Abstract

The Zapatista uprising in Chiapas has presented a challenge for theories of democracy and citizenship. Although the demands of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation are framed in terms of democratization, we should not assume that these demands can be contained within the individualist parameters of liberal political philosophy. I use social movement theory and discourse analysis to discuss the novelty and political significance of the Zapatista rebellion, giving particular attention to indigenous women within the movement and their gender-based claims.

In July 1996 the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) held a week-long conference at five sites in the Central Highlands and Lacandon forest regions of Chiapas in southeastern Mexico. Delegates from more than 40 countries attended the meeting, entitled the “Intercontinental Encounter against Neoliberalism and for Humanity”. For 6 days more than 3,000 thousand Zapatista sympathizers from as far away as Japan, France, Australia, and Argentina discussed the impact of capitalist restructuring and strategies of resistance in their countries.

The goal was simply to engage in dialogue and build understanding
between different perspectives. It was united by the theme of neoliberalism and the future of humanity, but it did not offer any single theory or political ideology under which all resistance could be subsumed. Indeed, most delegates insisted on the need to avoid creating another International. The collapse of communism was understood less as the "end of history" and more as the opportunity to create a new political imaginary that could articulate the plurality of popular struggles through a decentralized and democratic movement for global change. Rejecting the idea of predetermined processes of human emancipation, the encounter instead identified itself as the international of hope. Its practice would be governed by solidarity, communication and cooperation in furthering resistance to neoliberalism. Rather than proposing a common set of actions, each delegation was free to adopt the tactics and strategies that corresponded most to their historical and geopolitical circumstances.²

This encounter therefore raised several issues that help us link the particular experience of Chiapas to global problems of exclusion, theories of citizenship, and women's struggles. National borders have certainly been transcended by the Zapatistas, despite the fact that they are territorially restricted by more than 30,000 troops of the Mexican army. Only three Zapatistas have been able to set foot outside Chiapas since the 1 January 1994 uprising. The first was Comandanta Ramona, a young indigenous woman who attended a national congress of indigenous peoples in Mexico City in October 1996. A year later, two other Zapatistas traveled to Spain to participate in the "Second Intercontinental Encounter For Humanity and Against Neoliberalism."

The Zapatistas have revealed in a dramatic way that if traditional citizenship operates spatially, global citizenship operates temporally, escaping statist identities and embarking on a journey to a not yet existent global political community (Falk 1994). These "citizen pilgrims" inevitably face the backlash of those political and social forces that reassert territoriality as the basis for one's identity, as witnessed in the Mexican case by the government's attempt to delegitimize the Zapatistas by treating them as a purely local expression of civil disorder. However, the global appeal of the Zapatistas has now been firmly established, aided in part by cyberspace but more importantly by the novelty and inclusiveness of their political discourse. The fact that the intercontinental encounter was affectionately dubbed the intergaláctica by organizers and participants only served to underline the temporal and global aspects of citizenship, rather than the territorial and statist traditions of modern social theory.

Such an inclusive project raises once more the question of how women's struggles for equality are to be articulated with other social
struggles. Does the inclusiveness of Zapatista discourse deny the idea of a female subject with definable gendered interests and identity? If so, is this not to remove the grounding of a feminist politics by putting into question the interests of women as women? Is there a danger that women's interests will be once again subsumed into a male-oriented agenda, or are we faced with a more open process in which different identities are brought together in a mutually empowering way?

These questions also address the broader issue of the relationship between the universal and the particular. Whereas the affirmation of universal values excludes dissident voices, the assertion of pure difference denies the relational character of all identities. We can move beyond this impasse only by rejecting the possibility of some uncontested ontological foundation. However, we must also recognize that, in asserting their particular demands and identities, social groups are inevitably drawn into a relative universalization. As Laclau has stated, "the impossibility of a universal ground does not eliminate its need; it just transforms the ground into an empty place which can be partially filled in a variety of ways (the strategies of this filling is what politics is about)" (Laclau 1995, 164). It is this recognition of the political that allows us to understand why and how social groups attempt to transcend their own particular identities and project them for the society as a whole. This is the meaning given by Gramsci to the term "hegemony." Although all identities undergo a process of hybridization as they assume a relational position within broader chains of signification, this does not necessarily disempower them. In fact, it may be argued that the lack of any predetermined notion of citizenship allows for its contingent construction precisely through such a process. As Laclau has noted, "only a conservative identity, closed on itself, could experience hybridization as a loss... [hence] the particular can only fully realize itself if it constantly keeps open, and constantly redefines, its relation to the universal" (Laclau 1995, 164).

If we accept this point, then the reality of citizenship is transformed from a pre-given "signified" (which has only to be realized through political reforms), into an "empty signifier" whose content is filled by the political choices of social agents. It is perhaps this relational and contingent view of citizenship that is most relevant when discussing perspectives from Latin America, where the universalist notions of liberal republicanism have more often served the most exclusionary and authoritarian forms of politics.

In fact, the theme of citizenship has been a recurring feature in recent literature on social movements in Latin America. An important contribution of this work has been to refocus attention on the political
nature of exclusion, in contrast to earlier debates which revolved around either the assumed cultural or economic determinants of inclusion and exclusion (or “development” and “underdevelopment”). This article therefore focuses on possible connections between social movement theory, Zapatista discourse, and the “return of the political” to social analysis. In doing so, the intention is not to simply refer to the Zapatistas as a “case study” to be interpreted within available theoretical discourses, but to open up a debate on the Zapatistas’ contribution to rethinking citizenship and women’s struggles at the end of the twentieth century.

Social Movement Theory and Radical Democracy

Since the early 1980s there has been a surge of interest in popular movements in Latin America. Students have documented and analyzed the struggles of the urban poor, women, indigenous peoples, peasants, human rights activists, environmentalists, gays and lesbians, independent unions, and religious and cultural associations. The sheer number of grassroots organizations appeared to represent the “rebirth of civil society” as new actors and new demands forced their way into the political arena. Early writings were marked by optimistic accounts of self-managed, autonomous expressions of social solidarity. Spaces for democratic organization and representation were being carved out in the face of authoritarian rule and dependent capitalism. However, by the beginning of the 1990s, scholars debated the reasons for an apparent decline in social movement activity, the persistence of clientelism in newly democratizing countries, and the difficulties of maintaining mass participation. In this section I discuss some of the main lines of debate within this literature, focusing on the definition, novelty, and significance of popular movements in Mexico and Latin America.

