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From the Editor

We've had a great response to our June issue focusing on the novice experience of doing classic grounded theory (GT). This is no doubt indicative of the number of new researchers seeking to understand and apply the classic methodology for grounded theory. There's a great sense of accomplishment in completing that first GT study, having followed the full package of classic GT methods and realizing the explanatory power of the emergent theory. The logical next step is to disseminate that theory through doctoral defence, conference presentations, collegial dialogue, teaching, and, of course, those career critical publications. Publication is in fact that next level of apprenticeship in a scholar's career; achieving those important first publications will no doubt require the same diligence as undertaking and completing the research study itself. This is true of all new scholars but anecdotal accounts suggest that those adhering to the classic GT methodology appear to encounter added hurdles wherein the social structural constraints of the dominant qualitative research paradigm impose expectations in terms of what constitutes a good paper for publication that run counter to the classic methodology. These expectations echo familiar criteria as previously encountered under doctoral or senior research supervision where the dominant paradigm assumes that grounded theory is a qualitative method. Anecdotal experiences of classic GT scholars who have managed to navigate the hurdles and achieve publication in mainstream journals would suggest that 'accommodations' are required. Accommodating without undermining remains the classic grounded theorist's challenge; one that needs to be embraced, achieved and experiences shared.

Two of the papers in this issues offer us perspectives on potential accommodating strategies. Johnston's paper presents a

GT of *marketing for acceptance* proposing an explanation of ways in which classic grounded theorists address constraints and requirements to achieve publication. Stern offers us the experience of her many years of successful mainstream publication, suggesting the use of a powerful *hook* to engage the attention of those important preliminary readers – the editors and reviewers. Once hooked, readers may be more open to alternative formats and approaches in the presentation of a paper under review.

In a recent editorial for the *Academy of Management Journal* (2009, vol.52, no.2), Colquitt and Ireland offer another valuable strategy by recommending that aspiring authors study a journal's reviewer evaluation forms to assess prospective publishing potential. These forms will set out key criteria for acceptance and reveal both specific and embedded assumptions regarding what constitutes a paper worthy of publication in that particular venue; assumptions that can be as critical to achieving publication as are the explicit criteria. The manifestation of both criteria and assumptions is of course best evidenced in reading papers being published in the journal under study. Both may require creativity if not compromise on the part of the aspiring author.

In the spirit of assisting those wishing to submit to this journal, we have included in this issue a copy of our peer review guidelines. Every paper submitted is assessed first for its adherence to our particular focus; that is, does the paper espouse and appear to adhere to classic grounded theory methodology; does it propose a substantive or a formal GT; or, does it offer a methodological perspective regarding classic GT. If the submission meets these criteria, it proceeds through to a double blind peer review process with at least two experienced classic grounded theorists reviewing and offering comments and recommendations on suitability for publication. As our guidelines state:

> The goal of peer review in this journal is to advance classic grounded theory scholarship by providing constructive comments to authors with a view to enhancing the quality of papers submitted. The role of the peer reviewer is to respect the autonomy of the author by coaching rather than criticising thereby encouraging and supporting the author's understanding of the methodology and subsequent skill development as a published grounded theorist.

Of course, sustaining reader and reviewer attention requires substance that can only be achieved by crafting that emergent theory through polished writing; taking tentative conceptual ideas from memoing to theoretical writing. To remind us of the core principles in writing a good GT, we include Dr. Glaser's paper on theoretical writing originally published in his 1978 book, **Theoretical Sensitivity.**

Rounding out the issue are two papers that address persistent challenges to the novice grounded theorist. Holton discusses *tussles* that often confront the novice research in transcending issues of preconception and descriptive detail; issues that are frequently the manifestation of research methods training situated in the qualitative paradigm. Hernandez offers advice on achieving a better understanding of theoretical coding as an essential element in classic grounded theory methodology. Her paper also offers a useful summary of the many potential theoretical coding possibilities as explicated in Dr. Glaser's work over the past 30 years.

- Judith A. Holton, Ph.D.

Submissions

We welcome papers presenting substantive and formal grounded theories from a broad range of disciplines. 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 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 for full submission guidelines. Forward submissions as Word documents to Judith Holton at judith@groundedtheoryreview.com

Peer Review Guidelines

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Recommendations:

- Accept as it is
- Accept pending minor revisions
- Revise and resubmit

Basis for Revision:

- Needs a clearer focus
- Core category needs clarification
- Related concepts need clarification
- Theoretical propositions (hypotheses) need to be clearly articulated
- Contribution to knowledge (addressing the literature) needs further work
- Implications for practice need to be addressed
- Limitations of the study need to be addressed
- Data sources need to be addressed
- Brief statement on data collection & analysis needs to be consistent with classic GT methodology
- Composition needs work

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Theoretical Writing[1]

Barney G. Glaser, Ph.D., Hon. Ph.D.

Theoretical sorting has brought the analyst to the point of pent-up pressure to write: to see the months of work actualized in a "piece." But this is only a personal pressure. The goal of grounded theory methodology, above all is to offer the results to the public, usually through one or more publications. We will focus on writing for publication, which is the most frequent way that the analyst can tell how people are "buying" what really matters in sociology, or in other fields.

Both feedback on and use of publications will be the best evaluation of the analyst's grounded theory. It will be his main source or criticism, constructive critique, and frequently of career rewards. In any case, he has to write to expand his audience beyond the limited number of close colleagues and students. Unless there is a publication, his work will be relegated to limited discussion, classroom presentation, or even private fantasy. The rigor and value of grounded theory work deserves publication. And many analysts have a stake in effecting wider publics, which makes their substantive grounded theory *count*.

The best form to publish in sociology is through a monograph. The highest rewards, in general, go for writing books, for they probably reach the most diverse publics with the maximum amount of material. Journal articles, of course, run a close second. One solution which many analysts take is to write chapters into articles, while fewer combine chapters into books. We shall mainly focus here on chapter form, which is similar to the article form with minor adjustments.

In this is the final stage of grounded theory methodology, writing is a "write up" of piles of ideas from theoretical sorting. Writing techniques are, perhaps, not as crucial as the techniques characteristic of the previous stages, but they still crucial.

Since writing sums up the preceding work, it cannot be left

[1] Originally published as Chapter 8 in Glaser (1978). Theoretical Sensitivity, Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press, pp. 128-141.

uncontrolled, perhaps to scuttle it. Rather, writing must capture it. It must put into relief the conceptual work and its integration into a theoretical explanation. So very often in qualitative research, the theory is left implicit in the write-up as the analyst gets caught up in the richness of the data.

Below we shall discuss the logic of construction, of shape and of conceptual style of a monograph and a chapter. Then we discuss the reworking of initial drafts, in order to sharpen the shape and style. We briefly indicate our view of uses of the literature, and close with recommendations for the analyst's theoretical pacing.

It must be underlined that the write-up of sorts is a theory of a core variable which freezes the on-going for the moment. It is unfortunate, perhaps, that writing has this "slice of reality" character. We have covered this problem as best as possible by using concepts and processes that have duration and are independent of time and place. We also construct a theory that is readily modifiable. The analyst should underscore these points in his writing, because his writing probably will be read mainly as a fixed conceptual description, not explanation, by most readers. We are in essence stuck with this paradox.

Logic of Construction

Typically sociological monographs are constructed on the basis of a "little logic." It is the main building idea of the book, hence the ensuing chapters. The little logic usually consists of no more than a paragraph or two, and often just one long sentence. In monographs it may be stated as an interest, a general idea, a logical derivation, a hypothesis, a finding to be explored, an explanation, a statement of purpose and so forth. In our case the little logic states that the core variable explains a large amount of the variation in a behavior or set of behaviors. For example, in *Awareness of Dying*, we stated that awareness contexts account for much of the behavior around a dying patient in the hospital.

These little logics are found in the preface, introduction, editor's note (when the author does not state it) or appendix. Separate little logics may introduce each chapter, based on the build up of the book. Or they may end a chapter to set up the reason for the coming chapter. Sometimes each chapter further refines the logic.

Implied in the little logic of monographs are many aspects and assumptions of its construction. It implies whether the study will be descriptive, verificational or focus on theory generation. The little logic for a grounded theory monograph must clearly reflect its generative intent. It also should imply the book's methodology, the book's unity as a whole and its level of conceptualization. It brings out the model for its integration; such as in a grounded theory book, we state that the core variable will explain a behavior, implying that it will be written this way as its purpose. The little logic also brings out the unsolved question or problem with its necessary dissonance, which will interest the reader in finding out how the BSP [basic social process] will process or resolve it. The little logic can be substantively coded or theoretically coded, but is usually the former with the latter implied.

In most monographs, we usually find one little logic and sometimes two or none at all. A single one is all that is needed in grounded theory, for it is based on a core variable analysis. Books without any wander all over and books with two, as noted earlier, find difficulty in handling both together adequately. The promise implied in the little logic is one criteria by which to judge its success: "Did her pull it off?" as the saying goes. The grounded theorist should be cautious in his promise to the reader. The modesty of his effort, should be underscored, but with no apology.

Some sociologists are noted for using the same little logic for all their monographs and articles. It is usually a general substantive coded one, such as the relationship of professionals to client behavior, or the study of occupational careers, or the organizational effects on political life, and so forth. These authors have one theoretical code which they pursue as their "little logic" in many different studies. In our case the little logic of the study genuinely emerges.

Sometimes an author will overgeneralize his logic and spend much of his time book specifying it. Others will state their logics too specifically and soon transcend and leave them behind. The reader then feels lost in trying to find the book he had been invited to read. In our case, the level of generality of the logic is based on the core category; hence the logic is consistent with the level or conceptualization of the ensuing analysis.

Implied in the above discussion is a basic assumption of

grounded theory. Writing is a careful, systematic "construction job". It does not merely flow from a witty mind, no matter how much wit might help. Readers who wish to write grounded theory should look at several monographs to discover their little logics and their properties. Such experience gives an armamentarium of ideas on how to write a monograph effectively without committing the errors of colleagues. This study is invaluable. It is not to evaluate the substantive or abstract worth of monographs; it is to learn more techniques in the construction of a book. For example, one discovery we and our students have made is that there are a number of authors who write a little logic with minimal awareness of its import. Hence they are not or only slightly constrained in following its implications for the ensuing work. In grounded theory a little logic is written realistically and with awareness so that it can be followed throughout the book.

Shape

In grounded theory we follow the standard shaping of sociologically monographs and chapters or articles. For chapters we being with an introduction which includes first, the general problem, second, the methodology (if appropriate as in an article or introduction to a book) and third, a prose outline of the coming substantive theory for the chapter sections. Then we give the sections. If the chapter is an introduction to a book we close with the outline of the book. If it is a subsequent chapter we close with a transition to the next. We close articles and books with general conclusions. However, we do handle this shaping in somewhat different ways than standard, because of the aim of *putting the substantive theory into relief*.

Introduction: In writing of introductions, there are several forms that we do *not* use. For example, authors often may derive the problem for the book or paper from a general perspective, from a literature search or a general interest, or in some combination of those and with more or less synthesis and comparative work. However, in introductions we derive the problem and core variable from the grounded theory, which has been generated in the research. Existing perspective and literature are only used as supplements of contrasts, if at all.

