GROUNDED THEORY

GROUNDED THEORY
THE PHILOSOPHY, METHOD, AND WORK OF BARNEY GLASER

Edited by
VIVIAN B. MARTIN AND ASTRID GYNNILD

Grounded Theory: The Philosophy, Method, and Work of Barney Glaser

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INTRODUCTION: MENTORING A METHOD

Astrid Gynnild
University of Bergen

Vivian B. Martin
Central Connecticut State University

This book is about a mentor, his method, and the application of its principles. Grounded theory is reportedly the most invoked method in qualitative research worldwide, and the book is an edited collection with contributions from researchers from nine countries and four continents. The book is an attempt to clarify, elaborate on, and extend aspects of what Barney G. Glaser, the co-discoverer of the method, views as *classic grounded theory*. Though it was Glaser who drafted most of the book that codified the method, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*, his original conception of the method is not always understood; the method has undergone several splits since its discovery in the mid-1960s. In the last two decades, Glaser has written and published nearly a dozen books about the method in an effort to correct the record and explicate grounded theory.

This collection of original research articles and essays by grounded theorists who have studied with Glaser is for researchers, novice and experienced, interested in understanding more about classic grounded theory, how it can be learned and taught, be it through face-to-face, long-distance or written mentoring. In particular, the project is aimed at what grounded theory researcher and scholar Phyllis Stern has dubbed minus mentors, academics who want to learn to do grounded theory but who do not have immediate access to face-to-face mentors. Anecdotal evidence suggests that most PhD students who choose grounded theory as the methodological approach for their dissertation start out as minus mentees in the sense that their professors do not know the method or ways of teaching it. As a consequence, both students and professors need to search for information elsewhere, not the least in readily accessible edited collections online.

Glaser's influence as a mentor ultimately ties together the chapters in this book, something we came to realize on a chilly but pleasant January day as we sat in a London Starbucks, crunched between two small round tables on which we were sorting strips of yellow paper. We had scratched the titles of the chapters in this book on the paper and, while sorting, it became more and more evident that *mentorship* tied together most of the work in this project. We also saw that mentorship in grounded theory involves a wide variety of professional developmental relationships. To introduce this book we want to say something about the multifaceted process of sowing a research idea at

one point in history, and growing it with the assistance of research networkers who in turn mentor using methods initiated close to half a century ago.

Mentoring grounded theory

Mentoring grounded theory cuts across disciplines, countries, and generations of grounded theory researchers. It demonstrates the interwoven complexity of developmental processes of research professionals in the digital age. Both of the discoverers of grounded theory brought to the method strong influences from some of sociology's "great men." For Strauss, it was Everett Hughes, whose lineage traced back to founders of the Chicago School; for Glaser it was Robert Merton and Paul Lazarsfeld at Columbia. These were traditional academic relationships, but the spread of grounded theory has been shaped by different models that increasingly span the globe and take on properties that can tell us much about teaching, learning, and developing new forms of academic mentorship.

Grounded theory has been both spread and stunted by mentoring relationships. As other authors have noted, the method differs from many others in that it is very much tied to its co-discoverers, who have been active in it for long periods. In Strauss's case, mentoring continued up until his death in 1996. Barney Glaser, on the other hand, has written most of his books on grounded theory in the 21st century, and is still a mentoring role model for the rapidly growing, worldwide network of grounded theory. The founders' active engagement in mentoring a method that developed in two different directions no doubt contributes to some of the battles of legitimacy. But it also meant, at least in the early years, that people not associated with the discoverers created extensions and workarounds that have sometimes muddied the execution of the method.

