

tja?!

Issue 3 - Summer Term 2023



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The topic for the next issue is:

SOCIAL INEQUALITY & INJUSTICE

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Editor's Note

Dear reader,

From physical strength to political authority, power is multifaceted and understood differently depending on the cultural and linguistic context.

In Chinese *quánli* and Japanese *kenryoku*, the meaning of the word power is closely related to the concept of authority and emphasises the responsibility that comes with leadership and control. In Arabic, *sulṭa* is associated with political authority and divine power, underlining the importance of spirituality and faith in understanding the nature of power. The German *Macht* and *e pouvoir* (French) are associated with control and domination, while the English *power* can refer to political or social influence, economic and financial control, as well as physical strength and power. The Russian *власть* *vlast*, on the other hand, is closely associated with hierarchy and central authority.

In our articles and contributions, we will look at these different understandings of power and explore the implications and challenges of exercising power in other contexts. For example, on pp. 7-13, you will find an article and an infographic that shed light on the power structures in academia and at the OVGU. Kaleigh examines how money affects politics in Germany and the USA in her article on p. 22. Daniel's article even goes as far as Colombia: you can find out from p. 19 how the Char family has held on to power over several generations and what influence they have on national politics. In addition, you can also find an interview by Rosa with two international students from Iran, who talk about their personal experiences and impressions of the protests following the death of Mahsa Jina Amini in the International section on p. 22. The Students for Climate Justice want to push climate justice at universities with #Hochdruck. Leonie and Helena tell us how they want to do this in an interview starting on p. 17. On the other hand, Paula explores how climate politics works from the point of view of power relations in an interview with Prof. Böcher on p. 42.

tja, have fun reading these and many other contributions and articles!

See you next time,
Hanna for the tja?! Editorial team



POWER



1

UNI & MAGDEBURG

7

ARTICLE
is everything as it should be?

14

INFO PAGE
Power in the Context of Student Initiatives

17

INTERVIEW WITH STUDENTS FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE
#HOCHDRUCK

3

INTERNATIONAL

32

ARTICLE
CHAR – The Legacy of Power

37

INTERVIEW
Zan, Zendegi, Azadî





2

**POLITICS &
SOCIETY**

22

COMMENT
Money and Power

25

ARTICLE
Sexualised Violence and Power

28

COMMENT
Fear, Drill and Tears – Abuse of Power in Sport

30

CONTRIBUTION
Striving Upward

4

SCIENCE

40

INTERVIEW WITH DR. GUDRUN REINDL
The Need for Power from a Psychological Perspective

42

INTERVIEW WITH PROF. DR. BÖCHER
Power in the Climate Crisis

46

Imprint



UNI & MAGDEBURG



is everything as it should be?

by Hanna Westermann

Power at the OVGU and in Academia

In November 2022, the results of a survey on gender-based violence at universities and research institutions were published by the Leibniz Institute in Cologne. The results included 42,000 responses from students and staff from 46 institutions in Europe. 56% of men, 66% of women and 74% of non-binary persons stated that they had experienced gender-based violence. Commenting on the findings, Dr Anke Lipinsky, who is responsible for the project, said: "Gender-based violence is a systemic problem that affects scientific institutions no less than other parts of society. The data [...] clearly show that gender-based violence occurs everywhere and towards all genders." What makes the institution university the scene of so much violence? What structures encourage the abuse of power? How does it work at the OVGU, do students know how to defend themselves when they are discriminated against? How can one defend oneself at all? These questions went through my mind when I first heard about this study. The more students I talked to about this topic, the more aware I became of how foreign the structure of the university is to many of us, even though we spend several years of our lives here: There are committees, faculty student councils, the student council, faculty councils, the senate. But what is what? Who elects whom and where is what decided? Power dynamics are an integral part of university life, with different people and groups having different levels of power and influence. Wherever these power dynamics exist, they can be abused, of course. The question is how an institution chooses to deal with this possibility. In other words, what precautions are taken to prevent abuse and what steps are taken should such a case occur. In order to find out how the OVGU and the university system in general deal with these issues, Paula and I started our research for this article in autumn 2022. Our aim was not only to get an overview of the structural setup of the university but also to collect the experiences of actors from

different positions in this system. Paula focused on breaking down the question of how power is structured in the university through the institutional setup. While I was concerned with the question of how this structure influences students and staff and which that can be taken to prevent the abuse of power. In order to get an insight as comprehensive as possible, we tried to meet with people who were able to provide us an overview into the structures of the university and possibly also have a sensitised view on the question of power dynamics. Therefore, we approached the equal opportunities officers, student representatives in university politics, as well as university groups and working groups that deal with power in the university context. The numerous conversations and interviews resulted in the infographic (p. 8-9) and this article, which is intended to give an insight into the power structures, the work against the abuse of power, as well

OVGU & STRUCTURE

*Elections are usually in June.

STUDENTS

vote*

The Faculty Student Councils

- FHW
- FMB
- FMA
- FME
- FWV
- FEIT
- FVST
- FIN
- FNW

The Fachschaftsrat (the student council of each faculty) take care of the faculty's internal counselling and support of students and prospective students. The student council is the hub between the students and the various committees and institutions of the university, promotes student projects and organises (faculty) parties and the freshers' week.

Delegates members

vote*

The Student Council (StuRa)

15 elected members*

11 units

- BSGR
- Queer Campus
- FemRef
- RIA
- Referat für mediale Gestaltung
- Nightline
- Kulturreferat
- BIPOC Referat
- Sportreferat
- Hochschulpolitisches Referat
- Referat für Klimagerechtigkeit & Nachhaltigkeit

The Student Council is the highest student body at the OVGU. The elected members represent political university groups and are usually on election lists.

Currently represented electoral lists are:

- fintastisch(2)
- OvGUPride (2)
- RCDS (2)
- OLLi (5)
- Liste der WiWis (3)
- nicht zugehörig (1)

The StuRa's tasks include representing the interests of students at the university and in society. In addition, the StuRa promotes student projects and student sports, maintains national student relations and organises events and seminars.

The Faculty Councils

The Faculty Council is the highest decision-making body of each faculty. It is responsible for all decisions at the faculty level. A dean's office heads each faculty council. Among other things, it conducts the appointment of professors.

Dean's Office

elected for 4 years

Dean | Vice-Dean | Dean of Studies

vote for

Members with voting rights

- Dean
- Lecturers
- scientific employees
- non-scientific employees
- students
- equal opportunity commissioner

Commissions

- Audit Committee
- Academic Commission
- Research Commission
- International Studies Commission
- Press Commission
- Equipment Commission

Departments

Examination Office

FACULTY LEVEL

vote*

The Senate

The Senate is the highest body of the university. As a self-governing body, it adopts the university's basic regulations and has legislative, advisory, strategic and supervisory management tasks.

Advice and support

The Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees consists of 5 voting, non-university members.

President's Office

elected for 4 years

President | 3 Vice-Presidents | Chancellor

↑
vote for

Members with voting right

- President
- Lecturers
- Scientific employees
- Non-scientific employees
- Students
- Equal opportunity commissioner

Members with advisory vote

- Vice-presidents
- Chancellor
- Deans of the faculties
- PhD students' representation
- Speaker of the student council
- Advisory commissioners
- Honorary senators
- Commissioner and Commission for Scientific Misconduct
- Liaison lecturer
- Ombudsman*woman

The President's office leads the Senate and the University. Together with the Senate, the faculties and departments, it decides on agreements with the ministries and the distribution of allocated funds.

The Rector chairs the Rectorate and sets its guidelines. The Chancellor is the budget officer and representative of the non-academic staff of the university. The vice-rectors are the chairpersons of the commissions.

sends

advises

UNIVERSITY LEVEL

from Paula Meißner

as, the problems that still exist. In the first part of this article, I would like to focus on the experiences and problems of the people at the OVGU, while the second part focuses on the power structures of the academia in a conversation with Dr Tina Jung, the current Marianne Schminder Visiting Professor.

At the OVGU, there are equal opportunities officers at the central level of the university, in the faculties, the administration and the central institutions. They are elected for a term of two years by the student body and all employees. The Equal Opportunities Officers are primarily called upon for appointment and recruitment procedures, as well as for all other equality-related issues that affect the university. Furthermore, they also work in an advisory capacity with the Office for Gender Equality (BfG). In addition to the equal opportunities officers, there is also a commitment on the part of the students to deal with the power relations at the OVGU on the one hand, but also to actively change something about it, e.g. within the framework of the FaRaFIN awareness Referat or the AG Antidiskriminierung (anti-discrimination working group) at the medical faculty. Apart from concrete complaints, the AG and the Referat also work for a barrier-free campus and barrier-free studies, so that chronic illnesses or disabilities do not lead to exclusion from studies or work.

In discussions with students and equal opportunities officers, several points were raised again and again:

- BIPOC persons and international students are underrepresented in the various university policy bodies.
- Students usually do not know how the university functions and is structured. It is often difficult to get an actual overview, even if the students attempt to achieve this through their own initiative.
- The BfG has good intentions. However, there is a lack of authority or a central reporting structure for abuse of power that is as barrier-free as possible.
- Many services start after cases of discrimination. There should also be more compulsory training for teaching and management staff on discrimination.
- International students are often not informed

about their rights and where they can report discrimination. There is also the language barrier, as not all university websites are available or regularly updated in English.

- Student involvement in university politics is not open to all, as it can be very time-consuming.
- It is difficult to locate or reach responsible persons, as they often have multiple responsibilities and limited capacities.
- The Senate, as the decision-making body of the university, is very professor-heavy; students and staff are relatively underrepresented.¹

While researching this article, I also came across incidents of abuse of power that occurred at the OVGU. A former student reported a lecturer who allegedly made racist comments in his lectures. He repeatedly used the term “race” in reference to groups of people and associated “race” with various psychological characteristics. Furthermore, he repeatedly racialised students by asking supposedly non-German students in these lectures about their origin or implying that they had a certain origin. Other students confirmed these accusations. The use of the term “race” in psychological research has been widely criticised for being scientifically unsound and reinforcing harmful stereotypes and discrimination. While academic research and discourse require critical enquiry and respectful debate, the lecturer undermines these principles by showing no insight or willingness to engage in conversation regarding the use of the term “race” or discussion of other scholarly publications on the topic, according to students. Although the problem is known among the student body and also lecturers, the lecturer continues to teach.

There have also been such and similar incidents at the medical faculty of the OVGU, reports the AG Antidiskriminierung of the FaRa Medical Faculty. One lecturer, in particular, has repeatedly been noticed for sexual assaults as well as discriminatory, sexist and racist remarks. This was also reported to superiors. “Without consequences,” the AG reports, “the lecturer is known and feared across all years.” They go on to explain that although this is an extreme case, discriminatory and harassing behaviour by lecturers is not an isolated incident. Because there are no structures to report such incidents in a collected and structured way, there have been no consequences. This created a “feeling of being at the mercy of others” and led

¹ As of December 2021, there were a total of 2,924 people (budget- and third-party funded) working at the OVGU, just under 7% of whom are professors. However, this group accounts for more than half of the voting rights in the Senate, with 14 out of 25 people. The group of 13,143 students (as of WS 21/22) are represented by 3 students with voting rights, who thus make up just 4% of the senate.)

to the need for students to do something about it: This is how the AG Antidiskriminierung came into being. But despite the collective, it is difficult for them to take action against professors or to confront them with the accusations: "Often we are not taken seriously as students, or it is claimed that the situation was completely different and that the person in question only understood it 'wrongly'". The position of power of the lecturers, for example through the awarding of grades, also prevents students from complaining about incidents or even initiating a discussion with the respective lecturers through the AG, for fear of experiencing even more discrimination.

Although efforts are being made by various parties at OVGU to prevent abuse of power, it seems that this has not yet been possible in all places. It is crucial to create a safe and supportive environment for all students and staff, and this cannot be achieved if people who abuse their power in this way are allowed to remain in their positions.

"Academia is influenced by power, at all levels."

