Similarity of interests between governments and its impact on their bilateral relations: Case study of China-Sri Lanka relations

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Abstract

With China's rising as a global economic and political power, it is normally accepted that its leadership’s impact in international politics has expanded significantly. Nonetheless, precise investigations of China's effect on small states are uncommon and for the most part constrained to inquiries with respect to similarity of interests between China-small states and its impact on their bilateral relations. This paper seeks to add to the literature on China's international affairs ascend a more extensive viewpoint. Drawing on voting information from the United Nations General Assembly for the most recent decade, it investigates the credibility of diverse clarifications for interest similarities, economic, diplomatic, strategic and military relations and bilateral relations. The outcomes further demonstrate that similarity of interests appear support to China directing sound relations with small states in international politics.

Key words: China, interest similarity, UN General Assembly, voting data, bilateral relations, small states

Introduction

Small states have votes in the United Nations and other global organization, and in that capacity, can be valuable partners. Sometimes small states are chosen to essential chairmanship; for instance Jamaica has led the security council of the UN on two events, and additionally the G-77 and Non-Aligned Movement and small powers have held the presidency of the UN General Assembly. The driving force of the China's engagement with small states is the unresolved dispute about the status of Taiwan and its diplomatic recognition by a few small states. Twenty-three nations that still recognize Taiwan, nineteen of them are small states. China's contemporary relations with Sri Lanka have been depicted as 'Models of good relations between small state and big power'. China has been a valuable trading partner for Sri Lanka, with an expansive and developing trade surplus in China’s favour in the most recent couple of years. In the meantime it has additionally been a huge source of investment and international economic assistance to Sri Lanka. For China, some assistance in seeking core interest has not been confined to global high politics. The minimal methodical examination exists on why different states align with China. The few studies that exist arrive at opposing conclusions as well as only concentrate barely, on the subject of regardless of whether China's economic power is interpreted into direct political impact. They treat option causes, if by any stretch of the imagination, as auxiliary.

The aim of this exploration is therefore to add to studying so as to fill this whole the similarity of interests influence in interstate bilateral relations that focus on PRC–Sri Lanka relations. Be that as it may, systematic investigations of China's impact on amicable relations with small powers are still uncommon.


The study's independent variable measures Sri Lankan government's similarity of interests with the PRC on depend on United Nations General Assembly vote records. The voting information for the years 2005-2014 is taken from the Index to Proceedings of the General Assembly. Utilizing UNGA votes in favor of figuring similarity of interests with China bears the point of preference that information is accessible for all conditions of universal framework, and a for long time period. In spite of the fact that the votes in the General Assembly are regularly condemned as absolutely typical, the information accompanies two further focal points, for one, it is less bended accurately in view of the more typical nature of UNGA votes. Then again, UNGA votes uncover a higher fluctuation than other foreign policy decision. The resolution themes focus on international security, humanitarian and other political issues.

This research paper uses recorded votes from 63rd and 66th sessions of the UNGA (These regularly sessions started in 2008/2009 and 2011/2012), to evaluate Sri Lanka's relative interest similarities with China. The level of interest similarities with Sri Lanka's voting example is measured for PRC, as an individual member of the UNGA, giving a rundown which similarities or dissimilarities of two nations altogether of their relative concurrence with Sri Lanka's reality view as reflected in resolutions received by the UNGA.

The methodology utilized here includes correlation of agreement and disagreement between China and Sri Lanka. The quantity of times two member states voted oppositely is subtracted from the quantity of times they voted closeness. Abstentions by one country yet not the other are disregarded.

**Similarity of interests between China and Sri Lanka**

The UNGA offers a legitimate and precise forum for examining the policy positions of countries in comparative perspective of the number and various issues on which votes are recorded and the high degree of members by countries in those votes. Any requires choice among the different organs, exercises and decisions.

The role-call and recorded votes taken in plenary present helpful summaries of voting alignments inside of the UNGA and make up the standard information from which the data here is assembled votes taken in the UNGA put into a global setting the perspectives of a variety of countries, which can be measured and compared at reliably all through the range of issued raised. Both super power and small states can be investigated on the same issues following an UNGA vote offers a straightforward and direct "Yes", "No" or "Abstain" from which information can be measured. The voting of UNGA has equivalent weight for all countries. It is sensible to estimate that Sri Lanka would vote most intimately with China that has a similar economic, cultural and ideological foundation.

