ETHICS IN ECONOMIC FIELD RESEARCH or
SHORT STORIES OF DEPENDENCY

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This paper has been prepared within the framework of the student's PhD programme under the supervision of Professor George Stathakis (University of Crete, Department of Economics).

An earlier version of this paper has been presented at the 1st Conference of the Academic Society for Political Economy, co-organised (19-20.06.2009) with the 11th Conference of Greek Historians of Economic Thought, titled "Economic Crisis and Economic Theory" and held at the University of Crete in Rethymnon (Gallos University Campus), Greece. This version has been elaborated in November 2009.

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ABSTRACT

The paper is an attempt to use the idea of reflexivity in order to organise and set "ready for answers" the ethical issues which have arisen at the very beginning of the field research (on a topic in the economics area) and have been anticipated for later stages of the research project. While at the beginning, the ethical issues were well covered under the appearance of "everyday" research practical problems to be resolved, the interaction with research participants revealed the theoretical depth that those same issue can have and the extend to which they might affect the research project itself. The paper as well as the issues are divided for analysis purposes, into three categories: the first deals with ethics concerning the terminology, vocabulary and narratives during or after field research; the second, discusses the ethical issues connected the interaction with participants, especially two issues: their acceptance to participate in the project and the information exchange; and the third part, discusses the cases where the researcher faces petitions for assistance in constructing something, that according to the research proposal, belongs to the object of the research.

Keywords: ethics, field research, reflexivity.

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ΔΕΟΝΤΟΛΟΓΙΑ ΣΤΗΝ ΕΡΕΥΝΑ ΠΕΔΙΟΥ ΤΩΝ ΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΙΚΩΝ ή ΜΙΚΡΕΣ ΙΣΤΟΡΙΕΣ ΕΞΑΡΤΗΣΗΣ

ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

Το κείμενο αποτελεί προσπάθεια να χρησιμοποιηθεί η ιδέα της αντανακλαστικότητας (reflexivity) ώστε να οργανωθούν και να καταστούν «έτοιμα προς απαντήσεις» τα ζητήματα δεοντολογίας που έχουν ανακύψει στην έναρξη της έρευνας πεδίου (με αντικείμενο εντός της οικονομικής επιστήμης) και έχουν προβλεφθεί για μεταγενέστερα στάδια της έρευνας.. Ενώ στην αρχή τα ζητήματα δεοντολογίας ήταν κρυμμένα κάτω από την εμφάνιση των «καθημερινών» πρακτικών ερευνητικών προβλημάτων που έπρεπε να επιλυθούν, η αλληλεπίδραση με τους συμμετέχοντες στην έρευνας αποκάλυψε το θεωρητικό βάθος που μπορεί αυτά τα ίδια θέματα να έχουν και την έκταση στην οποία μπορούν να επηρεάσουν το ίδιο το ερευνητικό πρόγραμμα. Το άρθρο όπως και τα ζητήματα, είναι διαιρεμένα για αναλυτικούς σκοπούς σε τρεις κατηγορίες: η πρώτη ασχολείται με τη δεοντολογία που αφορά στην ορολογία, το λεξιλόγιο και τις αφηγήσεις κατά ή μετά την έρευνα πεδίου. Η δεύτερη, συζητά τα

ζητήματα δεοντολογίας που σχετίζονται με την διάδραση με τους συμμετέχοντες, ιδίως δύο θέματα: την αποδοχή τους να συμμετέχουν στο πρόγραμμα και την ανταλλαγή πληροφόρησης. Και η τρίτη, συζητά τις περιπτώσεις που ο ερευνητής αντιμετωπίζει αιτήματα για συνδρομή του στην κατασκευή «τινός», το οποίο σύμφωνα με την πρόταση της έρευνας ανήκει στο αντικείμενό της.
Λέξεις-κλειδιά: δεοντολογία, έρευνα πεδίου, αντανακλαστικότητα (reflexivity).

Acknowledgements: I am grateful to Prof. Apostolos Dedoussopoulos (Panteion University, Athens), Prof. Ben Fine (SOAS, London), Dr. Deborah Johnston (SOAS, London), Prof. Yannis Marangos (University of Crete), Ass.Prof. Evangelos Nikolaidis (University of Crete), Christina Sakali (University of Macedonia), Prof. Nikos Theocharakis (University of Athens) for their points, comments, questions and advice. I am also grateful to Dr. John Horton (University of Northampton) for his sending me the unpublished research notes (vignettes) concerning ethical issues of his own research project.

Contents:

Part I: Context of ethical questions

1) Introduction: the idea of reflexivity

It is unusual in economics to write with an "I", because this is not "good manners" in the academic narrative of the economic field. However, the choice has been made so,

- First, for practical reasons: what worries me most in this case, is that irrespective to what is written in books and papers, I have to face real issues in real life concerning real people and not just a hypothetical case of "what if".
- Second, it is that in other social science fields[1], particularly in anthropology, the narration of the field researcher's personal experience as such is considered to be not only an acceptable, but rather a desirable approach, so that the reader is as able as possible to detect the stance, psychology, attitudes, methodology use, even "vocabulary" biases of the researcher[2].
- Third, again in social sciences and particularly in anthropology, the issues of ethics are frequently tackled with, not as vague theoretical discussions irrespective of time and place, but as cases – this is the so-called casuistry approach for ethical matters in research[3].
- Fourth, for collegiality reasons. Perhaps, my paper would seem better fit if it had a more impersonal structure, but I do not want to present my case as impersonal. There is no need to hide the problems a researcher faces and this is also a more or less frank attitude toward colleagues, who would better have a clear idea about who is doing what within their own research community. It is me who is responsible, e.g. who chose for methods and solutions, some of them were already in books, some were not, some of them seemed to have worked more or less well, some others seem not to be efficient at all. So, let's say that this essay is an

[1] It might be too much of an epistemological risk (or even mistake) to use with such ease methods and approaches from other disciplines in economics, especially while I have no research experience that would make this "transfer" effective. On the other hand, when facing practical problems, some answers are better than none. Chilungu (1976, p. 464) would also add that this scientific "division of labor" is a Western phenomenon of labelling parts of knowledge. Donaldson (2003, p. 366) proposes a "hybrid" analysis that would bridge data and theory, facts and emotions, normative and empirical propositions.

[2] Aull Davis (1999), pp. 178-190, 226. Caplan (2003), p. 10. Josephides (chapter 3 in Caplan 2003) points out that the researcher's reflexivity of "being there" is "crucial to the moral person who is created in the field" through empathy with the participants – she also uses the autobiographical method to present how she tackled this issue (Caplan 2003, pp. 61-63). This is also the method used by Silverman (chapter 6 in Caplan 2003) to present the ethical issues she faced in her own research in Ireland, but also the other authors in Caplan's edited book (Caplan 2003).Chilungu (1976) is also very autobiographical in order to criticise anthropology and anthropological research as perfomed by Anglo-American scholars. Goduka (1990) uses autobiography to present the ethical issues faced in field research in South Africa. Shore (1999) also uses autobiography for his research in Italy as well as Gardner (1999). Horton (2008) also uses the autobiographical method to discuss the everyday issues that arise in research ethics. Later on, on p. 369 and p. 371 he proposes autobiography and case study [casuistry] as the solutions to the ethical issues of research.

[3] One can see this method (which helped me at lot, not only in the cases who were similar to those I had to face, but also about the logical structure one has to use in order to understand a particular ethical problem in research) used by Silverman (chapter 6 in Caplan 2003) and by Kravva (chapter 5 in Caplan 2003), who did her field research in Greece. Moreover, Horton (2008) uses in-depth casuistry (pp. 371-374, 369) by referring to his research vignettes and the actual problems he faced during his field research.

attempt to open a discussion by presenting the cases and the possible options and not a research report, much less a research results analysis.

