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# Doing Qualitative Data Analysis with NVivo



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## PREFACE

Qualitative research has known turbulent times. The War of the Methods questioning the scientific status of qualitative research lies behind us. The suspicion of digitalisation and colonisation by software programs has silenced. The rise of Mixed Methods was embraced and positioned as a middle way between the qualitative and quantitative approaches of scientific inquiry. And through all these academic debates, Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis (or CAQDAS) developed (Paulus et al., 2014), almost unnoticed. Starting with a wide range of competing programs, the market compacted to a limited number of players. One of the leading software tools is the topic of this comprehensive guide: NVivo. NVivo started as a program designed to code (textual) data and retrieve coded references. Throughout the years, it expanded to a leading software tool to work with multiple data sources, including audio, video and surveys; designed to execute the most complex queries on coded data and to visualise the results in multiple ways. It helps researchers to unlock the potential of their qualitative data, offering rich insights and a deeper understanding of the data they have collected.

The primary aim of this book is to bridge the gap between the daily practice of a qualitative researcher and the software they use. The book does not have the purpose to be a mere software manual or button-course. Off course, when writing about software, buttons, menus and screenshots are indispensable. But all buttons have already been described in the NVivo help pages or on YouTube in the introductory videos. This book grew out of many years of giving Ph.D. workshops on NVivo. Throughout the years, we learnt how qualitative researchers experienced their first encounter with NVivo. We learnt about their struggles with a new piece of software. From that feedback, we learnt to present NVivo from a researcher's perspective. And that is the major aim behind this book: to show you NVivo from the needs of the qualitative researcher, whether experienced or just starting. At the same time, we try to take the wide diversity of qualitative research into account.

Coming myself from a Grounded Theory tradition, our first (Dutch) book on NVivo was exclusively oriented to using the software to perform a Grounded Theory analysis (Mortelmans, 2011, 2017). But as NVivo developed into an all-encompassing software program, our courses were also followed by Ph.D.'s that needed more than just an introduction to Grounded Theory with NVivo. As a consequence, the narrow focus disappeared from this book and a wide range of data sources, approaches and techniques are discussed throughout the book. We start from setting up a project and importing data, to coding, querying and visualising data. We also explore more advanced features, such as classifications, and framework matrices, literature reviews and autocoding enabling a wide range of qualitative researchers to conduct complex analyses and extract meaningful insights from their data with their analytical approach.

This book is not a methods book. Some excellent introductions on NVivo (e.g. Jackson & Bazeley, 2019) combine an extensive introduction to qualitative research methodology and its application in NVivo. As this sacrifices room for more detailed insights in NVivo, we kept the methods background to a minimum. This implies that this book is not to be used in a methods course as a handbook but should help you in discovering NVivo's core tools and hidden gems and gain efficiency in using them in your daily practice.

This book is written for both novice and experienced researchers. For beginners, it provides a step-by-step guide to using the three basic skills: project management, coding data and retrieving coded data with Queries. For experienced researchers, we dive into advanced techniques like classifications or artificial intelligence in CAQDAS, and we show the latest features of the program. As such, both the beginning and the experienced users will be able to leverage the full potential of the software in their research no matter what stage of experience you have reached.

The book is structured into three parts. First, we start with a more theoretical background on qualitative research and the place of software in qualitative inquiry. Next, we explore the basic components of the program: setting up a project, importing and managing data, coding, analysing data, and presenting findings. Last, we have a set of more topical chapters where we apply the tools to specific situations like focus groups, mixed method research or literature reviews.

We would like to express our gratitude to all those who have contributed to the creation of this book. Special thanks to the team at Lumivero for developing NVivo and continuously improving it, making qualitative research more accessible and efficient. And even though we do not know them personally, thanks are also warranted for Tom and Lynn Richards for starting this program so many years ago (under the name of NUD\*IST). For those interested in the origin of NVivo, we highly recommend Tom's article on the intellectual history of the program (Richards, 2002). In the journey of writing this book, we have been fortunate to be supported by the insights of many of our colleagues and collaborators. Among them, one colleague and friend stands out for his exceptional contribution: Olivier Chandesais. Olivier's thorough

reading and detailed commentary on each chapter of this manuscript have been invaluable. As no one we have ever seen, his eye for detail and his year-long expertise with qualitative data analysis in teaching has not only enhanced the accuracy of this book but also enriched its content. It was with much curiosity that we looked forward to his next revision and corrections whenever he finished another chapter. Last, we want to thank all the Ph.D. students that have followed our workshops the past decades. Through their struggles with the software, they gave invaluable feedback and suggestions, which have greatly transformed our original software focus into a researcher focus. The unintended insights we got into the minds of starting qualitative researchers were invaluable to our own development as teacher and writer of this book.