Our approach to introducing the problem is to use a "funnel down" from a "nature discussion" to introducing the problem. The general, grounded, most relevant properties of the core variable

are discussed, to give the fullest meaning of its general nature. Then from these properties we select those that will be developed in the chapter or paper only one of many properties of a core category. For example, there are several dimensions upon which clients judge the performance of a professional they visit; cost, desire to help, kind of help, pace of their service, kind of clientele, references and so forth. One study focused on the combination of cost and desire to help. The clients weighted whether the client thought the professional was most interested either in helping or in the money. This affected whether or not they returned and referred the doctor to others.[2]

To set out the general nature of the core variable and then funnel it down to a theory on a specific process and problem that is associated with one property of it is very effective. The general meaning of the chapter or paper transcends its specificity, thus putting it in general perspective. Without it the selectivity may lose general meaning, and seemingly refers to a very limited study. It starts to appear unit focused. The "nature" paragraphs may have relevant literature and perspectives woven into them, as we previously said, but only as supplements or contracts, not as sources of derivation. The source of these properties, which establish nature, is their grounding in systematic research.

Once the problem and core variable are "funneled" down to the purpose of the paper or chapter, it is appropriate to state the integrative outline established through the sorting. The outline is written as a cumulative build-up of how the paper will handle the promise of the purpose. More precisely, the outline discusses each section and how they are related to each other. Then the reader knows what he can expect in theory. This promise is fulfillable, since the analyst is merely stating what he has already generated and sorted for writing.

If the analyst has not yet codified his outline, or is not sure of its integration, or indeed finds as he gets into the paper that the outline falls apart, he should write anyway. He should ask himself what he should talk about in order to write the most relevant parts of his theory. Writing can have the consequence of integrating the outline or reintegrating what has fallen apart. It is a good way out of a block in integration. If it does not fully

[2] David Hayes-Baptista: This paper was a Master's thesis at University of California, San Francisco, Sociology Program.

accomplish integration, then rework initial drafts will (discussed below).

The outline paragraph can be written or rewritten at any stage in writing. The analyst can do it first or last. It is a matter of preference. Some analysts prefer, from the beginning, to establish a tight rein on what they will write. It forces them to stick to the sorts. Others will do it last when reworking drafts, after studying what they have done, in terms of their sorts, and resorts as well as perhaps license to add and subtract yet even more material. By their writing, analysts are always outgrowing their previous perspective on the data and some like to leave options open to change the integration.

Once again, it is a worthwhile exercise for the analyst to study tables of contents and chapter outlines in published work in order to develop a grounded perspective on how other authors resolves this step- if they do resolve it- or forget it or fulfill the promise of their outline.

When appropriate, a brief methodology of the chapter can be put in the introduction or relegated to an appendix.

Substantive Sections: The sections, or course, simply follow from the sorts. They render visible the hard work that the analyst has done over many months. Thus, they bring the satisfaction coming from the culmination of the work in a product. In the analyst's pent-up demand is too great to deburden himself of his formulations and to feel the gratification there from, then the substantive sections or chapters can be written before the introduction.

Ending the Paper: We have a special view of ending a written work. First, summaries are not advised. After all, in conceptual work the paper or chapter is in some manner its own summary. Students ask us, "How do I finish the paper? I have written the theory, what else is there to say?" A summary is redundant and an affront to those readers who have actually read the paper, and a "cop out" for those who have not read it, however useful to them. Summaries are usually forced by an editor or brought on by the analyst who does not know how to end his paper.

Writing a conclusion of recommendations can be worthwhile if the theory is relevant for practitioners. Our approach to the ending is to take the core variable, and perhaps a few of those

sub-core variables that worked best, and generate their use and contribution for formal theory in sociology and for other substantive realms in sociology. This can be done relatively easily by brief comparative analysis with data from experience, knowledge and the literature, and by raising the conceptual level.

Thus, it is easy to see the general import of cultivating in a study of the cultivating of housewives by milkmen. Since it is a study of cultivating relationships for family fun and/or recreation such as in marriage ort friendships? Cultivating can be seen as occurring up and down social rank: milkmen cultivate up, doctors often down. Cultivating is a general problem in the service industries and in the professions. And so it goes: it is not difficult to bring out such general implications of the core and subcore variables, which contribute by suggesting other substantive areas of inquiry to broaden the substantive theory as well as suggest the important of generating a formal theory. One can also suggest theory on other aspects of the core variable not dealt with in the paper, but reviewed in the introductory "nature" paragraph. At this point the rigors of grounding can be relieved for conceptual elaborations. We believe that readers find this approach to ending a paper stimulating, and transcending of the substantive content given previously.

It must be noted that the *generalities of the beginning and the end sections to the paper are quite different.* The beginning section is systematically generated properties from research within the substantive area. The end section is generalized properties applicable to other substantive areas and conceptually elaborated through non-research comparisons. Substance of time and place are left behind.

Conceptual Style

One very frequent problem in writing grounded theory is that analysts have trouble in maintaining the conceptual level that they have worked so hard to generate. The dictum is to *write conceptually,* by making theoretical statements about the relationship between concepts, rather than writing descriptive statements about people. Thus, the analyst writes in such a way as to make explicit the dimensions, properties or other theoretical codes of his theory as well as the theoretical integration of these codes.

It is quite easy to slip into excessive description when

illustrating, perhaps because most of us have so much experience in writing descriptively. So, descriptive writing comes naturally, conceptual writing does not. It is even easier when the data is relatively conceptually unanalyzed. The most important thing to remember is to *write about concepts, not people*. Thus, one should write about cultivating or becoming, not milkmen who are cultivating or nurses who are becoming. (See Chapter 6 on distinction between units and process.) Saying this is easier than doing it! If writing momentum is important, then do not worry, write because the concepts can be brought out during the reworking stage. Usually initial drafts are a mix of both conceptual and descriptive levels.

Indicators for the concepts which are descriptive statements are used only for illustration and imagery. They support the concept; they are not the story itself. They help introduce the concept, which can then be carried forward illustration free. Thus, as we said earlier (in Chapter 5) the dosage mix for grounded theory is to minimize illustrations, using them for support purposes, so that the analyst can maximize use of concepts within the allotted space of the paper or chapter. The power of the theory resides in concepts, not in description.

The *credibility* of the theory should be won by its integration, relevance and workability, not by illustration used as if it were proof. The assumption of the reader, he should be advised, is that all concepts are grounded and that this massive grounding effort could not be shown in a writing. *Also that as grounded they are not proven: they are only suggested.* The theory is an integrated set of hypotheses, not of findings. Proofs are not the point. Illustrations are only to establish imagery and understanding as vividly as possible when needed. It is not incumbent upon the analyst to provide the reader with description or information as to how each hypothesis was reached. Stating the method in the beginning or appendix is sufficient, perhaps with an example of how one went about grounding a code and an hypothesis.

As the analyst learns to maintain a conceptual level, he finds that it supports itself by becoming more dense and integrated. As he writes on this level, he should not state in so many words that he will explain some behavior. He should write the explanation of how processes actually process problems, so the reader will see that explanation as such. In short, the analyst should *do* theory, *not tell that he is going to do it.* The latter too easily leads to

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excessive in promise, wastes valuable space, and "cops out" by offering a thin theory. Doing a theory just presents itself as it is: as modestly dense, integrative and explanatory theory.

Temporal distance from the data helps to maintain a conceptual level. Sometimes it is best to wait months, even a year in order to think about the data sufficiently to be able to write conceptually. Letting sorts or memos lie fallow always helps to mature the conceptualization of the data. The analyst simply forgets descriptive details from the field whole his conceptual scope grows. It is easier to be conceptual sooner in secondary analysis of other's data because the analyst never experienced the field where the data was collected, hence is free of the uncollected data that lodged in the field worker's head. [3]

There are a few rules that will help those analysts write who have difficulty in writing. Write as one talks, not as one writes. This makes writing much easier. So does the idea that if one has two things to say, say them one at a time. Write the first draft, with no heed to English construction, so as to focus on the theory construction. The grammar can be edited later in subsequent drafts. As with memos, it should not be allowed to interfere with the ideational out-put. The reader should not underestimate this problem: many an analyst cannot write because of our concern with perfect English. Out first concern must be to put over "good" ideas, which means getting them on paper.

Also, avoid in the substantive sections the use of analogies to bring out concepts and their relationships. While apparently useful, under examination any analogy may prove otherwise. While the current analysis and the analogy (with lots of imagery such as games, drama or machines) may have a few similar characteristics, that is often as far as the comparison goes. The difference in other characteristics between the two undermines the analysis, unless analyzed straight away. This takes unnecessary space and time and prevents a straight forward getting on with the current analysis. For example, in some ways interaction life may be like a drama, but dramas are very different than life. This, other properties of drama cannot be applied to life (such as, "not for keeps", stage lights, curtains, directors, etc.). But the catchy drama analogy can take a lively-

[3] Barney G. Glaser, "The Use of Secondary Analysis by the Independent Researcher," *The American Behavioral Scientist* (1963), p.p. 11-14.

minded reader easily down the wrong line or thought as he starts over-applying drama instead of doing the analysis itself. The reader is then either lost, not thinking correctly, or is forced to analyze his way back to the matter at hand, *if he cares to.*

Reworking

The first draft usually is a delight for the analyst, but also it usually is very rough. All of its defects can only be corrected by reworking the draft. As we said, its aim was to capture the conceptualization and integration of the theory. Like memos, it was not to be burdened or blocked by the requirements of prefect English. Until an analyst is an accomplished writer, one half or more of his creativity typically occurs in reworking his initial draft.

This reworking may take many trips through the work, as the analyst solves a problem at a time. Taking on too many problems at once may prevent doing a good job for each. Writing is a division of labor process, requiring different jobs of English, conceptual and scholarly editing. Needless to say, a general property of the reworking is that as each problem is corrected, the chances are that it is likely to reveal still other previously unnoticed problems and possibilities. This phenomenon does saturate however, or in the alternative the analyst will settle for less than perfection out of exhaustion and growing personal saturation.

There are many standard problems for which to rework the initial draft. They can be seen on two dimensions English and professional (conceptual and scholarly) editing. The latter includes weeding out needless redundancy, clarifications or confused or mixed analysis, trimming and adding illustrations, footnoting, integrating, reintegrating, weeding out unit focus and conceptual style and other needs or sections and subsections. We shall discuss professional editing here with respect to conceptualization and scholarship. English editing can be hired or drafted from among friends.

A basic reworking tactic for conceptualization is "flip-flopping" paragraphs that is making the theoretical statement come first. Most of us, but beginning writers in particular, often write paragraphs that start with the description and work up to the concept and general hypothesis in the last sentence. This comes naturally and also comes from the constant generating

that goes on. For it to be completely a conceptual writing and to bring the conceptualization into relief, what is necessary is to put the last sentence first. Or, "flip-flop" that paragraph by starting with the concept and then illustrating it through it originally grew in reverse. Then the concept is imaged, "out front", emphasized and usable in carry-forwards. The description is trimmed to fit the need of illustrating. The same applies to concepts buried within paragraph if they are the main idea of it.

