PROLOGUE: DEMOCRATIC THEORY
AND THE BOUNDARY PROBLEM
FREDERICK G. WHELAN

I. THE PROBLEM

The concept of democracy, although protean, always makes reference to a determinate community of persons (citizens)—a "people"—who are collectively self-governing with respect to their internal and external affairs. The process of self-govern- ment may be organized in different ways consistently with com- mon usages of the term and our intuitive notions of what democracy means, although individual theorists may defend a best or truest set of democratic institutional arrangements. Still, any democratic theory must face the logically prior and in some ways more fundamental question of the appropriate constitution of the people or unit within which democratic governance is to be practiced. I shall argue not only that the drawing of boundaries around these units is a significant problem for democratic theory and practice, but that democratic theory itself offers no clear guidance on the matter. The difficulties posed by controversies regarding boundaries thus present an impor- tant practical limit to the scope of democracy as a method of making collective decisions.1

Mention of boundary problems suggests territorial disputes involving sovereign states, or entities aspiring to statehood, and it is in this form that the problem arises most conspicuously.
More generally, however, the problem is one of defining or bounding not geographical units but the membership of the democratic body, or citizenry; it is in this form that the problem first arises in the more abstract varieties of democratic political theory.

Democracy is sometimes considered, for example, to be an essentially participatory mode of collective decision-making, one in which all citizens have an opportunity for involvement in public affairs. While the exact degree, methods, and distribution of participation that are required or desirable in a democracy are debatable, it is clear that some participatory element, at some significant point(s) in the political process, is a necessary and distinguishing feature of a democracy. The participatory formula for democracy, however, presupposes an answer to the prior question: who should participate? Or, how do we determine membership in the group whose members are entitled to participate? And who is to participate in making this decision?

Another common view regards the majoritarian principle as the heart of democratic governance: democracy is present where, when a collective decision is to be made, votes are counted (each person, or citizen, having one) and the alternative preferred by the greater number, or at least a plurality of those choosing to vote, is enacted. Any other method, it is said, would place the decision-making power in the hands of some minority, which violates the basic democratic value of equality among the self-governing citizens. Again, this is a formula that may be accepted, although with qualifications. Since only a small proportion of public decisions made in democratic governments can actually be made by majority rule, the practical democratic generally falls back on the free elections of officials as the hallmark of a real-world democracy, assuming that these are generally although indirectly determinative of policies; it is here that the majority principle is applied. All this is no sooner said, however, than we are again faced with the same problem of boundaries: how do we delimit the group within which, for purposes of making a particular decision, votes are to be counted and a majority preference identified? Or, to note a distinction passed over above, how are citizens, those with the right to be counted, distinguished from other persons? Major-

ity rule as a procedural principle is not inherently democratic, but must be combined with relatively inclusive qualifications for citizenship. Determination of the criteria or bounds of the citizen body, however, is a matter that is logically prior to the operation of the majority principle, and cannot be solved by it. A final and more general idea of democracy is that it is government with the consent of the governed. This formula is indeterminate with respect to institutional forms, or the procedures by which consent is to be expressed—questions on which consent theorists have historically differed. Again, however, we may always ask: whose consent is required? Or, within what group of people must public policies and laws win the requisite approval or acquiescence? To say simply the consent of “the governed” suggests that this is an arbitrary matter, that democratic theory requires only that consent be obtained for public decisions within political boundaries that are themselves the product of historical accidents, and usually of other-than-democratic forces. But this seems contradictory: it may well be the case that the appropriate boundaries, or the extent and composition of the community, is itself something about which the people involved have preferences; so if democracy is government by consent, then this too is a matter on which, in a democracy, consent ought to be determinative.
II. THE ALL-AFFECTED PRINCIPLE

Perhaps the most intuitively plausible proposal with respect to the proper scope of democratic governance is that all those people who are affected by a particular law, policy, or decision should have a voice in making it. Woodrow Wilson appears to have implied some such principle when he called for the "settlement of every question, whether of territory, of sovereignty, of economic arrangement, or of political relationship, upon the basis of the free acceptance of that settlement by the people immediately concerned." Recent democratic theorists have frequently expressed the same idea. The all-affected principle would thus distinguish those who are qualified to be citizens with respect to a particular decision from others by reference to the content, or the prospective impact, of the decision. Applied to the different types of democratic theory, this formula indicates the appropriate scope of participation, or of majority rule, or of the consent requirement; in practice this formula has often been advocated by proponents of a more participatory and egalitarian form of democracy than that prevailing in contemporary states, in which, it is said, many of the people who are actually affected by social decisions are rarely consulted, at least in any direct fashion.

I shall argue shortly that the all-affected principle is an untenable proposal; first, however, two aspects of its prima facie plausibility may be noted. This proposal appears to be offered in a spirit of defensiveness: it seems to conceive of social decisions as normally imposing burdens or costs on the passive many, and its intent seems to be to provide people with the means of protecting themselves, to the end either of avoiding these costs or of seeing that they are distributed more evenly. Such a defensive attitude—traditionally with respect to government, more recently with respect to concentrated economic power—has historically been an important part of the demand for democracy; the right to participate in government, like other rights, is (at least) an instrument with which individuals can safeguard their important interests against invasion or deprivation. As such this principle is morally plausible; it is perhaps not so intuitively clear that the recipients of benefits should have a voice in the decision to confer the benefits, although this is a decision that affects them. The applicability of the principle, in this perspective, depends on whether a given decision-making entity is regarded as (typically, or on balance) a source of burdens or of benefits; where the answer is mixed, as is presumably the case with the state and other relevant entities, the force of the principle is blurred, although it may be responded that wherever there is a question of costs, or of weighing relative costs and benefits, the potential bearers of the costs should have a voice.

The all-affected principle in democratic theory, furthermore, resembles the usual solution to the problem of scope in formal utilitarian theory, and may even be derivable as a political application of it; it may therefore derive strength from the appeal of this larger moral theory. Utilitarianism holds that the right action (or decision) is that which in the circumstances produces the greatest net increase in happiness or welfare of those affected by it. The utilitarian principle may serve as a prescrip-
tion for individual choices, and as such its requirements are clear, although they encounter formidable difficulties, both epistemological (knowing of what others' happiness consists) and intellectual (calculating correctly about means). It may also serve as a standard for political decision-making, prescribing that public policy aim at the greatest overall welfare of those over whom rule is exercised. The utilitarian argument for political democracy—that those affected should not only be benefited by governmental decisions, but should also participate in making them—follows from either or both of two additional points. It may be claimed that each individual is the sole, or best, judge of his own interests, which he defends and promotes with his vote in the democratic process. Or, it may be denied that any ruler or group of rulers other than the people (those affected) as a whole can be depended upon to be motivated by the utilitarian principle: democratic decision-making is the procedure most likely to lead to utilitarian results even in the absence of benevolent motives in individuals. Utilitarianism suitably developed thus may yield the all-affected principle for collective decision-making, and appeal may be made to it in support of this variety of democratic theory.

