Introducing Degrowth to Socio-Environmental Movements in the United States

A case study of the Sunrise Movement and Democratic Socialists of America

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Master Thesis Series in Environmental Studies and Sustainability Science,
No 2021:018

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of Lund University International Master's Programme in Environmental Studies and Sustainability Science (30hp/credits)

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Submitted May 11, 2021

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Abstract (149 words)

In a country with a large historical and current share of emissions, recent climate inaction and political upheaval have disallowed substantial social-environmental reforms from being endorsed. This thesis critically examines the current cycle of contention in the United States by classifying the Sunrise Movement and the Democratic Socialists of America as social movement organizations through the lens of social movement theory with a goal to identify successes and understand how the movement could increase the viability of democratic socialism in America and make governmental climate action inevitable. I describe the movement's political opportunities beginning with President Obama's climate policies, mobilizing structures like social media, and framing processes which make the climate narrative more effective. Performing a qualitative content analysis on interviews and social media content, I characterize the latest socio-environmental movement and conclude by recommending degrowth policies that could attract more participants and strengthen its claims for climate justice.

Keywords climate change, social movements, Green New Deal, politics, democratic socialism, framing theory

Word Count 11,991

Acknowledgements

Thank you to Josephine, Anna, and David for being the best thesis group and support I could ask for. For giving me such insightful feedback and really diving into my text like it was your own, I thank you. I also want to acknowledge Alicia, Cara, and Maris for being the second-best thesis group, for powering through this semester and sharing your thoughts and frustrations and cares with me. A special thanks to Maris for always being willing to go for an afternoon dumpster dive to get me out of the house!

And to my LUMES family… we had far less time together than any of us hoped for, and yet, we made the best of it. Studying and writing a thesis through a pandemic is a feat and we did it! To Annina: for all the walks and talks and laughs. To Juan: my Columbian co-author for allowing me to do something outside of the thesis. To Alicia: for the North American love and being my flatmate for a whole year. Y'all are amazing, you will change the world, and I will always welcome you to my home no matter the day or time. I'm honored to know y'all. Keep in touch!

To Amber in B24: thank you for sharing your pagan holidays, meditative demeanor, and at-home Zoom raves with me. You will make it through LUMES and do great things. Stay in touch and keep saving all the food in Lund.

To my family: Judy, Greg, and Elizabeth, for supporting my wild dreams to study in Sweden. I love you and wouldn't be here learning without you.

To Tiago: for getting me out of the house and calming me down when I get stressed. You keep me sane and grounded.

To my housemates: for the occasional family dinner, eating all the food I bring home, and letting me be loud and crazy sometimes. You are my Lund family and I will never forget good ol' Östratornsväg 85.

Lastly, my motivation for writing this thesis. Throughout 2020, when Trump was in his last year of office and the pandemic was surging in the U.S., I heard many times that Americans are skilled at 'normalizing the abnormal.' At first, I didn't know what this meant. After paying more attention to the news, I began to understand.

- 550,000+ deaths from COVID-19 within one year
- 8 million Americans put into poverty since the beginning of the pandemic
- The 50 wealthiest Americans now own more wealth than the bottom 165 million Americans
- 73 black people killed by police already in 2021 (mappingpoliceviolence.org)

This is not normal and we must not let it become our new normal. Though this thesis will not solve these problems, it is an attempt to call out another injustice happening in American society: the warming of the world disproportionately affecting the poor and vulnerable and we must demand action from the American government.

List of Abbreviations

AOC - Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez

COVID-19 - Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2, also referred to as COVID or corona

DSA - Democratic Socialists of America

GDP - gross domestic product

GHG - greenhouse gas

GND - Green New Deal

IPCC - Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

QCA - qualitative content analysis

RQ - research question

SMO - social movement organization

UBI - Universal Basic Income

UNFCCC - United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

U.S. - United States

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1 Introduction

1.1 The growth paradigm and the climate

Anthropogenic climate change is already estimated to have caused an average temperature rise of 1.25°C above pre-industrial levels (Voosen, 2021) and the IPCC warns that climate-related risks to health, livelihoods, nutrition, and security will increase with further global warming (IPCC, 2018). To meet the UNFCCC's Paris Agreement goal of limiting warming to well below 2.0°C (preferably 1.5°C) developed nations must reduce their carbon emissions by 8-10% per year (Anderson & Bows, 2011; UNEP, 2019). Though the relation between economic growth and carbon emissions varies by region (Acheampong, 2018), level of development (Narayan et al., 2016), and income inequality (Hailemariam et al., 2020), the link between growth and emissions is a warning of built-in emissions for developing countries and carbon lock-in of developed countries (Ahmad et al., 2021). One problem with economic growth as a measure of 'progress' is its indicator, gross domestic product (GDP), being used inappropriately; especially because both social goods (childcare) and bads (fossil-fuels) contribute to higher GDP growth. Studies on the *Easterlin paradox* show a positive correlation between life satisfaction and GDP per capita over the short term, but no relationship between the two in the long-term (Easterlin, 2009), suggesting that economic growth cannot be equated with well-being.

The growth imperative of capitalism is at the very root of "the systemic failures and resulting crises" experienced in America (Speth, 2012, p.181). Even after lessons learned from the 2008 financial crisis, the American system still experiences crises today: healthcare crisis caused by a pandemic's effects on an elite, privatized healthcare system; social crisis of racial and economic inequality and poverty despite working more hours than any other developed country; environmental crisis driven by consumption and carbon-dependent energy; and lastly, political crisis demonstrated by Trump supporters trespassing the nation's Capital building on January 6, 2021 disrupting the confirmation of election results, exposing the fragility of democracy. The severity of crises in 21st-century America are remarkable and unprecedented, and they further provide motivation for placing the U.S. at the center of this thesis.

The crises in America lead to a contradiction and crisis of capitalism – that modern market-based societies fundamentally rely on growth and expansion of resources and production (Clark & York, 2005, p.394). Additionally, the treadmill of production theory argues that modern society's "relentless commitment to growth" is to blame for the socioecological costs, indicating an inherent failure in the economic system which places profits over people (Clark & York, 2005, p.394). Building on the crises caused by capitalism, this thesis will explore the argument that our "best hope for a new political

dynamic is a fusion of those concerned about environment, social justice, and the political democracy into one progressive force" (Speth, 2012, p.181).

1.2 Limits to growth / decoupling

In 2009, Rockström et al. identified processes which regulate the stability and resilience of the Earth and devised nine planetary boundaries within which humanity can live and thrive. In 2015, Steffen et al. determined that humanity has pushed past four of these boundaries. Since 2009, annual GDP growth has been relatively steady at 3% bringing financial prosperity for the wealthy but inhibiting the rest of humanity (International Monetary Fund, 2018). Jackson (2009) claims "the myth of growth has failed" (p.5), exhibited by the environmental impacts of the economic increase since the 2008 Great Recession. If we accept the claim that growth has failed, then it would follow that decoupling growth from environmental effects is not possible.

A decoupling of resource use from economic growth refers to the situation in which resource use declines, or becomes more efficient, while economic output continues to rise (Jackson, 2017). Several scholars stress that decoupling is a myth of sustainable growth where production and profits continue to rise while using less (Daly, 2015; Jackson, 2017; Kallis et al., 2018; Parrique, 2019; Paulson, 2017). Absolute decoupling (resource use rises while emissions decrease) has not been achieved by any country, especially once factoring in trade-related emissions (Schor & Jorgenson, 2019). Relative decoupling may be more attainable, as it entails doing more production with less environmental damage, but *Jevon's paradox* (Section 3.1.2) calls the feasibility of decoupling into question (Jackson, 2017). Thus, if we accept these arguments and evidence, we need a societal and economic emancipatory transformation (D. Stuart et al., 2020) instead of waiting on a technological fix or hoping for decoupling.

1.3 The role of social movements

I define social movements as groups of people with a similar set of values or beliefs joined together to perform collective action as a means of achieving their goals (Section 3.1.1). Social movements draw attention to injustices, seek greater support for their goals, and/or advance new narratives of life and culture (Escobar, 1996). Understood through the political process approach, social movements take advantage of political opportunities within institutional contexts and seek state action (Coy, 2001).

This thesis will explain social movements as a means of achieving environmental sustainability. The environmental movement can use "existing definitions" of environmental concerns to "gain visibility and support from other activists and the state", or it can expand the definition of these concerns

(Forsyth, 2007, p.6-7). *Chapter 2* shows that a unified environmental movement in the U.S. has been essentially nonexistent. However, the rise of a new movement and increase in political support for a Green New Deal (GND) has energized the environmental struggle in the U.S. in the past decade. Here, I present my overall claim that we need to aspire to more radical change than that laid out in the GND because major societal transformation is needed to survive the climate crisis.

1.4 Research Aim

My research aims to add new perspectives and information on the emergence of social movement organizations (SMOs) in the U.S. by focusing on the emergence of a social-environmental movement dedicated to achieving climate justice. To address this issue, my first research question is:

1. What are the characteristics and successes of, and barriers facing, the latest wave of social-environmental movement organizations in the U.S.?

My research also aims to address the dearth of literature on the feasibility of degrowth in the U.S. Cattaneo et al. claim that "advancing degrowth scholarship hand-in-hand with political activism is an exciting and socially relevant project" (2012, p.522). Responding to Cattaneo's claim, this thesis asks how, or to what extent, degrowth can contribute to the success of the social movement in the U.S. Therefore, the second research question of this thesis is:

2. What degrowth policies can be introduced into the emerging social-environmental movement in the U.S. to better deal with environmental issues arising from economic growth?

1.5 Navigating this thesis

Chapter 2 establishes the setting of this thesis and introduces the history of environmental movements in the U.S. and two case study SMOs, the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) and the Sunrise Movement. *Chapter 2* will also address degrowth in the U.S. and the current COVID-19 situation. *Chapter 3* includes theory that produces the results and findings of this thesis: social movement theory and environmental economic theories. *Chapter 4* focuses on methodology beginning with a conceptual research design, data collection methods, and research limitations. *Chapter 5* includes both results and discussion presented in a narrative format. The chapter begins with the political opportunities and threats for the movement, mobilizing structures, framing processes, how degrowth overlaps with the movement, and *Chapter 6* ends with implications of the findings and suggestions for future research.

2 Background

McAdam (2017) observed a remarkable lack of environmental grassroots mobilization in the U.S. and warned of consequences "so severe and accelerated" that would demobilize and incapacitate communities from effectively responding if "a more aggressive, unified policy response" to climate change was not adopted (p.190). Four years later and the country is in a different position with civil disobedience actions reminiscent of the civil rights movement resurrected and reused alongside the rise of Trumpism, as well as last summer's Black Lives Matter protests spotlighting a string of police shootings of black people. This Chapter will provide context for the case study focused on the emerging socio-environmental movement in the U.S.

2.1 Environmentalism in the United States

The modern environmental movement began in the 1960s focusing on water and air pollution and led to monumental legislation in the 1970s (Peterson, 2008). Both the sustainability and environmental justice movements originated in the U.S. in the 1980s and their goals continue in movements today. Various environmental activist groups were founded in this time period: Friends of the Earth (1969), Greenpeace (1975), and Earth First! (1980). Greenpeace and Earth First! used civil disobedience and direct-action tactics (Covill, 2008), but these were violent, hierarchical groups that decided against waiting for legislation, and thus took radical, destructive action to achieve their goals (R. Eyerman, interview, February 18, 2021). In contrast, groups today like Fridays for Future, Extinction Rebellion, or 350.org are global organizations with local chapters and they organize both local and global campaigns. The SMOs focused on in this thesis, the DSA (Section 2.3) and the Sunrise Movement (Section 2.4), are different in that they are US-based organizations focused only on local and national action.

