Title:

Compatibility of dual methodologies: Examining and exploring the different sociological epistemics implied and produced by combining Grounded Theory Method and Ethnography in a Ph.D. project on drug users

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Content

Abstract

Purpose: The overarching aim of this course paper is to discuss the compatibility of ethnography with grounded theory. More specifically the aim is to show how ethnographers can apply grounded theory as an analytical tool to construct theory from data and link the discussion on the different traditions within grounded theory (and the criticism towards these positions) to my own doctoral thesis in sociology. In the introductory part of the paper, I first give a brief summary of my own Ph.D. project, along with the ethnographic approach I am using to collect data, with methods including documents, participant observations and open-ended interviews.

Background: Since its discovery by Glaser and Strauss in the sixties (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), grounded theory has evolved, and today, three 'main' perspectives dominate its influence. These three consists of Glaser's approach, Strauss and Corbin's approach and a later version, called constructivist grounded theory, with Charmaz being one of its most prominent figures (Annells, 1996). Embarking on the journey of discussing these scholars views and different perspectives on grounded theory , it is important to clarify that dividing grounded theory into three 'main camps', as I have, is a way of simplifying a complex methodology, done in the interest of making a meaningful discussion possible within the scope of this course paper. Therefore, continuing on, I do not set out to cover all the extensive questions and concerns that can arise when combining grounded theory with ethnography, or try to give a complete view on this methodology as a whole.

Originality/value: This paper, written with the ambition of exploring methodological questions found within the philosophy of science, contributes to my project by offering critical and important reflections on how ethnography and grounded theory might be compatible. Further, I investigate how combining the two methodologies might be effective in my research project, and I discuss arguments and views made by the most prominent members of the different grounded theory 'camps', related to disadvantages and advantages of applying one of the variants of grounded theory for my specific research project. However, despite delimiting the discussion to focus on arguments related to methodological challenges within my own project, the paper will still be written with the wider methodological context in mind, implying that I will draw on empirical research and perspectives of notable scholars, both from the field of grounded theory and of ethnography.

Keywords: Grounded theory, ethnography, mixed methodology, qualitative research, interactionism, drug use, rehabilitation

1 Introduction

1.0 A Focus on Rehabilitation and Recovery form Drug Use

My Ph.D. project will examine the everyday lives of young drug users (aged 18 – 35) as they participate in a one-year rehabilitation- and intervention-based program, carried out by a local humanitarian organisation in Northern Norway. An overarching interest, and aim of the study, is to see what it is like for drug users to be in a rehabilitation program focusing on activity-based rehabilitation. My intention is to recruit 10-15 key informants from the program and follow them closely. Here I will study the process of rehabilitation and the effects it might have on drug users at an individual-level over time, as they are coping with drug abuse, and how the drug users over time are able to integrate themselves back into society. When entering the field and explore the many issues drug users are facing my methodological approach will be ethnographic one: using participating observations, Open-ended interviews (biographical life-story interviews) and the studying and reading of documents to get details on my informant's daily lives. The 'thick descriptions', which is intensely detailed notes, regarding the lives of the drug users and the social network around them, are here created by combining the methods described (Geertz, 1973; Kelchtermans, 1994; James, 2001). Together, participatory observations, interviews and documents collected during fieldwork will provide detailed data that, along with an analysis, can result in key findings to understand the process of rehabilitation, and the drug user's experiences with such programs.

1.1 Overarching Research Questions

Aiming to use a combination of two methodologies, that in nature both have non-traditional and more informal paths of study and recorded outcomes, implies that my Ph.D. project likely will not follow conventional structures. However, going into scientific studies, there exists consensus that data collection and the methods of analysis directly affects the successful outcome of research projects (Bamkin,Maynard & Goulding, 2016). Therefore, choosing the 'right' methodology becomes an important decision for researchers, something that also is true in my own project. In a paper on the philosophy of science, I want to use this opportunity, to problematize advantages and disadvantages (or challenges) of combining dual methodologies, and in addition, investigate if combining them will be an effective research strategy. As I embark on my own project, grasping with these challenges, I have formulated three specific and overarching questions to guide the paper onwards:

(1) What is ethnography, and how can combining the two methodologies of ethnography and grounded theory be effective in my research project?

