Introduction

Entering the Oilscape

The dust on the road stirs up every time one of the wheels hits a pothole on the brittle pavement of the country road as the bus approaches the community. The sweltering heat gushes onto the open windows when the bus slows down and supplants the notion of the last bit of a cool breeze created through the air blowing in at rapid speeds. Outside the dirty windows, the verdant stretch of lemon and orange trees standing in rows like soldiers increasingly supersede the different shades of the light green meadows that we passed after leaving the small city of Chote. It is almost six o'clock in the evening, yet the scorching heat remains as intense as it was in the morning, making me have a perpetual feeling of melting away. Before the bus passes the bridge, offering its passengers an impressive view over the valley of the Remolino River, the first apparently empty spaces within the landscape appear. The almost geometrical rows of citrus trees covering every inch of the hilly area, suddenly give way to square fenced lots of approximately 150 square meters here and there. At first glance, those lots seem abandoned, bleak and empty except for some thin spear-like metal trestles and white tanks, the contents of which are unknown. Many of them are in bad shape, since they have been abandoned by the company during the recent years of the oil crisis. However, at closer range, one can observe people moving between the installations, wearing overalls of the new foreign companies that came to the region during the last couple of years. We have reached the area with some larger boreholes, indicating that we are getting closer to the extraction sites of the oilfield San Andrés, where the community and ejido Emiliano Zapata is located.[1]

While the bus crosses the bridge, swerving rather than driving in a bid to avoid the pothole-pocked road, I glance at the old bridge, the original one, which was made of metal more than sixty years ago and is extremely rusty now. This bridge, which marked a turning point in the lives of many families on the other side of the river we are crossing at this very moment, is now cordoned off and serves only as a monument paying tribute to the early heady days of the oil boom. The bridge was built after the

state-owned oil firm Petróleos Mexicanos (PEMEX), discovered large oil reserves in the area, as a measure to facilitate direct transportation from the oil city of Poza Rica de Hidalgo to the oilfields on the other side of the river. Before its installation, there was only an unpaved dirt road that connected the peasant communities on the other side with the city. With PEMEX came the steel, the asphalt, and the goods. With the recent crisis came the decay. And what comes after? Some changes have recently been palpable, when some of the old installations were revived and new people with fresh interests came to the area. Everything appears to be at a point of transition, fraught with uncertainty.

A few moments later, as we leave two villages behind, an unpleasant chemical smell from the nearby gas injection well suddenly rushes in through the window, coupled with the air. I get ready to grab my backpack and get up. The smell indicates that we have almost reached Emiliano Zapata, the community that has been my home for almost six months now. I have to hurry to get home before nightfall after having interviewed an oil worker in the city. The numbers of assaults and incidents related to drug violence have risen significantly within the last few years, and it is certainly prudent to get home before sundown. Houses start appearing on both sides of the road. Two of the facades present the passengers with a glimpse of graffiti protesting oil extraction, on houses built with compensation money from the oil firms, as I have come to know. The paintings show oil derricks surrounded by skulls and a Che Guevara looking unwaveringly into the future, while the slogan beneath his image condemns "fracking" in the name of the people. In particular, the extraction technique of hydraulic fracturing, called "fracking," has been a major issue that has come up in the wake of the implementation of the recent energy reform, which has caused a series of changes within the local setting.

More dust swirls up when the bus abruptly stops on the right side of the road. Getting off the little stairs at the back of the bus, I can see and hear the several meters high flame from the closest of the three gas flares in direct proximity to the settlement. The gas flare has become a symbol for the disturbances, pollution, and risks associated with oil extraction in the community, and many community members point to it when invoking the constant threat that oil extraction poses. "We are living on a time bomb" is a recurring expression in many conversations I had with community members. An elderly man on the other side of the road, carrying a machete and wearing a PEMEX jumpsuit, smiles and nods at me. When he passes by, I recognize him as Don Julio, coming back from his orchard. Like almost everybody in the community who works the fields, he wears old PEMEX jumpsuits to work because they are affordable, good quality working clothes. This creates the impression that I have entered a com-

munity of PEMEX workers, while ironically, nobody here has ever been part of the company staff. However, the work in the fields is hard and not very profitable, so many young people have already left the place to seek opportunities elsewhere—often finding them in the surroundings of the oil industry in other parts of the country. As I heave on my backpack and walk up the road, all those contradictions and the constant ambiguity almost physically engulf me, in addition to the first mosquitoes of the early dusk.

