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CHAPTER 9

Russia's Young Army

Raising New Generations into Militarized Patriots

Jonna Alava

Abstract

This chapter addresses military-patriotic education in Russia. The Russian state pays increasing attention to the military-patriotic upbringing of children and youth, hoping to achieve a larger draft pool and patriotic citizens. In 2015, Ûnarmiâ was founded to unite the country's fragmented military-patriotic youth organizations. The movement's aim was to operate in every school by 2020. By deconstructing the hegemonic discourse of military-patriotic education, I analyse the linguistic ways in which the legitimization of Ûnarmiâ has been constructed. Discourses of *heroism*, *masculinity*, a *beneficial and fun hobby*, *citizen-soldier* and *military traditionalism* include a variety of key strategies of legitimization for influencing audiences. Discourses suggest that Ûnarmiâ's purpose is to raise patriotic citizens, who support the prevailing

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regime and contribute to solving the demographic crisis by repeating 'traditional' gender roles, rather than preparing young people for war.

Keywords: military-patriotic education, Ûnarmiâ, Russia, patriotism, militarism

Introduction

> We would like, and we will do it, to create hundreds and hundreds of centres for patriotic education, hundreds of Ûnarmiâ centres throughout the country. (Sergei Shoigu, RIA Novosti, 2016)

This chapter examines the establishment and legitimization of military-patriotic education as an element of militarization in Russia by analysing the meanings associated with Ûnarmiâ, the All-Russia National Military Patriotic Social Movement Association 'Young Army'.[1] In recent years in Russia, patriotism has increasingly meant militarism and preparing for war. However, this is not the only interpretation, as Lassila, Mitikka and Zavadskaya, and Nazarenko show in their chapters in this volume. By deconstructing the hegemonic discourse of military-patriotic education, I analyse the linguistic ways in which legitimization of Ûnarmiâ is constructed. My research questions are: What does the re-emergence of military-patriotic education represent and what kinds of meanings does it acquire? How has the meaning of Ûnarmiâ been explained in official and semi-official contexts? How and why was it established? What kind of identities are formed and given to members of the movement?

Despite the scale of the rising patriotism in Russia, there is relatively little research on military-patriotic education (see for example Bækken, 2019; Laruelle, 2015; Rapoport, 2009; Sanina, 2017; Sieca-Kozlowski, 2010; Sperling, 2009), or research that combines gender and patriotism/militarism (for example Eichler, 2019; Kalinina, 2017; Riabov and Riabova, 2014). The rapid growth of Ûnarmiâ requires closer examination to understand the direction

of militarization processes among youth in Russia. My study provides new insights into that area.

I consider discourses in the macro-level context as a standardized way of describing certain types of phenomena in society. In the research analysis, I apply critical discourse analysis (CDA), which is well suited to the material dealing with power relations. From a discursive perspective, texts always have many functions, as they represent the world and display social relationships and identities (Fairclough, 1997, p. 40). CDA is a tool to decode relationships between language and ideology, language and gender, and language and power. Often, studies employing CDA focus on the linguistic construction of national identity and the process of 'othering' (Reyes, 2011), which are central for this study as well. In CDA, the discursive practices of each community are perceived as networks – which can be called the order of discourse. In the order of discourse, different discourses overlap and mix but can also be tightly separated (Fairclough, 1995, p. 77).

In the context of this study, it is assumed that the state actors are in a hegemonic position to define the objectives of military-patriotic education and the meaning of Ûnarmiâ. In other words, owing to their authoritative position and entangled in its wider powers, they have a better ability to create and maintain specific discourses. I have divided this hegemonic 'macrodiscourse' into subdiscourses or groups of statements, which are all linked together but occur at various scales in different groups of the source material. These include: 'heroism', 'masculinity', 'beneficial and fun hobby', 'citizen-soldier' and 'military traditionalism'. The hegemonic discourse excludes different points of view. Such issues as pacifism, different pedagogical perspectives, youth's own vision and voice, references to science and questioning the appropriateness of the movement are marginalized. Oppositional voices are almost muted in the mainstream media. However, as will be shown in this chapter, the fact that hegemonic discourse needs constant reinforcing and repeating indicates that it is not universally accepted and has an alternative, as has already been suggested in this volume.

The rest of this chapter is organized in the following way. In the next section I will briefly describe the main concepts used in the research analysis and the research data. After that, I will discuss the historical formation of military-patriotic education in Russia and the emergence of Ûnarmiâ as an organization. This is then followed by the research analysis, where I distinguish a network of hegemonic discourses that legitimate the creation of Ûnarmiâ. In the concluding part of this chapter, I will identify specific linguistic ways used in support of hegemonic discourses and argue that the legitimation of Ûnarmiâ relies heavily on military traditionalism and enemy images.

Research Framework: Key Concepts and Research Material

Key concepts: legitimization, ideology, identity

In this section I will introduce the key concepts used in the research analysis, which include legitimization, ideology and identity. Legitimization is here understood as a strategy employed by social actors to justify the development of military-patriotic education and related youth activities. The process of legitimization is enacted by argumentation that takes advantage of social ideas, thoughts, actions and declarations. It is aimed to obtain or maintain power, to achieve social acceptance, to reach popularity and to improve community relationships. To achieve an interlocutor's approval and support, the act of legitimization may appeal to emotions, rationality, hypothetical future, expertise and altruism (Reyes, 2011). Often, the process of legitimization strives to connect the past, present and future into a coherent narrative. Political actors display the present as a period that requires making decisions about taking action. These actions are related to a cause (in the past) and a consequence (may occur in the future) (Reyes, 2011). For example, in the research material, the Great Patriotic War represents 'the past', whereas 'the upcoming war' forms the possible future.

Another key term used in this chapter is ideology, which has a significant role in processes through which relations of power are established, maintained, enacted and transformed (Fairclough, 1995, p. 26). According to Žižek, in the classical Marxist definition, ideologies are discourses that promote false ideas or 'consciousness' in subjects about the political regimes they live in. However, this Marxist notion has been disputed in the humanities, questioning that there could ever be any One such theoretically accessible Truth and that the notion of ideology is irrelevant to describe contemporary socio-political life, because of the widespread cynicism towards political authorities. On the other hand, subjects today can know political regimes' false ideas very well but act as if they did not know (Sharpe, 2020) and I argue that this is very much true in contemporary Russia, where double standards familiar from the Soviet Union still exist at some levels of society.

