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Are There Two Methods of Grounded Theory?

Demystifying the Methodological Debate

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Abstract

Grounded theory is an inductive research method for the generation of substantive or formal theory, using qualitative or quantitative data generated from research interviews, observation, or written sources, or some combination thereof (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). In recent years there has been much controversy over the etiology of its discovery, as well as, the exact way in which grounded theory research is to be operationalized. Unfortunately, this situation has resulted in much confusion, particularly among novice researchers who wish to utilize this research method. In this article, the historical, methodological and philosophical roots of grounded theory are delineated in a beginning effort to demystify this methodological debate. Grounded theory variants such as feminist grounded theory (Wuest, 1995) or constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 1990) are beyond the scope of this discussion.

Development History of Grounded Theory Methodology

Most authors situate the beginning of grounded theory methodology with the publication of the 1967 book, *Discovery of Grounded Theory*. However, the first published account of grounded theory methodology was in 1965 when Barney Glaser published the article, "The Constant Comparative Method of Qualitative Analysis" (Glaser, 1965). This article contained all the rudimentary elements of grounded theory methodology as published, two years later (See Table 1 for comparison) and, in fact, this article was reprinted verbatim as chapter five of that book, as the major methods component of the book (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Perhaps this is why researchers frequently use the term *Constant Comparative Method* as a synonym for grounded theory, as did Glaser and Strauss (1967, p. 230). Glaser wrote eight chapters, including all of the methods chapters of *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* while Strauss was on an extended trip to Europe and then Strauss wrote the remaining three chapters upon his return – introductory chapter (chapter 1), the library as caches of qualitative data (chapter 7), and the final chapter (11) on insight and theory development (Glaser, 1998, p. 22).

In 1978, Glaser published *Theoretical Sensitivity*, considered by many to be the "bible" of grounded theory. In fact, several graduate students studying with Strauss used this as their sole reference for learning GT while doing a post-doctorate in chronic illness in the late 1970s (Barbara Artinian, personal communication, May 2006). In this book, Glaser elaborated on the

key procedures of grounded theory which had merely been touched on in Glaser's 1965 article and the 1967 book; in particular, the aspects of theoretical sampling, substantive and theoretical coding, and grounded theory writing were clarified. Glaser continues to publish books on grounded theory, releasing one new book approximately every two years, as well as publishing the international journal, *The Grounded Theory Review*. The content, of these more recent books and articles on grounded theory, does not describe a different grounded theory method than that which was as originally published (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) because grounded theory methodology has remained virtually unchanged throughout the past 40 years, as shown by the comparison in Table 1. Rather, Glaser expands on, or more fully delineates particular components of grounded theory. These particular topics are chosen based on questions received by grounded theory researchers or to counteract erroneous assumptions or methodological errors found in recently published articles or dissertations, in which grounded theory has been used.

Strauss (1987) wrote a section on grounded theory analysis as the last half of chapter one of his book, *Qualitative Analysis for Social Scientists*. Strauss stated that the information in this part "is reproduced almost wholly from Barney Glaser's *Theoretical Sensitivity*, 1978, with some editing and supplementation" (Strauss, p. 22). Strauss invented the term *axial coding* to refer to the coding of properties of each of the categories, and provided a schema for identification of the types of properties that could be found in the data that had been collected. However, the above changes did not change the major procedures of grounded theory as previously published. Open coding had always include the coding of both categories and their properties and the types of properties that might be found such as causes, conditions, and consequences had already been delineated (Glaser, 1965; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). However, graduate students who worked with Strauss at the time have asserted that he was already doing a different method than previously published (personal communication, Jill Rhine, October 2006).

Strauss' final break with grounded theory methodology, as originally conceived, began with his collaboration with Juliette Corbin. Strauss and Corbin (1990) published an article "Grounded Theory Research: Procedures, Canons and Evaluative Criteria" in the journal *Qualitative Sociology* and indicated that their book was forthcoming (p. 4). In the article, they asserted that grounded theory had not changed in form since 1967 but that some of its procedures have been more specifically elaborated (p. 5). However, the procedures described in this article and their two subsequent books deviate substantially from the 1967 grounded theory method because the researcher overlays the data with his or her preconceived theoretical codes rather than discovering them as they emerge from the data. Glaser (1992) passionately refuted this deviation from discovery of what is found in the data through emergence, and proposed that this was a different method with a focus on full conceptual description from the researcher's perspective rather than that of the participants (GTs focus). Glaser's critique is justified by referring to quotations made by Glaser and Strauss (1967) in the Discovery book. For example, "…we believe that forcing the connection between theory and data is completely opposed to our emphasis on a fit between them" (p. 29), and "To preconceive relevance is to force data, not to discover from data what really works as a relevant explanation" (p. 143). A more elaborate and forceful notation appeared in this same book.

Potential theoretical sensitivity is lost when the sociologist commits himself exclusively to one specific preconceived theory (e.g., formal organization) for then he becomes doctrinaire and can

no longer "see around" either his pet theory or any other. He becomes insensitive, or even defensive, toward the kinds of questions that cast doubt on his theory; he is preoccupied with testing, modifying and seeing everything from this one angle. For this person, theory will seldom truly emerge from data. In the few instances where theory does emerge, the preconceived theory is likely to be readily dropped or forgotten because it now seems irrelevant to the data. (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p 47)

Strauss' and Corbin's first book, Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques was published in 1990, and the second edition was renamed slightly to Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory and published in 1998, over a year after Strauss' death in December 1996. Rather than being simply a more specific delineation of the grounded theory method, the procedures expressed in these writings differ from the 1967 method in significant ways: method purpose, theoretical focus, type of reasoning, and overall approach to theory development (use of the researcher's preconceptions, experience, and literature) to the point that only the most naïve researcher would fail to notice that it is a different method, entirely These differences will be briefly articulated in the next few paragraphs and are summarized in Table 2. However, interested readers are encouraged to read the primary sources and make their own comparisons with Glaser's and Strauss' 1967 book, as well as the extensive and poignant contrast of these two methods by Glaser (1992).

Glaser and Strauss (1967) stated that the purpose of the grounded theory method is discovery of theory from data (p. 1), and the theory that has been generated explains the kind of behavior under observation (p. 36). The theory elements that are generated "are first, conceptual categories and their conceptual properties; and second, hypotheses or generalized relations among the categories and their properties" (Glaser & Strauss, p. 35). However, according to Strauss and Corbin (1990), "The purpose of a grounded theory is to specify the conditions that give rise to specific sets of action/interaction pertaining to a phenomenon and the resulting consequences" (p. 251). The grounded theory product is an *explanatory* substantive or formal theory (Glaser & Strauss) but this has been revised to include mandatory *description* along with explanation and possibly some *prediction* as well (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Grounded theory is an inductive theory generation method (Glaser & Strauss, p. 114) with minimal deduction used in the process of theoretical sampling (Glaser & Strauss, p. 32; Glaser, 1992). This inductive method develops theory that is "more trustworthy than logico-deductive theory for the simple reason that the latter often requires forcing of data into categories of dubious relevance to the data's meaning" (Glaser & Strauss, p. 98). The new method by Strauss and Corbin (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, Strauss & Corbin,1990,1998) is mainly deductive with minimal induction, and can be summed up by their statement of "verifying inductively what we proposed deductively" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 111).

Verification was never a part of the original grounded theory method, in fact, verification was repeatedly condemned by Glaser and Strauss (1967) as "stifling to the creative energies required for discovering theory" (p. 7), and as producing a less than adequate theory (pp. 27 & 29). In fact, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (Glaser & Strauss) was written to provide students a defense against "doctrinaire approaches to verification" and "verifiers who would teach them to deny the validity of their own scientific intelligence" (p. 7). However, verification is built into

Strauss' and Corbin's method and is a pivotal feature throughout the coding process. In fact, Strauss and Corbin have revised the definition of "grounded" from "the discovery of theory from data" (Glaser & Strauss, p. 1) to, instead, mean "verification", "We are building grounded theory, and it is the purposeful grounding or verification process that makes this mode of theory building different from many other modes of theory building" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 112). A later statement confirms this same verification definition, "Validating one's theory against the data completes its grounding" (p. 133).

The Strauss and Corbin method is no longer an emergent process of theory discovery; instead there is a 'forcing' process for developing theory, as exemplified by the following methodological suggestions: 1) Concepts from the researcher's preconceptions or the literature may be brought into the study rather than emerging from the data (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 7); 2) Each category "must be developed in terms of its properties and dimensions of the phenomenon it represents, conditions which give rise to it, the action/interaction by which it is expressed, and the consequences it produces" (Corbin & Strauss, pp. 7 & 8); 3) "Process must be built into the theory" (Corbin & Strauss, p. 10); and 4) Techniques, such as the flip-flop technique, are recommended when the answers to researchers' questions are not found in the data - they can simply imagine the opposite to what the data indicate and develop provisional categories and their properties (Strauss & Corbin, p. 84). All of the above strategies are in stark contrast to the original grounded theory method proposed by Glaser (1965) and Glaser and Strauss (1967).

One of the most significant deviations from traditional grounded theory was the addition of the conditional matrix or paradigm (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Strauss & Corbin, 1990) and renamed the conditional and consequential matrix (Corbin & Strauss, 1996; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This paradigm determines the questions that will be asked of participants and directs the theoretical sampling (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998). A third type of coding (axial coding) has been added between open and selective coding, and the meanings of open and selective coding have been changed. In addition, there are three types of sampling to correspond with each of these three coding types. Rather than waiting for the core category to emerge prior to reviewing the literature (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 37), Strauss and Corbin (1990) recommended reading the literature both before and throughout the grounded theory process, for purposes such as identification of the research problem (pp. 35 & 56); selection of concepts and potential relationships that can be verified later with actual data (p. 50); and, using philosophic/theoretical stances that suggest possible ways to interpret the data collected (p. 51). In addition, Strauss and Corbin (1998) suggested going to the literature to find examples of our phenomenon "to stimulate our thinking about properties and dimensions that we can then use to examine the data in front of us" (p. 44), and reading descriptive studies so the researcher knows what to look for in the data, as well as to help generate questions to ask respondents (p. 50). In distinct contrast, grounded theory categories and relationships are emergent from the data, itself, and grounded theory questions are emergent during the interviews as participants tell their stories, or during the subsequent analysis of this participant data. In their final book, Strauss and Corbin (1998) finally acknowledged that their method deviates from the original grounded theory method (p. 10), and did not suggest that their readers should read the previous books grounded theory books by Glaser and Strauss (1967) or Glaser (1978), which is a significant departure from their 1990 book. However, Strauss and Corbin continued to call their method *grounded theory*, suggesting

that it is just Strauss' approach to grounded theory (p. 12). Unfortunately, this assertion is unjustified as demonstrated above, and has most certainly contributed to the ensuing and current confusion over what grounded theory methodology actually entails.

It is clear from the preceding paragraphs that the most recent method promoted by Strauss and Corbin is not grounded 44 theory at all; the methodology has been changed completely, and in many instances is antithetical to grounded theory methodology (Glaser & Strauss 1967). See Table 2 for a summary comparison of the two methods. Although, Strauss and Corbin have maintained some of the grounded theory terminology such as theoretical sampling, theoretical saturation, and open and selective coding, the meanings of these terms deviate drastically from their actual meanings in grounded theory methodology, particularly in the 1998 book. In short, the only thing 'grounded' about the Strauss and Corbin method is that the theory is 'grounded' in the perspective of the researcher, rather than that of the participants. This new method is a clear case of 'exampling' as described by Glaser and Strauss (1967):

Another opportunistic use of theory that **cannot** [emphasis mine] occur with grounded theory is what may be termed "exampling". A researcher can easily find examples for dreamed-up, speculative or logically deduced theory after the idea has occurred. But since the idea has not been derived from the example, seldom can the example correct or change it (even if the author is willing), since the example was selectively chosen for its confirming power. Therefore, one receives the image of a proof when there is none, and the theory obtains a richness of detail that it did not earn…In contrast, grounded theory is derived from data and then illustrated by characteristic examples of data" (Glaser & Strauss, p. 5).

After the unfortunate death of Strauss in 1996, this new method has sometimes been referred to as *qualitative data analysis* (Corbin, 2003) and continues to be promoted by Corbin. However, qualitative data analysis is also a generic term that encompasses a variety of different approaches to analyzing data that are qualitative. It is the author's belief that Strauss and Corbin have developed a totally new method and should be labeled with a name that is consistent with its descriptive, deductive, and verificational focus. Researchers have been encouraged to "take the method in any direction they wished" (Glaser, 1978), however, this freedom comes with the responsibility to rename the new method, appropriately. The renaming of the Strauss and Corbin method is unlikely given that Corbin (2007) has recently labeled their method *Straussian Grounded Theory* and has asserted that it is not a research methodology but rather a qualitative data analysis approach. However, grounded theory (frequently referred to as classical or Glaserian grounded theory) is a complete research methodology (Glaser, 2003) therefore cannot be downgraded to merely one alternative among many for analysis of qualitative data.

Philosophical and Methodological Underpinnings

Many textbooks of qualitative research methods indicate that symbolic interaction is the philosophical underpinning of grounded theory methodology. However, this assertion is consistently challenged by Glaser (2005b), the original and primary author of grounded theory methodology. Probably a more precise characterization is that Glaser and Strauss, the authors of grounded theory, were influenced by different methodological and philosophical ideas during their graduate studies, and that these diverse ideas probably influenced the way in which they

later articulated or described grounded theory methodology. Several of these influences have been acknowledged in the various books published by them.

Glaser graduated from the University of Columbia with a PhD in sociology, during a time when quantitative methodology, particularly that of Paul F. Lazarsfeld, and Robert K. Merton's middle range theory were highly influential. When Glaser (1965), published the constant comparative method (CCM) he acknowledged that the CCM procedure for selection and coding of categories followed that of Becker and Geer (1960), while aspects of theoretical saturation were influenced by the ideas of Merton (1957). In addition, Glaser stated that this1965 manuscript had been extensively edited by Robert K. Merton, prior to publication. Later, Glaser and Strauss (1967) indicated that it was Merton who first called for the clarification and codification of qualitative research methods in 1949 (p. 16), and went further to state that Merton was concerned with "grounded modifying of theory" (p. 2). Glaser (2005a, b) attributed content regarding conceptualization to his training with Merton, in substantive and theoretical coding. Originally, Glaser and Strauss (1967) acknowledged that Lazarsfeld's notion of the interchangeability of indicators contributed to the grounded theory idea of theoretical saturation (no more indicators). Furthermore, the use of quantitative data to generate grounded theory was a variation of Lazarsfeld's elaboration of survey data (Glaser & Strauss, p. 186). Most recently, in a paper titled, *The Roots of Grounded Theory*, Glaser (2005b) identified several methodological beginnings from Lazarsfeld, which he integrated as ingredients in grounded theory procedures for generating substantive theory: index formation model to generate concepts, interchangeability of indicators to generate concepts, and the core variable analysis model. Hans Zetterberg was Glaser's dissertation supervisor (Glaser, 2005b) and Glaser and Strauss identified him as the person to whom they attributed their idea of the importance of integration of theory (p. 223). However, they contrasted the grounded theory method with Zetterberg's approach of doing exploratory research to determine problems and then going to the literature to obtain formal theories to assist with these problems (Glaser & Strauss, p. 239). Glaser (1992) summarized the key individuals – Robert K. Merton, Paul F. Lazarsfeld, Hans Zetterberg, Herbert Hyman and Hanan Selvin - who were his intellectual roots and forefathers and had a great impact on the formulations of grounded theory methodology (p. 125).

Strauss graduated with a PhD is sociology, from the University of Chicago, where qualitative methodology was the tradition, and an approach to studying the life and conduct of humans (later known as symbolic interactionism) was espoused by individuals such as George Herbert Mead, William James and others. The term symbolic interactionism was first coined by Herbert Blumer in 1937 (Blumer, 1969). Blumer, who had been a student of Mead's, was Strauss' advisor (Stern & Covan, 2001). According to Blumer, it was Mead who mainly laid the foundations of the symbolic interactionist approach, although Blumer further developed this methodology (p. 1). Strauss took a course from Mead on social interactionism at the urging of Blumer (Stern & Covan). After Mead's death, Strauss edited and wrote an introduction to a book of Mead's writings, *The Social Psychology of Geroge Herbert Mead* (1956), published post-humously. No mention of Mead was made by Glaser (1965) when he originated and published the constant comparative method, from which grounded theory methodology was derived, and, in fact, this article was reprinted in full as the analytic method for grounded theory, in *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Glaser and Strauss referred to Blumer (1954), for the notion of sensitizing concepts in their discussion of one of the two characteristic features

(analytic and sensitizing) of the types of concepts generated through grounded theory (pp. 38 & 39). However, they revised the "sensitizing" meaning somewhat to refer to only one characteristic feature of their grounded theory concepts, rather than characterizing the whole nature of that concept as was Blumer's meaning of sensitizing (Blumer, 1954). In addition, Blumer's sensitizing concepts "lack precise reference and have no bench marks which allow a clean-cut identification of a specific instance and of its content" (Blumer, 1954, p. 7), whereas with grounded theory, the sensitizing characteristic will "yield a "meaningful" picture, abetted by apt illustrations that enable one to grasp the reference in terms of one's own experience" (Glaser & Strauss, pp. 38 & 39). Perhaps this is why Glaser (1978) later began to refer to this characteristic feature as *imagery* (p. 70) or *imageric*, and has continued to do so (Glaser, 1998), as did Strauss (1987). It is evident that Strauss had attended classes as a student of Blumer because of a footnote reference to the classes about inappropriate application of both 'imported' and sociological theories, in *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (p. 238). Strauss was trained by Blumer and Everet Hughes in qualitative research and symbolic interactionism (Glaser, 1998). Strauss and Corbin (1990) acknowledged that grounded theory procedures are not bound by any discipline, nor did the researcher need to "subscribe to the Interactionist perspective to use it (p. 26). This is verified by the observation that neither Mead's nor Blumer's ideas were incorporated into grounded theory methodology; the one tangential reference (characteristic feature of sensitizing) was later dropped by both Glaser and Strauss. Added to this, is the fact that there are many differences between symbolic interactionism (SI) and Glaser's and Strauss' grounded theory method which make it impossible to situate GT methodology within this theoretical and philosophical perspective (See Table 3 for a summary of these contrasts).

Corbin's and Strauss' new method, recently referred to as *qualitative data analysis*, does have theoretical underpinnings in symbolic interactionism (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Corbin & Strauss, 1996). The most recent update of this method (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) was a complete break with original grounded theory methodology and a definite move to be incorporated within the symbolic interaction perspective: No longer do Strauss and Corbin (1998) recommend that the researcher read the previous grounded theory books, and the assertion that the researcher does not need to come from a symbolic interactionist stance (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) was also removed in this second edition. The remaining paragraphs in this section will be devoted to a discussion of SI and to contrast symbolic interactionism with grounded theory methodology. First, a brief discussion of the basic tenets of symbolic interactionism will be delineated to facilitate the subsequent comparison.

Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic interactionism is rooted in the philosophies of pragmatism and idealism (Reynolds, 1990). Interactionists have touted symbolic interactionism as a general sociology (Reynolds, 1990). Blumer wrote about symbolic interactionsim as a perspective in empirical social science (p. 21) but indicated that the writings of George Herbert Mead and John Dewey contain the outlines of a humanistic philosophy.

Up until 1969, four years *after* Glaser had published the constant comparative method, there was no clear statement of the position of symbolic interactionism (also called interactionism), nor had relevant research methodologies been delineated (Blumer, 1969). Much later, in 1990, Reynolds

noted that there are anywhere from 2 to 15 varieties of interactionism, therefore, there is not a common 'doctrine' that is agreed upon by proponents of this theoretical and philosophical position. The major depiction of interactionism is that interaction is the central focus, that one's situation is defined by mutual understanding, that is, through interaction with others (Reynolds, 1990). Also, the view of society is a process view in contrast to the functionalist's equilibrium view of society (Reynolds, p. 121).

Blumer (1969) correctly asserted that no specific research methodologies had as yet been specified for the interactionist perspective. However, Mead (1938, 1956) did frequently talk about the scientific or experimental method. Cook (1993) articulated Mead's pragmatic notion of scientific inquiry as described in *The Philosophy of the Act*, "It is the function of scientific inquiry to analyze such [uncertain, ambiguous] situations, distinguish what is problematic from what is unproblematic in them, propose a hypothesis that tentatively revises the problematic meanings thus identified, and then put this hypothesis to the test by seeing whether it can successfully guide the conduct that has broken down" (p 177). Furthermore, for Mead, scientific knowing deals with the problematic aspects of human experience (not an objective, absolute reality) and truth is not an absolute but rather is relative to the situation, and refers to the hypothesis that successfully reconstructs (overcomes) the problem situation (Cook, pp 177 & 178). Cook suggested that "Mead's general views about scientific inquiry, knowledge, and truth thus echo those of Dewey at nearly every point" (p. 178). Therefore the general approach to inquiry which Mead proposes is deductive, with hypotheses proposed by the researcher and then checked out later in data. This method is contrary to grounded theory methodology (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) but congruent with the new method of Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1998).

Reynolds (1990) cited several criticisms of interactionism, levied by interactionists and noninteractionists. A summary of these combined criticisms is as follows: Symbolic interactionism is ahistorical, noneconomic, apolitical, has an astructural bias, is devoid of transcultural applicability, ignores the unconscious, and does not deal with human emotions (Reynolds). In addition, Reynolds stated that interactionism is an utopian view which sees the world as it *wants to be*, not as it is (p. 140). These perceived shortcomings of symbolic interactionism are not shared by grounded theory methodology, because of grounded theory's preoccupation with "what *is* happening", and all of the above aspects unaccounted for in symbolic interactionism are possible derivations in grounded theory. Any of these aspects can be incorporated into the grounded theory as categories or their properties, as long as they emerge from the data, that is, they must have earned relevance.

The previous discussion demonstrates that the underpinnings of grounded theory as outlined by Glaser and Strauss (1967) are primarily methodological. This is also corroborated by Glaser's (2003) assertion that grounded theory did not evolve from either positivism or symbolic interactionism but rather came from his methodological notes taken during his own research and teaching activities (p. 62). Anyone who has read Glaser's (1964) published dissertation, *Organizational Scientists: Their Professional Careers*, will recognize that Glaser was developing grounded theory methodology during his doctoral work; this dissertation is a clear case of grounded theory using quantitative data. Any philosophical 'underpinnings' attributed to grounded theory were ascribed decades after this research methodology was developed and published; have been resolutely denied by Glaser the first (1965) and primary originator (1967)

of this method; and are tangential, possibly even inimical, to the operationalization of grounded theory methodology.

The perceived need to attribute grounded theory methodology to roots in symbolic interactionism may be attributed to non-intentional sloppy scholarship or intentional revisionist history. However, it is frequently condoned by scholars who feel uncomfortable about using a research methodology that they cannot attribute to some overarching grand philosophy, as if grounded theory is somehow 'legitimated' by such a connection. As demonstrated in the previous paragraphs, grounded theory methodology did not and could not come out of symbolic interactionism, and, when done correctly, it is methodologically distinct and divergent from symbolic interactionism. Ironically, the preoccupation with linking research methodologies to a grand theoretical or philosophical scheme is antithetical to post-modern thought, espoused by several of these same authors. Fortunately, grounded theory methodology is significantly powerful when done properly and can generate a substantive theory whether or not the researcher espouses a symbolic interactionist framework – as long as this framework is purposefully 'suspended' for the duration of the research, along with all other researcher preconceptions.

[please see pdf version for table: Comparison of the Constant Comparative Method and the GT Method (Original and Current)]

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The main point in the next two chapters is that the methodological literature is filled with references to the quantitative-qualitative conflict or opposition. Qualitative data is credited with providing the meaning and factual interpretation that quantitative data does not, thus it is more accurate in findings, interpretation and theory as opposed to the conjectures that explain fabricated quantitative findings. Qualitative data is real life collection of data that avoids the quantitative distorting difficulties in collecting data by preformed questionnaires and overly simple analytic techniques. The arguments go on and on as to which is objective and which subjective, which is harder science and which is softer.

Among some groups of researchers and some fields, qualitative data research wins this continuous opposition. With this QDA power GT is drawn in as a QDA research method, since most GT is done with qualitative data which is relatively easy and inexpensive. GT becomes eroded, and default remodelled by QDA in the process, hence blocked, simply because most GT research to date is done with qualitative data. Its fundamental theoretical orientation is seen by consequence of this remodelling as symbolic interaction. But this is not correct, since it can be used with any theoretical codes, from any theoretical orientation. Most GT uses structural functionalism — theoretical codes actually — such as conditions, contexts and consequences or scaling codes, such as degrees, dimensions, cutting points, ranges, zones or typologies.

GT is a general methodology that can be used with any data, I have said time and again. It is an inductive methodology. Qualitative data does not define GT; GT just uses qualitative data mostly — but among many possible data. "All is data" for GT, since all data has latent patterns. It can use any data and any data in any way and in any combination: it can use qualitative data and quantitative data solely or in any combination.

It is paradoxical that so often qualitative researchers denigrate quantitative work as work with no symbolic meaning interpretation. Yet they laude it as science and try to make QDA look like science with quantitative trappings. Whatever the solution to this paradox in any researcher's position, GT is abstract of it. GT just inducts abstractions or concepts from what ever data is

being used. This paradox of a qualitative research making puts a reverse block on GT. GT is blocked by QDA erosion in many ways and a further consequence is that this cooptation totally blocks GT from being used with quantitative data.

But, to repeat, GT is a general inductive methodology that can be used, with excitement, with quantitative data. My dissertation, which was published immediately as a book (Organizational Scientists: Their Professional Careers Bobbs-Merrill, 1964), used quantitative data exclusively. It was an inductive core variable analysis of scientific recognition. It was modelled after Lazarsfeld's The Academic Mind the Free Press, which was an inductive core variable analysis of apprehension in academic life during the McCarthy era. There were many monographs coming out of the Columbia University Sociology Department at that time that were pure inductive discovery using quantitative data. It was what was done as a norm.

In chapter 8 of the Discovery of Grounded Theory, "The Theoretical Elaboration of Quantitative Data" I wrote at length on the use of quantitative data for generating theory. The point of the chapter was to illustrate the careful relaxation of the rules surrounding quantitative data for the express purpose of generating theory. The rich veins in quantitative data can be mined when analysts relax their quantitative rigor in favour of GT rigor. If quantitative data is -handled systematically by theoretical coding of variables in elaboration tables, the analyst will indeed find rich terrain for discovering and generating theory.

I used Lazarsfeld's elaboration analysis combined with my -discovered method of consistency analysis. It is a property space approach to induction, using index formation and four fold and three fold tables. Other techniques are latent structure analysis, reason analysis, multi-attitude distribution, some forms of content analysis and so forth.

These techniques can be used with original data and with secondary data. The later is abundant, since so much quantitative data is collected and not analyzed. So most often inductive analysis of quantitative data was a secondary analysis of a small amount of a large survey. I myself used data from a humongous survey of scientists. I choose a sample of the numbers of participants and a sample of the tested questions pertaining to recognition.

Also, in combination, a GT using qualitative data can be used before and after a quantitative study. A GT done before can suggest items for a questionnaire and can suggest salient hypotheses to verify. After a quantitative study, a qualitative GT of the substantive area leads to grounded explanations of quantitative findings and future research directions.

The after approach would stop the conjectural interpretations of quantitative findings. The after approach stops the non-scientific explanations of scientific data which is a paradoxical travesty. So much time and money is spent on getting objective data that is explained by an immediate particularistic bent of one interested party, who conceives of him/herself as generally knowledgeable. But is he/she??? They will say yes, but that is not scientific.

It never occurs to many researchers, using the before approach, to analyze the qualitative data when a qualitative study is done to form the questionnaire for the purpose of providing explanations for the quantitative findings after the study. What a loss.

Now let us look at the quantitative-qualitative opposition from the point of view of the blocking, eroding and remodelling GT.

The Call for Qualitative Research

The growth of qualitative methods and GT commensurately and its final acknowledgment as science has not really upset or subverted quantitative research. It is still seen as the most objective science in many disciplines, however strong qualitative research has become. As applicable in many other disciplines, Gummesson says "What is taught to students and PhD candidates in business schools is still essentially that quantitative techniques will give us the truth and that qualitative approaches are just preliminaries…. Quantification has become so ingrained in the mainstream of education that complying with its specifications and publishing it accordingly is the fast lane to a university career, even the single lane. At the same time, we fail to offer proper education in qualitative methods, which require more of personal maturity, sound judgment, involvement and interaction." ("Are Current Research Approaches in Marketing Leading Us Astray," in Marketing Theory, 2001) Professor Gummesson is right. Distance from the meaning of data is seen as more scientific compared to involvement in data by qualitative methods which is seen as subjective bias, interpreted from accuracy and distorted compared to quantitative data. The zeal for accurate QDA descriptions to meet this criticism erodes the abstraction aspect of GT when it is seen as a qualitative method. GT is not concerned with accuracy as objective or subjective, it is all data that is used to generate concepts for GT. (SEE "Are Current Research Approaches in Marketing Leading us Astray?" Evert Gummesson, Marketing Theory, 2001)

Quantitative research has a low theory yield that has deadened for over 40 years research in many fields. Survey techniques have been improved and useful in selected situations, such as political poles on "over news-ed" issues, but have not fundamentally improved their ability to provide theory. "The supremacy of quantitative measurement shuts out most of reality and hence the creation of more general theory", says Professor Gummesson.

He is not against quantitative approaches per se, what he is against is their claim in that they are better, even the only science. In business research their claim has succeeded in acquiring a disproportionate share of research activity. "Counting and classifying can only take one so far. Meaning and interpretation are required to give significance to counts and classifications and these come from qualitative research," says Gummesson. This call to qualitative research for after survey research has to counter the non-science image in the quantitative researcher's eyes. It can be labelled "anecdotal evidence" in a derogatory way. The credibility of QDA is based on accurate description more than conceptualization, when trying to add qualitative research to a

quantitative research realm. Thus the use of GT in this situation is eroded and remodelled. In chapter 9 below I shall discuss at length credibility's requirement at length as an erosion of GT.

The use of GT as a qualitative methodology in this legitimizing method-mix is clear when Gummesson says "I have chosen for my methodology-in-use a package of the aforementioned approaches: Narrative research, action research, ethnography, GT and case study". This method mix of qualitative methods is quite typical of the first forays of researchers leaving quantitative research and tempting qualitative research. GT abstraction cannot withstand the intense descriptive orientation of these other qualitative methods. Hence it is remodelled by default.

In adding meaning and research interpretation to quantitative research, qualitative immediately challenges the sampling techniques of quantitative research, the objectivity of questionnaire items vs. the assumed subjectivity of interviews and, worst of all, the qualitative results that are contrary to the pet idea, hence the vested fictions, of top management in whatever structure. In this challenge GT has no chance of NOT being eroded and remodelled. In order to meet this challenge to quantitative research, QDA sampling of a routine clear population in a unit was barely, legitimately enough of a departure from quantitative random sampling. GT theoretical sampling is too deviant to quantitative formed researchers. Efforts at total accuracy by QDA again are enough of a departure from so called questionnaire objectivity. "All is data" of GT is too much of a departure for the quantitative oriented.

Lastly, conjectured interpretations of quantitative results bring the research into consistency with pet ideas of the corporate managers. Researched interpretations, especially those of GT which are powerful in their abstraction, are too contrary, even seen as subversive, to management. Clearly to remain pure to its integrity, GT must stand alone as a general method, not as a meaning provider to quantitative methods.

As QDA brings meaning to quantitative research, it also brings another resisted dimension. QDA raises new or untouched topics which further points to the gap between quantitative research and the reality of action in process. As Gummesson terms "The shallowness of quantitative studies" totally neglects analysis of services marketing and relationship marketing, which are so vital to business and so damaging of the ideal of free competition. QDA descriptions were enough of a challenge to this status quo, which descriptions are embalmed in the literature of the field. Abstract propositions generated in GT again are too general to tolerate, hence GT is reduced to description.

The rules of quantitative work are bulwarked by particularistic fictions in their use. The less apparent rule-bound qualitative research is threatening. Thus the new rules of GT procedures, while very rigorous, are too much to take on in a quantitative atmosphere, so GT is remodelled to a QDA method.

Qualitative research also provided as part of meaning the "Voice" of the participants, access to participants and interesting, stimulating reading about the participants compared to the deprived

access to the data in a survey. GT does not deprive voice of and access to participants, but its abstraction of the access is disconcerting to those who at last get to the data. And of course, QDA's making reading scientific research stimulating and easy rather than the stiff difficulty of quantitative articles is clinched by vital description rather than conceptualization. Thus GT is eroded to a QDA method and legitimates it as the most procedurally complete and balanced method available.

The constraint by quantitative methods to make qualitative research look "not unscientific" clearly erodes GT when it is caught up in this progression. Contrary to many researchers' beliefs, the positivistic criteria that dominate quantitative research are specific to it, not general to all research methods. Thus as we said in Discovery of GT qualitative research in general and GT in particular require different criteria for research that does continuous theory generation. And we have set them forth clearly in Discovery of GT and in Theoretical Sensitivity. A GT should fit, be relevant, work and be readily modifiable.

In particular GT requires continuous modification, not verification, and the subjective is conceived of as another form of objective reality. While in quantitative research subjective data is thought of as objective when it is aggregated, or congealed subjective, that is summations of subjective responses to questions in a questionnaire. For GT what is real is what is happening, however level of truthfulness. Once seen, extracting GT from being eroded into another QDA method in this progression from and reaction to quantitative data is not hard. One need only go with abstraction and conceptualization, and leave description to QDA researchers.

"What is science" is often treated as the empirical world narrowed down to quantitative data and statistical techniques of handling it. Actually it is the quantification of subjective responses which is the paradox. Qualitative research is not as "science" and merely an antecedent to deduction and quantification. Then conjecture takes over as interpretation of quantitative findings by selective referring to existing non research related findings based on cultural views, as well as some "ought" to be related research. In fact for those who see this demarcation between quantification and qualitative research for what it is, the distinction dissolves and it becomes common sense to use both methods for a research.

Again it becomes hard for GT to resist being drawn into qualitative method attribution and erosion by these transcending researchers. Default remodelling GT has to please both methods and their criteria. Simply going with GT abstraction and conceptualization is an easy way out of this erosion from being drawn into this method mix. It necessitates no argument, just knowledge of what GT is and doing it as conceived.

It is wise to respond to the call for the meanings in qualitative data in the face of the distance of quantitative data from meaning. BUT it is also wise to be careful of the implications for eroding GT by descriptive capture.

Succumbing to Quantitative Techniques

In spite of the recent and current zest for qualitative research there is however frequent succumbing to properties of quantitative research. Researchers weaned on quantitative methods may -succumb to overwhelming urges to reduce their qualitative data to numerical categories or neat variables. They seek to achieve respectability for their results at the cost of more penetrating analyses or interpretations that might raise questions rather than put them forever to rest. Qualitative research somehow gets quantified. It may be done by content analysis or often with computerization that sums instead of tapping the rich complexity of qualitative data.

This depicted researcher cannot live with the ambiguity, uncertainty and tyranny of worrisome accuracy in the data. He cannot tolerate it, so retreats to the objective reality of quantitative manipulation of data which he feels lead to objective facts independent of the researcher. Lack of tolerance is resolved. There is no longer doubt of qualitative accuracy. This retreat, of course, loses qualitative meanings.

If GT is caught in this retreat from a QDA method to quantitative trappings it is of course remodelled, but it is actually a moot issue for GT. GT is abstract of worrisome accuracy; it just conceptualizes latent patterns. They get modified by property generation when compared to new data. I have written at length on this. My discussion in the following sections will always come back to this simple circumstance: no matter what the problem between quantitative and qualitative methods, GT will not be eroded in the bargain if GT is seen as abstract of these data concerns and able to use all data.

Realistic Combinations

GT is in the middle of the quantitative-qualitative continuous controversy, which is basically different stances toward descriptive capture and focuses on worrisome accuracy. The issues of description do not apply to GT which is abstract of them (See The GT Perspective). Qualitative researchers keep up positivistic thought in a myriad of ways to achieve “solid research” so they affirm. As Janice Morse et al says in 2001, “We suggest qualitative findings are still not regarded as solid empirical research. A number of leading qualitative researchers argued that reliability and validity were terms pertaining to the quantitative paradigm and were not pertinent to qualitative inquiry.” They offer their solution to this controversy. (See International Journal of Qualitative Methods, vol. 2, no.2).

Given the preponderant use of qualitative data by GT researchers and the disuse of quantitative data by GT researchers, GT gets drawn into the qualitative side of the continuous controversy. It is then remodelled by QDA rigor requirements and good GT is consequently blocked. Actually GT can be used with both types of data (quantitative and qualitative) in any combination and integrate them in various ways while leaving out the issues of back and forth controversy. As we said in Discovery of GT, GT has its own canons of rigorous procedures, before, after and during the research.

