

Dispute as an Opportunity? Communicative Practices of Disputing as a Vehicle of Social Negotiation

International Online Student Conference
14 and 15 June 2024

Dispute is a common communicative practice. Laureys and Lessenich (2017: 1481) understand dispute («Streit») as *anthropological constant* and as a *social phenomenon that transcends epochs*. Whenever there is a disturbance in the relationship between participants or a thematic controversy, a dispute can arise (see Spiegel 1995: 16). Not least, culturally shaped norms of communication such as politeness can help speakers to navigate such conflictual interactions. However, if the common order is violated, disputes always have the potential to escalate (see Assmann & Assmann 1990: 12). Disputes can be observed in various communication domains; a distinction must especially be made between private and public contexts in different media environments (see Luginbühl 2003).

Disputes arise when different knowledge systems and the concepts of action linked to them come into conflict with each other. How disputes take place and which players argue at a given time depends on the topic and situation. However, a dispute is more than a single event in a specific situation. It is always realized in *forms and practices of dispute culture* (Laureys & Lessenich 2017: 1484) and also produces them: local (dispute) praxis becomes translocal (dispute) practice (see Alkemeyer, Buschmann & Michaeler 2015; Spitzmüller, Flubacher & Bendl 2017). *Knowledge about conflict* (Holly 2018: 511) is therefore a prerequisite for realizing dispute as a dispute: a dispute always presupposes a shared knowledge of how to disagree.

The student conference asks, among other things, how dispute can contribute to the expansion of knowledge. We address positive readings of controversy in order to discuss dispute as what Lundström (2015: 31) calls a *motor of social processes that structure the culture of a society* and to look at it not least from a sociolinguistic and discourse-analytical perspective.

We invite advanced BA students, MA students and doctoral candidates from the fields of linguistics and literary studies and related fields (including media studies, cultural studies, and social sciences) to present and discuss projects and ideas in an online student conference. The focus will be on questions that address and problematize dispute as an opportunity.

The student conference is organized by the inter-university working group of ThemaTalkers (U Bremen, Åbo Akademi and U Vienna) in cooperation with the U Bremen joint research platform Worlds of Contradiction (WoC) and the European Research Network on Discourses of Marginality and Demarginalization (DeMarg). The form of contributions is not fixed; different formats such as lecture, essayistic contribution, short film etc. are welcome. Contributions of 15 or 30 minutes in German or English are possible.

The following questions can serve as further thematic orientation, but they are not binding; the ThemaTalkers are an open academic space of shared interest:

- What is the relation between conflict and knowledge?
- What domain-specific differences are there for dispute?
- What characterizes so-called cultures of dispute and how are they negotiated?
- How is dispute realized as a valued social practice?
- What does it mean to use or understand disputes dialectically?

If you would like to submit a contribution, please send an abstract with your name, university affiliation, title of the contribution, suggested format, and short text (150 to 200 words) to themtalk@uni-bremen.de by 18 February 2024. Following the student conference, there is the possibility of an open access publication. We will be happy to answer any queries via the above email address. Further information on the ThemaTalkers can be found at <https://www.uni-bremen.de/thematalkers>.

The ThemaTalkers

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Hosts

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