

Foucauldian Discourse Analysis: Moving Beyond a Social Constructionist Analytic

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Abstract

Although social constructionism (SC) and Foucauldian discourse analysis (FDA) are well established constructionist analytical methods, this article propose that Foucauldian discourse analysis is more useful for qualitative data analysis as it examines social legitimacy. While the SC is able to illuminate how the “meaning” of our social action is constructed through our everyday interaction in socio-cultural and political contexts, questions emerge that are beyond the scope of the SC. These questions are concerned with understanding how the construction of “meaning” is connected to the power imbalance in our society, as well as how a particular version of reality comes to us as truth, having excluded other versions. Moreover, SC does not distinguish between successful and unsuccessful/marginalized claims. This article reflects on how using FDA addresses weaknesses in SC when used in qualitative data analysis, using specific examples from different literature.

Keywords

social constructionism, Foucauldian discourse analysis, qualitative data analysis, poststructuralism, power/knowledge

Background

Qualitative data analysis is shaped by the presence of researchers’ own insights and experiences in terms of his or her class, gender, sex, race, ethnicity, and other identities, regardless of analytical method. Although some researchers view the researcher’s presence as a pressing challenge (Kahlke, 2014; Staller, 2013), this article argue that this contributes to the beauty and strength of qualitative inquiry because qualitative researchers analyze how people interpret their social world or reality, which is a meaning-making process (Nowell et al., 2017). The purpose of qualitative research is to analyze how people understand, experience, interpret, and construct the social world (Bhatasara et al., 2013). Qualitative research is thus interpretative and grounded in the living experiences of people (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2013, 2017; Marshall & Rossman, 2014; Yilmaz, 2013). Instead of analyzing a fixed, pre-established, and pre-determined social reality, qualitative researchers observe the social world, knowledge, meanings, and notions of reality as contingent and dynamic in order to understand the socio-culturally constructed meaning of the individuals’ experiences. As people experience themselves through the mediation of language, culture, symbols, and networks of meaning, this complexity of human lives or experiences must be navigated by the qualitative researcher at different stages of research, including data analysis (Nowell

et al., 2017). Brinkmann (2014) used the term, “dilemma” for interpretive enquiry which is driven by astonishment, mystery, and breakdowns in one’s understanding, as well as “black holes” in understanding of phenomena (St. Pierre & Jackson, 2014). As noted by Teman, who embarked on qualitative research methods after a long period of working with quantitative methods, “It was a beautiful moment. I felt freed, liberated, and unshackled” (Teman & Lahman, 2019, p. 57). Lastly, but not least, qualitative research produces knowledge obtained from self-reflection rather than casual analysis, inferences from numerical data, measurement, and techniques (Agger, 1991; Khan, 2018; Khan & Raby, 2020).

As a consequence of the researcher’s interpretive role, data analysis in qualitative research is intertwined with varied ontological, epistemological, and methodological issues and contexts (James, 2013; Mykhalovskiy et al., 2018; Nowell et al., 2017). The decision of choosing a qualitative data analytic

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(e.g., thematic analysis, thematic decomposition analysis (DA), content analysis, grounded theory, discourse/critical discourse analysis, constant comparative method or analysis) is also influenced by how data are socially produced and collected, as well as the purposes and context of the study. Whatever the design, purposes, and analytic of qualitative research, it heralds scholarship that can move beyond “bare bone” descriptions and conventional assumptions of a problem under study (Mykhailovskiy et al., 2018).

Social constructionist approaches (hereafter SC), as an analytical method, can uproot dominant or established structures by calling attention to subjective processes. However, they generally do not distinguish between successful claims (e.g., made by powerful/successful people) and unsuccessful/marginalized claims (e.g., the voice of heterosexual versus homosexual people). In contrast, Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (hereafter FDA) takes “power” into consideration in data analysis and can promote inaudible speakers as legitimate claimants (Cheek, 2004). The FDA approach also recognizes alternative forms of knowledge as legitimate and allows for consideration of power as circuitous with multiple sources and relations, rather than as something that is possessed. Thus, this approach promotes qualitative researchers to look for difference, absence, and local contexts rather than for similarity, presence, and universal contexts (Kaufmann, 2011). This article also argues that qualitative research using FDA could be an effective way in order to revisit “social legitimacy” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008), by promoting questions about the establishment and structure of social conditions.

