

Reconstructing a Global Spiderweb with the Binational Front of Indigenous Organizations (FIOB)

Introduction

Inhabitants of Oaxaca, Mexico, have a long history of migrating from their rural communities to more prosperous parts of Mexico in search of better living and working opportunities. In the 1980s, the Mexican economy entered a crisis period of unprecedented hyperinflation. Migration patterns began to shift during this economic crisis resulting in more families not only leaving Oaxaca, but also leaving Mexico and crossing the border into the United States, mainly California.¹ As groups migrate, they maintain their sense of community through social and political organizing.

The *Frente Indígena de Organizaciones Binacionales*, Binational Front of Indigenous Organizations (FIOB) is a binational, community-based organization made up of indigenous peoples originally from Oaxaca, Guerrero, Michoacán, Jalisco and other Mexican states but currently living in Oaxaca and Baja California (Mexico) and in California (United States).² Founded in Los Angeles on October 5th, 1991, FIOB now has members throughout California and Mexico as

¹ Rufino Domínguez Santos. "The FIOB Experience, Internal Crisis and Future Challenges." This paper was presented at a University of California, Santa Cruz conference entitled Mexican Indigenous Migrants in the United States: Building Bridges between Researchers and Community Leaders. Santa Cruz, California, United States, October 11, 2002. <http://lals.ucsc.edu/conference/papers/English/Dominguez.doc>.

* Please note that all URLs in this proposal were working when accessed on September 23, 2007.

² FIOB. *Public Statement of Changes to the FIOB*. Oaxaca de Juárez, Oaxaca, Mexico, March 13, 2005. <http://www.fiob.org/urgentaction/vassemblyresolution.html>.

well as regional offices in Fresno, Santa Maria, Greenfield, Los Angeles, Baja California and two locations in Oaxaca.³ FIOB works to secure the rights of indigenous Mexicans living in the United States and Mexico. The FIOB's mission is to serve indigenous Mexican communities by promoting cultural integrity as well as economic and social development in Oaxaca, Baja California and California. FIOB accomplishes this through the creation and implementation of community-based projects, which promote human rights, family health, community integration, gender equality, and collaboration with other organizations.⁴



Dancers from *Grupo Folklórico Se'e Savi* prepare for the Danza de los Diablos (Dance of the Devils) at a Oaxacan Cultural Celebration in Greenfield, California on March 7, 2007.

Indigenous peoples have been underserved when it comes to use of the Internet. The objective of my social documentation project is not to create a documentary, rather, it is the creation of a new website that will serve the FIOB by enhancing their presence on the Internet. It is important to note at the outset of this project

³ Domínguez. Ibid.

⁴ FIOB. Projects. <http://www.fiob.org/proyectos/proyectos.html>

that the FIOB has maintained a website, fiob.org, since March 1997. The FIOB sees its website as a global spiderweb (telaraña mundial) and recognizes it as an effective resource for organizing indigenous peoples in the United States, Mexico and across the earth.⁵ Leoncio Vásquez, FIOB's website coordinator, and I, will work collaboratively to train key FIOB members how to update the website and publish new articles and photos. The project is not an effort on my part to represent the FIOB. It is a partnership with the FIOB to create a place where they are able to present their organization and internally coordinate their struggle and work. I approach this social documentation project with respect to the mission of the FIOB, which is to contribute to the development and self-determination of migrant and non-migrant indigenous communities.⁶

Indigenous peoples, activists and academics in the United States and Mexico are the target audience. Website users will be able to easily navigate rich content in both Spanish and English, where my photographs will enhance the presentation of the FIOB's history, communications and information about past and current projects. The photos, embedded in the website, will document projects and events organized by or involving the FIOB in California, such as educational meetings in Hollister and Madera, and cultural celebrations in Greenfield and Fresno.

⁵ FIOB. Telaraña Mundial. <http://www.fiob.org/proyectos/telarana.html>

⁶ FIOB. Our Organization. Available from <http://fiob.org/english/ours.html> [Accessed 23 July 2007].

Because it serves as a public face for a very active political organization, creating a new website for the FIOB involves much more than reorganizing the content of the current website and adding new functionalities. It involves employing cultural and social sensitivity at each stage of development due to close scrutiny by political adversaries and the FIOB's own constituency. A crucial aspect of this project will be my close collaboration with the FIOB to ensure that the website serves their mission and goals and that users have positive experiences when visiting the website.

