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UPROAR
Liebe Leserin, lieber Leser

Auf viele Früchte tragende Aufschreie!

Bertold Brecht
Der Pflaumenbaum

Im Hofe steht ein Pflaumenbaum
Der ist klein, man glaubt es kaum.
Er hat ein Gitter drum
So tritt ihn keiner um.

Der Kleine kann nicht grösser wer’n.
Ja grösser wer’n, das möchte er gern.
’s ist keine Red davon
Er hat zu wenig Sonn.

Den Pflaumenbaum glaubt man ihm kaum
Weil er nie eine Pflaume hat
Doch er ist ein Pflaumenbaum
Man kennt es an dem Blatt.

In diesem Sinne eine anregende Lektüre wünscht
die Zurich Globalist Redaktion
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Kazakhstan: What Comes Next?

Like the other former Soviet republics of Central Asia, with the exception of Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan has always been under authoritarian rule. Since the death of Uzbekistan’s long-time President Islam Karimov in September 2016, Kazakhstan remains the only country in Central Asia still governed by the same ruler since the country’s proclamation of independence in 1991, following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Nursultan Nazarbayev is Kazakhstan’s strong leader who has helped to develop the country and whose rule has seemed to guarantee long-term stability. However, there is great uncertainty regarding the impact of his death on the country’s politics. How will the future of a post-Nazarbayev Kazakhstan look like? This is a major question of political stability, not only for Kazakhstan, but also for the whole region of Central Asia.

In Kazakhstan the terrorism threat is on the rise. President Nazarbayev struggled to manage the country’s economic downturn since the price of oil and gas, two of Kazakhstan’s primary exports, decreased substantially in 2014. Worsening economic conditions lead to high levels of public discontent and increased risk of public upheaval.

Furthermore, the risk of separatism experienced an upsurge in part due to Russia’s recent expansionist policies, as well as to confrontations with ethnic Russian minorities living in the northern parts of the country.

“Terrorist” Attacks and Religious Extremism

In June 2016, a group of 27 militants attacked two gun shops and stormed a military unit of the National Guard in the north-western town of Aktobe. At least 19 people died in the attacks and in the events following the anti-terror deployment of the police. According to the authorities the militants were identified as radical Islamists. The details of their background, however, remain unknown. The incident in Aktobe is considered the most serious terrorist attack in Kazakhstan since 2012.

One month after the deadly assault in Aktobe, a gunman attacked a police station in the commercial capital of Almaty and killed three policemen and a member of the public. Once again the government called the shootings a “terrorist act.” According to security officials the suspect became involved with radical Salafists – a group of ultra-conservative Muslims – while serving a prison sentence.

Since 2012, several other aggressions that took place can be qualified as “terrorist attacks”. These were mainly targeted at policemen, governmental representatives and public institutions killing at least 70 people. Since those attacks there has never been direct evidence of the incidents being linked to foreign extremist groups. It remains unclear if the attacks were linked to religious extremism at all, yet this possibility cannot be ruled out.

Kazakhstan is the richest country of Central Asia in natural resources. Its wealth might be one main reason why Islamist terrorism has found little breeding ground, although the influence of extremist religious groups in the country had been growing. Hundreds of Kazakhs are now choosing to fight for the Islamic State.

To counter the growing threat of terrorism President Nazarbayev created a Ministry for Religious and Civil Society Affairs with the goal to strengthen secularism and religious freedom, to help civil society progress, and to tackle extremism. It remains however difficult to predict whether this policy will be effective.

The economic and political instability certainly help radical Islamist groups in attracting new members to their ranks. Therefore, the most recent series of assault could be a consequence of the economic crisis and declining socio-economic conditions in the country, especially in Western Kazakhstan where oil and natural gas production is mostly concentrated. It appears no coincidence that the last major attack occurred in Aktobe, one of the biggest cities of oil production. The exportation of oil and gas has driven Kazakhstan’s economic success for years, but little of that money has been invested in the major oil cities of Western Kazakhstan. Instead, the bulk of the revenue produced in the region has gone to Almaty and used to build up the infrastructure of Astana, Kazakhstan’s capital. In Western Kazakhstan, this has led to growing discontent over state neglect and protests.

Public Protests

Since 2014 the government decreased public expenditure and the national currency lost half of its value, although the Kazakhstan Tenge is slowly recovering as oil prices increased. The drop in oil prices affected particularly the western region of the country. Energy projects in this region were stalled, resulting in large-scale redundancies and protests of oil-workers against poor labour conditions. Even though public protests are extremely rare in Kazakhstan, several occurred in recent years.

The largest riot took place in the city of Zhanaozen in December of 2011, lasting a total of nine months. Hundreds of workers went on the streets to protest against their working conditions. At least 18 of them were killed and many more injured by the police. The most recent crackdown on a riot in the oil sector took place earlier this year, when workers protested against a court’s decision in the southern city of Shymkent to close Kazakhstan’s Confederation of Independent Trade Unions and its affiliates.

In April 2016, a wave of protests broke out after the government’s announcement of a land reform program. Protesters were concerned that long-term leases of land would result in the effective loss of Kazakh land to foreigners and foreign investors. In Kazakhstan land reform has been a historically sensitive topic. Modifications to the Land Code usually directly impact a significant portion of the population who feel an intimate relation to the land after fighting with nomadic tribes for hundreds of years.

The economic crisis caused living standards to decline, sparking demonstrations over the land reform. President Nazarbayev placed a moratorium in response, indicating how concerned the government is with maintaining stability.

