



# Towards climate resilient peace: an intersectional and degrowth approach

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## Abstract

How can peace be climate resilient? How can peace and environmental sustainability be advanced simultaneously? To address these questions, I develop a new conceptual and theoretical framework for climate resilient peace through degrowth. This paper calls for stronger consideration of positive conceptualizations of peace and of intersectionality and degrowth in pursuit of peace and resilience. Not only does climate change make planetary limitations more salient, but it also highlights rising inequalities. In light of this, peace necessitates transforming societal power structures that are both driving climate change and influencing people's experiences of climate impacts. Addressing imbalanced power structures then is key to understanding and fostering climate resilient peace. This paper conceptualizes climate resilient peace based on an intersectional understanding of positive peace, highlighting that peace depends on the negation of structural violence experienced at the intersection of political and social identities. In relation to this, I argue that a process of climate resilient peace must address underlying power structures influencing people's experience of climate harms, and driving climate change so as to mitigate further damage. This paper demonstrates such a process through degrowth, wherein growth is no longer the central economic goal, exemplifying social and ecological means for disrupting structural violence within climate limitations. I discuss and give examples of three key degrowth processes—redistribution, reprioritized care economies, and global equity—as opportunities to foster peace in a changing climate. This framework, thus, contributes a new approach to climate resilient peace that addresses challenges of both social and environmental sustainability.

**Keywords** Climate change · Degrowth · Intersectionality · Positive peace · Resilience

## Introduction

Climate change poses increasing challenges for society, not least of which include building and sustaining peace. Peace, as the absence of structural violence, exists along dimensions of access to and distribution of power and resources (Galtung 1969; Anglin 1998). Research has highlighted that although it may not be a universal driver of violent conflict (Theisen 2017; Mach et al. 2019), climate change does have

social, political, and economic consequences, which may be particularly negative for people in existing situations of vulnerability (Adger et al. 2014). Climate change, thus, impacts peace by affecting people differently through and at the intersection of social and political power structures (Kaijser and Kronsell 2014; Rydstrom and Kinnvall 2019). Power structures, particularly those behind ecologically harmful economic growth, have also driven climate change (e.g., Soron 2007; Pasch 2018; Hickel 2020). Questions of how to foster peace and address challenges of climate change, then, have much in common and present opportunities for addressing these two phenomena simultaneously.

How can peace be climate resilient? How can peace and environmental sustainability align? In seeking to further the debate on how peace and challenges of climate change can be addressed simultaneously, I develop a conceptual and theoretical framework for a degrowth approach to climate resilient peace. I present climate resilient peace as a

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transformative process of addressing imbalanced access to and distribution of power and resources in light of climate change. The concept is based on a positive and intersectional conceptualization of peace as a process of breaking cycles of physical and structural violence. Positive peace encompasses the negation of structural violence through distribution of power and resources, as opposed to negative peace, which implies the absence of (direct or personal) physical violence (Galtung 1969; Anglin 1998). Through intersectionality, there is particular attention to the ways in which power constellations (re)produce privilege, vulnerability, or resilience within and between groups of people along characteristics such as race, gender, or class. This contributes to the theoretical framework, in which peace must be experienced in light of climate change and peace conditions must not further contribute to climate change.

In consideration of power structures, this paper presents a point of departure for peace conceptualization and theory to pay greater attention to the forces behind climate change, namely drivers of economic growth. I suggest that peace is possible through a transition beyond growth to degrowth societies. Degrowth entails transitioning to a society where economic growth is no longer at the center, with downscaling of production and consumption to enhance human and ecological well-being (Kallis et al. 2015). This paper presents a framework highlighting three degrowth processes that contribute to climate resilient peace: redistribution to move beyond structural violence, reprioritized care economies to disrupt harmful power structures, and global equity for decolonizing peace. These pathways present ecologically sound opportunities to disrupt power structures that otherwise (re)produce violence and inequality.

With this framework, I consider climate resilience and climate change concerns for peace beyond violent conflict. Although climate change impacts and peace experiences are certainly a matter of global concern, this paper focuses on the so-called Global North. This focus frames climate resilience in terms of agency, especially in relation to responsibility for climate action. Through this focus, I address crucial aspects of structural violence in relation to experiences of peace and climate change: people face situations of vulnerability linked to power imbalances, Global North countries have overwhelming driven climate change, and degrowth literature and practices target high-consumption and highly industrialized societies.

This paper contributes enhanced understanding of peace and presents how a degrowth approach can foster such peace in light of a changing climate. It draws together peace theory and research on ecological limitations, emphasizing dynamics of power and sharpening our understanding of positive peace through an intersectional lens. Furthering normative goals of peace, the framework emphasizes the need for greater consideration of justice issues in the

study and practice of degrowth. Through this paper, I argue that careful degrowth can help address social and economic structural issues to advance intersectional positive peace within climate limitations, ultimately advancing a climate resilient peace.