I met with Tina Jung via Zoom. Dr Tina Jung is currently Marianne Schindler Visiting Professor at the OVGU, with a partial denomination of Gender Studies. She told me that the new title of "visiting professor" has made her more aware of how the title and position affect many interactions within the university framework: "There is already a different level of attention for professorships - even if they are 'only' visiting professorships and therefore of short duration." On the one hand, this opens up room for opportunities, she says; on the other hand, it also expresses the fact that the system of science is hierarchically structured, with various advantages and disadvantages. In addition, the academia has its very own economies of recognition. There are different currencies in which power can be expressed: Recognition can be linked to the reputation of professors or it depends on the acquisition of third-party funding or the prestige of publications. But power must be thought of in two ways, she emphasises. Seeing only the problematic side prevents us from perceiving that power "can be something very positive, especially for groups that have not been an equal part of academia for a long time, such as women or queers." So, when groups that have been or are being marginalised get

to positions that are associated with more power, they can also pay more attention to issues that were previously not given the same attention.

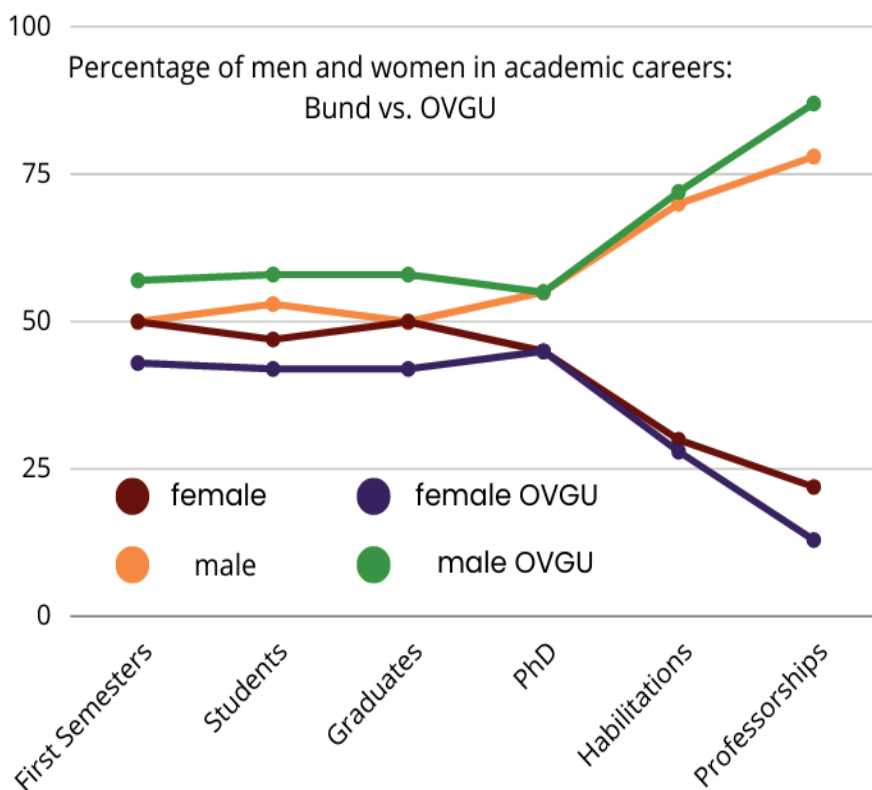
"Sometimes it is not even perceived that how you move in the university has to do with power," she notes. It is not only the interaction between status groups that is shaped by power but also the way the lessons are designed influences the possibility to participate in discourse and to get involved. An example of how power also influences seminars can be explained by Bourdieu's theory on capital. Of particular interest is cultural capital, which describes immaterial resources, such as a person's social network, language skills and understanding of cultural norms and practices valued by society, that can provide individuals with social advantages and influence their position and power within society. For example, students who come from privileged backgrounds and have been exposed to academic discourse from an early age may feel more comfortable participating in classes than students from non-academic and/or migrant backgrounds; gender relations also play a role. Thus, these interactions are also shaped by power relations that make it difficult for some students to fully participate in academic discourse. "That's why I see it as part of my job to actively contribute to creating a culture of work and conversation in seminars in which everyone can participate as well as possible."

Tina Jung emphasises that the widely operating ideal of the academic, but made invisible as such, is the idea of "academia as a way of life". In other words, the idea is that the entire life plan must adapt to the demands of the system. Especially people who have to fulfil care tasks - which in our society are still mainly reserved for women - cannot meet the requirement of one hundred percent sacrifice and fall behind. If one looks at the statistics on the share of women in academic careers, women graduates were still in the majority in 2020 with 51.7%. However, this share drops drastically the further advanced the academic career was: the share of women was 45.1% for doctoral graduates and only 35.1% for those who had completed a habilitation. Full-time female professors accounted for only 26.3% in 2020. Figures also exist for the OVGU, which were published in the Equal Opportunities Concept 2018 and show the percentage of women at various qualification levels (as of 12/2017). Even though the national average cannot be directly compared with

these figures, as they come from different years, a similar trend can be observed at the OVGU. Especially at the highest qualification level, the share of women is even lower than the national average, at just under 21% of professors (12/2021). This underrepresentation of women cannot be attributed to care responsibilities alone but is a complex problem to which other interrelated factors also contribute. The fact that there are mainly statistics comparing the share of men and women highlights this systemic inequality in access to power and resources based on gender. But while the underrepresentation of women in academia has been well documented and recognised as a serious problem, other marginalised groups do not receive the same level of attention or advocacy, despite facing similar barriers and discrimination. So while it is important to continue to address the underrepresentation of women in science, it is also crucial to recognise and address the underrepresentation of other marginalised groups and to consider intersectionality in efforts to increase diversity, equity and inclusion in academia.

Tina Jung says that in recent years there has been more focus on what it means to work in academia and the risks and problems involved: "The lack of predictability, the precariousness, the mobility requirements and the fact that it has nothing to do

with academic ability and qualification alone whether it works out in the end with a tenured professorship." An academic career often demands long hours and a heavy workload, which can disadvantage people with disabilities, caring responsibilities or other commitments outside academia. Many of the uncertainties of academic careers can be traced back to the possibilities for fixed-term contracts under the Wissenschaftszeitvertragsgesetz (WissZeitVG). This regulates the possibilities of temporary employment contracts for academic and artistic staff at the academic mid-level. Academic mid-level refers to all employees who neither hold a professorship, nor are students or employees in technical or administrative areas. In 2018, the proportion of temporary staff in the German mid-level academic staff under 45 years of age was 92%. This legal regulation finds its justification in the motto "innovation through fluctuation". From the legislator's point of view, this "regular exchange of personnel" (Bundestag 2006) is necessary to ensure the performance and innovative capacity of the science system. Scientists can therefore be employed on a fixed-term basis for up to 6 years before and after their doctorate and thus advance the qualification phase. After the expiry of the maximum fixed-term period, the staff members are either dismissed, employed permanently, or another fixed-term contract is found on the basis of other provisions.



"The dependency of many scientists who work in the academic world is, of course, fertile ground on which abuse of power can grow," says Tina Jung. If people are not granted a fixed-term contract and there is always dependence on superiors or reviewers because of the review of an article or the next qualification thesis, it naturally makes it infinitely difficult to

Source: „Gleichstellungskonzept OVGU 2018“ nach amtl. Statistik der OVGU vom 01.12.2017 und Statistisches Bundesamt. Frauenanteile an Hochschulen in Deutschland 2019 bis 2021 [Data set]. Zitiert nach de.statista.com. <https://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/249318/umfrage/frauenanteile-an-hochschulen-in-deutschland/>.

address this abuse. The network "Abuse of Power in Science" has compiled reasons why those affected often do not defend themselves. These reasons include uncertainty about options and contact points, lack of knowledge about their own rights, but also fear that information will not be treated confidentially or that they will face disadvantages. At the same time, abuse of power has been considered scientific misconduct by the DFG Code since 2019. "But you can see from developments like this that a lot is happening," she says. Under the hashtags #IamHanna and #IamReyhan, young scientists are increasingly creating a voice for themselves in this discourse. Also, #MeToo in science, initiatives on sexual abuse in science and abuse of power, in general, have the potential to change a lot and help many people. On the other hand, Tina Jung restricts this statement somewhat: "There is still a lot of work to be done to change the science system from the ground up in favour of predictability, security and compatibility with other aspects of life such as care." There is an insistence that the organisation of the German higher education system is good and as it is. ●

Where to contact if you experience discrimination

Equal Opportunities Officers of the Faculties

each faculty has one or more equal opportunities officers, a list of these and contact information can be found here: <https://www.bfg.ovgu.de/en/Equal+opportunities+officers.html>)

Office for Equal Opportunities at the OVGU:

gleichstellungsbeauftragte@ovgu.de

Anti-Discrimination Office SA:

<https://antidiskriminierungsstelle-sachsen-anhalt.de/en/>

Counselling Centre against Everyday Racism & Discrimination:

<https://www.alltagsrassismus-entknoten.de/en/>

Central Reporting Office for the Registration of Discrimination and Violence against LGBTIQ* in Saxony-Anhalt:

<https://www.dimsa.lgbt/>

AG Antidiscrimination FaRa Med:

antidiskriminierung@fara-med.de

Awareness Unit FaRa FIN:

awareness@farafin.de

Network Against the Abuse of Power in Academia:

<https://www.netzwerk-mawi.de/en/>

Power in the Context of Student Initiatives

Power is present in various environments and contexts. At the OVGU, there are several student initiatives formed through student engagement and dedicated to different topics. In the following, four student initiatives introduce themselves and their relation to power. How can student initiatives exercise power? How do they experience power? Or what does power even mean within their context?

by Sarah Richard



SIDUM e.V.

Our initiative is particularly characterised by flat hierarchies. The board of directors is elected annually and is responsible for the strategic management and steering of the association's operations. The power to delegate tasks lies with the five board members but they must also face the members in the case of new elections and justify their decisions to the members at the association meetings.

Via our LinkedIn and Instagram presence, we attempt to draw the attention of students, businesses, and non-profit organisations. **Our multi-faceted offering aims to encourage participation and collaboration, and thereby make a positive impact on the world around us.**

As a student consultancy providing insight into the consulting industry, we depend on cooperation with companies. Whether through lectures, workshops or at the bi-annual congress of our umbrella organisation - contact and cooperation with businesses are essential for us. Naturally, we adapt to the wishes and ideas of our cooperation partners to ensure a successful collaboration. Furthermore, our umbrella organisation has a certain amount of authority regarding our actions; therefore as a member association, we comply with the agreed regulations to the best of our ability and implement them as quickly as possible.

The student consultancy of the state capital Magdeburg, SIDUM e.V., is the main contact point for students to combine practical experience, further education, and networking. Thanks to more than 40 committed students from Magdeburg studying in various fields, we combine the strategic thinking of economists with the innovative approaches of engineers and digitalise it with the skills of our IT specialists.



INGENIEURE OHNE GRENZEN

Engineers without Borders e.V.

Knowledge is power – We, therefore, share our knowledge and focus on sustainable knowledge transfer.

Whoever possesses knowledge can use this knowledge for their own benefit and thereby exercise power. This fundamental connection was formulated by the English philosopher Francis Bacon in the 16th century. The well-known saying „knowledge is power“ can also be traced back to his work. As a result of the connection between knowledge and power, the transfer of knowledge - especially to disadvantaged groups - can contribute to reducing existing power imbalances by strengthening self-reliance and thereby improving the living conditions of these groups.

Nevertheless, the fact is that access to knowledge is limited in many developing countries in the world. In particular, this is the case in remote, rural regions. There are various reasons for this: partly, there is a lack of the necessary infrastructure, access to the relevant offers is often associated with high costs, or they are only available in foreign languages. Regardless of the reason, these restrictions result in denying many opportunities for development to the affected groups and making it difficult for them to break free from possible dependencies.

For this reason, Engineers Without Borders e.V. approach

es this issue in its projects: We always carry out our projects with local organisations. It is important that we learn from each other and that cooperation takes place in partnership and on an equal basis. Together we develop and research locally adapted solutions and use materials that are regionally available as much as possible. Our work is based on the principle of „helping people to help themselves“, meaning that our aim is to ensure a sustainable transfer of knowledge to enable our partnerships to apply the knowledge they have gained in the future to continue the projects on-site independently. Ideally, they act as multipliers to effectively spread knowledge in the region.

Through these newly acquired skills and knowledge, our partnerships are also able to apply the knowledge and realise projects independent of external support. This year, for example, we - the Magdeburg regional group - worked with a vocational school in Tanzania to set up a solar-powered hot water system at a girls' school. At the same time, we enabled the vocational school to set up such systems themselves to pass on the knowledge and skills to future generations of students. This knowledge transfer, in turn, strengthens the region's self-reliance.