This paper argues that compared with SC analysis, Foucauldian discourse analysis is a relatively useful analytical method for qualitative data analysis because it allows for the examination of social legitimacy and that this approach is particularly useful for policy analysis. The following sections of the paper provide a detailed overview of the historical origins and epistemological developments of SC and FDA. This article then reflects on the use of FDA in qualitative data analysis, drawing on examples in the literature.

Social Constructionism (SC): Theoretical Origins and Development

Social constructionism tells us about how we construct our knowledge or reality through our experiences derived from stories, histories or narratives what we deal with in our everyday lives. It is important to first distinguish between social constructivism and social constructionism, as the two terms are used sometimes interchangeably. Unlike social constructivism, which stresses individuals’ mind reflecting and representing the reality (e.g., radical or psychological constructivism), social constructionism focuses on individuals’ roles (e.g., interactions) (Galbin, 2014; Gubrium & Holstein, 2014). SC emerged from the collective influence of a number of North American, British, and continental writers approximately 30 years ago (Burr, 1995). It is derived from several intellectual or epistemological roots, such as existential phenomenological

psychology, social history, hermeneutics, and social psychology (Galbin, 2014). In the early stages, the ideas of Gimbastista Vico, Karl Marx, and Immanuel Kant reflected both social constructionist and constructivist constructs that included both individualistic (e.g., psychology) and collective (e.g., sociology) assumptions. Similarly, SC was also echoed in early sociologists’ writings, such as those of Emile Durkheim, Karl Mannheim, and W.I. Thomas (Conrad & Barker, 2010; Gubrium & Koro-Ljungberg, 2005; Vance, 1991). Gradually, SC was then developed at the hand of Herbert Mead’s (1934) symbolic interactionism, Harold Garfinkel’s (1950s to 1960s) ethnomethodology, symbolic interactionists (e.g., Erving Goffman), and Blumer and Schutz’s phenomenology (Galbin, 2014; Gubrium & Holstein, 2014; Gubrium & Koro-Ljungberg, 2005; Vance, 1991).

Later, major contributions to SC were heralded by Berger and Luckmann (1966), “The Social Construction of Reality,” implying that human beings produce and sustain social phenomena together with the help of their social practices. This version of social reality that we can see is constructed through a system of socio-cultural and interpersonal interactions in our everyday life (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). According to Berger and Luckmann (1966), this happens through three levels of processes: externalization, objectivation, and internalization.

In terms of externalization, people express words or actions, which in turn create artifacts or practices. For example, Bangladeshi people have the idea that sexuality outside of marriage is not normal, and externalize it by means such as telling stories, or writing books (Khan, 2018). Then, these expressions enter into the social world: other people retell the story, read the books, and reproduce the ideas (Burr, 1995). These expressions of ideas become an object of consciousness (objectivation) for people in that society and turned into a kind of factual existence of truth, as a natural, objective feature of the world (Burr, 1995). Finally, they internalize or make it part of their everyday practices and future generations are born into a world where these ideas already exist (Burr, 1995). Thus, Berger and Luckmann (1966) were concerned with the subjective and objective construction of meaning (Segre, 2016). For example, it is now natural for a Bangladeshi to think that that sex out of marriage is abnormal behavior. Thus, the world is socially constructed by people’s social practices and, at the same time, by peoples’ experiences by them as if the nature of their world is pre-given and fixed (Galbin, 2014). Essentially, knowledge is historically structured and embedded in cultural values and practices. As well, meanings are socially constructed via the interaction of people in their various encounters, so are always fluid and dynamic. In this context, the epistemology of social constructionism can be analyzed two ways: procedurally and reflexively. The procedural version underlines the interpretation and saturated meaning that constructs the world itself; the reflexive version recognizes the fuzziness of social interaction and considers reordering of knowledge of social world (Gubrium & Koro-Ljungberg, 2005). In Gubrium & Koro-Ljungberg’s analysis, they centralized “intentionality,” which denotes a close and active relationship between subject and

