Kincentric Economies: A Review of Post-Growth Pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Decolonisation

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I hereby declare that, except where it is otherwise acknowledged in the text, this thesis represents my own original work. All versions of the submitted thesis (regardless of submission type) are identical. This thesis did not require human research ethics approval.

Sophia Hamilton

18 August 2025

the hegemony of capitalism

of colonialism

works to frame alternatives

as a utopian farce

but is it not better

to imagine

to dream

to work

for a world in which

an implied dystopia

is a relic

and not a reality?[1]

[1] This is an original poem, included to introduce the conceptual framing of this thesis.

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Abstract

In Australia, capitalism and colonialism are inextricably linked — working to justify and reinforce each other through their ever-increasing imposition on resources and attempted erasure of diverse value systems and peoples. In light of this, anti-capitalist movements like post-growth are increasingly aligning with anticolonial movements across the world. However, such synergies are yet to be substantively analysed in the Australian context — a nation reliant on extractivism, geographically vulnerable to environmental crises, and without a treaty with its Indigenous peoples. In the interest of forming broad coalitions to support the widespread transformations necessary for social justice and ecological sustainability, it thus becomes salient to question the convergences and divergences of post-growth and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander decolonisation ideals, as well as how policies can support decolonial, post-growth economies in this context. To address these questions, this research utilised a qualitative systematic review of real-world, post-growth-based initiatives from across the world. These initiatives were then thematically analysed in relation to decolonisation principles from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander scholarship.

In the review, eight overlapping themes between post-growth and decolonisation were made visible: restructuring, resistance, recognition, recentring, redress, relationality, responsibility, and revitalisation. By identifying points of alignment and conflict within these domains, this research offers practical insights to guide more socio-ecologically ambitious policies in the Australian settler-colonial

context. In particular, an analysis of how more decolonial and Indigenist themes are made subsidiary or sidelined in post-growth literature guides the conceptual proposal for ‘kincentric economies’. That is, the restoration of economies that prioritise the holistic wellbeing of and reciprocity between Country and kin over neoclassical pursuits of growth, and work to undo the systemic subjugation of Indigenous peoples, ontologies, and epistemologies. Through this, imaginations of a sustainable, just society can be unchained from the grips of both capitalism and colonialism.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background and Context

As an inescapable facet of life in Australia and elsewhere, it is foremost necessary to situate this thesis within a critique of growthism – the belief that it is both possible and desirable for economies to indefinitely expand (Douglas 2007). With ever-increasing public interest in the environmental impacts of such expansion, growthism is now predominantly upheld by trust in green growth, wherein economic growth is decoupled from environmental impacts (Hickel and Hallegatte 2021). However, critics of this narrative largely agree that to ensure the ecological viability of green growth and related technologies, decoupling must be absolute. That is, economic growth should increase whilst environmental impacts necessarily decrease (Mauerhofer 2013). By these metrics, decoupling rates have thus far been wildly insufficient (Mauerhofer 2013; Hickel and Kallis 2020; Cuny and Parrique 2023). Even country-level cases purported as panaceas of evidence for the future feasibility of decoupling, like Denmark and other Nordic countries, lack both empirical evidence and internationally reproducible results (Tilsted et al. 2021).

Despite this, development paradigms continue to centre growth – controversially framing it as essential to human satisfaction and the provision of needs (Infante-Amate et al. 2024; Hickel and Kallis 2020), particularly as ageing populations begin to slow down economies (Kotschy and Bloom 2023). The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the current cornerstone of development

initiatives across the globe, highlight this tension best. In particular, SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth) is juxtaposed with and may inadvertently hinder the attainment of a significant number of other SDGs (Hickel 2019a; Kreinin and Aigner 2022). Evidence suggests that growth is directly incompatible with goals for reduced inequality, sustainable cities and communities, responsible consumption and production, climate action, life below water, and life on land (Hickel 2019a). The climate-related impacts of growth further undermine all SDGs except for partnership for the goals (Nerini et al. 2019). It can be reasonably assumed that the United Nations and wider international community would deny any such contradiction because of SDG 9 (industry, *innovation*, and infrastructure). However, considering even the world's most ambitious advancements are currently unfeasible (Hickel 2020; Saito 2024), this SDG only emphasises the omnipresence of unfounded faith in green technology, green growth, and decoupling – perpetuating a lack of meaningful climate action in an ecological emergency (Lim et al. 2018).

It would thus be ironic if not so concerning that key targets for growth-based initiatives – groups identified as 'developing', 'Global South', or otherwise disadvantaged – face the brunt of the socio-ecological impacts of excessive growth. For example, on a global scale, nations with the least impact on climate change are some of the most vulnerable to increasingly severe weather events, rising sea levels, food and water insecurity, and environmental displacement (Nath and Behera 2011). In settler-colonial societies, similar distributive and

environmental injustices exist for Indigenous communities who already face socioeconomic marginalisation and whose homelands, livelihood practices, and cultural identities are closely tied to the health of their environments (Thomas et al. 2018). While much of the literature on these injustices centres rural and remote communities, it must be noted that Indigenous peoples in urban regions also face 'culturally mediated effects of climate change that need specific attention' (Nursey-Bray et al. 2022:10). The significance of these impacts, not simply on rural and remote communities but distinctly racialised communities, suggest that ecological crises arising from the pursuit of perpetual growth are a form of cultural genocide – if not in law, at least in spirit (Williams 2012; Crook 2024).

Though a naturally confronting label, this claim of cultural genocide is strengthened by the intertwined histories of growthism and colonisation in Australia – the only Commonwealth nation without a treaty with the traditional custodians of its[2] land (Williams 2014). Here, the first dispossession of Indigenous lands was fuelled by a desire to relieve British prisons of excess populations, most of whom were sentenced to deportation for petty crimes against property – the theft of food and clothes in an unforgiving socioeconomic system (Crook 2024). Following the establishment of penal colonies, the capitalist mode of production made settlers structurally dependent on the continual expropriation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lands and labour (Crook and Short 2019). Genocide is

[2] 'Its' is used here simply for lack of a better term and is not intended to convey any entitlement of the settler state to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lands.

inextricable from this, as the systematic destruction of Indigenous peoples and ways of life worked to reinforce white settlers' sovereignty over the land and thus, their economic prosperity (Crook 2024). Even efforts towards political independence from Britain have been attributed to the pursuit of greater capitalist expansion, as opposed to an inherent desire for self-government (McMichael 1980), further clarifying the role of growthism in this period.

More contemporarily, growthism remains a notable element of Australian settler-colonialism in three ways. Firstly, the Australian economy's reliance on fossil fuel projects drives and often coerces the ongoing destruction of Indigenous lands and waters (Crook 2024). Secondly, the commodification of basic human needs like housing and healthcare ties Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to the time-intensive Western labourforce, thereby restricting their socioeconomic agency (Fiedler 2018). Thirdly, growthism assigns a subjective moral value to economic participation, while obscuring its own structural violence and exclusionary propensity, thus falsely portraying a lack of Indigenous economic participation as the result of a deficit in Indigenous peoples (Fiedler 2018). These points are not highlighted to simplify Australia's settler-colonialism. Rather, this argument intends to illuminate the complexity of growth and contest assumptions of its inherent utility, particularly in an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander context.

1.2. Research 'Problem' and Significance

There are distinct narratives dominating conversations about how to best empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples[3]. Particularly at the economic level, these narratives centre capitalism (see Section 2.4) – an inherently eurocentric and extractive socioeconomic system that thrives on otherwise unnecessary divisions between classes, races, and human-environment relationships (Hornborg 2013; Fiedler 2018). As such, the hegemony of capitalism must be problematised in terms of its subjugation of marginalised groups, ecological unsustainability, and the intersections of these issues. In turn, alternatives to growth must be considered, particularly for any unique abilities to support decolonisation efforts. Here, post-growth becomes salient for its intentional focus on social justice and ecological sustainability. However, this area of research is notably critiqued as eurocentric (Muradian 2019) and currently has limited substantive inquiry into how the systems change this movement seeks may support communities beyond its normative gaze. It has also been previously argued within post-growth research that the level of transformation required to achieve socially just and ecologically sustainable societies can be supported through analysing discursive synergies between movements with similar yet distinct values. This is said to mitigate each one's 'Achilles heel' and enable broader coalitions for change (Beling et al. 2018:308).

[3] As a non-Indigenous researcher, I am not necessarily privy to narratives discussed within communities, so this specifically refers to the dominance of narratives within the Western academic, policy, and political spheres. See Section 3.3 for more on researcher positionality.

In line with this recognition of the potential synergies of movements, there is some existing research on Indigenous engagement with post-growth and related initiatives (see Section 2.3). Likewise, the potential decolonising impact of post-growth is already being addressed both broadly and through specific case studies, especially in Latin America (see Sections 2.2-2.3). However, this area of research remains unexplored in an Australian academic context. In March 2025, Scopus and Web of Science queries on Indigenous or decolonial post-growth in Australia returned only one result[4]. In the same month, even queries on broader post-growth in Australia were limited, with no more than fifteen relevant documents found between these two major databases[5]. This research therefore holds significance in two related ways. Firstly, it contributes to the diversification of post-growth literature. As opposed to assuming the universality of decolonial post-growth scholarship for all Indigenous communities, this research utilises a unique scope to amplify the nuances in how post-growth relates to and must be flexible to accommodate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander contexts. Secondly, this thesis extends on existing decolonisation literature. By focusing on the potentials of anti-capitalism in decolonisation and analysing real-world alternatives to capitalism, this thesis challenges the dominance of the Australian settler-colonial socioeconomic system and examines underexplored pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sovereignty.

[4] The search strings used keywords including: ("post-growth" OR “postgrowth” OR "degrowth" OR “de-growth”) AND ("Indigenous" OR "Aboriginal" OR "Torres Strait Islander" OR "First Nations") AND ("Australia").

[5] The search strings used keywords including: ("post-growth" OR “postgrowth” OR "degrowth" OR “de-growth”) AND (“Australia”).

While this novelty may normatively illustrate a 'gap' in academic literature, this is not necessarily reflective of a gap in knowledge. Particularly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, knowledge exists well beyond the confines and exclusionary propensity of Western academia – in stories, yarns, and even silences themselves. As Tynan and Bishop (2023:501), from Tebrakunna Country and Gamilaroi Country, respectively, explain, "gaps imply that something is devoid, not full, in need of filling…silences are often used purposefully as a form of discourse in many Aboriginal communities; they encourage listeners to reflect on key messages, connect with Country and Peoples around them, and contemplate more deeply." In following this perspective, the research 'problem' and significance identified here may be better described as an opportunity to reflect on existing literature – not to fill gaps or establish authority, but to continue applying the platform of knowledge built by many scholars before me and hopefully support the work of those who follow after me.

1.3. Research Aims and Questions

In post-growth literature, a recurring aim is the decolonisation of the imaginary, which refers to the dissolution of economic growth's preeminence to make space for alternative realities (Latouche 2009). The present research recognises not just the need to decolonise thought from the shackles of capitalism, but also from the eurocentric interests, ontologies, and axiologies underpinning capitalism across the world. Here, even in the face of critical social-ecological crises directly attributable to the endless pursuit of growth, as well as the systemic

marginalisation of communities both locally and globally to sustain this economic system, ‘it is easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism’ (Jameson 2003). As such, where both capitalism and settler-colonialism have become so pervasive as to be almost invisible to the uncritical eye, this thesis aims to make evident that existing realities are not natural or inevitable but man-made and malleable.

Critically, this thesis does not intend to be prescriptive as to the ‘right’ pathway towards decolonisation, which is ultimately subjective and certainly not the place of a settler to decide. Rather, in the absence of other such discourse and evidence, this work aims to widen, or at least refine, the pluriverse of avenues for economic and socio-cultural sovereignty within ecological limits. In doing so, this thesis aims to identify potential synergies and disconnections between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander decolonisation and worldwide post-growth practices, ultimately considering how these movements can amplify each other. This thesis therefore asks two research questions: (i) how do real-world post-growth initiatives align and/or conflict with key elements of decolonisation in an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander context?; and (ii) what principles can support policies and practices for decolonial post-growth economies in an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander context?

1.4. Thesis Structure

This thesis is organised in six sections, beginning with Section 1 to introduce the context, significance, aims, and questions of the research. Following this in Section 2 is a literature review, including on the two core theoretical frameworks underpinning this research (decolonisation and post-growth) and the two prominent contexts in which this thesis builds upon (Indigenous engagement with post-growth approaches to development and existing agendas for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander economic development). Section 3 details the methodological approach of this thesis. This includes a justification for and explanation of the systematic literature search and thematic analysis processes, as well as a discussion of the researcher's positionality and reflexivity.

The core of this thesis is Section 4 on the findings and analysis. This is organised into the eight core themes identified in the literature: (i) *restructuring* of socio-political systems; (ii) *resistance* against dominant paradigms; (iii) *recognition* of structural harms; (iv) *recentring* of wellbeing; (v) *redress* of systemic inequality; (vi) *relationality* between humans, non-human animals, and the environment; (vii) *responsibility* to act; and (viii) *revitalisation* of traditional practices and values. Building on this in Section 5 is a discussion of policy principles for proposed 'kincentric economies', based in decolonial, post-growth ideology. Section 6 concludes the thesis, covering its key points, broader implications, limitations, and potential avenues for further research.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Decolonisation

There are two concepts central to this thesis. Firstly, decolonisation, which in its simplest form can be understood as the undoing of colonial systems and structures. It no longer merely refers to the processes in which former colonies gained independence from imperial powers, but rather, is concerned with dismantling the ongoing, pervasive influence of colonial and settler-colonial powers over Indigenous peoples and lands (Bradfield 2024). At a conceptual level, decolonisation is an overt resistance to the ways in which the beliefs, practices, and wellbeing of Indigenous peoples have been and continue to be subjugated in everyday life. However, it must be emphasised that decolonisation is not just an abstract concept for academic discourses, nor is it necessarily synonymous with other Indigenous justice initiatives (Tuck and Yang 2012). It is foremost a system of transformative practices, ranging from grassroots and community-led initiatives to governmental policies and programmes, each reshaping settler-colonial control in unique, sometimes contested ways.

While decolonisation is often viewed as necessitating institutional change, some initiatives focus on more everyday, individual and community-level acts of decolonisation. At the forefront of this is cultural revitalisation – efforts undertaken at both the grassroots and policy levels to restore and strengthen customary practices, languages, traditions, and values (Scott and Fletcher 2014). Ainu scholar Kanako Uzawa (2019) examines revitalisation as a way for

Indigenous peoples to re-engage with and express their cultural sovereignty on their own terms, including through more contemporary mediums like the internet and mobile phones. Here, revitalisation not only redresses the colonial dilution of Indigenous cultures, but further concretises their resilience outside of settler recognition and supports the development of cultures often falsely assumed to be unchanging. Similarly, there is the broader concept of Indigenous resurgence. Cherokee scholar Jeff Corntassel (2012) defines this as a process in which Indigenous peoples explicitly resist settler-colonialism through reclaiming their cultural beliefs, practices, identities, and responsibilities, particularly outside state-centric initiatives like reconciliation. Again, this frames decolonisation as possible to work towards at the local level, potentially empowering Indigenous peoples who are otherwise disenfranchised by or uninterested in engaging with systems that exist at the direct expense of their sovereignty.

Further supporting revitalisation and resurgence efforts is the increasing focus on epistemological decolonisation. Per Ndebele scholar Sabelo J Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018), this criticises the dominance of colonial knowledge systems and aims to re-legitimise Indigenous epistemologies, axiologies, and methodologies in the pursuit of freedom from eurocentrism. Ngāti Awa and Ngāti Porou Māori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2021) expands on this view of decolonisation, challenging the assumed objectivity and superiority of Western research practices and the consequent subjugation of Indigenous research practices, especially in research about Indigenous peoples. Here, it is appreciated that the universal application of

Western epistemology has substantial impacts on Indigenous peoples beyond the metaphysical perpetuation of colonial power imbalances. For instance, individualised disability services and diagnoses that do not consider Indigenous values and practices can inadvertently create inter- and intrapersonal conflicts where a more collective approach to support would be more productive (Puszka et al. 2022). Particularly in the development studies field, it is recognised that normatively top-down programmes and policies aimed at supporting communities inherently deny and devalue local priorities, thereby making little positive impact on their material wellbeing and structural inequalities (Meagher 2025). Epistemological decolonisation therefore regards a transformation of not just the systems overtly complicit in colonisation, but also the networks of valuation that covertly uphold and justify them.

As a critique of how this discourse may over-theorise decolonisation, it has further been argued that decolonisation explicitly and unambiguously calls for the return of land to Indigenous peoples as a prerequisite to their sovereignty. As Unangaŷ scholar Eve Tuck and her colleague K. Wayne Yang explain, control over Indigenous land is precisely what enables ongoing settler-colonialism and the ontologically, epistemologically violent displacement of Indigenous peoples. To distance decolonisation from its roots in land rights is therefore to evade its central demands for genuinely transformative redress of colonisation (Tuck and Yang 2012). Similarly, ni-Vanuatu scholar Ralph Regenvanu and his colleague Siobhan McDonnell contend that decolonisation is contingent on governance that enables

self-determination in relationships to land. This is especially important in recognition of the relationality between Indigenous peoples and their environments, and the subsequent need to move beyond colonial ideas of property (McDonnell and Regenvanu 2022). With that said, Koenpul scholar Aileen Moreton-Robinson (2003) has criticised laws that only superficially support the repatriation of land, such as Australia's *Native Title Act 1993* and the landmark *Mabo v Queensland (No. 2)* case, for framing Indigenous peoples as trespassers on their own land until proven otherwise in a racially-biased legal system. Here it becomes clear that whether through the literal return of land or broader dismantling of colonial powers, decolonisation is not a singular action but a complex and ongoing process. In many ways, it is a constellation of concurrent movements.

