Using Grounded Theory in Nursing

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Editors

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To Barney and Anselm, who gave us so much to debate about and who challenged us to think beyond the boundaries

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Contributors

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Preface

We conceived this book during chats in the hallways at several conferences, most notably the 1997 meetings of the International Council of Nurses in Vancouver, British Columbia. It was at that conference that we, along with our colleagues Dauna Crooks and Cynthia Ricci McCloskey, conducted a symposium on grounded theory and women's health, two of our passions. We were pleased at the considerable excitement in the crowded lecture hall about doing grounded theory research. For us it was a watershed experience to see this critical mass of scholars who shared our enthusiasm about the method. It was evident to us that there is a growing interest among nurses in conducting grounded theory research, and from their multiple queries, we saw the need for a source book where scholars could go for illumination.

At about the same time, a handful of faculty members and graduate students at the University of Victoria School of Nursing began to meet regularly in what eventually became known as the Grounded Theory Club (GTC). This was, in part, an effort to provide a place for exploration of the method and some of the epistemological and methodological challenges involved in conducting grounded theory research. One of the activities of GTC members involves sharing resources and references. After several months, it became clear to us that most of the available published literature failed to reflect grounded theory as some of the GTC members thought we understood and used it. This was particularly problematic for students new to the method who sought clear direction and advice to guide their studies. Members of the GTC, along with other North American long-term and newer, more questioning scholars, came together to

bring forth our collective understanding and wisdom in the clearest possible format.

To begin the process, we took a page from Jan Morse and decided to hold a two-day seminar, bringing together the contributing authors in Victoria, British Columbia, in January 1999. It was a time for authors to meet (or reacquaint themselves with) each other and have some fairly intense formal and informal discussions about the challenges and rewards of doing grounded theory research. During the scheduled meeting times, each draft chapter was opened for critique, and members of the group offered suggestions for improvement, resources, and references, and provided other perspectives as well as some support. Plans were made for how to review manuscripts at later stages of development. Since the Victoria meeting, updated (and some new) manuscripts flew back and forth between and among authors and editors via the electronic ether.

This text represents our attempt to identify and raise questions about grounded theory and how it is currently used in nursing research. We have brought together nursing researchers conducting, and reflecting on, grounded theory as a research method. As the reader will note, there are some conflicting views on the same issues expressed by different authors in this text. In our view, scholarly discussion is a positive process in attempting to resolve the issues and controversies surrounding grounded theory research. Thus, we highlight some key challenges researchers must consider as they conduct their inquiries.

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Introduction

Grounded theory, a qualitative, inductive approach to research, was originally developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) who "discovered" it as a way to help reveal how people manage the problematic situations in their lives. By directly observing and talking with people, researchers can now study how people make sense of their lives, particularly their health experiences, and use that understanding to resolve their challenges. The publication of *Discovery of Grounded Theory* (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) marked a dramatic breakthrough in nursing research by providing investigators with the tools to study health phenomena from the perspective of those experiencing them.

As a review of the literature and dissertation abstracts demonstrates, interest in qualitative methods in general and grounded theory in particular has burgeoned in the past 10 years. A review of CINAHL revealed that grounded theory is the second most popular qualitative research method published in nursing. Further, the majority of grounded theory dissertations have appeared in the past decade, and most of those have been within the past two years, indicating an exponential rise in interest in the method. Yet, the methodological writing on grounded theory has failed to keep pace with published findings. We, as both authors and editors, feel unsettled at the mismatch between what is written and our own understanding and practice of the method. This book represents an effort to raise awareness of the ontological and philosophical underpinnings of grounded theory and how these influence the way we conduct research.

Because grounded theory is an exploratory method of research, it does not begin from a position of an existing theory and pre-

defined concepts. Rather, as the data, which can be anything, are collected, coded, and analyzed simultaneously, concepts and properties become evident (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Grounded theory is sometimes referred to as the constant comparative method because every piece of coded data is compared with every other piece of data, with concepts and categories, and with all levels of abstraction as the developing theory begins to take form. At each stage of analysis, hypotheses or hunches are generated and tested against the data so that a core category and an explanatory theory of behavior arise from that data. However, we hope to make it clear that there is much more involved in doing grounded theory than just constant comparison.

We have found grounded theory to be the method of choice when we want to learn how people manage their lives in the context of existing or potential health challenges, and as such, is admirably suited to nursing inquiry. What is key in this process is learning the ways that people understand and deal with what is happening to them over time. Grounded theory was designed to reveal the human characteristic of change in response to (or anticipation of) various life circumstances. It is particularly useful for research in situations that have not been previously studied, where existing research has left major gaps, and where a new perspective might be desirable to identify areas for nursing intervention.

In generating this book, we gathered together a number of grounded theorists in both the U.S. and Canada representing a range of experiences with the method. With this mix, our plan was to create tension between traditional grounded theory as originally practiced and newer perspectives on the method. We believe we have succeeded in this goal.

What is different about this book is the broad coverage by the authors of the method and its background, as well as its ontological and epistemological roots and recent directions. The outcome of this background, mixed with authors who have little reserve when recording their points of view, is that the reader will find not all of our contributors agreeing with one another. Personally, we glory in academic debates, and our hope is that you, as reader, will be stimulated to do your own methodological investigations. We must confess that as editors *we* often disagree, but we view this debate as a healthy ingredient in a research environment.

We need to make the point, however, that we consider each chapter of this book as sound logic and creativity. The authors are true to grounded theory in its intent: to be a voice for the point of view of people who may not otherwise be heard and for the perspectives of participants on the way health professionals can learn to respect their chosen ways of solving life problems.

Finally, it has been our experience that everyone who uses grounded theory spins it to suit his or her way of thinking, just as everyone who reads a book takes away a somewhat different message. A word of caution here. The researcher using grounded theory needs to exercise care to avoid a departure from the intent of the authors who developed it, Glaser and Strauss. In short, there are a number of variations in doing grounded theory, all of which are acceptable. On the other hand, there are a lot of wrong ways of doing it. We hope we help you avoid those wrong ways.

REFERENCE

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CHAPTER 1

Situating Grounded Theory Within Qualitative Inquiry

Janice M. Morse

SITUATING GROUNDED THEORY WITHIN QUALITATIVE INQUIRY

Grounded theory is a major qualitative method. In the three decades since its development, it has made a significant impact on the development of social science theory and, as this volume attests, is currently making a major contribution to nursing research. Despite the extensive use of grounded theory over the past 30 years and the publication of several landmark methodological textbooks, many issues pertaining to the purpose and use of grounded theory continue to remain unclear. In particular, there is a conspicuous silence about the appropriate application(s) of the grounded theory method and silence about when (and even if ever) it is inappropriately used. In this chapter, I will attempt to situate grounded theory within the domain of qualitative inquiry by exploring the characteristics and strengths of the theory method. In other words, I will consider methodologically, What does grounded theory do best?

Before beginning this discussion, however, two points must be made clear. The first is that there are two dominant schools of

grounded theory that have emerged over recent years, that of Anselm Strauss and that of Barney Glaser (Melia, 1996; Stern, 1994), which immediately creates some tension in this discussion. Wherever necessary, the perspective of each of these schools of grounded theory will be addressed separately. The second point is that I will treat grounded theory as a method—that is, as a particular approach to analyze data that originally evolved through a particular theoretical perspective (i.e., symbolic interactionism). As such, it involves a unique perspective or way of conceptualizing reality using data (Strauss, 1987, p. 5), and particular strategies or techniques designed to meet analytic goals. Although data sources (and the forms of data) remain less clearly specified for grounded theory method ("all is data" [Glaser, 1998, p. 8]), the actual strategies used for data analysis are described in greater detail by grounded theorists than by methodologists for any other qualitative method. Thus, I will be treating grounded theory as a formal and mature qualitative method.

Characteristics of Grounded Theory Research

Completed grounded theory projects have a distinct style and form, one that is easily recognizable as "a grounded theory" study. Distinguishing characteristics of grounded theory are: (a) grounded theory focuses on a process and trajectory, resulting in identifiable stages and phases; (b) it uses gerunds (Glaser, 1978, 1996) indicating action and change; (c) it has a core variable or category (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), a *Basic Social Process* or *Basic Social Psychological Process* (Glaser, 1978) that ties stages and phases of the theory together; and (d) grounded theory is abstract (as is all theory), but it is unique in that it makes the synthesis of descriptive data readily apparent through its concepts and relational statements. Thus, grounded theory is usually aimed at producing mid-range theories.

Can scientific results be labeled "grounded theory" without these characteristics? Probably not. Notwithstanding the researcher's claims about "doing" grounded theory, without these essential theoretical structures the study is not grounded theory, and certainly not a good grounded theory study.

The Nature of Theory in Grounded Theory

The theory that is derived from grounded theory is typically a substantive mid-range theory. That is, it is most frequently focused on a behavioral concept, such as trust, resilience, caring, coping, and so forth, or on an interesting behavioral phenomenon. In early grounded theory method books (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), an inquiry into a concept or topic of interest was clearly described as a process with the resulting theory consisting of phases and stages. Such theory was built around a Basic Social Process (BSP) which comprises of either a Basic Social Psychological Process (BSPP) or a Basic Social Structural Process (BSSP) or core category (Glaser, 1978, p. 142; 1996, p. 135) or central category (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 146). The BSP/BSPP is a central theme that unites all categories and explains most of the variation among the data. The trajectural nature of grounded theory is further constructed with concept labels identified as gerunds (labels ending in "-ing") (Glaser, 1996), and categories and concepts built by identifying "strategies" or "influencing factors." In fact, when listing grounded theories in nursing by "knowledge clusters," Benoleil (1996) uses these processes or influencing factors as subheadings, such as "Interventions and interactional processes by nurses" or "Psychological processes of vulnerable people."

How crucial is process to grounded theory?[1] Strauss and Corbin (1998) write:

> . . . bringing process into the analysis is essential. Process can be the organizing thread or central category of a theory, or it can take a less prominent role. Regardless of the role it plays, process can be thought of as the difference between a snapshot and a moving picture. . . Theory without process is missing a vital part of its story—how the action/interaction evolves. (p. 179)

They also add that:

> [process is] a series of evolving sequences of action/interaction that occur over time and space, changing or sometimes remaining the

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[1]Interestingly, in their Overview, Strauss and Corbin (1994) do not discuss process at all in the distinguishing features for grounded theory.

> same in response to the situation or context. The action/interaction may be strategic, taken in response to problematic situations, or it may be quite routine. . . It may be orderly, interrupted, sequential, or coordinated—or in some cases a complete mess. What makes the action/interaction process is its evolving nature and its varying forms, rhythms, and pacing all related to some purpose. (p. 165)

How significant is *process* to grounded theory? Process implies a beginning and an end, an antecedent and a consequence, that is, some level of causality. Ideally, this means that in order to identify a trajectory, data should be temporal, similar to stories with a beginning, middle, and end. As opposed to "snippet data" (that is, data that is obtained in response to a question in a focus group or semi-structured interview), grounded theory data should be in a form by which the process and its structure can be readily identified. Therefore the narrative form, with events told as they unfold, is best suited for grounded theory data. Initially, participants who have experienced the phenomena or who have lived through the experience should be invited to "tell their stories" so that an overview of the process may be obtained. This structure then forms the sampling frame for purposely selecting other participants or structuring observations. Once the researcher has a broad overview of the process then sampling may be directed to transitions, critical junctures or significant points in the process, or observations targeted to significant events. Such strategies are the beginnings of theoretical sampling.

In this way, obtaining accounts of the whole event provides, at least, a preliminary understanding of the domain or of "what is going on." Comprehension (Morse, 1997) will thus be achieved earlier and faster than if the researcher worked prospectively, "going through" the experience with participants. This structure may facilitate the identification of the stages and phases; it may assist in the identification of critical junctures or points that may account for variation in data. At the very least, it provides the researcher with an important understanding of the context.

Can grounded theory be conducted using snippet data from focus groups or semi-structured questionnaires? These data are obtained from conversations and they rarely contain the continuous in-depth stories that the retrospective accounts from unstructured interviews

do. The disjointedness of the data structure in focus group data makes incorporation of these data into grounded theory clumsy and slow. Therefore, these data are used to supplement data in particular areas once the basic structure has been identified on the basis of narratives.

The key to grounded theory is that psychosocial process is discoverable. This "process" is not simply the temporal linking of day-to-day events to construct the grounded theory itself. The theory that emerges is not obvious and doing grounded theory is not easy, simple or fast. Rather, it is the processes of analysis, the strategies and techniques of coding, categorizing, and re-categorizing, that place data in a form that enables the discovery of the BSP, BSPP, BSSP, the core variable or category.

Theoretical Form

The fact that grounded theory is problem-focused and directed towards a process requires the theoretical structure be typically one of linked stages and phases. Categories identified in the data are developed as concepts and then linked as a trajectory. The theory is usually categorized as mid-range; while it is not usually obvious, it is also not complex; it is often diagrammed and organized around a central theme (basic processes or core variables/categories). Can the theory have two or more competing major basic processes or major core variables/categories? Perhaps, but this is rarely seen. The basic processes or core variables/categories appear to serve the purpose of focusing the researcher, so that a second set, if identified, is often poorly integrated into the theory. Perhaps, pushed by the pressure to publish on the basis of the same data, researchers sometimes use a second major core variable. Furthermore, if the basic processes or core variables/categories reveal a converse case (for instance, the ability to do . . . and the ability not to do . . .), these two processes may be diagrammed as different processes, in different theoretical schemes, rather than expressed in the same model. For example, with Bottorff, I was required to develop two models of different structures to illustrate breast-feeding mothers' ability and inability to express breast milk (Morse & Bottorff, 1988). At first glance, these two processes should logically be integrated in the

same model, however, it was elucidated that these two processes are, in fact, not opposing parts of the same phenomenon. The fact that the inability to express breast milk follows a different pattern than the ability to express (and the converse is not a mirror image of the first pattern), shows the value of grounded theory and the surprises that occur with its uses.

Focusing, while arguably essential for developing theory, has two ramifications. Firstly, it somewhat limits the explanatory value of the theory by keeping it narrow in scope. This is a mixed blessing. For students it ensures that their work remains manageable as a thesis or dissertation. On the other hand, it may also artificially restrict or simplify reality, thereby omitting processes that are significant or that transect the process under study. For example, hope is an important concept that assists individuals when emerging from suffering and likewise merges with the concept of suffering. But a grounded theory focusing on suffering would only address this junction—it would not necessarily explore hope as it did not relate to suffering. This could be resolved by exploring the topic more comprehensively through the use of multiple grounded theories or other techniques such as linking concepts (Morse & Penrod, 1999). Secondly, focusing on producing only one core variable keeps the theory astonishingly neat and in the lower mid-range level of abstraction. As I will discuss later, decontextualization, while essential, simplifies reality and results in its partial representation.

Type of Data

What type of data is best for the development of grounded theory? This is an area in which there is some disagreement among grounded theorists. Originally, grounded theory was conducted in a research setting, using both observational and interview data. Strauss notes that such data should be experiential (Strauss, 1987). However, in a recent review article Benoliel (1996) observed the trend away from using observational data, to a reliance on unstructured interviews, which are often not conducted in the research setting.

Let us return to the process criterion. As mentioned, one of the ways that grounded theory is more easily developed, making a process more readily identifiable, is to use data that are continuous over

time. Unstructured retrospective interviews, in which participants tell their stories about some event from beginning to end, are a natural foundation on which researchers may identify processes. As participants volunteer their stories, these stories provide data that incrementally build the processes and strategies needed to derive grounded theory.

I have learned the hard way—by struggling to develop grounded theory from interviews that do not have this sequential form or from observational data that were not linked overall—that continuous narrative data are essential. That is, observational data are "snapshots" of a process—field notes record short periods of observations rather than a continuous overview of the process. Such observations may be micro-analytic glimpses—glimpses that do not readily meld to process for developing theory. For instance, observations may be of a particular type of touch, and while the touch itself does provide information and fit into the theoretical scheme, the information does not fit with the developing theory on types of relationships or is not easily understood without the overriding theoretical scheme.

Therefore, researchers should be attentive to the collection of data and the type of data collected for grounded theory analysis. As mentioned earlier, focus group data are not amenable to grounded theory. As conversations about certain topics or opinions, these data contain few stories. Although participants may agree, even nonverbally, these data do not reappear in different forms (as occurs with a saturated data set), and they contain little replication in the sense that is required for saturation. At best, focus group data may be considered disjointed "snapshot" data, poorly suited to grounded theory. These data are not in a continuous form and are not best suited for developing grounded theory.

Let's consider other examples. Interviews may be a collection of short accounts about a topic, and these topics may not be linked to one another—they may be presented as separate, even unrelated, incidents. For instance, one project in which data resisted being molded into grounded theory was one on developing nurse-patient relationships (Morse, 1991). Eventually, data were presented as a list of characteristics, and types of developing relationships were presented in separate lines and not linked elegantly as grounded theory should be. I now understand the underlying problem as being one of competing perspectives. Interaction data (and the methods

used by interaction theorists, such as observational method and conversational analysis) do not provide the retrospective, reflective data needed for understanding relationships. Thus, relationship theorists, including grounded theorists, must use retrospective interviews.[2]

Thus the form of data collected demands that certain studies should be analyzed by certain methods. To ignore these criteria that make grounded theory possible neither renders it an easy process nor does it permit the best product to be developed. Data are forced into the form required in order for the researcher to *think* as a grounded theorist.

Level of Development

The lower to mid-range level of abstraction of grounded theory that so excellently explicates behavioral concepts and behavioral phenomena does not handle broad topics well. For example, with broad topics such as Chronic Illness and the Quality of Life (Strauss, Corbin, Fagerhaugh, et al., 1984) where the focus is less explicit, the context overwhelms and it reads like an ethnographic study.

One strength of grounded theory is its ability to recognize patterns (typologies) of behaviors. While some criticize this approach as removing and simplifying the individual experience, if the theory remains grounded in data, it permits the individual voices to remain. Glaser's (1998) recent admonishment against using recording and transcription, however, limits the ability of the researcher to use the participants' quotations and consequently the ability of the researcher to truly ground the study. Glaser's advice is odd and appears to counter the very principles that Glaser himself advocates.

Keeping grounded theory grounded also limits the level of abstraction. If theory must remain grounded in data, the researcher is restricted—all concepts used must be demonstratedly linked to data.

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[2]This important point escapes Silverman (1998) who does not appreciate the difference between these methods and their results. Using the inappropriate method to answer a question is not a matter of disciplinary preference and perspective (as Silverman suggests), but a matter of validity and methodological coherence (i.e., using the most appropriate methods to answer the question).

The solution to this problem of developing formal theory from substantive theory begs the question: Because formal theory is decontextualized, is it still grounded? Should it be? Or is it adequate that conceptual linkages "ground" this type of theory?

Processes of decontextualization raise the level of abstraction of a theory by moving it to higher level concepts and, in the process, remove it from the particular context. In this way, the level of generalizability of the theory is increased. The removal of the theory from a particular context eliminates its groundedness—its links to the particular, to the participants, and to the context in which it was created. Linkages to the literature and to established concepts are stronger. Again, is such a theory still grounded theory? I believe formal grounded theory continues to be grounded theory because the structure retains its distinctiveness. Process remains evident and the stages, phases, and core variable remain intact. At the same time, the theory is applicable to many more situations and contexts.

Use of Induction

The inductive nature of grounded theory was specifically developed to permit creativity and freedom. Glaser (1998) specifically warns the researcher against exploring the literature before commencing data collection, as it may move the researcher too quickly toward completing analysis. There is less chance of forcing or trying to fit the established knowledge. Thus, unique insight into reality and original theory is more likely to be developed from grounded theory.

Such a naíve perspective as working without consulting the literature may be possible for a senior investigator with a vast knowledge of social science theory with many concepts at his or her fingertips and with real theoretical wisdom. However, ignoring the literature is a strategy that is fraught with danger for a new investigator. Literature should not be ignored but rather "bracketed" and used for comparison with emerging categories. Without a theoretical context to draw on, new investigators find themselves rapidly mired in data—the very state that Glaser himself warns against. Or as Brink (1991) noted:

> There are a lot of students out there who cannot think creatively. They are so concrete! They don't have that incredible flight of fantasy that is needed to be a good qualitative researcher. They don't have

> the ability to make connections. When they see two pieces of data they say, "Oh, well, I've got two pieces of data! I've got that, and I've got that, and now what do I do?" (p. 300)

New investigators also lack the confidence to trust their own capabilities to create worthwhile research. Being able to compare their findings with others gives them a springboard into the analytic process.

This creative license and the admonishment to ignore the work of others is rapidly producing a rather interesting problem in grounded theory literature. As investigators develop their own set of concept labels in each study, they tend to ignore others' work, refusing to compare their labels with those used by others for the same or very similar concepts. A scramble to identify unique concept labels exists as if a unique name for a concept indicates that a new concept itself has been discovered. Knowledge is becoming redundant, rather than creatively new and exciting. Our literature is becoming noisy and cluttered. Thus we are developing a situation where researchers publish minor studies without linking or situating their studies within the literature pertaining to that topic. The recent trend towards meta-analysis means that researchers must decide, without the benefit of the original data, if two investigators are addressing the same or different concepts. I cannot emphasize strongly enough that the task of associating studies by using the same concept name is the responsibility of the investigator and we must work towards developing more theoretical cohesion among studies.[3] Further, any research under the guise of qualitative meta-analysis is nothing more than "label-smoothing" and does not, as meta-analysis should, develop new models of greater explanatory power.

Stern (1996) provides us with an interesting conceptual framework for women's health in which she uses established theoretical codes from Glaser and Strauss to identify the dimensions for women's health. She links these codes to her data and the work of others. Without the literature such theoretical richness is neither feasible nor possible.

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[3]This contains the caveat that, in order to preserve induction, these labels must be identified and applied after one's analysis is completed.

Tolerance of Variation

One of grounded theory's greatest strengths is the challenge it presents to researchers to actively seek variation. While remaining focused on the concept, the grounded theorist's deliberate listing of all data characteristics, comparing and contrasting, coding and verifying, and the purposeful seeking and saturation of negative case sampling ensures rich, dense, comprehensive results. If conducted well, grounded theory is valid, strong, and powerful.

Paradoxically, variation in the sample ensures that bias, while used as a sampling technique, is removed from the final product. The completed theory is presented as a balanced and well-rounded explanatory description of the topic. Note that the active seeking of variation and incorporating it into a model ensures validity. This is one of the major and most important strengths of the method.

The Soundness of Theory in Grounded Theory

Processes of theoretical construction of grounded theory are unique and systematic processes of conjecture and verification that are the hallmarks of grounded theory methods. It is the incremental development of the theory that is verified with data each step of the way, not the overall verification or theory testing that is conducted after the grounded theory is completed—a point that is confused when discussed by Dey (1999).

Miller and Fredericks (1999) attribute this inductive/deductive process to the processes of discovery and justification used widely in social science, noting that they do not exclude processes of interpretation. Furthermore, as both Glaser and Strauss emphasize causality, the theory produced by grounded theory methods may predict and explain. The result is a very solid and useful theory.

Elsewhere, I have argued that these processes of verification inherent in the construction of theory result in a product that closely resembles reality (Morse, 1997), giving it top marks for validity and representativeness. It remains as theory, however, because of its abstract nature (Morse, 1997).

The Strengths of Grounded Theory

Excellent grounded theory is an elegant, useful and valid research method and, as such, it has made an important contribution to understanding society's problems. It has been particularly useful for students as its methods and strategies are well described and it keeps students focused, producing research that is manageable for a thesis or dissertation. But if we ask "What makes grounded theory a grounded theory?" most likely we will get the answer that it is a study that is "grounded in the data." Unless, however, there is something unique about "grounded," this is not a comprehensive definition, as all qualitative studies are "grounded in data."

What is grounded? When "appropriate data" were explored above, we found that the form of data played a significant role in the development of grounded theory. The characteristics of these data were continuous over time, experiential, readily conceptualizable, and of adequate variation. Are these unique characteristics? Perhaps. Grounded theory is less concerned with a particular context, cultural perspectives, and world views than ethnography. It is more concerned with how participants create and respond to experiences rather than, as with ethnography, what they think or how they perceive their world.

Nonetheless, "grounded" has something to do with the development of theory from data, and this resulting theory must therefore remain linked to those data. That is, while abstract, the theory must also remain embedded in the context, which is usually presented as the lives of participants. It, therefore, best answers questions that focus on the experiences of participants, documenting their responses through an event. This is probably why grounded theory has played such an important role in nursing. It best answers the concerns and questions that are important to our discipline, such as the illness experience.

Because of the reliance of grounded theory on theoretical form, it is essential for the researcher to understand grounded theory as a method before attempting to do grounded theory. This understanding could be obtained from a mentor, from participating in a seminar or from reading excellent examples of published grounded theory. Strauss is right that grounded theory is a way of thinking

about data, about reality. Thus, learning to think as a grounded theorist is a necessary prerequisite to doing grounded theory.

Identifying the strengths of grounded theory by implication, identifies those data types and research questions that are best answered using other methods. Grounded theory does not answer broad questions well—ones that could be better answered by surveys, or where the context plays a significant role. In such cases, ethnographic methods should be used.[4] Theory is easier to develop if data is continuous, therefore fractionated data, such as focus group or observational data should not be used alone in the process of developing theory.

In conclusion, grounded theory does not do all things equally well—it does have a particular niche in qualitative research. Grounded theory best analyzes processes and identifies complex and hidden processes. As noted by Glaser, the research question that begs to be answered through grounded theory is: "What is going on here?"

As an analytic tool, does grounded theory take into account all data equally easily? The end product is rich and complex theories—theory with a distinctive form. Grounded theories provide excellent representations of reality that enlighten and excite. Results create new knowledge that informs practice.

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[4]For a complete discussion of the appropriate qualitative research method according to the type of question, see Morse (1994).

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CHAPTER 2

Early Grounded Theory: Its Processes and Products

Phyllis Noerager Stern and Eleanor Krassen Covan

In the 1960s, Helen Nahm, then Dean of the School of Nursing at the University of California–San Francisco (UCSF), spearheaded the development of a doctoral program in nursing. At the time, few nurses held advanced degrees and only a handful of those in nursing. Nahm had the foresight to bring to the school a cadre of sociologists in order to give the program a solid scientific/theoretical base. She was able to recruit Anselm Strauss from his position at Indiana University. Strauss was a social psychologist who entered his doctoral studies at the University of Chicago in 1939. At the urging of his advisor, Herbert Blumer (1954, 1969/1986), Strauss enrolled in a course developed by George Herbert Mead on social interactionism (1931/1967). The course still bore Mead's name even though he died several years earlier—such was the esteem in which he was held at the University of Chicago. Blumer regarded Mead with such reverence that Strauss became steeped in the philosophy of symbolic interactionism. When Nahm recruited Strauss for a position at UCSF, he welcomed the opportunity to build his own program

in medical sociology based on the symbolic interactionist paradigm. He thought doing so within a school of nursing offered advantages. First, he would be working with nurses, those health professionals whose interaction with patients was greatest, and second, he believed that he would not have to waste time convincing nursing students to reject the dominant sociological paradigm of the era: structural functionalism and its statistical hypothetical-deductive methods of data analysis.

Strauss recruited like-minded sociologists including Leonard Schatzman, Fred Davis, and, most importantly for the focus of this book, Barney Glaser, a protégé of Paul Lazarsfeld of Columbia University. Glaser studied quantitative analytic methods with Lazarsfeld, who generated a name for himself in the field of qualitative statistics when he designed a statistical model of hypothetical relationships for use in attitude studies. However, when he met Strauss, Glaser was more interested in developing sociological theory based on real world situations. The pair agreed that hospitals and nurses would provide those situations.

In this space, we provide a historical perspective of grounded theory, both because we think it is important evidence that will contribute to our knowledge of Glaser and Strauss' intent when they introduced the method, and because it gives you, the reader, an orientation to how this method originated, and what it has become. As well, we consider the early years a period in time that needs to be preserved for future generations of grounded theorists.

In their early years at UCSF, Glaser and Strauss received funding for what Glaser called, "a study of the consequences of who knows what about patients who happen to be dying in hospitals." The classic work, *Awareness of Dying* (1965) was the first product of that research. In the process of doing the "dying study," this pair of geniuses realized (discovered) that the method they were using was something new; they kept the important philosophy of symbolic interactionism, but Glaser added a systematic, disciplined approach of qualitative factor analysis that stemmed from his familiarity with quantitative data analysis. Using the language of the "famous men" of science, Glaser was able to demonstrate the reliability and validity of qualitative analysis. The researchers named their new method "grounded theory" and together they blended their careers. They studied the interaction between social psychological and social structural pro-

cesses in the context of organizations. They spread the word by publishing the book, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (1967).

Although in the early 1970s Glaser and Strauss were still developing their methodology, they began immediately to transmit their ideas to students. Into this exciting context we enrolled as doctoral students, Covan in the newly developed doctorate program in medical sociology and Stern in the Doctor of Nursing Science Program. In both programs students were expected to produce original research. Following the European model, students enrolled only in course work or independent study that had clear implications for the research they planned to do. Students were graduates of master's programs and thus judged to be sufficiently knowledgeable about their particular fields to go forward as serious investigators. The experience we lacked was in completing a successful independent research project. For example, Stern planned to study stepfather families and hence took courses in family interaction and therapy, while Covan, interested in what was universal about social aging, became immersed in a collection of ethnographies on non-industrial societies.

The Players

While earning her AB and MA in sociology at Temple University, Covan was attracted to courses taught by Robert Bell, Michael Gordon, and Mark Hutter, not knowing at the time that each of these men had studied sociology with a student of George Herbert Mead. Other Temple University faculty were structural functionalists, thus Covan, like Glaser, was trained to test structural functional hypotheses using the tools of survey research. Bell became Covan's first sociology mentor and it was he who suggested that she use these tools pragmatically to find employment. Covan obtained a position as research associate at the Philadelphia Geriatric Center (PGC), designing questionnaires, coding open-ended interviews, and "crunching" quantitative data. Her colleagues at PGC encouraged her to broaden her methodological skills by studying for her doctorate somewhere other than Temple University, especially since Covan believed she could learn more from spending time with older adults than from the numbers she was manipulating about them.

Covan was influenced by Bell and did not think she really needed a doctorate. Bell had achieved the rank of full professor at Temple with only a master's degree from Indiana University. Nevertheless, she applied to UCSF when her former husband's research career brought both of them to California.

Stern earned her RN via a three-year diploma program at Mount Zion Hospital School of Nursing in San Francisco. It was during World War II, and her education was paid for under the federally funded Cadet Nurse Program. After graduating, she worked as a "floor nurse" in various facilities in California and Arizona until age 39, only taking time out to birth and nurse her daughter. In 1965, after her mother's death, Stern, her spouse and her daughter, moved by her aging father's loneliness left Arizona for Stern's childhood home in San Carlos, California. After a year's sabbatical, Stern realized that she had the opportunity to complete her education; California schools were affordable and close to home. Her intention was to complete a baccalaureate degree. Because the environment of academia seemed bizarre to her, she began taking courses at the College of San Mateo, which offered the associate degree. In the 1960s, re-entering women students were rare, their numbers were scattered across the college campus: fortyish women strode among the younger generation with beatific smiles on their faces. With children near to leaving home, these women finally made time for themselves. They studied courses that had always interested them, and focused intently on satisfying their thirst for knowledge. Stern earned good grades, thus gaining the courage to continue. After studying basic science and literature for two years, she moved ahead to complete her undergraduate work at San Francisco State University where Rheba de Tournyay chaired the department of nursing. De Tournyay also earned her diploma in nursing at Mount Zion, two years after Stern entered, so they knew one another by sight. De Tournyay became an important role model, earning her doctoral degree while in middle age and taking a progressive role in the national welfare of the nursing profession. She inspired Stern to make the second half of her life academically and professionally productive. During her undergraduate years. Stern was often told by student colleagues that she would make a good teacher. The fact that she had experience as a professional nurse helped her understand what faculty tried to make clear to other students, most

of whom were inexperienced women in late adolescence. So Stern applied to the MS program in nursing at the UCSF. Following graduation, she landed a teaching position at California State University, Hayward, only to learn that in order to be put on tenure track, she needed a doctoral degree. Stanford, where she applied first, refused to consider her because she was over 40. She applied to the DNS program at UCSF and was put on a waiting list. She was finally accepted and enrolled in 1973. Stern, socialized as a "floor nurse," entered the program with fear and trepidation, not sure it would work out.

Interestingly, both Covan and Stern chose UCSF for graduate study, not because of the famous men that Glaser and Strauss had become, but because of Leonard Schatzman. Schatzman and Bell had been roommates at Indiana University. It was Bell who suggested that Covan investigate UCSF where she might study qualitative research with his friend Schatzman. Stern had heard one research lecture from Schatzman during her master's program at UCSF and it was when he said, "I can never tell what's going on in a guy's mind unless I ask him" that she thought, "I could do that kind of research."

Learning Grounded Theory

We met one another in a series of mysterious classes presumptuously named "The Discovery of Social Reality." We began the series with a seminar on fieldwork taught by Schatzman and Virginia Oleson. The following quarter, Strauss began teaching "data analysis" but soon Strauss persuaded Glaser to take over the discovery sequence, thinking it might help him write a follow-up book on grounded theory, which became *Theoretical Sensitivity* (Glaser, 1978). Glaser resisted at first and his resistance showed. During his first class period, he announced to the 12 individuals there that there were too many students and invited some to leave. At the time, we thought him unreasonable, but now that we have taught doctoral students using grounded theory, we understand how much time and effort it takes to see a student through to completion of a dissertation. Mixed in with the sociology students were a handful of nurses, and Glaser made it clear that he didn't think nursing students belonged. Since the medical sociology program was housed in the School of Nursing,

he was, however, stuck with us. After a few months of lectures filled with sociological concepts, the only nurse doctoral student remaining was Stern. Admittedly, Stern found the sociological jargon a mystery, but stuck it out thinking that through osmosis, one day she would understand.

Covan, for her part, was as resistant to her student role as was Glaser to his as instructor. She had learned that statistics were valued in the world of social researchers and Glaser's "trust me" approach did not convince her that qualitative findings based on grounded theory would be well received. This attitude is common in students enrolled in process learning courses, while undergoing the process, they feel at sea, unable to see the shore. Now that we have learned it, it is clear to us that process learning is the only way to teach grounded theory, but we find students become as confused and uncertain as we were initially. Most students are not as outspoken as Covan, but there's always one, and in our class, Covan was that one. Covan reminded Glaser that she had conducted survey research with Philadelphia Geriatric Center gerontologists whom she clearly regarded as the ultimate authority on matters of aging. Because neither Glaser nor Covan felt reluctant to defend their points of view, Covan became the continual questioner of the class, voicing one challenge after another to grounded theory, raising points that others only thought about. One day Glaser, pushed beyond his endurance, fired off the salvo, "I think you're disrupting the class!" to which Stern, nurse and advocate to the end, responded, "I think it helps all of us understand." Covan and Stern became allies then and forever. Eventually, Glaser began to see the benefit of Covan's questions and soon thereafter Covan ran out of challenges.

The book Glaser was writing was *Theoretical Sensitivity* (Glaser, 1978). In those days, prior to computer-generated "cutting" and "pasting" of a manuscript, his lecture notes were a tattered mess of scotch-taped phrases. During the beginning weeks of the class, as Glaser ("My name is Barney") elucidated various processes of his method, he invited students to write memos about what they understood. Several of those memos, including answers to Covan's questions and those of our classmates found their way into *Theoretical Sensitivity*.

Glaser made it clear that he had little respect for what others saw as scholarship. He said that people who know everything that is

written about a given topic, make a career out of studying trivia such as who wrote what and dates of publication. Glaser stated that they seemed to have scarce time to produce new knowledge and what they produced tended to follow closely what was already known. We were led to believe that Strauss shared this view. Strauss and Glaser wanted us to be familiar with those writers who did produce good theoretical studies. Glaser introduced us to an exercise for reviewing literature that he and Strauss devised, an exercise they called, "little logics." The point of the exercise was to read enough of a given work to understand the writer's meaning and what she or he had to offer. To do this students read the introduction, the conclusion, and one or two chapters in order to get the author's message. He explained that no one can read everything and still be prolific in one's own right: "Don't read great men, be a great man [sic]."

Glaser also exhorted us to be economical with our dissertation proposals because the real work of data collection, analysis, and writing the research report are the important elements in a grounded theory study. This is a far different approach than most doctoral committees demand today. A committee member from our cohort shudders at the sight of a 50-page proposal with an extensive literature review, which may be of little or no use when the student researcher discovers the dominant concept in the data. It seems to be an exercise set forth to satisfy the needs of committee members who wish to demonstrate that they demand "scholarship." While it is true that a proposal written for *funding* needs such a literature review in order to convince reviewers that the study is worthy of funding and that the applicant has done preliminary work, literature reviews for dissertation proposals could be much more concise. Stern's proposal covered 10 pages. Covan needed only five pages to convince Strauss and Glaser of her project's worth, as she had already received funding for her dissertation to examine ethnographies for accounts of intergenerational interaction. It helped that her work was part of a much larger cross-cultural study of aging in non-industrial societies.

The Enterprise

Following two or three months of what turned out to be over a year of seminars, we moved from learning about the process of executing

a good grounded theory to doing one. Students were sent forth to collect data for their particular studies. Many did not progress beyond gaining entrée into the field setting, that is, securing an agreement from the authorities over a given scene to do observations, interviews, and/or examine records. Students were expected to gain entrée on their own. Neither Glaser nor Strauss got involved unless a student was working with one of them as their research assistant.

Data Collection

Tape recorders were available to us, but they were bulky pieces of equipment; therefore most of us relied on field notes written during an interview or observation, and formalized as typed data soon afterward. Strauss once said that the only reason to use a tape recorder was to record ideas if they came quicker than we could type. Glaser assured us that we would remember what was important, that cream flows to the top, and "The mind is a good filter." Typing up interviews immediately after collecting them allowed us to analyze data as we recorded it. Instead of typed interviews, Covan's data were extracted scenes of intergenerational interaction from ethnographies, scenes in which people of different age groups were doing something together or scenes in which an ethnographer discussed relationships among people of different ages. In class, we were each assigned to analyze our data. We brought two or three pages of what we considered to be rich data to share with our classmates. In turns, the class worked with these data.

Analysis

Glaser warned that once we as a group began analyzing data, the excitement created would have an impact on the process—"It goes very fast." Each student submitted data to Glaser the day before the class, thus he had a student's data fresh in his mind as we began to offer overviews. The group identified major processes, "This could be a management study" or "You could focus on economics, allotments." Barney said of the stepfamily study, "It's all about integration, isn't it?" He asked students what problems seemed most important to participants, in other words, what do the players themselves consider the salient problem, a key component in the grounded theory pro-

cess. In Covan's data on intergenerational interaction we recognized that younger people needed the recognition of their elders in order to feel "okay" about themselves. The elders had the power to certify the competence of the youth. Glaser reminded us that the salient problem only appeared to differ for young and old, but that modeling included processes that were obviously interdependent and reciprocal.

Glaser always asked the students questions, "What else is going on? It's your data, you know more about it than anyone." He made it clear that we owned our data, that we were captains of our own studies, that it was our job to make our mark, to become famous.

Existing Knowledge

Steps in producing grounded theory are done in synchrony, rather than in sequence. Therefore, when a researcher is fairly confident that a variable or process has relevance for the scene, she or he wants to know what other authors have written about it. For example, when Stern became aware that integration was a developmental need for stepfather families, and the families made it clear that their chief problem was agreement over discipline, she searched libraries for major works on integration, childrearing, and discipline, looking for anything that earlier researchers had discovered that might help in the analysis of her data. Covan, on the other hand, read the claims of others concerning universal social processes. She reviewed Durkheim's work on the Aranda (1915/1965) because he claimed to be studying elementary (universal) forms of religious life and because the data analyzed by Durkheim were about intergenerational interaction (older men teaching young men the secrets of initiation into male society). Next, after discovering that the impact of constructing social fences was keeping groups apart, she reviewed the work of Frank W. Young who had called the consequence of fences "social rigidity" and the work of Mary Douglas who explained the awe and mystery created by "social borders." Without reference to existing knowledge, even grounded theories remain sterile; a researcher is unable to add to the body of knowledge expected in a research enterprise. In other words, without this step of comparing and coordinating the work of other scholars, a researcher may not

develop his or her theory completely and others may not be able to develop a theory further in the future.

Memoing

Each time we shared slices of data with our classmates, we returned to our data with additional ideas. We continued by writing memos detailing the unfolding theory. These memos served as snapshots for the finished work. Then Glaser and the rest of the class acted as editors for our memos, Barney warning us to keep in mind what the core variable or process seemed to be rather than getting lost in detail. We wrote what seemed to be an endless number of memos, some scratched on paper in the middle of the night, some carefully typed, until we had hundreds. All the while, we helped one another work out the themes of our work—this gave us the opportunity to learn about a number of areas and participate in the analytical process over and over. The work was excruciating, in that the mysteries remained mysteries. The work was frustrating because the data refused to give up their secrets and allow us to reach a theoretical level.

Glaser began to talk about "drugless highs" when breakthroughs would come, but most of us weren't there yet. Like most research methods, learning grounded theory is a process. The process requires doing grounded theory and the process of doing was, at once, frustrating and tantalizing.

Sorting Memos

Once students had a grasp of the main categories in their studies, we began sorting memos together. Finally we began to understand what Glaser meant when he said, "Analysis goes very fast when you sort in terms of your core variable(s)." In these pre-personal computer (PC) times, we sorted by hand, making labels and piling memos under rubrics—sometimes adding, "Also goes to fencing," for memos that seemed to overlap. Sorting one another's memos, we learned to think of grounded theory itself as a social process, parts of which are best done as group work. We gave a part of ourselves to each of our classmate's studies and in so doing, each of us also devoted more to our own work.

