

S3: Masculinities

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S3 concerns itself with masculinity as a fundamental category of the heroic and its constituting processes. In previous gender-related research at the SFB, the focus has tended to be on women, the search for female figures, and gender-ambiguous phenomena of the heroic. Now, S3's attention will turn from our established discussions on women and female heroisms to the study of the intrinsic link between masculinity and heroism, which has been frequently noted at the SFB, but never focused on systematically. Not only do the findings of masculinity studies contribute to the analysis of the heroic, this analysis of the heroic can in turn enrich gender studies. Masculinity will be treated as a theoretical concept, while 'masculinities', in the plural, refers to historically contingent gender configurations. By interrelating these two perspectives (masculinity and masculinities), the heroic can yield new insights relevant to gender studies.

The constituting processes of the heroic tend to create binary distinctions, and hence lead to the disambiguation of gender conceptions. Heroes thus embody notions of ideal masculinity and exert normative pressure. This pressure affects competing conceptions of masculinity, and forces both men and women to position themselves in relation to it.

S3 is researching four main trajectories. For the first trajectory, the researchers will inquire into the normative effect of the male hero on both men and women. Secondly, an intersectional approach will be applied to the nexus of masculinity and heroism. In the third trajectory, it will be analyzed where and how challenges to hegemonic homosocial logics lead to a renegotiation, while the fourth trajectory will see a subversion of this nexus of masculinity and heroism.

Exemplary case studies will be conducted for each of these four research trajectories, which will complement a re-examination of the findings from the SFB's first two funding periods. Researchers from the fields of history, history of art, Islamic studies, and Scandinavian studies act as principal investigators. The qualification projects deal with heroic AIDS discourses in literature (doctoral student), and with the heroization of women from a historical and transcultural perspective (post-doc).