

*Prof. Bernard Wiśniewski, Professor (Police Academy in Szczytno, POLAND);  
Dr. Eng. Tomasz Zwęgliński (Internal Security Department, Civil Safety Engineering Faculty,  
The Main School of Fire Service in Warsaw, POLAND);  
Assoc. Prof. Robert Socha, Professor (The University of Dabrowa Gornicza, POLAND)*

## THE THEORY OF COMMANDING

Management is a specific form of management, and its functioning is reflected through the prism of deciding on owned or subordinated resources. Command is, in turn, a specific form of control and is at the same time concluded in the concept of management. The difference between commanding and management concerns the scope of authority which is obtained by a commander in relation to a subordinate. Concepts of control, management and command are also linked to the governance. The term itself is ambiguous, thus variously defined. However, it may be assumed that governance stands for competences assigned to the authorized state body.

**Key words:** command, management, governance

## ТЕОРИЄТИЧНІ ОСНОВИ УПРАВЛІННЯ

Управлінська діяльність – це специфічна форма менеджменту, що розглядається крізь призму вибору між використанням власних сил та підпорядкованих ресурсів. Керівництво, в свою чергу, є формою контролю і, водночас, формою здійснення управлінської діяльності. Різниця між управлінням і керуванням полягає у масштабах повноважень керівника та способах їх реалізації. Контроль, керівництво і управління досить часто пов'язані із поняттям влади – терміном, який може мати кілька дефініцій, однак найчастіше використовується, коли мова йде про державні органи.

**Ключові слова:** керівництво, управління, влада.

Praxeology contributed considerably to the scientific organization and the matter of people management, with the praxeological jargon becoming commonly used within the groups of practitioners and theorists of management. This results from the shared interest in issues relating to the variety of undertaken actions, both individual and collective, among scientists [1]<sup>1</sup>. Praxeological theory of organization examines the functioning of human collectives considering predominantly level of their efficiency. It is characterized by comprehensive language and methods of research, created on the basis of the language of praxeology and its methodology [2]<sup>2</sup>. Moreover, the management theory adopted from praxeology a number of principles concerning properly conducted work, including postulate of proficient activity, that is the efficient and economical one.

It may be assumed that the organization "[...] is a system an arrangement of which consists mainly in the fact that its functionally varied parts in fact collectively contribute to the success of the whole, and such success of the whole is an essential condition to ensure the success of parts (with "success" meaning to draw near the state evaluated positively on the basis of the data significant for evaluating, and a minimalist postulate of success is the survival of the organization as such)." [3]<sup>3</sup> The organization is, therefore, an open operating social system consisting of people who perform in it specified functions and activities, and who, through carefully selected resources and methods of operating, are able to conduct assigned tasks. Furthermore, organizations are characterized by a specific structure, in which one may distinguish between the so called hierarchical system and structure.

A command hierarchy is an example of an organizational structure in which the position of individual elements allows to differentiate between subordinate and superordinate entities. The escalating difficulty in transmitting information in a linear arrangement through the consequent levels by so-called official channels may occur with the increase in the number of hierarchical levels. Considering

<sup>1</sup> A. Czermiński, M. Grzybowski, K. Ficoń, *Podstawy organizacji i zarządzania* „Wyższa Szkoła Administracji i Biznesu w Gdyni”, Gdynia 1999, p. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 31

<sup>3</sup> J. Zieleniewski, *Podstawowe pojęcia teorii systemów, organizacji, sterowania i zarządzania (próba systematyzacji pojęć i założeń)*, [in:] edited by J. Hołubiec, *Współczesne problemy zarządzania*, PWN, Warszawa 1974, p. 355-356.

the subject of command, distinguished shall be situational, instructive and directive information [4]<sup>4</sup>. The first of them, situational information, transmitted, inter alia, in the form of reports, dispatches and status reports, reflects an existing or past state of the environment, activities or its results. The instructive information is contained in regulations, procedures or other documents determining the principles of operating. The latter, directive information, usually expressed in orders and commands, reflect, in turn, future states and are a warrant to undertake or refrain from acting.

