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Epistemic Reclamation of Indigenous Local Wisdom as a Counter-Narrative to Anthropocentrism in Planetary Crisis Governance

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ABSTRACT: *The escalating planetary crisis has exposed the epistemic limitations of environmental governance frameworks that remain anchored in anthropocentric assumptions. This study aims to conceptually reclaim indigenous local wisdom as an epistemic counter-narrative to anthropocentrism within planetary crisis governance, synthesizing three previously disconnected bodies of literature: critiques of anthropocentrism, scholarship on indigenous knowledge, and theories of epistemic reclamation and decolonial epistemology. Employing a library research (conceptual-philosophical) method, this study analyzes journal articles, book chapters, and encyclopedia entries through thematic mapping, comparative concept analysis, and dialectical argumentative synthesis. The results show that anthropocentrism persists in governance not as an explicit doctrine but as an unexamined epistemic default; indigenous knowledge is well documented as practically valuable yet under-theorized as epistemically authoritative; and epistemic reclamation theory supplies the missing mechanism for repositioning such knowledge from supplementary content into a legitimate counter-narrative. The central finding is that indigenous local wisdom should be understood not as an object awaiting integration but as a co-equal epistemic standpoint in planetary decision-making. This reframing carries significant implications for the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly climate action, life on land and below water, and sustainable communities, as procedural SDG achievement risks reproducing epistemic exclusion when indigenous knowledge is treated as consultative rather than constitutive of sustainability governance.*

Keywords: *Epistemic Reclamation, Anthropocentrism, Indigenous Local Wisdom, Planetary Crisis Governance*



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I. INTRODUCTION

The planetary crisis is no longer a distant projection but a lived and accelerating condition, manifesting as a convergence of ecological, social, and epistemic ruptures that current governance architectures struggle to contain (Kennel, 2021; Seck, 2023; Suša, 2019). This convergence, often described as a syndemic entanglement of environmental and human health emergencies (Díaz-Barriga et al., 2024; Lenzer et al., 2024), has intensified scrutiny of the normative assumptions underlying global environmental governance, particularly the anthropocentric worldview that positions human interests as the primary, if not exclusive, referent of value and decision-making (Goralnik & Nelson, 2012; Kopnina et al., 2018). Anthropocentrism has been variously defended as an unavoidable feature of moral reasoning (Hála, 2013; Epting, 2024) and challenged as a hubristic abstraction that obscures the agency and value of non-human and more-than-human worlds (Washington et al., 2021; Battaglia, 2026). Between these poles, a substantial body of scholarship has traced the historical, religious, and philosophical genealogies of anthropocentric thought (Karabykov, 2025; Valera, 2014), interrogated its adequacy as an explanatory scapegoat for ecological crisis (Droz, 2022; Sorgen, 2020), and proposed alternative or "weak" formulations intended to soften its most totalizing claims (Epting, 2024; Ross, 2025).

This philosophical contestation is not merely academic; it is embedded in the institutional design of environmental governance itself. Governance frameworks, understood as the structures, processes, and norms through which environmental decisions are made, evaluated, and legitimized (Bennett & Satterfield, 2018; Haque, 2018; Paavola, 2023), have historically been built upon paradigms of regulation and control that privilege technocratic, state-centered, and market-based rationalities (Das, 2019; DeLoyde & Mabee, 2019; Ioris, 2014). Scholars have examined how such frameworks operate across diverse institutional and sectoral contexts, from multi-level participatory arrangements (Cheng & So, 2015) to technology-driven regulatory instruments (Jha et al., 2024) and quality-assurance regimes (Kaur et al., 2026), as well as how local and community-based governance practices attempt to reconcile ecological sustainability with social participation

(Gutiérrez & Morales-Pinzón, 2017; Liu et al., 2026). Emerging proposals have further sought to widen the ethical and cultural basis of governance, for instance, through relational and communal ethics (Jacob et al., 2026) or long-term strategic frameworks for planetary stewardship (James et al., 2026), yet these efforts largely remain anchored within governance paradigms that treat epistemic authority as a settled, rather than contested, terrain (Herrera et al., 2018; Silva, 2017).

