

The Rise and Fall of Mexico's Green Movement¹

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During the 1970s and 1980s, Latin America experienced several waves of social mobilization and popular protests as most countries in the region transitioned away from military dictatorships. As authoritarian regimes weakened and gave way to civilian rule, social movements became active social and political actors in the region's democratization processes. It has in effect been argued that social movements in Latin America played 'the crucial role of pushing the transition further than it would have otherwise have gone' (O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986, 56). Not surprisingly, social movements have attracted great scholarly attention, as exemplified by the voluminous literature devoted to their study (Eckstein 1989, Mainwaring 1986, Mainwaring and Viola 1984, Slater 1985, Garretón-Merino 1996, Urrutia et al 1985, Calderón and Jelin 1987, Hellman 1994, *Latin American Perspectives* 1994). Social mobilization in Latin America has also included citizens demanding better environmental protection. As the environmental consequences of Green Revolutions and post-war industrialization became apparent by the early 1980s, an increasing number of Latin Americans organized and mobilized to demand that governments pay more attention to the protection of the region's natural environment (Carruthers 2001, Hochsteler and Keck 2007, Hochsteler and Mumme 1998, Auer 2001, Díez 2006, 2008, Robert and Thanos 2003, Wright 2008). By the time electoral democracy had been restored in the early 1990s, most countries in the region counted with some form of environmental movement. While their size and strength varied across the region, environmental activism in Latin America has resulted in the unprecedented establishment of national environmental agencies and the writing of general environmental laws (Hochsteler 2007).

Environmental mobilization has also taken place in Mexico. During the 1980s, the environmental repercussions of Mexico's post-war development became apparent and, taking advantage of the new opportunities the country's political opening offered, citizens began to organize and mobilize to demand better environmental protection. Mexico thus witnessed the emergence of an environmental movement which grew in size and strength and that, by the mid 1990s, had gained national visibility. More importantly, during a series of environmental reforms implemented during the 1990s, Mexican environmentalists were successful in influencing national environmental policy and achieved a series of significant policy triumphs (Díez 2006). In a relatively short period of time, then, Mexico's green movement emerged and became an important political actor.

However, since the defeat of Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) in the general elections of 2000, which brought about the end to seventy-one years of interrupted rule, Mexico's environmentalists have been intriguingly much less visible in national politics and have been less influential in environmental policymaking. What appears to have occurred is a general weakening of the movement in a rela-

tively short period of time. What accounts for this phenomenon? Scholarly work on social mobilization has advanced several possible explanations. One holds that a country's transition into electoral democracy generally leads to the demobilization of its civil society. Because members of social movements do not have a single identifiable threat after authoritarian rule, it is argued, they are no longer united with large segments of society (O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986, 55-56). Others suggest that demobilization should be expected as the advent of democratic politics brings other channels of representation such as unions and political parties (Oxhorn 1999) and that democratic politics tends to fragment interests, thereby dividing individuals within movements (Törnquist 1999). However, most of this work has primarily concentrated on cases in which transitions away from authoritarian rule occurred in a swifter manner and in which there was a clear break into electoral democracy. Mexico's transition into democratic rule, on the other hand, has been rather protracted and social movements have experienced cycles of mobilization and demobilization during this process (Williams 2001). Indeed, as the 2006 presidential elections demonstrated, Mexico's transition into democratic politics continues to unfold and the country is still experiencing strong mass mobilizations.

Another explanation regards the institutionalization of movements. Research on social mobilization in Latin America suggests that the institutionalization of social movements leads to their demobilization. One of the most common ways in which social movements become institutionalized is through the formation of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). Accordingly, it is argued that NGOs have a depoliticizing and 'deradicalizing' effect on movement politics (Petras 1997, Ferguson 1994, Lang 1997, Pisano 1996). This perspective holds that, as members of social movements decide to institutionalize and professionalize their activities through the formation of NGOs, they tend to become less confrontational and attempt to influence politics and policy through state and non-state institutions, rather than through protests. The institutionalization of social movements, which has been referred to as their 'NGOization' (Álvarez 1999), has indeed occurred in Latin America; during the 1990s, the region witnessed the proliferation of numerous NGOs working on various issues as new funds from national and international donors, both public and private, became more available and as governments increasingly relied on NGOs to deliver social services which were previously under state control (Álvarez et al. 1998, 1).

This NGOization process has certainly affected environmental mobilization in Latin America as, similar to other social movements, environmentalism underwent a process of NGOization in the 1990s. While the return to democracy allowed societal groups to advance demands through the electoral arena, it has not been particularly beneficial in advancing environmental concerns given that the region's green parties and candidacies have generally been weak. Environmentalists have therefore found organizing through autonomous organizations, such as NGOs, as the most reliable way through which to bring issues to the political agenda. As a result, many countries of the region witnessed an unprecedented proliferation of Environmental NGOs (ENGOs) (Hochsteler 2007).

