# The Strength of a Solution Seeking Approach

## Editorial

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Why do PhD candidates choose grounded theory as their methodological approach? Many novice grounded theorists obviously grapple with this question while working on their dissertations. The Grounded Theory Review constantly receives papers from novice GT researchers that discuss and share experiences when following the tenets of the methodology.

In this issue, we are happy to present the first chapter of an upcoming reader by Barney G. Glaser on choosing GT for their dissertation work. As dr. Glaser points out, we know much about the many variables that influence a GT trajectory, but less about the initial drive to choose the GT method. Even though choosing a grounded theory approach may seem like an immediate firm decision, dr. Glaser emphasizes that its firmness varies with the learning curve of the researcher. Usually, the firmness increases with productive, conceptual GT training. This observation is surely supported by two short format papers in this issue.

A great advantage of the grounded theory approach is the fact that grounded theories are solution-oriented rather than problem-focused. I believe this solution-seeking speaks convincingly to a main concern of contemporary society, in which new forms of digital communication constantly change the ways that individuals and large groups of people relate to each other. Even if most of us are increasingly computerized in thinking and doing, our apparently rational clear cut goals are still coupled with values, affections, and traditions, as once pointed out by the influential sociologist Max Weber. Grounded theories are outstandingly good at conceptualizing main concerns of the few on behalf of the many, therein lies their explanatory strength and firm support of productive change.

Following Dr. Glaser's chapter of choosing grounded theory, we are happy to present two full format grounded theories:

Annabel-Mauve Adjognon's theory of political intelligentizing explains widespread strategies of political games in business administration. Her study, originating from France, provides new insights in ways that top-level corporate managers aim at becoming more politically successful. Political intelligentizing implies acquiring, developing, and combining six specific skills: time matching, rhetorical fitting, silence juggling, strategic forward thinking, strategic interacting, and relationing. Political intelligentizing is a good example of a substantive theory with great general explanatory power.

The next theory, safeguarding self-governance, explains older patients' patterns of behavior in relation to their relatives in a very special situation. Danish researchers Connie B. Berthelsen, Kirsten Frederiksen, and Tove Lindhardt propose that older patients turn to

safeguarding self-governance when faced with the challenge of recovering from total joint replacement in fast-track programs. Older patients' need for maintaining autonomy is resolved through strategies of embracing, shielding, distancing, and masking. This theory of heterogenous patterns of behavior to maintain autonomy emphasizes the need for health care professionals to apply an individualized approach to the involvement of relatives of older patients.

A novice grounded theorist, Amy Russell from Texas, USA, presents a methodological article where she discusses the development of self-trust and self-pacing during the GT research process. In her short format comment on gerunds, Amy explains how questioning and testing her own conceptualizations ensured that she would follow the tenets of grounded theory data analysis. Amy explains how transposing stages of self-pacing onto researcher gerunds made her identify phases of questioning and doubting, waiting and trusting, and ruminating and obsessing. She also suggests that saturation is similar to reflexing and owning.

Another novice grounded theorist, Leslie Piko from Australia, contributes with two short format papers in this issue. Just like Amy Russell, Leslie is concerned with explaining her own delving into grounded theory, but from a different perspective. In her first paper, Leslie shares her ways of discovering her theory of optimizing professional life. The theory deals with the substantive area of general practitioners and their need for sustainment. In her second paper, Leslie explains how she applied the theory of optimizing life in a workshop for general practitioners. In the workshop, doctors were challenged to reinvent their careers by using her newly generated theory. The theory provided a useful framework that guided participants in analyzing their own long-term career issues and in identifying potential solutions while working individually and in small groups.

Lars-Johan Åge from Sweden contributes with a short format article on the double challenge in sales management. Lars-Johan suggests that a main concern of a sales manager is to reach the sales and economic goals of his organization. This concern is resolved through the process of goal-oriented balancing. Sales managers constantly seek to maximize individual performance. But individual development can only be enhanced if balanced with frame development. Thus, the parallel challenge facing sales managers is to establish effective organizational processes and structures that maximize individual performance support.

Finally, researchers Jan Green and Ben Binsardi from Wales, UK, have explored a common phenomenon in academia, namely researchers' tendency to undertake complex research tasks outside core working hours. Jan and Ben identify how personal effort and drive require the application of mental mustering and systematic procedures. Researchers' resolution to the reoccurring dilemma of working long hours is resolved through treating research work as a hobby. Thus, the concept of systematic avocating explains researchers' personal solution through immersion in the task.

Have a good read!

# Choosing Grounded Theory

Barney G. Glaser, PhD, Hon. PhD

This book deals simply with choosing classic grounded theory (CGT) as the methodology to use mainly for doing the dissertation. CGT stands alone as a separate method, not as a competitive method in conflict and controversy with all the QDA (qualitative data analysis) methods jargonized as a type of GT. The PhD candidate (herein called novice) simply chooses the method that he/she wants as best fit for him. This reader provides a myriad of CGT properties to consider in choosing it as the method to use. There will be no competitive arguments with other methods offered here. It is designed to have CGT chosen on its merits for the user, not better or worse.

Other GT methods are just different, not better or worse. So to competitively compare them violates the Glaser purpose here to no advantage. Privately many novices may choose CGT over other methods for personal reasons, such as preferring emergence, autonomy, coding and no preconceptions, etc. but the choice is private, not better or worse. Also CGT is not to be mixed with other methods. The choice of CGT is solo pure.

This reader focuses on choosing, not doing, CGT. There are many articles, readers and books on "how to" do CGT, but only a few articles on why choose CGT before doing. Only a few articles exist that help the novice formulate his decision to use the CGT version for his dissertation. The novice will have to formulate his decision on which version of QDA or GT to use, usually to a degree that will convince a committee of his choice. This reader will help this decision formulation in many ways I will discuss below. The large volume of GT readers and articles publishing generated grounded theories support the choosing of CGT for the dissertation.

In comparing methodologies this reader is not designed by conflict to discredit or malign other methodologies, it is designed to show how CGT stands on its own as a very legitimate methodology to use. Thus CGT is a no better or worse than other methodologies. CGT is just worthy of use as designed and not to be changed by misunderstandings of its procedures or by imposing other method procedures on it. Nor do the CGT procedures have to be argued for, especially by a novice. It should be simply chosen for how it is applied and its resultant worthy product as shown throughout the work in journals and books. Thus novices can "just do it"; that is do CGT without being questioned on its procedures or the worthiness of its generated theory. This reader answers for the novice the typical committee question — "Why choose CGT?" — by reference to the appropriate chapter(s) herein and shows the chapter to the committee and or his supervisor.

This reader prints several articles available on choosing CGT. There are many GT/QDA versions of qualitative methods, and the novice will have to form a personal decision on which to use and then will have to usually convince a committee of his choice. If his choice is CGT over the other versions, it is usually necessary to argue this choice to his

committee. Which committee is usually as yet QDA oriented among senior faculty. And the committee has the social structural strength to put strong pressure on the novice to use a QDA approach and to not use CGT.

This problem is increasing given the worldwide spread of CGT with the result of many novices calling for help in explaining choosing CGT as well as initially doing the research. The novices need to formulate for themselves why they choose CGT for doing a dissertation since it is so fateful a life choice. And they often need help from a mentor in arguing and convincing a supervisor and a committee steeped in QDA procedures that do not apply to CGT.

This reader supplies many reasons to choose CGT that the novice can use personally to assure his attraction to CGT. But also under one cover, this reader contains many "why" articles by well known CGT researchers. Thus the novice PhD candidate can just show his supervisor and committee this legitimating CGT reader and let them read for themselves the "why" CGT, since most superiors have read little or nothing about CGT and read some wrong arguments confusing the CGT version with other so called GT versions.

A major goal of this reader is to anchor in the work of experienced GT researchers and senior academics the decisions of choosing to use CGT for the dissertation. I emphasize choosing,not doing CGT, in this reader since there are many articles and books on doing GT and CGT, but just a few scattered articles on choosing CGT for the dissertation methodology. There are many journals and readers showing over 100 grounded theories that are good examples of doing products. But how the authors go about choosing CGT methodology for doing their product is most often left out. How to choose is not offered in most articles.

The attraction of CGT is great and spreading worldwide. I can tell from the sale of Sociology Press books. Choosing to use methodology for dissertation is very fateful in time, expense of life, professional belonging and future in academic work. Mastering the arguments in this reader will be very helpful for making "Why" CGT choices and then convincing others of this choice, especially senior PhD committee members, not in tune with CGT. This reader will especially help the beginning novice who wants to use CGT for his dissertation but is not sure how to argue for his decision and how to explain to self and others his personal decision and commitment. In this reader we confront the academic merit of choosing CGT over other GT versions or simply QDA, and it is the merit of CGT in contrast to other methods or versions called GT that the novice has to argue about to supervisors and PhD committees. I trust this reader will help their travail.

It is the academic legitimacy of the CGT product that has to be approved by senior members of PhD committees. As CGT spreads throughout the world the increase in novices captured by the grab of CGT autonomy and discovery and attraction to what is really "going" on is increasing also. And then to be ok'd by a PhD committee to use CGT is a travail they are not yet trained for and often fail to achieve. This reader will help the novice solve this problem and have the legitimacy to use CGT in anticipation and before doing the dissertation by an educated choosing to use it.

This reader is not meant to scientize choosing to use CGT. It is not meant to get the novice to scientize an argument for his choice beyond his training level. He or she just chooses without winning or losing the rhetorical wrestle. There is no answer to best methodology based on rigor and other scientific requirements. This reader is just meant to show to seniors that the choice of CGT has well founded scientific principals and is quite legitimate as set forth in its procedures. It should convince the "worried" or doubtful novice or senior and committee of the merit of CGT procedures that have yielded hundreds of published CGT theories.

Choosing CGT may appear like an immediate firm decision, but actually its firmness varies with the learning curve of the researcher and usually increases with the conceptualizing experience when doing CGT productively. However, several aspects of the learning curve can disillusion the choice of using CGT. Some are unfavorable impressions of autonomy. The initial confusion that comes with conceptualizing is lack of experienced mentoring, giving constant negative advice all pressuring to use routine QDA procedures of description.

Tolerating the initial stages of the learning curve as it proceeds and having a supportive knowledgeable mentor, however infrequently, and joining a CGT network etc. all on the other hand firm up and support the decision to use CGT. As confusion starts changing to emergent conceptualizations CGT procedures start to make good sense relieving impressionistic initial decisions. The decision to choose CGT firms up solidly and becomes less sabotagable by others. Of course the novice always has the option of retreating to standard QDA or a non GT jargonized version if the learning curve becomes too much to bear. More frequently the opposite occurs leaving behind the over collecting of QDA for the growing excitement of an emerging CGT. So choosing CGT can be complex and takes time and can yield doubts as well as excitement on the way to a grounded theory PhD dissertation.

The initial draw to choosing CGT for a dissertation is expressed nicely by Hans Thulesius, MD, PhD, a very experienced CGT researcher. He says: "Classic GT draws the attention especially to novices who are attracted by the promise of being able to develop by discovery theory directly from the data and not having to deal with existing theoretical assumptions in a field that has started to interest them. So choosing CGT becomes a matter of fit. The researcher reads about the CGT method and recognizes a fit with his/her way of thinking about how to work scientifically."

Most novices starting with CGT that I have met and coached in doing CGT have chosen this method based on the impressionistic impact of CGT when initially reading about it. This starts the CGT learning curve, which competes better and better over time with other GT versions. It is important that the novice be in a PhD program that allows the time to support the curve.

Novice CGT researchers are increasing in numbers through the world as CGT is spreading. Senior CGT researchers who mentor novices are constantly being asked the following type of questions, to quote Angel Zamani of Iran, "It would be highly appreciated if you would kindly help me persuade the committee that it is worth it to explore the main

concern of a population." Dealing with committees is a big problem (see section on committees below). My trouble-shooting seminars dealing with such doing questions are jammed. Unanswered doing questions or answers that do not satisfy the committee put the choosing decision for novices in jeopardy in favor of QDA method. A firm why choose CGT provided by this reader will tend to end this instability for many novices.

This reader will help receive for novices the following good news like the following from Angel: "The good news is that the proposal got approved by the committee at last. Instead of applying some of their superficial changes, I gave them a paper authorized by you explaining why CGT is not constructionist." This reader will also answer this question and much more. It will help resolve problems like that expressed by Tommy Hund: "My supervisor even dominates my direction in doing data analysis alone by constant requests for discussion about it. It undermines my confidence in doing analysis alone. What should I do?" Enough said. I can quote many novices' letters to me about supervisor pressure problems. This reader will, in essence, speak for the novice with authority to the dominating supervisor.

I now turn to four topics in some depth touched upon above: mentors, committees, rhetorical wrestle and choosing patterns.

## Mentors

There is a growing worldwide network of grounded theorists for CGT many of whom have become peer mentors. Finding them has become easier through the GT Institute yet many from many foreign countries are still looking for mentors. This growth continues and users of CGT increases despite the confusion in choice brought on by the multi-GT versions wrestle. Given the autonomy from the strong hold on conjectural extant theory is a property of CGT that continues to attract many new CGT users. Add to autonomy the prospect of discovering a theory clinches the decision to use CGT for many novices. This decision is backed up by my method books, which are a form of written mentoring.

Mentoring can take many forms and all are going on as we read this. And competence in doing CGT research is thereby increasing from this mentoring. Minus mentorees seldom do as well as the mentored novice. One reason being that they are easily subject to wrong advice by supervisors who do not know CGT. Looking to the literature for some advice is a bit dangerous as much GT literature is in fact not CGT but just jargonized as GT. All methods have mentors of some sort, so the novice CGT researcher should be careful in the choice of mentor. It is important that the CGT mentor have had CGT research experience since learning the inductive CGT approach is highly experiential.

Also the novice should choose a mentor who provides psycho-social support during using CGT, which is necessary to handle the initial confusions as well as the free floating poor advice by others. Breaking with a mentor in order to give up on CGT is very real also, if the mentoree novice cannot take the CGT as too confusing or the mentor gives poor, not helpful advice. Mentoring and being a mentoree takes continual work, often years.

Mentoring works if the parties both work at it. It is not one sided. Mentoring is binary. Peer mentoring works well also; that is helping each other.

The best mentors are those who are more advanced in their own CGT research and thus have the experience the mentoree needs as well as knows the psycho-social support they need. Thus it is wise for novices to join CGT networks in which people help each other. This other oriented help and empathy is surely grounded in somewhat recent CGT experience. Moment mentoring, complementary mentoring and multiple mentoring are increasing on the internet as CGT spreads in use throughout the world. Collaboration emerges and minus mentorees are rescued when needed. The GT Institute helps foster these relationships as needed.

In some countries CGT is way out of step with senior supervisors pushing preconceptions and QDA descriptive requirements. So novices in these countries must go global and seek a mentor in another country where CGT has blossomed. Ireland is one such country. Many seniors from Ireland support correct CGT. Novices bloom with excitement under such mentoring and easily turn to peer mentoring to fellow other novices still caught in local QDA. Mentorees find that a little teaching of others teaches oneself. Yet until they have finished generating a grounded theory, peer mentors can be a bit premature in advice as they have not yet fully experienced CGT completeness. Premature peer mentoring is frequent based on the excitement of the emerging experience resulting in firm decisions to choose CGT for the dissertation. Student peer mentoring meetings stimulate moment mentoring which confirm yet again the choosing of CGT.

Most minus mentorees are quite alone, but survive it because of their natural affinity to the autonomy, openness and their ability to conceptualize, which is a great draw to choosing and doing CGT. Choosing CGT comes naturally. Their only choice to recant may be down the road under the pressure of a senior supervisor requiring routine QDA procedures. Peer mentoring others based on the powerful grab and expression of CGT properties yielding discovery keeps the CGT decision confirmed when facing QDA pressures to recant at the same time. Also mentorees require a level of maturity to handle the initial confusion and autonomy that comes in starting a CGT research. Most novices soon to become mentored are 30 years old or older, with many in their 40s and 50s. Also mentors can at times yield to other QDA versions jargonized as GT and may shift their research advice a bit e.g. start pre-conceptualizing, or engage in worrisome accuracy. Mentorees should be alert to these shifts.

Simply put novices finally choose CGT because they have found a good mentor. If they cannot find one, they likely do not choose CGT or give up their choice already made. For many it is too scary to work CGT alone and feel they are doing it correctly. When alone, confusion takes over and they become lost and QDA is retreated to for safety.

Mentoring is a needy process. Premature choosing CGT is "grabby" but when confusion sets in there is a cry for help. When none is found the decision for CGT becomes unstable. A student wrote me "I am a student in South Africa. Do you know of someone in Africa or the Middle East that can help me? Physical accessibility is not necessary. The internet is only connection I need." Another student from Iran wrote me a long paragraph

about the ineffectiveness of her local mentor and said, "But in order to avoid toxic mistakes I am in desperate need of professional help." So even positive supervisor help may not be enough if the supervisor is not practiced in doing CGT and many are not. This reader should help in not drifting back to QDA for want of needed training in doing CGT. The desperate need for good mentors is increasing as CGT spreads.

One source of mentor candidates are those novice who did not know CGT and learned it with doing the CGT learning curve and then succeeded in their dissertation defense. They often become excited to share their experience like an accomplished mentor to motivate novices to fully decide to choose CGT for their dissertation research. Their energy and excitement and success foster an attitude that can convince other novices to choose CGT and support the initial confusion, autonomy and conceptual challenges. The newborn mentor easily mentors the learning curve he was just in thus is able by example to help firm up the decision of the new novice.

Being a minus mentor is not easy and can easily result in not choosing to use CGT. And there are many minus mentorees in the world. Good mentors are hard to find since CGT is so individually autonomous. And whatever mentors may appear they can easily give unknowingly altered, modified GT advice because of the impact of the multi GT versions. Misunderstanding the CGT methodology comes easy in the face of QDA rigor and rules for complete descriptions that are hard to forgo but necessary for choosing to use CGT. The long and lonely minus mentoree research has its benefits if the only available mentor is not fully CGT accomplished. Since minus mentorees usually have no knowledge of the meaning of CGT vocabulary, it is easy for them to choose the wrong mentor. Then it is easy for them to be forced into preconceptions, forced interviewing, not allowed to memo, etc. This strangling has a positive outcome if the mentoree subsequently finds an experienced CGT mentor. Then the mentoree becomes thrilled to at last become liberated and autonomous and yielding to the emergent, which strongly confirms the decision to use CGT

I have engaged in many moment mentorings. A request for one conversation with me can resolve some confusion and clinch the decision for choosing CGT. Some are desperate as the time to decide method can be scheduled by the school or PhD committee. Many travel afar around the world to discuss their decision with me. The quest for solid advice is very strong and sometimes funded by the novice's school. I am used as the legitimator when going to one's supervisor or committee. Frequent topics are type of data collection and literature review that are causes of confusion and need to be stated clearly. They need to be mentored by me to be procedurally trusted.

