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## Teaching Visual Grounded Theory

### Abstract

The paper is based on personal 20-years experience of teaching methodology of grounded theory and qualitative methods.

In the following paper I would like to show the usefulness of visual analysis in teaching methodology of grounded theory. A very important tool is to use pictures and a sequencing of pictures, which give a comparative insight into empirical data and teaches the comparative method that is so important to generate theory (Glaser 1965; Glaser, Strauss, 1967; Glaser 1978). Students can learn how to compare and find patterns in empirical instances, which have visual character. Some of the sequences show stages of action and the sequence that all together is a linear representation of activity. Sequence of pictures helps to build the pattern that is conceptual understanding of the phenomena being studied.

In other case, the sequences of pictures given to students are not planned. They are almost accidentally created and force students to find patterns by means of the comparative analysis. We should always know what had happened before a picture was taken as well as afterwards, it is similar to sequences analysis in textual data (Silverman 2007). We should always be aware of the context of analysed activity.

Students are also encouraged to make a theoretical sampling and saturate categories using data from photos and other visual data. This helps them to proceed with the research from empirical incidents to conceptually elaborated properties of categories and finally to the definition of category and formulating the hypotheses. In this way they learn visual grounded theory that is using the visual images for generating categories, properties and hypotheses and also for presenting results of analysis in the final report.

The methods and knowledge about teaching of qualitative research is developing very rapidly now. There is possibility to learn how to teach from the description of cases of teaching (Hurworth 2008). We see a lot of innovations in the

field of teaching There are trials to teach research through internet by organizing Research Park On Line giving the possibility for creating the community of researchers learning from each other, exchanging the ideas and participating in the common research (Chenail 2004). Building the learning objects in such environment also help in teaching qualitative research and analysis, e.g. in grounded theory methodology (Chenail, Spong, Chenail, Liscio, McLean, Lenworth, Cox, Shepherd and Mowzoon 2006).

You Tube, the internet video hosting service, also can be a very good teaching devise by using video recordings of lectures, Power Point presentations on many topics and also collecting data plus showing the context of collecting data, recordings of actions and, at the end, analysis and presentation of results. We can find on YouTube many video clips introducing to qualitative research methods (Chenail 2008). There are also the clips teaching grounded theory from data preparation for coding, analysis and constructing grounded theory[36] and others explaining constant comparative method and triangulation[37].

Some online journals help in tutoring about writing the papers based on qualitative research. The Qualitative Report journal[38] helps the newcomers in qualitative scientific field to write their research reports in the form of academic papers. The help is associated with the access to resources (books, papers), with copy editing and teaching writing format and by giving intensive and extensive feedback to the authors (Chenail, St. George, Wulff, Duffy, Laughlin, Warner and Sahni 2007).

In my practice I usually teach qualitative methods through projects. Students receive a general outline of a research project and how to do a field of study. The most often used methodology of research and data analysis is grounded theory methodology (GTM). After introducing students to methods and procedures of research and analysis of data we start to collect data. Data is collected with different techniques in order to learn how to use them and to find different "slice of data" (including data from internet), that help in generating the properties of category, especially these connected with conditions and consequences (Glaser and Strauss 1967). During the process of collecting data we analyse data in the classroom – these are basically analytical sessions. The all students share data and memos and categories from one project to analyse and go forward in developing properties of categories and constructing hypotheses (see Corbin and Strauss 2007; Charmaz 2006; compare also Hesse – Biber 2007).

We have three goals of this paper to achieve. First and the most important is to describe the ways of teaching grounded theory by using visual images. The two other goals are subservient to the first one: to describe visual grounded theory as it is used in practice and the last one to show the analysis of visual data by presenting brief results of a research on homeless people.

A didactic and, at the same time, a research project on homelessness have been partially accomplished in Lodz[39]. The students participating in the project studied specialization of social work. One of the didactic aims of the project was to teach the students sensitivity and "intimate familiarity" of the field and finally to generate more formal categories and construct hypotheses to get basic knowledge on grounded theory. The research project was connected with the general outline, which was prepared beforehand, in order to gather the most important information on

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[36] see for example: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=em3dRhwQEAA
[37] see for example: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FtyNe9w5Pb4
[38] http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/
[39] Lodz University, June and July of 2008, twenty students involved in the project

"being homeless". The strategy of research applied in this study is grounded theory and the qualitative methods of research are: narrative interview (20 interviews done and transcribed during one month), open-ended interview (40 done during one month and transcribed) and photography (800 photos done during one month and described) and repeated visits in shelters. There were at least 60 homeless involved at the project during one month. Data were collected either at the shelters or in the places where homeless people lived (streets, forest, allotments etc.). Homeless people were asked to show the photographer their silhouettes, it means their photos with physical objects and surrounding that indicate their identity and past, present and future orientation to life. We started our research with collecting photos of homeless people from Internet and with analysing them. We used also other data on homeless people from Internet (video, journal articles and plain information).

This is the manner in which not only do I teach technical aspects of carrying of empirical-sociological research, but also sociological, theoretical as well as social sensitivity. All these sensitivities are obtained by analysing collected visual images of investigated problem. We want usually to be very close to the contexts of activities of the researched subjects and we are also interested in their experiences. The data elaborated conceptually were evaluated further by new data (and new kind of data) and further by theoretical elaboration that we did together in the class. We follow here the constructivist tradition of grounded theory with reference to pragmatist tradition (Charmaz 2006; Bryant and Charmaz 2007; Prus 1996; Bryant 2009).