Before ending this preface, we want to inform you about the graphical conventions we used when writing this book. In a book, one needs to convert the visual information on the screen of the reader into a written form. Of course, we show screenshots with explanations whenever necessary but still a verbal translation of visual information is unavoidable in this type of book. First, whenever we refer to a button or window, we will use italics for the name of the item and refer to add the name of the item (e.g. the *OK* button, the *Welcome* screen). Names of menus will be put in bold (e.g. the **File** menu). Often, you need to open levels in a menu or a folder structure. The different levels will be separated by an arrow sign: >. The different levels will be put in bold. For menu's, this will look like: **File > Project Information > Open Project Event Log**. For the Navigation View (the blue rectangular area at the left of your program screen), this will look like: *Navigation View > Data > Files*. When options are mentioned, they will be written in *Italic*. When you need to click a check-box, we will use this symbol: ☒. Even though most options are available through menus, working with the *Context menu* is often more efficient. When you right click in your program, a menu will appear next to your pointer offering options the programmers judged useful when being in that part of the program. We refer to a Right Mouse Click with RMC. Also the place on your screen to click will be indicated. So, referring to an option in the Context Menu will be done as follows: **RMC** (*above the main folder*) > **New Folder**.

Throughout the book, we will use the sample projects embedded in the software. As such, all readers of the book can reproduce the examples given in this book. As NVivo regularly gets updates, it is possible that changes in the data of these sample projects produce slightly different results than we show in the screenshots. We hope that these changes will still enable you to follow the examples even though our screenshots might differ from what you see on your screen. Also software changes through updates can create such differences although we are confident that the main structure and way of working with NVivo remains stable across updates and even across versions in the future. As the field of qualitative research and the NVivo software are constantly evolving, feedback and suggestions from you as reader are most welcome. Your feedback

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# A Guided Tour in Qualitative Research

## Key messages in this chapter

- Qualitative research methodology is defined through its research components.
- The place of software in qualitative data analysis is accepted but also contested by some scholars.

## WHAT IS QUALITATIVE RESEARCH?

Delineating the boundaries of qualitative research within a single definition is not straightforward. Intuitively, many perceive qualitative research as “something that does not involve numbers” or “something that includes open-ended interviews”. A potential start is the definition of Denzin and Lincoln from the first edition of their handbook:

Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. Qualitative research consists of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017, p. 10)

Central to this definition is the researcher’s perspective on the world. Furthermore, the natural, everyday environment is pivotal in the research, and a researcher who seeks to understand processes of meaning-making. There are many more potential definitions of qualitative research, but often elements from the aforementioned definition are repeated, omitted, or supplemented. Within the scope of this book, it is not our aim to attempt to provide a definitive definition of what qualitative research is or should be. Hence, we align with a group of authors (e.g. Bryman, 2012; Shank, 2006; Snape & Spencer, 2003) who attempt to define qualitative research by listing characteristics that are often present, but not necessarily found in all qualitative research. The distinct nature of qualitative research can be found in the domain of the research questions, the employed research design, the methods of data collection, the analytic approach, and the output that the research ultimately yields.

The different components in Table 1.1 together provide an insight into the essence of qualitative research. However, it is crucial to recognize that these characteristics are largely indicative. The recurrent mention of ‘flexibility’ highlights the relative nature of such lists. Simultaneously, it becomes evident that qualitative research is a large ‘tent’ (Shank, 2006) or ‘umbrella’ (LaMarre & Chamberlain, 2022) under which many approaches can be sheltered.