Although the main emphasis of the study is on the meanings given to legitimacy, representations of identities that emerged during the analysis require also attention. Identities interact with ideological prescriptions about roles and relationships in specific domains of social action that assign preferred properties, desires and needs to individuals (Bamberg, Schiffrin and De Fina, 2006, p. 135). This is a matter of social control. In each discourse presented later in this chapter, 'correct' values stand out strongly. Instead of a dialogue between youth and the authorities, the youth is represented as a mass that can be influenced in the desired direction. The discourses on Ûnarmiâ offer to the youth identities of a good citizen and a soldier. In addition, Russianness, traditional gender roles, self-sacrifice, humility, hard work and the pursuit of heroism are the most important building blocks of Ûnarmiân identity.

The research material

To achieve a comprehensive understanding of how the establishment of Ûnarmiâ was received and what kind of arguments were given to it in Russian society, my data are selected from four

different sources: the state's official documents, military periodicals, mainstream media and texts produced by Ûnarmiâ itself. As the movement was established in late 2015, I chose to review material from 2015 to the present day. Next, I will introduce the research material in more detail.

First, the State Patriotic Education Programmes (2001–2020) provide a basis for the hegemonic discourse. The military aspects of patriotic education have strengthened with every five-year state programme since 2001. Even in the first programme, the basis for the creation of the new youth organization was established, as there were plans to carry out military-historical, military-technical and military sports clubs and training centres (Patriotičeskoe vospitanie graždan, 2001). It seems that over the years DOSAAF[2] has lost its leading position as a leading military-patriotic educator and has therefore made room for a new player. Practices of military units over educational organizations have been strengthened continuously and today Ûnarmiâ fulfils most of the measures outlined in the programmes (ibid.; Patriotičeskoe vospitanie graždan, 2015).

In addition to these programmes, methodological handbooks for educational organizations (*Practices of Interaction between Educational Organizations and Military-Patriotic Associations with Military Units and the Development of Interaction between Educational Organizations and Military-Patriotic Associations with Military Units*) published by the Ministry of Education and Science proved to be an interesting source for discourse analysis as they justify military-patriotic education from many perspectives.

However, although these programmes seem effective on paper, critics question their effectivity. Anna Sanina (2019) has argued that patriotic narratives emanating from the state programmes create an impression that the Kremlin has a centralized and well-organized programme for supporting militarism and nationalism in Russia. In reality, there is no such grand design and the programmes lack concrete tools and meanings for patriotism formation. Furthermore, despite certain seemingly noble goals, like the integration of less fortunate children into Russian

society and the elimination of youth criminality, military-patriotic programmes appear to have more narrow objectives, such as increasing the number of potential recruits to the armed forces and paramilitary units (Eurasia Daily Monitor, 2019).

The second category of research material includes military journals that more often than not reflect and consolidate hegemonic discourses. The analysed articles are selected from the East View database, which contains over 40 major Russian military and security publications. I chose articles from the years 2015–2020 with the word 'Ûnarmiâ' for a closer look from the journals *Vestnik Akademii voennyh nauk* (3 articles), *Voenno-promyšlennyj kur'er* (17) and *Nezavisimoe voennoe obozrenie* (14). In addition, I overviewed several articles from the Ministry of Defence's newspaper *Krasnaâ zvezda* (803 articles), but, because of the large number of hits, I chose the articles for deeper analysis mainly based on their titles or whether I found references to them in other contexts.

The third type of research material is produced by the Ûnarmiâ organization and it is compiled from their website and social media accounts on Facebook and Instagram from the years 2015–2020. Ûnarmiâ is especially active on Instagram and publishes daily information on its activities. Among hundreds of social media postings, I focused on the representations of identities and gender roles.

The fourth category includes mainstream media documents from the years 2015–2020 that I searched from Integrum. I selected the databases 'Central press' and 'Regional press'. The search with the word 'Ûnarmiâ' returned 8,924 documents altogether. Owing to the large number of hits, I chose to take only Russia's most-read daily newspapers (Statista, 2020) for further analysis, so I reviewed texts from *Argumenty i Fakty* (16 texts), *Komsomol'skaâ pravda* (58), *Izvestiâ* (13) and *Kommersant* (17). I left out of the review the government's newspaper *Rossijskaâ gazeta*, as well as *Moskovskij komsomolec*, which is one of Ûnarmiâ's sponsors. These newspapers would hardly have brought any new perspective to discourse analysis but would have repeated hegemonic discourse familiar from the state documents. In fact, the material

from the mainstream media and military periodicals saturated quite quickly – the discourses repeated themselves and new arguments were rare and marginal.

The fifth and last category includes media reports and other material collected from popular newspapers and academic databases, googling and navigating through sources from one article to another. With a basic knowledge of the Russian media field, I relied on my judgement when assessing the significance of sources. The research material collected in this way is not exhaustive but offers a variety of texts and contrastive discourses for discourse analysis. Critical opinions and attitudes towards Ûnarmiâ are easily found from 'opposition' media like newspapers *Novaâ gazeta* and *Meduza*, but few authors also expressed them in the state-owned mainstream media.

Militarism and the Military-Patriotic Youth Organizations in Russia

The centuries-long tradition of symbolic unity between the military and patriotism explains why the military rationale of patriotic education does not need to be explained: patriotic education itself is a code phrase that implies military preparation, training and education (Rapoport, 2009). The Cambridge Dictionary (2020) defines militarism as 'the belief that it is necessary to have strong armed forces and that they should be used in order to win political or economic advantages'. Furthermore, Vagts (1959, p. 17) defines militarism as follows: 'Militarism covers every system of thinking and valuing and every complex of feelings which rank military institutions and ways above the ways of civilian life, carrying military mentality and models of acting and decision into the civilian sphere.' Militarization instead is 'a concentration of men and materials on winning specific objectives of power' (ibid., p. 13). However, Håvard Bækken argues that military-patriotic education in post-Soviet Russia is a textbook example of militarism. Patriotic education is an attempt to use the military to socialize youth into good human beings and

citizens, which is not necessarily related to war-fighting capabilities. Even though the term militarism fits better with Russian patriotic education as a whole, Ûnarmiâ is a very much related to 'war fighting', and its members are subjugated to the needs of the army. Therefore, in my view, it is appropriate to use both terms.

