

**From paradigm to the research method.  
The domain ontology as a model of knowledge representation  
about the contemporary field of qualitative research.**

The multi-paradigmaticity of qualitative research practices sanctions the coexistence of several different methodologies. Thus this field is, quite naturally, accompanied by an exceptional creativity in milieus which, since the 1980s, have been resourcefully overcoming the limitations of their own approaches. However, this has also meant that the drawing-up of a consistent and coherent image of the field of qualitative research has become an increasingly reckless venture. Nevertheless, a need for orientation in the field of one's own research practice, augmented by a desire to be "on top of the game," leads us to undertake an attempt to reduce the complexity. The examination of numerous individual acts of qualitative research practice will permit the distinguishing of certain, reproduced patterns of behavior.

The project at hand tackles the problem of a "curse of abundance" in the field of contemporary qualitative research. The goal is to systematize the current state of affairs with regards to qualitative research practices and rein in the diversity of its variations. Alongside this goal is an intention to assemble a comprehensive catalog of the fundamental building blocks and their configurations in qualitative research today. Specific, often unique testimonies of research experience will be drawn together to form a clear, legible whole.

The primary aim of this study is to create a model representing the knowledge found within contemporary qualitative research by employing the information technology concept of domain ontology and by conducting a multivariate analysis of the contents of leading methodological journals. The methodological strategy for this investigation is built on an approach which links knowledge drawn from the fields of sociology, social computer science, and computational linguistics. The exploration will be further facilitated by computer-assisted qualitative data analysis (CAQDAS) as well as by procedures for the processing and text mining of natural language.

This research project will comprise a significant contribution to the development of methodological knowledge in the field of qualitative research. Its outcomes will be applicable in both the practice and teaching of qualitative research. The resultant model, representing up-to-date knowledge about qualitative research, will serve as the basis for communication between scholars from different academic disciplines and practitioners who utilize qualitative methods. Consequently, a consistent means will be shaped for treatment of the diverse variants found in qualitative research practices. This will facilitate the cumulative development of methodological knowledge as well as exchanges of experiences, leading to the enhancement of specific research procedures and an increase in their transparency.