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GROUNDED THEORY IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Applications for Advancing Social Justice Studies

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Grounded theory methods of the 20th century offer rich possibilities for advancing qualitative research in the 21st century. Social justice inquiry is one area among many in which researchers can fruitfully apply grounded theory methods that Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss (1967) created. In keeping with the theme for the current *Handbook* of advancing constructive social critique and change through qualitative research, this chapter opens discussion about applying grounded theory methods to the substantive area(s) of social justice. Inquiry in this area

assumes focusing on and furthering equitable distribution of resources, fairness, and eradication of oppression (Feagin, 1999).¹

The term "grounded theory" refers both to a method of inquiry and to the product of inquiry. However, researchers commonly use the term to mean a specific mode of analysis (see Charmaz, 2003a). Essentially, grounded theory methods are a set of flexible analytic guidelines that enable researchers to focus their data collection and to build inductive middle-range theories through successive levels of data analysis and conceptual development. A major strength of grounded

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theory methods is that they provide tools for analyzing processes, and these tools hold much potential for studying social justice issues. A grounded theory approach encourages researchers to remain close to their studied worlds and to develop an integrated set of theoretical concepts from their empirical materials that not only synthesize and interpret them but also show processual relationships.

Grounded theory methods consist of simultaneous data collection and analysis, with each informing and focusing the other throughout the research process.² As grounded theorists, we begin our analyses early to help us focus further data collection.³ In turn, we use these focused data to refine our emerging analyses. Grounded theory entails developing increasingly abstract ideas about research participants' meanings, actions, and worlds and seeking specific data to fill out, refine, and check the emerging conceptual categories. Our work results in an analytic interpretation of participants' worlds and of the processes constituting how these worlds are constructed. Thus, we can use the processual emphasis in grounded theory to analyze relationships between human agency and social structure that pose theoretical and practical concerns in social justice studies. Grounded theorists portray their understandings of research participants' actions and meanings, offer abstract interpretations of empirical relationships, and create conditional statements about the implications of their analyses.

Applying grounded theory methods to the substantive area of social justice produces reciprocal benefits. The critical stance in social justice in combination with the analytic focus of grounded theory broadens and sharpens the scope of inquiry. Such efforts locate subjective and collective experience in larger structures and increase understanding of how these structures work (see also Clarke, 2003, 2005; Maines, 2001, 2003). Grounded theory can supply analytic tools to move social justice studies beyond description, while keeping them anchored in their respective empirical worlds.⁴ Not only are justice and injustice abstract concepts, but they are, moreover,

enacted processes, made real through actions performed again and again. Grounded theorists can offer integrated theoretical statements about the conditions under which injustice or justice develops, changes, or continues. How might we move in this direction? Which traditions provide starting points?

■ CONSTRUCTIVIST RE-VISIONS OF GROUNDED THEORY

To develop a grounded theory for the 21st century that advances social justice inquiry, we must build upon its constructionist elements rather than objectivist leanings. In the past, most major statements of grounded theory methods minimized what numerous critics (see, for example, Atkinson, Coffey, & Delamont, 2003; Bryant, 2002, 2003; Coffey, Holbrook, & Atkinson, 1996; Silverman, 2000) find lacking: interpretive, constructionist inquiry. Answering this criticism means building on the Chicago school roots in grounded theory consistent with my constructivist statement in the second edition of this handbook (Charmaz, 2000a).⁵ Currently, the Chicago school antecedents of grounded theory are growing faint and risk being lost. Contemporary grounded theorists may not realize how this tradition influences their work or may not act from its premises at all. Thus, we need to review, renew, and revitalize links to the Chicago school as grounded theory develops in the 21st century.

Building on the Chicago heritage supports the development of grounded theory in directions that can serve inquiry in the area of social justice. Both grounded theory methods and social justice inquiry fit pragmatist emphases on process, change, and probabilistic outcomes.⁶ The pragmatist conception of emergence recognizes that the reality of the present differs from the past from which it develops (Strauss, 1964). Novel aspects of experience give rise to new interpretations and actions. This view of emergence can sensitize social justice researchers to study change in new ways, and grounded theory methods can give them the tools for studying it. Thus,

we must revisit and reclaim Chicago school pragmatist and fieldwork traditions and develop their implications for social justice and democratic process.⁷ To do so, we must move further into a constructionist social science and make the positivist roots of grounded theory problematic.

For many researchers, grounded theory methods provided a template for doing qualitative research stamped with positivist approval. Glaser's (see, especially, Glaser, 1978, 1992) strong foundation in mid-20th-century positivism gave grounded theory its original objectivist cast with its emphases in logic, analytic procedures, comparative methods, and conceptual development and assumptions of an external but discernible world, unbiased observer, and discovered theory. Strauss's versions of grounded theory emphasized meaning, action, and process, consistent with his intellectual roots in pragmatism and symbolic interactionism. These roots seem shrunken in his methodological treatises with Juliet Corbin (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998) but grow robust in other works (see, for example, Corbin & Strauss, 1988; Strauss, 1993). Like Glaser, Strauss and Corbin also advanced positivistic procedures, although different ones. They introduced new technical procedures and made verification an explicit goal, thus bringing grounded theory closer to positivist ideals.⁸ In divergent ways, Strauss and Corbin's works as well as Glaser's treatises draw upon objectivist assumptions founded in positivism.

Since then, a growing number of scholars have aimed to move grounded theory in new directions away from its positivist past. I share their goal and aim to build on the constructivist elements in grounded theory and to reaffirm its Chicago school antecedents. To date, scholars have questioned the epistemologies of both Glaser's and Strauss and Corbin's versions of grounded theory. We challenge earlier assumptions about objectivity, the world as an external reality, relations between the viewer and viewed, the nature of data, and authors' representations of research participants. Instead, we view positivist givens as social constructions to question and alter. Thus, when we adopt any positivist principle or procedure, we

attempt to do so knowingly and to make our rationales explicit. In the second edition of this handbook (Charmaz, 2000a), I argued for building on the pragmatist underpinnings in grounded theory and developing it as a social constructionist method. Clive Seale (1999) contends that we can retain grounded theory methods without adhering to a naïve realist epistemology. Antony Bryant (2002, 2003) calls for re-grounding grounded theory in an epistemology that takes recent methodological developments into account, and Adele E. Clarke (2003, 2005) aims to integrate postmodern sensibilities with grounded theory and to provide new analytic tools for discerning and conceptualizing subtle empirical relationships. These moves by grounded theorists reflect shifts in approaches to qualitative research.⁹

A constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 1990, 2000a, 2003b; Charmaz & Mitchell, 2001) adopts grounded theory guidelines as tools but does not subscribe to the objectivist, positivist assumptions in its earlier formulations. A constructivist approach emphasizes the studied phenomenon rather than the methods of studying it. Constructivist grounded theorists take a reflexive stance on modes of knowing and representing studied life. That means giving close attention to empirical realities and our collected renderings of them—and locating oneself in these realities. It does not assume that data simply await discovery in an external world or that methodological procedures will correct limited views of the studied world. Nor does it assume that impartial observers enter the research scene without an interpretive frame of reference. Instead, what observers see and hear depends upon their prior interpretive frames, biographies, and interests as well as the research context, their relationships with research participants, concrete field experiences, and modes of generating and recording empirical materials. No qualitative method rests on pure induction—the questions we ask of the empirical world frame what we know of it. In short, we share in constructing what we define as data. Similarly, our conceptual categories arise through our interpretations of data rather than emanating from them or from our methodological

practices (cf. Glaser, 2002). Thus, our theoretical analyses are interpretive renderings of a reality, not objective reportings of it.

Whether informed by Glaser (1978, 1992, 1998, 2002) or Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1998), many researchers adopted positivist grounded theory as a template. The constructivist position recasts this template by challenging its objectivist underpinnings. We can use a constructivist template to inform social justice research in the 21st century. Clearly, much research in the area of social justice is objectivist and flows from standard positivist methodologies. A constructivist grounded theory offers another alternative: a systematic approach to social justice inquiry that fosters integrating subjective experience with social conditions in our analyses.

An interest in social justice means attentiveness to ideas and actions concerning fairness, equity, equality, democratic process, status, hierarchy, and individual and collective rights and obligations. It signifies thinking about being human and about creating good societies and a better world. It prompts reassessment of our roles as national and world citizens. It means exploring tensions between complicity and consciousness, choice and constraint, indifference and compassion, inclusion and exclusion, poverty and privilege, and barriers and opportunities. It also means taking a critical stance toward actions, organizations, and social institutions. Social justice studies require looking at both realities and ideals. Thus, contested meanings of “shoulds” and “oughts” come into play. Unlike positivists of the past, social justice researchers openly bring their shoulds and oughts into the discourse of inquiry.

■ REEXAMINING GROUNDED THEORY OF THE PAST

In the 20th century, grounded theory methods offered guidelines and legitimacy for conducting research. Glaser and Strauss (1967) established qualitative research as valuable in its own right and argued that it proceeds from a different logic

than quantitative research. Although researchers did not always understand grounded theory methods and seldom followed them beyond a step or two, they widely cited and acclaimed these methods because they legitimized and codified a previously implicit process. Grounded theory methods offered explicit strategies, procedural rigor, and seeming objectivity. As Karen Locke (1996) notes, many researchers still use grounded theory methods for “a rhetoric of justification as opposed to a rhetoric of explication” (p. 244; see also Charmaz, 1983; Silverman, 2000).

All analyses come from particular standpoints, including those emerging in the research process. Grounded theory studies emerge from wrestling with data, making comparisons, developing categories, engaging in theoretical sampling, and integrating an analysis. But *how* we conduct all these activities does not occur in a social vacuum. Rather, the entire research process is interactive; in this sense, we bring past interactions and current interests into our research, and we interact with our empirical materials and emerging ideas as well as, perhaps, granting agencies, institutional review boards, and community agencies and groups, along with research participants and colleagues. Neither data nor ideas are mere objects that we passively observe and compile (see also Holstein & Gubrium, 1995).

