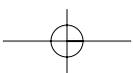


PART 1

INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH METHODOLOGY



1

THE LANGUAGE OF METHODOLOGY

In Chapter 1 you will meet a text which aims at clarifying the connections between various main concepts of methodology and their relationships. Those concepts are central to any understanding of different scientific ways of approaching problems and possibilities to create business knowledge in a number of areas.

METHODOLOGY

Methodology is no easy subject, but the more exciting as it concerns one's own personal development as a researcher, consultant or investigator in one direction or another. It is also a relatively young subject, at least in the subject of Business. There are contributions to its development, for instance, from philosophy, sociology, logics and mathematics. This, our book about methodology, was, when it appeared in its first edition, one of the first attempts ever to clarify the meaning of methodology in Business. Now you hold the third edition in your hand.

Methodology is a mode of thinking, but it is also a mode of acting. It contains a number of concepts, which try to describe the steps and relations needed in the process of creating and searching for new knowledge.

METHODOLOGICAL VIEWS

In Business, there are a number of views on when and how to use methods for studying and researching reality. There are also a number of *opinions* on what is really the meaning of "methods". Let us refer to these opinions as *methodological views* and later we will become more precise about what this might mean in various contexts. Our precision does not seek to define any kind of "best practice", but to disclose the complexity of this field, hoping to simplify as well as to clarify the choice of methods available to anyone trying to research the area of Business.

Box 1.1**When Methodological Views “Talk and Act”**

It is a common use of language to depersonify different social phenomena. We say, for instance, that “research has shown” ..., etc. Of course there are people (researchers) behind these statements. When we in the future talk in terms of “the view assumes”, “the view looks at”, etc., we use the same way to express ourselves for practical reasons. However, it is not the views in themselves, but their proponents who act and therefore carry full responsibility for what the view stipulates.

The different *methodological views* make certain *ultimate presumptions* beforehand about what we study as Business researchers, consultants or investigators. These presumptions differ between views, and the different views, therefore, present different ways to understand, explain and improve. Even if the differences are not as drastic as to compare the starting points of the different views to historical opinions about the configuration of the Earth – flat, round, oval or square – this might nevertheless illustrate what we mean.

If we believe that the Earth is flat, our observations and statements will be based on this belief (as we know, there are historical proofs of this). Our models of, say, navigation, will be concerned with avoiding sailing over the edge, etc. Those who, at that time, started with the assumption that the Earth was round then gained a competitive advantage, of course, by being able to navigate to areas, which were assumed to be placed outside the so-called “edge”.

Another interesting parallel is found in what the *New York Times* once wrote about the rocket pioneer professor Goddard set against a recent quotation from the Kennedy Space Centre in the USA. In the *New York Times* they wrote in 1921: “Professor Goddard does not know the relation between action and reaction and the need to have something better than a vacuum against which to react. He seems to lack the basic knowledge ladied out daily in high schools”. And in 2006, it was possible at the Kennedy Space Centre to read the following quotation from Goddard: “It is difficult to say what is possible, for the dream of yesterday is the hope of today and the reality of tomorrow”.

The reason why we have chosen the historic perspective is explained by the fact that it is not until afterward, when we are no longer tied to those assumptions which led to the statements, that we can verify whether they (and thereby the views behind them) have been fruitful or not. We must therefore not be tempted to brush aside the illustrations above by saying, “Oh well, now we know better”, because what we know *today* will probably be known better, or rather, differently, *tomorrow*.

One more example of how different *assumptions* may block understanding is found in Watson’s (1969) book *The Double Helix*. This describes his and Crick’s discovery of the DNA-molecule. When competing to solve the riddle they were convinced that they would get there before other researchers. Their main competitor was, in Watson’s words: “so stuck on his classical way of thinking that I would accomplish the unbelievable feat of beating him to the correct

interpretation of his own experiments”. So, the assumption of the old way of thinking prevented their main rival from interpreting his own actions correctly!

It is relatively easy, afterward, to see how some assumptions are blocking a successful interpretation in the case of the shape of the Earth, conditions for launching a rocket and the discovery of DNA in the natural science area. It is more difficult in the social area. Such clear cases are more or less non-existing there. Instead, all ingredients are mixed as in a big soup: a soup which is floating around in our brains while at the same time as we must judge its content, consistency and taste in order to create new Business-oriented and evolutionary recipes.

By this we want to say that it is only speculatively and reflectively (not logically or empirically) possible to overcome historical verification. From this it follows that there will be problems comprehending the data we collect or try to explain/understand unless we have already reflected upon how the particular view will shape our observations, our understanding and our explanations. As methodological views have different characteristics, it stands to reason that in Business, as in other social sciences, there are disagreements between proponents of different *views*. This situation indicates the necessity of a *critical attitude* from the readers' side in relation to different views to avoid being deceived into believing that applying a methodological view in different situations is without conflicts.

It is necessary in these situations to clarify to yourself whether it is of interest to develop Business knowledge in order to discover *what is possible in our world of possibilities*. This is even more important if you want to develop models and theories to bring into Business as tools/processes adapted to your own situation in order to, for instance, reconfigure a market or create new Business-oriented advantages in an existing market, or create completely new markets.

Business, with its *models and theories*, is characterized not only by its close relationships to these kind of “philosophical assumptions”, but also by its near relationships to “practical reality” where Businesses are developed and conducted. This situation is illustrated in Figure 1.1.