**Table 1.1** Overview of the core characteristics of qualitative research

---

|                                                                                                        |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. <i>Research questions and objectives</i>                                                            |
| • Questions address complex themes or social processes                                                 |
| • The everyday reality of the subjects is central                                                      |
| 2. <i>Research design</i>                                                                              |
| • The design is flexible                                                                               |
| • The design focuses on studies in a natural setting                                                   |
| • The design aims for a “holistic” understanding of the context                                        |
| 3. <i>Data collection methods</i>                                                                      |
| • A wide range of data collection methods is available                                                 |
| • Multiple methods are often employed in a single study                                                |
| • The use of methods is flexible                                                                       |
| • Data collection often implies intense and/or prolonged engagement with the field                     |
| 4. <i>Analysis</i>                                                                                     |
| • The analysis is primarily text-based rather than numerical                                           |
| • The goal of analysis is to uncover meaning                                                           |
| • Processes are central in the analysis                                                                |
| • The aim of the analysis is to understand in-depth rather than to provide representative descriptions |
| 5. <i>Reporting</i>                                                                                    |
| • Subjects are involved in (the review of) the results                                                 |
| • Reporting attempts to represent the context of the whole                                             |
| • The influence of the researcher on their research design is explicitly considered                    |

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### *Research questions*

In qualitative research, the focus is not on the researcher but on the researched. It is not the all-knowing scientist who is central, but the everyday living environment of the individuals or groups under study. This is the classic distinction made in anthropology between the deductive and inductive perspectives in research. A *deductive* perspective involves a researcher who, guided by literature study and previous results, approaches the subject with a predetermined framework (such as a closed questionnaire). In contrast, the *inductive* approach of qualitative research seeks these frameworks among the subjects themselves (Silverman, 2018). When a researcher adopts this approach, different research questions naturally come into focus. Instead of quantifying frequency, the researcher seeks to understand how social meaning is constructed, how social processes unfold.

### *The research design*

When seeking to understand the meaning-making of individuals, we must be acutely aware that although humans are composed of atoms, they certainly do not react like atoms. Human nature is inherently unpredictable. However, this does not imply that the study of social interaction and processes is an impossible task. Like Miles et al. (2018), we consider ourselves “transcendental realists”. This means we believe that social phenomena exist not only in our minds but also outside them, and that scientists are capable of discovering lawful and reasonably stable relationships in that objective world. These lawful and stable foundations of social life enable the development of concepts and theories that provide insight into underlying processes in social reality. This perspective is eminently suitable from both a quantitative and qualitative research viewpoint. As a qualitative researcher, you also aim to identify regularities with the goal of theory formation. This focus is much closer to the subjects themselves compared to quantitative research. Social processes and meaning-making are examined from the perspective of the individuals’ own lived experiences, including the rich context of their lives. This context is not “preformed” as in quantitative research, where questions are the same for everyone, and the context - what is not asked in the standard questionnaire - is assumed to be constant. In qualitative research, there is a continuous interaction between your study and its context, where sometimes context becomes research and research becomes context. Unexpected occurrences are common during qualitative studies. To understand how people give meaning to their surroundings, and how the environment shapes this meaning-making, it is necessary to employ a research design that is as open as possible. A research design is the way a researcher plans and organizes a study in advance. It is essentially their “work plan”. Such an approach needs to be “holistic”, meaning that the research design should be capable of approaching the research topic in a systematic, comprehensive, and integrated manner.

Therefore, qualitative researchers prefer not to fix everything in advance too rigidly. They review literature to understand the state of research in their field, without going so far as to prevent their minds from entering the research field with an “open” mindset. They write a research question that serves as a compass for the study, without this question precluding all side paths and discoveries. They collect data without creating instruments beforehand that are fixed and uniform for all subjects.

### *The data collection method*

In qualitative research, one does not confine oneself to a single method of data collection or consistently use the same method. Switching data collection methods during the course of a study, as necessitated by the research setting, is common. Moreover, employing multiple methods to gather data is more the norm than the exception. In quantitative research, one usually limits oneself to either conducting an experiment or administering a structured questionnaire. In qualitative research, however, you will likely collect statistics, conduct observations, and carry out interviews. It is often observed that in qualitative research, one method tends to be dominant. The researcher may primarily focus on participating in the field or mainly conduct in-depth interviews.

A characteristic common to many qualitative data collection methods is the prolonged and in-depth contact with the field. Gathering data about the context in which people live and the meanings they ascribe to their environment is rarely a matter of minutes. It can take days, weeks, or even years to gain a deep understanding of the subject of study. Particularly when opting for observation and participation techniques, the time for data collection increases.

