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Abstract

This paper unpacks ambiguities in the field of interdisciplinarity studies (IDS), explores where they come from and how they inhibit consolidation of the field. The paper takes its point of departure in two central fault lines in the literature: the relationship between interdisciplinarity and disciplinarity and the question of whether integration is a necessary prerequisite for interdisciplinarity. Opposite positions on the fault lines are drawn out to identify sources of ambiguities, and to examine whether the positions are irreconcilable - or disagreements that may continue to coexist in a consolidated field. It is argued that if we envisage a consolidated field of IDS, there is a need to develop common ground which calls for scholars of ID to be more explicit about the meanings they ascribe to ID than we see today when the sliding between the epistemological and political dimensions of the field may go unnoticed. It is suggested that whereas ambiguity may be unwanted in the epistemological dimension, it may be quite useful in the political dimension. A systematic comparison of opposite positions offers a common frame of reference for a more productive dialogue between different positions. The

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analysis shows that as to integration, the difference between opposite positions can be reconciled, whereas in the relation between interdisciplinarity and disciplinarity, the positions are antagonistic and logically exclude each other. The analysis suggests that it is the premise of integration that creates the conditions of possibility for “relabelling” interdisciplinarity and for using the “silo” for disciplines.(HRK / Abstract übernommen)