GROUNDED THEORY

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IMAGINE

- *"There is nothing but imagination that can ever supply [us] an inkling of the truth. [We] can stare stupidly at phenomena; but in the absence of imagination they will not connect themselves together in any rational way"*

(C. S. Peirce 1896,CP 1:46)

GROUNDED THEORY

Grounded Theory explains action, interaction, or process by studying phenomenon to develop a theory. GT is a process for developing theory, not testing theory. It is an inductive way of generating theory by studying participants in the field where the phenomenon is accessed.

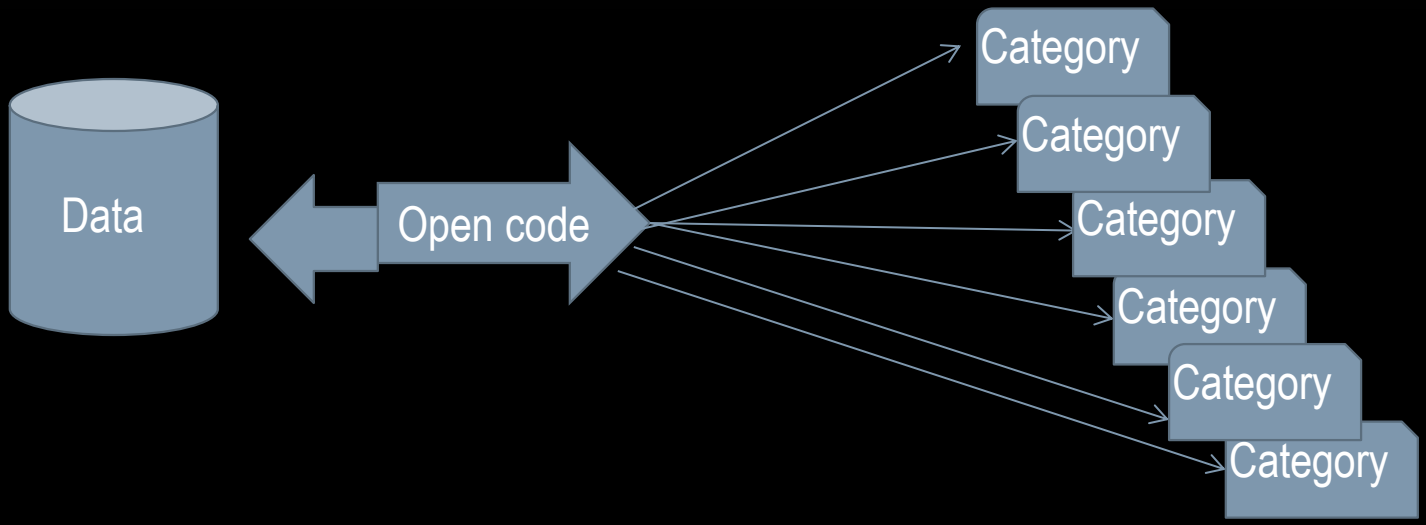
Glaser, B. and Strauss, A.L. (1967). The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research Chicago: Aldine.

