

# **The Boundary Manifesto**

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The phenomenon ‘boundary’ was since the beginning of surveying activities a central element of the profession. However, the significance of this powerful tool to organize societies all around the globe is underestimated. Even the surveying professionals did and do pay the necessary attention to this important element of our professional activities. It gives cause for thought, that border, borderline, boundary, limit do not exist in FIG’s keyword vocabulary.

In recent times the border questions became important political issues, be it in conjunction with the migration crises, Brexit, land grabbing, education, and religious disputes.

But the handling of borders is characterized by ignorance, abuse of power, misuse of purpose, lack of compliance with contracts and disregard for good faith and mental rigidity. Borders can be opened, closed or removed or changed, but these operations must follow clear rules.

It is high time that the surveyors, as specialists of borders, openly present their views, their credo and their convictions to the whole world and oppose the non-observance and abolition of borders and the respective rules.

For this purpose, the advocates of a professional approach to borders have gathered in Bern. They have taken the communist manifesto as a template and drafted the Border Manifesto which shall be the starting point for sharpening the profile of the surveyors, as servants for the peaceful living together in the world.

In the presentation, the Boundary Manifesto will be introduced, explained, and discussed.

We, the geodesists who professionally deal with geographical borders and with us our societies are confronted with a disturbing phenomenon - with the tendency to disregard and abolish borders. Many political and economic institutions, as well as civic associations and citizens and their societies are increasingly discriminating against borders. This fills us with concern.

The handling of borders is increasingly characterized by ignorance, abuse of power, misappropriation, lack of fidelity to contracts and disregard for good faith and intellectual rigidity.

The Austrian philosopher Konrad Paul Liessmann says in an interview entitled 'The Blessing of an Inconspicuous Line': 'Without borders we could not live'.

He defines the border as 'a real or mental line that separates two things'. It makes one thing end, and at the same time the other begin, and vice versa. And it gives contour and shape to both realms. Above all, it makes one distinguishable from the other - or: it asserts these differences. That is what makes borders interesting'.

Where are now the representatives of a correct handling of borders?

The discrimination of borders is a plague that is far advanced.

It is high time that the geodesists, as specialists of borders, openly present their approach, their credo and their convictions to the whole world and counter the improper treatment of borders with a border manifesto.

To this end, the advocates of a professional approach to borders have gathered in Bern and drafted the following manifesto, which is to be published in as many languages as possible.

## **THE PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE OF BOUNDARIES**

Boundaries are the most important means of organization of all societies in the world.

We find borders in all areas of life.

- Geographical and spatial ones:

- National, regional, district and municipal boundaries;
- Property boundaries;
- Use boundaries;
- Spatial planning boundaries;
- Boundaries of protected areas;
- Height and depth boundaries;
- Distance lines;
- Building envelopes;
- Room walls;

- limits

- biological (concentrations of substances) immission limits (vapors, pressure, vibrations, gases, noise, odors, noise, smoke, soot, radiation or heat)

- Safety limit values for industrial plants

- Air pollution control

- Radiation protection

- Drinking water and waste water

- Rules of conduct of a social nature

- physical limits

- intellectual boundaries

- emotional boundaries

- psychological boundaries

- boundaries of privacy

The recognized rules have the same effect as the boundaries.

Where the coexistence of states and people is organized and where the public sphere must be defined and privacy protected, boundaries must be drawn, recognized rules must be applied, and violations of boundaries and rules must be punished.

People need and use boundaries in all areas of life. They can only develop properly if they can seek out and use protected areas of retreat. This begins in houses and apartments, where the aim is to have a delimited space of retreat. And in education, boundaries are set in order to promote the development of the personality and coexistence. A typical example of the importance and effectiveness of borders has recently been provided by the Corona crisis. Without well-ordered national borders and definition of living spaces, it would not have been possible to successfully manage the crisis, both in health and economic terms. Without borders, no orderly life is possible!

## **DEFINITION OF BOUNDARIES**

The definition of boundaries and limits is in any case an act of will.

This will is put into action by individuals, legal entities, clans, states and whole societies. The means are constitutions, treaties, statutes and codes, customary laws, donations, marriages, annexation and military occupation. Except for annexation and martial occupation, all forms of expressions of will are generally recognized and formally regulated.

In morally intact societies, the rules are usually observed correctly, and it can be seen that where good influences are at work, as in the case of development aid, for example, there is usually a significant improvement in the understanding and handling of boundaries. However, there are numerous cases where the rules are abused in a corrupt manner, as in the frequently occurring land grabbing. On the surface, rules are followed, but claimants are deprived of their land.

