

Doing research relationships – Reflections upon a qualitative longitudinal project with young people

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In this paper, reflections on research relationships in a qualitative longitudinal (QL) project are provided from a relational perspective, in which agency is understood to be interdependent and evolving. All reflections are based on a study involving repeated interviews over nine years with young people who have experienced secure care, which is the most intrusive form of intervention for troubled youths in Swedish child welfare. Methodological QL research emphasizes the importance of the relationships between the researcher and participants, and an understanding of time and place as interdependent. Here, complexities in research relationships over time and the effects of repeated research encounters on the understanding of time are explored. The reflections are presented in three themes: *emotional footing*, *intersections of time and place*, and *evolving research agencies*. While emotions from the first encounters became a resource for reflections for the researcher, the recurrent interviews made the researcher become a time bearer that produced time-linear narratives of progress, and the research agencies of both the researcher and the participants evolved within and beyond the research project. Conclusions for qualitative social work research in regard to the effects of emotional, temporal and spatial dimensions on researcher vulnerability and research relationships over time are presented.