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China's Role as a Third-Party Mediator in Myanmar's Peace Process
中國作為緬甸和平進程之第三方調解者的角色

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摘要

自從緬甸總統登盛上任後，開始制定一份包容各方的「全國停火協議」，世界各國際機構與聯合國也堅定不移地加入支持緬甸的和平。然而，五年過後，花費了數百萬美元的捐助資金，目前 21 個民族地方武裝團體卻只有 10 個同意簽署加入，翁山蘇姬與全國民主聯盟領導的和平進程似乎幾近於失敗了。與此同時，相較於大多數國際機構逐漸消失的影響力，中國在緬甸和平進程中的第三方協調角色，卻愈見突出。本研究試圖利用現實主義與中國在緬甸所佈局的地緣政治與經濟戰略，其中涵蓋中國南部邊境的和平穩定考量等關鍵議題，分析何以中國能在緬甸和平進程中扮演如此成功的第三方協調角色。相較於其他國際機構與聯合國的協調失靈，中國採用多層級的參與策略，針對利害關係人甚至緬甸一般民眾，展現其在緬甸和平進程中的突出影響力。本研究同時利用“局內人－偏袒模型”（Insider-Partial Model）與“局外人－中立模型”（Outsider-Neutral Model）來分析中國在緬甸所發揮的第三方協調角色。本研究發現，由於中國與緬甸長久以來的歷史、文化與經濟連結，以及中國西南邊境與各民族地方武裝團體長期關係，使得中國扮演著局內人－偏袒的協調者角色。事實上，中國在緬甸和平進程中扮演一個獨特的角色，它是部分協調和部分利害相關人的角色，它視自己的利益優先於解決緬甸 70 年來的國內衝突。在本研究完成之時，中國仍尚未成功地說服大多數地方武裝團體簽署停火協議。

關鍵字：緬甸、中國、和平進程、局內人－偏袒模型、局外人－中立模型

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ABSTRACT

Since the beginning of Thein Sein's ambitious plan to create an all-inclusive National Ceasefire Agreement (NCA), the international community and the United Nations has been steadfast in its support for peace in Myanmar. Now, five years later, with millions of dollars of donor money spent, only 10 of the current 21 ethnic armed organizations (EAOs) signing the NCA. The peace process lead by Aung San Suu Kyi and the NLD appears to have all but failed. Meanwhile, the international community has seemingly withered into the background as China assumed the leading role as a third-party mediator in Myanmar's peace process. This study looks at why has China been successful at filling the role of a third-party mediator in Myanmar's peace process by examining Beijing's geopolitical, geostrategic, domestic, and economic strategies in Myanmar, including China's need to see stability along its southern border. China's use of a multi-layered engagement strategy that targets not just stakeholders but the civilian population of Myanmar, has made China's influence in the peace process more salient than that of international community and the UN. Furthermore, this study investigates the two leading mediation models the "Insider-Partial Model" and the "Outsider-Neutral Model" to understand what kind of mediator China is and which role China inhabits. The findings suggest China fits the "Insider-Partial Model" due to historical, cultural, and economic linkages with Myanmar, as well as China's long-standing relationship with the EAOs along its southern border. In fact, China inhabits a unique role that is part mediator and part stakeholder, who own self-interests seem to take precedence over solving 70 years of intra-state conflict in Myanmar. At the time this study was written, China still has yet to successful bring the non-signatories closer to signing the NCA.

Keywords: Myanmar, China, Peace Process, Insider-Partial Model, Outsider-Neutral Model

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GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS & INITALISMS

Acronymss	Meaning
AA	Arakan Army
ABSDF	All Burma Students' Democratic Front
ALP	Arakan Liberation Party
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ARSA	Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army
CMEC	China-Myanmar Economic Corridor
CNF	Chin National Front
CPB	Communist Party of Burma
DKBA	Democratic Karen Buddhist Army
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
EAOs	Ethnic Armed Organizations
EU	European Union
FPNCC	Federal Political Negotiation and Consultative Committee
KIO/KIA	Kachin Independence Organization/Army
KMT	Kuomintang
KNDP	Karenni National Democratic Party
KNLA	Karen National Liberation Army
KNPP	Karenni National Progressive Party
KNU	Karen National Union
LDF	Lahu Democratic Front
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MNDAA	Myanmar National Democracy Alliance Army
NCA	Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement
NDAA	National Democratic Alliance Army
NDA-K	New Democratic Army–Kachin
NLD	National League for Democracy
NMSP	New Mon State Party
NSCN-K	National Socialist Council of Nagaland–Khaplang
PNLO	Pa-O National Liberation Organization
PRC	People's Republic of China
RCSS/SSA-S	Restoration Council of Shan State/Shan State Army-South
SSPP/SSA-N	Shan State Progress Party/Shan State Army-North

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TNLA	Ta’ang National Liberation Army
UN	United Nations
UNFC	United Nationalities Federal Council
UPC-21CP	The 21st Century Panglong Conferences or Union Peace Conference
UPDJC	Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee
USDP	Union Solidarity and Development Party
UWSP/UWSA	United Wa State Party/ United Wa State Army

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Section 1: Background of Myanmar's National Ceasefire Agreement Process

On January 4, 2019, the nation of Myanmar, also known as Burma, celebrated its 71st year of independence from the United Kingdom. This anniversary is a sobering reminder that the nation of Myanmar has been locked in an endless cycle of protracted intrastate conflicts ever since the birth of the nation. Much of the violence has been the result of ethnic minorities push for greater political autonomy, control of the natural resources in their territories, economic equality, equal rights and preservation of their culture. Although the former government administrations, both civilian and military, have gone through periods of entering into bilateral ceasefire agreements with various ethnic armed organizations (EAOs), this nation has never successfully achieved a comprehensive peace agreement or a cessation of all civil conflict with in the nation's borders.

In 2010, Myanmar held its first democratic election, ending 50 years of military rule. Although many critics would argue that the election was not free and fair, the election did usher in a quasi-civilian government under President U Thien Sien and the military, better known as the Tatmadaw. This monumental election was more than just a step toward democracy; it marked a fundamental shift in domestic and international politics in Myanmar. For the first time in Myanmar's history, the government had decided to solve nearly 63 years of civil conflicts between the Tatmadaw and the EAOs through a "one size fits all" National Ceasefire Agreement (NCA). At the same time, the new regime began to reengage the West after years of isolation. Members of the international community such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the European Union (EU), the United Nations (UN), China, Japan, Norway, and the United States began to donate millions of dollars in order to foster Myanmar's domestically led peace processes.

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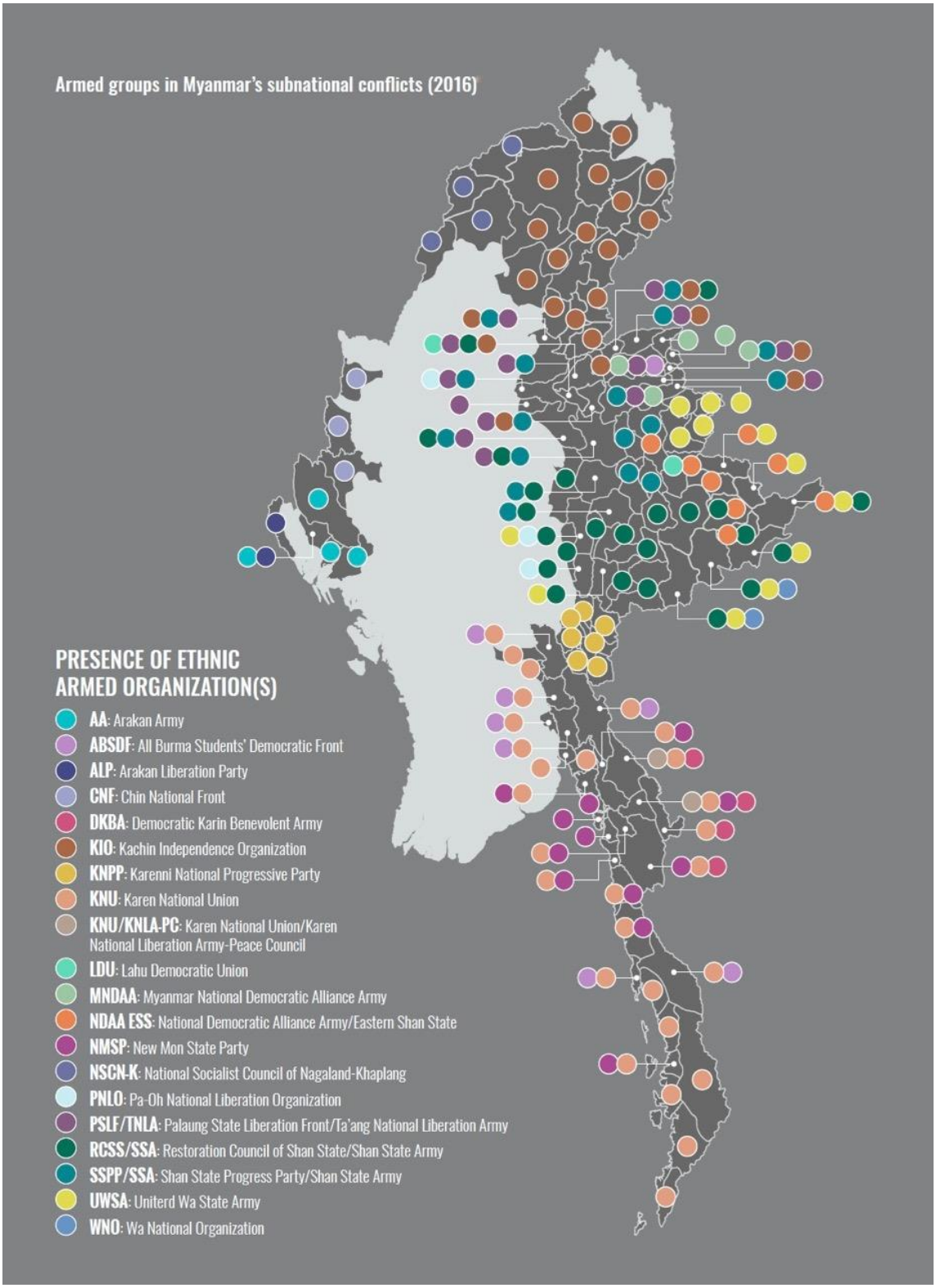

Figure 1 Armed Groups in Myanmar's Subnational Conflicts
Source: The Asia Foundation (2017). "The Contested Areas of Myanmar: Subnational Conflict, Aid, and Development."

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However, by the end of Thien Sien presidency, peace was still a distant dream. With millions of dollars of donor money spent, only eight of the 17 EAOs had signed the NCA in 2015. The signatories are All Burma Students' Democratic Front (ABSDF), Arakan Liberation Party (ALP), Chin National Front (CNF), Democratic Karen Benevolent Army (DKBA), Karen National Union (KNU), KNU/Karen National Liberation Army-Peace Council (KNU/KNLA-PC), The Pa-O National Liberation Organization (PNLO), and Restoration Council of Shan State/Shan State Army-South (RCSS/SSA-S). With fewer than half of the possible signatories agreeing to the NCA, many were left to wonder what had gone wrong and hoped that the new National League for Democracy (NLD) government, led by Aung San Suu Kyi, would be able to finally bring peace to Myanmar.

Since the start of the peace process more than seven years ago, seven of the most influential and most powerful EAOs still have not signed the NCA (the United Wa State Army (UWSA), Kachin Independence Army (KIA), National Democratic Alliance Army (NDAA), Shan State Army- North (SSA-N), Myanmar Nationalities Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA), Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA), and Arakan Army (AA)).

Meanwhile, fighting continues to rage throughout Kachin, Shan and Rakhine States. There have even been sporadic clashes between the Tatmadaw and some of the signatories to the NCA. For example, clashes have happened between the Tatmadaw, the KNLA and SSA-S are largely due to land grabbing by the Tatmadaw. These clashes are indirect violation of the NCA, as all signatories, including the Tatamdaw, agreed to pursue a peaceful resolution to "political conflict through political dialogue instead of force of arms" (NCA, 2015). There have even been clashes between non-signatories and signatories in Shan State. Shortly after the signing of the NCA in 2015, signatory SSA-S contested their land claims in northern Shan State, resulting in clashes with the non-signatory TNLA. Most recent, clashes have involved the TNLA and SSA-N squaring off against SSA-S in recent months (Quinley, 2015).

When the NLD and Aung San Suu Kyi took office in April of 2016, Suu Kyi made it clear that peace was her priority. The NLD then closed down the Myanmar Peace Center that was started by the previous government and funded by the international community in order to establish the Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee (UPDJC) to provide

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technical support and dialogue facilitation. The NLD effectively took control of the peace process and all of the funding. The NLD then started bi-yearly meetings known as the 21st Century Panglong Conferences or Union Peace Conference (UPC-21CP), named after the famous 1947 Panglong Conference held by General Aung San, Suu Kyi's father.

Since then, the NLD and Suu Kyi have come under heavy criticism from both signatories and non-signatories to the NCA. Many EAOs feel that they do not have access to the support that the UPDJC was intended to provide. Furthermore, the NLD's UPC-21CP is far from bi-yearly due to constant delays, and nothing has been done to suspend the fighting while ceasefire talks are in session. With the Tatmadaw continuing to battle non-signatories, it makes it much harder for the EAOs to have faith in the peace process. Foreign observers have also criticized the NLD's disregard for the EAOs' needs and the stagnated pace of the peace process.

While pundits continue to levy criticism on the NLD-led peace process, unity amongst the EAOs has transformed in light of new government tactics. For instance, the United Nationalities Federal Council (UNFC), a block of 11 EAOs that was started in 2011, has all but collapsed, with many of its members either resigning or choosing to instead sign the NCA. Originally, the UNFC was designed to negotiate with the government and campaign for the rights of ethnic minorities in Myanmar, but it is now defunct and largely ineffective with only five remaining members.

Section 2: China's Current Involvement in Myanmar's National Ceasefire Agreement Process

The support for Myanmar's domestically led peace process by the international community by and large has dropped off from the early days of the process. This is largely due to the lack of understanding of the root cause of Myanmar's civil conflicts, and the differences of opinions by members of the international community as to how to approach Myanmar's peace process. As Bertil Lintner says, "The governments of Norway and Switzerland, the European Union and a host of other governmental and private outfits have also brought with them hundreds of millions of dollars, turning

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peacemaking into a lucrative industry that has achieved nothing when it comes to alleviating the sufferings of the people in the frontier areas." (Lintner, 2019)

Comparatively, the People's Republic of China (PRC), which has a long historical, cultural, and economic linkage to Myanmar and the EAOs along its southern border, has become "more proactively and assertively involved in Myanmar's peace process (USIP, 2018, p. 7)." China has always claimed to adhere to a principle of non-interference in other nations' domestic affairs, but it has gone against its own fundamental principle when Beijing believes that its national interests are at stake. This has been the case with China's involvement in Myanmar, which has included a multi-layered engagement strategy aimed not just at the State Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi and the NLD government, the Tatmadaw and the non-signatories to NCA along China's southern border with Myanmar, but the civilian population of Myanmar as well, through the use of both soft and sharp power diplomacy.

China wants stability on its southern border and no longer want to see the spillover of refugees, violence, and illicit criminal activates, including drugs and human trafficking, all which have a direct link to the ongoing civil conflict in Myanmar. Beijing believes the lack of development in Myanmar is the root cause of the ongoing hostilities next door. China believes that its geostrategic and economic interests in Myanmar are tied to a greater scheme connected to the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor (CMEC), which is a part of China's ambitious $1 trillion-dollar Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), designed to help bring peace to Myanmar. Beijing wants access to the Indian Ocean, but wants to avoids the Malacca Straits, which it sees as a choke point. China working to build a deep-water port in Kyaukphyu, Rakhine State, and a railway linking the port to Kunming, China. This rail link would run through some of the areas that are currently contested by the Tatmadaw and various EAOs. By tying peace and stability with its own geopolitical, geostrategic, economic, and security issues, Beijing can protect its own emerging national interests all while looking like an honest broker for peace.

However, China has put its support behind the non-signatory EAOs along China's southern border with Myanmar in order to create a more inclusive NCA. Since 2013, China has been hosting meetings and facilitating dialogue between various

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non-signatories and the both the NLD and the Tatmadaw in various cities in Yunnan, China.

Although China has not gotten the seven remaining non-signatories to sign the NCA, China has had some success in getting the government and the Tatmadaw to accept the TNLA, AA and MNDAA or Kokang (under the leadership of Peng Jiasheng), which had originally been excluded from the NCA. The groups had been told that if they wanted to be included in the peace process, they must first disarm, a caveat that was not levied on any of the other EAOs before they were permitted to attend formal ceasefire talks. At the third UPC-21C, China was able to get two other EAOs invited as well, the Karenni People Progressive Party (KNPP) and National Socialist Council of Nagaland – Kaplang (NSCN-K), a Naga armed organization that is based in Myanmar's Sagaing Division, the political aim of which is to establish a sovereign Nagalim State by uniting all the Naga peoples in both India and Myanmar.

Most recently, mediation led by China has been quite fruitful. On December 12th 2018, in Yunnan Province, China was able to broker a four-month ceasefire between some of the EAOs in the north. The Tatmadaw reciprocated the EAOs' announcement by saying they would also "halt operations in Shan and Kachin States for four months" in order to "resuscitate deadlocked peace talks (Ye Mon, 2018)." Although it appears China has had some success at mediating the current peace process, one question still remains: "*Why has China been successful at filling the role of a third-party mediator in Myanmar's peace process while the international community and the UN have failed at filling the role of third party mediator?"* This study believes understanding China's role as a third-party mediator deserves great attention. Additionally, this study also examines the two leading mediation models of "Outsider-Neutral Model" and the "Insider-Partial Mode" in order to further our understanding of China's role in Myanmar's peace process.

Section 3: Motivations

This study is rooted in several factors, including the need to further our understanding of the peace process in Myanmar and why China has been so successful at

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filling the role of a third-party mediator leaving the international community and the UN sidelined. Additionally, there is a need to re-examine and reassess our existing theories and models in the field of conflict management in order to decide if there is a need to redefine the current third-party mediation models. By doing so, this study hopes to add to the growing body of literature on conflict mediation not just in Asia, but globally as well.

First, to understand how a nation like Myanmar, which has been steeped in protracted civil violence for more than 70 years, begins to bring the violence to an end with the help of outside intervention is important. The protracted civil conflict in Myanmar is very complex and one that may take years to fully understand. By studying Myanmar's peace process, society may be able to learn new ceasefire practices and apply them to future peace processes.

Second, the motivation for taking on this study lies in understanding how the international community has been supplanted by China as a third-party mediator. This study attempts to shed some light on China's involvement in Myanmar's peace process by looking at both political and economic issues that bear weight on the NCA and the future of peace in Myanmar. The study also tries to determine the answer to such questions, such as "Can China be a trusted third-party mediator in intrastate conflicts?" and "Is China's role as a mediator altruistic, or do the geopolitical and economic motives behind China's involvement outweigh any altruistic virtue?" Beijing might only be prioritizing its interest in Myanmar and looking to help mediate a peace that is suitable to their national interests rather than one that comprises comprehensive and durable peace accords.