Writing the Research Report

Following the social activity of analyzing one another's data, writing proved to be a lonely, laborious business, for the analysis continues during the writing process. It's yet another chance to make sure that what you write is true to the data. Clear writing proves to be vital to the process of grounded theory research. The core variable, the categories, and the properties seem so clear when one finally defines them, but beginning researchers, on the first try, usually fail to explain them adequately to the uninitiated.

We continued to check in with our cohort by phone as we discussed what we had written that day and asked, "Does that seem right to you?" We, Covan and Stern, often consulted each other as colleagues although our dissertation topics were diverse. We commented on the progress of one another's enterprise, supported flagging spirits, and shared our anger over giving up our lives to the dissertation enterprise. We made a good team and learned much from each other that would be helpful throughout our careers. Stern learned about major sociological themes, while Covan learned about nursing.

Richness of the Scene

In those beginning years, students had the benefit of the closeness of both Glaser and Strauss. Glaser was at once more effusive and more critical, Strauss, softer in manner yet equally demanding. Schatzman was there to soften the messages and help students understand difficult material. Nursing students had the advantage of a small coterie of faculty members who understood the requirements of grounded theory and concentrated on findings rather than plans (proposals). Of the nursing faculty, Shirley Chater proved to be a godsend. She taught students the politics of gaining a doctorate and the care with which one must choose a committee. As a mentor for all time, she helped students work out the problems of a study by asking them to explain the work to her, an excellent way for students having trouble clarifying.

All of our mentors encouraged us to do "good work." Strauss often noted, "The good work of my students provides me with the greatest of compliments." His medical sociology students had the

entire department at their disposal, but in those days the department pivoted around the leadership of Anselm Strauss. This meant that while all the faculty were there to help, they competed with one another for the attention and praise of Strauss. While all had great respect for him, they didn't necessarily like each other. Students thus worked with faculty in a context of jealousy, competition, and academic rivalry. In the context of this model of academia, that doctoral students worked so well together in developing grounded theories was remarkable.

Early Lasts but a Short Time

All of that is history. As time passed, other authors wrote about grounded theory and how to do it. Lincoln & Guba (1985) advised investigators to do an "audit trail," following a study in order to identify the data from which a given category arose and which discovery led to the next. Our mentors would have considered this exercise a waste of time, as clear answers to these questions should be found in the dissertation. With the invasion of technology, investigators have not only come to rely on it but also consider avoiding its use as heresy. Morse (this volume), for example, seems aghast that Glaser advises researchers that using a tape recorder allows one to collect and then to analyze meaningless data. While it is true that when one has an inexperienced research assistant, tape recording may be necessary, but anyone who has plowed through pages of irrelevant, transcribed data must agree with Glaser. Is Morse suggesting that generations of researchers who lived prior to electronic equipment created theoretical frameworks that were weakened because a word or two might be skipped? Is the issue one of trust or of verification? We can only speculate, but our collective heritage suggests that recording every word informants utter is not necessary in producing sound grounded theory. Grounded theory is the process of explaining social psychological and social structural processes, and requires only that we study these processes in the context of social interaction.

With this in mind, perhaps readers will understand why most early students of Glaser and Strauss reject focus groups when collecting data for grounded theory work. As a symbolic interactionist, Strauss

in particular was uncomfortable with data collected in contrived situations. While focus groups offer advantages for researchers, many voices and points of view emerge simultaneously and analysis seems to proceed more quickly. There is ample evidence that most of us are not ourselves in such settings. Ready access to PCs has encouraged many researchers to use text-management (TM) programs to help them analyze their data and to speed up the analysis process. Strauss once told Covan that NUD*IST was not too bad but that the researcher's eye was more reliable. Glaser (1998) also resists because he reasons that, "The time it takes to learn the program could be better spent getting on with the work." In truth, unless the beginning researcher understands that any computer program simply serves as a tool to the investigator, that it is the mind of the student that creates and refines the conceptual framework, she or he is in danger of discovering a thin analysis that fails to illuminate the problems and processes in the scene.

A number of researchers who have read grounded theories want to manipulate their data using the method, and they proceed to study grounded theory processes from a book or from a professor who learned it from a book. Stern (1994) calls this kind of learning, "minus mentoring." Instead of having experts present to rely on as we did, these students consult experts only when they discover how to reach well-known, long-distance scholars for help. For example, Glaser and his colleagues established an ongoing forum "Grounded Theory Institute" (1999), that can be found on the World Wide Web (Stern, 2000). Covan recently offered a workshop on grounded theory to doctoral students at Khon Kaen University in northeastern Thailand. Before leaving the campus, she advised students to continue the workshops with one another and to consult her through cyberspace when necessary. Through this interactive intervention, students who would otherwise flounder can gain valuable help. Schreiber (this volume) writes about the "Grounded Theory Club" established by students of the method at the University of Victoria. This learning group includes graduates of academic environments where grounded theory is accepted and where they can call on experts. These disciples, in turn, can then call on experts outside of the group to contribute to the advancement of knowledge for all the group's members. All of these process groups harken back to the beginning of grounded theory.

Products of Early Grounded Theory

Grounded theory, created in the 20th century, is widely used by nurse researchers, marketing professionals, and researchers in education. Life in the early 21st century differs from the last in that there seems to be less social freedom. In the 1960s, the social scene was ripe for innovations; after all, the hippies meant to change the world. What they did not count on was that basic human nature is consistent and that it has been commonplace for each succeeding generation to try to improve upon the model of those who preceded them. Because of the consistency of human nature over time, well-developed theories about social interaction are lasting. Symbolic interactionism is one of these, one which many scholars of disciplines make use of: anthropology, social psychology, and social work. Our job as students was to strive to develop theories of like durability. Being late "Blumers" seemed an awesome responsibility but, in praise of Glaser and Strauss, both of them expected their students to go forth and be wonderful. Most of us did. Covan developed a theory of the relationship between elder modelers and their protégés (1998, in press) that is as relevant today as it was when she discovered it (Krassen-Maxwell, 1978). In every social organization including academic ones, powerful, experienced teachers mentor less experienced protégés. Stern's research on stepfather families (1978, 1982) remains timeless; stepfamilies will always go through a process of integration, and their most pressing problem, because of individual family culture, will be the disciplining of children. As Satir informed us in 1972, "The chances of spouses doing at least some things different from one another are just about 100 percent, as neither was brought up in the same way" (p. 27). The following selected list may give you an idea of what students were able to do, even though they neglected to write a 55-page proposal.

Jeanne Quint Benoliel worked with Glaser and Strauss on the dying study. Some of her data found its way into their series on dying. She was the first graduate of the Doctor of Nursing Science program in 1969. In 1967 she published *The Nurse and The Dying Patient,* which was a "must read" for nursing students in the late 1960s and the 1970s. She has had a distinguished career. In 1996, Benoliel published a landmark paper, "Grounded Theory and Nursing Knowledge," which traced the work nurses have done from the

1960s to the present. Holly Wilson graduated from Berkeley but attended seminars at UCSF and published the first coherent description of the method in *Nursing Research* in 1977. Shizuko Fagerhaugh, who graduated from UCSF in 1975, worked with Strauss after graduating until his death. She is probably best known for her work on chronic illness (Fagerhaugh, 1975; Fagerhaugh & Strauss, 1977). The medical sociology graduates have made important contributions to our knowledge about health. Kathy Charmaz (1990) is known in nursing circles for her writing on grounded theory. Marsha Rosenbaum (1995, 1996), who supported her research on drug abuse through NIH grants from 1977 to 1995, said in a phone call recently, "Barney said we would use grounded theory in ways we never imagined. He was so right." Marsha became the Director of Lindesmith Center in San Francisco in 1996, a political action organization advancing alternate forms of treatment for drug problems.

Our Mission

We put this chapter together for three reasons: first, we wanted to preserve an important bit of history that might otherwise be lost: how Glaser and Strauss formed the model for teaching grounded theory. Second, there have been advances in grounded theory over the years. Jeanne Quint Benoliel, in a phone conversation with Stern (June, 2000) said she thought, although some nurses do fine grounded theory studies, they lack sufficient background in sociology. Stern agrees that because of her association with Covan, a medical sociologist, her insights have been easier to gain. We hope that MacDonald's chapter on health promotion and critical perspectives (chapter 7, this volume) will offer the same kind of assistance to other nurse researchers. Lastly, we fear that some of the essential elements of doing grounded theory have been lost as well-meaning scholars attempt to standardize and contort the basic rituals of the process. For example, attempts to force the standard academic format on a student's research proposal, complete with lengthy literature search, can hamper that student's capacity to see the scene under study with new eyes and thus unleash her or his own creative take on the situation. We repeat that a proposal for funding must include a formal review of current literature. However, funding bod-

ies assume that a grant writer is familiar with the subject area, and funders favor applicants who have done prior research to gain sufficient background for the work. At the end of grounded theory studies, students will have searched the literature pertaining to the participants' identification of *their* problem and how *they* process it. Students who study a topic that they care enough about to choose for the arduous process of doing a dissertation will have cared about the problem over time and read in the subject area. We agree that a thorough understanding of symbolic interactionism is necessary, as is reading the original and subsequent descriptions of how to execute such a study. We also agree that reading good, completed grounded theory studies can help the student "get" the thinking process that goes into such an analysis. But our position is firm about the requirement of a thorough review of the current and classic literature on the research at hand. It is not only a waste of the student's time but also may well distort how she or he both views and analyzes the data. Students must review literature during the process of the research rather than prior to undertaking the study! We write our opinions with the knowledge that, in general, they will be ignored, but some student somewhere, seeing these printed words, may be able to convince some committee that this is the way a grounded theory is done. If that happens, who knows how far the practice may spread.

Early grounded theory, in an informal, exciting way, allowed those who were lucky enough to be there to stretch themselves beyond their expectations. Doing grounded theory becomes addictive; the "drugless high" is the process.

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CHAPTER 3

Constructing and Deconstructing: Grounded Theory in a Postmodern World

Marjorie MacDonald and Rita Sara Schreiber

In the 30 years since the publication of *Discovery of Grounded Theory* (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), the world as we know it has changed dramatically. People living during this period have witnessed the atrocity and loss of faith of the Vietnam and Watergate eras, the end of the Cold War, the dissolution of the Soviet State, and the crumbling of the Berlin Wall. We have seen the wholesale export of American culture throughout the world. People in the overdeveloped world have (or covet) VCRs, TVs, fax machines, cellular phones, and pagers. The globalization of economies is creating businesses larger and more powerful than governments, resulting in job loss, impotent governments, and polarization of wealth. The middle classes are shrinking as unemployed workers join the ranks of the poor. At the same time, the few who control the world's wealth are ensuring their continuing dominance of resources.

The past 30 years have represented a watershed in women's lives. Although some might argue that few real gains have been made, a feminist consciousness, articulated or not, has infiltrated the thinking of an entire generation in the developed world, particularly in those countries in which women have access to education. The publication of the first edition of *Our Bodies, Ourselves* (Boston Women's Health Book Collective, 1973) reflected the beginning of a growing activism of women to reclaim their bodies, their health, and their lives, embracing a recognition and valuing of their ownership and entitlement. At the same time, we have seen a growth in anti-feminist activity, cloaked in the garb of family values and the neoconservative agenda. Some of this can be subtle, as in the downsizing of health care funding (for the greater good of balancing the budget), resulting in increased burden to unpaid, undersupported women caregivers (Wuest & Gray, chapter 8, this volume). This increasing burden for women is justified within the neoconservative rhetoric, which expropriates the language used by women to articulate the complexity of traditional women's work. Thus, at the same time that women have made gains in terms of rights, we have lost ground to the backlash against us (Faludi, 1991).

In these and other ways, the world has changed considerably since Glaser and Strauss first collaborated. These changes reflect what Lyotard (1979/1984) has termed "postmodernity" or "the postmodern condition." Postmodernism, as a philosophical stance, emerged in response to the chaotic and rapidly changing sociopolitical-economic environment. In many ways, it represents an attempt to make sense of the postmodern condition we find ourselves in at the turn of the millennium. Postmodernism represents "a wide ranging cultural movement which adopts a skeptical attitude toward many of the principles and assumptions that have underpinned Western thought and social life for the past few centuries" (Sim, 1998, p. 339). Although the term postmodernism represents considerable variation in thought and belief, there are several key ideas that surface repeatedly in postmodern writings.

We do not pretend to have a comprehensive understanding of postmodern thinking. Indeed, we are still grappling with it even as we write; we beg the reader's indulgence as we explore. This chapter, therefore, represents a work in progress in which we think aloud while inviting dialogue and debate to help us grapple with the chal-

lenges to grounded theory posed by postmodern thinking. In this chapter, we consider some of these ideas, their fit with grounded theory methodology, and the implications for future research practice.

IS GROUNDED THEORY MODERNIST RESEARCH?

Denzin and Lincoln (1994) define five moments of qualitative research: the traditional period, the modernist phase, blurred genres, the crisis of representation, and the fifth moment (in the present). They situate grounded theory at the end of the modernist phase, which ended in the 1970s. Modernism is characterized by a strong belief in human progress that will be achieved by the search for knowledge and truth. Modernists assume that the potential for unlocking the secrets of the universe can be found through the pursuit of knowledge, which they believe is certain, objective, inherently good, and obtainable (Grenz, 1994). Knowledge, in the modernist view, provides the tools for human and planetary salvation. Poverty, war, pollution, cancer, and other social ills can and will be overcome.

Modernist qualitative research, according to Denzin and Lincoln (1994), is characterized by three key features: (a) a quest for respectability, (b) a realist ontology, and (c) a focus on the common (hu)man. The quest for respectability was evident in the movement by qualitative researchers toward formalizing their methods. One aspect of this movement was the adaptation of positivist canons to nonpositivist paradigms. For example, concepts such as reliability, validity, generalizability, and objectivity were used to judge the products and processes of qualitative research. More recently, grounded theorists and others have argued that qualitative research requires its own criteria for judging scientific rigor, and they have proceeded to articulate these criteria (Burns, 1989; Corbin & Strauss, 1990; LeCompte & Goetz, 1982; Lincoln & Guba, 1987; Sandelowski, 1986, 1993).

Another aspect of the modernist quest for respectability was the adaptation of quantitative analytic techniques to qualitative analysis. For example, Glaser (1992) states that the underlying analytic methodology of grounded theory was influenced by the work of Merton, Lazarsfeld, and other quantitative sociologists from Columbia Uni-

versity. Stern, a student of Glaser, has said on many occasions that grounded theory is simply factor analysis using qualitative data (Stern, personal communication). Given his quantitative training, Glaser saw the need for well thought-out, explicitly formulated, and systematic procedures for coding data and testing hypotheses. Other influential qualitative researchers have taken up the banner of modernist respectability with their explication and modification of qualitative analytic techniques that have been influenced by the constant comparative method of grounded theory (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

The second characteristic of modernist qualitative research is its realist ontology. This realism is evident in the original writings about grounded theory. Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Glaser (1978) stress that there is a real world that can be studied and understood if we just "get out there and look for it." Glaser's later work (1992) continued to reflect this realist ontology (Annels, 1997) which contrasts markedly with the more relativist ontology of other qualitative methods.

According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994), the third characteristic of modernist qualitative research is the focus on the common person. Glaser and Strauss (1967) and others (Goffman, 1959, 1963; Mills, 1959; Wolcott, 1973), in rejecting research driven by "theories logically deduced from *a priori* assumptions" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 6), sought their truths in the everyday worlds of ordinary and marginalized people. In studying cocktail waitresses, bums, alcoholics, hospital workers, and dying people, these researchers elevated the status of those studied by drawing attention to the complexity of their experiences. They sought to understand the lives of real people in their everyday worlds, thus enhancing the potential for human emancipation.

Grounded theory, as it was originally conceived, fits neatly within the modernist tradition. The early writers stressed the scientific merit of grounded theory as a methodology and examined the centrality of the "real" world of everyday life. Therefore, when Denzin and Lincoln (1994), Annells (1996), and others describe grounded theory as "modernist," we must agree. The original writings on grounded theory cannot be seen as anything else. This begs the question of whether grounded theory still has a place in the postmodern intellectual landscape.

WHAT IS THE POSTMODERN INTELLECTUAL LANDSCAPE?

Although there are many perspectives on postmodernism, it is characterized by a number of common themes. The central tenet of postmodernism is antifoundationalism, which posits that there is no firm ground or truth on which to base any system of beliefs, philosophical principles, or research methodologies. Not only are there no basic "givens," but also any ideology that is presented as truth is open to challenge. Chief among those givens to be challenged is the acceptance of any sort of grand narrative or theory that offers "universal explanations" (Sim, 1998, p. 261). For example, postmodern feminists have criticized the universalizing tendencies of the feminist grand narrative of emancipation (Thornham, 1998). Christianity and Marxism are other examples of grand narratives since they each lay claim to a monolithic, indisputable, hegemonic "Truth." Grand narratives, however, are not restricted to named ideologies, but also include such things as the modernist belief in progress, which is embedded in our social discourse and communicated through the arts, the media, and social structures.

Related to the notion of antifoundationalism is a profound distrust or outright rejection of authority in all forms and an acceptance of a relativist perspective on the world. This skepticism and rejection of authority, a long-standing philosophical tradition in its own right, took on new meaning in light of the horror of World War II and the enactment of the grand narrative of the "Final Solution." Norris (1990), however, has criticized postmodernism, arguing that postmodernists, in rejecting the authority of ideologies, are nihilistic and offer nothing to replace the undermined philosophies or theories that previously laid claim to truth. This has left people with the dilemma of how to construct meaning and make judgments about good and bad, justice and injustice, in a world without signposts. Lyotard (1979/84) suggests that people can still make these judgments and live meaningfully without resorting to grand narratives or universal principles by considering the specifics of context and situation within which human action occurs. This pragmatic stance is reflected in Lyotard's advocacy of the "little narrative" which represents human action as situated within its own time, place, and person.

Lyotard views the little narrative both as a way of constructing meaning while recognizing and honoring human difference and as a form of resistance against authority.

The notion of "difference" is particularly relevant in postmodern thinking. Postmodernists challenge the ways in which power and ideologies overlook differences in favor of central tendencies. Even the concept of the "norm" is authoritarian in that it excludes or preempts variation in human behavior and reproduces marginalization of those without power. Anything that masks or hides differences is foundational, authoritarian, and to be rejected. Lyotard views the little narrative, with its insistence on deconstructing the particular, as a form of social resistance (Lyotard, 1979/84). At the same time, however, the little narrative may be inherently conservative with its emphasis on "what is" rather than on "what ought to be" as in many of our grand narratives. As a result of the relativist perspective and the rejection of foundational concepts, postmodernists understand that truth is constructed, both individually and collectively. In postmodern thought, truth is multiple and shifting. It reflects the social construction and reconstruction of reality (Anderson, 1990).

In postmodern thinking, everything changes in a cyclic manner marked by a paradoxical sameness and differentness (Anderson, 1990; Appignanesi & Garratt, 1995). Social movements, fashions, and institutions all cycle and recycle throughout history, as culture is produced and reproduced, thus making the reproduction as valid as the original. Indeed, a hallmark of the postmodern aesthetic is the re-appropriation and re-contextualization of older forms (Sims, 1998, p. 350). An everyday example of this re-appropriation is the digitalized re-mix of classic rock and roll music by new artists into hip hop or other music forms through the use of technology. This technological wizardry, as an integral part of the music, has become its own (postmodern) art form. This is illustrated in the following quotation:

> The emergence of "Acid House" as a discernible musical genre in the spring of 1988 completed the ever decreasing circle of revivalism . . . and imploded the past into a permanent (and danceable) present. Relieved of the burden of authenticity and the debt to the pantheon of (male) authorial presences that centralize the cult of the personality within the history of rock, acid music emerged as a

> celebration not of His Master's Voice but of the very technology that brought it into being. (Wakefield, 1990, p. 10)

An important implication flows from this: in postmodermism, there is a new understanding of what constitutes authenticity. Because a reproduction is just as valid as the original production, everything is authentic. Creation and re-creation are ongoing and indistinguishable as people construct their social realities (Anderson, 1990). The postmodern notion of authenticity is thus inherently relativist, recognizing multiple, authentic constructions and reconstructions of reality. This stands in contrast to the modernist notion of a single reality which is "out there" to be discovered.

Another aspect of the postmodern aesthetic is the merging of technology and humanity in a reconstituted "man-as-machine" metaphorical presentation of humanity. People and machines become indistinguishable as the lines between them blur. This creates and reflects a tension between humanity and technology that is evident in popular culture. For example, in the television show *Star Trek Voyager* there is a character, Seven of Nine, whose very existence and essence are the integration of humanity and Borg technology. Indeed, when Seven is experiencing health problems, it is predictably because her non-human Borg technology is attempting to reassert itself over her humanity.

A last word on postmodernism concerns words themselves. Postmodern writing is riddled with terminology that is, to say the least, not transparent to the ordinary reader (Katz, 1995; Appignanesi & Garratt, 1995). The paradox of this is that postmodern language becomes a form of authority and power in itself, excluding those not schooled in the meanings. Indeed, as hooks (1995) has pointed out, "Postmodernist discourses are often exclusionary even as they call attention to, appropriate even, the experience of 'difference' " (p. 117).

In these many ways, the world is a very different place than it was when Glaser and Strauss were developing grounded theory. We no longer adhere to a relatively simple thesis-antithesis ideology of social change. Now, there is a call for multivocality in which a myriad of voices and views are presented for consideration. To know "truth" is no longer a matter of the modernist acknowledgment of its self-evident existence. Rather, knowing truth requires that it be actively

constructed in light of the complex, shifting onslaught of stimuli that is the postmodern condition.

CAN GROUNDED THEORY BE POSTMODERN?

Given the postmodern turn in philosophy and the sciences, is grounded theory still a relevant research methodology or has it outlived its usefulness? We will now examine the fit between postmodernism and grounded theory and discuss a number of issues raised by the comparison. To begin, we must explicate what we mean when we speak of grounded theory. Central to our understanding of grounded theory is symbolic interactionism, a theoretical perspective rooted in the philosophy of pragmatism (Blumer, 1969/86; Dewey, 1922; Mead, 1934/67). Human action and interaction, and the construction and reconstruction of meaning within levels of context, are central phenomena of interest and foci for theory development. This is a synergistic and dynamic process in which action/interaction changes the context, which leads, in turn, to the construction of new meanings and new actions. In light of this, grounded theory is concerned fundamentally with the relationship between person and society.

In examining this relationship, the focus is on everyday life and meanings as understood by those whose concerns we seek to address. In working with people who experience the phenomena we study, it is intuitively obvious to talk directly to them and to observe them so we can learn how they understand and act in their worlds. As grounded theorists, we attempt to understand how people actively construct and reconstruct their lives in light of their circumstances and the meanings they make of these. Grounded theory thus provides readily understandable findings that are easily translated into practice.

The grounded theorist, although beginning with an atheoretical stance, remains open to the possibility that *a priori* theories might be found in the data. By atheoretical stance, we mean that we have no particular idea of what the results will be. This is not to say, however, that grounded theorists do not bring their own theoretical perspectives to the table which will influence the process. In fact, we call these "sensitizing concepts" and welcome them into the

melange of deconstruction and analysis in order to keep us honest (Denzin, 1989). Our conceptualization of grounded theory may have shifted from Glaser's original (1978) claim that a purely atheoretical stance is possible. As critical feminists we can hardly abandon the notions that race, gender, and social-structural conditions may be important categories in our analysis. At the same time, however, we hold that there is a balance to be struck between cultivating the necessary theoretical sensitivity and avoiding the imposition of prior theoretical conceptualizations on the data. Fortunately for us, the way out of this dilemma is provided by the constant comparative method of grounded theory.

Inherent in our understanding of grounded theory is an assumption about the nature of human experience—that human beings need to create personal order and meaning in the universe. Grounded theorists assume that people make sense of the world and interact with it in meaningful (to them) ways. As grounded theorists, we try to interpret and (re)construct the order embedded in that process of interaction, as revealed through the data. Both the interactional processes of informants and the reconstruction of that order are messy. Although some may argue that grounded theory analysis represents an artificial imposition of order on an inherently disorderly process, we would reply that the researcher-as-instrument is integral to data analysis in any interpretivist/constructivist methodology. And, the reconstruction of that order is, in postmodern terms, an authentic construction. As Strauss and Corbin (1994) have argued, grounded theorists accept responsibility for their constructions and do not claim that it is anything else but the researcher's construction. Thus, the researcher's cognitive processes, in part, shape the results. At the same time, however, the pragmatic criteria of "fit, work, and grab" ensure that results are congruent with participants' experiences and understandings. In our view, anything that assists people to resolve their concerns and act meaningfully in the world has value. This pragmatic view flows directly from the philosophical foundations of grounded theory in symbolic interactionism and pragmatism.

When we turn to the ideas encompassed by postmodernism, we find many that are congruent with grounded theory. Indeed, many postmodern ideas are present in the writings on symbolic interactionism, and these predate grounded theory. The grounded theory

that we practice is, like postmodernism, antifoundational. We understand this antifoundationalism to mean a rejection of any "Truth" or reality except as it is locally constructed. In other words, if the grounded theory fits, works, and grabs, then it is true or real in a small "t," small "r" way; it exists in this situation, place, and time. In our view, grounded theory is to be judged by those who are in the situation or are knowledgeable about it, rather than by any externally imposed authority that exists independently of the construction itself. To us, our conceptualization of grounded theory and postmodernism share a recognition that truth is not discovered, but actively constructed and reconstructed by people in the course of their daily lives.

At the same time, the very title of Glaser and Strauss' (1967) original book suggests that this view of truth has not always been evident in the work of grounded theorists. Indeed, as we discussed previously, the writings of Glaser (1978, 1992) clearly emerge from a critical realist view of truth in which there is a "real" reality out there waiting to be discovered (Annells, 1996). For Glaser, if a grounded theory fits, works, and grabs, it is because there is a correspondence to reality. We do not hold to this correspondence view of truth. For us, fit, work, and grab represent pragmatic criteria that are infinitely adaptable and that allow us to make judgments (albeit fallible) in the absence of firm foundations. Thus, postmodern ideas have influenced our own understanding and use of grounded theory.

In contrast to Glaser, Strauss (1993) has written about his personal transformation from a realist view to a more relativist perspective on the nature of reality (MacDonald, chapter 7, this volume). Annells (1997) argues that this relativist ontology is reflected in Strauss' work with Corbin (1990) in which theory development reflects a "local and constructed reality" (Annells, 1997, p. 123). At the same time, however, Annells points out that Strauss and Corbin's revised grounded theory methodology reflects a neopositivist orientation in its presentation of a more elaborated set of analytic procedures and the criteria for judging its quality. In other words, the work of Strauss and Corbin (1990) reflects the modernist quest for respectability. This residual positivism is, by definition, foundational. Perhaps it is because of this apparent contradiction that the Strauss and Corbin (1990) book has remained controversial; people can find support in it for any ontology they wish. On the other hand, this apparent

contradiction may merely reflect a focus on method rather than on methodology; criteria relate to method while the relativist ontology relates to methodology (Milliken & Schreiber, chapter 9, this volume).

Grounded theory has an ambiguous relationship with the notion of grand narrative. On the one hand, grounded theory made its mark by rejecting the authority of theory-driven research in favor of a locally constructed, inductively derived understanding, paralleling Lyotard's notion of the "little narrative" (Lyotard, 1979/84). On the other hand, grounded theory, with its roots in symbolic interactionism, has its own grand narrative, that of the redeemability of humankind, an intrinsically modernist idea. The notion of redeemability is inherent in the pragmatist action scheme, which underlies symbolic interactionism (Dewey, 1922; Strauss, 1993). By rejecting determinism (Strauss, 1993), symbolic interactionists are ultimately optimistic because the future is essentially open to be constructed. Similarly, in postmodernism, the openness of an undetermined, unpredictable, and yet to be constructed future has been described as "an article of faith" (Sim, 1998, p. 10). This article of faith, paradoxically, may be the grand narrative of postmodernism (Anderson, 1990). The openness of the future creates the possibility of emancipation at the same time that postmodernism rejects it as a grand narrative.

Both postmodernism and grounded theory embrace the concept of the little narrative. Indeed, it is the little narrative and its local context that are the usual stock-in-trade of grounded theorists. We seek to understand our research participants' underlying and overt meanings, and the actions and interactions that flow from those meanings. Postmodernism has challenged the centrality of the modernist emphasis on "meaning" as a stable phenomenon shared by all (or at least by many) (Derrida, 1967/76). Although meaning is central in grounded theory, we do not view it as stable. In fact, in both grounded theory and symbolic interactionism, meanings are constantly created and re-created and are the basis for action by situated individuals and collectives.

The postmodern notion of self, as continually created in collaboration with others, is also consistent with symbolic interactionism and grounded theory. Anderson (1995) points out that the postmodern self-concept is very different than the self-concept of traditional psychology. Drawing from Gergen (1995), he suggests that we do not

"find" our identities as they are determined by social roles and traditions. Rather, we begin to understand our identities as "made," constructed and reconstructed out of many cultural sources. Again, these ideas fit well with the notion of self-concept in symbolic interactionism, in which we continually construct meaning about the world, and ourselves, in relation to that world, and act on the basis of those understandings. In turn, this action leads to the (re)construction of meaning about self and the world.

These ideas about the continuous (re)construction of self, meaning, truth, and reality, lead us to consider the challenge of authenticity, a central theme of postmodernism. In postmodern thinking, the traditional view of authenticity is "irrelevant" (in the words of Seven of Nine) because each creation or re-creation is, in and of itself, "authentic" for what it is. Similarly, in grounded theory, information provided in an interview is a reconstruction of the experience and its meaning to the participant. A later interview of the same person might provide a completely different perspective on the experience. We do not raise questions about which version is true; rather, we accept both representations as authentic reconstructions within the temporal context of the interviews. In grounded theory, each study is what it is, and it is specific and meaningful in the context of the situation under study. At the same time, we do not claim that a grounded theory is authoritative. Indeed, most grounded theories continue to evolve after the study is initially completed. Each permutation is equally authentic, assuming it continues to fit, work, and grab. Grounded theory is thus resolutely postmodern.

The understanding of authenticity discussed above leads us to consider the postmodern blurring of the boundaries between technology and humanity (Grant, 1998; Wakefield, 1990). The merger of human life and technology is increasingly a fact of postmodern life. Genetic engineering, reproductive technology, and cloning are all ways in which the creation of life can be engineered in a laboratory. Are these forms of human existence any less authentic because of their origins than the products of other, more traditional forms of creation? In this way, technology has infiltrated our very notion of authentic human (re)production. Those who think that a human-machine merger is science fiction fantasy might consider how commonly we use such machines as insulin pumps, pacemakers, and dialysis machines. Indeed, clinicians have long observed that pa-

tients' relationships with these machines become integrated into their sense of who they are.

Another merger between technology and humanity also may be evident in the recent development of computer programs to manage and analyze qualitative data. Programs such as NUD*IST (Richards & Richards, 1991) arose, in part, as a result of the modernist quest for respectability. These software programs were originally intended to simplify the redundant tasks of qualitative analysis such as searching text and storing data. Although some researchers use NUD*IST merely as a filing cabinet, we argue that qualitative software can extend the researcher's cognitive processes. For example, the constant comparative method requires the researcher to move back and forth between data and the concepts emerging from the data. This is a time-consuming and meticulous process. Qualitative software provides instant decontextualization and recontextualization of data within the emerging conceptualizations, not only speeding up the process, but also extending the researcher's self in the analytic process. The ability to move instantly from a concept to the raw data within its original context could mean that the emergent conceptualizations are grounded more firmly in the data. Freed from the need to attend meticulously to the manual process of searching, the researcher's cognitive processes can be fully devoted to abstract conceptualization. Once a researcher is proficient with the use of such a program, it becomes second nature, so that doing analysis by any other means feels cumbersome and unwieldy. Like Seven of Nine, whose implanted Borg technology has expanded her repertoire of abilities, the qualitative researcher's abilities can be enhanced through the use of computer technology.

Another example of blurring boundaries is the postmodern rejection of the modernist tendency to dichotomize, between the universal and the particular, between society and unique individuals. In this modernist dichotomy, the situatedness of human action and communication in its historical and social context has been overlooked. Abstracting a person from her or his context leaves us stranded somewhere between the poles of society and the individual. Either the person is a powerless object buffeted by the forces of history and nature or human agency reigns supreme. Postmodernists have challenged this dichotomy, arguing instead that the way out of this dilemma is to study human beings in their cultural and social

contexts; local interaction is the point of departure (Kvale, 1995). This idea is not new to grounded theorists and is, in fact, central to their practice.

As noted previously, the postmodernist use of language that is inaccessible, authoritative, and exclusive is now the object of challenge by postmodern writers themselves (Anderson, 1990; hooks, 1995; Katz, 1995). Similarly, grounded theorists have developed their own canonical jargon on methods and procedures that can be mystifying for outsiders. Within the discourse of grounded theory, jargon is increasingly defining the territory. Some grounded theorists might argue that it is inappropriate to use such terms as "discourse," "lived experience," "themes" or "situatedness," since these belong to other methodologies. For those who are learning grounded theory from books, the language of the texts is increasingly defining the structure of the theory.

In many ways, postmodern thinking cannot help but pervade our use of grounded theory methodology. It is ubiquitous, insidious, and reflects the fact that we are living in a postmodern time. The thinking of this era pervades all our actions. If postmodernism is, more than anything, "an outlook" (Smith, 1995), then it is obvious that it has infiltrated the thinking of current grounded theorists. The difficulty is that many of us, up to now, have not really grappled with how and whether this outlook fits with grounded theory's most basic premises and with the implications for research practice.

UNADDRESSED TENSIONS

There remain two areas of tension that we have yet to figure out. We raise these issues for your consideration in the hope of encouraging engagement and dialogue. A major tension has to do with the nature of theory in grounded theory. Postmodernists could accuse grounded theorists of glossing over differentness in the quest for abstract conceptualizations. This may be a justifiable criticism in that, as grounded theorists, we are ultimately searching for areas of commonality—we are looking for theory to explain what we are seeing, and that necessitates greater parsimony. However, at the lower levels of abstraction in a grounded theory analysis, there is an explication of difference. In fact, sampling for differences is integral

to data collection and analysis. The concern is that these differences may be lost as they are subsumed under higher order categories. The time has come to revisit the nature of theory in grounded theory in light of the challenges from postmodern science, especially the science of complexity which casts doubt on the possibility of parsimony. In light of the postmodern emphasis on the little narrative, the place of formal grounded theory in the postmodern intellectual landscape also raises questions that we have not yet answered (Kearney, chapter 12, this volume).

The other tension relates to the criticism leveled at grounded theory and other interpretive/constructivist research approaches that they are inherently conservative. The same criticism has been made of postmodernism (Callinicos, 1989; Norris, 1990). Humanist/constructivist perspectives are grounded in a sociology of regulation in which the core view is that "social life is meaningful and proceeds on the basis of the subjective interpretations of participants" (Caplan, 1993, p. 153). In this view, social structures and institutions are socially constructed and maintained by people in their interactions with one another. The major concern is with "what is" based on the meanings and interpretations that people assign to events and actions. There is an implicit acceptance of the status quo. In contrast, a sociology of radical change focuses on explanations of social action that indicate the need for fundamental social change, particularly in relation to the way that social conflicts, tensions, and oppressive structures organize society. The major concern is not with "what is" but with what is possible or what "ought to be" and, thus, reflects a search for alternatives (Caplan, 1993). This raises the challenge of whether one can maintain a critical feminist stance, for example, in using grounded theory and, if so, how such critical perspectives and analyses of social change can be integrated into grounded theory methodology. Although possible solutions to this dilemma have been proposed (Layder, 1989; MacDonald, chapter 7, this volume; Poland, 1992; Wuest & Merritt-Gray, chapter 8, this volume), we believe that there needs to be continued dialogue on this issue.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

When we began this project, it was with some skepticism about postmodernism, particularly about its apparent nihilism. Because we

were coming from a critical feminist perspective, with the centrality of its narrative of emancipation, we were challenged to examine the assumption of nihilism. Our first exposure to postmodernism was to European thought, particularly that of the French writers Lyotard, Beaudrillard, Foucault, and Derrida. For the most part, these authors' writings reflect a tendency toward nihilism and rejection of the grand narrative of emancipation. As we read further, particularly the works of North American postmodern writers, we were struck by the openness of possibilities which seemed to be more consistent with our own thinking. It seemed to us that there was an inherent optimism in the writings of North American postmodern authors (e.g., Anderson, 1990, 1995; hooks, 1995), much as there is in the writings on symbolic interactionism and pragmatism, other quintessentially North American philosophical approaches. This made it easier for us to recognize postmodern currents in our own thinking. We continue, however, to grapple with the unresolved tensions discussed above.

When we returned to the literature on grounded theory, we were somewhat taken aback at how modernist it was. Indeed, we were forced to reevaluate our initial rejection of Denzin and Lincoln's (1994) and Annells' (1996) characterization of grounded theory as modernist or post-positivist. What we have discovered is that, for the most part, few writings on grounded theory methodology reflect what we are doing, and what many of our colleagues tell us they are doing when they do grounded theory research. Further, discussions with our colleagues suggest to us that thinking about grounded theory is way ahead of writing about it. With few exceptions (see Wuest & Merritt-Gray, chapter 8, this volume), we are struck by the relative lack of explicit critical engagement among grounded theory writers with the challenges that arise from postmodernism. We wonder what these gaps between thinking and practice, and between thinking and writing, might mean for how grounded theory research is enacted today.

We must, therefore, ask the question: Is grounded theory a canon or is it living and evolving? If grounded theory is a canon that represents enshrined Truth, then we, the authors, are infidels. If, however, grounded theory is a methodology that can, and does, evolve and change within the sociopolitical, economic, and intellectual context, then our challenge is to contribute to that growth and

evolution. We believe that grounded theory is the latter, and this chapter represents our attempt to open wide the windows through which we view grounded theory as a methodology. Our challenge to you is to join us in constructing and reconstructing the view.

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CHAPTER 4

The "How To" of Grounded Theory: Avoiding the Pitfalls

Rita Sara Schreiber

One of the struggles in teaching and learning grounded theory is that it is difficult to capture fully and in writing the "how to" of the method without sacrificing its more intuitive aspects. Part of the difficulty is that getting a handle on the method involves process learning: you learn it as you do it. The "doing," however, goes much more smoothly and is likely to have better results when the novice is able to work with an experienced mentor who can guide the way. In many graduate programs, mentors are in short supply. Another difficulty is that the only time procedures are not done all at once (rather than linearly, as they are inevitably presented in textbooks) is at the initiation of data collection. Once there are data in hand, the complex, multilayered process of sampling, coding, theorizing, and writing is in full force. It is a challenge, however, to adequately convey the gestalt of this process in words. Thus, the reader should try to visualize the sections of this chapter as forming a layer cake rather than cupcakes; the researcher experiences the whole much more than the pieces.

A few authors have actually attempted to describe the grounded theory research process in some detail, most notably Glaser (1978),

Strauss (1987), and Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1998), however these works are limited in light of developments in the method (see, for example, MacDonald, this volume). Melia (1996) and others (J. Morse, personal communication, August 30, 1996) have criticized Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1998) in particular as having reduced the rich complexity described in Glaser and Strauss (1967) to a linear and formulaic recipe. Although some of the criticisms, such as coding minute pieces of data, have been addressed in the recent edition, some of the book's limitations remain. For example, Strauss and Corbin (1998) have kept the discussion of such procedures as the "flip-flop technique," in which "a concept is 'turned inside out' . . . to obtain a different perspective . . . " (p. 94), although other researchers have seen it as a forced and unhelpful comparison (Glaser, 1992). In my experience, Glaser (1978) continues as the best single resource for the novice researcher, however, not all students find it fully accessible.

Having outlined in advance the challenge of describing in writing how to do grounded theory, my purpose in writing this chapter is to do just that. I have structured the chapter around certain problematics that, in my experience, can lead to difficulty for the learner of grounded theory. Although I recognize the challenge of trying to convey to a novice the gestalt of grounded theory through the linear reading/writing process, I hope, by focusing on these problematic areas, to help smooth the learning process. The wise novice grounded theorist, however, will not mistake my construction of the process for Truth but will use it as a place to begin, as well as a basis for comparison with the writing of others. What I will discuss is my understanding of how I do a grounded theory study.

THE METHOD

Glaser and Strauss originally published their work on grounded theory in 1967, and since that time, the method has been further refined and explicated by numerous others, notably Williams (1989), Glaser (1978, 1992), Strauss, (1987), Chenitz and Swanson (1986), Stern (1980, 1985, 1994), Hutchinson (1986), Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1994, 1998), Wuest (1995), and Wuerst & Merritt-Gray (chapter 8, this volume). Its roots are in factor analysis (P. Stern, personal

communication, May 12, 1994), pragmatism, and symbolic interactionism. As an exploratory method of research, grounded theory does not begin from a position of an existing theory and pre-defined concepts. Rather, as the researcher collects, codes, and analyzes data (which might be journals, group or individual interviews, field notes, books, videos, and/or other narrative forms), concepts and properties emerge (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Writers sometimes refer to grounded theory as the constant comparative method because coded data are constantly compared with other data and concepts at each level of theory development. At each stage of analysis, the researcher generates hypotheses or hunches about relationships between and among categories that are tested against the data. The researcher continues to compare emerging conceptualizations, which result from testing these hypotheses, against the data until core categories and a theory of behavior are distilled and understanding of human experience from the perspective of the participant is advanced. However, there is more involved in doing grounded theory than constant comparison.

I have found grounded theory to be useful when we want to learn how people manage their lives in the context of existing or potential health challenges and as such, is admirably suited to nursing inquiry. What is key in this process is learning the ways that people understand and deal with what has happened to them through time and in changing circumstances. Grounded theory is also useful for research in areas that have not previously been studied, where there are major gaps in our understanding, and where a new perspective might be beneficial.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Students who have read either *Discovery* or *Theoretical Sensitivity* often are mystified by the originators' advice to omit the usual literature review in favor of direct investigation of the phenomenon of concern. Rather than being swayed by the great minds of the past, Glaser and Strauss admonished grounded theorists to formulate their own interpretations, based on participants' understandings of what was going on. In keeping with the modernist focus on the experience of the common (hu)man and concurrent rejection of research driven

by *a priori* theory, this notion represented a shift away from the domination of positivist ideals in social science and nursing research. Thus, in a perfect grounded theory world, students might have been advised to limit prior reading to an exploration of grounded theory as a methodology with its epistemological and ontological roots, and prior grounded theory studies.