Hans Thulesius, an MD in Sweden who has generated an excellent GT on balancing cure and comfort care in end of life cancer care (palliative care) sees this vision and promise when he says: "But I think that you should know that I consider researchers as prophets more or less, and you are a very good one! I think that GT is a method which is so underutilized that if properly recognized it would revolutionize many areas of research and not only qualitative data studies, but a merge with quantitative data analysis. It would give new important knowledge to biomedicine in its connection with nursing and other soft areas of health care. Unfortunately not many researchers today have their feet in both fields or recognize the need to be in both fields, but this is essential in order to optimize the discoveries in biomedicine and apply it to real life for real people. So I think that in 10–15 years time if properly developed — GT and variations of GT — could play an even more important role in medicine among other areas. This is my impression after experiencing GT and its power." (email April 9, 2001) This, of course, applies to all fields, since GT is a general method.

In a subsequent email on April 15, 2001, Hans actuates his vision: "At the moment I'm doing statistical factor analysis of a screening instrument for posttraumatic stress disorder. I have responses from 300 persons. Factor analysis is about concentrating and condensing questionnaire items and finding new dimensions in data. It's fun to have the GT experience while doing statistical work. I feel that a whole new world of understanding would unfold if using GT more with quantitative data. Mixing the creativity of thinking from GT with all those powerful statistical tools seems to me like an exciting potential for future research methodology innovations." I showed his vision to be quite true in my dissertation using quantitative data, "Organizational Scientists: Their Professional Careers" 1964, Sociology Press. See also "Theoretical Elaboration of Quantitative Data", chapter 8, Discovery of GT.

In his article "Bridging the Quantitative-Qualitative Divide in Political Science" June 1995, *American Political Science Review*, Sidney Tarrow chastises King, Keohane and Verba's renowned book, Designing Social Inquiry, which takes the position that "a slightly more complicated theory will explain vastly more of the world". Tarrow says "If this is so, they really ought to have paid more attention to relations between quantitative and qualitative approaches and what a rigorous use of the latter can off quantifiers." "They offer very little about how qualitative approach can be combined with quantitative research." Tarrow continues "More and more frequently in today's social science practice, quantitative and qualitative data are interrelated within the same study. We need to think more seriously about the interaction of the two kinds of data." His paper addresses this interaction.

He sees quantitative research as providing data on large numbers of single observations and qualitative data providing data on large numbers of variables in the same area. Then the results of the combined interaction of both types of data are many. Qualitative data research can then turn to history, culture, and current data to interpret quantitative data by tracing processes for an event and it can reveal tipping or non-systematic variables that interrupt -systematic time-series patterns, often permanently.

He talks about sequencing the two types of research so each leads to research based on the other: quantitative work leads to qualitative inquiry for interpretations and then this leads to a more pertinent questionnaire for quantitative research and on and on. He talks of "putting qualitative flesh on quantitative bones" by doing a subsample of a survey sample to research qualitatively by interviews the quantitative findings. Then doing another survey based on the QDA findings. He talks of combing both types of research at once on the same problem to triangulate the results, to achieve the most appropriate and specific hypotheses. He concludes that "a -single minded adherence to either quantitative or qualitative approaches straight jackets scientific progress. We should try to use different kinds of evidence together and in sequence" on the same problem.

Where does GT stand in these thoughts that I do agree with? Tarrow leaves out GT totally by implicitly seeing it as a QDA method. Hence again GT is dragged into QDA and eroded by the latter and good GT is blocked. This is a shame because actually GT can solve his quest for combination of the quantitative and the qualitative since it can be grounded in both types of data sequentially and/or at once and the resulting generated theory can be abstract of both. GT uses all as data and is abstract of what ever data it is grounded in. It is realistically perfect for the task of combination.

This combination of the qualitative and quantitative presents a problem that GT can solve. Either type of data has its analysis style that can dominate the other. Take the causal model. Quantitative analysis simplifies assumptions and causes of an event. While the qualitative analysis complexifies with many variables causal clusters of the event, GT can combine and generate a theory using both models without either dominating or without losing the best features of each causal model. GT disaggregates or deconstructs the polarity of the causal models of each method, by abstractly using both to explain what is going on both within the large aggregated numbers of quantitative findings and the case-orientation of qualitative findings.

Thus quantitative findings of the prevalence of say, visualizing deterioration on an ICU by nurses receiving no medical response can be explained by the non vital sign in-depth variables involved gained in qualitative research. GT uses all the data in the emergent theory on resolving such a concern. Empirical generalizations about large social units should not be explained by conjectural theory. They should be explained by qualitative research on the same problem either at the same time or sequentially using the constant comparative method of GT. Constant comparing the case data with the survey data works to generate theory.

Large unit analysis is hard to come around to this view. In an article: "Beyond Quantitative Research: Exploring the Reality of Welfare Policy," July 1996, a paper given at the National Association of Welfare Research Workshop, Bonnie Glaser and Karen MacDonald say "Welfare research and demonstration projects are dominated by the quantitative approach, leaving little or no resources for a qualitative component." "Qualitative research is more often conducted separately from funded evaluation projects, rather than in conjunction with those projects

because research objectives are different." They assert "Descriptive studies in and of themselves are important to give meaning and texture to outcome studies, but they are also a prerequisite to further analysis of causal mechanisms that lead to outcomes of interest. The integration of qualitative and quantitative methods has been called an instrumental strategy: for program evaluation when the program goals are clear but the causal mechanisms are not."

This perennial problem of combination would be eased and solved if the "instrumental strategy" was used with GT to conceptualize the main concern in a problem area and how it was continually resolved. Perhaps the theoretical code of cause is not emergent thus not clear and another theoretical code would emerge to make clear the evaluation of the goals. 11

Sequencing GT and Quantitative Research

With and subsequent to GT substantive theory comes the future of application, new research directions, general implications and generating formal theory. Least interesting of all is the testing of a GT hypothesis by a quantitative research. The need is small and the yield not great. Substantive area changes in structure and culture are too fast for specific, tested hypotheses by slow quantitative research to hold. And indeed, the quantitative research just produces not a test, BUT more data to compare conceptually, generate new properties of the theory and thereby raise the level of plausibility of the theory. In short a quantitative test is really just more data for modification. See Doing GT, chapter on modification.

Testing a GT hypothesis by quantitative research is too slow and descriptive for our heterogeneous changing world. Quantitative research when used for verification and scientific worthiness is just not worth it. Views of "science" vary and testing is merely one view. GT is too multivariate and complex and theoretically coded in a myriad of ways for one hypothesis to be central enough for an expensive test. The test would end up inadequate and inconclusive for the whole GT theory. Modifications by constant comparison would come naturally.

Quantitative research on a GT could provide supporting confirmation, new directions for GT research, or extending or revising data for the GT, but it still resolves to modification. Also the quantitative research is very likely to lose the abstraction of GT, its scope and parsimony, if not compared correctly for conceptualizing. It thus could reduce it to a descriptive level and decrease its power. It then blocks future GT research, blocks induction and blocks raising a substantive GT to a formal level. Quantitative findings complement GT when conceptualized, not testing it.

So called pilot studies done by QDA but called GT are frequent enough and can provide relevant questionnaire items. But if the research is a genuine GT, then there is no such thing as a pilot study for another research preparation whether quantitative or QDA. GT stands on its own as a theory at any extent, not a preliminary pilot study. It may help formulate a quantitative study, which in the future just provides more data for comparisons. A quantitative study may, as we well know, need a GT study to explain its findings. With GT knowledge grows whatever way.

For GT more data, whether quantitative or qualitative, means a substantive theory is starting to become more abstract to a formal theory, when constant comparing is done conceptually.

GT provides all the benefits and functions that all theory does. It can provide a ground breaking theory for a whole program of research to extend, evaluate and refine a substantive body of knowledge using other methods, including quantitative research. It provides grounded concepts as opposed to received, logical, conjectural and borrowed concepts from forcing research frameworks. Its power to open up an area is great with theoretical formulation and categories of relevance and direction.

Using the reversibility of indicators can provide good questionnaire items for GT categories and their properties, which then can be indexed after the quantitative survey. Substructing GT categories and their properties also provide items to operationalize in questionnaires and interview guides for quantitative and qualitative research and then a conceptualization of the data, if the category has emergent fit. For example it is possible to operationalize quantitatively the concept of illusioning in organizations using a GT on organizational illusioning. A remodelled GT by a QDA method mix loses this power.

The reader should keep in mind that not all researchers do GT — obviously — so routine QDA and quantitative research can then use a GT with confidence to integrate them since the GT will fit, work and be relevant. This is far more powerful "science" than a conjectured theory can offer.

The revealing sequences of GT — before, simultaneous, subsequent — and quantitative research are emergently whatever as a substantive field develops. Researchers take the field in all directions with their particular methods: QDA, Quantitative or GT, as studies flood in all directions stimulated by GT giving abstract meaning, relevance, interpretations and future research possibilities. The sequencing can go on and even take years. A good GT conceptually guides and mobilizes both QDA researchers and quantitative researchers in future research years later. Its general implications have lastly, far reaching power. So a blocked GT by QDA description erosion loses this power for quantitative and qualitative research as abstraction and conceptualization is lost. This occurs both on the GT method remodelling by QDA and on the skill level of the researcher being steeped in QDA requirements. QDA description provides little or no guide to a myriad of subsequent research, since its abstraction is low and it is soon stale dated.

Odis Simmons captures the sequencing notion clearly in his and Toni Gregory's proposal to start a specialty in Grounded Action at the Fielding Institute. He says: "Grounded Action can be used with data that are either qualitative and/or quantitative in nature. The nature and type of data to be used at various phases of a Grounded Action project is itself open to discovery. A project may begin with open-ended interviews, progress to observations, quantitative archival data, surveys or whatever is indicated through the -evolving analysis." Simmons, as we all should be when appropriate, is totally open to sequencing qualitative and quantitative data whatever way using GT. He is also open to using GT to also develop a program of grounded therapy as well as

grounded action. See chapter 1, More Grounded Theory Methodology, Barney G. Glaser editor, Sociology Press.

Quantitative Clobbers of GT

In spite of the big success that GT has achieved in the world of research and especially GT using qualitative data, the GT researcher has to be prepared for quantitative clobbers from time to time. These occur in publication submittals, PhD committees, grant applications and critiques in general. I will cite a few, and I trust the reader will add more from his/her own experience.

Phyllis Stern in her paper "Overcoming the Rage of Rejection" chapter 7, in "Completing a Qualitative Project" 1997, editor Janice Morse, talks of these clobbers. "As a result of a disrespectful review, (many) never write again. The rejection that's particularly hard to shake is the one that comes from a reviewer who judges qualitative work from the point of view of quantitative research." For example the author may "receive a letter from the editor stating that they published only 'scientific' articles (read "quantitative") so the qualitative-quantitative mix-up is still going on."

Remodelling GT to a QDA is particularly subject to this kind of clobber, since QDA is more descriptive and does not provide the powers of conceptualization to offset the evidentiary view. It is easier to reject a QDA description than a conceptualization,
which overriding view implicit in the GT seems to explain and sum things up. The conceptual grab helps. Choosing journals compatible with the type of data is crucial. GT does better, as yet, in qualitative data journals.

Here is another publication rejection clobber based on the evaluator-reviewer, in the editor's view, only being comfortable with the quantitative approach to QDA. That is they have the evidentiary approach to descriptive findings — with no notion of GT's procedural rigor in generating conceptual, high applicable substantive theory, in this case on palliative end of life medical care. This is a clear block of GT which suggests it is to be remodelled to evidentiary, descriptive findings. This block comes from thinking GT is another QDA method. Email from Hans Thulesius, MD, Dec 01.

The reviewer says: "This paper presents a theory without any data whatsoever to support/refute or illustrate the arguments being made. This makes it impossible to judge the rigor of the work. In short, it does not adhere to the principle of good qualitative inquiry in terms of being transparent: adequate discussion of how themes, concepts and categories were derived for the adequate discussion on the evidence both for and against the researchers' arguments and measures taken to test the rigor of the findings."

This quote makes it so clear that quantitative evidentiary rigor is passed on to QDA and thus assumed of for GT. Thus, GT is remodelled. Han's theory on balancing cure and comfort care for end-of-life cancer patients has been well received throughout the medical world in Sweden. It

has great implications for practice when applied. Indeed, the quantitative oriented editor of this journal wanted Hans to develop a survey questionnaire of items based on his theory.

QDA success with grant proposals still rests in using quantitative evidentiary requirements such as clear populations, interview guides, preconceived professional problems and categories and a framework for analysis etc. Phyllis Stern says "The day may come when emergence will gain its rightful place in the funded grant proposal. However at present, the field is still quantoid-dominated and quantoid-minded reviewers are generally present when proposals are reviewed. As with manuscripts, proposals can be improperly assigned to reviewers who are incompetent in qualitative data methods and give unfair criticism." pages 141–2 ibid

John R Cutcliffe, PhD writes me on Jun 7, 2002: "How can a researcher who wishes to remain pure to your GT methodology (like me) write grant an application, when the funding authority specifically states that I must identify the research question? Indeed, some awarding authorities are even more prescriptive in stating that they want a-priori hypotheses stated (something I absolutely resist) allowing the central problem to emerge … runs the risk of being rejected."

The answers to his question are partly in chapter 9 & 10 in my The GT Perspective. One cannot change the formed. It is best to give a review committee what they want, however remodelled GT may appear for the proposal. Then do a pure (non-eroded) GT out of the QDA data. Or just do a GT. Once a good GT is underway, the QDA proposed problem and hypotheses will soon be forgotten in favour of the grab of a GT that explains what is going on.

Lastly the quantitative clobber of GT comes at times from the dissertation committee both during and at the defence if allowed to get that far. It is assumed that the scientific yield is far greater with quantitative research than qualitative research, so the dissertation should favour the latter. Of course and unfortunately GT is easily drawn into this preferential power as a qualitative, basically description method, is itself eroded and remodelled to suit quantitative canons. Evert Gummesson talks of this strong bias in his article referred above. "I am not against quantitative approaches per se. What I am against is their misapplication: their claim that they are better, even the only science; and their far too successful warfare to implant that claim in the academic system and acquire a disproportionate 'market share', close to monopoly." The debate will continue for some time about comparative scientific yield in spite of strong positions to the contrary.

This strong, logic tight bias toward quantitative research is clear and extreme in the following email I received from Denise Johnston on 9/6/00 about her dissertation defence. "I was under no illusion that defending the thesis in an oral examination would be easy. The thesis was purely qualitative being examined in a Faculty that only credits quantitative research … the oral exam was far worse that I could have anticipated. My research was discredited and my method of investigation trivialised. The end result was my being asked to resubmit the thesis for examination within 18 months including stating quantitative methods which, in my opinion, would change the whole tenor of the thesis." She told me that she could no longer work in this

"hostile" environment. Fortunately the consistent accepting environments of qualitative research are growing at a great rate as QDA and GT dissertations accumulate in numbers.

GROUNDED THEORY REVIEW
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Grounded Theory as a General Research Methodology

Judith A. Holton, Ph.D.

Abstract

Since its inception over forty years ago, grounded theory has achieved canonical status in the research world (Locke, 2001, p.1). Qualitative researchers, in particular, have embraced grounded theory although often without sufficient scholarship in the methodology (Partington, 2000, p.93; 2002, p.136). The embrace renders many researchers unable to perceive grounded theory as a general methodology and an alternative to the dominant qualitative and quantitative research paradigms. The result is methodological confusion and an often unconscious remodelling of the original methodology (Glaser, 2003). Given the various interpretations and approaches that have been popularised under the rubric of grounded theory, this paper addresses the important distinction between grounded theory as a general methodology and its popularisation as a qualitative research method. The paper begins with a brief overview of grounded theory's origins and its philosophical foundations then continues by addressing the basic distinction between abstract conceptualisation as employed in classic grounded theory and the conceptual description approach as adopted by many qualitative researchers. The paper continues with a brief overview of the criteria for judging the quality of classic grounded theory and concludes by detailing its methodological principles.

Origins of the Methodology

Grounded theory originated in the mid-1960s with the groundbreaking work in medical sociology of Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss (Glaser & Strauss, 1965, 1970, 1971, 1974, 1975) and the subsequent publication of **The Discovery of Grounded Theory**, (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). While the book is generally acknowledged as the seminal work on grounded theory, Glaser (1998) reveals that he was actually developing the method in his doctoral work at Columbia University and that he authored the first draft of **Discovery**, later sharing it with Strauss who added comments and wrote an additional three chapters (pp.22-27). While Glaser and Strauss were later to disagree about the precise nature of the methodology and discontinue their professional collaboration, Glaser is generally recognised as having retained both the spirit and the substance of the original work (Locke, 2001, p.64). His subsequent publications, together with Discovery, provide detailed accounts of the fundamental principles of the method (Glaser, 1978, 1992, 1998, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2007). His most recent methodological guide (2008), in particular, distinguishes grounded theory as a general research methodology.

The well documented schism in the collaboration between Glaser and Strauss occurred with the publication of **Basics of Qualitative Research** (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Glaser's (1992) response was **Basics of Grounded Theory: Emergence vs. Forcing** in which he set out to distinguish the original methodology from Strauss and Corbin's work which he clearly regarded as a remodelled method that he has termed "full conceptual description" (p.123). His continuing concern with the eroding impact of various subsequent "remodelings" of the original methodology has motivated him to produce several additional publications in which he endeavours to clarify the purpose, principles and procedures that together constitute classic, or Glaserian, grounded theory (Glaser, 2001, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2007, 2008; Glaser & Holton, 2004). This collection of works, a result of his dedication to advancing the original methodology, offers researchers a solid base for its study and application.

The Qualitative Embrace of Grounded Theory

Qualitative methods facilitate the study of issues in depth and detail (Patton, 2002, p.14). Denzin and Lincoln (1994) describe qualitative research as a complex, interconnected family of terms, concepts and assumptions that cuts across disciplines, fields and subject matter (p.3). Marshall and Rossman (1999) refer to a broad approach to the study of social phenomena that is pragmatic, interpretative and grounded in lived experiences (p.2). In describing qualitative research, these and other methodologists refer to a bewildering array of paradigms (Locke, 2001, p.6), moments (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p.19), genres (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p.2), theoretical orientations (Patton, 2002, p.75), perspectives (Chia, 2002, p.6), strategies and approaches (Creswell, 2003). The varying perspectives espouse a range of epistemological and ontological premises, necessitating
declaration of philosophical stance as a prerequisite of any qualitative research design. Accordingly, qualitative researchers have attempted to position grounded theory in any number of philosophical perspectives.

While Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1998) explicitly embrace the qualitative paradigm, Glaser rejects the neat divide between positivist and interpretivist paradigms claiming that grounded theory is neutral and as "issues free as research can get – conceptually abstract of issues and subject to modification by constant comparison" (Glaser, 2003, p.115). He notes that Lazarsfeld did not perceive any research method as wholly quantitative or qualitative but instead "showed constantly how all research contained both elements" (Glaser, 1998, p.29). While acknowledging the methodology's binary roots in quantitative methodology and qualitative math, he asserts its theoretical transcendence of a positivistic focus on verification in pursuit of theory generation and alludes to an early paradigmatic transcendence:

Pattern search is survey modeled as it aggregates incidents like surveys aggregate people. And then the task is to start relating these conceptualized patterns to generate a theory using theoretical codes. This was my conflicting truce at Columbia: an agreement not to conflict the

theoretical vs. the empirical side of the department but rather to combine the best of both approaches. (Glaser, 1998, p.31)

Partington (2002) echoes this transcending capacity. In reference to **Discovery** (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), he suggests that "despite the frequency with which it is cited, by no means all of those who refer to the work are true to its purpose, which was to achieve the fine balance between procedural rigour and creativity." (p. 136)

Yet numerous methodologists persist in positioning classic grounded theory within the positivist paradigm. Charmaz (2000) notes the predominance of realist ontology and a positivist epistemology in the classic methodology (p.513) while preferring to espouse a constructivist approach to grounded theory whereby "the 'discovered' reality arises from the interactive process and its temporal, cultural, and structural contexts. Researcher and subjects frame that interaction and confer meaning upon it. The viewer then is part of what is viewed, rather than separate from it" (pp.523-524).

Others have positioned grounded theory as pragmatist (Locke, 2001), realist (Lomborg & Kirkevold; Partington, 2000, 2002) and interpretivist Lowenberg, 1993). Charmaz (2000) attributes the confusion to a lack of explicitness in Discovery (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) and the subsequent search to fit the method to accepted research paradigms (p.524). She advocates the need for individual grounded theorists to examine and declare their own epistemological premises.

Much of the confusion, of course, can be attributed to the array of terminology used by various scholars to set out the boundaries and distinctions between and among the espoused research paradigms and associated issues of ontology, epistemology and methodology. While it is beyond the scope of this paper to provide a comprehensive review of the various perspectives on the matter, it is worth offering some examples of the various positions espoused. Locke (2001) cites three paradigms for qualitative research – modern (realism), interpretative and post-modern (including constructionism) (p.6). Conversely, Guba and Lincoln (1994) suggest that qualitative research describes methods not paradigms (p.105). Chia (2002), on the other hand, avoids the use of paradigms and favours instead the notion of two basic epistemologies – empiricism and rationalism – and a "wide panoply of theoretical perspectives" (p.1) including positivism, phenomenology, realism, heurmeneutics and postmodernism (including social constructivism). Lomborg and Kirkevold (2003) settle on realism as their preferred epistemological and ontological perspective on grounded theory and satisfy themselves that the methodology is about truth and validity while failing to refer to its essential nature as abstract conceptualisation. Amis and Silk (2007) offer the categorization of qualitative research into foundational, quasi-foundational and nonfoundational research orientations. While the divergence of perspectives is obvious even in this small sample, what rests at the heart of the debate is the express need of qualitative research to attempt to understand the nature of truth as a basis for generating knowledge through research.

While readily acknowledging the influence and contribution of the Chicago School and symbolic interactionism through his collaboration with Anselm Strauss, Glaser dismisses the notion that grounded theory is essentially interpretivist and insists that it is a general methodology that can be used with any kind of data – qualitative, quantitative or a combination thereof (Glaser, 2005,p.141). And, despite the enthusiastic and widespread embrace of researchers within the qualitative paradigm, a growing number of theorists trained in the classic methodology have also come to view grounded theory not as a qualitative research method but as occupying its own distinct paradigm on the research landscape.

According classic grounded theory methodology its own paradigm assists in putting to rest much of the "rhetorical wrestle" (Glaser, 1998) – a seemingly circular process that has inhibited understanding and acceptance of the methodology and has subsequently led to numerous interpretations and remodelled versions. Viewed as a general research methodology, GT is not confined to any particular epistemological or ontological perspective; rather, it can facilitate any philosophical perspective as embraced by the researcher.

Grounded theory's particular value is in its ability to provide a conceptual overview of the phenomenon under study. It focuses on participants' perspectives and provides them with opportunities to articulate their thoughts about issues they consider important, allowing them to reflect on these issues of concern to gain understanding and acquire new insights (Glaser, 1998, p.32). This ability does not render grounded theory superior to either quantitative or qualitative methods but rather complementary. "Quantitative research and QDA [qualitative data analysis] provide description of aggregates and in-depth cases respectively and GT [grounded theory] provides the conceptual overview with grounded interpretation, explanations, impacts, underlying causes and so forth" (Glaser, 2003, p.118). This distinction is important to advancing scholarship within both paradigms.

Grounded Theory Remodelled

Glaser's (2002, 2003, 2004; Glaser & Holton, 2004) chief concern is that the relegation of grounded theory to the qualitative paradigm remodels the methodology to the canons of qualitative research, thereby eroding its power as a general methodology. Bryant and Charmaz (2007) imply that Glaser has become "far more amenable" (p.4) to the remodelling and has adopted a "more accommodating view that at least acknowledges" (p.5) the disparities. However, one should not confuse acknowledgement with acceptance. While both Charmaz (2000) and Locke (2001) regard the modifications as a natural evolution of the methodology, others seem completely unaware of a migration from the original tenets of classic grounded theory. Again, it is not within the scope of this paper to provide an exhaustive review of the various approaches offered as grounded theories but a small sampling may serve to illustrate important examples and resultant distortions.

Locke (2001, p.30) embraces grounded theory while nestling it within a "qualitative paradigm" thereby requiring researchers to proclaim a theoretical perspective to orient their study.

Partington (2002) espouses a similar need. “Theoretical frameworks which make explicit the researcher’s ontological and epistemological assumptions provide the best foundation on which to construct and defend a theoretical argument.” (p.141). While neither Locke nor Partington appear to recognise grounded theory as a general methodology, Partington (2002) does, however, recognise the erosion of grounded theory through the qualitative embrace when he says,

in qualitative management research, the term ‘grounded theory’ has taken on a more generic meaning, tending to embrace all theory-building approaches that are based on coding of qualitative data. An inevitable consequence of this broadening of meaning has been a certain loss of attention to the essential principles of the Glaser and Strauss approach, and to their purpose. (p.136)

He acknowledges, as well, the general inconsistency with which research methods are applied in qualitative management research. “One of the consequences of this lack of uniformity is that every qualitative researcher tends to develop their own individual approach.” (p.137). Partington (2002) then proceeds to outline several requirements that, in effect, produce another remodelled version of grounded theory. He requires the advance establishment of research questions and a theoretical perspective (p.140), thus encouraging preconception and forcing on the research the professional concerns of the researcher, regardless of what might emerge as the real concern of the research participants. Partington also pre-selects and forces specific theoretical codes, namely the conditional matrix and stimulus-organism-response, on the data rather than trusting to the emergence of theoretical codes from within the data (p.49).

While calling for procedural rigour in management research methods, Partington appears to omit two essential principles of classic grounded theory: conceptual memoing and hand sorting of memos to integrate the theory. His advocacy of taping and transcribing interviews indicates a need for full data capture rather than a reliance on the researcher’s ability to capture the data on a conceptual level through field notes. He emphasises audit trails to validate the research results and identifies criteria for judging the quality of a grounded theory which are in fact, qualitative research criteria and not the criteria of fit, work, relevance and modifiability that govern classic grounded theory (Glaser, 1978, 1998; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Use of phrases such as “thickness of description” (Partington, 2002, p.154) and “full richness of the data” (p.144) also mirror the concerns of qualitative data analysis for full conceptual description rather than the abstract conceptualisation of grounded theory.

While Charmaz (2000) does acknowledge the general nature of grounded theory methodology when she suggests the method can be used with either quantitative or qualitative data and from either an objectivist or constructivist perspective, her references to grounded theory as explaining data and offering analytic interpretations of data demonstrate the blocking of conceptualisation. Glaser (2002) offers a strong rejection of Charmaz’ remodelled version:

Constructivism… is an epistemological bias to achieve a credible, accurate description of data collection (para. 10)…. her quest is not to take the data as it comes but to be sure it is accurate,

so she gets to mutual interpretation as the answer (para. 8)…. Personal input by a researcher soon drops out as eccentric and the data become objectivist not constructionist (para.24)…. Charmaz has clearly remodelled GT from a conceptual theory to a QDA conceptual description method with worrisome accuracy at issue (para. 38)….The strength of QDA research has clouded and swayed her view of GT, and thus she denies and blocks its true conceptual nature." (para. 28)

Bryant (2003) appears to miss entirely the distinction between the abstract conceptualisation and conceptual description. While his fervent defence of constructivist grounded theory may be attributed to his being firmly fixed within the qualitative paradigm, it serves to illustrate the limiting capacity of a qualitative embrace on classic grounded theory methodology. He confuses his argument still further by citing grounded theories that have, in fact, adopted the remodelled methods that are the focus of Glaser's concern.

Bryant and Charmaz (2007) make two rather peculiar assertions that seem to suggest a lack of currency in their own scholarship of classic grounded theory methodology. First, they suggest that Glaser has "recently changed his stance on the GT quest to discover a single basic social process" (p.9) despite Glaser's (1978) clear insistence that the basic social process is only one type of theoretical code that may apply in generating grounded theory (p.96). Secondly, they suggest that he has recently "distanced" himself from theoretical codes (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007, p.19), which does seem rather absurd given his publication of **The Grounded Theory Perspective III: Theoretical Coding** (2005). Their claims would appear to suggest that remodelling not only erodes the power of the classic methodology but also undermines its scholarship in the qualitative paradigm as further evidenced by the predominance of remodellers among the contributors to their Handbook.

Douglas (2003) borrows a number of assumptions from qualitative research (taping and transcribing interviews, conditional matrix) and, in a taken-for-granted manner, applies them to grounded theory unaware of the eroding impact of his remodelling. Rennie's (2000) authoritative attempt to reconcile grounded theory with qualitative research, in particular with hermeneutics, belies a miss of the distinction between abstract conceptualisation in building theory and the interpretation of descriptive detail from which a theory might be conjectured. Hall and Callery (2001) offer another remodelling that focuses on social constructivist concerns with the interactional dynamics between the researcher and participants. While a concern of qualitative data analysis, such dynamics are not an issue; rather, they are simply additional variables to be integrated into the conceptualisation of data if and when they prove to be relevant to the emerging theory. Miller and Fredericks (1999) offer still another critique of grounded theory which is in effect a criticism of Strauss and Corbin's method of conceptual description but which once again adds further methodological confusion.

Glaser (2003) has dealt extensively with Lincoln and Guba's (1985) positioning of grounded theory within the qualitative
paradigm. He views their naturalist inquiry perspective as, "changing views of worrisome

accuracy, but always accuracy. It does not address the abstract nature of GT … a flexible, conceptual, inductive methodology abstract of their discussion on finding the right truth, belief, to wit their focus on worrisome accuracy" (p.182).

A rather simple yet critical issue between classic grounded theory and various remodelled, or "evolved" (Charmaz, 2000; Locke, 2001) versions is the distinction between a "grounded analysis" (Johnson & Harris, 2002, p.113) and a grounded theory. Glaser (2001) clearly articulates this as the difference between abstract conceptualisation (grounded theory), whereby theory must be grounded empirically in the data yet transcend the data to form theory, and conceptual description (grounded analysis) which, while also grounded in data, fails to conceptually transcend the data to produce an integrated theory. Describing what is going on does not explain conceptually what is going on as a fundamental pattern of social behaviour (Glaser, 2002, para. 41). Such description lacks core relevance. "This overdue of descriptive capture, by going on and on at some length and redundancy, loses the parsimony of good GT explanation." (Glaser, 2001, p.33).

Morse (1997) suggests that qualitative researchers are theoretically timid and may be inhibited by what she sees as the hard work of conceptualisation necessary to produce theory. While acknowledging the possibility of timidity, Glaser (2001, pp.26-27) refutes her assertion of the work of conceptualisation, instead maintaining that many researchers simply lack knowledge and competence in conceptualisation. Therefore, they embrace with enthusiasm but without understanding. The resultant approaches to using grounded theory with qualitative data are often a dim reflection of the theorising power of classic grounded theory methodology.

Grounded Theory as a General Methodology

To understand the nature of classic grounded theory, one must understand the distinction between conceptualisation and description. Glaser (2003, p.127) claims that classic grounded theory stands alone as a conceptualisation method. With roots in inductive quantitative analysis and theory construction, hypothesis generation in grounded theory is essentially the statement of probabilities that explain latent patterns of social behaviour (Glaser, 1998, p.22). As a form of latent structure analysis, grounded theory reveals fundamental patterns in a substantive or a formal area. With concepts grounded in empirical data and theoretical coding integrating the concepts into theory, hypotheses can be written in quantitative or qualitative terms depending on the data and the researcher. Lomborg and Kirkevold (2003) suggest that this inductive process of data collection and analysis at the heart of grounded theory is the methodological pivot for this systematic generation of hypotheses (p. 191).

Grounded theory is not about the accuracy of descriptive units. It transcends descriptive methods and their associated problems of accuracy, interpretation and constructionism. In so doing, grounded theory offers qualitative researchers a systematic and rigorous method for developing theory but it requires that they transcend the canons of the qualitative paradigm if they are to access its power about social processes. As such, conceptualisation is not an act of interpretation;

it is an act of abstraction. This abstraction to a conceptual level theoretically explains rather than describes behaviour that occurs conceptually and generally in many diverse groups with a same concern (Glaser, 2003, p.117). Abstraction thereby frees the researcher from qualitative research's concerns with accuracy and interpretation of multiple perspectives by putting the focus on concepts. "Only concepts can relate to concepts to achieve hypothesis construction… Descriptions cannot relate to descriptions in any clear or precise way if at all. Hypotheses, if achieved, are unit empirical with no generalizability." (Glaser,2001,p.38). Thus, whether data are viewed as interpretative or objectivist is immaterial in classic grounded theory methodology, as it is not the descriptive detail that concerns the grounded theorist but the abstract concepts that lie within the data. While qualitative research is interested in context, this is just another variable for grounded theory. The contextualisation of meaning may or may not be relevant for a theory's explanation of how a main concern is continually resolved (Glaser, 2004, para 62). What matters are the concepts. The skill of the grounded theorist is to abstract concepts by leaving the detail of the data behind lifting the concepts above the data and integrating them into a theory that explains the latent social pattern underlying the behaviour in a substantive area (Locke, 2001, p.ix). The result of a grounded theory study is not the reporting of facts but the generation of probability statements about the relationships between concepts – a set of conceptual hypotheses developed from empirical data (Glaser, 1998, p.3).

Glaser (1998) attributes his early training in "explication de texte" at the Sorbonne as a foundational influence in grounded theory, particularly the constant comparative method at the heart of conceptualisation. He advocates its influence in enabling the researcher to examine and conceptually code data with "as little imputation and interpretation as possible" (p.24).

GT's paradigm is to trust to emergence and by constant comparison, conceptualize the latent patterns. The social organization of life goes on and on. The GT goal is to discover it conceptually not describe it….The worldview of GT is to allow the researcher the freedom to discover and generate conceptual theory about 'whatever' and not preconceive its nature. Its limits are the researcher's self and resources. (Glaser, 2003, p.127-128)

By contrast, Strauss and Corbin's linear, prescriptive approach to data analysis (Douglas, 2003, p.47) lays the foundation for the forcing of preconceived theoretical frameworks on data that Glaser finds so antithetical to the classic grounded theory methodology. Rather than trusting to the emergence of theory through the systematic application of grounded theory's twin pillars of constant comparison and theoretical sampling, Strauss and Corbin (1998) seek to guide the researcher by advocating that they establish, in advance, a theoretical framework. This is achieved through such mechanisms as a pre-formulated problem and research question (pp.36-42), a "sensitizing" review of the literature (pp.46-48) and the use of one theoretical code – the conditional matrix or coding paradigm (pp.181-199). The result is a blocking of the potential emergence of a grounded theory in favour of a conceptual description of a preconceived problem that may or may not be relevant to anyone other than the researcher (Glaser & Holton, 2004, para. 24).

Judging the Quality of Grounded Theory

The very "grab" of conceptualisation, however, creates a dilemma for many qualitative researchers. The excitement created by generating concepts from data can actually derail their attention from abstraction to description. As such, they neglect to stay with the full method of classic grounded theory and are unable to tap its potential in developing a conceptually integrated theory. The resultant theory is "linear, thin and less than fully integrated" (Glaser, 1978,p.116).

Thus, attempts at grounded theory vary in quality according to the methodological thoroughness of the study, the significance of the research questions and the incisiveness of the analyst. These must be assessed from the internal logic of the grounded theory methodology itself and not from the inappropriate application of external criteria from other research paradigms and methodologies (Charmaz, 1994). Thus, the canons of quantitative and qualitative methodologies do not provide appropriate criteria for assessing the quality of a grounded theory. The criteria established by Glaser and Strauss (1967, pp.237-250) and reaffirmed by Glaser (1978, pp.4-6) remain the standards by which the quality of a grounded theory should be assessed. The four criteria are fit, work, relevance and modifiability:

- **Fit** refers to the emergence of conceptual codes and categories from the data rather than the use of preconceived codes or categories from extant theory.
- **Work** refers to the ability of the grounded theory to explain and interpret behaviour in a substantive area and to predict future behaviour.
- **Relevance** refers to the theory's focus on a core concern or process that emerges in a substantive area. Its conceptual grounding in the data indicates the significance and relevance of this core concern or process thereby ensuring its relevance.
- **Modifiability** refers to the theory's ability to be continually modified as new data emerge to produce new categories, properties or dimensions of the theory. This living quality of grounded theory ensures its continuing relevance and value to the social world from which it has emerged.

To enhance the potential for a rich multivariate conceptual theory, rigorous adherence to the complete grounded theory method is essential (Glaser, 2003, p.151). "A grounded theory is neither right nor wrong, it just has more or less fit, relevance, workability and modifiability. Readers of grounded theory should evaluate them against these criteria" (Thulesius, 2003, p.27).

Methodological Principles

Glaser has articulated the essential elements that comprise classic grounded theory methodology (Glaser, 1978, 1992, 1998; Glaser & Holton, 2004) and emphasises that a study can only be considered as a true grounded theory when the complete package is utilised. The essential methodological principles as follows are largely excerpted from (Glaser & Holton, 2004):

Theoretical Sensitivity

Theoretical sensitivity, the ability to generate concepts from data and relate them according to normal models of theory in general, requires two things of the researcher. It requires first of all, the personal temperament to maintain analytic distance, tolerate regression and confusion and trust in preconscious processing and conceptual emergence and, secondly, the ability to develop theoretical insight and conceptualise data.

