

The Theory Of “Opportunizing” And The Sub-Process Of “Conditional Befriending”

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ABSTRACT

By applying the orthodox grounded theory methodology, the article offers a new conceptual theory of the Business Company, as well as new and grounded concepts as building blocks of the theory. The core variable of the emergent theory is the discovered latent pattern of “opportunizing”. Opportunizing explains practically all the variation in the data. It is found to be the main concern and the recurrent solving of it in business. One of the five sub-dimensions of opportunizing is “conditional befriending”. It consists of three sub-processes: “confidence building”, “weighing up for influence/match” and “modifying behavior”. The theory suggests new insights into business management practices. The data indicate relationships between performance of companies and the “weighing up” of elements in the sub-process of “confidence building”. Opportunizing is compared to the “hard core” of different theories of business, and opportunizing as well as conditional befriending are compared to the sub-disciplines of business economy. This comparison reveals some fundamental differences. One explanation for these differences might be the grounding of the discovered theory in the agenda of those being studied rather than in the compulsory, preconceiving agenda of the mainstream research community.

INTRODUCTION

The orthodox grounded theory (OGT) research methodology has been applied to generate a general theory of business and management. The research is based on theoretically sampled data from 11 dissimilar small and mid-sized companies, as well as 15 to 20 years of management and accounting data of all major companies in the sampled area. The core variable of the emergent theory is “opportunizing”. In this research, “opportunizing” was found to be the main concern and the recurrent solving of it in business and management. It was found to explain practically all the variation in the data.

Opportunizing is defined as the recurrent creation and re-creation of “convenient occasions” (or “convenient occurrences” or “recognized auspicious instances”) for the deliberate pursuit of competitive advantage in business. Opportunizing is basically what business people and managers do, and they do it all the time. However, these same people have not yet conceptualized it. Providing them with a conceptual theory that explains the on-going solving of their main concern may assist them greatly.

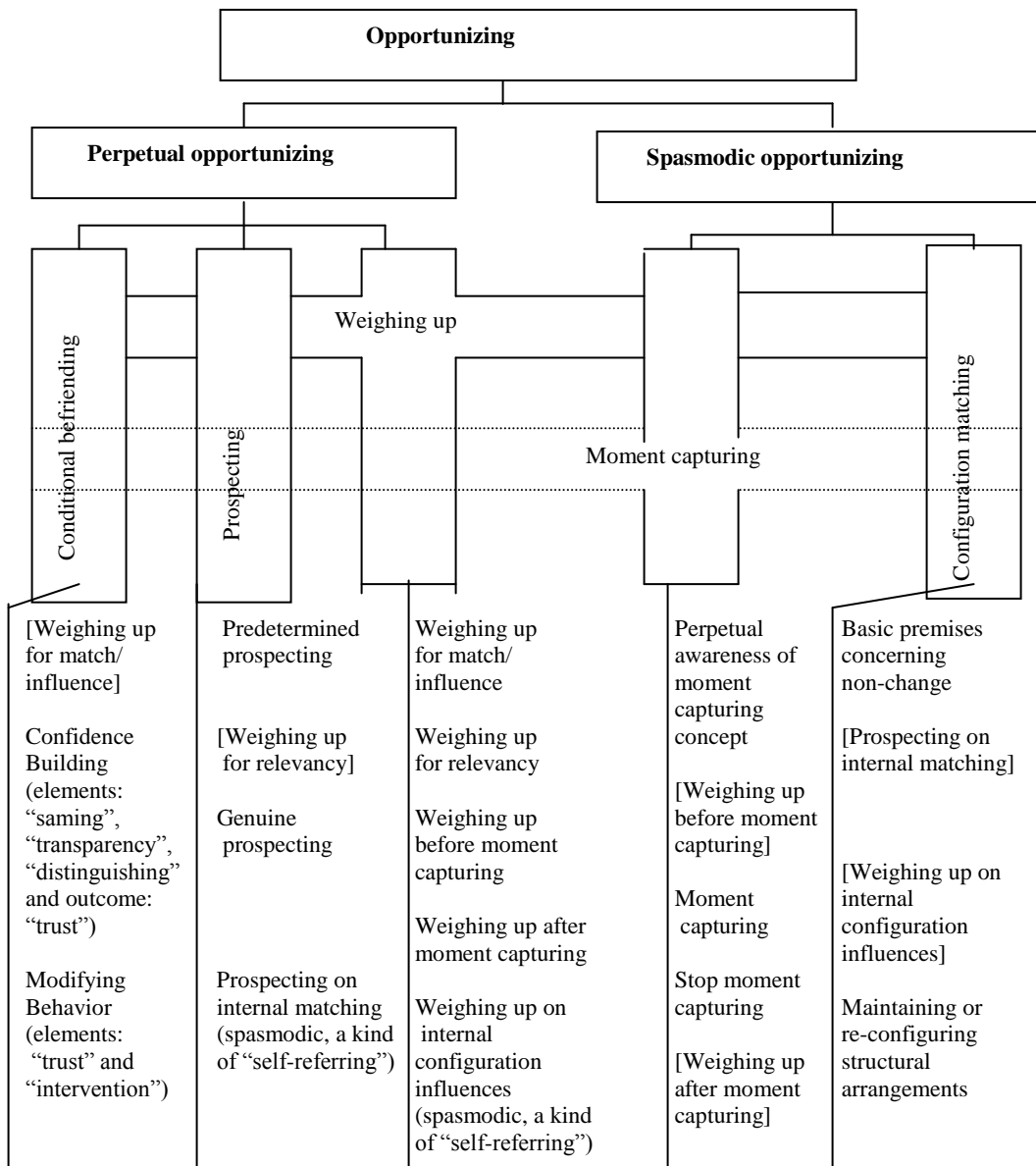
Figure 1 gives a brief overview of the conceptual characteristics of opportunizing. Figure 1 will be referenced in the following text, but it will not be further explained in this article. Elaboration may be obtained elsewhere. (Christiansen, 2004a).

This is the first OGT study done on the general topic of business and management, but a few OGT studies have previously been done on more specific business and management related problems or areas. The OGT research methodology is a form of latent pattern analysis of qualitative or quantitative data, but vis-à-vis factor analysis, it is performed without any numerical calculations. It is predominantly an inductive methodology, but in data collection by theoretical sampling some elements of deduction are also used. It is a methodology for generating and empirically grounding theory and hypotheses. It is not a method for testing hypotheses.

