

ZUG

minisymposium

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18:15

BOKU University |
Schottenfeldgasse 29,
1070 Wien, SR 31 (SR 3a)
oder via Zoom

weitere Informationen:



Dam on the Završnica stream, early 20th century. Detail from a postcard of the village of Žirovnica. Gorenjska Museum

Sara Šifrar Krajnik

The exploitation of hydropower under the Karavanks and Julian Alps (1880–1941)

The first private initiatives to harness the energy potential of rivers and streams using new technologies beneath the southeastern Alps date to the 1880s. At the turn of the century, local efforts to use the Sava River and its tributaries to illuminate primarily urban areas were joined by the first regional initiatives in Carniola, partly stimulated by centralized projects in the Austrian half of the Dual Monarchy and efforts at the national level. The outbreak of World War I disrupted existing efforts to harness hydropower and revealed the importance of water for the military. After the war, the region under the southeastern Alps experienced growing demand for electricity, expansion and integration of the power grid, and adaptation of existing hydropower infrastructure. The outdated legal framework for constructing these facilities was eventually reformed, in some respects addressing riverine flora and fauna. The development of the hydropower infrastructure described above was also accompanied by negotiations and conflicts, revealing existing uses of certain water-courses, established practices for obtaining water concessions, the importance of the Law on Water, and changes in the waterscape, which are the key topics of this presentation.

Sara Šifrar Krajnik is a doctoral candidate at the Department of Economic, Social and Environmental History at the University of Bern and an assistant at the Institute of Contemporary History in Ljubljana. Her doctoral dissertation, part of the SNSF-funded Ambizione project "Reservoirs and resettlement policy in the Alpine region after 1918", focuses on the development of the hydropower system in the southeastern Alps between 1880 and 1941. She is also a member of the Graduate School at the Uri Institute Cultures of the Alps.