## Rationale for a new approach

This paper stems from questions raised by overlaps or gaps in the theoretical and empirical findings between research on climate change, violence, peace, and economic growth. For decades, we have heard warnings that climate change will induce scarcity of resources, displace mass populations, and increase the risk of violent conflict (e.g., Homer-Dixon 1994; Gleditsch et al. 2006). However, research has not found such a general effect. Conflicts connected to climate change are not likely to concern large-scale armed conflict, but rather land disputes or social unrest, and climate change may impact dynamics of existing larger-scale conflicts or lower-scale communal conflict (Koubi 2019; Mach et al. 2019). Where climate does impact violence, it is a contributor, while other factors are more likely causal (Theisen 2017; Mach et al. 2019). Notably, this research on climate change has focused on negative peace (Koubi 2019; Sharifi et al. 2020), following a trend in broader peace literature, which has largely focused on the presence or absence of violence and conflict between groups (Gleditsch et al. 2014).

Research also emphasizes that structures of power may facilitate or constrain people's conditions relative to climate change, influencing the extent to which an individual or group faces vulnerability. Social vulnerability stems from factors such as access to resources, political power, or social capital, influenced by characteristics such as age, gender, race, or socioeconomic status (Cutter et al. 2003). Although climate change will impact all people, the magnitude and character of these impacts depend more so on political and economic factors than on physical climate events such as floods, droughts, or sea level rise. That is, the social and political factors influencing vulnerability may affect people's condition in connection to climate change more so than the climate event itself. Climate events may also further compound vulnerability by affecting control over natural resources, educational or employment opportunities, capacity for local organization, as well as increased exposure to unsafe conditions (Adger et al. 2014; Oppenheimer et al. 2014; Mora et al. 2018). These findings motivate a conceptualization of peace that accounts for resources and power.

Many existing political and scholarly frameworks for advancing peace, however, fall short of acknowledging these complex links to climate change. For example, the United Nations' 2030 Agenda seeks to foster peace as part of a holistic approach that advances economic growth

alongside social and environmental development. In academic literature, economic growth has long been seen as essential to raising living standards and reducing poverty, and has been seen by some as key to building and maintaining peace (e.g., Gartzke 2007; Chassang and Padró i Miquel 2009). However, others suggest more complex pathways to peace. For example, claims that sustained economic growth helps reduce the risk of civil conflict recurrence (Collier et al. 2008) have been challenged based on findings that growth might have the opposite result and that effects might instead depend on other conflict dynamics (Dahl and Høyland 2012). Rather than from growth, peace may stem from factors such as democratic institutions, economic interdependence, or people's ability to have decent work, secure capital, or access to services (Hegre 2014; Vernon 2015).

Aside from ambiguity about the impact of growth on (mainly negative) peace, scholars also increasingly note harmful patterns of economic growth in contemporary capitalist societies. Capitalist systems, based on exploitation of women, colonies, and nature as well as the labor of men, pit profits against human and environmental well-being and often hide production costs and social responsibility (Mies 1986; Picchio 2015). These practices of economic growth perpetrate “market violence”—inflicting physical harm, leaving masses in situations of vulnerability, and damaging the environment in market localities and through global supply chains (Firat 2018, p. 1020). In this context, inequalities not only persist but are rising; almost all countries face rising average inequality (Ravallion 2018). Growth also jeopardizes social cohesion and well-being, and quality of life improves only to a certain growth threshold (Petridis et al. 2015). Moreover, no countries currently achieve high social outcomes for their population within planetary boundaries (O'Neill et al. 2018).

This leads to another challenge of growth: ecological limitations. One aspect of the ecological harms of growth relates to whether it can be maintained. Research suggests that achieving growth without harmful climate impacts may not only be challenging, but potentially impossible. The achievement of economic growth within climate limitations is often proposed possible through green growth. This relies on decoupling—separating—economic growth from resource use and carbon emissions, for example through the use of “green” energy sources. Although decoupling might be possible in the short term for rich nations with strong policies, it is at best a temporary fix; it appears infeasible on a global scale and impossible to maintain in the long term (Ward et al. 2016; Hickel and Kallis 2020). If climate goals are not met, scientists warn that we risk undoing two decades of progress in development work (United Nations 2019).

These examples highlight that understanding peace in light of climate change necessitates looking beyond the absence of physical violence and accounting for diverse

experiences of vulnerability based on differing dynamics of power structures. Moreover, existing political and academic approaches to peace present questions of how to address peace priorities alongside climate limitations. While there are some benefits of growth, there are also inherent problems for how to maintain and continue to foster such benefits without growth's harmful impacts for both humans and the planet. In light of the inadequacies and inappropriateness of growth models, I argue it is necessary to find new approaches to peace that engage more meaningfully with environmental challenges.

