

Developing the Environmental Humanities in Switzerland: An Evaluation of Opportunities, Challenges, and Priorities in Research, Teaching, and Institutional Support

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Summary

Solving or mitigating today's environmental problems requires knowledge from the humanities, social sciences, and the natural sciences. In Switzerland and abroad, there is a growing acceptance of the central role that the social sciences and humanities (SSH) will play in our understanding of past, present and future human relationships with the environment. The Environmental Humanities (EH) is beginning to develop such programs. Emerging in the twenty-first century, EH can be considered a transdisciplinary meta-field of inquiry that involves several SSH subfields to understand our most intractable environmental problems and propose effective strategies for solving them. EH aims to provide new opportunities for SSH research while promoting interdisciplinarity within the SSH as well as between SSH, the natural sciences and the arts. This report sponsored by SAHS focuses on the current state and growth potential of the Environmental Humanities in Switzerland.

While EH are growing and is already rich and diverse in Switzerland, scholars in the field are dispersed widely across different institutions and often based at environmental sciences or geography faculties or research institutes. The researchers or professors who focus on environmental issues are very rarely housed in SSH institutes. To assess the state of EH research, teaching, and outreach in Switzerland, we prepared a written questionnaire in three languages (German, French, and English). In a second step we organized a one-day workshop, which took place in Zurich on June 20, 2014. The 67 respondents ranged from doctoral students to postdocs, senior scientists and professors covering all major environmental issues in applied and basic research.

There was a broad agreement that EH are vital to address the human dimensions of environmental problems and human-environment interactions. The topics specific to EH are:

- (i) Perceptions, representations and imaginings of environmental issues
- (ii) Environmental values, ethics and justice
- (iii) Environmental decision-making and participatory processes
- (iv) Societal transformations and cultural sustainability.

All agreed on a single goal: reaching a *critical mass* of scholars on environmental issues within the humanities and social sciences in order to:

- (i) Strengthen identification and collaboration among scholars working in the field
- (ii) Build enough institutional and personal capacity for inter- and transdisciplinary research *within* SSH and *between* SSH and other sciences to approach the complexity of environmental problems through large projects (such as national research programs)
- (iii) Exploit synergies in research and teaching
- (iv) Increase visibility, and thereby support, within academia and in society
- (v) Counterbalance the dominant role of the natural sciences in framing and leading environmental research and policy-making, and impart new relevance to the humanities within the academic community and in society at large
- (vi) Encourage humanists to take positions in political debates and communicate scientific findings to decision-makers (including the business world).

Our overview of teaching activities indicates that courses taught through the prism of environmental issues are widely present at Swiss universities. However, such teaching is mostly offered as part of programs in environmental sciences, sustainability or geography, while very few are offered within SSH faculties. Although the social sciences (economics, political sciences, sociology, psychology) and ethics are well represented in most environmental programs, there are – with exceptions – very few offers from the humanities such as literature or cultural studies. A first step to improve the situation might be to make existing courses more visible and give students the opportunity to combine courses (and credit points) from different universities to complement the curricula in their SSH bachelor or master programs. A future step would be to build bachelor and masters programs and create new teaching positions within the field of Environmental Humanities.

We asked participants of the questionnaire survey to assess nine activities aimed at supporting the Environmental Humanities in Switzerland: a Swiss Association of Environmental Humanities, a Swiss Center for Environmental Humanities, a list-server, a webpage, online researchers' portfolios, regular events, teaching programs, new funding mechanisms, and outreach activities (i.e., engagement with society and the public). Generally, all activities were rated as relevant to highly relevant even if participants did not always agree. Nevertheless, all participants rated at least one activity as relevant or highly relevant. Despite the consensus on the need for more support for EH, opinions differed about short-term priorities.

Our report concludes with ten propositions on how to develop the Environmental Humanities in Switzerland. EH can help orient environmental research and policy-making toward facilitating a major societal transformation away from an unsustainable society, and it can contribute to reinvigorating Swiss SSH through international collaborations and large-scale collaborative research. The particular strengths of Swiss EH are its transcultural diversity – bridging German, French, and English-speaking scientific cultures – and the close ties between SSH experts and natural sciences in environmental research institutions. Switzerland is also a hub in international decision-making in the corporate, diplomatic, non-governmental, and political worlds that Swiss EH researchers can explore. To support Swiss EH, the priorities are:

- (i) A national platform that will build the critical mass needed for inter-university collaborations, university-level competence centers, research groups and professorships, and large national research programs,
- (ii) Networking the classes in environmental studies offered by SSH by making existing courses more visible, and by giving students the opportunity to combine courses (and credit points) from different universities to complement their bachelor's or master's trainings
- (iii) Adapting inter- and transdisciplinary methodologies and quality assessment methods to the needs of integrative research rooted in the humanities.

1. Introduction

1.1 Current challenges

Solving or mitigating today's environmental problems requires knowledge from the humanities, the social sciences, and the natural sciences. Only by working together can academics and non-academics in all these fields describe and analyze the full complexity of the problems facing us today. A new type of expertise is needed for this broad endeavor, for promoting rapid and fundamental societal changes, and for a transition away from today's unsustainable and unfair state of affairs. In Switzerland and abroad, there is a growing acceptance of the central role that the social sciences and humanities will play in our understanding of past, present and future relations between living beings and the environment.

Because social scientists and humanists can contribute key insights for shaping a sustainable society, recent position papers and projects have encouraged them to take leading roles in environmental science and policy (e.g. Castree et al. 2014; Felt 2014; Hackmann and Clair 2012; Holm et al. 2013; Mathae and Birzer 2004). The flagship program of a consortium of international bodies, 'Future earth'¹ is explicitly built on a tight interdisciplinarity of the social sciences, humanities and natural sciences. In Switzerland, sustainable development is one of the three priority programs of the Swiss Academy of Humanities and Social Sciences (SAGW / ASSHS / SAHS).

As part of its current project on the use of sustainable resources, the Swiss Academy of Humanities and Social Sciences (SAHS) has recently funded an inventory of social science and humanities (SSH) research about the consumption of natural resources (Schmid and Stauffacher 2013). The study has concluded that research in this area is diverse at Swiss universities, but that researchers are scattered across institutions and few SSH institutes are dedicated to environmental research. Many such researchers work in departments of environmental sciences or geography, while at the same time environmental research is under-represented in traditional SSH institutes (other summaries of the SAHS project on sustainable resources include Wäger et al. 2014, and Bulletin SAGW 4/2014).

The Environmental Humanities (EH) are beginning to play an important role in developing such programs. EH aims to provide new opportunities for SSH research while promoting interdisciplinarity *within* the SSH as well as *between* SSH, the natural sciences and the arts (Forêt et al. 2014; Nye et al. 2013; Sörlin 2012). EH thereby touches upon many of the questions that are essential to the evolving identity of the social sciences and humanities. EH asks the following questions: how does our interaction with the material world affect our ideas, values, and hopes? How do representational and aesthetic practices influence the way we approach and understand the environment? What are the practical lessons to be learned from the social sciences and humanities? How do we assess quality in SSH, and how does it differ from assessing quality in the natural sciences? Is cooperative 'big science' possible in the SSH? And how do SSH contribute to resolving grand societal challenges such as unus-

¹ <http://www.futureearth.org/>

tainable development, climate change, biodiversity loss, poverty growth, social injustice and disease control? Such questions are also being explored by the SAHS priority project on “science in transformation” (see e.g., the issues raised in SAGW 2012).

This report on the current state of the Environmental Humanities in Switzerland aims to contribute to these on-going questions and debates. A recent, worldwide inventory of EH has been carried out by MISTRA (Nye 2013), and our present study is an in-depth survey of the situation in Switzerland. Sponsored by SAHS, our study focuses on the growth potential of the Environmental Humanities in Switzerland, and it complements the initial inventory of SSH research on the consumption of natural resources (Schmid and Stauffacher 2013). We focus more closely on the humanities than on the social sciences although we consider both. We also shift our emphasis from documenting the present state of the field to identifying areas of future development.

1.2 Research questions

- What is taught and researched today in the Environmental Humanities in Swiss institutions of higher education and research?
- What is the disciplinary background of researchers and lecturers in EH? In which institutions do they work?
- How can EH be strengthened in Switzerland? What are the appropriate means for this support?

2. The Environmental Humanities

2.1. Definition and objectives

The Environmental Humanities seek to understand and implement an efficient, sustainable, inclusive, ethical, and equitable relationship with our planet. Emerging in the twenty-first century, EH form a meta-field that involves several SSH subfields. Their common goal is to re-conceptualize our most intractable environmental problems and propose effective strategies and solutions (Bergthaller et al. 2014). Nye et al.'s (2013) worldwide survey of the Environmental Humanities concludes that:

The Environmental Humanities do not merely present improved ways to understand scientific and technological change. They offer a better understanding of the often human-based causes of those changes and the intricate relationship between people and the environments that they construct.

