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Chapter 1 – Introduction: Overview of the book

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Hugh Busher and Alison Fox

Introduction

Chapter 1

Introduction

Overview of the book

Hugh Busher and Alison Fox

Abstract

This chapter sets the scene for this book in two complementary ways. The first part of this chapter explains the different ways that one can make sense of the different approaches to ethics in research and how these different approaches relate to each other. The second part of the chapter looks at some of the different themes that are discussed in the chapters, linking them to the main questions that the papers on which these chapters are founded tried to address in two sessions of the Special Interest Group on Ethnographic Research at the European Conference on Educational Research in 2017. The chapter concludes by giving a brief digest of each of the chapters in this book.

Introduction

At present many books on research methods focus on the theory of ethics and how to apply it when starting a research project, but there is relatively little discussion on applying research ethics in practice throughout the life of a qualitative research project and the importance of researcher reflexivity to that process. This book focuses on the practice of ethics and how ethical practice can be sustained by researchers in the field throughout the life of research projects using ethnographic and other qualitative approaches to research.

The extension of ethical regulation over the past twenty years from medicine and psychology across the whole of social science has made it more difficult for researchers to explain why ethnographic research in education needs to be carried out in certain ways that often differ from those of medicine and the physical sciences while still being ethically sound. Ethical regulation is largely carried out by research ethics committees, known in some countries as institutional (ethical) review boards, which decide if research projects can be implemented, and on what terms. Other countries, particularly in Scandinavia, have central or national review bodies to support researchers in their ethical thinking and to police their practice.

This regulatory regime has posed problems for ethnographic and other qualitative research because it is based on a medical and physical science model of enquiry. Not least, it pre-supposes levels of potential harm to participants arising from invasive and other physical processes that are highly unlikely ever to occur in qualitative research. However, it is not unreasonable for participants, gatekeepers and beneficiaries of research to wish to be sure that researchers have taken care to act in manners that are intended to prevent harm to participants in, and the environment of, a research project. It has led to a public demand that researchers show that they can sustain auditable ethical practices. Nonetheless, the formal regulatory procedures have introduced significant delays into the inception of research projects, as well as raising questions about the validity of some research designs that are needed for studying human interaction in certain situations. Some researchers have even argued that the new regulatory regime is an infringement of academic freedom to pursue research deemed necessary for understanding social and political processes in society.

The main gatekeepers to whether or not a study is approved to proceed are variously called research ethics committees (RECs) or institutional review boards (IRBs), seemingly depending on which side of the Atlantic you live. Both terms are used in the chapters in this book. They are usually convened by academic institutions to police the quality of research projects proposed by researchers and to ensure the proposed projects meet the ethical protocols supported by an institution and the relevant ethical guidance or codes of conduct of the professional body or bodies in the researcher's field, and to give researchers confidence that they have the support of their organisation in their work. However, in some Scandinavian countries RECs are not institutionally based but government-based, as some of the chapters in this book illustrate. In

addition, researchers might also have to pass their projects through ethical review if their studies are undertaken with funding from sponsors, including government ministries, or in specific research settings, such as within healthcare or prison service settings.

Ethnographic enquiry proposals often face particular challenges when being considered by IRBs as some board members are often unfamiliar with the methodology and how its data collection processes need to be provisional at the beginning of a project. Even if board support is granted based on an agreed set of practices about entry to the field and securing informed consent from potential participants, this does not always help ethnographers as they confront methodological dilemmas in the field (Rashid, Cain & Goetz 2015). Once in the field, relationships develop in ways not easy to anticipate and data emerge that are of interest beyond those accessible through initial informed consent to participate in research. This places particular responsibilities on the ethnographer through significant self-reflection on ethical practice (Fine 1993) and also trust in the researcher from the institution.