Parallel to this governance discourse, a growing body of literature has documented the persistence, resilience, and practical value of indigenous and local knowledge systems across ecological, educational, and cultural domains. Indigenous knowledge has been shown to inform conflict resolution practices (Abdo, 2024), natural resource management (Withanage et al., 2024), pedagogical innovation in mathematics and science education (Mulenga et al., 2025; Willis, 2018), craft-based cultural economies (Pariwongkhuntorn & Phanpanya, 2026), and digital cultural preservation strategies (Sharma & Kaur, 2025). Systematic reviews have further mapped efforts to integrate indigenous and scientific knowledge systems (Ijatuyi et al., 2025) and to manage indigenous knowledge as a developmental resource (Lodhi & Mikulecky, 2010), while broader edited volumes have called for the resurgence and revalorization of indigenous knowledge systems within contemporary institutional life (Masenya & Bhuda, 2025). Education for sustainability scholarship has likewise foregrounded indigenous perspectives as a distinct epistemic vantage point rather than a supplementary cultural artifact (Ritchie et al., 2015). Taken together, this literature affirms that indigenous knowledge possesses substantive practical and pedagogical value; however, it tends to frame such knowledge primarily as content to be preserved, integrated, or applied, rather than as an epistemic position capable of contesting the deeper ontological assumptions, anthropocentrism foremost among them, that structure planetary crisis governance itself.

This is precisely the gap that a distinct and more recent strand of epistemological scholarship begins to address, though not yet in direct conversation with either the anthropocentrism debate or indigenous knowledge literature reviewed above. Work on epistemic reclamation has theorized how marginalized groups reassert control over meaning, language, and knowledge claims that have historically been

appropriated or delegitimized (Popa-Wyatt, 2020), while adjacent theorizations of epistemic reparation examine the obligations owed to those whose knowledge and testimony have been structurally discredited (Miragoli, 2026; Tobi, 2026). Decolonial and resistant epistemologies have extended this reasoning into concrete institutional domains, from critical theorization of resistant knowledge production (Miglievich-Ribeiro, 2025) to epistemic emancipation within higher education (R'boul, 2026), health data justice and vernacularization (Rawson, 2025), and the decolonial study of digital cultures through epistemologies-of-the-South lenses (Uzuegbunam, 2025). Related work on digital epistemicide (Youngman & Patin, 2024) and the politics underlying claims to gendered and cultural authority (Lee, 2010) further illustrates that epistemic reclamation is not confined to a single domain but constitutes a broader theoretical apparatus for understanding how excluded knowledges reassert legitimacy against dominant epistemic orders. Despite the conceptual maturity of this apparatus, it has not yet been systematically extended to theorize indigenous local wisdom as an epistemic counter-narrative within the specific institutional field of planetary crisis governance, nor has the anthropocentrism debate been substantively reframed through the lens of epistemic (in)justice and reclamation.

This article addresses that gap by asking how indigenous local wisdom can be conceptually reclaimed as an epistemic standpoint capable of countering the anthropocentric assumptions embedded in planetary crisis governance. Drawing on epistemic reclamation and decolonial epistemology as its principal theoretical lenses, this study advances a conceptual-philosophical argument rather than an empirical or field-based inquiry, situating itself at the intersection of three literatures that have so far developed largely in parallel: critical theorizations of anthropocentrism, empirical and pedagogical accounts of indigenous knowledge, and philosophical theories of epistemic reclamation and reparation. Its contribution is therefore twofold. Theoretically, it proposes a framework in which indigenous local wisdom is repositioned from an object of cultural preservation into an active epistemic agent capable of contesting anthropocentric governance paradigms. Practically, it offers conceptual grounds for rethinking planetary crisis governance as a site of epistemic contestation, with implications for how policy



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and institutional frameworks might accommodate plural, non-anthropocentric ways of knowing (Upreti, 2024).

The remainder of this article is organized as follows. The subsequent section develops the theoretical framework by synthesizing literature on anthropocentrism, epistemic reclamation, and indigenous epistemology. This is followed by a conceptual analysis section that examines the tensions and convergences among these three bodies of thought. The article then presents its central argument regarding the reclamation of indigenous local wisdom as a counter-narrative to anthropocentric governance, before concluding with a discussion of the theoretical and practical implications of this argument for the future of planetary crisis governance.

