

# Music, mining and colonisation: Sámi contestations of Sweden's self-narrative

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*Sweden's dominant self-narrative has tended to marginalise its historical colonisation of Sápmi. This aspect of Swedish history sits uncomfortably with prevalent understandings of that self-identity. Indeed, there has been little emphasis on the historical subordination of Sámi people in political science scholarship on Swedish exceptionalism and internationalism. This article problematises this absence by centring the analysis on Sámi musician Sofia Jannok's efforts to decolonise Sápmi through her music. The first part examines Sweden's colonisation of Sápmi and the tensions between Sámi reindeer herding communities, mining interests and the Swedish state. This is followed by an exploration of the constitutive relationship between music, politics and celebrity, as sites of political communication. A two-step analysis follows, investigating the broad themes in Sofia Jannok's personal narrative and the discursive markers defining her music and politics. The analysis shows how her narrative intersects with the discursive themes of her musical expression and other engagements.*

Sweden's self-identity is habitually couched within notions of being a 'good state' (Lawler 2013) that is committed to the welfare and rights of its own citizens and those of other nations (Bergman 2007). This has been expressed in support for the United Nations, human and minority rights, gender equality and comparably generous levels of overseas development assistance (Bergman Rosamond 2015). However, that self-narrative rarely includes critical reflections on the country's implication in the colonisation of Sápmi, the land of the Sámi, in the north of Sweden (Lawrence & Mortiz 2018, 1; Salminen 2018). Nor does it seriously consider Sweden's implicit role in other forms of European colonialism worldwide (Mulinari, Keskinen, Irni and Tuori 2009, 18). Rather the Swedish national narrative has been told through the lens of the majority population (Salminen 2018). Here 'national narratives' are understood as the "story of the state" and a channel through which its normative goals, values, historical past and ambitions are articulated to multiple audiences (Miskimmon, O'Loughlin, & Roselle 2013).

The Swedish story has skipped over less commendable aspects of its history that are inconsistent with prevalent understandings of the self. Nor has there been emphasis

on the historical subordination of Sámi people in political science scholarship on Swedish exceptionalism and internationalism (Lawler 2013; Bergman Rosamond 2015). However, research on the politics of extraction has identified an inconsistency between Sweden's support for global human rights and its negligence of the rights of Sami people (Lawrence & Mortiz 2018). My intention here is to cast light on this absence by centring the analysis on Sámi musician Sofia Jannok's efforts to decolonise Sápmi through her music (Lovesey 2016). Her ambition is captured in her song 'Snow Lioness':

“Antiracist my ass .. You don't even recognize the people from whom you've stolen all your cash ... Once you stole this land from me. A native empress, the rainbow you see, a snow lioness, well all that is me” (Jannok 2016).

Underpinning this article is the assumption that there is a constitutive relationship between music and political communication (Street 2017), enabling artists to articulate their stances on national and international injustices. Such individuals are well placed to communicate their ethical messages to their fanbase and society at large by having access to sizeable audiences and enjoying recognition within popular culture.

I commence the article by accounting for my own role as a non-indigenous researcher and the ethical concerns emerging from that position. To situate the study, I then explore the historical and political context in which Sofia Jannok's musical and other interventions take place. This includes reflecting on Sweden's colonisation of Sápmi and the tensions between Sámi reindeer herding communities, commercial interests and the Swedish state.<sup>1</sup> The second part of the article starts by exploring the constitutive relationship between music, politics and celebrity, as sites of political communication (Street 2017). I note that musical activism is often associated with mainstream popular culture rather than plights of indigenous musicians. Sofia Jannok nonetheless enjoys a dual presence within Sámi and mainstream popular culture which enables her to advocate her decolonising message across multiple audiences. In the last part, I provide a two-step analysis, by investigating some of the broad themes in Sofia Jannok's personal narrative and the discursive markers defining her music and politics. The intention is to show the ways in which her narrative intersects with the discursive themes of her musical expression and other engagements. The conclusion reiterates the contention that there is a co-constitutive relationship between music and politics and that the former can help to challenge dominant stories about the nation and allow voices at the margin to be heard.