The Soviet Union organized a massive propaganda campaign focused on the need to prepare fighters for an 'inevitable war' (Sperling, 2009). Today, patriotic education penetrates all state and social institutions again and it is coordinated at the highest and the lowest levels of government (Omelchenko et al., 2015). In contrast to international scholarly analysis that has attributed patriotic education initiation to Vladimir Putin, Bækken (2019) argues that patriotic discourses were already formed in the 1990s in traditionalist circles within the Russian military, where the armed forces were seen as a bearer of historical continuity and 'Russianness'. Increasing the prestige of military service was not the only aim, but the fact that patriotic education served as a form of social outreach. Thus, moral values and social concerns are as important as military security in the current patriotic project (Bækken, 2019). My review of military periodicals supports these arguments. Military circles see patriotic education as a long continuation, where the turmoil following the collapse of the Soviet Union was just an exception.

Ûnarmiâ is the latest version of military-patriotic youth organizations established by the Kremlin. In 2000, in Putin's first term, a first 'presidential fan club' 'Idušie vmeste' ('Moving together') was born to inculcate values of a regime in the youth. In the autumn of 2004, the Orange Revolution in Ukraine rose up and led to the creation of a bigger and nationwide organization, the Youth Democratic Anti-Fascist Movement 'Naši' ('Ours'). Naši was the regime's ideological vehicle, whose purpose was to create a new elite and prevent a colour revolution in Russia (van Herpen, 2015, pp. 123–135). Around 2007, Naši's political importance decreased and finally flamed out, owing to its internal disintegration and loss of political power of its leaders, which also resulted in a loss of funding (Mijnssen, 2014, pp. 181–182). As the Kremlin's foreign

policy became more assertive after the annexation of Crimea, a new youth group was once again needed to better reflect this more militant approach, and Ûnarmiâ was born (Finch, 2019). Although Naši is not what is referred to in the Ûnarmiâ debate, the threats that these organizations should respond to resemble each other, e.g. Western values, colour revolutions and oppositional movements in Russia.

Besides openly political youth organizations, several military-patriotic organizations that existed in the Soviet Union have been revived or expanded in the Russian Federation, including the Suvorov military and Nakhimov naval school, the cadet corps, Cossack military schools, the Society for Cooperation with the Army, Aviation and Navy (DOSAAF) and the Ready for Labour and Defence (GTO) training system. Since 2013, girls have been allowed to apply to many of these traditional boys' military educational institutions (Yandex, 2020), which may indicate that the role of women in war work is changing. Also, thousands of private or regional patriotic clubs are extremely diverse in Russia and many of them describe themselves with an additional adjective – cultural, military, civic, Orthodox or historical (Laruelle, 2015). Ûnarmiâ is somewhere between these traditional military schools, hobby clubs and political projects. In the constitutive meeting of Ûnarmiâ, members of the board considered it important that Ûnarmiâ not be involved in politics (Mironovič, 2016), which in turn is ridiculous as it is clear that Ûnarmiâ supports the current regime and vice versa. Still, the history with Naši has been learned and Ûnarmiâ is now more firmly tied to stable institutions like DOSAAF and the Ministry of Defence to avoid political fluctuations.

Establishment of Ûnarmiâ and Its Main Activities

Ûnarmiâ was formally established by the Minister of Defence of the Russian Federation, Sergei Shoigu, on 29 October 2015, the anniversary of the founding of Komsomol, which is hardly

a coincidence. Any 8- to 17-year-old student, military-patriotic club or search squad can voluntarily join the movement. As of September 2020, Ûnarmiâ had over 719,000 members (Ûnarmiâ, 2020). The authorities announced that the goal is to increase the number of members to one million this year (Radio Svoboda, 2019), but the COVID-19 pandemic appears to have slowed growth, unless the target was already too ambitious.

The term 'Ûnarmiâ' was already used during the Civil War in 1917 to denote underage participants. In the Soviet era, the term referred to teams in Pioneers' military games 'Zarnica' and 'Orlenok' (Vološinov, 1989, pp. 3–33). Another meaning for Ûnarmiâ was born when, from the mid-1960s, children's clubs under the Pioneers' umbrella organization spread the memory of the Great Patriotic War (Popkov, 2016). In the late 1980s, the Ûnarmiâ movement loosely united small military-patriotic clubs, created on the basis of organizations of Great Patriotic War veterans (Meduza, 2016; Omelchenko et al., 2015). Today's Ûnarmiâ is an official organization strictly controlled by the state. Still, it calls itself a movement, which creates an illusion of a bottom-up structured NGO.

In Ûnarmiâ's main message, citizenship has been elevated over military content, as 'Ûnarmiâ's mission is to raise citizens and patriots and teach the child an active civic position. Furthermore, Ûnarmiâ forms a positive motivation to fulfil the constitutional duty and prepares young men for service in the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation. The movement prepares its members to enter the military universities of the country, where they receive free higher education and social support from the Ministry of Defence. (Ûnarmiâ, 2020.) Thus, it offers its members a social rise in society.

Minister of Defence Sergei Shoigu justified the establishment of Ûnarmiâ by saying that:

> To make young people protect Russia with weapons in their hands, the readiness and willingness to serve must be born in childhood and adolescence. To form a positive attitude towards

> the army as a public institution and military affairs as an occupation, the state must participate systematically, with all relevant resources in military-patriotic work. (Eliseeva and Tihonov, 2016)

Ûnarmiâ's activities are divided into four parts: spiritual and moral development, social development, physical and sports development, and intellectual development (Ûnarmiâ, 2020). Despite the 'civilian' core message, every action includes a military starting point. While collectivism is emphasized in rhetoric, its competitive and athletic nature cuts across all activities of the movement, revealing that the intention is to highlight talented individuals.

Powerful sponsors behind the scheme

Although Ûnarmiâ belongs administratively under the military-patriotic wing of the Russian Movement of Schoolchildren (RMS), the Ministry of Defence has taken the key role as leader and organizer of Ûnarmiâ (Popkov, 2016). Ûnarmiâ has many partners and sponsors, such as Russia's state-owned bank Sberbank, TV companies Zvezda and Rossiâ 24, newspaper *Moskovskij komsomolec* and many other state-related companies and administrations (Ûnarmiâ, 2020). One of the main sponsors of Ûnarmiâ may be related to Evgenij Prigožin, the sanctioned oligarch who is also behind the notorious private military company Wagner Group (Eurasia Daily Monitor, 2019). In particular, the production of the movement's uniforms is associated with Prigožin (Radio Svoboda, 2018).