My well-known troubleshooting seminars have convinced many novices to make a firm decision to choose CGT for their dissertation. At the seminar they listen to others solving similar research problems and they get help with their problems. They network out their loneliness and join the CGT worldwide spread. At the seminar they become convinced of the power of several CGT procedures and with joy the resulting conceptual level analysis. The mentoring collegial help is wonderful. This type of seminar is springing up all over the world by my advanced students. They are strongly convincing to firmly choose CGT. They encourage "just do it" "not knowing beforehand" " being open" emergent research. It

changes their world view from preconception to emergent discovery. Participants literally come from all over the world.

## The PhD Committee

A major factor in deciding to choose CGT for the dissertation is the dissertation committee. They have the social structural power to quash a decision to use CGT and often do. Taking on a negative oriented committee to CGT is often too much for the novice. He/she is not ready for such an argument. The powerful strong pressure of a dissertation committee to not use CGT is increasing in the world with the spread of CGT. It is challenging the routine QDA requirements of worrisome accuracy, full description, preplanned interviews etc, that many committee members are well versed in. They defend their knowledge and skills. So again, many novices are calling for help as they formulate such a fateful life choice to bring to committee. They need help on taking on these seniors with such fateful power. They have to be convincing.

This reader gives many reasons to choose CGT that the novice can personally use in their argument to choose CGT. But also under one cover this reader gives many "why" arguments by well known GT researchers to ground and legitimate their arguments. Also the novice can give this reader to his committee to read for themselves the "why" choose CGT, since most are steeped in QDA and have read little or nothing on CGT methodology. This reader will help the novice receive the following good news as Angel wrote me, "The good news is that my proposal was approved by the committee at last. Instead of arguing some of their changes, I gave them a paper authored by you explaining why CGT is not constructivist."

Do not underestimate the problem of getting approval from a committee wedded to another method as their research identity is challenged. Respected mentors who are not in the department, if available, can save the day and get approval if they are senior enough. They exist but are not many. Many supervisors cannot even read or learn a bit about CGT as there is too much conflict with their current perspective. They can only confuse the choice for the novice. These seniors can easily force the naive novice to make the "wrong" decision into preconceptions and literature review before research etc. They can demand a long chapter on methodology that is totally QDA for the proposal, which is ignorant of CGT.

Thus choosing CGT as the method to use for a dissertation can open the novice up to many pressures, some hard and some easy to handle. The hard ones can potentially sabotage the decision to use CGT when they should not. For example "why take on such a difficult, constant conflict and argument with seniors who think they know best? The multi-version view of GT causes this conflict with various levels of pro and con procedures applicable and not applicable to doing CGT. The novice does not know all the answers yet and the senior cannot listen anyway. Taking on such confusion is not conducive to a good CGT dissertation and time is too valuable to enter the conflict. The negative pressure can be debilitating. Sometimes it is best to "obey" and get the PhD degree and then do a good CGT out of the collected data for future publication and jobs.

Choosing CGT often breeds a loyalty and stand for the method that can become excessive in the face of demands from the socially structured, vested fictions of committee members. The excessive loyalty can harm or distort. Stop, do not demand CGT procedures to this degree in pursuing the CGT method procedures in the face of such vested interests. Taking on the conflict with a contrary department committee is not worth the time and possible damage to one's research or even career. The CGT method lives on intact elsewhere. Under this condition reserve the pure method for post PhD research.

Writing up the CGT method for a proposal in this situation is probably a waste of time. Senior committee members are often learned non-learners. Teaching teachers is not an easy activity. Yet, if they wish, they can read my books and this reader. Thus forcing the novice to write up the CGT method before research is pre-conceptive. He cannot really write up convincingly what he has not done yet. Doing CGT is a learning experience waiting to happen, then write up. Writing before research is done yields often just beating on the same old QDA and multi-GT version issues. Yet further mentor rescuing from supervisor tyranny subsequently can lead to excitement and unwavering devotion to CGT.

In sum, a long chapter on why choose CGT will often enough not get very far in a contrary department. And taking on the ignorance of a committee or department questions ad infinitum will just confuse all involved. Lofty perspective arguments on many research issues, however right or wrong, can make doing CGT almost impossible to do correctly. I turn now to discussing the rhetorical wrestle between methods.

## The Rhetorical Wrestle

There is no winning the rhetorical wrestle. The rhetorical wrestle is comparing to see what is best between the features and procedures of QDA methods and so call jargonized remodeled GT version with CGT. The arguments between the methods can go on forever. They are just different. The novice does not have to win a better, say a generalization or interview technique etc etc. He just chooses and uses the method he chooses. He likes one method over the other for essentially personal abilities, skills and reasons. A method has grab for him. If he does not choose he will be lost in the many conflicts of the wrestle. Lost in not knowing what to do or which way to go.

A student from Nepal sent me his paper in which he laboriously compared all the GT jargonized versions. He came to a one-sentence conclusion. He says, "After studying this literature on GT versions, I came to the conclusion that what is not grounded theory rather than what is." So much for the result of one wrestle. He could not choose CGT as too confusing a commitment.

Lets look a little closer to ground some of the wrestle and why there is no sure answer, just differences. Tony Bryant, an experienced GTer demonizes CGT as positivist with lofty jargon. He severely discredits the positivism that he accuses CGT as using. He wants people to discard positivism that allows interviewers to pick and choose the data he

believes. He trashes generating concept procedures. It is hard to know what he is talking about, but how could a novice choose CGT in the face of such accusation by a highly experienced GTer. Trying to base a decision to choose or CGT based on positivism is a waste of time. The literature continues the argument continually to no solution. This debate is not an argument for the novice to worry about. His worry is to do well whatever method he chooses for the dissertation. Theoretical debates come much later in the academic career.

Students write me asking how to give CGT a perspective and how to write it up compared to other methods. They think perspectives legitimate research results. I write back to not perspectivize CGT. Just generate concepts that name patterns. The perpetual debate over which different perspectives are best in various methods is a waste of time and not solvable. Strauss used to say GT has no perspective, just a style.

When choosing CGT is based on one's philosophy of research compared to the philosophy of the method, the novice must have both which many do not have yet. So the wrestle between the two, and even other method philosophies, becomes too much to understand so arguments are faulty and often a bit empty. So the novice is forced to take a philosophy stand with his choice of method irrespective of true merits. He must advocate arguments against all attacks irrespective of his level of understanding. The choice of CGT becomes a stand rather than an educated decision when forced to argue for a philosophy. He must stand strong against attacks and the typical confusion. There is no winning the combat. There is just being endorsed sufficiently by a department and its seniors to use a chosen method. And given the multi-version view of GT, there is only one version of CGT no matter the argument. Taking a multi-view from all GT versions ends in a jargonized confusion resulting in description, not conceptualization. The only rational decision is to choose either doing conceptualization or description. Novices can go for CGT with all its clear rigorous procedures in order to transcend description with conceptualization theory.

CGT generates a substantive theory to be used to explain and abstractly account for a pattern of behavior. It is to be modified based on comparative data, not proven. It does not deal with multiple realities as QDA does and the so-called jargonized versions of GT. It is based on an integrated set of concepts explaining the continued resolution of a main concern. There may be more than one main concern in a problem area and CGT can do a theory of each, but only one is necessary for a dissertation, however overlapping they may be. For example heart attack victims are concerned with both cutting back and super-normalizing and also the moral claim to infirmity. Generating a substantive theory of one of these concerns is enough. A substantive theory about one main concern has general implications for other areas of behavior. For example super-normalizing in football is a big issue. The wrestle of which GT version to use does not get to this abstract level. The wrestle conflict is usually over what is "accurate" data for a description with a perspective, not over the abstract power of explanation that emerges using CGT procedures, which many academics cannot grasp. The ontological and epistemological issues of varied theoretical perspectives, such as symbolic interaction, are not relevant for CGT, just grounded conceptualizations of patterns in whatever data is used is relevant for CGT. "All is data" in which the patterns are conceptualized for CGT. The contest between social versions of GT is empty. CGT is a version in its own right and of course all research methods are grounded

some way. And there is no stopping the CGT jargon from being used for talking about different QDA and GT methods.

For example, in CGT all is data, but the wrestle asks the question what is data? Depending on the version the answer can be objective, symbolic, positivist, interpreted, constructed, interviews, descriptions etc, etc. Answering the question is discouraging for the novice since none is correct. The answer is irrelevant for choosing CGT. There are patterns in all data, so the novice need only cite what kind of data he is using. Most often it is open non-structured interview data using no preconceptions.

Much remodeling of CGT with descriptive lofty talk based on worrisome accuracy and a full description and conceptual description demands are plentiful and unknowledgeable. For the novice this kills the excitement motivation of discovery for the novice .Why choose CGT and enter into this mess? The novice should avoid these arguments and "just" choose CGT on its merits of conceptualization and generation. Sounding learned in these contests is a waste of time to get no answer and lose sight of the joy of discovery. The only rational decision for choosing is to choose conceptualities using the rigorous procedures of CGT on whatever data obtains OR choose a descriptive version of GT or QDA. Researchers like CGT since it transcends the descriptive by conceptualizing abstract patterns and it has clear procedures for generating emergent conceptual theory.

Suddaby wrote an article on "What GT is Not." It is about the profound misunderstanding between CGT, other versions of GT and QDA. This article should help the novice in his choice of a methodology for his dissertation and particularly CGT. He writes about how the literature is filled with serious misconceptions that of course affect the novice's choice to stop the confusion. His article starts out detailing how CGT freed researchers from the assumptions of grand theory and its positivism when testing preconceived hypotheses. CGT freed us to see how social actors in real situations produce their meanings From this, theory could be generated about what is actually going on using CGT methodological procedures. Fine, but he addresses the question: which version of GT to choose? To arrive at an answer he lists six "nots" which CGT is not. He works on the distinction between interpretive reality and objective meaning. Again choice is up in the air on which data to prefer to choose.

Suddaby's "nots" are: CGT is not an excuse to ignore the literature. CGT is not descriptive or phenomenological. CGT does not test extant hypotheses whether qualitative or quantitative. GT is not a simple application of procedures all at once. Procedures go on sequentially, simultaneously, and subsequently in ongoing interest with the data and emerging conceptualization. CGT procedures are not perfect. They are readily modifiable not wrong when warranted. Lastly, doing CGT is not easy as a step-by-step methodology. All goes on at once often initially in confusion. Its apparent simplicity is a misperception. Doing CGT is rigorous and tightly procedural however modifiable. It is not an "anything goes" methodology.

Judith Holton, a well known grounded theorist and former editor of the Grounded Theory Review, wrote me a direct, simple, accurate reasoning for choosing CGT which avoids all the lofty talk, method messing and scholarly arguing in the rhetorical wrestle. She

says "CGT's particular value is its ability to provide a conceptual overview of phenomenon under study: what is actually going on. It focuses on the participant's perspective and gives them the opportunity to articulate their thoughts about issues with understanding, reflection and insights they consider important. GT provides the conceptual overview with grounded interpretation, explanation impacts, underlying causes and effect and so forth. GT provides a conceptual compliment to the descriptive finding of QDA and Quantitative research. GT is not superior, just complementary to in-depth description." This is a clear, correct, simple scholarly approach to choosing CGT. She does not offer any combat for or against CGT with other methodologies.

Judy makes the further point that the traditional concern over rigor and credibility to yield validity is built into the procedures of CGT methodology. Not to worry if following CGT procedures. Conceptualization makes auditing data unnecessary as auditing is descriptive and conceptualization is abstract as its critique is over validity of grounded pattern naming. A pattern holds however it is named. She says: "Ontological and epistemological issues of theoretical perspective which are part of the multi-version conflict are not relevant for CGT. Just grounded conceptualization is relevant on whatever data is used. CGT has no predetermined pre-conceptual philosophy given in lofty words. CGT is just 'all is data' whatever is used and whose patterns are conceptualized. Contests between so-called versions of GT are empty and jargonized with GT vocabulary."

As said above, CGT is not for testing extant hypotheses. The constant comparative method produces emergent patterns which continual constant emergence from the data is self-testing of their grounding in the data. The patterns relate to each other as conceptual theory and how they are presented depends on the emergent theoretical code used.

Doing CGT is not a simple mechanical application of its procedures. It is the creative application of them all at once with the data as the emergent theory generates conceptually. Confusion and ambiguity, even fear of failure, at the beginning soon change to clear conceptualization as the researcher constantly compares and theoretically samples toward saturation. CGT methodology is not a pure step-by-step method. CGT methodology is itself a theory. Thus CGT is not an easy seamless clear methodology done step by step. It goes on all at once as the substantive theory develops; so contesting with other QDA and GT versions is messy and goes nowhere. The apparent simplicity of the CGT method is a misperception. So the novice should just decide and join the learning curve if CGT is the choice. Doing CGT can go fast, taking only six months or so, but many extend the research a few years as they tackle the conceptualization, confusions, to the end product.

Read my books on CGT methodology and the reader will see that CGT methodology is a well-formed bona fide methodology, not an excuse for not having one. It is rigorous and tightly procedural from start to finish. Selection and identifying participant's ongoing issues that they are continually resolving emerge. They ARE NOT conjectured " should have" issues preconceived by the researcher to do a study of however lauded they may be in other fully preconceived studies.

The rhetorical wrestle will never stop. It has gone on for over 40 years since the publication of *Discovery of GT*. It is too academic to give up sounding lofty. And academics get career rewards for the effort. But the novice should leave the combat and legitimating to the experienced GT researchers like Olavur Christiansen, Isabelle Walsh, Judy Holton and Odis Simmons (see their papers in this book) and just do good CGT research and get the PhD degree for it. Let the experienced GT'er take on the Strauss/Corbin advocates, Charmaz/Bryant and Gibson/Hartman people to mention a few. The method literature is replete with their bewildering wrestle.

I think by now the reader gets the idea of the rhetorical wrestle leading nowhere. I could go on, but there is no "best method" answer to the wrestle between methodologies. The volume of books and papers showing CGT products and methodology value is immense and a great and sufficient indicator of the value of generating a CGT theory for the dissertation. I warn: do not get involved in the lofty analysis of all the issues facing the multi versions of QDA methods. They will confuse the choosing decision. There is only preference not solution. The conflict over multi versions never gets to the abstract level about conceptual theoretical emergence which CGT produces and which many cannot grasp. Choosing CGT can be seen as a stand facing bureaucracy rather than a fully educated decision. Dr. Andy Lowe, a well-known CGT researcher for over 20 years, advises the following in dealing with committees. He writes, "The essence of survival within the bureaucratic system for the researcher is to always allow the bureaucracy to believe its own rhetoric. Always avoid direct confrontation and instead always use their own rule etc, to achieve your goal of intellectual autonomy". This is a bit too sophisticated for the novice, but it works well.

I turn now to a discussion of actual choosing, many ideas of which have already been sighted.


**Choosing CGT: Final Thoughts**

I have said much up to this point on choosing CGT firmly as a "grabby" preference, not a better or best method. I turn now to what often goes on in the novice's learning curve when making the choice of CGT for doing a dissertation in the department context. Needless to say it is a vital valued choice, and whether firm on the spot or gradual it is subject to the CGT research learning curve.

Choosing CGT takes a sufficient self contained maturity, which few young novices yet have. Most novice minus mentorees, soon to be mentored are in their 30s or older. The autonomy, "not knowing" beginning requirement and initial confusion using the constant comparative method to conceptualize takes some age maturity to handle. It can become fearful to cope with. Novices have to be careful to not yield to mentoring advice that shifts them out of CGT methods, for example shifting them to preconception to reduce initial confusion. This can take some age maturity.

Novices choose CGT for the grab, the excitement of discovery and to claim autonomy when doing the dissertation. The grab is individual and atomized through out the world. There is also a desire to be in the "among" wherever the CGTer individuals may be. They look for CGT networks by computer. They search for compatible departments and mentors.

Those doing CGT may be forced to study a professional problem, rather than an emergent main concern. This can kill the choice of CGT for switching to a preconceiving version of GT. Preconceive structuring up a QDA research solves this ambivalent problem of having to please the committee. The pressure to comply with a shift away from CGT can be quite strong and scary to resist since their academic career is at stake. Trying to get started and references travel fast. Hopefully this reader will help relieve the superior/committee interference problem by showing it to them to at least scan. Tommy Hung, a PhD candidate from Portugal says, as is so typical of novices, "I struggle in doing open coding data analysis and even in asking questions during forced preformed interviews as my supervisor interferes, even dominates my direction in doing data analysis alone by requests like please discuss with me your data analysis. And please write a conference paper from your data etc. Such requests appear constantly. I should avoid talking to my supervisor." Hung is being constantly pestered, but still sticks to CGT so far. The outcome I am not sure of. Overbearing pesty supervisors are hard to take for long before giving in and going QDA.

Supervisor concerns of rigor and credibility are traditional for all methods but not necessary for CGT. Built into the conceptualizing procedures of CGT is automatic validity of grounded concepts. This makes auditing unnecessary as it is descriptive and CGT is abstract conceptualization carefully generated inductively by the constant comparative method. The concepts cannot be reified if grounding CGT procedures are followed.

Another path to using CGT is a consequence of the learning curve. Some novices start doing QDA or descriptive versions of GT, yet try a bit of CGT. Gradual understanding of CGT from trying conceptualization procedures reduces resistance to using CGT as mistakes and confusion diminish, then disappear, fear fades. They then get "grabbed" by the excitement of discovery generating and autonomy and conceptualization. Thus they decide to fully switch to CGT. What appeared as a long and lonely journey in the beginning if they used CGT, suddenly becomes peopled by other novices using CGT as they join the CGT networks on the internet. They make a firm decision to use CGT even if the learning curve takes a few years. The combination of rigor and creativity growing in doing CGT reduces the novice to a CGT advocate and true believer. The multiple QDA version mess is just left behind with no contrary arguments interfering with being in favor of a firm CGT decision. The "eureka" moments that come with discovery of totally new concepts help convince putting aside all the preconceptions of descriptive QDA methods. Interview guides are put aside in favor of just letting the participants vent their concerns, face sheet data become moot. Trust in the CGT methodology grows by the convincing yield of the generating procedures. This learning curve path to the CGT choice is well grounded and advised for the "seeing is believing" doubtful and fearful novices.

A very successful novice can inspire new novices to be faithful follower adherents to CGT with devotion and no doubts. The successful novice getting the PhD awarded seamlessly and often with the best PhD dissertation award for the year can become a

supermodel for beginning CGT novices. They are pointed to as proof positive of the joys and legitimate value of a CGT dissertation. Brianna Both wrote me that she "knew Bene Brown who produced the most powerful GT theory, so it was her work which pointed me to CGT and you Dr. Glaser. Brene wrote in her publication *Daring Greatly* "I want to acknowledge Dr. Glaser who was willing to come from California to the University of Houston to serve on my dissertation committee. He literally changed the way I see the world." Brianne thus followed her model, Brene, to the nth degree and herself did a wonderful dissertation. Referring to my input further legitimated her using Brene as her supermodel. The model path convinced the choice of CGT for a dissertation and academic career. In these cases, the philosophy of the CGT methodology becomes strongly the novice's philosophy of method and even life: not knowing beforehand becomes the root to eventual knowing from the emergent. The approach to knowing by not knowing is liberating.

