

# UNILATERAL DE-ESCALATION AS AN OUTCOME IN NATIONALIST CONFLICTS: HIGHLIGHTING OBSCURED PROCESSES AND DYNAMICS, AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

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A survey of the literature on the decline of terrorist organizations typically categorizes outcomes as group success, military or policing victories, splintering, negotiated agreements, or ongoing. This paper argues a revised categorization is necessary for dealing with sub-state territorially nationalist conflicts that considers unilateral de-escalation/transformation as a set of processes distinct from those taking place in the context of negotiations, victory, or policing or military ends. Such a categorization could highlight additional contexts, mechanisms, behaviours, and opportunities for states and armed non-state actors alike. This revised categorization could provide a framework for the study of a unilateral de-escalation or transformation, along with the (often) continued pursuit of movement goals, a framework which is absent from current literature.

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## INTRODUCTION

Sub-state nationalist conflicts—those conflicts wherein a section of a population challenge the boundaries of their host state through contentious and often violent means—are typically ongoing and multi-phased. When such conflicts turn violent, the study of these conflicts overlaps greatly with the literature on the study of terrorism. While the definition of terrorism is