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<sup>1</sup> I employ the term Sápmi throughout this article. It is not confined to the north of Sweden, but is a transnational region embracing Sámi communities in Finland, Norway and Russia. I use Sámi to describe the indigenous people living in Sápmi in the North of Sweden, while recognising that there are several subgroups within this wider community. Sápmi is a geographical territory that has been inhabited by Sámi people for at least 6000 years. The Sámi people is a distinct, although, not heterogenous socio-cultural indigenous group, traditionally regarded as a nomadic reindeer herding people. Although the Sámi people of today are no longer nomadic, reindeer herding remains an essential signifier of their traditions and cultural identity (Castro, Hossain, and Tytelman 2016).

## Sapmi: a site of Swedish colonisation

Before I account for the historical and political context of the present study I should ethically reflect on my own position within the study as a non-indigenous scholar. I have not personally experienced any of the injustices that Sámi people have encountered, and this gives rise to the ethical question whether I am in a position to investigate their plights for justice. While I recognise that I cannot draw on lived experiences I hope that the analysis below can somewhat nuance political science scholarship on Swedish exceptionalism, ethical foreign policy and internationalism by considering the country's implication in the colonisation of Sápmi (Bergman 2007; Aggestam, Bergman Rosamond & Kronsell 2019).

Until the end of WWII many officially sanctioned forms of discrimination and subordination of Sámi people were intact in Sweden. Throughout the 1930s and in the early years of the 1940s the country engaged in racialised practices of eugenics. For example, scientists measured Sámi people's facial features and the size and shape of their heads to scientifically prove their inferiority (*Sameblood* 2016). During the same time period the Swedish government forcefully displaced Sámi children, placing them in special nomadic schools where they were forced to speak Swedish (*Sameblod* 2016). The idea was to ensure that Sámi children would be kept apart from non-Sámi school children as a way of ensuring their return to traditional life to avoid them mixing with the majority population (Mörkenstam, Josefsen & Nilsson 2016; Lawrence & Mörkenstam 2016).

These racist experiments ended in the post-WWII era, as Sweden sought to reconstitute its self-identity within the language of internationalism being wedded to the liberation of African and other colonies (Bergman 2002). To systematically repress the rights of indigenous people within borders would have been inconsistent with that decolonisation process. As Hough notes (2013, 759): "attitudes towards indigenous minorities gradually changed after the Second World War as both the Nordic Social Democracies and the Sami themselves embraced emergent international notions of economic and social rights and multiculturalism" (Hough 2013, 759). The retelling of the Swedish self-narrative has nonetheless tended to disregard the "subaltern pasts" of Sámi communities (Chakrabarty 1998,18). The Swedish public and its political elites were more likely to subscribe to the notion of Sweden as a moral superpower at home and abroad, defined by its pronounced 'moral worth' (Attwood, 2005, 243) and internationalist ambitions (Agius 2006).

By implication, the colonisation of the Sámi was blanked out from Sweden's collective memory bank for a long time. Össbo and Lantto (2011, 327) note that: "Sweden can be said to have adopted a 'the blue water thesis', according to which colonialism happens across oceans and is not something that occurs within the perceived borders of a state." However, "regarding the indigenous Sami people and their rights to land and water, the actions of the Swedish state are characteristic of colonial policy." Sámi politicians and activists, on the other hand, habitually describe the racialised repression of their peo-

ple within the language of colonialism, with Sofia Jannok frequently using such discursive markers (SVT 2016a, b).

This is also a discursive logic that has found its way into Swedish popular culture, whereby historical traumas are increasingly being made visible through media, film and music. Those stories challenge the Swedish ‘good state’ logic that underpins Sweden’s self-narrative. A recent example is the award-winning feature film *Sameblod* (Sámi Blood), directed by Amanda Kernell, herself Sámi. Its plot centres on the racialised and gendered ways in which the Swedish state treated the Sámi in 1930s and 40s. The leading actors in the film are Sámi and daughters of reindeer herders, which brings authenticity to the story telling. The willingness to openly debate Sweden’s colonising and racist practices in popular culture has not been accompanied by an official apology on the part of the state. Nor has Sweden signed the ILO convention on Indigenous and Tribal people.

