



# Sustainable Capitalism in the Making?

## The Marshallian Citizenship Conceptualisation Expanded in a European Circular Economy

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# Abstract

In contrast to a linear system of take-make-dispose when it comes to production and consumption patterns, a circular economy aims at preserving and using resources to its maximum, promoting a longer durability of products and stands for the minimising of waste. This can be seen as a part of a broader paradigm of sustainable economic growth, which the European Commission and many of the European Union's member states on the national level aim at integrating into society as a whole. Resource use is overall an issue surrounded by political conflict, and this since some argue that there are limits to how much growth that can be generated without using too much of the earth's resources, while some mean that we can find ways to overcome these limits. In democratic societies, conflict is to a large extent handled on the basis of citizenship and political participation. In this theory-developing paper, the citizenship theory as presented by T.H. Marshall is confronted with sustainable growth, with a circular economy as its specific dimension. The result shows that civil, political and social rights as presented in Marshall's original historical study are all affected by a circular economy. When applying the developed theoretical framework to empirical material in the form of policy documents stemming from the European Commission and from member states of the European Union, it becomes clear that there are also other aspects, such as differing political ideologies and geopolitical concern, that is surrounding the idea of a circular economy in relation to the citizenship concept.

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## 1. Introduction

What is a circular economy? Sébastien Sauvé, Sophie Bernard and Pamela Sloan (2016) define the concept as an economy where different loops are in focus, and the main objective for such an economy to be working at its best, and therefore make the least environmental harm, is to close these loops. Circular movements all form a system of production and consumption, to which the earth provides resources that form the loops - a process that needs to be sustainable in the sense **that the planet's capacities should not be overshoot. Resource consumption** and waste, which within this paradigm is to be seen as a resource, are thus important issues in this context. Resources should be used to its optimum, while pollution and the generation of waste should be minimised in each step of the production cycle.

The opposed way of organising the economy – the linear economy, works therefore in the contrary sense. There, environmental impact is not taken into consideration, resources are not used to their maximum capacity, there is too much pollution and too much waste generated within the economic system. Sauvé et al. mean that in the linear economy, the economic objective has first priority and does not take ecological or social issues into account.

In contrast, a circular economy aims at decoupling prosperity from resource consumption - “i.e., how can we consume goods and services and yet not depend on extraction of virgin resources and thus ensure closed loops that will prevent the eventual disposal of consumed goods in landfill sites”. In this context, promoting productivity is not a threat towards sustainability, since a circular economy bears in mind “the externalities of the production process, the consumption of the products and the end-of-life impacts” (Sauvé et al, 2016:53).

A circular economy is one out of several emerging concepts on how to face global challenges such as resource scarcity, climate change, and economic instability. In relation to the concept of sustainable development, Sauvé et al. mean that a circular economy can be seen as a tool for this process; however, they are of the opinion that the social context of sustainable development is absent in such an economy. This is object for academic debate - while for example, Mikael Skou Andersen (2007) means that a circular economy approach needs expansion in order to fully address the issue of sustainability, others argue that a circular economy can be seen as coming in different gradations, with the highest level addressing social issues too (Sauvé et al, 2016).

In sum, a circular economy focuses on the fact that the economy as a system should be regenerative – waste, emissions and energy leakage is to be avoided. The idea demands that products are designed to be long-lasting, that they can be repaired, and instead of going to waste can be recycled and reused (Geissdoerfer, Savaget, Bocken and Hultink, 2017). One example of concrete policymaking aiming at promoting a circular economy is the European Commission’s Circular Economy Package from 2015, containing proposed legislation that is being promoted through expected benefits for the European Union’s (EU) global competitiveness and ability to create jobs while at the same time working as a tool towards a reduced environmental impact (European Commission, 2017).

All of the abovementioned pronounce an appealing idea consisting of reconciling economic growth with decreased environmental harm, and this with relevance to political, economical and social issues. Resource use is overall an issue surrounded by political conflict, and this since some argue that there are limits to how much growth that can be generated without using too much of the earth’s resources, while some mean that we can find ways to overcome these limits. In democratic societies, conflict is to a large extent handled on the basis of citizenship and political

participation. How would then the citizenship, with its rights and responsibilities, of a circular economy look like? Can the concept of a circular economy expand the existing scholarship on citizenship theory?

One of the most prominent scholars of citizenship literature is Thomas Humphrey Marshall (1950). In this paper, I will through the use of T.H Marshall's original framework make a case for an expanded citizenship concept within the context of a circular economy. After developing a theoretical framework of a citizenship concept that takes a circular economy into account, this will be applied on policy material from the European Commission and on a number of EU member states' policies. This analysis will be done in order to illustrate the relevance of the framework and to evaluate the existence of other aspects related to the citizenship concept in a circular economy context, which the theoretical discussion did not shed light on.

## 1.1 Outline of the paper

This paper begins with a presentation of the concrete aim and research questions. The section after aims at providing the reader with an overview of the research design in order to get a clear picture of how the study is conducted. Following, the reader is given a review of previous research and theory related to the idea of citizenship and sustainability that within the literature can be seen as a way of adding an environmental dimension to the citizenship concept, often called an environmental citizenship. The concept of a circular economy is also further presented. Here, there is a theoretical discussion concerning the possibilities to integrate the paradigm of sustainable development, with circular economy as a specific dimension, into the three dimensions of Marshall's citizenship conceptualisation. After that, the reader gets an indication of how an expanded citizenship concept, which then also takes a circular economy into account, relates to contemporary policies on a circular economy. Finally, one part is granted to conclusions, implications of the results and suggestions for further research.

## 2. Problems and Aims

### 2.1 Presentation of the problem

In a democratic system, political decision-making must be based on the idea of citizenship, which means that politics must depend on the participation of citizens. Mirja Vihersalo argues, "the concept of environmental citizenship has been introduced as an attempt to solve problems

concerning the relationship between the environment and democracy” (Vihersalo, 2016:1). Since the overall idea of sustainable development is that sustainability should be integrated into every corner of society, the necessary way to theorize such an objective as to make citizenship sustainable would not be to add an environmental dimension, but rather to integrate sustainability in T.H. Marshall’s canonized citizenship conceptualisation.

## 2.2 Aim

The aim of the paper is to expand and develop the existing theorizing of the citizenship concept by introducing circular economy as special criteria. It is stated by scholars that the already existing extension of the environmental citizenship concept shows that it is open to many different interpretations (Barry, 2005). I would like to take advantage of the dynamics of this, but at the same time take an alternative approach in the sense that through developing my own version of an expanded citizenship, I will integrate the idea of sustainable growth into the already existing framework on citizenship developed by T.H. Marshall. However, I will to some extent draw on existing scholarship on environmental citizenship in order to do this, alongside with the more specific literature involving a circular economy.

After adding an intention of sustainability with the presumption of a circular economy for each of Marshall’s citizenship dimensions, I aim at illustrating this developed theory through the analysis of circular economy policies all stemming from EU member states. By doing this, the relevance of the added dimension to the citizenship concept could be evaluated in a useful way.

## 2.3 Research questions

With this background, I pose the following two questions:

- I. How is each dimension within Marshall’s citizenship concept affected if they must take the presumption of a circular economy into account?
- II. What relevance does a Marshallian citizenship reconceptualisation, taking circular economy into account, have for contemporary European circular economy policy processes?

The first question aims at adding a sustainability dimension to each out of Marshall's citizenship dimensions, and this through the provision of a literature review of existing state-of-the-art literature on citizenship and on the idea of a circular economy. The second question's objective is to empirically analyse circular economy policies with the expanded theoretical framework as an analytical tool.

### **3. Research Design**

Many scholars have already posed the question on how environmental issues and the citizenship concept could be developed in relation to a discourse of sustainable development. The inherent basis of responsibilities and rights that enable each citizen to play a role in sustainable development has therefore been articulated as dimensions within an environmental citizenship. This concept comes in different variations – besides from the already mentioned environmental citizenship there are for example the sustainable or green citizenship (See for example Shah et al. 2012, Andy Scerri, 2013).

One way of approaching such a theoretical development is to build on of the most prominent contributions to the literature on citizenship – the work of T.H. Marshall (1950). Marshall developed a framework that makes an argument that the modern citizenship can be said to have emerged in three different epochs of modern history, with different dimensions that characterise each extension. These three dimensions, which are the civil, the political and the social rights of the citizenship, could, therefore, be complemented with a forth dimension – the environmental rights. However, in this paper, I chose to go through with an alternative approach. Instead of adding a forth dimension, this paper integrates a circular economy as a special dimension into each of the three already existing dimensions of Marshall's framework.

#### **3.1 Theory-developing studies**

Mats Alvesson and Dan Kärreman (2011) emphasise how the empirical material in a study should be seen as “a resource for developing theoretical ideas through the active mobilization and problematization of existing frameworks” (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2011:4). To problematize in this case is to investigate how well the theory stands in relation to the subject it is meant to interpret. It is thus the empirical material that further improves the quality of the researcher's

capacity to “challenge, rethink and illustrate theory”(ibid). In this case, the empirical material consists partially of already existing scholarship on citizenship that is used in order to answer the first research question, and circular economy policies from EU member states that are analysed thoroughly in order to answer the second research question, and this through the application of a further developed citizenship concept. This paper should be seen as theory developing in the sense that I am adding something to an already existing theoretical framework, the one of T.H. Marshall, and applying the theory to empirical material – and through this see how well the framework can interpret this material.