The protests against the land reform first started in the city of Atyrau before spreading across major cities all over the country. Thousands of people joined the demonstrations.

According to Human Rights Watch, 500 journalists, activists, and demonstrators were detained after peacefully protesting.

The police had already detained groups of people before the protests under the suspicion of organizing the event. Compared to the reaction by the police at the oil worker strike in the city of Zhanaozen in 2011, the police is considered
to have acted much less violently to these protests. These demonstrations indicate a growing discontent among the population. Looking forward, Nazarbayev must find a way to navigate between finding an effective government response to mass protests and preventing a popular backlash which could potentially divide the country.

Separatism
Another major issue the Kazakh government currently faces is the threat of Russian separatism in the northern areas of the country on the border to Russia. Russian nationalists claim that this area was historically a part of Siberia and most of the 23% ethnic Russians in Kazakhstan live in this region. To promote territorial integrity, Nazarbayev moved the capital from the old center of Almaty in the South and has been building up a new city named Astana, in the northern steppe of the country. Furthermore, the government had been encouraging the migration of ethnic Kazahs from other regions and neighboring states in order to dilute the ethnic Russian population.

The government has always been very sensitive to secessionist sentiments and reacted by restricting the media and arresting ethnic Russians who sought to promote separatism in the North. Attention on this particular issue rose after the Russian annexation of the Crimean Peninsula in 2014. However, Kazakhstan is one of Russia’s closest allies.

Nazarbayev’s Succession
Due to the fact that Kazakhstan’s government has been facing threats increasingly over the last couple of years, dealing with the succession of the 76-year-old leader Nazarbayev is an even more crucial topic, as it is uncertain as to who will replace him. Political institutions in Kazakhstan are weak and ineffectual, and political stability highly depends on the president. Therefore, Nazarbayev’s death has the potential of creating a power vacuum as competing forces vie for power.

Kazakhstan’s society is clan-based. Several powerful political groups share both economic assets and media resources. There is a high risk that in the event of a presidential transition, a struggle for power between these groups could emerge.

For the time being the succession plan of Nazarbayev can only be speculated about. Just one week after the funeral of Uzbekistan’s former President Karimov, Nazarbayev conducted a serious reshuffle in the government. One key player, highly considered as his probable successor, is his older daughter Dariga. Last year, Nazarbayev appointed her to the senate, the upper chamber of Kazakhstan’s parliament. The reorganisation brought her closer to the succession set out in the Kazakh constitution that states that the chairman of the senate is next-in-line as head of state in the event of the president dying or leaving office before the end of his term. Nonetheless Dariga made an official statement indicating that she would not consider the position. In addition, Nazarbayev himself publicly stated that he would not hand power to his children while referring to the constitution. This past March the Kazakh parliament decided to shift powers away from the presidency. These amendments are expected to come into force after the president signs it. By strengthening the parliament and distributing power, Nazarbayev hopes to prevent the rise of another strong leader, as well as a struggle for power, which could ultimately lead to severe political instability.

Future Challenges
Terrorism, religious extremism, ethnic separatism, economic uncertainty, as well as lack of clarity about the future of the post-Nazarbayev era are serious concerns that are straining the current political stability of Kazakhstan. It is difficult to predict what is going to happen in the country after Nazarbayev’s death or resignation. The outcome highly depends on achieving a smooth political transition and on improving the economic conditions. One thing remains clear: In order to confront the rising number of threats to the state, Kazakhstan will need to maintain political stability. Only the prospect of a stable government will be able to avert multiple crises.

On the one hand, the next government will be forced to take actions to stabilize the economy. In this regard the challenge will be in making sure that these actions do not trigger a backlash and cause a greater social unrest instead of stimulating social peace. On the other hand, Kazakhstan will also need to increase its safety precautions and prevention measures against radicalization in order to successfully fight terrorism and religious extremism. The initial steps have already been taken by Nazarbayev and, as long as he remains in power, it is unlikely that Russia will actively support separatist movements of ethnic Russians in Kazakhstan as the country remains one of its few allies in Central Asia with considerable influence. All in all, it is difficult to predict what comes next for Kazakhstan. The exact political future of the country remains to be seen.

Echte Demokratie erst seit 1971


Die «Göttliche Ordnung 2.0» ist ein Film von der Schweizer Regisseurin Isabel Knobel, die als eine der ersten auf die Bedeutung der Frauenbewegung aufmerksam wurde. Der Film zeigt, wie das patriarchalische Geschlechterverhältnis in der Schweiz erst in den 1980er Jahren durch die Frauenbewegung und das Ehepaargesetz zunichte gemacht wurde. Es zeigt, wie sich die gesellschaftlichen Erwartungen an Frauen und Männer verändert haben und wie sich die Gesellschaft an die neuen Bedingungen angepasst hat.

Auch die «Göttliche Ordnung 2.0» zeigt, wie die Frauenbewegung in den letzten Jahren noch weitergekommen ist. Die Frauen haben mehr Freiheit, mehr Möglichkeiten und mehr Gleichberechtigung gefunden. Der Film schafft Bewusstsein für die Fortschritte, die die Frauenbewegung in den letzten Jahren erzielt hat, aber auch für die noch vorhandenen Herausforderungen, die noch zu meistern sind.