Recent focus of some environmental groups in the U.S. has been in supporting the GND. The GND states the government's duty to provide citizens with clean water, job guarantees or well-paying jobs, and environmental and racial justice for frontline and underserved communities of color (Stephenson, 2019). The GND is an example of "a working-class solution to the climate crisis in the national spotlight - something climate campaigners had been unable to do for years" (Gong et al., 2019, p.120). However, the GND allows for economic growth as it calls for "massive growth in clean manufacturing" and "directing investments to spur economic development", thus demonstrating the need for a more radical, transformative solution (Recognizing the Duty of the Federal Government to Create a Green New Deal, 2019).

2.2 Degrowth in the United States

Degrowth, whether in theory or practice, is not prevalent in the U.S. at the time of writing. Speth (2012) calls for post-growth in America and Schwartzman (2011) calls for the qualitative aspects of growth to be addressed in the U.S., but there is a lack of academic analysis of the degrowth movement and its viability for the U.S. Sam Bliss, a PhD student in ecological economics at Vermont University, wrote what seems to be the first call for degrowth in the U.S. in late 2016 (Bliss, 2016), and DegrowUS, the "loose collective" of advocates for American degrowth, formed in 2018 (DegrowUS, n.d.). Mastini et al. (2021) identify the tension between degrowth and the U.S. GND and calls for a 'GND without growth', indicating the GND's relevance in a degrowth future for the U.S.

The term degrowth has roots in the French 'décroissance' coined by Gorz and Georgescu-Roegen in 1972 and degrowth only entered the English language in 2008 at the first Degrowth Conference in Paris (Demaria et al., 2013). Within capitalism, economic growth is a "political necessity to pacify social conflict and ensure reproduction of the system" and degrowth has been labeled as incompatible with capitalism (Kallis et al., 2018, p.300). Due to the necessity for growth, progressive reforms to limit the damages of growth such as carbon caps and taxes, a universal basic income (UBI), or reduced working hours are so fiercely resisted by corporations, lobbyists, and politicians that they are unlikely to be implemented in the U.S. "short of a social revolution and systemic change" (Kallis et al., 2018, p.300).

Büchs and Koch (2019) explain the potential hesitancy of activists and academics to support degrowth due to "the embeddedness of the growth-based capitalistic economic system" in many other institutions such as "representative democracy, the rule of law and current legal, financial, labour market, education, research, and welfare systems" and a degrowth transition would require a simultaneous transformation of all coupled systems (p.160). The changes needed for a degrowth transition would be complicated, and Büchs and Koch (2019) attribute potential negative well-being implications arising from a degrowth transition as a reason for the lack of political support for the movement to date. Feola (2019) suggests the magnitude of the socioecological transformation implied by degrowth requires an 'unmaking' of capitalism that involves compromises, negotiations, and setbacks or even personally contradictory ways of living that discourage the expansion of the degrowth movement. The failure of past incremental steps to transform society prove that any hesitation about the required transformation will hinder its success.

2.3 The Democratic Socialists and their base

The DSA was founded in 1982 by Michael Harrington. It merged two socialist organizations, the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee and the New American Movement, each of which formed

in the 1970s with roots in the trade union, feminist, and community organizing movements (Schwartz, 2017). Bernie Sanders' 2016 DSA-supported, presidential campaign was an important moment for the DSA because it was through his national mainstream campaign that millions of Americans were exposed to the idea of democratic socialism for the first time, and DSA membership grew to 55,000 by 2018, up from 6,500 in 2012 (Freeman, 2019). At this time, the DSA was the largest socialist organization in America since the Community Party collapsed in the mid-1950s. Nationally, the DSA has focused on three priorities: electoral politics, Medicare For All, and labor, with the Green New Deal recently joining the fray in 2019 (Freeman, 2019; Schwartz, 2017).

It is hard to generalize about the whole DSA base due to scarce literature on DSA membership, but there is information about groups of their supporter base. Some portion of the DSA member base consists of mostly white people from the lower/middle-class who saw the Democratic Party as a 'corporate' party and saw the effects of capitalism not serving anyone but the wealthy (Freeman, 2019). Another group within the DSA is made of majority white millennials with a dissatisfaction in party politics who joined after Sanders' presidential run (Freeman, 2019). The DSA recognizes the need to represent a diverse group of people, as their work against the political establishment is intended to serve the public, the working class, and low-income groups.

2.3.1 The DSA's strategy

A unique, self-criticism of the organization was given by Michael Hirsch, then national DSA political committee member, at a pre-election debate on the viability of a progressive Democratic Party. In his remarks, he criticized the Democratic Party for being too pro-corporate and not a viable alternative for the "politically active unionists and shop stewards, black community leaders and feminists" searching for "alternative electoral expression" (Hirsch, 2007, p.5). Representing the DSA, he seemed to be calling his organization to create a center-left coalition able to represent on the electoral stage what social movements were calling for in the streets and workplaces (Hirsch, 2007). His opinion seems to emphasize the DSA's need for coalitions and partnerships to achieve things politically, while others interpret it as an expression of the group's role in social movements. Critics of this point say that merely pushing the Democratic Party to the left is a recipe for failure (with historical evidence in once-powerful social movements) and the better way to fight systemic climate change is to create a revolutionary labor party of ecosocialists and anti-capitalists (Nayeri, 2019). These criticisms show a debated political strategy within the DSA.

2.4 The Sunrise Movement

The Sunrise Movement is a non-profit political action organization and a self-described "youth movement" whose three-part mission is to "make climate change an urgent priority, end the corrupting influence of fossil fuel executives in politics, and elect leaders who stand up for the health and well-being of all people" (*Sunrise's Principles*, n.d.). The group's 'theory of change' or mechanisms to achieve their goals are to develop people power, catalyze political power, and align with other groups and movements with shared visions (*Sunrise's Principles*, n.d.).

The group was founded in 2017 by environmentalists, activists from 350.org, and student organizers from the Fossil Fuel Divestment network all unsatisfied with the climate movement's current progress (Matthews et al., 2018), though their idea for a youth climate justice movement emerged a year or two earlier. The organization plans protests and makes political demands, runs phone banks and canvasses for political candidates, and trains youth to be climate leaders. The organization has over 400 hubs nationwide, many located on college campuses. More details of the SMO will be analyzed in Section 3.1.1 and *Chapter 5*.

2.5 COVID-19: A window for reform

The recent COVID-19 pandemic in the U.S. has caused the worst economic contraction since the Great Recession (max unemployment of 10% in October 2009), where 14.8% of the population was unemployed in April 2020 and 6.1% remain unemployed as of April 2021 (U.S. Department of Labor, 2021). An additional 2.8 million people were unable to search for employment due to the pandemic, and therefore remain outside the official count of unemployed people, and 9.4 million people have been unable to work due to business closures or lost business (U.S. Department of Labor, 2021). When people's well-being and particularly their health insurance depends on their ability to hold a job in an unstable job market, the stakes are higher than ever.

The ongoing pandemic has opened a rare 'window for reform' - a short-term opportunity for political protest and social movements (Kolb, 2007) when the structural weaknesses of capitalism are exposed (Spash, 2020). Though I claim the GND, recently reintroduced in Congress, does not go far enough in transforming society, it may be the most promising political opportunity available right now to combat the socio-ecological struggle described in Section 1.1 (Samper et al., 2021). In addition to the GND's reintroduction, this thesis is relevant because it gives context to the emerging social-environmental movement and analyzes the opportunities to achieve sustainability in the U.S.

3 Theory

3.1 Theoretical Approach

In order to understand the emerging social movement in the U.S., this section will describe social movement theory and economic theory, with a focus on degrowth, in order to argue for what kind of societal change is necessary based on the arguments in *Chapter 1*. Social movements push the state to reform institutions like the economy, thus presenting the value of social movement theory and economic theory as a theoretical basis to classify the Sunrise Movement and DSA as SMOs and answer RQ1.

3.1.1 Social Movement Theory

Social movements are social processes with the mechanisms necessary for individuals to participate in collective action (della Porta & Diani, 2006b). Tilly and Wood (2016) characterize these vehicles through which ordinary people can participate in public politics by three distinctive elements: a campaign to organize and sustain collective claims; a repertoire of claim-making demonstrations such as protests, meetings, or statements; and public displays of worthiness, unity, numbers, and commitment. Tarrow (2011) defines a social movement as sustained sequences of contentious politics, unified by a collective challenge, a common purpose, and social solidarity. Social movements are contentious because the realizations of their collective claims conflict with another actor's interests, and they are a form of politics because government is some part of the claim-making (Tilly & Wood, 2016). Different definitions of social movements are included here because "understanding the mix of factors that give rise to a movement is the oldest, and arguably the most important, question in the field" (McAdam et al., 1996, p.7). This section addresses the factors which gave rise to a socio-environmental movement in the U.S. in order to better understand its roots.

This thesis will use the 'political process' approach as the main framework for social movement theory due to its close attention to the political and institutional environment in which social movements operate (della Porta & Diani, 2006a). The theory's focus on the relationships and interactions between traditional political actors and activists makes it particularly applicable to this thesis which focuses on the synergies between DSA members and youth environmentalists in the Sunrise Movement. The three factors of the 'political process' approach will be explained next.

Political Opportunities & Threats

Political opportunities are "changes in the institutional structures or informal power relations" of a political system that decreases the power differential between a challenging group and the state

(McAdam et al., 1996, p.3). Dimensions of a political opportunity could include changes in the openness of the political system, stability and presence of those in power, or power and willingness to repress (McAdam et al., 1996). The nuance for a significant change to become an opportunity is whether a group is sufficiently organized to act on the situation when it occurs. If no organization is looking for such changes in power or circumstances, there will be no opportunity to act. Tarrow and Tilly (2011) identify threats as the repressive powers and forces that discourage contention. Contentious politics emerge when "threats are experienced and opportunities are perceived" and social movements are formed if collective action is taken and mobilizing structures are created or appropriated (Tarrow & Tilly, 2011, p.33).

Mobilizing Structures

Mobilizing structures are the social dynamics, units, or bonds which enable people to engage with each other and mobilize into collective action if desired. Structures such as "family units, friendship networks, voluntary associations, [and] work units" can be used for a movement's mobilization (McAdam et al., 1996, p.141). Within these life structures, dissent over state or social processes is built and discussed and they are key in facilitating communication between participants if coordinated action is taken.

Framing Processes

Framing processes are "the shared meanings and definitions" that people use to describe their situation or "shared and socially constructed ideas" (McAdam et al., 1996, p.5). They are "conscious strategic efforts by groups of people to fashion shared understandings of the world and of themselves" (McAdam et al., 1996, p.6). Framing processes are intentionally exploited to motivate people to act against some illegitimate and vulnerable aspect of the system they live within (McAdam et al., 1996). A less mentioned, and sometimes assumed, factor of social movements is the base of mobilizing grievances people share and feel optimistic that acting together can sufficiently address the problem (Snow, 2013).

According to Lakoff's framing theory, our brains think in terms of unconscious structures called frames and every word is defined through a frame and the system in which the defining frame resides (Lakoff, 2010). Depending on the language used, certain frames are activated in the receiving audience and to communicate facts about an issue such as climate change, the facts must be framed properly. A large problem of communicating climate change in the U.S. context is due to the public having insufficient environmental frames. Conservatives in the U.S. can easily communicate their politics because they have spent decades building up vocabulary and frames in the public's brains (Lakoff, 2010).

