The Grounded Theory Review (2012), Volume 11, Issue 2

Editorial

Astrid Gynnild

To provide new knowledge is a basic aim of academic research. This task seems to be so self-evident that underlying cognitive aspects of knowledge acquisition are often taken for granted. Nevertheless, in order to produce credible, relevant and unbiased research results, the greatest challenge of any researcher is probably that of handling one's own preconceptions. When grounded theory was generated by Glaser and Strauss 45 years ago, they aimed to provide an inductive methodology that cut across preformed research investigations and the testing of irrelevant hypotheses with little grounding in empirical data. In grounded theory literature, getting open to what the data tells you and implicitly how to minimize personal and professional preconceptions, is a recurring topic. And yet we know from everyday life and from research in general how easy it is to slip into forming opinions beforehand without adequate evidence.

In this issue, we are happy to publish the first chapter of Barney G. Glaser's latest book, in which many aspects of preconceptions are discussed in detail. In his chapter, Dr. Glaser points out how the no preconception dictum in grounded theory applies to the general research problem and the specific participants' problem. By stating that by staying open to the emergent, the researcher cannot preconceive what he or she will discover, he touches an apparent research paradox. Glaser's theoretical discussion is based on data from a number of experienced grounded theorists and on data from his many years of discovering and developing grounded theories. The chapter and the succeeding book will fill a void in the research literature. Even though the quest for professional curiosity and openness is a prevalent aspect of any research approach, its cognitive and practical implications are rarely analyzed.

In this issue, I am also happy to present two new grounded theories, in two different publishing formats. Anna Sandgren from Sweden has developed a full format substantive theory about deciphering unwritten rules. Her theory is based on a secondary analysis of data from three former studies in palliative care. The concept of deciphering unwritten rules explains how patients, relatives and nurses in palliative cancer care handle the uncertainties of how to act and behave in different situations. The theory clearly demonstrates the importance of uncovering and talking about unwritten rules, and the importance of knowledge and counseling for all involved.

Gaetan Mormant's theory within the field of management introduces a new format in the Grounded Theory Review, namely shorter conceptual discussions. In less than six pages, or approximately 3000 words, Mormant presents a rich grounded theory about seeding events as a resolution to the main concern of developing spaces of entrepreneurial freedom (SoEF). His paper addresses the question of initiating, fostering and growing vibrant economies by establishing and developing the SoEF.

In the time to come, our goal is to present more theories in both the full format and the shorter format. Since grounded theories are conceptually written, the length of the theories can be scaled up and down as time and place allows. We believe that this new opportunity to present short form grounded theories, or parts thereof, will inspire more researchers to submit their work even if their theories are not fully developed. The shorter format helps in funneling down the essentials of a theory. In turn, this write-up practice might save both time and confusion, since the researcher will get valuable feedback by experienced reviewers during the theory generation process.

The paper written by Kim Kwok and Antoinette McCallin from New Zealand speaks directly to Barney G. Glaser's dictum of no preconception. Reflecting back on the different stages of theory development, they emphasize that an important part of a grounded theory research process is to learn how to work one's way through challenges of forcing the data. The paper discusses the practical realities of preconception and how it can be managed. The authors also draw attention to "less well recognised factors that contribute to forcing." They conclude that if one is able to regard the research process as a learning opportunity and focus on discoveries in the data, preconceptions will gradually be substituted by solutions to the real problems that emerge during the study. The authors experienced that the GT steps were helpful in getting out of the traps of preconception.

Naomi Elliott and Agnes Higgins from Ireland discuss how research students deal with the challenges of doing a GT study within an academic context and meeting the requirements of their degree programs. Drawing from the personal experiences of two PhD graduates from two different universities, the authors identify four key discussion points of a GT process. They point out that grounded theorists can demonstrate academic scholarliness by focusing on implications of inductive enquiry, the primacy of questions in data gathering and analysis, the research-theory versus the theory-research link and finally how grounded theory "provide researchers with a viable means of generating new theory."

Finally, in the section for book reviews, Paul Dowling from the United Kingdom provides a thorough and refreshing critique of the anthology *Grounded Theory: The Philosophy, Method and Work of Barney Glaser* (BrownWalker Press 2011). Dowling was asked to do the critique from the perspective of a scholar who teaches methodology at masters and PhD levels. He is well acquainted with GT literature and says he is *inspired* by grounded theory, but has developed his own theoretical approach to educational research. Dowling's reflections confirm that there is much to learn from getting feedback from colleagues with diverging perspectives, especially from colleagues with an open mind. Only be being open to, and curious about, the experiences and viewpoints of colleagues from significantly different methodological approaches can grounded theory researchers really test their own insights and improve their own argumentative skills.

The Grounded Theory Review (2012), Volume 11, Issue 2

No Preconception: The Dictum

Barney Glaser, PhD, Hon. PhD

I would like to begin and introduce this book on "no preconceptions" when doing grounded theory (GT) with a short trip of 45 years into the past by quoting the reasoning source of the no preconceptions dictum as first laid out in 1967 in the Discovery of Grounded Theory, by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss. The sources where (1) the zeal for verification of conjectured hypotheses research and (2) to explain the findings with theoretical capitalists demanding and commanding conjecture seldom if ever tapping the reality of what was really going on. Grounding induced theory in research data was what was needed.

Our first paragraph in Discovery reads as follows: "Most writing on sociological method has been concerned with how accurate facts can be obtained and how theory can thereby be more rigorously tested. In this book we address ourselves to the equally important enterprise of how the discovery of theory from data – systematically obtained and analyzed in social research – can be furthered, We believe that the discovery of theory from data – which we shall call grounded theory - is a major task confronting sociology today, because as we shall try to show, such a theory "fits" empirical situations and is relevant with understanding to sociologist and layman alike. Most important, it (GT) works by providing us with relevant predictions, explanations, interpretations and applications.

To achieve this goal we generated a methodology which we called grounded theory methodology which had, and still does have, many rigorous steps to achieve grounding. One aspect of GT was to stop hypothesis testing that was irrelevant and drew on conjectural theory explanations, by grand theorists – theoretical capitalists. These irrelevant preconceived tests yielded the dictum that No preconceptions were allowed. This dictum applies to the general research problem, the specific participant problem, what pre research conjectured theoretical categories and their connections would apply, and thus will provide the preformed explanations and in what theoretical shape. And preconceptions get even more subtle based on theoretical perspective assumptions and remodeled GT methods. I will lay out many of these utilities in this book. I saw many a research fail in those days because preconceived research and theory yielded no theory and findings of fit and relevance and workability.

As the reader knows, this position taken 45 years ago has flowered and boomed. Grounded theory today is used all over the world, principally for PhD theses and then in subsequent research of those GT PhD's. We were sufficiently correct to open up a whole new world of theory generation no matter what the latent theoretical perspective of GT researchers have as academics in health, management, social work, political science, business and sociology. No preconceived research works as GT. But the world wide use of GT or supposed GT versions has increased our knowledge of the subtlties of requiring no preconception or giving the arguments for preconceiving research aspects in some ways. I hope to detail many of these subtleties in this book so the reader can be aware of what it means to suspend preconceptions in service of emergent generating of theory.

As we said in Discovery of GT, part of the trend (in 1960's) toward emphasizing verification was the assumption by many sociologists that our "great men" and theorist forefathers (Weber, Durkheim, Simmel, Marx, Veblen, Cooley, Mead, Park etc) had generated a sufficient number of outstanding theories on enough areas of social life to last for a long while. Current great men such as Merton, Parsons, Homans, Blumer, and Goffman, to mention a few, continued their "think up" theories. Of course, GT will not

replace these theories but the shedding of their claim to preconceive research and theory writing will, and has significantly occurred, in the research world of today. The GT researcher may not become a great man, but at least his/her GT theory will be done with autonomy and originality and will be a contribution he/she is known for in the literature. There are hundreds of substantive grounded theories now as of 2012. No preconceptions clearly work for the emergent discovery of GT.

Reviewing the Dictum

In the remainder of this chapter I will review the no preconceptions dictum in some detail. I have said over and over in my many writings that the researcher should not preconceive in doing GT research: 1. the general problem, 2. the specific participants problem, 3. what received concepts will explain the current behavior, 4. what theoretical code will integrate the theory, and 5. what theoretical perspective applies. The rule is to let these areas emerge. Discover them. The researcher cannot preconceive what he will discover by staying open to the emergent. What is allowed is a general area of interest coupled with a humble lack of knowledge of what problems may exist in the area.

I have emphatically cautioned against using extant concepts of a field by reading the literature in a field of study before the emergence of a substantive theory. Indeed, the researcher will likely not know what literature applies before his/her theory emerges. This stance is important so the researcher is not likely to be tempted or feel required to use preconceived literature concepts for coding. And especially to not use these "received before emergence concepts" to solve the initial confusion that usually arises when starting conceptual coding of the collected research data.

Keep in mind that preconceived concepts do not have to be forgotten. They are just to be suspended for the GT research so the researcher is open to the emergent. Why let them get in the way? Sure, they may have legitimate power as sanctified by the literature, but this power must be ignored or resisted. Otherwise it will take over and stop the generation and subsequent power of a classical substantive GT with fit and relevance that works in explaining what is going on. Many advanced GT researchers have said in response to the dictum of no preconceptions how realistic it is for the "getting out of the data" a genuine substantive GT theory.

Alvita Nathaniel related the idea of no preconceptions well and succinctly. She writes,

> Generating good codes also require that analyst to be for her coding a non citizen for the moment so she can come closer to letting the data speak for itself. And speak for itself further from the issue orientation implicit in the academic field's view of the researcher's data which view can dictate a preconceived biased view of the data that is hard to give up as it structures up the confusion. At first the researcher may feel that his non-preconceived field work and coding yelds only scattered uncodable observations. But as soon as he starts to comparatively analyze data – preferable as soon as possible with the beginning research ...codes will emerge yielding theoretical leads. Then conceptual coding is off to a start without preconception. Description is left behind. A 'new truth' emerges. It is highly motivating.

Thus, as Alvita says, the initial suspension of preconceived ideas is soon replaced firmly by the joys of emerging discovery. To foster this transition to discovery the researcher should start the constant comparative coding with the initial interview or interviews that day or latest that night. The sooner discovery starts, the sooner

preconceptions have less bother or claim on the research. Why drag it out with "waiting" schedules for typing tapes. Field notes speed up the generating process. Evert Gummesson, a professor of marketing and management, firmly supports no preconceptions. He says:

> Simply put, inductive GT research lets reality tell its story on its own terms and not on terms of received theory of academically accepted concepts. There is growing encouragement among customer centered companies with the prime goal of satisfying customer needs to stop coding with preconceived concepts and let the needs emerge conceptually.

This position of dropping preconception and taking on of open GT research applies to many fields of practice and service orientation such as nursing, medicine, education, management, social work, psychotherapy etc. Gummesson continues strongly:

> Thus, code for what is there, not for what is preconceived to be there even though it appears not to support preconceived practices of marketing, bureaucracy, textbook or academic theory or the services of practicing professions and their short term practices or long term goals or facts for quick fixes. To start generating a theory or a research project for generating a theory by first designing preconceived clearcut categories and criteria for them will kill or mutilate chances for generating an emergent GT. As long as GT research is directed to an area of interest – we have seen it a multitude of times – patterns will emerge with the gentle assistance of the researcher using GT methodology. They will not be patterns brought on by forcing received concepts on data, nor on paying homage to the legacy of extant theory in any discipline. The GT researcher has to train himself momentarily to disregard or suspend existing knowledge while breathing in new real world data.

Gummesson's influence in the world of marketing research has been fundamental and wide spread. Dr. Naomi Elliott writes me about her dissertation experience,

> An important GT maxim is that the researcher enter the field with open questions to allow the participants own story to unfold without the direction of preconceived questions. Therefore, the guiding questions used throughout interviews focused on eliciting emergence what were the clinical practitioners; main concern and how they continually resolved it.

Anna Sandgren, PhD, wrote the following about her PhD research about "living on hope," the same as Naomi:

> Interviewing with open questions to allow the respondent's answers to unfold without the direction from preconceived questions. Open conversations allow the respondent to keep talking about his main concern, which allows the yield of emergent latent patterns. Furthermore, coding becomes easier with open data than from data obtained from preconceived questions which are likely not to tap relevant latent patterns.

In short, open questions lead steadily to open coding for discovering the main concern and related categories. As Odis Simmons would say, "use grand tour questions and coding should start as soon after data collection as possible, which forestalls preconceptions on what the main concern and related categories may be…," Coding should start the night of the first field note interview. Taped interviews and typing tapes take too long a delay to

start the analysis, which foster preconceptions during the delay of systematic constant comparative coding.

Thus, the no preconception dictum applies also to the data gathering questions as well as to forcing preconceived concepts. Preconceived interview guides and questionnaires block emergence with pre-framed thought about the way it should be, not the discovery of what is going on. The researcher finds that emergent questions lead to emergent coded patterns as coding feeds on the emergent of codes from emergent interview questions. Coding feeds on itself when using emergent interviewed questions spawned by coding. Thus the researcher needs to start coding right away as he starts data collection. They go on simultaneously.

And also, since there is a great accumulation of GT dissertations at this time, the researcher can thumb through lots of GT articles, outside his/her area of interest to become what non preconceived codes look and sound like. This type of literature reading increases the researchers sensitivity to possible codes without forcing preconception concepts. It helps suspend professional problems and concepts.

"No preconceptions" is a dictum subject to growing in its procedural clarity of coding with constant comparisons for generating a GT. But adaption of no preconceptions to the multi version view of GT brings preconception back in many ways since the multi version do not use the constant comparative method to really discover emergent concepts and open questions. Existing concepts then are compared by incidents which simply test them or forces them. Then classic GT is remodeled to a QDA method of conceptual description.

The researcher can trust to the constant comparative method to discover what the participants view as the general problem and their specific problem. The researcher then starts to treat the emergent concerns as conceptually problematic. In the bargain, as I have said, preconceptions are very soon being replaced by the emergent concepts about what is really going on, and preconceptions are forgotten. Academic preexisting categories fade away in the wake of the grab of emergent categories with fit and relevance that emerge from interchangeable indicators. The data will produce categories that could never have been anticipated.

Preconceptions can surely rescue the initial confusion that comes with constant comparison of indicators and they can reduce the fear of never coming up with an emergent category. This confusion is quite real, but the researcher should be patient, as the constant comparative method will start revealing patterns to be named as concepts. Patterns are always there and will emerge, usually faster than expected, especially if the researcher starts with field notes and then coding the data immediately and then uses emergent questions from the coding to see if the codes work with relevance and fit. Theoretical sampling soon sets into questions of respondents, giving rise to questions about emerging patterns that could never have been preconceived.

Suspending preconceptions apply to field domain of perceptive theory bits, cherished concepts, types of data, etc and applies to the personal domain of pet conjecture, system perspectives', cultural predictions and social biases, religious dogma, issue bias and affiliated preconceptions. Keep in mind that I am saying suspending preconceptions for the duration of the research goal of generating a substantive theory. One does not have to give up what one has learned and believed, though in many cases the substantive GT will change thinking with confirmation. Correction or abandonments of preconception grow with the generating of the substantive theory.

Remaining open to what is really going on will soon transform the researcher to going where the data takes him. This applies to most GT researchers except for the most intransigent ideological and, field driven thinkers with an immutable reality to push on others. Most researchers will when coding and analyzing go through the eureka effect of discovery and from then on suspending preconceptions becomes routine.

Here is another helpful thought from Dr. Odis Simmons, well-known GT teacher: "It is common during coding to generate concepts that relate to the researcher's particular professional practice or to ubiquitous popular psychological concepts like self esteem, separation anxiety or identity. These codings are usually large inferential leaps and are based on one indicator and neglect a series of interchangeable indicators. They can burden the emerging theory extant conceptual baggage and imported connotations. This can easily diminish the unique value and contribution of the emerging GT." Odis is correct, that no matter how one uses them preconceptions diminish the grab, relevance, fit and workability of a generated GT.

All researchers using their own or others data when doing GT must learn the skill of tolerance, with ambiguity and "not knowing" before emergence. Preconception clears up confusion quickly, but they must suspend the professional and or personal preconceptions to frame up the confusion quickly. They must deepen their analysis to reach the promise of emergence by constant comparison of indicators and in the bargain deepen their knowledge of GT methodology.

The toughest is suspending especially those types of professional preconceptions, reinforced by professional training, collegial input, academic social structure requirements, the best peer review journals and dissertation committees. Taking them all on is not easy. Remember one does not throw out everything they have learned. The researcher just suspends it when using GT methodology, especially when coding and theoretically coding. Ideologically driven researchers usually have difficulty suspending preconceptions since they overlay what is going on with jargonized biases as to what they believe ought to be going on. The researcher doing constant comparisons of interchangeable indicators and remaining open to what is going on in the data and coding its abstract patterns reduces the "what ought to be" to "what is." The literature and library are always there. They do not disappear. The correct literature can always be related to the final substantive GT to bring its contribution into the main stream of current thought within the appropriate field.

Joy of Coding without Preconceptions

There is a joy of coding without preconceptions. It gives the researcher energy that goes with autonomy and openness and it speeds up the theoretical sampling for selective coding. Astrid Gynnild, PhD, wrote me about one of her students, "she is now doing much better since she is allowed to go into collecting data without reading all about her area of interest first. She is very energized by this autonomy and doing all the preexisting theory stuff first was what she feared the most."

I cannot tell you how many PhD researchers call me with the same response to being given their autonomy. They say, "I am supposed to study this problem and I cannot find it." I reply, "When using GT, forget what you are supposed to find and just see what you are finding." My reply frees them to discuss with me what they are finding that is there. They are energized to the max.

I further warn them to be wary of a supervisor's need to stop their beginning confusion with demands to frame up the analysis with extant concepts from their field. I tell them that they do not have to know the area of interest problem nor the main concern of the participants regarding the general problem. Constant comparative coding will soon reveal it for the researcher. When doing GT, interest in an area of interest does not require a preconceived problem to legitimate the subsequent. In fact, the GT researcher should be prepared to have his emerging theory radically opposing mainstream theoretical thinking. In this case he/she must remain faithful to the emergent coded patterns since they came from data.

To say the least preconceived questions, problems and codes all block emergent coding, hence block classic GT. Preconceived field research is often flat or boring for its lack of grounded fit or relevance. There is no grab. Starting a GT research without knowing the participant's problems or concepts explaining their resolution is highly motivating, because the researcher starts the path to autonomous discovery. This is the path of knowing nothing about participants main concerns to knowing an in-depth theory explaining how they resolve their main concerns.

For example, Amy Calvin in her award winning dissertation starts with the reconceived problem of how patients on dialysis plan for death and give body parts in advance directions. The participants would not talk with her about this field imposed problem. She phoned me and asked what she should do. I told her to go back and ask general questions that allow them to vent (instill a spill). She soon learned that their main concern was staying alive by beating the odds. They would not discuss advanced directives. Staying alive was continually resolved by helping each other with equipment AND by appealing to a higher force through religion: God.

Judith Holton's comment on this chapter is poignant here. She writes:

> One of the things that your chapter brings home so clearly – and that has been forgotten or dismissed by qualitative researchers – is that the motivation for generating GT comes not simply from generating theory from data but from generating theory free of preconceived frameworks of any kind. So we still read in papers that it is a GT but the authors still use preconceived frameworks and concepts to guide the study.