This book discusses how researchers can carry out ethical educational ethnographic research in a variety of face-to-face public educational spaces, as well as in online and hybrid spaces. This includes researchers persuading organs of research supervision, such as ethical review boards, as well as stakeholders and participants in research projects that they will carry out their research in an ethical manner throughout the life of a research project and afterwards, during its publication phase. It also addresses the dilemmas of people carrying out research in happenstance situations when it might not be clear from whom to gain consent to carry out research, either at the beginning of a project or during the life of a project as the research process develops through time. Yet not gaining this permission raises questions about how responsibly a researcher is behaving.

Contributions to the book focus on how researchers can construct and apply knowledge of ethical practice to ethnographic studies in different educational situations to make clear to putative participants in and gatekeepers of their proposed research projects that these will be carried out in an ethical manner. It also focuses on the dilemmas in the field that educational researchers encounter when trying to enact ethical practice and how they might resolve these. It is intended that this book helps researchers in the field to cope wisely with the ethical dilemmas

that they may encounter while also helping ethical regulatory bodies at national and institutional levels to come to wise decisions when faced with research applications that may challenge tightly constructed notions of what constitutes ethical research practice.

Different ethical frameworks/approaches to ethical practice

Ethical decision-making can be considered to operate at five levels (Kitchener and Kitchener 2009), each of which are problematised in chapters in this book.

The first level is related to a researcher's ethical decision-making in their own research setting through an analysis of the research scenario and their responses. This level is illustrated in this book through different researchers' perspectives both culturally and personally: Nikkanen's chapter about her role as a teacher and researcher in a Finnish school (Chapter 6); Smette's chapter (Chapter 4) and that of Fox & Mitchell (Chapter 8) about the experiences of undertaking ethnographic study of schools in Norway and Ethiopia, respectively; Dovemark's chapter about the ethical dilemmas faced in studying public recruitment fairs of Swedish schools (Chapter 7). A key argument presented throughout the book is how demanding such decision-making is for ethnographers and in particular how, if researchers are to ethically meet the needs of those they research, entering only with pre-determined ways of behaving underpinned by agreed principles and practices will be insufficient. Decision-making, as for all social science research but argued in this book as a particular concern in ethnographic studies, needs to continue into the fieldwork and reporting phases. This book's chapters therefore explore how both researcher and regulatory practices need to support researchers in being able to be responsive to their fieldwork experiences to ensure culturally sensitive and ethical studies.

The second level of ethical decision-making refers to the ethical rules bound up in professional codes of practice, ethical guidance and legislative regulations. Such codes and guidance are constructed for the membership of particular professions such as national psychological and sociological associations, broader educational and social science research associations, such as the American Educational Research Association, the UK Academy of Social Science and the British Educational Research Association, as well as formal national bodies that regulate research, e.g., the Economic Social Research Council (UK) and ministries, such as those in Sweden, Finland and Norway. Such guidance is set within a broader legislative

landscape relating to issues such as data protection, criminal disclosure and child protection. The codes provide guidance which explain researchers' legal obligations when carrying out research and need to keep up-to-date with legislative changes.

In Europe, 2018 saw a major launch of new data protection regulation with the General Data Protection Regulation (2018), which affects all those collecting, processing and storing data in the European Union as well as transferring data in and out of the EU and to which national data protection acts have responded with amendments, e.g., the UK Data Protection Act (2018). Institutions within which research is carried out, as well as funding bodies such as research councils (e.g., the National Health and Medical Research Council, Research Council and Vice Chancellors' Committee in Australia) and national ministries who create ethical codes of practice for their researchers. Together this leads to a web of codified rules that a single researcher needs to navigate and, where the codes appear contradictory, make decisions. The codes are usually regulated by associated review processes ultimately overseen by RECs or IRBs as referred to earlier in this chapter. It is notable that none of these codes are written with any specific methodology in mind and further work is needed by researchers in holding up the various advice they are beholden to against the values associated with their chosen research approach. For ethnographers, this 'mean(s) our personal sense of ethics and our ethnographic sense of ethics are not separate from one another' (Dennis 2018:53). Busher's chapter in this book (Chapter 5), for example, explores the thinking, rules and practical applicability of the concept of vulnerable participants in the context of educational ethnography.

