National Centre for Research Methods Working Paper

09/14

New frontiers in qualitative longitudinal research: Perspectives of doctoral and early career researchers

Edited by Lucy Hadfield, Ester McGeeney and Fiona Shirani

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New Frontiers in Qualitative Longitudinal Research: Perspectives of Doctoral and Early Career Researchers.

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Biographical Notes.

Lucy Hadfield is an independent research consultant who has previously worked on two qualitative longitudinal projects about children's sibling relationships and motherhood, both of which have formed part of the ESRC Timescapes Changing Lives Programme. Lucy has recently finished her PhD; a qualitative longitudinal study about identity in the process of becoming a disabled mother. Lucy has been involved in setting up the New Frontiers in QLR PhD and Early Career Researchers' network and helping to deliver some of the NFQLR workshops.

Ester McGeeney is a Research Fellow at the Centre for Innovation and Research in Childhood and Youth at the University of Sussex. Ester has recently finished a PhD on young people's sexual relationships and cultures and is currently involved in a number of research projects involving children and young people. Ester has been involved in setting up the New Frontiers in QLR PhD and Early Career Researchers' network and helping to create online forums for sharing and disseminating ideas from the seminar series using social media.

Fiona Shirani is a Research Associate at Cardiff University. She also previously worked on the Timescapes qualitative longitudinal network as part of the Men as Fathers project, exploring the transition to first-time fatherhood and beyond. Whilst working on Timescapes, she completed her qualitative longitudinal PhD on the 'right time' for fatherhood. She currently works on the qualitative longitudinal and multimodal Energy Biographies project. Fiona has been involved in organising and helping to deliver some of the NFQLR workshops for doctoral and early career researchers.

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An introduction to New Frontiers in Qualitative Longitudinal Research (NFQLR): The doctoral and early career perspective

Lucy Hadfield, Ester McGeeney and Fiona Shirani

*#NFQLR We are off-day1 of event 1 of the New Frontiers in QLR!
(@estermcgeeney, 2012)*

In November 2012 a group of researchers from British universities launched the methodological innovation network *New Frontiers in Qualitative Longitudinal Research* (NFQLR). Funded by the National Centre for Research Methods (NCRM), the aim of the network was to bring together researchers and practitioners from a range of disciplinary traditions, and at different stages in their careers, to forge 'new frontiers' in qualitative longitudinal research (hereafter QLR). This collection brings together reflections from postgraduate doctoral students and early career researchers who shaped and participated in NFQLR network.

Since the turn of the millennium, QLR has become increasingly recognised as a distinct methodological paradigm within the UK, realised through the funding of longitudinal research studies such as the Timescapes Changing Lives Programme (2011) and the Real Times component of Third Sector Research Centre. Reflecting a 'renewed historical' or 'temporal' sensibility within the social sciences, there has been an increasing interest in QLR, evidenced through a growth in secondary analysis, the revisiting of classic studies and the creation and analysis of longitudinal archives such as Timescapes Archive (2011) and the Mass Observation Centre. It was in this context that the NFQLR network was realized with the aim of both consolidating existing knowledge and practice and creating a new frontier for QLR, with an emphasis on forging creativity and crossing disciplines (see Thomson et al., 2014*).

Reflecting the commitment of the network to build an enduring legacy for QLR, postgraduate doctoral students and early career researchers were invited to collaborate in the network's collective project of investigating how we *define*, *design* and *display* QLR. As a group we approached the NFQLR series of events at different stages in our own QLR journey. Some of us were just embarking on research design, others were in the thick of fieldwork, whilst a few were at the point of analysis and writing, with the prospect of the final viva exam or the end of a research contract an imminent reality. For many of us the invitation to join the NFQLR network

raised significant questions about the kind of contribution we could make and whether or not we could consider ourselves to be QL researchers. Can a PhD research project, undertaken within the strict time frame of a three year studentship really claim to be longitudinal? Can 'shortitudinal' research ever be or become longitudinal research? Or is this the early career and student fantasy in an increasingly competitive market for post-doctoral research funding and contracts? And how creative can we be in the context of doctoral projects in which we are encouraged to work to limited timeframes and draw boundaries around our contributions to knowledge?

Those of us employed as early career researchers on large scale QLR projects – often on short-term contracts – brought different kinds of ethical questions about the theory and practice of QLR to network discussions. We raised questions about the power dynamics within research teams, about ownership of data and about the pragmatics of conducting QLR in the context of insecure funding climates. Many of us struggled to continually participate in the series of NFQLR events as our job contracts ended, visas expired, and we juggled multiple jobs, unfinished PhDs, personal and family lives. For us this raised questions about what kind of commitment early career researchers can make to building 'new frontiers' in social research and what kind of insights can be generated from our own 'living connection' with the research in this climate (McLeod and Thomson, 2009).

This collection presents a sample of our collective process of considering these questions and making sense of QLR in the context of our own research projects. In each of the papers we consider how our participation in the network events and related social media activities (see below) have shaped our research practice – encouraging us to foreground temporality in our work, to reconsider what counts as 'QLR' or to examine how we document and display 'data' over time.

The NFQLR events, workshops and social media activities: developing a QLR sensibility

> *Thomson: will build up a conversation through blog for the network – it's a longitudinal method #NFQLR (@Auralisings, 2012)*

Between November 2012 and September 2013 five events were hosted by institutions across mainland Britain including the universities of Southampton, Cardiff, Manchester, Sussex and

Birkbeck, London as a means of creating an interdisciplinary and international forum for debate. The events spanned a number of issues across QLR, with contributions from a range of different disciplinary traditions. Each event involved a linked workshop where, amongst other activities, experts in QLR engaged with questions and issues raised by PhD and early career researchers.

At each event a handful of participants used twitter to document and share fragments of conversation and debate. Using the hashtag #NFQLR and the social network services Storify and Epilogger, participants' photos and comments were collated to create online stories or timelines of each event We also created an NFQLR network blog and invited participants to collaborate in the collective project of documenting and reflecting on the network events (McGeeney, 2012, New Frontiers Blog, 2014). We wanted to explore the potential of blogging as a qualitative longitudinal method, using individual blog entries to create a record of the network's development over time. Many of the papers in this collection are based on thoughts documented through the NFQLR blog over the duration of the project.

Our first event in collaboration with QUEST at the University of Southampton focused on interdisciplinary perspectives on continuity and change. We raised the question, what counts as 'QLR' and asked how continuities and changes can be captured and demonstrated over time. This event brought together researchers from the fields of sociology, history, literary, policy and development studies. It was in this first event that the network began to shape what we came over the course of the series to call a 'QLR sensibility', defined as; 'an appetite to understand ourselves and our knowledge projects as situated and dynamic and engaging in recursive practices of documentation, reflection and analysis' (Thomson et al., 2014:4). In our first linked workshop event with Professors Jeanine Andersons and Lois Weis, we asked how it was possible to build a longitudinal study or work with a 'QLR sensibility' over the course of our PhD and research careers, alongside more practical questions such as how to develop analytical strategies for working with a dense dataset (Hadfield NFQLR 2012).

At our second event at Cardiff University the network focused on research relationships in QLR and how the extension of this relationship over time, in an increasingly digitised landscape, complicates and amplifies a range of ethical issues. For example, we asked questions about whether anonymity is possible within QLR in a digital age and whether research without the promise of anonymity could in fact be more ethical. Such questions were explored further in the

linked workshop which included presentations on multi-modality by Bella Dicks and Fiona Shirani (Dicks, 2013, Shirani, 2013) followed by discussion of some of the key ethical issues that had arisen from our own research. Based on our discussions we also created short films focusing on the use of multi-modal methods in QLR and the potential of these methods to shape research relationships and enable new forms of participant audiences (SussexCIRCY 2013a&2013b).

At our third event hosted by the Social Life of Methods stream of CRESC at the University of Manchester we focused on 'durational phenomena' and potential links between temporal and spatial mobilities. In the linked workshop, participants were given 'cases' from two newspaper stories and asked to collectively design a QLR study. We drew on key concepts identified from Day 1 such as 'social time', 'anchoring devices', 'prospective and retrospective', 'unit of analysis' and 'attrition' (McGeeney, 2013), Working with our QLR 'experts' Julie McLeod and Liz Stanley, we considered what these concepts and the overarching themes of 'duration' and 'seriality' meant for the design and practice of QL research.

Our fourth event was hosted by the department of psychosocial studies at Birkbeck, University of London and the department of performance studies at Roehampton University. The purpose of this event was to draw into conversation practice traditions and QLR, using this to question our taken for granted stance on duration, participation, situation and reflexivity. In the linked workshop the discussion followed on from some of the provocative questions raised on Day 1 as to how social research might be enriched by paying attention to 'its own artifice' and the way we are embedded in the research process (Thomson et al., 2014:6). Participants were invited to take part in a practical exploration of how photography and performance could be used to shape our research practice, generating insights and knowledge that may not be accessible through more traditional research methods. Simon Bayly's game design experimentation offered us the opportunity to engage with fiction, playfulness and creativity in a series of 'scripted walks' using photography to document our experience in the moment and the sense of the unknown as we invited strangers we met to tell their own story of a significant journey.

Finally the fifth event hosted by the University of Sussex's Centre for Innovation and Research in Childhood and Youth (CIRCY) focused on the part played by qualitative longitudinal methods in childhood studies, exploring observation and visual methods in relation to the associated themes of 'development' and 'transition' (Thomson et al., 2014). In the linked workshop we

came together for a final time to draw together and reflect upon our individual and collective processes of sense-making across the NFQLR series. Through group discussion, we began to develop further the contributions that have come to form this collection of papers.

Network Reflections

At the final workshop held at the University of Sussex participants reflected on the process of coming together over a period of time in different locations across the UK. We agreed that this collective journey of understanding and developing QLR had helped to shed light on the significance of our own individual 'vantage points' from which to make sense of temporal phenomena (McLeod and Thomson, 2009). Reflecting on debate across the network events we discussed the implications of redefining QLR not in relation to a particular research design based on repeat interviews but as Catherine Walker clearly articulates in her blog entry:

> 'as a sensibility, a mindset, an orientation, a foregrounding of temporality, an inspiration to remain alert to time and temporality in our research.' (Walker 2013).

As some of us had recently submitted our theses, talk turned to the fallacy or fantasy of the 'end' of the PhD project, our sense of unfinished business, questions we still wanted to ask and the emotional toll of leaving our analysis open, or, paradoxically, of the idea of closing it down. We began to question the extent to which our newly attuned alertness to time and temporality could be applied to all social research – including our own 'shortitudinal' masters, PhD and contract research projects. As several of the papers included in this collection suggest, adopting this 'mindset' has significant implications for the longitudinal potential of doctoral projects, opening up possibilities for revisiting PhD projects (dis)continuously across a research career.

Collection Overview

Thomson: Exhaustion - in QLR you need some punctuation - a beginning and an ending #nfqlr (@NewFrontiersQLR 2013)

We begin this collection with reflections from Ester McGeeney on the use of social media at the network events and as part of our individual and collective sense-making processes. In her paper Ester uses the fragments of our discussions recorded on twitter to consider the ethics of

using social media to generate and disseminate knowledge from QLR. Her paper considers questions raised at the events about the 'new purchase' that digital technologies can give us on time and temporality, but also the new purchase that a QLR sensibility can offer on the affordances of digital technologies.

In the second paper Claude Jousselin reflects on his Masters and PhD fieldwork at support groups for adult Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in the UK. Claude explores the way in which his encounter with QLR methods through the NFQLR network produced fruitful questions about the temporal dimensions of living with ADHD and led him to reconsider what 'counts' as the start and finish of his research journey. In concluding his paper Claude reflects how thinking temporally can be an important asset for doctoral researchers. The third paper continues this theme as PhD student Sarah Leaney embarks on the analysis of a 'moment' recorded in her fieldnotes and we are invited to join her exploration of time and authority in data representation and analysis. Her paper draws in particular on the third NFQLR event and on Andrew Abbott's (2007) notion of 'lyrical sociology' as a provocation to treat her data differently. Sarah reflexively considers the impact this encounter has had on her research practice and on her theorising of power and equality.

In the following paper, Rebecca Webb considers the question 'what is data?', which was posed at event 4, and explores how insights from arts-based practitioners may give a different purchase on this question as well as on her own ethnographic research. Reflecting on her position as a doctoral researcher in the final stages of writing and analysis, Rebecca considers the ways in which data can be 're-animated' through data analysis and thesis writing and the 'politics of reconstructing data as text'. Providing further reflection on the writing process, Fabio Gaspani, inspired by an image described in a Philip K. Dick novel, considers the construction of spatio-temporal boundaries in social research activity. Fabio suggests that the research process can be viewed as a 'qualitative longitudinal experience' and proposes the development of reflexive practices to make this visible in written outputs.

Nearing 'the end' of the QLR project Lucy Hadfield shares her experience of preparing for a PhD viva examination on her own QLR project; Becoming a Disabled Mother (2013). Drawing on insights from the NFQLR network events Lucy argues that the period prior to examination affords an important moment of reflection on the QLR journey, reinforcing the centrality of the researcher as a 'living connection' to research. Rather than see the viva as the end to this

journey Lucy points to ways in which a new frontier in QLR informed by clinical and arts-based practice can enrich future disability studies research by offering rich and creative means to investigate the 'intermeshed' experience of becoming a disabled mother.

Writing from the other side of PhD research as a postdoctoral researcher, Mastoureh Fathi (with Fiona Shirani) draws on two studies of the experiences of Iranian migrants living in the UK to consider the implications of bringing a temporal perspective to migration research. Whilst the ability to adopt QLR approaches may be influenced by changing socio-political contexts, the paper explores how adopting a QLR sensibility may have potential to offer new insights in migration research. Finally, the punctuation' and 'ending' for this collection comes from Rachel Thomson and Julie Mcleod who respond as established QL researchers, drawing together key themes and considering the broader implications of our reflections as doctoral and early career researchers for building new frontiers in QLR.

What we hope will become apparent in this collection is the complex interweaving of different aspects of time and space that characterised the individual and collective processes of sense-making for the students and early career researchers in the NFQLR network. Not only did we all come to the network at different points within our research career and within our individual QL research projects, but these positions were constantly subject to change over the course of the network events. Fieldwork was completed, analysis embarked upon, vivas endured, contracts ended and begun, babies were born and theses deposited. Coming together for the network events and linked workshops marked for many of us a pause in which to reflect on QLR, but we also found this moment had a consequence for our own research journeys, as we returned to view our research from a different perspective. In this collection of papers we have attempted to capture the complexity of these processes, highlighting the interweaving of key moments in the development of the NFQLR network and of our own QLR sensibilities. As we engaged in forging a new frontier within the network, we too were developing our own frontiers as we applied the learning from the network to our own work.

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#NFQLR: Social media and a QLR sensibility

Ester McGeeney, University of Sussex

'Renewed interest in QLR in part shaped by digital technology and what this enables for thinking about temporality #NFQLR'
(@auraliser, 15/11/2012)

Day 1 of event 1: An introduction to Twitter and QLR

#NFQLR We are off – day1 of event 1 of the New Frontiers in QLR!
(@estermcgeeney, 15/11/2012)

At 'day 1 of event 1' in Southampton I stationed myself at the back of the room ready to type, tweet and take photos as a way of documenting and sharing the unfolding discussion of the day. For me, the New Frontiers of Qualitative Longitudinal Research (NFQLR) series was an introduction to both QLR methods and to the social media networking site, Twitter. Before becoming involved in the network I had only a peripheral awareness that this 'thing' called 'QLR' existed and before 'day 1 of event 1' in Southampton I had only ever sent about seven tweets in my life. At the time of the first event I was in the final year of my doctoral study and was working part-time, both as a support worker for a domestic violence organization and as a Research Fellow for the Centre for Innovation and Research in Childhood and Youth Studies ([CIRCY](#)) at the University of Sussex. My doctoral study was 'shortitudinal' and it was rather through my administrative role at CIRCY that I became involved in the network, tasked with helping to organize events, set up the NFQLR blog and explore ways of recording and sharing the learning from the network using different digital media.

'Thomson: will build up a conversation through blog for the network – it's a longitudinal method #NFQLR' (@Auralisings, 15/11/2012)

As detailed in the introduction to this volume, participants at each event were encouraged to document the learning from the series through blogging and live tweeting (Hadfield, McGeeney and Shirani, this volume). Speakers were also asked to share their papers and powerpoint

slides and to consent to having their talks recorded and uploaded on to [YouTube](#) and the [NFQLR website](#), hosted by the University of Sussex. From the outset we wanted to make our 'private' discussions 'public' and to experiment with using a range of digital methods to document the knowledge about QLR that emerged over the duration of the series.

> *'In today's first seminar we will be asking; 'What counts as QLR?' drawing on interdisciplinary perspectives on continuity and change #NFQLR'* *(@NewFrontiersQLR, 15/11/12)*

At the first event in Southampton, whilst the debates about ['what counts as QLR'](#) seemed to gradually build around me, I launched myself into the twitter deep end: typing furiously, quickly summarising the comments bouncing around the room, cutting and pasting choice phrases and sending them out into twittersphere. Whilst typing, cutting, pasting, tweeting and taking photos I was also watching online as other network participants in the room with me and miles away in Brighton and Cardiff also tweeted and we collectively constructed a particular kind of record of the day. As the pages of twitter continually refreshed and the tweets from a few hours ago moved out of sight into the vast past of twittersphere. Seemingly fleeting and transitory, each of these comments is still online however, easily recalled using the hashtag #NFQLR or through visiting the [Storify](#) and [Epilogger](#) sites that we set up to collate and congeal selected tweets and photos from the continuously moving twitter feed.

> *'#NFQLR Jeanine Anderson has been researching the same community in Lima Peru since 1977 - that's longitudinal!!'* *(@estermcgeeney, 15/11/2012)*

At one point during her talk on 'day 1 of event 1' in Southampton Jeanine Anderson looked up and checked how much time she had left for her presentation ([Anderson, 2012](#)). Hearing the customary response that she did not have much time left she commented; 'I must go much faster!' before returning to talk about the Peruvian community she has been researching since 1977. As I sat and listened, I tweeted; a tweet written in seconds, processed immediately but remaining (infinitely?) online; a tweet written in seconds about work carried out over decades and discussed and debated for 45 minutes. All these different temporalities bumping along together.

After the event in Southampton I wrote a blog about my experiences of using twitter at an academic event on time and temporality, noting the ways in which through live tweeting about the debates I became aware of the temporality of twitter – its past and duration as well as its pace and speed. In writing my blog I reflected that although not named as such, current popular and political debates about the ethics of social media use frequently centre on temporal questions. At the time I was writing (2012), questions about the legality and morality of drunken comments and offensive 'jokes' sent out on twitter were keenly debated leading to new prosecution guidelines from the Department for Public Prosecutions (CPS 2012). Here the debate focused on drawing legal boundaries around free speech and the ethics of whether someone should be punished for a fleeting comment, since deleted from twitter (but not from public memory), that expressed homophobia, sexism or other forms of hate. Now, in 2014, at the time I am writing, there are debates, following the death of young celebrity Peaches Geldof, about what happens to your social media accounts when you die (Roseingrave, 2014, Welsh, 2014). Should the life of a twitter feed or a facebook page end with the life of a person?

> *'Digital technologies can give us new purchase on time and temporality' Prof Rachel Thomson#NFQLR (@NewFrontiersQLR, 15/11/2012)*

In this short paper I reflect on the social media activity that we collectively engaged in over the course of the network, with a focus on my own use of the microblogging site Twitter. My aim is to adopt a 'QLR sensibility' towards this social media activity – remaining 'alert to time and temporality' (Walker, 2013) throughout my account as a way of examining some of the ethical and practical dilemmas that arise in using social media to 'display' QLR, and create knowledge more broadly. Like the other contributors to this volume, I also use this opportunity to reflect on my own evolving research career and the ways in which it has been shaped by – and shapes my interest in - debates about the time, ethics and multi-modal methods of showing and telling research to different audiences.

> *'Kofoed: it is 'time' for a methodological rethinking in studying time in social media #nfqlr' (@NewFrontiersQLR, 12/09/13)*

Writing with Twitter

> *Time that moves in bumpy irregular fashion-it jumps, starts&doubles back. The details of this can only be explored through QLR #NFQLR (@estermcgeeney, 15/11/2012)*

In writing this paper I switch between our once live, now archived tweets and my own year long stewed reflections, with the hope of creating the kind of 'bumpy', 'irregular' account that Jeanine Anderson advocated in her critique of linear discourses of social change and temporality (Anderson, 2012). Speaking in Southampton, Anderson argued that we can measure changes in income levels within a community to track changes in economic development, but that this will not capture the detailed, bumpy and irregular rhythms of social change. It is only through using QLR methods, Anderson suggested, that we can track the detailed shifts in value, recognition and respect as a community develops and changes over time.

> *#NFQLR Jeanine Anderson: (int'l) development not at forefront of poor shanty dwellers' minds: respect & recognition were more important 1/2 (@smnolas 15/11/2012)*

The question that Anderson and several other speakers raised across the series is how to 'display' such dynamic and complex accounts to different audiences. How can we write complexity into our research narratives and communicate the 'bumpy' and 'irregular' details of our participants' lives to different audiences - to policy-makers, journalists, practitioners and to the communities that we have been researching?

