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Globalisation and resistance in post-cold war Mexico: difference, citizenship and biodiversity conflicts in Chiapas

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ABSTRACT *In the post-cold war era changes at the global, regional, national and local level are altering earlier ways of understanding and practising citizenship. In Mexico the decline of the state-guided national development project (1930s–70s) has been accompanied by the transformation of corporatist forms of political control. This article uses examples of recent biodiversity conflicts in the state of Chiapas to illustrate this process in terms of a struggle between competing models of 'market citizenship' and 'pluri-ethnic citizenship'. By focusing on the actions and demands of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation and other indigenous organisations, the article highlights how resistance to globalisation in the Lacandon rainforest of Chiapas is related to struggles for collective rights and a more inclusive form of democracy in Mexico. This also raises important questions regarding the future shape of national identities and the scope of democratic rights around the world in the post-cold war era.*

In recent years a new type of conflict has emerged over control of the biological resources of the world. The rapid pace of corporate concentration in the agro-chemical and pharmaceutical industries has been accompanied by increasing competition for access to genetic materials found in plants, fungi and other living organisms. Since the areas of greatest biodiversity happen to be located in the tropical regions of Latin America, Asia and Africa, such areas are currently the sites of new struggles over the right to use biological resources and indigenous knowledge. This article discusses biodiversity conflicts in the state of Chiapas, in southern Mexico, with the goal of illustrating some of the main connections between globalisation, democracy and development. The article also seeks to locate these cases of biodiversity conflict in the context of broader struggles over the meaning of citizenship today.

The guiding assumption of this article is that capitalist development is in the midst of a global transformation, with far-reaching implications for how people experience development. The emergence of a global 'Life Industry', dominated by a handful of transnational corporations, is of great significance for how the

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world's people gain access to food, medicines and technology. However, this transformation is also fraught with internal contradictions. It must also compete with other global processes, including the political struggles for greater democracy in many countries, the growth of international environmental law, the transnational alliances of indigenous peoples and the linkages between northern consumers and southern producers. It is not inevitable that the 'interests' of the Life Industry will be reflected in how we make decisions regarding the use of biodiversity resources, which, in any case, are not solely biological but also possess cultural, economic and political significance. In this respect, we need to focus on the contradictions that give rise to various struggles to redefine the identities, as well as the interactions, of ecosystems, individuals, communities, indigenous peoples, nation-states, multilateral institutions, universities and private corporations.

At stake is the content of citizenship itself, understood as a 'conflictive process related to power—that is, a struggle about who is entitled to say what in the process of defining common problems and deciding how they will be faced'.[1] This article uses and expands this definition by arguing that resistance to the Life Industry should be understood in terms of struggles to defend and expand autonomous spaces for defining and addressing common problems in culturally meaningful ways. This resistance is opposed not only to the privatisation of biodiversity resources and indigenous knowledge, but also to the redefinition of cultural identities and political power which such privatisation implies. In contrast to the dominant neoliberal model of 'market citizenship', in which subjects are created by the extension of individual property rights and capitalist rationality, the struggles discussed in this article can be seen as diverse attempts to build an emerging non-essentialist 'pluri-ethnic citizenship' in Mexico.[2]

The article is organised in four parts. The first locates current biodiversity conflicts in the context of recent economic and political transformations in Mexico and their impact on contested notions of citizenship. The second describes the global context in which competition between transnational pharmaceutical and agro-chemical corporations over access to biological resources has led to resistance from indigenous organisations in several countries, including Mexico. The third section presents a case study of biodiversity conflicts in the Lacandon rainforest of Chiapas. The final section summarises the main arguments and highlights the competing scenarios for the redefinition of citizenship in the era of globalisation.

Citizenship in Mexico: corporatist, market and pluri-ethnic

In the post-cold war era the content of citizenship is being contested through discourses and practices that differ from those associated with the nationalist and developmentalist projects of earlier decades. This is no less true of the Mexican case, where the modern state emerged from the social and political revolution of 1910–17. The post-revolutionary state sought to base its legitimacy on the incorporation of the mass of the population into a nationalist model of development under the auspices of a single dominant party, the *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (Institutional Revolutionary Party—PRI). Individuals were incor-

porated into corporatist organisations that functioned more as pillars of the state than as voluntary associations or pluralistic interest groups. Independent organisations, particularly of workers or peasants, were continuously suppressed and their leaders frequently harassed, jailed or killed. The consolidation of the PRI relied on the strength of a particular form of identification with the state, a model of authoritarian political integration that we may call 'corporatist citizenship'. The PRI's nationalist ideology also exalted the virtues of a homogenous Mexican population, in which class, ethnic or gender divisions were concealed by the propagation of an official discourse of revolutionary nationalism. Government policies thus sought to assimilate the country's indigenous population (comprised of 56 distinct ethnic groups) into a single, Spanish-speaking, modern society, one capable of achieving an independent path to development and progress. This model functioned unevenly from region to region and sector to sector, but it did guide the political calculations of the PRI until the 1980s. However, already in the 1960s and 1970s, more independent-minded social movements began to emerge and even to consolidate their presence in several areas of the country. Indigenous organisations also began to break free from corporatist controls and mobilise in favour of political democracy, land rights and cultural integrity. These struggles opened up the possibility for rethinking national identity in terms of pluri-ethnic citizenship, dissolving the hegemony of the earlier ideology that proclaimed the existence of a homogenous Mexican nation.