The Grounded Theory Review (2012), Volume 11, Issue 2

Deciphering Unwritten Rules

Anna Sandgren, Jönköping University

Abstract

The aim of this study was to develop a classic grounded theory of patients, relatives and nurses in palliative cancer care. Data from three earlier studies conducted in palliative care were analyzed. "Deciphering unwritten rules" emerged as the pattern of behavior through which patients, relatives and nurses are dealing with the uncertainty of how to act and behave in palliative cancer care. Deciphering means finding out what the rules mean and trying to interpret them and this can be done consciously or unnoticed. Deciphering unwritten rules involves the strategies figuring out, deliberating, maneuvering and evaluating. This theory demonstrates the complexities of palliative care and the importance of knowledge, counseling and resources for all involved.

Introduction

Palliative care is a caring philosophy with the goal to achieve the best possible quality of life for both patients and relatives when facing problems related to life-threatening illness (World Health Organization, 2003). The adjustment and transition to palliative care takes time for patients and relatives, and involves shifting the care goals from curing to caring (Duggleby & Berry, 2005). In the 1960's it was common for patients not to be informed of their impending death; so the awareness of dying among patients and relatives was mostly a closed awareness (Glaser & Strauss, 1965). The pendulum has shifted during the last decades towards open awareness, where those involved talk more about death than they have in the past (Andrews & Nathaniel, 2009).

Powerlessness and helplessness is common in dying patients (Sand, Strang, & Milberg, 2008) who often oscillate between different feelings such as hopelessness and hope (Melin-Johansson, Odling, Axelsson, & Danielson, 2008). So even if patients have a lower quality of life in many dimensions during their last months of life, they can still experience happiness and satisfaction (Sahlberg-Blom, Ternestedt, & Johansson, 2001). For the relatives, the situation is new and they need to make adjustments, although they want to keep on living as normally as possible (Appelin, Broback, & Bertero, 2005; Sandgren, Thulesius, Petersson, & Fridlund, 2010), yet having a twofold role; as caregivers and as relatives suffering anxiety and physical exhaustion (Broback & Bertero, 2003). Both patients and relatives can be hypersensitive to what happens during the dying trajectory and this hypersensitivity is energy draining (Sandgren et al., 2010). It has been shown that adequate information and support from the health professionals early in the disease trajectory decrease relatives' needs throughout the dying trajectory and increases their trust and confidence towards the health professionals (Kristjanson & White, 2002; Wenrich et al., 2003).

Caring for cancer patients can be both challenging and rewarding for nurses (Corner, 2002; Penson, Dignan, Canellos, Picard, & Lynch, 2000) who often want to go beyond the diagnostic concept of cancer and care for the whole person (Bertero, 1999). A balance between being close to the patients and distancing themselves is needed to avoid the risk of

being emotionally overloaded (Sandgren, Thulesius, Fridlund, & Petersson, 2006). Palliative care can also be seen as a balancing act, where health professionals need to balance the needs for care with the resources to give care (Thulesius, Hakansson, & Petersson, 2003). There can be a tension or a gap between nurses' caregiving ideals and the reality of daily work. Nurses can be aware of their ideal of how to give good palliative care, but the possibilities to realize these are often small (Tishelman et al., 2004). To give high quality palliative care, health professionals need to know what is important for those involved. The aim of this study was therefore to generate a grounded theory explaining the latent patterns of behavior of patients, relatives and nurses in palliative cancer care in general hospitals and in homecare. The research question guiding the study was: What is the main concern for palliative cancer patients, their relatives and nurses and how do they resolve it?

Method

Classic grounded theory was chosen since it suited the research question. Grounded theory methodology provides a way to explore the latent pattern of behavior of the participants (Glaser, 1978, 1998) and is suitable for nursing research (Nathaniel & Andrews, 2007).

In this study, the analysis was mostly done using previously collected data. Glaser (1998) argues that secondary data analysis can be used on data collected for other purposes and is worthwhile to theoretically sample and analyze. Grounded theory focuses on conceptualization instead of descriptions which means that the concepts that emerge from the data will transcend the data and make the theory abstract of time, place and people. Glaser stresses that using secondary data is timesaving for the grounded theorist since less time is spent on data collection.

The analytic process started with open coding of data from three earlier grounded theory studies as a basis for concept generation: *Striving for Emotional Survival* (Sandgren et al., 2006), *Doing Good Care* (Sandgren, Thulesius, Petersson, & Fridlund, 2007) and *Living on Hold* (Sandgren et al., 2010). These studies were all related to the behavior of patients, relatives and nurses in palliative cancer care, and were conducted in general hospitals and in home care settings in Sweden between 2004 and 2009. The formal interviews from the three studies were done with 16 nurses in acute care settings (Sandgren et al., 2006), 33 nurses in community care (Sandgren et al., 2007) and 25 cancer patients in a palliative phase and their relatives (Sandgren et al., 2010). During the open coding, focus was on the following questions: What is the main concern being faced by patients, relatives and nurses, and what accounts for the continual resolving of this concern? The purpose of these questions is to keep the analyst theoretically sensitive and to avoid description when analyzing, collecting and coding data (Glaser, 1998). It should be emphasized that data collection and data analysis are not seen as separate processes in grounded theory; rather, as concurrently conducted (Glaser, 1998). When the core category had emerged, the selective coding process began where further data collection and coding were delimited to the categories related to the core category.

Theoretical sampling guided where to collect more data in order to refine and elaborate emergent categories and how the categories related to the core category in the emergent theory. Theoretical saturation occurs when no new properties emerge; the same properties continue to emerge when coding and analyzing the new data (Glaser, 1978). To saturate the emerging concepts, previously conducted interviews in palliative care from both published (Thulesius et al., 2003) and unpublished studies were analyzed. Consistent with the grounded theory concept "all is data" (Glaser, 1998, p. 8), data analyzed consisted of interviews, field notes, memos from informal interviews and participant observations at

cancer care conferences. Casual conversations or unplanned conversations with health professionals and others involved in the substantive area were also used as data for constant comparison. Since the author has worked in cancer care at a surgical ward, the author's experiences and preconceived thoughts were written down and compared with the other data, also in line with the "all is data" dictum (Glaser, 1998).

During the analysis process, memos were written to capture emergent theorizing at any time and place, often in the shape of figures and text to capture creative ideas. Glaser (1998, p. 177) explains that memos are the "theorizing write-up of ideas about substantive codes and their theoretically coded relationships as they emerge during coding, collecting and analyzing data and during memoing". Memoing is seen as foundational in classic grounded theory; without memos there could be no grounded theory. Memos on memos were also written and later on, the memos were then sorted in the theoretical coding process and written up as the theory of deciphering unwritten rules. In the theoretical coding process, relationships between the categories and the core category emerged through the hand sorting of memos.

In accordance with classic grounded theory, the literature review was not undertaken until the substantive theory was formulated. The literature was then used as another source of data for constant comparative analysis (Glaser, 1998).

Ethical issues are important to discuss when using secondary analysis (Andrews, Higgins, Waring, & Lalor, 2012). In this study, all the previous studies included as data were approved by The Regional Ethics Committee of Lund University, Sweden and by responsible managers for the hospitals and the home care in the municipalities involved. Written informed consent was obtained from the participants before the formal interviews. During the secondary analysis all the original transcripts, field notes and memos were anonymized with no possibility of tracing the participants in the different studies.

Theory

Unspoken expectations and unwritten rules of how to behave in different situations exist although nobody talks about them. In different caring contexts, there are various unwritten rules which may entail contrasting types of atmosphere. It can be hard to pinpoint what makes the difference, but one possible explanation is that unwritten rules can create special atmospheres. Unwritten rules can deal with values and attitudes individuals expect to have confirmed or accepted.

The uncertainty of how to act and behave in an appropriate and correct way in different situations emerged as the main concern for nurses, patients and relatives in palliative cancer care. Everybody understands that there are unspoken rules to follow but it can be difficult to learn them since they are continually changing and differ from situation to situation. Not knowing how to act or behave was explained as "struggling against a faceless, invisible giant". Not knowing what was expected of them caused uncertainty that can be exhaustive, creating emotional fear of being unsafe. There is therefore a need for certitude, or creating certainty in an uncertain situation. Handling the uncertainty of how to act and behave therefore requires constantly deciphering the unwritten rules. Deciphering means finding out what the rules indicate and trying to interpret them in actual situations, which can be done consciously but most of the time the rules are deciphered subconsciously.

Health professionals may signal to patients and relatives, wittingly or unwittingly, how they are supposed to behave and what problems are important from the professionals'

perspectives. This influences the interaction regarding what issues they are allowed to talk about or not. One example of deciphering unwritten rules can be how to deal with sensitive issues depending on the persons involved and the actual context. There can be unwritten rules such as: "Don't talk about the problem", "Act like nothing has happened", "Don't say things to upset the ill person", "Don't talk about your feelings and absolutely do not show your feelings in the open", "Open feelings leads to conflict". Deciphered unwritten rules of how to behave could actually lead to decreased instead of increased security for those involved. This insecurity can be regarded as "walking on eggshells" when the individual does not know how to act. The complexity increases when, for example, patients are cared for in different caring contexts with totally different unwritten rules. With fast changes, patients do not have the energy to decipher the unwritten rules, and may surrender with the attitude "do whatever you want to do with me; you know what is best for me".

For nurses, there are also unwritten rules regarding workplace etiquette, which means that nurses are supposed to have certain values or behave in a certain way. There can be an unspoken rule like: "Good is not good enough". This means that as nurses, they need to overdo things to show other professions that they can do what is expected of them and even do better than necessary.

Deciphering unwritten rules is done by patients, relatives and nurses and is necessary for deciding if the rules are to be followed or not. How patients, relatives and nurses decipher unwritten rules depends on their personality and experiences. For nurses, it also depends on their caring behavior, i.e. anticipatory caring, momentary caring or stagnated caring. Anticipatory caring is done by advanced care planning through foreseeing trajectories, creating trust, collaborating and prioritizing. The nurses are driven by their intention of doing their best or even better than necessary. Momentary caring is done by temporary solutioning through moment prioritizing and sporadic collaborating. The nurses are doing as good as possible in every situation but lack the resources to render anticipatory care. Stagnated caring entails avoiding changes and resigning (giving up). Nurses giving stagnated care are doing only what is expected of them which could be caused by resigning or low emotional competence. Emotional competence refers to emotional skills at handling emotionally charged situations (Sandgren et al., 2007).

How nurses decipher unwritten rules can also determine how nurses process their emotions while caring for palliative cancer patients (Sandgren et al., 2006). For patients and relatives, it can depend on their mode of being while living a life on hold; fighting, adjusting or surrendering. Patients and relatives can either be in the same mode or in different modes simultaneously. In the fighting mode, patients and relatives are striving to get back to the normal lives they had before the cancer literally took over. The fighting mode involves renormalizing, rebelling, blaming, foreseeing and scrutinizing. In the adjusting mode, patients and relatives are adjusting to a new normality and try to avoid letting the cancer control their lives. They adjust to the new normal by moment-living, diminishing and façading. In the surrendering mode, patients and relatives are giving up to a life on hold through total trusting and releasing control (Sandgren et al., 2010).

Even though patients, relatives and nurses are deciphering, the strategies used are more or less common. Therefore, some examples are highlighted under the strategies, but it should be emphasized that the persons involved can use all the strategies in the process. Deciphering unwritten rules is a continuous process which involves *figuring out, deliberating, maneuvering* and *evaluating.*

Figuring out

Figuring out means finding out which rules are valid and present in novel situations. Figuring out unwritten rules is done when entering a new caring context, meeting new people, when being in a new situation or when experiencing new symptoms. Figuring out the unwritten rules can be experienced as an unattainable goal. Although the rules are unwritten, patients, relatives and nurses have a tacit awareness of the existing rules, but since this shared awareness is not communicated verbally, unwritten rules may be taken for granted and therefore easily missed by someone new to the situation. Ruminating over how to act and behave can paralyze the involved persons and decrease their ability to figure out the unwritten rules, which can be done in an active way or in a passive way.

Figuring out in an active way

Figuring out the rules in an active way is done through *moment capturing* and *constantly questioning*. Moment capturing means every opportunity is taken to figure out the unspoken rules. Constantly questioning the care is a way to handle the insecurity of not knowing the unwritten rules. Through questioning, patients, relatives and nurses get attention from the people around them which may lead to a disclosure of the unwritten rules. The purpose of deciphering unwritten rules is important when figuring out the rules in an active way. For example, patients and relatives in the fighting mode may experience insecurity when lacking information and support, but with knowledge of the unwritten rules they can find out how to act to get what they need. A genuine desire of doing good helps nurses engaged in anticipatory caring to figure out which unwritten rules are useful to get them what they want. Both at a personal level but also when giving palliative care.

Figuring out in a passive way

Figuring out in a passive way is done through *passing over* or *acting incompetent*. Passing over means letting other people figure out the rules. Nurses engaged in stagnated caring and patients and relatives in the surrendering mode may not have the emotional sensitivity to figure out the rules by themselves. Instead, they let those around them take that responsibility and then copy and follow their acting. Passing over is easier for patients and relatives than for nurses, although it is possible to pass over during a short period of time without impacting the care.

Acting incompetent is a way to passively figure out the rules. Even though participants may have the ability to figure out the rules in an active way, it is more convenient to be passive and act incompetent. Being in the adjusting mode for patients and relatives leads to insecurity of not knowing how to act and since they do not want to show their vulnerability, they act incompetent to figure out the rules. From a professional perspective, patients and relatives seem to deny the situation, which can be difficult for professionals to handle. Nurses also act incompetent to receive help in disclosing unwritten rules in order to get what they need from the situation.

Deliberating

After figuring out the unwritten rules, patients, relatives and nurses deliberate as to how these rules might affect their situation and how they will act in relation to the rules. They consider which rules to apply to receive the best outcome from their point of view and there can be different reasons for this deliberating. Patients and relatives might deliberate how to act to get the treatment they want or receive the “right” care for the moment.

Inability to deliberate could be caused by lack of energy, lack of knowledge or low motivation, but insecurity and low emotional competence also affect how the involved deliberate the rules. Being in the fighting mode motivates patients and relatives to deliberate the rules in their favor since knowing the rules and how to handle them increases

their feeling of security. On the other hand, patients and relatives in the surrendering mode are not active in deliberating which rules to apply; they just follow the people around them and hope for the best. Acting incompetent can also be used when deliberating the optimal way of dealing with the rules.

Deliberating which rules to apply or not can be affected by dual protection in a family. Dual protection means a relational security: "I will be okay if you will be okay". Deliberating can also be affected by patients' posthumous caring, which means protecting by taking care of what will happen to the relatives after the patient's death. This includes financial and practical issues to secure the family's future. Patients therefore deliberate which rules to apply to be able to reach their goals.

Before deciding which rules to apply, the rules may be tested to find out if they have been deciphered correctly and if they are good to follow or not. Nurses in momentary caring are often testing consequences of newly deciphered rules in specific situations. They are moment-prioritizing which means that they are solving a problem when it arises and under the circumstances doing their best.

Maneuvering

After deliberating, patients, relatives and nurses maneuver the rules by either *following rules, ignoring rules, rebelling against rules, rule bending, rule breaking* or *rule making*.

Following rules

The decision to follow unwritten rules may depend on the anticipated positive benefits of acting by the rules. Some rules are, from a personal perspective, good to follow while other rules may not be so good. Yet, the outcomes are more important than the rules themselves so sometimes patients, relatives or nurses feel forced to follow the unwritten rules to be able to get what they want out of the situation. Although the rules may give the expected outcome, there is a risk of losing one's own values and attitudes when complying with new rules. Having high emotional competence facilitates deciding which rule to apply in any given situation. Through façading, they pretend to follow the rules, but instead they collect clues of how to decipher the unwritten rules by observing how others behave and copying their behavior. By façading, patients, relatives and nurses maintain the image of knowing and following rules, even though they have not figured out the meaning of the rules. There is a constant emotional fear of breaking rules and of the consequences of rule breaking. This fear might increase among patients and relatives who want to do everything as expected, and not causing any problems for the health professionals.

Not everyone has the ability to decipher unwritten rules and patients and relatives can become insecure as how to interpret them. Also, if patients, relatives and nurses disclose their ignorance of how to act by showing vulnerability and insecurity, they may lose their façade, leading to feelings of failure.

Ignoring rules

Ignoring rules is used as an emotional protection and may be caused by problems with deliberating rules. Since they do not understand the meaning of the rules, it is easier to deny them than to try and decipher them. Pretending that the rules do not affect them, patients, relatives and nurses can live their lives as usual for as long as possible. Patients or relatives, who have been disappointed in earlier situations, may ignore rules to protect themselves from being emotionally hurt again. Patients and relatives in the adjusting mode may seem to deny unwritten rules since they do not act as expected, even though they often suffer in silence. Ignoring rules is common among nurses in stagnated caring, since they do not want any changes. Nurses in both momentary and stagnated caring may ignore

rules when they experience new situations and have to learn several things at the same time.

Rebelling against rules

If the unwritten rules do not fall in line with personal values, an individual may rebel against the rules. Patients and relatives in the adjusting mode may choose to rebel against the rules rather than ignore them. Rules regarding how to act towards the end of life might be upsetting for patients and relatives. When they do not accept that death is inevitable, they may rebel against these rules.

When nurses use anticipatory caring, they may rebel against rules that go against their values and the goals of palliative care. Since they want to be one step ahead, there might be unwritten rules hindering this approach. Rebelling against rules may lead to rule bending and later on to rule breaking. Also, nurses in stagnated caring may rebel against the rules; this is often due to incompetence and lack of knowledge as to how to maneuver new rules. In such cases, it is more convenient to follow ingrained rules.

There can also be a rebelling against working etiquette rules for nurses. One provocative unwritten rule could be: “Nursing is a mission in life and you must be a ’Nightingale sister’ and sacrifice yourself if you want to work here”. This unwritten rule can be upsetting and nurses openly rebel against it through rule breaking which then leads to rule making to change this provocative unwritten rule.

Rule bending

As mentioned, rebelling against rules might lead to rule bending. Sometimes the rules are bent as much as possible to get what is wanted without breaking the rules. There might also be ways around the rules and by bending the rules, they can indirectly follow the rules but in a somewhat devious way.

By sweetening up nurses, patients and relatives bend the rules to get more attention and receive wanted recognition and the expected care. Sweetening up means that they use flatteries and praise to get what they want. While recognizing that sweetening up nurses, may not be the best way to maneuver the rules, they see it as necessary to receive the outcomes they want in a specific situation.

Rule breaking

Rule breaking can be a consequence of rule bending where patients, relatives or nurses have tried to follow the rules by bending them, but they have realized that it is impossible to continue bending. Both nurses in anticipatory caring and stagnated caring use this strategy, but for different reasons. Nurses in anticipatory caring are rule breaking with the intention of making new rules, while nurses in stagnated caring are rule breaking because they do not have the emotional competence to decipher the rules. For both patients and relatives as well as for nurses, rule breaking may lead to rule making, where new rules are created in order to receive expected outcomes or to give good quality care.

Rule making

Rule making and rule inventing may occur when situations are affected by a lot of changes. Unwritten rules change just like written rules but with unwritten rules, it is unknown who made them and therefore there is no one to blame for the rules. Rule making can threaten to change the atmosphere of a workplace since new rules at first increase the uncertainty until everybody has deciphered the new rules. Nurses in anticipatory caring may create new rules or recreate old ones so that they fit their intentions and ambitions with the care. These new rules may lead to frustration for other nurses and if they do not have the ability or the

energy to decipher these new rules, they may resign to stagnated caring where they ignore the new rules or they may even change workplace in order to find an emotionally safe workplace with rules they can maneuver.

Patients and relatives in the fighting mode may create new rules if they cannot decipher the existing rules, or if they do not receive the excepted outcomes. New situations with new rules may also lead to a possible change of mode being for patients and relatives.