(2) Which philosophical directions have influenced grounded theory?

(3) Why adopt a grounded theory approach in my project, which variant of grounded theory could I use, and what are advantages and disadvantages of choosing a particular variant?

2 The Perspectives of Ethnography

2.0 The Conduct of Ethnography

The word 'ethnography' literary means cultural description (ethno – folk, graphy – description). It is a form of naturalistic inquiry, with researchers taking a specific interest in culture, aiming to see the world through the eyes of the members of the culture being examined (Barnes, 1996; Atkinson, 1992). Further, ethnographers seek to document the social interactions among these members, including accounting for information learned and passed on by members to enable and establish interaction, and then study the way in which behaviour is subsequently organised and formalised in everyday life situations (McCurdy,Spradley & Shandy, 2004; Arnould & Wallendorf, 1994). Another aim which occupies ethnographers, is to explicate those activities that engage cultural members for significant amounts of time (Triandis, 1980). Ethnographies may also be broader cross sectional in nature, such as Goffman's study, which took a detailed look at a cross section of "total" institutions (Goffman, 1961) or they may be ethnohistorical, describing cultural realities of the present as historical results events in the past.

2.1 The Process of Ethnography and its Compatibility with Grounded Theory

In past studies, ethnography and grounded theory have been combined with success, providing a greater level of detail than either would do if employed on its own (Charmaz & Mitchell, 2001; Pettigrew, 2000). Pattigrew (2000), studying beer consumption in Australia, used ethnographic data collection along with grounded theory analysis. Of this study, Pattigrew stated: "the study provided both a description of the ways in which beer is consumed in the lives of everyday Australians and a contribution to consumer behaviour theory" (Pettigrew, 2000). In my project, I also aim to explore the nature and everyday lives of drug users, which requires a great deal of paying close attention to details. My approach means I must become familiar with, and try to understand, their worlds and their experiences, to be able to analyse the effects of drug rehabilitation, and the impact it can have on individuals in a broader sense, discussing the levels in which drug users are able to re-integrate

themselves back into society. An important aspect in this regard, and something worth reflecting on going into such a "field", is that the individuals I will be following finds themselves in a complex and struggling life situation. Their actual participation in the rehabilitation program is just one of the many activities that the drug users do in their daily lives. As social life in itself is infinitely complex and filled with interactions on many levels, it is important to be aware of the complex surroundings and the impact the social context can have on individuals.

For instance, in addition to the rehabilitation programs, the drug users interact with family, friends, government and other social groups, interactions that together plays important parts in shaping their lives. Moreover, structural and temporal surroundings, like the town they now live in, how long they have lived there and their individual backstories all play an important part in defining the social context that have shaped their perspectives. Therefore, as a researcher, I have to establish a focus on what factors are important for drug users when they try to "recover" and integrate themselves to a more 'normal' (and possibly) drug-free lifestyle. Adopting a flexible strategy for collecting and analysing data is one way to create an type of 'orderliness' that may help me explain these factors, here, Atkinson, with Charmaz (among others), support the view that *some* knowledge about the field could be preferable before the research starts (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Especially this is true for determining what to look for, where to go, and how to go about the study in the "field", like, what do the drug users themselves *say* is important, and is what they say related to, or in line with, what they actually do?

Here, combining ethnography together with grounded theory is valuable, as it would prompt me to go deeper into the studied phenomena, understanding the experience of the rehabilitation process as the subjects "live it", not simply as they talk about it (Charmaz & Mitchell, 2001). As pointed out by Charmaz and Mitchell, it comes down to the difference of being an objective observer, and still gaining insight into informant's daily lives.

Another important perspective when working with both ethnography and grounded theory, is that neither method attempts to 'prove' a pre-conceived theory, rather, truth and meaning is found through experience with the field that is being studied. As I aim to discover important aspects in the drug user's daily lives, aspects that hopefully will provide me with information on how participating in a rehabilitation program might affect drug users. This compatibility, of not using pre-conceived theoretical approaches, is an attitude emitted from the advice of keeping an "Open mind, not an empty head" when entering the field (Fetterman, 2010).