In economic terms, and as noted by Mark Berger (in the introduction to this special issue of *Third World Quarterly*), the PRI's state-directed model of development shared many of the features that were to be found in national development initiatives in the post-1945 'developing' world generally. It relied on strong state intervention in, and direction of, the economy, achieving rapid rates of economic growth until the 1970s when balance of payments problems led to increasing inflation and unsustainable levels of foreign indebtedness. In 1982 the Mexican government declared a moratorium on its debt payments, prompting a radical restructuring of the economy in line with stipulations made by the International Monetary Fund and World Bank. The government sought to stabilise the economy through privatisation and trade liberalisation, culminating in the signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) between Mexico, the United States and Canada, in 1993. Commercial ties between Mexico and its northern neighbors have been strengthened and government policies have been directed towards the rapid insertion of Mexico into the global economy. Internally, this has required the reform or even dismantling of earlier modes of social and economic organisation, reducing the power of traditional corporatist organisations that had accompanied the rise of the state-guided national development project in the post-revolutionary period until the 1980s.

Neoliberal restructuring provided the opportunity for domestic and foreign capital to reshape not only the economy but also the very notion of citizenship. The statist model of corporatist citizenship gradually gave way to an aggressive model of market citizenship, in which individuals were encouraged, trained or coerced into new relationships with global networks of similarly marketised societies. The form and pace of restructuring inevitably benefited some sectors more than others. While large segments of the urban-based upper and middle-

classes were attracted by the expansion of consumer choice, the majority of the urban and rural poor experienced increasing poverty and exclusion of their products and labour from the new globalised markets. This was particularly evident in the southern states where the majority of Mexico's 10 million indigenous people live. Lacking even the basic services of health care, education and housing, the majority of indigenous communities were clearly impeded from participating in the global economy, either as producers or consumers. In this context, neither the discredited corporatist citizenship, nor the promise of market citizenship offered a viable future and indigenous people turned to a reaffirmation of their specific cultural identities in order to create a place for themselves within the globalised Mexican nation.

Although NAFTA stimulated cross-border trade in goods and services, it also hurt vulnerable sectors of Mexican society, particularly the rural indigenous population that found itself excluded by global competition. In the southern state of Chiapas, several thousand indigenous people, known as the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) or 'Zapatistas', timed their armed uprising against the Mexican government to coincide with the first day of NAFTA, on 1 January 1994. The Zapatistas, calling NAFTA a 'death sentence for indigenous people', issued a list of demands calling for democracy, economic and social justice and an end to discrimination. The government initially attempted to suppress the rebellion militarily but was forced to accept negotiations following widespread protests and international scrutiny of human rights violations. The talks eventually produced an agreement in 1996 on one of the main goals of the Zapatistas, a package of reforms (known as the 'San Andrés Accords on Indigenous Rights and Culture' after the town in which they were signed) that would give indigenous peoples the right to determine their own forms of governance and development within a constitutional framework recognising the pluri-ethnic nature of the Mexican nation. The Mexican government failed to implement this accord, leading to a suspension of talks and a worsening of the conflict in Chiapas. In late 1996 a multiparty legislative body known as the Commission for Peace and Reconciliation in Chiapas (COCOPA) attempted to mediate the conflict. COCOPA produced a revised document that met with the approval of the Zapatistas but failed to win the backing of the federal government and President Ernesto Zedillo (1994–2000). The historic defeat of the PRI in the 2000 presidential elections raised the hope that the new president, Vicente Fox Quesada of the centre-right National Action Party (PAN), would fulfill his campaign promises and gain approval for the COCOPA Law on Indigenous Rights and Culture and thereby allow for a resumption of peace talks with the Zapatistas. However, Fox did not devote much effort to convincing legislators of the merits of the COCOPA law and the Congress finally approved a much weaker and revised version in April 2001. This version restricted the degree of indigenous autonomy to communities within single municipalities, denied constitutional recognition of indigenous peoples as subjects with the right to decide upon their own forms of governance and development, and maintained a paternalistic relation in which the federal government would provide social services to indigenous communities. These revisions to the COCOPA law met with predictable opposition from the Zapatistas, as well as from a civil coalition of regional organisations known as the National Indigenous

Congress (CNI). Nevertheless, the reforms were subsequently ratified by the requisite number of state legislatures, as required under the constitution, although, significantly, they were rejected in those states with the largest indigenous populations (including Chiapas, Oaxaca and Guerrero). In addition, anomalies in the ratification process led to a series of legal appeals concerning the validity of the entire procedure. Despite the fact that these appeals were still awaiting a ruling from Mexico's Supreme Court, President Fox decided to promulgate the new law, which came into effect on 14 August 2001.

