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Workshop Report: Climate Change Mitigation: Considering Lifestyle Options in Europe and the US

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**WORKSHOP REPORT  
CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION:  
CONSIDERING LIFESTYLE OPTIONS IN EUROPE AND THE US**

A European-American Workshop held at the  
European Union Center of Excellence (EUCE),  
University of California Berkeley  
on May 1, 2009

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**Abstract:** This report summarizes the presentations and outcomes of a European-American Workshop about lifestyle changes as a mitigation strategies for global warming. The conference was held on May 1, 2009 at the University of California, Berkeley and sponsored by the European Commission. The participants discussed various lifestyle approaches as a promising way to address environmental behavior and action within social and cultural contexts. The presenters and discussants acknowledged the theoretical and practical difficulties of this multi-faceted concept which relies on several sometimes virtually incommensurable traditions. Both a merely individualist interpretation of lifestyles (“green consumption”) and a rather socio-structural view (“green milieus”) are not well-gearred to explain the often observed discrepancies between environmental attitudes and people’s action. Lifestyle research must address this gap by explaining individual decisions within societal contexts that provide but also limit the possibilities of lifestyle changes. Despite these difficulties, the huge appeal of the lifestyle approach that makes the work on these problems worthwhile is the prominent role of the term “lifestyle” in the public and political discourse about environmental change. However, many policy attempts to influence lifestyles are barely grounded in sociological grounded theories of social change. The report shortly introduces the problem, summarizes the workshop presentations, and outlines central discussion points.

## **1. Introduction**

The call for lifestyle changes has always been an important corner stone of environmentalism. In 1987, the UNEP Brundtland Commission identified lifestyle changes a major strategy for sustainable development in addition to the control of population growth and technological advancement. More recently, the IPCC has started to pay more attention to the lifestyle dimension and connected strategies towards climate change mitigation; lifestyles and environmental behavior will play a more prominent role in the *Fifth Assessment Report* of the IPCC upcoming in 2014.

Despite the widespread acknowledgement of the fact that curbing climate change and its effects requires a change of lifestyle and consumer culture, only few theories have connected lifestyle choices and resource consumption (the ecological footprint for example). The approaches that do exist generally work within ad-hoc assumptions of social changes which are barely grounded in sociological theory. Many approaches using the term “lifestyle” are limited to environmental

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education, social campaigning, or marketing of “green” products. They rarely address lifestyle choices as a result of conflicting values, life goals, and limited opportunities to realize them within a given social context characterized by economic, natural, and cultural resources available to individuals, subcultural groups, and communities. At the workshop sponsored by the European Commission and the University of California at Berkeley, scholars from North America (US and Canada) and Europe (Germany and The Netherlands) discussed and explored the potentials as well as the limitations of lifestyle approaches to address climate change mitigation.

The participants identified central requirements for addressing the social dimensions of environmental change in a new mode that could go beyond the well-studied but very limited consciousness-behavior-nexus. Education and environmental consciousness have positive effects on the willingness to adapt environmentally friendly practices, especially in so-called low-cost-situation when no other central life goals are at stake. Nonetheless, the correlation between environmental consciousness and resource consumption of individuals is surprisingly low. One reason is that environmental consciousness is more widespread among the affluent strata of the population who also have a higher than average level of consumption. The lifestyle approach can be understood as an attempt to study environmental behavior and action in their complex socio-cultural context.

Lifestyles can be understood as an umbrella or boundary concept that allows the integration of occasionally contradictory findings regarding environmental consciousness, individual behavior, and resource consumption rooted in different social science disciplines. Because the term lifestyle is embedded in everyday language, it has the potential to be an effective instrument for environmental communication among experts, decision-makers, and the public. People often speak of their lifestyles, lifestyles they admire, and lifestyles of which they disapprove. Perhaps the operationalization of lifestyle approaches could provide models to explain resource consumption within a given culture while taking into consideration the meaning of everyday practices to individuals (expressive function).

These issues were discussed in a comparative manner. Differences (and similarities) between the US, Canada, and Europe exist on various levels. In addition to the historically distinct development of infrastructure and land use, people as well as policymakers in the US and Europe think quite differently about the relationship between individual responsibility and political action. These particularities are also reflected in different social science traditions. In Europe, lifestyles and social milieus have been discussed as a replacement for older categories of social stratification (e.g. class) since economic differences could no longer explain the plurality of changing life situations. This approach seems less plausible for the US and lifestyles have not been central in American sociology even if the term has been causally used when referring to complex patterns of individual behavior.

