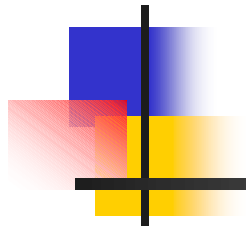


*Do we need a qualitative
approach in bibliometric
studies?*



Maria Forsman
DSocSc (Information studies)
Social Science Library,
University of Helsinki, Finland)



What is bibliometrics?

- n *statistical* bibliography (E.W. Hulme 1920's)
- n application of *mathematics and statistical* methods to books and other media of communication (A.Pritchard 1969)
- n *quantitative* study of physical published units or of bibliographic units, or of the surrogates of either (R.M.Broadus 1987)



What about the qualitative approach?

- n Qualitative scientometrics (M.Callon, J.Law and A.Rip 1986)
 - n Co-word analysis
 - n Co-word maps
 - n Dynamics of science



Sociological approach

- n Scientometrics and sociology of science (John Gläser and Grit Laudel 2001)
- n Integrating scientometrics (bibliometrics) and qualitative sociological methods
- n Theories built by scientometrics alone cannot meet the complexity of social activities in science



Understanding Social Capital

- n Social Capital was quite a new concept in Finnish social sciences in the beginning of 2000's
 - n Maria Forsman: Development of research networks – the case of Social Capital (Diss. Åbo Akademi 2005)
 - n 2001-2005



Bibliometric data

- n International general databases
- n International subject databases
- n Finnish databases



Bibliometric studies

- n Diffusion of the concept
- n Growth of publications
- n Co-word analysis
- n Citation analyses



Studying the elephant

- n Milestone publications
- n Web pages
- n Content analysis
- n Thematic interviews of key persons
 - n How the term was "found" in Finland?
 - n How to define it?
 - n What does it include?
 - n What were the most important publications?



The benefit of qualitative approach in bibliometric studies

- n We can understand better the issue in focus
- n We can explain better some unexpected changes
- n We can dive deeper in the research problem