Actually, my research project has not gone that far yet, e.g. to the point to give any results. But I am at the edge of choosing hypotheses, questions to be answered and methods to be followed. The project is quite peculiar in that sense, because we have not any other research projects undertaken before mine on the same topic for the same geographical area. Moreover, there are not any theoretical inquiries that would satisfactorily provide me with some framework from which I could start asking questions. The project faces a phenomenon, or a multiplicity of phenomena connected to parallel currencies, exchange networks, exchange groups and free bazaars.

The phenomenon could be summarised into the phrase “transactions without official currency” or “economic activity without official currency”. The initiatives studied in this project are either organised networks, or just groups of people not structured in any “formal” way. Each initiative seems to facilitate either transactions concerning specific goods (f.ex. traditional varieties of vegetables, trees, fruit, etc), or transactions concerning specific aims (f.ex. recycling, education) or both or to be dedicated to transactions of all types. For reasons of definition, one could add that this “economic activity” does not comprise any activity within the framework of family or relatives’ structure. The people might be related in origin, but family bonds are not the important point for the activity the project examines.

- Fifth, for a reason based in theory that seems to comprise all the previous four: it seemed that the idea of reflexivity (and reflexive research and reflexive researcher) fitted best to the situation of field research. It also seemed to offer an analytical tool for understanding the ethical issues that have arisen so far or that one might, given the actual circumstances, anticipate for the future. By the term “reflexivity” I understand that the research is an ongoing process of mutual learning and “teaching/informing/exploring” between the researcher and the research participants, as well as the other humans involved more or less directly with the research project: academia and public.

The reflexive researcher “returns” at all times and occasions of the research to his/her self to question terminology, hypotheses, methods, results, writings, analyses, etc of the research project as well as to bring the information gained through research process as knowledge to be studied, examined and questioned. This is particularly important, because, not only concerning the topic of the research, but also concerning its ethics, the researcher has to treat him/herself and participants as what they are: persons who, even if the researcher would try to avoid it, contribute all together to a social process[1], whether this is a parallel currency scheme or the research project itself.

The idea of reflexivity has permitted me to organise the ethical issues of the research project. It is not clear yet whether it is chosen because it facilitates the creation of cooperation atmosphere with participants, or because it better covers the fact that (any) field research cannot be done in another way[2], but only with the voluntary contribution of the participants within a cooperative framework. However, the reflexive approach has no rules of thumb for all problems. Nevertheless, it obliges social scientists to "critically and reflexively query the relationship between research ethics and research practice"[3] and at least permits discussing ethical concerns with the research participants themselves, either because they have questions, comments, or reject the research or aspects of it, or because the researcher wants to point out the ethical issues to the participants so that a commonly acceptable solution is found.

This might be an ethical solution in its own right, because even if there are no rules of conduct for economist-researchers, any economist researcher has to find ethical solutions. Therefore, reflexivity best satisfies the need that even if the researcher cannot find the absolute truth in his/her field and in ethics, he/she is bound to be truthful in any case about the research process and the research outcome. The case where there are not any theoretical criteria for moral action, does not mean there are not any criteria at all, nor does this mean there is no possibility for the research to be morally and responsibly conducted. The method for this is that the researcher describes "truthfully" the process and his/her role in it[4].

Some might criticise reflexivity as an approach which creates unjustifiable

- inability of decision-making by the researcher about its own project[5]
- extended powers to the participants to influence the research project more than they should
- mess, because it does not necessarily exclude any critical approaches to field research and epistemology, much less does it give any hints about ethical issues in research, but it rather

[1] Aull Davies (1999), pp. 5-10, 17-23. Silverman (chapter 6 in Caplan 2003), p.127. Rorty's view about reflexive humans as quoted by Cherryholmes (1988, p. 449) is also very interesting, because it emphasises that reflexivity is the human approach to express solidarity, through their story of contributing to the community. Gill (2003) also seeks a methodology "capable of critical introspection" when she comments on Brennan's "Economics and Ethics" (Brennan 2003). See also Hisrchheim & Klein (1994), p. 6, linking self-reflection with self-transformation. See also Nash & Wintrob (1972) pp. 527-529, Shore (1999) p. 45 and Gardner (1999), pp. 50-51. Abma, Molewijk and Widdershoven (2009), describe in detail a very reflexive research process with several practical implications. However, they use the term "reflexive" once only: to remind that the design of the research project not only emerges from the research process itself, but also, that this is done to make it link it to society "reflexive of the social condition". Reflexivity is also one of the responsibilities of the researcher according to Cannella & Lincoln (2009), p. 279. Shaw (2008), p. 410, asserts that the (qualitative) researcher seeks reflexivity while designing and performing the research.

[2] See Jorgensen (1971), p. 324, where he asserts that "primary data of social anthropology and ethnology are culled from objects who do talk back".

[3] Horton (2008) p. 369.

[4] Brinkman & Kvale (2005), pp. 174-176.

[5] Shore (1999) pp. 25-30. Horton (2008), p. 363-364.

permits a mixture of them, along with the researcher's personal experience, stance and psychology[1]

- boredom, because instead of "hard facts" or, in the case of ethics, clear solutions, it permits an endless intellectual wandering and endangers the research project into becoming a researcher-centered narrative[2].

2) Interdependence

The question is of course, whether the above problems are ones of reflexivity or of field research or of research in general; or, whether reflexivity is just the recognition of complexity that a research project has. No doubt, the main complexity is the intertwined structure of relationships created between the researcher and the research participants. Interdependence of all people involved in the project (in my case not only the researcher, who is a student, but also the supervisor, the supervisory committee, the university institutions, etc) is inevitable, but research participants' involvement is the most important in relation to the ethical issues, exactly because they are those who, without any obvious benefit, contribute at least the raw material of the research to be conducted; and they are those without which the research could not have been able to be done at all.

Dependency of the researcher on research participants is only one side of the coin[3]. The other side is that participants depend on the researcher about getting information on what project they take part in and how their contribution might be used even in a textual construction. The researcher has in hand relevant literature, ideas about what the project is aiming to and what it is probably leading to, and experience of issues that were raised in one case and now appear in another, while participants might have in mind their own case only and in hand their only right to refuse contribution (which would anyway jeopardise the project).

In addition, the participants are not well prepared to understand or feel the power characteristics of the research, while the researcher knows (or is supposed to know) very well how those power relations are formed and put into function during the project. The project might be manipulative to an

[1] See Silverman (chapter 6 in Caplan 2003), p. 128. Horton (2008) p. 364, 366.
[2] Nash & Wintrob (1972) p. 532. Shore (1999) p. 29.
[3] I liked very much the quotation Silverman offers us from a student of hers in her chapter (no 6 in Caplan 2003) at p. 118. However, one psychoanalyst would say that my fear and the other student's fear and any researcher's fear in general toward research participants might be also a "projection" of the researcher's guilt for its inner indifference to the research participant's experience as a real person in real life. Another explanation of that fear is that the researcher, knows by intuition and perhaps fells guilty of the fact that the research process in the modern social context might also express the commodification of rapport skills, feelings, trust, etc which happens during research in order that the researcher gains the raw material (contacts, data, etc) of the project (Brinkman & Kvale 2005, p. 165). This commodification is also hinted in Cannella & Lincoln (2009), p. 278.

extent that the participants might not be aware of[1]. To avoid this, they usually depend on the researcher's integrity, e.g. on the powerful person's will.

Nevertheless, before examining the specific ethical issues I am facing in this project, it is rather useful to have a so-called autobiographical presentation of the background story that concerns the project and affects the ethical issues raised.

3) Background of the research project

As it happens with any PhD student, everything starts with the research proposal: after having studied the related literature and especially after having studied and prepared a methodology review, I arrived at the conclusion that there is not any particular method appropriate for the case. So, when I submitted my proposal, I explained that the methods will be rather a combination of quantitative and qualitative[2] tools[3]. What had been a riddle for me, was to forecast the ethical issues that would arise as the project would start.