Evaluating

Patients, relatives and nurses are continually evaluating their maneuvering of unwritten rules and its consequences. Evaluating means assessing the outcomes from the maneuvering strategies. When evaluating the maneuvering of rules, they may discover that the chosen maneuvering strategy did not deliver the outcomes they expected, and they may therefore deliberate to change the maneuvering of the rules. If nurses in stagnated caring have ignored rules in order to avoid changes later discover that this strategy does not protect them emotionally, they may have to figure out the rules to find another way to maneuver them in order to survive emotionally. Even though those involved may be unaware of the unwritten rules, these rules underpin how they act and make sense of the situation. Although some rules seem irrelevant from an outside perspective, these rules help in navigating the situation. Unwritten rules also help those involved to find their place and to feel safe in the situation, even though it was not their decision to be there since they did not have any other option.

When a situation changes or something unexpected happens, patients, relatives or nurses may need to decipher the new unwritten rules and the deciphering process then starts again. This process is often continuous since there always seems to be new unwritten rules to decipher, triggered by new symptoms or changed symptom burdens, health professionals' acting, new routines, change of hospital ward for patients or a new organization, etc.

Discussion

Grounded theory provided a way to explore the latent pattern of behavior of patients, relatives and nurses in palliative cancer care. Deciphering unwritten rules emerged as the pattern of behavior through which they deal with their main concern; how to act and behave in palliative cancer care. Deciphering unwritten rules can be done in different ways, depending on personality, experiences and the situation.

In this study, secondary analysis was used on previously collected data. Andrews et al. (2012) identify several challenges of secondary data analysis. For example, identifying the main concern may take a long time and require a lot of coding and recoding. Identifying the main concern in this study did not take a long time, which can be explained by the large amount of interviews and detailed field notes which were included as data. When using secondary analysis, theoretical sampling can also be a challenge if the researcher has no possibility to collect new data to saturate the concepts. However the researcher can move back and forth between the existing data and theoretically sample for ideas and concepts that emerge (Andrews et al., 2012). In this study, theoretical sampling was done through collecting more data from previous studies and through informal interviews with nurses and casual conversations with persons involved in palliative care.

It should be emphasized that the theory *Deciphering Unwritten Rules* does not represent patients', relatives' and nurses' entire doing or being, but is seen as one important

pattern of behavior in which they are engaged. Further research is needed to saturate and fully develop this theory and the impacts of its different strategies. Although the theory might well be expanded to other areas to contribute to an understanding of how people are deciphering unwritten rules in different situations and caring contexts, to determine if the theory fits other areas, further research is needed to modify the present theory to optimize the fit.

The concept *unwritten rules* has been previously used and described but with various definitions in different areas, such as in pediatric care (Sorlie, Jansson, & Norberg, 2003), family therapy (Feinauer, Larson, & Harper, 2010) and depression in primary care (Wittink, Barg, & Gallo, 2006). So unwritten rules not only exist in palliative cancer care; they exist everywhere and are a consequence of the values and attitudes of the people involved. Mason (2007) suggests that unwritten rules can be life sustaining, but can also be distressing when nurses feel that they are not acting as they are supposed to act, due to unit values or expectations from the staff.

Wengstrom and Ekedahl (2006) point out the importance of understanding and interpreting the hidden codes and the unattainable goals, otherwise professional identities will not be clear when the codes are indistinct. The *deciphering unwritten rules* theory can therefore help professionals to develop their professional identities through knowledge of how to maneuver the rules. Although health professionals need to be aware of the existence of unwritten rules, they also need to assist new professionals in the workplace to be able to decipher the rules. Health professionals may assume that they talk and refer to the same thing when caring, but actually they have different definitions and attitudes and in reality they are not referring to the same thing at all. Mason (2007) suggests that in some workplace cultures new nurses can be ignored and offered little guidance as to what is expected of them. The new nurses have to learn the rules of the game by themselves and this can be utterly demoralizing. Wengstrom and Ekedahl (2006) argue that when nurses understand the codes and routines in the workplace, it diminishes the risk of changing workplaces.

Deciphering unwritten rules shows that rules and codes may help nurses to work, but they have to be clear and articulated. Nurses can, as time goes by, decipher the existing rules at their workplace and learn the new rules which are constantly being created. On the other hand, patients and relatives have a more complex situation since they have to decipher unwritten rules in more than one context. Patients are often cared for in different caring contexts during a disease trajectory; for example, their own homes, nursing homes, acute care hospital wards and palliative units. During this time, they meet health professionals with different caring behaviors. Since every caring context has its own set of unwritten rules, patients and relatives constantly need to figure out how to act and behave by deciphering the unwritten rules and then remembering which rules are valid in what specific context.

An earlier study shows that families may experience that they are “reinventing the wheel” when they struggle with the same issues as many other families (such as administrative and logistical needs), but lack the knowledge of how to handle them (Rabow, Hauser, & Adams, 2004). Unspoken expectations may affect those involved in different ways (Thomas, Morris, & Harman, 2002; Wengstrom & Ekedahl, 2006). Health professionals may for example signal to patients and relatives what is permissible to talk about and what is not, but they cannot then decipher the responding signals. It was found in an earlier study that physicians wittingly or unwittingly signaled to patients how their emotional problems would be addressed (Wittink et al., 2006). For example, if professionals do not ask about patients’ and relatives’ needs or preferences, the care will be professional-centered rather

than patient-centered (Widmark-Petersson, von Essen, & Sjoden, 2000). It has been argued that mismatched perceptions may affect the caring relationship as well as the quality of care (O'Baugh, Wilkes, Luke, & George, 2003). With this in mind, it is crucial to ask rather than assume what patients and relatives find important. Giving information and having good communication at the appropriate levels can assist all who are involved in figuring out and deliberating which rules are to be followed.

This theory demonstrates the complexities in palliative cancer care, often unrecognized by those involved. Health professionals need to assist all who are involved to be able to decipher the rules and make invisible rules visible by being sensitive to what patients and relatives want to know. For example, if patients and/or relatives are in a surrendering mode, where they have resigned or surrendered and do not want any participation in the care (Sandgren et al., 2010), it can be frustrating for nurses with an anticipatory caring behavior, where they want to be one step ahead and involve the patients and the relatives in the care (Sandgren et al., 2007). It can create clashes between health professionals and patients or relatives as well as within families if there are different behavioral modes with different abilities to decipher the unwritten rules.

For nurses, frustration can result when colleagues do not want to follow the rules and become rule breakers or perhaps start to create new rules. Depending on the attitudes and the allowance of rule breakers and new thinkers, a nurse may have difficulties being accepted which can lead to insecurity and finally a change of workplace in order to survive emotionally (Sandgren et al., 2006). It is therefore important to make unwritten rules visible, not taking anything for granted or assuming that everybody involved knows about such rules. This can be done through open dialogues at the workplaces and through creating open atmospheres where it is allowed to disclose the unwritten rules.

Conclusion

The theory of Deciphering Unwritten Rules explains how patients, relatives and nurses in palliative cancer care handle the uncertainty of how to act and behave in different situations. They are continually deciphering unwritten rules and the different ways they deal with these unwritten rules affect not only their experiences but also the quality of care. It therefore seems important to uncover the unwritten rules and talk about them. Security may increase when the unwritten rules turn into spoken rules and all involved know what is expected of them. How to facilitate the deciphering for everybody involved in palliative cancer care is indeed a call for future research. This theory may well fit other substantive areas, after some modification, thereby contributing an understanding of how people are deciphering unwritten rules in different situations and caring contexts.

References

Andrews, L., Higgins, A., Waring, M., & Lalor, J. (2012). Classic grounded theory to analyse secondary data: reality and reflections. *The Grounded Theory Review, 11* (1), 12-26.

Andrews, T., & Nathaniel, A. K. (2009). Awareness of dying revisited. *Journal of Nursing Care Quality, 24*(3), 189-193.

Appelin, G., Broback, G., & Bertero, C. (2005). A comprehensive picture of palliative care at home from the people involved. *European Journal of Oncology Nursing, 9*(4), 315-324.

Bertero, C. (1999). Caring for and about cancer patients: identifying the meaning of the phenomenon "caring" through narratives. *Cancer Nursing, 22*(6), 414-420.

Broback, G., & Bertero, C. (2003). How next of kin experience palliative care of relatives at home. *European Journal of Cancer Care, 12*(4), 339-346.

Corner, J. (2002). Nurses' experiences of cancer. *European Journal of Cancer Care, 11*(3), 193-199.

Duggleby, W., & Berry, P. (2005). Transitions and shifting goals of care for palliative patients and their families. *Clinical Journal of Oncology Nursing, 9*(4), 425-428.

Feinauer, ID., Larson, JH., & Harper, JM. (2010). Implicit family process rules and adolescent psychological symptoms. *The American Journal of Family Therapy, 38*(1), *63-72.*

Glaser, B. G. (1978). *Theoretical sensitivity*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.

Glaser, B. G. (1998). *Doing grounded theory: Issues and discussions*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.

Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (1965). *Awareness of dying* (2nd ed.). N.Y.: Aldine Publishing Company.

Kristjanson, L. J., & White, K. (2002). Clinical support for families in the palliative care phase of hematologic or oncologic illness. *Hematology/Oncology Clinics of North America, 16*(3), 745-762.

Mason, D. J. (2007). On our shoulders. *The American Journal of Nursing, 107*(9), 11.

Melin-Johansson, C., Odling, G., Axelsson, B., & Danielson, E. (2008). The meaning of quality of life: Narrations by patients with incurable cancer in palliative home care. *Palliative & Supportive Care, 6*(3), 231-238.

Nathaniel, A. K., & Andrews, T. (2007). How grounded theory can improve nursing care quality. *Journal of Nursing Care Quality, 22*(4), 350-357.

O'Baugh, J., Wilkes, L. M., Luke, S., & George, A. (2003). 'Being positive': perceptions of patients with cancer and their nurses. *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 44*(3), 262-270.

Penson, R. T., Dignan, F. L., Canellos, G. P., Picard, C. L., & Lynch, T. J., Jr. (2000). Burnout: caring for the caregivers. *Oncologist, 5*(5), 425-434.

Rabow, M. W., Hauser, J. M., & Adams, J. (2004). Supporting family caregivers at the end of life: "they don't know what they don't know". *JAMA: the Journal of the American Medical Association, 291*(4), 483-491.

Sahlberg-Blom, E., Ternestedt, B. M., & Johansson, J. E. (2001). Is good 'quality of life' possible at the end of life? An explorative study of the experiences of a group of

cancer patients in two different care cultures. *Journal of Clinical Nursing, 10*(4), 550-562.

Sand, L., Strang, P., & Milberg, A. (2008). Dying cancer patients' experiences of powerlessness and helplessness. *Supportive Care in Cancer, 16*(7), 853-862.

Sandgren, A., Thulesius, H., Fridlund, B., & Petersson, K. (2006). Striving for emotional survival in palliative cancer nursing. *Qualitative Health Research, 16*(1), 79-96.

Sandgren, A., Thulesius, H., Petersson, K., & Fridlund, B. (2007). "Doing Good Care" - a study of palliative home nursing care. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-being, 2*(4), 227-235.

Sandgren, A., Thulesius, H., Petersson, K., & Fridlund, B. (2010). Living on hold in palliative cancer care. *The Grounded Theory Review, 9*(1), 79-100.

Sorlie, V., Jansson, L., & Norberg, A. (2003). The meaning of being in ethically difficult care situations in pediatrics care as narrated by female registered nurses. *Scandinavian Journal of Caring Sciences, 17*(3), 285-292.

Thomas, C., Morris, S. M., & Harman, J. C. (2002). Companions through cancer: the care given by informal carers in cancer contexts. *Social Science & Medicine, 54*(4), 529-544.

Thulesius, H., Hakansson, A., & Petersson, K. (2003). Balancing: a basic process in end-of-life cancer care. *Qualitative Health Research, 13*(10), 1353-1377.

Tishelman, C., Bernhardson, B. M., Blomberg, K., Borjeson, S., Franklin, L., & Ternestedt, B.M. (2004). Complexity in caring for patients with advanced cancer. *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 45*(4), 420-429.

Wengstrom, Y., & Ekedahl, M. (2006). The art of professional development and caring in cancer nursing. *Nursing & Health Sciences, 8*(1), 20-26.

Wenrich, M. D., Curtis, J. R., Ambrozy, D. A., Carline, J. D., Shannon, S. E., & Ramsey, P. G. (2003). Dying patients' need for emotional support and personalized care from physicians: perspectives of patients with terminal illness, families, and health care providers. *Journal of Pain and Symptom Management, 25*(3), 236-246.

World Health Organization (2003). WHO - Definition of palliative care., Retrieved from http://www.who.int/cancer/palliative/definition/en/

Widmark-Petersson, V., von Essen, L., & Sjoden, P. O. (2000). Perceptions of caring among patients with cancer and their staff. Differences and disagreements. *Cancer Nursing, 23*(1), 32-39.

Wittink, M. N., Barg, F. K., & Gallo, J. J. (2006). Unwritten rules of talking to doctors about depression: integrating qualitative and quantitative methods. *Annals of Family Medicine, 4*(4), 302-309.

Surviving Grounded Theory Research Method in an Academic World: Proposal Writing and Theoretical Frameworks

Naomi Elliott, Trinity College Dublin
Agnes Higgins, Trinity College Dublin

Abstract

Grounded theory research students are frequently faced with the challenge of writing a research proposal and using a theoretical framework as part of the academic requirements for a degree programme. Drawing from personal experiences of two PhD graduates who used classic grounded theory in two different universities, this paper highlights key lessons learnt which may help future students who are setting out to use grounded theory method. It identifies key discussion points that students may find useful when engaging with critical audiences, and defending their grounded theory thesis at final examination. Key discussion points included are: the difference between inductive and deductive inquiry; how grounded theory method of data gathering and analysis provide researchers with a viable means of generating new theory; the primacy of the questions used in data gathering and data analysis; and, the research-theory link as opposed to the theory-research link.

Introduction

The aim of this paper is to help grounded theory research students deal with challenges arising from doing grounded theory research within an academic context and meeting the requirements of their degree programmes. The status of grounded theory research method in academia is contested (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007); insofar as it is considered that some aspects of grounded theory method do not conform to traditional conventions of academic research. Although each grounded theory research project gives rise to a unique set of challenges, when working in an academic environment that is unfamiliar with grounded theory, there are common problems that many students and researchers experience. Two recurring problems experienced by numerous grounded theory students across Canada and Europe (Luckerhoff & Guillemette, 2011; Walls, Parahoo*, &* Fleming, 2010) relate to the initial literature review and use of a theoretical framework. For students, these are key issues, not only at the start of their research project, but at the end stage when defending their grounded theory thesis at final examination.

Drawing from personal experiences of two PhD graduates who used classic grounded theory in two universities, one UK (Queen's University, Belfast) and one Irish (Trinity College Dublin), this paper highlights key lessons learned that may help students who are setting out to use grounded theory method. Key discussion points are also identified that students may use when engaging with critical audiences when discussing grounded theory method with other researchers, writing up the thesis, defending at viva or doing conference presentations.

Tensions between Grounded Theory and Traditional Research Approaches

Since its introduction by Glaser and Strauss in 1967, grounded theory is increasingly being used as a research method in diverse areas. It provides a viable means for scholars and participants to generate a new and emic perspective, and to generate theory that is grounded in the realities of the participants' daily life experiences. However, the hegemony of traditional research approach gives rise to difficulties for those researchers who wish to pursue an approach that is outside the traditional research conventions. Many of the tensions between grounded theory and traditional research stem from differences that are rooted in the differences between inductive and deductive enquiry. A key feature of grounded theory is it provides for inductive enquiry, a means of generating new theory and new understandings, and requires researchers to identify the research problem from the research participants' perspectives. By contrast, traditional research provides for deductive enquiry, a means of proving or disproving existing theory and requires researchers to identify the research problem from the extant literature. The traditional research process begins with a literature review, which is used to inform the research question and theoretical framework that ultimately guides data collection and analysis. The crux of the problem for many research students undertaking academic degree programmes is that a literature review is required in order to complete the research proposal, application forms for ethical approval and/or financial funding. At doctoral level, consideration of the theoretical framework underpinning the research study may also be needed in order to satisfy research supervisors and degree requirements.

Challenge 1: Developing a Proposal to meet Academic Requirements

A key challenge facing research students is how to develop a research proposal that meets academic requirements. The process of doing a research proposal involves critical analysis of the extant literature in order to map out what is already known about the topic and to identify the gaps in knowledge (McGhee, Marland, & Atkinson, 2007; Dunne, 2011). At doctoral level, this is critical, as generating new knowledge is a criterion for the award of a PhD (e.g. National Framework of Qualifications, undated; Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2008). In keeping with the traditional research perspective, Hart (1998) suggests that a prior literature review in the substantive area helps the researcher to think rigorously about the topic and develop a conceptual map of the subject area, thus ensuring that the subject area is researchable before the research commences. It also helps researchers to narrow the focus of the topic, define the research question, select a theoretical framework, and justify the research methodology. A critical review of the literature is used to generate the research question and consequently, for many students, precedes the selection of a research methodology. In other words, students complete a literature review for the purpose of generating a research question, and it is at this stage they are in a position to select an appropriate methodology to answer the research question. For many research students, including Elliott (2007) and Higgins (2007), they do not set out as "grounded theory" research students. It was only after the required research proposal is completed and grounded theory methodology is selected as the most appropriate methodology that they become PhD grounded theory research students.

Elliott's experience as a doctoral student

In keeping with the academic requirement that doctoral candidates generate new knowledge through their dissertation, Elliott (2007) carried out a scoping exercise of the literature on her area of interest, which was clinical decision-making and advanced nursing practice. In

order to provide a justification for the research proposal, a requirement for registration, a systematic analysis of the decision-making literature was carried out to determine what was already known and what was not known. This identified gaps in the body of knowledge and highlighted that little was known about advanced practitioner's decision-making in community care settings, and that previous studies assumed clinical decision-making was explained by hypothetico-deductive information processing, intuition or heuristics. It was at this point that Elliott was able to identify the research question, "how do advanced practitioners make clinical decisions in community care contexts?", and consider appropriate methodologies including grounded theory.

Similar to Urquhart's (2007) view of the literature review as orientation, Elliott used the literature to identify the area of inquiry and research question, which was to explain how advanced practitioners make clinical decisions in community care contexts. Although Elliott's research proposal involved a critical analysis of the decision-making literature and theory, it was not used to inform data gathering or to formulate the interview questions. Instead, the interview questions followed Glaser's (1998) approach, and asked 'what were your main concerns when making clinical decisions [for the patient you have just treated]?" and "how did you resolve your concerns?' These relatively unstructured, neutral interview questions were critical to ensuring that it did not guide data collection, although an analysis of the decision making literature had been carried out. Using Glaser's questions provided a means of assuring an inductive approach to the research, and a means of surfacing the participants' main concerns and not those emanating from the extant literature.

The potential risk that the review of the clinical decision-making literature could colour data analysis was recognised. Strategies that enable researchers stay close to the data are critical if the potential bias from a literature review is to be avoided. Using Glaser's neutral questions of the data namely, "what is this a study of? What category does this incident indicate? And [sic] what property of what category does this incident indicate" (Glaser, 1998, p. 123), using *in vivo* codes and suspending further literature review until the theory was developed, became important to assuring that data analysis remained focused on the participants' accounts. I*n vivo* codes, which came directly from the clinical practitioners' own words, were important to minimizing potential bias from the literature review. For example, the code "keeping the patient's boundaries" was developed from the following account:

> ..I had to say to her [the patient], no you don't need to talk about them [the patient's thoughts] if you don't want to..because often maybe some of them could be very embarrassing now in a rational conversation ..so its about her being allowed to keep her boundaries so she can be comfortable.

