicians.

A senior analyst and Professor Miguel Otero-Iglesias from the Elcano Royal Institute has a similar argument (2018). He states that the Hambantota was a “pet-project” of Mahinda and it was merely for his political manifestation which accumulated a burden for the new government and it was handed over to a party which had enough money to make the port economically vibrant. He further argues that there are quite a few discussions about the port of Colombo or the Colombo Port City project. The Port of Colombo project is an expansion project which is being conducted through a USD 550 million investment from China (AEI, 2019). Similarly, Colombo Port City is a USD 1.4 billion project which aims to construct landfills similar to that in Singapore, Dubai and Doha and is projected to accomplish within 2043 (Dayaratna-Banda & Dharmadasa, 2019). Therefore, Otero-Iglesias argues that the positive aspects of Chinese investments such as employment, higher trade, higher investments and economic growth is being clouded due to the image problem of China (2018). Moreover, as Plamen Tonchev remarks that it is just because of Chinese investment that the small state as that of Sri Lanka is being

discussed and this discussion has been attracting the interest from Indians, Americans, Japanese and Europeans (Tonchev, 2018).

With the Sino-Indian competition model as mentioned in previous section has been used to delineate the economic dimension in Sri Lanka, the model and the dimension have validated each other. As it has been discussed that the Chinese engagement gradually escalated through 2005, India also felt threatened within her sphere of influence and reacted in the economic dimension. This reaction was observed through the grant assistance and commitments provided by India. In a summary, the competition has been beneficial from economic point of view for Sri Lanka. As Sri Lanka is gaining recognition, the competition has led countries to pour resources to maintain their position. This can also be verified through the number of tourists. As tourism is one of the major constituent of the economy, Sri Lanka requires tourism advancement for the further progress of the economy. As the number of Chinese tourists visiting Sri Lanka has grown by 72.5% from 2010 to 2016 (Ministry of Tourism, 2018), it has led India to ensure the flow of tourists to maintain the first position. Therefore, India has also upheld the growth at 19.3%. As debt problem is mainly due to other problems not related to competition, the competition itself has been economically beneficial for Sri Lanka and can be seen as one of the reasons why Sri Lanka was elevated to upper middle income country within a relatively poor region.

6.2.2 Sino-Indian Competition and the Maldivian Economy

The economic dimension of Sino-Indian competition in Maldives is as significant as that of Sri Lanka for the sake of the study. It is also because the first fragment of the rift of Maldives with India appeared in 2012 over a construction contract. Maldives government, out of the blues, decided to scrap off the deal of the construction of Ibrahim Nasir International Airport (INIA), which was being undertaken by an Indian company, GMR (IANS, 2012). The contract was

granted to GMR during the tenure of Mohammed Nasheed in 2010. Later, the same contract was granted to a Chinese company (Pattanaik, 2019). The rift appeared as soon as the Progressive Party of Maldives took over the office from Maldivian Democratic Party. Especially the tenure of Abdulla Yameen saw a glut of Chinese projects, investments and assistances.

The major Chinese assistance during the presidency of Yameen includes USD 830 million investment to renovate the Ibrahim Nasir airport and China-Maldives Friendship Bridge (Sinamale Bridge) connecting the three major islands (Jeong-ho, 2018). Apart from that, China had also assisted in building a hospital and 7000 houses apartment complex in Maldives (Pattanaik, 2019). Interestingly, the Yameen administration had tampered with the public finance regulation in 2015, allowing large-scale projects exceeding MVR 1.5 million to be granted devoid of any bidding or evaluation procedure (Maldives Independent, 2016) and this allowed the government to award the Sinamale Bridge contract to a Chinese company, CCCC Second Harbour Engineering. The construction of the bridge was worth USD 210 million, out of which USD 126 million was granted by China, while USD 68 million was as a loan from Export Import Bank, China (Jeong-ho, 2018).

However, this was not the only tampering Yameen government had performed with the financial policy; the parliament ratified the constitutional amendment to grant foreigner individual or business to purchase land in Maldives that has potentiality to invest more than USD 1 billion in Maldives (Maldives Independent, 2015). Moreover, in 2017, the hastened ratification of the Maldives-China Free Trade Agreement through the Majilis (Panda, 2019) demonstrated the intention of the government.

As compared to China, the Indian involvement in the economic development, especially in the infrastructure development, has been negligible in the period of study. In 2011, India

assisted the upgrade of the Indira Gandhi Memorial Hospital with USD 7.76 million (Kumar & Sharma, 2015). Apart from that, India has also provided some assistances in establishing Faculty of Engineering and Technology, India-Maldives Friendship Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism Studies and the Institute for Security and Law Enforcement Studies (Pattanaik, 2019).

This abrupt seize in the Indian involvement was brought about after the decision to terminate the contract with GMR. Regarding the bridge contract, Mohammed Nasheed even claimed that if the contract with GMR would have been continued, the project would have been completed in USD 77 million (IANS, 2019). However, this statement was challenged and termed “sensational but baseless” by the Chinese ambassador to Maldives, Zhang Lizhong (Mohamed, 2019). Nasheed has been repeatedly reprimanding China and threatening to scrap off the FTA and even been found to exaggerate the amount of debt (Maldives Independent, 2019). Nasheed wrongly claimed that the Chinese debt including private loans and sovereign guarantees amounted USD 3.5 billion (Maldives Independent, 2019), while Finance Minister Ibrahim Ameer himself admitted that total foreign debt was USD 1.8 billion (Naish, 2018). While China has denied all the allegations of trapping Maldives, the Chinese government has been stern in the Maldives’ commitment with FTA (Shaahunaz, 2018).

Nonetheless, Solih government in 2018, requested Indian government to aid the country, upon which, Modi government promised to provide USD 1.4 billion as a financial assistance (Miglani, 2018). Amidst a drastic economic slowdown that India has been experiencing, Maldives has yet to receive even a tiny portion of the commitment. It commitment can be construed merely as a symbolic gesture, similar to India’s another pledge of providing USD 1 billion in loan to pay back to China at a very minimum interest (Kuronuma, 2018). Yet again, the commitment has not materialized. Lately, it has even been claimed that one of the reasons why

India is struggling within her neighborhood to counter China has been the delay. The bureaucratic system in India has been considered to be tremendously inefficient as compared to China, where the decisions are assertive and direct in nature. Therefore, the commitments are delivered within the time prescribed. This has been one of the reasons why India is trailing.

Considering several popular issues regarding Maldivian economy, there is a flaring concern regarding their debt. As mentioned, there is even a contradiction regarding the data of the debt. Therefore, it is pertinent that the debt scenario be analyzed along with the time frame and the GDP.