From Scapes and Time Bombs: Places Determined by Oil

The apparent contradictions regarding extraction in Emiliano Zapata not only reflect the historic processes and current circumstances at the national level but they are also linked to global forces behind oil production. The community provides a stage on which oil directs the plot development—and while it is not the focus, oil production seems to determine every part of community life. It is visible and tangible in the direct environment where the extraction takes place, in the landscape, and in the appearance of buildings, and it rules the sociocultural patterns of the community as well as the interactions among its members. It manifests itself in expectations and fears, in the hope for an improvement of life, but also in anxiety about the future, considering the uncertainty and the great risks associated with the extraction activities, which are often expressed with the idea of a "time bomb" by the people whose fate is interwoven with it. This book portrays the community Emiliano Zapata, which represents a place shaped by oil extraction and shows how the community members deal and interact with the extraction activities and uncertainty determining their lives.

The time bomb is not an uncommon concept within studies about resource extraction. In 1990, Colin Filer described a "time-bomb effect" for the process of social disintegration over time of landowning communities with respect to mining in Papua New Guinea (Filer 1990). Thereby, the resource extraction fails to meet expectations regarding economic possibilities and benefits for the local community, instead leading to major modifications on the territory. Resource extraction triggers a process of social disintegration where over time the reality regarding job opportunities, improved infrastructure, and compensation payments—or what is considered "development"—fails to meet expectations. Instead, the community members must live with major modifications on their territory; increased pollution of water, air, and soil; and move away from traditional ways of production and exchange toward the wage-based economy trade.

The time bomb image encompasses the uncertainty and anxiety concerning the future with extraction building on past experiences but also draws a lively picture of the collective imagination of a "spice of malice" lurking under the ground, ready to burst at any time. This phenomenon is also described by Frank Cancian for a Mexican community in Chiapas, where the development of the regional oil industry led to a process of increased renunciation of traditional farming economy and a movement toward wage labor, which changed the community's social patterns through the processual emergence of a worker's class (Cancian 1994: 3; 163). In 1996, Glenn Banks picks up the term "time bomb" again, when he asks, "Compensation for mining: benefit or time bomb?" and shows how compensation payments by the mining company for local residents foster social discordance instead of being the solution for a problem (Banks 1996). Lisa Breglia does not focus on the concept of a time bomb as such, but she inquires about the uncertainties of the oil crisis and post-peak futures in a fishing community in Campeche, engaging in the discourse about the local effect of global energy politics and the uncertain conditions it imposes on local residents (Breglia 2013). She thereby touches on an important aspect of the time bomb issue in resource extraction and particularly in the case of oil: its temporal particularities with regard to its uncertain but definitely unpleasant effects on local communities. In Emiliano Zapata, these effects have shaped the community and made it what it is today.

Oil as a resource is inevitably linked to temporal effects that generate a predestined course of wealth and economic growth, where oil is discovered at first and interlocked with a certain future ending. When the source is exhausted or the oil price drops, an oil crisis erupts. Yet, the exact moment in time when this will be the case remains elusive until it happens—thus featuring a resemblance to the idea of a time bomb. The bust then causes the economy to decline but the irreversible environmental impacts, which shaped the surroundings during the boom time, linger on. They continue to bedevil the local living conditions, compounding the crisis, until the oil price eventually stabilizes or alternatives for income are found. Therefore, the almost schizophrenic temporal dimension of an approaching and uncertain end, even in peak times, accompanies oil like no other resource, which has been widely acknowledged and described (e.g., Cepek 2012; Coronil 1997; Black 2000; Gilberthorpe 2014; Kaposy 2017; Limbert 2008; Weszkalnys 2014, 2016). This rhythmic sequence of abundance alternating with scarcity and an approaching finiteness links oil to a constant social and economic change, that is repeated worldwide in localities affected by oil extraction (Ferry and Limbert 2008: 3; Reyna and Behrends 2011: 5; Rogers 2015a: 367). These temporal features of oil thus also impact the material local environment of the places where it is

extracted and processed. The material manifestations of hydrocarbons become inscribed into the surroundings over time, in the form of installations, infrastructure such as pipelines and transportation routes, through residues and fumes, and through the physical presence of industrial and company actors. Resources themselves are often regarded as the determinants of particular social and political outcomes. However, it is necessary to engage with the interplay of the complex local conditions with the resource and the corresponding extraction practices to enable a comprehensive understanding of the social processes that arise around the extraction (Davidov 2013: 487–88; Ey and Sherval 2015: 176; Gilberthorpe and Papyrakis 2015: 381).

