Special Invited Paper: Continuities, Contradictions, and Critical Inquiry in Grounded Theory

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Abstract
What continuities and contradictions can qualitative researchers discern among versions of the grounded theory method? How do contradictions within the method affect research practice? How do new versions of grounded theory advance research practice and critical inquiry? To answer these questions, this keynote address begins with a brief overview of grounded theory for those who are unfamiliar with the method and subsequently discusses the continuities and contradictions between versions of the method. Constructivist grounded theory (CGT) uses the methodological strategies of the original version but builds on its pragmatist heritage, shifts its epistemological foundations, and resolves contradictions in earlier versions of the method. The result means placing grounded theory in the social constructionist tradition, viewing data as co-constructed with research participants, puncturing deeply held methodological preconceptions, and subsequently fostering a heightened methodological self-consciousness. The practice of CGT assists researchers in interrogating their data, nascent analyses, research actions, and themselves each step along the way. Subsequently, researchers can gain awareness of the pervasiveness of Anglo-North American worldviews throughout inquiry. CGT not only aids theorizing and defining and developing emergent critical questions during the research process but also brings power into purview.

Keywords
coding, constructivist grounded theory, epistemology, methodological self-consciousness, preconceptions, reflexivity

Before beginning my discussion of grounded theory, let me tell you about Emily, a 34-year-old woman who had lost a considerable amount of weight after being heavy all her life. Emily had survived two serious episodes of a life-threatening illness. Consider her remarks the following interview excerpts:

Emily: I started a diet that, uh, that, over the course of 6 months allowed me to lose 70 pounds.
KC: Mmm!
Emily: So, I’ve gone from just over 200 pounds to just under 130 pounds, in a very short amount of time.
KC: Mmm!
Emily: Uh, and, uh, that has been an enormous life change, I mean, obviously, but, uh, beyond that, uh, it’s been a very interesting experience for me, certainly in terms of my own self-perception, given that I have a difficult time, sort of coming to terms with the reflection in the mirror, when I walk by a store, for instance, when I catch reflections off the windows, for instance. It’s a freakish experience because I don’t know that person. Because it was, again, so quick. And, I have to say, it’s been reminiscent for me of my previous experience of having to reorient myself

How Do We Make Sense of Such Statements?
I propose using grounded theory methods. For newcomers to grounded theory, and perhaps to qualitative research more generally, here is a definition. Grounded theory methods consist of a systematic approach to qualitative inquiry for the purpose of

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Grounded theory construction. This method begins with inductive data and adopts key strategies for doing research. Since its earliest days when Glaser and Strauss (1967) created grounded theory, the method has emphasized data analysis. It does have implications for data collection, which are beginning to be articulated (Charmaz, 2014a, 2015b). Grounded theory uses comparative methods throughout the analysis, as I explain below. A major benefit of using grounded theory is that it inspires researchers’ continued involvement in the research process. In short, grounded theory is an interactive method from the beginning of the research through the last draft of the report.

Which strategies form the core of grounded theory? What continuities can we discern among versions of the method? What contradictions can we find between different versions of grounded theory? How do these contradictions affect research practice? How do new versions of grounded theory contribute to theorizing and to critical inquiry? Which practices do we need to enact?

To answer these questions, I begin with a brief overview of grounded theory and the logic of its strategies for those who are unfamiliar with the method. Next, I argue that shifting the ontological and epistemological foundations of grounded theory to the constructivist version resolves contradictions in the method and strengthens it. Constructivist grounded theory (CGT) follows the inductive, emergent, open-ended, and iterative approach of Glaser and Strauss’s first statement of the method but goes further. CGT integrates developments in qualitative inquiry over the past 60 years and, moreover, treats data and theorizing about these data as constructed, not discovered. Thus, I introduce how CGT rejects the positivist epistemology of earlier versions and builds on the pragmatist heritage of Strauss (1959, 1961, 1993). The result makes the method more flexible, places it in the social constructionist tradition, brings reflexivity into the forefront, and opens a path to critical inquiry.

Grounded theory means that we researchers consider and assess all possible theoretical understandings of our data, including our own new theoretical constructions. We develop tentative interpretations about the data through constructing codes, the labels we give fragments of data, and nascent theoretical categories, the abstract terms we construct to account for batches of data and clusters of codes. Then, we check and refine our major categories. We do that in several ways by (1) using our categories to comb through earlier data that we collected before defining the category, (2) returning to the field site(s) and gathering more data, and (3) building focused questions to flesh out our categories during later data collection.

