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Tourism Degrowth and Resident Well-being

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ABSTRACT

An increasing number of tourism researchers now advance the notion of tourism degrowth as a serious and viable alternative to the mainstream, growth-oriented approach to managing tourism development. The paper seeks to clarify, at a conceptual level, the well-being implications of tourism degrowth, positive and negative. Following a discussion of the basic principles of the degrowth approach, and identification of some major degrowth strategies, the paper overviews the nature of well-being, its sources and indicators. The potential impacts of tourism degrowth on resident well-being, are explored through a lens based on an established well-being framework. Taking sources of both material and non-material well-being into account, it is concluded that the degrowth process, when considered alongside a range of complementary interventions, can potentially make several important contributions to resident well-being. Identification and measurement of resident well-being outcomes in turn provides guidance as to the preferred strategies and types of interventions in support of tourism degrowth. In conclusion, the paper identifies issues for future investigation by tourism researchers.

KEYWORDS

Tourism Degrowth, Sustainability, Resident Well-Being, Tourism Management and Policy.

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1. Introduction

Two approaches to tourism development are gaining prominence in the research literature. One approach emphasises the importance of estimating resident well-being outcomes in assessing alternative paths of tourism development. The importance of maintaining and enhancing the well-being of present and future generations in destinations globally, is clearly identified in the standard conception of sustainable development, based on the Brundtland Report (1987) and endorsed by the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO, 2018). Consistent with research in the wider social sciences (Stiglitz et al., 2018; Dalziel et al., 2018; Büchs & Koch, 2019) and recent publications of the IPCC (2023), tourism researchers now acknowledge resident well-being to be the primary aim of tourism destination development (Chassagne & Everingham, 2019; Dwyer, 2020; Berbekova et al., 2023). This has generated interest in the nature of well-being, its links with tourism development, the effects on different tourism stakeholders, and the implications for tourism policymaking (Dwyer, 2023c).

The second approach, degrowth, has emerged from dissatisfaction with the standard 'business as usual', growth-oriented approach to tourism development, pervasive in tourism destination strategy formulation and implementation (UNWTO, 2018). There is increasing concern that ongoing economic growth irreversibly depletes the Earth's resources and its ecosystems, significantly degrades the environment, generates emissions that exceed biophysical planetary boundaries, drives climate change, and creates inequalities in income and wealth, alongside other social injustices (Jackson, 2017; Trainer, 2023). Tourism is a major activity in this process, depleting and degrading the natural and socio-cultural environments that that support industry growth (Dwyer, 2018). On what might be regarded as 'the standard view', the adverse effects of tourism growth, economic, social and environmental, can be eliminated through technological progress linked with more efficient management (Edgell, 2020; Butcher, 2023). This mainstream optimistic approach, however, has come under intense criticism in the 'heterodox', anti-growth tourism literature, with increasing calls for 'degrowth' of the tourism industry (and all related commercial and industrial activity) as the most appropriate response to the ongoing evident failures of growth-based tourism management (Hall, 2009; Andriotis, 2014; Fletcher et al., 2019; Higgins-Desbiolles et al., 2019; Sharpley, 2021; Dwyer, 2023e). Degrowth is not merely a reduction of growth but takes human well-being as a central element of a transformed, economic, social and political system (Andreoni & Galmarini, 2013).

To date, studies concerning the well-being outcomes of tourism development and studies of the impacts of tourism degrowth have developed independently, despite their obvious connection. If the primary aim of tourism development is resident well-being, then so also is enhanced well-being the primary aim of tourism degrowth. Despite some countercriticism that tourism degrowth will lead to all sorts of undesirable effects that erode social well-being (Butcher, 2023), this issue has been relatively neglected in the tourism literature. The degrowth counter-response is that its critics focus on the effects of degrowth on material well-being, neglecting other sources of well-being that may be activated in the process of degrowth (Hickel et al., 2022; Higgins-Desbiolles & Everingham, 2022).

This paper does not argue the case for tourism degrowth *per se*. Rather, it seeks to clarify, at a conceptual level, the well-being implications of tourism degrowth, positive and negative. In doing so, the paper identifies areas of essential overlap between well-being consequences and tourism degrowth, highlighting the implications for conceptual and empirical research, and issues for future investigation by researchers, destination managers and policy makers.

The structure of the paper is as follows. Section two provides the rationale for tourism degrowth emphasising the basic principles of the degrowth approach, together with a summary of some major degrowth strategies. Section three overviews the nature of well-being and its sources. In section four, the potential impacts of tourism degrowth on resident well-being, are explored with reference to indicators from an established well-being framework. Section five identifies important issues that will determine the direction of further research in this field of inquiry, both conceptually and by way of case studies of the potential well-being effects of degrowth in different destinations.

2. The Degrowth Approach

2.1 Failure of Growth Management

Critics have identified a major, as yet unresolved problem, for the standard growth management approach. A distinguishing feature of this approach is the underlying assumption ('faith') that technological progress can result in less intensive materials and energy use, accompanied by less carbon and greenhouse gas emissions (Fletcher & Rammelt, 2017). This assumption involves the potential 'decoupling' of resource depletion and associated emissions from economic growth. Two forms of decoupling may be distinguished: a*bsolute decoupling* implies that environmental efficiencies can be substantial enough to result in reduced resource use and lower overall environmental impacts, while *relative decoupling* relates to a situation where resource use and emissions still increase, but at a lower rate than economic growth (Parrique et al., 2019; Hickel & Kallis, 2020).

Only via absolute decoupling will growth management actually generate less material throughputs and less emissions overall. Essentially, absolute decoupling assumes that, new technologies will solve environmental problems, and destinations will become increasingly 'dematerialised' as consumption and production shifts towards the services sector (Monserand, 2022), making it possible to produce ever more, while extracting less resources and associated emissions from production. The potential for *decoupling* is central to the goal of 'green growth' (UNWTO, 2018).

There is increasing evidence, however, that technological progress cannot result in absolute decoupling, with or without associated managerial efficiencies (Healy et al., 2015; Hickel & Kallis, 2020). Whereas the quantity of greenhouse gases emitted per dollar of output has fallen consistently over time in developed economies ('relative decoupling'), the total volume of global emissions has increased alongside economic growth (Hickel & Kallis, 2020). Indeed, much of the perceived 'greening' in developed destinations is linked to their ability to shift resource-intensive and emissions-intensive sectors to lesser developed destinations (Parrique et al., 2019). Industry growth model simulations project that absolute decoupling is unachievable even under the most optimistic assumptions (Fletcher & Rammelt, 2017). A recent review of 179 articles published between 1990–2019 on decoupling mainly between CO2 and GDP, found no evidence of economy-wide, national/international absolute resource decoupling, with no evidence of the kind of decoupling needed for ecological sustainability (Vadén et al., 2020). Increasingly, critics of growth management approaches to development now refer to the 'myth' of absolute decoupling (Fletcher & Rammelt, 2017; Parrique et al., 2019; Kallis et al., 2020). In the wider social science research literature, growing recognition that decoupling is unachievable has given rise to the degrowth approach, advocating an equitable downscaling of materials and energy throughput, while mindful of ecological boundaries, locally and globally (Kallis et al., 2020).