Glaser (2002) treats data as something separate from the researcher and implies that they are untouched by the competent researcher’s interpretations. If, perchance, researchers somehow interpret their data, then according to Glaser, these data are “rendered objective” by looking at many cases. Looking at many cases strengthens a researcher’s grasp of the empirical world and helps in discerning variation in the studied phenomenon. However, researchers may elevate their own assumptions and interpretations to “objective” status if they do not make them explicit.

No analysis is neutral—despite research analysts’ claims of neutrality. We do not come to our studies uninitiated (see also Denzin, 1994; Morse, 1999; Schwandt, 1994, 2000). What we know shapes, but does not necessarily determine, what we “find.” Moreover, *each* stage of inquiry is

constructed through social processes. If we treat these processes as unproblematic, we may not recognize how they are constructed. Social justice researchers likely understand their starting assumptions; other researchers may not—including grounded theorists.¹⁰ As social scientists, we *define* what we record as data, yet how we define data outlines how we represent them in our works. Such definitional decisions—whether implicit or explicit—reflect moral choices that, in turn, spawn subsequent moral decisions and actions.¹¹

Rather than abandoning the traditional positivist quest for empirical detail, I argue that we advance it—*without the cloak of neutrality and passivity enshrouding mid-century positivism*. Gathering rich empirical materials is the first step. Recording these data systematically prompts us to pursue leads that we might otherwise ignore or not realize. Through making systematic recordings, we also gain comparative materials to pinpoint contextual conditions and to explore links between levels of analysis. By seeking empirical answers to emerging theoretical questions, we learn about the worlds we enter and can increase the cogency of our subsequent analyses. Hence, data need to be informed by our theoretical sensitivity. Data alone are insufficient; they must be telling and must answer theoretical questions.

Without theoretical scrutiny, direction, and development, data culminate in mundane descriptions (see also Silverman, 2000). The value of the product then becomes debatable, and critics treat earlier studies as reified representations of the limits of the method itself rather than how it was used (Charmaz, 2000a). Burawoy (1991) categorizes the products of grounded theory as empirical generalizations. Moreover, he claims that the method does not consider power in micro contexts and that “it represses the broader macro forces that both limit change and create domination in the micro sphere” (p. 282). I disagree. Simply because earlier authors did not address power or macro forces does not mean that grounded theory methods cannot. In contrast to Burawoy’s claims, I argue that we should use grounded theory methods in precisely these areas to gain fresh insights in social justice inquiry.

Critics of grounded theory commonly miss four crucial points: (a) theorizing is an activity; (b) grounded theory methods provide a way to proceed with this activity; (c) the research problem and the researcher’s unfolding interests shape the *content* of this activity, not the method; and (d) the products of theorizing reflect how researchers acted on these points. As Dan E. Miller (2000) argues, the ironic issue is that researchers have done so little grounded theory, despite their claims to use it. Its potential for developing theory remains untapped, as does its potential for studying power and inequality.

Social justice studies require data that diverse audiences agree represent the empirical world and that researchers have given a fair assessment. I do not mean that we reify, objectify, and universalize these data. Instead, I mean that we must start by gathering thorough empirical materials precisely because social justice research may provoke controversy and contested conclusions. Thus, we need to identify clear boundaries and limits of our data. Locating the data strengthens the foundation for making theoretical insights and for providing evidence for evaluative claims. Critics can then evaluate an author’s argument on its merits. The better they can see direct connections between the evidence and points in the argument, the more this argument will persuade them. The lingering hegemony of positivism still makes controversial research suspect, as Fine, Weis, Weseen, and Wong (2000) observe. Therefore, the data for such studies must be unassailable.

A strong empirical foundation is the first step in achieving credibility—for both social justice researchers and grounded theorists. Despite reliance on data-driven interpretations, the rush to “theorize”—or perhaps to publish—has led some grounded theorists to an unfortunate neglect of thorough data collection, which has persisted since Lofland and Lofland (1984) first noted it. Glaser (1992, 2002) discounts quests for accurate data and dismisses full description as distinguishing conventional qualitative data analysis from grounded theory. However, leading studies with implications for social justice and policy have had solid empirical foundations

(see, for example, Duneire, 1992; Glaser & Strauss, 1965; Goffman, 1961; Mitchell, 2002; Snow & Anderson, 1993). Grounded theory studies that lack empirical vitality cannot support a rationale for major social change—or even minor policy recommendations. The stronger the social justice arguments derived from a study, particularly controversial ones, the greater the need for a robust empirical foundation with compelling evidence.

■ USING GROUNDED THEORY TO STUDY SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUES

Initial Reflections

Both the steps and the logic of grounded theory can advance social justice research. Grounded theorists insist that researchers define what is happening in the setting (Glaser, 1978; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Sensitivity to social justice issues fosters defining latent processes as well as explicit actions. Grounded theory tools for studying action—collective as well as individual action—can make social justice analysis more precise and predictive. By focusing the data gathering, a researcher can seek new information to examine questions concerning equality, fairness, rights, and legitimacy.¹² The grounded theory openness to empirical leads spurs the researcher to pursue emergent questions and thus shifts the direction of inquiry.

A social justice researcher can use grounded theory to anchor agendas for future action, practice, and policies in the *analysis* by making explicit connections between the theorized antecedents, current conditions, and consequences of major processes. Social justice research, particularly participatory action research (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000), proceeds from researchers' and participants' joint efforts and commitments to change practices. Because it arises in settings and situations in which people have taken a reflexive stance on their practices, they already have tools to conduct systematic research on their practices in relation to subjective experience, social actions, and social structures. Hence, adopting constructivist grounded theory

would foster their efforts to articulate clear links between practices and each level and, thus, to strengthen their arguments for change.

Other researchers need to weigh whether, when, how, and to what extent to bring research participants into the process. Although well intended, doing so may create a series of knotty problems in concrete situations.¹³ Janice Morse (1998) finds that the consequences of bringing participants into research decisions include keeping the analytic level low, overstating the views of participants who clamored for more space in the narrative, and compromising the analysis. Moreover, Morse (1998) notes that qualitative analyses differ from participants' descriptive accounts and may reveal paradoxes and processes of which participants are unaware.

Adopting grounded theory strategies in social justice research results in putting ideas and perspectives to empirical tests. Any extant concept must earn its way into the analysis (Glaser, 1978). Thus, we cannot import a set of concepts such as hegemony and domination and paste them on the realities in the field. Instead, we can treat them as sensitizing concepts, to be explored in the field settings (Blumer, 1969; van den Hoonaard, 1997). Then we can define if, when, how, to what extent, and under which conditions these concepts become relevant to the study (Charmaz, 2000b). We need to treat concepts as problematic and look for their characteristics as lived and understood, not as given in textbooks. Contemporary anthropologists, for example, remain alert to issues of cultural imperialism. Most sociologists attend to agency, power, status, and hierarchy.

Grounded theory studies can show how inequalities are played out at interactional and organizational levels. True, race, class, and gender—and age and disability—are everywhere. But how do members of various groups define them?¹⁴ How and when do these status variables affect action in the scene? Researchers must define how, when, and to what extent participants *construct* and *enact* power, privilege, and inequality. Robert Prus (1996) makes a similar point in his book *Symbolic Interaction and Ethnographic Research*. Race, class, gender, age, and disability are

social constructions with contested definitions that are continually reconstituted (see, for example, Olesen, Chapter 10, this volume). Using them as static variables, as though they have uncontested definitions that explain data and social processes *before* or *without* looking, undermines their potential power. Taking their meanings as given also undermines using grounded theory to develop fresh insights and ideas. Adopting my alternative tack involves juxtaposing participants' definitions against academic or sociological notions. In turn, researchers themselves must be reflexive about how they represent participants' constructions and enactments.

What new dimensions will social justice foci bring to research? Societal and global concerns are fundamental to a critical perspective. Thus, these studies situate the studied phenomenon in relation to larger units. How and where does it fit? For example, a study of sales interactions could look not only at the immediate interaction and how salespeople handle it but also at the organizational context and perhaps the corporate world, and its global reach, in which these interactions occur. Like many qualitative researchers, grounded theorists often separate the studied interactions from their situated contexts. Thus, a social justice focus brings in more structure and, in turn, a grounded theory treatment of that structure results in a dynamic, processual analysis of its enactment. Similarly, social justice research often takes into account the historical evolution of the current situation, and a grounded theory analysis of this evolution can yield new insights and, perhaps, alternative understandings. For that matter, researchers can develop grounded theories from analyses of pertinent historical materials in their realm of inquiry (see, for example, Clarke, 1998; Star, 1989).

Critical inquiry attends to contradictions between myths and realities, rhetoric and practice, and ends and means. Grounded theorists have the tools to discern and analyze contradictions revealed in the empirical world. We can examine what people *say* and compare it to what they *do* (Deutscher, Pestello, & Pestello, 1993). Focusing on words or deeds are ways of representing people;

however, observed contradictions between the two may indicate crucial priorities and practices. To date, grounded theorists have emphasized the *overt*—usually overt statements—more than the tacit, the liminal, and the implicit. With critical inquiry, we can put our data to new tests and create new connections in our theories.

■ SOCIAL JUSTICE EMPHASES: RESOURCES, HIERARCHIES, AND POLICIES AND PRACTICES

A social justice focus can sensitize us to look at both large collectivities and individual experiences in new ways. Several emphases stand out: *resources*, *hierarchies*, and *policies and practices*. First, present, partial, or absent resources—whether economic, social, or personal—influence interactions and outcomes. Such resources include information, control over meanings, access to networks, and determination of outcomes. Thus, information and power are crucial resources. As Martha Nussbaum (1999) argues, needs for resources vary among people, vary at different times, and vary according to capabilities. Elders with disabling conditions need more resources than other people do or than they themselves needed in earlier years. What are the resources in the empirical worlds we study? What do they mean to actors in the field? Which resources, if any, are taken for granted? By whom? Who controls the resources? Who needs them? According to which and whose criteria of need? To what extent do varied capabilities enter the discussion? Are resources available? If so, to whom? How, if at all, are resources shared, hoarded, concealed, or distributed? How did the current situation arise? What are the implications of having control over resources and of handling them, as observed in the setting(s)?

