

CALL FOR PAPERS

2nd GeoHos Workshop

Geopolitical and Historical perspectives on Organization

War, Army & Military Art

*A Cross-Historical Conversation with Management, Corporate Strategy, MIS,
Logistics and HRM*

June 16th 2027 at Université Paris Dauphine-PSL & Neoma BS

Organized by the Organologia Institute (PSL University), the History of Management and Organizations (HIMO) Project and the Grand Societal Challenges (GSC) Projects as a pre-event of the 17th Organization, Artifacts & Practices (OAP) workshop.

This workshop will also include a specific track about “Teaching history differently: renewing our experience of remote pasts and futures of management and organization”.

Organisation

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1. Introduction and Motivation

War has long been treated in organization and management scholarship as a source of vivid metaphor. Expressions such as “strategy,” “conquering markets,” “line and staff,” “logistics,” “headquarters,” and “campaign” pervade everyday managerial language. Yet the military origins of these terms have rarely been treated as a serious object of historical organizational analysis in their own right. This is a significant omission.

Across centuries, military institutions have functioned as some of the most intense sites of organizational experimentation available to historians: laboratories in which coordination, planning, logistics, information processing, personnel administration, resource allocation, and strategic decision-making were invented, tested, and institutionalized, often under conditions of extreme uncertainty, urgency, and consequence (van Creveld, 1977, 1985; McNeill, 1982). A first generation of business and management historians has already shown that many practices later central to the modern corporation — from Chandler’s (1962, 1977) account of multidivisional structure and administrative coordination to Yates’s (1989) history of American managerial communication systems — cannot be fully understood without reference to military (or religious) antecedents in logistics, hierarchy, and standardization. Work on the managerial and scientific transformation of the U.S. military-industrial complex during and after the Second World War (Koistinen, 1980; Wilson, 2016) and on Britain’s wartime mobilization of experts and resources (Edgerton, 2011) has further demonstrated that the traffic between military and corporate organization has never been incidental. The Cold War intensified this entanglement: operations research, systems analysis, and cybernetics — fields largely incubated in military planning — reshaped not only weapons procurement and command structures (Edwards, 1996) but also the vocabulary and techniques of postwar management science itself (Waring, 1991; Mirowski, 2002).

And yet the relationship between war and management has rarely been theorized as mutually constitutive rather than unidirectional. Existing accounts tend to ask whether management “comes from” the military (a diffusionist reading) or whether the military simply “borrows” managerial techniques (a rationalization reading). Both framings understate the extent to which military and managerial worlds have been shaped by shared underlying problems — coordination under uncertainty, the calculation and movement of resources across distance, the discipline and administration of personnel, and the anticipation of an adversarial or unpredictable future (Bousquet, 2009; Cowen, 2014). Recent calls within historical organization studies to treat historical material not merely as context but as a source of theoretical insight in its own right (Kipping & Üsdiken, 2014; Maclean, Harvey, & Clegg, 2016; Rowlinson, Hassard, & Decker, 2014) — exemplified by Grey’s (2012) reading of Bletchley Park as an organizational, rather than purely cryptographic, achievement — offer a methodological opening we wish to build on.

This second Workshop on Geopolitics and Historical Organization Studies invites scholars to take up this opening: to examine reflexively and critically war, armies, and military art not as an external backdrop to organizational and managerial history, but as constitutive sites in which many of the categories management scholars take for granted — strategy, logistics, hierarchy, planning, personnel — were forged, contested, and exported in both directions.

2. Aims and Scope

The workshop seeks to:

- Establish a sustained dialogue between military history, business history, the history of management thought, and historical organization studies — fields that have developed largely in parallel despite substantial overlapping concerns.
- Move beyond diffusionist narratives (management from the military, or the military managerialized) toward accounts of mutual constitution, in which military and corporate organizations are understood as historically co-produced through shared problems of coordination, calculation, and control.
- Contribute to the emerging field of Historical Organization Studies and historical MIS by treating military institutions as a privileged empirical site for theorizing organizational invention, path dependency, and institutional transformation over the long run.

We welcome extended abstracts and full papers engaging historically and empirically with the entanglement of war and management, from imperial and early modern armies to contemporary digital and algorithmic warfare.