Engineers Without Borders is a non-profit and independent development cooperation organisation. Our mission is to improve people's living conditions with technical knowledge to promote global coalescence. That is why we plan and implement infrastructure projects and carry out educational work nationally and internationally. The regional group Magdeburg is a student initiative affiliated with the OVGU. Through this, we offer you the opportunity to become a part of this mission and to practically apply the theoretical knowledge acquired during your studies! Our activities range from project work abroad to public relations work for the association in the region of Magdeburg. We are always on the lookout for committed volunteers - no matter which study programme you belong to!

Student Stock Exchange Association Magdeburg

Student initiatives exert a very special influence on campus life. For companies and organisations, as well as for students, these institutions are one of the few instruments that can influence the university's plans in the long term. Financial firms support the stock exchange associated with the aim of gaining popularity for the association, thereby giving the Faculty of Business and Economics a higher priority. As a result, there are more finance courses at OVGU, attracting more business students who join the association and even-

tually become potential employees of the supporting companies. A similar cycle can be observed in all other faculties or between political organisations and political student initiatives. **The power of student initiatives is thus an important driver in the ongoing evolution of the university and the cultural landscape.**

Many unexpected questions always pile up for young, career-oriented adults. How do you build a valuable network? Where do you learn soft skills? Where to put your first own money? The student stock exchange association in Magdeburg has been helping out since 1994.

Queer Campus Magdeburg

In our group, power has different roles. We are self-organised, and every member has a democratic right to vote, but our speakers usually get the final word on decisions. We are working on gradually distributing power among all members, e.g., by working independently in a designated area of responsibility. We want all participants to contribute their own opinions and ideas, which must always be considered in the decision-making process.

Our biggest hurdle is to initiate structural changes at the university; we can make demands, such as the installation of gender-neutral toilets, but that does not guarantee that they will be implemented. These are often long-term, energy-consuming processes which require many discus-

sions, arguments, and compromises. As our department depends on the engagement of students, our capacity can be limited occasionally since studying full-time can be challenging and having time for an honorary position is not always possible. Furthermore, we must provide the StuRa with regular reports on our activities and expenditures, and naturally, we cannot make any changes outside of the university law.

The power of others sometimes gets in the way, but it never completely ties our hands.

We are Queer Campus, the LGBTQIA department of the student council at the Otto von Guericke University Magdeburg. We represent the interests of queer students by educating about queer issues offline and online, getting involved in university politics and being a shelter and contact point for queer students. We also organise cultural events, such as movie nights and workshops, and hold regular get-togethers on various topics.*



#HOCHDRUCK

Interview by Hanna Westermann with Leonie and Helena from Students for Climate Justice about climate activism at universities, power and lack of power and the #HOCHDRUCK campaign at OVGU.

Leonie and Helena met with me on Zoom to talk about their experiences. Helena and Leonie are both studying for their Master's degree in Environmental Psychology and are active in Students for Climate Justice.

It seems to me that power and lack thereof are central themes of the climate movement. Crucial issues for our future are at stake, and at the same time, decision-makers often give priority to other interests. How do you feel about this?

Helena: Definitely, the lack of power plays a big role because you often feel relatively small in relation to decision-makers because we, as activists, cannot decide things but primarily make appeals. But I believe that you can create a voice for yourself by becoming active with actions, demos, campaigns and talks and negotiations with decision-makers. In this way, you can take back some of the power. You can also achieve a lot and make a difference, so this feeling of powerlessness does not remain but can be transformed into something positive.

Most recently (on 21 November 2022), participants of the Last Generation in Magdeburg glued themselves to the asphalt to draw attention to the issue of climate justice and perhaps also to express their feeling of having exhausted all other means. Can you understand these actions?

Helena: Definitely understandable! They often have banners with them, expressing that not enough is happening in politics. And I think all people who are active in the climate

movement can understand that. And what strikes me above all is that the two biggest demands right now are the speed limit and the €9 ticket, both of which are measures that have popular support and could be implemented. I also think that these different forms of activism, together with civil disobedience, can move a lot. It is also important not to play different forms of protest against each other in an intact democracy, which sometimes happens, but to see them as different movements that can create pressure together so that powerlessness no longer prevails.

Leonie: And I do see other ways to

influence, but the point is that not enough is happening. We have to share our responsibilities, our forms of protest, because we have limited resources and everyone who is active in the climate movement, and many others, I'm sure, see that it's not happening fast enough. That is, what has been achieved and fought for in the climate movement in recent years has simply not led to progress that is satisfactory. And that's why I think it's important that we all exhaust our possibilities so that the climate goals are achieved more quickly. Helena: That reminds me of another addition because you just said that we have to make use

HOCHSCHULGRUPPE STUDENTS FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE

The university group has existed since 2019 and is a local group of Students for Future. The focus is on their commitment to more climate justice at OVGU.

ORGANISATION

Various working groups work on different topics that affect sustainability at the university, as well as organising events around climate justice.

GOAL

To create a binding foundation for climate protection at OVGU.

MEETINGS

Bi-weekly organisational meetings, but at the same time more frequent meetings to exchange ideas on specific topics or to attend events together.

PARTICIPATION

Students from all faculties are welcome! Inform or get in touch via Instagram (@studentsforclimatejustice_md) or email (students.magdeburg@fridaysforfutur.is).

of all resources. It is important to bundle resources and not to separate the climate movement from any social movements or social struggles but to see how we can form alliances and where we can join forces. This is a very big issue in climate justice; the movement should not be isolated from other social justice movements, for example.

Among other things, you are campaigning for the #HOCHDRUCK goals. Can you explain them briefly?

Leonie: The #HOCHDRUCK demands were developed by students from the Students for Future community, who planned this as a nationwide campaign and which we then joined. All the demands made in the campaign are central to advancing climate protection at universities. The demands include not only the reduction of CO2 emissions but also the social sphere, mobility and participation. Especially since it is about the transformations of universities, it must be possible for all students to be involved without having to sacrifice all their free time. The demands have been made at many universities in several countries; the implementation then takes place locally, depending on the conditions there. By networking with other universities, we have collected best-practice examples for each demand and have found that a lot is possible if someone is committed to it, for example, the greening of universities, the possibility for students to get involved or the reduction of the energy demand of universities. These best-practice examples show that the demands are all achievable and that a lot can be accomplished through joint pressure.

Through nationwide calls, we are networked with the other participating universities. Within Saxony-Anhalt, we have a lot of contact with Halle in particular because they also made the demands. This is very important for us so that we can take the demands to higher authorities, espe-

cially to the state level, since many things are regulated by the state, and the actors at the universities cannot decide for themselves on all points.

These goals are demands on higher education institutions from Germany, Austria and Switzerland. Where is there a concrete need for action with regard to the OVGU?

Helena: Actually, there is still something to be achieved in every demand, even if the OVGU is already further along in some points compared to other universities. We think it's especially important that more is being done in the area of credits for engagement. The cafeteria can also develop further in the direction of offering more vegetarian and vegan options. One demand relates to public transport; as our semester ticket is limited to Magdeburg, it would be important to us to extend this at least to Saxony-Anhalt. The greening and thus unsealing of the campus is another point, this necessity is already noticeable when walking over it: a lot of parking space and few nice recreational areas. There are good concepts to make the campus more liveable and to increase the quality of stay. And also the energy concept, which is a big and influential topic. The old energy concept, which is now being implemented, is still mainly based on natural gas, which is now being reconsidered due to the Russian war. Now that we should no longer be dependent on fossil natural gas. There is still a lot to be done so that at some point, we will only have renewable energies at the university.

You wrote a public letter to the university on 24.10.2022 regarding the #HOCHDRUCK demands. What were your more concrete demands on the university beyond the general goals?

Leonie: In principle, we first passed on the demands as they were to the university. We commented on a few points that were already in the position paper, so we made some

small additions to adapt them to the OVGU.

Did the university react to your public letter? Are you in contact with the university?

Helena: Three weeks after we published the letter and sent it to the rectorate, we met with representatives from the rectorate and the administration and exchanged ideas. Some points had to be clarified and we also discussed which points were feasible from our point of view and from the point of view of the rectorate. It was good to talk and we were assured that our rector would address the issues again at the state rector's conference. Especially the point about credits for engagement was received very positively. We will remain in contact with the Commission for Studies and Teaching. We are still in discussion and will now fine-tune our strategy on how we can ensure that the process is quicker since such demands can quickly get lost. We are also in contact with almost all the student councils to look even more broadly: What could be the roles of student councils and of the broader student body to implement the demands?

How can you implement demands and ideas within the university? Are there structures that deal specifically with the topic of sustainability and climate change at the OVGU?

Leonie: We are in exchange with the Sustainability Office as far as possible, and if necessary, also with the Senate Climate Commission, which is the body directly responsible for these issues. In the future, we will try to use these structures to exert pressure with regard to the demands. First of all, an implementation plan must now be drawn up, which will then be followed consistently and will achieve success through the evaluation of interim targets and readjustment of measures.

In addition, the climate is a cross-cutting issue for us that actually has to be considered in all areas, and this is still

1.

COMPULSORY MODULES ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND CLIMATE EMERGENCY.

CREDITS FOR COMMITMENT: COMMITTEE WORK, INITIATIVE WORK AND NON-UNIVERSITY COMMITMENT MUST BE ABLE TO BE CREDITED IN ALL COURSES OF STUDY.

2.

3.

25% REDUCTION OF ENERGY CONSUMPTION OF BUILDINGS BY THE END OF 2022 AND 100% RENEWABLE ENERGY BY 2030.

BY 2025, ALL MAIN DISHES IN THE CANTEENS MUST BE PLANT-BASED.

4.

5.

FREE NATIONWIDE PUBLIC TRANSPORT TICKETS FOR STUDENTS AND STAFF BY 2022.

MORE GREEN THAN CONCRETE! LIVING UNIVERSITY - ACCORDING TO THE SPONGE PRINCIPLE WITH 40% UNSEALED SURFACES AND A GOOD CLIMATE.

6.

7.

AFFORDABLE AND SUSTAINABLE HOUSING FOR STUDENTS - 40% SOCIAL HOUSING IN NEW CONSTRUCTION AND NET ZERO IN THE ECO-BALANCE.

BY 2025, ALL BODIES WHOSE DECISIONS HAVE A DIRECT INFLUENCE ON STUDENTS WILL HAVE EQUAL REPRESENTATION.

8.

9.

85% BASIC FUNDING AND STABLE, TRANSPARENT FUNDING OF UNIVERSITIES BY THE STATE AND EARMARKING OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES FOR CLIMATE PROTECTION AND ADAPTATION!

DIVESTMENT: BY 2025, UNIVERSITIES WILL NO LONGER INVEST IN FOSSIL FUEL STRUCTURES.

10.

DEMANDS

More information: <https://hochdruck.jetzt/>

#HOCHDRUCK-CAMPAIGN

happening far too little. In principle, climate should be considered in every decision that is made about innovations at the university and also in the allocation of funds, and this is not yet happening to a sufficient extent.

In which areas have you already been able to achieve success, at the OVGU or in Magdeburg?

Helena: A great success is that the Senate Commission on Climate now exists. This came about as a result of a position paper that was presented to the Senate over a year ago. This means that there is now a Senate Commission with equal representation that only deals with climate protection issues, which did not exist before. But what is also a success for us is when our events are well attended and we reach many people and our group grows. So we manage to make the issue of climate justice more visible on campus. We achieve this through the series of events like the Public Climate School, a big banner painting campaign of the global climate strike on campus ...

Leonie: ...film screenings and lectures on topics such as the sustainability of cryptocurrency or the extent to which you have to break through racist structures in order to achieve climate justice. We often organise events and workshops in which the university public and other interested parties can participate.

How can students at the OVGU get involved and inform themselves about climate justice, at your university or beyond?