Resource extraction in general severely modifies its immediate surroundings and consequently, the living environment of the involved people. The oil industry is no exception. In Emiliano Zapata, the extraction and industrial processing of oil and gas have profoundly modified the surrounding terrain, thus influencing the social and cultural practices of the people inhabiting those surroundings. I claim that the ejido territory of Emiliano Zapata has evolved into a space determined by oil including the particularities of extraction practices as well as social patterns emerging from the constellation of actors and materialities of extraction over time. In this book, this space is conceptualized as an oilscape in order to analyze the mechanisms of dealing with these uncertainties, considering the insights from research about the spatial dimension of oil, while paying attention to local particularities.

One approach for the analysis of extractive spaces, integrating material implications, as well as the processual character of the space emerging around extraction sites, is the concept of the "minescape," introduced by Melina Ey and Meg Sherval "as a way of conceptual mechanism through which to synthesize and integrate significant shifts in the way extractive processes and terrains are perceived" (2015: 177). The concept emphasizes the dynamic character of extraction spaces with complex sociocultural and material dimensions. The usage of scapes as an analytical entity was first introduced by anthropologist Arjun Appadurai and was not specifically used for a particular space, but rather emphasized the perspectival character of the construct "scape." Different scapes are determined by the actors, who experience, perceive, and navigate these scapes and thus construct them as multiple "imagined worlds" (Appadurai 1990: 296). Therefore, the suffix "scape" indicates a wider perspective than a territorially limited space. In the case of extraction, the minescapes are bound to a certain degree to a locally defined space where extraction takes place, but at the same time, it widens this scope through the integration of further dimensions. It offers a more comprehensive approach to understanding

landscapes of extraction and their actors (D'Angelo and Pijpers 2018: 216; Ey and Sherval 2015: 178).

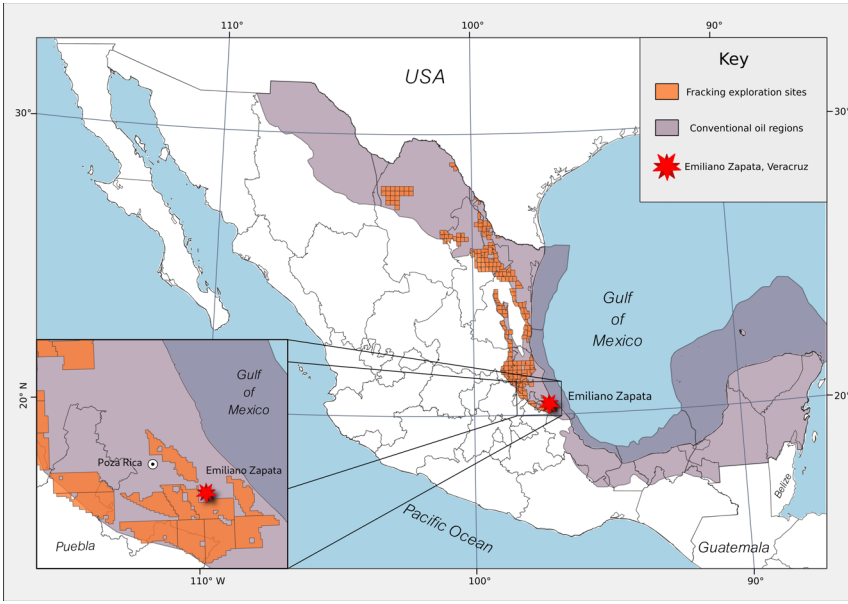
The term "minescape" was first used by the photographer Edward Burtynski (2009), who documented mining sites in Australia and first considered the physical inscription of the extraction into the landscape. Applied to terrains, where extraction physically takes place and also affects people's social practices, as carried out by Ey and Sherval (2015), the concept becomes more complex and describes an interplay of the sociocultural and the material dimension of space (D'Angelo and Pijpers 2018: 216). Yet, the concept "minescape" is, as the name suggests, mainly based on mineral mining and even though several aspects regarding social and economic effects of mineral and hydrocarbon extraction are comparable (Gilberthorpe and Rajak 2017: 186), oil as a resource bears a set of particularities. These particularities within the landscape are visible, for example, in the award-winning collection of photographs by the photographer David Gardner from 2020, which is entitled *Into the Anthropocene*.[2] The *New Scientist* wrote about the collection: "Surreal Californian Oilscape Wins Climate Change Photography Award" (Li 2020). The collection illustrates the unique material properties of oil. Oil extraction is linked to a different type of industrial installation and infrastructure than mining, which shape the landscape in a particular way. Furthermore, oil is linked to a particular type of temporal development, which can be understood as the temporalities of oil (see e.g., Kama 2020; Kaposy 2017 Weszkalnys 2014) and which is not expressly included as an important aspect in the concept of the minescape. Brian Black (2000) dedicates a chapter on the "The Sacrificial Landscape" of what he calls Petrolia—describing the transformation of Oils Creek as a space that turned from agriculture to oil industry basically overnight. He rightfully states: "A landscape is constructed of geology, hydrology, and biology; yet it also includes the creations of the humans or other beings that inhabit and change the environment. Where nature and culture meet, they construct a landscape" (2000: 61). In Emiliano Zapata, this landscape has been shaped in a special way that is unique to oil, just like in many other places with a history of oil extraction, since the underlying process always follows similar patterns. Therefore, a specific understanding of landscapes is required, as introduced by the concept of the minescape, but considering the particularities of oil. Such an approach helps to analyze the space constructed around oil extraction and processing sites, while also taking into account the particularities of oil production and the specifics of temporalities, which accompany the development of the oil industry. Myrna Santiagos (2006) approaches these particularities with the concept of "the ecology of oil," by looking at the impact of oil extraction on dynamics like land tenure as well as on social