The infeasibility of decoupling has substantial implications for tourism development strategy. If absolute decoupling is unachievable, then any environmental efficiencies associated with tourism industry development will not reduce tourism's carbon footprint. While relative decoupling resulting from improved management and technological progress can reduce carbon emissions as a proportion of GDP, the level of emissions will continue to be positive. Thus, it is not possible for tourism GDP to grow indefinitely without generating further adverse environmental impacts. In other words, tourism growth will forever be inconsistent with achievement of tourism industry net zero emissions.

If producing more while polluting less is unachievable, by implication the tourism industry should produce less, in order to pollute less (Monserand, 2022). Tourism degrowth thus gains traction as a serious and viable policy option (Hall, 2009; Andriotis, 2014; Fletcher et al., 2019; Higgins-Desbiolles et al., 2019; Sharpley, 2022; Dwyer, 2023e). To understand the basic elements of tourism degrowth we must understand the nature of degrowth, and the major strategies associated with the process of degrowth.

2.2 Nature of Degrowth

The degrowth approach involves a planned, gradual and equitable 'downsizing' or 'rightsizing' of production and consumption in the global economy. Reduced energy and material throughput can achieve a

better balance between resource use and supply consistent with biophysical limits imposed by the Earth's regenerative and assimilative capacities. Beyond environmental considerations, the approach seeks also to redistribute wealth and income locally and globally to enhance social well-being (Schneider et al., 2010; Kallis et al., 2020; Hickel, 2021; Hickel et al., 2022). The degrowth remit is to address modes of production, values underlying consumption, gender relations, the organisation of work, civic engagement, modes of governance, enablers of social and environmental justice, to enhance the well-being of human and other life forms. The degrowth process thus involves deep transformations on four interrelated planes of social being: material transactions with nature, social interactions between persons, social structures, and human well-being (Buch-Hansen, 2023).

Three policy goals capture the broad thrust of the degrowth approach: reducing the environmental impact of human activities via reduced consumption, investment and government spending and reduced work time; redistributing income and wealth intra-and inter-generationally; and promoting the transition from a materialistic to a convivial, caring, sharing, participatory society (Cosme et al., 2017; Kallis et al., 2020). These goals are argued to be met through six major strategy types as listed in Table 1. These strategies comprise both voluntary and policy-induced reductions in both the supply and demand side of the economy.

Table 1. Key Elements of the Degrowth Approach

Key Elements	Action Agenda
Resizing	• Planned reduction of the physical scale of the energy and material throughputs of the economy, consistent with planetary boundaries; • Reduced consumption levels both in aggregate and specific items; • Emphasis on locally determined development paths rather than externally imposed ones; • Investigate proposals to stabilise population levels.
Value Change	• Need for a fundamental change in resident values and lifestyles away from consumerism towards values such as empathy, self-reflection, creativity, diversity, good citizenship, generosity, sharing, conviviality, concern, responsability, sufficiency and cooperation; • Prioritising residents' the 'right to live' over the 'right to travel'; • Reduced dependence on economic activity to enhance material wellbeing; • Encouragement of community values such as empathy, self-reflection, creativity, diversity, good citizenship, generosity, sharing, conviviality, concern, responsibility, sufficiency and cooperation; • Need for more positive attitudes towards nature and its biodiversity.
Fairness	• Equitable distribution of income and wealth intra- and inter-generationally; • Public services accessible to all; • Fulfilment of basic human needs for all, including opportunities for decent employment; • Safe and healthy living and working conditions for people with economic security; • Increased work-sharing, leisure time, sense of community.
Participation	• Voluntary transition towards a just, participatory, and ecologically sustainable society; • Adherence to the principles of equity, participatory democracy, respect for social justice, human rights, and respect for cultural differences; • More collaborative relations, less bureaucracy, flatter governance hierarchies.
Environment and Culture	• Decommodification of heritage and cultural artifacts; • Regeneration of ecosystems and resources, with diminished biodiversity loss; • Healthy relationship between people and nature providing the foundation for people's physical and mental health; • Foster environmental justice.
Institutional and Political Change	• Institutional and political change to facilitate civic engagement, and social and environmental justice; • Independent judiciary, rule of law and access to justice for all; • Business models with social and environmental purpose prominent in mission statements; • Public participation in policy formulation and implementation.

Source: Latouche, 2009; Cosme et al., 2017; Santos & O'Neill, 2017; Kallis et al., 2018; Kallis et al., 2020; Hickel et al., 2022.

While many of the items comprising Table 1 are advocated by the critics of growth management approaches to tourism development, it is the downsizing or rightsizing of economic activity that distinguishes the degrowth approach. The degrowth agenda spans multiple scales (local, regional, national, international) and multiple stakeholders (households, communities, government, firms, employees, visitors), with a substantial range of interventions identified. Importantly, degrowth is not taken to be an end in

itself, but a process towards a sustainable steady state operating within planetary boundaries (Kallis et al., 2018, 2020). Degrowthers have no problem regarding the steady state economy as an 'unattainable goal' (Kerschner, 2010). In this respect the post-growth ideal it is no different from 'sustainable development', 'world peace', or even 'net zero carbon emissions' each of which can only be approximated at best. Their ultimate unattainability, however, does not imply that they are not worthy goals to aim for.

2.3 Major Strategies for Degrowth

On the degrowth approach, strategies aiming to increase *efficiency* in production must be complemented by the pursuit of *sufficiency* that is, 'the direct downscaling of economic production in many sectors alongside reduction of consumption' (Parrique et al., 2019). A range of initiatives for the transformation of society from growth to degrowth have been advanced (Jackson, 2017; Kallis et al., 2019; Hickel & Kallis, 2020; Hickel et al., 2022), with substantial debate regarding the required changes to economic, social and political institutions.

While differences in emphasis exist among researchers of degrowth, their shared strategic action agenda comprises the following features:

Beyond GDP. Recognising the inadequacy of standard economic measures, such as GDP, for capturing several critical dimensions of people's well-being, the Beyond GDP approach is developing measures of progress that capture broader aspects of people's living conditions and of the quality of their lives (Dwyer, 2020). Treating present and future well-being as essential to a sustainable development path, the *Beyond GDP* approach offers comprehensive and realistic ways to measure destination sustainability and well-being within a process of degrowth (Dwyer, 2023e).