In addition, using the ‘Anthropocene’ label, EH are increasingly interacting with the research community in earth system analysis and modeling (see the events listed below).

EH offers provocative insights into the cultural, historical and political dimensions of human life on earth (Bergthaller et al. 2014; Forêt et al. 2014; Sörlin 2012). Social and cultural scientists, writers, artists, and educators are provided with a common forum to discuss envi-

ronmental concerns (Rose et al. 2012). This forum fosters dialogues between these specialists and with biologists, engineers, environmental and medical scientists, while also involving politicians and business leaders (Chapman 2007; Sörlin 2013). We need such conversations because humans are dramatically changing environmental systems, and because scientific discoveries are interpreted and implemented in political, cultural, and economic contexts that shape the production and interpretation of new knowledge.

The global EH community is in a dynamic phase of formation, yet a number of common goals can already be identified. EH aims to:

- Foster critical and radical thinking about environmental issues and the sustainable futures of our societies. Fundamental social and economic changes are urgently needed. Re-envisioning and reframing fundamental concepts such as sustainability are in demand.
- Represent environmental issues in a multicultural and global society. Environmental problems are multifaceted and value-laden, and can only be addressed through long-term, international, and fair collaborations. Societal transformation within a few decades may only be possible through the involvement of diverse voices, including social movements, indigenous communities, and migrant populations.
- Enable critical reflections on our management of the planet, drawing attention to inadequate simplifications and power imbalances, and giving a voice to neglected, alternative, or excluded perspectives.
- Encourage integrative theoretical perspectives from all SSH subfields, enable stronger institutionalization, and promote networking both within academia and with environmental policy-making. The natural and engineering sciences are integral parts of EH as disciplines that do not frame environmental issues on their own.

2.2. Expansion

EH are a field that enjoys a significant and expanding institutional support around the world (Forêt et al. 2014; Nye et al. 2013; Sörlin 2012, and citations therein). As outlined below, France, Germany, Sweden, Canada, the United States, Australia, China and Taiwan have each established centers and networks in EH. The emergence of EH is also reflected through the formulation of policy documents, the rapid formation of institutions and journals, and a growing number of teaching curricula and outreach events. Many of these initiatives are new or have substantially expanded prior activities. They have added materials to an existing body of research, institutions, and journals, with the hope that EH may better connect between different SSH fields and subfields. Bergthaller and colleagues (2014) write that:

The emergence of the Environmental Humanities presents a unique opportunity for scholarship to tackle the human dimensions of the environmental crisis. It might finally allow such work to attain the critical mass it needs to break out of customary disciplinary confines and reach a wider public, at a time when natural scientists have begun to acknowledge that an understanding of the environmental crisis must include insights from the humanities and social sciences. In order to realize this potential, scholars in the Environmental Humanities need to map

the common ground on which close interdisciplinary cooperation will be possible.

Since the Swedish Foundation for Strategic Environmental Research (MISTRA) commissioned a worldwide survey of EH and developed related policy recommendations (Nye et al. 2013), different alliances have formed resulting in additional position statements. Some of these alliances include the Consortium of Humanities Centers and Institutes (CHCI)'s Humanities for the Environment program,² the European Environmental Humanities Network,³ the Australian Environmental Humanities Hub,⁴ and the Transatlantic Environmental Humanities Research Network.⁵ The webpages of these networks show significant lists of on-going activities and institutions in different countries. Many such EH research groups, institutes or centers are remarkably large, productive, and innovative, for instance the KTH Environmental Humanities Laboratory⁶ in Stockholm, and the Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society⁷ in Munich. While these centers focus on research, other university programs emphasize innovative forms of teaching, such as at the University of Utah⁸ and Stony Brook University.⁹ Two journals in the field, both founded in 2012, are *Environmental Humanities*¹⁰ (Australia) and *Resilience: A Journal of The Environmental Humanities*¹¹ (USA). The Rachel Carson Center also supports online publications, including the *RCC Perspectives* series¹² that are free and available to all.

The international dynamism of EH has expressed itself in numerous events over the past few years. Many such events are accessible online and illustrate current discourses, concerns, and directions in the environmental field. Recent events are for instance the 2014 KTH EH Lab conference on 'Im/mortality and In/finitude in the Anthropocene'¹³ or Munich's Deutsches Museum exhibit (co-organized with the Rachel Carson Center), "Welcome to the Anthropocene."¹⁴ A stimulating novelty is the meeting of critical scholars from the humanities with the natural sciences, for instance at the 'Arts of living on a damaged planet' conference¹⁵ at Santa Cruz, or at the Anthropocene project at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt¹⁶ in Berlin. Another novelty is the testing of new forms of scientific interaction, including combining arts exhibitions with scientific workshops (Anthropocene project at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt, or the Anthropocene Monument¹⁷ in Toulouse curated by Bruno Latour), or the 'Anthropocene

² <http://initiatives.chcinetwork.org/environment/>

³ <http://europeanenvironmentalhumanities.org/>

⁴ <http://www.aehhub.org/>

⁵ <http://environmental-humanities-network.org/>

⁶ <http://www.kth.se/en/abe/inst/philhist/historia/ehl>

⁷ <http://www.carsoncenter.uni-muenchen.de/index.html>

⁸ <http://environmental-humanities.utah.edu/>

⁹ <http://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/sustainability/majors/ENVhumanitiesmajor.pcf.html>

¹⁰ <http://environmentalhumanities.org/about/>

¹¹ <http://www.resiliencejournal.org/>

¹² <http://www.environmentandsociety.org/perspectives>

¹³ <http://www.immortalityandinfinitude.net/>

¹⁴ <http://www.deutsches-museum.de/en/exhibitions/special-exhibitions/2014/anthropocene/>

¹⁵ <http://anthropocene.au.dk/arts-of-living-on-a-damaged-planet/>

¹⁶ http://www.hkw.de/en/programm/projekte/2014/anthropozaen/anthropozaen_2013_2014.php

¹⁷ <http://www.lesabattoirs.org/en/expositions/anthropocene-monument>

Poetry Slam' at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.¹⁸ In Switzerland, a recently formed network called "Environmental Humanities Switzerland"¹⁹ organized in 2014 a joint summer school and symposium that explored collapse and post-collapse in natural and cultural systems.²⁰

3. Survey Methodology

To assess the state in Switzerland of research, teaching, and outreach in the Environmental Humanities, we prepared a written questionnaire in three languages (German, French, English; see Annex 1), and asked for the cooperation of the presidents of each of the 60 member organizations of SAHS.²¹ In March and May 2014, we asked them to distribute the questionnaire among their society members. The questionnaire was also sent to ca. 80 individual scientists with personal knowledge of the Environmental Humanities, who were also encouraged to forward it to interested colleagues. Our approach therefore combined a systematic survey through the SAHS societies with an iterative, targeted search to identify scientists who work at non-conventional institutions or have an international background.

In a second step we organized a one-day workshop, which took place at the Botanical Garden in Zurich on June 20, 2014 (see program in Annex 2). The workshop had three objectives:

- Stress the international significance of the Environmental Humanities. Our guest speakers introduced major players such as MISTRA and KTH Environmental Humanities Lab in Stockholm, the Environmental Humanities Master's Program at University of Utah (USA), and the Rachel Carson Center in Munich.
- Present a selection of current Swiss EH activities: the views from a law professor at the University of Basel, the EH program at the University of Lausanne, and the SUK/CUS Sustainable Development at Universities Programme.
- Discuss the results of our questionnaire, and elaborate on them in parallel working groups.

In total, 67 persons contributed to the survey, either by completing the questionnaire and/or attending the workshop. Of these, 58 persons were based at an institution in Switzerland (51 at academic institutions and 7 at non-academic institutions such as the Swiss Academies of Sciences). The following tabulations on distribution of participants among disciplines and institutions were calculated based on the 51 persons working at academic institutions in Switzerland (universities, universities of applied sciences, research institutes).

¹⁸ <http://nelson.wisc.edu/che/anthroslam/>

¹⁹ <http://environmentalhumanities.ch/>

²⁰ <http://www.ieu.uzh.ch/teaching/phd/graduate/structure/sgs/sgs2014/Zurich.EH.Symposium.abstracts.pdf>

²¹ <http://www.sagw.ch/en/sagw/die-akademie/mitgliedgesellschaften.html>

4. Research and teaching in the Environmental Humanities

The respondents to this survey represent a large geographical, institutional, disciplinary, and thematic diversity. They ranged from doctoral students to postdocs, senior scientists and professors. However, we received surprisingly few responses from the 60 SAHS member organizations. In total six presidents responded, out of which three said that their organization has no interest in the Environmental Humanities or environmental research (and so were not included in the analysis). The survey cannot give an exhaustive overview of relevant research and teaching activities but it complements existing databases (BAFU/FOEN database “Schweizerische Forschungsgruppen im Umweltbereich,”²² ProClim experts database,²³ and FORSbase²⁴) and the previous survey by Schmid and Stauffacher (2013). Indeed, many of our respondents were not among the ca. 150 scientists identified through the previous inventory. Our survey confirmed patterns identified by Schmid and Stauffacher (2013) and highlighted new aspects.