Leonie: Of course, you can join us; we are always happy to hear from people who would like to participate or contribute new ideas. And then there are the institutions already mentioned, the Department for Climate Justice and Sustainability and the Senate Commission on Climate. It depends a bit on whether you want to organise something or take part in university politics. Of course, you can join the StuRa in general and I would say you can also get involved by exchanging

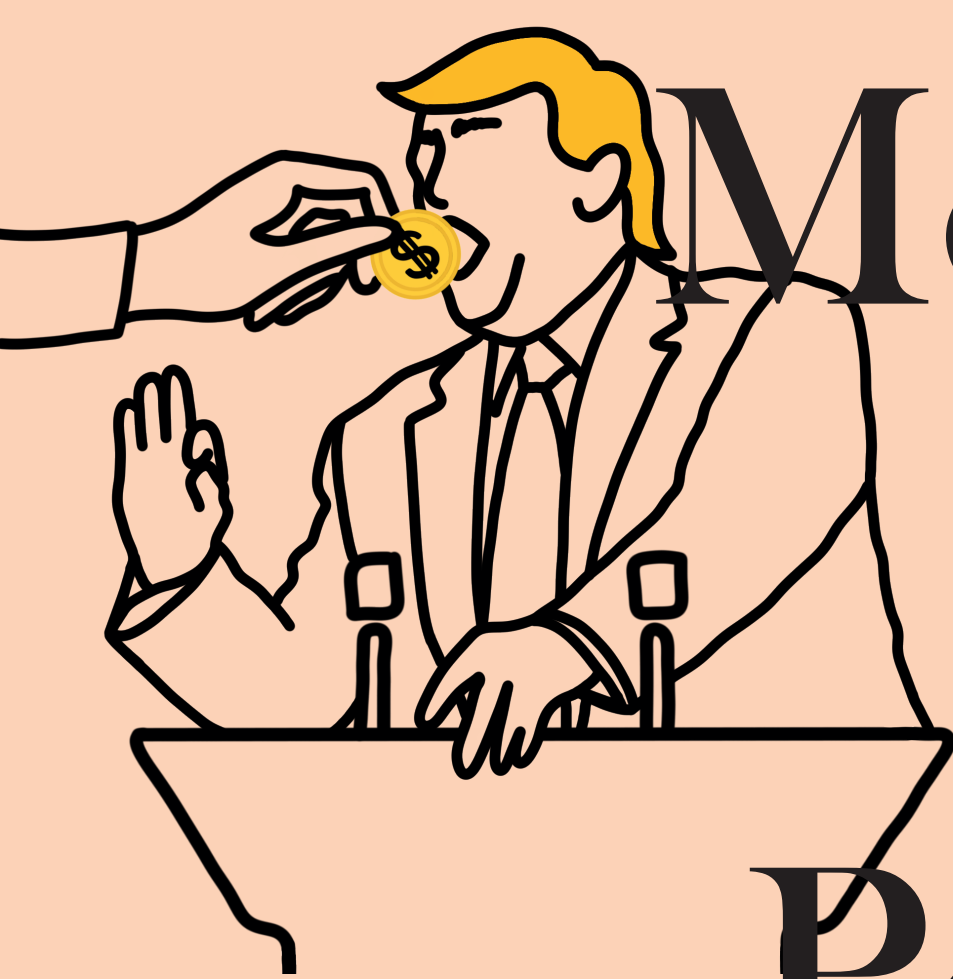
ideas and networking with others. The events that we help to organise or that are organised by the sustainability office are good opportunities for this, for example, the Public Climate School or the eco-social university days. You can also check out our Instagram or the page of the sustainability office.

Helena: Of course, there are also Fridays for Future in the city, which organises the global climate strikes, where you can get active and go to the demos.

Leonie: Studying is simply a good opportunity to meet people who have the same interests, the same ambitions, and especially if you are interested in sustainability, you can meet a lot of people with whom you can change a lot together. It's a time when you have some resources to plan events to bring problems to the public and I think it's just a great opportunity to get involved during your studies, whether it's in sustainability, social issues or other areas. ●

POLITICS & SOCIETY





Money and Power

Comment by Kaleigh O'Brien

Money and political power have been intricately connected since the creation of currency. This relationship, while clever with respect to governmental organization, has an inherent effect on the lives of everyday citizens and their ability to express their own political opinions, particularly in our current democratic structure. But why does money have such a large effect on one's personal political power? And how does that, in turn, effect one's ability to contribute to political movements, as well as express themselves politically? As these questions are broad, for the purposes of this piece, we will focus only on the United States and Germany.

To answer the first question, we must first look at the historical relationship between money, politics, and the lives of everyday individuals. In every form of government, money has been tied to the ruling political body since the inception of standardized currency. It was beneficial for the ruling body to have a standard way of regulating the economy, as it guaranteed continued trade and relative prosperity for everyday citizens and rulers alike. However, where the connection between money, politics, and the lives between laymen shines is in campaign funding, particularly in the democratic structures found in many of the world's governments today. Contributing to a campaign, monetarily in this case, is one of the ways that individuals can tangibly assist the candidates of their choice in being elected to office.

For example, in Germany, candidates and political parties receive funding from three main sources: membership dues, the federal government, and private donations. While the function and functioning of membership dues are self-explanatory, the money allocated to each party from the federal government stems from the amount of popular vote the party won in the previous election. The idea behind this is that the more sway a political party has on the mainstream public, the more public funding (AKA taxpayer money) they should receive. This pool of money has certain stipulations, namely that a party must earn more than one percent of the national vote in order to receive any money from the federal govern-

Anyone is eligible to spend as much money as they like on any political party, so long as that party immediately publicizes their donors.

ment. There are no such laws on private donations. Anyone is eligible to spend as much money as they like on any political party, so long as that party immediately publicizes their donors. Therefore, in the case of the extremely wealthy, it would be theoretically possible, if not particularly easy, to influence election patterns. That said, there is not a trend in German politics of large donations swaying election results, as the money that a single individual would have to contribute is vastly outweighed by the amount that the most popular parties already receive from the federal government. For smaller parties, however, this kind of private and personal donation can make a huge difference in their ability to campaign.

In contrast, in the United States, political parties do not receive money from the federal government. Any candidate that would like to claim a public office must do so with campaign funds that come from three sources: individual contributions, both small and large; large-scale corporate donations; and self-financing. There is a reason that many elected officials in the United States appear to have independent wealth. Now it may seem odd that there are two categories of private donations in this list; however, they are radically different in terms of their ability to influence the outcome of US elections. Despite its democratic reputation and the democratic republic nature of its government, due to the amount of excessively wealthy individuals and multi-national companies based in the United States, the country can at times appear as an oligarchy.



Although the United States and Germany have similar stances on limitations on campaign donations and making these donations public knowledge, the amount spent is vastly different. Germany is known for its thrifty elections. The last presidential election in the United States was the most expensive yet, with the campaign funding from both sides tallying up to \$14.4 billion (€12.24 billion). For many in the United States, the unlimited ability of particularly wealthy companies has become a cause for concern - companies seek their own profit, and by providing such exorbitant sums as campaign donations, they are ensuring that candidates will repay their kindness later on through beneficial tax breaks, laws passed in their favour, etc. However, when this unlimited budget was brought to the Supreme Court in 2010 in the case of Citizens United vs FEC (commonly known merely as Citizens United), the court ruled that limiting the personal expenditures of any individual or private business would be limit their freedom of speech, thus violating their rights until the First Amendment. This ruling only encouraged lobbyists to spend more of their money on influencing potential Congress members and presidential candidates. These lobbyists range from health insurance companies like Blue Cross Blue Shield seeking to maintain privatized healthcare in the United States, to Lockheed Martin and Boeing Co seeking long-term increases in military spending in order to expand their own contracts with the US military, to Amazon seeking tax exemptions and loopholes in order to maximize its own profit.

All of this combines to imply that money does indeed make the world go 'round. Despite grassroots movements in any country, they require a certain amount of investment from average individuals as well as the state in order to stay standing. One of the best ways to continue supporting or placing pressure on political parties is to target their sources of revenue. If political candidates are not receiving money in personal or private donations, they will be unable to function in the way that they are accustomed to. One's individual personal power can be expressed through spending on and withholding money from various political parties and candidates.

That said, this pressure is hard to apply alone. While the wealthy may be able to pull millions from the budgets of candidates and parties by refusing to donate personally or through their businesses, the average individual has limited power to affect the outcome of most political elections. This limitation is why it is important for the average individual to recognize the power of collective movements and the "power of the people", so to speak. Where one person can only do so much, many people can have a profound impact on how state, national, and international politics unfolds. ●



Guestarticle by Wir sehen hin e.V.



Sexualised violence is a topic that is reluctantly addressed. But also for the reason that nobody wants to talk about it, it remains an everyday problem that social groups such as people perceived female, members of the LGBTQIA+ community or people with disabilities are confronted with on a daily basis.

Sexualised Violence and Power

According to statistics, there is a rape in Germany at least every second day; the number of unreported cases is believed to be much higher (www.wirsehenhin.de/fakten). This is due to the fact that many people do not report a rape - on the one, hand because they are afraid, ashamed or because the perpetrator is a family member, and on the other hand, because the police structures can make it difficult for those affected to report it.



Sexualised violence is a problem that is deeply rooted in society. This can be observed in the discourse around sexualised violence. Those affected are often accused of being responsible for rape or other sexual offences, for example, because they were drunk or too lightly dressed. The responsibility to protect themselves from sexualised violence usually lies with the victims. They are not supposed to move outside their homes at night or go out partying. In the process, the responsibility is taken away from the actual perpetrators of sexualised violence.

Discussions about sexualised violence are often one-sided. The problem is taken out of context and treated as

Sexualised violence is above all an instrument of power.

a separate issue. When talking about sexualised violence without the context of society as a whole, one thing is often misunderstood: sexualised violence is, above all, an instrument of power. This becomes clear when one looks at which people are most often affected by sexualised violence: they are groups that experience discrimination in society, for example, because of their gender or sexual orientation. This discrimination, for example in finding a job, salary, and housing, but also in the form of experiences with violence, maintains the status quo: the position of power of the white, heterosexual cis man. While this in no way means that every white, heterosexual cis man, without exception, is actively or inactively involved in maintaining this power imbalance or that such men cannot themselves be affected by violence and sexualised violence, it does mean that this power imbalance exists. Sexualised violence is one of the symptoms of this patriarchal society.

By definition, sexualised violence begins when a person's right to sexual self-determination is violated, i.e. when they lose power over their body and are reduced to an object status. It is therefore primarily about self-determination.

When a person can no longer control their own body, it is one of the worst forms of loss of power. It is often accompanied by anxiety and physical as well as mental illnesses such as depression. However, it also means a gain in power for the person exercising violence. This gain of power can vary in extent, such as catcalling, where "only" for a few seconds or minutes a person is reduced to object status, to a gain of power through exercising domestic violence in relationships or sexualised violence against children by family members. Importantly, these different forms of power gain are inter-

connected. This means that catcalling is a possible beginning of gaining power and through the experience that power can be gained can support the perpetration of worse acts. Where power imbalances already exist, such as between adults and children, athletes and their coaches, or persons with disabilities and their caretakers, sexualised violence is more likely to be perpetrated. The abuse of power through sexualised violence further increases the power imbalance.

Exercising power through sexualised violence also leads to the closure of spaces for marginalised groups: Freedom of movement (at night) is restricted, the expression of one's personality cannot take place as desired, professional promotions do not come although they could be expected, and families can become a danger. These disadvantages are less to be feared by the favoured persons of patriarchy. Of course, power through the use of violence can also affect white heterosexual cis men. However, it is

important to remember that discrimination based on various aspects, such as gender, sexual orientation or skin colour, makes experiences of violence more likely for marginalised groups.