There are, however, methodological reasons for conducting a literature review. Glaser (1978, 1998) and Strauss and Corbin (1998) suggest that reading related and unrelated technical and popular literature is a good way to expand one's ideas about the matters under study and to help promote theoretical sensitivity (see below). In addition, the researcher brings to the study an existing background familiarity, gained through reading of professional or popular literature. Few researchers approach a topic without past experience and a continued interest in it. (The wise doctoral student bears this in mind when selecting a dissertation topic with which to live intimately for several years.) The researcher, however, cannot "unlearn" what is already known, therefore, the risk of conducting a literature review is that the researcher might superimpose his or her preconceived ideas onto the data. By conducting a formal literature review, the researcher can fully explicate many of her or his existing conceptualizations and sensitizing concepts (see below) of the phenomenon of study and subject them to the challenge of ongoing comparison with data. Thus, the researcher uses constant comparison to scrutinize the literature for its fit with emerging concepts and theory to better ensure the rigor of the findings.

More pragmatically, the current expectations of academic research and funding agencies suggest that plunging into field research without delving into the relevant literature would be folly. At the very least, researchers need to be aware of previous writing about the topic in order to develop a proposal aimed at adding something new. Having this knowledge, the researcher can also gain an appreciation for the magnitude of the problem, and thus, the importance of conducting the proposed study. Often, reviewing the academic literature is of limited use, since it rarely is focused on the problem of a given population as identified by that population. Nevertheless, the researcher who is seeking funding must demonstrate an understanding of the "state of the science" regarding the phenomenon of study in order for agency evaluators to be confident that their

money would be well-spent. Thus, in today's world a literature review is usually a necessary first step in beginning any research project, including a grounded theory.

SENSITIZING CONCEPTS

As suggested above, a sensitizing concept is an idea or understanding the researcher already has in her or his head about the phenomenon of study. A sensitizing concept may also be one identified from the research, popular, or practice literature that, in the researcher's mind, seems salient. The researcher may or may not be aware of the ideas and preconceived notions she or he holds and should make efforts to uncover and challenge them. The idea of identifying sensitizing concepts can be traced back to Blumer (1969/86) who suggested that concepts identified from prior sources must be carefully scrutinized and only brought into the study if support is found in the data. Glaser (1978) and Glaser and Strauss (1967) concur with this view. For example, in my studies of women and depression, I identified key concepts such as learned helplessness or attachment/loss as having been plausibly linked with depression in women. Because of this, I was alert to anything in the data that might reinforce or refute these concepts. I found, however, that these concepts could account for only a very small portion of the data.

Identification of sensitizing concepts should not be an excuse for superimposing one's favorite theory onto the data, however, and the researcher must remain vigilant against this possibility. For example, Milliken (1998) initiated a study of parental caregivers of adults with schizophrenia using loss and grief as sensitizing concepts. Although she found ample evidence of these concepts in the data, her rigorous scholarship allowed the data to override her preconception, to learn that the role of loss and grief was not as central as she had anticipated. In Milliken's study, the central issue (and basic social process) was "Redefining Parental Identity" in which participants changed how they understood themselves and their identity as parents as a result of having an adult child with schizophrenia.

Thus, although there may be merit for a researcher to approach a study in a *tabula rasa* fashion, it is not likely to be realistic or feasible to do so. To quote Dey (1993), "There is a difference between an

open mind and an empty head. . . . The issue is not whether to use existing knowledge, but how" (p. 63). What is needed is for the researcher to recognize her or his own assumptions and beliefs, make them explicit, and use grounded theory techniques to work beyond them throughout the analysis.

To do this, the researcher may explicate in writing her or his preexisting notions and carefully scrutinize them against the data. A research seminar or study group can be very helpful in this process, and colleagues who are not as enmeshed with the subject matter can often provide fresh insights to challenge you when you get stuck on an idea or concept. Likewise, when group members have heard you discuss the same (or similar) conceptualizations repeatedly, they can provide confirmation that the data support your findings, even though you are doubting yourself. Thus, by constantly comparing sensitizing concepts with data, the researcher can move beyond preconceptions toward the construction of a fully developed theory that is rooted in and explains the data.

THEORETICAL SENSITIVITY

Theoretical sensitivity is another way the researcher guards against potential biases that can be a threat to the rigor of the study. Theoretical sensitivity is the ability of the researcher to think inductively and move from the particular (data) to the general or abstract, that is, to build theory from observations of specifics. This process begins when the first data are in hand, as the researcher immediately examines the data from both the particular and the abstract levels, asking "what's going on here?" The researcher must be able to imagine, and test against data, a variety of explanations (theories) of what the data say. The personal background of the researcher is the filter of salience through which data are sieved, and each researcher is more or less open to theoretical possibilities contained within a data set; however, each must cultivate this ability. Development and refinement of theoretical sensitivity requires vigilance and practice.

Theoretical sensitivity helps curb the potential bias from the researcher's background experiences and diminishes the risk of compromising the study through premature closure in favor of the researcher's pet theory. One technique for promoting theoretical

sensitivity is to memo one's pet theories and set them aside for later comparison against the data. This is not the same as bracketing, as used in other interpretive traditions, because grounded theorists recognize that the researcher and her or his experience cannot be removed from the process. Some would argue that personal experience with the phenomenon of study is vital to the analysis process. Thus, the researcher explicates his or her background knowledge, not to isolate it from the study, but with the specific intention of bringing it into the analysis to see if the data are supportive or not.

To cultivate theoretical sensitivity, the researcher must recognize and constantly challenge her or his personal theories and biases against the data. This constant comparison allows for the emergence of theory that is truly grounded in data. For example, at the time Stern was doing her dissertation research on how stepfather families handled matters of child discipline, most writers advised couples to agree on the rules prior to marrying (Kiely, 1976). However, Stern's theoretical sensitivity allowed consideration of a variety of possible theoretical explanations for what was happening in the data so that she could discover that family rules of discipline were largely implicit and unspoken. Further, family members did not discover the rules until after they broke them (Stern, 1977).

The researcher can improve her or his theoretical sensitivity by attending to all possible explanations for what one sees in the data, particularly in light of negative cases (data that disconfirm or refute an emerging hypothesis). This involves inductive logic, moving from the specific observation to the theoretical level. For example, a classroom exercise I like to use is presenting an observation (for instance, "Nurses working in your facility have noticed that bedridden aboriginal elders do not seem to suffer skin breakdown as much as other elderly patients") and asking the group to brainstorm as many possible explanations (theories) for this as they can. The range of explanatory theories offered is always diverse and creative and includes everything from physiology to social behavior (family members turn elders more frequently than nurses turn other patients). I use this exercise to demonstrate both the range of theories that might emerge from a single observation and the usefulness of discussing one's emerging ideas in a group.

Discussing with others the categories and emerging theory, and examining how it all fits (or not) together, can assist the researcher in keeping perspective and not getting lost in the endlessly ruminative process of analysis. This also helps keep the analysis grounded in the data and not in the researcher's imagination where it too easily slips. The challenge for the researcher is to be open to the theories that are in the data, but not to get lost either in the data's minutiae or in theorizing. The researcher must also listen when others observe that the categories seem forced and be prepared to step back from the analysis and take a fresh look. Outside readers, colleagues, and participants can be very helpful here.

THE PROBLEM

Grounded theorists begin with an assumption that participants share a problematic situation, which they (participants) may or may not articulate. Even though the researcher tries to approach the study "with as few predetermined ideas as possible" (Glaser, 1978, p. 3), she or he cannot unlearn what is already known. Thus, even the act of selecting something to study imposes a pre-existing conceptual structure onto the phenomenon. The researcher has already identified what she or he thinks the problem is and begins the study from that perspective. However, the first goal of the researcher is to understand the shared basic social problem from the participants' perspective. Their understanding of the problem must be revealed so that the grounded theory will reflect what participants do to resolve it. Novice researchers sometimes omit this important first step, and this can lead to difficulty when trying to explicate how participants resolve the problem. Since the grounded theorist's ultimate goal is to learn how participants resolve or ameliorate the shared problem, it is vital to first learn what the problem really is.

For example, MacDonald (1998) conducted a study of implementation of a drug and alcohol prevention program that involved the introduction of prevention workers into the school system. Based on her reading of the literature, she was interested in learning whether the program would be implemented as it was intended. However, neither MacDonald nor the designers of the prevention program anticipated that prevention workers could not begin imple-

mentation until they had established themselves as credible and welcome in the schools. Thus, the basic problem discovered in the field was how prevention workers established themselves in their schools so that they could begin to implement the program. MacDonald's resulting theory reflected the complex balancing of political and personal intents revolving around the prevention worker role, and it was far richer and more explanatory than if MacDonald had forged ahead without uncovering the real basic social problem.

PARTICIPANTS AND SAMPLE SIZE

The grounded theorist faces recruitment issues similar to those in other research studies based on interview data, and he or she is bound by ethical considerations of self-selection, confidentiality, no risk to treatment (if recruiting in a treatment setting), and so forth (Holloway & Wheeler, 1995; Morse, 1998; Robley, 1995). Depending on the topic, participants may find the interview process to be emotional, yet often helpful (Draucker, 1999). In the case of interviewing on sensitive topics (such as sexual abuse or depression) or with vulnerable people, a procedure for prompt referral and support should always be established in the event that an untoward outcome should arise from the interview.

An exact determination of the size of the population for a study cannot be established *a priori* (Morse, 1991, 2000; Sandelowski, 1995). It is important to remember that the units of analysis are not predetermined and are not known until the data are in hand. The units of theoretical analysis are not the individual participants themselves, but may be incidents, stories, examples, and so forth. For example, in one study of oncology nurses and do-not-resuscitate (DNR) decision making, the units of analysis were discrete patient/family scenarios. Each nurse interviewed contributed several scenarios which resulted in more than 100 units of analysis (Jezewski & Finnell, 1998). Much depends on the scope and complexity of the study, the number and range of potential participants (how large and homogeneous is the group?), the design of the study (repeat interviews or single? participant observation?), the quality of the data, how reflective (and talkative) the informants are, and other parameters such as the realities of graduate studies. If the researcher

is lucky and finds a number of reflective and articulate participants, the number of interviews needed might be less. Similarly, participant observation in the field can add volumes of data relatively quickly. In general, the more widespread and varied the data, the larger the data set must be to reach theoretical saturation; however, the researcher must keep in mind that variation is needed for theory development.

THEORETICAL SAMPLING

Grounded theorists use theoretical sampling, the process of simultaneously collecting, coding, and analyzing data to generate theory. Theoretical sampling is a complex, changing process that shifts as the categories develop and the theory emerges. Because of this, the researcher can only plan in advance the initial sampling for data collection. This contrasts with positivist or "normal" science (Kuhn, 1970) in which the sampling procedure is designed in advance and adhered to rigorously. Instead, the sampling process is entirely controlled by the emerging theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). A good grounded theorist will seek out more than one data source to provide a wider perspective on the phenomenon of study. For example, a researcher studying depression and treatment might want to interview knowledgeable patients, nurses, psychiatrists, and psychologists. She or he might also want to examine hospital records so that many, varied perspectives are revealed. Each of these data sources would provide valuable, yet different, information about depression and treatment. By seeking different perspectives on a topic, the researcher is challenged to develop explanations for the variation in the data and to unify them at a more abstract level into a theory.

As categories emerge, the researcher targets certain groups or subgroups for data collection, first to test and refine the emerging categories, and then to elaborate and saturate them. For example, when doing early sampling for a study on depression, I discovered an over-representation of nurses and other care providers. To correct this, I sought informants in other occupations (for example, outside the caring professions) to ensure sufficient diversity to test the emerging conceptualizations.

As the researcher develops hunches about what is going on in the data, she or he might want to explore various circumstances under which an event does or does not happen, which might mean asking more specific questions or seeking out particular types of informants. For example, a researcher studying how people of sexual minority orientation manage life at a university (S. Vilches, personal communication) found visibility in the classroom to be an issue for everyone. However, further questioning people of sexual minority orientation[1] revealed context-specific strategies for managing visibility. Many opportunities arose, such as classroom discussions of family structure, in which a student chose (or chose not) to speak up and raise awareness of sexual minority issues. Speaking up depended on whether: (a) the person felt there was a chance she or he would actually be heard, and (b) she or he felt it was important *in the particular situation* to ensure the atmosphere was safe for people of sexual minority orientation. If these two conditions were not met, the student kept silent and remained on the margins. In this case, the researcher had some notion of what might be going on and selected key informants to ask specific questions to test her hypotheses.

The researcher usually continues theoretical sampling throughout the study. Often, while writing the theory, it is necessary for her or him to keep sampling in key areas to help fill in the categories or flesh out the connections between them.

DATA COLLECTION

In grounded theory everything is data. This means that, when the grocery store clerk learns that the researcher is studying house fires and she begins to talk about when her house burned down, the researcher listens and learns. Depending on the quality of information relayed, the researcher may give it more or less weight than other data, but this woman has shared data that also go into the pot with the rest. The researcher may even want to ask if the woman is

[1]The project included both those who identified themselves as people of sexual minority orientation and those who did not.

willing to be interviewed. A TV show about people's experiences with house fires is also good data, as are diaries, magazine articles, and other first-hand accounts. Depending on the study scope and on what is emerging from the data, the researcher may also examine fire department records or other documents. It is all data, and good grounded theories are built on a variety of data sources and perspectives on the topic, but the choice of data source is determined and directed by the emerging theory.

Most nurse researchers rely on formal and informal interviews as core sources of data in their studies. My experience suggests that the best (and most likely) site to conduct interviews usually is the participant's home or in a private office, however, my experience might not be typical. I would not interview street people, for example, in either of those settings. It is important that the interview be conducted in a quiet, private place where the participant will feel comfortable and where interruptions can be kept to a minimum.

Not all grounded theorists agree that interview taping is absolutely necessary (see Morse, chapter 1, this volume and Stern & Covan, chapter 2, this volume), so long as the researcher takes detailed, legible notes that she or he can read later (Glaser, 1998). I am reluctant to make a habit of conducting untaped interviews because I have found taking detailed notes to be distracting, and making legible notes impossible. Further, I have found considerable important detail in transcribed interviews that I would likely have lost through note-taking. Regardless of whether or not tape recording is used, it is imperative to memo or record one's impressions of the interview as soon as possible afterward, or important details will be lost. May (1994) has suggested keeping the tape recorder on until after the researcher and participant have said their good-byes, and the researcher is in the car, so that the nuggets of information that so often emerge on the doorstep are not lost.

The researcher continues collecting data until saturation is reached. Saturation, often called "theoretical redundancy," occurs when the categories and theory are fully explicated and no new information about the core processes is forthcoming from ongoing data collection (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This may not happen until late in the final write-up because it is in committing the theory to the page that the researcher may discover gaps in the data. When this happens, the researcher must identify the best sources of data

to answer the questions that will fill these gaps. Sometimes graduate committees, especially at the master's level, limit the scope of a study for purposes of completing a program. In such circumstances, the novice grounded theorist develops a theory that may not have all of the categories fully saturated. There are no "hard and fast" rules related to theoretical sampling for saturation. Instead, the researcher must keep in mind the purpose of the data collection and the relevance to the emerging theory, and not get sidetracked (which is too easy to do).

USE OF AN INTERVIEW GUIDE

It is often advisable for beginning researchers to develop either a draft interview schedule or at least a list of topics to be covered, which provides novices with a quick reference in case of nervousness or forgetting. As a very nervous novice researcher, I was comforted to hear Katharyn May (1994) state that many of her earliest interviews were embarrassing for her to read later, and that some of them should probably have been discarded. Nonetheless, with a bit of experience, it becomes easier to ignore the interview schedule and follow the trail of the interview as the participant tells it. This approach is preferable, as the primary job of the researcher is to discover the participants' understandings of how they resolve the problem under study. Imposing the interviewer's structure will affect the quality of data received. Then, once the participant has told the full story in his or her own words and probe questions ("anything else?") have been asked repeatedly, the researcher can briefly look at the interview schedule and check whether anything has been missed. This approach prevents the researcher from foreclosing on the participant's reality in favor of her or his own anticipated agenda.

Several tricks of the trade may be useful. Two key questions to help finish an interview are: (a) What advice would you have for someone experiencing (the phenomenon of study)? and (b) Is there anything else I should know about (the phenomenon of study) that I didn't ask? These two questions prompt the participant to reflect and often lead to fruitful data. Another useful technique, once the interview is nearly completed, is to pose direct questions about conceptual relationships, based on the literature, or (more likely) on

emerging concepts or hunches. For example, one might say something like, "Others have told me (or, "The literature suggests . . . ") that . . . Has this been your experience?" This allows the person to say "No, not really" or to validate the hunch and elaborate on what it has meant for her or him.

This latter technique illustrates how the interview schedule changes over the course of the process. The researcher draws such key questions from the analysis to promote theory development. For example, toward the end of a study on women's experience with treatment and depression (Schreiber & Hartrick, in press), it became clear to members of the research team that, although many women told personal stories of psycho-social challenges and traumatic experiences, their understanding of what would help them get better was medication. After hearing this several times, we began asking women directly if they could explain the connection between what they said led to their depression and what they felt was needed to make things better. This was important for us, because we were trying to elucidate the role of treatment in recovery from depression. This type of questioning allowed us to develop a theory to describe how women adopted a biomedical explanation to explain their depression and manage its stigma.

Thus, the grounded theorist changes the interview questions over the course of the study, moving from the general ("Tell me about your experience with X") to the specific ("How is X situation like Y for you?"). As the researcher gains skill in developing key questions from the data and conducts more interviews, she or he can move away from an interview guide to follow the data. After each interview, most researchers find it helpful to write memos about impressions, ideas, and so forth arising from the interview. Researchers also find it useful to make specific notes of areas to cover or specific questions to ask in future data collection.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Coding

Through conceptual coding the researcher transforms raw data into theory. By coding data and comparing the codes with the data, the

researcher identifies categories and their properties emerge. Various types of codes are generated, different people do it differently, and the terminology is bewildering. First-level codes, also known as *in situ, in vivo,* or open codes, are those in which small portions of data are conceptualized, using the participant's words as much as possible. Second-level codes are more abstract and represent a synthesis of first-level codes. Third-level (theoretical) codes hypothesize relationships among the lower-level codes. I understand first-, second-, and third-level codes as concepts, categories, and relationships, respectively. Although this description suggests sequential steps, these types of coding overlap.

So much has been written about coding that a casual reader might conclude that the essence of grounded theory is coding (see, for example, Strauss & Corbin, 1990/98; Glaser, 1978, 1992). Although coding is important, other key aspects of data analysis such as memoing are equally important. So, while I discuss coding below, the wise reader will not fixate on the technicalities but will approach coding with a view to understanding the data. I recognize, however, this is probably easier said than done for the novice. For more information on coding of data, the reader is referred to Glaser (1978), which contains an extremely useful discussion.

First-Level Coding

The researcher conducts first-level coding by reading through the transcript (or other document), carefully examining the data, and selecting phrases, words, or stories that, taken individually, contain a single unit of meaning. The researcher tries to use the words of the participant in labeling the unit. For example, the phrase, "No one really understood what it was like for me" might be labeled "no one understood" or "feeling misunderstood." In theory, the analyst can approach first-level coding in several ways by: (a) conducting a line-by-line analysis, carefully examining phrases, words and sentences, (b) examining sentences or whole paragraphs, or, (c) examining entire documents. The decision on which way to begin depends on the skill of the analyst and the types of data collected. Glaser (1992) suggested that the data themselves *dictate* the approach to coding. As a novice grounded theorist, I first began with line-by-line analysis.

I quickly discovered that different interviews and different parts of the same interview often yielded data that were more appropriate to one approach or another, so one has to be flexible.

The process of first-level coding proliferates codes quickly and eventually leads to long lists of coded concepts contained in the data. In doing first-level coding, the researcher is comparing incident to incident to identify similarities and differences. As analysis proceeds, the researcher uses existing codes wherever possible, only adding new codes when new, uncoded information is forthcoming. Much has been written on first-level coding, and in my experience novice researchers usually do it quite well.

Second-Level Coding

As the number of first-level codes proliferates, the researcher turns to second-level coding, examining and collapsing codes into categories or higher level concepts. The goal of second-level coding, according to Glaser (1978) is generation of "an emergent set of categories and their properties which fit the data, work, and are relevant for integrating into a theory" (p. 56). The researcher begins second-level coding when she or he notices similarities in the concepts identified in open coding, that is, almost immediately. When doing second-level coding, the researcher constantly compares the first-level codes against existing and incoming data and identifies categories that are then compared with data and codes. In this way, the researcher goes from specific incidents to abstractions, which are then checked against the incidents in an iterative process. She or he is comparing incidents to incidents and incidents to concepts to determine similarities and differences. Glaser (1978) presented a clear discussion of these comparisons in the concept-indicator model. These comparisons enable the researcher to identify gaps in the data where more information is needed.

Novices sometimes fret about how to name a category. Usually, the researcher derives names for categories either from the data, for example, if a code seems to fit a broader category, or much less often, from otherwise known concepts, such as ego boundaries, fear, and so forth. When a researcher identifies a concept from the literature that fits the data, it is called an "emergent fit."

As I have gained experience managing data, I often find myself coding data at two (or more) levels at the same time. For example, I might code the phrase "No one really understood what it was like for me" as "no one understood," "feeling misunderstood," and "feeling isolated in the experience" at the same time. By coding this way, I am assigning more than one open code as well as a higher level code ("feeling isolated") to the same meaning unit.

Third-Level Coding

Once the researcher has successfully collapsed many of the first-level concepts into categories, the focus changes to examination of the relationships between and among the categories. The researcher formulates hypotheses or hunches and tests them through further data collection and analysis, moving back and forth between inductive and deductive thinking. For example, the researcher may identify that one category seems to precede another temporally and will look for specific instances that either confirm or refute this relationship.

To assist the researcher in theoretical coding, Glaser (1978) and Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1998) have proposed different coding schema, to which the reader is referred. Kendall (1999) has illuminated the contrasts between the two perspectives. These coding schema are proposed as sets of lenses or perspectives through which the researcher might view the data, explore various conceptualizations, and discover the dimensions of the study. The novice researcher should understand, however, that these lenses should be viewed as suggested aids to theoretical sensitivity, rather than as prescribed categorization schemes. It is a poor grounded theory study that is reported as having been coded exclusively according to the "six c's" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967); such an analysis is simple content analysis using the six c's as a framework rather than a grounded theory.

Memoing

Memoing is the ongoing process of making notes of ideas and questions that occur to the analyst during the process of data collection and analysis. The grounded theorist uses memos for three purposes:

(a) to make explicit (and thus open for examination) the researcher's pre-existing assumptions, (b) to record methodological decisions regarding the conduct of the study, and (c) to speculate on and analyze the data (Glaser, 1978; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss, 1987; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998).

Written Verbal Memos

The researcher begins memoing as she or he plans the study, so that there is a record of design ideas that were entertained and accepted or rejected, and continues writing until the study is completed. The researcher writes memos constantly so that the ideas can be retrieved at a later date in the analysis. In general, memos are written in whatever form is comfortable for the writer. It is far better to get the idea down on paper than to lose it because of concerns about writing style, or worse, to talk about it with others and have no record of it. The researcher uses memos to augment data with analytical ideas, and as the primary record of data analysis. As the study proceeds, the researcher records memos that are increasingly theoretical, suggesting relationships among the categories and concepts. The researcher sorts and re-sorts these memos and uses them as the basis of the final report.

Memos can be in the form of questions that the analyst would seek to answer during data collection. An example would be, "Is recovery a process marked by epiphanies, in which there are turning points in a woman's consciousness?" Memos may be anecdotes that suggest areas for data collection. They can also postulate linkages between and among categories, suggesting hypotheses to be tested against the data. Memos are also used to keep track of methodological decisions and their rationales, perhaps a decision to limit the study's scope. For example, a researcher studying menopause might discover differing experiences of women with natural versus surgical menopause and, having reflected on the original purpose of the study (or a desire to complete a graduate thesis), decide to limit the present study to natural menopause. Memos might also suggest a story or a diagrammatic representation of an emerging theory.

Because of the emerging nature of memos, they should be dated, titled, cross-referenced and filed. Whether memos are produced

in a word processing program, a data analysis program such as NUD*IST or Atlas-ti, or handwritten in a notebook, on 3 × 5 index cards, or flipchart paper is unimportant. What matters is that the information is written down immediately so that it is not lost.

Diagramming

Diagramming is an invaluable tool to help the researcher reflect on and understand the relationships between and among emerging categories. In the beginning, the researcher may make diagrams that are mere scribbles of arrows and words. Using even these sketchy diagrams, the researcher often can see what is missing from the emerging theory. For example, an early diagram may not account for key pieces of data, or may highlight areas where more data are needed. At each stage, the researcher may draw a series of diagrams, each as an approximation of what she or he is attempting to capture in the theory. By drawing and re-drawing diagrams, the researcher can stand back and conceptualize the full theory, which can then be checked against data.

I cannot emphasize too strongly the importance of creating memos, notes, and diagrams at the time the thought occurs, lest it be lost. I suggest keeping a notebook and pen and/or a tape recorder handy at all times, even beside the bed, to record memo notes immediately. One key piece of advice is absolutely to avoid talking on the telephone or with friends and colleagues about an idea before memoing it. The reader will have to trust me on this one: when you talk about it, you lose the idea and the momentum dissipates, so it is better to write it down first, and then talk with others. After speaking with others, the researcher may have more ideas to memo, but it is important not to lose the original idea by talking about it. I have learned the hard way on this one.

The Core Category

The purpose of grounded theory, according to Glaser (1978), is "to account for a pattern of behavior which is relevant and problematic for those involved" (p. 93). The researcher does this by generating a theory around a core category that emerges from the data. The

core category is the central phenomenon or main concern for the people in the setting, when viewed from their own perspective. It encapsulates the substance of a pattern of behavior seen in the data and summarizes what is happening. Because the core category is central to the emerging theory, the researcher must be diligent in searching for the core variable throughout coding, always remaining open to the messages contained within the data. Finding and developing a core category requires theoretical sensitivity. Be thorough in saturating any category that appears to have explanatory power and, when necessary, seek out negative cases as described below. Ultimately, the researcher will notice a category or variable that occurs again and again and seems to link other categories together. This is the core category.

Glaser (1978) identified several properties of a core category. It can be any kind of theoretical code, including a process, condition, or consequence. It has to have "grab" or significant explanatory power, so much so that the analyst must guard against superimposing it onto data it does not fit. It must have "carry through," which means that it enables the analyst to carry through the analysis and does not "dead end." Because it is grounded in the data, the core category does not arise from deduction *per se* or from concepts already known from sociological interest, although occasionally what arises from the data will be similar to (or the same as) a concept that has already been identified (see Morse, and Kearney, this volume for a fuller discussion of this).

How a researcher finds a core category is controversial. Glaser (1978, 1992) and Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1998) differ considerably on this issue. According to Glaser, the core category is "right there" and seems to happen as if by magic. In contrast, Strauss and Corbin contend that considerable manipulation of the data is necessary before a core category simply "emerges." May (1994) in particular has discussed the magic involved in finding a core category after considerable handling of the data. Most grounded theorists discover their core categories through intuition, consciously or unconsciously reflecting on the study as a whole (May, 1994). I have found it comes to me when I am submerged in the data but not actively thinking about it, for example, when I am in the shower. Although the core category emerges intuitively, the researcher must then return to

constant comparison with the data to see if the metaphor or explanatory term works to explain the data.

Occasionally, two such categories will emerge. When this happens, the researcher must select one for further examination and focused data collection for the study at hand. In my first depression study, for example, it was not clear at one point whether "Clueing In" or "(Re)Defining My Self" was the core category. I made a semi-arbitrary decision to stay with the latter and to reflect more on Clueing In at a later time (Schreiber, 1996, 1998). Later, I returned to Clueing In and saturated it, to develop a different perspective on the phenomenon. Glaser and Strauss handled this problem in their study on dying by publishing several grounded theories, including, *A Time For Dying* (1968) and *Awareness of Dying* (1965).

At times, the researcher might have a vague sense of a core category but cannot find an appropriate label. In such cases, the researcher should select the best label available until a better one is discovered, while examining the concept against the data for relevance and fit. Once a core category is at least tentatively identified, the researcher limits coding to variables that relate to the core variable or category. Selective coding serves as a guide for further data collection, focused on filling in the gaps in the theory. It is at this point that novice researchers sometimes stall, as they succumb to the temptation to follow other interesting leads through the data. As more data are collected, the researcher compares concepts and codes with the emerging core category and with each other, to discover consistencies, differences, and the parameters of the emerging theory. Theoretical coding is the mechanism for bringing together all the data, codes, categories, and core category into a seamless, integrated theory.

The Basic Social Process

A particular type of core category is the Basic Social Process (BSP) (Glaser, 1978). While all grounded theories have core categories, not all have BSPs. What distinguishes the BSP from other core categories is that it is processural in nature, that is, it has more than one state of being. By convention, when the core category is a BSP, it is labeled with a gerund (an "ing" word), such as "Redefining Parental

Identity" (Milliken, 1998). The use of a gerund captures the notion of change over time, and embodies the action of the participants. This change may or may not be recognizable to the participant while, or even after, it happens. Likewise, the person may be aware of the events happening but have no overall sense of the process. The job of the analyst is to make the process visible to the reader in a way that is immediately recognizable to participants.

Examination of behavior from the perspective of an emergent BSP allows the researcher to come to a new understanding of the phenomenon of study. For example, Kearney (1995) conducted a study on pregnant crack users and prenatal care. She reported the common wisdom was that pregnant crack users did not attend prenatal care appointments because they either did not know or appreciate the importance of health surveillance or were too disorganized to keep the appointments. She found, however, that the decision to go or not was a carefully weighed judgment about the risks versus benefits. Benefits included reassurance of fetal well-being, but risks included detection of drugs in body fluids, criminal charges, shame and stigmatization, and loss of parental custody of the infant. Each woman weighed these for herself based on her knowledge and past experiences. Thus, the BSP that emerged enabled Kearney to look more closely at the behavior and unpack its meanings for participants.

Social Structural Processes

One of the potential strengths of using grounded theory is that the researcher can study human behavior within its social context. Social structural processes are those processes in which the "actor" is a group, organization, or society at large. Glaser and Strauss (1967) outlined the possibility of social structural processes, however, little has been done to expand this notion. Until recently, nurses have largely neglected consideration of the wider social context of their studies, locating the action in their studies at the level of the individual (see MacDonald, this volume). To my knowledge, no nurses have yet developed a grounded theory with a social structural process as the core concept. Nurses, however, both as researchers and practitioners, are gaining an appreciation of the ways in which social

forces impact on individual action (see, for example, Stevens, 1989, and Stevens & Hall, 1992), and this might result in more interest in social structural processes.

Nurse-researchers, however, are beginning to attend more closely to how the actors in their research are situated within their wider social contexts. For example, Bunting reports that when she was collecting data for a study of HIV in Detroit, Magic Johnson (who lived there) was diagnosed with the disease. Johnson's diagnosis changed the way people (though not participants) thought about HIV. Similarly, when we were studying how black West Indian Canadian women manage depression, we could not avoid such key issues as racism and relationships between the sexes (Schreiber, Stern, & Wilson, 1998, 2000). Returning to the symbolic interactionist roots of grounded theory, Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1998) discussed levels of social context in which individual action is embedded and included a diagram of Strauss' (1987) conditional matrix. By reflecting on the conditional matrix, which consists of concentric circles to illustrate, for example, the family, community, organizations, society, and so forth that surround the individual, the grounded theorist gains an understanding of how the meanings and understandings that inform participants' lives are influenced by the world at large, much as Bunting and Schreiber, Stern and Wilson did. Thus, in these ways, the researcher can use grounded theory to study action as it is located within society.

RAISING THE LEVEL OF ABSTRACTION[2]

Many novice, and sometimes experienced, grounded theorists encounter difficulty raising the level of theoretical abstraction from description to theory in the emerging theory. This difficulty has been noted (and bemoaned) by various experienced grounded theorists, including May (1994), Stern (1994), Wilson and Hutchinson (1996), and Becker (1993) (see also, Milliken & Schreiber, chapter 9, this volume). Most novices do well creating categories and describing

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[2]I want to thank Margaret Kearney and Marjorie MacDonald for their insights and discussions related to theory and theory development.

how the categories relate to each other, often in some sort of linear story line. Where difficulties arise is in being able to elevate the theoretical level of the findings so that what is produced explains the action, that is, how people work to resolve the basic social problem. Too often, researchers are content to create elaborate descriptions of the phenomenon of study and fail to take the next, vitally important step into abstract theory development.

The goal of good grounded theory research is the construction of a parsimonious theory with concepts linked together in explanatory relationships that, in accounting for the variation in the data, explains how participants resolve their basic social problem. The theory should be abstract—often a metaphor—but must be immediately recognizable to participants, must fit the data, and must compellingly illuminate the action and interaction surrounding the phenomenon of study. Anything purporting to be a grounded theory that lacks these qualities is not a theory, or at least not a good one, and the ways in which grounded theory can be mangled have been examined and discussed by many (see, for example, Baker, Wuest, & Stern, 1992; Becker, 1993; May, 1994; Milliken & Schreiber, chapter 9, this volume; Stern, 1994; Wilson & Hutchinson, 1996).

The reader will note that I understand grounded theory as explanatory, thus inherently predictive. The ability to explain relationships automatically allows us to make predictions about future action and relationships. In my view, researchers who present findings that are merely descriptive have not constructed theory. It is in explicating the relationships between and among the concepts that the researcher raises the level of abstraction from a conceptual (or theoretical) framework, or a loose association of ideas, to theory in which the workings of, and relationships between, those ideas is revealed.

Failure to elevate the level of abstraction results when the researcher omits some of the grounded theory techniques designed to promote theory development, as I have highlighted below. Key among these is the full use of theoretical sampling in which the researcher seeks participants and situations to provide more information about the emerging theory itself, that is, the dimensions and properties of the categories. This includes careful reflection on the coding families as well as on how to find the best data sources to reflect the broadest possible range of experiences. For example, in the depression recovery study there were some women who could still

be considered clinically depressed (not recovered). They, however, identified themselves as recovered and were able to talk about how bad they felt "before." In this way, women with varying recovery experiences helped in saturating the storyline, and I was challenged to examine the issue from several available angles, re-evaluate some of my understandings, and move to a higher level of abstraction to explain the action.

Sometimes a researcher will gather all the data before beginning analysis, sometimes even before deciding to use grounded theory. This is unfortunate, as such practice presents a threat to the validity of the study and may limit the level of abstraction possible. In such a situation, the researcher either does not understand, or appreciate, the rationale for concurrent use of grounded theory techniques. Unless arrangements have been made for follow-up contact and further data collection, the researcher is unable to theoretically sample to elaborate on categories, test hypotheses, and so forth. Thus, the findings will likely be concrete and descriptive rather than theoretically abstract and explanatory.

Another key and often overlooked component of theoretical sampling is the use of "negative cases." As hypotheses are generated, it is vital to seek informants whose experiences would not confirm an emerging hypothesis or that might refute the emerging theory and concepts. The examination of negative or deviant cases challenges the researcher to develop a fuller understanding at a higher level of abstraction of the phenomenon. For example, if I find that early data collection in a study of how people recover from serious and persistent mental illness shows that the experience of consumers in dealing with the mental health system is universally negative, it would be vitally important to seek out other informants whose experiences were more mixed or even positive. In this way, the examination of negative cases, that is, those that apparently refute the emerging conceptualizations, forces the researcher to develop concepts and explanations that account for the fullest range of data, necessitating more abstract thinking.

Yet another element often overlooked by novice researchers is standing back and questioning the data. Glaser (1978) has posed three levels of questions, each more specific than the last, including, "What is this data a study of?," "What category does this incident indicate?," and, "What is actually happening in the data?" (1978,

p. 57). By questioning the data, the researcher promotes theoretical sensitivity and is challenged to think more abstractly about what is hidden in the data.

Using the procedures developed by the originators of the method should help the researcher move data analysis to increasingly higher levels of abstraction (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1978; Strauss, 1987). It helps for the researcher to constantly keep in mind the goal of developing theory.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have attempted to guide the reader through the process of doing grounded theory research, highlighting some of the traps in which novice researchers often find themselves stuck. I have made efforts to examine some of these traps and offered suggestions on how to avoid them to ensure a good grounded theory. Nevertheless, this is but one construction (I hope a sound one) among many, of the grounded theory research process, and I offer it to fill some of the gaps I have seen in the literature. I had the good fortune to learn from an expert, Phyllis Stern, who encouraged and guided me in my interests in grounded theory. Later on, I was fortunate to be part of a grounded theory research seminar (see Schreiber, chapter 6, this volume) whose members challenged my assumptions and forced me to think about what I was actually doing when conducting my research. Thus, my challenge in writing this chapter has been to bring together my thoughts on grounded theory, recognizing all too well that I am still a learner of the process.

Learning grounded theory is praxis learning and occurs in doing it, reflecting on the process and applying what has been learned through reflection. These processes occur in a continuous cycle and are ongoing throughout the career of the researcher. No article, chapter, or book can substitute for this cycle of learning, as each writer views the topic from a unique perspective, highlighting what is salient to him or her. This is particularly the case if one lacks an experienced guide or, at the very least, reflective colleagues to help mentor. When one has others to talk to about one's thoughts and ideas on grounded theory research, the novice is not left to his or her own devices to make sense of an unfamiliar and complex

methodology. Instead, he or she can gain from the wisdom, experience, and reflections of others who share an interest in grounded theory.

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CHAPTER 5

Examining the Differences Between Researcher and Participant: An Intrinsic Element of Grounded Theory

Caroline Mallory

Social, ethnic, cultural, sexual, and economic differences between the researcher and participants affect both the process and findings of research. However, for those researchers using grounded theory, there is little in the way of published literature to guide us in determining the effects of these differences. Without some understanding of these effects, our research findings are less thorough, less accurate, less explanatory, and less powerful. In this chapter I propose a method for examining differences between researcher and participant within the context of grounded theory, and describe what the utility and purposes of such an analysis might be. Finally, I offer a series of questions and concerns for researchers to consider with regard to conducting an analysis of difference.

THE PROBLEM

Grace sat across the table from me in the public health department's conference room. In an effort to transform the rather bleak accommodations I offered food and coffee. Also on the table were the tape recorder, my notebook, and Grace's signed consent form. I handed her the envelope containing a small cash honorarium, and we began the interview. I was asking women engaged in survival sex to tell me how they were dealing with the threat of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) in their lives. Grace was 34 years old and described herself as a Black African. She said she was "straight," although she had had sex with women in the past, but that was usually part of "turning a date" or trading sex for money. Homeless, without income, and deprived of her children, Grace had just found out that her boyfriend was positive for HIV. She told me she had been drug-free for six months and had not been trading sex during that time, but this latest crisis had shaken her resolve and she found herself thinking about using crack cocaine again and going back to trading sex for economic support.

While Grace is an extreme case, many aspects of her story were common among the 12 women interviewed as part of this study (Mallory, 1998). In addition to trading sex for survival requirements such as food, shelter, drugs, and money, women recounted childhoods filled with abuse and neglect, teenage pregnancy, and, later in their lives, abusive boyfriends and husbands. From the outset of data collection it was obvious that, with few exceptions, I had little in common with these women. I could not help noticing major differences in our economic, social, ethnic, sexual, and cultural backgrounds, as well as comparing their experiences of risk and survival to my own privileged life. Our paths had crossed during this research endeavor, but our histories and future courses were infinitely different. Over time I sensed that the differences between the participants and me had an effect on the process of conducting the study and on the substantive findings. It occurred to me that our differences were, at times, creating a barrier between the participants and me that impaired data collection and analysis. As the social interaction between researcher and participant, building on their past experiences and backgrounds, is the basis for the co-construction of research findings, I thought it was important to have a better

understanding of how differences may impact on this process. I describe here the process of incorporating an analysis of difference between researcher and participants into grounded theory.

METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES

I use the term methodological in the sense that Maynard (1994) does, that is, " . . . the theory and analysis of how research should proceed, how research questions might best be addressed and the criteria against which research findings might be evaluated" (p. 14). At the heart of an analysis of difference is the methodological question—what is the relationship between participant and researcher? As researchers interested in or presently using grounded theory, we recognize the importance of subjective meaning as integral to understanding and explanation of human phenomena. In Stern and Pyles' (1986) words, grounded theory is a " . . . methodology [that] seeks to understand and explain human experience in the context of subjective and holistic experience" (p. 3). Given this philosophical premise, grounded theorists have integrated constructivist and feminist paradigms into grounded theory to emphasize subjective realities (Wuest, 1995). Robrecht (1995) notes that in grounded theory, not only is the subjective experience of the informant central to the research, but also the subjective reality of the investigator is given credence—" . . . the analyst's own symbolic interaction with the data will influence what dimensions are understood to be most salient . . . " (p. 175). Feminists and constructivists agree that the researcher is an integral part of the research, both from the standpoint of the development of the project and also by affecting the outcome of the study (Campbell & Bunting, 1991; Guba, 1990). Research itself may be thought of as a social process (Anderson, 1991), and through our social interactions with research participants we construct knowledge and begin to understand their lives.