What distinguishes grounded theorists from other researchers? Grounded theorists value theory construction over description, patterns in the data over individual stories, developing fresh concepts and theories over applying received theory, and theorizing processes over assuming stable structures. Grounded theorists view the contexts, situations, and actions constituting structures as shifting, as well as our responses to them.

Grounded theory is more than a specific method of qualitative analysis. It is a general method and its strategies have been generalized—and stretched over the decades. Questions about grounded theory supersede the method. Rather, current questions and challenges about grounded theory explicate issues pervading qualitative inquiry. Think about adopting British psychologists Henwood and Pigeon’s (2003) view of grounded theory. They see it as a useful nodal point where researchers can discuss and debate contemporary issues throughout qualitative inquiry.

Such discussions and debates raise fundamental questions about qualitative inquiry, how we should conduct it, which purposes it serves, as well as claims about what grounded theory really is, and whose versions should be followed. Grounded theory is a contested method from within and without. Despite being contested, grounded theory has become the most widely adopted qualitative method.

Nonetheless, researchers have often misunderstood and misused grounded theory. (Understand that what stands as misunderstanding and misusing the method flows from specific perspectives of it.) That said, tensions between its positivist and pragmatist roots have been evident from the beginnings of the method until the present. These tensions contribute to misunderstanding and have resulted in contradictions in the method and contested versions of it. Yet, the development of different versions of the method opens new spaces for integrating methodological advancements occurring over almost six decades.

**What Continuities Are Discernible Between Versions of Grounded Theory?**

**Different Versions of Grounded Theory Rely on Similar Methodological Strategies**

Essentially, grounded theory approaches are a constellation of methods (see also Bryant, 2017; Charmaz, 2010, 2014a). Proponents of various versions of grounded theory share certain common methodological strategies.

Grounded theorists of various persuasions subscribe to the following research practices (Charmaz, 2014a, 2015a), even if they do not consistently follow all of them:

1. Going back and forth between collecting and analyzing data—grounded theory is an iterative process.
   a. Data collection sparks analysis.
   b. Analysis focuses subsequent data collection.
   c. In turn, grounded theorists conduct later data collection to refine and check their developing analyses.

2. Focusing on what is happening as Glaser (1978) prescribed—what are people doing? What do grounded theorists define as happening? They attend to emergent actions and processes that they identify in the data rather than rely on preconceived general topics, themes, and theories.
a. A major emphasis is on learning how processes develop and change.

b. From the beginning, grounded theorists think about conceptualizing what is happening.

3. Making comparisons throughout the research process is known as the constant comparative method.
   a. Grounded theorists compare data with data, data with codes, codes with codes, and codes with categories.
   b. Categories are emergent conceptual terms to account for the data and codes. Researchers can either raise a code to a category when the code possesses analytic power or create an abstract term that captures and conceptualizes descriptive codes. Analytic codes hold "carrying capacity" (Charmaz, 2014a, p. 247) to put it in Adele Clarke’s terms—turning such codes into categories raises the conceptual level of the analysis.

4. Through making comparisons, grounded theorists tease out the properties, dimensions, and boundaries of their categories and illuminate both visible and hidden processes.

5. Using data (e.g., narratives, descriptions, cases, and numbers) to create original conceptual categories. The focus in grounded theory is on the analysis. That said, grounded theorists need not be rigid about one style of presentation of the analysis. We also need to think about audiences and the purpose of our reports.

6. Creating inductive categories through systematic coding and memo writing. Coding means assigning an analytic term to a fragment of data, while memo-writing consists of writing about our codes, emerging categories, connections between these categories, and questions, concerns, and musings that arise along the way.

7. Concentrating on defining and elaborating a category or categories rather than addressing a specific empirical topic.

8. Constructing new theory rather than rely on applying existing theories.

9. Developing and checking theoretical ideas with later data.

10. Stating the implications for professional practice and public policy.

To give an idea of how grounded theory works in practice, recall Emily’s story when she tells about seeing her reflected image. How can we analyze Emily’s statements? What might we think is happening in these data? What does Emily mean when she says:

…It’s been a very interesting experience for me, certainly in terms of my own self-perception, given that I have a difficult time, sort of coming to terms with the reflection in the mirror, when I walk by a store, for instance, when I catch reflections off the windows, for instance. It’s a freakish experience, because I don’t know that person.