Shame is also an instrument of power. For example, the shame attached to the nipple of female-read people not only deprives these same people of feeling as free in their bodies as non-female-read people but also prevents them from feeling comfortable and powerful without nipple covering, such as a bra. Furthermore, the terms pubic hair or labia, for example, suggest that the mere possession of these hair and body parts is already shameful. Although these discussions may seem petty, all of these aspects play a role in the structures that maintain patriarchy and thus maintain an inequality of power. Only by changing the system and our thinking across society can we prevent sexualised violence and the power it exerts. ●

Experience report

Amely*, 22 years old
Student, BWL / Business Economics
*name changed

"At a big event at the university, where I was with several friends and also my boyfriend, I met one of the tutors of my first group from the beginning of my Master's degree. He could hardly believe that I was the same as two years before. In the meantime, he is no longer a student himself but works at a department of the faculty. He was obviously very drunk that evening and repeated again and again how different I looked and that I could never be the same. At some point, he began not only to engage me in this conversation but also to physically separate me from my group of friends. So at some point, he stood with his back to the others and held me in front of him so that I could no longer see the others. He held me by the shoulder so that I couldn't get away, even if I tried several times. To talk to me, he kept bending down low to me. Among other things, he told me: 'I love you'. Even a little drunk myself, I blamed everything he said on his alcohol level. But at some point, I had the feeling that his movements with his face were more and more aimed not only at my ear (to tell me something) but at my mouth. Fortunately, I could always turn away, but I couldn't leave because he had a firm grip on me. Even though the description of the situation here may sound a bit long-winded, it only took a short time in the situation for me to realise that I could not get away on my own. I couldn't say anything because I was frozen inside and, at the same time

had the feeling that I didn't want to get him into trouble. After all, as a teacher, he would get into a lot of trouble for indecently approaching me as a student - even when drunk. I just didn't want to cause any trouble. Fortunately, immediately after the 'kiss attempt', my friend, a buddy and another academic staff member from another department came at the same time and got me out of the situation. Alone, despite all the theoretical training after previous experiences in this direction, I would not have managed to get myself out of the situation. Within the next quarter of an hour, he came near me again and again and sought contact. This went on until I left the party because of him. Even in retrospect, I don't know how to deal with the situation properly. Because I'm afraid of a confrontation afterwards, I don't want to inform the university. At the same time, the situation scared me so much that I don't know how I would face him if I met him again. However, due to the fact that we are in the same faculty, this re-encounter is bound to come sooner or later."

Wir sehen hin e.V.

The association Wir sehen hin e.V. deals with the issue of sexualised violence. The local initiative from Magdeburg has set itself the goal of showing that sexualised violence is not only a problem in other cities or countries, but that it is also part of everyday life here in Magdeburg. To get more people to address the issue, real-life testimonials from people of all ages are shared anonymously on the Instagram page @wirsehenhin_md. Sexualised violence is a socially deeply rooted problem that we can only confront collectively. Therefore, we are happy about any support and especially about the submission of your own experiences! You can send us your stories anonymously. You can simply fill out a short survey. You can find the button at the top right of the website: www.wirsehenhin.de.

Instagram: @wirsehenhin_md
Website: www.wirsehenhin.de



@wirsehenhin_md

Fear, Drill and

– Abuse of Power in Sport

Comment by Francis Göbecke

People who have power often seem to abuse it. This is the sad reality. Be it teachers towards their students, the boss towards their employees or even the coach dealing with their athletes.

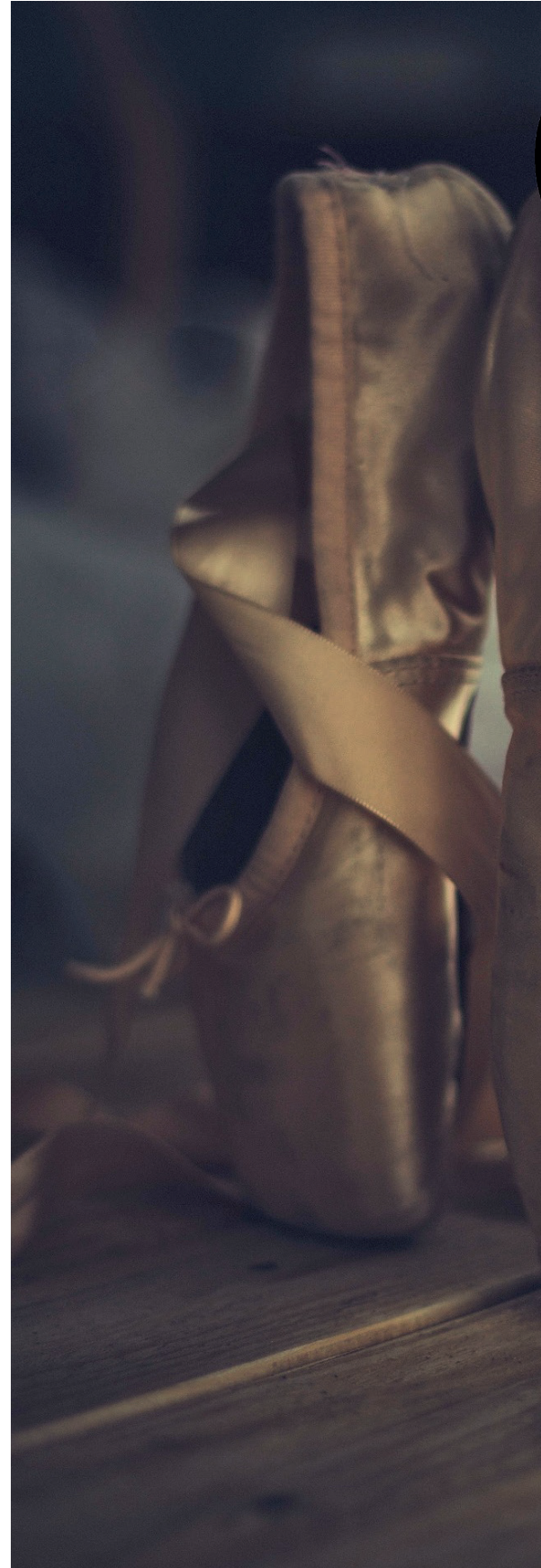
It doesn't even seem to matter in which performance class we are. It starts on a small scale in school sports or in the afternoon study group and extends far into professional sports. Whether child or adult, regardless of gender and origin, almost every person who plays a sport in a club has experienced abuse of power by a coach or at least knows someone who has. Different types of abuse of power can be distinguished: physical and psychological, drill and sexualised violence.

A trainer should never be allowed to threaten to end a career and methods in training should never be humiliating or dangerous to health. Personal boundaries should also never be crossed, no matter what reasons may be presented.

And yet, according to a recent study, 29% of athletes involved in competitive sports have experienced physical violence. It is no different in grassroots sports.

But the hard truth is that the share of mental and sexual violence is not only slightly higher. The same study from 2016 shows that 89% of athletes have experienced psychological violence and 33% sexualised violence. It can be assumed that the number of unreported cases is even higher because the victims are often not believed, and the perpetrator is protected in order to keep up appearances and keep the sports machine alive.

Aesthetic sports such as ballet, figure skating or gymnastics are particularly affected. For example, in the recent past, German gymnastics coach Gabriele Frehse was accused of abuse, alleging that she used her position to bully gymnasts.



Tears

"I didn't know I could have
said 'no'"

- Nora (former biathlete)

In addition, she probably administered drugs to her female athletes to enhance their performance without informing the responsible doctor. She vehemently denies the allegations. Renowned dance academies are fighting against the broken silence of former students who report harassment and humiliation. They have developed severe depression and eating disorders - mental illnesses that still limit them years later. Cases are also known in judo and rugby.

But voices have also been raised in winter sports. Especially after the former Austrian ski racer Nicola Werdenigg broke her silence about the abuse she experienced herself and founded the organisation #WeTogether to lend a helping hand to others. From stalking and unjustified bans from competitions and coercion to severe sexual abuse of minors at the hands of their coaches, all of this came to light through those affected and which opened the dialogue that calls for change.

Don't look away any longer.


At the expert conference against abuse of power in sports in 2021, the foundation was laid for establishing a general contact point for those affected. The current status (end of 2022) is that an extensive study has brought many sensational cases to light, and the available data will be evaluated in order to be able to take action next year. Already on a smaller scale, the coming to light of several athletes has led to a rethinking within the existing structures. For example, the German Equestrian Federation is setting up an advisory board for those affected, and the State Sports Federation is also planning a similar measure. In addition, videos for education and prevention have been made, which, above all, try to give children an understanding of when a situation is no longer okay and when they should confide in someone. Such video material can be downloaded online free of charge.

There's no shame in seeking help if your gut feeling gets the better of you and you go to training feeling uncomfortable or afraid of your coach. You don't have to be a competitive athlete; it can happen to anyone. ●


STRIVING UPWARD



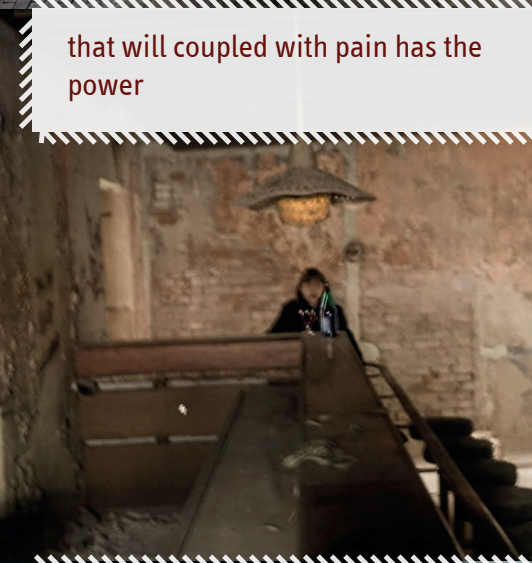
When the longer lever is used
arbitrarily,




it crushes the cries of the masses in the
cement of tradition.



But their demanding echo reverberates
in the space of possibility,



that will coupled with pain has the
power



to undermine the old order with a
thought.



The sight of destruction does not hurt,



if the construction is based on the right
values.

INTERNATIONAL



CHAR

The Legacy of Power

by Daniel Felipe Borda López



Alejandro Char (56)
Colombian Politician and Businessman

Political and economic power in Colombia has, for many years, been unequally distributed within the territory, especially within regional and remote areas. This has sparked a phenomenon of “Clans”, which are powerful groups and families that hold on to power for multiple generations, exhibiting conducts of nepotism, corruption, and other scandals. In this article, it is intended to dissect these groups and their effect on national politics, taking the Char family, one of the most well-known political clans, as an example to dissect regional power dynamics in Colombia.

It was some months ago when Alex Char strode through the main cities of his native Caribe as part of his presidential campaign: this comes as no surprise, as it is his very own political and media machinery that has controlled this region for over half a century. The “barranquillero”, with middle eastern roots, is the eldest son of Fuad Char, who has dedicated the last couple of decades to building his family’s empire in this region of the country. The Chars first came to Colombia in 1924, with the arrival of Nicolás Char Zaslavy, and settled in Lorica, a small town known for its high number of immigrants. Nicolás, who had fled the aftermath of the fall of the Otoman Empire, decided to try his luck as a merchant and with his brother, participated in a couple of unsuccessful businesses before opening a small grocery store.

Years later, now married and with seven children, he moved to Barranquilla because the profits from his shop were no longer enough to feed his family. There, he purchases the convenience store “La Olímpica” from one of his friends. From that moment, the Chars lived a comfortable life. Nicolás gave no signs of wanting to develop or enlarge his business. It wasn’t until 1955, when he was involved in a traffic accident that left him unable to use his legs, that the direction of the family would change.

His eldest son Fuad was 17 at the time and he was looking forward to going to the United States to study medicine and receive military training. However, looking after his father’s health, he abandons his plan and decides to take charge, with his brothers, of the family’s business. They decide to adapt their selling strategies to take a step forward over their competitors: they modify their prices depending on the time of the day and day of the week and use marketing strategies to actively look for new clients. This new system proved to be extremely successful, and it wouldn’t take long before “Almacenes Olímpica” became a staple chain-store in Barranquilla.

This was the origin of the Char's economic power, who are now owners of more than 300 stores nationwide. Under the corporation Char Hermanos Ltda, they have meddled in different economic sectors: banking, real estate, communications, publicity and, notoriously, the purchase of Junior, Barranquilla’s professional football team. With all this wealth and a good perspective of their future, it was just a matter of time before they got involved in politics.

Today, the Char clan has numerous connections in different political spheres in the Caribe region and the country. They are known for supporting many right-wing politicians, including an ex-president and now senator Álvaro Uribe during his first campaign in 2002, and, most recently, the “Centro Democrático” party candidate Fico Gutiérrez, once Alex Char’s candidacy dissolved because of lack of support. If one tried to pick apart the network of government positions, as well as management and directors of multimillionaire companies, that have been handpicked by members of this clan, one would find a pattern of nepotism that threatens the democratic and economic integrity of the region.

A comparison between regional power clans in Colombia and monarchies, who control large portions of land through negotiation and political alliances, can be drawn here. This article aims to analyse the regional power dynamics, characterised in Colombia by systematic negligence and neglect of the state, which allows the hereditary control of different clans throughout the country.

Regionalism: Sickness or Strategy?

