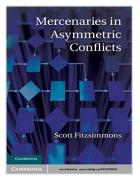
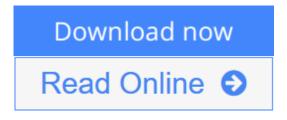
## **Mercenaries in Asymmetric Conflicts**



By Scott Fitzsimmons



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Scott Fitzsimmons argues that small mercenary groups must maintain a superior military culture to successfully engage and defeat larger 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 to other mercenary groups. Fitzsimmons 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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#### Review

"While much has been written on the impact of mercenary forces on colonial and post-colonial wars, Mercenaries in Asymmetric Conflict is special in that it unveils a new explanation of why mercenary groups often win against more numerous and better-equipped opponents. Looking through the lens of competing constructivist and neorealist theories of military efficiency this impressive work demonstrates how mercenary forces that strongly emphasise behaviour norms associated with military performance will display massively superior tactical competency than forces which ignore these norms. This scholarly book should be of great interest to academics and practitioners alike as it sets out to explore new lines of inquiry on a very important subject." - Dr. Christopher Kinsey, Reader in Business and International Security, Defence Studies Department, King's College, London

"Scott Fitzsimmons's book takes us back to the world of mercenary warfare, a field that has been underresearched for a long time. The difference these actors make in asymmetric wars and the conditions that determine their performance are important, fascinating, and timely problems. In his clear and precise analysis, Fitzsimmons goes well beyond the conventional and prejudiced picture of the greedy and bloodthirsty soldier of fortune. His investigative analysis unpacks mercenary military culture, thus significantly extending our knowledge of these actors' behavior and performance. Not only will his accessible work be highly beneficial to academics, but its implications are also of interest to policy makers." - Dr. Ulrich Petersohn, Senior Researcher, ETH Zurich

"Fitzsimmons effectively casts aside the common state-centricity in international relations theory to give mercenary groups their due treatment. In so doing, he usefully adds to the ongoing conversation between neorealism and constructivism. What is more, his well-structured and rich empirical study provides the reader with a framework to contemplate the larger and growing phenomenon of armed non-state actors on the world stage." - Dr. Christopher Spearin, Department of Defence Studies, Canadian Forces College

#### About the Author

Scott Fitzsimmons is Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Postdoctoral Fellow in the University of British Columbia's Department of Political Science.

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