If we take this philosophical stance to the more practical world of field research, we must acknowledge that the characteristics of the researcher and participant will affect their interaction, and the process of data collection and analysis will depend in large part upon this interaction. Addressing one half of this social equation, the place of the researcher in this process, a number of authors suggest

that the reader needs to be informed of the researcher's background relative to participants in order to draw accurate conclusions from reports of research (Bunting, 1997; Bunting & Campbell, 1994; Hall & Stevens, 1991). However, Stanley and Wise (1993) note that it is not enough to simply report that one is a white, mostly heterosexual, middle-class woman, and let readers draw what conclusions they may. Stanley and Wise (1993) call for "locating the social scientist within the research process" (p. 165). In other words, there is a need to be explicit about how participants' experiences are interpreted by the researcher. In conducting my early research, I noticed important differences between the participants and me, yet simply naming these differences on ethnicity, socioeconomic class, sexual orientation, and culture was inadequate for an accurate interpretation and understanding of the findings. The second half of the equation was missing as well: how to account for participants' views on how these differences impact on their ability to communicate and interpret their experiences to me. Even more frustrating was my realization that the process by which the researcher might analyze the effects of difference remains, for the most part, unarticulated. Given that such a process can be identified, there are a number of questions that we might ask. How might such an analysis be conducted? What is the use of analyzing differences between researcher and participant? When might such an analysis be applicable? Is grounded theory compatible with analyses of difference? Finally, what risks might be associated with conducting an analysis of difference?

SUGGESTIONS FOR CONDUCTING AN ANALYSIS OF DIFFERENCE

First, let me make clear that differences, in and of themselves, are not a bad thing. While the civil rights and women's movements of the 1960s and 1970s often emphasized human characteristics that seemed to transcend class, race, culture, sex, and so forth, today we value diversity and view differences between people as enriching our daily lives. Indeed, if participants and researcher were alike, what would be the point of conducting inquiry? Second, the researcher's implied privilege and class in society make it difficult to identify all the ways that differences between researcher and participants

influence the research process and findings. However, I am certain that such differences did affect several areas in this study, for example, the willingness of women to participate in the study, the ability and/or willingness of women to respond fully to questions during the interview, and my interpretation of the interview and observation data. I know my own background, values, and beliefs have influenced the interpretation of these women's experiences. I first became aware of the potential for this clash of realities when women told me that HIV simply was not their highest priority, while my own preconception had placed a high value on the threat of HIV to these women. Obviously, participants did not share my interests in HIV, and it was necessary to make room for other problems that participants considered more important. My personal background, values, and beliefs acted as blinders with regard to some aspects of participants' experiences, and like a magnifying glass regarding others.

My own sense is that these examples are only the tip of the iceberg. Moreover, it seems likely that to some extent the differences between researcher and participant will always be insurmountable, in that neither side can completely comprehend the reality of the other. We can, however, raise our awareness of differences, choose to examine critically the differences we are aware of, and attempt to account for differences in our approaches to research. Failure to recognize and integrate differences between researcher and respondent into grounded theory may limit a researcher's ability to accurately interpret data.

In the Glaserian school of grounded theory (Stern, 1994) the researcher does not choose a preconceived problem to study, but rather allows problems and questions to arise from data analysis, and then focuses the remaining data collection and analysis on the emergent social problem. Fortunately, this approach does not preclude researchers from examining their personal and professional values on the topic to be investigated. I view this examination as the first step in an analysis of difference. Because grounded theory researchers function as the instrument for data collection and analysis, we must be clear about beliefs that may serve as filters for the interpretation of the data. This self-examination is not in the sense of bracketing or setting aside the researcher's ideas, but of bringing to awareness, and examining closely, those ideas that may impact on the analysis and findings of research. Moreover, the researcher

must be willing to maintain this awareness and critical examination throughout the research process. For example, in an effort to recruit women into my study I visited a local exotic dance club during working hours. Many of my views on the oppressive nature of the club were reinforced during the visits, but the visits also prompted the questioning of my own motives for doing the research. I was forced to ask myself whether this research was exploiting, patronizing, or objectifying the women who participated, that is, I had to ask who was benefiting from this research. Seasoned researchers with extensive experience with a particular topic or population must also continually examine their values and pre-dispositions. Vast experience leading to detailed constructions of phenomena can blind a researcher to novelty in a familiar setting. Self-evaluation of personal and professional values related to the topic of interest is an essential beginning point for an adequate analysis of the differences between the researcher and participants.

A second strategy for understanding the impact of difference on the process and outcomes of research is what I call informed speculation, that is, the development of researchers' ideas about how their values and beliefs may differ or be similar to the participant's values and beliefs. Such speculation could be based on selective reading of sensitizing literature, discussions with key informants, and discussions with other researchers about their experiences across boundaries of culture, ethnicity, sexuality, and socioeconomic class. This kind of preliminary exposure to difference serves as a catalyst for continued self-questioning as well as providing some anticipatory guidance of what issues of difference might arise. For example, I found the writings of women engaged in the commercial sex industry to be particularly helpful in sensitizing me, not only to differences between the women writers and myself, but also to differences among the women themselves. Their writings encouraged me to see women as individuals, each with her own unique experience. Thus, the readings and discussions were attempts to understand the range of potential differences that I might find among participants in my own research as well as to reinforce the idea that unanticipated differences and similarities would emerge. The process of informed speculation is integrated into the sensitizing literature review and theoretical sampling of the literature, and is focused on bringing to light potential differences between researcher and participant in

order to provide anticipatory guidance in conducting interviews, other data collection, and analysis.

I envision the analysis of difference as continuing with the formation of tentative strategies for determining participants' perspectives on how differences in social, cultural, ethnic, and sexuality impact on participants' relating salient experiences. These strategies might include a short list of questions about the participants' backgrounds and values, eliciting participants' views on what barriers they perceived between themselves and the researcher, or asking what misunderstandings might have occurred because of differences. For example, we might ask how they felt about being interviewed by someone of a different ethnic or cultural background and what barriers they perceived in accurate communication between participant and researcher. It might also be instructive to ask participants to reveal their preconceptions of the researcher. While such questions may seem awkward or stiff, in my limited experience, women appreciate a candid and forthright approach to sensitive questions. Such questions might best be asked toward the end of interviews to allow for early development of rapport. Given the reciprocal nature of grounded theory, researchers must also be willing to divulge their personal and professional values to the participant. As participant and researcher share their respective beliefs and values, differences affecting the research process and findings may be illuminated.

An analysis of difference may also provide for the valuing of diversity. Recognizing and understanding differences between the researcher and participant keeps the researcher centered on the context and the unique contributions of each individual in the process of interpretive inquiry. More simply stated, an analysis of difference may provide a more complete picture of each person or group. Moreover, exploring differences may help in the development of trust and disclosure between researcher and participant, leading to improved credibility of research findings.

Not all research situations, topics, or participants are necessarily best approached with an analysis of difference, for example, when the researcher is truly an insider. However, in research designs that emphasize culture, ethnicity, sexual orientation or socioeconomic factors, or where major differences across these boundaries exist, an analysis of difference may be essential to a complete understanding of the phenomenon of interest. In cases where the researcher judges

that an analysis of difference may be helpful in illuminating the phenomenon under study, the analysis should be tailored to fit the research and the participants.

In summary, the basic aspects of an analysis of difference include a thorough self-understanding of the researcher's values related to the topic of interest. Researchers may also take measures to become sensitive to differences between themselves and the participants in order to develop strategies for uncovering differences. Finally, the researcher attempts to elicit the participant's view of differences and their impact on the process of the research. In this fashion, the researcher and participant may come to a shared understanding of their social interaction. An analysis of difference within grounded theory may improve the credibility of findings, emphasize the value of differences, and delineate the phenomenon more accurately.

CONGRUENCE BETWEEN ANALYSIS OF DIFFERENCE AND GROUNDED THEORY

Grounded theory, as initially developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967), was heavily influenced by symbolic interactionism (Robrecht, 1995), and also reflected a philosophical stance of critical realism (Mallory, 1998). Writing in the vernacular of the time, Glaser and Strauss (1967) implied that there was a single reality that could be known objectively, although imperfectly. While some researchers continue to use grounded theory in a context of critical realism, most contemporary researchers work from perspectives congruent with the premises of constructivism and feminism. In particular, researchers now emphasize the co-construction of social reality that occurs between researcher and participant. Emphasis on such co-construction, which allows the data to lead the researcher (Glaser, 1978; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Stern, Allen, & Moxley, 1984), in some respects, implies an analysis of difference. Implications and assumptions are not enough, however, to ensure the adequacy of a grounded theory. An analysis of difference makes explicit the researcher's efforts to include reflection on the interaction between participant and researcher. An analysis of difference has the potential to shape our conceptions of a phenomenon based on a variety of data sources and to assist us in making thoughtful judgments about how we will prepare for and

undertake data collection and analysis. The application of analysis of difference to grounded theory has the potential to improve the accuracy and legitimacy of the research process and findings. Recognizing socioeconomic, ethnic, sexual, cultural, and other differences between researcher and participant makes explicit the researcher's place in the process and findings, as well as leading to a better understanding of the basic social problem, that is, the processes through which participants make meaning in their lives. As such, an analysis of difference contributes to the development of substantive and formal theories that inform our comprehension of participant's lives.

QUESTIONS AND FINAL THOUGHTS

When I began this research project (Mallory, 1998), I struggled with a number of methodological issues. In this chapter I have attempted to answer some of the questions generated by that process. As much as I would like to end the whole thing with a tidy conclusion, I do not think such a thing exists in grounded theory. Instead I am left with a sense of how complicated and problematic an analysis of difference may be. For example, could accounting for difference be interpreted as forcing data into preconceived categories that have meaning only to the researcher? Also, how much sensitization prior to data collection is necessary in order to anticipate difference, and could this sensitization blind the researcher to characteristics, values, and beliefs that they hold in common with participants? Under what circumstances should inquiry into difference be undertaken, and when would a study benefit from such analysis? Would an analysis of difference detract from the collection of other, more relevant, data? In addition, there are practical considerations: how might the researcher approach the documentation and reporting of difference within a grounded theory study, and are we asking too much of the participant in commenting on difference?

Plainly, there is much room for discussion on the appropriateness and application of analysis of difference to grounded theory. I am convinced, however, that those of us who have chosen to use grounded theory need to consider carefully how differences may separate us from those from whom we would learn. Without the

recognition and examination of differences along ethnic, cultural, economic, social, and sexual lines, we remain limited as instruments of research. Whatever we aspire to in our research, at the very least it is understanding, and, perhaps for some, an analysis of difference will expand our understanding.

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CHAPTER 6

The Grounded Theory Club, or Who Needs an Expert Mentor?

Rita Sara Schreiber

Grounded theorists, particularly those who learned their trade from either Glaser and Strauss or from their direct disciples, have long espoused the view that one cannot learn to do grounded theory without a mentor. Having learned grounded theory in this way, I, too, endorsed this notion that the student of grounded theory would necessarily be lost without the guidance of a far wiser, more experienced teacher in the method to guide and assist the learner. Yet recent experiences have caused me to question this belief and consider wider conceptualizations of mentorship in this context.

This chapter represents my thoughts on the process of learning grounded theory and the nature of mentorship in that process. I wrote this because I have yet to find very much written on how to begin to learn grounded theory. In this chapter, I will briefly touch on the original teaching of grounded theory to graduate students at UCSF, identifying key strategies foundational to student learning. I will also outline some developments within the field that could profoundly impact the teaching, learning, and practice of grounded theory. Following this, I will propose an alternative model for teach-

ing and learning grounded theory that has recently emerged, the Grounded Theory Club (GTC), and reflect on the role of expert mentoring in learning grounded theory.

EARLY TEACHING AND LEARNING

When Glaser and Strauss were first developing the method, the primary venue for teaching research methodology was a sequence of five graduate quarters of seminars entitled "The Discovery of Social Reality," held at the University of California at San Francisco. Both Glaser and Strauss conducted seminars within the sequence at various times. This was an exciting time to be a graduate student at UCSF, and the seminar was highly prized by those who attended. (Stern and Covan, who were there at the time, have discussed this period of history in chapter 2, this volume.) What is important about this time is that an enriched atmosphere was created in which variation in perspective added to understanding and helped novice researchers wrestle with their data and tease out the core concepts of their studies.

In this atmosphere, students could gain an appreciation for the "magic" that is part of the process of doing grounded theory research (Glaser, 1978; May, 1994; Morse, 1991). As Barney Glaser is fond of pointing out, the core concept is probably buried in the first interview, but the researcher cannot yet see it. It is only once the researcher has collected, analyzed, and wallowed in much more data, and enjoyed some respite as well, that the magic of "discovering" the grounded theory can happen (Glaser, 1978).

Central to this teaching/learning experience is the notion that there are expert mentors who could guide students in gaining an understanding of the methodological considerations that applied to their own particular studies. This mentorship is viewed by many grounded theorists as the only way in which one can truly learn grounded theory, or at least learn it properly (Stern, 1994; May, 1994; May & Hutchinson, 1994). Mentorship styles have varied. Some, like Glaser or Strauss, took on the role of expert at whose feet novice researchers might learn the method. Such expert mentorship could be enacted in various ways, depending on the personality of the mentor. The power and influence, however, remain firmly with the expert. Such an expert mentor might work closely with students,

helping them code interviews and pointing out issues and questions to attend to in later interviews and memos. Some expert mentors might also identify a likely core concept of the study, helping the student to focus more closely on what is salient. In this way, expert grounded theory mentors seem to have taken a high-support approach to guiding novice researchers. In spite of differences in mentoring styles which might suit different learners, mentorship has always been an important feature in learning grounded theory.

Without such mentorship, however, students have been left to wander on their own, trying to use a method they have never seen enacted and trying to make sense of their data with no glimpses of how this might happen. This has often been the case for the poor graduate student wanting to do a grounded theory study but finding himself or herself in a department without a qualitative researcher, much less a grounded theorist. Without appropriate mentorship, many novice grounded theorists were forced to do the best they could. Sometimes the results were quite satisfactory (Milliken, 1996), however, most of us are familiar with the wide range of poor scholarship that some authors thought was grounded theory (May & Hutchinson, 1994; Stern, 1994). There can be no doubt that having a good mentor can only improve the overall quality of research that is published under the guise of grounded theory.

THE GROUNDED THEORY *OEUVRE*

For a long time, there was very little in the way of practical guidance that a novice grounded theorist might find in the literature. There was *Discovery* (Glaser & Stern, 1967), of course, plus *Theoretical Sensitivity* (Glaser, 1978), and two articles by Stern (1980, 1985), but these were not particularly directive in terms of providing a "how to" that would assist the novice. *Discovery* provided a philosophical argument, largely in positivist terminology, for why grounded theory could be a valid and reliable research methodology. The work of Glaser (1978) was more directly applicable and contained helpful sections on coding, memoing, and theory development, however, the reader was still left to his or her own imagination to figure out how the theoretical discussions of these methodological issues could apply to his or her particular study data. It was not until the appearance of Strauss'

Qualitative Analysis for Social Scientists in 1987, which walked the reader through careful examples of research data, that a novice grounded theorist could begin to get a picture of how to pull it together and what it all meant. Indeed, a careful reading of these three sources can provide an excellent theoretical understanding of what grounded theory is all about, but the researcher is still left to develop what it might look like for one's own particular research interests.

Since 1986, there has been a proliferation of literature on the methodology, including Strauss and Corbin (1990a & b, 1998), Glaser's response to Strauss and Corbin (Glaser, 1992), Hutchinson (1986), Chenitz and Swanson (1986), and others (Annells, 1996; Glaser, 1994, 1998; May, 1996; Melia, 1996; Strauss & Corbin, 1994). Strauss and Corbin's 1990 attempt to make the grounded theory method transparent has been widely read (1990a). It has also been widely criticized by some grounded theorists who view it as a cookbook in which the method has been reduced to a simple step-by-step recipe. It has been criticized in a more personal manner by Glaser who, in addition to seeing it as reductionist (and therefore not the "true" grounded theory), appears to have had some personal ax to grind. This interchange has long been discussed and debated, with various respected scholars firmly and convincingly supporting one side or another. (See MacDonald, chapter 7, this volume, for a new perspective on this apparent schism.) The substantive debate and criticism following publication of Strauss and Corbin (1990a) led to a newer edition in 1998 in which many of the criticisms of the earlier version were addressed.

We have found that the apparent schism between Glaser and Strauss has led some graduate committees to try to steer students away from grounded theory, in the fear that the student will become enmeshed in an incomprehensible and nonproductive debate. We have learned, however, that when the issues are explicated, some of the fears of our academic colleagues have begun to dissipate. To be sure, it is not entirely clear that grounded theorists outside of nursing consider this debate to be of any substance. In fact, from a teaching and learning perspective, the apparent argument between Glaser and Strauss has proven to be a real boon to grounded theory, as it has attracted attention and provoked a flurry of excited debate, both in print (Annells, 1996; Melia, 1996; Stern, 1994) and in corridors. This has, in turn, stimulated a spurt of new development of the

methodology as people are challenged to reconsider their assumptions and beliefs about research.

Of equal importance is the fact that this Glaser-Strauss controversy created widespread public discourse about the method as well as its epistemology, ontology, and application. This discussion is accessible to anyone who takes the time to read the literature on grounded theory carefully and critically. This means that even the unfortunate graduate student stranded in a department full of post-positivists can sift through the discourse and begin to make his or her own sense of what grounded theory is in a much more informed way than was possible even 10 years ago. Further, if she or he has a colleague in a similar position, they can share resources, thoughts, ideas, criticisms, and challenges to push each other further in their own development as researchers. In this way, the presence of a body of literature on the method and the various perspectives from which grounded theory has been viewed has provided a valuable resource that was missing when many of us were trying to learn it.

In addition, the dialogue that is now underway provides a variety of perspectives that the novice researcher must address. Without addressing them, the student cannot understand what grounded theory means for her or him. This situation puts much more responsibility at the feet of the learner than was previously necessary or even possible. Instead of either being handed the method by a mentor or being left to guess the method, the learner now must sort through all the philosophical and practical considerations and arguments to discover what she or he understands as grounded theory methodology and how it might be used to study the particular phenomenon of interest. It is from these humble beginnings of recognizing that we are all learners on this stage that the Grounded Theory Club emerged.

THE GROUNDED THEORY CLUB

The Grounded Theory Club (GTC) emerged when a handful of faculty new to the University of Victoria School of Nursing realized that we were all using or had used grounded theory in our graduate work. A fourth sessional instructor was considering grounded theory as he developed his doctoral proposal. Thus, it seemed like a good

idea to get together occasionally and talk about grounded theory issues. An early consideration was that we were an island of symbolic interactionists within an ocean of phenomenologists, and we had a vague sense that we could support each other. We knew we were lucky in not having to work in a post-positivist environment, but we wanted to ensure the survival of an interactionist perspective within the prevalent discourse.

It did not take long before graduate students and others began to hear about the group and wanted to attend. This led to the eventual current composition and format of the GTC. The group meets approximately every two weeks for two hours and is open to anyone interested in grounded theory. In this way, members range from those who have done one or more (funded) grounded theory studies through those who are just trying to figure out the difference between the various interpretive/constructivist methods and identify what would best fit their own research interests. This variation in background enables us to have lively, ongoing consideration and reconsideration of anything related to the method and its application.

In true grounded theory fashion, what has emerged was not envisioned at the outset. From my own perspective, it seems that we have developed three main scholarly purposes:

1. Teaching/learning
2. Consideration of emerging issues/development of the method
3. Mutual mentorship

Teaching/Learning

The core of the GTC is teaching and learning of grounded theory. Located as we are within the culture of the Faculty of Human and Social Development, we conceptualize teaching and learning from an emancipatory perspective (Friere, 1974; Allen, 1990). From this perspective, the expertise of the teacher is not in the content to be learned but in the process of how to learn, and the most effective learning is transformational in nature (Mezirow, 1991). Learning is created through the process of engagement with the material through discussion and dialogue so that the learner is transformed

through the process. In this way, we are all co-learners in the GTC, and this becomes evident at each meeting as we discuss our own creation of knowledge. This means that there are no experts in the GTC, although some members have more experience than others. Members of the GTC bring to meetings whatever issues each would like to see addressed. An agenda is created and we consider each issue in turn. A typical agenda might be:

- Tina's data
- Sampling
- Brainstorming/finding Jane's theory
- The nature of theory in grounded theory

Frequently, one or more issues must be shelved for a future meeting, or, if all are equally important, a special meeting will be scheduled. In this way, we have, thus far, been able to make sufficient time to address fully whatever methodological issues arise.

Having the range of experience within the group has enabled us to think through why we do what we do when we are involved with a study. For example, students considering whether or not to use grounded theory or phenomenology have provided us the opportunity to explore the philosophical underpinnings of both methods so that they could decide which approach better suited their research interests. Consideration of the ontology and epistemology of the two methods helped them identify how a study would be different depending on which direction was selected, but it also allowed each of us the opportunity to explicate our own natural biases.

Often at meetings, members writing dissertations or theses have shared drafts of grounded theory schematics with the group for discussion. This has led to discussion and questions about the emerging theory and helped clarify the final product. This also provided the opportunity for everyone to get involved with various ways that other literature might enlighten the discussion section of the dissertation. For example, one member described her early findings in a study of the process of parenting an adult child with schizophrenia. The category under discussion concerned the way in which parents, frustrated by their inability to effect change in the care their own children received, turned to social action and began working for

improved care for all people with schizophrenia. This led to discussion of a paper by Covan (1995), remembered from a conference in which adults living far from their elderly parents tended to informally "adopt" another elderly person to care for, in a symbolic enaction of caring for a loved one without directly providing that care. The open discussion also provided some guidance for others' work and the applicability (or not) of the concept of symbolic or substituted caring and arguments that might be pursued for their own research.

Another teaching/learning approach that has recently emerged has been in the classroom. Instead of inviting a token grounded theorist to guest lecture in graduate or undergraduate courses, instructors have been inviting the GTC to attend classes and hold a mock meeting. In these circumstances, as many members as possible attend, and we form a circle-within-the-circle of the classroom. In most instances, someone will give a brief overview of what grounded theory is and an example of a grounded theory. If the class is in a graduate course, a more specific topic, such as sampling or data analysis, might be the focus. After this, the floor is open for very informal discussion of issues that arise from the group. Members of the GTC come prepared with questions to pose in case they are needed, however, this has never been the case. More often than not, the students themselves have burning methodological issues, as they have their own research concerns.

One of the earliest questions that arises is whether or not it is appropriate (or necessary) to do a literature review to do a grounded theory study. As novice researchers, graduate students have often expressed feeling caught between knowing they must write a proposal and having read in *Discovery* that "the truth is out there somewhere" rather than in the literature. This has always led to a discussion of the practical realities of graduate school as well as understanding sensitizing concepts. Within the context, a discussion of the applicability and feasibility of bracketing and its relationship to grounded theory often arises. This usually helps students who are having difficulty making sense of the disparate perspectives to recognize their own needs as researchers.

The benefits of this approach to introducing students to grounded theory is that they can see it as a living, breathing methodology. They can be introduced to some of the issues and perspectives that are currently part of the discourse among grounded theorists without

being overwhelmed or discouraged from trying it. In fact, the GTC has gained members through contact with students in this way, as they have come to realize that their confusion is normal.

Consideration of Emerging Issues/Development of the Method

One of the early benefits that emerged from the GTC meetings has been ongoing discussion of emerging issues within the field. This began, as might be expected, with discussion of the Glaser-Strauss debate, as the more experienced members considered themselves at that point to be Glaserian grounded theorists. Early discussions justified this position. More than one person, however, had a need to explore whether or not grounded theory as a method would accommodate incorporation of a critical theory perspective, and this led to a review of the origins of the method. It was through this review, largely led by Marjorie MacDonald, that members began to realize that perhaps the Glaser-Strauss debate was a red herring founded on very little substance and that what we thought the masters' positions were was, to some degree, illusion. This has enabled us to explicate what each has written and to more clearly delineate our own perspectives on grounded theory. It has also allowed us to understand the areas of congruency between grounded theory and critical social theory in their philosophical origins and thus, contribute, in some small way, to the development of the method.

At GTC meetings, we have discussed other developments and their applicability to grounded theory. In one recent meeting, we discussed the relative merits of using computer applications to manage data. Currently, three members of the group use NUD*IST, while a third uses Atlas-ti to code and manage their data. In other meetings, we have considered the applicability of post-modernist thought to grounded theory methodology, and we have come to some surprising understandings (see MacDonald & Schreiber, chapter 3, this volume). On several occasions, we have taken up the issue of whether or not grounded theory is wedded to symbolic interactionism, and whether such a marriage is one of convenience or of true kinship (see Milliken & Schreiber, chapter 9, this volume). At the same time, the dialogue about the compatibility of grounded

theory with a critical perspective has also become ongoing, particularly as new graduate students come with their own needs to "make a difference" for/with participants. In this way, we are working toward a fuller understanding of the method within the larger methodological discourse.

Mutual Mentorship

The original purpose of the GTC was to provide each of us on the faculty with support to keep going with our various research projects. This is ongoing, and most welcome. We had no way of anticipating, however, how important this would become for the student members of the group, as they often feel lost in trying to design their own graduate research projects. When they are able to bring their questions, and to learn that their questions are important to ask, it is easier for them to decide whether they want to try grounded theory or not. Those who do not do this at least understand more clearly why they prefer another method, while those who do use grounded theory have a venue to bring forth their issues, concerns, and triumphs as they work through the process. This has been rewarding for all of us.

As members reach various stages of their data collection and analysis, they present their findings, at whatever stage, to the group and seek assistance in sorting things out. This is in keeping with Glaser's (1978) suggestion that the process is enriched by other perspectives, and by gaining some distance from time to time from the data. At a recent GTC meeting, two members presented their findings. One, a student, was in the middle of data collection and was beginning to formulate ideas of what might be hiding in the data. Members helped her by raising questions, suggesting possible contingencies, and providing ideas for areas to pursue in further interviews. For example, the student, who was studying student activism in high schools, noticed a difference between students at two different schools. Possible explanations for this included different school cultures, different student organizations, different individuals within the groups, and so forth, giving direction for areas in which the data could be saturated further. In contrast, another member, who was struggling to finish her dissertation, was supported by members to stop wallowing in the data and "just write." Several practical

suggestions for this were offered, including inserting "insert juicy quote here" in the text instead of being tempted to search for the best quote, which could be done later. In these ways, both practical and personal support have become integral to the GTC, as we have all been co-learners in creating the process.

DO YOU NEED AN EXPERT MENTOR?

As interest in interpretivist/constructivist research has flourished, awareness of the complexity of the ontological and epistemological issues surrounding methodology decisions has grown. This has promoted the growth and evolution of various methods, including grounded theory, as different views of the philosophical issues emerge. Indeed, different observers of grounded theory have described it as situated within a variety of traditions, including postpositivism (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Guba & Lincoln, 1994), interpretivism (Annells, 1996; Stern, 1994; Strauss & Corbin, 1994), and constructivism (Annells, 1996). The field is getting more complex and difficult to navigate without help finding the signposts.

Occasionally, someone will have the fortitude and drive to tease through the literature on his or her own and figure it out, but he or she will often report feeling lost and unsure even after having completed the project. This is especially the case with a first project, and the results are often of poor quality (Susan Noakes, personal communication). It is not likely that most people can learn to do grounded theory without at least some guidance and support. Why would anyone want to do something the hard way when help is available? But what does that guidance and support look like?

Much depends on how we view grounded theory itself. If we view grounded theory as a fully developed method of inquiry, then we do, indeed, need to learn its True Enactment from an expert so that we can ensure the proper use of it. In this case, there is little need to continue discussing it. However, if we can understand grounded theory as evolving, changing, and growing, then we, as co-learners, can promote both our own understanding and the development of the method through sharing our ideas in the general discourse. This is the perspective taken at the GTC, and I believe such collegial approaches can help ensure that we are not eroding grounded theory

(Stern, 1994) but rather building on it, ensuring its rigor, and explicating its usefulness.

Nonetheless, the chance to work with an originator of grounded theory, or with a direct descendant, still exists. The relatively easy availability, through phone, fax, and e-mail, of such leaders as Stern, Benoliel, and May, among others, presents a precious opportunity for those who would seek such guidance. In my experience, most methodologists are only too happy to speak with learners who call them seeking assistance, even if the person is a complete stranger. Yet, I have always been surprised at how few people, struggling alone with an idea, will pick up a phone and directly ask a few questions of someone who might be able to provide some clarification. The availability of these senior grounded theorists will not last forever.

What withstands through time, however, is what can be found in the literature: the writings of the masters, their disciples, and any other interpreters. Anyone with a commitment to understanding grounded theory can read what has been written and make meaning of it in his or her own way. It is through this interpretive process *about* grounded theory that new ideas are raised and the methodology is developed. Although some writers may feel that what they have written stands on its own and requires no interpretation, the reality is that, each time we read something, we interpret its meaning. In this way, the writings are cast and re-cast in different epistemological contexts so that they gain new, or enhanced, meanings in time.

This message was brought home to me through a multimedia piece of art I happen to own. At the time I acquired it, the artist told me how she had come to create the piece in response to her child's sorrow and rage at the artist going away for a week. For years, whenever people commented on the "unusual" piece (doubtless a euphemism), I explained that it had to do with the feelings of the person "left behind." When I re-encountered the artist and told this to her, her response was, "Well, that's what I created. But it's your painting now, so it can mean whatever you make of it." The message is that we put our ideas out into the fray of the discourse, but how it is received, both immediately and in time, is subject for interpretation and reinterpretation.

All this is a circular approach to answering the original question: Do you need a mentor to learn grounded theory? Consultation with an expert can be a priceless and important experience for learners

of grounded theory. Having the opportunity to show one's work to a more experienced expert and receive feedback is invaluable in developing both confidence and knowledge of the research tradition. The learnings that we can gain from direct contact with experts should be considered an important source of data in figuring out what grounded theory is. It is not to be mistaken, however, for received wisdom or Truth, which can stifle learning and growth. This is where I believe mentorship has sometimes become synonymous with capital "m" method, as in Methodolotry.

We can, however, reconceptualize mentorship from the hierarchical origins of the term and its early enactment, including within the grounded theory tradition, to a more egalitarian understanding of the concept. If mentors are seen as co-learners with particular areas of expertise, then mentorship can promote an emancipated approach to learning grounded theory. Each of us has something to teach and something to learn about grounded theory, even if it is only by raising old or dumb questions. In this way, peer mentorship, such as practiced in the GTC, is available to everyone who wants it and who is truly committed to engaging in a learning process. Such mentorship benefits both students and faculty, and the existence of research interest groups such as the GTC has been identified as a characteristic of top-ranked schools of nursing (Pollock, 1986).

My personal truth is that it is not the mentor *per se* that makes the difference. I believe that anyone engaged in scholarly inquiry who is committed to understanding what grounded theory is all about does not need an expert to tell him or her. What he or she needs is to make use of all the resources available, including the growing body of literature, consulting with colleagues, and consulting with the experts. Engaging in the dialogue to discover what grounded theory is and how it works, the learner will recognize his or her own understanding as he or she triangulates the disparate data sources. In doing so, the learning of grounded theory will ultimately emerge for each who seeks this knowledge.

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CHAPTER 7

Finding a Critical Perspective in Grounded Theory

Marjorie MacDonald

> In the social sciences there is only interpretation. Nothing speaks for itself.
>
> —Norman Denzin, 1994

> The most creative thinking occurs at the meeting places of the disciplines.
> At the centre of any tradition, it is easy to become blind to alternatives.
> At the edges, where the lines are blurred, it is easier to imagine that the world might be different.
>
> —Mary Catherine Bateson, 1989

In the wake of the Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion (World Health Organization, 1986), nurses have been trying increasingly to articulate the meaning of health promotion for their research and practice (Lowenberg, 1995; Novak, 1988; Rush, 1997). As a nurse educator who is interested in community health promotion, I have been fairly clear about the implications of health promotion

theory for my own teaching and practice. As a researcher, however, I found myself wondering about relevant methodologies for studying health promotion, given the potential conflict between assumptions inherent in some qualitative research methodologies and in the philosophical underpinnings of health promotion. Because I saw a need for the development of health promotion theory in nursing, I was drawn to grounded theory as a research methodology. However, given my commitment to the Ottawa Charter version of health promotion, with its inherently critical perspective, I was concerned about whether grounded theory as an interpretive methodology would be appropriate for my own research.

Although others have argued that grounded theory can be integrated with a feminist methodology (e.g., Wuest, 1995; current volume), which is one of a number of critical theories (Stevens, 1989), no one has argued the case clearly enough for my needs that grounded theory can address specific charges that arise from explicitly critical perspectives, including the socio-ecological perspective of health promotion. At the very least, the origins and epistemology of grounded theory raised initial questions for me about its relevance in a field, such as health promotion, that is simultaneously concerned with both macro- and micro-social issues. My preliminary reading on Symbolic Interactionism (SI) and grounded theory suggested that they were focused primarily on the micro-social world of situated interaction. I was most concerned about charges that SI and, by extension, grounded theory did not address social structural issues (Denzin, 1992; Reynolds, 1993). If this was true, I reasoned, then its relevance for studying health promotion might be limited.

My explorations, however, led me to conclude that grounded theory is an appropriate methodology for studying health promotion for two main reasons. First, the originators of grounded theory have always been concerned not only with social psychological processes but also with social structural processes and the structural conditions that influence those processes, although these have not been emphasized in most of the published grounded theories by nurses. Second, grounded theory's relevance for health promotion research is related to the consistency among key concepts of SI, the socio-ecological perspective in health promotion, and critical social theory. These will be discussed later in this chapter.

In this chapter, I describe my own scholarly journey to determine the relevance of grounded theory as a methodology for studying health promotion phenomena. This was a rather convoluted journey that took me across a vast terrain. I began by exploring the philosophical and conceptual foundations of grounded theory to identify potential sources of conflict and compatibility with the socio-ecological perspective of health promotion. As I got into this literature, it became clear to me that the answer to my question might be different depending on which version of grounded theory (if there really is more than one) I was considering. This led me to an analysis of the so-called schism between Glaser and Strauss (and their respective followers). From there, I followed the implications of this analysis for the way grounded theory could be used in health promotion research. Before I describe my journey, however, I will begin by clarifying what I mean when I use the term "health promotion."

HEALTH PROMOTION

My understanding of health promotion and its historical development has been articulated elsewhere (MacDonald, in press), but a brief overview of what I mean when I use the term will help to situate the later discussion. Maben and Macleod Clark (1995) argue that health promotion, particularly in nursing, is a contested concept and that the meaning varies from one person to the next. Many people see it as being synonymous with health education and having a focus on changing lifestyle behavior (Kulbok, Baldwin, Cox, & Duffy, 1997; Pender, 1987, 1996). This individualist view of health promotion has been entrenched in health policy in some countries, including the United States and Great Britain, but it is not consistent with the more collectivist perspective articulated in the World Health Organization's Ottawa Charter which defined health promotion as "the process of enabling people to increase control over, and to improve, their health" (World Health Organization, 1986, p. 1). The Ottawa Charter identified the importance of social factors in determining health by naming the fundamental prerequisites to health: peace, shelter, a stable ecosystem, sustainable resources, social justice, and equity. Writers of the Charter also proposed that the major health promotion strategies are building healthy public

policy, creating supportive environments, strengthening community action, developing personal skills, and reorienting health services. Thus, although a health promotion perspective does not preclude an individual focus at the micro social level, the emphasis is on understanding and taking collective action on the social and environmental influences on health at a macro social level. Elsewhere (MacDonald, in press), I have described the parallels between a health promotion perspective as per the Ottawa Charter, and an emerging critical social perspective in nursing (Butterfield, 1990; Kendall, 1992; Stevens, 1989; Stevens & Hall, 1992).

Since the Ottawa Charter was released in 1986, the socio-ecological perspective on health promotion has continued to evolve. Stokols (1992) suggests that ecology, which had its earliest roots in biology, is about the interrelations between organisms and their environments. It has evolved in several disciplines into a general framework for understanding the nature of people's transactions with their environments. Social ecology is concerned with social, institutional, and cultural contexts of people-environment relations. Thus, an important assumption in this perspective is that people-environment interactions are characterized by cycles of mutual influence. The assumption of mutual influence is important to remember when I later discuss SI and its relevance to health promotion. It is this assumption that removes health promotion from the realm of a purely structural perspective that would place it at odds with an interpretive research methodology such as grounded theory.

PHILOSOPHICAL AND THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF GROUNDED THEORY

An in-depth review of SI is beyond the scope of this chapter. I will, therefore, provide only a brief overview with specific attention to ideas that are relevant to the central thesis of this paper. Symbolic interactionism, as a theoretical perspective, was derived from the philosophy of pragmatism, articulated at the turn of the century by Charles Pierce, William James, and John Dewey (Münch, 1994). The sociological perspective that emerged from pragmatism placed particular emphasis on the symbolic nature of social life, which was studied initially from the micro-social perspective of human actors

involved in symbolically defining their situations, their selves, and their roles in social interaction. Thus, symbolic interactionists view human beings as active participants and creators of the world in which they live.

Many social theorists saw SI as being in distinct opposition to the classical European sociological perspective which was concerned with macro-social analyses of societal structures (e.g., economy, polity, culture) as the primary determinants of human action (Münch, 1994). Thus, symbolic interactionism emerged as a reaction to the dominance of structural-functionalist perspectives in sociology. For this reason, and because of its emphasis on personal meaning-making in shaping human behavior, symbolic interactionism has been interpreted by many as being unconcerned with the influence of social and structural conditions on human action. This has been called the "astructural bias" (Reynolds, 1993).

The most important contributor to the development of what came to be known as SI was George Herbert Mead who synthesized pragmatism with Darwin's theory of evolution (and thus its links to ecology) and behaviorism. Mead conceptualized the development of self and society as an interaction between the person and his or her natural environment. Herbert Blumer, a sociologist of the Chicago School, further developed Mead's SI into a distinct sociological paradigm and formally articulated the methodological position associated with this perspective (Blumer, 1969). In fact, Blumer officially coined the term "symbolic interactionism" in a 1937 article (cited in Blumer, 1969). Blumer identified three basic premises of SI: (a) human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that these things have for them; (b) the meaning of objects derives from social interaction; and (c) meaning is arrived at through an interpretive process.

The starting point for analysis in SI is the notion of "human society as action" (Blumer, 1969). Society is not a structure that exists independently of people's actions and interactions. Rather, human society consists of people engaging in action. Group life (i.e., society) presupposes individual and collective interaction. Human society consists of people in association who interact predominantly on a symbolic level. In contrast to the structural-functional perspective, in which behavior is seen as a product of the factors influencing it, symbolic interactionists see the human actor, not as a responding

organism but as an acting organism who constructs his or her own action on the basis of the interpretations made in the course of social and self-interactions.

In Blumer's view, meanings themselves are important, not the apparent structures or systems created by collective, repetitive action. Just because meanings are unquestioned, unconscious, and reflected in prevailing norms, values, and beliefs does not mean that they are not "subtended by a process of social interaction, a process that is necessary not only for their change, but equally well for their retention in a fixed form" (Blumer, 1969, p. 19). According to Blumer, it is the social process of group life that creates and upholds the rules, not the rules that create and uphold group life. It is this principle, in particular, that is challenged by the more structural approaches. In health promotion rhetoric, the importance of social and environmental factors in producing and reproducing health and health behavior has been central. How and whether such rhetoric flies in the face of SI is open to debate and will be taken up below.

CRITICISMS OF SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM AND GROUNDED THEORY

Denzin (1992) has summarized the major criticisms of symbolic interactionism that have emerged over the years. In addition to the charge of an astructural bias, several authors have criticized SI for being ahistorical, apolitical, acultural, overly rational, and non-emotional. It is important to note that many of these criticisms emerged from within the SI tradition itself, thereby leading to concerted efforts by many interactionists to address these issues themselves. Nonetheless, debate has continued over a number of years, within and outside the SI tradition, in relation to these criticisms (Alexander, Giesen, Münch, & Smelser, 1987; Huber, 1974; Layder, 1982, 1989a, 1989b; Meltzer & Herman, 1990; Prendergast & Knotternerus, 1993; Reynolds, 1993; Vaughn & Reynolds, 1968).

The most damaging criticism of SI from both a sociological and a health promotion perspective is that it suffers from an astructural bias. This issue has also been characterized as the "macro-micro debate" or as the case of "structure versus agency." Those charging SI as having an astructural bias believe that symbolic interactionists

are not able to deal with macro-structural issues, that is, they fail to deal with social organization and social structure as important influences on human action. Put another way, symbolic interactionists are accused of not adequately recognizing the objective constraints on social action that stem from economic, social, and cultural circumstances, or from race, gender, and ethnic discrimination. Critics have also argued that symbolic interactionists ignore how the interpreted meanings of individuals are channelled by society's dominant institutions.

In response to these criticisms, Denzin (1992) reviewed the large body of interactionist writing that "addresses head on the questions of social structure, social organization, power, the economy, capitalism, history, class structure, race and gender" (p. 59) and concluded that many interactionists have not neglected social structure, especially since the mid-1970s. Some critics (e.g., Meltzer & Herman, 1990) also concluded that symbolic interactionists have contributed to the understanding of social structural influences on human interaction and therefore argue that the notion of the astructural bias as a defining feature of SI should be reconsidered. In fact, the Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction, which was founded in 1975, considered the solution of the astructural bias to be one of its main purposes (Prendergast & Knotternerus, 1993).

Many of the criticisms of SI are based on the "canonical" texts, especially by Mead and Blumer. Symbolic interactionism, however, has a much more variegated and richly textured history of which critics may be unaware. Denzin (1992) defines six moments of symbolic interactionist theory: (a) the canon (1890–1932), (b) empirical/theoretical period (1933–1950), (c) transition/new texts (1951–1962), (d) criticism/ferment (1962–1970), (e) ethnography (1971–1980), and (f) diversity/new theory (1981–1990). The transition/new text period radically altered the perspective, and Strauss' 1959 work, *Mirrors and Masks*, contributed to this. The criticism/ferment period was a phase of internal critique by symbolic interactionists during which several challenges to the basic premises of SI were published and which led to theoretical and empirical efforts to address the criticisms. Denzin includes Habermas (1987) in the diversity/new theory period, and it is clear that elements of Habermas' critical theory have their roots in symbolic interactionism (Maxwell, 1997) and pragmatism (Antonio, 1989; Shalin, 1992).