Not knowing beforehand until the data is conceptualized easily becomes a personal way of life. This of course supports further firmness in choosing CGT for the dissertation. We all do mini GTs for personal problem solving. We run our patterns constantly. We look at the data and try to spot the patterns involved that explain a problem or our main concerns and then we follow the pattern. We are constantly resolving these concerns. Thus CGT procedures and trust in conceptualization spills over into personal life. There becomes a reciprocal support for the method between doing CGT and solving personal problems. This occurs naturally for many of us and thereby firms up a decision to choose CGT for the dissertation. Again it makes the rhetorical wrestle a moot waste of time. Applying CGT personally gives the person a level of power over his life and liberation in academic pursuit of the PhD. Choosing CGT is automatic, like what else would one choose to find out what is really going on. Personal life is changed from preconception to follow academic openness to the data however slower the pace to emergence. It makes being a PhD candidate very meaningful and grounded as opposed to the usual critique of academia that it is just lofty rhetoric. The personal use of CGT is private and thus very seldom mentioned in the literature. It helps dealing with life patterns such as in divorce, in marriage, in illnesses. In child rearing, in custody fights etc, etc. Its power, if used privately, convinces the novice of its power academically so it is chosen.

Choosing CGT may end with the completion of the PhD as no need or funds to do future CGT. But many wish to continue if they can find the resources. Jeanette Eriksson wrote me, "I just want to say that my journey over the doing GT has been great and I found out how much I want to use CGT in the future." Thus future choosing carries the motivation to continue doing CGT, if the opportunity and resources are part of the subsequent academic career. If not, or research interests subside after the PhD the choice may end. The choice need not go on forever and the now PhD can turn to other methods if interested or joining a big preplanned research project. The choice can end with the awarding of the PhD and doing no more research.

Also the choice for CGT can come late. A lady wrote me: "After using other types of research methods for over 20 years, I am so glad to have come across CGT. Your work is really what we need in management research." Quite often the choice to do more CGT after the dissertation is done is to renew the excitement of discovery and share it. Simple interview research can be quite inexpensive.

Also doing CGT can bring with it self discovery as well as personal problem discovery, which can motivate to continue CGT research after the PhD. Staying open to the research can keep a CGT researcher open to general self discovery. Brianna Booth's study of maintaining boundaries between people was a superb dissertation. Further it was directly related to her personal approach in friending and dating. Some finished PhD students even spiritualize the CGT staying open to data discovery. Once learned staying open with not preconceiving can come naturally. My trouble-shooting seminars of course help get the PhD dissertation. The seminars also stimulate the future orientation of students once it is learned to personal staying open with no preconceptions. Students constantly talk about being changed for life based on the full orientation of CGT. Thus their choosing CGT for a dissertation can have and did have for students future, lasting beneficial effects for both self and career.

Phyllis Stern told students that becoming known for doing an excellent CGT as an expert draws one into a career in meeting, boards and becoming a roving supervisor for foreign and US PhD candidates in many countries. It becomes a worldwide ticket, I know many of these CGT traveling experts.

CGT can be chosen for the wrong reason. It can be chosen as part of a big preplanned study thus required to preplan data collection interview and its problems. The choice can come with money and academic support, possibly a supervisor with a stake in the big study. The novice might not be clear on the no preconception rule of CGT. He might not know better and not realize he is just doing QDA description. The preplanning undermines the procedures of CGT. It remodels CGT to conceptual description.

Also choosing not to choose CGT can be wise if done in favor of avoiding being forced to do CGT wrong by a committee or a department which dwells on full description, worrisome accuracy, no abstraction and lofty talk calling it all GT to make it all sound learned. Taking on such senior pressure is not worth it. Not choosing and just going with the departmental method becomes the rescue from a scary choosing path of a novice. Finding an experienced mentor coupled with reading our books could be the only possible rescue.

Closely related to this poor choice is choosing CGT to test an extant hypothesis. This requires preconceptions also. Since whatever may emerge may have no relevance to the hypothesis, the CGT has to be "forced" to bear on the hypothesis from interviewing through conceptualizing. If the CGT happens to question an extant hypothesis, fine, but it cannot be forced and remain a CGT. The testing can easily be social structurally forced taking away the freedom for discovery that was the original goal. Scholastic freedom is compromised and lost. This loss of CGT emergence for discovery is lost in Isabelle Walsh's mixed method approach in which GT is used to correct quantitative findings by preplanning. Testing extant findings is not a higher purpose of CGT. Withstanding the academic pressure to test hypotheses when backed by the committee is not an easy pressure for the novice to cope with. Testing verified yet erroneous hypotheses will never be stamped out in the future by CGT biased preconceptions in using its procedures. It can only occur naturally by a freely emergent CGT, whenever it might occur. One should not do CGT to do combat with other methods. Corrections of other's findings are only genuine when consequential. Wrong choice reasons for using CGT require jargonizing.

Closely related to the correcting approach is doing a CGT on secondary data, usually interviews. If the data is picked up as preplanned, say a preconceived problem, then the CGT will be non-emergent. It will pick up the preplanned biases as real. In short, the secondary data has to be open and non-preconceived. Hard to find, since most QDA studies are preconceived academic "should be" problems, not emergent personal issues. The novice does not have to know anything about the participants or field they are being interviewed on. In fact the less he know the easier it is to let concepts emerge. He just has to know the interviews by others emerged as true expressions of the participants. There are mountains of unanalyzed interviews to choose from.

Professing the use of CGT also happens infrequently, but this is still too often. The student discovers a good concept with great general implications. Their richness plus his intellectual capacity combine to produce a conjectured CGT. I have seen three dissertations done this way. They were beautifully conceptual and all conjectural. They were hard to spot at first until the conjectural patterns emerged. Their theory ran thin. Conjecture (that is think up) can never be as creative as generated concepts. Professing the use of CGT and not really doing it is not hard to spot. It comes with excitement, but too fast without the real work of doing CGT.

## Conclusion

The reader can see now that choosing CGT is not simple, whether direct or gradual. There are many paths, much advice and many variables to contend with. Whatever the combination that obtains for a novice, there are many future career and personal rewards for those who can make and stick with a decision to choose CGT for research for the dissertation. Just make a firm decision without the pro and con arguments and do it. The value of CGT research has been shown over and over. There are many CGTs, how to books, substantive theory articles and books, CGT articles on methods and substance, journals on CGT all to attest to the value of CGT. Use a few for exampling for self and others to show what a worthy CGT looks like. Good examples can assure the supervisor and committee of the CGT research outcome. The examples are legitimating and convincing of value.

However, be careful not to cite jargonized written views of QDA as CGT. As Gary Evens said in his "walk through" the multi versions of GT, "Choose the best fit between personal philosophy and method philosophy. Be sure to walk the talk with caution in referencing GT writings. In spite of the fear and confusion in the beginning, have faith in the CGT process. Hindsight will show it was the right choice. Staying open to the emergence of conceptual fit and relevance will further confirm the choice." These are Evans' sound words of advice. They have a long history of working well. I can only add to be careful, as said above, of taking on supervisors who cannot tolerate the CGT perspective compared to their own QDA perspective.

Astrid Gynnild, professor and editor of Grounded Theory Review, wrote me: "Choose CGT for future orientation toward explanatory understanding, exploration, abstract transcending of accurate goings on, increased awareness, inner drive to know more about people's behavior, general implications, skills at memoing and feeling one can contribute original

thought and achieve autonomy. Find an experienced mentor. Here is my brief list of positive reasons." As the reader can see, the list of values for choosing CGT is nonstop and varies considerably among novices and the experienced but the product pattern is the same. They express the joy and productivity of doing CGT. Just firmly decide to choose CGT and then use it.

# A Grounded Theory of Political Intelligentizing in Business Administration

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## Abstract

This study focuses on the substantive area of business administration using the classic grounded theory method. Business administration is mostly driven by political games between top-level corporate managers. The main concern of the managers I met was that they wanted to be more politically successful. For them, success meant being able to change regularly the course of decisions and action within their firm. The study led to the emergence of a core variable called political intelligentizing. Political intelligentizing explains the recurrent main concern that these managers have to resolve, and it explains the competences managers have to combine to succeed regularly in organisational politics. They resolve their main problem through political intelligentizing which consists in acquiring, developing and combining six specific skills: time matching, rhetorical fitting, silence juggling, strategic forward-thinking, strategic interacting and relationing.

**Keywords:** organizational politics; political games; political behavior.

## Introduction

I have taught leadership and management in Executive Education for 10 years. My "students" are mostly 40 year-old managers who hope to improve their business management skills. They come with many concerns linked to their own management problems. However, most of them have a recurrent concern, which was clearly expressed by a businesswoman in the Class of 2012: "I am no good at managing political situations. How can I get better?" Since I could not answer this concern directly, it became the starting point for a new research project. For the study, the main concern was framed as follows: "Is there such a thing as a consistently successful political behaviour pattern?"

The political dimension of business administration has been highlighted for decades (Long, 1962). A firm can be considered as a political system (Morgan, 1998) in which actors strategically defend their own goals (Crozier & Friedberg, 1977). Beyond this statement, the question was to know whether some managers are regularly successful in political games and, if so, whether a specific behavioural pattern can be

discovered among them. The goal of this research was to produce relevant, useful theory to help new managers to resolve their main concern.

## Data Collection and Analysis

When beginning research using classic grounded theory, it is crucial to avoid preconceptions (Glaser, 2014). This research posture was facilitated by the fact that my knowledge of the literature on this subject was close to zero. Thus, I fortunately did not have any preconceived concepts in mind when starting the fieldwork.

I collected a first set of data through three face-to-face interviews. These three interviews were carried out on the same day and I started analysing the data right away. The interviewees were managers randomly selected among my list of one thousand former Executive MBA students. At the beginning of my research, I asked one grand tour question: "Do you have the impression that some people manage better than others to navigate their way through political games?" The discussion with interviewees regarding this question led them to describe their own political behaviour, which they considered more or less successful, and the behaviour of the people they judged to be better than they were. I used several follow-up questions that came to me as the interview progressed, to ensure I understood what they were saying and to discuss in more detail points that seemed crucial or problematic to them.

I began to write memos after the first interview. My comparison of the memos written after each interview, revealed a wide range of ideas, actions, and behaviours related to organizational politics. I was not able to make connections between the memos. I decided, therefore, to carry out additional interviews using the same grand tour question. I analysed each interview and constantly compared my memos with the previous ones. This second data collection continued until possible codes began to appear. Twelve additional interviews were necessary to reach this point, as the content of the interviews varied enormously and showed a huge range of aspects of political behaviour.

I first used the "six C's" (Glaser, 1978, p. 74) to organize the data. The "six C's" is a code that distinguishes data into general categories: causes, contexts, contingencies, consequences, covariance and conditions (Glaser, 1978). Within each category, I started to generate codes emerging from the data. For each code, I sorted memos that helped me not to forget ideas emerging from the coding process itself.

Several core categories and related categories emerged from this process. I focused on one core category named political intelligentizing and worked on its related categories. For the core category, I reached theoretical saturation by conducting a new wave of eleven interviews with managers from a wide range of companies.

## Core Related Categories

Political intelligentizing emerged as a core variable insofar as it is capable of explaining "the main concern and its recurrent solution of those being studied" (Christiansen, 2011, p. 200). The main concern of participants is that they want to manage political games more successfully within their company.

It is important to note that success in political games is defined by the participants as successfully changing decision-making and the course of managerial action in line with their individual or collective interests. These interests are not always personal. Some participants also attempt to influence decisions to protect their team or defend the interest of their clients. Success is therefore defined in terms of the ability to influence the course of events. It does not always go hand-in-hand with the overall success of the company. The participants' main concern is to influence the course of events; they do not necessarily consider the consequences of this influence, either positive or negative, on the success of the company.

Political intelligentizing can be explained as acquiring, developing, and combining skills in order to influence the course of events in a company. The concept of political intelligentizing has six related categories that can be grouped into two series of interrelated sub-core variables. The first series is made up of three dimensions: time matching (knowing how to act at the right moment), rhetorical fitting (choosing the correct rhetorical technique) and silence juggling (using silence effectively). These sub-categories are linked together. For example, the skill of time matching will encourage managers to choose between rhetorical fitting or silence juggling. Similarly, it is impossible to excel at political games without rhetorical fitting, but this skill is difficult without the mastery of silence juggling.

The second series of sub-core variables is made up of the following three dimensions: strategic forward thinking (collecting data, analysing data, building prospective scenarios, and capitalizing), strategic interacting (a series of skills aimed at inciting others to reveal themselves, while remaining opaque oneself) and relationing (creating, maintaining and exploiting relations with a large number of people). These three last dimensions enable the manager to combine the three previous dimensions effectively.

All of the six dimensions are interrelated; managers improve time matching skills using strategic forward thinking and relationing. Similarly, strategic interacting and rhetoric fitting enable them to manage relationing better and consequently to improve their strategic forward thinking. Finally, to develop strategic interacting, managers need to master the principle of silence juggling. Acquiring, developing and combining these six dimensions are fundamental to resolve the main concern of the participants.

<u>Time matching</u>

The first category related to political intelligentizing is time matching. The best political players know the right moment to act. They have a sense of rhythm. They can act fast or be endlessly patient depending on the circumstances. Their strength lies in their ability to align the time of their action with other actors' agenda and mood. Concretely,

good players plan their successive actions strategically during a political game. They also give themselves the latitude to alter the order of their actions, to act earlier than planned or postpone a task depending on the current situation and their opponent's state of mind.

For example, one of the participants planned to ask one of his colleagues to support his project at a board meeting. He got to the office and realised that this colleague was in a bad mood. Even if it was vital for him to obtain an immediate reply, he resisted his own sense of urgency and instead acted in an empathetic manner towards his colleague. He knew that it would be more prudent to wait for another meeting to make his request. He used their time together to develop his relationship with his colleague and changed the order of his action. Temporal mastery is a key issue in political games.

## Rhetorical fitting

A good political player knows how to handle the art of rhetoric. The interviewees particularly admired this skill during my research. Rhetorical fitting has several sub-categories such as persuading (the art of influencing by using affect) and convincing (the art of influencing by appeal to your opponent's rationality). It also includes knowing how to choose your audience, constructing an appropriate message according to this audience, and aligning gestures with your message. The idea of rhetorical fitting is that managers develop all their verbal and non-verbal expression according to their audience. To do so, they must know sufficiently well the people with whom they interact. Rhetorical fitting is thus closely linked with relationing. Furthermore, the choice of the discourse content depends very much on the conclusions of strategic forward thinking.

## Silence juggling

If the best political players master the art of rhetoric, this study shows that they also master the art of silence. Silence juggling is defined as using silence effectively. I discovered several strategic uses of silence during the fieldwork. The first use is silence to build trust. Remaining silent about confidential or potentially threatening information generates confidence between two managers. The ability to remain silent about key issues fosters trust and future alliances between actors.

The second use is silence for active listening. Political players remain strategically silent to collect more data through listening and observation. Their silence gives a space in which others can express themselves. This silent posture is magnified by specific gestures and attitudes to convince others that they really matter.

The third use is silence for self-preserving. Linked to carefulness, the use of silence is critical for not giving power to other players. The best political players remain silent about their true opinions about people and actions linked to their organization. They know that networks transcend the formal boundaries of firms. Consequently, they must be careful in any social interaction inside or outside their organization. The silent posture is the best way not to make serious mistakes.

The fourth use is silence to let the imagination run wild. The best political players do not speak too much. However, they let others imagine things about them. This is perhaps the most strategic use of silence. Myths, legends and rumours seem to be more powerful than reality. Political players use it to their advantage. They never say much about their real power, networks, knowledge, or competences, but they let others make assumptions. In many cases, other people's imagination gives them more credit and prestige than real facts.

The fifth use is silence to make a deep impression. Silence is the best friend of words. Best political players use silence in their discourse in order to give more value to what they say. They dramatize their discourse. Concision, rhythm, and silence mastery are their key principles when they express their opinion.

### Strategic forward-thinking

Strategic forward-thinking refers to the cognitive dimension of political intelligentizing. This category designates a cognitive process in four steps: collecting data, analysing data, building prospective scenarios, and capitalizing. To build relevant prospective scenarios, it is necessary to collect data constantly about people, processes, and activities within the organization.

The best political players do not really select the kind of information they collect ex-ante. They absorb a spectacular amount of data, even if it does not seem relevant or useful initially. They know that any information can be useful depending on the context. Therefore, they build a personal global data bank. For example, knowing the name of the CEO's golf club is not strategic information in itself, but it can become important if a manager needs to meet the CEO alone, during a political game. Mapping the power holders is not enough. Managers need to map the emotional links between individuals, individual concerns, and ambitions, as well as formal and informal information systems.

When a new political situation emerges, the best political players start to scan the data they have collected and select what is most relevant in order to deal with the specific political situation. Through analysis, they also seek to determine whether the information is credible. After selecting the most relevant and credible information, they integrate it into a holistic, multilevel vision of the situation. Then, they can start prospection.

Building prospective scenarios is a two-step process. First, it consists in anticipating the behaviour of each actor in relation to a potential change in the political situation. Managers think in terms of individual behaviour trajectory: "If this happens, he/she will react like this . . ." They imagine several scenarios and anticipate their consequences in the political game. Second, they select one of these scenarios, that best serve their own interests, and they build an action plan to make it happen. This prospective work is not an exercise in divination, it is a way to think about the best future possible and to try and make it happen.

The last component of strategic forward thinking is capitalizing. Each political experience must be memorized in order to improve the accuracy of the next prospection. At the highest level, decision makers do not change very fast. Therefore, the capitalization phase is a way to learn more about all these people all the time. This active learning process will be hugely valuable in managing the next political situation.

## Strategic interacting

Strategic interacting consists in behaving in such a way as to inspire trust, incite others to reveal themselves, while remaining opaque oneself. Strategic interacting is made up of five basic behaviours observable among the best political players: self-assuring, stepping softly, positiving, persevering, and tempering.

Self-assuring means giving others the impression that the manager thoroughly masters the situation and/or subject. Such an impression has the effect of inciting others to trust them and go along with their decisions. To do this, the best political players appear serene and strong, sure of their ideas and positions. This behaviour can be linked to genuine self-confidence. However, such behaviour is not always the case as self-confidence can be feigned. Whereas self-confidence is an intrinsic personal attribute, self-assuring is a way of behaving in front of others in order to take ascendancy over them.

Stepping softly is a recurrent behaviour of the best political players. They act carefully, assessing each discourse and each action before performing it. Political players know that information is critical (Crozier & Friedberg, 1977). They trust no one and avoid revealing too much information about their private life, opinions, interests, and actions. The less people know about them, the less risk they represent in political games. A perfect smoke screen surrounds the best players. They take every possible precaution in their social interactions.

Like reassuring, positiving is not necessary linked to personality. Political players appear optimistic and cheerful even if inside they feel differently. They know that this positive attitude creates positive social interaction. Indeed, political players need information. To collect it, they need to create a positive atmosphere that encourages others to divulge secrets and critical information. Smiling and being optimistic are the best ways to obtain confidences. People like to talk with positive people, whereas they avoid pessimistic, embittered people.

Persevering is a blend of tenacity and endurance. Political players accept temporary losses and never take no for an answer. They have long-term vision and a high capacity to work hard over long periods. When someone opposes their ideas, they simply try to find another way to reach their goal. They never give up.

