

## Call for Papers

Workshop, 22/23 November 2019, Bern (Switzerland)

### **HISTORICAL FORMS OF SUSTAINABILITY – MODELS FOR THE FUTURE? COLLECTIVE FORESTS AND PASTURES SINCE 1700 IN A EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE**

Organizers: Dr. Rahel Wunderli and Dr. Martin Stuber (Institute of History, University of Bern);  
Research Project [SCALES](#) (Sustainable Commons Adaptations to Landscape Ecosystems in Switzerland)

Sustainability defined as transgenerational thinking and acting is at the heart of communal organisations and their common property institutions in their own views as well as from external perceptions. Sustainability in the sense of robustness of common property institutions is also the key element in Elinor Ostrom's work, in which robustness is based empirically on eight so-called design principles. At the same time, the concept of sustainability, with its three classical dimensions of ecological resilience, social justice and economic efficiency, is an open-ended analytical tool for comparative research on collective resource usage practices in space and time.

The issue of sustainability is currently high on the political agenda, and the question of what role the commons have played in this complex in the past and what they will play in the future is of central interest. This is particularly true in the context of declining relative prices for the yields from forests and pastures which stand at the centre of this workshop and which play a crucial role in the sustainable conservation of European landscapes and their biodiversity. If common property institutions want to survive and continue to play this important role in the future, they must have a high degree of transformation capacity so that they can both adapt to changing circumstances and be active in shaping them.

In order to further investigate such forms of dynamic sustainability, we propose a historical analysis at four approaches that are particularly well suited for comparison from a European perspective. We would like to explore and test their potential and feasibility at the planned workshop and hope that on the basis of the workshop contributions, further research co-operations will emerge which will lead to concrete project proposals.

We are looking for papers to one of the following approaches:

- 1) *Economy of sustainability* based on quantitative long-term analyses of demography, finances, livestock, timber harvest, production of milk and cheese etc.
- 2) *Rituals of balance* starting from the analysis of visual sources (decision making, community work, tensions between individual, family and corporation)
- 3) *The role of the commons in agricultural and forest modernisation* based on programmatics and legislation
- 4) *Land use intensities and the organisation of space* by means of cartographic analyses

**Please send your proposal (with max. 400 words) until the end of August to [rahel.wunderli@hist.unibe.ch](mailto:rahel.wunderli@hist.unibe.ch) and [martin.stuber@unibe.ch](mailto:martin.stuber@unibe.ch). We will inform you about the accepted papers by mid-September.**

Hotel and travel expenses will be reimbursed for participants who do not receive financial support from their institution. Please indicate whether this applies to you.

## **Schedule**

### 22 November

- 13.00-13.45 Welcome and introduction of the organizers
- 13.45-14.45 Session 1 *Economy of sustainability* (3 presentations, 15 minutes of presentation and 5 minutes of discussion each)
- 14.45-15.15 Coffee break
- 15.15-16.15 Session 2 *Rituals of balance* (3 presentations, 15 minutes of presentation and 5 minutes of discussion each)
- 16.15-16.45 Coffee break
- 16.45-17.45 Session 3 *The role of the commons in agricultural and forest modernisation* (3 presentations, 15 minutes of presentation and 5 minutes of discussion each)
- 17.45-18.15 The International Association for the Study of the Commons (IASC) and the SNF-project SCALES (Tobias Haller)

Dinner together (offered by the University of Bern)

### 23 November

- 8.30-9.30 Session 4 *Land use intensities and the organisation of space* (3 presentations, 15 minutes of presentation and 5 minutes of discussion each)
- 9.30-10.00 Break
- 10.00-11.00 Talks in cross-team groups on the feasibility and potential of the five proposed approaches
- 11.00-13.00 Discussion of further research cooperations and questions of project financing on the basis of short input presentations