II. METHOD

This study employs a library research (conceptual-philosophical) method. Data consist entirely of textual sources, journal articles, book chapters, and encyclopedia entries, analyzed through conceptual and hermeneutic techniques to construct a philosophical argument, rather than empirical or field-collected data.

1.1 Source Selection

Literature was purposively selected based on conceptual relevance to three interrelated themes: indigenous knowledge/local wisdom, anthropocentrism/environmental governance, and epistemic reclamation/decolonial epistemology. Sources were drawn from peer-reviewed journals, book chapters, and scholarly encyclopedias, prioritizing conceptual depth and argumentative relevance over exhaustiveness or chronological coverage.

1.2 Thematic Mapping

A keyword co-occurrence visualization may be included to illustrate how the three clusters relate within the broader literature.

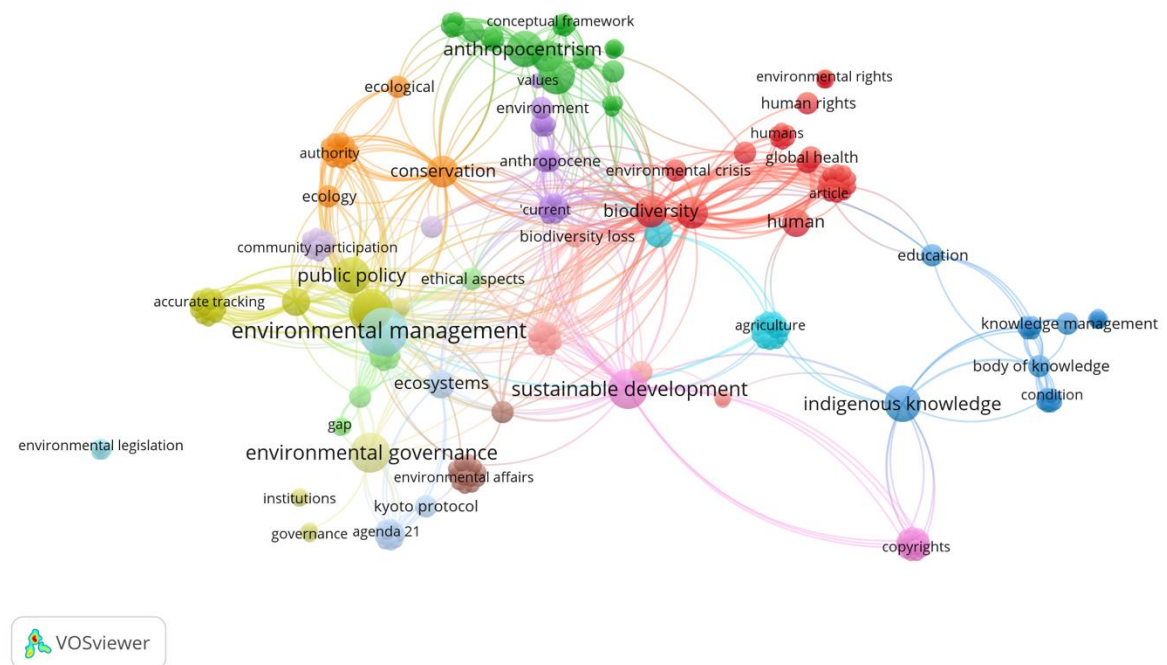


Figure 1. VOSviewer Keyword Map

Figure 1 presents a keyword co-occurrence network generated from the reviewed literature, comprising eight distinct clusters distinguished by color. The green cluster centers on *anthropocentrism* and its conceptual-normative dimensions (conceptual framework, values, environment), while the orange and olive clusters converge around *conservation* and *environmental governance/management* (public policy, community participation, institutions, Kyoto Protocol, Agenda 21). The red cluster, anchored by *biodiversity* and *environmental crisis*, links closely to human-centered terms (human rights, global health), and the purple cluster (anthropocene, biodiversity loss) bridges the anthropocentrism and biodiversity clusters, reflecting their conceptual overlap. Notably, the blue cluster—centered on *indigenous knowledge*, *knowledge management*, and *education*—appears comparatively peripheral, connected mainly through *sustainable development* (pink cluster) and *biodiversity*, with only sparse direct linkage to the anthropocentrism cluster. This spatial and structural distance visually confirms the thematic asymmetry identified in this study: indigenous knowledge remains an under-

integrated node within the dominant governance–anthropocentrism discourse, reinforcing the conceptual gap this article seeks to address.