Progressives have not done this and as a result, environmentalism has suffered because people lack the 'right' environmental frames that tell people how climate change can be solved. Instead, we have incorrect frames when thinking of the environment, notably ones that tell us individual action is the only solution. Environmentalists are now working to build up the necessary Environmental Frame in the public's minds so the public can understand the political nature of the environment and contribute to the discussion.

Theoretical Synthesis

McAdam (2017)'s analysis examines the three pillars of the 'political process' and the factors characteristic to the U.S. at the time that kept strong social movements for climate change activism from emerging and sustaining. Figure 1 provides a conceptual framework of McAdam's analysis of the U.S. in 2017 by illustrating the institutional structures, ideologies, and threats to social movement formation. McAdam et al. claimed "the timing and fate of movements [are] largely dependent upon the opportunities afforded insurgents by the shifting institutional structure and ideological disposition of those in power" (1996, p.23). Findings in *Chapter 5*, from primary- and secondary-source data, will illustrate (Figure 6) what has changed to allow a climate change movement to emerge since then.

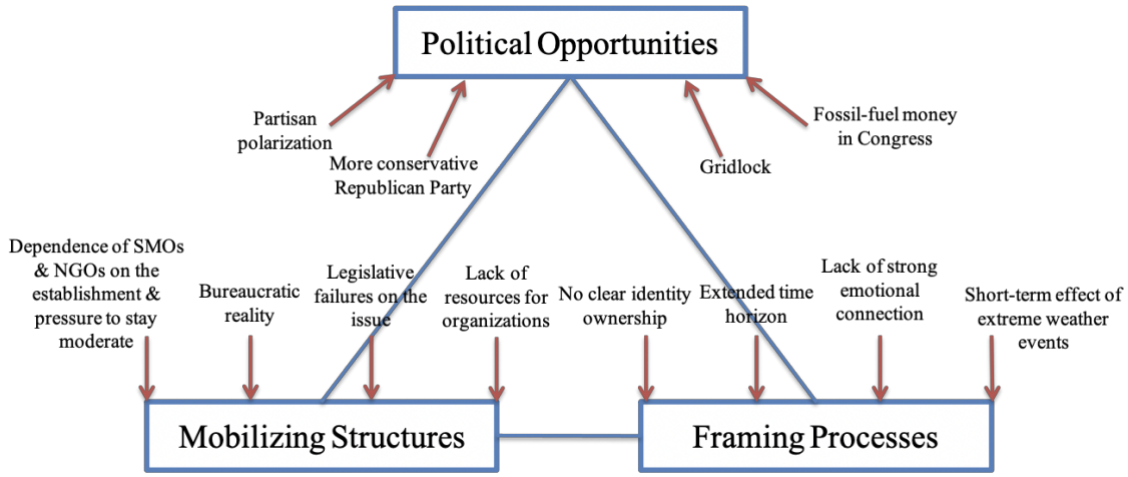

Figure 1: A summary of the factors (at the origin of the red arrows) which prevented social movements on climate change activism in the U.S. based on the 'political process' approach. Each corner of the triangle represents a pillar of the 'political process' approach (author-created, adapted from McAdam (2017)).

3.1.2 Economic Theory

We've established that environmental issues arise from unchecked economic growth (*Chapter 1*) and this section will support these arguments with theory. I will first present a critique of today's ecomodernist economy, which complements *Chapter 1*'s argument that the status quo is not sustainable. Next, I will introduce steady-state economics as an alternative which, as I ultimately judge, will not go far enough in transforming the economy. Lastly, I propose degrowth theory as a way out of

the problems presented in *Chapter 1* and a radical solution to today's social, economic, and environmental ills. Degrowth theory could also help the social movement described in this thesis fight for sustainability in the U.S and the theory will help answer RQ2 (Section 5.4).

The economics of ecological modernization

A so-called 'sustainable economy' aims to achieve green growth by using the market to save "globalized, industrial capitalism from its most ecologically damaging effects" (McAfee, 2016, p.334). This ecological modernization narrative brings environmental externalities, typically excluded from the cost of goods and services, into the market in order to optimize the socially acceptable level of environmental bads (McAfee, 2016). However, this capitalist narrative de-politicizes the economic inequalities caused by the concentration of capital in the hands of a few (Begović, 2020). Essentially, this depoliticized narrative accepts and allows *more of the same* in terms of economic, political, and social inequalities within capitalism. The myth of green growth leaves the basic economic structure unchanged instead of demanding more systemic changes, which this thesis argues we need (Schor & Jorgenson, 2019).

Steady-state economics

Steady-state theory was developed by Daly (2015) who thought unchecked growth of an economy in a finite ecosphere leads to a less biodiverse ecosystem. As an economy grows, the ecosystem services of the environment play a smaller role. As technology progresses and resource efficiency increases, Jevon's Paradox reveals an overall net increase in resource use despite efficiency gains (Daly, 2015). Jevon's Paradox sounds the alarm against relying on technological, innovative 'quick-fixes' resulting from increasing economic growth. The problem with this economic alternative is that it continues to mix growth and development together, as well as costs and benefits. As a result, economic progress is measured with GDP which lumps social ills together with social goods and thus, incorrectly inflates societal progress (Daly, 2005). While a steady-state economy should focus on qualitative development of the human economy instead of quantitative growth, it fails to change the way economic progress is measured and still calculates the environmental ills as economic progress and growth.

Degrowth theory

Chapter 1 established the claim that infinite growth is impossible on a planet of finite resources. Sustainability science and political ecology blame our current economic system for the unlimited exploitation of natural and human capital, which places profits above the common good (Aljets & Ebinger, 2016, p.5). Degrowth has been defined in several different ways, but for the purposes of this

thesis, I will examine degrowth theory as a political vision - one which could be adopted by social movements. Social movements could integrate degrowth policies into their claims and demands, degrowth ideology into their collective identity, or degrowth visions into their understandings of the world. Therefore, Section 5.4 proposes degrowth as a "radical political project" that could be used by social movements as "a new story" or "a rallying slogan" for the vision of "a society that lives better with less" (Kallis, 2011, p.873).

While a reduction in economic activity (GDP) may initially trigger frames of job loss and recession, degrowth scholars are confident that a planned reduction in economic throughput can maintain and even improve living standards in high-income countries (Hickel, 2019). However, its focus on wealthy, developed countries is a critique of degrowth, as not all countries have the ability or capacity to consider any of its proposals. The explicit goal of degrowth is not to decrease GDP, but GDP may inevitably decline as an outcome or side effect (Kallis, 2011). Critics claim degrowth's feasibility is concerning because it has yet to be achieved and sustainably proven. Besides an economic shifting (shrinking is recession), degrowth scholars hope it brings about a radical, cultural transformation that changes people's livelihoods, relationships, and values (Hickel, 2019; Paulson, 2017). Degrowth aims to redefine our relationship to economic transactions by valuing social goods over social bads; for example, low-carbon activities, such as care work of children and the elderly (mostly unpaid today), would be included in a degrowth economy. Degrowth policies such as wealth redistribution, shorter work weeks, a job guarantee, a living wage, work sharing, and equal access to public goods aim to address inequality and lower emissions at the same time (Hickel, 2019; Schor & Jorgenson, 2019).

Critiques of degrowth find the majority of degrowth proposals following a top-down national approach, despite the grassroots origins, both contradictory and involuntary (Cosme et al., 2017). Critics also argue that degrowth proposals fail to address population growth and what degrowth means for developing countries (Cosme et al., 2017). The critique on top-down governance approaches may be especially relevant in the American context where many people, especially conservatives, are wary of governmental overreach and interference with everyday life. However, a strong justification for degrowth is our need for a sustainable society where people and their needs are valued and our interdependence with nature is respected.

4 Methodology

4.1 Research Design

This research utilizes a case study design to perform a detailed analysis of the emerging socio-environmental movement in the U.S. and answer the proposed RQs (Bryman, 2012). The case study is appropriate because the setting has direct implications for the success and characteristics of the movement itself. The Sunrise Movement and the DSA will be the focus of the study. For my thesis, I seek to make sustainability science applicable by producing knowledge for a relevant example of a social movement. The strategy of the research approach (Figure 2) integrates social movement theory and qualitative methods to produce practical results through answering two RQs.

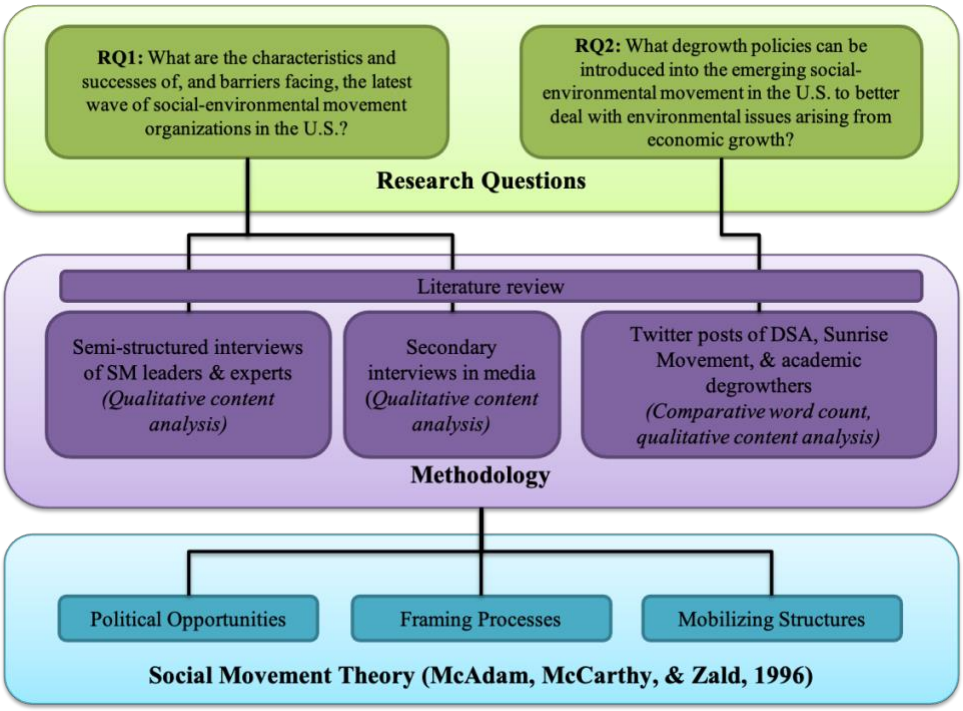

Figure 2: Research approach of the thesis showing guiding questions, methods, and theory (author-created).

4.2 Methodology and data collection

4.2.1 Literature review

The first stage of research for this thesis involved a critical examination of the existing literature related to social movements, degrowth, GNDs, and their presence in the U.S. This step was necessary to audit the current research related to the subject and determine the gaps this thesis could fill. The literature review is not simply a summary of current literature but is meant to assess the significance of current work and how this research will fit into the narrative constructed in the background and context for the thesis (Bryman, 2012). I used the search engines 'Web of Science', 'Scopus', and 'Google Scholar' to gather appropriate materials to conduct the literature review. The review conducted was not

systematic, rather a snowball method was used by identifying related literature from key works on degrowth and social movement theory.

4.2.2 Semi-structured interviews

To answer the first RQ, semi-structured interviews were conducted with one leader involved in the Sunrise Movement and one scholar of social movements. I created an interview guide (Appendix A) based on my knowledge of the movement and fundamentals about social movement theory learned in the literature review process and I adapted each guide based on the interviewee's specific background and experience. I asked questions from the guides but also allowed for unexpected information to arise and follow-up questions to be asked. Each interview was recorded and transcribed for coding.

