

Arvoisa rehtori, provosti ja dekaani; hyvät kunniatohtorit ja tohtorit; hyvät riemutohtorit ja juhlavieraat.

We are here tonight to celebrate a marvellous achievement: we are doctors!

The theme of today's celebration is beyond borders. In the world we live in today, where many are focused on protecting their own interests, it feels more topical than ever.

To me, doctoral work is all about crossing borders. It means going beyond what we know and what seems possible. We have all contributed to our fields by adding new knowledge that others can build on. We are part of a continuum stretching back hundreds of years in the effort to understand the world we live in, and I think that's pretty cool.

At Aalto, crossing borders comes naturally: it is a core principle of the university. I still remember my first day ten years ago, when we were told we were joining an international and multidisciplinary community that brings together three fields. Back then, Aalto itself was not even ten years old, so it felt more like a vision. Now, a decade later, it is wonderful to see that vision become reality, and that we have all had the chance to study and work in such a diverse environment.

In my own thesis, I worked at the intersection of smart building technologies and real-estate economics. When asked why I ventured into real estate, I often said it was because I am terrible at electronics and did not want a single equation in my thesis. And yes, I do not have any equations in it. But I think the real reason was that Aalto made it easy to explore other fields and see how my background could be useful in a different context. As an electrical engineer, it was eye-opening to realise in a real-estate economics class that the world does not revolve around technology, and that someone still has to pay for the cool gadgets we design.

My research also crossed mental barriers, in both good and not-so-good ways. Spending many nights taking measurements in a non-ventilated room, only to realise that the sensor lens had a tiny, tiny air bubble that

ruined everything, and then learning afterwards that the ventilation would have been just one switch away, definitely crossed a mental barrier for me. I bet we have all had moments like that. And, by the way, that study was later rejected and did not even make it into my thesis. Part of the process, I told myself.

On the positive side, pushing forward in that kind of situation also expanded my comfort zone. It is strange how, after every academic accomplishment, you feel like you could do it all over again in half the time. Crossing the barriers in our own minds, the ones that first told us this achievement was impossible, has brought us all here.

I also think that science is a common language that helps us cross borders. We come from different backgrounds, but we share a common goal: to understand the world better and seek the truth. It has been amazing to attend conferences and meet people from all around the world. We may not have spoken the same language, but somehow we still understood each other's research and the motivation behind it.

Let's use the language we have learned and make sure we keep crossing disciplinary, national and mental borders (mainly in a good way) to help create a bright future.

Finally, I want to thank, collectively, every supervisor and advisor in this room; you have made this achievement possible. I imagine there are also many partners, relatives, colleagues and maybe even friends here tonight. Thank you all for your unwavering support. I am sure there is a reason why you, of all people, were invited here today.

Let's take this night to celebrate both the good moments and the difficult ones that helped us learn. We did well, and we will continue to do well in the future.