Thus, the vagueness of the methods mentioned in the research proposal helped me with the latter, but I could not explain this to the Interview Committee, who was anyway kind enough to understand the peculiarities of the project. What also helped me a lot, was the Committee's and the University's open-mindedness to accept the ethics part of the proposal, especially the clause that the research will be negotiated as being done with the research participants, that their demands about "writing down" any information they give will be respected, concerning confidentiality or any other issues they want to keep beyond publicity. Not only the University accepted the clause, but even in the most "harsh" negotiations with scheme participants, this clause gave a "professional" and "scientific" aura to the research and the University appeared to be really in control of what the student is doing. So, instead of being an obstacle to the project, this very "weird" clause made the project acceptable to reluctant research participants and permitted the inclusion in the project of very interesting (see: important) initiatives related to the research topic.

One could immediately observe that the project became dependent on the research participants. This is true. The question is: why not? This is what THEY are doing, THEY are working for, THEY are taking the risk about, why not be THEM to have control over the information they give for the project? There is also the view that they own their contributions, even have intellectual rights to what

[1] Brinkman & Kvale (2005) pp. 164-167, 169. Shaw (208) pp. 404-405.

[2] A point that might be ethical as well, is not just that language might be as dangerous as numbers, but also that this distinction between quantitative and qualitative methods might not really hold, as Chilungu explains (1976, p. 460), because from the qualitative data the researcher creates a more or less quantitative series of categories, not verifiable anymore by any "quantitative" method. Another really harsh critique on qualitative methods and on their taken-for-granted progressive character is found in Brinkman & Kvale (2005), pp. 161-167. Therefore, the present paper does not assume any ethical superiority of any research method. See also Shaw (2008), p. 403.

[3] Afterwards, I realised that this is also an ethical choice concerning methodology! See, about this Brewer & Crano (2005) p. 355 but also Brinkman & Kvale (2005).

they say or write to respond to the researcher's questions[1]. From a legalistic point of view, this is true. From an ethical point of view this is more than ownership (which is anyway a notion that does not fit reflexivity at all).

However, the issue of dependency is much more complicated than this question and, of course, the idea of dependency did not helped me to feel relieved in front of the research participants. Because, in this project, just like in many others, humans are doing research on humans, or among humans or with humans. What is ethical to do in such case or in each such case? How far the idea of reflexivity can take the options for resolving ethical issues?

4) What rules already exist about ethics in economic field research

There is no code of ethics or code of conduct already agreed or just proposed for economic research in Greece. Nor has the Greek Sociologists's Association published anything relevant on their website[2]. The curious thing is that no code of ethics or anything similar to that was found on the American Economic Association's website[3], nor even on the International Initiative's for the Promotion of Political Economy website[4]. So, I turned to the Development Studies Association of Britain, who again have only a Development Ethics Study Group but no code of conduct[5], and of course to the American Sociological Association[6] and the American Anthropological Association[7] to get some examples of codes of ethics and ideas. The British Sociological Association[8] had ethical rules or recommendations in a Statement of Ethical Practice while the Royal Economic Society[9] of Britain had no special reference to ethics on their website. The ethics policy of the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS)[10] is also very interesting, because, instead of rules concerning situations, creates rules concerning the stance and attitude of its researchers. The Association of Social Anthropologists of the UK and Commonwealth[11] has also a set of Ethical Guidelines.

Something which is relevant to social research in Greece, is the RESPECT project[12], and the code adopted within that project's framework. The RESPECT project is an initiative adopted by the European Community so that the social researchers throughout the continent have some (not legally

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[1] Oliver (2003), p. 31.
[2] www.sociology.gr
[3] www.vanderbilt.edu/AEA
[4] www.soas.ac.uk/iippe
[5] www.devstud.org.uk . The study group has not reached any conclusions yet, as they informed me via personal communication.
[6] www.asanet.org
[7] www.aaanet.org.
[8] www.britsoc.co.uk
[9] www.res.org.uk
[10] www.soas.ac.uk
[11] www.theasa.org.uk
[12] www.respectproject.com

binding) instructions about ethical issues related to their research. It is really a very peculiar code of conduct in comparison to the rest I managed to find, because the priorities of this code are quite reversed (first comes the compliance with scientific standards, second law compliance with an emphasis on intellectual property and third the avoidance of social and personal harm) contrary to the theoretical (actually all) approaches to research ethics who prioritise the protection of people and communities to everything else. The other peculiarity consists in that the RESPECT code is, as always in the European Community, the minimum standard in Europe and professional associations are free to adopt stricter rules for their members. The third point of the code is that it is too general and actually advises the researchers to "endeavour" to satisfy the code clauses – which is already an approach out of date: the researchers do not endeavour any more, but "ensure" that they keep up with ethical rules[1].

Part II: Content of ethical questions

I could distinguish, just for analysis purposes, the issues into three categories:

A) Terminology, vocabulary, narratives

B) Dealing with participants: I) how can they accept to participate in the project?

II) how to manage info exchange and ownership

C) Help and intervention.

The solutions or methods adopted so far will be presented, as long as the issues that still remain open.

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1) Terminology, vocabulary, narratives

The ethical issues of what terminology to use while speaking with research participants and what words to use when writing, are not something new. There is extended literature on that and it will continue to increase in volume, given that any type of social research is done with words, even if social scientists may use nowadays visual material, too. It is a matter of interpretation, actually of narrating things. The problem I really faced is that, due to the theoretical "vacuum" of the project, I have no real specialised terminology to use. Even the initiatives the project studies, have not "regular" names. We have "alternative", "complementary", "secondary", "parallel" currencies, "exchange bazaars", "free" or "gift" bazaars (χαριστικό παζάρι in Greek), "exchange networks" or "time banks", barter, countertrade, non-monetary transactions, accounting units-money-currency-monies. Of course, this complaint might

[1] Otherwise there was not need to write this paper. The researcher could not have said: "Listen, I tried for an ethical research conduct, it was not easy, I am sorry". This "responsible" tendency is also obvious in the proposed revisions of the American Anthropological Association Code of Ethics (file dated 092208), clause A.2, accessed on 12.06.09 from the website www.aaanet.org .

also hide my intention to transfer my responsibility to others, e.g. those who under other conditions might have established a widely accepted academic jargon about the topic.

If it was for theory only, that would be fine, in the sense that the vocabulary I might use, would of course have been affected by my own beliefs, ideas, ideologies, hopes, study efficiency, etc. but this would be just my own narrative of the phenomenon. But field research is not about the researcher's narrative only. It is about the research participants' narratives, as well. Particularly in this case,

a) where there is not any established terminology
b) nor any previous research on those networks in Greece,
c) nor any extended research experience in other projects abroad,

what I "write down" becomes terminology whether I like it or not, whether the research participants like it or not, whether the University likes it or not. It is like a "monopoly of interpretation"[1]. Therefore, the questions that arise from this situation are the following:

I) To what extend should the researcher use the research participants' vocabulary?

II) How acceptable is it to use the already existing terminology intending to fit it into what the researcher "meets with" in real world?

III) What is a real research result? The thing that the participants say during free interviews, or the thing they respond to the researcher's questions, previously formulated according to hypotheses?

IV) Who is speaking through research results: the discipline structure, the researcher, the research participants, a combination of them?

The methods used so far to tackle the above questions have been:

- free discussion with scheme and group participants,
- use of original material (texts) from their websites and their leaflets,
- effort to use as "neutral" vocabulary as possible
- there has been mentioned to them that they will have access to what has been written about them, before the text is final.

The reflexive way is to examine the assumptions the researcher has about the congruence of meanings with the research participants. Then, the researcher has to be aware of the recording methods of data/discussions/notes[2]. To my great relief, many scheme participants "correct" me when I speak or write to them, when they feel I misunderstand what they are doing or what they are saying. Their corrections not only permitted me to understand better what they are doing, but also have given me ideas about theoretical questions or approaches I had not thought of when I started this project. My worry is that not all participants will have this courage or frankness, especially because "a researcher

[1] Brinkman & Kvale (2005), p. 164.
[2] Aull Davis (1999), pp. 112-116.

coming from the University" is enough a deterrent for the participants not to express themselves in a free way.

