RESEARCH ARTICLE

DE-ESCALATION STRATEGIES IN MILITARIZED TERRITORIAL DISPUTES: EXPLORING FACTORS AND PROCESSES FOR DEMILITARIZATION

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Manuscript Info

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Abstract

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Introduction:-

Analyzing the conditions under which militarized territorial disputes transition from a state of heightened military confrontation to de-militarization involves a nuanced examination of certain interrelated factors. In this research, the question "under what conditions do militarized territorial disputes become de-militarized?" inherently delves into the impact of external influences, including international norms, mediation efforts, and diplomatic interventions, on the de-militarization of territorial disputes.

This study is significant because events such as the South China Sea, and the Kashmir conflict, show that the de-militarization of militarized territorial disputes is difficult. Also, militarized territorial disputes are very risky, which can be viewed as the most conflict-prone and fatal disputes, and have a high likelihood of escalating into wars. With respect to militarized territorial disputes, researchers always consider high audience costs and the promotion of hard-liners. However, the relevant study demonstrates that the de-militarization of militarized territorial disputes and stable border agreements are related to negotiation and a dispute settlement mechanism.

In addition, through studying the de-militarization of militarized territorial disputes, scholars find that border agreement and delimitation are important factors that can affect broad interactions between neighboring states. When states try to settle down their militarized territorial disputes through delimitating, the likelihood of transition from militarization to de-militarization will be increased, which can push leaders away from escalated and aggressive military actions.

Therefore, I will focus on some of the current long-standing militarized territorial disputes around the world, and make comparisons among the issues at stake and the possible remedies currently available in order to examine whether militarized territorial disputes can become de-militarized. This research question can provide a series of guidelines for territorial dispute and resolution conflict settlement that current remedies did not offer. By deeply exploring this research question, a new ground for the study of the de-militarization of militarized territorial disputes opened.

The Literature Review:-

In 1993, with the publication of John A. Vasquez – The war puzzle, scholars start to focus on territory as an important source of conflicts (Vasquez, 1993), and the way to address the disputes. Vasquez claimed that the inherent characteristics of territorial disputes tend to make them militarized. Based on Vasquez's theory, Andy Yee applies the bargaining theory of war and the deterrence theory (Yee, 2011) to make an analysis of militarized

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territorial disputes. Also, he points out that the imbalance of power causes states more likely to negotiate, while the balance of power of two hegemonic states is less willing to cooperate. However, he neglects to consider whether there are other effective means that can make militarized territorial disputes become de-militarized, once the negotiation failed. Moreover, Sia SpiliopoulouÅkermark in her article "Demilitarization as a Constructive Tool for Cooperation and Peace" describes that de-militarized the Åland Islands disputes can be achieved by confidence-building measures (Åkermark&Kleemola-Juntunen, 2018).

Similar points of view raised by Holsti et al. argue that militarized territorial disputes become the basis of a great deal of interstate violence in the world (Holsti, 1991, Hensel, 1996, Huth, 1999, and Vasquez, 2009) and cause the emergence of long-standing rivalry (Tir& Diehl, 2002). Huth suggests that the de-militarization of militarized territorial disputes can be resolved by the adoption of a legally binding border or the transfer of territory, which is related to a reduction in subsequent disputes between states (Huth, 2009). So far, although literature that deals with each separate field are abundant, such as how to solve militarized territorial disputes, or the way to de-militarized conflict, no scholars have attempted to bring together a systematic analysis of the conditions that militarized territorial disputes become de-militarized. moreover, Ralf Emmers argues that the changes in three drivers of territorial conflicts, such as sovereignty, natural resource, and power competition, determine whether there is a possibility that militarized territorial disputes can become de-militarized (Emmers, 2009). However, though he examined the prospect for de-militarization of militarized territorial conflict management, he failed to consider the way can make states back down from military confrontations and resolve territorial disputes peacefully. Moreover, Douglas M. Gibler found that different types of territorial disputes in militarized disputes from 1816 to 2001 (Gibler, 2017). However, his datasets about the de-militarization of the militarized territorial dispute did not contain territorial disputes in Central Asia, which means it is not comprehensive and updated. Therefore, my case study of the Sino-Soviet disputes in 1969 about de-militarized territorial disputes can be a supplement to Gibler's research.

Moreover, like de-militarization, de-securitization also can shift the threat from an urgent mode to normal negotiations in the political sphere by giving up unilateral military actions. Thereby, realizing peaceful transitions from militarized territorial disputes to de-militarization.

