**EuroStorie Podcast: Stories of Politics and Human Rights in Europe**

**Episode 12: What Is Sustainability? An Anthropologist’s Guide to Culture and the Environment**

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Guest: Reetta Toivanen

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**Emilia Mataix Ferrándiz (EMF):** Hi everyone and welcome to another episode of the EuroStorie Podcast: Stories of Politics and Human Rights in Europe. My name is Emilia Mataix Ferrándiz and with me is my co-host Zoë Jay.

00:30 **Zoë Jay (ZJ):** Hello!

**00:31 EMF**: The EuroStorie Podcast aims to share the latest research on Europe and introduce you to what researchers have to say about topical issues affecting Europe and the Europeans.

**00:38 ZJ:** Today we have the pleasure of talking to Professor Reetta Toivanen. Reetta is the director of sub-project 3 at EuroStorie: migration and the narratives of Europe as an area of Freedom, Security and Justice. She's also a professor of sustainability science at Helsinki University Institute of Sustainability Science and a scholar of anthropology and law and she's involved in lots of different research projects involving inequality, culture, identity and Arctic studies. So welcome Reetta!

**01:09 Reetta Toivanen (RT**): Thank you, thank you for having me.

**01:10 EMF**: Thank you very much for being here Reetta. So just start with, can you tell us a little bit about your research background and how you came to your current work on cultural sustainability?

**01:21 RT**: Yeah, so I'm a legal anthropologist, so I have had a long-term interest in especially minority rights questions and I'm doing kind of ethnographic and anthropological research on rights. And when from minority rights to human rights and issues of equality and racism and so on. So, in a way sustainability is something for me that ties into these concepts or to these ideas of human rights, wellbeing and non-discrimination, because in my view… it's exactly this kind of component of understanding difference and accepting difference that makes the world diverse and sustainable at the same time so… I’ve been also now very interested in the kind of United Nations Sustainability Goals, the SDGs, the Sustainable Development Goals, because they are just… you know side-lining culture, so culture is very absent in any of these goals that now are very very prominent especially in Finland where even the research funding is tied to the SDGs. So, I have this kind of critical anthropological interest and understanding of what is actually “sustainability” what are these “sustainability goals” and is it really something that we should buy into without thinking further what is actually meant with them.

**02:44 EMF**: Yeah. I think when we were planning on, like you know drafting your questions for the interview, we were also wondering about sustainability that is such a sound concept and very complicated and I imagine that you also as a legal anthropologist you may have like a different argument than legal historian for example or you know, obviously there perspective must be quite different, I imagine.

**03:07 RT:** Yeah, we have actually now a book coming out that is called “Situating Sustainability: A Handbook of Contexts and Concepts” with the Helsinki University Press. And this is a very extraordinary book, because in the book we are trying to… I would say to reclaim or even claim the right of social sciences and humanities to talk about sustainability and do research on sustainability, because the whole concept has been very much in the hands of natural sciences and also kind of engineering, I would say. So in that book we had this kind of really great start with workshops, and I think all good books start with workshops and meeting with people, where we're kind of helping associated researchers talking about what do we mean with sustainability, what are the kind of key concepts for each and everyone and on that basis we wrote a book together where we are addressing issues such as inequality, crisis, governance and concepts that are very important for social sciences, but may not be very well known for people working in the kind of natural sciences. So, in a way I think that it's really really important that if we think about sustainability, it can be kind of concept covers or hides inequalities as structural and political inequalities very well, so it should be our task really go into these debates and make a kind of stronger growing for social sciences and humanities to intervene in these discussions.

**04:44 EMF:** I will stay tuned on that, and I know that the HUP publication will be normally accessible online so…

**04:50 RT**: Yeah it will be a eBook and actually it's also a crazy thing that happened last year when we had the kind of a corona lockdown, so we created a course, the sustainability science, for the whole University of Helsinki but it would be a MOOC, that is accessible you know globally, and it was really a kind of collaborative enterprise, I don't know how many hundreds of Helsinki University researchers participated in writing the course materials and this book will be one of them books that will be used especially the kind of social sciences, humanities.

