GEORG STÖBER SAYS FAREWELL TO THE GEI – THE END OF AN ERA BUT THE REASSURING CONTINUITY OF ACADEMIC WORK

Marcus Otto

In February 2015 we said goodbye to Georg Stöber as he left the Institute to start his retirement. Of course, if we know him, retirement will not stop his research or academic work although he will hopefully be able to continue it relieved from the burden of administrative tasks and constant evaluation and self-legitimation.

Georg Stöber worked at the GEI from 1994 to 2015 and he wholly embodied, in a way few others have achieved, the culture of academic research and cooperation that is palpable at the Institute. Before his work at the GEI Georg Stöber studied ethnology, pre-history and sociology at the University of Marburg, where he also received his PhD in Geography. He worked at the Universities of Marburg, Berlin and Bonn and conducted socio-geographical field research in Iran, Morocco and Pakistan. Georg Stöber undoubtedly epitomised the geographical expertise of the Institute, whilst simultaneously encapsulating a transdisciplinary conceptual approach to the diverse research questions addressed in his projects.

During his time at the GEI Georg Stöber worked on the representation of culture in geography education and coordinated the geography-related projects on the Baltic States, Poland, the Middle East and South Asia. The central focus of his empirical and theoretical research became the manifold relationship between textbooks and conflicts. Consequently he conceptualised, established and managed the research area “Textbooks and Conflict” from 2007 onwards. In this context, Georg Stöber was involved in a wide range of projects on textbook work, textbook revision, and textbook research in different (post-) conflict societies ranging from South Asia to South East Europe.

In 2013 he established the department “Textbooks and Society” which merged the former research areas of conflict, religion and globalisation. Since his academic and personal approaches have always been highly integrative and communicative he was the ideal person to realise the integration of these different research areas and to foster successful cooperation between their corresponding research fellows. Georg Stöber became a central figure at the Institute, both academically and personally and is an individual with whom many colleagues have had, and continue to have, a close intellectual, personal and academic relationship. This is due to his ability to engage seriously and intensively with the individual research questions and highly diverse academic challenges presented by his colleagues and research fellows. We are therefore delighted that Georg Stöber will become an associate researcher in “his” department “Textbooks and Society”.

In a sense then, this is less goodbye and more au revoir, looking towards our continued cooperation with Georg!