I am very fortunate to have the opportunity to learn from and share knowledge with members of the FIOB while working on this project. I will be learning valuable lessons in community organizing and indigenous culture and will reciprocate by sharing knowledge about creating websites and other strategies for online organizing. Collaboration and skill sharing will be guiding principles for all stages of the project.

Synopsis

Approach and Methodology

Use of online documentation has been increasing in recent years for social and political organizations, especially through websites like Indymedia, but many grassroots media initiatives have been precursors to Indymedia. While there are too many to list, organizations influential to Indymedia include: The California

Newsreel, founded in 1968, which produces and distributes cutting edge, social justice films that inspire, educate and engage audiences;⁷ Paper Tiger Television in New York City, founded in 1981, which works to expose and challenge the corporate control of media;⁸ and The A-Infos Radio Project, which was created in 1996 as a means to share radio programs via the Internet.⁹ In Chiapas, Mexico, the Zapatistas have used the Internet since 1994 to distribute communications to a global audience.¹⁰ Prior to using the Internet, the Zapatistas relied on fax machines in addition to a project of the Institute for Global Communications called PeaceNet. These served as tools for distributing communications to a global audience. The binational partnership between the Chiapas Media Project based in Chicago and autonomous Zapatista communities has put new communication technology into the hands of indigenous people, primarily in the Southern Mexico state of Chiapas, so that they can represent themselves, with their own words and images. The emphasis has been in the area of video production. The Chiapas Media Project is currently distributing 16 indigenous productions worldwide.¹¹

In my years of experience as a volunteer with Indymedia, also known as the Independent Media Center (IMC), I have developed a theoretical and methodological approach to social documentation that promotes a free and open

⁷ California Newsreel. <http://www.newsreel.org/nav/aboutus.asp>

⁸ Paper Tiger Television. <http://www.papertiger.org>

⁹ The A-Infos Radio Project. <http://www.radio4all.net/index.php?op=about>

¹⁰ Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional. <http://www.ezln.org>

¹¹ Chiapas Media Project. <http://www.promediosmexico.org/eng>

exchange of ideas and information. Indymedia provides an information infrastructure for people that normally do not have access to the tools and resources of corporate media like radio stations and distributions networks. Fundamentally, the theory behind Indymedia is that supporting people to publish their own news and analysis benefits local, regional and global struggles against exploitation and oppression.

The Indymedia approach is itself a grassroots movement for social justice that is practiced everyday across the world, within both rural villages and bustling metropolises. Participation from countless individuals and groups around the world has resulted in a thriving Indymedia network of activists from social justice movements around the globe. Everyday, people utilize the open-publishing feature of Indymedia to become journalists and participate in their communities in a democratic fashion. Self-publishing allows people to retain editorial control over their contributions and to an extent, flattens what is most often a vertically controlled publishing process. Human qualities of trust, respect, love and solidarity are facilitated online through software technologies such as email lists, online chat programs, and article syndication and translation tools used by Indymedia volunteers. When people publish an article to one of the hundreds of local Indymedia websites, they are instantly sharing their experiences with the local community and the entire global network. The methods utilized empower people to 'become the media' by publishing text, audio, photos or video to an Indymedia website, newspaper, radio or television program. Many articles

published on Indymedia websites are focused on local and global struggles for justice.

In addition to volunteering with Indymedia, I have refined my approach to social documentation by working on grassroots media projects with the Student/Farmworker Alliance (SFA). The SFA is a national network of students and youth organizing in direct partnership and solidarity with farmworkers to eliminate sweatshop conditions and modern-day slavery in agricultural fields.¹² Grassroots media has played an essential role for the SFA in raising awareness about farmworkers' struggles and winning campaigns against multinational fast-food corporations. For example, a boycott of Taco Bell in 2005 and McDonald's in 2007 resulted in wage increases for Florida tomato pickers.¹³

The SFA describe their work as part of a worldwide "movement of movements," in which localized struggles are seen as part of one global movement for economic, social and ecological justice. Their organizing philosophy states, "we work with – not for – farmworkers" and that "only farmworkers can speak for themselves." They leverage their resources and privilege as college students, including their power as consumers, to organize side-by-side with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW). The CIW is a membership-led community organization in southwest Florida comprised largely of immigrants working in

¹² Student/Farmworker Alliance. <http://sfalliance.org/about.html>

¹³ Ibid.

agricultural and other low-wage jobs throughout Florida.¹⁴ The groups have been successful in combining their respective resources to organize for change.



