The State of U.S. Army Doctrine: A Selective Review of Doctrine Research
Shawn Foster
Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University

Introduction
Doctrine is essential to the functioning of an organization the scale of the U.S. Army.

- The Army defines doctrine as “fundamental principles, with supporting tactics, techniques, procedures, and terms and symbols, used for the conduct of operations and as a guide for actions of operating forces, and elements of the institutional force that directly support operations in support of national objectives” (Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2012)

- Academic interest in doctrine has waxed and waned over the previous four decades. In an effort to encourage further study of doctrine’s importance and understand the state of the literature, this paper is a selective review of the current literature of two significant army doctrine manuals, ADP 3-0 Operations and FM 3-24 Insurgency and Countering Insurgencies.

- Overall, this paper finds that the scholarly literature on both ADP 3-0 and FM 3-24 highlights weaknesses in their conceptual frameworks and in the case of FM 3-24 emphasizes that it was flawed from its conception.

Source: Army Doctrine Smart Book

Operations
ADP 3-0

Conceptual Dissonance
- Stemming from the Army’s Choose to move away from “Full Spectrum operations” replacing it the “Decisive Action”.

Lack of Purpose
- The doctrine falls short of its purpose by failing to define the “Enemy” in any coherent way, while simultaneously not finding an operational modality unique to the Army.

Readability
- The doctrine has forgone a nuanced view of operations for a dry taxonomy of terms. This has resulted in a understanding rate lower than War and Peace according to Flesch-Kincaid Reading Ease scale.

Insurgency and Countering Insurgencies
FM 3-24

Core Critiques

Conceptually Lacking
- This manual does not account for non-violent insurgencies, which statistically are the most successful.

Flawed Conception
- This manual was created in a institutional eco-chamber which hindered its’ ability to be effective.

View of Indigenous Populations
- The view of Indigenous people groups taken by the doctrine is steeped in a long history of colonialism and actively hinders the mission it sets out to complete.

Headquarters, Department of the Army. (2019). Doctrine Primer (ADP 1-01).
Headquarters, Department of the Army. (2019). Operations (ADP 3-0).