In this book we have chosen to talk about this search for knowledge in terms of *knowledge-creating*. The reason why we have chosen “*create*” instead of other concepts like construct or develop is not directly related to how we think that knowledge arises. Knowledge may arise from pure guessing or speculations, through shifts of perspectives, from critical thinking and via anomalies. Knowledge may also be the result of careful planning and field studies, through decoding of information and from simple arithmetic, through experiments, and more. The

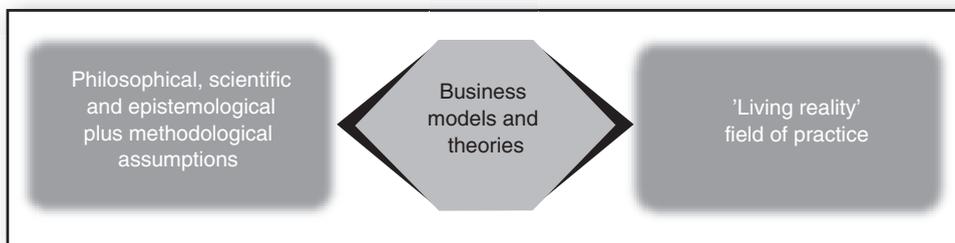


Figure 1.1 Close Connections!

Box 1.2**Why Can't We "Just" Collect Data and Make Statements?**

In order to develop Business theories and models, methodological views make *different* assumptions about the reality they try to explain and/or understand. This, in turn, means that observations, collections of data and results are determined to a large extent by the view chosen. Conscious development of knowledge in Business – as in other subjects – is therefore far from “just” collecting data and making statements. (Even an “unconditioned” mushroom picker has ideas of where the most sought after mushrooms may grow.) What might be essential data to one view can be completely irrelevant to another. For instance, what value would a calculation of the probability of falling over the edge have for proponents of the Earth being a globe? To take another example: what *statistical use* does a researcher, who is statistically *searching* for only what is *general* as knowledge about, say, entrepreneurship, have for the results of another researcher, who is *searching* for what is *unique* in the entrepreneurially single cases? Can the very search for what is *general* and what is *unique* reflect/reveal other *ultimate presumptions* as well – presumptions about *life, reality* and *business venturing*, which are influencing when, where and how we are searching for knowledge and what, we are searching for? And, not to mention, why we are searching at all? We are convinced it does!

common denominator in all this is that *somebody* consciously takes on something in order to disqualify existing knowledge, or confirms existing knowledge or enlarges it, that is, that somebody in a critical, conscious and insightful fashion *creates* the *prerequisites* for generating knowledge. This person we have chosen to call a *creator* of knowledge or knowledge creator (see Box 1.3 below). Included in this meaning is also the assumption that this is a person who can consciously and stringently stick to the rules, but also, if necessary, *creatively* transgress them.

METHODOLOGY AND REALITY

Methodological views make *ultimate presumptions* about reality! But what does that actually mean? Even to attempt to investigate, explain and understand reality we make certain assumptions about its quality, what it is like. These assumptions become a guide for *the creator of knowledge* in his or her effort to research reality.

The assumptions about reality guiding the creator of knowledge (see Box 1.3) can be conceived as kinds of background “philosophical” hypotheses, but not in the sense that they can be tested empirically or logically, as each view has already postulated its own constitution of reality. In consequence, data collected in that view will be based on these assumptions. If we try to use these collected data to test the assumptions mentioned, they will only confirm their own assumptions in a kind of circular logic. These background hypotheses, or, as we might

Box 1.3**To be a Creator of Knowledge**

When are we creators of knowledge, say, within the subject of Business? We want to restrict the concept to cover only when such work of developing knowledge and being creative is based on conscious assumptions of reality, and when we understand what knowledge is and how it comes about. Unconscious and naive consultative and investigative activities rarely lead to more than simply confirming what we know already. We have seen this kind of cookbook knowledge develop too often to neglect its existence. In this book we reserve, therefore, the concept of *creator of knowledge* to mean what we refer to a conscious researcher, consultant or investigator.

better name them, *normative theses*, can only be “tested” reflectively. In such a reflective situation, one might come to the conclusion that the *methodological view* no longer seems able to explain what is personally seen as important. In that case it is possible to shift to another view, or, if this is not enough, to supplement or synthesize. We will be back to this later in the book.

Box 1.4**Which Methodological View is the Best One?**

You can never empirically or logically determine the best view. This can only be done reflectively by considering a situation to be studied and your own opinion of life. This also means that even if you believe that one view is more interesting or rewarding than another, we, as authors of this book, do not want to rank one view above another. In fact, we cannot do this on any general ground. The only thing we can do is to try to make explicit as best we can the special characteristics on which the various views are based.

METHODS

The subject of methodology should not be taken lightly. It happens too often, unfortunately, that researchers, consultants and investigators claim that it has nothing to do with philosophy; that there is nothing controversial about conducting an interview, for instance, *as long as you stick to the rules*. According to this opinion, there should generally be one best way to, say, define and quantify something, formulate an interviewer’s guide, take a sample,