object. In this framework, “meaning” is product of interaction, not merely created by the subject or object (Gubrium & Koro-Ljungberg, 2005). Thus, self (e.g., individual identity) is the by-product of this interaction, which is socio-culturally, historically, and politically produced in a given context (e.g., society, social institutions). This is a relational self, therefore “individuals are relational beings that create constantly changing meanings in interaction with others” (Gubrium & Koro-Ljungberg, 2005, p. 693).

Berger and Luckmann’s project was followed by a German American sociologist, Burkart Holzner (1972), who received relatively less attention when he published a similar tone detailing “the social construction of reality.” He agreed with Berger and Luckmann (1966), as both were concerned with processes of reality construction (Conrad & Barker, 2010; Vance, 1991) and inspired by similar theoretical sources. Holzner (1972) shed light on the individuals’ experiences and interpretation of past and present reality, and anticipation of future reality, dealing with the shared symbolic and cognitive universe of meaning. However, Holzner differed from Berger and Luckmann (1966) in terms of his theoretical pursuits. While Berger and Luckmann (1966) ideas are focused on the construction of shared symbolic world, which is endowed with both objective and subjective reality, Holzner (1972) dealt with the social distribution and control of reality construction (Segre, 2016).

SC has gained incredible popularity among the qualitative researchers (Gubrium & Koro-Ljungberg, 2005; Kaufmann, 2011) because of its epistemological strengths, including its capacity of application and explanation of human being’s complex social experiences and actions. However, it has some pragmatic pitfalls, which we argue, create room for FDA approaches. Although SC embraces constructed realities, some have argued that it is still a modernist approach because it, in fact, rearticulates Enlightenment perspectives on knowledge, rationality, and truth to render these as relative (or perspectival), instead of facilitating an outright rejection of Enlightenment ideas (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2016). Another challenge is that SC does not solicit unsuccessful, marginalized, untold, and unspoken voices/silences. Even though this approach challenges taken-for-granted ideas, it does not resist established power relations or structures, which we argue should be the heart of qualitative data analysis. It is argued that SC approaches merely analyze the surface meanings of action or text, such as simple cataloging and observation of patterns or categories, and miss critical dimensions of the reality (Lupton, 1992). In terms of meaning-making through interaction between an interviewer and participant in qualitative interview, for example, Gubrium and Koro-Ljungberg (2005) argue that during interviews, some “constructions” are produced, which help to maintain some patterns of social actions/practices and exclude other patterns. This inclusion/exclusion is reproduced in social constructionism.

In contrast, FDA uses a “power lens” that may resist or disrupt the established constructions and inclusion/exclusion processes (Frost et al., 2010; Khan, 2017, 2018). Additionally, when using SC, the final product of an interview is an

understanding of meaning. However, FDA allows room for further analysis because this perspective considers that meaning making processes cannot be suspended with the end of an interview. This process continues through different readings of the presented document in various socio-cultural contexts (Gubrium and Koro-Ljungberg, 2005). In relation to definitions and key roles of SC in qualitative data analysis, Burr (1995, pp. 2, 3) provided comprehensive, but precise explanations of how it can be utilized in qualitative data analysis. According to Burr (1995), social constructionism has still compelling appeal in qualitative data analysis because it is a critical stance toward taken-for-granted knowledge, and it challenges phenomena as taken-for-granted, implying that alleged objective facts are neither objectively knowable nor inevitable. It further explains the way we understand our world in terms of historical and cultural specification, and stresses that knowledge is produced and sustained through social processes, in which knowledge and social action also go together. Thus, SC approaches focus on how we make meaning about our everyday lives or knowledge production, in the context of symbols and institutions.