The Coalition of Immokalee Workers and the Student/Farmworker Alliance held a demonstration for 'Fair Food' at a Burger King in Glen Ellyn, Illinois, a suburb west of Chicago, on April 13, 2007.

Another influence on my approach, towards promoting a free and open exchange of ideas and information, has been the method of Simon Sedillo. I met Simon, an organizer with the SFA, at an Indymedia conference in Austin, Texas, in February 2005 after his presentation about independent media and human rights in Oaxaca. For five years he worked with Oaxaca's Committee in Defense of the People's Rights (CODEP) creating the film *El Enemigo Común* (*The Common Enemy*) to raise awareness about paramilitary violence in Oaxaca, Mexico.¹⁵ The film had a powerful impact on me so I asked Simon how I could support the venture. We agreed that my website skills were needed, so in February 2006, elenemigocomun.net was launched. To this day, it continues to promote and distribute the film to people in the United States and the larger global audience. The website also disseminates articles with news updates and multimedia from

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ El Enemigo Común. <http://elenemigocomun.net/background>

the social movements in Oaxaca. Together with the film, elenemigocomun.net influences social change around the issue of neoliberalism and its connection to paramilitary violence in Oaxaca by providing news and analysis that is not available from the mainstream corporate media, especially in the United States. For example, on July 16, 2007, police attacked thousands of people in the streets of Oaxaca when they attempted to hold a community celebration called the People's Guelaguetza in the auditorium at the Fortín Mountain. This major incident, where police initiated violence, was not covered in English by corporate news outlets, however a detailed description and analysis of the events, along with photographs, were widely disseminated by Indymedia and elenemigocomun.net.¹⁶

Indymedia, the Student/Farmworker Alliance and El Enemigo Común all stress the importance of collaborative projects, where media resources are provided to communities struggling for social justice so that they may describe their own day-to-day experiences free of outsider interpretations and censorship. My participation in these projects has taught me lessons that will be valuable while working with the FIOB - lessons on solidarity, self-empowerment and online media activism.

¹⁶ Kelly Lee, Michael GW, and James Kautz. A Full Report on the Battle for Oaxaca, July 16, 2007. <http://elenemigocomun.net/1070>

The FIOB's Need for a New Spiderweb

On March 18th, 2007, I met Rufino Dominguez, General Coordinator for the FIOB, at a Oaxacan cultural celebration in Greenfield. During our initial conversation, drawing on my experience with Simon and *El Enemigo Común*, I asked Rufino if the FIOB would be interested in my assistance with their website. Rufino told me that he and the FIOB would appreciate having me share my time and knowledge to create a website for the organization. Since our first meeting in Greenfield, Rufino and I have continued our dialogue about the project along with Leoncio, the FIOB's website coordinator.

On May 6th, 2007, I attended a presentation in Hollister by Rufino and Oralia Maceda, an organizer who works to develop women's participation in the FIOB. The presentation was organized as part of the FIOB's outreach and educational mission to inform indigenous peoples from Oaxaca about preserving indigenous cultures and protecting their basic human rights.



On May 6, 2007, Oralia Maceda, an organizer with the FIOB, spoke at a presentation in Hollister, California on the important roles for women in organizations such as the FIOB.

Before the presentation, Rufino and I spoke in greater detail about the FIOB's desire to have a new website that will be easier for the organization to operate and maintain into the future. We discussed what features should be included on the FIOB website. He described what is currently available at fiob.org and proposed new attributes that would strengthen the FIOB's online presence. Ideas included; pages for the mission statement, biographies, a directory of offices, explanations of community projects, a space for position statements on current issues and galleries for different forms of media: photographs, audio pieces and videos. Also important is to display an elegant presentation of both Spanish and English content. I assured Rufino that I have the time and skills to re-create fiob.org with the desired features and I am honored to have the opportunity to work with the FIOB.