Second, any social entity has hierarchies—often several. What are they? How did they evolve? At what costs and benefits to involved actors? Which purported and actual purposes do these hierarchies serve? Who benefits from them? Under which conditions? How are the hierarchies

related to power and oppression? How, if at all, do definitions of race, class, gender, and age cluster in specific hierarchies and/or at particular hierarchical levels? Which moral justifications support the observed hierarchies? Who promulgates these justifications? How do they circulate? How do these hierarchies affect social actions at macro, meso, and micro social levels? How and when do the hierarchies change?

Third, the consequences of social policies and practices are made real in collective and individual life. Here we have the convergence of structure and process. What are the rules—both tacit and explicit? Who writes or enforces them? How? Whose interests do the rules reflect? From whose standpoint? Do the rules and routine practices negatively affect certain groups or categories of individuals? If so, are they aware of them? What are the implications of their relative awareness or lack of it? To what extent and when do various participants support the rules and the policies and practices that flow from them? When are they contested? When do they meet resistance? Who resists, and which risks might resistance pose?

By asking these questions, I aim to stimulate thinking and to suggest diverse ways that critical inquiry and grounded theory research may join. The potential of advancing such endeavors already has been indicated by symbolic interactionists who point the way to demonstrating micro consequences of structural inequalities (L. Anderson & Snow, 2000; Scheff, 2003; Schwalbe et al., 2000). Combining critical inquiry and grounded theory furthers these efforts.

■ WORKING WITH GROUNDED THEORY

Studying the Data

The following interview stories provide the backdrop for introducing how grounded theory guidelines can illuminate social justice concerns. My research is social psychological; however, grounded theory methods hold untapped potential for innovative studies at the organizational, societal, and global levels of analysis. The examples

below offer a glimpse of the kinds of initial comparisons I make.¹⁵ I began studying the experience of chronic illness with interests in meanings of self and time. Such social psychological topics can reveal hidden effects of inequality and difference on the self and social life that emerge in research participants' many stories of their experiences.

Both grounded theory and critical inquiry are inherently comparative methods. In earlier renderings, I treated the excerpt of Christine Danforth below as a story of suffering and Marty Gordon's initial tale as a shocking significant event that marked a turning point in her life. The first step of grounded theory analysis is to study the data. Grounded theorists ask: What is happening? and What are people doing? A fresh look at the accounts below can suggest new leads to pursue and raise new questions.

At the time of the following statement, Christine was a 43-year-old single woman who had systemic lupus erythematosus, Sjögren's syndrome, diabetes, and serious back injuries. I had first met her 7 years earlier, when her multiple disabilities were less visible, although intrusive and worrisome. Since then, her health had declined, and she had had several long stretches of living on meager disability payments. Christine described her recent episode:

I got the sores that are in my mouth, got in my throat and closed my throat up, so I couldn't eat or drink. And then my potassium dropped down to 2.0. I was on the verge of cardiac arrest. . . . That time when I went in they gave me 72 bottles of pure potassium; burned all my veins out.

I asked, "What does that mean, that it burned your veins out?"

She said, "It hurts really bad; it's just because it's so strong and they can't dilute it with anything. They said usually what they do is they dilute with something like a numbing effect, but because I was 2.0, which is right on cardiac arrest that they couldn't do it, they had to get it in fast."

I asked, "Did you realize that you were that sick?"

She said, "Well, I called the doctor several times saying, 'I can't swallow.' I had to walk around and drool on a rag. They finally made an appointment, and I got there and I waited about a half hour. The

lady said that there was an emergency and said that I'd have to come back tomorrow. And I said, 'I can't.' I said, 'As soon as I stand up, I'm going to pass out.' And she said, 'Well there's nothing we can do.' . . . And then this other nurse came in just as I got up and passed out, so then they took me to emergency. . . . And it took them 12 hours to—they knew when I went in there to admit me, but it took them 12 hours to get me into a room. I sat on a gurney. And they just kept fluid in me until they got me to a room.

Later in the interview, Christine explained,

[When the sores] go to my throat, it makes it really hard to eat or drink, which makes you dehydrated. After that first time . . . when I called her it had been 3 days since I'd ate or drank anything . . . and by the time I got an appointment, it was, I believe, six or seven days, without food or water.

Imagine Christine walking slowly and determinedly up the short sidewalk to my house. See her bent knees and lowered head, as she takes deliberate steps. Christine looks weary and sad, her face as laden with care as her body is burdened by pain and pounds. Always large, she is heavier than I have ever seen her, startlingly so.

Christine has a limited education; she can hardly read. Think of her trying to make her case for immediate treatment—without an advocate. Christine can voice righteous indignation, despite the fatigue and pain that saps her spirit and drains her energy. She can barely get through her stressful workday, yet she must work as many hours as possible because she earns so little. The low pay means that Christine suffers directly from cutbacks at the agency where she works. Her apartment provides respite, but few comforts. It has no heat—she cannot afford it. Christine does not eat well. Nutritious food is an unobtainable luxury; cooking is too strenuous, and cleanup is beyond imagination. She tells me that her apartment is filled with pictures and ceramic statues of cats as well as stacks of things to sort. Maneuverable space has shrunk to aisles cutting through the piles. Christine seldom cleans house—no energy for that. I've never been to her apartment; it embarrasses her too much to have visitors. Christine would love to adopt a kitten but cats are not permitted. Her eyes glaze with tears when my skittish cat allows her to pet him.

Christine has become more immobile and now uses a motorized scooter, which she says has saved

her from total disability. But since using the scooter and approaching midlife, she also has gained one hundred pounds and needs a better vehicle to transport the scooter. Christine has little social life by now; her friends from high school and her bowling days have busy family and work lives. When she first became ill, Christine had some nasty encounters with several of those friends who accused her of feigning illness. She feels her isolation keenly, although all she can handle after work is resting on the couch. Her relationship with her elderly mother has never been close; she disapproves of her brother, who has moved back in with their mother and is taking drugs. One continuing light in Christine's life is her recently married niece, who just had a baby.

The years have grown gray with hardships and troubles. Christine has few resources—economic, social, or personal. Yet she perseveres in her struggle to remain independent and employed. She believes that if she lost this job, she would never get another one. Her recent weight gain adds one more reason for the shame she feels about her body.

Christine suffers from chronic illness and its spiraling consequences. Her physical distress, her anger and frustration about her life, her sadness, shame, and uncertainty all cause her to suffer. Christine talks some about pain and much about how difficult disability and lack of money make her life. She has not mentioned the word "suffering." Like many other chronically ill people, Christine resists describing herself in a way that might undermine her worth and elicit moral judgments. Yet she has tales to tell of her turmoil and troubles. (Charmaz, 1999, pp. 362–363)

The following interview account of Marty Gordon's situation contrasts with Christine's story. Marty received care from the same health facility as Christine and also had a life-threatening condition that confounded ordinary treatment and management. However, Marty's relationship to staff there and the content and quality of her life differed dramatically from Christine's.

When I first met Marty Gordon in 1988, she was a 59-year-old woman with a diagnosis of rapidly progressing pulmonary fibrosis. A hospitalization for extensive tests led to the diagnosis of Marty's condition. She had moved to a new area

after her husband, Gary, retired as a school superintendent, and she herself retired early from her teaching and grant-writing post at a high school. Marty said that she and Gary were “very, very close.” They had had no children, although Gary had a son by an earlier marriage and she, a beloved niece.

Pure retirement lasted about 3 months before they became bored. Subsequently, Marty became a part-time real estate agent and Gary worked in sales at a local winery. Not only did working bring new interests into their lives, but it also helped pay their hefty health insurance costs. They had not realized that their retirement benefits would not cover a health insurance plan. They both found much pleasure in their new lives and in their luxurious home high in the hills overlooking the city. Marty seemed to remain almost as busy as she was before retiring. While working full-time, she had entertained her husband’s professional associates, had run a catering business, and had created special meals to keep Gary’s diabetes and heart condition under control. She had taken much pride—and still did—in keeping up her perfectly appointed house and in keeping her weight down through regular exercise. For years, she had arisen at 5 each morning to swim an hour before going to work, then stopped at church afterward to say her rosaries.

When I first met Marty, she told the following tale about her first hospitalization:

The doctor came in to tell me, “Uh, it didn’t look good and that this was a—could be a rapidly”—and it appeared that mine was really going rapidly and that it might be about six weeks. Whoa! That blew my mind. It really did. . . . Right after that—I’m a Catholic—right after that, a poor little volunteer lady came in and said, “Mrs. Gordon?” And the doctor had said, “Mrs. Gordon?” “Yeah, OK.” And then he told me. She said, “I’m from St. Mary’s Church.” I said, “Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, they’ve got the funeral already.” And it really just—then I began to see humor in it, but I was scared. . . .

This was the point when—[I decided]. “If this is going to happen OK, but I’m not going to let it happen.” . . . And I think probably that was the turning point when I said I wouldn’t accept it. You know,

I will not accept that um, death sentence, or whatever you want to call it. (Charmaz, 1991, p. 215)

However, from that point on, Marty had Gary promise her that she would die first. She needed him to take care of her when she could no longer care for herself; moreover, she could not bear the thought of living without him. During the next 5 years, Marty made considerable gains, despite frequent pain, fatigue, and shortness of breath. One Sunday evening, when Gary came home from a wine-pouring and Marty saw his ashen face, she insisted, “We’re going to emergency.” He had had a second heart attack, followed by a quadruple bypass surgery. Marty said, “He sure is a lot better now. And, of course, *I was very angry with him*. I said to him, ‘You can never leave me. *I tell you, I’ll sue you!*’ [She explained to me.] Because we’ve had a deal for a long time.” When telling me about her own health, she recounted this conversation with her surgeon:

I come in for an appointment and I had just played 18 holes of golf, and so he said, “I think we misdiagnosed you.” And I said, “Well, why do you think that?” And he said, “You’re just going over, you’re surpassing everything.” So I said, “Well, that doesn’t necessarily mean a diagnosis is wrong.” I said, “Are you going to give me credit for anything?” And he said, “Well, what do you mean?” I said, “You have to have a medical answer, you can’t have an answer that I worked very hard, on my whole body and my mind, to get, you know, the integral part of myself, and that maybe that might be helping? And the fact that I don’t touch fats and I don’t do this and I do exercise? *That’s not helping, huh?*” So he said, “Well, I guess so.” And I said, “Well, do you want to take out my lungs again and see?” I said, “You took them out [already].” So he acknowledged, he said, “Yeah, it’s just that it’s so unusual.” And maybe not accepting something, you know, denial is one thing, but not *excepting* is another thing.