The OGT research methodology has been inductively discovered and maintained by Barney Glaser (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1978; Glaser, 1992; Glaser, 1993, Glaser, 1995; Glaser & Kaplan, 1996; Glaser, 1998; Glaser,

2001; Glaser, 2003; Christiansen, 2004b). It has its origins in quantitative methodologies. It has not been “thought up” or logically derived. It is itself a grounded theory. The core variable of the OGT methodology is “conceptualizing” (categorizing, coding). Conceptualizing is the “main concern” in any OGT research, as well the recurrent solving of this “main concern”. Conceptualizing means denoting by fitting, sensitizing and analytic naming the discovered stable patterns in data. Thus, the OGT researcher develops his/her own concepts, generated from his/her data, instead of applying, probably forcing, the received concepts of others on his/her data. A concept is the underlying meaning, uniformity and/or pattern within a set of descriptive incidents. A concept is also an abstract of time, place and people. The more a particular underlying meaning, uniformity and/or pattern represents an abstract of time, place and people, the higher is the concept’s conceptual level. While data represents stories that soon become superseded, concepts are perpetual.

Figure 1



The chart gives a simplified and less than fulfilling illustration of the generated conceptual hierarchy, or the substantive codes or concepts of the theory of opportunizing. The naming of any concept points towards its meaning, but some may be difficult to understand. The variable “moment capturing” explains how the business managers in this research identified and “seized” important spasmodically occurring opportunities that have strategic implications for their business. The variable “configuration matching” is a spasmodically occurring process of matching the business owner’s internal organization to organizations of potential suitable suppliers, customers and/or strategic partners. If a category relates to more than one variable, then one of these categories are put in a []. The chart contains practically all the substantive concepts necessary to give a *conceptual description* of what the data tells – of what is going on in the data. The data itself represents *contextual descriptions*. For giving *conceptual explanations* (as conceptual hypotheses), theoretical codes (i.e., codes indicating relationships between substantive concepts) are however necessary. These are not shown in the chart.

The core variable conceptualizes at the highest conceptual level the “main concern” of the participants in the substantive area of study, as well as the recurrent solving of this “main concern”. Once the core variable has been discovered, the subsequent research is delimited to the core variable and its emergent sub-patterns. Thus, an OGT is a theory around a core variable. Consequently, it puts the agenda of those being studied at the centre of the research process, and not any compulsory, preconceived agenda of the mainstream research community. Elements of the OGT methodology are procedures such as: minimizing preconceptions, staying close to the data, sticking to what the data has to say and nothing else, avoiding influence from pre-existing theory when collecting and treating data, and conceptualizing while constantly comparing the rudiments of data.

A part of the overriding concern of any OGT work is dealing with what actually is going on in the field of study, and not what others have conjectured or logically derived to be. The outcome of an OGT study has to be judged according to its own standards, and not the standards of other methodologies with different research aims. Besides parsimony and scope of generated theory, the criteria for judging an OGT are fit of concepts, workability in explaining, relevance for those being studied, and modifiability (Glaser, 2001, p.41; Glaser, 1978, p.4-12; Glaser, 1998, p.16-19).

Generated concepts in an OGT are often of such a disposition that they have to be considered as multidimensional and multivariate qualitative variables. Frequently, they also stand for basic social processes. A basic social process as a theoretical construct has been conceived as an emergent by-product in the process of doing and developing the methodology of orthodox grounded theory. Change in time, involving at least two emergent stages - the stage before and the stage after - in “processing the problem”, implies that it is a basic social process. Basic social processes are frequently denoted as a gerund (“ing”) (Glaser, 1978, pp.100-115).

The OGT methodology is often misrepresented and distorted in books on research methodologies. One explanation is that numerous studies, labeled as grounded theory studies, violate the most basic and rigorous procedural rules of the OGT methodology for the collection and treatment of data. Such studies most often apply a different research methodology (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Mixing everything up and calling it grounded theory is also usual. Considerable training and practice is necessary for fully understanding and applying the OGT methodology. Yet the OGT methodology has a very distinct and independent profile when compared to the methodological viewpoints of positivism and hermeneutics, and the methodological procedures of deduction and induction. (Christiansen, 2004b).

The inherent potential of the OGT methodology, as well as the capability of the present research to uncover latent patterns, can be scrutinized by comparing opportunizing with the “hard core” of different research programs in business and management (Lakatos, 1970; Knudsen, 1997; Christiansen, 2004a):

This research indicates that none of these hard cores denotes the main concern and its recurrent solving for real-world people in real-world businesses. Logical elaborations, derivations and conjectures have produced all these hard cores, while the concept of opportunizing has emerged, grounded in real-world experiences.

The theory of opportunizing is not so much a theory describing “what” business managers do, as a theory explaining “how” they manage their business. The indicated relationships between the sub-dimensions of opportunizing are extremely important parts of this theory. Elaboration, however, is beyond the scope of this article.

The main purpose of this article is to explain the concept of “*conditional befriending*” as one of the main variables of opportunizing. The next four sections of the article will briefly explain opportunizing and its sub-variables. Subsequent sections will focus on “*conditional befriending*”, and will conclude with a very limited comparison with current teaching and theoretical literature.

<u>“Research program”:</u>	<u>“Hard core”:</u>
Neoclassical	Rationally maximizing profits (return) or optimizing.
Structure-Conduct-Performance	Essentially the same as neoclassical.
Game theory	Finding equilibrium solutions through rational individual decision-making.
Behaviorist	Satisficing in bounded rationality by a logic of appropriateness.
Principal-agent theory	Rationally maximizing subject to risk.
Agency theory	Maximizing by minimizing the agency cost in any contracting relationship.
Managerialism theory	Essentially same as neoclassical.
Transaction cost theory	Bounded rationality and opportunism of economic agents.
Evolutionary theory	Procedural rationality.
Resource-based theory	Creating or controlling scarce resources in high demand.
Knowledge-based theory	Essentially the same as resource-based theory.
Business-excellence-theory and Six Sigma	Creating quality proactively.
Value-based-theory	Self-actualising people.
Balanced-score-card theory	Creating synergy in implementing strategy.
Systems theory	Autopoietic or self-organizing. ¹

THE CONCEPT OF OPPORTUNIZING

The word “convenient” has been used in defining opportunizing². “Convenient” means: fit or adapted; suitable; proper; appropriate; affording advantage; well adapted to use; handy; seasonable; timely. It can also imply meanings such as gaining creativity or insight serendipitously. The words “competitive advantage” are also used in the definition; it is a necessity in business. Both these concepts, convenient and competitive advantage, have many dimensions and “sizes”. However, these convenient occasions are critical for competitive advantage. Without such convenient occasions taking place there is no business. Thus, people in business instinctively have a pivotal sensitivity and alertness to the importance the emergence of such convenient occasions; that these come about is their pivotal main concern.