In the case of Mexico, the professionalization of the movement did not completely depoliticize it during the 1990s as it was able to mount several well-organized environmental campaigns, some of which resulted in significant gov-

ernment policy reversals. While the movement did become more ‘NGOized,’ it was able to maintain what Sonia Álvarez refers to as a ‘double identity’ (1999). That is, professional environmentalists, mostly well-educated, middle-class individuals, became the directors of ENGOs, but they managed to maintain linkages with the larger environmental movement. It is precisely because of these linkages that the movement kept a certain degree of politicization and was able to organize several successful campaigns during the 1990s. The institutionalization of the movement did not therefore result in the weakening it underwent at the beginning of the century. Rather, as this article argues, such weakening is more directly related to the manner in which its leadership interacted with the state following the defeat of the PRI in 2000, than to its NGOization in the previous decade. The NGOization of the movement during the 1990s did not completely depoliticize it, but it facilitated the integration of its leadership into the new government. It is this phenomenon, this article attempts to show, that contributed to the movement’s weakening. The change of regime prompted by the election of Vicente Fox Quesada (2000-06) as president of Mexico allowed for the incorporation of a variety of sectoral leaders into the new government as he attempted to mark a departure from the country’s authoritarian past, and this included the environmental movement’s leadership. Because the movement was highly professionalized at the moment of transition and many of its leaders decided not only to forge a close relationship with the new regime, but in many cases became part of it, it created a ‘leadership vacuum,’ a process that weakened the movement.

Structural causes tend to prevail in work on the emergence and evolution of social mobilization (McAdam et al 1996, Della Porta and Diani 2006). Whether it is the political opportunities provided by regimes or the ability of activists to forge alliances with international organizations and actors, most studies on social movements tend to look at the structural causes that explain the rise and decline of social mobilization. This article attempts to make a contribution to growing literature that breaks away from structural factors and which looks at leadership dynamics in explaining social mobilization (Ganz 2000, 2008, Nepstad and Bob 2006). It also attempts to make a contribution to recent political science scholarship on Latin America that specifically looks at the interaction between the leadership of social movements and the state in general, and the effects such relationships have on the movements in particular (Foweraker 2001, Franceschet and Macdonald 2003, Franceschet 2004). Consequently, the analysis presented here specifically focuses on the impact the relationship the movement’s leadership forged with the Fox administration had on the strength of the movement. While it argues that the weakening of the movement is a result of this relationship, it does not argue that it is the sole cause.

This article is structured as follows. The first section traces the emergence of Mexico’s contemporary environmental movement since the 1980s. A subsequent section details the institutionalization of the movement and the impact it had on the formation of the country’s environmental policy regime. The last section presents an analysis of the reasons behind the weakening of Mexico’s environmental movement since 2000.

The rise of Mexican environmentalism

The economic reform and crises that Mexico underwent during the 1980s were accompanied by social mobilization. Unlike previous economic crises, the deterioration of socio-economic conditions of the 1980s affected severely various sectors of society, from the urban and rural poor to the middle classes. This unleashed general social discontent that contributed to the emergence of significant social mobilization as new social groups began to bypass the corporatist structures that characterized the country's political system in an attempt to place demands directly upon the state. The process accelerated when a powerful earthquake (7.6 in the Richter scale) hit Mexico City on 13 September 1985 and claimed the lives of approximately 20,000 residents. The Mexican government proved highly inadequate in providing relief and assistance to the hundreds of thousands of victims and homeless people. Due to delayed government action and sheer incompetence, residents of Mexico City began to organize swiftly and in large numbers to provide food, water, shelter and medical supplies to the victims. Such social mobilization witnessed the formation of a significant number of social organizations, a phenomenon that is regarded as a catalyst in the crystallization of large-scale social movements in contemporary Mexico (Foweraker 1990). Vikram Chand has referred to this 'strengthening' of Mexican civil society as the country's contemporary 'political awakening' (2001).

It is against this backdrop of increased social mobilization during the 1980s that several catalytic events impelled the emergence of Mexico's environmental movement.² On November 1984, an extremely potent explosion at a gas plant run by the state-owned corporation Mexican Petroleum (PEMEX) in San Juan Ixhuatepec, outside Mexico City, killed over 500 people. The explosion not only caused outrage, but it heightened environmental sensibilities as the environmental damage it caused became evident through widespread television coverage. The 1985 earthquake also contributed to environmental mobilization; along with various kinds of NGOs that surged following the disaster, ENGOS were created as 'green brigades' to support people who, as a result of the earthquake, were living in squatter communities around the ruined homes and in the suburbs of Mexico City (González Martínez 1992). Two months after the earthquake, and in an attempt to coordinate efforts and share information, fourteen civil associations called for the first National Meeting of Ecologists in Mexico City. The meeting was attended by representatives of more than 300 regional groups, civil associations and scout groups, which discussed a wide variety of themes. At this meeting participants created Mexico's first network of ENGOS, the Pact of Ecologist Groups (PGE). The PGE brought together 50 organizations and established ten working commissions that dealt with issues that ranged from pollution in the Valley of Mexico to deforestation. The PGE subsequently played a pivotal role in organizing and amalgamating opposition to the government's nuclear-energy programme shortly after the network was formed, thereby contributing further to the strengthening of the environmental movement in Mexico. The PGE's opposition began to brew in September of 1986, eight months after the nuclear disaster of Chernobyl, when President de la Madrid announced that the project to build a nuclear-power plant in Laguna Verde, in the Gulf state of Veracruz, was to go ahead. Although he eventually de-

cided to build the plant in 1988, the anti-nuclear campaign was successful in bringing together a large number of environmental groups, in raising awareness further and, ultimately, in opposing and defying the government through actions such as highway blockades. In effect, the Laguna-Verde mobilization is considered to be one of the watershed events of Mexico's environmental movement (Berlin 1988, Payá Porres 1994, García-Gorena 1999).