> *Anderson: 3 strategies for reciprocity in research: feed back to community for them to use; design interventions' feed into policy #NFQLR (@auraliser 16/11/2012)*

Over the course of the five events QL researchers shared their practices and ideas: Jeanine Anderson had organized a puppet show to communicate with the community she had been researching (Anderson, 2012), Rachel Thomson had played interview tapes back to her research participants in a longitudinal study of youth transitions, working with film-makers to capture the young people's responses as they listened to their young selves (Thomson, 2013). Tess Ridge had experienced her longitudinal research on lone parents experiences of employment being (mis)quoted in the House of Lords (Ridge, 2013) and several researchers

reported on their collaborative work with theatre practitioners and performance artists to explore new ways of showing (and doing) QLR (Bayly, 2013, Kelleher, 2013, O'Connor, 2013)

> O'Connor: Digital platforms have offered artists and researchers a variety of new tools -tangible propositions to work playfully #nfqlr
> (@NewFrontiersQLR, 13/06/13)

In my role as 'reporter' on the NFQLR events I was engaged in parallel questions of representation and communication, as I explored with colleagues new ways of using digital technologies (as well as more 'traditional' forms of scholarly communication such as writing this working paper) to capture, archive and communicate the learning and insights that emerged from the series. As I further explore below, questions or anonymity, consent and how to condense and display large quantities of 'stuff' online were central to our work. For us, Twitter, the NFQLR blog, and the NFQLR website with its archive of talks, papers and powerpoints are key methods of 'display' that provided opportunities for us, as researchers, to 'work playfully' with the data we gathered. Our work also raised questions however about what the purpose of our playful labour was – what and who was it for?

Day 1 of event 2: Show and tell
> '#NFQLR Natasha Mauthner-We need to understand the legal regulatory and technical backdrop to data sharing&research rel'ships'
> (@estermcgeeney 07/02/2012)

At the second NFQLR event in Cardiff, Natasha Mauthner started the day interrogating the legal, regulatory and technological contexts in which researchers build relationships with participants and negotiate consent to share research data over time (Mauthner, 2013). Natasha argued that these contexts do not constitute a passive backdrop against which we deploy QL methods but rather shape what it is possible to do in QLR.

> #NFQLR The unintended consequences of regulatory research funding guidelines- require us to make promises to p's that may b difficult2keep. (@estermcgeeney 07/02/2012)

As I tweeted about Natasha's talk she pointed to the emergence of new global technologies for instant data sharing and argued that there are ethical and moral differences in sharing data when participants have a relationship with the researcher, compared to when their consent is negotiated by an anonymous third party, possibly some time in the future.

> *#NFQLR How can we ensure participant's anonymity and 'informed consent' in the future by some third party? (@estermcgeeney 07/02/12)*

Rather than enabling ethical practice in QLR, Natasha argued that the current mandate to seek informed consent and anonymise data ensures that we make promises to our participants that are difficult to impose when working in the context of digital data sharing where we have limited control over the data and how it gets used. Intellectual property laws mean that data are frequently owned by the university, rather than the researcher or the participant. Further as digital technologies develop over time new possibilities emerge for showing and sharing QLR data.

> *#NFQLR What do we do when participants want to be named and have their contributions acknowledged in research outputs? (@estermcgeeney 07/02/12)*

After Natasha's talk I told her that I had tweeted about her paper and offered to show her what I had written, assuring her that I would remove any tweets that she didn't like. I felt nervous showing Natasha what I had written very quickly in 140 characters, concerned all of a sudden that I might have got it wrong, failed to acknowledge Natasha's intellectual efforts – her time – the years of thinking that she later told me had led to that paper, that I summarised and sent out via twitter in seconds. As participants and speakers had reflected during the day in discussion about sharing field notes with participants, there is an anxiety and discomfort in showing people what you have written about them and making these thoughts public in ways that neither you nor the participant can control.

> *#NFQLR R.Thomson reflecting on the challenges of sharing transcripts,tapes&analysis w young particiapnts-yp said they would rather not know! (@estermcgeeney 07/02/12)*

In her talk Natasha had argued that we need to acknowledge the labour of research production and the rights, as well as responsibilities, of researchers and participants in relation to data sharing and data ownership. In tweeting about Natasha's paper I was selecting and interpreting her ideas and sending them out to be read, retweeted and potentially rewritten in ways that may not acknowledge her authorship, rights or labour (Marwick and Boyd, 2011).

> *#NFQLR Regulatory guidelines can force researchers to privilege public interests rather than those of their participants(@estermcgeeney 07/02/12)*

Rather than being affronted by my tweets, Natasha was intrigued. Our interaction sparked a long conversation about the use of social media at home (phones at the dinner table, simultaneous family/work time) and at work (ethics, labour and intellectual property rights). Reading my tweets, Natasha gave me her (retrospective) consent to report on her work in this way but commented on the way in which twitter fails to acknowledge the 'provenance' of ideas and the labour of research; ideas that took hours, months and years to develop can be dished out and forgotten in seconds.

> *Tina Miller - in thinking about what can be shared need to also think about what can be lost and what we count as data #NFQLR NFQLR' (@NewFrontiersQLR, 07/02/13)*

Speaking later that day, Tess Ridge warned that research findings are not as 'ephemeral' as we may think, as they can be taken up and misused by policymakers with unwanted and unintended consequences (Ridge, 2013). Ridge provided the example of when her longitudinal study of lone parents' experiences of low-income work (Millar and Ridge, 2013) was (mis)used as 'evidence' in a House of Lords welfare reform debate on lone parent employment. The study was cited by the Minister as evidence that lone parents' employment can provide a good role model to their children and used to support clause 57 of the Welfare Reform Act which compels lone parents to seek employment and ends entitlement to income support for lone parents whose youngest child is aged 5. This finding, as was pointed out by Baroness Ruth Lister in the House of Lords debate, may be true but is only half the story.

#NFQLR Ridge-Interesting refelctions on how research gets taken up by policy
makers in the house of lords.The state just doesn't do messy. (@estermcgeeney,
07/02/13)

The study also showed that encouraging lone parents' into insecure and unstable labour market runs the risk of alienating children from the value of employment. For many children work had 'held out the promise of something better and that promise had not been kept, so they also experienced disappointment and for some an apparent loss of confidence in the value of work' (Hansard 25 Jan 2012: Column 1146). The value of longitudinal research, Ridge remarked, is that it can track these changing values over time; the challenge in disseminating such rich narratives is that they are open to 'picking and choosing' by those with powerfully ideological agendas.

#NFQLR Ridge-We have2tread carefully when researching lone mothers as they
are intensely governed&subject of continued public/policy conern
(@estermcgeeney, 07/02/13)

Ridge used this example to suggest that we need to tread carefully when 'we speak about the truth that we have been privileged to share'; our findings can be reproduced and mapped onto existing ideological and political terrains. Although we may want our research to have legacy, impact and endurance, we have to think carefully about 'what to show, what to tell and what to cover up', as our research findings become reanimated in unexpected and unwelcome ways.

Writing with twitter

'#NFQLR Discussion about how researchers can convey complex messages to
policy makers. We need to think more creatively about audiences'.
(@estermcgeeney, 7 Feb 2013)

When originally writing the blogs on which this paper is based I experimented with cutting, pasting and arranging lists of #NFQLR tweets into a word document to see if I could replicate the practices of collating and showing afforded through Storify and Epilogger, to create a kind of polyphonic meta-narrative of each event. In their new offline environment the tweeted comments looked strange when strung together, badly written, disjointed and frustratingly short.

140 character tweets may enable researchers to communicate with new audiences and encourage academics to distill and refine their ideas, but as other twitter user/commentators have noted they often write out the context of these ideas, leaving them open to problematic (mis)interpretations (Daniels, 2014, Rainford, 2014).

As Ridge's paper reminded us, we need to tread carefully when we report on our own and our colleagues' research findings as they can be easily reanimated and mapped onto existing ideological and political terrains. This challenge is amplified when using a method that only allows for bite-sized chunks of information and depends on the user clicking links and reading further in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding or overview. In Ridge's example, the Minster's summary of her research - 'lone parents' employment can provide a good role model for their children' – can be captured in 140 characters; the explanation of the other, more complicated half of the story cannot.

In a blog reflecting on her experiences of using twitter at the first NFQLR event, Laura Harvey reflects that twitter, like any other form of data, raises ethical questions about representation and the challenges of communicating complex ideas in accessible ways (Harvey, 2012).

> *What does it mean to represent complex analytical conversations in bite-size pieces? Is it possible to write accessibly in these short snippets? Those who are documenting the day via Twitter make decisions about what to include, what to exclude, presenting a record of the day inflected with their own interests and connections. What does it mean to document discussions as they take place, particularly as they are often exploratory and sometimes contentious? (Harvey 2012)*

Harvey's reflections raise questions about how to manage the 'bite size fragmentation' (Dicks, 2013) that can occur when using twitter and other forms of digital media to report on research findings. She also questions the ethics of tweeting live, of making ideas public as they emerge, before they are fully formed and without a speaker's explicit consent. As Tess Ridge's talk emphasized, such questions can be particularly pertinent when we report on groups, like lone parents, who are intensely governed and prone to stigma and 'pathological expectation' (Ridge, 2013).

#NFQLR R.Thomson reflecting on ethics of making a documentary style website on motherhoods project.We need2 own our ethical experiments (@estermcgeeney, 7 Feb 2013)

Reflecting on the ethics of working with film-makers to create and 'display' QLR, Rachel Thomson suggested that we are witnessing a shift in ethical politics. We are moving, Thomson suggested, from an 'analogue ethics' concerned with making the private, public and getting marginalised voices publically heard, towards a 'market ethics' where consent and copyright and the operation of power within research teams and institutions have become the focus of ethical deliberation.

Rachel Thomson considering whether there has been a shift from analog to market ethics #NFQLR (@NewFrontiersQLR, 7 Feb 2013)

Working within new digital terrains, Thomson suggested, throws open questions about the divide between public and private, making it feel anachronistic to talk about 'making the private, public' or 'the personal, political'. As Tess Ridge's exemplar suggested, our participants' lives may already be highly politicized and attracting unwelcome public attention. The ethical challenge for researchers engaged with these communities is how to intervene in political debate in ways that make it possible for the complexities and lived politics of participants' lives to be heard and made visible.

'#NFQLR Discussion about how researchers can convey complex messages to policy makers. We need to think more creatively about audiences' (@estermcgeeney, 7 Feb 2013).

In her paper Rachel Thomson reflected on some of her experiments in collaborating with film-makers to explore creative and ethical ways of reanimating the complex temporal rhythms captured through QLR (Thomson, 2013). As part of the *Inventing adulthoods* project (Henderson et al., 2007) – a 10 year study of young people's lives involving repeat interviews - a small selection of young people were filmed as they listened back to interview recordings of their younger selves. This meant forgoing the young people's anonymity and letting go of the researcher's authority in interpreting and commenting on the data. At one point the film-makers decided they wanted to visit the young people without the researchers being present – a further

step in the process of letting go and allowing for new knowledges to be created in the process of displaying and reanimating the research.

> *#NFQLR R.Thomson-ethical labour& the need to work interdisciplin& with non-academics-We are not the only ones who are interested in ethics.*

Missing a Day: The online archive – who and what is it for?

> *Disappointed to be missing another event! New Frontiers in Qualitative Research: Relationships in Time @NewFrontiersQLR #NFQLR (@Livingshared, 7 Feb, 2013)*

In the blog that I wrote after the event in Cardiff I reflected on my interaction with Natasha and on the title of her paper – 'What is research for?' In my post I wonder what, as the collector of NFQLR 'stuff' (powerpoints, photos, blogs, tweets, audio recordings etc.), was I collecting it all for? In my efforts to encourage people to tweet and blog about the events who did I think we were tweeting and blogging for? Was it for ourselves – the members and participants of the network – to help us process and reflect on each event and the series as a whole? Or was it for the 'public' and who is that 'public' and how would they find us and know what we mean by 'QLR'? As noted above, we need to be cautious about making claims about the potential for twitter to facilitate participation in academic discussion. As Laura Harvey (2012) reflected in her blog, using twitter requires time and internet access. Further our 140 character summaries of complex discussion draw on 'particular academic knowledge and language which will have an impact on how people are able to engage with them' (Harvey, 2012).

> *Anderson: Feeding findings back after research: important to find the right language so that you're on the same wavelength #NFQLR @auraliser 16/11/2012*

At the time of writing my blog, and posing the question – what is all this stuff for? - I was employed in academia for the first time and struck by what Ros Gill (2009) refers to as the 'hidden injuries' of neoliberal academic life; the everyday feelings of exhaustion, stress, anxiety, overload, shame and fear of exposure as employees struggle to manage unrealistic workloads and blurred personal/professional boundaries. Drawing on Nigel Thrift's (2000) ideas about 'fast management' – itself a development from the concept of 'fast capitalism' - Gill coins the phrase 'fast academia' to capture the ways in which academics are required to be ever faster, more

agile, more flexible and responsive to new calls for paper, funding streams and changing fashions on engaging 'research users' and stakeholders' (Gill, 2009).

With its continuously moving feed of bite-sized information, Twitter appeared to me as novice tweeter/academic as the modus operandi of 'fast academia'; a useful method for quickly distilling and accessing ideas and information from a range of academic and non-academic sources (Gainford, 2014), as well as another form of governance. With Twitter we can display our ideas, whilst auditing our impact and mapping our paths of knowledge exchange. Was all this 'stuff' we were collecting for our funders therefore to show (off?) our work? A quantifiable display of impact and ouput?

> *The top tweeters at NFQLR thus far are: @estermcgeeney, @NewFrontiersQLR, & @MrSimonWood! See the top ten on Epilogger http://t.co/6dePsYQy (@epilogger, 7 Feb 2013)*

Or was all this stuff for those NFQLR researchers and participants who couldn't be there at each event? Those who couldn't attend because they had teaching, deadlines and children to look after, who I encouraged to follow the series online via the blog, twitter, epilogger, storify and the website archive of videos, powerpoints and reading lists. Is all this 'stuff' there to ensure that those who can't 'be there' can engage in the series and continue to juggle their packed lives, personal and professional commitments? To keep up to speed in 'fast academia'?

> *@LivingShared Sorry you can't be here too! I can't send u a lunch(!) but u can catch up on the morning debate here-http://epilogger.com/events/research-relationships-in-time/alltweets (@estermcgeeney 7 Feb 2013)*

I couldn't be there for day 1 of events 3, 4 or 5, although I continued to work with colleagues to gather together films, tweets, powerpoints and consents to build the growing archive of NFQLR documents and resources. As I edited films and blogs and loaded all the 'stuff' online I felt that the twitter feed and blogs weren't enough; they gave me a flavour of the session that I missed but they were too fragmented and disjointed. I aimed to sit down and watch the films from each session I had missed but in my day-to-day life as a novice fast-academic it seemed so hard to carve out enough time to sit, listen and digest a full set of talks from one event. I tried to multi-task and listen to the films whilst cooking, tidying or answering emails, but the complex ideas,

dense language and sophisticated arguments demanded more of me and my time.

> *'LJ-reflecting on t priviledge of being here&listening 2 such sophisticated reflexive*
> *acounts vs how little can b heard in othr spaces #NFQLR' (@estermcgeeney, 7 Feb*
> *2013)*

Towards the close of the second NFQLR event in Cardiff, Lynn Jamieson reflected on the privilege of 'being here' at the event and being able to listen to the array of sophisticated, nuanced and reflexive research accounts. This experience, Jamieson also reflected, seemed to stand in sharp contrast to the experiences that various researchers had described throughout the day of how little of their research could be heard in public and political spaces. In our discussion we returned to the question of how to make the complexity of QLR and the insights afforded through following people, organizations and places over time, visible to people and publics with decision-making power. Part of the privilege of being there, it seemed, was participating in the luxury of 'slow-academia' – having the time to stop, listen and reflect on ideas and research that has taken years of time and labour to produce.

The tweets, films, blogs and powerpoints from the NFQLR series now act as an archive; publically available to use, misuse and reuse over time. The question – what is all this stuff for? – is perhaps likely to change. It enabled us to build and document a network, share ideas with those who couldn't be there, generate metrics that could be reported to funders, provide data that we could use to write data and reports, and form the basis of a planned future teaching resources. As several participants in the network noted the revisiting and reuse of data over time is often unplanned and unpredictable, shaped by funding schemes, job contracts, institutional regulations and research relationships over time. In the meantime, twitter users continue to disseminate, comment and report on the series as we add to the evolving NFQLR archive.

> *MT @SussexCIRCY final report from our @NCRMUK project: New Frontiers in Qual*
> *Longitudinal Research #RCUK*
> *http://www.sussex.ac.uk/esw/circy/research/completedresearch/newfrontiers*
> *#NFQLR (@jtedds, 23 April 2014)*

To conclude: to continue

> *'Often the long term nature of QLR is unplanned. When does 'shortitudinal' become Longitudinal? #NFQLR' (@NewFrontiersQLR, 7 Feb 2013)*

Towards the end of the NFQLR series I finished my PhD and started a one year [ESRC funded knowledge exchange project](#) that explores creative ways of sharing data from my 'shortitudinal' PhD with non-academic audiences. At the time of the NFQLR events, the debates about how and why to capture, condense and display complex ideas about temporality and the social world resonated with my role in the network as gatherer of 'stuff'. One year on they speak to my current project that is concerned with how to work select 'bite-sized' chunks of data and reanimate them for new audiences. Starting just 10 days after I submitted my thesis for examination, the new 'good sex' project involves a collaboration between the University of Sussex and Brook – a national UK young people's sexual health charity. As part of the project we have been working with young people and artistic practitioners to make films that aim to 'reanimate' data from my PhD research on young people's sexual cultures and sexual experiences. We have 'worked playfully' with a documentary film-maker, a theatre practitioner, Brook volunteers, young artists, medical and drama students to try out visualization techniques, performing monologues to camera, writing on bodies, spelling out 'data' with spaghetti hoops and trying to match abstract images with audio recordings of young people's sexual stories. This exploratory project has involved continually engaging with the kinds of questions raised across the NFQLR series and at the seminar in Cardiff in particular; when we use different artistic modes and digital technologies to reanimate and display research findings, what gets shown, and what gets covered up? Who decides what 'data' to include and how it should be displayed? And what kinds of new knowledge are created in this process?

In the 'good sex' project we have working collaboratively with young people and a film-maker to select extracts from 16 interviews in order to reanimate them using film. Unlike those presented at the NFQLR events, this is a very small data set of one off interviews, yet the challenge of selecting the 'best-bits' has been notable; if we only include one out of sixteen young people's stories do we set this up as the norm? If we only use data on first sex, do we reify virginity loss and fail to show the ways in which young people's sexual competence and enjoyment increases over time? If we include several stories from interviews with several young people will we make a film that no-one has the luxury of time to watch?

At the NFQLR seminar on practice traditions and QLR we were encouraged to understand different artistic modes such as theatre and performance not just as modes for disseminating and displaying our research, but as methods of research in themselves. As Rebecca Webb reflects in her paper (Webb, this volume), this seminar urged us as social scientists to question what counts as 'data' and to think critically about the boundaries that we draw between data collection, data analysis, data representation and dissemination. Taking this approach suggests that each experiment in 'reanimation' in my current project is a performative act that creates new knowledge about sexual cultures. My struggle in trying to encourage the young actors I have been working with to perform data extracts on first sex with humour and vitality, rather than loss and regret, is not just a problem of representation or variable acting skills but speaks to the problematic framings of virginity loss in popular culture and policy discourses (Holland, Ramazanoglu and Thomson, 2000, Carpenter, 2002).

Understanding 'data renanimation' and 'knowledge exchange' as performative research acts also suggests that my PhD research did not end with thesis submission, or the viva voce examination. These moments, along with the start and end dates of the ESRC knowledge exchange grant mark different moments in an ongoing project of researching young people's sexual values and exploring how meanings about pleasure and desire are embedded, marginalized and mediated in young people's sexual cultures. As Claude Jousellin and Mastoureh Fathi argue in their contributions to this collection (Jousellin, this volume, Fathi and Shirani, this volume), our own research careers can pull together separate projects, creating a continuity of knowledge production and exchange that crosses over the boundaries of official project start and end dates. No longer just an observer of this thing called 'QLR', over two years on from our first event in Southampton I am engaged in my own longitudinal project of revisiting and re-examining data over time.

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Unexpected encounter: a QLR detour during fieldwork

Claude Jousselin, Goldsmiths College, University of London

Sarah was sharing her difficulties with disorganisation with the group:

> "I get really distracted all the time, so I start something and don't finish it; I have all the strategies in place, you know, I've got apps on my mobile, with lists and reminders and all that, but most of the time I still forget things like appointments and repeat prescriptions. After all these years it gets really tiring, and it's getting me down. And if I am hyperfocusing it's even worse I can be doing something for hours, I won't even know what happened but it's never on the urgent things I have got to do, like paying bills. The other day I spent hours looking at how to build a house with hay and cardboard, you know, like natural, but really I should have been doing the repairs in our house, or wrapping the presents for my kid's birthday. That reminds me, you know how long the group has been going on? It's 7 years this week since I first put up the poster and waited for people to turn up and look at us now, the room is not big enough. We're not invisible anymore." (Sarah)

Inquiring into the diagnosis of adult Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in the UK, my research aims to trace the diagnostic practices through clinical and support group sites[1]. In this paper I wish to explore how encountering Qualitative Longitudinal Research methodology (QLR) whilst entering the field produced fruitful and novel questions related to the temporal dimensions of living with ADHD. QLR has been defined as an open ended dynamic research process consisting of waves of research and often conducted within collectives and teams (McLeod and Thomson, 2009). In the process of exploring the impact of these principles on my research, I will examine in more detail contributions from speakers at the New Frontiers in Qualitative Longitudinal Research (NFQLR) network that shed a different light on my project. I

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[1] This paper focuses on my fieldwork with adult ADHD support groups, and the excerpt above is taken from my fieldnotes after attending one of the groups. In parallel I have spent 10 months in a specialist adult ADHD clinic as a participant-observer, receiving training in diagnosis protocols amongst other things; for that purpose my research followed the ethical guidelines set by Goldsmiths College, University of London as well as gained ethical clearance from the NHS National Research Ethics Service. To protect the identity of those in my research I have used pseudonyms throughout this article.

will then consider how QLR's concerns with time and duration can be of benefit to doctoral students. First I describe an unexpected temporal dilemma encountered in one support group.