Concerns about an astructural bias in SI have been translated into criticisms directed against grounded theory methodology (Layder, 1982, 1989a, 1989b). Perhaps criticism is not an entirely accurate descriptor. Layder finds much to commend in the methodology of grounded theory, but he argues that it needs to attend to the macro-micro problem if it is to move forward. Layder acknowledges the grounded theory premise that there are problems with research beginning from a formalized explanatory framework that proceeds to explain "results" in terms of that framework. Thus, Layder believes that grounded theory "holds out the promise of a healthy theoretical anarchy" (Layder, 1989a, p. 53). At the same time, he believes that this promise is unfulfilled because many grounded theorists hold inflexibly to their methodological positions and thus exclude themselves from the important wider debates in the philosophy of social science.

Grounded theory has an enduring respect for the empirical world and the perspectives of the people being studied. But, because theory is linked so closely to empirical "reality," Layder argues that grounded theory is limited to what can be observed or recorded about human behavior and the action/interaction among people. As such, it has the potential for a conservative bias and may serve to support and maintain the status quo (Layder, 1989a). The entire thrust of grounded theory is tied to the empirical world as it appears to our senses (Layder, 1989a). This is evident in Glaser's (1992) unyielding trust in the ability of the data to "speak for itself" and to reveal all that is relevant to the analyst who is both persistent and has faith. He believes that if structural conditions are important to the management of a basic social process, these will emerge in the data. This belief has been criticized by feminists (e.g., Stanley & Wise, 1983) as advancing a form of inductive positivism, especially with the emphasis placed on the "emergence" of categories and the "discovery" of theory (Henwood & Pidgeon, 1995).

In challenging the grounded theory notion that categories related to structural conditions will emerge naturally, Layder (1989a) argues that many aspects of social institutions or power relations are not visible or detectable with a methodology that stays focused on observable behavior and peoples' perspectives within particular settings. Although behavior and personal meaning may be accessible through empirical observation, this is not always true of structural phenom-

ena, which may not have observable indicators in the empirical data. Power is not usually addressed in grounded theory, yet power is embedded in our systems of stratification, in gender and ethnic relations, and in other structural phenomena that Layder argues exist separately from people's acknowledgment or understanding of them and which have "real" effects on people's lives. These arguments reflect basic assumptions of critical theories (Stevens, 1989), including feminist perspectives.

There are good reasons why critics have charged both SI and grounded theory with an astructural bias. In reviewing two important texts, one by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and one by Blumer (1969), it is difficult not to make the judgment that grounded theory does indeed ignore issues of power, culture, social organization, economics, gender, and other structural influences on human action. For example, Glaser and Strauss (1967) say "Why not take the data and develop from them a theory that fits and works instead of wasting time and good men in an attempt to fit a theory based on 'reified' ideas of culture and social structure?" (p. 262). Blumer (1969) also emphasized that the phenomena of concern to symbolic interactionists are "acting units" rather than the "structures" and "systems" that are found in orthodox sociological approaches. When Layder wrote his critique of grounded theory, however, he did not have access to Strauss' later writing (Strauss, 1993) which appears to be an attempt to address many of these concerns.

Layder is correct when he says that grounded theory emphasizes the importance of processes of interaction and the way in which individuals and collectives play a part in constructing their social environment. One might argue that this interactionist perspective is indeed the strength of grounded theory and wherein lies one of its major contributions. Certainly, understanding an issue or concern from the perspective of those affected by it is a basic tenet of both health promotion and various critical perspectives, especially feminism, thus strengthening the position that grounded theory is an appropriate methodology for examining health promotion phenomena.

Most grounded theorists have used the methodology for the purpose of micro-level analyses. This is particularly true in nursing. Hutchinson (1986), says that the purpose of grounded theory is to discover and conceptualize the essence of complex interactional

processes. This understanding permits the development of relevant nursing interventions. She goes on to note that most of the grounded theories in nursing focus on micro analyses of social processes and do not address the relevant macro analyses of social structural processes. This is likely because much of nursing is concerned with individual care and face-to-face interaction and most nursing theories have an individualistic focus. One exception is community and public health nursing in which population and community level issues are important and the social-structural influences on health are critical foci of emerging community nursing practice (Stevens & Hall, 1992; Kendall, 1992).

Nursing, however, and other health disciplines, are moving away from an individualist perspective, particularly with the increasing emphasis on the importance of health promotion practice (Clarke & Mass, 1998; Duncan, 1996; Williams, 1989). More and more, health promotion practitioners are becoming concerned with societal level concerns and the way social structures and institutions influence health and health behavior. They recognize that these structural factors may be more important in affecting the health of communities and populations (versus individuals) than most health care services (World Health Organization, 1986).

The solution, according to Layder, is that grounded theory must attend to macro phenomena without compromising its concern with the micro world of situated interaction. Macro and micro realms are, after all, mutually interdependent. This interdependence must be captured in the procedures of the method. An amended grounded theory, he argues, would therefore focus on the linkages that bind macro and micro phenomena together. Layder proposes a "research map" to support his "revised" grounded theory position. This map attempts to address the problem of bringing the macro and micro analyses closer together. He attempts to convey the interwoven nature of different levels and dimensions of social "reality." These levels are the self, situated activity, setting, context, and history. Self includes biographical experiences and social involvements. Situated activity involves the dynamics of face-to-face interaction. Setting is comprised of the immediate features of the social environment (e.g., schools, family, neighborhood, community). Context involves macro social forms (e.g., class, gender, ethnic relations). History is woven in at each of the levels, as is power. These elements operate in two

dimensions: vertically as a series of interconnected layers at any given point, and horizontally over time. Layder argues that grounded theory, rather than focusing attention only at the level of situated interaction, needs to attend to other levels and to the linkages that interconnect them.

In the next section, I will present Strauss' action scheme as well as the coding paradigm and conditional matrix described by Strauss and Corbin (1990; 1998). As the reader will see, these sound remarkably like Layder's research map. The conditional matrix encompasses the vertical dimension of interconnected levels of analysis, while the coding paradigm and pragmatist action scheme addresses the horizontal time dimension. History is incorporated in every level of the conditional matrix. In their 1990 book, Strauss and Corbin do not assume the importance of power, but the conditional matrix and the action scheme certainly allow for it to be considered, and with sufficient theoretical sensitivity, the researcher will be attuned to its presence and emergence. Later, however, they attend to power more explicitly by stating that it is important to query the data about presence of power in a given situation (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). Thus, the challenges raised by Layder have been addressed by some grounded theorists.

THE GLASER-STRAUSS SCHISM

In the years prior to Strauss's death in 1996, it appears that a schism may have emerged between Glaser and Strauss related to changes that Glaser perceived Strauss to have made to the original procedures for conducting grounded theory inquiry. The original book, *Discovery of Grounded Theory* (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) laid out the rationale for and the underlying logic of the procedures of grounded theory. Glaser, in *Theoretical Sensitivity* (1978), provided an elaboration on grounded theory methodology based on what he said were the experiences of both authors in working with the method since the publication of *Discovery*. Glaser stated that the intent of that book was to fill in some of the procedural details about the method that had not been covered in the original publication. In particular, *Theoretical Sensitivity* expanded on the notions of coding, especially theoretical coding, saturation, theoretical sampling, and memoing, as well as

basic social and structural processes. Many grounded theorists over the years have found this book to be extremely useful (e.g., Melia, 1996), myself included. In fact, if I had to recommend a single resource to a student of grounded theory, it would be *Theoretical Sensitivity.*

In 1987, Strauss published *Qualitative Methods for Social Scientists,* which he stated was intended for more advanced researchers than those reading *Discovery of Grounded Theory.* In this book, he introduced some changes in terminology and procedure, most notably axial coding and a coding paradigm that included the concepts of conditions, interactions, strategies, and consequences. Strauss noted that the changes in terminology and in specific procedures were the result of additional reflection and different research experiences. He maintained, however, that the basic process of doing grounded theory was the same.

In 1990, Strauss and Corbin published *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques,* a basic text on grounded theory procedures in which the changes Strauss introduced in 1987 were elaborated and some new procedures and concepts were introduced. Specifically, a set of techniques for enhancing theoretical sensitivity was added, the conditional matrix was fully conceptualized, and strategies for tracing conditional paths were introduced. Although the notion of a conditional matrix had been introduced (but not named) in *Negotiations* (Strauss, 1959/1969), it was elaborated in some detail by Strauss and Corbin (1990). The coding paradigm, originally discussed as the 6C coding family by Glaser (1978), was central to the processes of analysis introduced by Strauss in his 1987 book. Strauss and Corbin (1990) later expanded it to include causal conditions, the phenomenon under study, context, intervening conditions, action/interaction strategies, and consequences.

In response to the publication of Strauss and Corbin (1990), Glaser published his own book in 1992 repudiating the process outlined by Strauss (1987) and by Strauss and Corbin (1990). Glaser says that both of Strauss' books on grounded theory "lose the abstract logic required to generate grounded theory" (Glaser, 1992, p. 8). He accused Strauss of subverting the basic process of grounded theory. He claims that the process described by Strauss and Corbin will not produce a grounded theory; rather, the result will be a

"forced, preconceived, full conceptual description" (Glaser, 1992, p. 3).

Several authors have discussed, to a greater or lesser extent, the differences between Glaser and Strauss (Annells, 1996; Melia, 1996; Stern, 1994). Annells located classic grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) and Glaser's (1992) perspective within a post-positivist inquiry paradigm and suggested that Strauss and Corbin's (1990) reconceptualized grounded theory was more closely linked to a constructivist paradigm. Melia (1996) also attempted to shed some light on the debate but her review was limited. Stern's (1994) paper was not aimed specifically at elucidating the differences between Glaser and Strauss, although she identified a few global differences in approach. Her observation, however, that students of both Glaser and Strauss always knew that there were differences in the approaches of both teachers is an important and telling one.

At the time of my introduction to grounded theory, I felt a need to clarify whether there were, in fact, significant differences between Glaser and Strauss, what those differences were, and what these would mean for how I would use and justify my use of the methodology. An overview of the differences between the two perspectives[1] is laid out in Table 7.1. Major differences that bear directly on my question about the appropriateness of grounded theory for exploring health promotion phenomena are discussed below.

The Origins of Grounded Theory

I have not been able to locate specific writings by Glaser that detail his own philosophical and theoretical perspectives as they might have influenced his contribution to the development of grounded theory. He does identify the influence of Lazarsfeld and others at the Columbia School of Sociology in terms of the ideas underlying specific quantitative analytic techniques that were applied to the development of grounded theory procedures (Glaser, 1992). In a

[1]Although the second edition of Strauss and Corbin (1998) has now been published, my comparisons between the perspectives of Glaser and Strauss draw from work done prior to Strauss's death. Any changes in the 1998 edition of Strauss and Corbin are more difficult to attribute to Strauss and thus are not incorporated into the analysis presented here.

later book, Glaser (1998) articulated how those ideas were integrated into the procedures of grounded theory.

For Strauss, pragmatism was central to his thinking. Although most people acknowledge the theoretical origins of grounded theory as being rooted in SI, it seems that insufficient attention has been given to its pragmatist underpinnings. The pragmatist action scheme was originally outlined by Dewey (1922) and later articulated by Blumer. In this scheme, action is ongoing, continuous, and for the most part, routine. Routine action, however, can be interrupted by environmental or situational conditions that cause the actor to mentally review options and to select among choices, thus leading to a reorganization and continuance of action. "Transformation through interaction—of lines of action, objects, environment, self and the world—is central to this theory of action" (Strauss, 1993, p. 3). It is important to note the transactional nature of this action scheme. Interaction transforms selves, lines of action, and the environment which, in turn, influence and transform subsequent action/interaction. This becomes important in our later discussion of the transactional nature of ecological theory in health promotion and the transactional nature of the conditional matrix in grounded theory.

Another critically important aspect of pragmatism, for Strauss' purposes, was its decidedly anti-dualistic position. In rejecting dualist assumptions, pragmatists did not separate such ideas as body-mind, real-ideal, fact-value, individual-collective, determinism-antideterminism. This anti-dualistic posture was emphasized in much of Strauss's work in which he sought to integrate macro and micro perspectives (Strauss, 1959/1969; Strauss, 1978) despite the micro-sociological focus of many symbolic interactionists. Strauss says that the pragmatist focus on both structure and process in theoretical explanations was the main reason why he and Glaser coined the term "structural process" (Glaser & Strauss, 1968).

It is important not to lose sight of the primacy of pragmatist thinking in Strauss' formulation of his own theory of action. Although SI, as articulated by Mead, drew from pragmatism, Mead's SI reflected a cultural conservatism and an alignment with the status quo (Denzin, 1992). Dewinian pragmatism, on the other hand, tended toward cultural criticism through pedagogy, dialogue, and open communication. This has important implications for the inte-

gration of a critical perspective in grounded theory methodology to reflect the critical elements in health promotion.

Also important in Strauss' thinking was the pragmatist notion that "truth" (quotations marks in the original) arises out of interaction and is "enacted" rather than discovered. This is more consistent with a constructivist perspective than with the realist ontology attributed to classical grounded theory (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). In fact, Strauss distances himself from Blumer's realism in his reflection, "Like Blumer throughout his life, I supposed then [i.e., in 1959] that pragmatist/interactionist assumptions represented reality itself, rather than useful assumptions about the world of individual and collective action" (Strauss, 1993, p. 9). In light of criticisms of the realist ontology of both SI and classic grounded theory (Annells, 1996), based on statements made by Glaser (1992), it seems likely that ontological differences between Glaser and Strauss go back to a time prior to the development of grounded theory. These differences also give credence to Stern's (1994) observation that the two men always did have a different approach but that Glaser only found out when Strauss and Corbin (1990) was published.

As an undergraduate, Strauss studied with Floyd House, a student of Park who introduced the term "human ecology" in 1921 (Park, Burgess, & McKenzie, 1925) in the application of plant and animal ecology to the study of human communities (cited in Green, Richard, & Potvin, 1996). The connection of SI to an ecological perspective is therefore not surprising. In graduate school, as a student of Blumer, Strauss was introduced to the work of Mead. Blumer's work, which built on the Park-Thomas-Dewey thinking as well as that of Mead, was therefore consonant with Strauss' own pragmatist thinking. In looking back on his career (Strauss, 1993), Strauss saw himself as "someone who had devoted himself to further working out the implications of the Pragmatist/Interactionist action scheme" (Strauss, 1993, p. 5).

The year 1952 represented a major turning point for Strauss and a "crystallization in his sociological life" (Strauss, 1993, p. 8). At the time, he found the social psychological components of Chicago sociology to be insufficiently "social organizational" and he says he began to move back to the structural side of sociology. His 1959 book, *Mirrors and Masks*, although grounded in a pragmatist perspective, was deliberately fused with a structural approach. He claims

that the notion of structured process runs throughout the book and that macro and micro perspectives were wedded. In *Mirrors and Masks,* Strauss emphasized "the fluidity and complexity of interwoven individual and collective identity and the significance of contingencies" (Strauss, 1993, p. 9). These influences can be seen today in his coding paradigm which is a concrete representation of the pragmatist/interactionist theory of action, as well as in his development of the conditional matrix, and the process of tracing conditional paths.

Denzin (1992) observes that Strauss, along with Goffman, Stone, and Becker, as third generation interactionists, radically altered the perspective. Strauss' important contribution in this era was the fusion of SI with a concern for organizational and structural perspectives. In fact, Denzin, in his response to charges of an astructural bias in SI, cites Strauss' early work as evidence that social structures were given their due in terms of their role in human action.

Strauss states that he went through a period of deep self-reflexivity in the early 1980s, occasioned by a review of the writings of prominent interactionists, both early and current. At the time, he recognized a consistency in his own work derived from an implicit acceptance of basic pragmatist premises. Most important was the sense that the world of social phenomena was exceedingly complex. It was out of this notion of complexity, which he shared with Glaser, that he says grounded theory methodology evolved more than a decade earlier. During this period of critical self-reflection, Strauss says he "began to comprehend the links among complexity, action/interaction, and the research methodology we had fathered" (Strauss, 1993, p. 12). It was shortly after this time that Strauss wrote his 1987 book on grounded theory methodology in which he expanded the development of procedures to link larger structural conditions with the interactions between and among actors in their social and institutional settings (Strauss, 1987).

Verification

The issue of verification seems to be a crucial factor that distinguishes the positions of Glaser and Strauss. Certainly, the importance of this issue to Glaser is reflected in his refuting Strauss and Corbin's position on verification in almost every chapter of his book (Glaser,

1992). Glaser's position is that a grounded theory is not verified. Rather, it is modified to accommodate new data by integrating them into the existing theory. Grounded theory yields hypotheses and nothing more, to be verified by others if they should choose to do so. Glaser states that hypotheses need not be verified or validated because these are the properties of verificational studies that require a different methodology. These two types of methodology should be seen in sequential relation to each other, with hypothesis discovery methodology coming first, then the most relevant hypotheses being tested with a different type of methodology (Glaser, 1992, p. 30).

Glaser's perspective on discovery versus verification in science reflects a traditional positivist orientation. Not even post-positivists adhere to this particular view any longer (Cook, 1985). It is difficult for me to understand Glaser's refutation of Strauss and Corbin's position on verification because I fail to see how their position is inconsistent with the perspective on verification introduced in *Discovery of Grounded Theory*. The notion of verification is built into the very processes of grounded theory analysis that Glaser has written about (Glaser, 1992). Grounded theorists who consider themselves Glaserian talk about provisionally "testing" hypotheses against the data. Strauss' position is that theories are first conceived, then elaborated, and finally checked out. This occurs through the processes of induction, deduction, and verification, which go on throughout the life of the research project from beginning to end (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1994). Strauss observes that few working scientists today would make the mistake of believing that discovery and verification stood in simple sequential relationship to each other (Strauss, 1987). Glaser, however, adheres to this position.

Guba and Lincoln (1989) have outlined the differences between conventional inquiry and constructivist inquiry. The first distinction they make is between the context of discovery and the context of verification. In conventional positivist and post-positivist inquiry, discovery is a precursor to verification. Theory emerges from the discovery phase (pre-inquiry) and then is subjected to verification in the inquiry phase. Guba and Lincoln further argue that, in the conventional paradigm, grounded theory as "science" is the resolution to the tradeoff between discovery and verification. That is, discovery and verification are seen on a continuum with each given its due. Clearly this is Glaser's position in which he sees discovery as a valid

process in its own right but one having no connection to verification at the other end of the continuum. In constructivist inquiry, however, discovery and verification are viewed as inseparable, synergistic processes carried out in close relationship. In fact, Guba and Lincoln use the yin and yang symbol to represent the relationship between these two processes. They see constructivist inquiry as "fully competent to carry out both discovery and verification" (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 114). Thus, it appears that Strauss and Corbin's perspective on verification is closer to the constructivist view, while Glaser's is more positivist.

In the original conceptualization of the role of verification in grounded theory, as represented in *Discovery*, Glaser and Strauss (1967) argue that the generation of theory through comparative analysis both subsumes and assumes verifications but only to the point that the latter are in service of generation. Glaser later argued against verification stating that, "A grounded theory stands on its own. It is not a sophisticated verificational process, honoring some extant theory that does not work or is not relevant in the first place" (Glaser, 1992, p. 15). Strauss, however, has never written about verification in this sense.

In the final analysis, Glaser appears to be defining verification in a different way than described by Strauss and Corbin, although both Glaser and Strauss engage in the processes Strauss wrote about in his interpretation of verification. For both of them, categories emerge from the data. Through a process of constant comparison, these categories are "tested" against the data so that only those concepts that earn their way into the theory, by virtue of appearing over and over again, will ultimately be integrated. Glaser himself says that the core category must be proven over and over again. "Theoretical sampling is a way of checking on the emerging conceptual framework, rather than for verifying pre-conceived hypotheses" (Glaser, 1992, p. 39). "The data constantly check deductions that lead nowhere" (Glaser, 1992, p. 40). These statements imply some notion of verification, if not in the traditional sense of the word.

Open Coding

Glaser and Strauss each propose somewhat different techniques for coding data and have defined the types of coding differently. In

terms of initial coding (i.e., open coding), the processes are quite similar. Glaser, however, charges Strauss with "overconceptualizing" and preconceiving the data by means of asking "theoretical questions" rather than the original neutral questions of grounded theory. Glaser argues that the questions Strauss asks of the data generate an unwieldy number of codes, and I tend to agree. Strauss also draws on Schatzman's (1991) notion of "dimensionalizing," suggesting that all properties of categories can be located along a dimensional continuum. Glaser disagrees, pointing out that dimensions are only one of the 18 coding families he describes in *Theoretical Sensitivity.*

In addition, Strauss and Corbin propose a set of techniques for enhancing theoretical sensitivity during coding: detailed analysis of a word, the flip-flop technique, far out comparisons, and waving the red flag (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, pp. 84–93). I must admit that I found these unwieldy and was never able to integrate them because they felt completely unnatural to my coding process. I therefore agree with Glaser who argues that these are unnecessary in open coding. I am more comfortable with the neutral questions that Glaser asks during coding, that is, "What is this a study of?" and "What property of what category does this incident indicate?" The theoretical questions proposed by Strauss may come more naturally at later stages of coding. Others (e.g., Melia, 1996) have also commented on Strauss and Corbin's procedures as being overly "formulaic" and rule bound.

Axial Coding

This type of coding was introduced by Strauss in his 1987 book and expanded in Strauss and Corbin (1990). It involves a set of procedures whereby data are put back together in new ways after open coding by theoretically linking categories using what they call a "coding paradigm." This paradigm includes the categories of causal conditions, the phenomenon under study, context, intervening conditions, action/interactional strategies, and consequences. Glaser argues that Strauss' coding paradigm is just another name for the "6C coding family" (causes, contexts, contingencies, consequences, covariances, and conditions) which Glaser described in *Theoretical*

Sensitivity. Glaser argues again, that since it is only one of the 18 coding families, limiting the coding to the 6Cs preconceives the data.

On closer examination, however, Strauss' coding paradigm is different than the 6C coding family described by Glaser, although it retains similar categories. As discussed above, Strauss' coding paradigm embodies his entire theory of action as outlined in *Continual Permutations of Action.* Strauss incorporates the notion of action/interaction pertaining to the phenomenon as being at the center of the paradigm. Strauss and Corbin's coding paradigm is highly transactional in nature while the 6C coding family is static and linear. In fact, Glaser says that his 6C coding family represents an "independent-dependent variable model" (Glaser, 1978, p. 74) and the description he provides implies a linear ordering. In the 6C family, consequences are the end point. Glaser also notes that causes and consequences could get mixed up without a clear ordering, which is precisely the point in Strauss' coding paradigm. In Strauss' transactional perspective, the consequences feed back into the process of ongoing action where they may alter or become the causes or conditions influencing subsequent action/interaction. Quite obviously, this is the Dewey-Mead-Blumer action scheme with the blanks filled in. The parallels of this transactional model with the ecological perspective in health promotion should not go unnoticed.

Glaser's 18 coding families (Glaser, 1978, pp. 74–78) represent a shopping list of theoretical codes that can be drawn from to aid the analyst in thinking about relationships among the categories. Glaser (1992) argues that Strauss ignores the other important coding families in favor of his "pet" category (the 6Cs), thus forcing and preconceiving the data. In fact, Strauss and Corbin's coding paradigm does allow the researcher to incorporate other key coding families (i.e., the process, strategy, and dimension families) into the analytic process. For example, Strauss' notion of process is inherent in action/interaction. In chapter 9, Strauss and Corbin (1990) define process as the linking of action/interactional sequences as they pertain to managing the phenomenon. Thus, in coding the properties of action/interaction, Glaser's "process coding family" would be relevant. Because action/interaction is often purposeful, that is, engaged in to manage or respond to a phenomenon, it is done through the use of strategies or tactics. Glaser's "strategy coding family" can therefore be used to code the properties of the action/interactional strategies.

With respect to the other 14 coding families, a careful review of Glaser's shopping list suggests that these codes can be used in relation to any of the categories in the paradigm model. For example, the "means-goal family" relates directly to consequences. The "mainline family," of which social control and social order are examples, could be used to name the broader structural conditions that impinge on action/interaction or the phenomenon in question. So, in fact, Strauss and Corbin do not ignore the full range of coding families as charged by Glaser. In describing the coding paradigm, Strauss has elaborated and reconceptualized the 6C coding family in a way that is consistent with his own meta-theoretical perspective.

The Conditional Matrix

Strauss' conceptualization of the "conditional matrix" is also important in understanding both his theory of action and his methodological approach. It is closely related to the coding paradigm. Taken together, the coding paradigm and the conditional matrix explicitly reflect Strauss' theory of action which has implicitly guided his work for over 40 years (Maines, 1993). The conditional matrix had its origins in Strauss' 1978 work *Negotiations* (as discussed in Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 165) in which he observed that most of the work in this area did not detail the structural conditions under which negotiations occur, nor did it provide any discussion of the linkage of broad social conditions to action/interaction. He proposed a "negotiations paradigm" to address the problem of relating various levels of conditions to the negotiative interaction which included two types of conditional contexts: the broad structural context (e.g., the judiciary system and the marketplace) and the more immediate negotiation context (e.g., national competition, governmental regulations).

Grounded theory, according to Strauss and Corbin (1990), is a transactional system that is made up of interactive and interrelated levels of conditions ranging from those close to the phenomenon to more general features of the world at large. Conditions at any level may be related to the phenomenon as a cause, as context within which action/interaction takes place or as intervening conditions standing between context and action/interaction. These conditions

either facilitate or constrain action. Action and interaction take place in related, not necessarily linear, sequences and therefore reflect process. Consequences result from action/interaction and may subsequently influence conditions at various levels or become new conditions that affect the next action/interaction sequence. In the course of action/interaction, contingencies may emerge that change conditions at one or more levels. These contingences pose problematic and/or unanticipated situations that must be managed (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Glaser rejects the conditional matrix as an element of grounded theory analysis and says it is, in fact, alien to it. In his view, grounded theory is not a transactional system. He denies categorically that all phenomena are embedded in sets of conditions. He rejects Strauss' and Corbin's statement that conditions at all levels have relevance to any study. Glaser's response is that, "It just depends on what emerges; it just does!" (Glaser, 1992, p. 98).

Strauss and Corbin (1990) maintain that the conditional matrix does not violate the basic emergent nature of grounded theory. Throughout their book they contend that all concepts must earn their way into the theory. They list three purposes for using the conditional matrix: (a) it helps the analyst to be theoretically sensitive to the range of conditions that might bear upon the phenomenon under study, (b) it enables the analyst to be theoretically sensitive to the range of potential consequences that results from action/interaction, and (c) it assists the analyst to systematically relate conditions, actions/interactions, and consequences to a phenomenon.

APPLICATION OF SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM AND GROUNDED THEORY TO HEALTH PROMOTION

Throughout this chapter, I have been alluding to parallels between the ontological roots of SI and the ecological perspective in health promotion. Now I would like to make these connections explicit and discuss the implications for a research methodology that allows us to capture this understanding.

Both the socio-ecological perspective of health promotion and symbolic interactionism share the basic concept of "mutual interdependence." In a summary of the basic characteristics of SI, drawing

from the works of prominent interactionists, Reynolds (1993) makes the following observation: "A dialectical relationship exists between individuals and their environments; people and their environments are mutually determinative" (p. 127). Similarly, Robertson and Minkler (1994) summarize the basic ecological premise of health promotion theory in the following statement: "Although it is true that the larger structural (economic, political, cultural, organizational) forces (the macro level) in any society shape the everyday lives of individuals (the micro level), it is also true that the everyday practices of individuals shape those same larger structural forces. This position tempers the notion of sociological determinism with the notion of human agency" (p. 297). Similarly, critical theory also posits that social structure and human agency constitute each other in mutual interdependence (Poland, 1992).

Just as Prendergast and Knotternerus (1993) have suggested that SI must deal with the astructural bias if it is not to be increasingly marginalized in sociology, health promotion insists that social/structural influences on health must be taken into account if one is to make progress in improving the health status of populations. At the same time, health promotion has not taken seriously enough the importance and role of meaning-making in constructing human action and the social world. Thus, a more balanced integration of structure and agency is critical if the "new public health" (Ashton & Seymour, 1988; Bunton & Macdonald, 1992), with health promotion as its central plank, is to resolve the current tensions in practice.

CONCLUSION

So where does this leave us in terms of an appropriate methodology for health promotion research? I agree with Poland's (1992) position that there is no single "correct" methodology, but the elements of an effective approach can be identified. Poland thus proposes that health promotion researchers adopt a theoretical stance that balances the dualism of structure and agency to seriously engage the rhetoric of integrating individual and social influences on health and human action. He argues for a critical interpretive methodology, particularly in light of health promotion's new holistic and ecological stance. On the one hand, an explicitly interpretive approach could

make an important contribution to our understanding of health and health behavior. This is particularly true in terms of exploring the significance of context in explaining variations in individual meanings and individual actions. Context is minimized or ignored in traditional public health methodologies that seek to standardize interventions and control "extraneous" factors and confounding contextual variables. On the other hand, we must go beyond the purely interpretive emphasis on personal meaning to question and challenge the common-sense and taken-for-granted meanings that guide human action (Poland, 1992). This is important because the influences on social action often go beyond the awareness of individuals.

Despite the fact that many writers recognize the importance of a thorough integration of macro and micro levels of analysis, few have offered methodological guidance about how that might be done. Some aspects of Strauss and Corbin's approach to grounded theory may provide that guidance. For Strauss, context was always relevant, and this is reflected in the conditional matrix which, if used thoughtfully, may provide the analyst with the theoretical sensitivity necessary to uncover the unspoken and the unacknowledged. Strauss and Corbin's (1990, 1998) conceptualization of grounded theory as a transactional system provides for, with some massaging, a critical interpretive methodology that is fitting for the study of health promotion phenomena. Grounded theory, conceptualized in this way, integrates macro-level social environmental conditions and micro-level influences on action/interaction, especially the meaning-making and symbolizing in which human actors engage in their daily lives. At the same time, care must be taken to ensure that the emergent theory is truly grounded and not driven by an *a priori* theoretical scheme. There is a fine line to be drawn between using the conditional matrix as a tool for theoretical sensitivity and collecting data only to fill the categories defined by the matrix. Fortunately, the procedures of grounded theory provide such protection.

Although I do not find all of Strauss and Corbin's (1990) procedures useful, they have not, in my opinion, converted from an emergent theory-generation process to a theory-driven model as Glaser charges. Rather, they have explicitly acknowledged "the unquestionable fact (and advantage) that trained researchers are theoretically sensitized" (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, p. 277). Thus, they have extended and emphasized the range of theoretically sensitizing con-

cepts that must be attended to in the analysis of human action/interaction. What is important in judging the product of this process is the extent to which the analysis has remain grounded in the data to produce a theory that fits the data, works to explain the phenomenon, and has relevance for the people experiencing it as well as for practitioners in their integration of theory in practice. In health promotion, no theory is likely to fit and work if it is not relevant to people's individual and collective experiences or to the substantive concerns of health promotion practitioners. These include the social structural as well as individual influences on health and health-related human action.

TABLE 7.1 Differences Between Glaser and Strauss on Aspects of Grounded Theory Methodology

Analytic Category	Glaser (1992)	Strauss & Corbin (1990)
Origins of Grounded Theory (GT)	• Underlying analytic methodology drawn from procedures of quantitative methodology, Bureau of Applied Social Research, Columbia University. • Influenced by Merton, Lazarzfeld, Zetterberg, Hyman & Selvin. • Glaser accepts the principles outlined by Strauss and Corbin. • Given his quantitative training, he saw the need for well thought-out, explicitly formulated, and systematic procedures for coding and testing hypotheses. • Says he wove into grounded theory ideas underlying elaboration analysis, reason analysis, property space and fourfold tables, consistency analysis, content analysis, matrix analysis, latent structure analysis, sociological units versus process, interchangeability of indices, concepts and indicators, ecological fallacy, partial analysis, and computer sorting.	• Influenced by pragmatist and interactionist writings of Park, Thomas, Dewey, Mead, Hughes, Blumer. The following ideas related to GT, came from this background: 1. the need to get into the field to truly understand 2. importance of theory, grounded in empirical reality 3. nature of experience as continually evolving 4. active role of the person in shaping the worlds they live in 5. emphasis on change, process, variability and complexity of life 6. the interrelationships among conditions, meaning and action • In 1993, Strauss wrote *Continual Permutations of Action* which details the influences of the pragmatist and symbolic interactionist traditions on his own evolving "theory of action." The evolution of this theory parallels the developments in GT methodology reflected in the Strauss and Corbin book.

TABLE 7.1 *(continued)*

Analytic Category	Glaser (1992)	Strauss & Corbin (1990)
Research Question/ Problem	• The research problem and its delimitation are discovered or emergent as coding begins. • Choosing a question beforehand forces the data and does not allow the problem to emerge. • One identifies area of inquiry beforehand, but not the research problem. • Dismisses the debate about whether research question should determine method ("once grounded theory is chosen, the question is moot"). • In contrast to Strauss, Glaser says the research question in GT is not a statement that identifies the phenomenon to be studied.	• An important aspect of the research question is setting the boundaries around what is to be studied. • Question narrows the problem to a workable size for the novice. • The question should allow flexibility to explore problem in depth. • Assumes limited knowledge of the phenomenon. • The initial question starts broadly and is narrowed down and focused during the research process. • The research question should dictate the method. • The research question in GT is a statement that defines the phenomenon to be studied. • GT questions are oriented to process and action.

(continued)

TABLE 7.1 ***(continued)***

Analytic Category	Glaser (1992)	Strauss & Corbin (1990)
Use of Quantitative Data	• Distinguishes between qualitative analysis and qualitative data. • Can use quantitative and qualitative data with qualitative analysis. • "All is data"—grist for the mill. • Qualitative data is used primarily, buttressed with quantitative if it is available.	• One can combine qualitative and quantitative methods. • Qualitative data can be used to clarify or illustrate quantitative data, or it is possible to quantify demographic data. • Can use quantitative data but the analysis is qualitative in nature.
Verification	• A GT is not verified. Rather, it is modified to accommodate new data by integrating them into the existing theory. • GT yields hypotheses to be verified by others. • Glaser says GT meets two prime criteria of good scientific inducted theory: parsimony and scope. • Hypotheses need not be verified or validated, because these are the properties of verificational studies which require a different methodology. These two types of methodology should be seen in sequential relation to each other, with hypothesis discovery methodology coming first, then the most relevant hypotheses being tested with a different type of methodology.	• A GT is discovered, developed and provisionally verified through systematic data collection and analysis. • The systematic features of GT allow the theory to meet the canons of good science: significance, theory-observation compatibility, generalizability, reproducibility, precision, rigor, and verification. • Alternating between collecting and analyzing data allows emerging concepts to direct sampling and also allows verification of provisional hypotheses.

TABLE 7.1 *(continued)*

Analytic Category	Glaser (1992)	Strauss & Corbin (1990)
Generalizability	• Glaser relates generalizability to verificational studies, therefore denies Strauss & Corbin's view of generalizability as being applicable to grounded theory. • He argues that Strauss' view of generalizability is focused on a unit analysis, rather than on a process analysis. • Glaser writes about generalizability in terms of the relationship between substantive theory and formal theory: "What applies to grounded theory is its generalizability from a substantive theory of limited scope to a process of larger scope with parsimony, based on its ability to fit, work, and be relevant."	• Strauss and Corbin state that the purpose of grounded theory is to specify the conditions that give rise to specific sets of action/interaction pertaining to a phenomenon. Thus, a grounded theory is generalizable to those specific situations only. • Strauss and Corbin (1994) further state that all theories are temporally limited and always provisional. Hence, there can be no time and context free generalizations of grounded theory. To the extent that situations and conditions in the new context are similar to the context in which the theory was developed, then a grounded theory may be generalizable.

(continued)

TABLE 7.1 ***(continued)***

Analytic Category	Glaser (1992)	Strauss & Corbin (1990)
Use of Literature	• Should not read literature in the substantive area beforehand for fear of derailing process with unrecognized assumptions. • When theory is sufficiently grounded in the core variable, then the researcher can go to the literature. • The type of literature that should be reviewed is the professional (related & non-related to substantive area) and non-professional (popular, descriptive, etc.). • Supplementary materials (e.g., data from other studies, ethnographic descriptions, etc.) can be used for data to constantly compare and generate categories. • The accuracy and authenticity of these is not an issue since they are considered data "in a perspective." The constant comparative method will correct through integration.	• Researcher should not be too steeped in the literature—it stifles and constrains discovery and sensitivity to the emerging concepts. • Go to the literature when one concept has emerged as relevant. • Both technical and non-technical literature are relevant. Non-technical includes supplementary materials like reports, letters, memos, minutes. • The literature can produce sensitizing concepts, but every concept must earn its way into the theory. • The literature can also be used as a source of data for developing categories and properties. • Supplementary data can be used in generating GT but there may be some question about the veracity of some documents so it is important to seek additional data sources.

TABLE 7.1 *(continued)*

Analytic Category	Glaser (1992)	Strauss & Corbin (1990)
Criteria for Judging GT	1. Fit—The categories must fit the data. 2. Work—Theory should explain what is happening, predict what will happen, and interpret what is happening. 3. Relevance—It must be relevant to the action of the area. 4. Modifiability—It allows qualification of what came before without losing what has already been generated. • These criteria are modified somewhat from the four criteria listed in the last chapter of *Discovery of Grounded Theory.* In *Discovery,* the first chapter talked about fit, work and relevance while the last chapter identified the four criteria identified by Strauss and Corbin in the next column. • Glaser added modifiability as a criterion in *Theoretical Sensitivity* on the basis of his experience doing GT. In his writings after *Discovery,* he does not refer again to the four criteria listed in the last chapter of that book. • Glaser argues that the criteria outlined by Strauss and Corbin are inappropriately applied to GT because they are "verificational criteria."	Strauss and Corbin identify three different sets of criteria for GT. The first set is for judging the grounded theory itself. 1. Fit—The theory must fit the substantive area and closely correspond to the data. 2. Understanding—The theory will make sense and be understandable to people working in the area. Provides a bridge between theory and practice. 3. Generality—It should not be too abstract so as to lose sensitizing aspects, but abstract enough to be a general guide—general enough to be applied to the whole picture. 4. Control—The application of theory enables the person to understand and analyze situations, to produce and predict change, and to predict and control consequences. It is a guide to action. Strauss and Corbin added two additional sets of criteria; one for judging the adequacy of the research process and one for judging the empirical grounding of the study.

(continued)

TABLE 7.1 ***(continued)***

Analytic Category	Glaser (1992)	Strauss & Corbin (1990)
	• With respect to Strauss and Corbin's criteria for judging the research process, Glaser says these are routine in the world of accurate judgment and description and simply look at the skill of the analyst, which is important in any method and not unique to GT. • In relation to the criteria for judging the empirical grounding, Glaser argues that once again, Strauss is forcing the data to fit his paradigm and thus "emergence is knocked out once and for all in favor of forcing the data with concepts."	*The Research Process* 1. How was original sample selected? 2. What major categories emerged? 3. What were some of the indicators that pointed to these categories? 4. On the basis of what categories did theoretical sampling proceed? 5. What were some of the hypotheses pertaining to conceptual relations among categories? 6. Were there instances when hypotheses did not hold up against the data? How were discrepancies accounted for? 7. How and why was the core category selected? *Empirical Grounding* 1. Are concepts generated? 2. Are the concepts systematically related? 3. Are there many conceptual categories and Linkages? Well developed? Conceptual density? 4. How much variation is built into the theory? 5. Are the broader conditions that affect the phenomenon under study brought into its explanation? 6. Has process been taken into account? 7. Do the theoretical findings seem significant?

TABLE 7.1 *(continued)*

Analytic Category	Glaser (1992)	Strauss & Corbin (1990)
Techniques for Enhancing Theoretical Sensitivity (TS)	• Personal characteristics of the researcher necessary for TS but training in theoretical codes is also important to be aware of them and sensitive to their emergence. • TS defined as the ability to generate concepts. • Opposes Strauss and Corbin's strategies for enhancing TS. • Says these are totally unnecessary if one sticks to the original way of doing grounded theory as outlined in *Discovery* and *Theoretical Sensitivity.*	• Personal characteristics of researcher are important for TS, i.e., insight, awareness of subtleties, capacity to identify relevance. • TS comes from personal & professional experience, the literature, and the analytic experience itself. • Insight & understanding increases in interaction with data. • State that there is difficulty in striking a balance between one's own knowledge and holding onto the "reality of the phenomenon." • Suggest concrete strategies to deal with this problem: questioning, detailed analysis of word or phrase, flip flop technique, systematic comparison of phenomena (perhaps unrelated to data), far out comparisons, and waving the red flag.

(continued)

TABLE 7.1 *(continued)*

Analytic Category	Glaser (1992)	Strauss & Corbin (1990)
Coding Types	• Initially, 3 types of coding: open coding, theoretical coding and constant comparative coding. Later added selective coding. 1. Open coding—initial stage of constant comparative analysis, before delimiting to the core category 2. Theoretical coding—a property of coding that yields the conceptual relationship between categories and their properties 3. Constant Comparative Coding—coding incidents for their categories and properties, and the theoretical codes that connect them 4. Selective coding—to cease open coding and to delimit coding to only those variables that relate to the core variable in sufficiently significant ways to be used in a parsimonious theory.	• 3 types of coding: open coding, axial coding and selective coding. 1. Open coding—the process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing and categorizing data 2. Axial coding—data put back together in new ways after coding, by making connections between categories using a coding paradigm (causal conditions, phenomenon, context, intervening conditions, action/interaction strategies, consequences) 3. Selective coding—process of selecting one category (core), systematically relating it to other categories, validating relationships, and fitting in categories that need refinement.