What is a social, or popular, movement? Problems of definition have been endemic to this literature. Do agricultural cooperatives or communal kitchens constitute social movements? Or are social movements only those movements that challenge the central institutions and values of a political system? David Slater’s (1985b) volume *New Social Movements and the State in Latin America* was one of the first attempts to reconceptualize popular protest in Latin America. Slater identified a diverse array of movements and argued that they are defined by the ways in which they break with traditional practices and theories of collective action (1985a). He therefore took issue with the influential work of Alain Touraine, who reserved the category of social movements to those struggles over historicity, or “the set of cultural models that rule social practices” (Touraine 1988, 8). Touraine based his theory on the experience of postindustrial societies of
Western Europe. In this context social movements are simply "the work that society performs on itself"—that is, the struggle over cultural meanings, identities, and difference. Material demands and class divisions no longer occupy the center of social conflict. In their place we find the critiques of modernity itself posed by pacifists, feminists, environmentalists, ethnic minorities, gays and lesbians, and cultural movements. Consequently, for Touraine, much of the activity that passes as a "social movement" in Latin America can best be described as "collective defensive behavior." This category refers to actions directed toward the state which seek solutions for particularistic demands. For example, a local peasant movement that demands access to land or credit does not challenge the state and its mode of operation, much less the ideas and values which underpin government policy or modernity. Some movements, however, may develop the potential to modify decisions or even whole systems of decision-making. Touraine defined these movements as "social struggles." In this category we might find movements that are able to transform government policies through their mobilization and pressure. Finally, there are "social movements" per se. In Touraine's view these are largely absent in Latin America because the dominant modes of historicity are established by the state and by the most integrated political actors, rather than by autonomous social actors of civil society. Popular organizations must direct their demands to the state if they are to achieve solutions. They are forced to play by the state's rules and are therefore unable to challenge the "cultural models that rule social practices."

Several of the contributors to Slater's volume rejected Touraine's classification as either misleading or simply Eurocentric. Slater (1985b) made the valuable argument that the human rights movement in Argentina, for example, may fit each of Touraine's three categories; it is a form of defensive collective behavior in its immediate goal to obtain the release or appearance of all political prisoners. Their struggle for an accountable justice system can also be seen as a social struggle to transform governmental structures. Finally, the invocation of ethical values challenged the highly authoritarian and patriarchal cultural models that ruled social practices in Argentina. As such, Slater suggested that the human rights movement would qualify in each of these categories. But are we then left without any analytical distinction between an urban neighborhood association and a fully-fledged national movement for far-reaching political change? Clearly we need some way of distinguishing between levels of political engagement without assuming the rigid separation of defensive collective behavior from social struggles or social movements. Slater attempted to resolve the definitional problem by invoking the novelty of Latin American
social movements. That is, movements are defined by their (new) 
political practices rather than by their social composition or cultural 
critique of modernity. We will return to the novelty question below, 
but here it is important to note this way of defining social movements 
as political actors.

This political definition guided the contributions to the volume 
*Popular Movements and Political Change in Mexico* edited by Joe 
Foweraker and Ann Craig (1990). Foweraker (1990) argued that 
movements are defined by their political practices rather than by their 
social composition. They are therefore better understood not as social 
movements but as “popular movements,” in that they seek to establish 
the “people” as a political actor. They are unavoidably “institutional-
ist” in their orientation. That is, they must engage the political system 
if they are to get demands met, but they also contest the terms of 
political representation. In the Mexican case this translates into a 
pervasive challenge to clientelism and regional or sectoral bossism 
(*caciquismo*). Popular movements are therefore institutionalist and 
nonconformist. They seek representation without sacrificing political 
autonomy. This goal involves them in a gradualist strategy to redefine 
the parameters of struggle and expand the horizons of what is politi-
cally possible. This struggle takes place in the interstices of a contested 
and shifting “legal and institutional terrain.”

Another contributor to the Foweraker and Craig’s volume, Gerardo 
Munck (1990), saw the usefulness of Touraine’s classification and 
argued that the term “social movement” should be kept for those 
struggles that impinge on the “central conflicts” of the day. However, 
he also emphasized the political (rather than social or cultural) nature 
of popular movements. Like Foweraker’s emphasis on the transforma-
tion of the legal and institutional terrain, Munck defined social move-
ments as “agents of contestation of the boundaries of the dominant 
order: they do not quibble about the means but are engaged in a 
struggle over the ends” (Munck 1990, 26). This means that social 
movements differ from other forms of social interaction because they 
actively and consciously seek to bring about change in their political 
environment.

Other authors have been more reluctant to provide a single defini-
tion for such a diverse array of popular struggles. Susan Eckstein 
pREFERRED to introduce her volume *Power and Popular Protest: Latin 
American Social Movements* (1989a) by defining the multiple factors 
that lead to movement emergence. In general, these authors shared a 
historical–structural perspective that emphasized the social bases of 
defiance, class structures and alliances, and political impact. However, 
as Eckstein noted, “the analytic lenses . . . are somewhat eclectic”
This more eclectic approach allowed for analytical description of particular case studies, but stopped short of engaging in theoretical debates on definitional issues.

Similarly, Arturo Escobar and Sonia Alvarez, editors of The Making of Social Movements in Latin America: Identity, Strategy and Democracy (1992b), avoided a single definition of social movements. In their introduction, they discuss Touraine’s classification and allow the reader to decide upon its utility. They suggest that some degree of analytical distinction is necessary but warn against dismissing some social movements because they do not visibly challenge state institutions in the traditional ways. They also refer to Elizabeth Jelin’s (1986) argument that it is the researcher who constructs the object “social movement” by reading a set of practices through a particular lens. Furthermore, social movements are seen more as processes rather than unitary, coherent, collective actors. Social movements do not appear on the political scene as already constituted. Instead, we need to adopt a more dynamic and historical perspective that defines social movements in terms of their evolution as “agents of contestation” (Escobar and Alvarez 1992a, 7).

The problems of definition are partly resolved by referring to the novelty of today’s social movements. Slater drew on the work of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (1985) in defining the novelty of “new social movements.” In Western Europe and the United States, new movements were seen as responses to new forms of subordination characteristic of postwar capitalist societies. For these authors, the increasing commodification, bureaucratization, and massification of everyday life were seen as generating counter-hegemonic struggles to resist the impersonal power of the market and the state. Examples of such struggles included feminism, environmentalism, and pacifism. New social movements also represented a crisis of traditional paradigms of interest representation. Rather than assuming the separate location of a political level where interests rooted in the social sphere find representation, Laclau and Mouffe argued that the politicization of more and more social spaces led to the emergence of autonomous social movements, thereby dissolving the traditionally accepted division between the political and the social. The feminist slogan “the personal is political” or the student movements’ struggles to democratize university education can be seen as examples of the expansion of democratic struggles to more social arenas. Finally, Slater (1985b) referred to the value which new social movements place on grassroots democracy, or basismo, in opposition to the hierarchical and patriarchal relations of centralized power that marked political parties and “old” social movements such as the labor unions. Again, new social
movements were seen as promoting greater gender equality, more
decentralized structures, and respect for cultural diversity.