Above the level of codified rules sits a third level of ethical decision-making, that of ethical principles. These underpin the second level to provide a justification for the advice and hence guide first-level decision-making. However, if we look across such guidance internationally there can be seen to be both agreement and difference in the priorities given to the key underpinning principles (see Table 1.1 below).

[Table 1.1: Principles in selected ethical research guidelines ABOUT HERE]

Table 1.1

Principles in selected ethical research guidelines

	Guidelines								
Principles	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
a. Respect for persons	*	*	* <i>key</i>	*	* <i>key</i>	*	* <i>key</i>	* <i>key</i>	
b. Beneficence and non-maleficence	*	*	*				*	*	
c. Justice	*	*	*	*					
d. Research merit and integrity		*			*	* <i>key</i>	*	*	
e. Honesty						*			*
f. Concern for welfare/duty of care				*					
g. Fairness			* <i>key</i>						* <i>key</i>
h. Responsibility for future generations									* <i>key</i>
i. Accountability					* <i>key</i>	*	* <i>key</i>	* <i>key</i>	*
j. Inclusivity (of interests, values, funders, methods and perspectives)							*		
k. Professional competence					*				
l. Independence of researcher								*	
m. Voluntary and informed consent								*	

Table largely based on Kitty de Riele (Brooks, de Reile & Maguire 2014:30–31)

Key

1. DHEW ‘The Belmont Report’ – 1979 (USA)
2. NHMRC, ARC and AVCC – 2007; updated 2018 (Australia)
3. CNDeS –2012 (Brazil)
 - a. (*autonomy*); g. (*equity*)
4. CIHR, NSERC and SSHRC – 2010 (Canada)
5. AERA – 2011 (US)
 - a. (*for rights, dignity and diversity*);
 - i. (*professional, scientific, scholarly and social responsibility*)
6. ALLEA – 2017 (Europe)
 - d. (*reliability*)
7. BERA and AcSS – 2018 and 2015 (UK)
 - a. (*for privacy, autonomy, diversity, values and dignity*);
 - i. (*social responsibilities for conducting and disseminating*)
8. ESRC – 2010; updated 2018 (UK)
 - a. (*for rights and dignity*); i. (*accountability and transparency*)
9. World conference on research integrity: Singapore Statement – 2010
 - g. (*and professional courtesy*); h. (*good stewardship on behalf of others*)

In terms of overlap, respect for persons (to be shown in a number of ways), beneficence and non-maleficence (balancing the maximizing of benefits against the minimization of harm), research integrity and accountability feature as common concerns across the most recent versions of these codes. There has been a shift over time as such national sets of principles have been reviewed from their origins in biomedical research. Whilst respect for persons and beneficence can be traced back even before the Belmont report (DHEW, 1979) to the Nuremberg Code (1947) and the Declaration of Helsinki (WMA 1964, 2013), the latter two principles of accountability and research integrity have moved into the language of regulation and hence become increasingly explicit in more recent updates. The phenomenon of increasing expectations of researchers to make a social impact has been noted as a modern concern at the regulatory level

and one that brings its own challenges in terms of defining and prioritizing this against other principles (Mustajoki & Mustajoki 2017). This pushes funding towards applied research, particularly in the case of development aid funding. This could lead to a limitation of what is considered valid research if only simple ‘what works’ studies are funded rather than research that both quests for fundamental understanding and consideration of its use (Wiliam 2011).