Auch für die Schweiz ist der Film ein wichtiger Meilenstein in der Geschichte der Frauenbewegung. Er zeigt, wie sich die Gesellschaft an die neuen Bedingungen angepasst hat und wie die Frauenbewegung die gesellschaftlichen Erwartungen an Frauen und Männer verändert hat. Der Film ist eine Erinnerung an die Geschichte der Frauenbewegung, die auch in der Zukunft weiterhin aufgeschlossen und kämpferisch sein muss, um die gleiche Gleichstellung für alle Geschlechter zu erreichen.
Dabei ging es um weit mehr als die Ablehnung der Frau, in diesem Land noch immer zu kämpfen haben. Die Erhöhungen, mit denen Frauen und andere Minderheiten auch in anderen Bereichen die sozialen und politischen Benachteiligungen. Eine partnerschaftliche Arbeitsteilung wird also bei den Frauen schlechter bezahlt oder gar nicht erst eingestellt, die als potenzielle Mütter heute von manchen Arbeitgebern als Risiko betrachtet werden, die sich im heutigen Vorsorge- system praktisch eine Voraussetzung für die Akzeptanz neuer Konzepte von Arbeit, Freiheit und Erfolg. Doch um gerechtzahlt zu werden, kommen Frauen nicht umhin, sich unter den heutigen Bedingungen Einfluss und Mitspracherecht zu erkämpfen.

Um strukturelle Barrieren auch im Sinne weniger privilegierter Menschen abzbauen, müssen Frauen in Wirtschaft, Wissenschaft, Verwaltung und Politik gleichberechtigt mitentscheiden können.


Einordnung in patriarchales System

Damit verbunden ist eine weitere, grundsätzliche Debatte, die es zu führen gilt: Wie wird Arbeit in der Schweiz beurteilt? Der gesetzliche Anspruch auf gleiche Lohnzahlungen gleichwertiger Arbeit führt nicht aus, was unter letzterem zu verstehen ist. Dabei ist die Frage der Wertaussage gera
dem Arbeitsrecht und auch in der unbezahlten Heim- und Pflegearbeit existenziell. Die Genderforschung und Initiativen von Frauenaufsichtsrätinnen, Franziska Fischinger, fragte sich kürzlich, was Gleichstellung denn überhaupt bedeutet: «Bedeutete es nicht vor allem, dass sie Frauen in allen Phasen ihres Lebens tangiert – alleine schon in finanzieller Hinsicht.


Die Chancengleichheit als Selbstverständnis


Zur tatsächlichen Gleichstellung von Frau und Mann sind neue Aufstände wie anno Women’s March stand: Feminism frees us all! 1

Um strukturelle Barrieren auch im Sinne weniger privilegierter Menschen abzbauen, müssen Frauen in Wirtschaft, Wissenschaft, Verwaltung und Politik gleichberechtigt mitentscheiden können.


Die Chancengleichheit als Selbstverständnis


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Chancengleichheit als Selbstverständnis

It Was About Time

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Baja California is a young state located in the northwestern corner of Mexico. In general indifferent to issues which affect the whole country, it saw the largest demonstrations in more than 30 years at the beginning of this year. The demonstrations against the national administration were triggered through a nationwide rise in gasoline prices of more than 20%. The discontent in the population was extraordinary. What in particular had led to such a state of uproar in this disconnected region?

Although less important nowadays, in previous decades being anti-chilango was a very common posture in BC, i.e., to have a negative attitude towards everything and everyone coming from the center and south of the country. The rejection included ideals, values and political points of view, fostering traditional apathy and indifference towards national political issues, which generally come from the center of the country. This attitude of apathy against the own country has been the norm across generations in this area and eventually led Baja California to earn the first place in a abstentionism ranking at a national level in 2016. “Taken to the extreme, there has even been a separatist call to proclaim the “Republic of Baja California” an independent country.” Although weak and utopic, the idea still directly attacks the centralist management of the country. Currently, the group leading the separatist movement counts more than 130’000 followers. In general, signs of discontent do not go much further than activities on social media, including more than 30’000 followers. In 2013, the taxes in the state were raised by 5% in order to bring them to the same level with the taxes in the rest of the country. However, the indignation so vehemently expressed on social networks was not reflected in any significant action from the affected population, and the tax reform came through. At the beginning of this year, the national administration raised the price of gasoline by 20% in the whole country. However, this time the response in BC led to the largest demonstration of discontent in more than 30 years. Why did not this happen before? What had ignited such a large revolt?

Gasoline and Water: An Explosive Mixture

In an extraordinary demonstration of discontent, the people from Baja California took to the streets, city halls and even the border with the USA, when issues with two normally immiscible fluids were combined to ignite the general population: gasoline and water.

Since 1938, the state-owned company PEMEX (Petroleos Mexicanos) exclusively managed the oil industry to ensure that all the revenues remained in the country. In 2012, the current national administration intended to open oil management to foreign investment as part of the so-called national “Energetic Reform”. The purpose of this reform was to avoid an abrupt increase in the price of gasoline. Additionally, it served as a campaign promise; as the reform was supposed to keep stable the price of the gasoline. However, the first day of this year the gasoline price was liberated and a 20% increase in the price of gasoline was the result, which strongly affected every region in Mexico. At the same time, but on a local scale, a law initiative to privatize the water in the region of Baja California was approved in almost absolute secrecy by the Governor of BC, supported by the current administration (Partido Acción Nacional). The law would allow private companies to manage the water resources in the region instead of the local public administrations. This all happened in total obscurity, without the consultation of experts or the population.

One of the many consequences of this law would have been an increase in the price of water up to 200%.