Referring more specifically to Latin America, Slater (1985b) noted
some similarities and some crucial differences. New movements were
also seen as resisting state power, but here state power was defined
by excessive centralization and authoritarianism, rather than the mas-
sification and bureaucratization of Western liberal democracies. This
was particularly evident with the overthrow of populist regimes and
the establishment of military rule in the Southern Cone and Brazil.
In this new, more exclusionary political environment, social move-
ments had to develop new strategies and practices of resistance. Sec-
don, as a result of fiscal crisis and the adoption of monetarist policies,
the state in Latin America during the 1970s was unable or unwilling
to meet the basic material needs of citizens. New movements re-
sponded by organizing to meet their own needs while building pressure
on government agencies to modify policies that hurt the poor. These
movements were particularly visible in the urban periphery of large
Latin American cities where basic services were lacking. The large
proportion of women participating in these movements and the shift
from workplace to community-based demands marked their novelty
in the Latin American context. Finally, one of the effects of authoritar-
ian rule and economic hardship was to generate grassroots movements
that sought to maintain their autonomy from existing political parties.
With the political sphere “frozen,” it was impossible to have social
interests represented at that level, even if we assume that the distinction
remained a theoretically valid one in Latin America. As a result we
find the politicization of social spaces, but this is not a result of
postindustrial sensibilities to the crisis of modernity, but simply a
necessity of life under military or authoritarian rule. Nevertheless,
this politicization of the social in Latin America also marks a break
with earlier patterns of popular representation which tended to be
dominated by political parties and clientelistic networks of patronage.
The systematic dismantling of linkages of this type led popular groups
to search for new, autonomous spaces for expressing their demands.
Religious, cultural, and nonpartisan activities became the ideal spaces
for rebuilding people's capacity to resist political, economic, and social
exclusion. In the process, they also generated new ways of acting
politically, which developed into a parallel critique of the hierarchical
nature of political parties.

The work of Laclau and Mouffe figured prominently in Slater's
analysis. It is therefore useful to describe the main points which they
put forward in *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical
Democratic Politics* (1985). Laclau and Mouffe argued that the pres-
ence of new social movements obliges us to break with economic reductionism, teleological explanations of social phenomena and, as we have noted, the traditional model of interest representation. Economic reductionism and teleology, which they see as the main weaknesses of orthodox Marxism, tended to establish necessary relationships between class position and class consciousness. The term “false consciousness” was used to explain the frequent lack of correspondence between real and supposedly objective interests. For Laclau and Mouffe, the rise of new social movements demonstrates the futility of economic reductionism. Now we see multiclass movements such as feminism or gay rights which, although shaped in part by class relations, cannot be reduced to them alone. This is because all identities are inherently contingent on the articulation of political discourses. In this way we can explain how groups of workers support anti-immigrant policies and xenophobic leaders, even though other workers are negatively affected. In other words, their identity as workers does not necessarily constitute the articulating principle for their shared political identity. We also need to see how other identities of race, ethnicity, gender, nationality, or sexuality are articulated within competing discourses which contest the hegemony, or political and ideological leadership, of the dominant bloc. If this is true, then there is no sense in arguing that political consciousness follows a linear path toward a predetermined end. The teleology of both Marxist and modernization theory cannot be upheld when the direction of change is seen to be contingent and relational rather than given by ideology or economics.

The break with reductionism and teleology is also related to another aspect of new social movements. For Laclau (1985), their main novelty lay in the politicization and differentiation of an increasing number of subject positions. The horizon of the politically possible is not reduced to a single moment of rupture such as the seizure of state power, but instead is marked by a multiplicity of irreducible identities and demands. This is where Laclau and Mouffe saw the political significance of new social movements. Instead of generating demands which are then articulated in a separate political sphere, they are revealing and contesting the political nature of social conflicts or what they call “antagonisms.” In their critique of Marxism, Laclau and Mouffe (1985) therefore rejected the primacy of capitalist relations of production in determining social conflict and, by extension, denied the centrality of the working class as the privileged historical agent of social transformation. This “post-Marxist position” led to a polemical debate over whether Hegemony and Socialist Strategy represented an “exit from Marxism” (Geras 1987) or the reorientation of Marxist thought away from class reductionism and toward a radical demo-
cratic politics (Laclau 1990a; Laclau and Mouffe 1987; Mouffe 1992, 1993).

For students of Latin America, it was clear that economic exploitation remained more important for social protest than it was in the postindustrial societies of the West. However, class identities could not be simply read off from economic relations here either. Instead, they were mediated by numerous political discourses which sought to construct the meaning of “class” in distinctive ways. Laclau’s own (1977) analysis of Peronism in Argentina sought to demonstrate how political identities were articulated through discourses of nationalism and populist ideology, thereby dissolving the notion of any “true” objective set of interests which define proletarian or peasant consciousness.

If all identities are inherently relational, the task for the Left is to articulate multiple subject positions within a radical democratic discourse that would contest all forms of authoritarian politics. However, Laclau and Mouffe (1985) questioned whether radical democracy is possible in the Third World, as it is contingent on the prior constitution of a democratic imaginary. That is, radical democracy cannot emerge directly from authoritarianism but only as the extension and deepening of the democratic revolution initiated by the Enlightenment. This project is not constrained by the hegemony of bourgeois liberalism, but is open to radical transformation through the struggles of diverse social movements around multiple points of antagonism. In contrast, in Third World countries, Laclau and Mouffe (1985) argued that the political field has traditionally been divided more clearly in binary oppositions, for example, between peasants and landowners, people and oligarchy, nation and imperialism, or proletariat and bourgeoisie. Social agents therefore occupy popular subject positions in contrast to the democratic subject positions occupied by new social movements in the postindustrial West.