Two of the codes feature integrity in their titles (ALLEA 2017; World Conference on Research Integrity 2010). These, and the other codes which prioritise the principle of integrity, link the quality of research explicitly with ethical considerations and place responsibilities on researchers to be transparent about their research designs and conduct. This links with the increased expectations of accountability. On the other hand, justice, one of the three common principles adopted from the earlier biomedical codes (Israel 2015) is less universally represented as a key principle in those reviewed (Table 1.1). This may be as social science ethical guidelines seek to take a more proactive approach to ethical guidance than the earlier agreements, which were often created as a reactive response to malpractice. However, this coming of age of in social science-specific guidance is being challenged to ensure that the “‘bottom-up’ discipline and institutionally sensitive approaches” being replaced by “‘top-down’ more centralized approaches” (Israel 2015:77) does not drift towards risk averseness, rather than fully representing the concerns of participants in social science studies. As can be seen from Table 1.1 above, relational concerns as a duty of care can be seen only to feature at a principled level in Canadian ethical guidance.

There have been nations that have tried to be inclusive of all groups of society in generating their ethical regulation, such as the approach in Brazil to include its indigenous populations (CNdeS 2012). However, this has been difficult to enact and has been accused in practice of limiting research with such communities (Israel 2015). In part the issues arising from this approach have been related to applying Western principles of individual autonomy, rather than accepting local conceptions of, for example, social and community assent, and in part to do with the positivist underpinnings of the regulatory codes. These issues lead to social science researchers in many contexts needing to apply waivers in the application of the positivist ethical protocols and hence being seen as non-normative. Inclusivity of methodologies is still something which is not accepted in all national contexts. Interestingly inclusivity in its broadest sense has

been prioritized in recently launched UK ethical guidance by the Academy of Social Sciences (2015), then adopted by the British Educational Research Association (2018). This book challenges and offers empirically based advice as to how the full range of ethnographic approaches might be reviewed and deemed acceptable by regulatory bodies and hence ethnographers feel empowered to prepare and defend their work to gain institutional and funder support.

It is noteworthy that there are some national contexts that have no ethical guidance to support researchers, particularly across the African continent. In these and similar contexts such as Pakistan any advice is usually limited to bioethical principles, with seemingly little national (political) appetite for developing social science-specific advice. Where such guidance exists, it is usually imported from Western contexts, rather than being locally derived or adapted to ensure it is culturally sensitive (Chilisa 2009; Qureshi 2011). Difficulties in applying Western expectations, for example, of informed consent, have been linked to potential participants having little experience of research methods and poor literacy as well as the impenetrability of the language of Western ethics. Tensions have also been linked to the ethical standards needed for publication in the “Global North”. This leaves ethnographers, wishing to represent and give voice to cultures in such contexts, with ethical work to do in ensuring they feel their ethical practice is culturally appropriate. The chapter by Fox & Mitchell (Chapter 8) examines such work in the context of a study undertaken in a school in Tigray, Ethiopia.

According to Kitchener and Kitchener (2009), ethical principles can be theorised in a fourth level of decision-making and, above this, be problematised and defined in a fifth layer of meta-ethical decision-making. Chapters in this book related to theorisations as they apply to ethnography include Beach & Arozzola’s exploration of how post-humanist and critical ontologies extend and challenge existing theoretical stances and Fox & Mitchell’s exploration of a multi-theoretical model to support ethical reflexivity. Traianou’s chapter takes a fourth-level analysis by focusing on presenting and unpicking a key meta-ethical concept relevant to ethnography: that of “phronesis”.

The relationship between principles and ethical theories is not straightforward. In an increasingly globalised and diverse world of social science researchers, there is an associated

increased lack of theoretical agreement amongst researchers and an increasingly diverse range of contexts in which to consider what constitutes culturally appropriate research behaviour. A selected review of recent academics' work shows the range of theoretical traditions that are perceived as relevant to social science research. Table 1.2 summarises the range of theoretical and philosophical stances used by some academics to explain the generation of principles relevant to research with human participants.