Alvesson and Kärreman state that within the social sciences, data is rarely unambiguous. This does, however, not mean that a researcher should not take data seriously, but rather that the analysis of the data **should be done in “an open-minded and humble way”**, and that there is a need to be creative when handling the empirical material (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2011:4). Alvesson and Kärreman do, however, state that it should not be neglected **that** “some interpretations or constructions may be more empirically supported and **qualified than others”** (ibid, 14). This means that I have to apply a somewhat inductive approach to this paper in order to relate the to concepts citizenship and circular economy to each other in a fruitful manner. Nevertheless, I have to bear in mind that my interpretations need to be well grounded and thus not too far-fetched.

The interaction between theory and the empirical material is in Alvesson and Kärreman’s view about seeing the empirics as an asset for inspiration – **not as an “ultimate validator for knowledge claims”** (ibid, 15). Alvesson and Kärreman describe that theory development has a particular focus on what does not work in already available theory, which will produce alternative views on how to understand a certain phenomenon. A circular economy might at first glance come off as simplistic and to a large extent instrumental. By looking at it through a citizenship perspective, it is my intention to generate such an alternative view of a circular economy as a phenomenon, which then would also further develop existing citizenship theory. An important angle of the paper is that even though I develop my own theoretical framework, the paper should be seen as both theory-driven and data-driven, and this since I do not see myself as committed to only

analyse the material through my own categories – I am open to new interpretations that the data might give evidence of. Not seeing alternative approaches would, in my view, limit this paper in a very disadvantageous way.

### **3.2 Material and selection**

As for material, it is useful to restate that the paper consists of two different parts. The first part aims at developing the citizenship concept. This is conducted using literature regarding environmental citizenship for the sustainability dimension of citizenship, and literature on a circular economy in order to add this dimension to the existing scholarship on citizenship. The circular economy literature includes both work that discusses the general concept, and articles that discuss the conditions for such an economy. The keywords used in the research for material in this part of the paper are circular economy and environmental citizenship.

The second part of the paper consists of an empirical analysis of existing circular economy policies stemming from EU-countries, on which the expanded citizenship is applied. In this part, I am focusing solely on EU-countries and the European Commission. Other countries that would be possible to look at are for example China. However, one reason for choosing a circular economy as a subject for this paper is the fact that the European Commission shows, as mentioned in the introduction, a clear ambition to legislate on this matter, and because of this, I am focusing on countries that are members of the EU. Important to note is, however, that when it comes to describing a circular economy as a concept and its implications on citizenship literature, the Chinese example is brought up, since this contributes to the richness of the paper.

In order to select the material I used the keywords circular economy, EU member states names one by one and gov (as in government), since my main ambition is to analyse government-produced policy documents that aim, in one way or another, to promote a circular economy. However, as for the case of France, it was a white paper on a circular economy from the region of Greater Paris appearing in the results feed when using those keywords. Seeing that this is not a paper aiming at comparing member states, but rather to illustrate examples, I chose to include this white paper, even though it is not a publication from the French state. Regions play an

important role in the European cooperation as well, and I made the decision that this white paper contributes to the paper in the sense that it offers material that illustrates my theoretical framework.

Besides doing research through keywords, I searched the English versions of the websites of all ministries of environment and ministries of industry/economy/finance of all the EU's 28 member states in order to find relevant policy documents, and this since I argue that it is most likely that it is these ministries that are in charge of issues regarding a circular economy. The decisive factor when choosing the documents is that they are explicitly about a circular economy and how to make the transition into such an economy – publications that merely state the necessity of for example resource efficiency, although this is key in a circular economy, are therefore not included, nor responses to consultations of EU circular economy policy. Since the websites and documents are all in English, it is possible that I have missed relevant documents written in other languages than English. The documents analysed in this paper are the following publications:

- ◆ *Closing the loop – An EU action plan for the Circular Economy*, 21 pages. This is an action plan that was accompanying what is referred to as The Circular Economy Package, proposed legislation stemming from the European Commission that was released in December 2015.
- ◆ *A White Paper on the Circular Economy of Greater Paris*, 76 pages. A publication from 2015 containing 65 proposals for a circular economy transition that is produced by the mayor of Paris's office, written in cooperation with other actors, such as the business sector.
- ◆ *A Circular Economy in the Netherlands by 2050*, 72 pages. The publication is a government-produced programme with a nation-wide focus, from 2016.
- ◆ *The Circular Economy Act* (Kreislaufwirtschaftsgesetz in German), 63 pages, which is German legislation aiming at promoting a circular economy with a specific focus on the conservation of natural resources, the protection of human health and the management of waste. The version used is from 2012.
- ◆ *Circular Economy – Denmark as a Circular Economy Solutions Hub*, 24 pages from 2016, which is produced by a Danish public-private partnership. This is a joint initiative consisting of the Danish government, the Confederation of Danish Industry, the Danish

Energy Association, the Danish Agriculture and Food Council, and the Danish Wind Industry. They all form a constellation that goes by the name *State of Green*.

One alternative way of conducting the paper could be to interview relevant policymakers and from there find aspects of a circular economy that could be put in relation to the theoretical discussion leading up to the theoretical framework. However, in this case, policy documents are chosen as material.

### 3.3 Content analysis as a method

The second part of this paper aims, as previously mentioned, at illustrating the expanded **theoretical framework** of T.H. Marshall's **citizenship** taking sustainability into account in each of its dimensions. As for method in this part, I am using the method of content analysis. This is a method described by Hsiu-Fang Hsieh and Sara E. Shannon (2005) as "the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns" (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005:1278). In order to answer the second research question, the chosen cases are analysed thoroughly. The parts judged as relevant are then put into categories in broad terms defined as the civil, political and social dimensions of citizenship. These categories are presented more thoroughly in the last part of the theory section in the paper.

Margrit Schreier (2012:108) suggests the following working procedure for qualitative content analysis, which I am using as guidance:

- I. Paraphrasing parts of the material that come off as relevant to the research question.
- II. "**Streamlining**" these paraphrases in order to eliminate information that is not important to the core message.
- III. Going beyond each individual paraphrase and looking at them in comparison.

Schreier (ibid, 2) **means that data never "speaks for itself"** - it is therefore up to the researcher to give the text meaning, and to actually construct the meaning. Putting this in relation to this paper, it is important to mention that the chosen documents are not made for the purpose of putting the citizenship concept in relation to circular economy policy. This is something that I create. However, Schreier also highlights that, as a researcher doing qualitative content analysis

you will never be able to “describe the full meaning of your material in each and every aspect” (ibid, 3). Thus, my contribution is to describe the documents and its relevance in relation to the citizenship concept in a circular economy in a quite narrow sense.

As for limitations of this method, Bruce L. Berg (2009) highlights that content analysis can only assess already existing materials, and it is not able to test causal relationships between variables using this method. This is therefore not my ambition to pursue.

### **3.4 The use of quotations**

In the part of the paper where the empirical material is presented, I am using two different ways of quoting the material. Besides from putting some quotes within quotation marks directly in the text, I am also using block quotations where I find the quotations as especially telling in order to fulfil the objective of the paper. These quotes are smaller in size and have a different indentation than the rest of the text.

### **3.5 Validity**

Peter Esaiasson, Mikael Giljam, Henrik Oscarsson, and Lena Wängnerud (2012) mean that validity is described in different ways within the literature. It can be seen as the conformity between a theoretical definition and an operational definition, absence of systematic errors or that the researcher is measuring what he or she is claiming to measure. Validity can also be linked to the choice of method. Taking these validity factors into account, it is thus important that I use my theoretical framework in a way that tries to objectively evaluate its usefulness. It is also important that when developing the framework, aspects looked at in one way in the theoretical discussion should not be looked at differently in the empirical investigation.

A limitation to using content analysis is the risk of not generating a full understanding of the material studied, hence failing to establish the key classifications (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005). Lyn Richards (2015) means that within qualitative research, the researcher is not an outside observer, but a part of the data. This statement means that there is always a risk of the researcher being biased in his or her interpretation, which could affect the validity of the paper. Richard also highlights that researchers have a certain baggage – such as interests where the researcher is

informed and areas of ignorance. It is worth mentioning in relation to this statement that all publications are in English, which I argue contributes to my own neutrality towards the documents. It would, for example, have been easier for me to read documents in Swedish, which then to some extent would have created a certain bias, and this since I could get an even better understanding of such documents.

## **4. Theory**

In this section, I aim at expanding the citizenship concept with regards to a presumed circular economy, and this through the provision of a literature review on the concept of citizenship. Some of the studies that I include in this section of the paper look at different approaches to how an environmental agenda can be added to the modern citizenship concept. I have made a consistent choice to use examples from what I argue are the three main strands of this literature – the liberal environmental citizenship, the civic-republican environmental citizenship and the post-cosmopolitan environmental citizenship. During the process of choosing the strands I rather focused on contrasting approaches than putting an emphasis on similarities. This is because I find it useful to present a wide spectrum of approaches in order to be able to expand and further develop **Marshall's citizenship dimensions**. As for the literature on a circular economy, my aim when searching for relevant literature has been to provide the reader with both a general perspective on the concept and literature that takes on a more questioning approach. Firstly, however, I will present the work of T.H Marshall and some scholarship that has commented on this work and to some extent also presented critique towards it.