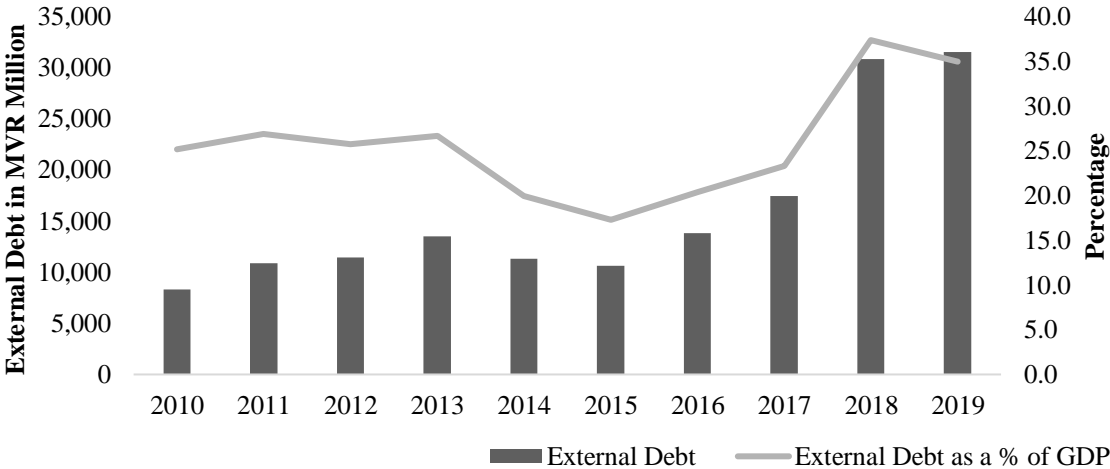


Figure 10: Movement in External Debt (Ministry of Finance, 2019)

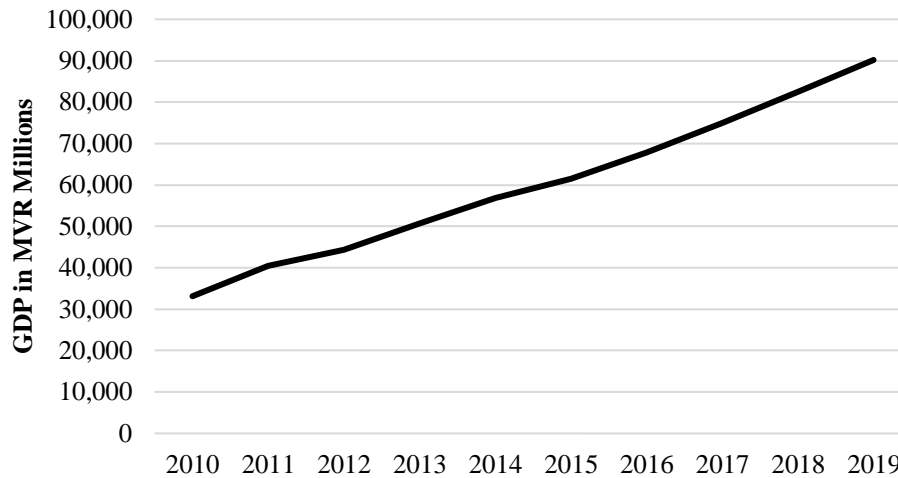


Figure 11: GDP volume by year (Ministry of Finance, 2019)

Observing the trend from 2010 to 2019, it is obvious that the external debt has increased by about three times, where the external debt amounts for about 34% of the GDP. Besides, the GDP has also escalated by about three times in 9 years. Even if the amount of Chinese debt claimed by Ambassador Zhang is considered (USD 1.5 billion), it accounts for 25% of the GDP. Considering a country populated by just 400,000 people and total GDP of about USD 5 billion, the amount of debt is truly enormous. There are several implications from this observation. First of all, devoid of this debt Maldives could have never attempted to build anything as large as the Sinamale Bridge. The bridge would be significant in many aspects, including the economic development of the country, for generations to come. Secondly, the statement made by Xi Jinping in 2018 Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) should be considered. He has stated that the Chinese government would cancel the loans for the countries which cannot pay the amount (Solomon, 2018). This is significant because while lending the amount, China must have considered the capacity of the borrower and the probability that the amount would be returned or not. If this is the case, then China might have used the debt to have a lynchpin over the countries such as Maldives. With the use of the capital, China has a political leverage over

the government and can influence in the decision-making. Therefore, apparently it is the debt-trap but actually it is a strategic entrapment.

There is another perspective to this argument as well. The rhetoric against Chinese involvement in Maldives is voiced so vehemently that the reality has sometimes been obscured. There is some information that has rarely been published in the popular news media. First of all, it is concerning the Chinese foreign grant assistance in Maldives. In 2014, the Indian grant assistance received by Maldives was USD 1.3 million (Kumar & Sharma, 2015). Same year, the Chinese grant assistance amounted to USD 16.9 million (Dreher, Fuchs, Parks, Strange, & Tierney, 2017). This data was extracted from an elaborate dataset published by a research lab called AidData and is also attached in the Appendix section. Not just the financial assistance, China has also provided numerous non-financial assistances. But this information rarely makes into the international media or even scholarly articles. But the financial assistance provided by India, United States or Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries are easily obtainable in the internet.

Another aspect that requires attention is the trade. In 2017, tourism accounted for 27.4% and fishery accounted for 4.2% of the total GDP of Maldives (Ministry of Tourism, 2018). Regarding tourists, the largest number of tourists visiting Maldives every year are from China. In 2017, 21% of the foreign tourists were from China. Compared to Chinese tourists, Indian tourists arrive in a smaller number.

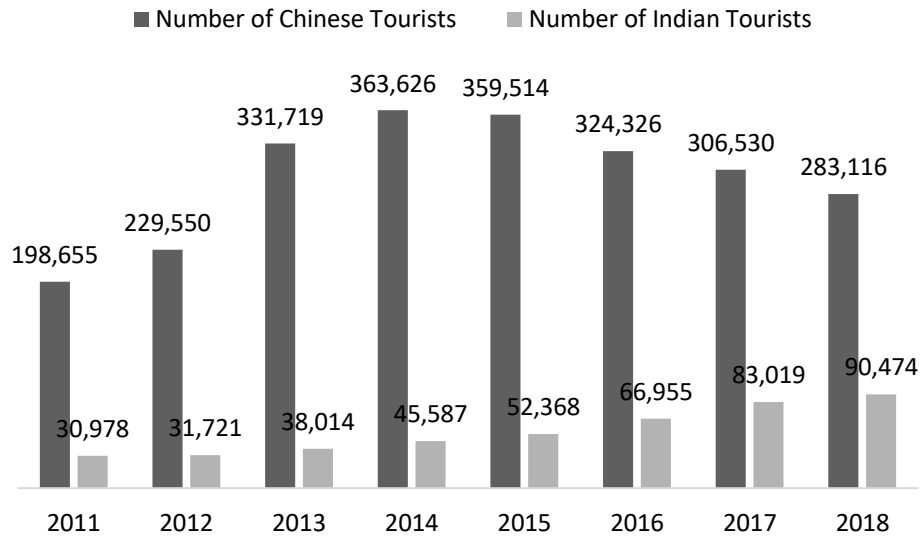


Figure 12: Number of Chinese tourists and Indian tourists arriving Maldives by years (Ministry of Tourism, 2018)

This implies that China has a significant impact upon Maldivian economy and contributes extensively. However, both India and China has a tremendously minimum import/export engagement with Maldives. It is not just the trade volume but their comparison with other countries is negligible. According to the World Bank data, China and India are not even among the top ten exporting destinations of Maldives. Neither are India or China the top importing countries in Maldives (World Bank, 2019). This implies that the actual interest of both China and India is predominantly political than economic. Therefore, this perspective should be maintained while studying the impact of the competition.

