



Narratives in the Anthropocene era

Charles Travis, Vittorio Valentino (Eds.)

Young People's Geographies in the Times of Covid-19: System Threat as a Chance for System Change?

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Abstract

The far-reaching consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic have not only demonstrated the economic vulnerability of the current capitalistic system, but also the positive ecological consequences of rapid policy action. Previous studies have shown that economic threats lead to a sense of lost control along with a subsequent differentiation of oneself in comparison to others. The question that arises is whether young people as drivers of the sustainability transformation will see the pandemic's impact as a positive example of fast action and therefore an opportunity, or whether they will view the phenomenon as a threat to their status quo. In this study 150 young people ages 15-24 were interviewed using an online questionnaire. The results show that young people see the Covid-19 crisis as an example of rapid, consistent action by politics and society. They demand that restrictions benefitting the climate be maintained to mitigate the climate crisis. This suggests that it is helpful to show positive examples of successful communal efforts to overcome massive threats and uncertainties, as such examples motivate young people and give them a sense of collective efficacy.

Keywords: Covid-19, Sustainable Development, Post-growth Economy, Young People's Geographies, Collective Efficacy.

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