structures and distinctive forms of labor. All these dynamics, be they economic, social, or material in nature, are connected and shaped by the typical properties of oil extraction and production, I therefore introduce the concept of the "oilscape," which borrows the initial idea of the minescape and adapts it to the circumstances shaped by oil extraction. The concept emphasizes the material definition of the surroundings while considering the temporal dimensions of the processual inscriptions of oil into the living environment, as well as the constitution of the space as an outcome of social processes (see Löw 2008: 25). The oilscape thus represents a space within which oil extraction has become inscribed into the material manifestation of landscape, housing, fields, and infrastructure, as well as the social texture and behavior of the community members over time. It did so under the conditions of economic peaks and declines, related to oil as a resource of global demand. Hydrocarbons, often representing toxic and explosive substances, are considered dangerous assets, which form the oilscape in a particular manner by posing risks to human lives and health, as well as the environment, through which they cause a variety of uncertainties to lurk among the inhabitants of the oilscape.

Aside from the temporal and material components, the social dimension models the oilscape too. Oil and the extractive industries play crucial roles for the constitution of sociocultural patterns within the environment they are active in. Space is described by Löw as "subjected to analysis in the social sciences as a 'product of social action' or as a 'product of social structures'" (2008: 25) and the social component of space is taken into consideration as an essential analytical pillar when approaching the oilscape. The social dimensions of space are the result of content negotiation processes between different actors and actor groups, predicated on the hierarchies of power (2008: 26; Bourdieu 2018: 107). Through the actions and interactions taking place within the physical space, this space is shaped by social encounters and processes. The oilscape, therefore, undergoes a process of constant reshaping of the material and the social-cultural settings under the temporal conditions of oil as a resource. One of these conditions is the uncertainty perceived by the inhabitants of the oilscape due to immediate risk caused by extractive activities on the one hand and the extent of dependence on oil in the light of its anticipated ending on the other.

Welcome to Life on the Time Bomb: Oil in Emiliano Zapata

I first came to the rural community of Papantla in Veracruz named after the famous revolutionary Emiliano Zapata in early 2016 with the goal of conducting a research project on the impact of oil and gas extraction on



Map 0.1. The ejido Emiliano Zapata located in a region in Mexico, where fracking, as well as conventional oil extraction takes place © Orestes de la Rosa, used with permission.

people's lives. The community is located on the San Andrés oilfield, once one of the major oil producing sources in the region and a place where different forms of hydrocarbon extraction have been taking place since the 1950s (Chenaut 2017: 101). The community of around seventeen hundred inhabitants has more than fifty active oil wells and various industrial facilities on its territory and is also located in an area known for the first application of fracking in the country.

