

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCHING SAVANNAH GUIDES

A researcher can approach the experience of people in contemporary organisations through examining personal and institutional documents, through observation, through exploring history, ... and through a review of existing literature. If the researcher's goal, however, is to understand the meaning people ... make of their experience, then interviewing provides a necessary ... avenue of inquiry (Seidman 1991: 4).

The qualitative investigation of ecotour guides is a relatively new area of inquiry in the discipline of sociology. Although there are some studies of tour guides from within a sociological perspective (see Cohen 1985; Cohen 1982; Crick 1994; Crick 1992; Crick 1989; Holloway 1981; Schmidt 1979), to date there has been little attention given to the subgroup of tour guides that form the ecotour guide cohort. As little qualitatively researched material is available in this area, the Savannah Guides group and my investigation into their purpose provides a qualitatively inspired project of an undeveloped sociological area.

This study of ecotour guides within the Australian tourist industry draws principally on interviews with people who work as ecotour guides and who belong to an umbrella organisation that has developed itself as a

marketing tool to encourage tourists to participate in the member's selected ecotours. The choice of qualitative methods is partly a response to contemporary writings about ecotourism, and this research looks at tour guides as workers in a competitive service industry. Qualitative methods are able to 'get behind the façade' of the individual or organisation, in a way that uncovers the personal lives and dilemmas of those in the situation being explored. Qualitative methods are a tool for unlocking both the nuances and the life experiences of the people being studied. In this way, qualitative methods allow the participants' view of the situation to come to the fore, and their thoughts and views on topics related to the research are illuminated. Therefore, qualitative methods can provide an 'insider' account of tourist motivation. It can also be useful in providing an 'insider' account of mass consumption, from within the peripheral framework of ecotourism. This thesis seeks to provide an account of the emerging occupation of the ecotour guides known as Savannah Guides, their participation within the umbrella organisation and, ecotourism generally.

The tradition of qualitative methodology (Bogdan and Taylor 1975: 1; Mason 1996: 39; Rosenau 1992: 116) highlights the subjects' definition of the situation as the main issue in the construction of theoretical models that are grounded in the actors' viewpoints (Anderson and Littrell 1996: 35; Glaser and Strauss 1967). Glaser and Strauss (1967), Becker (1970) and Glesne and Peshkin (1992), recommend uniformly alternating between theory and

evidence, instead of analysing hypotheses cultivated in the library (Alasuutari 1995: 42; Denzin 1978: 332; Veal 1997: 131). According to Patton (1980), emergent themes in the data are more visible by grouping a similar semantic field to identify a single theme. For instance, guides use friendship and fraternity to control neutral concepts of camaraderie. Analysing qualitative data involves coding sections of text, and then collating all those that fall into the same themes or categories. Coding is central to the process of analysing. Strauss and Corbin (1990) put forward the three components of the coding procedure: open coding, axial coding and selective coding. These three components of category coding are the main thrust behind the development of grounded theory (Rice and Ezzy 1999: 195). The data for this study was collected, worked with, reduced and reconstructed for conceptual and theoretical purposes using the three coding component procedures.

Engaging the subjects' viewpoint as a beginning and, further, taking what people 'say' sincerely, and constantly shifting from 'theory' to 'evidence' permits the researcher to perceive the complications, inconsistencies and dilemmas that individuals encounter in their everyday conflict with their 'normal' lives (Atkinson and Hammersley 1994: 252; Mason 1996: 45). An important premise of the tradition of the critical and theoretically grounded empirical research on which I draw is a recognition that social life is suffused with apparent inconsistencies, ambivalences and contradictions. Qualitative

methods allow researchers to juxtapose similar nuances.

The Progression of the Study

This dissertation on ecotour guides, undertaken in the tropical savannas region and outback of northern Australia, examines Savannah Guides as workers in the service industry of tourism. The literature highlights three salient points about ecotourism in the Australian outback. First, there is a large diversity between tourism operators, tour guides and types of tours on offer. No two guided tours can be considered identical, as there are many differing sites and forms of travel used by the guides. These differences occur because the environment is continually shifting and changing, the person who 'guides' a particular tour one day may be guiding an entirely different group of 'ecotourists' the next, possibly in a completely different location. In addition, not all people have the same ideas and definitions of ecotourism and so will conduct their tours differently. Second, once in the field, the theoretical concept of ecotourism was more meaningful as the diversity of experience played itself out at the various tourist sites. Third, the literature often implies ecotourism is distinct from mass tourism because the guides are a romanticised and individualistic portrayal of the Crocodile Dundee figure. However, I would argue that ecotourism is increasingly another bureaucratised aspect of mainstream tourism.