## Conceptualizing climate resilient peace

Increasingly, challenges of peace and climate change are considered jointly. Steps to address climate vulnerabilities are suggested to advance peace by contributing to community resilience (e.g., Matthew 2018). Ideas about climate resilient peace stem from key insights: factors addressing vulnerability and facilitating climate adaptation help mitigate armed conflict during environmental change; environmental cooperation can ease tensions and build trust between (conflicting) parties; and focusing on resilience rather than security discourses and practices promotes peaceful adaptation (Barnett 2019). Considering both vulnerability and resilience to be politically produced and situated, I take this as a starting point from which to conceptualize climate resilient peace with a focus on power structures.

Before advancing a framework for climate resilient peace, I discuss what such peace entails. Neither resilience nor peace are innocent or neutral terms. This section puts forth power-laden, contextual understandings of both concepts. This paper draws on positive peace as a general concept to study structural inequality, injustice, or oppression that contribute to harm or insecurities for individuals, and aims to strengthen it by incorporating intersectionality. Intersectionality puts the focus on structural disadvantages or privileges for particular parts of society. This allows scholars to emphasize challenges to peace by highlighting where and how structures of power reinforce violence at the intersection of people's social and political identities. Resilience then adds to this by focusing on transformative processes by which these structures are addressed in response to climate change and its impacts.

## Intersectional positive peace

Peace can be conceptualized in different ways. Johan Galtung is often credited with conceptualizing and distinguishing negative peace, entailing the absence of (direct or personal) violence and war, and positive peace, which emphasizes a state beyond this, entailing the negation of

structural violence (Galtung 1969). In this sense, peace still encompasses the absence of violence—not only organized armed conflict, but also crucially that which is organized around social structures. Peace then becomes a matter of overcoming a continuum of social inequality and marginalization that perpetuates systemic violence.

While positive peace incorporates many desirable conditions, it has also drawn criticism. This broad concept has for example been critiqued for lacking an operationalizable and clear definition (Gleditsch et al. 2014; Davenport et al. 2018), for omitting local diversity, or framing peace as a natural condition (Aggestam et al. 2015). Furthermore, Galtung's positive peace lacks analysis of underlying structures of power that (re)produce violence (Confortini 2006; Pasch 2018). Despite these critiques, positive peace is helpful because it provides an opportunity to understand experiences in both war and non-war contexts. Positive peace expands understanding of conditions after a peace agreement or in a society where harms stem not through overt armed conflict, but through structural violence. In this way, it is possible to talk about and understand violence at all levels, to approach peace more holistically.

I expand on positive peace through engaging scholarship that accounts for the social construction of power. It has been demonstrated that power hierarchies affect people differently and shape experiences of peace and war (Alexander 2018; Wibben et al. 2019). Building on this, I understand positive peace through intersectionality, which helps to account for the dynamic ways in which power structures impact people. Intersectionality is based on the idea that people hold multiple identities that interact with structures of power in different ways, demonstrating complex burdens, marginalization, authorities, and privileges (Collins and Bilge 2016).

Applying an intersectional lens to positive peace, I consider structural violence. For Galtung, positive peace necessitates the negation of structural violence, which “shows up as unequal power and consequently as unequal life chances” related to uneven distribution of resources and unequal power to decide over distribution of resources (Galtung 1969, p. 171). This paper understands resources as assets and capacity (e.g., wealth, natural resources, food, time, etc.), and power as an actor's discursive influence to realize their intentions (e.g., Svarstad et al. 2018). Structural violence leads to limited emotional or physical well-being, which may expose people to various sorts of harm such as assault or hazards that cause sickness or death (Anglin 1998). Structural violence is not a natural occurrence; it results from direct or indirect human decisions and is preventable (Lee 2016). This violence may be so commonplace that it becomes silent or invisible, but it enacts very real forms of harm both during and outside times of war. Some studies estimate that such violence afflicts tens of millions of casualties annually (Lee 2016).

Structural violence manifests differently based on multiple aspects of a person's identity, which can be understood and analyzed with intersectionality. Through overlapping social factors and power structures, people's experiences do not revolve around only one aspect of their person or situation, but rather are dynamic, changing, and relational. Structural violence then varies contextually and depends on geographically and historically different social factors or axes (Farmer 2005). These factors—including gender, race, ability, sexuality, ethnicity, class, nationality, or age—are seen to legitimize a status quo of exploitation, hierarchies, and inequalities.

