

Summary: Review of Lifestyle Research relevant to Alpine Regions

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The humans' way of life is causing devastating environmental changes impacting all living beings and the geophysical processes of the planet (Anthropocene). Hence, humans shall rethink their way of life. At the individual level, this concerns foremost nutrition, housing and mobility as these areas are responsible for the greatest adverse environmental impacts by individual behaviour in the western world. Consequently, the investigation of sustainable lifestyles, particularly in these areas, is an appropriate point of departure in order to foster sustainable ways of life. As regions hosting sensitive ecosystems such as the Alpine region are heavily affected by environmental changes it is obvious to develop strategies to change lifestyles in the Alps. As a consequence, the population may be perceptible to questions of lifestyle and environmental protection, and hence environmental impacts may be reduced. The Alpine region comprises parts of eight countries with a total amount of approximately 14 million people (following the Alpine Convention perimeter). Though the population shares the fact living in the Alps, they differ strongly inter alia in terms of cultural background and spatial conditions.

Social and psychological Factors (Chapter 2.1 and 2.2)

The review of lifestyle literature showed that there are social and psychological factors which influence lifestyles. The most important seem to be the following: (1) perception of individual responsibility; (2) habits and their changeability (trigger for change, pace of change); (3) capacity of self-reflection; (4) experience with nature; (5) social recognition of environmentally conscious behavior. Besides, there exist factors within the political and economic realm which have an impact on lifestyles: (1) institutional and legal framework; (2) advertisement; (3) default setting.

Consumption and marketing orientated lifestyle concepts (Chapter 2.3)

The consumption and marketing orientated concepts, e.g. the Sinus-Milieus, the Roper consumer styles, Mosaic or Housing Trends 2030. The Sinus-Milieus summarize people into groups following their view of life, values and social situation. The purpose of the concept is to illustrate socio-cultural diversity in society and to enable an understanding of the motivation of human actions. The Roper consumer styles are conceptually similar to the Sinus-Milieus. Their main objective is to position new brands, develop new products and identify upcoming trends. Mosaic is a more spatial approach with the aim to understand demographics, lifestyles, consumer behaviour as well as the location of individuals and households by clustering individuals, households or postcodes in a country into homogenous lifestyle types. Housing Trends 2030 focuses on the housing industry and provides information to meet specific housing industrial needs. This approach groups people according to their housing preferences and demands.

Sustainable lifestyle approaches (Chapter 2.4)

There exist several sustainable lifestyle approaches: the general typology of environmental behaviour, the forms of environmental conscious behaviour, the energy consumption of US-citizens, the WELSKO-Typology, the ISOE-Types of mobility, and the environmental awareness approach used in Germany. These approaches will be briefly presented: the

general typology of environmental behaviour aims to protect and improve the environment by increasing the participation of individuals and the community. Therefore, different population segments are identified with various abilities to act and willingness to act. The environmental conscious behaviour approach seeks to decrypt the overarching context of conditions of complex mentalities. Five types of behaviour with corresponding conditions are described. The study “Energy consumption of US-citizens” provides results on energy consumption and CO₂-emissions of different income classes, lifestyle groups and forms of housing. The WELSKO-Typology groups people of two German cities according to their energy-saving attitude. The typology helps to develop targeted marketing strategies for an energy service company. The ISEO-Types of mobility identifies different mobility types in two German cities and aims at supporting the development of communication strategies with the aim to transform the mobility behaviour. The milieu concept, developed by Sociodimensions, is used in the study “Environmental awareness in Germany 2014”. The concept is comparable to the Sinus-Milieus. Additionally, the study allocates different environmental types to the milieus according to Sociodimensions. The study is an annually released report, investigating the German population and their attitude towards environmental topics.

Socio-economic data for Alpine Region (Chapter 3)

Socio-economic aspects impact strongly on living standards and lifestyles. The socio-economic data reveals the following which might be relevant for lifestyle and environmental impact and the development of lifestyle models to consider in Alpine strategies: (1) there is an aging population in the Alpine territory; (2) the Alpine population works primarily in the service sector; (3) the net income per capita is uniformly distributed over the Alpine territory, except for the regions in Liechtenstein, Switzerland and Slovenia. The level of net income of Liechtenstein and Switzerland exceeds that of Germany, France, Italy and Austria, whereas the disposable net income in Slovenia is more or less half as high; (4) the gross domestic product is relatively even distributed over the entire Alpine region; (5) the degree of urban sprawl and accessibility vary across the Alpine regions.

Conclusion

Concluding this research, we recognize that in order to change lifestyles, the peoples' expectations and practices of life would have to be a starting point. Such expectations concern for instance the kind of housing and extent of living space, the daily and exceptional travel distances considered as normal, or the recognition of resource and land scarcities to adapt to. Overall, the research on (sustainable) lifestyles is insightful as it hints at areas and groups of population to address with lifestyle change approaches and the suitability of different approaches. However, when it comes to concrete approaches and measures to propose, we recommend to investigate the specific life conditions of the population as these conditions vary considerably and may differ in importance in the daily life of people.

This report is part of the project “Sustainable lifestyles in the Alps” of CIPRA International. The aim of the project is to investigate and develop sustainable lifestyle models. Full report: www.cipra.org/sustainable-lifestyle

Project “Sustainable Lifestyles in the Alps”

What we eat, what we throw away, how we live and move around - our lifestyle - affects our environment, our fellow human beings and the climate. The project promotes sustainable lifestyles and identifies good examples in the Alps.

Climate change, increasing resource consumption and waste problems threaten nature and society and pose major challenges for the Alps. The negative effects on people and the environment cannot be solved by technical efficiency and structural measures alone, as efficiency-gains are often offset by increased consumption (rebound effect). A sustainable lifestyle means reducing material consumption in the overall system and adapting one's own behaviour accordingly. Only with changes in behaviour towards a sustainable lifestyle will it be possible to conserve resources and preserve and improve our ecosystems.

Goals

- Expand the energy and climate protection debate with social and innovative, sustainable lifestyle approaches,
- show how behavioural change towards a low-carbon lifestyle can be effective,
- initiate an alpine-wide discourse on the topic of sustainable lifestyles,
- contribute to the transition of the Alpine Space to a low-carbon and post-fossil society and economy and thus contribute to the achievement of the SDG objective 12.

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