While resort is occasionally had to the all-affected principle for democratic decision-making in small groups, where it is obvious to all concerned with respect to a given issue just who is likely to be affected by the outcome, this principle has not been and cannot be implemented in the context of the state, to which democratic theory is normally applied. Public decisions, authoritative and binding as they are, are made (when they are made democratically) not by those affected, but rather by all the eligible voters or citizens (or their representatives) in the previously delimited political unit on whose agenda the question has arisen. Political democracy is in practice associated with states, that is, authoritative institutions that claim jurisdiction over, and, if democratic, are responsive to the collective preferences of the people residing in, geographically bounded territories. And while all of these fellow-citizens may share some common concerns, it is not likely to be the case that all issues arising on the public agenda are matters of common concern, nor are all citizens likely to be affected by every decision. Consideration of the reasons for the usual resort to the territorial principle rather than the all-affected principle reveals the fundamental untenability of the latter, despite its superficial attractiveness.

An obvious practical difficulty with the all-affected principle is that it would require a different constituency of voters or participants for every decision: the status of fellow-citizens would not be permanent, as is the case in the territorial states with which we ordinarily associate the concept of citizenship, but would shift in relation to the issue proposed. This is more than a mere inconvenience, which a committed democrat might be willing to tolerate. The deeper problem is that before a democratic decision could be made on a particular issue (by those affected), a prior decision would have to be made, in each case, as to who is affected and therefore entitled to vote on the substantive issue—a decision, that is, on the proper bounds of the relevant constituency. And how is this decision, which will be determinative of the ensuing substantive decision, to be made? It too should presumably be made democratically—that is, by those affected—but now we encounter a regression from which no procedural escape is possible. In many cases of political decision-making, moreover, the question of who is affected by a given law or policy depends on which law or policy is enacted from among the available alternatives; in fact, the scope and nature of the impact of different laws or policies on different categories of people is often their most controversial feature. Thus to say that those who will be affected by a given decision are the ones who should participate in making it is to attempt to bypass the crucial question, and to propose what is a logical as well as a procedural impossibility.

III. TERRITORIAL STATES

Given the failure of the all-affected principle, democratic theory is normally advanced with reference to some established community of people, all of whom are citizens and thus entitled to participate in public business and to make, through majority rule, collective decisions, regardless of their diverse personal interests or differential stakes in the issues that appear on the public agenda. Some citizens may indeed choose to defer, on particular issues, to those who seem to be especially affected,
but they are not required by democratic principles to do so. The same effect may be attained when those who are unaffected by or have only weak preferences with respect to proposed alternatives fail to exercise their right to vote, or conversely when comparatively intense minorities achieve disproportionate influence through their activism in the political process. In these cases political decision-making, as practiced in countries generally regarded as democratic, may sometimes seem to approximate what is called for by the all-affected principle. Despite the broad and undifferentiated category of legal citizenship, with its territorial basis, the effective constituencies for particular decisions consist of self-selected groups of individuals with special interests in the matter at hand; the boundaries of effective citizenship fluctuate. Familiar criticisms of pluralistic politics, however, call into question the assumption that all those who are affected by a policy normally succeed in exercising influence by informal processes. These phenomena thus seem anomalous, and sometimes even illicit, in light of democratic theory, although they may nevertheless be defended pragmatically.

A democratic political system is therefore one in which all the citizens of a particular community enjoy the right to have their preferences taken into account in public decisions, even though they may be differentially affected by the outcome. Worries that this might lead to unfair results may to some extent be alleviated by the reflection that liberal democratic theory, at any rate, not only calls for collective self-determination, but also insists that authority be exercised in accordance with other norms as well. One of these is the rule of law, and in particular the requirement that everyone enjoy the equal protection of, or equal treatment under, the laws that are made by the democratic process. If laws and policies literally treated everyone equally, of course, the all-affected principle would be satisfied even when democracy is implemented, in the usual way, within a fixed territorial community: the democratic regime would simply have to confine itself to matters that affect all of its members, and equally so at that. In practice democracies do not adhere to such limited agendas, and the “equal treatment” provision is usually taken to require only equal treatment for persons who are similarly situated, or who share similar, relevant characteristics. Subject to this condition democracies do enact policies that impose special burdens, or distribute special benefits, to distinct categories of persons, and in normal practice it is the entire citizenry who are entitled to vote on such policies, and to determine the appropriate categories of persons to whom special treatment is given. The determination of relevant differences, which justify departures from absolute generality in law, is in fact one of the fundamental types of political decisions that a community must make, one that reflects its basic collective values and goals as a community. It is thus a decision that must be made (according to democratic theory) democratically, with equal opportunity to participate for all members of the community, even if the effect of such a decision is to identify and prescribe policies for special groups. Thus for example it is the whole citizenry who decide that eighteen-year-old men (and not everyone, nor other descriptions of persons) shall register for military service, and not the affected group—partly because states are organized territorially, and partly for the logical reason, mentioned above, that we cannot know who the especially affected are in advance of the larger community’s decision. The requirement of the rule of law, with which such decisions as this are generally held to be compatible, does not therefore go very far in reconciling the all-affected principle with the usual structure of democracy.

Democracy therefore is practiced within communities all of whose members may vote and otherwise participate equally. According to what principle, then, or by what decision-making procedure, are the boundaries of the community determined, given that the all-affected principle is not workable for this purpose? The question of boundaries is essentially the question of defining eligibility for membership in the community: democracy refers to self-government by a people, and so a people or political “self” must be bounded or set apart from other peoples. In the case of states, however, the boundary problem refers in practice to the geographical borders of the territory over which authority is to be exercised; although in democratic theory territory is a consideration secondary to that of the composition of the people, in modern states it comes for the most part to the same thing, since the principal conditions of citizenship are birth or a period of residence within a certain territory.
How then are the boundaries determined within which democracy is practiced?