If we see things from the field presented in photos, we can try to put ourselves in the context as a participant of this situation or to be an observer. In both cases we are close to the investigated situation. Obtaining "intimate familiarity" is also the question of memory. Photos could be a good "artificial limb" of our memory. Pictures can sometimes give more information about the conditions of life than investigated social actors (see the paragraph "Saturating the category and theoretical sampling"). Being familiar with the situation is connected with our ability to obtain and process as much information from the field to our computer files, as it is possible. Photography is very helpful here. Moreover, it links the empirical context with analytical categories, what is so important in the constructivist approach of grounded theory. We see the links directly, what is indicated by category and we strictly keep track of our conceptual thinking to empirical (visual) data. It is very important in evaluation of the research that is done in grounded theory style (Corbin and Strauss 1990, 2007). What we actually do, it is a practice of visual grounded theory, that is associated with using visual data as a base for generating codes, categories and properties of categories and also for the theoretical sampling, saturating categories and for using constant comparative method in analysing of data. Finally visual images are also important in presenting elaborated theoretical statements and theory. The all kind of visual data could be used in analyses. We can paraphrase the dictum of Glaser that "all is data" for a dictum "the all visual data could be analysed". We remember that data are constructed and we should also analyse the context of constructing it. Visual data are also helpful in constructing the theoretical hypothesis/thesis. We can do it as A. Clarke does. She used both grounded theory and situational analysis for analysing discourses with extension to the historical, narrative and visual discourse materials to generate situational maps of these discourses (2005) or, as we do, to concentrate on visual data as a very important "slice of data" in generating theories of visual processes or just "visual properties" of categories that later we construct as a theory. However we should remember about of visual data as visual modes that can be implicated and "realism of gaze" should be carefully analysed: "Who gets to look. At whom or what? Who is in control of seeing? Who/what is the object of the gaze? With what consequences" (Clarke 2005: 210). Interpretation of images is not discovering

the truth (Clarke 2005). If a researcher gazes this context by his research and by photographing or video recording of subjects of research, the context of gazing should be also analysed. Therefore we also analyse the context of visual data production and use it as a data for our analysis.

**Ethnographic visual research on homelessness as an example in teaching**

We want to show our way of doing visual grounded theory basing on the research on homelessness. There are examples of qualitative visual research on homelessness that use the cooperative approach, in which the researched people **take active part** in producing data.

Radley, Hodgetts and Cullen (2005) researched homeless people taking photographs. They wanted to determine how homeless survive and live in the city and how they visualise it. They asked 12 homeless people to take photographs and show 'key times in their day, of typical activities and spaces, or anything else that portrayed their situation' (Radley, Hodgetts and Cullen 2005). The interviews were conducted before and after taking photos. The photographs added very important information that could not be obtained by interviews alone, the information on space and material objects, according to authors.

Another qualitative research is on "homeless places" as homeless people see them. It is a research on geography of homelessness, on "known" spaces and "hidden" spaces (Johnsen et.al. 2008). A group of homeless people were asked to take pictures using disposable cameras delivered by the researchers. The research was a kind of auto-photography (or self-directed photography) that was taken after conducting in-depth interviews (personal history, the route into homelessness). After obtaining pictures the homeless photographers were reinterviewed about the pictures. The pictures provided photo-cartography of the habitats of homeless people. They showed well-known places as car parks, hostels, street drinking sites, squats or less known areas such as camping sites and places to beg. However some places were not photographed because of inability of access to them (Johnsen et.al. ibidem,).

We have got also the classical work on a specific homeless people, the hobos, by Nels Anderson (1923/1965). He used photos in the book, however they were not analysed. The photos seemed to be illustrative and prove of the textual descriptions of the life of hobos. They show the places of living, jungle camp or summer resorting (Anderson ibidem), and the places of dining on the "Main Stem" in Chicago (Anderson ibidem), but also they are illustrations of some actions, e.g. educational movement among the hobos (Anderson ibidem), or "street speaking" concerning the economic arguments on hobos situations and also religious teaching (Anderson ibidem).

The photos were used as the auxiliary data about homelessness in the above investigations. We try to use such data for analytic purposes to generate categories, properties of categories by using the coding procedure, memoing and comparative method (Glaser 1965; Charmaz 2006; Corbin and Strauss 2007), in this case comparison of photographed objects, and trying to conceptualise differences and similarities between them. We are not interested in the pure ethnographic description and/or presenting only the description of experiencing the homelessness. We want these kinds of data conceptualize by using the classic grounded theory analytical procedures.

**Analysis by comparison of pictures in sequences – artificial sequencing.**

Pictures provide substantive knowledge about the field, and they are very important in ethnographical endeavours. However, comparing described and coded pictures gives a possibility to generate categories and their properties. If we compare pictures of homeless people, we can generate the properties of conditions of their life (homological comparisons)[40]. If we compare photos of a homeless man and an entrepreneur or manager, we generate properties of categories describing social stratification or social stratifying process (analogical comparisons)[41]. We can elaborate during comparisons differences substantively and immediately conceptually at the same time; they become the source of distinctions and properties. Below the analysis of the pictures comes from research and theoretical memos that we write after coding and comparing the pictures.

While watching the sequence of pictures we commence **a comparative process**. Without comparing things we are unable to typify and create the plan to act. Our mind works comparatively, it demands sequences to create the plan of action or action itself that exists only in time, that means, in an ongoing process. The process is an emerging activity of behaviours that are successively compared.

We can have a natural sequence from **naturally photographed action in progress**. We take pictures one by one to show how people act, work, teach, produce something etc. By means of photographs we represent what is "really" happening in the observed situation. We can also create stills from video-camera recordings that represent particular actions, e.g. debating, playing, walking, fighting, etc.[42]





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[40] Homological comparisons are aimed to explain a phenomenon and to show the transitive forms of the phenomenon on the base of comparisons of objects from the same substantive field.
[41] Analogical comparisons are connected with looking for the pattern of interpretation on the base of similarities of formally differentiated objects, often from different substantive areas.
[42] see The sequence of four pictures from Liberman 2004 and www.thdl.org/DebateTutorials; see also Goode 2007 and Konecki 2008, stills from video camera recordings showing actions

The sequence of four pictures from video recordings shows the Tibetan philosophical debate – natural sequence (Liberman 2004 and www.thdl.org/DebateTutorials).

