



Mercenaries in Asymmetric Conflicts

Scott Fitzsimmons

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In *Mercenaries in Asymmetric Conflicts*, Scott Fitzsimmons argues that small mercenary groups must maintain a superior military culture to successfully engage and defeat more numerous and better-equipped opponents. By developing and applying competing constructivist and neorealist theories of military performance to four asymmetric wars in Angola and the Democratic Republic of Congo, he demonstrates how mercenary groups that strongly emphasize behavioral norms encouraging their personnel to think creatively, make decisions on their own, take personal initiative, communicate accurate information within the group, enhance their technical proficiency, and develop a sense of loyalty to their fellow fighters will exhibit vastly superior tactical capabilities than other mercenary groups. Fitzsimmons also demonstrates that although the victorious mercenary groups occasionally had access to weapon systems unavailable to their opponents, the balance of material capabilities fielded by the opposing military forces had far less influence on the outcome of these asymmetric conflicts than the culturally determined tactical behavior exhibited by their personnel.

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