"Time flows in a turbulent and chaotic manner; it percolates." (Serres & Latour, 1995: 59)
ADHD, well known as a childhood disorder, has in the last decade been considered and applied to adult populations and the psychiatric classifications have adapted their descriptions of symptoms to the context of adult life, from school environment to work place. According to the diagnostic criteria for ADHD in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM5 American Psychiatric Association, 2013), the most common behavioural symptoms of ADHD fall into three categories which are inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity, with the stipulation that these must cause significant functioning impairment to be considered pathological.

As shown in my fieldnotes extract above, the most discussed symptoms of ADHD in support groups are related to an experience of time that is neither continuous nor regular. Acting impulsively, getting into trouble, regretting it and apologising afterwards is a common element of ADHD narratives. Similarly, procrastination which delays actions, and hyperfocus experienced as a suspension of time are explicitly part of patient narratives that project this fluid and uncontrolled experience of time on their inability to organise daily activities, to pay bills or sustain employment. Outside of the support groups temporal concerns are also high on the agenda; in the clinic, diagnosing ADHD in adults is dependent on events that took place fifteen, twenty, sometimes thirty years earlier, thus making this a retrospective diagnosis[2]. Cognitive scientists are exploring the links between working memory impairments and the experience of the passage of time (Lewis and Miall 2006) as well as the causal relationships between impulsivity, decision making and time perception (Wittman and Paulus 2007).

I attended the adult ADHD support group where Sarah was speaking at the beginning of my fieldwork. To some extent up to the last sentence I felt comfortable and comforted to hear the conversation evolving around the experience of time and its impact on daily life. As part of the PhD study process I had been working on a research design for a few months and had settled on a biographical and lifecourse approach.

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[2] "ADHD begins in childhood. The requirement that several symptoms be present before age 12 years conveys the importance of a substantial clinical presentation during childhood." DSM5 (American Psychiatric Association, 2013: 61) . Thus it follows that in order to gain a diagnosis and receive treatments, adults need to demonstrate retrospective and persistent symptoms since childhood.

In her last few words, Sarah discussed how the group was formed, how long ago, how it had changed and evolved and what role it had forged for itself in that time. She had jumped from her individual experience of time to a collective and durational dimension, from internal and intra-psychic tempos to an external and shared time. At the time I did not register fully that this spoke directly of the context in which adults with ADHD evolve and struggle to live with a contested and controversial disorder. The fact that these temporalities, individual and collective, are not experienced separately but simultaneously left me with a methodological problem that I had no solution for in the busyness of fieldwork. How could I include the individual and the group's experience of time and what are the analytical links between the two?[3] It was only through my participation with the NFQLR network during my first few months of fieldwork that I came to broaden my perception of my engagement with my participants, a process I will describe in the next section.

Fieldwork stretched back.

The fieldnotes I share above were taken at the beginning of a 12 month research period, which included my attendance at four adult ADHD support groups in different parts of the UK. My presence in the groups is situated within the continuum between complete participation and complete observation described by Gold (1958), closer to the observing end of the spectrum, mostly listening and sometimes contributing within sharing circles [4]. It is worth noting that this is not dissimilar to most members attending the groups whose presence usually includes both a need for information (observation) and for sharing (participation). At first I did not initiate conversations, instead I responded to queries, and even though my participation has become more active as time passed, I am careful not to advise in order not to position myself as an "expert". As one participant explained when we were discussing the impact of my observation on the group:

> "You are part of the group, you have been coming more often than most of us, and you're not the only one without ADHD coming. It's good for us to have neurotypicals talking with us." (Nick, 2/10/13)

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[3] Ian Hacking gave a philosopher's view on this in discussing how the objects of our knowledge are made over time, a project he called Historical Ontology (Hacking, 2002).
[4] My access to the groups was negotiated with the patient organisation AADD-UK with whom I entered into collaboration.

I was accepted and given a particular role; by the absence of ADHD in me, I was perceived as normal which made me "other" in the world of neurodiversity.[5] As this participant carried on explaining, this provided the means to reaffirm their belonging to the group where ADHD was the norm, and was not judged nor stigmatised. They were the experts and I was the novice.

Concurrently to starting my fieldwork, I joined the NFQLR network and benefited from the conversations over many months on the effect of temporalities on research methods, which eventually accumulated to feel relevant to my project. This is particularly fitting for QLR to be promoting learning methods over time, where links between topics can be made retrospectively[6]. But whilst I already had an interest in exploring issues of temporalities within my topic[7], the contemporaneity of conducting research and attending the QLR events had the creative effect of translating theoretical approaches into methodological ones. One of the strengths of the NFQLR network has been to bring experienced researchers from different disciplines together with early careers and doctoral researchers, thus highlighting pragmatic approaches to researching temporal and longitudinal issues.

Attending the series of events led me to reconsider the boundaries of my field of research and include contacts with adult ADHD support groups anterior to my PhD study. I had previously conducted MA research which focused on social health movements, and to that effect I had attended Adult ADHD support groups in 2009-2010. Since this period my contact with research participants in support groups has remained frequent and is expected to continue into the next year at least[8]. Yet when I developed my present project from MA to PhD studies with a different focus I did not consider the benefits that this continuity presented to me.[9]

During this 5 year timeframe I have had 2 periods of active fieldwork totalling 21 months which involved attending 4 different support groups in 3 different cities in the UK on 47 different

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[5] Neurodiversity is a movement that has developed in the last 15 years that advocates reconsidering disabilities such as dyslexia, ADHD, autism , more in terms of acceptable and " alternative forms of natural human difference" and biology. (For further details see (Armstrong, 2011)

[6] Being spread out over the course of the year and held at different venues, the NFQLR events enabled a successful pedagogy; the series gathered together expertise associated with each site and gave time for reflection that was enhanced by the online records and promoted a lasting doctoral network. For further detail on participants reflections on these themes see the blog entries: http://newfrontiersqlr.wordpress.com/

[7] For further details on debates in anthropology see James & Mills, 2004 and Munn, 1992.

[8] When I have not been formally in fieldwork, I have kept in contact with key participants by meeting in conferences (ADDISS 2009, UKAAN 2010 and 2011) and communicating through emails.

[9] This may be due partly to the rhythms of training associated with academia and its structure that tend to compartmentalise study programs as well as issues of work originality and self-plagiarism.

occasions. The groups were initially selected as the only groups in the UK that defined as self-help groups run for and by adults with ADHD. Not all members are diagnosed with ADHD; approximately 40% have yet to be diagnosed formally by a medical doctor, reflecting the lengthy process that takes on average 18 months to 2 years through the NHS pathway[10]. I have conducted 23 open ended interviews so far, each lasting between 1 to 2 hours; although the main focus has been on individuals' experiences of receiving the diagnosis of Adult ADHD, interviews inevitably included the role played by support groups in their lives.

This shift of time-scale, from a 12 month PhD research period to five years continuous contact, triggered by discussions in the QLR events, as if by a sleight of hand, uncovered new questions: How do participants' concerns change over time? When did change occur? Are there any turning points? What increases/decreases over time? What is the broader context of the change?[11] Simultaneously these questions also showed the potential of changing the unit of analysis from the individual to the group: What would the concept of duration highlight in the social life of support group? How different have the support groups become in this last five years, and what would that say about the place of ADHD in the UK? Is there an accumulation of knowledge through time?

In the next section I wish to focus on these two QLR methodological aspects, the duration of study and the unit of analysis, by linking them to some of the contributions in the NFQLR network events that were instrumental in orientating my project towards a longitudinal sensibility.

The reverse chronology of learning
The third event of the NFQLR program was the crossroads where my project and longitudinal concerns met and to that extent the title of the seminar "(Re)conceptualising the object of QLR" achieved exactly that. In particular the work of Liz Stanley (2013) suggested to me that shifting the unit of analysis was an exercise worth attempting as it would raise different questions. In her talk entitled "*Seriality, duration and interval: QLR and the figurations of white South African letter-writing 1770s – 1970s*", Stanley examines the fluidity of social change as a "continuous

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[10] Adult ADHD in the UK is not only controversial but actively contested and whilst it is formally recognised by medical and statutory organisations, most individuals seeking a diagnosis and treatment experienced this process as a fight and a battle (Dumit, 2006).

[11] For a more comprehensive list of questions relevant for QLR analysis see Farrall 2006.

process of becoming", in the context of letter writing in South Africa during a period of 200 years. Making reference to Norbert Elias's concept of figuration and sociogenesis (2000) she describes social life as a dance *"that involves many people, which goes on over time. People join and live, the dance continues, but few people dancing at 7pm are still dancing at 7am"* (Stanley, 2013). This spoke directly to my experience of support groups, where the members attend regularly for a while and then stop, or attend sporadically every few months, but what remains constant is the support group. Stanley goes on to describe the implications of avoiding a stilted and static representation of change for her project: *"the people come and go and the case or unit of analysis I am concerned with is not the people who write and receive letters, but it is the letters and the continuous exchange of letters within the configuration as a whole, which you can call practices or representations of practices (ibid)".*

What would shifting my unit of analysis, from the individual to the support groups, bring out? In the first instance it may help link their internal activities with their relations to the external and wider context. The main activity of the groups I attend is the sharing circle and through the telling and the listening of their stories, members are both role models to others and vulnerable members seeking help. The interdependence between receiving and giving help is at the core of the social action of support groups, it transforms negative life experiences into a positive world view, often through claiming the right to be different through notions of neurodiversity. The collective actions of support groups are therefore internal, affecting members and their well-being, but are also external in an attempt to affect others and influence policy makers. This work of advocacy and activism becomes apparent when following groups as they become visible with policy making institutions, such as representing the view of patients in the formulation of the NICE guidance (2013) and in their contributions in the persistent debates on the validity of adult ADHD diagnosis (Asherson, 2010; Timimi & Moncrieff, 2010).

Yet the external representation by groups would not take place if the internal practices of belonging did not happen; and this is crucial in order to understand the details of ADHD as a lived experience. What I call "practices of belonging"[12] are the actions that members take that reinforce their sense of kinship to each other. Groups provide practical peer-support, calling one another for reminders, helping in filling forms, going to the gym together, and beyond what could be seen as social events, they are setting themselves accountable to each other. As Nick explained:

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[12] See the recent work of May (2013) for a sociological review of the role of belonging in social change.

"You are opening yourself up, taking the mask off, and then you are holding yourself accountable, even if sometimes you are not verbalising it, just by turning up you're holding yourself accountable. The support group keeps the momentum moving." (Nick)

In the same paper, Stanley also highlighted that her data is found, given and finite, that she could not be tracking her participants, having lived and died in the past 200 years. She explained that this made attritions the core of her analytical stance rather than an obstacle. What is missing, what is different, what are the gaps between different points that in time may reveal more than what is actually there at one isolated moment. This issue challenged me to refine what groups as unit of analysis would consist of. As mentioned above, people come and go, and over the 5 years I became the most consistent element of the group along with the facilitators; so can groups be used as unit for comparison? I think so, and the total renewal of members within the same entity is in itself interesting, as the practices in the groups, practices of belonging, of sharing, have remained the same in each site I have attended, albeit between different individuals.

In a reversed chronological order of influence, it is only once I attended the third NFQLR network event that previous seminars became relevant. The very first event entitled "Interdisciplinary perspectives on continuity and change: what counts as QLR?" retrospectively resonated with my concerns to keep in my frame of analysis both the groups in the wider context and the individual lived experienced that I have described above. Lois Weis in her presentation revisited an earlier research project, "Class reunion: the remaking of the American White Working Class"(2004) and in doing so highlighted how ethnographic longitudinality can provide the means to link the local/global context with the individual's trajectory. She uses the concept of critical bifocality *"as a theory of method in which researchers try to make visible the sinewy linkages or circuits through which structural conditions are enacted in policy and reform institutions as well as the ways in which such conditions come to be woven into community relationships and metabolized by individuals"* (Weis & Fine, 2012:174). In her project Weis revisited a previous site of research, reconnecting with research participants and thus explored the changes that had taken place in their physical/social surroundings and their identity. This method, described as a follow-up study (McLeod & Thomson, 2009), has the particularity of having the longitudinal aspect added retrospectively. Adopting this bifocal and temporal lens, my new unit of analysis could start to extend my questions and include elements of change

through time. In particular the issues of over-diagnosis and epidemic, mentioned earlier, could be queried through the experience of the groups. There has been a significant increase in numbers of groups and in group memberships in the last five years, is this related to an increase in numbers of medical diagnosis? Is there any other policy context that may be influencing the formation of new groups?

From my participant-observations of support groups, I have been struck by the difference in their main theme of conversations and activities between 2009 and 2013. Whilst the recognition and affirmation of ADHD as a lifelong disorder was discussed at groups in 2009/2010, 5 years later, groups seem to make a different pragmatic turn. Not surprisingly in the wider economical context, gaining and keeping employment has been at the forefront of the group conversations, but this theme has also been an important target for their actions. Groups are actively providing resources to their members by delivering training courses for "harnessing the creative aspects of ADHD", and "building the skills to get work and keep it".[13] This is happening in the context of policy development by the coalition government, which in 2010 launched its Civil Society program that provides funds with the aim of empowering communities, promoting social action and opening up public services for competition (HM Government, 2010). Whilst it is still too close in time to draw conclusions, and a revisit in a further five years would be helpful, such policy context is part of the story of adult ADHD support groups. It opens the possibilities for understanding an increase in their numbers not just through medical concerns but also through political change and provides an alternative to the medicalisation discourse.

This increase in groups and membership could be seen as a success in rendering ADHD more visible, but it needs to be contrasted with the continuing struggles for individuals to access resources and to live with their persistent symptoms. Just as the quote at the beginning of this paper suggests that enduring ADHD through time takes its toll, it also affects how individuals engage with support groups and their wider context as a group member explained:

> If the group is going to do this (getting funding), somebody else will have to do it, I can't even organise my own things and remember to do my own forms, so I couldn't do that. And at the moment things are a bit tough, I am not even able to get my medication straight. (Beatrice)

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[13] See survey of the activities of support groups for more details on www.aadd-uk.org , (accessed on 1/02/14.)

The experience of disorganisation and inattention are often mentioned by individuals with ADHD as the cause of much of their social difficulties. In this case the limitations they produce directly affect the style of support and empowerment that groups can access and provide. One of the implications is that it takes a particular kind of person to participate in Civil Society and that some people may well be excluded from that process because of the very reason they should be included.

Towards the end of her presentation, Stanley finished by asking if her approach to longitudinal research was relevant to other studies, or was it specific to her project with South African letters. Some of what I have described so far suggests that it has been in my case inspirational, and so in conclusion I wish to briefly explore how QLR methods may be applied to the PhD research framework more generally.

QLR sensibility

Research design remains a crucial step of doctoral training and in this context the main characteristics of QLR listed at the start of this paper may appear at face value to be problematic. The increased time pressure to complete degree work and the present trend that emphasizes efficiency in graduate training can make it difficult for PhD students to consider QLR's attention to time as an option[14]. Yet by the time students reach PhD studies they may well have accumulated research data from previous courses that could be seen through a longitudinal lens. As in my case, the fact that this was for different academic training purposes i.e. MA to PhD, should not obfuscate the potential for this material to raise new questions (Holland, et al., 2006).

Longitudinal studies are often conducted by collectives, bringing opportunities for the distribution of labour at the point of analysis as well as offering support strategies when studying alongside vulnerable participants (Calman, et al., 2013). How could this be adapted to the often described lonely experience of PhD? This latter point feels particularly relevant to my field of research whereby participants share with me and/or the group very distressing events in their lives. Through time I sometimes observe the mental health deterioration of individuals with whom I

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[14] In past decades PhD studies would often extend over period that lasted 8 to 10 years, particularly in the humanities and social sciences; the 2000s saw a sharp refocus on efficiency of graduate training with the length of study cut by half. Marcus (2013) explores how this may be affecting the ethnographic imagination, and suggests that the need for relevance to non-academic circles is also altering the temporalities of fieldwork research.

have built a rapport and bond; on other occasions I lose contact with individuals without knowing if their situations have deteriorated further, or on the contrary, ameliorated. Whilst a team would be providing a supportive network to deal with these emotionally challenging and stressful situations, in a PhD context this is more likely to be part of regular sessions with a supervisor. This space can provide strategies for dealing with this emotional stress and can also be an opportunity to examine one's emotions as part of the research process itself[15]. I have also found that the collaboration I have established and the relationships I have built with facilitators of groups and other members are very helpful in these situations of stress. The collaborative practices that the patient organisation and I are developing have built this personal relationship over time and it also reflects on my intent to position myself in the field of ADHD as an active contributor rather than a detached observer (Jousselin, 2013).

To my reading, the flexibility described "as a major value of QLR" by Holland et al., (2006: 33) derives from two elements, an adaptability and a sensibility, which when combined can bring benefits to PhD students. Firstly, QLR has a range of methodological tools; most are part of the qualitative tradition, such as interviews and participant-observations that can be apply to fit different spatial and temporal contexts. As Silverman (2010: 11) reminds us, "methods should be our servants not our rulers", and the QLR methods can be flexible in regards to the scale of inquiries and be used selectively for a part of a study rather than designed as a whole research, or combined with quantitative methods such as surveys. At the point of designing PhD research, through to applying it during fieldwork, the plasticity of the QLR principles encourages the moulding of methods to the field of research and not the other way round.

Secondly and more importantly I would argue that the flexibility of the QLR methods is found in that they suggest a mind-set, an inclination and attitude towards time and duration that can be adapted to a range of disciplines and research situations. For PhD students this QLR sensibility towards temporalities can be an inspiration for remaining alert to the fluidity of their research field and consequently of their research process. Thus a QLR sensibility facilitates and makes possible the representation of the complex, the unfinished and the unsettled.

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[15] It is worth noting that the PhD fieldwork experience in Anthropology is more often than not a period away from such supportive supervision and that examining one's anxiety and emotions becomes an integral part of the research experience. For insightful exploration of the role of emotions in the field see   Davies & Spencer, 2010.

In the time pressured environment of the university, this QLR sensibility may seem to run up stream to the general speeding up and efficiency moves of institutions. But slowing things down, or marking time (Rabinow, 2008) and making new connections along different temporal lines must be a crucial part of doctoral training, a time for attempting different modes of researching. I hope that by describing my particular encounter with QLR I have also showed how its combination of flexible methods and a concern with temporalities can be applied onto doctoral training programs.

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Re-thinking representation, foregrounding the moment: Lyrical sociology and a lesson for ethnography

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'The playground'

The air is thick with the smell of softened tarmac, metallic and sweet. The heat of the afternoon sun is beating in my head. I lean against the playground climbing frame seeking a mottled shard of shade. A group of boys hang from the graffiti adorned frame and lie in subdued exhaustion on the "helter-skelter" slide. The humming silence is ruptured by the spluttering cough of a dirt bike. A young boy joins my side. "He's scared, he's scared" taunt the boys as they gather round to better observe the scene. The bike whines towards the park, using the steep grassy bank opposite to gain speed. The young boy's breathing slows, he does not gasp. We allow a communal sigh of relief as the bike turns and runs the length of the park, making a turn, back up the hill. The young boy responds to the accusation of cowardice, "I don't like the noise". Turning to me, with a slight tremble, he asks, "Is he naughty?" Through the haze the bike appears distorted; the crack of the engine signals its return. Again the bike targets the playground, jolting down the hill followed by a stream of burnt, greasy air. Enraged, the young boy breaks away from the group, he lunges towards the bike. Arms waving and shouting a battle cry, he runs at the bike and to the playground gate. Pulling up and turning off, the bike veers away from the playground and continues on to adjacent fields. The young boy parades, jutting out his jaw and thrusting forward his head: "Yeah - go, LEAVE!"

Introduction: Writing moments

The above piece of writing was taken from an ethnographic note I made during my PhD fieldwork. I wrote it with the intention of conveying my emotional response to a social happening, to 'communicate a mood' (Abbott, 2007: 73) and to recreate for the reader a social act in its complexity. I wrote this note as an exploration of a style of sociological writing first introduced to me through my participation in the NFQLR network: lyrical sociology. This paper maps my engagement with Andrew Abbott's theory of lyrical sociology; from my initial intrigue,

to my thinking about how his argument against narrative may inform my own work, through links with the philosophy of Jaques Rancière.

Starting with this ethnographic note, the paper describes my journey as I explore the practice of lyrical sociology. I begin by briefly outlining Abbott's development of the concept, discussing how it shaped the above ethnographic note and reflecting on the challenge of foregrounding the 'moment'. Next I introduce my own research and discuss the way my PhD journey shaped my engagement with Abbott's lyrical sociology. I discuss my theoretical struggle with representation and outline two points of affinity in Abbott's argument and the philosophy of Rancière. In the final section of the paper I return to the ethnographic note, reflecting on what lyrical sociology enables and what we may know through the representation of ethnographic moments.

A lyrical turn?

My first encounter with Andrew Abbott's work 'Against Narrative' was at the third NFQLR event. I was excited by this style of sociological writing and I was intrigued by his exploration of narrative as an 'explanatory approach' to social life (Abbott, 2007: 67). It was Abbott's conflation of narrative formations within both quantitative inquiry and qualitative sociology that challenged my own comfort with narrative styles of 'recounting, explaining, comprehending' (Abbott, 2007: 73). In this paper I explore what I had previously taken for granted in relation to ethnographic writing, to push my own boundaries in relation to what feels comfortable in my writing practice and to examine what lyrical sociology has to offer.