The story of the community itself, but also of Mexico as a nation, is inextricably linked to the story of oil and industrial development. In the context of the history of Mexico, since the nineteenth century and until today, oil and gas extraction came to play a crucial role for the economy and consequently for the national narrative (e.g., Breglia 2013; Checa-Artasu and Hernández Franyuti 2016; Santiago 2016). This holds especially true for the development of the oil industry after the nationalization of the oil sector in the aftermath of the Mexican Revolution (1910–20). The state-owned company Petróleos Mexicanos (PEMEX) was founded in 1938 and soon became one of the cornerstones of the national economy. For more than seven decades, the company wielded a monopoly on the exploration, extraction, and processing of hydrocarbon products, and thus

became a symbolic entity representing development in the whole country. PEMEX, ever since was perceived as one of the main pillars of national wealth and established relationships with urban and rural communities, which is likely to be one of the reasons why the Mexican hydrocarbon sector used to be considered less conflict-driven than other extraction sectors in Latin America (see Viscidi and Fargo 2015: 6; Silva Ontiveros et al. 2018: 483). However, oil extraction in Mexico after the expropriation was certainly not conducted without protest or contestation by local communities (e.g., del Palacio Langer 2015: 130–31; Zalik 2008: 182).

The oil-rich territories in the north of Veracruz have been central for the Mexican oil sector since the advent of industry in the country (Brown 1993: 13). The oilfields of Poza Rica and San Andrés were discovered in 1930 and 1956 and represent important centers of Mexico's petroleum industry until this day. Moreover, the local economy was mainly driven by the booming oil industry since the 1950s (Cárdenas Gracia 2009: 31; Chenaut 2010: 60; 2017: 101). When the oil boom came to an end in the first decade of the twenty-first century, the oil economy was weakened because of the worldwide energy crisis and a drop in the oil prices in the second half of the 2010s. By 2014, Mexico's position as an oil producing nation and exporter of hydrocarbon products had already fallen to tenth place in international comparison, a considerable drop from the fifth place it once held in 2005. The crisis caused the sector to withdraw from its prominent position in the national economy. Consequently, the Mexican hydrocarbon industry was finally considered unable to compete, ultimately resulting in the dethroning of PEMEX as a symbol of the national oil bonanza (e.g., O'Connor and Viscidi 2015: 3; Sánchez Campos 2016: 307).

As a political response to the crisis, then President Enrique Peña Nieto launched a comprehensive liberal restructuring of the national energy sector, known as the Mexican energy reform 2013/2014. It included the reformation of three constitutional articles that enabled the opening of the hydrocarbon sector for private investment and thus halted PEMEX's seventy-six-year monopoly. It also changed the patterns of land use rights and opened the country to new extraction technologies such as seep water drilling and the application of hydraulic fracturing, also known as fracking. Fracking is a technique where water mixed with chemicals is injected at high pressure into a wellbore in the ground to create cracks in the deep rock layers through which natural gas and petroleum are released and start to flow so they can be extracted (de Rijke 2013: 13). By inviting foreign companies into the country and introducing the new extraction technology, it was expected that the country's oil wealth and prosperity would recover with the revival of oil revenues (see Seelke et al. 2015: 3; Viscidi and Fargo 2015: 6).

When I started the first research phase in 2016, the implementation of the energy reform and specifically the issue of fracking had become a controversial issue at both the national and international level (e.g., de la Fuente 2016; Hudgins and Poole 2014; Pearson 2013; Rabe and Borick 2013, Whitton et al. 2018). Emiliano Zapata then had earned a local and even national reputation because it had been the venue of a conference and various protest actions against the implementation of fracking, as documented by several newspapers and websites (see Administrador Regeneración 2015a, 2015b; Gómez 2015; Ramírez 2015). A conference called Encuentro Regional Norte-Golfo por la Defensa del Agua y el Territorio Frente a los Proyectos de Muerte organized by local NGOs that formed part of a wider network of anti-fracking activists, had taken place about six months previously. Even at the time of my arrival, several graffiti, visible at the community center and on the walls of several private houses, suggest that a lively resistance and open protest against fracking is still active. Yet, soon after my arrival, I noticed that most of the community members I talked to had a rather blurry idea of the concept of fracking. Furthermore, no actual protest was taking place anymore, apart from the traces left in the community by the June 2015 event. No marches, no blockades, no demonstrations took place during my stay, in stark contrast to what the newspapers had suggested.

