

## Abstract

This thesis is about post-growth economic concepts and their relation to foodsharing initiatives. It links together the similarities that can be found between both the post-growth movement and the foodsharing movement, in terms of goals, values and strategies. The role that the agriculture and food sector play within the discourse around sustainability and the post-growth concept is shown to be important, which is why foodsharing initiatives are of interest to be examined in this regard. The thesis is comprised of the theoretical background of the issues and concerns leading to the formation of the above-mentioned movements, an introduction of the cases and the applied methodology, the findings and discussion section, as well as a conclusion. Using qualitative research methods, three initiatives from Stuttgart, Germany, are looked at in the case study. In-depth interviewing was used to collect data from each of the initiatives, which represent three different types of applied foodsharing. The data is then analyzed to find out for one, how these initiatives implement the strategies that strive for societal change, and second, if this contributes to the foundations of a post-growth economy by strengthening the principles and the concepts found in its theory. The findings suggest that each initiative has a slightly different focus, or emphasis, and thus they complement each other. As stated in the theoretical sections, both movements tend to have a heterogenous nature and do not strive towards one specific solution to fit all. The importance hereby is not to have a fixed solution, but to open up spaces for change, experimentation, and alternative styles of living. The thesis found this to be represented in the case studies. The initiatives contribute to social change by educating the public on the topic of food waste, its underlying causes related to overproduction. Additionally they strengthen communities, the culture of sharing and sustainability and focus on concepts entailing solidarity and low levels of hierarchy. They enable individuals to become active and participate more easily, while fostering experience-based knowledge. Many of their values and aims are similar to the post-growth goals and mindsets. Especially the focus on valuing resources and using what has already been produced is a shared perspective, that foodsharing initiatives help to establish in the society. The five areas of sufficiency, subsistence, regional economy, industry change and institutional measures are important in post-growth approaches and are all categories in which effects of foodsharing initiatives can be seen. Thus, foodsharing initiatives influence positive changes which have the potential to strengthen the foundations of a post-growth economy and are necessary for a benign transition to be possible.