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Abstract

What should the foundations of a legitimately demarcated demos be? How can we enable the demarcation of a demos around these values? These questions about the boundary problem have been central to the discussion. Thusfar, the focus has been on the inclusion of the people who have a right to participate in the decision-making process of a demos. However, this is not without concern. This thesis explores existing theories and the concerns with these theories from a deliberative democrat's perspective. I conclude that there is a problem with the democratic foundations of these theories. Therefore, rather than focussing primarily on inclusion, I prioritise the democratic values that are the foundation of a legitimately demarcated demos. I then proceed to suggest a language-centred approach, the principle of Linguistic Unity. The linguistic dimension has yet been overlooked in solutions to the boundary problem. Whereas it does serve a purpose in the protection and realisation of democratic values. Language ultimately brings individuals together in a political community. Agreeing on a common language upon entering a demos might thus be a reasonable condition to add to the discussion on the boundary problem.

Introduction

The role of language in a political community has thus far mostly been considered as cultural or pre-political. Language is essential to reach decisions in political debate, however, it also plays a complicated role in determining citizenship. Concerns with language revolve around the treatment of minorities and migrants and how groups of individuals can be silenced deliberately or accidentally when they are not allowed to participate in public debate. These are serious concerns; even so, existing theories fail to consider the opportunities that language offers to realise democratic values and protect them and there is no normative framework on the topic (Peled, 2021). This thesis argues for linguistic unity as a condition to achieve a

legitimately demarcated demos. I look at the role that language can play to protect the democratic foundations of the boundary problem.

The question this thesis aims to answer is as follows: given the commitments entailed by deliberative democracy, what might an appropriate solution to the boundary problem look like? This thesis interacts with the boundary problem and responds to existing theories to make a case for a principle of linguistic unity. An ideal model of linguistic unity is offered as a condition for solutions to the boundary problem to implement to strengthen their democratic foundations. I analyse the boundary problem and create four criteria that a solution to the boundary problem should meet to be democratic and legitimate. I propose that my principle of linguistic unity offers a solution to concerns with the level of democracy of existing theories and increase legitimacy. In this sense linguistic unity can serve as a means that guarantees that the criteria are met and that the democratic values of the boundary problem are protected. One could argue that most states already have a common language that all citizens speak. In that sense linguistic unity would already be present. However, unity of a language as a cultural phenomenon should not be confused with linguistic unity as a condition to protect democratic values and to legitimise a demos.

As mentioned in the research question, in this thesis, I assume the position of a deliberative democrat. This implies that I assume that the legitimate procedure of decision-making is deliberative and that every citizen should have an equal, free, and active part in the decision-making process for them to be legitimately subjected to the law. This position emphasises the importance of communication amongst citizens to arrive at a collective conception of the common good and for legitimate decision-making. Citizens are expected to participate equally and actively in the legislative process. Therefore, protecting democratic values that allow for deliberation is a central motivation for my argument.

A solution to the boundary problem will be an ideal model of a democratic demos. It considers "desirable properties that we want our political system to have, and then draw the boundaries so that units displaying these properties are created" (Miller, 2020, p. 6). Even though an ideal solution to the boundary problem faces practical and non-ideal concerns, it will offer a normative framework that is able to assess the legitimacy of current states based on democratic values.

Thus, ideal theory will be used as a method to build my theory. Ideal theory is concerned with the development of normative theories through the use of concepts (List & Valentini, 2016, p. 2). Considering the nature of the argument, ideal theory is the most fitting as it allows me to abstract from the real world and create a utopian, 'end-state' (Valentini, 2012, p. 654) type of theory that suggests an ideal state of democratic delimitation of a demos if all conditions are met. It is utopian in the sense that it suggests an "ideal of societal perfection" (Valentini, 2021, p. 654). Additionally, it is an end-state because it suggests a social ideal (p. 661). I will explore why linguistic unity is an effective way to demarcate a demos democratically. However, I do acknowledge feasibility constraints (p. 657). The main concern with ideal theory is that it is not sensitive enough of real-world conditions. In many ways this argument discusses spoken language and an 'ideal speech situation'. It assumes the equal ability of people to participate in deliberation. I use ideal theory as the method in this thesis to achieve the aim of creating a normative framework on the topic. I want to make explicit that I understand that not every individual has the opportunity to participate in deliberative activities. They might not be able to participate because of social relations, practical impediments (for example, a lack of leisure time or limited mobility), or disabilities that limit the capacity to use spoken language for communication. In an ideal situation the model in this thesis aims to eliminate many of the social injustices and promote equality and inclusivity. However, the feasibility of an ideal model will be limited by real-world complications. This thesis will not elaborate on the specific

qualities of the common language agreed upon in the demarcation of a demos for the sake of the general argument.

This thesis is structured as follow; the first chapter discusses the boundary problem. It analyses the origin and aims of the boundary problem and sets four criteria that a democratic solution to the boundary problem should meet. The second chapter evaluates existing boundary theories. It looks at the All Affected Interests principle, the All Subjected principle, nations and a global demos and measures them to the four criteria set in chapter 1. The third chapter then turns to the new solution that I introduce in response to the existing theories. It argues for the importance of language in a demos and it explains the principle of linguistic unity. Lastly, chapter 4 analyses the concerns with existing theories and shows how Linguistic Unity responds to these concerns. It also aims to discuss how readily the principle of Linguistic Unity can be incorporated in existing theories to strengthen their democratic foundations.