This approach is also in some conformity with the phenomenologist approach by Cherryholmes[1] concerning the construct validity in research. The sense-making of the participants "provides the basis for theoretical constructs" instead of insisting too much on the questions coming from the researcher, who according to this view, is posing questions for him/herself and not about the participants' activity. Therefore, the researcher has to get closer to life as experienced and create the research constructs on that basis. The phenomenologist believes that the research participants who also participate in the [researched] social practice know and understand first hand what is going on – this is something I keep saying (and it is not a courtesy) to the scheme administrators or members I talk with to show them that I need their help for doing this research and for learning. Therefore, the power relations existing and created between the researcher and the research participants may become a process where the participants may interrogate the research interpretation [so, they will also be able to check out the writings that concern them] and the researcher may interrogate the participants' subjective understandings.

2) Dealing with participants I. How can they accept to participate in the project?

The reactions I faced from scheme and group participants varied from happy acceptance to complete indifference and non-response. There were people who were very happy with the research and they somehow had been waiting for it and they actually said that they are looking forward to receiving the results of the research so that they have some evaluation of what they are doing. Therefore, they accepted immediately. There have been people who asked for more information, identification of the researcher, research funding details, even if they accepted at first instance to work for the research. There have been others who asked for details, but have not replied yes or no, due to the fact that they needed to consult with their group members. There have also been others who were very reluctant and distrustful at the beginning and wanted to clarify every detail about commitment and the cooperation procedure before accepting. There are also some who have never replied to any contact (we tried several times) that has been done toward their group.

The problems I had to face were the following

I) How to present the research project? I tried not to use any terminology that might deter people from participating or that might give a false image of the research. This, however, was not possible in all cases, because sometimes people denied that they were networks or any type of organised initiative, in other cases they did not want to use the "exchange" term, not only because this was not in conformity

[1] Cherryholmes (1988), especially pp. 430, 432, 434, 438.

with the official presentation of the group, but also because they saw reciprocal activity dispersed through time as not exchange but as something else (however, they were very happy to participate in the project, if I clarified that this "something else" was also of great interest to the University). I must also admit that, after discussing with potential research participants, I was in many cases unsure about what was included in the project or not, and thankfully, this is what supervisors are for. My intention was that all participants or candidate participants can at any case have access to information about the research (so they also have all my contact details) and that they have something "stable", e.g. written text to refer to when talking with the other scheme/group participants. Moreover, they will be able to contact other schemes and let them know about the research and all details about it – of my part, I always ask them to forward the information to whom it may concern.

II) The fact that we depend on the research participants for the project existence and success creates the problem of commitment. What if they accept now and after some months they completely deny to participate? How to agree about the project? How stable the negotiations may be? This is important not only for the essential part, e.g. about the information we need from them, but also about the time schedule and budget of the project.

III) The issue of the consent and actually the informed consent of participants is also interrelated with the commitment issue. Actually, there are people who support the idea that the researcher does not need to give all available information about the project, but just what is really necessary for the project to take place. On the other hand, there is the view about the fully informed consent, e.g. that people who participate in the research project should have all available information so that they are really able to decide whether they want to participate or not. The other question is, of course, whether the consent is given at the beginning and this is fine for the entire project, or whether the consent of the research participants is an ongoing process, e.g. a continuous negotiation with the researcher. Personally, I opted for the second view and fortunately this was something, as already mentioned, that the University had agreed to. This option of course led me to negotiate openly with the research participants and not only this – it permitted me to use the "unequal commitment" method, e.g. the one where the researcher commits herself orally and in written toward the participants, but the participants are free at any time to change their minds and renegotiate their participation. In other words, the researcher is committed to methods and rules of cooperation, the research participants are not. They can at any time opt not to participate, or ask for more details, or ask for less publicity, or ask for different methods of research, etc[1].

No doubt, this might create serious problems to the research project. However, I thought that using "written consent forms" would be really deterring participation – it would also create an atmosphere that something "ambiguous", "bad", "illegal" was about to happen during research. In

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[1] Consent is seen as an ongoing process, too. See Aull Davis (1999) p. 46-50. Silverman (chapter 6 in Caplan 2003), p. 117. Laws with Harper & Marcus (2003) p. 239-240. Goduka (1990), p. 334. Also, Jorgensen (1971), pp. 328-330.

some cases, I explained that not even their emails were binding them, although my emails were totally bounding me and the University about this research. I can tell that, contrary to my expectations, this way of tackling reluctance worked very well even in difficult “situations”, where the denial of the participants was expressed in plain words. I think that this freedom provided with to the participants, makes them very positive to the project and hopefully to a long-term positive attitude toward research in general[1].

IV) The issues of confidentiality were actually the easiest to tackle with. Apart from the fact that there is the legislation concerning use and disclosure of personal data, which in any case applies to the project, I promised to the participants that they will have access to the texts that will be relevant to their activities and they will know what is going to be published about them. They will be able to comment or maybe ask for non-publication of details or results that might not want to be widely known[2]. This, no doubt, raises the question, whether this might inhibit research. However, I prefer to have all information available, even if part of it is “off the record” and be able to evaluate the phenomenon I study, than oblige participants to hide information from me. At least, a group that might want to keep details not publicised might give me ideas for research with other groups that are more open about the results to be publicised. However, so far, nothing have been flagged as “off the record” and all information, as the participants tell me, is for research use, which is very relieving for me and very helpful for the project[3].

V) The issue of not doing harm to the research participants and the researched initiatives was also raised. Some of the participants have expressed their worries about being targeted by the tax authorities, after the research is published. I reassured them that they at least have opportunities to comment on the dissertation parts related to their activities and that there is no intention of the University’s part to create any problems to their initiatives. Personally, I have not seen anything that might be considered tax evasion or tax law infringement – to the contrary, the initiatives cover activities that in other countries or under better financial situations are done and financed by the state itself. In any case, my concern is that nothing in the dissertation or the research process harms the schemes or groups that accept to participate in the project[4].

[1] In any case, even the written consent forms would not resolve the issue. They usually have also the clause that the participant will be able to stop cooperation at any time without any reason, see f.ex. Boynton (2005) pp. 91-102. Therefore, the written consent forms exist rather to protect the researcher from scrutiny (because if the researcher wants to extend the research scope beyond what is written on the form, it can be done without the third parties to be able to detect it) than to protect the participants from abuse. This is also obvious in Denscombe (2003), pp. 62-63, where the author, after admitting that full information provision to participants is difficult, requires that the consent is given by participants in written. Hay & Israel (2006), pp. 60-76, point out the difficulties of the written consent method. See also Oliver (2003) p. 47 and Horton (2008) pp. 364-365, 375.

[2] This is considered to be a right of each participant. See Brewer & Crano (2002), p. 351. Gardner had a hard time with data that was difficult to acquire and much more difficult to publish (Gardner 1999, pp. 63-69).

[3] Laws with Harper & Marcus (2003), p. 242, consider this access of the participants to the writings concerning them as their own right and highly ethical issue.

[4] See for the issue of not doing harm, Hay & Israel (2006), pp. 95-111.

VI) I would like to insist a bit more on the difficult questions I faced so far, because this revealed a different world of research to me. I realised that people wanted to take part in the research, but were really afraid to do so. They sometimes did not believe I was a student. In other cases, they were telling me stories about researchers working for companies that they used the information participants gave them and never again appeared to give any feedback. The "researchers" never published the results of the research, so participants do not know even today, who they were really talking with, what they were looking for and why. This is why in some cases, they asked questions about the funding of the project. I also saw people who are scheme administrators to reveal through hints that they try to avoid their group members being bothered by people, because this behavior (spamming) is very common for marketing or for other purposes. The questions also revealed bad behavior by researchers in general, which means, instead of persuading about what I am doing, I have also to persuade people about what I am not, what the University wants not, what the project is not about[1]. All difficult questions were answered and this at least has been received with positive attitude (as not something common in research!). I felt really responsible not only for the University where I study, but also for all researchers that might try to contact the same schemes later, after me. A bad behaviour of my part will destroy not only my project, but probably the projects of others. As I am dependent on my predecessors in research, others are also dependent on my conduct for their projects tomorrow.