### **4.1 T.H. Marshall's citizenship concept**

One of the most prominent scholars when it comes to literature on citizenship is T.H. Marshall (1950) and his three dimensions of citizenship that have been developed throughout history – the civil, political and social dimensions of this concept. **In accordance with Marshall's historical study**, one can argue that the civil rights emerged in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the political rights in the 19<sup>th</sup> and social rights in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The civil rights are to a large extent related to property and the right to buy and own property, the right to justice and to equal treatment before the law. To Marshall, these rights are needed in order to maintain a market economy. Marshall describes that the political rights, however, could potentially put the capitalist economic system in danger. The political rights are to a large extent **built on every citizen's right to exercise political power**. The last phase of Marshall's citizenship, the social dimension, is built on a set of ideas, from "the right to a modicum of economic welfare and security to the right to share to the full in the social heritage and to live the life of a civilised being according to the standards prevailing in the society" (ibid, 8). Here, the right to work is also present.

Ben Revi (2014) is highlighting that Marshall's work should be seen as "the foundational text for studies of citizenship and social policy". However, Revi also presents some critique towards this scholarship – that for example, **the social rights presented in Marshall's work do not take into account inequalities "based upon sex, migration, cultural affiliation and group differentiation"**, but he also states that Marshall was aware of these issues (Revi, 2014:452). Andrew Connell (2012) summarizes some critique as Marshall having a too much of an Anglocentric approach, not taking the at the time prevailing position of women into account, and also not including the discussion of human rights in his work, which during the period of Marshalls theorizing led up to the European Convention on Human Rights.

Revi states that Marshall himself did not perceive the different parts of his typology as dimensions being necessarily independent of each other, but rather one generating the next, with overlaps in between. In short, this means that citizens being equal under the law (obtaining civil rights) will demand the possibility to choose the people shaping the laws (and thereby be granted political rights), and as a consequence use this power to advance regulation that generates welfare to the population (social rights). Connell poses **the question whether or not Marshall's social rights** should be seen as collective or individualistic, and he argues that Marshall sees them as being the latter. In Connell's view, **Marshall's social rights "exist to meet the needs and requirements of particular citizens, and that as these needs will vary from citizen to citizen, so will the practical effect of the social rights that the citizens possess**. So in this sense, social rights can be seen as

strongly individualistic and even inegalitarian.” (Connell, 2012:553).

Bart van Steenberghe highlights how it cannot be accepted that Marshall’s social citizenship should be seen as a final stage of the general concept of citizenship. In 1994, van Steenberghe mentions ecological citizenship as an alternative view on how to continue the progression of the citizenship concept, which he means is one out of several emerging citizenship concepts that is “**unfolded in the light of new developments and problems with which we are confronted today**” (van Steenberghe, 1994:3). This is an important statement that should be seen as guiding for this paper. **My own criticism towards Marshall’s citizenship concept**, and which also is one of the arguments that this paper builds on, is that it does not make a case for the strive for sustainable development – the answer to some of the problems that society indeed is confronted with.

However, as mentioned in the methods part, the aim of this paper is not to add another stage of the citizenship concept, but to expand already existing aspects to include a sustainability agenda focusing on ideas of a circular economy. The Marshallian way of theorising around the citizenship concept is to a large extent built on chronology. It is important to note that this is not the case in this paper, which rather aims at putting a focus on the analytical aspect, thus not chronology, in order to make citizenship sustainable. There is therefore a need for a more in-depth presentation of a circular economy, which is the ultimate symbol for sustainability in this paper.

## 4.2 The concept of a circular economy

Alan Murray, Keith Skene and Kathryn Haynes (2015) mean that the circular economy can be said to represent an attempt to provide the industry with what it has urged for during a long time – guidance in implementing strategies for sustainable development. To Murray et al., there is not much formal academic debate on this issue although its emergence as a concept. However, the concept of a circular economy is derived from antecedents within several different disciplines such as economics, history and ecology. An early example of the idea of circularity within the economy comes from François Quesney’s *Tableau Économique* written in 1758, where he describes “**a circular flow of income**” (Quesney, 1972). Murray et al. argue that he had been inspired by William Harvey and Marcello Malpighi, who had done work on blood circulation in 1628

respectively in 1661: “The circular flow of blood around the body was viewed as a useful metaphor for the **flow of money through an economy**” (Murray et al, 2015:372). Murray et al. argue that when it comes to circular economy practices, China is the leading nation, but that it is to be seen more and more within Western economies.

Skou Andersen (2007) describe that within the circular economy, the environment has four welfare economic functions. It has amenity values, not directly linked to economic issues, which means that it provides pleasure to individuals through for example green landscapes. The environment is also a resource base and should be seen as an input to the economy. Thirdly, Skou Andersen argues that the environment also works as a sink for residuals generated through economic activity. Finally, the environment acts as a life-support system for humans and for non-humans.

Sauvé et al. mean that there is a public good problem within the economy – “**the benefits of producing a less or a non-durable good is private while the environmental cost is public**” (Sauvé et al., 2016:54f). In the linear economy, environmental and health issues are not associated with **production and consumption, as in comparison to the circular context, where “these costs need to be fully integrated in the price paid by the consumers”**. This internalisation of costs is something that the circular economy has in common with the concept of sustainable development. To Sauvé et al., the circular economy demands that consumers shift their way of perceiving products and put more attention to functionality, **and they mention a “contractual agreement between the users and providers of products and services that can better align incentives and lead to more eco-efficient uses of resources” (ibid)**. An example that Sauvé et al. provides is car sharing – a functional service that challenges the traditional idea of product ownership. This changes consumer thinking in the sense that consumers no longer perceive a necessity to having its own equipment in order to be independent and make the most use of the products, and property rights change with this its form.

The concept of a circular economy can be said to be one of several emerging concepts that tries to conceptualise and address environmental challenges, which in this paper is related to the

traditional idea of citizenship. Given this context, the circular economy can be said to at times overlap, and at times contrast to, for example, sustainable development. Sauvé et al. try to make a clarification over this issue – how different concepts, such as circular economy, sustainable development and environmental sciences, can be applied to contemporary environmental concerns and what premises that underpin each concept. The premises for the circular economy which I am studying is thus the rights and responsibilities stemming from the idea of citizenship, a theorising that follows in the next section.

### **4.3 Expanding Marshall's citizenship conceptualisation to include a circular economy**

I turn now to the first research question that puts the circular economy in relation to existing literature on citizenship which is: *How is each dimension within Marshall's citizenship concept affected if they must take the presumption of a circular economy into account?*

In order to do answer this question, I benefit to some extent from previous literature presenting an environmental citizenship. I see this literature as useful starting points since they all to some extent bring up sustainability and put this in relation to the citizenship concept. In order to effectively integrate the circular economy concept in the paper, I introduce also additional scholarship focusing on the circular economy as a general concept and work that problematizes this phenomenon, this in order to get both an optimistic and a more sceptical view of the transition towards a circular economy.

What I aim to contribute to this research field of citizenship literature through this section of the paper is a theoretical elaboration inspired of already existing work on the variety of citizenship concepts, resulting in an expansion of Marshall's citizenship concept taking the concept of a circular economy into account. The contribution to already existing studies within this field that I aim to achieve concerns an analysis having environmental citizenship approaches in mind, and at the same time expanding the Marshallian concept and with that make a theoretical input.

#### **4.3.1 Circular economy as an integrated dimension in civil rights**

Derek R. Bell (2005) provides one dimension of an environmental citizenship that has a connection to civil rights. In Bell's work, the liberal environmental citizenship is being introduced. Bell means that at first glance, contemporary literature on environmental citizenship

seem to involve personal commitment to a large extent, but then also brings up rights and responsibilities, which results in Bell's claim that the population are "citizens of the environment" (ibid, 181). Bell's interpretation of the environmental citizen promotes that liberal theory should abandon the standpoint that the environment is merely property, and recognise that the environment is also about the provision of human needs and "a subject about which there is reasonable disagreement" (ibid, 180). The question of property is central in the circular economy discussion, since circularity is hindered if the norm is that everyone should own its own car or other equipment, as mentioned in the theory section introducing a circular economy.

Bell is critical about the way liberal conceptions of citizenship do not perceive citizens, the members of the political community, as living in a physical environment. Bell brings up the example of T.H Marshall's framework of the three phases of citizenship (1950) in this context. As mentioned above, the citizenship brings civil rights to individuals within the first phase of its development within this framework, with an emphasis on property rights. To Bell, this ignores the conception of the environment as something physical – it is looked at primarily as property.

According to Bell, this means that prevailing liberal political theory still suffers from the fact that the conception of the environment remains unchanged – "the world is still made of property" (Bell, 2005:183). Bell argues that there is a need to look at our environment as the provider of basic needs to a larger extent, and not ignore its essential role for the population. However, this should in Bell's view not require a rejection of capitalism as an economic system, nor result in that moral claims are to be justifying principles of political justice. This is why Bell's central claim is that we are all citizens of an environment - an environment that both serves as the provider to meet our basic needs and a political issue to which there are reasonable disagreement.