A Resource to Unite Social Documentation About the FIOB

The new website will be a valuable resource for the FIOB because it will showcase the existing works already published about the FIOB in different documentary mediums and languages. There will be a section of the website for *El Tequio*, a newsletter published by the FIOB since 1991.¹⁷ Another section will have articles written by Jonathan Fox, Professor of Latin American and Latino Studies at UC Santa Cruz and board member of the FIOB.¹⁸ Photographs by FIOB member Miguel Zafra,¹⁹ David Bacon²⁰ and myself will help to illustrate the

¹⁷ FIOB. <http://fiob.org/proyectos/eltequio.html>

¹⁸ FIOB. <http://fiob.org/nuestraorganizacion/directivos.html>

¹⁹ Miguel Zafra. <http://zafraphoto.com>

FIOB's ongoing projects in California and Oaxaca, and a short film by FIOB member Yolanda Cruz, *Women Who Organize Make Progress*, which allows viewers to see how indigenous Mixtec women in Oaxaca have organized a network of savings clubs to promote community development²¹, will all come together online. These elements compose a digital collage bringing together the works of many social documentarians and presenting it in a way that allows people to interact with the FIOB's rich history through a combination of text, photos, audio and video.

Like most websites, fiob.org will always be a work in progress as people continue to create media about the struggle and achievements of the FIOB. It will be updated as the organization changes and new campaigns are introduced. This is one way that a website is unique compared to other types of social documentation projects.

Current Status of the Project

The project is moving along at a smooth and natural progression. Already completed, is an important preliminary phase of the project, finding a hosting location for the website. Hosting refers to housing the actual data files that appear as a website on the World Wide Web. The FIOB formerly paid a company called Netfirms²² for hosting because it was convenient to set up in the past,

²⁰ David Bacon. <http://dbacon.igc.org>

²¹ Petate Productions. <http://petate.com/html/productions.htm>

²² Netfirms. <http://www.netfirms.com>

however my friend Tom Belote is now hosting the FIOB's website indefinitely as an in-kind donation. Tom hosts other websites that I have constructed, including bradleystuart.net and elenemigocomun.net. Tom is a Software Engineer and Web Developer with a degree in Computer Science from UC Santa Cruz.²³ Several meetings have taken place between myself, Rufino and Leoncio to establish priorities and goals for the project from all people involved.

On September 5th, 2007, I traveled to the FIOB's office in Fresno where I met with Rufino, Leoncio, Oralia Maceda and Nayamín Martínez to further discuss the website's structure, design and content. After this meeting, I was able to make a "first draft" of the new website. While it is not "live," meaning it is not found by typing "fiob.org," it is already functional and can be accessed by adding [/index.php](http://fiob.org/index.php) to the end of fiob.org, like this: fiob.org/index.php. An important aspect in the website's design is its theme, which in this case will use Mesoamerican imagery. The website's structure has been established, but language switching capability has not been implemented at this point and the primary language of the website is Spanish. A majority of content from the current website still needs to be copied over to the new website. This process takes a lot of time since each article and image must be copied one at a time.

²³ Tom Belote. <http://belote.biz>

Treatment: An Agenda for Action

Spinning the FIOB's new Spiderweb

The FIOB stated their need for a new website so the next step has been to conceive how the website will look and function. The website is being created with FIOB members and other Indigenous peoples as a target audience, as well as activists and academics in the United States and Mexico. An important goal is to create a website that is multilingual. The following sections of this paper detail plans for constructing the website, including photographic documentation, software and language considerations, methods for adding functionalities, and generating the overall look and feel while always working in collaboration with the FIOB.

Photographic Documentation

The FIOB has an organizational strategy focused on the preservation of indigenous culture. Current projects include the Oaxacan Indigenous Interpreters Project, the Indigenous Health Project, cultural celebrations, a bimonthly newsletter called *El Tequio* and the [fiob.org](http://www.fiob.org) website.²⁴ All of these are direct examples of how the FIOB is actively protecting indigenous culture while simultaneously working towards social justice for indigenous peoples. These projects will be represented on the website with photographic documentation. By taking photographs of people teaching and learning about the Indigenous Health

²⁴ FIOB. Projects. <http://www.fiob.org/proyectos/proyectos.html>

Project, I will show how the FIOB has taken a leading role in advancing social justice for indigenous peoples of Mexico.



Presentation in Madera, California, August 18, 2007, on the role medicinal plants can play in the maintenance of health, both naturally and economically.

A person's diet is a vital aspect of their health. According to indigenous traditions, food is the first resource that a human being has to preserve their health.²⁵ Many indigenous people believe in traditional healers and consult them either exclusively or in conjunction with western medicine and doctors. Traditional medicinal approaches include the use of plants and herbs, midwives, bone and muscle healers and spiritual guides.²⁶ On August 18, 2007, the FIOB convened an educational forum in Madera, a town northwest of Fresno, to improve the health and safety of indigenous people living and working in the Central Valley. At this forum, I took photographs as people presented on topics such as the role medicinal plants can play in the maintenance of health, both naturally and economically.