In order to correct a common misconception that ecotourism can be

practised by any tour operator, I wanted to study a group of ecotour guides in a setting that reflected the conditions that face interpretive tour guides in Australia. I also wanted to investigate the idea that the term 'eco' attached to any form of tourism marketing does not necessarily make the product environmentally friendly or, ecologically sustainable (Riley 1996: 37). This meant studying tour guides who had a common set of ecotourism principles and practices. The fact that I was able to study a collective group of ecotour guides who all had membership of the same overarching organisation, gives more weight and credibility to my study, as it provides a strong point of reference for all ecotour guides and ecotourism organisations. Although there have been numerous studies of ecotourism, the Australian perspective has largely been neglected. While there are few studies of tour guides, there has not, as yet, been any extensive sociological research into the ecotour guide sphere. Further, even though qualitative research has a tradition in the domain of tourism investigation (Boorstin 1961; MacCannell 1973, 1976; Turner 1973, 1974), only one identified use of grounded theory is evident in the tourism literature (Riley 1996: 24).

As my PhD scholarship is funded by the Co-operative Research Centre for the Sustainable Development of Tropical Savannas (TS-CRC), and there was already an existing link between the Savannah Guides and one of the academics at the Research Centre, the process of access ran smoothly. Given these links, I wrote a proposal, outlining my purpose and trying to

gauge the extent of access to the group and to the individual guides themselves, together with the possibility of spending some time with their group as a participant observer.

The choice of a participant cohort for this study is based on the fact that the group under examination forms a natural collection of participants, thereby providing access to a convenient and distinct representative group for a study concerning ecotour guides (cf. Whyte 1955). Additionally, the guides involved were interested and willing to take part in the research.

To obtain a more comprehensive view of ecotourism and the interpretive guided tour phenomena, I travelled to conferences and workshops facilitated by the guides. These are biannual events and are held every April and October at various locations throughout the Australian tropical savannas region and outback. The guides refer to these conferences as 'Savannah Guide Schools'. Following the principles of qualitative research, I wanted to become a part of their group and have access to them, which would allow me to conduct open ended in-depth interviews and participant observation (Riley 1996: 26).

One of the most common and effective type of research techniques contained within qualitative research has proved to be face-to-face interviews. In this research setting, the interviews were costly and time

consuming due to the distances travelled and, the remote locations of the schools, and also the tourist sites where the fieldwork was conducted. Even though there are dilemmas with regard to the research methods used, such as: issues of truthfulness in interviewees answers (Barnes 1994), and the problem of taking on the participants' position or worldview (Becker 1970), the methods clearly show the significance and use of integrated research methods in social science inquiries (Gurung, Simmons and Devlin 1996: 118).

Gallmeier (1991) argues that when researchers undertake fieldwork, they begin a long relationship with their participants. But, if they become attached to, and allowed access by the participants then, common differences will be more noticeable. This is what Adler (1985: 24) terms 'a cultural clash between research and subjects' (Gallmeier 1991: 227).

At the meeting which concluded the first School, my research about the group was put forward as a motion in the Minutes of the General Meeting, and was duly seconded and then passed unanimously. This official acceptance of my research by the participants was then recorded in the minutes. Subsequently, I received two letters of support from the group outlining their support for the research and wishing me every success with the endeavour (see Appendix A).

After receiving the Savannah Guides approval it was arranged that I would have access to interview members of the group. I was invited to travel to and attend all following Schools, to conduct my research. Subsequently, at all schools I attended, I carried a letter of introduction with me, explaining the nature of my research and asking the guide to participate (see Appendix B). I also gave every interviewee in the study a pseudonym (see Appendix E). I requested that each participant sign an informed consent form (see Appendix C), and as the sole researcher, I also signed the form.