**05:26 EMF:** That sounds great.

**05:27 ZJ**: That sounds awesome. I think that focus on cultural and social sustainability is really important because you're quite right, I think when we talk about it often what we think of, or at least what I think of in the first instance, is environmental protection and like sustainable use of materials and resources and so on and that's incredibly important, but also we need sustainable lifestyles and ways of interacting with other people because otherwise what are we protecting the environment for if not to enjoy it equally as people with each other.

**05:59 RT**: Exactly.

**06:00 ZJ:** So, speaking of cultural and sort of community sustainability, I know you have done some research recently on cultural sustainability around indigenous populations and the Sami people in Finland and in Nordic countries. You’ve talked in some of your work about this idea of Indigenous peoples in the Arctic region being a kind of object of European fantasy, which feels like a very sort of external European narrative that’s imposed from the outside in a way of mystifying people who are living their lives. How do those kinds of narratives and ways of thinking about sustainability and about different populations and how they relate to each other affect broader narratives about Europe and how we understand what sustainability is?

**06:43 RT:** Well, that's a great question. Yeah, I have worked I think now for about 20 years with the kind of Sami peoples as an Indigenous peoples in the northernmost Europe and something that I wrote quite recently was about the “European fantasy of the Arctic region”, it was in the book called “Arctic Triumph”, and there we tried to kind of turn these discussions about Indigenous peoples as being objects of policies and things to become the kind of agents of change. And in my chapter I was kind of investigating how even today the kind of operative strategic planning about the Arctic region is about a kind of technical right to nature and ignores completely the fact that they are human beings living in the Arctic, who have lived there for centuries and generations and I showed that in that piece that especially this idea of converting the Indigenous peoples to be more “nature” and be peripheral and not so interested in ownership and you know, this kind of romantic fantasies about them is exactly the kind of key tool with which the Nordic governments have stolen the Sami peoples lands and keep them as kind of state lands, because as in away saying that indigenous peoples are more “nature” you actually put them in a position where they don't have a political agenda.

And I think that this is not of course not only a problem in the Arctic area and it's not only with Indigenous peoples, but for sure, there are similarities globally that the kind of frameworks in which we talk about indigenous peoples that… that kind of enables certain kind of structural discrimination of Indigenous peoples. And that's something, because I'm legal anthropologist, I’m really interested in this kind of Indigenous rights discourse because I… in the same way as I mean in the other human rights, I'm also kind of thinking that… I mean Indigenous peoples rights are of course that is emancipating the Indigenous peoples and kind of supporting their own agenda, but at the same time they carry these kind of constraining mechanisms of relegating them to a certain kind of, should I say fantasies or should I say narratives, of people who need help. And even if we come back to the kind of Sustainability Development Goals, it's really interesting to see that that these United Nations goals, that are so important for us, actually put Indigenous peoples all the time only in the position of being object that needs help, similarly as women, disabled people and then the other minorities, that the conception is that they need support from “us” and this “us” is people who have power to… If that answers your question.

**09:49 EMF**: Yes, I have a question out of curiosity Reetta, do you think also the fact that people in the Arctic, they are surrounded by an environment that is… it changes, well I guess it changes a bit because it's very extreme? It makes you think differently about concepts of for example like ownership and…? I don't even know if this question makes sense because the other day I was reading about people of Iceland and how they feel about the environment because there's a lot of lava and that on most lands that makes changes of ownership rights because the lava moves your land and then maybe your land is mixed with your property on your neighbour and then they have a very light, you know, an open or flexible conception of like land ownership because it's always changing because of how the island is active. So, then I think the Arctic there's some phenomenon like that?

**10:34 RT:** Hmm, I don’t think there is a similarity, I think for example in the Nordic countries the Sami people have been for centuries, as long as we have kind of written records, they have been very careful in in kind of knowing their land rights. So, for example for Finland, Finland was part of Sweden so in the Swedish archives we can find the lawsuits of some Sami families against other families on kind of land right issues, but it just is in the kind of modern era when Finland was… became independent, but all these land rights disappeared and became state land. But in the Arctic, you are right in the sense that the Arctic is warming kind of twice as… compared to other parts of the globe, and it's not only that the Arctic you know, ice is melting and it's warming up, but this has kind of impact everywhere globally, so even the floods in India are partly caused by the fact that the ice is melting in the Arctic. So obviously this requires especially from those people who are living from kind of natural resources and economies, that they really have to adapt and change the way of for example reindeer herding or hunting or fishing, and so there is a very concrete demand for them to change their livelihoods and adapt and that they see a very strong contrast with the fact that their voices are not really heard in decision making.

