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Perspectives on Autonomy and Control Editorial

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Perspectives on Autonomy and Control

Editorial

Astrid Gynnild, University of Bergen

Can autonomy be appreciated without sufficient awareness of control? In what ways can autonomy and control be synonyms rather than antonyms? And in what ways can control that was lost be turned into processes of regaining control? Moreover: What does it mean to optimize one's own resources under shifting conditions? And what does respect and inclusion mean to the quality of teaching? These are some of the questions that surfaced when I started reflecting on the topics of the running theoretical discussions in this issue of the Grounded Theory Review. The theories presented on the following pages are of course generated from specific substantive areas, and generalizability outside of these areas cannot be claimed. But nevertheless it seems obvious that the new concepts that are brought to light in this issue might have great value across disciplines and topics. As always, grounded concepts spark the interest for understanding more of human ways of resolving problems.

In the introductory article on the "cry for help," **Barney G. Glaser** discusses problematic aspects of doing autonomous research, seen from the perspective of novice grounded theorists. As Dr. Glaser points out, "Claiming autonomy when researching within a structure of control by superiors is problematic. Success varies from failure to get autonomy to being autonomously alone with no help." By identifying a number of GT issues that require novices to seek methodological help, Dr. Glaser also includes a discussion of grounded theory procedures. Classic grounded theory has many procedures for generating conceptual theory that are not suitable to other methodologies. So developing research autonomy while at the same time adhering to the strict procedures of doing grounded theory might sometimes seem like a paradox to beginners.

Issues of learning, autonomy, and implicit control, are brought to the fore in the new grounded theory of optimizing personal resources by **Katja Hakel**. She found that optimizing personal resources is a main concern of students in higher education. In order to juggle a number of course commitments and other commitments throughout a semester, students resolve their main concern by oscillating between conservation strategies and investment strategies depending on the situation. Their choice of actions stems from deliberate considerations on how to invest their time most efficiently in order to ensure a wished outcome. This new insight is valuable to teachers and professors who work to improve their own approaches to teaching and learning.

In his theory of surviving situational suffering, **Barry Chametzky** focuses on the situation of a growing group of educators, namely contingent faculty members. In the US, part-time, adjunct educators are hired to teach a great many classes. Their main concern is

maintaining employment, and they do so within a context of reduced appreciation, underutilization, and ingratitude, as pointed out by Dr. Chametzky. The theory of surviving situational suffering integrates the categories of limiting, balancing, and falling short. The theory explains and predicts costs and dilemmas of the widespread use of part-time adjunct educators, not only for contingent faculty members themselves, but also for educational environments at large. In the end, students' learning is probably what would benefit the most from more respectful and longterm engagement with contingent faculty members by educational institutions and environments.

Jumping from educational environments to a study of urine incontinence of older persons in hospitals might, at first sight, seem like a leap. Or perhaps not? The generalizability of **Annemarie Dowling-Castronovo's** theory of regaining control is obvious. She found that when older persons are hospitalized because of illness or injury that affects biological capacity, their main concern is loss of control. But the loss of control is much wider than urine incontinence. Loss of control implies abrupt changes not only in physical, but also in spatial-temporal and social aspects of individuals' lives. Dowling-Castronovo's theory indicates that patients work hard to regain their control and get out of hospital again. These patterns of behavior have many implications for patient-centered care. The study of urine incontinence of older persons also illustrates that needs for shared decision-making among patients and hospital workers needs more attention.

In the book review section, **Gary Evans** discusses what he calls "Demystifying Grounded Theory Selection." The title points to the content of Barney G. Glaser's latest book, which deals with choosing grounded theory as a research method. After a thorough discussion of the 439 pages book, Evans concludes, "A great read I would highly recommend to both PhD students and supervisors."

Have a good read!