We can also create **artificial sequence for comparing things or actions**. Let us examine sequence of photos taken mainly by homeless people from a Photographic Club functioning in the shelter in the city of Lodz (photos by homeless were taken from the Internet what is indicated under each photo) and others. We analysed it together with students of social work during practical classes where I taught visual grounded theory (June 2008 in Lodz). It was just the beginning of the research and we have a vague and common sense perspective on homelessness. In this way we obtained a visual perspective of the world from the point of view of homeless people because homeless photographers had taken the pictures. Although this seems to give a direct access to the attitudes of homeless, we should remember that some conventions of photography and technical aspects of photographing create visual data and they are not absent in any act of photographing the world (Banks 2007). Also homeless people have some idea what is photography and photographing?

We took some photos for analysis that were not fully intentionally chosen to represent some topics of homeless life. They also do not represent any action step by step. They were chosen almost on random, just to show something interesting to the sociologically/socially oriented students and to start description of photos and open coding of them. However, we should remember that mainly homeless photographers took the photos. The students analysing pictures were studying social work and were sent to shelters for homeless people and to the streets to find homeless people and conduct open-ended and narrative interviews and to take pictures of physical objects and spaces that show their identity and orientation to the past, present and future life. We attempted to prepare and to make students sensitive to the topic of homelessness by presenting them some pictures and analysing them together in the group and start conceptual thinking on it.

We usually start our analysis in style of grounded theory from one photo that is described in details (see also Suchar 1997 about using photos in grounded theory research). In the first photo we also find some distinctions between objects, people,

space aspects, that usually start the thinking process and analysis of the visual images. In the first picture we see a homeless man raking the rubbish from the lawn[43].



Photo 1: Raking the rubbish up; the work of homeless man. Contrasting[44].
(http://zik.com.ua/pl/news/2008/04/15/133504)

The picture was taken from the ground level perspective; the rubbish is seen in the foreground. In the background we can see people, so called "normals" and cars, (one is rather an expensive 4x4 Suzuki). What we see in the picture is the visual process that could be called **"contrasting".** Maybe the photographer is contrasting, together with the viewer (analyst), what is already socially contrasted. "Normal life" and wealth are visually presented in the background of poverty presented in foreground. Social world is seen in this proportion and that direction, first poverty, second wealth, at least at this picture. We see here the opposition of "homeless – normals".

In other photo, the contrasting is going in opposite direction (see Photo 2: Easter in the shelter). We can see officials in the foreground, that came to the shelter for Easter celebration sitting at the table together with homeless people. There is more light directed onto the officials. They are well dressed, the men are wearing suits and ties and the women are dressed in two-piece costumes and have visible jewellery. They sit separately from the homeless and enjoy conversation with within their own circle. There is some dividing space between this group and the homeless. When we make a planimetrical division, the dividing the picture space is almost in the centre of the picture. In the background we can see the homeless, generally looking around and remaining silent. "Contrasting" is a social process that is also visually elaborated. Detecting the distinctions might be a kind of definition of the situation by the photographer (a homeless man from the photographic club); however, the pictures are related to a real situation and, for a sociological observer, social–structural relations are visible at the first glance. In this particular case, the direction of seeing the social structure is reverse, compared to the first picture, in the

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[43] The sequence of analysis that is presented below is different from the sequence of the first presentation of pictures when we saw the pictures for the first time and started to analyze them. The sequence created later (ordering of pictures) changed according to our progress in the analysis. We started from the first picture and from category of "contrasting" process, however, not because the pictures were arranged in the way imposing the generation of this category. The arrangement of sequence of pictures during analysis and presentation is the effect of analysis and choosing particular topic by analysts.

[44] Inscriptions below the pictures are codes of analysts; sometimes there is more then one code.

foreground we can see "normals" that are here officials, and we can see homeless in the background (opposition of "homeless – normals").



Photo 2: Easter at the shelter, visual process of "contrasting"; Easter celebration; there is a remarkable space between officials and homeless sitting at the table[45].



Photo 3: "Contrasting" at the station; bench; the process of "benching" (photo taken from the research project).

The "visual contrasting" of the official person to homeless people is visible in the Photo 3. Almost a quarter of the picture is filled with the body of the policeman and the intimate space around him. He is standing and looking down at two homeless men sitting at the bench somewhere at the station. One of them keeps his head down and is looking downwards, searching for documents (probably). Towards the right side we can see "normals" also sitting, however, at other bench. There is a pillar between them, giving the meaning of visual separation. We see the space dividing the two worlds. We also observe a "normal" man buying a ticket at the cashier. Here, once again, we have the homeless surrounded by the so-called "normal" world. Visual contrasting is mainly achieved by framing picture with the focus on the policeman, who is probably asking the homeless man for his ID card. The policeman is a main figure in the picture, representing the official world and the homeless men are outcasts because they are without home and are easily recognized not only by the police. We can observe the postures' opposition of Standing-Sitting (official – homeless).

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[45] Photos of Easter Celebration in the shelter come from the website of the Photographic Club of Homeless Shelter of St. Brother Albert's Aid Society in Lodz, ul. Szczytowa 11. (http://www.bezdomni.ovh.org/easter.html; retrieved: 01.06.2008).

Photo 4: Work on Contrasting; door as a dividing line between the scene and the coulisses (ante-room); food; photographers work; Easter Celebration (http://www.bezdomni.ovh.org/easter.html).

In the background of Photo 4 we can see a homeless photographer taking pictures. By his side there is an official discussing something in ante–room. The open door here is dividing the scene, where the ceremony is held, and the space behind the scene, the coulisses. We see the officials and homeless photographers working to show what is interesting and important for them. The contrast of the two social worlds is the most interesting thing that is emerging from the distinction of the scene and the coulisses[46].

Looking at the sequence of photos below we, as external observers, can get the impression of **"the atmosphere of waiting"**. However it is very particular situation, because the waiting here seems to be for nothing concrete and nothing specific. There is rather nothing to do concerning homeless men. Photo 5 shows the homeless sitting on the bench, one is reading a newspaper, the other one, without shirt (probably it is hot outside) is smoking a cigarette (we see the length of the cigarette, how far it is smoked out?), and one homeless with a deformed head is looking into the camera. The atmosphere resembles holiday, however, we can see the bench situated near the shelter for homeless, where there is no holiday, but only permanent homeless life. "Eating and sleeping" are the properties of "the atmosphere of waiting" (see Photo 6). "The atmosphere of waiting", in turn, is probably a property of "homeless life atmosphere". There is no visible opposition in the picture, no contrasting. World and life are passing slowly and peacefully.

