Introduction

The Personal and Public Politics of Militarizing Men

> Precisely because the military can insinuate itself so deeply into family dynamics, industrial structures, the human psyche, the electoral system, class and racial interactions, historical memories, and popular cultures, when women question the gendered fiber of any armed forces, they find themselves engaged in analyzing the very definition of personhood and of the nation.
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I MET VADIM at the office of a committee of soldiers' mothers in Samara, a city of one million located on the banks of the Volga. Now almost thirty years old, he had served as a conscript in the first Chechen war (1994–1996). Vadim had found it hard to reintegrate upon his return from Chechnya, but with the help of a local committee of soldiers' mothers attended school and later found employment as a financial specialist. The chair of the committee, who arranged our meeting, told me that Vadim had received an Order of Courage (*Orden Muzhestva)* for his actions during the war. But the war was not something Vadim was able to talk about. After more than ten years, he still suffered from the effects of his participation in the first Chechen war. We instead chatted about his experience of military life more generally. In spite of the memories of combat that still weighed on him, Vadim felt that military service had been an important life lesson, that it had helped him mature and become a man. He thought his transition from boyhood to manhood was confirmed by society, which treated him as an adult upon his return.[2]

Even for the many young men who do not see combat, military service in

Russia often is a damaging experience because of violent hazing practices and inadequate food and medical care. In early 2006, the case of the conscript Andrei Sychev shocked Russians and once again confirmed the dangers of military service. Sychev was brutally hazed by his fellow soldiers and, not receiving timely medical care, his legs and genitals had to be amputated. Every year hundreds of thousands of young men in Russia must confront the following dilemma: should I risk life and limb by heeding the draft call, or avoid the brutality and pain of Russian army life but take the chance of being seen as less of a man?

A young man's decision is shaped by the views of family members and society. Many Russian parents fear for their sons' health and life during military service and will do everything they can to keep them out of the army. However, it is the mothers rather than fathers who have publicly expressed this fear and organized in soldiers' mothers groups to improve service conditions and demand an end to conscription. For Russian men (whether sons or fathers) to publicly speak out against conscription is socially less acceptable and likely to be seen as unmanly. What it means to be a real man or a good mother lies at the heart of the state's conscription policy and societal resistance to it.

The Soviet state pursued a policy of mandatory military service for its male citizens. Military service was a key pillar of Soviet military power, but its significance went well beyond the defense of the country. As a duty of Soviet citizenship, military service was designed to mold young men into patriotic and loyal citizens. The military was also defined as *the* institution of male socialization, and military service was seen as a male rite of passage. During the 1980s, however, the Soviet state began to encounter increasing difficulties with draft evasion and an overall loss of prestige for the military. These changes were due in part to the Soviet war in Afghanistan and Mikhail Gorbachev's policy of *glasnost'*. The activism of soldiers' mothers brought public attention to the abuses and dire conditions conscripts faced during their service. Thus, in the final years of the Soviet Union, the prominent place of the armed forces in society and the militarized gender roles prescribed by the state were called into question.

Mandatory military service was one of the major fault lines of conflict between state and society that emerged with the demise of Soviet power and the transition to the postcommunist order. The new Russian state nonetheless upheld military service as a constitutional duty of young men, while promising the transition to an all-volunteer force sometime in the future. The first war in

Chechnya, which relied primarily on conscripts, further undermined the appeal of military service and exposed the deep problems plaguing the Russian armed forces. In addition to the widespread practice of hazing, the possibility of being sent to fight in Chechnya became another reason for the fear among young men and their families regarding military service. The waging of the second war (1999–2009), in contrast, more heavily involved contract soldiers and militarized state agencies other than the military (such as the Federal Security Service). President Vladimir Putin (2000–2008) aimed to restore society's faith in the military and its personnel, and stressed that military service was a duty of male citizens. The Putin regime itself was made up of significant numbers of militarized men originating from the security services. At the same time, draft evasion continued to be a problem and societal support for ending conscription remained strong. Interestingly, the very practices assumed necessary to achieve and assert manhood—such as hazing and combat—helped to undermine the appeal of military service in Russia. Hopes that Russia would move to an all-volunteer force in the foreseeable future were once again dashed in early 2010. The Ministry of Defense announced that it will continue to rely on conscripts to fill the ranks of Russia's armed forces, and will in fact expand the ratio of conscripts to volunteers.[3]

The issue of citizens' recruitment for military service and war is particularly salient today as many countries face challenges in filling their militaries' ranks. How states organize their military and recruit citizens for military service and war is fundamentally gendered: it relies on a particular understanding of men's role in society that links masculinity with the military. (Re)producing this link is important in order for militaries to attract male soldiers, bolster morale, and engage in combat. State policies such as male conscription and the waging of war are centrally informed by masculinity. The importance of masculinity, however, goes beyond the military sphere to the very core of state legitimation. To the extent that states depend on militarized justifications of their rule and reinforce a militarized form of patriotism, challenges to men's participation in the military and in war result in challenges to the very legitimacy of the state.

