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CHANGES TO THE METHODOLOGICAL WORKSHOP IN MODERN SOCIAL RESEARCH

Abstract
The article presents the basic assumptions of qualitative methodology, which is becoming increasingly popular among social science researchers. There is a noticeable turn from theories construed "behind the desk" towards site studies. New methods of research, such as auto-ethnography, are gaining importance.

Key words
quantitative methodology, qualitative methodology, well established theory, auto-ethnography

Introduction
Quantitative methodology has been well established in the academic world since the 1960s. In Poland, a significant portion of scientific research is conducted based on quantitative research tools such as questionnaire interviews and surveys. However, in many cases these studies do not give answers to the issues troubling society, thus failing to fulfill the basic function of prognostication. Despite its numerous advantages, including the possibility of generalization, quantitative research also has major disadvantages. The methods available do not capture individual differences between respondents, and they are limited to the categories proposed in the research tool developed by the researcher. While there is a statistical view of the opinions recorded, there are no nuances to those opinions. Finally, quantitative methods should not be used to study social processes or social worlds.

The increasing number of surveys conducted using quantitative methodology has also contributed to a decrease in the willingness to participate among the respondents themselves. Such a situation has made research using quantitative techniques difficult to perform, undermining their representativeness. The situation described has made social researchers turn towards qualitative methods. These two models of research are not antagonistic to one another, and in fact are very often treated as complementary. The triangulation of research methods and techniques is an important postulate of modern sociology.

Quantitative and qualitative methodology
The essential differences in qualitative and quantitative methodology include the purpose of the research undertaken, the techniques and research tools used, the role of the researcher in the research process, and the object-subject relation.

The purpose of quantitative research is to explain and predict social reality, which has produced a static picture of social reality. On the other hand, qualitative research seeks a detailed, in-depth description of the world around us and the interpretation of phenomena, thus providing a dynamic description of reality. The above methods also differ in their use of research techniques and tools. Quantitative methods are inherently associated with highly standardized techniques using questionnaires or interviews. The results obtained using probabilistic sampling (very characteristic of the positivist approach) provide the possibility to forecast and generalize the results. The research is conducted on numerous samples, and the results are numerical. Qualitative methodology is based primarily on non-probabilistic sample selection such as using free interviews, biographical interviews, observation, text analysis and visual analysis. Research is conducted on a small number of people and the data is textual.

In its contemporary iteration, qualitative research focuses primarily on the subjectivization of the researcher-research subject relations. This is an essential feature that differentiates qualitative and quantitative research. The positivist method assumes that the researcher remains objective, that they are "above" the research process, they are not emotionally involved, they do not impact the results obtained in any way, and they have the full potential to know the studied world based on the collected data. They strive for objectivity, remaining "outside" of the reality studied, minimizing their influence. The case is different for qualitative research, where an important element is face-to-face interaction, where the researcher is aware of their role and influence on the

interaction partners, and their experience may be (as in auto-ethnography) incorporated into data collected for analysis.

Methodology of the grounded theory

An attempt was made to address the positivist sociology stance by A. Strauss and B. Glaser, publishing the book "Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research" in 1967. It was an attempt to systematize the methodology of qualitative research, although its authors do not depreciate quantitative methods, believing that both quantitative and qualitative data is equally important in theoretical analysis.

Positivist theories are based on a deductive science model, in which a research hypothesis is constructed "behind the desk", which then, in the process of empirical research, is subject to verification, and consequently acceptance or rejection. At the foundation of qualitative methodology is induction, which assumes that the researcher first collects empirical data, which is then verified by comparison, and then conclusions are drawn and hypotheses are formed. Strauss and Glaser also postulate such an approach.

Grounded theory "(...) is an attempt to derive theories from the analysis of patterns, themes and common categories, revealed in observation data. (...) A grounded theory can be presented as an attempt to combine a naturalistic approach with positivist concern for a "systematic set of procedures" when conducting qualitative research" [1].

Krzysztof Konecki, as one of the authorities of qualitative sociology, has been developing grounded theory in Poland for over 20 years. He characterizes the methodology of grounded theory as the methodology involving building medium-range theories, based on systematically gathered empirical data. In the introduction to the Polish edition ("Teoretyzowanie w socjologii – czyli o odrywaniu i konstruowaniu teorii na podstawie analizy danych empirycznych") of Glaser and Stauss's work, Konecki emphasizes the processual nature of the theory built on the ground of grounded theory.