How might a grounded theorist code Emily’s statement? Although researchers analyze what is happening while interviewing and collecting data (Charmaz, 2015b), coding is generally acknowledged as the first major analytic strategy of grounded theory. In my view, coding is a heuristic device, it’s a way of seeing and defining our data. But these ways of seeing and defining reflect us as well as what we encounter in the empirical world. Coding is a way of engaging with data, a way of stretching our view, expanding knowledge, and raising questions. Codes do not reflect inherent truths. Instead, they reflect what we see and define at a particular point in time, and that may change. Hence, we can change the names we give our codes for a more telling term.

| Initial Grounded Theory Codes | Emily’s Interview Statement |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Contextualizing concern       | It’s been a very interesting experience for me, certainly in terms of my own self-perception, given that I have a difficult time, sort of coming to terms with the reflection in the mirror, when I walk by a store, for instance, when I catch reflections off the windows, for instance. It’s a freakish experience because I don’t know that person. |
| Joining self and body         |                            |
| Struggling to reconcile past and present images of body and self |                            |
| Catching glimpses of new body |                            |
| Seeing unsettling images      |                            |
| Disavowing the unrecognizable image as self |                            |
| Experiencing a lag between the new body and self |                            |

Our initial engagement with coding can give us ideas to work with. Already I have gained some interesting ideas about these data. “Experiencing a lag between the new body and self” sparks ideas and speaks to experiences beyond weight. Seeing those unsettling images is an intriguing experience to follow. The notion of “disavowing the unrecognizable image as self” captures my attention.

The data we collect, the codes we construct, the questions we ask, and the comparisons we make, all shape our emerging analyses.

Now let’s look at other research participants’ experience. I followed a subset of my research participants over many years. Think about Tina’s statement as her previously invisible disability became apparent. How does Emily’s statement compare with Tina’s?

Tina: I’m all stooped over, you know, I catch a glimpse of myself in ah, like a window, it’s very shocking sometimes what I see. (My emphasis)

KC: In which way?

Tina: Well, I can see that, other people can see is that, you know, my leg, I can hardly walk on it. And I feel like somehow I’m not a whole person and people can look at it and feel sympathetic, but they can look at you and see you as less than whole, you know. (Charmaz, 1991, p. 111)
Tina echoes Emily’s concern about the jarring effect of seeing unsettling images of one’s body. Tina’s story also brings in the added dimensions of wholeness, its absence, and sympathy. What is the relationship between body image, self, and sympathy? What can we learn by comparing data? Bonnie’s statement gives some clues when she talks about being in pain and not being able to breathe.

*Bonnie:* I do not like that look when someone looks at me when I’m in pain. I don’t like that look.

*KC:* What is that?

**Bonnie:** ... it’s just that look of sympathy or empathy ... when I couldn’t breathe, Joe was here, he took me to the doctor and he was just a total jerk, I mean he didn’t want to take me to the doctor, he said, “I haven’t eaten and I’m tired.” He was just that way. So when he came back [from taking her to the hospital’s emergency service], he did say something kind of funny, it was like, “Gawd, I need morphine.” “For what?” He said, “so I can handle your pain.” ... I mean the pain in his eyes, I mean it was just so totally beyond him because he’s never experienced anything [like that] ... and he knew it was real, he knew it. And I could see it. I just don’t like that look.

Bonnie’s reflection tells of moments when suffering becomes visible and real to those who can—must—look and act. Despite his initial refusal to help, Joe soon sensed that Bonnie needed critical care. Defining “seeing suffering as real” gives me another code for making comparisons. Bonnie’s story also reveals the tensions between the potential helper’s self-concerns and the escalating crisis. Tina’s story tells of people who see her disability but can turn away from it. Like Tina, Bonnie speaks of the unsettling images of body and self that are reflected by another person. Her account brings further complexity into the analysis. What does it mean when a close friend refuses to help? For getting immediate care? For images of self and one’s value? Bonnie’s story also raises further analytic questions about how images of the person sick body not only permeate the moment but also may puncture other people’s taken for granted views of the sick person. Further comparisons with other data may reveal conditions when the illness, which had lurked in the background leaps into the foreground.

**Why Are Epistemological Assumptions Important?**

**Epistemological Assumptions Profoundly Affect Research Practice and Knowledge Production**

Researchers from a variety of perspectives can use grounded theory strategies. Some proponents of grounded theory claim that this method can be used with any epistemology or perspective. My response to this claim is “yes” and “no.” Grounded theorists who adhere to different versions of the method can use the strategies of coding data, memo-writing, theoretical sampling, and sorting. How they use these strategies differs according to their epistemological assumptions. Thus, what they produce flows from their assumptions and concrete practices, both of which may be implicit or wholly taken for granted.