In spite of this outcome, it is likely that indigenous organisations (including the Zapatistas and the CNI) will continue to demand a greater degree of autonomy in how decisions are made concerning internal governance and development projects on their lands. For their part, the economic ministries of the federal government and segments of the private sector can be expected to extol the benefits of globalisation in terms of the opportunities it provides to indigenous communities wishing to participate in the global market. At the risk of over-simplification, we can conceptualise the significance of this conflict in terms of a struggle over the meaning and content of citizenship in the post-cold war era: that is, a conflict between 'market citizenship' and an emerging and non-essentialist 'pluri-ethnic citizenship'. Before discussing how this conflict is manifested through recent biodiversity conflicts in Chiapas, it is necessary to describe the global context in which these disputes are inserted.

Globalisation, biodiversity and resistance

Conflicts over access to biodiversity resources are intimately linked to the global competition for profits in the agro-chemical and pharmaceutical industries. A new 'Life Industry' has emerged in the past decade, in which transnational corporations have shifted from the earlier manipulation of inorganic chemicals to the more technologically advanced manipulation of genetic materials of living organisms. The development of this Life Industry has been characterised by a rapid concentration of ownership in a handful of companies. The largest is the Swiss-based Novartis, which holds a dominant or near-dominant position in the global markets for pesticides, seeds and plant breeding, pharmaceuticals and veterinary medicines. It also competes with other Life Industry corporations (such as the US-based Monsanto and Merck Corporations, and the British-based Glaxo/Wellcome) for the patenting of new chemicals and drugs developed through the application of biotechnology. Corporate concentration is evident in the main areas of Life Industry activity. For example, by 1997 43% of global pharmaceutical sales were in the hands of just 10 transnational corporations. Merger mania was particularly evident in the mid-1990s. Between 1993 and 1996 more than US$80 billion were generated in takeovers in the pharmaceutical industry. As many as 16 such takeovers were worth over $1 billion each. Similarly, by 1997 81% of global pesticide sales were controlled by 10 companies. Corporate concentration is also evident in the global seed industry. In 1987 the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) listed more than 7000 'seed sources' around the world, while by 1997 the top 10 corporations (including the Mexican-based Pulsar Group, see below) controlled 37% of the

global commercial seed market.[3]

What is significant about Life Industry corporations is that they must compete for access to living organisms in order to manipulate their genetic material in the production process. In other words, access to biological resources is vital to the competitiveness of corporations such as Novartis, Monsanto, Merck, Glaxo/Wellcome and Pulsar. Given the power of these corporations, governments and indigenous peoples in Latin America and beyond have lacked the ability to negotiate more equitable forms of resource use.

There are still no clear guidelines for bio-prospecting. The core issue is the status of 'prior informed consent'. Although the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) establishes the principle of prior informed consent, it is often violated in practice. Article 8j of the CBD, which specifically upholds the rights of indigenous peoples to decide upon the use of their biodiversity resources, is often ignored. It is this lack of concern for equitable and democratic decision making that has led some critics to refer to bio-prospecting as 'biopiracy'.[4] In the words of an indigenous person from Peru, 'bio-prospecting is like waking up in the night to find robbers in your home with a bag full of your possessions. When you ask them what's going on, they reply: don't worry, we have a proposal for benefit-sharing.'[5] Benefit sharing is further complicated by the practice of 'renting' genetic material to other parts of industry. The local providers may simply be unable to keep track of where the original material is being used. Gene splicing and recombinant DNA techniques in the development of 'genetically modified organisms' (GMOs) will make tracking and benefit sharing even more difficult for the original owners.

These developments have raised concern over the implications for food security of the concentration of technology, patents and seeds in a handful of transnational corporations. There is also concern over the potentially harmful impact on native strains when GMOs enter the environment. For example, in Mexico, the pollen of GM maize imported from the USA represents a potentially serious threat to the country's 300 native varieties.[6] Resistance to the marketing of GMOs has been increasing in recent years. In Latin America a coalition of indigenous and *campesino* organisations came together in Quito, Ecuador in January 1999 to share their experiences. The meeting issued a declaration calling for an immediate moratorium on the release of GMOs, pending the completion of studies and the creation of new laws.[7]

The Quito Declaration rejected the use of GM technology on the grounds that it is ethically questionable, it continues a pattern of regional inequality and exploitation to benefit large corporations, it endangers food security (while alternative forms of production do exist), it represents threats to health and eco-systems which current scientific knowledge cannot predict, it threatens the survival of native plant varieties, and the intellectual property laws break the continuity of indigenous and rural peoples' rights to conserve and exchange seeds, especially if companies are able to market sterile seed technology, such as Monsanto's 'Terminator' seed.

This sentiment has been echoed in Mexico, most recently by the National Indigenous Congress (CNI), a grouping of regional indigenous organisations that supports the demands of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) and

the latter's attempt to gain congressional approval for the COCOPA Law on Indigenous Rights and Culture, which was discussed above.