4.2.3 Content analysis of secondary sources

According to Patton (2002), "qualitative analysis transforms data into findings" (p.432). The subsequent content analysis of the interviews was crucial in turning the interview responses into usable data. Content analysis was also performed on secondary sources of interview data for the people I was unable to interview firsthand. Content analysis seeks to quantify content in categories which could be replicable by another researcher (Bryman, 2012). It is not a method which generates data, but it is used as a method of analysis on documents and texts (Bryman, 2012).

A qualitative content analysis (QCA) was performed on secondary news and magazine articles in order to determine themes and categories from the content which can be used to "reflect the interpreted, latent meaning of the text" (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2017, p.94). This practice is similar to Altheide (1987)'s ethnographic content analysis, which entails some initial categorization, but can involve some more back-and-forth throughout the coding process as categories and themes emerge (Bryman, 2012). Secondary sources from Appendix B were located using the keywords "Sunrise movement", "Varshini Prakash" (frequently interviewed co-founder of Sunrise), and "democratic socialists" in the ProQuest Global Newsstream and Publicly Available Content Database available through the Lund University Libraries. The QCA was performed with the use of NVivo coding software while reading articles and coding key phrases using predetermined categories. The categories were created based on knowledge gathered in the literature review process, the three tenets of social movement theory according to McAdam et al. (1996), and categories which could help in answering the RQs. For example, social movement theory (Section 3.1.1) established three overarching codes of 'political opportunities', 'framing processes', and 'mobilizing structures', while 'shared grievances' and 'visionary narrative'

further broke down the 'framing processes' category into more detailed themes based on inductive knowledge gained while reading the sources (see codes in Appendix C).

4.2.4 Social Media Analysis

Word counts and comparative content analysis were used to identify points of agreement between Twitter posts (from the movement), findings on framing (Section 4.2.3), and academic degrowth literature to answer RQ2. Qualitative and quantitative results were made using the Twitter accounts in Appendix D. The data sets are limited to the Twitter posts (excluding retweets) allowed to be downloaded using NVivo's NCapture tool. Counting the frequency of certain words in these accounts' posts can be significant for a content analysis and provide some indication of what the politicians, activists, and organizations communicate with their participants and members, especially for tech-savvy generations (Bryman, 2012). The search terms used in NVivo's 'Word Search' functionality (Figure 3) were based on Parrique's thesis on the Political Economy of Degrowth (Figure 7).

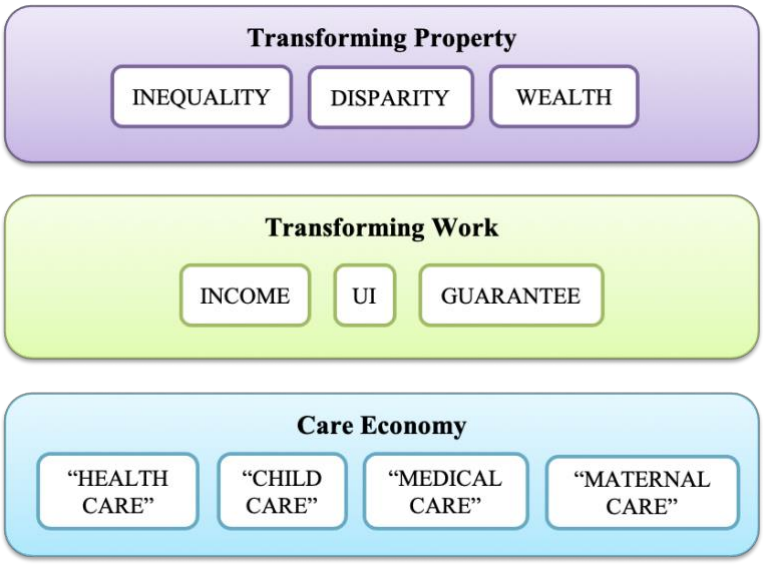

Figure 3: Search terms used to analyze Twitter posts and the frequency of words and phrases.

4.3 Limitations

The sources of data for this thesis were limited due to COVID-19 and the level of crisis in the U.S. I received a Right Livelihood College Thesis Grant to conduct field research in the U.S. when I thought it would be possible to interview key actors in Washington D.C. in person. However, my thesis topic changed course as a result of this limitation.

It was difficult to reach people in the movement due to the Zoom fatigue everyone has been feeling for the past year. Therefore, most of my data relies on secondary sources, which limits the questions I can ask of the movement and its leaders. Even though the full online nature of the research limited

the amount of data I could collect in-person, I found online data which demonstrates how this social movement uses the internet to connect with their participants and establish the collective identities they share through an imagined community of this social movement in the U.S. which is more active than ever during the pandemic.

Mentioned in Section 4.2.1, literature was collected using the snowball method, which runs the risk of a one-sided scientific perspective, but the risks of using this method were outweighed by the high quality and integrity of the primary sources first utilized on social movement theory and degrowth theory.

It is also worth noting my potential positive bias for degrowth and the social movement due to my academic background in environmental studies and sustainability science. However, I have used reflexivity throughout the research process in order to eliminate my biases and aspire for scientific objectivity. My research was peer-reviewed in order to help maintain objectivity and ensure a personal distance from the movement while evaluating their successes/challenges and degrowth's potential to serve the movement.

5 Analysis & Discussion

This Chapter will follow the three-pronged nature of McAdam et al. (1996)'s social movement theory (Section 3.1.1). The three central theoretical concepts (analyzed in Sections 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3) are essential for answering RQ1 on the emerging socio-environmental movement's characteristics, successes, and challenges, while Section 5.4 answers RQ2 by introducing degrowth to the movement.

5.1 Political Opportunities & Threats

As McAdam et al. (1996) stress the "central importance of political opportunities to understanding movement dynamics" (p.9), so too will I analyze the central role of political opportunities as an important element in analyzing the formation of social movements in the U.S. The threat of climate change has failed to influence American policy in any significant way due to political obstacles (Section 2.1), such as the prohibitive, two-party structure of electoral politics which "foreclosed that as a viable developmental option for American environmentalists" (McAdam et al., 1996, p.12), but SMOs like the DSA and the Sunrise Movement are reversing this trend. This section will examine recent domestic political opportunities exploited by the U.S. movement (Figure 4).

5.1.1 Opportunity: President Obama's climate policy

Due to the 2008 economic crash and recession, the U.S. saw eight million families lose their homes, a job market where most new jobs were temp, part-time, independent, or gig work, and as a result, millennials wait longer to form families and buy homes when compared to previous generations (Meyerson, 2018). Economic upheaval in the new millennium opened younger generations up to progressive ideas because they saw capitalism failing their families and themselves. Maurice Isserman from the DSA attributes this economic downturn (inherited by President Obama) as first opening the millennial generation to the left and to the ideas of socialism (Kurtzleben, 2018). Further, movements like Black Lives Matter and Occupy Wall Street awakened young Americans to organizing and joining ambitious groups like the DSA according to Isserman (Kurtzleben, 2018). With this context, it's less surprising that the share of Democrats and millennials with more favorable views of socialism is higher than those with favorable views of capitalism (Meyerson, 2018). As a result, young people started to search for groups such as the DSA who share the same beliefs and goals as them (Daniels, 2017; Heyward, 2018). Thus, young generations mark a political opportunity in favor of progressive SMOs, positioning these groups with a generation ripe for supporting 'radical' ideas like democratic socialism and climate justice.

Through an interview with Dr. Michael Dorsey, I learned that the Sunrise Movement began long before its emergence in 2017. In response to the "lackluster" climate record of President Obama, "not fit for purpose in the face of the data about the unfolding climate crisis," Dr. Dorsey and his students at Wesleyan University wrote 'The U.S. Climate Plan' in 2013 (Figure 4) detailing five robust policies to decarbonize the energy grid and lower carbon emissions (M. Dorsey, interview, February 14, 2021). The authors shared their proposals on Capitol Hill and around the country, connecting with different state and regional student organizations and other movements. These connections eventually brought together the activists who formed the Sunrise Movement. Therefore, I identify President Obama's dismal climate record, especially in the face of expectations that he "had it [climate policy] together" (M. Dorsey, interview, February 14, 2021), as a political opportunity used to call out centrist Democrats and their growth-centered policies incapable of addressing the magnitude of the climate crisis.

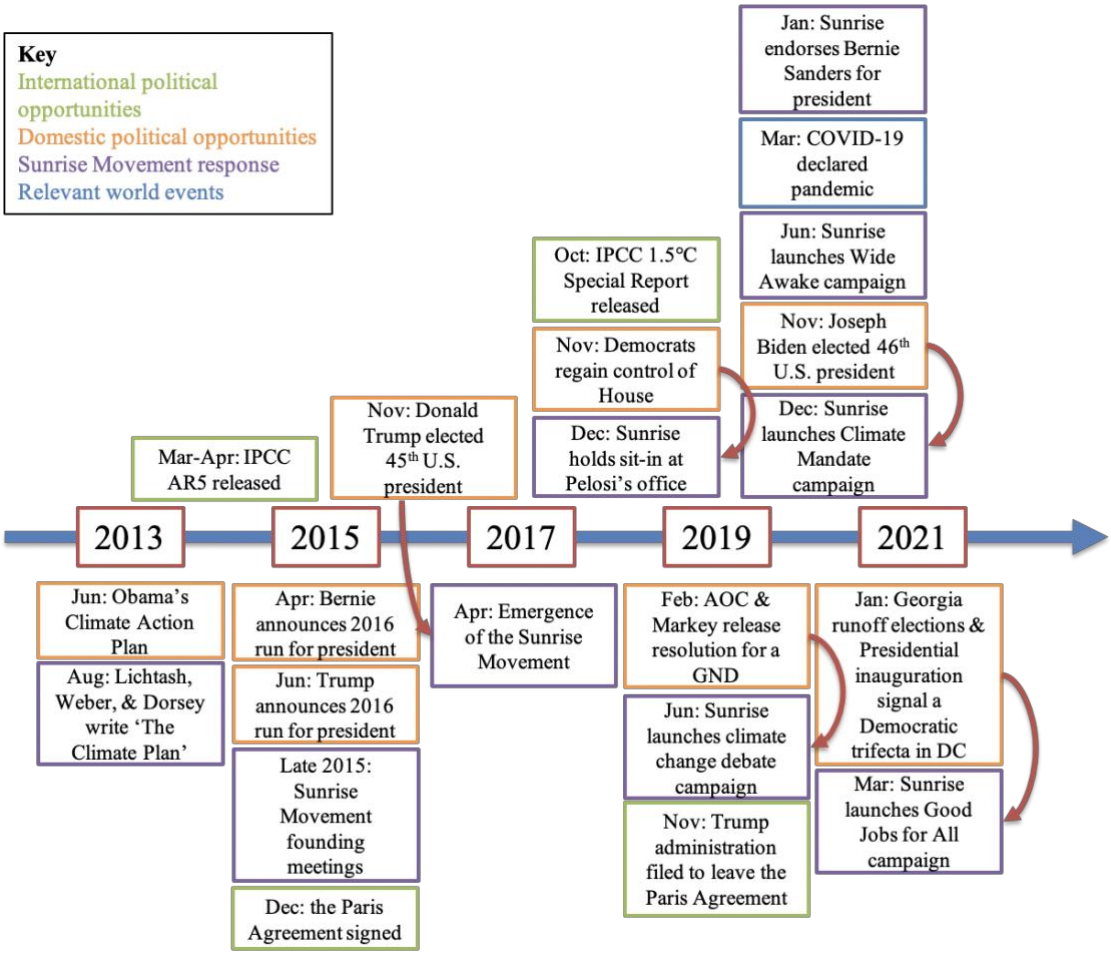

Figure 4: Timeline of events from 2013 to 2021 detailing the political opportunities in America relevant to the socio-environmental movement (author-created). The red arrows point at the Sunrise Movement's responses to the political opportunities (located at the arrow's origin) further described in Section 5.1.6.