Utilizing this methodology discussed in the introduction, a helpful estimation can be made of how firmly different nations voted with Sri Lanka. The table 1 demonstrates the pertinent figures for the China-Sri Lanka voting example in the United Nations General Assembly.
Table 1

UNGA voting comparison between Sri Lanka and the PRC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>63rd (2008/09)</th>
<th>66th (2011/12)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka and the PRC both voted “Yes”</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka and the PRC both voted “No”</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka and the PRC both voted “Abstain”</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total resolutions on which the two agreed</td>
<td></td>
<td>70 63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka voted “Yes” the PRC voted “No”</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka voted “No” the PRC voted “Yes”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Resolutions on which the two disagreed</td>
<td></td>
<td>01 00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreement (70/63) – Disagreement (01/00)</td>
<td></td>
<td>69 63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author’s own compilation

There are various things to note about this table. Most clearly, Sri Lanka of course was the nation which voted most intimately with the PRC. A closer examination of the 63rd session’s voting conduct demonstrates that of the seventy events when both nations voted, Sri Lanka and PRC agreed 69 times, while one abstained. The voting pattern of the 66th session demonstrates that of the 63 events when both nations voted, Sri Lanka and China agreed all resolutions that were 63 times.

While an investigation of the level of similarity of interests between Sri Lanka and China in the course of the most recent fifteen years gives an expansive review of the general patterns in UNGA voting. V.B. Tikhomirov, in a 1981 investigation of voting in the UNGA, offered a helpful division of issues into a set number of policy areas. They cover all resolutions adopted by the UNGA, and are sufficiently expansive to incorporate growing differing qualities of issues. Table 2 demonstrates the distribution of resolutions adopted by vote in each issue area in 63rd and 66th sessions.

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Table 2

2 Table, Total resolutions on which Sri Lanka and China voted by issue 63rd and 66th sessions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>63rd</th>
<th>66th</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CH SL</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SL</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disarmament &amp; International security</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poltial &amp; Decolonization</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic &amp; Financial</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Humanitarian &amp; Cultural</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative &amp; Budgetary</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author’s own compilation data collected from Index to proceedings of the UNGA 2008/2009 & 2010/2011

From table 2 and figure 1, there are clear that the issue of disarmament and international security made up the biggest extent of resolutions adopted by vote in 63rd and 66th sessions. The political and administrative issues took centrality decrease in both nations. Most different issues have kept up a moderately steady number of resolutions in both sessions. The issues of the economic and financial related made up the second biggest extent of resolutions in 63rd and 66th sessions when social and humanitarian issues made up the third place of China and Sri Lanka. In terms UNGA voting, this may show that the issue of disarmament and international security, Political and decolonization and social and humanitarian issues has been critical in the PRC and Sri Lanka Relationship.
To check this hypothesis, the relative similarities in voting conduct between China and Sri Lanka be taken a gander at for each policy area, following figures indicate to similarity level of convergence between the two nations as a rate of all resolutions on which the pair voted in favor of each of five policy areas.

Figure 2

Figure 2 to 6 China-Sri Lanka % similarities by policy area 2008-2014

Disarmament and international security policy issues
Figure 3

Political & decolonization policy issues

Figure 4

Economic and financial policy issues
Figure 5
Social, humanitarian and cultural policy issues

Figure 6
Administrative & budgetary policy issues
Figure 2–6 show the general similarities in voting behavior between Sri Lanka and the People's Republic of China in the 63rd, 64th, 65th, 66th, 67th, 68th UNGA sessions and the way the issues of international security, political, economic, social, and humanitarian policy areas played a role in the similarities. Given this confirmation, it is reasonable to infer that the policy issues of political, social, and economic played a key part in adjusting the voting similarities of Sri Lanka and China on UNGA resolutions with respect to one another. On the other hand, in light of the confirmation in figure 3, this demonstrated both countries’ changing position in connection to disarmament and international security. This figure likewise demonstrated the decrease in the quantity of demilitarization and international security resolutions adopted by China.

The figures illustrate the development of the similarity of interests from the 63rd through the 68th UNGA sessions. The graphs indicate that Sri Lanka’s similarity of interests with China basically corresponds with its voting on political, economic, social, and humanitarian issues and on resolutions regarding disarmament and international security.

The figures illustrate the advancement of the similarity of interests from the 63rd through the 68th UNGA sessions. The charts show that Sri Lanka’s similarity of interest with China fundamentally relates with its voting on political, economic, social, and humanitarian issues and on resolutions in regards to disarmament and international security.

**Bilateral relations between China and Sri Lanka**

As to informative elements, the study contains that needy variable measuring Strategic partnership, economic relations, aid projects and military relations with China. Because of constraints in information accessibility, on the other hand, I was not ready to incorporate China’s outgoing direct investment with Sri Lanka.