A few proponents of grounded theory even view this method as having no epistemology. I disagree. Buried underneath any method is a theory of knowledge. In their 2007 article in *Qualitative Health Research*, Carter and Little state: “A reflexive researcher actively adopts a theory of knowledge. A less reflexive researcher implicitly adopts a theory of knowledge” (2007, p. 1319). The theory of knowledge to which we subscribe or our claim to having no theory of knowledge has profound implications for which research questions we ask, the data we collect, our relationships with research participants, and how we render our analyses.

Underlying the views that grounded theory lacks an epistemology is the assumption that the strategies of grounded theory are neutral. Methodological strategies may be more or less helpful but they are not neutral. They come from somewhere at sometime. Ultimately, our methodological strategies derive from value positions and contain deeply held assumptions. Such fundamental assumptions inform what we do during our research in both subtle and obvious ways. One much contested assumption about positivist grounded theory is Glaser’s notion that we can enter our research with no preconceptions. He argues that reading earlier research and theory will preconceive how researchers interpret the data.

An increasing number of grounded theorists disagree (e.g., Bryant, 2017; Charmaz, 2000, 2008, 2014a; Clarke, 2005; Dunne, 2011; Henwood & Pidgeon, 2003; Thornberg, 2012; Thornberg & Dunne, in press). Grounded theorists can develop their critical faculties to subject earlier works to thorough critique.

We all make assumptions about the world and about our methods. These assumptions shape our standpoints and starting points. Thus, our assumptions shape what we do during research and affect whether, when, how, and to what extent our standpoints change throughout the research process. Conducting qualitative inquiry means learning about the empirical world. Unlike earlier grounded theorists, constructivist grounded theorists attend to how, when, and to what extent our standpoints change during the research process.

CGT is located in time, space, and circumstance rather than general and separate from its origins and aimed toward abstract understanding rather than explanation and prediction. We constructivists assume that researchers are a part of what we see, we cannot stand apart from it. Our views are multiple and interpretive, not singular and self-evident (Charmaz & Henwood, in press).

Most of us would agree that our research participants’ standpoints change with their experience, and with the women I have quoted, it is a deeply embodied experience. Years before her statement above, Tina had told me about unsettling contrasts between how she experienced her body and the images of self-reflected to her by other people. At that time, Tina’s arthritis caused her to suffer from debilitating pain but it was visible only to herself. Instead, she looked like an exceptionally attractive young woman, an image to which she gave considerable attention. Tina said,
I may look like I’m healthy and all this stuff and I get—all these guys start making catcalls and I’m in pain and it just seems incongruous. I go, “What are they whistling at?” I usually identify with how I feel, even though I go through a lot of effort to make myself look good, I still identify with how I feel. It’s like being—feeling like an old person in a young person . . . It’s like only an old person is entitled to have all this pain. (Emphasis added)

When we compare Tina’s concerns at different points in time, we see how her standpoints change. Similarly, our standpoints change as we engage with the data and our developing analyses. Following CGT means attending to our standpoints and how they shift and change.

What Are the Contradictions Between Versions of Grounded Theory?

The Positivist and Pragmatist Underpinnings of Grounded Theory Result in Contradictions Between Versions of the Method

Objectivist versions of the grounded theory method echo key tenets of positivism. CGT expresses its pragmatist heritage. This version of the method shifts the foundations of the method from positivism to a relativistic epistemology. By shifting the epistemological foundations of grounded theory, CGT changes research practice. The following major differences between objectivist and CGT lead to divergent research practices:

Approaches to Grounded Theory

|                | Objectivist                                                                 | Constructivist                                                                   |
|----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Avows no preconceptions (from the literature review and extant theories) | Grapples with preconceptions                                                     |
| Treats data as unproblematic and self-correcting: “All is data” (Glaser, 1998) | Advocates “theoretical agnosticism” (Henwood & Pidgeon, 2003)                   |
| Reflexivity is optional                                                 | Assumes data are co-constructed, relationships matter                           |
| Discover generality abstract of time, place, or individuals—erases difference | Reflexivity is crucial Data analyses—and methods—are constructed in specific times, locations, and situations |
| Methods are neutral.                                                    | Methods reflect values.                                                          |

