

In the third part, in the last 20 minutes.

So in my time, I want to say several things.

[encounter some technic problems]

It's,[clear throat] I will, like, separate three parts of what I am going to say.

First, it's a more theoretical understanding of borders.

Then I will bring some of my personal experience

of, like, witnessing the border -making or rebordering.

And then I want to address some ongoing political issues.

And we both mentioned our countries of origin, so I am originally from Ukraine.

And, I will make my examples about Ukraine.

Starting with some theories

I think great ideas by famous historian Benedict Anderson very relevant.

So, every nation is imagined just because people do not possess the experience of knowing all the nation.

But, obviously, every individual has the idea what the nation is, what symbols to relate.

And he stresses that every nation, even the largest one, is limited.

So, indeed, the border of a nation is what produces the nation within a particular territory.

And over here, culture, and you mentioned, language, is important,

and especially media.

So, he speaks about print capitalism.

So, when people, when communicate information within a particular territory,

and since then, since 19th century, it's a lot of developments.

Now we can be attached to the nation we have the feeling of belonging

without being, with being far away from it.

So, from not actually being within the borders of nation.

We can use Internet, which replaced print media.

So, we can stay at home while being abroad.

And we're always one click from home.

This is important development.

And, of course, it's also about political borders,

just because they are reinforced by army, by police, and by bureaucracy as well.

So, obviously, you know, like you mentioned Schengen Zone, and we can generally speak about Fortress Europe,

and it consists not only of borders in its, like, classical meaning as a fence,

as a protected border crossing, but also as paper walls in order to obtain documents, in order to enter the country.

Many people struggle and cannot manage, actually, not even to cross the border,

but get over the paperwork, to get a visa, to get a residence permit.

And that's why, like, obviously, this political regulation and power dimension is important.

And then, another important point [...]

There is, borders are changing, so it's, there is no clear-cut.

Some borders could be quite visible and quite distinct in cultural terms, but others not.

And this mismatch between political borders has a great potential for conflicts,

which we are witnessing now in Eastern Europe.

You know, we got these new borders after independence.

And instead of building, like, solidarity, we have this tension, sometimes armed conflicts.

Even with the European Union, there are tensions in terms of borders.

So this ideology called irredentism, when the nation is imagined

with a wider borders, then it exists.

So Hungary is a good example, partly Romania, we see the rise of these in Poland.

So when the borders became questioned, and I think it's very dangerous,

just because we can make borders very transparent, very open, but still regulated.

And if we manage prosperity of people well, we only benefit from this.

So it's, it's not necessarily a bad thing to have borders like within Schengen zone.

And we can discuss this with you later.

And about my personal experience, it was interesting to see how the border emerges.

So my, from my paternal line, I come from north of Ukraine.

And this is very old like East Slavic land.

And 500 meters from where my granny lives,

there is a border with Russia, between Ukraine and Russia.

And as a child, during the Soviet times, I remember this border, which actually was nearly non-existent.

It was just a line of trees and the then road.
So you basically could just walk through it,

and you could go to the village,
which was at that time on the territory of the Russian Soviet Republic.

And then, after independence,
the border became stronger and stronger.

And then they dug a trench across the road, so they made it impossible to cross.

Then they put some barbed wire and border control who were guarding it.

People were still crossing,
but it was like decreasing in these border crossings.

And in the last years, with the Russian aggression against Ukraine,
they built a fence

and it's heavily patrolled by border guards on both sides.

And last year, they even cancelled the border crossing corridor for pedestrians.

so you need to have a vehicle to cross the border.

So you really can see that the that the border emerges.

The border emerges from nothing and then it becomes very visible and very heavily policed.

And, and at the same time Russia questions,

and now I am moving to a more political dimension of the current situation.

So, the fact that some countries think about themselves
as being wider than their political borders,

the ones we have got after the Second World War,
I think it's very dangerous.

And, you know, like to withdraw imperial ambitions,

and to build rapport and understand it in between countries, it's super important.

If we go down the road of violently redrawing the borders, I think it would be a global crisis
for humanity and even the threat of elimination.

So, in the case of Russian aggression against Ukraine,

it's related both to borders and to cultures and to the past and to the future.

So there are a lot of lines which should be discussed here.

So the Yalta Agreement settled the borders after the Second World War.

Then we had the collapse of communism and a lot of nations emerged within the new borders.

And then there was obviously the Yugoslavian war, a very complicated one,

and then independence of Kosovo,
which was actually a very powerful message,

that the borders could be changed, and especially it was treated as a threat by Russia,

and as a pretext, so they were really objecting this.

I do not want to go in -depth on the Kosovo case, but it's important.

And then Ukraine had two revolutions.

The first one from 2004, the Orange Revolution, was peaceful and
it wasn't followed by the Russian aggression

although they tried to influence it much.

And then there was the Euromaidan Revolution,
which actually were important in terms of thinking Ukraine,

about Ukraine, within the European borders.

