THE ROLE OF ETHNIC POLITICAL PARTIES IN SHAPING THE FUTURE OF MYANMAR PEACE DIALOGUES

NIANG SAN CING

**MASTER OF ARTS
IN PUBLIC POLICY**

**CHIANG MAI UNIVERSITY
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**AN INDEPENDENT STUDY SUBMITTED TO CHIANG MAI UNIVERSITY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS
IN PUBLIC POLICY**

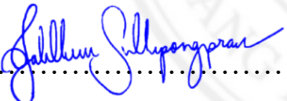**CHIANG MAI UNIVERSITY
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a

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THIS INDEPENDENT STUDY HAS BEEN APPROVED TO BE A PARTIAL
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MASTER OF ARTS
IN PUBLIC POLICY

Examination Committee :   **Advisor :**

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31 May 2024

b

To

I am deeply thankful to my family for their unwavering support and encouragement. I owe a special debt of gratitude to my father, Mr. Kam Lam Khup, and my mother Mrs. Cing Lam Za Vung for their continuous guidance, inspiration, constant support, and encouragement to accomplish my goals in life and additionally Mr. Gin Kam Lian (President of Zomi Congress for Democracy Party) who have been instrumental in the successful completion of this research report.

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Acknowledgement

First and foremost, I wish to extend my deepest gratitude to my advisor, Dr. Ora-Orn Poocharoen (Director of SPP), and Assistant Professor Warathida Chaiyapa, (PhD) for their unwavering support, patient guidance, and insightful criticisms that have significantly contributed to the completion of this study. Her encouragement and expertise have been invaluable throughout this journey.

I am also profoundly grateful to my classmate Soe Ko Ko Aung, Htet Aung Shine, Wyne Ei Thwe, and Nan Mwe Nom for their indispensable assistance in data collection and their active participation in classroom discussions, which have enriched this report immensely.

This research would not have been possible without the exceptional support Professors from the School of Public Policy, Chiang Mai University and Ms. Cherry and Ms. Hsu Myat Yadanar Thein for their dedication of time and resources contributed to this research report. I am particularly indebted to all the professors especially the IS examination committees and my interview participants from various ethnic political parties for their invaluable feedback, comments, and suggestions, which have greatly enhanced the quality of my work.

Niang San Cing

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หัวข้อการค้นคว้าอิสระ	บทบาทของพรรคการเมืองชาติพันธุ์ในการกำหนดอนาคตของการเจรจาสันติภาพในเมียนมา
ผู้เขียน	นางสาวเนียง ซาน ชิง
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บทคัดย่อ

กระบวนการสันติภาพในเมียนมาร์ ปัจจัยพื้นฐานในการแก้ไขความขัดแย้งที่ยืดเยื้อ จำเป็นต้องมีส่วนร่วมจากพรรคการเมืองกลุ่มชาติพันธุ์ทั้งหมด บทคัดย่อนี้ได้รวบรวมงานเขียนที่เกี่ยวกับความท้าทายและแนวโน้มของการไม่แบ่งแยกการเจรจากระบวนการสันติภาพในเมียนมาร์ โดยการมีส่วนร่วมของพรรคการเมืองชาติพันธุ์ การวิเคราะห์ทางประวัติศาสตร์เผยให้เห็นถึงรากเหง้าของความขัดแย้งของเมียนมาร์และการริเริ่มด้านสันติภาพที่มีมาก่อนหน้านี้ โดยเน้นย้ำถึงความสำคัญของการเจรจาที่ครอบคลุม การศึกษาใช้แนวทางเชิงคุณภาพ โดยอาศัยการสัมภาษณ์พรรคการเมืองกลุ่มชาติพันธุ์ 10 พรรคเป็นหลัก เสริมด้วยการวิเคราะห์เอกสาร จุดมุ่งหมายที่ครอบคลุมคือการส่งเสริมการไม่แบ่งแยกในกระบวนการสันติภาพโดยกรอบแนวคิดที่เน้นย้ำถึงความสำคัญของการมีส่วนร่วมของพรรคการเมืองอย่างไม่แบ่งแยกเพื่อส่งเสริมการเจรจาที่แท้จริง การสร้างความไว้วางใจ และผลลัพธ์ของสันติภาพที่ยั่งยืน บทความนี้จะสำรวจการออกแบบนโยบายสำหรับการเจรจากระบวนการสันติภาพของเมียนมาร์ โดยอาศัยการวิเคราะห์และการออกแบบการสัมภาษณ์ที่อาจเป็นทางเลือกสำหรับผู้กำหนดนโยบายและผู้เจรจาในการพิจารณา

คำสำคัญ กระบวนการสันติภาพของเมียนมาร์ พรรคการเมืองกลุ่มชาติพันธุ์ การไม่แบ่งแยก สันติภาพที่ยั่งยืน

Independent Study Title   The Role of Ethnic Political Parties in Shaping the Future of Myanmar Peace Dialogues

Author   Ms. Niang San Cing

Degree   Master of Arts (Public Policy)

Advisor   Asst.Prof.Dr.Ora-orn Poocharoen

ABSTRACT

Myanmar's peace process, essential for resolving protracted conflicts, necessitates inclusive participation from ethnic political parties. This abstract synthesizes existing literature on the challenges and prospects of inclusivity of peace process dialogue in Myanmar by participation of ethnic political parties. Historical analyses reveal the roots of Myanmar's conflict and prior peace initiatives, highlighting the significance of inclusive dialogue. The study adopts a qualitative approach, primarily utilizing interviews with ten ethnic political parties, supplemented by documentation analysis. The overarching aim is to promote inclusivity in the peace process by the conceptual framework underscores the importance of inclusive political party participation for fostering genuine dialogue, trust-building, and sustainable peace outcomes. This paper will explore the policy design for the Myanmar peace process dialogue based on the interview analysis and design could be an option for policymakers and negotiators to consider.