This book investigates the relationship between men's identities and the Russian state's conscription policy and waging of war in Chechnya. How did the state and military leadership on the one hand, and societal actors and individuals on the other, reproduce or contest the link between masculinity and the military in post-Soviet Russia? How have the postcommunist transformation and the Russian-Chechen wars affected the idea that a real man is one who has

served in the military, if not fought in combat? And what does the politics of militarized masculinity tell us about state-society relations in post-Soviet Russia and about militarism as a source of legitimacy for the post-Soviet state?

The book shows that men's militarization has been challenged *and* reinforced in the context of postcommunist transformation and the Chechen wars. In post-Soviet Russia, the state has faced serious difficulties in its militarization of men. This is most evident in the large number of draft evaders and deserters, antidraft and antiwar activism by soldiers' mothers, and the lack of popular support for the Chechen wars (with the exception of the initial phase of the second war). The transition to capitalism also encouraged the emergence of new ideas of masculinity that anchor men's identities in the market economy and conflict with patriotic, militarized masculinity. In addition to these disruptions of militarism, Russia has experienced a partial resurgence of militarized gender identities. This trend can be observed in the official revival of militarist ideology under President Putin, but also in the activities of regional soldiers' mothers groups and veterans' organizations. The process of remilitarization from above and below aims to strengthen militarized patriotism and narrow the gap between state and society. Even though it does not resolve the conflict over conscription, it increases the potential of militarism as a source of legitimacy for the post-Soviet state.

Theoretical Lens: Feminist International Relations and Militarized Masculinity

There are many competing definitions of militarism and militarization. I do not use "militarism" to imply the dominance of the military over the state or society, but rather define militarism as an ideology that promotes a central role for the military and its personnel in state and society. This role is shaped by particular sociohistoric and political-economic contexts. Militarism might inform state policies such as increases to military budgets, special social policy toward military professionals, or universal conscription. War necessarily relies on militarism, as it privileges a military solution over other, nonviolent solutions. The terms "militarism" and "militarization" are sometimes used interchangeably. I differentiate between militarism as an ideology (or a set of ideas), and militarization as a process. I define militarization as any process that helps establish and reinforce a central role for the military in state and society, and demilitarization as a process through which the military's position is questioned and undermined. Thus mili-

tarization (and the adjective "militarized") will be used to underscore the socially and politically constructed nature of the military's importance. Politicians, society, and individuals become militarized when their beliefs and actions support a central role for the military. Militarization is thus achieved when militarism is not questioned but accepted as normal and necessary.[4]

This study builds on scholarship in feminist International Relations (IR), which developed out of a desire to make women's lives and experiences visible and to uncover the gendered assumptions of the discipline. Joan Scott argues that "gender is a primary way of signifying relationships of power."[5] Thus gender is about more than women and men and their relations. It structures social life more generally as it assigns power to those institutions, practices, and activities associated with masculinity. What has traditionally counted as political (and thus relevant) gained its predominance by association with men and masculinity. The political leader, citizen, or warrior has long been imagined as a man and as displaying masculine characteristics. This was understood as natural, and masculinity therefore, just as femininity, remained unexplored in mainstream IR.[6] In recent years, feminist IR scholars have begun to explore in more detail the role of masculinity in global politics.[7] Turning our analytical gaze toward masculinity does not mean a simple return to the original subject of IR. It is intended to problematize what mainstream IR has taken for granted for so long: men's identities, notions of masculinity, and gendered relations of power. To study men then is necessarily to study them in relation to women, and vice versa. A gendered analysis reveals how women and men are affected differently by international politics, the ways in which they are expected and encouraged to fulfill certain gendered roles, *and* how notions of masculinity inform key concepts of IR.

