



Drawing inspiration from management to fully exercise command

Earth Thought Notebooks

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Commandement

Command and management are not synonymous. The mastery of managerial sciences allows the officer to dominate the increasing complexity of his environment. But the contribution of skills is reciprocal. They allow recognition of the officer's expertise and his ability to command fully.

The implementation of the "In Touch" model and the reissue of the Blue Book on the exercise of command in the Army call for "repositioning the benchmarks of what constitutes the foundation of the profession of military leadership, the exercise of command". The latter document recalls that the exercise of command must fulfil two objectives. Firstly, to guarantee the specificity of command and maintain its primacy in the exercise of the profession of officer, while facing the growing imperative of mastering managerial techniques. Secondly, to preserve the fundamental identities inherent to the profession of arms, while meeting the strong individual requirements of the second generation of professional soldiers.

At the risk of "trivialization of the military state", management also faces the need to constantly enrich itself with new currents of thought in order not to become sclerotic. Following an already rich literature on the concepts of command and management, it is necessary to determine under which conditions the management sciencesUnder what conditions do the sciences of management make it possible today to comfort the officer in the fullness of the exercise of command in his place, in his place alone, but taking his full place.

A clear definition of the potential contributions of managerial sciences and the possible interactions in terms of know-how contribute directly to guaranteeing armies a specific, full and recognised exercise of command.

Affirming from the outset a fundamental difference in terms of purpose, but recognising transposable qualities, mastery of managerial sciences contributes to strengthening

command and enables interactions that offer new opportunities.

A different purpose, but transposable qualities

First, to avoid confusion, the terms command and management need to be addressed more precisely.

General Blachon, commander of the Schools of Saint-Cyr Coëtquidan, identifies that, to command, it is a question of "knowing where one wants to go and setting the course (...), organising the daily action (...), mobilising energies". Management, for its part, is defined as "the ability to get the best out of an organization through the optimal use of available human and material resources". A 1989 study sets, among other things, as an objective for the officers of the 103rd class of the Ecole Supérieure de Guerre to "identify the capacities to be developed in the military leader to increase his effectiveness as a manager in peacetime".

These definitions seem to confer similar aspects to both terms. This is why it is essential to stress their main difference: their respective purposes. In order to identify this difference, the criterion of force should be identified as central. The leader is the one who commands, prepares and then leads on the battlefield. Moreover, never will a chief of staff of the armies ever be offered to buy them out. This distinction between the different purposes of command and management is fundamental. It does not, however, prevent interaction and mutual enrichment.

A return to the Blue Book indicates that in order to fulfil its objective, the success of the mission, "command is permanently exercised in three distinct but complementary dimensions":

It also reinforces the usefulness of managerial sciences in the exercise of command, both "to guarantee, among other things, the economy of means, which is a necessary condition for victory", and "within the framework of staff work and the management of organic areas".

This possible contribution of management to command, while respecting the specificity of the latter, is summed up by Olivier Kempf's formula: "The use of civilian techniques, combined with military qualities, makes it possible to obtain real results. Above all, it modifies the practice of command, but not necessarily its essence".

This conceptual clarification makes it possible to examine the possible contributions of managerial sciences to command today.

Mastering complexity in order to fully occupy its place

The possible contributions of managerial sciences allow the officer to master the current

growing complexity of organizations and to meet the new requirements of the professional soldier, strengthening the place of armies within institutions and society.

These contributions can be studied through three areas that management and command seek to optimise: financial, material and human resources. The contributions within these three fields cannot be exhaustively examined here. However, a few examples of very different scopes and levels illustrate the potential benefits for leadership in one or more of its three dimensions of leader, leader and manager.

In the area of financial resources, the different budgetary mechanisms (drafting of military programming laws, mechanism for the additional cost of operations, etc.) directly illustrate the need for technical mastery of the different tools. The officer, in his or her role as a manager and manager, then sees the contributions of managerial sciences in the context of knowledge of the mechanisms of public management. They are not then reduced to an executive role but do contribute to the design. Mastery of the various techniques for optimising resources also enables him or her to subsequently optimise them in a tight budgetary context.

In an area of radically different scope, the leader of men involved in the Harpie mission to combat gold panning has every interest in understanding from a micro-economic point of view the financial logic that applies to the trafficking of raw materials. A drop in the quantity of gold "offered" leads to a rise in prices and, by the same token, encourages new entrants to engage in exploitation, particularly illegal exploitation. Indeed, the latter, being free of many state constraints, benefits from lower operating costs. On the other hand, tackling these same costs of exploiting illegal immigrants (logistics, etc.) encourages the arrival of new legal entrants and the development of existing legal concessions. The latter, once again becoming beneficiaries, could then constitute a form of "economic deterrence", a bulwark against the development of illegal gold panning. Of course, this schematic approach alone cannot solve the problem, but it offers directly applicable keys to understanding.