Despite these confusions, the spirit of grounded theory and its explicit aim to give researchers autonomy from the stronghold of extant theory has continued to attract many. How these newcomers find the method is itself part of the mentorship process. As we discovered while putting together this project, coming to grounded theory is an interesting outcome of guidance from trusted persons. Both of us had been introduced to grounded theory by relatives, both academics, who had come across it through their own personal academic relationships. We began thinking about the role of door-openers for the method and have since observed that they work on both a local and global scale. For example, one contributor to this book, Evert Gummesson, a professor emeritus at the University of Stockholm, discovered Glaser and his work and struck up a relationship that brought Glaser to Europe for the first time in 25 years. It eventually lead to Gummesson recommending Glaser for an Honorary Doctorate at Stockholm. Importantly, this recognition helped the method spread in Sweden and the rest of Europe from the 1990's.

As a young PhD student, Barney Glaser studied with sociologists such as Merton and Lazarsfeld in typical student-teacher relationships. Later, after

engaging in a peer-to-peer mentoring relationship with Anselm Strauss, Glaser separated in order to redefine the direction of grounded theory and become autonomous in his professional role. Throughout this process he not only developed his own ways of mentoring PhD students from outside of academia, but he also acts as an experienced role model who provides encouragement, advice, coaching and moral support to learners who want to move on with the classic grounded theory protocol.

We suggest that grounded theory is mentored through cultivating competence of grounded theory networks over extended periods of time. The cultivating processes take place in writing, and in virtual and face-to-face academic encounters. The ultimate goal of Barney Glaser's mentoring is first, to help PhD candidates get their degrees, and second, to support the manifestation of peer mentoring in multiple networks. Peer mentoring multiplies rapidly when a sufficient number of grounded theorists having reached a level of method proficiency at which they are able to inspire, support and critique each other in ways that are profitable for both parties. Peer mentoring is closely related to peer reviewing, and both aspects of being among equals have manifested in the work with this book.

The proposition of cultivating competence in multiple networks is based on an analysis of the chapters in this anthology combined with data collection elsewhere in grounded theory environments. The key dimensions of cultivating GT competencies in multiple networks concern the teaching of troubleshooting skills; providing psychosocial support and building bonds of friendship; facilitating informal network meeting points such as grounded theory seminars and online discussion groups; and establishing professional authority through running a peer-reviewed journal and ensuring the accessibility of Glaser's many books on the method. In reality, the books serve as asynchronous, written mentoring of grounded theory. These are key issues in Glaser's strategy for mentoring the method.

By investing personally and professionally in the build-up of a competent peer-to-peer network, the number of competent performers of the method is likely to increase, and the results of Glaser's long-term focus on grounded theory seed planting in Europe, North America, Asia, and Australia are evident. As will be demonstrated throughout the book, many experienced grounded theorists around the world have become engaged in different ways of using and mentoring the method. Some are engaged in formal teaching and mentoring of the method in academic institutions; some have built a whole career on mentoring and further development of grounded theory approaches; some spend their leisure time teaching the method in grounded theory seminars; some are mentoring others through the participation in discussion forums online; some take on more formal one-to-one obligations of mentoring via the Internet; some contribute by peer-to-peer sharing of new ways of doing data collection; and some contribute by analyzing philosophical frameworks and revisiting early history of the method. All together, these

different approaches help build up a multifaceted knowledge base for mentoring grounded theory. Degrees of involvement in mentoring and time expenditure on grounded theory activities vary, but mentors in evolving peer networks do have at least two things in common: They are intrinsically motivated to help others learn the method and persistent in developing their own maturation with the method.

All of the contributors to this book studied with Glaser. A few were taught grounded theory in an early phase of Glaser's career. Most have taken up study with him in the last decade as part of his troubleshooting seminars around the world to help novice and experienced researchers better understand the method. A core of the people contributing to the book first met at such a seminar in Paris in May 2002. They were from the US, Ireland, Sweden, and elsewhere. The network they have been part of is an example of the type of peer mentoring enabled and sustained internationally. Since they met with Glaser at different stages of his career, the mentoring processes they went through also varied from formal mentoring initiated through course participation at a university to very informal mentoring either face-by-face at some of Glaser's seminars or through long distance calls or emails.