Marty strove to be the exception to her dismal prognosis—she insisted on being an exception. She made great efforts to keep herself and her husband alive, functioning, and enjoying life. By confronting her doctor and challenging his definition of her, Marty rejected his narrow,

medicalized definition of her. She implied that he was *denying her wellness*. Thus, she enacted a dramatic reversal of the conventional scenario of a doctor accusing the patient of denying her illness. Marty fought feelings of self-pity and sometimes talked about suffering and self-pity interchangeably. When she reflected on how she kept going, she said:

I do, do really think that, if you sit down, and I mean, literally sit down, because it's hard to get up, you do start feeling sorry for yourself. And I'm saying, "Oh, God if I could only get up without hurting." And I've begun to feel, once in a while, I get this little sorry for myself thing, that if I could have a day without pain, I wonder what I'd do? *Probably nothing*. Because I wouldn't push myself and I'd get less done.

I asked, "How so?"

Marty replied, "My whole thing is faith and attitude. You've just got to have it. I feel so sorry for people who give in. But maybe that's why . . . you've got to have some people die. [Otherwise they'd] be hanging around forever."

Marty had fortitude—and attitude. Marty intended to live—by will and grit. Dying? The prospect of dying undermined her belief in individual control and thus conflicted with her self-concept.

■ INTEGRATING GROUNDED THEORY WITH SOCIAL JUSTICE RESEARCH

What do these stories indicate? What might they suggest about social justice? How do grounded theory methods foster making sense of them? Both women have serious debilitating conditions with multiple harrowing episodes that make their lives uncertain. Both are courageous and forthright, are aware of their conditions, and aim to remain productive and autonomous.

Coding is the first step in taking an analytic stance toward the data. The initial coding phase in grounded theory forces the researcher to define the action in the data statement. In the figures illustrating coding (Figures 20.1–20.3), my codes

reflect standard grounded theory practice. The codes are active, immediate, and short. They focus on defining action, explicating implicit assumptions, and seeing processes. By engaging in line-by-line coding, the researcher makes a close study of the data and lays the foundation for synthesizing it.

Coding gives a researcher analytic scaffolding on which to build. Because researchers study their empirical materials closely, they can define both new leads from them and gaps in them. Each piece of data—whether an interview, a field note, a case study, a personal account, or a document—can inform earlier data. Thus, should a researcher discover a lead through developing a code in one interview, he or she can go back through earlier interviews and take a fresh look as to whether this code sheds light on earlier data. Researchers can give their data multiple readings and renderings. Interests in social justice, for example, would lead a researcher to note points of struggle and conflict and to look for how participants defined and acted in such moments.

Grounded theory is a comparative method in which the researcher compares data with data, data with categories, and category with category. Comparing these two women's lives illuminates their several similarities and striking contrasts between their personal, social, and material resources. I offer these comparisons here for heuristic purposes only, to clarify points of convergence and divergence. Both women shared a keen interest in retaining autonomy, and both were aware that illness and disability raised the specter of difference, disconnection, and degradation. Nonetheless, Marty Gordon enjoyed much greater economic security, choices, privileges, and opportunities throughout her life than did Christine Danforth. Marty's quick wit, articulate voice, organizational skills, and diligence constituted a strong set of capabilities that served her well in dealing with failing health.

Poverty and lack of skills had always constrained Christine's life and curtailed her choices. They also diminished her feelings of self-worth and moral status, that is, the extent of virtue or vice attributed to a person by others and self (Charmaz, in press). Then illness shrunk her

<p>Recognizing illness spiral Recounting symptom progression Approaching crisis</p>	<p>I got the sores that are in my mouth, got in my throat and closed my throat up, so I couldn't eat or drink. And then my potassium dropped down to 2.0. I was on the verge of cardiac arrest. . . . That time when I went in they gave me 72 bottles of pure potassium, burned all my veins out.</p> <p>I asked, "What does that mean, that it burned your veins out?"</p>
<p>Suffering the effects of treatment Receiving rapid treatment Forfeiting comfort for speed</p>	<p>She said, "It hurts really bad; it's just because it's so strong and they can't dilute it with anything. They said usually what they do is they dilute with something like a numbing effect, but because I was 2.0, which is right on cardiac arrest that they couldn't do it, they had to get it in fast."</p> <p>I asked, "Did you realize that you were that sick?"</p> <p>She said,</p>
<p>Seeking help Remaining persistent Explaining symptoms Encountering bureaucratic dismissal Experiencing turning point Explaining severity Receiving second refusal Collapsing</p> <p>Prolonging the ordeal—fitting into organizational time</p>	<p>"Well, I called the doctor several times saying, 'I can't swallow.' I had to walk around and drool on a rag. They finally made an appointment, and I got there and I waited about a half hour. The lady said that there was an emergency and said that I'd have to come back tomorrow. And I said, 'I can't.' I said, 'As soon as I stand up, I'm going to pass out.' And she said, 'Well there's nothing we can do.' . . . And then this other nurse came in just as I got up and passed out, so then they took me to emergency. . . . And it took them 12 hours to— they knew when I went in there to admit me, but it took them 12 hours to get me into a room. I sat on a gurney. And they just kept fluid in me until they got me to a room.</p> <p>Later in the interview, Christine explained:</p>
<p>Explaining symptoms Awareness of complications Enduring the wait Suffering induced by organization</p>	<p>[When the sores] go to my throat, it makes it really hard to eat or drink, which makes you dehydrated. After that first time . . . when I called her it had been three days since I'd ate or drank anything . . . and by the time I got an appointment, it was, I believe, six or seven days, without food or water.</p>

Figure 20.1. Initial Coding—Christine Danforth

limited autonomy, and her moral status plummeted further. Christine lived under a cloud of nagging desperation. The anger she felt earlier about being disabled, deprived, and disconnected had dissipated into a lingering sadness and shame. Clearly, Christine has far fewer resources than Marty. She also has had fewer opportunities to develop capabilities throughout her life that could help her to manage her current situation.

Marty struggled periodically with daily routines, but she exerted control over her life and her world. Her struggles resided at another level; she fought against becoming inactive and sinking into self-pity. She treated both her body and her mind as objects to work on and to improve, as projects. Marty worked with physicians, if they agreed on her terms. Although she had grown weaker and had pronounced breathing problems, she believed living at all testified to her success,

Receiving bad news Facing death Suffering diagnostic shock Identifying religion Recounting the identifying moment Finding humor Feeling frightened	The doctor came in to tell me, "Uh, it didn't look good and that this was a—could be a rapidly"—and it appeared that mine was really going rapidly and that it might be about six weeks. Whoa! That blew my mind. It really did. . . . Right after that—I'm a Catholic—right after that, a poor little volunteer lady came in and said, "Mrs. Gordon?" And the doctor had said, "Mrs. Gordon?" "Yeah, OK." And then he told me. She said, "I'm from St. Mary's Church." I said, "Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, they've got the funeral already." And it really just—then I began to see humor in it, but I was scared. . . .
Accepting the present but not the prognosis Insisting on controlling the illness Turning point—Refusing the death sentence	This was the point when—[I decided], "If this is going to happen OK, but I'm not going to let it happen." . . . And I think probably that was the turning point when I said I wouldn't accept it. You know, I will not accept that uhm, death sentence, or whatever you want to call it.

Figure 20.2. Initial Coding—Marty Gordon

For long years, Marty kept her illness contained, or at least mostly out of view. Her proactive stance toward her body and her high level of involvements sustained her moral status. Whatever social diminishment of moral status she experienced derived more from age than from suffering.

The kinds of insights that grounded theory methods can net social justice research vary according to level, scope, and objectives of the study. Through comparing the stories above, we gain some sense of structural and organizational sources of suffering and their differential effects on individuals. The comparisons suggest how research participants' relative resources and capabilities became apparent through studying inductive data.

The comparisons also lead to ideas about structure. Most policy research emphasizes *access* to health care. Comparing these two interviews indicates differential treatment *within* a health care organization. In addition, the comparisons raise questions about rhetoric and realities of receiving care. Marty Gordon credited her "faith and attitude" for managing her illness; however, her lifestyle, income, supportive relationships, and quick wit also helped to buffer her losses. But

might not her attitude and advantages be dialectic and mutually reinforcing? Could not her advantages have also fostered her faith and attitude? Each person brings a past to the present. When invoking a similar logic, the residues of the past—limited family support, poor education, undiagnosed learning problems, and lack of skills—complicated and magnified Christine Danforth's troubles with chronic illness and in negotiating care. The structure of Christine's life led to her increasing isolation and decreasing moral status. Might not her anger and sadness have followed? From Marty and Christine's stories, we can discern hidden advantages of high social class status as well as hidden injuries of low status (Sennett & Cobb, 1973).

Last, coding practices can help us to see *our* assumptions, as well as those of our research participants. Rather than raising our codes to a level of objectivity, we can raise questions about how and why we developed certain codes.¹⁶ Another way to break open our assumptions is to ask colleagues and, perhaps, research participants themselves to engage in the coding. When they bring divergent experience to the coding, their responses to the data may call for scrutiny of our own.

