

# Emma Hakala Interview

Sat, Jan 07, 2023 6:20PM 57:46

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

finland, security, russia, impacts, climate, energy, nato, cascading, eu, question, people, climate change, country, situation, finnish, bit, cooperation, war, episode, nordic countries

## SPEAKERS

Emma Hakala, Michael LaBelle

---



Michael LaBelle 00:01

Border zone emerging geopolitical and climate risks in Finland. Interview with Emma Hakala episode 74. Theory meets reality and Finland's energy security and climate change policies. In this episode with Emma Hakala. She's a senior research fellow at the Finnish Institute of International Affairs and a member of the BIOS Research Unit, we gain a greater understanding of what a cascade of crisis around climate change looks like. And the advantages of gaining foresight on these events before their impact is felt. Sounds like big words, but we use big words in this interview. So listen, we also learn about the quick shift in Finland's position on NATO membership and the change relationship with Russia. We take it head on. This episode addresses the changing climate and geopolitical realities of Finnish efforts to go zero carbon while shifting away from Russia. If you'd like international relations, this episode is definitely for you. Welcome to the My energy 2050 podcast where we speak to the people building a clean energy system by 2050. I'm your host Michael LaBelle. A second title for this episode I was considering is the cascading challenges and solutions for Finland but wasn't as catchy as the first one I chose. So as you learn in the first half of this episode, Finland is looking for ways to address climate change, and become more adaptable like a lot of countries. But here's some interesting information, I would say is that what was once thought of a solution with its forced acting as both fuel and a carbon sink is now emerging as an inverted solution with its forested carbon sink burned, which is now actually adding to its carbon emissions. So how Finland addresses climate change requires a strong awareness of interlinked feedbacks. The second part of this episodes brings in this international relations perspective that I just told you about Emma tells us about the impact that Russia's war in Ukraine has had between the Russian and Finnish relationship. This includes Finland's application for NATO membership, and a new security relationship through NATO, and closer ties with United States, we flush out a lot of these NATO questions and security questions that involve theories and understanding of international relations. The importance of this episode lies with understanding the shift in Finland, and the experience that it has had since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and the explicit NATO alignment and now holds ambiguity is out the door, a new security line is emerging. And we should be aware of how this new security pact changes, relations with Russia. So it goes not just for Finland, but all the neighboring countries as well, and regional countries, and we get into the Nordic country perspective or the Nordic Region perspective. In addition, what was once thought of joint project with Russia almost all frozen, we can claim this

as a win for EU sanctions, certainly cutting off relations and stopping cooperation on the surface appears in the moment right now to be a win. But we need to be aware of some of these really important issues. And Emma brings up the issue of water cooperation, and other environment, environmental issues that still require a regional approach. So security may dominate current relations, but we need to maintain the awareness that future cooperation will still need to occur, certainly in the environmental area. When the time is right, let me add that postscript there. My take on this interview with Emma is that by learning about Finland's energy and security challenges, we can appreciate the importance of regional cooperation, even in a Nordic country like Finland with a small population of vast landmass meeting climate change goals is still a real challenge. What is unique about our conversation this week, is that the integration of this new security order with Russia, and the concept of cascading crisis events, these are set to compound even more in our changing environment, and security situation. So we should not underestimate the challenges and unpredictability. The war between Russia and Ukraine holds for NATO for the NATO alliance. And I'm saying that by just sitting in Hungary, also a neighboring country to this conflict. So maybe it's the proximity to all the conflict that makes it much more real. But as a listener for you just want to hopefully, demonstrate in this interview in this discussion with Emma, how close some of these changes, these geopolitical changes are somewhat abstract. We read about them we understand how these relations affect how countries work together don't work together. But how does that actually feel when it's implemented? And what are the long term consequences of not cooperating uncertain issues? So gaining some insight into Russia's neighbors and their actions can assist how we as researchers, and analysts