1.3 Conceptual Analysis

Each key concept, epistemic reclamation, anthropocentrism, planetary crisis governance, and indigenous local wisdom, was analyzed to identify definitional variation, points of contention, and underlying assumptions across sources.

Key Concept	Core Definitional Tension	Underlying Assumption	Key Sources
Anthropocentrism	Unavoidable feature of moral reasoning vs. rejectable hubristic construct	Human interests as primary referent of value	Hála (2013); Washington et al. (2021); Kopnina et al. (2018)
Planetary Crisis Governance	Technocratic/state-centered vs. relational/communal ethics	Epistemic authority treated as settled, not contested	Bennett & Satterfield (2018); Jacob et al. (2026); James et al. (2026)
Indigenous Local Wisdom	Cultural content for preservation vs. active epistemic standpoint	Local knowledge valid as supplement, not co-equal to scientific knowledge	Abdo (2024); Ijatuyi et al. (2025); Masenya & Bhuda (2025)
Epistemic Reclamation	Discursive reappropriation vs. structural/institutional reparation	Delegitimized knowledge can be reasserted as authoritative	Popa-Wyatt (2020); Miragoli (2026); R'boul (2026)

Table 1. Concept Comparison Matrix

1.4 Argumentative Synthesis

The analyzed concepts were synthesized dialectically: anthropocentrism and its critiques serve as thesis–antithesis, indigenous knowledge literature provides empirical-practical grounding, and epistemic reclamation theory functions as the synthesizing framework, positioning indigenous local wisdom as an epistemic counter-narrative to anthropocentric governance.

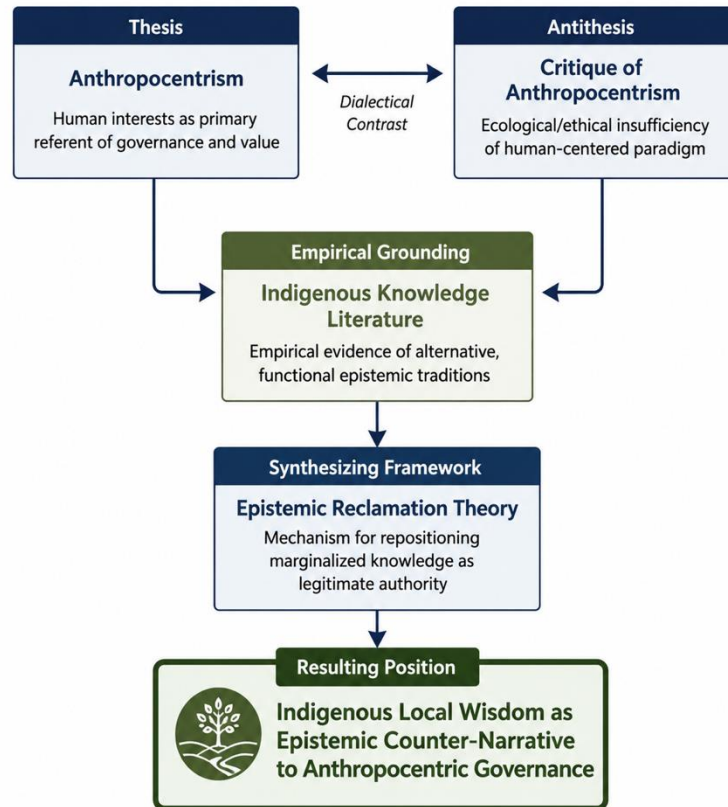


Figure 2. Conceptual Synthesis Model

1.5 Analytical Technique

Analysis combines conceptual analysis and critical hermeneutics, without formal coding software or systematic-review protocols, consistent with the study's philosophical and non-empirical design.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

2.1 Thematic Distribution of the Literature

Mapping the fifty-one sources onto the three conceptual clusters identified in the methods section produces an uneven but analytically revealing distribution.