Strategies Utilised for the Research

My theoretical slant led me to take up participant observation and interviewing as methods of engaging in the lives of the group I chose to study (Becker, Greer, Hughes and Strauss 1961; Mason 1996: 80). Initially, I used these methods to become acquainted with the guides and get a feel for the group and their Schools. It gave me a means to observe what they did and why they were doing it. Also, it was considerably useful as a way to compare and contrast what I was observing against what was being told to me in the interviews. It was also a means for highlighting what was not said.

Triangulation is an important methodological principle. It employs the use of two or more different methods for studying the same events - the point is that no single method is foolproof, so the use of several methods provides more conclusive results (Rose 1982). For example, in this study I

used participant observation, open-ended interviews and documentary data (see Glesne and Peshkin 1992: 24). 'Theory triangulation occurs in a qualitative project when theory produced in situ is compared to extant theories concerning a target phenomenon' (Sandelowski 1993: 216).

An increasing number of researchers are using multimethod approaches to achieve broader and often better results. This is referred to as *triangulation*. In triangulating, a researcher may use several methods in different combinations. For instance, group interviewing has long been used to complement survey research and is now being used to complement participant observation (Morgan 1988 as cited in Fontana and Frey 1998: 73 italics in original).

A principle notion of the triangulation approach is that research is a process of discovery, whereby the findings of a situation can be arranged as a formal theory of social organisation and processes. Triangulation infers that researching a phenomenon from various viewpoints supplies theorists and researchers with increased knowledge about the circumstances under scrutiny. This methodological approach also infers that there is a compelling necessity for a single standard by which methodological conduct can be assessed (Denzin 1978; Miller 1997).

Participant observation is both an overall approach to qualitative inquiry and a data collection technique. It developed initially from within both the fields of qualitative sociology and cultural anthropology. Participant observation is, to a certain degree, an essential component of all qualitative research. As the name suggests, participant observation is first hand involvement in the study of the social world. Involvement in the

chosen site of inquiry permits the researcher to see, hear and experience the social reality of the participants. The researcher immerses themselves in the research setting for a considerable amount of time, and learns about the day-to-day occurrences unfolding there. This immersion provides the researcher with the opportunity to learn directly from their own experience in the research field. These personal reflections are integral to the emerging analysis of the group under observation (Marshall and Rossman 1999). As Jackson (1989) suggests:

We must come to [knowledge] through participation as well as observation and not dismiss lived experience ... as 'interference' or 'noise' to be filtered out in the process of creating an objective report for our profession (Jackson 1989: 9).

Participant observation produces especially great rigor when combined with other methods. These are particularly valuable when used in connection with alternate data sources and can be used for enhancing cross checking (Douglas 1976) or triangulation (Adler and Adler 1998; Denzin 1989).

Although I sometimes used participant observation as a research strategy (Atkinson and Hammersley 1994: 249; Becker, Geer, Hughes and Strauss 1961: 22; Savage 2000: 331 - 332) at the Savannah Guide Schools, the majority of my data was obtained through interviews (Maxwell 1996: 89; Wellman 1977: 56). The interviews, like those in similar studies (Dunne 1997: 29; Mason 1996: 39), were in-depth, semi-structured and covered diverse topics related to ecotourism and interpretive guiding. Even though

in-depth interviews use fewer people, the analysis that results from them infiltrates more profoundly and more perceptively 'into the world of social and personal meaning' (Kellehear 1993: 1).

There are strengths and limitations to every research method. The strength of in-depth interviewing is that the researcher can come to understand the intricacies of participants' experiences from their own viewpoint. From this, it can be shown how their personal experiences interact with strong social and organisational influences that spread through the situation in which they work and live, and we can learn the connections between individuals who work and live in a mutual framework (Seidman 1991: 103).

The essence of in-depth interviewing is not to arrive at answers to questions, or to test assumptions. Neither is it to 'evaluate' the information as in the common usage of the word. The heart of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the experiences of other people and the meanings that they make of those experiences (Seidman 1991: 3). In other words, these interviewing techniques aid in developing explanations concerning the participants or research subject group, and investigate the activities of a set of individuals and their social world.