Keywords: Myanmar peace process, Ethnic political parties, Inclusivity, Sustainable Peace

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 Peace Dialogue in Myanmar

Myanmar, a nation rich in ethnic diversity, has a long history of violent confrontations between its military, known as the Tatmadaw, and various ethnic armed organizations (EAOs). The roots of this conflict can be traced back to the country's colonial era and the immediate years following its independence. The first significant attempt to establish peace between the ethnic national leaders and the central government occurred in 1947 with the creation of the Panglong Agreement, spearheaded by General Aung San. The second significant agreement is the Nationwide Ceasefire agreement under the U Thein Sein Government.

Myanmar is a multi-ethnic nation and has a long history of violent confrontations between its military known as the 'Tatmadaw' and various ethnic armed organizations (EAOs). The roots of this conflict can be traced back to the country's colonial era and the immediate years following its independence. Myanmar has initiated two kinds of peace dialogue initiatives that have been profound and significant in history. The first important attempt to establish peace between the ethnic national leaders and the central government occurred in 1947 with the creation of the Panglong Agreement, spearheaded by General Aung San and the second significant attempt to establish peace between the ethnic armed organization and military government occurred in 2015 under the U Thein Sein Presidency tenure.

The Panglong Agreement

The Panglong Agreement was a landmark accord intended to unify Myanmar's diverse ethnic groups under a single, cooperative framework. General Aung San, a pivotal figure in Myanmar's struggle for independence from British colonial rule, envisioned a nation where ethnic minorities would enjoy equal rights and autonomy. The agreement was supposed to be the foundation for a federal union, promising self-determination, and equitable development to the ethnic regions, which included the Shan, Kachin, and Chin states, among others.

The origins of Myanmar's civil war go back to the nation's emergence as a modern state following its independence from Britain in 1948. Before this milestone, leaders representing Myanmar's major ethnic groups convened at the Panglong Conference in 1947, forging an agreement to establish a unitary state with provisions for potential secession by dissatisfied ethnic factions. However, this accord swiftly unraveled within a year, instigating a civil war pitting the central government in Yangon against armed ethnic representatives. While the composition of these groups has evolved, the fundamental dynamic of ethnically delineated armed factions, known as Ethnic Armed Organizations (EAOs), contesting the authority of the central government's armed forces, the Tatmadaw, persists as a defining feature of Myanmar's armed conflict landscape.

Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement

In August 2011, during the administration of President U Thein Sein, concerted efforts were initiated to achieve a durable resolution to the conflict and establish a cohesive governance framework spanning Myanmar's territory (Nyein, 2017). This endeavour took shape through a comprehensive national peace process encompassing most major armed groups in the country. A pivotal milestone in this process was the consolidation of diverse bilateral ceasefire agreements into a unified Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) inked in March 2015 by most active EAOs in Myanmar. The electoral victory of the National League for Democracy (NLD) in 2015 heralded a new era of governance led by State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi, marked by semi-civilian leadership (Transnational Institute, 2023). Subsequently, in January 2016, the Union Peace Conference (21st Century Panglong) convened, assembling representatives from EAOs, political parties, the Myanmar government, and parliament, endeavoring to forge an overarching peace accord founded on federal democratic principles. Despite civil society's official role being predominantly observatory within the Union Peace Conference (21st Century Panglong), it has actively engaged in peace advocacy from the sidelines, convening forums, staging peaceful demonstrations, and utilizing artistic expression to promote reconciliation. However, beyond the negotiations of the UPC (21st CPC), Myanmar's conflict landscape encompasses inter-communal violence perpetrated by militia and vigilante groups, alongside one-sided violence by armed actors targeting civilians to quell dissent or effect displacement (Transnational Institute, 2023).

1.2   Problem Statement

However, according to the historical background Myanmar failed in a peace dialogue with ethnic leaders to go forward with the peacebuilding between military and ethnic armed groups. The problem remains a conflict between ethnic armed groups and the Myanmar military government since the long historical background until now. Efforts to establish peace have been made through significant agreements, such as the 1947 Panglong Agreement led by General Aung San and the 2015 Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) under President U Thein Sein. The Panglong Agreement aimed to create a federal union with equal rights and autonomy for ethnic minorities but quickly fell apart, leading to a prolonged civil war. The NCA sought to consolidate bilateral ceasefire agreements into a unified national framework, involving major EAOs in the peace process. Despite these efforts, peace remains elusive. A key issue is the limited participation of ethnic political parties, civil society organizations (CSOs), and public representatives in the peace dialogue, resulting in a lack of comprehensive conflict resolution. The persistent conflict between the military and EAOs underscores the need for a more inclusive dialogue process that addresses the root causes of discord and engages civil society in peacebuilding efforts.

The focus of this research is exclusively on the NCA, guided by the central research question: "How can the inclusion of ethnic political parties in future peace process dialogues be ensured, and what impact will their participation have on Myanmar's peace efforts?" This study will emphasize that the voices of ethnic political parties must be heard to ensure a comprehensive and lasting resolution and focus on the research question. The research seeks to gather extensive data and insights on the failure of the NCA peace dialogue by interviewing leaders of ethnic political parties to uncover the 'behind the scenes' factors contributing to the breakdown of the NCA.