Professor Fabio Velásquez, in his study on centralism as a form of state organization in Colombia, describes that in 1986 Colombia was one of the first countries in Latin America to reform its constitution to empower regional and municipal institutions. This, as he then argues, was postulated as a measure against the perceived illegitimacy of the state, which had mainly manifested itself in reduced participation in elections and social protests for better infrastructure and public services. With these reforms, new resources were directed towards smaller towns and cities, outside the capitals, promoting economic autonomy and political democratic participation in the most remote regions of the country.

However, even after these reforms were reaffirmed in the new constitution in 1991, during the last decade of the 20th century, these measures were reversed, looking for more funds to supply the financial needs of the country. So, it was stated in the 10th point of the right-wing president Alvaro Uribe’s government plan in 2002: “A municipality is the first encounter of the citizen with the State. We shall defend municipalities, but they shall help themselves with budgetary discipline and proper administration.” It was with this amendment that the government justified shortening funds for the regions, which would lastly allow for more organized internal

control and a reduction in the competition for public resources.

This sanction was, naturally, frowned upon amongst municipal and departmental authorities, as it reduced their autonomy and destabilized the distribution of resources. On top of this, it also dictated an adjustment to the national budget that would especially affect the regions in which the misuse of public funds (due to corruption, clientelism or pressure from violent groups) prevailed. These three phenomena follow the dynamic of regional power distribution, that scars Colombian politics and economy to this day.

In 1991, according to Velásquez, the guerillas (armed civilian groups that fought against the government for political and social change) occupied or influenced 43% of the country’s municipalities. Moreover, the paramilitary groups that emerged as their counterpart disputed the control of these regions with ever-growing strength. The accelerated advance of this last group obeyed the political views of this period but also the alliance between them and different powerful political groups in the country. Their confrontations turned the most remote regions of Colombia into war zones directed against innocent lives and, by extension, against democratic and administrative independence.

As a result of the State’s incapacity (or unwillingness) to provide support and attention in conflict zones, the control of many regions turned to the hands of these armed groups that were funded through criminal activities. Many of the leaders and authorities in these regions were threatened, harassed, kidnapped or even assassinated by these groups in order to seize power. As noted in Prof. Velásquez’s research, this coup had (mainly) three consequences linked to the regional power dynamics that still remain in Colombia, and it is in these consequences that the structure of this kind of power may be better understood.

- Forced migration and expropriation of the properties of thousands of citizens that fled towards urban areas.
- Establishment of illegal crops in hundreds of hectares of fertile terrain.
- Birth of narco- and para-politics, which are terms used to describe the alliance between politicians, narcotraffic and paramilitary groups in certain parts of the country.

Identity and Populism

After the waves of forced migration that experienced the country during more than 50 years of armed civil war, many of these groups of people settled in urban areas, which were perceived as being safer. This was not an easy process, and it led to a demographic redistribution, as nobody had seen. The migrants were located mostly in the external to middle areas of urban centres and they established themselves there with the few possessions they had left. This sparked problems with public sanitation, unemployment, inequity and hunger in various cities. It is calculated, as per studies made by (Ruiz, 2011), that in the first decade of this century, more than 8.4% of Colombia's total population was a victim of forced migration: this amounts to almost 5 million people.

On the other hand, the countryside was also deeply affected. An agrarian counter-reform took place and left thousands of hectares of land uncultivated. The population that remained in the regions controlled by armed groups were, in most cases, forced to have to pay "vacunas" (blackmail) to these groups and also to give up jobs and professions that they had held for many years. Many families were forced to turn to cocaine cultivation to make a living. Many of these families had women as heads of households and also very young family members.

This led to two mechanisms that help characterize regional power structures:

The first mechanism is the systematic repression of any social community leaders in these regions. These individuals (or groups) aimed to claim the rights of the people, in many cases, by opposing the respective authority in their zone (State, Guerrilla, Paramilitary). Since 2016 and until 2021, more than 400 social leaders have been assassinated in Colombia, according to reports from Human Rights Watch. Velásquez cites this as an authoritarian expression of power, regardless from the origin, but also argues that this generates a deeper connection between these leaders and their communities.

This indicates that, even when many municipalities have sparked efforts to give a voice to opposition ideologies, there are no effective means to protect them. Regional power structures, as they have developed in Colombia, are based on violence and impunity. Political clans and their hold on power is profoundly based on repressing opposition, which has turned democracy into a monopoly.

The second phenomenon has mostly affected the urban centres of the country, where the general repression of the whole population is no longer an effective strategy for maintaining power. A wave of populism has spread in the last few years, based on the new demographics following forced migration and the new social trends associated with it.

At a regional level, Colombia is a maze. Even if it doesn't have a big territory, certain social and political tendencies can be identified in different zones, regarding the historical context of each one of them. As a comparison, something similar could be acknowledged in the different sociopolitical tendencies exhibited between East and West Germany, in the early stages of the reunification. The Char family, who reigns over the Caribe region, are especially known for their right-winged identity: Catholicism, family values, patriotism, etc. This, even before they had reached the status they have now, is also prevalent amongst the people of this region and is something that conservative parties have exploited for many years.

In a way like the bonds formed between communities and their social leaders, political clans at a regional level must adapt to local standards, thus building a bond with potential voters and, more importantly, legitimizing their power through this mimicry. This quest for support, however, can turn into populism. This practice intends to gain the appreciation of a group of people with the claim of defending the interests of the People, even when it implicates the segregation and targeting of other sectors. This kind of practice has become usual in regional and national political campaigns, even relegating actual government plants to the background of politicians' speeches and placing critique as their main argument of superiority.

Many of the clans within marginalized communities in Colombia have operated this way. They claim to care for the migrants, retired army, and armed group personnel, poor and unemployed. In rural Colombia, this political points towards armed conflicts as the origin of every social end economic problem, offering a common enemy but no real executable solutions. In the urban areas, the way populism is expressed varies, but in many main cities such as Bogotá, Medellín, and Barranquilla, many right-wing campaigns have laid the blame on lower and migrant classes.

Álex Char, in his presidential campaign, named himself the “candidate of the people” and promised not to disappoint any Colombian, regardless of if they had voted for him. In this case, and just like most of the political movements that shared his ideologies, his discourse focused on reforms to the work of the last president (also right-wing), Iván Duque. Tax reforms, infrastructure in remote areas, and rejection of socialism’s advance in Latin America were his most important proposals. Although he did not win and dropped out of the race early on, his perspective and that of his family continued to support candidates with similar backgrounds, specifically Fico Gutiérrez: a professional administrator, from a powerful family, who was part of a powerful centre-right party.

The Appeal of Regional Power Structures

The big clans like the Char family have established in national politics by controlling strategic regions as a lever. The value of these regions, regarding politics, lays on the number of voters and their exploitability.

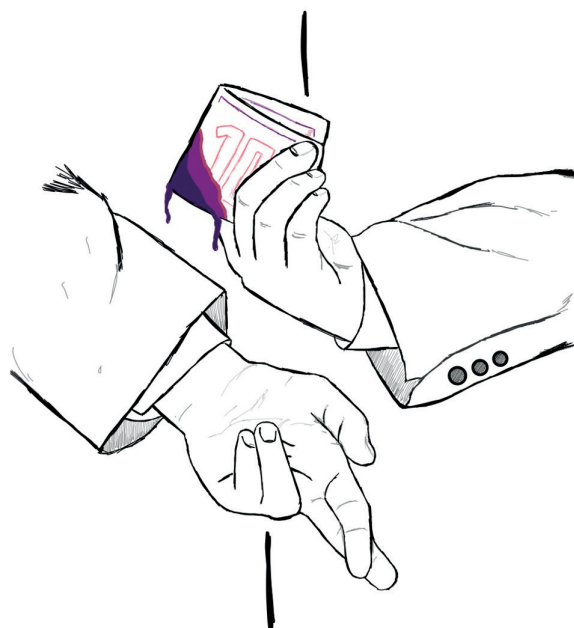
Rodríguez (2021) indicates that many politically abandoned people live in the northern departments of the country, where the lack of basic infrastructure is especially notorious. Many of them lack access to drinking water, telecommunication services, and proper road systems that connect them to nearby urban centres. In these places, the presence of armed groups is still strong, and the execution of politics turns into narcotraffic, corruption and violent repression; all this is supported by judicial impunity.

For the Chars, who are already owners of the biggest corporations in the Caribe region, the attractiveness of its control is the perpetuity of their power and the expansion of their presence in politics. This region holds more than 8 million voters, which is approximately 20% of the total electorate in Colombia. This benefits them, as their longevity has shown, because they enjoy the loyalty of many people in this region, especially in the department of Atlántico, where they come from. Even more so, their status makes them strategic allies for other politically aspiring forces, who are more than willing to offer favours, positions in the government or money in exchange for their support. This phenomenon allows them to be a political stronghold and also, creates a symbiotic relationship between them and different political circles in the country.

What do they use their power for?

The Chars, as well as many other political clans, are a symptom of Colombia’s regionalization. These regional power structures that unfold in the country utilize the negligence of the government, populism and inequity to generate local power structures that abide by their own set of rules. This allows many of these groups to secure their permanence in power and, at the same time, exploit any valuable resources for their personal gain. However, one could pose the question: How is it possible that these people, who hold such high positions, are where they are while contributing nothing to Colombia? Here, one may find a tricky answer.

Álex Char, two-time mayor of Barranquilla, prides himself on having been a good funds administrator, as he was able to carry out multiple infrastructure projects for the city. He built parks, hospitals, schools and sports venues while being transparent in this process, according to his voters. Nevertheless, two years ago, cases of corruption came to light, involving not only him but other members of his family: Aida Merlano, ex-senator and now political refugee in Venezuela, confessed that during Char’s term, there were cases of fraudulent use of funds. Be it money laundering, or payments to other politicians, certain contracts of “technical assistance” were used to transfer large amounts of public money to people related to Álex Char or his family.



Conclusion

Power, as one would expect, is a term difficult to define. It has an infinity of expressions, consequences and dynamics. The purpose of this review of the historical, political and social context in Colombia was to illustrate the distortion of governmental power in this country.

The abuse of regional power is not a phenomenon unique to Colombia, but in this country, it has developed noteworthy characteristics that should be mentioned. Today, there are several powerful families that run the country and their advance shows no signs of stopping in the coming years. Therefore, a cycle of inherited power and nepotism is established, hurting Colombia's democracy. Even if most parts of the country are aware of this, there is still a long way to go before being able to break these structures and find a method to truly renew the old legacy of power in Colombia. ●

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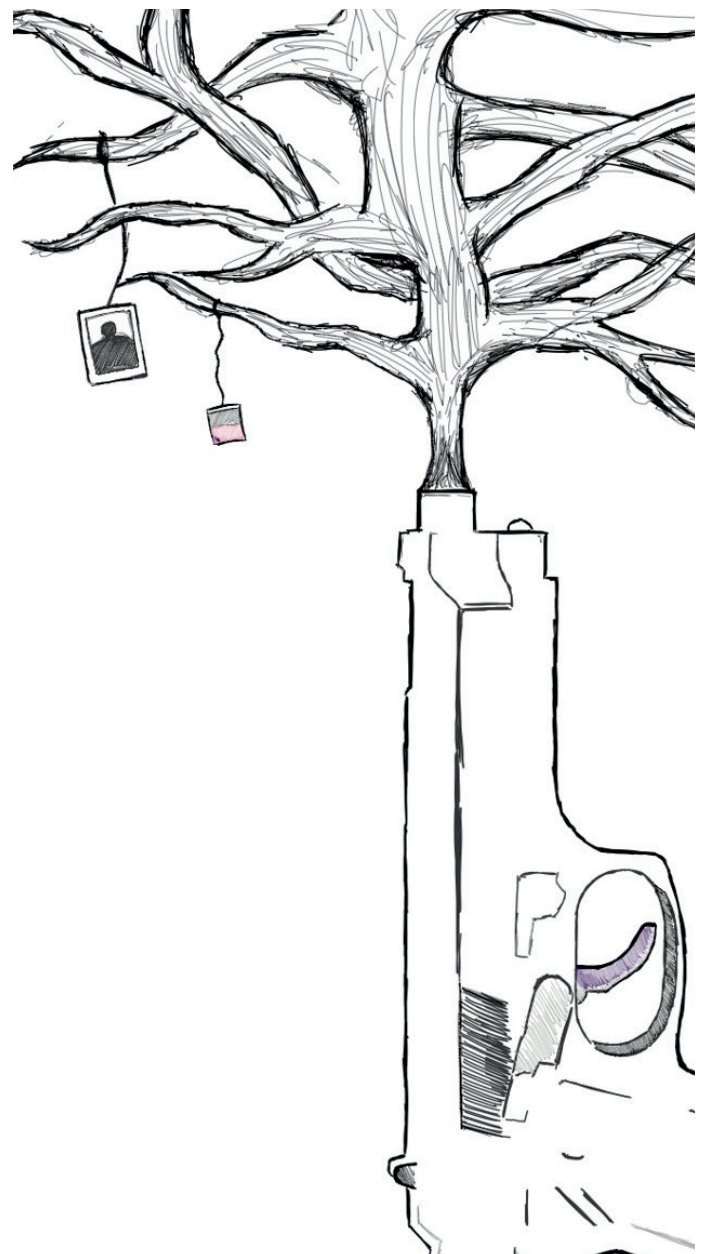
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Zan, Zendege, Azadi

(Woman, Life, Freedom) (Farsi)

by Rosa Wasiak

These three words have a long history and have not only been known since the protests in September 2022, but they also have their origin in the Kurdish freedom movement (Jin, Jijan; Azadi). Women's freedom is at the centre of the fight for a free life without oppression in the Kurdish freedom movement. There, it is assumed that the freedom of a society is measured by the freedom of women.

