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The digital therapy room(s)

A grounded theory research examining video-delivered
psychotherapy

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Master's thesis
Spring 2021
Welfare Policies and Management
Lund University

Abstract

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Title: The digital therapy room(s)

Subtitle: A grounded theory research examining video-delivered psychotherapy

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The global pandemic COVID-19 made it impossible for psychodynamic psychotherapists to continue with in-person psychotherapy and they had to transform their work to the digital platform. There is a research gap regarding psychodynamic psychotherapists' experiences of video-delivered psychotherapy which is emergent to investigate since previous research has shown that the therapeutic relationship suffers in the digital room. The aim of the research is to develop a theoretical framework that explains psychodynamic psychotherapists' experiences of video-delivered psychotherapy. A constructivist grounded theory approach is used to gather and analyze data. Qualitative semi-structured interviews and a theoretical sampling strategy is used to gather data and initial-, focused and theoretical codes are used to sort, select, and separate data to make analytical and theoretical sense of it. The grounded theory research results in a theoretical framework of an explanatory and factual character that sheds light on processes within the digital therapy room. The theoretical framework consists of the four theoretical categories "the other's room", "the unsaid", "the immediacy" and "the ownership", and these explain how processes in the digital room are linked and how they contribute to reduced control for the psychodynamic psychotherapists. Findings from previous research and the theoretical framework draws attention to the need for psychodynamic psychotherapists to construct a therapeutic frame that is functional in the digital room.

Keywords: Video-delivered psychotherapy, psychodynamic psychotherapy, grounded theory, digital room, e-health, phenomenology.

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1.Introduction

Mental illness is an emerging public health problem in Sweden and many people request psychotherapeutic treatment (The Public Health Agency of Sweden, 2020). Researchers and professionals argue that the traditional way of delivering psychotherapy, which is through an in-person meeting between psychotherapist and client, is not appropriate and effective as the main delivery form if there is going to be any reduction in the burden of mental illness (Doraiswamy et al. 2020; Fernandez et al. 2021; Kazdin 2015). The digitalization and development of technologies in the late 20th century has enabled new means for delivering therapeutic interventions (Burgoyne & Cohn, 2020) and to meet the extensive need has psychotherapists within manualized and standardized psychotherapy forms i.e., non-psychodynamic approaches, started to provide video-delivered psychotherapy during the last decade (Molén & Holmer 2016).

Previous research has almost solely evaluated video-delivered psychotherapy when it has been used in cognitive-behavioral therapy and findings from their research shows that psychotherapists experience the therapeutic relationship as weaker while working in video as compared to in-person (Ertelt et al. 2011; Topooco et al. 2017). It is within previous research argued that the disadvantages and shortcomings of video-delivered psychotherapy are overshadowed by the advantages (Connolly et al. 2020) and the delivery format is described as a time and cost-efficient way to reduce mental illness (Aafjes-van Doorn et al. 2021; Bouchard et al. 2004; Gordon, Xiubing & Tune et al. 2015). Previous research has shown that the psychodynamic orientation is related to more negative attitudes towards video-delivered psychotherapy than the non-psychodynamic orientations (Gordon et al. 2015). Findings from Fernandez et al. (2020) meta-analysis showed that psychodynamic psychotherapists find it difficult do perceive dynamics in the digital room, which has contributed to their negative attitude to the format.

Recently, restrictions and recommendations from the Swedish government regarding distance and isolation due to the global pandemic of COVID-19 made it necessary and inevitable for psychotherapists from all therapeutic orientations to transform their work to the digital platform (Probst et al. 2021). Previous research has shown that the pre-post improvement with video-delivered psychotherapy is greater within non-psychodynamic approaches, but more

explanatory and investigatory research is needed. It is emergent and important to investigate psychodynamic psychotherapists experiences of video-delivered psychotherapy. As Fernandez et al. (2020) express it in the quote below:

As technological advances, enhanced acceptability, public health needs, and economic imperatives continue to increase the popularity of video-delivered psychotherapy, up-to-date protocols and policies rooted in research evidence are needed now more than ever. (Fernandez et al. 2020:11)

1.1 Aim of research

The aim of the research is to develop a theoretical framework that explains psychodynamic psychotherapists' experiences of video-delivered psychotherapy.

1.2 Research question

1. How can psychodynamic psychotherapist's experiences of video-delivered psychotherapy be understood in terms of processes in the digital room?

2. Previous research

2.1 Sweden's E-health vision 2025

The digitalization and development of technologies in the late 20th century has changed the psychotherapeutic arena and resulted in new methods for delivering psychotherapeutic interventions (Burgoyne & Cohn 2020). "The new mental health interventions have carried various names, including digital mental health interventions (DMHIs), telemental health, telepsychotherapy, telepsychiatry, telemedicine, web counselling, remote therapy, e-therapy, mobile therapy, virtual reality exposure therapy, serious games, and artificial intelligence therapy." (Fernandez et al. 2021). In the light of the possibilities of digitalization did The Ministry of Health and Social Affairs and The Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR) in Sweden form and sign a E-health vision in March 2016. The E-health vision declared that Sweden by the year of 2025 would be the best country in the world in terms of taking advantage of the possibilities that comes with digitalization (Ministry of Health and Social Affairs & SALAR 2020).

2.2 In-person psychotherapy

The traditional and most practiced way of delivering psychotherapy is through an in-person meeting between therapist and client (Fernandez et al. 2021). This traditional mode of delivery is in previous research mentioned as in-person psychotherapy, in-vivo therapy and face-to-face therapy and has over the years been used to work with people in different constellations. The traditional way of delivering psychotherapy has received a lot of criticism during the 20th and 21st century, critics argue that the in-person format does not have the capacity to meet the emerging need for therapeutic interventions that exists in society (Ibid.). The critical voices especially emphasize that in-person psychotherapy does not meet the need that exist within areas that has high rates of psychiatric disorders, elderly, ethnic minorities, and in rural areas in general (Doraiswamy et al. 2020).

2.3 Video-delivered psychotherapy

Psychotherapists within manualized and standardized psychotherapy orientations has started to offer and work with video-delivered psychotherapy as the internet has become more accessible during the late 20th century and since the multimedia platform Skype was launched in the year of 2003 (Molén & Holmer 2016). The delivery method has in previous research been described and referred to as a time and cost-efficient way to deliver psychotherapy, since clients can access the digital room from their homes in a convenient way (Aafjes-van Doorn et al. 2021; Bouchard et al. 2004; Gordon 2015). Initially, the delivery method became popular due to the conveniency that it offered, stressed city dwellers and professionals viewed it as an opportunity to save time by the reduced travel cost. However, previous research shows that it is particularly appropriate and suited for clients that has weak resources, are low-risk, underserved populations and populations that are confined by a public health crisis (Armfield et al. 2012).

Findings from Fernandez et al. (2021) meta-analysis, based mostly on studies of video-delivered psychotherapy within non-psychodynamic approaches, showed that video-delivered psychotherapy is described as something that is technically convenient. The starting point for a well-functioning video-delivered psychotherapy is that both the therapist and the client have a well-functioning internet connection and a computer, telephone, or tablet with a functional web-camera. It is articulated that it is of greater importance to have a well-functioning internet connection than a functioning web-camera. Furthermore, findings from their meta-analysis showed that the software involved often is cheap or completely free and described as easy to

navigate within for most psychotherapists (Ibid.). Karyotaki et al. (2018) writes that a stable internet connection and a well-functioning web-camera allows for a synchronous interaction between the psychotherapist and the client. Since the format allows for both verbal and visual material to exist in the therapeutic conversation it is in research argued that video-delivered psychotherapy is the remote-therapy form that has the most in common with the traditional in-person psychotherapy out of all remote therapy formats (Fernandez et al. 2021). Franklin et al., (2017:116) emphasizes the similarities of in-person psychotherapy and video-delivered psychotherapy by referring to the digital room as “face-to-face but not in the same place”. The statement emphasizes the synchronized verbal interaction while creating awareness of the spatial division (Fernandez et al. 2021).

2.3.1 Improved availability

Fletcher et al., (2018) argue that video-delivered psychotherapy improves the availability of psychotherapy for certain client groups because it does not involve as many obstacles as in-person psychotherapy does. He discusses video-delivered psychotherapy in relation to stigma and claims that video-delivered psychotherapy involves fewer stigmatizing aspects. The stigma that many clients that are mentally ill experiences may hinder them from seeking in-person psychotherapy. Video-delivered psychotherapy allows clients to seek and engage in therapy from their safe home environment, which helps to eliminate certain aspects of stigma. Bouchard et al., (2004) also discusses the increased availability and writes that people who previously were forced to travel long distances to receive therapeutic treatment or did not have the opportunity to travel long distances due to social or economic circumstances are now able to receive therapeutic help in a convenient way. In other words, the threshold for therapy is lowered from both a stigmatizing, geographical and economical perspective.

2.3.2 Cognitive behavioral therapy

Most previous research that has examined video-delivered psychotherapy has investigated its effects when it has been used within non-psychodynamic approaches, primarily when it has been used in cognitive behavioral therapy. Findings from previous research shows that the delivery method is accepted both by clients (Backhaus et al. 2012; Jenkins-Guarnier et al. 2015) and by psychotherapists, even though the psychotherapists tend to be more skeptical to the format (Connolly et al. 2020). Although most previous research describes the software as something that is easy to navigate within did findings in Schopp et al. (2000) study show that

the psychotherapists experienced difficulties with the technology. Further, did Connolly et al. (2020) find in their study that psychotherapists preferred to work in-person even though the video-format offered flexibility.

There is a research gap regarding how video-delivered psychotherapy affects the therapeutic relationship. Findings from Sacula et al. (2012) literature review, which included 840 articles that examined distance psychotherapy, showed that only 1,3% of the articles investigated the therapeutic relationship and almost all of them were based on cognitive behavioral therapy. Findings from Probst et al. (2021) research showed that psychotherapists within cognitive behavioral therapy did not experience it as more difficult to build and maintain a therapeutic relationship in video-format. At the same time did findings from Ertel et al. (2011) and Topooco et al. (2017) studies show that the psychotherapists rated the therapeutic relationship lower in video-delivered psychotherapy than for in-person psychotherapy. The various findings make it hard to draw conclusions and even if it would be possible to draw conclusions, it is not appropriate to generalize between different psychotherapy orientations, since they are based on different theoretical frameworks (Probst et al. 2021).

2.3.3 Psychodynamic psychotherapy

Previous research highlights that there is a pattern between the psychotherapist's degree of satisfaction with video-delivered psychotherapy and their theoretical school and background. Humer et al. (2020) writes that there are, explained in a simplified way, four different theoretical schools of psychotherapy; the behavioral, the humanistic, the psychodynamic and the systemic. These theoretical schools all have different approaches to psychotherapy and are due to their theoretical background more and less positive to the video format (Ibid.). The psychodynamic school which is based on theory from the psychoanalysis is related to more negative attitudes towards video-delivered psychotherapy while for example, the behavioral orientations are found to be related to more positive attitudes (Perle et al. 2013).

Findings from Fernandez et al. (2021) study shows that the pre-post improvement with video-delivered psychotherapy is greater in cognitive-behavioral therapy as compared to psychodynamic therapy. There are different explanations to this difference in outcome among researchers and some argue that it has to do with the theoretical background of psychodynamic psychotherapy. The psychodynamic therapeutic work is based on having access to the interpersonal dynamics in the physical room and the access to interpersonal dynamics is said to

disappears in the digital room because of the digital barrier (Ibid.). Aboujaoude (2018) writes that video-delivered psychotherapy always involves some form of digital barrier and mentions that it is important that clients and therapists are aware of how they use their web-camera. If the therapist looks at the client's video instead of looking straight into her web-camera, the client may feel that the therapist is looking down on him/her. Such subtleties in the interaction may be less consequential in an intervention like cognitive behavioral therapy which can explain the greater effect size (Ibid.). Edbacken, Rohani and Erlander (2021) also talk about the importance of placing the web-camera at eye-level in their article, they mean that it contributes to a more natural impression and makes it easier to maintain eye-contact.

In the light of the global pandemic of COVID-19 has psychodynamic psychotherapists started to work with vide-delivered psychotherapy in order to continue with their treatments (Probst et al. 2021). The findings in Fernandez et al. (2021) research shows that it is important to investigate psychodynamic psychotherapists experiences of video-delivered psychotherapy. Since psychodynamic psychotherapy and cognitive behavioral therapy is based on different theoretical models is it not possible or appropriate to draw generalizing conclusions from findings in previous research.