5.1.2 Opportunity: Sanders' 2016 presidential run

The DSA experienced a mass influx of members and interest in socialism after Sanders' failed bid for the Democratic nomination in the 2016 election (Figure 4). Many young people joined the DSA to devote themselves to organizing and politics for the first time in their lives. With growth in national membership, the DSA now was now "more involved and influential than at any other point in its recent history" (Resnick, 2017, para. 5).

The DSA claims to fight for democratic socialism on the local and national level "through electoral campaigns, direct action, and political education" (Barnes, 2020, p.34). Political endorsements and electoral wins for candidates like Bernie Sanders, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (AOC), and Rashida Tlaib help pave what DSA members Gong et al. (2019) calls "favourable terrain for the socialist movement" (p.121) because those leaders "advance the socialist cause" (p.120) as well as build political support for working class people. However, some DSA members see electoral politics "purely as a tool to spread [their] message" (Gong et al., 2019, p.131), and instead choose to focus on ultra-local campaigning and canvassing, such as working with Tenants' Unions, training organizers, and supporting teachers' strikes. Ultimately, the group's "fairly autonomous chapters" (Gong et al., 2019, p.133) around the country aim to be an organization of the working class, not only for them. Most members, however, are white, male, and "downwardly-mobile millennials" privileged with the time and money needed to volunteer (Gong et al., 2019, p.129). Building on the arguments elaborated above, it is evident that the DSA exploits political opportunities by supporting like-minded 'class-struggle social democrats', while spreading the promises of a democratic socialist program such as health care for all, free college education, decent wages, and affordable housing (Weigel, 2017).

5.1.3 Threat: President Trump's climate policy

Before the 2016 election, the IPCC published their 5th Assessment Report in 2014 increasing the climate crisis' urgency and 2015 marked the signing of the Paris Agreement, a non-binding international agreement to reduce emissions and keep warming below 2°C (Figure 4). From the QCA, I identify Donald Trump's election in November 2016 as a political threat (Figure 4). The public recognition of a climate-denier and his anti-environment policies posed a major threat to the environment, yet it inspired collective action in the form of anti-Trump organizations, characterized by cross-generational participation and intersectional interests, labeled The Resistance by Meyer and Tarrow (2018). Though the Sunrise Movement and DSA aren't explicitly anti-Trump, they helped establish a new socio-environmental movement alongside The Resistance, whose values stand in stark contrast to Trump's.

The 2016 election presented a national opportunity for collective action against the rhetoric, behavior, and "brand of racial politics" characteristic of the Republican Party since the 1960s (McAdam, 2018, p.27). The People's Climate March on President Trump's 100th day in office was clearly an opportune time for the Sunrise Movement founders to canvass attendees and build support for the new movement in a moment when already diverse groups of citizens gathered to protest Trump's anti-climate policies (Matthews et al., 2018). The Sunrise Movement's public emergence at this protest (Figure 4) established the group's aims to "merge electoral organizing with creative protest" (Farrell, 2017, para. 6). According to surveys conducted at the 2017 march, it was the first time protesting for about a third of surveyed attendees, and for people who had protested before, half of them were already involved in environmental activism (Fisher, 2018). People from different movements participated in the march united by shared grievances and "intersectional motivations", not just by pro-environment sentiments (Fisher, 2018, p.123). People were drawn into the current cycle of contention by a common 'enemy': Trump and his anti-environment stances (Fisher, 2018).

The Sunrise Movement founders sought to build a more effective climate movement that could bring about real outcomes for the environment (Witt, 2018). Most importantly, they wanted to plan a movement "led by and for young people" (Klein, 2019, para. 33), a facet of the movement mentioned in every article I read on the Sunrise Movement (Appendix B). As the environmental regulations were reversed, movement youth realized that no credible climate legislation would be made in the next four years according to co-founder Sara Blazevic (Arrieta-Kenna, 2019). By emerging after the implications of Trump's election became clearer, the group provided youth an outlet to share their grievances and practice democracy "beyond the realm of elections and political parties" according to co-founder Varshini Prakash (Klein, 2019, para. 30).

5.1.4 Opportunity: 2018 midterm elections

Another political opportunity for organizations in this movement have been in supporting and endorsing candidates in political campaigns. Though the DSA is not "in the business of endorsing Democratic politicians," DSA member Maxine Phillips claims the group uses its endorsement as a political weapon if it will advance democratic socialist ideals (Resnick, 2017, para. 19). For them, the past years have "demonstrated the power of elections and elected socialists to advance socialist ideas" (Gong et al., 2019, p.119-20). In state and municipal elections around the country in November 2017, DSA members won 15 races, increasing the total number of elected DSA officials to 35 (Heyward, 2018). To the DSA, these electoral wins show the increasing potential for socialist candidates to interrupt the two-party system in the U.S. and interject more socialist policies into the mainstream arena (Meyerson, 2018).

The Sunrise Movement drew attention for their December 10th, 2018 sit-in (Figure 4) outside Nancy Pelosi's (Speaker of the House) D.C. congressional office where over one hundred youth were arrested. The group saw opportunity in the "critical period of time" after the 2018 midterm election when Democrats regained majority control of the House of Representatives (Figure 4) and influencing groups can steer the agenda and political discourse (Matthews et al., 2018, Occupy fizzled. Will Sunrise? section). This election represented a change in institutional power which gave the movement an opportunity to pressure centrist Democrats to support climate action when they had the power to pass legislation in the House with a Democratic majority. To attempt to influence the new majority, hundreds of youth activists sang songs of protest, wore coordinated shirts, and held signs urging lawmakers to back the GND, all part of the Sunrise Movement's repertoire of protest (Witt, 2018).

However, what really boosted the protest's influence was the "star power and firepower" of newly elected DSA Rep. AOC's participation in the protest (Matthews et al., 2018, Occupy fizzled. Will Sunrise? section). Blazevic claims everything changed for Sunrise after that protest - not because they were saying anything different, but because AOC, co-author of the GND, (and more generally, that any politician) was saying it with them (Arrieta-Kenna, 2019). Even before the GND's release in 2019, over 5,000 articles were written about climate change and the GND within 48 hours of this protest, demonstrating the movement's support for the GND (Klein, 2019). Once described as a "fringe proposal" (Matthews et al., 2018, Looking ahead section), some say the GND owes its "seemingly instant" (Arrieta-Kenna, 2019, para. 2), "swift rise" (Adler-Bell, 2019, para. 4) into the national conversation to the Sunrise Movement.

Sunrise co-founder Prakash claims the "political inevitability" of a GND would be a paramount achievement for the group (Witt, 2018, para. 9). DSA member Alcázar links the potential to pass the GND to the "galvanized movement of eco-socialists that includes many millennials who are scrambling to understand how we survive capitalism, as well as groups like the water protectors in Standing Rock" (Gong et al., 2019, p.127). Returning to McAdam's definition of a political opportunity, the realization of a GND would represent the movement's ability to decrease the 'power differential' between citizens and the state. Although the GND would be a positive step in the right direction, it is far from an indication of the radical transformation I argue is needed (*Chapter 1*). One downside to the movement's razer-focused attention on the GND is that it gives a false sense of hope that all will be solved once the GND is law. Based on degrowth theory and my arguments in *Chapter 1*, the realization of a GND is far from a solution to the climate crisis. The GND would only be one small step towards the radical, societal transformation we really need to survive climate change, but alone it is not enough.

5.1.5 Opportunity: 2020 presidential election

The 2020 presidential election was another political opportunity (Figure 4), where the Sunrise Movement claimed relevance in the electoral primary with their attempts "to make the election a referendum on climate change" (Higgins & Chávez, 2020, para. 16) and deliver their candidates with a youth voter base and associated "progressive cred" (Matthews et al., 2018, Looking ahead section). The group's goal was to build support for the GND and establish the election as a "litmus test for every politician seeking the presidency" (Fernandez in Stuart, 2019, para. 13). As a result, all five senators who ran for the Democratic presidential nomination co-signed the resolution and more candidates verbalized their support (Kurtzleben et al., 2019).

After the election, Sunrise co-founder Prakash served on President-elect Biden's climate task force alongside Sanders, AOC, and future Presidential Envoy for Climate Kerry, where she brought the SMO's agenda and proposed progressive changes to President-elect Biden's climate policy (Ottesen, 2020). While this could've been co-optation of the movement, this recognition and participation in forming the new administration's climate policy could also be a positive sign that the political establishment is taking the group and youth voices more seriously. For example, the movement's calls to include indigenous people and practices in climate action helped lead to the appointment of Rep. Debra Haaland as Secretary of the Interior on March 16, 2021 (The Sunrise Movement, 2021). Haaland is the first Native American to serve as a Cabinet Secretary and her leadership could alter the future of the Federal government's permitting of oil, gas, and coal leases and pipelines on Federal lands and resources and increase respect of tribal sovereignty (Funes, 2021).

Lastly, it is relevant to note the Sunrise Movement's response to political opportunities with prompt, relevant campaigns (Figure 4), such as the climate change debate campaign to push presidential nominees to discuss climate change, the climate mandate campaign to demand Biden create a cabinet of climate leaders, and the good jobs for all campaign to demand a jobs guarantee in response to the COVID recession. The specific, timely demands of these campaigns in responding to political opportunities demonstrate the political relevance of the emerging socio-environmental movement.

This section examined the ways in which the movement recognizes and responds to political opportunities with strategically placed campaigns, supporting like-minded leaders, and collaborating with other SMOs to amplify youth voices. The political opportunities analyzed here show the groups' efforts to put climate change on the agenda where it was absent before, but the groups cannot yet claim success, as the societal transformation I claim necessary in *Chapter 1* to solve the climate crisis is far from view.

5.2 Mobilizing Structures

Historical social movement research confirms the necessity of "established social entities" or collective social vehicles for successful social movements (McAdam, 2017, p.198). McAdam noted the bizarre lack of mass mobilization on climate change in the U.S. despite the grassroots-like environmental organizations (Section 2.1) and the importance of mobilizing structures being free from elite control to allow spaces where opposition can truly develop (McAdam, 2017). However, investigative journalism, from HEATED and Floodlight, expose the pervasive influence of fossil-fuel interests in societal spaces, including the energy grid (Holden, 2021a), political system (Atkin, 2020a), social media (Atkin, 2021), news reporting (Atkin, 2020b), and research (Holden, 2021b), which may explain the lack of mobilizing structures outside the purview of petro-interest groups.

One mobilizing vehicle of this movement is social media, including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, and TikTok. Not only does the Sunrise Movement use it as an organizing tool to attract and recruit participants, but it also aims to use social media to push politicians to support the GND, determine how politicians 'talk the talk' about climate change, and shape campaign messages through popular culture like memes (Grandoni, 2019; Higgins & Chávez, 2020; Kirst, 2019). The group uses the platforms to "saturate culture with ideas, reaching people through song, art, video, and graphics", demonstrating an inventive way to organize while still fostering genuine community (Prakash, 2020, para. 10). Similarly, the DSA uses media to try to "advance grassroots socialism" into the "mainstream discourse" with memes, Twitter, podcasts, and publications like The Intercept, In These Times, and Jacobin (Barnes, 2020, p.33; Weigel, 2017). Even though the DSA acknowledges social media as the best way to share their politics with large audiences, there are qualms that such mass media platforms undermine in-real-life organizing efforts, limit the meaningful advancement of a socialist worldview, and alienate older generations not typically online (Barnes, 2020). Therefore, this mobilizing structure can be seen as a strength for the movement in some ways (reaching a wide audience and potential members), but a weakness in others (most members being "downwardly mobile millennials" (Heyward, 2018, p.13)).