Chapter 1: The Boundary Problem

As aforementioned, this thesis engages with theories on the boundary problem. This first chapter sets out the understanding of the boundary problem that I use and distils the democratic values that form the foundation for a solution to the boundary problem.

1.1 What is the boundary problem?

The boundary problem asks how to determine the legitimacy of 'the people' in a democratic community (Song, 2012; Cabrera, 2014; Verschoor, 2018; Miller 2020; Spitzer, 2022). The boundary problem suggests that it is necessary to have a procedure or principle that determines how demoi are formed and "how democratic systems […] work, in the sense of translating the interests, opinions, judgements and so forth of their members into collective decisions" (Miller, 2020, p. 3). It aims to create conditions which demoi need to meet in order to be considered legitimate. There are different perspectives on this problem, some scholars argue that

"geographic participation boundaries simply should be accepted as found" (Cabrera, 2014, p. 225). However, due to migration and global interaction, who makes the laws and to whom the laws legitimately apply to becomes a complex question as the people affected by a law are no longer only part of the community living in a given geographical state (Verschoor, 2018). Additionally, social inequalities cause people to be subjected to laws while they are excluded from the decision-making process (Song, 2012, p. 42). They are excluded from the self-ruling demos, yet the laws do apply to them. This exclusion may be based on gender, race, ability, or economic positions. Nonetheless, they offend the democratic values that form the foundation for a legitimate demos. As "there is no sign of agreement on a solution" (Miller, 2020, p. 2) it is relevant to analyse what a solution to the boundary problem needs.

In short, boundary problem theories ask, "how to decide who legitimately make up 'the people' and hence are entitled to govern themselves" (Song, 2012, p. 39). The answer to this question suggests who can legitimately make laws that apply to the collective and to whom these laws apply (Abizadeh, 2012, p. 868). The extent of the power of these laws should be bound democratically and legitimately. In order to understand when a demos is constituted democratically, it is essential to know what underlying values are considered to be democratic (Song, 2012, p. 42).

1.2 Democracy and democratic values

The boundary problem is essentially a democratic problem. Democracy is understood as the rule of the people (Song, 2012, p. 39; Owen, 2012, p. 129; Verschoor, 2018, p. 3). The people are entitled to autonomy and self-rule. For democratic legitimacy it is essential that the people affected by the laws and decisions of a demos are active members of it and co-author the laws. When it is no longer the case that the laws within a demos are authored by the citizens or that they apply to people outside of the demos, it is faced with the boundary problem.

Democracy theory suggests values that are to be protected in order to treat people as moral beings. Democracy, therefore, is considered to be the best form of government that a demos should aim for to safeguard the rights of the people and aid in opportunity to realise their idea of a common good (Miller, 2020, p. 3). The boundary problem recognises that there are shortcomings in the level of democracy that is currently maintained in political communities. Solutions aim to solve this democratic issue and protect the democratic values when a demos is demarcated on the basis of the conditions created in these solutions.

This thesis is built on the following conception of people and communities. I understand individuals to regard themselves as free, equal, moral, and autonomous persons (Verschoor, 2018, p. 11; Song, 2012, p. 43). They regard others as being worthy of respect (Chambers, 1996, p. 3). People are interested in collecting themselves in a political community to realise their understanding of the common good in an efficient way (Verschoor, 2018, p. 16). In order to realise the common good in a political community, people come together to make decisions on what needs to be done to fulfil their aim. Democracy thus centres "around the ideas of a collectively self-governing people and collective self-government aimed at the realisation of the people's common good" (Verschoor, 2018, p. 15). These two concepts of individual autonomy through self-government and the realisation of the common good are intrinsically connected in the democratic demarcation of a demos (Verschoor, 2018, p. 19). To respect individuals as equal, moral, and autonomous persons, every citizen of the political community "should be able to understand themselves as the authors of the coercive laws to which they are subjected" (Verschoor, 2018, p. 16). In order to realise this within a political community, it is compelling to engage in deliberation with other members of the demos to arrive at a shared idea of the common good and decide upon laws that bring about this idea efficiently (Chambers, 1996, p. 9).

1.3 Criteria

Theories on the boundary problem aim to answer the legitimacy question in the boundary problem. The traditional and historical demarcation of a demos is determined by state borders and the place of one's birth and national identity (Song, 2012). However, other theories on the boundary problem aim to find an alternative to this demarcation as it is often lacking in democratic values and citizenship is determined randomly. The reason for demarcating the demos in an alternative way is "in service of enabling appropriate participation and democratic control" (Cabrera, 2014, p. 229). I will further discuss boundary theories in chapter 2. A democratic solution attempts to solve the undemocratic issues that states face and provide an alternative that protects the values that are under pressure.

The solution to the boundary problem determines who is to be included and excluded from the decision-making process and the effect of these decisions and on what grounds. It also determines who the author of a law is and, therefore, to be subjected to coercion of a law. Three of the most important values of democracy are equality, freedom, and autonomy. This means that no citizen holds more power than another, that everyone is free to give their perspective on an issue and participate and that every citizen co-authors the laws that they are subjected to through deliberative procedures. Besides these democratic values, another central value to the democratic boundary problem is self-determination. From this analysis of the boundary problem, I want to suggest the following criteria for a solution to the boundary problem.