The interviews explored a number of themes (see Appendix D). In

particular, how the individuals became ecotour guides and how they sustained work in the ecotourism sector. I also posed questions about working in the occupation of ecotour guide. I examined experiences within ecotourism as an industry, and attitudes, feelings and meanings about sustainable environmental practices and, marketing issues. Issues connected to the promotion, management and running of a tourism business were also examined. Liberman (1999) suggests that, '[m]aking real contact with real people in ways that does not lose their life world is the centrepiece of the craft of contemporary qualitative sociology' (Liberman 1999: 53). Throughout the interviews, the participants spoke freely, and at length, about their experiences in the bush, and about their lives.

As the interviews were held at the Schools, many of the guides were aware of when others were being interviewed. When part of a study participant's activity is undertaken in the presence of other people, some aspects of the activity are highlighted and others are concealed. According to Goffman (1959), scrutinised performances make their appearance in front regions, while the concealed or unaccentuated activities are suppressed and only emerge in a back region or 'backstage' (Goffman 1959: 114).

All the interviews were undertaken at the Savannah Guide Schools held at various locations around the outback and tropical savannas regions of northern Australia. The interviews lasted between forty and sixty minutes.

As the 'Schools' are held biannually, there was every opportunity to re-acquaint myself with participants, and to verify my emergent interpretations of the data (Gulati 1998: 103). The Schools also afforded me the opportunity to speak with the participants on many other related issues (Dupuis 1999: 53). On a separate occasion, apart from attending the schools, my supervisor and I both travelled to the outback, and undertook some of the ecotours the guides were offering, as part of an ecotourism encounter. This gave me the opportunity to see the guides at work in their own 'territory' and to engage with them as purveyors and deliverers of the ecotourism experience. I also wanted to see how they worked as individuals, how they utilised their interpretive skills and, how they worked in their ecotour guide occupation, away from the main overarching group.

PLATE 3.1

Remote Gorge in Research Area



PLATE 3.2**Remote Location in Research Area**

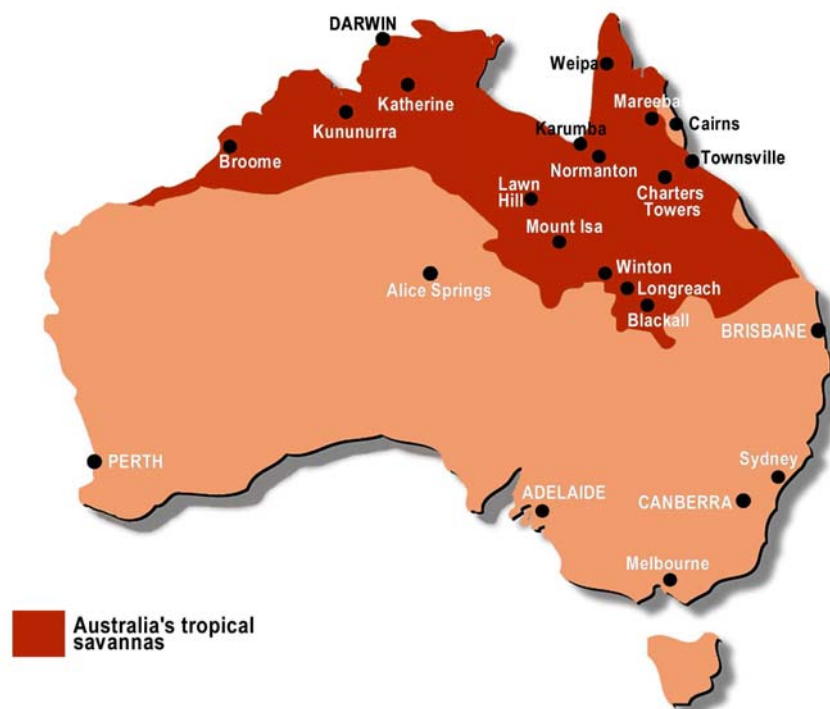
Due to time constraints and the length of time between Schools, I was unable to interview all members. As the majority of members of the organisation are predominantly male and, due to the fact that more men were present at the Schools than women, I encountered gender bias in the sample (Dupuis 1999: 53; Gurney 1991; Oakley 1981; Riley 1996: 26; Shaffir and Stebbins 1991: 26 - 27; Sword 1999: 277). This means that the majority of the data used in the following chapters is predominantly from male participants and that female respondents only make up a small proportion of the data analysis (see Appendix E). Gender is discussed here, as I seek to provide a comprehensive representation of the research scene (Morse 1997: 180). However, I was never confronted by conditions of access, or lack of availability enforced by the group because of my gender (Cheng 1996; Mills and Tancred 1992;

Pilcher and Coffey 1996).