To summarise the methods for tackling the problem of how to persuade people to accept to take part into the project, I can say that I used: full information about the research, freedom arrangements (unequal commitment), discussion, I pointed out the ultimate control the participants they will have for their own contributions, I answered all questions posed to me.

Moreover, this researcher's self-imposed regulation was useful to tackle most of the issues, probably because both the researcher and participants can get prepared for possible future situations. At the same time, this "self-regulation" sets a responsible precedent for the following part of the research project[2]. On the other hand, there is no way to tackle situations where participants' or possible participants' reaction gets insulting to you[3]. What makes me continue "research as usual" is that those reactions are participants' clumsy efforts to complain or even struggle for better treatment by researchers and research institutions or to turn my attention to issues I had not thought of . In a sense,

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[1] Contrary to the researchers' idea that what they are doing is important enough to persuade people to participate, Silverman's point that people started interacting with her as a researcher only after they managed to know who she was, might need further investigation (See Silverman, chapter 6 in Caplan 2003, pp. 118-119). In any case, if the important thing is "who the researcher is", then the codes of ethics are not enough and the individual quest for morality in the research field is not enough and maybe researchers should at least work on their collective identity and morality as well.

[2] Self-regulation is discussed in Dr. John Horton's unpublished research notes (vignette no3), sent to me by personal correspondence on October 2nd 2009.

[3] Insults or anything (like f.ex. hints) addressed by participants to the researcher to embarrass the latter, is discussed in Dr. John Horton's unpublished research notes (vignette no5), sent to me by personal correspondence on October 2nd 2009

they express their fears and their determination to defend themselves and finally, they help me[1] to conduct a better and more considerate project.

3) Dealing with participants II. How to manage info exchange and ownership?

This part of ethics is something I consider to be extremely difficult and exists as an issue from the very start till the end of the final draft of the research dissertation. The real thing is that the researcher seeks information and knowledge from the research participants and then the researcher becomes the one who will transfer the information and knowledge to others, e.g. the people who will attend conference presentations, or read the researcher's papers and texts in general. Unfortunately, reflexivity describes the situation but does not resolve the issues apart from giving a general principle of mutual respect. Therefore, the questions that arise in this case are the following:

I) How to present researcher's personal beliefs and ideology and hopes that undermine the so-called objectivity of the research procedure? It is implied that perfect objectivity is impossible (and no discussion is done in the present paper whether objectivity is what really we need from a researcher). So, how to deal with the fact that the researcher, no matter how conscientious he or she might be, affects the position of the project, even by the vocabulary he or she uses in dealing with the research participants, in describing what the field research appears to give to the observer, in formulating hypotheses, in evaluating and analysing data, in writing reports, papers and presenting the research results?

II) How to avoid making research participants means to an end, e.g the research results, much worse means to a PhD degree or means to enhance one's beliefs or to answer questions related to one's ideology etc. Actually, this is the problem of the role of research participants – how do they act within the research project? It is not an issue of participation only, because, participation does not speak about ownership, nor about decision-making procedures. So, it is also about decision-making, e.g. power relations, developed between the researcher and the participants. Fortunately, there are cases where people from the initiatives I study, try to educate me about anything concerning their own projects which might be misunderstood by me. But, does the fact that others have accepted my "narrative" without commenting or correcting mean that they just agree or that they do not want to dissent from "someone from the University"?

III) How to tackle with the fact that research participants might also have a similar stance, e.g. they use the researcher and the research project as well as the University's authority for their own

[1] In Advanced Learner;s Oxford Dictionary (Oxford University Press, edition of 1989, 8th impression 1993), "embarrass" is defined in two ways: a) cause somebody to feel self-conscious, awkward or ashamed, b) cause mental discomfort or anxiety to somebody. I think, this is the case with participants' tough reaction: they make the researcher anxious, ashamed and self-consious…

purposes (f.ex. to advertise their schemes, propagate their ideas, enhance their personal power within the schemes, etc)? In principle, this might be not a problem. But, is it possible that this attitude by the participants might lead to give other information than what they really know or think, just to turn the research results to a direction they think it is better for their purposes. This is particularly important if we consider the case of gatekeepers, e.g. people who by position have access to information and/or the research participants. There are many cases till now where this question haunts me, especially when I face extreme reactions: gatekeepers who consider the group members as already having accepted to participate or gatekeepers who want to transmit all information themselves from the researcher to the participants and infiltrate the entire research process that concerns their scheme. I try to explain that research participants have to be informed first about the research before any commitment of the gatekeeper is done and I also try to involve gatekeepers more in the project, f.ex. if they deny to give me any access to the group, I tell them that if they want, they might disseminate questionnaires if this will be the case where the group does not accept a direct communication from me. This is something I am really concerned about, because in this case the researcher cannot know whether the group members have been under pressure to answer or to answer in a specific way to give a certain image to the researcher. Moreover, the principles of confidentiality and anonymity of the research participants are at stake. One could suppose that the group members might feel more comfortable with their coordinator to collect data instead with a stranger, but on the other hand, the internal group politics are got to continue concealed as well as the bias they might imply for the research results[1].

IV) How to “write down” discussions, and all oral information that is accumulated at this first stage of field research? This “writing” will affect seriously the formulation not only of hypotheses, but also of theoretical perceptions of the research project, given its peculiarities about the “theory void” mentioned previously. Moreover, this question is deeply related to later stages of field research, too: hypotheses, questions, interviews, data, results and analysis will need to have this question answered.

No specific methods have been found to tackle the above issues. However, my study so far has not been completely fruitless.

Searing (1970) states that value judgments may intervene in a research project without creating biases. This happens because value decisions are inherent in the research process and it is an issue of methodology of the inquiry. This approach seems to me as expressing high confidence to the reason of the researchers who will be able to work in a logical way in order to make value choices. Even if this was possible, however, ethics is not only an issue of logic.

[1] On the other hand, this “paternalism” propensity of the researcher should also be under question: who am I to decide about those people, whether they want to talk directly with me or they prefer to be represented by a person they already know and trust? The fact that if I was at their position, I would not like to be represented like that, does reveal only my own preference, not theirs. Those thoughts or doubts have really been raised after my reading Dr John Horton’s unpublished research notes (vignette no 8), sent to me by personal correspondence on October 2nd 2009.

Another approach is what Aull Davis proposes[1] for interviews (interaction), but maybe I should consider it for all possible methods I use. She also proposes this for focus groups. To be specific, the idea is that the researcher and research participants are equal within the research process and this makes their contributions and perceptions equally meaningful. The methodological impass this might create is “resolved”, at least in theory, according to Aull Davis, by the idea that the researcher’s work is to reconcile the different results of different data gathering methods, because each method does reveal another aspect of the same social process.

Josephides (chapter 3 in Caplan 2003) proposes that the researcher should see participants as ends and be modest toward them, because field research might be a sort of “hybris” to individuals and their communities. At the same time, it might be the occasion the participants sought for themselves to speak with authority and through authority. So reflexivity becomes authorial, in the sense that one may face this intertwining situation using the autobiographical strategy to permit to him/herself and to the audience to trace the way the researcher has treated the participants throughout the entire process[2].

Cherryholmes adopts Foucault’s analysis and proposes, that the researcher be aware of “the political processes and institutions by which truth is produced” and “be prepared everyday to make ethico-political choices about which constructs constitute the main danger”[3]. I understand this statement as following: recording, writing and reporting in field research should be under self-reference scrutiny along with power-analysis, e.g. the researcher as person who receives and exercises power through research has total responsibility for this and the ethical issues that this power use creates.

On the other hand, although it was concerning something quite different than what the paper is for, I found the ideas presented by Hirschheim & Klein (1994) quite interesting, because I think they have been constructed to be practical. They propose some qualities for the emancipatory discourse [within the work place], that might be useful for tackling the issues examined in this unit, if they are applied concerning all people involved in the project, but particularly the research participants: equal opportunity to raise issues, equal position to call into question the truth or correctness of a view, to express attitudes, feelings, concerns, etc.[4]. In other words, the researcher is not only a story-teller, but also a person in the story told by research participants[5].