The first criterion is the defence of the basic democratic values of equality and freedom as "[p]olitical equality is plainly a core component of democracy" (Miller, 2020, p. 6). I specify these values as equal status as a political actor and the equal opportunity to participate in the realisation of the common good. Secondly, everyone should be autonomous and should reasonably be able to consider themselves co-authors to the laws that they are subjected to as "the moral imperative is respect for individual autonomy" (Cabrera, 2014, p. 226). This ties

into having political equality and extends to the third criterion as the concept of collective self-rule, which is "an extension of individual self-rule, where individuals collectively author the laws under which they will live" (Cabrera, 2014, p. 228). The third criterion is that all people should be involved in the deliberation on an idea of the common good that is to be realised within the demos. The desire to realise the common good and be treated respectfully are intrinsically connected (Verschoor, 2018). An ideal unit would aim for the "fulfilment of all or nearly all of the fundamental interests of each person [which is] connected with the fulfilment of all or nearly all of the fundamental interests of every other person" (Christiano, 2006, p. 85). Every individual would reasonably want to live their best life through the protection of a demos. Lastly, a solution to the boundary problem should not only focus on how people are legitimately included or excluded, but it should also allow for self-determination. Collective self-determination allows people to consent as a group and as individuals to the rights and duties within a political community (Spitzer, 2022). Allowing for self-determination respects the rights of individuals and gives them the opportunity to determine their status as a political actor (Spitzer, 2022, p. 247).

Chapter 2: Solutions to the Boundary Problem

In this chapter I will discuss existing theories and evaluate if they match the criteria set in chapter 1. These theories are acclaimed solutions to the boundary problem, yet I will argue that they fall short on the protection of democratic values and the opportunity for the realisation of the common good and self-determination. This is where linguistic unity steps in to respond to these concerns and to function as a condition to guarantee that the set requirements are met.

2.1 Evaluating existing theories

The criteria for a solution to the boundary problem set in chapter 1 were the following: all citizens should be treated free and equal, they should be autonomous and co-authors of the laws

to ensure their autonomy, they should be able to realise their idea of the common good in a demos formed through collective self-determination. These criteria cover the most important moral and democratic values that a solution to the boundary problem should found itself on in order to suggest a legitimate procedure of demarcating the demos. The deliberative democratic perspective in this thesis has high expectations of the level of agency of the citizens; however, it is the most legitimate manner of political decision-making. It encourages equal regard for the desires and interests of all citizens through deliberation between free and moral beings. This perspective will affect the evaluation of the degree of citizen-participation that theories offer.

I will evaluate four popular theories on the boundary problem. Generally, there are three trends within boundary theory. Interests in "legitimacy in politics beyond the nation-state" has grown (Agné, 2010, p. 382). Two major theories that follow this trend and that suggest an alternative demarcation of the demos are the All Affected Interests principle and the All-Subjected principle. A second trend defends the nation-state in response to these theories. Song (2012) explains why nations or states remain the best way to delimit the demos. This will be the third theory I take into consideration. Lastly, the third trend regards a global demos or a world-state as a possible legitimate demarcation. Opposing Song (2012), Agné (2010) makes a case for a procedure to legitimise a global demos. All of these theories are widely discussed in boundary problem theory. Therefore, it is worth analysing if they fall short in the criteria used in this thesis and how they could be strengthened by incorporating linguistic unity in their theories.

2.2 All Affected Interests Principle

The first liberal democratic solution to the boundary problem is the All Affected Interests principle (AAIP). This principle argues that "[e]veryone who is affected by the decisions of a government should have the right to participate in that government" (Dahl, 1970, p. 49). It is an inclusionary principle that centres around "the root democratic idea that the people

appropriately rule over themselves" (Shapiro, 1999, p. 37). This principle attempts to include all individuals affected by a decision to have a vote in the decision-making process as being affected by a decision implies that one has a right to co-author it. AAIP aims to solve the boundary problem by expending the boundaries to all people affected. It assumes that legitimacy is reached through including everyone who experiences the effects of a decision, regardless of their connection to the demos.

The appeal of this theory is that it seems to be a straightforward and effective solution to the problem. The original concern is that people do not have a say in the decision that affect them, so the solution is that they should have that right. Yet, people have no agreement on what they deem good and how they are going to realise that in a way that includes the people who wish to participate from the start.

Concerns with this view are that it is over-inclusive and participating in this manner need not be the same thing as having your interests in the common good represented. Who determines who is affected or not and can you then participate in all the governments that you are affected by or is this limited? This is a commonly discussed incoherence in AAIP. It is difficult to determine "whose interests are actually affected by an outcome [because it] depends on what the outcome turns out to be" (Owen, 2012, p. 132). It is over-inclusive because it allows all people affected to have a vote. Arguably, there is little delimitation of this demos as the effects of a decision reach further than ever due to globalisation. The risk of the extent of this principle is that when everyone has to be accounted for no one is really accounted for and creating and realising the common good is complicated. It is not guaranteed that having "the right to participate instrumentally" (Miller, 2020, p. 4) means that the outcome is in their favour. This concern applies to the All Affected Interests principle as well as to the global demos theory.

There are many concerns with AAIP according to the criteria set in chapter 1. That the people should be free and equal is met by this principle in the extreme. People are allowed a

great degree of equal freedom, but the equal status of citizens cannot be ensured because of the paradox in the theory. Who is affected by a law depends on the outcome. Therefore, there is little room for deliberating on a conception of the common good and working towards realising it. The aim of AAIP is that people co-author the laws that apply to them, but when you do not know if it affects you beforehand, it is difficult to establish one's status in the legislative process. Lastly, as AAIP allows for a flexible demos. Consequently, this means that no collective can demarcate themselves as a demos and limit citizenship and responsibility to the people in the demos.