Reduce production. Degrowth emphasises the need to reduce ('rightsize') the physical scale of the stock of built capital and of the energy and material throughput of the economy consistent with planetary boundaries. This implies a scaling down of fossil fuel dependent, carbon intensive economic sectors, such as aviation and automobiles and the need to end planned obsolescence of products (Hickel et al., 2022). Complementary strategies would include 'green job guarantees' involving training and mobilizing labour released from declining industries to areas consistent with social and ecological objectives such as installing renewables, insulating buildings, regenerating ecosystems and improving social care, (Hickel et al., 2022). A reduction in the large quantity of unnecessary productive effort occurring in a great many destinations would free up resources to be allocated to merit goods such as the arts, education, health care and socially desirable research and development (Trainer, 2023).

Reduce consumption. Given that overall consumption is the single most significant factor driving adverse global environmental impacts (Wiedmann et al., 2020), the degrowth approach emphasises reductions both in the overall level of consumption and consumption patterns, particularly in respect of high-emissions conspicuous consumption activity in the developed economies. Degrowthers argue the need for destinations, particularly developed destinations, to reduce their consumption levels of 'non-necessary' goods and services. This process would involve the transition to lifestyles, organisations and institutions that emphasise non-material sources of consumer satisfaction (IPCC, 2023).

Reduce inequalities in income and wealth. A major goal of the degrowth approach is to redistribute wealth and income globally to enhance the social well- being of the present and future generations. Income inequality is associated with higher production-based and consumption-based carbon emissions among both developed and developing nations, with 'demonstration effects' influencing the consumption levels and patterns of the less wealthy (Millward-Hopkins et al., 2022; Monserand, 2022).

Reduce work time. Working time is linked to wage income and hence to consumption. Reduced working hours restrict income and thus spending power, which in turn will limit consumption, the strongest determinant of environmental impacts globally (Wiedmann et al., 2020). Benefits of reduced working time spread among workers include greater opportunities for social, and recreational activities, including in-

tangible values such as supportive relationships and community involvement. Reduced working time can be achieved by encouraging part-time work, adopting a smaller working week or lowering the retirement age. Such measures, especially if accompanied by job guarantee schemes, can reduce carbon emissions and free up time to engage in care and other welfare-improving activities, stabilizing employment as non-essential production declines (Hickel, 2022).

Redefine business models. The transition to degrowth will require the development and application of innovative business models that direct firms' production strategies away from many 'frivolous' types of goods and services characterising consumption levels and patterns, to drive industry support for ecological regeneration and societal wellbeing. New business models are being developed for business operations based on values such as sharing and cooperation that create value for multiple stakeholders in the production process (Reinhold et al., 2019; Jonker & Faber, 2021). However, to date, there has been little effort to address appropriate models for degrowth generally, or for tourism specifically.

Relocalisation. The degrowth approach recommends production and consumption of goods and services should become more 'localised' in self-sufficient economies to promote community well-being (Latouche, 2009). Degrowthers favour labour intensive projects of smaller scale, devoting local resources to meeting local needs rather than the mass production methods of modem capital-intensive industry (Kallis et al., 2020). Given that domestic tourism typically has lower emissions due to shorter travel distances. and fosters improved social relations via community participation, a focus on domestic tourism is seen as an important development strategy, wherein the rights and needs of local residents are prioritized over those of tourists and industry stakeholders (Higgins-Desbiolles et al., 2019). To date, proponents of localisation have yet to deal satisfactorily with the inevitable loss of economies of scale that reduce operation costs, enabling lower priced goods and services generally.

Institutional Reform. The degrowth approach offers a vision for the transition of society from a growth-oriented materialistic economy to a convivial, participatory 'post-growth economy' (Cassiers et al., 2017; Kallis et al., 2020). Degrowthers emphasise the need to investigate the social and institutional changes that will improve provisioning systems for energy distribution, as well as for sectors such as housing, health care, education, agriculture, transportation, and communication, to deliver more favourable social and environmental outcomes (Hickel et al., 2022). Improved provisioning systems can deliver decent living standards with lower energy use (Fletcher et al., 2019).

Substantial debate exists, however, regarding changes required to transition to degrowth.

Some see the post-degrowth process as a range of reforms compatible with existing social structures. (Trainer, 2023) recommends focus on the development of smaller communities with radically simpler lifestyles, systems, settlements and economies. Other researchers, arguing that capitalism in its pursuit of growth will inevitably continue to push industrial activity beyond planetary boundaries, emphasise the necessity for transformation in forms of production, consumption and exchange, the market system, work practices, financial systems, human relationships and livelihood practices. On this view, voluntary degrowth can be achieved only if capitalism is abandoned (Kallis et al., 2018; Hickel et al., 2022; Buch-Hansen et al., 2024). Whatever label is applied to the post-growth ideal, it seems clear that it will need to be organised according to fundamentally different cultural, social, economic, political and technological principles, reflecting different values from those supporting the pro-growth approach (Buchs & Koch, 2019). There is widespread agreement that the degrowth agenda is not possible without a deontological shift in human values away from current consumption patterns and lifestyles based on the quest for affluence through growth (Trainer, 2023; Buch-Hansen et al., 2024). This view is held also by several heterodox tourism researchers (Hall, 2009; Higgins-Desbiolles et al., 2019; Fletcher et al., 2019; Sharpley, 2022) who claim that successful degrowth of the tourism industry, both locally and globally, requires a redefinition/refocus of the nature of tourism as a human endeavour facilitating transformative experiences that foster human wellbeing.

Besides the formidable challenges in changing entrenched lifestyles, a common concern about degrowth is that rapid and significant changes to established economic, social and political institutions will lead to social and economic chaos and instability, resulting in decreased resident well-being (Butcher, 2023). If degrowth does inevitably adversely affect human well-being, it would cease to be a viable alternative path for the tourism industry. In response, degrowthers argue that the preferred, lower risk, strategy would be a type of 'stepwise (de)development' involving reform of current institutions to facilitate social transformation. In this way, degrowth can proceed at a slower, less disruptive, more acceptable pace, with policy measures put in place to cushion potentially adverse impacts on well-being. The process would involve both top-down and bottom-up contributions to policy (Buch-Hansen & Nesterova, 2023).

At the present time, there is little understanding of the various ways in which degrowth affects resident well-being. To investigate the well-being effects of degrowth, we need to apply indicators associated with a credible well-being framework.