One could also add what Brinkman & Kvale[6] propose: “Ethical as well as scientific objectivity is about letting the objects object to what we as researchers do to them and say about them”. They also propose as a method the confronting interviews: Platonic dialogue; agonistic interviews (derived from

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[1] Aull Daivs (1999), pp. 99-110.
[2] Josephides in Caplan (2003), pp. 67-69.
[3] Cherryholmes (1988), p. 440.
[4] pp 89-90. The paper is actually for the methods used to create through information systems a working environment favourable to the employees and based on ethical imperatives. It is curious of course that the most theoretical part of the paper in a technology discipline (chapter about emancipatory discouse) is one of the most practical in a social discipline paper!!
[5] Shaw (2008), p. 408.
[6] Brinkman & Kvale (2005), p. 170.

the Sophists), dissensus research advocacy research[1], active interviews aiming at public argument and Socratic attitude.

Abma, Molewijk and Widdershoven propose that the empirical work should be organised as follows: a) Data should be gathered together with participants and not by the researcher about participants, b) The interpretation of data should be done with the use of dialogue with participants and c) The dialogue focuses on the consequences of empirical data for theory and on the consequences of theory for empirical data. This holds not only for the ethical issues, but also for the main core of a research project. The aim is an "emergent design" of the project, e.g. the plurality on which the project is based implies that the research design methodologically gradually emerges in conversation with the participants, and it is spontaneous and reflexive of the social condition. The precondition for this methodological option is that the researcher keeps track of his/her role in the research process. On the other hand, apart from using common qualitative research tools (like focus groups, brainstorming sessions, discussion meetings etc), this approach creates a cyclical way of research work. Instead of the linear process of hypotheses formulation, data gathering, data analysis, result discussion, the data is continuously created and analysed throughout the entire process, because the findings from one participant(s) or group are used as input to conduct research with the next participant(s) or research phase, and the experiences gathered through research are introduced via "stories" as issues for discussion in the next part of fieldwork. Therefore, theory becomes the tool of making crucial points on the participants' stories and connect them from a general perspective[2].

Another idea is that what is written down is as much as possible separated into "information" and "comment" or "discussion". The second idea is, that the research texts might provide all available information about how the ideas were formulated, how the hypotheses were chosen, how the interviews were conducted. Even if it will be impossible for the reader to trace exactly where the researcher's attitudes have affected research, at least it will be possible to point out where the research results might be biased anyhow or which methods were more prone to that or not. Reflexivity and self-questioning might be useful as an approach, although this might fill up the text with "I"s.

4) Help and intervention.

Actually, I wanted at the beginning to give the title "Aid and intervention" to this unit, because it reminds me of aid provision structures well used so far for developing countries (Majority countries). This is, no doubt, the toughest part of all ethical issues, maybe because I was least prepared to face a situation like this. Or maybe, because the idea of the researcher assisting in schemes the researcher

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[1] See also unit III.11 of the present paper.
[2] Abma, Molewijk & Widdershoven (2009), pp. 241-242, 245.

studies in his/her project is something that reminds colonialist practices. The issue has as following and it already comprises two cases:

Case 1: There has been raised a problem with two networks that are being constructed in a small city. From the very first communication with the administrator of the schemes, the University has been asked to assist in the construction of the schemes through my research project.

At first, I explained that we do not agree to have an active role in the founding and structuring of the schemes, but on the other hand, we are able to answer questions that the schemes might have, or to assist with information or academic material, f.ex. literature. The reason for this arrangement is (it is also mentioned in my communication with other schemes, as well) that we do not want that the research project arrives to be an experiment with humans.

In an informal meeting with the administrator, we discussed issues about the schemes and I answered any questions of his “to the best of my knowledge” and with examples I knew from the literature studied so far.

During the discussion, the scheme administrator pointed out that the local authorities are interested in supporting the schemes. So, the administrator as well as the people who want the scheme to be run in that city, think that the involvement of the University will show the local community that the schemes should not be rejected without discussion at least. Then, the administrator asked that a conference is given in that city, probably after an invitation to the University by the local authorities.

Case 2: From a small city on an island, we have another request for assistance to construct a parallel currency scheme. The request was by the occasion of a publication done much earlier than the beginning of the research. I explained to the person who requested my assistance, the same as in Case 1, e.g. that he might have all available information we have collected so far (bibliography, websites, etc) and/or answers to specific questions, but we cannot help him more to design and implement the parallel currency. I explained the ethical issues related to his request and we agreed that this is something not negligible and that we need to discuss it in detail.

Those particular two cases, as described above, created several questions:

1) What are the limits of the assistance a researcher can give to the research participants in their own projects, without this to be manipulation of the schemes and their members?
2) If the boundaries are not clear, how ethical it is for the researcher to deny any assistance, at the moment when assistance is (?) the least that an institution and a researcher can do for the citizens (who are also paying for the institution as tax payers)?
3) In general, when people ask the researcher about information (this is common during discussions with the representatives of the schemes so far), I tell them about websites, or if the question is concrete, I mention examples, so that they are able to make their own inquiries on

the internet and the relevant literature. I never stop emphasising that I do not know this topic and therefore, what I tell them is not a checked-out view or advice. Is this enough, or is this much less than what the researcher owes to do in such situations?

4) About publicity, especially when this is to take place in cases when the University (and/or the Supervising Committee as such) are invited to attend a conference or public meeting: how is this coherent with the distance a researcher must have from the “researched communities” at least as long as the research project is run?
5) On the other hand, if there is any petition for getting information in that way, to that extent and touching relevant topics (local politics, local power struggle between agents, etc), because this is the way the local agents want to open a discussion and in any case, this is the way they want to do it, what should the researcher’s position be?
6) The issue is much more difficult, because in that specific case, the schemes do not work yet. Therefore, even if we go to the conference, even if we do not go, even if we say ABC or even if we say DEF, this is a transformation of the schemes’ reality, because the University has in any case a de facto authority (which is also the reason for the invitation). In that case, can we say that the three schemes as object of research are an ethical research object? Or, should we exempt those schemes from the research project, whether they finally work or not? Will the exemption be a “bias” of the research impartiality, given that till now no scheme has been exempted as long as they accept to participate in the project?

At this point, I would like to say that I am totally opposed to the “action research method”[1], for the same reasons I mentioned above. So, my dilemma is: I do not want to make my project an experiment with people (if people want for themselves to experiment with schemes, exchange, etc, this is something they decide on their own, with their own methods and procedures), but I do not want to keep in secret any information or to stand back from helping those who ask for assistance. In any case, even if I do not help them, this is also an “experiment” in the sense, that I leave them on their own and watch them to see how they manage without the information I have.

At the same time, I am aware of the macro-ethics of the cases presented above, but also of the macro-ethical issues of the research project as whole. Macro-ethical issues are all those concerning communities involved in the project and the entire society, as well. Research can be ethical in micro-level (when f.ex. I respect the individual participants’ rights) and unethical in macro-level (when the

[1] Action research is as widely accepted method, also considered to be very progressive in the sense it permits researchers to “try change”. See, Laws with Harper & Marcus (2003), pp. 338-340, Denscombe (2003), p. 80, Bain (1951) and Evered & Susman (1978). Hay &Israel (2006), p. 7. Boser (2006) describes in detail the ethical issues and methods used in action research. The question one would raise after reading Boser (2006) is whether the progressive research attitude (like, the “democratic ethos” and the attention to power relations) are enough to justify action research. Therefore, apart from the question of the means (action research) justified by the end (knowledge and/or change), the other question raised would be whether the end (knowledge and/or change and/via action research) gets better, when the means get better (progressive research methods).

research might harm the community, or the initiative I study or the local society, etc). And, perhaps "interventions… become unethical within larger social contexts with opposing interests"[1]. Things might be worse than we imagine, because of the "helicopter research" attitude, where the individual-ethics-focused researcher does appear one day and disappears another, leaving the communities vulnerable to any project implications[2].