In democratic theory democracy is usually offered as the exclusively legitimate method of making binding decisions for a collectivity, yet brief reflection suffices to show that the boundary problem is one matter of collective decision that cannot be decided democratically. Just as in trying to implement the all-affected principle we would need to make a prior decision regarding who is affected, so in attempting to solve the problem of territorial boundaries we would need to make a prior decision regarding who are entitled to participate in arriving at a solution—and this prior question is frequently just as controversial as the substantive question, and procedurally insoluble. A boundary has two sides, and the inclusion of some means the exclusion of others, all of whom are, by this fact, affected by its existence. Thus a boundary cannot be democratically established solely by the collective will of those who are to be included within it, even if we could identify them, although this group is to be self-governing in other respects. When the membership of two adjacent groups is well-established, they can perhaps negotiate their common geographical boundary, but when boundaries in the larger sense of the composition of the self-governing units are in dispute, no democratic procedure seems applicable. Democracy can be practiced for making collective decisions once the collectivity has been defined, but democratic methods themselves are inadequate to establish the bounds of the collectivity, whose existence democratic theory simply presupposes.

This is more than a minor shortcoming of democratic theory, and the logically prior boundary question is often controversial for good reason. Not only are boundaries often an issue about which disputes arise, and with regard to which individuals have preferences; the resolution of this matter is also frequently determinative of the substantive questions that follow, since the alternative possible decisions respecting boundaries or membership may (predictably) generate majorities on different sides of the substantive questions. This case is similar to what may be observed at party conventions and similar proceedings, where the fiercest contests are over rules, procedures, agendas, and the like, since decisions made at this stage can be seen to influence not predetermine the ostensibly democratic decisions of the plenary sessions. The boundary problem seems more intractable than the problem of alternative procedures or agendas, however, since at least in the latter case the group whose business is to be conducted is definitively constituted. When there is disagreement over the composition of the relevant decision-making body, however—a sub-group demands decision-making autonomy for itself, for example, or people outside the group as currently constituted claim that they are entitled to be included—an impasse occurs, and an outcome that some will denounce as undemocratic will be the likely result.

The boundary problem and its insolubility by democratic means may be vividly illustrated by the case of Ireland, where the most troublesome political issue has long been precisely the proper boundaries of autonomous communities. Other important political questions, both in the north and south of the country, would no doubt be decided differently than they have been as a consequence of a different drawing of political boundaries, which are controversial at least in part because their definition can be seen by all to be determinative of other issues. In the eyes of an old-fashioned Unionist the appropriate sovereign unit (for historical, strategic, and economic reasons) was the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, the entity that existed from 1800 until 1922. A plebiscite taken among the population of this entity during that period would no doubt have revealed a substantial majority in favor of the established boundaries, a fact reflected in the refusal of the U.K. Parliament to acquiesce in demands for Irish independence. In the eyes of an Irish nationalist, however, the proper unit is the island of Ireland, which seems—both geographically, and for a different set of historical reasons—to be an entity distinct from Great Britain. A vote among the inhabitants of Ireland would probably confirm this opinion. Instead, in order to appease a local majority of Irish Unionists, the boundary settlement of 1921–22 embodied a third possibility: Ireland was divided into what became the present Republic of Ireland and a new entity called Northern Ireland, which remained associated, by a vote of its people, with Great Britain in a new state called the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. A vote taken among the inhabitants of Northern Ireland would confirm this
status quo, as would, presumably, a vote among the inhabitants of the present United Kingdom; yet the impasse remains, since the present boundaries appear arbitrary and illegitimate (a kind of international gerrymandering) to Irish nationalists. It may be conceded that all parties to this dispute are bona fide democrats, inasmuch as all of them are prepared to rest their case with a popular vote; what they adamantly differ about is the appropriate boundaries within which the vote should be taken. Democratic theory offers no guidelines on this question, and so the essence of the Irish problem is that no solution could generally be accepted as legitimate, given the prevailing contemporary acceptance of democracy as the exclusively legitimate method for resolving political questions. It is for this reason that all parties to the dispute, democrats though they may be, are found appealing additionally to non-democratic principles (historical tradition, nationality, economic rationality, and so on), none of which carries decisive weight, to support the case for their preferred boundaries.

IV. CONSENT

Is there any way, in specialized types of democratic theory or through congenial principles, to resolve such conflicts? In this and the following sections I consider the boundary problem as it appears in consent theory and the theory of nationalism, both of which have historically been associated with modern democratic theory; I also consider some geographical approaches to boundaries, and some theories that make reference to system autonomy as a desirable feature of political regimes, including democratic ones. None of these, I shall argue, offers a generally satisfactory solution to the problem.

Modern democratic theory is an outgrowth of a longer tradition of political thought that focuses on consent as the requisite foundation of government. Consent theory characteristically takes political and legal obligation as the central issue of political theory, and it asserts that (at least in the public realm) only an individual's consent, as expressed for example in an agreement or promise—that is, a free act of his will—can create a valid obligation for him. It follows that governmental author-

...
itical democracy has even been said to have its roots in the congregational self-government of certain Protestant churches, membership in which was entirely optional and, indeed, supposed to be a matter of self-conscious choice. For voluntary associations, consent theory does appear to indicate a plausible and feasible method of determining the bounds of the democratic community. Boundaries in such cases are open and fluid, at least in the sense that dissatisfied members are always free to leave, and also in the sense that, normally, new members may be admitted, if they are attracted to the group’s purposes, and subject to its rules, but only on a voluntary basis.

Significant difficulties arise, however, when the attempt is made to assimilate states to this model. States are territorial and compulsory associations, claiming jurisdiction over all residents from the time of their birth or arrival within their borders; and these features seem to be necessary if states are to fulfill their minimal functions of apprehending criminals and exercising compulsory adjudication over disputes between individuals. Actual consent in the sense of a deliberate decision to adhere to a polity is the infrequent exception, characterizing mainly naturalized citizens. Emigration, moreover, is a costly and unfeasible option for most people, even when states permit it, as Hume pointed out. Citizens may learn to approve of the governmental institutions of their country, and they may, if it is a democratic government, have the opportunity of consenting to, or seeking to change, its laws; but the boundaries within which these processes take place are something they normally find settled—or, if unsettled, not a matter to which the principle of consent is readily applicable.