6.3 Security Dimension

When compared to other IR paradigms, realism pays superfluous emphasis on the attainment of security. Besides, security-dilemma, which is a widely shared assumption among a variety of realists, is based on security. Realism mainly prescribes the competitive and collaborative strategy for attaining security (Glaser, 2013). This can be inferred that realism

advocates military and non-military approaches for achieving security that may include proliferating arms, forming alliances, restraining control, manifesting power, etc.

As widely as the term security is used, the vagueness is also inconceivable. Therefore, it is vital that the theoretical framework and the discipline of security studies are discussed briefly before studying the security dimension of the impact of the competition. The study of security, especially in international relations, gradually emerged after the end of the Second World War (Buzan & Hansen, 2008). The main idea was to study the methods in which a state can be protected from internal and external threats. And undoubtedly, the school of thought germinated through the realist tradition. As the years passed, various other schools of thought contributed extensively to broaden the area. Some of the major contributions have been made by Barry Buzan along with the Copenhagen School. Copenhagen School is greatly responsible for shifting the focus from traditional security to non-traditional (non-military) security in international security studies (Collins, 2016).

As the emergence of Copenhagen School is credited to the book, "People, States and Fear" by Barry Buzan (1983), the works by Buzan are cardinal in understanding the new approaches to the subject. In a fundamental sense, it is his epistemology with the international security studies, which brings about the shift and broadens the scope of the study. Marianne Stone (2009) has appropriately summarized his approach: constructing the framework based on neorealism and performing the meticulous examination using constructivism. This is the main reason why constructivism has become substantial in security studies. Buzan is relevant for this study also because of his epistemology. Based on the view point, various levels of analysis and a number of facets can be accessed while remaining consistent with the tenets of structural realism. After all,

Buzan found agreement with Waltz's concept of structural realism to a maximum degree (Buzan & Little, 2009).

Similar to Waltz's level of analysis, Buzan proposed three levels of security: individual, states and the international system. The concept of levels of security is relevant for this study as well; the impact of the Sino-Indian competition can be studied on each level based on the theoretical viewpoint. Another facet of his approach is the inquiry of the five areas of security: Military, Political, Economic, Societal and Environmental. And interestingly, in his paper "New patterns of global security in the twenty-first century" (1991), Buzan has positioned the five areas within the section "Implications for the periphery", implying how the great power politics threaten the weak or periphery states. Additionally, his contribution of the concept of "securitization" can be a basis to understand how states act extraordinarily in the name of security. Just as Zwitter and de Wilde (2010) argue about how the traffic incidents which has 150,000 average fatality per year in United States is treated normally while terrorist attack which was responsible for 5,312 fatalities between 1994 and 2004 is treated extremely vivaciously.

When discussing security, one of the obvious questions is, security from what? This is what Buzan considers the first question of security studies; security comes hyphenated with what (1983)? Hence, the terms threat and vulnerabilities enter the dialogue. Any intention, tendency or susceptibility of toppling the secured condition can be considered as a potential threat for a state. Whereas, being exposed to the possibility of a threat distressing the security can be considered as vulnerability. Thus, when studying the impact of Sino-Indian competition on the security of the two states, it is reasonable to discuss the vulnerabilities of these states beforehand. It creates a logical ground to comprehend the nature and intensity of the effects that have been created and have potential to be created.

Regarding Maldives, the worst threat is not Sino-Indian competition or ethnic violence but climate change. If the altitude from the sea level is considered, Maldives is the lowest lying country in the world, residing not above the land mass but above the coral reefs (Carrington, 2013). With the rapid upsurge in the sea level, Maldives is on the verge of being submerged completely. However, this threat is not directly related with the form of security that is being discussed within the paper. Apart from that, Maldives also has threat emanating from radical Islamism that has associated Maldives with international terrorism.

Maldives had seen the first radical Islamic terrorist attack in 2007 when a bomb blasted, injuring dozens of people. Subsequently, a violent clash hit a mosque, where armed terrorist and police were involved in a crossfire (Naseem, 2015). Later, there were reports that hundreds of youths from Maldives were involved in the groups such as Lashkar e-Taiba (LeT) and al-Qaeda (American Foreign Policy Council, 2019). The reason has been attributed to the rise in radical Islamism within the public domain fueled by NGOs which are led by clerics who have graduated from universities in Saudi Arabia, Yemen and Pakistan (Naseem, 2015).

When compared to Sri Lanka, the history of terrorism with Maldives is negligible. Sri Lanka has experienced leftist insurgency by the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) from 1987-1989, armed ethnic violence led by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) from 1983 to 2009 and radical Islamic terrorist attack, as of 2019 Easter bombing. These series of armed conflicts and violence throughout the modern history signals the intricacy of ethnic, religious and social issues within the country. Basically the population composition of Sinhala Buddhist, Tamil Hindus and Muslim has had numerous friction as radical groups have emerged from all the ethnic groups. Despite such issues in Sri Lanka or Maldives, the relation of Sino-Indian competition and these concerns is negligible from a security point of view. It is not that China or

India are uninvolved but they have been involved in their own way and their competition has limited influence or indirect influence on the ethnic issues.

The vulnerabilities of Sri Lanka, Maldives or any other small state within the Indian Ocean region in context to the Sino-Indian rivalry has quite a resemblance. The ramification for this argument lies within the concept of vulnerability and threats as maintained by Buzan in *People, State and Fear* (1983). First of all, he distinguishes weak power and weak state; weak power are countries having limited military capacity while weak states are the states which are highly vulnerable to threats. Buzan even mentions the case of countries such as Norway, Singapore or Austria, which are weak powers but are strong as a state. It can be interpreted that the countries which can repel any possible threats are strong as a state and the countries, despite their military power are susceptible are weak states. From this classification, most of the Indian Ocean small states, including Sri Lanka and Maldives can be considered weak states and weak powers, as weak state can also be defined according to the gap in capability when compared to her neighbors (Buzan, 1991).

