

Borders. Well, it's perhaps easy for me to talk about it because I teach on borders and, uh, so my research is on borders, so I think about borders a lot So on the one hand it's just regular work, it's a topic that I think about a lot, it meansÉ a job uh, for me. So it's you know, it's a very Practical, it's a very specific topic that I research. It's Basic, but I mean I'm this kind of crazy person who grew up in Canada, I'm Canadian and I moved to England to do a PhD and during my PhD I lived in Russia and then I moved to Finland to work and I've been in Finland now for twenty years and I work half an hour away, live half an hour away from the Russian border and I have Finnish citizenship now, so you know and I travel all the time as part of my work and just last week I was in Canada. Next week I'll be in Estonia and in two weeks or three weeks I'll be in Central Asia, so crossing the border is an experience crossing a border I think that's important It's not just what the border means to us, but how do we experience them uh, because it's different for everybody And of course I think it was very telling that the entire group of Nigerians who are hosting a big border conference in October I think it is they weren't there and they were supposed to make a presentation, And I think that's probably because they had a problem at the border. I don't know but that's my guess So experiencing the border and how you get treated at borders is so different

for each individual. My- Depending on so many things and of course we talk about citizenship we talk about race we talk about gender we talk about sexuality all these things that influence everybody's experience of the border and I think that's probably what I think about more when it comes to borders. Not just you know what is the border but it's more how do we experience them How do they affect our lives? Yes we know the borders you know they help regulate, they give us guidelines in our lives and that's how societies are built So you know here are the borders around our societies the social the political the economic the cultural and that helps you know regulate and set up our societies and we need that Without borders we have a little bit of chaos or Anarchy, but that doesn't interest me so much as really how do we experience borders and we know really that borders are- they're flexible. They don't stay in one place They're man-made so we can't if, you know, tomorrow parliament decided that you know there're not going to be any more guards at the borders and they basically don't exist tomorrow well that could happen because somebody can make a decision. Because They're man-made- They're not actually except for some you know rivers or mountains or something like that we don't have these physical borders They're man-made and they are in our heads And so they're very flexible And especially when we talk about the social ones and the cultural ones and I mean just my own experience when you know about our positionality where do we stand

when it comes to a border? on what side of  
the border of whatever border are weÉ looking from? And  
you know so I can come here and introduce myself  
as a researcher from Finland which I am When I  
meet a Finn here I'll say I'm Canadian And both  
are true And I'm crossing borders and playing with the  
borders because I can do that and they're up to  
I have to own my own borders. I have  
to describe them, I have to inform other people of  
my borders. So in some ways a lot of these  
borders I think because they are flexible, they are less  
important than we really- than many people think. They're really less important and  
because I've crossed so many borders and I see how  
it happens it's become a bit regularized. So it's the  
mundane It's the everyday Crossing a border. HereÕs my passport or  
I don't even have to show a passport  
and because I know my position as if I'm in  
Central Asia doing research and that's what I'm doing mainly  
now then, I'm the you know quote unquote my position  
is the western researcher coming in to research in that  
area on a particular topic. When I come to this  
conference and I'm also the researcher but you know coming  
from a well-known central European position, you know this conference  
has a bit of a theme a focus on Central  
Europe and the post-imperial borders Habsburg Empire which I think  
is great and that's not my thing. But at the  
same time I understand that and I can discuss the  
general concepts of borders from my own experience. So the  
borders how do I what do I think about borders

So, they're sometimes really annoying and especially now that we have this great world where countries are putting up new borders and it's just like 'why? Why do we need this?' quite frustrating, uh especially in a European context. When I'm at the border I feel very European even though I wasn't born in Europe. The migrant- I'm a labour migrant, I love saying that because people think of labour migrants as these you know 'frightened, slightly desperate people who are crossing in boats and coming over for the populace would say taking our jobs. Well hey I came over on an airplane, I took your job in a different way. The migrant experience and borders is also very important to me And again I think it's so 'because in my position, I'm in a very privileged position I know I'm in a very privileged position you know because of the language I speak the colour of my skin, gender, passport I hold, education' I have so many privileges and that definitely affects my understanding of the border. So for me borders are quite easy in many ways. They don't pose many problems to me as they could to others. And of course I mean, I'm not some utopian radical who thinks that we should just tear down all the borders because that also doesn't work or I don't think we have a way to make it work yet Maybe sometime in the future I'll be dead But, you know we're still struggling with Schengen and that should be a pretty easy one to get rid of our internal borders and it obviously isn't as we know. I mean, so you know, borders, borders, borders, crossing a border it's

exciting because there's something on the other, especially if you haven't crossed that particular border before there's something new on the other side that you're not familiar with. It's slightly frightening because it is something new that you haven't experienced before. When you're crossing some of these borders uh, I don't know, in Russia, that's the one that's common one for me or Tajikistan or wherever you know there's always an element of risk when you cross the border, but then usually the benefits what you gain from crossing the border is always worthwhile in some way, uh Or I think so. Yes, I hate the securitization of borders, this way we're moving. Where, I mean, now of course the borders are no longer these lines on Maps. They're in our bodies they're or they're part of Us, the person. Maybe not yet physically in our bodies. They haven't microchipped me yet, as far as I know I'm sure that'll come, but you know our passports you know they don't need to really ask us any questions at borders. That's basically ended. It's all- They know everything about us because it's all in that little paper book that we carry. if we need to carry it of course but Still, the airlines they're informing governments of all of our moves and it's slightly frightening how the borders are becoming Personalized and how, I mean- On the one hand as I said borders are flexible and I think this is sort of a natural expression of this that they are taking new forms they aren't these traditional lines on a map and fences and all that, But the way they're moving towards being sort of part of us and it's a part we can't really control that's slightly worrying but a very interesting area

of research, uh, what else, borders, borders, bordersÉ I suppose that now the borders have been challenged, you know these personal, if we think about gender borders and cultural borders and political borders These have all been challenged and now we see the backlash against this challenge, you know, the rise of the right where Populists- they should be separated but I don't separate them in my mind, that border is not very clear between the right and the populist, but I suppose it should be. So we see how the borders that have been breaking down or been flexible as I said are changing a little bit now, there's these people trying to push the borders back and I just don't think that they can be pushed back If they move backwards or maybe they move to the side but not backwards and society is not really really really able to go back And so let's see how that turns out I hope that kind of fails the moving backwards I don't like that

But I suppose that's part of the whole border experience. Uh, what else. Borders, borders, borders. I suppose I'd just be saying the same thing.

But I think that's so important yeah this whole positionality

The keyword is positionality the flexibility or the- I mean the removal of borders I think that's something not realistic but certainly

that borders are flexible all types of borders and they're

man-made they're not permanent. And the borders that we had

in societies between classes and genders you know one hundred years

Ago, fifty years ago, so different today and yet people

probably won't even recognize it. You know what do people

consider traditional culture? Their borders around traditions Well those traditions

probably didn't exist in the 18th century, they're probably a

creation of the 19th century or early 20th century especially in the lands of the Habsburg Empire where you know, new nations are being born. I think people should be reminded of these man-made borders and how they're just changing. All Right. Okay.

Not bad