So, this is the really idealized, and I recognize that, very idealized
image of Europe

which has a lot of problems, but still it's the great drive

to get rid of corruption, to get social justice,

so it's the border, to expand the borders of freedom.

And, although they explained that ...

a Russian narrative, that they protect Russian speakers,
so language is important.

But it cannot be a pretext of their aggression. It's never [an] excuse.

We always can find good solutions for ethnic minorities.

And then the fact that they annexed Crimea and now Ukraine
and wage war against Ukraine in Donbas,

making the border diluted.

It's draining both Ukraine and to some degree Russia.

So it punishes these two nations. It's very violent, more than 10,000 people died.

And there is no registered, you know,
like, ethnic violence or pressure on ethnic minorities in Ukraine.

Of course, many things could be done.

And at that time, when Russia stepped in militarily against Ukraine in 2014,

and now we go to the borders with our former Habsburg Empire,

then Hungary raised with Orban,
they raised the question of Hungarians living in Transcarpathian region.

And it was perceived by Ukraine in a very negative way.

So it was like backstabbing Ukraine in this complicated moment.

And the problem is that Ukraine,
being an economically not a very successful country,

many people feel more privileged, you know, to belong to some minority,
whether Romanian or Hungarian,

and with a lack of policies and funding,
it's also complicated to integrate these people.

So integration is very important as well.

So we have to recognize rights and
accommodate people, whether they live in-depth or historically,

whether they're historically connected to this land or whether they immigrated.

We always have to manage these things and we cannot stigmatize people on this basis.

And last year (2017), Ukraine adopted a law on school education.

And the argument was that many people in Bukovina,

in this ethnographically Romanian area of Ukraine
and in Transcarpathia, Transcarpathian region,

many people representing respectively Romania and Hungary,

they were not fluent in Ukrainian language.

So they were not fully integrated into Ukrainian society.

So one argument was also that
previously they were receiving funding to run public schools

exclusively in Romanian and Hungarian languages.

And then they would be (obtained in)claiming the citizenship,
which is another big issue within Europe

And then, with these new passports and citizens rights, they would leave Ukraine.

So, the state invests in these people, in some way, could be better.

And then they leave the country not contributing to the society

just because they are not fully integrated.

And then there was very negative response, both from Romania and from Hungary.

They saw this as a pressure on their co-ethnics abroad, on their compatriots.

And the harshest then and now Hungary blocks Ukrainian negotiations with NATO, which is very political.

And I think there should be some balance found,

although like when populist policies are exploited by mostly right-wing politicians.

They actually never help.

So integration without violence and finding the solution is important.

And of course economy, which shouldn't be left aside. As you mentioned[...]

the economic differences within Europe, they create these tensions.

So, for instance, people from post-2004 EU enlargement and post 2007 EU enlargement, a lot of people are going to richer countries.

And sometimes these people may represent some marginal groups or
or boosting, you know, this negative image.

But it's just because their problems were not solved in their home country,

if they would be coming as a qualified workforce, they only enrich other countries, they benefited for them, for themselves.

So achieving, you know, this equality and prosperity in terms of economy,

it would allow people to travel, to enjoy, to study abroad,

and without making the rise of xenophobia and without stigmatizing migrants.

So, I think that borders are important,

but at the same time, if we find very good solutions,

and the ways for building understanding,

respect for different countries, mutual respect for different countries,
and economic prosperity.

Then we could safely get rid of borders,

then we could safely have a global cultural space which allows people to travel around to prosper and not to be subjected to any repressions, hate violence, xenophobia, racism and so on.

So I think it's the question of human development and finding ways to understand each other and to work together towards the future.

And we have to think about the future more, just because we also, you mentioned a lot of history, and this is important.

You know, when history is an academic discipline, it is great, it provides us with knowledge about the past.

But when history becomes the weapon of politics or instrument of politics, then it becomes dangerous, just because a lot of people would speculate on it.

Politicians exploit history.

And the territory of former Habsburg Empire is a good example how the history is used and usually abused for political purposes, which boosts hate speech, which actually provides a resource for political tensions.

So, I think the memory politics, aggressive memory politics, which is going on between different states, between Russia and Ukraine, obviously, it's also a memory war, information war and the real war. So that's why they call it a hybrid war.

At the same time, we can see tensions between Ukraine and Poland arising, tensions between Hungary and Ukraine are quite high, not to the same extent, but also there are some tensions between Romania and Ukraine. I find it very unfortunate.

But to conclude, I think with all this dealized reception of Europe, and despite all these horrible casualties Ukraine is now having at this very hard time.

The fact that they introduced a visa-free regime within the Schengen state for Ukrainians, it will provide a huge boost for people to travel, to cross the borders, not only political, but to cross linguistic borders, to cross cultural borders,

to go to Romania, to go to Bulgaria, to visit other countries of European Union.

And it will provide Ukrainians with additional resource and better understanding of how different social models in Europe work,

how people behave, what are the different cultures.

And it will only enrich us.