Bell means that citizens possess certain personal rights – they can choose to make pro-environmental choices in their everyday life – or they can choose not to. In relation to these rights, Bell's environmental citizens also have general duties to fulfil. The main one is obeying to environmental law, another example could be to pay taxes that aim at improving the environment. However, in contrast to alternative views on environmental citizenship, the liberal

environmental citizen has no specific duty in protecting for example landscapes – they are not **naturally “Greens”** (ibid, 190).

It is clear that a circular economy changes the relationship between the citizen and the activity of owning, buying and selling property of different kinds. In a similar way that Bell is criticising Marshall’s citizenship concept from merely seeing the world as units of property, and not also as the provider of human needs, the idea of a circular economy wants to overthrow the prevailing posture that fully owning, for example, your mean of transport or electronic equipment is the norm. Thus, exercising rights affiliated with citizenship does not necessarily mean the right to owning, but rather the right to access the essentialities – or the functions - of society. However, neither Bell nor the promoters of a circular economy aim at putting an end to the prevailing capitalist system. It is not about collectivistic ideas in the sense that everything should be accessible without financial transactions – it is rather that these transactions, symbolising the individual’s pursuit to utility maximisation, take on other forms. Instead of buying, a circular economy promotes renting, sharing (in this case collective owning) or subscriptions of different sorts depending on the nature of a product.

There is also a dimension of environmental citizenship introduced by John Barry (2005) that has civic-republican characteristics, which can be related to turning civil rights sustainable. One important cornerstone in this type of environmental citizenship is the idea **that** “citizens are made **not born**” (ibid, 26). The original civic-republican citizenship as an idea is dominated by loyalty to the state and a **willingness to give one’s** life for the sake of the common good. Barry takes the original approach and relates it to the emerging literature on citizenship in an environmental context, and he means that one important parallel to draw upon is that from a republican **perspective**, “citizenship is something that has to be learned rather than something that comes **naturally to members of society**” (ibid, 27). On the one hand, Barry is of the opinion that the state should create conditions for a greener citizenship, but he also expresses that it is the task of a green civil society to change the state into becoming greener. It is thus up to citizens acting in civil society to put pressure on the state and economic actors.

In relation to a circular economy, there is a need for citizen action in the sense that they can make an informed choice to buy/rent/share products that are produced within closed loops. By doing

this, they are able to put pressure on market actors to adapt their business models into becoming circular, and therefore sustainable. I argue that citizen action in a circular economy would be more about trying to affect market actors and less about overturning the state. In a circular economy, the business sector stands for a great lot of responsibility for a sustainability shift, even if the state also might come to be involved in the sense that it can produce legislation and tax regulations that actively promotes closed loops activities.

In Barry's view, environmental citizens are required to "fight against unsustainable development, as well as comply with the demands of sustainable development" (ibid, 32). This can be associated with the civil rights that state that every citizen stands equal before the law and also has the duty to follow the rule of law.

#### **4.3.2 Political rights in a circular economy**

Ken Webster state in *The Circular Economy – A Wealth of Flows* (2015) that a circular economy is "Led by business for a profit but within the rules of the game decided by an active citizenship in a flourishing democracy" (Webster, 2015:22). What are then the significance and the role of an active citizenship within the idea of closing loops and promoting reuse and recycling? Political rights, such as participation in democratic processes and the right to vote, are fundamental pillars of society and an important dimension of the citizenship. This section aims therefore at providing an idea of how these pillars are affected in a society based on a circular economy.

Bell's (2005) **environmental citizenship comes with rights to specific environmental** goods, such as clean air. Citizens should have the right to participate in procedures that specify standards for this type of good, and they need to have the right to defend this right and claim it. If those rights are not given to them, they should have the right to take legal action, campaign for them and have the right to demand information about, for example, in this case, air quality. This should, therefore, be key in a circular economy – the right to participation in political processes that sets standards for human environment and the right to take measures if these standards for different reasons are not met.

However, one perspective on citizen's political role in a circular economy is that they are objects

of depoliticisation. Kersty Hobson and Nicholas Lynch's (2016) critical address on a circular economy is worth highlighting in relation to citizen's political rights: "Specifically we argue that to date talk of the circular economy has presented a curtailed and impoverished view of the role of citizen" (Hobson and Lynch, 2016:16). With reference to a speech made by the European Commissioner Frans Timmermans, Hobson and Lynch argue that he stands behind a contemporary paradigm of the citizen and the consumer acting inseparably in modern society, "whose role is to respond to correct labelling and price signals, produce less household waste (...)" and that "the role of the citizen thus appears to be fundamentally one of accepting or rejecting new and diverse business models, in line with re-jigged product and service life cycles" (ibid).

As a result, Hobson and Lynch argue that this gives the citizen a depoliticised role, and emphasise that if a circular economy actually stands for a deep shift in how society is constructed, there is a need for a more in-depth analysis of the citizen's role which they find at this point as being too limited, since as it now merely "reinforces the social norms, expectations and roles ascribed to us all within the post-industrial, service and consumption-based capitalist economies of the Global North, and increasingly, the Global South" (ibid, 18).

**Webster's statement** "The circular economy does not have a political agenda or ideological bias" (Webster, 2015:122) confirm to some extent the assumed **depoliticisation of the citizen's role** brought up by Hobson and Lynch, since it appears that the circular economy discussion does not involve contradicting opinions or different ideas on how to obtain sustainability – it is described as neither political nor based upon ideology. The question is what effect the removal of the political aspect of the economy has on the political rights of citizens. Political influence is vital, and letting governments cooperate directly with business to facilitate a shift to a circular economy is, therefore, to be considered as inconsistent with how modern, progressive societies operate today. A circular economy is bringing up issues such as marketization, consumerism and industrial relations – the question is whether these issues can be discussed without politics.

### **4.3.3 A social dimension of circularity**

As mentioned in the introduction of the paper, the circular economy concept has been criticised for not fully embracing a sustainability approach, and this since the social dimension of sustainable development is not clearly articulated within this idea. However, as briefly noted in the same section, Skou Andersen (2007) emphasises that if the concept gets expanded, it can take on a broader sustainability approach and therefore embrace the social dimension as well.

Yong Geng and Brent Doberstein (2008) do this by looking at a circular economy as existing within three different circles. On the micro level, corporations lead the way through eco-design and cleaner productions. Through a second circle, the meso level, firms operate in networks in order to be able to use each other's industrial by-products and thus generate environmentally friendly synergies. However on a macro level, the third and last circle, they argue that the social dimension is present, and take form in eco-cities or eco-provinces, using China as an example. They illustrate this level by stating, "From a consumption viewpoint, the circular economy concept encourages the creation of a conservation-oriented society, seeking to reduce both total consumption and waste production. Both individuals and governments are encouraged to reduce the impacts of consumption, aiming to guide consumers away from wasteful forms of consumption in favour of energy preservation and environmental protection in their daily life"(Geng and Doberstein, 2008:234).

With this said, it is clear that the social dimension of a circular economy in Geng and Doberstein's view has a clear connection to social responsibility and seemingly less emphasis on social rights. Citizens are, as mentioned above, guided away from incorrect forms of consumption. To be guided into making certain choices can be associated with Éric Darier's study of Canada's Green Plan (1996), by which he means that the government makes an attempt to create an environmental citizenry. To Darier, the government aims at disciplining the population through this publication, and by doing this transforming the same into an environmental one. In conclusion, Darier points to the fact that the Green Plan, through the construction of an environmental citizenship, aims at a sort of environmental normalisation of the population.

Hobson and Lynch (2016) underline the lack of social implications of a circular economy and therefore explore a circular economy agenda that to some extent tries to embed these issues within the concept. The sharing economy is brought up as an example of how social cohesion could be improved within the framework of a circular economy. However, Hobson and Lynch highlight

how services that are aiming at enabling consumers to for example trade or lease products might just be another way to monetize sharing, which leads the authors to what they refer to as a post-capitalist perspective. Circularities in this point of view could to Hobson and Lynch be embodied of not necessarily monetized exchange, but perhaps the exchange of skills or knowledge. Webster (2015) means that the sharing economy can contribute to a “revival in a new guise of the social capital building of neighbourhood and community”(Webster, 2015:137). Andrew Dobson’s (2003) post-cosmopolitan citizenship seeks to specifically engage the community of citizens for them to act sustainable, underlining that it is in this case not the morality of citizens that is in focus, but the relationship between individuals in a society, which can be related to social capital as well.

Webster describes, “One of the objectives of a circular economy is to preserve the quality, performance and value of the existing stock, **wealth and welfare**”. The **stock**, in this case, is related to for example people’s education and skills and culture. To Webster, this makes caring an important characteristic of a circular economy – “**caring for keeping up existing values and qualities**” (Webster, 2015:99f). Dobson’s post-cosmopolitan citizenship also brings up caring as a virtue, meaning that previous literature on environmental citizenship shows “reluctance to entertain care and compassion as **potential citizenship virtues**” (Dobson, 2013:80). To Dobson, the liberal citizenship is virtue-free, the civic-republican one contains masculine virtue while his framework involves feminine virtue, embodied in the caring feature visible in his scholarship. Stating that a circular economy naturally involves caring as a virtue might be too radical – but aiming at preserving resources and products for as long as possible can still to some extent be related to caring.