I interviewed thirty-nine participants (see Appendix E) all of whom are members of the Savannah Guide organisation. The interviews were conducted in several different locations across the outback and tropical savannas region of northern Australia. Some of these locations included: Katherine, in the Northern Territory; Mareeba, on the Atherton Tablelands, in north Queensland; Longreach, in western Queensland; and, the townships of Normanton and Croydon, in the Gulf of Carpentaria region of north western Queensland (see Plate 3.3). The interviews were conducted between April 1999 and October 2000.

PLATE 3.3

Tropical Savannas Research Area



Throughout the data collection process, I was given freedom of access to various documents and other organisational materials that were relevant to my research. Many of these were 'snapshots' of the history and organisational life of the guides. These documents provided me with verification of the group's collective activities. Qualitative researchers successfully utilise the study of documents and other written works because they are part of the 'social' way of life. Much ethnographic fieldwork is undertaken in educated societies, or in other locations, such as organisations, which develop and circulate their own range of documents. Ethnographic fieldwork was originally developed for undertaking research in places that lent themselves to oral histories and accounts, across all cultures and societies (Atkinson and Coffey 1997: 45).

Organisations and their sites of business represent themselves in diverse ways. Therefore, to understand current society we need to see how it describes itself. For instance, in this study, I have referred to the organisation's brochures, Constitution, By-Laws and Strategic Plan (see Appendix I, Appendix F, Appendix G and Appendix H). The creation and consumption of these organisational records have all been included in the research. There are various research settings and a plethora of research questions that cannot be adequately investigated without reference to these records and documents. As suggested by Bloomfield and Vurdabakis (1994),

textually transmitted applications are a necessary way in which organisations construct 'reality' and other appropriate forms of knowledge (Atkinson and Coffey 1997: 46-47).

Despite the utility of the distinction between documents and records, [the main] concern here is more the problems of interpretation of written texts of all kinds. Such texts are of importance for qualitative research because, in general terms, access can be easy and low cost, because the information provided may differ from and may not be available in spoken form, and because texts endure and thus give historical insight (Hodder 1998: 111).

In this instance, I am using the organisational data to help me develop insights into the Savannah Guide organisation. As well, I use the same data to provide a detailed context and historical background to my research. Contained within the documents is a written version of the evolution of the guiding association. Therefore, the documents contribute to an understanding of the ecotour guide occupation.

In some cases, I also used the fieldnotes I wrote during the research and data collection phases of the research as a resource and as an aid to help make sense of the interview data. Insights gained from the fieldnotes were used as corroborative indicators to support my findings. Fieldnotes comprise indispensable sensory details that indicate rather than explicate other people's conduct. How other individuals or groups show their feelings and emotions in the field can be documented in fieldnotes by writing down the participant's spoken words and also their expressions. The salient attributes of a research setting and of research subjects can be collected from both the

written observations of the researcher and the interaction between the researcher and the participants. These two perspectives, observations and personal interactions, are documented in the fieldnotes (de Laine 2000: 147).

Akeroyd (1991) suggests that data contained within fieldnotes are not necessarily delicate, detrimental or harmful; they can only evolve when they are changed into information (Sieghart 1982: 103). It is easy to exaggerate the risks that data in the fieldnotes can have for the researcher, through being confidential or controversial, but the risks must not be ignored. Researchers ought to pay attention to those components of their data they regard as classified and private, and arrange data in fieldnotes appropriately, by employing pseudonyms and signs to highlight materials that are 'off the record' (de Laine 2000: 147). Further, de Laine (2000) suggests that fieldnotes taken during the observational and data collection phases of the research can form a significant section of the data to be analysed and written up.

