

Scandinavian Journal of Military Studies Special Issue:

MILITARY COMMAND UNDER SCRUTINY: INTERDISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVES

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In recent years, military command has been under increasing public and academic scrutiny. Some commentators even speak of a “crisis of command” (Brooks et al. 2021). Albeit command has attracted interest from several scholars, there has as noted by Lawrence Freedman – been “...*remarkably few [...] systematic investigation[s] of the practice of command.*” (Freedman, 2020, p. 106). In this special issue, we wish to address this omission and invite potential authors to participate in an interdisciplinary discussion on the challenges and transformations of command in the twenty-first century.

Several scholars have identified command as *the* most important function in the armed forces (Creveld, 1985, see also Keegan, 1987; Cohen, 2002). Recently, Anthony King (2019) has revived an interest in command through his important work on the transformations of command from an individualistic activity in the twentieth-century military organization to a collective enterprise in the twenty-first century military organization. Thus, he argues for a fundamental historical shift in the practice of command. Lawrence Freedman (2020) has argued for what he sees as a less radical transformation. Nevertheless, both authors’ work point to a common concern with military command in the context of an increasingly integrated, networked and accelerated battlefield, including complex geo-political conflicts, multi-nationalization, informationalization and politization of missions, professionalized and hyper-specialized headquarters and a vast array of new intelligent technologies augmenting human decision making in all domains of operation.

In this special issue of Scandinavian Journal of Military Studies, we wish to explore how command is conceptualized, organized and practiced in the midst of these rapid transformations, allowing for an interdisciplinary exploration of the different and often competing interests and agendas that co-shape the conduct of contemporary warfare.

We seek rigorous conceptual and empirical contributions that advance our understanding of military command and help us understand better when, why, and how command is organized and approached and with what consequences. We welcome approaches from different levels of analysis as well as from different disciplines. We also encourage submissions of various methods, including case studies, field studies, theory building, ethnographies, qualitative comparative analyses and archival research

We welcome abstracts on a series of topics related to, but not restricted by, the following concerns:

- *Theoretical conceptualizations and empirical explorations of command:* We would like to call for new conceptualizations of command and empirical explorations on the social constitution of command (past and present). As such, we think it is time to build on recent scholarly work towards more dedicated attention in order to advance theory around the unique practices and systems of command.

- *Technology, technological acceleration and command challenges/innovations:* In what ways do emerging technologies challenge or reinforce particular conceptions and practices of command? How does technology co-shape command practices? What can a technological centered perspective offer to our current understanding of command? How does technology influence/reconfigure the spatial and temporal divide in command?
- *Technological governance and drivers of future command:* What are the central challenges and opportunities of increasingly digitalized, interconnected and automated networks of command and control (C2) including space, cyber and the wider information sphere? In what ways will the growing numbers of intelligent and distributed sensors and platforms affect the need to think, plan and execute operations? What new types of vulnerabilities, including legal and ethical concerns are introduced across domains?
- *Organization of command:* How is command and command systems organized? What organizational set-up and devices facilitate command? More concretely, how is command practiced in the multi-national/cultural military head quarter? What are the differences and similarities in command across organizations and missions? How do idealized understandings of command and the commander influence the organization of command?
- *Professionalization and professionalism in command:* Is the practice of command increasingly being professionalized and, if yes, what does this entails? What is the impact of a professional staff organization on higher command? Where do we see alternative organizational forms and new professional roles and tasks embedded in systems of command?
- *Leadership and command:* What is the interrelation between command and leadership in the military organization? How can classic and novel theorizing on leadership contribute to our understanding of command? How can the practice of command in different operational environments expand our understanding of leadership in the military organization? How does culturally diverse understanding of leadership inform command in practice?
- *The politics of command:* How to interrogate politics of command understood as loose assemblages of formal agencies, networks of informal associations, and influential actors? What is the relationship between strategy and the politics of command and how do we theorize it? What is effective command in war, taking into consideration the political and operational factors in command?
- *Command, education and knowledge:* What are the challenges in transferring knowledge, skills and expertise obtained in command education (e.g. military exercises) to command in operations? What happens to military command when education becomes a mission objective (e.g. in training missions)? Which institutional and cultural factors influence command education in multicultural staffs? Which problematics and potentials does educational practices such as simulations and war-gaming entail for command?

Submitting your paper

Please submit your manuscript through the journal's online submission system at www.sjms.nu. You will need to create a user account if you do not already have one. Please mention that your submission should be a part of this Special Issue in the cover letter field. The Special Issue Editors handle all manuscripts in accordance with the journal's policies and procedures; they expect authors to follow the journal's submission guidelines found on the homepage. Deadline for submissions to this Special Issue is March 1, 2022.

All enquiries regarding the special issue should go to Anne Roelsgaard Obling (anob@fak.dk). For administrative support and general queries, you may contact Jens Bjerling, journal manager of SJMS, at jebb@fak.dk.