	<i>Christine Danforth</i>	<i>Marty Gordon</i>
Awareness of illness	Predicting symptom intensification Recognizing illness spiral Lack of control over escalating symptoms Experiencing stigma	Learning and experimenting Becoming an expert Realizing the potential of stigma
Developing a stance toward illness	Remaining persistent Monitoring progression of symptoms Seeking help	Suffering initial diagnostic shock Feeling frightened Taking control Refusing death sentence Making deals Challenging physician's view Attacking physician's assumptions Discrediting physician's opinion Rejecting medical model Working on body and mind Following strict regimen Swaying physician's view Believing in her own perceptions Seeing self as an exception
Material resources	Fighting to keep the job Having a health plan Struggling to handle basic expenses Eking out a life—Juggling to pay the rent; Relying on an old car	Working part-time for extras Having a health plan Having solid retirement income Enjoying comfortable lifestyle with travel and amenities
Personal resources	Persevering despite multiple obstacles Defending self Recognizing injustice Abiding sense of shame about educational deficits and poverty Hating her appearance Trying to endure life Feeling excluded from organizational worlds	Preserving autonomy Forging partnerships with professionals Trusting herself Having a good education Assuming the right to control her life Believing in individual power Finding strength through faith Possessing a sense of entitlement Aiming to enjoy life Having decades of experience with organizations and professionals
Social resources	Living in a hostile world Taking delight in her niece Retreating from cruel accusations Suffering loneliness Realizing the fragility of her existence Foreseeing no future help	Taking refuge in a close marriage Having strong support, multiple involvements Maintaining powerful images of positive and negative role models Knowing she could obtain help, if needed
Strategies for managing life	Minimizing visibility of deficits Avoiding disclosure of illness Limiting activities	Obtaining husband's promise Avoiding disclosure of illness Controlling self-pity Remaining active Maintaining religious faith

Figure 20.3. Comparing Life Situations

■ RECLAIMING CHICAGO SCHOOL TRADITIONS

Marty Gordon and Christine Danforth's situations and statements above indicate the construction of their views and actions. Note that at certain points, they each struggle with obdurate social structures that take on tangible meaning in their stories of crucial interactions. To make further sense of situations and stories like these and to interpret the social justice issues with them, I have called for reclaiming Chicago school underpinnings in grounded theory. These underpinnings will move grounded theory more completely into constructionist social science. What are these underpinnings? What does reclaiming them entail? On which assumptions does Chicago school sociology rest? Why are they significant for both the development of grounded theory methods and social justice inquiry?

In brief, the Chicago school assumes human agency, attends to language and interpretation, views social processes as open-ended and emergent, studies action, and addresses temporality. This school emphasizes the significance of language for selfhood and social life and understands that human worlds consist of meaningful objects. In this view, subjective meanings emerge from experience, and they change as experience changes (Reynolds, 2003a). Thus, the Chicago school assumes dynamic, reciprocal relationships between interpretation and action, and it views social life as people fitting together diverse forms of conduct (Blumer, 1979, p. 22).¹⁷ Because social life is interactive and emergent, a certain amount of indeterminacy characterizes it (Strauss & Fisher, 1979a, 1979b). How might we use Chicago school sociology now to inform contemporary grounded theory studies and social justice inquiry? Where might it lead us? What moral direction might it give?

Both pragmatist philosophy and Chicago school ethnography foster openness to the world and curiosity about it. The Meadian concept of role-taking assumes empathetic understanding of research participants and their worlds. To achieve this understanding, we must know how people

define their situations and act on them. Social justice researchers can turn this point into a potent tool for discovering if, when, and to what extent people's meanings and actions contradict their economic or political interests—and whether and to what extent they are aware of such contradictions (see, for example, Kleinman, 1996). Thus, seeking these definitions and actions can make critical inquiry more complex and powerful. Knowing them can alert the researcher to points of actual or potential conflict and change—or compliance. Similarly, learning what things mean to people makes what they do with them comprehensible—at least from their worldview. Conversely, how people act toward things in their worlds indicates their relative significance. Such considerations prompt the researcher to construct an inductive analysis rather than, say, impose structural concepts on the scene.

Although Chicago school sociology has been viewed as microscopic, it also holds implications for the meso and macro levels that social justice researchers aim to engage. A refocused grounded theory would aid and refine connections with these levels. Horowitz (2001) shows how extending Mead's (1934) notion of "generalized other" takes his social psychology of the self to larger social entities and addresses expanding democratic participation of previously excluded groups. Her argument is two-pronged: (a) the development of a critical self is prerequisite for democracy and (b) groups that achieve self-regulation gain empowerment.

The naturalistic inquiry inherent in Chicago school tradition means studying what people in specific social worlds do over time and gaining intimate familiarity with the topic (Blumer, 1969; Lofland & Lofland, 1984, 1995). Hence, to reclaim the Chicago tradition, we must first: *Establish intimate familiarity with the setting(s) and the events occurring within it—as well as with the research participants.*¹⁸ This point may seem obvious; however, much qualitative research, including grounded theory studies, skate the surface rather than plumb the depths of studied life.

An emphasis on action and process leads to considerations of time. The pragmatist treatment

of social constructions of past, present, and future could direct social justice researchers to look at timing, pacing, and temporal rhythms. These concerns could alert us to new forms of control and organization. In addition, understanding timing and sequencing can shed light on the success or failure of collective action. Thus, attending to temporality affords us new knowledge of the worlds we study.

Chicago fieldwork traditions have long emphasized situated analyses embedded in social, economic, and occasionally political contexts, as evident in urban ethnographies (see, for example, E. Anderson, 2003; Horowitz, 1983; Suttles, 1968; Venkatesh, 2000). Numerous grounded theory studies have not taken account of the context in which the studied research problem or process exists. Combining Chicago intellectual traditions with social justice sensitivities would correct tendencies toward decontextualized—and, by extension, objectified—grounded theory analyses.

Looking at data with a Chicago school lens entails focusing on meaning and process at both the subjective and social levels. Like many other people with chronic illness, the women above are aware of the pejorative moral meanings of illness and suffering and sensed the diminished status of those who suffer. When I asked Marty Gordon how her condition affected her job, she said, “I never let it show there. *Never*. Never give cause for anybody either to be sorry for you or want to get rid of you.” Although Christine Danforth hated her job, she viewed it as her lifeline and feared losing it. After telling me about receiving written ultimatums from her supervisor, she said:

Nobody else is going to hire me. . . . An able body can't get one [job], how am I going to get one? So if I'm dyslexic, you know, those people don't even know what it is, let alone how to deal with it. I wouldn't be able to get a job as a receptionist because I can't read and write like most people, so I'm there for life.

Christine Danforth's employers knew the names of her medical diagnoses, but they did not understand her symptoms and their effects in

daily life. Christine's story took an ironic twist. She worked for an advocacy agency that served people with disabilities. Several staff members who challenged her work and worth had serious physical disabilities themselves. Christine also discovered that her supervisors had imposed rules on her that they allowed other staff to ignore. Thus, the situation forced Christine to deal with multiple moral contradictions. She suffered the consequences of presumably enlightened disability advocates reproducing negative societal judgments of her moral worth. Tales of such injustice inform stories of suffering.

These examples suggest the second step to reclaiming the Chicago tradition: *Focus on meanings and processes*. This step includes addressing subjective, situational, and social levels. By piecing together many research participants' statements, I developed a moral hierarchy of suffering. Suffering here is much more than pain; it defines self and situation—and ultimately does so in moral terms that support inequities. Suffering takes into account stigma and social definitions of human worth. Hence, suffering includes the lived experience of stigma, reduced autonomy, and loss of control of the defining images of self. As a result, suffering magnifies difference, forces social disconnection, elicits shame, and increases as inequalities mount.¹⁹

Meanings of suffering, however, vary and are processual. As researchers, we must find the range of meanings and learn how people form them. Figure 20.4 shows how suffering takes on moral status and assumes hierarchical form. In addition, it suggests how suffering intersects with institutional traditions and structural conditions that enforce difference. In keeping with a grounded theory perspective, any attributes taken as status variables must earn their way into the analysis rather than be assumed. Note that I added resources and capabilities as potential markers of difference as their significance became clear in the data.²⁰ Figure 20.4 implies how larger social justice issues can emerge in open-ended, inductive research. In this case, these issues concern access, equitable treatment, and inherent human worth in health care.