Two events at the beginning of the 1990s added further impetus to the movement: the preparatory discussions for the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (the Rio Summit); and the joint declaration by Presidents Carlos Salinas and George Bush Sr. (1988-1992), on June 1990, that their respective administrations planned to undertake discussions to draft a free-trade agreement. Environmental activism before the Rio Summit was mostly spurred by the fact that Mexican NGOs did not believe they had sufficient discussion space during the official preparatory meetings (Umlas 1996, 97-9). Twelve NGOs and networks called thus a meeting – entitled First National Forum of Civil and Social Associations of Environment and Development – seeking to open discussions on alternative development models and to promote interest in participating at a parallel summit, the Global Forum. The meeting resulted in the formation of the Mexican Civil Society Forum for Rio 92 (FOROMEX), which, at one point, incorporated 103 organizations.

The prospects of signing a free-trade agreement with the United States, and eventually with Canada, also strengthened the environmental movement and increased ENGO activity. Public opinion galvanized in Mexico around the benefits of free trade. Media coverage of the national debate increased considerably, with some sectors of society strongly supporting the agreement. Opposition to the agreement came mostly from Mexican environmentalists, who were opposed mainly because it ignored sustainable development and environmental protection. There was a concern that free trade would further degrade Mexico's national resources and increase pollution levels (Peña 1993, 124). Environmentalists saw thus the need to organize and collaborate in order to oppose the agreement, and various networks, working groups and associations were created, such as the Mexican Action Network on Free Trade (RMALC). These networks encouraged the creation and registration of NGOs (Hogenboom 1998, Ávila 1997). Importantly, given that the Bush-Salinas declaration was unprecedented, there was little information on the effects that free trade would have on the environment. Consequently, national and international collaboration among environmentalists increased due to the necessity to share information. Mexico's environmental movement benefited significantly from the increased interaction between Mexican environmentalists and their international counterparts. During the NAFTA negotiations, there was an unprecedented increase in funding for Mexican ENGOs from international organizations. Organizations, such as the National Audubon Society, the Natural Defence Council, the National Wildlife Federation, the World Wildlife Fund, and the Action Canada Network, made funds available to Mexican ENGOs (Hogenboom 1998). Moreover, several U.S. conservation organizations, such as the World Wildlife Fund and Conservation International, received substantial financial aid from the US government to promote the park approach to biodiversity conservation in Mexico, and they collaborated with their Mexican counterparts to channel donations

from the Global Environment Facility to manage Natural Protected Areas (ANPs) (Fox 2003, 363).³ Access to financial resources from international organizations greatly fuelled the formation of Mexican ENGOs as well as to the establishment of offices in Mexico of some of these international organizations (Hogenboom 1998; Gallardo 1997, 1999; Torres 1997; Gilbreath 2003). These factors contributed to the emergence and strengthening of Mexico's green movement and, by the 1990s, it gained national visibility.

The institutionalization and growing influence of the movement

The increased and sustained interaction members of the movement established during the 1990s with their international counterparts resulted in the institutionalization, or NGOization, of Mexican environmentalism. The integration of Mexico into the North American economic market was central to this phenomenon. The debate over the effects of NAFTA created an opportunity to encourage the interaction between national and international ENGOs. But that interaction was sustained once the agreement came into force and contributed to the proliferation and strengthening of Mexican ENGOs. Indeed, during the 1990s Mexico experienced an unprecedented increase in the number of ENGOs; whereas in 1985 there were no more than 30 registered ENGOs, their number had increased to approximately 500 by 1997.⁴ By the late 1990s, moreover, approximately 5 per cent of Mexicans belonged to an ENGO.⁵ Most of the ENGOs in Mexico received most, and in certain cases all, of their funding from international NGOs, especially from the US, and they benefited from the transfer of knowledge and expertise. Such transfer has greatly contributed to the professionalization of ENGO members and to the institutionalization of the activities, which helped them significantly in their activities and interaction with the government.

The growing institutionalization of Mexican environmentalism did not render Mexican ENGOs completely depoliticized, however. The most active and visible ENGOs became staffed with prominent Mexican environmentalists, most of whom are middle-class, highly qualified individuals, usually with advanced degrees in the natural sciences. These individuals gradually became the representatives of the newly formed ENGOs and the primary interlocutors through which most environmentalists interacted with the government. But, even as they became leaders of these highly professionalized organizations, most of them retained links with broader movements and they relied upon these links to forge alliances with the broader environmental movement. In effect, it is because of their continued contact and interaction with other environmentalists in the country – some of whom worked at the grassroots level – that they contributed to the organization of several successful environmental mobilization campaigns to stop a number of projects that would have had important environmental repercussions in the 1990s.

