



Newsletter September 2019



SHIFTING TOWARDS CIRCULARITY

Discussions at RSA Summer College

From September 3rd-6th, the CIRCULAR researcher Paula Hild attended the 2nd Regional Studies Association (RSA) Europe Summer College on Socio-Spatial Dynamics in Cagliari / Sardinia, Italy.



Early career researchers from all over the world discussed with established academics about their projects in innovation, mobility and entrepreneurship. Paula presented selective results from her doctoral thesis, summarised on the poster, entitled, *Motivations and barriers of companies for shifting towards circularity* (see p.2). The preliminary results put forward the interdependence of the actors' perception of what would a circular economy

model mean for Luxembourg. They also reveal the firm's specific role in this system. The decision of a business actor to implement a circular economy practice depends primarily on its return on investment, the general regulatory pressure and the maturity of the industry and the company. In general, the hindrance for circularity is not the absence of a technological or technical solution. Besides, the sophistication of the firm given its awareness for concepts like the circular economy or sustainability shapes its vision for the future in this field actively. As a push for action, interviewees suggested a regulatory framework for circularity.



Group work presentation: Creativity Lab

Motivations & barriers of companies for shifting towards circularity

Paula Hild, University of Luxembourg, Institute of Geography and Spatial Planning

Purpose

Since 2014, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg's national policy aims at transitioning the national economy from a linear to a circular model. The overall aim of the project is to analyse the effectiveness of the circular economy policy in Luxembourg by studying institutions and practices in businesses.

Circular Economy Practices

'The central idea [of the circular economy] is to close material loops, reduce inputs, and reuse or recycle products, and waste to achieve a higher quality of life through increased resource efficiency.'



(Peters et al., 2007) Circular practices embrace eco-design, repair, reuse, refurbishment, remanufacture, product sharing, waste prevention and recycling.

Motivations

The decision of a business actor to implement a circular economy practice depends primarily on:



- personal conviction (CEO, owner);
- good knowledge about sustainability;
- competitive advantage;
- direct financial gain;
- support from the government.

The Luxembourg Case

Luxembourg is a financial centre with a high share of private land ownership (Preller, 2018):



- 576,000 inhabitants (2016) live on 2586 sqm;
- with 64.4 sqm of housing surface per capita; and
- 661 cars / 1000 inhabitants (2015).

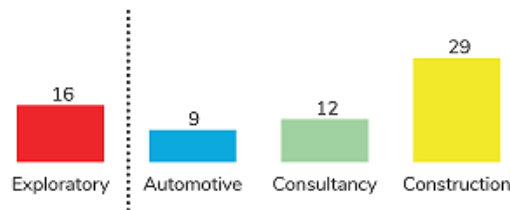
References:

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- Schulz, C., Hjaltadóttir, R.E., Hild, P. 2019. Practising Circles: Studying Institutional Change of Corporate Routines under Circular Economy Imperatives. *Journal of Cleaner Production* 237: 1-10. doi: 10.1016/j.jclepro.2019.117749

Funding:

The Luxembourg Research Fund (FNR) supports this work (project reference: 11268491). The project contributes to the FNR funded project: CORE C16/SR/11338441/CIRCULAR.

66 Interviews



Institutional Approach

The research follows authors who claim for the systematic inclusion of institutions into the analysis of policy effectiveness

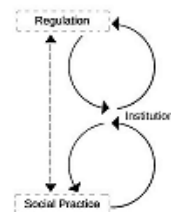


Figure 1: The intermediate role of institutions in policy making (adapted from Glückler and Lenz, 2016:263)

(see figure 1 and Schulz et al., 2019). The hypothesis assumes that institutions explain sectoral differences in the efficacy of circular economy policies.

Barriers

In general, the hindrance for circularity is not the absence of a technological or technical solution, but:



- missing regulatory pressure;
- no specific customer request;
- its return on investment delayed in time;
- low maturity of the industry and the company with sustainability approaches.

Conclusion

It is indistinct for the interviewees what actions to take to transition the company and the entire country towards a circular economy from a systemic perspective. As a push for action, interviewees suggest a regulatory framework for circularity (e.g. roadmap, certification, indicators, thresholds for CO2 emissions).



RESEARCH STAY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

This summer, CIRCULAR team member Paula Hild spent four weeks at the University of Hull (UK) thanks to the [RISC Consortium](#) Young Researcher Mobility Grant. Research around the Circular Economy in Hull has multiple perspectives and covers a doctoral training program ([CRESTING](#)) and mainly two projects on plastics ([Plastics Col-laboratory](#)) and the bio-economy ([THYME](#)). Paula shared insights from her doctoral project in a presentation on the motivations and barriers of companies in Luxembourg for shifting towards circularity. The stay in Hull permitted Paula in-depth discussions about her work with Julia

Affolderbach, a member of her PhD committee and a Senior Lecturer in Human Geography, and other researchers at the School of Environmental Sciences of the Faculty of Science and Engineering.



RECENT PUBLICATIONS

An article, Practising circles: Studying institutional change and circular economy practices, written by the CIRCULAR team, Christian Schulz, Rannveig Hjaltadóttir and Paula Hild, has been published in the Journal of Cleaner Production. The article is open access and you can access it [here](#) or using a link on the [CIRCULAR page](#)



Practising circles: Studying institutional change and circular economy practices



Christian Schulz^{*}, Rannveig Edda Hjaltadóttir, Paula Hild

SHARING ECONOMY IN UTRECHT

In June, Rannveig represented CIRCULAR at the [6th International Workshop on the Sharing Economy](#) in Utrecht. She presented findings of CIRCULAR research on the Sharing Economy in Gothenburg, focusing on the cooperation between the municipality and the sharing initiatives in the city. The aims of these initiatives include changing consumer practices towards circularity, such as less consumption, longer lifespan through repair and reuse, food rescue and access to shared items.

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