Taking the above into consideration, an attention shall be drawn to the information ties occurring in the information system of an organization, distinguished on the basis of the criterion of organizational structure and organizational ties, considering the criterion of the nature of said ties. With the criterion of the organizational structure following information ties may be determined:

- official, also called hierarchical, related to official subordination, which may be divided in accordance with the direction of information flow: "down"- for orders and "up"- for reports;
- coordinative, which may be divided into: internal information ties (related to the exchange of information between individuals within the headquarters) and external information ties of cooperation (related to the exchange of information within the specialty, complementing necessary information between specialties at the same level or between different levels excluding superior entities);
- cooperative, consisting in the exchange of information between the respective command posts, among which official dependences resulting directly from the professional occupation do not occur [5].<sup>5</sup>

In the theory of organization organizational ties may be further divided into four types, a typology of which is based on the criterion of the nature of ties between elements forming the organizational structure. The four types include:

- official (hierarchical), which result from the deployment of decision-making competences;
- functional, occurring in relation to the diversity of professional competences;
- informative, connected to the exchange of information;
- technical, resulting from the division of labor.

Considering the role and the importance of individual types of ties within the organization, it may be stated that hierarchical organizations, which include- in the colloquial understanding- the uniformed services, are those in which the official ties are of a uttermost significance. This results from, inter alia, the fact that they conduct specific tasks, often in dangerous environment in which the rapidity of taking decisions, the need for coordination of numerous elements, as well as the lack of systematic action enforce the necessity for strong hierarchical ties and significant role of people holding managerial positions, including commanding ones. It shall be emphasized that the term "command" has been unnoticeably marginalized and thus it provoked unintentional, gradual elimination of hierarchical organization from the general area of management. However, it does not affect the fact that commanding is an integral part of management, and any attempt to exclude it from said area would result in a substantive gap in theoretical systematization of systemically understood organizational nature of social processes in which hierarchical organizations reflect a significant potential both quantitative and semantic [6]<sup>6</sup>.

Following this reasoning it seems appropriate to take a further step in the considerations to determine the concept of the managed institution, that is an organization which consists of people who create a group connected by common objectives, as well as resources, and where the leadership

---

<sup>4</sup> *Leksykon wiedzy wojskowej*, Warszawa 1979, p. 145.

<sup>5</sup> M. Strzoda, *Techniki zarządzania w organizacji zhierarchizowanej*, AON, Warszaw 2005, p. 12.

<sup>6</sup> L. Ciborowski, *Zarządzanie i dowodzenie w organizacjach zhierarchizowanych*, Kwartalnik Naukowy Politechniki Śląskiej w Gliwicach „Organizacja i Zarządzanie” 2010, No. 4(12), p. 82.

stems predominantly from the right of superiors to dispose of resources [7]<sup>7</sup>. In the theory of organization, the concept of institution is considered a specific form of organized activity, and to determine it a praxeological conceptual apparatus is applied. According to the praxeological categories, institution refers to a wide range of subjects. One of the groups are institutions in which notably occur management, leadership and commanding, that is different forms of action- intentional behavior, consisting in deliberate provoking changes in the environment by a man or a group of people.

The hierarchy determines the flow of commands and information through official channels, and in the case of extensive hierarchical structure the official channel is a long process and causes the slowdown in the functioning. The authority, as follows, is the right to command and the ability to enforce the obedience. Fayol distinguished between formal authority, resulting from the location in the official hierarchy, and personal authority. As successful would be considered a situation in which formal authority would be supported by personal one, resulting from, inter alia, knowledge, experience, etc. The uniformity of commanding connected is to the fact that a subordinate entity receives commands from one person only, as duality of commanding would disorganize work and cause disruption in the functioning of the organization. Unity of command shall not be equated with unity of management, which consists in the fact that one object should be subject to control of only one manager using one plan. Unity of management enables the efficient organization of the team, and unity of command determines its functioning. Reduced role of subordinated units in decision-making process leads to centralization. In an efficient organization, according to H. Fayol, an objective that should be aimed at is possibly the most beneficial use of the talents of a personnel. As an "order" is perceived a situation in which employees occupy the most suitable for them professional positions, according to the principle: "the right man in the right place." With the right division of labor between subordinated entities considerably better results may be achieved with the same amount of effort, which is possible primarily due to the abovementioned specialization. Said fair financial compensation for both employees and employers is another rule impacting the effectiveness of management. Discipline stands for compliance with the standards within the organization. Its level depends largely on the decision of the supervisor. "Humane" treatment of subordinates should be reflected in encouraging them to wholeheartedly engage in implementing their duties. The stability of a personnel, as another standard, is advantageous to the efficient functioning of the organization as it is negatively affected by a high fluctuation of personnel, especially if the changes concern managerial positions since a specified time necessary to get acquainted with people and problems of a subordinate organization must pass before a new manager would begin to make responsible decisions. The task of a manager is to maintain within a team an harmonious atmosphere conducive to cooperation of a personnel. Avoided should be, however, an altercation between subordinates. According to Fayol, causing a disagreement among subordinates is not a merit of a supervisor, as it could be caused by any beginning manager. On the other hand, a true talent is required to coordinate efforts, stimulate enthusiasm, make an use of the talents and to compensate each employee while not arousing envy and not spoiling the harmony of good relations between employees. Subordinates should be allowed to participate in the process of creation and implementation of organization's tasks due to the fact that the atmosphere of creative freedom increases the involvement of employees at all levels of the organization. H. Fayol emphasizes also the notion that supervisors shall be able to forego their own ambitions in order to enable their subordinates to obtain the satisfaction resulting from taken initiative. The subordination of personal interests to general interest stems from the fact that the interest of the employee cannot be prioritized over interests of the organization as a whole [8]<sup>8</sup>.

