

GCKN Analytic Methodology

Overview

Global Cultural Knowledge Network (GCKN) social scientists developed the GCKN Analytic Methodology (GAM) based on select social science research approaches. Furthermore, GAM is augmented with choice structured analytic techniques.

The process occurs in phases, relying on open-source research, scholarly literature, and vetted subject matter experts (SMEs) in the topic of study. The methodology is a combination of multiple divergent and convergent data analysis procedures fused with an overarching and rigorous methodological process.

GAM Benefits:

- Provides a systematic and reliable process for explaining complex phenomena
- Uses inductive and deductive data to provide actionable assessments
- Clarifies the analysis process to enable easy application in real time
- Empowers analysts to engage with the data and to situate themselves within the analysis process
- Provides empirically verifiable bases for operational-level decision-making

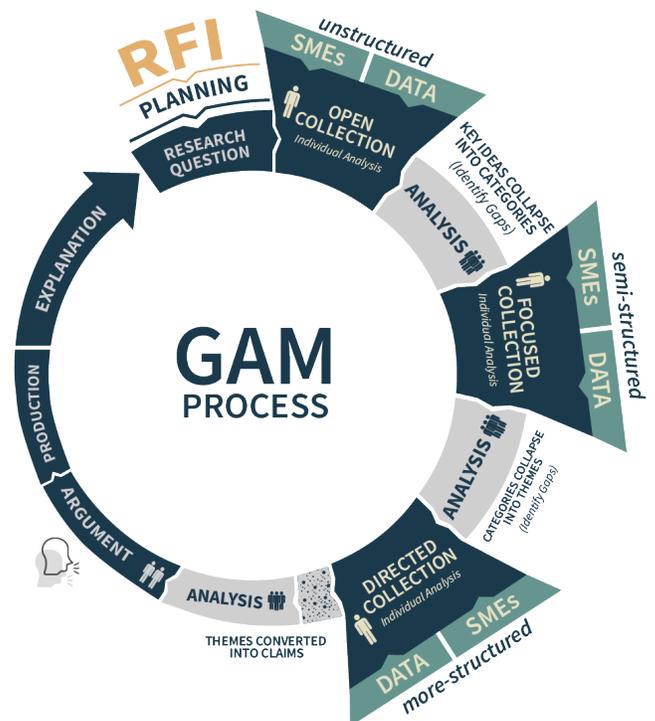
Specifically, GAM is a multi-step process; each step interrogates important dimensions of a phenomenon, but is linked to the other steps for explanation. The interdependent nature of the steps permits elements to interact through constant comparison of data, contexts, process, and outcomes. Through this intensely comparative procedure, the analyst reflexively establishes the parameters of the study, clearly outlines project objectives and research questions, iteratively collects data, seeks clarification to inject new ideas, intensively interrogates, and revisits these steps to achieve deeper understanding.

Methodology Steps Include:

- **Step one:** focus the analysis to outline and generate concepts through categorization
- **Step two:** fragment data into manageable components to identify structure and patterns
- **Step three:** make sense of data to determine relationships and produce meaning
- **Step four:** build on the previous steps to revise and refine explanation

In the final step, the analyst publishes the results to convey the important conclusions to military decision-making and soldier readiness in the form of information papers, analytic reports, infographics, briefings, journal articles, essays and book chapters.

The GAM helps novice and expert analysts to systematically reduce data, categorically integrate concepts, identify relationships, and produce credible and reliable explanations of the phenomenon under study. This is a result of GAM's unique ability to interact—by deliberately engaging in particular actions throughout the process—with the data to materialize meaning. Understanding and applying these actions are critical for effective examination of the topic and essential to analyst sense-making.



Source: GCKN Analytic Methodology (GAM) Process, infographic, GCKN.



Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027
Robert W. Kurz, Director
913-684-5972
robert.w.kurz.civ@army.mil

GLOBAL CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE NETWORK
<https://community.apan.org/wg/gckn>

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Rationale

The need for conducting effective sociocultural analysis is addressed in Army policy and doctrinal documents, including the Army Operating Concept (AOC) “Win in a Complex World,” Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) G-2’s “Operational Environments to 2028: The Strategic Environment for Unified Land Operations,” Joint Publication 2-01.3 Joint Intelligence Preparation of the Operational Environment, ATP2-01.3 Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield/Battlespace, and TP525-8-5 Functional Concept for Engagement. The range of policy and doctrinal documents suggests that the Army needs a single approach for conducting sociocultural analysis; multiple entities within the Army devise their own sociocultural analytic frameworks that essentially address the same subject matter. For example, ATP2-01.3 Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield/Battlespace, FM 3-24 Counterinsurgency, FM 3-57 Civil Affairs Operations, and the Political Military Analysis Handbook from the Special Warfare Center and School (SWCS) each contain similar sociocultural analytic frameworks.

GCKN advances what the Army has previously published in this field, including the Army’s recent G-3/5/7 Culture, Regional Expertise and Language Warning Order, and offers a useful framework that addresses the sociocultural nature of the operational environment (OE). This framework includes a system of sociocultural conditions that may be exploited from within or outside the region to destabilize it or to undermine U.S. influence. While much of the Army’s literature provides helpful profiles of the human domain, GCKN’s framework directly addresses the cultural conditions that undermine OE stability and, more specifically, how diverse actors—domestic and foreign—leverage them to limit U.S. influence.

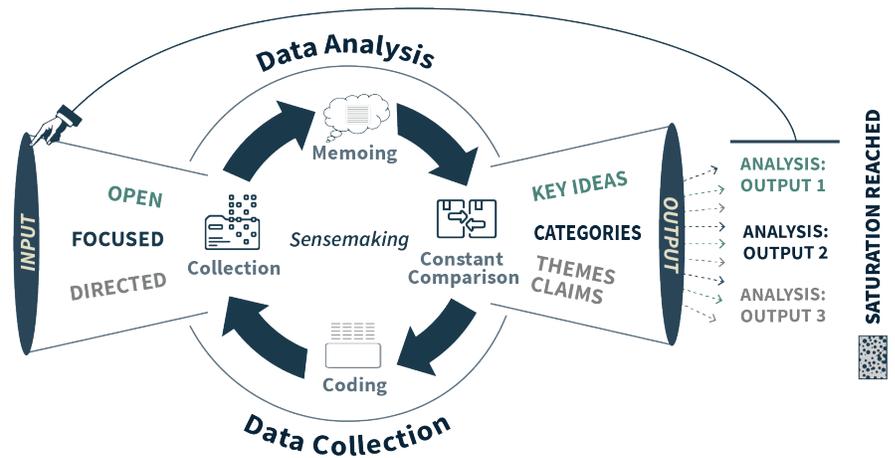
The GAM was developed by GCKN social scientists to directly address the Army’s analytic needs and requirements in this field. The Army must be able to tackle complex questions about its operational environment with a systematic and defensible methodology—and one that does not rely on the outsourcing of this task for decision-making. Furthermore, the GAM is extremely accessible and analytically sound as it is based on decades of social science research and augmented by Army analytic tradecraft.

The critical element in the GAM is the data-building and data-fragmenting process, which enables analysts to accumulate large bodies of data and to systematically abstract, fragment, or to facilitate a higher level understanding, using Glaser and Strauss’ (1967) Grounded Theory Methodology (GTM). The goal of GTM is to generate explanations for how

the social world works by allowing theories to emerge from—and be connected to—the reality they are developed to explain. Thus, explanations emerge from the ground up (i.e., from the data) rather than being imposed from the top, as is often the case in strictly hypothesis-testing research models.

The GAM approach is meant to bridge the yawning gap for reliable, credible, and efficient sociocultural analysis that accounts for the full range of conditions, interactions, and processes that impact issues related to stability and Army operations. The combination of quantitative and qualitative methods—or their inductive and deductive logics—provides greater predictive power than if either method were applied alone and linearly.