4.1 Disciplines and institutions

The scientists identified through this survey came from the following disciplines: history (15), ecology (7), political sciences (5), archaeology (3), philosophy (3), anthropology (2), human geography (2), literature (2), social sciences (2), arts / art history (2), ethnology (1), cultural studies (1), environmental sciences (1), ethnology (1), film studies (1), informatics (1), law (1) and media studies (1). The strong representation of history reflects the importance of historical studies for the Environmental Humanities internationally as well as the significant tradition of environmental history in Switzerland. There is an underrepresentation of economics, sociology, and human geography compared to the inventory by Schmid and Stauffacher (2013) that focused on research about resource use.

55% of the respondents work either at an applied research institute or geography / environmental sciences department, and another 24% at a history institute, while only 21% work at another social sciences or humanities department. Although we focused explicitly on the humanities, we confirmed the observation made by Schmid and Stauffacher (2013) that researchers in the field are dispersed widely across different institutions and often based at environmental sciences or geography faculties or research institutions with very few researchers or whole institutes focusing on environmental issues housed at SSH institutes. This gap might also partly explain why relatively few SAHS member organizations responded to our questionnaire, although we might have attained different results had we directly contacted SSH institutes across Switzerland.

²² <http://www.bafu.admin.ch/innovation/06631/10646/index.html?lang=en>

²³ <http://4dweb.proclim.ch/4dcgi/proclim/de/index.html>

²⁴ <https://forsbase.unil.ch/>

4.2 Research activities

The research activities of respondents cover the major topics in environmental research including agriculture, climate change, ecocriticism, ecosystem services, energy, environmental economics, environmental consciousness and education, environmental justice, ethics, gender studies, globalization, health, human-animal relationships, land use, mountains, nature conservation & ecosystem management, North-South research, participation & governance, post-humanism, political ecology, risk, societal transformation, sustainability, transdisciplinarity, and water.

We also asked contributors to list their five most relevant publications, and some simple statistics about these publications help to further characterize research activities. About one third of the publications were published in an edited book and a further 10% as monographs. Journal articles were relatively equally distributed between social sciences & humanities journals (18%), interdisciplinary environmental sciences journals (21%), and natural sciences journals (14%). About three quarters of all publications were written by only one or two authors, while less than 10% of the publications had more than five authors. About 80% of the articles were written in English with the remaining ones in either German or French. The publication culture thus shows a combination of elements typical for the social sciences and humanities, such as the importance of monographs and edited volumes and of single-author publications – and others more typical of the natural sciences, especially the dominance of English as *lingua franca* and publications in natural or environmental sciences journals.

To classify the content of the publications, we used a typology of six types of SSH contributions to environmental research that expanded on previous typologies (Kueffer et al. 2007; Wäger et al. 2014). The boundaries between different categories are of course not always sharp, and many publications belong to more than one category:

- A first type might be called “*provisioning of data and expertise to other research fields*”. In particular in historical climatology and historical seismology one objective is to critically compile and make accessible historical data about local climates, extreme climate-related events such as floods, or earthquakes.
- A second type might be called “*applied research*” that produces outputs of direct relevance to practitioners and is often also funded by government agencies for this purpose. This category can encompass research focused on “translation and communication of findings to decision-makers and the public” (type 2 in Wäger et al. 2014) but it often transgresses it. On the one hand such research is often not simply about translating natural sciences research for practice – something that has been criticized as an instrumental use of SSH (Castree et al. 2014) – and on the other hand it often goes beyond activities of communication and translation as it focuses more generally on clarifying a wide range of social, political or cultural aspects of environmental management. Several research projects aimed at improving in innovative ways the public understanding of climate change. One project for instance develops new ways of enabling people to interactively explore the realities of future climates through artistic work. Other applied projects dealt with improving specific socio-political institutions such as local public sector reforms, regional water supply or waste water institutions, or a socio-economic monitoring system for a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. This category, applied research also includes projects that analyze specific socio-political processes (e.g., lo-

cating polarization within the U.S. climate change debate, or an actor-network analysis of the Swiss energy sector). Still other examples of applied research are an international consultancy report on agricultural knowledge, and a history of the Swiss National Park. An intriguing example of historical climatology that was funded by a government agency focused on reconstructing past flooding events of individual rivers as a basis for improving the management of flood risk.

- A third type might be called “*conceptual advancements or methodological developments for applied research*.” Here the focus is on developing tools and concepts that can serve managers across different concrete contexts. This encompasses for example the development of tools for structuring policy processes and the science-policy nexus, of economic valuation, multi-criteria decision analysis, participatory processes, and management of sustainable resources. Some of these projects might hold the primary objective of translating existing understandings of environmental issues to problem-solvers, but they can also help re-frame how an environmental issue is addressed or suggest radical innovations. One project develops a new tool for exchanging local agricultural knowledge in Africa by using mobile phones in conjunction with spatially explicit computer visualization techniques. The project involves local and international experts of agriculture, local knowledge, visualization, information technology, and artists.

- A fourth type, that corresponds to type 3 of Wäger et al. (2014), might be called “*critical reflection on environmental research and policy*.” This encompasses research reflecting on the foundations of environmental restoration, re-wilding, invasive alien species, national parks, the use of scenarios, the epistemology of ecological thinking, and the role of metaphors in environmental research and policy. Typical publication titles in this category are “How well does risk society speak beyond global north” or “Ethical analysis of policy arguments in climate-related land use decisions.”

- A fifth type might be called “*basic research on environmental issues and human understandings of nature*,” and encompasses disciplinary and interdisciplinary research that explores fundamental issues about relations between the humans and the nonhuman world. This type includes type 1 of Wäger et al. (2014). This can for instance be fundamental research on climate ethics and justice, energy transition, global governance, land use systems, human-animal relationships, post-humanism, imagining the future and apocalyptic rhetoric, or the representation of environmental issues in literature and film. Research in environmental history and archaeology often addresses such fundamental aspects of human-nature relationships from a long-term historic perspective.

- The sixth type might be called “*endogenisation of research on environmental problems in traditional disciplines*” (*sensu* Kueffer et al. 2007). Here, environmental problems become a research topic of interest to traditional disciplines and their research interests and methodologies. Analyses related to environmental problems can be of a disciplinary interest to all research fields; in other words fundamental sociological, ethnological, historical, or political questions can be fruitfully approached through the lens of environmental problems.

4.3 Teaching activities

We asked respondents to list the courses they teach that are relevant to the Environmental Humanities, and we then complemented the list through an Internet search (Annex 3). The overview of teaching activities indicates that SSH courses taught through the prism of environmental issues are widely present at Swiss universities. However, reflecting the patterns for EH research, such teaching is mostly offered as part of programs in environmental sciences, sustainability or geography, while there are very few offers within SSH faculties. Although social sciences (economics, political sciences, sociology, psychology) and ethics are well represented in most environmental programs, there are – with a few exceptions – very few offers from the humanities such as literature and cultural studies when compared to the offerings of other European universities. A first step to improve the situation might be to make existing courses more visible and offer students the opportunity to combine courses (and credit points) from different universities to complement their curriculum in their SSH bachelor or master programs.

5. Support for the Environmental Humanities

We explored the opportunities and prospects of the Environmental Humanities in Switzerland by asking participants in the questionnaire why the Environmental Humanities are needed, what the priority topics are, and what kind of institutional support is desirable. Research topics, outreach activities, and institutional support were individually discussed in working groups at the one-day workshop of June 2014.

5.1 Why the Environmental Humanities are important

The consensus is that the Environmental Humanities are important to address the human dimension of environmental problems and human-environment interactions. A typical statement was: “Generally, any major environmental issue must be considered from humanistic perspectives, especially in combination with insights from the sciences.” A long-term historical understanding of human-environment interactions is deemed critical, e.g., “Compréhension des interactions entre l’Homme, le climat et l’environnement sur une échelle de temps longue.”

More specific topics in the Environmental Humanities were:

- (i) Perceptions, representations and imaginings of environmental issues
- (ii) Environmental values, ethics and justice
- (iii) Environmental decision-making and participatory processes
- (iv) Societal transformations and cultural sustainability.

The first topic on *perceptions, representations and imaginings of environmental issues* ranged from difficulties in understanding and communicating climate change, to risk perception and discourses (especially in concrete contexts or from a historical perspective), understanding images, perceptions or values in society, and imagining and visualizing alternative

environmental pasts and futures (especially in ways that allow for diversity and non-hegemonic conditions; one keyword was *heterotopia*).