There are some statistical studies on de-securitization. I will make an analysis of the de-securitization theory by drawing on the revisions of the Copenhagen School's securitization theory, such as Ole Wæver's book Securitization and De-securitization (Wæver, 1993). His theory about how to remove issues from the securitized by actively offering a political solution to the threats, dangers, and grievances in question can be a way to solve the de-securitization of militarized territorial disputes. For instance, by giving up unilateral actions, states that have militarized territorial disputes will turn to a mode of full cooperation and realize de-militarization. Also, Marc Jacobsen and Jeppe Strandsbjerg (Jacobsen &Strandsbjerg, 2017) show that as an act of de-securitization, the Ilulissat Declaration was successfully built on its ability to shift militarized territorial dimension from a securitized domain to a legal-technical regime codified by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Although this shift generates new controversies between the signatory states and the Indigenous peoples of the Arctic, Jacobsen and Strandsbjerg do show how this de-securitization has been successful in minimizing and de-militarized the risk of militarized conflict between states. Also, Snetkov (Snetkov, 2017) suggests that the case of Russia-Chechnya since the year 2000 can illustrate how the de-militarization of militarized territorial dispute plays in the practice of de-securitizations, and how it plays out across objects such as Chechnya, the North Caucasus region and Russia. Bezen B. Coskun in his article "Analyzing de-securitizations: prospects and problems for Israeli–Palestinian reconciliation" discuss Israeli–Palestinian peace education as the means for de-securitization (Coskun, 2008). However, Coskun did not provide viable alternatives of de-militarization to address the situation that the unwillingness of negotiation of both Israel and Palestinian governments to implement a coexistence program.

The main challenge is to devise a theoretical framework that combines the analysis of whether negotiation and a dispute settlement mechanism, with relevant disparate cases, can be used to illustrate under what conditions militarized territorial disputes become de-militarized. One approach is to integrate different levels of analysis in the de-militarization of militarized territorial disputes. As Robert Putnam's two-level games choose variables from the domestic and international levels and observe their relations (Putnam, 1988). In addition, Paul Huth's research about militarized territorial disputes finds that international variables are the major factors pushing states toward de-militarization (Huth, 2009). However, he did not mention and evaluate the frequency and success of a dispute settlement mechanism, or provide relevant evidence about how effective mediation causes de-militarized and peaceful relations. According to Roger Myerson's militarized dispute settlement mechanism, it is important to

establish a neutral mechanism or system, which has no favor to either of the disputants. The aim is to set the agenda, or procedure, of the peace mechanism by mandating, so as to de-militarize the militarized territorial disputes. Moreover, the legalistic/ normative school claims that a state's definition of interests does not merely rely on domestic interests and power distribution. Regional cooperation that is led by a dispute settlement mechanism can reduce military costs and facilitate peace agreements, thereby motivating states to de-militarize territorial disputes as well.

The other approach identifies the theoretical dimensions of the de-militarization of militarized territorial disputes. The economic interests (such as the deprivation of natural resources) and changing power relations (Leach et al., 1999) can cause a qualitative change in militarized territorial disputes. Militarized territorial issues constitute a significant security threat that realism suggests addressing through power politics, such as the use of force, containing alliance as well as armament-building. Also, when states employ power politics, nevertheless, the disputes become worse, thereby causing recurring militarized territorial disputes. Therefore, it is necessary to discuss the conditions that make militarized territorial disputes de-militarized. According to Teschke, the structural school of hegemonic stability associate regime with relative power distribution can be used to explain the qualitative change in the de-militarization of militarized territorial disputes. In asymmetric power relations (Teschke, 2006), such as China and Vietnam, states are more likely to reach a compromise on militarized border disputes. On the contrary, symmetric power relations, such as China and Japan are less likely to de-militarize Senkaku Islands disputes. Also, according to Thorin M. Wright's theory about jointly autocratic dyads (Wright& Diehl, 2016), militarized territorial disputes of jointly autocratic dyads are more likely to de-militarized than mixed regime dyads, since they tend to stay away from the escalation of militarization, and is more willing to back down, and accept stalemate or negotiate outcomes. However, both Teschke and Wright fail to consider the important role of deterrence plays in the demilitarization of militarized territorial disputes. For instance, the Sino-Soviet border conflict in 1969, showed that nuclear deterrence between two great powers can lead to de-militarized. Moreover, Gerson illustrated that deterrence theory puts emphasis on how military threats can lower one state's expected utility for using force by persuading the other that the consequence of a military confrontation will be costly and failed (Gerson, 2010). Although Gerson claimed that deterrence theory is often used in the context of militarized territorial disputes, he did not further develop deterrence theory into the way of de-militarization.