CHAPTER 2

Conceptual Framework

2.1 What is the Concept of the Peace Process?

According to the literature review, peace processes are structured attempts to resolve radical disagreements between conflicting parties. The diversity of actors involved and the presence of potential spoilers often complicate peace agreement implementation (Nilsson 2012). Continued mediation and third-party monitoring bodies can play a useful role in resolving disputes and overseeing implementation. While measuring peace and progress in implementation is inherently political and difficult, setting clear timelines and benchmarks may improve the chances of successful implementation. All inclusion makes peace more durable (Molloy 2018).

Addressing the challenges of this research requires a nuanced understanding of historical contexts, current obstacles, and implicit peace-delaying factors, alongside a commitment to inclusive dialogue and cooperation among stakeholders. Further research can contribute to identifying viable solutions for advancing the peace process in Myanmar. Lessons learned from international actors engaged in peacebuilding in conflict-affected contexts further support this theme. International actors have often neglected the vital role of political parties in peacebuilding, focusing instead on more accessible and less politically charged aspects of conflict resolution. However, scholars argue that political parties can play either a constructive or regressive role in democratic development and peacebuilding (Cottle & Thapa, 2017). The neglect of political parties is partly due to the inherent risks and challenges of engaging with partisan organizations that may have vested interests and a reputation for corruption. Moreover, international actors frequently lack an in-depth understanding of local political contexts, leading to a one-size-fits-all approach that fails to address the unique challenges faced by political parties in different countries (Autesserre, 2017).

2.2   Conceptual Framework Mapping
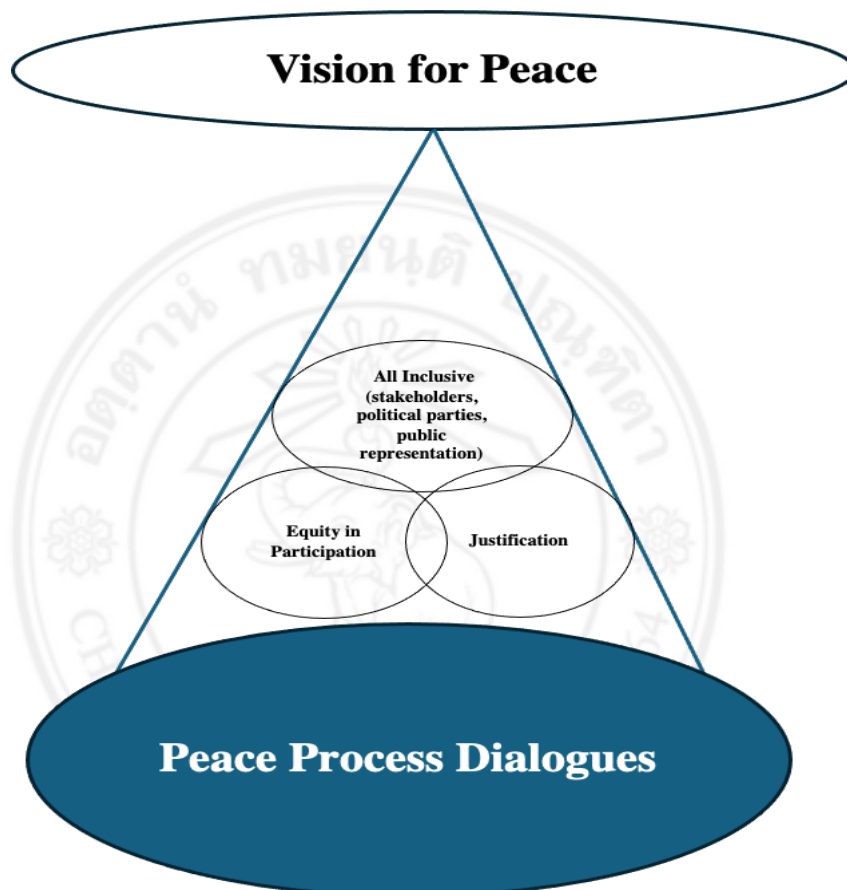
Figure 1: Conceptual Framework Mapping (*Illustrate by author, in text references by (Cuhadar, 2020*)

analyses the structure of the peace process dialogue. This framework emphasizes the inclusivity of all key stakeholders, highlighting the crucial importance of equitable participation and justification in the peace process. According to the analysis of eighty-three peace agreements, found that when civil society actors are included in the process, either alone or together with a broad spectrum of political parties, the risk of peace failing is reduced by 50 percent (60 percent when both civil society and political parties are included) (Nilsso, 2012). Most existing work on inclusion relies on a normative argument to justify an inclusive peace process. Such arguments primarily refer to the right to

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participation of ethnic political parties, youth, and civil society in peace processes—specifically in negotiations. This argument frequently references UN Security Council resolutions and international frameworks recognizing the right of historically excluded and marginalized groups to participate. Recent research corroborates this argument. Studies document the benefits of including ethnic political parties in peace and political transition processes. When ethnic political parties were able to influence negotiations, they brought new perspectives to the conflict and its solution, pushed for the initiation and continuation of negotiations, facilitated the signing of agreements, and incorporated provisions addressing ethnic equality into agreements (Hartwell, 2019).