### *The analysis*

Qualitative research is sometimes narrowly defined as a method that produces results without statistical procedures or quantification (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Many students also confuse the absence of numbers with qualitative research itself. Often, a choice is made for qualitative research in a thesis or paper because it does not involve numbers, and more importantly, no statistics. While reducing qualitative research to non-numerical research is an accurate depiction, this definition conceals as much as it clarifies. The lack of statistical analysis is a common feature across almost all qualitative variants. However, the characteristics previously mentioned are at least as defining for qualitative research as the mere absence of numerical data. If a researcher poses quantitative research questions and then uses a small sample with in-depth interviews to answer these questions, they have conducted neither quantitative nor qualitative research, even if no statistics were involved. The research may be presented as quantitative, but it is merely a weak version of it.

Conversely, qualitative researchers sometimes do use numerical data to outline the context of their research problem. Statistical data can help illuminate the contours of a particular issue, indicating what the researcher is addressing. Quantitative supplementary information can also be useful in analysing qualitative material. Nevertheless, the primary material for analysis is predominantly textual. Interviews are transcribed, and these transcripts are analysed. With observation or participation techniques, field notes are created, again a textual form of primary material. Visual material is also used to a lesser extent, focusing on content rather than appearance (as in quantitative content analysis, see Berelson, 1971; Krippendorff, 2018; Neuendorf, 2017). The analysis of this visual material is again conducted with words. Qualitative researchers read, code, and interpret their data. They create concepts and construct theories based on them. They typically work inductively, without testing pre-established hypotheses.

Since the goal of the analysis is to uncover the meaning-making of individuals and gain insights into social processes, flexibility is also necessary when analyzing qualitative data. While statistical procedures might be challenging due to their mathematical background, they offer the advantage of being unequivocal and can be quickly executed using accessible software. Today, one primarily needs to know the right menus and input screens to perform complicated statistical operations. Although NVivo will help you in performing your qualitative analysis, like all qualitative software programs, it lacks predefined paths. NVivo incorporates the flexibility of qualitative research and gives the researcher the freedom to conduct their analysis as they wish or as their data guide them but there are no pre-programmed routines that immediately provide output for the researcher to use in their report.

### *Reporting*

Lastly, the reporting in qualitative research also differs. Although qualitative research also emphasizes presenting results in an accessible and readable manner, the style of writing differs from that of quantitative research. In qualitative research, the aim is to provide an extensive description of the collected material. Throughout the description, the material should ‘speak’ for itself. The goal is not to present all results as compactly as possible but to offer a rich contextual sketch of the findings.

Additionally, the respondents who provided the primary material during data collection can be involved in the reporting process. Unlike in quantitative research, where respondents often learn about the results from the researcher via the media, in qualitative research, direct feedback on the results is sought from the participants. This approach checks whether the analyses conducted by the researcher align with the respondents’ own perceptions.

## THE (CONTESTED) ROLE OF SOFTWARE IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

The emergence of illuminated manuscripts during the Middle Ages stands as a testament to the era's artistic and cultural heritage. Crafted with immense care in monasteries worldwide, these manuscripts, including gospel books, psalters, and bibles, were intricately adorned with an array of initials, marginalia, and miniature illustrations. However, the advent of the Gutenberg printing process, which enabled the mass production of books, simultaneously marked the decline of the labour-intensive tradition of manually copying manuscripts. While the efficiency and large-scale capabilities of printing technology are undeniable, they inadvertently signalled the end of the age-old art of illuminated manuscripts. A similar trajectory is observable with the introduction of Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis (CAQDAS). This technological innovation, much like Gutenberg's printing press, brought about significant changes in the field, hinting at a transformation akin to the one experienced by the art of manuscript illumination.

"Invent the piano, and a whole host of composers will start writing a new music." (Richards, 2002, p. 203). Richards writes this quote to illustrate the huge impact (his) software had on the daily practice of qualitative research. The quote draws a parallel to the evolution in writing and book production, positioning the development of Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis (CAQDAS) within a narrative of both progress and loss. While the adoption of software in qualitative research is now widely regarded as standard practice, it's important to acknowledge that this technological integration does more than just offer benefits. It may also have fundamentally altered the essence of qualitative analysis itself.

Several concerns have been raised by authors about the application of software in analysing qualitative data. The first issue pertains to the *legitimation of the analysis* through software use. Authors like Bong (2007) have noted that merely mentioning software like NVivo in a study's methodology does not inherently validate the analysis. As Barbour (2001) and Pratt (2009) caution, simply citing software, similar to general terms like "purposive sampling" or "Grounded Theory", does not guarantee analytical rigor. Editors increasingly encourage authors to move beyond this simplistic validation approach.