Andrew Abbott's 'Against Narrative' is a provocation. I read it as a challenge to my own research practice, specifically my use of narrative formations. Abbott's paper is a theoretical exploration of a lyrical impulse within sociology, in which he urges the reader to 'imagine a kind of sociology…that is in some profound sense not narrative' (Abbott, 2007: 73). Reading the paper I was drawn to the idea of lyrical sociology as an analytic practice, which, perhaps, may allow for a rediscovering of an emotional involvement with our topics (ibid).

Lyrical sociology aims to communicate the author's emotional reaction to the object of study, rather than to 'explain' that object. The emotional engagement of the author in the writing of lyrical sociology locates them within the moment, as opposed to the distance that can be a feature of narrative accounts. The lyrical can be located within the consciousness of the author

in a particular place, but, perhaps more importantly, in a particular time. The lyrical is 'momentary'; it is not about something happening, or an outcome, 'it is something that is, a state of being' (Abbott, 2007: 75). It was these three elements that shaped my writing of the ethnographic note, through a focus on my own emotional response to the moment, my personal location in the moment and the moment in its lived state.

My research

The very living of ethnography, the visceral quality of being there, has ruptured what had been a very safe and comforting theoretical "home". Having built my sociological understanding upon the materialist anthropology of Pierre Bourdieu (Bourdieu, 1983; 1990; 1998; 1999) I now found myself uncomfortable with the positioning of the researcher as knowing and the community as ignorant. Yet, at the time of the NFQLR event, I had recently received ethical approval, a process which further legitimated my researcher expertise, through a demonstration of my ability to manipulate methodological techniques of asserting truth.

My research is an ethnography tracing educational opportunities for young people on an estate located on the eastern side of an English city. It explores both official and informal educational spaces in the area; reading the everyday sense-making of young people and parents within broader political and social debates. I am interested in current academic debates that engage with the ideology of neo-liberalism and its relationship to the purposes of, and access to, state education (Ball, 2010; Lingard & Sellar, 2012; Wright, 2012). The estate has distinctive characteristics, in that its secondary school was closed after "failing" and its primary school has recently become an academy following on from its "special measures" status. In this research I focus upon the lived experiences of young people and parents negotiating this educational terrain.

My research seeks to understand the educational opportunities that are both available to, and accessed by, young people on the estate. Informing this are two strands of enquiry. The first is an interest in the ways in which shifts in national educational policy shape the educational opportunities of the young people on the estate. Second is a consideration of the way in which relational identity constructions are both shaped, and in turn shape, educational opportunities. The premise of the research is an assumption that the lived experiences of participants are located. By this I mean that the lives of individuals are placed within multiple value systems

(Skeggs, 2004). This research connects place in the local and the lived, with place within broader political and academic debates concerning social class inequalities.

My participation in the NFQLR network coincided with a moment when I found my very foundations shaken. I had completed a whole series of legitimating processes: constructing my theoretical framework, designing my research, gaining ethical approval and drawing on secondary sources to sociologically imagine my research object. I then entered the field. It was the experience of being there and the sheer limitation of my theoretical tools to do justice to the complexity of the lives I had, in a small way, access to, that Andrew Abbott's lyrical sociology spoke to. Not by offering a solution, but through a form of creative questioning.

Lyrical sociology offers a way to present moments as they are experienced, not as read through theoretical gauze, but felt as 'humane sympathy' (Abbott, 2007: 278):

> 'even though…differences reify and ramify and trap us in our own nets…I do think it is established that the heart of lyrical sociology is precisely the evocation of this tension about difference: it confronts us with our temporal and social spatial particularities in the very process of showing us those of others' (ibid)

It is the paradoxes apparent in Abbott's writing that most intrigued me. Can we truly learn about difference through the 'ethnographic freezing' of moments? What knowledge is produced through the display of ethnographic moments in their temporal and social spatial specificity? Writing the ethnographic note I was struck with a further paradox. I had set out to explicitly locate myself in the moment, I am the narrator, yet my researcher identity is removed. My authorial voice is both present and absent. By this I mean, there is no reflection, there is no reference to what this all means, for me. It was this concern with interpretation that sparked something of a link in my mind between this endeavour to produce a form of lyrical sociology and the philosophy of Rancière. I have only recently begun to explore Rancière's thinking, drawn to it by my concerns surrounding the authority of academic knowledge. As such this paper is an exploration, it is a thought, it is work in progress.

Challenging moments

In writing this note I became conscious of the ways I 'write' time in my fieldnotes, how I locate moments within spheres of time through the ways I story data. Reflecting on my work, ethnographic moments become positioned within the story of my research journey; the political and academic debates of this time, and also the limits of my own imagining of time. What would the dislocation of my ethnographic notes from these spheres of time produce? What meaning is lost? What meaning is gained?

This questioning of time stems from my participation in the NFQLR network. The introduction of temporality as an object of research (McLeod & Thomson, 2009) speaks to my interest in the location of lives within structures. I am currently conducting my fieldwork and felt this new sensitivity to time acutely in the writing of my fieldnotes. I began to question the way I story my fieldnotes, the way I combine moments to construct a narrative logic; a beginning, a middle, and an end.

I sought to write a piece that explored what may be possible through the displaying of ethnographic data in lyrical form. Specifically, I was interested in how the construction of the ethnographic moment in the present would shape what may be said about this data. Writing this piece was unfamiliar terrain. I shifted my attention away from understanding the ethnographic moment to simply sharing it. More than this, I actively dislocated the ethnographic moment from the spheres of time I work within. Writing the piece in the present, I tried to capture the pace of the moment in its lived complexity, mundaneness and intensity. In order to capture these tensions, I selected an ethnographic moment that is particularly ambiguous. Of course all ethnographic data is selective, what resonates as important to the researcher is inherently linked to the feel of the moment. However, I am two months into my fieldwork and there are many moments I could choose - so why this one? I have been thinking about this particular moment a lot and had some very clear ideas about the young boy, about his identity and about his behaviour. I chose this moment, as a challenge to myself, my thinking, my theorising. I wanted to explore what may be understood about this moment through the wilful ignoring of location, in time and space (Abbott, 2007; Pelletier, 2009).

Working with lyrical sociology

I would now like to play with the lyrical; bringing together Andrew Abbott's 'lyrical sociology' and the 'poetics of the social sciences' of Caroline Pelletier's work with the philosophy of Rancière. I draw on two themes within this work, in an attempt to tease out some points of affinity: the introduction of the affective into social science research; and, the 'practice of equality' (Pelletier, 2009: 273).

Both texts are a challenge, a disturbance of the normative and normalising practice of social scientific enquiry. Abbott's 'against narrative' questions the implied neutrality of narrative, bringing to the fore 'pathologies' that go unread in its opposition to causal analysis. Pelletier's engagement with Rancière calls for the re-centring of the critical research agenda around 'the other of power, and the other of domination' (Pelletier, 2009: 268). Again, it is through the imagining of an other that ontological assumptions may be seen; it is critical theories' opposition to categorical positivism that renders invisible the process by which '"critique" claims a position of mastery over its objects, and thereby reproduces the very hierarchy it criticises' (ibid).

I read both articles as provocation: both to myself and to the reader. They push me to question the foundations upon which I am building my academic identity. This is a questioning and an engagement with a debate that I have, until now, resisted. I am all too conscious of the way framing ideas as binaries can lead to the comparison and caricature of one with the other. Thus, in the articles I am discussing (Abbott, 2007; Pelletier, 2009) – and indeed within this paper – both narrative and critical theories can become reified. The intention of this paper is, therefore, not to debunk but to understand more. Thus, this work is an exploration of both lyrical and narrative. My aim is that I may better understand the internal logic of narrative through writing in a way that is other to narrative.

Affect as object of study

Lyrical sociology and the poetics of writing foreground the 'affective dimensions of accounts' (Pelletier, 2009: 278). Through narrative, a writer may provide an account and an explanation, but through the lyrical, a writer shares 'her intense reaction to some portion of the social process seen in a moment' (Abbott, 2007: 76). Therefore, lyrical sociology has obvious implications for what knowledge claims can be made. Here I turn to Rancière's assertion of methodology as an act; 'building a stage and sustaining a spectacle' (Pelletier, 2009: 280). Through this

performance metaphor, Rancière suggests science may be thought of as 'constituting the world rather than understanding it' (ibid). In this way lyrical sociology may be seen as an opening up, a making visible of theory 'structured on fantasy' (ibid, 278). The conceptualisation of affect as the object of study introduces the possibility of true reflexivity, the situating of disciplinary theory as disciplinary "wants". This is not a call to move away from fantasy in academic writing, 'but to structure it in more egalitarian ways' (ibid, 279).

It is Rancière's troubling of "knowing" that really speaks to my struggle with representation. He constructs "knowing" as a practice, that divides the world into those who know and those who are ignorant; 'people who can think the social order and people who can only obey its logic' (Pelletier, 2009: 272). Rancière's critique is not aimed at sociological methodology, but the assumptions made in the reading of data: 'the way a discipline positions its own discourse with respect to that of the object of study' (ibid). Rather than misrecognition as a foundation for analysis, Rancière posits disagreement. The concept of disagreement introduces dissensus on two levels of analysis, the object of debate and the status of speakers.

A space for disagreement

This is where I draw a second affinity in lyrical sociology and Rancière's philosophy. The tension in Abbott's work between narrative and lyrical form is reminiscent of Rancière's discomfort with misrecognition. Abbott questions the embedding of a present in a narrative as it 'replaces its quality of disposition – locational indexicality – with a quality of dimensional fixedness in "larger" social entities' (Abbott, 2007: 92). Thus, he argues, lyrical sociology should be premised on 'maintaining the dispositional quality of the object of analysis, its position in the social world as it – the object – sees that world' (ibid). In this way, lyrical sociology may engage with Rancière's notion of disagreement by giving status to the speakers themselves; 'as speakers who speak, rather than emit noise or ventriloquize' (Pelletier, 2009: 276).

Yet, I remain troubled. My research methodology developed out of my ontological conflict with structure and agency. I turned to ethnography as a way to know both people and place. However, I maintain an open definition of place, one that allows analysis of both place in the present and the local and place within a history and a broader structural and political context. What would a focus on the present and the world view of my participants mean for my research? My research has a clear justice agenda; it is a critique of the structural inequality of

class. What does my research become if I aim to dislocate both people and place from the very structures I argue shape their lives?

Both lyrical sociology and the philosophy of Rancière challenge my position, by questioning the most basic assumption of sociological research: the quest to "know". Rancière's logic is that knowledge production implies ignorance, the production of an "other" to knowledge. Thus, my pursuit to "know" inequality is inherently flawed; I will remain ignorant of equality in its positioning as "other" to the knowledge of inequality. Rancière suggests 'if one is 'ignorant' of inequality, if one denies the reality of inequality, one is in effect asserting and instantiating equality' (Pelletier, 2009: 273). This wilful 'dis-attention' to structural forces is echoed in Abbott's assertion that 'the determination of a present situation by something outside it is no reason not to celebrate or investigate or understand it in and of itself' (Abbott, 2007: 88).

What may we know of this moment?

At this point, I refer back to my ethnographic note as an exploration of what this "practice of equality" may produce. I am accustomed to the writing of ethnographic notes and, to a certain extent, fictionalising moments. However, the writing of this piece was different; the process was different and thus the outcome is different. I felt as though this piece was for a different purpose, for a different audience, perhaps. My ethnographic notes take a similar form, they are descriptive, often written in the present, yet, they are littered with theorising. Events are described and instantaneously read through my theoretical lens. My descriptions lie flat and it is my theoretical puppetry that brings them to life. In this piece of writing my focus was not on analysis, rather on representation. I aimed to convey to the reader what I experienced in the moment and therefore spent time reflecting on not only what happened but what I saw, what I smelt, what I felt. In this way, I think the piece more thoroughly embeds people in place as the moment is explored holistically. I am not proposing that my research should move away from theoretical engagement with the data, but that data may be presented in a different way to render visible this theoretical engagement. Exploring data through lyric, rather than theory, may open up other avenues of knowing; that we may 'know not only society's causes and consequences, not only its merits and demerits, but also…its beauty and sadness' (Abbott, 2007: 98).

I am unsure of the extent to which I am able to do justice to a "practice of equality". Perhaps my disciplinary "wants" are too strong. I feel that I must "do" something with this data, regardless of the understanding that I may simply be enacting fantasy. This exploration of the lyrical has provided some solace in my struggle with representation. I think the representation of ethnographic moments in lyrical form brings to the fore my authorial construction of the moment, countering the implied objectivity of narrative. I hope to honour the voices of my participants, to some extent, through my use of the lyrical that values moments in their lived experience not through their theoretical reading. Thus, I hope to practice equality in some small way through the opening up of dissensus in my writing; presenting voices in their "disagreement" on an equal footing to those of sociological theorists'.

So, what can be said about this ethnographic moment? I hope it captures the complexity and contradictions of this young boy's experience: the fear, the risk, the morality, the agency. The writing of this piece as lyric has helped me engage with the possibilities of meaning of this moment far more than a narrative description of this young boy would have. I can see how locating him within broader structures and times weakens his act, at least anchors its meaning. But, by wilfully ignoring this boy's location within a wider narrative, I am able to open up new questions:

Why is he scared? What is his understanding of good/naughty? How does he position himself in relation to the "naughty" dirt bike rider? How is he affected by the others' taunts? Why does he risk moving away from the group? And, what, perhaps, is the meaning of his performance?

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Being There (NFQLR And Practice Traditions) and Thinking Beyond…What *Is* Data?

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Burrowing In

Do we all do this all the time – listen, watch, and *feel* with ourselves; our own 'work' in mind, consciously, and less consciously, syphoning off that which resonates, sparking some highly charged connections/affirmations? Certainly, for me, the two days of 'New Frontiers in Qualitative Longitudinal Research' (NFQLR) And (Arts) Practice Traditions' in June 2013 gave me (at least) two things. Firstly, the pleasurable sense of setting aside my own thesis-writing with a degree of legitimacy, in order to allow my thoughts to 'transgress' in territories new in the safe hands (and minds) of those whom I'm invited to trust. And, secondly, the realisation that whenever, wherever, I believe that I am setting it aside, in fact, I am not. It is ever present: the thesis spectre. And it makes demands. It needs to be tended. This requires that I, instinctively, (perhaps) somewhat desperately, seek out that with which I might tend it; with the urgency and tenacity of one who is fearful of - what? Losing it? Losing its thread? Its meaning? Its potential?... Losing myself? (My 'baby', perhaps?)

And I think that for me, the pure joy was in the permission given by the theme of the day to traverse the hinterland of art as 'social practice' (the term that Simon Bayly used), interposed with NFQLR as a 'social science'. For this demanded of those of us traditionally located within social science, that we ask ourselves questions: for example, questions of just what such an ostensibly uncomplicated location both disallows and disavows; and to what detriment; and what more we might gain from 'inhabiting different mind-sets' (as Simon described the possibilities of art as social practice). There is one question in particular that stays with me. And this is one posed by Lisa Baraitser during her leadership of one of the sessions on the first day of the seminar-workshop. It concerns the social science sanctity of defining and delineating our 'data'. 'Just what is it?' she demanded of us –'this ontological artifice?' Might it not be possible, perhaps, to capture as much – maybe more of what it is that can be known, were we to set its assured fixity to one side, and open ourselves up to the possibilities of observing more psychically, more ethnographically, and more socially.

The positing of such a rhetorical question certainly speaks to me as an ethnographer and an anxious thesis 'constructor' in the final stages of pulling together a full draft of her doctoral thesis. There is a paradoxical quality about this time. On the one hand it can be delineated by its 'specificity': it is 'writing up time'. And on the other, I experience it more ambiguously. I *am* writing – yes – which suggests my forward trajectory through time. However, such future-orientated momentum can often only ever be achieved by a necessary 'backward-ness'. For me, this takes two interconnected forms. Firstly, it manifests itself in the constant and necessary iterative process of the re/shaping and re/forming of text: a necessary 'to and fro' of a grappling with the crafting of the writing process. And secondly, it requires a reconstitution of 'my data' as text. This involves my re-visiting the data in, what has become, its (temporary) 'frozen' and 'inert' form, coaxing and provoking it into life so that it breathes through a present and animates a future. I say 'temporary' for it has only remained so since I last visited it. In this way, I am able to 'conjure', and render visible, a scene in textual form, where both I and my co-actors can be seen to perform a multiplicity of subjectivities, from which meaning/s may be construed, and knowledge/s asserted. And it is in this 'writerly present' that I adopt a post-structural pose such that I reflexively call upon this data to interrogate me: who am I in this? What is it that I can say? And what is it that I might not be saying/able to say? And, what more might there be to be said, if only I were to invite in the gaze of the arts practitioner?

What of the Gaze of the Arts-Based Practitioner
It is at this point I feel duty bound to declare my 'data source' for fear of either over simplifying or misrepresenting arts practice traditions. In characterising the gaze of the arts-based practitioner, I draw on notes and a subsequent blog[16] I wrote in response to the NFQLR seminar I attended in June 2013. These together represent my thoughts and interpretations of the ways in which different researchers illuminated either their own work, or their reflections on it, in ways that generated a resonance for me. What is it that sparked my fascination with the question of 'what is data?' - both then and now? And more particularly, what is it that renders more substantial my own sense-making of writing my own data into thesis text? In no particular order I was/am drawn to the ideas I noted down, which emanated from Baraitser, and a range of other speakers, over the two day period: keeping interpretive 'spaces open for as long as possible' (without foreclosing meanings and meaning making); the power and productiveness of 'blurred boundaries' to promote the querying and questioning of 'static' assumptions of producer and

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[16] http://newfrontiersqlr.wordpress.com/?p=199&preview=true

recipient, artist and subject, researcher and research object; conceptualising 'the [research] scene' and the *range* of faculties we might bring to engage with it and make something of it; operating within a range of temporalities and conceptualising longitudinality in different ways, perhaps as a process of return, as elongated time, as time of the encounter, or as time for reflection; art as curiosity; art as difficulty; art as organic and as intervention; and as actively inviting in conflicting paradigms and values to reassess/re-assert just what is/can be data?

And so, it is with these thoughts in mind - sparked by these arts based practioners - that has caused me to re-visit the uncertain nature of 'data' within my own qualitative social science doctoral research.

My Social Science Gaze: 'Capturing' the Data…
So what of my data? How can it be characterised? In some straightforward sense it can be described unproblematically. Much of it is of an ethnographic quality: hand-written/furiously scribbled field notes; and some loosely structured, informal interviews - these conducted towards the end of eight months of 'field work' in a primary school, which I completed over a year ago now. My everyday experiences of 'being' the researcher (the observational and participative nature of which I captured in paper and pencil note form) within the energising and chaotic milieu of my fieldwork site, with its broad array of children and adults, have formed the bedrock of this data. And yet, even at this juncture they feel problematic…'what *is* my data?'

In the first instance I have always experienced the uneasy early career researcher sense that in focussing my attention in one domain in order to 'capture' my data, I may have been missing something of much greater significance elsewhere. In order to cope with this particular anxiety (and to attune myself more attentively to the possibilities and potential of the ethnographic moment) I began to develop the habit of breaking my time in the school into 'chunks' so that I either participated and observed wholeheartedly in what was going on around me, or I took myself off to write and reflect. I found an almost 'secretive' writing nook which afforded me great pleasure: it offered a degree of seclusion – it was just off a busy thoroughfare through the school - whilst at the same time, providing a panoramic, panoptic vista, overlooking as it did a large and much frequented outdoor play area immediately adjacent to the school building. This meant that, as part of this field work stage of the research process, these were periods of either rather intense, or – occasionally – luxuriously relaxed, 'data generation' (depending on the pace

of my fieldwork schedule for the day). These formed into moments of urgent recall, intermingled and juxtaposed with opportunities for uninterrupted and rather 'illicit' observation and musing, in which I could, occasionally, loosen a rather random train of thought. And in the second instance and very much connected to the first, I have always had an acute awareness of the 'artifice' of this data: for as Holland and Thompson (2003:239) have highlighted, it is this very particular 'research process' that becomes an 'integral element of the data set' freighted as it is with the intense emotionality of the experience.

And Pummelling Them and Pulverising Them in the Analytic Cause…
Since these early pivotal points of data capture and 'incarceration', the data has been variously hauled out in the weeks and months that have followed, to be generally 'worked over' – pummelled and pulverised into submission in the analytic cause, in order to generate what Stanley (1992) calls the 'kaleidoscope approach' where 'each time you look you see something rather different, composed mainly of the same elements but in a new configuration (Stanley, 1992:158, in Holland and Thompson, 2003:237). More than this however, there have always, too, been 'flashes of recall' that demand – in that instant there and then – to be wrestled to the ground and written into posterity. Indeed there were occasions when, cycling away from my field site at the end of a winter's afternoon, such a moment of recall occurred and I alighted from my bike, rummaged for torch, pencil and paper, and manically, in gloved fingers, scribbled away again.

There have been periods since my field work ended when this data has lain, comatose, flattened, and quietened, in my boxed files (PRIVATE. KEEP OUT) in my locked university work room, undisturbed. And what is it? As I've stared at these neat boxes, I've mused on the 'data' therein: what is it without me? Data? Really? After all, am I not its puppeteer such that it is me – and me only – with my analytic tools and strings that can animate it and draw it into life in text? What is it without me? But what am I – PhD researcher, without it? After all as St Pierre and Adams acknowledge (2011:61 in Denzin, 2013:353) 'words become data only when theory acknowledges them as data'. And so I have visited and re-visited my data with some regularity, over weeks and months, in order that it can be re-digested, regurgitated and slowly chewed upon, as though the cud. It has, in turn, been substituted, supplemented, shaped and honed through my own subconscious and conscious imaginings: a curious magical alchemy of fermenting thoughts and ideas, fed and nurtured by my on-going reading; discussions with

colleagues in the academy; and by my own previous professional teaching and 'leading' experiences of the primary school and the UK state education system, formed over many years as part of my 'day job'.