[LOCATE Table 1.2: Analysis of key ethical theories covered by selected academics. ABOUT HERE]

Table 1.2

Analysis of key ethical theories covered by selected academics

Key ethical theories/authors	Israel 2015	Kitchener and Kitchener 2009	Brooks, de Reile and Maguire 2014	Mustajoki and Mustajoki 2017	Farrimond 2012	Hammersley and Traianou 2012, 2014
Consequentialism/ utilitarianism	*	*	*	*	*	*
Non-consequentialism	*					
Principalism	*			*		
Virtue	*	*	*	*	*	*
Casuistry	*					
Critical (also feminism, ethic of care, and situated)	*	*				*

Contractarianism		*				
Deontology		*	*		*	*
Justice						*

These principles come from very different traditions and rationales for how researchers “ought” to behave to be considered ethical. Flinders (1992) drew together four such theoretical stances to compare the implications of each for principled practices at different stages of a research project (Table 1.3). This framework is explored and critiqued further in the chapter in this book by Beach & Arrazola (Chapter 3). It can be noted that whilst three of the traditions Flinders pulled together are also represented in Table 1.2, an additional ecological perspective is included that takes account of the need for researchers to be aware of and respond to local, contextual factors and norms. For qualitative enquiry relevant to educational research Flinders pointed to how the relational and ecological stances offer more appropriate ethical bases for studies as compared with utilitarian and deontological approaches. He argues the latter have been shown to have failed to be inclusive in protecting the rights of those already marginalised by society, whereas social scientific enquiry should work towards meeting the needs and interests of all. Similarly, critical and feminist-based enquiries seek to go beyond avoiding inequality such that their studies contribute to addressing such injustices (Beach & Eriksson 2010). After comparing Flinders’ advice on alternative stances with a framework offered by Seedhouse (1998), Fox & Stutchbury (2009) concluded that rather than being incompatible with one another, these four traditions offered alternative lenses which, together, can support comprehensive ethical appraisal of a study. Their deliberative, rather than prescriptive, framework is applied in Fox & Mitchell’s chapter (Chapter 8) to support ethical reflexivity throughout an ethnographic study in an Ethiopian school (see Table 1.3).

[LOCATE Table 1.3: Table of ethical guidelines for fieldwork ABOUT HERE]

Table 1.3

Table of ethical guidelines for fieldwork

Theoretical tradition/	Utilitarian	Deontological	Relational	Ecological
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stages of a research project				
Recruitment	Informed consent	Reciprocity	Collaboration	Cultural sensitivity
Fieldwork	Avoidance of harm	Avoidance of wrong	Avoidance of imposition	Avoidance of detachment
Reporting	Confidentiality	Fairness	Confirmation	Responsive communication

Flinders (1992:113).

In terms of the application of theoretical traditions of thinking to ethnographic studies, different ethnographic traditions also draw on different traditions, depending on whether, for example, interactionist, critical, feminist or micro-ethnographic approaches are adopted (Beach & Eriksson 2010). There has been a call by some for there to be an ethical turn such that ethnography searches for a common basis and for this to be more confidently reflexive and consultative theoretically. This accepts and recognises the variety of potentially competing values and norms to be found not only in the web of obligations discussed as part of level-two ethical deliberation but also to properly prioritise the diversity of needs, interests and views of those in the research setting itself (Beach & Eriksson 2010; Gewirtz & Cribb 2008; Gudmundsdottir 1990). Recent thinking about a “new ethics” argues that researchers and the researched should be put on a more equal footing and principles (or even theories) of justice and care should be used to transform the very goals of research as well as how ethnographic studies are carried out (Hammersley & Traianou 2014). It is argued that, to ensure some of those in the setting to be studied are not silenced and are given voice, there should be a “response-ability” in the research (Beach & Eriksson 2010:132). This would require in-vivo, reflective and negotiated ways of working to develop in a way which would not be possible if only predetermined ethical practices are relied upon as models of research behaviours. This leads us on to the practical wisdom generated as phronesis in ethnographic fieldwork discussed by Traianou in this book, which needs to be developed and articulated by ethnographers and trusted by regulatory boards. The self-reflexivity required by researchers can be considered part of the relational work of

ethnographic enquiry, if intra-personal as well as inter-personal enquiry is pursued and values and assumptions properly problematised (Dennis 2018). Such self-reflexivity will arguably allow ethnographers to acknowledge the biases they bring, which might even be termed “lies” they might otherwise unconsciously embody (Fine 1993).