The two approaches reveal striking differences in their respective stands. First, constructivist grounded theorists go beyond and challenge the conventional grounded theory dictum of “no preconceptions” (Glaser, 2013). Yes, constructivists do examine whether and to what extent earlier research and theorizing influences the research process. But we subject earlier works to rigorous critique. In this sense, we engage in what Henwood and Pidgeon (2003) call “theoretical agnosticism.” We are not led blindly by existing research and theoretical literatures. Instead, we dissect and assess them with critical skepticism. Theoretical agnosticism involves doubt. As Locke, Golden-Biddle, and Feldman (2008) have argued, doubt is generative for theory because it drives the fundamental imaginative work for theory construction. Doubt involves opening up what we take for granted as well as scrutinizing our data, methods, and developing analysis.

Second, constructivist grounded theorists go significantly further in examining our preconceptions than earlier grounded theorists. In contrast to them, we grapple with our deeply held preconceptions about the world and our locations within it (Charmaz, 2009, 2014a, 2014b). Thus, we scrutinize where we stand in relation to power, privilege, and the specific positions we hold in everyday life.

Our standpoints arise from our assumptions and shape our most fundamental ideas, that is, what we take for granted to be true. Mannheim (1936) argued this point a long time ago. Standpoints are ideological and unquestioned. Taking Mannheim’s view a step further, the most important things to know about a person are what he or she takes for granted. And these include power, privilege, and position.

Third, constructivist grounded theorists are aware of the pivotal role of language. Preconceptions are embedded in the very language that we use. As Clarke (2005, p. 12) declares, researchers “cannot help but come to almost any research project already ‘knowing’ in some ways, already inflicted, already affected, already ‘infected.’” Language shapes our views, how we know the world. In keeping with its pragmatist antecedents, constructivist grounded theorists attend to language and how it shapes participants’ meanings and our own.

If we take another look at Emily’s initial statement, we might sense a broader view of shared language and meaning than words alone. Emily said,

Emily: I started a diet that, uh, that, over the course of 6 months allowed me to lose 70 pounds.
KC: Mmm!
Emily: So, I’ve gone from just over 200 pounds to just under 130 pounds, in a very short amount of time.
KC: Mmm!
Emily: Uh, and, uh, that has been an enormous life change . . .

My incoherent murmurings at first may seem irrelevant. Nonetheless, I am engaging in co-construction of the interview. Each “Mmm” substitutes for words. Along with my body language, gestures, and tone, these sounds validate Emily’s words and encourage her to talk. Like any interviewer or observer, I become part of what constitutes the data.

Treating our language as problematic and open to scrutiny is part of the reflexivity that constructivist grounded theorists invoke in our research. Reflexivity is crucial for conducting CGT. It merges with the foundations of inquiry and is inextricable from it.

Fourth, objectivist grounded theorists accept the positivistic goal of aiming to discover context-free generalizations abstract of time, place, and individuals. This approach erases difference among people, groups, cultures, and societies (Clarke, 2005, 2009; Clarke, Friese, and Washburn, 2015). In contrast, we
constructivist grounded theorists seek to be aware of and understand difference. We locate our studies in time, place, cultures, societies, and the conditions of inquiry. And we see our methods as resting on values, rather than founded in neutrality.

**How Does CGT Foster Critical Inquiry?**

**CGT Gives Us a Route to Conducting Critical Qualitative Inquiry**

CGT is aimed toward abstract understanding rather than explanation and prediction. To borrow a phrase from critical psychologist Stainton-Rogers (2013, p. 339), we aim for “explication not explanation” and thus move grounded theory away from its positivist roots. CGT offers an alternative to earlier versions predicated on positivism with its two touchstones of objectivity and empiricism, what many researchers call “naïve empiricism.” Rather than aiming for the positivistic goal of explanation of abstract generalizations, explication leads to insight and understanding. It necessitates gaining intimate knowledge of the research topic, participants, and settings. CGT encourages contextualizing the research in ways many grounded theorists have not done.

The pragmatist roots of CGT shape the methods focused on studying meanings and action. This focus supports developing critical inquiry. Meanings matter—whether given in language or hidden in silences. Actions can speak without words. All can heighten our awareness of the reach and content of power. CGT fosters taking power into account.

CGT helps us to unveil what we take for granted as well as what our participants take for granted. Excavating what our participants take for granted enables us to understand them in the context of their lives, including their actions, and concerns as political and public actors. Similarly, engaging in reflexivity helps us to excavate our preconceptions, to understand ourselves as methodologists and researchers, and to learn how our preconceptions reflect our positions (Mruck and Mey, in press; Ruokonen-Engler and Siouti, 2016). Social and cultural preconceptions become engraved in our consciousness. These derive from social class, gender, race, age, health, and professional statuses. If we don’t excavate our preconceptions, we foreclose a valuable route into critical inquiry.