The participation of ethnic political parties in peace processes also correlates positively with the likelihood of implementation and (after controlling for other variables) the durability of agreements. However, despite this growing preliminary empirical support for the normative argument, understanding why the inclusion of ethnic political parties, civil society, and others is correlated positively with the durability of peace is elusive (United Nations, 2018). Examination of the normative argument so far has barely gone beyond correlational analysis and into causal mechanisms. The normative argument has not yet offered much explanation as to why inclusion is resisted. Anecdotal evidence from ethnic political parties of this research about the obstacles they encounter is considerable including the idea that negotiations are a power game that should include just the "fighters in the conflict," challenges posed by the mediation landscape (such as mediators' dismissal of ethnic political parties), lack of awareness about ethnic political parties' contributions, and traditional attitudes toward their roles in society (Addisu Gelaneh, 2020).

To summarize, the literature highlights that inclusivity in peace processes, including the participation of civil society, ethnic political parties, and public representation, is essential for effective decision-making and peacebuilding. Scholars argue that the involvement of ethnic political parties in peace process dialogues is crucial, and projects are more likely to succeed if this inclusivity is prioritized from the outset. Despite the benefits, challenges persist in enhancing public participation in decision-making. Various studies emphasize that designing processes to ensure meaningful and

inclusive participation of ethnic political parties and public representatives is vital. Ensuring their roles are integral to peace process dialogues can significantly contribute to the durability and success of peace agreements.

CHAPTER 3

Method

3.1 Research Analytical Framework

This research aims to analyse interviews with ethnic political parties regarding inclusivity in the peace process dialogue in Myanmar. Utilising a qualitative methodology grounded in theory, the study categorises common factors and develops themes based on the interview results. The primary value driving this research is the promotion of an inclusive peace process. The conceptual framework development, the development of the above paragraph mentioned the conceptual framework seeks to understand the significance of inclusive political party participation in peace process dialogues. Key components included inclusivity by ensuring representation of all key stakeholders, equitable participation on fair involvement of marginalized parties and the justification in Legitimate representation to foster genuine dialogue and trust.

For the data collection process, primary data collection involves conducting interviews with leaders of ethnic political parties to capture their perceptions of the National Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) peace process. The interviews will focus on the assumptions and expectations regarding the NCA, views on the new political systems such as federalism and democracy, the challenges in participating in peace negotiations, and strategies for ensuring their voices are heard. By addressing challenges in peace dialogues, the challenges identified in previous peace dialogues the lack of a comprehensive negotiation framework, and issues related to the timing and duration of dialogue sessions.

Analytical methods would employ data analysis conducted using grounded theory to interpret interview results, identifying common themes and categories. The outcome is to generate insights that inform policy recommendations for a more inclusive and effective peace process. This framework aims to analyze the inclusivity of the peace process dialogue in Myanmar through interviews with ethnic political parties, employing

a grounded theoretical approach. It underscores the importance of inclusive participation and seeks to generate insights to enhance the legitimacy and effectiveness of the peace process. The data collected and analyzed will inform policy recommendations to support a more inclusive and sustainable peace process.

3.2   Research Methodology

Figure 2: Research Methods
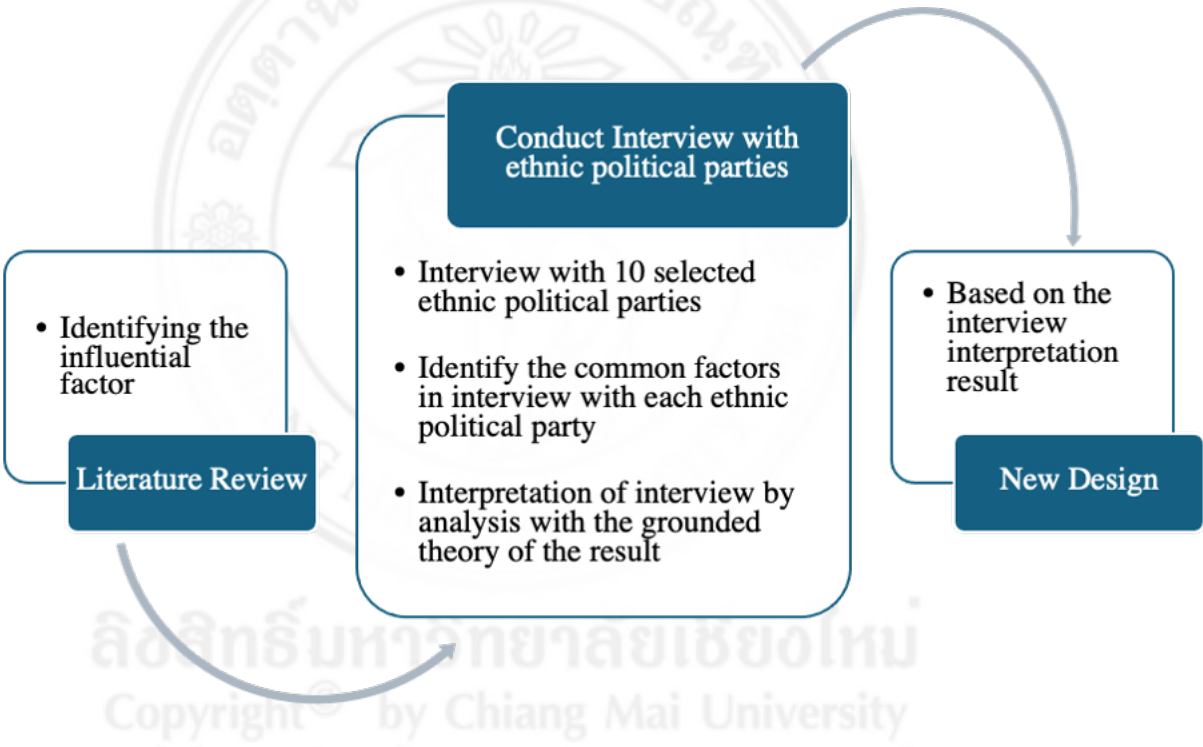
To approach the conceptual framework as the above mentioned, tools such as inclusive dialogue structures, and equity in participation for marginalized parties are proposed. The primary stakeholders in this endeavour are the political parties themselves, as their involvement is essential for achieving a more inclusive peace process. According to Figure 2, the first step would be the identify the problems to address and identify with what literature talked about peace process characters, and conduct the interviews, this report gathers data through interviews with leaders of political parties, aiming to capture their perceptions and hopes for the peace process. The interview questionnaire is