TABLE 7.1 *(continued)*

Analytic Category	Glaser (1992)	Strauss & Corbin (1990)
	• The basic questions to ask of the data while coding are: What is this a study of? What category or property of a category does this incident indicate? Any other questions pre-conceive the data and force them into categories that do not fit. • Glaser charges that Strauss's emphasis on the coding paradigm and dimensions concentrates on only two of the 18 coding families described in *Theoretical Sensitivity* will result in something other than grounded theory. It forces the data to fit "pet" codes rather than to allow the data to dictate the coding family it belongs to.	• Two analytic procedures are central to coding: asking questions and making comparisons. Asking questions opens up the data (e.g., who, what, where, when, why) and leads to theoretical sampling. • Questions will differ according to coding type and are generative of the analysis. • Emphasize the dimensions of each category.

(continued)

TABLE 7.1 ***(continued)***

Analytic Category	Glaser (1992)	Strauss & Corbin (1990)
Open Coding	• Open coding begins with no concepts and ends when a core category is determined. • Glaser charges Strauss with "overconceptualizing" the data and that the procedures Strauss uses proliferates codes unnecessarily. • Glaser says open coding does not involve as much fracturing of an incident as Strauss suggests because this generates an unwieldy number of codes, because Strauss asks preconceived questions, rather than just the neutral questions of GT. • Strauss' questioning process in open coding represents the "irretrievable, irresistible shift from the fundamental point of GT." • Glaser says Strauss focuses on "dimensionalizing" the categories and properties, but dimensions are only one of the 18 coding families proposed in *Theoretical Sensitivity.* Dimensions may not be relevant in the data.	• Open coding does not necessarily end when a core category is identified. Rather, it is identified during selective coding. • During open coding the data are broken down into discrete parts, closely examined, compared for similarities and differences and questions are asked. • Strauss maintains that each time an instance of a category occurs in the data, it is possible to locate it along a dimensional continuum.

TABLE 7.1 *(continued)*

Analytic Category	Glaser (1992)	Strauss & Corbin (1990)
Axial Coding	• Glaser maintains that axial coding is entirely unnecessary in GT. "We do not link categories using the paradigm model. The theorist simply codes for categories and properties and lets whatever theoretical codes emerge where they may." • Strauss' paradigm model is the same as the 6C coding family described in *Theoretical Sensitivity.* It is only one of 18 coding families. Limiting the coding to the 6C's preconceives the data and will not allow a grounded theory to emerge. • Glaser says Strauss has abandoned the concept of theoretical coding as presented in *Theoretical Sensitivity.* • Charges that Strauss presents two definitions of "context" which are in conflict. • Glaser argues that the relationships between the categories are self-evident and will simply emerge.	• Axial coding is a set of procedures whereby data are put back together in new ways after open coding by making connections between categories. This is done by means of a coding paradigm involving the following categories: causal conditions, phenomenon, context, intervening conditions, action/interaction, consequences. • Strauss and Corbin do not talk specifically about theoretical coding, but the ideas seem to be inherent in their description of axial coding, although they are primarily restricted to the paradigm categories. In Strauss and Corbin (1994) they discuss the importance of theoretical coding. • In doing axial coding, the researcher asks questions about the relationships between the categories then goes back to the data to verify those relationships. • Sometimes it is necessary to track down relationships if you come across something in the data that appears to be related to something else.

(continued)

TABLE 7.1 *(continued)*

Analytic Category	Glaser (1992)	Strauss & Corbin (1990)
Selective Coding	• Selective coding means to cease open coding and to delimit coding to those variables that relate to the core variable in sufficiently significant ways to be used in a parsimonious theory. • In GT, selective coding occurs only after the analyst has found the core category. • Claims that integration of the theory (which occurs at the stage of selective coding) is not difficult; it just happens in sorting the theoretical codes. "... it just happens, because the world is integrated and we are discovering the world, not creating it." • Claims, in contrast to Strauss, that discovering the core category is automatic and easy. • Says that Strauss's five steps in Selective coding are absolutely not necessary and that steps 2 and 3 force the data into the coding paradigm, rather than allowing emergence to happen. • Argues that the order for developing properties of the core category is opposite that proposed by Strauss. Discovery of properties of a category and its relationship to other categories is how we choose the core category.	• Selective coding is the process of selecting the core category, systematically relating it to other categories, validating those relationships, filling in categories that need further refinement. • To systematize and solidify the connections between categories, inductive and deductive thinking is used in a process of reciprocal inductive derivation of categories, and deductively proposing hypotheses to be validated against the data. • Choosing the core category can sometimes be difficult and integrating the theory is also hard conceptual work. • 5 steps in selective coding: (1) explicating the story line; (2) relating subsidiary categories around the core category via coding paradigm; (3) relating categories at the dimensional level; (4) validating relationships against the data; (5) filling in categories that need refinement (i.e., saturating categories). • A core category must be developed in terms of its properties. Once properties are identified, then the next step is relate other categories to it, thus making them subsidiary categories.

TABLE 7.1 *(continued)*

Analytic Category	Glaser (1992)	Strauss & Corbin (1990)
Process	• Glaser agrees with Strauss' initial statement on process. • He disagrees with the need to attend to process by noting the changes because this is preconceiving and forcing the data yet again into the 6C coding family. • Glaser says that process is only elusive because Strauss has not stuck to the original definition of process as a set of stages that can be conceptually named. Glaser says that process will naturally emerge if and when it is relevant or the prime mover of participants. If a person does not refer to process, it isn't relevant. If the analyst needs to account for change by attending to process that is not emerging in the data, then this is forcing. • Glaser argues that non-progressive movement is not a useful analytic concept; it does not neatly "order out." For Glaser, process is linear.	• Process is the linking of action/interactional sequences as they pertain to the management of, control over or response to a phenomenon and needs to be attended to in GT. Linking sequences is done by noting, (a) change in conditions over time, (b) action/interactional response to the change, (c) the consequences that result, and (d) how consequences become part of conditions influencing next action/interactional sequence. • Strauss argues that process is an elusive term that does not necessarily stand out in the data. Process does not always just emerge (although it should), but unless the analyst identifies it and builds it into the analysis it might be missed. It may be necessary to theoretically sample for it and go back to the field. • Strauss says process is the analyst's way of accounting for change because a participant often does not refer to process in terms of phases or stages. • When change is noticed in the data, one analyzes it in terms of specific properties. • Process can be either progressive or non-progressive movement (i.e., stages/phases versus non-linear sequencing).

(continued)

TABLE 7.1 *(continued)*

Analytic Category	Glaser (1992)	Strauss & Corbin (1990)
Conditional Matrix	• Glaser does not see GT as a "transactional system." He denies categorically that all phenomena are embedded in sets of conditions. He also denies Strauss's statement that conditions at all levels have relevance for any study. • Glaser completely rejects the conditional matrix because it preconceives the data. To use the matrix, Glaser says one has to force the data into it because levels of analysis are not always important. • The terminology is foreign to grounded theory. He argues that these concepts are used to develop, not to discover conditions and consequences at all levels.	• The conditional matrix is a transactional analysis system used as an analytic aid to considering the wide range of conditions and consequences related to the phenomenon under study. It is conceptualized as nested concentric circles, each representing a level of analysis. A phenomenon itself will be embedded in a specific level of the matrix. • At the center of the matrix is action/interaction pertaining to a phenomenon. The layers range from individual, group, community, organizational, through to national and international. • It is seen as aiding theoretical sensitivity to identifying the conditions that might impinge on the action/interaction in relation to the phenomenon under study. • All phenomena are assumed to be embedded in sets of conditions. • The researcher needs to fill in the specific conditional features for each level that pertain to the area. Conditions may emerge from the data, or could come from researcher experience, or the literature. BUT, they are provisional and must earn their way into the data.

TABLE 7.1 *(continued)*

Analytic Category	Glaser (1992)	Strauss & Corbin (1990)
Theoretical Sampling	• Glaser objects to the notion of fracturing the concept of theoretical sampling into the different types, which he says is unnecessary. Also, because he does not do axial coding, the sampling related to axial coding would be irrelevant to him. • Glaser criticizes this aim because he argues that preconceptions will drive sampling decisions rather than the data themselves.	• Theoretical sampling is on the basis of concepts with theoretical relevance to the evolving theory. Three types of theoretical sampling: 1. Open sampling—associated with open coding, in which openness rather than specificity guides the choices 2. Relational and Variational Sampling—associated with Axial coding, aimed at finding differences at the dimensional level 3. Discriminant Sampling—associated with selective coding. Aim is to maximize opportunities for verifying the story line • The aim in theoretical sampling is to sample incidents, not persons, to gather data about action/interaction, conditions giving rise to action, how conditions change or stay the same, and the consequences (i.e., in terms of the coding paradigm).

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CHAPTER 8

Feminist Grounded Theory Revisited: Practical Issues and New Understandings

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Grounded theory and feminist theory have been described as congruent methodologies to use together in qualitative research (Keddy, Sims, & Stern, 1996; Wuest, 1995). When the grounded theory research process is informed by feminist theory, the investigator attends to tenets of feminist research such as respect for participants, avoidance of oppression, usefulness of findings, and reflexivity. Theoretical sensitivity is influenced by feminist thought and the investigator is more responsive to the ways that such issues of difference as gender, culture, class, ability, age, and sexual orientation are revealed in the data and influence the variation in emerging theoretical concepts. Therefore, the resulting explanatory framework is more relevant to a diverse society (Wuest, 1997).

Despite these strengths, there are points of tension between feminist theory and grounded theory (Wuest, 1995). Reflective discussion of methodological issues arising from the use of feminist grounded theory is essential for the credible development of this research

approach. The purpose of this chapter is to voice the questions raised and the new understandings engendered by using feminist grounded theory in two research studies, one focusing on women's caring (Wuest, 1997, 2001) and one exploring the process of leaving abusive conjugal relationships (Merritt-Gray & Wuest, 1995; Wuest & Merritt-Gray, 1999). Reflexivity during and following the research is the source of this discussion. This discussion extends the dialogue in feminist grounded theory from a theoretical plane (Wuest, 1995) to a more practical level.

ISSUES ARISING FROM THE FEMINIST GROUNDED THEORY RESEARCH PROCESS

The theoretical justification for combining grounded theory and feminist theory is based on epistemological, ontological, and methodological congruence (Wuest, 1995). While this theoretical groundwork is essential in developing new approaches to research, equally significant is documentation of how such theory plays out in practice. Our reflections regarding implementation of feminist grounded theory in these studies revealed that tensions between feminist theory and grounded theory originated in the differences in priorities driving each methodology.

Grounded theory as a research approach is driven by the demands of theory development. The research design emerges during the research process (Glaser, 1978; Stern, 1980). Sources of data (observation, interviews or written materials) are initially selected because they are believed to be a source of information about the scene under study. Data collection and analysis proceed simultaneously with new sources of data being selected according to what they can contribute to the emerging theory. Identification of the factors that influence variation in the emerging concepts is vital in theory development; however, these factors, such as race, gender, class, income, and location, only become part of the analysis when they emerge in the data (Glaser, 1978). When a feminist perspective is merged with the method, theoretical sensitivity to issues of difference is helpful in recognizing variation in emerging concepts.

In contrast, research based on feminist theory is driven by demands that the process and outcomes be useful and transformative,

not oppressive (Acker, Barry, & Essevald, 1991; Reinharz, 1992). While grounded theories are starting places for change (Glaser, 1978), they are not required to have an emancipatory influence on the participants. Postmodern feminist approaches are also directed by avoidance of universalizing narratives and respect for complex, diverse, and perhaps contradictory experiences (Ristock & Pennell, 1996). Grounded theories are provisional, temporal, and historically embedded, reflecting social interaction within a structural context (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). Such theory can be continually recast according to new data, retaining relevance and increasing variation (Glaser, 1978).

We developed, through reflexivity while conducting two feminist grounded theory studies, the following three canons to summarize how the points of difference were managed:

1. Query the demands of theory development for potential to harm or oppress;
2. Examine the strategies employed to make the research process respectful, useful, and transformative for their potential to compromise the process of theory development;
3. Balance feminist inclusion of diversity by requirement with the emergent inclusion of diversity in grounded theory.

Reflexivity in the research process refers not only to conscious consideration of how the research process is proceeding but also to the reshaping of the research process in response to reflective learnings (Ristock & Pennell, 1996). In the following discussion, we describe the ways that these canons emerged in the research process, the actions we took, and the new understandings that we reached.

Selection of Participants

In both research studies, the chief means of data collection was unstructured individual and group interviews which evolved according to data analysis. Care was taken to reduce potential coercion. The investigators explained the study to community players who had access to participants who we judged had something to contribute to the development of the substantive theory. These key players were

given explanatory letters to distribute to potential participants with response portions that could be returned to the investigators by mail in enclosed prestamped envelopes. The initial commitment was only to discuss the study; potential participants were not expected to make a decision about being interviewed until their questions were answered and the study fully explained. The response card asked the women to indicate where and when they would prefer to be contacted.

We discovered that for vulnerable women such as those in the process of leaving abusive relationships, even making contact with them was potentially dangerous. Not only was it important to call at the time and place indicated, it was also important to ask, "Is this a good time for me to call?" In several instances, the woman was not free to talk and needed to get off the phone without revealing the nature of the call to others. Our conscious reflection on the effect of the research process enhanced our sensitivity to potential risk for participants, even in initial contacts. Although considerable ethical concern is placed around the process of informed consent, rarely is risk in the initial approach to potential participants questioned or discussed.

Although theoretical sampling guides the interview process in grounded theory, feminist theory demands that primacy be given to the participant. This meant that once a woman had volunteered to participate, we felt committed to do the interview even if the demands of theoretical sampling suggested that we needed participants who had different characteristics or experiences. Decisions for data collection in grounded theory based on theoretical sampling are "best guesses." The researcher develops a hypotheses or hunch during analysis about the theoretical relationships in the data and then seeks additional data to confirm or refute the hunch. When the source of such data is further interviews, the investigator makes a judgment about the characteristics of the participant who might best provide the needed data. However, the outcomes of interviews are often unpredictable. We found that extra interviews did not impair the credibility of the resulting theory. Although redundancy did occur in the data supporting codes that were already saturated, just as often, new theoretical variations were discovered. Having had this experience in the abuse study, the first author took care to limit the number of letters distributed initially in the caring study. In

addition, she collaborated with key community persons regarding particular requirements for theoretical sampling. These strategies facilitated maintaining congruence with both feminist and grounded theory.

In both studies attention was paid to how diversity was influencing the emerging process. For example, within the violence study, questions were raised about location (living on an island with limited ferry service versus living in towns) or whether a partner's social status in the community influenced options for leaving, how having children or being childless influenced issues of safety, and how cultural beliefs about marriage influenced duration of breaking free. Consistent with grounded theory, we let the issues emerge before deciding that these characteristics were significant. However, the influence of such variation was carefully explored and integrated into the emerging theory.

The Research Interview

To facilitate the participant's comfort in talking with the investigators, academic language was avoided and consideration was given to the participant's education and culture. While theoretical sampling and hypothesis checking in grounded theory are expected to guide the research interview, feminist theory demands attentiveness to women's voices and stories. A starting point for all interviews was inviting women to talk about their experiences of caring or leaving abusive relationships in their own ways, even when more specific questions might have been dictated by the emerging theory. However, theoretical sampling did influence the interview process; the investigators attended closely when participants raised issues that were particularly relevant to the emerging theory. In addition, after women had shared their experiences, investigators focused the discussion to gather comparative data to clarify and check out emerging hypotheses. In previously conducted grounded theory studies, the first author had given participants an opportunity to tell their stories, however, she found that explicitly using a feminist approach heightened both her recognition of the importance of hearing each participant's full story and her responsiveness to nuances of difference that contributed to variation in the emerging concepts.

The feminist principle that the research process not be oppressive resulted in the investigators paying careful attention to how women were responding during interviews. It is difficult, once an unstructured interview is underway, to control how much or how little is revealed by the participant. While some participants are very protective of what they say, others tell all. In the violence study, discussion invariably included descriptions of the violence that were distressing for the participants. Frequently, it was necessary to stop the interview to allow the woman to collect herself, but all women chose to continue. Since most participants were in the process of leaving or had left an abusive partner, we were able to help survivors to frame their experiences constructively.

Although talking about caring appeared on the surface to be a less sensitive subject, a concern that arose during data collection was the potential negative effect of the research process on women who agreed to participate. One risk was that women might feel diminished. During a group interview when several women had spoken about their ongoing work on graduate degrees and the influence of caring demands on the progression of their career, one woman who had no higher education commented, "I sit here and I listen to all these women. You're all professionals and I'm just a housewife." Group members responded by speaking of her strengths and encouraging her to talk about how she wanted things to be. Nevertheless, this situation highlighted the potential harm if participants see themselves as not measuring up to the group norm.

A second concern emerged in individual interviews when women's discussion of their caring, particularly the consequences of their caring, resulted in their questioning their present or future life. Women who had given up careers or caring relationships to care for others sometimes viewed future prospects fairly bleakly. In several cases, reflection on the current situation had potential to leave women feeling overwhelmed, hopeless, and less able to manage because, for most, caring demands were ongoing. Consideration of women's expectations of us and the effect of the interview process on them highlighted for us the importance of a period of careful debriefing at the conclusion of each interview. We checked out how the woman was feeling, confirmed her strengths and sources of support, provided information, and reiterated the focus of the study.

In both studies, women were interviewed twice. We began the second interviews by asking how the woman had found the first interview, whether she had given any further thought to the things we had discussed, and whether the process had been useful. We discovered that even those who had not appeared distressed during the first interview had been troubled. Some women said that, although they felt fine immediately following the first interview, they became distressed a day or two later. This seemed to occur as frequently in the study of women's caring as in the abuse study. The distress experienced by participants sometimes stemmed from uncovering old wounds, particularly in the abuse study, and from pondering the things they had both told or not told us. As a result of this experience, we are more aware of the potential of the interview process to heighten the participant's sense of vulnerability. One way to protect the participant may be for the researcher or a second person available on the research team to telephone the participant several days after the interview. This contact is not for the purpose of data collection. Rather, it offers a measure of safety for participants by providing the opportunity for discussion and referral to professional support if the participant so desires.

Reciprocity

Reciprocity in the research relationship is widely discussed in feminist literature (Wolf, 1996) and thus, in both studies, we recognized that ongoing evaluation of the nature of the research relationship was essential to guard against exploitation. Reflection following each interview revealed that each woman had her own reason for participating. Some women participated because it was an opportunity to be heard, to speak to issues and concerns for which they rarely had an audience. Others hoped that another person could benefit from their experience. For women who were facing major challenges related to caring demands or leaving abusive partners, the interview process allowed them to reflect and seek specific information or support. Women who had identified particular problems or issues saw participating as a means of having their stories heard in a larger forum and were interested in what we would do with the information. Those who were interested in changing system attitudes and services

around such issues as childbirth, parenting, or family violence saw participation as a means of achieving that goal and challenged us regarding our intentions. Other women simply saw participation as "helping out" and a change from their normal routine.

Reciprocity took on new meaning as the study progressed. Reciprocity was not forging bonds of friendship as suggested by Oakley (1991), but rather recognizing, respecting, and responding to participants' individual agendas. In the abuse study, participants challenged the value of our merely understanding the process of leaving. As issues related to the social structure emerged in the data, they raised the question, "What are we going to do about it?" This resulted in our embarking on participatory action study with some of the women and the local helping community (Wuest & Merritt-Gray, 1997). In both studies, despite our intent to have a research, rather than a therapeutic, relationship with the women, many women sought reciprocity in the interview by seeking information that would help them relate their experiences to those of other women. Grounded theory was well suited to this transformative goal because we shared the emerging theory on repeat interviews.

Data Analysis

Data analysis in grounded theory begins with open coding (Glaser, 1978). This coding is the first step toward identifying conceptual indicators in the data. Our interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed with identifying data removed. In the violence study, both authors worked together coding the data. This meant that in any one interview, only one investigator had interviewed the participant and was familiar with the data. Feminist perspective suggested that investigators need to attend not only to the words of women but also to the silences and hesitancies (Devault, 1990), and the emotion and intensity (Opie, 1992). Therefore, we began listening to the interview as we read the transcript, stopping the tape after each page and doing the coding. We found that hearing the women's voices was very helpful in determining the code to assign. Cadence, volume, and expression all contributed to the meaning. Because this approach to coding seemed to be most effective for identifying meaningful conceptual indicators in the data and more consistent with

attending to women's voices, the first author used it in the caring study as well.

Participant Involvement

While the grounded theory method normally includes repeatedly checking the fit of the emerging theory with the data, we chose in both studies to include the participants purposefully in the data analysis process. Involving the women in the shaping of the emerging theory seemed to be consistent with an emancipatory research approach and not inconsistent with grounded theory. Feminist research is to some extent premised on the assumption that women who participate in research want to be part of the analysis or, at least, know how they are being interpreted. In the abuse study, this assumption was justified and the women were very interested in the emerging framework. This was not the case in the caring study. Although some women were actively interested, some were not. Some agreed to a second interview but engaged minimally in discussion. They had been quite willing to tell their story but had no particular interest in what was done with the data. In fact, efforts to involve them were as oppressive as not involving them at all. This was evident when efforts were made to rebook appointments with women who "forgot" the second interview. This variation in interest suggests that the researcher can only extend the invitation for participation but the participants will decide how much they wish to invest in the process. Certainly, the consent form stated that women could withdraw at any time but the underlying assumption was that they would participate. A better approach would have been to ask participants after the first interview if they wished to be contacted for a second interview rather than telling them they would be contacted in a few weeks.

Framing the Discussion

A challenge in taking the emerging theory back to the participants was determining how to best present our findings. Because grounded theory is written conceptually and accounts for multiple perspectives, we thought it was important to demonstrate to each woman how her voice had contributed to the developing substantive theory. We chose not to take back the transcribed interviews and discuss the

meaning of each line with the participants, although we did return the tapes to the participants if they wanted them. Given that the goal of grounded theory is development of an explanatory theoretical scheme and not description of individual experience, it seemed more important to help the woman understand how her data contributed to the larger whole. This is consistent with the assertion that theoretical explanations in feminist research may be beyond individual conceptions (Thorne & Varcoe, 1998). We were not attempting to confirm the details of each woman's experience, but rather to ensure that the theoretical pattern being developed had "fit" and "grab" for the participants (Glaser, 1978). Each repeat interview, then, focused on a discussion of a diagram of the relationships between the central concepts that had been identified at that point in the analysis and a written outline of the major concepts and categories. Prior to each repeat interview, we wrote examples on the outline of how the variation in each category had been informed by her first interview. In the second interview, the woman was shown how her story was used to build the framework and engaged in dialogue to confirm, refine, and modify the emerging theory.

We discovered in our early repeat interviews that women also wanted to know the other dimensions of the concepts, that is, the dimensions that came from other women's experiences. Some women had been selective in what they told us and were looking to see if what they chose not to disclose fit into the model. Once we began to give women a broader picture of the diverse conceptual indicators that built the model, we found they were more inclined to elaborate on how those fit or did not fit for them. We quickly learned that our credibility rested on how well the model fit both disclosed and undisclosed data. For example, in the abuse study, we discovered that women fortified themselves in preparation for leaving. Strategies for fortifying were very diverse and included enhancing capability through education, distancing through drug and alcohol use, experiencing a caring relationship either vicariously or with a new partner, and creating space to think. One survivor had said little about this in her initial interview but when she saw the model she said, "Yeah that's right. I remember. I started eating right, and going to the gym. I used to go for a run when I came home from work. Yeah, I did do that!"

The process of fortifying had meaning for her and her example added to the variation in the ways women fortify their defenses. Taking the framework back to participants also legitimized women's perspectives, fostering further reflection and growth. For example, when the first author explained the difficulty that women had with competing and changing caring demands, one participant said, "Ain't it strange that you should come to that particular conclusion because it is true with me because I am always feeling torn. This one needs so much and that one needs so much. I feel that and I thought, 'Gee, I am the only one.' " She seemed energized by this discovery of commonality with other women and began to expand on issues associated with her caring in more depth than she had in the first interview.

Theory Development

One question that arose from the process of taking the emerging theory back to the participants was whether the intent to transform and not oppress could influence theory development. Ristock and Pennell (1996) have stated that feminist investigators are not limited to presenting only affirmative findings. Nonetheless, it was difficult to imagine sharing findings that could be destructive. Early in the caring study, the first author interviewed a woman whose life situation was extremely bleak. How could the data from this interview contribute to an explanatory theory that would not be destructive in its hopelessness? These thoughts evoked the question of whether the knowledge that she would be taking the theory back to each woman would influence the choices made in constructing the theory. Would the desire not to be oppressive and the wish to make the process of participating in the research somewhat transformative influence how the data was interpreted? This question haunted the investigator for many months as she continued to collect and analyze data. The key to the resolution of this issue, we believe, lies in the constant comparative method of grounded theory.

In the process of grounded theory construction, the investigator makes many choices about paths to follow that are influenced both by the data and the investigator's theoretical sensitivity. In the present studies, the feminist perspective has influenced decisions and height-

ened sensitivity to the way the emerging theory might be interpreted by women or used against women (DeMarco, Campbell, & Wuest, 1993). Participants also shaped the inquiry. Some of the women in the abuse study held strong beliefs about marriage, family, religion, and justice. Many women in the caring study had strong values about caring and the role of social systems. In constructivist analysis, the values of the investigator are given no more credence than those of the participants (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). In grounded theory, data is constantly compared, such that investigator interpretations and those of the participants are incorporated into the final conceptualization (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). Thus, the values of feminist thought are no more powerful than any other in influencing the developing grounded theory as long as constant comparison of the data guides the inductive and deductive processes of shaping of the emerging theory. The resultant grounded theory will incorporate a full range of variation in the developing concepts, and there should not be a concern that it will reflect a singular view such as a predetermined feminist agenda.

In the case of the caring study, constant comparison of conceptual indicators resulted in the data from the interview of the woman in the bleak situation contributing greatly to the understanding of the dimensions of dissonance, named *fraying connections*, created by caring demands. Within her experiences were also some indicators of strategies she had used to order those fraying connections. When data from many women were analyzed, a theory of *precarious ordering* was discovered that captured both the fraying connections and the reordering within the larger social context. Rather than being oppressive, the framework was helpful even to participants in difficult situations because they could identify new possibilities.

TRANSFORMATION

A central intention of feminist research is that the process and findings be transformative for the women involved. In the abuse study, participants were intensely interested in the topic and found the study useful as a means of reflecting on their growth. Most participants in the process of leaving abusive relationships had become aware of social and system constraints for women and had

reconsidered many traditional values. Because the emerging study clearly demonstrated women's strengths and capabilities, the research process was affirming. For some, participating in the study led to further involvement in participatory research on woman abuse in their own communities.

In the caring study, the question of transformation is more complex. Women who participated in this study were very diverse and had very different standpoints about women's roles and women's caring. Some of the women's beliefs were very consistent with patriarchal views. If a central goal of feminist research is to help "to change the lives of those who are locked into unfair or oppressive social structures" (McCormick & Roussy, 1997), what are the implications of such discoveries? The first author considered whether it was her responsibility in an explicitly feminist research project to point out the way these beliefs supported patriarchy or to respect each woman's perspective. Postmodern feminists suggested that multiplicity in women's positions must be recognized and that no one position can be privileged over another (Miller, 1997). As grounded theory analysis continued, this dilemma began to resolve.

Beliefs about caring were called caring ideals. The key dimensions of caring ideals which were evident in the data were connectedness, availability, and responsibility. Dichotomies in classification were avoided and diverse ideals about caring could be discussed in terms of these dimensions. This analytic approach is consistent with a postmodern view of avoiding oppositions (Miller, 1997; Ristock & Pennell, 1996). Fraying connections in caring were associated, not with a woman's particular viewpoint, but with degree of incongruence between women's caring ideals and those of her partner, professional helpers, care recipients, and the community. This conceptualization allowed a wide variation of positions to be incorporated into the framework and for discussion of diversity without passing judgment on any particular views. By moving the discussion to a more conceptual level in grounded theory, individual perspectives are respected but the socio-structural influences are exposed. Hence, participants are given a new lens on their experience, and this may or may not be a starting point for change. During the second interviews, some women became interested in the framework and began to talk more and muse about the interaction between the social structure and their caring. In this sense, the process was transformative. It is

important to note that when women agreed to participate in the study, they did not agree to participate in a critical transformative analysis of women's caring; they did agree to participate in a study of women's caring to enhance health professionals' understanding of women's caring and as a base for policy development. Hence, questioning their beliefs as "false consciousness" would have been oppressive and harmful.

Transformation can occur in minor ways. Some women genuinely found it helpful to talk to someone about their caring and to see how their perspectives fit with other women's. These women wanted the tapes of the interviews back so that they might listen to them. They asked for written summaries of the final report. They spoke about their enjoyment of the process and talked about how the emerging framework was useful to them. Taking back the data at a conceptual level allowed women to frame their experience in a larger model. Women who were having particularly difficult times were able to see new possibilities for themselves. The substantive theory generated is iterative and does not promise happy endings, however, it does authentically reflect the strengths in their voices, and this was helpful to participants.

CONCLUSION

When we presented the material in this chapter at the Fourth Qualitative Health Research conference, we were asked, "Why call it feminist? Clearly, what you have discussed is consistent with grounded theory so why does it need to be named anything else?" We agree that there is truth in this statement. However, in our experience, without the explicit commitment to feminist methodology, reflexivity, diversity, and transformation may not be attended to in grounded theory research. "To name is to take a stand" (Stone, 1988, p. 253). In this case, by naming the method feminist grounded theory, the commitment to respect the tenets of both approaches is clear.

Postmodern feminists have argued that singular theories cannot capture women's experience, that all theories are partial and contextual (Miller, 1997). Grounded theory produces substantive, contextual theory consistent with this view. However, the techniques of constant comparative analysis do permit the inclusion of diversity

in the construction of theory. We believe this to be important for knowledge development that has the potential to influence public policy. Otherwise, we are left with many partial perspectives that have no points of intersections and no collective influence. However, the risk during grounded theory analysis is to weave a homogeneous storyline that diminishes, and perhaps ignores, the contradictions and differences. The use of an explicitly feminist approaches reminds us to attend to these points of difference and to continually rework the emerging theory such that it accounts for or includes that variation.

Our ongoing reflection during the research process has resulted in new awareness of potential risks to participants in all stages of the research process and the development of strategies to overcome these risks. Moreover, our understanding of the potential sites of conflict between the two approaches is heightened. It is likely that each new investigation will illuminate new issues, and new solutions. We invite the dialogue to continue.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CHAPTER 9

Can You "Do" Grounded Theory Without Symbolic Interactionism?

P. Jane Milliken and Rita Sara Schreiber

Grounded theory is the product of a unique partnership at the University of California at San Francisco between two sociologists, Barney Glaser from Columbia University, an expert in "quantitative methodology and qualitative math" (Glaser, 1998, p. 22), and Anselm Strauss from the University of Chicago, steeped in symbolic interactionism. As Dey recently asserted, "In the marriage of these two traditions, it was intended to harness the logic and rigor of quantitative methods to the rich, interpretive insights of the symbolic interactionist tradition" (1999, p. 25). Thus, grounded theory emerged from and is intrinsically tied to symbolic interactionism (Stern, 1994). Consequently, the recent suggestion by one of the originators that grounded theory can be done outside the theoretical framework of symbolic interactionism (Glaser, 1999) initiated quite a stir, causing us to revisit our original understanding.

Initial shock gave way to consideration of Glaser's assertion when a colleague suggested that Guba and Lincoln's *Fourth Generation*

Evaluation (1989) was an example of the use of grounded theory's constant comparative method without symbolic interactionism. Thinking about this, we found ourselves wondering, "What do we mean when we use the term 'grounded theory'?" Is grounded theory a comprehensive package or a set of techniques? To answer this, we needed to examine our own understanding, as well as what others have written, of symbolic interactionism and grounded theory as an approach to research.

SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM

Symbolic interactionism is a theoretical perspective that illuminates the relationship between individuals and society, as mediated by symbolic communication. The use of symbols to denote objects is an essential human characteristic that enables communication and allows shared meanings to develop. Humans are understood as creating meanings of objects based on their own internal dialogue and their interactions with others. To understand human behavior, the researcher must look beyond the behavioral component to the underlying meaning that motivates it. Shared meanings, the foundation of culture, make interaction somewhat predictable by allowing people to plan, rehearse, and evaluate their own behavior in terms of the anticipated response of others. According to Blumer, such patterned behavior, which he termed "joint action" (1969/1986, pp. 70–71), gives a measure of stability to social interaction, while differences in individual experience and meaning introduce uncertainty.

According to Manis and Meltzer (1972), people construct their behavior in the course of its execution, through an elaborate process of perceiving, interpreting, choosing, and rejecting potential lines of action. As such, human behavior is influenced, but not determined, by the predictability of interactions. If individuals base their actions on their interpretations of meanings, it is essential to discover the actors' meanings in order to understand and explain the behavior (Manis & Meltzer, 1972). Thus, to understand human conduct requires study of the actors' overt and covert behavior. This is the chief methodological implication of symbolic interactionism that is directly addressed through the use of grounded theory.

GROUNDED THEORY

As we understand grounded theory, it is located within the constructivist paradigm. According to this paradigm, reality is pluralistic, relativistic, and created in the minds of individuals so that truth is based in consensus rather than objective fact (Schwandt, 1994). People are understood to create and modify meanings actively through their own actions and interactions with others. When interpreting the stories of research informants and other data, a grounded theorist's goal is to construct a model to explain the action and interaction surrounding the phenomenon of interest. Thus, a grounded theory is the researcher's reconstruction of the participants' constructed definition and resolution of the situation and should be immediately recognizable to participants in the study.

The grounded theorist begins inductively by gathering data and posing hypotheses that are confirmed or disconfirmed during subsequent data collection. Thus, grounded theory employs both inductive and deductive reasoning. Seeking out the widest possible range of experience with the phenomenon and using multiple data sources, the grounded theorist divines levels of conceptualization of the data that are checked against existing and incoming data, other concepts, and the developing theory. This is known as constant comparison. At each stage of analysis, hypotheses are generated and tested against the data until a core category is distilled and a theory of behavior is constructed. Sampling is guided by the emerging conceptualizations and contrary cases are sought to enrich the model and raise the level of abstraction. The resulting grounded theory, in synthesizing the range of participant experience and varied levels of analysis, reveals the hidden meanings embedded in people's actions as they deal with the basic social problem that they share, and thus represents their consensual reality.

For us, the connection between symbolic interactionism and grounded theory was obvious. Nonetheless, we recognized our own inexperience relative to Glaser and found ourselves forced to rethink our assumptions, as we faced the possibility that our beliefs about the relationship between grounded theory and symbolic interactionism could be flawed. Investigating this led us into a confusing morass of "conceptual macrame" (Rosemary Jadack, personal communication, 1994). Concepts that we thought we had understood suddenly be-

came confusing. We found considerable irregularity in the use of such terms as epistemology, methodology, method, and techniques or strategies. We also found considerable variation in the views of both those writing about grounded theory and those claiming to use it. The lack of clarity around grounded theory is not surprising when the meanings of these key terms are not shared by the discussants.

EPISTEMOLOGY

Epistemology is defined as "the branch of philosophy which investigates the origin, nature, methods, and limits of human knowing" (Barnhart, 1970). Epistemology has been defined more loosely in sociology to encompass the methods of scientific inquiry used to study knowledge (Abercrombie, Hill, & Turner, 1984). Thus, epistemology can be seen both as a philosophy of human knowing and how one learns about it. Nevertheless, there is a fair degree of consensus among writers that epistemology represents the philosophical assumptions and beliefs that define the parameters of research and underpin its conduct (Campbell & Bunting, 1991; Munhall, 1993). Inherent in different epistemologies are different assumptions and beliefs about the nature of knowing, of what can be known, and who can be the knower.

The epistemology of grounded theory begins with who is the knower. In contrast to quantitative methods, in which the researcher is the expert, in grounded theory the researcher defers to the expertise of the participant, who has experience with the phenomenon of study. The researcher's job is to investigate the socially constructed meanings that form the participants' realities and the behaviors that flow from those meanings. That is, we want to know how they understand and act within their worlds. This is the chief reason for constant comparison as well as for member checks, so that the researcher's findings can accurately reflect the participants' reality. In this way, what can be known of the covert and overt behavior of participants is negotiated between researcher and participant, toward a shared understanding of the relationship between the person and phenomenon within society. Clearly, in our view, the epistemology of grounded theory is steeped in symbolic interactionism.

METHODOLOGY

According to Harding, methodology is defined as "a theory and analysis of how research does or should proceed" (1987, p. 3). This is congruent with the etiology of the term in which "ology" refers to the study of something, in this case the study of method. As such, methodology provides the link between epistemology and the conduct of research. Nonetheless, there is considerable latitude in the use of the term. For example, while some authors use methodology to denote the principles and justification of a particular approach to scientific inquiry, others use it to refer to the techniques. As Kaplan states, "As used by philosophers, 'methodology' is often indistinguishable from epistemology (theory of knowledge) or philosophy of science" (1964, p. 20). For the purposes of this discussion, we subscribe to Harding's definition.

If the epistemology of grounded theory is steeped in symbolic interactionism and the methodology is the link between the epistemology and the conduct of research, then it follows that grounded theory methodology flows from symbolic interactionism. Researchers are challenged to find ways to investigate the "what can be known," that is, how people live in and make meaning of their worlds. To do this, Glaser and Strauss (1967) proposed an orientation to developing theory and strategies to get there. Researchers were instructed to go out into the worlds of their participants and learn first-hand, rather than first developing a sophisticated filter based on the literature. In other words, Glaser and Strauss were telling researchers to ask people for their understandings, uncovering the hidden meanings through which participants enact their lives. Clearly, in our view, grounded theory is a methodology in the sense that Harding (1987) uses the term, in that it bridges the philosophical underpinnings of symbolic interactionism and the conduct of the grounded theory research endeavor.

METHOD

Beginning again with a definition, method is an orderly or systematic way of doing something in accordance with a definite plan (Barnhart, 1970). In other words, a method is a logical sequence of techniques

for accomplishing something, for example, a research project. Separating method from methodology is particularly problematic when the two terms are used interchangeably by some authors. To further complicate matters, many researchers use the heading "methodology" for the "method" section of their report in which they describe what they did. Academics teach a variety of courses which address everything from epistemology and ontology to technique, under the rubric of research methods. Harding (1987) has even noted that the term "method" is equated with epistemology by some. We resolve this confusion for ourselves by adopting the stance that method is systematic and prescribes the techniques that can be used in a particular study.

Method in grounded theory is constant comparison, in which the researcher makes comparisons among current data, emerging concepts, new data, and her or his increasingly higher levels of abstract theorizing. Only by making comparisons among all these elements can the researcher construct a theory that fits the data, works to explain the phenomenon, and is highly relevant. This is where some researchers fail in their attempts as grounded theorists and end up with an insufficiently developed "theory" in which the phenomenon of study is merely described (May, 1994; Stern, 1994; Wilson & Hutchinson, 1996). Where such a "theory" falls short is the lack of a more abstract construction of the basic social problem and how it is resolved. It is this full understanding and explanation of how the problem is resolved that is the goal of a grounded theory study.

Although constant comparison is the method used to conduct grounded theory research, it seems to us that some researchers equate grounded theory with constant comparison, thus confusing method with methodology. In doing so, they fail to recognize that grounded theory is a methodology containing its own philosophical justification of symbolic interactionism. This oversight enables such researchers to assume naively that research methods are atheoretical (Denzin, 1972). We suggest that such reasoning is misguided. Nonetheless, we think there is merit in further examination of the constant comparative method to explore the relationship between method and theoretical underpinnings. To do so, we critically examine the techniques used by grounded theorists to conduct their inquiry.

TECHNIQUE

Technique is the term we have assigned to the tasks involved in conducting a grounded theory study, that is, the individual pieces of the "how to" of grounded theory. In our formulation, technique includes various data collection and analytic strategies, including coding, categorizing, memoing, theorizing, and so forth. Technique, then, is the nuts and bolts of conducting research. Although we address several elements of technique individually, in practice they interweave in an iterative process of data collection and analysis resulting in a theoretical model, that is, a grounded theory. What follows is a discussion of key elements of technique used in grounded theory as they relate to symbolic interactionism.

Sampling

As is common in other qualitative methods, in grounded theory the sample consists of people who are knowledgeable about the phenomenon of study as it unfolds. The researcher does not screen people in and out of the sample based on predetermined external criteria. Rather, working from an emic perspective, the researcher accepts as initial participants those who identify themselves as knowledgeable about the topic under study (Glaser, 1978). For example, if people say they are depressed, that is accepted as sufficient grounds for inclusion in a study of depression. As analysis proceeds and conceptualizations emerge, the researcher actively seeks out participants (or other data sources) who are able to provide information to allow the researcher to elaborate the theory. This method of sampling was first described by Glaser and Strauss in *Discovery* (1967) and called theoretical sampling. Researchers in other traditions, such as ethnography, may sample in a similar way to answer questions that arise during analysis.

A fully developed grounded theory will account for a broad variation in the experience and perspectives of the participants. Consequently, the researcher must seek a variety of data sources as well as participants with a range of experience with the phenomenon of study. For example, in a study of recovery from chronic mental illness, the researcher might interview people who have identified

themselves as recovered, as well as care providers, mental health administrators, activists, and family members, in addition to reviewing relevant documents. Further, the grounded theorist seeks out so-called negative cases, that is, people whose experiences cast doubt on the emerging theory. Incorporating these negative cases provides further refinement of the theory. Not all qualitative perspectives so easily accommodate widely diverse data, as grounded theory is able to do.

In looking for variation and in theoretical sampling, the researcher is operating under the assumption that people will differ in their understandings of the phenomenon of study and, consequently, act and interact differently. Embedded in the sampling strategies is the notion that a grounded theory needs to incorporate and account for the maximum variety of meanings and behaviors related to the phenomenon. The fact that these differences are seen to enrich the data manifests to us evidence of symbolic interactionism informing data collection. Whether or not the researcher recognizes symbolic interactionism in this, it is there, nonetheless. Thus, sampling in grounded theory is inherently symbolic interactionist by its nature.