Secondly, in the field of material resources, the contributions of the managerial sciences make it possible to strengthen some of the factors of operational superiority (FSO) identified in the document Future Land Action.

For the mass FSO (ability to generate and sustain sufficient force volumes to produce strategic decision effects over time), the inputs from managerial sciences are directly transferable to the manager for engagement readiness, whether in the formulation of the requirement, project management or stockpile management.

For the FSO understanding (the ability to perceive, interpret and appreciate a complex and evolving operational environment in order to provide the context, insight and foresight required for decision-making), mastery of networks and of Big Data require inputs from managerial sciences.

Finally, in the field of human resources, managerial sciences enable a better knowledge of "all the players involved in resolving a crisis", the objective of the FSO comprehension.

They are also undeniably useful in the context of the FSO influence (ability to act on perceptions), particularly in the discrimination of different human groups.

Managerial sciences also provide keys to understanding and analysing the current generation of soldiers. They reinforce the clarity of the message of the leader of men at the heart of the information, "one of the major foundations of the exercise of command".

A final example of the possible contribution of managerial sciences is the retention of personnel in positions with special qualifications and directly subject to "competition" from the private sector. A study of the various mechanisms put in place by the US Army since 2007 reveals the importance of the socio-economic approach in setting up specific bonuses for a set of clearly identified positions.

These different contributions in the areas of financial, material and human resources strengthen the command in its three dimensions of leader, leader and manager, reinforcing the place of the armed forces within institutions and society. These contributions are reciprocal and offer certain opportunities.

Et expand the range of opportunities

The possible contributions of managerial sciences allow for a dual interaction between two distinct universes (civil and military). The officer can export know-how and expertise that can be transposed to the leadership qualities sought by the manager. This reciprocal enrichment can be observed, among others, in the field of planning and in the mobilisation of energies where military expertise is recognised.

As far as planning is concerned, Peter Drucker praised its crucial importance for the manager as early as 1964: "There are only three ways to achieve success: luck, having a genius at the controls, and planning. Luck and having a genius at the helm are attributes that are unfortunately not instantly available to the manager". To ensure the survival of companies, Michel Godet recommends "marrying foresight and strategic will". It is also interesting to note that some manuals referring to the field of management take up verbatim the different offensive or defensive modes of action (frontal attack, mobile defence, etc.), for example to formulate a marketing strategy. Finally, the methods of risk analysis by command are also recognised today in a universe as different as that of traders, who recognise that "only the military face up to chance with genuine intellectual honesty and introspection". Faced with these ever-evolving needs of companies, the officer is in a perfect position to assert his qualities, particularly in his ability to conduct planning work, develop modes of action, design a manoeuvre plan, reduce uncertainty or "stay the course".

Concerning the mobilization of energies, Michel Godet states that "for reflection to crystallize into effective action, it must be embodied within the company, i.e. within a whole human group mobilized around a collective project". This formulation resonates in a familiar way for command. For the latter, it is "collective competence that counts", and here again, he can demonstrate his know-how. Expertise in the exercise of command from leader to subordinate to give meaning to action, to give orders, to delegate, to control, and so on. This expertise is now recognised through the multiplication of various leadership seminars led by military personnel and prized by both large companies and universities. But it also has expertise in the ability to integrate rapidly into different frameworks (joint forces, inter-allied) as invited by the FSO Cooperation.

Finally, expertise in the ability to bring together reinforcements (local forces, private operators, coalitions), as the FSO masse28 is committed to do.

Testifying to his expertise in immediately transposable command qualities, in particular through the ability to plan and mobilise energies, the officer sees new opportunities opening up that could enable him to strengthen his legitimacy to fully exercise command.

Clearly differentiating between command and management, particularly in their respective purposes, remains an imperative. Nor is it a question of trying to confuse the actors, but rather of examining the possible interactions that can directly contribute to guaranteeing armies a specific, full and recognised exercise of command.

The rising generation of executives and leaders does not have the same knowledge of the military world and its know-how as previous generations who have experienced conscription. Consequently, targeted outreach actions aimed at managers (both public and private), particularly in the context of their training, could provide a serious response to a real need, further strengthening the legitimacy of command.

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