#### **4.4 Analytical framework**

Below, the analytical framework consisting of T.H. Marshall’s citizenship concept with an integrated sustainability dimension in the form of circular economy is presented. This should be seen as an analytical lens that the previous theoretical discussion has led up to, and which should be guiding in the upcoming, second part of the paper focusing on empirical material in form of circular economy policies. By giving an account of this analytical lens, the aim is to give the reader the ability to assess the validity of the forthcoming analysis.

As for the civil rights of citizens, I argue that one a clear-cut characteristic of a circular economy paradigm affecting the citizenship concept is the one challenging ownership. Marshall's civil rights are to a large extent built on the right to ownership and the ability to go into contractual agreements, thus operate as an actor on a free market. A circular economy overturns the norm that owning should be a primary option to access functions and services. Civil action is another important dimension in Marshallian civil rights, however aiming at having an impact on the state is not articulated within a circular economy context – it is rather other market actors that one can imagine that civil action aims at affecting, and this towards getting more sustainable. Citizens' civil action seems to takes place mainly in the market sphere and this in the form of exercising consumer power.

When it comes to the political dimension of the Marshallian citizenship, the main contribution that I am adding through the analytical framework is that a circular economy and therefore to some extent also citizens are portrayed as apolitical. In this context, it is worth mentioning that there are scholars, such as Maurice Roche (1987), claiming that the very Marshallian citizenship concept is apolitical. He writes: “Marshall implies that citizenship is to be valued and its analysis is thus an exercise in normative theory to a certain extent. Nonetheless, writing in the early post-war period he assumes that there is a consensus about its value, as there is about the institutions that embody it - i.e., democracy, the rule of law, and the welfare state. Thus the concept for him is effectively apolitical.”(Roche, 1987:369). I argue that it should not be seen as extraneous that an extended citizenship, which takes sustainability into account, appears to assign an unclear political role of the citizen, and a depoliticisation of sustainability in general. Sustainability is an issue that it to a large extent seems to be a consensus around in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and going against this paradigm in the political context is for most parties in Europe today not an option – although the ways and means to obtain sustainability may vary.

In the section discussing the social dimension of a circular economy, the sharing economy is brought up as a potential articulation of this, and that one way of “socialising” the sharing economy would be to apply non-monetized transactions when it comes to the exchange of services. This can be seen as a revival of an economy in use for a very long time ago – when money did not have its obvious place in our everyday lives. Roche argues that within Marshall's social rights, it is implied that the growth of these generates social duties as well. Therefore he suggests that in a post-modern economy, where duties largely is related to work in order to contribute to the economy, the social duties might be interpreted as work taking on

two different dimensions; “(...) firstly, a compulsory ‘economic conditions’ element, i.e. an enforceable duty to share in work in organizations contributing to the national or regional economy and its infrastructure; secondly, a compulsory ‘social conditions’ element; an enforceable duty to share in work in local welfare organizations and local educational organizations.” (Roche, 1987:392). Taking in this statement, I argue that it is motivated to present the social rights dimension of a circular economy as containing citizens as consumers but at the same time claiming that in a circular economy, citizens would be open to exchange goods and services without necessarily paying each other in cash, but perhaps rather be sharing competencies. I also argue that a circular economy through these sharing services can make a case for community building where work is taking on the social conditions element as described by Roche.

Figure 1: Circular economy as an integrated sustainability dimension in the citizenship framework of T.H. Marshall

Civil dimension	Political dimension	Social dimension
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The right to access functions rather than to own property; usership instead of ownership</li> <li>- The citizen as a utility maximizing market actor</li> <li>- Citizens' action aiming at affecting business rather than government</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Different basis of ideology when addressing sustainability issues</li> <li>- Unclear political role of citizens</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sustainable consumers or users rather than citizens</li> <li>- Citizens as guided into making disciplined choices</li> <li>- Openness to non-monetized exchange</li> <li>- Circularity contributing to social capital building and the sense of community</li> <li>- Caring as a virtue</li> </ul>

Comment: This theoretical framework departs from the historical study of T.H. Marshall with the citizenship having three dimensions – the civil, political, and the social dimension.

Through a theoretical discussion including Marshall’s work, literature commenting this conceptualisation and literature on the circular economy, I propose this framework as a useful

tool for an empirical analysis of European circular economy policies.

## **5. Instances of Circular Economy Policies in Europe and the EU**

In this section, I will apply my developed theoretical framework on a number of empirical examples of circular economy policies in Europe. The civil, political and social dimensions of the citizenship concept will be related to the concept of a circular economy as described in these policies, and this in order to answer the second research question of this paper: *What relevance does a Marshallian citizenship reconceptualisation, taking circular economy into account, have for contemporary European circular economy policy processes?*

Each policy document is presented in its context, and relevant quotations from the publications follow thereafter. The quotations are all chosen due to its argued connection to the developed theoretical framework, and this in order to illustrate the framework and evaluate its usefulness and relevance. However, statements judged to have relevance to the development of the citizenship concept but not being specifically articulated in the developed framework are also put forward, and this since the paper (as mentioned in the methods section) should be seen as both theory-driven and data-driven. The content of the policies that is not possible to relate to the framework but to the citizenship concept is therefore also interesting here since the research question aims at not only illustrating the framework as an analytical tool but also to make a judgement of the relevance of it.

### **5.1 The voice of the European Commission**

Published in December 2015, the publication *Closing the loop – An EU action plan for the Circular Economy* aims at promoting the idea of transitioning into a more sustainable economy within the EU, inviting the European Parliament and the European Council to endorse by the European Commission proposed legislation on different wastes, which was published alongside with the action plan. These legislative proposals concern electrical and electronic waste, landfill, packaging waste and a directive regarding waste in general (European Commission, 2017).

One argument of the political dimension of a circular economy provided in the developed theoretical framework, meaning that it is apolitical as a concept and unbiased when it comes to ideology, fall rather short when it comes to relating them to this publication. The EU expresses for example that this economy will generate “sustainable competitive advantages for Europe”, “boost the EU’s competitiveness by protecting businesses against scarcity of resources” and creating new business opportunities (European Commission, 2015:2). A circular economy contains visibly an angle characterised by competition – that it is about strengthening the European economy, and that market-oriented policy with traditional capitalist reasoning is a first priority, which could be seen as an issue being shaped by politics. However, even if a circular economy as such is politicised in this context, the unclear political role of citizens is reinforced, and this through statements such as “Economic actors, such as business and consumers, are key in driving this process”, when it comes to circular economy transitioning (ibid). It seems that individuals in their role as economic actors have the ability to push the development forward, and not necessarily as political ones. This statement also amplifies the argument that citizens’ civil action within a circular economy is relegated to the market sphere, aiming at affecting business rather than public actors.

The European Commission expresses that although this action plan has an EU-level focus, “Making the circular economy a reality will however require long-term involvement at all levels, from Member States, regions and cities, to businesses and citizens” (ibid, 3). Citizens are thus taken into account in the advancement to circularity, even if their role outside the consumption sphere is not very well articulated. Nonetheless, citizens’ role within the consumption area has a clear emphasis, and this through statements such as:

The choices made by millions of consumers can *support* or *hamper* the circular economy (ibid, 6, my emphasis).

The European Commission also points to what can be stated as an important citizen right within a circular economy, namely the right to information about a product and with that the ability to differentiate one product from another – simply the issue of trust when entering contractual agreements. This is framed as important since the absence or even the overuse of different environmental labelling can result in a situation where “Green claims may not always meet legal requirements for reliability, accuracy and clarity” (ibid). Consumer protection as a civil right is visibly an important dimension in this context, reinforcing the theory about that there are consumers rather than citizens that are in focus in a circular

economy, giving consumer rights a leeway. This goes back to the statement of Hobson and Lynch in the theory-developing section of the paper that the role of the citizens is increasingly about their ability to “respond to correct labelling”, and can also be seen as a clear link to social responsibility.

With regard to the social dimension of a circular economy, it is mentioned in relation to reusing and repairing products that instead of wasting them when they are considered as worn-out, the European Commission means that “The reuse and repair sectors are labour-intensive and therefore contribute to the EU’s jobs and social agenda” (ibid, 7). The right to work in Marshall’s social citizenship can be linked to this statement. A circular economy is in this case about creating jobs not only to save resources but with a specific European social agenda aiming specifically at job creation. The sharing economy as a potential social dimension in a circular economy is also brought up, sharing products is however referred to as “innovative forms of consumption” and about “consuming services rather than products” (ibid), thus non-monetized exchange cannot be said to appear as an idea.

## 5.2 Greater Paris’s ambitions for a circular economy

*A White Paper on the Circular Economy of Greater Paris*, produced by Paris’s mayor, was published in 2015 and contains 65 proposals for a circular economy. This white paper is to be seen as “a first step in developing the Greater Paris region’s circular economy” (Mairie de Paris, 2015:8). In the editorial, statements by the mayor of Paris reinforce the argument that a circular economy should be seen as political, and this since the mayor’s perception of this economy seems to stem from a different ideological basis than the one of for example the EU. With regards to a circular economy, the mayor states:

It is an economy that encourages new forms of production and consumption, as well as sociability, sharing and democracy, as opposed to a short-term profit and consumerist diktat (ibid, 2015:3).