"The theory emerges here in the course of systematic field research, from empirical data that directly relates to the observed part of social reality. Hypotheses, concepts, and properties of the concepts are built during empirical research and are modified and verified in the course of the research. Thus, constructing theory is closely related to the long-term research process itself " [2]. This means that grounded theory moves away from the hypothetical-deductive model of theory building. He emphasizes, however, the essence of the researcher's field work, who, when starting the research, should minimize the pre-conceptualization of his or her research intentions. When starting the research, the researcher should not focus solely on the selected research problem, but they should be open to all data that flows from the field. Such "open" attitude enables allows for reaching out to phenomena and problems that might not be recognized by the researcher when constructing a theory from "behind the desk". "This methodology, through its flexibility, thus allows for the maintenance of the so-called "context of discovery" (serendipity), i.e. through its procedures, we have the capacity to search for and discover the phenomena that we were not looking for in the beginning of the research" [2].

The methodology of grounded theory combines both the assumptions of deduction and induction. It may be thus treated as an abductive theory "(...) because it involves a *reason-based* elaboration of empirical data to formulate theoretical theses that will be further tested experimentally. (…) Abduction is an innovative process that occurs by modifying and re-segregating elements of existing knowledge. Scientific discovery always requires integration of previous knowledge with new experience. Reconstruction of existing knowledge in new ways with the addition of new observations builds abductive inference" [2].

In the methodology of grounded theory, the construction of theory is processual. Thus, unlike in the positivist approach, it is not based on of verifying of previously created hypotheses derived from the collected empirical material. The scheme in which the sequences of individual actions are temporally defined does not apply in the methodology of grounded theory. Here the construction of hypotheses, their verification, and the collection of empirical data are not clearly separated. On the contrary, they are interwoven with each other during the research conducted. This methodological approach also entails the introduction of new concepts that adequately describe the research process, such as theoretical sampling, continuous comparison method, and theoretical saturation.
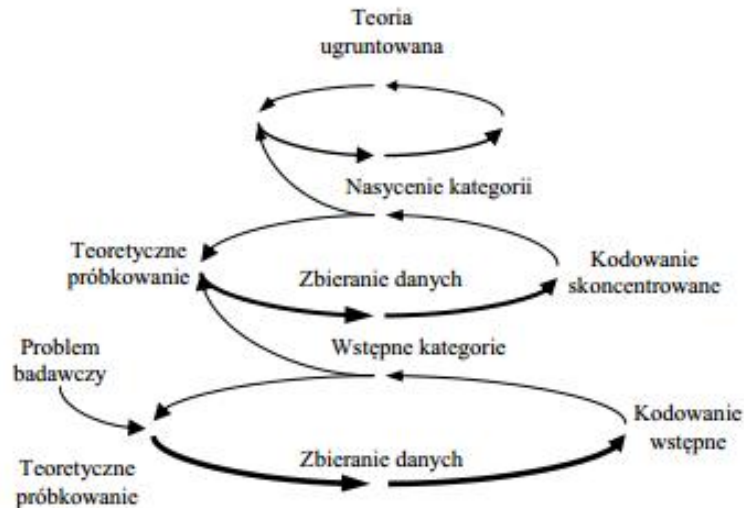
Teoria ugruntowana – Grounded theory; Nasycenie kategorii – Category saturation; Teoretyczna próbkowanie – Theoretical sampling; Zbieranie danych – Data collection; Kodowanie skoncentrowane – Concentrated encoding; Problem badawczy – Research problem – Wstępne kategorie – Initial categories; Kodowanie wstępne – Initial encoding

Fig. 1 The idea of constructing a grounded theory
Source: [3]

The methodology of grounded theory was first developed by Glaser and Strauss. This approach, however, is constantly evolving and new versions are emerging, such as the constructivist grounded theory established by K. Charmaz. "It seems to me that in the social sciences all over the world, grounded theory is still a niche methodology. On the other hand, its impact on qualitative research is enormous, even in the construction of commonly used procedures"[4].

Auto-ethnography
The concept of auto-ethnography refers to anthropological or ethnographic research conducted by individuals within their own culture. It may be located on the borderline between ethnography and the autobiography of the researcher. Thus, auto-ethnography brings the researcher's individual experience into the research process, placing it inside the research process, making their own experience (emotions, experiences, feelings, subjective perceptions) the material of analysis. In this approach, the researcher-subject relationship is completely re-evaluated. The researcher also becomes the research subject. Thus, auto-ethnography allows to combine two worlds, two perspectives, which in the positivist tradition were opposing one another.

In the literature of the subject there are many definitions of auto-ethnography. It is ambiguous and carries definitional difficulties. Some definitions emphasize its autobiographical nature, thus shifting it towards literary creation. Halina Poświatowska's poetry can be perceived similarly. The second, more important from the perspective of social research, is the auto-ethnography, located closer to ethnography. It integrates the researcher's individual experiences with the data for analysis.
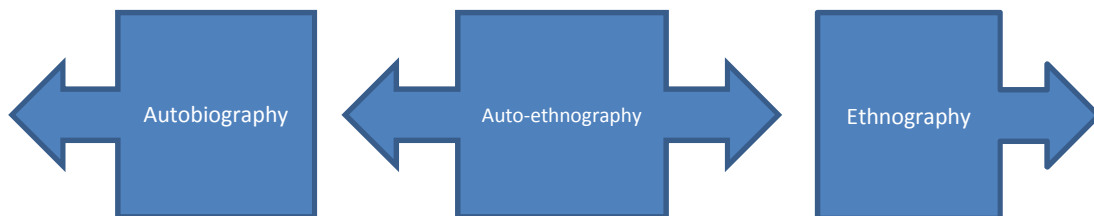