3. Well-being: Nature and Sources

Human well-being is increasingly considered to be a combination of individual, social and material experiences involving physical and mental health, psychological state, freedoms, opportunities, capabilities, flourishings, sense of meaning and purpose in life, thrivings, functionings and self-acceptance (Dodge et al., 2012; Stiglitz et al., 2018; Tov, 2018; MacCagnan et al., 2019).

3.1 Criteria for Well-Being Measures

Several criteria apply to construction of a framework to identify and measure well-being outcomes associated with destination development paths (including degrowth).

3.1.1 Acknowledgement of both subjective and objective sources of well-being

Subjective well-being (SWB) comprises three elements: *Life evaluation, Experiential* (moment to moment emotions) and *Eudaimonia* (meaning and purpose in life). Each of these elements is itself complex, comprising interactive components (Diener et al., 2018). Tourism research has tended to emphasise SWB measures, with focus on the *perceptions and attitudes* of tourists and residents to tourism development. SWB measures, however, fail to address the structural causes of well-being. Individuals may also be poor judges of their own future well-being, tending to give greater weight to current satisfaction compared conditions that support thriving and flourishing in the future. A focus on SWB is thus likely to ignore conditions that affect the well-being outcomes of tourism development for future generations (Dwyer, 2023a).

A mix of objective and subjective measures is required to capture the full range of resident well-being outcomes associated with destination development including degrowth (Adler & Seligman, 2016; OECD, 2020). Objective sources of well-being include material living standards (income, wealth, consumption, quality of housing), alongside variables such as equity and fairness in the distribution of goods and services, mental and physical health, education, nutrition, workplace environment, work-life balance, social relationships, opportunities for civic engagement, personal and economic security, and environmental quality (Durand, 2015; MacCagnan et al., 2019; Eurostat, 2023). Whichever well-being framework is employed, a broad dashboard of well-being indicators, based on a mix of subjective and objective sources of well-being, provides a sounder basis for the design and appraisal of tourism development or degrowth policies than does a focus on SWB only (Dwyer, 2022a, b, c; Berbekova et al., 2023).

3.1.2 Distinction between current and future well-being outcomes

For a destination development path to be sustainable, the present generation must bequeath to the next generation a stock of capital capable of maintaining at least the same level of well-being *per capita* (Stiglitz et al., 2018; Durand, 2020). Issues of inter- generational well-being have been relatively neglected by tourism researchers with greater attention to conditions for promoting current resident and tourist well-being. However, it cannot be assumed that policies that promote the well-being objectives of the present generation will necessarily promote future resident well-being (Dwyer, 2022a, b, c; 2023a, b).

Distinguishing the sources of current and future well-being allows sustainability considerations to be embedded into study of the effects of tourism degrowth (Dwyer, 2023c).

3.1.3 Theory-based measures of key indicators

Well-being measures used to inform tourism analysis and policy must be credible with a sound basis in theory (Adler & Seligman, 2016). Tourism research, with only some exceptions (Dwyer, 2020) has tended to 'cherry pick' well-being indicators from varied data sources rather than base them upon established theoretical frameworks. Government agencies, destination managers and researchers are progressively moving towards the development of internationally comparable measures of well-being to better understand the effects of industry development on people's lives at the individual, household and community level (Exton & Shinwell, 2018; Durand & Exton, 2019; OECD, 2020; Eurostat, 2023). Theory-based indicator selection helps to promote consistency of analysis, intra- and inter-destination comparisons of findings, and implications for policy making to enhance resident well-being (Dwyer, 2022b). As indicators are developed by researchers and statistical agencies that better capture conditions in the various dimensions of well-being, the quality of data and the empirical robustness of well-being measures may be expected to progress over time (Durand & Exton, 2019).

3.1.4 Flexibility

The well-being framework must be flexible enough to embrace a variety of indicators of well-being that reflect the particular values of different cultures and communities. Establishing well-being indicators through an inclusive and transparent, public participatory process is crucial to identifying resident well-being priorities and to bolster resident support for degrowth strategies (Dwyer, 2023c). Ideally, the well-being framework will comprise both 'generic' indicators based on a credible framework and 'contextual' indicators relating to values of particular relevance to destination residents (Durand & Exton, 2019).

3.1.5 Policy relevance

Given that the primary goal of tourism development (and tourism degrowth) is resident well-being, well-being measures are essential to policy assessment (Durand & Exten, 2019; Dwyer, 2020, 2023b), including the effects of degrowth. To be relevant to public debate on appropriate resource allocation to enhance resident well-being, tourism research must assess the potential well-being contributions associated with alternative development paths.Unless tourism researchers adopt or develop the types of well-being measures employed by policymakers (OECD, 2020; Eurostat, 2023), their findings will have little relevance to the wider public debates on appropriate resource allocation to maintain or enhance social well-being within the degrowth context. An advantage of using well-being measures developed in consultation with international statistical agencies is their consistency with destination Systems of National Accounts (Durand, 2020), providing a credible basis for benchmarking and policy making to action degrowth.

3.2 Sources and Indicators of Well-being

A well-being framework meeting the abovementioned criteria for credibility is the *Better Life Initiative* (BLI), arguably the most widely accepted conceptual framework for understanding the sources and indicators of social well-being (Durand, 2015; OECD, 2020). As displayed in Table 2, the BLI framework classifies sources of well-being under three pillars: *material living conditions*; *quality of life*; and *sustainability*. Over 80 indicators of current and future well-being are identified (OECD, 2020; Durand, 2020; Eurostat, 2023). The BLI has been employed recently in a range of studies of tourism development and resident well-being (Dwyer, 2022a, b, c; 2023a, b).

Table 2. The BLI Well-being Framework

Sources	
Material Well-being	Income and wealth Employment Housing
Quality of Life	Health Education Work-life balance Social connections Civic engagement/governance Environmental quality Safety and security Subjective evaluation (+ context specific quality of life variables)
Future Well-being (Sustainability)	Economic capital Human capital Social capital Natural Capital

Source: Durand, 2015; Stiglitz et al., 2018; OECD, 2020; Eurostat, 2023.

A multidimensional indicator set, associated with a credible well-being framework such as the BLI, can act as a 'lens' to convert impacts associated with alternative development paths, into resident well-being outcomes. The lens can be used *ex ant*e for policy formulation, or *ex post* for policy evaluation. The following section employs the BLI to identify well-being outcomes, positive and negative, potentially associated with tourism degrowth. The potential effects on resident well-being relate not just to the downsizing of tourism (and other industries), but also to the package of interventions that are recommended to accompany industry degrowth.