Just as information in the social world is positioned and modified into material and everyday knowledge, the information contained in fieldnotes can be divided into different categories. Fieldnotes are filtered and grouped in a selective process according to the researcher's theoretical basis and sociological concepts and in my case, a grounded theoretical approach. Many insights that stayed concealed or secret in fieldnotes previously are

now being disclosed in endeavours to recount the 'story behind the story'; even though, in this case, adherence to a set of ethical standards has been maintained. Fieldnotes aid in written confirmation of what actually happened and can be referred to in order to right any wrongly conceived ideas about the research participants long after fieldwork is completed (de Laine 2000: 148).

Issues of Methodology in Qualitative Research

Within the discipline of sociology, there has been a long standing tradition of qualitative inquiry. Denzin and Lincoln (1994), have argued that qualitative research, as a set of processes, includes ongoing tensions and conflicts over research projects, including the form, findings and interpretations of the project itself. The pervasiveness of qualitative inquiry is to be found, more generally, in many disciplines, including the physical sciences. Many researchers who use qualitative methods sometimes have contrasting worldviews, such as modernist or postmodernist perspectives, that they bring and apply to social research settings (Denzin and Lincoln 1994: 4).

Another feature of qualitative analysis, as suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994), is that the richness and completeness of the data reveal a complexity only achieved by this form of data collection procedure. The qualitative data, therefore provide 'thick descriptions' that are true-to-life, grounded in an authentic context, and are colourful and intense. All these

attributes provide a powerful impression for the reader (Miles and Huberman 1994: 10).

Corbin and Strauss (1998) suggest that researchers who use qualitative methods have questioned the positivist traditions of research with the intention of studying human interaction. Contained in this redefinition of methods is the idea that qualitative methods involve interpretation and that interpretation includes the worldview and voices of the social groups and individuals under investigation. Interpretations of the social world of groups and individuals are gradually drawn out of the data. Qualitative researchers are in an advantageous position because they can give voice to individuals, collectives and organisations under scrutiny. Further, they interpret what they have observed, been told, or read (Corbin and Strauss 1998: 160).

Qualitative data with their emphasis on people's "lived experience" are fundamentally well suited for locating the *meanings* people place on the events, process and structure of their lives: "their perceptions, assumptions, prejudgments, presuppositions", and for connecting these meanings to the *social world* around them (Miles and Huberman 1994: 10 italics in original).

Increasingly, there has been an acceptance of grounded theory within the qualitative methods approach, 'inductively derived theory is developed from the empirical data, with limited reference to pre-existing theory' (Rice and Ezzy 1991: 191). In essence, grounded theory involves inductive theorising. The theory comes from building observations from insights collected as empirical data, throughout the research. On the other hand, a more

advanced perception of grounded theory goes beyond basic inductive theory building. Theory building happens in a continuous relationship between theory that already exists and fresh insights generated through the results of empirical investigation (Rice and Ezzy 1991: 194). Data analysis that leads to the formulation of theory is a clear process. The aims and research questions are developed in the research data and from within the fieldwork itself (Lindesmith 1968: 8; Rice and Ezzy 1999: 195).

Grounded theory provides a methodical understanding which allows the richness of socially constructed knowledge to be clarified. The method is developed to obtain theories and concepts from various forms of uniformly collected data whether they are interviews, ethnographies or printed information. The standard rule for grounded theory analysis is that data appropriation and analysis are simultaneous operations. The themes and categories are constructed by continually contrasting previous analyses with data currently being analysed. The themes or categories are developed to saturation point through repeating the process and pushing the data as far as possible to provide the analysis (Strauss and Corbin 1998). Categories are initially developed by a division of the interview data into separate parts with common themes. The continually repeated action groups segments together, or breaks down the data into conceptually comprehensive categories. As category titles become more abstracted from the primary data, they are subsumed under more inclusive classifications (Riley 1996: 31).

This groups together consistent themes and portions of data in complimentary batches during the simultaneous actions of data collection and analysis, thereby making coherent sections of analysis out of a mass of data.

Since the researcher is also the front-line data gatherer and recorder, the process of analysis is an ongoing process. The researcher must constantly be relating what she or he sees to the objectives of the study, and drawing interim conclusions. The very act of deciding what to view, what to say and what to record involves choices, which will be influenced by the researcher's evolving understanding of the phenomenon being studied. This interactive process results in what Glaser and Strauss (1967) termed grounded theory (Veal 1997: 140).