For instance, centring Indigenous land rights and sovereignty are decolonisation movements like Land Back. This is a decentralised, grassroots movement for the repatriation of Indigenous lands and waters across settler-colonial states including Australia, Canada, and the United States (Pieratos et al. 2021). Critically, and in line with arguments from Anishinaabe scholar Julie Tomiak (2023), Land Back encourages the extension of Indigenous land rights and self-determination beyond the rural and remote regions that settler institutions often view as non-threatening, to include urban regions too. Here, the proposition of Land Back is not necessarily to displace settlers, but rather, to challenge the legitimacy of settler jurisdictions and reassert the authority of Indigenous peoples over occupied geographies.

Corntassel (2021:18) describes this as a return home, emphasising the movement as about 'protecting and honoring those relationships and places that we hold sacred and…upholding our relational responsibilities'. In this view, decolonisation is not exclusively about the wellbeing of people but also land – recognising that the restoration of its customary protections against over-extraction and exploitation is an inextricable element of redressing colonial damages.

As such, and closely related to matters of land repatriation and epistemological freedom, there exists the evolving concept of environmental decolonisation. That is, the reprioritisation of traditional ecological knowledge and stewardship, coupled with the dismantling of colonial systems that irresponsibly govern natural resources (Mbah and Ezegwu 2024). Here, it is acknowledged that on both global and national scales, ecological devastation has been driven by the deliberate sidelining of Indigenous environmentalism and animism for the benefit of colonial, largely capitalist expansion (Hickel 2020). Métis scholar Max Liboiron (2021) argues that environmental degradation itself is an enactment of colonialism, as the non-relational logic that stimulates it directly undermines Indigenous ways of being. This is particularly evident in the context of the Paris Agreement, where the relatively insufficient commitments of Global North countries, which have the greatest power in climate mitigation, will have significant ecological ramifications for the Global South and Indigenous communities (Hickel 2020). In line with the aforementioned aspects of decolonisation, environmental decolonisation therefore

calls for fundamental shifts in existing asymmetries of resources, governance, and power – something unlikely to be achieved in a growth-based economy.

2.2. Post-Growth Alternatives to Development

The second conceptual pillar of this thesis is post-growth, best understood through its origin. In the 1970s, André Gorz asked, 'is the Earth's balance, for which no growth, or even degrowth, of material production is a necessary condition, compatible with the survival of the capitalist system?' (Kallis et al. 2014:1). This question catalysed ongoing, global discussions of alternative approaches to development that might feasibly substitute capitalist paradigms, intersecting with but not necessarily conforming to debates around socialism, eco-Marxism, ecofeminism, and other Green Left perspectives (Andreucci and Engel-Di Mauro 2019). In particular came the rise of *décroissance* (French for degrowth) – the planned and radical reduction of throughput, designed to realign economies with Earth's finite biosphere and improve societal wellbeing (Hickel 2021a). Closely related to this is post-growth, understood as a philosophy that prioritises the improvement of human wellbeing within planetary boundaries over the internationally normative objective of increasing gross domestic product (Kallis et al. 2025).

The terms 'degrowth' and 'post-growth' are often used interchangeably due to a lack of consensus on their precise definitions and boundaries, but scholars who differentiate between the two fall into schools of thought. The first argues that

degrowth more closely aligns with anti-capitalist ideologies, whereas post-growth is an umbrella term inclusive of a range of ecological economic theories (Kallis et al. 2025; Lauer et al. 2025). The second argues that degrowth is the process of transition while post-growth is the result of that transition (Parrique 2019). Whilst appreciating these differences, this thesis treats the terms as fundamentally aligned and relatively analogous, with both post-growth and degrowth functioning as criticisms of growthism that advocate for radical social-ecological-economic transitions. The term 'post-growth' is preferenced here for two reasons: (i) its broader scope and (ii) the view that many marginalised communities require further economic development and may be adversely impacted in the short-term by degrowth transitions as a result of their structural dependencies on and lower resistance to global markets (Gräbner-Radkowitsch and Strunk 2023).

With that said, there are extensive ecological grounds for post-growth that transcend boundaries of the Global North and South, justifying its widespread implementation. Namely, the biophysical limits to growth – the extent to which economies can increase without compromising planetary resilience and stability (Boston 2011). Indicating Earth will soon no longer be within a particularly safe operating space, humanity has thus far breached six of the nine planetary boundaries – climate change, biodiversity loss, nitrogen and phosphorus cycles, chemical pollution, global freshwater use, and change in land use (Richardson et al. 2023). In growth-based economies, high-income nations meet social needs at the explicit sacrifice of these boundaries (Kallis et al. 2025), but this

environmental degradation is not natural or inevitable. Many lower-income countries that support the public provisioning of essential needs, such as Costa Rica, have better social outcomes than wealthier countries that rely on market-based provisioning systems (Hickel 2019a; Kallis et al. 2025). As a collective, humanity therefore has the means to satisfy their needs, but sustainable policy shifts are hindered by institutional resistance, self-interest, and social myopia (Boston 2011). Post-growth maintains that a focus on needs over affluence can respect the planetary boundaries whilst ensuring human wellbeing.

Supporting this is a key sociological argument for post-growth: the social limits to growth theory, which holds that growth is restricted in its ability to achieve social objectives (Hirsch 1976). This hypothesis holds that there are diminishing returns to growth beyond a certain level, because of three overarching reasons: (i) humans tend to evaluate their wellbeing through comparisons to people whose wealth is also increasing; (ii) growth beyond basic needs produces positional or zero-sum status goods, wherein their value derives from scarcity and thus inequality; and (iii) the benefits of growth are counteracted by its costs, including social fragmentation and inflation (Hirsch 1976). The Easterlin paradox furthermore suggests that despite assumptions of its social utility, economic growth has little bearing on subjective wellbeing in the medium and long term (Bartolini and Sarracino 2014). While this view has been extensively debated, it is at least clear that subjective wellbeing is significantly better predicted by social capital than

increases in gross domestic product (Kallis et al. 2025). This evidence reinforces the focus of post-growth on metrics of wellbeing beyond growth.

As such, practical approaches to post-growth tend to position the satisfaction of human needs as a prerequisite to dismantling growth-based economic systems. The most widely cited policy for this is universal basic income – an unconditional, periodic cash payment provided to every individual – aimed at reducing poverty and excessive consumption (Langridge 2024). Further wellbeing-based policies include the decommodification of land to restore housing, therefore releasing people from 'the largest and most unavoidable part of their dependence on the market' (Baumann et al. 2020:389). More broadly, scholars advocate for public work programmes and collective provisioning systems wherein labour is mobilised by ability and necessities are accessed as an unqualified right (Bärnthaler 2024). In addition to voluntary work and guarantees of meaningful employment, these policies and practices are supported by progressive income tax, wealth tax, and international tax agreements, all of which centre distributive justice over wealth accumulation (Engler et al. 2024). These pragmatic initiatives frame post-growth as within people's objective material interests, appealing to the fact that everyone regardless of values has certain needs, many of which are unnecessarily commodified for the benefit of a privileged minority (Bärnthaler 2024).

Such wellbeing-based policies and practices are often contextualised within more holistic post-growth systems. For instance, the foundational economy – a development approach that centres the universal provision of basic needs within the planetary boundaries (Calafati et al. 2023). In particular, it advocates for a transformation of the economy to prioritise long-term socioeconomic benefits (chain value) over immediate financial profit (point value) (Bentham et al. 2013). Similar is the doughnut economics model, which illustrates the space in which Earth's means can satisfy humanity's needs. Here, it is emphasised that 'below the inner ring – the social foundation – lie critical human deprivations...Beyond the outer ring – the ecological ceiling – lies critical planetary degradation' (Raworth 2017:14). Though related, these two systems approach post-growth in differing ways. The foundational economy is a more prescriptive, place-based agenda that began engaging with environmental concerns in its second iteration, while doughnut economics is a more heuristic, globally-focused concept that innately considers the society-ecology-economy nexus (Wahlund and Hansen 2022). Ultimately, these systems highlight that post-growth is not merely a critique of growthism but a viable alternative, offering diverse pathways for rethinking economic models.

Despite increasingly thorough models of post-growth, the theory remains subject to an array of misconceptions. For instance, it is often falsely conflated with a recession. This is a fundamental misunderstanding: post-growth imagines economies that do not rely on growth, while recessions are the result of economic

decline in growth-dependent societies (Hickel 2021a). While broadly arising from an ecological need to reduce production and consumption, post-growth transitions and societies are conditional on three other elements: they must be 'planned democratically…in a way that is equitable…while securing wellbeing.' (Parrique 2025:4). This further denies the common misconception that post-growth transitions would be unfair on Global South communities that need to increase, rather than decrease, their resource use (Hickel 2021a). Post-growth literature is clear that the Global North has a responsibility to address their disproportionate ecological debt and more equitably redistribute resources so the Global South can better meet their needs – either in line with or autonomous from northern development trajectories (Gräbner-Radkowitsch and Strunk 2023).

There are also more explicit critiques of post-growth, even outside of the growth-based field of neoclassical economics. Perhaps most notably is the concept of a-growth, which opposes growth as an indicator of social wellbeing but does not problematise growth itself, in large part because doing so may be unconducive to socio-political support (van den Bergh 2011). However, indifference to growth is simply not enough to dismantle the economic systems destroying Earth's ecosystems and perpetuating widespread social injustices. In line with the Lauderdale paradox, private and public wealth cannot increase in similar proportions – each one exists at the direct expense of the other, hence the focus of post-growth on decommodification and re-commoning (Hickel 2019b). With the accumulation of private wealth upholding many of the world's socioeconomic

institutions, growth is unlikely to be deprioritised to the extent ecologically required without explicit structural transformations. In other words, 'the "de" in degrowth is…not only a "de" for throughput decline, but also a "de" for cultural and institutional decolonisation from economism and the religion of growth' (Kallis 2011:877). Thus, while proponents of a-growth and other critics attempt to use the unorthodoxy of post-growth as a core argument against it, this only supports the view that the perceived utility of growth is more fanatical than evidence-based.

2.3. Indigenous Engagement with Post-Growth Development

Despite the world's mainstream obsession with growth, international examples demonstrate the historical and contemporary engagement of Indigenous peoples with post-growth-related ideologies, including as a means of decolonisation. In a broad sense, it is increasingly recognised that post-growth values like environmental sustainability, local autonomy, voluntary simplicity, and commoning are reflective of many Indigenous axiologies. While there is a paucity of recorded information on this in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander contexts, it is nonetheless explicitly relevant for First Nations people in Canada (Frost 2019), Māori people in Aotearoa New Zealand (Wilkins 2023), and Adivasi people in India (Nirmal and Rocheleau 2019). Moreover, there are several distinctly Indigenous concepts and movements that can be viewed as parallel to post-growth.

Perhaps the most prominent of these concepts is ‘Good Living’. Known as Buen Vivir in Spanish and Sumak Kawsay in Quechua, it is a cultural and political philosophy grounded in justice, equity, and living in balance with nature (Acosta 2023). It foremost refers to a societal reconstruction of the Americas based on Andean Indigenous cosmologies (Merino 2016), but is more broadly focused on creating an economy of social solidarity and sustainability over profit (Villalba-Eguiluz et al. 2020). In alignment with other oppositions to growthism, Buen Vivir is inherently distinct from concepts of ‘better living’, which are conducive to excessive consumption at the material level and interpersonal comparisons at the cognitive level (Acosta 2023). Nonetheless, and not dissimilar to other post-growth movements, Buen Vivir is subject to significant tensions with extractivist economies and political co-option, even in nations like Bolivia and Ecuador where their respective constitutions theoretically provide the philosophy with legal recognition and protection (Merino 2016).

Opting to work outside the constraints of the legal system are the Zapatistas, an Indigenous Mayan militant group from Chiapas, Mexico who have spent decades resisting unchecked capitalistic growth, resource commodification, and the perpetuation of local inequality (Otto 2017). Following their uprising in 1994, two years of federal negotiations, and the subsequent production of the San Andres Accords on Indigenous Rights and Culture, the Zapatistas formed self-provisioning, commons-based local economies and a relatively autonomous, participatory democracy (Nirmal and Rocheleau 2019). While the Zapatista Rebel

Autonomous Municipalities have recently been dissolved and restructured as a result of uncontrolled crime in the region (Moisés 2023), underscoring the challenge of post-growth transitions without the support of established systems like law enforcement, this case remains a practical, albeit radical, example of post-growth social systems as a pathway to Indigenous sovereignty.

Beyond Latin America, post-growth-like philosophies can be found in central and southern Africa – specifically in the Bantu concept of Ubuntu. This is underpinned by responsibility to, humanity for, and interdependence with one's community – including ancestors, the living, those yet to be born, and the environment (David 2024). Here, the rights of the environment and future generations resonate with post-growth ideals of living within planetary boundaries, while philosophies of wider social responsibility relate to the processes of commoning that post-growth fundamentally advocates for (Ramose 2014). As an Indigenous concept, it has been propounded that including Ubuntu in wider discourse can challenge the dominance of scientism and decolonise environmental mitigation efforts, particularly in regions as vulnerable to climate change as Africa (David 2024).

These cases, by no means exhaustive, elucidate that concepts of post-growth development did not emerge solely with discussions of décroissance in the 1970s, nor are post-growth ideologies confined to Western academia. Indigenous engagement with post-growth not only predates eurocentric engagement, but further enriches it – providing both pragmatic and philosophical alternatives to the

contemporary hegemony of growth that has long been weaponised as a justification for and tool of colonialism.

2.4. Existing Agendas for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Economic Development

The dominance and settler-colonialism of growth is evident in the context of agendas for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander economic development, where there are a number of organisations with distinct yet related agendas. At the federal level, the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) (n.d.a) groups employment with economic development, supporting this through initiatives including the Indigenous Advancement Strategy, the Community Development Program, the Indigenous Procurement Policy, and the Closing the Gap agreement. The Australian Government frames these initiatives as essential to 'financial security, increased social mobility and access to higher standards of living' (NIAA 2025:55) and the ability to 'derive economic…benefits from the use of land and sea' (NIAA n.d.b). Similar initiatives exist across the states and territories, including through the Northern Territory Government's (2022:11) Aboriginal Economic Participation Framework, which seeks to expand the region's 'productive capacity', and the New South Wales Government's (n.d.) Aboriginal Economic Development Package, aimed at '[unlocking] the commercial potential of land and cultural assets'. Though these governments overtly centre social wellbeing within their economic agendas, some of their more covert narratives suggest the commodification of Country and culture is the key to this. They further

imply that unequal socioeconomic standings can be attributed to limited economic participation, as opposed to governmental failures to provide essential security.

Beyond government agendas, there are two dominant approaches to Indigenous economic development, particularly in rural and remote communities, which tend to have lower economic activity than urban ones (OECD 2020). Firstly, there is the hybrid economy approach, which seeks to coalesce the private market, state support, and traditional Indigenous practices (Altman 2001). In addition to emphasising customary activities as an essential facet of security and cultural survival in many remote regions, this approach highlights the mutually beneficial intersections of the private-state-community triad. For instance, the monetisation of cultural knowledge and resources supports private markets, state interventions address market failures, and customary activities like ecological conservation support state interests (Curchin 2013). This model is suggested to provide the core benefits of mainstream economic participation, including better quality housing, education, and healthcare, whilst maintaining a kin-based social system and greater economic autonomy from the Western market (Curchin 2015). While this does not demonise reliance on social welfare or traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander livelihoods, this idea still frames their acceptability within the context of the neocolonial, growth-based state. Thus, while more culturally sensitive than others, this model is problematic in expecting a degree of economic assimilation and return on investment from communities maintaining customary practices.

Compounding these issues is the second mainstream approach to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander economic development – the 'real' economy. Coined by Bagaarrmugu and Guggu Yalanji lawyer Noel Pearson, this model critiques the welfare state and centres the integration of Indigenous peoples into Western, neoliberal economic markets (Curchin 2015). Underpinning this concept is the belief that engagement in these markets can result in greater wealth accumulation, thereby supporting self-sufficiency and improved social outcomes. Nonetheless, there are distinct concerns with how such economic assimilation may conflict with time sovereignty, cultural practices, and traditional values (Peterson 2005). For instance, in rural and remote communities with limited access to other industries, mining and tourism are significant entry points to labour market participation (Sangha et al. 2020). However, ill-considered development in these sectors may simply swap welfare dependency for dependency on environmental and cultural extractivism (Holcombe and Kemp 2020). This is not to critique the pursuit of socioeconomic parity or financial independence for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Rather, it is a problematisation of growth-based economics being conceived as the only pathway to this, particularly when it accompanies clear socio-cultural and ecological trade-offs. Here, it becomes pertinent to explore decolonisation agendas that explicitly challenge growth.