Convenient occasions do not happen by accident. They emerge from a series of deliberate activities. The people in the field conceive of them as an establishment of “contextual suitability” regarding time, people, place, knowledge, skills, equipment, circumstances, and so forth. Consequently, people involved in business deliberately create convenient occasions. This creation is also present during the time when convenient occasions or recognized auspicious instances take place. They are just being created even more convenient or auspicious for the potential for competitive advantage to flourish. Already available or created opportunities are continually being re-created or remodeled into opportunities that are seen as even more profoundly or directly exchangeable into competitive advantage in business. Thus, opportunizing is also the recurrent, pivotal and actually the sole solving of the problematic nature of the main concern. The underlying meaning of opportunizing drives, as well as directs behavior.

The processing of opportunizing of the problems of opportunizing clearly indicates that it is a basic social process. Opportunizing as a concept partly explains itself and its own variation. It explains certain problems occurring in achieving company objectives, as well as why and how companies pursue a certain course of action or non-action.

As the main concern and its recurrent solving, opportunizing is multidimensional and multivariate. It is highly variable in type, dimension and degree, and conditions easily impact it; yet it remains omnipresent.

The data collected in this research focus on management and overall corporate behavior. The conceptualized sub-patterns of opportunizing behavior, explained below, reflect behavior of both managers and the corporation as a whole. For non-management employees, these sub-patterns may be different.

PERPETUAL AND SPASMODIC OPPORTUNIZING

“Opportunizing” incorporates continually and intermittently occurring processes for the creation of propitious opportunities. Thus, the two sub-core variables of opportunizing are “perpetual opportunizing” and “spasmodic opportunizing” (See Figure 1). The continually opportunizing variables are “conditional befriending”, “prospecting” and “weighing up”. The intermittent opportunizing variables are “moment capturing” and “configuration matching”.

THE SPASMODIC OPPORTUNIZING PROCESSES

Configuration matching intermittently re-configures the internal organization of a company in order to obtain the most beneficial facilitation of the process of opportunizing. It may be done as an attempt to ensure that any opportunity being created due to “moment capturing” (see below) subsequently reaches its full potential. It is also done of necessity; both the internal processes of the company and the external market processes within which it operates are in a state of flux. Basically, the process of configuration matching is a process of matching the internal organization to organizations of potential suitable suppliers, customers and/or strategic partners. Configuration matching is highly related to the variables of perpetual opportunizing, as well as the variable of “moment capturing”. It connects to basic structures and structural processes (including routines). The four categories of configuration matching are noted in Figure 1.

Moment capturing explains how the business managers in this research “identified” and “seized” important spasmodically occurring opportunities that were perceived to have strategic implications for their business. Essentially opportunizing is not seizing, but creating opportunities. Creating other convenient occasions, which are closely associated to the opportunity being “seized”, carries out such a “seizure”. Moment capturing takes place as a “closing in”, transforming a potential new opportunity into an actual new opportunity by an anticipatory detection via “prospecting” and a successive evaluation by “weighing up”. Although moment capturing is a spasmodic activity, in order to be able to moment capture, business managers and the people involved must be perpetually aware of the moment capture concept. “Weighing up” (see below) is highly involved in moment capturing. Thus the essence of moment capturing is linked to decision-making. The categories of moment capturing are noted in Figure 1.

THE PERPETUAL OPPORTUNIZING PROCESSES

Weighing up is the simultaneous evaluation of both the individual variables of opportunizing and the whole process of opportunizing. Therefore, some of its patterns take place only intermittently and these are seen as a continuum of its perpetual activity. It also comprises remodeling potentialities for recognized opportunities (mutual effects in combining elements). The data indicates that in every act of opportunizing there is a fundamental problem of weighing up. Weighing up also relies on its own “weighing up”. This weighing up of the process of “weighing up” takes place automatically after a moment capturing. Decision-making is an integral part and a kind of summit of weighing up. The five categories of weighing up are noted in Figure 1.

Prospecting is the looking for new opportunities (i.e. potential or possible, but yet uncreated and not fully known convenient occasions that sustain competitive advantage). This “looking for” opportunity is an important part of “creating”, “re-creating” or “remodeling” or “instigating” opportunities. It encompasses the gathering and processing of information, knowledge, and intelligence. Prospecting is a perpetual, recurring process, proceeding from the familiar (category: “predetermined prospecting”) into the unfamiliar (category: “genuine prospecting”) and back again, and has to be interrupted now and then while “weighing up for relevancy” (the third category). Patterns

of prospecting also occur spasmodically within the continuum of its perpetual activity. The categories of “prospecting” are noted in Figure 1.