The atmosphere of waiting is created among groups (see Photo 7). A very important element of the life of homeless people and "the atmosphere of waiting" is "sitting on the bench" (see Photo 7). We can observe it in a number of photos. Bench is connected with waiting as in the situation at the station (compare Photo 3); however, homeless people do not wait for anything concrete and special. Bench, then, as a physical object and space induce some specific action that we call "benching" (subcategory of "the atmosphere of waiting"). They are just sitting and waiting… Waiting and sitting are always connected with leaning forward and keeping the elbows on the knees or thighs. The position gives the impression of tiredness; the smile is absent or very delicate. There is no picture showing the body position of homeless kept straight.

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[46] We can find at least three photographers in the Photo 4, one at the back taking picture, one on the right side, working with Canon camera and one taking this picture.

Photo 5: "The atmosphere of waiting"; relaxing - on the bench; benching, place of sitting (photo taken from the research project).

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Photo 6: Homeless sleeping at the table. "The atmosphere of waiting", food, "eating and sleeping" (photo taken from the research project).

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Photo 7: Sitting at the bench. Benching. The place of waiting. Group character of "the atmosphere of waiting". Relaxing — smoking; homelessness by different age, delicate smile, leaning forward and keeping the elbows on the knees or thighs[47].

Looking at the sequence of pictures we find certain patterns. There is more than just "the atmosphere of waiting", we can generate another visual process' category: **"focusing on food"**. Many photos show food, the act of eating or food in the background, when the other action is photographed. Food is associated with many other actions. We see food in the background in Photo 5, a man is sleeping after eating. Photo 8 shows the act of eating during the ceremony. Photo 9 shows the focusing of the photographer on food that is given away for free during a charity event.

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[47] http://www.ltf.com.pl/wystawy_w_galerii/w_o_obiektyw_bezdomnego.html

Photo 8: Focusing on food. Food – Eating (photo taken from the research project).

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Photo 9: Focusing on food; charity event (photo taken from the research project, from the Shelter of St. Brother Albert's Aid Society in Lodz).

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## Detailed Description for New Categories

While looking for the sequence of pictures students can find other patterns of behaviour or cultural arrangements of objects. However, we should remember that artificial sequences, which offer an opportunity for comparison, could leave some photos outside of the patterns. We should be very careful in order not to ascribe them to any patterns and force the data to the pre-existing and/or just generated categories. Such pictures could be analysed separately and given the possible interpretation, taking into consideration only the content of the picture (see Photo 10 below) and help us to generate new categories and/or properties.

What we should do first in our pre-analytical work is to make the detailed description of a photo? We start from the description (see the example below).

*Description of Photo 10. A homeless man with the bag sitting on the bed.*

| Description of the Photo. | Open Coding |
|---|---|
| The photo presents a homeless man with a bag. The head of the homeless is in the centre of the photo (nearly, view from planimetrical division). He smiles, slightly showing his teeth (he has moustache), he is looking up, and the head is turned slightly to the right. He sits on the bed with his legs astride. He holds the bag in his hands. He has a watch and wears a flannel shirt. He is neat, shaved, with clean hands and nails. At the bottom part of the picture there are  (in three – parts horizontally divided picture plan) a piece of the bag and a part of an arm of the bed. There is a shelf with some objects on the left side of the photo (the centre of a horizontal plan). Part of the shelf is hanging above the bed. There are some objects on the shelves: a clock, a lamp (? probably), a jar, a box (? probably tea box), radio, and "a head-decoration". There is a clock with the poster behind (poster with the inscription 2000) on the wall (this is an upper side of the horizontal plan– from planimetrical division of the picture). The clock shows 12.28.<br>Above the head of the homeless man from the left side of the photo we can see the calendar from 2003 year with a landscape of a forest and a lake.<br>On the right side of the photo there are some clothes hanging on the hook (jacket, beneath shirt and short overcoat probably?). Further on the right side there is a window and we can see the sun-lit leaves.<br>On the right side of the picture there is a towel (probably?) on the arm of the bed (lower section of the photo). | Bag (**Private objects; property**); "Framed head"<br><br>Smiling (expression of emotions– contentment)<br>Sitting on the bed (**private space – public space**); Keeping the bag, watch (**Private objects**); Being neat.<br><br><br><br>Arm of the bed– **the boundary of private space; shelf** – (**private objects**)<br><br>Shelf – (**Public space/private space**)<br><br>Clock – (**private objects**)<br><br><br><br>Clock, time (**private objects**).<br><br>Calendar (**private objects**).<br><br>Division of the space.  (**Private space – public space**); Clothes.<br><br><br><br><br>**Private space – public space.** |

**After completing coding and description of a photo, students can write a memo** in order to understand better what the situation is in this separately analysed picture[48]. Memo helps to elaborated generated codes and find more abstract codes. Photos seem to be very meaningful for interpretation of life conditions of homeless people in a shelter. They allow detailed descriptions and create minutiae codes that would be not constructed by using only textual data for the analysis.

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[48] A. Clarke suggests writing so called „specification memo", that helps "to break the frame, so that we can 'see' an image in multiple ways" (2005; 226-227). We should then, according to Clarke address such topics as: selection, framing, featuring, viewpoints, light, color, focus, presence/absence, intended/unintended audiences, composition, texture, scale and format proportions, technical elements, single or multimedia, relationship to Other Work in Same Media, references, remediations, situatedness, relations with visual cultures, commonness/uniqueness, work of the image, injuctions to viewers (Clarke 2005).