The mayor also states that in addition, “It is, necessarily, a social and solidarity economy” (ibid). The deputy mayor continues with “A model that is based on sharing rather than profit, collective intelligence rather than individual competition, recovery rather than waste: this is what Paris seeks in the circular economy”(ibid, 4) and “As we create the Greater Paris region, the circular economy will symbolize a collective and unifying political horizon” (ibid). It becomes thus clear that a circular economy can be framed in different ways depending on the messenger. Where the European Commission promotes

competition among market actors, the mayor of Paris stands behind a paradigm that rather wants to put forward an agenda characterised by anti-consumerism and collectivism.

Although economic arguments are included in this publication as well, the social dimension is more clearly stated in comparison with the EU-perspective, and envisaged in, for example, the idea of developing food aid distribution in order to reduce food waste, and through this be “promoting social and intergenerational diversity”. It is recognised that recipients of food aid might feel stigmatised because of their need for free food, and that this distribution therefore should “be combined with activities promoting social ties in order to meet one another and feel less shame and embarrassment (...)” (ibid, 47). This shows the relevance of the argument that a circular economy can contribute to social capital building and a sense of community, and this through welfare distributed to those citizens who seemingly do not get their rights met in a sufficient way from the traditional welfare system, which however in one way could contribute to a decreased sense of community among citizens. Interesting here would be to imagine a sharing economy on a partially voluntary basis, where citizens in need would benefit from others good will, or that non-monetary exchange of services would be an option. What is being referred to as a “social and solidarity economy” dimension within a circular economy is in this white paper something that can be achieved through for example office sharing – and this through the argument that:

Although costly and difficult to access, *land* nevertheless remains a key factor for circular economy players as a general rule and for social and solidarity economy bodies in particular “ (ibid, 25, my emphasis).

It seems that within this white paper, land as a resource is to be acknowledged as something shared and as an object for distribution on the basis of justice. Lastly, that citizens should possess proper information about products and be guided into making disciplined choices is articulated in the white paper as it is stated that “To inform consumers and steer them towards the ‘right products’, labels would have to be invented or re-invented, if not highlighted” (ibid, 30).

### 5.3 A nation-wide government programme for the Netherlands

The Dutch government presented in 2016 an extensive national programme aiming at the transition towards a sustainable society: *A Circular Economy in the Netherlands by 2050*. Quite early in this report, further statements reinforce the argument against the depoliticisation of sustainability as stated in the theoretical framework, although in a somewhat different way than what appeared in the EU action plan. The Dutch government provides namely a clear geopolitical dimension of a circular economy, and thereby the rights and responsibilities attached to it, and this under the headline “Dependency on other countries” (The Government of the Netherlands, 2016:9). Here, the Dutch government brings to the table the fact that the Dutch nation, and Europe as a whole, to a large extent is dependent on third countries to provide them with raw materials. As an example, it is stated that 90 % of critical raw materials needed in Europe has to be imported and this primarily from China. In relation to this, it is stated,

The relatively limited availability of these raw materials will lead to (more) geopolitical tensions. That, in turn, will impact on the price of raw materials and the security of supplies, and thus on the stability of the Dutch and European economies (ibid).

The Dutch government mentions thus several crucial political dimensions in connection to a circular economy: Geopolitics, resource security, price volatility and the desired stabilisation of EU economies. Interesting to note here is that the general idea of citizenship is to a large extent related to territorial limitations. It becomes thus pertinent to highlight the viewpoint of the Dutch government, that resources available in the own territory are scarce, and therefore the government as a rights provider towards its citizens might be challenged. However, in comparison with the white paper from the Greater Paris region, land and the resources that come with it appears in a different context. The term of a necessary “solidarity economy” used in the Parisian example is here replaced with a concern for resource security. The Dutch government expresses further that the transition to a circular economy can “make a significant contribution to the future earning capacity of the Netherlands and Europe”(ibid, 11).

A geopolitical dimension is thus clearly visible here, and when the Dutch government states that the Netherlands has a good starting point to make this transition it is also added that:

European cooperation can help us to capitalise on this leading position internationally (ibid).

For the Dutch government, it is thus vital to be a frontrunner in a circular economy development on a global scale for economic reasons.

Social rights, such as the right to work, are recognised by the Dutch government through the acknowledgement that there is a risk that a circular economy could lead to job losses, as it is stated that “it should be said that a circular economy would also lead to declines in some sectors: the closure of loops in industrial sectors could result in a decline in the waste-processing sector”(ibid, 12). This is in stark contrast to the other publications, where such statements are not explicitly visible. The Dutch government suggests also that there should be an internalisation of “social costs” in the prices of products. Its motivation is that “The benefits and costs for nature and the environment are not reflected or are insufficiently reflected in the price of a product” (ibid, 27). Harming nature and the environment is thus recognised as “social” effects.

The arguments that citizens’ duties in a circular economy would be to be guided into doing disciplined choices, and this as caring consumers, is well illustrated in this publication. “Consumers must exercise more care in the separate disposal of products (...), and “Consumers will regard the careful use of products and materials as a standard matter, in order to make a concrete contribution to the preservation of natural capital (...)”(ibid, 63). One can from these statements question whether or not citizens in their role as a consumer should care for their products for their own sake or for nature’s sake. With a third statement, it becomes clear that one aspect of caring for products is important also for the economy’s sake: “Citizens and companies bear an important responsibility for the responsible use of products and materials, and their high-grade return to the economy.” (ibid, 67). The aspect of caring is brought up in the sense that it is clear how a circular economy should serve not only the present population but also for generations to come, is visible: “The cabinet wants to outline a vision of a future-proof, sustainable economy for us and for future generations” (ibid, 5). It is stated by 2050, a circular economy “must be a reality” and

This will continue to give future generations access to *material prosperity* (ibid, 6, my emphasis).

Interesting in this context is how it is materialism that is put in focus – it is not the earth as a threatened environment that primarily is an object of concern, but the assurance for future generations to be able to enjoy the same living standard, materially speaking, as the population

living today is under the prevailing conditions. This goes to some extent back to the social dimension of Marshall's theory, where the right to welfare is articulated as being able to live under the prevailing conditions as "civilised beings".

As for a civil dimension, one of the obstacles of a circular economy as seen by the Dutch government is regulations:

The current regulations still insufficiently target the transition. This is because the focus is still too much aimed at countering the damaging effects of waste and emissions, and too little at utilising the value of raw materials (ibid, 17).

This could be interpreted as the Dutch government being willing to compromise on regulations aiming at protecting humans and the environment on at the expense of economic interest – giving up parts of social and civil rights in order to adapt regulations to support the economic system and thus the market.

The role of the state is articulated in the sense that it is described how the transition to a circular economy "requires a government that not only acts as a market regulator, but also – when necessary – acts as a director, steering the course and, as a network partner, showing its commitment and actively cooperating with various stakeholders in product value chains, in sectors and at various scale levels from the position of its own added value"(ibid, 18). It seems that a flexible state is of need in this context.

#### **5.4 The case of Germany**

Germany is an EU member state considered to be a pioneer when it comes to integrating the idea of a circular economy into national laws (Geissdoerfer et al, 2016). Germany can, therefore, be seen as one of the leading member states within the EU when it comes to regulations specifically aiming at a circular economy. One example of this is the *Circular Economy Act*, the version cited here from 2012, with the purpose to "promote circular economy in order to conserve natural resources and to ensure the protection of human health and the environment in the generation and management of waste" (The Federal Republic of Germany, 2012:4). It is explicitly stated that the "Circular economy within the meaning of this Act shall be the prevention and recovery

of waste” (ibid, 8). This document can, therefore, be said to differ from the other ones in this analysis: it is a legal text that focuses mainly on the waste management part of a circular economy.

In terms of responsibilities, this act makes proof of what can be referred to as a form of civic- corporate duties. “Parties who develop, manufacture, process, treat or sell products shall bear product responsibility with regard to the achievement of the objectives of circular economy” (ibid, 23). Product responsibility, in this case, comprises for example labelling of products containing pollutants, provision of information of whether or not the product could be re-used or returned to the producer after their use for its waste management (ibid). Manufacturers and distributors voluntarily accepting returned goods products and waste remaining after product use do this “in order to fulfil product responsibility obligations (...)”, while at the same time “such acceptance of returned waste promotes the aims of circular economy, and the environmentally compatible recovery or disposal of the waste is assured”(ibid, 26).

The notion of corporate responsibility in this document is reinforced through statements such as “Certified Waste Management Companies shall contribute towards the promotion of circular economy and the ensuring of the protection of human health and environment in the generation and management of waste in accordance with legal provisions applicable thereto”(ibid, 48).

There is also a dimension of public interest: “Waste shall be disposed in such a manner that the public interest is not impaired. An impairment shall be deemed to have occurred in particular if (...) public safety and public order are otherwise threatened or disturbed” (ibid, 17).

A democratic dimension is articulated in the sense that public participation is encouraged within the framework of waste management plans, and through the statement that the public should be informed of the process of producing such plans:

The competent authority shall permit the public to participate in the preparation or modification of waste management plans (...)” and “(...) the *Länder* shall inform the public of the state of waste management planning (...) the information shall contain a summary description and evaluation of the waste management plan, a comparison to the previous one, as well as a prognosis for the following information period (ibid, 30f).