Typically, the head of the regional Ûnarmiâ organization is a former *silovik* or a person close to the security forces, who is a part of the regional ruling elite or loyal to them (Sanina, 2017, p. 113). The infrastructure of the movement is tied to the locations of military units, DOSAAF and the central sports club of the army. Ûnarmiâ cooperates with relevant clubs of young rescuers, young guards, young police assistants and traffic inspectors and the movements

of the Russian Cossacks. Statistics on how many Ûnarmiâns join the troops are closely monitored. In 2019, the number was 1,000 and the tendency to increase continues (Mišina, 2019). The central venue for Ûnarmiâ's events is the Russian armed forces' 'Park Patriot', a huge military-themed park opened in 2016 near Moscow, where 'everything is permeated with patriotism' (Park Patriot, 2019). Similar parks are being planned all over Russia. In the year 2020, 'Ûnarmiâ houses', where the kids can study after school, are being set up in all regions, in each garrison and cultural institutions, as well as in regional centres of military-patriotic education and preparation of citizens for military service (Cygankov, 2019).

For the year 2020, Ûnarmiâ has planned 276 different projects and events. For example, Ûnarmiâ's social advertising will be placed on the streets of Moscow and other cities, and the movement will organize the work 'Immortal Regiment of My School' in educational institutions nationwide and participate in the spring and autumn in rituals of sending conscripts to military service locations (Ûnarmejskij god, 2020). Foreign policy enters the picture, as the movement will establish new units at the embassies of the Russian Federation abroad in 2020 (ibid.). Ûnarmiâ is supposed to operate in every school in 2020 (Novye izvestiâ, 2019). Schools are expected to open a room for study and recreation for students who have joined Ûnarmiâ. The room must contain certain types of equipment, a picture of President Vladimir Putin, samples of small arms, a map, a flag of Russia etc. The annexation of Crimea is strongly present in Ûnarmiâ's educational materials and visual imagery. These details remind of the Soviet era, when in the 1970s and the 1980s in the Soviet Union each educational institution had to have the same kind of educational material base (Sanina, 2017, pp. 110–113). It seems as if Ûnarmiâ is wanted as a permanent institution in society, like Komsomol was. That is why the ideological commitment of the individual member is not so important, because as many young people as possible are involved. Of course, there always exist ideological components, but it seems

that Ûnarmiâ's core is more educational than Naši's ideological and political actions.

Recruitment takes place in primary schools

The movement recruits young people directly from the schools. Ûnarmiâ's social media posts often glorify the classes in which each student has joined the movement. The head of Ûnarmiâ, Roman Romanenko, says that the recruitment process has become so efficient that it is no longer possible to stop it, as the kids keep inviting new friends to the movement (Èho Moskvy, 2019). The movement has several factors to attract new members. Visuality is widely used in symbols, artefacts and clothes. The Ûnarmiâ online store consists of 95 different military-style clothes and accessories, the prices of which are high compared to average salaries (Magazin Ûnarmiâ, 2020). Most of the members buy uniforms by themselves, but some regional departments offer them for free (Zajcev, 2019). Several sports heroes, actresses and warlords work in Ûnarmiâ or appear in its events, being role models for young people and bringing visibility to the organization. The big carrot is that more than 20 Russian universities already award extra points in their entrance exams to students who belong or have belonged to Ûnarmiâ (Èho Moskvy, 2019). Although membership of Ûnarmiâ is officially voluntary, there is an informal obligation to join for the children of military personnel, public servants and defence industry employees (Estonian Foreign Intelligence Service, 2020), as well for orphanage children, whose custodian is the state. *Novaâ gazeta* notes that the same phenomenon as in the USSR, when Komsomol came to orphanages, is being repeated today (Tarasov, 2019). This kind of measure originates in revolutionary history, when the Cheka[3] created the Emergency Commission for taking charge of orphans, who later came to form a large part of the NKVD officers.[4] The phenomenon is not new in this century either, as a presidential decree in 2000 renewed the tradition, putting the army in charge of dealing with social problems not taken on by the state (Sieca-Kozlowski, 2010).

The Legitimating Discourses of Ûnarmiâ

Earlier in this volume, Jussi Lassila and Salla Nazarenko introduced several different perceptions of patriotism in Russia. Jussi Lassila distinguishes between two interpretations of patriotism in the context of youth socialization. In a *broad* view, patriotism is seen as a nexus of all good things that must be fostered further. The *narrow* approach urges us not to forget the ultimate goal of all patriotism – preparation for military service, and indeed for war. In my discourse analysis, perhaps surprisingly the *broad* approach dominates, even though Ûnarmiâ is a paramilitary organization. Nazarenko, in turn, distinguished three narratives of patriotism among Russian TV journalists: *intimate patriotism*, *military patriotism* and *infowar patriotism*. From the perspective of these findings, the narrative of military patriotism is the most dominant in my material, but I have named it *military traditionalism*, in order to emphasize the role of history in the legitimization of military-patriotic education. Taken together, discourses of military-patriotic education analysed in this chapter follow the golden mean: they are not as pacifist as intimate patriotism can be, but not so belligerent as *infowar patriotism* or the above-mentioned *narrow approach* entails.

Heroism: self-sacrifice for the honour and glory of Russia

If Ûnarmiâ were described in one word, it could be heroism. The word and its derivatives, 'hero and heroic', are repeated more in Ûnarmiâ's discourses than anything else. Heroism encompasses many things, like pride, self-sacrifice and faith. By taking an oath, a member joins Ûnarmiâ, in which he or she promises to prepare him/herself to serve the Fatherland. According to the code of the movement, the honour and glory of Russia are the highest values of Ûnarmiâ (Kodeks Ûnarmiâ, 2018). Heroism is linked to 'Russia's special position in the world'. As the military periodical *Voenno-promyšlennyj kur'er* writes,

> At the time of the formation of the Ûnarmiâ, the aims of patriotic ideology were discussed: The new ideology was seen to unite the vectors of interests of the state, society and the evolutionarily developing biosphere, which must lead to an increase existence of Russians and Russia on Earth. (Sokolov, 2016)

Sacrifice is another concept intrinsically linked to heroic discourse. It can be associated with religious (Russia) or secular (Soviet Union) discourses. In the Soviet official commemorative culture, children and adolescents – young partisans, little soldiers adopted by Soviet army units, helpers of the underground resistance – were used as icons of heroic sacrifice and patriotism (Zhurzhenko, 2017).