3. Methodology

The methodological approach in this thesis is a qualitative systematic review. The PRISMA guidelines for systematic literature reviews were adapted for qualitative synthesis and followed in both stages of this research (Page et al. 2021): (i) the literature search and screening processes and (ii) the thematic coding and analysis of the literature (Appendix A). Despite the range of other methodological options in the social sciences, including narrative reviews and critical discourse analysis, a qualitative systematic review is most fitting to address the given research questions for two predominant reasons. Regarding the first research question on the convergences and divergences between decolonisation and post-growth, the comprehensiveness of the systematic review ensures the findings are not only legitimately reflective of the academic literature but also build on existing knowledge in a meaningful and nuanced way (Clark 2016; Wallace et al. 2004). Especially considering the interdisciplinarity of post-growth, a systematic review helps ensure the links analysed and presented in this research are grounded across relevant fields of study and with regard for how within academia, 'some voices are loud and say lots with little importance while some voices are quiet and say little with lots of meaning' (Clark 2016:1). Minimising this bias not only establishes this thesis' findings as legitimately novel, but further challenges discreet yet pervasive patterns that subordinate scholarship from the Global South (Amarante et al. 2022).

In terms of the second research question on practical insights for decolonial post-growth economies, a qualitative systematic review can provide a nuanced understanding of real-world contexts and thus support a rigorous evidence base for policy and practice recommendations (Wallace et al. 2004). This is especially relevant in the present case to tease out the adoption impacts, challenges, and opportunities of post-growth initiatives with distinct regard for the heterogeneity of environments and people's relationships to them (Macura et al. 2019). In line with policymakers' increasing appreciation of research synthesis, systematic reviews shift the focus from perceptions of practice to the empirical evidence of practice itself (Dacombe 2017), thereby limiting biases in how social problems are identified and how their potential solutions are evaluated. The practical insights in this thesis are not intended to be prescriptive, but rather, a contextually-grounded foundation. This is in accordance with existing understandings of how qualitative systematic reviews can enable rich findings more broadly applicable to underexplored environmental policy and management contexts (Macura et al. 2019).

3.1. Systematic Literature Search

To identify relevant literature, I conducted structured systematic literature searches in three academic search systems. Web of Science Core Collection and Scopus were chosen as principal resources for their documented suitability for evidence synthesis (Gusenbauer and Haddaway 2020) and their extensive coverage of social sciences literature (Norris and Oppenheim 2007). Google Scholar was selected as

a supplementary resource because, despite its faults in search functionality and algorithm bias, it provides the most comprehensive coverage of literature (Gusenbauer and Haddaway 2020). All searches were conducted in a private browser to ensure previous browsing history did not impact the results algorithm, and all ten documents on the first fifteen pages of Google Scholar were downloaded for screening. Further pages of Google Scholar were not downloaded due to the decreasing relevance of the results to the research.

Regarding the search process, keywords and related wildcards were selected to reflect a broad range of potential practices, including *program*, policy, case study, implement*, empiric*, practice*, and *initiative*. To ensure the relevance of the documents to post-growth, the terms *post-growth, postgrowth, de-growth*, and *degrowth* were also used in the search queries. In Web of Science and Scopus, it was specified that these search terms must be in each paper's title, abstract, and/or keywords. It was also specified that documents must be in English, but no other limits were set (Appendix B). The total number of articles returned from the three searches was 2,448.

The screening of these results was undertaken over two stages: firstly at the title, abstract, and keywords level, and secondly at the full-text level. Articles were assessed according to a predetermined set of inclusion and exclusion criteria, and as a rule, results with unclear suitability for the review progressed to the second, more comprehensive screening process. Duplicates, non-peer-reviewed sources,

and documents written in a language other than English were excluded. Further, it was specified that documents must centre post-growth/degrowth; must regard the implementation of one or more real-world initiatives; and must relate to post-growth within the context of the ecology-economy-society nexus (Appendix B). After the screening process, 97 documents were included in the final dataset (Appendix C).

The justification for these inclusion and exclusion criteria is two-fold. Considering the growing breadth of post-growth literature, these criteria reasonably limited the results to enable both widespread coverage of literature and in-depth qualitative analysis. Moreover, and in recognition of criticisms of the over theorisation of both post-growth and decolonisation, they enabled the grounding of the findings, analysis, and subsequent recommendations in real-world practice. In line with these goals, a significant number of articles were rejected because they related to issues of broader sustainability over post-growth (e.g. Goodman and Morton 2023) or were mostly theoretical (e.g. Kallis 2011).

There are several limitations of undertaking a systematic literature search. Most evidently, this process tends to privilege academic voices, particularly excluding those without access to the peer-review process or other publication avenues, or who communicate in alternative formats (Mallet et al. 2012). This review must thus be understood within its scope, as a product of and about (largely Western) academic literature. Further, and while a necessary element of academic

independence in the context of a thesis, the objectivity of this review is limited as a result of having only one reviewer of the literature search results (Uttley et al. 2023)[6]. While methodological transparency and adherence to established guidelines helps mitigate biases, it cannot entirely resolve the issue. Nonetheless, a systematic search remains beneficial for its breadth and empirical focus (Mallett et al. 2012).

3.2. Thematic Analysis

The final dataset of 97 articles on post-growth-based initiatives was analysed through a coding framework structured around principles of decolonisation. To develop this coding framework, I undertook an inductive thematic analysis of a subset of literature on decolonisation and related concepts by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander scholars (Appendix E). This subset was not intended to be exhaustive, but rather, is intentionally reflective of diverse conceptualisations of decolonisation, sovereignty, and self-determination. While critical sociological theory is naturally included, so is literature that demonstrates the necessity and ideals of decolonisation in the realms of health, psychology, law, the environment, masculinity, and femininity. In recognition of the varied ways in which Indigenous knowledge and perspectives are expressed, this literature also includes more creative works from Badtjala artist Fiona Foley (2024) and Palyku writer Ambelin Kwaymullina (2020). Here, the aim was to identify the core priorities, elements,

[6] While Uttley et al. (2023) analyses articles within the field of epidemiology, the authors highlight a range of methodological issues highly relevant to a wider range of systematic reviews, including this one.

and broader themes of decolonisation in an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander context.

From this subset of literature, eight overarching themes were identified and subsequently used to deductively code the post-growth literature: (i) *restructuring* of socio-political systems; (ii) *resistance* against dominant paradigms; (iii) *recognition* of structural harms; (iv) *recentring* of wellbeing; (v) *redress* of systemic inequality; (vi) *relationality* between humans, non-human animals, and the environment; (vii) *responsibility* to act; and (viii) *revitalisation* of traditional practices and values. Two issues must be acknowledged in regards to this framework. Firstly, it is perhaps notably missing the return of land. While it was expected this would be included, it was not identified as a significant theme in the subset of literature coded, nor in other core works by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander scholars. This is not to deny the importance of repatriation in broader decolonisation literature and discourses, but may demonstrate differences in Indigenous academic and socio-political contexts across the world. Secondly, while the coding framework intends to provide a fair understanding of key decolonisation principles, it is in no way meant to be comprehensive or reductive. Decolonisation is intrinsically nuanced and even the dissection of its themes risks misrepresenting the interconnectedness of its components. As such, this framework should be understood holistically and with close consideration of the limitations of its scope.

Regarding the process of analysis itself, the post-growth literature was deductively coded in NVivo 15 and analysed for both semantic and latent meaning. Tables and figures were created in Microsoft Excel to visually summarise the key characteristics and findings of the included studies. Following the initial coding, each reference was double checked for relevance to the selected theme. While the themes maintained mostly static throughout the coding process, 'responsibility to act' was slightly refined to include context-specific representations of responsibility, as explained in greater detail in Section 4.7. The analysis was thus somewhat hybrid – sitting within the structure of a codebook approach but guided by the interpretive cognisance of Braun and Clarke's (2006) reflexive approach. Here, 'codes are understood to represent the researcher's interpretations of patterns of meaning across the dataset…there should be no expectation that codes or themes interpreted by one researcher may be reproduced by another' (Byrne 2022:1393). While such subjectivity is often viewed as a limitation, particularly within positivist traditions, it can indeed be a resource to find richer, contextually-grounded meaning within data (Braun and Clarke 2023). Considering diversity of thought is valued in both post-growth and decolonisation, it would be epistemologically reductive to suggest any analysis of these ideologies can be siloed from their contexts or the contexts of those undertaking their analysis. In essence, when pluriversality is framed as a social goal, it should also be embraced as an analytical goal.

3.3. Researcher Positionality and Reflexivity

In recognising the subjectivity of this research, I must acknowledge my positionality. This refers to researchers' understandings of their identities and standings in a given context, and how these factors influence the processes and findings of their work (Bayeck 2022). Particularly in Indigenous research, it is a critical acknowledgement of privilege and power imbalances, aimed at making transparent the possible biases and coloniality of an author's work (Moffat 2016). It is thus pertinent that I situate myself here as a non-Indigenous researcher who has spent most of her life in the Australian settler-colony and now lives in the United Kingdom, a nation whose wealth was largely attained through colonial expansion. While I attempt reflexivity, my work is inextricable from my position within colonial institutions and therefore cannot be regarded as neutral. In line with Smith's (2021) calls for transparency in researchers' motivations, I moreover acknowledge that while social justice is a central tenet of my work, my interest in decolonisation is undoubtedly linked to the relationships I have with my Wiradjuri siblings and the time I have spent involved with and adjacent to their communities. While this hopefully conveys the relational context informing my work, it does not preclude me from perpetuating problematic imbalances in who is given agency and who is treated as mere subjects of research.

In acknowledgement of the inherent limitations of decolonisation research undertaken by a non-Indigenous researcher at a settler-colonial institution, I have attempted to decolonise this thesis' methodology. For instance, while a systematic

review is a largely Western, homogenising method, I have applied this exclusively to literature on post-growth, which is similarly Western. In turn, I utilised a more relational approach to my research on decolonisation, including through following citation chains and snowball-style searches for resources, similar to Tynan and Bishop (2023). I furthermore prioritised Indigenous scholars in my literature review; exclusively used literature written by at least one Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander researcher in the development of the coding framework; and explicitly reframed this thesis against dominant paradigms of exerting authority in research. I recognise these efforts cannot dismantle centuries of colonialism in research and wider society, and appreciate that genuine accountability extends beyond individual reflexivity. As such, I remain open to and on the lookout for dialogue should my work misstep or inadvertently reproduce colonial paradigms.

4. Findings and Analysis

The 97 articles included in this review were published between 2010 and 2025, with 61.86% published in 2020 or later and only 3.09% older than ten years (Figure 1). This indicates that post-growth practices, or at least their analysis as such, are still relatively new. Furthermore, journal articles comprised 88.66% of reviewed documents, with book chapters accounting for the remaining 11.34%. The fluid nature of programmes, projects, policies, and case studies limited the feasibility of distinguishing between the types of initiatives across the reviewed literature, but it can be said that only 7.22% of articles regarded initiatives at the municipal or higher-level government scale, with the remaining 92.78% occurring at a more grassroots level. Post-growth's interdisciplinarity made it similarly challenging to discern each initiative's field of study, but the most prevalent journals include *Political Ecology*, accounting for 9.28% of articles, followed by *Cleaner Production* (8.25%) and *Ecological Economics* (7.22%).

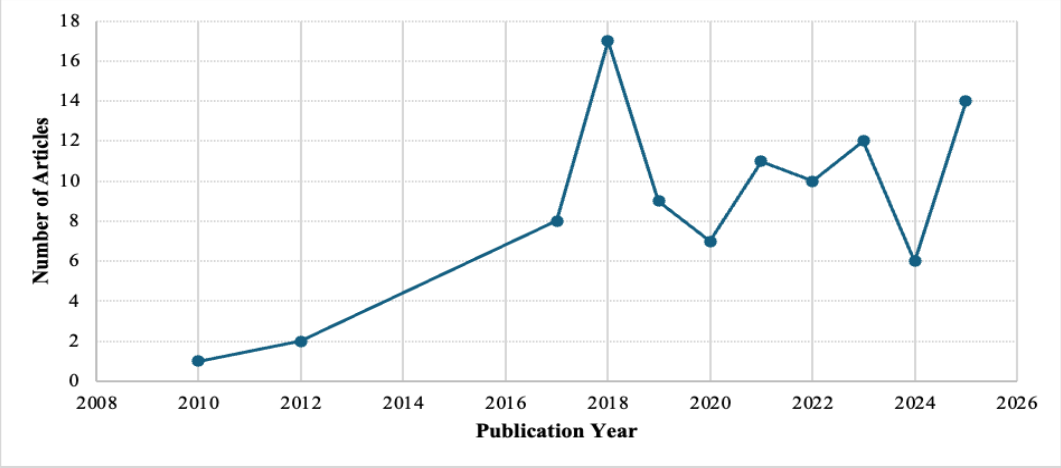

Figure 1. Publication years of reviewed documents.

Moreover, the transformative nature of post-growth suggests that it will inevitably reach into wide-ranging elements of social and economic life. This review of real-world post-growth initiatives broadly affirms this theoretical expectation, with most practices and policies able to be inductively grouped into the diverse areas of agriculture and food systems; business; housing and intentional communities; labour and alternative incomes; makerspaces; resource management; technological innovation and resistance; tourism; and urban planning and commons (see Figure 2 for the prevalence of these themes and Appendix D for their definitions). Within these categories, housing and intentional communities was the most prevalent, accounting for 18.56% of all initiatives, followed by agriculture and food systems at 13.40%. This ubiquitous concern for the provision of basic human needs supports arguments that access to land for housing and sufficiency-based living is vital to a post-growth transition (Baumann et al. 2020), and further resonates with decolonial calls for land repatriation (Tuck and Yang 2012).

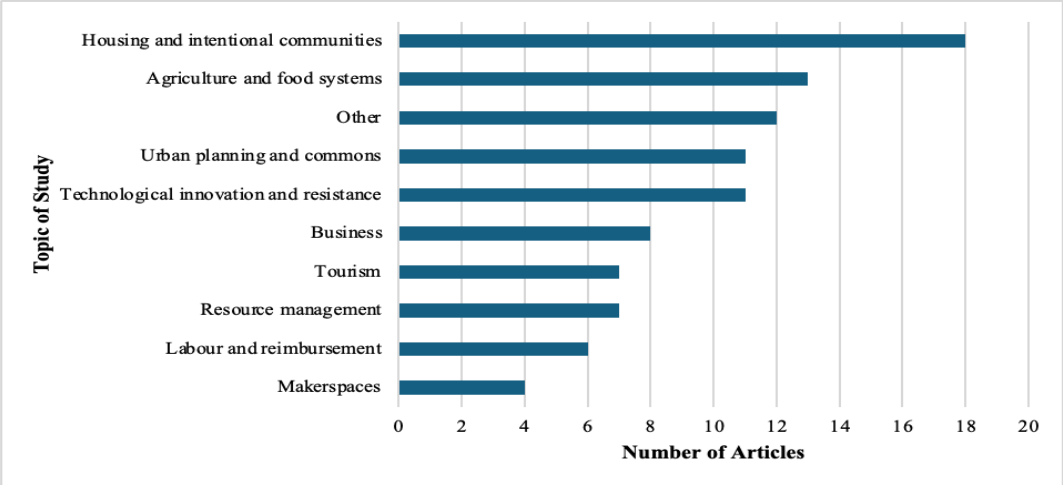

Figure 2. Prevalence of inductively categorised topics in reviewed documents.

With post-growth perceived as a largely eurocentric movement and field of research (Muradian 2019), it would be remiss to not discuss the geographic distribution of the literature in this review. In line with existing understandings, both the initiatives (see Table 1) and researchers (see Table 2) included in this review were heavily concentrated in Europe, with Africa least represented in both metrics. Considering all researchers in Oceania were affiliated with institutions in Australia and New Zealand, and Latin America was counted distinctly from the rest of North America due to their significant contextual differences, only 8.78% of researchers in the reviewed articles were affiliated with institutions outside of the Western world. Including the one Oceanian initiative located in Papua New Guinea, initiatives were more geographically diverse than the researchers but still noticeably skewed with only 21.79% taking place outside of the West. While Global North scholars have argued that post-growth is not intended to be prescriptive for the Global South (e.g. Kallis et al. 2022), this distribution (or lack thereof) supports the view that post-growth is yet to be meaningfully analysed within worldviews, movements, and contexts beyond Western normativity – a compelling disadvantage to an ideology that aims to revolutionise global systems of production and consumption.

Location	# of Initiatives	% of Initiatives
Africa	2	1.28%
Asia	12	7.69%
Europe	100	64.10%
Latin and South America	19	12.18%
North America	8	5.13%
Oceania	6	3.85%
Other/unspecified location	9	5.77%
TOTAL	*156*	*100%*

Table 1. Distribution of initiatives across geographic regions.

Location	# of Researchers	% of Researchers
Africa	1	0.49%
Asia	12	5.85%
Europe	140	68.29%
Latin and South America	5	2.44%
North America	20	9.76%
Oceania	11	5.37%
Other/unspecified location	16	7.80%
TOTAL	*205*	*100%*

Table 2. Distribution of researchers' affiliated institutions across geographic regions.