Above all, scholars have identified a confluence of factors at different levels of analysis. Relying on the above analytical framework, I will focus on how qualitative change interacts with, and make an effect on each other. Moreover, building on the present literature and historical observations, I will consider cases such as the Åland Islands dispute, and the Sino-Soviet border conflict in 1969 successfully showed the de-militarization of militarized territorial disputes. Also, because militarized territorial disputes can be viewed as a bargaining process by nature, therefore, single factors or levels of analysis models cannot capture the qualitative changes in the de-militarized process. Therefore, it is necessary to connect the different phases of the process by comparative case studies and process tracing. I plan to use the negotiation and a dispute settlement mechanism, of cases such as the Sino-Soviet border conflict in 1969, and the Åland Islands dispute to analyze under what conditions militarized territorial disputes become de-militarized.

Conceptualization and Case Selection
In this section, I will first make a conceptualization of three main terms, which are "militarized territorial disputes", "de-militarization", and "de-securitization". Secondly, I will identify the dependent variables and independent variables. Thirdly, I will discuss the operationalization of the main concepts. Finally, I will show my cases and provide a rationale for my case selection.

In terms of militarized territorial disputes, a set of historical cases of territorial disputes showed that when the threat, display, and use of military force short of war by one member state is directed toward the territory of another state, which will make the territorial dispute becomes militarized. Militarized territorial disputes often arise in various ways. For instance, a militarized dispute can be triggered by one state's attempt to conquest territory belonging to another state. Another example is the case of an entity seeking independence from one state. For instance, a militarized territory such as Åland Islands can invoke its population's right to autonomy to argue that it constitutes a newly independent state claiming sovereignty over the territory in which said population lives (Seyersted, 1982). Also, a militarized territorial dispute is not the same as an armed conflict or war. The militarized territorial disputes depend on the intensity of the violence and the level of how institutions are organized. However, militarized territorial disputes can lead to armed conflicts, and can further escalate to a war, which is hostility toward one state

officially issued by other states. Also, whether disputes happen between states and bring about the controversy over contested territorial and sovereignty claims, defines a dispute as a territorial dispute versus some other disagreement (Kocs, 1995). More specifically, a territorial dispute is a disagreement between at least two states about which state makes sovereignty claims over a certain area of the territory. While a disagreement is the absence of consensus and consent. In other words, it does not have to happen between states about territorial or sovereignty claims. Also, an enduring rivalry can bring disagreement into conflicts. Therefore, the territorial dispute is a sufficient and unnecessary condition for disagreement.

Demilitarization is an all-encompassing concept, which refers to the destruction of military equipment and weapons, as well as disarmament in the arms control sense (Willett, 1998). In theory, demilitarization can be viewed as a dynamic process that reacts to stimuli, which is determined by negotiation and through a dispute settlement mechanism, that can bring about a qualitative change. Most importantly, whether there is a reduction of state armed forces can be defined as a de-militarized situation. Then, how much reduction in the influence of military forces is needed? According to the report from the national budget office, after examining the effects on the military forces of a substantially smaller defense budget, the officers found that depending on the military strategy adopted, the influence of military forces can be reduced in the following three ways. Firstly, only retains the military strategy of successful deterrence, which depends on combat forces to deter military aggression against one state by reversing military gains in regional conflicts. Also, the influence of military forces needs to be reduced in percentage to a smaller budget (Alesina&Perotti, 1995), on the premise of keeping the same balance of military capability. Secondly, puts emphasis on deterrence through punishment, which is not focusing on the role of the combat military forces in militarized territorial disputes in favor of a dependent on coalition forces in combat operations. It calls for reductions in conventional forces, such as brigade combat teams and fighter aircraft, and increases in long-range strike capabilities, such as cruise missiles, anti-ship missiles, and air defense missiles (Hagen 2010). For instance, associate de-militarization with regional security to realize an equivalent decrease in arms exports and military costs by recipient states. Equipment used for military purposes can be freed without fear of escalation of militarized territorial disputes. Instead, the security of all will increase. The arms exporting states cutting sales will not be punished by way of increases in arms exports of other states. Also, it is important to limit the export of surplus arms through disarmament. Thirdly, centers on maintaining the freedom of navigation in the sea, air, and space worldwide, which can avoid the use of large ground forces to hold territory in militarized disputes in favor of engaging one state at standoff ranges (Huth et al., 2002). The above three means of reduction in the influence of military forces can define demilitarization.

Similar to de-militarization, de-securitization entails the removal or downgrading of a militarized issue from the security agenda, which has a significant meaning in the de-militarization of militarized territorial disputes.