2.4 Literature search procedures

To search for previous research on the research topic were the digital platforms LUBsearch, DiVA, Google and Google Scholar used. In order to maintain a clear focus and find relevant research articles was a combination of keywords used while searching. One of the keywords had to do relate to the format of the therapy, including video, video-chat, videoconferencing and in-person psychotherapy, and the other keyword related to the therapeutic orientation that was of interest, namely, psychodynamic psychotherapy and psychodynamic psychotherapist. The search procedures resulted in hundreds of different research articles and to delimit the selection even more was the choice made to focus on research articles that had been published in 2021 or 2022 and was named something that indicated that video-delivered psychotherapy was being compared to in-person psychotherapy. Fernandez et al. (2021) meta-analysis "Live psychotherapy by video versus in-person: A meta-analysis of efficacy and its relationship to types and targets of treatment" was the first article that I read, and their reference list was then used for further guidance to find other relevant research articles and books.

2.5 Definitions

For the research to make as much sense as possible for the reader does this section include descriptions and definitions of commonly used terms. The terms *psychotherapy* and *psychodynamic psychotherapy* are defined since these terms can be perceived as similar but represent and stand for different things. The choice has been to not include a definition of the term *video-delivered psychotherapy* in this section since that term is introduced and described in a nuanced way in section 2. *previous research*.

2.5.1 Psychotherapy

Psychotherapy is the use of psychological methods, to help a person change behavior, increase happiness, and overcome problems. Psychotherapy in an interpersonal intervention i.e., conversations between the psychotherapists and client are used as the main tool for treating the clients' mental problems. The two most well-known and common sub-branches of psychotherapy are psychodynamic psychotherapy and cognitive behavioral therapy. These therapeutic orientations are based on different theoretical models and theoretical explanations and therefore works with and understands mental health problems from different perspectives (Wampold 2012).

2.5.2 Psychodynamic psychotherapy

Psychodynamic psychotherapy is a subcategory and a psychotherapeutic orientation within the term psychotherapy. The psychodynamic orientation includes several different treatment forms and intervention methods which all are based on Sigmund Freud's work with the psychoanalysis (Freud 1920). The term is in this research defined and used in the same way as Safran & Hunter (2020) defines and uses it:

The term psychodynamic therapy has been used to refer to forms of treatment that are based on psychoanalytic theory but that lack some of the defining characteristics of psychoanalysis. (Safran & Hunter 2020:13)

Some of the core defining criterions for psychoanalysis is that it includes a minimum of three sessions per week and the therapy does not have any fixed number of therapy sessions when it begins (Safran & Hunter 2020).

3. Distribution

The different stages of the research process will be presented in different sections in order to generate clarity in the research process. In section 1. *Problem formulation* is a short background provided to why this research is needed and relevant within the field of social science. In section 2. *Previous research* is previous research that is relevant for the understanding of the research context presented along with definitions of certain terms that is crucial for the understanding of the research. Section 4. *Methodology and methods* include a presentation of the methods that have been used to conduct the research and methodological decisions that have been part of the research process. In section 5. *Concepts* are the terms that have been used and applied in the analysis section introduced and described to reach greater clarity and transparency regarding the analytical work. In section 6. *Analysis* is it described how the theoretical categories and the theoretical framework were developed and constructed through interpretative work. In section 7. *Result* is the theoretical framework that the research resulted in presented with an illustrative figure (*Figure. 2*). Further does section 8. *Discussion* includes a discussion about methodological decisions, the result, and ethical considerations in relation to the research process and research design. In the last section 9. *Suggestions for further research* are ideas for further research that has emerged throughout the research process presented and discussed.

4. Methodology and methods

4.1 Research approach

The choice was made to conduct the research in a qualitative manner since the aim of the research was to develop a theoretical framework that explained a certain social phenomenon. Previous research has shown that it is fruitful to work in a qualitative manner if the aim of the research is to understand, explain and theorize social processes (Bryman 2018). Further, has grounded theory been used as methodology and it is the methodological framework of grounded theory that has governed how methods have been used i.e., how data has been generated and how data has been interpreted and analyzed (Bryman 2018). Grounded theory was chosen as research methodology since it is well suited for studies that aim to explain and understand social processes where there are no theoretical explanations or theoretical framework available on the phenomena that are being studied i.e., grounded theory strategies and methods is common within studies when the aim is to develop theoretical explanations in relation to a more or less specific context and target group (Creswell & Poth 2017).

Several crucial factors are behind the decision to work in a qualitative manner with grounded theory. Among other things it allows for an inductive view on the relationship between theory and practice which means that theory and theoretical explanations are generated and developed based on the generated empirical data, which is considered to be appropriate for the aim of the research (Bryman 2018:458). Further grounded theory allows for an epistemological position that is interpretive, which means that emphasis is put on understanding the social subjective reality based on how the participants in a certain social context and environment interpret their reality (Ibid.). Moreover, it allows for an ontological position of social constructivism, which means that social characteristics and social processes are a result of human interaction and not something that objectively exists 'out there' separate from the humans in the social context (Bryman 2018:454).

In the light of the study's epistemological and ontological position does the research use a phenomenological approach (Szklański 2019). The phenomenological approach centers around the idea that what is perceived as the social reality is the result of everyday social interactions among social individuals. Social reality is something that is constantly constructed and reconstructed through social human processes. In other words, the phenomenological approach emphasizes that there is no such thing as the real social reality and what may be perceived as the social reality does vary between different individuals and different contexts. What is perceived as the social reality in one time-period may not be perceived as the social reality in another time-period and what is perceived as the social reality in one culture does not need to be perceived as the social reality in another culture. Within the approach is social reality seen as something that is highly subjective and shared at the same time. It is subjective because it is experienced through people's subjective eye-lenses, and it is shared due to its social aspect. The phenomenological approach focuses on describing these shared realities and how they are constructed (Ibid.). The phenomenological approach values people's experiences while trying to understand the shared and the subjective reality (Björwill 1995). The understanding orientation means that it is a person's subjective experience of a phenomenon that is interesting and not the phenomenon in itself (Bryman 2018).

4.2 Grounded theory - Glaser & Strauss

Glaser & Strauss (1967) introduced their work of grounded theory in their original work "The Discovery of Grounded theory". Grounded theory was presented and introduced as a framework

for conducting qualitative research and the authors invited qualitative researchers to treat the framework as a set of flexible guidelines for generating and analyzing data in order to develop and create theories and theoretical explanations about the social world i.e. theoretical explanations that are grounded in data. Ever since the researchers presented and introduced grounded theory, there have been divided opinions between researchers and within the research world regarding what it really is, some researchers argue that it is a research method for conducting qualitative research and others claim that it is an approach and framework for generating, developing, and constructing theory (Charmaz 2014; Glaser & Strauss 1967). While conducting this research has grounded theory been viewed and used as a framework and the framework has been used to generate a theoretical framework of an explanatory character to understand social processes.

Grounded theory is theory and theoretical explanations that are grounded in data that has been generated, developed, and analyzed in a systematic and strategic way during the research process. Grounded theory uses an iterative approach which allows for and creates a close relation and connection between data generation, data analysis, and the final theory i.e., the theoretical categories that emerge in the analysis are developed and created in close connection to the empirical data. Instead of dividing and clearly distinguishing between different stages in the research process does the data generation and data analysis take place in parallel (Bryman 2018:460).

By using the term “guidelines” Glaser & Strauss (1967) encouraged other researchers and professionals to use and view their work of grounded theory as a box of research-tools and as a flexible framework for conducting and producing qualitative research. They emphasized and claimed that they invited other qualitative researchers to adopt and adapt from their guidelines to construct and conduct their own theoretical explanations about the social world (Ibid.). Researchers within different institutions and different fields of research have throughout the years accepted their invitation and Glaser & Strauss (1967) original work has since then been further developed in various directions. Charmaz (2014) version of grounded theory that she names “constructivist grounded theory” will be used in this research since her reasoning and view on knowledge and theory of science is in tune with my own positioning. Glaser & Strauss (1967) on the other hand argued in the original work of grounded theory that theory is something that emerges from data, separate from the scientific observer, this idea of positivism is not in tune with my own positioning.

4.3 Constructivist grounded theory - Kathy Charmaz

In Charmaz (2014) version of grounded theory she adopts the inductive, comparative, interpretive, iterative and open-ended approach of Glaser & Strauss (1967) original work. But unlike Glaser & Strauss she emphasizes the researcher's active involvement in the construction and development of theoretical categories and theoretical explanations, she claims that empirical data and theoretical explanations are not something that is out there to be objectively collected by the scientific researcher. She starts from an epistemological position that emphasizes the scientific researcher as a subject that is actively involved in the research process and that is located within a certain paradigm which affects the researcher's view and perspective on the social world and what kind of knowledge that is seen as valuable. Moreover, she argues for building on the pragmatist underpinnings in grounded theory and advanced interpretative analysis that acknowledge these constructions (Charmaz 2014).

In order to emphasize and clarify the researcher's active involvement in theory construction and the constructivist approach on scientific knowledge will the term *generating* be used instead of collecting while discussing the empirical data material and research methods (Charmaz 2014). By using the term generate is my active positioning and involvement as researcher in the research emphasized. Moreover, does the term generate reveal information about how certain time specific views on knowledge did have an effect on which paths that were chosen throughout the research process and which paths that were not chosen. My positioning, privileges, perspective, engagement, and social interaction with other people has been an active part of the research process and the research reality and have had an effect on how the theoretical categories were developed and constructed. Viewing grounded theory as something that is constructed rather than something that is to be objectively found in the social world foster's my reflexivity regarding my own actions and decisions along the research process (Mason 2017). Charmaz (2014) emphasizes that any kind of theoretical explanation only demonstrates and shows an interpretive portrayal of the social world, not an exact or in any way objective correct description or picture of it.

When Charmaz (2014) introduces and presents her version of grounded theory she emphasizes that she does not recommend that researchers apply the framework on their research projects in a mechanical way. She argues that the constructivist framework allows for a high degree of

flexibility and that researchers should adapt it to the degree and to the extent that suits their own research projects. I have accepted Charmaz's invitation and have throughout my grounded theory research project adapted and adopted from her framework in order to develop and construct a theoretical explanation of psychodynamic psychotherapists experiences of video-delivered psychotherapy.

Glaser & Strauss (1967) write that the usefulness and applicability of a theory can be judged on criteria's regarding how it was generated. The authors argue that some criteria's that are helpful while evaluating the usefulness of a theory is: logical consistency, clarity, density, scope, and integration to the social world. Further, they state that it is likely to be a better theory if it has been inductively developed within social research. In the following section will it be described how data was generated, analyzed, and then further developed into a grounded theory. These stages were done in an iterative process but are presented and introduced separately in order to provide and reach greater clarity in the research process. Glaser & Strauss (1967) and Charmaz (2014) both argue that the main cornerstones of grounded theory research are theoretical sampling, coding, theoretical saturation and constant comparisons and my work with these cornerstones and other aspects will be described and discussed in the next section.

4.4 Generating rich data

Since the aim of the research project was to develop and construct a theoretical framework that explained psychodynamic psychotherapists' experiences of video-delivered psychotherapy was it of interest to use qualitative data gathering methods in order to generate a rich, solid and detailed data material that mirrored the social subjective reality of the research participants (Bryman 2018). Various kinds of data gathering methods are useful and suitable when conducting grounded theory research (Bryman 2018:462). Due to certain time limitations and lack of available resources, data gathering methods such as ethnography were excluded and the methodological decision to use interviews were made. It was of great significance to start the data generation process from the very beginning of the research process due to the iterative aspect and cornerstone of grounded theory research. The grounded theory was about to be built in close connection to the generated empirical data material. Since the aim was to generate and construct a theoretical framework that explained a specific social phenomenon, I needed to be aware of theoretical concerns regarding plausibility, centrality and adequacy, these concerns affected which sampling and selection decisions that were made (Ibid.). In the next section will

it be described how sampling and selection decisions were made to generate a rich data material and an empirical base to build the grounded theory analysis on.