Third, most of the literature on mediation in Asia is centered on the Korean Peninsula, Taiwan Straits and the South China Sea disputes. All three flashpoints involve the PRC in one way or another. Therefore, the motivation to study the PRC's role in Myanmar's peace process using the "Outsider-Neutral Model", "Insider-Partial Model," in order to define China's role is essential for our understanding as the nation matures and its political and economic influence grows across the Asian-Pacific region and the world.

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Moreover, the need to understand Myanmar's peace process is of particular interest to this author, who has covered the NCA as a journalist during the early stages of the peace process.

Section 4: Research Questions

This study is aimed at answering the following questions: "*Why has China been successful at filling the role of a third-party mediator in Myanmar's peace process while the international community and the UN have failed?"* This study not only hopes to answer the aforementioned questions, but to define and answer the question, *'What kind of third-party mediator role does China really play?"* by examining the two existing mediator models, the "Outsider-Neutral Model" and the "Insider-Partial Model."

In line with this logic, this study is divided into five main chapters. The first chapter introduces the background of Myanmar's national ceasefire agreement, China's current involvement, motivations, research questions, theoretical framework and methodology. The second chapter, a literature review, examines conflict management theory and mediation, mediator's motivations' and behaviors, and the challenges of mediating intrastate conflicts. In this chapter, this study not only reviews the contemporary literature, but will also introduce our two mediation models, both the "Outsider-Neutral Model" and the "Insider-Partial Model". In chapter 3, this study examines the current state of Myanmar's interaction with the UN and international community, followed by the examination of Sino- Myanmar relations in order to understand China's involvement in the peace process. The fourth chapter outlines China as a third-party mediator in Myanmar's peace process in order to answer the questions at hand. The final chapter will conclude with the findings and limitations of this study.

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Table 1 Two Mediation Models

Outsider-Neutral Model	Insider-Partial Model
1. The core of this model is the existence of a neutral mediator or third party.	1. The third party or mediator is "from within the conflict."
2. A the third party mediator that maintains distance from, and is not connected to, either of the parties in the dispute.	2. The acceptability of the mediator depends on its connectedness and trusted relationship with the conflicting parties.
3. A third party that does not have a vested interest in any outcome except settlement, and does not expect any special reward from either side.	3. The mediator must live with the consequences of their bargaining in the post-negotiation period.
4. The neutrality of the mediator, which primarily lies in their professional role, position, and function.	4. The mediator should rely on interpersonal communication as a way to reach consensus in a traditional cultural setting.

Source: Teng (2008).

Section 5 - Theoretical Framework

As mentioned above, this study introduces two mediation models, the "Outsider-Neutral Model" and the "Insider-Partial Model," to define and answer the question of what kind of third-party mediator role China really plays. The reason for choosing these two models is because they are the leading mediation models used today by academics who study conflict management and have proven to be the most robust. Furthermore, these models were chosen because they can best explain not only the role that a third-party mediator inhabits, but, more importantly to this study, China's role as a third-party mediator.

The "Outsider-Neutral Model" suggests: (1) the core of this model is the existence of a neutral mediator or third party; (2) a the third party mediator that maintains distance from, and is not connected to, either of the parties in the dispute; (3) a third party that does not have a vested interest in any outcome except settlement, and does not expect any

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special reward from either side; and (4) the neutrality of the mediator, which primarily lies in their professional role, position, and function (Teng, 2008, p. 5)."

In the "Insider-Partial Model" it states (1) that the third party or mediator is "from within the conflict"; (2) the acceptability of the mediator depends on its connectedness and trusted relationship with the conflicting parties; (3) the mediator must live with the consequences of their bargaining in the post-negotiation period; and (4) the mediator should rely on interpersonal communication as a way to reach consensus in a traditional cultural setting (Teng, 2008. p. 5)."

When examining these two models we can see there are major differences between the elements in each model but they have similar strategies. Both models highlight the way in which a third party mediator enters and engages in the act of mediating a conflict between belligerents. Both models have key fundamental differences in the origin of the third party who wishes to become engaged. For example, The first two elements of the "Outsider-Neutral Model" suggests that "the core of this model is the existence of a neutral mediator or third party" and "the third party mediator that maintains distance from, and is not connected to, either of the parties in the dispute". We can see that neutrality and distance are key elements to being an Outsider-Neutral mediator. They not only define the mediator but more importantly, they allow for belligerence to accept and trust the third party to inhabit the role of mediator. Whereas the "Insider-Partial Model" states that the third party or mediator is "from within the conflict" and their "acceptability of the mediator depends on its connectedness and trusted relationship with the conflicting parties". Here the acceptance and trust of a third party rely on first-hand knowledge or past relationship of a third party is key to acceptance.

In both models' third element, a fundamental difference can be seen and highlights a mediator's motives and biases in the act of becoming involved in mediating conflict. The "Outsider-Neutral Model" third element states "a third party that does not have a vested interest in any outcome except settlement, and does not expect any special reward from either side", which suggests that the mediator's motives are altruistic in nature and the mediator carries not biases or preconceived perception of the disputing parties. The "Insider-Partial Model" on the other hand states "the mediator must live with the

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consequences of their bargaining in the post-negotiation period". This seems to suggest that the mediator's motives for entering the conflict are based on self-interest and not altruistic. That in fact, the mediator will try to mediate an outcome that is in line with its own geopolitical or geostrategic interests.

Lastly, the fourth elements of both of these models speak to how a mediator should behave in their mediation role. The "Outsider-Neutral Model" seems to stress that the mediator professionalism is based on neutrality and must not stray from this position, and function in order to be an effective mediator. The opposite is true for "Insider-Partial Model" where it is the third party mediator's interpersonal relationship and ability to communicate to one or both disputants that must be employed in order to be an effective mediator. However, in the "Insider-Partial Model" it states "the mediator should rely on interpersonal communication as a way to reach consensus in a traditional cultural setting". This last part about "traditional cultural setting" seems to be hard to define because there is no explanation as to what is meant by "traditional cultural setting". Especially if the mediator does not share the same culture. In the case of China mediating in Myanmar, China might have some shared cultural traditions as the EAO's along its southern border or even with the Bamar peoples but both hail from different traditions. This study believes that there needs to be further study into "traditional cultural setting" when it comes to mediation. However, that is beyond the scope of this current study.

The key findings of this study point to China playing the role of "Insider-Partial" mediator and not "Outsider-Neutral" due to China's historical, cultural, and economic relations with Myanmar followed by China's use of Realpolitik, or the pursuit of pragmatic policies that guide Beijing's geopolitical and geostrategic strategy in Myanmar. In Chapter 4, this study lays out the findings in a clear and logical order. It will show that the international community and the UN simply do not have the connection to the conflict, acceptability by all parties, nor the ability to use interpersonal communication to reach consensus in a traditional cultural setting. Simply put, the international community and the UN exhibit dimensions of being "Outsider-Neutral" mediators.

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Section 5: Study Methodology

This study endeavors to answer the following questions: "*Why has China been successful at filling the role of a third-party mediator in Myanmar's peace process while the international community and the UN have failed?"* This study also sets out to define which of the two leading third-party mediation models, "Outsider Neutral Model" and "Insider Partial Model," best describes China's role as a third-party mediator in Myanmar's peace process. In order to answer these questions, this study uses Qualitative Research Methodology.

Holloway (1997) pointed out that "Qualitative research is a form of social inquiry that focuses on the way people interpret and make sense of their experiences and the world in which they live (Holloway, 1997, p. 2)." Kirsti Malterud (2002) states that "Qualitative research, also called naturalistic inquiry, developed within the social and human sciences, and refers to theories on interpretation (hermeneutics) and human experience (phenomenology) (Malterud, 2001, p. 398)." She also states that, "The aim of such research is to investigate the meaning of social phenomena as experienced by the people themselves (Malterud, 2001, p. 398)." Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln (2004) point out that "Qualitative research is multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. (Denzin and Lincoln, 2004, p. 2)"

Therefore, qualitative research focuses on understanding the way people interpret and make sense of their experiences and the world in which they live, and is the study of social phenomena in observed natural settings. Having research flexibility has enabled this study to better illustrate China's current role as a third-party mediator in Myanmar's peace process and has added to answering the hypothesis of this study. By analyzing the collected data both inductively and deductively, this study hopes to make the findings more robust.

Denzin and Lincoln (2004) go on to say that qualitative research "involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials - case study, personal

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experience, introspective, life story, interview, observational, historical, interactional and visual texts (Denzin and Lincoln, 2004, p. 2).” With this study, I am using the Field Study method in order to explore both the interpretive and naturalistic experiences of the stakeholders and the international community that are involved in Myanmar’s peace process. Examining the “social reality of individuals and groups” helps this study to understand why China has become such a salient presence in Myanmar’s peace process. It also helps this study to define what mediation model best represents China’s role in Myanmar’s peace process.

What is a field study and what are the methods that should be employed? The Nielsen Norman group (2016) defines field studies as a “research activities that take place in the user’s context rather than in your office or lab.” Field studies are “purely observational” and utilize a varying degree of methods, such as direct observation, interviews, data collection, audio recordings, photos, and video.

The field study was conducted in both Myanmar and Thailand in March of 2019. Along with the collection of first-hand data, and second-hand data was also collected in order to illustrate “*Why has China been successful at filling the role of a third-party mediator in Myanmar’s peace process* and to demonstrate which of the two mediation models “Outsider Neutral” or “Insider Partial” best fits China’s role in Myanmar’s peace process. The author collected first-and second-hand data in order to make the findings more robust. The data collected was examined from a deductive, top-down approach on observations and from an inductive, bottom-up approach in order to answer both the hypotheses and to determine which existing mediation model China best fit into.

The first-hand objective data was collected in a series of interviews conducted by the author (for a list of interview questions, please see at the Appendix). The interviewees were selected based on their expert knowledge of Myanmar’s political and current peace process. The interviewees hail from a wide back ground made up of local citizens, members of the international community, international institutions, journalists, human rights groups, and professors/ academics (for a list of interviewees, please also see at the Appendix). The interviewees’ answers were either collected from a set of questions or an open interview style. By selecting a cross section of interviewees of society, this study

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was able to present a clear and accurate illustration of the current situation of Myanmar's peace process. Furthermore, many of the interviewees were selected based upon their proximity to the peace process, either being directly affected or indirectly affected by the ongoing talks.

The second-hand data was drawn from news reports and reports produced by the UN, think tanks, and NGOs. These reports were used to help fortify the objective data collected in the field and make the conclusions of this study more robust. This study has shown the driving force behind China's involvement in the peace process correlates to China's geopolitical, geo-strategic, economic, and domestic strategies, including the historical, political, cultural, and ethnic ties between China and Myanmar

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CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

With the emergence of China as a third-party mediator in Myanmar's peace process, a host of questions come to mind: *What* is China's real motivation behind its involvement? *Why* would the stakeholders on both sides of the conflict accept China's mediation? *How* is China able to navigate the peace process? And will its involvement really foster a durable peaceful solution in Myanmar? But before this study can answer any of these questions about China's role in the peace process, it must first review some basic terminology and definitions about conflict management, mediation, and mediator behaviors. By reviewing the terminology and definitions being used by today's scholars in the field of conflict management, this study hopes to gain a better understanding of China's role in Myanmar's peace process and to define China's role as a third-party mediator in the longest-running civil conflict in modern times.

Section 1: Conflict Management and Mediation

1. Conflict Management

The term of "conflict" is highly visible in social science literature, where it means "disagreement," "incompatibility," "fight," "argument," "contest," "debate," "combat," "clash," "war," etc. It occurs as a result of incompatible interests and goals between disputants (Bercovitch, 1991). As for the deeper meaning of the term "conflict," many scholars use it loosely to encompass a range of phenomena like lack of convergence of goals, interests, and expectations among social groups; the intentional pursuit of actions or livelihood strategies that result in damage to others; open confrontations resulting from conflicting interests or damaging actions; and recourse to various forms of violence. It can involve ethnic issues, marginalization, underdevelopment due to mismanaged resources, and uneven distribution of resources.

With the end of the Cold War, the world witnessed an uptick in intra-state conflicts around the globe, largely due to the collapse of a bipolar world dominated by the Western

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and Soviet camps. At the same time, the escalation in conflicts increased the demand for conflict management by those "individuals, states, regional organizations, and intergovernmental organizations like the United Nations" who are willing to voluntarily intervene in a conflict and manage the crisis either through direct military interventions or as a third party mediator in order to bring about a peaceful resolution between disputants. (Bercovitch, 2008, p. 19)

Along with the increased demands for conflict management, a growing body of literature has also materialized in order to help us understand how best to resolve the many forms of discord such as interstate and intrastate conflicts.

Jacob Bercovitch, who is seen as the foremost expert in the field of conflict management, defines the process of conflict management as "related to but distinct from the parties' own efforts, whereby the disputing parties or their representatives seek the assistance, or accept an offer of help from an individual, group, state or organization to change, affect or influence their perceptions or behavior, without resorting to physical force, or invoking the authority of the law (Bercovitch, 1992, p. 237)."

William Zartman indicates that "conflict is an inevitable aspect of human interaction, and unavoidable concomitant of choice and decision…. The problem, then, is not to court the frustrations of seeking to remove inevitability but rather of trying to keep conflicts in bounds (Zartman, 1997, p. 197)."

Therefore, conflict management is a general term that portrays efforts to prevent, limit, contain or resolve conflicts, especially violent one, while building up the capacities of all parties involved to undertake peacebuilding. (Academy for International Conflict Management and Peacebuilding, 2011)

Scott Gartner expands on Bercovitch's definition and defines conflict management as "an attempt to do something about reducing, limiting or eliminating the level, scope and intensity of violence in conflict, and building a structure where the need to resort to violence in future conflicts is controlled (Gartner, 2014, p. 272). " Gartner (2014) also points out three types of conflict: unilateral (avoidance or withdrawal by one party), bilateral (two disputants negotiation), and multilateral (outside parties intervention).

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Conflict management is based on the concept that conflicts are a normal part of human interaction and are rarely completely resolved or eliminated, but can be managed by such means as negotiation, mediation, conciliation, and arbitration.

Conflict management also supports the longer-term development of societal systems and institutions that enhance good governance, rule of law, security, economic sustainability, and social wellbeing, which helps prevent future conflicts. (Academy for International Conflict Management and Peacebuilding, 2011)

As we can see, Gartner's definition is straightforward and defines the goal of conflict management as "reducing, limiting or eliminating violence." Gartner also goes on to explain that mediation is one of the most common forms of conflict management and is usually taken on by a third party voluntarily when intervening in a violent conflict. (Gartner, 2014)

2. Mediation

Mediation is a form of conflict management in which a third party controls some aspects of the dialogue process. It is the most commonly applied conflict management tool and has been examined frequently in theoretical and empirical studies. Mediation is mostly popular when other means of conflict management have already failed to bring about a solution to the conflict and when the disputes are particularly protracted and complex.

Mitchell defines mediation as "intermediary activity undertaken by third party with the primary intention of achieving some compromise settlement of issues at stake between the parties, ending disruptive conflict behavior and reach a consensual settlement that will accommodate their needs (Mitchell, 1981, p. 287)."

Jay Folberg and Alison Tylor state mediation as "the process by which participants come together then with the assistance of a neutral person or persons, systematically isolate disputed issues in order to develop options, consider alternatives and reach consensual settlement that will accommodate their needs (Folberg and Tylor, 1984, p. 7)."

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Leonard W. Doob describes mediation as “the efforts of one or more persons to affect one or more other persons when … the former, the latter or both perceive a problem requiring a resolution (Doob, 1993, p. 1). ”

James Wall, John Stark and Rhetta Standifer (2001) outline mediation is an assistance to interacting parties by a third party who may or may not have authority to impose an outcome.

Gartner defines mediation as “a form of joint decision making in conflict in which an outsider controls some aspects of the process, or indeed the outcome, but ultimate decision making power remains with the disputants (Gartner, 2014, p. 273).”

Therefore, mediation is the consensual, nonviolent, and nonbinding involvement of a third party in the conflict management and resolution process. It is always voluntary, and can only occur when both belligerents accept or request assistance from an intermediary. (Govinda, 2013)

Bercovitch and Gartner (2009) define the process of mediation as “a system of exchange and social influence whose parameters are the actors, their communication, expectations, experience, resources, interests, and the situation within which they all find themselves (Bercovitch and Gartner, 2009, p. 270).” The process must be non-binding, voluntary and accepted by all disputants. The job of the third party is to assist not to impose a solution on between the disputants during on their quest for peace. Mediation seems to be effective in protracted conflicts when the disputants are at an impasse and ready to engage in dialogue (Gartner, 2014).

Researchers have defined mediation in many ways. As this study delves deeper into the examination that has led to China’s involvement in Myanmar’s peace process and the current role that China plays, this study uses Bercovitch’s and Gartner’s definitions: “a process of conflict management, related to but distinct from the parties’ own efforts, whereby the disputing parties or their representative seek the assistance, or accept an individual, group, state, or organization’s offer to help change, affect, or influence their perceptions or behavior, without resorting to physical force, or invoking the authority of the law (Bercovitch, Anagnoson and Willie, 1991, p. 8).” Although this study believes that Bercovitch, Anagnoson, Willie and Gartner’s definitions to be most complete, all of

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these definitions are acceptable and that each one is a slight variation of the next. These definitions aid us in understand mediation, explain why belligerents turn to mediation, why belligerents might accept a third party like China to help mediate, and the process of mediation. We must remember that Myanmar's civil conflict is not a singular conflict between government and rebels. It is in fact a series of protracted civil and ethnic conflicts between the government, the Tatmadaw and militias on one side versus various EAOs fighting on the other side. Each EAO has its own set of grievances with the government and Tatmadaw. However, the core reason why many of these EAOs are fighting is based on political issues such as autonomy for ethnic peoples, self-determination, democracy, the establishment of a federal union, peaceful co-existence, human rights and the rights to the natural resources on their lands. The complexities go even further when some of these EAOs come together to from political alliance such as the Federal Political Negotiation and Consultative Committee (FPNCC), a negotiation block of seven non-signatories EAOs representing 80 percent of the most militarily capable EAOs (Lintner, 2019), or from military alliances such as Myanmar's famed Northern Alliance (a group of four EAOs. The name was clearly borrowed for the conflict in Afghanistan pre 911) to fight against the Tatmadaw. Additionally, the EAOs have been known to fight amongst themselves, such as in the continued skirmishes between the TNLA and SSA-S. Indeed, Myanmar's civil conflicts are messy at best.

Section 2: Mediator's Motivations and Behaviors

Mediation has become one of the most common forms of conflict management and occurs almost on a daily basis. (Bercovitch, 1997) Mediation is also one of the oldest forms of diplomacy and attracts both disputants who are seeking a way out of the current conflict and those who are willing to intervene to mediate a settlement. As stated earlier, a wide range of actors can fulfill the role of mediator for individuals, states, regional organizations, and global collective organizations. All of these actors bring a wide range of strategies and negotiation techniques to the table in order to broker a ceasefire or a permanent end to a conflict. They also bring their own behaviors, which can include

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biases and self-interests, with them to the negotiation table, especially when those third-party mediators are regional or world powers.