A Passage to Foucauldian Discourse Analysis: Origin and Development

Regardless of whether Foucauldian discourse analysis is conceptualized as poststructuralist or postmodernist, it is a constructionist approach because it focuses construction of meaning of social actions, practices, and a text using a lens of power relations (Agger, 1991; Burr, 1995; Hodges et al., 2008; Sharp et al., 2017). Scholars have argued that the epistemological roots of the FDA are derived from structuralism (Smith, 2010). In this section, the origins and development of structuralism and post-structuralism are highlighted in order to provide a historical and intellectual background for FDA. Against a backdrop of social movements and historical incidences in the West and beyond, including the May 1968 historical student movement at the Sorbonne in Paris, the second wave of feminism, the Vietnam war, and the American civil rights movement, poststructuralism emerged as an intellectual movement out of France in 1960s (Mann, 1994; Norris, 2002; Khan, 2018). This incidence challenged the historical legacy of a popular school of thought, that is, structuralism or structuralist reductionism, and introduced an understanding of the world through a lens of deconstruction (Khan, 2018; Khan & Raby, 2020). This transition from structuralism to poststructuralism had a profound influence on social thought and brought forward counterarguments against key aspects of humanism and the Enlightenment legacy (Agger, 1991).

The idea of structuralism derived from the two leading scholars, linguist Ferdinand de Saussure and anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss (Khan, 2018), who asserted that language and culture follow the same structural relation between subject and object (Han, 2013; Mann, 1994). This is a scientific view of language and culture, which suggests that a “center” or underlying system organizes and sustains a whole structure (Khan, 2018). It sees the overarching systems of structure organized

around laws, rules, principles, individuals' behavior, and practices (Norris, 2002). Thus, every system, such as culture, health, illness, language, and sexuality, has a structure governed by consistent rules and determining elements. In this sense, structures are real things that lie beneath appearances and that regulate and construct meaning. Epistemologically, therefore, structuralism sees the truth "behind" or "within" a text (Khan, 2018). By contrast, poststructuralism emphasizes the interaction between a reader and a text in terms of a context, implying that a text is not passive, but active in the production of meaning (Han, 2013). This notion is echoed in Roland Barthes (1967) expression: "the death of the author," suggesting that a text is able to produce different meaning in view of different readers' interpretations (Han, 2013). Thus, poststructuralism stresses critiques of the classical Cartesian conception of the unitary subject with mastery and control over language depending on a reader's experiences (Mann, 1994) which may vary over time and across individuals because different individuals experience meaning differently in relation to their own knowledge (Agger, 1991).

Through deconstruction, one of the pioneer ideas of poststructuralism, Derrida challenged the idea that one can determine the definite meaning of a text, having refused to accept the claim of a generalized and absolute conclusion. According to Derrida (1997), all texts lead to different and multiple interpretations. As well, meanings of texts are diffused rather than fixed or settled, and there is no absolute interpretation or truth. Thus, textuality always provides a surplus of possibilities (Khan, 2018). In this sense, we cannot stand outside of textuality to find objectivity because there is no "outside of the text" (Derrida, 1997, p. 158). Therefore, deconstruction raises the question of whether everything is depthless, loosely attached to concepts but not really proven. It brings out the hidden mechanisms behind systems to create transparency in order to harness awareness and deeper understanding for certain processes. In terms of analyzing texts or cultural practices, poststructuralist approaches assert that the author is destabilized or decentered, and the interpreters or readers are the focal point. Philosophically, this approach does not accept the totalizing (e.g., will of God), essentialist (e.g., there is reality or truth), and foundationalist (e.g., stable system) ideas. Instead, it holds that subjects (people, such as men or women) are culturally and discursively created and structured. So, in this view, reality is fragmented, diverse, multiple, tenuous, and culturally specific.

Unlike modern enlightenment thoughts (e.g., Western humanism and reasons), poststructuralists assert that there is not a point of reference, no single truth, and no ultimate reality, but subjective, relative, and is a creation of human minds (Agger, 1991). Similarly, postmodernism provides nuance as well as basic and far-reaching critiques of the myth and illusions around modern thought, including the obsession in research with the scientific method, measurement, and generalizability (Smith, 2010). Historically and epistemologically, both—poststructuralism and postmodernism boarded in the same boat when French philosopher Jean François Lyotard (1979/1984) used the term in his book, entitled "The

Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge" (Agger, 1991). However, their geographical roots are different because postmodernism originated in America in the 1950s (Mann, 1994).