Feminists use the term "gender" to underscore that women's and men's identities are constructed in relation to one another rather than biologically given. What it means to be a woman or a man depends on historical, cultural, social, and economic contexts. Gender structures social life to such an extent that we can talk of any given society as representing a particular *gender order:* a set of dominant gender relations and notions of masculinity and femininity.[8] The gender order manifests itself in gendered power relations, a gendered division of labor, and dominant sexual practices. Feminist and gender scholarship has documented the central role that modern states—capitalist, state-socialist, or transitional—play in reproducing and shaping their respective society's gender order, including its material, institutional, and ideological aspects.[9] However,

the state itself relies on the gender order for its own functioning and ideological legitimation, as is evident in the politics of militarization. The basic claims states make—to sovereignty, protection and security, the monopoly over the legitimate means of violence—are intrinsically tied up with particular gender relations and notions of masculinity and femininity. These claims have historically entailed dividing society into those who bear arms and defend state and nation (men) and those who are relegated to the private sphere and defined as in need of protection (women as well as children). A notion of militarized masculinity centrally underpins state sovereignty and the state's coercive power. States and militaries have worked hard to sustain the association of masculinity with the military and of femininity with the need for protection.[10] Without the militarization of men and their subordination to the state, the state would not be able to deliver on its claim of providing security. A particular gender order is thus implicit in militarization and state legitimation.

The focus of this book lies at the intersection of militarization/war and the gender order: the role of militarized notions of masculinity in state- and nation-building. In conceptualizing masculinity I follow R. W. Connell's important insights: first, masculinity needs to be understood in relation to femininity, as it is located within gender relations. That is, to make sense of masculinity and men, one must examine femininity and women, and vice versa.[11] Second, masculinities (and femininities) are produced at various sites: that of the individual, the institution (for example, the state, the workplace, the United Nations), and that of ideology/culture/discourse (such as advertisements, art, "common sense"). Third, masculinity is linked to power: men gain power in society not because of their biological identity as men but thanks to their "cultural association" with masculinity. What counts as masculine (or feminine) in a particular time and place depends not on men (and women) per se, but on what is considered to be power-enhancing (or power-degrading).[12] Fourth, we need to distinguish multiple masculinities. Connell argues that hegemonic masculinity gets defined in relation to various subordinate and marginalized masculinities (and femininities). Thus, gay men represent subordinate masculinity in an era that defines the heterosexual as the norm, and working-class ethnicized or racialized men embody marginalized masculinity in a society centered around middle- and upper-class white men. Finally, masculinities (and femininities) undergo change and are therefore best understood as historically (in addition to culturally) specific.[13]

Highlighting the intersections between the gender order and militarization,

we can see state legitimacy as being partly organized around notions of hegemonic masculinity (for example, the soldier, men of the dominant ethnic/racial group, or institutionalized hegemonic masculinity embodied by the state or the military). This hegemonic masculinity is defined in opposition to notions of subordinate masculinity (such as the enemy, the deserter, or the homosexual). In addition, states (and the social forces they are allied with) rely on, and at times actively empower, various constructions of femininity, including female domesticity, patriotic motherhood, or women workers. A state's ability to wage war, and to gain legitimacy from the waging of war, depends on men's and women's adherence to particular militarized gender roles, in addition to a variety of other factors such as economic resources, weapons technology, or public opinion.

Militarism has profoundly gendered effects. It privileges the military, a masculine institution, and men as militarized protectors, and thus contributes to unequal gender relations. Masculinity is associated with a variety of characteristics, including strength, violence, aggression, risk-taking, and dominance. The pervasiveness of militarism is evident in the fact that most people intuitively accept the idea of men as more aggressive, violent, and willing to fight in war than women. Indeed, historically men have acted as the warriors in most societies. However, feminist IR scholars urge us not so readily to accept the presumably natural link between men and militarism. Feminists use the term "militarized masculinity" to challenge us to think about how masculinities and men *become* militarized, about the ways in which masculinity and the military *become* linked, rather than to assume and accept that men are essentially militaristic.[14] Men's militarism cannot be taken for granted, as it relies on socialization, state policy, and—increasingly—economic incentives.

Militaries and states have long propagated the notion that manhood is achieved through military experience, or put simply, that the military helps make men out of boys. Obligatory military service has been one of the most important tools in shaping men's militarized identities.[15] In militarized societies, state and military leaders define woman's patriotism in terms of her willingness to sacrifice her son, and man's military service as intrinsic to his citizenship and identity. Militarization is gendered in that women's and men's identities can become informed by militarism. A mother's militarization is evident in the pride and social recognition she gains from her son's military service. A man's identity becomes militarized if he believes military service to be necessary for his transition to manhood or his status as citizen.