²⁵ Odilia Romero and Leoncio Vasquez. *Understanding the Oaxacan Indigenous Culture* PowerPoint slide 35. <http://www.ci.greenfield.ca.us/Documents/Presentations/oaxacanculture.ppt>

²⁶ Ibid. Slide 41

Cultural celebrations are a very important component of identity and expression and photographic representations will be included on fiob.org. One cultural celebration is the Guelaguetza. Communities from within the state of Oaxaca gather each year in Oaxaca City to present and share their regional culture in the form of music, clothing, dancing, and food. This annual celebration has migrated with the Oaxacans to various locations in California, including Fresno²⁷ and Santa Maria.²⁸ There will be a Guelaguetza in Fresno on September 30, 2007. At this celebration I will take photographs of women in their traditional clothing, red and white dresses called *huipili*, and men wearing white shirts with buttons and long sleeves. These images will represent the preservation of cultural traditions.

My photography of the FIOB's ongoing projects is modeled after the work of David Bacon, someone with a lot of experience documenting indigenous culture. In Communities Without Borders: Images and Voices from the World of Migration, Bacon's black and white photographs accompany his analysis of globalization's economic and social impacts.²⁹ Through photographs, Bacon shows how globalization continues to drive indigenous peoples into market-

²⁷ FIOB. <http://www.fiob.org/proyectos/guelaguetza.html>

²⁸ Hidalgo Maldonado called-in to *La Hora Mixteca* radio program on May 27, 2007, to announce the Guelaguetza in Santa Mara which took place on Sunday, June 10th from 10 am to 5 pm at 3400 Skyway Drive. More information is available by calling (805) 268-3001.

The radio program can be heard in most of California and on the Internet from 12-2pm every Sunday. *La Hora Mixteca* is a bilingual program in Mixtec and Spanish featuring Oaxacan folk music from Southern México. This program provides information and public service announcements relevant to migrant Mixtec workers on both sides of the border. The program frequently links via telephone with Mixtec radio stations in the states of Baja California and Oaxaca in México. Salutations from listeners calling from the fields on the West Coast are often aired. Produced at KSJV - Radio Bilingüe in Fresno, California. Hosted by Mixtec community organizer, Filemón Lopez. <http://www.radiobilingue.org/archive>

²⁹ David Bacon. Communities Without Borders: Images and Voices from the World of Migration. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press 2006)

based economies, increasing migration from rural Mexico to the United States in search of better economic opportunities. Bacon's photographs highlight the FIOB, an overtly transnational organization with ongoing projects in Oaxaca and California.

Software and Language Considerations

Online publishing technologies have advanced dramatically in the last few years and most of the contributions have come from volunteers engaged in decentralized, open source community projects. Presently, most advanced websites use some type of Content Management System (CMS). A CMS can be configured to allow the content of a website to be changed frequently and managed to allow many people to contribute to the site without having specialized knowledge of the technical underpinnings of the website.³⁰

WordPress is the CMS being used to create the FIOB's new website.³¹ There are already indigenous organizations in Mexico that are using this same software. This means there is a high probability for a person in Oaxaca to get in-person support while learning how to use WordPress. These organizations include the EZLN, *Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional* (Zapatista Army of National

³⁰ Email from Warren Sack on June 3, 2007. Warren is a software designer and media theorist whose work explores theories and designs for online public space and public discussion. He is currently a member of the faculty at the University of California, Santa Cruz in the Film & Digital Media Department. <http://people.ucsc.edu/~wsack>

³¹ WordPress is an open source project and there are hundreds of people all over the world working to improve the software. WordPress is therefore free to use without paying anyone a license fee. Since 2003, WordPress has grown to be the largest self-hosted blogging (online publishing) tool in the world, used on hundreds of thousands of sites. <http://wordpress.org>

Liberation)³² from Chiapas and the CODEP, *Comité de Defensa de los Derechos del Pueblo* (Committee Organized in Defense of the Rights of the People)³³ from Oaxaca.

WordPress uses a system of pages and posts for organization and layout. Pages will be used to present “static” information about the FIOB, such as an “about” page, project descriptions and a directory. Pages are typically “timeless” in nature while posts are generally time-oriented articles. For example, the FIOB will use a post when publishing a commentary on a current event. As posts aggregate, they become a chronicle of the organization.