Initially, Foucault was interested in the "analysis of systems," such as health systems, sexuality, and governance (Mills, 2003). However, socio-political changes in Europe (the 1960s–1970s) directed his thinking from philosophical and psychological analysis (pre 1960s) to historical analysis (post-1960s). As a result, he was concerned with analyses of the production of knowledge and discourses, such now called Foucauldian archaeological analysis. This type of analysis is concerned with examining, based on history, the relations between different statements, the ways these systems are grouped together, and the conditions under which they emerge. Therefore, archaeological analysis does not offer an explanation of what happens in the past. Rather, it looks at the discursive conditions in which it happens. Foucault's archaeology of knowledge is important in order to understand the later method of analysis: genealogy. After the 1960s, Foucault moved his attention to analysis of the internal structure of knowledge and discourses in terms of the processes of power relations ("power/knowledge"), and their impact on individuals or society as a whole. "The History of Sexuality" (1978) is a vivid example of Foucault's genealogical analysis where he was concerned with functions of power and describing the "history of the present," including the processes of how truth is formed and the conditions under which some utterances, statements, propositions, and a particular version of knowledge come to be seen as truth, rather than merely analyzing of truth. Accordingly, this truth-making process is a discursive process, in which power relations are embedded, and an individual engages in constructing his/her subjectivity (Waitt, 2005). In this context, Foucault sheds light on the "ontology of ourselves," which brings "analytic gaze to the condition under which we, as individuals, exist and what causes us to exist in the way that we do" (Mills, 2003, p. 25). This analytic gaze of self-construction is a historical product in terms of ethical, political, and cultural values. In fact, Foucault combined historical analysis with psychological and philosophical analysis through the transition of archaeology to genealogy. He examines disciplinary knowledge in terms of its historicity, and via this epistemological and ontological trajectory, Foucault moved from a structuralist to poststructuralist approach.

A number of discourse analysis methods have been used in empirical qualitative and textual data analysis, such as discourse analysis, critical discourse analysis, post structural discourse analysis, linguistic discourse analysis (Cheek, 2004). Graham (2011) distinguished Foucauldian discourse analysis from critical discourse analysis: the former focuses less on the micro (the structural/grammatical/linguistic/semiotic figures) aspects that make up the text, and more on the macro that is what is made up by the text itself. Of the three roots of discourse analysis (Cheek, 2004), such as linguistic, social theoretical, and post-structural roots, we are interested in

post-structural FDA, which constructs objects in the context of power relations (Parker, 1992).

In order to understand FDA, it is necessary to be clear about how Foucault defined “discourse (Foucault, 1972, 1981).” He defined discourse in many ways throughout “The Archaeology of Knowledge” (1972) and “The Order of Discourses” (1981). In the chapter related to “statement” (1972), which is a central concept in defining discourse, he used this term to refer to the general domain of all statements encompassing all utterances and statements which have been constructed to provide meaning and which have some effects in society. Then, discourse is defined as an individualizable set of statements, including all statements and utterances which seem to form a grouping (e.g., child sexuality, heterosexuality, disability) (1972). Finally, discourse is sometimes defined as a regulated practice, implying the unwritten rules, regulations, cultural and value structures that produce particular utterances and statements (e.g., socially and culturally prescribed rules for sexual relations) (1972). Thus, instead of thinking of discourse as a set of statements which have some coherence, according to Foucault (1981), discourse is a complex set of practices which try to keep statements and utterances in circulation or try to seclude them from others and “exclude” those statements from circulation (Mills, 2003). There is a power relationship embedded in the inclusion/exclusion process, which is discussed below.

