Mastering Tactics
Exploring and measuring victory in battle

Lars Henåker

Doctoral Thesis

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Faculty opponent

Professor John Andreas Olsen, Norwegian Institute for Defence Studies
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Abstract
This dissertation investigates effective military tactics in contemporary battle by measuring parameters behind successful and less successful tactical performance. As such, knowledge of tactics gives practitioners, scholars, and scientists in war studies a better understanding of battle results. The purpose of the dissertation is to test existing theories to create a new theory about what influences tactical results in battle and provide an explanation of what leads to tactical victory. Victory can be explained by tactical elements that affect success during battles. Moreover, victorious battles can partly be explained through some of the skills tacticians possess in comparison to those who lose their duels. Furthermore, the dissertation is an approach to critically evaluate tactical competence and identify what is successful tactics and how the theories are consistent with practical experiences. With increased insight into who and how tactics affect the victory or loss of battle, we have the opportunity to improve the development of skills in the field of military and tactics that research, analyse, and practice warfare. The dissertation consists of four independent articles. These articles correlate personal capabilities such as level of expertise, attitude, general intelligence, and individual decision-making styles, to levels of victory. Summarizing all four articles leads to three major conclusions: (1) contemporary manoeuvre warfare contains successful measurable elements when similar opponents engage in combat. (2) Tacticians who follow the steps from the ideal model representing “best practices of performing tactics” increase their chances of winning the duel, especially if the opponent does not follow any or fewer steps at the same time. (3) Personal decision-making styles influence tactical results in battle. These conclusions are relevant when drawing up effective tactics as well as tactician profiles in the future.

Keywords
Battle, decision-making, land warfare, manoeuvre warfare, military tactics, problem solving, victory in combat, wargames, war studies