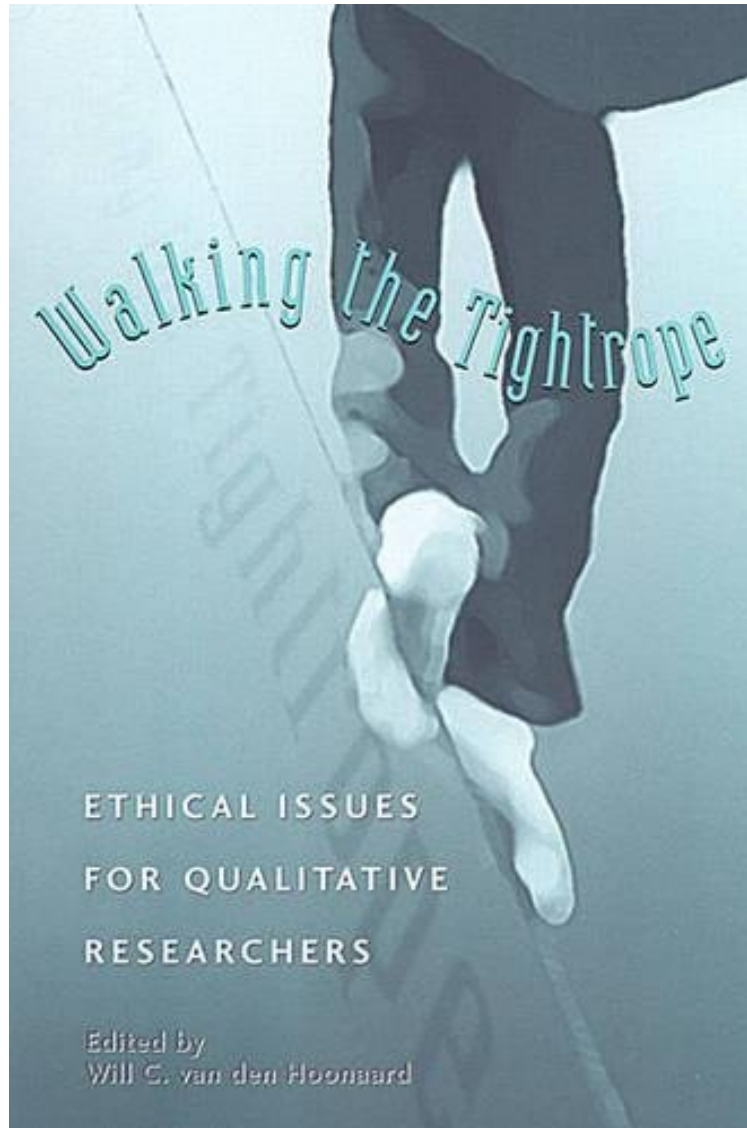


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Walking the Tightrope: Ethical Issues for Qualitative Researchers

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From physical settings such as high schools and maternity homes to the unfolding 'virtual' terrain of cyberspace, social

science research projects are subject to increasingly restrictive ethics-testing. Are formal ethics research guidelines congruent with the aims and methodology of inductive and qualitative social research? Using the experiences of sixteen Canadian, American, and British researchers, this collection of essays explores a range of answers to the question. The sixteen contributors challenge the 'bio-medical' basis of research-ethics review policies in the authors' three national contexts, suggesting that guidelines were created with quantitative work in mind, and actually impede or interrupt work which is not hypothesis-driven 'hard science.' Through examination of a range of ethics issues - confidentiality, especially sensitive settings, questions of 'voice' and the complex new challenges of ethical Internet research - the authors test the appropriateness of current ethical review protocols. Scholars and practitioners in the fields of social work, education and sociology will find the essays useful and stimulating, as will teachers and students of qualitative research methodologies in fields as diverse as medicine, comparative literature and business studies. These papers, none of which is previously published, raise disruptive questions with an engaging urgency of manner.

About the Author Will C. van den Hoonaard is a professor emeritus in the Department of Sociology at the University of New Brunswick.