

# Greta Thunberg's Population Growth Problem

Earlier this week, famed climate activist Greta Thunberg [took to Instagram](#), announcing her belief that she was recovering from COVID-19. Her illness, Thunberg noted, was light, and didn't seem much worse than the common cold.

Thunberg attributed her allegedly light COVID case to her youth. Unlike certain [spring break partiers](#), Thunberg recognized the importance of isolating herself for the sake of others saying, "We who don't belong to a risk group have an enormous responsibility, our actions can be the difference between life and death for many others."



[View this post on Instagram](#)

The last two weeks I've stayed inside. When I returned from my trip around Central Europe I isolated myself (in a borrowed apartment away from my mother and sister) since the number of cases of COVID-19 (in Germany for instance) were similar to Italy in the beginning. Around ten days ago I started feeling some symptoms, exactly the same time as my father – who traveled with me from Brussels. I was feeling tired, had shivers, a sore throat and coughed. My dad experienced the same symptoms, but much more intense and with a fever. In Sweden you can not test yourself for COVID-19 unless you're in need of emergent medical treatment. Everyone feeling ill are told to stay at home and isolate themselves. I have therefore not been tested for COVID-19, but it's extremely likely that I've had it, given the combined symptoms and circumstances. Now I've basically recovered, but – AND THIS IS THE BOTTOM LINE: I almost didn't feel ill. My last cold was much worse than this! Had it not been for someone else having the virus simultaneously I might not even have suspected anything. Then I would just have thought I was feeling unusually tired with a bit of a cough. And this is what makes it so much more dangerous. Many (especially young people) might not notice any symptoms at all, or very mild symptoms. Then they don't know they have the virus and can pass it on to people in risk groups. We who don't belong to a risk group have an enormous responsibility, our actions can be the difference between life and death for many others.

Please keep that in mind, follow the advice from experts and your local authorities and #StayAtHome to slow the spread of the virus. And remember to always take care of each other and help those in need. #COVID #flattenthecurve

*A post shared by [Greta Thunberg](#) (@gretathunberg) on Mar 24, 2020 at 8:22am PDT*

Thunberg is known the world over for her position that human-caused climate change will bring an end to the planet as we know it. Thus, she urges us to reduce our carbon footprints in order to save the planet, excoriating older generations – “How dare you!” – for risking the well-being of younger generations in order to maintain their comfortable lifestyle. In this sense, Thunberg’s alleged experience with COVID seems to be putting her words into action – she’s giving up her comfort, at least for a short time, and practicing social distancing for the good of others.

Such a stance is thoughtful and commendable. It’s also commendable that Thunberg did not use this virus as an opportunity to scold the world and suggest that its spread is mother nature’s revenge for humanity’s carbon emissions and population growth.

Concern over population growth is a “major factor” underlying the ideology of climate change activism, notes author Philip Jenkins in the [March issue](#) of *Chronicles: A Magazine of American Culture*. But reducing population growth isn’t the easy solution many climate activists seem to think it is. It calls to the forefront deeper, more problematic ideologies, including racism:

“[F]undamental to Thunberg’s ideas seems to be a commitment to the urgent reduction of human populations. By far the largest population growth in the modern world is in Africa and South Asia. Thus we might ask her, ‘By what proportion

would you like to reduce the world's non-white populations?' Would a billion fewer black people meet her goals? Or perhaps Thunberg would allow them to be born, but ensure that they never have access to electric light or power, to modern medicine or education. She should decide how many millions of Chinese people should be restored to abject poverty. Perhaps with sufficient suffering we would have done quite enough to combat the sinister monster of economic growth."

Jenkins concludes by saying:

"Either Thunberg does not comprehend the real-world consequences of the policies she is advocating, in which case she is ignorant, or she understands all too well, and she is a malignant white supremacist."

Thunberg's youth, disability, and enthusiasm have led many to claim that she's untouchable, that criticizing her amounts to nothing more than cruel bullying.

But what if her ideologies naturally lead to problematic conclusions, and even racism, as Jenkins suggests above? Perhaps it's time to look beyond Thunberg's youthful face and appreciate just how problematic her ideology actually is.

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