In February and March 2001 the Zapatista leadership travelled through 12 states on their way to meet members of the Mexican congress to push for approval of this law. During this march they also attended the third national meeting of the CNI. The CNI issued a declaration of support for the EZLN and the proposed law, while also making clear its opposition to what is described as 'biopiracy:

> Mexico's natural resources are not merchandise to be bought and sold, because we won't accept the destruction of our territories by the imposition of projects and mega-projects that state and federal governments try to impose on the indigenous regions of the country … We demand a moratorium on all prospecting (exploration) projects concerning biodiversity (biological resources), mining, waters, etc and on all acts of biopiracy being carried out in our territories and in our country, until the indigenous peoples have discussed in their own time and on their own conditions the issues pertaining to the control of their resources.[8]

The CNI is acutely aware of Mexico's attractiveness for the bio-prospectors tied to Life Industry corporations. Mexico is one of the seven richest nations in the world in terms of biodiversity. With only 1.4% of world's land mass, Mexico has 14% of the world's plants, with a great many corn varieties that have been passed down over generations among indigenous and mestizo *campesinos*. Chiapas is particularly rich in biodiversity. The Lacandon rain forest is equivalent to 0.16% of Mexico's land mass, but possesses 20% of the country's biodiversity. It is estimated that this rain forest is home to at least 4000 plant species, 306 bird species, at least 82 types of mammal, 46 different bat species, 23 amphibian and 54 reptile species. Barely 3% (or 1137) of the estimated insect diversity was registered by the early 1990s.[9] This diversity is threatened by deforestation and bio-prospecting, requiring stronger adherence to Mexico's current legal codes as well as the development of clearer regulations.

Weak or *ad hoc* environmental regulation has been a common problem in Mexico where political factors such as the six-year presidential cycle (or *sexenio*) have inhibited policy continuity and long-term commitments to bolstering environmental law.[10] In the area of bio-prospecting, critics claim that, during the Zedillo administration, the federal Ministry of the Environment, Natural Resources and Fisheries (SEMARNAP) acted more like an intermediary or facilitator for researchers and private corporations than as guardian of the relevant laws.[11] In highland Chiapas, for example, a major controversy emerged in 1998–99 between a regional coalition of traditional indigenous doctors and a bio-prospecting project involving researchers from the University of Georgia, the Chiapas-based Southern Border College and a Welsh biotechnology company, Molecular Nature Limited. The latter were recipients of a grant from the International Cooperative Biodiversity Group (ICBG), a consortium of US federal government agencies that has supported bio-prospecting in several developing countries since its founding in 1993. In the context of a weak regulatory framework and divergent world-views, the conflicting parties in highland Chiapas failed to establish a mutually acceptable relationship for the granting of prior

informed consent and equitable benefit sharing, resulting in the suspension of the project in the autumn of 2000.[12] At stake in such disputes are the terms in which researchers and corporations interact with indigenous communities. These interactions are increasingly inscribed within a context of global competition for access to areas of great biodiversity. The following section uses recent biodiversity conflicts in one such area, the Lacandon rainforest of Chiapas, in order to illustrate how globalisation is being resisted through appeals to the collective rights of pluri-ethnic citizenship.

Biodiversity conflicts in the Lacandon rainforest

In August 1999 the federal army was ordered by President Zedillo to prevent Zapatista supporters from stopping the construction of a road that would skirt the edge of the Montes Azules Integral Biosphere Reserve (RIBMA) in the heart of the Lacandon rainforest. The road would connect the village of Amador Hernández with one of the army's largest bases in the entire conflict zone (San Quintín). The rainforest is also home to a strong support base for the Zapatistas, as well as an entry point to the RIBMA. The army arrived and took enough land from the villagers to establish a new base, despite the protests from the EZLN and its supporters. For each day over the following 16 months, Zapatistas walked unarmed to the barbed wire fence that the soldiers had erected and loudly demanded the withdrawal of the army from their village and the return of community lands. Finally, on 22 December 2000, Mexico's newly inaugurated president, Vicente Fox Quesada, ordered the dismantling of this base as part of his strategy to re-establish peace talks with the EZLN.

Amador Hernández was not the only community under threat in this area of the Lacandon rainforest during these years. In April 2000 several prominent ecologists and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) called on the Mexican government to prevent the destruction of the RIBMA by indigenous *campesinos*. Arguing that satellite images had detected dozens of forest fires in the reserve, the Mexican government ordered the Federal Preventive Police (PFP) to remove over a dozen villages located within the RIBMA perimeter. In the face of local resistance and contrary evidence that the fires were located far away from the RIBMA, the SEMARNAP called instead for negotiations with the affected communities and their principal organisation, the Independent and Democratic Rural Collective Interest Association (Asociación Rural de Interés Colectivo, ARIC–Independiente y Democrática). During the rest of 2000 representatives of the latter met government officials in an attempt to resolve the problems associated with competing claims to land and resources within and around the RIBMA, one of the most important remaining reserves of Mexico's rain forest.