Bercovitch's (2007) outlines the motives of mediators. He also explains that mediation is a tool of "diplomacy and foreign policy." Mediation is most appropriate when a conflict has become drawn out, too costly, or has reached an impasse and all disputants are ready to cooperate and accept a third-party mediator to help to end a conflict.

"Traditional approaches to mediation assume that conflicting parties and a mediator share one reason for initiating mediation: a desire to reduce, abate or resolve a conflict (Bercovitch, 2007 p. 172)." However, as Bercovitch (2007) points out these humanitarian interests can become entangled by less-than-altruistic incentives. Political interests are always present in the relationship between disputants and mediators. The mediator's behaviors in a dispute may have to do with projecting its own "influence by becoming indispensable to the parties in conflict or by gaining the gratitude of one or both protagonists (Bercovitch, 2007 p. 172)."

Bercovitch (2007) also identifies the "nature" or environment of conflict as being a variable that shapes the mediator's behavior and strategy. If the mediator wants to be effective, the mediator must adjust its objectives and interests to conform to the environment of the conflict. By conforming to the environment of the conflict, the mediator can then use its biases and self-interests to influence the desired outcome it seeks to achieve. (Bercovitch, 2007)

A mediator's bias is a very important trait to examine when talking about third-party mediators and mediation. Although belligerents to a conflict who are ready to resolve the dispute at hand hope to attract a neutral third party, they may at some point be confronted with the mediator's bias. All accepted international mediators who are willing to participate in the act of mediation do bring some level of bias to the mediation tables. Although much has been written about mediator bias, the big problem with mediator bias is that there is no way to measure that bias. "Bias, in turn, can create a harmful conflict of interest whenever there is the possibility that a judge or mediator might lack

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independence and impartiality. Even the appearance of bias alone can undermine voluntary conflict resolution," Gartner wrote. (Gartner, 2014, p. 277)

Peter Wallensteen and Isak Svensson (2014) looked into a third-party mediator's biases, self-interests and the uses of leverage. Their findings demonstrate that there are cleavages in the academic community over how biases, self-interests, and uses of leverage can positively or negatively affect the outcome of the mediation process.

Wallensteen and Svensson (2014) discovered that superpowers might be able to use their biases and self-interests to influence a desired outcome. However, their leverage or coercive methods toward belligerents can make disputants lose trust in the mediator, and the peace process leading to a collapse of the process. They state that biases undermine the true nature of mediation.

However, Saadia Touval (1975) and Robert W. Rauchhaus (2006) argue that a third-party mediator's bias makes for effective peacemaking because it coerces belligerents into a deal and therefore is not an obstacle to achieving peace. This leads to the notion that biased mediators are actually more effective and more successful third-party mediators than neutral parties would be.

Derrick V. Frazier and William J. Dixon (2006) seek to provide more definitive conclusions especially when talking about powerful states as third-party mediators by looking through the lens of realism. They see major power states as the only ones who can really help disputants reach a deal. From the lens of realism, they remind us that the worlds are "a self-help system, and all decisions will be based on self-interest (Frazier and Dixon, 2006, p. 392)."

Therefore, "powerful states that have an interest in reducing conflict between other states will be able to do so with the threat of carrots and sticks, or as Oliver P. Richmond (2002) suggested, through tactical bargaining and/or coercive intervention (Frazier and Dixon, 2006, p. 392)."

In short, Frazier and Dixon (2006) conclude that powerful states are not motived by "altruistic goals but by their own "foreign policy priorities." What makes their

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intervention so important is that they have the resources to "impose their will during negotiations" and "help to alleviate the problem (Frazier and Dixon, 2006, p. 402)."

"Impartiality is neither an indispensable condition of their [mediators'] acceptability, nor a necessary condition for the successful performance of an intermediary's function (Touval, 1975)." However, reaching a deal does not mean the agreement will last.

This study believes that the finding from these scholars help to explain China's motivation and behavior as a third party mediator in Myanmar's peace process. This study will demonstrate that China's motivation and behavior as a third party mediator is no different from any other world power or regional power when it comes to mediation. That in fact China's humanitarian interests are less-than-altruistic and its biases and self-interests appear to be first and foremost when it comes to peace in Myanmar. Furthermore, this study will demonstrate that China wields carrots and sticks to cajole stakeholders into meetings or short term ceasefires. However, as we can see from these scholars finding there is nothing that says that China's motivation and behavior are anything different or are completely wrong. They are in fact not the best practices when it comes to mediation but as Frazier and Dixon (2006) posit carrots and sticks might "help to alleviate the problem".

Section 3: The Challenges of Mediating Intra-State Conflicts

As this study has previously established, there are many reasons why a nation would want to assume the role of third-party mediator to help facilitate a peaceful outcome to an interstate or intrastate conflict. Quite often the role of third-party mediator is played by an individual, state, regional organizations, or supranational organization. All of these actors bring a wide range of strategies and negotiation techniques to the table in order to broker a ceasefire or a permanent end to a conflict. As this study has demonstrated in the last section, third parties do not always get involved in managing a conflict for altruistic reasons. More often than not a third party's motivation for selecting to mediate a conflict is driven by its self-interests and the likelihood of achieving a settlement. Third-party

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mediators are often biased, and the techniques used by mediators result from the nature the dispute and the relationship between mediator and the belligerents. (Assefa, 1987; Terris and Maoz, 2005; Gartner and Bercovitch, 2006).

It is well known that variables like duration of a civil conflict, whether the conflict is divided along ethnic lines, number of stakeholders, involvement of an outsider, and the offering of economic incentives all influence the length of the conflict as well as the can be the sustainability of any peace agreement. Therefore, when we dichotomize China's role as a third-party mediator in Myanmar's peace process, this study needs to take into account the findings of previous studies to understand the likelihood that China's role as a mediator will foster a durable ceasefire or peace agreement.

With that being said, it appears China has an uphill battle if it wants to truly help the nation of Myanmar achieve peace. First of all, China is a foreign nation trying to negotiate peace amongst a group of stakeholders that are divided over ethnic and political lines. Second, the number of EAOs involved in the peace process has grown from 17 to 22 since the Thein Sein administration initiated the process back in 2011. (Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, 2018) Third, it has already been well established that China's panacea for the civil conflicts that plague Myanmar is economic incentives in the form of China Myanmar Economic Corridor (CMEC), which is part of China's $1 trillion dollar Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). (Khin, 2018a) All stakeholders, from the government of Myanmar to the Tatmadaw and the EAOs, have all endorsed Beijing's BRI. In fact, China might only be interested in peace that suites China's geo political and economic interests.

In the section, this study looks into the literature that surrounds the challenges third-party mediators face when trying to help foster peace. This study looks at what some of the scholars have previously said about the factors that influence the duration of the peace process and the possibility of a durable agreement. This study argues that the odds of Beijing being able to solve more than 70 years of civil conflict in a timely manner, or even being able to foster a durable ceasefire agreement amongst stakeholders, are very low.

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Prior studies have shown that the odds of mediating a durable agreement are stacked against any third-party mediators' efforts (Rothchild, 2002; Bercovitch, 2006; Gartner, 2014) and assumed that the role of third-party mediator in an interstate or intrastate dispute is not an easy task.

Studies have shown that conflict resolution efforts do not have a terribly great success rate when it comes to reaching an agreement. (Rothchild, 2002; Bercovitch, 2006; Gartner, 2014) According to Gartner's findings (2014), there are only about "45.5% of interstate and 44.3% of intrastate disputes" that have reached some kind of peace agreement. "The conflict management of interstate disputes results in more than twice as many ceasefires (9.9%) as intrastate disputes (4.8%), and slightly more full settlements and fewer partial agreements. Interstate disputes agreements, however, are more robust. Almost twice as many intrastate as interstate agreements fail immediately (5.9%) compared to (3.2%)," Gartner found. (Gartner, 2014, p. 9) Meanwhile, for the duration, 25.6% of interstate disputes last eight weeks; adversely, only 17.2% of intrastate disputes make it to the eight- week mark. (Rothchild, 2002; Gartner, 2014) Rotherchild refers to this time as the "treacherous transition period" where settlements need time to "take hold and alter the underlying political situation fueling the dispute (Gartner, 2006)."

In David E. Cunningham's book (2011), *Barriers to Peace in Civil War*, he establishes the reason why multi-party conflicts, such as Myanmar's current civil conflict, not only have an effect on the duration of a conflict but the durability of a signed ceasefire as well. He states, "We can think of civil wars as containing a set of actors that have separate preferences over the outcome of the conflict and separate abilities to block an end to the war (Cunningham, 2011, p. 15)." Cunningham argues that "the veto player approach in civil wars with multiple veto players are longer because (1) it is harder to find a settlement that all veto players within the conflict can agree to, and (2) each individual party will fight longer when there are more veto players in the conflict (Cunningham, 2011, p. 696)."

He further details the effect veto players have on a peace process by highlighting that "Civil wars with more of these veto players should last longer because the bargaining range of acceptable agreements shrinks, information asymmetries are more acute, all

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parties have incentives to hold out and negotiate hard to be the last signer, and shifting alliances between veto players lead negotiations to break down (Cunningham, 2011, p. 460)."

Cunningham (2011) asserts that these "veto players" continue to fight for different reasons, such as being "sons of the soil" or being involved ethnic conflicts (Fearon, 2004), hoping to gain "lootable resource[s]" or to profit off the war (Collier, Hoeffler, and Soderbom, 2004): sensing a division of the issues at stake, a lack of commitment in upholding the terms of an agreement, over-optimism, problems of indivisibility, or an inability to trust the other side- all of which are factors that can cause conflicts to drag on.

Cunningham goes on to further explain international peacebuilding missions and how nations that intervene in another nation's conflicts can become a veto players representing an additional actor who has their own independent agenda, separate preferences over the outcome of the conflict, and have the ability to block agreement. He even posits that some states may become involved in others states civil conflict in order to exploit resources from war (Cunningham 2011).

Cunningham (2011) demonstrates that the reason for the failures of many "peace-building missions" rests on the fact that international actors do not understand the dynamics that are driving these war in the first place, leading to inappropriate conflict resolution efforts that do not address the underlying grievances. This, in turn can inflame the current conflict as opposed to alleviating the issue. Some examples of improper conflict resolution techniques are the promise foreign aid or economic incentives to attract belligerents to join the negotiation table.

Patrick Regan investigated the effect that a third-party intervener has on the duration of a conflict. He writes out that intervention by a third party can contribute to prolonged "expected duration of a conflict" and that "unilateral interventions tend to lengthen the expected duration of a conflict, but that biased interventions are associated with shorter expected durations relative to neutral ones (Regan, 2002, p. 56)."

In the same vain, as stated in the previous section, Frazier and Dixon (2006) noted that use of realism can explain how powerful states are able to use tactical bargaining and/or coercive intervention in order to reduce conflict between other actors, thus,

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prioritizing their own "foreign policy priorities and impose[ing] their will during negotiations to alleviate conflict (Frazier and Dixon, 2006)."

Gartner and Bercovitch (2006) also agree with Frazier and Dixon (2006) that pushy strategies by themselves are not a bad thing. They are effective in high-intensity conflicts where outcomes are unlikely to occur without a "shove" and can lead to improved odds for both ceasefires and full settlements.

Despite the ability of powerful states to mediate and push an agreement through, statistical and empirical evidence seem to suggest that civil conflicts are very hard to mediate and even harder for stakeholders to abide by the terms of the agreement, whether it is a ceasefire or full peace agreement (Cunningham, 2011).

In this section this study has demonstrated the uphill battle China faces in order to broker any kind of ceasefire or peace agreement. Clearly from the findings in this section the odds are stacked against China when it comes to brokering a deal in Myanmar's protected intra-state conflicts anytime soon. However, these findings do not explain why China can play the role of mediator or what kind of mediation role China plays in Myanmar's peace process. In the next this study will explore the two main conflict management models and their application.

Section 4: Conflict Management Models and Application

In the field of conflict management, a lot of credence has been given to both the *"Outsider-Neutral Model"* and the *"Insider-Partial Model"* when it comes to the role of a third-party mediator. In the book, *Conflict Management, Security and Intervention in East Asia*, Teng (2008) outlines both the "Outsider-Neutral Model" and the "Insider-Partial Model" in his introduction.

Teng states that the "Outsider-Neutral Model" requires (1) the core of this model is the existence of a neutral mediator or third party; (2) that the third party or mediator maintains distance from, and is not connected to, either of the parties in the dispute; (3) that the third party does not have a vested interest in any outcome except settlement, and does not expect any special reward from either side; and (4) that the neutrality of the

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mediator primarily lies in their professional role, position, and function (Teng, 2008, p. 5).” This model has been successful in “Western society,” especially in the Northern Ireland negotiations led by former U.S. senator George Mitchell and others, which led to the 1998 Good Friday Agreement (Teng, 2008, p. 5).

However, when it comes conflict management in Asia, Teng (2008) and Satapathy (2004) both argue that “Insider-Partial Model” is most suitable in conflict management when it involves non-Western countries as opposed to the outsider-neutral Model, which is a widely accepted model of conflict management.

In the “Insider-Partial Model,” it states (1) that the third party or mediator is “from within the conflict”; (2) the acceptability of the mediator depends on its connectedness and trusted relationship with the conflicting parties; (3) the mediator must live with the consequences of their bargaining in the post-negotiation period; and (4) the mediator should rely on interpersonal communication as a way to reach consensus in a traditional cultural setting (Teng, 2008. p. 5).”

Teng (2008) applies the Insider-Partial Model to “two flash points,”: The Taiwan Strait where the US plays a role as a third-party mediator and the Korean Peninsula where China plays a third-party mediator. Although this study agrees with Teng’s belief in the use of the “Insider-Partial Model” in conflict resolution in East Asia,Teng’s work it does not explain China’s role as third-party mediator in Myanmar’s peace process in Southeast Asia.

In R. K. Satapthy (2004) article, “The Role of Insider-Partials in Conflict Resolution in Mizoram,” Satapathy also argues the case for the “Insider-Partial Model” being the right approach to ending the protracted violent conflict in the state of Mizoram, India, between the Mizo National Front (MNF) and the Government of India (GOI). Satapathy demonstrates that church leaders who played the roles of third-party mediators helped foster a durable peace agreement between the MNF and the GOI in Mizoram. The church leaders embodied two elements of the Insider-Partials model, both being “from within the conflict” and “acceptability,” which allowed them to fill the role of mediator. The church leaders were able to exploit their trustworthiness and intimate knowledge of all parties

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involved "permit[ting] them to resolve the conflict together with the adversaries (Satapathy, 2004, p. 62)."

Satapathy (2004) concludes by saying "It is more relevant to entrust this responsibility to an *insider-partial* mediator. This creates the basis for a more effective and durable resolution of conflict (Satapathy, 2004, p. 73)."

In interstate conflicts, many would say the attributes of a good third-party mediator are impartiality and fairness, and they should possess no bias. However, it seems that third-party mediator with partial bias in an intrastate conflict can actually help in the process of mediation. This is something that seems to differentiate international mediation in intrastate and interstate conflicts (Melin and Svensson, 2009).

In Molly Melin and Isak Svensso's article (2009), "Incentives for Talking: Accepting Mediation in International and Civil Wars," they argue that "historical ties between the potential intermediary and at least one of the disputants play different roles in regard to acceptance of mediation in interstate compared to civil wars (Melin and Svensson, 2009, p. 249)." They focus on the relationship between the third party and the disputants, noting that this these relationship are the key to mediating a civil conflict as opposed to interstate conflicts, and that mediators having a relationship with least one disputant had a greater impact on acceptance of mediation. They authors state that this relationship increases the willingness of the "third party to mediate in civil [rather] than interstate conflicts since the acceptance of mediation also differs as rebels have incentives to invite mediation in order to gain recognition (Melin and Svensson, 2009, p. 251)." They also concluded "that governments in internal armed conflicts will only turn to mediation once they anticipate that they have little chance to settle the situation by themselves (Melin and Svensson, 2009, p. 251)."

Melin and Stevensson's study (2009) explore variables such as "special historical or other links with a civil war state, trade interests, alliance, distance, previous acceptance, number acceptances, previous military intervention, previous economic intervention, other mediation, and negotiate" as being key to acceptability of the mediator.

Based on empirical knowledge of China-Myanmar relations or China's relationship with various EAOs, this study begins to understand why China has been accepted by the

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government and Tatmadaw and the EAOs as a third-party mediator to the peace process. Although, Melin and Stevensson's study (2009), does not explain China's ability to play the role of third party mediator. Their study is a general study that can be applied to understanding why China has been accepted as a third party mediator by the government, the Tatmadaw and the non-signatory EOAs in Myanmar's peace process. Therefore, Melin and Stevensson's study (2009) is useful because some of its findings can be applied when examining China's role as a third-party mediator in Myanmar's peace process.

In Yun Sun's 2017 Special Report for the United States Institute of Peace, called "China and Myanmar's Peace Process," Sun outlines China's role in Myanmar's peace process as being strongly biased. China's mainly focus is on the EAOs along its southern border, who happen to be the seven members of the FPNCC. Although China's official position follows the principle of non-interference and its official policy is "persuading for peace and facilitating dialogues," in practice, its attitude has been more ambiguous (Sun, 2017). Sun explains that "special interest groups and individuals who have offered direct financial support for ethnic armed organizations in Myanmar" have complicated Beijing's efforts (Sun, 2017, p. 1).

China played a decisive role in cajoling many of the EAOs in Kachin and Shan States to join Suu Kyi's UPC-21CP in 2016 but its role in the process is based on "bilateral relations" and "China's own national interests (Sun, 2017, p. 1)." This leads one to believe that Beijing's approach to the peace process is one of "carrot and the stick." In other words, Beijing will reward those stakeholders who will comply with their wishes and punish to those who do not. Furthermore, Sun also points out that "Beijing does not necessarily believe that comprehensive peace is attainable for the foreseeable future (Sun, 2017, p. 1)."

This report is very promising for this study because it not only indicates the time in which China became more involved in the peace process, but also explains a little of why and how China has been able to assume the role of third-party mediator in Myanmar's peace process.

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As we can see from Sun's report, China's mediation tactic is clearly biased and in many ways is self-serving of China's interests. However, Sun's report doesn't actually categorize or label what type of role China plays. Sun only gives us an analytical look into what China is doing and why.

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CHAPTER 3 INVOLVEMENT OF UN, INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY AND OF PRC IN INTERNAL CONFLICTS

Section 1: UN and Myanmar's Internal Conflicts

The current state of Myanmar and UN relationS can be said to be complicated at best. The ongoing ethnic conflicts in Kachin and Shan States, which have resulted in more 100,000 internally displaced peoples, plus the move by the government of Myanmar to ban UN special rapporteur, Lee Yanghee, from entering the country in December of 2017, while operating under "resolution 34/22, the Human Rights Council's mandated mission to establish the facts and circumstances of the alleged human rights violations by the Tatmadaw and security forces, and abuses, in Myanmar, in particular in Rakhine State (Human Rights Council, 2018, p. 3)." This has put a tremendous strain on their relationship between the government of Myanmar and the supranational organization.

Although the government banned Ms. Lee Yanghee from entering the country, the UN's Human Rights Council was able to complete its report entitled "Report of the independent international fact-finding mission on Myanmar (2018)." The report outlines the atrocities committed by both non-state armed groups and the Tatmadaw, ranging from genocide to crimes against humanity. However, this report states that the Tatmadaw were the "main perpetrator of serious human rights violations and crimes under international law in Kachin, Rakhine and Shan States (Human Rights Council, 2018, p. 17)."