As for the consumption phase of a circular economy, it is stated as an example of waste prevention measures that this could include “the use of awareness campaigns and information provision directed at the public or a specific set of consumers”(ibid, 63). Citizens can, therefore, be said to be framed as individuals in the need of guidance in order to make disciplined choices in this context.

## 5.5 Denmark – a white paper for a circular economy

In 2016, the Danish public-private partnership *State of Green* published the white paper *Circular economy – Denmark as a Circular Economy Solution Hub*. The partnership is a joint initiative including the Danish government, the Confederation of Danish Industry, the Danish Energy Association, the Danish Agriculture and Food Council, and the Danish Wind Industry Association, and is described as the “official green brand for Denmark”(State of Green, 2016:23). Since one of the partners behind this publication is a national industry confederation, there is also a strong corporate focus in this document.

Denmark’s Minister for the Environment and Food and the Minister for Business and Growth express that “the Danish government’s commitment to going green focuses on a balanced approach that considers both the environment as well as ensuring competitive conditions for growth and jobs”, which will be conducted through “a mix of business friendly policies and opening up markets for competition, all in a way that makes going circular a good business opportunity without huge public spending”(ibid, 7).

Depoliticisation is being reinforced in the sense that the Danish government seem to put the main responsibility of sustainable development in non-governmental, thus non-politically driven institutions:

The way to harvest the economic, social and environmental potentials of circular economy is to embrace the entrepreneurial, innovative and economic force of the private sector (ibid, 7).

The sharing economy as a fundamental pillar of a circular economy is present also in this policy document. It is stated that through the provision of services instead of products in this business model, businesses have the possibility to safeguard resources, in other words **retaining ownership of them**: “The companies do so because it saves materials and production costs, while the same time reducing their environmental impact”(ibid, 8). It is also recognised that “consumption patterns play an important role in

the transition to a circular economy. Without a demand from the customer, the companies cannot sell their solutions” (ibid, 12). Active citizens are thus demanded, but mainly in the shape of customers.

Regarding a civil dimension in this document, it is stated that “The circular economy is certainly a market-driven agenda, yet unleashing the full potential of circular economy principles requires close collaboration between public and private actors to create holistic solutions and to overcome legislative barriers”(ibid, 22). Putting this statement in relation to the civil dimension of citizenship, it becomes interesting to analyse how laws are given the attribute of being barriers. Laws are enacted for societal purposes, reducing them into becoming barriers that are standing in the market-driven agenda’s way potentially changes the relationship between the citizen and the law.

Internalisation of costs is also mentioned in the context of public procurement, but instead of costs for social effects as in the Dutch example, it is about taking also the end-of-life of products into account: an “(...) approach that can facilitate more circular procurement is using total cost of ownership as the basis for procurement decisions – i.e. not only considering the purchasing price, but also the operation, disposal costs and potential future use and value”(ibid, 12). This goes thus back to the idea provided by Sauvé et al. concerning internalisation of costs, that since environmental costs are public they need to be included in the price paid by the consumers, hence turning it into a private one.

## 5.6 Summary of findings

It is clear that throughout the analysis, dimensions related to the categories in the developed theoretical framework have been found, but also other dimensions which the framework did not take into consideration. There are also interesting statements within the material that can be related to the theory section, but did not end up being included in the original framework.

The depoliticisation of sustainability can, as a component within the framework, to a large extent be rejected. However, it seems like there is no uniform ideology standing behind statements with a clear political characteristic – they differ depending on the actor. One interesting dimension is a geopolitical one, which the original originally did not shed light on. I argue that the unclear political role of citizens can be confirmed, as citizens are mostly addressed as consumers in the material. Important to bring up is, however, that citizens are also portrayed as being able to act as active informed market agents using their consumer power in order to reject unsustainable business, which is possible to relate to both civil and

political action. In addition, the business sector is framed as having a large responsibility in the transition towards a circular economy, which I also argue enforces the unclear political role of citizens. There are also several statements supporting the argument of citizens in a circular economy being guided into making disciplined choices and being expected to care for resources, act primarily as market agents and prefer usership rather than ownership, which supports keeping these components in from the original framework.

The sharing economy as a component of a circular economy is framed in different ways in the material depending on the actor, but in some cases it is expected to act as a social capital builder and welfare provider, and at times as something that is not involving money transfer. Looking further into the social dimension, a circular economy as an engine for job creation is expressed, but also as a potential reason for jobs to disappear. In one example, the corporate duties in a circular economy is emphasised, and the concept of internalisation of costs in the prices paid by the consumer in order to take environmental costs into account are present in several examples, and also mentioned in the theory part of the paper. There were also several indications of actors referring to regulations as barriers in the transition to a circular economy, which makes a case for including this in the civil dimension of the framework. Below, a revised framework, taking the findings of the analysis into account, is presented.

Figure 2: The theoretical framework revisited

Civil dimension	Political dimension	Social dimension
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The right to access functions rather than to own property; usership instead of ownership</li> <li>- The citizen as a utility maximizing market actor</li> <li>- Citizens' action aiming at affecting business rather than government</li> <li>- <i>Regulations as barriers</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Different basis of ideology when addressing sustainability issues</li> <li>- Unclear political role of citizens</li> <li>- <i>Consumer power as a political tool</i></li> <li>- <i>Geopolitical dimension in the sense that the state might be threatened in its role as a rights-provider</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sustainable consumers or users rather than citizens</li> <li>- Citizens as guided into making disciplined choices</li> <li>- Openness to non-monetized exchange</li> <li>- Circularity contributing to social capital building and the sense of community</li> <li>- Caring as a virtue</li> <li>- <i>A circular economy as a reason for job losses but also for job creation</i></li> </ul>

Comment: The revised framework of Marshall's citizenship concept, with the circular economy as an integrated sustainability dimension, should be seen as a result both of the theoretical discussion in the theory section and the empirical analysis, and this in the sense that this version is taking also the results of the empirical analysis into account. The new dimensions that the empirical material itself provided are marked in italics.

## 6. Conclusion

In this final section, I will provide a conclusion of the analysis. The relevance of the theoretical framework will be further discussed, and the aspects related to the research questions that were provided by the data itself. Ideas for further research will also be presented.

### 6.1 A solution to resource scarcity – the geopolitical aspect

One aspect of a circular economy that the theoretical discussion did not shed light on, and therefore was not included in the developed framework, concerns geopolitics and resource scarcity. Both the European Commission's and the Dutch government's programmes present information that supports the inclusion of such a dimension in this paper. These actors provide arguments related to competitiveness for business

and limit the expected benefits of a circular economy to concern a specific territory – Europe – and not the earth as a whole. The vulnerability of the territory that is Europe appears – its governments seem to be, in this age, depending on other players on the global scene when it comes to assuring access to for example virgin resources, which in turn enables them to cater to citizens' needs and therefore rights.

What is at risk here is Europe's ability to emerge as an economic power, and its ability to assure its citizens that they will be able to live under decent conditions within a specific territory – the responsibility of a right's provider that is a state. It is thus about promoting competition in a capitalist system where the EU as a political body and the member states as entities of this body need to be frontrunners and also capitalise on this position, with the stabilisation of EU member states' economies as one important aim in a circular economy context. The access to resources is in the Dutch programme also a potential object for conflict and global tensions. Another view, which is provided by Paris, is looking at land as a factor for solidarity. The aspect of time is worth bringing up in this context – the Dutch government brings to the table that a sustainable economy does not only serve the current population but also for generations to come. In 2050, the year in which the Dutch government hopes to have achieved the transition to a circular economy, the population will be able to enjoy at least the same material prosperity as the people living under the current conditions. This is related to the social rights of Marshall and makes a case for a circular economy that also is responsible for the future, but with an emphasis on economic sustainability.

## **6.2 Internalisation of costs**

The idea of internalising what is described as social and environmental costs in the documents challenges the traditional idea of demand and supply in a market economy. This was mentioned in the theory section of the paper, but not included in the framework – however, several times mentioned in the empirical material. The rethinking of prices calculated through the mechanisms of supply and demand into covering costs not directly linked to the purchasing price creates a situation where someone has to pay this extra amount – a public cost becomes a private one, which can be seen as a responsibility shift. This relates to Sauvé et al. who state that such an internalisation is about consumers paying a price for products that are set to also include costs related to environmental and health issues.

### 6.3 Citizen-consumers' civil rights and responsibilities

Within the theory section of the paper, one critique towards the concept of a circular economy that was presented regarded that the environmentally friendly choices offered to citizens from such a policy might just be another policy initiative where the expectations merely lie in the **citizens'** correspondence to labelling of products. Labelling is something that in many ways should be looked at as the responsibility of the state since there is a need for a neutral actor to make a judgement concerning the degree of environmental friendliness of products and their concrete impact of the surroundings. In a democratic society, this cannot take place merely in a relation between the consumer and the producer, and this because of the vested interest of making a profit within the business sector.

It seems that consumer rights, which can be placed in a context of civil rights, are one of the main benefits provided by a circular economy towards citizens. Citizens are seen as having the right to information in order to make informed choices as market agents. In line with the Marshallian civil rights focusing on the right to buy and own property and this in order to maintain a market economy, the civil consumer rights in a circular economy are needed for the same reason. The empirical analysis can be said to confirm the inclusion of the theoretical framework's dimension that within a circular economy, citizens act first and foremost as consumers and their civil action is first and foremost about affecting economic actors, and not primarily political ones, exercised through the use of consumer power.