Other mobilizing structures are mainstream democratic socialist politicians, like Bernie Sanders, who draw people to the movement (Gong et al., 2019). Sanders is a politician whose socialist values draw progressive young people together in what is named the "Bernie wing of the [Democratic] party" (Krieg, 2021, From Bernie to Biden section). His presidential campaigns spawned a "Bernie moment" which sparked a new energy and desire among young people to be part of a political revolution (Witt, 2018, para. 35). People saw Sanders as a movement candidate who was talking about the fossil-fuel industry and corruption in politics the way activists were talking about it (Giridharadas, 2020). I label

this mobilizing structure the 'politician as activist' (Figure 6) because politicians like Sanders and members of 'The Squad' (i.e. Reps. AOC, Rashida Tlaib, Ilhan Omar, and Cori Bush) use public platforms like Twitter (Section 5.4) to share their goals to transform the federal government into an institutional power with a goal to ensure good lives for Americans (Giridharadas, 2020).

Alliances and collaborations between SMOs in this movement are also mobilizing structures. Though there is no official partnership between the Sunrise Movement and DSA, it is clear from Section 5.1.5 that the two groups seek to enhance the government's role in fighting climate change. For example, the DSA Ecosocialist Committee supported the Sunrise Movement's GND campaign and has since co-sponsored events such as the nationwide 'Road to the GND Tour' in 2019 which pushed what the group claims is an "ecosocialist vision" (Carter, 2019; *DSA Ecosocialist Steering Committee Endorses Sunrise Movement's Green New Deal*, 2018). The Sunrise Movement acknowledges the necessity for collaboration when Prakash recognizes the GND's ability to pass sweeping changes will depend upon a coalition of supporters (Carter, 2019). Klein agrees when she calls the GND "a vision to both unite movements and dramatically expand them" (2020, para. 30). This analysis indicates the necessity of collaborations within this movement for achieving its goals.

Therefore, one method to improve the movement is for it to focus on strengthening coalitions with other SMOs and local NGOs. More partnerships could increase the movement's capacity for political and social change needed to survive the climate crisis. Prakash claims Sunrise's local hubs have autonomy to work on issues that make sense in their own contexts (Carter, 2019) and similarly, local DSA chapters can work with local organizations to advance their socialist ideals. For example, the East Bay DSA supported the Oakland teachers' strike and the Westside LA DSA worked to support direct action with the LA Tenant's Union (Gong et al., 2019). However, a local chapter's relationship to other movements in a community is largely dependent on relationships between activists in the chapter and is up to each chapter to determine who to work with (Gong et al., 2019), which leaves local collaborations and synergies mostly up to chance. To bring more SMOs into the movement and involve more of the climate-concerned population, this movement could strengthen its alliances "with other groups experiencing the harms of capitalism" by focusing on where it aligns with degrowth (D. Stuart et al., 2020). Section 5.4 will dive into three categorical topics where this overlap occurs.

5.3 Framing Processes

Section 3.1.1 described why the issue of climate change has gained little traction in the U.S. due to its de-politicization and lack of effective environmental frames. This section will focus on the intentional moves of SMOs, their framing of climate change, and how they help to develop the current movement.

It can be difficult for people to comprehend the longevity of climate change and it is already less likely to personally affect older generations. This reality is illustrated by a study which shows American millennials find global warming more personally important than older generations, even ranking it higher as an issue while voting (Ballew et al., 2019). The same study found the percentage of people aged 18-34 believing climate change will harm them personally increased from 30% in 2008 to 51% in 2018, whereas people aged 55+ believing the same only increased from 32% to 41% (Ballew et al., 2019). A Gallup poll supports this, finding 70% of Americans aged 18-34 worried significantly more about global warming compared to only 56% of Americans aged 55+ (Reinhart, 2018). Counteracting the framing failures that made it more difficult for a socio-environmental movement to form in the U.S., four processes (Figure 5) utilized by this movement contribute to climate change being a now-recognized national issue for many Americans. Ahead of the 2020 election, Pew Research Center found climate change as a very important (42%) or somewhat important (26%) issue for voters (Tyson, 2020). Similarly, climate change has risen as a threat to well-being for 44% of Americans in 2010 to 60% in 2020 (Kennedy, 2020).

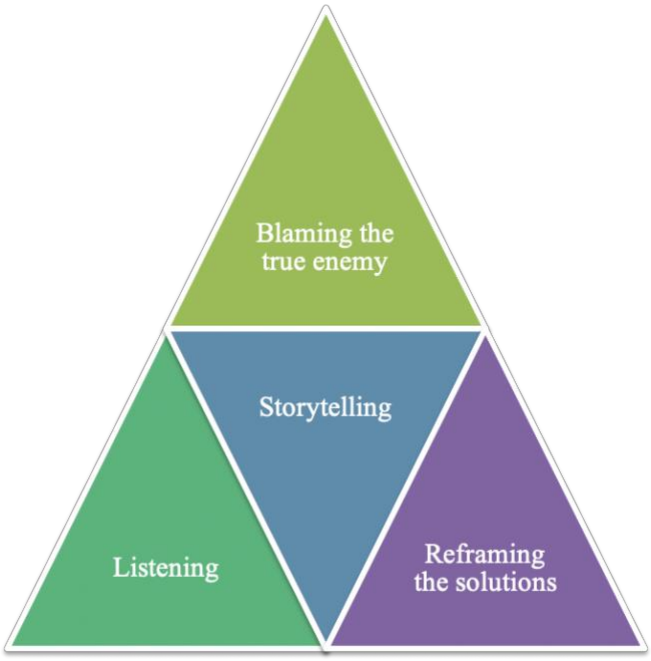

Figure 5: Framing processes successfully and intentionally utilized by the movement (author-created).

One framing process identified in the QCA is naming and blaming the true 'enemy' of environmentalists and environmental progress – what the Sunrise Movement calls the "fossil-fuel oligarchs and any member of Congress doing their bidding" (Adler-Bell, 2019, para. 15). In 2018, the Sunrise Movement brought awareness to fossil-fuel money in politics by lobbying lawmakers to sign a pledge to reject fossil-fuel industry money (Matthews et al., 2018). It was not the first organization to

launch a fossil-fuel divestment campaign; Bill McKibben and 350.org launched their people-powered movement focused on divesting institutions from fossil fuels (Cadan et al., 2019). However, the Sunrise Movement recognizes the permeability of American politics to corruption (Klein, 2019) and frames the responsibility to the "greed and selfishness of wealthy men fossil-fuel billionaires who plunder our earth for profit" (Witt, 2018, para. 7). According to the Carbon Majors Database, 100 fossil-fuel producers are responsible for 71% of all carbon emissions since 1988 (Griffin, 2017). By transferring culpability to fossil-fuel producers, individuals can associate climate change with political action, despite political involvement not being present in the Environment Frame (Lakoff, 2010). Sunrise youth call out corruption and some wealthy elite standing in the way of climate action (Willcox & Barnett-Loro, 2019) in order to reframe climate change as a political problem. The Sunrise Movement reintroduces political action into the Environmental Frame as a way of politicizing climate change by pointing to systemic flaws dependent on fossil-fuels.

Those analyzing this movement's momentum identify the narrative and rhetoric as part of their strategy (Willcox & Barnett-Loro, 2019), therefore I identify storytelling as a framing process utilized by the movement (Figure 5). According to the Climate Advocacy Lab who investigated the effectiveness of GND campaigns in the U.S., developing a narrative capacity works for the Sunrise Movement because "stories allow us to imagine a tomorrow that is dramatically different than the world today" (Willcox & Barnett-Loro, 2019, A visionary narrative section). The youth-led group aims to motivate with hope, instead of fear ("Sunrise Movement Fights for Green New Deal," 2019) and similarly, the DSA supports candidates running on socialist platforms because it frames the ambitions "many young, progressive Americans" have "of far-reaching structural change across the economy and society," which movement participants may perceive as encouraging instead insurmountable (Paz, 2019, para. 5). Humans have been using storytelling for centuries in order to convey messages and morals, and the storytelling done in this movement is no different; here, the message is one of global crises and these organizations provide the GND as a future vision, though I argue in Section 5.1.4 that this vision isn't radical enough.

Lastly, the movement's ability to listen to people's problems and to reframe the solutions are also framing processes (Figure 5). Prakash attributes the lack of support for climate action to the way we are used to framing climate solutions as taking something away from people (Klein, 2019). Part of what makes this new movement stand apart from other environmental organizations is that youth from movement groups are changing the way society talks about climate solutions, shifting the focus from behavioral changes, like recycling, to structural solutions, like the GND, yet fail to visualize the radical societal transformation argued for in *Chapter 1*. In order to understand and focus on the issues that

people care about, they develop empathy by listening and talking to their communities (Klein, 2019; Sunrise's Principles, n.d.). DSA volunteers use canvassing as an opportunity to knock on people's doors, establish common ground face-to-face, and tying a specific solution to socialist projects (Heyward, 2018). On a broader level, the Sunrise Movement has changed the environmental conversation from one of gas taxes and carbon caps to an inclusive and patriotic appeal to join a mass mobilization of historic proportions to demand a livable future for all people (Teirstein, n.d.; Witt, 2018).

This section examined how the movement's framing processes aim to reintegrate politics into the Environment Frame. For the movement, placing the blame of climate change through storytelling correctly identifies the problem's root causes; listening to people's concerns and reframing the solutions to focus on the possibilities of addressing climate change and transforming society defines a path forward but fails to provide a vision capable of stopping climate change.

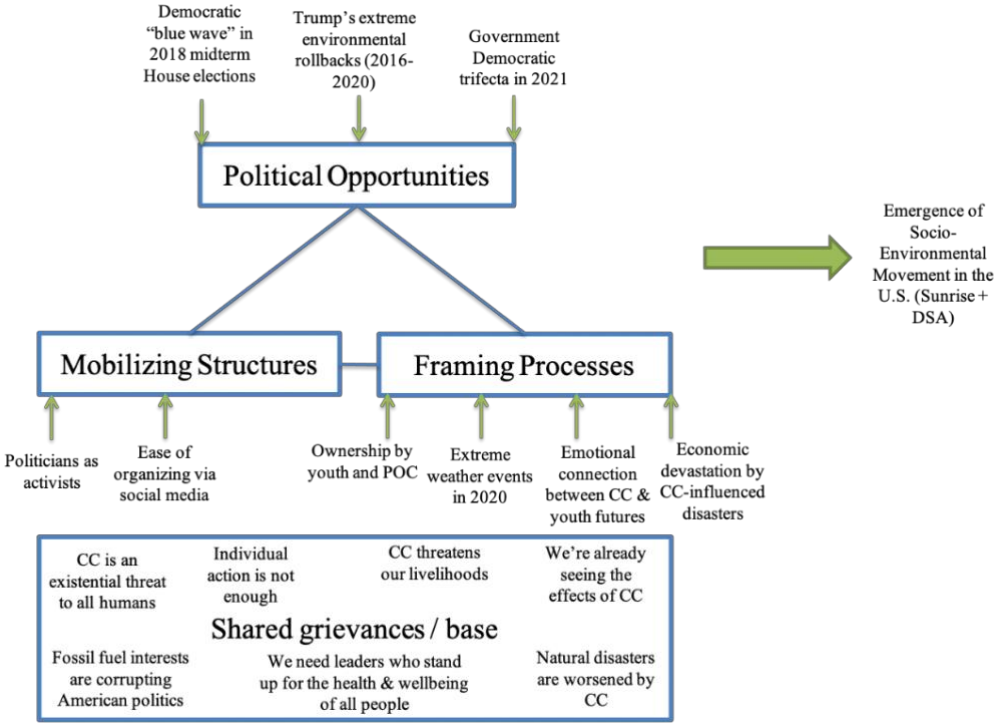

Figure 6: An updated conceptual framework of the 'political process' approach that synthesizes the answer to RQ1. These factors contributed to the emergence of the new socio-environmental movement in the U.S. (author-created).

