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The Institutional Sources of Military Doctrine: Hegemons in Peripheral Wars

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Abstract

This article examines the formation of military doctrine by the United States during Vietnam and by Britain during the Boer War to test the prevailing literature on military doctrine. Finding the literature inadequate, The paper offers an institutional model of the forces shaping military doctrine. The

institutional model is based on the broader literature concerning the delegation of power in organizations. The logic of the delegated power depends as much on the structure governing the superior (the civilian authorities) as that governing the specialized subordinate (the military organizations). This model proposes that the differences in adaptability demonstrated by British and American military organizations in response to similar threats can be explained by the distinct structure of civilian institutions and their effect on the development of military organizations.

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