In this light, positive peace as the negation of structural violence can be understood in terms of remedying unequal distribution of resources and power. Intersectionality highlights marginalization and privilege as products of structural and intersectional violence and inequality (Rooney 2018; Kappler and Lemay-Hébert 2019). This allows peace scholars to focus on how different groups experience peace based on political and structural inequalities. Through intersectionality, we can engage with these dynamics by considering how different power constellations (re)produce privilege, vulnerability, or resilience within and between groups of people, and to what extent peace permeates society. Positive peace then is not a singular outcome or static achievement; it becomes dynamic and contextual, experienced differently by different people within a society. It necessitates individual agency, which can lead to changes in distribution and access. However, such changes are also always constrained or enabled through existing structures. This means there is no ultimate or universal state of positive peace, and there will be structural constraints with winners and losers in different contexts.

## Climate resilience

Resilience has recently become more prevalent in climate security debates, bringing together diverse actors around a somewhat “messy” concept (Boas and Rothe 2016, pp. 618–9). In part, these debates highlight the importance of resilience in enabling communities to cope with climate change. Climate change then is often cast as a negative phenomenon to which we must adapt. In the context of climate change, David Chandler critiques framing of problems, in this case the Anthropocene, as external shocks from which systems must recover (Chandler 2020). Seeing Anthropogenic change as external may result in problem-solving via short-cuts rather than addressing underlying causes of problems (Chandler 2020). In light of this, I take a different approach to resilience, accounting for a socially constructed and contextual process of adjusting to climate change, integrally tied to power (in)balances. This emphasizes that

inequalities and power dynamics shape people's experiences of climate change.

I follow Bourbeau and other scholars who understand resilience as “a process of patterned adjustments adopted by a society or an individual in the face of endogenous or exogenous shock” (Bourbeau 2013, p. 10). Other conceptualizations of resilience make it dichotomous or equate it with “bouncing back” from a shock. This implies that an external factor, such as a climate-induced harm, is necessarily negative. Departing from this, Bourbeau's broad conceptualization of resilience holds that changes or disturbances are understood and experienced contextually, and that shocks are interpretive. Moreover, it does not assume a return to or maintenance of a social equilibrium. In this conceptualization, resilience is seen as a dynamic and complex process, as varied depending on time and context, and as a response to shocks that are only “disturbing” if interpreted to be so (Bourbeau 2013, 2015).

Building on this and on the foundations in peace literature discussed above, I conceptualize climate resilient peace, starting from an understanding of climate change as internal change. That is, climate change is not a natural or completely external process; rather, it is produced by particular interests and exercises of power that are internal to societal structures. I see climate change impacts serving as a trigger for change, toward a process of responding to climate change so as to address structural violence. This may not necessarily be a response that returns to the status quo, but rather may involve systemic or societal shifts.

Given Bourbeau's definition of resilience and the highly context-driven nature of intersectional positive peace, resilient responses to a change or disturbance vary depending on time or context. Resilience then depends on power structures rather than individual qualities. It follows then that identifying climate change as a “disturbance” depends on the context in which it is experienced—not only when, where, and by whom, but also, for example, in the context of particular knowledge or past experiences collectively or individually. Climate resilient peace, then, can be understood as a transformative process of addressing imbalanced access to and distribution of power and resources, in response to the structures driving climate change and influencing experience of its impacts.

To exemplify resilience processes, this paper highlights degrowth practices and policies. The framework below demonstrates theoretical links between a degrowth approach and climate resilient peace. As a preface, I here briefly conceptualize degrowth in the context of resilience. Degrowth encompasses philosophical ideas as well as social and political action in pursuit of downscaled production and consumption. Degrowth is not economic recession or deprivation; it is a purposeful (re)direction of societies toward an entirely different type of economic model, where a smaller

metabolism centers around sharing, simplicity, conviviality, care, and the commons (Kallis et al. 2015).

Degrowth has both social and ecological aspects. The first entails downscaled production and consumption, aiming for declined demand for and use of natural resources, industrial goods, and labor (Petridis et al. 2015; Kallis et al. 2018). With regard to the social aspects, degrowth encourages frugal abundance and redistribution of wealth. It stems from anti-utilitarianism and promotion of a good life and well-being, justice, and direct participatory democracy (Demaria et al. 2013). Addressing basic needs enhances well-being, while fair redistribution of economic, social, and environmental benefits or harms helps to remedy past injustices. Though these ideas stem from critiques of development in the so-called Global South and similar movements can be found in various parts of the world (Martínez-Alier 2012; Kothari et al. 2014), degrowth thus far is largely directed toward high-consumption and highly industrialized societies of the Global North (Latouche 2009).