At the centre of qualitative research are two issues. Firstly, a responsibility to the ordinary, descriptive development of different parts of the research, and secondly, a continuing critique of the politics and procedures of positivism (Denzin and Lincoln 1994: 4). This means that qualitative research, while developing thicker, richer and more descriptive data on the one hand, also provides a rigorous methodological base from which theory can emerge.

The adaptability of grounded theory is apparent in the organised analysis of large amounts of collected data, such as interviews, observations and documents. Added adaptability is established in the development and redevelopment of theory to account for all varieties of analysed data. The main idea of grounded theory is that theme and category generation is 'grounded' in the relation and observation of a chosen set of social interactions. This reflects the social realities of what is happening within this

set of social occurrences (Strauss and Corbin 1994). In this way, theme and category development are connected to the boundaries of the chosen set of interactions rather than being generalised to a wider framework (Riley 1996: 23).

Sociologists frequently uncover types of social behaviour that people in everyday life would probably prefer not to have exposed (Denzin 1978: 329). Participants have specific ideas about their representations of themselves and their situations. To protect themselves against the possibly critical eye of the observer, interviewees characteristically exhibit character detachment (Goffman 1959), allowing them, in theory at least, to avoid a number of the possibly negative connotations of their activity. They do not have to completely account for their esoteric culture (Fine 1996: 235). So as to be able to capture interviewees from their own perspective, it is the researcher's aim to learn the subjects' systematic ordering of the world, and their classifications for making consistent and comprehensible the circumstance of the studied reality (Lofland 1971: 7).

This perspective permits the practice of letting subjects 'speak for themselves'. The researcher allows them to include ideas and feelings relevant to their own life experience and therefore generate themes through inclusion of these ideas in the data collection process. Thus, according to Glesne and Peshkin (1992), the principle end result of participant observation

is to interpret the research setting, its subjects, and their behaviour (Glesne and Peshkin 1992: 42; Marshall and Rossman 1999: 107 – 108; see also Cohen 1988b: 29).

The use of participant observation also allowed me to highlight inconsistencies in the fieldnotes, and to develop further issues of interest and applicability that were also underlined and highlighted by the participants in the study.

The basis of grounded theory is the process of coding, sorting and organising data. The analysis of qualitative data requires coding 'chunks' of text and subsequently, collating all the pieces that are coded similarly. Coding is the central process of the analysis. Strauss and Corbin (1990) note three central coding procedures, open coding, axial coding and selective coding. These three coding categories contribute to the development of theory 'grounded' in the research (Rice and Ezzy 1999: 195).

Open coding is the process where actions, events and interactions are compared. The researcher looks for differences and similarities in the comparisons and provides conceptual classifications and loose category groupings. Conventional processes of data analysis are disregarded while the researcher conceptualises the data to provide social categories (Rice and Ezzy 1999: 196).

Axial coding is the process where the initially developed codes are subjected to a more rigorous scrutiny. The data is related to different coded sections with a view to creating categories and sub-categories. Each code is scrutinised for distinguishing features and full elaboration of each code (Rice and Ezzy 1999: 197). Miles and Huberman (1994) refer to this process as 'subsuming particulars into the general' (1994: 254).

Selective coding is the procedure where all categories are blended together to produce 'core categories' (Corbin and Strauss 1990: 14). Selective coding is similar to axial coding, but is practiced at a higher level of generalisation. The categories and codes are evaluated and a main or significant code is identified that provides a theoretical point of amalgamation for the study (Rice and Ezzy 1999: 197).

Grounded theory is employed as a methodology for analysing the data (Creswell 1998: 56; Rice and Ezzy 1999: 194), and so it is appropriate to show how the key ideas were induced from the words and reports of the subjects (Corbin and Strauss 1998: 158; Riley 1996: 24; Sword 1999: 275). First, I counted commonly appearing repetitions, recurring events, explanations and experiences in the transcribed fieldnotes. Second, I noted the patterns and themes that occurred in the data. Third, I used coding and symbols for what I found. Fourth, I checked to see if single experiences or

events were really several experiences or events. Fifth, I connected particular events to general ones. Then, I noted the differences and similarities. After that, I looked for triggering and connecting inconsistencies. Finally, I noted patterns in the data that resembled theoretical concepts (Kellehear 1993: 40; Miles and Huberman 1984: 215-230).