However, Sápmi was given indigenous status in Swedish law in 1966, and, in year 2000 Sámi languages were given formal minority status. In 1993 the Sámi parliament was established in Sweden, and 8000 Sámi individuals are on the electoral register and, as such, are entitled to vote (Sametinget 2020). This was followed by an official recognition of the Sámi as a distinct people in 2011. Members of the Swedish parliament have also sought to more actively promote Sámi rights (Bah Kuhnke 2018). Sweden’s former Minister for Culture and Democracy, Alice Bah Kuhnke, a member of the Green Party, has openly supported Sami people’s self-determination and land rights. On the occasion of the Sámi

National Day in 2018, she noted that the Swedish state “must update its Sami policy” and revisit its repressive past (Bah Kuhnke 2018).

Sámi activists and politicians, moreover, are given more space in public debate and life with Sofia Jannok’s singing at the official opening of the Swedish national parliament in 2009 being testament to this claim. Less pronounced, however, is the readiness to debate controversial subjects such as land rights and the granting of exploration permits to Swedish and international mining companies in mineral-rich parts of Sápmi.

Swedish colonialism in Sápmi is intimately linked with the extraction of natural resources in the North of the country, a practice that dates back approximately 1000 years (Sveriges Geological Undersökning 2020). Many of Sweden’s mineral-rich areas are geographically located in Sápmi territory. Out of the estimated 20,000-40,000 Sámi people in Sweden, there are about 4,600 owners of reindeer (Lawrence & Mortiz 2018). To own reindeers and engage in herding, individuals need to belong to a Sámi village and that right is not afforded everyone; this sometimes creates tensions within Sámi communities (Lawrence & Mörkenstam 2016). Still, a rather sizeable proportion of Sámi people work in the reindeer herding industry. However, the exploration and exploitation of minerals and iron ore are often inconsistent with Sami subnational claims for land ownership and participation in key decision-making processes (Rico 2008). This has not prevented the Swedish state from granting exploitation and exploration permits to mining companies in Sápmi.

The dispute over the Gállok Iron Deposit is of particular significance here - it has been closely followed in media and has been the site of many protests. It is geographically located near the UNESCO world heritage site of Laponia and the Sami villages Sirges and Jåhkågasska tjiellde. Laponia was awarded world heritage status in 1996 on the basis of its unique nature and Sami heritage. Indeed, it is “the largest area in the world (and one of the last) with an ancestral way of life based on the seasonal movement of livestock. Every summer, the Saami lead their huge herds of reindeer towards the mountains through a natural landscape hitherto preserved.” (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, Undated, see also Laponia undated a, b).

Laponia stretches 94,000 square kilometres across forests, mountains and bogland, and hosts four natural parks, two nature reserves, and nine Sami villages (Laponia undated, a, b). Though protected by international law due to its UNESCO status, the distinctiveness of Laponia is currently under threat by the ongoing and planned exploration and exploitation activities conducted by the British owned mining firm Beowulf. Since 2010, the firm has conducted explorations in the area, predicting large assets of iron ore if the actual exploitation process goes ahead.

The Swedish government has not yet decided whether to grant the British company the right to go ahead with the exploitation of ore because of the controversies surrounding such a decision (Dagens Nyheter 2020). The company states on its website that its “flagship project is the Kallak magnetite iron ore deposit in northern Sweden” (Beowulf Mining 2020). A future establishment of a working mine in Gallok is likely to endanger reindeer herding by preventing the animals from grazing in the area (Mustonen and Syrjämäki 2013). Indeed, for Sámi reindeer herders’ access to the land is a condition for the continuity of their lifestyle, heritage and cultural identity.

However, the same land is viewed as a site of national social and economic development, enabling Sweden to meet the global demand for iron ore (Langston 2013). This dispute over Gallok is further complicated by the mining industry’s key role in the economic development of Sweden since the 17th century (Ojala and Nordin 2015). In the north of Sweden, new mines lead to jobs, tax revenues and the revival of unpopulated regions (Persson, Harnesk, and Islar 2017), causing many non-Sámi locals to support the exploitation of ore (Persson, Harnesk and Islar, 2017; Lawrence and Moritz, 2018). In a similar fashion, the Swedish state has generally supported mining companies by promoting “pro-mining policies, low mineral taxation, and investments in mining-related infrastructure” (Ojala and Nordin 2015, 7).