Related to challenges I can expect to find in my own project, it means holding the objective view that the outcome of the research will be open ended. Meaning that for some drug users, participating in the rehabilitation programs might not change their lifestyles notably, but for others it might have a determining and lasting impact, influencing their lives. In this case, using a grounded theory approach

is one way of coping with open-endedness, as theories and explanations are allowed to develop and possibly change as the research progresses (Charmaz & Mitchell, 2001).

Both in grounded theory and in ethnography *flexibility* is encouraged, implying that instead of denying any effect of prior experience, the skills and knowledge of the researcher are acknowledged and put to use as valuable research instrument (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Charmaz, 2006). In my project, such 'pre-knowledge' relates to personal experiences, having studied vulnerable groups in the past (but in other settings, like interacting with drug users in prisons as a research assistant). In addition, in my Ph.D. project, I have met with key staff members in the humanitarian organizations and conducted descriptive interviews on the goals and visions of the rehabilitation programs, before meeting up with the actual participants themselves.

Taking such pre-steps can be necessary and possibly rewarding, as I can draw on the experience of the staff to obtain valuable insights and an early sense of the program. Moreover, this might lead to where I should go, whom I might talk to and what I should investigate deeper during fieldwork. This approach would be close to the position of 'constructivist' grounded theory, advocated by Charmaz, that the data one produces in the research field is co-constructed, with both the researcher and the informant's taking an 'active' part (Charmaz, 2006). However, it is still my responsibility as a researcher to not let such pre-information constrain or "cloud" the focus on the subjects, but rather, letting it serve the purpose of opening new 'doors'/gaining even deeper access, which can lead to the development of useful concepts and sensitizing ideas needed for the analysis.

2.2 Observations in Grounded Theory and in Ethnography

Having described the aims and research process of both grounded theory and ethnography I want to emphasize some differences in both these methodologies concerning an important method of collecting data; using observations. A main point of departure is how social processes are being studied and explained. Grounded theory relies on its underlying philosophical perspective for observations, which is symbolic interactionism, while ethnographic observers preferably have more holistic views (Najafi,Roudsari,Ebrahimipour & Bahri, 2016). Charmaz explains by saying that, in a way, the observer in grounded theory, according to his or her research objectives, discusses details of only one aspect of the research. Whereas the observer in the ethnographies examines details of all the aspects available.

Based on these views Charmaz argues that the observations in gounded theory has a "narrower lens" than in ethnographies (Charmaz, 2006). A separation then becomes apparent, as scholars or researchers in sociology who adopt symbolic interactionism prefer to observe human behaviour in *present* and *changeable circumstances* and consider these an active issue making it a more dynamic approach in contrast to a more static take found within ethnographies (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

An example of these differences could be concerning making field notes. In grounded theory, the researcher relies more on the phenomenon and the process and revolves all field notes around these two issues, resulting in the concepts becoming senses of actions and interactions in the observed field. He or she also moves from setting the process details, while in ethnography the focus would be more on the social setting itself (Strauss, 1987).

In addition, ethnography deals with issues such as religious beliefs, network of friends and family or culture related to specific communities. Here the attention is more on structure than the process itself (Najafi et al., 2016). Adopting such a line of thought would imply that the pure ethnographer deals with observation with respect to the purpose and the title of the research (Emerson,Fretz & Shaw, 2011). To return to the example of use of field notes, in ethnography, the research subject is described as an object, without considering the available process which is incorporated in it (Emerson et al., 2011).