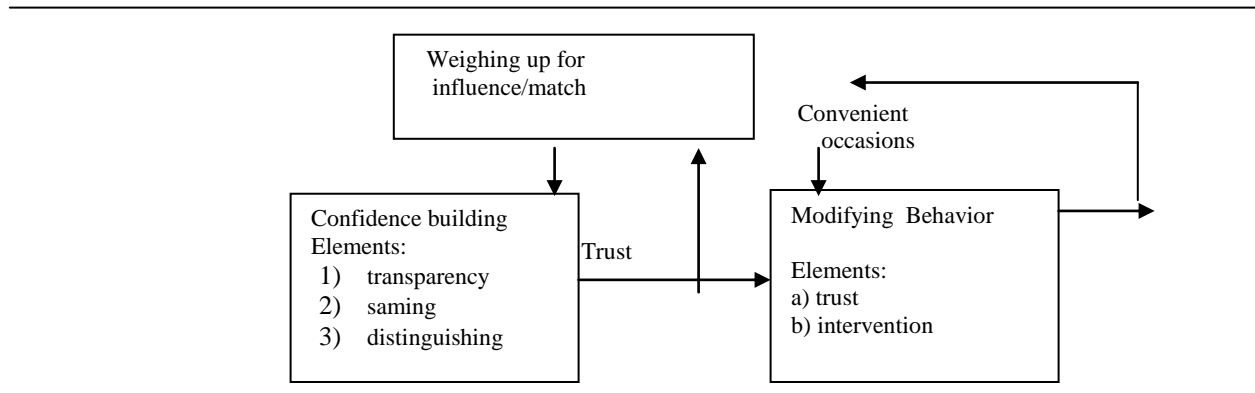
Conditional befriending is the making use of people in opportunitizing. This is accomplished by modifying people’s behavior in favor of creating those convenient occasions that are assumed to sustain and nourish the company’s competitive advantage in business. Conditional befriending is seen as the main point of departure in opportunitizing. Bringing about a convenient matching between the ”conditionally befriending” company and the ”conditionally befriended” people facilitates “conditional befriending”. Conditional befriending comprises three categories or sub-processes as illustrated in Figure 2.

The "confidence building" category of conditional befriending is a basic social process with three elements and one outcome. The elements are “saming”, “transparency” and “distinguishing”. The outcome is “trust”. (Explanations will follow.) The data indicates that these three elements, as well as trust, can be conceived as multidimensional, multivariate qualitative variables. The data also indicates that the three elements can be conceived as inherent basic social processes.

The “modifying behavior” category of conditional befriending is a basic social process with the elements “trust” and “intervention”. Its outcome is behavior modification attempting to sustain competitive advantage.

The “weighing up for influence/match” category of conditional befriending is also a category of the variable “weighing up”. It balances gaps in perceived matching and influence.

Figure 2. The categories of the variable “conditional befriending”



THE CONCEPT OF “CONDITIONAL BEFRIENDING”

The concept of “conditional befriending” is defined as the *offering of befriending* (meaning contributing something, fostering a relationship) on *conditions* or *net preconditions* that maintain the befriending agent’s competitive advantage in business. Thus, the behavior of the befriended is modified in the process of submitting to these *conditions* or *net preconditions*.

This preliminary definition needs to be amplified by two additional elements:

Firstly, these “offerings” [of befriending], “conditions” and “net preconditions” only occasionally become explicit and hence predominant. Usually they are rather implicit, and as implicit they are not seen as predominant or overt.

Secondly, the “attraction-or-repulsion force” among the participants in a “conditional befriending” is also seen as one principal characteristic of the concept. This “force” is related to the “trust”, the “intervention” and the “assessments” that are involved in a “conditional befriending”. This “force” can be modified, and by being modified, it can in turn modify the behavior of the participants in a “conditional befriending”.

Thus, conditional befriending is a basic social process, which itself contains three basic social sub-processes as illustrated in Figure 2. “Conditioning” as well as “befriending” is carried out through its three sub-processes. In addition, “conditional befriending” has many dimensions. It can be conceived as a multidimensional, multivariate qualitative variable. Conditional befriending is not seen as tantamount to “pseudo-friending”, but occasionally may resemble it.

People relationships are obviously very important in any business. Facilitating these relationships is a perpetual demand and activity. Thus, conditional befriending appears as the most prevalent of the “perpetual opportunizing” variables.

Conditional befriending seems to represent the only sensible way to get the most out of people relationships. The only way to “opportunize” or to create propitious opportunities with and by these people is to befriend them, but on explicit or implicit conditions. Basically, all the opportunities that are created in business and management are created with conditional befriending as co-creator.

Conditional befriending is carried out amongst everyone coming into direct or indirect contact with the conditionally befriending company. It is carried out among employees, suppliers of different kinds, customers, partners, community, government, competitors and also the family of employees and managers.

Opportunizing in general is made possible by skilful use of information and different forms of knowledge, including gathered intelligence. These are derived mainly through personal relationships and mainly through the process of conditional befriending. Thus, conditional befriending is a precondition for not only the processing of “prospecting”, but also for the processing of the other main variables of opportunizing.

Different forms of access, goodwill, connections, acquaintances, and so forth, are gained through personal relationships and through the process of conditional befriending. Such “soft” gaining is impossible to quantify or measure, or otherwise capture by quantitative concepts. Yet, nobody can deny its very “hard” economic significances in business. The most important and most hard “numbers” in business may ultimately be the most unobtainable “numbers” and the most “soft” issues.

Sales are generated through the process of conditional befriending. Processing of materials into products and services is made possible through the process of conditional befriending. Raw materials as well as labor are likewise made available through the process conditional befriending. Thus, conditional befriending is a contributor in the creation of a supply of goods and services. Likewise, conditional befriending is a contributor in the creation of a demand for goods and services.

Some properties of conditional befriending are elucidated in the definition of it. Other properties are “the operations of the market forces”, “controlling customers”, “controlling employees”, “controlling suppliers”, “lobbying”, “networking”, “relationship marketing”, “exposing befriending”, “communicating”, “discriminating”. Other important high-level properties are “matching” and “influencing”. Also, “affiliating” is a property of “confidence building”; “obliging” is a property of “modifying behaviour” (Guthrie, 2000, p.95)

THE SUB-PROCESS OF “CONFIDENCE BUILDING”

Trust in business is synonymous with faith, belief, hope, conviction, confidence, loyalty, belonging, right feelings, liking, attraction, passion, a kind of enthusiasm and the like. Thus “trust” has to be conceived as a multidimensional, multivariate qualitative variable. It is a main underpinning of conditional befriending. For conditional befriending to take place, the conditionally befriending agent has to have some minimum of trust in

himself, in the other part or parts, and in the fruitfulness of a conditional befriending. Thus, the sub-process of confidence building is maintaining the main underpinning of conditional befriending. Of course, perceived trustworthiness need not to be the same as factual or actual trustworthiness, acknowledged by hindsight. There is obviously a room for the confidence-building agent to build up “social fictions”, and to depend on “social fictions” that are generated by himself/herself or by others.

Transparency means that there is no hidden agenda. High transparency usually facilitates trust. Transparency may have a number of dimensions. For example, many may be associated with: “not only talking the talk, but also walking the talk”. The data slightly indicates that transparency contextually may function as an inherent basic social process wherein the outcome is different dimensions and degrees of trust. Transparency can however also appear as a condition with only spasmodic changes.