Nevertheless, Laclau (1985) concluded his essay in Slater’s volume by asking whether the transitions from military rule in Latin America in the early 1980s would lead to the reproduction of traditional political spaces which have tended to reduce all political practice to a relation of representation. Or, he continued, “will the radicalization of a variety of struggles based on a plurality of subject positions lead to a proliferation of spaces, reducing the distance between representatives and represented?” (Laclau 1985, 41–42). That is, would the new social movements remain imprisoned by the political discourses of the past, such as the Leninist faith in the revolutionary vanguard or the national variants of populism, both with their cult of the leader and their invocation of a collective will? Or would these movements break with the past and articulate new political visions from numerous points rather than one central point of antagonism?
The fact that Laclau posed this question contradicts the idea that radical democracy can only emerge in postindustrial society. In posing the question, he addressed the potential for social movements to expand the political arena to previously marginalized groups. Social movements were new to the extent that they not only presented new demands but did so within new political discourses. Identity therefore became as central to analysis as structural conditions. In fact, the impact of structural reforms in the economy and the state could only be interpreted through a relational analysis of popular movements' strategies of resistance, negotiation, and accommodation. While class-based identities remained important, they were not the only ones; researchers documented the uses of gender, ethnicity, and religion in social movement activity. In later work, Laclau (1990b) reiterated his position that the main obstacle to radical democracy in the Third World was the failure of the Left to take seriously the specifically democratic tasks of socialism. In answering Aletta Norval's (1990) question as to whether a radical democratic politics could emerge in South Africa and other Third World countries, Laclau (1990b) replied that this was possible but depended on the transformation of the political imaginary of liberation movements and vanguard parties which have historically tended to construct totalizing ideologies that ignore or suppress ambiguity, difference, and dialogue. Laclau's personal experience of Left politics in Argentina also fed his concern about the lack of articulation between socialism and democracy in Third World liberation struggles (Laclau 1990c). For him, socialism is a part of the global democratic revolution of the past 200 years. The point is not to subordinate democracy to socialism but to further them both by working for their political articulation.

The argument that new social movements were indeed "new" did not convince everyone. For some, it appeared to leave out the historical dimension of popular protest. Referring to the Mexican case, Alan Knight (1990) described the continuities in popular movements, noting that identity had always been problematical and contingent. It was therefore no great revelation to find different sectors of the working class simultaneously supporting the ruling PRI, the Mexican Communist Party (PCM), or the far right. Mexico's new popular movements of the 1980s could be understood by reference to the effects of economic crisis on the poor, while the supposedly "new practices" were simply an extension of quite traditional strategies of appealing to those in positions of power. In short, the popular movements in Mexico were not new in the way that new social movements theorists believed. Although they may have involved new actors or new demands, their practices remained the same and should not be misread as the sign of an emerging democratic political culture.
Knight’s criticisms, however, were made at an empirical rather than at a theoretical level. Laclau’s arguments could easily accommodate the presence of antagonism at any point in history. It was not a matter of how far back we want to go, since the social, by definition, is always constituted by antagonism and never by the ideological closure of state discourses. The difference concerns the novelty of contemporary movements, but here Laclau had not made any detailed reference to Mexico or Latin America beyond the fact that the transitions from authoritarian rule potentially allowed for a proliferation of political actors, rather than their reabsorption by the totalizing imaginaries of Marxism and populism. That Knight did not see such a breakthrough does not deny the theoretical distinctions made by Laclau. Furthermore, the fact that economic dislocations played such a central role for Mexican popular movements in the 1980s in no way implies that these movements automatically adopted a class character, still less a socialist consciousness. Again, Knight’s critique is limited to an empirical account of popular mobilization rather than a radically different understanding of the contingency of identities. In fact, the two were not as far apart as it seemed, since they both gave primacy to agency, history, and ambiguity rather than objective structures, interests, or laws. Knight’s (1986) interpretation of the Mexican Revolution is consistent with this less deterministic, relational approach.

Similar empirical problems were posed by a group of Latin American sociologists who, in the midst of economic crisis, saw not plurality and diversity, but fragmentation, anomie and a radical disarticulation of the social (Zermeño 1990). Postmodern politics in Latin America was not primarily about the discovery of new sensibilities and respect for difference. It was the crisis of development, the state and the hope of social integration which marked the “lost decade” of the 1980s. Drugs, street crime, and gangs came to occupy the spaces vacated by the state and political parties. In these conditions, the political articulation of demands depended not on new practices of radical democracy, but on its antithesis: the caudillo, or charismatic leader who claimed to interpret the “collective will.” The caudillo was certainly no stranger to Mexican politics (nor to the Left) and, in the absence of strong civil associations and parties, the “return of the leader” appeared as the only possible means of integrating the masses. If hegemony was not to be used out of historical context, these writers demanded a sociological analysis of popular movements, their strengths and, in particular, their limitations. However, this Tourainian account of resistance as basically collective defensive behavior tended toward a determinism which obviated the need for political analysis. The Zapatista rebellion defied such determinism (and pessi-
mism) by drawing attention once more to the political nature of exclusionary strategies of development.

Zapatista Discourse and the "Return of the Political"

If it is true that structures cannot determine the actions of social agents, then the limits of political domination tend to become more and more apparent as established paradigms enter into crisis. This period of indeterminacy creates new possibilities for political intervention in the redefinition of a society's historicity. This process is an uneven one. Not all regions or sectors of a society undergo the same transformations, even when the global strategies of international capital appear to homogenize social relations. In this sense we need to liberate ourselves from any deterministic account of why a rebellion against neoliberalism has occurred in Chiapas. If neoliberal economics are now universally adopted, then why was it that the most significant challenge has arisen in one of the world's poorest and most politically marginalized regions? The answer to this question cannot be deduced solely from economic dislocations. Instead, we must look to the specificity of political struggle and the recognition of the socially constitutive role of antagonism.

Antagonism is understood by Laclau and Mouffe (1985) as the necessary condition of any political community. This is clearly distinct from theories of modernization and development where antagonism is reduced to the legacy of tradition or to the presence of deviance. In either case, the assumption was that harmony depends on the elimination or suppression of antagonism. The practice of rural development in Chiapas and elsewhere can be seen in this way. It was argued that poverty could be eradicated through technical interventions of an increasingly sophisticated type, rather than questioning the power relations that constitute the social fabric of the "target" communities. Similarly, communities were conceived as unified wholes, ready to receive development "packages" of equal benefit to all members. Peasants who refused to fully cooperate were deemed to be "traditional" and in need of education. Knowledge and technical expertise displaced politics as the solution to poverty and hunger. Development planners sought out those community leaders who displayed the right kind of aptitude to modernize their production techniques. Communities could, in this way, be continually transformed through the interventions of rational planning and knowledge of market economics. This is not to say that these skills are irrelevant to the task of improving rural livelihoods, but they do, of course, avoid treating social relations as politically contingent. This is how the "antipolitics machine" of
“development” operates as a mode of social regulation rather than as a means to eradicate poverty (Ferguson 1990).

