

An international city network of its own? The Global Diffusion of Brunswick/Braunschweig

City names often have their origin in the history of these cities, usually referring to key characteristics and features of a specific place. Further relevant factors for the naming of a city are its geographic location, its political function or connections to important personalities.

Another common phenomenon is the naming of a city at a new place after an already existing city somewhere else. To visualize this diffusion process, we examined if and where “Braunschweig” (in English: Brunswick) has served as inspiration for other cities and places around the world. For instance, several settlements exist in North America that are called “Brunswick”. Additionally, this name can also be found when referring to geographic structures like rivers, lakes and mountains.

The diffusion of the name “Braunschweig” can be explained by two main reasons. The first one is the migration of German migrants in the 18th and 19th century. When founding new settlements, German immigrants often named them after their cities of origin, in this case “Braunschweig”. The second reason can be attributed to the House of Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel. The House was allied to Great Britain during the Napoleonic Wars and furthermore possessed familial ties to the British royal family. To commemorate their sacrifices, the British Empire named multiple places after the city of “Braunschweig” during the 19th century.

The diffusion process has visualized in the interactive map above/below.

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Link to the map:

<https://www.zeemaps.com/view?group=6759279&x=-90.560334&y=23.188970&z=15>