These consumer rights are then expected to affect individuals to endorse certain responsibilities. It is as economic actors using their consumer power that citizens are taken into account as key drivers towards sustainable development, and are expected to affect other actors, mainly the business sector in their action of choosing some products and therefore business models while rejecting others. **This becomes from one perspective the citizens' political action of a circular economy.** In the eyes of the EU, this is not a detail but rather what could determine if a circular economy actually is possible or merely a utopia. The aspect of caring for different reasons, such as for the sake of preserving natural capital and therefore the prosperity of the economy, is visible in the documents. This is also true for the issue of being guided towards the right products. As an

example, in the German document, it is clearly stated that awareness campaigns and information provision are key in preventing waste, making the transition to a circular economy facilitated.

The tendency to see the legislation as a barrier and not contributing to the transition to a circular economy is shown in the Dutch programme and repeated in the Danish document. In the Dutch example, regulations are seen as focusing too much on the dangers of the generation of waste and emissions, which can be seen as a part of promoting civil and social rights, which then are not letting regulations aiming at preserving resources' valuableness come onto the legislative agenda, which is more related to the upholding of an economic scheme. Among environmental frontrunners in the international community today, there has for long been a priority to limit for example emissions through legislation. How would a new legislative agenda, seeking rather the best for the economy than the best for the environment, be developed in international forums?

#### **6.4 A collectivist or an individualist approach on social rights?**

One aspect of the social rights as presented by T.H. Marshall that was introduced in the theory section of the paper involved the question of whether these rights should be seen as collectivist or individualist rights. Connell (2012) means, as stated in the theory section, that they are of an individualistic art, and this since they are formed to meet needs of particular citizens. Since these needs vary the social rights provided to each citizen follow this variation and thus are not the same for everyone. This approach can be applied to the social dimension of a circular economy as well.

This is visible for example within the scope of the sharing economy, which within the document appears in different forms and as having different objectives. The EU is referring to the sharing economy as a new and innovative form of consumption, which is difficult to relate at all to a collectivist approach, and is not affiliated with social issues. Sociability and sharing are, however, seen as compatible in the document from the Greater Paris region, where a circular economy is presented as a model that instead of individual competition aims at collective intelligence, which can be said to support a collectivist approach to a circular economy and therefore also the social rights that it might come to offer. Food aid as a social activity is presented in relation to a sharing economy and is seen as an engine of social and intergenerational diversity, but also recognised as a possible reason for a sentiment of stigmatisation. The sharing economy can thus be seen as a

complex issue around which there is no clear definition. These activities are presented as civil action, and with that it can be said that the state as a social right's provider is taking a step back – where the welfare state has failed to live up to expectations of basic needs, civil society steps in and this to provide aid to individuals, not the collective. In the same way that the theory section presented Roche's argument that the Marshallian social rights also include duties, it seems that the sharing economy could be a platform for the exercise of both duties and rights.

One argument for looking at social rights, and in particular the right to work, as collective rights is that fact that the EU is referring to its European social agenda that aims at job creation in the context of a circular economy, meaning that the reuse and repair sectors are potential categories for the EU to work with in order to create jobs. The Dutch government recognising that a circular economy might lead to job losses also shows an awareness of the right to work as a social issue related to collectiveness.

## 6.5 The question of (de)political rights

The part of the developed framework putting forward a presumed depoliticisation of sustainability in the form of a circular economy and an unclear of the political role of citizens can, after an empirical evaluation, partially be rejected but also to some extent be confirmed. There are statements of different ideological basis presented in the chosen documents that can be viewed as for example neoliberalism and socialism. As an example, in the Parisian document, there is a support for an anti-capitalist agenda; a claim supported by the fact that the mayor expresses that there is a need to end short-term profit and work against the consumerist paradigm. It is thus very problematic to state that there is no ideological bias nor political agenda attached to a circular economy – there is indeed, but at the same time, such an agenda seems to stem from different ideologies and not from a uniform one.

Citizens' political participation is, however, not very clearly expressed in the material. Germany can be seen as an exception expressing the need for public consultations for waste management plans – a concrete sign of wanting political participation from the citizens' side in an issue related to the idea of a circular economy. Citizens' political participation and thus the exercise of

political rights are beside from this example not clearly stated in the different documents. Especially in the Danish example, it becomes clear that the participation of first and foremost the business sector is expected in the development process of a circular economy, where private actors are expected to be key drivers in accumulating the potentials of this economy - whether it is about economic, social or environmental issues. It is interesting to see this in the light of the Marshallian theory where the political rights are seen as a potential threat to the capitalist economic system. Does this mean that political rights on the citizen level are to be re-evaluated? Are political rights unnecessary or actually standing in the way for a circular economy that makes the perfect case for combining sustainable development with economic growth that at the same time do not aim at changing the prevailing EU capitalist economic system in its core?

The empirical analysis shows, however, that through the usage of different ideologies, a circular economy offers a certain differentiation within its politics. Applying circular economy principles to societal functions and businesses can on the grounds of different opinions be framed in a way that makes citizens aware of political actors' objectives, meaning that their role is not totally impoverished in the way that Hobson and Lynch (2016) described in the theory section, and this in a presumed scenario where citizens are mostly expected to adapt to norms stemming from the "post-industrial, service and consumption-based capitalist economies" (ibid, 18) and perhaps then not be encouraged to political participation.

## **6.6 Sustainable capitalism in the making**

I argue that for sustainable growth to be democratic it needs development. A circular economy is, to a large extent, about how to cope with negative effects of capitalism, and might therefore be one step out of several in such a development. In the presentation of the Marshallian line of thought in this paper, Roche put forward the argument concerning Marshall's view of the citizenship as being apolitical. In the same way that Roche maintains that Marshall presumes during the time of his work a consensus around the value of the citizenship, the rule of law and the welfare state, I argue that there seems to be a consensus concerning sustainable development and circular economy. Important to note, however, is that the goals and means for obtaining this type of economy seem to vary. Perhaps it is at times where there seems to be consensus around a political issue that the public debate is especially needed and makes the most difference in the development of policies and government programmes.

I posed the question in the introduction of the paper how a citizenship of a circular economy would look like. I also posed the question whether or not a circular economy can expand this theory. What I have shown in the paper is that there is indeed room for an expansion of the citizenship concept in the context of a circular economy. Under the presumption of a circular economy, **Marshall's civil rights citizenship** dimension needs to take into account that citizens are expected to make informed choices with regard to resource efficiency as market agents and to be open to alternatives to owning their own property, and this under regulations that are expected to promote the preservation of resources' value. **Marshall's political dimension of the citizenship** gets a geopolitical aspect in a circular economy in the sense that resource security becomes accurate. I argue that the political role of the citizen in a circular economy context needs to be further investigated in order for it to be possible to draw conclusions on this matter; however, there are agendas from different ideologies presented in relation to a circular economy. This enables political awareness among the citizens, and political action may, for example, be promoted in a discussion of consumer power. I argue that whether or not **Marshall's social dimension of the citizenship** in a circular economy has an individualistic or collectivistic view on social rights is dependent of the actor presenting the arguments for transitioning into such an economy, in which the sharing economy is a potential platform for social capital building and the exercise of social duties. Other social issues such as job creation but also job loss due to the transition to a circular economy become also pertinent in relation to the citizenship concept.

As for the relevance of the framework, I have in this conclusive section partially confirmed its usefulness in the analysis of citizenship in a circular economy, but also tried to show the gaps in it that the empirical material itself gave proof of, especially with regards to the geopolitical dimension and the different ideologies that seem to underpin the circular economy concept.

## **6.7 Suggestions for further research and final remarks**

I have two main ideas for further research related to this field of a circular economy transition. One idea for further research is to dig deeper into the ideological differentiations of implementing circular economy strategies. Are the measures proposed by different actors framed as having the same political agenda attached to them, and how are party politics playing a part in

the presentation of a circular economy? Another path possible for further research within this field is to look even more into resource scarcity and the geopolitics of a circular economy. How are actors, perhaps specifically in Europe where a circular economy is high on the political agenda **not least from the EU's side**, expressing their views and interests within the question of transitioning into a circular economy, are they doing this with concern for the planet or primarily their own local surrounding? How is the dependency on other regions put forward, is it put forward at all?

Finally, as a closing remark, I would like to highlight that perhaps Bell's (2005:183) statement "the world is still made of property" in relation to Marshall's citizenship theory and Bells claim of its lack of environmental awareness, to a certain extent remains valid in an expanded citizenship concept that takes s a circular economy. However, property should perhaps be replaced with resources. The world is still made of resources, and within a paradigm of sustainable growth based on capitalism, growth seems to be the necessity when perhaps the sustainability aspect of it should be emphasised instead if such a paradigm are to be fully endorsed by society. Bell's view of liberal environmental citizens not necessarily being "Greens" (ibid, 190) is also accurate here. Citizens in a circular economy are not expected to be environmentally friendly in the way that they are primarily looking after the landscapes in order to preserve them as a physical environment in which they are living, but to act in a way, mostly within the consumption sphere and in line with the preconditions set by the capitalist system, that is following a resource efficient logic that enables sustainable growth. A society of infinite growth, is it possible? If so, who does it serve?

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