Despite the current strain in relations, the UN remains committed to "the government and civil society to implement Myanmar's reforms and transitions through four main pillars: socio-economic development, peace building, humanitarian action and human rights. This support is guided by the principles of inclusiveness and sustainability as well as rooted in internationally agreed principles and standards." The UN continues to

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fund a wide range of programs in the areas of education, health, employment, nutrition and food security, urbanization, environment, migration, governance and human rights.

The UN is also deeply committed to Myanmar's peace process and has invested $22 million in support of the peace process and peacebuilding initiatives (UN, 2015). The UN recognizes "Myanmar's peace process is nationally owned." Therefore, the UN does not take a leading role as a third-party mediator, but instead acts as a facilitator assisting all stakeholders, including the government of Myanmar, ethnic organizations, and civil society. The UN promotes conflict prevention and "encourage[es] inter-communal dialogue and peaceful coexistence" while working with all stakeholders in the process. (UN, 2015)

The UN has always played a support role in the peace process, even from the very beginning when the Thein Sien government began the peace process in 2011. In October of 2015, former Secretary General of the UN Ban Ki Moon welcomed the signing of the NCA by saying the signing "marks an important step in advancing national reconciliation and consolidating the reform process in the country (UN, 2015)." Ban went on to reiterate the UN's commitment to the peace process in Myanmar by saying, "The United Nations remains prepared to contribute to the next stage of the peace process in accordance with the unified expectations of all stakeholders (UN, 2015)." When the NLD and Aung San Suu Kyi launched the UPC-21CP, Ban reiterated the UN's commitment to the peace process by saying, "The United Nations will remain your respectful partner as the peace process deepens." He then tried his hand at Burmese and said, "Let us work together for peace in this great nation (Pagnucco, 2017)."

Even though the relations between the UN and the government of Myanmar are currently strained, the UN does not appear to be leaving any time soon. Nor is the government of Myanmar asking the UN to leave or drop its support of the current peace process or other development projects. However, under the NLD administration, Myanmar has reduced its cooperation with the mediation of the UN and allowed China to take a leading role as a third-party mediator (TNI, 2017). China's ability to supplant the United Nations as leading mediator is largely due to China's historical, cultural and economic linkages with many of the EAOs along its southern border including the

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civilian population. These linkages give China an advantage at playing the role of third-party mediator because they know the EAOs better than the UN or the international community. Furthermore, Beijing's strategic concerns regarding instability along China's southern border and its own geo-political ambitions in Myanmar (TNI, 2017) were some of the reasons why China early on in the peace process did not want the involvement of the UN or the international community involved in the early stages of Myanmar's peace process.

Although China originally got involvement in the peace process as an official observer in partnership with the UN, Beijing began to "operate independently and opaquely to help Myanmar address its internal challenges (USPI, p. 8)." In fact, when China first began hosting ceasefire talk between the KIO and the Myanmar government in the border town of Ruili, China, Beijing was very assertive over who could attend the meeting. China even tried to keep the UN and the international community away until a compromised between the stakeholders, with China only agreeing to allow the "participation of the UN as the only international observer (Yhome, 2019, p. 11)."

China's historical, cultural, and economic linkages with the EAOs along its border give China an advantage over the UN when it comes to mediation. China knows the EAOs better than the international community and can exert pressures on many of the non-signatory EAOs. These same EAOs that are part of the FPNCC negotiation block have even endorsed China's BRI and have urged the government of Myanmar to allow China's involvement in the peace process, while at the same time endorsing the participation of the UN (Myanmar Times, 2016). Although China has been successful at filling the role of a third-party mediator in Myanmar's peace process, the EAOs endorsement of the UN participation in the process shows that there is still a need to have some kind of level of international participation, even if it does not take the leading role. As Paul Keenan, a consultant at Euro Burma Office says:

> "*They should be bothered, I don't think anyone else can do what the China have been doing. I don't agree with blocking international efforts, that's mainly because international effort may bring more democratic values. But at the same time, from what I see the government of Myanmar is not ready to embrace democratic*

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values if it feels that it's is under threat from democratic values. And as we see from Suu Kyi, her goals are not ones of democracy and human rights. So think China is doing a good thing."

Section 2: The International Community and Myanmar's Internal Conflicts

As for the international communities, their participations in the peace process seem to be a different story. Back in October 2015, when 8 of the 17 original stakeholders signed the NCA, it was hailed as a historical occasion and U.S. State Department spokesman, John Kirby, said "The United States commends all sides for their ongoing efforts to bring an end to the longest-running civil conflict in the world (Reuters, 2015)." However, since then the international communities have been less than enthusiastic and the current efforts by the international communities have not been as successful as China in filling the role of a third-party mediator. There is a real lack of unity amongst the international communities, lack of understanding of the issues knowledge of the situation on the ground. Furthermore, Myanmar's recent isolation by the international communities after the 2017 Rohingya crisis has only served to weaken the international communities' interests in solving over 70 years of Myanmar's civil conflict.

As Lintner states that "foreign peacemakers reports reflect their lack of knowledge of the situation in the field" and "the governments of Norway and Switzerland, the European Union and a host of other governmental and private outfits have also brought with them hundreds of millions of dollars, turning peacemaking into a lucrative industry that has achieved nothing when it comes to alleviating the sufferings of the people in the frontier areas (Lintner, 2019)." Lintner says that the international community's efforts are hampered by what he describes as a "peace-industrial complex" that has sprung up as a result of the funding that has been dumped into the peace process. In his article "Minorities, Money and Getting It Wrong in Myanmar," he quotes a foreign human-rights activist as saying "a cabal of carpetbaggers and con men whose real contribution to the peace process is shrouded in self-laudatory assessments that have no basis in reality (Lintner, 2019)."

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Lintner also points out that these so-called study tours aimed at ethnic leaders to other former conflict areas including Northern Ireland, Colombia, South Africa, and Guatemala have not served to help the peace process and have only served to distract from the real issues at the heart of the peace process (Lintner, 2019). As he posits, the international community should not be spending vast amounts of money on studying other peace process but should instead "examine Myanmar's own past experience of peace efforts" in order to solve the current problems. As Lintner states, "it is an opera where too many divas aspire to be the lead performer, and no one wants to sing in the choir (Lintner, 2019)."

Meanwhile, Japan who still claims to have unwavering support for the peace process has also tried to play the role of a third-party mediator. Yohei Sasakawa, Japan special envoy for national reconciliation in Myanmar, claims that Japan is trying to build trust and confidence among stakeholders. Sasakawa says, "Trust among all partners must be built and nurtured (The Myanmar Times, 2018)." Japan has tried to promote dialogue between the government, Tatmadaw, and EAOs by engaging in its own diplomacy. Sasakawa brought 20 leaders of different EAOs and Myanmar officials to Japan to meet with Prime Minister Abe but has little to show for its efforts. Where Japan has been successful in building confidence amongst stakeholders is through the Nippon Foundation, mainly working in conflict and non-conflict areas providing food and humanitarian assistance to nearly one million people (The Myanmar Times, 2018).

The United States would claim that it is no less involved but it recognizes that the peace process is domestically lead even though China has taken steps to counter the international community's influence as a third-party mediator. Much like Japan has relied on its diplomats and Nippon Foundation to influence the peace process, the United States has relied on its ambassadors, Derek Mitchell and Scot Marciel, to communicate with the stakeholders including USAID to influence the peace process. The United States approach has been described as a "holistic approach" opposite to China's approach which is aimed at a geostrategic and economic interest including stability along its southern border. The United States focuses on "humanitarian aid, and nationwide peacebuilding based on a culture of dialogue aimed at an inclusive, sustainable end to armed conflict (Kyaw, 2018)."

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Both the US and Japan have pledged over $100 million each over the next three to five years towards the peace process (Kyaw, 2018; The Myanmar Times, 2018). Whether this can help influence the peace process is unclear. What clear is that the international communities and the UN have not had the same success as China in filling the role as a third-party mediator. In the next section, this study will examine why China has been so influential in Myanmar's internal conflicts.

Section 3: PRC and Myanmar's Internal Conflicts

1. Brief History of Myanmar-Sino relations

The bilateral relationship between Myanmar and China is indelible and involves a vast array of historical, geographical, economic, blood ties and cultural linkages. The two nations share a porous 1,500-miles long border that in the past has come under dispute by both nations. The people who live along the border are a tapestry of ethnic identities and political allegiances. Throughout the ages, various ethnic groups that live along the Myanmar-Sino border have traveled back and forth, putting down roots and conducting a wide range of both legal and illicit actives.

Starting with the Mongol invasion in the late 13th century and leading up to the 1769 a peace treaty between the Qing Empire and Imperial Burma, the relationship between the two states was contentious, but when the British took control of Myanmar in 1885.

During the British colonial period, many Han people settled in Myanmar fleeing from economic hardship, civil unrest, and the decaying Qing dynasty. During WWII, the Allies focused on the China-Burma-India theater in order to supply the Republic of China and defeat the Japanese Imperial forces. In 1949, at the end of the Chinese Civil War, retreating remnants of the Kuomintang set up a guerilla army with the help of the CIA and the nationalists in Taiwan.

However, today's relationship between the Myanmar and China today really started in 1949 when Myanmar, then as known as Burma, recognized the People's Republic of

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China and established official diplomatic relations in 1950. Since the establishment of diplomatic relations, Myanmar-Sino relations have been far more positive than negative.

In 1967, anti-Chinese riots caused the two nations to sever ties and led China to unconditionally supports the Communist Party of Burma's (CPB) armed struggle against the government of Myanmar. Although Myanmar and China normalized relations in 1971, their relationship remained strained until mid 1980s, when China withdrew its support for the CPB.

With the violent suppression of the student-led democracy movement in Myanmar and China in the late 1980s, both nations faced sanctions and isolation from the international community. It was these two unfortunate events that brought the two nations closer as Myanmar's military rulers that had been shunned by the international community looked for developmental assistance.

After the 2017 Rohingya crisis, China used its veto power at the UN to shield Myanmar from sanctions after the international community's outcry over the allegations of genocide and sexual violence. While this led half a million Rohingya Muslims to flee to Bangladesh, it also helped increase bilateral relations between these two Asian neighbors.

Bilateral trades between Myanmar and China was valued at some $10.8 billion in 2016-2017 (Mizzima, 2018). Most of this trade flows through Muse and other border towns in northern Myanmar into Yunnan, China.

Both nations rely on each other for certain things, and each has a desire to obtain what the other nation possesses. It is these needs and wants that are the basis for their exchanges, especially for their current relationship. However, their current marriage is highly asymmetrical in favor of China.

On one hand, China has to use both its political and economic resources in order to keep the other members of the international community from coming between Myanmar, and China's own economic and geopolitical interests in Myanmar. China has an array of investment and strategic infrastructure projects related to its BRI and the CMEC. China

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also needs Myanmar's vast supply of natural resources, such as oil and gas, lumber, jade, and mineral deposits to keep its economic engine running.

On the other hand, Myanmar needs China's loans, investment projects, security engagements, military hardware, developmental assistance, and mediation in the peace process. Myanmar sees China as a model for development and would like to replicate the Chinese model.

As Andrzej Bolesta (2018) states, "scholarly analyses often omit that both countries share more than a history of economic and political interactions. They are both post-socialist economies, which have been undergoing the process of transformation from state-command, centrally-planned economic models to market based systems; in other words, from a form of socialism to a genus of capitalism (Bolesta, 2018, p. 34)."

2. Myanmar-Sino relations

Myanmar's relationship with China is driven by economic and political factors. Myanmar sees China as a friend, political ally, and mentor that assist Myanmar with some of its most pressing political and economic issues. It is these factors have led Myanmar to enhance its relationship with China for better or worse. Narayanan Ganesan's report (2018) "*Bilateral Issues in Myanmar's Policy towards China,*" is useful in helping to answer this study's main research question. Ganesan breaks down the factor driving current Myanmar-Sino relationship as historical and geographical factors, as well as distinctive domestic factors affecting relations with China, this including "security and strategic issues, ethnic insurgency and refugees, drugs and human smuggling, and economic issues (Ganesan, 2018, p. 1)."

It was the violent suppression of the student-led democracy movement in Myanmar by Burmese Junta Ne Win and the Tiananmen Massacre a year later by Deng Xiao Ping, that seems to be the starting point of the modern Myanmar-Sino relationship. Both Myanmar and China were facing sanctions and isolation from the international community. As a result of international isolation, "Myanmar's military rulers began to look towards China for developmental assistance as well as investment in infrastructure and the country's procurement of military hardware, the relationship blossomed to the

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point where it would regularly be referred to by the local idiom of *pauk-pauw* (a Burmese word for kinsfolk) (Ganesan, 2018, p. 5)."

Under the Than Shwe's military-led government, this relationship only strengthened and legitimized the military junta. In 2011, China was caught off-grade by Myanmar's democratic transition when newly elected President Thein Sein began a period of political liberalization and rapprochement with the West. China then focused bringing Myanmar back into its fold and actively courted the NLD and Aung San Suu Kyi, even inviting Suu Kyi, who was at the time a political candidate, to visit China's unveiling of the BRI meeting in Beijing (Financial Times, 2015). When the NLD won a landslide electoral victory in October of 2015 and Suu Kyi was made the State Counselor and de facto leader, China saw its efforts pay off.

In the aftermath of the recent Rohingya crisis, Myanmar strengthened its relationship with China after "reports of sexual violence and extrajudicial killings and torture perpetuated by the military" drew international criticism (Ganesan, 2018, p.6). Both nations knew that sanctions could hamper economic cooperation between the two, as well as hindering the future of BRI and the CMEC. Therefore, China using its leverage at the UN to block sanctions against Myanmar (Ganesan, 2018) was in the best interest of the Myanmar-Sino relationship. It seems that when "Myanmar has poor relations with the external world, in general, there appears to be an incentive for the evolution of a mutually beneficial bilateral relationship with China (Ganesan, 2018, p. 6)."

Myanmar's relationship with China also has a domestic component. China has pledged roughly $3 million towards the peace process in Myanmar. China not only has a long history with many of the EAOs on its southern border, but also political and economic ties as well. Therefore, both the EAOs and the Myanmar government hope that China will not only take their side but also broker the situation (Ganesan, 2018).

The Chinese government allegedly pressured some of the EAOs on its southern border to participate in ongoing ceasefire talks while at the same time in arranging for other groups to participate in the UPC-21CP. China's participation in the peace process can be seen as having both a political and strategic component. "China's cooperation is crucial for Myanmar to achieve internal political cohesion and security (Ganesan, 2018, p.

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7).” Indeed, Myanmar needs China’s cooperation if it wants peace and stability along its borders, only making the relationship between the two nations all the more important.

Furthermore, by allowing China to take part the peace process, Myanmar can reap the economic benefits that come from peace along its borders. This is something that the other members of the international community could not provide for Myanmar if they were playing the role of a third-party mediator.

Economically speaking, Myanmar’s relationship with China is critical. In Bolesta’s report (2018) *“Myanmar-China peculiar relationship: Trade, investment and the model of development,”*. Bolesta (2018) points out that China is the biggest investor and trading partner in Myanmar. Although Thein Sein’s government attempted to “diversify international trade routes and foreign investment sources” from China, China’s ability as the “second largest economy and a global superpower”, caused Myanmar to fall back into its political and economic orbit.

In addition to China’s strength, Bolesta calls attention to the fact that China is now being seen as a "model of development” that can be mirrored (Bolesta, 2018). “Both economies have been undergoing post-socialist economic transformation and Myanmar, in the years 1988-2015, chose to emulate the Chinese model of development, with its closed political system, limited economic liberalization, state interventionism and heavy regulatory regime, as well as with its industrial policy,” Bolesta writes (Bolesta, 2018, p. 24)

Bolesta’s analysis defiantly explains a lot about the two nations economic relationship. However, not everyone in Myanmar is happy about the current state of that relationship. Xenophobia among many of its citizens and people are starting to distrust for China’s state-owned-enterprises (SOE) because many citizens fell that China’s foreign direct investment (FDI) only benefits elite officials and the managers who run the SOEs (Christie and Hanlon, 2014; Bolesta, 2018; Ganesan, 2018). Due to the lopsided nature of the two nations’ relationship, citizen also fear that Myanmar is falling into a debt trap. Despite the growing discontent amongst certain segments of the population, the relationship between the two nations, at this time, appears to be unwavering.

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3. Sino-Myanmar relations

Apparently, the Sino-Myanmar relations today are the best that they have ever been especially for China.

China wields its disproportionate influence over the current NLD-led government and the Tatmadaw in order to protect its own national interests. Besides having close ties with Naypyitaw, China maintains a close relationship with many of the EAOs along its southern border with Myanmar.

Two recent reports -one authored by Yun Sun (2017) for the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) called "*China and Myanmar's Peace Process"* and the other a USIP Senior Study Group Final Report (2018) called "*China's Role in Myanmar's Internal Conflicts"* -define the current relationship between China and Myanmar as being largely based on China's own national interests,

Starting in the1990s, China began to enjoy an asymmetric relationship with Myanmar's military rulers. However, in 2010, when Myanmar made its transition from military rule to a democratic system, China began to see its influence wane as a civilian government began to take shape (USIP, 2018). Widespread protests over China's investment in infrastructure projects forced President Thein Sein to suspend the construction of the Myitsone Dam. Furthermore, Thein Sein's government reforms and Myanmar's reengagements with the West, especially with the United States, made Beijing rethink its strategy in Myanmar.

Soon after the 2015 landslide elections that brought the NLD into power, China realized that in order to achieve its economic and security ambitions inside Myanmar, China would have to foster relations with de facto leader and State Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi and the NLD. At the same time, China worked to reinforce its military-to-military relationship with the Tatmadaw through training and technical exchanges. China has even used its soft power to court the citizens of Myanmar via "study tours" (USIP, 2018). According to the USIP report, "this pattern of Chinese engagement has increased after the onset of the Rakhine crisis in 2017 (USIP, 2018, p. 15)."

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China's efforts to restore close ties with Myanmar paid off, when Aung San Suu Kyi made her first visit to China in June of 2015, and then again when she made ther first official visit overseas as State Counselor of Myanmar in 2017.

Since the rekindling of relations with Myanmar, China has used its veto power at the UN to protect Myanmar from sanctions over the Rohingya crisis that erupted on August 25, 2017. The crisis caused more than 650,000 Rohingya to flee from "systematic campaign of mass killings, rape, and arson", at the hands of the Tatmadaw as the military and security forces conducted operations " in response to attacks carried out by the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) (USIP, 2018, p. 30)."

"Notwithstanding Western criticisms, China has leveraged the situation and in September the Chinese Foreign Minister, Wang Yi, told the UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, that China "supports efforts by the Myanmar government to protect its national security and opposes recent violent attacks in Rakhine State," the report states (USIP, 2018, p.30).

Both reports also clearly highlight the one-sidedness of China's relationship with Myanmar and interest in the peace process. The USIP report (2018) states that "Beijing has several clear strategic interests in Myanmar which are based on stability on its shared border, access to the Indian Ocean and a wide variety of economic interests (USIP, 2018, p. 16)." All three interests are closely related to one another and are part of Beijing's plan to transform the region into one that is more China-centric and less dependent on the West.

