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BLOGPOST Hey Generation Z, what's up with the future?



What is certain these days? Many people are probably living with this feeling at the moment. Not only since Corona have we perceived our world in a state of crisis. But how does Generation Z actually feel about it? In our [monthly motivation](#), philosopher and author Jörg Bernardy explores this question and shows to what extent we might find exactly the right answers to the crises of our time in the contradictions and diversity of this generation.

In 2010 I was a speaker at a scientific conference with the title 'Biopolitics, Bioeconomics and Biopoetics in the Age of Crisis'. I still remember how critical I was back then and that I wasn't sure whether I found this title appropriate or completely over the top. Obviously, one of the biggest financial crises since World War II had occurred in 2008, but did that really justify the declaration of an entire 'Age of Crisis'?

Things always carry on somehow

The past 12 years have taught me to remain humble and modest on this issue. At least from my current (admittedly highly subjective) perspective, the potential for an age of economic, political and ecological crises has once again increased. And yet, we could easily relativise this idea if we regard the entire history of humankind as a history of crises. Things always carried on somehow.

Since the covid-19 pandemic I not only think back to that auspiciously titled conference sometimes, I also often wonder how the younger generations perceived the last decade. Much has been written about the so-called Generation Z, but since the German federal elections, and on the basis of recent studies, we can ascertain as much as this: the majority of them vote yellow and green, which means they ascribe equal importance to a sustainable future as to economic security and individual freedom.

Between hyper-acceleration, sustainability and loneliness

Gen Z favours a healthy, sustainable lifestyle and at the same time is as politically sensitive as the baby boomers used to be. Despite all the contradictions, they are more willing than any generation before them to limit their meat consumption and carbon footprint. They're also more open on the issue of mental health than previous generations – which is very likely due in large part to the fact that internet addiction and new forms of loneliness, insecurity and depression have become a particular concern of this generation.

As digital natives, the members of Gen Z are both extreme winners and extreme victims of digitalisation. 'Offline and online life are virtually inseparable. In the cloud, we are not completely ourselves, but somehow we are,' journalist and podcaster Valentina Vapaux remarks in her book Generation Z. She describes her generation's attitude to life in the following terms: 'Acceleration is above all a feeling. Our whole life - everything is hyper, crazy, fast.'

Courage for uncertainty and an open future

Let's return to the political agenda: in all probability the voting age will be reduced to sixteen. Hence, more representatives of this 'hyper, crazy, fast generation' will be voting in the next federal election than ever before. And though this generation in many ways challenges and burdens our society, in their sensitivity, contradictions and diverse interests, they may yet have exactly the right

answers to the crises of our time.

What did it say again in the announcement of the conference I mentioned earlier? In the words of the organiser Vittoria Borsò: 'In the crisis, self-evident facts and proven paradigms are called into question, and the political, social and economic orders are revealed to be relative. This produces uncertainty, but also a chance to move in new directions.' And 'this uncertainty also means that the future is once again open: for politics, the economy and culture, which will now have to work together more closely than ever.'

United in the age of the Anthropocene

Whether baby boomers or Generation Z, Generation X, Y or Alpha, we all need to come together. Just as three parties united to form the traffic light coalition, we must now unite socially. 'Daring more progress' does not mean that everything will be better. Progress is based on the premise that we are prepared to work and develop together.

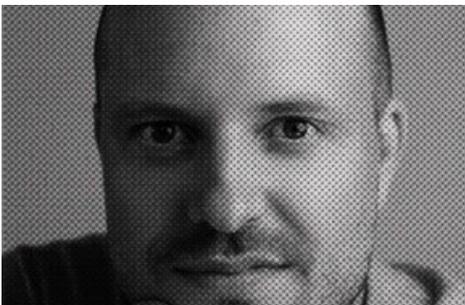
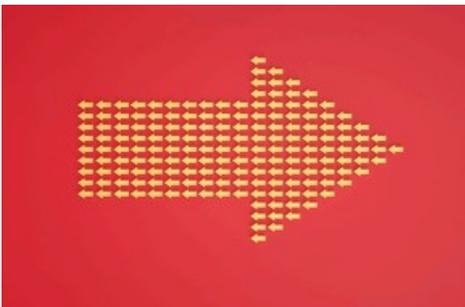
The history of humanity is not only a history of crises, but also one of progress and great achievements – not least of which are vaccination and democracy. In the age of the [Anthropocene](#), in which humans have become the dominant driving factor of global environmental change, the future is only possible together.

'If we are no longer reaching for the future, it is because the future is reaching for us.' ([Marc Augé, French ethnologist and anthropologist](#))

This article was originally posted in our blog:

<https://www.newsaktuell.com/blog/monthly-motivation-hey-generation-z-whats-up-with-the-future/>

Medieninhalte



Dr. Jörg Bernardy, author, philosopher and lecturer. Picture by Max Baier

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