The first three Sections in *Chapter 5* answer RQ1 by characterizing the socio-environmental movement in the U.S. and update McAdam's findings from 2017. Figure 6 shows my synthesis of the three factors which have allowed for the emergence of a socio-environmental movement in the U.S. Two SMOs are used as case studies: the Sunrise Movement which uses youth mass protests and actions of nonviolent resistance to raise the issue of climate change to national politicians and the DSA which uses electoral politics to bring socialist notions into the political mainstream. However, the movement must grow its influence by collaborating with like-minded organizations and expand the demographics of its

participants in order to force lawmakers to take significant climate action. In a recent analysis of climate activism in the U.S., no evidence was found of groups spanning across movement boundaries, nor did it show evidence of intersectionality in coalition-building efforts (Fisher & Nasrin, 2021). The lack of diversity in the American movement reemphasizes the need for coalitions of people with different identities sharing a common struggle. The movement should focus on the suggested opportunities in this thesis to grow their influence and capability of influencing policies and achieving real outcomes in terms of environmental change.

5.4 Using degrowth to reframe climate change

This section explores whether degrowth policies would be supported by the movement's participants and how they could foster the movement. I recommend specific degrowth policies based on the synergies and overlaps (Section 4.2.4) between movement Twitter posts and contributions from existing degrowth literature. Based on my analysis thus far, I claim degrowth policies to transform property and work (Figure 7) and build a robust care economy would be accepted by participants, but whether it is powerful enough to bring more people into the movement should be researched further. A strategy to include degrowth in the movement is an attempt to reframe climate change as an opportunity to reimagine the future of human society. The following subsections will explain how the proposed changes would lead to a degrowth society and why it would further the movement's aims to address climate change.

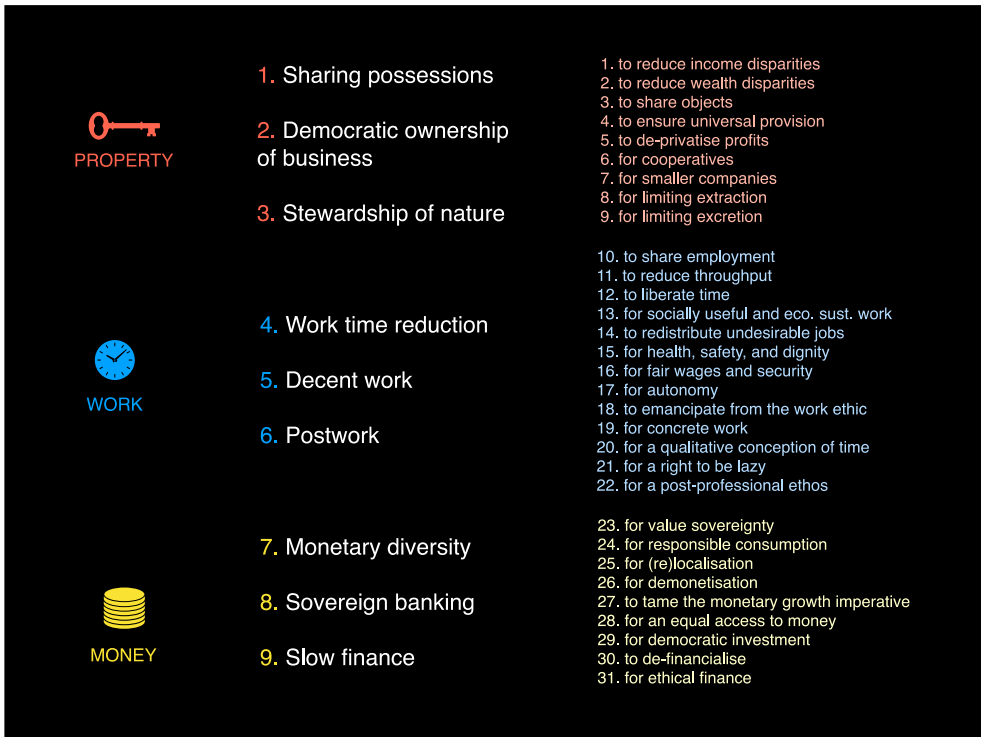

Figure 7: Recipes for Degrowth (obtained from Timothée Parrique via e-mail communication based on his text (Parrique, 2019)).

5.4.1 Transforming Property

Degrowth argues for more equality citing lower overall well-being in countries with high levels of inequality (Kallis et al., 2018). I propose this movement align with the degrowth community which "stands against the economization of society and nature" (Parrique, 2019, p.509) because the movement seems to agree that human life is valuable, and people should have equitable chances at a good life. With the intent of improving human well-being, this subsection will explore the goal of reducing wealth disparities and increasing equality.

Parrique (2019) proposes policy instruments like progressive taxes on income or wealth and a universal autonomy allowance. Further support comes from Demaria et al. (2013), Hickel (2019), Domazet et al. (2020), and D'Alisa and Kallis (2020) who claim governments should attempt to redistribute wealth and/or income in a degrowth society. Jackson (2017) and Daly (2018) also argue for a minimum and maximum income, while Fraser (2019) disagrees with paying people to purchase their basic needs because it continues to treat these needs as commodities instead of public goods.

I argue that the movement should bring more attention to the problem of wealth inequality (the Sunrise Movement only mentions the inequality crisis once and wealth tax once on Twitter) and income disparities in the U.S. because my analysis of why the movement advocates for social and environmental prosperity for all people indicates they also support equality. Currently, the movement

may be afraid to raise inequality because it could risk alienating wealthy people, including the wealthy donors and foundations which help fund the Sunrise Movement and DSA campaigns. However, elected politicians from the Justice Democrats and DSA already raise their voices about the "obscene" (Sanders, 2020), "massive" (Omar, 2021), and "extreme" (DSA, 2020) wealth that American billionaires own. Sanders frequently calls out unequal power relations, which leads me to argue that SMOs in this movement should risk calling out inequalities in society and advocate for wealth redistribution. There can be no sustainable society without equality, especially if people are living beyond planetary boundaries.

5.4.2 Transforming Work

Work is our "obsession with an activity that has become so natural it is hardly questioned" (Parrique, 2019, p.566). It is the source of incomes and thus the source of consumerism. Governments pursue economic growth because growth creates work, so if we want to escape the demand for growth, we must reevaluate our relationship and dependence upon work. To redefine work, Parrique (2019) explores three degrowth goals: work time reduction, decent work, and postwork. Given the fact that 6% of the U.S. workforce is currently unemployed, this section will focus on redistributing the quantity of work for social and ecological reasons (U.S. Department of Labor, 2021).

From a degrowth perspective, work time reduction is desirable for three reasons: (1) equality - if employment is limited, sharing it allows more people to participate; (2) ecological - lowering the hours worked can reduce environmental pressures from production, commuting, extraction, and pollution; and (3) liberation - more time for leisure, political involvement, or education which means higher well-being and other positive outcomes (Parrique, 2019). Common policies to achieve work time reduction support a shorter work week, a shorter workday, a shorter work life, job sharing, or more holidays. However, given high unemployment in the U.S., I argue these policy goals should be paired with a UBI and job guarantee, which would guarantee a job to anyone who wanted one, thus shrinking unemployment and ensuring both a livable wage in conjunction with leisure time.

The DSA and Justice Democrats already talk about a job guarantee on Twitter (Figure 8), indicating that the movement could gain more support if they support a job guarantee as well. Doing so could appeal to a different type of supporter from the lower and middle classes, thus working towards diversified membership.

Figure 8: Tweet from the DSA Ecosocialist working group showing support for a federal job guarantee (DSA for a Green New Deal, 2020).

5.4.3 Care Economy

Missing from American society is a culture of *care* and I claim this must be present in order to address the climate crisis. The value of care in a degrowth economy is not just about healthcare; it is equally about the care for people as it is about the care for nature (Parrique, 2019). However, I focused research on the talk around healthcare (Table 1) to emphasize the value of and need for 'care activities' present in degrowth literature. In 2019, 8% of Americans did not have health insurance at some point during the year; approximately 68% of Americans have private-insurance (the majority is employment-based) while 34% had a public health insurance plan (total is more than 100% because people can be covered by more than one type during the year) (Keisler-Starkey & Bunch, 2020). Despite the millions of people with no health coverage, the amount of health insurance tied to employment is worrisome. The American healthcare system overwhelming relies on people having jobs, which could easily fluctuate due to climate change.

Table 1: Frequency of healthcare mentions on Twitter accounts from Appendix D

Politician	Twitter Mentions*
Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez	62
Ayanna Pressley	18
Bernie Sanders	271
Cori Bush	40
Ed Markey	127
Ilhan Omar	41
Jamaal Bowman	22
Rashida Tlaib	24

*Including mentions of "health care", "healthcare", "child care", "medical care", and "maternal care"

While the Sunrise Movement Twitter account only mentions healthcare six times and the DSA account mentions it 49 times, Democratic socialist politicians talk about healthcare more often (Table 1) because it's an important issue for Americans. According to Pew Research Center (2020), 68% of voters in the 2020 presidential election cited healthcare as important to their vote. With these facts, I claim the movement could benefit by advocating for a better healthcare system in the U.S. and potentially gain more support, but more research is necessary to determine this. Section 5.4 answered RQ2 with degrowth policies that address environmental problems arising from continued economic growth and provide opportunities to bring new participants into the movement.

6 Conclusion

6.1 Implication of findings

The findings from this research characterize the new socio-environmental force in the U.S. as youthful, political, and vocal. Groups in the movement address political threats and opportunities by supporting climate leaders, vocalizing their demands, and forming coalitions with groups who share their values. They use frames of opportunity and visions of a better future to reframe and re-politicize climate change. Degrowth policies that redistribute wealth, increase employment levels, and increase support for a care economy could be accepted by the movement, but further research is needed to determine if support for these policies could grow the movement. Ultimately, degrowth calls for a "reimagining of the political" (Medak et al., 2020, p.290) and challenges us to reimagine what is possible for society. It is yet to be seen whether this social movement can use degrowth as a "framework for articulating their demands for a more ecologically sustainable and economically fair society", but this thesis presents it as a relevant vision for this movement (Mastini et al., 2021, p.3).

6.2 Contribution to sustainability science

The introduction to this thesis sets the scene and urgency with the warning of major climatic changes unless we limit global warming to 1.5°C. Yet, the current temperature rise is at 1.25°C (Voosen, 2021). One could look to solve this problem from many different angles and within many unique disciplines. The emerging field of sustainability science claims an interdisciplinary approach to the complex issue of climate change makes any solutions or approaches more holistic (Jerneck et al., 2011). This thesis approaches the wicked problem of climate change by joining the natural sciences with the social sciences using social movement, economic, and framing theories to better understand nature-society interactions (Jerneck et al., 2011). I answered the RQs posed in this thesis by describing the emergence of a social movement, processing its cultural context and implications, and suggesting radical ideas to improve it. This thesis contributes to sustainability science by using an interdisciplinary approach to help other people in American society process recent political events and see this social movement's importance and role in society. This research aims to be action-oriented and provide use-inspired research and by doing so, I contribute new knowledge for the movement and civil society actors.