The carry-forward notion of concepts and the cumulative build-up of the theory are crucial in reworking. To let a concept drop may indicate its lack of relevance. And to not have sections and chapters tied together with theoretical meaning and development is to undercut grounded theory. All methods we have detailed previously to this, especially sorting, have set the writing up for an integrative build-up and the use of relevant concepts. During the reworking, the analyst makes sure these two facets or theory generation are there.

In the heat of writing initial draft, it is easy to not tie sections and chapters together sufficiently. Now the analyst writes and rewrites these transitions. He makes sure of the directions of his explanations and bring into relief why and how each chapter goes in the direction it does. As he reworks he sees clearly that a concept which has been dropped can be working usefully in a forward position to enrich the analysis. And if it has not been used for 100 pages or so perhaps more illustration is warranted. Missing and messed transitions are easy to spot, with the perspective of a second or third trip through the writing. This polishing can be immensely gratifying.

Lastly, it is sometimes useful during reworking to submit work to colleagues for opinions and critique. If this is too traumatic, the usefulness is neutralized. The analyst should be wary and submit to only those colleagues with sensitivity enough to be appreciative, delicate in suggestion, and knowledgeable enough to understand and give positive and possible suggestions, to the reworking.

Submitting drafts to journals is a good source of evaluations from the outside world or unchosen readers. It is an excellent source of material for reworking to solve problems that derail the professional and layman public who do not know the meanings familiar to and often assumed as general by the grounded

theorist. There is as yet no standardized sociology with respect to either method of paradigm. This freedom to do different kinds of sociology is a strength of our field and spawns growth in many directions. But it also forces accommodations to make grounded theory accessible to other sociologists with training in different methods and theorizing. Their critique should be seen in such light, not as "dumb", "deprecating", or "outrageous".

Footnoting the Literature

One important aspect of reworking drafts is to integrate the generated theory into the existing literature through the use of footnotes. The key to this task is the analyst's attitude toward the existing literature. His attitude should note be one adumbration, volume or reverence. It should be one of carefully weaving his theory into its place in the literature.

To "adumbrate" is for the analyst to find in the literature an idea he has generated, especially in the literature of a great man. It is amazing how many authors try to find their best ideas in previous work in order to legitimate using it, as borrowed or derived as if they could not be allowed to generate it on their own. The proper attitude is simply to accept having discovered ideas. There are so many in grounded theory work! And if the analyst discovers that one of his many ideas has already been used elsewhere, the proper attitude is "he (the other author) discovered it too," as might any theoretically sensitive analyst in dealing with the same or similar data. The essential point to remember is that the discovered idea is relevant because of its connections to other variables which make up a theory which accounts for variation in a pattern of behavior. And the analyst will almost never find this relevance associated with the concept as it was used previously! Thus, his contribution remains truly original, since the crucial issue is- a multivariate, grounded theory that works.

Many a scholar, theorist or empirical research worker will voluminously footnote ever piece of possibly related literature. The footnotes seem like a reading list or an extensive bibliography.[4] There are far too many to integrate meaningfully. Interestingly enough when, in theoretical writings, one studies

[4] Robert K. Merton: *Social Theory and Social Structure* (Glencoe, Free Press, 1949) and Neil Sidser, *Collective Behavior* (New York Free Press of Glencoe, 1963).

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these footnotes carefully, one usually discovers that nothing is referred to that might detract from the originality of the citing author. This is so even when well known related, relevant works are overlooked by the theorist, perhaps purposefully, so as not to threaten his creativity. Thus, much necessary integrated placement of these theoretical works is missing. This non-integrative approach cannot fail to hinder the growth of theory.

Reverential, commemorative, and referral footnotes are fine, as long as they do not take precedence over the generated theory. They go hand and hand with integrative placement of the grounded theory. There is no magic about a theory in print before the analyst's writing just because it already occurred that warrants undue reverence. Soon the analyst also, will be in print and his ideas will be used. Thus, reverence and commemoration should be moderate based on what the idea from the literature truly contributes to the big picture, just as the analyst uses ideas for his own theory. Idolization of "great men" should be replaced with the attitude "He too was working with these ideas." In addition, there should be implication that the current idea was derived from a previous author's, merely to legitimate the idea. In our research ideas are discovered on their own or emergently fit. Clearly reverential derivations are farthest from our methodological position.

These efforts should be as short as possible so as not to derail a reader who stops to see the footnote. A reader will also be less likely to miss footnotes, because they are brief, since he can see at a glance that his reading will barely be slowed. Footnotes that require length can be put at the end of the chapter as annotated references. Even longer requirements can result in another article.

Obviously this kind of footnoting takes analytical work: it is not easy. But it is done just as the analyst does his grounded theory: he compares, generates, memos, sorts and writes-up the ideas for the footnote.

Theoretical Pacing

It is appropriate to close this chapter by referring to many of the properties detailed in Chapter 2 [of **Theoretical Sensitivity**] on theoretical pacing as the apply in writing. The theoretical pacing of reading, talk, deadlines, respites, collaboration and personal growth, become very relevant during

writing.

Reading: We have said that during data collection, coding, memos, and sorting of memos, the analyst should read in other fields so as not to preempt his thought regarding the significant variables in the substantive area under research. The analyst should continue this rule throughout the initial draft, if his sorting has not reached a firm integration. This maximizes on another dimension the emergence of his theory.

But when he starts reworking his draft he should make a concerted effort to cover as much literature as possible in the same area in which he is writing his theory. Now the job is to compare his work to others and weave it into its place in the pertinent theoretical and substantive literature. It also sensitizes the analyst to reworking his theory to the best advantage, as he studies how others are theorizing in the field. As noted above, integrative placement of ideas by supplementing, extending, and transcending other' work is the issue, not their preemption of his ideas.

It is a travesty not to do this scholarly aspect of grounded theory for sociology, though some analysts do not because of their personal saturation. Just because grounded theory has emerged and can stand on its own, does not mean it should be left to isolation or only for the consumption of laymen interested in the area. It should contribute more explicitly to the "bigger enterprise" in some way. If theoretical and substantive literature is sparse, as it has been for some of our own studies, hopefully it starts a literature to which others can contribute.

Talk: As in doing codes and memos, the analyst should avoid talking about the ideas he is writing. At best, talk is interrupting and distractive. At worst it gives away ideas before writing by releasing the energy behind them which can easily be followed by forgetting them or feeling no need to write them up. Also others can derail or block even the most careful writing up of sorts. Once the analyst is deep in the writing mode, he should stay there undistracted. There is plenty of time during reworking to discuss ideas for critique, clarification and polishing after the initial draft. At this point they are down on paper so they cannot get lost or blocked. The initial draft can always be changed, it if is written. But we have seen too many drafts get blocked or prematurely changed or closed off, by a too soon critique of ideas

by a trusted colleague, who has little notion of the interrupting effect of his ideas through connections to other codes that he is unaware of.

Collaboration: A carefully applied exception to the rule on talk is to seminar with a collaborator who is stimulating rather than draining. Again, when writing, the analyst must be careful because of possible blockage, derailment, and/or drain from even this trusted, respected source. There is really no reason why collaborators cannot also wait to talk during reworking, once they know which parts of the integrative outline they will write up.

Collaboration is very useful in reworking, because it saves much time. An analyst may have to wait a month or two, to be able to rework his draft with sufficient freshness. While a collaborator can start reworking it the next day, since for him, the initial draft is fresh (not having written it). When collaborators trust each other with reworking of their final drafts, then writing proceeds very fast. When they do not trust, they can destroy each other. [5]

Collaborators who are out of "sync" with each other's pacing should be patient in waiting for the other to be ready to talk. Demanding talk can be damaging to the work and the collaboration. It may force premature closure of the writing of one collaborator, when the other's judgement is valued.

By the same token to demand talk of a personally saturated colleague who can not say one more work about the project is to be avoided. At this point the collaboration is either over for the moment or completely.

Deadline: Our goal in preventing talk and showing one's work before the initial draft is to maximize the energy behind productivity and minimize those circumstances which so often short circuit it. Helpful along these lines is the analytic rule of giving oneself the shortest possible deadline for the initial draft. This pressure prevents wasting time on premature showing and talk. And it gives the analyst an expectation to himself and others as to when he can show his work. A deadline is strength inducing to ward off these and other typical foibles of writing. It prevents drift, evasion and over elaboration of the theory. It generates

[5] Warren O. Hagstrom, *The Scientific Community* (New York: Basic Books, 1965) Chapters 11 through 15.

focus, perseverance and closure.

A deadline should include the possibility of respites consistent with the analyst's personal pacing recipe. Otherwise the work may become a drudge that undercuts the richness of the writing. The deadline and respites should be synchronized both with the analyst's personal pacing and the natural pace of the work. Respites occur best after semi-closures, such a finishing a section or sub-section.

Outgrowing the material: From the outset grounded theory work is a growing experience both personally and with theoretical understanding of the data. Writing further grows the analyst with respect to maturity with his data, and fortunately, knowing far more than he is capable of getting on paper. The sheer fact of writing a paragraph, quite often, yields insights that put the analyst beyond it. This outgrowing of one's material can be disconcerting and even undermining of the final writing of the theory. In grounded theory work the analyst must realize that *writing is but a slice or a growing theory*.

The analyst, who feels that he cannot finish writing because he can never begin to tell what he knows, should just accept this fact and finish as sorted and planned. He can never outstrip his own constant growing, no matter how much he writes. His writing will always spawn growth and yield more to say. He cannot overload his work and break his integrative outline- thus, he must accept that although he knows more and better, his reader, knowing less, can greatly benefit by whatever the analyst does write. It will be "news" to the reader, even if "old hat" to the analyst. Others will respond to the richness of the dense grounded theory, while the analyst may feel he had only begun and that it is "sort of thin."

It is a tribute to grounded theory that it maximizes this outgrowing of one's theoretical material. The reduction, natural high and relief from closure on what theory he has written, usually outweighs the nagging realization, that much more could be said. Yet some analysts still are blocked by the "puniness" of writing compared to what they really "could tell."

Other qualitative methods leave much theory implicit and underdeveloped, because they do not allow for much generating, strategies of coding, sorting, memoing and integrating. These likely will leave the theoretically inclined researcher with an even

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worse feeling that much has been undone and left out, since he has not at least integrated a fledgling theory that fits and works.

The point is to publish this "slice" of a growing theory so others can get to this point and also use it and grow with the theory. The differential perceptions of the reader and the writer do not redound against the writer. He will be applauded for what he did, not what he knows he did not do. What he did not have room to set down can be covered in other papers or books and can be suggested to others as future research leads. What is arbitrary about writing and publishing a substantive theory is more than compensated for the contribution of the grounded theory methodology by which the theory was generated.

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Marketing for Acceptance

Tina L. Johnston, Ph.D.