One advantage of using *in vivo* coding, such as "keeping the patient's boundaries," was that it focused the analysis on the participants' accounts, and on eliciting their perspectives rather than that of the extant literature. As coding progressed, *in vivo* codes were eventually superseded by analyst specified categories. However, *in vivo* codes served an important function in the early stages of data analysis by keeping the researcher close to the data.

Being aware that the risk of literature colouring data analysis was greatest when coding the initial interview transcripts, Elliott did a review of her early codes and memos to check if they were linked to the literature. The timing of this review was important, and carried out after the grounded theory had been generated. In so doing, the researcher was not influenced by the literature during the analytic process and theory generation. This review showed that very few codes were linked to the decision-making literature, and as data gathering and analysis progressed, these early codes were superseded by new codes.

Gradually, issues relating to the nurse-patient relationship became the focus of data analysis. The link between the nurse-patient relationship and clinical decision-making had not been identified previously in the literature. Using grounded theory methods in data gathering and analysis, therefore, provided a viable means of generating a new perspective, one that was generated from and relevant to the participant's practice. Although the process of reviewing codes for similarities against preliminary literature reviews is not commonly reported in grounded theory research literature, it provided a useful means of demonstrating to any critic that the theory and its constituent components were grounded in the data.

In summary, although Elliott carried out a critical review of the decision-making literature as part of justifying her PhD research proposal, the literature was not used to inform interview questions. By using the interview questions "what were your main concerns when making clinical decisions [for the patient you have just treated]?' and 'how did you resolve your concerns?," the data gathering focused on eliciting the participants' concerns. The risk that the literature review coloured data analysis was limited by using Glaser's grounded theory data analysis questions, namely "what is this a study of? What category does this incident indicate? And [sic] what property of what category does this incident indicate?" (Glaser, 1998, p.123); including *in vivo* codes during data analysis, and suspending further literature review until after theory development.

Higgins's experience as a doctoral student

Higgins's (2007) research was focused on sexuality and mental health nursing practice. Unlike Elliott, Higgins's research question was formulated prior to engaging in a literature review, and arose from her experience of working in clinical practice and from informal conversations with colleagues. Being convinced that sexuality was an ever present issue within nurse-client relationships; Higgins was interested in how nurses coped, addressed and responded to issues of sexuality within clinical practice. Similarly to Elliott, a detailed review of both nursing and mental health literature was conducted, under the mentorship of a librarian, to ensure that nothing of importance was omitted. This strategy was employed not just for academic registration, but to enhance the likelihood of receiving national funding for the study. The literature review suggested that limited research was conducted in the area, and no framework or model existed that explained or aided understanding of the phenomenon of interest. It was following this review that Higgins selected grounded theory as her preferred methodology, and successfully defended the choice to academic supervisors and funders on the grounds that the key outcome of the study would be "a substantive theory of how mental health nurses respond to issues of sexuality in a clinical practice context." The decision to adopt a classic grounded theory approach only occurred after in-depth study of Grounded Theory method, and attendance at workshops facilitated by Dr. J. Corbin and Dr. B. Glaser, on their respective method. Classic grounded theory was selected for a number of reasons. Firstly, it emphasises letting the problem emerge from the participants' perspective. Secondly, the classic approach, although no less rigorous, seemed flexible enough to allow freedom to follow leads and use a variety of data collection methods, as ideas emerged. Thirdly, the notion of finding a latent pattern of behaviour also fitted with her idea of developing a theory of practice (Glaser, 1978; 1992; 1998; 2001; 2005).

As part of the research proposal for funding, Higgins developed an interview schedule consisting of a list of possible questions for discussion. Following a workshop with Dr. Glaser, she recognised that using the interview schedule at the beginning of the research process was inimical to grounded theory methodology, as it risked pre-framing the problem, and leading participants to talk about the researcher's concerns. Consequently, the real issues

would become obscured. As advised by Glaser (1998) she abandoned the original interview schedule and endeavoured to "instill a spill," by commencing the interviews with a very open and broad statement, which permitted participants to talk freely about their issues. As the study unfolded and categories began to be developed, questions aimed at identifying properties of categories were identified and explored in subsequent interviews. In this way, the interviews gradually became more focused as the emerging concepts determined both the questions asked and the development of a theoretical sample.

Once coding of data commences, the aim is to get the best concept that fits and authentically reflects the data, as opposed to developing concepts by conjecture or importing received concepts from the literature. As Glaser (1998) states, "no theoretical capitalism is tolerated" (p. 31). A number of writers highlight the need to make every effort to uncover and challenge preconceived ideas, and only bring into the study concepts that have earned their way and are supported by data (Blumer, 1969; Glaser, 2001; Schreiber & Noerager-Stern, 2001). In other words, grounded theorists cannot "shop their disciplinary stores for preconceived concepts and dress their data in them" (Charmaz, 2000, p. 511). For example, Higgins had identified some concepts from the literature, such as "lacking comfort", "compliance" and "maintaining silence" and was constantly on alert to anything in the data that might reinforce or refute these concepts. While these concepts did emerge, they only accounted for a small amount of the final theory. Throughout the analysis a combination of *in vivo* codes (come from the language of the participants), and *in vitro* codes (constructed by the researcher to reflect the data) were used. Once the grounded theory concepts were identified, they were modified, sharpened and verified throughout the data collection and analysis phase of the study and concepts that best fitted the data were selected. Similarly, categories, properties and their relationships were checked repeatedly, using the constant comparative process and theoretically sampling, to see if they patterned out in both new data and in previously collected data. This self-correcting process ensured that pet ideas and assumptions were not imposed.

Glaser and Strauss (1967) acknowledge that no researcher can erase from their mind all the literature or theory they know before beginning research. Hence, they identify the importance of cultivating ideas from the literature, within the framework of the developing theory, by constantly comparing one's own and others theoretical ideas with the emerging data. In addition to using the constant comparative process during the coding and analysing stage, Higgins also used analytic memos to capture and track conceptual ideas, and to document her own non-grounded ideas about the emerging theory (Glaser, 1998). Another strategy used was peer debriefing. The role of a peer de-briefer was to ask probing questions of the researcher and help search for alternative perspectives and explanations (Baxter & Eyles, 1997). This approach helped identify ungrounded assumptions prior to commencing and throughout the study; thus, stopping the creative mind from being a conjecturing mind (Glaser, 1998).

Key Discussion Point - GT Questions for Gathering and Analysing Data

The role and place of literature review in grounded theory has generated debate amongst researchers and scholars (McGhee *et al.,* 2007; Walls *et al.,* 2010; Dunne, 2011). From a grounded theory perspective, a pre-research literature review is "inimical" to generating grounded theory (Glaser, 1998, p.67), as preconceptualising the problem, theoretical framework, or concepts have the potential to contaminate the emerging theory, and can result in forcing both the problem and the data into a preconceived model. In Glaser's (1992) view, it is hard enough for researchers to generate their own concepts, without having to contend with "the derailment provided by the literature in the form of conscious or

unrecognised assumptions of what ought to be in the data" (p.31). Conceptual ideas may be conjectured from the literature and superimposed, as opposed to emerging from the data. Since the main concern of the participant cannot be known beforehand, neither can one know the pertinent literature to review. Once the main process has emerged and theory development is at a stage that literature will not derail the researcher from seeing what is going on in the data, the required literature becomes apparent and is reviewed. In other words, "the literature is discovered as the theory is" (Glaser, 1998, p.69). In keeping with the maxim all is data; the literature is then treated like any other source of data, and woven into the theory in the constant comparative process. In this way, it is hoped that the "grounded theorist will generate a theory that transcends the literature, synthesises it at the same time" (Glaser, 1998, p.120), and produces a theory that is relevant and fit for context.

Although discourse on the place and role of literature in grounded theory research is important, what is missing is a discussion about other key determinants of data gathering and analysis. As such, key determinants that directly influence the process are, the questions used to collect data, and the questions asked of the data during the analysis. Researchers bring their own mix of theoretical, academic, professional and personal knowledge into the research field, so the crux of the issue is what questions are used in gathering data and later, what questions are asked of the data during analysis. A critical discussion point, therefore, is how grounded theory methods and the use of relatively neutral questions for gathering and analysing data provide researchers with a means of generating a new and emic perspective; one that is rooted in the participant's perspective. Grounded theory research students can demonstrate this by specifying what questions were used to gather data, and how data analysis informed the subsequent interview questions. Importantly, the logic of the line of inquiry can be demonstrated by tracing the progressive modification of interview questions from the initial interview questions to those used in the final interview. Finally, this issue needs to be discussed in the context of differences between inductive and deductive enquiry.

Challenge 2: What Theoretical Framework is Underpinning your Study?

Another challenge, for grounded theory research students, is how to deal with the question, "what theoretical framework is underpinning your study?" In academic contexts, scholars are responsible for making explicit the assumptions they are using within their research project. The relationship between theory and qualitative research, however, is complex and there are divergent views as to what the term "theoretical framework" means. On the one hand, Anfara and Mertz (2006) define theoretical framework as "..any empirical or quasi-empirical theory of social and/or psychological processes, at a variety of levels (e.g. grand, mid-range, and explanatory), that can be applied to the understanding phenomena" (p. pxxvii). For Anfara and Mertz, theoretical frameworks are not synonymous with methodological issues (e.g. symbolic interactionism, narrative analysis) or research paradigms (e.g. post-positivist or constructivist). By contrast others, such as Wu and Volker (2009), adopt a broader view of theoretical framework, and recommend that researchers articulate an understanding of the philosophical and theoretical underpinnings of the research approach they are using. Although they recognise that "theory is the outcome of [grounded theory] research" (Wu & Volker, 2009, p.2728), they also position grounded theory within symbolic interactionist philosophy without any consideration if this is appropriate. Notwithstanding the different understandings of what theoretical framework means, a challenge for doctoral students undertaking grounded theory research is how to deal with the question, "what theoretical framework is underpinning your study?"

Elliott's experience as a doctoral student

At doctoral level, in addition to generating new knowledge, students are expected to engage in a discussion of their research at higher levels of theory, epistemology and philosophy. The question regarding which theoretical framework was underpinning Elliott's (2007) grounded theory study on clinical-decision making by advanced practitioners was posed by her supervisor in the early stages of her PhD study. A review of the literature identified several scholarly papers on symbolic interactionism and grounded theory (Becker, 1993; Hutchinson, 1993; Morse, 2001; Locke, 2001; Milliken & Schreiber, 2001). Given the predominant view in the literature that asserts a link between grounded theory and symbolic interactionism, Elliott initially reasoned to her supervisor that symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1969) was an appropriate theoretical framework for her study. However, it was only after the grounded theory was developed, when Elliott critically examined her theory to determine how symbolic interactionism had influenced its development that she realised it had not. It became apparent that data gathering and analysis had focused on how advanced practitioners resolved their main concerns when making clinical decisions for patients without influence from symbolic interactionism. The assumption commonly held by research scholars that symbolic interactionism underpins grounded theory was reinforced further during Elliott's experience of publishing a paper, *How to recognise a quality grounded theory study* (Elliott & Lazenbatt, 2005). One reviewer's recommendation that the paper include the link between grounded theory and symbolic interactionism, again reinforced the notion that symbolic interactionism underpins grounded theory.

The main lesson learnt from Elliott's experience, is for grounded theory researchers to avoid falling into the trap of thinking they are using, or that they have to use, symbolic interactionism. Grounded theory methodology does not require symbolic interactionism. The theoretical discussion which characterises a doctoral thesis can be achieved after the grounded theory has been developed, when the new theory is critically discussed with the relevant extant literature. For Elliott, after the theory of mutual intacting had been developed, a search of the theoretical literature led to a discovery of Habermas's theory of communicative action (1984; 1987), and it was only after the grounded theory had been developed it became known that Habermas's theory was most relevant to her discussion. The key issue, therefore, is how can grounded theory researchers know what theories are relevant until their grounded theory has been developed? If grounded theory research students are asked to discuss the issue of theoretical frameworks early in their PhD, perhaps one way of demonstrating that they are theoretically aware is to discuss the theory of grounded theory, in other words the epistemology and the inductive approach to generating new theory.

Higgins's experience as a doctoral student

In the context of Higgins's experience as a doctoral student, part of the requirement for funding involved the demonstration of an awareness of the state of existing theory regarding the phenomenon under study, in order for the funding body to evaluate the proposal. Although a preliminary review of relevant literature and theories (e.g. Foucault theory of power) was conducted prior to the enquiry, they were not used as a theoretical framework to guide the study but, as Glaser (1978) suggested, to help develop theoretical sensitivity. Theoretical sensitivity is the ability to sense the subtleties of the data. A distinction, therefore, must be made between using sensitising concepts to sharpen one's awareness, and using concepts to impose a framework on the data. However, in the early stages of the research there were some suggestions from academic colleagues that Higgins should use

Foucault's (1976; 2001) work as the theoretical framework for the study. The following memo was recorded six month after Higgins had commenced her study.

> Memo title: Using prior theoretical framework
>
> Currently reading Chapter 6 on forcing the data in Doing Grounded Theory (Issues and Discussion). Just realising what was happening in a recent seminar when I presented my research. Came away from the seminar very anxious but now realise that the advice being given was going to force me into looking at a prior theoretical framework (Foucault's work) as a basis for my study. Be careful of perceived wisdom from academic colleagues who have already completed PhD's using a traditional framework. In Glaser's (1998) view, "preconceptualising the problem, theoretical framework, or concepts have the potential to contaminate the emerging theory and can result in forcing both the problem and the data into a preconceived model" (p. 67).

As far back as 1978, Glaser points out that "one needs good scholarship to be a good analyst" (Glaser, 1978, p.12); consequently, to enhance her scholarship and analytical skills, Higgins read various theoretical perspectives throughout the research process. In addition to enhancing her analytical skills, this approach also provided her with some insights into the theoretical codes other theorists used to weave their theory together, and enhanced her understanding of the variety of theoretical codes discussed by Glaser in his text on theoretical coding (Glaser, 2005).

In addition, once the grounded theory was developed, Higgins returned to the literature and reviewed other relevant theories, such as theories of self presentation (Goffman, 1959), cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957), and interpersonal theory of nursing (Peplau, 1952). Following that review, she positioned her own theory of 'Veiling Sexualities' in the context of the wider theoretical literature and discussed how her theory might confirm or refute previous theoretical or philosophical positions.

Key Discussion Point- Interaction between Inductive and Deductive Enquiry

As with the literature review, the use of *à priori* theoretical frameworks within grounded theory research is a contentious issue. Mitchell and Cody (1993) critique grounded theory methodology on the grounds that the role of prior theory is "veiled in obscurity" (p.171). Morse (2001) fears that without a theoretical context to draw on, new researchers may "find themselves rapidly mired in data" (p.9) without the ability to conceptualise or position their study or findings within the existing body of theory. Thus, she states that "literature should not be ignored but rather 'bracketed' and used for comparison with emerging categories" (Morse 2001, p.9). There is no doubt that the role of existing theory in grounded theory differs from that of the traditional research approaches. This is not to suggest, however, that the generation of a grounded theory proceeds in isolation of existing theory, or that a grounded theory is atheoretical. Glaser and Strauss (1967) acknowledge that the researcher "does not approach reality as a *tabula rasa*" (p.3), and as such cannot erase from their mind all the theory they know, before beginning research. What Glaser (1998) objects to, is the selection of a theoretical framework prior to commencing a grounded theory study, and using theory to preconceptualise the problem or concepts. However, Glaser (1978) does advise the researcher to read in areas other than the substantive area throughout the study. Reading for ideas and style not only fuels the researcher's creative processes, but it helps develop theoretical sensitivity. Theoretical sensitivity can also be gained by a preliminary review of the literature in the substantive area, or from personal experience in the clinical

field. However, a distinction must be made between using sensitising concepts to help sharpen ones awareness, and using theoretical concepts to impose a framework on the data. Grounded theory research students can demonstrate scholarliness by addressing the issue of theory from a research-theory perspective, as opposed to a theory-research perspective.

In addition, research students need to address the distinction between inductive and deductive enquiry, and acknowledge the subtle interaction between induction and deduction within classic grounded theory. Although classic grounded theory is primarily an inductive methodology, in that it commences with the data and builds a theory based on the systematic analysis of the data, to classify it as wholly inductive is to ignore its deductive element as one theoretically samples. Glaser (1998) however, points out that "it is not logical, conjectured deduction based on no systematic research" (Glaser, 1998, p.43), but a carefully grounded deduction based on an induced category, which directs the researcher on where to go next for data. Thus, the researcher starts by coding, conceptualising and generating hypothesis about the relationship between concepts, and then begins to deduce where more data can be found (theoretical sampling) for comparative purposes. Thus, grounded theory is both inductive and deductive, with deduction primarily in the service of induction. The logic and interaction between inductive and deductive enquiry can be demonstrated by tracing how concepts and theory were generated from raw data and importantly, by demonstrating how grounded theory methods, such as theoretically sampling and constant comparative analysis, are used to test emergent concepts throughout the research process.

Conclusion

Preparing a research proposal and using a theoretical framework to underpin a study are two key challenges for many grounded theory researchers in academic environments. These issues usually present in the early stages of the research process yet, they are relevant at the end stage when students are required to defend their choice of methodology at examination, or at research conferences. The lessons learnt from the experiences of two PhD graduates, who survived using grounded theory in an academic world, provide future students with key discussion points to consider when engaging with critical audiences, and discussing grounded theory methods with other non-grounded theory researchers.

Grounded theory researchers can demonstrate academic scholarliness by focusing on the following four key discussion points: what inductive enquiry means and its contribution to generating new knowledge; secondly, the primacy of the classic grounded theory questions used in data gathering and analysis; thirdly, the research-theory link as opposed to the theory-research link; and finally, how classic grounded theory provides a viable means of inductively and deductively generating a theory that is derived from the participant's lifeworld. Using classic grounded theory research method in an academic world can create tensions for students, who on the one hand want to use classic grounded theory as a whole methodological package whilst on the other hand, need to make adjustments to meet academic requirements. The challenge for all researchers is to know what is important to fight for, and what adjustments can be made without compromising on methodological integrity.

References

Anfara, V., & Mertz, N. (2006). Introduction. In V. Anfara & N. Mertz (Eds.), *Theoretical Frameworks in Qualitative Research* (pp. xiii- xxxii). Thousand Oaks, London, New Delhi: Sage Publications Inc.

Baxter, J., & J. Eyles (1997). Evaluating qualitative research in social geography: establishing 'rigour' in interview analysis. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers,* 22(4), 505-525.

Becker, P. H. (1993). Pearls, Pith, and Provocation: Common Pitfalls in Published Grounded Theory Research. *Qualitative Health Research, 3*(2), 254-260.

Blumer, H. (1969). *Symbolic interactionism: Perspective and method*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press Ltd.

Bryant, A., & Charmaz, K. (2007). Introduction to grounded theory research: Methods and practices. In A. Bryant & K. Charmaz (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of grounded theory* (pp. 1-28). London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Charmaz, K. (2000). Grounded theory: Objectivist and constructivist methods.. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research (pp.* 509-535). Thousand Oaks, London, New Delhi: Sage Publications, Inc.

Dunne, C. (2011). The place of the literature review in grounded theory research. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology, 14*(2), 111-124.

Elliott, N., & Lazenbatt, A. (2005). How to recognise a 'quality' grounded theory research study. *Australian Journal of Advanced Nursing, 22*(3), 40 - 44.

Elliott, N. (2007). *Mutual intacting- keeping the patient-practitioner relationship and patient treatment intact.* Unpublished PhD thesis, Queen's University Belfast, Belfast.