The mining industry also has significance in constituting Sweden’s industrial identity with Sweden’s former prime minister Fredrik Reinfeldt noting that “our iron ore is for us what oil is for Norwegians. An amazing wealth, an opportunity to build future investments, future development” (Reinfelt 2018 cited in Persson, Harnesk, and Islar 2017, 23). Though reindeer herding and key land and water areas of particular interest for the husbandry

Profession and industry are protected, in the case of national interest, those areas could be used for mining and as such might jeopardise reindeer herding (Koivurova,

Masloboev, and Petre 2015). Sámi herding communities do not enjoy full legal ownership over the land but are entitled to use it for herding purposes. While reindeer herding is protected by Sweden (and UNESCO) it is associated with cultural heritage, rather than commercial gains and often mining interests are privileged over Sámi rights.

The Gállok conflict should also be situated within the particularities of its historical context - the current disputes over the land use are part of a historically rooted struggle for Sapmi's right to self-determination and access to land and resources. There is also a pronounced relationship between the extraction of natural resources and the colonialisation of Sámi territories (Lawrence and Åhrén 2016). I will revisit this relationship in the last part of the paper by unpacking the musical expression and political communication conducted by Sofia Jannok.

### Music and celebrity as platforms for political activism

Scholarship on popular culture and politics holds that the two fields are constitutively linked rather than existing in separate realms (Weldes & Rowley 2015). What is more "(c)ulture is not opposed to politics. Culture is political, and politics is cultural" (Weber 2005, 188). By implication, music and other cultural expressions are "serious sites of enquiry" (Hamilton 2016). Increasingly, it is through popular culture that discourses and practices of politics are constituted and communicated. Such representations "matter" (Griffin 2015, 1) and enable us to make sense of world events and developments around us.

Music constitutes such a site of communication, providing channels through which serious messages can be communicated to audiences. The constitutive power of music emerges from the lyrics of the song in question, and/or its distinct beats and sounds. There is a long trend of music being used to protest against injustices in national and global society, with Sofia Jannok's protests against mining and colonisation being instructive examples here. John Street (2017, 2) notes that the "ubiquity of the protest song owes much to music's particular characteristics. Lyrics, like poetry, allow for meaning to be hinted at, rather than stated explicitly ... [a]nd unlike film or television, music ... it is a more democratic art form ... [m]usic ... in its uses of melody and rhythm, has the capacity to move people directly". Moreover, "protest and propaganda" are channels through which political messages are communicated (Street 2017, 3).

Music has been employed to combat global poverty, with Band Aid, led by Irish musician Bob Geldof being key here. The latter released the Christmas single "Do they know it is Christmas" to raise awareness about the then famine in Ethiopia (1982-1984). Such campaigns play a "central role in the campaign to alter economic and political relationships between the developed and developing worlds" (Hague, Street and Savigny 2008, 5). Band Aid, however, has been critiqued for relying "heavily on simplistic and graphic images of starving African children" and as such endorsing the savior logic of "[w]estern celebrities and donors ... consolidating a colonial image of the global South

as helpless.” (Jones 2017, 189). That savior logic is gendered within masculinist protection, with white (often male) musicians assigning rescuing qualities to themselves. Female artists have also used their musical expression to critique contemporary society, however, often as a way of taking issue with the misogynous undertones of the aforementioned masculinist protectionist music. Examples here include Beyonce’s song *Flawless*, which delivers an unequivocal feminist message. The song challenges gendered and often misogynous conceptions of female beauty in favour of acceptance of different body types and looks.

Such musical interventions are nonetheless located within mainstream popular culture with the artists having access to big record contracts, transnational audiences, recognition and star power. As such they tend “to reinforce prevailing power structures” while “resistant forms of popular culture do frequently and subversively contradict convention and orthodoxy” (Griffin 2015, 9). One such music genre is punk, often used as an expression of rebellion, associated with “angry young men” and “misogyny” (Reynolds & Press 1995, 2). The employment of “grim social realism” by the Clash, lyrically expressed in songs about “tower blocks and dole queues”, is an instructive example of social criticism of Britain in the 1970s, but also boredom and ‘homosocial’ values (Reynolds & Press 1995).