**12:10 EMF**: Thank you very much for your answer.

**12:11 ZJ:** And they are not the key producers of the climate change that is requiring those adaptations. There is a very similar kind of dynamic between the white urban settler population in Australia and Aboriginal and Indigenous communities. There are sort of these white Australian narratives about Indigenous communities being… they are the traditional owners of the land and have traditional ways of like engaging with the land on the continent which is very harsh, very hot, very dry, so very difficult to survive but communities have been there for 60,000 years and have succeeded very effectively in doing so, but then on top of that, these sort of white settler narratives come along and turn that kind of knowledge into another resource that white people can adapt and draw from and so we say we should we should learn from these narratives in these communities experiences and we should, but it doesn't… the way you were talking about the power dynamics and decision-making it becomes another situation where colonists and power-makers are the ones who are taking the resource and using it for themselves rather than thinking about what is the most useful way to engage this material for the people who are using it and it’s a tricky power dynamic that intersects with race and colonisation.

I think we think sustainability and the environment..it affects everyone climate change affect everyone equally, but it clearly does not and will not, as it gets worse.

**13:31 RT**: Yes, that’s very important what you are saying, and I think that especially this sort of argument with the extractivist attitudes that the kind of companies and even governments have that we can just go to the Arctic area and take what we want, the minerals that we need for our smart phones or whatever we need. So, there’s all the time the argument that land is something that we should be allowed to use and profit from and this “we” is the people in the South of, for example Finland, basically those who anyway are the wealthy ones and the owners of the power, and the people who just have to adapt and make space are not really participating in these discussions.

Which is a pity especially if you think of Finland being a country that has such a high reputation of human rights, as does Sweden and Norway, they also have this reputation strongly, it is a kind of strange combination that is somehow kind of raising the question that how difficult actually kind of these minority rights or even I mean general how difficult human rights are to be realised, that that how difficult it is to understand those kind of central concepts of human rights like equality that everybody has the same humanity and the same worth in the in the kind of real politics, so that is that very difficult.

**15:02 ZJ:** So, how might we… if we have all these sort of sustainability and cultural heritage buzz words that make their ways into things like the UN Sustainability Development Goals or the EU's Green New Deal policy agenda talks about cultural heritage at last I think, but they tend to talk about again environmental protection and to the extent that they talk about culture it's mostly to do with sustainable tourism, which itself potentially feels like another one of those kind of extractive things where people in urban areas of a country are profiting off the experiences of more rural communities especially somewhere like Finland.

What are some of the shorter- and longer-term challenges around those political dynamics about what sustainability and cultural heritage mean in Finland and the Nordic region and in Europe more broadly?

**15:47 RT:** Yeah, that’s a very timely question, I have just tweeted this morning, because the European Commission is launching funding in the area of climate change and societal transition, I think it's called, to the climate change. So, it's clearly something that the European Commission takes very seriously, and we see it in all this kind of Green Deal stuff. And of course, one big question is that how much is it kind of ‘greenwashing’ the whole talking and how much it's serious report, but I suppose that in the EU-level it’s very well and for our future we really have to find the kind of zero carbon solutions for everything. As an anthropologist I have been kind of following this with kind of two attitudes, can I say so, that on the one side it's… the kind of clean energies are not so uncomplicated as we would like to see. For example, of you think about clean energy solutions just like wind power that is now gaining more popularity, but for example in Sweden the whole… the biggest areas with wind power are located in the Sami homelands and there is not only the evidence of how they are disturbing with noise and you know other elements, the birds, and having an impact on the kind of environment, even the construction of such a huge thing such as wind power…

**17:18 ZJ:** Wind turbine!

**17:19 RT**: Exactly, turbines. But also, for example in Rásttigáisá where there is a windmill park, it's not only a Sami reindeer herding area, but it's kind of sacred land for Sami people, that is not taken into any consideration when there is this big slogan that “we need clean energy”. So, I think that the biggest challenges, and this is not only involving kind of Indigenous peoples, but it is to… that we would need to understand much better kind of other ontologies and epistemologies and you know, different kinds of knowledges, and knowledge systems. So, if we just, you know, keep to our certain white understanding of how the world is and should be, there is a big danger that we are not, first of all, reaching the goals, but we are kind of re-creating new forms of colonialization and discrimination. So, I don't know what the short- and long-term impacts are, but I'm just saying that we should take this much more seriously that the whole discussions and we should… I mean that's maybe the kind of main message to me all the time everywhere is that we have to involve social sciences in all of these debates. There is no environmental anything without critical social sciences to understand kind of different layers of what is kind of planned and what is going to be implemented and what kind of short- and long-term impacts such decisions may have.