05:00

To assess the longer term impact of the war, I just want to point down in Episode 69, I spoke with Emma's BIOS Research Unit colleague, Tera Vaden. It's an awesome interview. I suggest checking out that episode and energy and philosophy to understand more, both on the finished perspective, but also how climate change is approach. I would say from a philosophical perspective, it's already proven to be a real top podcast episode here on the My energy 2015 website. For those not in the know, this is maybe some housekeeping here we are launching the repowering leadership in new European energy and food summer school 2023. This is done with the Central European universities summer university program. And with open society university network, you can find a link to the call for applications in the show notes. The application deadline, I want to point this out is February 14 2023. So apply now apply early. I would love to see as many applications as possible. There are scholarships available so you get a free trip to Budapest. We have an amazing lineup of instructors, so not just a free trip to Budapest. But this includes Margarita Balmaceda, author of Russian energy change has been on the podcast before we have Alberto Potoschnig. He's the former director of Acer and he's at the Florence School of regulation. We have Tim Benton and Leslie Vinjamuri from the from Chatham House, along with EU energy law scholars Kim Tallis and Sirja-Leena Penttinen. I think I screwed up her last name Penton then the University of Eastern Finland and Tulane Law School. So we have awesome analysis and we have real practitioners and professionals speaking about EU energy law, eu energy policy, foreign relations, and we have other instructors talking about energy, community, communities, agricultural and leadership. So I'm really trying to bring together a range of top scholars policymakers here in Budapest for a whole week, actually eight days to talk about this energy food Nexus and really motivate educate people about leadership and how they can be leaders in this area. So check out either the show notes with a link here or [summer.university.cu.edu](http://summer.university.cu.edu) For a full list. And yeah, get your application in a final note, this interview was done for my 2022 role as an open society

University Network Senior Fellow at Chatham House, the Royal Institute of International Affairs, funding was generously provided to produce the podcast for the episodes recorded in 2022. So I still have a great backlog of episodes, I'm still rolling out like this one. So keep on listening, and go back and listen to any of those old episodes that might interest you as well. So with all that done, now, for this week's episode,

**M** Michael LaBelle 07:59

I'm here today with Dr. Emma Hakala. She's a senior research fellow at the Finnish Institute of International Affairs, and a member of the bhios Research Unit. So Emma, welcome to the My energy 2050 podcast.

**M** Michael LaBelle 08:12

Thank you very much. Nice to be here.

**M** Michael LaBelle 08:14

Yeah, no, this is this is great. And I'm just happy to be here in person, because I think it matters. And I think our conversation is actually better than online. So I'm happy I walked all the way to Finland. Yes.

**M** Michael LaBelle 08:30

A sustainable way.

**M** Michael LaBelle 08:32

So your your areas around climate and security. I mean, it's a broad area, and then you have your own specializations within it. But my first question is, how did you become interested in climate and security issues?

**E** Emma Hakala 08:47

It's actually a rather long story. And it's really by coincidence. But originally, I was still not even doing research. I was not doing my PhD. But I had been interested in the doing some some courses in my, in my studies on the Balkan region. And then just through some weird coincidences, my teacher at the university, he was putting together like a research project on environmental security in the Balkans. And for some reason, because he didn't really know anyone who would have been working on this topic in Finland. And I wasn't working on it. But he just asked me if I wanted to be included in the application or actually to write the application and then work on a project if it got funded. And I said yes, without really thinking much about it, because it sounded interesting. And and we managed to get the funding. And so then I also had to start my PhD because otherwise I wouldn't have they wouldn't have been able to hire

me at the university. So that's how I got involved in this environmental security stuff. And then I would still say that I do also Oh, environmental security more broadly. But, but I think it has. I've been focusing, especially for the past few years. More on on climate security. But I guess I mean, I just stuck with it because it sounded, or it was. And it turned out to be very, very interesting, like all these linkages between security and environment. And, and something that I have noticed is that when I started my PhD way, way back, I think in 2011, people were asking me like, What is the linkage between environment and security? Like, what what are you actually looking at? And it was really like, a mystery to them how these two things could be related. But then nowadays, especially when you talk about climate change and security, it's quite obvious for people that that there is something unfortunately,

M

Michael LaBelle 10:53

yeah, no, i love it i A the story of how you I don't want say accidentally got involved, right. But I think that's many researchers Beginnings is kind of just falling into a topic, and especially the proposal writing, and then oh, wait, we got the project. We have to do it. Yeah. So it's a great start. And then then how actually, the topics themselves evolve over time, like the climate security. And then earlier people not knowing what that connection, are, they didn't see this connection. And maybe maybe you can talk about Yeah, what is the connection? This is my next written question was, what is the connection between climate change and security?

E

Emma Hakala 11:35

Well, it's really wide. And maybe the that's the reason that I've tried to sort of somehow formulate it, or categorize it for myself, in order to make it a little bit more, like easier to grasp somehow. And the way that I always explain it, at least to myself, is that there are these sort of three categories of the sort of impacts of climate change that also have implications on security. And firstly, of course, have the direct impacts which come from the, like the physical climate change itself. So for example, flooding and, and storms and extreme weather in general, and the implications on people's health and sort of functioning of the society. And that's maybe quite clear. But then you have what I call cascading impacts, which which are, where the climate impact is combined with this sort of socio economic and even geopolitical factors. And they often also cross national boundaries, and are they formed for him into these sort of cascades of impacts, which could be, for example, forest migration, or conflicts or supply chain disruptions and things like that. And then third, you have these transition impacts, which are then associated, not really with climate change itself, but with the mitigation of it and the adaptation to it. And this is not to say that we shouldn't be mitigating climate change as, as best we can. But because the changes that we really have to do in the society are so wide and huge, they will have some implications on security, especially if we don't somehow take them into account and try to prevent those impacts. So these would be things like, for example, societal sort of disruption, due to kind of protests against these climate policies, or then between countries, I think we are already seeing a little bit that they're already sort of winners and losers of of climate policy and energy transition, and so on, which might then reflect into geopolitical tension and so on. So I guess, overall, you you would talk about a rather huge range of topics, which all kind of fall under the climate security, sort of

