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BOOK REVIEWS

Barney G. Glaser, *Choosing Classic Grounded Theory: a Grounded Theory Reader of Expert Advice*, CA: Sociology Press, Mill Valley 2014

This book is designed for the researcher seeking a methodology to aid in their development of substantive theories. Grounded theory methodology can be utilized in either qualitative or quantitative research. A difficulty researcher's face is deciding which grounded theory methodology to select. Unfortunately the majority of texts available do not even identify the version of grounded theory that is being put forth and the novice researcher is left unaware of the stark differences between methodologies. This book takes us back to the roots of grounded theory and why it is important to stay true to the original methodology. Dr. Glaser as co-founder of grounded theory explains the added value the researcher gains by using Classical Grounded Theory (CGT). The book outlines how and why different versions of grounded theory developed and the strengths of CGT as the only true grounded theory methodology. Dr. Glaser puts forward that all other grounded theory methodologies are variations of qualitative data analysis (QDA). This book provides the much needed clarity on what is and is not grounded theory. The book takes a pragmatic approach to answering key questions for both the experienced and novice researcher. Will CGT fit my data and area of research? Can I use CGT for my PhD? What questions should I ask to determine if CGT is suited for my research? Do I need a mentor? Can the

methodology fit the time frame of my research? Dr. Glaser's new book allows both the novice and expert researcher to better understand the role of CGT as a robust research methodology. This fifteen chapter 439 page book takes the reader through the process from selection to application of the methodology. The challenges and myths around the methodology are clearly outlined and the book identifies what is and is not CGT.

In the world of technology a google of "grounded theory" will produce a range of books offering the researcher an abundance of grounded theory methodologies and techniques to utilize. What is not apparent to the novice researcher is the epistemological issues that separate the various versions of grounded theory. Dr. Glaser points out that while similarities appear on the surface other forms of grounded theory put forth are variations of QDA and break the governing rules of true grounded theory. This is not to say they don't have value but should be seen as a form of QDA. This book provides the reader with a clear understanding of grounded theory and why researchers should take care not to blend or slur together what are totally different methodologies. Joining Dr. Glaser in this book are contributions by four outstanding experts in the field of grounded theory (Dr. Christiansen, Dr. Holton, Dr. Lowe and Dr. Simmons). Each expert has chapters

dedicated to the selection and use of CGT. For the PhD researcher a wide range of examples and supporting documentation is provided by those who have successfully used CGT methodology for their PhD dissertation.

Chapters one and two clarify grounded theory myths and the basic rules in selecting CGT as a methodology. Dr. Glaser points out that CGT is based on conceptualization and therefore it produces “enduring concepts for years compared to the stale dated descriptions” (Glaser 2014: 49) associated with QDA. The PhD researcher is given particular focus in these two chapters citing excellent dissertation examples and a candid approach to some of the challenges that the PhD researcher may face in selecting CGT as a methodology. For researchers new to grounded theory Dr. Glaser strips away much of the confusion around the different versions of grounded theory and provides sound advice on the use of mentors. Researchers who have the opportunity to attend workshops organised by Dr. Glaser cite the benefits they received and why it is strongly recommended. Dr. Glaser advocates that such workshops will benefit the new researcher, however, the methodology can be learned with or without a mentor. In fact mentors who do not understand CTG can potentially do more harm than good.

Chapter three is a contribution by Dr. Christiansen taking the reader through the research procedures, stages and unique terminology of CGT. Warnings are given for the novice CGT researcher of some of the common errors in the use of CGT. The use of technology for example “may lead to a built-in pre-framing” a problem that exists with QDA based methodologies.

Dr Glaser in Chapter four addresses the hallmark issue of conceptualization contrasted with descriptive generalization. The importance of being conceptual

is a core of CGT. The “GT researcher can start with the details of an existing case and constantly compare, generate a core category and its properties on an issue and start a substantive theory” (Glaser 2014: 144). This chapter brings out the importance of conceptualization. An excellent outline is given on how descriptive cases can be utilized as input data for CGT.

Chapters five to ten provide CGT background that can be used by the experienced and novice researcher. The desire by researchers in the social sciences to emulate the scientific world of research draw them to QDA methodologies that profess to be grounded theory but whose roots are firmly in QDA. Chapter five is focused on the novice researcher and in particular the PhD student and the importance for the supervisor to provide encouragement and not to act as a block to their ability to be creative and original. Dr. Glaser puts forward “Make no mistake about it, the best GT is done in the hands of beginners” (Glaser 2014: 157).

Dr. Christiansen in chapter six discusses ontology and epistemology and the debate on theory building. In chapters seven and eight Dr. Glaser discusses in detail the differences found in constructivist grounded theory and Straussian grounded theory and explains why these variations of QDA fail the researcher whose goal is to break through to new conceptualizations and new theories. These chapters provide the reader a clear separation between the different methodologies. The question of how and when to select CGT is covered with examples from researchers who were searching for a methodology that would allow them to work directly with the data to develop a theory beyond the limitations offer by descriptive research methods. Dr. Simmons in chapter nine provides the reader the historical perspective on the Constructivist and Straussian methodol-

ogies and why these methodologies have gone down the QDA path.

In chapter ten Dr. Lowe asks the PhD students four simple questions to help them decide if CGT is the methodology for them. If they answer “yes” to the four questions he encourages them to read on and discusses some of the potential challenges faced by PhD students who select CGT as a methodology.

Dr. Glaser in chapter eleven takes on the ongoing issue of credibility in qualitative research and puts forth in his book: *“credibility is not the question. The question for GT is being applicable to explaining how a main concern is continually resolved in a substantive area and its general, conceptual applicability... The theory has fit, relevance and works and is modifiable when compared, conceptually, with new data”* (Glaser 2014: 317).

The due diligence of the methodology and constant comparative analysis is what makes CGT work. The fact that it is based on conceptualization versus descriptive allows CGT to generate theories that go beyond the time constraints of descriptive based methodologies. This is highlighted in Chapter twelve by Dr. Holton in her discussion of CGT as a general research methodology. The reader is re-

minded again that the four pillars of CGT are; fit, work, relevance and modifiability

Dr. Glaser and Dr. Holton in chapter thirteen warn researchers of the dangers of mixing methodologies, and the importance of following well-defined methodology procedures. Chapter fourteen highlights the success of CGT in development of PhD dissertations. The final chapter fifteen reviews letters Dr. Glaser wrote defending the CGT approach.

In summary this is a well written book and displays the level of attention to detail that Dr. Glaser has become known for. The book is an excellent reference manual for anyone considering grounded theory as a methodology. It clearly portrays the strengths of CGT whilst being honest on some of the challenges that users of the methodology will face. Even advocates of Constructionist or Straussian grounded theory will not debate the importance of not blending these very different methodologies.

I would highly recommend this book to both PhD students and their supervisors. If you are beginning to explore grounded theory this is a “must read”.

Gary Evans

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Aims and Scope

Economics and Business Review is the successor to the Poznań University of Economics Review which was published by the Poznań University of Economics Press in 2001–2014. The Economics and Business Review is a quarterly journal focusing on theoretical and applied research work in the fields of economics, management and finance. The Review welcomes the submission of articles for publication dealing with micro, mezzo and macro issues. All texts are double-blind assessed by independent reviewers prior to acceptance.

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