**18:55 EMF:** Yeah, and you know, I would like to dig more on the topic of like the white focus, because here I'm thinking… I have not really read this novel, but my partner was reading this novel by this Finnish author called Miika Nousiainen, sorry if I mispronounce it, it’s called “Pintaremontti” and basically it's a very ironic novel in which he refers to the anxiety now suffered by people that, you know they live in a… they are well-being, they live in a welfare state and then you know it made me think about sustainability as a kind of instrumental and normative ideal, something that we should be working towards, but in that sense what kind of sustainability are we talking about and who it’s sustainable for?

**19:35 RT:** Yeah, I mean for sure, I have not read the book, but it sounds creepy.

**19:41 EMF:** He told me it was very disturbing.

**19:44 RT:** Sustainability, I think I have read somewhere that it was kind of first used in a German context of “Nachhaltigkeit”, and it was used especially in the area of forestry… the kind of beginning of industry in 18th century, so with the idea that that you need to have a certain kind of balance between the environment-and human action. But as you kind of… the whole thing in the beginning you pointed out that the sustainability has become the kind of buzzword for everything and anything and we can kind of speak in any kind of context about sustainability. So, I don't have kind of a good response here, but I think that there is something very difficult… because sustainability is very similar to human rights, that is used very much in the context of doing something good, being something good, it's a positive word. If we would but we speak about resilience, that would be a kind of more negative word or if in the context of human rights we would speak about non-discrimination, we would have also this kind of the negative discrimination being in the forefront. But when we speak about human rights or sustainability we kind of even in our mindsets already put it in the context of something nice and friendly.

But many of the solutions that are kind of offered at the moment for some kind of green solution or sustainable solutions, they don't take very comprehensive and global approach. So, something that may be good in Helsinki may be really bad for people who live in, I don't know, in a very different location. Even coming to the kind of when, we speak about diets and what kind of foods they should eat, we should eat less meat. So not all the alternatives to meat are actually globally very sustainable because they are causing problems, environmental catastrophes, in other parts of the world. Let’s take for example avocados, something we really think it's a nutritious thing and it's a good alternative to meat, but at the same time it has globally really terrifying consequences for the environment and peoples’ well-being. So somehow, we would also need much more that kind of information, so that if I do this here, what kind of impact does it have somewhere else and is there a way of doing good for me but also doing good for everybody else. And I think that should be our goal. I see that we are quite far from that because even if there would be this kind of information maybe, it's not very easily available.

**22:22 EMF:** Yeah, no I think you're right. I think we should be aware of like we are kind of part of this butterfly effect like in a globalised society, everything we do at the end it has its consequences even if we don't really see them that much and yeah… I have like the following question and I'm sorry because every time one needs to mention Covid-19, but we have been in this thing for so long that it is difficult to avoid the topic.

But you know the New York Times has been releasing recently a paper talking that the dominant emotion of 2021 is languishing, so existing in an ongoing unpleasant situation carrying on, but not really thriving. That seems like an unsustainable state in the long term. So, do you think that this feeling has changed with the… you know with the development of Covid-19 and how was the how has the perception of sustainability changed and for whom has it, like, you know, varied, during the pandemic?

**23:16 RT:** Well, I don't know about those people who are kind of opposing corona and are against it that how much it has changed for them, but I do see that there is a kind of global very strong awareness about… I mean this time of course, none of us have ever experienced anything like this and it is like a sci-fi movie for you know to think about it all. Suddenly the borders were closed, and you know even in here in Finland from the region of Helsinki you were not allowed to travel to any other regions because of being we being so infectious. So, I think that the Covid-19 as a consequence has... has had as a consequence much higher awareness that something needs to be done. Now the other thing is that how much are we able to do and are we willing to do… Today or yesterday started the kind of demonstrators of Elokapina here in the front of Finnish parliament and they're going to have a protest until Finland declares a climate emergency, I don't know whether they will be successful, hopefully they would be, but I think that this kind of movements that's also part of a global movement that we need to declare climate emergency and much stronger kind of things will be required from the governments to act. And I think this is very much tied to the understanding that sustainability somehow means life and if we want have life on flow we need to change, not only things we do but also the things… our attitudes and our perceptions.