I started to inquire about the issue explicitly during my interviews and asked what people knew about or associated with fracking. All my interview partners recognized the term but had varying ideas of what fracking actually means. Many associated it directly with the conference of June 2015 and the activists from Mexico City who visited Emiliano Zapata during the event. Don Ernesto, whose small convenience store is located right at the intersection between the main road and the smaller road leading directly to the community center, was present at the event and remembers the talks that were given that day. Yet, the actual technique and its implications remained unclear to him and he remembers the word "fracking" as mainly related to the group of activists who organized the event. Thus, when I asked him what fracking was, he suggested that the odd sounding word might have been the name of that group or NGO: "That are the ones who came here when the event took place," he said. "Some tall guys with long hair in ponytails. And we listened to what they had to say to support them like they came to support us. That's 'fracking,' the organization that came to support us."

Other community members also mentioned the event, but most of the residents I talked to mainly referred to environmental hazards and accidents with regard to fracking without knowing about the technological aspects and its implications. Doña Luisa, a housewife in her 30s, who lives

up a little hill from the community center, where the noise of the gas flare is particularly loud, stated: "The 'fracking,' yes, I heard of that . . .," but then could not seem to remember exactly what the term implied. Yet, she knew that it was something potentially harmful and continued: "Well, it refers to the pollution, the accidents and the deforestation . . . well that is what I heard." The confusion surrounding the issue of fracking showed that, while the people seemed to have little knowledge about the technical aspects, they were certainly aware of the potential dangers that fracking entailed.

Almost everybody I spoke to about the extraction at first, mentioned the pollution, the accidents and the seepages that had occurred in the community during its long history with oil extraction. The oil industry, for most of the residents, is associated with constant anxiety with regard to possible accidents and health threats. Most of my interview partners therefore perceived their own community as quite a dangerous place to live and articulated qualms about something happening to them or their family, in addition to mentioning stories about such incidents. The common image of a time bomb on which the community members live is also taken up as an illustration by Doña Marieta, a woman in her fifties. She prepares food in the community kitchen once a week along with some of her female relatives. "Well . . . we already know that we're living on a time bomb." she said during a focus group interview, and adds: "Any minute everything here could explode and we would not wake up ever again." The other women in the group nodded in agreement. "You have to be aware and careful," she continued, "The loud noise of the gas flare scares us all, but most of all we worry about our children. We already have many diseases here from all the pollution." Meanwhile, the issue of fracking for many remained an unclear idea of something harmful and potentially dangerous, which became integrated into the catalogs of potential risks of everyday life imposed by the oil industry and its activities, rather than an independent concrete threat per se.

The community members of Emiliano Zapata are well aware of the situation of uncertainty and exposure to risk that they experience each day. During the course of the extraction activities on their territory, they were witnesses of the intensive industrial development that was triggered during the oil boom, and its questionable practices during the beginning, not to mention the oil crisis that led the oil company to withdraw and let many installations wither away. They have been a part of the local oil industry because of the community location on a contractual area of PEMEX, as well as through their active and passive participation in the industrial activities over a long period of time. Several accidents and seepages occurred over the years, while the oil boom, as well as the subsequent

crisis, presented a variety of challenges to them. Today, the residents of the community are living with the constant uncertainty of potentially or probably harmful activities going on around them, even within the confines of their own homes. At the same time, they are apprehensive about the effects of the uncertain future of the oil industry after the crisis, the opening up of the energy reform and the possible application of fracking. Yet, they continue to lead their everyday lives. Despite the insecure future, the constant hazards, the severe pollution of air, water, and soil, which were expressed by many community members through the metaphor of living on a time bomb, the community found its own ways and means to make its life on a time bomb, if not desirable, at least possible. So, the question that determines the inquiry of the study at hand is: How do community members in Emiliano Zapata come to terms with living on a time bomb, an expression for a situation rife with constant uncertainties with regard to oil in their living environment?