The second topic on *environmental values, ethics and justice* related to concepts such as environmental ethics (including virtue ethics), environmental justice, multicultural communication, or concepts of responsibility, but also more thought-provoking ideas such as the perception of the imperceptible, ethics of disruption or post-humanism.

The third topic on *environmental decision-making and participatory processes* includes all aspects of societal decision-making and deliberation from participatory processes to governance with an emphasis on uncertainty and complexity and critical views such those related to the tension between participatory dialogue versus critical discourse.

The fourth topic on *societal transformations and cultural sustainability* emphasized in particular the need for thinking about the fundamental transformation of the current societal order, focusing on topics such as energetic decline and limits to growth; social-economic gaps between rich and poor; population growth and population control; or the university as a post-capitalist experience.

An important topic for the Environmental Humanities is the development of research frameworks and methodologies for transdisciplinary research within the humanities and across the humanities and the natural sciences, including support for the practical application of this type of work. Keywords mentioned in this context were methodological integration, clarifying vocabularies and metaphors, forms of disciplinary hybridization, and the balance between disciplinary strength and transdisciplinary knowledge.

The working group at the one-day workshop that focused on research topics in EH emphasized the need for projects that are concrete, discrete, doable, and practical. The group then differentiated between four different modes of interdisciplinary organization and knowledge integration:

- (i) A thematic focus (e.g., mountains, water, climate, agriculture, forest, resources, animal studies, food studies),
- (ii) A conceptual focus (e.g., resilience, risks, uncertainty / ignorance, dealing with scarcity, transformation [of societies or landscapes etc.]),
- (iii) A problem-oriented focus that structures research topics based on the options and constraints of actors (e.g., lifestyles / consumption patterns; societal transformation; food), and
- (iv) Critical perspectives (e.g. sufficiency, end of economic growth, power relationships, or more general a critical theory of the environment).

For all four types it was emphasized that hybrid topics are needed that are of interest to both natural and social sciences, are adaptive (no topic survives forever, either it changes or it ends), and relevant for society.

5.2 Why are the Environmental Humanities needed?

When asked why the Environmental Humanities as a research field is needed, the key argument was that a *critical mass* within the humanities and social sciences working on environmental issues is desirable for several reasons:

- (i) To strengthen identification and collaboration among scientists working in the field
- (ii) To have enough institutional and personal capacity for inter- and transdisciplinary research that can tackle to great complexity of environmental problems through large projects (such as national research programs)
- (iii) To exploit synergies in research and teaching
- (iv) To increase visibility and thereby support within academia and in society.

Such a critical mass is needed to enable more interdisciplinarity within SSH through the formation of new subfields, concepts and theories and by forcing scientists out of their comfort zones. Another common rationale was to counterbalance the dominant role of the natural sciences in framing and leading environmental research and policy-making. A typical statement was: “En particulier pour ne pas laisser le monopole de ces questions aux sciences naturelles”, in other words to gain more recognition among both humanists and natural scientists both nationally and internationally.

A second rationale for EH focused on the relationship between academia and the “real world.” We need more applied research from the humanities, and humanists should be braver in taking positions in political debates and in simplifying the science for decision-making (including in the business world). Two typical statements here were: “Humanities sollen auch mal Position beziehen” and “business needs humanists who tell people what to do (like psychologists, economists).” More generally, we need to find new ways of engaging with diverse contexts, i.e., diverse and real issues, places, and people, and EH can help scientists to personally connect to environment issues (e.g., through story-telling).

Fund raising, professorial positions, and education (starting already in primary education) were mentioned among other specific demands. An interesting point was that new evaluation criteria and procedures within the humanities are needed for the inter- and transdisciplinary projects that are typical of EH. Critical voices questioned whether a research field can be deliberately institutionalized or whether this is desirable given the heterogeneity, diversity and transdisciplinarity of EH. An early-career scientist feared that an EH research field would add uncertainty to academic career pathways: research opportunities would be offered that do not fit the profiles of rather traditional professorial positions.

One working group at the June 2014 workshop further explored how EH can contribute to new modes of engagement between academia and society, and whether this can help justify the need for EH. One way to justify the allocation of resources to EH and encourage public engagement in EH would be to promote a new discourse that would differ from clichés like “Saving the World” endorsed by many NGOs, and from the wooden languages of the sustainable development and climate change academic communities. Offering a different language about alternative thinking and long-term planning would encourage behavioral change. The group then discussed the values fostered by EH that the general public would likely adopt.

The new social media has empowered the citizenry at a time of a crisis of confidence in expert knowledge and integrity, and when the disaffection with the humanities and liberal arts is widespread. Could these new capacities to reach and share lead to a lifestyle transition that would value experimenting more than purchasing and consuming? A second audience that EH leaders should try to reach would be the green business community. Inclusive conversations, shared practices, and joint decision-making processes would assist with the emergence of common values and ethics. Examples on how to articulate claims for social and environmental justice, or on how to target disenfranchised audiences (generation Y or retirees), could be seen in pop culture and religious extremism. The workshop concluded its reflections on outreach by stressing the significance of participation, empathy and altruism during the transition from the knowledge society to a society that would care and nurse nature and culture.

5.3 Forms of institutional support

We asked participants of the questionnaire survey to assess nine activities aimed at supporting the Environmental Humanities in Switzerland on a scale from 1 to 5 (Table 1). Not all participants completed this part of the questionnaire. The proposed activities were: a Swiss Association of Environmental Humanities (comparable to the member organizations of SAGW²⁵), a Swiss Center for the Environmental Humanities (comparable to e.g. the Rachel Carson Center²⁶, or the KTH Environmental Humanities Laboratory²⁷), a list-server (mailing-list), a webpage, online researchers' portfolios (see e.g., SPSW²⁸), regular events, teaching programs, new funding mechanisms, and outreach activities (i.e., engagement with society and the public).

Generally, all activities were rated as relevant to highly relevant, however some participants also said that not all the activities were relevant. All but two participants rated at least one activity as highly relevant (while the highest rating of these other two was 'relevant'). So while there was a consensus about a need for more support, there were different opinions about short-term priorities. A Swiss Association or Consortium was seen as important particularly to reach the necessary capacity for large-scale national programs (such as National Research Programs [NRPs] or National Centers of Competence in Research [NCCRs]). It is seen as a relatively easy first step to support networking and collaboration, including the organization of regular events and the maintenance of a webpage. It was also pointed out that the natural sciences are generally better networked than the SSH. The establishment of a Swiss Center for the Environmental Humanities was seen by some as difficult to achieve, both because of the sizeable resources needed and because Centers tend to be difficult to establish in Switzerland due to the decentralized organization of the country. For teaching it was emphasized that courses should start at the Bachelor level and should be designed as interdisciplinary courses bridging the SSH and natural sciences. It was also mentioned that coordination of

²⁵ <http://www.sagw.ch/en/sagw/die-akademie/mitgliedgesellschaften.html>

²⁶ <http://www.carsoncenter.uni-muenchen.de/index.html>

²⁷ <http://www.kth.se/en/abe/inst/philhist/historia/ehl>

²⁸ <http://www.swissplantscienceweb.ch/de/research/researchers/>

teaching activities already works for other fields such as gender or cultural studies. For funding, the need for mechanisms that promote inter- and transdisciplinarity was emphasized, and the need for new professorships was mentioned. Overall, the need for substantial projects was emphasized.

Table 1: Priorities assigned by the participants to the questionnaire survey to nine activities for supporting the Environmental Humanities in Switzerland (N = 31). 1: not at all relevant, 2: not relevant: 3: no opinion / neutral, 4: relevant, 5: highly relevant. The complete range, the mean and the median across all answers are given for each activity.

Activity	Range (Mean, Median)
Swiss Association of Environmental Humanities	2-5 (3.6, 4.0)
Swiss Center for Environmental Humanities	1-5 (3.8, 4.0)
List-Server [Mailing-List]	1-5 (4.3, 4.0)
Webpage	3-5 (4.3, 4.0)
Researchers' Portfolios	2-5 (4.1, 4.0)
Regular Events	2-5 (4.2, 4.3)
Teaching Programs	2-5 (4.0, 4.0)
Funding Mechanisms	1-5 (4.3, 5.0)
Outreach Activities	2-5 (4.0, 4.0)

Outreach activities were seen as an important step to establish a public presence and build a strong network with stakeholder groups and the media in order to add to the visibility of alternative understandings of environmental issues. Outreach was further discussed in one of the working groups at the one-day workshop in June 2014. Most people agreed that the creation of a website or online platform would be the most desirable first step to take. The basic challenges accompanying such an initiative were recognized, and in particular a significant budget or the voluntary work by a competent administrator. The possibility to rely on available services, such as UZH Media Desk or ETH e-learning, was also mentioned. The creation of a web resource will fulfill at least three objectives: (1) ensuring ongoing activities; (2) providing outside visibility and grounds for outreach; and (3) providing a platform for networking and developing ideas. Of these points, only the last one was discussed in further detail since the need for a tool linking people and building community may be more practical than establishing a traditional website.