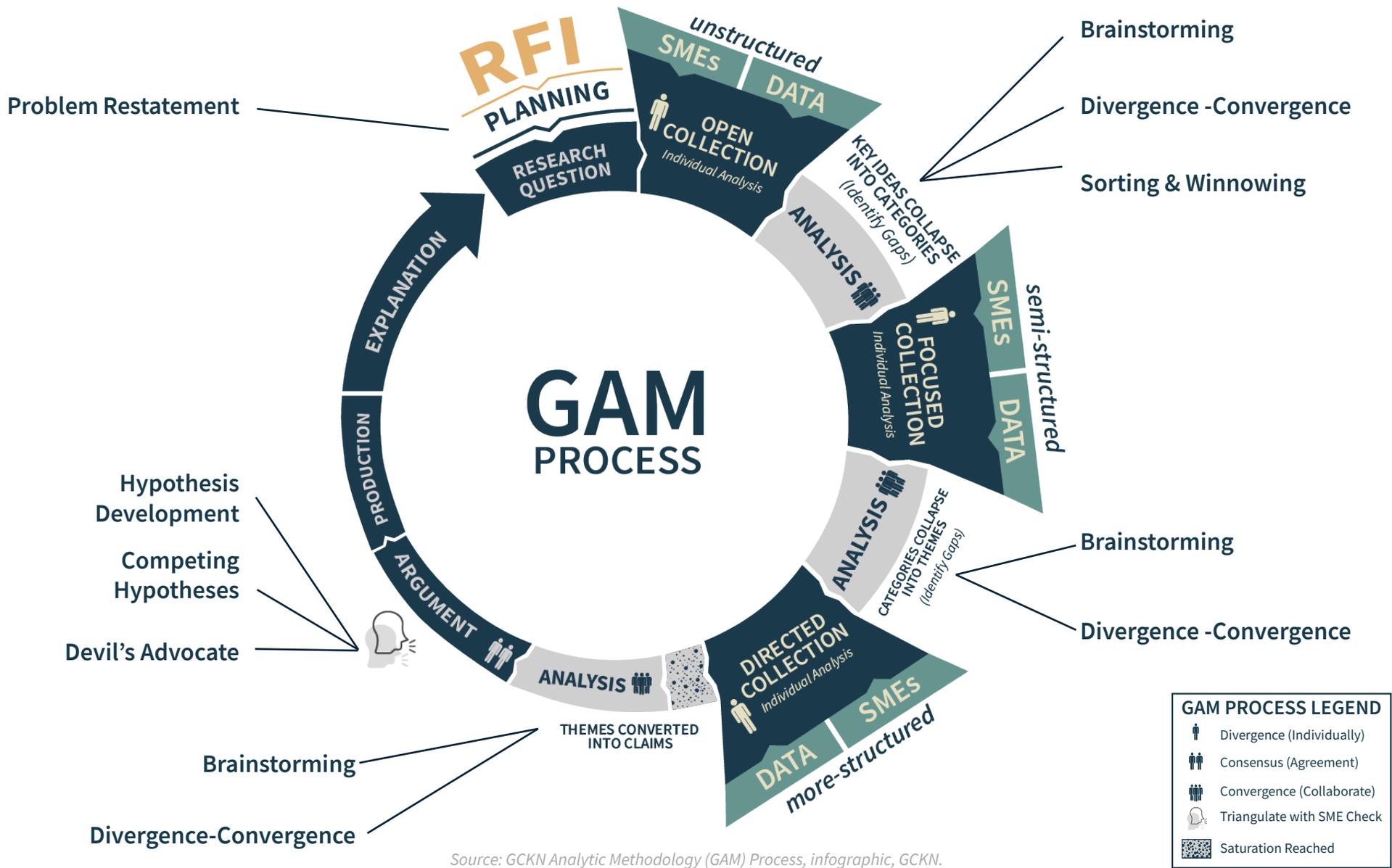
The GAM provides the principles and practical ways of collecting, refining, managing, synthesizing, integrating, and connecting large and complex bodies of sociocultural data. This, in turn, facilitates analysis in support of military decision-making. Central to understanding the GAM are several key terms, including iterative, reflexivity, coding and memoing—which together describe a process of constant comparison that permits analysts to identify, isolate, and engage with data centrally important to the research inquiry. Applied to a broad set of exclusive or interacting problems, the GAM can explain complexities in narrowly defined, tailored, or specific problem sets, and in broad, multidimensional, and interconnected situations that adversaries can exploit to upend the social order or to undermine U.S. influence.