3 The Grounded Theory Approach

3.0 Overview and Brief Description

Before exploring which variants of grounded theory that could be successfully applied in my Ph.D. project, it is important to take a step back, to explain (briefly) the logics that has influenced this methodology and some of its most prominent figures. Grounded theory derives its theoretical underpinnings from the views and writings of scholars adopting Pragmatist (Dewey, 1925; Mead, 1934) and Symbolic Interactionist views (Park & Burgess, 1921; Hughes, 1971; Blumer, 1931). Glaser, one of the original founders, had a strong training in positivism, enabling him to code qualitative responses, while Strauss used his training to look at the active roles of people's lives as they were being studied (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). According to Glaser, this implies that the strategy of grounded theory is to take the interpretations of meaning and symbols in social interaction and study the interrelationship between meaning, in the perception of the subjects and their actions (Glaser, 1998). As Charmaz and Mitchell (2001) explains further, it is based on the pragmatic philosophy of using practical observation to explore the meaning of concepts (Charmaz & Mitchell, 2001).

However, as Corbin and Strauss argue, one need not necessarily subscribe to these philosophical and sociological orientations to be able to use the method of grounded theory. Still, they note, that emitting from these two traditions, two fundamental principles are built (Corbin & Strauss, 1990:419). The first principle have to do with issues related to *change*, the second with *determinism*. The issue of change deals with the notion that phenomena are not conceived of in static terms, but as continually changing and evolving in response to prevailing conditions. Thus, Corbin and Strauss notes, an important

component of the method is to build change, through a process, into the method itself (Corbin & Strauss, 1990:419).

On the other hand, determinism deals with the fact that actors are seen as having (though not always using) the means of controlling their destinies by responding to conditions. They are able to make choices according to how they perceive available options, a stance shared both by Pragmatism and Symbolic Interactionism (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Catching this interplay is what lies at the centre of why one should adopt a grounded theory approach. Because, as Corbin and Strauss argues, grounded theory seeks not only to uncover relevant conditions (where change can happen), but also investigate how actors actively respond to those conditions, and to the consequences of their actions (Corbin & Strauss, 1990).

3.1 The Purpose of Grounded Theory

A broad definition when discussing the purpose of grounded theory is that it acts as "a general methodology for developing theory that is grounded in data systematically gathered and analysed (Strauss & Corbin, 1994:273). Originally, grounded theory emerged out of Glaser and Strauss' ethnographic study of death and dying in the San Francisco Bay area. From their studies, they articulated and formalised the methodological principles into the classical text *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The methodology was, at the time, an answer to marginalised views on qualitative research (like the notion that qualitative research could only be verified through statistical or quantitative methods), as Glaser and Strauss proposed, one should instead build theory 'from the ground up', through systematic conceptualization and constant comparisons with similar and distinct research areas (Tavory & Timmermans, 2009).

Thus, Glaser and Strauss advanced a set of methodological principles such as *theoretical sampling, conceptual saturation, memo writing* and *open coding* to guarantee that theoretical claims were backed up and supported with data. An inductive methodology, free and 'uncontaminated' by pre-existing theories. From these outlined principles, they argued that theories grounded in substantive areas could lead to formal theories on social life (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012).

According to Kelle (2007), the controversy and disagreements between Glaser and Strauss boils down to the view of whether researchers employs a well-defined 'coding paradigm', meaning, always looking for systematically 'casual conditions', 'intervening conditions' and 'consequences' in the data. Or, on the other side, that theoretical codes are employed as they emerge, in the same way that substantive codes emerge (Kelle, 2007). Simplified: it is the issue of whether empirical data, through the process of coding, becomes "forced" by its application or if it does emerge more naturally. In my opinion, both strategies have their pros and cons, depending on aims of the research project and the phenomenon one wishes to investigate.

3.2 The Credibility of Grounded Theory

Readers of scientific work faces several aspects when they are to judge the credibility (objective and subjective components of the believability of a source) of a theory. First, it is the fieldwork in itself. If a reader becomes sufficiently intrigued in the descriptions, so that he or she feels that they were also there in the field, then they are more likely be positively disposed toward the researcher's theory than if the information and descriptions do not make sense or are unconvincingly presented (Glaser & Strauss, 1967:230). In addition, the reader's judgement of credibility also rests upon his or her assessments of how the researcher came to the conclusions presented. This compromise what range of events the researcher saw, whom he met with, interviewed, what diverse group he compared and what kind of experiences he had while doing it, and how the people whom he studied perceived him.

