

## PhD-Project Description

### Overall Information

Project Title: «Tourismentwicklung in Südtirol:

Utopische, faschistische Architektur: Tourismus als strategische Investition in Südtirol»<sup>1</sup>

PhD Student: Catrina Klee, Master of Arts in World Society and Global Governance from the University of Lucerne, Switzerland

University Affiliation: Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Lucerne, Switzerland

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Valentin Groebner, University of Lucerne

### Project Abstract

The doctoral thesis examines the confluence of the two processes of modernity – tourism and fascism (especially the forced Italianization) – in South Tyrol. The study focuses on tourism as a strategic investment or constructed policy in South Tyrol during the 1920-1940s. The study focuses on investigating and thinking together the connection of tourism with fascism and the advancing Italianization through fascism in South Tyrol. Here, Italian fascism in South Tyrol is understood as a specific means of the province's policy of denationalization, and the promotion of a new type of tourism contributing decisively to this policy.

It is assumed that there was no great change in the "hardware" of South Tyrolean tourism (especially hotels) after World War I until the 1940s. At the same time, there was a change in the type of South Tyrolean tourism: from World War I until the 1930s, there was a shift from spa and bath tourism (especially in Bolzano and Merano) to summer tourism. This new type was much more active: Sports and sporting activities are in the foreground.

Although hardly any hotel buildings in the narrower sense were built in the interwar years, much was invested in the further development of local tourism in South Tyrol and in changing the architectural past. Objects of investigation are the hitherto hardly researched, unrealized, "utopian" large-scale technical projects for tourist infrastructures in the Dolomite region. Within this focus, the coupling of road, cable car and hotel construction under fascism for new purposes – unlike the upper middle classes before World War I, motorists and athletes are now to head for the mountains en masse – is discussed. In the course of this, tourism is examined as utopian modernization and optimization of bodies, mountains and means of transportation at the same time, as the advancement of fascism under the guise of "bringing modernity".

Focusing on the political component of the period of upheaval in South Tyrol and its close intertwining with architecture, the study discusses the following hypothesis:

Fascist (political and military) infrastructure investments and large-scale projects are the basis for turning South Tyrol into a region dominated by car and sports tourism between the 1920s and the 1940s. Tourism projects in South Tyrol during the 1920s-1940s acted as accelerators of the Italianization of the northern province during this period and thereby decisively propelled fascism in the region. In particular, the question which of these yet unexplored and unrealized tourism infrastructures were to drive this process in South Tyrol will be explored. For it is these utopias that shape and preformat the later change from the 1950s onward.

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<sup>1</sup> Engl.: «Tourism development in South Tyrol:

Utopian, Fascist Architecture: Tourism as a Strategic Investment in South Tyrol»

This is also referred to as politically guided tourism. The understanding of this politically guided tourism, especially in the interwar period, has so far been incompletely researched. The aim of this research is to fill this gap.