

Abstract Dissertation Kirsten Hollaender

This dissertation studies interdisciplinary research using the case of the German research program Urban Ecology.

Interdisciplinary Research is regarded as very important and at the same time faces challenges originating from cognitive and social barriers. These are explored theoretically in the text. The text then progresses to construct a model of interdisciplinary research collaboration using a wide array of research results from many different areas of social sciences. It aims at integrating these into a theoretical framework. Empirically, it combines questionnaire related results with qualitative interviews.

It develops a model of interdisciplinary research, the factors influencing it and in return also examines the influence the interdisciplinary cooperation has on the research outcomes (which as variables include integration of results, a common language and theoretical basis and collaboration with practice partners).

Researchers collaborating in interdisciplinary research are conceptualized as rational actors who engage in a cooperation because they expect it to be of use for them. Apart from examining influence factors on the actor level, the model also includes other influence factors such as management and previous experience with interdisciplinary research. It develops a number of scales (and reports on their reliability) which can be used for further research.

The theoretical part derives a number of hypotheses about the interrelations and effects of different elements affecting interdisciplinary research. These hypotheses are tested and further explored through qualitative in depth interviews. The text finally includes conclusions for the management of interdisciplinary projects.