M

Michael LaBelle 14:13

the I liked this term cascading of cascading impacts. And is this. Yeah, I mean, it's a more developed way to look at this intersection of climate and security. And so it's, I mean, it's essentially a simplistic view of security is just one one factor one maybe geopolitical element, but actually, it's this cascading impact of a climate event. Could you maybe provide an example or your specific research that you're working on now on this?

E

Emma Hakala 14:45

Oh, well, at least from research that other people have done? I think one good example would be the way in which of climate change has contributed to this sort of deteriorating security situation or even conflict. For example, in the Sahel region, where you already have like an existing security situation, which is not great. And you have, for example, terrorist organizations that are functioning there. But then when you add to climate impacts, which cause for example, water resources, to be falling, basically, so there is less water available, and therefore, that then impacts the livelihoods are available to people. And that might increase recruitment into terrorist organizations, which then again, increases or enables terrorist organizations to function better and to, therefore, make the security situation deteriorate further. And then overall, of course, the the, like, issue of water availability, has impacts on human security itself. So, it kind of becomes this sort of vicious circle that feeds itself. And then, of course, if you want to look at the sort of more trans boundary impacts, then there might be, for example, forced migration to do to the, the, of course, also because of the climate impacts, because people don't have that, like possibility to continue their livelihoods, but also because of the security situation that might in great increase forced migration from from that area, which might then have implications in, in surrounding areas or even, for example, in Europe or, or elsewhere. So, yeah, I mean, they do formulate into these sort of chains of effects, which are often quite difficult to say, what is the sort of first trigger for something, and, and when aware, it's also very difficult to say in advance where a specific impact might lead to. But I still think that even if, even though the chain of effects are sometimes a bit sort of unclear, and kind of difficult to interpret or forecasts, I think it still makes sense to try to look at them and sort of analyze, like, what, what kinds of implications there might be, both for the sort of local people, but then also more broadly on even in to geopolitical events, and so on,

M

Michael LaBelle 17:42

like, one of the areas, at least for me, that comes to mind is migration. People pointed to migration. So is that kind of part of these cascading events? Yeah. impacts? Yeah, see? Yeah. And I was just wondering, how does that I won't ask him, I want to ask, like, what sorts of solution, but I think this, but maybe that's actually it's not such a dumb question. Sometimes. Like questions are no dumb questions. But But how do you how do you formulate? Like what the solution is because it would probably be like multiple, multiple solutions put in together just like you have cascading events, you have cascading solutions.

E

Emma Hakala 18:25

That's actually a really good term, I might see. Another, I think these often the problem with climate security in general, and especially when you're talking about cascading impacts, because the solutions are really sort of different from what we normally would consider in the

field of security in a way, I mean, most of these impacts cannot be at least prevented or even really sort of prepared for through sort of normal means of security and use of force and things like that. I mean, of course, migration is kind of a good example, in the sense that often the solution, at least in Europe has been to close borders, and to increase border security and so on, which can for very good reasons be challenged, whether that's a sustainable and long term solution. But But otherwise, I think for most, for example, like supply chain disruptions, it's not really the traditional security officials who would be responsible for responding to that. So what I've been sort of talking about is, on the one hand, kind of developing our ability to do foresight and to preparedness against this, this sort of impacts that are very difficult to, to kind of, prevent as such and to to know exactly when and how they are going to happen. So for example, by monitoring these sort of chains of events as they develop, and then also to, to have this ability for sort of risk assessment and a kind of a situational awareness as things unfold in a way,

M

Michael LaBelle 20:22

but how do you do that? Because usually, maybe it's a crisis. Right? So it's unfolding very quickly. Yeah. And then how do you whose job is it to step back and say, Actually, this is the bigger picture? Or how is that done?