4.4.1 Theoretical sampling and selection strategies

Since the aim of the grounded theory research was to develop and construct a grounded theory that was applicable in a specific context and in relation to a specific social phenomenon, and since the research was interested in depth, nuance, complexity, and interpretive work was sampling and selection decisions needed in order to generate a rich empirical data material to build the theoretical framework on (Mason 2017:55). Mason (2017:55) writes that qualitative research always involves some form of sampling and selection decisions for two sets of reasons. The first set of reasons relates to practical and resource-based issues and the second set of reasons relates to issues regarding focus and applicability. These kinds of decisions are particularly important while conducting grounded theory research in order to ensure that the grounded theory mirrors and is relevant in relation to the part of the social world that it is aimed to explain.

Bryman (2018:499) mentions two levels of selections that researchers need to decide upon and be aware of in order to maintain a clear focus and gain a rich empirical data material for the purpose of their research. The first level of selection, contextual selection, refers to contextual decisions regarding where the empirical data should be generated. The choice was made to delimit the contextual selection by only interviewing and focusing on psychodynamic psychotherapists who work with video-delivered psychotherapy in Sweden. The second level of selection, selection of participants, refers to decisions regarding which people that are interesting to interview in the selected context. The choice was made to interview psychodynamic psychotherapists that had experience of delivering both in-person-psychotherapy and video-delivered psychotherapy. Further, due to practical reasons was the choice made to use a purposive sampling. It is common that qualitative researchers use some form of purposive sampling since the research most often has a time frame to relate to. Explained in a simplified way is purposive sampling a term for a variety of sampling methods within qualitative research where the selection is made on the basis of the aim of the research so that the analysis units are selected on the basis of criteria that make it possible to answer the research questions (Bryman 2018:498).

The website *psykologiguiden* (psykologiguiden.se) was used in order to recruit psychodynamic psychotherapists who work with video-delivered psychotherapy, since it is through these peoples experiences that relevant empirical data material can be generated in order to fulfill the aim of the research. Since almost none of the psychodynamic psychotherapists explicitly stated on their homepage if they offered video-delivered psychotherapy or not was the invitation to participate in the research sent by e-mail while in the state of uncertainty (*Appendix 1*). Out of the 95 emails that were sent with an invitation to participate in the research, five people responded and out of these were two willing to participate with their experiences. Later on in the research process I then came in contact with a third psychodynamic psychotherapist through one of the interviewees, who also participated in the research.

Theoretical sampling is a kind of purposive sampling that is referred to as one of the main cornerstones within grounded theory research (Bryman 2018:498). Glaser & Strauss (1967) introduces theoretical sampling as a process where the researcher simultaneously generates, codes, and interprets the data material in an iterative manner in order to develop and create theoretical categories. The generated data at a certain stage in the research process indicate which type of data that is going to be generated next and where that data is to be found, in other words, the data generation is guided by the grounded theory that is under development. To summarize, theoretical sampling is a constant ongoing process throughout the research and does not take place at a certain stage of the research (Bryman 2018:500). Theoretical sampling has been used while conducting this grounded theory research, the use of the method increases the possibility that the theoretical framework that this research will result in will reflect the research participants shared and subjective social reality in an adequate way, primarily because of its iterative approach. Further is the method particularly useful since the research project is time-sensitive and does not have time for multiple rounds of research (Charmaz, 2014).

According to Charmaz (2014) is emphasis and focus placed on theoretical saturation while using theoretical sampling in grounded theory research. Whether the research has reached theoretical saturation or not is a measure for deciding whether to interrupt the data generation regarding a specific theoretical category or whether to continue the investigation and development (Bryman 2018:500). The researcher follows leads that emerge that seem to be interesting and of value for the research until no new leads emerge that seem to provide useful and fruitful information and aspects to the grounded theory; this way of working allows for a greater focus than other sampling methods. The use of theoretical sampling will sharpen my

focus on what is happening in the empirical data material and direct my interpretive work, my imagination and my ideas are allowed to flow freely which will have a beneficial impact on the theory development.

Researchers who advocate grounded theory often point out that sampling and selection procedures in mainly quantitative studies, but also qualitative studies, often are ineffective in relation to the study's purpose. Determining a fixed number of units in advance that are to be included in the sampling group can result in a situation where the researcher wastes both time and resources, since the researcher could have been able to conclude the same findings with the use of a smaller sampling size. According to proponents of grounded theory, sampling decisions should be made in terms of what is relevant in relation to the research process in order to develop a theoretical explanation (Bryman 2018:499).

4.4.1.1 The interviewees

The three people who participated in the research identify themselves as women or non-binary. The age range is between 30-65 and they live in different parts of Sweden. All of the interviewees have more than one year of working experience with video-delivered psychotherapy and work within the private sector. When quotes from the interviewees are presented and discussed in the analysis section their real name will not be included in order to maintain the interviewees anonymity, instead will the interviewees be referred to as *interviewee 1*, *interviewee 2* and *interviewee 3*.

4.4.2 Semi-structured interviews

Mason (2017) writes that researchers need to decide upon a couple of questions concerning how, where and when in relation to data generating methods, since the answers to these questions will affect which phenomenon the researcher will see and further what type of empirical data the researcher will end up with in the end. Previous research has shown that qualitative interviews are a fruitful method to use if the research aims to understand and explain human experience since these methods allow the researcher to follow up in a flexible way on interesting data (Mason 2017:32).

The choice was made to use semi-structured interviews in order to generate the data material since semi-structured interviews leave room for spontaneous thoughts and reflections during

the interview for both the interviewees and the interviewer, which is beneficial for the database and for the development of the theoretical framework (Bryman 2018:260). Further, semi-structured interviews are assessed to be adequate and appropriate given the research's phenomenological approach. Semi-structured interviews have the beneficial element of flexibility and invites reflection; it allows the researcher to ask questions that encourages the interviewees to reflect upon their experiences. As previously mentioned it would have been more beneficial for the aim of the research i.e. the development of the theoretical framework, to study social processes in real time through participatory observation, but due to time limitations was the choice made to use retrospective semi-structured interviews instead (Bryman2018:481).

It is common that researchers who conduct grounded theory studies choose to use intensive interviews as the data generating method since it suits the aim and the inductive approach of grounded theory studies particularly well (Charmaz 2014). Charmaz (2014) argues for the great use of intensive interviews and emphasizes that the method allows for in-depth exploration of the research participants' experiences. The intensive interview method is open-ended to its nature and therefore allows for a wide exploration of the participants' experiences. Due to the study's time limitations has the decision been made to not use intensive interviews even though the method is suited for grounded theory studies that aim to theorize experiences. The unstructured nature of intensive interviews would leave me as a researcher with an overwhelming amount of data material and it would have been impassable given the time frame of the study (Bryman 2018:260).

Semi-structured interviews are considered to be an appropriate choice since it allows me as the researcher to explore the research participant's experiences of their social reality just like intensive interviews does, but in a bit more structured manner. Further, the semi-structured interview are flexible and permissive towards new thoughts and ideas that emerge, just like the intensive interview, but a little bit closer ended which makes the generated data more manageable (Bryman 2018:260; Charmaz 2014). However, even though the semi-structured interview and the intensive interview have a lot in common, does the intensive interview allow for a freer conversation during the interview situation, the interviewees are allowed to express their experiences as they indicate during the interview, while the semi-structured interview are guided to a greater extent. The awareness of this aspect resulted in the interviews being

conducted with an as open approach as possible in relation to the study's time frame (Charmaz 2014).

The semi-structured interviews were held on Zoom and lasted between 40 to 50 minutes. In the very beginning of the interview was oral consent regarding the participation in the research taken. The decision was made to use oral consent instead of written consent since it is less bureaucratic and since it was convenient given the digital format of the interview situation. The interviewees were informed that the interviews were to be recorded and that participation was voluntary and that they as participants had the right to cancel and leave the interview situation whenever they wanted. The interviews were held on Zoom due to the global COVID-19 pandemic and geographic distance between me and the interviewees (Mason 2017:127). The decision to conduct the interviews online was not a matter of course, careful balancing led me to the conclusion that the digital format would not affect the data material in a too decisive way, the method would leave me with and result in valuable data about the interviewees' experiences. I am aware that my choice to conduct the interviews on Zoom may had an impact on what type of data that was generated, much of the non-verbal language is not visible in the digital interview room and from previous experience of making conversations in the digital rooms does the conversation not flow in the same natural way as it does in-person. However, the digital barrier in the digital interview room does not pose a major risk in relation to the applicability and the relevance of the study's findings.

The interviews were recorded since that reduced the risk of missing any important verbal data for my understanding of their experiences, instead of taking notes I could put my attention on being fully present during the interviews and follow up with supplementary questions whenever I felt that it was needed for my understanding (Bryman 2018:578). While conducting the interviews were both the interviewee and I alone in our parts of the shared digital interview room and we were both sitting straight in front of the camera with good sound and lighting, which is a prerequisite for as little information as possible to be lost. The tape recorder was on until the very end of the interview since interviewees sometimes opens up more at the end of the interview (Bryman 2018:581). The semi-structured interviews were gently guided with an interview guide (*Appendix 2*) that were designed to explore the research participants' subjective experience of video-delivered psychotherapy. A presentation and discussion regarding the interview guide and the study's points of departure will be held in the next section.

4.4.3 Interview guide and points of departure

Charmaz (2014) suggests that researchers who are new to grounded theory research use some form of interview guide since the development and the creation of it forces researchers to think through what kinds of questions that could be useful to ask the interviewees in relation to the aim of the research. There are not any specific rules for how an interview guide within grounded theory research should be designed or developed, but Charmaz (2014) and Glasser & Strauss (1967) both emphasize that the questions within the interview guide should make it possible for the researcher to get data about how the interviewee experience a certain social phenomena, which in a more or less direct way indicate that the interview guide needs to leave room for flexibility. The questions in the interview guide should not be spelled out in such a specific way that they prevent alternative ideas from emerging during the interview situation. Bryman (2018:565) underlines and emphasizes that the most important aspect to think of as a grounded theory researcher while constructing the interview guide is to not formulate and use leading questions, since leading questions can result in a misleading data material, which may result in a grounded theory that does not accurately reflect the participants experiences of the social world (Bryman 2018:565).

While formulating the interview questions I aimed for a variation in how the questions were formulated. Some questions were designed to maintain the focus on the research topic and some questions were formulated to allow and open up for new ideas to emerge. Since the interview questions and my interviewer-style as interviewer forms the context and the frame of the study, effort was put on formulating and creating questions that were as open-ended as possible and not value-charged (Charmaz 2014).

Even though the research uses an inductive approach, did some pre-existing interests of mine guide, and affect the development of the interview questions. Charmaz (2014) refers to these pre-existing interests as points of departure and claims that almost all research projects use and start from some points of departure, even though the research is conducted with an inductive approach. Given the time limitations of the research project was some form of pre-understanding of the social context needed and my points of departure while creating my interview guide were “therapeutic framework” and “professional resistance”. Bryman (2018:564) writes that grounded theory researchers who are concerned over the fact that even the smallest and most light weighted points of departure will hinder a complete and full understanding of the research participants' experiences should address and discuss their points

of departure to show transparency. A discussion about my pre-understanding of the social phenomena is provided in the discussion section.

The interview guide (*Appendix 2*) that was used while conducting the interviews consisted of three sections and each section had a theme followed by three questions (Mason 2017:122). Bryman (2018:570) suggests that researchers use three different kinds of questions while exploring the research participants' experiences, namely, introductory open questions, intermediate questions and conducting questions. These questions were used as a basis while formulating my interview guide since they are all of an investigative nature but use different perspectives while exploring. Introductory open questions focus on what kind of events that led to a certain process, intermediate questions focus on how the participants experienced a certain process the first time and conducting questions investigates if the participants view on a certain process has changed and in what way it has changed. The interview guide was used as a basis and the order that the interview questions were asked in varied from one interview to another in order to follow the rhythm and flow of the conversation. As previously mentioned, would it have been more beneficial for the development of my grounded theory to just use themes instead of specific questions since pre-designed questions can lead the interview situation in a certain direction based on my pre-understanding of the social phenomena. But, due to the time limitation was the decision made to maintain some sort of focus by using interview questions of an open kind.

