

## **Abstract for ISMS 2023 in Copenhagen**

Bringing spatial humanities into military history: Towards a framework for applying geospatial methods in historical analysis of operational-level plans from the Cold War.

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Abstract:

This paper offers the first steps towards a framework for applying geospatial methods in historical analysis of operational planning from the Cold War.

Military operational planning constitutes a set of complex spatial-temporal relations between; (1) the physical and cultural environment of the operational area, (2) the desired operative objectives, and (3) information about the capability of own and enemy forces. Thus, cartographic representations are often used as a conveyor of the spatial implications of the plan. This is also the case with NATO and Warsaw Pact plans from the Cold War. While the two alliance had very different ways of applying cartographic representations in their operational planning, maps and spatial diagrams forms an important component of the operational planning of both sides.

Recent decades have seen an increasing number of scholarly publications dealing with the Cold War operational planning. However, the cartographic content of plans are only to a limited degree brought into the analysis. This means that the geography and spatial-temporal implications of operational planning of both sides are understudied. In recent years, there has been an increasing focus on space and spatial representations in parts of the humanities and social sciences within the fields of spatial humanities, Historical Geographic Information System (HGIS) as well as Military Geoscience. Although there is a large body of research dealing with the application of geospatial methods for inclusion of historical records into a HGIS, only few studies reports on the use of geospatial methods applied on military plans and non in relation to military planning during the Cold War.

Based on comprehensive archives from the Danish military commands at COMLANDZEALAND and COMLANDJUT as well as the Polish General Staff during the Cold War, we propose the first steps towards developing a methodology, which aims to integrate the cartographic components of operational planning into historical analysis with the use of HGIS. In this paper, we outline our initial thoughts on developing an ontology for transforming the content of the plans into digital geodata layers in a HGIS. Besides, of describing the different steps of geoprocessing of the historical records, we also aim to illustrate the application of this data in a historical analysis of the development of the operational planning from Danish and Polish military during the Cold War.