Despite this eurocentric concentration, there are significant ideological similarities between the reviewed post-growth initiatives and Indigenous decolonisation literature. However, the prevalence of each principle nonetheless differs rather distinctly and reflects notable divergences between practices of post-growth and those of decolonisation. The decolonisation themes that were applied to the literature have thus been sorted into three intuitively defined categories: synergistic themes, which are present in the overwhelming majority of the reviewed post-growth literature (85% or more); subsidiary themes, which are present in most of the literature but centred to a lesser extent (65-75%); and sidelined themes, which are present in less than half of the literature but maintain a level of visibility (35-45%) (see Figure 3).

The synergistic themes, arguably core to many social and environmental movements, are recognition of structural harms, resistance against dominant paradigms, recentring of wellbeing, and restructuring of socio-political systems. The subsidiary themes, frequent particularly in the context of Indigenous and environmental justice, include redress of systemic inequity and relationality between humans, non-human animals, and the environment. Finally, the sidelined themes are responsibility to act and revitalisation of traditional practices and values, which may be reflective of epistemological differences in the respective eurocentrist and Indigenist propensities of the post-growth and decolonisation movements. Each of these themes will be discussed below in terms of their

prevalence, framings, and relationship to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander decolonisation discourse.

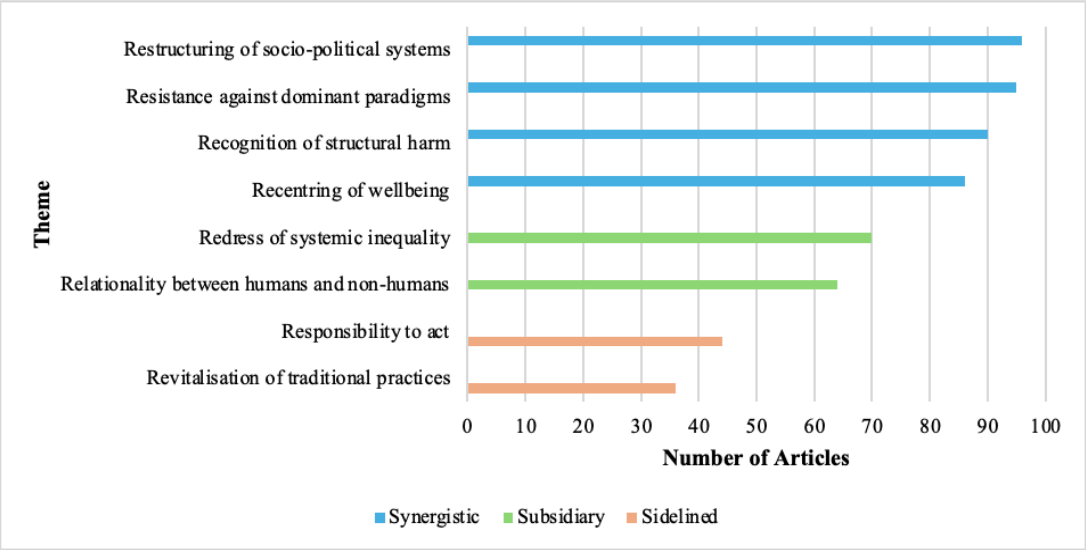

Figure 3. Prevalence of themes in reviewed documents.

4.1. Restructuring of Socio-Political Systems

The first and most ubiquitous theme, present in 99% of the reviewed post-growth initiatives and similarly prevalent in decolonisation literature, concerns the desire to change how systems are organised. One of the main ways restructuring is imagined is in everyday, individual, and small-scale acts. Though this may not appear conducive to systems-level transformation, it underscores the idea that systems are ultimately composed of individuals – each with a degree of power and responsibility to alter how they engage with the world, thereby potentially influencing the systems they participate in (Osberg et al. 2024). In post-growth, examples of small-scale acts of restructuring include changing approaches to material consumption, such as through prosumption and repair practices (e.g.

Bradley 2018); utilising alternative forms of provisioning in a system that otherwise commodifies basic human needs (e.g. Cattaneo and Gavalá 2010); and counteracting normative individualism through processes of sharing and communalism (e.g. Lloveras et al. 2018). This resonates with everyday acts of resurgence and resistance in the context of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander decolonisation, wherein 'the revival and restoration of Indigenous knowledge practices does not require the approval or oversight of colonial power holders' (harriden et al. 2024:7). Here, systems of knowledge, values, and being are reshaped through personal refusals to centre Western or capitalist norms. Though this may not result in wider reform, such acts may ensure people can empower themselves even in the absence of structural emancipation.

Notwithstanding this, both post-growth and decolonisation are deeply committed to system-wide restructuring. Real-world post-growth initiatives mainly operate at the small community level and below, but even within these initiatives, there exists a widespread drive for transformation. This is an innate feature of the movement, wherein 'the degrowth agenda is the source of creative destruction that seeks to shatter the existing order while holding up some vision of what the future may be' (Wells 2018:1704). Though this larger-scale rhetoric is often abstract, this is not a matter of practical detachment but fluidity in design. For instance, scholars like Vandeventer et al. (2024) explicitly acknowledge this gap as a result of ongoing conversations about what different elements of a post-growth society will look like. On the other hand, decolonisation tends to have a more developed design,

particularly within the context of reforming professions and services. Here, there is a strong focus on ensuring systems that currently disadvantage or marginalise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are changed to better support rights, equality, and cultural needs, including through utilising Indigenous knowledges and processes (e.g. Dudgeon and Walker 2015; Falk and Martin 2018).

In terms of systemic focuses, post-growth and decolonisation further diverge in their approach to the restructuring of the economy. This is naturally a central focus of post-growth initiatives, which aim to reshape communities towards alternative economic practices on a smaller scale, and reduce society's systemic reliance on economic growth on a larger scale (e.g. Skrzypczyński 2021; Sekulova et al. 2023). Within this, there is a deep repoliticisation of the economy and economic thought, whereby growth dependence is not inherent but created, and thus able to be restructured (e.g. Hall 2017; Lloveras et al. 2018). Per Adityanandana and Gerber (2019:1841), post-growth 'implies a fundamental rethinking of what "we" value in the economy…This cannot just be a technical project but a political and a sociocultural one'. In contrast, there is a paucity of literature on decolonising the Australian economy. There is indeed discourse on economic sovereignty, but this only broadly pertains to the right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to be economically self-sufficient and otherwise empowered (Behrendt 2013). This highlights the contrasting, potentially complementary blind spots of how decolonisation and post-growth address systems change – with each arguably

necessitating socio-cultural and economic reform, but neither having yet comprehensively developed both.

This also underscores a distinction between the intended beneficiaries and agents of change in socio-political restructuring. Post-growth is interested in altering systems for the benefit of the environment and the equity and wellbeing of all people (Parrique 2025). While this may appear to advantage a wide range of people, for those in the Global North with excessive ecological footprints, this inevitably necessitates a downscaling of the production and consumption societies have learned to value above all else (Hickel 2020). Post-growth may nonetheless benefit people, but not necessarily in a way that is widely desired because it involves material sacrifice. Restructuring is thus dependent on ideological shifts not just within systems themselves, but foremost within the communities these systems are being restructured for. On the other hand, the concern of decolonisation is to alter systems for the benefit of Indigenous people. Here, restructuring is more grounded in the self-determined goals and interests of Indigenous communities themselves. It critiques systems largely outside of the community's control, meaning its conceptual legitimacy is therefore not contingent on persuading the broader public in the same way post-growth transformations are.

4.2. Resistance Against Dominant Paradigms

The second synergistic theme, present in 98% of the reviewed literature is resistance against dominant paradigms. Moving beyond the mere acknowledgement of structural faults, this refers to the ways in which individuals and collectives work to constrain and oppose the hegemony of certain societal archetypes. In this domain, the greatest distinction between post-growth and decolonisation is naturally the paradigms being challenged. As should be evident, post-growth is a distinct countermovement to growthism, capitalism, and even otherwise seemingly socio-ecologically progressive frameworks like sustainable development (e.g. Geary and Ravenscroft 2019; Ajulo et al. 2020; Kallis et al. 2022). On the other hand, decolonisation addresses colonialism, particularly settler-colonialism in the Australian context – a violence that too often goes unseen and unproblematised by its beneficiaries (Collis and Webb 2014). With that said, while the central foci of these movements differ, their peripheries mirror each other in places. In certain post-growth literature, particularly that which pertains to Indigenous communities, there is clear recognition of how action against capitalism can be both an element of and a prerequisite to action against colonialism (e.g. Nirmal and Rochelau 2019; Jonas and Gressier 2025; Richter 2025). Though evidently more marginal, broader literature on the Australian colonial context also appreciates the entanglements of this with capitalism (Crook 2024).

For both the post-growth and decolonisation movements, resistance against their targeted paradigms begins at the conceptual level. In particular, there is a shared repoliticisation and reconceptualisation of development. It is acknowledged that in many instances, matters that have long been understood as neutral, necessary, or good are indeed subjective and can be actively harmful. In challenging structurally embedded assumptions about the utility of economic growth for social wellbeing and green growth for environmental sustainability, 'degrowth fundamentally questions the spirit of capitalism supported by an extractive economy – consumption and development as economic progress' (Chassagne and Everingham 2019:1910). In a similar vein and particularly relevant to discourse on how colonialism has shaped the epistemic structure of Australian society, whiteness is 'the invisible norm against which other races are judged in the construction of identity, representation, decision-making, subjectivity, nationalism, knowledge production and the law' (Moreton-Robinson 2019:388). Though conceptually distinct, both of these quotes are a form of Gramscian counter-hegemony (Pratt 2004) – they unpack the invisible ideologies underlying normative, largely eurocentric notions of progress. Here, post-growth and decolonisation can be understood as resisting dominant paradigms by working to delegitimise capitalism and colonialism, respectively.

However, resistance does not end at the conceptual level for either movement. The post-growth literature in this review was specifically selected for its emphasis on practical resistance to capitalism – ranging from the challenging of growth-based

development projects (e.g. Adityanandana and Gerber 2019) to the challenging of money itself (e.g. Balaguer Rasillo 2020). Though these initiatives are wide-ranging, practical resistance largely concentrates on areas of social and economic life that have been most obviously impacted by the capitalist mode of production. For instance, almost a third of reviewed initiatives regard housing and intentional communities or agriculture and food. These are basic needs that have been excessively commodified to the detriment of human welfare since the rise of capitalism (Sullivan and Hickel 2023) and now tie people to an exploitative growth-based economy (Baumann et al. 2020). While it is evident that wider structural change is needed to combat this commodification, many agents of post-growth simultaneously recognise that they are in a unique position to enact change at least for themselves – 'detaching partly from the centralised infrastructure' (Houtbeckers 2018a:80). This can be in both the literal sense of disconnecting from public services or in reference to more broadly reclaiming their livelihoods from capitalism.

Practical resistance within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander decolonisation movement takes a contrasting form. Here, there are also small-scale cases working towards tangible change within a range of areas, particularly healthcare and education (e.g. Cullen et al. 2020; harriden et al. 2024). However, rather than tackling the areas that have the greatest structural hold on settler-colonialism such as sovereignty and land rights, the focus appears to be on domains where Indigenous peoples themselves are most marginalised. There are a couple possible

reasons for this. Firstly, structural change at any scale, but especially at higher levels, requires substantial power. Without diminishing the difficulty of challenging colonial thought within individuals, organisations, and professions, action here is unlikely to have the same institutional or financial barriers as decolonising domains as significant and exclusionary as the Australian legal system and the provision of land rights. In essence, it is a privilege to resist society-wide causes of subjugation. Secondly, decolonising the systems that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples must regularly engage in is not just an act of ideological resistance but also a matter of wellbeing and cultural safety (e.g. Dudgeon and Walker 2015; Coombs et al. 2024). In terms of necessity, it is understandable to deprioritise wider issues, no matter how important to the cause, in favour of addressing immediate needs within systems that cannot easily be opted out of.

As an often proactive transition towards an alternative value system, post-growth resistance stems from an entirely different vantage point to decolonisation as a more reactive movement. Nonetheless, both ultimately demonstrate resistance as pluriversal – involving the challenging of dominant paradigms at the intellectual, personal, communal, and more structural level. Despite their ideological and practical differences, resistance can therefore be viewed as a fundamental aspect of both movements – explicating that they are not simply about improving conditions for people or the environment, but that they foremost intend to achieve

this through the undoing of existing social, economic, and political systems, many of which are interrelated.

4.3. Recognition of Structural Harms

The third theme, present in 93% of reviewed literature, regards the ways in which movements – be it decolonisation or post-growth – problematise the status quo and the systems underpinning it. This acknowledgement that something is wrong, unfair, or actively damaging forms the fundamental basis of many social and environmental movements, acting to propel subsequent demands for change (Smith and Fetner 2010). It is thus unsurprising that this theme was present in >90% of the reviewed post-growth initiatives and can be considered synergistic with the literature on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander decolonisation. In both areas, recognition of structural harms is largely explicit, not merely implied. For instance, in their discussion of decolonisation, Cullen et al. (2020:2) explain how 'contemporary manifestations of colonial violence persist in overt forms (e.g., interpersonal racism) and through structural violence (e.g., systemic and institutional racism)'. Similarly, Kostakis et al. (2023:2310) specify that 'the degrowth literature highlights the unsustainability of current production practices and economic structures'. Though markedly different in content and context, the underlying message is shared: existing structures are causing legitimate harm and necessitate adequate attention. In both movements, the literature makes clearly visible the slow violence of settler-colonialism and economic growth

(respectively) that otherwise risks a quiet[7] erosion of social and ecological conditions (Nixon 2011).

In the social domain, the decolonisation and post-growth movements both converge and diverge in their recognition of structural harms. The latter has a strong focus on issues relevant to the social majority, such as the availability and quality of housing and commons (Alonso 2022; Anantharaman et al. 2023), people's ability to meet their basic needs (Bradley 2018) and the degree of social solidarity within a given community (Boillat et al. 2012). While there is undoubtedly reference in some of the post-growth literature to ways social challenges disproportionately impact people along class, gender, and racial lines (e.g. Anantharaman et al. 2023), the prevalence and nuance of this analysis is relatively limited. On the other hand, and notwithstanding its evident regard for inequalities in other areas of social life, decolonisation in Australia naturally centres cultural erosion (Moreton-Robinson 2003), epistemic subjugation (Dudgeon and Walker 2015), and procedural injustices (Warren et al. 2025). Here, the distinction between the two movements becomes evident: post-growth focuses on one's quality of existence, that being people's potential to live better, while decolonisation is more heavily concerned with the quality of existing, that being Indigenous peoples' ability to sustain their culture and wellbeing in a nation whose very sovereignty denies theirs.

[7] 'Quiet' is used in reference to the mainstream visibility of these issues, but it is recognised that structural harms are seldom invisible to the often already marginalised groups impacted by slow violence.

Nevertheless, the post-growth literature perhaps redeems itself in its analysis of structural harms in the ecological domain. Within this, there is explicit regard for how existing social and economic structures negatively impact Earth's lands (Langridge et al. 2023), waters (Childs 2020), and broader ecosystems (Crowley et al. 2021). It is also acknowledged that the effects of ecological destruction are felt most closely by marginalised groups and work to more deeply embed these marginalisations. As emphasised by Weber et al. (2019:307), 'those benefiting least from global capitalistic production and waste trajectories tend to be most exposed to the effects of global waste contamination'. This sentiment is mirrored in the context of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander decolonisation. Here, it is widely recognised that the pursuit of economic interests in Australia has had egregious consequences for Country, from the overt destruction of sacred sites to the more covert impacts of climate change on water systems, biodiversity, and weather (Bradfield 2024). Though the social and ecological domains have been discussed separately here, it must be reiterated that they are indeed closely related, particularly for Indigenous peoples but also for proponents of post-growth. As a result of cultural, economic, and biophysical interdependencies, impacts on different elements of the world are often addressed with regard for their complete context.

In many instances, the literature describes post-growth initiatives arising as responses to structural harms within a given community, as opposed to in an abstract or decontextualised form. This demonstrates the movement as somewhat

of an adaptation response, but also affirms that slow violence is seldom invisible to or misunderstood by the often already marginalised groups impacted by it (Nixon 2011). For instance, in Nelson (2018), a lack of housing affordability made eco-collaborative housing more attractive, and in Chassagne and Everingham (2019), the stress of tourism as an extractive activity made way for a needs/degrowth-based approach to the industry. This can be likened to how, in addition to the wider reparative elements of Australian decolonisation, there is a keen awareness in the literature of the need to right specific racialised inequalities (e.g. Prehen 2021; White 2010) and ecological damages (Martin and Mirraboopa 2003). Here, it is clear that while the foci of post-growth and decolonisation are distinct, they are not disparate. Both movements aim to address identified challenges with regard for the intersections between ecology and society, with post-growth additionally centring the economy in this nexus. The holistic approach of addressing issues within these movements likely stems from their foundations in clearly defined, all-encompassing structural causes.

