



Climate: what is the impact of human activities on the environment?



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Introduction

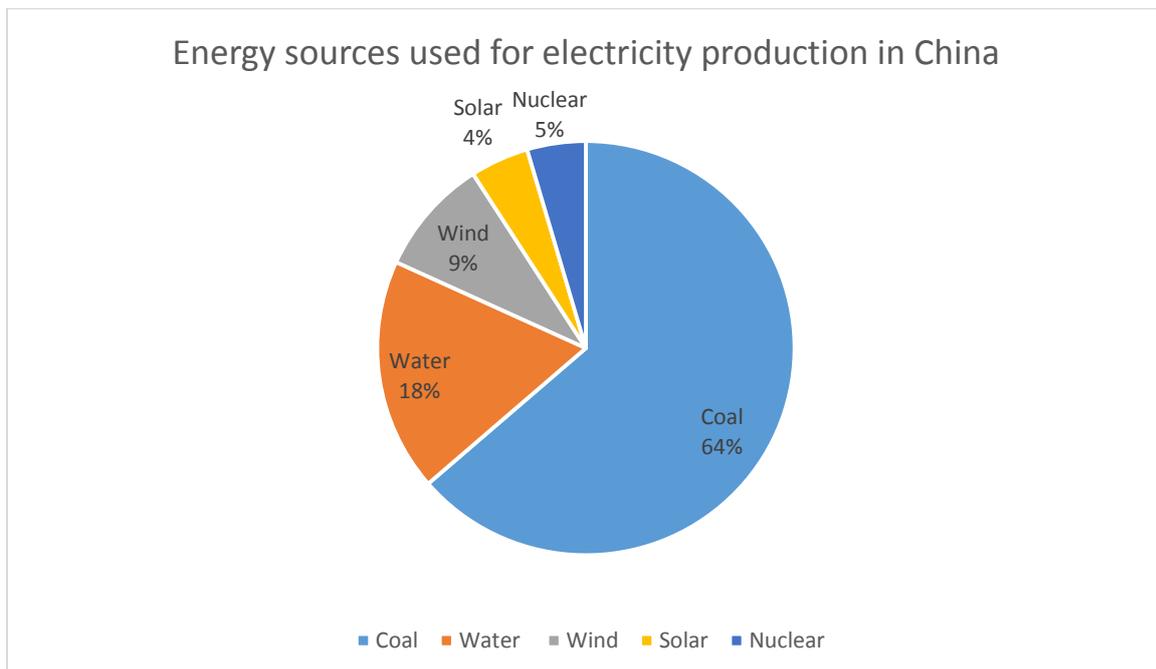
The aim of this report is to describe and assess the footprint let by human on the environment in both countries and to detail the measurements undertaken in order to minimise the effects caused by carbon emissions.

China

Energy sources

Over the past century, electricity has become something essential almost every society. There are several ways to produce it, but the main questions remains what type of energy should be used. We distinguish two types of energy: the renewable and the non-renewable. The first one includes energy that can be produced again and again such as water, wind and solar energy, whereas the second implies energy that cannot renew itself on a human scale or produces waste which is toxic. This includes coal, fuel and nuclear energy.

Even though China mainly uses coal for its electricity production, it tries to develop the use of renewable energy. Water is very exploited especially in the South part of China. Here is a graphic representing the different types of energy used in China.



Source: estimates from my host father, checked on the Internet

Measurements undertaken to reduce carbon emissions

China clearly aims to reduce its carbon emissions. Therefore, the Chinese government has undertaken several actions:

Waste

There are two types of bins: the recyclable one and the one for the rest of the waste. It is a step in the right direction, but the people do not always put the litter in the right bin.



Picture 1: two types of rubbish at Beijing airport

Mobility

Beijing encourages the use of other type of transportation than car. Firstly, the use of cars is highly regulated: there are car restrictions. Every car has one day per week where it cannot be driven. Another measurement decided in order to prevent the people from using car is to develop Beijing's subway network and to authorise new ways of lending bikes.



Picture 2: bikes to rent with help of a mobile phone

Industry

The quality of the air was highly affected by the industrial activity around the city. Hence, the industrial production has been moved from the city to the countryside. Ever since, the population has noticed the improvement of the quality of the air.