Foucauldian discourse can be further distinguished through mutually supplementary ideas, including power/knowledge, resistance, normalization, and truth/common sense truth. Foucault asserts that power is everywhere. Unlike traditional views of power that position it as something people use to oppress or control individuals or force individuals to do something (e.g., through the military), Michel Foucault (1978) positions power as relational. He notes that power is also productive (Foucault, 1978), in that it produces the way we construct ourselves and each other in society. According to Foucault (1978), this is how power, including both disciplinary power (e.g., via school, religion) and bio-power (e.g., via the subjugated physical body), produce “discursive practices” or “discursive knowledge” in which individuals are expected to behave in certain ways bolstered by common sense truths. As a result, an individual is judged by how closely he/she fits into the expected norms. Therefore, power is what makes us what we are through the processes of normalization. Simply put, Foucauldian power is omnipresent, productive (not just destructive), circulating, diffused, enacted, discursive, embedded in discourse, knowledge, and regimes of truth, constituting (the subject), embodied, and consensual rather than coercive. As power is relational, according to Foucault (1978), resistance is an integral component of power relations and overlaps with it. Since power is diffusive, Foucault illustrates that resistance to power must then be diffused across social systems and incorporated into the everyday. Both domination and resistance power are “fragmented and inconsistent, with each always containing elements of each other” (Raby, 2005, p. 161). Thus, resistance is about local struggles that challenge institutions and normalizations rather than revolutionary attacks to the state.

Therefore, in modern societies, self-surveillance and self-regulation, rather than force, are a mechanism of social control. Discipline becomes the technique (or an instrument) of power and body becomes the object of and target of disciplinary power (Foucault, 1978).

Implications of FDA in Qualitative Data Analysis: A Reflection

Even though both SC and FDA are social constructionist analytics (Sharp & Richardson, 2001), poststructuralist/Foucauldian discourse analysis is a particularly necessary or useful way for qualitative data analysis (Cheek, 2004). Simply put, SC can be criticized because it “fails to deal adequately with power-laden political context in which presumably open dialogue occurs and genuine understanding is constructed” (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2016, p. 14). Even though SC is a critical analytic approach, in our view it is a relatively “bare bones” project that examines meanings given to events and the ways in which discourses (e.g., mental health) are constructed (Wingsey-Yanez, 2014). In contrast, the main tenants of discourse analysis are that our social actions are intertwined with socio-cultural, historical, and political contexts, and our social relations are produced, reproduced, and resisted (Janks, 1997). Understanding meaning only in an interactional context is insufficient for dismantling existing reality or truth, which is why Foucault was not interested in reducing discourse to merely “meaning” (1972). A Foucauldian discourse analyst is concerned with how “games of truth” are played out in socio-political contexts, instead of focusing on how meaning is constructed in interactional settings (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2008). For example, what are the underlying questions (and embedded power relations) we may consider if we want to conduct a discourse analysis of occupational health and safety policy of a given country. Therefore, we may ask: how are the discursive formation of occupational health, safety, regulations are constructed? Which perspectives of workplace safety are legitimized, and which are silenced? Who produces the knowledge and which knowledge? And who can exercise their power in relation to this regulation and with which strategies? In short, when a discourse analysis is consistent with Foucauldian insights, it does not reveal a true meaning in terms of what is said or not said. It looks at statements in terms of what they do, not what they say because “discourses are not objects but rules and procedures that make objects thinkable and governable, and they do not “determine” things but intervene in the relations of what can be known, said, or practiced” (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2008, p. 120). The bottom line is that it is that FDA allows for understanding of political or constitutive effects of social actions (Graham, 2011). Thus, Foucauldian discourse analysis is concerned with power, which investigates how particular discourse systematically constructs a version of the social world (Hodges et al., 2008; Talja, 1999).

FDA helps us to understand “how people think, what they know and how they speak about the world around us, and how their knowledge is culturally embedded” (Raby, 2002, p. 30).