An important aspect here is how the researcher, by precisely detailing the many similarities and differences of the various comparison groups, will know under what sets of structural conditions his hypothesises are minimized or maximised (Glaser & Strauss, 1967:231). In turn, this detailing makes it possible to see under what social structures the theory is applicable. Therefore, it is vital that a researcher carefully presents the limitations of his or her fieldwork. By increasing the scope and delimiting the generality of his or her theory the burden of delimiting relevant boundaries are taken away from the researcher's colleagues and other critical reader's.

3.3 Analytical Approach: The Issue of Emergence versus Forcing

In the following table[1], I present some variations, when it comes to the analysis of data in the different grounded theory approaches. I have tried to point to some differences, but it is important to note that many of the aspects mentioned in the table is employed by both researchers adhering to Glaserian or Straussian paradigms (the interpretive framework), like the constant comparison method, but that they differ in the way in which it is used. To clarify, a paradigm is in itself a basic set of beliefs that guides action, and comprises epistemological (nature of knowledge), ontological (the study of being) and methodological premises (Blaikie, 2000; Guba, 1990).

Primarily, the table is set up to highlight the divergences, making them easier to locate and point out in the discussion of which variant that could fit my project and its compatibility with ethnography. Secondly, my intention for this table is that it can act as a useful point-of-entry, to determine the most

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[1] This table is made with the scope of this paper in mind, and should therefore be treated as such, meaning, that one have to be clear that this is only a simplified version, with suggestions that I have highlighted, and it does in no way incorporate, or aim to capture, all the complexities of the different variants.

suitable process of analysing data, showing which grounded theory approach that could be ideal to my project.

Table 1.

Grounded Theory Approach:	Methodological principles:	Analysing Approach: (Development of concepts)	Theory generation:
Glaser's Approach (Glaser, 1998).	Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA).	Induction and emergence as the key process.	The data develops theoretical sensitivity. Initial coding is data dependent.
	Little or no prior experience on the phenomena that is to be investigated. Open coding.	Emphasizes more on researcher's creativity within a clear frame of stages.	Tolerate some 'confusion' – wait for concepts to emerge.
	Constantly compares indicators concepts and categories as the theory emerge.	Developing ideas and potential insights are developed and recorded in theoretical memos.	Deduction and verification are seen as the servants of emergence.
	Avoid selection to fit preconceived or premature ideas.	Ideas generated must be verified by all data. Categories are constantly refitted to ongoing incidents.	Sees 'forced' questioning as a possible danger. May come at the expense of data and discovery of new theories.
Strauss & Corbin's Approach (Strauss & Corbin, 1994; Corbin & Strauss, 1990).	Researchers shapes the data by their interpretation, which moves analysis beyond descriptions.	Abductive reasoning and emphasis on deduction.	Open coding captures actions and interactions *as the scene unfolds*, creating theoretical sensitivity.
	Flexibility in coding: Open, Axial, Selective.	Validation criteria and systematic approach important.	
Constructionist Grounded Theory (Charmaz, 2006; Charmaz & Mitchell, 2001).	A 'middle ground' between the realist and postmodernist position.	Neither data nor theories are 'discovered' in this process.	Theories are constructed by the researcher as a result of interactions with the field and its participants.
	Literature review used in a constructive and data-sensitive manner.	Data are co-constructed by both researcher and participant.	Data can be coloured by researcher's perspectives.
		Systematic inductive guidelines for collecting and analysing empirical materials.	

With the table above in mind, I try to identify some key elements in the three approaches of Glasarian/Straussian paradigms and the constructionist approach. According to Charmaz the three approaches can be identified like this:

I. Glaser's approach

Glaser's mode is widely regarded as the 'classic'. Characterized by others as a 'critical realist' and a 'modified objectivist' (Annells, 1997). Implied in this description, Glaser assumes an objective external reality; meaning that the social world can be investigated in the same way as the natural world. Hence, the researcher is a neutral observer who discovers data in an objective and neutral way, thus discovering the theory (Glaser, 1998; Glaser, 2002).