The states which have limited institutional capacity and have relatively less power find it difficult to resist the foreign intervention, nor are they free from any domestic disruption. And the vulnerability amplifies if these states have some resources of interest for the great powers. The pursuit of the goals of the great powers from these small states might be through military, political or economic means. And a competing power might use similar means to counter the advance of the dominating power. Therefore, the types of threats that the small states in the region have been facing from the Sino-Indian competition are of military, political and economic types. These categories will be discussed sequentially.

6.3.1 Military Threats

Although Barry Buzan, a pioneer in security studies, has contended that the concept of security had been a moot even in the twentieth century (1991), Michael Sheehan (2013) refutes the argument by asserting that throughout the twentieth century, there was a scholarly consent that the term security was tantamount to military security. And therefore, security was assumed to be achieved, when a state grants the freedom to the citizen from external attacks (Kapstein, 1992). But military security, as an instrument, has been widely used to address comprehensive issues through humanitarian intervention and peace-keeping operations as well. And above all, military security is overriding, as a failure to instigate military security would incapacitate a state even if all the other dimensions of security are maintained (Buzan, 1991).

In this case, military means should be analyzed from the offensive realist point of view. Offensive realism dictates that the benefit of the action must exceed the cost. And regarding military means, it has profound implications on different levels. Therefore, military intervention would not be quite a favorable choice of action for offensive realist. Mearsheimer, in a lecture at Yale University claims that he along with most of the realists opposed the military intervention of the United States in Afghanistan and Iraq which he had predicted would further alienate the Islamic world and would lead more youths to adopt the radical view (2017). Similarly, if India or China pursues military intervention in any of the small states, it would be met with higher cost and moreover, the counterpart might even be benefitted in some way. For example, if China intervened militarily in Sri Lanka, India might find a space to take the benefit and in a longer term India might benefit more than China. Therefore, the military threats are of different nature in these states.

In 2015 the Maldivian parliament(Majilis) passed an amendment allowing foreign individual or company to purchase land in Maldives, given that they should invest USD 1 billion and they should acquire 70% of the land from the Indian Ocean (International Business Times, 2015). This was seen widely as a pro-China move by the Yameen government to provide land to China and China could establish a military base in Maldives (Baruah, 2015; Fernando & Nizar, 2019). Several discussions have been made in the previous section about similar arguments gaining popularity when Chinese company took Hambantota port on a 99 years lease.

There are several evidences regarding the speculations made about the intentions of China. These events show that China is not interested merely in the economic outcomes from the engagement in India Ocean. In November, 2014, a Chinese submarine and a warship docked at the port in the capital Colombo (Aneez & Sirilal, 2014). Similarly, there were reports, especially from the Indian media of Chinese submarines and warships lurking around Maldives (Pandit, 2019; India Today, 2015). The threat solidified even further when Yameen asked for Indian helicopter to be removed from the island Gan (Parashar, 2018). It was where the old British air base and naval base were located till 1970s and the position is even close to the US base in Diego Garcia (Brewster, 2018). The suspicion can be further founded if the case of Chinese marine's deployment in Djibouti (Brewster & Bergin, 2017) is also considered. Besides, China has cleared the intention in a white paper, the Chinese State Council Information Office published in 2015 titled "China's Military Strategy" (2015). It states how the focus from offshore water defense is being shifted to the combination of offshore water defense with the protection of open sea while securing the maritime links within the Indian Ocean. Therefore, "the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation" can be achieved.

It can be perceived that the engagement of China in Maldives or Sri Lanka serves several functions from the perspective of China. But from a security point of view, establishing a military base and being engaged in a competition with India or other global powers is of a serious concern. This would eventually compromise the physical security and if an armed conflict strikes the Indian Ocean, Maldives and Sri Lanka would be the first to suffer. Unfortunately, this is not irrefutable, as Mearsheimer points out that China's rise is not going to be peaceful (2006).

The Sino-Indian competition within the Indian Ocean has a different threat over the small states compared to the traditional military threats such as invasion or blockade. Even though it is a military threat, it is not devoid of other forms of threat such as political and economic. So the threat is more nested and complicated. Within the circumstances, if China pushes further and becomes able to establish a base then the security architecture of the region would obviously change. Regardless of how the architecture transforms, the fate of the small states does not look optimistic.

6.3.2 Political Threats

As compared to the military threats, the political threats of Sino-Indian competition on small states has been more tangible and extensively diverged. It is diverged in a sense that politics has a direct impact upon military, economy, foreign policy and every other aspect that could impact from the competition. And the tangibility of the threat owes to the fact that the internal political dynamics of the states began to churn as the Sino-Indian competition became more real. In this section, the cases of Sri Lanka and Maldives would be considered by observing some cases.

Political threats mainly emanate from the various interventions that can threaten the organizing ideologies and the institutions which forms the basic idea of a state (Buzan, 1983). The sheer ambiguity of the terms ideologies or institutions in a political sense can also be translated as a range of elements within a state that are threatened. In some cases, it can refer to the threat upon the entire regime or in some case it can just be a threat upon the government or its leader. And this threat upon the regime or even the leader is grasped with a profound urgency, within the practice as well as in the academics. Within academics, there is even a separate term "regime security" dedicate to the study within the area (Jackson, 2010). In some instances, it can even refer to an attack upon the idea that forms the keystone on which the state has been built. One of such atrocities were observed in the case of Soviet Union which was built on the basis of socialism and that basic foundation collapsed in the pretext of the end of the Cold War.

For Sri Lanka and Maldives, the dominant form of political threat that can originate from the Sino-Indian competition is the foreign intervention that can compromise her ideologies and institutions. Moreover, this vulnerability is shared among various small and weak states within South Asia and the Indian Ocean region. Similar to elsewhere, this can mean an attack on the government or the entire regime to the extent that even the founding idea of the state can be challenged. As some events have signaled, the scenario, although not congruous but finds resemblance with the proxy wars that the United States and Soviet Union engaged during the Cold War in Korean peninsula or Vietnam. The resemblance is due to the fact that they are not directly involved or visible but there is evidence that they have a role in the internal coercion. When recollecting such evidence, the events surrounding the Sri Lankan election of 2015 and Maldivian election of 2018 are noteworthy. It should be clarified that the idea of Indian intervention in the region is neither a novel phenomenon nor concealed within the regional

politics. As it has already been discussed, that the role of India in sealing the social and political fate of the entities within the region has been unparalleled. However, those involvements were never an effect that synthesized out of the competition with China, but probably were connected entirely with the interest of India.

Some of the major events that involved India in Sri Lanka and Maldives can be considered for the instance. The involvement of India in Sri Lanka during the 80s was more concerned with the Tamil population in India, who carried a political meaning for the central government. Similarly an intervention in Maldives which looked military but was deep down the part of the neighborhood diplomacy was the Operation Cactus, where Indian forces intervened the attempted coup in 1988 (Chordia, 2009). The Indian intervention was fueled by the fact that if India had not acted then other powers would have entered and it would have been a challenge to the authority that India held within the region at that time (Laskar, 2014). From both of the events, it can be inferred that they were not a product of Sino-Indian competition but purely the part of the pursuit of Indian local and global interests.