Festinger, L. (1957). *A theory of cognitive dissonance*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Foucault, M. (1976). *The will to knowledge. The history of sexuality: 1*. London, New York, Victoria, Penguin Books.

Foucault, M. (2001). Power/Knowledge In S. Seidman and J. C. Alexander (Eds.) *The new social theory reader: contemporary debates*. London New York, Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.

Glaser, B. G. (1978). *Theoretical sensitivity*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.

Glaser, B. G. (1992). *Emergence vs. forcing: Basics of grounded theory analysis*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.

Glaser, B. G. (1998). *Doing grounded theory: Issues and discussions*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.

Glaser, B. G. (2001). *The grounded theory perspective: Conceptualization contrasted with description*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.

Glaser, B. G. (2005). *The grounded theory perspective 111: Theoretical coding*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.

Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: strategies for qualitative research*. New York: Aldine de Gruyter.

Goffman, E. (1959). *The presentation of self in everyday life.* London, New York, Victoria: Penguin Group.

Habermas, J. (1984). *The theory of communicative action: Volume 1 Reason and the rationalization of society* (T. McCarthy, Trans.). Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Habermas, J. (1987). *The theory of communicative action: Volume 2 Lifeworld and System* (T. McCarthy, Trans.). Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Hart, C. (1998). *Doing a literature review*. London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage Publications.

Higgins, A. (2007). Veiling sexualities in a psychiatric nursing context: A grounded theory study . Unpublished PhD Thesis. Trinity College Dublin.

Hutchinson, S. A. (1993). Grounded theory: The method. In P. Munhall & C. O. Boyd (Eds.), *Nursing Research: A Qualitative Perspective* (pp. 180-212). New York: National League for Nursing Press.

Locke, K. (2001). *Grounded theory in management research*. London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage Publications Inc.

Luckerhoff, J., & Guillemette, F. (2011). The conflicts between grounded theory requirements and institutional requirements for scientific research. *The Qualitative Report, 16*(2), 396-414.

McGhee, G., Marland, G. R., & Atkinson, J. (2007). Grounded theory research: literature reviewing and reflexivity. *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 60*(3), 334-342.

Mitchell, G., & Cody, W. (1993). The role of theory in qualitative research. *Nursing Science Quarterly,* 6(4), 170-178.

Milliken, P. J., & Schreiber, R. S. (2001). Can you "do" grounded theory without symbolic interactionism? In R. S. Schreiber & P. N. Stern (Eds.), *Using grounded theory in nursing* (pp. 177-191). New York: Springer Publishing Company.

Morse, J. M. (2001). Situating grounded theory within qualitative inquiry. In R. S. Schreiber & P. N. Stern (Eds.), *Using grounded theory in nursing* (pp. 1-16). New York: Springer Publishing Company.

National Framework of Qualifications (undated). *National framework of qualifications*. Retrieved from http://www.nfq.ie

Peplau, H. (1952). *Interpersonal Relations in Nursing.* New York: Putnam.

Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education. (2008). *The frameworks for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*. Mansfield UK: Quality Assurance Agency.

Schreiber, R., & Noerager- Stern, P. (2001). Early grounded theory: Its processes and products. In R. S. Schreiber and P. N. Stern (Eds.) *Using grounded theory in nursing* (pp. 17-34). New York: Springer Publishing Company.

Walls, P., Parahoo, K., & Fleming, P. (2010). The role and place of knowledge and literature in grounded theory. *Nurse Researcher, 17*(4), 8-17.

Urquhart, C. (2007). The evolving nature of grounded theory method: The case of the information systems discipline. In A. Bryant & K. Charmaz (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Grounded Theory* (pp. 339-361). London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage Publications.

Wu, H., & Volker, D. (2009). The use of theory in qualitative approaches to research: application in end-of-life studies. *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 65*(12), 2719- 2732.

The Grounded Theory Review (2012), Volume 11, Issue 2

Working Through Preconception: Moving from Forcing to Emergence

Kim Kwok, AUT University
Antoinette McCallin, AUT University
Geoff Dickson, AUT University

Abstract

Much has been written about grounded theory and the processes of theory generation. Less is written about managing the problem of preconception, which has the potential to undermine the openness and emergence that are fundamental to classic grounded theory. The purpose of this paper is to discuss the practical realities of managing preconception, and to draw attention to less well recognised factors that contribute to forcing. The topic interest, tactical innovation in rugby, is introduced. Researcher motivation and the management of preconception are discussed. The example used is the theory of developing, which explains how rugby coaches in New Zealand manage the problem of winning games. The research demonstrates how the novice grounded theory researcher who is prepared to follow the method and trust the process can produce a rigorous grounded theory that makes a meaningful contribution to rugby coaches, players and their administrators.

Introduction

Grounded theory research begins, as all research does, with a general area of interest (Glaser, 1978, 1998). Grounded theory is unique, however, in that the research problem is unknown at the beginning of a study and will be defined in the early interviews by participants rather than the researcher. Ideally, the researcher begins a study without any preconceptions. This means that there should not be any expectations about what might be happening in an area of interest. If the researcher is to be open to the problems and solutions that participants use to manage particular situations, he or she must put to one side personal and professional values, beliefs, knowledge, and experience (Holton, 2007). Grounded theory stands out from other methodologies, as there is an expectation that the researcher does not pre-empt participant understanding and assume that he or she knows what is going on in the topic area. It is this issue of managing preconception that makes the difference between forcing a theory in a particular direction, following existing knowledge, or explaining the hidden patterns of social behaviour (Glaser, 1992).

This initial positioning challenges novice researchers, who may have been taught that typically, research begins with a review of the literature (McCallin, 2006). The traditional view of research design is that the research problem is defined from the literature (Robson, 2011). Robson also acknowledges that "in real world research literature provides a background resource rather than an essential starting point for research" (p. 50). However, literature is a resource that needs to be treated with caution in the current environment where researchers and participants work more closely together. Literature has much to offer those wanting to know more about the key concepts in an area. Whether concepts are relevant or meaningful for people managing problems in a particular situation is another matter altogether (Glaser, 1978, 1998). While a novice researcher commonly, and sometimes necessarily, begins a study with preconceptions, if he or she follows the

grounded theory method, forcing gives way to emergence. The real challenge for the researcher is to be prepared to let go of preconceptions:

> As a grounded theory grows it undoes forcing as moot....pet concepts, pet theory bits, and pet preconceptions just disappear as discovery enhances the drive to keep moving with what is going on. Grounded theory has such impactful conceptual power, that forcing becomes "silly" and preconceptions are given up without notice (Glaser, 1998, p. 99).

Moving beyond preconception, however, is not as easy as it sounds. Few researchers enter the field as vague and passive beings. The nature of research demands focus, motivation and commitment, which come from many sources in the everyday world.

Researcher Motivation

The project began in a roundabout way. The researcher (KK) received scholarship support for a Master's research study from his rugby club. Access to the scholarship began when a faculty member (GD) invited the student to consider becoming a postgraduate researcher. At the time the prospective student was the manager of a team at the rugby club. Consultation between the potential student, the faculty member, and the rugby club identified a common interest in tactical innovation in rugby. Tactical innovation was provisionally and pragmatically conceived as a new, revised, or freshly conceived and/or applied tactical method, designed to take an opponent unawares. The pitch was that understanding tactical innovations within invasive ball sports was limited. This beginning situation illustrates well that "the researcher does not set the agenda [for research] in isolation but acts in partnership with a variety of client groups" (Robson, 2011, p. 50).

The timing of the research is worth mentioning in that several factors affected preconception. The research was of special interest at the time, because New Zealand was preparing to host the Rugby World Cup. The faculty member was interested in the topic due to the gap in the academic sports literature. The prospective student was presented with a new academic and vocational opportunity. Although he had not previously considered research as a vocation, being invited to research his long-standing personal life-cycle interest (Glaser, 1978) was an opportunity not to be missed. However, the sequence of events for this real world research project meant that right from the beginning forcing and pre-conceiving occurred. Essentially, the student was awarded the scholarship to study tactical innovation in rugby. He was to be supervised by the faculty member who was an experienced quantitative researcher. At that stage everyone - the student, the supervisor and the rugby club - thought that the research would produce knowledge about how tactical innovation occurred. The next step was significant: the student still had to complete a Master's research paper so enrolled in a qualitative research course.

In the qualitative research course he discovered a smorgasbord of social science methodologies. Right from the beginning, grounded theory stood out. Whilst the researcher chose grounded theory, grounded theory also chose the researcher. Choice seemed to be related to the researcher's temperament, personality traits, and previous life experiences. Glaser (2010) notes that "motivation to use grounded theory is linked with research age, career development, and chronological age" (p. 3). Glaser suggests that it is not uncommon that a grounded theory researcher notices a natural affinity with the method. In this instance the researcher was familiar with analysing data and conceptualising emergent explanations in another discipline. Previous experience with Biblical and Systematic Theology had demanded an inductive-deductive reasoning process, which is similar to grounded

theory. This personal history of conceptualisation was critical. Glaser observes that "the grounded theory researcher must have three important characteristics: the ability to conceptualise data, an ability to tolerate some confusion, and an ability to tolerate confusion's attendant regression" (2010, p. 4). In addition, grounded theory seemed to offer "a total package" (p. 3). There was an initial methodological fit in the desire to uncover patterns of behaviour that accounted for the social processes underlying tactical innovation in rugby. The promised final product of grounded theory - a conceptualised explanation with scope, density and parsimony, which fitted, was relevant, and had workability for participants in the substantive field - was a desirable research product outcome.

Once the methodology was sorted the research proposal was prepared. Again, of necessity, preconception was emphasised. The research interest had to be framed in a particular way to gain approval from a key faculty academic committee. Despite the dictates of grounded theory to remain open to participant problems, the researcher was required to preconceive, to justify a gap in academic knowledge, and to signal the potential practical benefits of research outcomes. Xie (2009) discusses this issue and suggests that it is not uncommon for research students to have to write what she calls “a compromised GT proposal” (p. 35). Accordingly, approval was sought and given to research a preconceived problem and grounded theory was presented as an ideal methodology to understand what was happening in the area of interest. The framing therefore reflected Glaser’s pragmatic advice to, “give [influential committees] the forcing that they want and start the study. Then let the grounded theory emerge without forcing, while doing the research. Soon what is being discovered will unforce the study. Preconceptions will be neutralized by what is being generated” (Glaser, 1998, p. 90).

At that point a grounded theory researcher (AM) was appointed to the research team. There were discussions about the implications of using the method and what would be required, but as is typical of grounded theory there is a delayed action learning curve (Glaser, 1998). This means that researchers very often do not understand the full meaning of becoming a grounded theorist until the process is finished. In spite of the problems the student was well positioned to begin the project. Indeed, Roderick (2009) advises novice researchers to “seek expertise, engage in community, just do it, know self, and balance challenge and support” (p. 49). That advice proved helpful.

Managing Initial Preconceptions

From the time grounded theory was chosen, and well before any data was collected, the novice researcher faced an inherent paradox. Although a researcher may be tempted to pre-conceive and force the direction of a study, Glaser (1998) prescribes contrary dicta, which must be strictly followed, if emergence is to occur. This causes some tension, because most researchers are motivated to work with a topic of interest, which is a usually a professional interest. That was so in this study and could not be ignored. The student had received a scholarship to study tactical innovation. If this had been an open grounded theory study from the beginning the substantive area would have been rugby tactics.

Preconception was emphasised further because the researcher began the study believing that coaches were primary movers of innovation and change. At the time it was difficult to suspend that type of thinking. New Zealand was well into the throes of the Rugby World Cup build-up. Everyday rugby was discussed, and all aspects of the game were analysed publicly and subjected to media scrutiny. There was an intense interest in innovative tactics due to the fact that New Zealand had not won the World Cup for many years, and the public wanted to know what was happening to rectify the situation. In

particular, coaches were thoroughly scrutinised. They were the ones who were responsible for introducing something new and surprising into the game so that their team had an on-field advantage over their opponents. The way coaches did that was largely unknown. The researcher believed that it was a hidden pattern of behaviour.

Although professional and possibly public interest motivated the researcher, he certainly understood that he must not force the study direction to conform to the received view of the world. With the support of his grounded theory supervisor, he readily questioned his pre-conceptions. Perhaps because of his previous theological background, he was comfortable constantly comparing data and conceptualising in a way that was congruent with the content and contours of the data alone (Glaser, 1998). A distinctive feature of the methodology is that only that which is grounded in the data earns its place in the theory – hence 'grounded' theory. This was achieved by analysis and re-analysis to ensure that conceptualisations were both grounded and emergent. Similarly, emergence was fostered as the researcher searched for the patterns in the data, and avoided interpretations that followed the original preconceptions and existing patterns of thought (Glaser, 1998).

It was clear by then that preconception was a significant issue. It did not just disappear. As stated, preconception was apparent in the decision to interview coaches initially. The researcher had a long-standing history of studying the game, playing, managing, and writing about it. He recognised the power of players but believed that coaches were the more likely tactical experts. Thus he targeted coaches who worked in remunerated representative rugby, where the most capable players and coaches were to be found. The pre-understanding was that tactical innovation was more likely to occur there, as time, resources, and financial incentive supported it. Forcing continued during the early interviews. Interviews began with open-ended questions all of which focused on tactical innovation. Examples of these questions include:

- Tell me about the circumstances which led you to consider [tactical innovation] as a possibility.
- Was it a necessity, and if so, why? If not, why did you consider it?
- Do you remember when you first thought of [innovation], and how it came about?
- What things/factors influenced your thinking?
- What was the process by which you thought [tactical innovation] was a possible option, rather than, say a recognised tactic such as [tactical option]? and
- What was the process by which you first determined if [tactical innovation] was really a viable option?

Looking back, the questions were too specific and forced the direction of the study. Fortunately for everyone, it quickly became apparent that tactical innovation was a "professional problem" (Glaser, 1998, p. 116). The supervisor picked this up when she read the interviews. She noticed that the participants talked about winning and questioned the researcher's emphasis on innovation when it did not seem to be important to the participants. From that point on, tactical innovation was used as a beginning talking point. The researcher was also assisted by the participants, who were not particularly interested in talking about tactical innovation anyway. They preferred to talk about other topics that were meaningful for them. They were especially keen to talk about winning games and competitions.

The Main Concern and Resolution

The main concern was identified after the ninth interview. Although it was evident that coaches wanted and needed their teams to win and to perform to their utmost ability, the main concern identification was not straightforward. It is possible that it was affected by all the hype about winning the World Cup, which was in the media at the time. While this was a general contextual issue that would not usually affect data analysis, the daily discussions of rugby were everywhere and were difficult to avoid. In hindsight this atmosphere may have contributed to forcing. Another problem was that there were two concerns - winning and performance. At times these two concerns varied in that it seemed that a short-term gain in one aspect compromised the other. In the early stages of analysis the main concern was identified as achieving winning potential and performance potential. This of course was descriptive. The researcher understood that the main concern needed to be conceptualised (Glaser, 2001). In an effort to give it comparative scope, depth, and parsimony it was re-labelled as realisation of winning performance, which was eventually refined to winning. Once the main concern was clarified it was much easier to let pre-conceptions go and focus on finding the resolution.

During the seventh interview the phrase “mental engineering” came up during an interview. It was emergent, in that it was a potential pattern of behaviour that coaches use to solve the problem of winning. While tactical innovation had been left behind, in hindsight it was possible that data were forced towards the mental engineering resolution, because time for the research was running out. Mental engineering became the focus of data analysis from that time onwards, until just before the writing up was completed. The formulation appealed to the researcher. It reflected the perceived complex inter-relationships between categories, and allowed one category to inter-connect and then leverage off another, creating a new team dynamic. That interpretation of course may have been linked to the original desire to explain what was happening in innovating. Nonetheless, the notion that no one category acted as a starting point was appealing. It fitted well with the idea that grounded theory should include an explanation of the inter-relationship between categories (Glaser, 1998).

Memos helped detail theoretical development. They confirmed that mental engineering was becoming formalised. For example, three categories were identified, which meant, up to six possible team engineering inter-relationships were possible: prospecting [later changed to innovating, as discussed later] to influencing, influencing to prospecting, prospecting to implementing, implementing to prospecting, influencing to implementing, and implementing to influencing. Illustrations of each inter-relationship were also worked through in memos. For instance, the setting up of systems (implementing) contributed to the creation of an implicit agenda (influencing). But, the utilisation of analogies and other illustrations, such as mental engineering, is not within the valid scope of grounded theory and illustrates another swerve, possibly subconsciously, into forcing. The categories already represented a conceptualisation of the data. Interestingly enough, attempts to force conceptualisation about the inter-relationship between those categories tended to dissolve the distinctive concepts that were quite clear in the data. As Glaser (1978) argues the method is self-correcting.

As constant comparison continued into the writing up, emergence strengthened. The researcher gained confidence in following emergence and became accomplished at recognising forcing. For example, he realised that the way he interpreted the interrelationships was over-complicated. However, over-complication was not necessary. A grounded theory needs to be understood and recognised by its participants. In particular, it was noted that mental engineering was not commonly used by participants, whereas

developing was common right across the data. Glaser (1998) of course argues that in order for the theory to be grounded, and reflect the concerns of the participants, it is advisable to utilise their terminology where possible. Ongoing interviews showed that mental engineering and its attendant connotations did not exhibit grab or have a ready acceptance with the participants. While one coach had used the term others did not connect with it at all. To have insisted further would have forced the data. Obviously, mental engineering needed to be replaced, preferably with terminology that came from the data.

Further analysis drew attention to the process of developing that occurred everywhere. There was no doubt at all that once it was noticed that it was an over-riding pattern. Little notice had been taken of this concept before, perhaps because it is rather innocuous in everyday language. Developing simplified the theoretical explanation by providing scope to explain the interrelationships between the categories. Furthermore, the tenth interview participant referred to resource development. However, analysis and sensitivity to emergence suggested that this was an inexact conception, as the data confirmed a rugby team is both the recipient of resource development, and also a resource in and of itself. Further thought about mental engineering suggested that misconceived inter-relational emphasis was the result of an initial failure to properly separate out the concepts in the data, and then inter-relate them again within a framework of developing. In retrospect this occurred because the researcher focused on participants' descriptions. While the breaking up and conceptualising of the data was in accordance with the methodology, core category identification is critical to theory development, as it integrates the main concepts into a coherent whole (Glaser, 1978).

Identifying Innovating

Similar issues were encountered with the emergence of the category of innovating, which was about assessing opportunities to secure potential advantage that supports developing. In an attempt to compensate and avoid forcing the tactical innovation professional concern, the emphasis on innovating that was discussed in the interviews, was underplayed. Eventually, innovating was adopted late in the write-up. Originally, the emphasis was on identifying, which really did seem bland. Once innovating had earned its place in the analysis identifying became a property of innovating. Memoing was useful to work through the options and try out different interpretations before making a final decision about labels. The final product of that round of memoing was prospecting, which remained a category until late in the writing up. Prospecting certainly had grab (Glaser, 1992). The term captured aspects of the search, inquiry, and unexpected find and identification that accompany coaches' analysis. However, at no stage did any of the participants volunteer prospecting as a suitable descriptor. In other words, the researcher had gone beyond the data and moved into forcing, as opposed to allowing data to emerge from participants (Glaser, 1992). Indeed, during theoretical sampling one participant expressed a concern that prospecting be confused with the gold-mining process. This highlighted the possibility that prospecting was acting as a description or an analogy, rather than fulfilling a conceptual function.