Tempering is related to emotional control. It means that political players adapt the expression of their emotions to the situation. Sometimes they have to control themself and not react immediately to a situation. Sometimes, they need to react more vigorously than they really want to, in order to respond to the expectations of others.

This ability to express emotions that fit the situation is not easy to develop. It is a critical asset for political players.

<u>Relationing</u>

Relationing is creating, maintaining, and exploiting relations with a large number of people within and outside the company, with the aim of collecting information and obtaining their support. Networking is part of relationing. But it is more. The best political players give the impression, real or imagined, that everyone has a special relationship with them. To do so they use empathy, which can be genuine or strategic. Some political players are neither altruistic nor humanist, but they will develop warm relationships with others in order to exploit them at a suitable moment.

The best political players are interested in everyone in the company, from the managing director down the most powerless assistant or trainee. They know that all of them are sources of information and can also give information to other people at the appropriate time. They use their interpersonal skills to place themselves at everyone's level and maintain the relationship. Relationing will facilitate their political action considerably, because it opens up opportunities that others do not have. They use unexpected networks that they have patiently developed strategically over time, throughout and beyond the organization.

## Conclusion

Classic grounded theory study involves a conceptual comparison stage during which the theory and concepts generated are compared conceptually with the literature (Christiansen, 2001; Christiansen, 2006; Glaser & Christiansen, 2007).

Firstly, my literature review shows that the concept of political intelligentizing is close to certain concepts such as political intelligence (Adams & Zanzi, 2006), political behaviour (Farrell & Petersen, 1982) or political skills (Ferris and al., 2000). However, the definitions of these concepts are conjectural. They lack the consistency and precision required to respond to the main concern of managers. These definitions are also often confusing, since they include skills, types of actions, and the strategic choices of political players. The use of grounded theory to build the concept of political intelligentizing gives it more clarity and makes it possible to differentiate between political skills and political strategy.

Secondly, previous studies have showed that political players identify power holders (Pfeffer, 1992) and their power bases (French & Raven, 1968). They also collect information on the positioning of these power holders toward the political problem (Kotter, 1985). Although my research confirms the need for this information, it also shows that it is not sufficient. Strategic forward thinking includes these elements but it takes the process further by showing that managers must also anticipate the evolution of their power and power bases by developing future scenarios.

Thirdly, the category relationing and the sub-category tempering can be compared with the concept of Emotional intelligence developed by Daniel Goleman (1998). This concept has five components: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills (Goleman, 1998). Tempering is close to self-regulation insofar as it involves controlling one's emotions and adapting one's reactions to individuals and situations. However, the notion of tempering does not only involve constraining ones emotions. It can also involve increasing the level of a reaction, as in the case of simulated anger. This aspect is not present in the concept of self-regulation, but is an essential component of tempering.

Relationing needs empathy and social skills since it involves creating and maintaining links with other people. These are properties of Relationing. Moreover, it is interesting to note that relationing is close to other concepts that have emerged from previous classic grounded theory (CGT) research: conditional befriending in the work of Christiansen (2006), cultivating relationships (Simmons and Milkman 1993; cited by Christiansen, 2006), and pseudo-friending (Guthrie, 2000; cited by Christiansen, 2006). The next stage of this research could thus be an analysis of the correlations between these concepts to develop an integrated formal theory of relationing.

Overall, the concept of political intelligentizing uses several patterns that can be found in the concept of opportunizing developed by Christiansen (2006). Opportunizing is made up of five dimensions: conditional befriending, prospecting, weighing up, moment capturing, and configuration matching.

The pattern of moment capturing can be considered as a sub-category of time matching. Moment capturing is defined as "the spasmodic seizure of strategic business opportunities where quick intervention is critical for optimal outcome" (Christiansen, 2006, p.117). Clearly, moment capturing is a sub-category of time matching, since it describes one of the ways in which managers can act. Similarly, the category prospecting echoes one of the sub-dimensions of strategic forward thinking. The manager must first gather information to develop effective scenarios.

The category conditional befriending included two elements: confidence building and modifying people's behaviour. The main concern of the participants in my study is quite similar to the idea of modifying people's behaviour. Indeed, managers attempt to gain advantage by influencing the course of events and decisions in the company. To gain advantage, they sometimes have to modify other people's behaviour. The concept of influencing is particularly crucial for both opportunizing and political intelligentizing.

This in-progress research has several limitations. The first is that it deals solely with political skills and not with political strategies. It gives no indications of the types of strategies that managers can implement during a political game. It would be interesting to continue this research to discover whether this corresponds to a real need felt by the participants and whether, accordingly, it would be valuable to explore this aspect of organizational politics.

Nor does this study deal with ethics. For example, the notion of trust between individuals recurs as a fundamental element in a large number of categories. My interviews showed that the best political players can either create genuine relationships of trust with other actors or develop false relationships of trust to exploit others. My participants were preoccupied with this point. They want to become better political players but do not want to use dishonest techniques to achieve their objective. It would be interesting to extend the study to techniques used by the best political players and their impacts to investigate whether it would be possible to respond to this concern.

Finally, during the Grounded Theory Seminar in April 2014, Barney Glaser and Judith Holton pointed out the richness of this study. They made me realize that each sub-category has the potential to become a core category. According to them, silence juggling for example, could be a good candidate for formal theory. The art of mastering silence may not be related to a single substantive area. Thus, further work on this concept might lead to the formulation of a more general theory. It would also be interesting to continue to explore the links between the generated categories and other categories stemming from classic grounded theory.

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# Safeguarding Self-Governance:
## A Grounded Theory of Older Patients' Pattern of Behavior in Relation to their Relatives in Fast-track Programs

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### Abstract

The aim of this study was to generate a grounded theory of older patients' pattern of behavior in relation to their relatives' involvement in fast-track programs during total joint replacement. Sixteen patients were recruited in orthopedic wards. Data collection included 11 interviews with patients and 15 non-participant observations of interactions between patients, relatives, and health professionals during scheduled meetings throughout the fast-track program. The constant comparative method was used for simultaneous data collection, data analysis, and coding. Safeguarding self-governance emerged in the analysis as the core category of our theory and pattern of behavior of the older patients in relation to their relatives. The older patients' main concern was to complete the fast-track program while maintaining autonomy, which they resolved through four strategies of actions: embracing, shielding, distancing, and masking.

**Keywords:** Fast-track program, grounded theory, older patients, relatives, total joint replacement.

### Introduction

Relatives often support their older family members through fast-track programs by sharing concerns, making decisions, and supporting with both emotional and practical issues (Berthelsen, Lindhardt, & Frederiksen, 2014). Although the support of relatives might increase the patients' abilities to recover, knowledge is needed about how older patients' actually relate to the involvement of relatives and how their pattern of behavior is displayed through social interactions with relatives.

Total hip or knee replacements are invasive surgical procedures performed in fast-track programs. Indications for replacements are often osteoarthritis accompanied by excessive pain and loss of mobility (Kehlet & Søballe, 2010). The orthopedic fast-track program begins with an initial pre-assessment visit at the outpatient facilities, and continues through admission to discharge 1-2 days after the surgery (Kehlet & Søballe, 2010). Fast-track surgery is defined as "the synergistic, beneficent effect on

convalescence achieved by adding multimodal evidence-based care principles and combining these with optimized logistics" (Husted, Solgaard, Hansen, Søballe, & Kehlet, 2010, p. 1), which means that the core areas of treatment and care—such as information, surgical stress reduction, pain management, mobilization, and nutrition—have been applied with systematic and evidence-based optimization (Kehlet & Søballe, 2010). Since the mean age of patients undergoing knee or hip replacement is 70 years for women and 68 years for men, consistent from 1995-2012 (The Danish Hip Alloplasty Register, 2013), patients have a higher risk of functional limitation, and are naturally more in need of practical support from relatives. During admission, care is supported by the core areas and administrated following clinical guidelines and the patients are required to participate actively and to adhere to standardized daily regimes. However, older patients might not have the strength and knowledge about this requirement, in which case the support of relatives may be decisive for the patients.

A measurable impact on quality, length of stay (Husted et al., 2010), and rehabilitation (Theiss, et al., 2011) was seen when relatives were involved before, during, and after total hip or knee replacement. A study consisting of 1722 observations in four American hospitals revealed a significant effect on the patients' outcomes regarding social support of the relatives before, during, and after total hip or knee replacement (Theiss et al., 2011). The length of stay was measurably shorter for patients with high or very high levels of relative involvement and the percentage of patients achieving the transfer-out-of-bed-goal was significantly higher for patients with a high level of social support (Theiss et al., 2011). Norlyk and Harder (2011) explored the recovery of 16 patients after elective fast-track colonic cancer surgery using a phenomenological approach; they found that patients felt more secure and ready for discharge when their relatives were involved. Their relatives took on a double role during the fast-track program. They occasionally acted as a support for the patient, pressuring him or her to comply with the program, and in other situations providing security and practical help during admission and after discharge (Norlyk & Harder, 2011). In a qualitative study, Wagner and Carlslund (2002) explored the perspectives of 17 women undergoing a fast track program for hysterectomies and found that relatives were attentive to the patients' situations and needs after the surgery and discharge thus protecting the women from physical strain (Wagner & Carlslund, 2002).

This study aimed to generate a grounded theory of older patients' pattern of behavior in relation to their relatives' involvement in fast-track programs during total hip or knee replacement. The research question that guided the study was as follows: What is the older patients' main concern and how do they resolve it?

## Method

A classic grounded theory approach according to Glaser (1978, 1998) was used, aiming at generating a substantive theory abstract of "time, place, and people" (Glaser, 2009, p. 24). Through an inductive-deductive approach, theory was generated from patterns of behavior within a given substantive area (Glaser, 1998). The constant comparative method was the guiding principle for simultaneous data collection, data analysis, and coding (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Sixteen patients (nine women and seven men) participated in the study. Of the nine women, four were married and six were single (including five widows and one never married). Of the seven men, three were married and three were single (including two widowers and one never married). Their ages ranged from 70 and 94 years, and they all underwent total hip or knee replacement at one of the two participating orthopedic wards. All participants lived at home, independent of formal care; cohabitating relatives supported some participants. Eleven participants had relatives who were involved in the fast-track program. The relatives' ages ranged from 40 to 80 years and included spouses, children, foster children, friends, neighbors, nephews, and nieces. The remaining five participants refrained from having relatives involved during hospital admission.

<div align="center">Data collection</div>

Data collection took place from 2010 to 2011 in two Danish orthopedic hospital wards, specialized in fast track hip and knee replacement surgery. The first ward was chosen through initial sampling, being the place of employment of the first author as a full time PhD student. The second setting was selected through theoretical sampling due to assumed socio-economic differences between patients in the two settings.

Data consisted of 15 non-participant observations and 11 interviews. The observations focused on the social interactions between the first six patients, their relatives, and the health professionals during the scheduled meetings within the fast-track program before admission (the pre-assessment interview and rehabilitation seminar) and during admission (on the morning of surgery, the first round after surgery, and the discharge preparation meeting). Participants were recruited at the pre-assessment interview in the outpatient facilities, and observed throughout the meetings of the program. The observer (first author) sat at the back of the room during the meetings to reduce the impact of any ongoing interaction. The observer focused on the patients' behavior, verbal, non-verbal, and para-verbal communications. Field notes were taken during the observations.

One of the first six patients included was interviewed two weeks after discharge and after the observations. An additional ten patients were interviewed at the hospital. The first author conducted the interviews. An interview guide based on the emerging concepts was used during the first two interviews and was subsequently omitted to avoid preconceived ideas while focusing on any newly emergent concepts (Glaser, 2001). During the interviews at the hospital, the patients talked about how they usually received help from their relatives and what kind of support they expected to need after being discharged with a new hip. Eight interviews were tape-recorded and then transcribed verbatim. Field notes were obtained during the last two interviews in order to focus on data relating to the core category, (i.e., the predominant pattern of behavior) (Glaser, 1992). The interviews lasted between 9 and 61 minutes, decreasing in length at the end of the data collection process when concepts and categories moved towards saturation; the interviews became increasingly focused. Theoretical saturation was reached when further data did not elaborate the core category. The patients were recruited individually through theoretical sampling, where concepts generated through analysis and coding guided us in further inclusion of patients who could elaborate these

concepts. Memos were written throughout the study as a brainstorming tool, to keep track of new ideas about the concepts and their theoretical relationship within the emerging theory (Glaser, 2011).

<u>Data analysis</u>

Transcriptions from formal interviews, non-participant observations, field notes, and memos were initially analyzed through line-by-line coding, assessing each sentence while being open to the emerging concepts. After the initial coding, the software program NVIVO 9 was used to store data from the 22 codes that were generated. While coding and analyzing data, we looked for patterns in data and compared the codes and concepts with the new data. The authors participated in data analysis and comparison of concepts. Six categories were generated as we sought to identify a core category accounting for patients' latent pattern of behavior in resolving their main concern. These six categories were as follows: including, confiding, concerning, protecting, managing, and excluding.

When the core category and predominant behavior were identified as safeguarding self-governance—a precaution to guard one self and others and to protect autonomy—coding became more selective and aimed to delimit data collection to only those categories relevant to the core category. Theoretical sampling ceased when the core category was saturated and further data collection did not contribute with new knowledge to the emergent theory (Glaser, 1978). Theoretical codes of strategies emerged during the analysis and the six categories were modified into four strategies of action. These strategies, and the theory, are built around patients' pattern of behavior when resolving their main concern of succeeding in the fast-track program while maintaining autonomy in relation to the involvement of relatives. Eventually, memos were sorted and written according to the classic grounded theory approach (Glaser, 1998). During theoretical coding, it became apparent how the patients' strategies of actions were connected to their gender and marital status.

<u>Ethical considerations</u>

The study was approved by the Danish Data Protection Agency (j.nr. 2010-41-4462). The National Committee on Health Research Ethics was presented with the project description and found formal evaluation to be unnecessary. The participating patients, relatives, and health professionals were informed that participation was voluntary, and that withdrawal from the study could take place at any time, without consequence for treatment or care. Data collection was performed after written consent was obtained from the participants.

## The Theory of Safeguarding Self-Governance

Safeguarding self-governance emerged as the core category of our theory and conceptualized the pattern of behavior of older patients in relation to their relatives in their fast-track programs. The older patients' main concern was to complete the fast-track program while maintaining autonomy, which they resolved through four strategies

of actions: embracing, shielding, distancing, and masking. The strategies described the patients' actions of maintaining autonomy by deciding which relatives were allowed to be present, when their presence was desired, and what kind of support was acceptable so the patients could stay in charge of their fast-track program. The strategies of actions, chosen by the patients, appeared to be related to their gender and marital status (Table 1). The strategies share some similarities with each other because social strategies are commonly used and a part of the patients' overall pattern of behavior.

|  | Married | Single |
|---|---|---|
| Women | **Embracing**<br><br>Needing relatives involvement<br><br>Including relatives based on an essential need for their presence during admission and after discharge<br><br>Accepting dependency | **Shielding**<br><br>Partly needing relatives involvement<br><br>Including relatives for visits during admission<br><br>Excluding relatives after discharge to protect relatives from being burdened<br><br>Refusing dependency |
| Men | **Masking**<br><br>Partly needing relatives involvement<br><br>Excluding relatives during admission to protect themselves from relatives<br><br>Including relatives for practical support after discharge<br><br>Accepting dependency | **Distancing**<br><br>Not needing relatives involvement<br><br>Excluding relatives to protect themselves from relatives during admission and after discharge<br><br>Refusing dependency |

Table 1: *The patients' four strategies of actions and their apparent relation to gender and marital status.*

Embracing

The strategy of embracing was preferred by married women and explained how they involved their husbands, based on an essential need for their support and presence during the fast-track program. The married women did not perceive their autonomy as being threatened by their husbands' involvement; rather, it was supported and retained, and the married women accepted being dependent on their husbands to complete the fast-track program. This dependency is illustrated in the non-participant observation field notes, where two of the married female patients' husbands were present at every scheduled meeting—something that did not occur with the other participants. These married female patients were autonomous together with their spouses and were comforted by the closeness of their husbands during admission and after discharge.

The feeling of having their loved ones close by when the married women needed them comforted the women; they considered closeness to be their husbands' most important attribute. Their need to share the experience with their husbands was vital and the women needed their husbands' presence as well as their emotional and practical support. Embracing their relatives' involvement was a natural thing, which differs from the strategies of shielding, masking, and distancing, where the relatives' involvement was disregarded. Through embracing, the married patients confided in their husbands and relied on their support for decision-making.

The decision about surgery was an important one for the married women and they often involved their husband in the decision-making process. The decision-making process differs from distancing, where the single men excluded their relatives, and made the decisions by themselves, and from shielding, where the single women refrained from including their relatives for fear of burdening them.

## Shielding

The shielding strategy was preferred by single women with children or nieces and nephews as the potential supporters. The single women completed the fast-track program and maintained autonomy by avoiding help from their relatives. Through shielding, the single women protected their relatives from being burdened; these women were concerned about the well-being of their relatives their low financial capacity, decreased health, and heavy workload in spite of the fact that these single women needed their practical and emotional support. Field notes from the observation of a pre-assessment interview illustrated a single female patient's need for her daughter's assistance: "The nurse asked the patient which pain medication she was currently using. Confused, the patient looked to her daughter for the answer. The daughter replied that her mother took eight paracetamol tablets per day". The single woman concealed her anxiety and ensured her relatives that she was capable of self-management.

Avoiding being a burden to relatives was a prominent aspect of shielding. Practical support was occasionally refused by the single women, but later accepted if the relatives were insistent. The appreciation of the willingness of relatives to support and act as a safety net for the patients was balanced by the patients' need for autonomy. Such need related to the strategy of masking where support was not accepted until after discharge. Relatives were protected by the single women who accepted home care and admission to a rehabilitation facility to limit the amount of help from relatives. This aspect differs from distancing, where the single men perceived relatives as superfluous and excluded them in order to protect themselves.

## Distancing

The strategy of distancing was preferred by single men and explained how they dissociated relatives from the fast-track program, during admission and after discharge. The strategy was seemingly used to protect themselves from the opinions and interference of their relatives. Distancing also explain how single men wanted to be in charge and manage without interference. The single men completed the fast-track program while maintaining autonomy guided by a high sense of self-governance.

The single men managed daily life alone with faith in their own abilities and took care of themselves, even though, in one case, it meant having to crawl up the stairs to visit the bathroom. Although practical support was needed, these men discarded dependency and excluded relatives as superfluous in order to maintain autonomy without relatives. The single men also attended the scheduled meetings alone, only informing their relatives when they considered it necessary. Such behaviors differed from those of married women in the strategy of embracing, where the husbands' involvement during the scheduled meetings was considered important. Taking pride in independence and making their own decisions—such as doing housework, in spite of patients' decreased functional abilities—was prominent in the strategy of distancing. The relatives' presence was considered a redundancy for mastering the fast-track program, and visits were declined by single men because of their desire to succeed alone and make their own decisions. Married men also declined visits during admission through the strategy of masking, but accepted being dependent of their wives after discharge.

<u>Masking</u>

The strategy of masking was preferred by married men and explained their need to complete the fast-track program while maintaining autonomy alone to protect themselves from their relatives' interference and worry; but they did, however, depend on the support of their wives after discharge. To display their autonomy, these married men maintained a masculine façade of self-governance during admission towards their wives and the health professionals.