In Chapter 10 in this volume, Elina Kahla points to the current church–state–military collaboration model, which glorifies blood sacrifice and argues that new martyrs strike as of ultimate significance for Russian society's identity formation. The Moscow Patriarchate sees that future warriors need not only patriotic education but 'the constant connection with God to maintain their morale, which can be achieved by developing a link between church and state' (Russkaâ Pravoslavnaâ Cerkov′, 2015). The church strengthens the importance of self-sacrifice as part of the heroism in the name of faith. Unlike Ûnarmiâ's Soviet predecessors, religion is present in the movement's material as members, for example, pose beside icons (see e.g. Ûnarmiâ Instagram, 2019a). Another example of sacrifice discourse is the project 'Pioneers–Heroes of the Great Patriotic War', which started at the beginning of 2020 on Ûnarmiâ's Instagram and Facebook accounts. The project presents young people and children who lost their lives while protecting their homeland. Thus far, the stories of over 50 children have been presented. Here is one example.

> After the death of his father at age 13, Valera Volkov becomes the 'son of a regiment' in the 7th Marine Brigade. Along with adults, with a weapon in his hands, he restrains the attacks of the enemy. According to memoirs of fellow soldiers, he loved poetry and often read Maâkovskij for his comrade. … In July 1942, reflecting an enemy attack, he died heroically, throwing a bunch of

> grenades under the advancing tank. For courage and bravery, he was posthumously awarded the Order of the Patriotic War of the 1st degree. (Ûnarmiâ Facebook, 2020)

Heroism through self-sacrifice is not only yesterday's business. Last year, Ria Novosti (2019) reported on a heroic 13-year-old Ûnarmiân boy, Dima, who saved two children from drowning but died himself. Ria Novosti described how 'Dima dreamed of becoming a soldier to protect people'. These narratives and imageries of children as heroic little soldiers have increased heavily in Russia in recent years to support the state-led militarization.

Masculinity: gendered warfare adores 'real men'

In the Soviet Union, ideal masculinity materialized in the mythic image of a soldier, a young pioneer working for the greater good of his nation, while the feminine ideal was a young and active woman and fertile mother giving birth to new soldiers (Kalinina, 2017). Today, Oleg Riabov and Tatiana Riabova have argued, an important factor contributing to the authorities' high popularity is the 'remasculinization of Russia' – the politics of identity directed towards creating a positive collective identity with the help of gender discourse, particularly by promulgating masculine images of Russia. Politics of identity conducted by the new Russian authorities under Putin had to take into consideration the demands of the 1990s' nationalist and communist oppositions, who called to restore collective male dignity, for the restoration of national pride. The Russian mass media masculinizes Putin's image with the help of militarization – Putin is represented as a military serviceman (among other caricatured images). Historically, warfare has played a crucial role in determining what 'being a real man' is all about at the symbolic, institutional and corporeal levels (Riabov and Riabova, 2014). Furthermore, militarism as an ideology values the military and its members over society. Militarism relies on, reproduces and helps justify hierarchical and unequal gender roles and relations. Militarized femininity is a contradictory construction, in which female soldiers are seen as

equal to, and still different from, male soldiers. This reproduces masculinity as the norm of soldiering rather than acknowledging women as soldiers in their own right (Eichler, 2019).

Even though Ûnarmiâ's mission is to prepare the boys for the army, many girls belong to the movement. Girls are constantly represented in the movement's pictures and texts, but, in the absence of official figures, it is not clear what percentage of members are women. The proportion of women in Ûnarmiâ has raised the question of whether the role of females in the Russian military context is growing and how it is changing. Women are not subject to general conscription but can serve under contract. At present, 40,000 women are serving as soldiers and about 280,000 women hold civilian posts in the Russian armed forces, and the number is increasing (Krasnaâ zvezda, 2019). Despite ostensible gender equality, Ûnarmiâ is strictly gendered. The movement organizes, for example, the beauty contest 'Miss Ûnarmiâ' and, at balls, girls wear prom dresses while boys keep their Ûnarmiân uniforms. One interesting detail is that many Ûnarmiân girls wear *bantiki* – white and puffy hair bows – which became part of (gendered) school uniforms in the Soviet Union in the 1940s. The bows became a symbol of idealized Soviet childhood, reflecting national prosperity, development and happiness (Millei et al., 2019). Ûnarmiâ has regularized the use of *bantiki*s again.

However, masculinity and femininity do not follow the same classification as the division into women and men. Women can have 'masculine' qualities, for example braveness, strength and power, which are always positive 'extra qualities'. For example, one female chief of a regional Ûnarmiâ headquarters is described in a social media post as follows: 'this fragile and sweet woman has a strong character and enough courage to lead a whole region's Ûnarmiâns' (Ûnarmiâ Instagram, 2019b). These examples reveal that, women can 'grow up' in the ranks of Ûnarmiâ and attain qualities considered traditionally masculine, but they must remain feminine: fragile, sweet and beautiful. The opposite situation is not positive or even possible in discourses of Ûnarmiâ. Boys have to become 'men' who under no circumstances should have 'weak'

feminine attributes or qualities like fragility. This kind of education is in line with the 'traditional gender roles' that are nowadays promoted strongly in Russian society. In summary, women can be involved in militarized projects like Ûnarmiâ and be equal with men as soldiers, but the default is that they must remain feminine and thereby support masculinity.

Fertility is strongly tied to the need to develop military-patriotic education and it is thereby linked to gender issues. Demographic problems need to be solved to achieve a larger draft pool (Sperling, 2009). The conservative party of the Orthodox Church is also eager to participate in this project. The state's military-patriotic goals are logically linked to the traditional gender roles promoted in the Orthodox Church. The church became a social tool supporting the state's initiatives in the realm of family, motherhood, social problems and children's and youth education (Adamsky, 2019, pp. 175–177). The issue of fertility rates is not easily noticeable in Ûnarmiâ's material but it is a major component of 'traditional Russian values' upon which patriotic programmes and Ûnarmiâ are based. Ûnarmiâ encourages youth to take on a traditional lifestyle that includes a spouse (opposite sex), a family with kids, a healthy lifestyle, religion and a military or civilian career. This in turn is linked to the 'beneficial hobby' discourse, which emphasizes athletic and healthy lifestyle. Let us now turn to it.

