

Table of Contents

List of Abbreviations	XI
List of Figures	XIII
List of Tables	XV
1 Introduction	1
1.1 Relevance of Circular Economy	2
1.2 Research Questions, Scope and Contribution	3
1.3 Structure of this Thesis	4
2 Theoretical Foundations	7
2.1 Roots of Sustainable Development	8
2.2 Resource Management and Sustainable Development	10
2.2.1 Sustainable Development, Sustainable Innovation and the Role of Circular Economy	11
2.2.2 Sustainability as Limit to Growth?	13
2.3 Circular Economy	15
2.3.1 Circular Economy in the Context of other New Economy Models	16
2.3.2 Fundamentals of Circular Economy	18
2.3.3 Circular Economy as Economic Strategy – Reasons to engage in Circular Economy	22
2.3.5 Demarcation to Post-Growth Economics	29
2.3.6 Circular Economy in China	30
2.3.7 Conceptual Framework for this Thesis	34

3	Research Method	39
3.1	Research Design	39
3.1.1	Reasons for choosing a Qualitative Research Approach	39
3.1.2	Quality Criteria in Qualitative Research	40
3.2	Multiple Case Study Approach	42
3.2.1	Design	43
3.2.2	Data Collection	46
3.2.3	Case Analysis	48
3.2.4	Conclusions	50
4	Case Description and Within-Case Analysis	51
4.1	Definition and Operationalization of Parameters	51
4.1.1	Framework for Description of Circular Economy Implementation	52
4.1.2	Further Parameters used for the Description of the Cases	53
4.2	Background Information on the Cases and Case Order	53
4.3	Case Alpha	55
4.3.1	The Company's Circular Economy Approach	55
4.3.2	Motivation to engage in Circular Economy	58
4.3.3	Challenges for the Implementation	58
4.3.4	Economic Impacts	59
4.4	Case Beta	60
4.4.1	The Company's Circular Economy Approach	60
4.4.2	Motivation to engage in Circular Economy	62
4.4.3	Challenges for the Implementation	63
4.4.4	Economic Impacts	63
4.5	Case Gamma	65
4.5.1	The Company's Circular Economy Approach	65
4.5.2	Motivation to engage in Circular Economy	67
4.5.3	Challenges for the Implementation	69
4.5.4	Economic Impacts	70
4.6	Case Delta	71
4.6.1	The Company's Circular Economy Approach	71
4.6.2	Motivation to engage in Circular Economy	73
4.6.3	Challenges for the Implementation	74
4.6.4	Economic Impacts	75
4.7	Case Epsilon	76
4.7.1	The Company's Circular Economy Approach	76
4.7.2	Motivation to engage in Circular Economy	77

4.7.3	Challenges for the Implementation	78
4.7.4	Economic Impacts	79
4.8	Case Zeta	80
4.8.1	The Company's Circular Economy Approach	80
4.8.2	Motivation to engage in Circular Economy	82
4.8.3	Challenges for the Implementation	83
4.8.4	Economic Impacts	84
4.9	Case Eta	85
4.9.1	The Company's Circular Economy Approach	85
4.9.2	Motivation to engage in Circular Economy	87
4.9.3	Challenges for the Implementation	87
4.9.3	Economic Impacts	88
4.10	Case Theta	89
4.10.1	The Company's Circular Economy Approach	89
4.10.2	Motivation to engage in Circular Economy	90
4.10.3	Challenges for the Implementation	91
4.10.4	Economic Impacts	91
4.11	Case Iota	92
4.11.1	The Company's Circular Economy Approach	92
4.11.2	Motivation to engage in Circular Economy	93
4.11.3	Challenges for the Implementation	94
4.11.4	Economic Impacts	95
5	Result of Analysis and Interpretations	97
5.1	Implementation of the Circular Economy Concept	97
5.1.1	Multiple Possibilities for Implementation	97
5.1.2	Motives to engage in Circular Economy	100
5.2	Impacts of Circular Economy Implementation on Organizations	102
5.2.1	Monetary Aspects of Circular Economy	103
5.2.2	Non-Monetary Aspects of Circular Economy	108
5.2.3	Discussion on Impacts of Circular Economy	113
5.3	Practical Challenges for Realizing Benefits in a Circular Economy	114
5.3.1	Nascent Stage of Concept	114
5.3.2	Lacking Coordination of Concept Implementation	118
5.3.3	Increased Entrepreneurial Efforts	121

6	Summary and Implications	125
6.1	Summary of Results	125
6.2	Implications for Research	130
6.3	Implications for Management	131
7	Conclusion	135
7.1	Critical View on Circular Economy	135
7.2	Limitations and Opportunities for Future Research	137
8	Appendix	141
8.1	Semi-structured Interview Guideline in German	141
8.2	Quotations: Original German Quote and English Translation	144
	References	159