For instance, Hodges et al. (2008) detail how, in his study of madness, Foucault revealed three different discourses, which constructed three different types of madness in terms of three different historical epoch and places: madness as spiritual possession, madness as social deviancy, and madness as mental illness (Hodges et al., 2008). Likewise, Speed (2006) illustrated how different discourses of “mental health services” construct three different types of people’s identity: patients, consumers, and survivors. Thus, FDA helps us to unveil the multiple ways to define a discourse, or multiple discourses, to construct reality, which is linked to the power and objectives of particular institutions.

FDA does not position methodology simply as a set of technical procedures in order to manipulate data (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2016). Rather, it enables us to consider the hidden motivations behind the choice of a particular method of research to interpret particular texts or social actions. This is a Foucauldian genealogical analytic (gaze), which considers the ontological and epistemological assumptions behind a project, a statement, a text, and participants’ talk (Hallett et al., 2000). It can open up a window of understanding about what individuals, organizations, and even whole societies really think, rather than what they show with their manifested meaning.

In qualitative data analysis, coding, as well as thematic analysis is a popular undertaking. However, it does not allow for the representation of socially produced silences because it underlines the presence over absence and spoken voice over silence (Rosiek & Heffernan, 2014). In this context, that which is not expressed or expressed with gestures and postures becomes meaningless (Rosiek & Heffernan, 2014). Silence is often seen as resistance or an impediment in qualitative data analysis (MacLure et al., 2010). However, silence is full of people’s untold and unspoken chronicles and can be a strength for qualitative data analysis (Bengtsson & Fynbo, 2018; Khan, 2017). In addition, silence can create something new, instead of merely reproducing pre-existing structures (Bengtsson & Fynbo, 2018). Thus, silence in an interview may be a resource in qualitative data analysis as it creates diverse possibilities for forming diverse expressions. In a study using FDA, Hamed et al. (2017) were able to consider women’s narratives on obstetric Fistula via non-verbal communication, as well as the use of space, body language, and silent moments in their qualitative data analysis. Thus, FDA may enable us to listen to socio-culturally produced silence in qualitative data analysis.

FDA has been a growing analytical method in policy research, across fields of study, including environmental policy and planning (Hajer, 1995; Jensen, 1997; Mazza & Rydin, 1997; Sharp & Richardson, 2001), public health (Lupton, 1992; Teghtsoonian, 2009), occupational health and safety policy (Zoller, 2003), education policy (Rogers et al., 2005; Stevens, 2003; Thomas, 2002). The popularity of this method in policy lies in its ability to solicit critical assumptions regarding how policy formation and reformation are intertwined with broader social changes and stakeholders (e.g., policymakers, consumers or benefited people, and implementing agencies),

which are complex and messy interactions that construct the policy processes in which the stakeholders are actively engaged (Liz Sharp & Richardson, 2001). It is applied as a way of understanding the dynamics of political processes, socio-economic and environmental lives, which are immanently embedded in public or social policies (Hewitt, 2009). In fact, these processes of policy formation are “the production of discourses,” which question the practices of government and how public policy is formed, shaped and reshaped, having refuted to institutional histories or taken for granted ideas (Hewitt, 2009). Thus, FDA promotes us to ask, in relation to a policy instrument, how, why, and by whom the reality is attributed in a context of power-relations (or arguments) rather than just asking about the reality, having excluded other arguments (Sharp & Richardson, 2001). This approach deconstructs and therefore denaturalizes and critiques, what forms a particular embedded social reality, compelling us to question it as truth or reality (Winges-Yanez, 2014).