The next section gives a short overview of the presentations of the conference. The workshop was divided in three sessions. The *first* session dealt with the problems associated with addressing such a manifold concept as lifestyles in sociology and in environmental sciences. The speakers in the *second* session presented case studies exploring how lifestyles could be integrated in environmental sciences and climate change mitigation efforts. The *third* session explored questions regarding how policymakers could encourage or motivate individual lifestyle choices that would help to develop a sustainable society. After an overview of the presentations, this report summons up central issues bridging the papers and dominating the discussions. The report closes with a sketch for a working program for the near future.

## 2. The presentations

### 2.1. Session 1: Lifestyles in environmental sciences

Falk Schützenmeister outlined in his introductory remarks *The call for sustainable lifestyles—A challenge for social sciences and environmental policy*<sup>2</sup> the central questions for the workshop. He named a number of reasons for the current preference of technology-oriented approaches to climate change mitigation and the implementation of market mechanisms that are supposed to motivate the adaptation of “green” technologies throughout society. New technologies are supposed to attract venture capital. In contrast, the implementation of readily available technologies (e.g. railway systems) would require massive public investments contradicting neoliberal ideology which has dominated recent political thought. Policies limiting unsustainable choices were often discussed as infringements of individual freedom. This is especially true in the case of the communitarian tradition of US policy; but similar arguments were made in Europe as well. The continuation of today’s lifestyles seems to be an underlying goal of technology-oriented approaches towards climate change mitigation. Nevertheless, the problems lie also within the social sciences. Hereby, the common hesitation to produce visions about social change and future society seems to matter equally as much as conceptual difficulties. Engineers produce visions about future society all the time; however, most of them do not come to fruition. One example of this would be biofuels. However, new ideas and variations are necessary to identify the approaches to climate change mitigation that might actually work.

Following Weber’s lifestyle concept that takes the “life chances” of an individual into consideration, Schützenmeister argued that policies focusing on lifestyles could influence opportunity structures within a given society and open up new spaces for experiments that would produce variation. Such a lifestyle policy would increase individual freedom to realize norms and values towards the environment without surrendering central life goals. The rhetoric of abandonment is inherently unsexy. The substitution of unsustainable practices requires new and attractive life goals and cultural means to realize them in everyday life.

Next, Michael Maniates<sup>3</sup> presentation *Dissonant visions of efficacy and change in a politics of environmental lifestyles* began with a critique of the theory and policy of “conscious consumption.” The proponents of this approach argue that every impact of product choices, no matter how small, are important and contribute to large overall benefits. Furthermore, conscious consumption itself is seen as a political act of citizenship building community and common purpose. In addition, it is believed that a strategy of “small wins” is the best way to drive individuals towards ambitious political action in service of fundamental change. A significant portion of conversation, activism, and analysis about “lifestyles” in the United States around climate change issues, is framed by the question “How can individual lifestyle changes at the micro level be encouraged such that the sum total of these changes will drive political and policy change too difficult or messy to achieve via traditional political channels?” Maniates argued that this is a self-destructive framing from the very beginning, as it rests of a theory of social change that is out of sync with reality. Especially in the US, the tendency persists to understand “lifestyle change” of millions of people as the driving force in political change even though legal action e.g. to develop a sustainable energy supply was pushed usually only by a few. The ephemeral outcomes of small win strategies are by no means sufficient to achieve the goal of carbon neutrality and are especially

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<sup>2</sup> This paper is available: Schuetzenmeister, Falk, 2009, "Global Warming And Lifestyle Choices: A Discussion Paper" Institute of European Studies. Paper 090401. <http://repositories.cdlib.org/ies/090401>

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vulnerable to “green washing” by corporate PR and advertisement. The resulting political activism spent most of its energy to get everyone on board to gain small wins instead of working with those who are already convinced of more far-reaching (and more effective) solutions. Because of the dissonance between the amount of action and the limited environmental outcomes, politics of “green consumption” fostered unnecessary cynicism and frustration in the long run. Maniates presented empirical work-in-progress to demonstrate the problems of the small wins approach; he doubts that an individualist lifestyle approach could be the main driver for climate change mitigation. Nevertheless, an appropriate theory of social change could inform efficient lifestyle policies.

