



## Post-Growth: Rethinking Prosperity Beyond Endless Expansion

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### Introduction

For decades, economic growth has been treated as the primary measure of progress, with Gross Domestic Product (GDP) serving as the benchmark of national success. However, the relentless pursuit of growth is increasingly being questioned in the face of environmental crises, social inequality, and resource depletion. *Post-growth* is a framework that challenges the assumption that more growth is always better. Instead, it seeks to redefine prosperity by prioritizing wellbeing, sustainability, and social justice over the endless accumulation of wealth and consumption. In doing so, post-growth offers an alternative vision for societies that acknowledges ecological limits while still fostering human flourishing [1].

### Discussion

At its core, post-growth recognizes that infinite growth on a finite planet is impossible. Economic expansion typically depends on resource extraction, energy use, and production, which contribute to climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution. While growth has historically improved living standards, it has also produced widening inequalities and unsustainable consumption patterns. Post-growth perspectives argue that the future must involve shifting away from the obsession with GDP toward indicators that capture quality of life, environmental health, and social cohesion [2].

The post-growth approach emphasizes sufficiency rather than excess. This does not mean abandoning prosperity but redefining it. Instead of equating wealth with material consumption, post-growth societies aim to prioritize values such as community, equality, leisure, and ecological balance. For example, reducing working hours can improve wellbeing while also lowering energy demand. Similarly, promoting circular economies—where resources are reused, repaired, and recycled—aligns economic activity with ecological resilience [3].

Several real-world initiatives reflect post-growth thinking. Countries like Bhutan, with its Gross National Happiness index, and New Zealand, with its wellbeing budget, demonstrate how governments can measure success beyond GDP. Social movements

advocating for degrowth or steady-state economies also echo post-growth principles by calling for economies that fit within ecological boundaries. Moreover, urban projects focusing on walkable cities, green infrastructure, and cooperative business models highlight how post-growth ideals can translate into daily life [4].

Nevertheless, moving toward a post-growth economy presents challenges. Critics argue that without growth, governments may struggle to finance public services or create jobs. Societies accustomed to consumer-driven lifestyles may resist scaling back material aspirations. Addressing these concerns requires innovation in taxation, redistribution, and social safety nets, ensuring that basic needs are met without relying on perpetual expansion. Additionally, political will and cultural change are essential, as dominant economic systems are deeply tied to the growth paradigm [5].

### Conclusion

Post-growth represents a paradigm shift in how prosperity is understood and pursued. Rather than chasing endless expansion, it calls for economies designed to sustain both people and the planet. By focusing on wellbeing, equity, and ecological limits, post-growth challenges the status quo and offers a vision of a future where success is measured not by how much we produce, but by how well we live. While the transition will be complex, the post-growth framework provides a hopeful path toward building resilient and sustainable societies in a finite world.

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