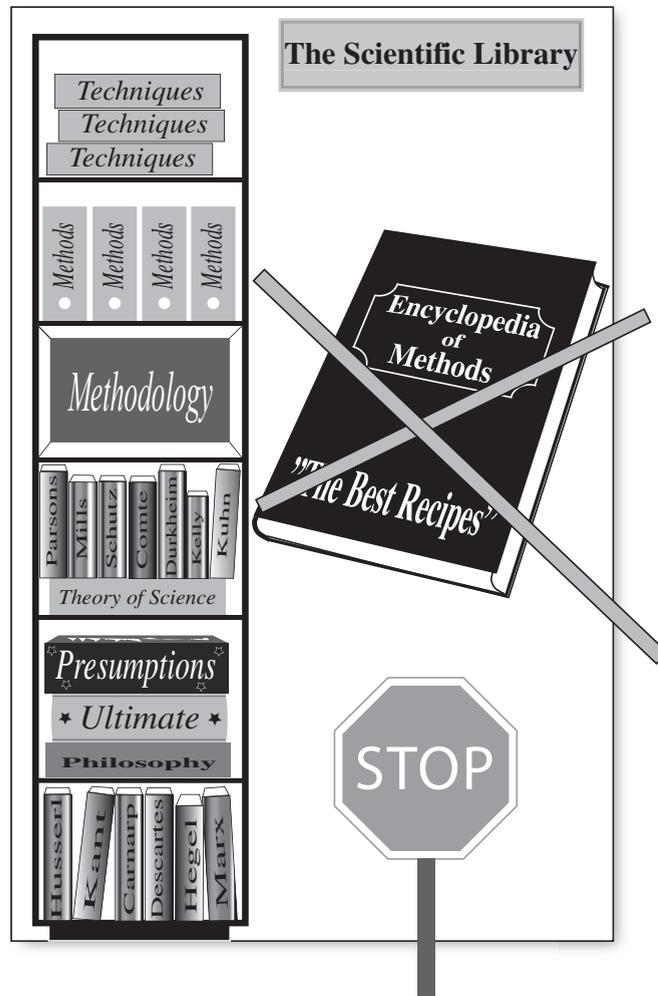


Figure 1.2 How to Avoid Cookbook Knowledge

decide when computers should be used or determine the degree of reliability of the end results. If, for instance, you were interested in how a sample is to be taken, you need only walk to the scientific library, pick out *The Encyclopedia of Methods* and look for the answer under the letter “S” (see Figure 1.2).

Unfortunately, too many so-called “books on methodology” are written as cookbooks. Some author, interested in methodology, modify this slightly, however. They claim, that what is meant by suitable *methods* is determined by the problem at hand. This, in turn, would mean that there would be one best way to develop knowledge, if *only you know which problem is at hand*, that is, a certain *problem* in itself determines the best *techniques* to solve it (see Figure 1.3).

These so-called methodologically oriented authors neglect one important fact: the way a problem appears to a creator of knowledge is intimately related to *the view* he/she is using

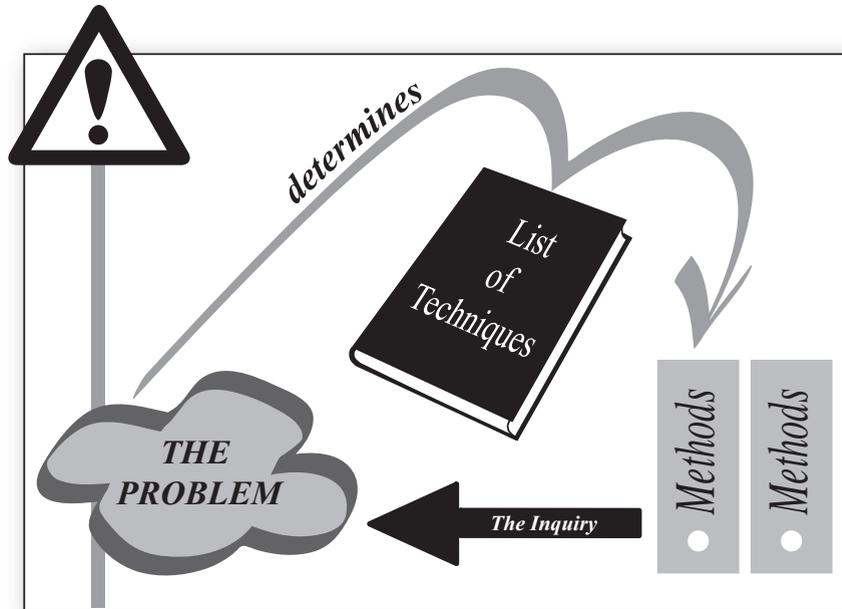


Figure 1.3 What Determines What?

for his/her *reflection*. Methodology is reduced by these authors to relatively simple, instrumental and trivial questions about whether an interview should be conducted in person, over the telephone or by mail, whether it is possible to quantify certain data, etc. Such discussions regard *methodological questions* as mainly choices of suitable *techniques*, against the background of a given problem, considering the researcher's/consultant's/investigator's ambitions and interests. Methodological issues then become operative activities, which in itself is harmless. We all need to be operative and practical as part of our development of knowledge. But, and this is the annoying part, too many Business scholars, mostly because of ignorance and fear, never leave this operative level.

Most Business scholars who have reflected on methods and methodological applications realize that *every* human being, as a human being, and then as a creator of knowledge as well, carries around certain *ultimate presumptions* (what we previously called background "philosophical" hypotheses or normative theses) about what his/her environment looks like, in principle, and about his/her role in this environment. These presumptions are mostly unconscious on a daily basis and very difficult to change, at least in the short run.

Our ultimate presumptions will have a bearing both on how we look at problems and on how we look at existing and available sets of techniques and at knowledge in general.

The differences between Figure 1.4 and the previous one are several. In the second case a methodological outfit is *created* out of possible techniques (where single techniques very well may be modified or recreated and where every technique is to be seen in relation to all the others) against the background of a problem *and* the ultimate presumptions. Furthermore, the picture of the problem will be influenced not only by ultimate