Abstract

Becoming a researcher comes with the credentializing pressure to publish articles in peer-reviewed journals (Glaser, 1992; Glaser, 2007; Glaser, 2008). The work intensive process is exacerbated when the author's research method is grounded theory. This study investigated the concerns of early and experienced grounded theorists to discover how they worked towards publishing research projects that applied grounded theory as a methodology. The result was a grounded theory of marketing for acceptance that provides the reader with insight into ways that classic grounded theorists have published their works. This is followed by a discussion of ideas for normalizing classic grounded theory research methods in our substantive fields.

Introduction

Publish or perish is an often quoted phrase in academia aptly describing the pressure put on scholars to produce and get research articles through the journal review process and into content area publications so that new knowledge can be shared throughout the reading populous in their field of study (Vernier, 1994). Submission processes are much the same (although blinding policies may differ). An author writes an article, finds an appropriate journal in which to submit the article for peer-review and then waits for a response from a few volunteering reviewers who will choose to accept, ask for revisions or reject the article for publication (Groves, 2006; O'Gorman, 2008). Regardless of the debate as to the general efficacy of this method, it is the one in place (Groves, 2005; Winkler, 2009; Lee, 2006). Like any researcher, the Grounded Theory author must pursue publication in this way. There are complications that arise when writing and submitting classic grounded theory (hereafter CGT) articles for publication. CGT research methods and articles have different structures than others (Glaser, 1978; 2006). In addition, there are many derivatives of grounded theory methodologies (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007; Glaser, 1992b; Chen & Boore, 2009).

When reviewers volunteer at various journals they are asked

to provide topical and methodological expertise by filling out surveys where they check of boxes in which they feel they have expertise. In these lists, very often grounded theory is one of those choices, however, what kind of grounded theory the reviewer is familiar with or even whether that reviewer has a real understanding of the method is not insured. To further complicate matters these journals may publish standard formatting requirements that do not match the standard format of CGT papers.

The Problem

The problem then is two-fold; users of CGT are under the same pressures as their colleagues to publish studies, yet the journals and reviewers in their field are often inhospitable or ignorant of the intricacies of papers written using the CGT method. Additionally, the 'Grounded Theory' articles that do get through to publication in many content area journals have either used some other form of grounded theory (i.e., Qualitative Grounded Theory, or the Strauss and Corbin method) or are claiming to use the method but instead have applied certain aspects or jargon from the method (Glaser, 2009) in combination with other often qualitative research methods such as case study or ethnography. The prevalence of these 'other' grounded theory articles set reviewers expectations of what the grounded theory methodology is and what studies that use grounded theory should look like. These expectations cast a shadow on CGT article submissions.

Methodology

This research study employed the use of classic grounded theory (Strauss and Glaser, 1968; Glaser, 1978, 1992, 1992b). Using data in the form of reviewers' comments to CGT authors who published Grounded Theory articles and interviews with CGT authors, this theory of *marketing for publication* was discovered over a period of three years.

The author collected memos/notes following incidents of data collection and line by line analysis of data. Every time a new memo was collected the previously collected memos were read and sorted seeking a main concern and patterns of behavior to resolve that main concern. In this case a main concern was quickly realized, however the details (causes of the difficulty in publishing CGT articles) came after much of the theory was

discovered. A working paper was written and presented at the 2007 Grounded Theory Seminar in New York. This presentation provided the author with additional subject volunteers who sent publication reviews and provided interview data for the author.

A final data set was collected from the grounded theory literature by conducting a search of a random collection of published articles by searching library databases for 'grounded theory' as a keyword. Seeking examples of grounded theory articles to scan for the type of grounded theory used. Articles were then scanned for references to classic grounded theory or references to Glaser and then read for article format and interpretation of grounded theory methodology. If open reviews or article iterations were available these were read.

Marketing for Publication

As the early career grounded theorist commences with paper submissions to the various journals in his/her field invariably he or she receives rejection or revise and resubmit notices. Scrutiny of these notices may reflect a variety of non-methodological suggestions for improvement of the articles (general style or content concerns) while others suggest that the reviewer has misconceptions of or a lack of knowledge of the classic grounded theory method. These voids of knowledge lead to unfair criticisms and ultimate rejection of articles.

> Most reviewers, and [editors name], expressed significant concerns with the conceptual framework for the study, the literature review, the methodology, data collection and analysis, as well as the paper's structure. These concerns have resulted in our decision to reject the manuscript.

The rejecting journal reviewers may suggest that all articles should be formatted to include, a section for the problem, a theoretical framework, literature review, analysis, results and discussion sections. Some receive reviews suggesting that there is not enough detail in the data, documentation of data, or attention to the literature, or they are criticized for poor sampling techniques.

Once rejected, the classic grounded theorist begins to be more strategic in his/her writing and submission process. This process, termed *marketing for acceptance*, may include both

changes in the article's content and/or a focus on article placement. The changes to the article may include method masking, qualitizing, and methodological redefinition. While the article placement strategies include piggy-backing and strategic submitting.

Method Masking

Method masking occurs when the researcher, in order to make his/her study more marketable must compromise on many aspects of the method. He or she may feel compelled to write the article to match deductive formatting requirements out of pressure to apply a theoretical framework or literature review. Reliability and validity measures are detailed and sampling and interview questions described (Swanburg, et. al, 2009). Under these clearly mismatched pressures towards confirmatory research paradigms, the researcher may feel compelled to gain acceptance by minimizing the discussion of grounded theory in the research process or eliminating it all together by going back to the data and using another method but with a view to their completed grounded theory results.

Qualitizing

Qualitizing occurs when the early researcher seeks to adapt an article to journals that report qualitative studies. Grounded theory, in general, seems to have had a better reception among Qualitative researchers and therefore to reviewers of journals that focus on these types of studies. Grounded theory researchers may adapt their article for this type of publication by increasing the number of illustrations included in their article submission or by increasing the overall details of the study and its results. Qualitizing is characterized by a shift from a focus on the overall patterns and those patterns application to thick description of the substantive area.

> A reviewer liked the work but questioned whether I needed to give much attention to the method. In her view I was explaining something that is common practice (not a distinct method). Another person took issue with my limited attention to certain literature. A third wanted more examples and also took issue with the notion that I was presenting a theory (another common resistance). I stuck with the reviewers and tried to balance their comments and create something I could live with…There

> is more description, but I think I was able to convey some key elements of the work.

Methodological Redefinition

Methodological redefinition is a very common phenomenon among grounded theory studies published in the research literature. The author of a grounded theory article may suggest that grounded theory is a data sorting method, a qualitative analysis method, or a method that can be attributed to Dr. Glaser, Strauss and Corbin, and Charmaz in tandem (Hunt et. al, 2009; McGlachlan, 2009). The extent to which these authors are displaying misunderstanding of the various grounded theory methodologies or represent a strategic display of the grounded theory literature is unknown.

Piggy Backing

A grounded theory researcher may piggyback their grounded theory study with another deductive study. This piggyback study uses the authors initial grounded theory study as a theoretical framework for the new deductive study (Calvin, 2004; Calvin & Erikson, 2006). This method provides the researcher with an opportunity to gain exposure for their theory while submitting to a journal that may require a non-compatible article organization, or narrowly defines the types of articles it will print (i.e. quantitative studies etc.)

Strategic Submitting

The grounded theory author may submit a classic grounded theory article to the methodological journal that currently accepts and prints CGT research. *The Grounded Theory Review* is a peer-reviewed journal that was created explicitly for this purpose. However in author's substantive area, articles have been targeted to journals that are grounded theory friendly, that is they may allow generous word limits for explaining grounded theories unique reporting components and organization or have open review processes (Sandgren, et. al, 2007; Thulesius & Grahn, 2007). These journals may have a track record of including classic grounded theory articles (such as many of those in nursing fields). The author's findings might be so well matched to the substantive area that these results overshadow any objections that may be made to the methodology in other words the study results have grab (Glaser, 1992).

Discussion

The results from this study indicate that authors do find some difficulty in publishing CGT articles and employ a variety of strategies to garner the publications that are so important to advancing one's early career in academia. Using interview data and published examples of articles labeled to have used classic grounded theory methodology indicates that the authors employ strategies of *marketing for publication in* their quest to garner publications to further their careers. These strategies included *method masking*, *qualitizing*, *methodological redefinition*, *piggy-backing*, and *strategic submitting*. These strategies are not employed in any order but in their variety suggest some problems and solutions for classic grounded theorists as they too pursue publication opportunities.

Normalizing Classic Grounded Theory

Within many substantive fields of research there is a great need for CGT to become more a part of the research culture. Some of the strategic marketing strategies discussed in this article impede this process as they perpetuate a culture of methodological misunderstanding while others work towards this goal. This need is two-fold: one, to share the method itself so that others can experience the power of theory development, and, two, the focus of this paper, is to increase the literary exposure of classic GT results into all fields of research. The author and discussions with other grounded theorists suggests there are some things we can do to aide in the normalizing process.

Becoming a Reviewer

The collected reviews of article submissions suggest there is a need for more reviewers with expertise in evaluating classic grounded theory articles. If we want our article submissions to be read by competent grounded theorists we must be willing to provide that service to our discipline colleagues who also use classic grounded theory. Increasing the number of reviewers will increase the acceptance rate of submissions and increase the visibility of method through print.

Train New Grounded Theory Researchers

In developing grounded theory seminars Dr. Glaser has build a foundation of knowledgeable classic grounded theorists around

the world. These growing bodies of experts are beginning to train new users of grounded theory. If this process continues to grow more and more researchers will have expertise in classic grounded theory, they will write about their substantive area, become reviewers themselves and again both the method itself and the opportunities of exposure through print will increase.

Conclusion

Cleary the results of this study indicate that there is still much progress to be made in publishing studies that use this more than 40 year old method of theory development. Still, there is also clear progress as is evidenced by the growing popularity of grounded theory institutes, *The Grounded Theory Review* and the diversity of disciplines represented by the novice to expert classic grounded theorists (Glaser, 1978; Glaser, 2007). It is hoped that this article will further assist in normalizing classic grounded theory across disciplines and inspire grounded theorists to both become grounded theory reviewers in their content fields and submit positive examples of studies that employ the use of the method.

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The Hook: Getting your grounded theory research published[1]

Phyllis Noerager Stern, DNS, LLD (hon.), FAAN

I learned about the hook as a fledgling writer back in the late 70's, and early 80s. I wrote about stepfamilies when almost nobody else did (Stern, 1978, 1982a, 1982b). My big break came when I published an English-language version on how to do grounded theory. In my field, nursing, grounded theory was the buzz word of the day, but few nurses had a sociological background, and thus the vocabulary to be able to understand the Glaser and Straus description (Stern, 1980). That article kick started my career as a writer and researcher. There was a time when it was required reading for graduate students in nursing around the world. Twenty-nine years after its publication, I got a request for a reprint from a doctoral student in New Zealand. What the hook consists of then is timing, a subject that has impact, and a title that sparks the interest of a potential reader. A classic example of all three is The Discovery of Grounded Theory (Glaser and Straus, 1967), a then new approach to sociological research. Sociologists were interested, but as the authors were based at the University of California, San Francisco School of Nursing, they had an eager audience in the nursing community who were looking for a research method to formalize what they did as nurses.

