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"Recentralising Political Power Through Decentralised Environmental Governance: A Case from Mexico's Early REDD+ Program"

Bee, Beth A.

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The decentralisation of environmental governance is often associated with the interests of political parties and the fight for political power. In Mexico, constitutional reforms sought to provide more autonomy to local municipal governments, but until now, have had paradoxical effects. Now, in the face of international commitments like REDD+, Mexico is promoting the formation of decentralised parastatal organisations called *Inter-municipal Juntas*, to oversee broadly-defined environmental conservation activities at the local scale. Although the *Juntas* are proposed to be a model of decentralised environmental governance, this article draws upon a case study of one such *Junta* in the state of Jalisco to demonstrate that in reality, they merely serve to re-centralise political power at the local scale. Utilising the literature on decentralised environmental governance as well as the literature on democracy, decentralisation, and state power in Mexico, this article illustrates how the economic and political marginalisation of the municipalities in the region combined with the power of the political parties, particularly the PRI, undermine the process of decentralisation, and consequently the democratisation of environmental governance in Mexico. Such deficiencies have implications not only for environmental governance in Mexico but also for the broader process of democracy in Mexico. (Text from author's abstract)

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