However, music can also “naturalise or normalise a certain social order by entrenching the expectations of social behaviour upon which ... dominant ideologies of ... policy are founded” (Kiersey and Neumann 2013, 5). Some artists actively seek to disrupt the entrenchment of prevalent societal or national power relations, including indigenous musicians such as Sofia Jannok. As will be shown below she uses her dual position at margins of mainstream and indigenous popular culture to challenge prevalent stories of Sweden’s exceptionalism and moral worth.

Most studies of celebrity activists and humanitarians, whether musicians, TV personalities or actors, tend to focus on individuals who enjoy global fame, rather than those who are mainly known to national or subnational audiences. Nonetheless, a growing number of scholars have come to recognise the significance of studying celebrity activism across contexts, genres, professions and nations (Richey 2015; Cooper 2008; Bergman Rosamond & Gregoratti 2019).

Deconstructing the ethical interventions and political communication by indigenous artists is in line with this ambition. Even if Jannok is not a global household name she has access to a sizeable audience offering her opportunities to communicate her messages of decolonisation and land rights beyond her own community (2016a, SVT 2016a, Aftonbladet 2016). While music is her primary artistic expression her participation in several national TV productions on Sápmi has added both authenticity and recognition to her distinct brand (SVT 2016a). Below, I will briefly reflect on Jannok’s personal narrative and the way it intersects with the discursive framing of her musical and visual expression and other engagements.

## Sofia Jannok – the intersection between her story and her musical activism

Here I provide a two-step analysis of the connections between Jannok's self-narrative and the discursive framing of her music and humanitarian engagements. In the first place I investigate some aspects of Sofia Jannok's personal narrative, which enables me to situate the study "within a wider discursive field" (Hansen 2006, 7). Personal narratives bring together the collective and the personal as well as the intersubjective and the individual (Wibben 2011, 2). Analysing such narratives enables investigating how people – especially marginalised groups - make sense of their lives and developments around them. I couple this analysis with broad poststructural techniques (Hansen 2006; Shepherd 2008, 2013).

Discourses give "meanings to social and physical realities", and it is through discourse that individuals ... and states make sense of themselves, of their ways of living, and of the world around them." (Epstein, 2008, 2). What is more, material reality is always mediated through discourse (Hansen 2006). The analysis below draws on Laclau's and Mouffe's (1985, 112) discourse theory and the ontological position that the most relevant units of analysis in any discourse are signifiers. Nodal points are privileged signifiers around which we construct meanings.

Below I focus on two discursive themes: first, Jannok's opposition to Sweden's implication in the colonisation of Sápmi, and, second her opposition to the mining industry in Gallok. Such stories are told across texts because "texts build their arguments and authority through references to other texts: by making direct quotes or by adopting key concepts and catchphrases" (Hansen 2006, 9). I draw upon Lene Hansen's (2006) careful elaborations of research design as they relate to the selection of texts, in particular the ways in which popular cultural texts can be productively used to highlight marginal stories (Hansen 2006, 73). The material investigated below includes Jannok's songs and visual expressions as well as interview material in which she offers her ethical reflections on Sápmi,

### *Sofia Jannok – a Sámi artist and political communicator*

Sofia Jannok was born and brought up in Gällivare, which is one of the municipalities in which the world heritage site Laponia is located. Because her parents are Sámi and owners of reindeer she was exposed to herding early in life and is herself the owner of such animals (SVT 2016a). Sofia's mother tongue is Sámi and she attended Sámi school until she was 12 when she moved to a mainstream Swedish school (Blomvist 2016). Sofia started performing the traditional Sámi musical genre of Jojk at that age and became known to a larger audience when she performed the Abba song Waterloo during the interlude of the Swedish Eurovision song contest final in 2009 (Feministiskt Perspektiv 2016). She has twice been nominated for the Swedish Grammy and received the World Music Award (Sweden) in 2014.