Managing the Time Bomb

For the community members of Emiliano Zapata, who represent the main actors for this ethnography, the oilscape manifests itself in their living environment through a series of uncertainties that condense into the defining characteristic of the time bomb. These uncertainties underlie the conditions imposed by the oil industry and its temporal economic particularities, as also the social actions taking place within the oilscape. The concept of the oilscape can therefore be understood as an empirical approach to the realities in Emiliano Zapata, transformed into a generalizable framework that could help analyze the particular ethnographic settings in different parts of the world where oil extraction takes place.[3] An oilscape is a space emerging around oil extraction sites, within which oil extraction has become inscribed into the material manifestation, the social texture, and behavior of residents over time. The limits of this space are thus related to the spatial dimension of a certain location of the extraction site. Aside from the material dimension, it takes the temporal and specific social dynamic on the site into account but remains spatially bound to the place where the extraction is conducted. However, this space is also shaped by decisions, personnel, and material flows in and out as well as migratory movements, which are not particularly limited to a certain space. Hence the boundaries of the oilscape are permeable, but the analytical focus provided by the concept of scapes reflects a certain perspective of the actors on a topic—other examples are mines (Ey and Sherval 2015), coal (Portal 2018) or even water (Karpouzoglou and Vij 2017). The analysis in this

book therefore represents a contribution to the body of literature on the anthropology of oil and resource extraction by representing a novel take on the broader category of "landscapes of extraction" (see e.g., Halvaksz 2008; Liesch 2014; Watts 2011; Wheeler 2014). The analysis is therefore meant to represent a certain perspective on oil and gas extraction from an actor-centered perspective, which has a territorial component, but is not limited to it. Instead, the relationship patterns and the social texture of the community members represent a crucial factor for the composition of the oilscape.

As a rural population living on the edge of an oilfield, the community members of Emiliano Zapata do not necessarily have a position of power within the hegemonic texture imposed by the national narrative, since PEMEX and the oil industry are essentially the main driving forces for wealth and "development." Yet, they continuously establish strategies that allow them to deal with the challenge of the uncertainty imposed by the predominant power of oil. Following the distinction between "coping" and "adapting," as Anthony Oliver-Smith proposed for crisis contexts, they do so through coping with the risks and dangers at the very instance of their appearance and adapting to the long-term conditions by making adjustments within their practices and sociocultural patterns (2013: 277). Therewith, they constantly and processually adjust to the conditions of the oilscape itself. The community members thereby actively participate in constructing the oilscape through their actions and interactions among themselves, with their surroundings or with other actor groups, as will be shown.

This ethnography contributes to the ongoing debate about the impact of oil on people's lives and the relationship between the extractive industry and human actors by showing how community members actively deal with uncertainties introduced by oil extraction in specific ways. It does so by taking the temporal matters and material implications of this resource into account, where each consolidates a dimension of uncertainty and thus leads to the advent of a situation perceived as the "time bomb." This book shows how local actors find innovative ways of dealing with and living amid this time bomb by creatively shaping patterns of behavior that allow them to successfully face the challenges by the presence of the oil industry. Thereby, they are part of the process of negotiating and shaping the appearance and limits of the oilscape. Thus, this work follows the claim of Emma Gilberthrope and Dinah Rajak who postulated recently about "bring agency back into the picture" as one of the most important tasks of anthropology addressing issues concerning resource extraction (2017: 200).

The ethnographic field research on which this book is based was carried out over the time of eleven months divided into two blocks from April until September 2016 and from September 2017 until March of

2018. I followed a mixed-methods approach with a focus on qualitative methods, including participant observation, grand tour, semi-structured as well as group and expert interviews. Furthermore I applied freelists to explore the domains of oil extraction in general and fracking in particular and conducted mapping exercises with community members of Emiliano Zapata where the participants drew individual maps based on a predesigned basic draft of the community. Additionally, I conducted a systematic survey within the community. The data was complemented by information drawn from local archives within the ejido itself, where large parts of the community's history is documented and stored as well as in historic archives in Xalapa and Mexico City.

Outline in Brief

In this book, I follow the trail of the "time bomb" by discussing the processual construction of the ejido Emiliano Zapata as an oilscape. The course of the discussion is divided into three main dimensions: the temporalities of oil, the materialities of oil, and the social dynamics within the oilscape.