E

Emma Hakala 20:36

I think it should be done sort of continuously. And at least in Finland, we have this sort of foresight, capacities were kind of the idea is to follow this sort of security related events. And I think that in that kind of work, climate change should feature a lot more strongly. And we should have a better understanding of how its impacts will, especially combined with this larger political and economic impacts, how these will affect also Finland security, for example. But yeah, then I guess there isn't really like a specific method or way of going about, like in a crisis situation. And I think there is actually a lot of research has been done on this sort of, kind of I forget the name of a few of my colleagues are working on this, this sort of situation room, but a kind of what you set up in a in a crisis, where you sort of follow and monitor the situation, and then you sort of keep analyzing it as you go along and try to come up with the sort of best solutions or best responses to do it in a certain situation. But yeah, that's the problem that that there isn't really any, like, it's sort of impossible to say that. Okay, there is this climate security threat. And then there is this solution that we should now be implemented. It also

M

Michael LaBelle 22:23

takes like preparation ahead of time, like if you and your job, right. I guess maybe I back out just a little bit since we're at this point. And just ask, because you're a research fellow at the I'm getting in front of the Finnish Institute of International Affairs, and then also a member of BOC research. So could you maybe explain the role that you have within those two organizations and what they're created for? Okay, international affairs, but also the the BOC unit and the overlap or?

E

Emma Hakala 22:55

Yeah, yeah. Well, the Finnish Institute of International Affairs is a rather sort of established Research Institute is actually funded by the Finnish Parliament. But we are completely independent of it in the sense that we don't, it doesn't affect our research. But of course, the idea is to also inform policymaking. And I think that's quite motivating, at least for me, that a lot of the research we do is somehow used by policymakers, and that they actually are at least in some cases interested in knowing about it. But then the Beers Research Unit is a bit more somehow independent, and maybe a bit more. I want to say somehow spontaneous, but I don't know how spontaneous it has actually been. Because I think my colleagues who actually said set it up in the first place. Probably did plan it for a long time.

M

Michael LaBelle 23:55

And then in particular what I don't say, what are the threats to Finland, but what are some of the issues that are because Finland seems like a really safe country, although you have like, kind of a noisy neighbor? And I guess that's that's changed some of the dynamics. So so from the climate security perspective, what are some of the leading issues right now? For Finland?

E

Emma Hakala 24:18

Yeah, that's that's a good question. I mean, of course, we have to recognize that Finland is, is in a kind of a good place, compared to a lot of the rest of the world in terms of climate security, specifically, because we are not maybe exposed to the most most difficult sort of direct impacts of climate change. And we also have quite a high resilience against these, these impacts. But I think then that has also maybe led to this sort of complacency in a way. And there still are people in Finland, who are kind of saying that climate change doesn't really affect us, which I think is I, I have trouble understanding how how you can sort of have this sort of worldview where you sort of completely closed off the rest of the world around you. Because I think that inevitably, what happens in the rest of the world will affect us, and especially actually Finland, because we are a small country, and we are quite dependent on our foreign trade, for example. So in that sense, the the main threats, I would say in Finland are linked to the kind of our international relations our sort of place in the in the world in that sense, and the functioning also of the kind of international multilateral order that we have relied relied quite a lot on

M

Michael LaBelle 25:48

multi, I would say multilateral world. And and I mean, because in one sense, we can people are questioning whether this is still present or not. Not. I mean, we have like the trade wars with China, the United States and kind of entrenchment of maybe industry or industry shifting back to specific countries for production for manufacturing. But the especially for Finland, I would say, This is my question, so I don't but but it seems like because they want to join NATO now, the membership or the application for membership is there, that this multilateral world is even more important? Maybe you could expand on the UN security perspective, from a Finnish perspective?

E

Emma Hakala 26:31

Yeah, I think it became, I mean, well, Finland has always been sort of speaking for the multilateral world and sort of rules based order and all of those things. And in that sense, probably nothing changed. But just the the reasoning. And the justification for that, of course, is now a lot more clear. And we really have to sort of rely on on that. And, of course, NATO has been kind of maybe a bit of a difficult issue in Finland. Because of Russia, I would say that there has been a kind of a reluctance, especially in the among the politicians to really speak up for for joining NATO. And then we've sort of seen it as more advantageous to stay in this kind of less allied position. And even the public opinion was very, quite clearly against joining NATO, up until the Russian attack on Ukraine, after which it completely changed, like almost overnight, the public opinion that is, because even then, like even after the attack, I think that there was a kind of like a period of time when the politicians who are not really taking a stand, and everyone seemed to be a bit unclear about what to do with NATO. But then in the in the public opinion polls, it started to look like people were very much for joining NATO. And then the conversation just changed completely. And now we're on the on the way.

M

Michael LaBelle 28:20

Okay, okay. And but maybe you could, I mean, you have a degree in what political history right, so maybe you can provide a bit of context of why, why Finland was an a member of NATO earlier.

