



Forschungsverbund
Militär, Krieg und Geschlecht/Diversität
Research Network Military, War and Gender/Diversity



ZMSBw
Zentrum für Militärgeschichte
und Sozialwissenschaften der
Bundeswehr



DFG
Forschungsgruppe
Military cultures of
violence

Call for Papers

Second International MKGD-ZMSBw Conference

Masculinities, Militaries, and Mass Violence in Transition

Thursday and Friday, January 22 and 23, 2026

at the Bundeswehr Centre of Military History and Social Sciences Potsdam, Germany

Hosts:

- Research Network Military, War and Gender/Diversity (MKGD)
- Bundeswehr Centre of Military History and Social Sciences (ZMSBw)
- University of the Bundeswehr Munich, Department of Social Sciences and Public Affairs
- DFG Forschungsgruppe Military Cultures of Violence, University of Potsdam

In cooperation with:

- Military History Working Group (Arbeitskreis Militärgeschichte, AKM)

Organizers:

Prof. Isabelle Deflers, PD Dr. Anke Fischer-Kattner (University of the Bundeswehr Munich), Prof. Christa Hämmerle (University of Vienna), Prof. Karen Hagemann (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill), Dr. Friederike Hartung (ZMSBw), Dr. Christin Pschichholz (University of Potsdam)

Theme and Goals:

The military and war were among the first subjects of the history of masculinity, when it developed as a subfield of the emerging discipline of gender history in the 1980s. Until then, most military historians had regarded military service and warfare as exclusively masculine activities. Even today, for many scholars studying armed forces and conflicts the maleness of their research subject seems so self-evident as to require no critical scrutiny.

Historians of masculinity challenge this gender blindness, arguing that “gender” is crucial for understanding past and present armed forces and military conflicts around the globe. They use “gender” as a research subject and methodological approach, conceptualizing it as an analytical category, which works in intersection with class, race, ethnicity, age, sexuality etc.. For them, “gender” as a social, historically specific construct of perceived differences between the sexes, shapes discourses on and representations of armed forces in peace and war, informs military laws and regulations, permeates the organisation and culture of regular and irregular armed forces, and frames individual as well as collective identities, experiences and memories.

Important areas of research in the history of masculinity, the military and war include the link between the supposedly “natural” male duty to serve as soldiers protecting home and family as well as male citizenship rights, which has long been used to deny women their rights as citizens; the resistance against an inclusion of women in the military in general and in combat positions in particular; the importance of male heterosexuality for the construction of a virile concept of military masculinity, which went hand in hand with the persecution of homosexuality; and sexual harassment within the armed forces and against women and men of the enemy.

The second conference of the international Research Network on Military, War and Gender/Diversity (MKGD), founded in March 2023, aims to take a comparative look at the current state of the history of masculinity in military, violence and war, exploring the diverse approaches and themes addressed by innovative scholarship in these fields. We will consider both early modern and modern armed forces and conflicts in Europe, North America and beyond up to the present day, and welcome contextualised case studies as well as diachronic and synchronic comparisons. We would like to invite participants to join us in exploring masculinities, militaries and mass violence in transition.

Keynote Speakers:

- **Thomas Kühne** (Strassler Colin Flug Professor of Holocaust History, Clark University, Worcester, MA):
Masculinity, War, and Genocide: State and Perspectives of Historical Inquiries
- **Aaron Belkin** (Professor of Political Sciences, San Francisco State University):
Gender Identity and Violence in Authoritarian Times: Reflections on Transgender Military Service

Call for Papers:

The CfP invites advanced doctoral students, postdoctoral researchers, and experienced scholars in the field to submit proposals. Presentations should be no longer than 20 minutes. The conference language is English. Unfortunately, we are unable to offer hybrid participation. The submitted proposals may address the following aspects and topics, but need not be limited to:

- intersectional gender images, in particular constructions of masculinity, class, race, ethnicity, and nationality, in the context of military and warfare, including the “archetypical” construct of men as protectors of nations, families and women;
- continuities and discontinuities in the construction of ideals of masculinity in the military and war; differences and similarities between periods, regions and conflicts as well as between peace- and wartime;
- the importance of differences in the organisation of armed forces as well as types of military conflict for the ideals and practices of military masculinity;
- cultural, including visual, representations of masculinity in military cultures and their intersectional variations across armed forces and conflicts;
- the resistance against the inclusion of women in regular and irregular armed forces, in particular combat, and the role of ideologies of masculinity in these processes;
- female perspectives on the alleged maleness of armed forces;
- sexuality and masculinity in the context of military and war;
- practices of illegitimate individual and collective gender-specific violence, sexual and sexualized violence by men and on men in the context of military and warfare;
- different male experiences or memories of everyday life and violence in the military and war.

To apply for participation in the conference, please submit an English abstract (approx. 700 words) and a short CV (up to 2 pages).

Please send your application to: Friederike Hartung <FriederikeHartung@bundeswehr.org> by **March 31, 2025**.

If necessary, hotel and travel expenses (economy-class flights or train) can be covered upon application for the speakers.

Please follow the link for further information on the MKGD research network: <https://mkgd.hypotheses.org/>