

Preface

The modus of interdisciplinarity has become a familiar feature in modern research despite the ongoing specialisation of disciplines in science and humanities. Today, many questions addressing the science system are of complex nature and are thus directed towards a *diversity* of relevant disciplines. Hence, these disciplines have to organise themselves within interdisciplinary research frameworks in order to introduce their specific perspectives to these problems and their reflection appropriately. However, crossing disciplinary borders in this way is not trivial, especially with regard to the epistemic and procedural restrictions of such endeavours. Moreover, the topics of interdisciplinary research are often *societally relevant*, either simply in form of explicit research mandates from the addressees or implicitly by problems of uncertainty, incompleteness and ambiguity of modern scientific knowledge with respect to their impact on and utility for society. Hence, the extra-scientific dimensions of interdisciplinary deliberations might challenge the results and validity claims of these efforts.

From this background, the present study aims at critical reflections of the practise of interdisciplinary research and at its validity conditions within and beyond the scientific system. It is not a manual or recipe book for meaningful or best-practise interdisciplinary research but a basis for further discussion and improvement of interdisciplinary endeavours—no more, no less. The content of this volume is the result of more than 3 years' exercise by a working group, which has been established at the European Academy GmbH. The group met 15 times to discuss and frame the topic and to reflect relevant initial theses and papers, which were finally developed to the chapters and conclusions of this present study by iterative refinement in the course of the whole project.

The working group consists of experts renowned in the fields of epistemology, practical philosophy, technology assessment and scientific policy advice. The members and authors of this study are: Martin Carrier (Bielefeld), Carl Friedrich Gethmann (Siegen), Gerd Hanekamp (Bonn), Matthias Kaiser (Bergen/NO), Georg Kamp (Bad Neuenahr-Ahrweiler), Stephan Lingner (Bad Neuenahr-Ahrweiler), Michael Quante (Münster) and Felix Thiele (Bad Neuenahr-Ahrweiler). Most of the authors have contributed to other relevant publications within the academy's book

series ‘Ethics of Science and Technology Assessment’ such as the volumes on “Rationale Technikfolgenbeurteilung” (1999), “Ethik in der Technikgestaltung” (1999), ‘Interdisciplinarity in Technology Assessment’ (2001), ‘Enabling Social Europe’ (2006) and ‘Business Ethics of Innovation’ (2007) among others.

Additionally, two events with the incorporation of external experts improved the formation of the findings of this study: In an early phase of the study, a public symposium on interdisciplinary research was held in October 2010 in Mainz. The conference aimed at exploring the tension between scientific validity claims of interdisciplinarity and societal expectances thereupon. Besides members of the working group, the following invited speakers contributed to the fruitful discussion with the audience: Prof. Dr. Claudius Geisler (Mainz), Prof. Dr. Bernward Gesang (Mannheim), Prof. Dr. Armin Grunwald (Karlsruhe), Prof. Dr. Eberhard Knobloch (Berlin), Prof. Dr. Klaus Mainzer (Munich) and Prof. Dr. Jan C. Schmidt (Darmstadt). Central papers of the conference were published in the Springer journal *Poiesis & Praxis. International Journal of Ethics of Science and Technology Assessment*, Vol. 7(4) in June 2011. In September 2013, a more focused workshop was held at the premises of the European Academy. The workshop aimed at the review and discussion of the working group’s interim results with those external researchers with specific competences in methodology of interdisciplinarity and scientific policy advice. We thank Prof. Dr. Hanne Andersen (Aarhus/DK), Prof. Dr. Armin Grunwald (Karlsruhe) and Prof. Dr. Harry van der Laan (Wyk/NL) for their evaluation efforts.

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Interdisciplinary Research and Trans-disciplinary Validity
Claims

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