Although more complex dynamics of feasibility are beyond the scope of this paper, it is notable that degrowth practices are not only possible, but already happening in many places (Kallis et al. 2018; Burkhart et al. 2020), as highlighted by empirical examples in the framework below. Analysis of well-being in many rich countries shows that resource use could be reduced without affecting social outcomes (O'Neill et al. 2018). Furthermore, many societies have survived without growth or with relatively little money (Kallis et al. 2018). Factors constraining the realization of degrowth largely stem from efforts to protect interests of existing power relations; such a transformation is unlikely under current capitalist pathways. Although more research is needed to understand scalability and dynamics of degrowth, this scholarship demonstrates that it already exists in some places and could expand under certain circumstances.

While positive peace and degrowth may overlap, this does not make these agendas redundant. In degrowth literature, well-being points to “the good life”, stemming from “more meaning in life” brought about by a change or alternative ways of living (Demaria et al. 2013, p. 197). Though perspectives vary, degrowth generally emphasizes criteria for material living standards, focusing on alternative ways of living that prioritize mental and physical health in connection with community life to meet basic or universal human needs. This does not necessarily equate with nor lead to peace. For instance, urban gardens given as an example below may entrench existing power dynamics through for example restricted access or by marginalizing funding patterns rather than fostering climate resilient peace. Positive peace may be characterized by some as a process towards enhanced well-being, but it also goes beyond this to address root causes of (in)justice, conflict, and violence. The emphasis on peace helps to focus on particular justice-oriented

aspects of degrowth. Moreover, while degrowth literature does account for power and politics, not all degrowth is inherently peaceful, with regard to negating either physical or structural violence. Consideration of peace would necessitate disruption of long-standing structures of power. This can draw out the benefits of degrowth to minimize potential harm and maximize reflection and focus on dismantling violent structures of power.

## Framework for a degrowth approach to climate resilient peace

Building on the above rationale and conceptualizations, I present a theoretical framework posing alternatives for how peace might be fostered in light of climate change without furthering environmental degradation. This section explores the normative theoretical basis for climate resilient peace and presents foundations of the framework: ecological aspects as well as synergies between the concepts of peace and degrowth. Building on this, I demonstrate constitutive pathways from degrowth to peace, presenting new possibilities for climate resilient peace through three degrowth processes – redistribution, reprioritized care economies, and global equity.

This framework toward climate resilient peace considers peace and climate limitations simultaneously. I suggest that the extent to which peace is climate resilient necessitates both that peace does not contribute to climate change and that people can experience peace through a changing climate. As discussed above, peace depends on how societies address the intersectional distribution of power and resources, focusing on how certain groups experience vulnerabilities or privileges. Through these power structures, climate change has diverse impacts, often most negatively affecting those in positions of greater vulnerability. At the same time, structures of power have allowed over-consumption and -industrialization that not only harm humans but drive climate change. Unequal power structures, therefore, both influence people's experience of climate impacts and contribute to climate change. In light of this, peace depends not only on responses to climate shocks, but also on the extent to which societies are able to address problems of social inequality and violent power structures.

Ecological aspects of degrowth form a crucial foundation for this framework. Degrowth proposals heed ecological limitations and prioritize green sectors as a means to achieve environmental sustainability. This entails the downscaling of energy and material throughput in light of natural resource and ecosystem constraints. Findings suggest that environmentally sustainable renewable-energy economies are most likely to be achieved with lower production and consumption (Huetting 2010), and that a sustainable economy is more

feasible at lower economic growth rates (D'Alessandro et al. 2010). The throughput limitations suggested under degrowth proposals as well as other aspects of such an approach, for example localized environmental impacts, address environmental sustainability. Thus, potential benefits of degrowth align with climate limitations.

Between peace and degrowth, a local focus and potential for well-being emerge as synergies. The governance and economic aspects of degrowth are localized. Decentralized decision-making facilitates more direct citizen participation in democratic processes while (re)localization of economies re-allocates production and distribution of goods and services at the local level (Mocca 2020), localizing not only priorities of people but also environmental impacts. Such local self-governance envisioned through degrowth prioritizes and addresses the problems and needs of communities as necessitated by intersectional positive peace. Though notably the discussion of feasibility and practicalities of localization requires more study, the theoretical underpinnings are consistent with the focus of intersectional positive peace. Greater well-being is also promoted by both positive peace and degrowth. The emphasis on egalitarian sharing of resources and space in degrowth speaks to realizing a “good life” through enabling people to meet their basic needs. Positive peace specifies the negation of structural violence, such that people have more equal access to power and resources. These components contribute to fostering greater well-being.