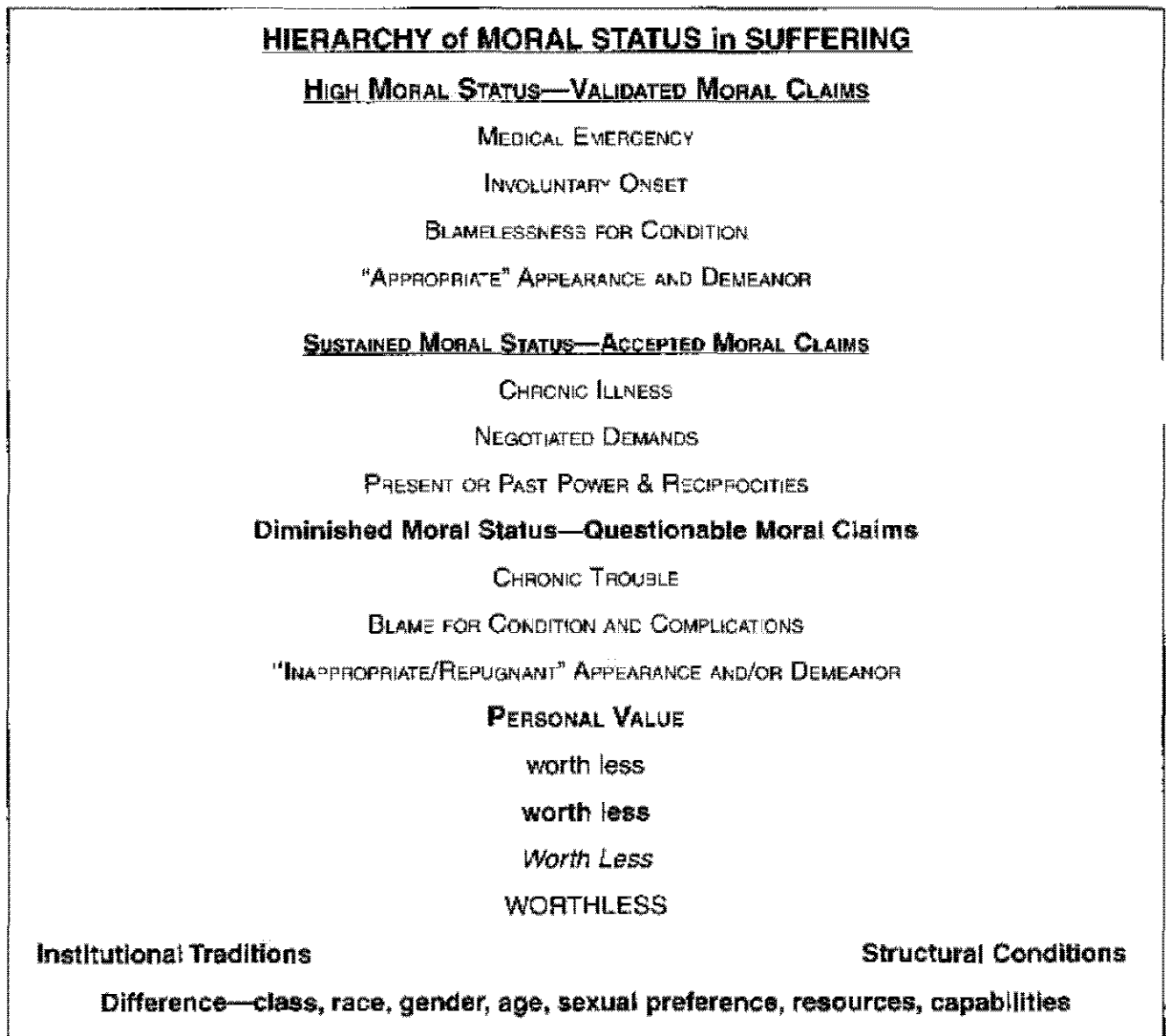


Figure 20.4. Hierarchy of Moral Status in Suffering

Source: Adapted and expanded from Charmaz (1999), “Stories of Suffering: Subjects’ Stories and Research Narratives,” *Qualitative Health Research*, 9, 362–382.

The figure reflects an abstract statement of how individual experience and social structure come together in emergent action. The figure derives from inductive and comparative analyses of meaning and action, consistent with Chicago school sociology. When we compare individual accounts, we can see that Marty Gordon and Christine Danforth develop their stance toward illness from different starting places and different experiences, yet they both are active in forming their definitions. The Chicago school concept of human nature has long contrasted with much of

structural social science. We not only assume human agency but also study it and its consequences. People are active, creative beings who *act*, not merely *behave*. They attempt to solve problems in their lives and worlds. As researchers, we need to learn how, when, and *why* participants act. Thus, the third step in reclaiming Chicago traditions follows: *Engage in a close study of action*. The Chicago emphasis on process becomes evident here. What do research participants see as routine? What do they define as problems? In Marty Gordon’s case, the problems

disrupted her life and could kill her. She had good reason for wanting to oversee her care. At one point, she described her conversation with Monica, her lung specialist, about ending treatment with prednisone:

I've had a couple of setbacks. . . . The first time I went off it [prednisone], my breathing capacity cut right in half, so she said, "No." And I make deals with her. . . . So I'm going to Ireland and she said, "Okay, I want you to double it now, go back up while you're traveling, and then we'll talk about it. But no deals, and don't be stupid." So when I came back I said, "Let's try it again."

But when Marty came back from Ireland, she had complications. She described what happened while she was playing golf:

I wound up in emergency Easter Sunday because I thought . . . I pulled a muscle. . . . But they thought it was a pulmonary embolism. . . . They said, "Well, with your condition we have to take an X ray, a lung X ray." And he [physician] said, "Oh, I don't like what I see here." And I said, "Look, you're not the doctor that looks at that all the time, don't get nervous, it's been there." So he said, "No, there's a lot more scar tissue than your other X ray." And I said, "Yeah, well that's par for the course, from what I understand." And he said, "But there's a hole there I don't like to see." I said, "Look, it's a pulled muscle. *Give me the Motrin.*" [At the time of this interview, Motrin was a prescription drug.] And finally he said, ". . . Maybe it is a pulled muscle." So she [Monica, her lung specialist] called me the next day and she said, "Okay, let's slow down on this going down on the prednisone, too many side things are happening, so we're going slower." And I think it will work. . . . I'm still playing golf and still working.

Marty Gordon's recounted conversations attest to her efforts to remain autonomous. She insisted on being the leading actor in her life and on shaping its quality. From the beginning, she had remained active in her care and unabashed in her willingness to challenge her physicians and to work with them—on her terms.

Agency does not occur in isolation; it always arises within a social context already shaped by

language, meaning, and modes of interaction. This point leads us to the next step in reclaiming the Chicago tradition: *Discover and detail the social context within which action occurs.* A dual focus on action and context can permit social justice researchers to make nuanced explanations of behavior. What people think, feel, and do must be analyzed within the relevant social contexts, which, in turn, people construct through action and interaction. Individuals take into account the actions of those around them as they themselves act. Interaction depends on fitting lines of action together, to use Herbert Blumer's term (Blumer, 1969, 1979). We sense how Marty Gordon and Monica fit lines of actions together to quell her symptoms. Marty crafted an enduring professional partnership with Monica that has eased her way through an increasingly less accessible health care organization for more than 10 years. Knowing that others are or will be involved shapes how people respond to their situations. The more participants create a shared focus and establish a joint goal, the more they will build a shared past and projected future. Marty and Monica shared the goal of keeping Marty alive and of reducing her symptoms while minimizing medication side effects. They built a history of more than a decade, and to this day they project a shared future.

The women in these two stories grapple with the issues that confront them and thus affect the social context in which they live. Marty had a voice and made herself heard; Christine tried but met resistance. She lacked advocates, social skills, and a shared professional discourse to enlist providers as allies, which commonly occurs when class and culture divide providers and patients. The construction of social context may be more discernible in Marty's statements than in other kinds of interviews. In Christine's attempt to obtain care, she related the sequence and timing of events. We see that she received care only because she became a medical emergency, and we learn how earlier refusals and delays increased her misery.

These interview statements contain words and phrases that tell and hint of meaning. Marty

Gordon talks about “making deals,” “working hard,” “not excepting,” “wallowing,” and “pushing myself.” Christine Danforth contrasts herself with an “able body” and recounts how the sequence of events affected her actions. The fifth step in reclaiming the Chicago school tradition follows this dictum: *Pay attention to language*. Language shapes meaning and influences action. In turn, actions and experiences shape meanings. Marty’s interview excerpts suggest how she uses words to make her meanings real and tries to make her meanings stick in interaction. Chicago school sociology assumes reciprocal and dynamic relations between interpretation and action. We interpret what happens around and to us and shape our actions accordingly, particularly when something interrupts our routines and causes us to rethink our situations.

In addition to the points outlined above, Chicago school scholars have generated other concepts that can fruitfully inform initial directions in social justice research and can sensitize the researcher’s empirical observations. Among these concepts are Glaser and Strauss’s (1965) concept of awareness contexts, Scott and Lyman’s (1968) idea of accounts, Mills’s (1990) notion of vocabularies of motive, Goffman’s (1959) metaphor of the theater, and Hochschild’s (1983) depiction of emotion work and feeling rules. Establishing who knows what, and when they know it, can provide a crucial focus for studying interaction in social justice research. Both the powerful and the powerless may be forced to give accounts that justify or excuse their actions. People describe their motives in vocabularies in situated social, cultural, historical, and economic contexts. Viewing life as theater can alert social justice researchers to main actors, minor characters and audiences, acts and scenes, roles and scripts, and front-stage impressions and back-stage realities. Different kinds of emotion work and feeling rules reflect the settings in which they arise. Expressed emotions and stifled feelings stem from rules and enacted hierarchies of power and advantage that less privileged actors may unwittingly support and reproduce (see, for example, Lively, 2001).

■ RETHINKING OUR LANGUAGE

Just as we must attend to how our research participants’ language shapes meaning, we must attend to our own language and make it problematic. I mention a few key terms that we qualitative researchers assume and adopt. These terms have served as guiding metaphors or, more comprehensively, as organizing concepts for entire studies. Perhaps ironically, Chicago school sociologists and their followers have promulgated most of these terms. Researchers have made them part of their taken-for-granted lexicon and, I believe, imposed them too readily on our studied phenomena. The logic of both the earlier Chicago school and grounded theory means developing our concepts *from* our analyses of empirical realities, rather than applying concepts *to* them. If we adopt extant concepts, they must earn their way into the analysis through their usefulness (Glaser, 1978). Then we can extend and strengthen them (see, for example, Mamo, 1999; Timmermans, 1994).

Two major concepts carry images of tactical manipulations by a calculating social actor: strategies and negotiations. Despite what we social scientists say, much of human behavior does not reflect explicit *strategies*. Subsuming ordinary actions under the rubric of “strategies” implies explicit tactical schemes when, in fact, an actor’s intentions may not have been so clear to him or her, much less to this actor’s audience. Rather than strategies, much of what people do reflects their taken-for-granted habitual actions. These actions become routine and scarcely recognized unless disrupted by change or challenge. Note that in the long lists of codes comparing Christine Danforth’s and Marty Gordon’s situations, I list many actions but few strategies.

When looking for taken-for-granted actions in our research, John Dewey’s (1922) central ideas about habit, if not the term itself, can prove helpful to attend to participants’ assumptions and taken-for-granted practices, which may not always be in their own interests. Like Snow’s (2001) point that much of life is routine and proceeds without explicit interpretation, Dewey (1922) views habits as patterned predispositions

that enable individuals to respond to their situations with economy of thought and action: People can act while focusing attention elsewhere (see also Clark, 2000; Cutchin, 2000). Thus, habits include those taken-for-granted modes of thinking, feeling, and acting that people invoke without reflection (Dewey, 1922; Hewitt, 1994). The habits of a lifetime enabled Marty Gordon to maintain hope and to manage her illness. Christine's habits let her eke by but also increased her isolation and physical problems.