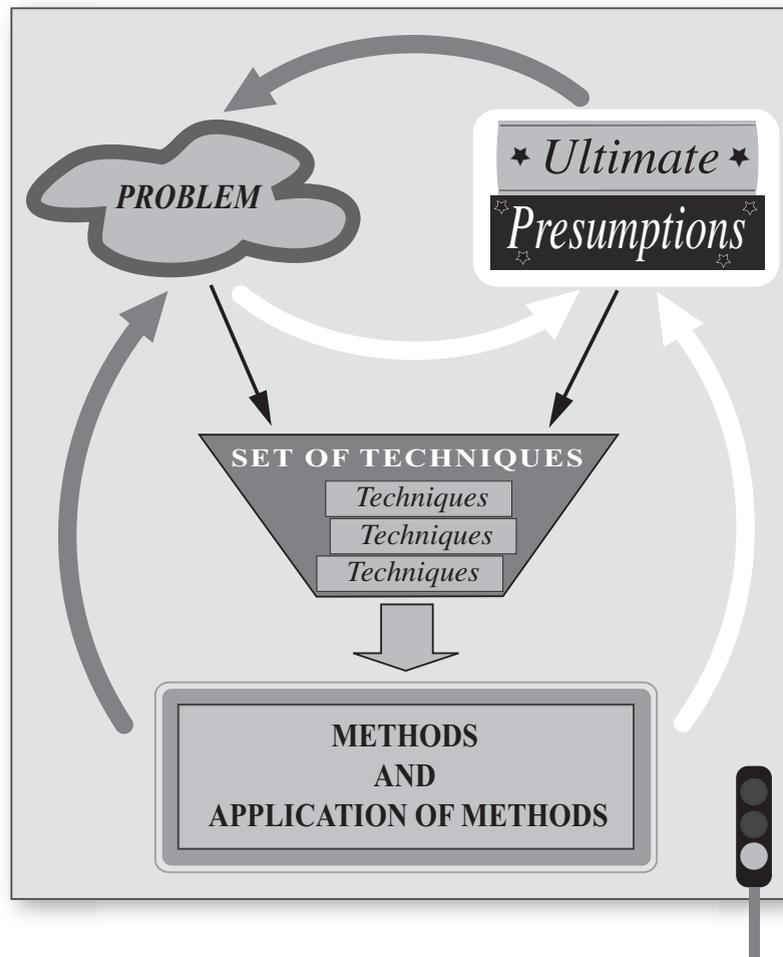


Figure 1.4 Methods and Application of Methods – The Green Light!

presumptions, but also by the methods used. These presumptions will, however, normally reach a certain stability for individual creators of knowledge as they practice their trade – and will thereafter not change in any decisive direction (indicated by the white frame around the Ultimate Presumptions and the white arrows in Figure 1.4).

So, what do these ultimate presumptions (background presumptions, normative theses) consist of? A common *collective term* for such presumptions is *paradigm*. We will return to this concept shortly. However, let us mention here that opinions are divided in the world of creators of knowledge concerning what a paradigm consists of. Some researchers, consultants and investigators claim, furthermore, that this issue is of no interest – or at least unproblematic – when it comes to questions of methods, which in fact in itself is an ultimate presumption as well! Before we take up *the concept of*

paradigm we will look at how it is possible to choose and develop *methods* using our point of departure.

CHOOSING AND DEVELOPING METHODS

We see methods as *guiding principles for the creation of knowledge*. But such principles, in order to be useful and effective, must “fit” both with those *problems* which are under consideration and those *ultimate presumptions* held by the creator of knowledge. Otherwise the methods lead, if anywhere, only to platitudes; they may even counteract their own purposes. Another way to express this is that methods must be both *consistent* (fit the problem and the ultimate presumptions held by the creator of knowledge) and *constructive* (fit each other).

Box 1.5

Methods and Methodological Views

Our opinion about the *meaning of the concept of methods* is, of course, also based on certain ultimate presumptions. The two most important presumptions, in our case, are:

1. There are different types of ultimate presumptions.
2. These presumptions are important to how methods are constructed.

One consequence of the above is that there are things we may call *methodological views*.

But how is it possible to choose suitable *methods* when everything seems to depend on everything else? It seems like circular thinking to say that methods depend on problems, which depend on ultimate presumptions, which in turn depend on methods (or vice versa)! The answer to this “paradox” is that the contents of ultimate presumptions, problems, available and developed techniques, and methods, change at different rates and to different degrees over time.

Ultimate presumptions seldom change, as mentioned earlier, and if they do, this normally takes place as gradual modifications of a *paradigm* over a longer time (*evolutionary*). Many people (maybe most) will, in principle, keep their ultimate presumptions all their lives once they have “taken root”. But there are those who, once during their lifetime (rarely more than once), change their minds completely about what they earlier believed in and become critical of their own former thinking. Such total shifts of paradigm often take place quickly and radically (*revolutionary*) after a long time of accumulating paradigmatic contradictions and deviations. So, this may be associated with deep personal crises, but also – at least afterward – with great happiness!

The *available set of techniques* is constantly being added to in the general course of research, consulting and investigation. This set is both broad and deep in Business today. Drastic changes or revolutionary additions rarely take place. *In an individual case and in the short run the creator of knowledge may consider his/her ultimate presumptions and his/her technical possibilities as given, by and large.* They change (if they change) only gradually over a long time, from experience, from problems addressed, from methodological activities, and through curiosity and inventiveness.

Problems are never given. They must at least be perceived by others and/or by the creator of knowledge in order to be of interest as methodological objects. One may even say that they must be “created” or at least be formed, what is sometimes called *being problematized*, in order to be relevant and of interest. Such a creation or constructed result is in itself a creation of knowledge and takes place by the use of methods.

So, *in practice*, choice and development of methods take place in an interaction with a problematization in one form or another, given ultimate presumptions and (on the whole) existing technological possibilities.

THEORY OF SCIENCE, METHODOLOGICAL VIEWS AND PARADIGMS

This book is about *methodology*! As the reader has realized, *methodological views* and *methods* cannot be discussed directly, without showing how they are related to ultimate presumptions. To do otherwise, would be like teaching a navigational approach without explaining that: (a) it is based on the presumption that the Earth is flat; and (b) it is ... etc. (try for the moment to disregard the fact that today we believe that the Earth is a globe). The basic construction of today’s social world is an extremely controversial issue – and this book is about views and methods to “navigate” in our social world.