The married men regarded total joint replacement as an easy procedure, that it was a matter of getting a bone repair and not a legitimate cause for involving relatives who were subsequently excluded during admission. These men met the worries of relatives with surprise, as they did not regard the surgery as an illness. Previous hospital experiences had left the impression that relatives were interfering and curious, which was also the case for the single men using the strategy of distancing; however, distancing differs from masking by also excluding relatives after discharge. Keeping up a façade was considered necessary by married men going through total joint replacement to maintain the image of staying strong for their worrying wives. Accepting help was apparently not in conflict with the masculine façade for the married men as they regarded and received their wives' support after discharge as a natural thing.

Even though the married men excluded their wives during admission, they accepted dependency after discharge when their wives' practical support was needed; such behavior also, relates to the married women and their strategy of embracing.

**Discussion**

The theory of safeguarding self-governance demonstrated how older patients tried to resolve their main concern of completing the fast-track program while maintaining autonomy through the four strategies of action of embracing, shielding, distancing, and masking.

Autonomy was a prominent aspect in our theory where the patients' actions to maintain autonomy resembled the concept of autonomy viewed by Gillon (1995), a philosopher in medical ethics, who regarded independence as a vital component in the concept of autonomy. Gillon (1995) described how the capacity to think, decide, and act on the basis of such thought and decision freely and independently and without hindrance is an essential factor. This type of autonomy is explained through the single patients' strategies of distancing and shielding, where they felt independent without the support of relatives. In a review study of self-determination theory and autonomy-supportive behavior, Deci and Ryan (2012) did not define autonomy as similar to independence. Instead they distinguished between being autonomously independent, where patients chose not to depend on others, and autonomously dependent, where they chose to do so, without being controlled. In safeguarding self-governance, older patients' autonomy did not presuppose independence, at least when it concerned married patients who accepted dependency of relatives through the strategies of embracing and masking, without feeling less autonomous. The aspect of accepted dependency as a part of autonomy has also been addressed by La Guardia Ryan, Couchman, and Deci (2000) in their intervention study of family members. Here, autonomy was not always perceived consistent with individuals, but described as how one person could be dependent of support, and willingly rely on the care of others while still feeling autonomous (La Guardia et al., 2000).

An association between the patients' gender and autonomy was found in our study. Women seemed more likely to involve their relatives than men, who insisted on managing independently and even seemed to protect themselves from their relatives' opinions. In a Dutch study of autonomy-connectedness and gender, Bekker and van Assen (2008) examined a sample of 2256 people and found that women were more sensitive to others, while men had higher scores of self-awareness. Moreover, the women in our study seemed to accept dependency on relatives as part of being autonomous, maybe even a prerequisite for autonomy, which was seen in embracing and shielding. This aspect was also seen in Deci and Ryans' study (2012) about the self-determination theory, where they showed how dependence could be a precondition for autonomy if one relies on others for guidance. In the safeguarding self-governance theory, men were more reluctant to accept dependency and used the strategies of masking and distancing and insisted on managing the fast-track program by themselves. Deci and Ryan (2012) defined this aspect as autonomously independent, where people choose not to be dependent on others for fear of being controlled or pressured into depending on the others' leadership.

Such was not the case for the married patients in our theory where autonomy was maintained by the support of spouses. Married women accepted dependency on their husbands during and after the fast-track program through embracing; such behavior did not interfere with their feelings of being autonomous. Neither did the married men who included relatives after discharge for practical support, which was in concordance with the findings of Van Nes, Runge, and Jonsson (2009) in their exploratory case study of the everyday life experiences of older couple after suffering from a stroke. They found that the couples acted as one entity, conceptualized through "one body, three hands, and two minds", (Van Nes, Runge, & Jonsson, 2009, p. 198) and showed how they managed daily living together by assisting each other.

In our study, the behaviors of single patients differed from that of the married patients. Through the strategies of shielding and distancing, single patients seemed to rely on their own abilities for completing the fast-track program, while maintaining autonomy without their relatives' involvement. Single men used the strategy of distancing to dissociate from their relatives during admission as well as after discharge, to minimize the impact of opinions and interference of others. The occasional undue pressure of patients' families was described in an essay by Ho (2008) about family involvement in medical decision-making. Ho (2008) stated that the patients' concern of being influenced by paternalistic pressure from family members is important in western bioethics because patients are often in different power positions than those people surrounding them. At the same time, Ho (2008) rejected the image of patients as passive care recipients and explained how the patients' dignity and autonomy must be preserved.

Single women in our theory were seen to have the same needs as men: to complete the fast-track program while maintaining autonomy without their relatives' involvement. However, they used the strategy of shielding to protect relatives from being burdened, and as a way to maintain their autonomy without the presence of relatives, even though practical and emotional support was needed. In a study by Cahill, Lewis, Barg, and Bogner (2009), 50 semi-structured interviews of patients over the age of 65 were conducted; older patients' discussed the concept of burden, which was related to not wanting to complicate the busy lives of their adult children. The patients felt guilty about having health problems and concerned that their children were overly worried about taking care of them. Through shielding, patients excluded relatives from support during admission as a consideration for their well-being and concern for their busy daily lives. However, the single women in this study occasionally appreciated their relatives as a safety net after discharge. A descriptive study of 35 patients going through total hip or knee replacement, showed similar results with patients expressing concerns about the consequences of early discharge for them or their relatives, particularly managing pain and mobility problems (Hunt et al., 2009).

Our theory of safeguarding self-governance indicated that autonomy is important for the patients' involvement of relatives in their fast-track program during total hip or knee replacement, and showed that men and women have different strategies for achieving this associated to their marital status.

## Study limitations

Our theory is based on a small sample consisting of sixteen patients. However, according to classic grounded theory, theoretical saturation is not perceived through the number of participants but through the concepts and categories relevance for the emergent theory and core category (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1998). Through theoretical coding we found how the patients' tried to resolve their main concern using four strategies, which were related to the patients' gender and marital status. Even though it could be argued that our sample was too small for a generalization in this size, nonetheless, we found gender and marital status to be important for the four strategies of patients included in the current setting at the specific time.

The employment of the first author in the ward that was initially chosen for data collection could also be of scrutiny. Glaser (1998) emphasized the importance of the researcher studying an area he or she knows nothing or little about and let theoretical sensitivity guide him or her. The first author was familiar with the area of interest, but was also interested in finding out *what was going on* with the older patients and their relationship to relatives as they were discharged three days after invasive surgery. Glaser (1998) stated that if you study an area you know about, you are going to have more variables, and you have to suspend that knowledge: "much like a judge tells a jury to disregard something they have heard that is not to be considered in reaching a verdict" (p. 120).

<u>Implications for practice</u>

This theory illuminates older patients' capacity to complete the fast-track treatment program while maintaining autonomy. Autonomy was revealed to be a central issue for older patients undergoing elective surgery, but also that it was possible to achieve autonomy while being dependent.

This new knowledge implicates nursing care for older patients with the needs of patients to balance autonomy and dependency in relation to the formal and informal care they received. Older patients' display of heterogeneous patterns of behavior to maintain autonomy when involving relatives emphasizes the need for health care professionals to apply an individualized approach to the involvement of relatives.

<u>Theory quality</u>

The quality of the emerging theory of safeguarding self-governance was evaluated by: fit, work, relevance, and modifiability (Glaser, 1978). The theory already meets the criteria of fit, by consisting of data collected from the substantive area of orthopedic hospital wards where total joint replacements were performed, and work, by explaining older patients' actions in the area examined. The four strategies of the theory and the relation to gender and marital status were found relevant by health professionals when presented at the two orthopedic wards where the study was conducted and in national events and conferences. Further research is needed to establish the theory's relevance to older patients' in fast-track programs during total joint replacement. The theory should also be modified by new data, exploring new tendencies in the theory and to further modify the relation to gender and marital status.

**Conclusion**

The safeguarding self-governance theory showed how older patients completed their fast-track program while maintaining autonomy through four strategies of embracing, shielding, distancing, and masking. In our theory of safeguarding self-governance, the patients' autonomy did not presuppose independence as dependency of relatives could be accepted without feeling less autonomous. However, this aspect was related to the gender differences and marital status of the patients, as women would more willingly accept their relatives' support and men excluded the relatives' help in order to feel

autonomous. We also discovered that the level of the relatives' involvement was limited to the extent decided by the patients, who chose who was to be involved, when they were involved, and with what kind of support.

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## Authors' contributions

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# A Comment on Gerunds: Realizing the Researcher's Process

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## Abstract

This conceptual discussion briefly presents the unique process that classic grounded theory researchers may encounter when undertaking the analysis and interpretation elements of the research process. Grounded theory researchers may discover their own researcher gerunds, much like the naming of theoretical codes in grounded theory. The author formulates the researcher gerunds she experienced and presents these in the context of her dissertation study.

**Keywords:** conceptual discussion, learning grounded theory, the new grounded theory researcher.

## Introduction

Testing and questioning represent constant comparison in data analysis. The researcher may sometimes have self-doubt and may question his or her abstractions of the data. This self-doubt is better served through testing codes in constant comparison, and allowing said codes to emerge from the data. As I learned to trust myself as a new grounded theory researcher, testing as a learning action became requisite, since this led to revisiting data for constant comparison and checking for substantive coding, fit, and flexibility. Questioning and testing my conceptualizations ensured I would follow the outline for data analysis: (a) comparing incidents applicable to each category, (b) integrating categories with their properties, (c) delimiting the theory, and (d) writing the theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p.105). Questioning and testing the fit and flexibility of codes, categories, and properties grounded my process of theory generation. Glaser (1978) believed that the researcher "should not be afraid of his own fear; for that itself may block the creative process" (p. 20). Embracing this fear and using it in the grounded theory process have been invaluable to me as a grounded theory researcher. Self-doubt in this learning process led to a more theoretical sensitivity and testing action, and as such relieved the fear that I would be unable to conceptualize the theoretical codes, which reflects the next section of the researcher gerunds of waiting and trusting.

## Waiting and Trusting

Glaser (1978) stated generating grounded theory "takes time [and is a] delayed action phenomenon" (p. 18). Patience in the process is challenging, especially when excitement builds as codes emerge. The researcher must trust in emergence, whether discovering a category or naming a theoretical code. Trust requires waiting for

emergence. There is nothing passive in waiting and trusting because the researcher is constantly thinking about the data. As memoing occurred and links made between codes and basic social processes, three epiphanies would then come that would finally turn the coding toward a more fitting direction. Glaser (1978) stated that this self-pacing recipe forces patience. Waiting and trusting also involve relinquishing control; the researcher has no control over the data or the direction the discovery takes.

## Reflexing and Owning

Reflexing and owning required insight and accountability in my previous practice experiences and studies. For social workers, previous practice experience presents a unique issue when doing grounded theory. Reflexivity, a feminist concept, means that a person must reflect on contexts of past experiences (Hurd, 1998). As a community mental health worker in the field nearly ten years, I pride myself on the ability to assess severe and persistent mental illness, which I found myself doing in one interview. I recovered quickly when I recognized this behavior and returned to the method. It is no accident that classic grounded theory is very forgiving because details are inconsequential. The researcher simply abstracts data to find deeper meaning. This event was a very powerful and liberating realization. The simple awareness of what was occurring helped me redirect my energies back into conceptualizing theory. For social workers doing grounded theory, this issue must be addressed before entering the field to avoid falling into comfortable practice skills that are antithetical to the process of classic grounded theory.

Reflexing and owning also help the researcher put away predetermined ideas of what is meant by "remain open to what is actually happening" (Glaser, 1978, p. 3). My proposal and past studies quickly became secondary to my intrigue with the data. Toward the end of data collection, however, these past studies and literature would again surface. Knowing the consequence of forcing data, I adamantly restricted any entertainment of existing theory relevance. If I thought connection (Relational-Cultural Theory) was a concept, it was put to a rigorous test of fit. I recognized and owned that my previous studies might impede theory generation.

## Ruminating and Obsessing

Glaser (1978) stated that theoretical pacing requires distraction with other endeavors. Because unrealistic deadlines stunt creativity, the method must not consume all the time of the researcher. This behavior was difficult for me as I found myself ruminating and obsessing over codes, theoretical sampling, and the abstractions of the data. I did plan distractions. I genuinely enjoyed and was inspired by this study, thus ruminating and obsessing were not always troublesome. It is a perfect fit with my melancholic nature. Perhaps Glaser knows this about classic grounded theory researchers. Glaser (1978) spoke of a "transition from input into depression and out through writing memos" (p.24); this was the "drugless trip" (Glaser, 1978, p. 24): the researcher's absorption of data through data collection and coding. Ruminating, I

believe, is parallel to the process of constant comparison. Going over the data repeatedly, contemplating it, and chewing "again what has already been chewed slightly and swallowed" Mish, 1978, p. 1030) was helpful in conceptualizing the data. Grounded theory has exceptional power over minus mentorees (Stern, 1994). This power presented difficulty later because I could not distance myself from the data to name all the theoretical codes, and the inability to distance self from the data was when obsession led me to my committee members for assistance in order to lead me out of a mental fugue.

## Conclusion

To conclude this brief comment on the unique process of the classic grounded theory process, and the evident gerunds that occur, I realized that, when thinking of researcher actions and conceptualized codes, gerunds can be helpful through the experiential process of the grounded theory method. The researcher is all things: designer, data collector, sole coder, analyst, and author. In these roles, I found that not only were participants resolving their main concern but I was also discovering it. Action is implicit for both researcher and participants. This is part of what Glaser (1978) called the self-pacing process. Self-pacing is a three stage process to generate theory: (a) input, (b) the drugless trip, and (c) saturation. Transposing these stages onto researcher gerunds reveals that input and the drugless trip are like questioning and doubting, waiting and trusting, and ruminating and obsessing. Saturation is similar to reflexing and owning. The researcher must find his or her own personal recipe to ensure the process is genuine as he or she searches through the dictionary for just the right word, and as he or she discovers his or her own researcher gerunds.

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# Discovering Glaser: My Experience of Doing Grounded Theory

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## Abstract

For my investigation into how general practitioners (GPs) experience their medical careers, I used a grounded theory methodology based on the early work of Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Glaser's subsequent work (Glaser, 1978, 1998). Glaser (1998) suggested you need to do grounded theory in order to understand the methodology. I found as I engaged in the process I began to understand the meaning of Glaser's teachings and to discover Glaser. In this article, I share my experience of discovering my theory of optimising professional life.  This theory explains how GPs develop their professional life in response to their need for sustainment—a need that encapsulates self-care to sustain wellbeing, work interest to sustain motivation and income to sustain lifestyle.

**Keywords:** Career development, sustainment, optimising professional life, general practitioners, grounded theory.

## Introduction

Glaser (1998) suggested you need to conduct grounded theory (GT) in order to understand the methodology. I found that as I engaged in the process, I began to understand the meaning of Glaser's teachings and to discover Glaser. In this article I share my experience of how I discovered a new career development theory, the theory of optimising professional life.  This theory explains how general practitioners (GPs) develop their professional life in response to their need for sustainment—need that encapsulates self-care to sustain well-being, work interest to sustain motivation and income to sustain lifestyle. I used GT based on the early work of Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Glaser's subsequent works (Glaser, 1978, 1998).

## Sampling

My early sampling was based on a perspective of GP careers, beginning with young GPs, to hear about the formative years of medical life. I then interviewed experienced and mid-career doctors working in different professional roles and locations. Their need to self-care, be interested in their work, and earn income emerged as catalysts for career events. Guided by Glaser's writings, I used a sample of GPs for career events that added

to the properties and dimensions of these concepts. The sampling continued until similar incidents were repeated and no new concepts were emerging from which I concluded a category was saturated and sampling for that concept could stop.

## Data Collection

Sampling and data collection for this study occurred through interviews with thirty GPs and seven managers of general practice businesses. For each doctor I interviewed, I also explored public information from websites, publications, government registration, biographies, Google searches, and conference proceedings. Any information that supported or contradicted a participant's account was noted, for further analysis. Data were collected over several months. Six study participants had second interviews and one GP also has a third interview.

Throughout this data collection process, I was concerned with keeping the interview conversation open and guided by the participant (as required by Glaser's teachings), and wanting to capture depth and consistency in the data. I managed to ease the concern through developing of an interview guide that served as a prompt. I wanted to collect sufficient data to compare what GPs said and to explore new lines of enquiry. This guide was a useful tool that ensured I followed Glaser's research method appropriately.

I would begin each interview with an open question so that issues were allowed to emerge more freely. Subsequent data collection was informed by these issues. Typically, the first question was as follows: Could you tell me about your work history since graduating in medicine? Other open questions I used were as follows: Tell me about your life as a GP. And what is it like being a GP? I used techniques to encourage the individual to continue talking such as repeating a question or reply. I also used phrases like: Go on. Tell me more about... or, why did you do that? It was important to remember to be open and flexible therefore the specific wording of questions and the order in which they were asked was influenced by the participant's replies.

The interviews evolved in line with the concepts being developed. For example, the questions asked in the first interview with Monica (aged 44) followed the interview guide. However, my second interview with Monica, which occurred 12 months later, contained specific questions around freedom to make her own decisions and autonomy. My third communication with Monica was by email, shortly after the second interview, clarifying aspects of the doctor-patient relationship.

Even though Glaser (1998) wrote that there is no need to tape interviews in order to generate concepts and hypotheses, I was required to make digital recordings as evidence for my Doctor of Philosophy thesis; I was being asked to provide descriptive illustrations of my concepts. I also made field notes during and post interview, and compared these with the recorded interview. Initially, I analysed the transcribed data but as I gained experience, I coded field notes made from the recording rather than the transcription. On reflection, as a researcher who was inexperienced in conceptualisation,

these recordings were an advantage. I was able to revisit, verify, and re-code text as new concepts emerged and I detected patterns.

## Coding and Analysis

Inspired by the goal of Glaser's methodology to find the core category, which explains how the participants resolve their main concern or problem, I conducted my analysis. This required coding incidents into categories, comparing incidents and categories, and trying to identify the main concern being articulated.

I began coding by fracturing the data, line by line, pulling the GP's storytelling format apart, with each fragment becoming a very small episodic story. I analysed through asking Glaser's questions: What are these data a study of? What is actually happening? What category does this incident indicate? What property of what category does this incident indicate? What is the participant's main concern? I compared and grouped the fragments, eventually giving them an abstract name. My thoughts at the time can be found in the following descriptive memo:

> Fracturing the data
> I've highlighted the behaviour by looking at the action in the GP's story in words such as exercise, work, bill, see, and take. Then I have looked for meaning in motivation, attitude and feelings by looking at words such as like, why I left, think, didn't like, and didn't feel comfortable. I compared these statements and conceptualised them as indicating control and autonomy. I have omitted *dictated to* because it is the participant's observation. However, should an incident emerge which links this observation to the GP's behaviour then I would code this text with that behaviour to help me understand the behaviour.

Coding 11 interviews yielded 367 codes (that is, 367 conceptual categories). This large number of codes grew quickly, as a consequence of over-coding and over-fragmenting the data, something which Glaser (2011) warns against (Holton, 2007). The process of comparing incidents became more difficult therefore recognising vital patterns in the data was at risk. With further analysis, I was able to redistribute the 367 codes into 10 categories and 36 sub-categories.