Nor should we assume that communities are preconstituted as systems of nonantagonistic relations. Attempts to fix the meaning of community in such a way are simply political strategies that are always open to contestation and transformation. This is what Laclau, following Derrida, means by the subversion of structures by the “constitutive outside” of the social (1990a). No structure or discourse (whether of community, identity, ethnicity, state, or nation) achieves full closure. Ideological constructions of such entities exist but they are political claims to an objectivity that is permanently threatened by the radical contingency of the social. The attempts to construct social movements depend on the articulatory practices of the agents involved. There is similarly a danger that those who sympathize with the Zapatistas may do so on the basis of an essentialist faith in the harmonious nature of indigenous communities. The fact that Zapatista communities make consensual decisions only means that they have created the internal mechanisms of deliberation that allow such decisions to emerge; it does not imply the absence of antagonism within communities or individuals. As Comandante David reminded participants in the intercontinental encounter, “You have all arrived at our heart and you should see that we are not special, but just simple and ordinary men and women” (EZLN 1996).

This process of popular struggle does not take place at a distance from the institutions of the state but must continually traverse that terrain, while leaving its political imprint for future struggles. We have thus moved away from conceptions of state and civil society as two rigidly divided spheres of the social. The state can be better understood as the always partial institutionalization of social relations that deny it a Hegelian rationality of purpose. For the case of Mexico, this is evident from the unevenness of state presence across such a heterogeneous social landscape. However, until recently, the postrevolutionary state in Mexico has been conceptualized by most social scientists in precisely the opposite way. Marxist and dependency theorists viewed the state as the instrument of the ruling class and U.S. imperialism. Liberal theorists conceived of the state as a predator on a potentially individualistic civil society. The development of Mexican capitalism was hindered not by the nature of Mexico’s external relations but by its own political system. Clientelism, corruption, and excessive bureaucratic regulation were seen as subverting the rule of law, respect for private enterprise, and modern Western values. Rather than mediating between contending interests of a pluralist society, the Mexican state has dominated and crushed that society in the name
of revolutionary nationalism. Note that in both cases, the state is already constituted at the level of idea prior to any historical analysis of its political contingency. The state is either an instrument of class rule or, potentially, a neutral arbiter between the free associations of civil society.  

Neither of these approaches leave room for internal contradictions, compromise solutions, ad hoc expediency or, for that matter, nonstate actors. Yet, as it became clearer that the executive, the PRI, and the state were not omnipotent (which some historians had always questioned anyway), the opportunity for a different reading of Mexican politics emerged. The student movement of 1968 marked a watershed in this regard. It certainly was not the first challenge to the authoritarianism of the PRI government. It was preceded by the sectoral struggles of peasants, teachers, miners, railroad workers, and doctors. It was also preceded by local electoral struggles and the continuity of cardenista identities. These local struggles and identities form an extremely rich "constitutive outside" which have periodically revealed the incompleteness of the PRI's ideological construction of the state. Their constant threat to pretensions of ideological closure was evidenced by the blatantly repressive acts of a supposedly revolutionary nationalist discourse. We can refer to the persecution of Communist and cardenista activists in the main national unions in the 1940s and 1950s, the massive use of fraud in the 1952 presidential elections to defeat a cardenista candidate, the repression of the railroad workers' strikes in 1958-59, the assassination of Morelos peasant leader Rubén Jaramillo and his family in 1962, and the arrest of the Communist leaders of the National Liberation Movement (MLN) in 1963. The list can easily be extended, but the analytical purpose is to demonstrate the failure of successive PRI governments to achieve the type of ideological closure that could sustain essentialist interpretations of their decisions and actions.

The student movement and other popular movements after 1968 were in some way a continuation of this long history of struggle against authoritarianism. However, they introduced something more than a simple continuation of older movements, and this is where we must distinguish their articulatory practices in terms of a broadening of democratic struggles to more and more social relations. The specifically democratic character of these struggles is given by the construction of a new political imaginary which found its moment of articulation less in the appeal of revolutionary nationalism and more in the language of social and political rights. This new imaginary did not necessarily have to break with earlier discourses of liberation struggles. Instead, we find a coexistence, even a blending, of historically specific identities with an emerging discourse of democratic citizenship.
For example, the history of new peasant movements since the mid-1970s can be seen as a series of attempts to establish mechanisms of self-government and participation in decision-making. The forerunners of the EZLN were at the same time entirely pragmatic in that they sought solutions to issues that were determined through participatory means to be the ones that most required attention (Harvey 1990, 1992). The release of jailed leaders, the recovery of communal lands, the creation of economic apparatuses to retain peasant surplus—these were not abstract problems of theoretical discussion, but the conditions of possibility for the democratic constitution of the social. This democratic imaginary was not constructed out of thin air but from the contingent articulation of existing discourses that had begun to subvert local systems of power relations. The assertion of land rights by indigenous organizations, the decision to remain independent of political parties, the priority given to mechanisms of broad participation and self-government, and the critique of caudillismo—each of these involved conscious decisions, taken through political deliberation and struggle, to transform the real conditions of economic and social existence in Chiapas. None of them was able to be fully realized as horizons of political identification. The nondemocratic practices of caudillismo persisted, and participation was too often limited to a supporting role in demonstrations and marches. Nevertheless, the assertion of popular democratic ideals within these struggles served as a horizon or political frontier that established a democratic identity in opposition to the antidemocratic practices not only of the PRI and the caciques, but also of popular organizations.

The emergence of this democratic imaginary appeared to be continually frustrated by successive rounds of co-optation, repression, and the accompanying factionalism within peasant movements. This certainly appeared to be the case before 1 January 1994. With the reforms to Article 27 of the Constitution and the signing of NAFTA, peasant organizations were split into fragments from which no articulatory politics could be expected. In this context the federal government's antipoverty strategy (PRONASOL) had the effect of simply multiplying the fragments as each local committee petitioned the executive for its own share of social spending. Participation was redefined according to the logic of individualized projects, displacing the earlier attempts to build participatory mass movements for social change. The articulatory practices of the Salinas government were so logically coherent that they even merited a name. "Social liberalism" combined neoliberal economics with targeted social welfare programs and the freeing of individuals from the paternalism of a corrupt and unaffordable bureaucracy. By the end of 1993 it appeared that this political reconstitution of the social was complete. The cardenistas had been
effectively contained through a mix of repression, electoral fraud and government spending. The national leadership of the PAN had been co-opted into a new historic bloc based on advocacy of the free market and a strong (but lean) state. The agents of international capital rejoiced at Mexico's neoliberal revolution, with Salinas being named "Man of the Year" by *Forbes* magazine and columnists from *The Economist* to *The New York Times* marveling at his political savvy in bringing Mexico into line with neoliberal hegemony.