A second concern relates to the confusion between qualitative data analysis and coding. Seidel (1991) referred to this as "analytical madness", highlighting the risk that the ease of coding with software could lead to an overemphasis on coding as an end goal, rather than a means to achieving theoretical depth. This is echoed by Levin (1986), who suggests that software might transform from a support tool to a methodology in itself. Coffey et al. (1996) extend this argument, noting that the popularity of CAQDAS, predominantly developed by Grounded Theory researchers, risks pushing qualitative research towards a uniform approach. However, as Lee and Fielding



(1996) and Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2011) argue, most modern software packages offer flexibility that accommodates various analytical methods.

Thirdly, Weaver and Atkinson (1994) argue that software can *distance the researcher from his data*, a phenomenon known as “reification of researcher and data”. This issue arises from coding processes that may detach researchers from the original context of their raw material (e.g. a transcript). However, NVivo addresses this by allowing broader context retrieval during coding. When reviewing coded material with queries, the researcher can use the option “spread to” to increase the original coded material to a broader context (see Section “Dissecting the Query Window” in Chap. 12).

Additionally, there are concerns about the expanding size of qualitative research projects, now that NVivo is capable of handling vast data quantities. This growth, as Jansen (2005) points out, has led to the term ‘qualitative survey’ being coined. However, this expansion raises fears of a shift towards quantitative analysis methods, where the focus is more on counting codes rather than in-depth interpretation (Bassett, 2004; Mason, 1996). NVivo’s development over time reflects this risk, with increased capabilities for statistical analysis and mixed methods. NVivo does produce several statistics on number of codes, number of fragments coded at and the percentage of text (or visuals) being coded. As such, the software supplies abundant opportunities to fall in this trap. But the risk is bigger than the information given in the codebook. The data can be exported to Excel or SPSS leading to a further quantification of the coding work (see Section “Exporting Project Material with Text Reports (Extracts)” in Chap. 14) and NVivo also imports surveys from Qualtrics or Survey Monkey (see Section “Importing Primary Data in Your Project” in Chap. 6). In addition, quantitative techniques like cluster analysis are built into the program to help users automatically detect (statistical) associations within the raw material (see Chap. 19). This evolution is driven by a rhetoric of the programmers that NVivo increasingly will help you to detect the patterns in the data automatically instead of helping the researcher to dive into his data and support the intellectual analysis of the empirical material.

It’s worth noting that most of these concerns, as highlighted by authors like Barry (1998), date back to the 1990s when CAQDAS tools were new and less developed. But even back then, the benefits of using such software, including efficiency and flexibility, were already acknowledged by authors like Tesch (1990, 1991). However, the earlier warnings still hold relevance. As NVivo offers more automated and AI-based analysis features, there’s a risk that researchers might opt for quicker, less rigorous methods over more detailed manual coding processes. The rise of Generative AI and its application in qualitative data analysis (especially coding data) is reigniting the debates about the role of software in qualitative research (e.g. Davison et al., 2024).

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# A Guided Tour in Qualitative Data Analysis

## Key messages in this chapter

- In qualitative research, data analysis can be done from many methodological approaches.
- Nevertheless, most approaches have the same way of analysing qualitative data.
- We illustrate one way of analysing as an example: Grounded Theory analysis.

## APPROACHES IN QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

The analysis phase of a study is often where researchers find themselves unexpectedly challenged. While qualitative research is perceived as quick and cost-effective, especially in comparison to large-scale surveys, this is not always the case. Although data may be gathered more swiftly, the time saved is often negated by the extensive and time-consuming analytic process. This intensive engagement with the data contrasts sharply with the click-of-a-button efficiency offered by statistical software like SAS or SPSS. In qualitative data analysis (QDA), the researcher grapples with their data alone, and no computer can replace the creative phase of this analysis. Though quantitative research also demands creativity, it is largely intertwined with the computational power of the processes. Software like NVivo can ease the burden of qualitative researchers, but it will never autonomously produce results ready

for reporting. Consequently, delivering you with a cookbook approach to qualitative analysis is not possible. Just as one cannot encapsulate “falling in love” in rules and procedures, qualitative analysis cannot be fully captured in a definitive analytical pathway. However, this does not diminish the value of NVivo as a tool that can enhance the qualitative researcher’s experience. While it doesn’t provide ready-made analyses, the computational power of the software is harnessed to organize, make searchable, and visually condense qualitative material. This chapter provides an overview of the steps a qualitative researcher might take in their analysis, offering a potential pathway for researchers. This is not to suggest that it is the only or an infallibly successful approach. Every qualitative research project and set of data is unique, demanding a creative and adaptable approach to the methodologies outlined in this chapter: utilize them as needed and modify them when necessary. The flexibility of NVivo ensures that most alternative approaches can be seamlessly integrated into its usage.