In addition to “power/knowledge” as an analytical framework in FDA, policy analysis has also leaned on “Foucauldian Governmentality” lens in order to understand policy critically. By governmentality, Michel Foucault (1977) drew on the metaphor of the “panopticon,” implying that way of self-surveillance and self-regulation, rather than force, are mechanisms of social control. Thus, discipline becomes the technique of power and body becomes the object of and target of disciplinary power. Using this FDA lens, for example, Zoller (2003) analyzed critically how workers consent to occupational health hazards, and how they regulate themselves in relation to the regulatory mechanism (e.g., occupational health and safety policy) through produced and reproduced the common identity norms and values by the employers. She argued that occupational health and safety is a political discourse at both policy and everyday organizational levels and provides insight on the suppression of conflicts at each level of organization. This study also revealed that one of the reasons why employees do not report work-related injury and illness is “disciplinary norms” (discursive and ideological construction of social reality) created by the organization through their policies related to workplace health and safety. Hence, employees themselves subjugated their physical body (e.g., self-surveillance) and normalized their illness and hazards related to work, which reduced reporting and produced consent to existing protection systems that exclude their experiences (Zoller, 2003). Another example is hegemonic masculinity ideals, such as self-reliance, autonomy, and an emphasis on agency (Sloan et al., 2010). A culture of healthism encourages people to monitor themselves to present as healthy, which, in turn, functions to discipline their potentially rebellious minds and bodies. In this context, Sloan et al. (2010) did not merely analyze how healthy masculinities were constructed; using FDA, they also revealed how these construction processes are shaped by the discourses of self-surveillance and Western neo-liberal politics/policies. Thus, FDA helps us to gain a (re)view of the problem from the “outside” and think (differently) about the present by taking up a position outside of our current regimes of truths, in order to

recognize the hidden assumptions and practices that form the rules of discourse formation (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2008; Hewitt, 2009).

Is SC Necessary When FDA Is Applied?

In this penultimate section, we move from theory to application by providing a specific example of the use of FDA analysis derived from the lead author's study (Khan, 2018) of sex education gaps in Bangladesh. Using the lens of SC and FDA, this study addressed the research questions: How do Bangladeshi young men receive sex education during adolescence? How do they interpret their experiences? How do their narratives reproduce and/or disrupt dominant discourses related to sex education, including discourses around sexuality, masculinity, and manhood? This study identified dominant discourses around sex education, which were intertwined with social institutions, including schools; it also illustrated instances that reproduced and disrupted these dominant discourses. Some participants embraced dominant discourses while others disrupted them, and some contradicted themselves. In this case, SC provided insights into the ways that the participants interpreted their experiences. However, this interpretation lacked critical engagement by not informing how the young men's construction (production or reproduction) of experiences had been shaped by power-relations, where knowledgeable authorities (such as schools, religion) played a pivotal role in forming their experiences. It is the participants who are the product of discourses. As well, the analyst or qualitative researcher is also a product of discourses. As such, the meaning-making or construction process of experiences, which is the final contribution of SC, is the first step of FDA. This step is then further examined using different Foucauldian lenses, such as power/knowledge, resistance, truth games, and genealogy. Given these analytic conditions, the lead author published a paper (Khan & Raby, 2020) using only FDA, showing how Bangladeshi young men constructed, produced and/or reproduced, and contradicted their experiences (discourses) around sex education. This analysis is one example of how SC is unnecessary, if we use FDA. In addition, the two approaches are philosophically distinct. SC favors a conventional humanist qualitative methodology, while FDA favors post qualitative methodology (St. Pierre, 2020); as such, they cannot go hand by hand, as realized by St. Pierre (St. Pierre, 2018):

I realized those two structures could not be thought together, that their ontologies and epistemologies were incompatible because of their very different descriptions of human being, language, discourse, power, agency, resistance, freedom, and so on. (p. 603)

Conclusion

This article has explored opportunities provided to qualitative researchers in FDA, which allow for an understanding of the "complexity" of human experiences, ranging from basic human

communication to the internal functioning systems of power-relations, and which provide us with a version of the truth or reality about the problems encountered by researchers. This article proposes that it is imperative to develop and promote a sound analytic that can capture the important and implicit components/assumptions of that complexity. Against this backdrop, FDA may be a fairer analytic than SC because it not only analyzes what participants have said as well as the way they said it, by looking not only at how they interpret their experiences, but also how their experiences reproduce and/or disrupt dominant discourses around the problems under study. Though FDA plays pivotal roles in problematizing intellectual traditions, it has some drawbacks in that it is more concerned with theory than method. The absence of an explicit technique for researchers to follow is a striking constraint for new researchers. Finally, as FDA ideas are full of cryptic philosophies, novice researchers might struggle to apply the concepts to qualitative data analysis.

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