designed to explore future scenarios, seeking insights into potential solutions and strategies for overcoming the identified challenges. By engaging directly with political party leaders and examining their perspectives, this research endeavours to contribute to a more inclusive and effective peace process in the context of the NCA dialogue.

The insights gathered aim to inform policy recommendations that support a more inclusive and effective peace process in Myanmar, the below figure is the analysis methods conducted from the interview with ethnic political parties. Data collection involved interviewing key representatives from these parties to understand their perspectives on the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) peace process. The interviews aimed to gather insights into the parties' assumptions and expectations regarding the NCA and their role in the peace dialogue. Key areas explored included the parties' views on federalism and democracy, the challenges they face in participating in peace negotiations, and their strategies for ensuring their voices are heard in the process.

3.3   Interview Method and Schedule Details

The study highlights the critical role of ethnic political parties in promoting sustainable peace and the necessity of their inclusive participation in addressing Myanmar's complex political and ethnic conflicts focusing only on the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) discussion. By understanding these parties' positions, the research aims to provide policy recommendations for a more inclusive and effective NCA peace process in Myanmar. The lists of ethnic political parties' selection processes such as -

UNA: Unity Nationalities Alliance (UNA) is a political alliance of parties representing several ethnic minorities in Myanmar. The UNA's charter establishes nine basic federal principles as a roadmap for federalism in Myanmar.

PRCF: People's Representatives Committees for Federalism The PRCF, formed post-2021 coup, includes United Nationalities Alliance members. It rejects dictatorships, and promotes federalism, democracy, and peaceful coexistence for a stable union.

1)   Shan Nationalities League for Democracy (SNLD) - UNA / PRCF (No Response)

2)   Arakan League for Democracy (ALD)   -   UNA/   PRCF
(Accepted)

3)   Zomi Congress for Democracy   - UNA **(Accepted)**

4)   Mro National Democracy Party   - UNA (Rejected)

5)   Karen National Party (KNP)   - UNA (Rejected)

6)   Danu National Democracy Party (DNDP)   - UNA **(Accepted)**

7)   Daingnet National Development Party (DNDP)   - UNA (Rejected)

8)   Mon Alliance Affair   -   UNA   /   PRCF
(Accepted)

Table 1: Ethnic Political Parties' Interviewees Selection List

No	Political Parties	Invitation Status	Status
1	Shan Nationalities League for Democracy (SNLD)	U Sai Nyunt Lwin (Party Leader)	Not accepted for the interview but write in message (can not follow up to get answers from them)
2	Arakan League for Democracy (ALD)	U Myo Kyaw (President)	Interview done
3	Zomi Congress for Democracy (ZCD)	Mrs. Cing Ngaih Mang (former parliamentary member 2015 -2020)	Interview done
4	Mro National Democracy Party	Not accepted for interview	Reason 'the topic', don't even talk about anymore
5	Karen National Party (KNP)	Not yet confirmed for interview	Not yet done interview
6	Danu National Democracy Party (DNDP)	U Min Lwin Oo (Party President)	Interview done

6	Khmumi (Khami) Democracy Party (DNDP)	Reject for interview due to they are not register as the official ethnic political party	-
7	Mon Alliance Affair (MAA)	Mr. Min Banyar San (Party EC member)	Interview done
8	Daingnet National Development Party (D.N.D.P)	-	-

3.4 Interviewees Selection Process

This research aimed to focus on the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA), a significant peace dialogue initiative between ethnic armed organizations and the military (Tatmadaw) in Myanmar. The objective is to achieve peace without resorting to armed conflict through formal agreements. Historically, Myanmar has had over fifty ethnic armed organizations from regions such as Kachin, Kayin, Shan, Karen, Chin, and Mon, some of which have persisted since before the 19th century. However, new armed groups have emerged following the military coup in Myanmar in 2021.

In the selection process for interviewees, the researcher targeted individuals directly and indirectly related to the NCA. Specifically, members of the Unity National Alliances (UNA) and some UNA members who are also part of the People's Representatives Committees for Federalism (PRCF) were chosen. Despite these efforts, all selected ethnic political party leaders declined to participate in the interviews, each citing different reasons for their refusal. Initially, the ethnic political parties selected about eight parties but, only four parties accepted interviews out of eight but only one party accepted to answer the research questions which attached the interview questions with them when sending the invitation to interview. Most of the ethnic political parties rejected the interview invitation and the one who committed to share the research questions, waited and followed up to send the interview answers but until 20th May 2024, he didn't respond and got response to the researcher, the below list are some of theirs replied to the researcher through messenger & Viber call –

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"The topic which no need to discuss anymore, not happened this NCA in future and waste of time by interview this ridiculous topic" (*Ethnic Political Party*).