Three particular environmental mobilization campaigns stand out. In 1995 a coalition of local activists and the most prominent national ENGOs mobilized to halt the construction of a 478 million-dollar project to build a development complex consisting of a golf course, a hotel and 880 houses in the city of Tepoztlán, south of Mexico City (Stolle-McAllister 2005, 143-4; Díez 2006, 83-4). The project was also supported by strong business interests and the State Governor, Jorge

Carrillo Olea. The decision to shut down construction followed a period of intense popular mobilization against the project that was sparked on August 22, 1995, when the mayor of the city, Alejandro Morales Barragán, announced that he had agreed to allow the construction to go ahead. Local residents, organized under the organization Committee for the Unity of Tepoztlán (CUT), took control of the City Hall on 25 August 1995, took hostage city officials, and declared the city to be in a state of siege (*La Jornada*, 25 August 1995). CUT also erected barricades, blocked highways and elected a provisional government and eventually forced the mayor to resign from his post on 5 September 1995. The project was cancelled shortly thereafter (Rosas 1997). In the same year, another coalition formed by ENGOs, local residents and municipal councillors successfully stopped the establishment of a toxic-waste treatment in the northern city of Guadalcázar by the California-based Metclad Corporation. The project was personally supported by the president and federal environmental authorities, but strong environmental mobilization was successful in convincing the municipal government to deny the issuance of the permit to allow construction (Ugalde Saldaña 2001, Borja Tamayo 2001). Another, and perhaps most notable, successful campaign relates to the cancellation of a project to build the world's largest salt mine in the state of Baja California Sur. On 2 March 2000, President Ernesto Zedillo (1994-2000) made the unexpected announcement that his government had decided to cancel the project to expand the operations of a company in the San Juan Lagoon, a lagoon that serves as a sanctuary for whales that migrate from Alaska and British Columbia in the winter. The cancellation of the project represented the culmination of a very successful five-year long campaign waged by a coalition of Mexican and international ENGOs and was a definite triumph for Mexico's environmental movement.⁶ A characteristic of these campaigns is that they were led by coalitions of NGOs, whose efforts were coordinated by umbrella organizations, and that included a variety of national and regional ENGOs. Importantly, the most important and visible national ENGOs in Mexico, such as the Mexican Environmental Law Centre (CEMDA), the Union of Environmentalist Groups (UGAM) and the Pact of Ecologist Groups (PGE), were directly involved in the campaigns and highly active. The campaigns brought the leaders and members of these organizations in close contact, as they organized and launched them, and contributed to the maintenance of relationship. As a result, even though during the 1990s the movement had become highly institutionalized, in the form of NGOs, it continued to maintain a degree of politicization, as these campaigns demonstrate.

The strengthening of Mexico's environmentalism was also evidenced by the success ENGOs had in influencing environmental policymaking during a series of reforms that were implemented in the 1990s. In 1996 and 1997, the Environment Minister launched a reform of the Environmental Protection Law and the Forestry Law. These reforms were significant as they introduced numerous legal mechanisms intended to reduce environmental degradation. The reform of the Environmental Protection Law, for example, increased the number of activities for which Environmental Impact Assessments are required, decentralized environmental responsibilities to sub-national levels of governments, increased environmental penalties and enhanced the notion of 'environmental responsibility' whereby every party that contaminates is legally liable and must repair the damage. The reform of

the Forestry Law was also important. During the early 1990s, and within the overall context of economic liberalization, the forestry sector had been liberalized through a dismantling of the regulatory system established in the 1980s. The 1997 reform of the law introduced a new regulatory framework intended to reduce deforestation levels. Central to this effort was the introduction of the requirement to prove that timber transported or stored be accompanied with documentation establishing that it comes from areas in which logging has been allowed, making it a crime not to comply. Moreover, in early 2000, the ministry also enacted Mexico's first Law on Wildlife. The new legislation established a Council of Wildlife (National Technical Council on Wildlife) with the responsibility to develop and manage the National List of Endangered Species and oversee the various policies implemented for their protection. Moreover, it instituted the National Commission for Protected Areas with the mandate to administer the country's National Protected Areas (ANPs), whose number increased dramatically during her administration: by 2000, the Zedillo administration had established 30 new ANPs, bringing the total number of hectares from over 10 million to close to 16 million (an increase of approximately 60 per cent) (INE 2000).

NGOs not only applied strong pressure on the Environment Minister to undertake these reforms, but they were very active participants in the reform processes, having in fact had significant input. Indeed, one of the most distinctive characteristics of environmental reform during the Zedillo administration was the significant and rather unprecedented influence NGOs had on environmental policymaking and the participatory nature of the process. The 1996 reform of the Environmental Protection Law, for example, was a very open process that lasted 19 months to complete and in which representatives of more than 108 NGOs participated. Most of these NGOs declared, at the end of the reform process, that they were highly satisfied with the final bill, which was unanimously passed through Congress (Diez 2006). Such participatory process was to a great extent due to the opening created by a reformist Environment Minister who believed strongly in the inclusion of civil society groups in the formulation of environmental policy. But it was also the result of international factors; environmental reform in Latin American is considered part of what has been termed 'second-generation reforms' (Pastor and Wise 1999, Naím 1994). These reforms followed the structural adjustment programmes of the 1980s and were more inclusive than previous economic reform programmes introduced in the region. International organizations, such as the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank, began to call for the inclusion of civil-society actors in the formulation, implementation and delivery of government policies and services by the mid 1990s. NGO influence was also largely due to the level of organization and expertise many of these organizations possessed. The transfer of resources, both technical and financial, and expertise from international actors allowed them to present well-crafted proposals during the reform process. This was especially the case with those NGOs which pursue issues relating to conservation and bio-diversity. By the late 1990s, then, the environmental movement had not only become highly visible in Mexico, but it could claim several important victories.