Although violent confrontation and evictions were avoided in both cases, they simultaneously revealed the new-found importance of biodiversity conservation for the promoters of economic globalisation. The most influential actors in the management of the RIBMA are two other ICBG grant recipients, the Washington DC-based NGO, Conservation International, and the Monterrey-based Pulsar Group, one of Mexico's most powerful business conglomerates. Both of these have been working closely with the World Bank in the implementation of a new

initiative to link protected natural areas from southern Mexico to Panama, known as the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor. Another actor interested in this region is Mexico's state-owned oil corporation, Petróleos Mexicanos (PEMEX), which capped 15 wells in the area before its withdrawal in 1994. Some analysts believe that PEMEX is waiting for a more secure political environment before resuming exploration and extraction of oil and natural gas in the area.[13]

The Pulsar Group is the dominant business actor in the region. The group was founded in 1991 by Alfonso Romo Garza, who is also editor of the business magazine *Expansión*, a consultant for the World Bank, and a member of the board of directors of Conservation International, Archer Daniels Midland and the Mexican grain giant and tortilla distributor, GRUMA. He is also one of the closest advisers of President Vicente Fox. In January 2001 Fox appointed Romo and two other prominent businessmen to a special committee designed to modernise the operations of PEMEX. Romo has also been one of the principal directors of the Fondo Chiapas, an association of business groups founded in 1994 that has sought to attract new investment to Chiapas in the wake of the Zapatista rebellion. It is clear that the Pulsar Group occupies a central role in decisions affecting development in Chiapas and, more specifically, in the Lacandon rainforest.

It also happens that the group's most prominent firm is an agricultural biotechnology corporation known as Savia, which has a strong interest in bioprospecting and the development of GM seed varieties.[14] In fact Savia is the world's largest producer and distributor of improved seeds for fruits and vegetables, with markets in 110 countries and annual sales of US$2.8 billion. During the 1990s Savia bought up several foreign seed companies and, by the end of the decade, controlled 22% of the world market. Savia also has research and development laboratories and production installations in more than 36 countries. In Mexico it has 66 000 clients, and biotechnology research installations in Tabasco, Nayarit and Chiapas. Its Chiapas installations are known as the International Center for Agricultural Research and Training (CIICA), located in Frontera Hidalgo, near the border town of Tapachula. The main areas of research at CIICA are in plant genetics, with the goal of developing disease-resistant fruits and vegetables.[15]

Besides its biotech R&D, the Pulsar Group is also a major producer of bamboo, African palm and ornamental plants. It also aims to establish fast-growing eucalyptus plantations in order to produce pulp for the packaging needs of *maquiladora* assembly plants. However, in Chiapas and Tabasco, local communities have refused to plant eucalyptus on their land, partly because the know that this tree uses up nutrients very quickly and negatively affects the future productivity of the land.[16]

The role of Pulsar in Chiapas illustrates the overlap between biodiversity conservation and bio-prospecting. These two activities come together in precisely the area noted above: the villages located in or near the Montes Azules reserve. In order for each of these projects to proceed, local communities have to be incorporated into new alliances. In many cases, the promise of economic improvement is an attractive one for members of these communities. However, these same communities are also active in resisting bio-prospecting in the RIBMA.

Contacts between ARIC-Independiente y Democrática and other organisations have also facilitated a growing consciousness, among the indigenous organizations of Chiapas including the EZLN itself, of the dangers of bio-prospecting. Members of these organisations may therefore participate in official development projects, while simultaneously participating in oppositional political work, including support for the EZLN. This dual form of participation is understandable if we consider the lack of economic alternatives and the overbearing presence of government agencies, plans, programmes and projects in Chiapas since 1994. However, it does challenge the idea that indigenous people are clearly divided between those who demand access to Western-style development and those who are practising alternative forms of development. The lines are often blurred as people seek to negotiate the conflicting pressures of market citizenship and the struggle for pluri-ethnic citizenship.

The RIBMA was established by presidential decree in January 1978, covering an area of 331 200 hectares. Thanks to lack of financial resources and inter-ministerial rivalries, the Environment ministry was unable to manage the reserve efficiently throughout the 1980s. In the face of growing international concern with the impact of tropical deforestation on global warming, Conservation International (CI) and other northern NGOs became active in identifying 'hot-spots' in more than 20 tropical countries around the world. It is worth noting that CI is one of the more popular conservation organisations as far as some of the biggest transnational corporations are concerned. The board of directors of CI includes Pulsar's Alfonso Romo and representatives of Intel, BP Amoco, United Airlines, Gap, Exxon Middle East, Cementos de México, Rockefeller Family and Associates, and Starbucks. Its corporate sponsors include Bristol Myers-Squibb, British Petroleum, Citibank, Walt Disney Corporation, Exxon Corporation, The Gap, Inc, The Home Depot, Intel, JP Morgan and Company, McDonalds Corporation, and Monsanto.[17]

In the case of Chiapas CI arrived in 1990, in response to a request from a group of Mexican scientists concerned about the dilapidated and abandoned research installations within the RIBMA, as a result of government inefficiency and bureaucratic wrangles.[18] In this year a Mexican branch of Conservation International (CIMEX) was established, with its main activity centred on protection of the RIBMA. In 1991 CIMEX consolidated its position in Chiapas through a debt-for-nature swap worth US$2.6 million, brokered by the World Bank. In 1995 CIMEX received a grant of $246 000 from the US Agency for International Development (USAID) which was used for a second debt swap. However, the biggest amount came in 1996, from Alfonso Romo's Pulsar Group, which donated $10 million to CIMEX for its work in the Montes Azules reserve. This money was earmarked to:

> fund CI's programs that teach farmers in the Lacandon rain forest how to support themselves through means that are conservation friendly. Farmers will learn to work the land in a buffer zone surrounding the forest with a particular focus on cultivating bamboo, or '*hule*', African palms and ornamental plants.[19]

This work is supported through Pulsar's research institute CIICA, mentioned above, and is designed to contract the land and labour of local people for the production of Pulsar's main agro-forestry products such as African palm and

ornamental plants.[20]

The focus on grassroots participation also had an impact on how the government began to implement its conservation plans after 1994. In particular, SEMARNAP promoted a new model of decentralisation and local participation. For example, in August 1997 it set up a Technical Advisory Council (Consejo Técnico Asesor—CTA), with representatives from communities, *campesino* organisations, academic institutions, government and NGOs.[21] In addition, SEMARNAP sought to build a local consensus in favour of conservation. In a style that parallels that of the new World Bank discourse of 'partnerships' and 'listening to the poor', the government, in alliance with business (Pulsar) and NGOS (CIMEX), has now reached out to the people, with the goal of establishing a regional consensus regarding conservation-friendly paths of development. Local support for this model of 'sustainable development' is part of the general shift towards the construction of market citizenship.[22]

The outcome of the alliance between CIMEX and Pulsar is their mutual expansion in the Lacandon rainforest, with the collaboration of many local communities who lack attractive alternatives. The CIMEX/Pulsar nexus may also open the way for bio-prospecting in the RIBMA. Given the leading position of Pulsar in the field of seed production and biotechnology research, it appears that it is well placed to gain access to an area of great biodiversity. As in the highlands, the biggest obstacle facing CIMEX and Pulsar are those communities that participate in the area's indigenous organisations. In this respect, both the EZLN and the ARIC-Independiente y Democrática are demanding more meaningful participation in the design and implementation of conservation and rural development plans for their communities. Each of these organisations claims that the Mexican government has sought to gain political control over the region through the threat of evictions from the RIBMA and the militarisation of areas with strong support for independent organizations and the EZLN.

In the case of the ARIC-Independiente y Democrática, the strongest threat of eviction came in April 2000. As noted above, the government sought to relocate 12 communities from the RIBMA and even threatened to use coercion if they refused. It should be emphasised that almost all these communities had been established before the 1978 RIBMA decree. One dated from as long ago as 1934. They remained vulnerable to eviction because, despite many years of petitioning, they had not received definitive land titles from the government. The problems have been exacerbated by the arrival since 1995 of hundreds of people who had to flee their home villages because of the rise of paramilitary attacks against those who sympathised with the EZLN.

Following a series of protests by members of ARIC, the government accepted the need for a negotiated solution. The government proposed the allocation of one hectare of land to each of the resettled families, but this was rejected as insufficient by ARIC, which was demanding five hectares each for the five communities that agreed to move, as well as the definitive titling of the land of the seven other communities which would stay within the RIBMA. When the government offered each individual 20 000 pesos (about $2000) in exchange for their agreement to be resettled, the ARIC leaders responded by asserting their claims to land rights within the RIBMA. 'We told the commission that we are not

here begging for money. What we want instead is that our rights be respected.'[23] According to these leaders, the main reason for resettlement was the government's desire to weaken the presence of independent organisations in the area, so that it could continue its counter-insurgency war against the Zapatistas, as well as complete the construction of a strategic road connecting the area to the San Quintín army base.

In May 2000 the ARIC organised a forum with representatives of 30 member communities.[24] The forum issued the 'San Gregorio Declaration', which began by denouncing the government's failure to bring development to the area. It noted the lack of schools, roads and clinics, despite years of petitioning. It also denounced the government's failure to issue definitive titles and the consequent insecurity of land tenure. It pointed out that the loss of biodiversity was not a result of the agricultural practices of indigenous *campesinos*, as some ecologists believed. Instead, ARIC invited ecologists to work with them in designing sustainable development plans. ARIC called for a moratorium on the patenting of live organisms, the defence of traditional knowledge and biological resources against intellectual property laws that benefit transnational corporations, as well as a ban on the marketing of GMOs by national and transnational corporations. Citing the need for a strong regulatory framework for biodiversity conservation, the declaration called for groups to work together to formulate a law that would reflect the spirit of the Convention on Biological Diversity (Article 8j), the Protocol on Biosecurity and International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention 169. ARIC demanded rights as indigenous people to land, health care and education, while committing to conserve natural resources of the Lacandon rainforest. ARIC also upheld the right to control the use of indigenous knowledge and to improve it through interactions based on mutual respect. The indigenous communities of ARIC-Independiente y Democrática are realising the power that comes with their knowledge and cultures:

> Retrieval and protection, the valuing and strengthening of production systems and traditional knowledge, which belong to all humanity, cannot and should not fall into the hands of a few; we assert the right and the obligation to share this knowledge, to improve it and to make innovations, thereby assuring its collective transmission. Consequently, these systems and forms of knowledge are not open to appropriation, nor can they be restricted by individuals or monopolies.[25]