Nevertheless, since the discovery of grounded theory, it appears that many researchers, from different disciplines and different continents, have generated their own grounded theories without ever attending a grounded theory seminar or experiencing a learning milieu where principles of grounded theory were taught or discussed. The term "minus-mentoring," introduced earlier, points to the fact that even though all PhD candidates have one or more official supervisors at their own institution, many of these supervisors do not have any competency in grounded theory. In practical work, therefore, the candidate might be considered a minus-mentee.

In their chapter on the role minus mentoring has played in remodeling grounded theory ("Learning Methodology Minus Mentorship," chapter 4), Antoinette McCallin, Alvita K. Nathaniel, and Tom Andrews write that "although mentoring is seldom discussed as an essential component of grounded theory research training, mentorship advances understanding." With references to literature in the field, the authors argue that mentorship is invaluable to the learner to engage in excellence and scholarship. Mentoring not only concerns methodological support; it also socializes and informs new researchers into a community of scholars. When the novice scholars and their supervisors are uninformed, they rewrite the method with their own misunderstandings. According to McCallin, Nathaniel, and Andrews, part of the problem is that:

> novice researchers seldom appreciate the fine distinctions of the method until they are engaged in the research process. If a researcher is under supervision from a qualitative researcher who is not familiar with grounded

theory at all, the learner is exposed to qualitative generalizations that are at odds with what is a specialist methodology.

The authors write that another problem is caused by the fact that even when novice grounded theory researchers search for grounded theory in journals and in books, they easily get into trouble. Much of what is written is methodologically inaccurate: "All too often grounded theory research published in well-respected international journals bears little resemblance to the original methodology."

This dilemma highlights a problem with literature as a mentoring tool in academia. Is the information accurate? Can the article or book be trusted? In contrast to many method books, Glaser's books guide researchers throughout the whole process of doing a grounded theory study. When reading his books for the first time, researchers across disciplines are often astonished by the wealth of details in grounded theory trajectories that are presented; they experience that the books speak to their own dilemmas and challenges while generating theory. Glaser has met the need for books by establishing the Sociology Press and the Grounded Theory Institute, which ensures that the books would always be accessible.

As Glaser's theorizing is based on systematic analysis of large amounts of data, the relevancy of the written information is evident. Yet after he withdrew from academia in the late 1980s, and thereby also withdrew from formal mentoring in established university settings, there was a void that needed to be filled. The number of emails that Glaser received from researchers on several continents indicated that the books of grounded theory were important. But even though the method was thoroughly discussed in writing, this form of "long distance" mentoring was not enough. The minus-mentees needed something more. As a consequence, Glaser developed the grounded theory seminars, which provide a new learning cycle for PhD candidates who grappled with the method. These seminars offered an opportunity for learners of the method to experience face-to-face mentoring in grounded theory.

The mentoring provided at these seminars will usually be complementary to the more discipline-specific mentoring provided at home institutions. However, as grounded theory is mainly inductive and experiential, it is necessary that future mentors have personal experience in doing the method. As a role model for those who aspire to become grounded theory mentors, Barney Glaser embodies what many PhD candidates need during their doctoral process: a mentor who is clear and upfront on the roles of both the mentee and the mentor; mentors who can supervise them through the process, not in detail, but who demonstrate an empathetic understanding of what they are struggling with. In other words, psychosocial aspects of mentoring tend to be just as important as the strictly skill-dependent aspects of it. These aspects of informal and formal mentoring are supported by existing research (Henderson Daniel, 2006, de Janasz and Sullivan 2001).

Mentoring grounded theory is carried out through a multiplicity of competent support networks. From networking that has come out of the many grounded theory seminars, grounded theory mentoring has been spread to many countries in the world. With the introduction of the Internet and virtual communication, the pace of dissemination has increased. Within these large networks, the first issue that takes considerable amounts of time is building competency in theorizing based on grounded theory principles. The contributors of this book have all specialized in different substantive areas with grounded theory. They come from many disciplines and many countries. As a basic principle, this multiplicity takes care of several issues. For PhD candidates it simplifies the process of establishing contact with several mentors. As long as the mentoring is informal and a supplement to the formal supervising that a candidate receives at the home institution, the multiplicity of mentors that might be contacted takes away some of the time pressure that would otherwise fall on one person. Moreover, with several potential mentors at hand, it is more likely that the individual researcher connects with people who match his or her specific needs.