The weakening of Mexico's environmental movement

Mexico's green movement has been notably less visible in the country's national social and political stage since the defeat of the PRI in 2000. Whereas in the 1990s they held several national campaigns and held numerous protests and demonstrations, they have not been as active after Fox came into power in 2000. This phenomenon is best illustrated by the absence of mass environmental mobilizations in the 2000s. Unlike the previous decade, Mexico has not experienced any major national environmental campaigns to stop projects, and demonstrations have been limited to activities held during World Earth Day. Environmentalists did join the campaign to halt plans to build a second national airport in Atenco, outside Mexico City, in the early part of the Fox administration. However, as John Stolle-McAllister details, such campaign was framed as a struggle for land rights and ENGOs performed a subsidiary, supporting role to its leadership, not a leading one (2005). In effect, during the first three years of Fox's administration, not a single demonstration was held outside Mexico's Environment Ministry, a common occurrence since the ministry was first established in 1994. According to all participants interviewed for this study, Mexican environmentalists lost vitality and strength since Fox came to power. Indeed, in the words of a renowned Mexican environmentalist: 'there is no question that we are less visible and weaker than we were five years ago, and it is very disheartening (*desolador*). It seems that we have gone into a state of dormancy and we are not as militant and politicized (*grilleros*) as we were before.'⁷ Fox's first Environment Minister, Víctor Lichtinger Waisman, stated that Mexico's Green Movement had suffered a notable weakening after the 1990s. Lichtinger declared that the weakening of the movement came as a disadvantage to him since he would have liked to have seen a more vociferous movement as it would have given him more leverage vis-à-vis cabinet and the president to press harder to advance his policy objectives.⁸

Mexican environmentalists have also been less influential in environmental policymaking. As mentioned, ENGOs were active participants in the passing of several environmental laws during the 1990s. However, the extent to which they were able to have a real impact on policy during the Fox administration was minimal. The only policy in which they appear to have had some influence relates to the establishment of the Pollution Release and Transfer Registry (*Registro de Emisiones y Transferencia de Contaminantes*, RETC) in 2002. The RETC, similar to the U.S. Toxics Release Inventory, requires firms to submit information to a registry on the type, location and quantity of pollutants released on site and transferred off-site by industrial facilities. Fierce opposition from industry had previously resulted in a limited version whereby industry agreed to release information of pollutants on a voluntary basis. The RETC makes this obligatory, and it is accessible by the public. The establishment of the registry had been long overdue given the international commitments Mexico had made,⁹ but it was heavily influenced by pressure exerted by ENGOs (Pacheco-Vega 2005). However, this policy change was the only significant policy achievement of ENGOs since 2000.¹⁰ All the interviewees, including the Environment Minister, conceded that environmentalists have been less successful in having an influence on policy, a phenomenon that is directly related to the movement's overall weakening.

The weakening of Mexico's Green movement has been due to two main factors. First, there has been a considerable decrease in funding from international donors. In certain cases this decrease has led to operational crises within ENGOs. Some ENGO members attribute this to the fact that, after 2000, international funding sources considered that, since Mexico had become a stable democracy, they could shift their attention to other regions and countries. More importantly, however, the movement's weakening is largely due to the manner in which Mexico's environmental leaders decided to engage the new administration during the transition away from PRI rule. Fox campaigned under the banner of 'change,' arguing that his election would bring about the end of authoritarianism in the country. Once elected, he began fulfilling his promise by appointing a cabinet whose composition was unlike those of any his predecessors. Reflecting his professional development in the private sector,¹¹ and arguing that increased accountability required a managerial style of politics,¹² he recruited a significant number of individuals from the private sector: two-thirds of his newly appointed ministers had pursued careers in the private sector in the past and nearly half of them owned a private firm or held a high-level management post at the time of their appointment. The recruitment of a cabinet with experience in the private sector was in stark contrast with appointments in previous administrations under PRI rule, in which all of the cabinet ministers emanated from the public sector or academia. Fox also diversified the recruitment process by selecting individuals from different career backgrounds and political persuasions, some of whom were in fact selected by professional headhunters.¹³ His cabinet – to which he referred as a *gabinetazo*, or top-flight cabinet – reflected thus more heterogeneity than previous ones.

In regard to the environment portfolio, Fox appointed Víctor Lichtinger Waisman as his Minister of the Environment. Lichtinger was a respected environmentalist, not only in Mexico but internationally; he earned the respect of environmentalists in North America through his performance as the first Executive Director of the North American Commission for Environmental Co-operation (NACEC) (1994-1998), when he agreed to take on controversial cases and challenge governments. Of particular importance was the Cozumel case, in which he proceeded to issue a factual report stating that environmental regulations had not been respected by the Mexican authorities in the authorization of the construction of a port for cruise ships.

Lichtinger was not only a respected environmentalist, but, prior to his appointment, he belonged to a group made up of the most renowned environmentalists in the country: the *Grupo de Reflexión 25* (G-25). Created in November of 1999, the G-25 was a political coalition of 25 professional environmentalists who worked on a series of reform proposals prior to the 2000 election, proposals that they expected the new government to adopt. Importantly, the majority of G-25 members had been part of the country's green movement since its emergence in the mid 1980s and became the leaders of the most prominent ENGOs during the 1990s, when they were formed. They included Regina Barba, founder of UGAM (referred to above), Marta Delgado, president of UGAM, and Gustavo Alanís, director of CEMDA (referred to above). The group published a document before the election, in which they advanced criticisms of the environmental positions of the main political contenders and outlined their policy reform proposals (see *Grupo de Reflexión* 2000).