Saming means the extent to which the sameness of life interests, or life style, or common interests are perceived or acknowledged among the participants. Saming may signify some kind of common identity or unity. Obtaining membership of or belonging to a particular group is also one dimension of saming. A high saming between people, otherwise very different in many respects, may ease confidence building. Saming is, of course, a matter of degree, and it is comprised of many dimensions. It is a multivariate, multidimensional qualitative variable. Saming, as well as transparency, seemingly have something to do with the inherent spirit of the “junction point” between people, - the junction between “conditioning” and “befriending” - and the naturalness and ease in connecting. Some people may have a better general ability of saming than others. For example, by establishing inter-ownership in companies doing business with each other, one may change different dimensions and their degrees of saming. One property of saming is “*the inclusive*”. Another property is “*the soft (e.g. compassion)*”. Some other dimensions or properties are e.g. “*simplicity in use*”, “*easy access*”, “*how genuine welcome other people opinions are*”, “*easy to accomplish or acquire*”, “*sharing knowledge or information*”, “*co-operating*”, “*unity*.” The data indicate that saming contextually may function as an inherent basic social process wherein the outcome is different dimensions and their degrees of trust. It can, however, also appear as a condition with only spasmodic changes.

Distinguishing is the possession, exhibition or formation of high standing features embedding trust. The reverses are features withdrawing trust. These features may be attached to what is given out in the process of conditional befriending, or to the required conditions or net preconditions of the process of conditional befriending. It may be attached to the derived benefits of what is “conditionally” offered in the “befriending”. It might also be befriending agent’s certifications, distinguished craftsmanship, distinguished treatment of people, reputation, award-winnings or special honors. Distinguishing may have many other dimensions. Even elements of idiosyncrasy can have distinguishing effects. One property of distinguishing is “*the exclusive*, or “*giving an unforgettable moment*”. Another properties are “*the hard (e.g. presentation overruling compassion)*”, “*multiplicity of qualities (e.g. of skills, expertise, activities, knowledge, information)*”, “*diversity of specialized expertise*”. One dimension of distinguishing may be to make the offer unique with few or no substitutes, and consequently scarce. Another dimension of distinguishing may be its wide availability because its features make almost everyone a user of it. Some distinguishing features may be subtle and difficult to interpret. In any case it may be conceived as a multidimensional, multivariate qualitative variable. The data indicate that distinguishing may operate as an inherent basic social process wherein the outcome is different dimensions and their degrees of trust.

Weighing up for influence/match monitors confidence building, and it becomes itself monitored as illustrated in Figure 2. By weighing up the contextual needs for the multidimensional and multivariate trust is taken into account, as well as a mixture of the three multidimensional, multivariate elements for producing trust.

The data indicate that the three elements of transparency, saming and distinguishing are not independent, but that they mutually affect each other when combined. The data indicate that the sorting and weighing up (combining) of these three elements (including their dimensions and sizes) in the process of confidence building may be extremely important for (1) the outcome of “trust”, and also for (2) the triggering of the five main processes of opportunizing to operate in conjunction.

If the dimensional values of transparency, sameness or distinguishing become “frozen”, i.e. unchanging, they become just basic conditions of the higher-level concept of “conditional befriending”. By default, they have some perceived values that affect the outcome of confidence building, which is trust in business.

THE SUB-PROCESS OF “MODIFYING BEHAVIOR”

Trust is the input received as outcome from the process of “confidence building”. As mentioned, trust has many different dimensions and sizes. Trust may of course be “stored” for later use, but without its use for modifying behavior in one way or another, it will ultimately be wasted.

Intervention is the other element of the process. It involves the employer’s intervention in the another’s action, and it takes place on the basis of the generated trust. It is, of course, directed against a conditionally befriended part for prompting behavioral modification. This intervention has two main aspects. One aspect of intervention is *preventing* behavior, which sustains the creation of “inconvenient occasions” with more or less direct transferability to competitive *disadvantage* in business. The other aspect of intervention is *encouraging* behavior, which sustains the creation of “convenient occasions” with more or less direct transferability to competitive advantage in business. These interventions are directed against everyone coming into direct or indirect contact with the company. “Obliging” is a property of intervention. They are employees, suppliers, customers, partners (shareholders, joint venture partners), an employee’s family, the community, government, competitors, etc. As an employer and producer, the agent has different degrees of direct control over these different groups of people. The agent has considerable direct control over his/her employees and frequently also suppliers, but for example far less control over his competitors and customers. Thus, each of these different sub-processes of “modifying behavior” has a considerable degree of autonomy.

Weighing up for influence/match monitors “modifying behavior”, and is itself monitored as shown in Figure 2. A conditionally befriending agent does not continue to lead a process of conditional befriending without ultimately getting a behavioral modification, which apparently (not necessary actually) satisfies the preconditions of the conditional befriending. Thus, the possible ultimate outcomes of a specific process of modifying behavior are continued engagement or ultimate disengagement.

THE SUB-PROCESS OF “WEIGHING UP FOR INFLUENCE/MATCH”

The two processes, confidence building and modifying behavior, are inherent, perpetual and unavoidable in any business. The same applies for the process of “weighing up for influence/match”. These three processes take place whether one is aware of it or not. A weak weighing up appears to decrease the “visibility” or “vivaciousness” of these three processes, and *vice versa*. The process of “weighing up for influence/match” conditions the operations of these processes by infusing a kind of discrimination and hence dynamism into their joint operations.

“Weighing up for influence/match” balances and “clears up” perceived gaps in the contextual influencing and matching of confidence building as well as modifying behavior. One important property of “weighing up” is “discriminative”.

For weighing up special insights, experience and knowledge are in high demand, but intuition and sentiment may also have much to say. Data indicate that the degrees of “vivaciousness” and “effectiveness” of this weighing up process differs considerably among companies. For example, some managers are very mindful about their speech and body language, and especially about how other people may interpret them. Other managers do not have this same kind of mindfulness. By augmenting their process of weighing up, managers may obtain some kind of power over the processes of confidence building and modifying behavior.