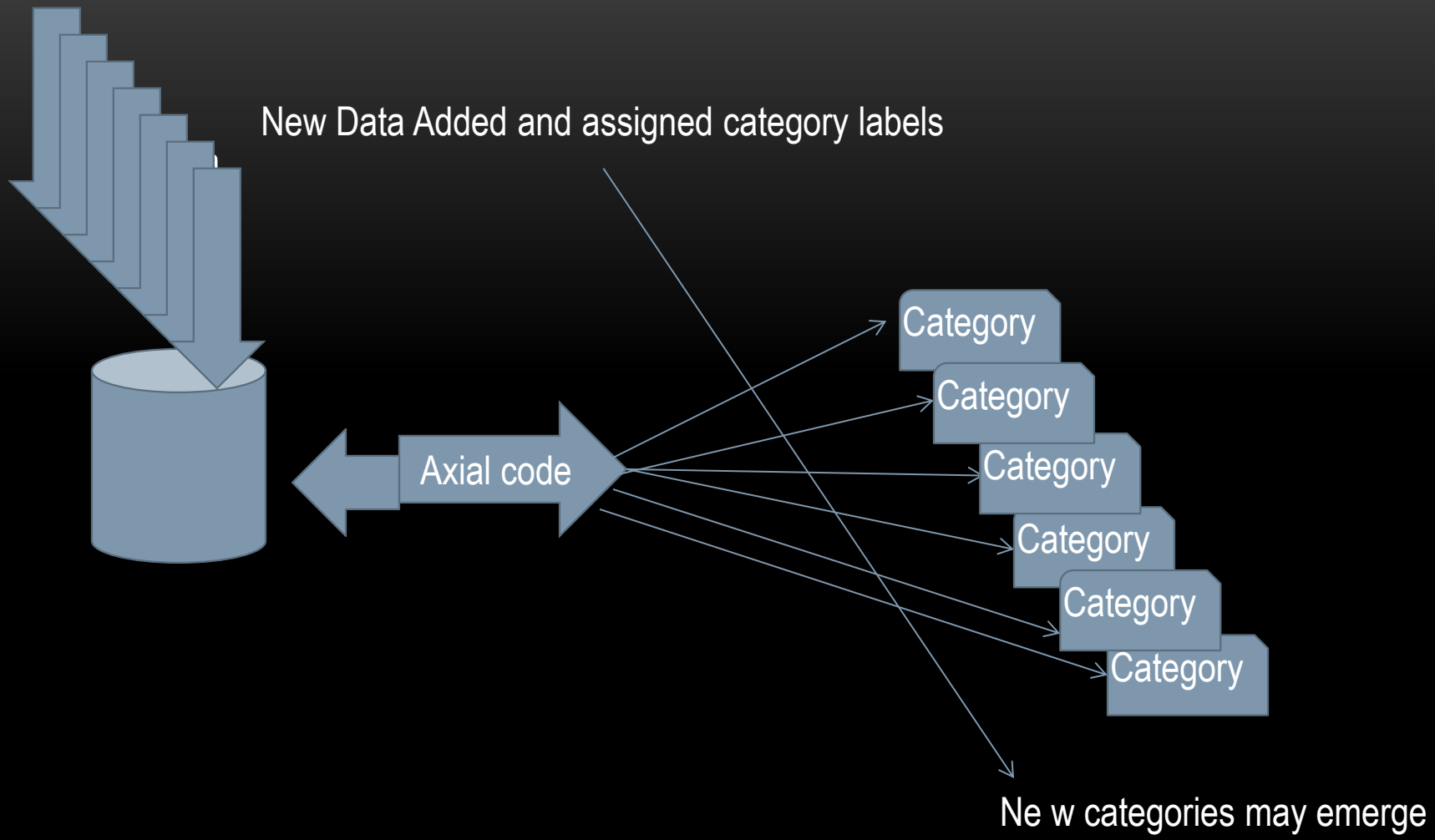
Terminology

Category - unit of analysis
Causal conditions - axial coding
Central phenomenon - axial coding
Coding Paradigm
Conditional matrix - conditions and consequences
Constant Comparative
Context
Dimensionalised
Discriminant sampling
In vivo codes
Intervening conditions
Memoing
Open Coding
Properties
Propositions
Saturation
Selective coding
Strategies
Substantive level theory
Theoretical sampling