Water has always been a sensitive issue in Baja California. It is a scarce resource and to some extent a delicate subject of negotiations with the USA, as part of the region’s water resources stem from the Colorado River. The amount of water from the Colorado River, to which Mexico is entitled, was established in the 1944 USA-Mexico water treaty. Its renewal will be discussed at the end of 2017. After being made public, the reaction of the population to the new water law and the higher gasoline prices was immediate. As a two-front attack on the families’ budgets, this explosive mixture triggered what had been the largest demonstrations seen in Baja California in 30 years. The main trigger for the revolts was the law initiative to privatize water – and not only the increase of the gasoline price, like in the rest of the country. Taking to the streets was the obvious step of action. Any other political instrument would have been useless, as the law was established through a net of bureaucracy and corruption.

With national discontent backing them, on the first Monday of this year, a group of activists placed gigantic rattraps in front of the local congress deputies’ houses who had voted in favor of the water privatization. The campaign of the rattraps alludes to the shameless lack of transparency behind the approval of the water law, and exposes the deputies, who voted in favor of this law. The organizers were part of a local cell of the so-called “Congreso Nacional Ciudadano” (National Congress of Citizens). This civil organization does not pertain to a political party and welcomes any person who is willing to take pacifist action to prevent or denounce acts of corruption and injustice. After a week of a growing number of acts of discontent with the new water and gasoline laws, the first march with more than 4’000 protestors was organized in Tijuana. The
march ended at the Mexican-US border, and cars coming from San Ysidro (located in California, USA) were allo-
vated to cross the border to Mexico freely for a few hours. The open border allowed anyone who wanted to come to
Mexico to do so without going through customs control. This continued for the next seven days, were no taxes were
paid for the products entering Mexico which brought from abroad.
On the following three weekends, approximately 60’000 people left their houses in the five main cities of Baja Ca-
lifornia. The people got together to demand a retraction of the water law and to reduce the price of the gasoline
to bring it to a level capable to compete with the gasoline prices in the neighboring US state of California. In Mexi-
cali alone 40'000 demonstrators walked to the building of the regional administration of Baja California, exceeding
by far the number which the organizers had anticipated. After this march some groups occupied the administrative
buildings for days, demanding worktables and dialogues between the government and its citizens to clarify concerns
and doubts regarding the consequences of the water law initiative.
Another form to express the people’s discontent was to take
over the tollbooths located along the highways connecting
the five municipalities of Baja California and opened them
at no charge for traffic for over a month, with the goal to
oppose the elevated gasoline prices and even out transport
costs. Also in a wittier act, one activist changed the name
of the national congress house to “rats’ house” on Google
Maps. Organized by social media and the radio, the people who
marched belonged to many different social groups. Not
only students or certain circles of the society reacted to the
changes in the law, but also taxi drivers, teachers, scien-
tists, farmers, people with different political views and
many others who were fed up with the government.
Outcome and Consequences
The gasoline price did not change after the protests. Never-
theless, the outcome of the population’s response was the
derogation of the water law. The derogation was announ-
ced in a public speech held by the governor of the state Baja California after 40’000 people protested in Mexicali. This
meant that water will not be privately administered in the
state of Baja California for now. To a certain extent, the
gasoline served as a source of ignition, paradoxically the
water as a lighter. Mixed together, these two issues led to
the people taking to the streets. The derogation of the wa-
ter law was viewed as a victory in Baja California and in the
rest of Mexico. The fact that the water law was retracted
also acted as an incentive to maintain the revolts in the rest
of the country. What would have happened if the initiative to privatize water had not been launched in Baja California? It was the water problem that animated people to protest against
the changes made unilaterally by the government, not the
rise in the gasoline price, as it was the case in the rest of the
country. It is possible that without the regional problem of
the water law the mobilization of people would not have resonated as it did this time.
Certainly, another possibility is that in combination with
international events, meaning Donald Trump’s inaugura-
tion and the instability of the Mexican peso in relation to
the US dollar,
the people from Baja California are star-
ting to look more towards the Mexican side
of the fence.
Perhaps Bajacalifornianos are developing a sense of civic
duty as they have realized that Mexico is the country they
live in, and when changes need to happen, they have to
make them happen. In this the case, it was about time.
2 La Crónica: http://www.lacronica.com/edicionenlinea/notas/
noticias/08042015/958757-cuenta-bc-con-el-primer-
3 San Diego Red: http://www.sandiegored.com/noticias/44745/
Separatist-Group-seeks-independence-for-Ba
In order to roughly understand the factors which have led to the uprising, Michoacán’s recent criminal history has to be briefly highlighted. The mountainous state of Michoacán is located in central-western Mexico on the Pacific Ocean. It ranks among the poorest states in Mexico, has had a long history of vigilantism and has been in the grip of several criminal groups for decades. In the end of the 90s, Michoacán was disputed between Armando Valencia and Carlos Rosales.

The Rise and Fall of Los Zetas in Michoacán

Rosales could count on the support of the back then powerful Gulf Cartel, and its at the time armed Los Zetas. Los Zetas invaded Michoacán around 2001. Following the arrest of both Valencia and Rosales in 2003 and respectively 2004, the path was cleared for Los Zetas to fully take over the state. Former so-called lieutenants of Rosales together with Los Zetas finished off the remnants of Valencia between 2005 and the beginning of 2006. Among these former Rosales lieutenants was Nazario Moreno González who would shape the future of Michoacán in the years to come. As a result of Los Zetas’ notorious reign of terror against the local population, Nazario saw an opportunity to increase his power. Together with other ex-lieutenants of Rosales, he turned against his former ally Los Zetas.

