

C.1: Reappraising Public Representations of Finno-Ugric Identities

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The research on communities speaking Finno-Ugric languages has traditionally relied on explicit or implicit assumptions about a unified cultural heritage or ways of thinking produced by linguistic kinship. Similarly, cultural work related to kindred nations has been intertwined with the undefined concept of Finno-Ugricity. Alongside the emphasis on collectivity, one has also built distinctions between communities speaking Finno-Ugric languages and other linguistic communities, but also between different Finno-Ugric communities. These distinctions have been accompanied by significations that influence the perceptions of Finno-Ugricity and each individual Finno-Ugric community.

In this symposium, we will contemplate the images that have been created and perpetuated in research as well as in societal and cultural activities concerning communities that speak Finno-Ugric languages. The topics may relate to history or the present day, and the materials can include, for example, travel accounts, research, museum exhibitions, folklore collections, or public performances of social identity. Presentations may address images constructed by Finno-Ugric peoples themselves or outsiders, their backgrounds, as well as continuities and disruptions. In addition, the symposium will explore possible thought patterns or ideologies associated with modes of presentation and the value systems that presentations either reinforce or challenge.

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