“Weighing up for influence/match” resembles a feedback-loop center process. Its elements are the outcomes of both processes, confidence building and behavior modification. Its own outcomes are the decisions:

- 1) “stop” or “go on” in weighing up of elements in the process confidence building,
- 2) “stop”, “stop temporarily” or “go on” in weighing up of elements in the process of modifying behavior.

With regard to point number 1,

(a) If confidence building cannot create the contextual appropriate trust, or if it believed to be so, no effort will be made. This, of course, applies for the relationship between the agent and the other party. Thus, the process of confidence building will *stop* with the agent’s values of transparency, saming and distinguishing exposed and stationary.

(b) If the trust created by confidence building cannot be transformed in the process of modifying behavior into “convenient occasions” upholding competitive advantage, or if it believed to be so, no effort will be made. This, of course, applies for the relationship between the agent and the other party. Thus, the process confidence building will *stop* with the agent’s values of transparency, saming and distinguishing exposed and stationary.

(c) If the contrary to these is true, or if it is believed or assumed to be so, the process of confidence building will *go on* until it is terminated. Actually the process may go on perpetually. Thus there will be a weighing up of the elements of transparency, saming and distinguishing. This may take place accidentally, by more or less default, or calculatingly. While doing this, conditional befriending also alerts or connects to the other processes of perpetual and spasmodic opportunizing, and especially prospecting.

With regard to point number 2,

(a) If an additional behavior modification, sustaining “convenient occasions” that uphold competitive advantage, cannot be created by the process of modifying behavior, or if it believed to be so, no effort will be made. This of course applies for the relationship between the agent and the other party. Thus, the process modifying behavior will *stop permanently or temporarily*, and the process will expose non-engagement as its output. This *stop is only intermediate* if a new weighing up on confidence building is believed to bring about relevant changes in trust.

(b) If the contrary to this is true, or if it is believed to be so, the process of modifying behavior will *go on* until it is terminated. Such a going on may be perpetual, and it will as well involve perpetually the process of confidence building. Thus, there will be a weighing up of the elements of both processes. While doing weighing up, conditional befriending also alerts or connects to the other processes of perpetual and spasmodic opportunizing, and especially prospecting.

SOME INDICATED RELATIONSHIPS OR SUGGESTED HYPOTHESES

It may not be so straightforward to give preconception-free judgments of long-term performance of business companies. One criterion would be long-term growth or expansion on a highly sustainable basis. A long history of good profits without growth or expansion may be equivalent. However, a good long-term performance may also be obtained by obtaining a match between what the owner or manager wants and what the owner or manager gets from his/her company. The data indicate that some business owners or managers have no desire for growth of their company, nor excessive profits. Instead, they have a desire for a particular process of doing business. This process constitutes the goal in and of itself. This is indicated by other research. (Brytting, 1991). Other issues may also be involved, such as ethical or environmental. Thus, it may be premature to stick to any finality of criteria when judging performance. Yet, the convergence of what owners or managers want and what they get, as well as high profits or expansion, could be good indicators of good performance.

An OGT study only suggests hypotheses on the bases of data indicators and interchangeable indices. Here are a few contributions to a few such grounded, yet provisional, hypotheses:

- (1) The data indicate that to be a good performer, a company needs the eloquent performance of the two spasmodic and the three perpetual opportunizing processes. In other words: The orchestrating of all these five variables are necessary for good performance.
- (2) Besides perpetual and spasmodic opportunizing, other property-related groupings of the five main processes of opportunizing are indicated in the data:
 - a) Conditional befriending and prospecting have the properties of matching the operation of basic social behavioral processes. The pair represent properties such as “matching ideas” or “matching flows”.
 - b) Weighing up has the properties of discriminating and connecting to all types of processes and giving impetus to processing. Weighing up, and also moment capturing, have other properties such as “discriminating” and “deciding”.
 - c) Configuration matching and moment capturing have the properties of matching the operation of basic social structural processes. The pair have properties such as “matching structures” and “matching flows by matching back-up structures”.
- (3) The degree of vivaciousness of the three processes of conditional befriending seems different in different companies. The data indicate that the degree of vivaciousness of conditional befriending is positively related to performance and that this vivaciousness is reflected by the discriminating vivaciousness of weighing up.
- (4) Not surprisingly, the data indicate that lack of unity or agreement within a company management impedes the company’s orchestrating of the processes of conditional befriending, and that this has detrimental effects on company performance.
- (5) When “social fictions”, spin, or manipulations are created, a process of conditional befriending creates them (mixture of saming, distinguishing and some “negative” dimensions of transparency), and a process of configuration matching incorporates them into the social structure. Their survival is dependent on differences in the conceptual understanding of the process of conditional befriending. For example, “social fictions” may make it possible for a manager to opportunist for personal gain at the sacrifice of company opportunizing. However, bringing to light vested “social fictions”, which have become part of the structure, may become a tough task.
- (6) The data indicate that the senior manager personally represents or reflects the style of weighing up in the company. If this is true, it makes certain problematic issues simpler to uncover. It is also indicated that a company’s style of weighing up in connection to conditional befriending more or less represents the company’s general or consistent selective style for similar problem solving or problem neglecting. It is also indicated that activation of weighing up in conditional befriending connects conditional befriending to the other four main variables of opportunizing, and especially prospecting.
- (7) Generalizing about people or units is totally beside the point in OGT. Generalizing via induction on business-related behavior is easier, because behavioral processes transcend the boundaries units. Thus, “configuration matching” is not the “the organizational structure”, but the process of re-configuring of the internal organization. Not surprisingly, the data indicate that “the organizational structure” as one accumulated outcome of “configuration matching” reflects the particular shapes of perpetual opportunizing of the corporation, including its specific shapes of conditional befriending, as well as the basic conditions in which the company operates.
- (8) The data indicate that the opportunizing company may gain most advantage when it is the leading or initiating agent in a conditional befriending and in modifying the behavior of others. The reverse may, but will not necessary be the case, when the company allows its own behavior to be modified by the conditional befriending and opportunizing of others, leading, for example, to a moment capturing.