In early 2013, residents in Mexico’s state of Michoacán took up arms against the infamous Knights Templar criminal cartel, thereby unleashing a self-defence movement which even the President struggled to curtail. However, about four years later Michoacán’s security situation has not become any better.

The Uprising against the Knights Templar Cartel

At the peak of the Knights Templar Cartel’s power, it was hard to run any business in Tierra Caliente, regardless of whether legal or illegal, without them wanting a share of it. Furthermore, murders, kidnappings, and the significant steady increase of extortion demands had gotten out of hands. Besides the apparent unwillingness of the government to clamp down on Nazario’s group, the last spark that reportedly initiated the uprising was the repeated abduction and subsequent rape of women and girls in order to collect extortion payments.

In the beginning of the uprising, there were only a few plotters, consisting of local citizens who met secretly. These vigilantes, who called themselves Autodefensas, came from a wide range of backgrounds including amongst others business owners, dishwashers, ranchers, builders, and doctors.

They were motivated by a similar but eventually smaller uprising against criminals in the neighbouring state of Guerrero. Symbolically on 24th February 2013, which marks Mexico’s Flag Day, the uprising against the Knights Templar Cartel began in Tierra Caliente’s towns of Tepalcatepec and La Ruana, with only a few dozes of Autodefensas armed with guns. Together with the neighbouring town of Buenavista, Tepalcatepec and La Ruana formed the heart of the movement. Many residents of this area regarded the Knights Templar Cartel thugs as outsiders. This bears a striking resemblance to the rhetoric applied by La Familia Michoacana towards Los Zetas who were considered “foreign invaders”. Despite being scared of the Knights Templar Cartel’s anticipated retaliation, their numbers grew markedly from a dozen in Tepalcatepec to hundreds by the end of the first day. Due to the fact that no Knights Templar Cartel

The Forgotten Uprising of Michoacán’s Ordinary Citizens


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members did show up at the cattle market on that day, the Autofénsas were able to erect barricades there in order to prepare for a reaction or an anticipated reaction. Some weeks later, the Knights Templar Cartel responded by attacking the Autofénsas. With only one fallen vigilante and several killed cartel members, of whom many were young and intoxicated, the counterattack failed miserably. Subsequent gunfights, which were also won by the Autofénsas, proved that the Knights Templar Cartel was not invincible. That helped the number of Autofénsas to grow massively. Their ranks were filled with citizens joining by conviction, ranch workers who were paid to fight, as well as some dubious characters. These were ranging from drug traffickers to people with a criminal record or with connections to another cartel, namely the Cártel de Jalsico Nueva Generación (CJNG), which is likely to be Mexico’s currently most powerful cartel.

In response to this form of civil unrest, current President Enrique Peña Nieto sent in the army, arresting 34 Autodefensas, accusing them of working on behalf of the CJNG. Enrique Peña Nieto sent in the army, arresting 34 Autodefensas, accusing them of working on behalf of the CJNG. For the months to come, there would be a virtual frontline stronghold and capital of Tierra Caliente, with barricades to grow massively. Their ranks were filled with citizens joining by conviction, ranch workers who were paid to fight, as well as some dubious characters. These were ranging from drug traffickers to people with a criminal record or with connections to another cartel, namely the Cártel de Jalisco Nueva Generación (CJNG), which is likely to be Mexico’s currently most powerful cartel.

The situation was delicate. On the one hand, they broke the law, including illegal gun possession and murder. On the other hand, the Mexican public as well as parts of the global media sympathized with the Autofénsas, who were depicted overly-romantic as righteous citizens taking arms against criminals. As a result of that, it was rather unclear how the security forces would exactly confront the Autofénsas. At first, the security forces started to disarm the Autofénsas. In a town, recently freed by the Autofénsas, angry villagers took to the streets demanding that the army hands the weapons back to them. In the meantime, the army opened fire, killing at least three people including an eleven-year-old girl. The outrage among many Mexicans was enormous. Peña Nieto was forced to switch his position towards the Autofénsas again. He decided to work together with them. On 8th of February 2014, Autofénsas moved into Apatzingán simultaneously with Autodefensas convocados. The Knights Templar Cartel gunmen were largely outnumbered and subsequently either fled, surrendered or were killed. While captured high-ranking Knights Templar Cartel members were killed, most of the other captured low-ranking cartel thugs, who were willing to show remorse, were given the chance of joining the movement.

After Apatzingán had fallen to the Autofénsas, their cooperation with the security forces began to deepen. Autofénsas handed over “ground-intelligence” to the federal police officers who conducted the subsequent security operations. However, the situation on the ground also turned uglier, with indiscriminate arrests, interrogations and torture conducted by Autofénsas. Many missing people were last seen at the hands of Autofénsas. About a month later on 9th March 2014, Mexican military officials stated that Nazario had been alive, but that they had killed him now. They released a video showing the corpse of Nazario, whose face looked severely beaten. The government’s official version is that he was shot dead, after he allegedly opened fire on soldiers who attempted to arrest him. The alternative version, which circulates among many, is that the Autofénsas and appears much more plausible, is that his own bodyguards turned against him. It is said that they tipped-off the Autofénsas to kill anyone and the Mexican army was happy to cover itself with glory, the official version appeared suitable for each party. As a result of Nazario’s death, his group was largely disbanded in the following weeks, with the remaining towns controlled by the Knights Templar Cartel falling into the hands of the Autofénsas and most of the high-ranking cartel members either killed or arrested.