Mentoring principles in grounded theory are rooted in data about the needs of mentees, and influenced by Barney Glaser's vision of wanting to give people their sense of being themselves. As Glaser points out in the conversation with Astrid Gynnild, grounded theory might be applied not only on academic research projects; learning the method gives researchers "their creativity, their independence, their autonomy, their contribution, their self-satisfaction and their motivational joy." In the research literature, mentoring is repeatedly referred to as having two primary functions for mentees: the career-related function and the psychosocial function. The career-related function establishes the mentor "as a coach who provides advice to enhance the mentee's professional performance and development," whereas the psychosocial function establishes the mentor as a "role model and support system for the mentee (Daniel et al, 2006, p 6). Moreover, mentoring is typically theorized as a process. Daniel et al (2006) and Russell (2004) conceptualize mentoring as a four-stage process in which an initiation stage, a cultivation stage, a separation stage, and a redefinition stage are identified. According to the general mentoring glossary, the cultivation stage is a phase in which "career and psychosocial functions are enhanced during the 2 to 5 years after the mentoring is initiated" (Russell, 2004).

From the perspective of mentoring a method presented in this chapter, there are no such specific limitations of the cultivating stage. It is definitely true that all researchers, no matter what method, mentor, or project they are engaged with at any time of their career, will go through stages of initiation, cultivation, separation, and redefinition in mentoring relationships. This goes for mentees as well as for mentors. However, Barney Glaser's life work indicates that to successfully mentor a method, cultivation approaches should

preferably last for several decades and there should be an increase in the multiplicity of approaches.

A person who takes on the task to mentor a method, of course, does so through mentoring other persons. In practice, this fact means that even though the mentor is steadily cultivating his project throughout the years, both he and potential mentees are likely to experience many moments and situations of no return where relationships are bound to break in some way or other. Glaser broke out from his early career relationships with people like Merton and Lazarsfeld at Columbia and later broke away from the method's co-founder Strauss, although they managed to keep their personal relationship. More precisely, Glaser claims that Strauss was the one who broke out, as he at one stage in the method's history deviated from its established definitions.

Many students of Glaser have also separated from the original version of the method throughout the years. Initiation, cultivation, separation, and redefinition are stages that all humans go through not only in relationships in general; it is a necessary trajectory on the way from being a child to becoming an adult. In this perspective, the most interesting question to be posed is not whether or when anybody is going to break out from a network or an academic field of interest. The most interesting issue to analyze is what happens during and after redefining a relationship, be it to a mentor or a mentee. According to the mentoring glossary, redefinition is "the phase after the separation phase when the mentoring relationship may end or change qualities" (Russell 2004, p. 609).

Some contributors to this anthology were mentored by Glaser but later separated from his approach in order to establish their own grounded theory branch. Others again have redefined and levelled up to peer-to peer relationships in their grounded theory networks. In this way, open networks manage to become self-supportive mentoring environments. Mentoring can be task-focused, relationship-based, and both. Mentoring grounded theory as a method exemplifies a binary approach to enhancing professional performance and development and ensuring a gradual expansion of the approach. The wish to mentor others often surfaces when people are midway in their careers, when they are at a peer-to-peer stage in their own professional development (Allen, 2002). Allen also points out that mentors who are intrinsically motivated for a task are likely to be more focused on psychosocial dimensions of mentoring than others. People who are focused on mentoring others usually exhibit an other-oriented empathy that relates to psychosocial mentoring. In the case of mentoring the grounded theory method, the other-oriented empathy conveyed is also grounded in the data.

