



# GROUNDING THEORY REVIEW

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Editor's Comments

Judith Holton

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## **Editor's Comments**

It's often said that the only thing constant in our world today is change. Change can impact on many dimensions – physiological, psychological, emotional, relational, contextual. As such, our response to change is a subject of endless curiosity and theory generation. This issue of the Review offers three papers on the subject of change, two of which offer substantive theories of change to explain how individuals resolve concerns regarding significant change events within their lives. Ekstrom et al. offer a "hypothesis of a general uncertainty-resolving pattern of behaviour" in how middle-aged women respond to the passage through menopause. Raffanti offers a theory of how educators "continually resolve their main concern of survival in the face of pervasive change" within their organizations. Fernandez and Lehmann's paper offers a methodological perspective on the value of grounded theory for enhancing both rigour and relevance in information systems and organizational change research.

The general implications suggested by Ekstrom et al.'s and Raffanti's theories are interesting to note. Both theories indicate that resolving uncertainty regarding the impending change is the main concern of the individuals involved. Each theory however focuses on a different aspect of resolution. Ekstrom et al. propose a basic social process in which women employ explore and consider personal beliefs and values in preserving and adjusting their sense of self to accommodate the passage through menopause. Raffanti proposes a process by which educators consider the impact of impending change in their organizational environment and offers a typology of response options for surviving the change "consistent with personal and professional needs, goals and values."

What is significantly different between the theories is the degree of inevitability of the impending change and its proximal impact on those concerned. For middle-aged women, menopause is an inevitable change with maximum proximal impact; for educators, the impact of

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organizational change, while of great concern, is neither necessarily inevitable nor maximally proximal. A comparison of the two theories suggests that the greater the inevitability and proximal impact of the change, the greater the focus on acceptance and integration of the change as opposed to resisting or deflecting. In exploring the general implications of their theory, Ekstrom et al. draw on Glaser and Strauss's (1971) formal theory of status passage; in particular, its properties of inevitability, desirability and centrality.

Even such a cursory comparison of the two substantive theories of theories of change offered in this issue of the Review illustrates how substantive grounded theory (SGT) "may have important general implication and relevance, and become almost automatically a springboard or stepping stone to the development of a grounded formal theory. SGT not only provides a stimulus to a 'good idea' but it also give an initial direction in developing relevant categories and properties and possible modes of integration (theoretical codes)". (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 79) Given a sufficient number of substantive grounded theories of change, one can easily see the potential emergence of a formal grounded theory of change as a welcome addition to a crowded yet frequently conjectured theoretical field.

Rounding out this issue of the Review, we are pleased to offer another chapter from Dr. Glaser's latest book, The Grounded Theory Perspective III: Theoretical Coding. This chapter, "Staying Open: The use of theoretical codes in grounded theory" reminds us that the essential principle of earned relevance in grounded theory is not restricted to conceptual emergence but is equally important in the conceptual integration of the theory through the emergence of relevant theoretical codes. Dr. Glaser is currently at work on a new book on formal grounded theory. We shall look forward to keeping readers of the Review informed about this important development in advancing the methodology of classic grounded theory.

- Judith Holton

## **Submissions**

All papers submitted are peer reviewed and comments provided back to the authors. Papers accepted for publication will be good examples or practical applications of grounded theory and classic grounded theory methodology.

Comments on papers published are also welcomed, will be shared with the authors and may be published in subsequent issues of the Review. See our website [www.groundedtheoryreview.com](http://www.groundedtheoryreview.com) for full submission guidelines. Forward submissions as Word documents to Judith Holton at [judith@groundedtheoryreview.com](mailto:judith@groundedtheoryreview.com)

## **Call for Papers in Honor of Phyllis Stern on the Occasion of her 80th Birthday**

A special issue of Health Care for Women International is planned in volume 27 as a festschrift to honor our Health Care for Women International Editor Emeritus, Phyllis Noergar Stern, on the occasion of her 80th birthday. Authors may consider any aspect of Dr. Stern's career and thus you may present new substantive research, teaching pedagogy, grounded theory methodology, or discuss Dr. Stern's contribution to the history of nursing. Please send three copies of your manuscript and include a cover letter indicating that your manuscript is to be considered for the festschrift to the editor-in-chief by January 31, 2006. Contact:

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