I define militarized masculinity as the idea that military service (and combat) are central to men's identity, whether this is understood as a citizenship duty or a necessity of male socialization. Militarized masculinity is embedded in gendered state policies such as compulsory military service for men as well as the public expressions and actions of the state and military elite. At the societal level, changing political-economic conditions as well as societal receptivity for notions of militarized masculinity affect the link between masculinity and the military. Individual men and women reinforce or challenge militarized masculinity through their acceptance of military service as a duty of male citizenship and/or as key to masculine identity, which is reflected in men's willingness to serve and women's support for men undergoing service.

The study of the military, militarism, and militarization is crucial for feminist scholars, for analytical and political reasons. The military is one of the main sources of unequal gendered power relations in society. In conscription societies, men's mandatory military service defines citizenship in gendered terms and effectively elevates men's citizenship status over that of women. As gender signifies relations of power more broadly, militarized masculinity is a factor in political power relations. Association with hegemonic notions of masculinity often brings social and political advantages. Thus, an examination of how notions of militarized masculinity achieve or lose hegemony is important for understanding gendered social and political power. At the same time, the insight that men are militarized rather than being born militaristic opens up space for the reconsideration of gender roles and the militarized politics they help sustain.

Empirical Focus: Postcommunist Transformation and the Russian-Chechen Wars

The Russian postcommunist transformation forms the backdrop of this study. Liberal scholars and policy-makers initially assumed a linear transition from communist political and economic systems to democracy and capitalism. Others, such as path-dependency scholars, pointed to the negative effects socialist legacies would have on the progress of change.[16] Michael Burawoy and Katherine Verdery find it misleading to "conceive of the transition as either rooted in the past or tied to an imagined future. Transition is a process suspended between the two."[17] Their approach allows for a better appreciation of

the complex interplay of continuities and changes that make up postcommunist transformations.

Postcommunist transformations touch all aspects of life. They are best viewed as a multiplicity of connected economic, political, ideological, social, and cultural processes that lead to fundamental changes in the economic and political system, the social and ideological order, and in cultural norms and practices. This transformation is by its very nature contested and dynamic, its outcome uncertain. The outcome depends on political and societal struggles over the path of reform and the nature of the new regime. Postcommunist transformation involves the redistribution of economic and political power as well as the restructuring of societal relations along class, gender, age, region, or nationality. Neither state nor societal actors fully determine the outcome of change. The state is a central agent, but even within the state, ministries, agencies, and levels of government often disagree on the course of reform. Similarly in society, various social actors work to influence or contest the government's policies.

In the early 1990s, the legitimacy of the new Russian state rested on the government promise of improved social and economic conditions. Russians associated democratization with outcomes such as "social order, economic stability, guaranteed welfare and a greater measure of distributive justice."[18] However, the economic policy of "shock therapy," adopted by Boris Yeltsin's reform government, created a social order characterized by increased economic disparities and the concentration of power in the hands of the "new" ruling class. This undermined the popularity of the government's neoliberal reforms and its definition of Russia as part of the West. Resistance to Yeltsin's program emphasized alternative conceptions of the Russian nation. The government shifted its own position in response, taking on a more nationalist, anti-Western stance. President Putin carried forth this more assertive stance vis-à-vis the West and in addition moved to strengthen the state and renew Russian patriotism. Economically, Russia continued its integration into the world capitalist system, while the ideological sphere saw a revival of state patriotism and militarism reminiscent of the Soviet era. In the context of the economic and ideological crisis of the postcommunist order, militarism together with nationalism and patriotism became central to political leaders' attempts to gain, or strengthen their grip on, power.[19]

Militarism and militarization are best understood within the dialectic of continuity and change that has accompanied Russia's postcommunist transformation. Changes in the military sphere and in military-society relations cannot

be isolated from other aspects of transformation but have to be understood in the context of multiple, intersecting transformations: of the economy, society, the political system, and culture and values. This study views militarism and militarization as part of the reorganization of social relations and political power that has taken place during the postcommunist period. Such an approach does not take the militarism of—and between—states for granted, but instead investigates why militarism emerges and how it fits into broader social and political changes.