Even though the group was formed primarily to advance policy proposals for the new government, numerous of its members decided to collaborate with it during the transition. Once elected (2 July 2000), and until he was invested as president (1 December 2000), Fox formed a transition team to formulate his government policies. This team was composed of his close advisers, established figures from his own party and individuals with expertise in various policy areas. In regard to environmental policy, he invited several members of the G-25 to work on his environmental policy agenda, including Lichtinger. It was while working on the new policy agenda that Fox asked Lichtinger to become his Environment Minister.

When Lichtinger took up the post, he in turn appointed individuals with environmental expertise, most of whom belonged to the G-25, to key positions within his ministry. These include Rodolfo Lacy as his Chief of Staff, Francisco Székely as Under-Minister of Planning, Cassio Luisselli as Under-Minister of Regulation, Ignacio Campillo as head of the Environmental Protection Office, Rayo Angulo as Director General of the Strategy and Financing Unit; Olga Ojeda as Director of International Affairs Co-ordination Unit; Fernando Ortiz Monasterio as Executive Secretary of the Inter-Ministerial Commission for Biosecurity and Genetically Modified Organism, Tiahoga Ruge as Co-ordinator of the Centre of Education and Training for Sustainable Development, Sergio Sánchez as Director General of the Unit for Air Quality Management; and Regina Baraba as Director of the Unit for Social Participation and Transparency. In interviews, several of these individuals stated that their decision to accept these positions within the new administration was due to the fact that it represented a new opportunity to advance their policy objectives given that the Fox's election marked a clear break from the past. Importantly, many of these individuals positioned themselves on the left of the political spectrum, but decided to join a right-of-centre government because they believed they would be able to contribute to a new phase in Mexican politics in which environmental concerns figured prominently; Fox was the first presidential candidate in Mexico to include environmental concerns as a main component of his campaign, having formed a coalition with the Green Party (PVEM). For many of these individuals, the election of Fox represented a true change of political regime and a clear break from the past.

Their decision to accept the invitation to form part of the new government by accepting important positions within the Environment Minister marked a very significant change of relations between the Mexico's Green Movement and the state. While another prominent environmentalist was appointed as Environment Minister in 1994 under the Zedillo administration, she only recruited a couple of environmentalist into her Ministry and the leaders of the movement at large retained a combative relation with the state from the outside, as the various mobilization campaigns showed. In 2000, however, some of the most prominent leaders of the movement decided to cross the state-society divide and became part of the new national government. This phenomenon in turn weakened the movement as ENGOs suffered a weakening in their leadership, or what the minister himself referred to as a 'leadership vacuum.' One interviewee referred to the 'beheading' of the movement. All of the interviewees stated that the incorporation of important environmentalists had a negative effect on the movement's vitality. Lichtinger stated that, in hindsight, this was a grave mistake as it reduced the vibrancy of ENGOs.¹⁴

This does not mean that all the leaders of the most prominent ENGOs joined the environment ministry. Indeed, several did not, such as Gustavo Alanís, director of the renowned ENGO CEMDA. However, because the Environment Minister had been a participant in the movement, he was considered an ally within the administration adopting several of the proposals advanced by the G-25, and, hence, there was no need to take a confrontational approach. During the first three years of the Fox administration, then, the relationship between Mexico's Green movement and government was characterized by very close contact, as the movement's leaders formed part of government, and a non-confrontational approach.

The weakening of the movement, through the incorporation of its leaders into government, became evident throughout the Fox administration as environmental issues dropped in importance and environmentalists were unable to mobilize. Despite the declarations Fox made during his campaign regarding the importance of environmental issues, it became clear that the environment was not atop his agenda. In an interview with the author, Lichtinger stated: 'Fox became upset when I spoke about the environment at cabinet meetings. He argued that economic growth and environmental protection were not compatible. At first I thought that I could educate him, well, 'de-educate' him, but it soon became apparent that it was not the case. He had a personal prejudice against the environment.' Another cabinet minister in turn commented 'the environment is certainly not important for Fox. He relied heavily on focus groups to make decisions, with his idea of running government like a business and being accountable to clients. Because environmental issues were not among the five most important issues with the Mexican population, he simply dropped the environmental portfolio to the bottom of the agenda.'¹⁵ Because the environmental portfolio was not an important one for the Fox administration, the environment minister was weak within cabinet and unable to advance his policy objectives. Paradoxically, and as mentioned, the environment minister in fact stated that he would have liked to have seen a more vociferous movement as it would have given him more leverage vis-à-vis cabinet and the president to accomplish more of his policy objectives. Such ministerial weakness, combined with the decline of the environment as a national priority, meant that, despite the inclusion of environmentalists into the new government, ENGOs were unable to influence policy to the same degree that they had done in the 1990s. Indeed, with the exception of one interviewee, all others stated that the environment dropped in level of priority from the previous administration and they believe that there had been a *retroceso* (a step backward) in environmental policy.