Only very late in the writing up did the term innovating earn its way into the grounded theory, as a result of its continual appearance in the data. However, whereas the initial data gathering utilised the assumption that innovating was a new, revised, or freshly conceived and/or applied tactical method, designed to take an opponent unawares, innovating was redefined within the theory of developing as: anything that has the possibility to change a team so that team function is different. The purpose of innovating is to secure a potential advantage over opponents. Specifically, this meant that whereas innovating was initially defined in narrow terms of original tactics, in the theory of

developing tactical originality became a much smaller aspect within the entire category. So the emergent findings confirmed Glaser's advice:

> The researcher must always keep in mind not to force the data with particularism. His job is to find out what is going on by looking at the patterns that emerge from many people. Thus his own particular problem embedded in an interest gets transcended to a grounded theory, which can then be brought back to help him understand the area of interest and his particular problem (Glaser, 1998, p. 49).

Identifying Influencing

A similar wrestle occurred with the category influencing, which was about securing buy-in from others by structuring and persuading those who could support developing. A field note made immediately after the fourth interview reinforced an emerging paradox: coaches sought to exercise control, in order for team players to have an environment in which to freely utilise their skill and judgment. Initially, the properties of influencing were controlling and creating the environment to support influencing. However, freedom to rethink analysis is central to theory development, and allows the analyst to rework thinking and initial descriptions (Glaser, 1978). Analysis of the data showed the recurrence of influencing, which, along with the properties structuring and persuading, captured the conceptual nuance and extent of the category.

Complicating understanding of influencing was the explanation of the indicators of the properties that were wide-ranging. Data analysis suggested an outward-oriented sphere of control that included senior players, co-coaches, and confidants. This group was easier to persuade, and were a source of mutual influence on coaches. Beyond the inner group, influencing also extended to the team and included referees, administrators, opponents, media, and the public as well. Memo and records of the organisation of open codes within influencing immediately prior to writing up suggest that influencing was such a broad category that it probably required further data collection for refinement. It is possible too that the researcher got caught up in the constraints of full description that limit conceptualising (Glaser, 2001).

Part of the problem was data highlighting the personal and introspective reflection underpinning influencing, which coaches were required to exercise when developing. It was evident that effective influencers model openness and flexibility to their teams. Also, in the writing up it was clear that coaches had less capacity to secure buy-in from those on the outer-sphere of their influence than was originally thought. Despite this, the properties of influencing remained the same, whether influencing close confidants within the inner team circle, or distant ancillaries. There was another problem in that openness was previously located within innovating. While participants discussed some aspects of personal introspection and character development, following that through was beyond the immediate scope of this grounded theory study. Those leads were therefore put to one side and the focus remained on understanding how influencing fitted into a theory of developing. Not surprisingly, the final write up of influencing, whilst reflecting that coaches exercise a wide and diverse sphere of potentially mutual influence, concentrated on the content and extent of category development, rather than the sphere of influence, which was seen to be different. This shows how reworking weeds out theoretical problems such as "needless redundancy, clarifications of confused or mixed analysis, trimming and adding illustrations...unit focus and conceptual style, and other needs of sections and subsections" (Glaser, 1978, p. 136).

Identifying Implementing

The emergence of the third category, implementing, was more straight-forward during analysis. Implementing was about developing the resource reliability that was needed for developing. Implementing was evident before the tenth interview. Fortunately, participants referred directly to implementing. Along the same lines, data also confirmed implementing was a category that focused, applied, and gave concrete expression to the other categories of developing. For this reason, enabling was considered as a possible descriptor during a round of memoing. However, constant comparison during writing up clarified the extent of the implementing, and its inter-relationship with innovating. In particular, there was fluidity in the locating of the point of decision, which developed a potential innovation into an actual implementation. Initially, deciding was placed within innovating. This caused some theoretical difficulty, as the more abstract reflective aspects of innovating emerged. In addition, there was an increasing realisation that much innovative possibility was provisional until inter-related with team-interactive influencing. As a result, it became clear that the decision to enact was an aspect of implementing. The initial misplacement was useful though, since it highlighted that deciding was the point of inter-relationship between innovating and implementing. Although the final theory of developing had three categories there was a time during analysis when four categories were considered.

Development as an Analyst

As analysis proceeded the researcher became accomplished at letting preconceptions go. He became so open to analytical possibility that he needed to be drawn back to complete the job in hand. For example, when sorting memos he noted that balancing stood out. Was this a fourth category? Or perhaps it was part of implementing? The balancing of options and resolving of paradoxes was found at points within the data. Dichotomies and dilemmas suggested that coaches needed to address both physical and mental aspects within developing; institute structure yet maintain fluidity; give expression to individual talents, but fit that within team requirements; on-field vs. off-field needs and abilities; initiating or responding to events; analysis as opposed to task; reinforcing established patterns juxtaposed with the need to innovate; and rugby as an art or a science. However, the balancing possibility was eventually discarded as a fourth category on the grounds that it represented a difficulty in the free initiation and direct inter-relationship between categories.

It is possible that if more data were collected balancing may have earned a place in the theory of developing. Subsequent reflection and reading after the writing-up raised the possibility that balancing may have been a theoretical code. Even though the option of theoretical coding was not used in this research due to time constraints, balancing is well recognised as a theoretical code (Glaser, 2005). Glaser argues that balancing is a step beyond the dichotomy or trichotomy of complex decisions: “Balancing is handling many variables at once in order to start an action, keep an action going or achieve a resolution. One gets an equilibrium between all the variables” (Glaser, 2005, p. 29).

Even though this research went no further than substantive coding, balancing is not the only theoretical code offering insight into the findings of this research. Amplifying causal looping, a derivative of the causal theoretical code family (Glaser, 2005), provides another explanation of the analysis possible in the theory of developing. “As consequences become continually causes and causes continually consequences, one sees either worsening or improving progressions or escalating severity” (Glaser, 2005, p. 9). There seems to be resonance between this theoretical code and the theory of developing. Elements of the free

leveraging off of one category to any other category, in order to enhance the progress of team developing, seem to exhibit an amplifying causal loop.

Implications for Practice

Despite the initial and unavoidable forcing this research has had a happy ending. The thesis was completed successfully (Kwok, 2011). The researcher was able to regard the research process as a leaning opportunity, one to open up the mind to different ways of looking at the world. More importantly was his open attitude and his willingness to study the method and apply it in a scholarly way. The researcher's initial motivational concern for tactical innovation still remained, but as per Glaser's advice, "[the grounded theorist] is not afraid to relinquish whatever...pet theories maybe...led to their interest. Giving up... preconceptions [does] not kill...drive: rather discoveries enhanced it" (Glaser, 1998, p. 49). Even more importantly for the issue of methodological rigour, the researcher's, "own particular problem embedded in an interest gets transcended to a grounded theory, which can then be brought back to help him understand the area of interest and his particular problem" (Glaser, 1998, p. 49).

Of particular interest is how the research was received by the rugby club. A presentation of findings was well received. Coaches present thought the theory "made sense" and explained what they did everyday. The director of rugby of the club, who has had many years of experience as a player and coach at the highest representative international level, thought the theory of developing provided a ready-made template that could be used to manage rugby coaching better throughout New Zealand. The next step is for the researcher to utilise his connections in the rugby community to disseminate his findings further to test how they are received, and revise accordingly. The aim is to develop the theory into a user-friendly format that can fit within existing national coach education structures. Perhaps a subsequent option is for the researcher to write a book about coaching, with applicability not just for rugby, or invasive ball sports, but also for managers in dynamic competitive and creative environments with affinities with sport such as business and the performing arts.

What this Paper Adds

This paper illustrates that there are multiple hidden challenges that influence emergence and may contribute to forcing of data, which impacts theoretical development. Glaser has written at length and argued against the use of prescribed coding models, over-conceptualisation, the influence of the received view of the world, the researcher's worldview, not to mention the researcher's life cycle interests, all of which contribute to forcing the data (Glaser, 1978, 1992, 1998, 2005). Glaser encourages researchers to stay open, to trust in the research process. Indeed, Christiansen (2008) argues that the suspension of pre-existing understandings minimises the researcher's assumptions about what a study is really about. In practice though, putting assumptions to one side is much more difficult as has been seen in this paper. Many students begin research with an interest, perhaps a life-cycle interest or a professional interest (Astrom, 2006). It can be difficult to put this to one side, to recognise the central importance of openness that also grows and develops over time (Gynnild, 2006).

Interestingly, several new points in the forcing-emerging debate stand out. Firstly, forcing may have political origins, in that research interests proposed by others may be carefully chosen, as a particular view of the world is promoted, implicitly or explicitly, often ingenuously. Documenting how innovative tactics are developed in the world's most

successful rugby team is seemingly reasonable, if not naïve. This suggests that forcing and openness present themselves in much more subtle disguises today. Secondly, forcing may be economically driven. It is very difficult to stay open to what participants want to talk about when scholarship money has been awarded to study a particular problem. Thirdly, forcing may be influenced by the researcher's intellectual confidence and competence, both of which impact on the researcher's willingness to trust in emergence. Fourthly, competent supervision from a trained classical grounded theorist is essential to pre-empt forcing. Finally, the social context has some influence on forcing and may counteract emergence, as what is considered "normal" is present in everyday behaviors as they are portrayed in the media.

Limitations of the Study

This was a small scale Master's research project. The time-line for completion was short. Thus the study was contained to some extent. Theoretical sampling that would have extended the theory further was not possible in the time-frame. Even though the number of participants was small the coaches were all experts in the field and very articulate about their work. This supported the notion that it is not the number of participants that matters but the depth of their discussion which is significant. Finally, while the research is presented as a theory of developing with further data collection and sampling, perhaps the inclusion of players, developing may be subsumed as a category in a broader theory of sports coaching.

Conclusion

This paper has explained how the methods of grounded theory were applied in the research process to generate a theory of developing. The problem of preconception was discussed as was its management. This demonstrates the rich promise that awaits those who are prepared to trust in emergence. Grounded theory represents a powerful and unique research methodology. Even the novice grounded theorist can commence the research endeavor with the knowledge that original and potentially significant findings are likely. In addition, the core processes to master/be mastered are essentially the formalising of everyday problem-solving skills. They have also been explained in detail in various works for two generations. If potential grounded theorists have equipped themselves with the necessary foundation, one thing remains: to give grounded theory a go. Various pitfalls and false turns almost inevitably await. However, if the methods of grounded theory are faithfully employed, the researcher and the emerging theory are strengthened all the more.

References

Astrom, T. (2006). Moral positioning: A formal theory. *The Grounded Theory Review: An International Journal*, *6*(1), 29-60.

Christiansen, O. (2008). The rationale for the use of classic GT. *The Grounded Theory Review: An International Journal*, *7*(2), 19-38.

Glaser, B. G. (1978). *Theoretical sensitivity*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.

Glaser, B. G. (1992). *Basics of grounded theory analysis: Emergence vs forcing*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.

Glaser, B. G. (1998). *Doing grounded theory: Issues and discussions*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.

Glaser, B. G. (2001). *The grounded theory perspective: Conceptualisation contrasted with description.* Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.

Glaser, B. G. (2005). *The grounded theory perspective III: Theoretical coding*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.

Glaser, B. G. (2010). The future of grounded theory. *The Grounded Theory Review: An International Journal, 9*(2), 1-14.

Gynnild, A. (2006). Growing open: The transition from QDA to grounded theory. *The Grounded Theory Review: An International Journal*, *6*(1), 60-78.

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). London: Sage.

Kwok, K. R. (2011). *Tactical innovation in New Zealand representative rugby: A grounded theory of developing* (Master's thesis). Available from AUT University Theses and Dissertations (10292/2543)

McCallin, A. M. (2006). Grappling with the literature in a grounded theory study. *The Grounded Theory Review: An International Journal*, *5*(2/3), 11-27.

Robson, C. (2011). *Real world research* (3rd Ed.). Chichester, UK: John Wiley.

Roderick, C. (2009) Learning classic grounded theory: An account of the journey and advice for new researchers. *The Grounded Theory Review: An International Journal, 8*(2), 49-63.

Xie, S. L. (2009). Striking a balance between program requirements and GT principles: Writing a compromised GT proposal. *The Grounded Theory Review: An International Journal, 8*(2), 35-47.

The Grounded Theory Review (2012), Volume 11, Issue 2

Seeding Event: Creating and Developing Spaces of Entrepreneurial Freedom

Gaëtan Mourmant, IESEG School of Management

Abstract

This paper addresses the question of initiating, fostering and growing a vibrant economy by developing *Spaces of Entrepreneurial Freedom* (SoEF). Establishing and developing the SoEF is explained by a *seeding event* which is the core category of this grounded theory. In short, a seeding event leads to the patching of a potential, structural "hole", which may prove valuable to an entrepreneurial network. Seeding events are started by an initiator who will recognize a network opportunity and exploit it. After event designing, the initiators implement the event through bold experimentation and using an adaptive structure. If the event is considered successful, the next stages are refining, growing, templating and finally replicating; these stages may occur one after the other or simultaneously. Through the development of SoEF, we suggest that entrepreneurs, governments, universities, large companies, and other players in the business world can improve the development of entrepreneurship at their respective levels.

Introduction

Creating, developing and promoting a vibrant entrepreneurial economy is a key challenge for any economy looking for value and wealth creation, in other words, for economic development and vitality. This challenge is even more important in the current economic crisis. This concern is present for various entities, not only for entrepreneurs or governments, but also for CEOs and managers of large companies who want to promote intrapreneurship (Pinchot, 1985) and innovation in their companies.

We introduce the core category of *seeding event* to resolve the main concern of our interviewees: how to create, develop and promote spaces of entrepreneurial freedom and, ultimately, a vibrant economy. In short, a seeding event leads to the patching of a valuable structural hole (Burt, 2002, 2004; Walker, Kogut, & Shan, 1997) identified in an entrepreneurial network; such patching concurs to the creation and/or development of spaces of entrepreneurial freedom. Seeding event*s* are started by initiators who recognize a network opportunity and exploit it. After event designing, the initiators start the implementation of the initial event through bold experimentation, using an adaptive structure. If the event is evaluated by the initiators and the participants as a success or potential success, the initiators embark in the next stages: refining, growing, templating, and finally replicating. These stages may not occur only one after the other, but also simultaneously and iteratively; for instance, replicating leads to growing.

Methodology

We follow a qualitative classic grounded theory methodology, (Glaser, 1978, 1998, 2011, 2012; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). In particular, we iteratively use the following tools: open, selective and theoretical coding; memoing; memo sorting; constant comparison; writing up; and theoretical sampling in order to reach theoretical saturation. First, spaces of entrepreneurial freedom emerged from the analysis of the first set of interviews with Entrepreneurs, CIOs, and IT employees. The interviews were conducted in France, China (Shanghai), Canada and the United States. Each interview started with an open question related to the intensification of entrepreneurship (N=14). Second, we re-analyzed and selectively recoded previous interviews while conducting and analyzing additional interviews (N=10) around the concept of SoEF. In agreement with "All is data" and theoretical sampling, we also coded and analyzed the book "Startup Community" which analyzed the

creation and development of startup communities in the city of Boulder (Feld, 2012). We then proceeded to perform memo sorting (over 60 memos) and writing up, which lead us to a temporary theoretical development around spaces of entrepreneurial freedom. While this development was interesting, the core category seeding event (we are indebted to the first reviewer of this paper for bringing up the conceptual distinction between space of entrepreneurial freedom and seeding event) emerged as a central explanation and resolution to the main concern of creation and development of SoEF during the third memo sorting and write up. Fourth, we completed another round of full analysis – from coding to memo sorting and write up – around seeding event with over 130 memos.

Definitions of Core Category and Main Concern

In order to clarify the concepts, we start by defining spaces of entrepreneurial freedom and seeding event. *Spaces of entrepreneurial freedom* (*SoEF*) is defined as spaces - material or immaterial, formal or informal - whether these spaces refer to the whole nation, a region (e.g. the Shenzhen area), a startup community, virtual networks, cities, a whole company, or just a part (e.g. a quick-win team) thereof. In these spaces, entrepreneurial-minded individuals can benefit from entrepreneurial freedoms, for instance freedom to trade, freedom to innovate, freedom to take calculated risks, freedom to make mistakes, freedom to be weird, and organizational freedom. Such freedom increases the entrepreneurial intensity of the space, leading to a vibrant economy. Additionally, very much like Russian dolls, SoEF are embedded into one another: a quick-win team within a department, an entrepreneurial department within a company, a startup within an entrepreneurial network, an entrepreneurial network within a nation, etc. A group of SoEFs communicating and/or embedded in one with the other is conceived as a *meta-SoEF*.

Seeding event is the core category of this research. Seeding event leads to the patching of a potential structural hole (Burt, 2002, 2004; Walker et al., 1997), which may prove valuable in an entrepreneurial network. As defined by Burt, “the weaker connections between groups are holes in the social structures of the market” (2002). It is a very fast and efficient way to patch such holes. If the event is a success – that is, the initiators are ready to repeat it based on the positive reaction of the community - and more events are felt to be necessary, this could lead to the creation of networks, and/or spaces of entrepreneurial freedom. Conversely, if the event isn’t successful, then the idea can either be dropped or completely reshaped if there is still a potential to explore.

The initiator(s)

In order to create a SoEF, one or several initiators need to begin the seeding event process. In addition to the characteristics discussed in the section “Event designing”, initiators also need to have a long-term vision and commitment for their events, belong to a very well-connected network, be “event junkies”, and have a “give before you get” mentality (Feld, 2012).

Often, but not always, the initiators also need to play the role of a *Protector* of the event or emerging Space of Entrepreneurial Freedom. Such protection can be achieved via diplomatic and relational skills, in order to “finesse” (Pinchot, 1985) the corporate politics – in the case of intrapreneurship – or the relationships between the SoEF and the bureaucratic governmental parties. These roles are not necessarily easy and may involve a “mental battle” with the non-entrepreneurial environment.

Not surprisingly, the first and most important group of initiators are the entrepreneurs themselves who can use their opportunity recognition skills, a pivotal concept in entrepreneurship research (Shane, 2000; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000) to identify valuable structural holes (Burt, 2002, 2004; Walker et al., 1997) and network opportunities.

Recognizing network opportunity

We consider both the concept of opportunity recognition/exploitation and the concept of network opportunity recognition/exploitation for seeding event, as requiring a very similar set of skills (Burt, 2002, 2004; Walker et al., 1997). In other words, creating successful events that will lead to spaces of entrepreneurial freedom requires network opportunity recognition and exploitation skills. The main difference between the two is that opportunity recognition occurs at the market level, while seeding event occurs at the network level.

The nodes of these networks are composed of individuals or organizations. Of course, the core group of nodes is the entrepreneurs, around which, we find various other participants such as universities, government, venture capitalists, etc. Those nodes usually exist in the area of the event and are a good way to leverage existing strengths.

Based on our data, several types of links between the nodes of the network have been identified. These links can be people-oriented (e.g. a business speed-meeting event), money-oriented (e.g. Venture Capitalists and Entrepreneurs), action-oriented (e.g. a startup weekend leading to the creation of a new venture), knowledge/idea-oriented (e.g. TEDx), advice/support-oriented (e.g. mentors and young entrepreneurs), feed-back-oriented, and/or skills-oriented (e.g. "Random hack of Kindness", where skills are shared for a weekend to support non-profit organizations). Of course, this list is neither exhaustive nor exclusive, and many events fulfill a combination of these types of links.

Having those two categories in mind is useful for mapping the different existing events and identifying the valuable structural holes. For instance, a "Nonprofit Night" was started after identifying problems of nonprofit organizations that could be solved by IT professionals.