Thematic Cluster	Sub-themes Covered	Representative Sources	n
Environmental Governance/Anthropocentrism	Definitional accounts; ethical critique; institutional governance; planetary-scale framing	Goralnik & Nelson (2012); Kopnina et al. (2018); Bennett & Satterfield (2018); Kennel	32

Thematic Cluster	Sub-themes Covered	Representative Sources	n
		(2021); Karabykov (2025); and 27 others	
Indigenous Knowledge/ Local Wisdom	Conflict resolution; resource management; education; cultural economies; integration/revalorization	Abdo (2024); Withanage et al. (2024); Mulenga et al. (2025); Ijatuyi et al. (2025); Masenya & Bhuda (2025)	10
Epistemic Reclamation/ Decolonial Epistemology	Linguistic reappropriation; epistemic reparation; resistant/decolonial epistemology; digital epistemicide	Popa-Wyatt (2020); Miragoli (2026); Miglievich-Ribeiro (2025); Youngman & Patin (2024)	9
Total			51

Table 2. Thematic Distribution of Sources

The *environmental governance/anthropocentrism* cluster is the most populated, spanning conceptual and definitional accounts of anthropocentrism (Goralnik & Nelson, 2012; Hála, 2013; Karabykov, 2025), its ethical critique (Kopnina et al., 2018; Washington et al., 2021; Battaglia, 2026; Droz, 2022; Sorgen, 2020; Epting, 2024; Ross, 2025; Valera, 2014), and institutional accounts of environmental governance across regional and sectoral contexts (Bennett & Satterfield, 2018; Haque, 2018; Paavola, 2023; Das, 2019; DeLoyde & Mabee, 2019; Ioris, 2014; Cheng & So, 2015; Gutiérrez & Morales-Pinzón, 2017; Herrera et al., 2018; Jacob et al., 2026; James et al., 2026; Jha et al., 2024; Kaur et al., 2026; Liu et al., 2026; Silva, 2017). Planetary-scale framings of crisis appear as a distinct sub-theme (Kennel, 2021; Seck, 2023; Suša, 2019; Díaz-Barriga et al., 2024; Lenzer et al., 2024; Upreti, 2024).

The *indigenous knowledge* cluster is comparably substantial but oriented toward application rather than governance theory: conflict resolution (Abdo, 2024), natural resource management (Withanage et al., 2024), education and pedagogy (Mulenga et al., 2025; Willis, 2018; Ritchie et al., 2015), cultural and craft economies (Pariwongkhuntorn & Phanpanya, 2026; Sharma & Kaur, 2025), and systematic or edited overviews of indigenous knowledge integration and revalorization (Ijatuyi et al., 2025; Lodhi & Mikulecky, 2010; Masenya & Bhuda, 2025).

The *epistemic reclamation/decolonial epistemology* cluster is the smallest yet theoretically the most concentrated, comprising work on reclamation and linguistic reappropriation (Popa-Wyatt, 2020), epistemic reparation (Miragoli, 2026; Tobi, 2026), resistant and decolonial epistemologies (Miglievich-Ribeiro,

2025; R'boul, 2026; Rawson, 2025; Uzuegbunam, 2025), digital epistemicide (Youngman & Patin, 2024), and the politics of epistemic authority more broadly (Lee, 2010).

This distribution itself is analytically significant: the *volume* of literature is inversely related to its *theoretical integration*. Governance and indigenous-knowledge literatures are extensive but largely descriptive or applied; epistemic reclamation literature is theoretically dense but has not yet been extended into either domain. This asymmetry constitutes the empirical basis for the conceptual gap this study addresses.

2.2 Anthropocentrism as the Contested Foundation of Planetary Governance

Across the governance-oriented literature, anthropocentrism functions less as a single doctrine than as a spectrum of positions. At one end, it is treated as a near-unavoidable feature of human moral reasoning, since any ethical framework is necessarily authored and applied from a human standpoint (Hála, 2013; Epting, 2024). At the other end, it is characterized as a hubristic abstraction that systematically discounts non-human and ecological value, thereby enabling the very crises that governance frameworks are meant to resolve (Washington et al., 2021; Kopnina et al., 2018; Battaglia, 2026). Historical and genealogical analyses complicate both positions by showing that anthropocentrism is not a fixed metaphysical stance but a historically contingent construct shaped by religious, philosophical, and cultural currents (Karabykov, 2025; Valera, 2014), which explains why attempts to simply "reject" it often reproduce it in modified form (Droz, 2022; Sorgen, 2020).