This framework reframes resilience for studying the peace–climate nexus within a particular context; although it may have general theoretical application, this framework is designed in the context of the Global North. Within this context, climate resilient peace and degrowth have been conceptualized primarily at a local level. As a process toward equal access to and distribution of power and resources, the peace concept applies to all people in communities both during and beyond times of armed conflict. Climate change, likewise, will impact all people in all parts of the globe. Meanwhile, degrowth is thus far rarely intended as a universal approach. It rather targets high-consumption and highly industrialized societies of the Global North, although some crucial aspects of degrowth parallel movements and ideas found in other parts of the world (Martínez-Alier 2012; Kothari et al. 2014). While the overarching goals for climate resilient peace presented in this paper may find resonance beyond the Global North, there may be varied pathways in different contexts, for example in emerging economies or in conflict-affected communities. That is, although in theory this framework may have broader relevance, pathways for balancing peace and environmental aspects may vary. Such dynamics present opportunities for further research, including, for example, the impacts localized action would have at international levels.

The sections below build on these foundations to suggest three ways that degrowth may contribute to climate resilient peace. I highlight three key processes of degrowth— redistribution, reprioritized care economies, and global equity— and underline how they address power structures and ecological limitations. For each of these processes, I highlight both peace and environmental benefits and then present a concrete degrowth initiative and explain how it addresses structural harms in light of climate change. A specific empirical example is then given of a case where each initiative has been implemented, along with a discussion of the social and environmental impacts. These are intended to illustrate seeds of change; to demonstrate promising aspects of degrowth practices for peace, thus suggesting ways by which peace on a local level might be possible within planetary boundaries. While these degrowth aspects and the examples given are neither meant to be exhaustive nor mutually exclusive, they represent opportunities to negate structural violence and enhance resilience in light of climate change.

### **Redistribution: moving beyond structural violence**

Climate resilient peace highlights that power and resource distribution is influenced by structures existing at the intersection of people's social and political identities. This necessitates that people have access to resources as well as the power over use of these resources. The redistributive components of degrowth are suggested to be tools to address privileges and power hierarchies, holding potential to make visible and address existing power structures. A degrowth transition crucially relies on shifting priorities, policies, and practices toward a system wherein political power, wealth, technology, leisure time, and other resources are accessible and shared among people. This is proposed through, for instance, grassroots economic practices and new forms of commons, community currencies, and participatory democracy. Such proposals aim to have less accumulation of wealth in the hands of a few and to distribute power more equally on a local basis. Thus, redistribution not only meets material needs as occurring at the intersection of identity factors, but also alleviates structural inequalities. Redistribution then emerges as a key aspect of tackling structural violence to facilitate peace.

This process can be exemplified through grassroots urban gardening initiatives, localized alternative food systems. Urban gardens are low impact and provide environmental benefits through for example reducing dependence on harmful petroleum-based food production, sequestering carbon, preventing soil erosion, and filtering air and rain water (Anguelovski 2015; Clarke et al. 2019). Urban community gardens have often been used in the context of political or economic crises, for example to boost food security during times of economic recession (Clarke et al. 2019).

These gardens not only provide fresh food to communities and health benefits such as relaxation, trauma recovery, and leisure opportunities, but also can strengthen neighborhood relations and help foster sharing of space and responsibilities (Anguelovski 2015).

The city of Detroit in the United States provides one illustration of how this process addresses structural violence. Urban gardening in Detroit spans a long history; today, these activities are largely citizen-led and have become an important component of the city. Urban gardening provides material resources for structural problems that can be understood not least through access to food and health statistics. Neighborhoods with more low-income and Black households have been shown to have less access to supermarkets with healthier food options, and health impacts such as obesity, Type 2 diabetes, and hypertension disproportionately affect Black women (White 2011). Urban gardening in Detroit has improved access to healthy food, including for low-income families, by impacting how food is obtained and distributed (Colasanti et al. 2012; Taylor and Ard 2015). This constitutes redistribution of food as a key resource, with benefits for individual and household food security and health.

Urban gardening in Detroit also facilitates local agency and political engagement through for example improved access to food, community building, empowerment, and cooperative economics (White 2011). This gardening has provided employment opportunities, green spaces, political agency, and impetus for social change among many community members and for whole neighborhoods (Taylor and Ard 2015). These activities present opportunities to reclaim “unutilized” city spaces, organize social change to address structural inequalities, and promote civic agriculture (Colasanti et al. 2012). Thus, with environmental benefits, urban gardening provides material solutions to alleviate the experience of structural violence, and it addresses power structures themselves, redistributing resources and power as necessary for climate resilient peace.