This book contributes chapters advocating the wide scope for such ethical reflexivity in relation to embarking on ethnography and its implications for regulation and practice – a reflexivity strongly defended as necessary for all social science research (Gewirtz & Cribb 2006, 2008). This allows illustration of different methodological applications of ethnography, including engaging with current debates on what counts as ethical applications of different forms of ethnography such as how political ethnography can be through whether researchers intend transformation or a somewhat more independent representation (Beach & Eriksson 2014; Hammersley 2006).

Concerning the chapters

The chapters of this book arise out of a symposium on the practice of ethics in educational ethnographic research held at the European Conference on Educational Research (ECER) in Copenhagen, 2017. The conference is run by the European Educational Research Association (EERA). The symposium emerged from online discussions by members of Network 19 of the Conference Ethnography in Education, chaired by Sofia Marques da Silva in 2017, in the months before the conference, as did the coordination of the symposium by the editors of this book. Contributors to the symposium, as also to this book, came from many European countries, including Norway, Finland, Sweden, Spain and the UK, as well as the USA.

Through the course of the conversations during the conference, six questions emerged inductively about the application of ethical practice in educational ethnography. These have been used to varying degrees by authors of the chapters in this book to guide the development of their contributions.

[LOCATE Table 1.4: The six questions guiding authors in this book ABOUT HERE]

Table 1.4

The six questions guiding authors in this book

1.	What can we (ethnographers, members of academia, members of the public) expect and not expect of ethical review boards?
2.	Where are the spaces for and with whom should dialogue take place about ethicality in our research?
3.	What effect does a research topic's focus have on both dealing with regulation and research practice?
4.	What effect does context have on researchers' ethical practices?
5.	What effect does the positionality of a researcher have on ethical practices?
6.	How do we ensure that ethicality supports the trustworthiness of research projects?

Although most of the chapters address only two or three of these questions, they generally all refer to the regulatory ethical procedures which envelop the practices of researchers, especially those in their own countries. This helps to make visible the variety of regulatory practices pursued in different European countries.

Part I of the book, on “Informing compliance with regulation,” see question one above, has two chapters which focus critically on regulatory ethical procedures and what researchers and the general public might expect from them. In the chapters by Beach & Arrazola (Chapter 3) and by Traianou (Chapter 2) the relevance of these regulatory practices to ethnographic research are challenged, arguing that the over-formalisation of processes for gaining informed consent from participants and for recording, that researchers know how to do this effectively, risks inhibiting the development of research projects that do not use a medical/scientific approach to research. On the other hand, they acknowledge that research project participants and the public, as well as other beneficiaries of research, need to be reassured that any research project is carried out ethically to protect effectively from harm its participants and their environments, and to produce trustworthy findings.

However, concern with formalised regulatory procedures runs throughout the book. In Chapter 4 in Part II of the book, “Applying ethics in the field”, Smette enhances this scepticism about formalised regulatory practices and procedures pointing out that they do not really work well with those types of research, such as educational ethnography, which require researchers to

re-negotiate informed consent with their participants as the process of a study unfolds and, possibly, the participants in a study alter – a view with which Nikkanen and Dovemark concur in their chapters (Chapters 6 and 7, respectively) in Part III on “Ethical dilemmas in the field”.