4. Effects of Degrowth on Resident Well-Being

4.1 Tourism Degrowth and Material Well-Being

4.1.1 Income and wealth

Tourism development is widely agreed to promote economic growth, and generate income, wealth and employment, increasing material standard of living at local, regional and national levels (Edgell, 2020, Butcher, 2023). Income allows people to satisfy their consumer needs, while wealth provides opportunity to sustain consumption choices over time (De Neve & Sachs, 2020). In contrast, tourism degrowth can be expected to adversely affect several indicators of material well-being including tourism contribution to household net adjusted disposable income *per capita*, net wealth per household, tourism contribution to GDP, hourly earnings by tourism sector; average earnings in tourism compared to national average, and tax revenues from tourism industry activity. While degrowth will place less pressure on land price rises and cost of living as compared to tourism growth, the likely net effect of reduced tourism activity with its foregone production and consumption opportunities, is a loss of resident material well-being.

Although degrowth is inevitably associated with lower GDP, the approach does not seek to achieve this *per se*, but rather to reduce material and energy throughput (Schneider et al., 2010). The effects of reduced GDP on social well-being depend on what goods and services are affected. Selective degrowth implies a scaling down in particular of ecologically destructive resource-intensive sectors such as fossil fuels, mass-produced meat and dairy, private cars, long- haul aviation and package holiday travel, while prioritising sectors with demonstrated social benefits such as education, health services, renewable energies and green hydrogen technologies. In parallel, degrowthers aim to reduce consumption levels of 'non-necessary' goods and services, or 'conspicuous consumption' that are either resource-intensive or contribute little to collective well-being (Fletcher et al., 2019). The effect of a decrease in consumption on

resident well-being depends on how strongly society emphasises material well-being, rather than the intangible elements of quality of life.

Degrowthers deny that reduced GDP inevitably results in reduced resident well-being. There is also growing evidence that individual material well-being depends not only on absolute levels of income and wealth but also on inequalities in its distribution (Lustig, 2018). Findings by Easterlin and others (Easterlin & O'Connor, 2020) reveal that, over the longer term, increased GDP does not improve social well-being beyond a certain threshold level of living standard. This finding contradicts arguments supporting continued economic growth of tourism. Within a destination, improved income equality has a greater effect on resident well-being- after basic needs are met, relative rather than absolute levels of income matter to well-being (Nikolova & Graham, 2020). While pro-growth advocates have focussed on the allegedly adverse effects of reduced *overall* GDP, this criticism overlooks the fact that income and wealth inequalities can entrench status-based consumption patterns (IPCC, 2023). Degrowthers emphasise the importance of interventions to redistribute income and wealth that tend to be relatively neglected in mainstream policy making (Hanacek et al., 2020). Neglected measures include relative income, at-risk-of-poverty rate, and material deprivation defined as the inability to afford the necessities of life (Laimer, 2017; OECD, 2020). There is increasing evidence that inequality can act as a driver of emissions resulting in unequal well-being outcomes for residents (Kelly et al., 2023). Addressing inequalities in income and wealth can increase overall resident well-being as well as improving the effectiveness of climate change mitigation policies (IPCC, 2023). Beyond environmental considerations, highly unequal societies also tend to perform poorly on a range of other criteria, including physical and mental health, crime, educational attainment and social trust (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2022).

4.1.2 Employment

The availability and quality of jobs is widely agreed to affect people's well-being, with income earned creating consumption opportunities. Standard employment indicators for the tourism industry include availability of 'decent' jobs, tourism contribution to employment; hourly earnings by tourism sector; annual gross earnings per full-time tourism employee compared to national average (Laimer, 2017). Since degrowth implies an overall loss in full-time employment in a destination, changes in each of these indicators would be expected to reduce material well-being and various aspects of resident quality of life associated with consumption. Forced unemployment also may lead to a loss of social status and self-esteem, social exclusion, poverty and deprivation (Krekel et al., 2019).

While conceding the benefits of 'decent work', degrowthers point out that employment opportunities *per se*, do not guarantee the fairness of different wages or the conditions of the workplace. The tourism industry globally has long been associated with low wages, persistent gender pay differences, poor working conditions, irregular hours, casualization, seasonal unemployment, and lack of unemployment benefits (Mahadevan & Suardi, 2019). Employment performance indicators include safe working conditions, number of workplace accidents, good workplace relationships, on the job training, career advancement opportunities, development of skills, work-related health problems, enhanced self–esteem, personal dignity and life satisfaction (Cazes et al., 2015). Attention to these issues can foster resident well-being within the degrowth process.

It should be emphasised that degrowth does not imply that jobs cease overnight. Complementary strategies attempt to ensure a just transition from employment in declining industries such as those with a high carbon footprint. The public and private sectors can each play an important role in promoting and funding socially useful and ecologically regenerative activities such as, environmental reclamation and management, ecosystem restoration, renewable energy production, improved education and social care. The direction of change for each of the well-being indicators will be influenced by the package of employment policies developed by both private and public sector stakeholders to complement degrowth.

4.1.3 Housing

Housing is part of a destination's key physical and social infrastructure. Indicators of adequate housing include adequate sanitation, good insulation and ventilation, access to electricity and internet, overcrowding rate, and satisfaction with housing quality. Housing quantity and quality can contribute to resident

basic needs, as an important determinant of health status, access to jobs and public services, opportunities for social connections and family cohesion, personal security and opportunities for individuals to live in safer and cleaner communities (Helliwell et al., 2020). The quality of tourism and hospitality worker accommodation can affect job satisfaction and labour productivity (Dwyer, 2022b).

Local residents compete with tourism developers for land and housing. Housing affordability relates to the share of household gross adjusted disposable income spent on housing rent and maintenance. Recent studies confirm the impact of tourism expansion on housing prices including a particularly strong tourism seasonality impact (Mikulić et al., 2021; Cró & Martins, 2023). Given that housing is the largest component of household expenditure (Stiglitz et al., 2018), the housing cost overburden, potentially affected by the size and pace of tourism development, restricts opportunities for resident consumption of other basic goods and services. A growing gap between housing prices and incomes has been found to generate inequalities in destinations affected, causing the displacement of local residents from tourism destinations, with an overall tourism- led decay of urban areas (Mikulić et al., 2021). Conversely, tourism degrowth is likely to put less pressure on housing prices generally making housing more affordable. To the extent that degrowth reduces or eliminates these effects, resident well-being may increase overall.

More affordable smaller scale housing can free up household resources to meet other consumption needs. A transition to reduced size housing and co-housing will likely lead to a lower overall ecological footprint for the housing industry. This is already happening across many destinations worldwide (Cró & Martins, 2023). The degrowth approach emphasises the need for improved spatial and urban planning, including alternative housing arrangements such as housing cooperatives and shared housing, and regulating the development of holiday homes. Public or cooperative housing should be prioritised in an economic system that regards housing as a basic need, rather than as an opportunity for making speculative profits.

