Worlds of Contradiction (WoC)
Interdisciplinary Research Platform, University of Bremen

WHO WE ARE
The University of Bremen has established an interdisciplinary research platform which pursues research on the subject of contradictions across five of its twelve faculties: law, social sciences, cultural sciences, linguistics and literary studies, as well as pedagogy and educational sciences.

We investigate concepts of contradiction and their epistemic framings, including notions such as difference, aporia, paradox, diversion, and discrepancy, across a range of different research projects. Our interest in the concept of contradiction goes beyond conventional dialectical approaches to contradictions or the purely normative notion of contradictions having to be resolved. Instead, we adopt an empirical approach to the social and cultural productivity of contradictions. We examine forms, context, methods, and conditions of living with them; that is, we explore how and to what end contradictions are used, enacted, and strategically dealt with and how they undo manifestations of heterogeneity, difference, and diversity.

Worlds of Contradiction is conceived of as an open structure, which offers to bring together a vibrant and changing cluster of projects. The following five subject areas are currently at the heart of our research activities: (1) Contradiction Studies as a field of study in its own right, (2) Soft Authoritarianisms, (3) Postcolonial Figurations, (4) Opposition and Resistance, (5) Marine and Maritime Social and Cultural Research/ Blue Humanities and Blue STS.

Across our platform, we approach the topic of contradiction from four different angles:

**Production and Discursivity** In order to become socially relevant, contradictions have to be articulated and/or recognized. This perspective focuses on the premises of contradictions and on the practices of articulating and recognizing them in different contexts.

**Stabilization and Materiality** This angle homes in on questions of concrete materialities, i.e. on how contradictions are stabilized and how they operate in objects, institutions, infrastructures, laws, and respective contexts as codified standards.

**Historicization and Temporality** Historical contexts and respective epistemological frameworks impact the ways in which contradictions operate and how they are understood. This research perspective seeks to enhance our understanding of the history of contradictions and the different historical conditions and practices of producing, articulating, resolving, and living with them.

**Decentralizing and Provincializing** This perspective concentrates on how contradiction and the principle of non-contradiction become hegemonic practices. It enables us to critically engage with these practices while investigating practices of decentralization, provincialization, and decolonization. Adopting it also helps us to explore contradictions in different cultural and social settings, and to arrive at a nuanced understanding of how differences and conflicts go beyond the binary structures of contradiction and take on different, but interconnected forms.
WHAT WE DO
We develop and curate innovative collaborative research projects, bridging the arts and humanities as well as the social sciences.

We have launched a new book series entitled Contradiction Studies. The first volumes are already available!

We regularly run lecture series and discussion forums and organize international conferences. Currently most of our events are taking place on the university campus, yet we are seeking to expand our horizons and establish new venues in and around Bremen to foster the intellectual exchange with other institutions and individuals.

We are equally working on expanding our international reach and on establishing an international research network which draws international scholars to the University of Bremen and enables our PhD students and junior researchers to build lasting international contacts. As part of that endeavor, we host the U Bremen Excellence Chair, which is held by Prof. Shalini Randeria (Rector of the Institute for Human Sciences (IWM) in Vienna and Professor of Social Anthropology and Sociology at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva).

HOW TO GET IN TOUCH
Universität Bremen
Worlds of Contradiction
Gebäude SFG, Raum 3100
Enrique-Schmidt-Straße 7
28359 Bremen, Germany
Dr. Sarah Wilewski
+49 (0)421 218 67850
woc@uni-bremen.de
https://www.woc.uni-bremen.de/