While Jannok is often defined as an ‘activist’ by Swedish commentators who reflect on her music and politics, she does not identify as such. Rather, she sees herself as an artist and notes that her music is a continuation of “what previous generations started: mirroring the contemporary world – as art always does” (Blomqvist 2016, 3). That political communication is expressed in a strong commitment to the decolonisation of the stories told about Sápmi so as to challenge Sweden’s dominant self-identity (Salminen 2018; Mulinari et.al. 2009; Jannok 2016, 2013). Decolonisation, here, is “associated with Indigenous voices in the Americas and other settler colonial contexts” and, as such, seeks to “denaturalize this dehumanization intrinsic to colonial and settler colonial logics and all the violences arising from them” (Runyan 2018, 3). Sofia Jannok seeks to “denaturalise the dehumanisation” of her people through music which “has always been an essential part of the decolonisation work that Sápmi has undertaken for as long as I have lived and long before my time.” Blomqvist 2016, 2). In her view music can disrupt colonial narratives that tell the story about a particular community in singular language, and, thus, contribute to “a more fair and true image of reality because it is told through the eyes of the ones who experience it” (Blomqvist 2016, 2).

Jannok’s music is deeply rooted in the tradition of Jojk, which was outlawed by the Swedish authorities for generations, though Sámi communities resisted that prohibition and performed it in secrecy. However, Jannok did not learn Jojk at home. but rather acquired skills from teachers along the way (Blomqvist 2016). Jannok mixes Jojk with jazz and pop music and sings in Sámi, English and Swedish. Her music was initially poetic and she “allowed art to be art” but increasingly she has moved towards being more direct in delivering her message that Sápmi is her land and that it is indigenous land so as to avoid any “misinterpretation” (Blomqvist 2016, 9). Thus, she has recently sought to make her music more accessible, also by writing in multiple languages. In so doing she ensures that her decolonising messages reach wider audiences (SVT 2013, SVT 2016a, c). Music, according to Jannok, evokes sentiments and feelings in people that are hard to ignore and stick to their memory (SVT 2016a, Blomqvist 2016).

Coupled with her musical expression Jannok has figured in several TV productions, giving her further opportunities to portray Sweden’s colonisation of Sápmi and the repression of indigenous people globally. In the three-part documentary *Världens Sofia Jannok* (The World’s Sofia Jannok), broadcast by Swedish state television, she makes a strong claim for indigenous rights worldwide (SVT 2016a). She also played a main part in the French-Swedish TV series *Midnight Sun* (Midnattsol). In that series she portrayed a ‘Nájd’ – a Sámi spiritual guide with healing powers that border on the paranormal (SVT 2016b) adding authenticity to her artistic production. It is fair to say that such appearances have added visibility to her persona and strengthened her celebrity status within Swedish popular culture. In what follows I unpack the discursive themes that prevail in Jannok’s musical and non-musical interventions.

*Contestation of colonisation*

Sweden's colonisation of Sápmi throughout history is a pronounced discursive theme in Sofia Jannok's music and political communication. It is rooted in a strong sense of wishing to use her music to push for the decolonisation of Sápmi and is politically expressed in her opposition to the extraction industry in her land. Here, Jannok contends that: "The colonial history of Sweden, with the oppression and violence toward the Saami, is not covered at all in the Swedish school system. But I can put it in a song and tell the truth through arts" (Jannok cited in Arctic Portal 2017). The song 'Noadi' on her record 'This is My Land' is of particular importance in this part of the article in that it is a cry for the decolonisation of Sápmi and tells the story of lost land and nature (Jannok 2016; Blomqvist 2016).

In an effort to contest the Swedish 'good state' non-colonising self-narrative Jannok employs a range of nodal points pertaining to grief, racism, the love of her land, as well as transnational indigenous solidarity and mining. She employs these discursive markers intertextually across lyrics and visuals. Her music is defined by her people's sense of grief and loss of land, while pointing out that this is not an emotion shared by the Swedish majority population. This is expressed in the lyrics of her song 'Grieving: Ooppaide':

"not grieving the loss of you home sweet home. Not grieving your walls that for all times are gone ... I'm grieving the wide-open wound that I can see. When will they understand to let be?" (Jannok 2016). That sense of grief and loss, moreover, is coupled with a feeling of not belonging to the majority population, with Jannok having on occasions noted that she does not self-identify as Swedish (Aftonbladet 2016).