This ambivalence is mirrored institutionally. Environmental governance frameworks are consistently described as structures for coordinating regulatory, technocratic, and market-based responses to ecological problems (Bennett & Satterfield, 2018; Haque, 2018; Paavola, 2023), and case-based accounts—from municipal participatory schemes (Cheng & So, 2015) to community-level evaluations (Gutiérrez & Morales-Pinzón, 2017) and technology-driven regulatory tools (Jha et al., 2024), demonstrate considerable procedural innovation. Yet even proposals that explicitly seek to broaden governance's ethical basis, such as



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relational or communal ethics frameworks (Jacob et al., 2026) or long-term planetary stewardship strategies (James et al., 2026), tend to treat epistemic authority, *whose knowledge counts*, as settled rather than as itself a site of contestation. The result is a governance literature rich in procedural reform but comparatively silent on the epistemic hierarchies that determine which knowledge systems are admissible in the first place.

2.3 Indigenous Knowledge as Practical-Epistemic Resource

The indigenous knowledge literature complements this picture by demonstrating, empirically and pedagogically, that non-Western epistemic traditions generate functional, transferable knowledge across domains as varied as conflict mediation (Abdo, 2024), resource stewardship (Withanage et al., 2024), mathematics education (Mulenga et al., 2025), and digital cultural preservation (Sharma & Kaur, 2025). Systematic reviews confirm that integration efforts between indigenous and scientific knowledge are increasingly documented (Ijatuyi et al., 2025), and edited volumes explicitly call for the revalorization of such knowledge within contemporary institutions (Masenya & Bhuda, 2025) rather than its treatment as a residual or supplementary resource (Lodhi & Mikulecky, 2010; Willis, 2018).

However, a recurring pattern across this literature is that indigenous knowledge is predominantly framed as *content*, a body of practices, techniques, or cultural artifacts to be preserved, documented, or selectively integrated into existing institutional frameworks (Ritchie et al., 2015; Pariwongkhuntorn & Phanpanya, 2026). This framing, while valuable, stops short of positioning indigenous knowledge as an *epistemic standpoint* capable of contesting the deeper ontological commitments—anthropocentrism among them, that structure the governance frameworks into which it is being integrated. In other words, the literature establishes *that* indigenous knowledge has value, but not *how* that value could be mobilized as a counter-narrative at the level of governance epistemology itself.

2.4 Epistemic Reclamation as a Theoretical Bridge

The epistemic reclamation literature supplies the conceptual resources that the governance and indigenous-knowledge literatures lack. Reclamation theory, as developed in relation to language and meaning, describes how groups whose

terms or knowledge have been appropriated or discredited can reassert control over their own epistemic resources (Popa-Wyatt, 2020). This is extended by theories of epistemic reparation, which articulate the obligations owed to those whose testimony or knowledge has been structurally undermined (Miragoli, 2026; Tobi, 2026), a framing directly transferable to indigenous knowledge systems historically excluded from governance epistemology.

Decolonial scholarship broadens this bridge further. Work on resistant epistemology (Miglievich-Ribeiro, 2025) and epistemic emancipation within institutional settings such as higher education (R'boul, 2026) shows that reclamation is not merely a discursive act but an institutional one, with concrete implications for how knowledge is produced, validated, and represented, as also demonstrated in health data justice and vernacularization scholarship (Rawson, 2025) and decolonial approaches to research using epistemologies-of-the-South lenses (Uzuegbunam, 2025). Scholarship on digital epistemicide (Youngman & Patin, 2024) and on the politics underlying claims to cultural and gendered authority (Lee, 2010) reinforces that epistemic exclusion operates across multiple institutional registers simultaneously, educational, technological, and political, suggesting that planetary crisis governance is unlikely to be an exception.