"Our ethnic political parties hadn't registered to this military government, so we aren't an official organization from now, hence we don't want to accept an interview with you" (*Ethnic Political Party*).

Some of the ethnic political parties suggested changing the topic, and research questions and not focusing on the NCA anymore because :

"We couldn't improve this NCA and no more touch it because of this NCA which we can throw into the TRASH BIN. Don't try to recall about the NCA which suck our lives and one of the reasons today's conflict happened in Myanmar" (*Ethnic Political Parties*).

Based on the predominant themes and findings derived from the feedback and desires of ethnic political parties, as well as insights gathered from attempted interviews, the researcher has decided to revise the original research question. Initially, the focus was on improving the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) peace dialogue. However, it has become evident that there is a stronger inclination towards designing a new peace process dialogue tailored for the future of Myanmar.

In light of this shift, the research question has been updated to focus on the creation of a "new peace process dialogue design for future Myanmar by inclusion of ethnic political parties." This change reflects the need to address current challenges and aspirations for a more effective peace process. Consequently, the upcoming interview report will delve into and enhance new policy designs for peace process dialogues, aiming to provide a comprehensive framework that aligns with the evolving political and social landscape of Myanmar.

3.5   Interview Interpretation with Grounded Theory Analysis

Interviewee Ethnic Political Parties	Coding	Categories
Mon Affair Alliance (MAA)	-*NCA lack involvement of ethnic political parties* - *Exclusion create distruct* - *Limited time discussion* - *Procedural issue* - *Complexity of NCA procedure* - *Marginalization leading to distruct* - *Unfair treatment* - *Discrimination in participation* - *Military's relutance to relinquish control* - *Dominance role* - *Imbalance in power dynamic* - *Intimidation* - *Negative impact* - *Power struggle* - *Call for restructuring the NCA* - *Ensure inclusivity* - *Addressing issue fuelling conflicts* - *Political grievance* - *Impact of historical military dominance* - *Evolution of peace process* - *Advocacy for new politcal system*	- Lack of inclusivity - Insufficient discussion time - Procedural Breakdown - Distruct and Resentment - Military Dominance - Power Imbalance - Excusion of ethnic political parties - Need for comprehensive reform - Trust-building measure - Balanced and Equitable Peace process

Interviewee Ethnic Political Parties	Coding	Categories
Zomi Congress for Democracy Party	-*Structural attempts to resolve conflict* -*diversity of actors* - *Exclusion of key stakeholders* - *Distruct due to exclusion* - *Limited time discussion duration* - *Inefficiencies in process* - *Military relutance to relinquish control* - *Focus on substantial agreements* - *Ensuring the stakeholder involvement* - *Military centric framework* - *Non-conductive structure* - *Side lining political issues* - *Needs for significant reform of political system* - *Lack of genuine dialogue* - *Replace with new poltical framework* - *Dominance parties influences* - *Military manipulation in participation of NCA discussion*	- Stakeholder exclusion - Effectiveness of NCA - Limitation of NCA - Reforming NCA - Necesscity of NCA - The role of political parties - Addressing the root cause - Future Political System

Interviewee Ethnic Political Parties	Coding	Categories
Arakan League for Democracy	*-Marginalization of ethnic political parties from NCA discussion* *- Lack of representation of non armed ethnic group in peace talk* *- Distruct towards NCA due to exclusionary practices* *- Insufficient time allocate for comprehensive deliberations* *- Lack of procedural transparency in NCA framework* *- Ineffectiveness of procedural guidelines in achieve peace* *- Challenges in civillian-military concensus* *- Polarization of public opinion regarding NCA effectiveness* *- Need for action to inclusion in peace dialogue of Myanmar peace process* *- Challenges in overcoming historical grievance through NCA* *- Enhancing NCA legitimacy through community engagement*	-Impact on unity and division - Stakeholder exclusion - Critique of current NCA - Strategies planning for future peace process in Myanmar - Advocating for new peace framework - Recocilliation and Peacebuilding - Envisioning inclusive governance for peace - Future Political Landscape - Socio-Political implication of NCA reforms

Interviewee Ethnic Political Parties	Coding	Categories
Danu National Democracy Party (DNDP)	*-No need to discuss anymore about the NCA* *-Lack of inculsion of ethnic political parties* *-Current conflict linked to NCA failures.* *-NCA is ineffective and outdated* *- The initial step of apporaching is wrong and insufficient* *- should do the new approach on the peace process dialogues* *- future policy design for peace in Myanmar* *- NCA which sucked live and full of distruct* *- For minorities groups not have chance to participate and decision-making level* *- Full of unfair and distrust* *-Fruad of contract*	-Disillusionment with NCA - Exclusion of ethnic political parties - Ineffectiveness of NCA - Inadequate initial approach - Call for new peace process approach - Future policy designs for peace - Criticism of Governments' role

CHAPTER 4

Findings

4.1 Findings on Interpretation of Interview

Based on the analysis of interviews with ethnic political parties, key findings have prompted a shift in the research focus from solely improving the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) to a broader examination of "Peace Process Dialogue in Myanmar by Participation of Ethnic Political Parties." The interviews revealed significant challenges regarding the exclusion and marginalization of ethnic parties from meaningful participation in the NCA dialogue. Parties expressed deep-seated concerns about procedural inequities, structural biases favouring military influence, and the overarching need for comprehensive reform to ensure inclusive decision-making processes.