Ultimate presumptions, in the context of this book, are of a *philosophical* character (by all means, study the bookshelves in the scientific library in Figure 1.2). The *relation* between these presumptions and methodological views is studied by theorists of science, whose discipline is consequently called *theory of science* (see Figure 1.5).

Theorists of science have developed a “conceptual language” to describe the relation between ultimate (philosophical) presumptions and the practical use of various methodological views. This “language” contains, as an important ingredient, the concept of *paradigm* (model/pattern). This concept can be seen as the bridge between the two starting points here, which are ultimate presumptions and methodological views (see Figure 1.6).

In the same way as theorists of science have developed a “conceptual language” for *the relation* between ultimate presumption and the practical use of various methodological views, using paradigm as a *bridge*, we will in this book about *methodology* develop a “language of thinking and acting” for the relation between methodology and study area. “The language” is contained in what in Figure 1.7 is called “Methodology”. We will use the concept of *operative paradigm* as a *bridge* between methodological views and the study area. The concept is chosen considering its necessary relation to ultimate presumptions, i.e., to some *paradigm*.

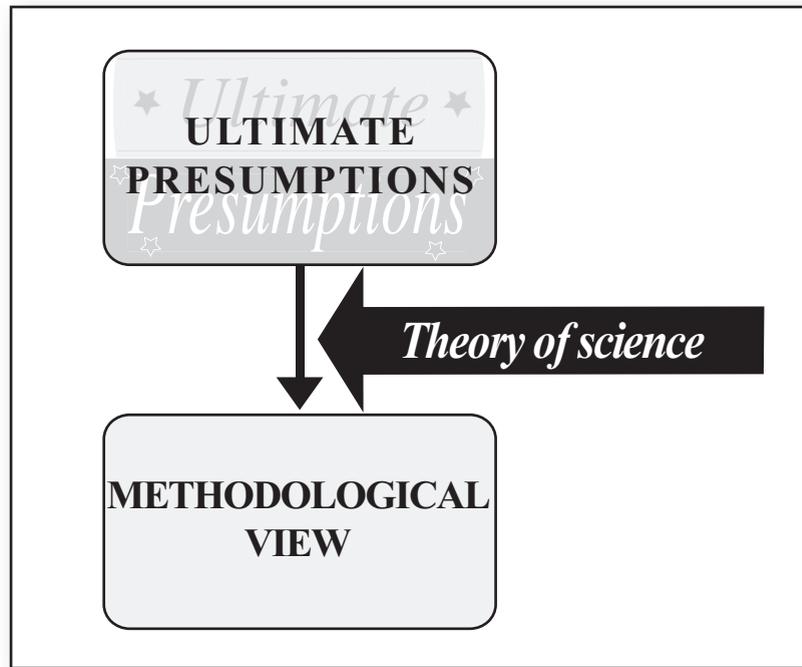


Figure 1.5 Theory of Science

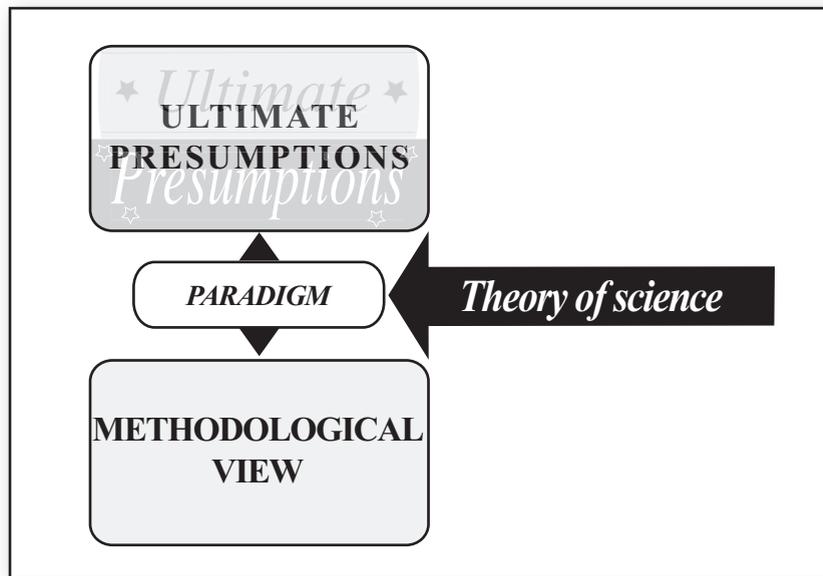


Figure 1.6 Paradigm

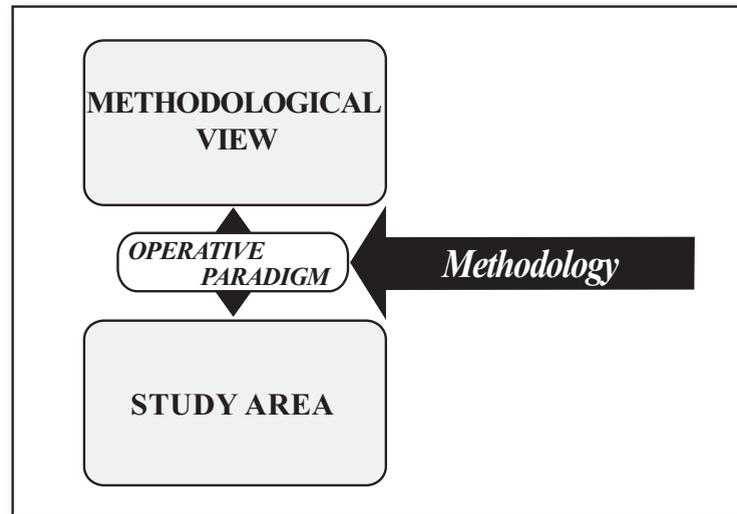


Figure 1.7 Operative Paradigm

Box 1.6**Paradigm**

The scientist mostly associated with the concept of “paradigm” today is Kuhn (1922–1996), who first presented his theories in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* in 1962. Kuhn was originally rather unclear about what a paradigm consists of, something that he admitted. In later editions of his book, however, he becomes more precise about its components:

1. *Symbolic generalizations*, that is, typical expressions used within the scientific group – what might be called jargon – which are not questioned.
2. *Metaphysical aspects*, that is, typical models (they may vary along the whole spectrum from being heuristic to being ontological). These models function somewhat like symbolic generalizations. Among other things, they offer suitable and acceptable analogies and metaphors. They also assist in determining what will be accepted as an explanation or a solution, which also means that they determine what will be regarded as unsolved problems.
3. *Values* for judging research results (e.g., that they should be formulated quantitatively), or theories (e.g., that they should be simple, consistent and probable) or scientific topics (e.g., that they should be related to specific social use).
4. *Ideal examples* – such as specific solutions to a problem – that scientists confront early in their careers and that can be found in “recognized” scientific journals.

If we choose Kuhn's interpretation of the scientific process of knowledge, there is every reason to doubt the common opinion that knowledge develops linearly and cumulatively.

There are different opinions within the social sciences about paradigms. We (and many others) have found Kuhn's type of analysis rewarding, at the same time that we note an important difference between the natural (Kuhn's field) and the social sciences. In the natural sciences, old paradigms are replaced by new ones; in the social sciences, old paradigms usually survive alongside new ones. This leads us to prefer the scientific theorist Törnebohm's (1974) evolutionary position instead of Kuhn's revolutionary one. There are in social sciences also a lot of proposals for classifying paradigms, of course. Two quite recognized such classifications are by Burrell & Morgan (1985) and by Guba (1990). There are similarities with both these classifications and our own in this book. They use the concepts of ontology, epistemology and methodology to classify different paradigms. We do the same but not in the same way (for further clarification, see our Appendix).

According to Törnebohm, a paradigm consists of:

1. a conception of reality (view of the world)
2. a conception of science
3. a scientific ideal
4. Ethical/aesthetical aspects

We have now, in different ways, tried to illustrate, in principle, how ultimate presumptions are influencing the process of creating knowledge. Formulating a problem, collecting data, etc., are to a large extent controlled by the methodological view chosen, which in turn is subordinated to a number of philosophical assumptions and notions. A *methodological view* has, therefore, a double function by *encompassing* some ultimate presumptions at the same time as providing the prerequisites for the *design* of practical instruments, i.e., the development of an *operative paradigm* (see Figure 1.8).

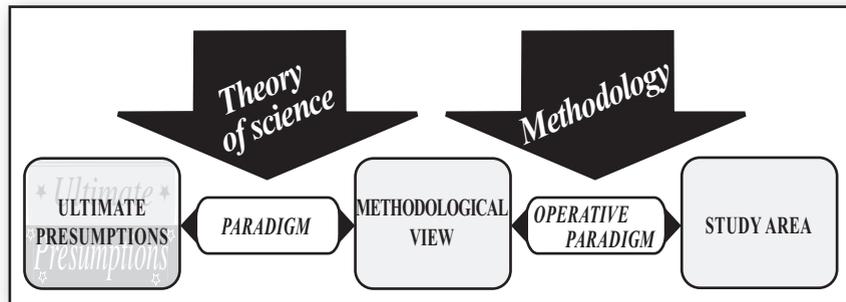


Figure 1.8 Theory of Science and Methodology

Theorists of science use the paradigm concept to describe basic philosophical assumptions that are of importance to practical research. Our use of the paradigm concept consists of a *conception of reality* (vision of the world), a *conception of science*, a *scientific ideal* and *ethical/aesthetical* aspects. Disagreement about the content of any of these components – such as differing conceptions of the constitution of reality – will result in a different paradigm, the same way that different methodological views exist. There is, however, nothing to prevent the existence of more than one methodological view within a given paradigm. And in a similar fashion, a single methodological view can be inspired by more than one paradigm.

Conception of reality has to do with philosophical ideas about how reality is constructed, whether reality exists in and of itself or through our mediation, for example: that reality is ordered and logical in causes and effects, or it has an inherent tendency to dissension with non-linear relations, or it is based on chaotic relations, or it is ordered as well as disordered with a bit of each at the same time.

Conception of science has to do with knowledge we have gained through education, which gives us our concepts or beliefs about the objects and subjects we study, and our knowledge interests, for example: all kinds of pre-scientific concepts and models contained in Business, for instance, budget, strategic planning, cost accounting, efficiency, calculated risk, market segment, Business concept, etc.

A *Scientific ideal* is related to the researcher as a person – an expression of something related to his/her desires, for example: if somebody perceives him/herself as being guided by the idea that science is something objective and not influenced by partial interests, or if he/she claims that it is impossible to be impartial and aims therefore at changing some aspects of society.

Ethical and aesthetical aspects have to do with what the researcher claims is morally suitable or unsuitable and claims to be beautiful or ugly, for example: observing people should not be done without their knowledge; well-constructed diagrams and graphs are ideals of beauty; scientific results justify the means used to achieve them.

We understand from this that a paradigm is not usually influenced by any major force of change. It is not possible, for instance, constantly to question the constitution of reality, or our scientific opinion – that would make all practical research and other knowledge creation virtually impossible. The changes that do take place in paradigmatic matters are ultimately derived from the development of different philosophical schools, and may well be of interest for several decades or even for centuries.

An *operative paradigm*, on the other hand, may change fairly often, depending on the *shifting character of the study area* and the type of operative paradigm in question. Differences in rate of change are due in part to the different conceptions of reality that support the various *views*, and in part because of their age. For example, a study area that is based on the concept of an ordered existence should change less than one based on the assumption of a reality with a tendency to contain inherent conflicts.