4.4.4 Transcription

The process of transcribing the recorded interview material began right away once the first interview had been conducted. In order to preserve the authenticity of the interviewees' experiences and allow for nuances in the analysis to emerge, every word that the interviewees said was written down. I found it to be important for my understanding and interpretive work of their experiences to capture their formulations in as equivalent a way as possible. It took about five to seven hours to transcribe each one of the interviews and in order for the material to be as trustworthy as possible was silences, laughter and other aspects in the interview conversation highlighted to create an increased understanding of the data material (Bryman 2018:579). The work of transcription resulted in 25 (6+10+9) A4-pages with text.

4.3 Data analysis methods

This section includes a discussion of how initial coding, focused coding, theoretical coding, comparative methods, and memos were used in order to sort, select, separate and theorize the generated data material in order to make analytical and later theoretical sense out of it (Charmaz 2014). Since the research uses an iterative approach was an iterative method and strategy used while interpreting and coding the data material. This means that the data analysis began once the first interview was conducted and transcribed and the outcome of the first codes affected the next step in the data generation process. Phrased in a more nuanced way did the initial codes from the first interview influence my focus and steer my attention while conducting the second interview (Charmaz 2014).

The work process of coding and labeling qualitative interview data offers me as a researcher a close look at what the interviewees say and struggle with, formulating codes helps to identify the participant's implicit concerns as well as their explicit statements (Charmaz 2014). While coding I used and distinguished between functional codes and theoretical codes which is important to do while conducting grounded theory research and constructing grounded theories. Functional codes represent words that the interviewees have explicitly pronounced, and theoretical codes are codes that have been developed through my subjective interpretative work as a researcher. It is important to keep track of and be aware of this distinction since this type of knowledge is crucial if the researcher wants to verify the grounded theory that has been developed. Other researchers must be able to trace the codes back to the empirical data material and future reviewers of the grounded theory need to know which codes that are direct statements from the interviewees and which codes that are built on subjective interpretative work from the researcher (Charmaz 2014:121).

4.3.1. Initial coding

The initial coding phase was the first stage on the path to make some sort of analytical and theoretical sense out of the generated data material; this process started in the beginning of the research process once the first interview had been conducted and transcribed. Charmaz (2014) introduces initial coding within grounded theory research as the initial process of defining what data represent and do not represent by attaching short codes to pieces of data that summarizes it and makes it more manageable. Line-by-line coding was chosen as the initial coding strategy since it allows me as a researcher to remain close to the generated data material. Word-by-word

coding was considered but deselected due to the time limitations of the research project. Line-by-line coding is valuable within grounded theory research since it strengthens the grounded theory's fit and relevance in relation to the studied social world, which is of great interest and high priority while conducting grounded theory research. Charmaz (2013) writes about line-by-line coding and emphasizes that the grounded theory will fit the empirical world once the code has been constructed and later developed into theoretical categories that nuances the research participant's experiences (Charmaz 2014).

Charmaz (2014) encourages speed and spontaneity while formulating and creating the initial codes. The aim of brainstorming and having a spontaneous approach is to remain open to analytical and theoretical possibilities in the data material and to not overthink and draw analytical conclusions right away. Moreover, she emphasizes that the spontaneous approach opens up for and results in a great variety of initial codes which will form a good basis for the interpretative and comparative work later on in the research process.

Just like many other qualitative researchers am I interested in change and development and want to capture processes in the data material (Bryman 2018:481). Charmaz (2014) recommends researchers to code with words that reflect actions and processes rather than types of people when the aim of the research is to develop, and construct nuanced theoretical explanations of social processes. Using codes that describe types of people leads the research to focus on individuals rather than what types of processes that are happening in the data and such coding tends to freeze people in time and space and further minimizes the researcher's chance of defining any variation within the studied phenomenon. I followed Charmaz's (2014) recommendation and formulated the initial codes with the use of gerunds which she introduces as a heuristic device to make processes in the data material more visible. Coding with gerunds helped me as a researcher to view links between different processes which strengthened the analytical level of the grounded theory. Glaser & Strauss (1967) also encourages researchers to search for processes in their data material and since these sometimes can be hard to find in the data material that many times appear overwhelming, they suggest a couple of questions for researchers to ask their data material. The questions that I adapted to maintain a clear focus on processes were; when why and how does this social process change and what are the consequences of the social process? Given this research constructivist approach is it worth emphasizing that the answers to these questions always depend on the subject's perspective and the researcher's subjective interpretation of the data material. In order to shed light on the

researcher's subjective perspective while interpreting processes were questions such as the following also discussed and thought through; from what point of view is a given research fundamental and who exerts control over these processes and under what conditions (Ibid.)?

In line with Charmaz (2014) and Glaser & Strauss (1967) recommendation and invitation was the initial coding done in a spontaneous manner without problematizing it too much, the initial codes became a result of what the transcribed data material suggested. Further, I strived to not apply existing and well-known theoretical concepts while formulating the codes. The aim of not using well-known and recognized theoretical concepts within social science research was to build my analysis step by step from the very ground without taking any shortcuts and not make theoretical generalizations too early on in the process. Herbert Blumer, who is a well-known sociologist who was interested in and worked with symbolic interactionism and social science methods during his career has argued against the use of definitive concepts in social science and claimed that such concepts enclose social reality (Bryman 2018:463).

The open approach at this early stage in the research process was used to make as many theoretical and analytical paths as possible visible before closing any doors. The initial codes that emerged at this stage were temporary and provisional and were about to be renamed, compared, and theorized later on in the process in order to improve their fit with the data. The initial coding from the first interview resulted in 62 codes and many of these codes could in some way or another be linked to experiences and issues regarding the therapeutic frame, which is a central within psychodynamic psychotherapy. The heavy number of functional codes that were describing processes regarding the therapeutic frame caught my attention and interest and guided my interest during the next interview. The second interview resulted in 74 codes and while comparing these codes with the codes from the first interview a pattern in initial codes started to appear. The pattern that appeared was not explicitly expressed in any interview, but when the initial codes interacted it became visible. Charmaz (2014) encourages researchers to follow their analytical ideas even though these are not clearly expressed in the raw data material. The pattern in the functional codes and the theoretical codes told a story about a diminished sense of control. The third interview resulted in 68 codes and while comparing the initial codes from the three interviews with one another the pattern that I earlier had noticed appeared clearer and due to the already visible pattern and the time limitations was the decision made to move on into focused coding with these codes.

4.3.2 Focused coding

The open-minded approach that was used while doing the initial coding resulted in many different initial codes which allowed me to discover nuances and explore theoretical possibilities in the data material while doing the focused coding. The initial codes opened up for and suggested various paths for further theoretical analysis, and these were all relevant since they were all grounded in data and therefore had something to say about social processes (Charmaz 2014). But, since the aim of the research was not to capture the whole complex picture of the studied social phenomenon it was not of interest to follow all theoretical paths that the initial codes opened up for, instead the choice was made to follow the theoretical path that most of the initial codes pointed towards which were the one that indicated processes of reduced control (Bryman 2018:691).

While doing the focused coding I focused on the most common initial codes and the codes that could provide the most information based on the data that I had generated. The codes on the chosen path were compiled and compared with one another and new codes and categories emerged through interpretative work that summarized numerous of the initial codes (Charmaz 2014). The codes that emerged at this stage in the analysis were more analytical to their nature than the initial codes but were not yet to be seen as theoretical categories since links and hypotheses between them had not yet been developed. While doing the focused coding I began to view with a clearer perspective what the interviewees viewed as problematic in relation to video-delivered psychotherapy (Mason 2017).

Once again it is worth emphasizing that my subjective perspective as researcher did affect how I interpreted and worked with the data material while doing the focused coding and instead of viewing my focused codes and findings as some sort of truth should it be seen as one interpretation of many possible interpretations (Charmaz 2014). One of the greatest challenges while creating focused codes and making greater analytical sense out of the data material was my own taken-for-granted understanding of the social phenomenon that were studied. In order to deal with this, I remained engaged in comparative work during the process to test my ideas. The following questions were asked to the data material in order to interact with the focused codes; is there anything in the focused codes and the data material that suggests that the interviewees experience that something is associated with or caused by something special? (Charmaz 2014).

However, even if the development and the work with the focused codes was guided and steered of my subjective interests as a researcher, the process was not just about selecting and going forward with the codes that interested me the most. The process included interpretative aspects regarding deciding which codes that had the greatest analytical power and to determine the adequacy and the conceptual strength of the initial codes (Charmaz 2014).

4.3.3 Theoretical coding

The last step in the analytical process included the development and creation of theoretical codes, these codes are important for the credibility of the grounded theory since they are more analytical and theorizing to their nature. Theoretical codes are used in grounded theory research to prove how certain categories are linked together which strengthens the analytic story and the trustworthiness of the grounded theory. Through the use of theoretical codes, the researcher is able to demonstrate how the categories within the grounded theory are related and affect one another and therefore why and in what way the grounded theory makes sense (Charmaz 2014).

Charmaz (2014) emphasizes that researchers who conduct grounded theory studies should be careful while formulating and using theoretical codes. She writes that lack of preciseness and awareness can result in a grounded theory that does not reflect the research participants' experiences and therefore does not reflect the studied social world. Lack of knowledge and ignorance pose a great risk and may result in a situation where the theoretical codes no longer are based and built in close relation to the focused codes. Even though many grounded theory researchers make use of theoretical codes is it not considered to be a requirement while conducting grounded theory research (Charmaz 2014; Glaser & Strauss 1967). As an example, did Charmaz (2011) not make any explicit attempt to integrate the focused codes through theoretical codes in her study "losing and regaining a valued self".

However, since the aim of the research was to develop and construct a grounded theory, a theoretical framework, that could be used to explain and nuance psychodynamic psychotherapists experiences of video-delivered psychotherapy, was the decision made to use theoretical codes in order to prove how the focused codes were linked and thereby strengthen the credibility and trustworthiness of the theoretical framework. I created theoretical codes by engaging in active interpretative work and the theoretical codes expressed among other things connections that were and were not explicitly stated in the data material. Through how the

interviews talked about their experiences of video-delivered psychotherapy was for instance the theoretical codes; loss of control, delusion and confusion developed.

4.3.4 Theoretical saturation

In this section will the discussion about theoretical saturation that was initiated in the section about sampling and selection decisions be continued since theoretical saturation is one of the main cornerstones within grounded theory research (Charmaz 2014:213). Glaser & Strauss (1967) and Charmaz (2014) both emphasize that researchers who conduct grounded theory studies need to be aware and mindful about the degree to which their categories has been saturated. Theoretical saturation is a moment in the research process when it no longer contributes to the researchers understanding or development of the grounded theory to gather any more empirical data. The following quote is from Glaser (2001) book “The grounded theory perspective” where he explains what theoretical saturation is.

Saturation is not seeing the same pattern over and over again. It is the conceptualization of comparisons of these incidents which yield different properties of the pattern, until no new properties of the pattern emerge. This yields the conceptual density that when integrated into hypotheses make up the body of the generated grounded theory with theoretical completeness. (Glaser 2001:191)

Bryman (2018:501) emphasizes that theoretical saturation sometimes is an unrealistic goal while conducting inductive research since the number of themes that emerge from a set of data is more or less unlimited and researchers who conduct grounded theory studies often have certain time frame to relate to. Mason (2018) discusses theoretical saturation and sampling sizes in qualitative research and writes that there is not any rule for how much data that is needed for the research to be saturated. Grounded theory researchers have argued that their research is saturated from interviewing just a couple of informants, the amount of data that is needed depend on the purpose of the research and how rich the generated data material is. Crouch & McKenzie (2006) recommends that researcher who aim to conduct qualitative interviews use small sampling sizes with less than 20 informants, small sampling sizes increases the researcher’s chance to form a good alliance with the interviewees which most shows of in a richer data material.

Bryman (2018) writes that it is not that unusual that researchers develop grounded theories and claims that theoretical saturation was reached without any really proof of it. In the light of Glaser's (2001) definition of theoretical saturation has this research not fulfilled the criterion of theoretical saturation. I made the methodological choice to stop gathering any more data when a pattern in the data material started to appear, which makes it impossible and inappropriate for me to claim that the properties within the theoretical categories are saturated. Since the study had a time frame to relate to was I unable to fulfill the criterion of theoretical saturation since that is very time consuming and the choice was made to not aim for that in the light of how Bryman (2018:501) describes it as an unrealistic goal. I am aware that the credibility and trustworthiness of the developed theoretical framework is negatively affected by not fulfilling this criterion and that is a shortcoming in the study.