Military violence between Chechen separatist and Russia federal forces overshadowed Russia's postcommunist transformation.[20] The state waged two wars (1994–1996, 1999–2009) against the separatist republic of Chechnya, which declared independence in November of 1991. Competing explanations of this conflict have been put forward, which look to the history of Russian imperialism, the legacy of contradictory Soviet nationality policies, Russia's current economic and geostrategic interests in the Caucasus region, or a combination of these factors. Some authors emphasize that Chechen resistance to Russian imperialism dates back to the nineteenth century. They situate the most recent conflicts within a prolonged history of Russian-Chechen animosities and interpret them as part of the Chechens' historic struggle for national liberation.[21] Others argue that Russian-Chechen relations were aggravated by a Soviet nationality policy that was based on a "built-in contradiction between the principle of ethnoterritorial federalism and the actual repression of national aspirations."[22] On the one hand, Chechens faced forced deportations and assimilationist policies. In 1944 approximately 500,000 Chechens and Ingushes were deported to Central Asia on Joseph Stalin's order for alleged collaboration with Nazi Germany. On the other hand, the principle of ethnoterritorial federalism encouraged the idea of a Chechen people.[23] Furthermore, Soviet modernization policies during the 1960s to 1980s helped develop the republic's economy and educational system, but ethnic inequalities remained.[24] Those authors who look to contemporary rather than historic explanations stress the importance of economic and geostrategic factors for the Russian state. They note the key transportation routes (Rostov-Baku highway and railway) and oil pipeline that run through Chechnya, the local oil refining industry, as well as proximity to the Caspian Sea with its considerable oil reserves.[25]

While all these approaches offer important pieces to the puzzle, I favor an approach that situates the wars within the process of Russia's postcommunist transformation.[26] The wars can be partly understood as a response to threats

to the unity of the Russian state. However, the wars must also be understood in connection with the legitimation of political power in the context of the economic and ideological crisis of the postcommunist social order. The political leadership in Russia has relied on militarism to bolster its rule, because of the lack of other easily available sources of legitimation.[27] Yet, this process has been contradictory. The new Russian state was able to draw on the Soviet legacy of a dominant military culture, but had to contend with weakened notions of militarized masculinity and "patriotic duty" at the societal level. The Chechen wars are typical of contemporary warfare in global politics. Fought against "separatists," "bandits," and "terrorists," the wars have not ended in clear victory or peace. In an age of the perpetual war on terror Russia faces the problem so many other countries do: how to mobilize its population in support of war.

Fieldwork

This study draws on fieldwork I conducted in Samara, which is the administrative center of Samara *Oblast'* in the Volga Federal District and located approximately 1,100 kilometers southeast of Moscow. During the Soviet period, Samara—then named Kuibishev—had been a "closed city" because of its concentration of military industry. I chose Samara for the following reason. One of the central components of my fieldwork was to carry out interviews with women who were active in the soldiers' mothers movement. Here my concern was to avoid the focus on Russia's "center" often found in the Western literature and reflected in the already substantial research that exists on the independent soldiers' mothers groups in Moscow and St. Petersburg. I had the hunch that this focus on Russia's two main cities might lead to a skewed view on gender and militarization. Nongovernmental organizations in Moscow and St. Petersburg are more likely to be in contact with Western organizations and be influenced by Western ideas. Instead, my aim was to examine how nongovernmental groups in Russia's regions address concerns about the military, and thus to contribute to a more complex understanding of the soldiers' mothers movement.[28] In hindsight Samara also presented a good place to conduct fieldwork on military matters, as troops from Samara region participated in both Chechen wars. This fact led to the development of numerous local and regional groups that work with Chechen war veterans.[29]

During my fieldwork in Samara from May to August 2006, I conducted twenty-four interviews primarily with soldiers' mothers, draft evaders,

and veterans of the Chechen and other recent wars.[30] The interviews were semistructured and the questions focused on the interviewees' perspectives on military service and the effects of the wars on their lives, as well as on the activities of soldiers' mothers' and veterans' organizations. The interviews were informed by my feminist curiosity about men's and women's notions of militarized masculinity. However, the majority of questions did not explicitly ask about gender (such as "In your view, what attracts or deters men from military service?" or "How did the Chechen wars affect your life?"), but nonetheless revealed gendered attitudes and stories. I read the interviews through a feminist lens to identify what notions of masculinity and femininity the interviewees employed.