The first chapter provides a brief overview of the theoretical approaches to oil in anthropology. I explore the issue of hydrocarbons as an anthropological topic, following the division of the two main analytical approaches of "temporalities" and "materialities," as proposed by Douglas Rogers in his overview of anthropology and oil (2015a). In the following subsection, I conceptualize the oilscape as an analytical framework for analyzing the situation of uncertainty with regard to the development of the oil industry in the case of Emiliano Zapata.

In chapter 2, the ethnographic circumstances in Emiliano Zapata are embedded into a national and regional context. The chapter begins with an account of hydrocarbon extraction in Mexico, where oil holds a special position in the historical development of the national economy and thus also in the national narrative (e.g., Breglia 2013: 5; Monreal Ávila 2008: 69; Suárez Ávila 2017: 8). The Mexican energy reform of 2013/14 thereby, represents the legal manifestation of an important turning point in national oil politics, which is crucial to understanding the case of Emiliano Zapata. After a general overview on the national scale, I will focus on the regional development of the oil industry in the northern area of Veracruz and the oilfield San Andrés on which the community is located. Subsequently, specific ethnographic details about the composition, economic background, and social texture of the community are presented.

Chapter 3 engages in the first dimension of analysis with an approach on the temporal properties of oil. They manifest in a process of peaks

and valleys, therefore introducing certain patterns of social and economic change as well as anxiety about an imminent worsening of the given conditions (e.g., Cepek 2012; Coronil 1997; Kaposy 2017; Limbert 2008; Mason, Appel, and Watts 2015). Rather than a singular progress, the temporalities of oil are to be understood as multiple simultaneous processes that are determined by individual parameters of preconditions and settings (see Bear 2016; D'Angelo and Pijpers 2018; May and Thrift 2001; Munn 1992). Therefore, the analysis includes the diversity of the temporal processes of coping and adaptation mechanisms applied by local actors during the history of oil extraction in Emiliano Zapata.

In chapter 4, the analytical dimension of time is augmented by the dimension of material inscription, resulting in two aspects that are inevitably linked (Richardson and Weszkalnys 2014: 6). The section starts with the contextualization of the material dimension of the oilscape, within which the material modifications of the space act under the premises of the temporal particularities of oil. This approach aims at unraveling the material dimensions of oil extraction in Emiliano Zapata and their consequences on the lives of the community members without disregarding temporal matters or social implications. Thereby, it is shown how the community members develop the strategies and mechanisms that enabled them to deal with the altered environment and thus the inscription of uncertainty and risk onto the oilscape over time.

Chapter 5 focuses on the third analytical dimension of the oilscape, represented within the social sphere around oil extraction in Emiliano Zapata, which manifests within the relationships between different actor groups. In Emiliano Zapata, the constitution of the interrelation dimension of the oilscape is tied to the connections and dependencies the community members developed with the company, PEMEX, and its staff over a long time. This relationship is determined by conflicts on territory, as they are by the formation of multilayered sociocultural identities within the community itself. It will be shown how the changes introduced by the energy reform affected the social space, and consequently the oilscape, by the appearance of new actors and the reconfiguration of relationship patterns and power hierarchies.

In the closing and outlook, the results presented in this book will be discussed and merged to provide a comprehensive and innovative take within the conceptual approach of the oilscape and the manifestation of uncertainty through the perception of a time bomb. This discussion is followed by an epilogue explaining the situation of oil in Mexico after the induction of the new president, Manuel López Obrador, serving in office since 1 December 2018. The future of the energy reform in its original form and therewith, the future vision for the national oil economy is currently

at stake under the new government and the economic challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and a short description of the recent events will thus provide a concluding perspective for the "time bomb" of oil in Emiliano Zapata.

Notes

1. A form of communal landholding for small-scale agriculture in Mexico. The concept is laid out more in detail in chapter 2 of this volume: A Mexican Oil Story.
2. See https://www.lightight.com/into-the-anthropocene-1.
3. See, for example, the research project by Akin Iwalde at the University of Edinburgh, Africa's Oilscapes, which specifically looks at the role of youth and temporalities associated with oil extraction in Africa. Akin Iwilade, "Youth Temporalities in Africa's Oilscapes," *The University of Edinburgh*. Retrieved 2 April 2022 from https://www.research.ed.ac.uk/en/projects/youth-temporalities-in-africas-oilscapes.