2.3 All Subjected Principle

The All Subjected principle (ASP) shares many of the values discussed in this thesis as its justification of subjection to laws is similar to that of theories of deliberative democracy. It requires the demos to include all individuals subjected to decisions (Miller, 2020, p. 4). There are two interpretations of this principle. The focus can be on including those who "are actually or potentially subjected to political coercion, meaning 'direct physical force'" (Cabrera, 2014, p. 231) or on the legal force of the law. Coercion by a law or decision can only be legitimate when someone has bounded themselves to that decision and the body that makes the decisions (Cabrera, 2014, p. 231). It highly values an individual's autonomy and status as a political actor. Some of a person's autonomy is compromised by a binding decision, as "subjection carries with it the risk of domination, and the ability to speak and vote, directly or indirectly, on the rules that will be applied provides some protection […] against that risk" (Miller, 2020, p. 5). Therefore, ASP aims to give an individual power over what laws they are subjected to. ASP also covers some of the concerns that AAIP faced. ASP offers a better answer "to the constituency question than AAIP" (Miller, 2020, p. 5). The group of individuals make up the demos by subjecting themselves to a decision or a law. In theory, this clearly limits those who are included in this demos and those who are not. The law applies to the people who chose to

be subjected to it. Additionally, because their autonomy is valued the laws should represent the interests of the people subjected to it in order to respect the people in this demos. Thus, the All Subjected principle suggests a more constraint version of the All Affected Interests principle. It bases itself on similar moral and democratic values as the criteria in this thesis, yet, only after determining their inclusion principle.

I would argue that this theory has a high regard for the autonomy of individuals and allows them to co-author the laws. All individuals should agree to the laws that subject them. Therefore, these laws are likely to represent their conception of the common good. These two criteria are satisfied by this principle. There are two concerns with ASP. Firstly, what this theory seems to be missing is a means to ensure the equal status of citizens and an equal opportunity for them to participate. People may subject themselves to these laws but there is no means installed to ensure that everyone can participate equally and voice their perspectives on the matter. Without this the All Subjected principle allows for one person or a group to take over and enforce laws as long as the people subject themselves to it. When that is the case, the equal representation of their interests cannot be guaranteed. In a way this is included in its proposal as it centres around subjection to the laws of a government. This leads to the second concern. It is hard to determine whether ASP meets the criterion of collective self-determination as it discusses one's subjection to a government or law-making body. ASP appears to assume that "domain and scope" (Miller, 2020, p. 5) have been established. With pre-determined governments, it is difficult to establish a demos based purely on democratic values.

2.4 States

These previous principles emerged as the traditional demarcation into nation states became complicated and illegitimate. Contrastingly, state-centred theories still make a case for themselves. They assume that "national sentiment is a necessary condition of participatory rule, and that it provides the most appropriate basis for setting participation boundaries" (Cabrera,

2014, p. 243). Song (2012) addresses concerns of size and stability of alternative theories and principles. She argues that, historically, states are "the primary instrument for securing the substantive rights and freedoms constitutive to democracy" (p. 58) and that people within states have a higher regard for each other due to being part of a pre-determined collective (p. 59). States are stable collectives that have organised institutions to "serve legislative, executive, and judicial functions necessary for the creation and maintenance of the system of rights" (Song, 2012, p. 58). Bounded demoi by states appear to be a tried and tested solution that, according to Song (2012), provide the best protection for democratic values.

The demarcation of a demos based on territorial grounds or cultural grounds, like a national identity are pre-political. A central concern for the boundary problem is with whether "a national sentiment approach, or any related approach focused on drawing participatory boundary lines around persons who share some set of characteristics, can overcome the democratic paradox" (Cabrera, 2014, p. 243). As it is demarcated pre-politically, there is no democratic procedure in the establishment of the demos. Additionally, a state does not need to be democratic, nor do democratic values need to be the basis for the formation of a state. One of Songs concerns is how political equality can be guaranteed in a demos that is prone to change (2012, p. 57). I would argue that when a demos is pre-politically determined, there is no guarantee that all inhabitants of the territory are equally regarded, and the demos has equal regard for their interests. Therefore, political equality, freedom and autonomy are also challenged in a static demos, like a territorially determined one. The first and second criteria are not necessarily met in a demos. Similarly, the fourth criterion is challenged, there is little option for self-determination. Individuals end up in a demos that they may not have shaped themselves. The third criterion of the realisation of a common good benefits from a bounded demos. Undeniably, a territorial demos imposes clear boundaries on the demos and when people

are solidary with each other, they are likely to be motivated to realise their conception of the common good.

2.5 Global Demos

The idea of a global demos has gained popularity as globalisation keeps expanding the world with which individuals interact. The motivation is similar to that of AAIP. A global demos aims to be as inclusive as possible. Agné (2010) understands democratic legitimacy to be depended on including the right people. A global demos' "democratic legitimacy is safe from objection that the procedure operates on an illegitimate policy of exclusion" (Agné, 2010, p. 389). The theory starts from a conception of democracy that people are bound together in a political community through the common characteristic of humanity (Agné, 2010, p. 390) and aims to make democratic citizenship a global phenomenon (Held, 1995). A global demos takes democratic values as the core of what determines citizenship and concludes that in essence every individual is part of a global demos with an overarching global law. Theories suggesting a global solution seem to oppose the idea that boundaries in a globalised world can be justified in the first place. Rather than legitimising boundaries it solves the boundary problem by democratic equality which can only be realised in a global demos. When everyone is included in a global demos, there are no minorities as everyone is equally a citizen (Agné, 2010, p. 398). Additionally, because everyone is already included, "there is no reason to require that people must exercise their right to participate in global procedures of foundational politics, as long as they have an equal opportunity to do so" (Agné, 2010, p. 403).