II. Strauss and Corbin's approach

Strauss and Corbins view assumes a more 'subjectivist' position, implying more of an objective external reality, aiming towards unbiased data collection. At the core, verification is important when generating a grounded theory. They stress the importance of giving voice to their respondents, and acknowledge their view of reality. Actions and interactions can be captured with open coding, and as the scene is unfolding, which again will help create the theoretical sensitivity. In this approach abductive reasoning and deduction is seen as an integral part throughout the whole research process (Strauss & Corbin, 1994).

III. Constructivist approach

Charmaz, one of the most prominent users of the constructivist approach, suggests that is possible to use grounded theory without embracing earlier proponents and adds her view, which is somewhere between the two, a middle-ground, that studies people in their natural settings, with systematic and inductive guidelines (Charmaz, 1990). A constructivist approach also proposes that our view of reality is merely something constructed in our heads and invented by us. Therefore, our ideas determine what we know. This approach sees data and analysis as a form of co-constructed and shared experiences with participants and other sources of data (Charmaz, 2006). Undertaking such an approach implies seeking out both respondent's and researchers' meanings before generated grounded theories with rich data that reflect participant's views, feelings, intentions and actions, as well as taking in the context and structures of their lives (Charmaz, 2006).

IV. –A small analysis on the different approaches:

Taking interviews as an example, the constructivist approach seems ideal if one were to adopt an interactionist view. Here, the view is that interviews provide the site for active interactions between two people, leading to results that are mutually negotiated and contextual. As Charmaz suggests, the interview questions can be framed and ordered, not only having to be purely open-ended or free of any possibly 'forcing' characteristics (Charmaz, 2006). Interviews can set the tone, seeking in-depth

information, call for reflection and search for the narratives and endings on a more positive note. In this way, the data is constructed through observations, interactions and the materials that the researcher has gathered. Here the more purely inductive Glaserian approach would warn against taking such an systematic approach, as it may come at the expense of discovering new or more data, as the respondents, in a stronger sense, are 'forced' into ways of acting and thus, ways of replying. As I have mentioned earlier, which path leads to 'the right way' is not easy to claim.

Whether one advocates for measures that are more inductive or abductive in nature, the creation of interesting concepts, and development of theoretical sensitivity is still possible. It is therefore as much of a question of what one wishes to find out, and then, how one goes about exploring and answering one's own research questions. With this reflection in mind, one approach could be to settle on a 'compromise' in the early stages of a research project. Meaning, when having gathered some initial data, one would then identify some key ideas that could represent categories or properties, thus generating the next set of questions and give a sense of where to focus data, while moving the analysis forward from the obvious and concrete to seeking more abstract ideas.

3.4 Strength and Weaknesses: Selecting a Grounded Theory Approach

Finally, I want to include some observations regarding difficulties and possible 'weaknesses' when applying or selecting a grounded theory approach. As observed by Allan (2003), difficulties is sometimes the result of researchers from different disciplines not fully understanding the complexities of grounded theory methodology (Allan, 2003). Here, a natural first step (to avoid confusion) when intending to explore and use this methodology is to seek out, and find, competent mentors (supervisors, professors, field experts). In my own work, I see such a first step not as a danger of risking pre-conceived notions, but as recognising the knowledge, and benefitting on, the wisdom from those that have used the methodology in their own work (Stern, 1994). For me, the value of using grounded theory is primarily in the ability to let the explanations ultimately come from the participants being studied.

However, I realise that this is a daunting task, trying to examine a relationships and behaviours within a phenomenon (like coping with drug abuse) from an unbiased in-depth perspective. Here, careful considerations needs to be taken. Like, acknowledging that grounded theory analysis and ethnographic work takes considerable amounts of time, which may turn out to be one of the major challenges when time is restricted, due to the nature of writing a Ph.D. thesis. It can therefore be hard to do the methodology real justice, resulting in unwanted or unintended 'shortcuts'.