Getting Started

As a generative and emergent methodology, grounded theory requires the researcher to remain open to discovering what is really going on in the field and not what should be going on according to extant theory or the preconceived notions of the researcher's worldview. Getting started in grounded theory means entering the research field with no preconceived problem statement, interview protocols or review of literature but instead remaining open to the discovery of the main concern of the participants and their multivariate responses to its resolution. The forcing, preconceived notions of an initial professional problem or an extant theory and framework are suspended in the service of seeing what will emerge conceptually by constant comparative analysis.

All is Data

This dictum expresses the flexibility of grounded theory in utilising all types and sources of data as opposed to a focus on one specific type of data. The grounded theorist uses all data that are available. The richer the range of data, the greater the potential for producing multivariate theory.

Use of the Literature

It is critical in grounded theory methodology to avoid unduly influencing the pre-conceptualisation of the research through extensive reading in the substantive area and the forcing of extant theoretical overlays on the collection and analysis of data. To undertake an extensive review of literature before the emergence of a core category violates the basic premise of grounded theory—that the theory emerges from the data, not from extant theory. The presence of advance subject expertise also increases the risk of clouding the researcher's ability to remain open to the emergence of a completely new core category that has not figured prominently in the research to date, thereby thwarting the theoretical sensitivity. Practically, it may well result in the researcher spending valuable time on an area of literature that proves to be of little significance to the resultant grounded theory. Instead, grounded theory methodology treats the literature as another source of data to be integrated into the constant comparative analysis process once the core category, its properties and related categories have emerged and the basic conceptual development is well underway.

Theoretical Sampling

Theoretical sampling is the process of data collection for generation of theory whereby the researcher jointly collects, codes and analyses the data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop the theory as it emerges. The process of data collection is controlled by the emerging theory, whether substantive or formal. Beyond the decisions concerning initial collection of data, further collection cannot be planned in advance of the emerging theory. Only as the researcher discovers codes and tries to saturate them by looking for comparison groups, does both (1) what codes and their properties and (2) where to collect data on them emerge. By identifying emerging gaps in the theory, the researcher will be guided as to next sources of data collection and interview style. The basic question in theoretical sampling is, to what groups or subgroups does one turn next in data collection—and for what theoretical purpose? The possibilities of multiple comparisons are infinite and so groups must be chosen according to theoretical criteria. The criteria—of theoretical purpose and relevance—are applied in the ongoing joint collection and analysis of data associated with the generation of theory. As such, they are continually tailored to fit the data and are applied judiciously at the right point and moment in the analysis. In this way, the researcher can continually adjust the control of data collection to ensure the data's relevance to the emerging theory.

Open Coding

To begin open coding—with a minimum of preconception—tests the researcher's ability to trust in herself, the method and her skill to use the method to generate codes and find relevance. The process begins with line-by-line open coding of the data to identify substantive codes emergent within the data. The researcher begins by coding the data in every way possible—"running the data open." From the start, the analyst asks a set of questions of the data—"What is this data a study of?" "What category does this incident indicate?" "What is actually happening in the data?" "What is the main concern being faced by the participants?" and "What accounts for the continual resolution of this concern?" These questions keep the researcher theoretically sensitive and transcending when analysing, collecting and coding the data. They force her to focus on patterns among incidents that yield codes and to conceptually transcend the detailed description of these incidents. She codes for as many categories as fit successive, different incidents. New categories emerge and new incidents fit into existing categories.

Open coding allows the researcher to see the direction in which to take the study by theoretical sampling before she has become selective and focused on a particular problem. Thus, when she does begin to focus, she is sure of relevance. The researcher begins to see the kind of categories that can handle the data theoretically, so that she knows how to code all data, ensuring the emergent theory fits and works. Open coding allows the researcher the full range of theoretical sensitivity by encouraging the generation of codes that fit and work.

Line by line coding forces the researcher to verify and saturate categories, minimises omission of an important category and ensures the grounding of categories in the data. The result is a rich, dense theory with the feeling that nothing has been left out. It also corrects the forcing of "pet"

themes and ideas, unless they have emergent fit. It is essential that the researcher do her own coding. Coding constantly stimulates ideas.

Constant Comparative Method

The constant comparative method enables the generation of theory through systematic and explicit coding and analytic procedures. The process involves three types of comparison. First, incidents are compared to incidents to establish underlying uniformity and varying conditions. The uniformity and the conditions become generated concepts and hypotheses. Then, concepts are compared to more incidents to generate new theoretical properties of the concept and more hypotheses. The purpose is theoretical elaboration, saturation and verification of concepts, densification of concepts by developing their properties and generation of further concepts. Finally, concepts are compared to concepts. The purpose is to establish the best fit of many choices of concepts to a set of indicators, the conceptual levels between the concepts that refer to the same set of indicators and the integration into hypotheses between the concepts, which becomes the theory.

Interchangeability of Indicators

Grounded theory is based on a concept-indicator model of constant comparisons of incidents to incidents and, once a conceptual code is generated, of incidents to emerging concept. This forces the researcher to confront similarities, differences and degrees in consistency of meaning between indicators, generating an underlying uniformity which, in turn, results in a coded category and the beginnings of the properties of that category. From the comparisons of further incidents to the conceptual codes, the code is sharpened to achieve its best fit while further properties are generated until the code is verified and saturated.

Conceptual specification, not definition, is the focus of grounded theory. The grounded theory concept-indicator model requires concepts and their dimensions to earn their way into the theory by systematic generation of data. Comparing in new incidents and thereby generating new properties of a code can only go so far before the researcher discovers saturation of ideas through interchangeability of indicators (incidents). This interchangeability produces, at the same time, the transferability of the theory to other areas by linking to incidents (indicators) in other substantive or sub-substantive areas that produce the same category or properties of it. Interchangeability produces saturation of concepts and their properties.

Core Category

As the researcher proceeds to compare incident to incident in the data, then incidents to categories, a core category begins to
emerge. This core variable, which appears to account for most of the variation around the concern or problem that is the focus of the study, becomes the focus of further selective data collection and coding efforts. It explains how the main concern is continually resolved. As the researcher develops several workable coded categories, she begins, as much as possible, to

saturate those that seem to have explanatory power. The core variable can be any kind of theoretical code—a process, a condition, two dimensions, a consequence, a range and so forth. Its primary function is to integrate the theory and render it dense and saturated. It takes time and much coding and analysis to verify a core category through saturation, relevance and workability. The criteria for establishing the core variable within a grounded theory are that it is central, relating to as many other categories and their properties as possible, and accounts for a large portion of the variation in a pattern of behaviour. The core variable reoccurs frequently in the data and comes to be seen as a stable pattern that is increasingly related to other variables. It relates meaningfully and easily with other categories. It has clear and "grabbing" implications for formal theory. It is completely variable and has a "carry through" within the emerging theory that enables the researcher to get through the analyses of the processes that she is working on by virtue of its relevance and explanatory power.

Selective Coding

The emergence of a pattern marks the beginning of selective coding. The researcher ceases open coding and delimits coding to only those variables that relate to the core variable in sufficiently significant ways as to produce a parsimonious theory. Selective coding begins only after the researcher is sure that she has discovered the core variable.

Delimiting

Once the researcher has identified the core variable, subsequent data collection and coding are delimited to that which is relevant to the emerging conceptual framework. This selective data collection and analysis continues until the researcher has sufficiently elaborated and integrated the core variable, its properties and its theoretical connections to other relevant categories.

Integration of a theory around a core variable delimits the theory and thereby the study. This delimitation occurs at two levels—the theory and the categories. First, the theory solidifies, in the sense that major modifications become fewer and fewer as the analyst compares the next incidents of a category to its properties. Later modifications are mainly about clarifying the logic, taking out non-relevant properties, integrating elaborating details of properties into the major outline of interrelated categories and—most important—reduction. Reduction occurs when the researcher discovers underlying uniformity in the original set of categories or their properties and then reformulates the theory with a smaller set of higher-level concepts.

The second level of delimiting the theory is a reduction in the original list of categories for coding. As the development of the theory progresses and it becomes reduced by delimiting, it increasingly works better for ordering a mass of qualitative data and the researcher becomes committed to it. This allows her to pare down the original list of categories for collecting and coding data, according to the present boundaries of the theory. She now focuses on one category as the core variable and only variables related to the core variable will be included in the theory. The list of categories for coding is further delimited through theoretical saturation.

Memoing

Theory articulation is facilitated through an extensive and systematic process of memoing that parallels the data analysis process in grounded theory. Memos are theoretical notes about the data and the conceptual connections between categories. The writing of theoretical memos is the core stage in the process of generating grounded theory. If the researcher skips this stage by going directly to sorting or writing up, after coding, she is not doing grounded theory.

Memos are the researcher's theoretical notes about her data and the conceptual connections between emerging categories. Memo writing is a continual process that helps raise the data to a conceptual level and develop the properties of each category. Memos also guide the next steps in further data collection, coding and analysis. They present hypotheses about connections between categories and their properties and begin the integration of these connections with clusters of other categories to generate a theory.

The basic goal of memoing is to develop ideas (codes) with complete freedom into a memo fund that is highly sortable. Memo construction differs from writing detailed description. Although typically based on description, memos raise that description to the theoretical level through the conceptual rendering of the material. Thus, the original description is subsumed by the analysis. Codes conceptualise data. Memos reveal and relate the properties of substantive codes—drawing and filling out analytic properties of the descriptive data.

Initially, memos arise from constant comparison of indicators to indicators, then indicators to concepts. Later memos generate new memos. Reading literature generates memos; sorting and writing also generate memos. In grounded theory, memoing is never done! Memos slow a researcher's pace, forcing her to reason through and verify categories, their integration and fit, relevance and work for the theory. In this way, she does not prematurely draw conclusions about the final theoretical framework and core variables.

Theoretical Coding

The conceptualisation of data through coding is the foundation of grounded theory development. Incidents articulated in the data are analysed and coded, using the constant comparative method, to generate initially substantive, and later theoretical, categories. The essential relationship between data and theory is a conceptual code. The code conceptualises the underlying pattern of a set of empirical indicators within the data. Coding gets the researcher off the empirical level by fracturing the data then conceptually grouping it into codes that then become the theory that explains what is happening in the data. A code gives the researcher a condensed, abstract view with scope of the data that includes otherwise seemingly disparate phenomenon. **Substantive codes** conceptualize the empirical substance of the area of research. **Theoretical codes** are abstract models or frameworks that conceptualize how the substantive codes may relate to each other as hypotheses to be integrated into a theory. Theoretical codes give integrative scope, broad

pictures and a new perspective. They help the analyst maintain the conceptual level in writing about concepts and their interrelations.

Sorting and Writing Up

Throughout the constant comparative coding process, the researcher captures the emergent ideation of substantive and theoretical categories in the form of memos. Once the researcher has achieved theoretical saturation of the categories, she proceeds to review, sort and integrate the numerous memos related to the core category, its properties and related categories. The sorted memos generate a theoretical outline, or conceptual framework, for the full articulation of the grounded theory through an integrated set of hypotheses.

Such memos are the ideational fund of grounded theory. Theoretical sorting of the memos is the key to the formulation of the theory for presentation or writing. Sorting is essential—it puts the fractured data back together. With grounded theory, the outline for writing is simply an emergent product of the sorting of memos. There are no preconceived outlines. Grounded theory generates its outline through the sorting of categories and properties in the memos into similarities, connections and conceptual orderings. Through theoretical coding, patterns emerge that shape the outline.

To preconceive a theoretical outline is to risk logical elaboration. Instead, theoretical sorting forces the "nitty gritty" work of making theoretical discriminations as to where each idea fits in the emerging theory. Theoretical sorting is based on theoretical codes. As the researcher sees similarities, connections and underlying uniformities, she bases the theoretical decision about the precise location of a particular memo on the theoretical coding of the data grounding the idea.

If the researcher omits sorting, the theory will be linear, thin and less than fully integrated. Rich, multi-relation, multivariate theory is generated through sorting. Without sorting, a theory lacks the internal integration of connections among many categories. With sorting, data and ideas are theoretically ordered. This sorting is conceptual sorting, not data sorting. Sorting provides theoretical completeness and generates more memos—often on higher conceptual levels—furthering and condensing the theory. It integrates the relevant literature into the theory, sorting it with the memos.

Sorting also has a conceptual, zeroing-in capacity. The researcher soon sees where each concept fits and works, its relevance and how it will carry forward in the cumulative development of the theory. Sorting prevents over-conceptualisation and pre-conceptualisation, since these excesses fall away as the researcher zeros in on the most parsimonious set of integrated concepts. Thus, sorting forces ideational discrimination between categories while relating them, integrating them and preventing excessive proliferation.

Analytic Rules Developed through Sorting

While theoretical coding establishes the relationship among variables, analytic rules guide the construction of the theory as it emerges. They inform the theoretical sorting and subsequent writing of the theory. Analytic rules detail operations, specify foci, delimit and select use of the data and concepts, act as reminders of what to do and keep track of and provide the necessary discipline for sticking to and keeping track of the central theme as the total theory is generated.

There are several fundamental analytic rules. First, sorting can start anywhere. It will force its own beginning, middle, and end for writing. The important thing is to start. The researcher tries to conceptually locate the first memos thereby forcing a start to reasoning out the integration. Once started, she soon learns where ideas are likely to integrate best and sorting becomes generative and fun. Starting with the core category, or variable, and then sorting all other categories and properties only as they relate to the core forces focus, selectivity and delimiting of the analysis. Theoretical coding helps in the determination of the relationship of a concept to the core variable. Once sorting on the core variable begins, the constant comparisons are likely to generate many new ideas, especially on theoretical codes for integrating the theory. The researcher stops sorting and memos her ideas; then, she sorts the memo into the integration.

The researcher carries forward to subsequent sorts the use of each concept from the point of its introduction into the theory. A concept is illustrated only when it is first introduced so as to develop the imagery of its meaning. Thereafter, only the concept is used, not the illustration. All ideas must fit in somewhere in the outline or the integration must be changed or modified. This is essential, for, if the researcher ignores this fitting of all categories, she will break out of the theory too soon and necessary ideas and relations will not be used. This rule is based on the assumption that the social world is integrated and the job of the researcher is to discover it. If she cannot find the integration, she must re-sort and re-integrate the concepts for better fit. She moves back and forth between outline and ideas as she sorts, forcing underlying patterns, integrations and multivariate relations between the concepts. The process is intensely generative, yielding many theoretical coding memos to be resorted into the outline.

Sorting forces the researcher to introduce an idea in one place and then establish its “carrying forward” when it is necessary to use it again in relations to other ideas. When in doubt as to the place to sort an idea, the researcher puts it in that part of the outline where the first possibility of its use occurs, with a note to scrutinise and pass forward to the next possible place. Theoretical completeness implies theoretical coverage as far as the researcher can take the study. It requires that, in cutting off the study, she explains the behaviour and problem under study with the fewest possible concepts and with the greatest possible scope and with as much variation as possible. The theory thus explains sufficiently how people continually resolve their main concern with concepts that fit, work, have relevance and are saturated.

Pacing

Generation of a grounded theory takes time. It is above all a delayed action phenomenon. Little increments of coding, analysing and collecting data process, mature and emerge later in

theoretical memos. Significant theoretical realisations come with growth and maturity in the data, and much of this is outside the researcher's conscious awareness until a preconscious processing facilitates its conscious emergence. Thus, the researcher must pace herself, exercising patience and accepting nothing until this inevitable emergence through preconscious processing has transpired. Survival of the apparent confusion is important. This requires that the researcher takes whatever amount of quality time that is required to do the discovery process and that she learn to take this time in a manner consistent with her own temporal nature as a researcher—her personal pacing. Rushing or forcing the process will shut down the researcher's creativity and conceptual abilities, exhausting her energy and leaving her empty and her theory thin and incomplete.

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The Rationale for the Use of Classic GT

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Abstract

Two "hallmarks" explain why and how Glaser's GT method is one of a kind and meaningless for research that is conventionally pre-framed:
(I) The finding of the core variable is the first stage of the research and it is accomplished by the systematic treatment of the data. The core variable sums up and explains the main concern (and its recurrent solution) of those being studied, and most of the variation in the data. The study is then delimited to concepts related to the core variable. This is equivalent to the finding of the research problem.
(II) During the data work, the researcher suspends his/her preconceptions and prior knowledge about the area of research, and trusts in *emergence of concepts from the data*. Its purpose is avoidance of preconceived academic interest concerns with, instead, sole focus on the participant's substantive interest concerns and their solutions, and the triggering of intuitive insights during states of *not knowing*. One way to transcend preconceptions is to study unrelated literature in order to identify latent behavior patterns and to increase the researcher's familiarity with the full range of possible theoretical codes.

Introduction

There is a general and increasing bewilderment in the literature regarding the concept of "grounded theory", sometimes abridged as "GT" (Bryant & Charmaz 2007, Kelle 2007, Strubing 2007, Alvesson & Karreman 2007, Charmaz 2006, Douglas 2006, Clarke 2005, Suddaby 2005, Gephard & Rynes 2004, Alvesson & Skoldberg 2000:12-36, Moustakas 1994:4-7). This confusion also impinges on the understanding of other theory generating methodologies. (Alvesson op.cit., Moustakas op.cit.). There seems to be blindness to the fact that the grounded theory term is seriously misleading, because GT has become a name, not for one method, but for an array of very different research approaches, among which Glaser's "orthodox" or "classic" GT is fundamentally different from the rest. Yet, with a few exceptions (Holton 2007, Hartman 2001, Glaser 1998:5), authors have failed to explain the original *raison d'être* for the emergence of GT as a predominantly inductive (yet, also deductive and intuitive) theory generating method. To understand this original *raison d'être* is of course important, as well as the fact that Glaser, on this basis, is the originator of GT as a theory discovery method (Glaser 2006:3, 1998:21-34). To misrepresent a methodology because it is "very different" is inappropriate; neither is it useful. Most likely, we need methodological

diversity to achieve theoretical and applied advancements in complex fields of enquiry, e.g., business and management.

This article is based on the assumption that different research methods are just different. This means that the question about better or worse regarding methods in general, or regarding ontological and epistemological positions *per se*, is assumed pointless. It is assumed that this question only gains relevance when specific research purposes and frameworks are taken into account. While considering these contexts, openness and tolerance with regard to methodological diversity may provide better opportunities than forced restriction into methodological uniformity.