Over the years, qualitative research has evolved into an amalgamation of various approaches and schools of thought. This complex evolution has led to the emergence of three distinct methodological paradigms: postpositivism, constructivism, and the paradigm encompassing critical and feminist approaches. Within the latter, various sub-streams can be identified. Each of these streams emphasizes different aspects within qualitative research and brings different focuses to the forefront. As a result, the qualitative analysis conducted by each stream can also differ.

Qualitative researchers have access to multiple sources of data. They can conduct interviews or focus groups, engage in participatory observation, gather documents, or take photographs. Theoretically, all these content streams and data forms could be placed in a matrix to derive a multitude of analytical approaches. However, this is not the case in the practical world of research. Still, it can be said that various established methods of analysis have crystallized over time. For instance, certain forms of analysis are based on specific types of data, like participatory observation (as illustrated by Spradley, 1980) or are aligned with a particular qualitative paradigm, such as phenomenology (Moustakas, 1994).

Authors like Tesch (1990) argue that the differences between these methods are not as vast as they might initially appear. Tesch categorizes the objectives of qualitative analyses into four main goals: uncovering language characteristics, discovering regularities, understanding the meaning of a text or action, and reflection. From her analysis, she proposes a continuum of methods, ranging from highly formalized (almost quantitative) to those where almost no method is defined. Beyond these extremes, she identifies ten basic principles common across most methods. Creswell (1998), in his comparison of five streams (the biographical method, phenomenology, Grounded Theory, ethnography, and case study), finds a common analytical procedure at the base of each method.

Regardless of the method or paradigm, a researcher typically starts by organizing the data (data management) and begins with reading interview transcripts or field notes. Then, the data are broken down into smaller segments, filtering out irrelevant information. This is followed by describing the data and connecting different data parts. The analysis concludes with writing up the findings. The central process in this can be metaphorically described as **dismantling** and **rebuilding**. It's like a researcher entering a jungle and encountering unknown ruins. They see the forms of buildings, some unclear or collapsed. Carefully, they remove the debris and number the stones that belong together. Then, they clean the site and begin reconstructing the buildings step by step, often returning to the leftover stones to fit them into the larger structure. The dismantling process in qualitative research is described as coding, indexing, labeling. The rebuilding phase involves linking, connecting, aggregating. The outcome of this phase are constructs, concepts, variables, themes, which later evolve into theories or narratives.

## GROUNDING THEORY AS A STRUCTURED WAY OF QDA

In this chapter, we show you one methodological approach to CAQDAS: Grounded Theory. As we have shown above, this is only one family within a wide range of possible analytical approaches. Grounded Theory is founded on the works of Anselm Strauss and Barry Glaser, originating from their collaborative publication "The Discovery of Grounded Theory" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The rationale behind this choice is its prevalence and its historic connection to NVivo. Grounded Theory is the most expansive qualitative analytical approach (Bong, 2002). The majority of qualitative publications employ or reference Glaser and Strauss's method in data processing. The dominance of Grounded Theory is evident not only in the number of studies utilizing this method but also in the plethora of handbooks making a similar choice to this book. It is important to note, however, that the following sections are inspired by Grounded Theory but do not represent the Grounded Theory in its entirety. The divergent approaches of Glaser (1978, 1992, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2005) and Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1990, 1998a) alone illustrate that there are varying perspectives on the approach. We also opted for Grounded Theory as an example in this chapter as the predecessor of NVivo (NUD\*IST) originated in this methodology. Even though NVivo today is a flexible and methodology independent program, it has its roots in the Grounded Theory approach (Richards, 2002).

### *Theory as the Core Component of Grounded Theory*

While it is clear that Grounded Theory is not a monolithic methodology, its foundational framework shares common ground, particularly in two central elements: theory and procedures. Theoretical development has always been at the heart of the Grounded Theory approach. The very idea of the method is