The revised research direction acknowledges these findings and seeks to explore how ethnic political parties can play a more pivotal role in shaping inclusive peace dialogues beyond the confines of the NCA. This shift reflects a broader aspiration to foster genuine dialogue, trust-building, and sustainable peace outcomes in Myanmar's complex socio-political landscape. By reframing the research to focus on "Peace Process Dialogue," the study aims to contribute actionable insights and policy recommendations that promote equitable participation, address historical grievances, and pave the way for a more inclusive political framework in Myanmar.

4.2 Findings of the analysis with grounded theory

In the analytical framework part, the researcher employed a grounded theory approach to interpret the interviews with ethnic political parties. This involved generating codes and categories based on the responses and perspectives gathered during the interviews. The analysis aimed to uncover recurring themes and patterns that shed light on the challenges and aspirations of ethnic political parties regarding their participation in Myanmar's peace process.

The quest for sustainable peace in Myanmar faces formidable challenges, particularly concerning the inclusivity of ethnic political parties in the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) dialogue. Through in-depth interviews with leaders of these parties, critical themes have emerged that shed light on the complexities and barriers hindering inclusive peace negotiations.

Theme 1)   Exclusion and Marginalization: Persistent Barriers

Foremost among the findings is a pervasive sense of exclusion and marginalization felt by ethnic political parties participating in Myanmar's peace process. Across interviews, parties consistently lamented their limited role and perceived lack of meaningful participation in the NCA dialogue. This exclusionary dynamic not only breeds distrust but also undermines the legitimacy of the peace process itself. Parties expressed frustration that their voices and concerns are often overlooked or dismissed, exacerbating ethnic tensions, and inhibiting genuine reconciliation efforts. The interviews underscored that this sense of exclusion goes beyond mere procedural concerns; it strikes at the heart of ethnic representation and equitable governance. Many parties cited historical grievances and systemic biases within Myanmar's political framework that perpetuate their marginalization. Addressing these deep-seated issues is crucial for fostering a more inclusive dialogue that accommodates the diverse perspectives and aspirations of Myanmar's ethnic minorities.

Theme 2)   Structural and Procedural Challenges: Impediments to Effective Dialogues

A second critical theme highlighted in the interviews revolves around structural and procedural challenges within the NCA framework. Parties expressed frustration with the complexity and inefficiencies of the negotiation processes, often citing inadequate time for comprehensive deliberations and a lack of transparency in decision-making. These issues not only hinder progress towards substantive agreements but also contribute to a cycle of disillusionment and disengagement among ethnic political parties. Moreover, the parties noted that the current framework disproportionately favors centralized decision-making and military perspectives, side-lining political and ethnic

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diversity. Such structural biases perpetuate power imbalances that undermine the principles of inclusivity and fairness in peace negotiations. Reforming these procedural shortcomings is essential for rebuilding trust, enhancing transparency, and ensuring that all stakeholders have a meaningful stake in shaping Myanmar's future.

Theme 3)   Advocacy for comprehensive reform: Pathways to inclusive peace

Amidst these challenges, there was a unanimous call for comprehensive reform of the NCA framework among ethnic political parties. Parties advocated for restructuring that addresses historical grievances, promotes equitable participation, and lays the groundwork for a more inclusive political system. This reform agenda reflects a collective aspiration to move beyond superficial negotiations and establish a foundation for lasting peace based on mutual respect and understanding. Key reform proposals include enhancing procedural transparency, extending negotiation timelines to facilitate thorough deliberations, and diversifying dialogue platforms to include a broader spectrum of ethnic voices. Additionally, parties emphasized the importance of institutionalizing mechanisms for accountability and ensuring that peace agreements reflect the diverse needs and aspirations of Myanmar's population.

Theme 4)   Towards a more inclusive peace process

The findings from interviews with ethnic political parties underscore the urgent need to address issues of exclusion, procedural inefficiencies, military dominance, and advocacy for comprehensive reform in Myanmar's peace process. By confronting these challenges head-on, Myanmar can pave the way towards a more inclusive, transparent, and effective peace process that promotes reconciliation, strengthens democratic institutions, and secures a sustainable future for all its citizens. Moving forward, policymakers and stakeholders must prioritize inclusive dialogue, institutional reforms, and equitable governance structures that reflect the diversity of Myanmar's ethnic landscape. Only through genuine collaboration and commitment to inclusivity can Myanmar overcome its legacy of conflict and forge a path towards enduring peace and prosperity.

4.3)   Main Discussion Points

The main discussion that emerges from both the conceptual framework and the grounded theory analysis is focused on enhancing the inclusivity of ethnic political parties in Myanmar's peace process dialogue. This theme underscores the critical importance of inclusive participation for achieving sustainable peace and addressing historical grievances. The conceptual framework provides a theoretical underpinning by asserting that peace processes inclusive of civil society actors and political parties are more likely to result in durable peace agreements. It argues normatively for the inclusion of historically marginalized groups, such as ethnic political parties, in peace negotiations to enhance the legitimacy and efficacy of agreements.

The grounded theory analysis corroborates these assertions through empirical findings from interviews with ethnic political party leaders in Myanmar. It reveals pervasive sentiments of exclusion and marginalization within the peace process, where parties feel their roles are restricted and their voices often ignored. This exclusion not only undermines trust but also hampers genuine reconciliation efforts, highlighting the need for broader participation to address ethnic grievances comprehensively.