The purpose of this article is to try to clarify why it may be justified to chose other methods or GT-versions than Glaser's, when the choice of Glaser's GT would be meaningless. I will try to achieve this purpose mainly by highlighting a few characteristics of Glaser's GT. I have tried to select those characteristics that seem to be mostly misunderstood or ignored in literature that explains and compares different GT-versions. GT is not easy (Suddaby 2005). Before use, Glaser's prescribed research procedures should be studied in Glaser's own writings (1964, 1978, 1992, 1998, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2008).

The Methodological Origins

Paul F. Lazarsfeld's inductive quantitative methodology, as well as other ideas that Glaser received as a student of Lazarsfeld, are the roots of Glaser's GT. These are procedures and notions such as latent pattern analysis, core variable analysis, explanation of variation, use of crude indicators of concepts, naming of stable patterns as concepts, reliance on the interchangeability (not summation) of indicators of concepts, "*explication de text*", the importance of understanding the meaning behind human behavior, and the pivotal importance of the participant's main concern. (Glaser 1998:21-34, 2006:3-6, 2008:1-18).

The use of crude indicators means a relaxation of the required accuracy in quantitative verification-testing studies. This relaxation facilitates discovery of theory. Accurate findings and final verification or testing is not an issue. Another justification for this relaxation was Lazarsfeld's discovery that crude indexes gave the same finding as elegant, perfected indexes based on latent structure analysis. Thus, Glaser considered the latter expensive and a waste of time (Glaser 2006:4).

However, Lazarsfeld had missed one procedure that became fundamental in Glaser's GT. This is the *constant comparative analysis* that is applied during coding (categorizing, conceptualizing) of the data. The fractured data slices or conceptual indicators are constantly compared. Consequently, the naming of the concepts is recurrently refitted to what the data purport to express about the main concern and its recurrent solution. This refitting continues until sufficient interchangeable indicators have saturated each concept, and each concept's properties are also saturated. This procedure facilitates the finding of stable latent patterns that explain variation, especially variation in qualitative data (variation within and between categories). (Ibid., Glaser 1978:149-155, 1998:139-152).

The Emergence of Glaser's GT

Glaser's first GT study was based on quantitative data (Glaser 1964). Later, he combined, refined and modified these procedures into a methodology that also could handle qualitative data. In accomplishing this, Glaser's cooperation with Anselm Strauss was instrumental. Strauss was trained in qualitative methodology. Glaser and Strauss carried out the first GT study that used qualitative data (Glaser & Strauss 1965). Two years later, Glaser and Strauss explained the methodology they had been using (Glaser & Strauss 1967). Subsequently, Glaser has maintained and elaborated the method through numerous books (Glaser, op.cit.) and by his Grounded Theory Institute.

Thus, Glaser's GT method is essentially a "concept-indicator model" with quantitative-methodological origin. It can use any type of data, quantitative and/or qualitative. However, because qualitative data are easier to collect, the method has so far almost exclusively been used on qualitative data. Furthermore, because much of human behavior and its variation are unquantifiable, quantitative data may sometimes be insufficient for a study of behavior. When this is the case, and when the purpose is discovery of the concealed and unanticipated (not minute accuracy as in verification/testing studies), statistical significance may be very different from theoretical significance, and irrelevant.

Both More and Less Assumption-free

The theory that is generated directly from data has to be a theory about the human behavior patterns within the chosen field of research. The theory has to explain conceptually how the studied participants, by their behavior, recurrently resolve a main concern. Glaser's method is predominantly inductive, but not inductive in a traditional sense. It is both more and less assumption-free than traditional induction (Hartman 2001:36-37,41-42).

Glaser's GT is *more* assumption-free than traditional induction because the researcher, in his/her constant comparison of the data, deliberately has to suspend his/her prior theoretical knowledge and preconceptions about the chosen field of research. This suspension does not apply for knowledge about the full range of possible *theoretical codes*. (These will be explained later). However, assumptions that are merely inferred from extant theory do not count as assumptions. Only what the data relate will count as assumptions (Ibid.). As in solving a puzzle, the analyst transcends or minimizes speculative logical interpretation in favor of straightforward categorization (coding, etc.) of data slices according to fit of patterns.

Glaser's GT is *less* assumption-free than traditional induction because the researcher has to use his/her own data-generated ideas and to base his/her continued inquiry on these ideas. Assumptions that are recurrently sustained by data indicators do count as assumptions. The researcher has to base his/her continued inquiry on these assumptions, and they may be modified by new indications that emerge during the continued use of the research procedures (Ibid.).

This means that the researcher's perpetual closeness to his/her data is a paramount requirement. This also means that the researcher refrains from any predeterminations (preconceptions) before and during the research process – or from "knowing" before he/she is in a position to "know".

This disparate application of induction explains how Glaser's GT is distinct from other versions of GT as well as other inductive research approaches. However, Glaser's GT is not entirely inductive. Without some *reason* and *intuition* in addition to *empiricism*, it is not possible to generate a theory from data. The role of intuition and *deduction* will be explained later.

The Data

The *units of analysis* are behavior incidents within the chosen field of study – not people or organizational units. Thus, these units of analysis comprise the data. Usually, these data are generated from a sample of organizational units (e.g., businesses). This sampling is theoretical, not statistically representative. In the beginning phase of theoretical sampling, the researcher selects units with maximum differences. Then the analyzing (i.e., coding by constantly comparing, conceptual sorting) and synthesizing (e.g., memo-writing, sorting) of the data determines what unit to sample next for comparison of more incidents. These may, or may not, indicate stable latent patterns or concepts (categories), or provide indicators for the elaboration of emerging concepts.

When data is generated by interview, preconceived questions should never be asked, and pre-structured interviewer guides must never be used. The interviewee should just be encouraged to talk freely and confidentially about how they continually solve their main problems. (Taping and intensive note taking during interviews will destroy confidentiality). When stable patterns have emerged, the interviewer can ask more "empirically grounded" questions. The researcher has to acknowledge that the subjects know much better their work-procedures than the researcher does. With reference to organizational units, time, place and people, they can easily describe it. However, because of this "engrossment" in their activities, they are usually unable to conceptualize and conceptually explain their recurrent patterns of behavior. This is the profession of the researcher. This includes the task of building a theory that transcends the boundaries of time, place and people.

Recurrent Refinement of Hypotheses

The purpose is to suggest a set of interrelated conceptual hypotheses about the participant's main concern and its recurrent solution. This suggestion is based on their "grounding in data" and not on any final verification. The task to verify deduced, preconceived, or grounded hypotheses by testing them is left to others that use other methods. Instead of testing, the method facilitates recurrent modification of hypotheses in order to come closer to what actually goes on within the chosen field of study with regard to the participant's recurrent solving of their main concern.

There is no ultimate finality about such a generated theory. No claim is made that the generated theory will reach or transcend any ultimate truth line. However, due to its grounding, it can be trusted to approach what actually goes on. The theory goes as far as it goes in explaining behavior, and further research can bring it closer to the truth line.

Coding of Data for Emergent Fit

A researcher may want continue from where another researcher has ended in generating a theory, or to use the theory in practice, e.g., to bring about some changes. Without some trust in the credibility of the earlier work, such a continuation or practical use would hardly have any purpose. In this case, it is not possible to start "empty" or "non-preconceived". Nevertheless, the second researcher has to "try out" the fit of the earlier researcher's concepts to his/her own data. These data may, or may not, originate from the same substantive area. E.g., refitting of some conceptual names may become relevant, and they may, or may not, amount to a substantial modification of the theory. In the later stages of the research, the ordinary GT procedures should apply. This means that the later researcher minimizes his/her preconceptions while he/she refines, verifies and/or modifies the earlier researcher's theory beyond its original limits. (Glaser & Holton, 2005: 17-18).

Other GT Methods

Later, Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1998) have prescribed a different set of GT procedures. The roots of this different GT version are qualitative methodologies, and it has an inseparable attachment to the theoretical perspective of *symbolic interactionism*. Charmaz (2006) has also prescribed her own version of GT. This GT version has an inseparable attachment to the theoretical perspective of *social constructivism*. Clarke (2005) has also prescribed her own version of GT that is based on *post-modernist theoretical perspectives* and *situational and discourse analysis*. These other versions of GT are, due to their apriori attachment to and favoring of a specific theoretical perspective, incompatible with Glaser's GT. The procedures of these other GT versions are by naming similar to Glaser's, but they are used very differently. To mix procedures of these different versions of GT with Glaser's GT procedures implies abandonment of Glaser's GT. Glaser's GT has to be considered as a fundamentally different methodology. (Glaser 1992, Martin 2006b). The following subsections will make this clearer.

The raison d'être for Glaser's GT

Pre-framed professional interest concerns of a researcher or a research community are, e.g., shared ontological and epistemological assumptions and the favoring of some particular theoretical perspectives or some *paradigm* (Kuhn 1996) or *"research program"* (Lakatos 1970). Preconceived professional interest concerns unavoidably mean that the researcher preconceives the significance of particular concepts, hypotheses as well as of data. He/she has to view his/her data through this particular "lens".

It is hardly a controversial statement that this kind of pre-framing overrules research. Such overruling applies for quantitative hypothetical-deductive studies and for qualitative studies (phenomenology, ethno-methodology, hermeneutics, postmodernism, social construction, etc.), as well as for Strauss-Corbin's, Charmaz' and Clarke's versions of GT. These favor *apriori* a particular theoretical perspective. Glaser's GT is very different. It entirely rejects these kinds of *preconceived professional interest concerns* in favor of *"the substantive interest concern of those being studied"* – or the explanation of the main concern and its recurrent solution of those being studied. The researcher's professional interest concerns have to merge with this latter.

When Glaser's GT is used, the first and most pivotal stage is to find empirically, as a concept, the main concern of those being studied, i.e., the most important and problematic for these people, and that drives and directs their behavior. This is the concept that best sums up and explains the essence of what is going on in the data – what the data relate about of the essence of relevance for those being studied. This concept then becomes the *core variable* (or *core category*) of the emergent theory. The remaining theory generation is delimited to concepts that are most related to the *core variable*. During the remaining theory generation, the researcher has to view his/her data through this "lens" – through the "lens" of the core variable.

This fundamentally different kind of overruling of the research is the original *raison d'être* for the emergence of Glaser's GT as a theory generating methodology (Glaser 1998:5). This overriding concern explains Glaser's prescription of research procedures. The conceptualization of the core variable is carried out by an analytic data-fracturing and constant comparison and re-synthesizing of the fractured data-slices in order to find latent patterns in the data and relationships between these patterns. These patterns are categorized and named (coded) as concepts. The main criterion for identifying the core variable is that it is the concept (pattern) that is most related to the other concepts (patterns), or is a super-pattern of the other patterns, and that it explains most of the variation in the data (the behavior).

Ontology and Epistemology

This means that Glaser's GT is only a *methodological paradigm or methodological "research program*". However, can such a *paradigm* exist without ontological and epistemological assumptions, as well as other theoretical assumptions? The answer is that its basic assumptions are limited to this: *Man is a meaning-making creature. Consequently, social life is patterned and empirically integrated, and the core variable organizes and explains most of the variation in how the main concern is continually resolved. It is only a question of applying a rigorous and systematic method for discovering and explaining these patterns. No preoccupation is necessary regarding questions of ontology and epistemology or interpretation: Generation of concepts that are abstract of time, place and people, will transcends these issues. Thus, just do it.* (Glaser 2001:199, 2004).

It is implied in these assumptions that the study of behavior, which is the basic task of all social science disciplines, is very different from the study of natural science phenomena. As one distinction, the element of "meaning-making" is mentioned – "meanings" link "subject" and "object". Another distinction is the significance of the "main concern" of those being studied.

The Question about Relevancy

This *raison d'être* makes Glaser's GT methodology one of its kind in its contribution to methodological diversity. As mentioned, no claim is made that it is better – or more relevant. Professional interest relevance is relevance – and substantive interest relevance is relevance. Glaser's GT just gives researchers a different option with a different perspective on relevance.

What has been taught as well as researched in, for example, business schools has sometimes been criticized by insiders for being irrelevant "*and so far removed from what businesses do that*

even our MBA students sell back their textbooks" (Jennings 1994). Glaser's methodological paradigm provides an entirely new perspective on this debate. This perspective is entirely absent in the current debate (Pfeffer 2007) about the relevancy of management research.

Consequently, some provocative questions and answers can be put forward about relevancy of business and management research. What is the main basis upon which academics conceptualize and build theory? One obvious answer is pre-made concepts from extant theory and preconceived professional interest concerns of their research communities. To keep their work within these pre-framed borders becomes their main concern – the most important and problematic for academics, and this drives and directs their behavior. Their research relates more about their own main concern than about the main concern of those being researched. Furthermore, they only address minor issues of minor importance for practitioners, and not their main concerns. This answer is, of course, just a perspective, and it may not make full justice to the traditional academic concerns.

Conceptualizing the Building Blocks of Theory

The main issue is conceptualization. Concepts are the building blocks of theory. The core variable is, of course, the pivotal building block. A new concept is a new idea. The concepts that have been generated by users of Glaser's GT are typically new concepts, or concepts generated by "*putting together of ideas into new connections*" (Glaser 2006:3)

Glaser makes a distinction between two main types of concepts. These are *substantive concepts (patterns)* and *theoretical codes (models). Substantive concepts* are stable latent patterns (the underlying meaning, uniformity and/or pattern within a set of descriptive incidents) that image the area being researched, and summarize the empirical substance of the data (Glaser 1992:38, 1998: 163). That the patterns are stable means that they are saturated by many interchangeable indicators and conceptual properties in the data (i.e., grounded).

Theoretical codes, on the other hand, model the types of relationships or connections between substantive concepts. For example, within basic economics, "price" and "quantity" are substantive concepts while a "demand curve" or "supply curve" as *theoretical codes* model their relationships. The researcher cannot know beforehand what kinds of theoretical codes will fit as models. Glaser recommends that the researcher should be open to the emergence of any kind of theoretical code and be knowledgeable about the widest possible range of theoretical codes in order to be able to recognize fitting codes when they are indicated in the data. Fitting codes may originate from very different theoretical perspectives. Consequently, Glaser recommends the researcher to read extensively in literature that is unrelated to the researched area during the research process. During this reading, the researcher should look for patterns and especially theoretical codes that link these patterns.

Glaser has provides a listing of 40 theoretical coding families (Glaser 1978:73-82, 1998:170-175, 2005:7-30), and he admits that the list is far from exhaustive. The recommenders of other versions of GT have a more restricted understanding of theoretical codes, which they mostly understand as "causality" (see next section). Thus, Glaser explains by other theoretical codes what recommenders of other versions of GT understand as simple causality.

It is hardly controversial that due to the element of "meaning" in social science, social science causality is usually very different from natural science or "classical physics" causality (Sorokin 1956, 1964). Thus, *the connections between substantive concepts* in natural science on the one hand, and social science on the other hand, may be very different. This possibly explains Glaser's long list of theoretical coding families that go far beyond "classical-physics causality". Nevertheless, a selection of recommended theoretical texts for the identification of the widest possible range of theoretical codes would be helpful for users of Glaser's GT.

The substantive building blocks of the theory and their connectedness (theoretical codes) have to "earn their way" into the ensuing theory by repeated and stable indications in the data of conceptual fit, as they sum up and explain what drives and directs the participants' behavior and what is most relevant and important for those being studied. Fit corresponds to positivist validity, but it is fit in action and usage and not by testing, and quantification is not an issue. The criteria for evaluating the theory are *the fit of its concepts in action or usage, their workability in explaining, their relevancy or usability for practitioners, and their modifiability by new data* (Glaser 1998:18-19). Experienced people who know the studied area will be able assess the theory's credibility and usability by comparison to their own experiences.

The distinction between conceptual levels (abstractness and generality) of concepts is determined by high or low abstractness with regard to time, place and people. Theoretical codes are as models on a very high conceptual level and they may transcend borders of disciplines. The substantive concepts of a theory will be on different conceptual levels. The core variable will be the substantive concept of the theory that has the highest conceptual level. As descriptions bounded by the specificity of time, place and people, data is on the lowest conceptual level. *A property* is yet another type of concept; it is a conceptual characteristic of a substantive concept or theoretical code, or a concept of a concept. It has lesser conceptual level that the concept that it refers to. While data represents stories or contextual narratives that soon become superseded, concepts may last forever and easily transcend contextual boundaries (Glaser 1998:135-139). *Consequently, description (contextual or conceptual) is the opposite of conceptualization*.

Differences in Terminology

The terminology of Glaser's GT is only apparently similar to the terminology of Strauss-Corbin's GT. It is in fact very different, because behind similar or identical terms, there is a very different meaning. This easily leads to misunderstandings. *Open coding* and *selective coding* in these two versions of GT do not mean the same. The significance of the *core variable* is fundamentally different the same applies for *theoretical codes*. Charmaz (2006) and Clarke (2005) have no place for the *core variable*. Strauss-Corbin's axial coding is not used in Glaser's GT. The axial coding paradigm is pre-programmed to take into account only the theoretical codes of causality (6 C's: cause, consequence, contingency, context, condition, covariance) and the stimulus-organism-response model that is associated to the *symbolic interactionist* perspective (Strauss & Corbin 1998:126-137).

The Research Problem and the Literature

The researcher only chooses a *general and loosely formulated research topic*, and the researcher has to discover *the research problem* by the systematic treatment of his/her data. The first stage of this discovery of *the research problem* is the finding and conceptualization of the participants' main concern and the next stage is the conceptualization and conceptual explanation of how the participants recurrently resolve their main concern. Thus, the finding and solving of the *research problem* amount to the entire research process, and the researcher should never preconceive the research problem.

If the researcher wants to preconceive the research problem, he/she should choose another research method. The researcher may preconceive the research problem by defining it in accordance with what he/she thinks is most relevant, or what the literature claims to be most relevant, or by spotting gaps in the literature in order to identify untested hypotheses. To study the literature as the first stage of the research with the deliberate purpose to define the research problem is a common pre-framing solution. If this were the case, the choice of Glaser's GT method would be a meaningless choice. The researcher may be very familiar with the literature. However, this is no problem as long as the literature is not used as his/her source of substantive concepts.

If a researcher has decided to use Glaser's GT, a preliminary study the literature in order to derive the research problem would be waste of time. The research problem, when empirically discovered from behavioral data, may be very different from what the extant or originally identified literature assumes it to be. (Glaser 1998:67-80). However, studies that have applied Glaser's GT in closely related fields of enquiry could give some clues. Reading of them is recommended, and coding of data for emergent fit could be an option. As mentioned, the systematic reading (i.e., "explication-de-text-reading") of unrelated literature in order to obtain a general training in the discovery of behavior patterns and theoretical codes is also recommended.

This restriction with regard to preliminary literature studies does not prevent the researcher from carrying out literature studies in order to find a loosely defined research topic that fits to his/her interests. However, if the researcher believes either that he/she can derive the participant's "main concern and its recurrent solution" from this literature, or that he/she can ignore the empirical discovery of this "main concern" as the first stage of research, the choice of Glaser's method would be meaningless.

