

Doing Society and Genomics: On the Interactive Production of Convergence

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'Doing society and genomics' embraces scholarly research and analysis as well as project collaboration, policy and polity advice, public debate, science communication, and education. It takes place as engagement with and enactment of society and genomics issues. The production of such nexus can be interpreted as 'convergence-work'. It takes part in a space of actively connecting life-science and societal issues which has been co-created by governments, funding agencies and research centres. Research centres and researchers are expected to contribute to participatory life-science governance and provide knowledge to various publics, to support inter- and transdisciplinarity, to stand for both academic robustness as well as for societal serviceability and visibility. Involved are also individuals who have a biography of crossing between life- and social sciences. This intermediary role, both on the institutional and/or personal level, has been built on existing expertise in genomics related issues, just as in collaboration that crosses domains of knowledge and practice. This paper explores key features of the way how two current society and genomics programs, the Dutch 'Center for Society and Genomics' and the British 'ESRC Genomics Network', execute top-down initiated frameworks and thereby make them their own in dual efforts of boundary- and convergence-work. The paper will elaborate on a series of empirical categories developed in order to describe the practical side of institutionalized ELSA/ELSI type of work.