But yes, changing attitudes and changing action are very very difficult, as science has shown, so I’m curious to see how quickly we forget about everything.

**25:03 EMF:** Yeah, one very common reaction I’ve seen among friends, you know like in academics I think, it's like we were not maybe being aware of how much we were moving before like going to conferences for one day you know and making this huge effort for basically like a two hour talk and stuff. And I think it’s not been until the world has forced us to be quiet and breathe and look around to realise like “Oh my life was crazy before and now I…” I mean in my case I'm kind of like looking forward to move in a more, yes, sustainable or more a calm manner, but I have collected, basically I have decided that you know I am ready to reduce my travelling to a minimum. I'm not gonna travel, because I don't enjoy that and this pandemic has showed me that I can do things from home.

**25:51 ZJ:** I find that so interesting. To me, that moving around and travelling a lot and going to different conferences every week or every couple of months or whatever, feels like it's very distinctly European thing that you can do in Europe because you've got like 20 different countries all sort of two hours train away from each other that, that amount of travelling is unheard of in Australia and especially where I'm from in Tasmania, which is an island off the bottom of an island on the other side of the world. Like my academic experience has involved a lot of travel but it has been very expensive and it's it takes a long time to get literally anywhere. And it's even, even more difficult to travel if you are from the global south and not only facing the expense of international travel, but the challenges of border closures and visa issues that were always there for people outside the global north.

So I think that the pandemic is a really interesting experience for people who… especially in Europe where if you've grown up for the last 30 years with free movement and not having to think about travel, it's such a foreign concept but the idea that travel was restricted was always there, it's just sort of the pandemic has brought it to the fore for people who had the privilege to not experience it so it's… I think you're right, it has changed a lot of peoples understanding in the world, but I also think it's also important to remember that I think any major change brings new things but it also sort of draws attention to stuff that was already there and this is no exception.

**27:19 RT:** But I must say that of course I’ve been always feeling bad about my … I’ve been flying a lot too and then being a professor of sustainability science, it sounds like it's not going very well together. But I must say that I need so much seeing and meeting people, so I have this feeling that even conferences if I participate in the kind of virtual conference, I understand much less and I remember much less of the kind of important things. I would need it somehow that during the coffee break there is the kind of conversation about things that were just said and you know all this kind of human interaction. So, I guess people are different and I'm a person who really needs human interaction, what maybe has to do with my profession also as an anthropologist.

**28:06 ZJ:** I think that's a real thing about like the way the human brain works is affected by context and memories are shaped so much by the space around us, so I keep having conversations with friends where I told them the same story over and over again, because I forget who I’ve told because I'm just telling everyone in my text messages or on the same zoom meeting. It must be very annoying to my friends, so I also sympathise, like we have this tension between needing to drastically change the way we consume travel and also, like, it is nice to spend time with people and it’s hard to go without that. It’s a really interesting sustainability issue.

**28:44 EMF:** Yeah, I don't know in your case, but in virtual conference as Reetta said, I really struggle more to pay attention also because when you're in a conference you don't look at yourself the whole time, like this is like looking in the mirror at some point you are looking at yourself and you're like “Oh no my hair is looking funny” or something like that. You don't have that in the normal, in the regular conferences and I honestly think that coffee breaks are essential for, you know, actually getting you know like an impression of the person to decide if you want to work. So, there's something that even if luckily, we live in a world of technology and we have kept on going, but I think there are things that human actual contacts cannot really be beaten.

**29:20 ZJ:** Yeah, so I have one more question. Speaking of being an academic and being an anthropologist, this might be slightly inside baseball but I'm interested in the sort of disciplinary differences in the way we discuss Europe and talk about narratives about what Europe is, what it means to be European and so on. Because all of our previous guests have been legal scholars or legal historians or political scientists, so we've had a lot of that sort of side of social sciences, but not so much anthropology.

