"WHITE COAL" OR "ABUSE OF NATURE"? CONFLICTS AROUND THE USE OF HYDRAULIC POWER IN THE (SUB-)ALPINE REGION: RIVERS IN THE BORDER REGION BETWEEN BAVARIA AND AUSTRIA

Ute Hasenöhrl

The history of hydraulic power use in the Alpine countries Bavaria and Austria is characterized by conflict and compromise. Arriving at acceptable solutions for diverging requirements in connection with transborder rivers presented great difficulties in the field of tension between power generation, economic growth, considerations about landscape aesthetics, nature conservation, and regional identities. Not only did diverging sectoral interests clash, on a national level demands conflicted as well. In spite of their importance for transnational conflicts and cooperations, however, transborder rivers have hitherto been largely ignored in the context of research into the history of hydraulic power generation and of nature conservation in the Alpine region. The present contribution takes a look at the use of hydraulic power in Bavaria and Austria from a transnational, comparative perspective for the first time. The rivers Salzach, Inn, Danube, and Lech are looked at in order to examine the actors involved together with their respective networks, strategies, discourses and nature images. The result is as follows: The border-crossing rivers did not enjoy the same level of importance for the energy politics of the two Alpine countries considered. Moreover, their rating in the context of natural beauty and as goods belonging to the community varied also – with respect to the regions and over time as well.

SPECIAL SCHOOLS FOR SPECIAL CASES?
THE ORIGINS OF ROMA CHILD SEGREGATION
BY STATE-SOCIALIST EDUCATIONAL AND FAMILY POLICIES IN EASTERN SLOVAKIA

Fabian Steiner

It is remarkable how many Roma children in Eastern Slovakia attend special education schools. According to non-governmental organizations, this is due to their ethnic status, not to their individual capabilities. The argument is that normally-gifted Roma children are systematically assigned to schools for the handicapped because of entrance examinations which do not take into account their ethnic background, and that this leads to a de-facto segregation along ethnic lines in the Slovak educational system. This allocating practice is attributed to having originated under communism, i.e. explained as a fault inherent in the old system. But setting up special education schools had not initially been aimed at segregating Roma children. On the contrary, these pupils were to be specifically assisted so that they could be transferred to regular schools as soon as possible. But paternalistic integration policies, combined with great discrepancies between central decisions and their local realization, through the years perverted what was meant as temporary support into a permanent segregation without a legal foundation, legitimatized by pseudo-scientific arguments.