Conceptual comparison to the existing literature within the field of enquiry is a very important part of the research task. However, relevant literature for conceptual comparison cannot be identified before stable behavioral patterns have emerged. This means that the literature comparisons have to be carried out at later stages of the research process, and especially towards the end. (Suddaby 2005, McCallin 2006, Andrews 2006, Nathaniel 2006, Thulesius 2006, Ekstrom 2006, Martin 2006a). These conceptual comparisons to the literature may substantiate the theory, but they may also lead to corrections or modifications of the theory or of the extant literature.

Conceptual Parsimony, Explanatory Scope, not Description

The theory should explain behavior and its variation by interrelated conceptual hypotheses (i.e., substantive concepts connected by theoretical codes), and with scope (i.e., as much as possible), and with conceptual parsimony (i.e., with as few concepts as possible). The theory should *not* be descriptive, i.e., just "tell a story" that is restricted to the specificity of organizational unit, time, place and people, or merely identify some themes within the data, or merely describe some concepts. Instead, the theory should explain by concepts that transcend the contextual specificity from whence the data came. Thus, "the story" (the data) is turned into concepts that are abstract of time, place and people, and the behavior and its variation is explained by the concepts and the relationships between the concepts, which both have to fit to the data. (Glaser 2001, 2003).

The Hallmarks of Glaser's GT

The distinctive characteristics of Glaser's GT can be summed up as its two "hallmarks". The *first hallmark* is first to find the core variable by the systematic treatment of the data, and to delimit the study to concepts that are most related to the core variable. This sequence eliminates the potential problem of *"many equally justifiable interpretations of the same data"*.

The *second hallmark* is suspension of preconceptions and prior knowledge about the area of research during the use of the research procedures, and to trust in "emergence of concepts from the data". These two hallmarks are related. The second hallmark is necessary for finding the core variable and for fulfilling the first hallmark. These two hallmarks do not apply for other versions of GT. They explain the main difference between Glaser's GT and other versions of GT. As mentioned, the point is not better or worse methods, but that the other GT methods violate Glaser's original *raison d'être* for doing grounded theory.

The Role of Deduction and Intuition in Glaser's GT

GT literature frequently rewrites and distorts Glaser's GT. Authors like Goulding (2002) and Douglas (2006) claim to have used Glaser's GT, but they use axial coding or description. Clarke (2005), Charmaz (2006), Locke (2001) and many other authors (e.g., in Bryant & Charmaz 2007) challenge Glaser's method, but without explaining its essential points. They label Glaser's GT as "positivist", or "objectivist" or "natural-science-based". Charmaz justifies this labeling by Glaser's emphasis on "conceptual explanation" and not just plain "understanding", which qualitative research emphasizes in general (2006:126). Another objection is that "emergence of concepts from the data" is impossible, and that data and concepts are merely "interpretations" or "social constructions" (in the mind of the researcher) and not "objective realities".

These objections seem to be based on misrepresentations and misunderstandings of Glaser's GT method and especially of its second hallmark. Firstly, a user of Glaser's GT has to take into account the element of "meaning" that links "subjects" and "objects". This, as well as the first hallmark of Glaser's GT, means that the method is deliberately created for social science research. Thus, there is no essential difference between "conceptual explanation" and "understanding". Yet, there may be a huge difference between contextual storytelling and conceptual description that provides understanding, and conceptual explanation that also provides understanding. Even so, both can contribute.

Secondly, the researcher "surrenders to" the second hallmark of Glaser's GT in order to submit the control of the research process to the data and to what the data relate about the participant's main concern and its recurrent solution. This surrendering is made in order to prevent "preconceived professional interest concerns" from taking control of the research process.

Thirdly, the question about "social constructions or interpretations" versus "objective realities" is mainly a semantic issue. It is quite justified to label an obvious behavioral pattern like "going to the bathroom" as an "objective reality", yet it is also a "construction" in the mind of the observer. The same applies for any concealed and unanticipated behavior pattern, which is uncovered in a study, and which relates to the most important and problematic for those being studied. There is no either/or, both apply. There may not be just one "reality". However, ungrounded speculative "interpretations" or "constructions" are kept in check by keeping close to the data and by *viewing the data through the "lens" of the core variable*. What matters is the credibility of the theory with regard to what actually goes on in the recurrent solving of the main concern of those being studied. This credibility is also maintained by upholding the theory as a modifiable theory – it can only approach what is going on.

Fourthly, in addition to *empiricism, deductive reasoning* and the highly subjective element of *intuition* are also parts of Glaser's GT. The researcher uses *deduction* when he/she decides which unit to sample next for data collection. This deduction is based on what the data so far have indicated regarding to conceptual elaboration. Furthermore, it is not possible to study theoretical codes in the literature without openness to and "participation with" deductive reasoning in this literature. If "classical physics" causality were the only theoretical coding family, such literature studied would be unnecessary. Yet, theoretical codes are only included in the theory when they are indicated in the data.

The second hallmark of Glaser's GT has yet another purpose. Its "practicing" and "the surrendering of control to the data" usually leads to prolonged periods of standstill and confusion and "not knowing" while nothing seems to "emerge from the data". This is uncomfortable for novice researchers, who are very vulnerable in such a situation. For experienced users of Glaser's GT, this is a good sign. Before stages of "knowing" and "understanding" there have to be stages of "not knowing" and "confusion". Such periods usually lead to subconscious processing during which new ideas can emerge at any time. The researcher needs to have pen and paper ready day and night to make notes. Comparison of these ideas to the data may lead to new discoveries. Thus, the second hallmark of Glaser's GT, which Clarke (2005:17) and Charmaz (op.cit.) only understand as "positivist" or "objectivist", actually works as a procedure to trigger *intuition*. Their labeling of Glaser's GT as "positivist" does not explain researcher behavior and is therefore irrelevant.

The Choice of Other Versions of GT

The choice of other versions of GT may be justified when the choice of Glaser's GT is meaningless. For example, some researchers may want to generate a theory about the stages of buyer behavior with regard to some specific product or service. The researchers may want study the literature as the first stage of their research. On this basis, they may decide to delimit or pre-frame their theory generation to a theory that resembles the traditional multistage models of

consumer decision-making behavior, or to suggest an adaptation of these models. In this case, the choice of, for example, the Strauss-Corbin method may be justified. Such a choice would mean a considerable simplification. It would mean that the researchers only had to take into account the theoretical codes of the 6 C's and the stimulus-organism-response model (the axial coding paradigm) that is associated with the *symbolic interactionist* perspective. On this basis, an adaptation of the model could be simple and useful.

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Management Research and Grounded Theory: A review of grounded theorybuilding approach in organisational and management research

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Abstract

Grounded theory is a systematic methodology for the collection and analysis of data which was discovered by Glaser and Strauss in the 1960's. The discovery of this method was first presented to the academic community in their book 'The Discovery of Grounded Theory' (1967) which still remains a primary point of reference for those undertaking qualitative research and grounded theory in particular. This powerful research method has become very popular in some research domains; whilst increasing in popularity it is still less prevalent in the field of organisational and management research particularly in its original form. This self reflexive paper sets out to explore the possibilities for this imbalance which takes the discussion onto the areas of methodological adaptation and training. It also enters the debate about access to research subjects and provides a succinct argument supporting the notion that grounded theory should simply be viewed as a method that develops empirically grounded conceptual theory.

Key Words: Grounded Theory Approach, Inductive Research, Research Methods.

Introduction

By examining the dominant research paradigms in the organisational and management research field, linked with a review of grounded theory origins, this desk study serves to understand how and why organisational and management researchers contextualise and locate the methodology within contemporary qualitative research. It then allows the authors to build on this platform to show how grounded theory is viewed in the organisational and management research field, particularly from a novice researcher's perspective.

Paradigms and Perspectives

Review the literature and it's not difficult to find the common threads by which researchers classify research methods. The most common distinction is to classify research as either qualitative or quantitative. Denzin and Lincoln's work (2005) provides a valuable comparison of the two methods; "qualitative verses quantitative research".

Quantitative research methods, originally developed and used in the natural sciences, formed the basis and accepted methodology that has become the norm in social science research and subsequently organisational and management research. Encompassing such techniques as surveys and laboratory experiments, it generally leads to numerical data collection facilitating mathematical and statistical modelling.

Qualitative research, on the other hand, was specifically developed in the field of social sciences to enable researchers to study socially derived phenomena and once again adopted by organisational and management researchers. Huberman and Miles (2002) in the introduction to their text "The Qualitative Researchers Companion" explained how they witnessed the explosive growth of qualitative research methods between the 1980's and the 1990's. This increase manifested itself in increased publications of qualitative based research material in professional journals, taking on various forms ranging from case study research, ethnography and discourse analysis to narratives and symbolic interaction studies using techniques such as observations, interviews and questionnaires to collect data. Each method has its own traditions governed by its own genres with its own preferred forms of presentation, interpretation, trustworthiness and textual evaluation (Becker, 1986). Qualitative research methods are designed to help researchers understand people, the psychological effects and the social and cultural contexts within which they live. Glaser (1998) as did Miles and Huberman (1994) argue the advantages of understanding a phenomenon from the participants perspective, pointing out that particular social and institutional context is largely lost when textual data are quantified.

Further distinctions adopted by researchers are to classify research methods as objective (e.g. positivist, empiricist) or subjective (e.g. anti-positivist, idealist) (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). The major alternative to positivism in management science is that of the interpretive (and the closely related constructive) paradigm, an umbrella term for a range of approaches that reject some of the basic premises of positivism (Denscombe, 2002).

Positivists generally assume that reality is objectively given and can be described by measurable properties which are independent of the observer (researcher) and his/her instruments. In a positivist framework, researchers seek to discover the laws imposed on actors; they believe reality already exists in itself. It has an objective essence, which researchers seek to discover, they aim to explain reality (the object). Positivist studies generally attempt to test theory, in an attempt to increase the predictive understanding of phenomena. A subject's observation of an object does not alter the nature or essence of that object. The positivist vision of reality leans towards explanatory research, to answer the question 'for what reason'.

Interpretive researchers interpret reality; they start out with the assumption that access to reality (given or socially constructed) is only through social constructions such as language, consciousness and shared meanings. Consequently, qualitative researchers engage a wide range of interconnected interpretive methods to explain reality (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). Interpretive studies generally attempt to understand phenomena through the meanings that

people assign to them. They seek to understand how actors construct the meaning they give to social reality. Rather than explaining reality, they try to understand it through actor's interpretations, drawing clear distinction between understanding and explaining. Such studies do not predefine dependent and independent variables, but focus on the full complexity of human sense making as the situation emerges (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). Denzin and Lincoln (2005) place grounded theory firmly in the interpretive paradigm albeit this methodology inductively draws concepts from empirical data.

It should be clear from the above why interpretivism has become synonymous with qualitative research and positivism with quantitative methods. The dominance of the positivist paradigm in management science research stems from the early perspectives of social science research where there was a belief that facts can only be discovered through measurement and the mathematical relationships between them, an approach modelled on traditional sciences (Coolican, 1999; Denscombe, 2002). The main objection pointed towards the positivists is that they use highly controlled procedures and exact quantification of operationalised variables which can be restrictive and may stymie the development of knowledge within a human behaviour context, limiting the potential for new perspectives to emerge (Henwood and Pidgeon, 1992; Coolican, 1999; Robson, 2001) whereas interpretivists (qualitative researchers) study people in the field in their natural environment.

Probably, the most pertinent philosophical assumptions are those which relate to the underlying epistemology, which guides the research. Epistemology is a branch of philosophy that concerns itself with understanding how we know the world; it refers to the assumptions about knowledge and how it can be obtained or created (Hatch, 1997).

There are an abundance of texts that provide an account of epistemology in a global sense, that is, from a social sciences perspective, of which management science is only one. There are considerably less that provide perspectives purely from an organisational and management research stand point. The work and subsequent text produced by Hatch (1997) provides some clarity on the varying perspectives relating to organisational theory. Hatch (1997) suggests four underlying epistemologies in organisational theory: classical, modern, symbolic interpretive, and post-modern. Whilst these four research epistemologies are philosophically distinct in the practice of organisational research, they are not always clearly defined and established in their short history. This could be due, in part, to the temporal differences between organisational theory and that of other disciplines. Quite often, perspectives influencing other disciplines take time to migrate across to the organisational and management research domain, causing a natural delay before they are applied to the study of organisational and management science.

Hatch (1997) provides a refreshing framework that identifies specific historic periods when the aforementioned perspectives became recognisable within the field. Classical emerged from the 1900's onwards, modern was the 1950's onwards, symbolic interpretive 1980's onwards, and post-modern was the 1990's onwards. These periods are more indicative of when perspectives

became influential on organisational theory and not when they started to emerge in social science in general. Hatch (1997) considered the four periods in terms of the central issues or subject of concern, the preferred method for conducting research, and the sort of results produced.

The classical period considered the effects of industrialism on society (the social approach) or how to make organisations more efficient and effective (the managerial approach). The methods adopted by the researchers of this period relied upon observation and historical analysis, resulting in typologies and theoretical frameworks accompanied by prescriptions for management practice.

The modernist perspective (labelled by others as the positivist paradigm) changed its focus from society and management to the organisation itself; taking an objective epistemological position (looking at the organisation as an object with dimensions that can be measured); it sought explanation for the various forms that organisations take, along with their achievements (e.g. performance, profitability and control). Modernist research methods relied more on descriptive measures and correlation amongst standardised measures, leading to comparative studies and statistical description from analysis (it's easy to understand why some label this the quantitative approach).

The symbolic interpretive perspective is similar in some respects to the modernist perspective in so far as it looks at the organisation itself. The significant difference here is that it adopts a subjective epistemological stance. It treats the organisation as a subject whose meanings are to be appreciated and understood. Symbolic interpretive research methods adopt ethnographic techniques leading to narrative descriptions and case study analysis. The key feature of the ethnographic approach is that it is based on what are termed naturalist modes of inquiry (interviewing and observation), within a predominantly inductivist framework (Gill and Johnson, 2002). Interpretive and inductive methods are widely referred to as qualitative methods

The post modern perspective changes the focus once more. This time it moves from the organisation to organisational theory and theorising. Its research methods are more akin to deconstruction leading to self reflexive theorising. Whilst this paper has so far been concerned with the historical development of qualitative based research methods and more specifically that of grounded theory, it provides the essential understanding and background to that which is about to be disclosed.

Locating Grounded Theory within Contemporary Qualitative Research

The background material presented in the opening sections provides for a suitable platform from which to build perspectives on grounded theory methodology. This section serves to understand how and why organisational and management researchers contextualise and locate the methodology within contemporary qualitative research. Starting with its origins, it looks at the originators backgrounds and how their history and previous training contributed to the discovery

of grounded theory, ultimately providing some perspectives on grounded theory, locating it within contemporary qualitative research.

Glaser (1967,1998) repeatedly tells his audience that grounded theory is a general method that works well with qualitative data collection approaches that involve inducting insights from field based, case data. He refrains from saying it is a qualitative research methodology *per se*. Indeed he goes to great lengths to drive home the message; grounded theory was not discovered or developed specifically to foster a qualitative ideology. There are many examples in the field of management research (Locke, 2001; Goulding, 2002) where grounded theory is categorised purely as a qualitative methodology and condoned as anything else, least of all a general methodology. This is due in part to Strauss and Corbin's views on grounded theory and where it should be located within the research paradigm (Strauss and Corbin, 1990).

The Origins of Grounded Theory

Grounded theory has its roots firmly in the social sciences. It was developed by sociologists for sociologists (Goulding, 2002). Developed by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss in the 60's, grounded theory was first embraced by the nursing profession for its ability to decipher and explain what is actually happening in real-life situations, rather than simply describing what is going on. Despite its origins, Glaser suggests (1978) that grounded theory could be used by any discipline interested in generating theory, citing nursing, education and business as the main disciplines that have used the method successfully.

The origins of grounded theory have been well documented. Most qualitative research methods material (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Miles and Huberman, 1994; Robson, 2001; Huberman and Miles, 2002; Denzin and Lincoln, 2005) now reference Glaser and Strauss (1967) which records the authors reasons and thoughts that led to its discovery and details the processes for applying its methods.

Glaser (1998) concedes that the path leading to the discovery of grounded theory was not linear and not one that was initially, specifically embarked upon. He cites the strong links to quantitative methodology, qualitative mathematics and the teachings of Paul Lazarsfeld at Columbia University as the main influences. He also places his confidence in the constant comparison of incidents particularly in the aspect of 'explication de texte'. Explication de texte is the intensive and exhaustive scrutiny and interpretation of written work, often word for word (Guralnik, 1982) and is the French predecessor of the English version of 'close reading'. Other influences came from Robert Merton's teachings of theory construction (Glaser, 1998).

Strauss's training, on the other hand, lay in the field of symbolic interaction, qualitative research and pragmatist writings that emerged from his time at the University of Chicago. His influences came from Herbert Blumer, Robert Park, John Dewey and Everet Hughes (Strauss and Corbin, 1990; Glaser, 1998). Strauss (1990) believes his background contributed to the notion that individuals play a role in shaping the world they live in; therefore, to understand 'what is going

on' one needs to get out into the field placing emphasis on the importance of theory grounded in reality.

Wrestling Grounded Theory

Glaser sees grounded theory as a simple inductive approach where all is data. As a general methodology, grounded theory can be very multivariate using all kinds of data from various sources, tables, performance data, and statistically derived results as part of the grounded theory analysis process. Therefore, he sees attempts to marry it to another methodology as futile, merely diluting and complicating the methodology (Glaser, 1998).

Despite Glaser's attempts to keep grounded theory in a category of its own by labelling it as a general methodology and implying it is neither qualitative nor quantitative in its true form, it is not difficult to see why management researchers continually attempt to classify grounded theory as qualitative. One only has to look closely at the language used by Glaser (1967; 1978; 1998) and that of Strauss and Corbin in their texts (1990; 1998) to see how and why this has happened. Glaser himself (1998) identifies grounded theory as an inductive methodology, using deduction to implement theoretical sampling, implying that the methodology calls on cannons from other qualitative methods. Indeed Strauss and Corbin in their texts (1990; 1998) cut straight to the chase and directly identify grounded theory as a qualitative approach.