The consent principle may work, to a limited degree, in establishing the composition of groups enjoying local self-government within a federal state. The formal boundaries of the subnational units are of course usually territorial, like those of the larger state, and the same problems of arbitrariness, non-democratic origins, and even manipulation (gerrymandering) arise at this level. Federalism also presents democratic theory with the additional problem of deciding on the appropriate level within the federal structure for making a particular decision—a prior decision that is frequently controversial because, like the drawing of political boundaries, it may predetermine the

“democratic” outcomes on substantive issues. If one can assume geographical mobility within a federal system, however, one may imagine individuals “voting with their feet,” migrating and settling where they like, thus becoming citizens (at the local level) of a community they choose for themselves. The possibility of migration does not of course alter the established territorial boundaries, but it may (in principle) determine the more important question of the composition of communities in a way that seems consistent with democratic theory.

The assumption of perfect mobility is unrealistic even for a country like the United States; it is of course even more so internationally, which is what most seriously undermines the portrayal of the establishment of states on a voluntaristic basis in classical contract theories. An individual may be fortunate enough to find that democratic institutions exist within the boundaries of the country in which he was born, or he can work for their realization there, but the boundaries themselves are normally given. The background assumption of Madison’s advice (in Federalist #10) to choose a large republic over a number of small ones was that the Americans of 1788 had such a choice before them, but this is a rare occurrence in political life. Boundaries are not only usually given, but their origins more often than not do not bear scrutiny in light of democratic and related types of political theory. As Hume says in the essay cited above, consent when present is no doubt a ground of legitimate government, but consent historically grows within states founded by other means (usually force), as a consequence of good government. Consent may even come to be routinized in democratic institutions within the state, but it cannot normally be the basis of the existence or of the boundaries of the state in the first place.

The issue of secession may also be mentioned in connection with consent theory. If it is held to be a principle of democratic theory that membership in a particular self-governing unit ought to be contingent on the consent of each individual, it clearly follows that, barring special circumstances, a right of emigration ought to exist for individuals. More controversially, however, it might also appear that a territorially concentrated group whose members (or a majority of them) are disaffected with the larger community ought to be entitled to
secede, along with their territory, and to constitute themselves as a new state. Compelling them to remain within the larger state may be compatible with democracy understood solely as majoritarianism (since they are a minority of the whole), but it seems at variance with the principle of consent as the basis for determining membership or the boundaries of the polity.

The right of secession is nonetheless not recognized by modern democratic states, although it sometimes is successfully asserted by arms and afterwards accepted. The other side of this question was maintained in familiar words by Abraham Lincoln, who combined the roles of state-builder and democratic theorist. The Union must be preserved, he says, precisely in order to assure the success of the American experiment in democracy; secession is incompatible with democracy because it denies the principle of majority rule, and perhaps also because of its tendency, if not checked, to anarchy. Still, to accept the verdict of the majority of the larger union, rather than that of the majority in a smaller but viable geographical unit, is arbitrary in terms of democratic theory, and no doubt reflects a view of the desirability of large and strong states based on other than democratic grounds. Nor does it tell us how large the larger union ought optimally to be: the United States had, after all, seceded from the British Empire. It is superior force, not adherence to principles of democracy or consent, that generally resolves such disputes, as in the United States itself.²⁶

V. NATIONALITY

Democratic political movements in the past century and a half have frequently been associated with nationalism, and much modern democratic theory has acquiesced in what appears to be the verdict of history by accepting this additional principle as offering the best practical solution to the problem of political boundaries for sovereign states. Nationalism, however, contains difficulties of its own, and a boundary principle based on nationality does not always fit well with democratic theory.

The nationalist principle holds that states ought to correspond to pre-existing national units, and that the claim of independent statehood and self-government arises from the collective right of a distinct nation to determine its own affairs and destiny. While states are artificial creations of political will, nations (it is said) are given, either by nature, or by history, which has differentiated nations from one another on the basis of distinctive languages, cultures, traditions, and common memories. No single objective criterion of nationality appears to be definitive, and defenders of the principle usually end by saying that a nation is simply a group of people united by their common feeling of being a single body in some respect(s) other than their being under a common government.²¹ The nation then is held to comprise the people or community presupposed by democratic theory, and when a particular nation moveover occupies (or has a historical claim to) a definite territory as well, the criterion of nationality seems to provide a solution to the boundary problem in both of its forms.

Democratic nationalists hold not only that the nation-state is the appropriate unit of self-government, but further that all members of the nation are by that fact qualified to be citizens, with an equal right to participate in managing their common affairs. This conjunction of nationalism and democracy seems largely fortuitous, attributable to the historical fact that democratic ideology discredited dynastic and in some cases colonial boundaries together with dynastic and colonial rule, leaving a void with respect to the legitimate foundation of modern states that nationalism filled.²² The nationalist principle is nevertheless fundamentally different from democratic principles, since its central tenet appeals to non-voluntaristic criteria. John Stuart Mill’s qualified acceptance of political claims based on nationality illustrates the effort of liberal democratic theorists to reconcile themselves to the currents of the times. “Where the sentiment of nationality exists in any force,” Mill says, “there is a prima facie case for uniting all the members of the nationality under the same government. . . . This is merely saying that the question of government ought to be decided by the governed.”²³ This effort to construe nationalism as somehow implied by democratic theory, however, is circular: one must have decided in advance that “the governed” should be the nation, in order to conclude that they would (democratically) choose to be an independent nation-state. Retreating from this high ground, Mill also offers several arguments to the effect
that nationality (as a distinct principle) may be expected to contribute to the success of democratic government: a common nationality facilitates the communications, confidence, and mutual respect that are necessary or desirable in a democracy, permitting compromise and the pursuit of the public interest; it ensures sympathy between the army and the people, thus precluding a common tactic of despotic governments. Nationality as a "sense of belonging together" and as a foundation for the requisite sense of equality thus may be among the conditions favorable to successful democracy.²⁴

These arguments notwithstanding, however, nationality provides only a prima facie case for statehood. Mill's more fundamental utilitarian principles lead him to the important qualification that it is desirable for small and backward peoples to be absorbed into more highly civilized states—as for example the Scottish Highlanders and the Welsh have been merged with England, the Bretons and the Basques of Navarre with France. It is better, he says, for the average Welshman or Breton to enjoy membership in a more advanced community—rather than "to sulk on his own rocks, the half-savage relic of past times"—and it is also in the general interest of the progress of civilization as a whole, which often emerges as the decisive consideration in Mill's moral theory.²⁵ This reasoning suggests a different principle for the boundaries of political communities: they should be drawn so as most efficiently to spread the influence of higher civilizations, by absorbing less advanced groups as minority elements into larger democratic states, where their members may be elevated to the higher level. This is a perfectly coherent principle, although it is no more conceptually related to democracy than is the alternative nationalist principle. It is also no doubt of fairly limited applicability, and in default of it Mill is prepared, like most nineteenth-century liberals, to embrace nationalism.