In the post-growth literature, many of the world's social and ecological woes are deemed to be the result of growthism and wider capitalism (e.g. Spanier and Feola 2022; Rojas-Jiminez 2024). In a decolonial and Indigenist perspective, these woes are attributed to (settler)colonialism (e.g. Kwaymullina 2020; Blanch 2024). Though it seems obvious that structural harms will have structural causes, there are important differences in how this is recognised and communicated. On one hand, it is relatively commonplace to identify that certain challenges exist and are

embedded in society, as is the case with racial inequalities in government reports like Closing the Gap (NIAA 2025) and the climate crisis in international agreements like the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. It is another thing entirely to pinpoint the specific structures causing social and ecological issues, as is the case with decolonisation and post-growth literature. Thus, while these two movements may highlight separate causes of harm, there is nonetheless synergy to be found in their shared naming of destructive systems. This is particularly evident considering the well established links between capitalism and colonialism (Crook 2024), wherein it becomes possible to acknowledge that it is not just one or the other at fault but perhaps both.

4.4. Recentring of Wellbeing

The fourth synergistic theme, present in 89% of reviewed initiatives, is the recentring of wellbeing. This recognises how dominant paradigms have systemically undermined the holistic health and happiness of individuals and communities, and how movements work to reprioritise this domain. Critically, this theme is about wellbeing in actuality, though what this entails differs between movements. In a post-growth perspective, the recentring towards actual wellbeing is a move away from gross domestic product as a proxy for wellbeing, which is believed to be an inadequate measure and undesirably reinforce growthism (Verma 2017; Narciso et al. 2025). Here, post-growth is viewed as necessary to improve social outcomes in a system that otherwise commodifies wellbeing and then measures that wellbeing based on how well it has been commodified, rather than

how well it has been satisfied (e.g. Chassagne and Everingham 2019). In recentring towards actual wellbeing, a decolonial perspective similarly aims at providing a more comprehensive and legitimate picture, but differs in its aim to move away from Western normativity, which can neglect and even stigmatise cultural and justice-based needs (Watson 2024). In this view, it is not enough to simply adapt the settler-colony to better address Indigenous wellbeing – the dominance of certain ways of thinking must be undone to make space for those currently marginalised (Cooms et al. 2024).

Across the literature, actual wellbeing is imagined in a multiplicity of ways, but ultimately regards two overarching types. The first type is objective wellbeing, which concerns the extent to which more quantifiable needs are satisfied – including socioeconomic development, employment, health, environment, safety, and politics (Voukelatou et al. 2021). A recentring of objective wellbeing in itself is not necessarily decolonial, partly because this too disregards cultural wellbeing. However, it maintains presence in the literature in recognition of how histories and ongoing structures of colonialism have negatively impacted Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (e.g. Kehoe et al. 2022), and must therefore be addressed as a form of material reparations. Conversely, objective wellbeing is a focal point in much of the post-growth literature. At the grassroots level, supporting or claiming access to resources is a core aim of most initiatives as it provides distance from the capitalist structures that exploit people and the environment (e.g. Ehrnström-Fuentes and Biese 2023). At an academic level, the potential of a

post-growth economy to better support objective wellbeing, particularly in the midst of a polycrisis, is leveraged as a powerful tool for advocacy (e.g. Houtbeckers 2018a).

The second type of actual wellbeing discussed in the literature is subjective wellbeing – that is, how favourably people evaluate their own lives. This can be influenced by dimensions of objective wellbeing like universal basic needs, but further includes psychological and social needs (Voukelatou et al. 2021). In decolonial and Indigenist thought, this especially pertains to connection to Country, culture, kin, and self (Dudgeon and Walker 2015). For instance, while settler-colonial structures, particularly within health and social care, overemphasise more measurable domains of wellbeing (Puszka et al. 2022), scholars like Blanch (2024:86) tell a different story: 'within the Black space of the hair salon, we connect to our own Blackness…we tell jokes, we gossip; every component of this space informs our wellbeing, and we leave full – we are happy.' Though contextually different, this resonates closely with the focus of post-growth of finding and maintaining fulfillment in life to offset the drive for growth (e.g. Nierling 2012; Lestar 2018; Lockyer 2017). Here, there is an emphasis on people's contentment with their time-use, connection to community, and feelings of self-determination (e.g. Balderson et al. 2022). In both post-growth and decolonisation, there is thus a redefinition of what is at stake for individuals and communities – not abstract measures of economic growth or culturally-devoid measures of welfare, but the content and quality of life itself.

Critical to these redefinitions of wellbeing is the relationship between the individual and the collective – another source of similarity between post-growth and decolonisation. In a quote that regards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social systems but would not be out of place in a post-growth article, Kwaymullina (2020:10) states, 'to be a fully realised individual is to be part of a collective and to live in a way that ensures all other life has the same opportunity for self-realisation'. Mirroring this, Verco (2018:99) discusses how a post-growth-based community in Copenhagen aims to 'create a self-governing society, whereby each and every individual can thrive under the responsibility for the entire community'. While this exact rhetoric is not present in all post-growth literature, it is a common theme that what benefits communities will benefit individuals (e.g. Boillat et al. 2012; Bogadóttir and Olsen 2017). Thus, while both movements recognise people's individual needs, it is acknowledged that this can be addressed through support for communal wellbeing. This is distinct from a settler-colonial, capitalist approach to wellbeing which typically foregrounds individualism.

With that said, there are still divergences between the movements in question in the ontological framings of what contributes to wellbeing and more broadly, a good life. In post-growth, wellbeing is largely considered in socioeconomic terms (e.g. Tsagkari et al. 2021), while decolonisation more so concerns wellbeing within the sociocultural domain (Dudgeon and Walker 2015; Cooms et al. 2024). These framings are not mutually exclusive and undoubtedly have considerable

overlap, but this can nonetheless help illustrate differences in the movements' assumptions, priorities, and contexts. Decolonisation centres people and communities as a starting point for wellbeing – focusing on how existing systems of colonialism directly affect their lives and identity. In contrast, post-growth typically begins from a structural critique, targeting how people's pursuit of (commodified) wellbeing impacts economic and ecological systems. Here, there is a dichotomy between wellbeing as a direct goal and wellbeing as a strategic, positive consequence of the pursuit of other goals. This is not to deny post-growth's concern with wellbeing, but to highlight that this is balanced with its interests in sustainability. This is evident because even frameworks that post-growth rejects like green growth and new capitalism mobilise wellbeing in the fight for other goals – albeit with divergent means, measures, and values (Andrews and Duff 2020). This does not suggest any incompatibility of post-growth and decolonisation, but rather should contextualise their underpinnings of wellbeing.

4.5. Redress of Systemic Inequality

The first subsidiary theme refers to the setting right of inequities and inequalities currently embedded within societal systems. This is present in 72% of reviewed articles, which is undoubtedly significant but nonetheless potentially reflects dissonance between the theory and practice of post-growth. Equity and equality are widely proposed as central conditions of degrowth transitions and post-growth societies. This maxim specifies where production and consumption should be

downscaled, that being in nations with excessive ecological footprints, as well as how this movement can support the broader social justice that neoclassical economics hinders, such as through the fair redistribution of wealth and resources (Parrique 2025). The absence of this tenet from over a quarter of real-world initiatives may suggest a couple of different, though not necessarily mutually exclusive or exhaustive realities: that agents of post-growth – largely small-scale and grassroots – may lack clarity on how their actions can support equity within or beyond their communities, or alternatively, in a predominantly middle-class European context[8], equity is secondary to priorities like ecological sustainability. Conversely, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander decolonisation literature innately concerns the redress of systemic inequity – from the epistemic domain to access to resources, social discrimination, and structural exclusion (e.g. Kehoe et al. 2022; Warren et al. 2025). This is arguably because colonisation explicitly created inequities to further the settler regime, and while the same could be said about capitalism, there is evidently less cognisance of this in practice.

Within this theme, there are further differences in the types of inequity each movement centres. Post-growth is predominantly concerned with issues of class, especially how this pertains to labour, access to goods and services, and standards of living (e.g. DeVore 2017; Fletcher et al. 2021). Here, many initiatives especially target economic redistribution in the pursuit of equity. For instance, by challenging

[8] This is demonstrated by the geographic distribution of reviewed post-growth initiatives. See Table 1 & Table 2 on pages 44-45.

individualistic housing norms that create an overreliance of the working class on the elite (e.g. Hall 2017; Ibrahim and Sarkis 2020), or by utilising public funds to support wider access to social services (e.g. Kębłowski 2023; Langridge et al. 2023). In Global North initiatives, this analysis is generally limited to how class inequities manifest within communities and nationstates. This may reflect the small scale of initiatives but nonetheless highlights the meagre resolution of northern agents in utilising post-growth to reduce class inequities across and beyond borders, despite wider theoretical understandings of the Global South as a target for economic extraction.

The decolonisation literature also addresses class-related matters like wealth and resource distribution, but analyses this through a divergent, more nuanced lens. That is, decolonisation is explicitly concerned with racial inequity, including how such marginalisation is compounded along axes of gender and (dis)ability (e.g. Prehn 2021; Puszka et al. 2022). Despite its relevance to social and environmental justice, the reviewed post-growth articles seldom utilise intersectional analysis. With a handful of exceptions (e.g. Anson 2018; Velotti et al. 2025), the domain of race is almost entirely neglected in this literature base – both in terms of international inequities and disparities within communities. This fails to meaningfully challenge assumptions of post-growth's eurocentricity and exclusivity. Similarly, while some of the post-growth literature mentions gendered inequities and marginalised groups more generally (e.g. Sanna 2018; Renkert 2019), the prevalence of these discussions, particularly with meaningful depth, is

once again lacking. Here, the concept of redress becomes vague and untargeted. It is not enough to assume that the reduction of class inequities will support tangible change in other domains of inequity, nor to view inequities within the vacuum of class. Of course, a full appreciation of this is challenging at the small-scale many post-growth initiatives operate in, but considering the recognition of this in grassroots decolonisation initiatives, it is not impossible.

There is evidently belief in both post-growth and decolonisation that inequities can at least partially be addressed at the grassroots and local organisation levels, as opposed to purely at a larger scale. However, within the post-growth literature, there is further recognition that in an economic and political system that has long prioritised growth over justice, the redress of inequities is closely tied to democratisation (specifically of production and consumption) (e.g. Mayer et al. 2021; Liodaki 2024; Krähmer 2025). Particularly in comparison to targeting inequities at the service-level, this focus is relatively limited in decolonisation literature, which may reflect culturally-embedded valuations of liberal democracy as an avenue for justice[9]. This is not to claim that proponents of decolonisation are in any way against democracy or do not engage with it, but rather suggests a deeper awareness of how Western governance has marginalised minorities both historically and contemporarily. Inter alia, it is democracy that denied federal

[9] The post-growth literature does not explicitly reference liberal democracy, but considering the disproportionate representation of Europe in both initiative locations and researchers, clearer references to alternative, non-Western forms of democracy are needed before liberal democracy ceases to be the assumed default.

voting rights to Indigenous peoples for decades via the *Commonwealth Franchise Act 1902*, and democracy that overwhelmingly refused Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples a constitutionally-enshrined Voice to Parliament in 2023[10] (ABC News 2023). As such, while the social justice values of post-growth and decolonisation are not dissimilar, the core focuses and strategies of redress may be – reinforcing the fact that genuinely redistributive actions must be undertaken with regard for diverse socio-cultural contexts.

4.6. Relationality Between Humans, Non-Human Animals, and the Environment

The second 'subsidiary' theme, present in 66% of reviewed post-growth articles, concerns the relations and interconnections between humans, non-human animals, and the environment. The term 'non-human animals' is used here to challenge the human-animal divide that has been socially constructed by many non-Indigenous societies (Watts 2013). While this divide works to legitimate the exploitation of other species, this alternative framing resists human exceptionalism and foregrounds the inherent relationality between species (Bennison 2011). As such, an evident distinction between post-growth and decolonisation literature is how the relationality between humans and non-human animals is addressed. With a handful of exceptions (e.g. Ehrnström-Fuentes and Biese 2023), the reviewed post-growth literature seldom acknowledges non-human animals to any extent, much less with regard for the reciprocal relationships or responsibilities of humans

[10] While no consensus among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, or any community, can be expected on this issue, polling data demonstrates that regions with the highest proportions of Indigenous people overwhelmingly voted in favour of the Voice (ABC News 2023).

towards them. Conversely, decolonial and Indigenist literature is clear that humans, animals, and all other elements of Country are closely intertwined (e.g. harriden et al. 2024), with customs of totemism further imparting relational duties towards non-human animals (Bird Rose 2013). This difference draws attention to cultural positioning of post-growth, wherein it may be assumed neutral but is in fact deeply embedded within Western cultural thought.

As such, while the theme of relationality is present in the majority of the reviewed post-growth articles, albeit to differing extents, the framings of relationality diverge considerably from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander literature. In post-growth initiatives, a central concern is relationality between humans themselves, including through the development of meaningful friendships, social networks, and a sense of community (e.g. Hagbert 2018; Ajulo et al. 2020; Balaguer Rasillo 2020). Here, authors are cognisant of how existing growth-based economic systems can undermine social solidarity and connection, and as such, how post-growth movements must actively work to strengthen these (Natarajan 2025). Capitalism naturally threatens other forms of relationality too, so this relative prioritisation of human connections again reflects Western normative hierarchies that distinguish humans from the rest of their environment (Bennison 2011). Decolonial and Indigenist literatures also have regard for the relationships between humans, including how relations are transformed within settler systems, wherein ‘Islanders exist, live and are positioned in a particular relation to other knowledge, interests and people’ (Nakata 2007:321). However, human-human

relationality is scarcely discussed in a silo – it is contextualised within further relationships, reflecting cultural values of humans' inextricability from the world around them.

This can be understood as holistic relationality and is a central tenet of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing and being. In this, every facet of Country – be it the land itself, the beings inhabiting it, or the ancestors who once walked it – is interconnected, interdependent, and ultimately, someone's kin (Kwaymullina 2020; harriden et al. 2024). As such, 'the two most important relationships in life are, firstly those between the land and the people and, secondly, those amongst the people themselves, the second being always contingent upon the first' (Graham 1999:106). With the view of decolonisation as a resistance movement, maintaining relationality between Country and kin can be a fundamental aspect of challenging the physical and ontological extractivism and displacement brought about by colonialism. In contrast, in a number of the initiatives, relationality between humans and the environment is discussed merely in passing, with particular regard for general harmonisation and ecological care (e.g. Ajulo et al. 2020; Crowley et al. 2021; Zakharova et al. 2022). Therefore, while holistic relationality is present in post-growth literature, its importance and comprehensiveness is not expressed to any comparable degree.

Where the post-growth literature does capture a fuller essence of relationality, this is predominantly within the context of customary, religious, and Indigenous

initiatives. This includes but is not limited to Tri Hita Karana in Indonesia (Adityanandana and Gerber 2019); Buen Vivir in Ecuador (Chassagne and Everingham 2019; Richter 2025); and yurt-based living in Mongolia (Segura 2025)[11]. Each of these initiatives go beyond the normative, Western scientific acknowledgement that humans are a part of ecosystems and thus rely on the health of the environment for long-term survival. Rather, these culturally-based initiatives recognise a more comprehensive spiritual connection, wherein nature is viewed as having a family-like relation to humans, or forms a part of humanity itself. In this view, 'we regard the land under our feet as a part of our body' (Alcock 2019:265)[12]. Though these initiatives stem from vastly different sociocultural contexts, this rhetoric demonstrates one of the greatest alignments between post-growth and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander decolonial thought. Here, relationality is not merely a crisis management response, nor a process of reconciliation with set socio-ecological goals. It is a way of being and thinking so inherent that it is inalienable (Moreton-Robinson 2003) – providing it with relative immunity to the paradigms of colonialism and capitalism.

4.7. Responsibility to Act

The first sidelined theme regards the perceived obligation of individuals, communities, and proponents of a given movement to help enact change. Here, the question is not on what the problem is, nor how to address it, but rather, who, if

[11] These initiatives are culturally embedded and do not stem from post-growth – rather, they are analysed through a post-growth lens within the literature and considered to align with the ideology.
[12] This quote is originally from Shared Harvest Farm, which Alcock (2019) undertook a case study on.

anyone, is responsible for rectification. Such a sense of responsibility is evident in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander decolonisation literature, as a poignant quote from Kwaymullina (2020:14) demonstrates: 'decolonisation requires / that Settlers / continually identify / challenge / disrupt / the structures of settler-colonialism'. However, this theme is relatively sidelined in the reviewed post-growth literature – present in only 45% of initiatives and even within this, discussed to a limited degree. While it must be acknowledged here that more conceptual and fundamental post-growth literature (e.g. Hickel 2020) clearly denotes the responsibility of the Global North to degrow their material throughput and related environmental impacts, this line of thinking is largely absent from the contextualisation and justification of real-world post-growth initiatives (see Houtbeckers 2018a for an exception). This raises questions as to accountability in post-growth action, wherein it is closely recognised that existing systems are not fit for purpose but agents of change are hesitant to argue this is anyone's particular responsibility or ground their actions in a sense of responsibility.