In the process of the de-securitization of militarized territorial disputes, on one hand, factors such as securitizing actor, audience, speech act, and other enabling conditions raised by Copenhagen School can be applied for analysis of the de-securitization process (Wæver, 1993). On the other hand, Andrea Oelsner's analysis can be used to explain the ways that militarized territorial disputes transcend the security language and then are de-securitized. According to Oelsner, such disputes can be de-securitized in two ways. One is that loses its threatening image since both the agent and audience sense a positive change in the nature of the threat. The other is that the agent and audience observe a qualitative change in the relations between them and the securitized threat. Therefore, they begin to trust the fact that there no longer poses a militarized threat. The first mechanism is relatively passive because it barely involves effort on either side of the agent and audience, such as without successful deterrence, which made the militarization of territorial disputes lose its power and capability. While the second mechanism reflects a rather active qualitative change because the relationship between the agent and audience has been reassessed (Jacobsen &Strandsbjerg, 2017). It encourages de-securitization through negotiation and a dispute settlement mechanism. In other words, although failed deterrence can make negative effects on them, de-securitization processes essentially shift the threat from a militarized mode to normal negotiations, such as a ceasefire, and a boundary agreement. Thereby, demilitarization of militarized territorial disputes can become more stable and solid in the absence of security concerns and when disputes have been effectively de-securitized.

Secondly, when it comes to the dependent variables and independent variables, I identify the dependent variable as negotiation and through a dispute settlement mechanism. More specifically, the de-militarization of militarized territorial disputes can be eventually achieved either by means of negotiation or through a dispute settlement mechanism. The former dependent variable comprises the conclusion of a ceasefire, or a boundary treaty setting out

the peace and friendly border agreement on how to delimit the contested militarized territory. The latter dependent variable contains the binding decision of a dispute settlement body, such as the International Court of Justice or an arbitral tribunal, on how to allocate the militarized disputed territory to the disputing states.

Also, the independent variable is the pattern of successful deterrence, that is, a combination of military capabilities and bargaining behavior. Precisely, successful deterrence can prevent peacetime diplomatic and military cooperation from escalating into a militarized confrontation that threatens armed conflict or even war, and make militarized territorial disputes become de-militarized. Also, the core notion of bargaining behavior is that a negotiated outcome will leave both sides better off than if they were involved in militarized disputes.

Thirdly, on one hand, making operationalization of militarized territorial disputes is done by measuring the intensity of the violence and the level of how institutions are organized, to make distinctions between an armed conflict and war. Also, necessity and sufficiency can be used to describe a conditional relationship between the territorial dispute and other disagreements. Moreover, whether effective negotiation and dispute settlement mechanisms have been adopted can be used to identify cases of a militarized territorial dispute and a de-militarized territorial dispute. In detail, when one state displays and uses military force to threaten another state, and without or under failed negotiation and dispute settlement mechanisms, the territorial dispute will become militarized.

On the other hand, in the operationalization of de-militarized territorial disputes, the indicator is how much the reduction in the influence of military forces is needed. For instance, by reducing conventional forces, and the influence of military forces in percentage to a smaller national military budget, bilateral methods such as successful deterrence and bargaining can play major roles in causing negotiation and dispute settlement mechanisms, thereby, further leading to de-militarized territorial disputes.

Case Studies
In this research, the selected cases are the Åland Islands disputes, and the Sino-Soviet border conflict in 1969.

First, the Åland Islands dispute was between Finland and Sweden, it becomes a de-militarized territorial dispute because Sweden and Finland accepted the arbitration of the League of Nations, and agreed to give the Åland Islands to Finland. In other words, through a dispute settlement mechanism (the second dependent variable) – the League of Nations, the militarized Åland Islands dispute becomes de-militarized. Since the dispute is guaranteed by international agreements, thus, Finland cannot change its de-militarized status of the Åland Islands. Also, with the risk of Russia re-establishing a military presence on the archipelago, although Finland and Sweden are not members of the alliance, NATO is playing an active role in regional security, and de-militarized territorial disputes. For instance, NATO enhances the deterrence of land, sea, and air power to protect its allies in the Baltic Sea region (Shlapak& Johnson, 2016). Therefore, although Russia implied its willingness to use nuclear deterrence, it does not make any further military actions, because of the successful deterrence from Finland and NATO.

