

Practices of Ethics

Practices of Ethics:
An Empirical Approach to Ethics
in Social Sciences Research

Edited by

Isabella Paoletti, Maria Isabel Tomás
and Fernanda Menéndez

CAMBRIDGE
SCHOLARS

P U B L I S H I N G

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To Fernanda and her joy of life, no matter what

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CHAPTER TWO

ETHICS ON THE MOVE: METHODOLOGICAL DILEMMAS ON THE QUALITATIVE SCIENTIFIC WRITING PROCESS

ROSALINA PISCO COSTA

Naiveté [about ethics] itself is unethical.
(Mirvis & Seashore 1982, 100)

Introduction

There are many historical explanations (and examples) that justify current interest in ethics research. The new millennium has brought with it a wave of ethical challenges, as methods of data collection, analysis and dissemination have become more and more sophisticated and widespread in recent years (e.g. software development, internet-based research, and data dissemination via ICTs). The words of Mirvis & Seashore, the motto of this text, are not only as true as ever; they also invite us to rethink ethics as crosscutting and a global issue in the twenty-first century (Tilley & Woodthorpe 2011).

Ethical issues are pervasive along all dimensions of scientific practice. Since the very beginning of any research project, from the choice of a topic until the publication of research findings, ethical issues are a matter of constant thought, discussion and, finally, decision. Just as it is understood that scientific research truly engaged with social responsibility cannot overlook the ethical implications of its practice, so widespread is the understanding that any complete research proposal will have exhaustively anticipated the ethical issues involved, as well as shown ways to deal with them (Creswell 1994; Denzin and Lincoln 2000; Denscombe 1998; Patton 2002).