The necessity of multiple mentorships, moment mentoring, and complementary mentoring is likely to increase in an academic world where researchers are working more and more on collaborative projects and loose networks around the globe. When mentoring a method, individuals who

choose to work within the definitions of the method go through a process of being cultivated to cultivating. This joint project is one such outcome. The book is divided into four parts focused on the most important dimensions of mentoring a method: teaching, doing, explicating and documenting its roots and epistemology, and advancing it.

How this book is organized

While editing this project we had some debate over whether to use the "classic" grounded theory modifier throughout to draw the line dividing the version of grounded theory advanced here and the work of others. In some ways, using the modifier to describe Glaser's version of grounded theory--he does not like Glaserian, as it is sometimes called– cedes ground and allows remodeled work to carry the banner of grounded theory without challenge. As a result, we chose to go forth with simply Grounded Theory in the title. At various points in the book, however, it is necessary for authors to use "classic" to clarify distinctions that set Glaser's vision apart from those of others. The need to make classic grounded theory's strictures especially explicit is critical in chapter 1, Odis Simmons's "Why Classic Grounded Theory," which opens Part I Teaching Grounded Theory. Simmons, who studied with both Glaser and Strauss, explains how he came to understand that grounded theory as advanced by Glaser differed from Strauss's version and why he came to prefer the conceptualization power of Glaser's classic grounded theory. Simmons also cuts through discussions that seek to categorize classic grounded theory as objectivist rather than constructivist and shows how these labels put grounded theory in unnecessary boxes.

The Grounded Theory Institute's Troubleshooting Seminar was the vehicle through which most contributors to the book, including the co-editors, came to know Glaser and one another. In chapter 2, "Atmosphering for Conceptual Discovery," Astrid Gynnild examines the process of participating in the seminar and presents a theory of learning that, she hypothesizes, can be extended beyond the grounded theory seminar to better understand empowering learning situations. Through interviews, observations, and other data, she theorizes the conscious strategies Glaser has used to help PhD candidates from around the world complete grounded theory dissertations.

Despite the success of grounded theory dissertations in many types of institutions, there are still special challenges PhD candidates doing classic grounded theory dissertations face at their home institutions. Andy Lowe, who has helped a number of candidates navigate common pitfalls, and Wendy Guthrie, who completed a dissertation with Lowe's guidance, provide a blueprint in chapter 3, "Getting Through the PhD Process using Classic GT: A supervisor/researcher perspective," which anticipates issues ranging from the original proposal and IRB issues to the final write-up. The fourth chapter rounding out Part I is "Learning Methodology Minus Mentorship," which was cited earlier in this introduction. McCallin, Nathaniel, and Andrews not

only address the scholarly concerns when a method is misshaped by those who are not adequately informed, but also highlight the moral and ethical issues raised by such representations.

Part II Doing Grounded Theory provides a range of instruction in ways to expand data collection, think about doing grounded theory, and research extending some of the original work on awareness of dying. In chapter 5, "Conducting Grounded Theory online," Helen Scott leads readers through the process of conducting grounded theory interviews online, a form of data collection becoming more popular as more researchers become aware of the rich possibilities online. In chapter 6, "Using Video Methods in Grounded Theory," Lisbeth Nilsson takes grounded theory's "all is data" dictum further with a discussion of collecting data with video, a technique she refined while conducting research among disable people who could not speak and participate in the interview as it is traditionally known. Video of work with patients in her work as an occupational therapist became the source for codes and building of a theory that has won respect internationally. In chapter 7, "Developing Grounded Theory Using Focus Group Interviews," Cheri Ann Hernandez clears up some of the misapprehensions grounded theorists might have about using focus groups, which she argues can aid grounded theorists so long as they are mindful of some of the issues she outlines.

The use of qualitative software to aid the completion of grounded theory projects is a sticky topic, one that is too often dismissed without adequate discussion of how the process really works. In chapter 8, "The Utility and Efficacy of Qualitative Research Software in Grounded Theory Research," Michael K. Thomas goes beyond the flat-out rejections or the uncritical embrace of such tools with an overview that lays out the options and limitations from the point of view of a classic grounded theorist who has used some of the leading software programs and can critique in context. Chapter 9, "De-Tabooing Dying in Western Society: From Awareness to Control in the Dying Situation," by Hans Thulesius, extends the *Awareness of Dying* work that played a critical role in launching grounded theory. The data in the emerging theory points to processes in which the main concern of the patient, now aware of his terminality, wants control of dying, whether it be through the right to die or active participation in decisions for palliative care.