Second, for the Sino-Soviet border conflict in 1969, clashes occurred on Zhenbao (Damansky) island, causing significant causalities on both sides, and almost turning into a nuclear war. In 1999, by signing the border agreement, the two states formally announced that the militarized territorial disputes had been resolved peacefully. In this case study, the successful nuclear deterrence between China and the Soviet Union caused the de-militarized territorial disputes. According to Huth, a successful deterrence policy attempts to convince an adversary by the threat of military retaliation that resort to the use of military force to achieve foreign policy goals is costly (Huth, 2009). Also, both states were able to deter one another from continuing militarization because of the threat of each state's nuclear capability. Therefore, the Sino-Soviet border conflicts provide support to a case where successful deterrence worked for the de-militarization of militarized territorial disputes through negotiation (by signing the border agreement).

Methodology:-
In this section, I will analyze the data by process tracing, as well as structured and focused comparisons.Also, these two types of analysis fit within my overall post-positivist methodological approach, which is to identify the causal mechanisms of entities. According to KKV, causal mechanisms of social life must be premised on the identification of empirical variables (Kurki, 2006) and uncover the deep structures of social life. Also, Karl Popper preferred to dispense with references to causal analysis and confine the discussion to observable regularities and entailments. In other words, he wishes to set up a relationship between theory and observation one of logic. Highly consistent with

Karl Popper's, KKV also delineates a theory of confirmation that expresses a priori rules for employing observations to assess the truthfulness of hypotheses and the field of inquiry (McKeown, 2004). Scholars can better understand social regulations and put forward proposals for social reform by observing how outcomes are generated through causality, and applying them to the study of social life, privileging mechanisms and processes (Jackson, 2006).

First, process tracing refers to the systematic examination of evidence selected and analyzed based on research questions and assumptions proposed by the researcher (Collier, 2011). Also, process tracing contributes to describing political and social events and evaluating causal inferences.However, the weakness of process tracing is that Bayesian forms of process tracing are theoretically challenging (Collier, 2011). When making evaluations, researchers need to re-program their thinking around levels of confidence in an assumption rather than regarding it as simply true or false. When making the evaluation, researchers need to de-program assumptions when holding about causal inferences.

In addition, the way I analyze the data to develop causal inferences by process tracing aims at examining whether "successful deterrence", that is, a combination of military capabilities and bargaining behavior, can de-militarized territorial disputes, through a dispute settlement mechanism, and by signing a peace treaty, within cases of "the Åland Island" and "the Sino-Soviets border conflict."

Second, the comparative case study is used to analyze the similarities, differences, and patterns across these two cases to examine whether they share a common focus and outcomes (Hladchenko et al., 2020). However, the weakness is that it is important to make systematically and transparently identify and test causal propositions. Another weakness is the limitations of the case study and research bias (Morin et al., 2021). Also, there are two strengths of the comparative case study. On one hand, the structured comparison is about general questions that reflect the research objective, and these questions are raised by each case to conduct and standardize data collection, therefore, it is possible to make systematic comparisons and cumulation of the findings of each case. On the other hand, focused comparison deals merely with specific aspects of the examined historical cases. Also, structured and focused comparisons apply to individual cases equally because they can be joined by additional cases.

Therefore, the way I analyze the data to develop causal inferences by structured and focused comparison that aim at studying historical events such as the Åland Island conflict, and the Sino-Soviets border conflict in 1969, in ways that would produce generic knowledge, that is, whether through successful deterrence, militarized territorial disputes of these two cases can both become de-militarized. moreover, how the different means such as a dispute settlement mechanism, and signing a peace treaty, work in the de-militarized territorial disputes of these two cases. Through analyzing historical phenomena induct the descriptions of each case of a certain phenomenon into a broader theory in order not to depend on a single historical analogy when addressing a new case.

Conclusion:-
In conclusion, the examination of demilitarization and de-securitization within the context of militarized territorial disputes offers valuable insights into the dynamics of conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

The conceptualization of demilitarization provides a foundation for analysis, and can be viewed as a dynamic process, which is characterized by reductions in the influence of military forces. Likewise, de-securitization, involving the removal or downgrading of militarized issues from the security agenda, plays a crucial role in facilitating the transition from conflict to peace.

Also, the case studies of the Åland Islands dispute and the Sino-Soviet border conflict in 1969demonstrate how negotiation, dispute settlement mechanisms, and successful deterrence can lead to the de-militarization of territorial disputes and the promotion of peace and stability.

This research contributes to the broader discourse on conflict resolution and peacebuilding by shedding light on the conditions and processes that facilitate the de-militarization of territorial disputes. By integrating theoretical frameworks with empirical analysis, the research informs policy interventions and fostersa greater understanding of complex geopolitical dynamics.

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