### **Reprioritized care: disrupting harmful power structures**

Structural violence can be understood as the violent effects of power hierarchies and categories of inequality, through, for example, gendered structures (Anglin 1998; Sjoberg 2013). As pointed out by Ariel Salleh and Nancy Fraser among others, systems of growth are sustained through largely invisible reproductive and care labor (Barca 2019). Care work is understood as “daily action performed by human beings for their welfare and for the welfare of their community”, which may include concrete work in caregiving for young or elderly persons and often refers to labor carried out in the private or domestic sphere (D'Alisa et al. 2015, p. 63). The focus here is on the unpaid work on which

the economy rests, noting in particular the gendered nature of this work (Gregoratti and Raphael 2019). In the current growth system, even efforts to increase gender equality tend to reinforce the paid and unpaid labor divide. “Empowering women” has largely meant greater gender equality in paid labor, while women still carry the brunt of care work, creating double burdens for many women (Dengler and Strunk 2018, pp. 166–167).

Peaceful potential of degrowth lies in disrupting such power structures. As part of a transition toward reduced resource and labor throughput, degrowth proposals may help restore services of high social value such as care work to the center of the economy (D’Alisa et al. 2015). Care economies focus on well-being and social cohesion within ecological limits by (re)valuing care for humans and nature, including future generations (Wichterich 2015). Reprioritization of care economies presents the opportunity to disrupt violent hierarchies, so as to expose and address imbalances at the intersection of for example gender, class, age, race, ethnicity, and ability.

Take, for example, basic income, which proposes that all people in a state or given community would receive periodic payment, typically advocated to be guaranteed, unconditional, and universal (Alexander 2015). In addition to other potential benefits such as added self-care or altruism, this contributes to the (re)valuing of care work. It encourages combining roles of worker and caregiver, and guarantees minimal resources for well-being, reducing inequalities of power between and within households (Zelleke 2011; Cantillon and McLean 2016). Environmental benefits stem from changing patterns of production and consumption through reduced status-driven consumption of positional goods, or achieving long-term emissions targets by bringing more people to a modest expenditure level (Howard et al. 2019).

Dauphin, Canada experimented with basic income in the 1970s. In connection with the policy, both men’s and women’s paid labor participation decreased slightly, though notably more so for women, who at the time contributed a lower proportion of an average household’s income. Engagement in care work was found to be one of the motivations for participants who left work in association with receiving basic income (Calnitsky and Latner 2017). Research showed improved health and social outcomes at the community level (Forget 2011). This exemplifies capacity and material goods as well as structural benefits through re-valuing care work.

Importantly, the peaceful focus here is not on gender equality in paid work but on a re-valuation process to disrupt harmful power structures. Basic income helps meet the material needs of those who take responsibility for care work (Miller et al. 2019), and helps balance household power linked to gender as well as income, education, or ethnicity (Cantillon and McLean 2016). Furthermore, basic income applied universally avoids dividing society between

receivers and givers (Bollain et al. 2019). The material benefits of basic income then accompany prospects of economic autonomy, valuation, and control. The reprioritization of care is seen to disrupt harmful power structures, presenting opportunities for more egalitarian structures to foster peace.

## Global equity: decolonizing peace

Degrowth enacts limitations on throughput and redistribution locally; this will also have impacts globally that must be acknowledged and addressed with concern for class, gender, race, and global inequality. This matters for climate resilient peace if we consider the relationship between excessive wealth and emissions contributing to climate change. As of 2015, the richest one percent of people emitted 30 times more than the poorest 50% (Oxfam 2015). While there are extraordinarily wealthy individuals around the globe, the majority of the world’s richest 10%, who produce half of the world’s emissions, live in rich OECD countries (Chancel and Piketty 2015). High-income countries also overwhelmingly drive climate damages (Hickel 2020) and wealthy countries moreover tend to utilize environmental space and resources with little or no payment and create imbalanced damages (Martinez-Alier 2002). In part, the peace potential of degrowth lies in recognizing and addressing the unequal contribution to drivers of climate change both between and within countries.

Given this, there also lies a decolonial potential of degrowth in acknowledging and addressing inequalities and injustices (Martínez-Alier 2012). This potential is understood in line with Maria Lugones’s scholarship as an “opportunity to go beyond the (post-colonial) analysis of racialized, capitalist and gendered structural injustices, i.e., the coloniality of the status quo and to foster decoloniality in theory and practice” (Dengler and Seebacher 2019, p. 247). Take, for example, wealth caps or maximum income policies, which impose a ceiling on individual wealth and earnings through, for instance, progressive taxes or a maximum tied to a minimum (Pizzigati 2004; Alexander 2015). Such measures may benefit the environment by limiting environmentally unsustainable lifestyles (Buch-Hansen and Koch 2019). In addition, these policies address inequalities within nations (Pizzigati 2004).