The union of democratic and nationalist principles remains prominent in world politics today, the United Nations having affirmed both the "right of self-determination" of "peoples" and equal democratic political rights for individuals.²⁶ Political boundaries should be drawn, on these principles, in accordance with the geographical distribution of distinct peoples or nations, the members of which are entitled—and required—to practice democracy among themselves. The existence of "peoples" is presupposed, as in nationalist theory generally, although the concept is no better defined; thus groups aspiring to self-government continue to seek legitimacy by trying to establish their claim to be genuine peoples.

The nationalist principle is theoretically clear, although its empirical applicability to disputed cases is doubtful. Before considering the difficulties, however, we should note how it qualifies democratic theory. Democracy refers to a method of making collective decisions which, holding as it does that collective preferences or majority will (suitably informed by deliberation) should prevail, appeals to values such as voluntarism, freedom (from an alien will, or from mere tradition), and rationality. When it is combined with nationalism, however, democracy appears to be a subordinate and circumscribed principle, even if decisive in its intra-national sphere. Democratic rule is exercised, but within a context that is not itself freely chosen, nor reflective of the will or the reason of the people concerned. Democratic politics takes place in a framework that is held to be outside the scope of political choice, and identified in accordance with criteria supplied by a theory other than democratic theory. Thus while as a matter of putative practical necessity democratic theorists may subscribe to the claims made on behalf of nationality, it should be recognized that in so doing they acknowledge the limitations of democracy.

Beyond this, however, several major difficulties with the nationalist principle severely weaken its acceptability as a general solution to the boundary problem of democratic theory. The first of these concerns the large number of actual cases (frequently the subject of controversy) where one or another of the tenets of nationalist theory does not in fact hold true, and where therefore the principle offers no guidance. There may in a given region be no agreed-upon nation or people, but rather some other state of affairs: a politically united but heterogeneous population (the United States), or a population sharing a common language and culture but lacking the common interest or sense of unity requisite for a nation (Ireland and Britain, the U.S. in 1860), or two or more different nations whose people are apparently content to live associated in a larger, multi-national state (United Kingdom, Soviet Union), or
a number of ethnic groups, each below the size to which the principle of self-determination is conventionally held to apply (some African countries). These examples reveal the inadequacy of nationality as the exclusive determinant of acceptable boundaries, and they point to the fact that political choice and creativity can be brought to bear on the problem, sometimes in a benign and stable fashion.

Another sort of empirical difficulty arises when a claim of nationhood is advanced but not accepted by other groups whose established boundaries would be affected (Basques, Kurds, Palestinians). Such a claim may be rejected either because of doubts about its procedural validity, that is, whether those who make it really represent those in whose name they purport to speak; or it may be problematic simply because the theory of nationalism lacks precise and universally valid criteria for identifying a genuine nation. In such cases neither nationalist nor democratic theory offers any acceptable method for resolving the question.

A final type of difficulty presents itself when two or more nations, with clearly distinct collective identities, exist, but their members are intermingled in the same territory. Since independent states require mutually exclusive and reasonably continuous territories, the nationalist principle cannot be applied in such cases except through a transfer of populations—something that usually cannot be accomplished except forcibly. Even when it is done, the determination of the boundaries into which the populations are moved cannot be made in accordance with the principles of nationalism (nor of democracy), but only through some other method, such as war, or negotiated compromise. It is well known how this difficulty emerged in the Versailles settlement, when the victorious Allies set out to apply the principle of national self-determination (which they associated with democracy) to the peoples of the defeated empires. The residential intermixture of peoples in central Europe was such that it proved impossible to draw boundaries so that each nation had its own state, and each state contained only one nationality. While democracy was to be practiced within the new states, the founding decisions could not be made democratically, but were imposed from without; resentments arising from these decisions—which involved the denial of some national claims, and the creation of new national minorities—were an important factor in the outbreak and course of the Second World War.

A device that has been used on occasion to settle national boundaries in an apparently democratic fashion is the plebiscite, in which a group of people are permitted to decide for themselves, by majority vote, of what country they wish to become a part, or in some cases whether they wish to form an independent state. The plebiscitary process is necessarily so constrained by extraneous forces and arbitrariness, however, that its consonance with the democratic principle (decision in accordance with the will of the people) is illusory. An outside authority must set the alternatives and delimit the electorate, decisions that will appear unfair to some interested parties, especially as they will predetermine the outcome of the vote (and may even be framed for this purpose). A plebiscite is a plausibly legitimate method for settling the independence or affiliation of an area whose national identity and geographical boundaries are already firmly settled by history and not in dispute (as is arguable, for example, in the case of Quebec); but when it is boundaries themselves that are in question, a plebiscite can provide only the appearance of democracy and is likely in consequence to stimulate cynicism about democratic government generally.

I turn now from difficulties in application to another problem in the theory of nationalism, one that casts doubt on its claim to be anything other than an acquiescence in the verdicts of history, so far as the territorial foundations of states are concerned. Contrary to the claim in nationalist theory that nations exist independently of, and prior to, states, thus predetermining their proper boundaries, a careful reading of history suggests otherwise. Nations are more often than not created by states, by the deliberate policies of rulers of states in the process of their establishment and consolidation, or otherwise by the endeavors of political activists who seek to realize the nation-state ideal. Thus attempts have been made to develop national foundations for aspirant states by reviving or standardizing declining languages (Irish, Ukrainian) and by other cultural efforts; in the "new nations" there are many cases of newly invented national identities being promoted by political leaders.
and superimposed on the ethnic pluralism that exists within the established boundaries (India, Algeria, Ghana, etc.). Macpherson, who acknowledges that the creation of national loyalties in underdeveloped countries is usually undertaken by one-party authoritarian regimes, nevertheless regards this process as “democratic;” but it is not, in the senses of democracy admitted in this paper. Nor is such nation-making a feature only of the contemporary third world; the national unity of apparently clearly defined states such as Britain and France is actually the product of similar efforts by successful state-builders in the past. Thus the boundaries and common culture of the units that may be destined to become self-governing states is rarely natural or simply given, as nationalists hold, but rather is determined by political will. This will, however, is not and cannot be a democratic will, but that of rulers and activists; it is made effectual more often by their initiatives and by force than by any consultation of the preferences of the people concerned.