Regarding Sri Lanka, it has already been discussed the depth of the presence of the agents belonging to RAW within Sri Lanka during the insurgency. However, post-2000 the activities of RAW and the agents have not been as blatant as it once was. Yet in 2015, RAW agents were expelled from Sri Lanka, alleged of persuading Sirisena to ditch the Rajapaksa cabinet and garnering support for Sirisena within the Sri Lankan political realm (Chalmers & Miglani, 2015). It was not a coincidence that a leader of the stature of Chandrika Kumaratunga supported Sirisena in the election (Haidar, 2016). It was especially interesting because Rajapaksa and Kumaratunga both hailed from the same party SLFP. Kumaratunga blamed Rajapaksa for fostering a family-run dictatorship (India Times, 2015).

Kumaratunga can be a central figure for this argument, as she was not only involved in Sri Lanka but was actively involved in Maldives as well. Abdulla Yameen had benefitted from the fringe between the opposition parties and secured a presidential victory in 2013. Kumaratunga played a vital role in bringing the opposition parties together under the flag of Ibrahim Solih in the election of 2018 (Radhakrishnan, 2018). This was her matchless political influence that could achieve the impossible: formed the kinds of alliances in both Sri Lanka and Maldives that seemed virtually impossible. Likewise, Kumaratunga supported UNP candidate Sajith Premadasa against her party line in the 2019 election as well. After observing the absolute shift in her political stance, it is worth investigating the reasons.

First of all, it is deliberate that she wants to regain the lost influence she used to relish before the tenure of Mahinda Rajapaksa in 2005. In spite of her political motive, another obvious question is, why Maldives? Immediately after the election of 2015 in Sri Lanka, Kumaratunga visited India where she was praised by Prime Minister Modi for her role in strengthening the Indo-Lanka relation (India Times, 2015). In another of her attempts, Kumaratunga also called upon Sushma Swaraj to attend an event (Press Trust of India, 2015). Even when Sushma Swaraj visited Sri Lanka in 2016, apart from the President and the Prime Minister, the only Sri Lankan leader she met was Kumaratunga (India Times, 2016). All of these events have been garnished by the fact that the agent who was expelled from Sri Lanka for influencing the election was involved in constant communications with Kumaratunga (NDTV, 2015).

It brings to the same question which is the key to this argument: why Maldives? Before diving into the answer, another figure that is demanded by the discussion is the ex-Maldivian President, Mohammed Nasheed. Nasheed has always been making the news for expressing pro-India and anti-China remarks. On one hand Nasheed blamed China for grabbing for land than the

East India Company (India Times, 2019) while on the other, he supports the government of India's decision to scrap the article 370 pertaining to the Kashmir issue (Mohan G. , 2019). As aforementioned, Modi avoided visiting Maldives when he was visiting other countries within the region, during the tenure of Abdulla Yameen, owing to the fact that Nasheed was imprisoned at that time. In regards to the role of Nasheed within the argument, there are a couple of questions that ought to be answered: how did Nasheed shake hands with his opponent Maumoon Gayoom and how did an ex-President became the speaker of the Majilis? Nasheed is the only ex-President in the history to take the position of the speaker of the house.

All of these questions point out an outcome that is coherent with the regional interest of India; loss for the governments who worked in favor of China. Both Nasheed and Kumaratunga were involved in gathering the pro-India and anti-China groups into one united front and defeat the leaders who showed the pro-China tilt. Their moves established a government that was thought to be more favorable for Indian interest. This can be proved by the change in behavior of the Indian government towards both the governments in both the countries. Another connected event which involves the aspect of political security within Sri Lanka from Sino-Indian competition is the candidacy of Sajith Premadasa over Sirisena.

Taking the electoral history of Sri Lanka into consideration, most of the times a candidate has won the presidential or premier post more than once in a succession. The leaders such as Sirimavo Bandaranaike, J.R. Jayawardene, Chandrika Kumaratunga and Mahinda Rajapaksa took the office for at least a couple of times in succession. Also the leaders like D.S. Senanayake or S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike would have probably repeated their tenure if they had been alive; it can be agreed upon because their successors were their own family members (Dudley Senanayake the son of D.S. while Sirimavo the wife of S.W.R.D). With the electoral history

which strongly flairs incumbency, the discontinuity of Sirisena as the candidate should carry some significance. Although there is barely any strong evidence, and are purely calculative speculations but Sirisena's fate could be a result of a couple of major events within his tenure: leasing out the Hambantota Port to the Chinese and the constitutional crisis which he caused by expelling Ranil Wikramasinghe and reinstating Mahinda as the Prime Minister in 2018. Besides, while Indian officials deliberately claimed that the reason for them to support Sirisena in 2015 was triggered by the Chinese submarine which showed up in Hambantota, it could be glaringly construed that the move to lease Hambantota was sufficiently displeasing for India.

6.3.3 Security in a Sino-Indian Perspective

Although the events demonstrate the active involvement of India in the domestic politics of her neighbor, they are merely the counteractions against the Chinese activities within the region. There are theoretical as well as historical verifications that help understand the behavior of India. First of all, the theoretical concept that has already been discussed and is quite significant in this scenario is securitization. The concept of securitization basically describes how a state 'securitizes' an issue over other; securitize refers to taking extraordinary measures regarding an issue in the name of security. The historical relevance of this concept from India towards Maldives and Sri Lanka, as aforementioned, are Operation Cactus in Maldives and deployment of IPKF in Sri Lanka. As discussed, Indian involvement in these events were due to the understanding of Indian leadership that foreign powers may barge in if India refrains from any actions. These theoretical and historical references are relevant in order to elucidate a couple of inferences. First of all, it helps to understand how sensitive India is about the presence of foreign power in India or Maldives. It proves that India has always considered these countries and most importantly the region as her sphere of influence or even her backyard. Secondly, it

also proves that India would counteract these threats with political, economic or even military means.

The argument is that the Indian involvement within the region as perceived, basically after 2010s, has been as a reaction to the gradual Chinese penetration. To balance the perspective, Chinese interference originates from her economic and strategic ambitions which has undermined the political integrity of the countries. The political outcome that stemmed out of her ambition was vivid during the Sri Lankan election of 2015 which was even considered as the proxy election between India and China. Although there are several political outcomes from China's approach, but China's advance has basically relied upon her rhetoric of non-interference in political realm and partnership through the economic means. In spite of this rhetoric, political outcomes have been a characteristic of her involvement within this region.