Fig. 2 The continuum of auto-ethnography
Source: [5]

Anna Kacperczyk defines auto-ethnography as follows:

"Auto-ethnography is a particular variation of ethnography, which involves the generation of an ethnographic description, the subject and object of which is the researcher himself - their feelings, their emotions, their subjective perception and experience of the world. The description itself is constructed

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from an introspective perspective - it stems from the subject experiencing the world and presents its subjective perception of the world. The researcher is also interested in the social context of their own experiences and personal references. They perceive them and try to embed them in the field of social interaction. They try to understand the socio-cultural determinants of their own subjective experience. Auto-ethnography goes a bit further - apart from the exclusive interest in oneself and the area of one's own experiences, aiming at understanding the context in which the actions and sensations of the researcher-participant are placed" [6].

It is important for the auto-ethnographic researcher not to focus solely on their own experience, but also to search for data in the surrounding world. Such an approach is at the heart of auto-ethnographic analysis, thus enabling the researcher to become a full-time participant in the research process. Thus, they are also more likely to understand the studied world. The literature on the subject distinguishes the suggestive auto-ethnography approach and the analytical auto-ethnography approach.

Suggestive auto-ethnography can be seen as closer to autobiography, since "(...) it puts emphasis on building stories (narrations) with a strong emotional charge, which allow for sharing one's experiences with others, trigger *(elicit)* similar emotional reactions in the recipient (viewer, listener, reader) and cause a cognitive transformation in them" [6].

The second type of auto-ethnography, analytical auto-ethnography, derives from ethnography and is embedded in the methodology of grounded theory. Auto-ethnography, as Kacperczyk points out, citing Anderson [6], must meet five basic requirements:

1. The researcher fully belongs to the researched group. "On the one hand, while being a member of a group, they have access to information that is not accessible to outsiders - for example, the whole sphere of emotions accompanying the activities undertaken by the group. On the other hand - they can distance themselves from their own feelings, thoughts and motives and present them in a theoretically ordered way"[7]*.*
2. The researcher must demonstrate analytical reflexivity - it relates to the researcher's awareness of the impact they exert on the research itself.
3. The researcher's being must be narratively visible - communication takes place in the first person without the use of an impersonal form.
4. The researcher, apart from their own experience, should also take part in a dialog with the informants - the researcher cannot concentrate solely on their own experiences. The analysis should also include data from other sources, e.g. from other members of the studied community. "In this sense, the coexistence of the two: the external and the internal source of information should take the form of a specific dialog with the respondents." [7]
5. The researcher should be involved in theoretical analysis - the autobiographical analysis conducted should not be merely an emotional description of the chosen part of the social reality, but it should contribute to "(...) the increasing perfection, refinement, enlargement and revision of theoretical explanations" [8]*.*

Auto-ethnography, as a new and ambiguous method, is widely criticized, mainly by the positivists. The basic allegation directed at auto-ethnography concerns intersubjective data control. Anna Kacperczyk provides two methods for solving this problem [6]:

▪ Epistemological - recognition of the researcher's personal expression as an authentic, legitimate voice in a social reality, having the same right as any other participant. The voice of the researcher is just as important, significant and authentic, as the voices of the people they study.
▪ Methodological - the personal communication of the researcher is fixed, written, it has a material form, and it is subject to intersubjective control, it can be encoded and checked by other researchers and compared. In this view, auto-ethnography enriches the researcher's personal experience and it reinforces their cognitive abilities, it helps to understand the data. It represents a new layer of data for comparison and analysis.

Auto-ethnography is rapidly growing in popularity as a method of conducting research. This is the only approach that brings the researcher's individual experience into the research process, thus making it a full-fledged analysis material. By strictly linking the two worlds of the researcher and the research subject, it opens completely new research perspectives and allows for reaching difficult to access areas of social life such as emotions, illness, and trauma. However, it is also strongly criticized, especially by the proponents of the positivist paradigm.

Conclusion

Qualitative research is becoming increasingly popular among social researchers. The methodology of grounded theory has been developing for decades. It organizes the research process in a completely different way, thus influencing qualitative research. It also puts the researcher themselves in a completely different light because they are no longer "objective" towards the subject matter of the study, but rather a significant part of the research process on which they have an impact. The researcher's self-awareness becomes an important postulate of qualitative research. Its essence may be the use of auto-ethnography in the research process. The researcher is not only aware of their own role, but they include their personal experience in the material, which is then subjected to scientific analysis.

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