Different web contents were identified, which should be exchanged and developed through the online platform in question. Everybody said that a list of relevant contacts, including all symposium participants and potentially interested individuals, is crucial. One of the main obstacles to a transdisciplinary dialogue is the lack of a shared vocabulary or theoretical framework: several participants remarked how difficult (if not impossible) they found it to

understand presentations anchored in a disciplinary jargon with which they are not familiar. An online platform could be used to collectively build a glossary of fundamental terms, or an archive of key theorists and readings. For this purpose, existing tools (e.g., Mendeley) can be used. While this undertaking would be of direct help to our group, producing something like a 'glossary for transdisciplinary research in the Environmental Humanities' could be of significance to the broader scientific community. A list of completed or ongoing transdisciplinary projects would be desirable. Looking at differences in successful examples can be inspiring. Finally, the online platform could feature some sort of 'blue-sky box,' where wishes and suggestions are dropped, for example research ideas that require collaborative work and involve different network members.

6. Ten propositions to develop the Environmental Humanities in Switzerland

1. SSH as leaders in Swiss environmental research

Switzerland has a long tradition in environmental research and teaching, and in providing expertise on public policy issues. To further develop these strengths, we should seek to better involve leading humanists and social scientists. Research toward a major societal transformation away from an unsustainable society, which has gained prominence in Germany²⁹ and elsewhere,³⁰ is not yet well defined in Switzerland as a topic for integrative research. Strengthening the Environmental Humanities can help to address such fundamental and pressing environmental challenges in Switzerland.

2. Strengthening integrative and cooperative research in Swiss SSH

Large-scale integrative and cooperative research programs have been identified as a priority area for the further development of SSH in Swiss academia. The Environmental Humanities can serve as a new direction for SSH because its broad approach conflates existing programs that have contributed significantly to integrative research on societal issues. They include human geography, environmental history, North-South research, science and technology studies, and sustainability studies. The first steps toward integrative and cooperative research can be observed as more individual research groups and institutes have recently established new EH clusters.³¹

²⁹ e.g., <http://www.wbgu.de/> or http://www.mwk.niedersachsen.de/portal/live.php?navigation_id=33675&article_id=118898&psm=and=19

³⁰ Through the Future Earth program

³¹ For instance at the Universities of Bern and Lausanne

3. Opening a laboratory for ‘humanities in transformation’

Through the creation of EH centers and the launching of large-scale collaborative programs nationally and internationally, we are learning how new approaches may address pressing issues in the humanities in a changing academic structure. In particular, collaborative research employs quality assessment criteria that account for the growing number of multi-authored papers (often from multiple disciplinary backgrounds and in English), or for the fact that researchers may not get individual credit for their contributions. Originality can hinder integration in collaborative research. Following closely international standards in EH are important to complement or redirect traditional research methods in the Swiss humanities³².

4. Building on and enhancing Swiss diversity

The Environmental Humanities are gaining momentum in Ticino, Romandie, and German-speaking Switzerland, with researchers from all three regions participating in common funding proposals, academic symposia, and planned student exchanges. In addition, academics with international career paths are attracted to EH, with rising efforts to develop international cooperative research initiatives. Thereby EH activities are contributing to bridging the language and associated scientific cultures of the country. The transcultural features of Swiss EH are especially valuable because it facilitates communication between the Germanophone, Francophone and Anglophone traditions in SSH and EH in Europe and beyond.

5. Cherishing close links to the natural sciences

To date, Swiss environmental scientists with a background in SSH are mostly located in departments of natural sciences or applied sciences. Such institutional proximity is a major strength because it facilitates long-term and reciprocal collaborations between SSH, engineering, and the natural and medical sciences. Tight collaborations with natural scientists will remain a distinct feature of the Swiss EH.

6. Swiss-based outreach activities towards international decision-makers

Switzerland is a hub in international decision-making in the corporate, diplomatic, non-governmental, and political worlds. The Environmental Humanities in Switzerland has a unique opportunity to open venues for cooperation with companies and institutions that have a global reach.

³² Compare the work of SAGW / ASSHS on quality assessment: <http://www.sagw.ch/sagw/laufende-projekte/Qualitaet-Leistung.html>

7. EH strengthens international networking

The Environmental Humanities are an intellectual pursuit that is re-orienting the social sciences and humanities at international forums. The EH community in Switzerland is characterized by the high diversity and density of its international network. It cultivates strong personal links to major Environmental Humanities centers across Europe, North America, Australia, and China. The emergence of a strong EH community in Switzerland can only increase the international visibility of SSH in Switzerland.

8. A new national platform for the Environmental Humanities

There is broad agreement that EH needs to be better networked in Switzerland, and a first step might be to establish a national platform that maintains a strong online presence³³. This will increase the visibility of teaching and research activities among EH scholars, within the SSH community, and across academia nationally and internationally, as well as to the public and business and political worlds. A national platform will also help build the *critical mass* needed for inter-university collaborations, university-level competence centers, research groups and professorships, and large national research programs.

9. Strengthening teaching offers

New teaching offers in SSH competences and perspectives related to environmental issues are needed at all levels, from pre-university education to bachelor and master levels and post-graduate training. In environmental sciences courses, there is often a gap in building on expertise from the humanities. Very few BSc and MSc environmental courses are rooted in SSH rather than natural sciences (i.e., environmental studies instead of environmental sciences). Traditional SSH departments do not have options to complement the curriculum with courses focused specifically on environmental issues. A first step to improve teaching offers in environmental studies would be to make existing courses more visible and offer students the opportunity to combine courses (and credit points) from different universities to complement their bachelor's or master's curricula.

10. Developing inter- and transdisciplinary methodologies

Methodologies and evaluation criteria and procedures have been developed for inter- and transdisciplinary research³⁴, but these can be further developed and adapted to the needs of integrative research rooted in the humanities.

³³ The SUK/CUS „Sustainable Development at Universities Programme“ is currently developing the IT-infrastructure for a national online platform on sustainability research, <http://sd-universities.ch/index.php>

³⁴ See www.transdisciplinarity.ch

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Annex 1: Questionnaire

Pour la version française voir ci-dessous – for an English version see below

Umweltgeisteswissenschaften in der Schweiz: Perspektiven und Bedürfnisse?

Eine Befragung zu umweltbezogener Forschung und Lehre in den Geisteswissenschaften als Grundlage für die Identifizierung von Fördermassnahmen

Die Umweltgeisteswissenschaften (‘environmental humanities’) sind ein schnell wachsendes Forschungsfeld, welches international im Moment stark gefördert wird. Forschungszentren (‘Centres of Environmental Humanities’) und Finanzierungsinstrumente wurden in den letzten Jahren in verschiedenen Ländern neu geschaffen (zum Beispiel in Belgien, Deutschland, Schweden, und den USA). Diese internationalen Entwicklungen haben ein grosses Potenzial, um auch in der Schweiz die institutionelle Unterstützung der Umweltforschung in den Geisteswissenschaften zu verbessern.

Das Ziel dieser Befragung ist es, Perspektiven und Bedürfnisse für umweltbezogene Forschung und Lehre in den Geisteswissenschaften in der Schweiz auszuloten, um Aktivitäten zur Stärkung der Umweltgeisteswissenschaften zu identifizieren.

Kontext

Die Befragung ist eine Aktivität der neu gegründeten Arbeitsgruppe ‘Umweltgeisteswissenschaften’ der Schweizerischen Akademischen Gesellschaft für Umweltforschung und Ökologie (saguf, www.eh.saguf.ch). Finanziert wird das Projekt durch die Schweizerische Akademie der Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaften (SAGW). Die Resultate der Befragung werden wir an einer eintägigen Tagung am 20. Juni 2014 in Zürich diskutieren. Das Programm finden Sie in einem separaten Anhang. Anmeldeschluss ist **1. Mai 2014**.

Ziele

Die Ziele der Befragung und der Tagung sind

- i) Bestehende Aktivitäten an Schweizer Hochschulen, Fachhochschulen, und Forschungsanstalten (wie EAWAG oder WSL) zu dokumentieren
- ii) Ein akademisches Netzwerk zu Umweltgeisteswissenschaften in der Schweiz zu initiieren

- iii) Perspektiven und Bedürfnisse für die Weiterentwicklung von Lehr- und Forschungsaktivitäten zu identifizieren
- iv) Den Nutzen von verschiedenen spezifischen Aktivitäten zur Förderung der Umweltgeisteswissenschaften in der Schweiz auszuloten

Die Resultate der Befragung und der Tagung werden in einem Arbeitsbericht dokumentiert werden, welcher vor Ende 2014 publiziert wird.

Wie können Sie teilnehmen?