From the point of view of a writer of articles and an editor, (19 years as Editor in Chief of the interdisciplinary journal, Health Care for Women International), I have a seasoned eye for what editors and reviewers are looking for: good science, of course, fluid writing, no doubt about it, a fresh look at a familiar problem, you bet, but there's something else they want—the hook. They want articles that make their journals the go-to for the new black. What follows pertains to articles in refereed journals.

[1]This article in an expanded and modified form will appear in the forthcoming book, *Accessible grounded theory: A beginner's handbook.* Authors, Phyllis Stern and Caroline Porr

Selecting the Right Journal

Most scientific journals have an on-line version which you can access through a university library. Get familiar with a variety of journals, and see where your work might fit. If the editors have just published a special issue on Asian dating patterns, likely they're full up with that subject. Some editors like to work with new authors to get them up to speed. As an editor I was fond of helping the next generation launch their careers. Other editors have other goals, but being an editor allows one to form intimate relationships with authors.

The Title

The title needs to be worded in a way that other researchers doing a computer search will relate to, but that's no reason it can't be catchy too. As an example, "Discovery of nursing gestalt in critical care nursing: The importance of the gray gorilla syndrome", (Pyles and Stern, 1983) got a fair amount of attention, as did "The troubleshooter's guide to media" (Harris, Stern & Paris, 1986). "Method slurring: the grounded theory/ phenomenology example" crossed discipline lines, (Baker, Wuest and Stern, 1992) as did the book chapter, "Eroding Grounded Theory" (Stern, 1994). In 1972, at the suggestion of the professor, June Abby, I submitted a physiology term paper to The American Journal of Nursing, and it was accepted. I consider the title I chose, "APA: Insidious foe of an aging Swede." to be clever, but unclear (Stern, 1972). It was a case study of my father who developed Addison's pernicious anemia, the symptoms of which, loss of appetite, loss of energy, depression, his physician attributed to the aging process. I figured Dad was anemic, and finally got him appropriate treatment. The trouble with that title was that a potential reader would have to know that APA stood for a type of anemia rather than The American Psychological Association. But Freda Rebelsky, a professor of Psychology at Boston University did know, and used a portion of the article to illustrate how often treatable chronic illnesses in the elderly go undetected (Rebelsky, 1975). How she found the article in a nursing journal in a time prior to the World Wide Web is beyond my kin.

The Abstract

It's fairly common in computer searches for a student or

author to limit the search to abstract only; for this reason it's important to describe the essence of your grounded theory in the abstract. When you're limited to 100 words, say, this is no easy task, but a necessary one—it may mean deleting that perfect phrase you started with, but following the rules is one path to getting published. Ignoring the journal's publication guidelines makes editors and reviewers irritated, to the point that manuscripts can be rejected out-of-hand. Over the years researchers have put their own spin on the original grounded theory method (Morse, Stern, Corbin, Bowers, Charmaz, & Clarke, 2009), while I've stuck with classical grounded theory—which I call Glaserian after Barney Glaser, as opposed to Strausian, after Anselm Straus (Stern, 1994, Artinian, Giske, & Cone, 2009)—it's important to make this clear at the outset, so the reader gets the in the appropriate frame of mind.

Body of the Paper

Introductory paragraph. I'm a staunch supporter of the well-phrased introductory paragraph, a hook to catch the reader's attention. This overture sets the tone of the paper, and gives the reader some guidance as to where you're going with this work. Avoid a repeat of the abstract; you already said that.

Writing style. I learned to polish my writing style by reading articles in The New Yorker magazine. I admire the way science writers can explain a complicated subject so that even I can understand, and that's what I've tried to do—if the reader fails to understand your theory, she or he fails to pass it along, or to use it. Reading poetry has helped me develop rhythm in my writing. Editors tell me I have a recognizable voice, a pattern that readers can identify as mine. I think this is true; some of my work has become public domain, and when I read it (sans citation) I know, "Hey, I wrote that!"

Everything is a draft. Barney Glaser's advice to his students was, "Consider everything a draft," and, "The best writing is in the re-writing." (Glaser, personal communication, 1974). This recommendation is particularly useful when your submission comes back with myriad suggestions from reviewers. It's helpful to remember that reviewers are school teachers, and they think they're not doing their job if they don't make corrections. Not that I take their advice calmly; my reaction tends to bring forth a string of four-letter words followed by the epithet, "stupid jerks!"

My advice is to put the paper aside, pour a stiff drink, put your feet up, and watch television. By the time you get back to the task of writing up the theory so that even they can understand, you may be less emotionally involved (Stern, 1997). Often in a calmer state, the advice of reviewers makes sense. Maybe you have a longer fuse than I, and can get right on with the re-writing. In any case, don't take no for an answer! Some of my best stuff took three rewrites before I got an acceptance (Stern & Kerry, 1996).

Conclusion. Some authors confuse the conclusion with a summary. A summary is a summary, a conclusion is something else. As an editor, I often asked an author of an otherwise publishable paper, "How will your work save the world?" An article is a selling job and the conclusion tells the reader how it can be useful; it sells is your work. This is no time to be timid; this is a time for the crescendo, the closing act, the big kahuna!

Getting Hooked

"I coulda' been somebody, instead of a bum, which is what I am." Marlin Brando in *On the Waterfront*. (Spiegel, 1954). Seeing your work in print makes you feel like a somebody. American published articles are catalogued in The United States Library of Congress, and other countries have similar depositaries. Being published is a way of gaining eternity. It's a way of getting hooked. People remember where they were when a major historical event occurs. I remember where I was when my first article was accepted (Stern, 1972). My husband and I went to see the movie version of *Fiddler on the Roof* (Prince, 1971). I was too excited to follow the plot line, and to this day, I have only a vague idea of what the film was about. In 1980, I was supervising a group of student nurses at Saint Luke hospital in San Francisco when I got a call from Nell Watts, then Chief Executive Officer of Sigma Theta Tau, the honor society of nursing which publishes Image: *The Journal of Nursing Scholarship*, a respected research journal. Nell wanted to know if I could turn around a few changes to an article I had submitted by overnight mail (this was before fax and electronic mail). Of course I could—I was thrilled. This was the big time, this was Broadway! After the clinical tour was finished, I drove home along the coast, and stopped off at Fort Point. I needed to walk off my drugless high. The Point has updrafts skydivers like, and they were out in force: all bright colors and waving to me. It's the closest I expect to get to Nirvana. I was hooked. I have celebrated my 84th birthday, I

have one arthritic hand, and the other partially paralyzed due to a dislocated shoulder making keyboarding awkward, but the thrill is still there.

Writing is hard, lonely, work, but your research is complete only when it is published. Come get high with me. Get hooked.

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Qualitative Tussles in Undertaking a Grounded Theory Study[1]

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Abstract

Those who've been trained to regard grounded theory as a qualitative research method frequently struggle to 'unlearn' qualitative data analysis dicta when undertaking a classic grounded theory study. A plethora of research methods texts that support this notion of grounded theory as a qualitative method are primarily responsible for the ensuing confusion. Further supporting this popular misconception are many papers published in leading academic journals and all too often the pressuring advice of thesis supervisors. This paper addresses specifically two issues that can create frustrating tussles for novice grounded theorists, especially in challenging such 'authoritative' perspectives: avoiding preconception and transcending descriptive detail. In addressing these persistent tussles, the reader is reminded of the fundamental distinction of grounded theory as a methodology for the emergent discovery of conceptually abstract theory from empirical data.

Preconception

To remain truly open to the emergence of theory is among the most challenging issues confronting those new to grounded theory. As a generative and emergent methodology, grounded theory requires the researcher to enter the research field with no preconceived problem statement, interview protocols, or extensive review of literature. Instead, the researcher remains open to exploring a substantive area and allowing the concerns of those actively engaged therein to guide the emergence of a core issue. The conceptualization of this main concern and the multivariate responses to its continual resolution emerge as a latent pattern of social behaviour that forms the basis for the articulation of a

[1] Much of this paper is extracted from Holton, J. A. (2007). The coding process and its challenges. In A. Bryant, & K. Charmaz (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of grounded theory.* (pp. 265-289). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

grounded theory. Remaining open to discovering what is really going on in the field of inquiry is often blocked, however, by what Glaser (1998) refers to as the forcing of preconceived notions resident within the researcher's worldview, an initial professional problem or an extant theory and framework; all of which pre-empt the researcher's ability to suspend preconception and allow for what will emerge conceptually by constant comparative analysis.

One of the dominant preconceptions regarding grounded theory is the frequent attribution of its 'roots' to symbolic interactionism (Clarke, 2005; Goulding, 2002; Locke, 2001). Glaser (2005) has written at length on the impact of this 'takeover' (p. 141). While not discounting the influence of symbolic interactionism in the contribution of Anselm Strauss as co-originator of the methodology, to attribute grounded theory's origins thereto ignores the fundamental influence of Barney Glaser's training in quantitative methodology at Columbia University. As Martin (2006) suggests, 'It is really the analytic techniques out of Columbia, through Glaser, that gave qualitative researchers tools for systematic analysis' (p. 122). Pre-framing grounded theory through the theoretical lens of symbolic interactionism precludes other perspectives, pre-determines what data are used and how these should be collected, and limits the analyst's creativity in the analysis and conceptual abstraction of the data under study. This is not to suggest that classic grounded theory is free of any theoretical lens but rather that it should not be confined to any one lens; that as a general methodology, classic grounded theory can adopt any epistemological perspective appropriate to the data and the ontological stance of the researcher (Holton, 2008).

Concerns that arise through the researcher's professional training and experience often stimulate the initial research interest and can provide the motivation for pursuing a study. However, when the practitioner turns researcher, she carries into the field her own espoused values and accumulated experience and with this often comes the need to know in advance, to prescribe at the outset how the research should be framed, who should be engaged, and what outcomes should be anticipated. This instinctual practitioner perspective is, as well, frequently augmented by the structuring dictates of predominant research paradigms which call for the articulation of explicit theoretical

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frameworks in advance of fieldwork or analysis (Partington, 2002, pp.138-142).

Clarke's (1997, 2005) privileging of context as an essential consideration in the framing and analysis of a grounded theory study is another forceful example of preconception. Presuming the significance, indeed the centrality, of context as she does is merely forcing a preferred theoretical framework (what Glaser, 2005, calls a 'pet theoretical code') on a study from the outset. While accepting Madill, Jordan, and Shirley's (2000) contention that grounded theory may be applied within a contextualist epistemology (p. 10), for a classic grounded theorist context is merely another variable; thus, contextualizing meaning may or may not be relevant for a theory's explanation of how a main concern is continually resolved (Glaser, 2004). If it is relevant, it will emerge through the coding and constant comparison of conceptual indicators in the data. The relevance of context, like any other variable, must be earned in the emergent theory; it is not determined in advance by the analyst calling upon extant theoretical frameworks.