Where the theme of responsibility is present in post-growth initiatives, there is a distinct regard for both environmental and social challenges, as well as the intersections of these domains (e.g. Barrineau 2025; Kosnik 2018; Haucke 2018). This indicates that responsibility *to* whom is clear, even if responsibility *of* whom is not. This naturally stems from a general regard for the wellbeing of society and the planet, but in select cases, also as a cultural and religious obligation or government-imposed priority (e.g. Verma 2017). Though these more niche

underpinnings of responsibility to act are a minority in the literature, they demonstrate the importance of context-sensitivity in the drive for social-ecological transformation. Particularly considering its European origins and focus, post-growth may not naturally resonate with every individual or community, but its central ideology can nonetheless be reframed for better alignment – such as with discussions of Sumak Kawsay in Indigenous Latin American contexts (e.g. Renkert 2019) and biblical scripture in neo-monastic contexts (Hall 2017). This closely relates to calls for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander decolonisation in Australia, which, in many instances, do not discuss responsibility for decolonisation in a general way, but often contextualise it within the specific systems that require transformation – including health, law, and education (e.g. harriden et al. 2024).

Notwithstanding this, there are obvious differences in how the majority of post-growth initiatives frame responsibility to act compared to decolonisation literature. The former more so foregrounds imperative, using biophysical tipping points and critical societal deficiencies to justify transformation (e.g. Wells 2018; Skrzypczyński 2021). While important in its own right, especially to widen the movement's appeal, this framing risks the abstraction of change – making clear its necessity while eluding an articulation of who precisely is or should be its agent. In contrast, decolonisation centres accountability, emphasising the obligation of individuals and institutions to correct historical and ongoing injustices (e.g. Blanch 2024). In line with the social connection model of responsibility, it is recognised

here that both everyday, individual acts and more structural, collective acts are required to transform the status quo. This provides a strong imperative without necessarily assigning attributability (Zheng 2019) – an element of social-ecological justice that post-growth initiatives largely lack in their omission to address accountability. As such, while both decolonisation and post-growth aim to mobilise action, there is dissonance in how they view responsibility to act on the structural challenges they seek to address.

Where a sense of responsibility is present within the reviewed post-growth literature, there is personal imperative, wherein agents of change feel a moral or political obligation to enact change (e.g. Arias et al. 2020), and there is relative recognition of structural responsibility, wherein governments and sectors are encouraged to mitigate their social-ecological shortfalls (e.g. Çakar and Uzut 2020). However, even this is ultimately different from the common assertion in decolonial literature that individuals and governments, regardless of their willingness, have a mutual responsibility to one another. This potentially reflects a lack of relationality in eurocentric thought, particularly in comparison to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and movements who consistently centre responsibility to Country and kin. There are naturally a few exceptions to this, such as Alcock (2019:267), who quotes that, “as a member of the Earth we are responsible for Mother Earth’, implying that responsibility does not stem from sociopolitical positioning, power, or beliefs but simply one’s existence. However, this makes it even more glaring that in a movement that centres structural

challenges and radical transformation, it goes largely unspoken by agents of change that someone, somewhere not just needs to do something but is obliged to.

4.8. Revitalisation of Traditional Practices and Values

The second sidelined theme regards the intentional renewal of practices and values once commonplace or otherwise customary. This theme can be found in 37% of the reviewed post-growth articles, predominantly in recognition of the aspirational sustainability of previous generations and societies (e.g. Dale et al. 2018; Fuente-Carrasco et al. 2019). Revitalisation is notably more fundamental to the undoing of colonisation, whereby in an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander context, 'marginality is the result of colonisation and the proximity to whiteness, while centring is achieved through the continuity of ontology and cultural protocols' (Moreton-Robinson 2003:33). This underscores a key distinction: where post-growth tends to mobilise revitalisation as a means to achieve ecological sustainability, decolonisation recognises the intrinsic value of revitalisation as an expression of cultural sovereignty and identity. This divergence reflects the differing socio-historical contexts of these movements. Colonisation was a violent imposition on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, who may now live in a settler-colony but cannot themselves be settlers on Indigenous lands (Moreton-Robinson 2003). In contrast, the growth imperative is essentially maintained through liberal democracy, albeit under structural coercion and cultural hegemony, so even proponents of change contribute to and may benefit from this paradigm to an extent.

Despite these differences in origins and interests, there is nonetheless a mirrored appreciation in post-growth and decolonisation for how present practices and values are inadequate – culturally, socially, and ecologically. Post-growth in particular is concerned with revitalising pre-industrial, more sustainable practices. For instance, reviewed initiatives included subsistence agriculture (Houtbeckers 2018a), voluntary simplicity (Lestar 2018), and do-it-yourself or prosumption practices, wherein people create products to fulfil their own consumption needs or those of the local community (Liodaki 2024). Through engaging these practices, agents of post-growth recognise that sustainability is not necessarily something that must be innovated but rather, returned to and reclaimed. In a similar vein, decolonial literature appreciates that some of the most sustainable, ecologically-grounded practices – both generally and in the mitigation of natural disasters – are Indigenous (Williamson et al. 2023). Caring for Country is therefore not limited to, or even necessarily reliant on, Western environmental management. Rather, this entails culturally-embedded practices of looking after not just physical resources, but cultural and spiritual ones that ultimately deliver positive environmental outcomes (Altman et al. 2007). Post-growth and decolonisation, distinct as they are, thus share a questioning of not only what constitutes development, but what domains of development should be prioritised. In a socioeconomic context where technologism and ecomodernism are purported as desirable, post-growth and decolonisation essentially frame these pathways as likely insufficient in the ecological domain and potentially even regressive (Paulson 2024).

A similar argument can be made in the sociocultural domain, wherein traditional practices are sometimes viewed as more conducive to holistic wellbeing. In post-growth, examples of this include the maintenance of food customs to enable meaning-making (Alcock 2019); the reclamation of practical knowledge to increase autonomy and creativity (Bradley 2018); and the continuing use of customary spiritual healers to support emotional needs (Gezon 2017). While these specific practices may not be relevant to all contexts, the core takeaway is that selectively engaging in traditional practices creates space to reconnect people to the world around them and the things they value at a deeper level, as opposed to prioritising economic gain as the default. In an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander context, practices of cultural revitalisation, continuity, and reconstruction are understood to not only counteract the destructive nature of settler-colonialism, but also as beneficial to identity, belonging, and wider health (Murrup-Stewart et al. 2021). Neither decolonisation or post-growth unanimously reject contemporary practices – they simply emphasise that it is possible, and in some instances preferable, to decentre contemporary norms and revisit what previously brought fulfilment.

Beyond practice, revitalisation further pertains to customary knowledges and values. In the reviewed post-growth literature, this includes religious understandings of wellbeing, anticonsumerism, and communalism (Hall 2017; Lestar 2018; Adityanandana and Gerber 2019); Indigenous ways of knowing and being (Bogadóttir and Olsen 2017; Chassagne and Everingham 2019; Childs

2020); and broader historically-grounded perspectives (e.g. Segura and Feola 2022). Though decolonisation naturally centres Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander thought, the sentiment remains consistent being these two literature bases: 'we could learn much from the old ways' (White 2010:22). This does not imply contemporary values should be entirely replaced with traditional ones, but instead, ties together the aforementioned core themes of decolonisation and post-growth. It starts with a *recognition* of and *resistance* against the inadequacy of the status quo, imparts a *responsibility* to *redress* social and ecological faults, pursues this through the *recentring* of wellbeing and *relationality*, and *revitalises* suitable practices to help *restructure* a better world. Thus, while the prevalence and context of revitalisation and the remaining themes undoubtedly differs between the post-growth and decolonisation literature bases, these movements are nonetheless united in their intention to make heterogenous ways of thinking, being, and doing that dominant paradigms – be it colonialism and capitalism – have sought to control.

5. Policy Principles for ‘Kincentric Economies’

It is evident there is considerable alignment between post-growth and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander decolonisation ideals. However, the subsidiary or sidelined status of several decolonial and Indigenist principles – including redress, relationality, responsibility, and revitalisation – in the post-growth literature makes clear that coalition-building between these two movements will be dependent on contextually-sensitive ideological and practical adaptations. To contribute to this nexus, I propose the concept of ‘kincentric economies’ – the restoration of economies that actively foreground the holistic wellbeing of and reciprocity between Country and kin; prioritise Country and kin over neoclassical pursuits of growth; and work to dismantle the systemic subjugation of Indigenous peoples, ontologies, and epistemologies (Figure 4). In this, Country and kin may exist within an economy but ultimately function in support of each other, as opposed to any abstract concept of ‘the economy’, and further benefit from existing economic resources as a matter of reparative justice.

This proposal builds upon the work of O'odham scholar Dennis Martinez (1995, 2018:140), who coined the concept of kincentricity – an ancient ‘way of relating respectfully to all life as kin and the earth as a nurturing mother’. While kincentricity has largely been explored in ecological and traditional land-care contexts, including by Rarámuri scholar Enrique Salmón (2000), I extend its application to the economic domain. Kincentric economies are thus explicit about the interconnections between the economy, society, and the environment, but

distinct from other post-growth frameworks in that they also make salient the relational, reparative, and ontological shifts required for radical social-ecological transformation. Though any further development of this proposal must be led by Indigenous scholars and communities to ensure self-determination, in the spirit of building a foundation from which other work can be propelled, I offer some potential policy principles for kincentric economies, drawn from the reviewed post-growth literature and adapted for a more decolonial context.

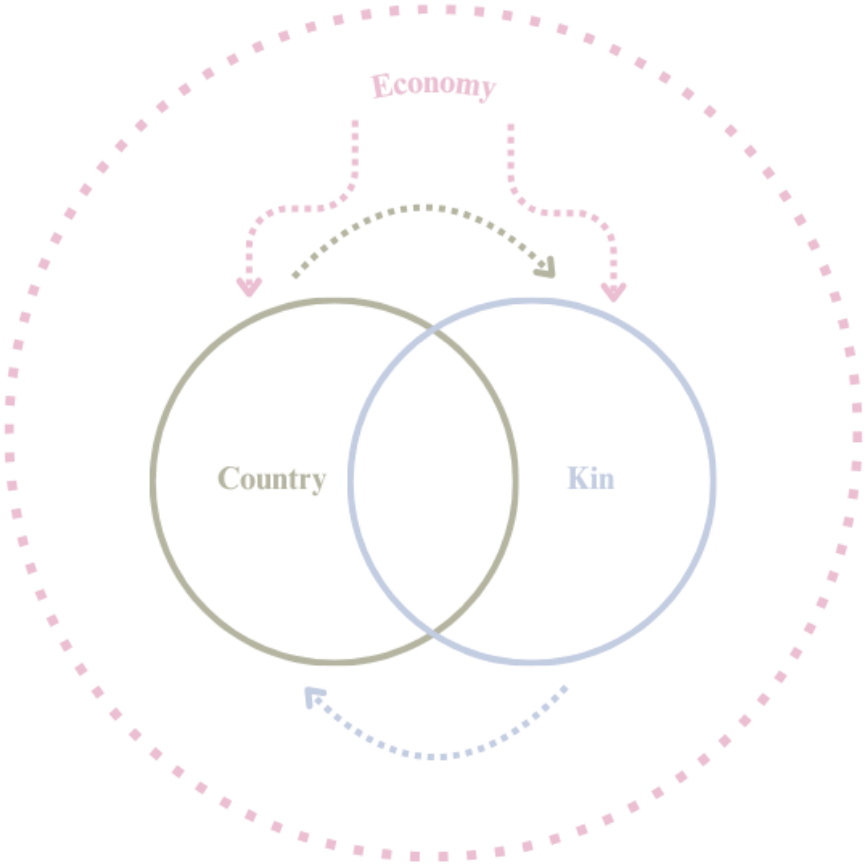

Figure 4. Diagram of resource flows within kincentric economies.

5.1. Intersectional Social and Environmental Justice

Firstly, policies and practices must explicitly centre intersectional social and environmental justice, helping to fulfil the aforementioned principle of 'redress of systemic inequality'. This can include the redistribution of resources through progressive taxation, which can support universal basic services (Coote and Percy 2020) or an ecologically-grounded basic income (Langridge et al. 2023). However, policies must also support a redistribution of risk – that is, recognise how certain groups are disproportionately impacted by certain practices and omissions. For instance, the impacts of Australia compromising climate action for economic growth is predominantly faced by Indigenous peoples, including through rising sea levels in the Torres Strait (Green et al. 2010), chemical contamination in remote Indigenous water sources (Balasooriya et al. 2023), and decreased wellbeing as a result of the mining of traditional lands (Leyton-Flor and Sangha 2024). Regardless of social safety nets, there can be no social or environmental justice until inequalities are adequately addressed, necessitating a fundamental rethinking of the industries propping up Australia as an extractive economy. Here, it becomes essential to prioritise collaborative processes of knowledge-production and decision-making – not assuming any set pathways will universally benefit people, or merely feigning participation for social license, but co-producing a more just policy landscape with Indigenous peoples and other structurally disadvantaged groups.

5.2. Collective Responsibility for Social and Environmental Outcomes

Secondly, collective responsibility for social and environmental outcomes must be more actively promoted within governments and civil society, aligning with the aforementioned theme of 'responsibility to act'. This principle challenges entrenched norms of political myopia and unaccountability in Australia that have enabled the nation's repeated failure to meet environmental targets amidst a social-ecological polycrisis (Climate Action Tracker 2025). In practice, there are multiple ways collective responsibility can manifest. In the post-growth literature reviewed in this thesis, Geary and Ravenscroft (2019) describe how legislation in the United Kingdom transferred the onus of responsibility for water management to local communities. Their findings demonstrate the role of participation in fostering a sense of responsibility, while also underscoring the importance of adequate resourcing to avoid merely displacing state obligations. As such, a more grounded principle of collective responsibility might involve mechanisms such as progressive taxation, used to fund social and environmental initiatives determined through citizens' assemblies – enhancing democratic legitimacy without compromising state accountability. France's Citizens' Convention on the Climate demonstrates that despite governmental reluctance to act on recommendations, deepened civic engagement can be conducive to social-ecological transformation (Saito 2024). In decolonial terms, processes like this might be adapted to ensure meaningful Indigenous representation and leadership. This could function similarly to how the Yoorrook Justice Commission (n.d.) undertakes treaty and

truth-telling processes in Victoria, working with but independent from both the government and the First Peoples' Assembly.

5.3. Relational Time-Use

Thirdly, policies should encourage relational time-use over growth-based labour, explicitly linking to the theme of 'relationality between humans, non-human animals, and the environment'. This principle regards providing structural protections and incentives for work that contributes to broader social and environmental wellbeing but is currently unremunerated. For instance, McGuirk (2017) illustrates a case of timebanking in New Zealand, wherein participants exchange favours rather than money. Though this case faced structural challenges as a grassroots initiative, this article underscores how spending time in a more relational way – that is, developing relationships and solidarity with others – can bolster community networks, assist in meeting people's material and social needs, and support growth-independence. Structurally-supported relational time-use may be more diverse than this in practice but is not unrealistic in the existing Australian policy landscape. Centrelink's voluntary work provisions allow certain income support recipients to meet mutual obligations through structured volunteering. Extending and diversifying this programme, particularly beyond the limited remit of Centrelink, could support the provision of needs and wider social development, while simultaneously destigmatising economic unproductivity (Baumann 2025). This could ultimately benefit diverse groups, but for Aboriginal and Torres Strait

Islander peoples, it could support increased engagement in culturally and personally meaningful activities without incurring a minority tax[13].

5.4. Time Sovereignty

Fourthly, decolonial, post-growth economies must centre time sovereignty – one's ability to control how their time is spent (Wanger 2017). Balderson et al. (2022) conducted a series of interviews with people who voluntarily reduced their time in formal employment, which largely resulted in increased engagement in skill development, caring activities, and volunteer work, as well as greater notions of freedom and self-determination. This case evidences the relational and psychological benefits of a society that does not centre profit-maximisation. Of course, it takes relative privilege for one to voluntarily reduce their working hours without compromising their ability to meet their basic needs in a capitalist economy. However, policies for working time reductions without changes to wages can address this – making it more feasible and socially sustainable to restrict economic growth and reduce ecological burdens (Ashford and Kallis 2013)[14]. Though universal design means wider society can benefit from improved time sovereignty, this principle may have even greater impacts for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. By definition, time sovereignty does not prescribe or coerce any particular time-use in the same way existing economic systems do,

[13] A minority tax is a structural penalty that marginalised people face from undertaking work expected of them that is undervalued and often invisible in a market-based system (Williamson et al. 2021).

[14] As noted by Ashford and Kallis (2013:57), this would need to be accompanied by additional policies to 'shift incentives in favour of convivial, environmentally friendly consumption' so increased time sovereignty supports, rather than inadvertently worsens, ecological outcomes.

which means it has underexplored potential to functionally alter Indigenous peoples' engagement with and commitment to the settler economy.

5.5. Traditional Sustainability

Fifthly, and partially enabled by the meaningful choice between convenience and sustainability provided by time sovereignty, policies should work to revive the practices and values of more sustainable eras – fulfilling the aforementioned principle of 'revitalisation of traditional practices and values'. While some further innovation may be necessary to prevent ecological collapse, there already exists a wealth of sophisticated practices and environmentally-grounded values – the mobilisation and adaptation of which can be understood as a form of retro-innovation (Zagata et al. 2020). For instance, Jonas and Gressier (2025) detail cases wherein new peasants in Australia seek guidance from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in transitioning to agroecology. Though this exists in a relatively niche context, this case underscores how settlers can meaningfully resist capitalist-colonial logics and reconfigure deep-seated values. In a broader context, settler societies may benefit from supporting Indigenous leadership in protecting environmental resources, addressing ecological crises, and bringing social values in line with relational responsibilities to Country (Williamson et al. 2023). This does not mean governments should extract or decontextualise Indigenous knowledge, nor that Indigenous people should be coerced into sharing this. Rather, this implies a process of truth-telling and genuine reciprocity – that is, empowering Indigenous self-determination in caring for Country, even when

elements of this are not easily understood from a settler perspective (Muller 2014). There are also ways policy can support traditional practices and values that are not necessarily culturally embedded, including through restricting ultrafast production and consumption, as France has recently done in the fashion industry (Reuters 2025). The aim here is not to prescribe pathways to sustainability – just to highlight that many have already been paved.