In his paper *Making a difference: The origins of environmental efficacy*<sup>4</sup>, Mark Lubell<sup>5</sup> modeled the factors that influence environmental efficacy on the individual level using data from a national survey on climate change attitudes and behavior. Environmental efficacy is defined as the perceived probability that individual action will influence environmental outcomes. People’s perceptions about whether or not they can make a difference is actually higher than most rational choice approaches would predict. Drawing on Ajzen and Fishbein’s theory of reasoned actions as well as on Ostrom and Olson, Lubell suggested a Collective Interest Model of environmental behavior. According to this approach, different forms of global warming activism (support for environmental policy, participation in environmental policy, and behavior change) are not merely a result of choices maximizing the selective benefits of an individual. Individual action becomes likely if people believe that their action would be effective and successful in creating a collective good. The factors of the three forms of action studied are different. The model explains the support for environmental policy and participating in environmental groups better than actual environmentally friendly behavior. The strongest predictors for individual action are environmental values, the perceived risk of climate change, knowledge of, and communication about environmental issues. An interesting finding within the context of the lifestyle discussion is that the quality of citizen-government relationship is important for policy support while citizen-citizen relationships matter more for participation in environmental groups and adopting environmentally friendly behaviors.

Following a German tradition of thinking about social structure, Jens Jetzkowitz<sup>6</sup> developed a different perspective on *Styles of Living and Acting*. In his theoretical considerations, he claimed that the application of the lifestyle concept in environmental sociology widely ignored the underlying methodological inventions. By using the concept of lifestyle, sociologists departed from economic determinism of, for example the Marxist class theory, while adding (subjective) definitions of life situations to (objective) criteria for social inequalities such as income, education, and age. The advantage of this approach is that the members of society are considered the designers of social order. Jetzkowitz operationalized the stylization of life as a result of action beyond the individual/collective distinction. Since action always implies an expressive and distinctive dimension, he stresses its irreducible social aspect. He demonstrated the explanatory power of this approach with two case studies. The first showed the co-evolution of people’s everyday life and plant communities in settlements. The second explored the link between climate change and tourism. While several studies predicted a pole-ward shift of tourism due to changing climate conditions, Jetzkowitz questioned this simple climate determinism. He showed that different styles of travelling differ in their tolerance of bad weather and their loyalty to

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<sup>4</sup> An early version of this paper: Lubell, M., Zahran, S., Vedlitz, A., 2007. Collective action and citizen responses to global warming. *Political Behavior* 29(3), 391–413.

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destinations despite changing conditions. Changing travel patterns are not merely a result of climate but of habits of perception and social bonding. Using these two examples, Jetzkowitz suggested the (life)style approach as a toolkit for the analysis of the co-evolution of society and its natural environment.

## 2.2. Session 2: Case studies

Gert Spaargaren<sup>7</sup> presented a paper titled *Life(style) politics for sustainable consumption: The role of citizen-consumers in global environmental change*.<sup>8</sup> His argument was that lifestyle policies derive their specific power from connecting the public and the private sphere within society. For instance, consumption is inherently political and public policy influences the choices individuals make in private. Within this framework, Spaargaren proposed a ‘third way’ mediating between the individual interpretations of consumption behavior and the structuralist system paradigm focusing on technology and legal regulation. Following Giddens, he argued “that lifestyle politics must be analyzed in direct connection with the ‘shared’ social practices individuals embrace when enacting their everyday lives.” Most practices (e.g. shopping or commuting) are shared by many individuals and formed by ethical codes and political choices that reproduce the routines making up ‘individual’ lifestyles. Spaargaren developed a concept of citizen-consumers by integrating several approaches about the relationship of individuals with the market authority (political consumerism), the state authority (ecological citizenship), and the moral authority (lifestyle politics). Both individual lifestyles as well as the system of provision (design, production, and distribution of goods) are embedded in these social practices. Citizen-consumers are seen as agents in environmental policy who can develop new practices affecting both public policy and markets. One important finding of an empirical study conducted within this framework showed that the practices of individuals in different spheres of living are not necessarily highly correlated. Some people who are ecologically aware try to live sustainably at home but undertake long-distance holiday trips via airplane. He concluded that it thus seems more appropriate to think about different styles of housing, commuting, eating, shopping, or going on vacation rather than one coherent lifestyle.

