

## **Abstract for paper presentation**

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### Decolonizing Vocal Expressions in Sápmi

This paper unfolds how engaging with musical arrangements contributes in the reclamation of yoik—the traditional Sámi vocal expression. Numerous Sámis whose cultural heritage has been weakened are now engaged in processes of *taking-it-back*; land, rights, and cultural expressions such as yoik. Much identity is embedded in local variations and nuances of yoik. For a period of time, laws prohibiting yoik silenced the tradition in some areas. Consequently, certain yoik dialects are lost. Additionally, descendants from these areas often did not grow up with yoik, and it is challenging to internalize this vital part of Sámi culture. Learning yoik later in life often leads to insecurities—fear of making mistakes or of offending knowledgeable culture bearers.

Through research-creation and an Indigenous onto-epistemological framework, I facilitate conversations around reclaiming yoik as a form of collective decolonization. While questions of legitimacy remain—such as whether one may learn from knowledge bearers outside one's own area—modern yoik may offer a path forward. By combining traditional vocal expression with contemporary musical arrangements, modern yoik creates accessible entry points for learners and audiences alike. It can bridge lost dialects and contribute to the continuation of yoik as a vibrant Sámi cultural expression.

### Keywords

Yoik, Cultural Tradition, Decolonization