Peter Campbell. *Military Realism: The Logic and Limits of Force and Innovation in the US Army.* American Military Experience Series. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2019. 390 pp. $50.00, cloth, ISBN 978-0-8262-2184-1.

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Militaries fight the last war. This maxim describes the problem with military doctrine, which is often written using observations and lessons gained in the previous conflict. The widely acknowledged problem with this process is that it promotes a reactive response as strategic environments change. So, it is not a surprise that within military circles, promoting innovation and innovative thinking is very popular; innovation should help militaries overcome issues associated with their reactive stance. But when it comes to how militaries innovate, particularly how militaries innovate on the development of their doctrine, the process is not always clear.

In his new work, *Military Realism: The Logic and Limits of Force and Innovation in the US Army*, Peter Campbell tackles the question of how and why militaries change or retain their doctrine as the strategic and political environments change. Campbell argues that the ultimate driver of doctrinal change or retention is an understanding of "military realism." Military realism, based on the principles of realpolitik, or the international relations theory of realism, requires military leaders to respond to the largest and most pressing threats facing a state and orienting military doctrine accordingly. The theory of military realism is presented as an alternative explanation to the traditional explanations for doctrinal change, including bureaucratic incentives, army culture, and "civilian realism," or Barry Posen's theory that decisions are driven by civilian leadership.

Campbell traces the existence of military realism from the push for flexible response in the 1960s to the return to the counterinsurgency (COIN) doctrine during the Afghanistan and Iraq Wars in the 2000s, demonstrating how the principles of realpolitik underpin major revisions in the army doctrine during that time and how this thinking exists within the army officer corps. Within the book, Campbell uses a combination of textual analysis of the major revisions in doctrine and the army's professional journal out of the Command and General Staff College to highlight shifts in the thinking of the army officer corps.

A professor of political science at Baylor University, Campbell uses broader research agenda to focus on civil-military relations, strategy, and military culture. In particular, he concentrates on policy relevance, insurgency and counterinsurgency, and cyber warfare. His research has been published in *Defense Studies*, *Orbis*, and *Foreign Affairs*. *Military Realism* represents Campbell's first book-length manuscript, suggesting a research trajectory that will be both substantively rich and policy relevant.

In *Military Realism*, Campbell's theory successfully weaves together ideas and concepts from military strategy with the broader international relations grand theory of realism. Often theoretical work is presented and followed by a few policy recommendations. However, Campbell circumvents this trope by showing how a theoretical understanding of the world shapes and reinforces policy decisions throughout the doctrinal development process. By synthesizing these often-disparate conceptual ideas, Campbell does a great service in showing how international relations theory and military operational strategy complement one another.

However, Campbell does not give a clear and independent explanation of his theory. Within the theory chapter, he presents his theory of military realism only in opposition to the competing explanations. As a result, it is difficult to pull out the specific hypotheses that the research is attempting to address. Each subsequent chapter also begins with a review of each of the alternative explanations (including military realism) and their predictions for the case, followed by consideration of available evidence. Yet due to the lack of clear articulation of the theory independently, it is difficult to assess the theory's validity on its own merit.

Throughout each chapter, Campbell does an excellent job of comparing his theory to previous academic work and showing how his ideas about strategy and decision-making within the army complement, critique, and extend other theoretical explanations currently available. In this way, *Military Realism* provides an excellent introduction to the broader understanding of doctrinal development and military culture for readers new to the subject area. Campbell's book is also particularly well suited for military officers who want to understand the practical side of theoretical work as well as scholars who wish to better understand how theory can drive operational doctrinal development.

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