5.6. Core Contributions

Each of these principles for kincentric economies encourages a reframing of what wider society deems valuable – moving away from growth towards relationality by pursuing justice for people that may be strangers, coming together as a community to address longstanding challenges, freeing up individuals' time so it can be spent with the people and places they care for, and utilising the social-ecological benefits of diverse ways of knowing and being. At their essence, none of these principles or proposals are anything completely new – that is the point. Kincentric economies exist at the intersection of two existing movements: post-growth and decolonisation. Like the Yolŋu concept of Gaṉma, it can be visualised in the meeting of saltwater and freshwater in a lagoon – a place where Indigenous and non-Indigenous knowledges work together for a joint cause, each necessarily 'preserved and respected' (Muller 2014:132). Kincentric economies thus naturally involve the reframing of already proposed initiatives to underscore the similarities between distinct ideals, whilst maintaining cognisance of the areas most requiring ideological fluidity, cultural context, and policy focus.

More than just another framework for post-growth, kincentric economies are pathways towards economic decolonisation – an undoing of the eurocentric, imperialist regime of expropriation, exploitation, and accumulation that devalues alternative orders to maintain hegemony over those it oppresses (Kvangraven and Kesar 2023). Further, kincentric economies do not centre the planetary boundaries in the same way as other post-growth frameworks like doughnut and wellbeing economics (Kallis et al. 2025). Rather, it is recognised that ecological health may include but ultimately goes beyond Western measurements of domains like climate change and biosphere integrity. Here, sustainability and justice are not only more holistic but innately dependent on the relationships of Indigenous peoples to Country. Through this lens it becomes clear that despite their differences, decolonisation and post-growth economics are almost inextricable in Australia – the former depending on the latter and vice versa.

6. Conclusions

6.1. Key Points and Broader Implications

The post-growth and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander decolonisation movements are evidently complementary. Arising from distinct contexts but with similar values, there is a plethora of ideological convergence and practical divergence. There are four particularly synergistic themes. Firstly, both post-growth and decolonisation movements focus on the restructuring of socio-political systems, with a similar balance between everyday, small-scale acts and system-wide structuring. However, they differ in post-growth's focus on transforming the systems that proponents of change may not like but nonetheless benefit from, while decolonisation centres transforming inherently marginalising systems. This makes evident the necessity of addressing intersectional injustices in social-ecological movements. Secondly, both post-growth and decolonisation emphasise resistance against dominant paradigms, wherein the movements share an approach to conceptual resistance and a repoliticisation of development, whilst deviating in terms of practical resistance. Here, post-growth initiatives tend to target areas capitalism has the greatest structural hold on, while decolonisation initiatives focus on areas where Indigenous peoples are most functionally subjugated. Thirdly, post-growth and decolonisation both recognise structural harms and explicitly problematise the ways in which existing paradigms concretely damage the interwoven social-ecological domains. Fourthly, both movements support the recentring of wellbeing, wherein they reject proxies of wellbeing – such as those based on gross domestic product and Western

normativity – in favour of subjective/objective and individual/communal wellbeing. At the same time, the movements arise from divergent ontological framings, with post-growth centring socioeconomic wellbeing and decolonisation more so centring the sociocultural.

Despite these convergences, there are themes central to the decolonisation literature that are made subsidiary or largely sidelined in the post-growth initiatives. Firstly, redress of systemic inequality, wherein practices in both movements largely aim to address inequities at the grassroots and local organisation level, but while post-growth centres issues of class and economic redistribution, decolonisation takes a more racial and intersectional lens. Secondly, relationality between humans, non-human animals, and the environment, wherein both movements are interested in reciprocity between humans, but decolonisation has a stronger focus on human connections to non-human animals and the environment. Thirdly, responsibility to act, wherein decolonisation clearly pinpoints an obligation of settlers and Western institutions to dismantle colonialism, while post-growth initiatives foreground social-ecological imperatives and abstract notions of sustainability over specific accountabilities or duties. Finally, there is revitalisation of traditional practices and values, wherein both movements are at least somewhat interested in renewing the customs of previous eras, but this is seen as more socioculturally fundamental to decolonisation and more marginally relevant to ecological sustainability in post-growth. These subsidiary and sidelined themes, though notably less prevalent

in post-growth initiatives than decolonisation literature, do not necessarily reflect an inherent incompatibility between the movements. Rather, these distinctions highlight how despite possible perceptions of post-growth as neutral or universal, it is ultimately embedded in the Western context it comes from, in the same way decolonisation is inextricable from the cultural and historical context of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

As such, it becomes useful for both social justice and ecological sustainability to develop coalitions between post-growth and decolonisation in Australia, similar to how the former has been recently likened to Eco-Swaraj, Buen Vivir, and Ubuntu elsewhere. This thesis has proposed that a more context-sensitive framework can take form as kincentric economies – post-growth economies that concentrate on the relational, reparative, and ontological shifts necessary for social-ecological transformation in the Australian settler colonial context. Included in this framework are preliminary policy principles and possible mechanisms. Firstly, the centring of intersectional social and environmental justice, including through the redistribution of resources through progressive taxation but also the redistribution of risk. This could occur through adequate environmental action and collaborative knowledge-production processes so Indigenous peoples are no longer disproportionately burdened by environmental crises. Secondly, the prioritisation of collective responsibility for social and environmental outcomes, again possibly manifesting through progressive taxation, but more specifically utilising these funds for initiatives determined through First Nations' and other citizens'

assemblies. Thirdly, there should be a focus on relational time-use over growth-based labour, including through voluntary work provisions for income support. More generally, policies should aim for increased time sovereignty and the revival of practices and values that can better support relational responsibilities to the environment, utilising Indigenous leadership and knowledgebases where appropriate to guide this social-ecological transformation. In line with the sentiment of kincentricity, these proposals support the development of a society that treats all life – people, non-human animals, and nature itself – with familial relationality, responsibility, and respect, in distinct opposition to the growth-based exploitation currently endured.

There are two main broader implications of this research, each relating to an interrelated yet distinct domain. On the sociological side, coalescing post-growth and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander decolonisation demonstrates a significant yet currently underexplored route to decolonising economic systems and the wider development field, as called for by Madra et al. (2025). While Indigenous development in Australia tends to focus on more deeply embedding Indigenous peoples into the settler, growth-based economy, the alignment between post-growth and decolonisation draws attention to pluriversal pathways to economic empowerment. With sufficient momentum, development initiatives could thus be reoriented towards better supporting the material needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, thereby reducing reliance on waged labour and enabling a level of time and broader sovereignty conducive to

meaningfully dismantling colonial structures. On the ecological side, linking decolonisation with post-growth in the Australian context helps to realise the call of Hickel (2021b) to highlight colonialism as a function of capitalism, not simply an externality. Challenging this dynamic ensures activism is grounded in the political realities of ecological crises and further increases the epistemological and ontological systems available in the pursuit of radical sustainability. In this framing, post-growth has potential to move beyond its eurocentric foundations and enter a new era of context-sensitivity, assisting in scaling environmentalism from the local to the global and vice versa (Stubbs 2025).

6.2. Limitations and Avenues for Further Research

Though the methods employed in this research were the most suitable given its scope, this thesis is not without limitations. Most pertinent is the lack of primary engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives, opinions, and critiques. While this thesis did engage with Indigenous perspectives via the literature, this is ultimately distinct from having open-ended dialogue with knowledge holders, which could have enabled a more direct and nuanced analysis of Indigenous alignment with post-growth. However, to do so within the constraints of a Master's thesis would have either exceeded its capacity or risked its depth. Moreover, by exclusively reviewing real-world initiatives, it is possible that this thesis missed some theoretical convergences and divergences between decolonisation and post-growth. Where such dynamics were apparent, they were noted in the analysis, but this research must nonetheless be understood within the

practical limits of its design. Importantly, the decision to focus on grounded initiatives enabled a more policy-relevant analysis of feasible pathways for decolonial, post-growth economies.

With that said, these limitations offer ample avenues for further research. For instance, it may be fruitful to analyse how more grassroots, non-academic, and/or culturally-authoritative Indigenous perspectives align with the broader theories and practices of post-growth. This would be particularly beneficial in further developing the concept of kincentric economies, whereby it can be refined for greater relevance to distinct Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander countries, as well as policy mechanisms more directly linked to the interests and goals of Indigenous peoples. Similarly, this research may support the analysis of existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander initiatives through the lens of heterodox economics. This can assist in understanding where post-growth may already exist in Australia and help explore the place-based feasibility of alternatives to the current settler-colonial socioeconomic system. Ultimately, this thesis does not seek to prescribe but to simply widen pathways for change. As Kallis (2014:4) so eloquently explains, ‘degrowth does not call for doing less of the same. The objective is not to make an elephant leaner, but to turn an elephant into a snail’. In this spirit and as illuminated by this thesis, decolonisation should not merely concern the dilution of settler hegemony, but rather, aim to transform the very shape of society and its economy so it is no longer a cage but a canvas.

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Appendices

Appendix A: PRISMA Checklist

Section and Topic	Item #	Checklist Item	Location where item is reported
TITLE			
Title	1	Identify the report as a systematic review.	P. 1
ABSTRACT			
Abstract	2	See the PRISMA 2020 for Abstracts checklist.	P. 7-8 – not all applicable or reported.
INTRODUCTION			
Rationale	3	Describe the rationale for the review in the context of existing knowledge	P. 13-15
Objectives	4	Provide an explicit statement of the objective(s) or question(s) the review addresses.	P. 15-16
METHODS			
Eligibility criteria	5	Specify the inclusion and exclusion criteria for the review and how studies were grouped for the syntheses.	P. 36-39
Information sources	6	Specify all databases, registers, websites, organisations, reference lists and other sources searched or consulted to identify studies. Specify the date when each source was last searched or consulted.	P. 36-39
Search strategy	7	Present the full search strategies for all databases, registers and websites, including any filters and limits used.	P. 36-39; 114

Selection process	8	Specify the methods used to decide whether a study met the inclusion criteria of the review, including how many reviewers screened each record and each report retrieved, whether they worked independently, and if applicable, details of automation tools used in the process.	P. 36-39; 114-116
Data collection process	9	Specify the methods used to collect data from reports, including how many reviewers collected data from each report, whether they worked independently, any processes for obtaining or confirming data from study investigators, and if applicable, details of automation tools used in the process.	P. 36-39
Data items	10a	List and define all outcomes for which data were sought. Specify whether all results that were compatible with each outcome domain in each study were sought (e.g. for all measures, time points, analyses), and if not, the methods used to decide which results to collect.	P. 36-39
	10b	List and define all other variables for which data were sought (e.g. participant and intervention characteristics, funding sources). Describe any assumptions made about any missing or unclear information.	P. 36-39
Study risk of bias assessment	11	Specify the methods used to assess risk of bias in the included studies, including details of the tool(s) used, how many reviewers assessed each study and whether they worked independently, and if applicable, details of automation tools used in the process.	P. 36-39
Effect measures	12	Specify for each outcome the effect measure(s) (e.g. risk ratio, mean difference) used in the synthesis or presentation of results.	N/A – qualitative review.
Synthesis methods	13a	Describe the processes used to decide which studies were eligible for each synthesis (e.g. tabulating the study intervention	P. 36-39

		characteristics and comparing against the planned groups for each synthesis (item #5)).	
	13b	Describe any methods required to prepare the data for presentation or synthesis, such as handling of missing summary statistics, or data conversions.	N/A – qualitative review.
	13c	Describe any methods used to tabulate or visually display results of individual studies and syntheses.	P. 41
	13d	Describe any methods used to synthesize results and provide a rationale for the choice(s). If meta-analysis was performed, describe the model(s), method(s) to identify the presence and extent of statistical heterogeneity, and software package(s) used.	P. 39-41
	13e	Describe any methods used to explore possible causes of heterogeneity among study results (e.g. subgroup analysis, meta-regression).	N/A – qualitative review.
	13f	Describe any sensitivity analyses conducted to assess robustness of the synthesized results.	N/A – qualitative review.
Reporting bias assessment	14	Describe any methods used to assess risk of bias due to missing results in a synthesis (arising from reporting biases).	N/A – qualitative review.
Certainty assessment	15	Describe any methods used to assess certainty (or confidence) in the body of evidence for an outcome.	N/A – qualitative review.
RESULTS			
Study selection	16a	Describe the results of the search and selection process, from the number of records identified in the search to the number of studies included in the review, ideally using a flow diagram.	P. 36-39; 114-116
	16b	Cite studies that might appear to meet the inclusion criteria, but which were excluded,	P. 38

		and explain why they were excluded.	
Study characteristics	17	Cite each included study and present its characteristics.	P. 117-126
Risk of bias in studies	18	Present assessments of risk of bias for each included study.	N/A – qualitative review.
Results of individual studies	19	For all outcomes, present, for each study: (a) summary statistics for each group (where appropriate) and (b) an effect estimate and its precision (e.g. confidence/credible interval), ideally using structured tables or plots.	N/A – qualitative review.
Results of syntheses	20a	For each synthesis, briefly summarise the characteristics and risk of bias among contributing studies.	N/A – qualitative review.
	20b	Present results of all statistical syntheses conducted. If meta-analysis was done, present for each the summary estimate and its precision (e.g. confidence/credible interval) and measures of statistical heterogeneity. If comparing groups, describe the direction of the effect.	N/A – qualitative review.
	20c	Present results of all investigations of possible causes of heterogeneity among study results.	N/A – qualitative review.
	20d	Present results of all sensitivity analyses conducted to assess the robustness of the synthesized results.	N/A – qualitative review.
Reporting biases	21	Present assessments of risk of bias due to missing results (arising from reporting biases) for each synthesis assessed.	N/A – qualitative review.
Certainty of evidence	22	Present assessments of certainty (or confidence) in the body of evidence for each outcome assessed.	N/A – qualitative review.
DISCUSSION			

Discussion	23a	Provide a general interpretation of the results in the context of other evidence.	P. 44-79
	23b	Discuss any limitations of the evidence included in the review.	N/A – qualitative review.
	23c	Discuss any limitations of the review processes used.	P. 38-39; 40; 93-94
	23d	Discuss implications of the results for practice, policy, and future research.	P. 91-94
OTHER INFORMATION			
Registration and protocol	24a	Provide registration information for the review, including register name and registration number, or state that the review was not registered.	N/A
	24b	Indicate where the review protocol can be accessed, or state that a protocol was not prepared.	N/A
	24c	Describe and explain any amendments to information provided at registration or in the protocol.	N/A
Support	25	Describe sources of financial or non-financial support for the review, and the role of the funders or sponsors in the review.	N/A
Competing interests	26	Declare any competing interests of review authors.	N/A
Availability of data, code, and other materials	27	Report which of the following are publicly available and where they can be found: template data collection forms; data extracted from included studies; data used for all analyses; analytic code; any other materials used in the review.	Coding frame-work: P. 127-136

Appendix B: Search and Screening Documentation

1. Search Queries

Table 3. Results of systematic literature searches conducted on 28/03/2025.

Database	Search String	Records Returned
Google Scholar (first 15 pages)	("degrowth" OR "de-growth" OR "postgrowth" OR "post-growth") AND ("practice" OR "initiative" OR "project" OR "program" “programme” OR "policy" OR "policies" OR "empirical" OR "empiric" OR "implement" OR "implemented" OR "implementing" OR "implementation" OR "case study" OR "case studies")	150
Scopus	TITLE-ABS-KEY (("degrowth" OR "de-growth" OR "postgrowth" OR "post-growth") AND ("practice" OR "initiative" OR "project" OR "program*" OR "policy" OR "policies" OR "empiric*" OR "implement*" OR "case stud*")) AND LANGUAGE ("English")	1,283
Web of Science	TS=("degrowth" OR "de-growth" OR "postgrowth" OR "post-growth") AND TS=("practice" OR "initiative" OR "project" OR "program*" OR "policy" OR "policies" OR "empiric*" OR "implement*" OR "case stud*") AND LA=(English)	1,015
Total		**2,448**

2. Screening

2.1. First round of screening

Table 4. First screening process.