Several chapters discuss in what spaces and with which people should dialogues about the ethics of research be carried out. Fox & Mitchell, in Chapter 8 in Part III, argue that these spaces can be constructed with other research workers to help researchers think reflexively about their work and the application of ethics within it. However, they point out that the scope of the reflections needs to be bounded if it is not to become overwhelming and a hinderance to practice. They argue that reflexivity should help a researcher to focus on the enactment of ethical practices in a project and how to give account of those to research authorities such as ethical review boards who license practitioners to carry out projects. In other chapters, Smette and Nikkanen also argue that reflexive spaces allow researchers to work out practical solutions to their ethical dilemmas, pointing out that ethical review bodies in their countries include in their regulatory function acting as a sounding board for researchers to develop their practices for their studies, an approach which Traianou also commends in her arguments (Chapter 2). Other chapters by Busher (Chapter 5), and by Beach & Arrazola (Chapter 3) argue that reflexive spaces for researchers need to be constructed with research project participants and gatekeepers who control access to a research site and/or to participants in it. These, the authors argue, are the people with whom researchers need to have discussions about how to construct ethical research practice for a project on a particular site.

Turning to the chapters in specific sections of the book: in Part I, “Informing compliance with regulation”, there are two chapters, one by Traianou (Chapter 2) and one by Beach & Arrazola (Chapter 3). Traianou discusses ways of lessening the tension between the approaches to ethical regulation that has crept into the social sciences from medicine and psychology and the practical requirements of carrying out educational ethnography in an ethical manner. She argues that the dominant discourses for thinking about ethical regulation are highly problematic as they assume that what is needed is the application of general principles to specific situations that can be transformed into procedural certainties that institutional regulatory bodies for ethics can monitor. However, this approach is fundamentally at odds, she argues, with ethnographic research where each project is a unique experience that challenges a researcher’s understanding and judgement

of ethical practice in the field. This understanding of research has resonances with the idea of *phronesis*, she argues. *Phronesis* offers a process of interpretation of situations that requires skilful practice by researchers to make virtuous judgements in the field, rather than relying on proceduralist structures managed by committees to construct ethical ethnographic research. Research ethics committees could play a part in this by encouraging researchers to develop these skills, as they appear to do in Finland and Sweden.

Beach & Arrazola discuss critically the role that ethical regulation through institutional review boards plays with researchers seeking legitimation for their research projects. They point out that being ethical as an educational ethnographer is not isolated from how people engage as ethical beings with others in the world but may be related to the research methodologies researchers choose to use. This, they argue, has led many educational ethnographers to question the value of ethical review boards, coming to see the process of ethical approval as merely a bureaucratic hoop to be jumped through. However, Beach & Arrazola (Chapter 3), using examples from Spain and the USA, consider ethical review boards as necessary but needing to take more account of the situatedness, post-qualitative and post-humanist dimensions of ethics when deciding whether or not to approve the ethical practices of a proposed research project. According to these authors, ethical practices are forged in the interpersonal interactions of everyday life influenced by participants' commitments to a variety of scientific, ideological and political goals, beliefs and practices.

In Part II, "Applying ethics in the field", there are two chapters, one by Smette (Chapter 4) and one by Busher (Chapter 5). Smette argues that requirements by research ethics committees for researchers to obtain consent from all potential participants before the start of a study make it impossible to do ethnographic research in institutional settings. Drawing on her experiences from researching in secondary schools in Norway, she discusses the ethical dilemmas and the methodological and analytical challenges posed by participant observation when not all pupils and parents choose to take part in a study. The dilemmas arise, she argues, because social practices in public institutions, such as schools, need to be discussed publicly and the interests of individuals not to take part cannot override the public interest in knowing what is taking place on those sites. Formalised approaches to gaining prior informed consent from participants do not address the dilemmas ethnographic researchers face, especially, as she points out, as people's

decisions not to take part in a project can be time-related and may change, and therefore can be renegotiated as a research project progresses. Consequently, ethnographers need to continue to reflect on how to observe and ethically represent collectives that include individuals who do not wish to participate.