***Memo to Photo 10. "A homeless man with a bag sitting on his bed"***
***Lack of division for private space and public space. Private objects, property.***

If we take into consideration the distinction: "private – public", we can observe the mixture of private and public space. The clothes of homeless man are hanging on the hook and are clearly visible in the background. The situation is similar with the towel on the arm of the bed. The right side of the photo (divided vertically into two symmetrical parts) presents private objects, which, in our culture, are usually kept in private space not available to the public view. We do not usually present the interior of our wardrobe to the strangers.

On the left side of the photo (close to the lenses of the camera) we can see private objects available also to the public (shelf with private objects). Here we can observe so called "durnostojki", the objects that are usually decorative objects in our homes kept on/near mantelpieces, shelves, some recesses in the walls, etc. These object are supposed to present our identity to the public. The majority of these objects in the shelter have functional rather than decorative character (a clock, a radio, a lamp), although some are decorative (head – decoration).

Private space is mixed with public one. Homeless people have small chances to keep the private objects in private space not visible to the public in the shelter. The only private place is a bag that the homeless man holds in his hands. The rest of the objects, even the ones situated further from the eye of the camera, are suitable for public view and observable, what is documented in the photo.



Photo10: A homeless man with a bag sitting on bed; bedding; to be confined for space (photo taken from the research project).
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**Comparison for More General Concepts**

We may also inspire students to think in a more general way by providing them with a sequence of photos from different contexts that have some analogical similarities (open-analogical comparisons).

If we compare pictures of homeless people and entrepreneur or high rank manager we can immediately find some social class cliché to interpret differences (see Photo 10 and 11). Sociologists tend to think about the social world in the categories of social stratification. Students should also think about the patterns of visual and cultural representation of different body positions in social class terms.

We mentioned earlier that heads of homeless are usually leaning forward and their elbows are kept on the knees or thighs (compare also Photo 7). This tired–like or timid position could be contrasted with a straight position of a high rank manager.
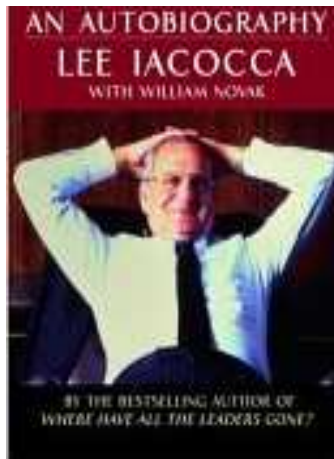
Photo 11: Lee Iacocca on the front page of the Autobiography, "above position", assertiveness/self - confidence, "formal–informal" pattern of self-presentation (Lee Iacocca and William Novak 1984).

A very significant photo is printed on the front page of the book. It shows the author, a great manager, Lee Iacocca, who presents himself in a very assertive way with both hands kept behind his head, smiling to the photographer (not opening his mouth) and looking directly at him (and to any other spectator) from the "above position". He does not wear a jacket, suggesting informality, however, he wears a tie that, on the other hand, suggests some formality and position in business world. It creates distance to the audience. Only a recognised man is able to combine informal style of self-presentation with formal one, and in that situation "discrepant" styles of presentation of oneself become socially acceptable in the same context of self - presentation. He is looking at the viewer-photographer with such assertiveness in order to show that the alter ego does not belong to his world. Such "formal–informal" pattern of self-presentation is possible to achieve if a person is professionally experienced and has had many successes in the past (see Mastenbroek 1996).

If we include Photo 11 in the sequence of previously analyzed pictures, our analytical perspective will immediately change. Students start to think about the **class generated/associated forms of visual representation of social position. When comparing Photos 10 and 11 we can see two men smiling, however, in a different choreographic context.** Homeless smile is a timid smile (compare also Photo 7). That interpretation is based on the way he is holding his bag. The bag is kept near the body; he is sitting on his bed in the shelter surrounded by not clearly separated private and public space and objects. The manager, in turn, is sitting on his armchair and his informality (no jacket, and hands kept behind his head) were deliberately arranged to show his assertiveness and superiority. The picture was taken from below the line of his head. The picture of the homeless man was taken from above. Iacocca is not showing his teeth when smiling, while the homeless is. The latter is not looking directly into the lens of the camera; Lee Iacocca is looking directly into the eye of the camera.

This short sequence shows the class background of representing the social position in the photos. These patterns are created not only by behaviour of a photographed individual but also by the photographer. In case of homeless men they were also homeless photographers, therefore the representation of social position is based on the local perspective of the actors, who are looking at their colleagues, as they perceive themselves. Without creating a new sequence, by adding the picture of Iacocca, we could not generate the new patterns of interpretation. **The artificially created sequences are the tool for the analysis and at the same time didactic devices to start categorical and pattern analysis by using comparative method.**

**Saturating the category and theoretical sampling.**

Saturating the category means finding and naming all possible properties of some conceptually labelled phenomenon. If the instances indicating some properties reoccur all the time during collecting of data and analysing them, we can say that the category is saturated (see discussion on the problem of saturating the category in Charmaz 2006). The theoretical description of category can be elaborated in conceptual details. We should do then theoretical sampling, it means look for the new data from different contexts to compare incidents and properties and saturate the category. Looking for the images or video - recordings from different contexts to saturate category with the new incidents indicating new properties (Schubert 2006) helps also theoretically elaborate the core category and investigated processes. Different contexts provide data about the thorough spectrum of the phenomenon described by the category. Practically theoretical sampling is connected with theoretical work that we do during analysis. We should look for the new data and contexts basing on the theoretical questions that come from our analytical memos and commentaries on the elaborated categories.

We can saturate a category with "pictures" referring to properties of a category. Some categories could be better analysed with this kind of data, **e.g. physical conditions of homeless life than by using textual data.** The category is broad, however, it is ideally fitted to describe the sequence of pictures gathered during field study. Students can see that some data chosen from the same substantive contexts have something in common and, by using constant comparative method, produce patterns by analytical work (homological comparisons).

Such a very broad category could be saturated also by data that come from previously analysed photos. We can see that physical contexts and physical objects are the main aspects of the category that could be saturated by using photos as the representation of physical conditions of life. In the same photos we can find many instances indicating different properties. One photo could be full of very rich data for analysing and saturating categories.