**Military relations**

There has been some military training of Sri Lankan officers. For instance, in 2009 it was declared that four senior Sri Lankan officers would be set at the National Defense University and that China would likewise train an extra 40. In October 2011, a visiting People's Liberation Army (PLA) delegation offered extra training for Sri Lankan officers, aid for the SLAF’s Defense College and the open door for joint maritime preparing and observation operations. The Sri Lankan Military held a ‘seminar on defeating terrorism: The Sri Lankan experience, the seminar was supported to a great extent by two Chinese defense organizations: Poly Technologies and China Electrical and Technologies Corporation.

According to Stockholm Peace Research Institute data, between 2005 and 2010 Sri Lanka was China’s eight largest arms market, although this is still a fairly small share of China’s total arms trade.

As indicated by Stockholm Peace Research Institute information, somewhere around 2005 and 2010 Sri Lanka was China's eight biggest arms market, in spite of the fact that this is still a genuinely little share of China's aggregate arms exchange.

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Figure 7

Arms transfers to Sri Lanka from largest international suppliers, 2005-2014

Figures are SIPRI Trend Indicator Values (TIVs) expressed in US$ million


Trade Relations

The relationship between China and Sri Lanka grow up another top under the post 2005 administration. The former Sri Lankan president Mahinda Rajapakse made a land make state visit to China 2007 on the event of the golden jubilee celebration diplomatic relations, signed the eight bilateral agreements and MOUs with China, as follows:

01. Agreement on Economic and Technical Cooperation between China and Sri Lanka

02. MOU between the Ministry of Construction of China and the Ministry of Urban Development and Sacred Area Development of Sri Lanka

03. Agreement between the city of Guangzhou of China and District of Hambantota of Sri Lanka on the establishment of Friendship City Relationship

04. MOU on two-way investment promotion cooperation between the Investment Promotion Agency of the Ministry of Commerce of China and the Board of Investment of Sri Lanka

05. MOU on Cooperation in the Film Industry between the Film Bureau of the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television of China and the National Film Cooperation of Sri Lanka

What’s more, to the aforementioned agreements aimed at strengthening two-sided ties between China and Sri Lanka. As the Chinese economy has developed at a quick rate of above 9 per cent annually for the past decade, with a high of 14.27 per cent in 2007, the share of Sri Lanka's imports from China has consistently expanded to 13.9 per cent in 2012. The share of Sri Lanka's export to China however has stayed low at 1.2 per cent in 2012. Hence, while bilateral trade has developed, trade balance has been illustrative of the trading quality of the two countries. Sri Lanka's real exports to China have shifted significantly throughout the years. A climb can be found in the estimation of rubber exports which became almost tenfold in 2010 and afterward again multiplied in 2011. The main real export to China that declined in 2011 was that of diamond and gems. This was promptly taking after the development in diamonds exports from US$7.3 million in 2009 to US$20 million in 2010.

Similar to the exports, estimations of Sri Lanka's significant imports from China have detectably differed in the six-year period. As can be seen data from the Sri Lanka Custom that machinery, boilers andcotton are unmistakably the most prevailing Chinese imports to Sri Lanka. The import estimation of electrical machinery and tools dramatically increased in 2011, after a year in which the import value really declined. Then again, import estimation of boilers and machinery and machine parts became relentlessly up until 2010 and afterward dramatically increased in 2010.

Aid projects

China has likewise been a more essential donor to Sri Lanka, providing aid and technical assistance. There has been solid economic collaboration between China and Sri Lanka after the 1952 rubber-rice agreement. China has been an imperative donor in Sri Lanka more than quite a long while, adding to a few major projects.

All the more as of late, China subsidized the Nelum Pokuna (Lotus Pond) Mahinda Rajapakshe Theater, which was opened in December 2011, at an expense of US$30 million and the Mattala International Airport which was opened in March 2013, at an expense of US$2210 million. The Lotus Tower in focal Colombo is at present being subsidized by the Chinese government.

Somewhere around 1971 and 2012 China provided US$5.1 billion worth of financial assistance to Sri Lanka out of which US$4.8 billion came amid 2005-2012, which close to 94 per cent of Chinese grants and loans have come amid the most recent eight years. Sri Lanka prepared credit assistance from China basically from the Exim Bank of China, China Development Bank and Industrial Commercial Bank of China. As indicated by Ministry of Finance and Planning Annual Report (2012). Amid the 2008-2012 periods, China made an
aggregate commitment of US$3,609 million involving loan of US$3,559 million. The Ministry of Finance and Planning reported that China has given Sri Lanka a US$278.2 million loan to fund the first part of another railroad track running from the Southern town of Matara to Kataragama\textsuperscript{13}.

