



## Research article

# Competing actors in the climate change arena in Mexico: A network analysis

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## ABSTRACT

This paper analyzes the actors in the climate change arena and their influence in directing Mexico toward policies that decrease greenhouse gas emissions, such as the carbon tax and climate change law. The network analysis of the agreement of these laws and public policies in Mexico is a lesson for any country that is in the process of designing and adopting environmental laws. The research is performed using a network analysis that is derived from interviews with various main actors and a discourse analysis of the media. Results show that actors do not coordinate their efforts—they meet frequently but in different inter-ministerial commissions—and do not enforce the same policies. The actors in the industry have formed strong coalitions against the carbon tax and the General Law on Climate Change, whereas international institutions have formed coalitions that support these policies and laws.

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## 1. Introduction

Climate change is one of the most important environmental threats that countries are confronting. Mexico is considered a Non-Annex 1 country in Kyoto's Protocol; although there is no compulsory country reduction target in this classification, Mexico has made some efforts in the legal and political arenas to mitigate climate change. Its most important achievement has been the approval of the General Law of Climate Change (GLCC) in 2012, published in the official diary (DOF, 2012), making Mexico the first developing nation to enact such a law. It also imposed an average carbon tax of \$3.50 per ton of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent on domestic emissions and, in September 2014, announced the goal of obtaining 35% of its energy from renewable sources by 2024.

According to Mexico's Special Program of Climate Change (SPCC) described in the official diary (DOF, 2009), Mexico is grouped

among the countries with a high Gross Domestic Product, high population, and high emissions<sup>1</sup> and has set an ambitious target: to decrease greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by half between 2000 and 2050. This goal implies a decrease from 664 to 339 of MtCO<sub>2</sub>e; the projections indicate that, with no intervention, Mexico will reach the level of 1089 of MtCO<sub>2</sub>e by 2050.<sup>2</sup>

These agreements represent a challenge for Mexico, whose energy infrastructure is insufficient and outdated, and whose energy services have historically been provided by government monopolies. The Mexican economy is highly dependent on oil prices and remittances, as well as on fossil fuels for production and, therefore, for economic growth. Reducing the carbon intensity of the economy is a considerable challenge since fossil fuels account

<sup>1</sup> This group includes Japan, Germany, the USA, South Korea, the UK, Brazil, Italy, France, Indonesia, Turkey, Russia, and India, among others.

<sup>2</sup> The GHG target was part of Mexico's Copenhagen Pledge commitments, although this agreement was not legally binding. In 2010, Mexico emitted 748 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e that contributed to 1.4% of global emissions and that are mainly derived from burning fossil fuels and from productive and transformation oil processes.

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