The category is connected with instances that indicate the following properties: "focusing on food" (Photo 8, 9 and 13), lack of division between private and public space (Photo 10 and memo to this Photo, Photo 12 and 14), "relaxing place" (Photo 5 and 7), food (Photo 6 and 12), "to be confined for space" (Photo 12 and 15), place for celebrations (Photo 2and 13); "places for benching and bedding" (bench on Photo 5; bed on Photo 15 and 17), lack of private objects/property (data from interviews).



Photo 12: To be confined for space; food, private objects; decoration (photo taken from the research project).

Photo 13: Life in the shelter. Easter celebration. Table, place for celebration. Organized celebrating. Celebrating; focusing on food (http://www.bezdomni.ovh.org/easter.html).



Photo 14: Life in the shelter; privacy; private – public space; to be confined for space; bed; bedding (photo from the research project, from the Shelter of St. Brother Albert's Aid Society in Lodz).



Photo 15: Life in the shelter; to be confined for space, private/public space, and private objects, bed, bedding (photo taken from the research project, from the Shelter of St. Brother Albert's Aid Society in Lodz).

Photos 14 and 15 show the property "being confined for space". We can find more photos that show insufficient space to live in a shelter. They all show physical objects that are property of the homeless near their bed or even on it. There are 14 people that sleep in the aforementioned room and "everybody would like to have his own room", said one interviewee.

**One of the most important objects, indicated by homeless people to be photographed, is bed**. Private objects are hardly ever photographed. A bed becomes the centre of their life, although as we mentioned, this private space can be quickly transformed to public one. Below one's bed we may often find a private repository (see Photo 16). **We should add that "the physical conditions of life" induce some kind of action,** see the **theses below that are** implication of the thesis above:

1. If the bed is the centre of life, then "bedding" is one of the most important activities of homeless people. Similarly a bench, which induces the act of "benching".
2. Consequently "the atmosphere of waiting" is co-created by physical objects and space of living and also by activities induced by interpretations of these physical surroundings, e.g. benching or bedding.

   We look, then for the properties of conditions of life to saturate the category and for other activities induced by "physical conditions of life" to ground second hypothesis. The best data seems to be visual one.

***Thesis 1. Physical conditions of life -> activities: bedding, benching -> the atmosphere of waiting***
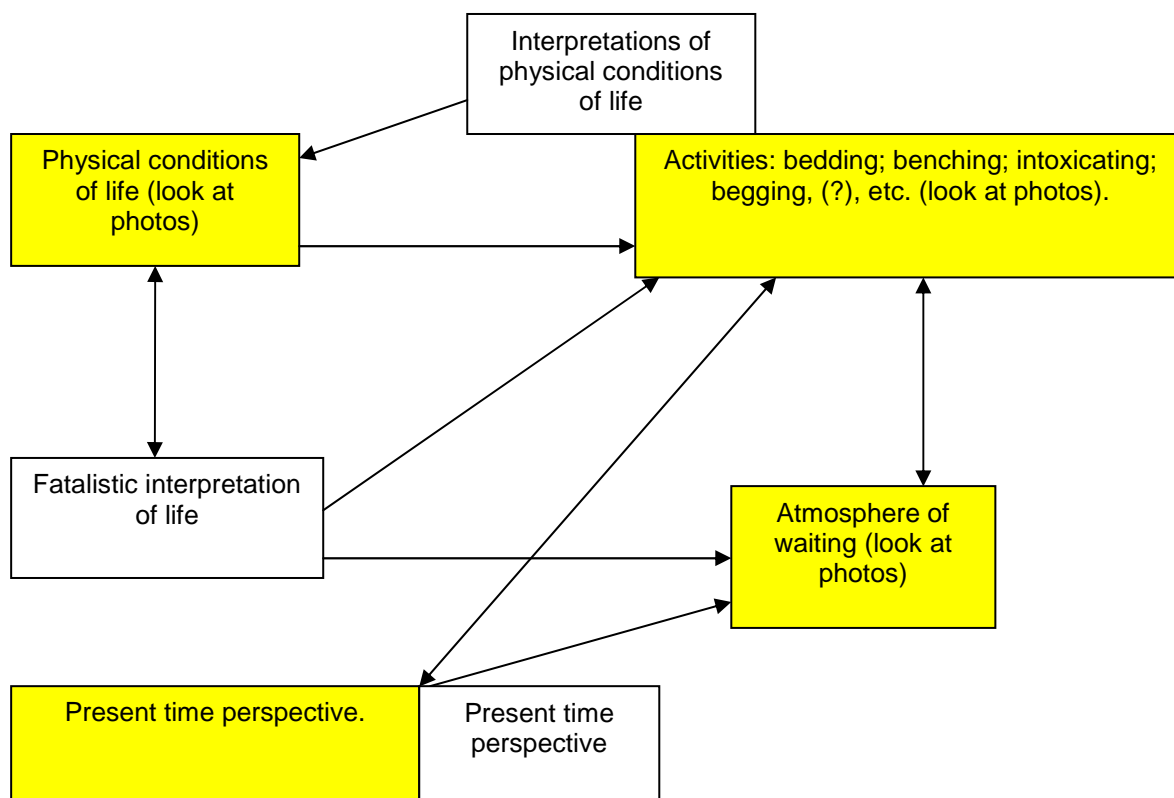


Diagram 1. The connections between categories (the yellow boxes indicate mainly the visual background of data for generating the categories; white boxes indicate the interviews as the basis for generating the categories).

What is important here is that "the physical conditions of life" are not external features of the life of homeless people, they can not be analysed separately from the interpretations and actions that are connected with them. Physical conditions of life through interaction with a human being turn into actions, e.g. a bed transforms to bedding or a bench transforms to benching. **The interaction with physical objects and space produces a new kind of activity (thesis)**. If somebody interprets one's space for living as difficult but bearable or not having physical objects as an excuse for "doing nothing" (it is also an activity) then there is a possibility to act passively and to do "bedding, benching, intoxicating, begging" and create the "atmosphere of waiting" that reversibly reinforces the activities.

