# Making academic geographies in Europe.

[Symposium] 19 Octobre 2012, Université de Fribourg, Suisse.

Par Responsable éditoriale



Human geography in Europe is still shaped by so-called “national” – or “language-based” traditions, such as Francophone or “deutschsprachige” geography. Even within Anglo-American geography, we can detect nuances between British and US geographies. These various traditions have emerged from very specific national genealogies of the discipline, which has been shaped by specific philosophical thought traditions, traditions of practicing social sciences and academic writing. These genealogies shape present-day practices of young and established scholars in these different academic spaces. In our view, this is not a problem, but a source of richness. While there is a drive towards internationalization, which largely means Anglo-Americanization, this richness of thought traditions should be saved rather than buried.

Switzerland as a country with at least three language traditions (German, French, Italian) finds this co- existence of different thought traditions in its own human geography landscape (in the books and journals available in its university libraries for instance). Until recently, we found two kinds of human geographies, one inspired by the French tradition in Francophone Switzerland and another by the German tradition in the German speaking part of the country. In addition, a series of Swiss geographers have had during the past thirty years strong links

with Italian geography. The common reference to Anglophone geographers has been superimposed on this intellectual landscape for two decades now. This has generated a very specific Swiss mixture of human geography, including the preservation of a quantitative tradition and an empirical pragmatism, which has tended to be weakened in Anglo- American human geography.

This workshop takes our own experiences of cross-fertilization between German and French speaking geographers in Switzerland as a starting point to discuss the present-day practices of academic research and writing in different European traditions. We look for papers which discuss and contextualize these practices in different countries, based on own experiences, social science studies or a historical perspective. We are also interested in comparative discussions of the following questions:

– What are in different traditions the important recent turning points (say the return to ‘material geographies’ in Anglophone geography)? Are they the same? Do they have the same origin’

– Can we identify different trajectories of theoretical and methodological cosmopolitanization in different countries? Does it still make sense to talk about national traditions’

– How are the power relations related to cross-fertilization debated in different national contexts’

There are no conference fees. In case, you are interested to participate, please contact Sandra Altorfer for registration.

For questions regarding logistics (e.g. accommodation), please contact Marie Descloux.

For questions regarding the content of the symposium, please write to Benedikt Korf, Francisco Klauser or Ola Söderström.

The conference marks the re-launching of Geographica Helvetica (the Swiss Journal of Geography).

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## Résumé

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