The fact that subjects such as the military and the Chechen wars are considered politically sensitive in contemporary Russia posed some difficulties for my research. My status as a foreign researcher compounded this problem. Among those who were skeptical or did not agree to an interview, the most common concerns seemed to be around the association of Westerners with human rights or espionage. I also encountered the view that people from abroad should not be interested in these kinds of topics and should instead concern themselves with their own society's problems. However, it must be noted that Russian scholars also encounter difficulties when conducting research on the military and Chechnya. As Tanya Lokshina pointed out in May 2007 in reference to her interviews with police veterans of the Chechen wars: "Unfortunately, Chechnya has become almost a taboo subject in Russia of late and a lot of police officers who served in Chechnya refuse to speak about their respective experiences in the conflict zone, even with anonymity warranted."[31] I encountered similar difficulties, yet my experiences were not universally difficult.[32] In one case, my status as foreign scholar was of advantage, as the leader of one of the Samara soldiers' mothers groups apparently refused to talk to local journalists but was willing to give me an interview.

Plan of the Book

The book explores the facets of militarized masculinity in post-Soviet Russia through five thematic chapters. Chapter 1, "Gender and Militarization in the Soviet Union," outlines the significance militarized masculinity had for Soviet state and society (including its gender order) and argues that the official notion of militarized masculinity began to be challenged in the late Soviet period

as a result of the war in Afghanistan, Gorbachev's policy of *glasnost'*, and the activism of soldiers' mothers. Chapter 2 on "Militarized Masculinity and State Leadership in the Russian-Chechen Wars" examines how articulations and representations of militarized masculinity undermined the legitimacy of the first war, but helped mobilize support for the second. The analysis shows that there is no straightforward connection between the waging of war and manliness. Instead, leaders' attempts to use war as a means of appearing manly are shaped by a complicated interplay of militarized masculinities. In Chapter 3, "The Societal Crisis of Militarized Masculinity: Conscription, Economic Transformation, and the Russian-Chechen Wars," I analyze the policy of male conscription and the growing challenges to militarized masculinity as a result of violence and poor service conditions within the military, the emergence of new class-based notions of masculinity, and the Chechen wars. Chapter 4, "The Soldiers' Mothers Movement: Contesting and Reproducing Militarized Gender Roles," examines the soldiers' mothers movement in Russia by contrasting groups in Moscow and St. Petersburg with those in Samara. Soldiers' mothers groups in Moscow and St. Petersburg have challenged militarized masculinity by publicly opposing the wars and lobbying for the abolition of conscription. By contrast, soldiers' mothers in Samara shied away from publicly opposing the wars, and while they defend draftees' and conscripts' rights, they have tended to reinforce militarized gender roles. Chapter 5 on "Veterans of the Chechen Wars: Questionable Warriors or a Model of Masculinity?" explores how representations of Chechen war veterans have diverged from the image of the heroic warrior. It argues that the Chechen wars revealed numerous contradictions of militarized masculinity, both in the representations of unwilling and excessive warriors and in the difficulties veterans faced upon their return to civilian life.

Three threads are drawn through this book. The first concerns a gender analysis of militarization that is simultaneously situated at the state and societal levels, and also takes seriously the experiences and actions of citizens. I emphasize the importance of gender to state policies such as conscription and war, but I am equally concerned with how society and individuals reproduce or contest these policies. An analysis of militarized masculinity at the societal level makes evident the challenges to militarized state- and nation-building in post-Soviet Russia. Such an approach also reveals that the politics of militarized masculinity are as much personal and local as they are public, national, and global.[33]

Second, in this book I examine how gender can help produce ideological

coherence but at the same time often points us to tensions and contradictions within social and political processes. Gender helps stabilize social relations and creates ideological support for state policies. For example, the idea that men are warriors and women are in need of male protection offers a justification for male conscription and the waging of war by men. But gender also helps us see disruptions to ideology and the potential for the transformation of social relations and political power. As states rely on militarized masculinity for their own functioning and legitimacy, the contestations of militarized masculinity offer insight into the challenges to gendered social and political power.

Finally, I explore contradictory and parallel processes of de- and remilitarization instead of assuming a linear process of militarization. Such an approach is especially suited to the study of postcommunist transformation and conceptualizes militarization and militarism in the context of the economic and ideological crisis of the postcommunist order. The following chapters explain how changing state-society relations manifest themselves in the contested politics of militarized masculinity, and how notions of militarized masculinity are reinforced as the state attempts to stabilize the new order and citizens struggle to find their place within it.