(9) As mentioned, trust as well as transparency, saming and distinguishing have many dimensions and scales. The data indicate that certain mixtures of the dimensional values of transparency, and in particular saming and distinguishing, may produce some particular powerful outcomes of trust. Such a mixture may be illustrated by one example: Working for a company that distinguished itself in certain respects may simultaneously become distinguishing and saming for its employees, provided that the management has the skill to share the credit, and also to convey appropriate understanding of how this is being brought about (transparency). Some dimensions of saming and distinguishing may appear as opposites, while some dimensions of transparency and saming may appear as similarities. The data indicate an interaction to create a very strong combined effect when there is a merging of these opposites and apparent contradictory - of the “inclusive” and the “exclusive”, of “the soft” and “the hard”, of “simplicity in use” and “sophisticated features”, of unity” and “diversity of specialized expertise”. *The data indicate that the effects of distinguishing may be enhanced through the basing of it in saming and vice versa, provided that there is an appropriate amount of transparency.* Such special combination effects may be very significant, as they seem to be related to long-term performance and growth of companies. There are many interchangeable indices for this combined effect. These effects may be brought about in confidence building directed at a company’s employees, or customers or partners. Two illustrative cases are provided below.

DATA INDICATORS OF COMBINED EFFECTS OF “SAMING”, “DISTINGUISHING” AND “TRANSPARENCY”

Case 1: The main owner/manager has a rather unusual engagement contract for employees above a certain level of skills. For example, if these employees seek employment elsewhere, they are contractually obliged to provide prior notice to the manager. The manager is good at reading the signs of the thriving of his employees, also about problems in their private life. If an employee wants another job, the manager does all in his power to help him/her in finding the best obtainable job elsewhere, yet not in a competing firm. If an employee has personal problems, for example in marriage, he (the company) helps in finding a place to live, also financially, if necessary. If an employee has financial problems because of a spouse losing his/her job or because of sickness, the manager gives them moral support, and if needed, the company confidentially pays all or a part of the payments due in house mortgages. In the case of the death of a child or a spouse of an employee, the company confidentially pays the funeral. There is good transparency concerning the finances and performance. The company has never paid dividends; all profits go to consolidate the company and the workplace. There are also examples of unusual, but a quite different “mixture” of measures in the confidence building directed towards strategic partners (yet, the indices are interchangeable). The loyalty of employees is high, much is demanded of them, they work hard, and the company has had an impressive performance and expansion record when compared to competitors.

This case indicates an extraordinary effect of a combining of saming and distinguishing in the process of confidence building. The combining also connects conditional befriending to prospecting and configuration matching.

Case 2: The founder of a trading and fishing company started his business by buying a fishing ship in partnership with a captain with a very good fishing and management record. The ship was chosen very selectively, and was much better suited and equipped than similar ships. The profits were high, also because good crew is attracted to good ships and good fishing captains. He repeatedly did the same again in partnerships with different other captains with good fishing and management records, and became the owner or co-owner of a large fleet. He also diversified successfully into related trading and manufacturing, but without applying partnerships. He gradually abandoned co-ownership with captains, but continued selective relationships with them. The company became one of the largest and best consolidated trading and fishing companies in the North Atlantic, and most of the profits were derived from the large ships. Data indicate that the founder did not fully conceptually understand the mechanism behind the growth of his business. After the death of his wife, who also was his most important business advisor, and after basic changes in market conditions, he departed even more from his former business strategy. The configuration matching of his business was also badly neglected. When he died he had lost everything.

This case indicates the same with quite different, yet interchangeable data indices. The *connectivity* of the particular weighing up in conditional befriending (i.e. combining of elements in confidence building) to prospecting, moment capturing and configuration matching is also indicated.

A BRIEF COMPARATIVE LITERATURE REVIEW

The generated theory is grounded in the agenda of those being studied. It is not tested. It is not “thought up” or logically derived. It has emerged while applying a rigorous procedure for minimizing preconceptions while conceptualizing (coding) the data. It is grounded in authentic real-world data obtained by theoretical sampling. Its credibility corresponds to its grounding. It goes as far as it goes. It is provisional and modifiable. Some of the conceptualized data are very rich, and also confirm that reality is stranger than fiction. Data of this kind would mostly have been unobtainable by preconceived data collection and preconceived questioning.

An OGT comparative literature review examines the concepts rather than the contexts from whence the data came. Consequently, an OGT literature review is funneled down to the relevance of substantive and theoretical codes. When literature from a context has no important relatedness to principal concepts, it will not be included. Literature from other contexts or disciplines is included when key conceptual relatedness is found. The literature is seen as new data on related concepts to be constantly compared. The constant comparing can lead to new properties of the theory, and thereby integration of the “data-literature” into the theory, which itself can become modified as a consequence. OGT comparative literature reviews are usually short. Considerable literature comparison has already been made in the introduction, yet in a synthesized form. The following literature review will be limited. It does not go far beyond the most basic textbook readings in neoclassical economics and marketing (E.g. Parkin et al., 2000; Kotler, 1984).

Conceptually the sub-disciplines of business economy treat very diverse issues. The placement of some of these sub-disciplines in the conceptual hierarchy of opportunizing is given below.

Core variable of opportunizing: Business management in general	
<p>Perpetual opportunizing: (Tactical management theory)</p> <p>Conditional befriending: Neoclassical microeconomics, Human resource management Customer relationship management, Customer cost accounting (weighing up category) Marketing, relationship marketing, Agency theory (weighing up category), Principal agent theory (weighing up category)</p> <p>Prospecting: Market analysis, Information technology (partly), Statistics</p> <p>Weighing up: Operational economics, Operation management, Operation research, Finance, Investment theory, Statistics, Agency theory, Game theory, Principal agent theory</p>	<p>Spasmodic opportunizing: Strategic management</p> <p>Moment capturing: Finance, Investment theory</p> <p>Configuration matching: Organisational theory, Organisational change, Organisational culture, Evolutionary theory of business, Structure-conduct-performance theory Auditing</p>

Sub-disciplines relevant for **theoretical codes** (i.e. relationships between the substantive codes in the conceptual hierarchy, such as e.g. “conditions”, “consequences”, “cutting points”): Macroeconomics, themes on globalisation, trends in technology, auditing, research methodology, etc.

This centrality of opportunizing is presently not recognized in research and teaching. One of the consequences of *not* linking to the authentic core variable in business - and hence the essence of relevance - is proliferation of irrelevances and “hammer and nail syndromes” in business research and business teaching. The following comments will focus on some of the disciplines of conditional befriending.

