
Preface

Many scholars perform high-quality research on matters related to sustainability. Yet, there are relatively few events where a multidisciplinary overview of research efforts and projects has taken place, and where research scholars from across the spectrum of the social sciences have had the opportunity to come together to discuss research methods, research findings, or exchange ideas about ongoing and future research opportunities focusing on sustainability.

It is against this background that the “Sustainability and Social Science Research Symposium” was organized by the University of Michigan, in cooperation with the Inter-University Sustainable Development Research Programme (IUSDRP), Manchester Metropolitan University, HAW Hamburg and a number of institutions of higher education active in this field.

The aims of the symposium were as follows:

- i. to provide social science researchers focusing on sustainability an opportunity to present and discuss their work (e.g., empirical work, case studies, teaching and learning innovations, applied projects, etc.);
- ii. to foster the exchange of information, ideas, and experiences acquired in the execution of research projects, especially initiatives which have influenced behavior, decision-making, or policy;
- iii. to discuss methodological approaches and projects which aim to offer a better understanding of sustainability across society and economic sectors; and
- iv. to network the participants and provide a platform so they can explore possibilities for further cooperation.

Last but not least, a further aim of the event was to document and disseminate the wealth of experiences on sustainability and social science research. To that end, this peer-reviewed “Handbook of Sustainability and Social Science Research” has been produced. The publication introduces the results of research, field studies, and projects around social science research on matters related to sustainability, and introduces new and innovative thinking on how social sciences influence sustainability and vice versa.

The book is structured in three main parts. Part I explores the connections between sustainability and the social sciences. It includes discussions of key paradigms and analytical concepts, explores policy applications, and considers new approaches to education and economics. Part II highlights research and findings from an array of behavioral interventions and participant engagement efforts covering topics such as climate change, resource conservation, renewable energy, social justice, and green citizenship. Part III provides several examples of innovative methodological approaches and evaluation strategies such as cognitive mapping, brainstorming, online surveys, instructional modules, and sustainability assessments.

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Enjoy your reading!

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Handbook of Sustainability and Social Science
Research

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