

Jeremiah Rozman

Socializing Militants

How States End Asymmetric Conflict with Non-State Militants

VERNON SERIES IN POLITICS

About the author

Jeremiah Rozman has a PhD in International Relations from the University of Virginia with a focus on strategic/security studies and conflict resolution. His dissertation introduces socialization logic, a novel framework by which states can categorize and work to end asymmetric conflict with non-state opponents. It examines case studies including Israel, the United States, and Russia. His regional expertise is in the Middle East and Russia. He designed and taught an undergraduate course on the Arab-Israeli conflict. He worked as a National Security Analyst for the Association of the US Army from 2018-2021 and is currently a First Lieutenant in the US Army.

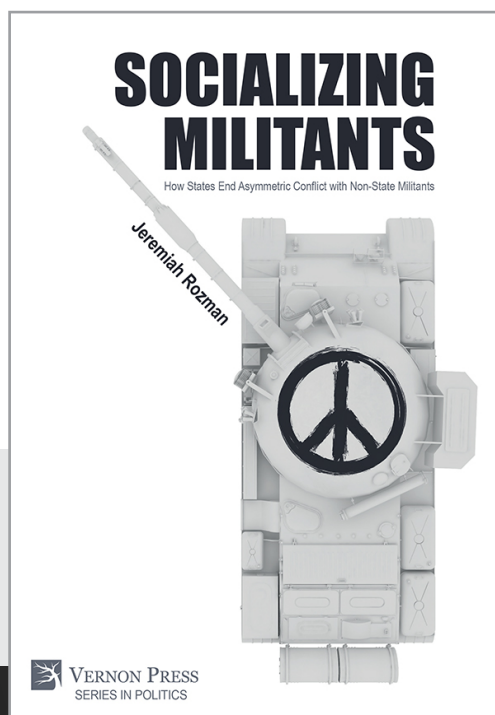
Summary

The twentieth and twenty-first centuries have seen states engaged in long-term conflicts with asymmetrically weaker non-state actors (NSA). States aim to end these conflicts as quickly as possible by combining force and diplomacy to socialize these militants—meaning give them the characteristics of states—in order to make a credible bargain achievable. The militant's characteristics determine the state's optimal strategy.

In times of conflict, politicians and pundits often march out an oft-cited phrase in support of negotiations: "if you want to make peace, you don't talk to your friends. You talk to your enemies." This is only possible when the opponent is willing to make peace under acceptable terms and able to enforce abidance. Some opponents have an ideologically driven fundamental purpose that precludes renouncing violence under terms that a state could accept. Others have reasonable demands and are structured in a way that allows productive negotiations. In other cases, the non-state militant is not yet the type that can be bargained with but can be socialized into this type through a state's correct application of force and diplomacy. I call this "socialization logic." I argue that optimally, states tailor their strategy to socialize with their opponent, to make it possible to successfully negotiate peace. In practice, the state's strategy is often distorted by its internal and external constraints.

Socialization logic provides a novel typology of non-state militants based on how well interstate conflict bargaining concepts can be applied to them. It looks beyond tactics, to systematize a framework for understanding how leaders tailor strategy towards non-state opponents based on their characteristics. Socialization logic examines the NSA type as endogenous to the strategy that the state employs and provides a framework for leaders to design a strategy to end the conflict. Finally, socialization logic synthesizes critical NSA attributes (ideology, leadership structure, and governance function) and the state's strategy (distorted by constraints) into in an interactive model.

Through 41 interviews, primary and secondary source data, I analyze the United States', Russia's and Israel's asymmetric conflicts with militants and demonstrate that socialization logic most comprehensively explains their strategies throughout those conflicts.



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