However, they had not reckoned with the "constitutive outside" that is Chiapas and the precariousness of social liberalism as a political discourse. The presence of antagonisms rooted in racism, class, and gender discrimination exploded onto the political scene with the simultaneous occupation of San Cristóbal, Ocosingo, Altamirano, Las Margaritas, Huixtán, Oxchuc, and Chanal. These actions did not simply represent anger and frustration. They were also politically articulated in a coherent set of demands for dignity, justice, and democracy. As time went by, the democratic imaginary of the EZLN became clearer to more sectors of Mexican and international society, establishing bridges for solidarity and cooperation in constructing a new political frontier.

What does this political frontier consist of? It is clearly a line to be drawn between those who control the major resources of global capitalism and those who are dispensable to capitalist accumulation. But it is not simply a matter of economic dislocations. There are many other struggles that contest relations of power based on sexist, racist, or nationalist ideologies. This is how *Subcomandante* Marcos constructed such a frontier in his invitation to the Intercontinental Encounter against Neoliberalism and for Humanity (*Subcomandante Marcos 1996*):

To the people of the world:
Brothers and sisters:

During the last years, the Power of money has set a new mask on its criminal face.
Disregarding borders, with no regard to race or color, the Power of money humiliates dignity, insults honesty and assassinates hope. Renamed "neoliberalism"—the criminal concentration of privilege, wealth and unaccountability—it democratizes misery and hopelessness.

A new world war is being waged against all of humanity. As in all world wars, what is being
sought is a new distribution of the world. This modern war... goes by the name "globalization."

The new distribution of the world consists in concentrating power in power, and misery in misery.

The new distribution of the world excludes "minorities." Indigenous peoples, youth, women, homosexuals, lesbians, people of color, immigrants, workers, peasants— ## the majority who fill the world's basements— are presented, by Power, as disposable. The new distribution of the world therefore excludes the majorities.

The modern army of finance capital and corrupt government advances, conquering in the only way it is capable of—destroying. The new distribution of the world destroys humanity.

The new distribution of the world has only one place for money and its servants. Men, women and machines are equal in servitude and disposability. The lie governs and it multiplies itself in means and methods.

A new lie is sold to us as history. The lie about the defeat of hope, The lie about the defeat of dignity, The lie about the defeat of humanity.

The mirror of Power offers us a distorted balance: the lie about the victory of cynicism, the lie about the victory of servitude, the lie about the victory of neoliberalism.

Instead of human values, it offers us stock market values. Instead of dignity, global misery. Instead of hope, emptiness. Instead of life, the international of terror.

Against the neoliberal international of terror, we raise the international of hope.
Hope, above borders,
  languages,
  colors,
  cultures,
  sexes,
  strategies and thoughts,
of all those who prefer humanity alive.

The international of hope.

Not the bureaucracy of hope,
not the opposite image, the same as that which annihilates us.
Not the Power with a new mask or with new clothing.

A breath like this, the breath of dignity.

A flower, yes, the flower of hope.

A song, yes, the song of life.

Dignity is that nation without nationality,
  that rainbow that is also a bridge,
  that murmur of the heart no matter what blood quickens it,
  that rebel irreverence that mocks borders, custom-posts and wars.

Hope is that rejection of conformity and defeat.

Life is what they owe us: the right to govern and to govern ourselves,
to think and act with a freedom that does not enslave others,
the right to give and receive what is just.

For all this,
along with those who beyond borders, race and color,
share the song of life, the struggle against death,
the flower of hope and the breath of dignity...
The Zapatista Army of National Liberation speaks...

To all who struggle for human values of democracy, liberty and justice.

To all who struggle against neoliberalism
and for the strengthening of humanity and hope
so that the two may be synonymous with the future.
To all individuals, groups, collectives, movements, social, civic and political organizations, neighborhood associations, cooperatives, all the Lefts known and to be known, non-governmental organizations, groups in solidarity with struggles of the peoples of the world, bands, tribes, intellectuals, Indigenous peoples, students, musicians, workers, artists, teachers, peasants, cultural groups, youth movements, alternative communications media, ecologists, tenants, lesbians, homosexuals, feminists, pacifists.

To all human beings
without a home, without land,
without work, without food,
without health, without education,
without freedom, without justice,
without independence, without democracy,
without peace, without tomorrow.

The Zapatista Army of National Liberation calls you together to the First Intercontinental Encounter for Humanity and Against Neoliberalism . . .

Brothers and sisters:

We need not conquer the world.
It's enough to make it new.

We. Today.

This political frontier can be seen as an attempt to articulate a plurality of struggles around the right to participate in a political community as full citizens. This is not the same as demanding that the economic and cultural resources of a community be made available to more people. It is instead questioning the way that a community makes decisions regarding what those resources should consist of in the first place. It is not therefore a matter of allowing an abstract notion of the community (which is itself politically constructed) to serve as the maximum authority on issues of morality, economics, or education. On the contrary, radical democratic discourse reveals the lack of an ultimate grounding for such authority and instead exposes its political (and therefore precarious) status. This does not deny any grounding for political action. What it denies is the affirmation of some objective rationality which underpins the development of history. However, what we do have is the present configuration of power relations and the conditions of possibility for alternative configura-
tions. It is on this terrain that political agents and discourses must prove their worth.

The "return of the political" is precisely what the EZLN seeks to establish in contemporary Mexico. It is a recognition that the crisis of the political system cannot be resolved through appeals to nonantagonistic relations such as corporatism, *concertación*, or "social liberalism." This is the importance of the peace talks, known as the "dialogue of San Andrés." Although opponents continually threaten to sabotage the dialogue, it has at least provided the space around which the antagonistic nature of the social can be recognized and acted upon. It is also the basis from which the ambiguities and contradictions of the new *zapatismo* can be addressed and will continue irrespective of the formal peace talks with the Mexican government.