The principle of a global demos is appealing for its regard for values of humanity and inclusion that form the basis of this theory. It argues that people can only be absolutely free and equal when they are global citizens. However, as they are not expected to all participate in the legislative process their status as a political actor is not protected. Additionally, they are stripped of their autonomy. In a globalised demos it is impossible for all individuals to participate in the

legislative process and come to decisions that represent their interests. Song (2012) defends her theory against the global demos theory by stating that "[c]oncerns about the size of the demos and its impact on the realisation of political equality might loom large in the current system of territorial states, but they would loom much larger under a world state" (p. 61). This statement marks a serious concern with the global demos theory. In a global demos voicing one's opinion or arriving at an idea of the common good is nearly impossible. Therefore, the second and third criteria are not met. The concerns with AAIP also apply to the global demos theory. Because of the unbounded demos that it suggests, no collective is able to form a demos and separate itself from the global community.

Chapter 3: Linguistic Unity

People are moral beings that should be treated as equal, free, and autonomous beings and will strive for the realisation of their common good. Therefore, they will want to enter a political community that guarantees the protection of their equality and their liberties while also making it possible to realise the common good in an efficient and consensual-prone manner. A solution to the boundary problem should be founded on these values and be able to protect them and the realisation of the common good. This requires a solution that prioritises democratic values. I propose a condition to incorporate in existing theories to reach these democratic ends. Existing theories offer to little protection of democratic values as they are usually founded upon a conception of legitimate inclusion rather than legitimate democracy. The principle of Linguistic Unity offers a condition that can solve the concerns, provides a mechanism to protect these values, and allows for the realisation of the common good. In this chapter I discuss the role of language in a demos and what a principle of linguistic unity might look like.

3.1 The role of language

Previous studies have considered the role of language in democracy. However, the role of language has been neglected in the discussion on solving the boundary problem. Other accounts mention language as a cultural phenomenon, a ground for shared political identity, or as an argument for geographic demarcation of demoi (Abizadeh, 2012; Song, 2012; Cabrera, 2014). In a recent article Peled (2021) relates language to an individual's status within a demos. Before Peled (2021), no previous studies take language as a means to achieve the democratic goals of the boundary problem. Language is ultimately at the basis of human interaction. When one can voice their opinions or perspectives and understand other's perspectives, their interests can be taken into consideration and their idea of the common good can be realised. From a moral standpoint, it is therefore important that there are procedures in place that allow every citizen within a demos to be heard and included in the legislative process. These democratic values enabled by language match the criteria of the boundary problem.

Peled (2021) ultimately argues for the linguistic dimension to the boundary problem. He states that a demos should primarily be a "communicative body" (Peled, 2021, p. 826). Peled is supported by Van Parijs (2011), who describes a demos as "an arena for deliberation and mobilisation" (p. 27) and by Chambers (1996). One's status as a political actor is directly related to one's status as a linguistic actor (Peled, 2021, p. 831). Peled even claims that "overlooking the linguistic substance of the boundary problem […] risks producing a highly depoliticized account not only of the boundary problem but more generally of the demos itself" (p. 826). The aim of a democratic demos is that every citizen is free and that all citizens have equal opportunity to participate. According to Peled (2021), this is related to one's capabilities as a linguistic actor. I share his conception of a demos in this thesis.

3.2 Language and the boundary problem

Peled claims that the linguistic dimension is of such importance that the boundary problem could be considered to be a linguistic boundary problem. Language is what gives citizens agency within a demos. The linguistic boundary problem should be understood as the question of the linguistic substance when demarcating a demos. In other words, what decisions do people make on language as they are delimiting a demos?

I propose that it is reasonable for people to agree upon a common language for public debate and political deliberation. This is what I call the principle of Linguistic Unity. The following question arises: what is meant by linguistic unity? It implies that one language is central to the demos to protect the rights of its citizens and demarcate citizenship. It could be that people entering a demos based on the same democratic values choose a language that is already familiar to most or a language that is a mix between other languages, as long as everyone agrees on it and is able and willing to participate in that language. My motivation for a linguistic and deliberative solution is captured by Cabrera in his description of the rights-approach (2014). He argues that "[d]emocratic deliberation, augmented by mechanisms to ensure the inclusion of the poor and others whose voice are often muted in public dialogue, certainly would have a role to play in publicising the insights of all persons in a policy regarding the identification, provision and appropriate interpretations of rights protections" (p. 238). The rights and interests of all individuals within a demos can best be ensured by a linguistic approach to the boundary problem.

Abizadeh (2012) refers to Fichte with an example of how the boundary problem can be solved by the concepts of nations referring to the language of the state (p. 869). Fichte argues that a common language binds people as a nation, which makes it a pre-political ground for a democratic boundary. I emphasise that my argument for linguistic unity does not have the same conception of a common language. Rather than seeing a common language as a cultural aspect

of a pre-political nation, my conception of linguistic unity understands language as a pragmatic means to democratic ends. Van Parijs (2011) argues for a universality in language that will enhance social justice in an otherwise chaotic, democratic system. Public debate and a demos are "facilitated, indeed made possible, by the availability of a common language" (p. 28). Speaking a common language in public debate allows for legitimate political deliberation between citizens. Language is a vessel through which the normative values of a demos can be realised rather than a factual cultural or pre-political ground that delimits the demos. Ultimately, the normative values are what demarcates the demos and linguistic unity is a necessary condition to agree upon when constituting a legitimate political body to prioritise and ensure the protection of democratic values and the realisation of the common good. This makes the principle of Linguistic Unity a condition of the legitimate demarcation of a demos.

Surely, when people have agreed upon a common language in their demos, it becomes a part of their political identity. In that sense the language becomes part of the culture of that political community. Nonetheless, I suggest a different order of cause-and-effect to this approach. I suggest that this political identity based on cultural factors only emerges after the creation of a demos based on shared democratic values enabled by agreeing on linguistic unity.

3.3 Concerns

Academics that have looked at language and democracy address concerns and dilemmas about how language affects democracy. The role of language remains complicated, especially within empirical cases. These concerns mostly relate to the treatment of minorities within a linguistic majority or the neglect of people who are excluded from participation in the demos. These are concerns arising from demoi that are originally delimited geographically or on cultural grounds and they show that the democratic values are oppressed in these cases.

3.3.1   Treatment of minorities

The first concern is brought up by Peled (2021). He aims to highlight that it is necessary to be attentive of what makes the everyday experiences different for linguistic minorities or pluralist societies (p. 833). He makes a persuasive case for the importance of language in political decision-making and the injustices that these minorities face.

A linguistically united demos aims to avoid linguistic minorities within the demos when it comes to political deliberation. The way that linguistic minorities or multilingualism usually emerges is when a demos is demarcated on different boundaries than linguistic ones. When borders are drawn territorially, linguistic minorities might find themselves within a demos where they cannot participate. When collectives have the option to self-determine their demos linguistically, linguistic communities can agree upon that language and form their own demos.

3.3.2   Migration

Another concern is migration and the protection of minorities (Cabrera, 2014, p. 226). What if people wish to move from one demos to another or what if they have to due to a violent climate in their own demos? One of the criteria for a solution to the boundary is self-determination. People should have the freedom to opt for a demos that protects them as moral, equal, and free beings and where they can realise their idea of the common good.

The main concern with migration is that it can be difficult for people to integrate into a different political community. Language is one of the factors that makes it difficult to integrate. This is a concern that is hard to account for in my theory. Because it proposes an ideal model where everyone has the option to agree upon a common language when demarcating a demos and afterwards. If they were to move to a different demos, they would know that that includes consenting to the common language and engaging publicly in that language to fulfil your duty as a citizen. Besides, it assumes a deliberative democracy where chances are slimmer that one

person or a small group of people takes over and forces others out through violence or scarcity. Moving to a different demos would in most cases be voluntary. Relating this to real-world causes of migration, this account lacks a solution that accounts for involuntary migration.

3.3.3   Social positions

A third concern is inequality between groups within a population (Song, 2012). There are many cases where one's status as a citizen is not only determined by them joining a demos but also by random factors, like gender, race, or ability. These people are affected by the laws in the demos, but they are not treated as equal citizens and they are not included as political actors. Whether this comes from ideas of status, purpose or hate, the injustice of this comes back to equality, autonomy, and self-determination. Everyone has a right to be treated as equal citizens and random traits have no place in the demarcation of a demos. Through linguistic unity, this thesis aims to ensure that every person can participate in the deliberation process and be treated as an equal member of the demos.

3.4 Argument for linguistic unity

These concerns are valid, real, and far from exhaustive. There are endless cases in the world where these injustices take place or where people have an unequal status as a citizen based on who they are or where they come from. This inequality is worrying because the aim is to have demoi where every citizen is equal, able to participate and can determine for themselves to which community they want to belong.

That is why the boundary problem is still relevant and why normative solutions based on moral values are valuable to recognise and point at these inequalities. My principle strives for equality and an equal status of all citizens. The rights of all individuals are clear and the condition for "participatory inclusion" (Cabrera, 2014, p. 233) is demarcated by their consent to the language used in the legislative process. Using a moral ground, I argue for linguistic unity

to protect the most important values and to prevent injustices that hurt the democratic nature of a demos. However, it is an ideal model, suggesting a 'perfect speech situation'. Therefore, it does not necessarily offer an absolute solution to these real-world injustices.

Nevertheless, taking the understanding developed here and in the first chapter of why people would enter a demos and under what conditions, it is reasonable for people to agree on linguistic unity upon entering a demos. I argue that linguistic unity demarcates the demos democratically and legitimately as it allows for the protection of equal rights and the autonomy of individuals. These values are necessary for a demos to be democratic and they cannot be ensured without the equal states of individuals as political actors.

Chapter 4: Incorporating Linguistic Unity

The previous chapters showed how existing boundary theories do not meet the criteria that a solution to the boundary problem should meet and I introduced the principle of linguistic unity in response to these concerns. If existing theories would incorporate the principle of linguistic unity in the foundation of what demarcates a demos, these theories could provide a better solution as Linguistic Unity provides a solution for the concerns raised. This chapter summarises the concerns with existing theories and how Linguistic Unity offers a solution to these concerns. Lastly, I will address how readily existing theories can incorporate Linguistic Unity.

4.1 Concerns with existing theories

Existing theories fall short in protecting the democratic foundations of a demos. Some theories divert more from the criteria set in chapter 1 compared to others, however, they would all benefit from a condition to strengthen the protection of democratic values.

The most prominent concern with the first criterion of freedom and equality is that there is no mechanism in place to ensure that all citizens are treated equally. Most theories seem to

assume that because citizens are free from coercion or because they are free to participate, they all have an equal status as citizens. Yet, nothing ensures that everyone has the opportunity to participate and that they will be treated equally when participating. As Miller (2020) argued, political equality is the basis for a legitimate demos (p. 6). Therefore, theories need to show how they will protect equality and prevent certain individuals to oppress or silence others.

Secondly, autonomy is at stake when theories are overly inclusive. Agné (2010) warns about being overly exclusive and not allowing individuals who wish to become a citizen to do so. However, if the aim is for all citizens to be co-authors of their own laws (Cabrera, 2014), all individuals within a demos should be able to deliberate in the legislative process. Respect for individual autonomy requires all citizens to be reasonably engaged in the decision-making process and support the decisions reached. Theories that are overly inclusive are incapable of guaranteeing consensual-prone decisions. They assume that individuals are able to participate and have no objections against the law when they decide to not use this right. Yet, when the sheer size of the demos causes people not to participate, it disrespects individual autonomy. Individual interests cannot be properly taken into consideration; thus, one may question which interests are represented.

The third criterion of the realisation of the common good benefits from a demarcated collective of individuals. A collective's conception of the common good can only be established when it is determined who is willing to accept this conception and to whom the obligations that come with the law apply. The realisation of the common good becomes complicated when outsiders who feel affected by the laws demand to have a say in the legislative process without commitment to the duties of the demos or when it is previously unclear who commits themselves to the realisation of the common good. They have not participated in the creation of the conception of the common good but meddle with the realisation of this established

conception. As a consequence, no one can be sure of the realisation of their conception of the common good.

Lastly, the opportunity to collectively determine a demos faces similar concerns as the realisation of the common good. Collective self-determination allows for individual rights and duties (Spitzer, 2022) that benefit all the previous criterion. Theories that extent rights to people outside of the demos or that claim that exclusion is illegitimate do not meet this criterion and thus complicate the realisation of the other criteria.

The shortcomings of these theories illustrate the complex nature of a demos and the difficulty to demarcate a demos in a legitimate way that respects all the core values of democracy. All of these problems are interlinked. From this analysis, I conclude that existing theories experience difficulty with conditioning their principles to protect the democratic foundations in favour of including as many individuals as possible. I argue for the protection of the democratic values first. I am concerned with underlying desire to include everyone without sufficient regard for what this means for the democratic values of the boundary problem. This is why offering a means to strengthen these theories is valuable and relevant. Incorporating linguistic unity into these theories might bring them closer to an ideal solution to the boundary problem. This overview of the problems that the democratic criteria face allows me to now turn to the principle of Linguistic Unity again and show how it solves the problems that other theories face.

4.2 LU in response

The general concept of Linguistic Unity has been explained in chapter 3. Here I want to respond to the specific criteria and explain how my principle solves the concerns with the other theories. First of all, the principle of linguistic unity (LU) offers a clear mechanism that prevents arbitrary exclusion of social groups. Rather than assuming the equal status of individuals as political

actors, LU takes on Peled's assertion that one's status as a political actor is related to one's status as a linguistic actor (2021). Therefore, the principle of Linguistic Unity suggests that all individuals entering the demos commit to a common language for public debate so that an individual's interests cannot be neglected without them being able to have a say in the legislative process. The aim is that no social group can be silenced deliberately or accidentally without them noticing as all citizens have a shared understanding of the issues and considerations. Having this condition in place in the demos creates an explicit norm for the equal status of citizens that is not hopeful or random, but qualitative.

Secondly, it might be fairly obvious how LU creates the opportunity for perfect autonomy. Simply put, when everyone in the demos is able to participate in the legislative process and has their interests taken into consideration, they co-author the laws that then apply to them. Thus, they are autonomous within their demos. In chapter 2 I referred to Miller (2020) who brought up the concern that the right to participate instrumentally is not enough to guarantee that the outcome is in one's favour (p.4). In response to this I argue that in a deliberative democracy where there is linguistic unity, all individuals do not only have the right to participate instrumentally, but they have the opportunity to be an active part in the legislative process. Deliberative democracy allows for well-considered and consensus-prone decisions. In practice, linguistic unity makes this ideal of deliberative democracy feasible. Rather than voting for representatives or tacitly consenting to the laws of a government, self-rule is respected when the principle of Linguistic Unity is incorporated.

Linguistic Unity solves the concerns with the third criterion for a similar reason. A demos creating a conception of the common good that they strive to realise benefits from a shared understanding of morality, values, and issues. Besides, everyone has a right as a political actor to have their interests heard and represented in this conception. This is where LU steps in to enable individuals to come to the common good and to agree upon conditions and duties that

come with citizenship. LU is a reasonable condition to agree upon because it allows for an effective and democratic creation and realisation of the common good. A common language in deliberation creates an interest in each other and opportunities to cooperate.

Lastly, one of the ideas of the principle of Linguistic Unity is that it allows individuals who wish to form a demos together to do so based on agreement on a common language. It does not prescribe who is to be included or not based on territory, pre-political characteristics or on a government. The aim of LU is that a collective that is willing can determine the boundaries of a demos. It thus allows for collective self-determination arguing that it is reasonable to agree on a common language when delimiting the demos because of the democratic foundations of a legitimate demos.

In short, in response to the criteria of boundary theory and the concerns with existing theories, Linguistic Unity is a simple and elegant condition to incorporate in boundary theory. If it is accepted as a principle of boundary theory, other theories would be encouraged to incorporate linguistic unity. It improves the protection of democratic values and is therefore able to strengthen existing theories. The following question arises: how readily can Linguistic Unity be incorporated?

4.3 Incorporating LU

The incorporation of Linguistic Unity might be tricky. A change of core values of the existing theories is required for them to incorporate this principle. This alteration affects some of the basic principles of theories. For example, the boundedness of the demos in some of the theories will be radically impaired by the principle of linguistic unity. Additionally, it limits the flexibility or adaptability of citizenship that these theories advocate. Besides this shift, incorporating LU will primarily require a shift from reasoning from a concept of inclusion to reasoning from democratic foundations. LU prioritises the protection of a certain level of

democracy in the demarcation and the legislative process within the demos. Inclusion is an important part in this, however, including as many people as affected or everyone who shares certain characteristics pre-politically is not fundamental to this aim. Existing theories do take this as a fundament and aim to be democratic afterwards. However, as the previous paragraphs show this leads to illegitimacy that LU can solve. If the principle of Linguistic Unity is accepted as a condition for the legitimacy of a demos and existing theories do not incorporate it, they will have to respond to the concerns raised in this thesis to explain their perspective on these democratic values and defend the legitimacy of their proposals.

Further research into the implementation and feasibility of incorporating linguistic unity is required to shape the principle in more detail. For example, the principle of Linguistic Unity focuses on how the laws affect people within the demos and how the foundation of the demos and the relations between citizens can be democratic and legitimate. This intra-demos focus might cause concern on how a linguistically bounded demos interacts with other demoi and how global issues would be resolved. In short, I would argue that the solution of global crises, like climate change or conflict, affect all individuals. Therefore, people are likely to wish for a solution that aids them in continuing to realise their conception of the common good. Consensus on the decision to strive for a global solution, allows for demoi to resolve inter-demoi crises while staying in line with the principle of Linguistic Unity.

On another note, a prominent discussion amongst scholars concerned with the boundary problem is the democratic paradox. The question of how a demos can be founded democratically and who decides who can decide on the demarcation of the demos. The difficulty of the democratic rule by the people is that "there can be no democracy prior to the delimitation of the people" (Agné, 2010, p. 382). In response, Agné (2010) suggests that scholars limit the understanding of the boundary problem to the situation in which people live and act politically (p. 383). The scope of this thesis limits itself to this suggestion and the

discussion so far, yet I encourage further investigation into the principle of Linguistic Unity and whether it has an answer to the democratic paradox. This chapter shows the value of the principle of linguistic unity in these theories. By incorporating linguistic unity these theories strengthen their democratic foundation and offer practical delimitations for the demarcation of a demos.

Conclusion

Given the commitments entailed by deliberative democracy, what might an appropriate solution to the boundary problem look like? This is the question answered in this thesis. This thesis aimed to create a normative framework for a condition to the boundary problem based primarily on democratic values. I argue that the prioritisation of democratic values strengthens the legitimacy of existing theories. By taking a distinct perspective on the role and nature of language within a demos, I argue for the principle of Linguistic Unity.

As shown, language is instrumental to people to deliberate amongst each other and represent their desires and interests. I adopt the view of boundary problem theory that a solution should be based on democratic values and that it should strive to protect them and provide the opportunity for people to realise their idea of the common good. As a deliberative democrat, it is therefore essential that citizens, who have agreed to come together to protect their values and realise the common good, can deliberate as equal and free political agents. A solution to the boundary problem must address how to ensure that these relationships between citizens are as they ought to be. I propose that the principle of Linguistic Unity can respond to existing concerns. Linguistic Unity as a principle aims to protect the democratic values at the basis of the boundary problem and allows for equal participation for all citizens in line with deliberative democracy. The four criteria set in the first chapter can be met by this principle whereas existing theories fall short. As a consequence of agreeing upon a common language, every citizen has the opportunity the understand the political issues and be involved in them. Therefore, everyone

is equal and free as they enjoy an equal status as political actors. They are also autonomous as they are involved in the legislative process through deliberating. This deliberative process also allows them to realise their conception of the common good. Lastly, because there are boundaries in place that determine citizenship, like linguistic unity, people can agree on a demos that they want to join and commit to the language to be an equal citizen covering the criterion of self-determination.

In conclusion, the principle of linguistic unity does two things. Firstly, it offers a means to achieve the democratic ends of the boundary problem. Therefore, it helps to solve the legitimacy question of the boundary problem. Secondly, it strengthens existing boundary theories. If this principle of linguistic unity is accepted as a condition to incorporate in order to strengthen existing boundary theories, this creates a new perspective on the construction of solutions to the boundary problem. As the conditions for a solution improve, theories can become more complete. This benefits the democratic nature of the boundary problem and the democratic nature of demoi in general. Besides improving existing theory, this ideal model serves as a measurement for the level of democracy in demoi. It brings a new perspective and understanding to political theory on the boundary problem that respects the role of language and the values of democracy.

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