The aspects we use to describe an operative paradigm are *methodical procedures* and *methodics*. This means that the relation between a methodological view and some actual study area will be determined by the methodical procedures being used and the methodics being implemented.

METHODOLOGY AND OPERATIVE PARADIGM

Methodology is the understanding of how methods are constructed, that is, how an *operative paradigm* is developed. An operative paradigm relates a methodological view to a specific study area. An operative paradigm, as already mentioned, consists of two important parts: *methodical procedures* and *methodics*. The most important mission for methodology, then, is to clarify how different methodologies, problem formulations, study plans, methods, techniques and study areas make up the parts of an integrated whole. In our opinion, one *cannot* talk about a methodology if the components mentioned above are merely described separately and in isolation, instead of referring to their relations to each other and to the whole (see Figure 1.9).

A *methodical procedure* refers to the way the creator of knowledge *incorporates, develops, and/or modifies some previously given technique* (e.g., a technique for selecting the units of study, for collecting data, or for analyzing results) *in a methodological view. Adopting and possibly modifying a previous result and/or theory is also called a methodical procedure.* So, a technique becomes a method only when, through the application of a *conscious and explicit methodical procedure*, it is incorporated, developed, and/or modified in relation to the methodological view in question, *as well as* in relation to the character of the study area. We point this out because too many studies and investigations take place without any direct or conscious methodical procedures. Such studies or investigations become technique-oriented and mechanical with little or no connection to either the study area or to any preconditions (some methodological view).

The way in which the creator of knowledge *relates to and incorporates* these techniques made-into-methods into to his/her study process, and the way the study *is planned and conducted* is called *methodics*. So, adapting a technique to a methodological view is a *methodical procedure*,

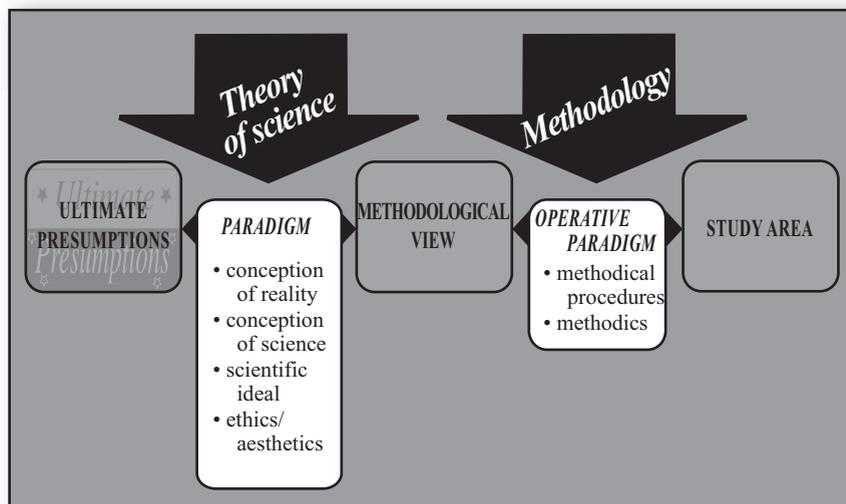


Figure 1.9 Paradigm and Operative Paradigm

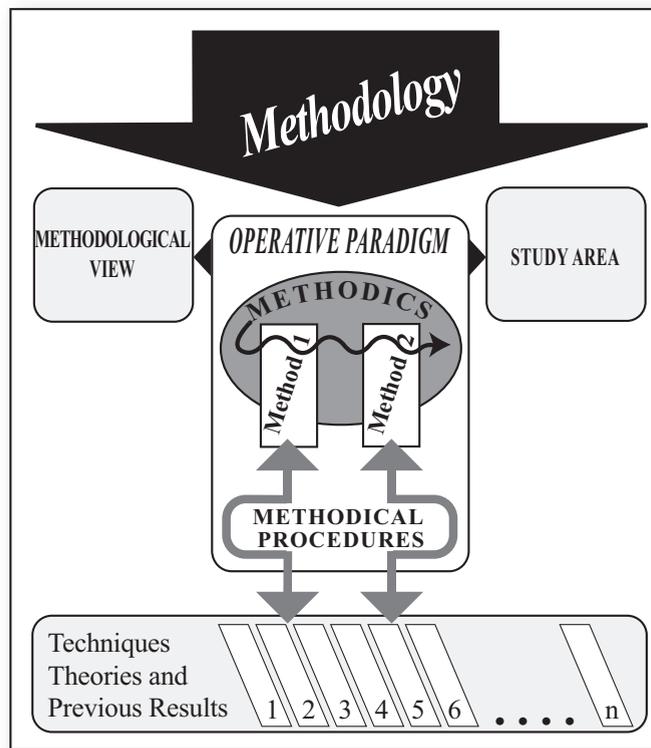


Figure 1.10 Methodics and Methodical Procedures

whereas applying this adaptation (in a plan and/or an implementation of a study) is *methodics*. The study may concern scientific research, consulting and investigation or any Business development (see Figure 1.10).

The *methodics* is to be in harmony with the chosen view, the methods and the study area. Lack of harmony either in methodical procedures or in methodics leads to scientifically weak results. All use of theories, previous results and techniques in a study should therefore be taken into consideration within the framework of what we call “development of an operative paradigm”, that is, in terms of *methodical procedures* and *methodics*.

From Figure 1.10, and from what has been said before, we realize that *methodology* has more to do with the development of personal insight and understanding in the creator of knowledge than with learning specific techniques and skills.

AWARENESS AND SELF-REFLECTION

To be aware of, and reflect upon, theory of science and the content of methodology is an important task for anyone who wants to understand his/her own studies, and understand

what the knowledge that he/she produces is knowledge about. Development of your own *consciousness* about, for instance, the history of the theory of science gives valuable insights into why some views are used the way they are (rightly or wrongly) and why some problems are solved the way they are, etc.