All of these arguments superpose into a reality that threatens both Sri Lanka and Maldives along different dimensions. While military threat can be prevented from culminating by avoiding the presence of any foreign military, political threat would demand a considerate attention while operating within the diplomatic and political realm. To be fair, the highest form of threat is upon the government, due to which, India or China might be able to squeeze out a favorable decision out of the leaders. However, comparing military and political threat, political seems much more prevalent, possible, yet inconspicuous and military threat has a lesser probability. Therefore, laying out security threats become more intricate and an orthodox approach to developing resilience seems insufficient at this condition. A policy that balances the relation with international powers and taking a careful approach in decision making by relying upon rational thought process, making calculations about the consequences, would be a relatively effective way to ensure security.

Chapter 7: Discussion and Conclusion

The significance of the Indian Ocean Region in world politics at present is unprecedented. China and India, being major players have major implications upon the region. The China-India dyad itself has had several pitfalls during the modern political period and is described within the text through the theoretical frameworks of offensive realism and EIR. The pitfalls which can also be articulated as a competition, has also been observed to inflict impact upon the region of influence. Despite the idea of an impact being banal, the nature and intensity of the impact on different dimensions of the states has not been a popular subject of study.

The text utilized several theoretical lens to meticulously examine the Sino-Indian competition and its impacts on an array of subjects by considering the historical and contemporary events and evidences. The framework primarily based upon offensive realism, empirically established the notion of China being a potential hegemon of the region and other great powers in the region of having a sense of competition. Through the study, it became apparent that the real impacts on the states resulting from the competition started to emerge only after China initiated the ambitious pursuit after 2010. It can also be comprehended in a way that the impacts have primarily been the effects of Chinese action and the Indian counteraction.

Through the scrupulous study of the competition, it was observed that the impacts were predominantly regarding international relations, foreign policy, economics, political security and physical security. With foreign policy, the flaring competition induced subsequent paradigm shifts which was discernible from the foreign policy of Mahinda Rajapaksa government in Sri Lanka and that of Yameen government in Maldives. Foreign policy being a dynamic substance, experiences constant changes. But the alterations pertaining to this specific case and time have been considered paradigm shift as the fundamental and the continuous elements of foreign policy

were challenged. Furthermore, the changes were not limited towards a single direction. As mentioned regarding the phenomenon of action and counteraction, the graph of foreign policy also fluctuated parallel with the dialectics.

The fluctuation in foreign policy and the study of decision-making through the combined offensive realism and poliheuristic theory, validated how the structural constraints limit the maneuverability for a small state to operate in the international political realm. The impact is the limit in the number of choices a state can pursue and a threat of punishment if the structure is undermined. Therefore, the paradigm shift, were a result of the parochial decision-making process, which basically rallied along with the will of a dominant power.

However, the economic dimension has been found to inflict positive effect on the small-states. With the competition of China and India, there have been an increased flow of investment and assistances to the small-states to maintain the presence. The effect is not only limited to just India and China but other major economic powers throughout the world has been attracted because of the impact of Chinese investment and the inevitable competition. It was also verified the negative aspect of the competition but it was quite insignificant. The benefit could be further verified by the fact that Sri Lanka and Maldives, the countries which have been facing enormous impact from competition, are the only countries within South Asia to be the upper middle income countries. But the overall picture is not as optimistic as according to the economic dimension.

When discussing the impacts of competition on small states, security would be one of the compelling factors. This paper has primarily discussed physical security and political security. Regarding physical security, the threat is quite specific than as compared to the political security. Rather than directly being threatened, the states have high susceptibility of being caught in a crossfire between greater powers. It has been attributed to the nested security competition, which

has been a characteristic of the region. Through economic and political means, China aims to advance the strategic ambition and it could be accomplished if the areas within the Indian Ocean States could be used for military purpose. Once the Chinese military or navy set their foot in the region, the regional security architecture would face belligerence from offshore balancer: United States. But the biggest counteraction would be expected from India as it directly concerns with her national security. Regardless of how the alliances would be formed and how the confrontation would shape, it would certainly be quite unfortunate for Sri Lanka and Maldives. Therefore, the maintenance of regional security status quo is vital for physical security of these states.

Despite the intensity of the threat regarding physical security being indescribable, the threat on political security is significantly perceptible and relevant in the contemporary scenario. When discussing political threats, there can be different forms, but the main threat that has been seen on the government and the leaders. Interestingly, there has been evidence that one of the impacts of the competition has been on the change of government. The claim of India and China interfering the political process by attempting to influence the 2015 election in Sri Lanka and 2018 election in Maldives have several corroborating evidences. Chinese support has basically been tantamount to economic, while India was focused on political influence. India was enthralled in the aftermath because of a brief victory but the economic lynchpin that China has on both the states proves that the scenario is not as simple and as same as it once used to be. These states have experienced a tremendous level of Indian intervention in past and the approach of India to interfere in the microcosm of the political realm has more profound implications than the economic approach of China. In this regards, the main political misery due to competition have

been and could be the change in government, policies and a range of political turmoil which is not limited with only politics.

As the impact of the competition within the two countries has been assessed, a vast regional perspective cannot be validated by considering merely two states. Besides, the scope of the study was to understand the impact of the competition on the small states of the region through the case studies. The validity of this rests upon the similarity that was observed within Sri Lanka/ Maldives and other small states regarding the impact of the competition. The inclusion criteria of the time and nature of the relevant events were the basic tools to identify the similarities, therefore, corroborating the conviction that the observations regarding Sri Lanka or Maldives could be considered relevant for other small states as well.

Another aspect that has not been explored sufficiently is the South Asian perspective. Maldives and Sri Lanka have intersection between South Asian region and Indian Ocean region. When considering the aspect of being a South Asian country, there are several other factors, mainly cultural and regional, which are associated with that issue.

All of these delimitation can be considered the research gap and also the implications for further research. Apart from that, there also exists a theoretical feature associated with the research in this area. This study has taken the primary theoretical viewpoint from the offensive realist perspective. However, along with offensive realism, other school of thoughts such as EIR, poliheuristic theory and Copenhagen School are taken into consideration. But these theories are not completely consistent with the realism, so they cannot be entirely applied. If the analysis is performed with different viewpoints, more specifically the Constructivist approach or Critical approach, the analysis would be much more consistent and the possible outcomes might be more interesting.

Nevertheless, the findings that were consistent with both the countries are relevant to other small states of the region as well. The countries having similar capabilities are subjected to similar condition due to the dynamics of the Sino-Indian relation. This notion is pertinent with Nepal as well. Similar to Maldives and Sri Lanka, Nepal has had remarkable historical and cultural relation with India. However, post-2010, just as Maldives and Sri Lanka, the Sino-Nepal relation reached new heights, while Indo-Nepal relation stooped in an unprecedented manner. The domestic condition were undoubtedly variant across these countries, but the striking similarity in the paradigm shift that was observed in their foreign relation is noteworthy. In regards to the dimensions as discussed in this research, some congruencies can be observed with the situation of Nepal as well. Regarding domestic politics, there have been issues in all of these countries regarding China or India taking sides in the election, involving directly/indirectly and assisting financially. The international media openly discussed whether the Indian side won or the Chinese side won in the domestic election. Secondly, the economical dimension also shares some similarities. China has pledged to invest and assist the projects in Nepal amidst of the rhetoric of "debt-trap diplomacy". The competition has been beneficial for Nepal too; Nepal has signed trade and transit agreement with China and the Chinese engagement regarding infrastructure, trade, energy and industry is unparalleled.