E

Emma Hakala 28:33

Yeah. I mean, we were in a bit of a strange position, maybe during the Cold War, because, of course, we had a war with Russia during the Second World War, which we lost. And, and, of course, the peace deal that we then signed, had quite strong sort of obligations for Finland to, to stay in check in a way for the Soviet Union. And that kind of remained, even though it was not like, we're not somehow directly under Soviet rule or anything like that. We were back then we were a neutral country. And I think it was also in the interest of Soviet Union to keep it that way. So Finland was always very reluctant to join any, or at least in our official policy, we're not looking to join any any sort of military alliances with the West or anything like like that. And we talk about this era of Finland decision where Finland started to kind of maybe self censor itself also, sort of we were so afraid of somehow upsetting the Soviet Union that we were reluctant to take a stand or to maybe look out for our own national interests. And there was really this sort of balancing act between what would potentially cause problems with the Soviet Union? And what would be good for for us. And I think that there's still a lot actually, in the history of that time that is a bit unclear, and that we should actually go through as a nation in order to understand what was what was done and why and how were those decisions justified?

M

Michael LaBelle 30:30

And then what has been the impact of Russia's war in Ukraine? So, for example, I think the gas has stopped, maybe you can expand on that. So this is my question to you is, what has been the impact?

E

Emma Hakala 30:44



Well, it has been quite huge, of course, in a way, because a lot of the linkages and cooperation and trade, of course, with Russia, that existed before has completely stopped or at least been significantly reduced. And a lot of it is due to the EU sanctions, which we of course, are a part of. And then a lot of it might also just be, for example, Finnish companies who used to function in Russia, just drawing out of the country, if they if they can, apparently, it has also been a bit difficult sometimes to do it very fast. And that has been partly, I guess, because of the difficulties of like functioning in Russia anymore. But also, of course, because of the criticism towards those like Finnish companies who would still be selling their products in Russia. So a lot of a lot of the economic life has changed quite a lot, actually. Because, of course, the trade with Russia has been quite significant for Finland. And then, of course, other forms of cooperation, for example, in terms of cooperation on the environment or water. We've had a very functioning sort of transboundary water cooperation, which, which was previously, and I think that that hasn't completely come to you like a halt, or it's not complete this stuff, because there are issues that just have to be somehow taken care of in order to make sure that basically water runs through some channels. But other otherwise, I mean, there isn't really any, anything extra is not happening. So. So a lot of the work that has been done in the past and has actually been quite even maybe important. For Finland on Russia in relation this is just not being done anymore.

M

Michael LaBelle 32:45

Okay. So it just, I would say stop, but it froze. Yeah, yeah. That's and then unlikely to pick up anytime soon. No,

E

Emma Hakala 32:53

I don't think so. I mean, it depends a bit on the issues, but But otherwise, I think that it's hard to see all of that coming back in anytime soon.

M

Michael LaBelle 33:05

So is this like forcing a realignment or I'm gonna say realignment, but like, maybe this gets into the EU, it gets into NATO. But maybe we could talk about the EU a bit more, because maybe so Finland served as a bridge to Russia or mediate mediating role with with Russia thinking, or were the neighbors. And we note, we've known them for a long time. We've had this deal during the Cold War, and it worked out for us. And then after the Cold War ended, what trade really went down, there was big economic adjustment here. And how do you see Finland then, in this role of Russia's Western neighbor, but on the eastern side of the EU?

E

Emma Hakala 33:46

You mean, in this current situation? The current situation? Yeah, I think we are maybe I mean, it's very clear, of course, it has to be settled, it's very clear that we are in the west and in the EU. And I think that that now it's it's somehow more important than ever, for us to underline that. And maybe also now, it's less important to think about what kinds of implications that might have in Russia, because it doesn't really matter anymore. And also, I think that that's

what enabled, of course, the NATO process that we kind of the worst scenario, well, maybe not the absolute worst scenario for Finland, but but in terms of like, international politics has already come through through so so we don't have to worry about that. But in terms of the EU, I actually think that Finland has, in a way, lost some of its position as an EU country, when it comes to this sort of expertise on Russia, because I think that now in the EU, quite understandably, we are listening a lot more to the Baltic States, for example, or Poland who have been saying for decades, or many, many The years at least that, that we should be very careful of Russia. And it's a very clear threat. And I think Finland has, until now always been a bit more somehow careful and kind of more balanced in its in its views. So now I think in a way Finland is still like within the the EU countries, Finland is maybe sort of looking for its its kind of role or the final identity that we have.

M

Michael LaBelle 35:29

And how, okay, this is like an obvious, obvious questions, but it's an obvious question. But how do you think Russia perceives this? Because this is certainly not what they expected in the war, how its proceedings, not what they expected. So how is this bad? I'll just say, How is this bad for Russia? What was what's happening?