Impact of pollution on everyday life

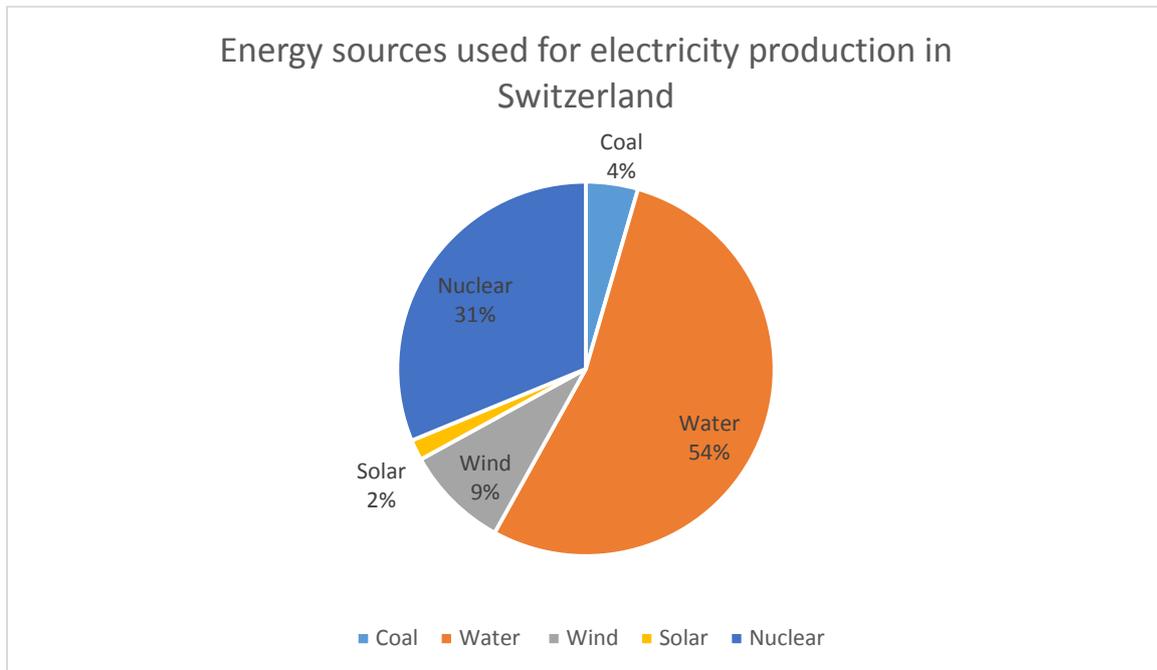
The pollution is worse in winter than in summer because of the use of heating. People will sometimes wear a mask to protect their respiratory tract. However, masks are not necessary all year long.

Pollution has an impact on the lifestyle of people living in the city. It can endanger health and reduce the possibility of practising leisure activities such as sports.

Switzerland

Energy sources

Switzerland has recently decided to stop using nuclear energy for its electricity production. It is an important decision, which is part of the "Energy Strategy 2050", voted by the Swiss population in May 2017. It implies increasing the part of renewable energy



Source: <https://www.swv.ch/fr/Infos-techniques/Force-hydraulique-Suisse/Production-electrique>

Measurements undertaken to reduce carbon emissions

Buildings

Switzerland needs to improve the energy efficiency of its buildings, which are big consumers of energy, especially due to the use of heating. As an encouragement, owner can get grants from the Swiss government to help them renewing their houses.

Recycling

Switzerland makes many efforts in order to recycle its waste. Its recycling rate is very high, but its waste production is also huge, which represents a major issue for the environment. One solution would be to narrow down drastically the quantity of waste produced, and to keep on recycling the part of waste that cannot be avoided.

Renewable energy

Renouncing to nuclear involves finding other sources of energy. Switzerland wants them to be mainly renewable energy types, such as solar, wind or water energy. Switzerland has great hydro electrical resources that needs to be exploited.

Conclusion

China is making many efforts in order to minimise the footprint of human activity on the environment by increasing its part of renewable energy and other measurement detailed above. We can hope that this willingness will live on and that the environment will keep on being a major preoccupation for the Chinese government.

Concerning Switzerland, the willingness to reduce the level of energy consumed and to optimise the waste production and recycling is also clear. It now needs a cooperative work between the authorities, the corporations and the population in order keep on making significant progress.

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