

Grounded Theory: A practical guide to qualitative analysis
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Example of transcript, coding, and memo (from O'Reilly's study in the Costa del Sol)

Nicola, John and two children had lived in Spain 3 years when I interviewed them. They had pretty much decided to move back to the UK because things had not turned out as planned.

I had a working theory about escape: people going to Spain want to escape, and not integrating is part of that. They don't want to get sucked into the bureaucracy, control, routine.

However, they say they moved to Spain because of things Spain offers, so they can't really then have nothing to do with it. They say they try to integrate but in fact they don't really.

This excerpt shows defeatism and accepting that she won't integrate.

Initial coding are about experiencing racism, struggling with schools and settling in, learning the language.

Focused codes include defeatism (in other words the whole passage sounds defeatist, and settling, racism, struggle are all part of that). Focused coding also highlights the move from blaming self to blaming others.

But we can see she didn't really try to integrate. The children went straight to International school, she does not speak Spanish well and has not tried hard.

Elsewhere escape comes out loud and clear, so in the end I saw defeatism as a positive thing, a means to achieve escape without feeling guilty about it. The difficulty is that now the lack of integration and unfulfilled dreams is leading so many to want to go home. There seems to be a turning point at which people start to blame others rather than themselves for their marginalisation.

Interview transcript (excerpt)	Initial codes	Focused codes
<p>So, you've been here over two years, how's your Spanish? Let's start with that.</p> <p>Nicola: Very poor. Very poor.</p> <p>Interviewer: And did you learn any before you came out here?</p> <p>Nicola: Well I had a look at learning but I didn't really put much effort into it I must admit. I did try more when I got here, we all took lessons. The kids are obviously doing it at school. But I found it very hard managing two kids, the business, the house and also to, you know, find time to do the homework they gave me. I am a lot better when I am drunk!</p> <p>Interviewer: (laughs) aren't we all??</p> <p>Nicola: (laughs) Yeah. John does very well at it. I think its coz he studied with no distractions. I studied with the kids and found myself always having to tell them to "Sssh".</p> <p>Interviewer: Where did you have the lessons??</p> <p>Nicola: In a local bar. A guy used to come and teach a group of us. There were about 11 of us to start with. All learning together from scratch.</p> <p>Interviewer: Right.</p> <p>Nicola: I think he was a good teacher, I think I was the problem really. Having failed at it once I now rely on John and the kids.</p> <p>Interviewer: But you can manage ok?</p> <p>Nicola: Oh, yeah. I manage alright but I will never have a conversation with a Spanish person.</p> <p>Interviewer: Does that bother you?</p> <p>Nicola: Yes, it does. But not enough to do anything about it obviously. I find it sad and lacking in me, because we live in Spain and I miss just having a natter with someone, which all you can do is English people here, or sit and not natter to people, which is my failing. I miss it, so my choice now is either shut up or talk to English people.</p> <p>Interviewer: Oh, right. I see.</p> <p>Nicola: I can bumble my way through ordering meals or asking prices, you know, but</p>	<p>Admitting poor Spanish</p> <p>Putting little effort into Spanish Started to learn Now need not worry about kids learning</p> <p>Excuses for not learning Spanish. Joking</p> <p>Comparing with others' Spanish Excuses</p> <p>Lessons in English bar</p> <p>Blaming herself Having someone else to rely on – excuses?</p> <p>Disappointment Expectations in past - conversation</p> <p>Blaming self, disappointment</p> <p>Levels of Spanish</p>	<p>high expectations, dreams, disappointments</p> <p>Low effort</p> <p>Blaming self</p> <p>Making it less important Defeatism</p> <p>Low effort</p> <p>Low effort Blaming self Making it less important Defeatism</p> <p>Blaming self</p> <p>High initial expectations</p> <p>Blaming self</p>