Stability on China's southern border is a key factor to the latter two interests Beijing has in Myanmar. Border stability would reduce the activities of transnational organized crime that for decades has fueled the civil conflict and increased the influence of illegal economies such "drug and human trafficking, resource smuggling, and other illicit activity," which has affected both nations. Furthermore, with the cessation of conflict, it will be easier for both nations to tackle "emerging health challenges, including drug-resistant malaria, tuberculosis, and other infectious diseases (USIP, 2018, p. 16)."

China's geostrategic interest in its ability to access the Indian Ocean severs both its strategic and economic interests in Myanmar. Strategically speaking, being able to access

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the Indian Ocean through Myanmar would allow China to avoid the Malacca Straits, which could be used as a choke point in times of war, cutting off China's access to the Indian Ocean and impeding its access to certain energy sources.

Besides the geostrategic interest, China has in Myanmar, nothing compares to its comprehensive economic interests in Rakhine. The deep-sea port project at Kyaukphyu is valued at around $7.3 billion, and the special economic zone, at $1.3 billion (The Irrawaddy, 2018), but these are just the tip of the iceberg that also includes "road, rail, and pipeline network to move energy and other materials and supplies from the Bay of Bengal through Myanmar to Yunnan Province (USIP, 2018 p. 5)." China International Trust and Investment Corporation (CITIC) won contracts for the two projects in 2015 (The Irrawaddy, 2018) and has taken a 70% stake in the project.

4. Chinese Relations with the EAOs

Not only does Beijing have an economic interest in Myanmar, but there are other Chinese actors or special interest groups that have similar interests. Some of these groups have been accused of fueling conflict in northern Myanmar by engaging in natural resource extraction and other economic projects in the conflict areas, thereby generating revenue for Myanmar's various conflict actors (USIP, 2018, p. 16). These other Chinese actors or special interest that groups in a wide range of legal and illicit cross-border trade including including "drugs, logging, wildlife, charcoal, jade, and other gems". Their involvements in Myanmar complicates China's relationship with the nation and their role in the peace process. (USIP, 2018, p. 16; Sun, 2017)

Part of China's strategy in Myanmar not only relies on cultivating relations with the NLD government and the Tatmadaw, but also on maintaining its relationship with those EAOs along its southern border. China has a varying degree of ties with the seven northern non-signatories to the NCA that make up the negotiating block of FPNCC. Its closest relations are with the UWSA, KIA, and MNDAA or Kokang group under the leadership of Peng Jiasheng. To a lesser extent, it maintains relations with the Shan State East National Democratic Alliance Association (NDAA-SSE), AA, TNLA, and SSA-N.

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Often, conflicts between the Myanmar army and any of these groups lead to an immediate flood of refugees across the border into China and create a security problem for the authorities in Yunnan Province. (Ganesan, 2018) Thus, it is in China's interest to maintain good relations with these groups in times when the conflicts spill over

China's closest relationship amongst all the EAOs is with the UWSA, one of Myanmar's largest EAOs. UWSA and China have a nuanced relationship that dates back to when the Wa made up the backbone of the fighting force of the CPB. China applies a multi-layered diplomatic approach to their relationship. China can engage the UWSA on a government-to-government level and a party-to-party level through the ILD/CPC because the UWSA's political wing, the United Wa State Party (UWSP) is modeled after China's open-party communist system. They can also engage on a military-to-military level allowing arms transfers through front companies (Lintner, 2017).

After the collapse of the CPB in 1989, China maintained a relationship with the Wa and fully supported their Self-Administered Division (SAD) both economically and militarily over the years. The Wa has the dubious distinction of being labeled the largest narco army in Southeast Asia with roughly around 20,000 to 30,000 forces. It has been said that some of their ranks have been filled by Chinese mercenaries who are attracted to the ranks of UWSA due to higher pay. The Wa has received various arms from China in the past but it is alleged that the Wa operate two of their own arms factories (Yun, 2017). Unlike the other EAOs, the Wa leaders are allowed to travel to the "capital city of Yunnan Province for medical treatments without any advanced approvals from Beijing (Yun, 2017, p. 12)." The Wa are staunch supporters of Beijing's national interests and have been accused of being Beijing's proxy army in Myanmar. At the first UPC-21CP in 2016, the UWSA distributed a 30-page document called "*The general principles and specific demands of EAOs upon the political negotiation*," which appears to have been "influenced by Beijing or written with Chinese interests in mind [as it] endorsed China's involvement in the peace process and [implied Wa] support for China's "One Belt One Road" initiative. (Pagnucco, 2017)

China also maintains close communications with the KIA in order to mediate the ongoing fighting between the KIA and the Tatmadaw and to help coordinate negotiations

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between the two warring factions. In February of 2013, China hosted a round of talks between the government of Myanmar and the KIA in the border town of Ruili in Yunnan, China (Reuters, 2013). Although the talk did not lead to a cessation in fighting, China continues to host talks between the EAOs fighting the Tatmadaw and the government of Myanmar.

China also sees the KIA as a security concern and is very wary of its own Chinese Kachin or Jingpo populations, who are largely Christian and have been known to offer "political and financial" support to their brethren in the KIA across the border. Not only is their support a concern for China, but Myanmar's Kachin population's contact with Western missionaries and Western influence is seen as a problem for Beijing. In 2014, a group of high ranking KIA officers made a trip to Washington, D.C., and New York to garner support for the Kachin cause. This sent alarm bells ringing in Beijing, with the Chinese fearing that this trip might lead to a US presence along its border region. Beijing was prompted to cultivate a closer relationship with the KIA in order to monopolize influence over the peace process (Yun, 2017).

The other EAO that China maintains a relationship with is the MNDAA or Kokang group under the leadership of Peng Jiasheng. The perception of China in the MNDAA has gone from that of a nuisance to a tactical ally. Like the UWSA, China's relationship with the MNDAA started back when they were part of the CPB. After the collapse of the CPB, China maintained a loose relationship with MNDAA and its leader Peng Jiasheng. The 2009 "Kokang Incident" brought an end to Peng Jiasheng's leadership. Then, in late 2014, Peng Jiasheng re-emerged with a group of loyalists and launched attacks on Myanmar's armed forces, causing resentment in Beijing. Peng Jiasheng sought to inject himself as the rightful leader of the Kokang people in the peace process. The move was seen as being "motivated by his narrow personal interests in gaining political capital rather than any consideration of China's national interests (Yun, 2017, p. 13)." Peng Jiasheng then subsequently launched a media blitz to appeal to the Chinese Kokang people, playing to their sympathy in an effort to garner their support (Yun, 2017, p. 13).

Peng garnered greater sympathy when the Tatmadaw's military campaign to stop him out ended in disaster when a sugarcane plantation in the border city of Lincang,

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China, was accidentally bombed, killing four people (The Diplomate, 2015). After the death of four nationals inside of China, authorities in China allegedly allowed the MNDAA to open bank accounts to solicit donations and use Chinese territory when fighting Myanmar forces (Yun, 2017).

It is clear that the current Sino-Myanmar relationship is based on a complex web of interconnected geostrategic, geopolitical, and economic interests all aimed at protecting China's own national interests and keeping Western influence out, "n particularly, the United States, especially along Myanmar's border with China (USIP, 2018, p. 19)."

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CHAPTER 4 PRC AS A THIRD-PARTY MEDIATOR IN MYANMAR'S PEACE PROCESS, 2011-2019

In this Chapter, this study delves into the role of China as a third-party mediator in Myanmar's peace process by examining China's gradual assent into conflict management to demonstrate how China has been able to fill the role of third-party mediator in Myanmar's peace process. This study is briefly looking at the history of China's participation in conflict management around the globe, followed by China's approach to mediation. This study then analyzes the literature and interviews that correspond to China's behaviors in Myanmar in order to answer this study's main questions *(please refer to the two main research questions)*. Then chapter concludes with a presentation of what is currently happening in Myanmar's peace process is and what the impact of China's involvement is.

Section 1: China's Approach in Mediation

1. History of China as a Third-Party Mediator

In this section, this study briefly examines how Beijing has made "peace" a "core feature" in China's international affairs by taking incremental steps in conflict management around the world. By exploring this step-by-step process, we will begin to see how China's foreign policy has been shaped by its participation in conflict management efforts around the world and see a bigger pattern of how China uses conflict management strategies, like peacekeeping and mediation, as a blueprint to aid in the development of the BRI, which has become a pillar of Beijing's geo political strategy.

The PRC is not historically known for its international engagements and participations in multilateral organizations due to its principle of non-intervention or non-interference in other nations' affairs (Qian and Wu, 2009) (ISDP, 2018). China's principle of non-interference stems from "The Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence,

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initiated by China, India, and Myanmar in 1954 as guidelines for international relations, stress mutual noninterference in internal affairs and peaceful coexistence in international relations (Qian and Wu, 2009, p.81)".

However, in the 1980s, when China began to open up to the outside world, Beijing started to take incremental steps towards participating in conflict management efforts around the world. In the last 30 years, China has become "the third-largest contributor to the UN budget, the second-highest contributor to the UN peacekeeping budget, and the 12th highest provider of peacekeepers, with 2,634 personnel as of January 2018 (ISDP, 2018)."

In 1988, China joined the UN Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, this marking China's interest future peacekeeping missions (ISDP, 2018). In April 1990, China sent five observers to the UN Truce Supervision Organization in the Middle East for its first military peacekeeping operation (ISDP, 2018). Throughout the 1990s, China slowly began to increase its supports for UN peacekeeping operations.

Since the early 2000s, as China's economic prominence began to rise, so did its participation in peacekeeping efforts, including "enforcement mandates in Mali, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Darfur, which include civilian protection and humanitarian aid (ISDP, 2018)." Meanwhile, China also expanded its efforts in mediation in Africa, going so far as to broker a ceasefire agreement between the South Sudanese government and rebels, and to mediate the Six Party Talks over the Korean nuclear crisis. At the same time, this approach projects a positive image of Beijing as an honest broker for peace (Chaziza, 2018).

Although, President Xi Jingping stated, "With our national power continuously strengthened, China will shoulder more international responsibility and undertake more international obligations. China will make a greater contribution to the peaceful development of mankind (Wang, 2016)." As this study will demonstrate, Beijing's increased participation in conflict management and mediation are not just about a "greater contribution to the peaceful development of mankind"; their move into international conflict resolution has a great deal to do with China's increasing needs for energy, raw materials and markets to sustain its own economic growth and domestic

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stability (Chaziza, 2018; International Crisis Group, 2018). It also needs this access to the resources of the outside world to ensure the implementation of "its Belt and Road Initiative, which has metamorphosed into a global set of bilateral agreements to foster Chinese trade, investment and financing (International Crisis Group, 2018)."

China realizes that conflict management is "a low-cost method of proving China's commitment to global stability. China recognizes that upholding international stability, as well as international institutions and mechanisms, is vital to Chinese economic and political interests (ISDP, 2018)." It also fosters an image of Beijing as a contributor to world peace and human development. Indeed, it is no mistake that China has engaged in conflict management efforts in parts of Africa, the Middle East, and Myanmar. All of these regions are linchpins along China's BRI. Mediation diplomacy has become a way to promote its political influence, economic interests and self-image as it ascends to become a world power (Chaziza, 2018).

China's role as a third-party mediator in Myanmar's peace process is quite illuminating and marks the culmination of years of incremental steps taken by Beijing to learn the art of conflict management diplomacy in order to advance its geopolitical strategy.

2. China's Distinctive approach

When it comes to conflict management and mediation, Beijing has a distinctive approach that serves not only its national interests but its own political narrative as well. China advertises itself as an honest broker that is without colonial baggage (Chaziza, 2018; Large, 2008; Qian and Wu, 2009) and claims to adheres to a strict policy of non-intervention in other nations' internal affairs. Beijing has attempted to promote an "Asian way" to conflict management or mediation that is non-confrontational, with Confucian values, emphasizing harmonious relationships, all while maintaining a flexible strategy in order to adapt to the changing political environment (Chaziza, 2018; Qian and Wu, 2009).

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Since the early 2000s, China's engagement in Africa has increased dramatically. China's distinctive approach to mediation in Africa is to project the concept of no-strings-attached cooperation and political equality, an approach that stands in stark contrast to the West's more forceful approach (Larger, 2008). Mordechai Chaziza (2018) writes that "China's mediation role is part of a carefully devised conflict management strategy that suits the country's non-intervention policy" and that mediation has become "one of the central pillars of China's foreign policy objectives and practice in the MENA region." (Chaziza, 2018)

China identifies humanitarian assistance as a critical solution to the reduction of conflict and argues that "underdevelopment fuels conflict, and economic development is necessary to a lasting peace (Large, 2008, p. 39)" compelling Beijing to make peace a "core feature in China's official presentation of its purpose in international affairs and Africa (Large, 2008, p. 37)." Thus, China tries to highlight mutual benefit when mediating, telling mediation partners about China's willingness to invest in and deliver effective infrastructural projects. This leads to increased visible peace dividends in places, such as Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Angola at the post-conflict period (Large, 2008, p. 38).

Though Beijing backs the current security architecture of the African Union (AU) and the UN Security Council, China has only been engaged in a limited number of mediation or conflict-resolution endeavors (Large, 2008).

Indeed, China's argument that "underdevelopment fuels conflict" in Africa is the same argument China is making about the underlying causes of conflict in Myanmar, thus Beijing tries to promote the CMEC as solution to conflict in order to convince non-signatories in Myanmar's peace process to sign the NCA.

Cheng Qian and Xiaohui Wu (2009) investigation into the unique role that China played as mediator in the Six Party Talks during the nuclear crisis on the Korean Peninsula in 2006. They delineate that when mediating in a conflict-prone region like Asia, it is critical for the mediator to approach the conflict in an Asian context, and that non-Asian nations who try to mediate in Asia should take notice. This is largely due to the fact that Asian nations historically have an aversion to mediation because it is associated with interference in a nation's affairs. Therefore, they posit that a non-Asian

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mediator must "employ both a realistic strategy and a pragmatic process to accommodate the complex characteristics of country mediation and the region's unique culture of conflict resolution (Qian and Wu, 2009, p. 80)." Beijing's role in the Korean mediation was a hybrid style that incorporated balance between mediation and negotiation. They characterize this hybrid form of mediation as "medinegotiation."

Qian and Wu (2009) explain China has a unique approach as a "neutral and harmony-oriented mediator" embodied the philosophy of "concept of conflict resolution and subsequent mediation behavior" that "can be viewed as Confucian, emphasizing harmonious relationships, a holistic view, a long-term orientation, and coercion-aversion (Qian and Wu, 2009, p. 86)." China was able to "influenc[e] without interfering" in the US and DPRK's internal affairs (Qian and Wu, 2009).

According Qian and Wu (2009), China's principles of mediation method are as follows,

(1) Abide by the principle of non-interference in other countries' internal affairs while maintaining active intervention as dispute escalates.

(2) Stand ready to nudge those being mediated toward action when necessary to advance peaceful negotiations.

(3) Establish an optimal environment to foster communication and reduce hostility between the major parties in dispute.

(4) Serve as an honest broker but remain firm in its own position and cautiously take initiatives to guide the talks.

(5) Advocate a step-by-step approach to the negotiation process.

(6) Aim for the outcome of negotiations to be a give-and-take agreement.

Yang Jiechi, Director of the Office of the Foreign Affairs Commission of the CPC Central Committee said, "We actively pursued multilateral diplomacy and played a constructive role in addressing hotspot issues, such as the nuclear issue on the Korean Peninsula (Beijing: World Affairs, 2008)," However, in actuality, very little was accomplished to end the nuclear crisis on the Korean Peninsula. The DPRK gave away nothing substantial while continuing to develop its nuclear arsenal.

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3. China's Self Interests and Mediation

Whether Beijing really adheres to these values and strategies is another story. As described before, it is obvious that the dependence on natural resources and resource-extraction has caused China to be caught up in armed conflict. "China's attitude to conflict resolution in Africa reflects contrasting policy priorities and economic interests and only engages on its own terms for its own ends," especially when its interests are jeopardized (Large, 2008, p. 37). It seems to be more about managing conflict rather than the resolution of conflict as China tries to fulfill its political and economic ambitions through what appears to be amalgam of mediation and negotiation.

Figure 2 China's trans-Myanmar Oil and Gas Pipelines
Source: Chen (2018). Chen (2018). "Globalisation Redux: Can China's Inside-Out Strategy Catalyse Economic Development Across its Asian Borderlands and Beyond."

Although China has been participating in conflict management in Africa and Asia, since the early 2000s, its role as a mediator has grown dramatically. President Xi Jingping announced the launch of the BRI in 2013. Beijing's participation in conflict management efforts have become a significant part of China's geopolitical strategy which

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permits Beijing to advance its own interests abroad, while protecting its domestic interests, "expanding commerce and trade, and by extension its long-term access to resources, contracts, and markets (Chaziza, 2018)."

Helena Legarda and Marie Hoffmann (2017) suggest there is a clear connection between the uptick in mediation and the launch of the BRI. They suggest China's growing involvement in conflict mediation is aimed at creating "stability along the Belt and Road to allow for the smooth flow of trade and investment through unstable regions and to improve the security conditions for Chinese citizens and companies living and operating there (Legarda and Hoffmann, 2017)." Therefore, it is no surprise that the majority of China's conflict mediation efforts are taking place in countries that are resource-rich and along the BRI.

Although Beijing still complies with the principle of non-intervention in other nations' internal affairs, it has altered its interpretation of its own fundamental principle when it comes to conflict management, alleging "the role of a peace broker is a 'legitimate way' of intervening in the domestic politics of other states when it feels its own national economic interests are at [stake, and thus] allowing Beijing to project its political influence in the region, without going against its traditional guiding principles (Wang, 2017; Chaziza, 2018, p. 30)."

China's approach to conflict management and mediation appears to be largely driven out of a need to promote its political influence and economic interests both on the international stage and domestically. At the same time, its conflict management efforts help bolster its self-image as a responsible member of the world community as it ascends to become a world power (Legarda and Hoffmann, 2017). In the current peace process in Myanmar, China appears to be heavily biased and seems to put its own political and economic interests before those of either the stakeholders in Myanmar's peace process or the region as a whole.

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4. China's approach to Mediation

Beijing's nuanced approach to its own "non-intervention principle framework" and efforts to include all stakeholders is quickly becoming a signature strategy that can be seen in its past and current mediation efforts in Africa, Afghanistan, and the Korean Peninsula (Qian and Wu, 2009; Chaziza, 2018), as well as more recently in Myanmar's ongoing peace process, where Beijing has leveraged Naypyidaw to accept EAOs that were previously excluded from the peace process.

China often involves itself in "higher international visibility" conflicts that are already being managed by a multinational effort. This move allows Beijing to take credit for their participation in the resolving of the conflict and to be seen as a responsible global actor. (Legarda and Hoffmann, 2017)

China has developed a flexible non-confrontational approach to conflict management and peace brokering, one that does not conflict with its principle of non-intervention, limits its participation to "multilateral peace mediation," and allows for all concerned stakeholders to participate in the peace process. Accordingly, Beijing has gradually stepped up its participation in conflict management and mediation efforts and promoted itself as an "honest broker" and an alternative peace maker to the Western nations.

