

OBITUARY: IN MEMORY OF PROFESSOR EIKE W. SCHAMP (1941–2019)

Professor Eike W. Schamp, an eminent German economic geographer, died of a serious illness on 8 February 2019. For many years he was director of the Institute of Economic and Social Geography and dean of the Faculty of Geographical Sciences at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University in Frankfurt am Main. He was also a full member of industrial commissions of the International Geographical Union and constantly cooperated with our journal.

Professor Schamp was born in 1941 in Frankfurt am Main. Initially, he studied geography, geology, meteorology and soil science at universities in Bonn and Freiburg. He then studied macroeconomics (*Volkswirtschaftslehre*) at the University of Cologne, from which he graduated in 1967 and later received his PhD degree (1971) and post-doctoral degree (1977). He taught economic geography at universities in Munich and Göttingen, and in the years 1989–2006 (until his retirement) directed the Department of Economic Geography at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University in Frankfurt am Main. He co-created a working group of German industrial geographers, which initiated several interesting research projects. Many economic geographers now holding high positions in German geography were associated with the “school of Professor Schamp”. They emphasise three characteristic features which made him an outstanding scientific personality: innovativeness, openness and criticism.

In his scientific investigations, Professor Schamp tried to pursue the most current questions of rapidly changing socio-economic reality in its spatial dimension, skilfully combining his geographic and economic knowledge. His scientific interests included issues such as: organisation of local production systems, global value chains, the role of knowledge, technology and innovation

in industrial change, and geography of the financial system. He devoted a number of empirical studies on the one hand, to the automotive industry and, on the other hand, to light (especially footwear) industry. Moreover, he was interested in the problems of developing countries (particularly of Central Africa); he treated the transfer



Photo 1. Professor Eike W. Schamp (right) with the author of this obituary during the last meeting in Altenberg near Cologne in September 2018.

of knowledge there as one of his life missions. Starting from the 1980s, he became increasingly involved in a debate on the theoretical foundations of economic geography. Professor Schamp's most quoted works belong to this field, e.g. "Basics of modern economic geography" [*Grundansätze der zeitgenössischen Wirtschaftsgeographie*] (1983), "Globalisation of production networks and location systems" [*Globalisierung von Produktionsnetzen und Standortsystemen*] (1996), "Evolution and institutions as basics for dynamic economic geography" [*Evolution und Institution als Grundlagen einer dynamischen Wirtschaftsgeographie*] (2002), "Styles of thought in German economic geography" [*Denkstile in der deutschen Wirtschaftsgeographie*] (2007) and primarily "Networked production" [*Vernetzte Produktion*] (2000). Most of these works are obligatory literary canon for those studying social and economic geography in German-speaking countries. He left much space for a theoretical debate also as an editor of the journal *Geographische Zeitschrift*. After retiring, Professor Schamp was an expert of the German Development Institute (DIE) in Bonn (from 2008).

Prof. Eike W. Schamp was a recognised authority in the international scientific community. I first had an opportunity to meet him during the conference of the Commission on Industrial Change of the International Geographical Union in Rabka (Poland) in 1987. As a young holder of a PhD in Geographical Sciences, I was delivering a paper there, in which I emphasised a positive role of small and medium-sized enterprises in the then socialist economy. The speech was criticised by many luminaries of industrial geography from former countries of 'people's democracy' who were of the opinion that only large combines can be the future of this economy. After a fiery discussion, Professor Schamp approached me and suggested that I should not change my views on small and medium-sized enterprises, and not be easily discouraged by the voices of titled opponents.

Shortly after this conference, many countries of the former Eastern Bloc saw great political

changes. Professor Schamp was very interested in these changes and took specific actions to facilitate the integration of geographers from an 'old' and 'new' Europe (e.g. I remember to this day his valuable comments which enabled me to publish my first articles in English on spatial changes in the Polish bank system as well as on business networks in the 'economy in transition'). He was engaged in establishing contacts not only between academics but also among students of both parts of recently divided Europe, rightly believing that only getting to know one another and mutual collaboration can overcome built-up prejudices. In 1993, he initiated the first Polish-German student practice on both sides of the border. Professor Schamp had also numerous contacts with industrial geographers from all over the world (including those in African states and Jordan) at the International Geographical Union forum.

In July 2018, I saw Professor Schamp for the last time. We were in Cologne – his place of residence and favourite city – for the Fifth Global Conference on Economic Geography. I suggested we meet at a special place to catch up with each other. After the conference, we went to a former Cistercian abbey in nearby Altenberg. In 1143, the Cistercians from this abbey established a branch of their monastery in Łekno near Wągrowiec (close to my birthplace, which Professor visited one year earlier). We said good-bye – as befits two geographers – while looking at the map hanging in the monastery, in which Cologne (Altenberg) and Łekno/Wągrowiec were connected with an appropriate arrow. Several months later Professor Schamp passed away and was buried in the Cologne-Melaten Cemetery. He will remain in the memory of many grateful geographers, who were fortunate to work with him and draw on his profound knowledge (myself included).

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