E

Emma Hakala 35:49

Well, of course, I mean, it's it is a bit ironic that by starting the war, they sort of forced or at least gave a very big incentive for Finland and Sweden to join NATO, which probably wasn't in their in their plans, and definitely isn't in their interests. And they have been speaking up against Finland and Sweden joining, but especially Finland joining for years. So this is this is definitely bad for Russia. But and it's not like they somehow welcomed it in, in a very sort of friendly manner. But I think that at least so far, there hasn't been like a very strict message or condemnation or anything. I mean, of course, they've worded their displeasure about it. But I think that they are trying to sort of just shake it off a little bit. Yeah, exactly. Yeah. So but, yeah, I think it's, at least for me, because I'm not a Russia expert at all. It's impossible to say what what will happen in the future, then after the war in Ukraine, and so on, and then in London, and Sweden will be in the NATO, and how the situation then develops, but it definitely is, in a way, like a strategic loss for Russia as well,

M

Michael LaBelle 37:13

a new geopolitical reality for Russia. And I mean, because of the shift in the the expansion of NATO right to its border, again, for another country as well, just like the Baltic states, and now now Finland and Sweden are members. And my one question then will be kind of shifting it to to fossil fuels. And how do you see this for the Nordic countries? Because yeah, actually, I'm formulating the question, reformulating the question, because they were so where they would just say, reliant on Russian gas, coal, I believe Poland was, and certainly oil as well. How do you see this shift away or impacting how fossil fuels are used in? I'll say, the wider Baltic region?

E

Emma Hakala 38:03

Well of course we are now we now have like an additional and very strong additional incentive

Well, of course, we are now we now have like an additional and very strong additional incentive to move away from fossil fuels fast. And that has been the sort of thesis stated goal in at least the Nordic countries. I don't know exactly, actually, about the Baltic countries how this has been worded. I mean, of course, the, the there as well, the idea has been to, to get away from from Russian fossil fuels as fast as possible. But then, how they perceive the sort of broader like, climate related energy transition as a part of this? I don't know so well, in Finland, this whole discussion has definitely been linked very strongly with the energy transition. And I think it has also been recognized to some extent that if we actually had been faster with the energy transition before, then we wouldn't be in so much trouble now. But then, when you look at how it's actually turning out in practice, I'm maybe not so convinced that that this will, I mean, of course, it will speed up the energy transition and give additional incentives and also funding and so on for it. And it's like increasingly important in policy. But then, there is a risk, maybe that, that we will just stick to the sort of easier, easiest solution is to replace Russian oil and gas and everything, rather than to look for the most sustainable solutions. And I think that there are sort of two things or two sort of timeframes that you have to keep in mind here because of course now in this situation, looking At this winter, which is now starting and one following that, I think it's quite important to just find energy sources where we can, we can find them. So, for example, in Finland, that also means using some fossil fuels that we have on our own. And, and even using wood for energy, which is not really advisable in any way. But, but these are very short term solutions, and we have to acknowledge that. But then we also need to look at the longer term and understand that, that we shouldn't make any decisions that will somehow lock us in to this, this sort of dependency, like continuing dependency on fossil fuels, and that we have to kind of do everything with still with a with a view to the energy transition on the longer run, which will make everything easier in the long run anyway,

M

Michael LaBelle 41:02

sorry, because you're breaking the fossil fuel dependent. Exactly. Yeah, I'm gonna be coming much more, and how, I mean, looking ahead towards even 10 years from now, but probably 20 years from now. Or even to 2050. How, how well, does it look that Finland? I don't want to just say, like, will be like zero carbon, but, but in one sense, more self sufficient, but also or maybe integrated with other Scandinavian countries?

E

Emma Hakala 41:34

Yeah, I mean, Finland has really ambitious plans in a way, for example, we have a climate neutrality target that we will reach it by 2035, which is quite early. And how optimistic Am I that we will reach it? I don't know. Exactly. I mean, I mean, I'm not completely convinced, unfortunately. And not so much, because because there isn't effort. I mean, I think that there isn't maybe enough effort still, but But there also are like big sort of structural problems with achieving this goal. And as a kind of an example, a lot of the sort of strategies and programs towards the climate neutrality target are based on this certain level of carbon sink, because we have a lot of forest. And that, of course, it's very beneficial to us as a carbon sink and carbon storage. And that helps with the climate neutrality target, then, but now, it's turned out that because we've been increasing cutting of forests over the past years, so now actually, there's quite a high risk that the sink will not only be considerably reduced, but actually turn into like a source of carbon instead, which would completely mess up our our plans for the for climate neutrality. And then what I think that we are actually now now in a very big rush to think about how we overcome this situation, like whether we try to limit the cutting of forests, or whether