Grounded theory's status as a method embraced worldwide means that scholars for whom English is not the first language discover grounded theories that they sometimes write up for native and English audiences. Conceptualizing in one language and writing in another has certain advantages and challenges. Moreover, translating grounded theory books, particularly the seminal texts, can leave translators searching hard for the right ride. These are among the ideas Massimiliano Tarozzi explores in chapter 10, "On Translating Grounded Theory: When Translating is Doing."

Part III Historical and Philosophical Grounding is an opportunity to better understand the historical roots of grounded theory, as well as some of its

philosophical underpinnings. Chapter 11, "Lessons for a Lifetime: Learning Grounded Theory from Barney Glaser," by Kathy Charmaz, who studied with both Strauss and Glaser, interviewed classmates from the period to provide a picture of what it was like to have Glaser as a professor. Most associated with developing a model that departs from classic grounded theory, Charmaz, nonetheless, in describing Glaser's assistance at her dissertation defense, illustrates the important role Glaser played as a mentor for that time in her life.

Those who study with Glaser know he eschews the "rhetorical wrestle" and implores students to get on with the work of doing grounded theory. Nevertheless, the nature of scholarship is such that epistemological discussions cannot be ignored, and that is what Alvita Nathaniel provides in chapter 12, "An Integrated Philosophical Framework that fits Grounded Theory." Her goal here is not to retrofit a philosophical framework on top of grounded theory; rather, her aim is to show grounded theory's affinity with the pragmatism of Charles Peirce. Despite the lack of an explicit connection between Glaser's grounded theory and pragmatism, Nathaniel argues that grounded theory's strictures can be understood philosophically when situated alongside pragmatism.

In actuality, several influences shaped Barney Glaser's method. In chapter 13, "Creative Autonomy: Early Influences in the Emergence of Classic Grounded Theory Methodology," Judith A. Holton discusses and documents the autobiographical and intellectual influences that Glaser brought together to wrest his autonomy from academic structures and create what became grounded theory. The chapter fits into fruitful discussion with chapter 14, "Grounded Glaser," by Evert Gummesson, who seeks to capture some of the personal qualities of Glaser that are instructive to social science in general. Chapter 15, "Living the Ideas: A Biographical Interview with Barney Glaser," by Astrid Gynnild, is a breathing illustration of some of the previous chapters as readers are given a question and answer format to follow along as Glaser talks about life, love, and grounded theory.

Part IV Advancing the Method is forward-looking even as it necessarily reaches back. Chapter 16, "Generating Formal Grounded Theory," is a reprint of chapter 5 from Glaser's book *Doing Formal Theory* (2007). Glaser wrote the book to answer the many questions grounded theory researchers have about formal theory, which, given the paucity of such theories, seems to intimidate many. Picking up on the challenge of formal theory, Tom Andrews's "Reflection on Generating a Formal Grounded Theory," chapter 17, shares some of the hard-won insights he has gained while developing a formal theory in visualizing worsening progression.

Critical to the development of grounded theories, substantive and formal, will be greater utilization of quantitative data. Grounded theory is not a qualitative method despite the fact that it is mainly used by qualitative researchers. Glaser always envisioned the use of both kinds of data, but many grounded

theories do not have training in quantitative methods. Chapter 18, "From Theoretical Generation to Verification using Structural Equation Modeling," by Mark S. Rosenbaum discusses how structural equation model can be used to test grounded theories. Rosenbaum acknowledges that Glaser does not think grounded theories need to be taken through traditional verification protocols; however, Rosenbaum points to the preference for verification in some disciplines, arguing often requisite for publication. He further argues that structural equation modeling comes out of the same qualitative math analysis that Paul Lazarsfeld was doing when Glaser was studying with him. Part IV ends with chapter 19, "The Power of an Enduring Concept," by Vivian B. Martin, who uses her developing theory on discounting awareness to demonstrate the continuing power of the original theory of awareness contexts and to tease out the unfinished theory development suggested in *Awareness of Dying*, as well as some of Glaser's earlier pre-grounded theory work. She argues that early Glaser work and suggestions for the secondary analysis of qualitative research are necessary for grounded theorists to embrace if they are to build more formal theories.

