Ethical dimensions in narrative inquiry on and with people of vulnerable groups.

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Paper presentation

The aim of this paper is to investigate ethical dimensions when doing narrative inquiry on and with people of vulnerable groups.

I am a passionate knitter, and this autumn I met a Rom-woman on the street of Bergen in Norway, selling small items she had knitted. She can talk some English, and I started to ask her some questions about knitting and yarn. I learned that she did not have much yarn, so we made an appointment that I should bring her some leftovers of yarn from my home.

Some weeks later, I handed over some bags of yarn to Renata, and we had a little chat. When sitting there on the street with her, an older woman hit me on the back with her walking stick. I looked up, and could see and feel all the negative response to me sitting next to a Rom-woman. Renata and I changed Mobil-numbers, and she asked me to help her to get a warm jacket for the winter.

I have met Renata several times this autumn. Every time on the street. Every time with all this negative energy surrounding us (people walking with angry steps locking at her and me, make aggressive comments etc). She has shown me her family (5 kids and two grandchildren), I have even said hallo to them on Skype. She can tell me that knitting is her job, the way she can get some income for her and her family.

Renata is telling me an interesting story, and we have just began to share of each other’s lives. I will invite her home to me to knitting events with my (and hers) friends, and then see what comes out of this. I know this will give me much as a human being, but I also know that I am very interesting to making a narrative inquiry on and with her, and her hidden history.

In narrative inquiry, our focus is on place, temporality and phenomenon. Narrative Inquiry is relational inquiry where people in relation studying the experiences of people in relation. The inquiries are part of what we study. In narrative inquiry, you keep meeting yourself in the research, and you need to know where you are placed in the research. Sometimes we meet our self in unexpected ways (Clandinin, 2016).

When doing research on people of vulnerable groups, you have to be aware of your own preconception as a researcher, and ask where you place yourself in the research (Solbue, 2011; 2014). Narrative inquiry are often long term research projects where we get empathy with the informants and friendships are made. My questions for this paper are:
1. Where does the friendship ends and the research begin?
2. Why do I become friends with my informants? When I am emotional connected with them, will they give me more detailed and richer stories? Would we have become friends without my research project?

**Question:** What it means to be an activist and whose values we represent?

**Keywords:** Rom, narrative inquiry, ethic, preconception

References:

