**Frontiers and Boundaries**

**Frontier:**

In the past, during the political evolutions of a state, states were separated by areas, not lines. The function of the intervening area was to prevent direct contact between the neighbouring states and it was referred to as a frontier.

A frontier, can, thus, be defined as a politico-geographical area, lying beyond defined borders of a political unit into which expansion could take place (for instance, European penetration into the Zulu-Natal area and, in modern times, Antarctica). It is a physical and moral concept which implied looking outwards and moving outwards. It is not an abstract concept but a ‘fact of life’—a manifestation of the tendency for spontaneous growth of ecumene.

According to Lapradelle, there are three stages in the evolution of a frontier, viz., (i) designated zone of influence of different physical phenomena; (ii) anthropological-geographical concept; (iii) political frontier.

**Boundary:**

It implies the physical limit of sovereignty and jurisdiction of a state; it is a manifestation of integration and is oriented inwards.

**Its characteristics are as follows:**

1. It is still possible to recognise frontier characteristics in boundaries, especially in sparsely populated regions, such as deserts. This leads to minimum friction. An example is the boundary between Spain and Portugal.

2. It is an appropriate concept for the modern state where all that is within the boundary is bound together by common law, economy, physical features, idea or creed with a government or central authority in effective control of the territory and activities within the boundaries.

3. It may be reached by expanding into frontiers when the natural limits are reached. For instance, the westward expansions of the USA into desert frontiers till the coastlines were reached.

4. It is an outer line of effective control of the central government keeping the enemy out and the resources in.

5. It is a legal-political phenomenon which is not created but fixed by the political decision makers.

6. It signifies differences in goals, ideology, structure, interests etc. from those of the neighbouring states.

**Boundary and Frontier—A Comparison:**

1. A boundary is oriented inwards. It is a manifestation of integration, and is a centripetal force; a frontier is oriented outwards and is a manifestation of the spontaneous tendency to grow, of ecumene, and is a centrifugal force.

2. A boundary is created and maintained by the will of the government. It has no life of its own, not even a material existence; a frontier is a ‘fact of life’ and exists physically on ground as a dynamic entity.

3. A boundary is well-defined and regulated by law. It possesses uniform characteristics. A frontier is a phenomenon of history and, like history, it is unique.

4. A boundary is a separating factor whereas a frontier provides scope for mutual interaction and exchange.

**Conclusion:**

Existence of boundaries shows that a political community has reached a relative degree of maturity, orderliness and being law abiding. Frontiers and boundaries are products of socio-political forces and are, thus, subjective and not objective.

In order to have a stable internal political structure, distinction is required between domestic and foreign policy. Boundary facilitates this distinction. Super-national, non-national and other factors undermine the significance of boundary to some extent.