In that case, maybe the researcher's role is to let the communities out of the research process to permit them to find a solution for the conflict that expresses the balances of the community members themselves. Or maybe, as Winship states[3], it is also a reflective researcher's ethical stance to avoid "experiments" and maybe limit his/her research, so that we know, when something emerges, that "it has emerged organically and not because it has been stimulated by research procedure".

Therefore, the solution that prevails so far is to exempt those two cases from the research project, so that it is possible to provide the assistance we are asked for. The counter-argument, of course, would be, that this is a politically correct solution, leaving the researcher "free from dilemmas" and waiving her responsibilities towards the "assisted" people or community who asked for the researcher's involvement.

Part III: Theoretical efforts concerning ethical issues

This paper could be categorised into the field of applied ethics[4], which means I already used any practical idea found in the literature and could be relevant for the issues I have faced. For questions not answered yet, however, many would ask: Why didn't you use any of all those theoretical approaches to ethics to solve the issues?

Because, no matter how difficult an issue might be, the researcher should bear in mind that ethics cannot be constructed and reconstructed at will and that he or she should be able in any case to face skilfully the ethical reality of each situation of the project. And, in any case, the researcher should be ready to stop thinking about possible rules in possible situations and look for practical solutions, "for at same point we have to act"[5].

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[1] Brinkman & Kvale (2005), pp. 167-170.
[2] Flicker, Guta, Meagher, McDonald & Travers (2007), p.; 479. Same attitude (is it a coincidence that both papers belong to the health sciences field?) has Glese-Davis, Janine (2008), pp. 149-150 about that.
[3] Winship (2007), pp. 179-180.
[4] I completely agree that "ethics are more about everyday practice of ethnography" [in my case "of economic research"] as Caplan thinks (Caplan, 2003, p. 22). However, Hay & Israel (2006, p. 13) define applied ethics as the part of ethics which "involves investigating how normative ethical theory can be applied to specific issues or to particular situations and circumstances". They (Hay & Israel, 2006, p. 12) define ethics quoting Beauchamp & Childress (1994) as "a generic term for various ways of understanding and examining the moral life".
[5] Brinkman & Kvale (2005), p. 158 -159.

Well, that meant that I had to make an inquiry about any possible theoretical or practical approaches. I am not sure I have found any solutions, but I would like to share my effort's results and my thoughts in relation to my need to take action through my project:

1) Consequentalist approach

That means, the ethical choice is judged by its result, and not its intention. Utilitarianism belongs to this ethical approach[1] as well as pragmatism[2]. However, to adopt such an approach would lead to the tough question "utility for whom?"[3] and the tough recognition of the power relations created between researchers and research participants. And when it comes to situations of conflict of interest (the researcher's views and perceptions vs the participants' views and perceptions, or the researcher's career vs the participants interests), utilitarianism is not that enlightening. And if we accept that we seek utility for the others first, then, how is the researcher going to decide about the others?

2) Neo-consequentalist approach

This is the so-called deontological approach well connected to Immanuel Kant's theory about ethics[4]. It helps with cases who might seem extreme, like my decision about action research – the Golden Rule (don't do to others what you don't want to be done to you) is enough an argument. But it does not help at all with the case described in II.4 (Help and Intervention), because in that case we have a request by the research participants and it was not the researcher's initiative to intervene in the construction of any project. What is "δέον" when one asks for assistance and this is something you consider to be one's own pathway to possible exploitation by you?

3) Virtue ethics

This might seem to be the panacea or doom for everything, given that it focuses on the moral character of people rather than their action, e.g. it is enough that the people involved in a situation be moral, then they are able to find solutions[5]. It might be so, but this leaves us with no practical hints. Moreover, one could question this approach with the power structures in a research project: for example, the researcher knows what he/she is doing about the project, the participants don't have a global view of it. Even if all people involved are ethical, they cannot change the fact of unequal power (knowledge) and they have to make choices within this unequal structure. How are they going to do it?

4) Teleological Expressivism

[1] See, Hay & Israel (2006), pp. 13-14. Loue (2002), pp. 61-64. May (1980) pp. 360-363.
[2] Loue (2002) pp. 65-66.
[3] It is a simple question derived from Christopher A. Gregory's argument (1997, Savage Money) whose discussion about the notion of utility is very interesting (see pp. 18-21 and its linkage with the notion of efficiency, p. 126), although his book is not in this paper's references list.
[4] See, Hay & Israel (2006), pp. 14-16. Loue (2002), pp. 60-61. May (1980) pp. 363-364. Varoufakis (1996) p. 160.
[5] Hay & Israel (2006) p. 17. Loue (2002), p. 65.

This theory emanates from the medical/biology fields and tries to combine virtue ethics and the idea of self-interest. The main conception is that, during the ethical choices, people use their emotions to "…evaluate the significance, value, interest and meaning of the world and its myriad contents", because "moralizing is to insist on certain emotional responses". However, according to this view, emotions are not irrelevant to real world, but they also engage objects, which creates the foundations of ethics on empirical primary evaluations[1]. The issue of this theory is that it relies on empirical facts in an unclear way, to the point, f.ex. to discuss the problem of informed consent on the extreme axis of "abandon or further research"[2], as if it was a problem of the researchers only. However, the idea that emotions are inherent to moral decisions is crucial and might well adapt to the idea that the researcher should be reflective to expose his/her emotions hidden under the research process.

5) Principlism

This theory states that morality is (or should be) based on four principles: respect for autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence and justice[3]. It sounds simple and practical, but it is not so, because it does not define justice. So, we return to the starting point to ask what is justice in research? How does the researcher make justice to the participants in his/her research?

6) Casuistry

This approach is really simple and practical, because it just makes rules for specific cases[4]. It has already been mentioned that it is used extensively by anthropologists to talk about ethical issues they face in the field. Nevertheless, it is totally useless if there is not any previous case quoted or mentioned anywhere to the one you are facing. So, you are supposed to open up the discussion and narrate the case for the others in the future. But this is something that will happen after you have solved the issue.

7) Ethical relativism

Ethical relativism[5] is easy an approach in the sense it relieves of responsibility: if the participants claim that the researcher has harmed them, then it is because they have a different ethical view that the researcher's – same with the third parties that will scrutinise the researcher in his/her

[1] Parker (2009), pp. 204-210.
[2] Parker (2009), p. 210.
[3] Hay & Isreal (2006), pp. 18. Loue (2002), pp. 58-60.
[4] Hay & Isreal (2006) p. 19. Loue (2002), pp. 45-46 . The curious thing is that, although many authors use it to discuss ethics in research, they usually do not include it as an approach to ethics. The impression that this gives is that "casuistry is the best approach till we agree on some other more elaborated approach".
[5] Hay & Israel (2006), p. 20.

choices. But I have not adopted this approach because it seems to me not ethical at all, or, at least, totally justifying anybody to make unethical choices.

8) Ethics of care

This is the feminist approach to ethics. The main idea is that justice and the whole conception of normative ethics is a construction of patriarchy and that the context of nurturing relationships and compassion, where women "dwell" as moral beings, is better an approach to make ethical choices[1]. To my great disappointment I cannot adopt this feminist approach, not only for theoretical reasons (women are not morally superior than men because they are women) but also for practical reasons: the researcher is a woman, which means what? If she is caring enough, can she deceive the research participants? If she is compassionate enough, can she make them to create a research object as she wishes for? And, in any case, isn't this a form of "paternalism"[2]?

9) Communitarianism

This approach promotes the idea that ethics should emerge from a shared philosophical understanding with respect to communal goals and the communal good, because there is need to integrate what is now a fragmented ethical thought, but also to provide a community reference point instead of focusing on the individual ethics[3]. I could not dissent from this view, but I cannot see how this could help with practical ethical issues, unless an open discussion takes place. That means, the researcher needs to be(come) or see him/herself as a member of one or multiple communities where ethical issues should be discussed and commonly arranged. One should also have in mind Eikeland's view[4], who considers the researchers' ethical dilemmas as challenges originating in the transition from non-existent to emerging peer communities of inquiry around real intellectual commons, through openness and exposure. Practically, the action to be taken within this framework is: first, to discuss the ethical issues with the research participants themselves, second, to present the issues to the academy colleagues, so that a related discussion is hopefully opened.