As the study progressed, I found that conceptualisation seemed to automatically take over from detailed description as codes were consolidated or set aside in accordance with GT. Categories were established that captured multiple incidents under the one concept. Examples of this are as follows:

- I found the problems and motivations for GP behaviour in the categories of triggers and coping mechanisms.
- Incidents I had coded in the categories of description of general practice, organisational context, and attitudes could be grouped together to form a new, higher-level category-named context with the two properties of external context and internal context.
- When autonomy emerged as the work value of most importance, all other sub-codes of work values were be set aside while I continued to code incidents to autonomy (thus delimiting the scope of the study).

- Incidents I had coded in the categories of career pathways, satisfaction, and participation appeared to indicate the outcomes of vocational behaviour.

I continued my analysis of the category I had named progression until I discovered the core category of optimising, after which codes and incidents were redistributed within this framework of optimising.

## Discovering the Main Concern

For a long time I was unable to identify the main concern or problem that GPs were talking about and processing. There was tension around job changes and categories for triggers, work adjustment, and coping mechanisms. It was possible to see working lives being shaped by concerns about motivation, work-life balance, coping with demanding work and earning income. It appeared the problem was multi-faceted, yet it felt vaguely similar in each case.

I made a decision to examine the categories again, with fresh eyes. A quote taken from an interview with GP Monica (aged 44) helped focus my attention: "the goal from the beginning of my career was to be the best GP that I could be". Soon after, I read a field note from the twelfth interview, with GP Meg (aged 35): "she says she couldn't do just general practice without having other outlets and still be a functioning healthy person".

Comparing these two fragments of data and asked the crucial questions: What is this a study of? What category do these incidents indicate? What property of what category do these incidents indicate? I realised both incidents could be seen as different perspectives of the same category. To pursue this idea, I took a theoretical sample of three doctors who had left general practice (Mary, Alan, and Natalie). My comparison of these cases highlighted, that while GPs wanted to achieve results in their work and progress in their careers, they also expressed concern about their own welfare. I named this new category sustainment—a name that captured both the aspirational character of the first incident referred to by Monica, combined with the protective and sustainable character of Meg's incident. Sustainment integrated these elements, in response to changing needs and circumstances, in a way GPs could retain their ability to fulfil their primary career ambition.

I proceeded to compare the existing categories—triggers, work adjustment, tension and coping mechanisms, and their subcategories—with the new concept of sustainment. It seemed that the existing concepts could be linked to sustainment; because they related to decisions to enter the medical field, taking breaks, dissatisfaction, searching for experience or a more enhanced work role, financial factors, isolation, and personal or family life. At this point, it was important that I resist any temptation to engage in logical elaboration, so I examined the concept indicators again, asking: Is this a problem for the study participants and are they resolving it? and recoded if necessary. When I completed this process, the need that these GPs had for

sustainment was retained as the main concern. However, it now had three subcategories: need for self-care to sustain well-being, staying interested in the work to sustain intellectual motivation, and need for financial reward to sustain lifestyle.

## Discovering the Core Category

I needed to find the core category that showed how this problem of sustainment was being resolved. At first, I identified a pattern of behaviour where GPs encountered a problem—which they remedied by seeking a better work situation—by changing jobs or changing some aspect of their current job. This created various career pathways, with different amounts of participation in clinical general practice. After 11 interviews, I was not confident I had found the core category. Initially, I named the core category career shaping for own needs and continued data collection and analysis. I worked on several categories until it became clear that career shaping for own needs had the most explanatory power.

Autonomy and, to a lesser extent, recognition were present in this process of career shaping for own needs—however it was difficult for me to conceptualise the link between them. Autonomy seemed to have a stronger link to a GP's search for a more satisfactory professional situation than did recognition. Autonomy had the internal perspective, of providing a means for career shaping, whereas recognition held the external perspective of how the public regard GPs. Using the prevailing internal perspective, this study focused on autonomy as a key element in being able to make career shaping changes. Following Glaser's rules for delimiting, my work continued using those variables that related to this notion of career shaping.

Over time I came to the view that whilst the name career shaping for own needs did fit the core behaviour pattern, it lacked conceptual grab and was limited in how well it explained the observed behaviour. I considered other names: sculpting a professional life and me-shaping for autonomous needs. An individual GP may be juggling multiple issues, and yet they were generally thoughtful and structured in their behavioural responses.

My eureka moment came whilst reading an operations research piece that described an algebraic technique for solving linear problems. The concept of optimal solution was defined as "the point (in the solution space), which maximises the value of the objective function". I understood that to optimise was to make the best or most effective use of a situation or resource—relevant when there was an imbalance between needs and the limited resources to resolve them. It became clear that the study participants were looking for the most satisfactory or optimal solution within a set of constraints: that they were optimising their professional life.

While career shaping could refer to any solution that resolved their problem in a satisfactory way, these GPs sought the optimal solution, that is, the special case that is most satisfactory. Also, they sought this optimal solution subject to their individual set of internal and external constraints.

I concluded that optimising professional life explained how GP make trade-offs between competing needs to optimise their personal situation and develop a satisfying career. Glaser supports connections of this kind; where the researcher is open and theoretically sensitive to how other fields conceptualise data: "By familiarity with ways of constructing variables in other fields he [the researcher] may imbue his theory in a multivariate fashion that touches many fields" (Glaser, 1978, p. 3).

## Integrating Concepts in a Theory

Once the data were analysed, to aggregate incidents into patterns, I turned to Glaser's theoretical codes for a way to bring these concepts together into a theory that explained what was happening in the data. I saw the connection between *sustainment* and *optimising* wherever an individual was leaving or changing work, along a trajectory of professional life. This resembled a turning point or critical juncture—important because "they indicate where the difference occurs" (Glaser, 1978, p. 76). In a descriptive memo I wrote:

> She found that her health was not as good as it used to be and she was getting very tired. She resolved the problem by reducing her work hours, thereby exhibiting self-care behaviour. However, reducing her participation in clinical work also reduced her income, which could potentially cause concerns about financial reward. She said that reducing her clinical hours was more important compared with the loss of income.

I used the theoretical code of process to bring together the generated categories of exploring, selecting, implementing, adjusting and testing as the action of the optimising process—into the stages of discomfort, assessment and resolution.

## Sorting

The next key step in Glaser's GT was to sort my ideation memos into an order guided by the theoretical codes found in the data. Holton (2007) described the process: "as the researcher sees similarities, connections, and underlying uniformities, the theoretical decision about the precise location of a particular memo is based on the theoretical coding of the data grounding the idea" (p. 284). By following this GT step I sought "internal integration of connections among the categories" and to avoid developing a theory that was "linear, thin and less than fully integrated" (Glaser, 1978, p. 116).

During the research project, I produced a Word document of 122 pages, containing 212 memos grouped by category name. My memo sorting began with rereading and reconceptualising each memo, breaking down some that dealt with several ideas, and setting aside others that were descriptive rather than conceptual. Where a connection or relationship between concepts was seen, I created a linkage memo (a hypothesis) to discuss the connection.

Glaser (1998) recommended choosing a large table for manual sorting of printed

memos. I summarised each linkage memo on a separate Post-it note sticking it to the glass of a large window, in the position where it related theoretically and substantively to other Post-it linkage memos. This process continued—sorting, comparing, resorting, and adding Post-it note memos about other categories and properties—for several weeks. I reflected on the multi-coloured Post-it notes stuck to the windows until the final theoretical framework became visible to me.  When the properties of optimising were arranged, beside the sorted linkage memos, I could see how the categories fitted into a theory underpinned by seven propositions (listed below), which described how these categories interacted.

- The main concern being addressed by the professionals in this study is the need for sustainment.
- The aim of the optimising process is to achieve the most satisfactory solution (i.e. to satisfy the need for sustainment to the greatest extent possible) within a set of constraints.
- The process of optimising has three stages: stage of discomfort, stage of assessment (a cross roads), and stage of resolution.

The solution space holds a range of possible satisfactory and very satisfactory solutions that meet the GP's need for sustainment. Solutions are found in four dimensions: treating patients (control over work content and how the work is done), structuring the work day (administrative structure of the day), integrating work and personal life (balance between personal and professional life), and adapting oneself (building resilience and skills, changing perceptions and attitudes).

- GPs are aware of, and respond to, the constraints present in the internal and external environments.
- Having personal autonomy enables GPs to make desired changes in order to optimise their situation.
- Optimising is a psychological process that recurs throughout a professional career.

### Examining the Existing Literature

The literature review for this project was driven by the concepts found in the data. It occurred after the new theory of optimising professional life was developed (Glaser, 1998). This ordering allowed me to commence the work "with as few predetermined ideas as possible" (Glaser, 1978, p. 3) and to "remain open to what is actually happening" (Glaser, 1978, p. 3).

In career development theory, a common theme occurs in that humans strive to meet innate psychological and biological needs through engagement in work. Since the early 20th century, the study of careers has been dominated by psychological-based theories.

I analysed five of these theories for concepts that were relevant to my new

grounded theory: Holland's theory of vocational personalities and work environments (Holland, 1997), Dawis and Lofquist's (1984) theory of work adjustment, Super's (1980) self-concept theory of career development(Super, 1980), Gottfredson's (1981) theory of circumspection and compromise and Lent, Brown, and Hackett's (2002) social cognitive career theory. These theories are underpinned by the notion of a linear upward trajectory of work positions, usually within a particular profession or organisation. In contrast, participants in my study most often forged their careers in small, non-hierarchical, private business organisations with few opportunities for advancement once they became fully registered.

I examined the medical literature finding studies relating to career choice and entry to the field, satisfaction, stress, work-life balance, and early career—although studies of mid and late career for GPs were scarce. These studies provided factors that could trigger career events. Concepts were analysed using constant comparison and incorporated into the grounded theory when appropriate.

This research discovered sustainment—a concept not found in the career literature. Sustainment conceptualises the dynamic tension between self-care, staying interested in the work and income. These needs are identified in the literature (Blustein, 2006; Kilmartin, Newell, & Line, 2002). However, it is the trade-off between them that uniquely locates the new theory of optimising professional life in the literature. This balancing act was alluded to in a qualitative study of female GPs working in Australia, where the researchers identified "juggling the complexities of competing priorities in one's professional life" (Kilmartin et al., 2002) as an important issue.

The theory of optimising professional life is a career development theory. This theory is based on the behaviour of GPs working in Australia, with relevant concepts integrated from existing literature through constant comparison. Within the career literature, the theory contributes a dynamic explanation of person-environment fit and pays attention to multiple environments that may simultaneously influence how a GP's professional career is shaped.

## Conclusion

For my investigation of how GPs experience their medical careers and continue to be GPs, I chose Glaser's theory-building research method. As this was a relatively new topic, the exploration benefited from an approach not preconceived with a priori assumptions that could force misaligned assumptions upon the analysis (Glaser, 1978). My conclusion, from doing GT, is that if Glaser's teachings are followed, the researcher will be rewarded with a parsimonious theory that fits, works, is relevant, and modifiable. I felt my experience of doing GT enabled me to discover Glaser and the meaning of his teachings.

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# Applying the Theory of Optimising Professional Life

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## Abstract

Glaser (2014) wrote that "the application of grounded theory (GT) is a relatively neglected topic" (p. 1) in the literature. Applying GT to purposely intervene and improve a situation is an important adjunct to our knowledge and understanding of GT. A recent workshop of family doctors and general practitioners provides a useful example. The theory of optimising professional life explains that doctors are concerned about sustainment in their career and, to resolve this concern, they implement solutions to optimise their personal situation. Sustainment is a new, overarching concept of three needs: the need for self-care to sustain well-being, the need for work interest to sustain motivation, and the need for income to sustain lifestyle. The objective of the workshop was to empower doctors to reinvent their careers using this theory. Working individually and in small groups, participants were able to analyse a problem and to identify potential solutions.

**Keywords:** Career development, sustainment, optimising professional life, general practitioners, grounded theory.

## Introduction

Glaser (2014) pointed out that "the application of grounded theory (GT) is a relatively neglected topic" (p. 1) in the literature. At the 2014 Wonca Europe conference of family doctors and general practitioners (GPs), I conducted a workshop with three colleagues that applied my theory of optimising professional life. The objective was to empower doctors to reinvent their careers. I found that this theory and its concepts resonated with workshop participants. Working in small groups, they were able to analyse a problem which individuals in the group were experiencing and to identify strategies that could assist them.

## The Theory

The workshop was based on my research, for a Doctor of Philosophy thesis, that investigated how Australian GPs experience their careers and participate in primary health care. For my study, I used GT based on the early work of Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Glaser's subsequent works (Glaser, 1978,1998). I collected data from 37 study participants.

The emergent theory of optimising professional life explains that experienced GPs are concerned about sustainment in their career and, to resolve this concern, they implement solutions to optimise their personal situation. Sustainment is a new, overarching concept of the three needs that GPs have to sustain and grow their careers: the need for self care to sustain well-being, the need for work interest to sustain motivation and the need for income to sustain lifestyle.

Optimising involves assessing alternatives and choosing the best—after taking into account the particular set of circumstances and the constraints involved. GPs find these alternatives in four main areas: in treating patients, in structuring the workday, in integrating work and personal life, and in adapting oneself. Firstly, treating patients refers to the work content—how that work is done and the type of clinical work. Secondly, structuring the workday refers to the administrative progress of the day—the mix of roles, place of work, timing of appointments, deadlines and so on. Thirdly, integrating work and personal life relates to how seamlessly doctors can bring these two life roles together. Finally, adapting oneself involves building ones skills and resilience, or perhaps changing one's perception of what is needed.

This new career development theory explains the trade-offs GPs make between competing needs to optimise their personal situation and the constraints involved. In doing this GPs can change the focus of their clinical work, re-structure their day-to-day working life, improve how they integrate work-life balance, and enhance their skills and personal capacity.

## The Workshop

Whilst coming from different generations and work contexts, most family doctors and GPs experience a need to rejuvenate their careers over time. The workshop at the 2014 Wonca Europe conference brought together an international group of doctors to reflect on their careers, share lessons learnt, and explore how individuals adapt when faced with new challenges. Workshop participants were provided with a framework of my theory to help them understand and resolve issues that could trigger decisions to make career adjustments.

The workshop, led by three facilitators, included a panel of family doctors and round-table discussions. In these activities, participants were expected to reflect on their own career-path, both past and future. We conducted two exercises. Forty-three doctors attended the workshop from different European countries, two were from Australia and two were from the United Kingdom.

## The First Exercise

The objective of the first exercise was to show how to analyse a career problem. Workshop participants were asked to think about two or three occasions during their working life when they made changes that influenced and shaped their medical career.

Questions were asked: So when you were in that situation, what were your main concerns?" and "What bothered you the most?

Using Post-it notes, participants wrote down why they made these changes. These were collected, sorted into categories of need and discussed. The results showed that most of the concerns fitted within the three categories of sustainment. This exercise demonstrated that doctors at the workshop understood the issues addressed by the theory and found them relevant.

## The Second Exercise

The objective of the second exercise was to analyse a current problem and identify solutions to resolve the unmet need. Workshop participants were split into smaller groups of 4 to 6 people and asked to discuss solutions to a particular concern using the theoretical framework suggested in my theory of optimising professional life. Prompting questions were used to stimulate the discussion, for example:

- What could I do in my clinical work treating patients to resolve a concern I might have with my self-care?
- What are the actions I might take in order to bring about the desired change, for example, changing my clinical workload (the number of hours worked, the number of patients treated)?
- Could I change the mix of clinical and non-clinical work I do?

Glaser (2014) stresses an important feature of applying GT is that the favourable change or solution should emerge naturally. In the workshop discussion, which followed from the second exercise, doctors found favourable solutions to several scenarios:

- In treating patients: new work teams and workplace culture were recommended to alleviate work stress.
- In structuring the workday: changing work roles added work interest, whilst allocating catch-up time and sharing work could relieve work stress.
- In integrating work and personal life: job sharing would enable individuals to take personal time off from work.
- In adapting oneself: learning how to work cooperatively, building personal resilience, changing expectations, and accepting the unchangeable were suggested as solutions to sustainment.

## Discussion

Individuals attending the workshop were expected to consider their careers and possible changes that could be made in the future. The theory of optimising professional life offered a problem-focused approach to resolving career issues. This is an approach, which has been found to help doctors integrate work and life events and improve

satisfaction in general practice. This theory provided a framework to guide individuals in developing their own long-term careers and to ensure they were well prepared and trained for evolving models of medical practice. The framework was used to understand issues they had in their career and empower them to sustain their interest and satisfy a need for self care and income.

The conference workshop indicated how the theory could be applied by individual GPs to examine and progress their careers. In addition, the theory could be utilised by policymakers to assess the likely effectiveness of various policy options.

Over the past decade, a number of initiatives have been introduced in Australia to address the problem of GP workforce shortage—without reform, this shortage is likely to continue into the future. A range of factors have been recognised as influencing why, where, and how GPs provide professional services. These include family, social and professional relationships, as well as lifestyle and market forces.

The theory of optimising professional life explains GPs' careers, and their vocational behaviour, based on the issues and problems being processed by the study participants. Applying this explanatory GT to a particular problem in GP workforce policy and practice would need more detailed questions to be answered (Simmons & Gregory, 2003), for example: What does the theory of optimising professional life indicate about the real-world problem to be solved? And what does this theory indicate that needs to be done in order to mitigate this policy problem?

Nevertheless, this theory provides a new perspective for the design and implementation of GP workforce policy and practice. It provides a framework for integrating macro (structural) and micro (psychological) dimensions of an issue. At the micro level, an initiative is more likely to be embraced by doctors if it enhances the comfort they have with their self-care, staying interested in the work and financial reward. An initiative should provide opportunities to resolve any discomfort through treating patients, structuring the workday, integrating work and personal life and adapting oneself. The theory also predicts that implementation of a new policy is likely to be more difficult where an initiative hampers any of these facets of GP professional life.

## Conclusion

In setting out general properties of applying GT, Glaser (2014) correctly suggested that being able to apply a GT is an important adjunct to our knowledge and understanding of GT. This workshop to improve the satisfaction that individuals feel in their professional life provides a useful example of applying GT.

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# Goal-oriented Balancing:

# a New Model of Contemporary Sales Management

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## Abstract

This study focuses on the substantive area of sales management and it suggests that the main concern of a sales manager is to reach the sales and economical goals of the sales organization. The social process by which this main concern is resolved is called goal-oriented balancing and it describes two complementary organizational dimensions, frame development and individual development that are continuously balanced against each other. That is, the sales manager must establish effective organizational processes and structures as well as find the keys to maximum individual performance. These two processes have to be in balance and supportive of each other.

**Keywords:**

## Introduction

A sales manager's responsibilities include assigning territories, mentoring team members, assigning training, and building a plan. Managers are often involved in hiring and firing and have to determine sales force effectiveness. They also have to determine sales force effectiveness by continually assessing how well members of the sales organization perform. These evaluations provide a basis for rewards, but they also generate feedback that can be used to improve the overall sales management process.