A beneficial and fun hobby for everybody

When browsing Ûnarmiâ's material on social media, it is clear that this discourse is the number one means of rhetoric aimed at young people and their parents. My findings from Ûnarmiâ's material and military periodicals support those of Bækken (2019) and Sieca-Kozlowski (2010) that patriotic education is seen as a means to save youth from criminality, alcohol, drugs and the influence of television and social media. Alongside basic military training, the Kremlin wants to offer via Ûnarmiâ a greater structure, discipline and guidance for today's younger generation, among which suicide rates are high, alcohol and drug abuse

remain a problem, and gangs are growing – particularly linked with social media (Finch, 2019).

Ûnarmiâ's peaceful goal has been emphasized in the movement's social media texts, in which Ûnarmiâ is presented as a developing hobby for children and youth. Any kind of military matter is seen as a fun and adventurous thing. As Sergei Shoigu put it in *Kommersant*, 'through the army and DOSAAF, Ûnarmiâ gets access to all the joys of military service'; he continues that 'you will have the opportunity to fly aeroplanes and jump on a parachute, dive underwater and cruise on our warships and submarines, shoot with everything that shoots, except with rockets' (Berseneva, 2016). Joy is related to Soviet nostalgia. The military periodical *Nezavisimoe voennoe obozrenie* rejoices that 'in Soviet patriotic summer camps, one could hold a real machine gun and feel like a real hero' and that by now 'Russian children can fulfil these and other wildest dreams by joining the Ûnarmiâ' (Nezavisimoe voennoe obozrenie, 2017).

Besides joy, the beneficial and fun hobby discourse emphasizes useful and practical civic skills. It gives hints of a beneficial future, where the citizen with a history in Ûnarmiâ can expect better advantages than others, like having a good physical condition and everyday skills or having a career in the government or the military.

When it comes to the needs of young people, adults get the floor in every discourse. The material reveals that authors and adults *know* naturally what youth is like, and they want to share their childhood memories with contemporary youth. The approach is paternal and sceptical through the material. For example, the author of a military journal criticizes youth by saying that 'it is very problematic to raise a citizen and patriot of teenagers with empty files in their heads' (ibid.), and continues that, 'because of the fear of maintaining a communist ideology, patriotic education was abandoned as well'. The talk of 'empty files' reveals disappointment with 'digital native' young people.

The contradiction to the joy is that military-patriotic education can be used as a punishment. The Russian Ministry of Internal

Affairs has intensified the work to develop measures to prevent crimes related to the manipulation of the minds of minors through social networks. Young people who commit these crimes are sent to military-patriotic camps (Argumenty i Fakty, 2019). This reveals the ideological emphasis of the project and questions its voluntary nature and 'fun'. These measures draw lines for appropriate citizenship, which I will discuss next.

Citizen-soldier: the ideal of a new citizen

The representation of identity is an instrument of power. Patriotism as an official ideology of Russia forms ideal identities. Ûnarmiâ's discourses form a clear representation of a desirable or ideal identity. The ideal Ûnarmiân is patriotic, collective, athletic, traditional, active, spontaneous within limits, ready to fight and self-sacrifice, a proud Russian who knows the country's history and respects it. All these qualities are easily found in patriotic discourses, but they are highlighted in Ûnarmiâ's communication.

The Russian state wants patriotism to combine an idea of a multinational 'all-Russian' country as a core value and the meaning of life (Ministerstvo obrazovaniâ i nauki Rossijskoj Federacii, 2017a). This might be difficult to achieve, as Mitikka and Zavadskaya (Chapter 6, this volume) show that people consider themselves more 'local patriots' who value the *malaâ rodina* (regional homeland), while the whole of Russia is too 'abstract' to be represented. Furthermore, 'traditional norms of Russian society like moral education, being hardworking, knowledgeable and respectful of one's own and other nations' culture, are based on the ideas of serving Fatherland' (Ministerstvo obrazovaniâ i nauki Rossijskoj Federacii, 2017b). Although these norms are quite universal in many countries, why does Russia feel the need to instil these values increasingly on young people? One military periodical explains that, 'without patriotism, the youth could be modern, prospective and effectively developing, but lose its identity and itself as a nation in a difficult modern situation' (Astanini, 2016). The writer adds that 'young people must love their motherland like their own

mother: the mother may not always be right, she might be too strict, but she's a mother'. Such an argument emphasizes that one should love his/her homeland, regardless of how it treats him/her. Citizens must be humble.

For an Ûnarmiân it is 'unacceptable to be lazy at work and study, to behave illegally, to interfere with normal communication or to provoke violations of the law and standards of public morality, advocate the values of subcultures that erode the foundations of the national culture of Russia, participate in youth and other public associations promoting extremist ideology or asocial lifestyle, distort the state language of the Russian Federation and its constituent republics and use of slang speech' (Kodeks Ûnarmiâ, 2018). Rules are strict and prohibition of being interested in 'subcultures against national culture', 'interference with normal communication' and an 'asocial lifestyle' tells us about attempts to guide and limit youth culture without specifying what these vague concepts mean in each (political) situation.

One of the most important tasks of military-patriotic education is to ensure the national security of the country by increasing the prestige of military service. According to the Ministry of Education and Science, despite the fact that 80% of young people have a positive attitude towards military service, there are still many who consider service 'a meaningless occupation that should be avoided'. The ministry believes these numbers indicate the need for more thorough military-patriotic work 'to root out pacifist sentiments in children and youth' (Ministerstvo obrazovaniâ i nauki Rossijskoj Federacii, 2017b). This fragment reveals pacifism as an unwanted ideology in society: a good citizen cannot be a pacifist. These official documents assume that the reader (citizen) shares the same original assumption of the danger of pacifism and the importance of early military-patriotic education. At the same time it makes clear that pacifism is something that must be naturally left out of the debate. This shows that hegemonic discourse is limited, even though it might create the picture of extensive discussion in society. Soldiers are the chief example of today's patriots to emulate (Bækken, 2019). When history writing in Russia

increasingly means that victorious military history and military-patriotic education intertwine with the school schedule, the soldier and the citizen become one.