It appears in our data that when the initiators have their "realization" related to their network opportunity, it is not the result of an analytical rational process, but much more a realization based on an experience - "When I arrived here, I couldn't find …"; a questioning - "What does the Boulder start-up community need that it doesn't currently have?" (Tim Falls, in Feld, 2012, p. 94); an intuition; or just an observation of the existence of a valuable structural hole or need. For example, the realization that, in that community, entrepreneurs are "heads-down and siloed." However, mapping the nodes, the types of relationships and the holes in the network of meta-SoEF could be a fruitful analysis in order to identify the next seeding event. Additionally, the global network of meta-SoEF is dynamic, and not just static. For instance, a newsletter (e.g. startupdigests) written as a synthesis of all the entrepreneurial events occurring in a city is necessary *only* when the number of events reaches a certain threshold.

We also suggest that the influence of digital tools in the accelerated production of links – coined as acceluction (Bounfour, 2011) also accelerates the creation of spaces of entrepreneurial freedom. Indeed, we propose that in fast networks where information is shared very quickly, the need for a new SoEF is known very quickly, resulting in seeding event*s*. Once network opportunity has been identified, the initiator can start *event designing*.

Event designing

During *event designing*, the first event is rather important as it will provide an "early spirit" (Feld, 2012, p. 75) and the DNA for the future events. Indeed, this first event is the first expression of the long-term vision or answer to a need by the initiator, hence it is very likely that such vision or answer is already embedded – consciously or not – into the event itself. The event is designed around the classic questioning of *when*, *where*, *who,* and *how many*, with the *why* question already answered in the previous section. These questions are relatively standard and don't present major difficulties.

When is related to the timing of the event and its regularity. Entrepreneurs are busy people, but knowing that they can still come to the event next week is a great advantage. For a rather frequent event to be successful, the regularity of the event is highly recommended. When could also be an interesting dimension in the case of looking for new seeding event*s* to launch. For instance, if there is no large annual entrepreneurial event, maybe it's time for one. Moreover, a time dimension (when) can be added to the evolution of the network to highlight its dynamic perspective.

Where concerns the location – for instance a bar, an office, or a series of locations. It deals with the classic questions of expansion management, such as the growth of the event, and geographic proximity.

Who and *how many* are more interesting and richer. The who question is linked to the porosity of the event itself, and by extension, the porosity of the SoEF, and the event can range from being an all-inclusive or highly selective. For the former, focusing on inclusiveness is essential and the view is that individuals will be organically rejected if they don't fit the event. For the latter, the selection process of participants with the "right mind-set" appears to be critical. These individuals combine a passionate perspective on their work that leads them to be very professional when it comes to delivering the best product they can. Their curiosity combined with a reasonable artistic type allows them to be forward thinking, reasonable risk-takers and visionaries. Finally, their soft skills and human qualities fosters their "give before you get" mindset (Feld, 2012) and balance their more technical skills. Those aspects are very close to the literature on the characteristics of the entrepreneurs - personality traits (Brandstätter, 2011 ; Zhao & Seibert, 2006), entrepreneurial intuition (Blume & Covin, 2011) jack-of-all-trades (Lazear, 2004; Wagner, 2006), and passion (Cardon, Wincent, Singh, & Drnovsek, 2009).

During event designing, core values are discussed. In agreement with the description of participants with the "right mind-set," sharing is a core value. This sharing is done in a pleasant atmosphere and should lead to action-oriented events. These events are made by and for entrepreneurs; hence, they have no time for chitchat and focus on action. Regarding action, once the event has been designed, it is time to move on, and what better proof of concept than a bold experimentation.

Bold experimentation

Bold experimentation requires four criteria. First a permission to try and fail (fast). Second, the initiator should feel empowered and should dare boldly asking the network to help set up the event – "I shamelessly ask for sponsorship" (Feld, 2012, p.95). Third, the first event takes place as an experiment and fourth, this experiment is permission-free – "we didn't ask permission." The reason for bold experimentation is the risk-free or risk-limited characteristics of the event, the reduced amount of energy required compared to a full formal set of events, and because if it fails, it was just an experiment anyways. Envisioning the event as an experiment allows the initiators to have more liberty and releases the pressure being perfect, while the participants are able to suggest changes in the format via a gradual ownership of the event. This search for flexibility leads us to the structure of the event, which is extremely adaptive.

Adaptive structure

When it comes to structuring the events, multiple models exist and the structure is refined over time, bold experiment after bold experiment. During the first set of seeding event*s*, the structure could be extremely minimal, relying solely on the energy generated by the initiator and the enthusiasm of the first participants. For instance, the organization of the first Startup Week was described as "there was no money, no structure and no organized leadership." (Feld, 2012). Again, the role of digital tools and social media is crucial for having a non structured event. Then, after the first seeding event, the structure

can be changed and adapted to improve the fit with a participant's need. Having a minimal structure at the beginning lets the community be part of and own the event. This is a great way to involve the participants. Perfection vs. messiness is also a debated theme. Perfection could become the enemy of the good (based on Voltaire).

Moreover, while the initiator is described as having a long-term vision, it may appear to contradict comments made by initiators such as "I didn't know where it would lead" (Feld, 2012, p. 85). We suggest that there be a balance between having a flexible long-term vision of what is needed and an adaptive structure to let this vision organically and naturally unfold.

Another reason why informal and adaptive structures are well-suited is the characteristics of entrepreneurs who are used to creative destruction (Schumpeter, 2003), risk-taking and innovation (Alpkan, Bulut, Gunday, Ulusoy, & Kilic, 2010), and liquid environments (Johnson, 2010) .

Refining, growing, templating and replicating

Thanks to adaptive structure and bold experimentation, the structure, format and culture of the events become progressively refined to reach the stage of templating and replicating, while still leaving room for improvement. For instance, the success factors of the events are now well known and identified; the timing of the event has been refined (e.g. 48 hours or one week duration, yearly or weekly events); a network of alumni is active and reachable; a digital structure has been created such as website templates, blogs, twitter accounts, and other forms of online social networking; new initiators are expressing the desire to bring the event to their own area, etc.. The event can then continue to grow on its own and/or be replicated if it makes sense (e.g. TED in TEDx). Because entrepreneurs are action-oriented, growing through refining, templating and replicating can be very fast. In terms of common success factors, Feld mentioned the following: "an ability to creatively adapt to market demand," "a stubborn leader with a vision," and "free beer" (2012).

Seeding event and spaces of entrepreneurial freedom

Finally, seeding event, by patching holes in a network, bring together participants and allow the creation of a more efficient, creative and value-creation flux. This flux of ideas, money, actions, software code, knowledge, people information, and so on are the basic building blocks that lead to the creation of solid networks and new startups, the recognition and exploitation of opportunities, and the creation and development of vibrant spaces of entrepreneurial freedom, ultimately fostering and developing a strong economy.

Contributions, Limitations and Future Research

To conclude, we would like to reinforce our contribution and raise a few limitations and future research questions.

We contribute to the literature about entrepreneurship by introducing the concept of seeding event and its stage model leading to the creation of spaces of entrepreneurial freedom. Hence, this paper is helpful for several streams of research. First, for the research on entrepreneurship in general (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000), but also for specific research streams such as the very rich field of opportunity recognition (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000), clusters and geography (Audretsch & Feldman, 1996; Gilbert, McDougall, & Audretsch, 2008), network of entrepreneurs (Katz & Shapiro, 1985, 1994) and, the entrepreneur as an individual - (Blume & Covin, 2011; Brandstätter, 2011; Cardon et al., 2009; Lazear, 2004; Wagner, 2006; Zhao & Seibert, 2006). Second, this paper also contributes to the field of research at the intersection of structural holes, social capital and entrepreneurship - however our paper focuses on network opportunities leading to SoEF and not just entrepreneurial opportunities.

Is Freedom too strong? One could argue that the term freedom implies that the organization functions as a jail and its members are prisoners. Well, in fact, from the point of view of the entrepreneur, expressions such as "the golden handcuffs," "it kills me," or "in this organization, people were rejecting their personal values" clearly expresses the perceived brutality of some organizations by the future entrepreneur. That said, it is important to keep in mind that not all individuals are unhappy in non-entrepreneurial settings. Indeed, many people thrive in environments with rules and processes that keep the organization in order.

Do we need SoEF? In some cases, the development of entrepreneurial behavior may not be appropriate. For instance, if the industry or company needs to be highly regulated, too much entrepreneurial behavior may lead to major mistakes. In other cases, there is a need to stabilize the profit and therefore alternate an expansion/entrepreneurial phase with a stabilization/non-entrepreneurial phase. This varies from one circumstance or period to another.

Expanding the analysis of emerging core categories. Some concepts may require more in-depth analysis. Following Glaser (2012), we suggest that some of the concepts that emerged as lower-level concepts may very well deserve to be explored as core categories. For instance, the concepts of porosity or protecting the SoEF may have additional nuances, complexities, or hybrid forms that can be useful to explore further.

Finally, seeding event is a good candidate for a Formal Grounded Theory (Glaser, 2007). The recent paper by Rao (2012) on "Free Spaces" in "the 1857 Bengal Native Army" would be an interesting starting point to pursue such an objective.

References

Alpkan, Lutfihak, Bulut, Cagri, Gunday, Gurhan, Ulusoy, Gunduz, & Kilic, Kemal. (2010). Organizational support for intrapreneurship and its interaction with human capital to enhance innovative performance. *Management Decision, 48*(5), 732-755.

Audretsch, David B., & Feldman, Maryann P. (1996). R&D spillovers and the geography of innovation and production. *The American Economic Review, 86*(3), 630-640.

Blume, Brian D., & Covin, Jeffrey G. (2011). Attributions to intuition in the venture founding process: Do entrepreneurs actually use intuition or just say that they do? *Journal of Business Venturing, 26*(1), 137-151.

Bounfour, Ahmed. (2011). *Acceluction in action*: Fondation CIGREF.

Brandstätter, Hermann. (2011). Personality aspects of entrepreneurship: A look at five meta-analyses. *Personality and Individual Differences, 51*(3), 222-230.

Burt, Ronald S. (2002). The social capital of structural holes. In M. F. Guillén, R. Collins, P. England & M. Meyer (Eds.), *The New Economic Sociology* (pp. 148-192). New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Burt, Ronald S. (2004). Structural holes and good ideas. *American Journal of Sociology, 110*(2), 349-399. doi: 10.1086/421787

Cardon, Melissa S. , Wincent, Joakim, Singh, Jagdip , & Drnovsek, Mateja. (2009). The nature and experience of entrepreneurial passion. *The Academy of Management Review 34*(3), 511-532.

Feld, Brad. (2012). *Startup Communities*: Wiley.

Gilbert, Brett Anitra, McDougall, Patricia P., & Audretsch, David B. (2008). Clusters, knowledge spillovers and new venture performance: An empirical examination. *Journal of Business Venturing, 23*(4), 405-422.

Glaser, Barney G. (1978). *Theoretical sensitivity: advances in the methodology of grounded theory*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.

Glaser, Barney G. (1998). *Doing grounded theory: issues and discussions*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press

Glaser, Barney G. (2007). *Doing formal grounded theory: a proposal*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.

Glaser, Barney G. (2011). *Getting out of the data*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.

Glaser, Barney G. (2012). *Stop, write*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.

Glaser, Barney G., & Strauss, Anselm L. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: strategies for qualitative research*: Aldine Transaction.

Johnson, Steven. (2010). *Where good ideas come from: the natural history of innovation*. New York, NY: Riverhead Hardcover.

Katz, Michael L., & Shapiro, Carl. (1985). Network externalities, competition, and compatibility. *The American Economic Review, 75*(3), 424-440.

Katz, Michael L., & Shapiro, Carl. (1994). Systems competition and network effects. *The Journal of Economic Perspectives, 8*(2), 93-115.

Lazear, Edward P. (2004). Balanced skills and entrepreneurship. *American Economic Review, 94*(2), 208-211.

Pinchot, Gifford. (1985). *Intrapreneuring: why you don't have to leave the corporation to become an entrepreneur.* New York: Harper & Row.

Rao, Hayagreeva, & Dutta, Sunasir. (2012). Free spaces as organizational weapons of the weak: religious festivals and regimental mutinies in the 1857 Bengal native army. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 57*(4), 625-668. doi: 10.1177/0001839212467744

Schumpeter, Joseph. (2003). The theory of economic development. In J. G. Backhaus (Ed.), (Vol. 1, pp. 61-116): Springer US.

Shane, Scott. (2000). Prior knowledge and the discovery of entrepreneurial opportunities. *Organization Science, 11*(4), 448.

Shane, Scott, & Venkataraman, Sankaran. (2000). The promise of entrepreneurship as a field of research. *The Academy of Management review, 25*(1), 217-226.

Wagner, Joachim. (2006). Are nascent entrepreneurs 'Jacks-of-all-trades'? a test of Lazear's theory of entrepreneurship with German data. *Applied Economics, 38*(20), 2415-2419.

Walker, Gordon, Kogut, Bruce, & Shan, Weijian. (1997). Social capital, structural holes and the formation of an industry network. *Organization Science, 8*(2), 109-125. doi: 10.2307/2635305

Zhao, Hao, & Seibert, Scott E. (2006). The big five personality dimensions and entrepreneurial status: a meta-analytical review. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 91*(2), 259-271.

Book Review: Being Barney Glaser

Paul Dowling, University of London

Grounded Theory: the philosophy, method, and work of Barney Glaser. Vivian B. Martin & Astrid Gynnild (Eds). 2011. Boca Raton. BrownWalker Press.

I was a little taken aback when Astrid Gynnild asked me to review this work for *Grounded Theory Review*. As I explained, I have been impressed by a lot of what Glaser and Strauss and Glaser writing alone have said to me about sociological research, I teach methodology at masters and doctoral levels and always recommend these works to my students, encouraging them, where appropriate, to adopt some of the more familiar strategies of this approach—let the data speak, theoretically sample, write memos, conceptualise, in particular. I will, however, not allow them to say that what they are doing is grounded theory and nor do I claim that that is what I do; I may have been impressed, even inspired by Glaser's work, but what I do is other than it. So I'm not sure that I am qualified to review the book. Nevertheless, I agreed, only to be disconcerted by the announcement of audience in the introduction by Gynnild & Martin:

> It is our hope that grounded theorists at all stages of competence will find something useful to incorporate into their grounded theory practice. Much is said here about the desire to get good information into the hands of minus mentors, but the book is also for the many skilled GT researchers around the globe who are searching for more insights, inspiration, and ideas to move on with their own GT projects (p. 11).

It would appear that I am not even included as a reader, yet I am now asked to address people who certainly are. Well, here goes.

Firstly, I think Gynnild and Martin have left me out in error. There is a great deal in this collection for the non-specialist in grounded theory starting with the discussion and illustration of mentoring in the introduction and in the first section of the book, "Teaching grounded theory," in particular. Indeed, the editors have deployed a grounded theory approach to the analysis of their own collection. In their introduction, Gynnild and Martin present the outcome of this analysis, revealing that the main concern in this book is "mentoring a method" — the title of the introduction—"through cultivating competence of grounded theory networks over extended periods of time" (p. 3). If a practice—any practice—is to have coherence in its practical application, then that coherence will, in part, at least, be characterised by what I (Dowling, 2009) call "low discursive saturation," whereby its principles are not available within language, cannot be validly codified in books, though we may try. As Guthrie and Lowe put it in their chapter giving advice to students and their supervisors:

> Have you ever read a book which aims to teach you how to ski, surf, ride a horse? None, no matter how well written, can mimic what it is really like to feel the full range of these real experiences as they are lived (p. 154).

Neither do you learn to ride a horse or do research—at least, not well—without a mentor. This is an important lesson for all educators and, in particular, for the supervisors of dissertations to take mentoring seriously, whatever their approach to research. Of course, mentoring is not the only responsibility that a supervisor has in respect of their students, particularly where the students are drawing productively on the supervisor's own work. Examiners will want to be assured that that work has credibility within the relevant field and will expect to see citations of published work. The supervisor, in other words, has a responsibility to their students to publish. So I do not go along with Guthrie and Lowe's contrasting of the bad supervisor as a PRAT—one who prioritises publishing, research,

administration and teaching in that order—with a good supervisor as TRAP. Each of these domains of activity is vital both for the supervisor's career and in their responsibility to their students; it should not be a matter of prioritising—amusing as these acronyms are—but of engaging in each activity with integrity.

The ultimate impossibility of acquiring classic grounded theory skills textually notwithstanding, the non-specialist can still learn a great deal about grounded theory and, in particular, about the distinctiveness of classic grounded theory from this collection. A recurring theme is the well-known interdiction on doing a literature review in advance of data collection and analysis. Now I had previously understood this to be based solely on the need to avoid pre-conceptualisation and forcing. Indeed, this is re-stated by Glaser himself in his chapter on formal grounded theory (although I take the point that it applies to substantive, but not to formal grounded theory). I have tended to stand against this argument, not least because we generally should approach the literature critically. I feel I now have now been presented—particularly clearly in the chapter by Simmons, in that by McCallin, Nathaniel and Andrews and in Gynnild's interview with Glaser—with what seems to me to be a far more persuasive case. This concerns the fundamental intention of classic grounded theory to access that which is considered to be most important by the participants in the setting of the research and, through analysis, their latent patterns. This being the case, an advance literature review is not advisable because one cannot know in advance what literature will be relevant. I still disagree, because I approach research as more of a transaction between researcher—as a student of research literature—and researched and do not see a preliminary literature review as a contract; it has to be redone anyway at the completion of analysis. What is important is to allow the data to speak and not to presume that it will speak in the language of the literature.

Judith A. Holton, in her chapter, reports an Alvin Gouldner anecdote, recounted by Glaser, about a student, interested in risk-taking behaviour among steeplejacks. The student had been frustrated by his difficulty in getting the steeplejacks to talk about risk. At one point, the student saw them drawing straws for the allocation not of potential risk, but of vantage points for window peeping. The study, originally on risk-taking, subsequently became a study in strategic positioning. Not, for me, an argument for avoiding the literature, but for keeping an open mind. Nevertheless, where the transactional aspect of research is being minimised, I will (almost) concede the point about preliminary literature reviews. I would not, though, go quite as far as Guthrie and Lowe in suggesting that, if university protocols insist on a preliminary literature review then the student should produce "a logically plausible (but quite irrelevant)" (p. 61) review: if your university or supervisor does not understand or permit the approach to which you are committed, then find another university/supervisor.

The second section of the book consists of six chapters on "doing grounded theory." The first three of these appear to me to provide practical advice on specific data collection strategies and could all be used as stand alone pieces on these strategies; I will certainly recommend them to students on my masters programme. Helen Scott's chapter on "Conducting grounded theory interviews online" addresses an important development in data collection settings and discusses some of the issues in a grounded theory motivated way; how do we cope with lies, for example. Lisbeth Nilsson discusses the use of video recordings in an approach that generally advises against audio recording interviews. Again, this is a useful piece for any researcher intending to make use of video and again there is discussion of grounded theory methodology, in particular, the interdiction on recording. Nilsson reports that Glaser had advised her that the rule would not apply in her case—working with "people who have profound cognitive disabilities [that] means having to learn a whole new system of communication where meaning is primarily conveyed through behaviors not words" (p. 103)—and that video recording was appropriate. Now, again, I take a different view from Glaser on audio recording interviews. For me, using the recorder enhances my ability to focus close attention on what the interviewee is saying and field notes can be used for preliminary analysis, which can begin with the beginning of the

interview. I see transcription as part of the process of analysis itself, getting to know the data, as well as enabling a form of re-visiting that relies less on memory and its inevitably uncontrolled recontextualisations. I'm sure that those affiliating to the classic grounded theory method have heard these arguments before, but I do not seek to establish counter legislation, merely to mark my position. The chapter by Cheri Hernandez again takes on the recording issue in her discussion of the use of focus groups. Here, recording becomes necessary because, for example, this method is likely to involve a team of researchers rather than just one and because of the extended period of time involved in focus group discussions. Transcription of group discussion will, of course, take a great deal longer than is the case for one on one.