Brown (1973) points out that grounded theory is not appropriate to use in many research projects. Brown (1973) also suggests that particular types of lengthy historical process would be unsuitable for theorising using the grounded theory approach (Seale 1999: 102). As Brown suggests:

[Grounded theory] may only be possible in a fairly limited range of circumstances. The type of material best given to the development of grounded theory ... tends to involve relatively short-term processes, sequences of behaviour that are directly observed or can be easily reported upon, and behaviour which has a repetitive character. Something missed can often be observed again (Brown 1973: 8).

In reality, many types of data can be collected and analysed using an inductive, grounded theory approach. The 'constant comparative' method (Glaser 1969) can be applied to many forms of other disciplinary research, and can be used for 'large-scale' projects in research by investigators that have not, as yet, 'conceptualised their methods in terms of grounded theory' (Seale 1999: 103).

According to Strauss and Corbin (1994), '[g]rounded theory is a *general methodology* for developing theory that is grounded in data systematically

gathered and analysed' (Strauss and Corbin 1994: 273 italics in original).

Grounded theory 'is a *detailed* grounding by systematically' and intensively 'analysing data, often sentence by sentence, or phrase by phrase of the fieldnote, interview, or other document; by "constant comparison", data are extensively collected and coded', ... thus producing a well-constructed theory. The focus of analysis is *not* merely on collecting or ordering 'a mass of data, but on *organising many ideas* which have emerged from analysis of the data' (Strauss 1987: 22-23 italics in original).

For example, in my research the theoretical background used is a critical sociological approach influenced by MacCannell (1992a). I also employ the use of symbolic interactionism (Goffman 1959) and critical Marxism (MacCannell 1992a). These theoretical positions are relevant to the sociology of tourism, tourism and the environment and ecotourism. Critical elements of labour process theory are also employed in this thesis and they seek to give voice to the agency of the tour guides. Further, recent work on emotional labour, when applied to tour guides, enabled me to develop a research aim and to generate open-ended interview questions. The open-ended questions were developed, expanded, improved and finalised through the use of the constant comparative method as I read more widely and began the data collection, which provided 'fit' between 'purpose, approach and theory' (Lincoln and Guba 1985). Frequently, fit can be assumed in research when there is none. When findings and conclusions do not correspond to methods and theoretical approaches, fit must be assumed to not exist with regard to the original and developed sequence of questions (Rudestam and Newton 1992: 75).

Conclusion

This chapter explores salient issues connected to the qualitative tradition of grounded theory within tourism research. In this chapter I have explained the nature of the research I conducted and how I analysed the data. I have shown that it is possible to achieve an informed, theoretical account of a research investigation through the use of grounded theory. As I have noted thus far, only one other identified use of grounded theory, as a research methodology, exists in the tourism literature (Riley 1996).

In this chapter I have also expanded my use of mainstream mechanisms of data collection to include organisational documents and fieldnotes, and have used these to enhance the more accepted qualitative methods of in-depth interviewing and participant observation. This method of working with the data has provided me with the opportunity to 'give voice' to the individuals I am studying and also, to give an account of their 'lived experiences' (Miles and Huberman 1994).

Through the use of inductively generated and derived data, theory building has been a technique used as an on going method throughout the entire simultaneous data collection and analysis phases of this research (Glaser 1969; Rice and Ezzy 1991). The theme and category development emerging from the research is 'grounded' in the social activities and

interactions of the participants in this project. This approach to theory construction, development and synthesis reflects the day-to-day lived experiences and features of the group under examination and has provided me with meaningful and rich categories of substantive detail.

This research study of individual Savannah Guides as members of an overarching ecotourism organisation provides an informed, theoretical account of their daily situations and encounters. Through the use of grounded theory and inductive reasoning, a comprehensive picture of the guides will be developed and explicated. As this study is qualitatively based, it indicates that research does not have to be objective and fixed to be rigorous; as contextualised, passionate and subjective investigation can also be dependable, orderly and ethical (Brewer 1994).