VI. GEOGRAPHY AND SALIENCE

Geographers have naturally been interested in political boundaries—their origins, consequences, and relationships to other features of the human geography of an area; several topics from this literature may be briefly considered. Geographers have called attention to the fact that precise, linear boundaries for political units, as a concept and a practice, are in large part distinctive of the modern West, and may be contrasted with the more fluid and indeterminate zones or frontiers that characterized Medieval Europe and some non-Western cultures. Well-defined territorial boundaries are probably to be associated with the emergence of the modern sovereign state of the Western type, with its claim to a monopoly of coercive authority within an area (and possibly also with the concept of private property as exclusive dominium in European civil law). This type of state, in any case, and this conception of state boundaries, have become universal norms, and thus it is primarily boundaries in this sense that pose the main practical problem for democratic theory.

The literature of political geography contains several normative suggestions regarding boundaries, though not especially ones that are advanced with concern for their conformity to democratic principles. The idea that the best boundaries are defensible ones is frequently proposed, and it is morally plausible if such boundaries would serve to decrease the likelihood of armed conflict between states. Three difficulties, however, attend this suggestion. The defensibility of borders varies to an extent with changes in military technology and thus does not offer a secure basis for boundaries over time. One country’s strong borders, moreover, are frequently its neighbor’s weak ones; defensible boundaries, however, would be mutually acceptable, and thus stable, only if they were equally defensible from both sides. There is no agreement, finally, on whether the goal of peace is more effectively advanced by boundaries that act as barriers between peoples, or by those that facilitate intercourse and hence mutual understanding. It thus appears that strategic considerations, while they may often (and perhaps properly) enter into boundary determinations, do not provide clear or generally applicable criteria. Geographers have also explored the relationship between boundaries and patterns of economic activity, a topic that suggests that desirable (in the sense of efficient) boundaries would be those that embrace regions that function as economic units. Economic patterns more often than not develop, however, in response to political boundaries previously established. More importantly, it would seem that facilitation of economic growth could never be a neutral or non-controversial principle for boundaries, since any alternative in this respect would tend to advance some interests at the expense of others. Thus while strategic and economic principles may occasionally offer useful considerations, neither very often provides generally acceptable criteria. Neither, furthermore, is democratic, except insofar as one can assume that military security or economic rationality is everyone’s (or the majority’s) paramount interest, and impute preferences accordingly.

The most-discussed geographical issue pertains to the claim that “natural boundaries” ought to delimit the territory of states, a claim that has at times had an important impact on political practice. The natural-boundary principle, moreover, can be ad-duced as an adjunct of democratic theory by being brought un-
der the more general heading of salience. Salient factors may be the basis of democratic choice, first, insofar as they determine the popular preferences that democracy must take into account. Secondly, resort to salient features of the objects among which a choice is to be made, merely because they are salient, can be defended in general as a rational basis for a collective decision in some circumstances. When it is important to everyone that a decision be made, but when it is a matter of comparative indifference to each party which alternative is chosen, salience provides a criterion that facilitates both agreement itself and observance of the agreed-upon rule or convention thereafter.38 Accepting the model of rational choice from which this conclusion emerges, a democrat might accept salience to settle disputes when, as in the case of boundaries, democratic procedures are unworkable. This reasoning may partly explain the attractiveness of the notion of natural boundaries, in the sense of conspicuous features of the physical terrain, as the basis for political boundaries.37

The first difficulty with this suggestion is of course that in many instances there simply are no obvious physical indicators for boundaries where, on other grounds, boundaries seem to be needed. A more serious, and usually decisive, objection, however, calls into question the very concept of salience or "naturalness" as an objective quality of geographical features. It is clear, to take the most famous case, that the alleged naturalness of the Rhine-Alps-Pyrenees frontiers for France was a distinctively French (not German or Italian) perception. Prescriptions and actions based on this claim were therefore manifestations of a particular political will, notwithstanding appeals to "nature" and inevitability; while this claim was advanced most vociferously to justify annexations of territory in the wake of the French Revolution, the anti-dynastic ideology of natural frontiers was evidently a product of the nationalistic rather than the democratic element in the Revolution.38 French expansionism led Fichte to reply that the "truly natural boundaries" of a nation are "internal," spiritual ones, marked externally by a common language—that is, to appeal from physical to what might be termed cultural salience, which is even less likely to offer grounds for consensual agreement.39 The objective quality of geographically salient features may be questioned more generally. Rivers have cartographic salience and have therefore sometimes been used by boundary-drawers, but in actuality rivers in inhabited regions more often unite than separate the people who live on the two banks. The case of Ireland casts doubt on the naturalness (to all observers) of islands as political units. That mountains form obvious dividers, it has been said, is the distinctive perception of lowlanders.40

Salience may be a suitable basis for collective choice when a given thing is equally salient—and salient as a solution to the same problem—to all concerned. Boundaries established on this basis, therefore, if they are to accord with democratic values, must be equally salient, as proper boundaries, to the people living on both sides. The salience of physical features as political boundaries, however, is likely to differ among the disputing parties depending on their particular historical associations and political ambitions. Salience, furthermore, figures in theories of rational choice as a means of selecting among comparatively indifferent alternatives, and thus it will not work when, as is often the case with boundaries, the alternatives are the objects of differing and intense preferences. For both of these reasons, then, attempted resort to "natural" boundaries comprises a mistaken and usually futile effort to deny the essentially political (and thus artificial) quality of boundaries and the political nature of their determination. In some cases political boundaries may be drawn so as to conform to conspicuous features of the terrain, in which case salience, in addition to custom, no doubt plays a role in sustaining them. But it is unlikely that appeal to salience could resolve a political dispute over proper boundaries.

VII. AUTONOMY

The concept of autonomy may finally be considered for whatever guidance it may offer on the question of appropriate boundaries for a democratic system. Autonomy denotes both self-governance from within and independence from external control, ideas that may be combined with democratic procedures for decision-making in order to capture more completely what is usually meant by a democratic system. Two suggestions
may be made regarding the bearing of autonomy on appropriate boundaries—neither of them, however, comprising a solution to the problem.

