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Creation of a Geo-Spatial Database to Analyse Railways in Europe (1830-2010). A Historical GIS Approach

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ABSTRACT

The GIS is a tool that allows us to study the logic of the distribution of phenomena that occur on the Earth's surface. In this article, we propose exploring its potential for historical research over long periods. Here, we present a Historical GIS (HGIS) of the railways of Europe for the period 1830-2010. This is a response to the need to carry out spatial-temporal analyses in order to evaluate the territorial impact of the railway and its influence on the distribution of population. The main objectives of this work are: to publicise the existence of this spatial database; to explain the approach followed in order to produce it; and to highlight some of the results that have already been achieved by using it. To date, the possibilities offered by HGIS have hardly been explored in research into the territorial impact of the railway. Similarly, until now, little work has been done in this area at the European scale. The most innovative aspects of this HGIS therefore lie in the methodology used and the subject treated.

KEYWORDS

Railways; Historical GIS; Historical Geography; Europe

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