My Substantive Research Theme and Data Working Together?

Together then, this data has been informed by and in turn, has formed, my substantive research interest, which is in 'Citizenship' situated – as I have been –in a UNICEF 'Rights Respecting' school. At its core, my doctoral research considers the implications of adopting a dominant discourse of 'Rights' as a framework to guide both the policy and practice of a large state primary school in England. More than this, however, it interrogates the ways in which 'Rights' (and 'Respect' with which it is coupled) link to, and inform, subordinate discourses of 'Equality' and 'Diversity'. My work involves applying theorisations of feminist post-structuralism in my explorations of these four 'values' (as they were commonly labelled by members of the school community). As I described in my written feedback to my research school soon after completing almost a year of fieldwork there, I use 'discourse analysis' to engage with my 'data' in a manner which I attribute to Laws (2012). I do this, 'in order to scrutinise the everyday occurrences of school life, acknowledging that they can be understood in many different ways, all and none of which can be seen as 'true'' (Laws, 2012:5). This acknowledgement of a multiplicity of truths brings me some quietude in those moments of panic concerning 'which data' and 'where'? For what I wish to achieve – like Laws – is a way of 'reading' the school, and what goes on there, in new and different ways in order to see things that may be, or may have been, overlooked or taken for granted.

So in this research, I use post-structuralism to contest, but *not* dismiss, the limits of the bases of structural theories. I use a 'bundle of theorisations' to enable me to recognise my own investment in the texts I construct and to de-totalise some of the voices of science by reflecting on a variety of subject positions from which ordinary people speak knowledgeably about the world. This is particularly pertinent within the context of this research which draws on a multiplicity of 'voices' from the field – those of adults (with a wide range of responsibilities, roles and interests, including my own), and those of the children - pupils in the school.

I draw particularly on feminist approaches to post-structuralism. This does not mean that I systematically address 'gendering' or elevate gender as a category within my conceptualising of

the four values per se. But such approaches do allow me to do two things. Firstly, they enable me to acknowledge this research as a feminist project in which partial narratives of my own accounts of myself prior to, and during, this enterprise intrude into my sense-making of the research process and the account that I offer as I turn my experiences into text. After all, at the time of the conducting of this research, I had myself been a teacher and education leader and 'advisor' for many years, in similar contexts to those I was researching, asking similarly urgent questions about 'values' which had always been an important part of my own professional and political 'persona'.   Secondly, feminist theorisations offer me some further critical insights into the 'mechanisms of power' (central to post-structural analysis) and the way in which 'power can be *redone* at the moment it is imagined as *undone* (Ahmed, 2012:13 – original emphasis). This provides me, especially, with some tools for reflecting upon the way in which power relations meet and intersect, especially in relation to gender, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation and dis/ability as 'strands' within my conceptualisations of the four values.

So, my research investigates just what a discourse of ' Rights' and 'Respect' and 'Equality' and 'Diversity' does by also focusing on what such a discourse denies. I pose four inter-related questions that implicitly connect meaning-making, power, language, culture and human subjectivity to inform and underpin my endeavour:

- How are dominant discourses of 'Rights' and 'Responsibilities' constituted as part of the everyday meaning making of school?
- How are attendant discourses of 'Equality' and 'Diversity' implicated within those of 'Rights' and 'Respect' and to what effect?
- What do the discourses of 'Rights' and 'Respect' and 'Equality' and 'Diversity' assume?
- What do the discourses of 'Rights' and 'Respect' and 'Equality' and 'Diversity' produce?

'Discourse' as a Life-Constituting Data Source?

In the course of the sense-making and breathing of life into my data, I come to use 'discourse' to link 'language and social life' (Dunne, et al., 2005:93) so that it forms the shape, sound and feel of my social experiences. However, I construe it as *more than* this, to allow for language and social life to become 'mutually constitutive' (ibid.), recognizing discourse itself is as much about creating the speaker as vice versa. In this way, the ongoing and iterative process of 'capturing' and analyzing the data in discourse accommodates the institutional viewpoints and positions

from which people speak, and the power relations these presuppose. All research subjects, including myself, have become a dynamic of the internal machinations of discourse so that 'boundaries' between speaker and spoken and subject and object are continually and dynamically reworked within a warp and weft of the fabric of the social. Maclure (2003) describes this as an enfolding and entrapping of research subjects within a relationship with the world so that text, discourse and the social are constantly being re-spun within a metaphorically textual fabric (ibid).

And 'Selecting' My Data to Write into the 'Writing Up Time' Text?

In the re-animation process of selecting which data for 'writing up', I have drawn on what Maclure (2010:281-2) terms 'examples' in extracting from what she suggests is a 'wearying mass of ethnographic data' in order to constitute this stage of the thesis-writing process. In the selecting of this data, Maclure's suggestion of significant data as 'exemplifications' which 'start to glimmer, gathering our attention…[where] things both slow down and speed up' (ibid), has appealed to me, for its vibrant, vital, organic and dynamic quality. It is these filmic qualities which create the ethical frenetics and tensions of the *living* of the doing and *feeling* of the selection and illumination of the data as thesis text I have come to realise. When Maclure asserts this as their strength this speaks to me: this is data constituted in discourse that 'intensifies our gaze and makes us pause to burrow inside it, mining it for meaning' (ibid). Nonetheless, I am mindful of the contingency of such moments of selection and the temporal specificity of this decision, despite apparent 'analytic rigour'. For the question must always hang: 'why this data and not that; why this interpretation and not that; why this analytic frame and not that?'

I can perhaps illustrate this best by drawing on two examples of 'data' that feature in a (draft) version of my thesis text. And they are, qualitatively, very different 'types' of data: one is an 'impressionistic' ethnographic note that I wrote to myself after only a couple of months in my field work school; and the other is a short transcript from an interview I conducted with the head teacher of the researcher school around the same time. However, in the re-animation of data as text in my thesis, they have taken on a dialogical relationship, such that they 'allow' me to set out my stall. I re-produce both below:

Rebecca's Ethnographic Note, September 2011:

'Rights' – they appear everywhere, both concretely, as well as, somehow, floating in the ether – not so much on their own – but coupled with 'responsibilities': they're on the walls in UNICEF brightly coloured poster form; as 'home-made' school charters on the walls of corridors, classrooms, hallways, outside in the playground, on newsletters home, reminders of what can be expected - 'you have the right to be heard', and 'you have the right to work' (and 'you have the responsibility to listen'… and to 'let others get on with their work'…); in passing remarks between teachers and pupils, 'remember, it's lovely that we have the right to go out into the sunshine to play, but we have the responsibility not to disturb other children inside…'. They feel invested in, by many, and in such a range of spaces within the school. They are a garment, not so much worn lightly, as with a mark of distinction…they are asking to be recognized and valorised. This is Downland View School saying, 'Hey, this is what we're about…sit up and take notice…'

Interview Extract, October 2011:

Head teacher, John – explaining the 'Rights' and 'Respect' framing agenda of the school to me:

'It comes from your conviction of what on earth you think you are doing here [as an educator] in the first place…We are privileged to be part of shaping young people. It is about sending messages into a future we won't see…it's about a set of core beliefs…and core values. It's not about 'let's sit down and write a Vision Statement'…it's grown out of what was already there…'

Both these extracts of empirical documentation have come to feature as part of my opening thesis chapter which explores the rationale for, not only my developing research agenda, but also the justification of the construction of my thesis text. It is this 'choice'; the 'selection' of *this* data (and *not that data)* and the reconstitution of 'it' as text that I come to employ as integral to the overarching 'shape' of that which I deem I might say. So that I find I write:

'A day did come'… 'when I had found myself reflecting upon the ways in which an overarching discourse of 'rights' and 'responsibilities' was 'calling out' to frame the excitements, tensions, complexities, contradictions and the 'messiness' of the 'ethos

making' of school life, especially for an ethnographer researcher, with the time and
scope (to watch and listen, to step both in and out) and to engage.' (Excerpt taken
from Chapter 1 - *in draft* - of Rebecca's PhD thesis)

What Is My Problem, then, with Data?

What is the problem for me: surely, so far so good? Within the post-structural paradigms with
which I have cloaked myself, I apparently know what data I'm working with: I've identified and
selected it; I've 'collected it'; I've 'analysed' it and now it's me that's re-animating it to write it into
the text of my thesis. So, what can it be that so entices and intrigues me about Lisa's demand
of social scientists to account for ourselves in terms of this data 'thing'? After all, I know that I
could say to her that data is never transparent: a premise of post structural theorisations is that
this is so. Data does not speak with a uni-vocular voice and I have not required it to do so.
Throughout the research process, I have constantly been aware of developing reflexive,
interrogative 'notes' appended to my data in order to highlight the way in which I am always
writing from 'a particular position at specific times' (Richardson, 2001:36), all too conscious too,
of the language I employ as not so much reflecting a social reality but, just as much, creating its
own (ibid).

However, it is in the very *doing* of the crafting of the methodology of writing that Lisa's urgent
enquiry resonates with me most at the moment: perhaps this is because I am fully immersed in
the intensity and pain of writing this, my data, into thesis text. This data 'demands' of me, in a
heightened sense in a way that I have not previously experienced and which makes me worry
that I will lose some 'intrinsic authenticity' of meaning; that I am no-longer a 'proper' social
scientist. I had not been so prepared for the mimetic quality of the 'doing' of the writing as such
a constant process of analysis and transformation. As Richardson suggests (quoting Rose,
1992), crafting data into thesis text becomes all about how we 'word the world' (and then
'reword the world'…'again and again', 2001:35). In a metaphorical sense, I find the data
demands of me to be read differently in the here and now of the writing because the very act of
writing is one of discovery. I am finding things out (about researching; my 'data'; constructing
text; 'myself') as I write: reworking latent meanings, opening up new possibilities of
interpretation. And what I hope, when I worry less, is that, rather than shutting out possibilities
for making meaning of the data, this process opens it up to new possibilities of knowing. After
all, this data as 'texts, are neither the world per se nor an objective representation of parts of

this world. Rather they result from the interests of those who produce the text as well as those who read it' *(*Flick, 2002:23 in Dunne et al., 2005). This is an exhausting process with a visceral dynamic.

The Politics of Reconstructing Data as Text

This leads me to reflect on another possible reason for the urgency of the 'what is data?' question for me at this stage in the writing process. And this is to do with the ways in which – I rather arrogantly, and, perhaps defensively - find it hard to construct this data as anything other than indexically and minutely, attachment to, 'Me – Rebecca the Researcher'. Thomson's (2014 forthcoming) book chapter entitled '*Possession: Research Practice in the Shadow of the Archive'* resonates here. Not only does she explore – and challenge – data as an exercise of ownership, or attachment; but she also muses on the way in which data can work to generate a state of feeling of being 'possessed by' it for the very reason that data is 'constituted relationally'.   Thomson references the work of Mauthner and Parry (2009) who have recently written on the challenges of data archiving and sharing, and have asserted that: 'data are not separate from the subjectivities that generate them or independent of the relational and intersubjective contexts that give rise to them' (Mauthner and Parry, 2009:292 in Thomson, 2014, *forthcoming*).

Yet, I know that this possessive instinct of mine is something of a temporal – and temporary - artifice. The data (at least some of it) has travelled – both through time and space – from the moments of its genesis a couple of years ago in the school in which I carried out my research, to the pages of my emerging thesis text. It is only 'now' in this moment that I have any sort of claim to feelings of possessiveness. After all, the interview data in particular, has not only been generated in concert with other research subjects, but it has, both a political and ethical connection with and to those subjects, even within the strictures of my claims to the 'many truths' of my post-structural analysis.   And – equally – once I give over the data reconstituted within my final thesis text, I give it freely for the reader to make of it what they will. There is – perhaps - a pragmatic and philosophical legitimacy to the urgency with which I explore the 'what *is* data' question now at this crafting stage. But this must – and will – pass.

Burrowing In/Burrowing Out: What Have I Learnt from Reflecting On Arts-based Practice Traditions and NFQLR?

Certainly, engaging with the assertions and musings of the range of arts-based practitioners at the NFQLR events has given me some confidence: confidence, paradoxically, in my lack of confidence. It has given me something to return to when I worry. I can remind myself that writing with data in a post-structural vein is an inherently creative and active process, one where 'fixity' is not assured, indeed not countenanced. It does invite in the dialogic engagement of the reader (audience). It does demand that spaces be kept open; that boundaries (may) be blurred, and that reflexive engagements, that draw on both mind *and* body, constantly offer the possibility of new 'becomings'. It requires new ways of reading data; asking questions of data; conceptualising data; and laying oneself, as author/researcher, open to 'writing mastery as letting go' (Barnacle and Dall 'Alba, 2013:4). And it requires an appreciation of the vagaries of temporality – as process, as moment, as a 'backwardness' and a 'forwardness', and as reflection; the way in which the prism of time in any ethnographic field work conducted over a period of even just months, must acknowledge its complicity in the thorny question of 'what is my data'? With arts-based practice in mind, writing with my data in the crafting of text invites my immersion in the sculpting, etching, honing and 'chipping away' at that which I am creating, demanding a 'textual plasticity' (Barthes, 1970, Barnacle and Dall 'Alba, ibid) of that with which I work. This mind/body engagement in writing with data means that what emerges in the process can take on new, interesting and surprising forms that I can embrace such that I allow myself to be 'no longer quite myself'… 'like falling into a twilight zone…where things are no longer recognisably the same, where words are displaced, where I lose my orientation, where anything can happen' (Van Manen, 2002:1-2, in Barnacle and Dall ' Alba, ibid).

However, what my involvement with NFQLR also reminds me, crucially, is that my time for both worrying away at – and holding close –'my data' has its own temporality. It fixes me within a specific moment of my own history. Nonetheless, there is a time to 'let go'. My personal investment in this 'possession' (Thomson, forthcoming) and my own agonism over what constitutes 'my data' in the 'creative process of analysis, interpretation and writing' (ibid) is relinquished. 'My data' can and must be thrust from the 'informal murkiness' of self-possession into the 'bright light' (ibid) of public access and engagement.

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(Spatio-)temporal dimensions of social research: researchers' Qualitative Longitudinal Experience

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The visual image congealed; he saw at once a famous landscape, the old, brown, barren ascent, with tufts of dried-out bonelike weeds poking slantedly into a dim and sunless sky. One single figure, more or less human in form, toiled its way up the hillside: an elderly man wearing a dull, featureless robe, covering as meager as if it had been snatched from the hostile emptiness of the sky. The man, Wilbur Mercer, plodded ahead, and, as he clutched the handles, John Isidore gradually experienced a waning of the living room in which he stood; the dilapidated furniture and walls ebbed out and he ceased to experience them at all. He found himself, instead, as always before, entering into the landscape of drab hill, drab sky. And at the same time he no longer witnessed the climb of the elderly man. His own feet now scraped, sought purchase, among the familiar loose stones; he felt the same old painful, irregular roughness beneath his feet and once again smelled the acrid haze of the sky – not Earth's sky but that of some place alien, distant, and yet, by means of the empathy box, instantly available.

(Dick P.K., *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, 2010)

Introduction

I came to the 'New frontiers in QLR' network as an international PhD research student from Italy. I am interested in the methodology of social research and life courses transitions, and my study is a qualitative investigation of the biographical constructions and visions of the future of young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET). Thinking about NFQLR debates after my recent participation in the network, an image from Philip K. Dick's novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* came to my mind in a powerful way. The description of John Isidore's journey from the living room to the hill helps me to reflect on the conceptions of (spatial and) temporal dimensions in research practices.

My reflections start from the assumption that longitudinal research tracks individual lives through time, with a methodology that offers insights into processes, and attention to changes and

continuity in phenomena. However, one of the differences between quantitative and qualitative approaches to longitudinal research is that "what is obscured in the quantitative approach are the narratives that individuals tell about their own lives" (Elliott et al., 2007:242). Aware of this specificity, if we shift the focus from the subjects studied to those carrying out the research, considering him[17] as the unit of analysis, we can affirm that each research process is a Qualitative Longitudinal Experience (hereafter QLE) of the researcher. In fact, the researcher maintains a 'living relationship' with the object of study (McLeod and Thomson, 2009), and develops a narrative which extends longitudinally throughout the research process. For this reason, reflections conducted in this paper are considered relevant not only to the practice of qualitative and/or longitudinal research but, in some respects, to the process of social research in general.

In this paper I argue that there is value in understanding the research process of social science as a QLE for the researcher. I structure my argument into three parts. First, I explore how the researcher is positioned dialogically between society and social science and how the process of social research is embedded in different temporal (and spatial) settings. Second, I analyse the researcher's QLE during the research process. Third, I reflect on the social science field as a normative reference for the researcher. My concluding remarks focus on the need to make visible the (spatio-)temporal dimensions of social research, and contend that making visible researcher's QLE may enrich research reporting.

Staying in-between: the living room, the researcher and the hill
In the quote that opens this paper, Philip K. Dick writes about an empathy box, through which it become possible, from a living room, to access and engage with a mythic space of a hill. Similarly, in the research process the researcher makes this move, from the situated time and place of 'his' social science to the (aspect of) society he wants to study. *He clutches the handles of the empathy box. The living room disappears and he feels – as usual – the irregular roughness of the hill under his feet.* The features of these places can be better understood by exploring the time dimension of relations between the contexts and of the boundaries that separate them. This perspective enables us to order the activities "in terms of a multiplicity of temporal codes and settings that define different social time patterns or institutional speeds"

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[17] In the absence of neutral linguistic forms, I have chosen to use the male gender because it corresponds to mine and composite forms as 'he/she', 'his/her' or 'him/her' interrupts the flow of the text.

(Pels, 2003:5), and favours a translation of the topological variables of distanciation, estrangement and marginality frequently used to describe research practices, to more temporal experiences and categories. The (social) differentiation *between the living room and the hill* – the spatio-temporal dimension of social science and the society – simultaneously creates different time cultures and maintains a temporal pluralism according to which every social activity operates its own velocity and follows its own distinctive rhythm (Zerubavel, 1981).

Time can be understood as a social product that undergoes a process of differentiation depending on the social contexts in which it is reflected. Considerations of the temporal aspects of social research practices have to be linked to the ways in which social science has understood temporality as a feature of a society at any given stage. It is argued that the configuration of contemporary timescapes is characterized by an acceleration of social rhythms and at the individual level there is a tension between biographical time, which is hard to project into the indeterminable future, and everyday life, which becomes the space for action (Leccardi, 2009). In an era of global risks (Beck, 1992), uncertainty and crises of the future, the ability to temporalize – according to which past and future, experiences and expectations, have to be continually coordinated and related to each other – tends to fragment. Bauman (1999:78) suggests that:

> (Whereas in the past) "stretches of time used to acquire their meaning from the anticipation of further sections of the time-continuum still to follow; they are now expected to derive their sense from, so to speak, inside – to justify themselves without reference, or with only perfunctory reference, to the future. Time-spans are plotted beside each other, rather than in a logical progression; there is no preordained logic in their succession; they may easily, without violating any hard and fast rule, change places – sectors of time continuum are in principle interchangeable. Each moment must present its own legitimation and offer the fullest satisfaction possible".

With the fragmentation of the experience of time, the 'extended' present becomes the time of individual action, an existential horizon that, in some way, includes and replaces the future and the past (Nowotny, 1993). The disappearance of the projectual time[18] from the individual and

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[18] The crisis of the future and of the project is expression of the difficulty of anchoring individual experiences with the social and political institutions, and the inability of these institutions to guarantee the

social imaginary is joined by the weakening of the idea of continuity of experience, deprived of "meanings arising from an organic link of the present with the past and future" (Rampazi, 2002:139; my translation).

In doing social science, the researcher needs to follow a 'slow' rhythm, anchored to the typical idea of time of the 'first' modernity, according to which the future – a separate dimension from the present and the past, controllable and predictable – is submitted to the human domain. It is an 'open' and irreversible time that proceeds in the direction of improvement and innovation, trying to keep the relationship between intention and result, instrumental rationality and control. Similarly, the social research process must maintain a certain degree of controllability and the researcher must be able to plan the future of his project.

These reflections highlight the existence of a time-lag between the social and the science that studies it: *the temporal cultures and the rhythms of the hill and the living room are not perfectly superimposable.* It is therefore necessary to consider time as a tool of differentiation (Luhmann, 2001). To perform its role *the living room has to be separated from the hill.* Social science must establish spatio-temporal boundaries that act as filtering devices and institutional barriers able to dampen faster social temporal cultures and rhythms. Social science occupies a special – de-synchronized and de-spatialized – chronotope, a quiet shelter that facilitates the development of critical thoughts and capacities. The temporal differentiations (asynchronicity) between society and social science allow the formation of territorial boundaries, also understood as boundaries of sense (ibid.).

If science requires a spatio-temporal disconnection from societal rhythms, social scientists have to adopt temporal strategies that favour a culture of 'waiting' and 'stalling', and even of 'wasting time', and waiting for 'enlightenment'. Furthermore, the research is not connected to finite times and places (the *living room*), as the researcher can work when and where he prefers. The *living room* does not represent a specific, material and impenetrable place, but a fluid and permeable space allowing for temporal transfer and the filtering of experiences, a space that affords the appropriate conditions for the development of scientific activity. Consequently, thinking about Philip K. Dick's image in reference to the process of social research, it can be affirmed that

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subjective sense of biographical continuity. It becomes the result of the individual's ability to construct and re-construct narratives, despite the presentified time frame (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2003).

every researcher's 'movement' from society (*the hill*) to social science (*the living room*) is a movement in time, if not in space.