In addition, considering one's own prior experiences, use literature or not from early on and one's general world-view are important issues to overcome. As I advocate, having some prior experiences

might be useful, and in addition, the roles established and interactions I will be having with my respondents (in interviews especially) might shape the data I am able to collect. Therefore, my approach is perhaps not that of 'purist' grounded work, more often seen in the Glasarian approach, but could be described as leaning more to constructivist. Still, it is important to recognize the view of Glaser's approach. Meaning that one should emphasize on the inductiveness of the research process, were discovery and emergence have a central place in the analysis, and with open coding playing an integral part when comparing the data, trying not to 'load' the data with descriptive labels, risking too much 'forcing' of the data by application.

More generally, in terms of strengths, applying grounded theory methods can be an effective way to deal with change. Used properly, it can help discover the participant's main concerns, and identify how they continually try to resolve and overcome these concerns (Glaser, 1992). If one embraces this line of thought, grounded theory becomes an effective approach to build new theories and to understand new phenomena.

Issues of dealing with change makes one of the original formulations by Glaser & Strauss particularly useful:

"[…] a great deal of sociological work, unlike research in physical science, never gets to the stage of rigours demonstration because the social structures being studied are undergoing continuous change. Older structures frequently take on new dimensions before highly rigours research can be accomplished. The changing of social structures means that a prime sociological task is the exploration – and sometimes the discovery – of emerging structures" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967:235).

Glaser & Strauss's observation of structural changes as continuous are an important one as they point to how static explanations and scientific work may suffer from not taking into account the ever shifting and very considerable structural changes. In this light, grounded theory becomes a sensible and reasonable approach that can guide a researcher into discovering new theory or modifying existing ones. The answer should not be more testing of hypotheses', but developing them further to strengthen the exploration and knowledge on a given social phenomenon.

4 Conclusions

Having made a discussion on the compatibility of two prominent methodologies, my main suggestion is that these two methodologies combined may produce a level of detail and interpretation that could be unavailable from other methodologies, an attribute I would consider an advantage. Through fieldwork, I can expect the ethnographic approach to provide in-depth understandings of the ways drug users interact with the specific rehabilitation program and their social surroundings, and at the same time, help me with valuable insights into rehabilitation work and drug use in general. Simultaneously, grounded theory can generate substantive theories on integration back into society from drug abuse and help answer how participating in rehabilitation programs can become an crucial factor in this process, thus supplying a means of extending or validating existing theories on rehabilitation from drug use in general.

Still, I want to remind that the shape of my project is in its 'early' stages, regarding commencing fieldwork, making the discussion of adopting these methodologies for this paper a reflective, but fruitful, process on expected results, outcomes and challenges of merging two methodologies.

However, as I have discussed throughout the paper, one needs to pay close attention to the rigours procedures (the constant comparison, open coding process, develop sensitizing concepts, the writing of memos) of grounded theory, and stick by them, so to not risk ending up 'claiming' to have employed the method, while only ending up using some of its attributes. Here, Atkinson makes an important point, on the dangers of treating grounded theory as a form of 'theory' in its own right, which is far from Glaser and Strauss first promotions on grounded theory as a characterisation of research. Grounded theory, according to Atkinson, should not be codified into some highly prescriptive, formulaic approach, which only would become conflicting to the ethnographic imagination (Atkinson, 2014:57). Therefore, when navigating this complex methodology it is important to remind one's self of the advice given by Stern: "Get thee to a mentor" (Stern, 1994:221).

In addition, Glaser, in my opinion, makes an important suggestion, that researchers should stop talking about grounded theory and get on with doing it (Glaser, 1998). While still considering myself as the 'novice researcher' in this regard, I agree with Glaser's advice of trying to set aside the anxiety of 'doing it right'. Instead, I will adhere to the principle of constant comparison of data, the theoretical sampling and focus on emergence, and through ethnographic fieldwork try to discover which approach helps me to achieve the balance between interpretation and data, which in the end produces a grounded theory. Finally, it is important to remember that the aim is not to discover *the* theory, but *a* theory, that can aid in the understanding and action in the area under investigation, which in my case concerns people with drug problems, their daily lives and everyday struggles, and the process of rehabilitation

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