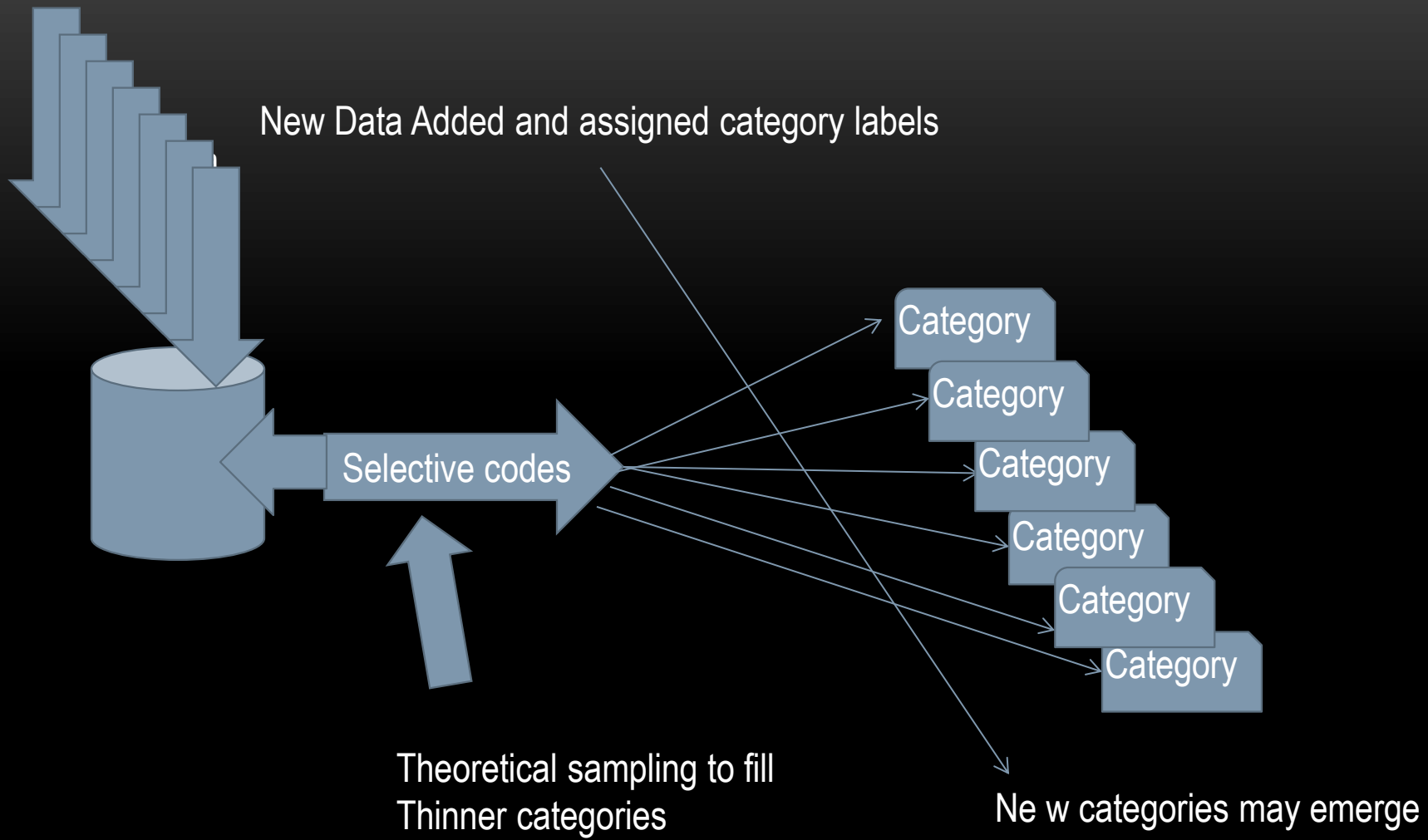
Method

- Phenomenon to study
- Participants
- Procedure
- Data sources
- Data collection, analysis and writing
- Causal conditions
- Phenomena
- Context
- Intervening conditions
- Strategies
- Consequences


Data
Open code
Category
Category
Category
Category
Category
Category



Theorising continues


New Data Added and assigned category labels
Selective codes
Category
Category
Category
Category
Category
Category
Theoretical sampling to fill
Thinner categories
Ne w categories may emerge
Theorising continues

TECHNIQUES AND PROCEDURES

- Grounded Theory (GT) was an approach developed by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss in 1960s.
- GT was a response to move away from verification studies so prevalent in sociology for most of the twentieth century dominated by Talcott Parsons search for ‘Grand Theory’ and his ‘structural functionalism’.
- If you want to know more about the history of sociology you should read Chapter 1 of Burrell & Morgan’s seminal text: Sociological Paradigms. Limited copies are available in the library.
- GT started from data without preconception by examining a phenomenon in detail adopting a systematic approach.

TECHNIQUES AND PROCEDURES

The essential elements of the process of conducting a Grounded Theory study are:

- Theoretical sensitivity
- Data collection – Theoretical / Purposive sampling
- Open coding – Memoing is a necessary process to record what is going on.
- Axial coding - Memoing
- Theoretical coding using the *constant comparative method* – Memoing
- Theoretical sampling
- Constant comparative method – continuously compare new data to previous data
- Core variable emerges from data
- Selective coding and delimiting of further data collection
- Sorting and writing the report

KEY TERMS

- **Open coding** is the first step attempting to identify pieces of data to form initial categories that you later refine. This is the start of the coding process and it is like solving a puzzle. So you might begin by taking pieces of text and grouping them in a category label you choose and assign. It is a first step in making sense of data.
- Use **Code Notes** to give reasons for choices made – justifications. You will retain and maintain this through the project. Code notes will contain notes on **properties and dimensions** linked to the code name. For example, pain as a category code may have a range of properties that relate to cause of pain.

PAIN PROPERTIES AND DIMENSIONS

Properties:

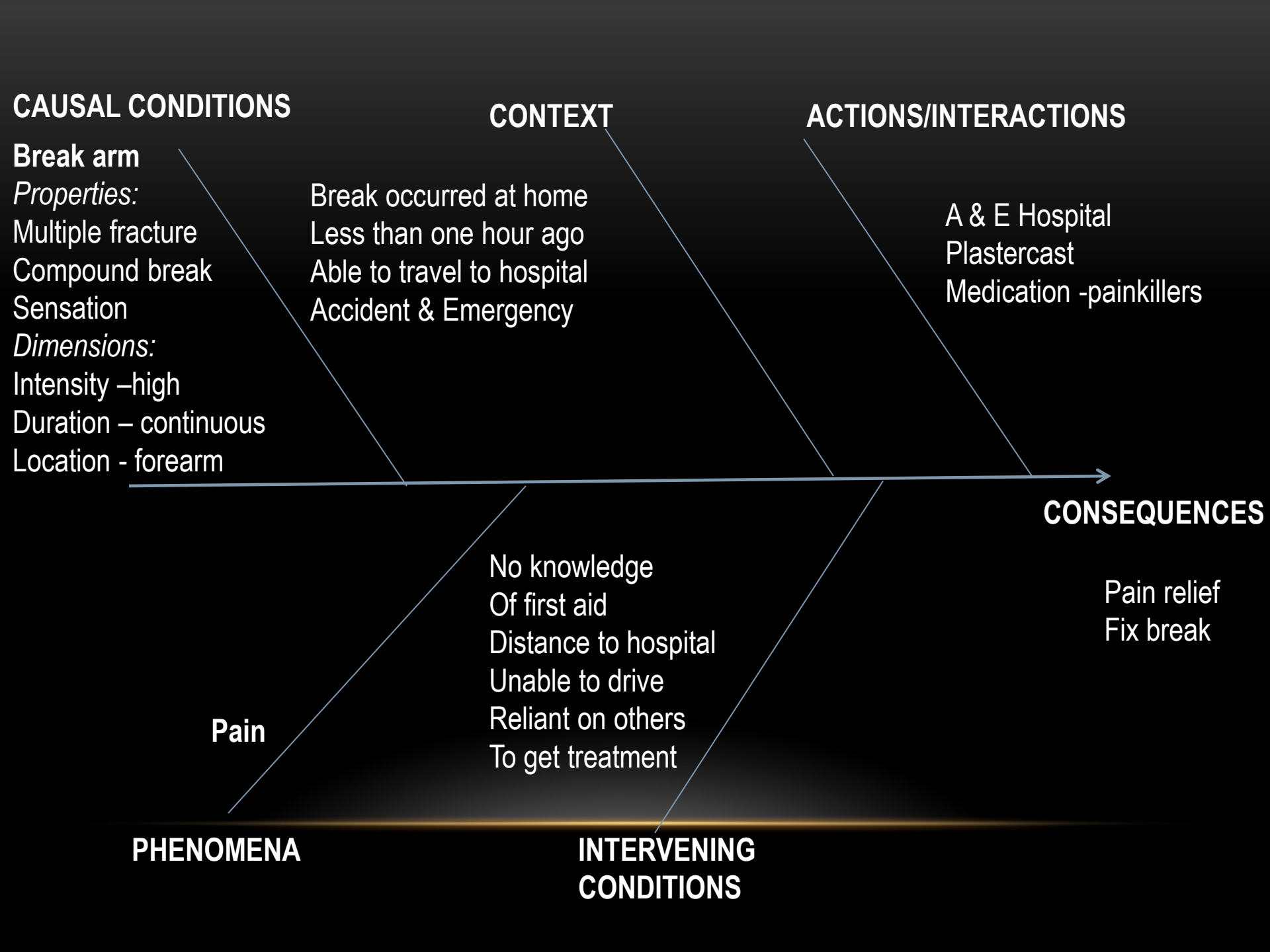
- Multiple fracture
- Compound break
- Sensation

Dimensions:

- Intensity –high
- Duration – continuous
- Location - forearm

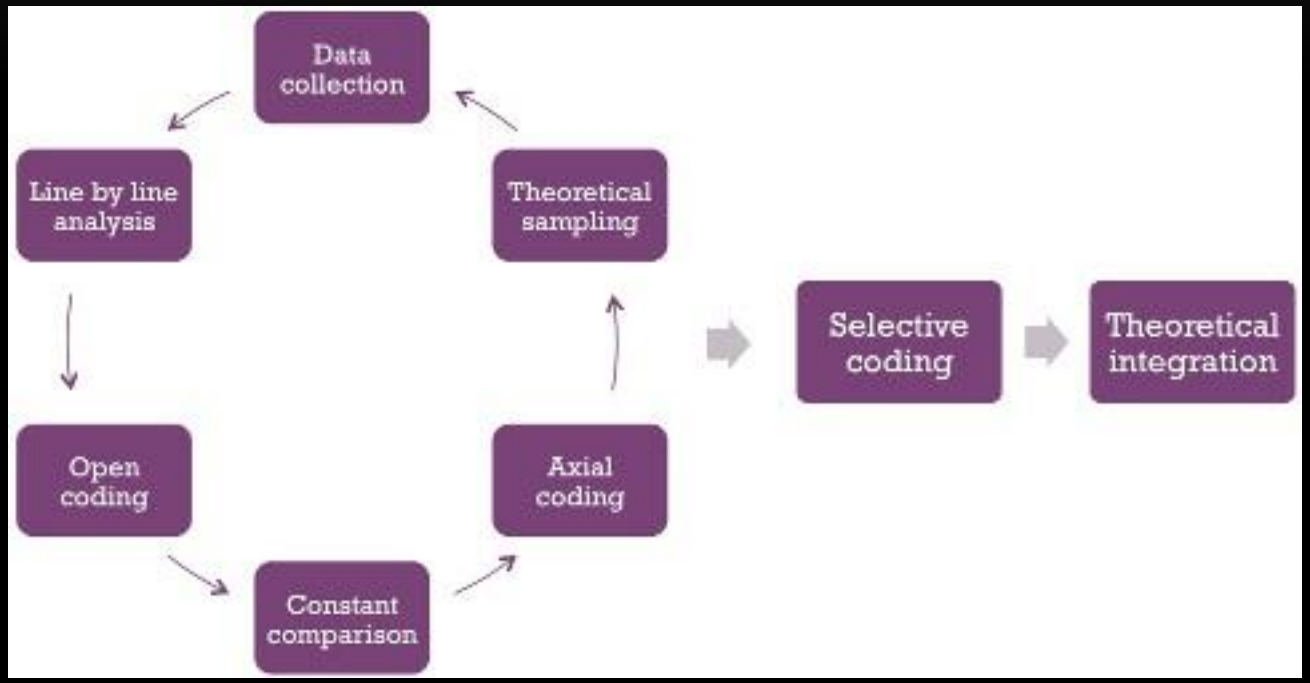
AXIAL CODES

- Relate categories
- Continue developing categories in terms of properties and dimensions
- Memo writing is done to reflect this purpose
- What, when, where, with whom, how and with what consequences
- Axial coding is a skill that is developed with practice
- Logic diagrams may be used as axial codes develop
- Theoretical notes sensitising and summarising thoughts about theoretical sampling i.e. what additional data would help develop a more robust theory to explain the phenomena?
- Operational memos too may be kept as reflexive reminders of process


CAUSAL CONDITIONS
Break arm
Properties:
Multiple fracture
Compound break
Sensation
Dimensions:
Intensity –high
Duration – continuous
Location - forearm
CONTEXT
Break occurred at home
Less than one hour ago
Able to travel to hospital
Accident & Emergency
ACTIONS/INTERACTIONS
A & E Hospital
Plastercast
Medication -painkillers
CONSEQUENCES
Pain relief
Fix break
No knowledge
Of first aid
Distance to hospital
Unable to drive
Reliant on others
To get treatment
Pain
PHENOMENA
INTERVENING CONDITIONS

KEY TERMS

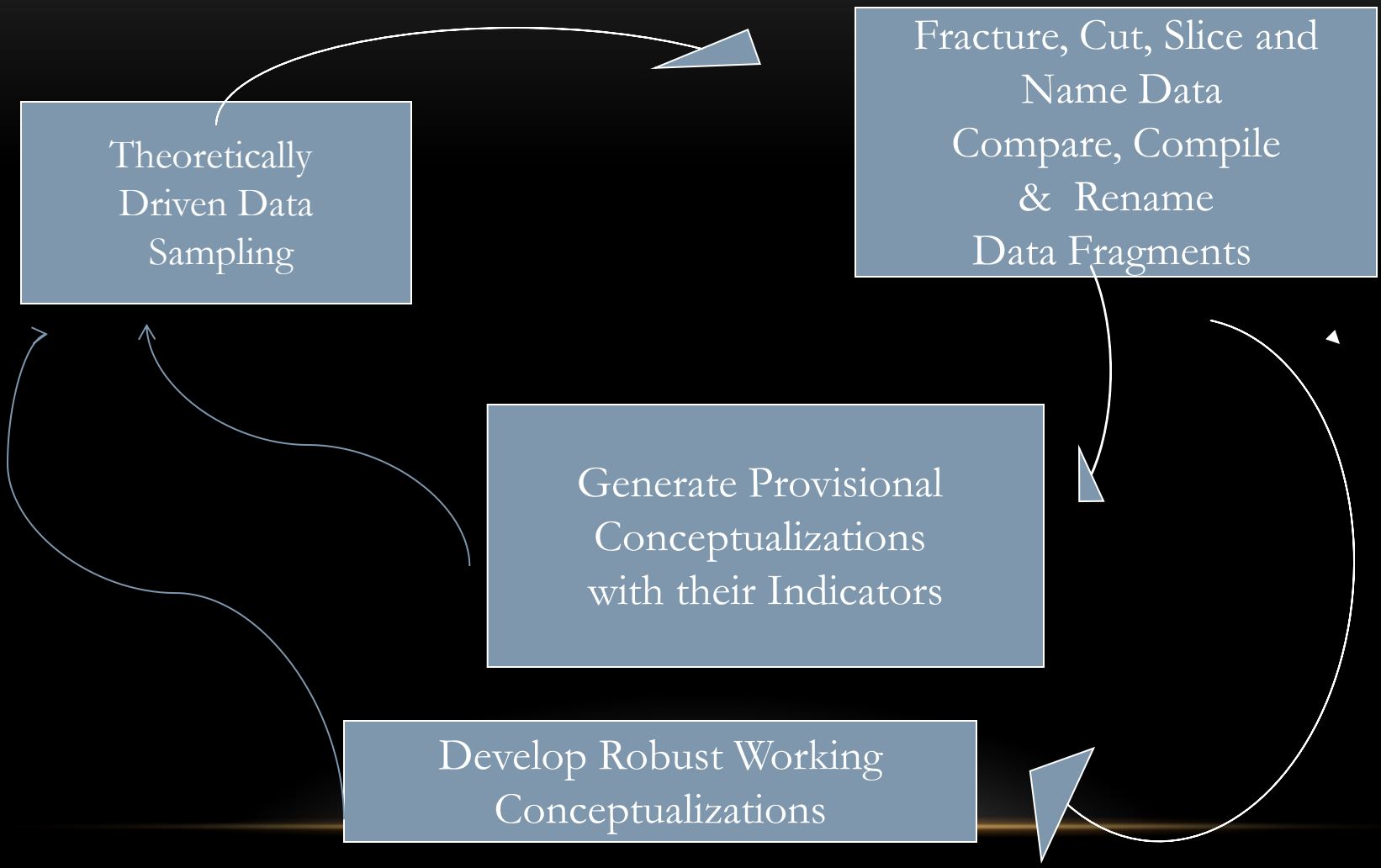
- Axial coding- Intense analysis focused on one category at a time that treats the category as an 'axis' around which further coding and category building is done.
- Categorizing – an analytic conceptualization
- Coding – process of naming what data is about
- Coding families or coding paradigm – a fund of abstract theoretical terms to aid thinking about categories and their relations to each other
- In-vivo or substantive coding – captures substantive aspects of research setting, in research participants' own terms
- Theoretical sampling – Ongoing sampling specifically for the purpose of developing the theory
- Theoretical saturation – the point at which gathering data yields no new properties nor any new theoretical insights