Working with the FIOB

During the summers of 2005 and 2006, I spent time in Oaxaca City and other regions of Mexico learning about social, environmental and political struggles. I value those educational experiences, which have taught me ways to organize in my community. This summer I look forward to working with the FIOB in order to learn more about the social, environmental and political situation for indigenous peoples that have migrated to California. Our partnership to create a new website will be driven by goals and questions that both the FIOB and I see as interesting and relevant. As with most projects, unforeseen challenges are bound to arise.

³² EZLN. <http://enlacezapatista.ezln.org.mx>

³³ CODEP. <http://codepappo.wordpress.com> CODEP uses WordPress software, but it is not 'self-hosted.' Rather, the site is hosted at wordpress.com. There are advantages and disadvantages to hosting at wordpress.com as opposed to self-hosting the WordPress software. See: <http://wordpress.com/about> and http://codex.wordpress.org/WordPress_Features.

We must acknowledge this and set realistic expectations for the amount of work and collaboration that will be required.

In the essay *Lessons from Action-Research Partnerships*, Jonathan Fox discusses many different ways to bridge scholarly and activist commitments and presents propositions for discussion. His first point stresses the importance of having a balanced goal of mutual learning and agenda sharing between researchers and social actors.³⁴ This means partnering with the movement, not trying to build the movement. My partnership with the FIOB will apply this practice as they utilize digital tools and resources to further document and disseminate their history and ongoing projects in their own voice. Another important point from the essay is the need to establish *fronteras claras* (clear boundaries) between activists and academics in terms of their respective roles.³⁵ Collaboration between parties must be a priority for a successful project. This will be very challenging and many considerations must be taken into account during all stages of creating the new website for the FIOB.

I anticipate challenges with language in all stages of this ongoing website project. My first language is English and I am still in the process of learning Spanish. I am confident in my ability to listen, understand and speak in Spanish, however the process of reading and writing is still a big challenge. Many indigenous people do

³⁴ Jonathan Fox. "Lessons from Action-Research Partnerships: LASA/Oxfam America 2004 Martin Diskin Memorial Lecture" in *Development in Practice*, Volume 16, Number 1, February 2006. pp 28-29.

³⁵ Ibid. p. 30.

not communicate in a written language and their first and primary language is indigenous, such as Zapotec, Mixtec or Triqui. Since Spanish is a second language, not always spoken by indigenous peoples, it will be important to find ways of including indigenous language content in the website through the use of audio and video.



Rufino Dominguez Santos, General Coordinator for the FIOB, speaking at a meeting of indigenous Oaxacaños in Hollister, California on May 6, 2007.

This collaboration is a wonderful opportunity to work with Rufino, Leoncio and other members of the FIOB and contribute to their mission of organizing and improving the quality of living for indigenous peoples in the United States, Mexico and around the world. There is an indigenous principal of ‘finding our path by walking’ and I look forward to putting this principal into practice as I work with the FIOB to address both the technical and social challenges of creating a new website. With the support of my academic adviser Warren Sack and creative adviser Lewis Watts, the faculty and staff of UCSC’s Social Documentation Department, Jonathan Fox and John Borrego of UCSC’s Latin American and Latino Studies Department, my family and especially friends, including the WordPress community. I am confident that working with the FIOB will be a successful, sustainable project that can be a model for activist-academics working with indigenous grassroots organizations around the world.

Annotated Bibliography

Anderson, Benedict. **Imagined Communities** (London: Verso, 1983).
A book on nationalism and modern nation-building. Anderson argues that nations have been imagined into existence and that they are not real entities. Anderson writes, "It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion."

Arquilla, J. and Ronfeldt, D.F. "**Cyberwar is coming!**" Comparative Strategy (Santa Monica: RAND, 1993).

--- **The Advent of Netwar** (Santa Monica: RAND, 1996).

--- **Networks and Netwars: The Future of Terror, Crime, and Militancy** (Santa Monica: RAND, 2001).

The 'netwar' concept developed by David Ronfeldt and Ron Arquilla argues that for a structure similar to that of the movement for global justice to exist, it must be supported by a dense communication infrastructure.

Bacon, David: **Communities Without Borders: Images and Voices from the World of Migration**. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. 2006. pp. 1-67.
The first part of this book of black and white photographs and written testimonies is called Globalizing Farm Labor: Oaxacans Create a New Kind of Cross Border Community. Through photographs, Bacon shows how globalization continues to drive indigenous peoples into market-based economies, increasing migration from rural Mexico to the United States in search of better economic opportunities.