6.3 Future Research

Future research would be beneficial to analyze other SMOs contributing to this socio-environmental movement. A closer look at other groups and individuals independent of the central organizations mentioned in this thesis could bring a new perspective to the multi-dimensionality of this social

movement. It may also be relevant to examine individuals or organizing leaders working towards socialism to address societal inequities and climate change.

More research focusing on the Sunrise Movement and the DSA could further foster the movement if new data sets were to be used, for example in-person interviews or surveys of movement participants. Utilizing other social movement theories could contribute to identifying the successes and failures of the movement as it develops further.

In summary, it is clear this socio-environmental movement has potential and a lot to accomplish for the U.S. How long this will take and how many people it will require is undetermined. One thing is sure, this movement is just one subset of the larger, global climate action and environmental justice effort that is demanding government action against climate change.

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Appendix A

Interview Guide

Introduction to the research

Interviewee's background

1. Please tell me about your background with social movements.

Sunrise Movement

2. When did your involvement in the Sunrise Movement / Climate movement begin?
3. Why were you motivated to help co-found the Sunrise Movement?
4. How were you involved in the planning / formation phase of the movement?
5. What is Sunrise's strategy for achieving sustainability in the U.S.?
6. What sort of questions did you ask when forming the Sunrise principles? The first of which is "We are a movement to stop climate change and create millions of good-paying jobs in the process."
7. How did you decide to focus the movement on jobs, fossil-fuel corruption in politics, and human well-being? What did you leave out?
8. The 10th Sunrise Principle is "We united with other movements for change." What movements do you think Sunrise could benefit from partnering with?
9. The iconic shirts worn at the sit-in at Pelosi's office said "We have a right to good jobs and a liveable future" and "12 more years" – why were these slogans used? Do you think they were effective?
10. What is your current role with the Sunrise Movement?

Collaboration with DSA

11. What role has collaboration with elected DSA officials played (i.e. with AOC)? 12. Did the collaboration evolve organically or was it planned?
12. Where do you see the future of Sunrise's work with the DSA going?

Green New Deal

13. In your opinion, is everything we need to combat climate change in the Green New Deal? What is missing?

Future of the movement

14. What more radical proposals for social change do you think could one day influence the movement?
15. How do you think these more radical goals could be introduced into the movement?

Appendix B

Secondary Sources

Title of Article	Publisher	Section	Date Published	Author(s)
Five Steps America Must Take Now to Combat Climate Change	U.S. News	World Report	Oct. 15, 2013	Shank, Michael and Lichtash, Matt
Weber ’13 and Lichtash ’13 Launch “The Plan”	University Wire, Carlsbad	News	Oct. 24, 2013	Lim, Rachel
The Democratic Socialists of America Have Actual Political Power. What Will They Do With It?	The Daily Beast	Politics	Aug. 6, 2017	Resnick, Gideon
The socialist movement is getting younger, thanks to one 75-year-old	The Washington Post	National Politics	Aug. 6, 2017	Weigel, David
Democratic Socialists of America are a force for the common good	University Wire, Carlsbad	Opinion	Nov. 22, 2017	Daniels, Henry
Coming Up Roses	The Nation.	-	Jan 15/22, 2018	Heyward, Anna
Getting To Know The DSA	NPR	Politics	Jul. 19, 2018	Kurtzleben, Danielle
Why Democrats Love Democratic Socialism	National Review	-	Oct. 1, 2018	Hammond, Samuel
The Return of American Socialism	The American Prospect	-	Fall 2018	Meyerson, Harold
Inside the Sunrise Movement (it didn’t happen by accident)	E&E News	Activism	Dec. 3, 2018	Matthews, Mark, Bowlin, Nick, and Hulac, Benjamin
The Optimistic Activists For a Green New Deal: Inside the Youth-Led Singing Sunrise Movement	The New Yorker	Dispatch	Dec. 23, 2018	Witt, Emily

Title of Article	Publisher	Section	Date Published	Author(s)
The keys to the Sunrise Movement's momentum? A bold idea, a visionary narrative, and organizing best practices	Mob Lab	Climate Advocacy Lab	Feb. 13, 2019	Willcox, Nathan and Barnett-Loro, Carina
How Varshini Prakash and the Sunrise Movement Are Making People Actually Care About Climate Change	Elle	Culture	Feb. 20, 2019	Kirst, Seamus
America's New Left	New Left Review	DSA: Directions	Mar-Jun 2019	Gong, Jeremy; Mason, Sarah; Miranda Alcázar, Magally; Sallai, Arielle; and Christian Moya, René
Sunrise movement fights for Green New Deal	The Suffolk Journal	News	Apr. 24, 2019	Koczera, Amy
The young climate activist taking on Washington	CNN Global Newsstream	News	Apr. 29, 2019	Amanpour, Christiane and Prakash, Varshini
Sunrise Movement, the Force Behind the Green New Deal, Ramps Up Plans for 2020	Rolling Stone	Politics	May 1, 2019	Stuart, Tessa
Varshini Prakash of the Sunrise Movement on Climate Justice, the Green New Deal, and Revolution	Nation	Q&A, Climate Change, Environ-mental Justice	Jun. 4, 2019	Stephenson, Wen
The Sunrise Movement Actually Changed the Democratic Conversation. So What Do You Do for a Sequel?	Politico	Letter from New York	Jun. 16, 2019	Arrieta- Kenna, Ruairí

Title of Article	Publisher	Section	Date Published	Author(s)
The group that pushed the Green New Deal sets its sights on 2020 and beyond	Grist	2020 Vision	Jun. 19, 2019	Teirstein, Zoya
“No permanent friends, no permanent enemies”: in- side the Sunrise Movement’s plan to save humanity	Vox	Ezra Klein Show Podcast	Jul. 31, 2019	Klein, Ezra
Democratic Socialists of America: Communism for the New Millennium	The New American	Politics	Aug. 5, 2019	Loudon, Trevor
Notes From Three Months With Young Climate Activists	New York Times	Reader-center	Aug. 8, 2019	Lucas, Jake
The new face of climate activism is young, angry – and effective	Vox	The Highlight	Sep. 17, 2019	Nilsen, El
The Energy 202: Sunrise Movement to score 2020 candidates on Green New Deal – and yes, tweets count	The Washington Post	Politics	Oct. 8, 2019	Grandoni, Dino
Why Some Young Voters Are Choosing Democratic Socialism Over the Democratic Party	New York Times	US	Oct. 15, 2019	Paz, Isabella Grullón
How a 26-Year-Old Activist Forced the Democratic Party to Get Serious About Climate Change	Vice	Environment	Nov. 18, 2019	Solis, Marie
Democratic Socialists on Social Media: Cohesion, Fragmentation, and Normative Strategies	triple	-	Jan. 13, 2020	Barnes, Christopher C.
‘Kids are taking the streets’: climate activists plan avalanche of events as 2020 election looms	The Guardian	Environment	Jan. 25, 2020	vander Voo, Lee

Title of Article	Publisher	Section	Date Published	Author(s)
#SocialismSucks: Trump's TikTok Teens	Dissent	-	Spring 2020	Epp, Julian
To solve everything, solve climate	The.Ink newsletter	-	Sep. 1, 2020	Giridharadas, Anand
The Sunrise Movement, a Growing Electoral Force, Faces "Painful Moment"	The Intercept	-	Sep. 9, 2020	Higgins, Eoin Chávez
'Adults are asleep at the wheel' in climate crisis, says co-founder of youth-led activist group	The Washington Post	Lifestyle	Sep. 22, 2020	Ottesen, K K.
Sunrise Movement advocates, empowers through protest music	The Tufts Daily	News	Nov. 9, 2020	Szostak, Megan
Varshini Prakash on Redefining What's Possible	Sierra Club	-	Dec. 22, 2020	Prakash, Varshini
The Sunrise Movement is an early winner in the Biden transition. Now comes the hard part.	CNN Wire Service	U.S. Politics	Jan. 2, 2021	Krieg, Gregory
Behind the scenes of Sunrise's volunteer-led phone bank program: Learn the volunteer team structure that powered 6.2 million dials	Power Labs	Learn how to design and run people-powered campaigns	n.d.	Zaia, Sophia and Smith, Randall
On the Horizon: the Building of the Sunrise Movement	The Yale Politic	-	n.d.	Teirstein, Max

Appendix C

Coding breakdown

Sunrise Movement sources

Name	Files	References	Created on	Created...
Actions	8	11	3/1/21, 10:34 AM	AS
Arrest	7	8	3/1/21, 10:35 AM	AS
Canvassing	4	8	3/2/21, 9:58 AM	AS
Fundraising	6	7	3/1/21, 11:10 AM	AS
Protest	13	36	3/1/21, 10:35 AM	AS
Social Media	14	29	3/1/21, 11:08 AM	AS
Evaluation	0	0	3/1/21, 10:33 AM	AS
Challenges	10	38	3/1/21, 10:33 AM	AS
Failures	3	4	3/1/21, 10:33 AM	AS
Successes	11	32	3/1/21, 10:33 AM	AS
Identity	14	47	3/1/21, 10:47 AM	AS
Social Movement	4	20	3/1/21, 10:48 AM	AS
Framing Processes	15	57	3/1/21, 10:48 AM	AS
Mobilizing Structures	3	7	3/1/21, 10:48 AM	AS
Political Opportunities	9	20	3/1/21, 10:48 AM	AS
Stage of Movement	0	0	3/1/21, 10:31 AM	AS
Birth	15	66	3/1/21, 10:31 AM	AS
Emergence	9	17	3/1/21, 10:32 AM	AS
Strategy	1	4	3/1/21, 10:34 AM	AS
Collaboration	15	37	3/1/21, 10:41 AM	AS
People	19	55	3/1/21, 10:41 AM	AS
Political	21	57	3/1/21, 10:41 AM	AS

DSA Sources

Name	Files	References	Created on	Created...
DSA for GND	4	6	4/8/21, 10:49 AM	AS
Electoral Strategy	8	18	4/8/21, 10:48 AM	AS
Framing	6	18	4/8/21, 10:50 AM	AS
Mobilizing Structure	6	44	4/8/21, 10:49 AM	AS
Social Media	5	14	4/8/21, 10:49 AM	AS
Political Opportunity	8	15	4/8/21, 10:49 AM	AS

Appendix D

Twitter Accounts

Section 5.4 explores qualitative and quantitative results from the following people or organizations and Twitter handle provided in parentheses:

1. DSA members & politicians including:
    a. Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (@AOC)
    b. Rep. Ayanna Pressley (@AyannaPressley)
    c. Sen. Bernie Sanders (@BernieSanders)
    d. Rep. Cori Bush (@CoriBush)
    e. Democratic Socialists of America (@DemSocialists)
    f. DSA for a Green New Deal (@DSAecosocialism)
    g. Rep. Ilhan Omar (@IlhanMN)
    h. Rep. Jamaal Bowman (@JamaalBowmanNY)
    i. Young DSA (@YDSA_)
    j. Justice Democrats (@justicedems)
    k. Rep. Rashida Tlaib (@RashidaTlaib)
2. Social Movement Organizations including:
    a. The Sunrise Movement (@sunrisemvmt)
3. Degrowth academics and institutions including:
    a. The Centre for the Understanding of Sustainable Prosperity (@CUSP_uk)
    b. degrowth.info website (@degrowth_info)
    c. U.S.-based degrowth group (@degrowUS)
    d. Research & Degrowth (@R_Degrowth)