Michael K. Thomas introduces another issue that may seem controversial to some classic grounded theorists, the use of qualitative research software. In his chapter on formal grounded theory, Glaser asserts that this cannot be done on a computer, though I cannot recall mention of computers in relation to substantive grounded theory. In any event, the computer does not do the analysis for you, it simply enables storage, annotation, and retrieval in ways that should help the grounded theorist—whether doing substantive or formal grounded theory—to conceptualise more efficiently and, just possibly, more effectively. Again, Thomas provides some insightful discussion and helpful advice in a chapter that could, again, stand alone on the reading list of a methods programme.

Mark S. Rosenbaum—whose chapter is in the book's fourth section—also argues a case for the use of computers in grounded theory research, this time for the deployment of structural equation modelling in the verification of grounded theories. The chapter includes descriptions of various kinds of theory models that might arise out of a grounded theory study and that can be verified by theoretical triangulation using the Amos software that Rosenbaum introduces. The discussion is interesting, though presumably Glaser would argue that, if the grounded theory study has been done properly in the first place then it shouldn't need verifying.

The chapter by Hans Thulesius (back to the second section of the book) discusses his work in developing the seminal study, *Awareness of Dying*. There is not a great deal on grounded theory *per se* in this chapter, but the chapter is interesting in its own right. So too is the chapter by Massimiliano Tarozzi in which he discusses his translation of *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* into Italian. Tarozzi reveals some of the ways in which the process and problems of translation can enhance the understanding of a method. I found both of these chapters fascinating.

Three of the chapters in the fourth section—those by Glaser himself, Tom Andrews and Vivian B. Martin—concern the development of formal grounded theory. Andrews' and Martin's discussions of particular projects are helpful here as are the many illustrations in Glaser's chapter. Again, there are lessons or, at least, interesting points for debate here, not only for aspiring and actual grounded theorists, but for all researchers. Glaser, for example, warns against the tendency (most of us are guilty of it at some point) to "drift into logic-deductive speculation" that is "just 'super think' divorced from reality" (p. 274). He also notes that:

> Rewriting substantive theory up a notch can sound like formal theory and gives formal theory implications but it is not FGT. At best it is a FGT waiting to happen by comparisons with new data and simply rides on the general implications of the core category. ... For example, a theory on becoming a nurse can be rewritten as ... a theory of becoming a professional by leaving out substantive words, or even becoming in general, an aspect of socialising. Or a theory of cautionary control among dentists can be rewritten, leaving out references to dentists as four general types of cautionary control. Or a theory of cultivating housewives for milk delivery accounts can be rewritten leaving out substantive reference to milkmen, as a theory of cultivating clients for profit or recreation. In short, by rewriting

> leaving out the substantive attributions the researcher has raised the conceptual level of his [sic] work mechanically. He has not done the research to broaden the scope of his theory to the formal by conceptual comparative analysis of different substantive areas (pp. 274-5).

These cases are well made and, as I say, constitute important caveats for all researchers and not just grounded theorists. One additional point is worth mentioning. In this chapter Glaser points out that:

> People collect heaps of data thinking that is what research is, and then do not know what to do with it. They are often delighted that someone will or may do something with it (p. 263).

One needs, however, to take care here. Research Ethics Committees—at least in the UK—are tending to take a dim view of the use of data for purposes other than that for which it was collected unless the informed consent of those from whom the data was collected has been given for this additional use either originally or subsequently. The institutional scrutinising of research ethics in social and educational research has only really been an issue in the UK for about ten years, with research education rather lagging behind the bureaucracy. I hope that this will not unhelpfully reduce the availability of data for use such as the development of formal grounded theory.

Both grounded theorists and non-specialists will find the insights into Glaser's life, teaching, and early influences to be fascinating and helpful in appreciating what is specific about classic grounded theory; these insights are also, for me, an inspiration in dedication. There is something in pretty much all of the chapters as one might expect, I suppose, from a team who all studied under Glaser at one point or another in their careers. Key chapters in this respect for me, however, were those by Simmons, Charmaz—in her chapter presenting observations from students who studied with Glaser in the 1960s and 1970s—Holton—on early academic influences—the chapter, "Atmosphering for Conceptual Development," by Gynnild and especially, of course, Gynnild's interview with Glaser. Indeed, the interview seems to get to the heart of the matter. "Where did you get the inspiration from?"(p. 238), Gynnild asks, the reply: "Me. It's doing Barney" (ibid.), and later:

> You know what I'm thinking the core variable is? I know how wonderful it is to have one's self. I want to give people their sense of being themselves. (p. 251)

"Doing Barney," it seems, entails the application of the Golden Rule and hence the insistence on the crucial aspect that I mentioned above:

> ... classic grounded theorists begin with problems that are important to the people involved (McCallin, Nathaniel & Andrews, p. 78).

The rule penetrates Glaser's teaching, which enables Gynnild to reveal a resonance between it and Carl Rogers' person-centred theory that itself resonates with many of the anecdotes in the collection relating to learning grounded theory with Glaser and, indeed, with Anselm Strauss. The coherence that is suggested in Glaser's response to Gynnild's question is underscored by Evert Gummesson, who claims that, unlike many politicians, economists, lawyers, and physicians, Glaser "walks his talk:"

> Barney Glaser lives GT ...[He] became a world-renowned sociologist, but he used his scientific method to start a building company, a financial business, and a publishing house. And they are all successful. His windsurfing skills are the outcome of a GT study; his mini-GTs help him to quickly get to the point in all walks of life. Doing what he preaches, he personifies GT methodology (p. 230).

Indeed, Glaser seems to have adopted a similar approach in respect of determining and maintaining a healthy diet. This practical intention of classic grounded theory is nicely illustrated by Odis E. Simmons:

> ... in my study of the relationship between milkmen and their customers [..], I discovered the core category, "cultivating relationships." Prior to my sharing the concept with the milkmen from whom I had collected my data, they were unaware that they were cultivating relationships and that this was an essential part of their jobs. When I pointed it out, they immediately understood. And, with the informal theoretical foothold that I had provided them, they devised enhanced cultivating strategies and became even better at it. What had been latent easily became apparent and modifiable (p. 26).

Judith A. Holton describes Glaser's enthusiasm for the use-value of classic grounded theory:

> Glaser would continue to apply GT methodology to a wide range of studies including topics of everyday life interest such as contracting the building of a house and safe investing [..]. For Glaser, it was a natural evolution in applying and refining the methodology as practical sociology. In his writing and in seminars, Glaser continues to underscore the substantial power of GT and frequently advocates that this power deserves to be applied to those areas of life that matter most—relationships, parenting, careers, health and wellness, etc. (p. 216).

McCallin, Nathaniel and Andrews present this use-value rather more forcibly, classic grounded theory is, they argue:

> ..a unique theory-generating approach to understanding human experience. The moral imperative of research in the social sciences is to produce the best possible knowledge that can be used to positively affect those who require the services of a professional. So, there seems to be a valid moral justification for adherence to the tenets of classic grounded theory in disciplinary research. Furthermore, inadequate, skewed, misinformed, biased, or capriciously interpreted data and thoughtless, preconceived analysis of research data fails to attain the moral imperative central to disciplinary development. (pp. 78-9).

There is "a valid moral justification for adherence to the tenets of classic grounded theory in disciplinary research:" they seem, here, to be labelling not only the modification of classic grounded theory, but all other approaches to social research as immoral. This is a step too far for me and appears to be in some tension with Glaser's determination "to give people their sense of being themselves," "people" presumably including researchers. There are many legitimate justifications for social research, the production of directly useable results being just one. My own view of educational research, for example, is that it can provide bases for the interrogation of professional educational practice, but that it should not seek to direct that practice. It can generate new ways of looking at parts of the world that practitioners may recruit and recontextualise to enable them to develop their own practices. Glaser describes his own upbringing in a wealthy household with domestic servants. Many of the settings of social research include people who are rather less fortunate and a good deal of social research aims to reveal the systems and processes that constitute their oppression and this often requires going beyond the local areas of life of "relationships, parenting, careers, health and wellness, etc." I'm not saying that this cannot be done using classic grounded theory, simply that there are other legitimate approaches, including, perhaps, versions of modified grounded theory. McCallin, Nathaniel and Andrews are unduly simplifying the situation in a kind of purifying strategy: purifying is legitimate in terms of maintaining the specificity of classic grounded theory itself, but not as an attempt to pathologise alternatives.

Judith A. Holton's chapter considers the early influences on Glaser's academic thought and work, presenting a strong sense of Barney doing Barney in his engagement with some of the big names of American sociology, Paul F. Lazersfeld, Robert Merton and Hans Zetterberg amongst others. Holton quotes Glaser as recalling that "Throughout my whole training I resisted the efforts of both Lazersfeld and Merton to co-opt me to work for them...I had no time for them personally, just their ideas." (p. 209). These and other ideas from the field presumably contribute to what Glaser refers to as the theoretical sensitivity that enables him to recognise significant patterns in data. Theoretical sensitivity—if I've understood the concept appropriately—is going to be to a degree specific to the researcher and their intellectual history. I was a little bewildered, therefore, by the suggestion by Alvita K. Nathaniel that both Glaser and C.S.Peirce

> ... believed that no matter where different investigations may begin, if they closely follow the method, their results will eventually converge toward the same result and that further study will tend to correct the results (p. 197).

If, indeed, theoretical sensitivity constitutes the individuality of the researcher in classic grounded theory (I'm sure someone will correct me if this is not the case), and if theoretical sensitivity develops with each project, then the different investigations may very well not "converge toward the same result." In his chapter on formal grounded theory, Glaser recalls, "the two dissertations I supervised on heart attacks lead two diametrically opposed core categories: cutting and super normalising" (p. 268), although he—the supervisor and so third researcher—articulates them, "heart attack victims ordered to cut back, if the attack is not severe, will super normalise to prove that they are still ok." (ibid.). It may be, then, that Nathaniel's attempt to "propose an extant, integrated, philosophical framework that fits the classic grounded theory method and undergirds its rigorous scientific processes" (p. 187) is somewhat forced, but why do it in the first place?

> Why is it important to identify the philosophical foundations of a research methodology? If carefully attended, the first principles, assumptions and beliefs of a given philosophy contribute the ontology and epistemology to a *methodology* and hold it together. This provides structure, logic and cohesion. Methodology carries through to the *method*, which includes practical steps of procedures such as data gathering coding, and analysis and also language, images, relationships, and meanings. Thus the philosophy's assumptions and beliefs imbue the day-to-day practical application of the method and its eventual product. This engenders research that is ethical, logical, truthful, and cohesive—earmarks of good scholarship. (p. 187)

It seems to me that this is less an argument than a sequence of assertions. It is reasonable to note that there are resonances between Peirce's pragmatism—the extant framework identified by Nathaniel—and the pragmatic claims of classic grounded theory, but I tend to empathise with Glaser himself when he asserts that "grounded theory is a-philosophical" (McCallin, Nathaniel & Andrews, p. 72) or as Simmons reports:

> Let the diehard constructivists and objectivists continue their rhetorical wrestle; for others, as Glaser tells his students, "just do the work!" (p. 27)

It seems to me to be entirely consistent with "doing Barney" to resist being subordinated to someone else's discourse, in this case, philosophy, elsewhere symbolic interactionism and so forth. I approach the situation in a different way, but arrive at the same conclusion. Philosophising generates metadiscourse in its relations with social research. This is often engaging, as it is here, but it is largely irrelevant to "doing the work"—and, apparently, to doing Barney—except insofar as it may contribute to, dare I say, theoretical sensitivity, in which case we need lots of different philosophies and not just one. One of the flaws in research methods teaching, at least in educational studies in the UK, is that programmes often begin with discussion of philosophy on the apparent grounds that one needs to sort

out one's epistemology and ontology before even beginning to think about "doing the work." I take a different view (see, for example, Dowling & Brown, 2010) and, so it would seem, does Barney Glaser. So I welcome the presence of philosophical discussion in this collection—especially that included in the chapter by Odis E. Simmons—but react against its attachment to the body of classic grounded theory as an unnecessary prosthesis.

A substantial amount—I hope not all—of this review has been, I suppose, descriptive rather than conceptual, but then I suppose that's the job of a reviewer in large part. I have a sense of the kind of distinction that Glaser is making between description and conceptualisation, but I don't like the use of these terms in this way: a description is always a conceptualisation of that which it describes, though often this may not have been taken very far. I refer to my own general approach as constructive description and, as I've mentioned above, I see my kind of analysis as a transaction between analyst and data. The analyst begins with a disposition or prejudice that has arisen from an engagement with largely conceptual literature to constitute an internal theoretical language. I conceive of analysis as the transaction between this internal language and the empirical, which may be data of any kind to generate an external language and an analysis in terms of this language. The external language accumulates to constitute the legacy of past analyses. My internal language encourages a sensitivity to action and on emergent alliances and oppositions. One of the components of my external language is a scheme that describes authority strategies, employing terms that are borrowed from Max Weber (though used in a way that is different from his). The scheme originated in the analysis of an institutional circular letter and proposes that the authority of an utterance or act may be attempted via a closing of the category of its author, or a closing of the category of the practice that contextualises the utterance or act, or a closing of both, or of neither. The result is the 2x2 schema in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Authority Strategies

	Category of Practice	
Category of Author	Open	Closed
Closed	*charismatic*	*traditional*
Open	*liberal*	*bureaucratic*

(Adapted from Dowling, 2009)

Re-visiting the collection that I have reviewed, all of these strategies can be found. Much of the book concerns the attempt to specify the classic grounded theory method, to mark out its distinctiveness from other approaches, to establish that whoever uses it should adopt its very specific procedures. These are bureaucratic strategies, specifying practice, but not the practitioner. At the same time, a number of chapters in the book make it quite clear that it is not possible to deploy the approach appropriately without an extended mentoring. This is a traditional authority strategy because it specifies both the practice—classic grounded theory—and the practitioner. Mentors must themselves have been mentored by a previously mentored grounded theorist and as the originator of the method was Barney Glaser. This establishes a necessary direct line of descent of all legitimate, classic grounded theorists from Glaser. This and the reported references back to him for the legitimation of particular decisions, not to mention the references to his quirky behaviour, in "atmosphering" and in waving at window cleaners during an interview, for example, constitute him as the charismatic author and ultimate arbiter of the method. Finally, the openness to the voices of others in being themselves, whether as learners of grounded theory or as participants in research settings, is a liberalising, a handing over of authority from the author of an act or utterance to its audience. I have no space to do this properly nor to defend the approach, though I will note that I justify my use of polarised categories and my rejection of the continuum by my contention that you cannot have a continuum unless you have a metric. Perhaps I can also note that, although I do look for patterns in data, I do not regard those

that I find as latent or as subjacent in respect to the practice or text. For me, all is surface and the patterns are the product of my deforming transaction with the data. A rather attractive illustration is offered by Jerome McGann's (2001) application of random Photoshop mutations to Rossetti's *The Blessed Damozel*, "revealing" (or producing?) hitherto unsuspected structure in the painting. McGann's own explanation of what he's achieving—his metadiscourse as opposed to mine—does constitute the structure as latent. Alternatively, then, (and also reported by McGann) there is Emily Dickinson's advice to try reading a poem backwards (I wonder what she meant exactly; perhaps it doesn't matter) if one is making little headway with a poem. In any event, this little ending is just a very quick holiday snap of Dowling doing Dowling. For the rest, in reading this book I was reminded, oddly, perhaps, of the film, *Being John Malkovich* (Spike Jonze, Dir.), with all of its puppetry imagery; it was fun, just for a little while, perhaps not doing, but being Barney Glaser.

References

Dowling, P.C. (2009). *Sociology as Method: departures from the forensics of culture, text and knowledge*. Rotterdam. Sense.

Dowling, P.C. & Brown, A.J. (2010). *Doing Research/Reading Research: Re-interrogating education*. Second Edition. London. Routledge.

McGann, J. (2001). *Radiant Textuality: Literature after the world wide web*. New York. Palgrave.

About the authors

Barney G. Glaser is the cofounder of grounded theory (1967). He received his PhD from Columbia University in 1961. He then went to University of California San Francisco, where he joined Anselm Strauss in doing the dying in hospitals study and in teaching PhD and DNS students methods and analysis. He published over 20 articles on this research and the dying research. Since then, Glaser has written 14 more books using and about grounded theory, and countless articles. In 1998 he received an honorary doctorate from Stockholm University. His latest book, which deals with the no preconceptions dictum in grounded theory, will soon be published. Email: bglaser@speakeasy.net

Antoinette McCallin works with postgraduate students from many health disciplines in the Faculty of Health and Environmental Sciences. She supervises masters and doctoral research projects, and coordinates the research paper in the professional doctoral research programme. Antoinette is a Fellow of the Grounded Theory Institute, and a Peer Review Editor for The Grounded Theory Review. Specialist research interests include collaboration, interprofessional practice, interdisciplinary learning, and interdisciplinary teamwork. Email: amccall@aut.ac.nz

Geoff Dickson is the Associate Dean (Research) for the Faculty of Health and Environmental Sciences. Geoff is responsible for research development and building research capability and productivity in the Faculty. He co-chairs the Faculty Postgraduate and Research Committee, a key communication, policy and funding committee, and is responsible for maintaining records and reporting on research activity and outcomes. As a member of the School of Sport and Recreation, Geoff leads the undergraduate and postgraduate programs in sport and recreation management. His research interests focus on interorganisational networks, corporate governance and event tourism. Email: geoff.dickson@aut.ac.nz

Paul Dowling is professor of education in the Department of Culture, Communication and Media, Institute of Education, University of London. He is a sociologist and his work involves the development and deployment of an organizational language—social activity method (SAM)—for the sociological description of pedagogic sites, texts and technologies in any context. Email: p.dowling@ioe.ac.uk

Naomi Elliott is Assistant Professor in General Nursing in the School of Nursing and Midwifery in Trinity College Dublin, Ireland. She completed her PhD using grounded theory, is supervising PhD students using grounded theory and lectures doctoral students on qualitative research methodology. Email: Naomi.elliott@tcd.ie

Agnes Higgins is a Professor in Mental Health Nursing at Midwifery in the School of Nursing and Midwifery in Trinity College Dublin, Ireland. She completed her PhD using grounded theory and is supervising a number of PhD students who are conducting classic grounded theory studies. Email: ahiggins@tcd.ie

Kim Kwok's research of rugby coaching was an outgrowth of more than thirty years of ongoing interest and involvement in New Zealand's national game. He currently manages an amateur team at his local club, and is attempting a start-up business, which will seek to disseminate and market the findings of his Masters research. Email: kkimbo1@gmail.com

Gaëtan Mourmant received his Ph.D. degree in Information Systems from Paris Dauphine University (France) and Georgia State University (USA). He worked four years as a Marketing Database Analyst in a global, financial institution (Canada). As a consultant, he managed more than 50 IT projects (France). Gaëtan's research interests include turnover and entrepreneurship. He has published papers in the European Journal of Information Systems, the Proceedings of the ACM Special Interest Group on MIS and the International Conference on Information Systems. Email: gmourmant@gmail.com

Anna Sandgren has a PhD in Caring Sciences and works as a senior lecturer at the School of Health Sciences, Jönköping University, Sweden. Her research is mostly focused on palliative cancer care, but she is also involved in other research areas such as lifestyle intervention studies for persons with psychiatric disabilities, studies focusing on patients with pacemaker and their relatives, and studies on patients with subarachnoid hemorrhages and their relatives. Anna uses different research methodologies but she is especially interested in classic grounded theory and she is a fellow of the Grounded Theory Institute.
Email: anna.sandgren@hhj.hj.se