Marshall and Rossman (1999) offer 'analyst-constructed typologies', 'logical reasoning', and 'matrix-format cross-classifications' as strategies for data analysis (pp. 154-155). They do at least note Patton's (2002, pp.469-470) caution to be wary of the potential for such devices to manipulate the data through its forcing into artificial structures. A classic grounded theorist would echo this same caution. Marshall, however, appears not to have heeded this caution in her use of preconceived 'conceptual levers' (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, pp.148-149) in the data management for her own dissertation. Here she describes her use of role strain theory (Goode, 1960), sourced through her literature review, as a framework for analysing her data. While stating that she has employed 'constant comparative data analysis' (p. 149) to develop a grounded theory of women's socialization in male sex-typed careers, the classic grounded theorist is left wondering what the real concern of the women under study might have been and how they handled this concern. It is quite conceivable that the real concern of the women in Marshall's study may have had nothing to do with 'feminine identity and sexuality crises prompted by the demands of working in a male-normed profession' (p. 149). Their main concern may have been finding flexible child care services to accommodate unpredictable work

schedules, finding time and opportunities to network, or structuring continuing professional development opportunities into an already over-subscribed life. Of course, it is impossible for us to know what their main concern may have been as Marshall's preconceived professional concern constrained the potential for the participants' main concern to emerge. Glaser (1978) offered the example of a sociologist's preconceiving a study of prostitution as a study of deviance when, from the perspective of the prostitutes under study, the main concern could be effective client servicing, a concern that would align them more appropriately with other service sectors: barbers, hair salons, auto repair, etc. Deviance as a dimension of prostitution would therefore have to earn its way into the emergent theory rather than being presumed from the outset (pp. 104-105).

The preconceiving practices of traditional training in qualitative research methodology that condition the researcher to know in advance, can unwittingly condition the researcher to seeing new data through received concepts. In Konecki (1997), we see the impact of another preconceived theoretical framework: the conditional matrix (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Konecki's interest in exploring the conditions for effective work by professional recruiters ('head hunters') has produced a solid piece of qualitative research; however, despite references to having produced a grounded theory, the study falls short of that goal. There is, of course, some possibility that the main concern of the recruiters may have focused on the effectiveness of their work and the time to find appropriate candidates, as Konecki's study suggests, but it is also quite possible that the core category of an emergent grounded theory may have been entirely unanticipated by his preconceived, discipline-bound perspective. It is this capacity for the emergence of tacit yet previously unarticulated explanations of social behaviour that delights the classic grounded theorist and motivates the effort to work at setting aside derailing preconceptions in undertaking a study.

Partington (2002) offers us another example of a preconceived theoretical framework imposed on an effort at grounded theory. His theoretical code of choice is Strauss and Corbin's (1990) 'paradigm model' which he simplifies to a mechanistic 'stimulus → organism → response →' framework and suggests its general utility for management research. In another guide to grounded theory for management, business, and

marketing research, Goulding (2002) suggests Schatzman's (1991) dimensional analysis as an alternative approach to theorizing (pp. 79-83). What she really offers, however, is yet another preconceived theoretical framework to be forced upon the data. Later in her guide, Goulding cautions the reader that using grounded theory can be 'risky!' but advises that '[t]hese risks are of lesser concern for researchers who define their boundaries to begin with, explore the literature fully, identify key research questions, and collect data to answer them' (p. 156). These suggestions would most certainly reduce the risk of undertaking a grounded theory study. They would, in fact, remove all risk as no grounded theory would be involved. The process would be pure qualitative data analysis: a legitimate goal to be sure but not grounded theory.

These are but a very few of the examples of preconceived theoretical frameworks being forced upon what is intended as grounded theory. There are many others to be found in the numerous studies that masquerade under the guise of grounded theories while employing only selected aspects of the methodology. Glaser (2003) has written extensively on this propensity for remodelling.

Extensive review of extant literature before the emergence of a core category in a grounded theory study is another dimension of preconception that violates the basic premise of the classic methodology; that being, the theory emerges from the data not from extant theory. Extensive engagement prior to data collection and analysis also runs the risk of thwarting theoretical sensitivity by clouding the researcher's ability to remain open to the emergence of a completely new core category that may not have figured prominently in the literature to date. Practically speaking, preconception may well result in the researcher spending valuable time on an area of literature that proves to be of little significance to the resultant grounded theory. By contrast, in classic grounded theory methodology, the literature is just more data to be coded and integrated into the study through constant comparative analysis but its analysis and integration happens only after the core category, its properties and related categories have emerged, and the basic conceptual development is well underway, not in advance as is common to qualitative research methods. Unless pre-empted by preconception, emergence is natural with the resultant grounded theory often

charting new theoretical territory.

From Description to Conceptualization

To understand the nature of classic grounded theory, one must understand the distinction between conceptualization and description. Grounded theory is not about the accuracy of descriptive units, nor is it an act of interpreting meaning as ascribed by the participants in a study; rather, it is an act of conceptual abstraction. While tied to experience, conceptual abstraction directs attention to and isolates a part or aspect of an entity or phenomenon for the purposes of contemplation (Whitehead, 1925, p.147). While the descriptive findings of a qualitative research study are most certainly valuable, they do not provide a conceptual abstraction. A grounded theory must offer a conceptually abstract explanation for a latent pattern of behaviour (an issue or concern) in the social setting under study. It must explain, not merely describe, what is happening in a social setting.

It is this ability to abstract from empirical indicators (incidents in the data under analysis) the conceptual idea without the burden of descriptive detail that distinguishes the coding process in classic grounded theory methodology. This abstraction to a conceptual level theoretically explains rather than describes behaviour that occurs conceptually and generally in many diverse groups with a common concern (Glaser, 2003). While a researcher's initial attempts at coding new data may very well be more descriptive than conceptual, a classic grounded theorist will endeavour to raise the conceptual level early on in the analysis process through the constant comparison of conceptual indicators in the data under study. Those trained in the requirements of qualitative research may, however, settle more readily into descriptive coding with its capacity to portray rich detail, multiple perspectives, and the voices of lived experience. For instance, where a qualitative researcher might record in vivo codes such as *boosting self confidence, growing as a person, learning to trust*, a classic grounded theorist, in asking 'what concept does this indicate', might code for *empowerment*, with the three descriptive codes serving as indicators.

For a classic grounded theorist, what matter are the concepts. The conceptual abstraction of classic grounded theory frees the researcher from the qualitative paradigm's emphasis on

detailed description and elucidation of multiple perspectives. The skill of the grounded theorist is to abstract concepts by leaving the detail of the data behind, lifting the concepts above the data and integrating them into a theory that explains the latent social pattern underlying the behaviour in a substantive area (Locke, 2001). The result of a grounded theory study is not the reporting of facts but the generation of probability statements about the relationships between concepts; a set of conceptual hypotheses developed from empirical data (Glaser, 1998, pp. 3, 22).

Morse (2004) recognizes the importance of raising qualitative research above the descriptive level of analysis. Unfortunately, her prescriptive procedures for developing qualitative concepts leave little scope for exercising the creativity and intuitive autonomy that are the hallmarks of classic grounded theory: the ability to fracture and interrogate the data for its conceptual essence, to constantly compare indicators for interchangeability, and the achievement of theoretical saturation. Her approach provides little allowance for the preconscious processing that enables the emergence of conceptual ideation and theoretical integration. Her structure may work well in qualitative analysis but would inhibit what Glaser (1998) describes as the 'subsequent, sequential, simultaneous, serendipitous, and scheduled' (p. 15) nature of grounded theory.

Various scholars within the qualitative paradigm have put forth strategies and guidelines for the coding process (Charmaz, 2006; Goulding, 2002; Partington, 2002; Patton, 2002; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998). By comparison, the procedures espoused by classic grounded theorists may initially appear loose and perhaps even messy or confusing. These procedures as originally developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and extensively elaborated in Glaser's subsequent work (1978, 1992, 1998, 2001, 2003, 2005; Glaser & Holton, 2004) do require the researcher to grapple with both chaos and control. The chaos is in tolerating the uncertainty and subsequent regression of not knowing in advance and of remaining open to what emerges through the diligent, controlled, often tedious application of the method's synchronous and iterative processes of line-by-line coding, constant comparison for interchangeability of indicators, and theoretical sampling for core emergence and theoretical saturation. This discipline is simultaneously complemented by requiring the theorist to remain open to the innate creativity in

preconscious processing of conceptual ideation and theoretical integration; a creativity characterized by the exhilaration of eureka sparks of discovery; what Glaser (1978, 1998) calls the drugless trip.

This excitement in generating concepts from data, however, derails some researchers. Captured by the imagery, or 'grab' (Glaser, 2001, pp.19-21), of the emerging concepts, they switch their attention from abstraction to description. By neglecting to stay with the full method of classic grounded theory, they are unable to tap its full potential in developing a conceptually integrated theory. 'To skip a step, particularly the middle ones associated with memoing and sorting, is to produce a theory with less conceptual density, less integration, less conceptual qualification, too much descriptive and conceptual flatness in places, and missed connections obvious to the astute reader' (Glaser, 1978: 16).

Baszanger's (1997) paper, 'Deciphering Chronic Pain', is an example of the kind of conceptual description that is frequently presented as grounded theory. While tempting us with the imageric grab of what Glaser would call a 'juicy concept' (Grounded Theory Seminar, New York, October 2003), and acknowledging that she has employed grounded theory techniques of 'constant comparative method of analysis and its coding procedures' (p. 5), Baszanger has not employed the full package of classic grounded theory methodology. Consequently, what we have is an ethnographic account of the way in which physicians at two different clinics manage the issue of deciphering chronic pain. She does not follow through in taking her conceptual description to a fully integrated theory that would offer us a conceptual explanation for the phenomenon under study. While we have a rich account of particularistic experiences, we are deprived of the full power of grounded theory to offer us an integrated set of conceptual hypotheses that would explain what is really going on in the process of deciphering chronic pain. Baszanger's account, however, offers excellent data for conceptual abstraction and the possible emergence of a grounded theory.

Skill Development in Grounded Theory

Morse (1997) suggests that qualitative researchers are theoretically timid and may be inhibited by what she sees as the

hard work of conceptualization necessary to produce theory. While acknowledging the possibility of timidity, Glaser (2002a) refutes her assertion of the hard work of conceptualization, instead maintaining that many researchers simply lack knowledge and competence in conceptualization and, as such, they embrace with enthusiasm but without understanding. To truly understand classic grounded theory requires extensive study of the methodology in tandem with experiencing the method first-hand. While some like Dey (1999) would appear to dismiss the importance of first-hand experience in favour of adopting a sceptical stance from the sidelines, the resultant 'rhetorical wrestle' (Glaser, 1998) is ironically at odds with the fundamental premise of ensuring empirically grounding of one's theoretical (and methodological) contributions to knowledge. Yet, staying the course to develop that understanding is easily circumvented by straying into the mixed methods approaches prevalent in qualitative research and the diverse perspectives of the methodology that Glaser (2003) refers to as remodelled versions.