Democratic theorists have frequently raised the question whether it is desirable, in general, for a democratic community to be large or small. The latter has often appeared to be desirable from the point of view of realizing such democratic values as equality, fraternity, and participation. Dahl and Tufte pose this question more systematically as involving a trade-off between “citizen effectiveness” (a sense of real involvement in decision-making), which is attainable only in comparatively small units, and “system capacity,” which requires large ones. System capacity refers to the democratic system’s control over a significant agenda, or its ability to act effectively on all the matters that affect the interests of its members, and it is thus related to the concept of autonomy: a unit that is too small, however democratic it may be internally, will inevitably have some of the decisions on matters that affect it made by outsiders—or not made at all—and in either case its impotence renders it something less than a fully self-governing or autonomous democracy. The requirement of autonomy thus implies generally that democracies ought to be larger rather than smaller; more precisely it suggests that boundaries ought to be drawn such that each unit has the capacity to control all the matters that affect it. This principle, however, is unworkable: the “matters” for political decision are not always congruent with stable territorial boundaries; more seriously, “affectedness” is a controversial matter itself, invocation of which raises the difficulties discussed above in connection with the all-affected principle. Dahl and Tufte suggest that democratic theorists should think in terms of a hierarchy of different sizes and levels of government, in which the different goals and values of democracy could be realized in differing degrees at different levels; but this in itself does not offer a solution to the problem of how the various units ought to be bounded.

Deutsch relates the concept of the autonomy of a system to a “communication differential” between it and its environment: “among members or parts of an organization there should be more rapid and effective communication than with outsiders.” Deutsch mostly argues descriptively that self-govern-

ing organizations are marked by such differentials, which can be observed and measured, but the argument can take a prescriptive form: boundaries of political systems should be drawn in accordance with such differentials, thereby enabling the system to derive maximum benefit from a common set of historical memories, an unambiguous symbolic system, and facility of internal communications. This argument can, moreover, be applied with special force to democratic systems, since ease of communication is conducive to the deliberative process and the sense of common purpose that are especially important in democracies.

Deutsch’s suggestion accords with one of the common arguments relating nationality to democratic government: national sentiments, where they exist, facilitate communication within the national group, thereby conducing to the operation of democracy. It is also reminiscent of Dewey’s idea of a “public” as constituted by common perceptions of the consequences of collective actions, and thus by a conscious common interest in controlling these consequences, which is the function of the state. The proper scope of a state, Dewey suggests, corresponds to the extent of such shared perceptions, which no doubt can be related to concentration of communications. Something resembling this proposal may occasionally provide grounds for drawing boundaries, but its general applicability may be doubted. One difficulty is that communication differentials, and shared perceptions, like the incidence of national sentiments, are usually a consequence of political boundaries previously drawn and maintained for a period of time. National boundaries especially, once drawn, however arbitrarily, become important factors in determining subsequent patterns not only of economic and communications networks, but of people’s habits and outlooks as well. Another difficulty is that this criterion may conflict with that of autonomy in the sense of system capacity: it may be that pressing matters in need of political solution may be larger in scope than present concentrations of communications, which are related to the past existence of groups, and may be outdated, and thus that optimal boundaries would be more inclusive than indicated by this criterion. While the idea of a communication differential thus provides insights into how political systems function, and into
the meaning of autonomy, it is not likely to offer a clear principle for boundaries in many cases.

VIII. CONCLUSION

I shall conclude by reviewing the ways in which the issue of boundaries may be said to constitute a problem for democratic theory. First of all, democratic theory cannot itself provide any solution to disputes that may—and historically do—arise concerning boundaries. This is generally the case with versions of democratic theory, including those that emphasize participation, majority rule, consent, autonomy, and the all-affected principle, and it is likewise often the case with the principle of nationality that (though distinct) is often allied with democratic theory. It may not be surprising that democracy, which is a method for group decision-making or self-governance, cannot be brought to bear on the logically prior matter of the constitution of the group itself, the existence of which it presupposes. Nevertheless, strong claims are frequently made for democracy, both by its philosophical advocates and by ideologues and activists of the modern world; democracy is commonly put forward as the sole foundation of legitimate government, and as the sole legitimate method for making binding public decisions of all sorts. Thus that democratic methods cannot be brought to bear on the determination of political boundaries, even though this is usually an important political decision, about which people may have strong preferences, has the effect of rendering controversies over boundaries among the most intractable and bitter types of political conflict. In default of democratic theory, boundaries may occasionally be resolved in accordance with the principle of nationality, in which there is also widespread concurrence, or on the basis of physical features of the landscape. When these criteria also fail, like democracy, to offer clear guidance, it appears that our only choices are to abide by the arbitrary verdicts of history or war, or to appeal on an ad hoc basis to other principles, none of which commands general respect.

In addition to the fact that democratic procedures cannot accommodate preferences regarding boundaries as such, there is the secondary problem that the establishment of boundaries (undemocratic as this must be) generally predetermines the outcomes of substantive political issues. This is a matter that is conspicuous and therefore a source of overt controversy only when boundaries are in actual dispute, and a choice must somehow be made among various proposed alternatives; on these occasions the parties concerned can usually see that different resolutions of the boundaries will inevitably lead to different subsequent decisions and policies, and this can greatly enhance the bitterness of the conflict attending the boundary question. Boundaries generally determine substantive political outcomes, however, or at least significantly restrict the range of alternatives that will be considered and that have a realistic chance of being adopted—although this is not ordinarily recognized when boundaries are well-established and not themselves in dispute. A literal application of the all-affected principle calls attention in a vivid way to the arbitrariness of virtually all established political boundaries. Doubts may therefore arise concerning the validity of democratic procedures when it is considered that, however impeccable democratic decision-making may be within a given community, the outcomes are in a sense determined by the previous and inescapably undemocratic decisions that defined the community in the first place.

Before democratic procedures can begin to operate, boundaries must be established in one fashion or another. Continuing dissatisfaction with the boundaries as given can, finally, threaten the viability of the established democracy. It is often said that a successful democracy in practice depends on a consensus among its citizens on fundamental democratic values (equality, respect for persons, the right to dissent, and so forth) and on the validity of democratic procedures themselves. Beyond this a healthy democracy must also be characterized by a fundamental consensus on the boundaries of the system, an absence of which among the citizens will be accompanied by a sense of unfairness and alienation if not active efforts to overthrow the system, together with a repudiation of its "democracy" as a fraud. Similarly, a belief among outsiders that the boundaries are illegitimate may pose an external threat to the viability of the system. Thus it must be a matter of concern to all democrats—both the citizens of an existing democratic system and well-wishers of
democracy in general—that boundaries of democratic communities be generally acknowledged as fair and appropriate. In arguing, as I have, that democracy itself has no resources for bringing about such a state of affairs, I intend no disparagement of democratic principles in their proper sphere. The boundary problem does, however, reveal one of the limits of the applicability of democracy, and acknowledgment of this may have the beneficial effect of moderating the sometimes excessive claims that are made in its name.46

NOTES

1. This is one of the few questions of democratic theory that is not systematically discussed in J. Roland Pennock, Democratic Political Theory (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979).