Der Fragebogen wird an über 100 Schweizer Forschende verteilt und kann in etwa 15 Minuten ausgefüllt werden. Senden Sie bitte Ihre vollständigen oder ausgewählten Antworten bis spätestens **1. Mai 2014** an Christoph Küffer, ETH Zurich, kueffer@env.ethz.ch

Sie können in Deutsch, Französisch oder Englisch antworten. Das Word-Dokument erlaubt Ihnen, soviel Platz wie nötig für Ihre Antworten zu benutzen. Versuchen Sie aber bitte, Ihre Antworten kurz zu halten.

Bitte leiten Sie den Fragebogen an Ihre Kolleginnen und Kollegen weiter.

Ihre Person

Namen:

Institution:

Email:

Webseite [URL]:

Teil A: Ihre Arbeit

Disziplinen / Forschungsfeld(er) [bitte nur Stichworte verwenden]:

Forschungsthemen [bitte nur Stichworte verwenden]:]:

Was sind Ihre wichtigsten umweltbezogenen Forschungsinteressen?]:

Bitte führen Sie relevante kürzlich abgeschlossene oder laufende Forschungsprojekte von Ihnen auf [inkl. Webseite falls vorhanden]:

Bitte führen Sie bis maximal fünf relevante Publikationen von Ihnen auf [vollständige bibliografische Angaben]:

Bitte führen Sie relevante Lehrtätigkeiten von Ihnen auf [inkl. Webseite falls vorhanden]:

Teil B: Umweltgeisteswissenschaften („environmental humanities“)

Was sind prioritäre Forschungsthemen für die Umweltgeisteswissenschaften?

Ist die Etablierung eines institutionalisierten Forschungsfeldes ‚environmental humanities‘ nötig, und falls ja, weshalb?

Teil C: Umweltgeisteswissenschaften in der Schweiz

Welche prioritären Aktivitäten sehen Sie, um die geisteswissenschaftliche Umweltforschung und –lehre in der Schweiz zu stärken?

Wie wichtig schätzen Sie jede der unten aufgeführten Aktivitäten ein (1: überhaupt nicht relevant, 2: nicht relevant, 3: keine Meinung / neutral, 4: relevant, 5: sehr relevant). Falls Sie bereits relevante Beispiele aus der Schweiz kennen, dann nennen Sie diese bitte. Sie können Ihre Einschätzungen bei Bedarf erklären.

SCHWEIZERISCHE GESELLSCHAFT FÜR UMWELTGEISTESWISSENSCHAFTEN

SCHWEIZER ZENTRUM FÜR UMWELTGEISTESWISSENSCHAFTEN

[vergl. z.B. Rachel Carson Center in Munich; or KTH Environmental Humanities Laboratory in Stockholm]

LIST-SERVER [MAILING-LIST]

WEBSEITE

[z.B. mit einem Veranstaltungskalender oder Researchers' portfolios, siehe unten]

RESEARCHERS' PORTFOLIOS

[vergl. <http://www.swissplantscienceweb.ch/de/research/researchers/>]

REGELMÄSSIGE VERANSTALTUNGEN

LEHRPROGRAMME

FINANZIERUNGSTRUMENTE

OUTREACH

Weitere Vorschläge?

Teil D: Abschliessende Fragen

Wären Sie selber bereit, sich für solche Aktivitäten in der Schweiz zu engagieren. Falls ja, welche?

Dürfen wir Ihre Antworten ggfs. in nicht-anonymisierter Form verwenden? Falls nur zum Teil, nennen Sie uns bitte die Antworten, welche anonym bleiben sollen.

HERZLICHEN DANK, DASS SIE SICH DIE ZEIT GENOMMEN HABEN, UM DEN FRAGEBOGEN AUSZUFÜLLEN!

Les sciences humaines de l'environnement en Suisse: Les perspectives et les besoins

Les activités de recherche et d'enseignement sur l'environnement menées en sciences humaines: Recensement préalable à la formula- tion des mesures d'encouragement

« Les sciences humaines de l'environnement (SHE) » constituent un domaine en croissance qui reçoit un important soutien institutionnel dans le monde entier. De nombreux pays, y compris la Belgique, l'Allemagne, la Suède et les Etats-Unis, ont créé des centres de recherche et financent des initiatives d'envergure sur les sciences humaines de l'environnement. Ces progrès à l'étranger peuvent grandement renforcer le soutien institutionnel donné en Suisse aussi aux activités de recherche et d'enseignement sur l'environnement qui sont menées par les sciences humaines. Basé sur un questionnaire, notre recensement cherche à identifier les perspectives et les besoins des activités en SHE, puis à définir les priorités des actions d'encouragement en Suisse. (Pour un aperçu des sciences humaines de l'environnement, voir Forêt et al., GAIA, 2014, www.eh.saguf.ch).

Contexte

Financée par l'Académie suisse des sciences humaines et sociales (ASSHS/SAGW), cette enquête est effectuée par le nouveau groupe de travail des « sciences humaines de l'environnement (SHE) » de la Société académique suisse pour la recherche sur l'environnement et l'écologie (SASREE/SAGUF, www.eh.saguf.ch). Les résultats de l'enquête seront présentés à Zurich le 20 juin 2014, lors de l'atelier qui couronnera le symposium international où nous examinerons les SHE (du 16 au 20 juin 2014).

Objectifs

Les objectifs de l'enquête et de l'atelier sont les suivants :

1. Répertorier les activités déjà en cours dans les universités, les hautes écoles et les instituts de recherche suisses (EAWAG ou WSL, par exemple)
2. Construire un réseau suisse des universitaires en SHE
3. Examiner les perspectives et les futurs besoins de l'enseignement et de la recherche en SHE
4. Evaluer la pertinence des instruments spécifiques pour l'encouragement des SHE.

Les résultats de l'enquête et de l'atelier feront l'objet d'un rapport rendu public fin 2014.

Comment participer ?

Le questionnaire est envoyé à une centaine de chercheurs à travers la Suisse. Si vous le jugez approprié, veuillez faire suivre le questionnaire à vos collègues. Le questionnaire étant un document Word, vous pouvez prendre l'espace dont vous avez besoin, tout en veillant à rester concis. Le remplir prend 15 minutes. Vous pouvez répondre en français, en allemand ou en anglais. Veuillez renvoyer le questionnaire rempli (totalement ou en partie) avant le **1er mai 2014** à Christoph Kueffer, ETH Zurich, kueffer@env.ethz.ch.

Nous présenterons les résultats de l'enquête à l'atelier d'une journée que nous organisons le **20 juin 2014** à Zurich. Le programme préliminaire de l'atelier figure en annexe de cette correspondance. Veuillez vous inscrire à l'atelier en vous adressant à Christoph Kueffer par email avant le **1er mai 2014**.

Sur vous-même

Nom :

Etablissement :

Adresse email :

Page web personnelle [URL] :

Partie A : Sur vos travaux

Discipline(s) ou domaine(s) de recherche [seulement les mots-clefs, merci] :

Thèmes de recherche [seulement les mots-clefs, merci] :

Quels sont vos principaux centres d'intérêt sur les questions environnementales ?

Faites la liste et décrivez en une ou deux phrases vos projets récents et actuels [en donnant si possible les adresses URL] :

Faites la liste de vos cinq publications principales sur le sujet [en donnant les références bibliographiques complètes] :

Faites la liste de vos cours sur le sujet [en donnant si possible les liens aux pages web] :

Partie B : Sur les sciences humaines de l'environnement (SHE)

Quels sont pour vous les sujets prioritaires de recherche pour les SHE ?

Est-ce que la structuration de ce domaine de recherche vous semble nécessaire, et pourquoi ?

Partie C : Sur les SHE en Suisse

Selon vous, quelles devraient être les activités prioritaires pour le développement de l'enseignement et de la recherche en SHE en Suisse ?

Quelle importance donnez-vous à chacune des activités ci-dessous ?

1: Pas du tout importante, 2: Pas très importante, 3: Pas d'opinion, 4: Importante, 5: Très importante.

Vous pouvez ajouter des commentaires à votre évaluation. Le cas échéant, veuillez donner les exemples d'activité en Suisse dont vous avez connaissance.

La création d'une SOCIETE SUISSE EN SCIENCES HUMAINES DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT (SSSHE)
[Schweizerische Gesellschaft für Umweltgeisteswissenschaften (SGUGW), ou Swiss Association of Environmental Humanities (SAEH)]

La création d'un CENTRE SUISSE DES SCIENCES HUMAINES DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT (CSSHE)
[Schweizer Zentrum für Umweltgeisteswissenschaften (SZUGW), ou Swiss Center for Environmental Humanities (SCEH)]

[Le Centre serait comparable au Centre Rachel Carson RCC de Munich, ou au Laboratoire en SHE de l'Ecole polytechnique royale KTH à Stockholm]

La création d'un LIST-SERVER [MAILING-LIST]

La création d'un SITE WEB

[Avec par exemple un calendrier et le programme des activités des chercheurs. Voir ci-dessous]

Des informations sur les PROGRAMMES INDIVIDUELS DE RECHERCHE

[Comparable à ceux de: <http://www.swissplantscienceweb.ch/de/research/researchers/>]

Des informations sur le CALENDRIER DES MANIFESTATIONS

Des informations sur les PROGRAMMES DE COURS

Des informations sur le MECHANISMES DE SOUTIEN FINANCIER

Des informations sur les ACTIVITES GRAND PUBLIC

D'autres suggestions ?