The decision to use classic grounded theory methodology is a 'full package' decision. It requires the adoption of a systematic set of precise procedures for collection, analysis and articulation of conceptually abstract theory. On the menu of research methodology, classic grounded theory is 'table d'hote', not 'a la carte'. Generating grounded theory takes time. It is above all a delayed action phenomenon (Glaser, 1998, p.220). Little increments of collecting and coding allow theoretical ideas to develop into conceptual memos. Significant theoretical realizations come with growth and maturity in the data, and much of this is outside the researcher's conscious awareness until preconscious processing facilitates its conscious emergence (Glaser, 1998, p.50). Thus, the researcher must pace herself, exercising patience and accepting nothing until this inevitable emergence has transpired. Surviving the apparent confusion is important, requiring the researcher to take whatever time is necessary for the discovery process and to take this time in a manner consistent with her own temporal nature as a researcher: what Glaser (1998) refers to as personal pacing (p. 49). Rushing or forcing the process shuts down creativity and conceptual ability, exhausting energy and leaving the theory thin and incomplete.

As an experiential learning methodology, it is important that the grounded theorist stay actively engaged in continuing skill development by cycling through various projects and always having at least one project active (Glaser, 1978, pp.25-26). Reading and re-reading Glaser's work, while memoing about the methodology, also keeps cognitive processing alive. Critically reading substantive grounded theory papers and memoing conceptual thoughts is another way to gain insights into the methodology and to be able to distinguish a quality grounded theory or to see how or where another researcher may have come close but missed the full power of the methodology. Without active engagement through continuing field research and analysis as well as methodological reading, it is easy for many to leave behind their grounded theory skill development: especially those who have been trained in the dominant paradigm of qualitative research. The inevitable consequence is that they will begin, often unconsciously, to remodel the methodology to suit the dominant genre in their field or to compensate for inadequate or lost skill development.

Skill development seems to be particularly difficult for novice researchers who encounter resistance from thesis supervisors or peer reviewers who are trained in qualitative or quantitative methodologies and who express doubt or reservation about the full package approach of classic grounded theory. Without the confidence of experience gained through skill development or the power to challenge discipline or departmental authority, the novice researcher may feel pressured to abandon or compromise the proper procedures. The outcome diminishes the researcher's autonomy and confidence to engage with the methodology as intended. Glaser refers to this resistance propensity as the 'trained incapacity of novice researchers held to binding interpretations by the higher authorities of other research methodologies' (personal communication, July 10, 2004).

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Theoretical Coding in Grounded Theory Methodology

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Abstract

When doing classic grounded theory research, one of the most problematic areas, particularly for novice researchers, is the theoretical coding process. The identification of theoretical codes is essential to development of an integrated and explanatory substantive theory when a researcher is using classic grounded theory research methodology, but it is not a part of Straussian qualitative data analysis as described by Strauss and Corbin. A theoretical code is the relational model through which all substantive codes/categories are related to the core category. Like substantive codes, theoretical codes emerge through the data analysis process, rather than being overlaid on the data through the use of conjecture or 'pet' codes. The purpose of this article is to provide an overview of the theoretical coding process and to review the theoretical coding families and individual theoretical codes that have been identified previously by Glaser.

Introduction

Grounded theory (GT) is a research methodology for discovering theory in a substantive area. In many of his publications, Glaser (1978, 1992, 1998, 2001, 2003, 2005) has carefully delineated the various aspects of GT research methodology, and has consistently elucidated areas that have been difficult for published GT researchers, often illustrating the erroneous assumptions or methodological errors found in such research (Hernandez, 2008). One of the most problematic areas, particularly for novice researchers, is the theoretical coding process which includes finding the theoretical code that will integrate the emerging substantive theory. Perhaps one of the reasons for this confusion is that many researchers have not understood that classic (also known as Glaserian) GT and Straussian GT are two very different methods (Hernandez, p. 44) and, as a result, many research articles list references from both Glaser and Strauss as the methodological underpinning of their

studies. However, theoretical coding as described by Glaser (1978) is not a part of Strauss' approach to grounded theory data analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

The purpose of classic GT research is to uncover the main problem in a substantive area, as well as the resolution to this problem. The resolution is known as the core category. The final theoretical code is the one that emerges, through the coding process, and serves to integrate all of the substantive categories with the core category. The approach to data in classic GT methodology consists of two main processes. First, during the *open coding process*, the data are broken down into *substantive codes* (either *in vivo codes* or *sociological constructs*) as interview, field notes and/or other written data are coded in a line by line manner and incidents are compared with one another, for similarities and differences (Glaser, 1978) until the core category is found. Then, as *selective coding* results in the saturation of all of the categories through theoretical sampling, these substantive codes are built up into a substantive theory as they are integrated into a cohesive structure by the emergent *theoretical code.* The purpose of this article is to provide an overview of the theoretical coding process and review the theoretical coding families and individual theoretical codes that have been identified previously by Glaser (1978, 1998, 2005) as being relevant for grounded theory research.

Understanding Theoretical Codes in Classic GT

In any GT study, several theoretical codes may emerge but eventually, through ongoing coding and memoing, one theoretical code is chosen as the theoretical code for the study. A GT study's theoretical code is the relational model through which all substantive codes/categories are related to the core category. In GT methodology, "Substantive codes conceptualize the empirical substance of the area of research. Theoretical codes conceptualize how the substantive codes may relate to each other as hypotheses to be integrated into the theory" (Glaser, 1978, p. 55). Substantive codes break down (fracture the data) while theoretical codes "weave the fractured story back together again" (Glaser, 1978, p. 72) into "an organized whole theory (Glaser, 1998, p. 163). The relationship, therefore, between substantive and theoretical codes is that theoretical codes "theoretically render an empirical pattern" (Glaser, 1978 p. 74). Another way of saying this is that "Theoretical codes implicitly conceptualize how the substantive

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codes will relate to each other as interrelated multivariate hypotheses in accounting for resolving the main concern" (Glaser, 1998, p. 163). Theoretical codes must not be preconceived, rather they are emergent in the data, and therefore, "earn their way into the theory as much as substantive codes" (Glaser, 1998, p. 164).

Coding processes for substantive codes and theoretical codes are not two isolated or disconnected processes. Both types of coding occur simultaneously, to a certain extent, but the researcher "will focus relatively more on substantive coding when discovering codes within the data, and more on theoretical coding when theoretically sorting and integrating his memos" (Glaser, 1978, p. 56). Without substantive codes, theoretical codes are empty abstractions (Glaser, p. 72). The importance of the substantive codes cannot be over-emphasized. If the substantive codes do not fit the data, then the theoretical codes that relate these substantive codes are probably irrelevant to the substantive area: The researcher has only a contrived theory that is not grounded in the data.

Theoretical codes are either implicit or explicit but, whether implicit or explicit, their purpose is to integrate the substantive theory (Glaser, 2005, p. 11). Theoretical codes from the Process Family are often explicit and easily identified by researchers when study participants talk about changing over time or about going through stages, phases or transitions. However, other theoretical codes are more implicit. These more implicit theoretical codes can be uncovered as a theoretically sensitive researcher continues coding and memoing, or through observing participants act in ways that are contrary to what they have espoused in interviews. This latter example would imply that vaguing or properlining (from the Cultural Representation Family) is occurring.

Theoretical codes are flexible – "they are not mutually exclusive, they overlap considerably... [and] one family can spawn another" (Glaser, 1978, p. 73). The overlap in theoretical codes can be seen in Table 1 by comparing the individual theoretical codes within the coding families that have been placed next to each other. For example, there is overlap between the Process and Basics coding families, with the basic processes frequently having stages, phases, transitions, sequencing and so on, all of which are theoretical codes found under the Process Family.

Over the past three decades, Glaser has identified many theoretical codes and theoretical coding families that can emerge in grounded theory: 18 in *Theoretical Sensitivity* (Glaser, 1978), 9 in *Doing Grounded Theory* (Glaser, 1998), and 23 in *Theoretical Coding* (Glaser, 2005). See Table 1 for a summary of these theoretical codes. This table has been organized so that the theoretical coding families and codes, identified by Glaser in three of his books, have been positioned next to the coding families to which they are closely related or a part of. However, Glaser has been adamant that there are potentially many more theoretical codes that might emerge in GT research; therefore, the theoretical codes found in Table 1 do not comprise an exhaustive list.

Researchers learning to do grounded theory need to be aware that seasoned GT researchers may speak about theoretical coding (a *verb* denoting the process of finding theoretical codes through emergence) as the process they use to find a theoretical code (a *noun* denoting the actual type of relationship between two or more substantive codes or between the core category and all other substantive codes). Theoretical coding can occur throughout the GT process, whether it is during open coding or selective coding (the two major phases of the GT methodology) because theoretical coding is simply detecting the relationships between two or more categories. Several theoretical codes can be discovered as coding proceeds during one GT study. However, discovery of the ultimate theoretical code that integrates the substantive theory will probably occur during the selective coding phase, that is, after the core category has emerged.

As previously stated, in any GT study there can be several emergent theoretical codes because a theoretical code simply specifies the relationship between two or more substantive codes. Theoretical codes from several theoretical coding families may emerge as being relevant in specifying the emergent relationship between categories (known as major categories, codes, or variables) and subcategories (known as smaller categories, codes, or variables), and even between the core category and the subcore (major) categories and their properties. However, the theoretical code that ultimately emerges as the one that most fully integrates the substantive theory is one that specifies the overall relationship between the core category and all other categories. When more than one theoretical code can fit the data, then the

researcher must make a choice but this decision will be "grounded in one of the many useful fits" (Glaser, 1978, p. 72). The following example will illustrate this point. Hernandez (1991, 1996) discovered the substantive theory of integration in her research with adults with Type 1 diabetes. Integration was the core category to which all other substantive codes were related through a *basic social process* (a theoretical code from the Basics Family). However, the first phase of the theory of integration was named "having diabetes" (major category) and the smaller categories related to "having diabetes" as *strategies* (theoretical code from the Strategy Family) which helped to prevent the person who had diabetes from moving into the second phase, "the turning point" (major category). In addition, it was observed that as participants with diabetes moved through the three phases of integration (having diabetes, turning point, science of one) there was an increase in the level (theoretical code from the Degree Family) of integration. In the end, a basic social process emerged as the final (overall) theoretical code for the substantive theory of integration because of its fit (i.e., it was able to show the relationship of all of the categories to the core category of integration) and thus provided the best overall fit for the data. For example, it was discovered that an individual with diabetes could remain in the turning point phase (second phase) for a period of time but later revert back to the having diabetes phase and this represented the best fit with the *basic social process* theoretical code rather than the *degree* theoretical code.

A major characteristic of the theoretical code for a GT study is that it must be emergent through the data, not preconceived (or overlaid on the data) by the researcher. Unfortunately, many researchers have a 'pet' theoretical code that they apply to all data, rather than remaining open and waiting for emergence. When viewing research data through the blinders of a pet category, there is a danger of systematically ignoring important data that are relevant to the substantive theory but do not fit with this pet code. Emergence is always better than conjecture (Glaser, 2005, p. 42), therefore theory generated through 'pet code overlay' may not be one that adequately explains the resolution of the problem experienced by participants in the substantive area.