In contrast to the findings of Qian and Wu (2009) that China's approach is of a "neutral and harmony-oriented mediator" or "*medinegotiation,"* Legarda and Hoffmann find that China relies on a traditional approach to mediation, one "which revolves around high-profile mediation tools that target the top levels of governments, including host diplomacy activities, top-level visits and special envoys (Legarda and Hoffmann, 2017)." They characterize Beijing's approach as "one that does not follow international good practice" nothing that "Beijing has failed to produce a long-term sustainable peace process in any of the conflicts it is involved in."

Regardless of how scholars want to label Chinese mediation, there are a few things that are abundantly clear when it comes to China's approach. First, Beijing's reinterpretation of its non-intervention principle and its methods of mediation has

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allowed China to participate in more conflict mediation roles. Second, Beijing has prioritized conflict management as a way to project its nation's interests, such as energy security, raw materials, markets, and the BRI. Third, Beijing is using its involvement in conflict mediation to bolster its image on the world stage as an honest broker for peace.

Section 2: The PRC's salient influence

Although China claims to pursue a principle of non-interference in other nations' internal affairs, in actuality, China has been a player in Myanmar's internal affairs for a quite some time (Large, 2008; Qian and Wu, 2009; Sun, 2017; Chaziza, 2018; ISDP, 2018). Whether it has been residual fighting from the Chinese civil war that spilled over into northern Myanmar in the early 1950s or the unconditional support of the CPB in the 1960s (Lintner, 1998, 2019) or its relationship with the EAOs along its southern border after the collapse of the CPB, China has been present in Myanmar's internal conflicts. However, China's involvement in Myanmar's current peace process is most illuminating and leaves many to wonder why China's influence in the process has been more salient than that of other members of the international community.

It was not too long ago that China was seen to be losing its influence in Myanmar when former President Thein Sein began initiating a host of political reforms including re-engagement the West, especially the United States, reconciling the nation's various civil conflicts with the creation of an NCA, and the indefinite suspension of the Myitsone Dam project in Kachin due to public outcry over Chinese investment (Fuller, 2011).

However, things seem to have changed since the Thein Sein administration ended. China has regained its influence in Myanmar through recalibrating its multilateral strategy (Kyin, 2018). Unlike the international community, which appears to have lost its influence due to fragmentation or disinterest in Myanmar's peace process, China's influence has been conspicuous. The reason why China's influence has been so pertinent has to do with the restructuring of its multilateral strategy that started about five years ago.

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China's strategy is clearly multi-faceted and involves a wide array of political and domestic actors who are in lock-step with one another and fully behind the pursuit of Beijing's geopolitical and economic ambitions through China's BRI (Kyin 2018). These actors represent the government, the party, the military, business interests, and local Yunnan authorities. (Sun, 2017; Kyin, 2018)

China's multilateral strategy employs both soft and sharp power combined with a sustained campaign of diplomatic engagements (Kyin, 2018). This strategy allows China to maintain its old relationship with the Tatmadaw and build new ones that target not just State Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi and the NLD, but the citizens of Myanmar as well. At the same time, this strategy permits China to advance its influence while playing an active role in the peace process.

Therefore, when examining why China's influence in the peace process has been more salient, this study must investigate not only "*why*" but "*how*" Beijing has been able to reassert its influence in Myanmar out of a need to protect its geopolitical, economic and domestic ambitions.

In this section, this study analyzes how China's influence in the peace process has possibly been more salient than the international community's influence by briefly looking at the historical events that led Beijing to reassess its strategy in Myanmar, then followed with an investigation into the steps Beijing has taken to reinvigorate its Myanmar engagement strategy to understand how China has been able to exert its influence and even leverage the stakeholders in Myanmar's peace process, all while prioritizing its own geopolitical, economic, and domestic strategies.

1. Historical Background

Starting in 2008, the military government of Myanmar, known as The State of Peace and Development Council, announced the draft of a new constitution and the return to democratic rule (Reuters, 2008). In 2010, Aung San Suu Kyi was released from house arrest and an election was held ending nearly 50 years of military rule. Then, the newly elected president Thein Sein made sweeping political and economic reforms (Asia

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Society, 2013; Clapp, 2015, Asia Foundation, 2017). At the same time, the government began to make steps in its rapprochement to the West, especially the United States, in order to bring Myanmar back in from the cold and end crippling sanctions against the country (Sun, 2014).

Beijing was caught off-guard when a 17-year ceasefire agreement between the military and KIA broke down reigniting the conflict along China's southern border (Lintner, 2012). At the same time, a rising anti-Chinese sentiment amongst civil society over Chinese-backed mega projects caused President Thien Sien to announce the indefinite suspension of one of these projects, the Myitsone Dam in Kachin State (BBC, 2011).

Between 2011 and 2014, the Thein Sein administration pursued a ceasefire program between the military and various EAOs, garnering 'the support of the international community" marking the beginning of the peace process (Myanmar Times, 2018)." By 2014, the government of Myanmar had signed a number of bilateral ceasefire agreements with EAOs and had drafted the NCA.

On February 9th, 2015, fighting erupted again on China's southern border, this time in the Kokang Self-Administered Zone of Myanmar, when troops loyal to former Kokang leaders Peng Jia Sheng attacked Burmese army outposts near the town of Mawhtike in an attempt to retake the Kokang Self-Administered Zone (TNI, 2016). This sent alarm bells ringing once again in Beijing.

By October 15, 2015, eight out of 17 EAOs had signed the NCA. The other 12 groups, including three groups that were excluded from taking part in the NCA, opted not to sign the agreement. Three weeks later, general elections were held in November, with the NDL winning by a landslide. All of these events caused Beijing to reassess and reconfigures its strategy toward Myanmar.

China employed shuttle diplomacy as a means of approach to the peace process. In February of 2013, China hosted a round of talks between the government of Myanmar and the KIA in the border town of Ruili in Yunnan, China (Reuters, 2013). Although this did not lead to the cessation of fighting, however, it did signal that China was taking its

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own unilateral approach to peace, one different from the approach being taken by the greater international community.

In March of that year, China also made adjustments to its diplomatic engagement strategy by appointing Wang Yinfang to be China's first Special Envoy on Asian Affairs (TNI, 2016; Khin, 2018) in order for Beijing to maintain close contact with the government of Myanmar, the Tatmadaw and the EAOs. In 2015, after renewed fighting broke out along the border in the Kokang region adjacent to the China's Yunnan Province, Wang Yinfang was quickly replaced by Sun Guoxiang (Lintner, 2016).

2. The Reasons Why China is More Salient

(1) Multi-layered Approach

As mentioned previously, China has employed a "multi-layered approach" when dealing with not only the government and Tatmadaw but with the EAOs along China's southern border (Lintner, 2016; Sun, 2017; Khin, 2018a) and the civilian population, which has made China's involvement in the peace process almost indispensable. By engaging with the EAOs and the civilian population, China is building a network of connections or "Guanxi" amongst the different stakeholders in Myanmar's society (Khin, 2018), thus, allowing China to reprioritize its own self-interests while still exerting influence in the peace process.

Lintner (2017) indicates China's polices towards Myanmar have not changed much from its former approach of "government-to-government," "party-to-party," and "military to military" engagement. China's policies are a comprise between diplomatic engagements and the use of "carrot and stick" diplomacy, enabling Beijing to maintain relations with all stakeholders in the peace process while reasserting its own interests in Myanmar. The surface layer paints a picture of an "amicable" and "friendly" relationship between the two nations. The second layer is the political layer dominated by the International Liaison Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (ILD/CPC). The ILD/CPC maintains the relationship between the government and other political parties in Myanmar as well as "various non-state groups, including armed

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resistance organizations like the UWSA, which serve China's long-term strategic and economic interests (Lintner 2017)." The People's Liberation Army (PLA) makes up the final layer of this engagement policy. Through the PLA, China maintains relations with not just the Tatmadaw but the EAOs along its southern border, especially the UWSA, which has benefited from PLA arms sales through its relations with the CPC's "party-to-party" links (Lintner, 2017). China also maintains relations with FPNCC, a UWSA-led block of seven northern non-signatories to the NCA. The FPNCC brings together more than 80% percent of Myanmar's armed rebels, and none of its members have shown any interest in signing the NCA (Lintner 2019).

Lintner (2017) explains that Beijing's multi-layered approach of "government-to-government" and "party-to-party" relations gives China the ability to engage all major stakeholders and play shuttle diplomacy, all while manipulating the peace process to suite its own interests through leverage and coercion tactics. A militarily "strong UWSA, which sometimes shares its China-supplied arsenal with other EAOs its allied with, serves as a 'stick' in its relationship with Myanmar. Lintner also explains that the "United Wa State Army more or less an extension of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (Linter 2019)" and can be used to apply pressure if the government "strays too close to the West (Linter 2019)." Meanwhile diplomacy and promises of aid, trade and investment are the 'carrot' (Lintner, 2017)."

Khin Khin Kyaw Kyee (2018) posits China's "multi-layered engagement strategy" in a different light, suggesting that it not only encompasses a "government-to-government," "party-to-party," and "military-to-military" engagement, but is aimed at Myanmar's civilian public. Khin (2018) explains that China's "multi-layered engagement strategy" is a "multi-faceted" campaign that, includes "cultural exchange programs, art exhibitions, charitable and social welfare initiatives, media campaigns and the provision of scholarships for students and civil servants (Khin, 2018a)." The strategy is steeped in the art of building "Guanxi" amongst different stakeholders in Myanmar's society in order to change their perception of China and influence those "who possess the potential for advancing Chinese interests (Khin, 2018a)."

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This massive and highly targeted campaign of soft power seeks to engage a wide array of selected actors, including government officials, high-ranking members of the Tatmadaw, members of both Bamar and non-Bamar political parties, journalists, religious leaders, civil society organizations, member of the public and academics. The most prevalent way in which China engages these stakeholders is through state-sponsored "exposure trips, short-term capacity building trainings, study tours and friendship visits to China (Khin, 2018a)." These "exposure trips" are also hosted by different states-sponsored organizations such as the China NGO Network for International Exchange and the ILD/CPC (Khin, 2018a). During these exchange visits, China is able to show off its economic progress and tie it to its own model of governance. The goal behind these trips is to impress upon the participants that the China's model of governance and economic development is the best way for Myanmar to develop both politically and economically. (Khin, 2018a)

There are three objectives to China's multi-layered engagement strategy, including "generat[ing] local support for China's economic and geo strategic interests in Myanmar, promot[ing] a Chinese model of governance and economic development, and lastly [using] to use local networks in Myanmar to advance broader interests that include generating support for the CPC and its territorial claims in the South China Sea (Khin, 2018a, p. 9)."

When these objectives are broken down, it becomes quite clear who China is trying to target and influence. For example, much of China's geostrategic and economic interests in Myanmar are centered on the CMEC, a component of China's massive BRI, which is designed to link Yunnan Province of China with the deep-sea port and special economic zone of Kyaukphyu. Although the government and the EAOs, especially those along the Chinese border currently engaged in fighting with the Tatmadaw, have expressed their support for the CMEC, there are still many who remain skeptical of China's intentions and have the ability to voice their opinions. Therefore, it is imperative for China to try to and mend fences amongst those who have a negative view of Chinese-backed infrastructure projects.

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At the same time, Beijing must also try to win support from those members of civil society who are non-Burmese and live in Kachin, Shan, and Rakhine States, where many of these investment projects will be initiated. These ethnically dominated states also happen to be where much of the fighting between the Tatmadaw and EAOs is currently taking place. The public in these states want to see the fighting end and want investments in their infrastructure but they remain wary of Chinese-backed mega-projects.

In the face of growing public concern, Beijing seems to have cultivated a good relationship with Aung San Suu Kyi and the NLD. Aung San Suu Kyi has expressed that China and Myanmar must maintain a good relationship (Khin, 2018a; USIP, 2018), and it is her belief that Myanmar's participation in the BRI is the answer to Myanmar's own infrastructure problems and lagging economic growth. The recent signing of a "1 billion Yuan (225.39 billion Kyats, or approximately US$148 millions) grant for socioeconomic development projects under an economic and technical cooperation agreement" is a proof of the their growing relationship between China and the NLD-led government of Myanmar (Lwin, 2019b).

According to our interviewee, Khin Khin Kyaw Kye, head of the China desk and the program coordinator for Institute for Strategy and Policy- Myanmar,

> *"Although Beijing had has not convinced Myanmar to give up its democratic system, it has been able to take advantage of the NLD's inexperience in governance and was able to influence Aung San Suu Kyi to sign a number of bilateral deals with Beijing involving the BRI and the CMEC. The most troubling is these deals have yet to be disclosed to the public"*

The exact number of people who have gone on one of these tours is not quite known but Khin says,

> *"In 2017, China invited up to 2000 people from Myanmar and up to 700 from just the NLD party."*

At the same time, China continues to keep up its military-to-military relationship with the Tatmadaw which continues to play a major role in Myanmar politics. In recent year, both the PLA and the Tatmadaw have pledged to explain their cooperation.

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A more recent reason why China's influence may be more salient is due to the fact that China has used its veto power at the UN to protect Myanmar from sanctions over the Rohingya crisis (Reuters, 2017; USIP, 2018). As Khin says,

> *"This act of protecting Myanmar carries some serious credit that China and put Myanmar at the mercy of Chinese influence in the peace process*."

In conclusion, it appears that China's influence has more salient because of its multi-layered polices and multi-layered engagement strategy. Beijing has been able to use this approach to engage not just the NLD government, but a large cross-section of population through a highly targeted campaign of soft power. Through outreach to the citizens of Myanmar, Beijing has been able to positively affect its relationship with the NLD government and the Tatmadaw. The current relationship between Beijing and Naypyidaw is much better than it was under the former government and only seems to be getting better, at least on the surface (USIP, 2018).

While the present situation in Rakhine State has cast Myanmar, the country's military, and Aung San Suu Kyi in a negative light, it has also provided China with a window of opportunity to strengthen the bilateral relationship between the two nations (Ganesan, 2018).

Currently, it appears that China's influence has been more salient than the international community's on the peace process, but this does not mean the NCA will be signed anytime soon. In the meantime, it seems that China's re-established its influence in Myanmar only seems to be pulling Myanmar back into China's sphere of influence.

(2) Local contributor for China's salience – Yunnan

Another reason why China's influence has been possibly more salient than that of the international community and the UN in the current peace process has to do with local actors in Yunnan Province who represent both local business interests and authorities (Sun 2017; Khin 2018b). Since Beijing's influence over border issues and the peace process has grown, the central government has taken into account the interests and concerns of the local Yunnan authorities as they craft their policies (Khin, 2018b), essentially doubling its efforts to increase border security and engage in the peace process

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on both a local and national level.

Yunnan's proximity to Myanmar's Shan and Kachin States of Myanmar makes it of vital importance to China's geo strategic, domestic, and economic interests. It is estimated the border trades between Myanmar and Yunnan is worth around $11billion dollars (Khin, 2018b). Furthermore, Yunnan holds a very important position at the heart of the CMEC and is seen as a land bridge that will connect China to the Indian Ocean, Southeast Asia, and beyond. Therefore, issues such as cross-border trades, border security, and the peace process not only concern central Chinese authorities, but local Yunnan authorities as well.

In order for China to tackle all of these issues, Beijing needs the help of the local authorities in Yunnan. The significance of local authorities' participation cannot be overestimated. When Beijing took a hands-off approach and allowed Yunnan to have greater autonomy over border affairs, local officials regularly communicated with "EAOs through informal channels, personal contacts and local intelligence sources operating at the city, district, county, prefecture, and provincial levels in Yunnan (Khin, 2018b, p. 7)." These local officials also facilitated many of the EAOs' requests for permission to travel across the border, provided Beijing with information, and at the same time, these local actors were able to "manipulate information so that the policies of the central government are more aligned with local interests (Khin, 2018b)."

Since Beijing needs to take local Yunnan authorities' concerns into account, especially economic interests, the central government has to coordinate a policy between the two branches of government. Therefore, Beijing plays the "leading role when addressing issues related to peace and security," at the same time, "does not disregard local interests and encourages participations by local authorities (Khin, 2018b, p. 15)." When the Special Envoy of China, Sun Guoxiang, met with the EAOs, he was accompanied by the Yunnan Province Foreign Affairs Officials, the Deputy Director of the Yunnan Public Security Department, and other local officials (Khin, 2018b, p. 13). Local authorities then can "perform roles that are difficult for the central government to execute because of its concern for diplomatic and reputational issues over the border region and peace process (Khin, 2018b, p. 15)."

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Large parts of Yunnan's southern border are directly across from EAO-controlled territory where both legal and illegal commerce takes place. While China needs natural resources from Myanmar to keep its economic engine going, it also has to contend with illegal activities such as drug trafficking, human trafficking, illegal immigration, illegal wildlife trafficking and gambling, all of which pose a problem for local authorities. Along with illicit cross-border trades, China has had to contend with outbreaks of violence on its border. After fighting broke out along the border following the 2009 Kokang incident, and the renewed fighting began in Kachin State in 2011, sending thousands of refugees across the border into China, and Xi Jingping's anti-corruption campaign began (Sun 2017), and central authorities began to clamp down on local authorities in Yunnan.

Beijing's recent efforts with border affairs indicate that China's engagement is limited to the peace process while provincial and county authorities continue to play a leading role in the socioeconomic development of Yunnan Province (Khin, 2018b, p. 15).

(3) A leading role of peace process

The last reason why China's influence has been more salient has to do in large part to the way China positioned itself to take a lead role in Myanmar's peace process. Although China was not involved in the beginning stage of Myanmar's peace process, China had long believed that Myanmar's ethnic conflicts and border stability played roles were part in China's geopolitical and economic interests. The Thein Sein government's moves to open up to the West, especially the United States, made China become increasingly wary of the budding friendship. China feared that this could lead to western involvement in Myanmar's peace process (Yhome, 2019).

On February 4, 2013, China took its first steps toward involvement in Myanmar's peace process by hosting a round of talks between the KIO and the Myanmar government in the border town of Ruili, China. China tried to chair the meeting, but both belligerents objected to overtures (Yhome, 2019). However, China still "dictated the terms on who could attend and what should be included in the minutes of the meetings (Yhome, 2019, p. 11)."

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In subsequent meetings the KIO and Myanmar's government, China became more assertive over who could chair or attend the meetings. China continued to block members of the international community from attending, especially the US, even when they were invited by the KIO (Yhome, 2019). This pattern of refusal to let the international community attend meetings only ended when a "compromise was reached, with China agreeing to the participation of the UN as the only international observer (Yhome, 2019, p. 11)."

China continued to object to the international community's participation in following meetings between various EAOs and the government up until the signing of the Nationwide Ceasefire Accord on October 15, 2015, which members of the international community were allowed to attend.

Here, we can clearly see that this marks the beginning of China's influence over the peace process. As Lintner pointed out, this was Beijing's way of reminding Naypyidaw not to move to Washington because China has "means to interfere in its internal conflicts and that it can, and is willing to, step up the pressure (Lintner, 2013)." After the signing of the NCA in 2015 and the Myanmar election followed a month later, Beijing moved onto influencing the newly elected Aung San Suu Kyi and her NLD-led government (Yhome, 2019).