Photo 16. Private place; private objects under the bed; the centre of private life, the place for bedding (photo from the research project, from Shelter of St. Brother Albert's Aid Society in Lodz).

***Outside of the shelter – theoretical sampling and comparisons for saturating categories***

The physical conditions of life are connected with living in shelters or in dosshouses. We noticed together with students, during the analysis of data, that we have mainly data on homeless coming mainly from shelters. So we decided to sample data from another contexts.

**If we go outside of the shelter to other places of living** occupied by the homeless, we can see other things, e.g. the place of living, how homeless people prepare food in the ruins, how they are dressed when it is cold outside and whether open house can protect them from cool weather? So, the students went outside of the class to see directly the contexts of homeless life.



Photo 17: The three hobos in Chicago, 1929.
(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:ThreeHobosChicago1929.jpg; 22.08.2008).



Photo 18: The place of living of the homeless – hobo; allotment; shed (photo from the research project).

The Photos below show the place of living of a homeless man (physical conditions of life).

Photo 19: The place of living of the homeless – hobo; ruins, near railway station of Lodz Fabryczna, centre of the city (photo from the research project).



Photo 20: The place for spending time during rain and cool weather at nights and place for drinking – information from an interview with homeless man (photo from the research project).



Photo 21: A homeless man, a kerb, a bottle of vodka, drinking place (a place near the Faculty of Economics and Sociology, Lodz University; photo from the research project).

The saturation with images should usually refer to verbal data. We should get some information directly from the homeless in order to understand meanings of physical conditions of life. However, the pictures we analysed were also taken by homeless, therefore the participants' meanings of conditions of life is inscribed in the physical objects and space presented in the photos. Homeless photographers and homeless directing photography chose what they wanted to show to others, what is important to them and, simply, how they live and what they usually do in some places. **Students of social work could receive the perspective on life directly from people that they will be working with in the future. Photos could be also treated as a sensitising tool for teaching how to do research and understand the perspective of the people?**

**The homeless people living outside of shelters do not say much in the narrative interviews about their present life.** They mainly talk about the past. On the contrary, in the photos they show their present life. The photos show actual life and objects and space from their present life: shoes, railway stations, dust bins, streets, sheds, ruins where they sleep, benches where they sit or drink, etc. **The interviewees say that they do not possess anything.** Generally they refuse to be photographed. They hardly ever let the objects that belong to them to be photographed. They mainly show space, social and physical surrounding of living in the streets. Their visual imagination is limited to **the present conditions of life** and these conditions are connected mainly with the public space where they live. They show themselves in solitude, as in pictures below, although the interviewed homeless man was living on the street with another homeless friend. In shelters the homeless more often show their friends to be photographed.



Photo 22: The shoes. ("They can be useful. I found them today"; photo from the research project, homeless living outside of shelters).



Photo 23: Shed near railway station. The place of living (homeless living outside of shelters, photo from the research project).



Photo 24. Railway station Lodz Fabryczna (centre of the city). The place of staying and living (homeless living outside of shelters, photo from the research project).

Photo 25: Dust-bins give a possibility to get something valuable and exchangeable for money; the place of work (homeless living outside of shelters, photo from the research project).



Photo 26: Homeless sitting on the kerb; (homeless living outside of shelters, photo from the research project).
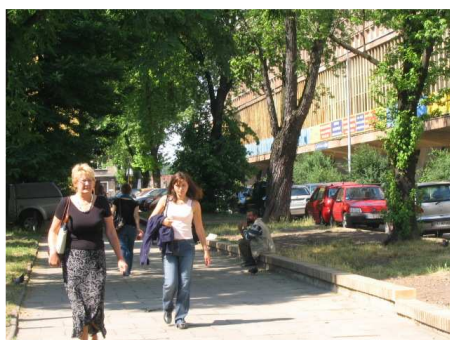


Photo 27. Homeless sitting on the kerb; space close to Faculty of Economy and Sociology UL building (homeless living outside of shelters, photo from the research project). The photographer (student) was a little bit embarrassed to take a photo and took the photo with a homeless man in the background
(see and compare Photo 26).



Photo 28: The place of living, spending time. Mess, bottles of vodka, newspapers, cigarette packets, the place of drinking; intoxicating. (homeless living outside of shelters, photo from the research project).

*Visual contrasting of time perspectives. Co-constructed sequences of visual images of time*

The categories are constructed during the research analysis. The analysis below shows the co-construction by researchers (me and students) and homeless people the visual aspects of time perspectives. The category is saturated by collecting data from different contexts of homeless life.

We see also that physical artefacts can be associated mainly with the present time perspective. So the visual world of homelessness is concentrating on the actually available physical objects. When the researcher asked homeless people to show their past, present and future they tried to cooperate and showed the icons of these time dimensions in their life history. Temporality is embedded in physical objects. Having them, and showing, is associated with evoking the memory of them. However, the biggest problem for the homeless was to show objects connected with the past and with the future. They usually did not have the objects from the past with themselves. Sometimes they belonged to the members of the family and stayed with them. **Sometimes homeless indicate their past by showing the homes, where they used to live, to be photographed (Photo 29), or showing the photo "from previous life" (Photo 30).** Such photos are icons of the past. Not many homeless showed them or have them. These visual icons are contrasted with actual conditions of life and likely future conditions. Actual life is characterized by dustbins, where the homeless look for valuable things (Photo 31). One of the homeless showed home from the past and the ruins of the barrack where he will live in the near future, in this way he contrasted past and future (Photo 32). However, the future is connected only with homelessness.



Photo 29: The place where the homeless lived before (perspective of the past; photo from the research project).



Photo 30: Photo of the picture from their "previous life" (perspective of the past; photo from the research project).

Photo 31: Reality of living in the street; present time perspective. Working in the dustbins (photo from the research project).



Photo 32: Future place of living – the future perspective (photo from the research project).