Lichtinger's position of weakness vis-à-vis the president culminated with the 'dirty beaches' controversy, which would ultimately result in his dismissal. On 10 February 2003, the Environmental Protection Office released the results of academic studies revealing very high levels of pollution in beaches around the country, 16 of which had shown levels that posed a serious threat to human health (*Reforma*, 11 February 2003). The following day, the Minister declared the need to inform tourists of the high levels of pollution, and said that a detailed official report would be released in the forthcoming days along with a 'clean beaches' programme. The Minister's declaration prompted strong reactions from hoteliers and governors of states that depended heavily on tourism. Miguel Torruco, President of the National Hotel Chamber (*Asociación Mexicana de Hoteles y Moteles*), and the

governors of the states of Guerrero, Nayarit and Quintana Roo urged the Environment Minister not to release the report (Reforma, *La Jornada*, 11 April 2003). Lichtinger decided nonetheless to release the results and, on 9 April, he announced the launch of a monitoring programme to supervise pollution in the beaches as part of a clean beach programme, declaring seven beaches to be on a red-flag pollution alert. Lichtinger's decision to launch the monitoring programme despite strong opposition from the National Hotel Chamber, the Ministry of Tourism, and several state governors angered Fox and, on 2 September, Lichtinger learned from media reports that the president had asked him for his resignation. Lichtinger left his position on the following day with almost everyone of his team.

If the environmental agenda dropped in its level of priority after 2000, it took a precipitous dive after Lichtinger's resignation in 2003. With the resignation of the Environment Minister on 2 September 2003, Lichtinger's team, who had environmental expertise, was replaced with *políticos* from the PAN and close to the president. On his first day on the job, the new environment minister hosted a breakfast at the official presidential residence, Los Pinos, with the 40 most prominent national and international tourism investors. At the event, Fox promised that in the new phase of the ministry, investors would be treated 'with a sense of urgency' as they sought to overcome 'bureaucratic hurdles' (Reforma, 4 September 2003). Adolfo Fastlicht, president of the Association of Developers (*Asociación de Desarrolladores*), declared after the breakfast: 'the President has given us the assurance that in the second half of his *sexenio* there will be an environmental policy that promotes investment' (Reforma, 4 September 2003). On the second day on the job, the minister accepted the resignations of the environmentalists who had worked under Lichtinger and appointed mostly either *panistas* or business people to senior positions. Environmentalists naturally opposed these changes, declaring that they represented the most severe step backward on environmental policy in 15 years.¹⁶ However, environmentalists reacted to this chain of events with declarations made at news conferences and not mobilization.

According to several NGO members interviewed, the dismissal of the Lichtinger and his team meant that criticism of Fox's actions by environmentalists came from individuals who had lost their jobs, and their declarations could not be seen as solely based on environmental concerns by the general public. Importantly, the dismissal of environmentalists from the Ministry meant that it made it very difficult for the movement to re-organize itself and present a common front against the government as the environmentalists who worked under Lichtinger were not automatically re-integrated. In many cases, some of these individuals decided to take up positions in academic institutions both in Mexico and abroad, abandoning environmental militancy. In others, having been part of government did not make reintegration easy as some positions of leadership had already been taken up by others. Moreover, to some militants, having worked for the government meant a loss of legitimacy as they were seen as having been co-opted by the government, thereby creating tensions and frictions within the movement. As a result, the Green Movement lacked the leadership necessary to organize and apply pressure on the government during the remaining years of the Fox administration and the beginning of Felipe Calderón's (2006-). However, because Mexico's green movement has become highly institutionalized, the weakening of its leadership does not nec-

essarily mean that the movement has become completely dispersed. Several ENGOs in Mexico still count with access to funding, expertise and connections with their international counterparts. As a result, it is certainly possible that the movement can experience an upsurge in mobilization should its leadership regenerate over time. Environmentalism has certainly experienced cycles of waves in other Latin American countries.¹⁷

Conclusion

As the environmental consequences of Mexico's post-war development became apparent by the mid 1980s, and within the broader context of general social mobilization, Mexicans began to organize and mobilize to demand better environmental protection from the regime. Propelled by a series of catalytic events during the mid 1980s, Mexico's green movement thus emerged and strengthened. By the mid 1990s, the movement had gained visibility in national politics. Importantly, beyond their visibility, Mexico's environmentalists were able to advance successfully demands and include them into environmental policy during a series of reforms that were implemented during the 1990s.

The strengthening of Mexico's green movement during the 1990s unfolded concurrently with its institutionalization. The interaction Mexican environmentalists had with their North American counterparts through discussions held during the advent of NAFTA and the availability of international funds directed for environmental protection encouraged the NGOization of Mexico's green movement during the decade. As a result, the country witnessed an unprecedented proliferation in NGOs devoted to environmental protection. However, as this article has attempted to demonstrate, such institutionalization of the movement did not lead to its depolitization as environmentalists managed to organize, mobilize and mount a series of important campaigns which subsequently resulted in significant policy triumphs.

Nevertheless, this process of NGOization facilitated the incorporation of the movement's leadership into the government as the country transited into a new regime. As this article has shown, this process had an effect on the strength of the movement as it created a leadership vacuum. Such process subsequently made it very difficult for Mexican environmentalists to apply pressure on the new government once it became evident that environmental issues did not figure high among the administration's priorities.