Section 3: China's Success at Filling the Role of a Third-Party Mediator and Mediation Models

In this section, this study begins to answer the question of "*Why has China been successful at filling the role of a third-party mediator in Myanmar's peace process?*" The study not only reviews the literature to analyze China's behaviors, but it also determines which of the two mediation models, the "*Outsider-Neutral Model*" or the "*Insider-Partial Model*," that best encapsulates the role China plays in Myanmar's peace process by examining of the elements that make up each model.

This study defined that mediation is "a system of exchange and social influence whose parameters are the actors, their communication, expectations, experience,

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resources, interests, and the situation within which they all find themselves (Bercovitch and Gartner, 2009, p. 270).” The process must be non-binding, voluntary, and accepted by all disputants. The job of the third-party is to assist, not to impose a solution between the disputants on their quest for peace.

1. Outsider-Neutral Model

As stated earlier in this study, there has been a lot of credence placed on both the “Outsider-Neutral Model” and the “Insider-Partial Model” when it comes to the role of a third-party mediator. However, in the case of China’s role as a third-party mediator in Myanmar’s peace process, the “Outsider-Neutral Model” is less helpful in explaining China’s role for the followed reasons:

(1) The core of this model is the existence of a neutral mediator or third party

As established earlier, China is far from unbiased and has its own objectives in Myanmar, which include its geopolitical, geo strategic, national interests, border security and an economic interest in the for of the CMEC (Sun, 2017; Khin, 2018a). No matter what happens in the peace process, it is of major concern to China. China cannot afford to be neutral and therefore must be try and influence the peace process.

(2) The third-party or mediator maintains distance from, and is not connected to, either of the parties in the dispute

China has a conflict of interest if it wants to be seen as an “Outsider-Neutral” mediator. It is not just China’s relationship with the government, the Tatmadaw and the EAOs along its southern border, it is also Chinese actors who act independently of Beijing who can hurt the chances of China playing the role of “Outsider-Neutral” mediator. As established in section 2.4, Beijing not only has economic interest in Myanmar, but “there are also other Chinese actors or special interest groups who have been accused of fueling conflict in northern Myanmar by engaging in natural resource extraction, illicit activates and other economic projects in the conflict area, thereby generating revenue for Myanmar’s various conflict actors (USIP, 2018, p. 16). This unintentionally draws China into the conflict and prevents China from being truly distanced from any of the parties in the dispute.

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(3) The third party does not have a vested interest in any outcome except settlement, and does not expect any special reward from either side

It would be an understatement to say that China as a third-party mediator does not have a vested interest in the any outcome of Myanmar's peace process. If the peace process were to fall apart, it will be much harder to initiate the CMEC part of the BRI. China International Trust and Investment Corporation (CITIC) won contracts for two projects in 2015 (The Irrawaddy, 2018) and has taken a 70% stake in these projects. These include the deep-sea port project in Kyaukphyu is valued at $7.3 billion and the special economic zone, which is valued at $1.3 billion (The Irrawaddy, 2018). These project, however, are just the tip of the iceberg that also includes the road, rail, and pipeline network that is slated to move energy and other materials and supplies from the Bay of Bengal through Myanmar to Yunnan Province (USIP, 2018, p. 5), a route which is currently impeded by ongoing intrastate fighting in Myanmar. (Lwin, 2019)

Obviously, China has a vested interest in any outcome in the settlement of the NCA, and does expect reward for their participation. Indeed, China's merger of peace and stability in Myanmar with its own geopolitical, geostrategic, economic, and border security issues (Sun 2017; Khin, 2018) makes any outcome of the peace process of extreme interest to Beijing. As Paul Keenan states:

> *"China is primarily only focused on a peace that directly affects them and not necessarily the country as a whole. While China recognizes that peace throughout the country is advantageous it is primarily concerned with groups that are likely to impact their long-term strategic goals."*

(4) The neutrality of the mediator primarily lies in their professional role, position, and function

China is acting in a professional capacity, but by no means is China neutral. There is just too much at stake for China. Furthermore, China hopes its participation will enhance its image of being an honest broker for peace.

In sum, after reviewing the four elements of this "Outsider-neutral Model," it is abundantly clear that China's role as a mediator in Myanmar's peace process does not fit

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this model.

First, China is not neutral and has connections with the Tatmadaw and the government of Myanmar. At the same time, China has had a long-standing relationships with many of the EAOs along the China/Myanmar border, especially, the UWAS, MNDAA and NDAA, who were once part of the CPB before they staged a mutiny in 1989 and formed their own groups. China also has a cordial relationship with the KIA and KIO, but not to the same extent as the members of the former CPB. It is even speculated that the formation of the FPNCC negotiating block due to China influence.

Second, China has a vested interest in the outcome of any settlement due to its proposed economic investment in CMEC, which is a part of China's ambitious BRI. Without peace in Myanmar, the CMEC and BRI may have considerable trouble being implemented. That is not to say China is not playing a professional role or functioning as a trusted mediator, simply that China's involvement does not fit the "Outsider-Neutral Model."

2. Insider-Partial Model

Now this study draws its attention to the "Insider-Partial Model." Again, this study looks at each of the elements that make up the "Insider-Partial Model" to demonstrate if China actually fits the "Insider-Partial Model" of mediation.

(1) The third party or mediator is "from within the conflict"

At first glance this element seems to suggest that the third-party mediator must be from within the conflict to qualify it as being a mediator. However, the model does not fully explain what is meant by "from within the conflict." Does this mean the third-party mediator must be engaged in or formally engaged in the fighting? Or does it mean a member of civil society who has been caught up in the conflict?

In the Myanmar case, China is not from within the conflict as a member of civil society or disputant in the current conflict between the government of Myanmar the Tatmadaw or the EAOs along its southern border.

However, based on the perspective of Melin and Svensson (2009), it is quite clear that China is "from within the conflict" due to its historical relationship between the

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EAOs along its southern border, Especially the UWAS, MNDAA, NDAA, NDA-K and to a lesser extent the KIA. As for the UWAS, MNDAA, NDAA and NDA-K, their relationships with China stem from the days of when China gave unabated support to the CPB. These relationships continued after the 1989 mutiny that brought down the CPB. China continued to have a relationship with these groups either economic and/or a military to military, government to government, party to party especially in the case of the UWSA, the largest of the 4 EAOs who broke away from the CPB. Many of which has been stated earlier in this study.

Dr. Enze Han from the Department of Politics and Public Administration at the in University of Hong Kong, who studies politics of state formation in the borderland area between China, Myanmar and Thailand, explains that China exhibits the characteristics of an "Insider-Partial" mediator when examined through historical, economic, and sovereignty perspectives. He discloses that China is "not neutral" and is "one of the players" in the peace process. He explains:

> *"China's involvement is not due to "China exerting themselves" into the peace process but rather due to China's historical and economic relations with Myanmar as the reason for their involvement in the peace process."*
>
> *"… when we look at the EAOs in the Northern Myanmar, we sometimes take a very clear approach to sovereignty and territory and think the northern EAOs are definitely Burmese but they are non- Burmese and nowadays many scholars look at sovereignty as degraded and there are lots of different levels and degrees and obviously in those areas in Myanmar, sovereignty is much less and there is lots of overlaps in terms of Chinese influence in the region both historical as well as contemporary."*

Indeed, anyone who has been to northern Myanmar can see China's historical and economic influence everywhere. Therefore, China is "from within the conflict." Another point that Han makes speaks right to the second element of "acceptability of the mediator." That a mediator's acceptability is not mutually exclusive and therefore China's role as a mediator is not just accepted by the EAOs in the north but by the government and the Tatmadaw as well because of their historical relations with China.

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(2) The acceptability of the mediator depends on its connectedness and trusted relationship with the conflicting parties

Khin explains that China's acceptability as mediator among conflicting parties is due to their dependence on China, which makes them quite helpless. Khin writes:

> *"China exerts tremendous pressure on the all the stakeholders, including the government of Myanmar and the Tatmadaw to comply. Therefore, China's mediation is more about pressuring the stakeholders into a deal that China can benefit from. China's pressure comes in the form of access to China and economic leverage that China can apply especially to the EAOs alone its southern border. For these EAOs, China is an economic life line. For instance, China can close the border, restrict the movements of their people from entering China or curtail economic activities like trade."*

Although China has the ability to apply pressure on the stakeholders, Khin says,

> *"It doesn't mean that China has the ability to make the outcome what it wants but it holds a large amount of sway."*

(3) The mediator must live with the consequences of their bargaining in the post-negotiation period

This element is very interesting because when it comes to China's involvement in Myanmar's peace process, much of literatures indicate that China is not necessarily interested in peace as much as it is interested in influencing the government of Myanmar and pursuing its own geostrategic and economic interests inside Myanmar. In fact, as Sun (2017) states "Beijing does not necessarily believe that comprehensive peace is attainable for the foreseeable future (Sun, 2017, p. 1)." This has been echoed by those who were interviewed for this study. This is yet another indication that China has prioritized its own interests ahead of the peace process and therefore will be happy with a ceasefire as long as it does not interfere with its geopolitical ambitions and the CMEC. As Paul Keenan states:

> *"China just wants the country to be stable. They don't want conflict next door. The peace process itself has to be dealt with by the ethnic leaders. They don't care*

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so much about the political dialogue that comes after the signing of the ceasefire. If you give KIO political or economic right's, it's not going to affect China."

Keenan goes on the explain that if the whole peace process were to collapse and everyone goes back to fighting,

"It might be better for China because they might get their dams (and other infrastructure projects) cause by that time if everyone is fighting, the Myanmar government is going to need some money. Either way China is going to benefit one way or another."

David Mathieson, an independent analyst on Myanmar, posits that no matter what the consequences are, China is prepared to get something out of the peace process. He defines China's approach to the mediation process as Realpolitik or the pursuit of pragmatic policies, one that will enable China to live with the consequences of their actions in the post-negotiation period. As Mathieson says,

"China wants what it wants and may come out of this blood but they will win."

(4) The mediator should rely on interpersonal communication as a way to reach consensus in a traditional cultural setting

It is quite evident that China has had a long-standing interpersonal relationship with the government, the Tatmadaw and the EAOs along its southern border. China has used shuttle diplomacy to host meetings between the parties in Kunming, the capital of Yunnan, and in the border town of Ruili. As pointed out by Khin (2018), the Representatives from Yunnan Province Foreign Affair Office, the Deputy Director of Yunnan Public Security Department, and the other state and local officials accompanied Special Envoy Sun Guoxiang, during these meetings. China also sends these same representatives to FNPCC meetings hosted by the UWSP in Pangkham, the defector capital of Wa State,. Special Envoy Sun Guoxiang was even presented at the most recent 30th anniversary of Wa State (The Irrawaddy, 2019).

Obviously, China does have an interpersonal relationship with the stakeholders, but there is no indication that China tried to approach mediation in a "traditional cultural setting" that reflects Burmese culture or the culture of one of the EAOs. This element

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seems to need further explanation as to what constitutes "traditional cultural setting". Furthermore, it cannot even be said that China tries to promote "an Asian way to mediation that is non-confrontational, with Confucian values, emphasizing harmonious relationships, all while maintaining a flexible strategy in order to adapt to the changing political environment (Qian and Wu, 2009; Chaziza, 2018). Those who were interviewed for this study suggest that China's approach is confrontational and more like bullying in the way it pushes the stakeholders to attend meetings and even at meetings.

As Tom Kramer, a researcher for Transnational Institute, explains:

> *"China may rely on its interpersonal relationship for communication but what is really going on is different. China may host meetings in Ruili and Kunming but they don't do informal meetings and they don't shuttle back and forth to give opinions, there is nothing like that going on that is not Chinese style. There is something failing in the negotiations. What you don't have anymore are these informal meetings like you had (when the Myanmar peace center was open) before you had meetings where you talk about what can be and the position, you negotiated first that is not what is happening. If China wants to be a peacemaker, they could do this and they could explore things and bring people together. I don't see that happening at all. And the groups don't like it, they see China as a bully"*

It seems that these scholars and experts who participated in this study all agree that China does not mediate as so much as it pushes stakeholders. Furthermore, this study finds that China's over all tactics are no different from other Western nations mediation behaviors. The fourth element may not exactly fit China's current modus operandi, but at the same time it does not mean China is not an "Insider-Partial" mediator.

Consequently, China does fit all of the elements of the "Insider Partial Model" but the most troubling seems to be the fourth element: "The mediator should rely on interpersonal communication a way to reach consensus in a traditional cultural setting." The most troubling part of this element is not the uses of interpersonal communication but the part about "traditional cultural setting". This part seems to be very vague. There does not seem to be any way to define this part. In Myanmar, there are 153 ethnic groups officially recognized by the Myanmar government. So does this mean that China

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communicates with each stakeholder in their own "traditional cultural setting"?

With that being said, there is no evidence that China communicates with the stakeholders in a way that reflects a "traditional cultural settings". As for their tactic of using "carrots and sticks", pushing or bullying stakeholders, there is nothing in the "Insider-Partial Model" or in Chapter 2, the literature review of this study that suggests a third party mediator cannot use these tactics. As Frazier and Dixon, 2006 posit it, a third-party mediator can impose their will during negotiations to help to alleviate the conflict. When we look at the literature in Chapter 2 on conflict management or mediation, pressuring belligerents seems to be a widely used tactic and is accepted if it means that an agreement is reached. Once the agreement is reached, no matter if it succeeds past the "treacherous transition period" or collapses in a matter of days, the mediator can claim success and say they accomplished something (Rothchild, 2002).

In sum, this study can say for sure based on the information collect that China fits the "Insider Partial Model".

Section 4: The current state of the peace process

As this study has demonstrated, China has emerged as a very unique player in Myanmar's peace process. One that is part "Insider-Partial" mediator and part stakeholder due to not just its historical, cultural, and economic linkages, but it's geopolitical, geostrategic, and economic strategies as well. Over these years, China has cultivated long-standing relationships with the Tatmadaw and now with the democratically elected NLD government. It also has a nuanced relationship with the EAOs along its southern border, which are the strongest of all the EAOs in Myanmar, in terms of military capabilities. These same EAOs are also non-signatories to the NCA and have formed their own negotiating block, the FPNCC, which has called for the revamping of the NCA. As many scholars and experts in Myanmar have pointed out, that China's geostrategic and economic interests, as well as the need for stability along its southern border, are guiding China's involvement in Myanmar's peace process. It is quite evident that China will stop at nothing to make itself an indispensable player by keeping

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the international community, especially the United States, away from its southern border and from influencing Myanmar's peace process.

Currently, the peace process seems to have all but completely stalled and it appears that many of the signatories and non-signatories to the NCA have become unhappy with the process. The biannual UPC-21CP meetings, started by State Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi, are not happening as scheduled, and the political negotiation process the signatories to the NCA are taking part in order to get the NCA ratified have gone nowhere. This is evident due to not only to signatories like the KNU who temporarily stepping back from the political negotiation phase of peace process (Nyein, 2018a), but the resignation in March of 2019 of the KNU's Mutu Say Poe and Yawd Serk of the RCSS, who are the chairman and vice chairman of the signatories' Peace Process Steering Team. The Peace Process Steering Team is a negotiating block made up of the 10 signatories to the NCA. It is designed to handle the peace negotiation period between the government and the Tatmadaw. Mutu Say Poe and Yawd Serk resigned because they believe the peace negotiation period had "deviated from the path set by the NCA (Lintner, 2019a)." The significant of the resignations cannot be overstated because these men represent two EAOs with a considerable number of troops.

As for the non-signatories, continued fighting in Kachin, Shan and in Rakhine, States have only added to distrust between the government, Tatmadaw, and the non-signatory EAOs. Furthermore, the reluctances of the members of the FNPCC who have stated that they are unwilling to sign the NCA due to the lack of inclusivity and its inadequacy in recognizing the political rights of all ethnic nationalities have made the hopes of finding a peaceful solution to 70 years of conflict in Myanmar a distant dream.

The current state of the peace process looks grim, but this has not stopped China from playing the role of a third-party mediator. China continues its multilayer engagement strategy with Myanmar, at the same time promoting peace and fostering continued dialogue. China is able to use "carrots and sticks" to further its influence over the EAOs, and the government, and the Tatmadaw. For example, as previously mentioned, China knows that the northern EAOs depend on access to China and cross-border trade. If they deny access or close down the border trade, this would have

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serious implications for the EAOs, especially those currently engaged in hostilities against the Tatmadaw. As for the government and the Tatmadaw, China uses trade and even aid as a carrot and stick. More recently Beijing's actions at the UN to shield Myanmar from sanctions over the Rohingya crisis have been nothing short of a windfall for China and can also be seen as another form of carrot and stick diplomacy. As Kramer states,

> *"Now anger for the west is driving them away from the west and even are closer to China."*

Beijing knows it has Naypyidaw right where it wants it and Myanmar can do nothing except comply with Beijing's wishes if it does not want to face sanctions. According to Mathieson, China has been clever at playing the game, while the NLD has not.

> *"Clearly China has taken Myanmar seriously then Myanmar has not taken China seriously"*

According to many of the experts interviewed for this study, the EAOs in northern Myanmar do not like China to pushing them around and telling them when to go to meetings. Even the government and Tatmadaw do not care for the pressure that China puts on them.

The EAOs would like to see greater international participation. Ashly South, an independent writer, researcher, and consultant, says that:

> *"There is still a demand for international involvement in the peace process. There is a feeling that having international mediation would level the playing field with the Tatmadaw because they hold lots of power. International mediation would begin to balance against the government great power in the peace process."*

However, it is highly unlikely that China, which appears to hold sway over the peace process and has done a good job at keeping the process from becoming internationalized, would ever let the international community participate.

Paul Keenan adds that many of the ethnic leaders believe the UN is capable of mediating, but, as he points out, "*once you bring in the UN, it slows everything down and*

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doesn't necessarily result in a better deal." It seems for now that the stakeholders are stuck with China for the time being.

Meanwhile, China appears to be in the driver's seat, and it seems to be working for Beijing. China has been able to keep Western influence almost entirely out of the peace process and has have been able to get its way when it comes to taking steps to enhance its economic interests in Myanmar. In December of 2018, China was able to broker a four-month ceasefire between the EAOs and the Tatmadaw in northern Myanmar. Although, this might sound like a step in the right direction, Kramer states the four-month ceasefire "*wasn't for peace*" and that one of the reasons was to allow Chinese engineers to conduct a feasibility survey along the proposed route of the high-speed railroad that is intended to connect the city of Kunming, China, with the proposed deep-sea port of Kyaukphyu on the Bay of Bengal.

Most recently, at the second BRI forum in April of 2018, China and Myanmar signed three of agreements regarding the CMEC that are intended to "promote cooperation in the following areas in line with the Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan: Industry, Transportation, Energy, Agriculture, "Digital Silk Road,", Finance, Tourism, Environmental Protection, People-to-People Exchanges, Science and Technology, Personnel Training, Water Resources and Flood Prevention and Control (Lwin, 2019b)". Furthermore, "China will provide a $1 billion Yuan grant that is intended to be used to support socio-economic development, particularly projects to improve people's livelihoods, feasibility studies for major projects and humanitarian assistance for IDPs in northern Myanmar (Lwin, 2019b)".