Since many of the initial codes pointed in a certain theoretical direction after the third interview was the choice made to move on in that direction instead of exploring more thoroughly before choosing an analytical direction. However, the fact that I stopped gathering data one I noticed a pattern in the data material does not mean that the theoretical framework does not reflect the interviewees experiences and social reality, my interpretative work and theoretical framework is still grounded in data (Charmaz 2014:1). The aim of my grounded theory research was never to construct and develop a theoretical framework that could be used to draw concluding generalizations about the bigger social world. The aim was to develop a theoretical framework that explained certain specific experiences within a limited context, in order for a small group of people to understand their situation better. In the light of this I claim that my theoretical framework mirrors the small, limited context that it was constructed within, and I do not make any claims that it is applicable in another larger context.

4.3.5 Constant comparisons

Constant comparisons were done throughout the whole research process, comparisons were mainly done between initial codes and other initial codes and between focused codes and other focused codes, but also between different theoretical and analytical ideas. The comparisons were going in all directions in order to ensure the grounded theories fit and relevance to the studied social world. It was primarily through comparisons between initial codes and focused codes that nuances in the data material were discovered and codes were further developed into more analytical ideas and theoretical categories. The constant comparative work maintained the close relationship between the interviewees' words, my codes and my interpretations and

reinforced the desired outcome of the research, namely, that the categories should have a meaningful anchorage in the empirical data. The constant comparisons contributed to a desirable processing of the categories, which among other things contributed to the theoretical categories “the immediacy” and “the unsaid” becoming two different categories. The properties within these categories may at first glance seem to represent the same processes, but the comparative work made it visible for me that “the immediate” stands for something of a more abstract nature in the therapeutic work while “the Unsaid” represents something of a more concrete nature (Charmaz 2014).

4.3.6 Memos

Charmaz (2014) emphasizes the importance and usefulness of processing one’s impressions, thoughts, and ideas before and during the research process. Qualitative research often includes lots of impressions for the researcher. The researcher may meet new people or learn new things that sparks their inspiration and allows new ideas to emerge. Keeping notes of these impressions throughout the research process can be valuable for the researcher’s understanding and processing of the studied phenomenon. Charmaz (2014) calls these notes memos and argues that these are an important part of grounded theory studies, writing memos helps the researcher to understand their impressions and make analytical sense of the data material.

What Charmaz (2014) describes as freewriting was done in the very beginning of the research project before the data generation had begun. Freewriting was used as a tool to become aware of my prejudices and preconceived notions about the social phenomenon, and to reflect on my positioning as a researcher, being aware of these aspects is important for the theory development. While freewriting I wrote about my own experiences of conducting conversations online and my positioning as a master’s student at Lund’s University. I then kept contiguous notes throughout the research process in the same document about my impressions, analytical ideas and methodological dilemmas which accelerated the productivity and the analysis work. The methodological notes then became the basis for the design of the method section and the method discussion in this thesis.

At the beginning of the research project the memos mainly consisted of notes regarding codes, but as the research progressed, they included more and more thoughts and analytical ideas about categorization and theorizing i.e. the memos had a central role in constructing theoretical categories. It was through the use of memos that the analytical idea about a diminished sense

of control emerged to me, and later the theoretical categories that told something about the psychotherapist's experiences of control loss. Charmaz (2014) emphasizes that there is no predetermined way or manual for how memos should be used or designed in order to be of value for the research. Instead, she encourages grounded theory researchers to design and use them based on what is considered meaningful to the individual researcher and their research project.

5. Concepts

The terms that are mentioned in this section refer to the various tools that were used to organize and express how data related to each other during the analysis work. I have already mentioned some of the terms in the method section above and will return to them in the analysis section. By making a brief presentation of the terms I hope to be able to guide the reader in my use of them in the analysis section. Below is a simplified model that illustrates how the analytical tools codes, properties, categories, hypotheses, and dimensions relate to each other (*Figure. 1*). The terms: codes, properties, category, hypotheses, and dimensions are italicized in the analysis section when they are used to emphasize their meaning in the specific context.

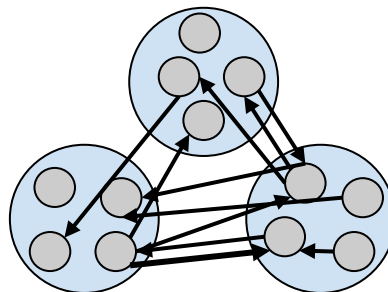


Figure. 1. The figure is a simplified model that explains how the concepts in the research i.e., codes, properties, categories, hypotheses, and dimensions relate to one another. The figure deepens the understanding for how and why the different theoretical categories in the theoretical framework interact with one another. This illustrative figure is presented in order to make the discussion in the analysis section clearer for the reader.

5.1 Codes

Codes are short labels that the researchers use to make the empirical data material more comprehensible. Codes have a summary function and tell what processes are in the material and give an understanding of how the researcher has perceived the data. What the code looks

like depends on the researcher's choices and interpretations (Charmaz 2014:115). Codes are used to create, develop, and saturate categories and are in the figure above illustrated by the blue color that fills the large circles (*Figure. 1*).

5.2 Properties

Properties are built on both functional and theoretical codes, and it is these properties that make up and define the categories within grounded theories. Functional codes, also known as in-vivo codes are based on direct statements from the interviewees and theoretical codes are the result of interpretive work. The properties are represented by the smaller circles in the figure above (*Figure. 1*).

5.3 Categories

“A category is a phenomenon that has a definite meaning for a group of people” (Hartman 2001:47). Categories are created by compiling and analyzing codes in the data material that describe the same phenomenon. The core category is the category that has the most links to the other categories and are therefore central in the final grounded theory. The categories are represented by the black outline around the large circles in the figure above (*Figure. 1*). In my analysis and results section will quotation marks be used when mentioning any of the categories in order to bring clarity.

5.4 Hypotheses

The threads that link the properties of the categories and thereby the categories themselves are called hypothesizes. It is through articulated and sensible hypotheses that the relevance of the theory is strengthened, the hypotheses show and prove how the categories interact with each other. The hypotheses are represented by the arrows in the figure above (*Figure. 1*) (Charmaz 2014).

5.5 Dimensions

Dimensions describes the relationship between the properties and categories within the grounded theory and are created by ranking the properties and categories. This ranking helps to generate the core category and it strengthens the grounded theories hypothesizes. This term is not used frequently in the essay but is an important step in relation to the theory development.

Dimensions are illustrated in the figure above by the large blue circles being at different levels (*Figure. 1*) (Charmaz 2014).

6. Analysis

In this section will it be demonstrated how the interview data was analyzed with the help of the grounded theory terms: codes, properties, categories, hypotheses, and dimensions. These concepts are used to prove how the theoretical categories relate and interact with one other and why the theoretical framework that has been developed through interpretative and comparative work makes sense. The theoretical categories that make up the theoretical framework are: “The Other’s room”, “the immediacy”, “the unsaid” and “the ownership”. The theoretical category “the other’s room” is the theoretical framework's core category since all of the other theoretical categories can be linked in some way or another to this theoretical category. All of the other theoretical categories share properties with this theoretical category. In order to reach a nuanced and more in-depth theoretical understanding of the interpretative work will the theoretical categories be presented and discussed along with quotations from the interviewees. The aim of demonstrating and presenting the quotes is to be transparent about my ideas and allow other researchers and colleagues to make their own judgment about my interpretative work that resulted in the theoretical framework that is visualized through a figure in the next section (*Figure. 2*). This analysis section does not address or discuss all the identified connections and links between the theoretical categories that have been identified. As an example, does the time frame for the research process not allow a presentation of all the hypotheses that have been identified. However, some of the identified hypotheses will be presented and discussed in order to demonstrate my interpretative work and the logic behind and between the theoretical categories.

6.1 Core category: The other’s room

The theoretical *category* “the other’s room” is the theoretical framework's core *category* since all of the other theoretical *categories* can be linked to this category in one way or another. All of the other theoretical categories share *properties* with this category since video-delivered psychotherapy always involves two separate physical rooms in the shared and common digital room. Many of the *codes* and *properties* within this theoretical *category* nuances and express experiences and processes of reduced control over the therapeutic room since half of the therapeutic room is on the client's side. The following quote is from the interview with

interviewee 2, she talks about the loss of control over the client's part of the therapeutic room that she experiences while working with video-delivered psychotherapy:

“I still have control over the therapeutic room that is on my side.. but half of the therapeutic room is on the client's side while working in video-delivered psychotherapy.. the fact that the digital therapy room is both shared and divided at the same time is challenging.. I feel like I have to do pedagogical efforts in order to make it work.. I usually inform my client's about the importance of sitting in a safe and closed room while they are in video-delivered psychotherapy.. and that no one is allowed to enter their physical room while they are in therapy since it can have devastating effects on the therapy situation if family members are in the same room as the client.”

(Interviewee 2)

Interviewee 2 describes the spatial division in the digital therapy room as challenging and emphasizes that she must do pedagogical efforts in order to regain the control over the therapy room. Processes of loss of control in video-delivered psychotherapy are perhaps not that strange since psychodynamic psychotherapists traditionally have had control over the therapeutic room. In an interview with informant 1, she talks about the constant uncertainty regarding whether the client and the therapist are alone in the digital room or not.

“I feel like I have control over the therapeutic environment and the therapeutic room in another way at my physical clinic.. I have a curtain at my clinic that I often use to lock out the social world from the therapy situation.. But it is not possible to use such strategies in video-delivered psychotherapy.. for instance.. I have no idea what my clients have on their phone or computer screens while they are in psychotherapy.. and that is nothing that clients think of or even reflect upon.. because people today are so used to the digitized world.. they are used to being constantly available for the social world around them.. people work late and rush home from work to go to therapy.. without closing their work mail or turning off notifications on their phone or computer.. and it is impossible for me to know if or when the social world infringes on the therapy situation if they do not literally tell it to me. I am able to notice the social world's infringement in another way when the therapy is at the clinic.. at the clinic I can tell if people glance at their

phones.. and we can talk about it.. talk about how the client experiences the social world's infringement on the therapy situation.. whilst in the digital therapy room.. I can believe that we are alone even though we are not.. because like I said.. people will most likely have tabs open on their phone or computer screen.”

(Interviewee 1)

Like interviewee 2, interviewee 1 also talks about the experience of loss of control in the therapeutic digital room. She mentions that strategies that she previously used to lock out the social world are no longer applicable and the uncertainty regarding who is in the therapy room affects her and the therapy situation negatively. She expresses that her lack of knowledge and her dependency on the client contributes to a state of uncertainty, she is forced to rely on the information that the client shares and provides. The loss of control over the client's part of the shared digital room is not only expressed through experiences of uncertainty linked to unspoken information, it is also expressed through experiences of more visual disturbances. The following quote is from the interview with interviewee 3:

“My experience is that there are many disturbing elements in the clients' home environment.. and these disturbances affect the therapeutic relationship and the focus on the therapy session negatively.. family members are home and partners and children's presence in the house affect what the client shares and how they share it.. the fact that someone can hear them affects what they are saying.. it is common that clients whisper in order to not get overheard by family members.. clients' pets jump up in front of the camera and the focus in the therapy gets disturbed.. I have had clients who have been sitting in the car since the family is home.. clients who have been out on a walk in the park or in the city.. clients who have said that their baby needs to get some fresh air and then they put the child in a pram and go for a walk while they are in therapy on their mobile phone.. so there are many disturbing aspects that is a challenge in video-delivered psychotherapy.”

(Interviewee 3)

Interviewee 3 talks about her experiences with disturbances of a more visual nature in the quote above. The quotations that have been presented nuances experiences of loss of control over the client's part of the digital room from different perspectives. The *properties* within this

theoretical *category* relate to one another but express various aspects of the control loss. *Properties* within the theoretical *category* are for instance, visual disturbance and non-visual disturbance. The lack of available information relates the theoretical *category* “the other’s room” to the theoretical *category* “the unsaid” and the lack of available information is the *hypothesis* between the two of them. However, is the theoretical *category* “the other’s room” placed and located within a higher level of abstraction than the theoretical *category* “the unsaid”. This is the case since the theoretical *category* “the unsaid” is built and made up of many functional *codes* such as lack of body language and non-verbality whilst the theoretical *category* “the other’s room” is developed through interpretative work to a greater extent i.e., it consists of more theoretical *codes*. The different levels of abstraction do that these theoretical *categories* are in different *dimensions* to each other.