I understand the researcher as a dialogical figure, positioned between different spatio-temporal dimensions. He 'belongs' both to society and to the science that studies it and must create and re-create (spatio-)temporal differentiations between areas of experience. In different spheres of life, and on the basis of the roles he plays, the researcher acts according to distinct temporal 'forms' and rhythms. The temporality of 'his' social science (*of the living room*) is constantly 'domesticated' – or transformed into "domestic territories, places that we perceive as areas of intimacy and roots, where we feel at ease, which we are able to control from the cognitive point of view and involve us from the emotional point of view" (Mandich, 2010:9; my translation). The researcher domesticates the space "through the filter of beliefs, objects, habits and symbols that mediate (his) experience, allowing the rooting" (ibid:10). From his position in society, he has a cognitive (perception), emotional (lived) and symbolic (representational) relation with the space of social science that he constructs.

Researcher's QLE

A key way in which we apprehend the temporality of social science activities is through the researcher's experience of the social research process. The researcher's QLE is a subjective and meaningful experience, which emerges during the research process, from the relationship with the object of study. The term 'qualitative' refers to the *modus operandi* of the qualitative researcher, who tends to develop an empathic relationship with the aspect of society he studies, recognizing and problematizing the interdependence between him and the object of the analysis.

The research process has its roots in the researcher's gaze on social reality, which can be understood as a political act that embodies a dimension of power towards the object of study: when he looks at the 'social' and makes choices to describe it (selection, classification, definition and so on), he constructs an artificial field (Melucci, 1998). These operations bloom from assumptions and (subjective, historical, cultural, unconscious) dispositions of the researcher, whose perspective reflexively shapes the object of study. In addition, the research process is not only a private event, but also involves the context, the interactions with other actors, the relations with the institutions and so on. If the contents of social research are closely

related to the manner and the times of its production, we need to develop a high level of reflexivity towards the research process, drawing analytical attention to its effects on both researcher and the researched (Thomson and Holland, 2003). In fact, the researcher and the object studied not only exist in relation to one another, but are constituted and contaminated by one another.

In order to analyse this dynamic I find it is useful to introduce the concept of habitus (Bourdieu, 1992, 2001; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). The habitus can be defined as a "system of durable and transferable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures" (Bourdieu, 1992:93; my translation). Talking about habitus means "to establish that the individual, the personal, the subjective is (also) social, collective" (ibid.). It represents the matrix of the production of differentiated practices, as a result of the interiorisation of the conditions of socialization of the individual. We can consider the habitus as a pre-reflexive concept, which becomes reflexive from the moment it comes into contact with 'the alterity'. The relation between researcher and object of study during the research process is a dynamic relation, which changes both the researcher's individual and disciplinary habitus (Bourdieu, 2001) and his affinity with the object of the study. In other words, the researcher's life and scientific experiences interact both in changing his habitus and in the development of the research, through the processual relation he has with the object of analysis. The researcher's QLE unfolds from this process. It takes shape through reflexive interrelations – occurring at different speeds – between his life and research experiences and the phenomena studied in social reality. In this case, the use of the term 'reflexive' indicates both the characteristic of the relation between subjective dimensions of experience (the social and the scientific one) and those between the researcher and the object of the study: each dimension employs its relation with the other for measuring and questioning itself. In general terms, reflexivity can be defined as the questioning of the habitus through an action (agency) toward 'the alterity' (the object of study). These reflexive practices take shape in time, and they reverberate in the problematization of the temporal dimension itself.

During the research process time represents a medium between interactions of individuals and contexts, between subject and object of knowledge, between past, present and future stages of life and research. The 'slow' time of scientific research enables researchers to interpret and re-interpret their own impressions of the social, and refine the way in which these are communicated. The differences between the temporality of social science and that of society –

between the living room and the hill – bring out epistemological issues in terms of acquisition, construction and elaboration of the 'data', which is calibrated or adapted, hidden or eliminated in time through continuous reflexive operations. Social research, therefore, configures itself as a qualitative process of temporally oriented choices.

Following John Isidore's route, during the research process the researcher finds himself *entering into the landscape of drab hill, drab sky.* The narrative of each research prefigures inside the identity and the perspective of the author (Melucci, 1998): it represents the situated researcher's 'I' which reflects on time and in time. It is the result of the indispensable link between the author and 'his' time. A qualitative and heterogeneous time, not divisible, not measurable and irreversible, that is hard to translate into discourses and indicators (Bergson, 1968). During the research process, past and future phases of the research reflexively interact in how the researcher conducts his study, interprets situations and makes decisions in the present. In other words, the research process has its roots in the researcher's (individual and disciplinary) habitus and, through the contact with the object of the study, it proceeds through his agency, "a temporally embedded process of social engagement, informed by the past (in its habitual aspect), but also oriented toward the future (as a capacity to imagine alternative possibilities) and toward the present (as a capacity to contextualize past habits and future projects within the contingencies of the moment)" (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998:963).

The researcher's particular relation with his time must be translated into the 'formal' spatio-temporal dimension of science – the social science field. This requires a shift in language that ensures that social science knowledge is not only a private fact. During this phase, researcher agency can be defined as coping with demands which derive from the construction of the research process, and with the identification of the most appropriate way to communicate his choices and results. The researcher has to develop appropriate legitimating strategies concerning both the area of the scientific field where he will publish and the style of writing, which varies according to the type of publication and the approach he follows. Within the 'public' spatio-temporal dimension of social science, the writing is the result of reflexive elaborations and practices of monitoring of the research process and contents, expressing the researcher's ability and strategies to control his background and cognitive dispositions, the analysis and the thesis he wants to support, according to the 'rules of the game' (Bourdieu, 2001).

Social science field and objects

The researcher's role is rooted in collective processes and structures. The social science field is "a network, or a configuration, of objective relations between positions" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:97) in which agents endowed with different resources struggle to conserve or transform the existing power relations[19] (Bourdieu, 2001). It appears as a shared space in which production, circulation and discussion of ideas take place. To some extent it can be understood also as normative reference, inasmuch as what the researcher expresses has to follow institutional principles.

Earlier in this paper I argued that the time of research is experienced by the researcher as concrete and subjective, with the present lived with the memory of the past and the anticipation of the future. This type of time is not objective and iconic, but subjective and indexical[20], rich with meanings and emotions. We can make a similar argument regarding the spatial dimension of social science: the indexical notion of space of science is founded on what this space 'looks like' from the point of view of the researcher. It can be seen as a principle of organization of experience (Goffman, 1974), a representation whose boundaries are the 'crystallization' of subjective processes of delimitation (Simmel, 1989). If the space of social science can be understood in a different way by each researcher, it is not necessary to define it precisely, merging every indexical space into a general and definitive topology – *build a living room able to host all the researchers*. On the contrary, it is important that researchers – for recognition, communication and so on – "routinely act 'as if' there (is) an objective social structure of this kind" (Abbott, 2007:91), able to coordinate the different perceptions and representations, giving them a semblance of cohesion and communion. In other words, it is important that its nature is recognized as being normative reference, making visible the cultural and performative characteristics in reference to which researchers conduct their activities.

Within the field of social science, space and time can be understood as tools of institutional organization providing constraints and resources. They also operate as a system of meanings, enabling cultural norms according to which the researcher expresses his ability to organize,

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[19] The researcher's position into the intellectual field is defined of the provision of specific forms of influence that can be invested in the pursuit of 'internal' – attention, recognition, reputation – or 'external' – economic, political, educational – capitals.

[20] Indexicality is the characteristic which makes the (verbal and/or practical) accounts understandable only in reference to the context in which they take place, and in light of the common interpretative references of the people who participate of them (Garfinkel, 1967).

coordinate, evaluate and communicate his research experiences. When we read a social science report, we often imagine it in an atemporal way because it represents a statement/objectification of transient impressions on a tangible basis (a screen, a paper page), removed from time by the analytic closure of the academic writing. The final product of researchers who follow a mainstream approach often stands out for its rigidity and atemporality even if the work that has made it possible was a slow process, with mistaken choices and incongruity between theoretical model and empirical research. The aim is to convey rigour to the reader, funneling attention on findings and explanations, tables and typologies, and not on the path that has made their construction possible. On the contrary, researchers from critical approaches of qualitative research, having provided a tradition of debates on epistemology, ethics and reflexivity, consider the researcher's voice as a qualifying element for the understanding of the research process. Writing within a feminist and QLR tradition, Thomson and Holland (2003:237) argue that "analysis and data collection are never finished; interpretation is always provisional" and suggest that if we think of how social research processes and analysis unfold over time we recognize that each step is situated in a (spatio-)temporal context that plays a strong role in determining meanings and contents of research. In general, the way in which social analysis is written and presented corresponds to a spatio-temporal strategy of action in the intellectual field (or a section of it), which expresses the author's reflexive adaptation to those who he perceives as the standards of 'scientificity' (Bourdieu, 2001). However, this adaptation is not always passive but it can be the result of a 'dance of agency' between the actor and disciplinary agency, which take shape through dialectics of resistance and accommodation. In fact, the intellectual field has a certain degree of flexibility and is subjected to a slow but continuous process of transformation and redefinition by researchers who act within it.

Researchers create cultural objects – concepts, theories, paradigms and methods – which aim to give a shape to the world, aspire to clarify how social facts are, and how they should be. It is therefore important to reflect on the ways in which social science produces its own objects. If it is true that "sociology has contributed to the creation of society's collective consciousness, to then make this very consciousness the object of its enquiry" (Touraine, 1978: 231, my translation), social scientists risk remaining imprisoned in disciplinary discourses they have contributed to create through the formulation of their assumptions (see Foucault, 1971). In fact, the scientific frame tends to act through a dual normativity: inward towards the discipline, via an educational and (self-)disciplinal action toward the researcher's particular discourse

(socialization and disciplinary habitus), and outward, producing other discourses which cannot be different to those that already exist.

It is also important to reflect on the historicity embedded in researchers' habitus and, consequently, in their analysis. Social scientists are historical subjects, exposed to the changes they attribute to the society. In fact, "research apparatus (…) does not sit above the social world but (…) is itself embedded in contemporary life" (Savage, 2010:7). In case that these changes – or the effects produced by the belief of their occurrence – prove 'real', social scientists cannot avoid being invested by them. This is the temporality of researchers' habitus. For a scientist, the habitus is not only a perceptual and conceptual filter; it also brings into play past experiences – structured structure – and defines future attitudes and behaviours – structuring structure. To some extent, it has to be considered as the foundation of the researcher's agency, as it affects his orientations, analysis and interpretations. In this way, social scientists often construct the (apparently objective) features of the social classifying and attributing to it properties from their position within it, and from their point of view on it (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992).

Finally, I argue that it is necessary to consider the link between historical and emotional dimensions of research into the frame of the scientific field. The emphasis that the scientific community attributes to a certain theme in a given temporal context and the position of this theme in the social science field (or in political agenda for example) have to be considered in relation with the researcher's biography and emotions (McLeod and Thomson, 2009). The object of study with which the researcher relates has a certain degree – that changes over time – of affinity or extraneousness with his habitus, which influences his emotional involvement. Furthermore, the disciplinary agency might condition the researcher's emotions and cultural mood, predisposing him to 'find' and to emphasize particular themes/dimensions during the research process, and consequently – to some extent – unconsciously 'steer' the results of the study.

Concluding remarks

In this paper I reflect on how the dimensions of time, duration and change relate to the process of social research, showing some of the non-linear ways in which spatial and temporal dimensions collide and are experienced, apprehended and imagined in research practices. The image described by Philip K. Dick is used as a device to help me to reflect on the issues of time,

context, the researcher's role and perspective. It also helps me to understand the complex interrelation of processes from which researcher's QLE unfolds.

Researcher's QLE not only relates to QLR, but refers to the general process of social research. During this process, the researcher's QLE unfolds through his 'belongings' to/interactions in/movements between different spatial and temporal settings. The social reality that he configures is a reflexive construction, whose comprehension must go hand in hand with the understanding of the changes that occur in the relation between the object of study and the researcher and of the way in which his analytic process is translated into the frame of social science.

For these reasons, showing the (spatio-)temporal dimension of research processes becomes a central issue for social science. It is necessary to develop theory and methodological practices tailored to address key aspects of time and synchronization, making the "real-life research" (McLeod and Thomson, 2009:166) visible, as the reflexive practices embedded in it. The researcher is the epicentre of the research process and his perspective historicises social science practice. In line with the debates promoted by NFQLR network, making public researcher's QLE might be an antidote to ensure that social research processes will not be represented as a conventionally accepted fiction.

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The Viva and Beyond: Ending the QLR Journey?

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If I am being totally honest I never really gave much thought to the PhD viva voce examination until the point I had to hand in my thesis. The examination always felt like a fantasy event in the distant future, a time when I would have total clarity on the key issues in my research and become, of course, an expert in my field. So it came as something of a shock to me when I found myself the day I planned to hand in my beautifully printed, spring-bound examination copies, clutching on for dear life. And, I confess, even the day after they had been sent – tearfully explaining to my supervisors that I thought they needed to be recalled. 'The PhD doesn't have to be the final word, just a record of the work you have done so far', were the wise words at the time of my supervisor Rachel Thomson. But in my case, the work I had done so far had spanned almost a decade (2005-2013), slotted in 'part time' between employment as a research fellow on a series of linked longitudinal ESRC research projects, as a researcher for an advocacy and consultancy organization for disabled children and young people, the birth of a book; Making of Modern Mothers (with Rachel Thomson, Mary Jane Kehily and Sue Sharpe, 2011) and the birth of my own child (with a year maternity leave 2011-2012). I had 'grown up' with my thesis both academically and personally (if the two can be imagined as separate). I was and I am, the 'living connection' with my research, and the time to let go of the thesis or 'end' the research journey was, consequently, a difficult moment (McLeod and Thomson, 2009).

In this collection we have drawn together the reflections of postgraduate students and early career researchers, who form part of the New Frontiers in Qualitative Longitudinal Research (NFQLR) network. As we have argued all PhD research can be seen as longitudinal if we consider a temporal sensibility in the research process and the possibilities of extending research projects in the future. In my PhD research; 'Becoming a disabled mother: A qualitative longitudinal study', however, a consideration of temporality and subjectivity (or emotions) was integral to my research design. I used a small in-depth sample of six case studies of disabled women, following their journeys into the first year of motherhood. I interviewed my participants at three different stages; in pregnancy, four months after birth and one year after birth. In doing so I presented two aspects of temporality – the transition to disabled motherhood as a key lifecourse moment and mapping the process of becoming a disabled mother over time. I was

interested in understanding the making of identity in this transition to first time motherhood, mirroring the agenda of a wider ESRC funded project – The Making of Modern Motherhoods – that I also embarked on in 2005 with colleagues Rachel Thomson, Mary Jane Kehily and Sue Sharpe. My core objective in my own project, however, was to reveal the way in which attention to these two aspects of temporality could inform our understanding of what 'disability' means both as experience and as an identity position (Priestley, 2003). I explored the social, emotional and embodied experience of becoming a mother for the first time, and questioned the implications of what could be considered as a time of dramatic embodied change (including conception, pregnancy, birth and mothering) for my participants' understandings of themselves as 'disabled mothers'.

As I will discuss in this paper, my QLR approach, which I regard as 'psycho-social', was strongly influenced by the work of those who use psycho-dynamic principles and psychoanalytic concepts as a way of exploring the emotional experience of both our participants and ourselves in the research process (Hollway and Jefferson, 2013; Hollway, 2010; Lucey, 2004; Walkerdine et al 2001; Hollway and Jefferson, 2000) That is to consider data not only in relation to what is said in the interviews but what is unsaid and can be revealed through gaps, silences and contradictions in the interview narrative, observation and the feelings or emotions of the researcher before, during and after the research encounter. My own position as a (temporarily) able-bodied and (temporarily) non–mother played a significant part in this work, as I became drawn into conversations (spoken and unspoken) about the significance of embodied difference.

In the first NFQLR event at Southampton University the network members explored interdisciplinary perspectives on continuity and change, and how QLR methods have been used to capture and understand the dynamic relationship between personal and socio-economic change. We questioned what counts as QLR. Following the first day Karen Henwood noted in her entry on the linked NFQLR blog that whilst the network focused on different disciplinary perspectives of the matter of 'value' that the 'turn to affect' was not mentioned even though considerable interest was shown in studying 'everyday evaluative statements and what matters to people' (Henwood, 2012). Yet as the network events developed there was a sense of the forging of a new understanding of the 'object' of QLR not as a particular research design involving repeat interviews but rather as a 'sensibility' including 'ways of remaining alert to time and temporality' in our research (Thomson et al, 2014, Walker, 2013). Others have highlighted the impossibility of separating the researcher from the researched in the QLR research process

(Thomson and Holland, 2003). Emotions can be seen as providing the link between the different temporal narratives that are contained within the research process, including biographical time (of both researcher and researched), research time (the timetable of the research process), analytical time (the process of analysis and writing) (Thomson and Holland, 2003). By making emotions explicit in my analysis, my thesis had not only come to represent my research journey but it had 'it' all out on display, exposing my process of sense-making – warts and all –for my examiners (and later my readers) to dissect.

The timing of the hand in of my thesis coincided with our final ECR and student workshop at Sussex University, where we reflected on the journeys of sense-making that we had all embarked on over the course of the NFQLR journey, in our own research and the ways the two intersected. In sharing my own difficult experience of handing in the thesis we discussed the fantasy of 'ending' QLR research. Maybe the idea of finishing our PhD – the desired end point – is something we have to hold onto for our own sanity in the writing process, but it soon becomes apparent that it is something of an illusion. What happens when you let go of the thesis? What do you do with all those sharp in-takes of breath when you think of all the literature or data you could have, or worse, should have included? What if in the process of re-reading the 'finished' thesis you develop a new perspective or different ways of thinking about your research findings? And what of the authoritative figure of your examiner? What do you do with those nightmarish fantasies of the difficult and challenging questions they may ask or the fear that they might not 'get it' – especially when what they don't get is so bound up with your own personal journey of sense-making? These questions are relevant to all PhD students but they are perhaps particularly acute for the QLR researcher who is aware of the impossibility of 'stepping outside the temporal flow' of the research enterprise (McLeod and Thomson, 2009: 63).

In the rest of this paper I present my experience of the period prior to the viva voce examination, both in relation to the imagining of conversations with my examiner and the development of a different 'vantage point' once released from the pressure of writing and delivering a 'finished' thesis (McLeod and Thomson, 2009). I argue that rather than anticipating the examination with a sense of dread, the PhD student can use the preparatory period to their advantage, reflecting on the temporal flow of their research and the part played by different models and theories over time. I illustrate this point by sharing with the reader how in my imagining of the examination encounter I returned to some of the tensions and anxiety felt at the outset of my research related to crossing disciplinary boundaries of psychoanalytically informed psycho-social studies,

sociology and disability studies and ethical questions related to researching across lines of difference. I show how in the process of revisiting my research journey over time I gained greater clarity on my own shifting perspective on emotions from an emphasis on the 'emotional effects' of disability and impairment towards the study of 'affect' in line with methodological shifts in psycho-social studies and QLR research (Wetherell, 2012, McLeod and Thomson, 2009, Thomas, 1999, 1997). Rather than see the viva as the end to this journey, drawing on insights from the NFQLR events I conclude that a new frontier in QLR informed by clinical and arts-based practice can enrich future disability studies research by offering rich and creative means to investigate this 'intermeshed' experience.

Imaginary conversations with my examiner

The best piece of advice I would give to any student when they hand in their thesis is to sit down and have an imaginary conversation with your examiners about your work. Go back to your examiners' key texts and have a think about what kind of angle they would approach your thesis from. Have a look at their most recent work and think about how their ideas are developing. What are their core interests? What aspects of your argument/findings/perspective would they most likely challenge or want to know more about? How does your approach differ from or compliment their own? Even if you feel that you know your examiners' work inside and out, returning to it once you have reached the end of your research journey, from a different temporal 'vantage point' may provoke new questions and ways of engaging with your thesis and offer you fresh insight on your own contribution to knowledge (McLeod and Thomson, 2009).

I began my PhD research in 2005 after three years as a qualitative research assistant and as a research consultant for an organization that specializes in advocacy and consultation with disabled children and young people. For me the PhD represented a creative space in my academic career where I could explore some of the niggling questions and concerns that I had begun to form in relation to the way we understand and define disability. These concerns reflected a growing sense of discontent within the field of disability studies about the strict binary division within what has become known as the 'social model' of disability between the experience of the body (as impairment) and social barriers or oppression (as disability). The 'social model' was created as a political tool to challenge the dominant way in which 'disability' is understood through dominant medical discourse (or model) as located within the individual (body and mind), and linked to a sense of personal tragedy (Thomas, 2007, Oliver, 1996). Yet

feminists within the UK disability movement and the academy have argued that by redefining disability in relation to social factors, the social model fails to address the gendered and impaired experience of women's bodies (Thomas, 2007, 1999, 1997; Crow, 1996; Morris, 1996). Others within the field of psychotherapy have also highlighted the way that this strict binary within the social model closes down the opportunity to speak of the emotional experience of both impairment and oppression (Watermeyer, 2002).

In my own PhD investigation I wanted to build on the political 'social barriers' agenda of the social model without neglecting the subjective (emotional) and embodied experience of disability. I chose my external examiner, Carol Thomas, because of her significant contribution to the field of disability studies and her development of the social model to take into account the 'intermeshing' of the lived experience of impairment and disablism with the 'social conditions that brings them into being and gives them meaning' (Thomas, 2007:137). Thomas argues that both impairment and the social oppression of disabled people can have 'psycho-emotional effects' on their wellbeing (1999: 8-9). Further disablism could become embodied as pain or suffering. As Thomas explains:

> 'Psycho-emotional disablism both in its enactment and its effects should be thought of as fully embodied … (not as) operating as simply at the level of mind or consciousness.' (Thomas, 2007: 152)

Returning to Thomas's work with the knowledge that she would be examining my thesis made me pay closer attention to her term ' psycho-emotional effects' and how this differed from developments in my own thinking; related to the turn to 'affect' in the social sciences (Wetherell, 2012). Would Thomas regard this as a significant contribution to the development of the social model, an intermeshing of the lived experience of the body (impairment and becoming a mother) and disability over time? How would my interpretation be received in British Disability Studies? Grappling with these questions I found myself returning to early concerns I had at the outset of my research about how we measure or assess 'emotions' and present an investigation of the subjective experience of becoming a mother that is agentic, relational and embodied. Crucially I remembered my fear that my own position as a non- disabled researcher would place me on difficult terrain, where I could be thought of as further objectifying or pathologising disabled women.