Heike Walk<sup>9</sup> reported in her presentation *Low emission lifestyles in megacities—communication and participation strategies in Hyderabad, India*<sup>10</sup> about the design and outcomes of an experiment in citizen participation in climate change mitigation in a developing country. Citizens’ Exhibitions are a new tool used to raise awareness about ecological problems, build group and neighborhood identity, and contribute to the planning process by identifying stakeholders to help give their views and interests a voice. A fast growing city like Hyderabad, India, characterized by high social inequalities, religious and cultural diversity, and a growing middle class purchasing consumer products, is confronted with a vast number of ecological problems connected to density, energy supply, and traffic. For people facing these problems daily, climate change seems remote if presented by abstract scientific knowledge. However, different studies showed that if framed accordingly and connected to people’s experience, climate change and sustainability issues are not only a concern of the affluent middle class. People realize that their lifestyles are in-

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<sup>8</sup> The paper has been co-authored by Peter Oosterveer

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<sup>10</sup> Forthcoming as Walk, Heike/Schröder, Sabine, 2009, *Low Emission Lifestyles in Megacities. Communication and Participation Strategies in Hyderabad*. IES Working Paper Series. Berkeley. <http://repositories.cdlib.org/ies/>

deed affected by the rapid change in consumption and transportation patterns. The citizen exhibition in Hyderabad addressed the changing traffic situation within the city. Many people are negatively affected by increasing motor vehicle traffic, especially if they cannot afford a car by themselves and rely on now marginalized ways to get around or inhabit public spaces. First of all, poor people lose room for living, the streets as a place for business, and life quality due to air pollution. At citizen's exhibitions telling the public about every day life and problems of environmental change using interview excerpts and photographs, city dwellers become empowered to perform their citizenship role, in many cases for the first time in their life.

The presentation *Shopping Mall or Town Hall? Media Framing of the BC Carbon Tax* by Shane Gunster<sup>11</sup> also addressed the role of lifestyles as a discursive concept in the public. In the case presented, lifestyle arguments were used to organize resistance against environmental policies. In 2008, the Canadian province of British Columbia (BC) introduced a carbon tax. Gunster studied the media coverage and asked how references to lifestyles were used to frame the issue. The conservative government of BC chose to frame the issue merely as tax policy that affects the individual tax payer and not as an environmental policy that would benefit everyone—the majority of media followed suit. The government promised to give the money it collected back to the consumer by providing tax cuts in other areas. People had to make appropriate market choices to benefit from the changes. The measure was promoted as a way to place choices into people's hands. Because of this individualistic framing, resistance against the measures grew from individuals, communities, and organizations who believed that they did not have choices *within* their lifestyles. Especially in remote towns, opponents to the carbon tax claimed that the tax would punish people for their lifestyles even if it was shown that people living in cities are driving more. Instead of discussing the enormous risks, the carbon tax was framed within particular interest; a strategy that distracted from the necessity of aggressive politics confronting climate change. Gunster concluded that effective climate change policy should address the catastrophic costs of inaction. The action against global warming should be placed in people's hands but within the public sphere of town hall and the political arena instead of the shopping mall or the marketplace.

### 2.3. Session 3: Policy approaches towards lifestyle changes

In his paper *Lifestyle, energy use, and the efficiency industry*, Loren Lutzenhiser<sup>12</sup> explored the reasons why lifestyle approaches have had little impact on energy policy. From his research and consulting experience with decision-makers, stakeholders, and energy providers in California and elsewhere, he finds an inherently technocratic highly-regulated efficiency industry that chose to improve efficiency over the conservation of energy resources. Lutzenhiser characterized the emergent paradigm as a bureaucratized form of engineering economics which works with erroneous assumptions and beliefs about human actors. The preferred individualistic approaches of psychology and behavioral economics have had little concern for the social organization of consumption and the social embeddedness of attitudes, values, beliefs, and action. However, the social sciences do not seem well prepared to face the challenge and Lutzenhiser wondered whether they actually have an interest in either broadening the policy discourse or amending existing models. A more thoroughly socio-technical-institutional understanding is needed, but it needs to be pol-

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<sup>12</sup> Portland State University, Portland, OR

icy-relevant and actionable. Lutzenhiser calls for a new relationship among policy, (social) science, and techno-environmental application.