Denouncing her Swedish identity could be seen as a response to Sweden's radical and racist othering of Sápmi. Her music then challenges Sweden's self-narrative as an exceptionally other-regarding, non-racist state by locating it within the language of colonialism and loss. The song 'Snow Lioness' offers a critique of Sweden's racialised discrimination of Sámi individuals by provokingly stating "non-racist my arse" to disrupt Sweden's self-identity (Jannok 2016). This is also visible in her song 'This is My land':

"This is my land: Sápmi. This is my land this is my country ... If you say that this girl is not welcome in this country if she must leave because her face is brown. Well, then I say you go first, cause frankly this is my land" (Jannok 2016).

The nodal points of grief and racism are intimately linked with Jannok's discursive use of land across lyrics and interview material. Her record 'Orda This is My land' is explicit in its questioning of land rights and propriety, while celebrating Sápmi's distinctive nature which is bound up in Sámi identity and heritage (Blomqvist 2016). She clarifies this position by noting that her people "depends on the right to land and water and the reindeer and our settlements. Every day that you infringe on these rights it becomes a little harder

for us to survive!” (Blomqvist 2016). The nodal point of land is surrounded by signifiers pertaining to home and belonging with Jannok noting that “this is my home, this is my heaven, this is the earth where I belong” (Jannok 2016).

Running through Jannok’s musical expression and political communication is also a strong sense of transnational indigenous solidarity, which is a key nodal point around which her decolonising efforts are positioned (Blomqvist 2016; Aftonbladet 2016). She uses her music not only to highlight the historical maltreatment of her people, but also the justice-based plights of other indigenous peoples across the world (SVT 2016a, b). In this context, she notes that we “share the same history ... we are alike” and music creates “awareness of indigenous rights” (SVT 2016a).

Engaging in indigenous rights also provides an opportunity for Jannok to “draw parallels to other indigenous peoples precisely to debunk the option that Sami people aren’t indigenous” (Blomqvist 2016, 22). To act on her philosophical stance, she visits indigenous communities worldwide and performs at world music festivals where she teams up with indigenous musicians (Aftonbladet 2016; SVT 2016a). On those occasions she often emphasises the universality of indigenous people’s struggles for land and recognition (Aftonbladet 2016; SVT 2016a). In her words “I have met many indigenous people, often at festivals... I have felt at home everywhere I’ve been.” (Rehlin 2017). This message is articulated by Jannok in the public service three-part documentary *Världens Sofia Jannok* (The World’s Sofia Jannok) from 2016. Jannok’s self-representation in the documentary is that of an artist wedded to global environmental and intergenerational justice, politically committed to questioning and challenging the exploitation of indigenous land, which I shall turn to now.

### *Mining*

Jannok’s decolonising interventions are intimately linked with her opposition to the extraction industry in Sápmi which she considers to be the political issue that concerns her the most, in particular “the ways in which the mines destroy our land” (Lundberg 2013, my translation). The discursive links between colonisation, genocide and mining are captured in her song ‘I ryggen på min kolt’ (at the back of my kolt), in which she defines the selling of the “land to mines” as a form of “genocide” (Jannok 2016). The song also contains references to ownership, land rights and racism, indicating Jannok’s wish to contest the dominant Swedish self-narrative that is couched within notions of national and international justice.

Jannok’s anti-mining engagements have tended to focus on the site of Gallok which figures in her music and visual material. In an interview with Swedish Television she argues that the events in Gallok have “become a symbol of the exploitation of the entire Sápmi” and that “Sámi people have always opposed extraction, but nobody has listened” (SVT 2013, my translation). At the structural level Jannok has critiqued the Swedish Mining Inspectorate’s decision to grant the British mining firm Beowulf the

right to conduct exploration in Gallok. In so doing she points to the ways in which such exploitation will jeopardise the future of Sami villages' subsistence, traditions, heritage and land rights (SVT 2013). Her song 'We are still here' directly takes on board the damaging effects of the mining industry on Sápmi: "this is my home, this is my heaven, this is the earth where I belong and if you want to ruin it all with big wounds in the mountains then you're not worthy of listening to this song" (Jannok 2016). Presumably, the use of "big wounds" in the lyrical expression symbolises the damage that the exploration and exploitation of iron ore cause affecting the livelihood of Sámi people.

