RESEARCH DESIGN AND QUALITATIVE RESEARCH ON CO-OPERATIVE ENTERPRISES

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Structure of Presentation:

1. Context
2. Challenges
3. Research Design
4. Grounded theory
5. Philosophical underpinnings
6. Breakthroughs
7. Change
1. **Context Pros:**

Recent scholarship looks in a rigorous way at the current situation and tries to suggest why and how the co-operative model is important.
2. CONTEXT Cons

1. Lengthy and fascinating research discussions over cooperatives potential economic contributions, their underlying values and principles, and their operating practices and distinctive qualities.

2. Because of such discussions, the wide diversity in types of co-operatives and the varied contexts in which they exist, co-operatives can appear to be *opaque* in the popular mind.

3. A lot is an “*internalist*” discussion.

4. Sometimes, research does not take seriously the underlying co-operative values and principles.

5. Lack of case studies that are compared, where theoretical insight emerge from variety. Most are individual cases.

6. Much research in the intensive literature of the co-operative movement does not address the “big picture”.

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What to do?

1. Place research in relevant context
2. Maintain openness through the research design
3. Building a research strategy in which the epistemological link between the research approach (the question) and the methodology is clear.
4. Because the research of co-operative enterprises does not blend into the existing ‘grand theories’ (eg in economics and business), grounded theory, constructivism and a triangular mix of analyses appear more appropriate.
5. Keep in mind building a theory of change (diachronic view)
The research design of a study is the end result of a series of decisions junctures made by the researcher concerning how the study will be and is effectively conducted.

In traditional design: ‘It is a blueprint for conducting the study that maximises control over factors that could interfere with the validity of the findings.’

The generation of knowledge can be instead characterised as developmental and dynamic. Data and 'reality' are interpreted.

Thus, research design is the sum of series of decision junctures and the path chosen throughout the research.

Research strategies link epistemology to the research approach and the methodology.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decision Juncture Example</th>
<th>Ethnography</th>
<th>Constructivism</th>
<th>Social Constructionism</th>
<th>Hermeneutics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main data collection methods</td>
<td>Ethnographical interviews and observations</td>
<td>Individual interviews, journals</td>
<td>Group interviews, focus groups, group assignments, archival materials</td>
<td>Interviews, archival materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis method</td>
<td>Domain analysis, content analysis, thematic analysis</td>
<td>Narrative analysis, grounded theory, conversation analysis</td>
<td>Discourse analysis, conversation analysis</td>
<td>Hermeneutical analysis, narrative analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main knowledge producer</td>
<td>Participant and researcher</td>
<td>Participant</td>
<td>Group of participants together</td>
<td>Participant and researcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of researcher</td>
<td>Level of participation varies</td>
<td>Detached</td>
<td>A group member</td>
<td>Interpreter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research’s relation to practice</td>
<td>Describe the practice</td>
<td>Describe the practice</td>
<td>Negotiate and transform the practice</td>
<td>Interpret the practice</td>
</tr>
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Note. For definitions see, for example, Audi (1995) and Blauuw and Pritchard (2005), as categories are overlapping and interrelated. These simplified categories and labels are provided as a framework.
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<td><strong>Epistemologies</strong></td>
<td>Objectivism, subjectivism, constructionism</td>
<td>Subjectivism, constructionism, contextualism</td>
<td>Objectivism, subjectivism, constructionism, social epistemology</td>
<td>Subjectivism, constructionism, contextualism, externalism</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| **Purpose statements**    | - To describe a culture and its various characteristics | - To describe individuals’ perspectives, experiences, and meaning-making processes  
- To describe individuals’ values and beliefs | - To describe socially constructed view on the phenomenon  
- To describe socialization, roles, dialogue, and transformation | - To understand holistically and cyclically participants’ experiences  
- To interpret a phenomenon |
| **Research questions**    | How do teachers and administrators describe the current school culture at Lincoln High School? | How do classroom teachers describe their experiences of professional development workshops? | How does a mentor–mentee dyad describe the socialization process that takes place during the professional development workshop? | How do classroom mentees understand the role of professional development? |
| **Sampling strategies**   | Closed (within a culture or particular unit) | Homogeneous, purposeful | Variety of options including purposeful, homogeneous, maximum variation | Variety of options including purposeful and maximum variation |
Grounded Theory is not a theory but a methodology to discover theories dormant in the data’ (Legewie & Schervier-Legewie, 2004).

to develop new concepts and theories firmly grounded in data, which allows for the emergence of original and rich findings.