*Ronnie Lipschutz*<sup>13</sup> presentation about *The governmentalization of “lifestyle” and the biopolitics of carbon* took an even more radical stance than Lutzenhiser. Using the example of the anti-smoking movement and non-smoking policies he showed that lifestyle politics usually associated with the freedom of choice are actually heavily regulated by social norms and policies disciplining unhealthy and dangerous behavior. Drawing on Foucault, Lipschutz introduces biopolitics as a realm of policy that uses power to rule about matters of life and death, birth and propagation, as well as of health and illness. In biopolitics, people are not treated as individuals but instead as a population within an environment. Governmentality refers to the possibility of managing the health and the well-being of the population by governments, international agencies, public and private associations as well as by non-governmental organizations. This approach is based on a difference between individuals and the population as a statistical aggregate, e.g. in public health research and policies. With the denial of this difference, neoliberal politics surrendered the governmentality of society to the free market. Lipschutz argued that the thread of global change and the survival of humanity require an answer to the question whether (and how) global survival can be governed. A biopolitics of carbon involves managing the world population towards modes of living consuming less carbon. Because of the vast differences of carbon consumption and the diversity of lifestyles throughout the world, efforts to transform lifestyles cannot treat everyone in the same way as the individualist approach suggests. What are the new to collective manage the planet? How can governmentality be reclaimed after the failure of neo-liberalism?

*Felix Creutzig*<sup>14</sup> presented *Pricing policies in the transportation sector*<sup>15</sup> which is a more applied approach to lifestyle policies. Using the example of Beijing, a fast growing city with a significant annual increase in motor vehicle transportation, he showed that fiscal measures to reduce congestion also have an environmental impact. This is especially important in a city that spends about 7.5–15% of its GDP on traffic externalities. Starting from the economic perspective of road pricing, Creutzig showed that price signals have only then a positive effect if feasible alternatives are available. For this reason, fiscal policies such as road and parking fees must be complemented by infrastructural, technological, and lifestyle measures. He showed that the elasticity of behavior as a function of pricing is higher if transportation alternatives are available; environmental policies need to address the demand as well as the supply side. The latter can be addressed by policies that consider lifestyle changes. For the case of Beijing, Creutzig named the improvement of the accessibility of subway stations and the reduction of transfer times, the development of a bike network as a feeder system for public transportation, and the management of relocation and the planning of housing for new immigrants as examples.

### 3. Summary of central discussion points

The discussions of the workshop were led by the session chairs *Richard Norgaard*<sup>16</sup>, *Ronny Lipschutz*, and *Beverly Crawford*.<sup>17</sup> Some central issues of the discussions that provided a frame-

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<sup>15</sup> Published as: Creutzig, F., He, D., 2009. Climate change mitigation and co-benefits of feasible transport demand policies in Beijing. *Transportation Research D* 14, 120–131.

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work in which most of the presentations could be integrated, vantage points for further discussion, and some points of disagreement are listed below:

- Most participants considered the **lifestyle approach a promising way** to address the relationship between society and its natural environment including intermediating and intervening variables (culture, values, beliefs, institutions, infrastructures, and the built environment). Even if not fully theoretically elaborated, lifestyle approaches draw on various traditions: a) ecological movements (e.g. deep ecology, voluntary simplicity), b) sociological approaches considering the cultural dimension an important explanatory factor (Jetzkowitz), and c) different theories regularly referred to in environmental sociology, e.g. civil society, social capital, or ethical consumption.
- Consensus was reached concluding that the **individualist approach to environmental behavior is not sufficient** for the development of social science knowledge that could significantly contribute to climate change mitigation (explicitly Maniates, Gunster, and Lipschutz). Many researchers proved that market forces influence individual behavior. Nevertheless, environmental incentives such as taxes (Gunster) or road pricing (Creutzig) have a too small of an impact on people's cost-benefit-calculations. These incentives are not sufficient to change people's behavior and resource consumption in a way appropriate for the actual threat of climate change and the reduction goals. The implementation of a cost structure reflecting all externalities of climate change seems impossible especially in democratic societies. In addition, there is also evidence that people make rational decisions toward the collective interest (Lubell).
- The term lifestyle was often used in the context of an merely individualist approach (social marketing, "green" consumption). Nevertheless, the sociological tradition marked by names like Weber, Bourdieu, and Giddens suggests that action and individual decisions should be analysed as **result of social structure, institutions, economical, and political systems on the one hand and choices of the individual on the other** (Schützenmeister, Jetzkowitz). The lifestyle approach does not negate the findings of environmental behavior research. Instead, it provides a way to study behavior in relation to other people and within society.
- The lifestyle approach can address the problem that most environmentally relevant action is not based on explicit decisions (or on elaborate cost-benefit-calculation) but rather on **learned patterns deeply embedded in the shared practices of a society** (Spaargaren). In contrast, lifestyle changes are often decisions motivated by ecological awareness but also by the chance to realize norms and opinions in a given societal structure.
- The **lifestyle approach provides a conceptual framework in which the individual (action) and the social structural dimension of lifestyle choices can be balanced and studied in relation to each other**. The participants did *not* agree on priorities or the extent to which structural and individual variables need to be considered. The views spanned from the amendment of economic models with a few lifestyle variables (Lubell, Creutzig) to suggestions regarding biopolitics that acknowledge individuals but do not expect sufficient lifestyle changes purely motivated by individuals' free choice (Lipschutz).
- Even if available data is sparse and inconclusive, the **problems of lifestyle politics seem to be similar in Europe and in the US**. Differences exist in the historical development of infrastructure as well as among the philosophies about the role of the individual and the government in society. Nevertheless, we observed a divergence. While European politicians tend to implement more market mechanisms (carbon taxes, carbon trade schemes,