The aim of this grounded theory study is to produce a theory that explains the main concern of sales managers and how the population resolves that main concern. Data was collected for this study from 27 interviews in 13 different companies that were regarded as very effective sales organizations. The first eight companies were nominated as "best sales organization" in Sweden 2011 by Weekly Business (in Swedish: Veckans Affärer), a leading periodical. The other five were chosen based on snowball technique and were recommended by the respondents in the first sample.

Data were primarily collected from interviews, each of which lasted approximately 1-2 hours. The respondents were sales managers or directors. The criterion for choosing respondents was that they should have responsibility for the whole sales organization. Therefore, middle sales managers were not included.

The author conducted the interviews at the respondents' organization. Leading

questions were avoided during the interviews; rather, interviewees were asked to respond freely to general open-ended questions about the challenges and difficulties they experienced during these management processes. According to Glaser (1978), such an attitude of "openness"(p. 44) is crucial for developing the emerging theory. Finally, existing categories were allowed to guide the interviews to some extent. The interviews were audio-recoded and notes were taken.

## Extant Literature

Within the extant sales literature, researchers have often considered the characteristics of the salesperson as the main predictor of sales performance and sales effectiveness (Babakus, Cravens, Grant, Ingram, & LaForge, 1996). Two of the most well known efforts are the models presented by Walker, Churchill, and Ford (1977) and Weitz (1979, 1981). However, these studies resulted in a lack of "adequate explanation of observed inconsistencies" (Churchill, Ford, Hartley, & Walker, 1985, p. 103); in the 1980s, researchers started to focus on sales management practices as determinants of salespersons' performance and sales organization effectiveness.

To understand these managerial factors, three different and rather disconnected areas of research emerged around the themes of motivation, control systems, and compensation plans (Brown, Evans, Mantrala & Challagalla, 2005). Sales force motivation research is based on psychological theories and emphasizes personal characteristics and perceptions as determinants of individual performance (Vinchur, Schippmann, Switzer, & Roth, 1998; Brown & Peterson, 1994; Bagozzi, 1980; Brown, Cron, & Slocum, 1998). The literature involving control systems has mainly focused on metrics and monitoring, and draws on management and organizational theories (Anderson & Oliver, 1987; Oliver & Andersson, 1994; Jaworski, 1988; Ouchi, 1979; Cravens, Ingram, La Forge, & Young, 1993; Challanga & Shervani, 1996). The studies involving compensation emphasize goal setting and incentives based on economic theories (Basu, Srinivasan, & Staelin, 1985; Srinivasan, 1981; Mantrala, Sinha, & Zoltners, 1994; Raju & Srinivasan, 1996; Rao, 1990; Dearden & Lilien, 1990; Kalra & Shi, 2001).

Even though these research streams yield rich insights into specific aspects of sales management, they also contribute to a situation in which researchers focus on their own issues and paradigms, and exclude other aspects. Scholars (Zoltners, Sinha, & Lorimer, 2008; Ingram, LaForge, Locander, MacKenzie, & Podsakoff, 2005) have increasingly questioned whether the existing literature actually grasps the complexity of today's sales management processes.

Some scholars (Pangapoulus & Dimitriadis, 2009; Flaherty, Arnold, & Hunt, 2007; Brown et al., 2005; and Zoltners et. al 2008) have called for a more integrated and holistic view of sales force management. Commenting on the different dimensions of contemporary sales leadership, Ingram et al. (2005) stated, "the future will require an understanding of these interfunctional relationships so as to align strategy, systems and organizational structure" (p. 141). Similarly, Zoltners et al. (2008) asserted, "much of the sales-related research to date has focused on the outcome of a single sales

management decision, process, system or program" (p. 116).

Another example of the disconnectedness among different lines of research in sales management is, as noted by Zoltner et al. (2008), the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management* (Brown & Jones, 2005) that included many different ideas for future research. Nonetheless, most articles have focused on a single effectiveness driver, such as CRM (Tanner, Ahearne, Leigh, Mason, & Moncrief, 2005), leadership (Ingram et al., 2005), and compensation (Brown et al., 2005).

This study aims to contribute to this literature by producing a grounded theory of contemporary sales management processes that incorporate different processes and their interrelationships.

## The Theory

The model that emerged from the data analysis consists of a general pattern, called goal-oriented balancing, which describes how the actors resolve their main concern. This pattern consists of two complementary organizational dimensions that continuously balance against each other during the process of managing the sales force.

## The Core Process: Goal-oriented Balancing

This study suggests that a sales manager has one main concern and that is to fulfill the goals of the sales organization. These goals can include long-term and short-term market share, sales growth, and other results measurements. To fulfill these goals, it is important to understand the function of the sales manager as confirmation that he or she is successful in his or her efforts to direct and develop the sales force.

This study suggests that this main concern makes the sales manager conduct two simultaneous parallel processes. One process is to create structures in order for activities not to be tied to certain individuals, and make sure individuals' effectiveness can be enhanced over time. Those structures are referred to as frame development.

At the same time, the sales manager faces another challenge: to find the key to maximum individual performance.  These two processes are not easily unified. If structures and processes predominate, they become a goal in and of themselves. On the other hand, if those structures and processes are not in place, the sales manager can never create an organization in which the personnel run in the same direction and conduct their tasks in accordance with the overall vision and the goals of the company. Thus, this study suggests that not only is it important to conduct the frame development and the individual development, but also that these two dimensions need to be in balance with each other.

More specifically, the author of this study suggests that this balance can be accomplished through (1) designing and redesigning, (2) feedback, (3) adaptation, and (4) coaching. For example, designing the framework entails creating a structure that

provides support, confirmation, and context. In this study, several managers pointed out that it was a matter of creating a framework from the beginning that inspired worker confidence. In that way, the bureaucracy was kept to a minimum and valuable sales personnel time was not wasted. A sales manager in a mobile operator firm commented, "The salespeople should not feel that they have to worry about dressing up a deal they have closed successfully internally just so that it will fit the existing processes."

Even if the framework is established, it has to be redesigned continuously in order to keep up with external and internal changes. The sales director in a global construction and mining company commented on managing in relation to the individual:

> You can say that I am the strainer between the formalized processes and the individual. My job is to make sure that our processes are fully supportive of the daily activities and do not hamper what we actually want to accomplish. In fact, if you were to follow these processes in every detail, you would not be able to breathe.

Sometimes, balance does not require changing the structure of the framework; instead, smaller adaptations and adjustments are needed based on upcoming events and everyday activities. By adapting, the framework is adjusted to situation-specific requirements. The sales manager in the same company described the adaptation of the frame in the following terms:

> According to our regulations, there should be a detailed plan for every customer, but when you are sitting face-to-face with a salesperson, it sometimes becomes absurd to demand a plan. Often it is enough to have it for your three major customers.

In this study, we can see that when it comes to both designing and adapting the frame, sales personnel feedback is essential. The sales director at an employment company explained, "Either you follow the processes or you suggest how they can be improved."

The importance of feedback is also emphasized in the other organizations. The sales director in a global construction and mining company explained that they had standardized processes to collect opinions and that a team of accountants synthesized the feedback and made suggestions to managers. Such continuous frame adaptation supports the sales staff in the field.

Sometimes, the solution is not to redesign or adapt the existing framework. Instead, the focus of a manager's attention is the individual salesperson and the manager has to take on a more active role and coach him or her.

The head of sales in a global IT company noted that such a process is crucial to build understanding about each step and to have a flexible approach even though the processes can be quite static in a large organization. She continued:

> To create such an understanding involves coaching a person reflectively and consciously so that he or she understands the purpose of each step in the business process and how to tackle it effectively… Even if the standardized processes say one thing, sometimes we have to do it a little bit differently in order to get maximum result in a given situation. You can say that I have to be like a traffic policeman directing the person within the system I have created myself"

Having described the core category of the study, I would like to turn the focus to describe the two dimensions of this balance.

## Frame Development

Frame development is the way that management creates and designs processes and structures for the sales work. It consists of several layers, each dependent on the other, and consists of following three subcategories: (1) objectives, (2) management processes, and (3) roles.

The first subcategory of objectives describes the overall goals and vision of the organization and the way the goals are transformed into more specific sales objectives. This subcategory also explains how reward systems are designed. Several sales managers in this study emphasized the importance of having an overall vision as a guideline for the other objectives and the need for goals to be consistent with this overall vision.

A sales director in a global construction and mining company commented, "If you have a clear vision, everything else in the sales management process becomes much easier." The importance of an easily communicated, overall vision is also supported by the CEO at a global industrial solutions company: "Revenues and market shares do not constitute a good vision for the sales organization. You need something that engages the people in the field, something you can use as the foundation for collective pride."

Management processes involve systems that are consistent with the overall goals of the organization. For example, if the goal is to facilitate long-term relationships with the customer, the management systems must be calibrated accordingly.

Also, matching the right people with the right customers is critical. The different roles have to be analyzed with regard to which competences are required for different customers. For example, recruitment requires appropriate measures to be undertaken when the overall objective is to develop long-term customer relationships.

## Individual Development

The sales managers interviewed in this study also develop the individuals, including the sales force and managers. In order to promote understanding of various topics, they create insights, such as: (1) goals, (2) structure (frame), (3) organization, and (4) offerings. By understanding the overall goals of the organization and making them tangible, each sales person can easily see him or herself as part of a greater whole and realize what these general goals mean for his or her individual situation. The sales director at an employee consultancy firm suggested: "A salesperson should be able to sit down with his family on Sunday evening and discuss, what does he have to do this year in order for all of us to go to Thailand in December."

Salespeople must understand the role of the standardized structure and processes guiding the sales work (the frame) in order to believe that the structure and

processes are designed to help not control them in their work. The CEO at a sales consultancy firm commented: "You have to be able to answer the question why when it comes to these issues, otherwise, they will never follow you."

Since many of the offerings provided by these organizations incorporate components and services from different divisions, managers have to create insights regarding other organizational units. The office manager at a mobile operator company commented: "You need to understand how, for example, engineers look on the world since they have different driving forces compared to salespeople. You need to create an understanding regarding this."

In the process of understanding different parts of the organization, it is also crucial to have an understanding of the offering as a whole. Creating insights includes the economic side of the offering, from pricing issues to a deals role in contributing to the overall results of the division and company. The sales director at a global industrial service company emphasized: "We created a tool for the sales force to understand a business deal as a whole with pricing issues, revenues, profit levels, and a specific deals implications for the bottom line of the company."

## Conclusion

The author of this study suggests that contemporary sales processes are complex and dynamic endeavors in which various (sometimes conflicting) interests are ultimately managed by involved actors through goal-oriented balancing.

The holistic and integrative model proposed here describes the management process in two categories: frame development and individual development. Comprising these two categories is the core category of goal-oriented balancing that conceptualizes the way these two mutually dependent dimensions are managed in real situations.

The idea that an important aspect of an effective sales management is the balance between organizational and individual dimensions is also supported in the extant literature. For example, Brown et al. (2005) explained that sales managers must "motivate salespeople to pursue specific challenging goals that benefits the organization [and that] sales people´s personal goals must be appropriately aligned with organizational objectives" (p. 155). Similarly, in a study by Panagopoulos and Dimitriadis (2009), they emphasized the interconnectedness between sales force control system, transformational leadership, and salespersons outcomes.

Another example is a study by Zoltners et al. (2008) in which the author suggested a model that also emphasized the interdependence of different activities in a sales organization, such as company goals, strategy, and the different activities (such as efficiency drivers, structure, people. and activities).

In the field of organizational theory, the model presented in this study has similarities with a flexible leadership model presented by Yukl and Lepsinger (2005) that consisted of the following distinct determinants of organizational performance: efficiency and process reliability, innovation and adaptation, human resources, and relations.

In terms of contributions, this study develops a conceptual framework to provide a better understanding of complex sales management processes. And this model is not linear and sequential. Moreover, through this broader view, different dimensions present in sales management are effectively integrated.

In terms of practical contributions, the empirically derived model proposed in this study can be used by practitioners to create a structure for a multidimensional process. This practical utility can range from issues of major import, such as strategic decision-making, to issues of internal management education and training, such as initiating a more reflective learning process.

Regarding corporate decision-making, the conceptual structure can be used to analyze management activities. The management team can use this structure as it represents a common language of otherwise fluid and intangible processes. As an example, this model can be used as a map to check whether different components have been considered properly and to see whether there is a state of balance between the different dimensions. Thus, this structure can assist managers in their analysis of the next step to enhance the productivity of the sales organization. Moreover, practitioners can use this model to get a comprehensive and coherent view of the present situation. Such a discussion can provide valuable insights into organizational strengths and weaknesses.

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# Systematic Avocating

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## Abstract

Feeling obliged to undertake complex research tasks outside core working hours is a common occurrence in academia. Detailed and timely research projects are expected; the creation and defence of sufficient intervals within a crowded working schedule is one concern explored in this short version paper. Merely working longer hours fails to provide a satisfactory solution for individuals experiencing concerns of this nature. Personal effort and drive are utilised and requires the application of mental mustering and systematic procedures. The attitude to research work is treating the task as a hobby conceptualised as avocating. Whilst this provides a personal solution through immersion in the task, this approach should raise concerns for employers. The flexibility of grounded theory is evident and the freedom to draw on various bodies of knowledge provides fresh insight into a problem that occurs in organizations in many sectors experiencing multiple priorities. The application of the core category, systematic avocating, may prove beneficial.

**Keywords:** avocating, flow, personal drive, time management, support mechanisms.

## Introduction

Sources of motivation, individual engagement and work/life balance strategies within the workplace are topics that have been subject to extensive scrutiny by researchers since Maslow's work in the 1940s. In contrast, limited attention has been given to behaviours of highly engaged and motivated individuals who are accomplished performers and strive to complete complex, time-consuming tasks in addition to a busy core role. Personal development and achieving career aspirations are the most frequently cited individual rationales for undertaking additional tasks within the work place.

Evidence of working on supplementary tasks in business departments of academic institutions is widespread where there is an expectation to undertake research and publish the results within specific timeframes. This work contributes towards the Research Excellence Framework (www.ref.ac.uk) in the UK, the system for assessing research, which determines public funding and affect the reputation of universities. The scope and focus of this discussion paper is limited to this specific example. However the theory generated is readily transferable to other sectors and roles where research and undertaking additional projects are requirements, as the concerns and their resolution are of a similar nature and indicate the theory is modifiable to fit other circumstances.

The theoretical proposition is that the accomplished performer draws on less visible and less documented support mechanisms and interpretations of work when undertaking additional tasks having close links with the way in which hobbies are addressed. How support is sourced and utilised may be complex, intermittent and

varied. The aim of this study is to reveal the behaviours that contribute towards a solution, for individuals striving to fulfil additional strata of work and, is based on a general problem area (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

It is anticipated that the grounded theory will provide additional insight into this issue for academics and practitioners to support not only their own future endeavours but also those of colleagues and managers requesting extra effort and task completion from staff. "In the absence of clear-cut procedures and definitions," (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p.1) which effectively address the issues of work-place fatigue and complex endeavours, there is a clear research gap that warrants attention to provide a useable theory with practitioner understanding.

Data were gathered from a sample of research active academics employed in business and management departments to ensure potential respondents have first-hand experience of the specific problem. The format of the data collection consisted initially of "open-ended conversations during which the respondents are allowed to talk with no imposed limitations" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 75) to establish a story, as related by nine respondents. The introductory question was as follows: In what ways do you address the requirements of the research excellence framework to produce the required level of output? As categories emerged, subsequent data collection included additional questions requiring three further conversations. The purpose of these conversations was to ask about research activity as a hobby, thus providing additional incidents of relevance to previously established categories thereby achieving saturation.

## The Study

The study is presented as a grounded theory, based on the empirical data provided, coding processes, de-limiting to achieve theoretical saturation and the memos written during these processes consistent with classic grounded theory methodology. As the format is restricted to a discussion paper a review of grounded theory techniques is omitted.

Issues emerging from the data were diverse and revealed several courses of action, which, in some cases, were relied on or practised so extensively that they were deserving of inclusion into the core category as systematic practices. The systems were visible and frequently documented; the mental techniques however, were personal and practised in an avocating manner, which addresses other behaviours and provides complete coverage of the data and contributed to the generation of the central core category of systematic avocating.

In considering the incidents and actions taken to resolve the problem in academia of completing research projects it is clearly evident that a systematic approach is taking place. Repeatedly ensuring that task allocation occurs demonstrates methodical behaviours mentally to barricade out other pressing requirements. The range of activities related to manage time constraints effectively are properties that contribute to the sub-category of defensive corralling. The additional effort and personal drive to undertake the research, which is not usually visible, is clearly depicted in the data is as mental muster. This is only possible through regular participation in the mental balancing processes of recovery, which requires minimal effort and is personally restorative.

Personal efforts ensuring research activities progress in a timely manner and to a necessary standard are conceptualised as avocating. Avocating is defined as an activity a person does in addition to a principal occupation (www.dictionary.cambridge.org). Saturation occurs at this point in the data collection process. Avocating is at the core of the data incidents because all the behaviours are additional to the core role, carried out with vigour drawn from mental mustering and protection from corralling. The term avocating only partially explains the overall concept as the strong links with planning and progressing are personally incorporated into role management and activity. Linking the two concern-resolving behaviours provides the core category of systematic avocating, an integrated behaviour that provides the innermost and central response, from a conceptual perspective, to the problem under consideration.

## Corralling

The properties of corralling require a systematic approach to the given task and consist of defensive time-management, delegating, elongating, juggling, prioritising and defending.

Whilst the theory is not linear in nature, the issue of time is clear and is referred to as a concern. There is widespread evidence of excellent time management techniques. Diaries were examined during data collection to demonstrate the extent to which working hours are taken up with routine tasks. Incidents included staring at diary pages or electronic calendars on a range of devices in order to allocate a slot to carry out the research-related tasks. To achieve this objective, there was no alternative other than giving up another task; various examples were provided that may have implications outside the workplace. The majority of examples related to social and domestic responsibilities and expectations, which subsequently create additional time pressures and an expectation to set-aside a chunk of time at a later stage as a form of payback.

Other allocating solutions revolve around delegating tasks. As the majority of the participants are not employed in traditional management positions, the first call was to colleagues who (a) hosted a tutorial class, (b) assisted in a literature search and (c) undertook proofreading. These practices are largely acceptable within academia, as extensive mutuality exists. There is a widespread culture of favours asked and favours returned.

Juggling and prioritising are in-vivo properties contributing to time management; in addition, there is a clear appreciation that time is not being created; but used in an alternative manner. The final solution, though not be the preferred choice, was to have (a) earlier starting times, (b) a later end to the working day, or (c) weekend work. Being mindful of spill over from other tasks into allocated research-related time slots also occurs. Preference is to manage time in chunks of sufficient length to enable satisfactory progress to be made during each session, to reduce the detrimental effect of switching tasks and to avoid having an over-reliance of polyphasic thinking, whilst always remaining aware of imminent deadlines.

Despite the pressures and difficulties related, the data indicate a fierce determination and desire to undertake the research and be vigilant in guarding the time required. In order to achieve this outcome time defending strategies practised to resolve the concerns of participants in this substantive area is conceptualised as the sub-

category of corralling.  The concept of corralling is far stronger than the descriptive term of time management as it depicts a space, which is difficult to exit; corralling is selective and not available to everyone. In the data, it is a solitary space dedicated to research activities.