This is not the only area where Glaser and Strauss fail to agree. Since their original work, Glaser and Strauss (1967) have disagreed on how to carry out grounded theory. Whilst Glaser has remained faithful to their discovery, Strauss has moved away from the basic premise that makes grounded theory so unique and powerful to develop, instead, a method that is more rigid and structured in its implementation. The now well documented differences have caused two schools of thought. This means that academics and practitioners involved with or using grounded theory fall into one of two categories. Classic Grounded Theory, sometimes referred to in the literature as 'Glaserian' Grounded Theory, for those who follow the original techniques discovered by the originators Glaser and Strauss (1967), and Structured Grounded Theory, sometimes referred to in the literature as 'Straussian' Grounded Theory , for those who follow the more structured techniques proposed by Strauss and Corbin (1990).

Grounded Theory: A qualitative inductive approach

Grounded theory is an inductive approach which also uses an element of deduction to allow theoretical sampling to take place. Located at the end of the modernist phase (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005) grounded theory follows a symbolic interpretive epistemological perspective.

Goulding's work (2002) provides an excellent account of the historical influence of ethnography and symbolic interactionism on the development of grounded theory. Specifically with these approaches the researcher tries to immerse himself or herself in a setting and to become part of the group under study in order to understand the meaning and significances that people place upon the behaviour of themselves and others (Easterby-Smith et al., 2003). This could be

construed as an over generalised view that is more particular to qualitative methods in general terms rather than to grounded theory specifically. Glaser's view is that the value of grounded theory is that concepts emerge quickly without the researcher needing to spend too much time in the field and running the danger of the researcher influencing the research subjects (Glaser, 2007).

Grounded Theory and Organisational Research

Since its inception in sociology in 1967 and its subsequent migration to the field of management and organisational research in the 70's grounded theory has slowly developed to become a respected methodology in the analysts armoury. Grounded theory methodology is based on the belief that, as individuals within group environments comprehend events personally, common patterns of behaviour are revealed (Glaser, 1998); as a group interacts together people do in fact make sense of their environment despite apparent chaos. Grounded theory is well suited to understanding the social processes and the consequential psychological effects inherent in organisational change dynamics in what is seemingly a chaotic environment. Its strength is that the process of theorising ensures that it explains what is actually happening in practice rather than describing what is going on. It helps to develop perspectives and to learn how participants manage their lives in the context of existing and future organisational challenges; it is therefore well suited to organisational behaviour inquiry. It is particularly useful for research in areas that have not previously been studied, where there is an obvious gap, and where a new perspective could identify areas for management involvement and improvement.

This method is particularly suited to looking at rarely explored phenomenon where extant theory would not be appropriate. In such situations, a grounded theory building approach is more likely to generate novel and accurate insights into the phenomenon under study than reliance on either past research or office bound thought experiment, (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

Irrespective of whether the analyst adopts the classical grounded theory methods developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) or the more regimented approach advocated by Strauss and Corbin (1990; 1998), the method is increasingly being adopted by managerial and organisational researchers. Most commentators (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Robson, 2001; Huberman and Miles, 2002; Denzin and Lincoln, 2005) writing on the subject of qualitative research methods discuss the merits of grounded theory and increasingly papers are published in the management science arena based on research developed using this methodology (Carrero et al., 2000; Holton, 2007; Kenealy and Cartwright, 2007; Raffanti, 2005; Schwarz and Nandhakumar, 2002); yet frequently manuscripts claiming to be grounded theory analysis very often tend to be written in a fashion that would be more consistent with that used for other methodological frameworks (Goulding, 2002).

It is difficult to find examples of research in the organisational and management field that follow the exact tenets of classical grounded theory such as that by Raffanti (2005), Holton (2007) or Kenealy and Cartwright (2007). Most appear to be an adaptation of the method. This view is

underpinned by Locke's (2001) perspective that there is an inclination to adapt and adopt grounded theory methods within the management research field; a direction to which Glaser (1998) is strongly opposed. This adaptation includes the integration of other qualitative research methods into the grounded theory methodology. Locke (2001) cites Sutton and Callahan (1987) and Eisenhardt (1989) as examples of this adaptation.

Closer inspection of the language used in grounded theory based management research publications (Sutton and Callahan, 1987; Eisenhardt, 1989) demonstrates the prevelance of Straussian methods within this domain. Qualitative research should be conducted systematically and rigorously and not tackled with a casual or ad hoc approach. Procedural rigour, however, should not be confused with rigidity or structure which is generally inappropriate with qualitative research (Mason, 2006).

Nevertheless, there is a propensity for organisational and management researchers to favour the more structured methods of Strauss and Corbin (1990). This can, in part, be attributed to the strong influences of the positivist paradigm within this field and the regimented processes that positivist methods invariably attract. Without labouring the point too much, grounded theory's processes of 'constant comparison' and 'theoretical sampling' violate longstanding positivist assumptions about how the research process should work; that is, constant comparison contradicts the requirements of a clean separation between data collection and analysis whilst theoretical sampling violates the ideal of hypothesis testing in that the direction of new data collection is determined, not by prior hypotheses, but by ongoing interpretation of data and emerging conceptual categories (Suddaby, 2006)

This may also help to understand the popularity of Strauss and Corbin's (1990) structured guidance as demonstrated in the research methods material, where there is a tendency to cite more examples from Strauss and Corbin (1990; 1998) than Glaser's textual accounts. Notably, the identification of, and the levels of, theoretical sampling strategies; Easterby-Smith et al. (2003), Locke (2001), and Goulding (2002) all appear to use descriptions of Strauss and Corbin's 3 tier coding ('Open', 'Axial' and 'Selective') in their text as their coding strategies.

Product Proof and Scientific Rigour

Because grounded theory falls outside normal organisational and management research traditions, researchers still find it necessary to continually defend the choice of methodology used, what Glaser refers to as 'product proof', which results in unwarranted rhetoric about its suitability over that of other methods. Whilst understandable, this is not necessary, as well done grounded theory justifies itself (Glaser, 1998). This could be, in part, because some researchers cite Glaser and Strauss or indeed Strauss and Corbin against research that purports to be grounded theory when in reality they are using it as a guise to hide what appears to be a mess (Suddaby, 2006).

This stems from modernist perspectives regarding scientific rigour. Modernist qualitative research, according to Denzin and Lincoln (2005) sought respectability. The stumbling block and therefore the area of the greatest debate has been the perceived inability of qualitative based research, particularly grounded theory to demonstrate scientific rigour (Lincoln and Guba, 1987; Corbin and Strauss, 1990). Easterby-Smith *et al's*. view (2003) is that grounded theory has been criticised as being suspect because of its lack of clarity and standardisation of methods, citing the positivist perspectives in respect of the importance of 'finding the truth' as the culprit. The adaptation of positivist cannons such as reliability, validity, generalisability, and objectivity, to judge the processes of qualitative research, has been ill founded. Goulding (2002) goes a long way to construct parallels between grounded theory and other qualitative approaches suggesting that all too often the validity of qualitative research is wrongly assessed according to quasi-positivistic criteria. Given the paradigm dominance within the field of managerial and organisational research this is hardly surprising. Goulding (2002) cites Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria for assessing the trustworthiness of qualitative insight as the more realistic model when working in the area of grounded theory. They considered attending to four criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability as key to assessing trustworthiness. Here the goal is to demonstrate that the enquiry was carried out in a way which ensures that the subject of the enquiry was accurately identified and explained.

Glaser (1998) is quite specific on the criteria for judging and carrying out grounded theory and offers a four point check: fit, workability, relevance and modifiability. *Fit* according to Glaser (1998) is another word for validity. Does the concept adequately express the pattern in the data which it purports to conceptualise? *Workability* also refers to the concept. Are the concepts and the way they are related to the hypotheses sufficiently accounted for? How are the main concerns of participants in a substantive area continually resolved?

Relevance makes the research important because it deals with the main concerns of the participants involved. To study something that interests no one except a few is probably to focus on non-relevance or even trivia. Relevance, like good concepts, evoke instant grab.

Glaser (1998) places great importance on *modifiability*. He suggests that the theory is not being verified as in verification studies and thus never right or wrong. It simply gets modified when new data is available to which it can be compared. Strauss and Corbin's (1990) criteria for assessing and judging grounded theory studies are based on a seven point criterion check list: *Criterion 1* – How was the original sample selected? What grounds? *Criterion 2* – What major categories emerged? *Criterion 3* – What were some of the events, incidents, and actions (indicators) that pointed to some of the major categories? *Criterion 4* – On the basis of what categories did theoretical sampling proceed, that is how did theoretical formulation guide some of the data collection? After the theoretical sampling was done, how representative did these categories prove to be? *Criterion 5* – What were some of the hypotheses pertaining to conceptual relations (that is, among categories), and on what grounds where they formulated and tested? *Criterion 6* – Were there instances when hypotheses did not hold up against what was actually

seen? How were the discrepancies accounted for? How did they affect the hypotheses? *Criterion 7* – How and why was the core category selected? Was this collection sudden or gradual, difficult or easy? On what grounds were the final analytic decisions made?

It has already been argued that the dominance of positivism in management research has caused many researchers to seek rigid structure negating the true value offered by classic grounded theory. What is interesting is that unlike Glaser's (1998) criteria, Strauss and Corbin (1990) suggest that their criteria should not be read as hard and fast evaluative rules merely as guidance, accepting that new areas of investigation may require modification to fit the circumstances, also suggesting that researchers should indicate what their procedural operations were.

Grounded Theory and the Novice Researcher

Review the literature and it is easy to see that the odds are stacked against the qualitative researcher getting qualitative studies published. Most journals within the field of organisational management and psychology research are positivist and quantitative in nature. Symon and Cassell's (2006) work shows the neglecting perspectives relating to published qualitative studies in this area. After a review of the published work in the Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology (JOOP) and what it has to offer to its readership, they suggest that there is a tendency to overlook insights that could be gained from alternative perspectives. 'Alternative' here means methods other than quantitative studies. This is by no means the first time that this debate has arisen. Symon and Cassell (2006) point to other debates (Symon and Cassell, 1998; Johnson and Cassell, 2001) regarding this disparity. They even point to past editors of JOOP (Sparrow, 1999; Arnold, 2004) who have argued that the journal would benefit from publishing a wider range of relevant research. The point here is that it is a difficult, painstaking process for the novice researcher to get work recognised by way of publication, let alone overcoming the additional hurdle of persuading publishers of the value and contribution of qualitative studies. Add to this the inclusion of grounded theory methods in your work and the chances of getting published are reduced further. Most research literature advocates adopting research methods that fit the aims and objectives of the research, which means differentiating between exploratory or investigatory research and hypothesis or validity testing. Obstacles such as these will only discourage the novice researcher from attempting qualitative studies and grounded theory methodology in particular.

When it comes to grounded theory, Glaser's advice (1998) is simple; "just do it". This is sound advice, too much time can be spent studying the methodology but experience only comes from doing it. For the novice researcher, however, there is a need to gain an understanding of the methods principles before they can start. This is particularly so for the researcher working against specific time restrictions such as those relating to a PhD research programme where there are always concerns about wasting precious time. Grounded theory research demands particular qualities of the researcher that have to be learned before one gains confidence. For one, it requires the strength of character to rely on the data; that theory will emerge without forcing the

data. It also requires creativity; creative in the sense that the researcher must focus on generating ideas that fit and work, the data takes considerable thought (Glaser, 1978). Most important of all, it requires experience; it requires the experience of understanding what research is meant to achieve and the experience of applying grounded theory tools.

Considering all the reasons mentioned above and the fact that most doctoral researchers, particularly in the United Kingdom (UK) are 'minus mentors' (Stern, 1994); it begs the question; are enough novice researchers embracing the methodology to establish and secure its future within the field of organisational and management research? Research methods used and indeed honed as a trainee will invariably form the backbone of future research projects. Consideration should therefore be given to the accessibility of grounded theory research methods material, particularly to the novice researcher.

Most organisational and management research training, particularly in UK universities, until recent times focused heavily on quantitative techniques, to the detriment of qualitative based methods (Easterby-Smith *et al*., 2003) and especially grounded theory. Whilst there is an increase in qualitative research and qualitative research training there is still a lack of experienced grounded theorists and grounded theory training. It is this perspective that is the likely cause of grounded theory being rarely adopted by the novice researcher, particularly those who are 'minus mentor'. Combine this with the inconsistency of the methods literature, partly caused by the two schools of thought (Glasserian and Straussian) and the result is a low up take of the method.

Glaser's approach to grounded theory (1992; 1998) starts by looking at the particular area of study. This being either a process or a specific activity where the relevant issues are allowed to emerge during the course of the research process based entirely upon the participant perceptions. In essence, he advocates starting without preconceived ideas.

The appeal of Strauss and Corbin's approach (1990) is that it is more specific, they suggest identifying a phenomenon or looking for specific issues on which to focus the study. It is more in line with other research methods (both qualitative and quantitative) in so far as it allows preconceived ideas of what the subject of inquiry should be, akin to the researcher's area of interest before data collection starts.

The confusion is further exacerbated by the tendency of organisational and management researchers to adapt and adopt (Locke, 2001); not forgetting the unorthodox fashion by which most organisational and management grounded theory manuscripts are presented (Goulding, 2002). Considering all these points, it's hardly surprising why the novice researcher finds other methods more appealing, rather than embarking on the seemingly uncertain path of grounded theory.

Another concern expressed by a number of commentators (Locke, 2001; Easterby-Smith *et al*., 2003) writing on the subject of grounded theory is the question of access. They see access to

managed organisations as difficult and problematic, suggesting that some assumptions of grounded theory have to be amended to deal with difficult situations. Most business managers, if indeed they are willing to allow access, need to plan the research activity into the normal operational activity in such a way as to limit the impact to the business itself. With this in mind, the researcher seeking access would have to demonstrate how they intend to conduct their research in the form of an access proposal. The structure of the proposal would, amongst other things, present the reader with envisaged interview dates, interview durations and participant groups; i.e., gender, age, department, job role, job grade and/or location. This sort of detail may be difficult for the grounded theorist to present before data collection starts, dependent on which school (Glasserian or Straussian) is being adopted by the researcher. The very essence of the method, more specifically 'theoretical sampling', means that parallel processes of data collection and analysis itself determine how and where to find more data as the research process progresses. From an organisational perspective, it would not be practical for researchers to access participants on an ad-hoc basis nor would business managers be able to accept this practice in their organisations.

There is no doubt; access may pose many difficulties to the researcher. For many, the deciding factor is the duration of access. The uphill battle to gain access could be swayed by the amount of access requested by the researcher. Obviously, the shorter the access, the more chance one has of persuading business managers to allow the project to go ahead. Grounded theory does not start with a preconceived idea of sample size or a fixed duration for interviews. The interviews continue until 'saturation' is reached and each interview continues until the participant has exhausted their story. It would be difficult to persuade a business leader to give access without first furnishing details of sample size and how long the interviews will be. If the researcher has reached the stage where he/she is generating an access proposal, one would assume that they have already been through the initial approach or even the initial meetings and discussions. The aim next is to make sure the door that has now been opened is firmly wedged open. Gaining access is a critical juncture in any empirical research project and without the guidance of colleagues or in the case of a PhD student, a supervisor, the novice could fall at a very important hurdle. For the experienced grounded theorist, an assessment can be made based on previous experience. Experience can help to provide an approximation of the number of interviews required, along with an approximation of duration of each interview. Identifying exactly which group of participants the researcher would like to interview is a little more difficult. One solution, as with any other research project, would be to identify the group that the researcher feels (at the planning stage) would make a valuable contribution. Once access has been established it is always easier to renegotiate a short extension later. With grounded theory, it is always much easier to finalise access requirements after theoretical sampling is well advanced. For those who do manage to gain access, limiting disruption and access time is important. For most grounded theory projects within the field of organisational management research, there is an inclination to follow the hermeneutics practices of tape recording then transcribing interviews in their entirety. According to Glaser (1998), this is a very time consuming and fruitless exercise,

contemporaneous field notes would help to reduce access time. Most novice researchers, particularly those following a doctoral research programme tend to be overly cautious about the potential of losing data, let alone the concerns about collecting data and finding that the net result is very little or no contribution to the area of study. Consequently, they see taping and transcribing as the safest option. Trying to persuade the novice researcher otherwise may be futile. Strauss and Corbin's stance (1990) on tape recording and transcribing is quite different to that of Glaser. They suggest taping all interviews but only transcribing what is needed. This may mean full transcription initially and then partial transcription as the focus becomes more acute.

Conclusion

By way of conclusion this section draws on all the points developed in the paper to present a synopsis view of grounded theory methodology within the organisational and management research field, culminating in a concluding view of the novice researcher and grounded theory.

There is a great deal of confusion caused by the rhetorical discourse between the contradicting views of Glaser (1992) and that of Strauss and Corbin (1990). This paper has discussed some of the differences particularly in relation to the start of a study where Glaser (1992; 1998) advocates starting without preconceived ideas whilst Strauss and Corbin (1990) suggest identifying a phenomenon or looking for specific issues on which to focus the study.

It is difficult for the novice researcher to accept that the research method that purports to be grounded theory has two accepted yet contradictory principals on how to apply its methods. That said, apart from the terminologies, basic tenets of grounded theory from both perspectives remain the same; both stick to the basic premise that grounded theory serves to generate theory that is grounded in the data; both agree on the importance of getting out into the field and in the constant comparison of incidents related to participant stories; both agree with coding, memoing, conceptualising and theorising. That said, some would argue that Strauss and Corbin's research methods have moved away from the basic tenants of grounded theory and can therefore no longer be considered grounded theory in its pure form.

The novice researcher would be well advised to consider following the guidance of one method over the other (Glaserian or Straussian grounded theory), taking care not to adapt the method too much. This will allow him/her to develop a greater level of understanding of the skills required to conduct a grounded theory study without the incumbency of deciphering the rhetoric wrestle.

There are many challenges facing the novice researcher considering the grounded theory approach. One such challenge discussed in this paper is the issue of gaining access to participants within organisations. The problem of gaining access is not peculiar to grounded theorists but the methodology accentuates the problem. This paper describes, in some detail, the difficulties of providing essential information to support an application for access. Such information includes the identification of access boundaries that can clearly demonstrate the access period start and

finish. The very nature of grounded theory makes it difficult to identify appropriate interviewees, the number of interviews required and the interview durations at the study planning stage.

The burden of understanding grounded theory methods and gaining access to subject organisations is not the only problem discussed in this paper. The difficulty of achieving publication of manuscripts that use qualitative data, and grounded theory in particular, was discussed. In summary, as long as the novice understands these hurdles he/she can plan and devise strategies for overcoming such difficulties ultimately leading to a successful period of study and publications. Certainly the work carried out by Symon and Cassell (2006) amongst others (Symon and Cassell, 1998; Sparrow, 1999; Johnson and Cassell, 2001; Arnold, 2004) paves the way towards levelling the playing field such that different kinds of philosophical commitments may live side by side with equal weighting in the teaching, research and publication of material (Beatty and Lee, 1992).

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