It is our hope that grounded theorists at all stages of competence will find something useful to incorporate into their grounded theory practice. Much is said here about the desire to get good information into the hands of minus mentors, but this book is also for the many skilled GT researchers around the globe who are searching for more insights, inspiration, and ideas to move on with their own GT projects.

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PART I

TEACHING GROUNDED THEORY

I

WHY CLASSIC GROUNDED THEORY

Odis E. Simmons
Fielding Graduate University

Since Glaser and Strauss first introduced grounded theory in their 1967 book, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (hereafter referred to simply as *Discovery*), it has been both praised and criticized. Some critics disfavor the whole idea of grounded theory. These critics tend to be strongly invested in the tenets of positivistic approaches to social/behavioral research and have an unfavorable view of approaches other than their own. Criticisms coming from those of a positivist bent are usually along the lines of grounded theory not meeting the requirements of the standard model of science; in other words, it is not sufficiently positivistic.

These criticisms are also likely to come from social/behavioral scientists who have a superficial or distorted view of grounded theory that is skewed by their inability to fathom that a method that doesn't meet their preferred canons of science might be scientifically legitimate. Given that to me a proper science must above all be true to its subject matter and there are doubts that positivistic social/behavioral sciences are able to cover all facets of their subject matter, particularly the role of "meaning making," it is clear that other approaches to the study of human behavior, including grounded theory, have much to offer. Criticisms of grounded theory have also been lodged by non-positivist social scientists as well. Ironically, these criticisms often claim that grounded theory is *too* positivistic. I will leave it to others to engage in these particular "rhetorical wrestles" (Glaser, 1998. pp. 35-46).

The criticisms of concern to me here are criticisms lodged by those who are favorable towards grounded theory, including many who consider themselves to be grounded theorists, but see ontological and epistemological problems with Glaser and Strauss' original conceptualization, now commonly referred to as "classic," or sometimes, "Glaserian" grounded theory. These critics usually assert that Glaser and Strauss' original conception of grounded theory has positivist, objectivist underpinnings (Bryant, 2002a, 2002b; Mills, Bonner & Francis, 2006; Urquhart, 2002), although some critics approach their criticism from other angles (Haig, 1995; Kools, McCarthy, Durham & Robrecht, 1996). Some of these critics offer ways in which they think the method could be improved. Martin (2007) provided a pointed, critical response to those who have made this claim.

Charmaz (2000, 2006) has aptly characterized these approaches as "constructivist grounded theory." Mills et al. (2006) have referred to them as

"evolved" grounded theory. The term "evolved" implies that grounded theory as originally conceived by Glaser and Strauss needed to be refined or improved. In my view these "remodeled" (Glaser, 2003) versions of grounded theory thoroughly miss the primary purpose of the method, which is to ground theory in *data*, not the speculations and imaginations of researchers, theorists, and ideologists.

The positivist, objectivist criticism is lodged more frequently at Glaser than at Strauss. I think in large part this is inferred from Glaser having studied and received his Ph.D. in sociology at Columbia University, which had a strong objectivist and positivist bent, whereas Strauss studied and received his Ph.D. in sociology at the University of Chicago, which had a strong qualitative, participant observation, symbolic interactionist bent. However Glaser was a strongly independent student. He was inspired by and fed off the ideas of his professors, but did not adopt them as his own. To the contrary, he was at times rather critical of them. It was they who inspired his term "theoretical capitalist," a not particularly reverent expression. Yet, he transformed many of their ideas into classic grounded theory.[1]

Strauss remained closer to the ideas of his graduate school professors. This played a role in the divergent directions Glaser and Strauss took following the publication of *Discovery*. Having been a student of both Glaser and Strauss in the early 1970s I witnessed this first hand. To be sure, I was not the only Glaser and Strauss student who saw the divergences in their methodological approaches. Charmaz, for one, said that she saw their differences early on.