6.2 Category: The immediacy

The theoretical *category* “the immediacy” mirrors the psychodynamic psychotherapists' experiences of reduced access to the immediacy in the interpersonal therapeutic situation. The theoretical *category* got its name since many of the functional *codes* included and involved aspects of immediacy. The interviewees used and referred to the word immediacy while they reflected upon their experiences, and it was described as something that is inherent in the physical interpersonal interaction between the therapist and the client and as something the psychotherapist uses and takes advantage of in their therapeutic work. Interviewee 2 emphasizes in their interview that psychodynamic psychotherapy is not instrumental and standardized in the same way as other psychotherapy forms and that psychodynamic psychotherapists therefore are dependent on the immediate in the moment to a much greater extent. The immediate is used to get a feeling and interpret abstract signals from the client, the following quote is from her interview:

“Psychodynamic psychotherapy is not standardized and manualised to the same extent as other psychotherapy forms like Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy.. this makes us more dependent on interpersonal interaction.. it is important that psychodynamic psychotherapists have access to the un-said and the immediate in the therapeutic situation.. our work is dependent on these aspects..you sit with someone and you get a feeling.. a feeling that there is something underneath the surface of what the client says or signals.. immediacy is important in order to

interpret the client in the right way and in order to avoid misunderstandings.. because, sometimes a client's emotional expression does not match what they are saying.. immediacy is about perceiving the discrepancy.. and the immediacy disappears to some extent in the digital therapy room.”

(Interviewee 2)

The immediacy is described in the quote as something that takes place on an abstract level in the physical interaction between the therapist’s gaze and the client’s physical and emotional expression and appearance. Interviewee 3 also talks about the importance of having access to the immediacy in psychodynamic psychotherapy, but from an perspective of authenticity.

“The authenticity in the therapeutic relation and the therapeutic situation disappears to some extent in the digital room while delivering therapy in video-format.. let's use the web-camera as an example.. since we are doing this interview on Zoom it is a great opportunity to demonstrate my point for you.. if I look at the little square on my screen where your video is showing it feels to me like I am looking you in your eyes, right.. but you do not experience it as I am looking in the eyes.. you experience it as I am looking down on you.. in order for you to get the experience that I am looking you in your eyes I need to look straight into the web-camera.. but then I do not see you at all.. so.. it is much easier for clients to hide from the psychotherapist in the digital room.. and not fully expose themselves.. since it is impossible to remain some sort of natural eye contact.. and we normally and traditionally work much with eye-contact.”

(Interviewee 3)

Experiences of lowered authenticity and lowered immediacy have been toned under the same theoretical *category* since they express aspects regarding emotional and interpersonal distance in the digital room. Both of the quotes contribute to a nuanced understanding of how video-delivered psychotherapy affects the immediate in the meeting. Further, do the quotes demonstrate how the immediate and the genuine disappears by giving the client space and opportunity to hide from the psychotherapist.

The theoretical *category* “the immediacy” is linked to the theoretical *category* “the other’s room” for instance through the properties; emotional distance and physical absence and by the

hypothesis; the physical body as a source of information. The *hypothesis* also links the theoretical *category* “the immediacy” to the theoretical *category* “the unsaid” through their common *properties*; non-verbal language and reading the situation.

6.3 Category: The unsaid

The theoretical category “the unsaid” and the theoretical category “the immediacy” have a lot of similar properties in common and may at first glance be perceived as very similar, but they make up two separate theoretical categories as they do not represent the same processes and experiences. The interviewees talked about the interpersonal interaction on two parallel levels, one of the levels were of a more abstract character which is represented by the theoretical *category* “the immediacy” and one of the levels were of a more verbal and concrete character which is represented by the theoretical *category* “the unsaid”. Except that it is linked to “the immediacy” is it also linked to the theoretical *category* “the ownership” through the hypothesis; inaccessibility to the emphatic room. The theoretical categories “the immediacy” and “the unsaid” are placed and located at the same *dimension* in the theoretical framework as their interactions are closely interconnected i.e., they recreate one another. The interviewees talked about the body as a source of information in the therapeutic room and the importance of having access to the body’s non-verbal signals. Interviewee 2 describes in the following quote that she prefers to have the client’s physical body in the therapy room and that the lack of body language in video-delivered psychotherapy makes her work as psychotherapist more difficult and challenging.

“I experience it as harder and more of a challenge to work with clients in the digital therapy room.. especially if we never have met each other in person.. you never know beforehand who is on the other side of the digital therapy room.. who or what you will be met by.. it can be someone that is really nervous.. someone that is excited to start therapy and has been longing to have someone to talk to.. it is difficult for me to determine and get a feeling of the client’s level of state since I do not have access to their body language.”

(Interviewee 2)

Interviewee 1 also prefers to have the physical body in the therapeutic room and confirms what interviewee 2 says about non-verbal signals. In the following quote, she explains her

experiences of working with video-delivered psychotherapy and emphasize that clients tend to have a more easy-going approach towards therapy when it is received online in the digital room

“The fact that it is better to have the physical body in the therapy room is something that I tell all my clients that I work with in video-format.. I usually feel the need to emphasize that video-delivered psychotherapy is not a quick fix.. because sometimes clients tend to have a little bit too easy going approach towards video-therapy.. like it is an app that you login on.. they expect a quick answer to their issues.. and that is not what psychodynamic psychotherapy is about.. it does not work that way.”

(Interviewee 1)

Informing the clients that video-delivered psychotherapy is not a quick fix just because the client does not need to be physically present in the therapeutic room becomes a strategy to maintain the control over the digital room. The theoretical *category* “the unsaid” is linked to the theoretical *category* “the ownership” and the theoretical frameworks core *category* “the other’s room” since all of these theoretical *categories* possess the *property* control. Moreover, they are linked through the *hypothesis*; maintaining ownership of the therapeutic room. In the following quote, interviewee 3 talks about how she uses, interprets, and works with the client's body language.

“It is hard to explain in a logical way.. but it is another thing to have the client's physical body in the therapy room.. the physical body contributes with something.. the bodily expression says something about the verbal expression.. Does the client imitate my body language? Even the smallest bodily expressions can be of value in psychodynamic psychotherapy.”

(Interviewee 3)

Through the quote above from interviewee 3, we understand that the client’s bodily position and bodily expression in the therapeutic session is of interest for the psychotherapist and the access to this type of information is limited in the digital room.

6.4 Category: The Ownership

The theoretical *category* “the ownership” is built on mostly factual *codes* since all of the informants talked about a reduced feeling of ownership in the digital therapy room. The *properties* within this theoretical *category* are for instance security and ownership of the situation. The interviewees describe that they do not feel like they own the digital therapy room to the same extent as they own their physical therapy room at the clinic, which contributes to feelings of insecurity. Interviewee 1 describes in the following quote how she in an active way creates and recreates the digital room in the same way as she does at the reception in order to experience that she owns the room.

“A lot of work and effort is required in order to feel safe and secure in the digital therapy room.. in order to feel like you own the digital room.. and that is not really that strange.. because you have designed your therapy room at the physical clinic in a way that makes you feel safe and comfortable.. you have selected pillows.. ensured that no one can enter the room without your permission.. you own the physical therapy room in a very definitive way.. while in video.. since half of the room is on the client's side is effort needed to create some form of standardization in order to feel comfortable as therapist. ”

(Interviewee 1)

Interviewee 1 emphasizes in the quote that it is important to feel safe and comfortable in the digital room in order to feel like you own the room. Lack of safety and comfortability results in stress for the psychotherapist which affects the therapist and the therapeutic session negatively. Interviewee 1 describes in the quote below how stress and feelings of safeness are linked to how the level of ownership is experienced.

“You need to own the digital therapy room.. you need to feel that you are just as comfortable as you are in your therapy room at the clinic.. all psychodynamic psychotherapists have been through the experience that the room that they have booked in advance has been occupied and they have been forced to sit in another room that looks completely different.. this switch and change affects the feeling of control negatively.. you may hear or see people from the new therapy room

that you do not usually hear or see from your therapy room.. the reduced control over the therapeutic room results in stressful feelings for the therapist which affects how present he or she can be in the therapeutic session with their client.. I believe that all psychodynamic psychotherapists make efforts to avoid that kind of control loss and stressful situations.”

(Interviewee 1)

Interviewee 2 also emphasizes that it is important that the therapist feel like he or she owns the therapeutic digital room. Standardization and predictability are described as important cornerstones within the work of becoming safer and more comfortable in the digital room.

“Psychodynamic psychotherapists are very aware of the importance of keeping and maintaining the feeling of safety in the therapeutic room.. something happens in the therapeutic relationship and in the therapeutic situation when you return to the same room over and over again.. do stuff in the same way.. it is of high importance for the therapeutic work that psychodynamic psychotherapists find a standardized solution in the digital room.. which is a challenge.. because clients home environments are full of disturbing elements.. people have kids and pets and receive phone calls.”

(Interviewee 2)

The theoretical *category* “the ownership” shares many *properties* with the other theoretical categories but is not the core theoretical *category* of the theoretical framework since it does not include *properties* that are central within the theoretical *category* “the immediacy” like authenticity. Hartman (2001:88) writes that the core category may express a problem that the empirical material points to and what people do to solve them. The theoretical *category* “the other’s room’ captures the issue that the empirical material describes in a more comprehensive and complex way than the theoretical *category* “the ownership” does.

7. Result

This grounded theory research resulted in a theoretical framework (*Figure. 2*) that explains psychodynamic psychotherapists’ experiences of video-delivered psychotherapy. The theoretical framework consists of the four theoretical categories: the unsaid, the immediacy, the

ownership, and the core theoretical category the other's room. These theoretical categories nuances and sheds light on the processes that psychodynamic psychotherapists experience in the digital therapy room while working with video-delivered psychotherapy.

The figure (*Figure. 2*) is to be understood as a simplified illustration of how processes in the digital room are linked and how these processes contribute to the psychodynamic psychotherapists' experiences of reduced control. The figure should be read and interpreted from top to bottom since the psychodynamic psychotherapist's experiences starts with the entrance of video-delivered psychotherapy and results in the experience of reduced control. The theoretical categories are in the figure (*Figure. 2*) represented by the yellow squares and they are placed at different dimensions in relation to each other since they comprise different processes. The processes within the theoretical categories trigger each other which is demonstrated by the arrows in the figure (*Figure. 2*).

Video-delivered psychotherapy always involves a digital room, and the digital room entails a spatial division, and it is in the light of this that the core theoretical category "the other's room" is placed at the highest dimension in the theoretical framework (*Figure. 2*). The spatial division in the shared digital therapy room awakens processes of reduced access to the non-verbal language and reduced access to the immediate which is illustrated by the arrows from the theoretical core category "the other's room" to the theoretical categories "the immediate" and "the unsaid". The theoretical categories "the immediate" and "the unsaid" are placed next to each other in the theoretical framework since they are located at the same dimension. The arrows in between the two theoretical categories are used to demonstrate and emphasize their interplay, the processes within these theoretical categories regenerate each other. The processes of reduced access to the authentic, the immediate and the body language contribute to a weakened ownership, which is illustrated by the arrow down to the theoretical category "the ownership". The theoretical category "the ownership" is located underneath the other theoretical categories since the processes within the other theoretical categories in the theoretical framework contributes to the triggering of these processes.

The theoretical framework illustrates how processes within the digital room interact and triggers each other and results in an experience of control loss for the psychodynamic psychotherapist.

