

## **S2: Personalization: Subjectification and Authority**

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Heroes and heroines are granted authority because they are followed and looked up to. However, heroes also provide models of self-description, self-fashioning and action-orientation; in this sense, they can impact subjectification. Heroic bonds of authority and invocations of the heroic subject are linked by a logic of personalization. Obedience and subordination are not established by stronger weapons, superior resources, an appeal to tradition, legitimization through procedure, or the unforced force of the better argument. Similarly, the self is not formed by general value systems, codes of conduct or cost-benefit calculations. Rather, the self is formed by a role model demanding imitation, or by the admiration and worship of an exceptional figure. The case studies developed so far at the SFB have historically classified and described in detail the connection between personalized ties of authority and asymmetrical modes of subjectification. In this project, these case studies will now be the object of theoretical reflection.

S2 is pursuing two complementary questions. Firstly, S2 will consolidate the knowledge gained in previous funding periods about the heroic blueprints of subjects, and about heroes as figures of authority. Additionally, S2 analyzes the overarching characteristics of leadership relationships and invocations of the heroic subject. This includes the study of narrative patterns of authorization, the attribution of exceptionalism and agency, socio-psychological dynamics of identification and projection, the reduction of complex networks of interdependence to personalized followerships, as well as how sacrifice can wield a socially binding power. Based on previously completed historical case studies, S2 draws on and continues to develop the analytical concepts and empirical findings of studies on authoritarianism and subjectification. This will deepen the theoretical insight into central aspects of the heroic. In addition to this, S2 will focus on fields of discourse that the SFB has, until now, given little attention to, but that are fundamental to the understanding of heroizations and heroisms. In particular, such fields of discourse will include political-philosophical, pedagogical, socio-psychological and ethical approaches. Using the methods

of historical discourse analysis and the sociology of knowledge, S2 analyzes the disciplinary structures of justification and problematization because such structures negotiate models of heroic binding of authority and subjectification.

Secondly, the SFB's findings will yield further insights into how exactly personal relationships of authority arise, are maintained or eroded, and what subjectifying effects these relationships produce. The heroic itself thus becomes an explanans. S2 will examine how personal claims to authority and types of subject are formed in certain exemplary areas (such as political regimes, establishments, religious groups, scientific communities and educational institutions), and how they follow a characteristic pattern of relationships to heroic figures. Heroic bonds of authority and invocations of the heroic subject can be found in Western and non-Western societies, but they are determined by specific characteristics, respectively. Therefore, the research design includes a case study on China, which is particularly relevant to S2, due to China's authoritarian political system and the belief in the formative power of exemplary figures in Confucianism and Maoism. Overall, the research at S2 is informed by the concerns of the present.