Theoretical codes are important to grounded theory because they potentiate its explanatory power and increase its completeness and relevance, resulting in a grounded theory with

greater scope and parsimony (Glaser, 2005, p. 70). Without theoretical codes, the substantive codes become mere themes to describe (rather than explain) a substantive area; the descriptive thematic approach is characteristic of qualitative research methods such as phenomenology or ethnography but not Classic GT.

Ways to Enhance Researcher Ability to 'See' the Emergence of Theoretical Codes

Some researchers mistakenly believe that core categories generate theoretical codes (Glaser, 2001, p. 210). They do not. Theoretical codes emerge from the data as a theoretically sensitive researcher analyzes the data, through coding, memoing and sorting the memos, or possibly through developing a schematic model (conceptual map) of the substantive codes. Several strategies for eliciting theoretical codes are described in the section below.

1. Theoretical Sensitivity. The researcher's theoretical sensitivity enhances his or her ability to recognize the theoretical codes as they emerge during coding and memoing. Knowledge of the various theoretical coding families will help to sensitize researchers (Glaser, 1998, p. 175), making the researcher "sensitive to rendering explicitly the subtleties of the relationships in his data…It sensitizes him to the myriad of implicit integrative possibilities in the data" (Glaser, 1978, pp. 72 & 73). Therefore, "the goal of a GT researcher is to develop a repertoire of as many theoretical codes as possible…the more theoretical codes the researcher learns the more he has the variability of seeing them emerge and fitting them to the theory. They empower his ability to generate theory and keep its conceptual level" (Glaser, 2005, p. 11). Researchers are encouraged to read literature in any field to learn about other theoretical codes (Glaser, 2005, p. 42). In this way, researchers build an understanding and repertoire of many potential theoretical codes; this will allow emergence of the theoretical codes rather than always reverting to a cherished 'pet' code that a researcher forces or overlays on the data. Researchers are advised to be familiar with the theoretical codes in Table 1 so that they can recognize them when they see them in the data they are coding.

2. In Vivo Codes. An in vivo code is one of the two types of

substantive codes that emerge as data are coded during the open coding process, and these in vivo codes can point to possible theoretical codes. In vivo codes "tend to be the behaviors or processes which explain how the basic problem is resolved or processed" (Glaser, 1978, p. 70) and, therefore, "can imply theoretical codes; for example, cultivating implies looking into consequences since anticipating consequences [a theoretical code] is why people cultivate" (Glaser, 1978, p. 70).

3. Memoing and Sorting Memos. Writing memos will force researchers to theoretically code (Glaser, 1978, p. 85) to determine how a particular category is related to other categories that have been discovered already. Researchers' ideas that are developed through memoing include "hypotheses about connections between categories and/or their properties" (Glaser, 1978, p. 84) and thus begin "to integrate these connections with clusters of other categories to generate the theory" (Glaser, 1978, p 84). In other words, memos bring out the relationships (i.e., the theoretical codes) among the various categories and their properties. "Memos serve as a means of revealing and relating by theoretically coding the properties of the substantive codes" (Glaser, 1978, p. 84). The memoing process helps the researcher determine which of the theoretical codes provides the best relational model to integrate the substantive theory because it is during memoing that different emerging theoretical codes are discussed and tried out as possible ways of organizing the grounded theory (Glaser, 2003, p. 31).

The major process through which a grounded theory is written up, is through sorting of the memos that have been written throughout the study process. During sorting, the researcher places each memo onto the pile to which it belongs, based on the substantive code (s) to which it refers. According to Glaser (2005), about 90% of the theoretical codes found in a study are identified through the sorting of mature memos (p. 42).

4. Models. Glaser (1978) identified the development of a model as one way to theoretically code; using this method, the researcher models the "theory pictorially by either a linear model or a property space" (p. 81). The researcher writes the substantive concepts (codes) on a piece of paper in circles or squares and draws solid or broken lines between them to demonstrate the relationships between and among all of the concepts. However, Glaser recommended that these models be

used with constraint and caution: researchers might be tempted to *deduce* relationships through logical elaboration, rather than eliciting them from the data by emergence (*induction*). This error may derail the emergence of a good substantive theory because deduced relationships may not be relevant (Glaser, p. 82).

Researcher Uses of Theoretical Codes

Glaser (1978) identified four general uses of theoretical codes. The two major uses will help researchers integrate and write-up their substantive theories. The last two purposes are for critiquing GT studies and for grant writing. These four uses specified by Glaser are: 1) helping the researcher maintain a conceptual level when writing about concepts and the relationships among them; 2) preventing researchers from getting bogged down in the data through endless illustrations; 3) critiquing other researchers' grounded theory reports; and 4) when writing a grant proposal that forces the researcher to preconceive possibilities prior to the start of the research and, therefore, before the researcher knows anything about the data to be collected (Glaser, p. 73). An important dictum when talking about a GT or writing it up, is to talk or write substantive codes but think theoretical codes (Glaser, 1998, p. 164). The theory of integration (Hernandez, 1991, 1996) can be used to illustrate this dictum. Whenever the author writes about the theory of integration, she writes about the substantive codes within each of the three phases. Therefore, she acknowledges that there are three phases (theoretical code of basic social process forms the Basics coding family) but the focus of the write-up is on the explanation of the substantive codes within these phases.

Conclusion

The identification of theoretical codes is essential to development of an integrated and explanatory substantive GT. The theoretical code that emerges to integrate the substantive theory is not, itself, the core category; rather it is the conceptual model of the relationship of the core category to its properties and to the other (non-core) categories. It is this relational model that integrates the substantive categories into a theory. Preconception, through conjecture or overlay of pet theoretical codes, will derail the emergence of a credible substantive grounded theory. Just as theoretically sensitive GT researchers are able to recognize sociological constructs in the data, so to will

these researchers be able to detect the emergent theoretical codes as they follow GT methodology and when they have built up a repertoire of relevant theoretical codes. Although, several theoretical codes may emerge in any one GT study, the theoretical code that is most relevant will be the one that captures the relationships between all essential categories and the core category (i.e., provides the best fit for the data).

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Theoretical Coding in Grounded Theory Methodology

Theoretical Coding Tables

Table 1 Theoretical Coding: Mapping of Coding Families & Theoretical Codes (Glaser, 1978, 1998, 2005)

1978	1998	2005
The 6 Cs Causes Contingencies Consequences Covariance Contexts Conditions		**Causal Family** Conjunctural causation TC Amplifying causal looping Perpetual compounding Bias random walk Equifinality Reciprocal Causation Social Arena TC, (Social Worlds TC, Social Constraints TC Social constraints TC (boundary maintaining conditions)
Process Family Stages, Staging, Phases, Phasing Progressions, Passages, Transitions, Trajectories Gradations, Steps, Shaping Ranks, Ordering, Chains Sequencing, Temporaling, Cycling	**The Basics Family** Basic social process Basic social structural process Basic social structural conditions Basic social psychological process Basic psychological process	**Temporal Family** Timelines Pacing of action (self, others) Pacing growing conditions Cycling TCs: Temporal ordering of work, etc. Organizational cycling of productions Actions/interaction spiraling up or down
Degree Family Ranks, Grades, Continuum, Levels Limit, Range, Intensity, Extent, Amount	**Average Family** Mathematical actions (mean, median, mode)	Levels TC (e.g., social stratification, authority structures, spirituality)

1978	1998	2005
Cutting points, Critical juncture Statistical averages, Standard deviation Probability, Possibility, Polarity	Cutting points, Confidence limits Structural norms Probabilities of Occurrence	
Dimension Family Dimensions, Elements, Divisions, Piece of, Properties of, Facet Sector, Portion, Segment, Part, Aspect, Section		
Type Family Type, Form, Kinds Styles, Classes, Genre		Ideal Type TC (Constructed Types, Paradigms, Pattern Variables)
Strategy Family Strategies, Tactics, Mechanisms, Ways, Techniques Manipulation, Manoeuvrings, Ploys, Dominating Dealing with, Handling, Arrangements, Managed Goals, Means, Positioning		Cross Pressures TC (External Conflict) Moment capture TC (essential opportunistic action)
Interactive Family Mutual efforts, Reciprocity, Mutual trajectory Mutual dependency, Interdependence Interaction of effects, Covariance	**Interactive Family** Traffic interaction Asymmetrical interaction (off-balance power equilibriums or power relations)	Systems Parts TC (e.g., functional reciprocity)
Identity-Self Family Self-image, Self-concept, Self-worth, Self-evaluation Identity, Social worth Self-realization, Transformations of self, Conversions of identity	**Unit Identity Family** Work, family, recreational life	**Unit Identify Family** Binary code TC (binary retreat, binary deconstruction)

1978	1998	2005
Cutting Point Family Boundary, Benchmark, Division Critical juncture, Cutting point, Turning point, Breaking point Cleavage, Tolerance levels, Deviance Dichotomy, Trichotomy, Psychotomy In-out, Intra-extra, Point of no return	**Boundary Family** Limits, Outer limits, Confidence Limits, Front line, Deviance Boundary maintaining mechanisms Tolerance zones, Transition zones	Outer limits TC (e.g. legal, moral, security, safety, breaking or moving boundaries)
Means-Goal Family End, Purpose, Goal Anticipated consequences, Product		Asymptote TC (getting as close as possible) Fractals TC Autopoiesis TC (e.g. structural coupling)
Cultural Family Social norms, Social values, Social beliefs Social sentiment	**Representation Family** (Cultural Representation) Descriptive (e.g. conceptualizing, baselining, vaguing) Proscriptive (e.g., properlining) Prescriptive (e.g., interpreting) Sentimental, Evaluative	Frames TC (Political, Religious, Ideological, Cultural)
Consensus Family Clusters, Agreement, Contracts, Cooperation Definitions of the situation Uniformities, Opinion, Homogeneity-Heterogeneity, Conformity, Conflict, Dicensus, Differential Perception, Non- Conformity Mutual Expectation		

1978	1998	2005
Mainline Family Social control, Socialization, Social organization Social order, Social Mobility, Status Passage Recruitment, Stratification Social institutions, Social Interaction, Social World		
Theoretical Family Parsimony, Scope, Integration, Density, Clarity Fit, Relevance, Modifiability, Utility, Condensability Conceptual level, Inductive-Deductive Balance Multivariate Structure, Degree of Interpretive, Explanatory & Predictive Power		
Ordering or Elaboration Family Structural ordering Temporal ordering Generality (Conceptual ordering)		
Unit Family (Structural Units) Collective, Group, Organization, Aggregate Nation, Social world, Territorial units, Society Situation, Context, Arena Behavioral pattern, Family Positional units (status, role, role relationship, status set, role-set, person-set, role partners)	**Structural-Functional Family** Reference groups Structural change Authority structure Functional requirements of structure	Action TC (variation in types of action for each unit) Social constraints TC
Reading Family Concepts Problems Hypotheses		

1978	1998	2005
Models Linear model Property space		Isomorphism TC (theory model)
	Paired Opposite Family Dichotomies, Polar opposites Paired Alternatives	**Paired Opposite Family** Symmetry-asymmetry TC Binary TC Micro macro TC Balancing TC
	Scales Family Likert Guttman Cumulative Funneling down, Delimiting Random walk	

TC= Theoretical Code