The definition and treatment of borders are governed by the following basic measures:

- The constitutions stipulate the right to property and the freedom rights of the individual, which may only be restricted according to certain rules;
- The legal bases on boundary surveying and land registration;
- The bodies of laws that regulate the coexistence of people;
- The treaties that establish how societies deal with each other;
- The documentations concerning limits;
- The codes of conduct, such as the norms in traffic;
- The norms established by religions;
- The unwritten codes of conduct voluntarily followed by societies.

From all these foundations can be derived the rules of how border issues must be handled. And these rules are to be applied unconditionally, unaltered, and unchanged.

### **THE PROBLEM OF NON-OBSERVANCE OF THE RULES**

In recent times, there has been an increase in the number of cases where boundaries are disregarded, violated, and even abolished.

Konrad Paul Liessmann says about this: Drawing boundaries, be it in reality or in thinking, is considered indelicate. The spirit of the age wants to transgress, eliminate, abolish and make boundaries disappear. In doing so, however, it deceives itself about the function and possibilities of boundaries as well as about the significance they must assume for the analysis and management of crises. But even those who, for good reasons, want to make borders disappear would have to sing the praises of the border, for it is only this that signals to them what the border once divided and what has now become manifestly invalid.

The great importance of borders in crisis situations was drastically demonstrated to us during the Corona pandemic

Although in many cases borders are vehemently adhered to on the surface, they are in fact violated, disregarded and - without following any rules - abolished.

Wherever borders are put up for discussion, the same circles that are pushing for the abolition of borders insist on their immutability.

The non-observance of borders and rules does not only concern geographic borders.

In the area of non-geographical borders, violations of the law and, for example, the creeping softening of rules, as well as the relativization of limits, can be observed.

It is no longer justifiable how borders are handled worldwide.

Leaders from politics and business who are willing to give respect to borders because they clearly recognize their importance are rare and their arguments are criticized and ignored.

This leads to situations that appear highly untrustworthy and create a poor role model effect. How are citizens still supposed to behave in accordance with the rules when the government and business continually violate the rules with impunity?

Although the majority of people still behave peacefully in the face of these border violations, it must be expected that the occasional upheaval will occur, as the students are now demonstrating with their climate strikes.

It is urgent, then, that professionals involved with borders begin to sensitize societies to the ills of borders and to propose and help implement measures to remedy them.

### **AXIOMS THAT APPLY IN THE FIELD OF BOUNDARIES**

Boundaries create clarity. Without borders, no orderly coexistence is possible.

Those who want to change boundaries must follow the prescribed procedures.

Those who want to abolish borders arbitrarily endanger social peace. The abolition of borders is a subtle matter. It may only take place if those affected have been consulted and have given their consent.

Stifling border discussions is counterproductive. Borders should and may be discussed.

Decisions regarding boundaries must be made after thorough discussion and are subject to the consent of those affected.

### **MEASURES THAT THE GEODESISTS CAN CONTRIBUTE TO IMPROVE THE SITUATION?**

The surveyors, who have been dealing with geographic boundaries for about 5000 years, are organized in the Fédération internationale des Géomètres FIG. This NGO can contribute its experience with property, use and corporate boundaries for the benefit of a broader public in order to promote the correct handling of boundaries. As a professional association, it can sensitize and educate professionals to the problem, and as an NGO, it can influence politicians and societies in the various member countries to deal with borders responsibly.

In doing so, it sets itself the following goals:

- To raise awareness about borders.
- To elaborate and widely communicate the principles of border management.
- To support the enforcement of the rules concerning the correct treatment of borders on as many levels as possible.

### **CONCLUSION**

The trend toward the unobjective treatment of borders of all kinds must be broken. Only a correct and credible approach to borders can stabilize societies and ensure the peaceful coexistence of individuals and entire societies.

It is imperative that the profession, which has been dealing with borders for centuries, take a leadership role in dealing with borders.

Therefore: Geodesists of all countries unite to enforce and respect the principles handling boundaries.

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#### Biographic note

Jürg Kaufmann, born 1942 and graduated from the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich founded 1988 his own company KAUFMANN CONSULTING, working in the field of cadastre and geomatics on national and international level. Among many involvements for the Swiss Development Agencies, the UN, the Worldbank, and for the federal and cantonal governments he was a member of the management board for the Swiss cadastral surveying system reform and the legislation team for the Swiss Law on Geoinformation.

From 2003 until 2010 he acted as a president of geosuisse, the professional Association for Geomatics and Landmanagement and he became a honorary member.

Jürg Kaufmann is also a honorary member of FIG and was chairing the FIG-Commission 7 working group on 'Cadastre 2014'.