3. Thematic Strands (not exhaustive) and Illustrative Questions

Strand 1 — War as a Site of Organizational and Managerial Experimentation

- How have wars accelerated the invention of new organizational forms, and under what conditions has this experimentation outlasted the conflict that produced it?
- How have military crises reshaped practices of coordination, planning, logistics, and resource allocation, and with what long-term institutional consequences?

Strand 2 — Military Influences on Management

- What are the military origins and trajectories of specific management concepts, vocabularies, and techniques (e.g., "strategy," "staff," "line," "logistics")?
- How did military engineering, discipline, and personnel administration shape the emergence of hierarchy, standardization, and human resource management?

Strand 3 — Management Influences on Warfare

- How was military organization itself "managerialized" over the twentieth century, particularly through operations research, systems analysis, and cybernetics (Murphy, 2026; Edwards, 1996; Waring, 1991)?
- How did corporate, consulting, and academic actors shape Cold War military planning, command, and intelligence practices?
- What continuities and ruptures characterize the shift toward digital, algorithmic, and AI-driven forms of military organization?

Strand 4 — War, Capitalism, and Corporations

- How have war economies and industrial mobilizations shaped, and been shaped by, the broader history of capitalism (Koistinen, 1980; Wilson, 2016; de Vaujany, 2022, 2024)?
- How have public–private relationships in defense procurement, technology, and logistics evolved historically, and what do they reveal about the boundaries of "the firm"?
- How do multinational corporations and global supply chains inherit or reproduce older geopolitical and military logics (Cowen, 2014)?

Strand 5 — Strategy, Logistics, and Organizational Knowledge

- What is the relationship between strategy as military art (Clausewitz, 1832/1976) and strategy as a corporate management discipline (Ghemawat, 2002; Cummings, 2002)?
- How has logistics functioned historically as a foundational organizational capacity linking strategy, infrastructure, resources, and power, rather than a merely operational afterthought (van Creveld, 1977)?
- How have practices of information, intelligence, forecasting, and risk anticipation travelled between military and corporate contexts?

4. Theoretical and Historical Perspectives

We welcome contributions engaging with military history, business history, the history of capitalism, management history, and organization studies, and we particularly encourage papers that put classical reflections on strategy and war — Clausewitz's (1832/1976) treatment of war as the interaction of uncertainty, politics, and action, or older traditions of military art more broadly — into conversation with contemporary historical organization studies. We also welcome comparative and cross-contextual work tracing how military and managerial practices have travelled across imperial formations, industrial capitalism, colonial systems, the Cold War, globalization, and contemporary digital societies.

Consistent with recent methodological debates in the field, we are especially interested in papers that use historical material not merely as illustration but as a resource for organization theory building (Rowlinson, Hassard, & Decker, 2014).

5. Guiding Question

How have war and management mutually shaped each other as historical technologies for organizing human beings, resources, knowledge, and futures?

6. Submission Process and Timeline

We invite two types of submissions:

- Extended abstracts (1,000–1,500 words), outlining the paper's historical contribution, its engagement with the themes above, and its relevance for organization and management scholarship; or
- Full papers, prepared according to standard academic conventions.

Deadline for submission is 4th February 2026 at this address: himo.research@gmail.com

All submissions should clearly state:

- the historical sources and method underpinning the analysis;
- the paper's specific contribution to organization and management scholarship;
- its engagement with questions of war, strategy, logistics, technology, or organizational transformation.

Selected contributors will be invited to present and discuss their work at the workshop, with a view towards developing papers for submission to a relevant peer-reviewed journal or edited volume.

Doctoral students and early-career researchers are warmly encouraged to submit.

We also welcome papers and extended abstracts around the more general topics of the GeHos workshop, i.e. geopolitical and historical perspectives about organization and organizing.

Key dates, venue details, and submission instructions will be circulated shortly.

7. Specific track about “Teaching history differently”

In the context of AI and its pervasive presence, offering embodied, sensorial, aesthetic and engaging ways to explore remote pasts and futures is more important than ever. This track of GeoHos 2027 is devoted to art-based, alternative and experimental approaches to teaching and learning the history and futurology of management and organization.

Completed works are welcome, as are works in progress and projected works.

When submitting your extended abstract, please mention the THD track.

We look forward to welcoming you to the Organologia Institute (PSL University) for the second Workshop on Geopolitics and Historical Organization Studies.

The Organologia Institute (Université PSL) explores the pasts and futures of organizations to develop alternative ways of organizing work, consumption and life in response to contemporary societal challenges.

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