Going back to the beginning: Political and theoretical fashions and trends

When I began my PhD research in 2005 I presented a paper to my faculty within the Open University, with the title: 'The trauma of carrying out research into disabled motherhood' (Hadfield, 2005). The title conveys some of the tension I felt in relation to my position as a non-disabled researcher, and my proposed application of psychoanalytic and psychodynamic concepts to disabled mothers experiences.

At the time of my presentation in early 2005 I was conscious of a history within disability studies of a suspicion of non-disabled researchers of either the exploitation of disabled people for their own ends (academic credentials) or of contributing to the oppression of disabled people by reinforcing a personal tragedy model of disability (Oliver, 1996). The goal of 'emancipatory research' suggests that for disabled participants to experience power in the research process, non-disabled researchers must follow the research agenda set by disabled people, including the aims, methods and uses of the research (Zarb, 1997:52; Oliver, 1997). In contrast, not only had I not consulted my participants in the aims, methods and use of the research, but I was planning to import concepts and methods from a clinical context that would take my analysis beyond the words of my participants.

The psycho-social element of my research design was originally based on the idea that both participant and researcher are defended against unconscious processes of anxiety. I drew on two popular psycho-social methods at the time that moved beyond the discursive level of research to take into account these processes: the Free Association Narrative Interview (FANI) technique of Hollway and Jefferson (2000) and Walkderdine et al.'s (2001: 84) approach to the 'defended researcher' as the 'primary instrument of enquiry'. The FANI method attends to people's unconscious investments in discourse positions via close examination of the interview transcript data, paying attention to slips of the tongue, contradictions and gaps in the narrative and (although arguably to a lesser extent) the emotional dynamic produced within the interview. Walkerdine et al. (2001) argue that unconscious processes occur just as powerfully in a research setting as they do in any other interaction. Psycho-dynamic concepts used primarily in the consulting room of psychotherapy, such as projection, interjection, transference and counter-transference have been regarded as important tools for social scientists as by their very nature they uncover processes that are 'relational and dynamic' (Clarke and Hoggett, 2009: 13). By examining the thoughts and feelings felt by the researcher during and after the interview, it is possible to begin to understand and point to 'what might not (indeed cannot) be expressed by

the subject' (Walkerdine et al., 2001:90).

As my research progressed, particularly at the point of my early fieldwork as I tested out my methods, I became increasingly uncomfortable with the application of psychoanalytic and psycho-dynamic concepts and ideas. I became acutely aware of the difference between the analytical space in therapeutic practice and research, the different nature of the relationship between patient and therapist, researcher and researched, and the purpose of the encounter. Researcher encounters do not offer the same element of containment and relationships are not created on the basis of reciprocity and inter-subjective exchange. The encounter is designed to help the patient, as opposed to benefit the researcher. If it is impossible to replicate the same conditions for investigating unconscious processes, it is important to question whether psycho-social research methods can reveal instances for example of transference or counter transference. By using a method that is inspired by clinically observed phenomena and drawing on vocabulary in which I had no professional training I also felt consumed by a sense of its authority. Rather than use the FANI method in a strict prescriptive way, as a means of closely attuning myself to evidence of my participants' 'defences' within the interview transcript, I began to realise that the value of the (free association) method was in relation to its capacity to take the researcher into unexpected and unknown territory. By focusing on moments of discomfort and challenge or conversely comfort and ease (including a desire to control the interview encounter), I found myself able to question and explore some of the emotional work going on as evidence of the way in which both researcher and researched were struggling to make sense of experiences of difference.

Of course my dissatisfaction and unease with the psycho-social component of my research did not occur in a vacuum. My PhD research took place in a particular historical moment within the academy characterised by a fierce debate about the applicability of clinical concepts and methods to social research (Baraitster, 2008;Frosh and Baraitster, 2008). Frosh and Baraitser (2008) argue that attempts at engaging with the unconscious over a short period of time, in the uncontained research setting, and the mistaken assumption that colleagues can successfully interrogate the researcher's unconscious is futile (p362-363). Instead they state:

> 'Psychoanalysis has more to offer when it's disruptive and peformative elements are
> placed in the foreground, that is, when the kind of reflexivity it advances is one that
> acknowledges the way the phenomena of the psychosocial are produced through

the actions of the analyst and analysand, researcher and researched. This means that cherished psychoanalytic ideas have to be rethought for the different context of investigation and expression.' (p363)

Rather than investments in discourse positions (such as the 'social model' or the 'medical model') I got the sense during my fieldwork that my participants (and I) were actually engaged in much more complicated processes of sense-making that were not only agentic and embodied but built over time. Drawing on the work of Judith Butler (2004), I mapped processes of sense-making as my participants made their experiences as disabled mothers intelligible in relation to dominant social norms. By paying attention to sense-making as an iterative process over time, I mapped the way in which my participants were making the transition to motherhood 'livable' and moments when this felt difficult or even impossible. All of the participants in my study invested in a series of 'body projects' (including conception, pregnancy, birth and the body projects of their own children) and attention to this work revealed the tension between the presentation of their capacity for autonomy, claiming support and their experience of interdependent relationships over time (Shilling, 1990, Featherstone, 1991, Warren and Brewis, 2004). In some cases there was clear evidence that women were able to challenge, provoke and even potentially 'queer' or transform dominant social norms, in some cases offering or presenting 'embodied alternatives' (Goodley, 2011). Despite this capacity for agency, however, my research also revealed the fragility of these processes of intelligibility and the emotional toll of living outside dominant social norms.

While there are tensions with combining clinical (psychoanalytic) methods with longitudinal social research, both entail a concern with 'duration' ('the demand to keep looking/talking over extended period of time') which enables us to analyse the individual and look beyond 'manifest meaning' (Thomson, 2010:16). Intensity is thus produced through this repetition of the research encounter, whereby psycho-dynamic layers of data can accrue and can be subsequently excavated. For example, gaps and inconsistencies or the repetition of emotional response over time can reveal the defenses or desire present for researcher and researched. (Thomson, 2010; McLeod and Thomson, 2009).In the process of my research I became more closely attuned to the impact of QLR. While processes of hindsight and foresight can be mapped (more literally) in my participants' accounts of becoming a disabled mother through their reflections on past and present and imagining of the future, they also interact in the research process and can be accessed through researcher subjectivity. By

making the presence of hindsight and foresight explicit in my analysis, I found myself able to develop what Thomson and Holland (2003:243) refer to as a 'provisional and mobile' understanding of my data. That is to say that the emotional responses and investments of the researcher and the way in which these change or repeat over time can provide insight into the experience of research participants and the construction of social phenomena. My own body, the bodies of my participants and their children were drawn into these conversations even when not explicitly voiced. I found that in these cases the detailed descriptions I made of the interview setting and non-verbal communication and interaction in my field notes were invaluable for building a partial sense of the context of my participants' situation.

Reflecting on and documenting this emotional dynamic over the course of the analytical process I began to realize that my participants and I were involved in a two way relationship that signifies the co-production of meaning or simultaneous projects of sense-making. The passage of time not only gave me the opportunity to reflect on what may not have been accessible in the past but I found myself able to reflect on my data from different positions or 'vantage points' (McLeod and Thomson, 2009; Walkerdine et al., 2001). The seven-year framework of my study (with an additional year of maternity leave) saw significant changes in my own biographical position: from a desire to answer my own questions about disability and difference to a recognition of the importance of motherhood as a source of difference and connection. My own experience of infertility and motherhood inevitably produced different perspectives for my analysis of the data at different points in the research process.

For me then the 'emotional' element of my research was not a causal line linking embodied and social experience to the 'effects' of these. Rather it was something more complex, agentic, dynamic and crucially temporal. Baraitser questions whether it would be more apt to consider a different type of conceptual language to understand these processes drawing on Laplanche's distinction between 'psychological' and 'analytical' transference (Laplanche, 1999; Baraitser, 2008b:423-427). That is not to let go of the 'psychic reality' of a research encounter, but to treat it differently to a consultation. I found myself moving further away from psychoanalytical conceptual language in my analysis preferring to reveal and show these processes through descriptive presentation of the emotional dynamic within the encounter and processes of intelligibility over time.

A different vantage point and forging a new frontier for Disability Studies and QLR

In Margie Wetherell's publication: Affect and Emotions: A New Social Science Understanding (2012) she argues that rather than rely on simplistic lines of causation, character types and neat emotional categories the turn to affect involves paying attention to the shifting and flexible relational capacity of individuals and the 'lively' activity of meaning making as relational, interactional that changes and refigures over time with 'affective ruts' (p14). Affect can be located in relation to the body and as such is of crucial importance to a 'social model' understanding of disability as it demonstrates the complexity of the lived experience with implications for identity and connection with others (Wetherell, 2012).

My intention in carrying out my PhD research was to forge a creative space in which to investigate disability. Following the fourth NFQLR event at Birkbeck College, which staged an encounter between QLR and practice traditions in which 'situated' and durational forms of observation and participation play a key role, I realized I had not gone far enough.

Observation as a psychosocial technique is based on non-verbal, embodied aspects of communication and mental states and allows the observer to pick up on what is unsaid or unsayable (Hollway, 2010). In Hollway's (2010) research, she draws on infant observation methods as a means of moving beyond the limitations of interview narrative approaches to explore the embodied aspects of identity:

> '(Observation) enables us to see identities that are less the product of conscious intentional production through narrative, more sensitive to affect, to unconscious inter-subjectivity and to embodied aspects of identity' (Hollway, 2010: 334-5).

These were the kind of insights that were present in Jenifer Wakelyn's presentation of the first year of the life of a baby using infant naturalistic participant observation methods with children in care in the fourth NFQLR event. Wakelyn described the power of infant observation in capturing the 'intensity of being with a tiny baby and the drama and detail of relationships as they are unfolding' (Wakelyn, 2013). It would be impossible to replicate the infant observation method without considerable clinical training or access to a trained team of infant observers, and I do not pretend I have done so. The data produced in my observations however helped build a rich picture of everyday experiences, often going beyond what was able to be expressed in words, or in some cases providing a sense of contradiction to the interview narrative provoking new

avenues for analysis. That is not to say that one version is more 'true' than another, but an example of the difference between the presentation or performance of self through narrative and a more complex performance through the interview (emotional) dynamic (Hollway, 2010)

On a practical note, observation is also essential in research where traditional narrative interviewing may not be possible; the presence of a young baby is one factor that may hinder this but it can also be combined with the demands of a participant's particular impairment which may make the process of telling stories too difficult (or exhausting) (Hadfield, 2013). Observation became integral to the way in which I began to understand the way my participants (and I) were making sense of their bodies. I watched as they actively performed new body projects –feeding their child, connecting and caring for them and even drawing out the parallel body projects of their own children as they made sense of the tension between presenting themselves as autonomous and recognition of their interdependent relationships with others and their need to claim support.

In the linked ECR/Doctoral workshop at Birkbeck, Simon Bayly encouraged us to abandon what we knew and felt familiar with, pushing ourselves outside of our comfort zone as we took a scripted walk around the local area, interviewing a stranger about a journey they had taken. When we returned we were asked to describe our journey and the people we met through a different narrative genre. Reflecting on this exercise following the event I realized that the power of a QLR approach when combined with clinically informed methods is attention paid to the process of 'unfolding' through the detail of what is happening in the here and now (Wakelyn, 2013, Thomson et al., 2014). By engaging with practice traditions it is possible to make strange or 'rework the knowledge bases that we come with' (Baraitser, 2008:426). Rather than categorize or label the emotional experience of my participants, or draw on clinical language to translate their experiences, a focus on affect and temporality may offer disability studies a way of engaging with the body and emotions without the danger of pathologising or objectifying disabled people's experiences. I would argue it is this combination of a focus on temporality and emotions that can enrich and develop a more 'intermeshed' social model of disability (Thomas, 2007). Rather than focus on the danger of researching across lines of embodied difference in relation to the potential exploitation or objectification of disabled people, the combining of attention to processes of affect over time can enrich an understanding of processes of intelligibility as co-constructed. Placing ourselves as researchers in this process, being open and honest about the kind of insights that we can see, or are only revealed with hindsight,

enables a deeper form of reflexivity. This is not reflexivity for reflexivity's sake. Wetherell argues 'power works through affect and affect emerges in power' (Wetherell, 2012:16). By paying attention to processes of intelligibility, both individual and co-constructed over time, I was able to reveal the way in which both my participants and I were both contesting and conforming to normative constructions of able (maternal) bodies, and the fragility of these processes when existing outside of dominant social norms (Wetherell, 2012). This fragility has emotional, embodied, and social consequences, highlighting the need for emotions to be a central element of our understanding of disability.

Conclusion

Time has passed again and by the time I came to write this paper, shortly after receiving my PhD certificate in the post, my memory of my examination is already becoming distant. One thing I do remember however was my examiners explaining how refreshing it was to speak to a student who had already begun to think about ways of moving their work forward and extending their contribution to knowledge. As students we cannot do anything about the horror that is the looming PhD exam, but we can stand at the crossroads for a while, viewing the thesis from a different vantage point in a way which can help us enrich and develop a fresh perspective about the significance of our research. In my case the process of looking back on my research journey with the added space of the NFQLR network to consider these issues helped me broach the viva with renewed certainty about the importance of QLR for a social model of disability that takes seriously the 'intermeshing' of embodied and social experience through the lens of emotions (Thomas, 2007) As I have illustrated in this paper you do not need to have all the answers by the time you reach the viva, but the process of reflecting back on your journey in conversation with your examiners can help you gain new insight and forge a new frontier for your own QLR project.

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Reflections on qualitative longitudinal research and two studies with Iranian migrants in the UK

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Introduction

This paper is based on my reflections from two research studies that I was involved in between the years 2009 and 2013 with highly skilled Iranian migrants living in Britain. In this paper I consider how bringing a qualitative longitudinal sensibility to existing data can elucidate changes in migrant communities and their willingness to be involved in research. Furthermore, I reflect on my role as a researcher and explore how my understanding was affected by adopting a temporal perspective and by the time lapse between the two research projects.

In conducting research on social change in migrant communities, several important points intersect; including alterations within the contexts that migrants live their lives, changes in their countries of origin and transformation of transnational links over time (Lutz, 2011; Anthias, 2008). An important aspect of qualitative longitudinal research (hereafter QLR), is temporality; QLR can help to make visible and understand the nature and process of change over time (Corden and Millar, 2007). One of the most evident types of change is narrative, as individual stories unfold across time (Lewis, 2007). In this discussion I consider the relevance of temporality both in relation to a migrant community and in relation to myself as a migrant academic.

This paper considers data from two studies conducted at different points in time. The first in 2009/10 was my PhD study involving interviews with female Iranian migrants who were working as doctors and dentists in the UK. The second involved a sub-section of interviews I conducted with Iranian academic migrants for research on the decision-making processes of highly-skilled migrants living in the UK. These studies were not longitudinal, in that they each involved only one occasion of qualitative data collection, which included participant observation and

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interviews. However, my involvement with the NFQLR network has led me to reflect on the importance of temporality in relation to subjectivity formation in the research process, for both participants and researcher, which I believe can be of particular salience in the context of migration research.

In 2013, I was not the same person as in 2009/10 but I had retained an interest in asking similar questions of those who shared the same ethnic heritage as each other, and me. Although my participants were not the same, the passing of time changed my view of certain subjects and the ways in which I viewed my data. In this paper, I foreground the idea of 'belonging' and explore the different connotations of this in 2009/10 compared to 2013. My aim in this paper is to show how a QLR paradigm can illuminate changes within the context of migrant communities.

What is QLR?

QLR has been applied within the fields of anthropology, community studies, education and psychology and used to address a variety of topics (Holland, et al., 2006). In contrast to quantitative methods, Henwood and Lang (2003: 49) argue that:

> 'qualitative studies are highly sensitive to contextual issues, and can illuminate important micro-social processes, such as the ways in which people subjectively negotiate the changes that occur in their lives at times of personal life transition'

As such, qualitative research that is conducted over a period of time allows the researcher to pay detailed attention to the sensitivity of contexts in relating political, social and cultural discourses to personal narratives. Some theorists have been prescriptive about how QLR should be conducted, suggesting that there should be two to three research encounters per year (Young, et al., 1991). Others have a broader notion of what constitutes QLR, describing it as research which seeks to explore change over time through more than one episode of data collection (Lewis, 2007).

Thomson and Holland (2003: 241) identify the main characteristics of qualitative longitudinal research as time, change and duration. Thomson (2013) argues that QLR is involved with both 'continuous' and 'discontinuous' time by recording 'nows' and by creating the archives of recorded material as our data (be it interviews, letters, observations, images, objects). In the

first NFQLR workshop masterclass with Lois Weis and Jeanine Anderson different possibilities for QLR research were discussed, including experiences of visiting the same communities over time, although this did not necessarily involve the same people[22]. This had salience for my own work with different groups of Iranian migrants interviewed at different points in time. My argument in this paper is that change in QLR should not only be analysed in relation to participants in the research but also in relation to the role of the researcher over time and the changes that the researcher goes through, which should be theorised in the research process. Such change in the researcher's perspective, positioning and negotiation of meanings should not be taken for granted as it has an impact on what is produced in different outputs. I suggest that some of the key elements and concepts in QLR can help to inform thinking about data collected at single time points, through the researcher's development of a QLR sensibility.

The importance of time

Time and space shape our understanding of a research context. Although we think about both while conducting research with migrants, space is perhaps prioritised over time. Even in the work on migration that follows Ricoeurian tradition[23], which has a more complex approach to time than other approaches in narrative analysis, time goes unquestioned (Squire, 2005). Molly Andrews (2008), in her seminal work with East German political activists' accounts of their memories of Wende[24], addresses the importance of time in the formation of political narratives and their meaningfulness within temporal frameworks. Andrews' work demonstrates that the formation of self is an iterative process that takes place in and through time. In stories that are bound to time and historical events, the self is constructed through narrating memories of these historical elements. Hence memory and history are interlinked.

My own interest in time was sparked by attending the NFQLR network seminar series. In particular I was interested in the possibilities of revisiting my own research, using my own biography as a researcher as a way of bringing together two studies that although involving different people, had important connections. Within a QLR paradigm it became possible to understand the studies as connected, both through my role as the researcher, but also through

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[22] http://www.sussex.ac.uk/esw/circy/research/currentresearch/newfrontiers/event1
[23] The interpretive tradition in narrative research is related to the work of Ricoeur and includes the assumption that lives have a particular time-based relationship with narrative (see Squire, 2005)
[24] Wende or turnaround refers to a period of political change/turnaround between 1989-90 in the German Democratic Republic.

the passage of historical time that transformed what it meant to be a migrant during this period. I re-visited the data collected in 2009/10 and compared this to data collected in 2013 using a temporal lens. In doing so, I realised that I had changed during these four years, not least by making the move from being a PhD student to research employment. In revisiting the transcripts I became aware of the many readings of the data that I had previously engaged in, and how these were situated in time and place. I noticed how my interest and interpretations changed over time.

Different contexts, similar themes

The conditions of migrants' lives are constantly changing. These changes encompass a wide range of personal issues – such as educational, employment and family transitions – alongside political changes – such as alterations to immigration policies, or political changes in country of origin or residence. In 2009, I was interested in understanding how macro-transformations in my participants' country of origin, Iran, changed a migrant's understanding of life away from home. Further, I became interested in how such understanding informs their perceptions and personal decision making within migratory contexts.

Study one - PhD

During 2009/10, I conducted 14 interviews with first generation-migrant Iranian women doctors and dentists residing and working in Britain. The study involved life story narrative interviews with a focus on the construction of social class after migration. Initially I had intended to interview each participant twice, but my plans to conduct second interviews were disrupted by a few considerations. This included the women's reluctance to cooperate due to lack of time, their concern about further disclosure of their lives and the fear of being identified by other fellow Iranians, as well as Iranian authorities. However, the most important factor which persuaded me not to interview these women for a second time was the impact the 2009 presidential elections and its aftermath were having on Iranians inside and outside the country.

In summer 2009, millions of Iranian people came to streets in Tehran and other cities and towns in Iran to protest against the allegedly rigged presidential elections. Consequently, media reporting has indicated that many were arrested, tortured and a number were killed on the

streets and died while under arrest[25]. The tense and highly charged political atmosphere spread outside national borders and many Iranians in different countries protested against the atrocities. During this turbulent time, I was recruiting participants for my PhD project. Consequently my already limited sample became increasingly contingent on my personal contacts and their capacity to assure participants that I was a 'safe' researcher and that my research had no political intentions.

On one occasion, after interviewing Farnaz, a GP in her early 40s, in a coffee shop, we went for a walk. She said to me, 'I was prepared to walk out of the interview if you asked me anything political'. I asked if there had been any point during the interview which made her want to walk out. She said that there had been nothing; otherwise she would have had the courage to stop the interview. The way Farnaz used the word 'political', implied the danger that was being felt at the time.

In this study I found my intention to adopt a qualitative longitudinal approach complicated by the changing social and political context in which the research took place. This highlights one of the challenges of QLR methods; that they can be seen as more demanding of participants, requiring sustained contact over time, which can be difficult to maintain in times of social and political unrest.