The confrontation between 'us' and 'them' is also present when discussing what a good citizen is like. Liberals are increasingly treated as the current power elite, as we have seen in arrests and harsh sentences that followed protests in Moscow in 2019. The online newspaper *Russkaâ planeta* writes that 'the so-called patriotic camp considers Ûnarmiâ an excellent institution for educating the younger generation, while liberals see it as propaganda of militarism and the cult of the Kalashnikov' (Zajcev, 2019). The phrases 'propaganda of militarism' and 'cult of the Kalashnikov' have negative connotations and imply that the liberals are overreacting. At the same time they set the 'patriotic camp' as the 'normal' position – patriots are naturally and already within the frame of common sense. This confrontation is also present in Ûnarmiâ's code, which calls for 'to show tact and attentiveness in dealing with persons not participating in the movement' (Kodeks Ûnarmiâ, 2018). Here 'we', i.e. patriots, are represented as something more intelligent and fairer than 'others', and therefore have a responsibility to behave discreetly towards others, who, reading between the lines, not may know 'the right way'.

Military traditionalism

Military traditionalism is an undertone of the military-patriotic education in present-day Russia (Bækken, 2019). This discourse was especially strengthened before celebrating the 75th anniversary of victory in the Second World War and the new constitutional amendments in 2020. Besides 'traditions', this discourse effectively exploits threat and enemy images to legitimate military-patriotic education among youth.

The Russian military press has called for years for a return to 'Russianness' in the traditional sense by using a certain framing, language and rhetoric. Discourses that rely on epic and glorious military history and traditions help to transcend ethnic and

religious borders and are useful to the regime, as military values such as discipline, collectivism, self-sacrifice and hierarchy guide society towards political loyalty (Bækken, 2019). The traditionalist worldview contains nostalgia and historical memory, which both lean on the prestige of the Russian military. Young people are expected to respect the older generations by embracing this nostalgia and participating in a similar patriotic education that older generations did.

One task of Ûnarmiâ is participating in the 'revitalization of historical information space', where 'the Western nations practice total confrontation' (Tonkoškurov, 2016). This 'revitalization' is more a tool than a concept: schools' history textbooks are being revamped and the regime tries to block false information about the Second World War on the internet. As the military periodical *Voenno-promyšlennyj kur'er* put it, 'the enemy wants to tarnish the most beloved memory of the Russian people – the Great Patriotic War. Its main target group is youth, and through the mass media, it strikes a wedge between generations. In the fight against this special attention must be paid to develop the Ûnarmiâ' (Mišina, 2019). *Izvestiâ* writes that 'Russia needs an active, total, offensive and patriotic historical policy that encompasses everything – the family, kindergarten, schools, universities, as well as cinema, the internet, the media and literature' (Il′nickij, 2015). *Nezavisimaâ gazeta* explains the relationship between the armed forces and historical memory in patriotic education by writing that 'the Russian armed forces need only citizens, who can consciously defend state interests, which is possible only if they haven't lost their historical memory' (Odnokolenko, 2016).

Enemy images in military-patriotic education context follow the Kremlin's general threat-based political climate, which is discussed in more detail earlier in this volume (see Pynnöniemi, Chapter 4, and Laine, Chapter 3). My material reveals the kind of threats that are seen to exist specifically against youth. The biggest and the most abstract and uncontrolled threat is 'globalization', which in patriotic rhetoric means mainly Western values and the uncontrollable internet, giving the word merely negative

connotations. According to the Ministry of Education and Science, 'Globalization is leading to the displacing national mass culture and replacing personal communication between people by electronic communications. It has given birth to nationalist sentiments, which sometimes cross the line of national identity and turn into national chauvinism that requires a consistent fight with fascist ideas' (Ministerstvo obrazovaniâ i nauki Rossijskoj Federacii, 2017b). The military periodical *Voenno-promyšlennyj kur'er* wants Ûnarmiâ to be the authority in this 'total information confrontation', in order to educate citizens (Ilûŝenko, 2017).

Later the same periodical opens up the enemy image:

> With the help of modern mass media and networks, the NATO and its allies seek to reformat the individual, group and mass consciousness of the Russian population in the way that they need for themselves. Therefore, the main object of defeat and destruction is not people themselves, but certain types of consciousness. Its main target group is youth, and through the mass media, it strikes a wedge between generations. In the fight against this, special attention must be paid to military-patriotic education and the key here is to develop the Ûnarmiâ. (Cygankov, 2019)

Another periodical, *Nezavisimoe voennoe obozrenie*, goes on the same lines, as, 'because of the complete lack of control on the part of the state and society in terms of ideology, it is necessary to constantly post on social networks photo and video materials covering the work of various patriotic public associations such as Ûnarmiâ' (Astanini, 2016). In summary, Russian military circles' attitude towards the internet and global freedom of communication is reprehensible, and their attempt to limit 'non-traditional' information for young people is clear.

In addition to the fight against the negative effects of globalization, Ûnarmiâ is thought to play a preventive role in maintaining the stability of society. The writers of the journal *Vestnik Akademii Voennykh Nauk* argue that at the federal level the organization is a good weapon in the fight against colour revolutionary ideologies. They write that 'the formation of the correct attitude

of schoolchildren and students to state and municipal authorities can be achieved by organizing joint events, which allow authorities to begin the process of building trust in state at all levels and will help counteract protest moods in the youth environment' (Sasim and Kovalev, 2018). Furthermore, 'democratization processes' in domestic politics are seen as a threat and 'the emergence of a multi-party system creates certain difficulties for modern youth to understand the older generation, that has received patriotic education of Soviet system' (Ministerstvo obrazovaniâ i nauki Rossijskoj Federacii, 2017a). This argument reveals that youth must understand older generations and adapt to them, not vice versa.

In Conclusion: Interpretations and Discussion

This chapter aimed to provide an overview of the re-emergence of military-patriotic education in Russia, and, by deconstructing the state hegemonic discourse, analyse the linguistic ways in which the legitimization of Ûnarmiâ is constructed. I presented five discourses, which strongly overlap and interact. Discourses of *heroism*, *masculinity*, a *beneficial and fun hobby*, *citizen-soldier* and *military traditionalism* approach different audiences and repeat and support the state-led ideology of patriotism. Discourses include a variety of key strategies of legitimization for influencing audiences.