44 years ago (1997), after the Islamic Revolution, the Islamic Republic government formed in Iran. Since then, women have been discriminated against, particularly through the compulsory hijab (1983) and prohibitions such as dancing and singing in public. According to Amnesty International, the basic human rights of the entire population are systematically violated.

The morality police "Gasht-e-Ershad" in Iran has existed since 2005, and they invoke the penal code of the Islamic Republic, acting brutally with a direct order from the government. The death of Mahsa Jina Amini (22 years old) on 13 September 2022 by the hands of the morality police in Iran for not wearing her headscarf "properly" has unleashed a wave of protests and started a new revolution. In addition, 520 protesters have been killed since then (as of 13 January 2023).

Interview with two international students from Iran.

Since the death of Mahsa Jina Amini, many women have started to stop wearing their headscarves. Is this a symbol of the revolution?

B: It is becoming more and more normal not to wear a headscarf. But it is still dangerous. It is a big step for women, and it scares them. They put themselves at risk of being attacked in the street just because they don't wear it. But it is their way of fighting, but it costs overcoming. It's not as simple as "okay, just don't wear it".

What is happening now can absolutely be called a revolution.

D: The difference between the previous demonstrations against the government and the current one is definitely the social media and the awareness that is being created. The government cannot tell every lie and get away with it. They claim they are not killing people, but the documents and videos show other-

wise. It is much easier for people not to be convinced by the things the government says.

B: This revolution is a result of the previous demonstrations. In the past demonstrations (3, 5, 11, 21 years ago), the demonstrators tried everything and then compromised with what the government promised, but now people know that they cannot trust anyone in the system and that they should reject any proposal from them. This time there is no trust. There will be no reformation in the system. The last protest movements have shown that.

Iran is currently partially isolated from the outside world by the internet; how is that?

D: The shutdown of the internet after the murder of Mahsa Jina Amini happened very quickly. In the last ten years, the government has experimented it many times.

Facebook and Youtube were first filtered 13 years ago during the first demonstrations (claiming that the

government had manipulated the election results). At that time, they were also very violent and brutal demonstrations. People uploaded the video evidence to Youtube; Instagram was not yet as popular as it is today. Shortly after, Youtube was banned in Iran. The government realised it needed a more fundamental approach and spent a lot of money on a national internet that could be shut down and disconnected from the outside world if needed. Again, as soon as the demonstrations became a little serious, the internet was shut down very quickly. This is how the Iranian government wants to save a good face and pretend in international negotiations that they are treating their population well. Videos that prove the opposite are, of course, counterproductive there.

How did the protests develop?

D: Initially, the demonstrations were about women's rights, but later they were also about general dissatisfaction with the quality of life in the country. A few years ago (2019), the government suddenly decided to increase petrol prices three times, and this had a huge impact on people's lives as food prices and rents also went up while wages stayed the same. Demonstrations and riots were also taking place at the time, and the government killed about 1500 people in just three to four days. Meanwhile, the internet was shut down for a two-week period. Mahsa's death was a trigger. It was

"A revolution is not something that happens in one night. It has to be continued. It needs strength and emotional support."

not just about women's rights in Iran but about the general oppression of the government. Women's rights were very much in the foreground, though, and that's perhaps why the demonstrations got more international attention this time.

B: All of us, whether we are women or men, whether we live in the capital or in a city far away, have lost many basic rights. The protests started as a fight for women's rights because they had definitely lost more basic rights. It was nice that in the first days, besides women, men also said that women should live in freedom. But people are really fighting for Zan, Zendegi, Azadi: for women, a normal life and for freedom.

D: The revolution is unstoppable. People are frustrated and angry that things have been bad for so many years. Life in Iran is hard. The cost of living is much more expensive than in Germany, and the average

Iranian salary is maybe 1/10 of the German salary. That's why it's not so easy to take part in demonstrations every day.

B: Nevertheless, the situation is unstoppable, and there is no going back to the life before Mahsa's murder.

It is a fire that keeps burning. Sometimes you see the flames very high, sometimes, they are smaller, but this fire keeps burning. A revolution is not something that happens in one night. It has to be continued. It needs strength and emotional support. It is not that simple. It is a long-term movement. I believe that this time the government cannot just smother the fire with sand but that the fire will keep burning and keep reigniting.

D: Now, many people have found the courage to speak out. So many of my family members are talking about it. The government is losing more and more credibility with the people.

B: People take risks because they have nothing to lose. For example, a student in a university had a conversation about politics with his professor. The professor called the university security to arrest him. Then the student cut his veins, and you could see the blood in the university. He shouted, "You want my blood, here is my blood. Add this to the blood of the others. Take it." Or another situation where a girl shouted, "I don't want to live like this anymore; what do you want me to do? Do you want to arrest me or kill me?"

A few years ago, in 2017, there was a big movement. In a street in Tehran, called "enghelab", which means revolution, there were many girls who stood on a rise in that street, took off their hijab and tied it on a piece of wood and held it up.

One of them was Vida Movahed. She was arrested and has been in prison since back then. She was a pioneer of the revolution.

What connection to power do you see in Iran?

D: The government regularly demonstrates its power, for example, by posting its security forces and soldiers on the streets for days. It wants to show that it is more powerful than the people, has the situation under control and continues to rule. When people are oppressed, power is inevitable.

B: I think that these killings of people in the streets and the executions are just empty demonstrations of power. The fact is that the government has no power. This depends, in my opinion, on the people. The government gains its power from the people; if they don't accept it, then the power is fragile and can be taken away from them in a second. That's why the government is acting so brutally.

D: The system and its structure have become fragile. Even people in the government are turning their backs on it. Many military officers have been arrested for showing solidarity with the people. This has never happened publicly before. ●

Further Resources:

Instagram: @1500tasvir_en

Spotify: The Protest in Iran and What It Means (Masih Alinejad)

SCIENCE



The Need for Power from a Psychological Perspective

Rosa Wasiak in Conversation with Dr. Gudrun Reindl

Gudrun Reindl holds a doctorate in psychology. She did her doctorate in Ghent, Belgium, at the interface between work and organisational psychology and personality psychology and studies whether personality has an influence on how people perceive situations in the work context. Now she works for an organisational psychology consultancy in Nuremberg called Blackbox/Open. They help companies to promote the motivation, performance and mental health of their employees through targeted, scientifically supported methods. They develop managers, conduct coaching sessions, engage in team development based on basic psychological principles and help companies through their cultural change.

Is there a field in psychology that deals with power and personality?

Yes, of course! Not surprisingly, the field is called personality psychology. In the German-speaking world, there is also differential psychology. While personality psychology only deals with people's personalities, differential psychology deals with the differences between people. Internationally, however, this distinction is not made because personality can only be studied in comparison to other people. There is no such thing as absolute personality. So the distinction makes little sense.

How would you define the power motive? What are other personality traits related to the power motive?

The power motive tells how much a person tries to exert influence on others. This can mean that a person tries to influence the behaviour of others or to change their thoughts or feelings. To satisfy this power motive, people with a

higher power motive more often seek out situations in which they can exercise power.

The power motive is one of the Big 3 in motive research. Motives can be explicit or implicit. Our explicit motives are conscious, and we can express them well in the language. Our implicit motives are unconscious. That is, we cannot express them linguistically, but they still guide our behaviour by making us feel good about satisfying our needs. People have all three motives. However, they are expressed differently in everyone.

What is the difference between the power motive and the power motivation?

To explain, we should first clarify the difference between motive and motivation. A motive is a characteristic of a person that remains fairly stable over time. Motivation is a state of a person that comes and goes. Motivation is triggered when a person with a certain motive finds himself in a situation where

this motive is activated. So a person who likes to exercise power has a high power motive. If this person now comes into a group that needs leadership, for example, this power motive is activated by the situation. The power-motivated person, therefore, wants to exercise power and will probably take over the leadership of the group. That is then the power motivation.

The power motive also plays a role in career choice. Are there professions that people with a strong power motive are more likely to pursue, and if so, which ones?

Of course, when people think of a strong power motive, they first think of high-ranking managers, and that is certainly true. At higher levels of management, the power motive becomes an advantage because more tasks have to be delegated.

However, a study in Ireland from 2021 recently found that women in CEO positions show a less pronounced power motive on average than men.

Somewhat more surprising at first glance is that many people with a high power motive find themselves in social professions - teachers or social workers. In such professions, you work a lot with people who need guidance. This makes it much easier for a power-motivated person to satisfy their need. Power-motivated people sometimes also like to act out their power motive through teaching. If the teacher knows somet-

McClelland's Human Motivation Theory

The need for power: These people want to control and influence others. They enjoy status and recognition.

The need for achievement: These people have a strong concern for setting/achieving challenging goals. They are good at taking calculated risks to realise their ideas.

The need for affiliation: These people are characterised by the fact that they belong to a group and want to be loved. Cooperation is more important than competition. They are content with what the rest of the group wants.

hing that the student needs to learn, the teacher can act out his or her power motive. At the same time, children, adolescents or mentally unstable people, for example, need a lot of guidance because they often cannot (yet) structure themselves properly. If the power-motivated person can regulate their motivation well, it is even a classic win-win situation.

therefore, longed for simple solutions. That's why a part of the population wanted a man who made the world simple again. And centralising power in a power-oriented man seemed very easy. In that sense, the zeitgeist helped Trump's extreme power motivation to succeed.

begins to disturb, and the person gives up the power of decision again. But, of course, it takes longer to reach this feeling of satiation if the motive is more pronounced.

What could be a typical statement from a person with a strong power motive?

That depends a little bit on the degree of the motive. With personalised power motivation, it could be aggressive statements such as insults or provocations. For example, a manager could say in a meeting: "Meier, you are an incompetent idiot". However, power can also be demonstrated by making fun of others or humiliating them, for example, by a manager constantly calling his employee "fatty".

In the case of a personalised power motive, which is also designed to help others, it would be more likely to be phrases like "Shall I explain this to you?" or perhaps "How can I help?". Because even a strong power motive is not automatically bad ;).

Personalised Power Motivation

- manipulative, suppressed need
- Striving for power to experience strength and superiority by dominating and manipulating others.
- low self-control

Socialised Power Motivation

- helping, supportive need
- Striving for power to use opportunities to achieve goals for the benefit of a group or to promote others.

Which public figures have a strongly developed power motive and could be in their position right now because of it?

Hmm, difficult question. Of course, there are people in public life from whose behaviour you can read a clear power motive. But I find it difficult to say whether the motive was the reason for their success or rise. Only a pronounced power motive would probably not help anyone to succeed. Various factors are necessary intelligence, a good idea, the right network and sometimes simply the right "Zeitgeist".

Donald Trump was an interesting case in point. At the time, he seemed to be driven by the idea of being above all Americans. With his "America first" ideology, he also seemed to want to be above all other countries. Cooperation, innovation, exchange of interests? Not a chance. This was really power-seeking in the classical sense. And it was precisely this power thinking that seemed to go down well with many Americans. I can only assume that the zeitgeist of an increasingly complex, digitalised world overwhelmed the population, and they,

Interestingly, his first presidential bid was accompanied by allegations of sexual assault against young women. Sexual violence is also an indicator of personalised power motivation, and it is precisely that which harms a group. So even though he lacked the self-control to control his power motivation, and was thus actually a risk to the entire nation, half of Americans elected him president. This suggests how great the need was for simple centralisation of power.