Three elements are essential:
1. *Theoretical sensitive coding*, generating theoretical strong concepts from the data to explain the phenomenon researched (open, axial, selective coding);

2. *Theoretical sampling*,

3. *Comparison* between the phenomena and the contexts to make the theory strong.
- Grounded theory is a research method that seeks to develop theory that is grounded in data,
- systematically gathered and analysed
- There is a continuous interplay between data collection and analysis
Constructivism builds on grounded theory, proposing new definitions for knowledge and truth that form a new paradigm, based on inter-subjectivity instead of the classical objectivity, and on viability instead of truth.

Constructivism can be validated through experimentation, and data. It is pragmatic, not idealistic.

Critique of Modernism without being post-modernist:

Idea of universal theory, where the place of the researched and the researcher is the ‘discovery of theory’
• You begin with an area of study and allow what is relevant within that area to emerge.
• Used when little is known about a topic, as opposed to one that is guided by previous research.
• Ecological validity: Ecological validity is the extent to which research findings accurately represent real-world settings.
• Constructs are context-specific, detailed, and tightly connected to the data.

• Novelty
• Parsimony
Symbolic Interactionism

Understanding the world by interpreting human interaction, which occurs through the use of symbols, such as language.

• The nature of experience and undergoing as continually evolving

• The active role of persons in shaping the worlds they live in

• Emphasis on change and process, and the variability and complexity of life

• Inter-relationships among conditions, meaning, and action

In business, managers have used grounded theory to explain the ways in which organizational characteristics explain coworkers support.
* Is there a clear chain of evidence linking the findings to the data?

* Are there multiple instances in the data which support the concepts produced?

* Has the researcher demonstrated that they are steeped in the field of investigation (Glaser, 1978)?

* Has the researcher created inferential and/or predictive statements about the phenomena?

* Has the researcher suggested theoretical generalizations that are applicable to a range of situations?
The assumption is there is and can always be change: Research must thus involve research on change; a set of hypotheses and critical assumptions about a path for change.

Hypotheses are thus ‘if-then’ statements between different levels of the change pathway

Research accompanies and interacts with the researched.

Looking for hypotheses to the questions:

1. what is the change we are working for

2. what needs (beliefs, activities, approaches) to happen for the change to come about?

needs to be regularly reviewed and adjusted (testing the assumptions, measuring breakthroughs and re-examining the pace of change).
* Areas in which change is essential to achieve an (impact) goal.

* A goal may have 2-4 domains of change

* A domain of change may be:
  * a relationship
  * behavior and/or structural change in a system or institutions
  * Laws and policies related to a specific issue

* Represent all outcome areas in an integrated Framework

* Domains of Change
• A change that represents a leap on the pathway of change that is not easily reversed.

• In its most important form, it is a structural or systemic change. On a smaller scale, it can be something that happens for the first time.
Desired Long-term Goal (related to population impact group)

1. Current Situation, including underlying causes/barriers to change

2. Domain of change

3. Domain of Change

4. Pathways of change

5. Stakeholders

6. Indicators related to breakthroughs, domains, and long-term goal

7. Assumptions and Risks
**Why Theories of Change?**

* Social change is a messy, complex affair, rather than a predictable, linear process

* We have to be adaptive, non-linear – we have to seize opportunities and learn what works and what doesn’t work.
"Research is Hard Work, it's Always a bit Suffering. Therefore, on the Other Side Research Should be Fun"

Anselm Strauss in Conversation With
Heiner Legewie and Barbara Schervier-Legewie (2004)

Thank you! Any questions?