Like the concept of strategies, negotiation also imparts a strategic character to interaction. Negotiation is an apt term to describe Marty Gordon's "deals" and disputes with her practitioners. At least from her view, contests did emerge, and bargaining could bring them to effective closure. Then interaction could proceed from the negotiated agreement. Marty brought not only her resolve to her negotiations, but also years of skills and fearlessness in dealing with professionals, a partnership with her primary physician, a network of supportive others, and the ability to pay for nutritious food, conveniences, and a good health plan. Little negotiation may proceed when a person has few such resources and great suffering, as Christine Danforth's story suggests.

Although the concept of negotiations may apply in Marty Gordon's case, we have stretched its applicability, as if it reflected most interactions. It does not. Much of social life proceeds as people either unconsciously adapt their response to another person or interpret what the other person says, means, or does and then they subsequently respond to it (Blumer, 1979). Interaction can alter views, temper emotions, modify intentions, and change actions—all without negotiation. The strategic quality of negotiation may be limited or absent during much sociability. People can be persuasive without attempting to negotiate. Negotiation assumes actors who are explicitly aware of the content and structure of the ensuing interaction. Negotiation also assumes that participants' interactional goals conflict or need realignment if future mutual endeavors are to occur. For that matter, the term assumes that all

participants have sufficient power to make their voices heard, if not also to affect outcomes. Judith Howard (2003) states, "The term 'negotiation' implies that the interacting parties have equal opportunities to control the social identities presented, that they come to the bargaining table with equal resources and together develop a joint definition of the situation" (p. 10). Nonetheless, much negotiation ensues when the parties involved do not have equal resources, and much foment may occur about enforcing definitions of social identities, despite unequal positions. For negotiations to occur, each party must be involved with the other to complete joint actions that matter to both, likely for different reasons.

The problems of applying these concepts and of importing their meanings and metaphors on our data extend beyond the concepts above. These problems also occur with applying the concepts of "career," "work," or "trajectory," which we could examine with the same logic. However, the current social scientific emphasis on stories merits scrutiny here.

■ METAPHORS OF STORIES AND MEANINGS OF SILENCES

The term "story" might once have been a metaphor for varied qualitative data such as interview statements, field note descriptions, or documents. However, we cease to use the term "story" as metaphor and have come view it as concrete reality, rather than a construction we place on these data. With several exceptions (e.g., Charmaz, 2002, *in press*; Frank, 1997), social scientists have treated the notion of "story" as unproblematic. We have questioned whose story we tell, how we tell it, and how we represent those who tell us their stories, but not the idea of a story itself or whether our materials fit the term "story." The reliance on qualitative interviews in grounded theory studies (Creswell, 1997), as well as in other qualitative approaches, such as narrative analysis, furthered this focus on stories. In addition, the topics themselves of intensive interviews foster producing a story.

Limiting data collection to interviews, as is common in grounded theory research, delimits the theory we can develop. In social justice studies, we must be cautious about which narrative frame we impose on our research, and when and how we do it. The frame itself can prove consequential. The story frame assumes a linear logic and boundaries of temporality that we might over- or underdraw.⁴¹

Part of my argument about stories concerns silences. In earlier works (Charmaz, 2002, in press), I have emphasized silences at the individual level of analysis; they are also significant at the organizational, social worlds, and societal levels. Clarke (2003, 2005) provides a new grounded theory tool, situational mapping, for showing action and inaction, voices and silences, at varied levels of analysis. She observes that silences reveal absent organizational alignments. Thus, mapping those silences, in their relation to active alignments, can render invisible social structure visible. Invisible aspects of social structure and process are precisely what critical inquiry needs to tackle.⁴²

Silences pose significant meanings and telling data in any research that deals with moral choices, ethical dilemmas, and just social policies. Silence signifies absence and sometimes reflects a lack of awareness or inability to express thoughts and feelings. However, silence speaks to power arrangements. It also can mean attempts to control information, to avoid redirecting actions, and, at times, to impart tacit messages. The "right" to speak may mirror hierarchies of power: *Only those who have power dare to speak*. All others are silenced (see, for example, Freire, 1970). Then, too, the powerless may retreat into silence as a last refuge. At one point, Christine Danforth felt that her life was out of control. She described being silenced by devastating events and by an aggressive psychiatrist, and she stopped talking. In all these ways, silence is part of language, meaning, and action.

Making stories problematic and attending to silences offers new possibilities for understanding social life for both social justice and grounded theory research. What people in power do not say

is often more telling than what they do say. We must note those who choose to remain silent, as well as those who have been silenced. Treating both stories and silences with a critical eye and comparing them with actions and inaction provides empirical underpinnings for any emerging grounded theory. Subsequently, the constructed theory will gain usefulness in its explanatory and predictive power.

■ ESTABLISHING EVALUATION CRITERIA

Using grounded theory for social justice studies requires revisiting the criteria for evaluating them. Glaser and Strauss's (1967; Glaser, 1978) criteria for assessing grounded theory studies include fit, workability, relevance, and modifiability. Thus, the theory must fit the empirical world it purports to analyze, provide a workable understanding and explanation of this world, address problems and processes in it, and allow for variation and change that make the core theory useful over time. The criterion of modifiability allows for refinements of the theory that simultaneously make it more precise and enduring.

Providing cogent explanations stating how the study meets high standards will advance social justice inquiry and reduce unmerited dismissals of it. However, few grounded theorists provide a model. They seldom offer explicit discussions about how their studies *meet* the above or other criteria, although they often provide statements on the logic of their decisions (cf. S. I. Miller & Fredericks, 1999). In the past, some grounded theorists have claimed achieving a theoretical grounding with limited empirical material. Increasingly, researchers justify the type, relative depth, and extent of their data collection and analysis on *one* criterion: saturation of categories. They issue a claim of saturation and end their data collection (Flick, 1998; Morse, 1995; Silverman, 2000). But what does saturation mean? To whom? Janice Morse (1995), who initiated the critique of saturation, accepts defining it as "data adequacy" and adds that it is "operationalized as collecting data until no new information is

obtained" (p. 147). Often, researchers invoke the criterion of saturation to justify small samples—very small samples with thin data. Such justifications diminish the credibility of grounded theory. Any social justice study that makes questionable claims of saturation risks being seen as suspect.

Claims of saturation often reflect rationalization more than reason, and these claims raise questions. What stands as a category?²⁵ Is it conceptual? Is it useful? Developed? By whose criteria? All these questions add up to the big question: *What stands as adequate research?* Expanded criteria that include the Chicago school's rigorous study of context and action makes any grounded theory study more credible and advances the claims of social justice researchers. Then we can augment our criteria by going beyond "saturation" and ask if our empirical detail also achieves Christians's (2000) and Denzin's (1989) criterion of "interpretive sufficiency," which takes into account cultural complexity and multiple interpretations of life.

To reopen explicit discussion of criteria for grounded theory studies, and particularly those in social justice research, I offer the following criteria.

Criteria for Grounded Theory Studies in Social Justice Inquiry

Credibility

- Has the researcher achieved intimate familiarity with the setting or topic?
- Are the data sufficient to merit the researcher's claims? Consider the range, number, and depth of observations contained in the data.
- Has the researcher made systematic comparisons between observations and between categories?
- Do the categories cover a wide range of empirical observations?
- Are there strong logical links between the gathered data and the researcher's argument and analysis?
- Has the researcher provided enough evidence for his or her claims to allow the reader to form an independent assessment—and agree with the researcher's claims?

Originality

- Are the categories fresh? Do they offer new insights?
- Does the analysis provide a new conceptual rendering of the data?
- What is the social and theoretical significance of the work?
- How does the work challenge, extend, or refine current ideas, concepts, and practices?

Resonance

- Do the categories portray the fullness of the studied experience?
- Has the researcher revealed liminal and taken-for-granted meanings?
- Has the researcher drawn links between larger collectivities and individual lives, when the data so indicate?
- Do the analytic interpretations make sense to members and offer them deeper insights about their lives and worlds?

Usefulness

- Does the analysis offer interpretations that people can use in their everyday worlds?
- Do the analytic categories speak to generic processes?
- Have these generic processes been examined for hidden social justice implications?
- Can the analysis spark further research in other substantive areas?
- How does the work contribute to making a better society?

A strong combination of originality and credibility increases resonance, usefulness, and the subsequent value of the contribution. The criteria above account for the empirical study and development of the theory. They say little about how the researcher writes the narrative or what makes it compelling. Other criteria speak to the aesthetics of the writing. Our written works derive from aesthetic principles and rhetorical devices—in addition to theoretical statements and scientific rationales. The act of writing is intuitive, inventive, and interpretive, not merely a reporting of acts and facts, or, in the case of grounded theory,

causes, conditions, categories, and consequences. Writing leads to further discoveries and deeper insights; it furthers inquiry. Rather than claiming silent authorship hidden behind a scientific facade, grounded theorists—as well as proponents of social justice—should claim audible voices in their writings (see Charmaz & Mitchell, 1996; Mitchell & Charmaz, 1996). For grounded theorists, an audible voice brings the writer's self into the words while illuminating intersubjective worlds. Such evocative writing sparks the reader's imagined involvement in the scenes portrayed and those beyond. In this sense, Laurel Richardson's (2000) criteria for the evocative texts of "creative analytic practice ethnography" also apply here. These criteria consist of the narrative's substantive contribution, aesthetic merit, reflexivity, impact, and expression of a reality (p. 937).

A grounded theory born from reasoned reflections and principled convictions that conveys a reality makes a substantive contribution. Add aesthetic merit and analytic impact, and then its influence may spread to larger audiences. Through reclaiming Chicago traditions, conducting inquiry to make a difference in the world, and creating evocative narratives, we will not be silenced. We will have stories to tell and theories to proclaim.

■ SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

A turn toward qualitative social justice studies promotes combining critical inquiry and grounded theory in novel and productive ways. An interpretive, constructivist ground theory supports this turn by building on its Chicago school antecedents. Grounded theory can sharpen the analytic edge of social justice studies. Simultaneously, the critical inquiry inherent in social justice research can enlarge the focus and deepen the significance of grounded theory analyses. Combining the two approaches enhances the power of each.

A grounded theory informed by critical inquiry demands going deeper into the phenomenon itself and its situated location in the world than perhaps most grounded theory studies have

in the past. This approach does not mean departing from grounded theory guidelines. It does not mean investigative reporting. Grounded theory details process and context—and goes into the social world and setting far beyond one investigative story. Grounded theory contains tools to study how processes become institutionalized practices. Such attention to the processes that constitute structure can keep grounded theory from dissolving into fragmented small studies.

With the exception of those studies that rely on historical documents, grounded theory studies typically give little scrutiny to the past and sometimes blur inequalities with other experiences or overlook them entirely. Studying social justice issues means paying greater attention to inequality and its social and historical contexts. Too much of qualitative research today minimizes current *social* context, much less historical evolution. Relying on interview studies on focused topics may preclude attention to context—particularly when our research participants take the context of their lives for granted and do not speak of it. Hence, the mode of inquiry itself limits what researchers may learn. Clearly, interviewing is the method of choice for certain topics, but empirical qualitative research suffers if it becomes synonymous with interview studies.

Like snapshots, interviews provide a picture taken during a moment in time. Interviewers gain a view of research participants' concerns as they present them, rather than as events unfold. Multiple visits over time combined with the intimacy of intensive interviewing do provide a deeper view of life than one-shot structured or informational interviews can provide. However, anyone's retelling of events may differ markedly from an ethnographer's recording of them. In addition, as noted above, what people say may not be what they do (Deutscher et al., 1993). At that, what an interviewer asks and hears or an ethnographer records depends in part on the overall context, the immediate situation, and his or her training and theoretical proclivities.

At its best, grounded theory provides methods to explicate an empirical process in ways that prompt seeing beyond it. By sticking closely to

the leads and explicating the relevant process, the researcher can go deeper into meaning and action than given in words. Thus, the focused inquiry of grounded theory, with its progressive inductive analysis, moves the work theoretically and covers more empirical observations than other approaches. In this way, a focused grounded theory portrays a picture of the whole.

■ NOTES

1. Such emphases often start with pressing social problems, collective concerns, and impassioned voices. In contrast, Rawls's (1971) emphasis on fairness begins from a distanced position of theorizing individual rights and risks from the standpoint of the rational actor under hypothetical conditions. Conceptions of social justice must take into account both collective goods and individual rights and must recognize that definitions both of rationality and of "rational" actors are situated in time, space, and culture—and both can change. To foster justice, Nussbaum (2000, p. 234) argues that promoting a collective good must not subordinate the ends of some individuals over others. She observes that women suffer when a collective good is promoted without taking into account the internal power and opportunity hierarchies within a group.
2. For descriptions of grounded theory guidelines, see Charmaz (2000a, 2003b), Glaser (1978, 1992), and Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1998).
3. I use the term "data" throughout for two reasons: It symbolizes (a) a fund of empirical materials that we systematically collect and assemble to acquire knowledge about a topic and (b) an acknowledgment that qualitative resources hold equal significance for studying empirical reality as quantitative measures, although they differ in kind.
4. In this way, integrating a critical stance offers a corrective to narrow and limited studies conducted as grounded theory studies. Neither a narrow focus nor limited empirical material is part of the method itself. We cannot blur how earlier researchers have used grounded theory with the guidelines in the method. Although social justice inquiry suggests substantive fields, it also assumes questions and concerns about power, privilege, and hierarchy that some grounded theorists may not yet have entertained.
5. Chicago school sociology shaped an enduring tradition of qualitative research in sociology, of which grounded theory remains a part. What stands as "the" Chicago school varies depending on who defines it (Abbott, 1999; L. H. Lofland 1980). In my view, the Chicago school theoretical heritage goes back to the early years of the 20th century, in the works, for example, of Charles Horton Cooley (1902), John Dewey (1922), George Herbert Mead (1932, 1934), and Charles S. Peirce (Hartshorne & Weiss, 1931–1935). In research practice, the Chicago school sparked study of the city and spawned urban ethnographies (see, for example, Park & Burgess, 1925; Shaw, 1930; Thomas & Znaniecki, 1927; Thrasher, 1927). Chicago sociologists often held naïve and partial views but many sensed the injustices arising in the social problems of the city, and Abbott (1999) notes that Albion Small attacked capitalism. Nonetheless, some Chicago school sociologists reinforced inequities in their own halliwicks (Deegan, 1995). Mid-century ethnographers and qualitative researchers built on their Chicago school intellectual heritage and created what scholars have called a second Chicago school (G. A. Fine, 1995). For recent renderings of the Chicago school, see Abbott (1999), G. A. Fine (1995), Musolf (2003), and Reynolds (2003a, 2003b). Chicago school sociology emphasizes the contextual backdrop of observed scenes and their situated nature in time, place, and relationships. Despite the partial emergence of grounded theory from both theoretical and methodological Chicago school roots, Glaser (2002) disavows the pragmatist, constructionist elements in grounded theory.
6. Symbolic interactionism provides an open-ended theoretical perspective from which grounded theory researchers can start. This perspective is neither inherently prescriptive nor microsociological. Barbara Ballis Lal (2001) not only suggests the contemporary usefulness of early Chicago school symbolic interactionist ideas for studying race and ethnicity but also notes their implications for current political action and social policy. David Maines (2001) demonstrates that symbolic interactionist emphases on agency, action, and negotiated order have long had macrosociological import. He shows that the discipline of sociology has incorrectly—and ironically—compartmentalized symbolic interactionism while increasingly becoming more interactionist in its assumptions and directions.
7. In particular, the Chicago school provides antecedents for attending to social reform, as in Jane Addams's (1919) work at Hull-House and Mead and Dewey's interests in democratic process. The field research founded in Chicago school sociology has been called into question at various historical junctures

from Marxist and postmodernist perspectives (see, for example, Burawoy, Blum, et al., 1991; Burawoy, Gamson, et al., 2002; Clough, 1992; Denzin, 1992; Wacquant, 2002). Criticisms of Chicago school sociology have suggested that grounded theory represents the most codified and realist statement of Chicago school methodology (Van Maanen, 1988).

8. Strauss and Corbin's (1990, 1998) emphasis on technical procedures has been met with chagrin by a number of researchers (Glaser, 1992; Melia, 1996; Stern, 1994). In his 1987 handbook *Qualitative Analysis for Social Scientists*, Strauss mentions axial coding and verification, which depart from earlier versions of grounded theory, and he and Juliet Corbin (1990, 1998) develop them in their coauthored texts.

9. My critique mirrors a much larger trend. Lincoln and Guba (2000) find that the movement away from positivism pervades the social sciences. They state that the turn toward interpretive, postmodern, and critical theorizing makes most studies vulnerable to criticism (p. 163).

10. Grounded theory provides tools that researchers can—and do—use from any philosophical perspective—or political agenda. Studies of worker involvement, for example, may start from addressing employees' concerns or management's aim to increase corporate profits.

11. Tedlock (2000) states, "Ethnographers' lives are embedded within their field experiences in such a way that all their interactions involve moral choices" (p. 455). Ethnography may represent one end of a continuum. Nevertheless, does not grounded theory research also involve moral choices?

12. Feminist research suggests ways to proceed. DeVault (1999) and Olesen (2000) provide excellent overviews of and debates in feminist research.

13. Issues of exploitation arise when participants work without pay or recognition. Feminist researchers often recommend having participants read drafts of materials, yet even reading drafts may be too much when research participants are struggling with losses, although they may have requested to see the researcher's writings in progress. When research participants express interest, I share early drafts, but I try to reduce participants' potential feelings of obligation to finish reading them. Morse (1998) agrees with sharing results but not the conduct of inquiry.

14. Schwalbe et al. (2000) and Harris (2001) make important moves in this analytic direction.

15. The first two interview excerpts appear in earlier published accounts. I include them so that readers interested in seeing how I used them in social

psychological accounts may obtain them. Subsequent interview statements have not been published. The data are part of an evolving study of 170 interviews of chronically ill persons. A subset of research participants that includes these two women have been interviewed multiple times.

16. Further specifics of grounded theory guidelines are available in Charmaz (2000a, 2003b, Charmaz & Mitchell, 2001), Glaser (1978, 1992, 2001), Strauss, (1987), and Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1998).

17. I realize that presenting the Chicago school as a unified perspective is something of a historical gloss because differences are discernible between the early pragmatists as well as among the sociologists who followed them. Furthermore, a strong quantitative tradition developed at the University of Chicago (see Bulmer, 1984).

18. See Lofland and Lofland (1984, 1995) for an emphasis on describing the research setting. Lincoln and Guba (1985) offer a sound rationale for naturalistic inquiry as well as good ideas for conducting it. When the data consist of extant texts such as documents, films, or texts, then the researcher may need to seek multiple empirical sources.

19. See Schell (2003) for a discussion of relationships between shame and society.

20. Grounded theory methods can inform traditional quantitative research, although these approaches seldom have been used together. Hypotheses can be drawn from Figure 20.4, such as that the greater the definitions of an individual's difference, the more rapid his or her tumble down the moral hierarchy of suffering. Quantitative researchers could pursue such hypotheses.

21. And as I have pointed out with individual accounts (Charmaz, 2002), raw experience may fit neither narrative logic nor the comprehensible content of a story.

22. Clarke's (2003, 2004) concept of implicated actors can be particularly useful to analyze voices and silences in social justice discourses.

23. See Dey (1999) for an extensive discussion on constructing categories in the early grounded theory works.

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