we tried to find emission cuts elsewhere in other sectors, but we're not really having this discussion at all yet. So in that sense, I think that there are many, many problems. And then, of course, if you look at the Nordic countries, and cooperation with the Nordic countries, and that's one, one solution that could be used more, I mean, we have a joint electricity market already. But now, we actually there has also been some protests or like, kind of opinions against it as well, because in a way, it means that in some situations, we also export electricity from Finland. And some people have considered that would be smarter to just keep everything that we have. But then on the other hand, the Nordic market has been important in sort of balancing out situations where we are kind of running out of electricity. So I think that we, those kinds of things will will help. And there probably wouldn't be a lot more that the Nordic countries could also do together. And not to think about our own strategies, but but actually, maybe a bit surprisingly, it's not, at least in sort of national level policies. That's not being talked about so much. The Nordic

M

Michael LaBelle 44:40

cooperation is not so much. Okay. No, it's great to hear that there's other parts of Europe central easier if they don't cooperate. So so don't cooperate as much as they could. Yeah, basically, for some common solutions, then. Maybe Maybe I have and it's something else goes to one of the things that you've written that I was reading, but I reinterpreted it into some different phrasing here. And it goes back to the IR perspective. And my question is does realism takes a central stage to a more liberal goal globalized perspective to security? So we're back to the security perspective. And is there because this liberalized globalized world? Hey, this is all great. We talked about multi-lateralism. But now, yeah, there's a war, right? And so, and with military, active and everything, so are we in a much more realistic world,

E

Emma Hakala 45:37

I know that some people can interpret it that way. And maybe in a way, it's maybe true that we are at least talking about very different issues. And we were maybe even like a year ago, as like the major threats facing us right now. But I don't necessarily think that that means that this sort of realist perspective would be the only way somehow then to analyze these developments and to understand them. So I think the liberal kind of worldview can can also work. But of course, in that, then we have to accept the reality that we are in a war situation, and, and that, that it's also a war that could escalate and, and so on. But I don't think that that in any way somehow, in a way, it cancels out any of the other problems, unfortunately, that we have in the world right now. And I also have a bit afraid that that these things have have a habit of sort of accumulating and maybe cascading as well, in the sense that, that somehow these different crises, so like the war, and the energy crisis, and the climate crisis are also all linked together. And if we don't, if we shift our focus completely on only the war, for example, then we will actually do ourselves this favor, in the sense that these things will come and bother us in the future. So yeah, I don't necessarily see a shift, or at least the need for a shift completely in this sort of IR perspectives and, and, and our need to understand the world. But of course, I think that a lot of analysis will be written on how all of this happened, and how somehow it seems that a lot of people were quite blind to the, to the level of change that was was to come. So probably, there will be some shifts, also in sort of more scholarly perspectives to this, but I'm not really sure if we can say even yet what they actually then will be.

M

Michael LaBelle 48:10

Yeah, no, this is one of the difficult things about discussing our to say this current energy crisis or crisis is, ya know, it's almost too soon to be and once I mean, maybe we're being very academic. Yeah. It's like, well, it's too soon to talk. So we can't say anything, although it's been months. And, and certainly a lot of journalists and other people are talking about it, and they're happy to talk about it. But we're like,

M

Michael LaBelle 48:36

to kind of see how to sit back and analyze,

M

Michael LaBelle 48:39

or come back with a journal article in two years time, three years to talk about it. Okay. But one of my will start wrapping up concluding questions then. And I would say it reflects both the Cold War, and also the current will say, I'll just say liberal realities or something in a multipolar polar world or multilateral world is the position of the United States since we're talking about IR, and from a Finnish perspective, because they've had to walk this careful line with Russia and United States, if you want to frame it like that. And kind of leaving out the EU, but the EU is important actor is how then how does Finland maybe perceive the United States now the role United States provides, both within NATO or even economically as well?

E

Emma Hakala 49:27

I think it's an interesting question. I think that that. I mean, of course, the somehow the Reliance may be on on the US for security has now become more pronounced and more clear. And it's clear that, of course, the NATO NATO members membership is the most obvious kind of sign of that and it will inevitably, take us closer to the US and kind of make The relationship with the US somehow tighter. And I, then that also, of course has some implications on on Finnish policy. And those issues actually have been talked about very, very little in Finland, in the sense of not not even like criticism towards joining the NATO. But even this sort of, like understanding of what that means to our foreign policy and our sort of positioning in the world and so on. And especially from the point of view of if there are significant policy changes in the US, which could happen if there is a new precedent, in a few years. I think that discussion has really been in the background for now, which is probably understandable in this this sort of urgent situation. But I think that it's something that that needs to be had at some point. But overall, of course, I would say that Finland has had a close relationship to the US, also, previously, and now it's somehow maybe somehow formalized what has been sort of, kind of always there, but now it's, it's more somehow visible and, and formal.