The upshot of this discussion is that the loss of material well-being resulting from degrowth may not be as great as pro-growthers allege, particularly in view of the potential range of complementary interventions accompanying degrowth, expanding the opportunities for non-material sources of well-being to contribute to social well-being. While degrowth is likely to negatively impact upon *material* well-being, particularly in the early stages of the process, the wider consequences for overall *social* or immaterial well-being may well be positive. Contributions to quality of life, typically not captured in GDP, may result in well-being improvements to resident well-being as GDP falls. The net effect of overall social well-being for any degrowth situation can only be determined empirically.

4.2 Degrowth and Quality of Life

4.2.1 Health

Good physical and mental health allows performance of a range of personal and social activities that contribute to well-being (MacCagnan et al., 2019). These activities include gaining employment and earning income, participation in community life, becoming educated and creative, the fostering of a more productive workforce and achieving greater life satisfaction (Llena-Nozal et al., 2019; Helliwell et al., 2020).

The implications of tourism degrowth for health status of destination residents are mixed. Pro-growthers argue that the reduced taxation base will lead to an overall contraction in health care across the board, with consequent reduction in social well-being. In response, degrowthers deny that downsizing necessarily implies a reduction in health- related infrastructure or facilities specifically dedicated to health and welfare improvement. Treated as a 'merit good', expenditure on health care should be prioritised in the degrowth process. Degrowthers also identify some of the negative impacts that growth-oriented development can have on people's wellbeing caused by competition for status and recognition, that contribute to stress and the onset of mental and physical health conditions (Jackson, 2017).

4.2.2 Education

Education and skills acquisition benefit both the individuals concerned and society as a whole. Education supports other well-being outcomes such as better health status, reducing income inequalities,

fostering greater productivity, more active participation in civic and political engagement, volunteering, promoting tolerance of diversity between people, deeper personal fulfillment, lower physical crime rates and appreciation of global citizenship (MacCagnan et al., 2019; Helliwell et al., 2020). A better educated workforce is more innovative and productive, improving business profitability and employee remuneration (Helliwell et al., 2020), each of which contributes to worker well-being.

Since the absolute size of government receipts from taxation will be less in a degrowth situation, maintenance of a quality education sector will present challenges to policy makers, particularly if less work time induces increased demand for education services. Reduced business growth is also likely to negatively impact on business funding support for educational institutions and on in-house training programs. But degrowth *per se* does not imply cuts to education. Since education is an important sector affecting living standards and quality of life, degrowthers agree that every effort should be made to retain high funding for this sector at all levels including adult learning. An ideal focus should be on retention and enhancement of educational programs that are rewarding and life enhancing, directly enhancing their well-being (Helliwell et al., 2020). While numbers of students enrolled in tourism courses will decline due to tourism degrowth, tourism education, including in the form of adult education and training and lifelong learning, has significant potential to continue to promote values associated with individual and social well-being such as sustainability, pro-environmental behaviour, inclusiveness, a culture of sufficiency, tolerance, and analysis of eco-centric worldviews (Kaufmann et al., 2019).

4.2.3 Work-life balance

Work-life balance is important for individual and social well-being. There is evidence that economic growth is associated with a general imbalance between time devoted to work and time spent in other pursuits with long working hours, including long commuting times, restricting the time available for leisure and recreation, personal care, and family life (Krekel et al., 2019). Indicators of well-being associated with work-life balance include average hours at work, atypical working hours, proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, time devoted to leisure and personal care, flexibility of work schedule, gender differences in hours worked and satisfaction with time use (Eurostat, 2019). An appropriate balance between time devoted to work and that devoted to leisure promotes good mental and physical health, reduced stress, greater workplace productively, with positive impacts on life fulfilling activity, including volunteering, civic engagement, and the forging of social connections (Durand, 2015; Helliwell et al., 2020).

The strategy of reduced working hours receives support in all major degrowth scenarios and is endorsed by heterodox tourism scholars (Higgins-Desbiolles et al., 2019). The less time is spent on formal work, the more opportunities present themselves to pursue other activities that are fundamental to one's well-being. While average annual salaries will inevitably decline alongside reduced working hours, research suggests that the extent of the overall negative effect on well-being may well be exaggerated, particularly given greater awareness of the range negative effects associated with work-centred lifestyles (Kallis et al., 2018). Further research is needed as to the impact of shorter working hours on tourism stakeholder well-being, and the challenges associated with the transition to reduced working hours.

Reduced working hours may also be less environmentally harmful, with potential to lower carbon emissions via reduced need for energy and materials at the workplace and reduced demand for related transportation services. However, environmental gains may be limited if more leisure time activities involve material and energy-intensive goods and services, putting increased pressure on environmental resources (Demaria & Gómez-Baggethun, 2023). Additional policies may be necessary to create incentives for residents to favour convivial, environmentally friendly consumption over current volumes and patterns.

Degrowthers acknowledge that working less will not please every worker. Employment provides workers with opportunities to earn a decent living, acquire skills, form friendships, integrate into the community, forge an identity and achieve self-realization (Cazes et al., 2015). To embrace the positive aspects of working time, the degrowth approach seeks a reconceptualization of work involving deprioritising wage labour in society, in favour of a society emphasising activities such as community services and volunteer work caring and sharing, with less dependence on economic activity to enhance well-being (Jackson, 2017).

In sum, reduced employment hours, if planned and voluntary, may not have the significant negative net effect on worker/resident well-being as claimed by the critics of degrowth. While reduced wages result in less material well-being, increased leisure time can enhance opportunities for non-material forms of individual and social well-being.

4.2.4 Social connections

Societal well-being is enhanced through good social connections (Algan, 2018; Helliwell et al., 2020). Social connections can help individuals gain employment and to improve opportunities for increased incomes and career progression, to improve mental and physical health and to enjoy material and emotional support in times of need (De Neve & Sachs, 2020). Since good social connections are prioritised in the degrowth process, social connections they are likely to strengthen as a result of stakeholder participation in the degrowth process, with the required mutual support demanded to achieve common goals (Andreoni & Galmarini, 2013). Several indicators of well-being associated with social connections in tourism may potentially improve in the degrowth context. These include time spent by residents in social interactions with family and friends, social network support, participation in formal voluntary work, and expansion of the sharing economy (Jackson, 2017).

4.2.5 Civic engagement and governance

Civic engagement gives residents a political voice in society improving the accountability and the effectiveness of government institutions and public policy (Helliwell et al., 2020), with good governance required to translate people's voice into policies that support aspirations for the good life (Algan, 2018; Durand & Exton, 2019). Well-being indicators include the existence of formal and open consultation processes on rule making; trust in judicial and government institutions, participation in civil society groups/organisations, voter turnout, anti-discrimination legislation, access to and satisfaction with public services, perceived corruption in government and business, and community input into decision making including tourism policy and planning (Eurostat, 2023).