Because Strauss was not in residence until several months after I began my studies in the Graduate Program in Sociology at the University of California, San Francisco, I had taken two terms of Glaser's Analysis seminar, in which he taught grounded theory. By then, I had a solid familiarity with Glaser's rendering of grounded theory, including where he had taken it beyond what was written in *Discovery*. In his seminars and conversations with his students (because he and I commuted together, I had the pleasure of many such conversations), Glaser continued to develop his ideas about grounded theory, which eventually appeared in *Theoretical Sensitivity*.

When Strauss returned from his time away, I enrolled in his methods seminar. During the first session of this seminar I immediately recognized that there were major differences between the way Strauss and Glaser portrayed grounded theory, particularly regarding how to analyze data. Glaser emphasized the importance at the outset of minimizing preconceptions, including preconceived questions and categories. Strauss began providing us with both. Strauss' perspective and much of his language was drawn from the interests, questions, and categories of the symbolic interactionist perspective, in which he had been so thoroughly immersed during his years at the University of Chicago. Having studied under some notable sociologists with a qualitative, symbolic interactionist bent, such as Stanford Lyman, John Lofland,

Fred Davis, and Leonard Schatzman, I was well familiar with that approach to sociological research.

Although Strauss used some of the terminology (constant comparison, theoretical sampling, etc.) from *Discovery*, the content of what he was saying did not always match the understanding of grounded theory that I had gained from reading *Discovery* and participating in classes and individual conversations with Glaser. Because I assumed that the ideas of Glaser and Strauss would be consistent, I was a bit taken aback. I also noticed a distinct difference from Glaser in the language of research Strauss used as well as even his view on the scope of grounded theory. Strauss spoke of grounded theory as merely a style of qualitative analysis. He held this view at least until 1987 when in the Preface to his book, *Qualitative Analysis for Social Scientists* he referred to grounded theory as, "a particular style of qualitative analysis of data (*grounded theory*)" (italics in original) (Strauss, 1987 p. xi). In the Introduction to this book he also wrote of grounded theory:

> So, it is not really a specific method or technique. Rather it is a style of doing qualitative analysis that includes a number of distinct features, such as theoretical sampling, and certain methodological guidelines, such as the making of constant comparisons and the use of a coding paradigm, to ensure conceptual development and density. (p. 5)

From the beginning, Glaser spoke of it as a full, systematic research method. Today it is commonly considered to be a full research method. To be sure, I learned a great deal from Strauss. He was a brilliant sociologist and a kind, supportive, and thoughtful person, which is one of the main reasons why I selected him as my dissertation committee chair. Glaser also served on my dissertation committee. Fortunately, their different understandings about grounded theory never got in the way of my research. They were both very supportive of my methodological approach, which was guided by grounded theory as laid out in *Discovery*.

Since my graduate school days I have used and taught grounded theory as it was articulated in *Discovery* and the subsequent writings of Glaser because it produces theory that is more completely grounded in data, which makes it more suitable for action. In classic grounded theory, throughout the process, everything must "earn" its way into a theory through constant comparison of data rather than being imported from other sources.

Following *Discovery*, Glaser wrote numerous books expanding and articulating classic grounded theory in greater detail (Glaser, 1978, 1992, 1996, 1998, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2006, 2008, 2009) as well as editing a series of grounded theory anthologies (Glaser, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996), as well as one co-edited with Holton (2007). Strauss wrote one grounded theory related book as sole author, although grounded theory was not in the title (Strauss, 1987).[2] With Corbin, he coauthored the First and Second Editions (Strauss