2.5 Toward a Counter-Narrative Framework

Aspect	Anthropocentrism	Indigenous Knowledge	Epistemic Reclamation
Role	Thesis & critique	Empirical antithesis	Synthesis
Core Idea	Human-centered paradigm	Relational human–nature knowledge	Legitimizing alternative knowledge
Basis	Western science	Local & experiential knowledge	Epistemic pluralism
Function	Exposes limitations	Provides practical alternatives	Reconstructs epistemic authority
Outcome	Deconstructed	Validated	Institutionalized

Table 3. Concept Comparison Matrix

Synthesizing these three literatures dialectically produces the framework at the center of this study. Anthropocentrism and its critiques constitute the *thesis*–

antithesis: a paradigm asserting human primacy, met by an internal critique demonstrating its ecological and ethical insufficiency (Kopnina et al., 2018; Washington et al., 2021). Indigenous knowledge scholarship supplies the *empirical-practical antithesis in substance*: concrete demonstrations that alternative epistemic traditions generate valid, functional knowledge outside anthropocentric science (Abdo, 2024; Withanage et al., 2024; Mulenga et al., 2025). Epistemic reclamation theory provides the *synthesizing mechanism*: a theoretical account of how such alternative knowledge can be actively reasserted, not merely included, as a legitimate epistemic authority (Popa-Wyatt, 2020; Miragoli, 2026; R'boul, 2026).

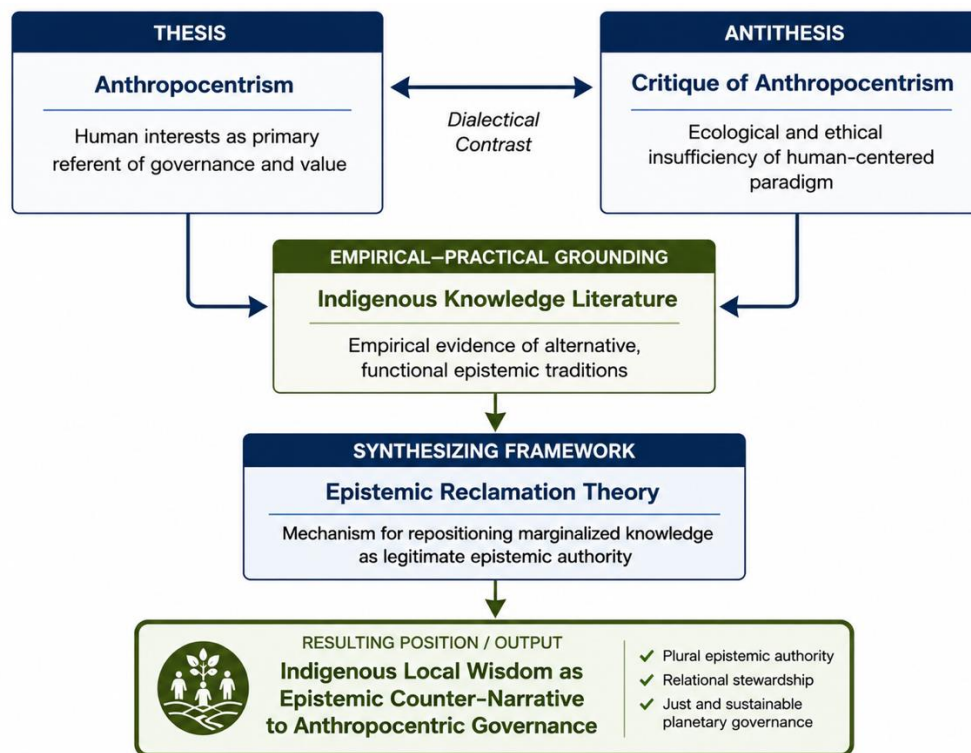


Figure 3. Conceptual Synthesis Model

The resulting position is that indigenous local wisdom, when read through epistemic reclamation theory, is not adequately described as a cultural resource awaiting integration into anthropocentric governance structures. It is more accurately understood as an *epistemic counter-narrative*, a standpoint that contests the underlying assumption that human-centered, techno-scientific rationality



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constitutes the sole legitimate basis for planetary decision-making (Battaglia, 2026; Upreti, 2024).