There is no evidence that the degrowth process will adversely affect the direction of these indicators. Indeed, degrowthers emphasize that initiatives to enhance good governance and civic engagement in the destination are essential to individual and social well-being (Hickel et al., 2022). Localisation, a preferred degrowth strategy, will help to achieve community- based tourism planning and development (Nunkoo, 2017), while resident engagement in tourism planning can foster place-protective behaviours (Chassagne & Everingham, 2019).

4.2.6 Environmental quality

The natural environment is interconnected with human physical and mental wellbeing (Krekel & MacKerron, 2020). This relationship reflects both exploitation of the material components of environment for sustenance (objective wellbeing), and to nature's role in generating enhanced SWB via a range of emotional cognitive, symbolic, educational, spiritual, aesthetic feelings (IPCC, 2023). The natural environment presents opportunities for people to undertake recreational and nature- based activities to improve physical and mental health, stress levels, the work-life balance, longevity, social connections and life satisfaction (Helliwell et al., 2020). There is substantial evidence that ongoing economic growth is associated with environmental degradation that adversely affects well-being (Roberts et al., 2020). To complement economic downsizing degrowthers support a range of strategies to reduce environmental pressures to improve environmental quality (Jackson, 2017). The transition to degrowth thus has the potential to reduce various adverse effects on environmental quality and reduced well-being resulting from economic growth.

4.2.7 Safety and security

Economic and physical security relates to those elements of well-being (perceived or real) associated with potential loss of life and property, stress, anxiety, feelings of vulnerability, lower productivity, absenteeism. Feelings of insecurity, discrimination and vulnerability limit people's daily activities and functionings (Krekel et al., 2019; De Neve et al., 2019). Despite degrowth commitments to inclusiveness, it is likely

that residents will experience increased financial insecurity and mental stress associated with tourism downsizing. A smaller government budget position may impact on funding of the police force and judiciary. While the degrowth process has the potential to affect economic security, there is widespread acknowledgment of the need to develop social security systems that support residents in time of need, including job loss, and which regard occupational health and safety regulations as an important determinant of well-being in the workplace (Kallis et al., 2018; Hickel et al., 2022).

4.2.8 Subjective evaluation

Tourism research generally has emphasised the effects of different types of tourism development on resident life evaluation, with less attention to feelings and emotions and eudaimonia (Dwyer, 2023b, c). The effects of tourism degrowth on SWB will vary according to the specific type of downsizing undertaken at any given time and the circumstances of the individuals and stakeholder groups affected. Degrowthers realise that a downsizing of the economy may well produce a loss in SWB, particularly of the hedonic type embracing feelings, emotions and states, but regard these as primarily short term effects of the degrowth process, rather than its post-growth phase (Buchs-Hansen, 2023; Buchs-Hansen et al., 2024). Recognition of the importance of eudaimonic well-being, alongside objective indicators is necessary for the creation of economic social institutions and political systems that can enable individuals to flourish during and following degrowth.

4.3 Degrowth and Intergenerational Well-being

Accounting for resident future as well as current well-being helps to put in place the longer-term focus essential to maintaining or improving well-being during the degrowth process. The BLI recognises that contribution to resident well-being over the longer term is influenced by changes in both quantity and quality of four different types of capital stocks- economic, human, social and natural.

4.3.1 Economic capital

Economic (manufactured) capital in the tourism industry includes facilities and services that are available to residents and visitors such as hotels, restaurants, airports, shipping terminals, shopping facilities, as well as the physical and financial capital supporting infrastructure such as roads, transportation networks, energy production, water storage and distribution, and telecommunications (Dwyer, 2023a). While reduced economic capital will impede growth in tourism GDP and tourism employment, thus impacting on material well-being, higher levels of public debt incurred to support tourism related infrastructure may lead to reduced public expenditure on essential community services reducing community well-being overall. An advantage of tourism degrowth would be a reduction in levels of public indebtedness and/or taxes to fund increased infrastructure and services.

4.3.2 Human capital

Human capital is the stock of knowledge, skills, competencies, creativity, physical, emotional and mental health of individuals that enables them to fully participate in work, study, recreation, and society, supporting individual and social well-being (Stiglitz et al., 2018). An increase in human capital and its equitable distribution, has positive effects on the economy and on the well-being of society Good physical and mental health provides opportunity for individuals to participate in and enjoy a range of life-enhancing activities inside and outside the workplace. The education system, including tourism education, contributes to present and future well-being through development of knowledge, skills, productivity and ability to innovate (Helliwell et al., 2020). Degrowth can affect funding support for both, reducing the skills and learning opportunities available to people unless these sectors are prioritised in the degrowth process.

4.3.3 Social capital

Social capital comprises the public and private sector networks, connections, attitudes, norms and formal rules or institutions that contribute to societal well-being through coordination and collaboration between people and groups in society (Algan, 2018). Levels of trust generated by social networks influ-

ence a variety of well-being outcomes (De Neve & Sachs, 2020). Social capital is strongly influenced by the current degree of fairness in the distribution of resources (which is a major goal of the degrowth process). An ideal set of indicators of well-being outcomes associated with social capital would include quantity and quality of bonding, bridging, and linking capital, trust in civil institutions, good governance, resident sense of belonging and pro-social norms (Stiglitz et al., 2018; Eurostat, 2019). There seems little reason to believe that degrowth may cause these well-being indicators to downturn. To the contrary, the reduced economic activity, relocalisation, a cultural shift towards more inclusive values, and greater emphasis on non-market relationships between individuals, is likely to increase social capital and individual well-being as residents embrace their common purpose (Andreoni & Galmarini, 2013).

4.3.4 Natural Capital

Natural capital comprises the destination stock of renewable and non-renewable natural resources, including those that provide goods and services necessary for the economy, and broader ecosystems supplying provisioning, regulating, cultural and supporting services that support the biodiversity essential to physical and mental health, quality of life and survival of all species (UNWTO, 2018). Sufficient natural capital is essential to other types of capital (economic, human and social) that generate well-being into the future (De Neve & Sachs, 2020). Tourism degrowth may be expected to change indicators of changes in natural capital in a favourable direction. To complement the positive environmental effects of downsizing, degrowthers have developed a range of strategies to protect natural capital (Jackson, 2017; Fletcher et al., 2019). Well-designed climate mitigation policies emphasise wider community participation in climate action, building more effective governance for improved mitigation, and including social trust, greater equity, ecosystem restoration environmental justice and community wellbeing (Demaria & Gómez-Baggethun, 2023; IPCC, 2023).