Data collection
Line by line analysis
Open coding
Constant comparison
Axial coding
Theoretical sampling
Selective coding
Theoretical integration

GROUNDED THEORY METHOD

- **Open coding**
- GT Method begins by open coding of data. This is the first stage of theory building. You may want to do coding using tools, such as NVivo, which allows you to store, code and recode data as appropriate. GT coding is often done using invivo codes (coding in the words of participants in the study).
-
- GT Method has two further stages in the coding process: **axial and selective coding**. In the next section I will briefly outline these following Strauss and Corbin's paradigm (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).
  - OPEN CODE – FIRST CUT AT CATEGORISING
  - AXIAL CODING – DEVELOPING CATEGORIES THAT FIT DATA
  - SELECTIVE CODES - THEORISING

THE DEVELOPMENT OF CONCEPTUAL CATEGORIES (c.f. Grounded Theory)



Process is ended when core categories are theoretically saturated

THEORETICAL SAMPLING -DRIVEN BY INFORMATION NEEDS

- The logic of theoretical sampling is that you select units which will provide you rich information relative to your research questions

- Theoretical sampling to expand, check and refine conceptual categories. Conceptually-driven sequential sampling- usually not wholly pre-specified, but can evolve once fieldwork begins.

- Sampling reflects researcher interests in the evolving fit between gathered data and the emerging theory. You sample with the aim of *developing* your emerging theory.

ENSURING SAMPLING FOCUS:

CLARIFYING UNITS OF SOCIAL ORGANIZATION EXPRESSING OUR PHENOMENA

- **Social Practices** – recurring categories of normal talk or action
- **Episodes** – significant events in the life of…
- **Encounters** – 2 or more persons mutually involved
- **Roles** – categories of person (formal roles, informal roles, social types)
- **Relationships** – parties interacting over period of time, viewing themselves as connected in some way (e.g. interdependence, power, trust, information regarding each other, etc)
- **Groups** e.g. formal, work team, informal, friends, many other types guided by data
- **Organizations** – goal pursuing entities with formal and informal strategies
- **Processes –** educating, surveilling**,** marketing, selling, invoicing, manufacturing etc.

May have interpretive, emotional as well as agency aspects

(Adapted from Lofland & Lofland, 1995)

Constant Comparison

How is this fragment the same as and different from others?

