Diversifying and de-growing the circular economy: Radical social transformation in a resource-scarce world

"Programmes and policies for a Circular Economy (CE) are fast becoming key to regional and international plans for creating sustainable futures. Framed as a technologically driven and economically profitable vision of continued growth in a resource scarce world, the CE has of late been taken up by the European Commission and global business leaders alike. However, within CE debates and documentation, little is said about the social and political implications of such transformative agendas. Whilst CE proponents claim their agenda is ‘radical’, this paper outlines its inability to address many deeply embedded challenges around issues of consumption and the consumer, echoing as it does the problematic (and arguably failed) agendas of sustainable consumption/lifestyles. Using the Sharing Economy as an example, we argue here that the ontological and sociological assumptions of the CE must be open to more ‘radical’ critique and reconsideration if this agenda is to deliver the profound transformations that its advocates claim are within our collective reach." (p. 15)

Format:
Scientific article

Author names:
Kersty Hobson, Nicholas Lynch

Length (pp):
11 (pp. 15-25)

Year:
2016

URL:

Source:
Cardiff University, The University of Oxford

Type of evidence:
- Scientific articles

Sectors:
Policy changes:

- Other [5]

Expected changes of economic processes:

- Efficient use of resources [6]
- More recycling and use of recycled materials [7]
- Remanufacturing, refurbishment and reuse of products and components [8]
- More circular design [9]
- Sharing models [10]
- Shift in consumption patterns [11]

Indirect effects on the economy:

- Change in consumption patterns [12]

Environmental impacts:

- Use of resources [13]
- Pollution [14]

Economic impacts:

- Growth [15]
- Other [16]

Social impacts:

- Poverty, inequality, social cohesion [17]
- Other [18]

Time frame for impacts to materialize:

- Not specified/not applicable [19]

Enabling factors:

- Technological development and cost of technologies [20]
- Other [21]

Administrative level:

- EU [22]

Method of valuation:

- Qualitative assessment [23]
- Quantitative assessment [24]
- Monetisation [25]
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The CIRCULAR IMPACTS project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 Programme for Research and Innovation under the Grant Agreement no. 730316.

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