

## Are our technologically-mediated sustainable lifestyles a game changer on the Circular Economy?

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Oral Abstract

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This research explores the relationship between the ascribed current passive role of the citizens as consumers only, and the ability of the Circular Economy (CE) analytical framework to operate outside the post-industrial, service and consumption-based capitalist economy. Using a post-capitalist lens, this research looks to discuss how human and social capital, rather than monetary value, can be used as guidance towards a sustainable circular economy.

For the last decade CE has been portrayed as a technological revolution promising to disrupt and take our economic system away from its current *multidimensional unsustainability*. Technological developments have indeed enabled us to efficiently retain and generate value out of the products and materials we use in different industries. However, increased efficiency has enabled an increment in consumption creating a rebound or backfire effect overall.

On top of that rebound effect, such revolution is leaving individuals relying upon a *technologically-mediated form of social engagement* to respond to the challenges of co-creating a sustainable future. That technological mediation promotes individuals to engage, almost exclusively, economically with the rest of society through sustainable consumption patterns or *sustainable lifestyles*. Such form of engagement perpetuates a system where the market forces, rather than the individuals, are the ones in control of generating change towards sustainability; it creates a force (of individuals) that responds to correct labelling and price signals.

Has CE become another version of an ecological modernist argument to stimulate economic growth?

To start answering that question, this research will be part of a territorial experiment taking place at the Communauté de communes du Barsequanais, located in the department of Aube, in France. The activity was proposed by the CREIDD research team of the Université de Technologie de Troyes (UTT), after being contacted by the local authorities of Barsequanais with an intention of *collectively revitalising their territory* for a sustainable future. The experiment will have its first phase during the third week of April 2019, where researchers from CREIDD and the Institute Chenêlet will develop multiple activities to assess, analyse and co-create strategies towards the revitalisation of the territory.

For the purpose of this paper, the researcher will develop and present a social cartography workshop in four different towns. The goal of such workshop is to engage the communities in a collective participatory mapping session of their territory to examine the potential synergies among the different actors (people, community organisations, local authorities, businesses...) that could enable the development of collaborative strategies to empower the community towards their territorial sustainability.

This research positions individual actions as the propelling force of collective actions towards sustainability; it gives agency to individuals by recognizing them as citizens rather than consumers. The results of the experiment will be analysed by the researcher using analytical developments on theories such as 'cooperative capitalism', 'breakthrough capitalism', 'diverse economy', and other de/post-growth theories. That framework will enable to stimulate the discussion between theory and practice about the agency of communities disrupting and transforming the current logic of the economic system into one that can successfully coexist with our current biospheric limits.

Circular Economy, territorial revitalisation, community mapping, sustainable lifestyles