Moreover, the analysis identifies structural and procedural challenges within Myanmar's Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) framework, including insufficient deliberation time and opaque decision-making processes. These shortcomings perpetuate power imbalances and reinforce military dominance, and side-lining political and ethnic diversity in peace negotiations. The call for comprehensive reform among ethnic political parties underscores the urgency of addressing these issues to create a more inclusive political system that respects and incorporates diverse ethnic perspectives. The implications are clear: Myanmar's policymakers and stakeholders must prioritize reforms that promote transparent and inclusive dialogue, extend negotiation timelines, and diversify participation frameworks to amplify ethnic voices. By aligning with the insights of the conceptual framework and the grounded theory findings, Myanmar can navigate towards a peace process that not only resolves current conflicts but also establishes a foundation for lasting peace by addressing historical injustices and fostering equitable governance structures. This integrated approach is essential for building trust, promoting

reconciliation, and securing a sustainable future for all citizens amidst Myanmar's complex socio-political landscape.

CHAPTER 5

Recommendations

5.1   Policy Recommendations

Effective international engagement requires a nuanced understanding of the political settlement and the broader struggles over power and identity that shape parties' willingness and ability to support peacebuilding. For example, in Nepal, political parties played a crucial role in advancing peace by forming coalitions to remove the king and end the conflict. In Sri Lanka, a coalition of parties was essential in removing an authoritarian leader and opening space for addressing war-related grievances (Aditya & D.Bhatta, 2016). In Myanmar, however, the failure of ethnic parties to form effective coalitions has left them excluded from the parliament and the peace process.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, International actors can assist political parties by supporting coalition-building efforts, facilitating greater engagement between civil society and political parties, and encouraging parties to address identity-based grievances. Capacity-building initiatives for civil society groups representing marginalized populations and for identity-based parties can help these groups effectively participate in the political process. Additionally, international actors can support dialogue initiatives that bring together civil society and political actors around critical peacebuilding issues, such as constitutional reform. Enhancing the inclusivity of ethnic political parties in Myanmar's peace process is vital for achieving sustainable peace. This theme is supported by both theoretical insights and empirical findings, and it is reinforced by lessons learned from international actors' experiences in similar contexts. Prioritizing inclusive dialogue, institutional reforms, and equitable governance structures will help address historical grievances, promote reconciliation, and secure a sustainable future for all citizens in Myanmar.

To sustain peace in Myanmar, it is essential to create an inclusive peace process dialogue that actively involves ethnic political parties, addresses historical grievances, and promotes equitable governance. Establishing diverse dialogue platforms is a key recommendation, ensuring that all ethnic political parties, including those not registered with the current government, are represented. This can be achieved through virtual forums and community-based consultations. Additionally, engaging local communities and ethnic groups directly in the peace process is crucial for building trust and legitimacy. This engagement should include grassroots consultations, with feedback from these communities incorporated into policymaking.

Developing a transparent negotiation framework is another critical recommendation. Such a framework should allow for open dialogue and accountability, including clear timelines, publicly accessible records of discussions, and transparent decision-making processes. Moreover, it is vital to allocate sufficient time for comprehensive deliberations, ensuring that all parties can fully express their concerns and contribute meaningfully to the discussions. Addressing military dominance in the peace process is also essential. Implementing measures to reduce this dominance could involve international oversight or mediation to ensure that military interests do not overshadow those of ethnic political parties. Fostering a civilian-military consensus is another strategy, which could be achieved by creating joint committees that include both military and ethnic political party representatives working towards common goals.

Advocating for policy reforms that address historical grievances and systemic biases is another key recommendation. This includes revising laws and regulations that perpetuate ethnic marginalization and ensuring equal rights for all ethnic groups. Institutionalizing mechanisms for accountability and monitoring is crucial to ensure that agreements are faithfully implemented and that any breaches are promptly addressed. International support and mediation can provide significant benefits to the peace process. Inviting international organizations and neutral countries to mediate and support the peace process can offer impartial oversight and help balance competing interests. Additionally, seeking international assistance for capacity-building initiatives can

strengthen the institutional frameworks of ethnic political parties, enabling them to participate more effectively in the peace process.

Building trust and reconciliation among the various groups involved is also vital. Implementing trust-building measures such as confidence-building activities, joint community projects, and public declarations of commitment to peace by all parties can foster this trust. Promoting reconciliation through initiatives that address past injustices, such as truth and reconciliation commissions, reparations, and public apologies, is equally important. Working towards designing a new political system that accommodates the diverse aspirations of Myanmar's ethnic groups is another crucial recommendation. This new system could include federalism or other forms of decentralized governance that empower local communities. Ensuring that this new political framework promotes equitable governance, where all ethnic groups have a meaningful voice in decision-making processes, is essential. The implementation strategy involves conducting a detailed mapping of all relevant stakeholders, including ethnic political parties, civil society organizations, and community leaders. Engaging these stakeholders through workshops, seminars, and continuous dialogue can help build consensus on the new peace process design. Providing training and support to ethnic political parties to enhance their negotiation skills, policy-making capabilities, and organizational capacities is also important. Establishing a support network of international advisors and experts can guide the peace process.

To summarise, developing a robust monitoring and evaluation framework is necessary to track the progress of the peace process, assess the effectiveness of implemented measures, and make necessary adjustments. Regularly publishing progress reports and involving independent observers can help maintain transparency and accountability. The peace process in Myanmar requires a fundamental shift towards inclusivity, transparency, and equitable participation. By addressing the exclusion and marginalization of ethnic political parties, reforming procedural inefficiencies, and reducing military dominance, Myanmar can pave the way for a sustainable and inclusive peace process. International support and a commitment to comprehensive reforms are crucial to achieving lasting peace and stability in the country.

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