and pricing of utilities; Spaargaren), new approaches towards governmental city planning (compact cities, new urbanism, smart growth) are popular in the US. Nevertheless, both strategies are rarely informed by sociological knowledge about social change (Lutzenhiser).

- A problem with many social science approaches is the **hesitation to develop utopian visions**. The objections against Walks' presentation that a little citizenship exhibition could not significantly contribute to climate change mitigation in a developing country show that the social science discussion is also affected by an efficiency ideology that often discourages social experimentation (Lutzenhiser). Within an evolutionary approach, the likelihood of success or measurable output cannot be a criterion for the usefulness of experiments. On the other hand, though, these utopian visions must be situated within careful analysis of the levers for and drivers of political change. Too often (Maniates), especially with regard to the analysis and practice of "voluntary simplicity," "simple living," or "green consumption," it is assumed that changes in individual lifestyles will autonomously aggregate into meaningful social change (which some scholars, for example Langdon Winner, point to as a "flight from politics.")
- Considering lifestyles and climate-relevant action of individuals within cultural contexts and social structure means also to **address the structures of power and governance and the connected interest constellation** (Lipschutz, Walk). The assumptions about the relationship of nature and society are a part of most political ideology including Marxism, neo-liberalism, and neo-conservatism.
- The **connection between lifestyle choices and climate change should be publicly discussed** (Walk) and not only indirectly communicated through weak price signals (Gunster). Such a communication process should be supported in both ways: citizens should realize the consequences of their actions as well as the intermediate or indirect impacts of unsustainable practices on their lives.
- Workshop discussions demonstrated that the **social science discussion is not yet sophisticated enough to derive far-reaching political recommendations** for climate change mitigation. The participants agreed that a theory about action within societal structures and political systems is needed, as is a theory of social change that could assess the feasibility of measures toward a carbon-free society.
- However, **various ideas for addressing lifestyles** in environmental policy do **exist**. The engagement in environmental policy or in community activities are lifestyle decisions in and of themselves (Walk, Gunster). Lifestyle approaches should be discussed in the framework of civil society that provides enough room for individual lifestyle experiments beyond the realm of buying and consumption.
- **Governments could create structures that would provide new possibilities for developing sustainable lifestyles**. Such policies should not focus on the abandonment and surrender of central goals, but instead on new means to realize attitudes towards environmental protection and new life goals. The participants did not agree upon the question to what extent governments should restrict unsustainable practices of individuals. In the United States, at least, a particular way of thinking about the connection between lifestyles and political/government change – one in which individual lifestyle change is thought to drive government policy – militates against such structural changes. Nevertheless, the discussion of the workshop showed that individual lifestyle changes are highly dependant upon economic and infrastructural opportunities to do so.

#### **4. Working program**

The lifestyle concept—or other approaches that could contribute to the understanding of environmental behavior in the wider context of society—could contribute to the transition of an environmental policy that has often been shaped by technological optimism and neoliberal market ideologies. The decline of the neoliberal ideology provides the necessary change for new sociological thinking in the field of climate change mitigation. The workshop identified this chance and searched for vantage points for an endeavor that could integrate European and American traditions of thinking and contribute actively to the emergence of a sustainable society.

The next step would be identifying social science approaches that could contribute to an integrated view of individual behavior and social structures. Starting from but not limited to the workshop contributions, scholars who work with different concepts related to lifestyles should be invited to contribute to an edited volume or a special journal issue to formulate the agenda for ecological lifestyle research and identify theoretical problems. It remains an open question whether the label lifestyle—originally coined by Max Weber—should be used or if another term might be found. The goal is not the promotion of one single approach but the solution of some of the problems that appeared during our discussion about lifestyles and climate change mitigation.

We believe that the answers to the questions raised at the workshop could help to achieve this important goal.