Peña Nieto, who faced thousands of vigilantes under arms, decided to integrate them into a newly created police force, named State Rural Force (Fuerza Rural). By doing that, he officially provided criminals within the ranks of the Autofénsas with police badges. Some leaders of the Autofénsas were keen on being integrated into the force. Others, however, such as the prominent figure José Manuel Mireles Valverde, were openly against it, stating that their movement had been infiltrated by too many criminals. Although the different vigilante groups within the movement operated rather autonomously, with about 30 regional leaders forming a ruling council, Mireles spearheaded the movement, acting as its spokesman, thus making him an unofficial supreme leader. However, by opposing the integration of Autofénsas into the State Rural Force, Mireles openly confronted the government including President Peña Nieto. This was also highlighted by Mireles’ increasingly revolutionary tone. As a result of that, he was arrested with dozens others in June 2014 under the pretext of violating the Federal Law of Firearms and Explosives. He remains imprisoned until today.

The Aftermath of the Uprising

Despite the demise of the Knights Templar Cartel, the security situation in Michoacán has continued to be highly volatile, especially in the Tierra Caliente region. The lucrative criminal vacuum was filled shortly afterwards by some of the self-defence groups themselves and to some degree by a group called Los Viagras. Once part of the Knights Templar Cartel, the group switched sides at the right time masquerading themselves as Autofénsas by joining them but secretly working on behalf of the CJNG. At a later stage, their members even formed a special unit within the State Rural Forces, including Los Viagras members and opposing former Autofénsas, left eleven people dead in Michoacán. The incident highlights the power struggle between the different vigilante groups, of which many had been infiltrated by criminals. In hindsight, the Autofénsas’ biggest mistake might had been the integration of everybody who was against the Knights Templar Cartel, regardless of their background or intention. This also includes flipping Knights Templar Cartel thugs group leader Nazario de los Viagras, whose members’ background and connections were uncovered by a lot of people quite early.

Nevertheless, righteous Autofénsas largely conditioned their true motives, pursuing determinedly their sole goal of defeating the Knights Templar Cartel at the expense of their integrity. The absence of a clear leadership further more favoured the autonomous nature of each vigilante group, all hugely differ in terms of background and intention. In conclusion, the uprising can only be deemed as a success from a retaliatory point of view when it comes to defeating the Knights Templar Cartel. It dearly fell short in providing an improvement of the security situation in Michoacán. The uprising failed in this aspect. The above-described alliance between Los Viagras and the CJNG has meanwhile broken apart, with both groups fighting each other nowadays. The emergence of new criminal groups, such as La Nueva Familia and the reappearance of remnants of the Knights Templar Cartel and La Familia Michoacana triggered a substantial homicide rise in Michoacán in 2016. The deteriorated security situation is emphasised by the fact that Michoacán witnessed Mexico’s fourth-highest homicide rate in March 2017. A recent report counts seven criminal groups currently competing in Michoacán, letting alone all the different self-defence groups which also continue to operate there. These largely rather small criminal groups are not able to logistically maintain the whole drug supply chain from the meth labs in Sinaloa and poppy fields into the United States on their own. As a result of that, they face much smaller profits in compari son to international drug trafficking organisations, such as the CJNG. They tend to additionally conduct other, more local criminal activities, such as extortion and kidnapping, mainly at the expense of the local population.

However, in this light, it appears quite paradoxical seeing the government hailing each arrest or killing of an influential drug lord as a victory of the Mexican people, taking into account the usual subsequent fragmentation of the respective cartel and the above-described consequences to the Mexican people. These current fragmentations of cartels across Mexico, which also includes amongst others the notorious Sinaloa Cartel and Los Zetas, as well as the large-scale expansion of the CJNG, are mainly responsible for the sharp increase of homicide rates in Mexico in recent time. As long as the government continues to fail in effectively combating the rampant corruption and impunity, as well as education barriers and poverty, particularly in “forgotten” rural regions such as Tierra Caliente, crime and insecurity will persist. As a consequence, further uprisings, regardless of their size, by ordinary citizens taking justice into their own hands can be expected to occur in Mexico in the time to come.
Die Operation Libero – Ein Beitrag zum Ideenwettbewerb in der Schweiz

Ein Interview mit Nicolas Zahn

Interviewerin für den Zurich Globalist: Valentina Suter, MA Politik und Weltgesellschaft, Universität Zürich
Editorin: Nicola Rothlin, MA Weltgesellschaft und Weltpolitik, Universität Luzern

Das Interview fand am 21.3.2017 in Zürich statt.

Nicolas Zahn bildet zusammen mit Flavia Kleiner und Laura Zimmermann das Präsidium der Operation Libero, er bevorzugt Coop gegenüber von Migros und steht Rede und Antwort zu der Rolle der Operation Libero in der Schweiz.

Valentina: Zuerst möchte ich dich fragen, wie die Operati-

on Libero entstanden ist?

Nicolas: Es war ein flüster Entwicklungsprozess, welcher seinen Anfang nach der Annahme der Masseineinwande-

rungsinitiative nahm. Es ging ein „Rock“ durch meinen Freundeskreis. In einem Netzwerk von Kollegen aus dem Studium, aber auch aus Vereinen wie foraus (Forum für Aussenpolitik) entstand die Idee, dass man sich mal tref-

fen würde, um die Situation zu analysieren. Diese Treffen

fanden im Stil von Townhalls statt. Man konnte sich ein-

fach anmelden und sagen, welche Themen man diskutie-

ren wollte.