Memoing

Beginning at the initial conceptualization of the study, the grounded theorist records all ideas and thoughts regarding the phenomenon of study as well as the conduct of the research itself. Memoing creates a record of the analytic and methodological decisions and why they were made as well as the researcher's own "conceptual baggage," that is, assumptions, beliefs, and biases drawn from previous experience (Kirby & McKenna, 1989). In grounded theory, memoing is the mechanism whereby higher levels of data analysis leading to theory development occur. Memoing continues throughout the study, becoming increasingly complex as the study progresses and the researcher's insight becomes more sophisticated.

Memoing makes visible the researcher's internal dialogue regarding the data. Through memos, the researcher constructs and reconstructs his or her understanding of the meanings that guide participants' actions and interactions in resolving or ameliorating the basic social problem. In doing so, the researcher is engaged in a symbolic interaction between himself or herself and the data,

the research process, and the world of participants (Denzin, 1972; Konecki, 1989). As Denzin (1972) observed:

> The very act of engaging in social research must be seen as a process of symbolic interaction, that being a scientist reflects a continual attempt to lift one's own idiosyncratic experiences to the level of the consensual and the shared meaning. (p. 83)

Data Collection

To collect data, the researcher might use any of a variety of techniques, such as unstructured or semi-structured interviews, participant observation, focus group interviews, or examination of documents. The researcher strives to use data sources that are suited to the topic. For example, individual interviews may be the best approach to collect data on highly personal issues such as sexual abuse. Nonetheless, we believe, in contrast to Morse (chapter 1, this volume), that focus group interviews can be a useful primary source of data in situations where more data is likely to be forthcoming when participants can spark ideas from each other (Morgan, 1998), for example, when studying nurses' worklife. Because data collection and analysis occur simultaneously, the researcher is able to identify gaps in the data and data sources to fill those gaps. The researcher seeks sufficient variation in the data to allow the development of a rich conceptualization of the core category that holds the theory together. A good grounded theorist uses multiple data sources and actively seeks a wide range of perspectives and understandings of the phenomenon to synthesize and construct a model that reflects a consensual view of reality. As with sampling, data collection is aimed at discovering the varied perspectives and meanings surrounding the phenomenon of study in order to construct a parsimonious yet shared representation of reality.

Analysis

Data analysis includes various techniques for examining, coding, and synthesizing data, some of which are unique to grounded theory.

Analysis begins with *in vivo* coding of interviews, field notes, and other data to identify the meanings contained within. In *in vivo* coding, the codes assigned to the raw data reflect as closely as possible the language of the participants. As *in vivo* codes are subsumed into higher levels of abstraction (concepts or categories), the language may change to reflect the researcher's evolving interpretation of the participants' experience and memoing becomes more theoretical.

Constant comparison during this stage involves checking the emerging concepts and categories against the data and emerging conceptualizations. This process allows the identification of gaps in understanding and leads the researcher to sample theoretically for participants or experiences to fill those gaps. Throughout, the researcher negotiates both internally and with participants to create a shared meaning of the basic social problem and the ways in which participants resolve it. Thus, data analysis enshrines the assumption that "meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretive process," one of Blumer's three premises of symbolic interactionism (1969/86, p. 2).

In grounded theory, the researcher usually begins with a degree of previous knowledge of the phenomenon but remains open to alternative interpretations. For example, a researcher studying depression might enter the field with a variety of understandings gleaned from past personal or professional experience with the topic. These "sensitizing concepts" (Blumer, 1954) influence the researcher's approach to the data, however, a good grounded theorist will continuously take the devil's advocate role and challenge her or his assumptions and beliefs. Constant comparison of assumptions with data and emerging conceptualizations serves to enhance scientific rigor and ensure that the findings are not mere armchair theorizing. From working with these comparisons, the researcher sees patterns that eventually lead to the development of theory. Recognition of the patterns hidden in the data is largely a right-brain activity, rooted in experience, that cannot be reduced to technique. This kind of creative process, a characteristic of grounded theory, is what May (1994) describes as the "magic in the method." In May's words:

> Technique and rigor, however, cannot entirely explain what moved the analyst from confusion to insight, from chaos to order, and from simple description to understanding. The product (knowledge) is

> shaped *but not completely defined* by the process through which it was created. (1994, p. 14)

Many would-be grounded theorists produce "theories" that are mere descriptions and stop short of constructing a full representation of participants' reality (Stern, 1994; Wilson & Hutchinson, 1996). A fully developed grounded theory goes beyond the mundane data and description to an evocative and elegant explanation of that reality in a way that is immediately recognizable to those in the know (May, 1994; Sandelowski, 1994). A grounded theory without these qualities cannot meet the basic requirements for scientific rigor in grounded theory, that is, fit, work, and grab (Glaser, 1978). Until the theorist has constructed a symbolic representation that explains the relationships among concepts and illuminates the actions and interactions of participants, the data are not sufficiently analyzed nor the theory fully developed. What results is a description, not a theory, and certainly not a grounded theory. Without magic in the analytical method, grounded theory is reduced to a mere set of techniques, and the result lacks the characteristic gestalt that defines a grounded theory.

CONCLUSION

To return to our question, can you "do" grounded theory without symbolic interactionism? Certainly, some of the individual techniques, such as constant comparison, can be used freely, however, we suggest that grounded theory is more than the sum of its techniques. Even if we consider grounded theory as merely a set of techniques, it is evident to us that these techniques embrace key elements of symbolic interactionism.

As illustrated in Figure 9.1, symbolic interactionism penetrates even the technical level of grounded theory so that, in our view, an adequate grounded theory study cannot be divorced from it. Even the grounded theory researcher who is unfamiliar with symbolic interactionism *per se* is necessarily enacting the epistemological underpinnings of the method through the conduct of her or his study.

Nonetheless, just as a grounded theory is more than a description of the data, grounded theory as a method is more than the tasks

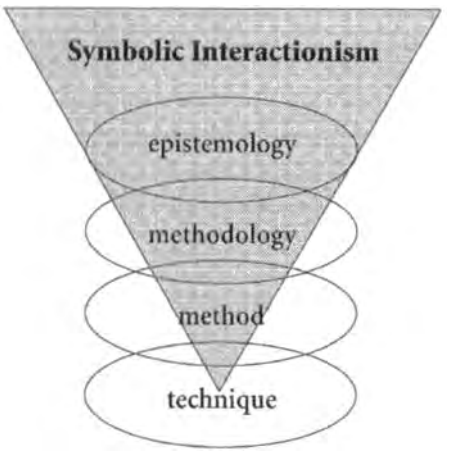

FIGURE 9.1 The relationship between symbolic interactionism and grounded theory.

performed by the researcher. Grounded theory research must result in a parsimonious, evocative construction that illuminates and explains the actions and interactions of participants as they manage the basic social problem. To achieve this end, the researcher necessarily engages in symbolic interaction—within herself or himself, with the data, with participants, and with the emerging theory. Thus, for us, grounded theory is a comprehensive package, not simply a set of techniques. Anything short of this, purporting to be a grounded theory, fails to achieve accepted standards of rigor in grounded theory and is simply bad science. As Sandelowski (1994) says, the proof is in the pottery.

Thus, it is our view that symbolic interactionism is inherent in grounded theory research, whether the researcher is aware of it or not. If research is truly grounded theory, it cannot occur in the absence of symbolic interactionism, which is intrinsic to the process. This does not imply that other theoretical perspectives, such as feminism (see Wuest & Merritt-Gray, chapter 8, this volume), critical theory (see MacDonald, chapter 7, this volume), or hermeneutics (see Pursley-Crotteau, Bunting, & Draucker, chapter 10, this volume) may not be incorporated as well, but that these other perspectives are

superimposed onto symbolic interactionism. In these circumstances, the researcher is challenged to reconcile the ontological and epistemological stances of these differing perspectives.

Thus, for us, grounded theory is both a method and a methodology, and contains within it its own philosophical justification. This should not be surprising, as any research method is imbued with an epistemology that guides its unfolding. For example, statistical research is based on positivist and post-positivist assumptions about the nature of knowledge, what can be known, who can know it, and how it can be studied. Consequently, there is an unarticulated epistemology underpinning SPSS. As Denzin (1972) noted, " . . . methods are not atheoretical tools, but rather means of acting on the environment and making that environment meaningful" (p. 77). We share Denzin's view.

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CHAPTER 10

Grounded Theory and Hermeneutics: Contradictory or Complementary Methods of Nursing Research?

Suzanne Pursley-Crotteau, Sheila McGuire Bunting, and Claire Burke Draucker

Grounded theory and hermeneutics are interpretive methods frequently used in qualitative nursing research. Grounded theory is a research approach used to generate substantive theory of basic social or social-psychological processes experienced by groups who share a common problem or concern. Hermeneutics is a research approach used to discover meaning and achieve understanding of everyday lived experiences. Both methods are considered phenomenological as they are used to describe the worlds of persons being studied (Stern, 1994). Researchers using these methods share several common beliefs and practices: they view knowledge as tentative and evolving, produce findings that are a result of an interpretive

collaboration between researcher and participant, and seek to answer research questions that inform practice (Baker, Norton, Young, & Ward, 1998). The ontological and epistemological assumptions on which the two methods are based, however, are distinct. Grounded theory is rooted in symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1969; Mead, 1934/1962) and hermeneutics is rooted in the philosophy of phenomenology (Dilthey, 1990; Gadamer, 1975; Heidegger, 1962).

Wilson and Hutchinson (1991) advocated the triangulation of grounded theory and Heideggerian hermeneutics to understand complex human phenomena and to provide "the breadth and depth needed in nursing science" (p. 275). They argued that hermeneutics can provide rich detail that can inform how we think about our practice, whereas grounded theory can yield a conceptual framework on which to base interventions. Some researchers have suggested, however, that the different philosophical groundings of the two methods make it difficult to espouse both paradigms (Darbyshire, 1994). Indeed, since the Wilson and Hutchinson article was published, few researchers have accepted the challenge to triangulate both methods and for good reason. Triangulation was originally a technical term used in surveying and navigation to describe the technique of using two known or visible points to plot the location of a third point (Knafl & Breitmayer, 1991). Social scientists initially used it metaphorically to characterize the use of multiple methods to measure the same construct (Campbell, 1956; Campbell & Fiske, 1959). Researchers later expanded the use of triangulation to include the use of quantitative and qualitative methods. The appropriateness of the use of both methods in the same research project stimulated much debate and discussion (Flick, 1992; Goodwin & Goodwin, 1994), but this has not daunted its use in nursing and behavioral sciences. Researchers have also suggested that the different philosophical perspectives of grounded theory and hermeneutics make it difficult to espouse both paradigms (Darbyshire, 1994). In this chapter, we review and compare the historical roots, the methodological perspectives, and the analytic procedures of the two approaches in order to consider whether they can be successfully triangulated, as suggested by Wilson and Hutchinson, or whether to do so would *threaten the integrity* of both methods. A study that used both grounded theory and hermeneutics to study women's responses to violence will be described.

GROUNDED THEORY

Historical Roots

Grounded theory is rooted in symbolic interactionism, which focuses on the meaning of events to people in natural settings. Social interactionism is derived from the work of pragmatic philosophers such as John Dewey and William James. The basic propositions of pragmatic philosophy are:

1. Truth does not exist "out there" in the real world but is actively created as humans act toward the world;
2. People base their knowledge of the world on what has proven useful to them;
3. People define the social and physical objects they encounter in the world according to the way they can use them; and
4. If we want to understand people, we must understand what those people do in the world and how they interpret that world (Ritzer, 1983).

Symbolic interactionism was developed by George Herbert Mead who taught philosophy at the University of Chicago from 1894 to 1931. Mead's major work was *Mind, Self, and Society: From the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist* (Mead, 1934/1962). Herbert Blumer (1969) refined Mead's propositions. According to Blumer, symbolic interactionism is based on three basic principles:

1. Human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that things have for them;
2. Meaning of such things is derived from, or arises out of, the social interaction that one has with one's fellows; and
3. These meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretative process used by the person in dealing with the things she or he encounters (Blumer, 1969, p. 2).

All human behavior is considered "a vast interpretive process in which people, singly and collectively, guide themselves by defining the objects, events and situations they encounter" (Blumer, 1969, p. 132). From the symbolic interaction perspective, behavior is studied on two levels: the behavioral or interactional, and the sym-

bolic. Through social interaction, individuals are always designating symbols to each other and to themselves (Bowers, 1988). With its roots in pragmatism and social interactionism, grounded theory has as its purpose the derivation of theory that explains the interactions of people within a given context. The researcher asks and answers the question, "What are the processes and meanings people use to manage their worlds?"

Methodological Perspective

Grounded theory was explicated by Glaser and Strauss in *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (1967). The primary purposes of this work were to offer a rationale for theory developed through interplay with data collected in research, suggest the logic for and specifics of grounded theories, and legitimize qualitative research through adequate verification (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, p. 275). Glaser (1978) suggested that grounded theory could be used by any discipline interested in "generating theory and doing social research as two parts of the same process" (Glaser, 1978, p. 2).

In grounded theory, the researcher seeks to understand the actions of the individual or collective actors under study and to account for change over time. Sources of data may include interviews and field observations, videotapes, letters, diaries, autobiographies, biographies, newspapers, and other media materials. The researcher can also use quantitative data or a combination of qualitative and quantitative data for the analysis. The perspectives and voices of the participants are included in the study findings. Although the grounded theory researcher carefully examines and considers the participants' expressed meanings, he or she assumes final responsibility for the interpretation. The findings reflect the theoretical formulation developed by the researcher. Grounded theory procedures are considered amenable to different levels of theory development from substantive theory to general formal theories (Glaser, 1978; Strauss & Corbin, 1994).

Analytic Procedures

Although grounded theory was designed to allow for much latitude and ingenuity by the researcher (Strauss & Corbin, 1994), analytic

procedures have been prescribed. The constant comparison of concepts derived from the data is the main analytic process used in grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Analysis begins with open coding of the data in which interview texts and other documents are coded word-by-word and line-by-line to completely open or "fracture" the data. Substantive coding then includes the processes of developing categories and relating the categories to one another in theoretical statements. The researcher then returns to the data to establish validity of these statements by finding confirming or contrary instances.

The researcher may seek additional data in the forms of a literature review, interviews of new participants, or additional interviews of previous participants. This process of seeking data from various sources to confirm or offer contrary cases of the theoretical statements is called theoretical sampling, the hallmark of the grounded theory method. Using theoretical sampling, the researcher allows the emerging theory to guide the ongoing sampling process (Glaser, 1978).

Even though these procedures are often described in a linear fashion, the processes of data collection and data analysis are interwoven as the grounded theory is conceptualized. According to Strauss and Corbin (1994), grounded theorists are "much concerned with discovering 'process'—not necessarily in the sense of stages or phases, but of the reciprocal changes in patterns of action/interaction and in relationship with changes of conditions either internal or external to the process itself" (p. 278).

HERMENEUTICS

Historical Roots

The term hermeneutics is derived from the Greek word, *hermeneuein,* meaning "to interpret." Originally, hermeneutics was used as a systematic, historical, and critical scientific method specifically for interpreting theological and philosophical exegesis (Welch, 1999).

Friedrich Schleiermacher, a German theologian and philosopher, is considered a creator of modern hermeneutics (Tice, 1995). He first introduced the notion of the hermeneutic circle to reflect the circularity of interpretation; that is, the interpretation of each part

of text is dependent on the interpretation of the whole. Because every interpretation is based on another interpretation, one cannot escape the hermeneutic circle (Bohman, 1995).

Dilthey (1900), a German philosopher and historian, was also a significant figure in the development of hermeneutics (Makkreel, 1995). He believed that all human sciences are interpretive and Understanding (with a capital letter) involves the interpretation of expression of human activities, the "objectifications" of life (e.g., literature, art, social life, history) (Polkinghorne, 1983). Understanding is a kind of comprehension that exceeds purely logical analysis through the use of both inductive and deductive logic. Dilthey argued that explanation is the method of the natural sciences and Understanding is the method of the human sciences. Human sciences share the data collection techniques of observation and description with the natural sciences, but add the Understanding or *Verstehen* of human expression through thoughts and emotions. Dilthey believed that both the natural and the humans sciences could obtain objective truth through proper method.

Unlike Dilthey's epistemological perspective, the philosophical hermeneutics of Heidegger (1962) represented an ontological perspective. Heidegger (1962) was a German philosopher who, in his seminal work *Being and Time*, significantly challenged the assumptions of Western science and proposed that being human is being interpretive. Heidegger was interested in the background conditions that enable entities to show up as mattering. To understand why entities are intelligible, one must analyze an entity that has prior understanding, that is, human existence, or *Dasein*. As Guignon (1995) explained:

> Heidegger's claim is that *Dasein's* pretheoretical understanding of being, embodied in its everyday practices, opens a "clearing" in which entities can show up as, say, tools, protons, numbers, mental events, and so on. This historically unfolding clearing is what the metaphysical tradition has overlooked. (p. 317)

For Heidegger, the analytic of *Dasein* involves a description of *Dasein's* everydayness, which is "our ordinary prereflective agency when we are caught up in the midst of our practical affairs" (Guignon, 1995, p. 317) and an account of how understanding is possible. According to Guignon (1995), Heidegger suggested that *Dasein* has three essential structures:

1. Being already in the world. *Dasein* is always already thrown into a world, a concrete historical and social context, to live out its life.
2. Being ahead of itself. *Dasein* is always taking a stance on its life by acting in the world (projection) and is future oriented as its identity is constituted by the ongoing fulfillment of possibilities.
3. Being engaged with things. *Dasein* is always articulating entities that show up in our concernful absorption in current situations (discourse).

Hermeneutics, according to Heidegger, was not a method designed to develop science but rather the very nature of human existence. The hermeneutic question is: "What does it mean to be?" Understanding is not a way of knowing, but a mode of being—our basic way of our "being in the world."

Gadamer (1975), a German philosopher who was strongly influenced by Heidegger, believed that hermeneutics is the most fundamental aspect of all disciplines (Koch, 1996) and discussed several important concepts related to interpretation. In his book *Truth and Method*, Gadamer discussed the concept of prejudice, which he defined as "a judgment that is given before all elements that determine a situation have been fully examined" (p. 270). All interpreters have expectations based on their own beliefs, practices, and values. Gadamer also introduced the notion of the fusion of horizons, a metaphor for understanding. Koch (1996) explained:

> Fusion is the coming together of different vantage points. The process leading to fusion of horizons is . . . like a posture, or a way of conducting yourself, a willingness to open yourself to the standpoint of another so that you can let their standpoint speak to you, and let it influence you. (p. 177)

For both Heidegger and Gadamer, therefore, true understanding is the consequence of human engagement; there is no "pure truth."

Methodological Perspectives

While hermeneutics as a contemporary research method is based primarily on the ontological philosophies of Heidegger and Ga-

damer, Heidegger considered his project to be one of philosophical reflection; he rebelled against the notion of "method" and the term "research" (Cohen & Omery, 1994). Gadamer (1975) also was not interested in describing a methodological procedure for the human sciences (Annells, 1996). As Cohen and Omery (1994) stressed, "It fell on others to define what the hermeneutic was to become as a research method" (p. 147).

Van Manen (1990) outlined six research activities that are critical to the interpretive endeavor:

1. Turning to a phenomenon, which seriously interests us and commits us to the world;
2. Investigating experience as we live it rather than as we conceptualize it;
3. Reflecting on essential themes, which characterize the phenomenon;
4. Describing the phenomenon through the art of writing and rewriting;
5. Maintaining a strong and oriented pedagogical relation to the phenomenon;
6. Balancing the research context by considering parts and whole. (pp. 30–31)

Research based on hermeneutic, or interpretive, phenomenology, is often contrasted with research based on eidectic, or descriptive, phenomenology (Cohen & Omery, 1994). As a research method, eidectic phenomenology is based on the assumption that all human experience has essential structures that take on meaning when consciously apprehended. The goal of this method is a description of the meaning of experience from the perspective or worldview of those who have the experience. "Researchers bracket their presuppositions, reflect on the experiences that were described, and intuit or describe the essential structures of the experiences under study" (Cohen & Omery, 1994, p. 148).

In contrast, hermeneutics as a research method rests on the ontological assumption that all experience is an interpretive process. The purpose of hermeneutic research is interpretation and understanding of a lived experience—to understand what it means to be a

person in the world (Walters, 1995). Researchers do not attempt to suspend the presuppositions they bring to the research, rather they examine them as part of the interpretive process. In hermeneutical inquiry, "the data generated by the participants is fused with the experience of the researchers and placed in context" (Koch, 1996, p. 176).

Hermeneutic researchers may utilize many sources of data, including individual and group interviews, participant observation, videotapes, documents, public writings, and media (Benner, 1994). When talking with participants, interviewers ask for narrative accounts of specific experiences, rather than ideas or opinions about certain issues. Second interviews are recommended to give the researcher and participant a chance to ensure that understanding has occurred.

Analytic Procedures

Although those who write about hermeneutic research stress that there are no cookbook recipes to guide analysis, some practical guidelines, typically aimed at novice researchers, have been explicated. Benner (1985), for example, described the basic process of hermeneutic analysis:

> Interview material and observations are turned into text through transcription. The interpretation entails a systematic analysis of the whole text, a systematic analysis of parts of the text, and a comparison of the two interpretations for conflicts and for understanding the whole in relation to the parts, and vice versa. Whole cases may be compared to whole cases. Usually, this shifting back and forth between the parts and the whole reveals new themes, new issues, and new questions that are generated in the process of understanding the text itself. (p. 9)

Three interpretive and presentation strategies are recommended for interpretive study (Benner, 1985). Paradigm cases are whole cases that are clear and vivid examples of a particular pattern of meaning. Exemplars are parts of text, such as stories or vignettes, that demonstrate concerns and practices within context. A thematic analysis is the identification of themes in the data that represent common meanings.

The most frequently employed application of the hermeneutic philosophical premises to a research method was explicated by Diekelmann, Allen, and Tanner (1989). These authors have delineated the steps of the process of analysis for hermeneutics. Researchers, who often work in teams, read each interview to obtain an overall understanding, write interpretive summaries of each interview, and code for possible themes. Transcripts are then analyzed by the group to develop the themes. Analysts continually return to the text or to the participants for clarification and understanding, always moving back and forth from the whole of the text to the specific textual examples to aid in interpretation. A composite analysis of each text is written. Texts are then compared and contrasted to identify and describe shared practices and common meanings across texts. The team identifies constitutive patterns and connections across themes and collaborates on a final draft of the findings.

Benner (1995) argued that when one gains skills in interpretive work, the need for rules falls away. She stated, "Indeed, as Dreyfus (1991) contends, models (and rules) would not even work to capture the know-how of skilled involvement in the world that Heidegger calls the ready-to-hand mode of engagement, that is, the smooth functioning of expertise or understanding" (p. 78).

RESEARCH TRIANGULATING HEIDEGGERIAN HERMENEUTICS AND GROUNDED THEORY: WOMEN'S RESPONSES TO SEXUAL VIOLENCE BY MALE INTIMATES

Draucker (Draucker & Madsen, 1999; Draucker & Stern, 2000) conducted a study using both Heideggerian hermeneutics and grounded theory to explore women's responses to sexual violence by male intimates. The study was an Academic Investigator Award program funded by the National Institute of Nursing Research. The author's mentors for the project were Drs. Phyllis Stern and Nancy Diekelmann. The aims of the study were to:

1. obtain descriptions of (a) the meaning of violence in their current lives, and (b) their day-to-day experiences of being a

survivor of violence from women who have experienced sexual violence within an intimate relationship in adulthood;
2. analyze and present these descriptions using hermeneutic methods;
3. obtain descriptions of healing experiences from women who have experienced healing from sexual violence within an intimate relationship in adulthood;
4. construct a theoretical framework outlining the process of healing from intimate sexual violence using the grounded theory method;
5. combine the findings on surviving and healing to provide a comprehensive description of women's responses to the experience of living through intimate sexual violence;
6. develop recommendations for nursing interventions for women who have survived intimate sexual violence in adulthood, based on the results of this project and current knowledge in the field.

Aims 1 and 2 were achieved by a Heideggerian hermeneutic study of 10 women who had experienced sexual violence by a male intimate, and aims 3 and 4 were achieved by a grounded theory study of 33 women who had experienced some healing from an experience of sexual violence by a male intimate. Aims 5 and 6 were achieved by merging the findings of both approaches. As recommended by Wilson and Hutchinson (1991), the samples were kept separate "to remain true to the tenets of both methods" (p. 269) and the focus of the interviews was different. The women in Study A were asked to describe their day-to-day experiences of being a survivor of violence, and women in Study B were asked to describe how their lives had progressed since the time of the violence. The interviews lasted between 1 and 3 hours. Many women maintained contact with the investigator throughout the course of the project, providing additional data via phone contacts or written correspondence.

Study A: Heideggerian Hermeneutics

The data provided by the 10 women in Study A were analyzed using hermeneutical methods, similar to those outlined by Diekelmann,

Allen, and Tanner (1989). Two themes that emerged from the data were explored using the participants' text, Heideggerian philosophy, and other literature sources.

Dwelling with Violence

The first theme, dwelling with violence, reflects the women's descriptions of living among and inseparable from violence, abuse, and maltreatment (Draucker & Madsen, 1999). Early in the interpretive process, it was clear that the women's stories were not about a single episode of sexual violence or an abusive relationship, but rather about multiple and varied experiences of violence throughout their lives (e.g., childhood abuse, physical violence in adult relationships, sexual exploitation at school and/or work, fear from living in everyday environments that are dangerous or hostile to women). The Heideggerian concept of dwelling helped deepen our understanding of the participants' experiences as ways of "being in" a violent world. Heidegger (1971), in his essay "Building Dwelling Thinking," argued that to be human means to dwell (*bauen*) on earth as a mortal. The nature of dwelling is remaining or staying in place. Dwelling is experienced as *wunian,* which means "to be at peace, to be brought to peace, to stay at peace" (p. 149). The word for peace (*friede*) is to be preserved from harm and danger, to spare. Dwelling with violence is the "remaining or staying in place, finding peace, and being preserved from harm and danger" when these essential ways of being-in-the-world are challenged by violence, abuse, and maltreatment.

Two experiences related to dwelling were revealed in the texts. Violence resulted in the women "living-in-exile"—feeling uprooted, unsettled, unprotected, and distrustful. Yet, their stories were about "preserving and sparing amidst violence"—caring for the things they valued, creating a safe place for themselves, guarding those things which are essential to their nature, and seeking to protect others.

Knowing What to Do

The second theme, knowing what to do, reflects the women's descriptions of how they intuitively knew how to manage their lives during and after their violent experiences by using practical, commonsense

activities (Draucker, 1999a). The women gave examples of knowing how to do things to survive the violence (e.g., intuitively knowing whether to fight or resist), to attempt to stay safe (e.g., "scoping out" potentially dangerous men), and to make things better (e.g., reading, keeping journals).

The Heideggerian concept of understanding as know-how was used to interpret the women's narratives. Their narratives reflected Heidegger's concept of understanding as a basic way of being in the world (knowing how) rather than a cognitive process (knowing what). In *Being and Time*, Heidegger (1927/1962) stated that "when we are talking ontically we sometimes use the expression 'understanding something' with the signification of 'being able to manage something,' 'being a match for it,' 'being competent to do something' " (p. 183). For women who had experienced violence, being-in-the-world entails "being a match for" the suffering created by violence.

The issue of thrownness (as described above) was also evident in the women's narratives. Many discussed familial and social worlds (e.g., abusive parents, an oppressive society) that both created and limited their possibilities. *Speilrum* (translated as room for maneuver) is that which "permits particular coping activities to show up as possible in the current world" (Dreyfus, 1995, p. 186). Room for maneuver is the range of possibilities in a given circumstance, one's leeway. This nonreflective understanding of what makes sense in a certain circumstance was reflected in the women's beliefs that they knew what to do and the practical, commonsense activities they used to manage the violence and its aftermath.

Study B: Grounded Theory

Data provided by the 33 women in this phase were used to construct a theoretical framework using grounded theory methods (Draucker & Stern, 2000). Originally, we asked each woman to reflect on her healing from the violence, but several rejected the term healing, stating instead that they had simply struggled to get on with their daily lives. In subsequent interviews, therefore, we asked the women to describe the violence and how their lives had progressed since the violence.

We identified and labeled the core variable as "forging ahead in a dangerous world." This variable represented the women's struggles to get on with their daily lives in a world they knew through firsthand experience to be dangerous.

The women described a wide range of responses to the sexual violence. Their responses were related to their involvement with or commitment to the perpetrator(s) and the extent of violence they had experienced throughout their lives. Therefore, we divided the participants into three groups. Women in Group 1 had experienced a one-time assault; women in Group 2 had experienced sexual violence within abusive relationships; women in Group 3 had experienced a lifetime of abuse and violence. Each group described different variations of forging ahead. Group 1 described *getting back on track;* Group 2 described *starting over again;* and Group 3 described *surviving the long, hard road.* The women in each of the groups discussed three common processes used to forge ahead: *telling others about the violence, making sense of the violence,* and *creating a safer life.*

The nature and function of these processes varied according to group. While all women described telling others about the violence as a way of forging ahead, women in Group 1 needed reassuring talk (revealing the abuse and getting an empathic response); women in Group 2 needed motivating talk (revealing the abuse and being gently challenged to take action, but not pushed to leave the relationship); and women in Group 3 needed restoring talk (revealing the abuse and being given the opportunity to "dig deep" and explore the origins of the violence in their lives).

Similarly, women in the groups differed in how they made sense of the violence. Group 1 women decided they were in the wrong place at the wrong time; Group 2 women figured out why they had chosen "losers"; and Group 3 women came to understand how their bad childhoods had set them up for subsequent violence.

The women created a safer life in different ways as well. Group 1 women used the "wisdom" they acquired from their sexual assault experience to prevent further violence; Group 2 women discovered hidden strengths so they no longer needed "losers" in their lives; and Group 3 women reclaimed their spirit and will to survive. The model suggests that different therapeutic interventions are appropriate for the three groups of women.

Based on the themes identified in Study A and the theoretical framework derived in Study B, recommendations for nursing practice were outlines. The results of these studies, when managed, suggest that health care professionals who work with women who have been sexually assaulted should:

1. Consider the overall effect of violence on women's lives, not just their symptomatic responses to a particular event.
2. Ask about the context of the assault, including the women's relationship and commitment to the perpetrator, societal and family responses to her experience, and her past history of violence.
3. Recognize that women who have endured sexual violence by male intimates face a fundamental paradox. The violent experiences that prompt a search for a safer life are the same experiences that taught them that their social world is dangerous. A treatment approach that focuses not only on the reduction of symptoms but that supports women's attempt to create a safer life is recommended.
4. Consider that women's tacit know-how, if respected and given voice, will ultimately guide their coping. The professional should avoid dictating the survivor's choices or taking action without her consent.
5. Be aware that telling others about experiences of sexual assault or abuse is crucial to recovery—but for different women, different kinds of talk are likely to be helpful. Women who experience single incidents of sexual violence may seek only reassurance and validation, but not advice, from a helping professional; women who experience repeated sexual violence by a partner may profit from talk that "plants the seeds" of change by enhancing their self-esteem without pushing them to leave the relationship; and women who have experienced lifespan abuse need to "dig deep" to explore their past in order to ensure their future.
6. Recognize that finding meaning in an experience of sexual violence is crucial to recovery. Helping professionals, however, should appreciate a woman's need to explain the violence in her own way before they confront any account she holds credible.

7. Consider using a therapeutic approach that elicits women's narratives about how they preserved that which is important to them in order to reveal hidden strengths and competencies.

CONCLUSION

Hermeneutics and grounded theory methods share several elements. As Wilson and Hutchinson (1991) pointed out, researchers using these methods "share a commitment to a qualitative, naturalistic, contextual, historic, intersubjective methodology to understand human responses and experiences from a variety of perspectives" (p. 267). Yet, there are crucial differences. Interpretive researchers are driven by ontological concerns and enter the hermeneutic circle to achieve understanding and grounded theory researchers are driven by epistemological concerns and analyze field data to develop substantive theory. Differences in research procedures stem from this difference in purpose.

Nurses have consistently employed one method or the other to explore a wide variety of phenomena [see Draucker (1999b) for a review of nursing studies using Heideggerian hermeneutics and Benoliel (1996) for a review of nursing studies using grounded theory], but few have triangulated the two methods. Because we believe that incorporating both perspectives in one project can provide a more holistic view of phenomena of concern (Morse, 1994), we urge researchers to revisit Wilson and Hutchinson's (1991) call to triangulate grounded theory and hermeneutics. In the Draucker project, the hermeneutic study shed light on ways of being in a violent world and the grounded theory study yielded hypotheses with specific implications for practice (i.e., different "types" of violence result in different responses necessitating different therapeutic interventions).

Clearly, there are dangers to triangulation. While both Morse (1994) and Stern (1994) address the potential advantage of using two qualitative methods in the same study, they caution that researchers must keep the analyses separate, avoid "muddling" the methods, and clearly describe the procedures they use. Researchers may assume that, with some adjustment in perspective and "out-of-the-box" thinking, either method can be adapted or mutated. This risks

violating the philosophical perspectives and procedures of each method, rendering an "eroded" research product (Baker, Wuest, & Stern, 1992; Stern, 1994).

Triangulation of grounded theory and hermeneutics requires an understanding of and a commitment to the integrity of each tradition, a mentor for each method, collaboration and dialogue with colleagues versed in both approaches, and time (lots of time!). We do believe, however, that such investments may yield fruitful results for nurse researchers.

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CHAPTER 11

The Application of Grounded Theory: Issues of Assessment and Measurement in Practice

Wendy Hall and Katharyn A. May

Over the last two decades, grounded theory method has grown steadily in acceptance and use among nurse researchers. It is now widely recognized as an effective way of generating substantive theory, and virtually every nursing research text and published report of grounded theory research includes at least one earnest claim about the usefulness of such theories to guide both nursing research and practice.

Indeed, these claims are so prevalent they now comprise a litany—that is, an utterance frequently repeated in a prayerful fashion reflecting articles of faith rather than claims of fact. Unfortunately, despite these repeated claims of the "usefulness," the influence of qualitative research findings in general, or of grounded theory research in particular, on the practice of nursing is still barely discernible (Morse, Penrod, & Hupcey, 2000).

Sandelowski (1997a) suggests several reasons for this. First, she argues that utilization of research findings is primarily defined in terms of observable actions and measurable outcomes in practice;

thus, current models of research utilization and evidence-based practice focus on applying findings from quasi-experimental studies to instrumental or technical aspects of patient care. While there is no question that this is a critically important activity, it also tends to undervalue the contribution of qualitative research findings in making sense of the world (i.e., gaining insight and understanding, creating new possibilities for thought and action). Second, many nurses (clinicians, educators, and scientists alike) have an inadequate understanding of qualitative methods, and this impedes both the conduct of high-quality research and the effective translation of findings into practice. Third, the nature of qualitative findings (and perhaps "qualitative researchers") seems to resist accumulation, synthesis and integration, processes that are essential to the development of a useful body of knowledge. Finally, utilization of qualitative research is significantly hampered by the misconception that the findings must be subjected to testing (usually through quantitative means) before they can be applied in practice (Sandelowski, 1997a). We would add that relatively little attention has been directed to the advantages of grounded theory findings as a foundation for instrument development.

In the specific case of grounded theory research, the first and last of these deterrents to utilization (i.e., inadequate attention to the heuristic utility of grounded theory for practice, and misconceptions about testing and the process of instrument development related to grounded theory findings) have particular significance, and will comprise the focus of this chapter. We will first explore what is (or what should be) meant by "using" or applying grounded theory findings in a practice discipline, and we will then focus on two modes of application: (a) *conceptual application* or using grounded theories to stimulate insight and create new possibilities for thought and action, (b) *systematic application* or applying and evaluating grounded theories directly in innovative practice, or through testing and extension to extant theory using psychometric instruments derived from the grounded theory itself.

SO WHAT SHOULD APPLICATION OF GROUNDED THEORY LOOK LIKE ANYWAY?

What is it that we mean when we say that grounded theories are useful for nursing research and practice? Usually, we mean the follow-

ing: (a) the theory can help us to think about extant knowledge and about practice in new, and presumably better ways; (b) based on these new and better ways of thinking, practice may be improved in some, often unspecified, way; and (c) the theory can help to guide future research, which then will generate new knowledge that eventually may improve practice. Theories generally don't do each of these things on their own in an effort to be useful; humans must do it for them. Given that fact, some focused consideration of how humans do this would seem to be in order.

CONCEPTUAL APPLICATION OF GROUNDED THEORY: CREATING NEW POSSIBILITIES FOR THOUGHT AND ACTION

There is no question that grounded theory research and other forms of qualitative research are powerful tools that can help us see the world differently, thereby creating new possibilities for thought and action. Grounded theory research is extraordinarily useful in this regard, because when the research is done well, the findings have both the "grab" of description and voice, and the elegance and power of theory.

However, grounded theory research is likely to function best in this heuristic mode when the mind is prepared to use it in this way, that is, to think "theoretically." This is consistent with the argument that when one has a rich and varied context of background knowledge and experience in which to apply it and is also accustomed to thinking "theoretically," analytic power is enhanced (Glaser, 1978).

Every educator who has ever discussed grounded theory research with beginning students can testify to its seductive "grab." However, most will also admit that it is unclear how well students at this level understand and apply it (conceptually speaking). While beginning students often seem to enjoy these discussions, when asked to consider what use the theory may have, one of three things will usually happen: (a) students accept it uncritically, concluding the theory is "very useful," (b) they reject it out of hand as "unscientific" and run for the intellectual comfort of "controlled research" and "facts," or (c) they remain silent and confused.

This range of reaction cannot be explained by relative inexperience in dealing with theory; after all, theories are introduced in

foundational courses and the notion of theory-guided practice is familiar to students from the first days and weeks of their educational program. While most beginning students privately express skepticism about its value, they usually see it for what it is—a tool to guide systematic thought and action.

So why do students who have little difficulty working with practice theories sometimes struggle with conceptual application of substantive theory? One possibility is that practice theories are general, and students typically are instructed to apply them across a wide range of clinical practice situations. Initially, they learn to use them as intellectual tools without necessarily having to take into account the complexities of variation, context, and specificity. On the other hand, substantive theories, because they are more specific and often rather complex, may require more mental agility, and a certain amount of experience and knowledge of the substantive area to "push against," like an intellectual fulcrum of sorts.

Consider the reaction of experienced nurses when asked to reflect on the usefulness of grounded theory research. Generally, once the normal skepticism around research is overcome, many nurses can use a grounded theory to open up new lines of thinking, particularly if they have some experience and depth of expertise related to the area of study. Certainly, previous education and cognitive styles play a strong part here. Nevertheless, even with little previous experience with theory, their "real world experience" enables them to stand back and use a grounded theory as a way of reflecting about their patients and their practice. Grounded theories raise new questions and insights that then give rise to ideas about specific potential interventions in practice. If experienced nurses have had some exposure to theory-based practice beyond their basic nursing education, this facility with conceptual application of middle-range theory is likely to be even more pronounced.

This observation suggests that the process of conceptual (or heuristic) application of substantive theory relies to a significant extent on background knowledge, very much akin to Glaser's (1978) argument that theoretical sensitivity is enhanced by a broad working knowledge of the field under study. If this argument is correct, it then raises questions about how and when novices should be exposed to grounded theory research. As seductive as it may be to "use"

grounded theory as a way to excite students and novice nurses about nursing research, there may be some attendant risks.

If early encounters with grounded theory research are allowed to be superficial and seductive, learners may conclude that qualitative research is "the best and only true research" for nursing; taken to an extreme, this would become a form of blind methodolatry (Sandelowski, 1997a). On the other hand, if early experiences in the conceptual application of grounded theory are frustrating or shallow, it may have the opposite effect—convincing novices that qualitative research is suspect, and trivializing the notion of developing and using theory in nursing.

These may not be questions of great significance; nevertheless, it would seem wise for educators and researchers to consider how and when learners can best make use of grounded theory as a conceptual tool. At a minimum, it seems important not to simply present qualitative findings and let the momentum take over. Rather, learners should be given an opportunity to practice conceptual application of middle-range theory, complete with all the necessary confusion, skepticism, frustration, excitement, and hard work.

Innovative and Experimental Practice

One method of systematic application uses grounded theory findings to develop and implement innovations in practice. This type of theory application has been slow to develop in nursing for several reasons. First, many still hold the misconception that grounded theory must first be subject to testing, via instrument development and hypothetico-deductive research, before it can be applied to practice. Second, although expert nurses may use grounded theory to develop and use innovative clinical practices on a case-by-case basis, the results of such applications are rarely documented or communicated. Finally, until recently, there have been no procedural guidelines on how to develop, implement, and evaluate such innovative practices on a broader scale. Morse, Penrod, and Hupcey (2000) have recently outlined a process they call "qualitative outcome analysis," a set of procedures to assist in the direct translation of grounded theory to practice through the development and evalua-

tion of interventions. It remains to be seen to what extent these guidelines will be taken up and used by other investigative teams.

While many grounded theories may not translate readily to the development of intervention studies for a variety of reasons, they may offer valuable opportunities for the development of clinically useful assessment tools. While this type of work is necessary for intervention research, it may also be done expressly for the purpose of improving practice by enhancing the quality of nursing assessments. For example, one author's research on the impact of treatment for high-risk pregnancy on women and their families (May, in press) resulted in a substantive theory that predicted how and under what conditions the strain of treatment would destabilize the family unit.

Clinicians collaborating in this grounded theory study described how their own assessment practices shifted as this pattern became increasingly apparent during data analysis. Based on these observations, the research team developed a short assessment guide that included questions intended to identify conditions associated with increased risk of family distress and disruption. Clinicians began using the assessment guide routinely on intake with other high-risk pregnant clients and quickly concluded that it provided previously overlooked, valuable information for planning appropriate care with clients.