So, I was wondering if you could tell us a little bit more about how you approach the idea of what Europe is from an anthropological perspective?

**29:56 RT:** I just wanted to tell you that I had an interdisciplinary research project at Humboldt University funded by the Volkswagen foundation that was looking at human rights education in different European countries and especially how minorities play into the human rights education discourses and materials. And my colleague was an international lawyer and a political scientist, and they were always saying that “Yeah, because they do the hard work and Reetta just goes and has coffee…” And I think that this is very much what anthropologists do, it’s to drink coffee with different people so kind of… it's very much hanging around and talking to people and observing stuff around you and having a kind of notebook to make your weird observations. And I think that, how to look at Europe for example, may be a very difficult question for anthropologists, it’s like the three blind men and the elephant, and it depends on which part of the elephant you touch. So, I guess also the anthropology of Europe there that is a very striving academic discipline, but it has very diverse approaches, whether it's on the current certain habits of Europeans or whether it's about European institutions and how Europeanism is made it certain offices or whether it's about pictures produced by the European Commission and the certain narratives in those…

So, I think that my approach to Europe has been very much about looking from the perspective of the not-dominant voices and that has somehow remained my main interest and that plays also into the sub group 3, where we are looking at the refugees and migrant knowledges, so maybe it's kind of naïve and stupid to say that I try to give voices for people who otherwise wouldn't be heard, because obviously they come through the translation that anthropologists and scientists do. But there is a certain kind of emphasis in understanding the diversity… Yeah, those kind of maybe ideas that are not outspoken anywhere. So, read and understand something between the lines, that's maybe the contribution.

**32:16 EMF:** I have a curiosity driven questions Reetta, because obviously you know Sami people because of your studies. Was it difficult to get them to trust you, because I imagine a lot of anthropologists a lot about people trusting you for you to be there observing them and…?

**32:29 RT:** I have actually never lived in Lapland anywhere, but I have travelled a lot. But I mean it's always involving people in your research for an interview for example or even any kind of discussion. It's always a negotiation of positions and especially in Finland where the Sami matters are very politicised and we researchers are very often kind of resembled as enemies of certain Sami or friends of certain Samis’. So, it's really really difficult to try to convince people to understand for kind of research don't have any opinions about how people should be or what they should think, but we are interested in this diversity and I'm struggling with that a lot in Finland at the moment, especially this Sami research because there are certain people who are very very strongly trying to put me in such a certain corner where I don't feel comfortable. Because I do think that especially anthropological research is really about trying to understand the other’s point of views and there's no need to have their own opinions. Yeah, but trust, that’s very important.

**MUSIC BREAK**

**33:34 EMF:** I think anthropologists are the cool kids of social sciences. Like if humanities, archaeologists are like the adventurers and the anthropologists, you are the cool kids of the social science.

**34:04 ZJ:** Yeah you always seem so much smarter and interesting than political… I should say that about all political scientists… but as a discipline there seems to be a lot more exciting stuff going on.

**24:16 EMF:** Yeah, so comes the moment from the… what we call the fun questions. So, I would like to start asking you like if you have any favourite book or film or another work that influences the way you think about Europe or that inspires your work.

**34:29 RT:** Yeah, I must say that there is a book that was published already 1990 and I was then a young person who, I think I read it maybe a few years later after it was published by a German author called Hans Magnus Enzensberger and the book is called “Europa Europa!”, so “Europe Europe”. And it's a kind of travel book where he is kind of describing… it’s a kind of funny travel book from different parts and different times in Europe, there is Sweden and Italy and Hungary and Poland and I think there’s Spain maybe, even in Brussels, where he's kind of capturing by going there the kind of weirdness of Europeans. And I just love it, because it was not only was it fun but it was also really interesting because it's a political book about real… it's not kind of fantasy, it's also based on what really has happened in these countries, but in the conclusion it says that what makes Europe Europe, is exactly this diversity, that we are thinking about certain stuff so differently and without that there would not be a kind of a unification of Europe, so that's one book that comes to my mind now.