It is obvious that the neoclassical hard core is not an authentic and actual core variable for integrating the sub-disciplines. In many business schools the teaching of neoclassical economics, marketing and organizational theory is somewhat odd or incoherent. First, the neoclassical theory is taught with an aura of finality, which students seldom resist. Next, the teaching of marketing and organizational theory exposes some important tenets of the neoclassical theory as bizarre. Something similar applies for the other hard cores that were listed in the introduction.

The neoclassical research program, and research programs related to the neoclassical, have been apriori-rationalistic-deductively developed, and have later been maintained by hypothetical-deductive procedures. This makes preconceiving the rule. Thus, one could expect the outcomes from such a research program to be highly contrasting when compared to the outcomes of OGT research. No claim is made that OGT is a superior methodology. It is just different. Opposites may be complementary.

The customer-producer relationship, as it is described in the basic neoclassical microeconomic market model, is but one of the numerous cases of business' conditional befriending. In this model, the price is the only "conditioning" factor taken into account and the quantity of a given quality is the only "befriending" factor taken into account. The only "net preconditioning" factor taken into account is fixing price and quantity for maximum profits (the equality of marginal cost to marginal revenue).³ Thus, only quantifiable concepts, or concepts that fit into 17th century mathematics, are included.

In contrast to this, the theory of opportunizing does not delimit the "conditioning", the "befriending" or the "net preconditioning" to the quantifiable. These are conceived qualitatively as well. Delimiting oneself to the direct quantifiable may shut out most of reality. Opportunizing, conditional befriending, trust, saming, distinguishing, and transparency are conceived as multidimensional, multivariate qualitative variables. This makes the theory of opportunizing a highly complex multivariate theory. Much of the fitting of the multivariate concepts or substantive and theoretical codes in an OGT can be conceived as practicing a kind of "qualitative mathematics". By the process of grounding in data from those being studied, these qualitative variables or concepts have been specified. Their fit, their use in explaining, and their relevancy have recurrently been verified by properties and interchangeable indices in the data during the process of grounding.

In addition to having emerged from a process of grounding, the concepts of conditional befriending, confidence building, saming, etc., are on a much higher conceptual level than logically derived and also grounded economic concepts such as market forces, market demand, market supply, or pricing. The logically derived concepts of the neoclassical theory such as utility, producer benefit, etc., obviously did not emerge as fitting, explaining or relevant in generating the theory of opportunizing. These concepts are neither found to be grounded in the agenda of those being studied, nor in the sampled real-world data from these same people or companies. Furthermore, the neoclassical economic models are static or static-comparative models, while the concept of conditional befriending, as well as its lesser-level concepts, denote basic social processes that account for change over time.

The preconceiving, logical forcing, logical conjecturing and hence subjective nature of the neoclassical theory becomes evident in its relationship to mathematics. Within the framework of the hypothetical-deductive methodology, the possible unrealistic assumptions of a theory's "hard core" may not be judged as relevant. What will be judged as relevant are the predictive power of the logically derived auxiliary hypotheses, and the simplicity of the initial knowledge necessary to make predictions. (Friedman, 1969. pp. 9-10). This conceived "simplicity" might constitute preconceived and subjective judgments. As for example: suitability for fitting or forcing into 17th century mathematical concepts. The founders of the neoclassical school even derived the term "economics" from "physics". They preconceived that just as mathematics' "inner laws of the mind" had been successful in describing "the outer laws of nature" in classical physics, so it should be in economics. This has been more easily desired than accomplished. Yet the mathematics, which the neoclassical economists still cultivate, is limited to the core of 17th century mathematics. (Sydsaeter & Hammond, 1995). Modern quantum physicists have gone far beyond that in their use of mathematics. They have gone far beyond the 17th century world outlook of the neoclassical economists. Unlike the most advanced quantum physicists, the neoclassical economists have for example never heard about the rediscovered Vedic mathematics. (Puri, 1988; Tirthaji, 1992; Williams, 1991; Williams & Gaskell, 1997). This mathematics is fundamentally different, and in many respects far more advanced. The latter is especially the case if

focus is on the correspondence between the “inner laws of the mind” of mathematics and the “outer laws of nature” of physics or society. Thus, the neoclassical mathematical expertise may actually be limited.

The concept of “relationship marketing” has also problems of fit and workability in explaining. Gummesson has attempted to identify the properties of this concept (Gummesson, 2000), but he has not solved the conceptual problem. Actually these properties of “relationship marketing” constitute a few of the numerous properties of conditional befriending. “Relationship marketing” is not a core or sub-core variable. It is more descriptive than conceptually explaining. Conditional befriending is a concept on a much higher conceptual level.

What has been said about the neoclassical microeconomic market model and relationship marketing may also be said about the 4-p model (product, price, place, promotion) in marketing. There are many more options and varieties for the use of conditional befriending, as well as opportunizing, than those traditionally uncovered and analyzed by for example neoclassical economics, the 4-p model or relationship marketing.

The fact that a concept is quantifiable is not a precondition for its fit, workability and relevance in practical use or in the advancement of theory. We can take the economic concept of capital as an example. The concept is used as a one-dimensional quantitative variable within all sub-disciplines of economy. It is mainly derived by logical deductions and logical elaborations. Yet, it is problematic. Financial analysts are well aware of its many limitations. Its limitations have led to new conceptual development, also by logical elaborations: “social capital”, “intellectual capital”, “human capital”, etc. Sometimes these concepts are “operationalized” into quantitative variables. However, the problem remains unsolved. We do not know with sufficient certainty what these new concepts actually mean or stand for. The concepts do not have any proper empirical grounding; they do not convey explanations. The many empirical properties of these concepts, as well as the data indicators of these properties, have not been fully accounted for. Their fit, workability in explaining and relevance for practical use or theoretical advancement remain questionable. Un-emerged concepts, or undiscovered latent patterns might serve the need better. They, of course, have to be discovered first. Social science, as well as economics, abounds with concepts with similar problems.

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NOTES

¹ Actually some kind of autopoietic is a property of any core variable of an orthodox grounded theory, if it also processes the problems of the “main concern”. Thus opportunizing processes the problems of opportunizing.

² Opportunizing does not necessary imply opportunism or disregard of principles.

³ In the neoclassical model regarding “demand for and supply of labor”, the labor quantity is the only “conditioning” factor, wage is the only “befriending” factor, and the equality of wage to marginal revenue product of labor is the only “net preconditioning” factor.