While no further instrument development work was undertaken at that time, this assessment guide was subsequently modified and used as a scale to measure emotional distress and family disruption associated with high-risk pregnancy treatment. The assessment guide was then included as part of a self-report questionnaire being used to evaluate an innovative antepartum nursing care program. This scale was shown to be a sensitive measure of emotional state, demonstrating that high-risk pregnant women who received antepartum nursing care at home experienced significantly less emotional distress and family disruption than did similar patients who received standard hospital care (Janssen, 1997).

This example highlights two points of considerable interest relative to application of grounded theory. First, it clearly shows the advantages of developing instruments for clinical or research purposes directly from grounded theories. We will discuss this point more fully in the final section of this chapter. Second, this example

demonstrates the powerful synergy created when expert clinicians collaborate with researchers in considering "next steps" after a grounded theory study is completed.

The extent to which the judgment and expertise of clinicians will affect the process and outcome of intervention studies based on grounded theory is an aspect that merits further consideration. Morse, Penrod, and Hupcey (2000) reported that the process of developing, implementing, and evaluating intervention strategies in their study was greatly enhanced by the expert clinical judgment of the nurses involved. This is a reasonable conclusion for two reasons. First, their sophisticated clinical skills allowed for detailed and highly accurate observation and assessment of changes in status and also for considerable creativity in the development and implementation of new intervention strategies. Second, experts whose decision-making is "rule-transcendent" (Benner, 1984) would be more likely to view the working theory as a representation of "what may happen" rather than "what should happen," thus assuring its appropriate application.

The significance of this distinction may not be immediately apparent, however, an example from one author's research (KM) may underscore its importance. In this case, the author was contacted by a clinician from another institution who wished to develop an intervention program for expectant fathers based on published findings of a grounded theory study (May, 1982). The clinician intended to develop and implement a series of interventions to promote emotional involvement in pregnancy among expectant fathers, based on the published theory.

Unfortunately, the clinician had misinterpreted the theoretical model on two points: (a) she incorrectly concluded that one of the several patterns of involvement described in the study was preferable to the others, and (b) she proposed that patterns of involvement would be amenable to change through nursing intervention, when the theory predicted this would be quite unlikely. These errors were probably the result of limited clinical experience with the population of interest, and inadequate knowledge and skill in interpreting and applying theory.

Had this experiment proceeded, the clinician would undoubtedly have learned quite quickly that most expectant fathers would not be interested in such an intervention program. The practical risk

to any participants who might have been recruited would have been limited to modest frustration and perhaps some time waste. However, there was a small risk that some subjects would have experienced emotional distress as a result of the proposed intervention because they would have been pressured to behave in ways contrary to their self-concept and their orientation to gender roles. Had this clinician interpreted the theory correctly, the fundamental flaw in the proposed intervention would have been clear. Ironically, the clinician's lack of expert clinical judgment would probably have further compounded the problem since it would have limited her ability to deal effectively with untoward consequences of the intervention.

Thus, the involvement of expert nurses may be critical to the success of systematic applications of grounded theory findings through innovative practice, and may be far more important in this type of intervention work than in more conventional clinical trial studies. Clearly, systematic application of grounded theory in practice is a complex process that holds great promise but that also requires considerable clinical and scientific skill to ensure success.

Instrument Development and Extension to Existing Theory

Without question, the still-prevalent notion that grounded theory findings must be subjected to testing before it is appropriate to apply them in practice is problematic (Morse, 1996), and it is entirely appropriate for qualitative researchers to dispute it vigorously. However, there is some risk that in the process, another equally problematic misconception may take root, that is, that subsequent development of grounded theory through instrument development and conventional theory testing has little or no value. Clearly, that notion is also misguided. We argue that the systematic application of grounded theory through instrument development and testing may generate potentially valuable knowledge and, therefore, should be considered out of several avenues for the utilization of grounded theory.

THE ARGUMENT FOR USING GROUNDED THEORY FOR INSTRUMENT DEVELOPMENT

Setting philosophical objections aside for a moment, it is actually surprising that so little instrument development based on grounded

theory has occurred, given that it offers several advantages over more conventional methods of instrument development. First, the analytic process within grounded theory method itself focuses the researcher's attention on matters of concern to people (the participants) and how they deal with these concerns over time, usually within a social context. Thus, because elements of a grounded theory derive from participants' descriptions of day-to-day experiences, the researcher can (or should be able to) have some confidence in their relevance to and fit with those life experiences. Second, because substantive theories are intended to explain and predict, rather than just to describe, they provide abstract conceptualizations of phenomena that can readily be compared and contrasted with related findings. Further, this comparison is likely to cue the researcher to ways in which existing theory may be extended, refuted, or transcended. Third, the elements of a grounded theory may naturally suggest variables amenable to manipulation, as well as processes likely to produce desirable outcomes within specified conditions and contexts. Finally, strong arguments have been made about the importance of native language and meaning in instrument development (Klakovich, 1995; Tilden, Nelson, & May, 1990). Quotations from participants, already linked directly to elements in a grounded theory, are ready sources of simple, powerful language for writing items. Thus, a substantive theory provides clear direction for instrument development by highlighting a phenomenon of particular interest (a concept or construct), its properties and dimensions (subscales), and the conditions in which it can be understood (context).

As a result, a major advantage of using grounded theory as the basis for instrument development can be seen in the notion of content validity. Assuring content validity is a critical but often neglected aspect of instrument development (Tilden et al., 1990). Content validity of an instrument, the extent to which the instrument measures what it purports to measure, is highly dependent on the clarity of the concept (concept specification) as well as the strength of linkage between individual items and that concept. One author (WH) has had experience developing a measure from grounded theory. She discovered that an adequately developed grounded theory offers an excellent point of departure, since it already provides a significant degree of concept specificity as well as a pool of specific

statements about that concept by participants which, when used to generate items, will ensure strong item-to-concept linkage.

Another advantage of using grounded theory for instrument development is the fact that, in the process of developing the theory itself, careful work will have already been done to compare and contrast the major theoretical elements with the existing literature. This process not only helps to ensure adequate concept specification, but more importantly, locates the concepts in relationship to previous empirical and theoretical work. One of the weaknesses apparent in nursing research to date has been the practice of using investigator-developed instruments in hypothesis-testing studies without sufficient attention to the quality of the overarching theoretical or conceptual framework and its compatibility with the variables to be measured (Strickland & Waltz, 1986).

The Process of Instrument Development

One of the authors (WH) has identified a number of phases in the process of instrument development beginning with a grounded theory. First, the researcher derives from the theory a working definition of a concept that may be amenable to measurement and, just as importantly, may be useful to measure. Many concepts in a grounded theory represent processes and, as such, are not generally good choices for quantification. The concept of choice may have dimensions and properties that have been specified. These may be aspects of the concept to be reflected in individual items or subscales of items; for this reason, the relationship and relative importance of dimensions and properties to the meaning of the concept should be clarified. It is useful to construct a conceptual framework highlighting the concept of choice, its properties and dimensions, and relationships with other relevant concepts in the theory (Hall, 1993).

The process of moving from a working definition of the chosen concept to an operational definition as a variable that can be measured usually requires a secondary analysis of the data. The original analysis was done to develop theory, and thus the development of any one concept within that theory is likely to be inadequate for instrument development purposes. The secondary analysis begins by concentrating on the further development of the concept; as

such, it includes a review of memos, interview transcripts, and field notes focusing specifically on the concept and related theoretical elements.

After reviewing all data sources (coding documents, memos, etc.) related to the concept, the analyst identifies the properties or dimensions that are of particular significance and can be measured. Such a process involves comparing and contrasting data that exemplify properties or dimensions, as well as those that are borderline and negative cases. This comparison should demonstrate the variation in the concept itself (via its properties and dimensions, or conditions in which it is observed) and in relation to other concepts in the theory, as well as variation between and among participants' reports. If this variation across this range cannot be demonstrated, further development of that particular concept is probably unwarranted, since the point of measurement is to capture variability.

After properties and dimensions of the concept, and the analytic categories from which they were derived, have been reviewed and clarified, the researcher can then regroup them. This process forms the basis for items or subscales of items and is analogous to statistical cluster analysis, a procedure for finding patterns within groups of factors.

At this point, attention should be paid to elements that are labeled in, or substantially described through, the use of "native language," as this can create difficulties in describing relationships with existing theoretical and empirical work. If native language is to be retained, then care must be taken to explain meanings in ways that can be understood out of context of the theory, and that make clear where the element originated. A criticism of qualitative research reports has been a failure to identify the origin of categories, that is, whether they were derived from the literature or from analysis of participant data (Silverman, 1998). Such criticism could equally be applied to labels applied to instrument dimensions and subscales if the origin of those labels is not clear.

Next, the analyst returns to consider the original working definition of the concept of choice in light of this review and reanalysis. A final theoretical definition of the concept must then be developed, one that clearly states the relationship between and among properties and dimensions, and their relationship to observed variation in the concept itself. A conceptual map may be helpful at this point because it provides a visual image of the elements in the theoretical definition.

After the theoretical definition is developed, item development may begin. First, the analyst writes objectives that describe each dimension of the concept to be measured and specifies items intended to measure each dimension (Hall, 1993). These objectives then form the basis for subscales and guide additional item selection. Items developed from grounded theory are likely to be superior to items from other sources (existing literature, other instruments) because they are either based on data elements from participants' reports of their own experience in their own language or derived from analytic categories (clusters) of such data elements. Items developed in this way will probably be relevant and meaningful to future research subjects who complete the measure, assuming their situation and context are consistent with those of participants in the original study. Items borrowed and modified from other instruments, or items developed from the extant literature, generally offer little advantage over items developed from grounded theory. One exception to this may be the use of other relevant qualitative studies as a source for additional items. This may be helpful in broadening the relevance of the instrument for use with larger, more diverse populations, as long as there is good fit between the conceptual focus and findings in both studies.

Finally, the analyst can specify an operational definition for the concept (variable) of choice in terms of dimensions to be measured by the instruments' items and item subscales. This step should not be difficult since the process just outlined leads naturally to it, That is, the process began with evidence derived from grounded theory analysis and from pertinent literature to refine the concept of choice, then the hierarchical relationships between and among the concept and its properties and dimensions were clarified, again based on evidence, and, finally, instrument items and subscales were developed from data elements in the original analysis.

Challenges in Instrument Development

At this point, the somewhat more conventional aspects of instrument development begin, with assessment of psychometric performance through repeated testing of the instrument with suitable populations. While the use of grounded theory as the basis for instrument develop-

ment offers some distinct advantages, there are also some challenges to keep in mind, challenges that derive from the very nature of grounded theory itself.

As noted before, content validity of an instrument is based upon the strength of the link between the concept and the items designed to tap it, and can be assessed *a priori* only by considering how items were generated (Nunnally, 1978). Assessment of content validity relies on evaluating how well items represent the core of the concept (or domain) as well as its full range of meaning, and whether the scale items contains a sufficient number of unique but related items to demonstrate consistency of measurement (Klakovitch, 1995; Krisjanson, Atwood, & Degner, 1995).

Conventional approaches to instrument development dictate that domain sampling should be done (i.e., selecting items from the broadest possible range of items related to the concept) so that the instrument can be said to tap the full range of the concept's meaning (conceptual domain). On the other hand, items must also reflect the meanings associated with individual reality and patterns of daily living or they will be irrelevant to study participants Since grounded theory analysis emphasizes context and the conditions in which social action occurs, the resulting theory typically contains much information about intricate, relevant, and problematic details of participants' experiences.

Thus, when using grounded theory as a basis for instrument development, it can be difficult to achieve a balance between specificity and representativeness of items. One of the authors (WH) has discovered that, if the measure is too specific, it may only be applicable to populations with similar characteristics to participants in the original study. On the other hand, if items are overly general, the instrument may be more widely applicable, but it will be less securely linked to the source theory. Thus, its content validity may be threatened.

It can also be challenging to create scales and items that are consistent with the source theory while also meeting criteria for psychometric performance. For example, psychometric evaluation of instruments requires that scales and subscales be distinct from each other but still cohesive. Because grounded theory method strives for theoretical density and explanatory power, the resulting theories tend to include concepts that are complex and interrelated. Such characteristics present challenges to investigators in the design

of instruments with conceptually and psychometrically distinct scales and subscales (Hall, 1993) as well as in the design of structured questionnaires (Bottorff, 1997).

CONCLUSION

In summary, we have argued that, despite fervent and repeated claims of the obvious usefulness of grounded theories, the actual influence of grounded theory research on nursing practice and research to date has been quite limited. We identified a number of factors that seem to deter application of grounded theories, namely the tendency to emphasize research utilization related to technical and instrumental aspects of care and to overlook heuristic utility of grounded theory for practice, as well as widespread misconceptions about both the necessity and the utility of instrument development and testing as it applies to grounded theory findings. The obvious utility of well-conceived and executed grounded theory research can be seen in conceptual (or heuristic) application as well as in systematic application in innovative and/or experimental practice, or through direct testing of conceptual elements and extension to other theories.

Despite its growing acceptance and popularity, grounded theory research still has had relatively little impact on nursing practice and scholarship. Unless those who conduct and read grounded theory research devote more focused attention to the challenge of appropriate utilization in our discipline, the full potential of this powerful method for generating substantive theory will not be realized.

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CHAPTER 12

New Directions in Grounded Formal Theory

Margaret H. Kearney

Grounded formal theory is middle-range theory that is grounded in substantive qualitative research. Glaser and Strauss (1967) conceived of grounded formal theory as describing a discrete kind of human experience that could be demonstrated across situations and contexts. Their own formal theories include status passage, awareness contexts, negotiation, and institutional social organization (e.g., Glaser, 1968; Glaser & Strauss, 1971). Formal theory is developed using the same theory-building strategies as substantive grounded theory, including theoretical sampling and constant comparison. Glaser and Strauss suggested that the best building materials for formal theory were substantive theories, the setting, materials, and findings of which are analyzed as data.

Although grounded theory has long been a popular qualitative approach in nursing, few nurses engaged in qualitatively based theory development have used the label of grounded formal theory to describe their work. This may be an effect of our postmodern context in which we are skeptical of formality and the possibility that a theory about human life could be applicable across location and time.

Glaser and Strauss (1967, p. 93) anticipated this concern, suggesting that sociologists avoided formal theory due to "its supposed depersonalizing effect" and believed that "the future of sociology rests on theories of substantive areas (period)!" These words are quite prophetic as we consider our commitment to situated knowledge at the turn of the millennium. Nonetheless, nurses are eager for knowledge synthesis that can help us understand illness experience across samples and settings and direct our practice in unstudied situations. My purpose in writing this chapter is to locate grounded formal theory among its sister qualitative synthesis approaches and then to explore some interpretive challenges in developing grounded formal theory.

My interest in grounded formal theory arose after spending some years as a women's health nurse practitioner in the United States, immersed in qualitative health research literature and discovering that many challenging health problems, such as diabetes self-care or adjustment to chronic illness, had been approached by a dozen or more researchers using grounded theory techniques. Some of their findings were similar, and some were not. Could these findings be synthesized into useful higher-level models, and (in true grounded theory form) could their differences be explained by the researcher's definition of the situation and the context of the research? I went on to pull together studies of women's adjustment to illness and trauma (1999), addiction recovery (1998b), and experience in violent relationships (Kearney, 2000), using grounded theory analysis techniques to synthesize theory that should be useful in health care practice (Kirkevold, 1997). In the course of these projects I developed a target for formal theory development (1998a) that was a variation on the original Glaser and Strauss (1967) model. I consciously decided to work toward relevant and recognizable models of specific health phenomena, using multiple studies of a single phenomenon rather than following the sociological practice of Glaser and Strauss and aim for broader theory that extended beyond health-related contexts. Perhaps my goal should be termed lower-mid-range theory.

I have been eager to draw from the unique perspectives, cultural and historical contexts, and samples of a range of investigators. Others in the qualitative health research field have chosen to build formal theory as Glaser and Strauss did, through their own original

research. Although not always explicitly described as such, it seems safe to identify the work of Sandelowski (1993a), Corbin and Strauss (1988), Morse and colleagues (e.g., Morse & Johnson, 1991), and Charmaz (1991) as grounded formal theory. Each of these senior researchers has integrated layers of substantive study in an ongoing process of discovering, fleshing out, testing, and refining particular instances of their theories of health and illness. In a related move, Wuest (2000) described incorporating previously discovered concepts (her own and others') in new grounded theory analyses, relying on the constant comparison process to test the "emergent fit" of useful grounded ideas in new theoretical contexts. Standing on the shoulders of others to extend knowledge is a hallmark of mature science. As grounded theories of health-related phenomena proliferate, it makes sense that new iterations will be influenced by and build on strong grounded ideas from previous research.

Certainly, there is something to be gained by both the vertical (building on one's own work) and lateral (pooling one's own and others' work) approaches. However, the complexities of interpretation are much greater when one borrows data from extant work by others. Concerns have been raised by thoughtful writers (e.g, Thorne, 1998) about how to select research reports for such analyses, how to deal with methodological differences and lapses, how to account for the interpretation that has already occurred by the original researcher in a particular historical and cultural context, and how to read and analyze language as it was used in other places and times. After locating grounded formal theory within the range of extant synthesis approaches, I will explore these issues as they confront the formal theorist in nursing.

THE META FAMILY: CURRENT APPROACHES TO SYNTHESIS

A number of approaches have been described for synthesizing extant findings of multiple qualitative health research studies into newly integrated wholes. Among these are meta-ethnography (Noblit & Hare, 1988); meta-study including meta-method, meta-theory, and meta-data-analysis (Thorne & Paterson, 1998); meta-synthesis (Jensen & Allen, 1996); meta-interpretation (Finfgeld, 1999); aggregat-

ing qualitative findings (Estabrooks, Field, & Morse, 1994); and grounded formal theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, 1971; Kearney, 1998a). All are overlapping and none has been thoroughly tested in health research by more than a handful of analysts.

Schreiber, Crooks, and Stern (1997) grouped qualitative meta-analysis approaches into those aimed at theory building (grounded formal theory), theory explication (concept development using qualitative findings), and thick description (uncovering the essential aspects of an experience across studies). For our purposes, theory building and explication are seen as in the same branch of the family, as each involves abstraction. In light of our representational concerns at this point in history, I have extended Schreiber and colleagues' trio to a continuum, on which are arrayed the members of the family of qualitative synthesis methods (you will note that this is a grounded theorist's approach to description), ordered from the most interpretive to the most theorizing. By interpretive I mean focused on holistic portrayal and contextualized thick description without distillation to shared concepts and theory, and by theorizing I mean focused on the building and refining of concepts and theories that integrate the differences across studies into an explanatory model.

This admittedly contrived polarity echoes Denzin's (1994) use of the Jamesian "tender-minded" and "tough-minded" categorizations of qualitative research communities. Tender-minded post-structuralists accept the nature of research as art rather than science, hesitate to impose theory on experience, and share a concern about the use of science as an implement of power. Tough-minded qualitative empiricists, among them grounded theorists, believe science is rational, cognitive, and involves a shared canon; aim for neutrality and an open-minded but objective voice; and work toward theory construction, albeit through interpretive means. Denzin readily acknowledged that most research displays qualities of both. Likewise, the boundaries are blurred on the interpreting-theorizing continuum of synthesis approaches, as will be seen.

The Theorizing End of the Continuum

Grounded formal theory may be the oldest qualitative synthesis approach, having been described and applied by Glaser & Strauss

(1967, 1971) more than 30 years before this writing. Although tender-minded grounded theorists may resist the tough-minded implication, grounded formal theory is explicitly about theory-building and thus is located at the extreme theorizing end of the continuum. It is unabashedly realist, in that it treats human experience as definable and measurable (although not universal or stable), and it is to a certain extent positivist (Thorne, 1997) in that it involves extrapolation, abstraction, and deduction across contexts, but not positivist to the point of losing sight of the subjective origin of definitions of situations, which are the material under study. Whereas substantive grounded theory, when well-executed, can keep alive the vivid particularity of individuals situated in contexts (Charmaz, 2000), grounded formal theory may require us to reduce contextual particularities to combinations of conditions or contingencies. In a book-length theory work, these combinations can be richly illustrated in situated description, but the description serves the theory rather than standing as self-evident. Grounded formal theory faces all the threats to validity that this abstracting activity brings, along with the other threats common to the secondary use of qualitative findings for qualitative purposes.

The Interpretive End of the Continuum

On the opposite end of the continuum is meta-ethnography. Noblit and Hare (1988), conducting qualitative research in education, developed meta-ethnography as a means of reconciling different ethnographers' interpretations of the same phenomena in studies of educational institutions. The analytic steps include determining how studies are related (their common area of focus), translating the studies into one another (finding or using metaphors for each researcher's view of the phenomenon under study and applying those metaphors to the other studies to reveal contrasts and agreements), synthesizing the translations at a higher level by grouping separate findings in shared metaphors, and depicting the synthesis in writing or by other means. Their final product is a juxtaposition of the key points of different ethnographies as expressed within shared metaphorical frameworks, capturing the similarities and differences in the individual studies.

In contrast to their followers in nursing, Noblit and Hare stopped short of synthesizing findings into a common entity. For example, in their 1988 synthesis of two ethnographies about school structure, they identified the different metaphors representing the worldviews and interpretations of the two researchers. Noblit and Hare then synthesized them into two sets of ideas about schools' formal structure, substructure, and classroom dynamics, using the same terminology, to display concisely where the two researchers agreed and where they diverged. Noblit and Hare were explicit about their placement in the interpretivist, non-theorizing domain and described all research as translation. At the same time, they suggested (p. 63) that grounded theory techniques could work for the same meta-ethnographic purpose when used to differentiate lines of argument or perspectives of different actors (or researchers). The distinguishing characteristic of meta-ethnography as originally conceived is that differences across studies are portrayed and explicated with a common set of terms in the final product rather than synthesized into a unified summary.

Between the Poles of the Continuum

Returning to the theorizing end of our Meta family continuum, closest to grounded formal theory are meta-interpretation, described by Finfgeld (1999), and aggregated analysis (Estabrooks, Field, & Morse, 1994), used to develop and refine an illness constellation model (e.g., Morse & Johnson, 1991). Meta-interpretation was described by Finfgeld as using some procedures of meta-ethnography (specifically, the translation of findings of one study into the terms of another) but as essentially rooted in grounded theory in its epistemology and methodology. Finfgeld developed a process model of the experience of courage in chronic illness using categories that included causal and contextual conditions, strategies, and consequences. Aggregated analysis (Estabrooks, Field, & Morse, 1994) was described as application of the same overall steps used in substantive qualitative studies, which include comprehending, synthesizing, theorizing, and recontextualizing. Although theory development was the explicit goal of aggregated analysis by which the authors distinguished it from meta-ethnography, Estabrooks and colleagues de-

scribed the use of interpretive techniques to retain the nature of context, if not its particularities.

Theorizing with an Interpretive Edge

Next on the continuum, moving along toward its interpretive end, is Thorne and Paterson's (1998) meta-study, the framework for which was inspired by Zhao (1991). It encompasses meta-theorizing (analyzing theories underlying extant studies of a phenomenon of interest), meta-method (examining assumptions and rigor of methods used in study of the phenomenon and developing new norms), and meta-data-analysis (studying the form and content of data and synthesizing findings across studies). The third component of this approach is our focus now, although the first two will be important to later discussion. These researchers described applying Noblit and Hare's (1988) meta-ethnographic techniques for developing new interpretations across extant texts, but they also described developing and testing hypotheses to support or negate emerging theory. The meta-study approach has been used by these researchers and others to analyze a large data base of qualitative work on chronic illness.

Interpretation with Theorizing Components

Meta-synthesis (Jensen & Allen, 1996) is more strongly interpretive than meta-study and claims to draw considerably on meta-ethnography (Noblit & Hare, 1988). This approach was used by these researchers in a synthesis of 112 studies of wellness and illness (Jensen & Allen, 1994). Jensen and Allen described meta-synthesis as having hermeneutic (capturing situated meaning) and dialectic (comparing and contrasting meanings) components. Using meta-ethnographic techniques, texts were described in terms of their metaphors, ideas, and/or concepts, and then translated into each other's terms while preserving individual metaphors. A matrix of descriptive elements of various findings was developed and progressively distilled to arrive at a unified comprehensive description of the phenomenon under study which represents a step beyond Noblit and Hare into the theorizing realm. This process was done separately for groups of

studies from different qualitative methods, separating the grounded theory studies from the phenomenological, for example.

Barroso and Powell-Cope (2000), in their study of living with HIV, and Sherwood (1999), in an analysis of nurses' caring from the patient's perspective, cited Jensen and Allen and described their approaches as meta-synthesis. Barroso developed a group of overarching themes (described as metaphors) by translating findings into one another but used constant comparative techniques rooted in grounded theory. Sherwood cited hermeneutic and dialectic processes and derived a summary description of each area of findings that included essential patterns and explanatory themes, but she also noted that "the interpretive statements sustain the context and contribute to grounded theory development" (p. 40). Fredricksson (1999) used a qualitative research synthesis method that was described as similar to meta-synthesis for a study of elements of caring. This approach also involved isolating meaning elements and metaphors in individual studies, finding a common structure through which studies could be translated into each other, and synthesizing these into a single narrative interpretation.

Sliding Along the Continuum

It can be seen that the borders between interpretation and theory are not always clear or delineated by methodological labels. The derivations of meta-ethnography are more theorizing than their parent method, despite the use of interpretive terms of "hermeneutic" and "dialectic." When members of this Meta family of qualitative synthesis methods slide back and forth across borders of interpretation and theory, it might be viewed as methodological inconsistency or weakness. Certainly, some inconsistency appears in several of these descriptions. However, most qualitative researchers working in the present era deeply desire to retain elements of situated standpoint, researcher visibility, and local particularity regardless of the level of abstraction sought in the findings. This struggle is the core issue facing qualitative synthesists (Sandelowski, Docherty, & Emden, 1997), including grounded formal theorists, as we move forward methodologically. When researchers mingle qualitative paradigms and methods they also may be trying to avoid other pitfalls of the

synthesis enterprise, which is the attempt to "sum up a poem," as Sandelowski and colleagues (p. 366) put it. Threats to consistency, validity, and interpretive richness as they operate in the grounded formal theory approach are the focus of the next section.

PRODUCING FORMAL THEORY IN A POSTMODERN AWARENESS CONTEXT

Appraising Substantive Reports for Formal Theory Analysis

If the material for a grounded formal theory analysis is to be multiple substantive theories on a shared topic of concern, the first step is to collect these substantive grounded theories. This is more difficult than it first appears. Like other serious practitioners of grounded theory who were trained by its originators, I have long been aware that all research that calls itself grounded theory is not what it seems (Wilson & Hutchinson, 1996).

There is a range of variation in grounded theory process and product that is conceptually consistent with the originators' intent, ranging from the rich narratives of Karp (1994) and others that exemplify Strauss's observationist Chicago roots to the more starkly conceptual work seen in abbreviated nursing research articles, in which the theory is like a skeleton with bits of flesh attached in the form of short exemplifying quotations. These are the interpretive and theorizing extremes of substantive grounded theory, but they are both grounded, and both depict theory. These materials are well suited to re-analysis at higher levels.

More challenging are the reports that do not contain theory or do not contain grounding. In the nursing literature, particularly in journals for which skilled qualitative reviewers are lacking, much of what is called grounded theory is grounded but not theory. These findings consist of an uninterpreted "table of contents" of collected data (Kearney, in press), in essence a content analysis, or they may consist of an interpretive depiction of a shared pathway or meaning without variation in context or action. The theory is missing, but the data provided (if collected with appropriate rigor) may be useful for secondary testing of theory derived elsewhere. Some reports lack theoretical integration but contain one or two concepts that are well

fleshed out and documented, and these can serve as building blocks for higher-level analysis.

Reports that contain theory without grounding are problematic. In these, a pre-conceived explanation for behavior has been applied to the data. Analysts in the social sciences often are interested in exploring the fit of a theory to a specific instance of observed behavior, or comparing alternate theoretical explanations of a phenomenon. This can be done consciously and artfully (and in most cases is not labeled as grounded theory), or it can occur unknowingly, as when a student whose advisors are not strong in qualitative methods is pressed to identify a "theoretical framework" before starting a thesis or dissertation and then discovers a version of that same framework in the phenomenon at hand. (An example of this will be described later.) These data usually should be considered as having been shaped and tailored to suit the pre-existing theory and are of limited value in testing new higher-level ideas.

Another instance of grounded theories that are not what they seem is found in reports that are described as using another qualitative approach, such as phenomenology or ethnography, and whose findings include theory grounded in data. Theory development is an overt goal of some variations of ethnography and phenomenology. If the methods are clear and the grounding of the theory is apparent, these are good materials for re-analysis. Examples encountered in a grounded formal theory of women's domestic violence experience (Kearney, in press) include Germain's (1994) study of battered women in shelters, described as a phenomenology but using constant comparative techniques and offering theoretical findings, and Clarke, Pendry, and Kim's (1997) thematic content analysis of recent arrivals in homeless shelters, in which the researchers delineated phases in a process.

Sandelowski and colleagues (1997) and others have noted that there are few grounds on which to exclude a study from a qualitative synthesis for lack of methodological quality, given the great diversity of past and present opinion on what constitutes quality, and the common presence of valuable findings embedded in relatively minor methodological inadequacies. They agree that studies may be methodologically mislabeled but may still have internal congruence and utility for synthesis purposes.

A research report that has potential but lacks detail can sometimes be supplemented by a larger, unpublished form of the same report, such as a dissertation. Finfgeld (1999) reported using dissertations preferentially over published work because of their greater detail. I also have found the point about detail to be true, but at times the later-published article or book reflects a higher level of maturity in its synthesis. Furthermore, although reviewed and guided by faculty committees, dissertations may lack the wider critical perspective and international level of methodological expertise that peer review can bring to the work. Dissertations, however, are invaluable for elucidating researchers' theoretical, disciplinary, and sociocultural standpoints because they include an extensive literature review, methodological underpinnings, and other information as introduction to the work.

Published and unpublished sources can be used together to gain the widest possible perspective on the evolution of the analysis. This was helpful in a project that involved over 100 studies of women's illness experience (Kearney, 1999), of which about half were only available in dissertation form at the start of the analysis. Some eventually appeared in print, and some of these articles had a higher level of synthesis, whereas others were more limited in depth and documentation. On occasion, I started from an article and then sought out a dissertation referenced in the published work to gain more detail. The option of contacting the researchers for more information about their studies is also available and is commonly used by quantitative meta-analysts.

In my formal theorizing experiences to date, the grounded theory literature on the phenomena of interest have consisted of only a handful of fully developed grounded theories, accompanied by eight or ten reports that are partial (in both senses of the word) or incomplete but contain useful data or single concepts. In these situations I relied heavily on the complete theories as primary material and used the other reports as back-up sources for theoretical sampling. The fewer the complete substantive theories, the greater the need for re-interpretation of original data by the formal theorist and the lower the theoretical saturation in the findings. The greater the number of substantive theories to work with, the higher the level of formal theory that can be achieved and the more saturated and transferable will be the product of analysis.

Blind Men and Elephant: Identifying and Delimiting Scope

In my recent analysis of studies of women's experiences of domestic violence (in press), it soon became apparent that some researchers were interested in particular aspects of this complex phenomenon and reported only parenthetically or briefly on other phases or components. This confluence of partial knowledge reminds me of the fable in which blind men were asked to describe an elephant by touching only the parts of it they could reach. Each was completely accurate about his part (rough, corrugated skin, strong sinuous trunk, thin tasseled tail) but unable to depict the whole.

In qualitative research, this delimitation can be intentional. For example, in the domestic violence analysis project mentioned above, Langford's (1996, 1998) elegant work on how women managed the threat of violence on a day-to-day basis within relationships was augmented in the formal theory development process by Merritt-Gray and Wuest's (1995) description of how women reassembled their lives after leaving the violent partner. Both were logically consistent and fully developed as theory. A third study (Hilbert, 1984) used data collected in a courthouse when women came in to apply for restraining orders and file criminal charges against their abusers. Their narratives of having "had enough" at this highly charged moment in the relationship's trajectory were vivid and useful despite lack of coverage of the larger relationship trajectory. These well-crafted illuminations of pivotal moments in a basic process were ideal building blocks for formal theory, especially when the researchers located their focus within a larger narrative.

At other times, of course, a limited trajectory and range of variation may be unintentional or unacknowledged, as I have found (1998b) when the experience of addiction was studied only in persons in treatment programs, or the experience of a chronic illness was studied only in those who attended a self-help group (1999). The formal theory analyst often has the advantage of a wider horizon and can locate a self-limiting study in the larger frame of possibility that is laid out when all the studies are arranged in their temporal and topical contexts.

Taking into Account Paradigmatic and Historical Contexts

Many readers may recall when, in the 1980s, the work of Gilligan (1982) and Baker Miller (1984) reigned in many of our conceptions

of women's self-understanding and moral development. These ideas were rediscovered in one form or another by more than one doctoral student during qualitative dissertation research. For example, in collecting studies of women's eating disorder recovery within the larger project on women's illness experience (1999), I encountered a dissertation, which will remain unidentified, in which Gilligan's theory of women's self-definition through relationship was presented as the major extant work on women's development. The findings that followed this literature review framed women's development of and recovery from bulimia in a metaphor of being silenced and then gaining a voice. The data appeared to provide other rich avenues for theory-building, but the analyst limited the interpretation to the *a priori* view.

In powerful unobtrusive ways, Gilligan and Baker Miller shaped Western cultural understandings and our qualitative interpretations of women's experience during that era. Since then, we have become more constructivist and have more diverse understandings of the range of influences on women's worldviews and ways of being. Likewise, feminist and critical theorist lenses can be overtly or subtly applied to data collection and interpretation in grounded theory studies (Denzin, 1994). On a more local level in nursing, it can be seen that disciplinary and clinical specialty orientations shape nurses' theorizing (Sandelowski, 1993b). Many of us recognize that critical care, maternal-child, and operating suite nurses will look at the same patient completely differently and hold sharply contrasting priorities for her or his care.

When one becomes a re-analyst of another's work, it is essential to know as much as possible about the original researcher's standpoint. When a researcher states an epistemological, theoretical, or political position at the outset of a research report, the qualitative synthesist must not skim over this content as "bracketing," or a disclaimer preceding an objective presentation, but instead should analyze it closely as a strong indicator of how data were elicited and framed, and for what purpose. This information is essential to locate findings in theoretical terms. The researcher self-descriptions that once seemed to me self-serving or awkward to write now emerge as methodologically imperative if my work is to be useful to later scholars. Like the substantive analyst, the formal theory analyst also has a unique standpoint shaped by methodology, politics, sexuality, age, religion, discipline, culture, history, and so forth, that must be elucidated as

best as possible, given the perennial difficulty of this kind of awareness when immersed in the unconscious living of life in the present. Our placement sets up our possibilities for judging and taking into consideration the placement of others, which is a central step in the formal theory development process.

Thorne and Paterson (1988), by including meta-theorizing as one component of a comprehensive meta-study, have built in a step for this scrutiny of paradigmatic perspective. They used it to good end when they identified changes in approaches to the study of chronic illness experience. They discovered that, between 1980 and 1998, findings shifted from capturing the loss and burden of chronic illness to explicating its role in personal transformation and achieving new versions of normality. Larger social processes and the accumulation of research findings during those years were seen as conditioning both researchers and patients to see chronic illness and the patient-health professional relationship in different ways. Thorne and Paterson advised that researchers and clinicians must be open to illness experiences outside the current paradigm if we are to discover theory that responds to a range of perspectives and offer our patients the kinds of individualized support they need.

The grounded formal theory technique can and should accommodate these important contextual influences by analyzing the conditions under which each theory was generated. Each report serves as an individual contributor to the analytic material and, like a participant who is interviewed, must be located and analyzed based on the context from which its contributions arose. For example, in the recent analysis of domestic violence experience (Kearney, 2000), a nurse research team that included an African-American member produced a theory that contrasted African-American and European-American women's experiences as part of an explicit research agenda. Another report by a counselor focused on dating violence experiences as revealed in counseling-like data collection sessions. In several other reports, the researchers' standpoint was not explicated and had to be inferred from the date of publication, geographic site of data collection, sample description, discipline of researcher and journal, and so forth. The spread of constructivist sensibility has been slow in many arenas of nursing literature. Many of the less reflexive reports, particularly those published before 1995, did not identify ethnicity of the sample, perhaps assuming that readers would

recognize all participants as European-origin middle-class members of the majority culture unless specified otherwise.

Interpreting Language Across Research Reports

Closely related to the challenge of elucidating sociocultural context is that of locating and interpreting the language of analyst and participant (Thorne, 1998). Postmodern analysts are attuned to the role of language as arbiter of meaning and power (Denzin, 1994), but we have little guidance as to how verbatim text or analytic labels should be "read" for the purpose of synthesis projects. Noblit and Hare (1988) acknowledged this specifically when they described all research writing as translation, which involves modification of meaning to fit the alternative linguistic paradigm.

When one is attempting to synthesize three clearly linked concepts from three theories into one concept, for example, and each is labeled using a different word with different contextual connotations, how are these influences to be recognized and preserved? In my analysis of studies of women's addiction recovery (Kearney, 1998b), I encountered two studies in which a critical stage of recovery was described as surrendering and a third in which the same juncture was termed transcending denial. Closer examination revealed that the participants from whom the surrender idea had arisen were recruited from (and embedded in the rhetoric of) Alcoholics Anonymous and related twelve-step programs. The transcending denial concept arose from a sample recruited in a psychiatric facility. The language of the participants and their researchers was influenced by these sociocultural contexts. I was required to develop a new description that captured the meanings of both along with concepts from other studies. Only through my past experience studying women in addiction recovery was I sensitized to these standpoints and related linguistic references. Undoubtedly, I failed to understand many other unfamiliar linguistic nuances.

Discovering the Voice and Influence of the Original Researcher in the Data

Investigators (even postmodern ones) have great power over their participants and the data they provide. It may be impossible to know

how a given researcher prompted and elicited particular data from participants during data collection, or how those data were classified and interpreted to serve an unseen theoretical or personal bias. At best, publications include a narrative on the researcher's standpoint and goals that sensitizes readers to a particular shaping and manipulation of data. Otherwise, the formal theorist relies on content, tone, language, coherence, richness, and truth value of data and interpretation to uncover the researcher's implicit standpoint and level of data manipulation. Grounded formal theorists therefore must be interpreters regardless of epistemological stance. Findings do not float free as objective truth independent of their origins (Thorne, 1997). In the synthesis process, during theoretical sampling within and across research reports, during category-building, and during constant comparison of data and theory to derive syntheses of concepts and relationships, one must keep visible the limits and particularities of the contributing material.

GROUNDED FORMAL THEORY FOR POSTMODERN CLINICIANS

The clinically useful postmodern grounded formal theory is as situated and local as its substantive components. As synthesists we are obliged to clarify our own standpoints, our disciplinary and epistemological perspectives, the points in culture, time, and geography from which we write, and the agendas we hold in seeking and presenting our formal theory. The methods of analysis and synthesis must be described in detail, and the limitations and delimitations of our projects must be clear. The range of variation within the phenomenon must be portrayed in as great a level of complexity as is possible, to do justice to the diverse array of experiences of the pooled participants. And, most important, the findings must have the qualities of good grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967): they must have fit with the phenomenon, grab the reader with their vivid validity and applicability, work to explain change and variation, and offer insights as to ways of modifying problematic conditions and outcomes.

The clinician reader will ask the same questions of a qualitative synthesis as of any other research report: How much is known, and from what sources? In their scope, perspective, history, and

geography, where do these findings sit in relation to other possibilities of experience of this phenomenon? Whose stories are included in the synthesis, and whose are excluded or not yet heard? What is the level of abstraction here, and how do I make this theory concrete in my clinical realm? What are the reasonable clinical applications, and what roads might I be tempted to take in applying these findings that would be clearly unwarranted at this point?

A clinically useful grounded formal theory is not so abstract that its terms seem to float over the realities of illness experience. It is constructed of components that are labeled and linked in recognizable ways and characterize the particularities and diversity of the health or illness experience at hand. Let us avoid "discovering" large hazy words like uncertainty and transformation unless we are prepared to portray in vivid accompanying language the unique kind of uncertainty or transformation this is, the conditions that produce it to differing degrees, and the concrete implications for health meaning and behavior.

Useful formal theory explains some of the more puzzling or challenging problems faced by health care clients and practitioners. Drawing from and generalizing to a situated group of samples, it depicts the personal and situational conditions that contribute to meaning, the components of players' definition of the situation that explain previously unclear behavior, and the range of action and consequences that ensues from these definitions. It maps the possibilities for trajectory of change over time and highlights points of influence open for clinician involvement. It keeps its own boundaries visible. The reader is constantly aware of who is speaking—participant, substantive analyst, or synthesist—and where the speaker is located.

My work has yet to reach this ideal, and many in nursing have struggled to come within reach of the level of rigor that Glaser and Strauss (1967) set out for us. Nurse researchers are pressed by more immediate and different concerns in knowledge development than are medical sociologists. Moreover, what the "founders" set out to achieve was simpler in their more empiricist day than it is in our constructivist time. Nonetheless, grounded formal theory analysis can help nurses raise their substantive inquiry to a higher level of knowledge development, reach across localities to test the common ground of human health experience, and assist patients in reaching

common goals. In doing so, it seems wise to expand this theorizing work as far as possible toward the interpretive end of the Meta family continuum. The greater the inclusivity of voices, histories, and geographies in grounded formal theory analyses, the more visible and integrated the standpoints of all whose voices are portrayed; and the more sensitive we are to the language and theoretical origins of the contributing works, as Thorne and Paterson (1998) have demonstrated, the more complete and clinically useful will be the product.

There are few examples or guidelines for this endeavor in nursing—hence, the newly coined labels for newly tried synthesis approaches in the Meta family. Much dialogue and demonstration is needed to refine and strengthen our efforts at grounded formal theory development. The results will look different than those of sociologists or education researchers. Ours in nursing will serve as clinical road maps. As clinicians we will use grounded formal theories to consider possible locations of our patients' experiences in the landscape of experiential variation and identify an array of routes along which we can guide them toward health.

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