In the case of Amador Hernández, the Zapatista support base had to confront the establishment of a new military camp in August 1999. The government attempted to justify the army's presence by claiming that the soldiers were carrying out a large-scale reforestation project in the nearby Montes Azules reserve. Several observers questioned this reasoning, since reforestation requires a very particular knowledge of local ecosystems and the types of trees that can be grown with a degree of success. Instead of a serious project of conservation, it appeared that the army's main goal was to complete a road from San Quintín to other bases along the valleys of the Lacandon rainforest. Rather than assisting in the protection of the rain forest, the military's road building operations were likely to destroy more forest and facilitate the arrival of more colonists in search of land or income from timber exploitation.[26]

Following a year of constant protest against the military camp, the Zapatistas were given some hope by the electoral defeats of the PRI in the presidential and state governorship races in the summer of 2000. Nevertheless, President Zedillo continued to increase the military presence in the area until he left office on 30 November 2000. Earlier that month, on 6–7 November, the Zapatistas, representatives of human rights groups, environmental NGOs, and other independent organisations (including ARIC-Independiente y Democrática) met at Amador Hernández for a 'Forum on Demilitarization, Indian Peoples, Development and Biodiversity'. The Forum demanded the dismantling of the military camp and the return of the land that had been taken by the army to build its installations. It demanded that development projects not be linked to counter-insurgency and called for new projects that would promote more genuine and locally appropriate forms of participatory sustainable development. Echoing the demands of the Declaration of Quito and ARIC, the forum protested against the ownership of plants, species and microorganisms by private corporations, because 'they are the patrimony of mankind'. In solidarity with the ARIC, the forum denounced the threat of evictions of communities from the RIBMA. Finally, it demanded that the new state government of Pablo Salazar Mendiguchía include *campesino* and indigenous representatives in his government. The speakers also drew connections between militarisation and the protection of businesses (such as Pulsar) interested in the exploitation of the area's resources (biodiversity, oil, uranium and water).[27]

On 22 December 2000, as noted above, President Fox ordered that the camp be dismantled and the lands returned to the state government of Chiapas. The newly elected governor, Pablo Salazar, immediately returned the lands to the Zapatista villagers. It remains to be seen how the indigenous organizations, including the EZLN, will be able to influence the type of development in the area and particularly in the RIBMA, especially given the failure to win legislative approval for the original text of the San Andrés Accords and the COCOPA law on Indigenous Rights and Culture. However, there is a growing awareness among indigenous organisations of the threats posed by bio-prospecting and GM products. In the cases studied here we can see how these organisations have been calling for a moratorium on both these aspects of globalisation. The declaration of the CNI in March 2001 (cited earlier in this article) serves to confirm this sentiment at the national level.

Conclusion: globalisation, citizenship and difference

The analysis of biodiversity conflicts presented here sheds some light on the competing models of citizenship that underpin the economic projects of various institutions and corporations. As such, these conflicts provide a window onto the complex interaction of global and local changes and the power relationships that are set in motion by development and biodiversity conservation. This article has argued that projects such as bio-prospecting in Chiapas depend on the acquiescence of local communities to participate in new relationships with government agencies and private corporations. These interactions can be conceptualised in terms of a conflict between different ways of understanding citizenship in the era

of globalisation. An important lesson to be drawn from the cases discussed in this article is that more attention must be given to the process of decision making regarding the potential benefits of biodiversity conservation and bio-prospecting, rather than assuming that such projects bring inevitable gains. It is precisely this process which provides an arena for competing ideas regarding the scope of citizenship rights today. However, the speed and force with which global pressures intervene tend to reduce the possibilities for the exercise of citizenship through the act of democratic deliberation. Similar pressures and tensions are present in other cases discussed in this issue, although the way in which they are addressed is contingent on specific national histories and current interactions with regional and global forces.

In the Mexican case we can point to some unexpected outcomes of biodiversity conflicts, such as the removal of the army base from Amador Hernández and the negotiated solution to the RIBMA conflict. The pressures have not been removed and the main players have not gone away. However, there is a growing awareness of this problem among the indigenous organisations in Mexico, as manifested in the CNI declaration. This new arena of conflict also reveals the significance for indigenous peoples of the struggle for constitutional recognition of collective rights of indigenous peoples, as presented in the San Andrés Accords and the COCOPA Law. Despite widespread support for this law and its centrality to the entire peace process in Chiapas, we noted that the Mexican Congress decided to approve a severely amended version in April 2001, leading the Zapatistas to suspend all contacts with the federal government and to call for civic mobilisation in defence of the original bill.[28]

It is significant that final approval of the revised law by President Fox in effect retains the centralised and paternalistic role of the state in its relations with indigenous peoples, marking a clear continuity with the past and 'corporatist citizenship,' although now increasingly at the service of the private sector's efforts to gain greater access to resources located in areas of significant indigenous population. In this way, the future model of citizenship proposed by the Mexican government resembles a hybrid of corporatist and market citizenship, in which the state continues to secure political order (through the maintenance or expansion of military force if necessary), while the market seeks to incorporate those who are willing and able to work, produce and consume at globally competitive rates.