Busher focuses on how to protect and involve vulnerable participants in research, noting that vulnerability is not just a consequence of personal attributes but of the ways in which researchers choose to carry out projects. What factors contribute to participants being deemed vulnerable in a research project are developed by considering how the processes of consent are negotiated with participants and how different research methodologies can make participants vulnerable by making them more or less visible. Arguing that researchers have a responsibility for protecting research participants from harm throughout the life of a project and afterwards when it is written up, Busher discusses how researchers might move beyond a protective duty of care to help vulnerable participants engage healthfully with research projects so that their involvement helps them to develop their identities and agency as people. This approach to practice in the field goes beyond what is often required by institutional ethical codes of keeping participants safe from harm and requires researchers to consider reflexively throughout the life of a research project how to implement ethical practice in the field.

In Part III, “Ethical dilemmas in the field”, there are three chapters: one by Nikkanen (Chapter 6), one by Dovemark (Chapter 7), and one by Fox & Mitchell (Chapter 8). Nikkanen focuses on the ethical dilemmas encountered by a teacher researcher carrying out ethnographic research in Finnish secondary comprehensive schools. Her dual role allows her to live in “the field” for years, gaining tacit knowledge of the profession, and following the societal and educational changes in the school in real time. However, she points out that her double position raises ethical questions about how to record the daily life of a school as an observing researcher while sustaining her teaching commitments as an equal and active member of school staff and confronting the ethical dilemmas of students’ consent/non-consent to participation in her research. However, she notes that in Finland teacher ethics are even stricter than researcher ethics when it comes to protecting teachers and students from harm. She concludes by hoping that teacher researchers can act as active agents for participatory practices and positive change in both fields, but acknowledges that they risk being perceived as spies if colleagues or students

feel that anything they say may be used for unknown purposes. This dual role, she suggests, needs a special sensitivity for choosing appropriate research topics and methods.

Dovemark focuses on the ethical dilemmas raised by carrying out ethnography in semi-public contexts that are nationally relevant but insufficiently studied in relation to the marketised Swedish educational system. Citing venues like upper-secondary school fairs and open houses where schools can market themselves and lure customers, she notes that researchers can access these “semi”-public events, without gaining direct consent from participants, and write field notes based on their experiences and overheard conversations on how people choosing schools act and how different schools market themselves. The problems she notes are whether such research practices are ethical, occurring as they do in a semi-public arena where it is not always possible for a researcher to be able to obtain informed consent in advance, and how researchers find a reasonable balance between the interests of different people, including the quest for new knowledge from under-researched but socially important sites like the one she exemplifies.

Fox & Mitchell focus on ethical learning through developing an educational ethnography. They use the vehicle of doctoral research supervision to show how ethical learning is related to ethnographic methodology, project planning, fieldwork and reporting in an international context. After discussing the CERD ethical framework as a tool to scaffold learning about ethical practice, they show how support was given to a doctoral researcher through a series of meetings focused on ethical issues. These meetings allowed Mitchell to rehearse and become confident in his ethical stance and behaviours. The authors also note, however, that the supervisor, too, learnt from the experience about ethnography and cultural sensitivity in a particular setting with which she was practically unfamiliar. In their chapter, they offer an account of the use of extended dialogue focused on ethical reflexivity to create explicit, meaningful and mutual understanding of issues relating to a research project, in this case an ethnographic study of schools in Ethiopia. The authors argue that the process helped to deepen their understanding of ethical practices in educational ethnography and the effective use of the ethical framework itself for their own further work.

The last chapter, in a section on its own, offers a critical synthesis of the preceding chapters. Dennis draws together the themes that have emerged in the book and shows how they are

reflected in different chapters. In doing so, Dennis explains how she thinks ethical discussions about ethical practices in educational ethnography are developing.

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