The relationship between controlling, managing and commanding based on the analysis of the subject literature shall be presented in this paragraph. In the literature of the 21<sup>st</sup> century concerning management, the term "command" is generally not used, despite the fact that in the military

---

<sup>7</sup> A. Szpaderski, *Prakseologia a nauki o zarzadzaniu*, [in:] *Współczesne przedsiębiorstwo. Teoria i praktyka*, edited by A. Sopińska, SGH, Warszawa 2012, p. 17.

<sup>8</sup> A. Czermiński, M. Grzybowski, K. Ficoń, *Podstawy organizacji...*, p. 34 – 36.

and paramilitary organizations the term has functioned considerably earlier than the concept of management [9]<sup>9</sup>. According to L. Ciborowski "[...] This means that in the contemporary times a significant component of the human population functioning in a hierarchical structure was in a way excluded from the scientific area of management. This may be interpreted that such shaped theory is essentially lacking the features of universalism of management [10].<sup>10</sup>" Substantive justification for the need to include this area of knowledge within the general management theory results from the fact that "[...] hierarchical organizations has never operated in isolation from the scientific basis of management, and commanding, developed through centuries and often misinterpreted, was and is an inherent part of the management, desired for the use under special conditions when the speed and significance of performed reactions occlude the threat of danger to life and health of participants of the action, and a decision pursuant to command becomes an act of an executive coercion [11].<sup>11</sup>" This predominantly applies to all hierarchical formations, such as: the armed forces, police, etc., which at the same time does not mean that in these organizations on a daily basis occurs a necessity for command, manifested, among others, in the need for individual commanding. It sometimes occurs in hierarchical structures that some superiors, especially those who are afraid to enter into substantial discussion with subordinates due to the limited knowledge or innate autocracy, are still abusing this form. According to the quoted before L. Ciborowski "[...] Significant evidence of immanent location of command in the substantive area of management are located in the environment of management and in a factual management structure." [12]<sup>12</sup>

L. Krzyżanowski classifies command as a type of control over organization, taking into consideration formal competences of a controlling body as a dominant criterion, at the same time not denying the presence of other units entitled to control. He also considers the term "controlling" to be broader than both management and command. As contained in *Leksykon Wiedzy Wojskowej*, command is a whole of purposeful activity of commanders and staff, performed within a specific management system, providing a high combat readiness and proper preparation to obtain possibly the most beneficial achievement in a fight, battle or during an operation [13]<sup>13</sup>. However, in *Regulamin działań wojsk lądowych* "command" is defined as the process by which a commander imposes his will and intentions on subordinates. This includes the authority and responsibility for the use of subordinated forces and resources to complete the task [14]<sup>14</sup>. A similar concept was presented in the Allied Joint Doctrine AJP-01 (A). According to the Doctrine, command is the process by which a commander imposes his will and intentions on subordinates in order to take a specific action. A commander is a leader and bears responsibility for the use of forces to complete an assigned task [15]<sup>15</sup>. According to M. Porwit command is an area of practical action. What results from this is the necessity to regularly conduct exercises aimed at improving the skills of commanders, given that the greater the number of said exercises, the more the rules of commanding begin to serve as sensors against an error. Taking into consideration the matter of theoretical aspects of command in the Police it should in particular be referred to the definition developed for the military understanding of command. J. Orzechowski believes that command is the mean to implement the rights of military art. Other authors of rules for commanding in the army understand by the term "command" the pur-

---

<sup>9</sup> Currently the subject of commanding is more often present in the literature, in terms of both the process and certain features. As the process, commanding is the use of impact without recourse to coercive measures, with the aim of shaping the objectives of a group or an organization, motivating behaviors targeted at achieving these objectives and helping in defining a group or an organization. As features, commanding is, conversely, a set of characteristics ascribed to entities who are perceived as commanders. The term "commander" refers therefore to the person who influences the behavior of others without the necessity to resort to the use of force (source: Ricky W. Griffin, *Podstawy zarządzania organizacjami*, Polish Scientific Publishers PWN, Warszawa 1999, p. 491).