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nxlErzX3aQQ&feature=related

RECOMMENDATIONS WHEN DEVELOPING CATEGORIES

- Generate multiple category names for data fragments (c.f. brainstorming)
- Do assign data fragments to more than one category (discreteness will come later, don't force it)
- Do not use technical jargon, i.e. prior specified theory as category names (bracket it out)
- Category names are flexible, use images, phrases, sentences
- Category names should be a good fit for the data incident being described
- When a category has 6-12 data indicators, write a formal definition of that category

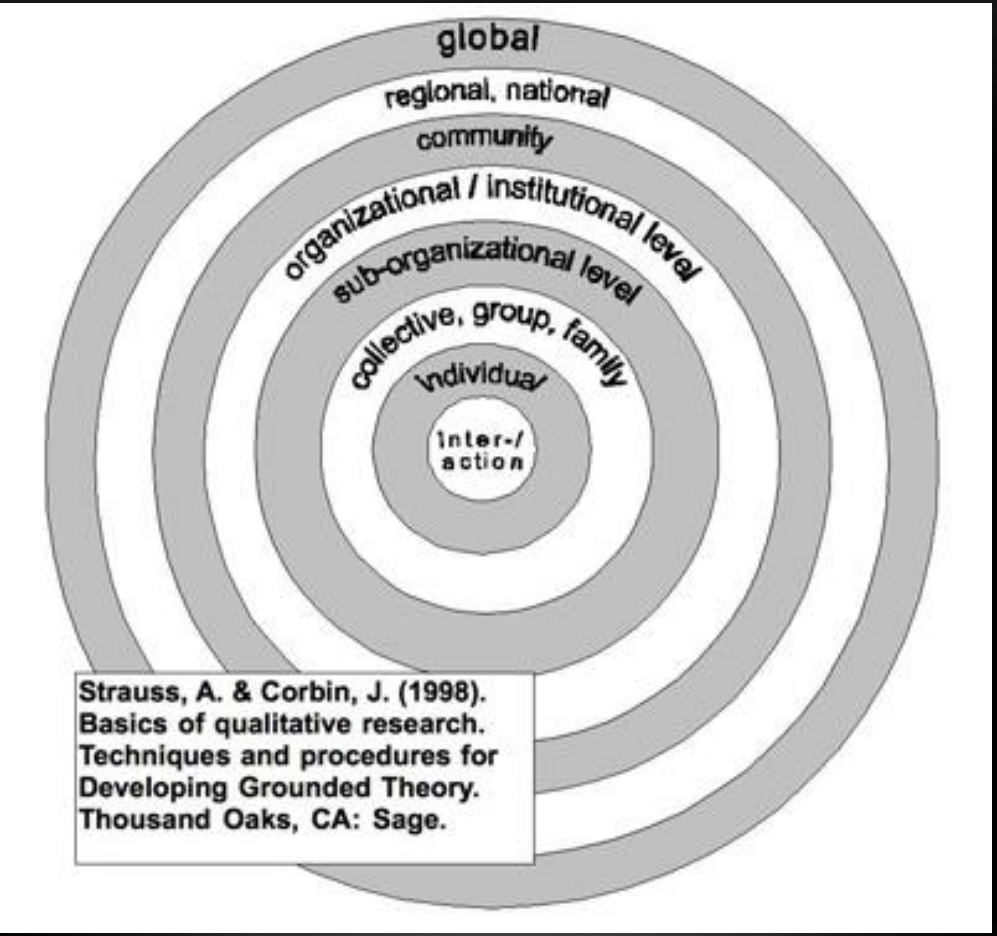
RECOMMENDATIONS WHEN DEVELOPING CATEGORIES

- Do be on the look out for developing major or "core" categories
- Be aware how many conceptual categories you have in development
- Too many categories? Make a list of all the category names; ask yourself, which ones are similar which ones are different?

THEORETICAL SAMPLING

In light of your developing categories, what kinds of data do you need to develop them further?

Conditional Matrix



FURTHER RESOURCES

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NTgiRQqa3m0
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M2DyB-hGX-Q
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D5AHmHQS6WQ

RESEARCH DESIGN

- Here we compare and contrast two approaches to research design
- Quantitative v Qualitative
- In doing so I want to draw some significant similarities and some significant differences between these approaches
- We will also identify reasons to explain why these designs are different or similar and in what ways that happens

TAKE TWO DESIGNS

Quantitative – Purpose to test theory (verification)

- Literature review – to scope the study identify theory to be tested
- Method - identify methods applied to test theory in this discipline. This depend on your chosen data sources. Random sampling.
- Develop hypotheses to be tested.
- Apply appropriate statistical tests.
- Accept or reject hypotheses following procedures for statistical tests selected.
- Discuss findings from the study.
- Conclude with contribution of the study, limitations of the study and agenda for future work arising from the study.

Qualitative – Purpose develop grounded theory (build new theory)

- Data gathering from the field on the phenomenon of interest.
- Method follows the GT procedures and techniques.
- Develop categories from the data first after open coding.
- Compare categories and category relationships through axial coding.
- Theoretical sampling to strengthen theory in development. Followed by discriminant sampling to search deliberately and fill gaps until theoretcial saturation is achieved.
- Theory
- Write up the study. At this stage there are considerations about how to tell the story.