First of all, the notion that a small state within a region has higher maneuverability when great powers of the region are engaged in a competition, can be justified through the cases of Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka. Compared to cooperative relation among great powers, a competitive relation provides small states with more space. The example of Sino-Indian cooperation is the agreement regarding Lipulekh, which has had bitter response in Nepal. Another perspective to observe the situation is the analogy of small boat-big boat. Small states

find it easier to change the course of their foreign policy swiftly when compared with great powers. The advantage of small states is that they can focus on their material gain and take rational decisions. Through offensive realist lens, it can also be argued that the material gain is comparatively less consequential for small states, which makes it more rational. However, just like small boats in the sea, the small states are much more affected by the tide, as the oceanic conditions dictate their route rather than their own decision. Moreover, through the EIR reasoning, it is comprehensible that the Sino-Indian competition would persist a considerable amount of time. Therefore, a prescriptive outlook for the small states of the region would be to take rational decision by weighing favorable outcomes over cost, while aggregating self-capability.

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Appendix A

Record of China-Sri Lanka Transaction

Title	recipients	Year	USD
China gives LKR204.9m worth of export credits to Sri Lanka for purchase of vehicles	Sri Lanka	2009	17825950
EXIM Bank loan for Northern Road Rehabilitation Project	Sri Lanka	2009	498047831
CDB funds Priority Roads Project 2 (PRP2)	Sri Lanka	2010	500000000
CDB funds Priority Roads Project 2 (PRP2)	Sri Lanka	2010	500000000
CDB funds Priority Roads Project 2 (PRP2)	Sri Lanka	2010	500000000
CDB funds Priority Roads Project 2 (PRP2)	Sri Lanka	2010	500000000
CDB funds Priority Roads Project 2 (PRP2)	Sri Lanka	2010	500000000
CDB funds Priority Roads Project 2 (PRP2)	Sri Lanka	2010	500000000
CDB funds Priority Roads Project 2 (PRP2)	Sri Lanka	2010	500000000
CDB funds Priority Roads Project 2 (PRP2)	Sri Lanka	2010	500000000
China provides loan to Sri Lanka for Moragahakanda Development Project	Sri Lanka	2012	214200000
China provides loan to Sri Lanka for Moragahakanda Development Project	Sri Lanka	2012	214200000
China provides loan to Sri Lanka for Moragahakanda Development Project	Sri Lanka	2012	214200000
China Development Bank provides loan of \$153 million to Sri Lanka for Priority Road Project-1 (part of umbrella project #33381)	Sri Lanka	2011	153000000
China Development Bank provides loan of \$153 million to Sri Lanka for Priority Road Project-1 (part of umbrella project #33381)	Sri Lanka	2011	153000000
China Development Bank provides loan of \$153 million to Sri Lanka for Priority Road Project-1 (part of umbrella project #33381)	Sri Lanka	2011	153000000
China Development Bank provides loan of \$153 million to Sri Lanka for Priority Road Project-1 (part of umbrella project #33381)	Sri Lanka	2011	153000000
China Development Bank provides loan of \$153 million to Sri Lanka for Priority Road Project-1 (part of umbrella project #33381)	Sri Lanka	2011	153000000
EXIM Bank Preferential Buyers Credit for First Stage of Norochcholai Coal Power Plant (Linked to #33452 & #33463)	Sri Lanka	2006	300000000
EXIM Banks gives preferential buyers credit worth \$891 million USD to fund Phase II of Norochcholai Power Plant (linked to project ID#33244)	Sri Lanka	2009	891000000
EXIM Bank Loan for the First Stage of Norochcholai Coal Power Plant (linked to project ID#33244)	Sri Lanka	2006	150000000
EXIM Bank provides \$200mil preferential buyer's credit for Matara-Kataragama railway extension project (Linked to #42460)	Sri Lanka	2011	200000000

EXIM Bank provides \$200mil preferential buyer's credit for Matara-Kataragama railway extension project (Linked to #42460)	Sri Lanka	2011	200000000
EXIM Bank provides \$200mil preferential buyer's credit for Matara-Kataragama railway extension project (Linked to #42460)	Sri Lanka	2011	200000000
EXIM Bank provides \$200mil preferential buyer's credit for Matara-Kataragama railway extension project (Linked to #42460)	Sri Lanka	2011	200000000
Exim Bank of China commits 200 million USD loan for railway extension project in Sri Lanka (linked to #33407)	Sri Lanka	2013	200000000
Exim Bank of China commits 200 million USD loan for railway extension project in Sri Lanka (linked to #33407)	Sri Lanka	2013	200000000
Exim Bank of China commits 200 million USD loan for railway extension project in Sri Lanka (linked to #33407)	Sri Lanka	2013	200000000
China Exim Bank loans Sri Lanka 180 million USD for second stage of Southern Highway project	Sri Lanka	2006	180000000
China Exim Bank loans Sri Lanka 180 million USD for second stage of Southern Highway project	Sri Lanka	2006	180000000
China Development Bank loans 100 million USD to Sri Lanka for Priority Road Project 3' (Phase II)	Sri Lanka	2014	100000000
China Development Bank loans 100 million USD to Sri Lanka for Priority Road Project 3' (Phase II)	Sri Lanka	2014	100000000
China Development Bank loans 100 million USD to Sri Lanka for Priority Road Project 3' (Phase II)	Sri Lanka	2014	100000000
China loans \$494.03m to Sri Lanka for Construction of Outer Circular Highway Project – Phase III	Sri Lanka	2014	494030000
China loans \$494.03m to Sri Lanka for Construction of Outer Circular Highway Project – Phase III	Sri Lanka	2014	494030000
China loans \$494.03m to Sri Lanka for Construction of Outer Circular Highway Project – Phase III	Sri Lanka	2014	494030000
China loans \$494.03m to Sri Lanka for Construction of Outer Circular Highway Project – Phase III	Sri Lanka	2014	494030000
China loans \$494.03m to Sri Lanka for Construction of Outer Circular Highway Project – Phase III	Sri Lanka	2014	494030000
China Development Bank provides loan of \$153 million to Sri Lanka for Priority Road Project-1 (part of umbrella project #33381)	Sri Lanka	2011	153000000
China Development Bank provides loan of \$153 million to Sri Lanka for Priority Road Project-1 (part of umbrella project #33381)	Sri Lanka	2011	153000000
China Development Bank provides loan of \$153 million to Sri Lanka for Priority Road Project-1 (part of umbrella project #33381)	Sri Lanka	2011	153000000
China Development Bank provides loan of \$153 million to Sri Lanka for Priority Road Project-1 (part of umbrella project #33381)	Sri Lanka	2011	153000000
China Development Bank provides loan of \$153 million to Sri Lanka for Priority Road Project-1 (part of umbrella project #33381)	Sri Lanka	2011	153000000