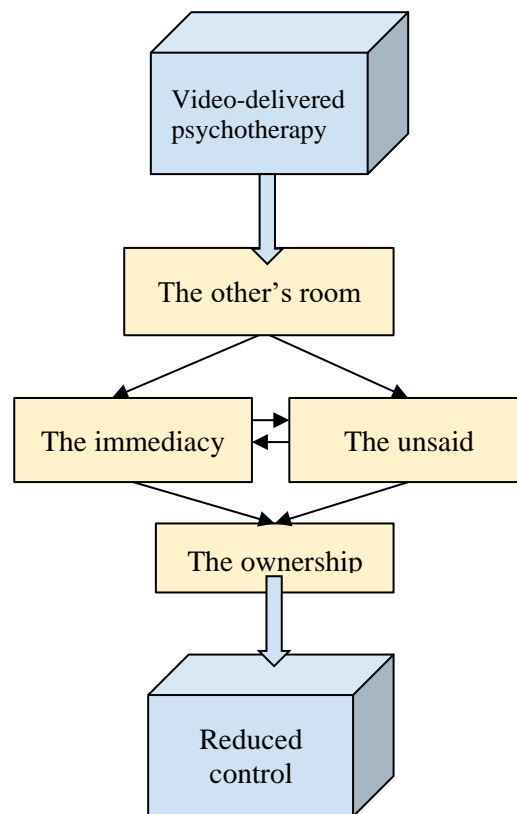


Figure 2. A theoretical framework that explains psychodynamic psychotherapists' experiences of the digital therapy room in terms of processes. The arrows in the figure are used to demonstrate how the theoretical categories and the processes within them interact with one another and contribute to reduced control.

8. Discussion

In this section will methodological decisions, ethical considerations, and the theoretical framework that the research resulted in be discussed.

8.1 Methodological discussion

This section includes a discussion of methodological decisions in relation to the conducted grounded theory research. It will be discussed how various methodological choices have contributed to the research's degree of trustworthiness and authenticity. Before continuing, is it worth emphasizing that my subjective pre-understanding and experience of working in video-

format may have affected how data were generated and analyzed. My previous experience of working in the digital room contributes to my pre-understanding that the digital format can have a negative impact on the conversation. However, since I was aware of this negative experience and pre-understanding while conducting the research and since the analysis procedures have been carefully reported, is this not considered to be a problem in relation to the usefulness and the credibility of the theoretical framework.

8.1.1 The research's trustworthiness

The quantitative concepts validity and reliability is difficult to apply within qualitative research since they are built and worked out in relation to research ideas within the quantitative research tradition. Lincoln & Guba (1985) argue that these concepts are inappropriate to use in qualitative research and suggest that qualitative researchers evaluate and discuss their research through the concept of trustworthiness instead. The nature of the concept trustworthiness emphasizes that there are multiple descriptions of social reality, and it is made up on the cornerstones of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Ibid.).

8.1.1.1 Credibility

Credibility is about the extent to which the result of a research reflects the social reality that has been studied. It is not unusual that researchers who conduct qualitative interviews report their findings to the interviewees in order for them to confirm that he or she has perceived their social reality in a correct way (Bryman 2018:467). This is most often referred to as respondent validation and is often used within grounded theory research to ensure the link between the interviewees' experiences and the grounded theory that has been developed (Bryman 2018:466). In the light of the research's tight time frame was the methodological choice made to not communicate the research's findings to the interviewees. I am aware that a respondent validation would have strengthened the credibility and the trustworthiness of the theoretical framework and that the decision to not use it is one of the main shortcomings in the research project. However, the iterative approach that has been used has strengthened the credibility of the research. The iterative approach has contributed to a close connection and relation between the developed theoretical framework and the raw interview data (Bryman 2018:465). Moreover, is the credibility of the theoretical framework considered to be strong since the research's findings solely are based on my interpretive work. It would have implied a risk for the

credibility of the research if the interpretative work had been done by several researchers, since people within the research team may interpret data differently (Bryman 2018:465).

8.1.1.2 Transferability

The concept of transferability assesses and investigates to what extent the findings in the research can be applied and used in other social contexts (Bryman 2018:75). Since the aim of my research was to investigate a specific social phenomenon in a specific social context by interviewing a small group of people who have first-hand experience of the social phenomenon is the study's findings applicable and useful in a specific context. In order for other researchers to be able to assess whether the theoretical framework is useful in other social contexts are thick descriptions provided and presented about the research context (Bryman 2018:468). Thick descriptions are provided primarily in section 4. *methodology and methods* and in section 8. *discussion*. In these sections are my position as a researcher discussed together with detailed information about the research process.

8.1.1.3 Dependability

The concept of dependability investigates and evaluates whether the study would have resulted in the same findings if it had been conducted at another time (Bryman 2018:75). Since it is not possible to freeze social people or social contexts will researchers in the future not have access to the exact same social context, which most likely will affect the result and result in other findings. In the light of this is one criterion for assessing the dependability of the research the degree to which the researcher has described the different stages in the research process. In order to meet the criterion of dependability have the aim of the research and the research questions been presented in a clear and transparent way and methodological decisions regarding sampling, selection, memos and coding has been discussed. The presentation of methodological decisions and methods is a way of demonstrating how theoretical conclusions were made. By clearly presenting the methods that have been used increases the possibility that a replication of the study would result in similar data (Bryman 2018:468).

However, even if methodological decisions are discussed, is it possible that aspects of a subjective social character will affect the result if the study were to be replicated. Researchers who intend to replicate the research need to take on the same social role as me and possess the same social characteristics in order to generate similar data. If the next researcher does not

adopt the same social role as me will their generated data and findings not be comparable to my findings. Social roles and social characteristics are difficult to adopt due to their subjective nature which makes it difficult to replicate interview studies in a meaningful and productive way (Bryman 2018:465).

8.1.1.4 Confirmability

Confirmability is about the importance of remaining objective as a researcher, which may seem confusing as constructivist grounded theory studies are based on subjective interpretations of the data material. Confirmability is about remaining objective while doing the interpretive work and not letting individual values or preconceived notions influence the analysis or the result of the study (Bryman 2018:75). Bryman (2018:470) writes that it is impossible for researchers to completely look past their own values while working with qualitative research and that it is important that researchers are aware of their own prejudices in order to reach an understanding for how they may influence the research process. Memo writing was used as a technique to highlight my subjective prejudices about the studied phenomenon, and it was through these memos that I became aware of my negative experiences of digital conversations. Identifying my negative experiences of video conversations resulted in awareness while interpreting and coding the data material, I was able to minimize the risk that they would impact the interpretation of the data material (Bryman 2018:470).

8.1.2 The research's authenticity

Besides the criteria of trustworthiness does Lincoln & Guba (1985) recommend that qualitative researchers discuss their studies in relation to the criteria of authenticity. They suggest that researchers structure their discussion with the help of the concepts; fair reflection, ontological authenticity, and educational authenticity which all more or less relates and has to do with research policy.

8.1.2.1 Fair reflection

I argue that the theoretical framework that my grounded theory research has resulted in provides a fair picture of the interviewees' social reality as I have worked closely with the data material through the research process. However, does the theoretical framework not reflect the variation in the population of psychotherapists' experience of video-delivered psychotherapy since the empirical data material were generated through three qualitative interviews. More interviews

would have contributed to a richer empirical data material and the theoretical framework would have reflected the psychotherapists' experiences in a more equitable way (Lincoln & Guba 1985).

8.1.2.2 Ontological authenticity

It is important that researchers who intend to conduct qualitative interviews are clear about how and in what way the research will contribute to the participants' gaining an increased understanding of their social situation; these types of questions concern ontological authenticity (Lincoln & Guba 1985). Since previous research has shown that video-delivered psychotherapy is suited for manualized and standardized psychotherapy forms was the qualitative interviews conducted in order to shed light on show processes in the digital room contribute to psychodynamic psychotherapists' experiences. The psychodynamic psychotherapists will get a better understanding of their social situation through the visualization of the processes in the digital room and by the demonstration of how these processes are linked.

8.1.2.3 Educational authenticity

Educational authenticity concerns whether the research contributes to the participants gaining an increased understanding for how other people in the social context experience the social context and the social situation (Lincoln & Guba 1985). The research does contribute to an increased understanding for the psychodynamic psychotherapists in how other people within the profession experience the digital room. The quotes in the analysis, which are raw data material from the interviews and the previous research in the previous research section, does primarily contribute to this increased understanding.

8.1.3 Semi-structured interviews

The choice was made to use semi-structured interviews instead of intensive interviews even though the last mentioned is emphasized as a richer alternative for grounded theory research (Charmaz 2014). It is common that grounded theory researchers adapt and adopt from grounded theory techniques in order to make their grounded theory research project fit and work in relation to specific limitations that they have to relate to. The research would have benefitted from using a more open-ended interview strategy, but the use of semi-structured interviews does not become a problem since a discussion about theoretical sampling, coding, constant comparisons, theoretical saturation, and memos is included (Bryman 2011:516).

Since the semi-structured interviews were conducted on Zoom was it out of my control to steer whether we were alone in the digital interview room or not. I am aware of the risk and the possibility that there were other people in the interviewees part of the digital room at the time for the interview and that it may have had an effect on what the interviewees said and how they said it. But since the research topic is not sensitive to its nature, I do not consider this uncertainty to pose a major risk for the trustworthiness and the relevance of the developed theoretical framework. My impression was that the interviewees were present and focused during the interview but since I did not have full access to their environment can I only make assumptions. It would have been beneficial for the development of the theoretical framework if the interviews had been conducted in person since that would have given me more and greater information about these aspects.

The fact that only psychodynamic psychotherapists' who work with video-delivered psychotherapy were interviewed is a shortcoming in the study. The understanding of the social phenomena would have benefitted from also interviewing psychodynamic psychotherapists' who do not use the delivery method. Furthermore, it can be assumed that the request to participate in the study was answered by those who felt the need to talk about their experiences, in other words, perspectives of satisfaction with video-delivered psychotherapy may have been neglected.

8.1.4 New methodological ideas

New methodological ideas did occur to me during the research process, but due to the limitations of the research project the decision was made to continue with what I was doing and not add any new data gathering methods. It would have been fruitful for my empirical data base to use vignettes as well since it would have revealed useful information about the studied phenomena (Bryman 2018).

8.1.5 Iterative approach

Bryman (2018:697) writes that there are some practical difficulties with grounded theory research that are very time consuming. He mentions the interpretive work as an example of a time-consuming process and emphasizes that many researchers do not complete their grounded theory research in such an iterative way as Glaser & Strauss (1967) and Charmaz (2014)

suggests. While conducting the research I adapted the iterative approach to a degree that suited my time frame, in other words, I worked in an iterative manner but not to the degree that the authors advocate.

8.1.6 Codes and categories

Although grounded theory research is a well-established research approach in social science research, there are still uncertainties in the research field regarding how researchers should work with codes and categories. When does a set of codes form a property and when does a set of properties form a category? Great emphasis is placed on the individual researcher's assessment and the lack of concrete guidelines makes it difficult for researchers to articulate and argue for their assessment and interpretative work (Bryman 2018:697). The lack of guidelines for coding and categorizing makes it difficult for me to concretize and present these processes in any detail, it was an interpretive balance that was mainly based on my feeling, interpretation, and perception of the data material.

8.2 Result discussion

In this section will the theoretical framework be discussed in the light of previous research that has been done on video-delivered psychotherapy. Moreover, will it be discussed how my pre-understanding of theoretical concepts may have affected the theory development and the result of the research. In the very end of this section is a discussion about the construction of the theoretical framework. While discussing the theoretical framework in relation to previous research will the theoretical categories be written within quotation marks to emphasize their involvement.

8.2.1 Previous research

The theoretical framework that this grounded theory research has resulted in can be understood and nuanced in the light of findings from Aafjes-van Doorn et al. (2021) interview study where they interviewed 141 psychotherapists, out of which 50,4% were psychodynamic psychotherapists. Their study showed that psychodynamic psychotherapists feel less connected with their clients in video-delivered psychotherapy, which can be linked to processes within the theoretical category "the immediacy", and experiences difficulties with reading the client's emotions, which can be linked to processes within the theoretical category "the unsaid". Further, findings from their research showed that the transition from in-person psychotherapy

to video-delivered psychotherapy did not significantly affect the therapeutic relationship but the psychotherapists experienced a lower level of authenticity in the meeting with the clients, which can be linked to the theoretical category “the immediacy”. Moreover, did the psychotherapists experience distractions in the client’s part of the room as challenging for the therapeutic process which relates to processes within the theoretical category “the other’s room”. Further, did the psychotherapists feel less competent in the digital room which corresponds to the theoretical category “the other’s room”. Lastly, did their research show that the psychotherapists experienced higher levels of anxiety and professional self-doubt in the digital format, which can be linked to processes within the theoretical category “the ownership”. Self-doubt and higher levels of anxiety were in their study associated with the female gender, young age and weak clinical experience, but such conclusions cannot be made in this research since the sampling size is too small to make that kind of generalization.