**Women's Rights and Zapatismo**

The Zapatista movement also provided a new space for indigenous women to demand equal participation in their homes, communities, organizations, and nation. Although the prior history of grassroots organizing in Chiapas was marked by a predominantly male leadership, the participation of women in community life did create the conditions for a reappraisal of gender relations in the wake of the rebellion. This was most evident in the Lacandon forest where three interrelated processes helped indigenous women to assert their own demands during 1994-96. The first of these was the very fact of colonization itself, which required women to adopt nontraditional roles in the new lowland *ejidos*. Due to the lack of government assistance in providing adequate infrastructure, the migrants were left to clear the forest on their own. Women carried out as much of this work as the men, as well as caring for children and the elderly. The second process was the incorporation of women into grassroots agricultural cooperatives, health and education programs by the Diocese of San Cristóbal, and a number of NGOs. These programs began when the Diocese adopted its preferential option for the poor in the 1970s. It was deepened in the 1980s by new projects initiated by university researchers, students, NGOs, and craft cooperatives located in San Cristóbal. The third process was the creation of the EZLN itself. Male-dominated community assemblies were transformed by women's demands for equal participation in the struggle. This was reflected in the Zapatistas' Revolutionary Women's Law, which states that all women should have the right to a life free of sexual and domestic violence, the right to choose one's partner and number of children and the right to political participation on an equal footing with men (Hernández Castillo 1994).
During the first quarter of 1994, indigenous and mestizo women from independent organizations began to construct a common platform in support of the Zapatistas. In preparing their proposals for a National Democratic Convention, they met in San Cristóbal in late July 1994, where they formed the Chiapas Women’s State Convention. This meeting issued a list of demands that reflected the spirit of the Zapatistas’ revolutionary law. These included the right of women to participate in the making of laws that relate to indigenous people and women, the right to be elected to positions of responsibility within their organizations and communities, and the right to choose the number of children that they want and can maintain (Convención Estatal de Mujeres Chiapanecas 1994). They also addressed gender discrimination within indigenous communities by demanding an end to the practice of exchanging girls for money, animals, or objects and the right to choose marriage partners. Some of these proposals inevitably implied conflictual relations between indigenous men and women, between daughters and parents, and between women and the various churches, including the Catholic Diocese.

The Chiapas State Women’s Convention gradually consolidated during 1995, despite internal disputes over its understanding of feminism and women’s goals. Against the universalism of some feminists, the indigenous women appeared to be demonstrating the validity of their own particular struggles as women within a patriarchal society. Analytical distinctions between the “practical” and “strategic” gender interests of women were seen by some observers as reflecting the ethnocentric views of feminists in North America and Europe. The actions of women in Chiapas, whether in the EZLN or the state-level convention, were considered to be simultaneously practical and strategic in that they sought solutions to material problems and, in doing so, challenged the gendered power relations which had traditionally subordinated women to men (Stephen 1996). Indigenous women became active participants in organizing acts of civil resistance against the imposition of PRI mayors during the fall of 1994. They also participated in protecting the Zapatista delegates at the peace talks and in building the EZLN’s bases of support throughout the highlands and Lacandon forest. Women also drew attention to the use of sexual violence against indigenous women. Although a number of cases of rape by soldiers and police were denounced by human rights groups in the national and international media, the majority of abuses were covered by a blanket of silence. By 1996, many grassroots activists were perplexed by the weakness of the Zapatistas’ own response to this issue. Despite the opening created by the Revolutionary Law, indigenous women still felt alone in their struggle for respect and dignity (Hernández Castillo 1996).
In this context, indigenous women have continued to demand the right to be heard. Consider the conclusions to the discussion group on "Women and the Excluded Civil Society" at the first intercontinental encounter in July 1996. The participants stated that the structures of neoliberalism are grounded upon patriarchy. The patriarchal family prevents the construction of more plural forms of social structure, encompassing all in a nationalist ideology as members of one single family, based on the rule of money, armaments, and sexual violence. For the indigenous Zapatista women, the main issue was how to overcome exclusion, not only by government, but also by their own social organizations. To be listened to, to be taken into account, and to have a voice in collective decision-making are the central aspirations (EZLN 1996). Participation in the EZLN has provided many indigenous women with this space from which they can participate equally, although the conditions of possibility are contingent on the same commitment from their male compañeros. At stake are the modes of subjectivization that continue to construct women as subordinate. Within Zapatista discourse, this means a constant struggle to redefine relations between female and male supporters at all levels. In this process, there is a real tension between, on the one hand, old or new forms of discrimination and, on the other, the establishment of a new equality in which women's demands occupy an equal position in a broad set of demands for peace, democracy, and justice. If the EZLN is to successfully articulate women's demands through the latter strategy, it needs to address the type of concerns raised by Mouffe in her reflections on feminist politics:

Feminism, for me, is the struggle for the equality of women. But this should not be understood as a struggle to realize the equality of a definable empirical group with a common essence and identity—that is, women—but rather as a struggle against the multiple forms in which the category 'woman' is constructed in subordination. (1993, 88; emphasis added)

Given that there are many ways of understanding feminism, Mouffe makes the politically relevant point that a nonessentialist approach to women's struggles allows us to understand how the subject is constructed through different discourses and subject positions, rather than being reducible to some objective, prepolitical, and a priori determination. She concludes by stressing the broader applicability of this relational and political understanding of subjectivity and citizenship:

[A project of radical democratic citizenship] is also better served by a perspective that allows us to grasp the diversity of ways in
which relations of power are constructed, and helps us reveal the forms of exclusion present in all pretensions to universalism and in the claims to have found the true essence of rationality. This is why the critique of essentialism and all its different forms—humanism, rationalism, universalism—far from being an obstacle to the formulation of a feminist democratic project, is indeed the very condition of its possibility. (1993, 88)

Conclusions

It should not be assumed that the struggles of the Zapatistas will be resolved in favor of popular or indigenous notions of citizenship and democracy. The failure of the peace talks in San Andrés to achieve more than a minimal accord demonstrates the scale of the problems indigenous organizations face. The apparent ambivalence of the government to the success of the peace talks, combined with the rise of violent attacks against Zapatista sympathizers, is also an indicator of the reluctance to reconsider the direction of economic policy and the scope of political reform. As a result, it appears that earlier forms of populism and revolutionary nationalism are being replaced not by citizenship and democracy, but by a neoliberal authoritarian state.