Partie D: Questions en conclusion

Souhaitez vous participer personnellement au développement de ces activités, et plus précisément de laquelle?

Nous donnez-vous la permission d'utiliser vos réponses de façon non-anonyme ? Veuillez indiquer quelles parties du questionnaire doivent rester anonymes.

NOUS VOUS ADRESSONS NOS SINCERES REMERCIEMENTS POUR AVOIR REMPLI LE QUESTIONNAIRE.

Building Environmental Humanities in Switzerland: Opportunities and Needs?

An inventory of environmental research and teaching in the humanities as a basis for prioritizing action to strengthen institutional support

‘Environmental humanities’ is an emerging field that is attracting significant institutional support around the world. Centers of Environmental Humanities and major funding initiatives have recently been initiated in various countries (including Belgium, Germany, Sweden and USA). These international developments have great potential to strengthen institutional support for environmental research and teaching in the humanities in Switzerland.

Through this questionnaire-based inventory we aim to explore opportunities and needs for environmental activities in the humanities in Switzerland as a basis for prioritizing actions that promote and strengthen them. For an overview of Environmental Humanities, see Forêt et al., GAIA, 2014, available from www.eh.saguf.ch.

Context

The inventory is an activity of the newly formed working group ‘Environmental Humanities’ of the Swiss Academic Society of Environment Research and Ecology (saguf, www.eh.saguf.ch). It is funded by the Swiss Academy of Humanities and Social Sciences (SAGW). The results of the inventory will be discussed at a one-day workshop on June 20, 2014 in Zurich, which is the culmination of a five-day international academic symposium (16-20 June) exploring the Environmental Humanities.

Objectives

The objectives of the inventory and workshop are to:

- i) Document existing activities at Swiss universities, universities of applied sciences, and research institutions (such as EAWAG or WSL)
- ii) Develop networks of EH academics in Switzerland
- iii) Identify opportunities and needs for developing research and teaching activities in Switzerland
- iv) Explore the utility of specific tools to promote EH in Switzerland

The results of the inventory and workshop will be documented in a report that will be made publicly available before the end of 2014.

How to participate?

This survey will be distributed to some 100 researchers across Switzerland, and will take about 15 minutes to complete. Please return the (partly) completed questionnaire no later than **1. May 2014** by email to Christoph Kueffer, ETH Zurich, kueffer@env.ethz.ch

You may reply in English, French or German. We provide the questionnaire as a word document, so that you can use as much space as you need, but please be as concise as possible. Please further distribute this questionnaire among your colleagues in Switzerland.

We will discuss the results of the inventory at a one-day workshop on **20. June 2014** in Zurich. In case you have not received the preliminary program of the workshop, please contact us. Please register no later than **1. May 2014** by email to Christoph Kueffer.

Your person

Name:

Institution:

Email:

Personal webpage [URL]:

Part A: Your work

Discipline(s) / research field(s) [use keywords only]:

Research themes [use keywords only]:

What are your main research interests related to environmental issues?

Please list and describe in 1-2 sentences recent and current key projects [incl. URL where available]:

Please list up to five of your key publications [full bibliographic information]:

Please list your relevant teaching courses [with links to webpages where available]:

Part B: Environmental Humanities

What should be priority topics for a research field of Environmental Humanities?

Is the formalization of such a research field needed, and if yes, why?

Part C: Environmental Humanities in Switzerland

What priority needs do you see to strengthen the position of researchers in the humanities working in Switzerland on environmental topics?

Prioritize each of the tools for promoting Environmental Humanities listed below (1: not at all relevant, 2: not relevant, 3: no opinion / neutral, 4: relevant, 5: highly relevant). Indicate if you already know of such activities in Switzerland. Specify your response with a comment where appropriate.

SWISS ASSOCIATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL HUMANITIES

SWISS CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL HUMANITIES

[compare e.g. Rachel Carson Center in Munich; or KTH Environmental Humanities Laboratory in Stockholm]

LIST-SERVER [MAILING-LIST]

WEBPAGE

[e.g. with an event calendar or Researchers' portfolios, see below]

RESEARCHERS' PORTFOLIOS

[compare <http://www.swissplantscienceweb.ch/de/research/researchers/>]

REGULAR EVENTS

TEACHING PROGRAMMES

FUNDING MECHANISMS

OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

Other suggestions?

Part D: Concluding questions

Would you be prepared to contribute to the further development of any of these activities? If yes, how?

Are we allowed to use your responses in non-anonymous form? If only partly, please indicate which parts should remain anonymous.

THANK YOU SINCERELY FOR COMPLETING THE QUESTIONNAIRE!

Annex 2: Workshop program

Umweltgeisteswissenschaften – Perspektiven und Bedürfnisse in der Schweiz

Datum: Freitag, 20. Juni 2014, 09.00 – 16.30

Ort: Botanischer Garten, Zürich. Grosser Vorlesungsaal (P1 40) oberhalb Cafeteria (siehe Rückseite)

Sprachen: Deutsch, Französisch, Englisch (keine Übersetzung)

Ziele:

Die Umweltgeisteswissenschaften („Environmental Humanities“) sind ein schnell wachsendes Forschungsfeld, welches international im Moment stark gefördert wird. An dieser Tagung, welche Teil eines einwöchigen internationalen Symposiums ist, sollen die Perspektiven und Bedürfnisse für die Umweltgeisteswissenschaften in der Schweiz ausgelotet werden (für mehr Informationen siehe Fôret et al., GAIA, 2014, download von: www.eh.saguf.ch).

09.00 – 09.15 Eröffnung

- Begrüssung (Philippe Forêt, Marcus Hall, Christoph Küffer)
- Bernhard Schmid (Dekan, Mathematisch-naturwissenschaftliche Fakultät, Universität Zürich)

09.15 – 10.45 Internationale Entwicklungen

- Johan Edman (Programmes Director, Swedish Foundation for Strategic Environmental Research, MISTRA, Sweden)
- Marco Armiero (Director, Environmental Humanities Lab, Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm)
- Steve Tatum (Director, Environmental Humanities Master's Program, University of Utah, USA)

10.45 – 11.15 Kaffeepause

11.15 – 12.45 Schweizer Erfahrungen: aktuelle Umweltforschung in den Geisteswissenschaften

- Daniela Thurnherr (Professorin für Öffentliches Recht, Universität Basel)
- Christian Arnsperger (Professeur en durabilité et anthropologie économique, Université de Lausanne)
- Gabriela Wülser (Programmanagerin, SUK/CUS Sustainable Development at Universities Programme)

- Claudia Zingerli (Geschäftsleiterin und Mitglied Arbeitsgruppe ‚Integrative Ressourcenforschung‘, Schweizerische Akademische Gesellschaft für Umweltforschung und Ökologie, saguf)
- Vorstellung der Resultate der Befragung zu umweltbezogener Forschung und Lehre in den Geisteswissenschaften in der Schweiz (finanziert durch die SAGW)

12.45 – 13.45 *Mittagspause*

13.45 – 15.00 Parallele Arbeitsgruppen (in Deutsch, Französisch, und Englisch)

- Forschungsprioritäten
- Bedürfnisse der Lehre
- Institutionen, Netzwerke, Veranstaltungen, Finanzierung

15.00 – 15.45 Synthese (World Café)

16.00 – 16.15 Perspektiven (Christof Mauch, Director, Rachel Carson Center, München)

16.15 – Apéro

Die Tagung wird von der SAGW und SCNAT der Schweizerischen Akademien der Wissenschaften unterstützt und von der saguf Arbeitsgruppe ‘Environmental Humanities’ organisiert (www.eh.saguf.ch).

Les sciences humaines de l'environnement: Les chances et les besoins de la Suisse

Date : Vendredi 20 juin 2014, de 9h00 à 16h30

Lieu : Jardin botanique de l'Université de Zurich, salle P1 40 (au-dessus de la cafétéria, voir au verso)

Langues : Allemand, anglais et français (pas d'interprétation)

Objectifs:

Les sciences humaines de l'environnement (« Environmental Humanities ») forment un nouveau domaine de recherche qui bénéficie d'un important soutien institutionnel dans le monde. Faisant partie d'un symposium international qui dure une semaine, notre atelier fait le tour des chances et des besoins de la recherche sur l'environnement dans les sciences humaines en Suisse (pour plus d'informations, voir Forêt et al. GAIA, 2014, disponible sur www.eh.saguf.ch).

