Paid research assistant for research on community responses to climate change. Analysis of German-language documents and records.

Period: summer 2022, though the work could start earlier if the candidate is available

Time: This position could be either full-time (40 hr/wk) or part-time (10 her/wk or 20 hr/wk).

Pay: Graduate Research Assistant scale, commensurate with experience and skills

Area: Summary and analysis of documents and records for a German-speaking area of the Alps which is experiencing climate change, to examine local forms of adaptation.

Contact: Ben Orlove, SIPA, bso5@columbia.edu

I am seeking a research assistant to examine documents and interviews a mountain region in the Italian Alps affected by climate change. The research assistant would catalogue the documents, summarize each one, indicate the presence of key terms, and provide an overview. German language fluency is a basic requisite; some familiarity with environmental policy, sustainable development, social science or history is preferred. The specific region is the South Tyrol, a German-speaking region of Italy that borders on Switzerland and Austria, also known as Sued-Tirol and Alto Adige.

This case is one of the three that I am examining in a book I am writing. The other two are in the Peruvian Andes and the North Cascades in Washington State. These are all small valleys or communities. Stated briefly, the communities are undertaking activities that look like climate change adaptation, since they reduce the impact of changing snow and ice on livelihoods and resource availability, but they do not engage very much with global frameworks of climate change. This research contributes to an understanding of cultural frameworks through which the communities understand themselves and form their responses to the challenges and opportunities which they see. The South Tyrol cases raises interesting questions about the deep loyalty of its residence to their identity as German-speakers, and their complex forms of locating themselves in relation to German, Italian and European identities.

The research assistant work would examine a series of documents, including the online records of the local town council, and the local news magazines from that section of the province. They would also examine the records of a few local organizations-- a hydroelectric plant, the mountain rescue service, and an association of people who collect WW I military objects as they are released by melting glaciers I would provide direction to the specific archives, and indicate what kind of summaries I would like.  I would meet weekly with the RA.

The work could start in late May or could begin earlier. Pay is at Graduate Research Assistant level, commensurate with experience and skill. Hours are flexible: if a full-time candidate is available, I can offer 40 hrs/wk, but part-time work (10 hr/wk or 20 hrs/wk) also available.

Ben Orlove

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SIPA and the Climate School