As public concerns grow over that fear Myanmar might fall into a debt trap, Khin Khin Kyaw Kyee warns that China's loans and grants, that designed to enhance economic cooperation between Myanmar and China, could, in fact, infringe upon Myanmar's sovereignty. As Khin states:

> *"Debt trap is a means to an end and then debt trap will lead to a diplomatic trap. China is trying to influence the way our policies develop through a range of actions. Influencing government and the people who are in charge of these projects. China has offered Myanmar government its version of Facebook and WeChat to*

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implement mass surveillance in Myanmar. It is a violation of democracy values and human rights. China is promoting its own way of governance in Myanmar."

Khin points out that the implication of the CMEC and BRI will have a serious negative impact on the peace process and the future of peace in Myanmar. She says, *"Chinese narrative is the BRI is the road to peace. China says the root cause of the fighting is lack of development. So BRI will provide the necessary development and lead to peace."*

As Khin further explains, the real issues at the heart of the peace process are political and not the lack of development. The ethnic groups know this and fear these infrastructure projects are a way to exploit their resources and confiscate their land. Additionally, these projects will have huge implications when the stakeholders begin to negotiate the terms of a federal state because all of the projects in the CMEC have been proposed by China. They are in fact designed to meet China's interests and needs rather than those of Myanmar and its people. When they were designed, there was no consideration for a federal system; they were intended for a Unitarian state. They are confusing peace with stability, but peace is far beyond what China wants because the BRI is what China wants.

In fact, it is quite right that the issue of economic incentives or the promises of development is negative contributors to a ceasefire or peace. In the past, Myanmar's military approach to peace has always offered "peace in exchange for rehabilitation and business opportunities (Lintner, 2019a). These incentives were rarely fulfilled after an agreement was made between rebels and the military, regime, and many of these agreements broke down due to broken promises (Lintner, 2019a).

China's belief that the BRI will provide the necessary development and lead to peace is having an opposite effect in northern Shan State and causing some EOAs to fight amongst themselves. As Kramer states:

"In northern Shan State, a lot of fighting between TNLA and SSA and the SS-S/RCSS is in areas with economic interests or where BRI projects are being implemented or maybe in the future. So clearly on the ground people know this is a big thing and groups are vying for territory that could be strategic at some point."

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As for China's mediation approach, it seems to be based on pushing and leveraging the stakeholders. It is hard to say if Beijing is using any of the principles of mediation that Qian and Wu (2009) describe form when China mediated the Six-Party Talks between North Korea and the United States. None of the interviewees spoke about China employing an "Asian Way" to mediation. For example, "Abide by the principle of non-interference in other countries' internal affairs while maintaining active intervention as dispute escalates. As stated earlier by Han, "*many scholars look at sovereignty as degraded"* and in northern Myanmar *"the overlap of Chinese influence in the region both historical as well as contemporary"* injects China right into Myanmar's internal affairs. At the same time, many EAOs feel they are being bullied by China, and that the bullying crosses the line of "nudging those being mediated toward action when necessary to advance peaceful negotiations." China does not seem to be averse to using coercion to get what it wants. Furthermore, there is nothing about China's role in Myanmar's peace process that illustrates that China is being a neutral and harmony-oriented mediator in the Asian context that was presented by Qian and Wu (2009) in the Six-Party Talks during the nuclear crisis on the Korean Peninsula in 2006.

China may portray the image of an honest broker without colonial baggage when it comes to conflict management and mediation, Beijing distinctive approach only serves its national interests and political narrative. China seems to be relying on a traditional approach to mediation, like the one Legarda and Hoffmann define as hosting meetings that target the top levels of governments followed by top-level visits and special envoys (Legarda and Hoffmann, 2017). As mentioned by experts in the previous section of this study, China's approach to the mediation process is guided by Realpolitik or the pursuit of pragmatic policies. They do not do informal meetings and they do not shuttle back and forth to give opinions. Furthermore, Beijing uses access to China and economic leverage to pressure the stakeholders, especially the EAOs.

While China exerts pressure on the stakeholders, it also tries to pressure civil society to stay away from Western diplomats and to accept its mega project tied to the CMEC. In a report by the Irrawaddy in January of 2019, Chinese ambassador Hong Liang met with members of Kachin civil society, and "warned them not to make close friendships with Western diplomats," that they otherwise "would face serious consequences." Furthermore,

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ambassador Hong Liang, "warn[ed] them not to oppose Chinese projects in Kachin State (Lwin, 2019a)."

Khin (2018) posits China's approach best by using an only Burmese metaphor: "holding fire in one hand and water in the other." Essentially it means "China is using the peace process as leverage to further its interests (Khin, 2018, p. 11)".

As the many scholars interviewed or read for this study have said China does not care so much about the peace process as it does stability, Khin furthers this point by saying:

> *"When I talk to scholars or policy influencers in China, they all know that peace is impossible in the near future. So what they are seeing at the moment is stability. Not peace. They don't even consider the possibility of peace in their current policy-making process. All the policy they are making is based on the assumption that peace in Myanmar is impossible in the near future.*

This study has demonstrated that China has been able to inhabit a very unique role in the peace process as an Insider-Partial mediator that makes itself indispensable to all stokeholds involved. China seeks to bring stability along its southern border and this is a major impetus for Beijing's involvement in Myanmar's peace process. By stabilizing its southern border, Beijing hopes to start the ball rolling on the CMEC, which is a part of China's ambitious BRI. All the stakeholders in the peace process have endorsed those China's rollouts of the CMEC.

However, as this study has illustrated, China knows the situation in Myanmar better than the international community and the UN, yet they seem to be ignoring the fact that the real issue at the heart of the peace process is first and foremost a political one. China's economic ambitions are no panacea for the current conflict in Myanmar, and, in fact, are fanning the flames of war amongst some of the EAOs that are jockeying for a better position to reap the spoils of the CMEC.

China's approach to mediation appears to be less about meditation and more about pushing the government and the Tatmadaw into accepting other EAOs as partners in the peace process, like they did at the third UPC-21CP, or coercing them into short-term

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ceasefire, as they did this last December in order to implement a feasibility study on Beijing's geostrategic and economic interests in Myanmar. However, unlike the international community, China is able to use its multilayer approach to engage with stakeholders, send diplomats to attend talks in Naypyidaw, and host meetings in Kunming and in other parts of China.

Furthermore, China wants the suspended Myitsone Dam back on the table and has been pressuring Kachin civil society to advocate for the reinstatement of the dam project. However, it appears that Beijing might have overplayed its hand after Kachin citizens made it known that ambassador Hong Liang had threatened them. But this may not deter China from trying to get what it wants. As one Western legal consultant who works closely with some of the EAOs said, speaking on condition of anonymity, China understands election cycles and thinks they can get the reinstatement of the dam with this government.

Therefore, when examining what is happening now and the importance of mediation in the current peace process, it appears as if Beijing is really mediating to get what it wants out of Myanmar and the current NLD administration. China's engagement is driven by the need to fulfill its geopolitical, geostatic and economic interests, and as long as its southern border remains stable and free of refugees and illicit activities, it has no interest in finding a solution to the ongoing civil conflicts in Myanmar. This is evident in the fact that other than getting a few EAOs invited to the third UPC-21CP and a four-month ceasefire, China does not have much to show for its mediation efforts. However, when it comes to China's geopolitical, geostrategic and economic interests, Beijing seems to be making great strides.

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CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION

Section 1: Conclusion

In the midst of Myanmar's all-but-failing peace process, China has emerged as a key third-party mediator. China's ability to outpace the international community and the UN to inhabit the role of a third-party mediator is quite illuminating and has left many to wonder if China will be able to help end Myanmar's 70 years of protracted civil conflict and aid the country in finding the peace it so desperately needs. Although this study recognizes the normative issues that many scholars and experts have posited as the guiding force behind China's involvement in Myanmar's peace, such as geopolitical, geostrategic, domestic, and economic interests including the need to see stability along its borders, this study has set out to answer one overarching question: "*Why has China been successful at filling the role of a third-party mediator in Myanmar's peace process while the international community and the UN have failed?"* Furthermore, this study has also proceeded to explore the two existing mediator models the "Outsider-Neutral Model" and the "Insider-Partial Model", in order to determine what kind of third-party mediator role does China really plays in Myanmar's peace process.

This study has determined that China has been successful at filling the role of a third-party mediator in Myanmar's peace process. What this study has been able to demonstrate is that China has been able to "successful inhabit the role of a third party mediator" where the international community and the UN have failed to inhabit the role of a third-party mediator. However, at the time that this study was concluded, China still has yet to successful mediated the signing of Myanmar's NCA by the non-signatory EAOs leading to a cessation of hostilities in Myanmar.

Although China has an official principle of non-interference in other nations' internal affairs, it appears that Beijing is able to work around the principle of non-interference when it believes that its interests are in jeopardy. This has compelled Beijing to make peace a "core feature in China's official presentation of its purpose in

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international affairs (Large, 2008, p. 37).” Therefore, Beijing’s concerns for its economic interests being in jeopardy due to the ongoing conflict in Myanmar have ‘legitimatized’ Beijing’s intervention into the domestic politics of Myanmar without compromising its own principle of non-interference in other nations internal affairs.

This study has shown, China likes to portray its self as an honest broker without colonial baggage, who accepting of all stakeholders when it comes to conflict management and mediation, but when it comes to Myanmar, Beijing distinctive approach only seems to serve its own geopolitical and economic interests and on the interest of Myanmar.

Furthermore, China’s multilateral strategy employs both soft and sharp power combined with a sustained campaign of diplomatic engagements (Kyin, 2018) aimed at not just the stakeholders, but Myanmar’s the civilian population in order to build “Guanxi”(connections) allowing “China to reprioritize its own self-interests” and “exerting influence in peace process” and cultivate relationships with those “who possess the potential for advancing China’s interests (Khin, 2018a).” China targets political parties, journalist, religious leaders, civil society organizations, members of the public and academics through “exposure trips, short-term capacity building training, study tours and friendship visits to China” in order to prove its worth as a trusted mediator (Khin, 2018).”

There are three objectives to China’s “multi-layered engagement strategy”: “generate local support for China’s economic and geostrategic interests in Myanmar, China’s desire to promote a Chinese model of governance and economic development and lastly, to use local networks in Myanmar to advance broader interest that include generating support for the CPC and its territorial claims in the South China Sea. (Khin, 2018, p. 9).”

China’s approach to the mediation process is based on Realpolitik or the pursuit of pragmatic policies. Beijing knows that the NLD government is very inexperienced at governing, and the EAOs do not have the international community to turn to, therefore, China can get away with being pushy and applying pressure as a tactic in its negotiations. Although Beijing tries to foster peace and facilitate dialogues through shuttle diplomacy,

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it seems that some of the stakeholders are unhappy with the pushy tactics. Notwithstanding the deployment of these tactics, Beijing has not been able to push the non-signatories any closer to signing the NCA. They may have gotten the government and the Tatmadaw to accept some of the EAOs who were originally excluded from signing the NCA in 2015 as partners in the peace process and mediated a four-month ceasefire in northern Myanmar. However, a rift still remains between the parties. The only thing Beijing has been able to do is garner more support for the CMEC that is part of the BRI and not actually meditate in the signing of the NCA.

Based on the findings collected by this study, it is quite clear that China's role as a third-party mediator fits the "Insider-Partial Model" and not the "Outsider Neutral Model."

First, China is "not neutral" and is "one of the players" in the peace process due to its unique China's historical, cultural, and economic linkages to Myanmar. As Han has illustrated, there is a great disconnection between the perceptions of sovereignty and the reality in northern Myanmar are quite different. This is due to the fact that the northern EAOs are not ethnically Burmese and do not see themselves as such. Furthermore, in northern Myanmar, China's long influence in the region allows the country to be viewed as being "from within the conflict". In some ways, China could be seen as stakeholders themselves. Thus legitimizing their involvement in the peace process.

Second, China's acceptability as s mediator among conflicting parties is due to not just to Beijing's relationship with the government and the Tatmadaw but also its relationship with the northern EAOs through local actors in Yunnan. China is not just a regional power, but a rising world power and all the stakeholders are economically dependent on China. The stakeholders really do not have anyone else to turn to, allowing China to exerts tremendous pressure through carrots and sticks but as Khin says "it doesn't mean that China has the ability to make the outcome what it wants but it holds a large amount of sway."

Third, China may want Myanmar to be stable, but it does not have invested interests in the political dialogue after all stakeholders have signed the NCA. The political dialogue that follows is up to the stakeholders to decide. China knows that no matter what

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happens in the peace process, they will be one step closer to what they really want, and that is the implementation of the CMEC and a deep-sea port in Kyaukphyu, Rakhine State, with access to the Indian Ocean.

Fourth, China has had a long-standing interpersonal relationship with the government, the Tatmadaw and especially with the EAOs along its southern border. When China hosted a round of ceasefire talks between the KIO and the Myanmar government in the border town of Ruili, China, in February of 2013, it became quite evident that China had the ability to use its interpersonal relationships to play the role of third-party mediator in Myanmar's peace process. China's relationships with the stakeholders and its use of shuttle diplomacy have given Beijing an unparalleled advantage over the international community and the UN in filling the role of a third-party mediator. China's interpersonal relationships further legitimize Beijing's role as a third-party mediator. However, when it comes to "reach[ing] a consensus in a traditional cultural setting," this dimension is hard to explain. What is exactly is meant by "traditional cultural setting"? This is a very vague term and needs further analyzing. However, many of the experts and scholars who participated in this study say the same thing: that China's negation style is heavily reliant on exerting pressure or bullying. The stakeholders may not like this tactic, and it may very well harm the stakeholders' perception of China in the future but that is the least of China's concern. China knows it can get away with it and there is nothing in the "Insider-Partial Model" or the literature from Chapter 2 on conflict management and mediation seems to suggest that the mediator cannot use carrots and sticks, pressure or bullying as leverage or coercion as a tactic in order to get an agreement inked. As Frazier and Dixon (2006) posit, powerful states who are third-party mediators approach mediation throw the realist lens and are not motived by altruistic goals but by their own "foreign policy priorities." They can "impose their will during negotiations" and "help to alleviate the problem (Frazier and Dixon, 2006, p. 402)." Therefore, the use of leverage or coercion as a tactic is seen in a better light if it fosters a ceasefire or peace accord. At the same, when Beijing uses these tactics it demonstrates that China is no different from any other powerful nations who intervenes as a third-party mediator.

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As for the future of a political settlement as part of a comprehensive peace deal in Myanmar, China believes that a comprehensive peace deal is not is attainable in the future. In the meantime, it appears that China will continue the inhabit the role of third-party mediator in order to manipulate the peace process for its own geopolitical, geostrategic, economic, and domestic strategies, whether its role as a third party mediator will help foster the signing of the NCA or not only time will tell.

Section 2: Contributions

This study has aspired to contribute to the growing body of literature on conflict management and mediation by looking at China's ability to inhabit the role of third-party mediator in Myanmar's peace process. It is clear that more than 70 years of civil conflict in Myanmar has made the current peace process a very unique case that should be studied. China's involvement in Myanmar's peace process adds a particular dimension that is rarely seen in the field of conflict management. This due to the way in which China ties peace and stability with its own geopolitical, geostrategic, economic and security issues including the historical, political, cultural, and ethnic ties between China and Myanmar is a truly unparalleled case and begs to be studied. Furthermore, China's knowledge of the conflict in Myanmar and the uses of a multi-layer approach to persuade and manipulate stakeholders for its own interests all while keeping the international community out of what has become a Chinese affair is rather illuminating.

This study believes that it findings on how China has been successful at inhabiting the role of third-party mediator will aid future researchers in their pursuit to understand the current peace process in Myanmar and how it is being managed with little to no involvement from the international community and the UN.

Furthermore, by defining which of the two mediation models, the "Outsider Neutral Model" and the "Insider-Partial Model", China fits into will help not just future research into Myanmar's peace process but research in conflict management and mediation. By demonstrating that China fits the "Insider-Partial Model" and not the "Outsider Neutral Model" we can begin to understanding how an "individuals, states, regional organizations,

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and intergovernmental organizations like the United Nations" through historical, political, cultural, and ethnic ties inhabits the role of third-party mediator, we may be able to understand a mediator's behaviors or even predict if a third-party mediator will be successful at not just filling the role but actually brokering a ceasefire or peace accord.

Section 3: Limitations and Suggestions for Future Study

Although this study collected both first- and second-hand data to draw a conclusion to help it answer the questions of "*Why has China been successful at filling the role of a third-party mediator in Myanmar's peace process while the international community and the UN have failed"?* and explore the two existing mediator models the "Outsider-Neutral Model" and the "Insider-Partial Model", in order to determine "*What kind of third-party mediator role does China really plays in Myanmar's peace process?"* like most studies there were limitations. First of all, limited time and resources impeded the collection of more first-hand data. Second, in this study the author only interviewed eight people; a more comprehensive study, the pool of interviewees could have been drawn from a larger number would require that the pool of interviewees be larger and diverse. Although some experts and scholars in Myanmar participated, there could have been more participants from some of the ethnic groups that are currently fighting with the Tatmadaw. It could have also included participation from the perspectives of China. However, this study did reach out to the Peoples Republic of China's embassy in Yangon unfortunately the request for an interview was not granted.

The author of this study believes that there could be further investigations into China's role as a third-party mediator by testing other hypotheses to make the findings of further study more robust. This means greater inclusion of participants carried out over a longer period of time. A peace process like the one in Myanmar, with its number of stakeholders and diverse actors, does not come along often. Therefore, great attention should be paid to Myanmar's ongoing peace process, and scholars should continue to ask questions and test theories in order to understand what is happening in Myanmar today.

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APPENDIX

1. List of Interview Questions

These questions were collected in March of 2019.

1. Can you explain a little about China's involvement in Myanmar's peace process?
2. Is China a neutral mediator or third party in Myanmar's peace process?
3. What does China expect or not expect in the outcome of settlement, and China special reward?
4. Is China from within the conflict "from within the conflict"?
5. Is China accepted and trusted all stakeholders and why?
6. Can China live with the consequences of their bargaining after the ceasefire agreement has been signed?
7. What is China's interpersonal communication and do they reach a consensus amongst stakeholder in a traditional cultural setting?
8. How was China able to assume the role of third party mediator?
9. Now that China has assumed the role of third party mediator where is international community and the UN's in the peace process?
10. How does China's involvement affect the ongoing conflict, refugees or IDPs along its southern border?

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2. List of Interviewees

#	Name	Affiliation	Interview Time (Hours)	Original of Country
1	Khin Khin Kyaw Kye	Head of the China desk and the program coordinator for Institute for Strategy and Policy- Myanmar	1	Myanmar
2	Enze Han	Department of Politics and Public Administration at The University of Hong Kong	0.5	China
3	David Scott Matheison	Independent Analyst on Myanmar	0.5	Australia
4	Tom Kramer	Researcher for Transnational Institute, and writer and freelance consultant, specializing on ethnic conflict and civil society in Burma	1	Netherlands
5	Paul L. Keenan	Author, Analyst Examining Ethnic Issues in Myanmar	1	United Kingdom
6	Ashly South	Independent writer, researcher and consultant	0.5	United Kingdom
7	Interviewee 7	Lawyer for EAOs	0.5	United States
8	Interviewee 8	US Embassy	0.5	United States

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