

Commitment and regulation. Ethics in research and the human sciences*

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Although ethical issues have been present since remote times in the academia and in professional organisations, in recent years ethics in research has been doubly highlighted: as a topic and specific field for reflection within the academic community and as an object of evaluation and regulation from outside academia. While reflection has a well-established context in the human sciences, evaluation and regulation developed focusing especially on dilemmas in the biomedical fields. They have expanded from there to the other scientific areas. For research with methodologies that establish more horizontal relations and are open to permanent negotiations, such as participatory research, the regulations that involve vertical knowledge-power relations may present dilemmas that affect both the practice of research and its potential results. However, recognising the specificity of the human sciences regarding this aspect meets with strong resistance. The text discusses these problems based on the experience of participating in a research ethics committee and in a Work Group of the Ministry of Health in Brazil charged with elaborating specific regulations for ethics in research in the human and social sciences.

Key words: evaluation, human and social sciences, reflection, research ethics

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