2. See for example Carole Pateman, Participation and Democratic Theory (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970). Michael Margolis, Visible Democracy (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979), sees ways of enhancing opportunities to participate. Equality of participation, or of access to decision-making, may be held to be required.


4. Ibid., chap. 3.


7. As the preceding discussion shows, I take “collective preference” (in Braybrooke's terms) to comprise the essential meaning of democracy. If democracy is taken to mean a system that upholds personal rights, it may be that the boundary problem is less significant. It does not seem to me that welfare is conceptually related to democracy at all. See David Braybrooke, Three Tests for Democracy: Personal Rights, Human Welfare, and Collective Preference (New York: Random House, 1968). On welfare and the meaning of democracy, cf. Ernest Barker, Reflections on Government (London: Oxford University Press, 1942), p. 315.

8. “The boundary indicates certain well-established limits (the bounds) of the given political unit, and all that which is within the boundary is bound together, that is, is fastened by an internal bond.” Ladis K.D. Kristof, "The Nature of Frontiers and Boundaries," in Harm J. de Blij, Systematic Political Geography, 2nd ed. (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1973), p. 137.

9. This was Point II of Wilson's "Four Additional Points," July 4, 1918, quoted in Samuel Flagg Bemis, A Diplomatic History of the United States (New York: Holt, 1936), p. 635.


11. Cohen, Democracy, p. 27, says with respect to this problem that determination should be made "upon the merits of particular cases;" but this begs the question: who decides what the merits are? Cf. also p. 16: "It is no reasonable requirement to make of any democracy that it enlarge its community to include all of those who may prove to be concerned in the sequel of any of its acts." Of course, after the fact it would be too late in any case; but on Cohen's all-affected principle it is not clear why this would not have been a reasonable requirement before the decision was made.

12. When a decision-making unit is constituted for very limited purposes, as in a water conservancy district, it may be technically feasible, and appropriate, to assign the power of decision to those (and only those) who are affected. This assumes, however, that there are no external effects of such decisions, and that those excluded from the unit have no claim whatever to be included—a situation that is no doubt rare.

13. Democracy is a politia, in Aristotle's sense, defined primarily by the composition of its citizen body and by the conception of justice that determines the structure of authority within it. Territory is a secondary consideration in democratic theory, though not of course in the practice of modern states.

democracy of such congregations is consensual, due to both their
small size and the like-mindedness of the members—the latter a
fact due to the voluntaristic basis of membership. For a discussion
of similar themes, see Jane J. Mansbridge, "The Limits of Friend-
ship," in J. Roland Pennock and John W. Chapman, eds., *Nanos
XVI: Participation in Politics* (New York: Liefier-Atherton, 1975),
pp. 246–75.

16. David Hume, "Of the Original Contract," in *Essays Moral, Political,

17. Sidgwick considers the thought that, humanity being a natural
collectivity, the whole world is the national unit for democratic
government. Since such a government would have to be federal,
with numerous subdivisions, however, significant controversies
would continue regarding internal boundaries, as well as over the
distribution of powers among the different levels. Henry Sidg-
p. 218.

where history leaves off." Dahl also acknowledges the boundary

19. See Frederick G. Whelan, "Citizenship and the Right to Leave," *Ameri-

49; and Robert R. Bowie and Carl J. Friedrich, eds., *Studies in Fed-
eralism* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1954), pp. 765–66. The am-
ciable achievement of independence by a former colony may be
seen as a kind of successful secession, but in such cases the colony
was usually (in principle) regarded as a separate entity, destined
for eventual self-government. New boundaries are not drawn; the
bounded units rather by mutual consent acquire a new rela-
tionship.

21. Sidgwick, *Elements of Politics*, p. 224. National sentiments are, how-
ever, sometimes generated through a common identification with a
past state, real or legendary (the German Reich, Zimbabwe); see
Raymond D. Gastil, *Freedom in the World: Political Rights and Civil


23. John Stuart Mill, *Considerations on Representative Government*, with
*Utilitarianism* and *On Liberty* (London: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1910),
pp. 360–61.

24. Lindsay, *Essentials of Democracy*, p. 45; and Charles Frankel, *The
32.

25. Mill, *Representative Government*, pp. 363–64. Mill restricts the ap-
licability of the nationalist principle in a manner parallel to that
in which he limits the principle of liberty in *On Liberty*: it is not
for barbarians, or, it is subordinate to considerations of progress
and civilization.

26. Democratic political rights are declared in Art. 21 of the Universal
Declaration of Human Rights; the right of peoples to self-deter-
mination is added in the International Covenants on Civil and
Political and on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. For the
documents, see Maurice Cranston, *What Are Human Rights?* (New
York: Taplinger, 1976), pp. 91, 95, 108. Self-determination, how-
ever, may be understood by some members of the U.N. as con-
noting only anti-European colonialism, and not necessarily de-
94.

27. See generally Alfred Cobban, *The Nation State and National Self-

28. The disputes of the 1930s are enumerated in Richard Hart-
shorne, "A Survey of the Boundary Problems of Europe," in
Charles Carlyle Colby, ed., *Geographical Aspects of International Rela-
tions* (Freeport, N.Y.: Books for Libraries Press, reprint of 1938


15–14. See also Rupert Emerson, "Nationalism and Political

31. C.B. Macpherson, *The Real World of Democracy* (Oxford: Claren-

32. Charles Tilly, ed., *The Formation of National States in Western Europe*
and generally. Nationality is not especially important among the
factors that determined the success of the 25 states that emerged
by 1900 from the 500 or so candidates of 1500. War was the most
important factor in determining boundaries.

33. See Robert L. Solomon, "Boundary Concepts and Practices in
Southeast Asia," *World Politics* 23 (1970) 1–23. See, more gener-
ally, Stephen B. Jones, "Boundary Concepts in the Setting of Place


37. The concept of natural boundaries sometimes connotes militarily defensible features as well; in some nationalist theories the "naturalness" of certain geographical limits is related to the alleged destiny of a particular nation.


45. Only consider the extreme case: questions of social justice or the distribution of resources would be resolved differently than they are if the world were a single democratic unit. Cf. the argument of Charles R. Beitz, *Political Theory and International Relations*