Aid from China grew significantly in the years taking after the end of Sri Lanka's ethnic war. The aid originating from China which was around a couple of million US dollars in 2005, bounced to roughly US$1 billion in 2008 and US$1.2 billion in 2009 as China supplanted Japan as the significant donor contributor country to Sri Lanka. While providing US$1 million as humanitarian aid for internally displaced persons and technical assistance for de-mining operations in Northern and Eastern provinces, China has likewise helped with the resettling of individuals who lived in the war influenced zones, giving US$1 million in humanitarian aid to Sri Lanka to help the civilian with affecting by the ethnic conflict and a further 20 million Yuan worth of tents for the rehabilitation activities. Notwithstanding the post-war period, China likewise supported Sri Lanka undertaking so as to take after the overwhelming Tsunami of 2004, reconstruction activities in Tsunami influenced zones.

**Strategic Cooperation**

As an Indian Ocean nation with extremely special geopolitical area, Sri Lanka has a more vital key status with the ascent of Indian Ocean's significance. With the change of port and other base, Sri Lanka's strategic significance concerning Sea-lane security and trade relations in Indian will rise further. Energy vitality and asset prerequisites are raised to backing China's fast economic advancement with a rapid over the past over thirty years. The route security in Indian Ocean is turning into China's center national worry because of Indian Ocean has turned into the most imperative channel for China to import oil and assets from the Gulf and Africa. Accordingly, China will most likely give careful consideration to Indian Ocean. Then again, China's military vicinity in Indian Ocean is just about zero other than the counter theft movement close to Somali. China needs to cooperate with the Indian Ocean nations and important partners to guarantee the peace and steadiness in the most occupied water region on the planet. At bilateral level, there are a great deal of progress to advance the comprehensive and in-depth improvement of respective relationship between China and Sri Lanka.

On the premise of solid shared political trust between the two nations, China and Sri Lanka have the comparable positions on numerous global issues and could profit by the participation with one another to keep up their core national interests. The two nations take economic development as a need of their national strategy. China-Sri Lanka respective economic and trade cooperation has awesome potential particularly after the forthcoming marking of the Free Trade Area Agreement. The greater component to the bilateral relationship is that China set forward the thought to make the 21 Century Maritime Silk Road.

**Conclusion**

The primary aim of this study has been to evaluate the plausibility of similarity of interests between Sri Lanka and China and their impact on bilateral relations. It has been argued that a better understanding of Chin's relations with small power like Sri Lanka in global affairs and of the underline patterns of international support so as to back is picked up a stage back and considering the Chinese government's capacity to constrain small states into obliging its interests as only one of a few informative elements. In this way, notwithstanding China's economic relations with Sri Lanka, I have included Aid projects, trade, military relations and strategic partnership and also institutional similarities in the examination.

The paper’s findings support the claim that of direct impact over small states’ diplomatic choices is only one possible explanation for general interest similarities. Important prerequisites for healthy bilateral relations are

also rooted in institutional similarity. Dense United Nations General Assembly voting similarities shared interests and help to explain the duration of high levels of interest similarity affinity.

The paper's findings bolster the case that of direct effect over small states' diplomatic decisions is one and only conceivable clarification for general interest similarities. Vital requirements for solid bilateral relations are likewise established in institutional similarity. The United Nations General Assembly voting similarities shared interests and clarify the length of time of elevated amounts of interest similarity proclivity.

In spite of factual and subjective confirmation in backing of the principle hypothetical clarifications, the outcome ought not to be over deciphered, nor ought to the investigation be viewed as a clear test of particular causal channel. The fundamental commitment of this study can be seen as the procurement of a more extensive point of view on conceivable clarifications interest similarity with China-Sri Lanka and of beginning credibility test. More quantitative and subjective work is expected to better comprehend the way of China's relations with small powers in international relations. It ought to additionally be highlighted that the present study is worried with general examples of backing for China's political interests and standards in international politics and China's effort of direct control over different states.

As an aftereffect of similarity of interests, Sri Lanka upheld for China's seat at the United Nations Organization. Sri Lanka assumed a dynamic part in guaranteeing China picked up observer status on the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). Sri Lanka in 2000 effectively upheld its entrance into the World Trade Organization (WTO). Sri Lanka never having given recognition to Taiwan and different official statements repeated its open backing for the "One China Policy". Sri Lanka reliably denied the Dalia Lama visas to visit the nation. In 2010, Sri Lanka was one of only a handful couple of nations to blacklist the Nobel Peace Prize Ceremony for a Chinese nonconformist.

By discussing about a brief description of bilateral relations of the China-Sri Lanka, this exploration presumes that China Sri Lanka relations has less plausibility of experiencing issues if both government keep up similarity to their greatest advantage. I suggest that closeness of similarity between the PRC and small powers like Sri Lanka boots bilateral relations smoothly will to execute for the China to achievement its global influence.

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