Level of Screening: Title, Abstract, and Keywords		
Criteria	*Definition*	*# Excluded*

Must centre post-growth/ degrowth.	Documents must implicitly or explicitly centre post-growth. Documents that centre unintentional degrowth (e.g. recessions and shrinking cities) or broader sustainability (e.g. green growth, the circular economy, or a-growth) will be excluded.	348
Must analyse one or more targeted post-growth/ degrowth initiative(s).	Documents must analyse: (i) One or more real-world initiatives; (ii) That are based in or considered conducive to post-growth. This can include policies, programmes, projects, or case studies. Documents that are solely conceptual, rely on statistical models of initiatives, focus on mere perspectives on post-growth, frame post-growth as a solution for as opposed to a fundamental aspect of initiatives, or centre curriculum/pedagogy-based practices over real-world initiatives will be excluded.	600
Must relate to the ecology-economy-society nexus	Documents must explicitly discuss post-growth in relation to the environment, economy, and/or society. Documents that are predominantly focused on mathematics, engineering, natural sciences, or business (with the exception of explicitly sustainable business) will be excluded.	233
Must be peer-reviewed literature.	Reports, conference proceedings, theses, and other documents that have not been peer-reviewed will be excluded.	17
Must be in English.	Language constraints mean documents written in a language other than English will be excluded.	5
Must be a unique entry.	Duplicates will be excluded.	808
Total excluded		*2,011*
Total remaining		**437**

2.2. Second round of screening

Table 5. Second screening process.

Level of Screening: Full Text		
Criteria	*Definition*	*# Excluded*
Must centre post-growth/degrowth.	See above.	123
Must analyse a targeted post-growth/degrowth initiative(s).	See above.	205
Must relate to post-growth/ degrowth within the context of the ecology-economy-society nexus.	See above.	1
Must be in English.	See above.	3
Must be peer-reviewed literature.	See above.	2
Must be a unique entry.	See above.	1
Full text must be accessible.	Resource constraints mean documents that are not available for full-text review via either institutional access or contact with the author(s) will be excluded.	5
Total excluded		*340*
Total remaining		**97**

Appendix C: List of Articles Included in the Review

1. Adityanandana M and Gerber JF (2019) 'Post-growth in the Tropics: contestations over Tri Hita Karana and a tourism megaproject in Bali', *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 27(12):1839-1856, doi:10.1080/09669582.2019.1666857

2. Ajulo OM, von Meding J and Tang P (2020) 'Relocalisation for degrowth and disaster risk reduction', *Disaster Prevention and Management*, 29(6):877-891, doi:10.1108/DPM-01-2020-0012

3. Alcock R (2019) 'The New Rural Reconstruction Movement: a Chinese degrowth style movement?', *Ecological Economics*, 161:261-269, doi:10.1016/j.ecolecon.2019.03.024

4. Anantharaman M, Sahakian M and Saloma C (2023) 'Spatialising degrowth in Southern cities: everyday park-making for (un)commoning', *Urban Studies*, 60(7):1266-1284, doi:10.1177/00420980221148386

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6. Balaguer Rasillo X (2020) 'Alternative economies, digital innovation and commoning in grassroots organisations: analysing degrowth currencies in the Spanish region of Catalonia', *Environmental Policy and Governance*, 31:175-185, doi:10.1002/eet.1910

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16. Cattaneo C and Gavalá M (2010) ‘The experience of rurban squats in Collserola, Barcelona: what kind of degrowth?’, *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 18:581-589, doi:10.1016/j.jclepro.2010.01.010

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Appendix D: Coding Framework

1. Main topic of study

a. Agriculture & food systems: the initiative(s) in the study concern farming and/or the production/distribution of food, including agroecology and permaculture.

Keywords: agriculture, food, agroecology, trade, market

Examples: "The strategy aimed at revitalizing the local market for fish, establishing and reinforcing cooperation with producer organizations." (Arias Schreiber et al. 2020); "We present the experiences of two community-led food initiatives in the Amsterdam region." (Pineda Revilla and Essbai 2022).

b. Business: the initiative(s) in the study concern the commercial activities of an organisation, including social enterprises and hybrid organisations.

Keywords: business, organisation, enterprise, firm, brand

Examples: "We collected data on decarbonisation business plans." (Narciso et al. 2025); "The investigation focused on pro-environmental, pro-social, values driven, British small firms, here termed as radical for simplicity to highlight the nature of their operations which deviates radically from the firm-as-profit-maximiser reduction in neoclassical economics and mainstream business theorising." (Nesterova 2021).

c. Housing & intentional communities: the initiative(s) in the study concern the homes and/or communities of homes in which people live, regardless of legal recognition, including housing cooperatives, eco-villages, and squats.

Keywords: housing, home, village, community, squat

Examples: "The example of the Undercroft at the Lammas eco-village in West Wales, illustrates the possibility of non-professionals making simple shelters from locally available resources." (Dale et al. 2018); "The Mongolian yurt is a round tent-like housing that has been used on the grasslands of central Asia for thousands of years." (Segura 2025).

d. Labour & reimbursement: the initiative(s) in the study concern people's work, whether paid or unpaid, including the various ways in which this is (or is not) reimbursed.

Keywords: currency, work, labour, income, timebanking

Examples: "Timebanks help to create blended transition spaces that allow members to experiment with new forms of non-capitalist exchange, while continuing to participate in the market and waged labor." (McGuirk 2017); "Qualitative, problem-centred interviews with people performing unpaid work constitute the basis of the empirical material." (Nierling 2012).

e. Makerspaces: the initiative(s) in the study concern places in which physical and knowledge-based resources are shared to enable people to work on projects.

Keywords: makerspace, kitchen, workshop

Examples: "The case study of the Bike Kitchen in Malmö, Sweden, is used here as an example…meeting basic needs available to all in a collaborative and non-profit way." (Bradley 2018); "Tzoumakers, is an open, rural makerspace in the village of Kalentzi." (Liodaki 2024).

f. Resource management: the initiative(s) in the study concern the planning, allocation, and/or control of resources, including natural resources and waste from human activities.

Keywords: resource, conservation, water, energy, waste

Examples: ; "This research was carried out in the Ampiyacu-Apayacu watershed of the Loreto region of Peru. The Ampiyacu-Apayacu Regional Conservation Area was established in 2010, and forms part of a larger system of protected areas in the Ampiyacu, Apayacu, Yaguas, and Putumayo watersheds." (Ravikumar et al. 2023); "In 2015, the local government decided to develop and operate an innovative renewable energy project as part of the island's sustainability plan." (Tsagkari et al. 2021).

g. Technological innovation and resistance: the initiative(s) in the study concern the advancement of technologies for practical use, including resistance against this.

Keywords: technology, innovation, digital sobriety/disconnection

Examples: "An ethnographic research design was followed for empirical investigations on three Hare Krishna farms in Europe…The latter has achieved significant standards in re-introducing bio-diversity and de-technologizing labour and lifestyle." (Lestar 2018); "The interview questions were structured to explore the values embedded in the technological development processes of the initiative." (Robra et al. 2023).

h. Tourism: the initiative(s) in the study concern the commercial organisation of travel and sight-seeing.

Keywords: tourism, travel

Examples: "The interviews were conducted in Istanbul with local stakeholders who play a key role in the shaping and implementation of tourism policy." (Çakar and Uzut 2020); "The qualitative techniques used were observation, semi-structured interviews and the ethnographic counting of aspects related to tourism activity and the functioning of local households." (Ruiz-Ballesteros and González-Portillo 2024).

i. Urban planning & commoning: the initiative(s) in the study concern the use and development of urban infrastructure and land, including processes of (re)commoning.

Keywords: urban, planning, commons, infrastructure, development

Examples: "In the following, we analyse promising local initiatives and their potential for more sustainable practices in land use and local development in three fields. They have been carefully selected to depict current practices of collaborative development in German municipalities." (Weck and Ritzinger 2021); "Diverse urban movements have advocated [fare free public transport] as a strategy for contributing to social and spatial justice, addressing climate change and challenging the pro-growth logic of urban development. Thus, below I employ it as an example of how institutional transport planning can work towards spatialising degrowth." (Kębłowski 2023).

j. Other: the study's main topic is not clearly identifiable, or not included in the above codes.

Examples: "Gross National Happiness (GNH) from the Himalayan Kingdom of Bhutan is a unique and meaningful living development alternative that challenges the logic of GDP metrics." (Verma 2017); "In this study, we examine the prefigurative transformative processes of socioecological change by relying on an approach to storytelling that does not separate between the socially constructed

and the material reality of a ready-made world 'out there'." (Ehrnström-Fuentes and Biese 2023).

2. Geographic location

2.1. Initiative

In what country did the initiative occur? If the study is across multiple specified countries, code each country separately. If the study is not within a specified country, code as 'other'.

2.2. Researchers

What country is the author's affiliated institution in? If multiple authors, code each author separately. If the author's affiliated institution is not stated, code as 'other'.

3. Principles/values/practices associated with post-growth initiatives

a. Recognition of structural harms: the study appreciates how existing social structures and processes cause inequalities, injustices, or other undesirable impacts.

   Keywords: inequality, injustice, power, marginalisation

   Examples: "With the privatisation and marketisation of the housing sector, the development of housing projects has increasingly raised issues of inequality and injustice." (Cucca and Friesenecker 2022); "The problem is seen in a polarisation and institutionalised inequity between different social groups, expressed in structures ranging from postcolonialism, to people's

and organisation's dependence on financial earnings, commodity markets, and an interest-based debt system, to the prevailing power relations between workers, owners, and managers." (Froese et al. 2023).

b. Responsibility to act: the study considers there to be a moral imperative, ethical obligation, or urgency to enact change.

   Keywords: responsibility, duty, obligation, accountability

   Examples: "As a member of the Earth we are responsible for Mother Earth." (Alcock 2019); "Everyone must take responsibility for the climate." (Barrienau 2025).

c. Relationality between humans, non-human animals, and environments: the study considers the ways people influence and are shaped by other humans, non-human animals, and their environments.

   Keywords: relationality, reciprocity, interconnectedness, stewardship

   Examples: "The deep sea is understood by Duke of York Islanders as a relational congregation of different actors in which nature is not separated from human politics." (Childs 2020); "Communities in the Cotacachi County state that they hold a deep connection to nature, demonstrating a reciprocal relationship between the communities and their environments,

grounded in their philosophical leanings toward [buen vivir].” (Chassagne and Everingham 2019).

d. Recentring of wellbeing: the study advocates for a prioritisation of the physical, emotional, and social health of individuals and communities, particularly over existing economic goals.

   Keywords: wellbeing, health, welfare, security, prosperity

   Examples: “This would require shifts to the autonomous sphere, widespread systems of mutual aid and support, and value change to prioritise the wellbeing of others and the environment.” (Langridge et al. 2023); “These are seen as inseparable from the functioning of traditional economic activities, and acting as a mutual support system for communities, by developing basic human capacities and promoting civic wellbeing.” (Natarajan 2025).

e. Resistance against dominant paradigms: the study questions or challenges well-established social beliefs and/or practices.

   Keywords: resist, challenge, reject, critique, anti-

   Examples: “The new peasantry’s pursuit of anti-capitalist decolonial agrarian futures is being enacted through the adoption of a custodial ethic.” (Jonas and Gressier 2025); “Radical-integral [Tri Hita Karana] challenges

the current regime of mass-tourism development in Bali, which underlies an addiction to unequal and unsustainable growth." (Adityanandana and Gerber 2019).

f. Revitalisation of traditional practices and values: the study advocates for a resurgence of customary practices and values.

Keywords: revitalisation, resurgence, custom, tradition, Indigenous

Examples: "Environmental activists came up with a proposal for an anti-capitalist economy anchored in local and indigenous community practices that take into account communality, sharing economy and ecological sustainability" (Batubara et al. 2025); "In this movement, there was an interest in rediscovering, and in developing and upgrading, traditional technologies that had been abandoned in the rush towards modernisation" (Bradley 2019).

g. Redress of systemic inequity: the study advocates for the remedy of socially embedded injustices and inequalities.

Keywords: redress, redistribution, reform, equity, justice

Examples: "Timebanking is known to foster an equitable system where community members are given equal opportunity to participate and all forms of labour are given equal value." (Ajulo et al. 2020); "Such

organizations attempt to create value that is unrelated to growth and emphasize the redistribution of wealth." (Mayer et al. 2021).

h. Restructuring of socio-political systems: the study advocates for the reformation/transformation of social and/or political structures, including values and the economy.

Keywords: transform, reform, restructure, organise

Examples: "The kind of transformation (or transition) away from heteronomous and exploitative social-ecological relations and towards more sustainable and just societies (in a deliberately broad sense that itself is to be determined democratically) as discussed here, involves a postcapitalist horizon." (Schmid 2021); "However, in this article a definition of degrowth is used, which emphasizes that degrowth does not mean contraction alone but a differently organized society: Degrowth signifies a society with a smaller metabolism, but more importantly, a society with a metabolism that has a different structure and serves new functions." (Vetter 2018).

Appendix E: Subset of Articles Used to Develop Coding Framework

1. Blanch FR (2024) 'Shedding the colonial skin and digging deep as decolonial praxis', in Bargallie D and Fernando N (eds) *Critical racial and decolonial literacies*, Bristol University Press. https://www.jstor.org/stable/jj.12348214.13

2. Cooms S, Muurlink O and Leroy-Dyer S (2024) 'Intersectional theory and disadvantage: a tool for decolonisation', *Disability and Society*, 39(2):453-468, doi:10.1080/09687599.2022.2071678

3. Cullen P, Mackean T, Worner F, Wellington C, Longbottom H, Coombes J, Bennett-Brook K, Clapham K, Ivers R, Hackett M and Longbottom M (2020) 'Trauma and violence informed care through decolonising interagency partnerships: a complexity case study of Waminda's model of systemic decolonisation', *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 73:7363, doi:10.3390/ijerph17207363

4. Dudgeon P and Walker R (2015) 'Decolonising Australian psychology: discourses, strategies, and practice', *Journal of Social and Political Psychology*, 3(1):276-297, doi:10.5964/jspp.v3i1.126

5. Falk P and Martin G (2008) 'Misconstruing Indigenous sovereignty: maintaining the fabric of Australian law', in Moreton-Robinson A (ed) *Sovereign subjects: Indigenous sovereignty matters*, Taylor & Francis Group. http://ebookcentral.proq3u3est.com/lib/anu/detail.action?docID=5492416

6. Foley F (2024) 'The provocateur as decolonial praxis', in Bargallie D and Fernando N (eds) *Critical racial and decolonial literacies*, Bristol University Press. https://www.jstor.org/stable/jj.12348214.16

7. harriden k, Gordon B, Gross R, Stevens R and Weir J (2024) 'Disrupting colonial environmental research and teaching, yarn by yarn', *Environmental Justice*, 00(00):1-8, doi:10.1089/env.2023.0057

8. Kehoe H, Schütze H, Spurling G and Lovett R (2022) 'Development of a decolonising framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health policy analysis in Australia', *The International Indigenous Policy Journal*, 13(3):1-26, doi:10.18584/iipj.2022.13.3.11269

9. Kwaymullina A (2020) *Living on stolen land*, Magabala Books, https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/anu/detail.action?docID=29276922

10. Martin B, Stewart G, Ka'imi Watson B, Keola Silva O, Teisina J, Matapo J and Mika C (2020) 'Situating decolonization: An indigenous dilemma', *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 52(3):312-321, doi:10.1080/00131857.2019.1652164

11. Martin K and Mirraboopa B (2003) 'Ways of knowing, being and doing: a theoretical framework and methods for indigenous and indigenist research' *Journal of Australian Studies*, 27(76):203-214, doi:10.1080/14443050309387838

12. Moreton-Robinson A (2003) 'I still call Australia home: Indigenous belonging and place in a white postcolonizing society', in Ahmed S, Castada C, Fortier AM and Sheller M (eds) *Uprootings/regroundings: questions of home and migration*, Routledge, doi:10.4324/9781003087298-3

13. Moreton-Robinson A (2008) 'Introduction', in Moreton-Robinson A (ed) *Sovereign subjects: Indigenous sovereignty matters*, Taylor & Francis Group. http://ebookcentral.proqu1est.com/lib/anu/detail.action?docID=5492416

14. Nakata M (2007) *Disciplining the savages: savaging the disciplines*, Aboriginal Studies Press, https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/anu/detail.action?docID=838256

15. Prehn J (2021) 'Decolonizing Australian settler-colonial masculinity', in Walter M, Kukutai T, Gonzales AA and Henry R (eds) *The Oxford handbook of Indigenous sociology*, Oxford University Press, doi:10.1093/oxfordhb/9780197528778.013.24

16. Puszka S, Walsh C, Markham F, Barney J, Yap M and Dreise T (2022) 'Towards the decolonisation of disability: a systematic review of disability conceptualisations, practices and experiences of First Nations people of Australia', *Social Science & Medicine*, 305:115047, doi:10.1016/j.socscimed.2022.115047

17. Warren I, Beaufils J and Corrales T (2025) 'Decolonisation, biopolitics and neoliberalism: An Australian study into the problems of legal decision-making', *Children and Youth Services Review*, 168:108035, doi:10.1016/j.childyouth.2024.108035

18. Watson N (2024) 'Counter-storytelling as critical praxis', in Bargallie D and Fernando N (eds) *Critical racial and decolonial literacies*, Bristol University Press. https://www.jstor.org/stable/jj.12348214.21

19. White N (2010) ‘Indigenous Australian women’s leadership: stayin’ strong against the post‐colonial tide’, *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 13(1):7-25, doi:10.1080/13603120903242907

20. Williamson B, Provost S and Price C (2023) ‘Operationalising Indigenous data sovereignty in environmental research and governance’, *EPF: Philosophy, Theory, Models, Methods and Practice*, 2(1-2):281-304, doi:10.1177/26349825221125496