

## REFLECTIONS II: PHILOSOPHIES

### **OVERCOMING THE SILOING OF GEOGRAPHY: NECESSITIES OF STRUCTURE IN AN ENGAGED PLURALIST HISTORIOGRAPHY OF GEOGRAPHICAL THOUGHT**

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A recurring pattern when discussing the epistemology of geography is that geographical knowledge is by definition situated. Instead of producing facts independent of time and space, geographical scholarship collates information in ways that are situationally useful. That does not mean that older geographical scholarship is per definition irrelevant to the future. For instance, recent years have compelled geographers to revisit some of the lessons from the quantitative revolution in order to find an appropriate strategy to deal with 'big data'. Also one can imagine that in the age of climate change and natural disasters, older work on human-environment relations all of a sudden stand on the forefront. However, contemporary geography seems ill-suited to find and cherish these insights from the disciplinary past. Observers, such as Ron Johnston, have noted that geography has fragmented into self-referential paradigmatic siloes that tend only to interact with its Others to boost their own case. Trevor Barnes and Eric Sheppard have therefore called for an 'engaged pluralist' geography to replace such centrifugal 'polemic pluralism'. Nevertheless, a contemporary engaged pluralist geography also requires an engaged pluralist approach to geography's historiography. Too long have geographers written their history as cautious tales of paradigmatic change, disincentivizing scholars to search the discipline's history for useful concepts, methods and theories. Approvingly surveying recent developments in the discipline's historiography, this

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contribution outlines some ideas on the necessary practices and structures that we need to create for an engaged pluralist historiography. How can we make the sprawling archive of past geographical work accessible and navigable for contemporary geographers who want to get inspired as much as to learn from the discipline's past?

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