

*The Social Life of Research Ethics in Sápmi, Deanuleahki*

This paper examines the social processes surrounding research ethics that have emerged during my ethnographic doctoral research in Sápmi, Deanuleahki. In my research, I examine kin-based care practices and relationships in Deanuleahki. I particularly seek to analyze the implications, for care among kin, of:

1. Historical and present-day manifestations of colonization and assimilation;
2. The ebb and flow of Finnish and Norwegian states' health care and social services' consolidation and downscaling; and
3. Mobilizations surrounding the (re)vitalization of language, culture and foundational livelihoods (*vuoddoealáhusat*).

From the outset, my research ethics protocol had been carefully calibrated to emphasize matters of informed consent, confidentiality, and data protection. This emphasis stemmed from both the sensitive nature of the material I would gather, and requirements of my university's institutional review board and of relevant national institutions. Over the course of my dissertation fieldwork, the linguistic, political and ecological context of my fieldwork led me to a collaborative process of translation and rewriting of this protocol. This process, in turn, enabled the expansion of my project's analytical scope to a more appropriately capacious inquiry into both care and ethics – an inquiry grounded in reciprocity, and one that could encompass care for the elderly, ill or otherwise vulnerable, as well as care for the non-human ecology of the river valley. It particularly led me toward focused inquiry into forms of care that reside in the foundational livelihoods of Sápmi, which in turn demanded greater recognition of the inextricably political and ecological features of care in Deanuleahki. Crucially, attention to such features has also suggested systemic challenges to research ethics in the context of global flows of capital that percolate through Sápmi.