

# **Spatial semantics under the Global Condition. The example of Geographical Societies through the lenses of Global Studies and Digital Humanities**

**Ninja Steinbach-Hüther**

*Leibniz Institute for Regional Geography, SFB 1199*

Thomas Efer

*University Leipzig*

Dirk Hänsgen

*Leibniz Institute for Regional Geography, SFB 1199*

The paper proposal is based on our research project about an international comparison of geographical societies 1821–1914 that is conducted within the broader frame of the Collaborative Research Center 1199 (Leipzig University, Germany).

Geographical societies contributed significantly to spatialization processes by reacting in varied ways to conditions of globalization during the “long” nineteenth century. They advanced geographical research (by way of expeditions, documentation, and visualisation) and, through their imagination, conveyed and linked new geospatial knowledge. We followed a methodological mixture of quantitative, qualitative and computational analyses to develop a global typology of geographical societies while comparatively analysing their structural and activity profiles, interconnectedness and thematic and regional orientations.

The societies became highly influencing space-entrepreneurs who disseminated their knowledge nationally, internationally and sometimes worldwide through their journals. We are now focusing on the societies’ use of terms and their change, translation and transfer related to, in a broader sense, space, geography and the global condition.

The huge database that we have established out of the periodical material of 30 geographic societies in Europe, the two Americas as well as in Asia, Northern Africa and Australia is therefore analysed with computational tools and visualisation techniques.

The paper, following the theoretical concept of cultural transfers, presents the interdisciplinary and collaborative methodological approach to the data (collection, analysis, visualisation, quantitative-qualitative, inductive-deductive approaches) through the lenses of Global Studies coupled with Digital Humanities methods (distant reading, data and text mining, etc.) to eventually being able to globally and transnationally compare spatial semantics on a temporal scale of 100 years. It sheds light on their synchronic and diachronic presence, change and translation as well as their imagined meanings within various languages, especially putting emphasis on the anglophone, francophone and germanophone world.