

Maren Weiß

Attitudes towards Climate Change and the Willingness to Take Action

Seminar paper

YOUR KNOWLEDGE HAS VALUE



- We will publish your bachelor's and master's thesis, essays and papers
- Your own eBook and book - sold worldwide in all relevant shops
- Earn money with each sale

Upload your text at www.GRIN.com
and publish for free



Bibliographic information published by the German National Library:

The German National Library lists this publication in the National Bibliography; detailed bibliographic data are available on the Internet at <http://dnb.dnb.de> .

This book is copyright material and must not be copied, reproduced, transferred, distributed, leased, licensed or publicly performed or used in any way except as specifically permitted in writing by the publishers, as allowed under the terms and conditions under which it was purchased or as strictly permitted by applicable copyright law. Any unauthorized distribution or use of this text may be a direct infringement of the author s and publisher s rights and those responsible may be liable in law accordingly.

Imprint:

Copyright © 2020 GRIN Verlag
ISBN: 9783346533777

This book at GRIN:

<https://www.grin.com/document/1127980>

Maren Weiß

Attitudes towards Climate Change and the Willingness to Take Action

GRIN - Your knowledge has value

Since its foundation in 1998, GRIN has specialized in publishing academic texts by students, college teachers and other academics as e-book and printed book. The website www.grin.com is an ideal platform for presenting term papers, final papers, scientific essays, dissertations and specialist books.

Visit us on the internet:

<http://www.grin.com/>

<http://www.facebook.com/grincom>

http://www.twitter.com/grin_com

Attitudes towards the Climate Change and the Willingness to take Action

Seminar Paper

in Qualitative Methods of Social Inquiry at the Department of Social and Economic Sciences Otto-Friedrich-University Bamberg

Complex and Innovative Technological Systems

Maren Michelle Weiß

Political Science, Master's Degree, 2nd term at University

08/24/20

Abstract

This research paper deals with the current issue of the global climate crisis and the personal responsibility to act against it. Theoretically, it is based on the combination of the paradox of voting and the collective action problem, which are adapted to the topic of the climate crisis. Within the seminar paper, four assumptions about knowledge, the perception of urgency, responsibility and the willingness to take action are developed, which ought to solve the assumed free-rider-problem within the climate crisis. Background for the discussion delivers a qualitative content analysis based on Mayring (2015) and Kuckartz (2016). Five qualitative interviews with master students of political science of the University of Bamberg were conducted with the help of an open guideline. The interviews were coded through the computer-aided program MAXQDA. The extensive analysis of the interviews and the interpretation revealed that three out of four formulated assumptions can be accepted. All in all, this seminar paper concludes that the higher the urgency of the climate crisis, the resulting personal responsibility and the individual effectiveness of actions are perceived subjectively, the more willing people are to take individual action.

Outline

1. An Introduction to the Topic Climate Crisis	1
2. Theory and Assumptions.....	2-7
2.1. Definition of the Climate Crisis.....	2
2.2. Theoretical Assumptions about the Climate Crisis and individual Behaviour.....	2-3
2.2.1. Knowledge and the Perception of the Climate Crisis.....	4
2.2.2. Urgency and Feelings of Responsibility.....	4-5
2.2.3. Feelings of Responsibility, Effectiveness and Willingness to take Action.....	5-6
2.3. The Role of Political Science Students.....	6-7
3. Research Design.....	8-11
3.1. Qualitative Method of Investigation.....	8-10
3.1.1. Data Collection through Interviews.....	8
3.1.1.1. The Survey Instrument: Guided Interviews.....	8
3.1.1.2. Problem-Focused Interview.....	9-10
3.1.2. Operationalization.....	10
3.2. Practical Research Details.....	10-11
3.2.1. Access to Case Selection.....	10
3.2.2. Aspects of the Survey Situation.....	11
3.2.3. Data Analysis / Coding.....	11
4. Analysis.....	12-19
4.1. Knowledge and Perception of Importance.....	12-13
4.2. Feelings of Responsibility towards Climate Crisis.....	13-15
4.3. Perception of Effectivity and Willingness to take Action.....	15-18
4.4. Perceived Problems with Climate Crisis.....	16-19
5. Interpretation.....	20-22
6. Conclusion and Reflection.....	23-24
Bibliography.....	25-26
Appendix.....	27-74
Appendix I - Start of Contact.....	26
Appendix II - Guideline Interview (German Version).....	26-28
Appendix III- Codebook (English Version).....	28-29
Appendix IV- Codebook with Operationalization (English Version).....	29-32
Appendix V – Interviews (German Version).....	32-75

1. An introduction to the Topic Climate Crisis

„Human influence on the climate system is clear, and recent anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gases are the highest in history. Recent climate changes have had widespread impacts on human and natural systems” (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change 2014). Nowadays, the socio-political significance of the manmade climate crisis cannot be denied rationally anymore. Especially during the last decades, the saliency of the climate crisis as a global threat has grown tremendously and polarizes societies all around the world (Fragnière 2016). It partly dominated and continues to dictate media coverage and the public discourse in the political field (Olausson 2009). Correspondingly, the issue of climate change plays an increasingly major role in international institutions and national governments, as in the case of Germany. It is a topic which tangents every human being, because it can have dramatic consequences for everyone’s future. Therefore, the individual responsibility to act against this development might perform a decisive part during the solution process of the climate crisis. This is also why extensive research needs to be conducted in this field, which targets the very bottom of subjective human decision making. Until now, a clear research gap can be identified in this area, because systematic studies about this topic are lacking. Qualitative interviews with political science students might uncover hidden steps of the formation of opinions on the climate crisis. On grounds of this socio-ecologic urgency and political significance of that topic, the research question of my term paper will be formulated as follows: *“How do master students of political science perceive the climate crises and are they willing to take action against it?”* It is crucial to understand this attitude formation process to identify potential policy implications, which can help illuminating people, who still deny manmade climate change and do not accept to alter their behaviour. This is the main goal of this research paper.

This research paper maintains the following structure. At first, a definition of climate crisis is provided and the key problem with the climate crisis is presented. Thereupon, four assumptions are formulated as solutions to the adapted paradox of voting and the free-rider-problem of collective action theory. Within the research design, the method of qualitative guided interviews with political science students in their master’s degree is justified and the operationalization of the concepts is explained. In addition, important practical research details are noted and the data is analysed and coded with the computer-aided software MAXQDA. After that the content data is analysed thoroughly and is interpreted regarding to the formulated assumptions. At the end within the conclusion, the main results of this term paper are summarized, a hypothesis is generated and further implications are discussed.