China Development Bank provides loan of \$153 million to Sri Lanka for Priority Road Project-1 (part of umbrella project #33381)	Sri Lanka	2011	153000000
China Development Bank provides loan of \$153 million to Sri Lanka for Priority Road Project-1 (part of umbrella project #33381)	Sri Lanka	2011	153000000
China Development Bank provides loan of \$153 million to Sri Lanka for Priority Road Project-1 (part of umbrella project #33381)	Sri Lanka	2011	153000000
China Development Bank provides loan of \$153 million to Sri Lanka for Priority Road Project-1 (part of umbrella project #33381)	Sri Lanka	2011	153000000
China to fund statue of former Sri Lanka Prime Minister	Sri Lanka	2001	
Chinese donates LKR450m for commemorative exhibition hall in Sri Lanka (linked to #33186)	Sri Lanka	2001	5034514
China Development Bank provides loan of \$153 million to Sri Lanka for Priority Road Project-1 (part of umbrella project #33381)	Sri Lanka	2011	153000000
EXIM Bank loan for Muthurajawela Oil Tank Storage Project	Sri Lanka	2001	72000000
EXIM Bank loan for Northern Road Rehabilitation Project	Sri Lanka	2009	498047831
EXIM Bank loan for Northern Road Rehabilitation Project	Sri Lanka	2009	498047831
EXIM Bank loan for Northern Road Rehabilitation Project	Sri Lanka	2009	498047831
EXIM Bank loan for Northern Road Rehabilitation Project	Sri Lanka	2009	498047831
EXIM Bank loan for Northern Road Rehabilitation Project	Sri Lanka	2009	498047831
Exim Bank of China commits 200 million USD loan for railway extension project in Sri Lanka (linked to #33407)	Sri Lanka	2013	200000000
China Development Bank loans 300 million USD to Sri Lanka for Priority Road Project 3' (Phase I)	Sri Lanka	2013	300000000
China Development Bank loans 300 million USD to Sri Lanka for Priority Road Project 3' (Phase I)	Sri Lanka	2013	300000000
China Development Bank loans 300 million USD to Sri Lanka for Priority Road Project 3' (Phase I)	Sri Lanka	2013	300000000
China Development Bank loans 300 million USD to Sri Lanka for Priority Road Project 3' (Phase I)	Sri Lanka	2013	300000000
China Development Bank loans 300 million USD to Sri Lanka for Priority Road Project 3' (Phase I)	Sri Lanka	2013	300000000
China Development Bank loans 300 million USD to Sri Lanka for Priority Road Project 3' (Phase I)	Sri Lanka	2013	300000000
China Development Bank loans 300 million USD to Sri Lanka for Priority Road Project 3' (Phase I)	Sri Lanka	2013	300000000
China Development Bank loans 300 million USD to Sri Lanka for Priority Road Project 3' (Phase I)	Sri Lanka	2013	300000000
China Development Bank loans 300 million USD to Sri Lanka for Priority Road Project 3' (Phase I)	Sri Lanka	2013	300000000
China Development Bank loans 300 million USD to Sri Lanka for Priority Road Project 3' (Phase I)	Sri Lanka	2013	300000000
China Exim Bank loans Sri Lanka 180 million USD for second stage of Southern Highway project	Sri Lanka	2013	300000000

China donates LKR150m and educational materials to three schools in Sri Lanka	Sri Lanka	2006	180000000
CDB funds Priority Roads Project 2 (PRP2)	Sri Lanka	2011	1356665
CDB funds Priority Roads Project 2 (PRP2)	Sri Lanka	2010	500000000
CDB funds Priority Roads Project 2 (PRP2)	Sri Lanka	2010	500000000
CDB funds Priority Roads Project 2 (PRP2)	Sri Lanka	2010	500000000
CDB funds Priority Roads Project 2 (PRP2)	Sri Lanka	2010	500000000
CDB funds Priority Roads Project 2 (PRP2)	Sri Lanka	2010	500000000
CDB funds Priority Roads Project 2 (PRP2)	Sri Lanka	2010	500000000
China Development Bank provides loan of \$153 million to Sri Lanka for Priority Road Project-1 (part of umbrella project #33381)	Sri Lanka	2010	500000000
CMEC signs \$229.5 million water plant construction deal in Sri Lanka	Sri Lanka	2011	153000000
CDB funds Priority Roads Project 2 (PRP2)	Sri Lanka	2013	229500000
ICBC loans \$69.7 million for Broadlands Hydropower Project	Sri Lanka	2010	500000000
China donates ping pong table and equipment to Sri Lanka	Sri Lanka	2010	69700000
EXIM Bank loan for Mattala Rajapaksa International Airport	Sri Lanka	2013	
China donates Language Centre to Sri Lanka	Sri Lanka	2009	190000000
China provides loan to Sri Lanka for Moragahakanda Development Project	Sri Lanka	2009	
China Exim Bank loans 307 million USD to Sri Lanka for phase one of the Hambantota Port development project	Sri Lanka	2012	214200000
EXIM Bank loan for the construction of bunkering terminal at Hambananta Port	Sri Lanka	2005	307000000
EXIM Bank provides \$600M Preferential Buyer_ â€žÅ½s Credit for Second Phase of Hambantota Port (Linked to Project ID #39024 #39025)	Sri Lanka	2009	77000000
EXIM Bank provides \$158M Government Concessional Loan for Phase II of Hambantota Port (Linked to Project ID #39023 #39025)	Sri Lanka	2012	600000000
EXIM Bank provides \$51M Buyer_ â€žÅ½s Credit Loan for Second Phase of Hambantota Port (Linked to Project ID #39023 #39024)	Sri Lanka	2012	158350000
CDB funds Priority Roads Project 2 (PRP2)	Sri Lanka	2012	51000000
CMC provides 15 power set trains (linked to #33275)	Sri Lanka	2010	500000000
China loans Sri Lanka 102.7m USD loan to purchase Chinese S12 power trains	Sri Lanka	2008	38683633
China donates books to 16 scholarship holders in Sri Lanka (linked to #38911)	Sri Lanka	2012	102700000
China donates books to the 24 scholarship holders in Sri Lanka (linked to #38920)	Sri Lanka	2010	
China Development Bank provides loan of \$153 million to Sri Lanka for Priority Road Project-1 (part of umbrella project #33381)	Sri Lanka	2011	
	Sri Lanka	2011	153000000

Source: (Dreher, Fuchs, Parks, Strange, & Tierney, 2017)