V: Was haben diese Treffen ergeben?

N: Es kristallisierte sich heraus, dass es in der Schweiz keine „gute“ liberale Stimme gibt, die sich für eine pro-

gressive, offene Schweiz, welche vernetzt bleibt, einsetzt. Es sollten demnach nicht grosse Theorien und Papiere

erarbeitet werden, Dahinterstehen sollte active politi-

sche Arbeit. Wir haben festgestellt, dass Ideen vorhanden sind und die Leute durchaus Präferenzen für eine liberale

Schweiz haben. Das Problem liegt darin, dass diese im po-

litischen Spektrum nicht genügend repräsentiert wurden.

Wir haben uns dann gesagt, das links-rechts-Schema der

heutigen Parteiensystem finden wir nicht passend. Es

müsse eher ein konservativ-progressiv-Schema sein und es braucht eine neue politische Bewegung im Land.

V: Man könnte sagen, dass die Schweiz ein funktionie-

rendes Parteiensystem und eine intakte Demokratie hat, welche das thematische Spektrum im Vergleich zu ande-

ren Ländern relativ gut abdeckt. Wie unterscheidet sich die Operation Libero von den bestehenden Parteien in der

Schweiz?

N: Ich würde das so unterschreiben, dass die Schweiz als

demokratisches System an sich gut funktioniert. Wir se-

ben uns in diesem Sinne nicht als Systemkritiker oder Sys-

temveränderer. Wir möchten uns auch nicht als Alternati-

ve zur Partei positionieren. Wir sind fest davon überzeugt, dass es in einer funktionsfähigeren Demokratie Parteien

braucht. Sie machen hier in der Schweiz eigentlich auch keinen schlechten Job. Aber wie wir politisieren, ist eben

eine andere Art zu politisieren. Die Partei hat Kommissi-

onsarbeit und Delegiertenversammlungen. Es ist alles re-

lativ rigide und träge und von der Themenetzung her sol-

t sehr konkret, da Parteien auf Gesetzesstufe arbeiten. Wir

wollten uns mit der gesamten Rolle der Schweiz beschäfti-

gen und dafür neue Ideen erarbeiten.

V: Ist das nicht der einfachere Weg, sich von der konkreten

Arbeit “zu drücken”?

N: Es ist traurig, dass man auf diesem Level überhaupt erst

anfangen muss... Uns ging es darum, das Ganze auf einer anderen Flughöhe angezogen. Wir haben unsere Aufgabe in diesem Bereich darin gesehen, dass wir einen Schritt zurück machen und uns nicht sofort mit konkreten Geset-

zesentwürfen auseinandersetzen, sondern generelle Kon-

zepte und Visionen erarbeiten und thematisieren.

V: Da ihr das Problem auf einer anderen „Flughöhe“ ange-

holt habt, habt ihr auch keine Partei gegründet?

N: Unter anderem. Was aber im Umkehrschluss nicht bedeutet, dass wir nicht konkret aktiv werden. Aufgrund unserer Vision des Chancenlandes Schweiz, für die wir im bestmöglichen Teilbereichen Grundpositionen erarbeitet ha-

ben, zeigen sie dann die eher abstrakten Visionen in unse-

ren Kampagnen zu Abstimmungen.

V: Was war aus eurer Sicht der Grund, wieso es die Opera-

tion Libero überhaupt braucht?

N: Wir sind zum Schluss gekommen, dass man das politi-

tische Feld viel zu lange den Leuten aus dem rechts-kon-

servativen Kreis überlassen hat. Man hat erlaubt, dass die SVP mit Wörtern, Bildern und Konzepten die Debatten
dominiert. Diese sind dann von anderen Parteien aufge-

griffen worden. Unser Ziel war es, ein Reframing zu errei-

chen.

V: Was meinst du damit?

N: Wir möchten nicht über das sprechen, was die SVP

vorgibt, sondern über etwas, das uns wichtig ist. Daraus

hat sich dieses Gegensatzpaar ergeben: Das Chancenland,

welches wir haben möchten im Gegensatz zum Freilicht-

museum, welches die SVP möchte.

V: Würdest du sagen, dass ihr ein Produkt der Generation

Y seid? Diese Behauptung würde doch gut passen, da bei euch das Engagement nicht verpflichtend ist.

V: Ja, es ist so, dass im Gründerkreis sehr viele aus dieser

Generation kommen. Wir sind jetzt aber über diese Gren-

zen hinaus bekannt geworden und haben Unterstützer

aus allen Altersschichten. Insgesamt würden wir sagen, das

Bedeutens, sich flexibler politisch zu engagieren, ist nicht an eine Generation gebunden. Wir haben festgestellt, dass die Politik, welche sich politisch engagieren möchten, denen die Struktur einer Partei aber nicht zusagt.

V: Das politische Engagement ist nicht altersabhängig?

N: Nein und hier sieht man auch die Grenzen dieses Ge-

nerationenstereotyps. Die Generation Y seid? Diese Behauptung würde doch gut passen, dann muss man sich vielleicht überlegen, warum sich die jungen Leute anders wo engagieren, bevor eine Generation als

"tief“ oder “wählerisch“ deklassiert wird.

V: Du hast vorher über die Stimmung in der Schweiz nach

der Masseineinwanderungsinitiative gesprochen. Eine

solche Stimmung herrscht aber zuezeit nicht nur in der

Schweiz. Könntte sich eine Organisation wie die Operation
Libero auch in anderen europäischen Ländern etablieren?