In short, CGT encourages us to engage in Harding’s (1991) “strong reflexivity” and scrutinizes ourselves from our participants’ standpoints. She also asks us to stand behind our participants and view the specific social and cultural content of our research in addition to what we do and how we do it when analyzing data. Engaging in critical inquiry intensifies our need to examine the sources and quality of our data. The stories above indicate the depth of the women’s experience and the openness of their reflections. In the excerpt below, Tina alludes to connections between image and illusion:

Tina: A lot of people, they miss the arthritis or something, I don’t know what they see actually. But I feel like they miss it, or they discount it or they don’t bring it up or something. And to me, it’s like my main preoccupation. So it’s kind of strange, in dealing with it or coping with it. So it’s almost like, you know, just all illusion, like a film or something. Or if you can just present something, a certain type of image, you don’t have to deal with all the heavy stuff.

Tina’s evocative insight raises intriguing questions about relationships and tensions between image and illusion that transcend illness. We might not only further interrogate the experience of illness but also investigate relationships between image, illusion, and ideology in other realms. CGT not only aids researchers in theorizing but also fosters defining and developing emergent critical questions during the research process.

Qualitative researchers, including myself, have exported Anglo North American qualitative methods across the world. Critics (e.g., Alasuutari, 2004; Amelina & Faist, 2012; Gobo, 2011; Tarozzi, 2011) are correct that qualitative inquiry is imbued with taken-for-granted Anglo North American ideas and approaches. Neither fit conducting research in all communities and cultures. Indigenous qualitative researchers here in Canada and across the globe have critiqued and resisted conventional qualitative inquiry (e.g., Kovach, 2016; Smith, 1999). Their critiques and actions indicate the limits of Anglo-North American methods. Numerous paths lead to knowledge and produce numerous knowledges.

When we go deeper into our preconceptions, we find further obstacles that impede developing critical inquiry. Among them are taken-for-granted territorial stakes—for ourselves, our disciplines and professions, our theoretical and methodological approaches—and the careerism and competition embedded in these stakes. Methodological self-righteousness likely follows with claims that my way is the way, the only way. Taken together, they result in making a method an idol and adhering to it with unquestioning dedication: methodolatry.

**Conclusion**

In sum, the practice of CGT assists us in interrogating our data, nascent analyses, research actions, and ourselves each step...
along the way. A constructivist stance on inquiry sees our analyses as interpretive renderings, not as objective reports or the only view of the topic. As a result, we increase our awareness of the relativity of the empirical world with its multiple realities and multiple views of our analyses and of our methods.

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Notes
1. Grounded theory is both method and methodology in contemporary use of the terms. It is a method because it offers specific tools for conducting research. Although the definition of “methodology” actually refers to the study of method, many researchers today use the term to elucidate and/or to justify the principles they invoked to conduct their studies. A methodology provides the underlying rationale of a particular approach to inquiry such as grounded theory. Thus, many researchers use the term to explain their reasoning behind which approach they took as well as the specific tools and techniques they used and how they used them.

2. In contrast, Glaser (2013) views much of contemporary qualitative inquiry as in opposition to grounded theory. He opposes such common practices as attending to epistemology, conducting a literature review, transcribing interviews, and being concerned about gathering accurate data. Constructivist grounded theory, in contrast, does not oppose qualitative inquiry.

3. This comment from Tina appeared in Charmaz (1995, p. 666). I interviewed Tina intermittently over a period of 18 years.

4. See Ralph, Birks, and Chapman (2015) for their discussion of “methodological dynamism” in grounded theory which addresses how historical moments, contemporary methodological conversations, generational differences, and methodological audiences result in epistemological shifts.

5. Also see Redman-MacLaren and Mills (2015) for pivotal questions to raise about how power, privilege, and colonialism can enter the research process.

6. The term, “methodolatry,” has a long history in psychology going back to Bakan’s (1969) book. Since then, this concept has been taken up in the discipline’s methodological and counseling literatures (e.g., Danziger, 1985; Gurman & Kniskern, 1978). Janesick (1994) introduced the concept to qualitative inquiry, and Chamberlain (2000) has provided an excellent discussion of its implications for qualitative health research.

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