Study two

Four years later, in another heated election in summer 2013, the Iranian population voted for a moderate presidential candidate, Hassan Rouhani, who, unlike the former Iranian president Ahmadi Nejad, talked of friendship with the world. During this time I was asked by a colleague, Cigdem Esin, to conduct four interviews with Iranian academic migrants. These interviews were part of a broader study which aimed to understand the nuances in decision-making processes of Iranian, Turkish and Kurdish highly skilled migrants' living in Britain (Esin and Fathi, in preparation). The participants, two women and two men, were recruited via snowball sampling (similar to the first study). This time, I faced almost no difficulty in recruiting my participants. On one occasion, I asked one of the interviewees if he had any problems in me naming the organisation he had worked for and he expressed no anxiety about me doing so. The responses to participation across the two studies were very different, which could be indicative of the extent to which changing political context in country of origin influenced migrants' willingness to

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[25] E.g. see http://www.theguardian.com/world/iranian-presidential-election-2009?page=4

be involved in research, although clearly the small numbers in these studies requires caution in interpretation. This insight into the different sampling experiences I encountered was made visible by a qualitative longitudinal sensibility, looking at the changing context for data collection over time.

Similar themes emerged from both sets of interviews relating to social class, belonging, transnationalism, racism and discrimination, the migratory processes and identity formation in diaspora. Although fears of being recognised are prevalent in migrants' lives, the political and social upheavals in both societies might affect the processes of making sense of life and the intensity of fear they experienced. Helma Lutz (2011) in discussing Alfred Schütz's (1944, cited in Lutz, 2011: 349) depiction of the stranger, argues that Schütz's 'stranger is a migrant whose cultural and daily routine is uprooted, whose 'thinking as usual' has become dysfunctional. The stranger is ultimately doomed to identity crisis, to feelings of complete estrangement from everyday culture, taste, or the sense of beauty and knowledge, because there is nothing he/she shares or has in common with the citizens of the receiving country'.

QLR and migration contexts

While these two research projects were not linked (and cannot be seen as a single longitudinal study), I am nevertheless able to think about the projects together within A QLR paradigm because they were conducted by the same researcher. I aim to draw on some longitudinal ideas from my experience with interviewing highly skilled Iranian migrants and justify why a qualitative longitudinal sensibility towards research with migrant communities is not only beneficial but also necessary in order to glean 'what is going on' in these communities.

Firstly, migrant communities and individuals are subject to various political and social power relations in different contexts and their identities as 'in-betweeners' are constantly affected by these forces. Hence conducting research with these groups on multiple occasions across different points in time is vital for the understanding of ethnic communities and their sense-making. Secondly, migrants' experiences of social change are intersectional[26] and as a result their lives are subjected to different and at times harsher reformations than those who are located in more powerful positionings in a given context. Migrants' attempts for survival, for integration and for improving life conditions constantly undergo different immigration policies

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[26] Although this does not suggest that non-migrants' lives are not intersectional (See Yuval-Davis 2011).

and political changes, which happen as part of a process rather than sudden changes (Esin and Fathi, in preparation; Lutz, 2011). Migrants' narratives therefore need to be considered using a temporal framework and by reference to the context within which they were narrated. Thirdly, as migration can be seen as a process that does not have a beginning and end point, its fluid nature needs to be documented over time so the nuances of geographical movements as well as social translocations can be recorded and analysed at different stages rather than a one-off point in time. Finally, I argue that migrants' sense of belonging within the residence context is contingent on time, social and political changes within the societies involved in a migrant's life.

Although some of these points could potentially be explored using other qualitative approaches, I would argue that a QLR paradigm enables the researcher to think about the relationship between historical change and the ways in which migrants present themselves in social research.

In 2009, when I started thinking about recruiting for the PhD research project, I was seen as a young student in her mid-twenties who needed help from older women to complete the interviews needed for her study. By the second study however, I was several years older and had become a researcher with some skills and experience who was involved in a more formalised research process, the results of which would be published. The second interview sample was closer to me in terms of age and shared many similarities in ideologies and lifestyles. The similarities between my participants and I also put me on a stronger and perhaps more professional positioning that gave me a form of authority to conduct a dialogue rather than seeking their 'help'. I had changed within four years but consistencies in the research remained; I was researching people who counted themselves as Iranian, who were skilled migrants, and were answering similar questions on class, belonging, migration processes and being an Iranian professional working in the West.

In particular I want to touch on a point raised above – the sense of belonging – and discuss the importance of QLR in exploring this particular aspect of migrants' lives using some illustrative data. Since the publications of the Crick report in 1998, citizenship as a subject has been incorporated in the British school curriculum. From 2003, it also became mandatory to take the *Life in the UK* test as a process of naturalisation (Yuval-Davis, 2011). Such on-going political processes shed multiple lights on the importance that is given to language and acquiring proficiency in speaking the language of the country of residence (Lutz, 2011). In these reports, it

has been argued that English language proficiency is viewed as a core measure of an individual's entitlement to national inclusion and belonging. As Lutz (2011: 352) argues, ''migrants' narratives cannot just be perceived as acts of 'innocent' communication. Instead, they are politicized since the language in which they are spoken has an impact on whether or not the speakers are considered to belong to the nation'. In both studies I realised that language is an important aspect of the everyday lives of migrants too. Although my participants rarely mentioned their abilities to speak the language, analysis of their stories suggests that acquisition of English to a 'high standard' is seen as a sign of success for highly skilled Iranian migrants.

Participants told stories about their earlier periods in Britain differently to the way they recounted stories from more recent times. Their stories about their early experiences in Britain suggest that they felt they had fallen short in some way. In the beginning when they came to Britain they had to adapt to the new environment; in some cases they felt it was a culture shock. Usually the concept of being a foreigner, or feeling like one, was more significant in these narratives than in later stories. Phrases used in the stories about their earlier experiences included:

'Falling from the top to the bottom' (Farnaz, study 1)

'Starting from point zero' (Monir, study 1)

'I had to submit 85 post-doc applications to different places.' (Setareh study 2)

'It was like an earthquake in my life.' (Maryam, Study 1)

'They never accepted my qualifications.' (Khorshid, Study 1)

'They put you down at the bottom of the list.' (Setareh, study 2 and Khorshid, Study 1)

These are in contrast with the phrases they used to describe later periods in their lives when they were registered doctors and dentists or had secure positions in academia, where the tone changes to a sense of superiority, class status and success:

'I don't feel inferior to the English' (Monir, study 1)

'I am living at a good level of society' (Monir, study 1)

'We are middle class in English standards' (Maryam, study 1)

'I think there is no difference between being a native or an immigrant' (Setareh, study 2)

'I am a global citizen' (Shirin, study 1)

'I feel my life is more secure here.' (Azadeh, study 2)

These two sets of narratives taken from different points of time in a migrant's life but narrated in the same interview show the importance of accounting for time and transition, providing insights into the fluid process of belonging/unbelonging. This transition is important in marking unbelonging in a context and its replacement by the feelings of belonging to the same setting. This sense of belonging and its fluidity in the lives of migrants happened over the course of a few years and was recounted retrospectively in my study interviews. Alternatively a QLR study walking alongside people through time (Neale, 2011) may be able to capture change in process, although the changing political contexts, as noted above, means conducting this kind of study would not necessarily be straightforward.

In the second study, when I was asking the questions around belonging, I was more aware of the situation of migrants, my views became more political and the narratives about different groups of migrants sounded similar to me. The passage of time had indeed changed my political positioning in favour of marginalised groups of British society, but I could still witness similar hierarchical positioning in the narratives of belonging that were narrated to me. Indeed the political agendas of the conservative party in coalition government tightened the immigration rules and anti-immigrant discourses were heated[27]. I believe these discourses reiterated the hierarchies of belonging that became quite popular among migrants themselves as well as in between migrants and the white British population.

In the 2013 study, academic migrants positioned themselves in a separate category as they were competent in the English language from the moment they arrived in Britain. The temporal and social element of transition was absent from these narratives. However, of interest was the importance the participants in the second study placed on being recognised as different to other types of migrants who were living alongside them in the same locations. For example for Bahram, a young academic in his thirties, his point of reference for belonging was not the temporal elements of his identity formation in Britain but rather his perception of difference from other migrants and professions:

> … about migrants, I am not very optimistic. Completely, and somehow I understand
> the fundamental views on rejecting migrants altogether. Maybe because I feel that I
> am part of those people who what I do is valuable enough to get me out of [this
> discourse] for example, it is not very important for me to kick the Pakistani taxi

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[27] http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2013/oct/14/worry-immigration-poll-crackdown-migrants

drivers out of this country. Because I think that I have brought in 1.5 million Euro foreign investment in this country and because of this, I am the one who should stay. That is what I do for a living. And maybe next year, I will bring even more. So, to me, I look at it like this.

Migrants' lives are subject to transformation, with personal lives affected by geographical and social translocations as well as by political and structural power relations. As importantly, they are affected by emotional attachments, which is one facet of their sense of belonging (Yuval-Davis, 2011). Therefore, the questions around positionality, belonging and identity formation should be explored over a span of life within ethnic minority communities in order to provide a deep understanding of meaning making and how and to what extent these transitions happen.

A concluding note

In this paper, I have raised issues about the possibility of thinking across two separate research studies by drawing on a QLR sensibility. I do this by locating myself within a QLR paradigm that connects my own identity as a researcher with the condition of my research participants and the dynamic understanding of what it means to be an Iranian migrant. I realised that as an individual and as a researcher I had changed in relation to the political and social changes in the country of my origin, Iran, and the country in which I am a migrant, England. Bringing together these two studies, I realised that my sense of belonging had undergone a transformation and my analysis was more entrenched within the structures of the society within which I was spending my adult life.

My argument has illustrated how I view QLR methods, which afford a temporal perspective, as being of particular relevance for researching migrant communities. For example, I have highlighted how the field of migration studies has not yet grasped and integrated the importance of time and duration into its analytic framework, yet I suggest that doing so would bring further insight into the changing experience of migrants. I contend that by adopting a QLR awareness and attending to the importance of time in research studies, a researcher can see the transformations of her own understanding and nuances that occur as a result of time. Social changes shape and reshape the context of migrants' constructions of their lives in new forms. By exploring these processes over extended time periods it becomes possible to see power

relations at work, for example in the ways that interviewees 'other' certain migrants along the lines of racial, ethnic and class factors.

A migrant's feeling of unbelonging is not simply the result of a sudden change of geographical dislocation but rather, as Apitzsch (1999, cited in Lutz, 2011) argues, is a consequence of power relations in the reconstruction process. These reconstruction processes are developed over time and in conversation with changing geopolitical contexts. If two presidential elections (in 2009 and 2013) can affect respondents' willingness to participate in projects transnationally and the immigration policies in Britain can make migrants in both studies seemingly more hostile towards other migrants, then one can conclude that macro narratives directly or indirectly create spaces for negotiating micro narratives and identities that are changing continually.

Whilst adopting QLR methods in my own study was rendered impractical by the concurrent social changes in my participants' country of origin, lessons from QLR approaches have been valuable in revisiting my own data from different time points, affording new insights into the experience of migrants in the UK. These initial challenges in adopting this methodological approach highlight some of the potential difficulties researchers may encounter when undertaking QLR. For example, longitudinal engagement is more demanding of participants than a one-off research encounter, so participants may be less willing to be involved. However, the depth and detail afforded by QLR can also bring an important dimension to understanding identity. Subsequently, I suggest that adopting a QLR sensibility could offer new insights and could help to inform future migration research.

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Epilogue: methodological lessons in temporal perspective

Rachel Thomson, University of Sussex and Julie McLeod, University of Melbourne

In this final contribution Rachel Thomson and Julie McLeod reflect on the New Frontiers Methodological Innovation Network series and the working paper that has grown from the participation and contributions of early career researchers:

Rachel writes: In the time that I have been a professional academic there has been a transformation in the technologies of knowledge production. My first research job in the late 1980s involved a labour intensive process of making private stories public through turning audio recordings of face to face interviews into public documents. The internet and email were on a slow burn, but the new possibilities of word processing and desktop publishing transformed the way in which we recorded and communicated our work. As an early career researcher in a feminist research team I understood myself as having unusual access to responsibility and influence within the collective, aware of a not-too-distant past and present in which research assistants did not get to publish or have their ideas and labour acknowledged. Fast-forward 25 years and the media landscape is transformed. Twitter and social media are collapsing the temporal rhythms of academic production with researchers blogging analysis as they go and self-documentary emerging as a mundane practice of everyday living. Yet research assistant and early career researchers still struggle for a voice and need to be careful about the exploitation of their labour.

In this collection, we hear the voices of early career researchers, sensing the proximity of doctoral projects, of uncertain positions within hierarchies and the consequences of new and old divisions of academic labour. These were the early career researchers who formed a convoy that travelled together over the year of events that comprised the New Frontiers in QLR network. They participated in the events and formed the primary audience for the master classes and workshops that accompanied, followed or preceded the seminars. They were the best bloggers, no doubt because we made this a condition of having their expenses paid. And they digested and understood the heterogeneous material that constituted the series. I am deeply grateful to these other minds with whom I have thought, and whose reflections and writings I have enjoyed in blogs and here in this working paper. The collection is not complete;

several key participants were unable to contribute due to competing demands on their time. However, we feel their presence nevertheless through the collectively forged phrases and shared ideas that emerged and circulated over the series. The collection is also half the story, and should be read in conjunction with the working paper 'New Frontiers in QLR' which is a report on the series with a mapping of the future of the field. Without the presence and provocation of the early years researchers, the series and the learning that arose from it would not have been the same. All vibrant knowledge communities involve a combination of research and teaching, allowing us to be receptive to the new as well as attending to the difficult.

There is something about digital culture that makes the assembled character of knowledge production more evident. In this series the component parts of the project and their connections are extremely visible, as is illustrated in Ester's account of the play and purpose of social media in these workshops. The events were filmed and can be watched again. Live tweets can be collated and read as a story. Our narrative of the series hyperlinks back to examples that might be tweets, blogs, snatches of film or published accounts. Our reflexive style reveals boundary crossings between the different times and spaces of our lives, the synchronicities of vivas and events, and sequences of thinking, writing and publication. These are also assemblages of people spread across time and space. Running five events at different institutions over a year, yet it nevertheless being 'one thing', was an enormous logistical challenge that involved complex webs of communication and action and much labour – not always visible and not to everyone. There is an enormous amount of work within this working paper, including the endeavours of participation, writing, editing, organising and completing. And as the work is done, so time passes and the mantle is passed between generations of researchers for leadership and the nurturing of continuous, contingent and contiguous intellectual projects.

The QLR sensibility that is the motif of this collection is a shorthand for something subtle and profound that includes all sort of processes, including a philosophical and methodological turn to time, the deployment of reflexivity as a practice and a re-sensitising of awareness to the present as a space for knowledge production. All these papers are marked by this sensibility in different ways and by the experience of collaborative investigation.

Julie writes: travelling from Australia, I was able to participate in three workshops, including the final session. The experience of returning and re-connecting with discussions amplified the incremental and recursive nature of the collaborative learning underway in these workshops.

Missing one session, and re-entering discussions several months later gave a potent sense of how a QLR sensibility was being teased out, questioned, challenged, pushed, enacted, morphed and represented in many ways, not settling for a single definitional or doctrinal moment, but remaining open to what it offered for individual research projects and for methodological thinking and knowledge building more generally. This type of learning carries implications for conceiving pedagogies of doctoral training in the bigger picture. The combination of intensive time in workshops with the extensive time of a year-long commitment gave opportunities for digesting ideas, to puzzle over questions in the gaps between sessions, to form relationships inviting trust, reciprocity and intellectual rigour, and managing the experiences of uncertainty and growing if tentative confidence that can emerge over a longer period of engagement. In some respects this mirrors the experience of reflective, relational and analytic time when doing research work.

The intensity of research dynamics are often hard to represent – the flashes of insight, the spark of ideas, the happenstance of conversations and connections that take on signal moments in one's research journey: these often remain invisible and even elusive, written over by the genres and demands of academic modes of production and publication. The papers represented here manage in their diversity to capture a sense of unfolding time and cumulative insight, speaking to their specific research projects and to the productive intersections of emotional and intellectual dynamics.

Interestingly, few of the projects discussed in this collection began as explicitly or deliberately longitudinal in either design or conceptual ambition. Yet, in the course of the discussions, generative new ways of approaching the topic, or of retrospectively re-arranging and re-interpreting the study emerged. This included recasting earlier fieldwork research not as discrete events but as episodes that might be juxtaposed, connected across time by particular research questions, groups of participants, or ideas. This re-imagining brought new perspectives to research projects, seen in the papers by Mastoureh and Claude, who both consider the meaning and application of a qualitative longitudinal sensibility, revealing the benefits of this 'unexpected encounter', both during the time of undertaking fieldwork and after its completion. A focus on time can also produce a heightened attention to the vividness of the present, and to ways of adequately trying to register its complexity. The temporal turn here is taken up not so much with the flow of things whooshing by, or the duration of waves of research over the long haul, but with trying to capture the nuance and now-ness of the present. This

shows up in researchers grappling with affective responses to fieldwork and its unpredictable intensities, and in pushing up against modes of representation, yearning for other ways to register the everyday and the present moment – this is captured in Sarah's reflections on and enactments of a more lyrical sociology and in Rebecca's methodological meditations on disciplinary and practice traditions. Fabio's paper similarly works across modes of representation to convey what he characterizes as a qualitative longitudinal experience, looking to literary parables as a way into considering the temporal rhythms of research.

A recurring conversation, one that was more emphatic by the final workshop, was to look outside or at least alongside social science traditions to explore how other fields of research and practice engaged with various methodological and interpretive challenges, some to do with QLR specifically and some to do with research practices and knowledge-building more broadly: managing and producing sources, especially in the digital era, research writing and representation, the significance of talking about 'data' rather than archives or sources or research materials, distinctions between explanation and interpretation, making arguments and evidence that matters. These cross-disciplinary encounters were especially stimulating for me, as someone whose research straddles history and sociology of education, and who feels not quite perfectly at home in either. At one of the seminars, and in response to a question about whether historians' approach to time and duration resonated with the impulse and approach of QLR, Liz Stanley remarked that historians were not much interested in time. This succinct response has stayed with me, continuing to both puzzle and be productive. It invites a closer scrutiny of just what exactly is being conjured in references to time/temporality/duration and longitudinality and how these analytically suggestive notions seem to resonate differently across disciplines and intellectual formations – biographically and collectively. It can be easy to get lost in the big philosophical dilemmas and seductions of the temporal turn. Working with such big ideas can also be helped by the pragmatics of designing and doing specific empirical projects, imposing some parameters, while also testing and pushing ideas; and these papers all bear the marks of such dialogic and reflective scholarship.

Being somewhat a participant observer in the early makings of these papers, I was also reflecting on my own formative doctoral experiences, two decades ago now, and recalling the enduring impact of reading groups, seminars and workshops and the intense collaborative connections with doctoral fellow travellers. On the one hand, some elements of the life of the doctoral researcher seem familiar and, tinged with the glow of nostalgia, even the long slow slog

of the PhD starts to look luxurious. On the other hand, there have been significant shifts in research and university environments and, in particular, how researcher formation is imagined and managed in universities. In a remarkably short span of time there has been a shift (at least in the PhD models adopted in UK and Australian universities) towards more institutional management of doctoral training, encouraging a model less reliant on the sole scholar and the apprenticed student, and one with a greater emphasis on the role of cohort training and timely completions. Improved doctoral research training equates to better completion rates. This arises in the context of increased focus in educational sectors on output measures and, in this case, pressures for improving rates of doctoral completions because that is a measure which also determines levels of university funding, Doctoral students are thus caught up in the metrics and funding mechanisms of universities, their on-time 'through-put' part of the neoliberal agenda in higher education. But this attention to research training and to a more collective sense of responsibility for shaping the academic careers and dispositions of the next generation of scholars can also give rise to more creative and exciting initiatives, as witnessed in these papers, and the workshops, blogs, cross-generational and peer learning collaborations upon which they were built: the editors' Introduction essay gives a valuable glimpse onto these rich and generative interactions.

In these changing contexts of doctoral learning, the NFQLR doctoral workshops opened up important spaces, but not only for methods training in a narrow technical sense. The workshop process fostered critical reflection on doctoral learning itself. Lucy's paper addresses her doctoral journey explicitly in relation to questions of researcher and analytic time, the place of duration, observation and distance in psycho-social methods, conveying a vibrant sense of ideas and emotions colliding both in retrospect and in anticipation of life beyond the thesis. As we conclude this epilogue, we take a cue from Claude's observations on the implications of a QLR sensibility for doctoral learning in general, as a way of 'marking time', 'making new connections along different temporal lines' and his call for doctoral training to be a 'time for attempting different modes of research'.

Rachel and Julie write: At the final workshop of the NFQLR series in September 2013 we ran a writing workshop where drafts of the papers presented in this working paper were shared and developed. It was a wonderful day for all concerned, a culmination of the best of the series in terms of substance and method. An email shared between us at the end of the day captures our thinking at that moment, lessons that we did not want to forget, yet which until the rediscovery of

the email had faded. Our insights concerned how to teach research methods with early career researchers. We offer our list as a conclusion to a working paper and a methodological network that both enacted and made visible these principles:

Methods training should involve:

- Active learning – making things material
- Mixing experience and inexperience
- Promoting a sensibility rather than a design or recipe
- Employing new media intelligently and a documenting practice, anchoring devices
- Demanding: requiring writing along the way and the sharing of this work
- Leading to creative work
- Travel and breaks in time/ intervals
- Face to face and mediated
- Early career as well as doctoral, encouraging a researcher rather than student identity
- Linked to an interdisciplinary reader
- Element of master-classes and student responses as part of the materials