**35:44 ZJ:** Sounds great.

**35:45 EMF**: Yeah, that sounds very…

**35:46 RT:** Of course, there are a lot of books and a lot of movies and lot of kind of… I mean that kind of thinking of Europe and it's even in its recent history it’s in many ways so fascinating at the same time really hard to understand how we have become to think of Europe in certain terms, and how these of certain dominant narratives are so strong. Even today there is no factual basis for example for this kind of glorification of the human rights commitments of the European Union that are so ridiculous if you think, they are dying at the borders at the moment.

**36:21 EMF:** Yeah, I find these accounts on travel very interesting in in general, you know.

**36:27 ZJ:** And finally, if you could travel back or forward anywhere in time where, would you go and why?

**36:31 RT:** I remember that somebody, was it Kaius Tuori, who said that he wouldn't go anywhere. But I actually would go out of curiosity I think at the moment because as I indicated there are really these really strong tensions among the Finnish Sami people about the question who can be Sami so shouldn't be a Sami and so on, so I would really like to go to let's say 1760’s and live at least one 100 years, so I would need a quite long life. And I would like to see what's actually going on there, because in Finland there is no such thing like in Australia the settler colonialism. They almost… the all Arctic hasn't been kind of colonized in a way that people came and took something, but it has been a very smooth ongoing process of interaction, very global interaction between people, and then the church and education being kind of the tools of internal assimilation of the people's mindset. But I would like to go on and you know see how it works when the border to Norway was closed and many reindeers and Sami families had to move there, because there is so much fight about this issue, I would like to write it all down and come back and show it.

**37:44 ZJ:** Yes, so a historical like ethnography. It's very anthropological.

**37:50 EMF**: I think, I think you're the second one of our guests that is very professional on the choice of like going back, because we had Ben, who also wanted to go to the start of the European idea you know and the project and stuff…

**38:04 ZJ:** Kickstart European integration.

**38:05 EMF**: Yeah, and you are the other one who has chosen something like very professional, which is very good, you're very endeavoured to your profession.

**38:12 ZJ**: I mean, it's a, it's a genius idea. You go back in time and like solve a research question that you can't, you don't have the sources for in the contemporary world.

**38:24 RT:** Especially so I could convince people of today that you are wrong, I am right.

**38:29 ZJ:** People would be like “where are you getting this data?!”

**38:30 EMF**: I don't know if your answer makes me feel like maybe I'm a bad scientist, because I don't know if I will go like to go back to Rome because I am scared of like everything I have been arguing is wrong and they will tell me like “No, this is not right, what were you thinking about?”

**38:43 RT:** Yeah, that's true, but I’m so convinced that it, that there is not in this issue that I'm interested in, there is no wrong and right, but it just kind of… the diversity that exists that that some people are trying to deny that it existed, and they are wrong. But if I had that kind of… if I had written everything down, then there would not be this kind of conversations, because I just… because I mean, I don't know if it's kind of a disciplinary thing also that obviously there are facts and non-facts, but in many issues there are more kind of different views on matters and I think an anthropologist’s work is more of bringing this kind of things forward, diversity of opinions, so ideas and the difference of understanding of anything.

**39:34 ZJ:** Thank you so much for joining us today Reetta, this was super interesting, we really enjoyed having you here.

**39:39 EMF:** Yeah, thank you very much for your answer and for your presence, it was super interesting.

**39:42 RT:** Thank you for the very interesting discussion, I think.

**39:46 ZJ:** And thank you also to everyone who tuned in to listen. In the meantime you can catch up on all of the previous episodes of the podcast via SoundCloud, Spotify, Google Podcasts and Radio Public.

**39:57 EMF**: You can also follow the podcast on Twitter at @eurostorie and on Facebook at facebook.com/eurostorie as well as our website eurostorie.org. You can also follow the hosts on Twitter. I am @Mataix\_Emilia and Zoë is…

**40:13 ZJ**: @ZoeCharlotteJay. Reetta do you have an account?

**40:15 RT**: Yes, @ReetToi.

**40:23 EMF:** Okay. We would love to receive your feedback and to hear about your thoughts on this episode of the podcast. Thank you for listening, bye!

**40:29 ZJ:** Bye!

**40:29 RT:** Bye!

**40:30 Music Outro**

**00:41:00 EMF:** This project is supported by the Academy of Finland fronted Center of Excellence in Law Identity and the European narratives. We would also like to thank Antonio Lopez Garcia for the theme music and Karla Shorter and Maria Erma for research assistance.