Jannok couples her musical and lyrical expressions with visual effects and performances, for instance by participating in anti-mining protests on the Gallok site. In 2013, she performed the song 'We are still here' as part of a demonstration against the establishment of the mine in the territory (Jannok 2013). Inspired by the song she also recorded a music video titled 'Ahpi- Wide as Oceans' which contains recordings from the Gallok mining court case (SVT 2013). The issue of land rights prevails in the production and Jannok ends the video with the words "we are still here", further reinforcing her support for Sápmi land rights (SVT 2013; Jannok 2013).

Moreover, Jannok's opposition to the extraction industry in Sápmi is intimately linked with her solidarity with other indigenous people's plight for environmental justice and land rights. In the aforementioned documentary 'Sofia Jannok's World' Jannok travels to the USA to meet up with indigenous people in Minnesota. On several occasions in the documentary she notes that such human encounters leave her "touched" giving her a sense of Sápmi people not being "alone" in their struggle for justice (SVT 2016a). As a way of showing her solidarity with the land claims of the indigenous Sioux people in Dakota Jannok participated in the protests against the Dakota Access Pipeline at the Standing Rock. In a radio interview she notes that the protest offered opportunities for many of the world's indigenous people to gather together with their "sisters and brothers" (Sveriges Radio 2016). Moreover, she notes that the struggle in Dakota bears resemblance to the those facing Sami people (Sveriges Radio 2016). She adds that music in particular is a productive way of bringing to the fore the ways in which commercial interests jeopardise the subsistence, traditions and heritage of indigenous people worldwide (Sveriges Radio 2016). Indeed, her song 'We are still here' reflects the pronounced tensions between indigenous people worldwide and the economic interests of the extraction and other industries:

"Kill the bison, dig out the reindeer's land  
 Gold and iron, blood on greedy hands  
 Drown the lávvu, burn the tipi down  
 we raise new ones, survivors we are now  
 We are still here, we are still here  
 100 years back in the USA  
 killed my sisters, cut their breasts away  
 In Peru my brothers always stayed" (Jannok 2015).

The song reflects the parallels Jannok draws between the planned mining activities in Gallok and other parts of Sápmi and those of other parts of the world. Having identified the key nodal points prevalent in Jannok's musical expression, visual effects and statements I will offer a set of concluding remarks below.

### Concluding remarks

Underpinning this article is the ontological position that music and politics are co-constitutively linked and do not exist in separate realms. Rather than offering neutral descriptions of the world around us music provides venues for political activism and contestation by touching people's emotions, souls and thought processes. In this piece I have focused on the musical and visual expressions of Sofia Jannok, an indigenous artist who is located at the boundaries of mainstream popular culture and the indigenous music scene. As has been contended above this dual position makes her well placed to communicate her messages to multiple audiences as well as posing critical questions about the historical subordination of her people.

Moreover, Sofia Jannok uses her musical and visual expressions as well as activist statements to disrupt embedded stories about the Swedish nation and its moral credentials. Those interventions often centre on Sweden's implication in the colonisation of Sápmi, a story that is rarely, if ever, touched on in the country's official self-narrative. That story rather centres on Sweden's record as a 'good state' wedded to justice within and beyond borders (Lawler 2013). What is more, the historical repression of the Sámi people has been neglected in research on Swedish internationalism and exceptionalism (Bergman Rosamond 2015). This article is an attempt to further this conversation with the hope of nuancing such research.

While the first part of the article focused on the political and historical contexts in which Jannok's music and political communication have emerged, the latter part turned to the artist's personal story, as told by herself and others. By getting a little closer to her lived experiences, as a platform for her music and political messaging, it is possible to explore the connections between her personal narrative and the discursive framing of her work. Because Jannok wishes to employ her music to draw attention to indigenous plights for justice, at home and abroad, it is productive to trace the ways in which that political communication is articulated in her personal story as well as her music. That plight would appear to be more genuine and authentic given that she has grown up and still lives in the community whose history she seeks to highlight. The likes of Madonna and Bob Geldof appear to be far removed from their audiences or the communities that they seek to assist through their humanitarian interventions. While there is a whole register of injustices experienced by Sámi people, past and present, Jannok's humanitarian efforts tend to focus on the colonisation of Sápmi and the related question of mining, both of which figure in her music.

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