Self-reflection helps the creator of knowledge (see Box 1.3) to orient him/herself within his/her own area, to see its possibilities and limitations and understand his/her own role in the context in question.

As we have found the concepts of awareness and self-reflection central to reading *Methodology for Creating Business Knowledge*, we have chosen to point this out by giving them a section of their own. It is our wish that the reader takes a break here and tries to make clear to him/herself what awareness and self-reflection means to methodology in the area of Business.

THE OUTLINE OF THE BOOK

The book is divided into five Parts (plus an Appendix and Glossary), and each part, in a pedagogical fashion, deals with the theme of the book within the framework of a specific context.

- **Part 1: Introduction to Research Methodology**, contains an introduction to the specific world and language of *methodology*, and consists of three chapters. You have just read Chapter 1. Chapter 2 introduces necessary and reflexive thinking which a creator of knowledge should adopt when facing practical problems and possibilities in Business realities in general and, as an example, in entrepreneurship, in particular. Chapter 3 provides an overview of the conditions for creating knowledge and gives a brief summary of the foundation of the three methodological views.
- **Part II: Three Methodological Views**, presents a *principal* description of these three *methodological views* in more detail and consists of three chapters, one for each of the analytical view (Chapter 4), the systems view (Chapter 5) and the actors view (Chapter 6).
- **Part III: Methodology**, constitutes the more *applied* and *practical* part of the book and consists of three chapters: Chapter 7 illustrates different methodical procedures and their design in our three methodological views, considering different available groups of techniques. Chapter 8 provides practical examples of language and action within the framework of such methodical procedures in the three methodological views. Chapter 9 treats methodics in relation to our three methodological views.
- **Part IV: Approaching Methodology**, presents in detail some projects of illustrating the creation of knowledge in more depth than was the case in those short practical examples provided in Part III and consists of three chapters. In Chapters 10, 11 and 12 six (3 x 2) longer examples of methodical procedures and methodics are given for the three methodological views in application (methodological views in application are called *methodological approaches*).
- **Part V: Methodology of Complementarity**, contains our development of some of the complementary possibilities that exist in a reconciliation and transformation of

starting points and techniques in the different methodological views and consists of three chapters: Chapter 13 illustrates our principle of complementarity and presents some of the complementary criticism which the different views direct at each other. Chapter 14 presents three illustrative cases of the methodology of complementarity in Business research, where our three approaches act as transformative operators. Chapter 15, finally, brings up some notions about what we refer to as “methodology as Business creating intelligence” and the “Business knowledge society”.

- **The Appendix** (Our conceptions of methodology and others) brings up different established thoughts on how to do research in social sciences and relates those thoughts to the methodology presented in this book and to our methodological views.

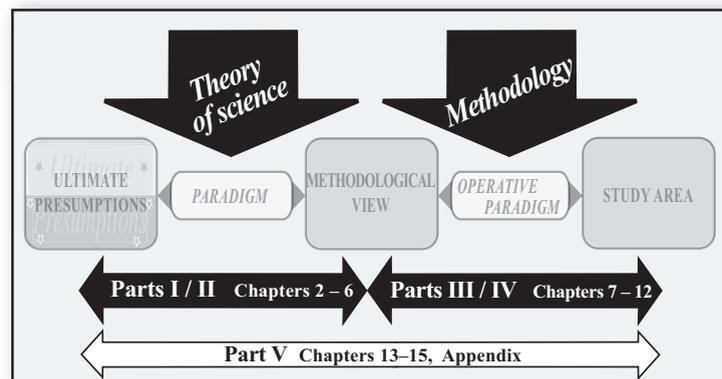


Figure 1.11 Plan of the Book

As can be seen in Figure 1.11, the design of the book follows the model provided in this chapter of the content of the theory of science and methodology.

The **Glossary** presents the essence of what every conscientious researcher, consultant and investigator should know in his/her relation to methodology for creating Business knowledge. It is a condensed result of knowledge creating work for great many years of us two authors together.

Methodology means to be aware of, and be able to handle, different relations which exist between participating moments and processes when conducting studies aiming at generating new knowledge. In this chapter we have presented a vocabulary for methodology by introducing concepts like ultimate presumptions, theory of science, paradigm, methodological views, operating paradigm, methods, techniques, methodical procedures and methodics. We have also restricted the term ‘creator of knowledge’ to mean those researchers, investigators, consultants and other business developers, who in a conscious way go about using the language of concepts and action of methodology.

POINTS OF REFLECTION

1. What thoughts come to your mind when you reflect over the *historical* development of science?
2. Name one *important thing* to keep in mind for a creator of knowledge in sp (latin meaning 'coming, future, to become')!
3. In one of the boxes in the chapter the words *general knowledge* (about entrepreneurship) and *unique knowledge* come up. Can you give some examples of each of those two knowledge formats and what they can be used for?
4. If you enter the *scientific library* (Figure 1.2) you will meet a stop sign. What is it that the scientific library wants to stop?
5. *Ultimate presumptions* are something we all carry with us. As a creator of knowledge we should be aware of these and how they What?
6. What do we start from when we talk about different *methodological views*?
7. Which are the most important concepts in the *language of methodology* presented in this chapter?
8. There are two *concepts of relations* that summarize the connections between these important concepts. They are and
9. Which different *consisting parts* describe these two concepts of relations?

RECOMMENDED FURTHER READING

See the end of the Appendix and visit the website below.

Become a worldwide partner as a **knowledge creator** in the development for *Methodology for Creating Business Knowledge* by visiting the website: knowledge-creator.com. Here you can contribute by asking your own questions and you will also find answers to the most frequently asked questions. The website has been developed alongside this third edition of the book and the questions posted there will be used to provide input for future editions.