<sup>10</sup> L. Ciborowski, *Zarządzanie i dowodzenie w organizacjach ...*, p. 89 – 90.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* p. 90

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> *Leksykon wiedzy wojskowej*, MON, Warszawa 1979, p. 90.

<sup>14</sup> *Regulamin działań wojsk lądowych*, Dowództwo Wojsko Lądowych, Warszawa 1999, p. 49.

<sup>15</sup> *AJP – 01 (A) Allied Joint Operations Doctrine*, MAS, Brusseles 2000, p. 4-1, as cited in: *Podstawy dowodzenia*, edited by J. Kręcikij, J. Wolejszo, AON, Warszawa 2007, p. 16.

poseful activities of commanders, staff and other organs of command in the area of preparation of combat operations and leading the efforts of the military units to the successful fulfillment of a combat mission in the course of fight by obtaining and processing the data on the situation, decision-making adequate to the situation and implementing tasks to contractors.

Considering the matter of command it seems relevant to evoke the words of Marshal Jozef Piłsudski, according to whom the command stands for mere ordering the tasks. Therefore, acknowledging the words of the Marshal, it may be assumed that the process of control, in a hierarchical structure often called "commanding", is the situation in which a commander by the means of orders imposes his will on the subordinate structures. It is commonly accepted that the competences to assign orders are granted to individuals having the proper preparation and knowledge, that is to commanders [16].<sup>16</sup>

Command is, therefore, a decision-making process, that is a sequence of operations on the collection of information concerning the state's own forces, enemy forces, and operating conditions. Command constitutes of an action based on the results of creative thinking, composing a series of solutions to specific decision-making situations. Hence the concept of command stands for taking decisions on the manner of implementing a task.

As results from abovementioned definitions, the command is perceived as two dimensional – as an authority and as a process. Being an authority it reflects both the right to issue orders and to bear full responsibility for them. The process, in turn, is the exercise of command, in which the commander, assisted by staff, implements tasks related to planning, organizing, controlling and coordinating activities of subordinated forces.

To conclude, basing on the analysis of the subject literature it is possible to distinguish between several concepts related to command, namely between the views in following perspectives: empirical, organizational, cybernetic and psychosocial. The first of them equates the essence of commanding with the whole of operation of a commander and bodies of command. In the second one, command is perceived in the scope of a structure and features of a control held over specific organizational units, including the police and armed forces. In relation to cybernetics, command is, in turn, a form of control with acknowledging the feedback where its essence is equivalent to information processes, that is to acquire, process and transmit information. What is considered in the psychosocial approach is the human factor which becomes both the subject and object of command. Considering the fact that commanding is the decision-making process, its essence is to take decisions on the manner of implementing assigned tasks, it is, therefore, an action based on the results of creative thinking, which is "[...] a sequence of solutions to specific decision-making situations."<sup>17</sup>

Concepts of control, management and command are also linked to the governance. The term itself is ambiguous, thus variously defined. However, it may be assumed that governance stands for competences assigned to the authorized state body. Therefore, in a democratic state, governance means serving by the executive power several functions which combine elements of control and management to fulfill the tasks and objectives defined by the legislative authority.

As has been emphasized before, management is a specific form of management, and its functioning is reflected through the prism of deciding on owned or subordinated resources. Command is, in turn, a specific form of control and is at the same time concluded in the concept of management. The difference between commanding and management concerns the scope of authority which is obtained by a commander in relation to a subordinate.

It shall be also noted that within several environments it is assumed that commanding occurs on the same level as management. Command, due to the extent of executive pressure resulting from the nature of orders, may be compared with order which is sanctioned by legal coercion, given the fact that a command in commanding is also sanctioned by legal coercion, with the exception in a

---

<sup>16</sup> Skilful commanding is a necessary yet insufficient condition for victory, whereas commanding inefficient and incompetent is a sufficient condition for the failure. That is how L. Kuleszyński stated nearly half a century ago in his book *Dowodzenie wojskami a cybernetyka* (L. Kuleszyński, *Dowodzenie wojskami a cybernetyka*, Warszawa 1967, p. 11). This concept, however, related to commanding within the armed forces, but given the nature of modern threats it may be transposed to the area of commanding in the conditions of non-military threats.