Heroism is the tip of all communication, and it is shared by all actors. In Ûnarmiâ's material, a *beneficial and fun hobby* discourse dominates, naturally because its target audience is minors and their parents. This discourse differs from others in its pragmatism when others are more ideological and abstract. Newspapers and state documents emphasize *citizen-soldier* discourse, and military periodicals stress *military traditionalism*. *Masculinity* cuts across all other discourses but is mainly hidden between the lines as it is such a naturalized initial assumption in society. However, when it mixes with the hobby discourse at the practical level, it becomes visible to the reader.

So, what do these discourses mean in the legitimization process? Reyes (2011) differentiates five key strategies for influencing audiences: emotions (particularly fear), a hypothetical future, rationality, voices of expertise and altruism. Every military-patriotic discourse uses these specific linguistic ways in order to obtain the approval of a particular group.

Emotions are key in the legitimization process because they prepare the audience towards supporting and accepting the proposal of the social actor (ibid.). Fear is the most visible means in military traditionalism discourse: upcoming war, internal disruption, the decay of the West, the loss of traditional values and lazy youth arouse fear. Emotions are also in use when the speaker and audience are in the 'us-group' and the social actors described negatively form the 'them-group' (ibid.). This division is rooted deeply in military-patriotic rhetoric. Ûnarmiâns are represented as 'best patriots' – they dedicate themselves to ideology, give their time and publicly demonstrate their commitment. I like to argue that threats that Ûnarmiâ is expected to respond to have slightly changed over the past five years. At the time of the establishment of movement, the threats were mostly perceived as external. Over the past years, talk of patriots and liberals as opposing groups has increased in the military-patriotic context, so the meaning of 'them' has changed from external to internal, which may mean that the response to external threats is already at the required level, or that internal problems have increased in society. Nostalgia also strongly affects emotions. Soviet nostalgia, traditional values and the older generation's own experiences of (militarized) youth are present in many discourses. Nostalgia hits the emotions of the older generation, while young people are offered excitement as an emotion, mostly in the beneficial and fun hobby discourse. Emotions, especially fear, are often naturally used with *a hypothetical future*: if we do not act as we suggest, there will be a war/decay/demographic crisis etc.

It is a matter of *rationality* when political actors present the legitimization process as a process where decisions have been made after a heeded, evaluated and thoughtful procedure (Reyes,

2011). This strategy cuts the whole hegemonic discourse, where the proposed measures are effectively naturalized at the language level. Military-patriotic education is presented as an only rational way to act in the current situation. The grounds for this are sought from a long continuum and history of military-patriotic education, giving the impression that things have been studied and prepared for a long time. *Voices of expertise* is related to this. Military patriotism is driven by the most influential figures in society. From the researcher's perspective, there is a lack of credible scientific research of military-patriotic education, and this vacuum is filled by 'experts by experience' in various fields. Sports heroes, celebrities and veterans represent this strategy in communication targeted at young people.

Ûnarmiâ's activities include helping the poor, veterans and orphans. Social media reports on these events prominently, but it seems that helping is individual acts or events rather than constant collaboration. This leads us to the last legitimization strategy, *altruism*, which justifies its rationale from other people's well-being. Doing things for others, especially for the poor and vulnerable, is well-perceived in society and can help the process of justification (ibid.).

In summary, discourses and legitimization strategies work simultaneously to get different audiences interested and accept the actions of military-patriotic education. If we summarize what the aim of each discourse is, then, according to *military traditionalism*, Ûnarmiâ's purpose is a revitalization of historical information space and preparing citizens for the army. *Citizen-soldier* discourse wants to raise patriotic and loyal citizens. *Heroism* encourages self-sacrifice and heroism – to take risks for the Fatherland. *Beneficial and fun hobby* seeks to make youth active, professional and militarized. Lastly, *masculinity* discourse puts pressure on replicating traditional gender and family norms.

However, it is important to keep in mind that behind the official image is youth, whose perceptions of patriotism do not match the experiences of their parents' generation. The generational gap between policymakers and youth is deepening (see Lassila, Chapter 5, this volume). Youth can demonstrate the patriotism

in order to achieve some benefits in working life or enjoy the resources provided by the movement, especially in rural areas, where other hobby opportunities are scarce, but it is hard to say yet whether they will become the patriots desired by the Kremlin in this way. The project is not risk-free either. Military education for young people may increase the amount of aggression and nationalist narratives in society, which may begin to work against the Kremlin. Also, if discourses of confrontation between liberals and patriots intensify and spread to schools, it will not stabilize future society.

Arguments over the legitimization of Ûnarmiâ and military-patriotic education rely heavily on *military traditionalism* and enemy images. Education is seen as an integral part of a historical continuum; in other words, it is normalized at the level of rhetoric. The Pioneer and Komsomol organizations' spirit is strongly present in the goals of harnessing the whole generation under uniform patriotic education. Still, this study strengthens the idea that Ûnarmiâ's purpose is to raise patriotic citizens who support the prevailing regime, rather than raise only conscripts. The Russian Orthodox Church sees that national security is based on family and therefore the church plays an important role in the current formation of ideology and gender roles to create moral and traditional nuclear families. The Kremlin hopes that this patriotic force may in the future be used to curb and silence colour revolutions and the rise of opposition and prevent their subsequent emergence as young people at risk of radicalization and oppositional thoughts are recruited at an early age in the movement. This claim of Ûnarmiâ as a tool of domestic policy is supported by the large involvement of girls, who are not subject to general conscription, the movement's systematic infiltration into the school world and the growing rhetoric of liberals as 'others'.

Notes

[1] Vserossijskoe voenno-patriotičeskoe obŝestvennoe dviženie 'Ûnarmiâ'. Research material can also be found under the names Yunarmiya, Yunarmia and Yunarmy.

[2] Volunteer Society for Cooperation with the Army, Aviation and Navy. See Svynarenko's Chapter 8 in this volume about the definition and purpose of DOSAAF.

[3] The All-Russian Extraordinary Commission, commonly known as Cheka, was the first in a succession of Soviet secret police organizations.

[4] The People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs was the interior ministry of the Soviet Union 1934–1946, which included both ordinary public order activities and secret police activities.

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