TAKE TWO DESIGNS

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Qualitative – Case Study purpose to theorise how strategy occurs in one organization

- Literature review to scope the case study focused on strategy and how it occurs.
- Method – Case Study. Following protocols for CS e.g. multiple data sources etc.
- Write up the descriptive, exploratory or explanatory case study.
- Analyse the case following the CS Method.
- Develop theory.
- Discuss findings from the study.
- Conclude with contribution of the study, limitations of the study and agenda for future work arising from the study.

HOW REFLEXIVE ARE YOU?

- ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS BY SCORING YOUR ANSWER 1-5
  SCALE 1 never,2 possibly, 3 sometimes, 4 always

- When you make a plan do you stick to it?
- Would you revise your plan once the research begins?
- How receptive are you to new ideas?
- Do you think about what you have learned doing your research?
- Do you think about the methods chosen once the work begins?
- Would you change your research aim/objectives once the study begins?

SCORES

18-24	Very reflexive
10-17	Somewhat reflexive
5-9	There's hope for you – pay attention
1-4	Try something else or pay very close attention to this lesson

WHAT IS REFLEXIVITY AND WHY IS IT NECESSARY?

- Reflexivity is an ability to learn through reflection
- It is necessary to improve your research skills
- It is necessary to understand positioning and contribution of knowledge

Argyris and Schon's Reflective Practitioner

- Practitioner success is "developing one's own continuing theory of practice under real-time conditions" (Argyris and Schon, 1974: 157).

Reflection in Action: Schon's The Sequence of Moments (Reeves, 1994: 105)

- · *Routine Response*
- · *Surprise*
- · *Reflection*
- · *Question Assumptions*
- · *On the spot experiment*

REFLECTIONS AND RESEARCH DIARIES

Awareness in Action (Reeves, 1994: 107)

- *Learning-in-action demands heightened self-awareness. As well as reflecting on event*

Doing qualitative research is by nature a reflective and recursive process. (Ely et al, 1991: 179).

The Research Diary: A Place for Recording Reflections

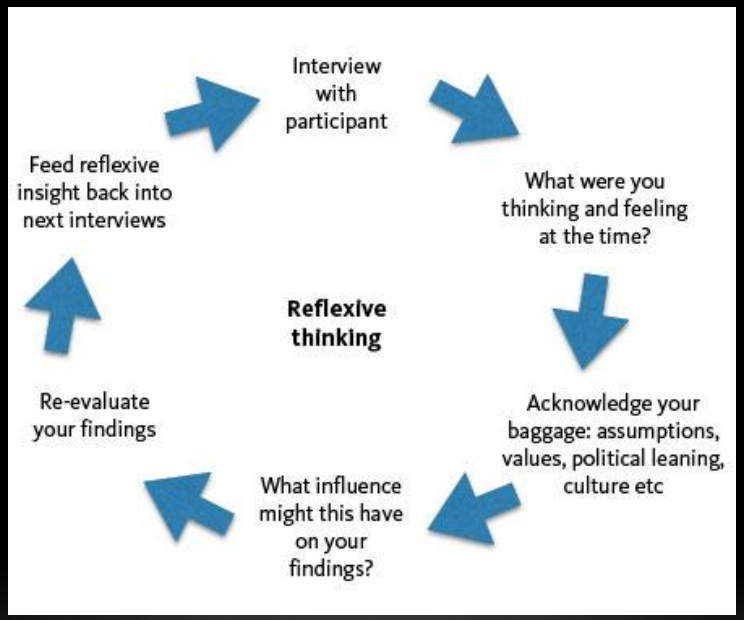
Memoing is common practice doing qualitative research.

It can be used effectively in quantitative studies for a different purpose.

REFLEXIVITY – AVOID BIAS

What is reflexivity?

- Reflexivity is the process of reflecting on yourself the researcher, to provide more effective and impartial analysis.



REFLEXIVITY, REFLECTION AND THE PLAN.

- What have you learned by doing your research?
- How do I think reflectively?
- How can I build these skills and embed them into my research processes?
- Why is it important to do so?

REFLEXIVITY

- This is a term that is important in all research
- It is emphasised in qualitative studies
- Most PhD Theses have a section that discussed reflexivity of the researcher
- It is a demonstration that you kept an open mind and were not closed to new ideas as the research progressed
- **READ**
- Alvesson, M. (2003). Beyond neopositivists, romantics, and localists: a reflexive apporach to interviews in organizational research. *Academy of Management Review,* **28,** 13-33.
- Alvesson, M. and Sköldberg, K. (2009). *Reflexive methodology: New vistas for qualitative research* London: Sage.
- Johnson, P. and Duberley, J. (2003). Reflexivity in management research. *Journal of Management Studies,* **40,** 1279-1303.

REFLECTIVE THOUGHT

- To be reflexive you have to think by reflecting on your experience of doing research.
- What worked to plan and what did not?
- Why did some things work and others did not?
- What did you do to change the plan?
- How might you design your next study differently?