Would someone who wields a very high position of power be more likely to abuse it. Is there a sense of satiation in the pursuit of power?

I like the term sense of satiation very much at this point. In fact, I like to explain psychological needs and motives in terms of hunger or fatigue that need to be satisfied. Once they are satisfied, so, we have eaten, and slept, we don't have to deal with the need for a while. On the contrary, more food or sleep may even feel uncomfortable. It is the same with psychological needs. A power-motivated person likes to decide about himself and his environment. But if he has to decide too much, this also

POWER IN THE CLIMATE CRISIS

How does climate policy behave in relation to power? Paula got to the bottom of this question in an interview with Professor Böcher from the Chair of Political Science with a focus on sustainable development. His research at the OVGU includes environmental, sustainability and climate policy.

Paula Meißner in Conversation with Professor Michael Böcher

What do you consider to be the most convincing definition of "power"? How do you understand "powerlessness"?

For me, Max Weber's definition is still the most convincing. According to him, power is "the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests". This is a very influential definition of power that is still used today, although it dates from the beginning of the 20th century. Max Weber's definition covers many phenomena of power; for example, power based on persuasion, better arguments, force, or coercion.

"Powerlessness" is a term that makes me think above all of Hannah Arendt, for whom, in contrast to Max Weber, violence is not a component of power but an expression of powerlessness. Powerlessness is given when certain social groups think that they – now speaking with Max Weber – cannot enforce their will and think that they have too little influence in society.

If we look at the protest actions of the "Last Generation" – that is, throwing food at paintings and glueing their hands to streets to block traffic – are these, for you, an expression of "power" or of "powerlessness"?

I would say it's both. On the one hand, of course, the activists are exercising power. Think, for exam-

ple, of the end of November in Magdeburg, when people glued themselves to the B1. Of course, in this situation, they had power over the drivers because they couldn't drive on and were perhaps late for work as a result.

But you can also interpret it in the sense of Hannah Arendt, i.e. that the activists of the Last Generation have the feeling that they are not being heard enough in the normal political process and then resort to these actions out of the feeling of a certain powerlessness. These are then an attempt to find a way out of this perceived powerlessness.

On the internet and in talk shows, there is usually only agitation against these activists. An activist of the "Last Generation", Aimée von Baalen, said in a debate on "Maischberger" that civil resistance is justified and necessary because by not reaching the climate goals, valid law is broken. How would you classify this statement?

Well, I think that this statement is at least partially justified. It is clear that certain social advances have also been achieved with the help of civil disobedience, especially on environmental issues. Runway West, the expansion of Frankfurt Airport, is one example where there were big protests in the 1980s, and people died. Another example is the demonstrations against nuclear power, which also reached their peak in the 1980s. I do believe that civil disobedience is needed for social progress.

But the question is whether it is legitimate in this case. In particular, one has to distinguish between civil disobedience and "resistance" in the sense of the Basic Law of the FRG. The legitimacy of resistance is based on a constitutional principle. Article 20 of the Basic Law, which is relevant here, legitimises resistance against attacks on our constitution as a whole, for example by a coup d'état, but not against individual government projects or political decisions that some people do not like. This is a very different background from what is being addressed here. If someone tries to abolish democracy in Germany, then resistance to this is also legitimate. This has to do with the fact that the Basic Law was also developed as a response to National Socialist rule.

Regarding the failure to meet climate targets and breaking existing law: The German government is, of course, obliged to implement the decisions of the Paris Climate Agreement. This must be achieved through an effective climate policy. However, it should be noted that the Paris Climate Agreement does not prescribe binding emission levels. The German government is primarily bound here by EU commitments. On the one hand, there is EU emissions trading, which, step by step, reduces the permitted amount of greenhouse gas emissions. On the other hand, Germany must also massively reduce emissions in the sectors not covered by this emissions trading within the

framework of the EU Climate Protection Regulation. Among other things, CO2 pricing was introduced in Germany for this purpose.

What I would like to say in general about actions of the Last Generation in relation to theories of power: According to Hannah Arendt, the ability of people with the same interests to form groups is an important factor in gaining power in society and being able to achieve goals. The actions of the Last Generation can jeopardise this ideal, because effective climate protection measures can only succeed if all citizens are involved, even those who are not yet fully convinced of their necessity. Otherwise, there is a danger that an elitist climate protection movement will emerge that is far removed from the citizens and divides rather than unites them. More should be done to get people who, for example, have to drive to work every day in view of the current working and mobility conditions, on board and to communicate that climate protection is something that concerns us all. I would support legally legitimate demonstrations and blockades, which have also taken place in the past against Castor transports and nuclear power. The question is how far civil disobedience goes before it becomes radicalised and no longer legitimate. If, according to Hannah Arendt, the possibility of uniting is endangered, and climate activists find themselves relatively isolated, and without greater social support, this could lead to a radicalisation that I reject. Climate protection can and must be achieved only through democratic means, but these must include peaceful protests and demonstrations.

The COP27 conference recently took place in Egypt. There government representatives from various countries are sitting at the same table. Who would you say holds the power?

The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) exists, for whose implementation the COP (Conference of the Parties) takes place annually. The Paris Agreement was adopted at this conference in 2015. At the COPs that have followed since then, the representatives of the countries negotiate concrete measures on how to implement the Paris Agreement. I would say that the power is not equally distributed, even if this impression is sometimes given. Of course, the industrialised nations – also due to their economic strength – have more power than the countries of the global South, and conversely, there are countries that are more affected by climate change than we have been up to now.

In the future, there will be a fund to support countries that are particularly affected by climate change. Do you see this as an important step in the direction of justice or a balancing of this power imbalance?

This fund was also discussed during the Paris Climate Agreement. The difficulty now is to get countries to commit how much money they will put into this fund.

Of course, it is a step in the right direction to enable poorer countries to take climate protection measures that would not be able to do so without aid. At the moment, however, it is difficult to verify how "fair" the fund will be. It would be important to know (1) how much the fund is endowed with, (2) who pays, (3) whether everyone is willing to pay, (4) whether the funds are high enough to enable effective climate protection measures to be taken and (5) whether it works in practice. Unfortunately, there are also structures and political actors in supported countries that may not be interested in using this money for climate protection measures but instead use it for other things.

STAGES OF INTERNATIONAL CLIMATE POLICY

- 1979**
First World Climate Conference
- 1988**
Foundation of the IPCC:
Intergovernmental Panel of Climate Change
- Since 1990**
Negotiations on a UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
- 1992**
UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio
- 1994**
Coming into force of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
- 1995**
First "COP" in Berlin
- 1997**
Kyoto Protokoll (entered into force internationally in 2005)
- 2015**
Paris Climate Change Agreement

Luisa Neubauer called the COP27 "a farce" in a tweet. For her, there was not enough push to phase out fossil fuels, and the plans to reduce emissions remained too vague. How do you assess the outcome of COP27?

These climate conferences are about power and interests, and climate protection is not always the most powerful political issue globally. The vagueness of the reduction of emissions is a bit of a "design problem" of the Paris Agreement. The Paris Agreement is based on a binding declaration of intent to reduce emissions – countries have agreed that they will tackle the 2° or 1.5° target – but unlike the Kyoto Protocol, there are no set amounts of emissions to be saved. The measures of the individual states are flexible. At the COPs, it is then discussed which efforts states can take on and how these can be demonstrated to the other parties to the agreement. I think the compromise in the Paris Climate Agreement could only be negotiated in a ratifiable way because binding emission levels were waived. This agreement somewhat reflects what is possible in international climate policy, which is shaped by the power and interests of the various states. Otherwise, it would probably never have been signed.

Would you say that conferences like the COP27 are effective for the creation and implementation of climate goals, or is the "distribution of power" among different decision-makers also a disadvantage, especially when it comes to the issue of climate change?

The "distribution of power", i.e. the fact that many actors play a role, is not a disadvantage per se, which is what we want in a democracy. Of course, this goes hand in hand with the possibility for many different interest groups to express themselves freely and to try to influence politics.

When it comes to globally

drastic measures, one can, of course say, that it is a disadvantage if decisions are delayed and certain measures are weakened. But that's also a bit of the essence of democracy, that in the end, compromises are made. It is difficult to prevent this because otherwise, we would have to consider what alternative form of government we need, and then we quickly end up with authoritarian states. A climate dictatorship is also being discussed but I warn against that, because such a state would not limit its authority to climate policy alone. It could also lead to restrictions on individual freedom and more authoritarianism in other areas of society.

After Nancy Pelosi visited Taiwan in August 2022, China broke off all negotiations with the USA for the time being, including all negotiations on climate protection. These are now to be resumed after COP27. To what extent can the most powerful countries in the world instrumentalise climate change to push through their foreign policy?

That is a very multi-faceted question. In general, one mechanism that is discussed in political economy theory is that climate is about a global public good, and individual states are thus subject to great incentives to do nothing about climate change and rely on the actions of other states. They are so-called free riders. States that have not done so much for climate protection also benefit from the "saved climate". So, you could say that states instrumentalise the climate by relying on the behaviour of other states and doing nothing themselves.

Of course, one can also see it in the way you mention it here. The climate crisis is being instrumentalised in terms of achieving other political goals by states threatening to withdraw from climate negotiations.

But I would also see instrumentalization from another per-

spective, for example, in relation to the global climate fund or climate protection projects. Something like this can be instrumentalised by countries that want to export their own environmental technology and thus pursue economic interests. It is rarely just about charity, but countries naturally also have an interest in strengthening their own economy. One dimension of this would be development projects. China, for example, invests in various projects in Africa and builds infrastructure there. This is also about a certain export of ideology or the export of a certain social model. China wants to show that not only is the West "good" but also that a collectivist social system and socialism, as it exists in China, is efficient and can be imitated.

Where do you think the important decisions regarding climate change will be made in the future? Do we have to put up with conferences like COP27?

I think important decisions regarding climate change are made every day. If I say I'm going to cycle instead of drive, then that's a step in the direction of climate protection, and if everyone does that, then politicians must consider building cities that take cyclists' interests into account more than they have in the past. In Magdeburg, this is unfortunately only in its infancy. The demand from citizens and activists can help a lot because politics and the economy react to different demands. An example of this would be the discussion about meat consumption. It can be observed that meat consumption is slowly decreasing, and I do think that this influences agriculture, and the companies that offer these products. The only negative message is that these processes of change are very slow and for some activists, this is not fast enough.

In international climate diplomacy, we will have to put up with the COPs and I think that's

where the decisions will continue to be made in the future regarding climate protection. The problem is that citizens always have huge expectations for these COPs, but little is understood about what their actual function is. It is often about discussing certain aspects or technical issues to be able to implement climate protection agreements. Power and interests can then lead to a situation where "they come to nothing". This then leads to a discussion that calls the structure of this international climate policy into question. This misguided idea of the role of international climate conferences assumes that there must be a centre of power where an agreement is reached between all countries. The idea prevails that the UN is very powerful and embodies something like a world government that can enforce climate protection hierarchically. However, this is by no means the case. The UN is rather weak because in international law, the principle of sovereignty of individual states applies, and no state may dictate to another what it must do in terms of climate policy. The Hope here is based on diplomacy, negotiations, and treaties. In addition, international relations are first and foremost characterised by the principle of "anarchy": each country pursues its own interests and tries to enforce them in the international system. Under such conditions, it is difficult to implement globally effective climate protection. However, there is also hope: on the one hand, there are countries that have already successfully taken important steps towards climate neutrality, Sweden for example.

On the other hand, so-called polycentric solutions are being discussed scientifically as promising, i.e. that pioneers (centres or pilot programmes in certain regions of the world) can serve as inspiration for other countries. This is very interesting because it is also an important thesis of environmen-

tal policy research that there were individual pioneers who started to pursue environmental policy, and at some point, other countries saw that this was not a bad thing but that it even helped their own economy in the medium and long term and started to imitate these pioneers. Germany could, of course, be such a pioneer. I would also say that the political efforts to achieve this have so far been too limited. For example, we let coal continue to run even though it emits a lot of CO₂, and we buy gas in undemocratic countries or build LNG terminals. This can be explained in political science terms with the consequences of the energy crisis after the Russian war of aggression in Ukraine – but in terms of climate policy, it is completely counterproductive. ●

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