Although there are few examples of large-scale wealth-limiting policies, there have been proposals, similar efforts, and sector-specific initiatives in several countries including the United States, Great Britain, Switzerland, and Spain (Buch-Hansen and Koch 2019). Since 2015, the Netherlands has had a bonus cap in the financial sector, tied to base salaries; in 2018, the government introduced plans to restrict pay, having financial service providers explain managers’ pay levels and limiting selling of shares for short-term gains (Meijer 2018). Such sectoral or other localized schemes

stand to redistribute wealth and balance environmental harm both within and potentially also between countries. This curbs growth linked to drivers of climate change, and interrupts associated structural violence. These policies, if focused on the richest and biggest emitters, hold potential for creating material equity as well as for decolonizing “conceptual space” (Kallis et al. 2015, p. 5) so that countries and communities have the chance to pursue their own trajectories of a good life and peace. This approach holds potential to dismantle hierarchies of exploitation, detangling countries and communities from harmful chains of production and consumption.

## Conclusion

Climate resilient peace poses challenges in light of the current mainstream growth-centric economic systems. This paper offers a first venture into considering degrowth alternatives for climate resilient peace. I have presented a novel framework that first conceptualized climate resilient peace, and second presented a normative and theoretical framework for a degrowth approach to such peace. This paper has outlined that this peace must be understood as positive, entailing the negation of structural violence, and that intersectionality sharpens our understanding of this peace by focusing on how power structures create certain situations of vulnerability or privilege in society. To be climate resilient, people must be able to experience this peace in light of a changing climate and to foster such conditions without further driving climate change. I have presented how this is possible through degrowth processes of redistribution, reprioritized care, and global equity. What stands out is the importance of disrupting underlying power structures, rather than treating only the symptoms of inequality and structural violence.

Such a broad framework for climate resilient peace raises questions about limitations and prompts further investigation. It has been highlighted that degrowth initiatives already take place in a variety of contexts (e.g., Burkhart, Schmelzer, and Treu 2020), and that research increasingly supports the idea that human well-being can be fostered at lower throughput levels (e.g., O’Neill et al. 2018). The primary consideration here is potential limitations of a climate resilient peace framework, including aspects of feasibility, implementation, and implications. This framework largely refers to local level or small-scale initiatives and changes. Whether or how these impact larger-scale issues such as climate change or systemic structural inequalities depends on how such processes can or do aggregate to systemic change. Additionally, the examples given of climate resilient peace processes are instances of specific degrowth practices taking place within market economic systems. There may be challenges of wider implementation, including how to peacefully detangle complex

and global chains of production and consumption. Furthermore, this framework involves intentional processes; indeed, degrowth relies on a voluntary shift to more frugal production and consumption, and these processes do not and will not take place in a vacuum. Implementation of such a framework might entail considering dynamics of different transition scenarios. For instance, different types of crises could pose limitations or challenges for implementing such a framework. Ultimately, questions of feasibility and implementation must be balanced with the implications of systemic change. As previously mentioned, degrowth may be less likely under current capitalist economies. Systemic change, then, is an integral part of the framework, both in terms of making it possible and envisioned outcomes. Ethical considerations must grapple with questions about who or what stand to lose from these processes of change. Given dynamics of intersectional positive peace, highlighted earlier in the paper, ethical considerations may pose limitations to how, when, or where such a framework for climate resilient peace could be desirable or possible.

What does seem clear is that degrowth transitions rely on systemic change and that conceiving of this framework requires envisioning alternatives to our present reality. Looking ahead, alternative visions of peace that address climate limitations might more critically engage with different dynamics of economic growth. Future research might consider impacts of growth in different sectors, different temporal scales including violence against future generations, or in different geographic contexts such as rural versus urban communities. This framework’s focus on peace has opened opportunities for further empirical research to explore the potential violent or peaceful experiences of a degrowth society. Greater intersectional focus in research, as included here, could also help to focus degrowth on dynamics of power structures. This also poses further questions about dynamics of individual agency in light of negating structural violence, the role of different actors, or state relations, for example relating to international division of labor or natural resources. Other strands of peace research, such as peacebuilding, might also be investigated through a degrowth approach.

If we wish to pursue peaceful societies, the environment in which we envision and experience this peace must be considered forefront. I have aimed to further discussions around peace more holistically, bringing together peace, intersectionality, resilience, and degrowth to demonstrate benefits of such an approach to normative and theoretical thinking for peace scholars. This paper contends that climate resilient peace must take intersectional experiences into account by addressing structures of power and demanding that peaceful means themselves help mitigate climate change. This framework calls on both academic and practical efforts to think ambitiously and differently about what is both needed

and possible, within and beyond current systems. I hope to have opened new avenues to consider the relationship between peace and climate change, and to have prompted broader discussions around sustainability. Peace in today's landscape must not only answer to different people, but also the demands of a changing climate.

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