IV. DISCUSSION

This synthesis carries two implications. Theoretically, it repositions indigenous knowledge from the margins of governance discourse, where it functions as supplementary input, into a position of epistemic contestation, aligned with the broader decolonial argument that epistemic justice requires structural reassertion, not accommodation alone (Miglievich-Ribeiro, 2025; Uzuegbunam, 2025). Practically, it suggests that planetary crisis governance frameworks (Bennett & Satterfield, 2018; Haque, 2018) which incorporate indigenous knowledge only as consultative or supplementary input, without addressing the epistemic hierarchy that subordinates it, risk reproducing anthropocentric assumptions under a more inclusive procedural surface.

At the same time, this framework carries an internal tension that must be acknowledged rather than resolved prematurely: treating indigenous local wisdom as a unified epistemic counter-narrative risks flattening its internal diversity across contexts as different as those documented in African (Abdo, 2024; Jacob et al., 2026), South Asian (Sharma & Kaur, 2025; Withanage et al., 2024), and Southeast Asian settings (Pariwongkhuntorn & Phanpanya, 2026). The reclamation framework itself cautions against this risk, as reparative and resistant epistemologies emphasize situated, rather than generalized, epistemic authority (Tobi, 2026; Rawson, 2025). This tension is taken up further in the concluding section as a boundary condition for the framework proposed here, rather than a flaw to be resolved within the scope of this study.

V. CONCLUSION

This study set out to theorize how indigenous local wisdom can be conceptually reclaimed as an epistemic counter-narrative to anthropocentrism within planetary crisis governance. Through library research combining conceptual analysis and critical hermeneutics, three previously disconnected literatures, anthropocentrism critique, indigenous knowledge scholarship, and epistemic reclamation theory, were synthesized into a single dialectical framework. The analysis shows that



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anthropocentrism persists in governance not as an explicit doctrine but as an unexamined epistemic default (Kopnina et al., 2018; Karabykov, 2025), that indigenous knowledge is well documented as practically valuable yet under-theorized as epistemically authoritative (Ijatuyi et al., 2025; Masenya & Bhuda, 2025), and that epistemic reclamation theory supplies the missing mechanism for repositioning such knowledge from supplementary content into a legitimate counter-narrative (Popa-Wyatt, 2020; Miragoli, 2026).

The central contribution of this study is therefore conceptual: indigenous local wisdom, read through epistemic reclamation, should be understood not as an object to be integrated into existing governance paradigms but as an epistemic standpoint capable of contesting their foundational assumptions. This reframing resists the tendency, identified across the reviewed literature, to treat non-Western knowledge as consultative input rather than as a co-equal basis for decision-making (Uzuegbunam, 2025; R'boul, 2026).

This conceptual shift carries direct implications for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly as they intersect with the planetary crisis agenda. The SDGs' environmental pillars, most notably those concerning climate action, life below water, life on land, and sustainable communities, are typically operationalized through governance mechanisms that remain, as this study has shown, epistemically anthropocentric in structure (Seck, 2023; Bennett & Satterfield, 2018). Framing indigenous local wisdom as an epistemic counter-narrative suggests that SDG implementation cannot be reduced to a technical or managerial exercise; it requires confronting whose knowledge is authorized to define sustainability, resilience, and planetary health in the first place (Díaz-Barriga et al., 2024; Lenzer et al., 2024). Where governance frameworks incorporate indigenous knowledge merely as supplementary local input, they risk achieving SDG targets procedurally while reproducing the epistemic exclusions that the broader planetary crisis literature identifies as part of the problem (Kennel, 2021; Suša, 2019). Conversely, treating indigenous epistemic reclamation as constitutive of governance, rather than peripheral to it, aligns with emerging ecosociocentric proposals that reposition sustainability as a matter of plural, non-anthropocentric ways of knowing and living with the Earth (Upreti, 2024).

This study is limited by its conceptual-philosophical scope: it does not empirically test how epistemic reclamation operates within specific governance institutions or indigenous communities, nor does it resolve the tension between treating indigenous wisdom as a unified counter-narrative and honoring its internal diversity across regional and cultural contexts (Rawson, 2025; Tobi, 2026). Future research, particularly empirical or case-based studies, is needed to examine how this framework functions in concrete SDG-related policy processes, and how epistemic reclamation might be institutionalized without flattening the plurality it seeks to defend.

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