M

Michael LaBelle 51:21

Exactly. Okay. And then my final, my final question would be focused on looking at 2050. So, so, usually asked, because I know your key areas not not energy, but usually asked like, what is the energy system going to look like in 2050? But my question to you then is, you know, what,

will the Nordic neighborhood slash Baltic neighborhood look like in 2050? Do you think there'll be a lot more cooperation? Integration? If we think about the EU integration over the years? Maybe not even looking at 25? It seems like really far away. So maybe that's a horrible question.

E

Emma Hakala 52:03

Maybe about telling the future, but

M

Michael LaBelle 52:06

maybe the next 10 years, particularly under the under the security situation right now?

E

Emma Hakala 52:13

Well, even then, of course, it's because I feel like it's difficult to say even what happens in like six months or something. But if we want to speculate, I think that that there is a good chance that we have made our energy system, at least, to some extent more sustainable. And that will also then mean a lot of like, closer, certainly EU cooperation, but also hopefully Nordic cooperation and having these sort of linkages and kind of the infrastructure for sharing in a way the energy sources that we can then all have in our in our countries. But it's I mean, it's really can go two ways, I feel like, and one way is that there will be more cooperation. And and maybe Russia is a big question mark, what what they will become after, after the war and everything. But regardless of that, I think that there is a good chance that Finland will have closer cooperation, a closer ties with the Nordic countries and the EU. But of course, then the other scenario, which is a kind of nightmare scenario would be that the sort of kind of internal fights, even within EU countries will increase. And even within the Nordic countries, there will be this sort of increasing need to actually just secure our own energy sources and our own interest and prioritize it very much first, and then to kind of only draw inward in a way. And I think that in the long run, or even in the run of 10 years that would be harmful for for everyone. And the countries will be in that case a lot. somehow less wealthy and the security situation probably in general will be worse. But unfortunately, I I think maybe still last year or a few years ago, I would have seen that as a kind of unnecessary dystopia. But now I think it's something that we have to consider as a possibility. And we have to somehow active actively try to do something to make sure that that doesn't happen.

M

Michael LaBelle 54:41

No, Emma, I think I think you're absolutely right. And it's sometimes like it's hard to finish the podcast, because because it's kind of like well, it's pessimistic or something, but I seriously think this is an issue. Now I've been to a few countries and just from my experience as well. With the high energy prices, it seems like society is calling for more and more energy independence like this is our energy and we want to have low prices. And why are we selling this to other countries? And it's a real threat to the EU?

E

Emma Hakala 55:13

Yeah, I think, Yeah, unfortunately, it is.

M

Michael LaBelle 55:15

Yeah. And I was gonna try, I was trying to give it back to you. So. So you see this trend as well, where I don't want, how can we label this as nationalistic tendencies, or just kind of this is our these are our resources, and we need to be using them?

E

Emma Hakala 55:33

Yeah, definitely. It is visible, I think in Finland as well, which is a bit of a surprise to me, because I think that we have overall in Finland, we've always benefited from cooperation with other countries and having these sort of open links and open trade with other countries, we've benefited from it a lot more than we would have from any sort of. I mean, of course, it's maybe this situation shows that it's also good to have some of your own sources for energy, for example, and so on. But still, trade has been really good for us. But maybe it has been so somehow invisible. That, that then it's easy to somehow just say or claim that, that we should actually just be holding more closely to what we have and not sell it to anyone else. And close all our ties and trade with other countries. And yeah, unfortunately, I think that the more there are these maybe populist politicians who also kind of reinforced that, that claim, there is a risk that it will it will somehow take hold?

M

Michael LaBelle 56:41

Yeah, no, I think it's a real risk. Okay, Emma, thank you very much for coming on the podcast. Thank you. Thank you for joining us. For this episode, we produce the my energy 2050 podcast to learn about cutting edge research and that people building our clean energy system. If you enjoy this episode, or any episode, please share it. And remember, each episode is equivalent to consuming 10 journal articles one book and 500 charts and how to implement the energy transition. And you get it all in less usually than 60 minutes for each podcast guarantee. I can actually say no other podcast makes this guarantee. The more we spread our message of the ease of an energy transition, the faster we can make that transition. You can follow us on LinkedIn where we are most active on the My energy 2050 page or on Twitter and Facebook. I'm your host Michael LaBelle. Thank you for listening to this week's episode.