V: Wie positioniert ihr euch zu Europa?


V: Was würdest du sagen, seid ihr ein Aufstand für oder gegen etwas?

N: (lacht) Ich denke, es ist ein kreativer, friedlicher Aufstand.

V: Aber nicht gegen das System...?


V: Was wäre dann passender?


V: Vielen Dank für das Gespräch.

N: (schnaufend und lachend)

V: Man shocked as dining room table suddenly ‘explodes’ into tiny pieces in his bare hands.
The Future is Renewable – A Chance for a Global Redistribution in Responsibility

Author: Oskar Jönsson, MA Environmental Science, ETH Zürich
Editor: Polina Chizhova, BA student in Art History and East Asian Art History, University of Zurich

With climate change being the main issue of our times, transitioning electric power generation from fossil fuels to renewables is a key component for the reduction of global CO2 emissions. Even if this transition is challenging, it also represents an opportunity for an economic development that is able to re-distribute global political power shares.

Since the US freshman president Donald Trump has been gradually dismantling the US climate policy, it seems reasonable to bet on an increase in future atmospheric CO2 concentration, rather than on its decrease. After the global community finally agreed on trying to limit global warming to below 2°C within this century in the Paris Climate Agreement (COP21), it all seems to have been in vain now. As the US represents the second largest emitter of CO2, Trump’s intention to withdraw from the COP21 agreement and to carry on with business as usual, burning coal and gas to produce electricity, would certainly not motivate other countries to stick to any ambitious CO2 reduction targets.

During the Obama-era, the US became one of the biggest markets for renewable energies. In 2010, non-hydro renewable energy accounted for 4.2% of US electricity generation, whereas that number rose to 7.6% in 2015.1

By promising to bring back coal, Trump is working against a market that is increasingly accelerating.

While many experts doubt whether it will be possible to create a renaissance for the coal industry, Trump is jeopardizing the leading position of the US in the renewable energy and cleantech sector. In the short-term, the policy of opposing renewable energies will probably threaten many jobs that could be created by the renaissance of coal.2

In addition, in the long run failing to continue the success story of US renewable energy might prove itself disastrous. Reducing global CO2 emissions to limit warming to 2°C represents a major opportunity for continued innovation and international cooperation. At the same time, with renewable being the biggest challenge of our times, the stakes are high. The States that recognize this opportunity and adapt their regulatory framework in order to foster innovation in the cleantech sector would most likely benefit from the decarbonization of the economy. They would not only improve their environmental quality but also attract more investment. This is exemplified by Denmark, where the early support for wind industry made this small country a world leader in the wind energy industry.3

In addition, a country complying with or even exceeding your compliance to COP21, the higher is the degree of loss of credibility in the international community. This became strikingly obvious when China, the world’s biggest emitter of CO2 and rather known for blocking negotiations at COP21, suddenly appeared green and sustainable after condemning Donald Trump’s plan to withdraw from COP21.

The chances of “greener” power generation might be the largest for developing countries, where much of the energy infrastructure has not been built yet and could thus be designed from scratch. For instance, solar and wind power could bring electricity to remote regions without the establishment of extensive electric grids and the waste management could be included in the green power generation instead of ending up in a landfill. On the one hand, these measures would reduce ecosystem stress, considering that biomass is still an important source of energy source in many countries, while on the other hand, more importantly, the associated upfront investment costs are lower for small scale renewable energies than for large scale grids or power plants.

In fact, a decarbonized economy is a long-term necessity for the prevention of severe climate change and the COP21 agreement mainly facilitates a faster transition towards global decarbonization in order to avoid adverse effects of a too high global warming. Stopping the gained momentum will be hard, considering the majority opinion that climate change is a major problem, no matter what share of emissions one may have. By constantly being at odds with legislation on climate change and clean energy, Donald Trump puts the future of the US as a leading hub for innovation at risk.

The global community is now faced with two options: either claim it was all for nothing and abandon their renewable energy policies or take advantage of the opened-up room for innovation and competition. With countries like China needing to improve their environmental quality and create sustainable jobs, as well as their international reputation, the second option is more likely to happen. Considering the dynamic evolution of the renewable energies in the past few decades, far-developed countries will have to keep up with it and actively foster innovation in this sector instead of relying on cheap coal to generate electricity. There will be no time to wait for those who lag behind.

Schwerpunkte

- Internationale Beziehungen
- Demokratieforschung
- Wirtschafts-, Energie-, Umwelt- und Sozialpolitik
- Politische Philosophie
- Nationale Institutionen & die EU
- Sicherheitspolitik
- Politisches Verhalten & Psychologie
- Migrationsforschung
- Schweizer Politik
- Datenjournalismus
- Politische Ökonomie & Entwicklungspolitik
- Methoden der Datenanalyse

Besonderheiten

- Schweizweit größtes Kursangebot in Politikwissenschaft
- Hohe Flexibilität (Teilzeit, Monomaster, Wahlmöglichkeiten)
- Persönliche Betreuung & kleine Gruppen (Master)
- Praxisbezug durch Praktika & angewandte Projekte (Capstone Courses) aus Verwaltung und Privatwirtschaft
- Umfangreiche Austauschmöglichkeiten
- Interdisziplinärer Austausch mit dem CIS (Uni & ETH Zürich)
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Studiengänge

Breit angelegter Bachelor
Konsekutiver Master (Hauptfach oder Monomaster) mit vier wählbaren Schwerpunkten:
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- Schweizer Politik
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