Programme

09.00 – 09.15 Introduction

- Ouverture (Philippe Forêt, Marcus Hall, Christoph Küffer)
- Bernhard Schmid (Dekan, Mathematisch-naturwissenschaftliche Fakultät, Universität Zürich)

9.15 – 10.45 Les progrès sur la scène internationale

- Johan Edman (Programmes Director, Swedish Foundation for Strategic Environmental Research, MISTRA, Sweden)
- Marco Armiero (Director, Environmental Humanities Lab, Royal Institute of Technology, KTH Stockholm)
- Steve Tatum (Director, Environmental Humanities Master's Program, University of Utah, USA)

10.45 – 11.15 Pause café

11.15 – 12.45 L'expérience suisse: Les recherches sur l'environnement qui sont en cours dans les sciences humaines

- Daniela Thurnherr (Professorin für Öffentliches Recht, Universität Basel)
- Christian Arnsperger (Professeur en durabilité et anthropologie économique, Université de Lausanne)
- Gabriela Wülser (Programmmangerin, SUK/CUS Sustainable Development at Universities Programme)
- Claudia Zingerli (Geschäftsleiterin und Mitglied Arbeitsgruppe 'Integrative Ressourcenforschung', Schweizerische Akademische Gesellschaft für Umweltforschung und Ökologie, SAGUF)

- Présentation des résultats de l'enquête sur la recherche et l'enseignement en sciences humaines de l'environnement en Suisse (enquête financée par l'ASSHS/SAGW)

12.45 – 13.45

Pause déjeuner

13.45 – 15.00

Groupes de travail en parallèle (en français, allemand, et anglais)

- Les priorités de la recherche
- Les besoins dans l'enseignement
- Etablissements, réseaux, manifestations, financement

15.00 – 15.45

Synthèse (World Café)

16.00 – 16.15
Munich)

Conclusions (Christof Mauch, Director, Rachel Carson Center,

16.15 –

Apéro

Annex 3: Overview of some existing teaching offers

We asked respondents to list the classes they teach that are relevant to the Environmental Humanities, and we complemented their lists through a non-exhaustive Internet search at Swiss universities. We searched the institutes of our respondents, the curricula of environmental sciences or studies programs at Swiss universities, and the teaching activities of the research groups listed in Table 1 of Schmid and Stauffacher (2013). The final list is not meant to be comprehensive and is not necessarily based on equal search efforts for all universities or departments.

ETH Zurich

Masterprogramm in Entwicklung und Zusammenarbeit
Masterstudiengang “Geschichte und Philosophie des Wissens”
Human Environment Systems
The Science and Politics of International Water Management
Transdisciplinary Research for Sustainable Development
Concepts and Assessments of Sustainable Development
Readings in Environmental Thinking
Philosophical Issues in Understanding Global Change
Wissenschaftsphilosophie
Produktion, Zirkulation und Verwertung von naturwissenschaftlichem Wissen
Institutionelle Regelungen der Landnutzung
Advanced Landscape Research
Integriertes Praktikum “Genetisch-veränderte Organismen und Risikoabschätzungen”
Ecological Assessment and Evaluation
Policy and Economics of Ecosystem Services
Politics of environmental problem solving in developing countries
Multi-Criteria Decision Analysis
Environmental Governance
International Environmental Politics
Climate change uncertainty and risk: from probabilistic forecasts to economics of climate adaptation
Economics of Climate Change
Umweltsoziologie
Introduction to Cultural Ecology
Diverse Fallstudien zu Stadtplanung und Nachhaltigkeitsaspekten

Master in Science, Technology, and Policy (start in 2015)

Master in Entwicklung und Zusammenarbeit

Franklin University Switzerland, Lugano

The Visual Culture of Disaster

Poor Relations: Representations of Poverty in Literature, Film and the Media

The Politics of Mobility: Exile and Immigration

Tales of Catastrophe

Environmental Discourses

Natural Disasters, Catastrophes, and the Environment

Nature Writing and Ecocriticism

The Graduate Institute, Geneva

Master in Development Studies

Development and Sustainability

Gendering Sustainability

Introduction à une critique de la société de marché et à ses alternatives solidaires

Ecologie politique (Political Ecology)

Amérique latine: une histoire environnementale (Latin America: An Environmental History)

Economie politique de la biodiversité (The Political Economy of Biodiversity)

Political Economy of International Energy

Agricultural Policies, Challenges and Constraints

Urban Ecology and Public Policies

Politics of Disasters and Emergencies

Critique des approches disciplinaires en sciences sociales

The Corporation

Crisis Communications

University of Basel

Masterstudiengang in Sustainable Development

Transfakultäres Querschnittsprogramm "Nachhaltige Entwicklung"

Kultur- und sozialwissenschaftliche Grundlagen der Nachhaltigkeit

Kolloquium: Sustainability Science Research (social dimension)

Seminar: Governance, Sustainable Development and Democracy

Sustainability, Intergenerational Justice, and the Economics of Climate Change

Linking Sustainable Development, Equity and Health: Triggering Debates across Disciplinary Boundaries

Nachhaltigkeitspolitische Transformationen im Vergleich

'Political Ecology' und gesellschaftliche Transformationen aus ethnologischer Perspektive

Seminar: Environmental Ethics and Intergenerational Justice

Seminar: Current Topics in Epidemiology and Public Health

Proseminar „Perspektiven auf eine Umweltgeschichte des östlichen Europa“

MSc in Epidemiology

MSc in African Studies

University of Bern

Bachelor Minor Nachhaltige Entwicklung

Proseminar: Herausforderungen nachhaltiger Entwicklung

Nachhaltigkeit – natürliche Ressourcen im Vergleich

Globale Entwicklungs- und Umweltfragen

Political Economy of Climate Change

International and European Law and Policy on Climate Change

Water Policy Seminar

Governance of Collective Goods

Seminar: Tragedy or Drama of the Commons

Schutz- und Nutzungskonflikte rund um die Umwelt und Natur

Anthropologie der Natur

Introduction into Historical Climatology

University of Fribourg

Schwerpunkt Nachhaltigkeit

Umweltethik

Umweltökonomie und -recht

Lebensraum und Umwelt

Politische Geographie

Global Change, Development & Ethics

Environmental social methods

University of Geneva

Master of advanced studies: urbanisme durable

Écologie urbaine et gestion durable: régimes institutionnels des ressources urbaines

Global cities 1: développements urbains et Environnement

Gouverner la ville en transition

De la ville hygiénique à la ville écologique

Développement durable et Agenda 21

Initiation aux sciences sociales de l'environnement

Représentations sociales de la nature et du paysage

Séminaire: Environnement et paysage: enjeux et controversies

La gouvernance des biens communs planétaires

Économie, environnement et écologie

Approche interdisciplinaire des systèmes et des politiques énergétiques

Éthique: l'homme et l'animal - Questions éthiques et problèmes contemporains (Théologie)

Éthique, risques environnementaux et santé

Global environment, energy and risk

Droit de l'eau

Ecosystem services: a new tool for sustainable development

Techniques multicritères d'aide à la décision

Introduction Interdisciplinarité

Ecologie humaine

Politique environnementale

Atelier Interdisciplinarité

University of Lausanne

Interdisciplinary master program in environmental studies (starting in 2016)

Démocratie écologique et finitude

Fondements des problèmes environnementaux globaux et ressorts de la durabilité

Représentation et construction sociale des risques

Durabilité: enjeux scientifiques et sociaux

Anthropologie et histoire de l'idée de nature

Science, technologie et société: les défis récents de la théorie de l'acteur-réseau

Politiques environnementales internationales

Environmental writing

Literature and the Environment

Human/Nature: contemporary British poetry

University of Luzern

Klimawandel und Gesellschaft

Umweltökonomik

University of Neuchâtel

Bachelor en biologie et ethnologie

Agroécologie: entre biologie et ethnologie

Socio-anthropologie des problèmes environnementaux

University of St. Gallen

Strategien für eine nachhaltige Entwicklung

Umweltethik

Seminar: Ethik und Politik in Zeiten des Klimawandels.

Philosophische und kulturelle Grundlagen des Wirtschaftsdenkens

Democracy in Developing Countries

University of Zurich

Nachhaltigkeit und Gesellschaft

Didaktik der Nachhaltigkeit

Seminar: Demokratie und Klimawandel

Klimaethik

Master of Advanced Studies in Applied Ethics

Ecohealth: past and prospect

Understanding Ecology through the Humanities (summer school)

Global Environmental History

Human Dimensions of Conservation

Economics of biological wealth and ecosystem services

Ökologie und Wirtschaft

Nomadische Gesellschaften

Politische Ökologie

Politische Philosophie meets Politische Geographie

Environmental perception

Umwelt- und Wissenschaftskommunikation

Umweltpsychologie

Seminar: Technik als Gegenstand der Risikoberichterstattung

Zertifikatsstudiengang "Ethnobotanik und Ethnomedizin"