<p>that's not a conversation at all, is it.</p> <p>Interviewer: So would you say you were integrated in Spanish society?</p> <p>Nicola: No, No. Not particularly.</p> <p>Interviewer: Do you think the children are?</p> <p>Nicola: No</p> <p>Interviewer: Do you think they ever will be?</p> <p>Nicola: No</p> <p>Interviewer: Why is that?</p> <p>Nicola: I think a lot to do with it is they have met levels of racism and having met that they're not prepared to do any more towards it</p> <p>Interviewer: and this racism is from the school 'coz they're treated differently or more than that?</p> <p>Nicola: Erm, more than that, yeah, it came from the school but also they've encountered it on the streets.</p> <p>Interviewer: Really? Have they?</p> <p>Nicola: Yeah, they definitely have. They find it on the streets. Just silly things really but it amounts up and undermines their confidence.</p> <p>Interviewer: Any examples?</p> <p>Nicola: I'm trying to think of one off the top of my head. Its just silly name calling, you know kids stuff, but it's always coming from the Spanish children. They take that as racism and now, unless he's with us, Tom is not allowed to wear his England shirt or to take his England beach towel to the beach.</p> <p>Interviewer: Not allowed meaning he won't let himself?</p> <p>Nicola: No, we won't let him. He gets a bit, you know, testosterone filled, but we realise that it's all very well flaunting your England shirt</p> <p>Interviewer: yeah but then you are also taunting them maybe</p> <p>Nicola: Well, you are just looking for trouble really. It's just inflammatory. It shouldn't be because we don't get in a strop if someone takes an Italian beach towel to the beach. But it does cause trouble. It provokes them. I mean this summer I have seen things, for example, an old lady elbowed Tom the other day.</p> <p>Interviewer: An old lady?</p>	<p>Not fully integrated Low expectations</p> <p>Blaming others Experiencing racism</p> <p>Experiencing racism in streets</p> <p>Racism impacting on quality of life</p> <p>Racism affecting behaviour</p> <p>Implicit: anger Racism from unexpected people</p>	<p>Lowered expectations Defeatism</p> <p>Blaming others</p>
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<p>Nicola: Yes, can you believe it? Interviewer: Why? When? Nicola: Coz we were stood by the car and Tom stepped back in her path, now I saw, coz he had his back to her obviously, now I could see what was going to happen so I grabbed his shirt and pulled him forward out of the way. Now as far as I was concerned that was the end of it, Tom never made any contact with the woman, she was two paces away, but she elbowed him in the back anyway. Now its things like that, I mean Tom is very English looking but I bet if he had dark skin and dark hair nothing would have happened. The other day Tom mentioned to me, out of the blue, a time when he was walking down the street. Now you and I both know that two abreast and the path is full. Now if they're walking two abreast towards you, they will continue to do so. Funnily enough Tom said to me quite unprompted last week that he's now learnt to walk with his elbows stuck out, which is also what I do.</p>	<p>Reacting to racism Anger, defensiveness</p>	
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Memo

More and more people I have spoken to seem to have experienced racism now. But it takes the form of small, seemingly insignificant acts so they downplay them, trying to make less of them. Or they try to emphasise to me how important they are even though they seem trivial. It makes me think about racism and how it is defined by academics as opposed to people who experience it. When I have told colleagues the Brits experience racism they too seem to dismiss it as trivial. One guy even said 'isn't that just kids being kids?' It is easier to dismiss it when the group is apparently higher status, powerful, wealthy, or in the majority group. White northern-Europeans in a southern country are seen as 'expatriates'.

For the Brits I have spoken to it is another reason why they find it difficult to settle, to integrate. It is another spoke in the wheel along with difficult bureaucracy, language difficulties. But the contradiction, that they say they want to integrate but don't try very hard remains.

The lack of integration is the outcome of expectations, actions, (informed by expectations), experiences, and responses to these. We need a dynamic analysis of this.

Reference

O'Reilly, K. 2012, *International Migration and Social Theory*, Palgrave.