## Mental Mustering

Having engineered time and moved into the corral, participants demonstrated the ability to operate at the required standard during the time; such available behaviour was referred to as aiming for Olympic standards without undertaking sufficient training to perform at that level. This behaviour required mental mustering in order to strive and produce work this level.

Mental mustering encompasses the properties of internal driving, immersing, commencing, reviving, pondering and supportive cajoling.  Engaging in these properties is the outcome of the resolutions for the time issue which results in research-related activities taking place when recurring day-to-day job priorities are attended to initially. Tiredness and low energy levels are the result; repeated reference is made to feelings of fatigue impacting the rate and standard of work being produced.  If the hard-fought time slot is not effectively utilised participants become frustrated when progress slows down.

In order to overcome the problems linked to physical issues, data exist that demonstrate participants draw on their personal and internal drive, and mental determination.  It is clear that the urge to research enables individuals to use personal volition and calls on their resources because a pressing mental urge exists to work that, in turn, creates unsettled feelings and agitation.  Becoming immersed in the research task through self-persuasion solves these feelings.  A coded data extract is mental muster requiring a personal effort; there are indications of personal questioning the primary motive behind the research task at this stage in the theory. Commencing a relevant activity enables the researcher to become absorbed in the task and drains away most of the emotional issues.  This desired outcome brings focus to the task and a personally satisfying sense of direction.

Practising mental mustering is largely a cognitive exercise with limited visual evidence.  However, frequent short-term revival techniques are undertaken as simple rituals. A saturated example is a task connected with making either a drink or a snack; the example is identified as thinking calories.  This daytime interlude provides sufficient time to shift the focus of thought from routine matters to the direction of the research task.  Pondering also assists in the mustering process. Reflection and projection occur in order to establish the correct starting point for the session.

Disturbances are largely avoided. One exception is of colleagues who were described as possessing empathy and were sensitive to the nature of research work. These people only intervene with refreshments, a time check, or in order to cajole and encourage.

Immersion in the research task greatly reduces the awareness of time.  On occasion, researchers realised they were experiencing a state of flow when tasks became semi-automatic and almost effortless.  Most instances of flow occurred unexpectedly and could not be encouraged or cajoled.  The period of flow also varies with each situation;

sudden departure from the state may also take place, signalling the decline of mental muster.

Whilst actions are taken to drive the research forward in the early stages of the corralled slot it is clear that knowing when to stop is relevant to the problem. When concentration wavers, continuity is difficult to maintain, and the occurrence of errors rises; these experiences are described as fog in the brain. Experience teaches the researcher that attempting to strive at this stage is offset by the reduction in quality; ceasing to work is the best solution. Recovery practices take the form of physical activity, change of scenery, relaxation, and socialisation. From the data, the emphasis is the levels of frequency; recovery needs to be corralled into a routine in order to regenerate the mental energy depleted during research sessions.

## Avocating

Categorisation of research work as a hobby reoccurred throughout the data collection; the tone is emphatic: research *has* to be a hobby. However the use of the word hobby did not fit or match how the respondents felt about undertaking research, despite its repeated use by participants, and this led to a dilemma. To address the dilemma, delimited conversations were carried out with four members of the initial sample to collect additional data and ensure inductive development was occurring. Additional insights and reflections, collected from the participants in the second conversation, provided additional insights to more recognisable pastimes categorised as hobbies. The term labour of love was used and acknowledgements of similar efforts were a requirement when arranging free time in order to participate in a hobby.

Comparing participants' feelings of becoming absorbed in research and participating in hobbies is met with incredulity because the two activities are not usually compared. However the participants reinforced the hobby-like tendencies that are practised; saturation occurred and no other properties emerged. This conclusion demonstrates a clear contribution to knowledge.

Hobby-related incidents include commentary on making progress. The progress is compared to a project-based activity such as dressmaking, which has a clear start, finish, and structure per item; therefore, it has some similarities to research that complies with specified word counts structures. Mastery is also a recurring property where drive and repetition are required in order to improve a level of ability. An example cited is learning to swim using the crawl stroke as opposed to the breaststroke. This task proved to be particularly challenging due to the need for total absorption during practise, and mental muster in order to practice the asymmetrical movements so as to become competent.

In summary, the grounded theory of systematic avocating consists of two sub-categories: corralling to clear and defend research time and mental mustering. Mental mustering is the largely invisible element of the theory that enables the person to assemble resources and organize his or her effort in order to undertake the research activity. People engage in these practises to undertake and achieve a research outcome; such outcome requires a person to participate beyond core work-activities and use systems effectively to ensure that satisfactory progress and quality occur; these behaviours pattern out to a core category of systematic avocating.

**Literature**

As stated in the introduction this is a discussion paper and this section is limited to a brief sample of literature, which has relevance to the study. Nevertheless, the sample effectively demonstrates how grounded theory contributes a slice of theory seamlessly crossing recognised bodies of knowledge through the synthesis of subject-matter emerging from the empirical data linked to the research question and effectively contributes to knowledge. This approach enables useful existing concepts to contribute to the theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Time management is defined as "behaviours that aim at achieving an effective use of time while performing certain goal-directed activities" (Claessens, van Eerdi, Rutter & Roe 2007, p. 262). However, the authors added that time cannot be managed; it is an inaccessible factor and self-management is a more appropriate term. In their review of the literature, Claessens, et al. (2007) mentioned that the main factors that contribute to effective time management practise are the ability to have short and longer-range priorities. Other aspects that support a good use of time include a sense of purpose, structured routines, effective organization, persistence, and present orientation. Training in the techniques reduces worry and procrastination.

Nicholls (2001) proposed two techniques to improve time management. The first is breaking away from fake, urgent labels to reduce time spent on trivial tasks. Achieving break away requires resisting demands and delegating, whenever possible. The second is becoming focused and allocating a set task for the week requiring mental effort and uninterrupted concentration; in many cases this task can be achieved by getting away from the usual work setting. Goofing-off periodically was also recommended by Nicholls (2001) to introduce an element of light-heartedness and to develop the ability to recover.

By making notes, recommended by Jones and Hood (2010) a person can get things out of his or her head as fast as possible. Because of data deluge from contemporary organizations, multitasking leads to inefficient time chopping, which results in reduced sustained thought. Mind clearing, such as going for a walk, is essential during below base line activities, which require minimal demand by the individual (Green, 2012) and are relatively passive.

Jansink, Kwakman and Streumer (2005) referred to the positive relationship between knowledge development and internal personal drive. The forerunners of a commitment to research projects are identified in this study as (a) the centralisation of fragmented activities, (b) bonding, which is supported by a favourable social context, and (c) the determination of priorities to develop a strategic plan. In addition, knowledge output is identified as being dependent on personal effort resulting from individual drives.

Drive is a disturbing internal presence, which creates a need to undertake activity (Green, 2012); it has direction and resides in the individual. This presence is tied to a sense of obligation, which subsequently generates personal effort (Kuhn, 2006). The utilisation of drive supports the activities being attempted in the study in that it requires resilience to provide the personal drive and has a continued presence when faced with obstacles (Quigley & Tymon, 2006) but is perceived as being worth the time and energy required as the outcome is viewed as a real accomplishment. Elements of job crafting as

the research output contribute to self-image and require the alteration of the relational boundaries of a job (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001).

Conditions contributing to flow were identified by Rana, Arcichvilli and Tkachenko (2014) as being vigor, dedication, and absorption. The ability to manage stressors as burnout avoiders emerges from psychological resilience; a norm of reciprocity in co-worker relationships is also supportive for a dedicated work approach. Possessing an autotelic personality to inject flow into work tasks is a longer-term factor in effort maintenance linked to work tasks. Krausz (2002) identified setting time aside as a key factor in achieving transformation to a flow state.

Studies on personal goals and their role in the work context are sparse (Salmela-Aro & Nurmi, 2004); this sparseness is unexpected according to Kuchinke, Ardichvili, Borchert and Rozanski (2009), given the popularity of the topic in business media. The dimensions covered in their study provide an insight into the supporting rationale when performing beyond the core job role. Suggestions from the data indicate that undertaking something that is interesting is (a) satisfying, (b) serving society, (c) causing prestige and status gain, and/or (d) creating a sense of self, group membership and/or personal expression rank high. Of low importance is the company or organization where the respondents work.

The acceptance of research as a hobby is provided by the notion of a serious leisure perspective, which Stebbins (2001) referred to as an activity carried out in free time where the central focus is acquiring specialised experiences, knowledge and skills. The pleasure principle is linked to learning activities (Fulton, 2009); the outcomes of this principle are empowerment, control, confidence, and pleasure. Using poetry Islam and Zyphur (2006) provided an interesting perspective on work, regulated by society and placed in conditions outside those chose by working individuals. The relevance for a grounded theory study lies in the inference that poetry does not tell, but indicates. Where work encapsulates both pleasure and necessity, providing a unified perspective on life, the goal in Frost's poem, cited by Island and Zyphur (2006), *Two Tramps in Mud Time* is achieved: "My object in living is to unite my avocation and my vocation."

The literature provides some evidence of theoretical sensitivity for the study and also suggests a dearth of studies to support the notion of drawing on avocating as a key motivator in undertaking additional activities, which, in this study, is research.

## Discussion

Undertaking research to solve a problem using classic grounded theory removes many of the constraints associated with other methods. In this particular study, a hypothesis would be limiting and may have restricted the range of data provided and the emergent theory. Respondents were not asked to comment on the sources of their efforts; instead, they were asked what actions they took to in order to create an opportunity to engage in academic research practices. This approach provided an opportunity to present data with a positive perspective.

Data outcomes go beyond the confines of well-documented motivation theory and encompass planning and time management (Claessens, et al. 2007) Actions to protect and defend the research time are more difficult to categorise as they are individual

behaviours and the sub-category of mental mustering draws on personal energy, drive and recovery practices.

Of particular relevance to employers, is the fact that when participants spoke of people support the references are to colleagues; no commentary existed regarding line managers and teamwork. Further research would be beneficial to address this identified gap.

Personal pleasure and the hoped-for, rather than expected, recognition from the completed research is the rationale for the work. Pleasure originates from experiencing flow, seeing progress and completing the given task. Recognition is external to the organization and is provided by the academic community in the majority of incidents.

What appears to be overlooked by academic institutions is the energetic and creative resource that is needed to complete research work. In a minority of forward-looking private sector organizations each employee has an allocation of time in order to work on a project of their choice. The project may be charitable, sustainable, local community or a work-related idea. A number of reasons exist for the rationale of such a project; corporate social responsibility, reputation, community standing, and a source of creativity and idea development; these reasons may counter the findings of Kuchinke et al. (2009) that the organization is of limited importance.

The provision of dedicated, mainstreamed, timetabled, research time may result in an increase in research output—a priority for higher education institutions, which rely heavily on the goodwill of staff. Unannounced withdrawal of the goodwill could have detrimental ramifications to the institution. Mental mustering practices reveal a further gap in the effective and well-managed organization requiring additional attention.

### Implications for Practice

Where an occupation has multiple layers of tasks with complex priorities, employer acknowledgement of systematic avocating practises is recommended to ensure the process and effort are acknowledged. Whether this acknowledgement occurs in the form of regular or periodic feedback, or more formal integration into an appraisal process is dependent on the degree to which systematic avocating outcomes contribute to the core organizational performance measures and standing. In an academic sector these factors are both extensive and significant. The formal recognition—the core category of this study—warrants attention by senior management. It is a tenuous strategy relying on systematic avocating as a means of attending to the academic research agenda. This aspect is also referred to in extant literature however the organization is given scant consideration; in such situations, it is the employees who take priority and this practice is clearly a potential concern for employers.

Issues emerging from the data impacting the rate or frequency and quality of the resultant work should be of concern to practitioners and employers. It is clear that individuals are undertaking complex tasks when they feel the need to practice mental mustering due to mental and physical fatigue. As the resulting work outcomes are showcased externally, they should receive far greater priority. Therefore, central corralling in order is recommended to allocate specific times when employees could conduct research-related activities in a dedicated manner. A central strategic approach

involving departments would reduce the sporadic and ad-hoc practices that the theory indicates are currently in place.  By adopting a central approach it would also provide widespread clarity to other departments, functions, and people, and emphasise that research is a priority activity.

Systematic avocating is modifiable to encompass a very broad range of sectors, particularly where project work is being undertaken as an additional, extended task.  As the use of technology encroaches even further into working practices, the ability to extend working hours is easily achieved and practised.  The key issue is the level at which people are working clearly does not correlate with higher quality and is the link between the grounded theory of systematic avocating and the practise implications identified.

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# Book Review: Beneficial Applicability of Grounded Theory

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*Glaser, B. (2014). Applying grounded theory: A neglected option*.
Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.

For what good is grounded theory? How can it be applied? Who finds it useful, and are there specific issues that ought to be considered before, or during, deliberate application of grounded theories? These are but some of the issues that are raised in Barney G. Glaser's latest book, which deals with applying grounded theory. In this 190 page book, which is actually a reader, Dr. Glaser's new theorizing in the field is coupled with reprints of previously published material. In the first three chapters, Dr. Glaser contextualizes applying aspects of grounded theory in relation to previous literature and the variety of ways that grounded theories are implicitly used by researchers and laymen. Next, chapters from three of his earlier books are reprinted and thus recontextualized. The latter section of the book provides four reprint chapters on applying grounded theory provided by contemporary grounded theorists.

Initially, Dr. Glaser points out that the application of grounded theory has so far been scarcely focused in the literature. His aim in the book is to elucidate applicable connections to professions, literature, service to clients, and personal use. Thus, Chapters 2 and 3 are devoted to discussing professional and private application of grounded theory respectively.

I agree with Dr. Glaser that even though applying GT largely has been a neglected topic in the literature, the application of abstract grounded theory concepts goes on constantly. A good concept might be enough to improve practice; in many cases, there is no need for the full theory to be applied. At the same time, Dr. Glaser makes clear that when an existing theory is actually applied, the researcher must ensure the theory's credible relevance to the application population. If necessary, the theory should be modified to ensure relevance, grab, and fit. In general, one should be careful in applying existing theories to a different population, because these individuals might have a different main concern.

The apparent generalizability of a substantive theory does not imply that it is a formal theory. Consequently it should not be used as if it were generally applicable, but only be applied to similar areas of like concerns. Dr. Glaser's example here is supernormalizing, which is a concern of both heart attack victims and football players. Doing grounded theory interventions with the goal of getting specific changes may, however, be just as risky as using any other kind of data, since purposeful goalsetting might be prompted by preconceptions.

In Chapter 3, Glaser presents one of his favorite topics; the value of applying grounded theory for personal use. As often stated in his troubleshooting seminars, memoing on personal problems or challenges helps work and reason with the problem. He explains how the patterns "soon jump out of the memos and yields thought on appropriate action" (Glaser, 2014, p. 36). The chapter is filled with illustrations provided by grounded theorists who have experienced the magic of applying grounded theory concepts or theories on issues with which they are grappling.

The value of this book lies in particular in the multiple perspective approach to the topic. The content of the book is written over a time span of 50 years, from 1965 till now, and comprises 11 chapters. The four last chapters are reprints with comments added by Dr. Glaser. Together, the great variety of chapters provides a unique blend of perspectives on the applicability of grounded theories. Dr. Glaser's comments alone prompt individual reflection on the multiple and somewhat parallel theoretical discussions going on in the book. In my view, they stimulate the reader to explore further the topic while experiencing minimal preconceptions. Some readers may find the comments disturbing in the sense that the chapters are not allowed to speak totally for themselves. But I like this way of framing and modulating the ongoing discussion, as long as the chapters are published in their pure form.

In Chapter 4, we get direct access to the original chapter that first discussed the practical usefulness of Glaser and Strauss' theory of awareness of dying (1965). In this nearly 50 year old chapter, the co-founders of grounded theory explicate four interrelated properties of application of theory to practice. They present requirements of fit, that the theory must be readily understandable by laymen in the area, that it must be sufficiently general to be applicable to a multitude of diverse situations in the substantive area, and that it must allow the user partial control over the structure, process, and substantive area as it changes through time. By controllable, they mean that the theory must provide a theoretical foothold in the realities of a situation.

For anyone interested in the gradual development of grounded theory, the next chapter, Chapter 5, sheds new light on what happened between the time that *Awareness of Dying* was published in 1965 until the same applying chapter was reprinted in *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (1967). As explicated in a footnote, only minor changes were made. The two interesting questions for the GT historian are, of course, the following: What minor changes were made? And, what changes or modfications are trackable from 1967 to 2014?

Of general interest is also the chapter on the uses of formal grounded theory, which is a reprint from Dr. Glaser's book entitled *Doing Formal Grounded Theory* (2007). Uses that are discussed in this chapter include lectures, readings, guiding research, consultations, correcting extant theory by modification, giving deeper but transcending understandings, extending the general implications of a theory, and the cumulative building up of theory. In this chapter, the author returns to the major distinctions between conceptual applications, which are probable and modifiable to fit the area, and application of descriptive generalization, which seldom fit and soon become outdated.

I am happy that the seminal, but somewhat neglected, work on grounded action is made more widely accessible through this new book. The chapter entitled Grounded action: Achieving optimal and sustainable change,  was written by Odis E. Simmons and Toni Gregory. As the authors explain,

> Grounded action is grounded theory with an added action component in which actions are systematically derived from from a systematically derived explanatory grounded theory. Actions are grounded in a grounded theory in the same way that grounded theory is grounded in the data. (Simmons & Gregory, 2014, p. 130)

The authors of this chapter distinguish between explanatory theory and operational theory. They see explanatory theory as a provider of a grounded theoretical foothold for action planning and implementation. They provide a number of arguments for engaging in grounded action when doing change.  It is hard not to agree with their arguments for grounding plans for change in grounded theories. The question is of course to what extent is it possible to distinguish between explanatory theory and operational theory.

Finally, the three last chapters are reprints by Birks and Mills, Artinian et al., and Walsh. Whereas Birks and Mills argue that grounded theories should be evaluated before they are applied, Artinian, Giske, Satinovic, Hjalphult, and Cone discuss what they call the intervention mode of grounded theory, and Welsh argues that grounded theory might help avoiding research misconduct in quantitative studies. Dr. Glaser frames these chapters with his  own comments.

*Applying Grounded Theory: A Neglected Option* is the second book by Barney G. Glaser this year. After writing more than 20 books and numerous articles on grounded theory, Dr. Glaser still finds methodological voids to fill and produces more GT literature than ever. He does so in an openminded, and yet somewhat strict manner which I personally find intriguing and inspiring.  In the 190 pages of what Dr. Glaser insists is a neglected option, readers are invited to explore the  potential application of grounded theories from many perspectives. The book systematically responds to all the issues raised in the introduction, and ends with two more pages where the author raises many questions that only future research can answer.

I learned a lot from this book. Dr. Glaser's ways of making the implicit explicit intrigue me in this book. His writings during the past 50 years provide a conceptual richness which is formally and informally applicable in most areas of life. So yes, I agree, you get far with a good concept, but it is good to know about the wider effects and potentials of conceptual creation, too.

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