The case of Mexico's Green Movement therefore suggests that neither the democratization of a country nor the institutionalization of a movement, through its 'NGOization', necessarily results in a movement's depolitization. A movement can gain a certain degree of institutionalization and remain politicized. However, as this case also shows, the degree of politization is largely dependent upon the links that are established between a movement's leadership and the broader constituency. This analysis also suggests that the degree of politization, vibrancy and militancy of a movement can be affected by the relationship it establishes with the state. While the incorporation of members of a movement into the state does not automatically lead to a movement's weakening, such as the case of Brazil's green movement (Keck and Hochstetler 2007), it appears that the incorporation of an

important number of a movement's leadership into government can result in a loss of leadership within the movement, outside the state, which can in turn weaken the movement as a whole. The research presented here conforms to findings of scholarship on social movements in post-transition societies which demonstrate that the integration of movement leaders into the state generally results in demobilization (Oxhorn 1994a, 1994b, 1999; de la Masa 1999; Hipsher 1996, 1998). This work then suggests that the demobilization of social movements can generally be expected to occur in consolidating democracies when they lose autonomy.

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Notes

1. This paper draws from data collected during interviews conducted with 36 individuals during the summers of 2004 and 2005. These participants include members of ENGOs and government officials. An earlier version of this article was presented at the 2007 annual meetings of the Canadian Political Science Association in Saskatoon. The author would like to thank Candace Johnson, Lisa Kowalchuk and the anonymous referees for their comments on previous drafts of the article. All errors of analysis or interpretation are solely my own.
2. While Mexico's green movement strengthened considerably during the 1980s, as this section details, it does not mean that environmentalism did not exist before. Indeed, Mexican environmentalism can be traced back to the establishment of the Mexican Forestry Association by Miguel Ángel de Quevedo (usually referred to as the father of Mexican environmentalism) in 1924 and of the Mexican Society of Natural History by Enrique Beltrán in 1934. The first Mexican ENGO is perhaps the Mexican Institute for Non-Renewable Resources, founded in 1952 by businessman Manuel Arango. It was not, however, a political organization and served primarily as a repository of bibliographical material on environmental issues.
3. The donations have been administered by a newly-created organization, the Mexican National Conservation Fund.
4. The actual number of ENGOs depends upon the source, but 500 would be an approximate number. According to the Ministry of the Environment, the number was 461 by 1994 (Ávila 1997, 231). Flavia Rodríguez places the number, in 1997, at 'more than 500 in all the country' (1997, 6B). The OECD, in its 1998 report on Mexico's environmental performance, states that the number was 400 by 1994 (1998, 145). Finally, according to a Mexican Environmental Directory (*Directorio Mexicano de la Conservación*) published by the *Fondo Mexicano de la Conservación de la Naturaleza*,

- the number was, in 1998, 1260.
5. This number is based on a poll conducted by the Mexican newspaper *Reforma* (15 July 1996).
 6. For a more in depth analysis of these mobilizations, see Diez 2006, pp. 83-9.
 7. Interview with Marta Delgado, President of the ENGO UGAM, and Minister of the Environment for Mexico City 2006-, Mexico City, 12 June 2004.
 8. Interview with Victor Lichtinger, Environment Minister (2000-2003), Mexico City, 24 June 2004.
 9. As a signatory of North American Agreement of Environmental Cooperation, Mexico agreed to resolution 97-04, which encourages the three countries toward the adoption of comparable registries. Also, as a member of the OECD, Mexico agreed to harmonize its registry with all member states. The establishment of the registry is also in line with commitments made to Agenda 21, whose principle 10 stipulates that states should facilitate and encourage the dissemination of information.
 10. This does not mean that the introduction of the RETC was the only important policy change during the Fox administration. In effect, several noteworthy reforms were introduced during this time, such as a reorganization of the Environment Ministry in 2001, a partial reform of the Forestry Law in 2003, the establishment of the Programme of Payments for Environmental Services in 2003, and minor reforms to the Penal Code in 2001 and to the Law on Wildlife in 2003. However, as admitted by several government officials interviewed (including the minister himself and Mauricio Limón, head of the Ministry's Legal Department), there was no significant input from civil society actors in these policy changes.
 11. Fox joined Coca-Cola of Mexico soon after he finished his studies in 1965 and left the company in 1979 as the CEO. He then managed his frozen foods export firm, Grupo Fox, until he decided to run for political office in 1988, when he was elected as Member of Congress and, eventually, governor of the state of Guanajuato. Fox can be considered an 'outsider' to Mexican politics. Not only was he the first president since 1929 to have emerged from the private sector, but he did not have a strong relationship with the PAN; he joined the party in 1987, only 13 years before becoming president.
 12. Fox declared publicly that he would apply to politics the various skills he had acquired as CEO of Coca-Cola Mexico.
 13. These included individuals from the international institutional community, such as Julio Frenk, who worked for the World Health Organization and became Health Minister; Jorge Castañeda, who had been a cofounder of the Mexican Socialist Party and very influential in the 1994 campaign of Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas and was appointed Foreign Affairs Minister; and the intellectual and former independent Senator Adolfo Aguilar Zinser, who became the co-ordinator of Fox's security cabinet.
 14. Interview with Victor Lichtinger, Environment Minister (2000-2003), Mexico City, 24 June 2005.
 15. Interview with Adolfo Aguilar Zinser, National Security Advisor (2000-2002), Mexico City, 30 July 2004.
 16. See the report in *Reforma* of 3 September 2003 'Reprueban ONG relevo en la Semarnat'.
 17. This has certainly been the case in Brazil (Hochstetler and Keck 2007).

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