<sup>17</sup> *Podstawy dowodzenia...*, p. 12.

form of a more considerable regime. The essence of it is rooted in the direction of an organization, as in organizations different than those directed at providing a broad sense of security every person has the right to refuse to execute the command providing that its implementation poses a threat to life or health, without any negative consequences, which is unacceptable in the case of an order issued within organizations such as military or police. It appears also to be true that none of hierarchical organizations of a military or paramilitary nature could effectively operate merely on the basis of commanding which in fact imposes the limits on executive creativity of human resources.

#### Bibliography:

A. Czermiński, M. Grzybowski, K. Ficoń, *Podstawy organizacji i zarządzania* „Wyższa Szkoła Administracji i Biznesu w Gdyni”, Gdynia 1999, p. 19.

Ibid. p. 31

J. Zieleniewski, *Podstawowe pojęcia teorii systemów, organizacji, sterowania i zarządzania (próba systematyzacji pojęć i założeń)*, [in:] edited by J. Hołubiec, *Współczesne problemy zarządzania*, PWN, Warszawa 1974, p. 355-356.

*Leksykon wiedzy wojskowej*, Warszawa 1979, p. 145.

M. Strzoda, *Techniki zarządzania w organizacji zhierarchizowanej*, AON, Warszaw 2005, p. 12.

L. Ciborowski, *Zarządzanie i dowodzenie w organizacjach zhierarchizowanych*, Kwartalnik Naukowy Politechniki Śląskiej w Gliwicach „Organizacja i Zarządzanie” 2010, No. 4(12), p. 82.

A. Szpaderski, *Prakseologia a nauki o zarządzaniu*, [in:] *Współczesne przedsiębiorstwo. Teoria i praktyka*, edited by A. Sopińska, SGH, Warszawa 2012, p. 17.

A. Czermiński, M. Grzybowski, K. Ficoń, *Podstawy organizacji...*, p. 34 – 36.

Ricky W. Griffin, *Podstawy zarządzania organizacjami*, Polish Scientific Publishers PWN, Warszawa 1999, p. 491.

L. Ciborowski, *Zarządzanie i dowodzenie w organizacjach ...*, p. 89 – 90.

Ibid. p. 90

Ibid.

*Leksykon wiedzy wojskowej*, MON, Warszawa 1979, p. 90.

*Regulamin działań wojsk lądowych*, Dowództwo Wojsko Lądowych, Warszawa 1999, p. 49.

1. Ciborowski L., *Zarządzanie i dowodzenie w organizacjach zhierarchizowanych*, Kwartalnik Naukowy Politechniki Śląskiej w Gliwicach „Organizacja i Zarządzanie” 2010, No. 4(12).
2. Czermiński A., Grzybowski M., Ficoń K., *Podstawy organizacji i zarządzania* „Wyższa Szkoła Administracji i Biznesu w Gdyni”, Gdynia 1999.
3. Griffin Ricky W., *Podstawy zarządzania organizacjami*, Polish Scientific Publishers PWN, Warszawa 1999.
4. Kuleszyński L., *Dowodzenie wojskami a cybernetyka*, Warszawa 1967.
5. *Leksykon wiedzy wojskowej*, Warszawa 1977.
6. *Podstawy dowodzenia*, edited by J. Kręcikij, J. Wołęjszo, AON, Warszawa 2007.
7. *Regulamin działań wojsk lądowych*, Dowództwo Wojsko Lądowych, Warszawa 1999.
8. Strzoda M., *Techniki zarządzania w organizacji zhierarchizowanej*, AON, Warszaw 2005.
9. Szpaderski A., *Prakseologia a nauki o zarządzaniu*, [in:] *Współczesne przedsiębiorstwo. Teoria i praktyka*, edited by A. Sopińska, SGH, Warszawa 2012.
10. Zieleniewski J., *Podstawowe pojęcia teorii systemów, organizacji, sterowania i zarządzania (próba systematyzacji pojęć i założeń)*, [in:] edited by J. Hołubiec, *Współczesne problemy zarządzania*, PWN, Warszawa 1974.