It is worth noting that one of the principal features of such a state is its absence or weakness in regions where powerful private elites dispense their own brand of justice. Imagining a three-colored map designating the presence of legitimate and efficient state institutions, O'Donnell (1993) ranked such regions as “blue” (high state presence), “green” (middle) and “brown” (low). Chiapas has long been a “brown area,” despite the proliferation of federal and state agencies, since the real power is exercised through extra-legal means, including guardias blancas. O'Donnell's proposed solution involves the strengthening of social and political institutions, but he recognized that this is a difficult proposition because the current political crisis has led to a loss of faith in social cooperation, solidarity, and civic commitment among large portions of the population. It is here that the EZLN has at least had some success, in creating a national movement in which the aspirations of democracy and citizenship have become the articulating principles for diverse subject positions. However, the articulating principles of a radical democratic citizenship cannot be some abstract, universal notion of equality and liberty. While equality and liberty are entirely appropriate goals for any democratic movement, the actual political construction of such a project is far more complex and contradictory than this implies. At the same time, however, the contradictions do not mean that the struggle to redefine citizenship and democ-
racy is only present at a discursive level among small groups of leaders, advisers, and academics. This struggle takes place first and foremost on a daily basis in homes, families, communities, ejidos, workplaces, unions, schools, communications media, churches, political parties, and many other sites. The public expression of these struggles emerges from shared meanings around the nature of the struggles themselves and is not automatically represented as democratic struggles, just as material struggles are not always understood as class struggles. In thinking about the emergence of democratic discourse in Mexico, we therefore need to pay close attention to the collective nature of developing new expressions of political consciousness.

The implications of this analysis for the current political process in Chiapas are not insignificant. At stake is the democratization of a legal and institutional terrain that has historically discriminated against the indigenous population. But can such a reform be divorced from the economic discrimination to which this population has been subjected since the Conquest? That is, can democratization be furthered through legal changes alone, or do these changes presuppose economic and social reforms that effectively enfranchise all citizens and therefore make democratic politics possible? This question has long been a source of debate in comparative politics and has recently reappeared in the literature on transitions from authoritarian rule in Latin America. Part of this issue revolves around the need to construct democratic institutions, particularly in the judiciary and legal system, which are able to process the diverse demands of social agents through accountable and responsible mechanisms (Jelin 1996; Jelin and Hershberg 1996). Yet even these changes will not address the social and economic inequalities that led to the Zapatista uprising. In fact, for some, including the Popular Revolutionary Army (EPR), the Zapatistas' negotiation strategy has failed to win any meaningful concessions from the government. However, there is even less evidence that sporadic acts of guerrilla violence would be more successful. The actions of the EPR have instead been met by greater repression of popular movement activists and by the militarization of more areas of the country.

In contrast, the EZLN and the national indigenous movement have sought to frame economic demands within the discourse of citizenship and democracy. The question becomes not simply the "right to life" as a universal human right, but the right to decide the content of that life, one which inevitably requires changes in the current economic model and political system, and one which the Zapatistas have attempted to articulate through their own version of radical democratic citizenship. In doing so, they may also be revealing the crisis of those social theories that have relied on totalizing and teleological models.
of political representation and instead demonstrating the plurality of ways in which the particular can be articulated within inclusive projects for social transformation. Here lies the possibility for ridding difference of any pre-given political relevance and for affirming the potential of new, hybrid, and irreducible identities.

With the end of the Cold War, many theorists looked to Europe as a potential arena for the reconstruction of a normative commitment to global citizenship. Habermas (1995), for example, spoke of the need to promote "communicative pluralism" within a region-wide democratic political culture if integration was to reflect more than the economic and administrative concerns of elites. By enhancing cross-border linkages at a societal level, difference could not only be tolerated but actively celebrated. Similarly, Falk (1994) asked whether Europe would be able to "forge an ideological and normative identity" that would become more than a strategy to simply compete more effectively in global markets. In his words, "Can Europe become the bearer of values that are directly related to creating a more peaceful and just world?" (Falk 1994, 137). His pessimistic conclusion was that Europe was becoming more self-absorbed and insular, rather than rising to the normative challenges posed by globalization. Perhaps we therefore need to look to the traditional peripheries of global politics to meet these challenges. Inverting the realism of Henry Kissinger's famous dictum about how the axis of political power ran through Washington, Moscow, and Peking, we may now say that the conditions of global citizenship have been traced along a "southern axis," leading from Soweto, to Managua, to Chiapas.

NOTES


1. "Neoliberalism" here refers to the ideological and economic project of those sectors of global capitalism that have sought to reintroduce the liberal economic doctrines associated with the expansion of European capitalism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Although neoliberalism differs in some important respects from the theories of Adam Smith (most notably in regard to the dominance of monopoly capital), it does emphasize the presumed benefits of free trade, privatization, unhindered markets, and minimal state intervention. During the 1980s most national governments in Latin America adopted neoliberal economic policies. Although the precise package of reforms varied, the social costs tended to be similar: increasing income inequality, the decline in social services, the concentration of wealth, and the exclusion of the most vulnerable sectors. For the Mexican case, see Otero (1996).
2. The encounter was organized around the following five themes: (1) what type of politics do we now have, and what type of politics do we need? (2) the economic question: horror stories; (3) Culture and media (from graffiti to cyberspace); (4) What type of society is not a civil society? and (5) Many worlds fit in this world. The proceedings, speeches, and resolutions have been published in EZLN (1996).

3. These questions are inspired by Chantal Mouffe's critique of essentialism in general, and of feminist politics in particular. See Mouffe (1993), particularly chapter 5, "Feminism, Citizenship and Radical Democratic Politics."

4. Much of this discussion will refer to four edited volumes published between 1985 and 1992: Slater (1985b), Eckstein (1989b), Foweraker and Craig (1990), and Escobar and Alvarez (1992b). These volumes are particularly important because they consciously address the conceptual and theoretical problems of defining social movements, debating their novelty and establishing their political significance.

5. Teleological interpretations of social change assume an inevitable and knowable outcome of historical processes. For example, in the 1950s and 1960s, modernization theorists argued that industrial capitalism in Latin America would lead to economic growth, a strong middle class and the telos (end point) of liberal democracy. For its part, Marxist theory often assumed the telos of the collapse of capitalism, its replacement by the dictatorship of the proletariat, a transitional period of state socialism and then, after the withering away of the state, the realization of full communism, the telos of all humanity.

6. For a similar critique of both liberal and neo-Marxist interpretations of apartheid discourse in South Africa, see Norval (1996).

7. Article 27 was amended in 1992, bringing an end to land reform and opening the possibility for the privatization of communally held lands known as ejidos which had been distributed by successive administrations since the end of the Mexican Revolution in 1917.


9. The EPR made its first public appearance in the state of Guerrero in July 1996. It represents the convergence of several clandestine revolutionary groups which trace their roots to the guerrilla struggles of the early 1970s.

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