This scenario will be encouraged if the government of Vicente Fox decides vigorously to implement a regional development programme known as the Plan Puebla–Panamá. This proposal would provide tax incentives for the private sector to invest in southern Mexico and spur economic integration and trade liberalisation with the countries of Central America. The government is hoping to promote the expansion of commercial agriculture and the establishment of low-tech clothing assembly plants (or '*maquilas*') with the goal of generating employment in Chiapas and the other southern states of Mexico. The main promoters of this plan include the Pulsar Group and Mexican subsidiaries of the Life Industry transnational corporations.

Clearly there are some important contradictions between indigenous rights, a strengthening of laws to protect biodiversity, and the Plan Puebla–Panamá.

However, it is not inevitable that only the latter of these three initiatives has any chance of becoming a reality. The outcomes depend on the kinds of political struggles and negotiations that are altering the historical relations between global capital, the Mexican state and indigenous peoples. In this regard, alternative forms of local–global interaction may also create new possibilities for indigenous peoples in Chiapas. Pluri-ethnic citizenship does not necessarily imply a rejection of global markets and there are many efforts by non-governmental organisations and grassroots movements to create and expand fair trade networks that link struggles for social and economic justice across borders. The best-known examples include associations of organic coffee producers and indigenous women weavers who actively participate in the construction of alternative global networks in which solidarity and dialogue are as important as the quality and price of their products. The simultaneous struggles for cultural survival and economic viability pose important dilemmas for indigenous peoples and their organisations as they seek to resist the vestiges of corporatist citizenship and the neoliberal construction of market citizenship. Nor does resistance to globalisation necessarily take the form of a conservative reaction or fundamentalist ethnic nationalism. Unlike a number of other cases discussed in this special issue of *Third World Quarterly*, post-cold war Mexico is not characterised by a resurgence of exclusionary nationalisms or secessionist movements. Instead, it is one marked by the contested nature of national identity and the struggle for new forms of participation within a democratically reformed nation-state. For the Zapatistas and other indigenous organisations discussed in this article, at stake is the construction of a more inclusive notion of citizenship, in which democracy itself is redefined in ways that recognise the right to be different. In the words of Zapatista *comandanta* Esther, speaking to the Mexican Congress on 28 March 2001, 'this is the Mexico that we, the Zapatistas, want. A Mexico where we may be indigenous and Mexican, a place where respect for difference may be in balance with respect for what makes us equal. A place where being different is not a motive for killing, imprisonment, persecution, ridicule, humiliation and racism.'[29]

Notes

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[2] For debates concerning the content of citizenship in Latin America, see C Blacklock & J Jenson (eds), 'Citizenship in Latin America', special issue of *Social Politics*, 5(2), 1998; Jelin & Hershberg, *Constructing Democracy*; and D Yashar, 'Democracy, indigenous movements, and the postliberal challenge in Latin America', *World Politics*, 52(1), 1999, pp 76–104. On 'market citizenship', see V

Schild, 'Market citizenship and the "new democracies": the ambiguous legacies of contemporary Chilean women's movements', *Social Politics*, 5(2), 1998, pp 232–249. On pluri-ethnic citizenship, see G de la Peña, 'Territorio y ciudadanía étnica en la nación globalizada', *Desacatos: Revista de Antropología Social*, 1, 1999, pp 13–27. For a discussion of citizenship and ethnic identity, see N Harvey, *The Chiapas Rebellion: The Struggle for Land and Democracy*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998, pp 30–35.

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[10] S Mumme, 'Environmental policy and politics in Mexico', in D Uday (ed), *Ecological Policy and Politics in Developing Countries: Economic Growth, Democracy and environment*, Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1997.

[11] Such legal ambiguities were present in the case of a bio-prospecting agreement between a US corporation and the national university in Mexico. See A Nadal, 'UNAM-Diversa: ¿dueños de los recursos genéticos?', *La Jornada*, 11 March 1999; and Nadal, 'Contrato UNAM-Diversa: epílogo', *La Jornada*, 7 December 2000.

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[17] See the Conservation International web page http://www.conservation.org.

[18] O'Brien, *Sacrificing the Forest*, pp 162–163.

[19] *Ibid*, p 163.

[20] Pickard, 'Genetically modified organisms'.

[21] O'Brien, *Sacrificing the Forest*, p 164.

[22] One example of this model is the Ruta Mundo Maya, a regional tourism project that extends from Chiapas to Guatemala, Belize and the Yucatán peninsula. This new tourist route would include areas of the RIBMA and Lacandon forest, requiring the guarantee of political control over the actions of independent organisations. See M Pérez, 'En el nuevo milenio, otro valor económico para la Lacandona', *La Jornada*, 3 January, 2000. For a description of the World Bank's current anti-poverty strategy, see World Bank, *Annual Report 2000*, Washington DC: World Bank, at http://www.worldbank.org/htmal/extpb/annrep/over.html.

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[24] H Bellinghausen, 'En plenas lluvias, desplegados contra incendios inexistentes', *La Jornada*, 23 May 2000.

[25] ARIC-Independiente y Democrática, 'Foro para la defensa de la vida, la tierra y los recursos naturales: Declaración de San Gregorio', 20 May 2000, *Revista Chiapas*, 10, 2000, pp 195–197.

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