As it was mentioned earlier, homeless people usually show the places and icons from their actual life. They are immersed in the present. Some of them show the places where they spend the most time:

Q: If I am going to take picture and show your previous life and present and future life, then what should be on these pictures?
R. I never thought about it, so it is difficult to say. However, there is such place, because I work in a laundry, it is my small hobby, maybe not only hobby, but I found a place here, to be alienated from the rest, there I am alone, I have everything what I need, including TV set, and other things. I spend there as much time as I can.

The visual images are co-produced together with the interviewer, we can see from the sequences of utterances and his comments that homeless man has no experience with such questions and issues of contrasting time. However, he answered and showed the place of great importance to him now (Photo 29).



Photo 33: The most liked place in present time, laundry. No references to past and future.

The present conditions of life are also associated with some activities that are performed in the shelter. There is a photographic club in one of the shelters in Lodz and the homeless man points out to the collection of photo cameras presented on the shelf (Photo 34), near the place where he lives (Photo 36).



Photo 34: Collection of photo-cameras in the shelter; photographic club; present time, photographing (photo from the research project).

Homeless can also show the objects that they are proud of, e.g. a pond that was constructed by him, in front of the shelter. It is his pride embedded in present time, although the pond was constructed few years ago. It was not well built and water is leaking (see Photo 35).The homeless man made a few vague remarks about the future that some woman is going to take him to Italy, although this remark seemed to be unrealistic.



Photo 35: Cobblestones in the pavements and a pond in front of the shelter have been constructed by a homeless man. Proud in the present time (while taking the picture the student unintentionally captured the tent in front of which one of the homeless was sleeping; photo from the research project).



Photo 36: Seat of the photographic club and the place of residence of the homeless man  (photo from the research project).

## Conclusions

The analysis of photos and analysis of contexts of photographing, that we did, reminds the research of visual ethnography. Images are "everywhere" (Pink 2007). We would like to say, that visual ethnography is a method of collecting data where the visual images are used to enrich our observations and textual data that we gather and/or produce. The methodology of grounded theory is a set of procedures helping in elaborating the data collected in the field. The ethnography or participant observation and interviews used together can only help to be close to the participants and reconstruct conceptually participants' experiences (Charmaz 2006; Bryant and Charmaz 2007). The photos could be extremely useful in grounded theory inspired by symbolic interactionism, where the "intimate familiarity" and definitions of situations by participants are so important in understanding and explaining their life (Strubing 2004, 2007; Clarke 2005). The visual images that have been used in our research had a great importance in generating categories that are sensitive enough to get their meaning in the imagination of the everyday life's participants and readers of the theory. They had also a great importance in teaching our students the theoretical sensitivity (Glaser 1978), "sensitivity grows with the exposure to data" (Corbin and Strauss 2007: 230). Visual images give the naturalistic outlook at the researched field and show how the data are constructed and, at the same time, how theoretical categories are created?

We could see then that construction of categories by using sequencing is a very helpful teaching device **to generate more general categories** through search for patterns. Sequencing could be stated after theoretical sampling of visual data from different contexts that are chosen after a theoretical analysis. Comparing pictures forces students to find in the photos something common and different in the investigated incidents at the same time. The analysis and sampling are strictly connected procedures in grounded theory.

However, we should also be very detailed in the description of photos to see the inner processes going on in the photographed and represented empirical site and finally "to open" the picture for analysis. If the picture does not fit to the sequence patterned by analysts, it should be very carefully analysed and eventually becomes the picture for opening a new sequence for analysis (see Photo 37 in Appendix that was dropped from the initial analysis). Analysts to define and later refine their new category should create the sequence and a new pattern, which has been generated by a new distinctions found in the pictures. Theoretical sampling creates the sequence, when the new pictures are sampled from the new empirical sites, which are chosen on the base of theoretical analysis and writing memos.

Using photos of objects and spaces could support saturating a category and teach students the procedure. Physical objects and spaces are strictly connected with activities and they co-produce activities together with the actors that interpret them. We can sometimes see more from the pictures than from verbal accounts of the researched people. The homeless people can not always give explicit and verbal account of their conditions of live. They are accustomed to their life conditions and are not each time able consciously to describe it fully and with details. Their surrounding is taken for granted by them. Photos very often show more than a photographer intended to show, they show a context of action. The background and small details are very important information on many aspects of homeless life (e.g. lack of division for private and public life) that should be elaborated conceptually. The visual representations of place of living could help us to saturate category, e.g. "physical conditions of life" with the full and detailed properties referring also to activities being the consequence of "physical conditions of life".

We should use the constant comparative methods and compare the types of researched subjects shown in the photos. Sequencing is subservient procedure to constant comparative method. First we build sequence on the basis of analysis and theoretical sampling[49] and then we compare data and properties. When we **compare pictures** of the homeless living in shelters with the pictures of homeless living in the streets we see that pictures from the shelters show homeless in the group. The homeless in the streets are more "self-dependent" and live alone or in pairs. It is also very effective to compare the pictures for generating the properties of the category of "time perspective". Constant comparative methods seemed to be the most important method of visual grounded theory and also teaching devise in showing the analysis and elaborating of theoretical categories and hypotheses. However the procedure could be only used together with other ones as: theoretical sampling, saturation and sequencing of visual data.

There could be put a question: should we achieve theoretical level of GTM when we teach it? Should we generate a theory? I think that we should get to the theoretical level when analysing data and come back to the field after theoretical sampling and analysis of the data. There can be no final theory as a result of the teaching grounded theory but we should reach some level of consolidation of categories (see Diagram 1) and some hypotheses should be formulated. Teaching by projects should show some research results and, if data are analysed, theoretical results, although the questions and indications to rise new problems and/or built new categories are very important in the educational process (see Photo 37).

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[49] Except the initial sequencing at the beginning of research and analysis when we use sequences that are not preceded by earlier intensive research.

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# Appendix



Photo 37: Photo not used in the analysis, only presented in the first sequence; it can open a new category – "homeless living with lameness; the picture does not fit to "contrasting" category, however we see a double separation at the table: separation from "society" that means from "normals" and also others homeless people; homeless sitting at the table's corner.