

Obituary — Professor Dr. Hans-Georg Bohle

Professor Dr. Hans-Georg Bohle died suddenly and unexpectedly in September 2014 last weekend. He was 66 (03.03.1948–20.09.2014). As an internationally renowned human geographer and expert on social vulnerability research, he dedicated his academic life to deciphering the sociospatial production of poverty and exclusion in the Global South. We have lost a captivating teacher and advisor, inspiring researcher, and a dear supportive friend.

We would like to offer our sincere condolences to his family and close friends.

Hans-Georg Bohle's academic career began with his studies in Geography at the University of Göttingen, where he also completed his Ph.D. in 1979 on the Green Revolution in the Cauvery Delta in South Asia. Afterward came his *habilitation* on South Asian farmers' market systems, completed in 1985. He was subsequently a professor of Cultural Geography at the University of Freiburg (1989–1995), a professor of Geography of South Asia at the University of Heidelberg (1995–2004), and a professor of Cultural Geography and Development Geography at Bonn University (2004–2013). Hans-Georg Bohle retired in 2013, living in Freiburg until his death.

Hans Georg Bohle's academic work has continued to decisively shape Development Geography research over the course of the last 25 years. His theoretically informed and empirically grounded research focused on vulnerable people in critical regions. His conceptual work on social vulnerability has remained a fundamental contribution to the development of the risk and hazard research field. Inspired by Amartya Sen, Hans Georg Bohle's work not only discloses the spatial dimension and social production of poverty, hunger marginalization, and vulnerability but seeks also to identify people's potentialities for human security — and thus for a life of self-determination, freedom, and dignity.

As an academic, he taught generations of development researchers and practitioners to think critically about the world. He had the gift of being able to vividly explain complex processes, and to illustrate them with examples from his numerous empirical research projects in both South Asia (Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan) and Africa (Chad, Egypt, Ghana, Sudan). He challenged his postgraduates to be innovative, and to move beyond the framework of established thinking. He was a helpful, fair, constructive, and sincere supervisor to his staff and associates. Among colleagues, he was respected for his constructive and pragmatic problem-solving attitude and his theoretical and regional expertise. We look back gratefully on the enriching scientific discussions, exciting times had during field trips, and the many sociable events and feasts that we were able to celebrate together.

His retirement in July 2013 enabled Hans-Georg Bohle to start anew and enjoy his own life in absolute self-determination, freedom, and dignity in his home in Freiburg, in his beloved cottage in the Black Forest — as well as to indulge himself in numerous travels to places near and far in the wider world. Hans-Georg Bohle was in the golden years and has sadly left us much too prematurely. We shall keep him — the brilliant scientist, dedicated professor, and dear friend — with gratitude and joy forever in our hearts.

Patrick Sakdapolrak, Benjamin Etzold, Irene Hillmer, and Theresa Fabian*

* And all members of the Development Geography section within the University of Bonn's Geography Department. Bonn, September 25, 2014.