Source: GAM Process Analysis Funnel, infographic, GCKN.

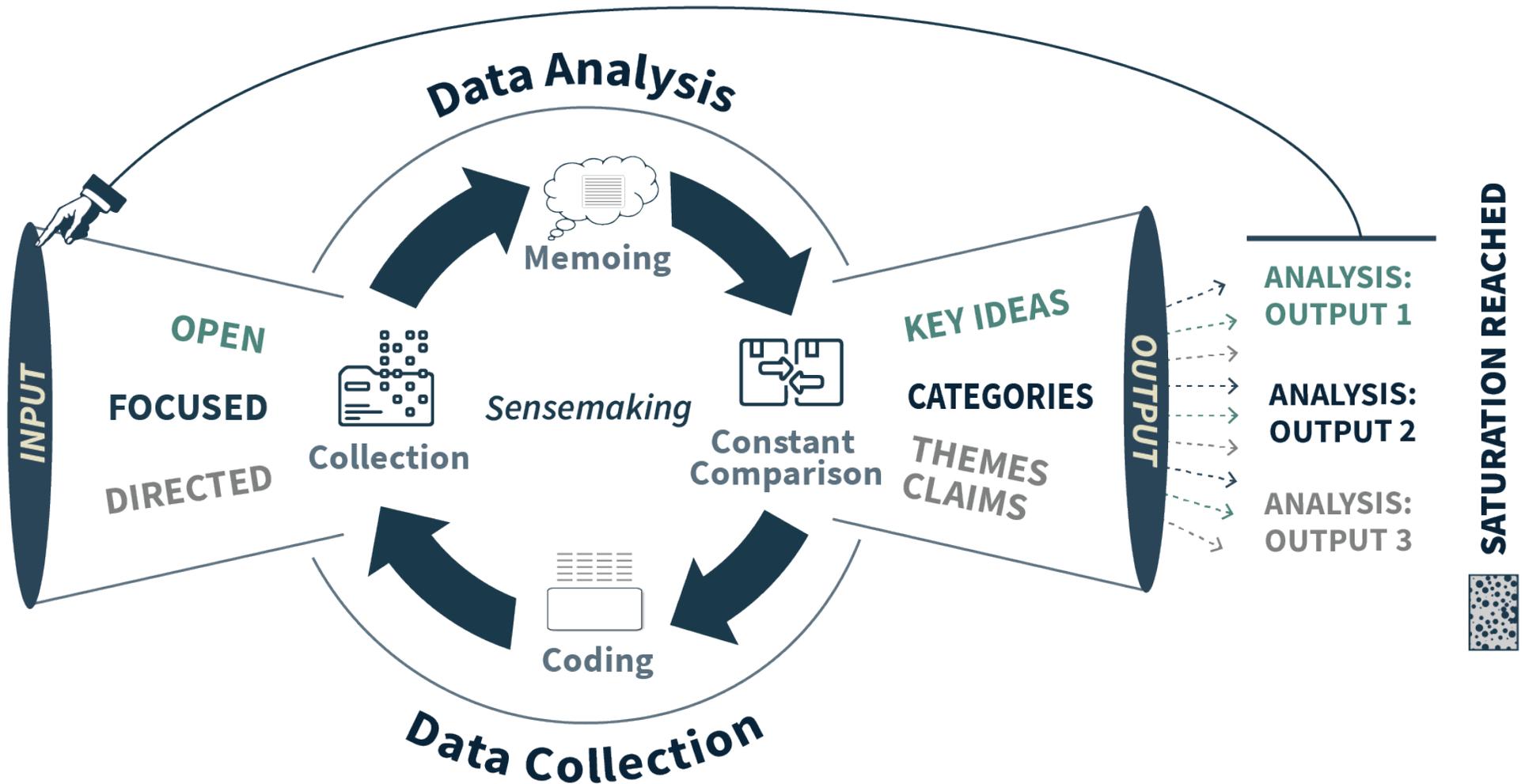


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Source: GCKN Analytic Methodology (GAM) Process, infographic, GCKN.

GAM Process Analysis Funnel



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