Findings from Scharff (2012) literature review of psychoanalytic literature showed that psychotherapists often experience reduced control in the digital therapeutic room which contributes to feelings of anxiety. The findings in her research correspond to the processes that my theoretical framework describes. The experiences of increased levels of anxiety and stress that the interviewees express in my research and in Aafjes-van Doorn et al. (2021) research can be nuanced in the light of what Fernandez et al. (2021) writes about the need for training and certification programs in relation to video-delivered psychotherapy. Fernandez and his colleague’s agree that training programs are becoming particularly important for mental health professionals who wish to work with video-delivered psychotherapy. The interviewees in my research talked about the importance of working with pedagogical efforts to gain control over the client’s part of the room, in other words, the processes within the theoretical category “the other’s room” corresponds to Fernandez et al. (2021) discussion about training programs. Edbacken et al. (2021) writes that psychotherapists' uncertainty regarding their own competence and knowledge hampers the spread of video-delivered psychotherapy. They argue that the digital therapy room requires other working methods than the physical therapy room and that further education is needed for psychotherapists to feel comfortable. They emphasize that it should not be assumed that working methods can be transformed into the digital therapy room. While arguing for the importance of further education the authors emphasize that the digital methods do not have to be fundamentally different from the well-known analogous methods (Ibid.).

Findings from Fisher et al. (2020) research shows that the therapeutic relationship is built on non-verbal signals and that the lack of these signals in the digital room is an obstacle for the therapeutic work. The findings correspond and strengthen the accuracy of the theoretical category “the unsaid”. Further, does Drum & Littleton (2014) write that the flexibility and convenience of digital norms may lead to a more casual interaction between the client and the therapist, which might contribute to a more relaxed attitude about time and space boundaries for both the client and the psychotherapist. The authors argue that the lack of clarity about the therapeutic boundaries lead to uncertainty for both the client and the therapist, and the therapist may experience a weaker and decreased level of professionalism. Their discussion about how digital norms may affect therapists' experience of professionalism can be linked to the theoretical category “the ownership”. The theoretical category “the ownership” nuances how lowered level of professionalism results in a lowered control over the therapeutic digital room.

The interviewees in my research expressed that clients tend to have a more easy-going approach towards video-delivered psychotherapy than in-person psychotherapy and that they feel the need to inform the clients about certain boundaries in the digital room to maintain the control of the therapeutic situation. Findings from Zur et al. (2009) research showed that many psychotherapists used metaphors from the service sector while talking about their experiences of the therapeutic digital room. The psychotherapists felt that the clients expected them to deliver good service and be available in another way than in the physical therapy room, in other words, the psychotherapists felt that the digital norms involved expectations of quick fixes. Zur et al. (2009) write that they are not too surprised about their findings since it is consistent with the norms of availability and easy access that define most other relationships and situations in today's society and time period. Findings from their research and my interviewees experiences of video-delivered psychotherapy nuances how therapeutic interventions has been marketized in the 21st century. The findings from Zur et al. (2009) research corresponds to the property availability within the theoretical category “the unsaid”.

Eedbacken et al. (2021) writes about the digital therapeutic room in a way that can be understood through my theoretical categories “the other's room” and “the ownership”. The authors mention the spatial division in the therapeutic digital room and argue that psychotherapists need to prepare what they have control over before starting the video-call. The need for preparation is a hypothesis between the theoretical category “the ownership” and “the other's room”. The authors emphasize that different platforms have different functions such as screen sharing and

file sharing that can be helpful in the therapeutic work and for the therapist to reach an increased feeling of a shared and common digital room.

Sigrell (2000) emphasizes that it is important that psychotherapist feel comfortable in his or her work environment, the feeling of insecurity can affect the psychotherapist's ability to be present in the therapeutic room. The interviewees who participated in my research talked about how feelings of lowered ownership, insecurity and stress are linked, which made the basis for the theoretical category “the ownership”. He further argues that it is the psychotherapists job and responsibility to ensure that the therapeutic framework is solid and functioning in the therapy room, his discussion sheds light on the importance for psychodynamic psychotherapists to create a therapeutic framework in the digital room. In the light of my developed theoretical framework and Sigrell’s (2000) discussion about the importance and valuable of working with a therapeutic framework, certain conclusions can be made. It is of great value for psychodynamic psychotherapists to create a therapeutic frame that works in the digital room, a digital therapeutic frame would contribute to more control. How the digital frame should be developed and used is not clear, but it must include aspects that is constant, since standardized elements contributes to less stress and anxiety for the psychotherapists.

8.2.2 Pre-understanding of theoretical concepts

Blumer (1979) is skeptical to the spontaneous approach that Charmaz (2014) encourage while doing the initial-and focused coding. He questions if researchers within social science can hold back on their pre-understanding of theoretical concepts until late stages in the research process. He argues that researchers always have some form of understanding for theoretical concepts that can be useful in relation to the research context. In the light of Blumer’s (1979) discussion and critique did my knowledge about useful theoretical concepts affect my initial and focused coding in some way, which influenced and affected the research’s result. My pre-understanding of the term control made me notice certain patterns in the data material that related to this term early in the research process, which had disadvantageous effects on my ability to explore other theoretical paths in the data material. The fact that I noticed a pattern that told a story about reduced control while doing the initial coding may have affected how my codes were constructed and formulated and which types of processes that I noticed in the data material. However, my pre-understanding of the term control does not make the theoretical framework less useful or accurate, it is still grounded in data. Bryman (2018) writes that it is common knowledge within social science that the researcher has some form of pre-understanding of

relevant theoretical terms even if the research is conducted with an inductive approach. He writes that this pre-understanding that lives within the researcher steers the research to some extent even if the researcher intend to maintain a neutral and open approach toward the data.

8.2.3 Construction of theoretical framework

Charmaz (2014) claims that theory consists of well-developed theoretical categories that interact with each other and form a theoretical framework that explains certain relevant social aspects. To demonstrate and argue for the theory construction are the hypotheses that link the theoretical categories presented and discussed in the analysis section. The theoretical framework would have made more sense to the social world if more hypotheses were presented that explained the theoretical categories relation. However, I argue that my demonstration of hypotheses is sufficient in relation to the study's time frame. The relation and correspondence between my theoretical ideas and the empirical data are emphasized and described in the analysis section (Bryman 2018).

The theoretical framework was developed and constructed in an intensive way with the help of memos and memo-writing. The credibility of this grounded theory research may had increased if these memos were presented (Charmaz 2014). However, the choice has been made to not include the memos in the presentation of the research since they do not include much logic reasoning, they are built on spontaneous thoughts and spontaneous interpretative work. My assessment is that a presentation of the memos would not contribute to a considerably better understanding of the theoretical framework or the research process in wider terms.

Glaser & Strauss (1967) gives a short introduction to what grounded theory in sociology are, they write the following:

The interrelated jobs of theory in sociology are: (1) to enable prediction and explanation of behavior; (2) to be useful in theoretical advance in sociology; (3) to be usable in practical applications- prediction and explanation should be able to give the practitioner understanding and some control of situations; (4) to provide a perspective on behavior- a stance to be taken towards data; and (5) to guide and provide a style for research on particular areas of behavior. (Glaser & Strauss 1967:3)

Explained in a simplified way do they argue that a completed grounded theory should explain social behavior, be useful, contribute to increased understanding and have a close fit with the data. The theoretical framework does have a close fit with the data, and it is useful in a specific limited social context. Moreover, does it explain social behavior and contributes to an increased understanding of psychodynamic psychotherapists experiences. Its explanatory power nuances and deepens our understanding for how video-delivered psychotherapy results in less control over the therapeutic room for the psychodynamic psychotherapists. Its durability over time can be questioned since it is developed within a such small social context, and social phenomena are within constant change (Glaser & Strauss 1967).

8.3 Ethics discussion

Mason (2017:85) writes about ethical considerations and argue that every researcher needs to reflect upon which compromises that are and are not legitimate in a certain context. In the following section will ethical aspects of the research be discussed in order to show transparency about my decisions in the research process. Qualitative research of all forms relies on the researchers who conducts it, and it is therefore important that researchers reflect upon ethical aspects before, during and after the research process to no harm or hurt anyone inside or outside the research project, in other words, the researcher needs to make sure that the purpose of the research is defensible from an ethical perspective (Ibid.). Since the research aimed to investigate social people's experiences of their social reality was it of great importance for me to reflect upon the risks of hurting anyone. However, since the research aimed to examine psychodynamic psychotherapists' experiences of video-delivered psychotherapy in their profession did I not consider the topic to be sensible. The interviewees were not expected to share any sensitive information about their personal life since the questions in the interview guide concerned their professional experiences (Ibid.).

Mason (2017:88-90) argues that researchers need to articulate what the research participants will receive from participating in the research. Since there is a research gap regarding the effects of video-delivered psychotherapy when it is used in psychodynamic psychotherapy, especially in relation to the psychotherapists' experiences, will the research contribute will valuable knowledge that the psychodynamic psychotherapists can make use of in their daily work with their clients in video-delivered psychotherapy. The theoretical framework that this grounded theory research resulted in explains and makes sense of their experiences, it explains how

processes in the digital room are linked together and why these processes end up in reduced control.

Verbal consent was taken to make sure that the interviewees agreed to participate in the research, and moreover were they informed about the purpose of the research. I do not consider the interviewees to be in a particularly dependent position towards me, which contributes to an increased opportunity for them to refrain from participating in the research. The interviewees have higher education than me and the continuing of their professional life is not dependent on my grounded theory research. However, one should not ignore the fact that my research will contribute to their understanding of their experiences, which creates a motive for participating (Mason 2017:91).

9. Suggestion for further research

The theoretical framework i.e., the grounded theory, that this grounded theory research ended up in is of a factual character since it is generated and developed within a small and specific context and is therefore applicable within this small specific context. It sheds light on how video-delivered psychotherapy has changed the very nature of therapeutic space for psychodynamic psychotherapists and since the digital era seems to be here to stay, is it important to continue the research regarding the digital room's effect on psychodynamic psychotherapy. The digital room contributes to a variety of dilemmas and explanatory theories of a formal character is needed to understand and make sense of the processes in the therapeutic digital room. A formal theory at a higher level of abstraction would be applicable in a wider and more functional way to understand the processes that live within the digital room (Bryman 2018:692). In the light of the research's time limitations was it not possible to develop a formal theory but previous research and the interviewees' experiences articulate that it is needed. More research that examines the processes in the digital room and the digital norms would increase the possibility and ability of developing a digital therapeutic frame that is usable in video-delivered psychotherapy and in other remote-therapy forms.

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Appendix 1 - Letter to interviewees

Hej!

Jag heter Hanna Olsson och studerar på mastersprogrammet Welfare Policies and Management vid Lunds universitet. Under vårterminen 2022 kommer jag skriva min mastersuppsats om videosamtal i psykodynamisk terapi där syftet med uppsatsen är att undersöka psykodynamiska psykoterapeuters erfarenheter av videosamtal.

Som forskningsdeltagare är man anonym i studien. Intervjun kommer pågå under cirka 60 minuter och kommer att spelas in. Det inspelade materialet kommer endast jag ha tillgång till och efter studiens slut kommer det att raderas.

Intervjuerna kommer att genomföras via Zoom.

Hör gärna av dig vid frågor,

Välkommen att delta i min intervjustudie!

Med vänliga hälsningar,
Hanna Olsson

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Appendix 2 - Interview guide

Introducerande frågor

1. Hur länge har du arbetat med psykodynamisk psykoterapi?
2. När började du arbeta med video-delivered psychotherapy?

Motstånd

3. Påverkar videoformatet ditt arbete?
4. Medför videoformatet några begränsningar?
5. Varför finns det ett motstånd hos psykodynamiska psykoterapeuter att jobba i video?

Terapeutisk ram

6. Hur arbetar du med terapeutisk allians i video-delivered psychotherapy?
7. Hur ser dina erfarenheter ut av att skapa terapeutisk allians i det digitala rummet?
8. Vad är dina erfarenheter av att arbeta med ramar i det digitala formatet?

Digitala rummet

9. Upplever du en digital barriär i ditt klientarbete?
10. När upplever du att den digitala barriären är ett problem?
11. Hur arbetar du i det digitala rummet?