For tourism degrowth to achieve favourable intergenerational well-being outcomes, important decisions must be made about the types of capital that can be used up in the present, and the types that must be preserved for the future (Dwyer, 2023a). The practicality of this position depends on the formulation of acceptable notions of 'criticalness' and the measures adopted to estimate threshold levels of capital stocks (Dwyer, 2023d). Ultimately, possible substitutions between the different types of capital stocks can only be determined by reference to the outcomes for current and future well-being.

5. Where to Now?

To date, the tourism degrowth movement has had little effect on mainstream thinking, but this situation is likely to change when the failure of absolute decoupling is fully realised by tourism stakeholders. The arguments presented above support the growing calls for governments and societies to reject their focus on economic growth and instead concentrate more directly on promoting well-being within environmental limits.

This paper first provided arguments to support degrowth as a serious alternative to the mainstream pro-management approaches that dominates tourism development research and policy. The rationale for degrowth comes from the demonstrated failure of improved management and technological progress to overcome biophysical realities to shift production towards less material and energy intensive types of goods and services.

The basic principles of the degrowth approach were identified, together with a summary of some major degrowth strategies. Since the promotion of well-being is the primary aim of tourism development, so also must this be the primary aim of tourism degrowth. If degrowth is to be taken seriously as a solution to reverse the accumulating economic, social and environmental effects of tourism industry development on planet Earth, it must demonstrate its potential to deliver well-being outcomes to destination residents, present and future. A range of strategies to downsize an economy in an equitable and participative way were identified, but there has been little detailed attempt to identify, let alone measure, potential well-being outcomes, negative or positive. The bulk of criticism of the degrowth concept has emphasised the various *material* benefits that may be lost if destination economic growth is abandoned, rather than the *immaterial* positive quality of life outcomes that can result.

In particular, little effort has been made to use an established well-being framework to identify and measure the well-being outcomes of degrowth experienced by different stakeholders. The arguments presented above suggests that individual and social well-being do not depend necessarily on high levels of production and consumption which themselves generate socio-economic and environmental costs. To assess the consequences of tourism degrowth for resident well-being, and to specify relevant sources and indicators, an established well-being framework, the *Better Life Initiative* was employed as a lens to filter the impacts of degrowth and complementary strategies to identify some important well-being outcomes of tourism degrowth. The well-being lens also enables the trade-offs implicit in policy interventions to be more open and transparent. This exercise revealed various well-being outcomes of degrowth that have escaped detailed investigation. It also revealed that the effects of degrowth on resident well-being are not clearcut. While degrowth affects levels of material well-being, the linkages between economic growth and resident well-being appear to have been overrated, as demonstrated by Easterlin and other researchers (Easterlin & O'Connor, 2020). Material well-being, beyond some threshold level is not closely associated with economic growth. Research findings confirm that an equitable income distribution rather than income level is an important determinant of individual well-being. Taking sources of non-material well-being into account, it emerges that the degrowth process, considered alongside a range of complementary interventions, can potentially make important contributions to resident well-being. By implication, the loss of material well-being, due to a downscaling of production and consumption, can potentially be compensated by improvements in other well-being variables. Resident well-being outcomes may decrease in the various stages of degrowth, but increase in a post degrowth state as values, norms, attitudes change. It is concluded that the net effect of overall social well-being for any degrowth situation can only be determined empirically, taking account of the timings of different interventions.

While the BLI framework formed the basis for identifying potential well-being outcomes of degrowth, the findings are not dependent on any particular well-being framework. Recently, a needs-based approach to identifying degrowth well-being outcomes has been proposed (Bucks & Koch, 2019). Any framework employed would, however, need to meet each of the criteria outlined in Section 3.1. Composition of the well-being lens can be refined over time as improved measures are developed. Ideally, destination managers need to develop indicators that can better capture resident well-being outcomes for different demographic and geographic segments of the resident population. An improved research effort can determine potential gainers and losers in the process of degrowth, with particular attention to individuals and communities already marginalised in terms of geography, gender, race, class and caste, with ameliorating actions taken where appropriate (Hanacek et al., 2020).

The degrowth process is unlikely to be successful unless driven by a transformative shift in values away from neo-liberal thinking. Detailed research is required to determine how the principles basic to degrowth can become institutionalised in public- and private-sector plans and policies. There is need also to identify those institutions, agencies and organisations that can support or impede degrowth (Buchs & Koch, 2019; Dwyer, 2023e). Researchers also need to determine the ideal characteristics of a post-degrowth tourism industry (Higgins-Desbiolles & Everingham, 2022), that incorporates wellbeing measures into private and public sector policymaking.

The task of identifying the effects of degrowth on resident well-being is magnified by a varied range of strategies, policies and institutional reforms enabling the degrowth process, each of which will affect well-being. Analysis of well-being outcomes, can, however, provide guidance as to the preferred strategies and types of interventions that best support the degrowth process. Particular attention should be devoted to the effects of degrowth on human, social and natural capital stocks that transmit well-being to future generations. This area of investigation will include analysis of the potential well-being outcomes for residents of the political-economic, socio-cultural, judicial and institutional changes required to enable the degrowth process (Roberts et al., 2020). Since changes in the quality and quantity of capital stocks affect the well-being outcomes of tourism activity for both present and future generations, the links between reduced capital stocks resulting from degrowth, and changes in resident well-being outcomes must also be identified (Dwyer, 2023a). While some recent ecological macroeconomic modelling shows degrowth can be environmentally, socially, and economically beneficial (Monserand, 2022), more studies are needed with specific attention to well-being outcomes under tourism degrowth. A key research issue thus

concerns the conditions required to maintain or improve human wellbeing in both the degrowth phase of tourism and postgrowth in the long term, and the types of institutions that can enable this (Büchs & Koch, 2019).

To date, little formal or empirical work has been undertaken by tourism researchers to estimate the likely outcomes of rejecting business as usual, and the advantages or disadvantages of alternative policy initiatives to 'resize' tourism. Empirical studies can reveal the relative weightings accorded to different well-being outcomes, which may be expected to differ according to the destinations studied, their economic, socio-cultural and environmental features and the types of degrowth initiatives undertaken. The discussion in this paper represents only a first step to determining well-being outcomes of tourism degrowth compared to tourism 'business as usual'. An intensive empirical research effort will be required to identify and measure resident well-being outcomes associated with degrowth and the role that different degrowth strategies may play in this process in different destinations. Undoubtedly, strategies to actualise tourism degrowth confront formidable challenges in their formulation and implementation. The discussion herein has attempted to demonstrate, however, that the degrowth process is capable of delivering a range of well-being outcomes to residents that hitherto have been ignored in the tourism research literature.

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