10) Contract-based ethics

This ethics theory originates in contract theories[5], most modern of which is that of John Rawls (and his Theory of Justice[6]). Therefore, the researcher has a duty in his unequal relation with the research participants to do anything appropriate to their benefit. Of course, apart from not giving

[1] Hay & Israel (2006), p. 21. Loue (2002), pp. 48-54.
[2] I realised as I was searching for a term to describe a mother's "I know better" that there is not any word as paternalism is for the father's "I know better".
[3] Loue (2002), pp. 47-48. Shaw (2008), pp. 401-404, 409.
[4] Eikeland (2006), pp. 43-46.
[5] Loue (2002), p. 64. Shaw (2008), pp. 405-406, refers to House's theory derived from Rawls' theory of justice, in order to present the theoretical background for the ethical design of a research project.
[6] The reference is: Rawls, John (1978 [1971]): A theory of justice, Oxford University Press, Oxford-London-New York

practical solutions, it is also too paternalistic. There is, however, the approach by Abma, Molewijk and Widdershoven which is based on Rawl's reflective equilibrium to support the dialogical approach they use in a very practical way to tackle ethical issues in medical research[1].

11) Covenantal ethics

This approach should not be confused with contract-based ethics, because in this theory the obligations of the researcher do not originate in a social contract arrangement, but in arrangements between the researcher and individuals and the researcher and communities (host communities, the university, colleagues, etc). The covenantal ethics are based on reciprocity and altruism. They emphasise of course that the "paramount obligation" remains to the research participants[2]. This theory reminds of the communitarian ethics, not only in its content but also in the lack of practical hints, at least in theory. Nevertheless, discussion and dialogue (negotiation) might be the pathway to find solutions through this approach.

12) Advocacy research

This is a special theory which emphasises the "positive tie" between the researcher and the participants. In other words, the researcher is a facilitator of the researched community's goals while maintaining a commitment to the truth. On the other hand, the research participants have "a right to expect from the field researcher something more substantial than bourgeois respect, courtesy and honesty; they have a right to the social power that comes from knowledge"[3]. This ethical approach could be a good justification for action research (or for the rejection of it). Nevertheless, its militant basis might induce a researcher to intervene more than he or she should in a community, under the idea of the "positive tie". At the end of the day, the researcher has his/her own communities to belong to and intervene to – why intervene that much in the community studied?

13) Structuralist ethics

This approach emerges as opposing to scientism and asserts the possibility of innate knowledge not derived from direct experience. It uses Chomsky's linguistic theory to create the idea of a universal ethical deep structure but it finds a difficulty to describe its moral content[4]. Therefore, this is a theory that, just like others, does not provide with practical tips for the ethical issues of everyday research life.

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[1] Abma, Molewijk and Widdershoven (2009), pp. 245-246. Their approach is presented in this paper in units II.3 and III.13.
[2] May (1980) pp. 367-369.
[3] May (1980) pp. 365-367. Advocacy research, although not mentioned with that term, seems to be a main concern for Abma, Molewijk and Widdershoven (2009), pp. 240-241, where they use the notion of "voice", to describe the active involvement of participants, in the research process, as equal partners of the project. Also, advocacy research (again without this term used) is the conclusion of Brinkman & Kvale (2005), p. 178, where they claim that the rationale of research is to lend a voice to that which is other than oneself and they also claim that this is at the same time, the core of ethics.
[4] See Stent (1976).

14) Hermeneutic ethics and responsive evaluation

This is an approach coming from empirical ethics in medical research, therefore the question is how this might apply to economic research. Hermeneutic ethics use (open, respectful, inclusive and engaging) dialogue as the key term, which forms and changes the perspectives of the people involved in a research project (researcher and participants), which is the main learning tool for all parties and grounds knowledge on the context that produces the latter. Responsive evaluation is the methodological framework within which conclusions are reached through interactive processes between researchers and participants. In that sense, the researcher becomes the facilitator of negotiation "between stakeholders" [e.g. participants]. Moreover, evaluation is not the measurement of a programme's effectiveness but the examination of the engagement of the stakeholders with reference to the issues of (their) concern[1]. This approach is at least practical in its own right, although it does not provide with "ready-to-use" ethical guidelines, because it does provide some instructions on how the process of "negotiation", "evaluation" and use of empirical data are going to be conducted during research[2].

15) Reflexive ethics

I am not sure I understood it well, but I feel I should mention this option adopted by Cannella & Lincoln[3]. Reflexive ethics is considered to be directly connected with a critical approach not only toward research and researchers, but also to it self, e.g. the reflexive ethics. It also includes a "concern for transformative egalitarianism, attention to the problems of representation and continued examination of power orientations". The aim seems not to be ethics for ethics alone, but an effort to support through social science the "knowledges that have been discredited by dominant power orientations…" and "go beyond countering domination to construct unthought ways of being". Therefore, according to this view, reflexivity appears to give the rationale for ethics in research, e.g. positions the researcher in society. How could this be "translated" into practical options for a project?

16) Ethics derived from the economic theory

No-one considers economics as a theory of ethics. However, Adam Smith would say that there are no ethical dilemmas, because every individual will pursue its interest within the market and the market mechanism will bring harmony. Karl Marx would also say that social class structure is the creator of morals for the people who happen to belong to one or the other of the social classes and therefore, morality is common among those of the same class and different among those of different classes[4]. Smith's idea is just like saying we do not need to discuss ethics, since researchers and participants will pursue their own interests during the research project. Marx's idea seems as saying

[1] Abma, Molewijk & Widdershoven (2009), pp. 238-241.
[2] Abma, Molewijk & Widdershoven (2009), pp. 241-242, 248.
[3] Cannella & Lincoln (2009), p. 279-.
[4] Varoufakis (1996) pp. 161-162, 167-169.

that if the class of the researcher and the class of the participants is different, then they cannot reach an agreement about ethical issues. The question is of course, what happens if there is no class consciousness or no definite class structure, as is the case in Greece? What about the ethics ruling the research project?

Instead of concluding remarks

There are four approaches that I have not used and not further studied (yet) in order to examine any possibilities to find answers in ethical dilemmas of research:

The first is the psychoanalysis approach and particularly the idea that field research is a psychoanalytic treatment for the researcher[1]. This might have implications for the rules the researcher adopts or agrees to about field work.

The other approach is the point by David G. Epstein, who adds to the individual self-consciousness idea (reflexivity) the idea of collective self-consciousness[2] of the researcher.

The third approach is the idea of Abma, Molewijk and Widdershoven, who attribute to the ethicist and/or to the researcher in general the roles of a) interpreter and integrator of theory and practice, b) educator through a process of creating understanding, c) facilitator for fair and genuine dialogue and d) Socratic guide, who challenges taken-for-granted ideas and searches for tensions and conflicts, as well as for new meanings[3]. This approach emphasises the responsibility of the researcher who has to reconcile those conflicting roles during research. Perhaps, the ethical issues raised from research originate in this conflict.

The fourth approach is the conclusion by Horton[4], who proposes that a) any ethics of research should be open to surprise, given that the research situations should be considered ongoing, dynamic and subject to change, b) that both the researchers and research participants should be recognised as vulnerable, fallible, emotional, moody and embodied beings, c) that the relationality and contingency are features of research happenings and encounters and finally, that d) the research ethics should be open to possibility of fallibility, disappointment, sadness, unpleasantness and mess.

It seems to me that those four ideas will be interesting to explore through study in the future.

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[1] May (1980) pp. 532. Most interesting points however, are found in the comments of the same paper, e.g. by Hanifi p. 535, Henry p. 537 and Panoff p. 538.

[2] Comment by D.G. Epstein to May (1980) at the same journal, p. 533. It seems rather a Marxist approach but it is also very elaborated and includes the epistemology aspects of it.

[3] Abma, Molewijk and Widdershoven (2009), pp. 248.

[4] Horton (2008), pp. 375-377.

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