Cleaver, Harry. "**Background on Chiapas95**"
<http://www.eco.utexas.edu/~hmcleave/bkgdch95.html> [Accessed 28 July 2007].

In 1994, Harry Cleaver, an Associate Professor at the University of Texas at Austin, started an email listserv called Chiapas95 that became a central source of filtered information about the Zapatistas for people all over the world.

Domínguez Santos, Rufino: "**The FIOB Experience, Internal Crisis and Future Challenges in Indigenous Mexican Migrants in the United States.**" In: Jonathan Fox and Gaspar Rivera-Salgado (eds.), *Indigenous Mexican Migrants in the United States*. pp. 69-79. Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies and Center for Comparative Immigration Studies at UCSD. 2004.

In this article, Domínguez Santos recounts his migration experience from rural Oaxaca to Sinaloa, Baja California and California's San Joaquin Valley in the United States. He talks about some of the history of the organizations and motivations involved in forming the FIOB. Domínguez Santos also discusses the difficult process of building leadership accountability. The article also helps to

draw out how the FIOB is distinct from hometown clubs and home state federations.

Fox, Jonathan: “**Lessons from Action-Research Partnerships: LASA/Oxfam America 2004 Martin Diskin Memorial Lecture**” in **Development in Practice**, Volume 16, Number 1, February 2006. pp 28-29.

In this article, Fox discusses the many different ways to bridge scholarly and activist commitments and presents propositions for discussion. His first point stresses the importance of having a balanced goal of mutual learning and agenda sharing between researchers and social actors. Another important point from the essay is to establish fronteras claras (clear boundaries) between activists and academics in terms of their respective roles.

Fox, Jonathan and Gaspar Rivera-Salgado: “**Building Civil Society among Indigenous Migrants.**” In: Jonathan Fox and Gaspar Rivera-Salgado (eds.), *Indigenous Mexican Migrants in the United States*. pp. 1-65. Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies and Center for Comparative Immigration Studies at UCSD. 2004.

In this article, Fox and Rivera-Salgado describe how the Mexican migrant population in the United States has diversified both socially and geographically. They demonstrate how indigenous migrants are excluded, both in the US and in Mexico, economically, socially and politically. The article outlines the experience of Oaxacan migration to California and the process of building an indigenous migrant civil society.

Garrido, M. and Halavais, A., “**Mapping Networks of Support for the Zapatista Movement**” in *Cyberactivism: Online Activism in Theory and Practice* (New York: Routledge, 2003).

The Zapatistas were among the first social actors to utilize the internet for global solidarity. Cyberactivism covers a range of practices from organizing a movement through email to hacking. The book's editors and contributors "share a modest belief that new technologies can become agents of social change."

Ginsburg, Faye. “**Rethinking Documentary in the Digital Age**” in *Cinema Journal* 46, No. 1, Fall 2006.

This article rethinks documentary in a digital age and discusses how different indigenous peoples are experiencing and utilizing the Internet.

Hickman B., Amanda. “**FOSS and Proprietary Software**” in *The Organic Internet* by Lopez, A., McClelland, J., Goldhagen, E., Kahn Gillmor, D. and Hickman, A. (Entremundos Publications, 2007).

This is a key article on the importance of using free, open-source, software and the dangers we face with proprietary software and services.

Holmes, Douglas R., and Marcus, George E. "**Fast-Capitalism: Paraethnography and the Rise of the Symbolic Analyst**" In *Frontiers of Capital: Ethnographic Perspectives on the New Economy.*" Chapter 1 Melissa Fisher and Greg Downey (eds). (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006).

López, Alfredo. "**The Organic Internet**" in *The Organic Internet* by Lopez, A., McClelland, J., Goldhagen, E., Kahn Gillmor, D. and Hickman, A. (Entremundos Publications, 2007).

Lopez writes that, "The Internet is an organic response by much of humanity to the excruciating oppression we collectively and individually face." This article explains how the Internet itself is a movement and that protecting its independence should be a top priority.

Martínez-Saldaña, Jesús: "**Building the Future: The FIOB and Civic Participation of Mexican Immigrants in Fresno, California.**" In: Jonathan Fox and Gaspar Rivera-Salgado (eds.), *Indigenous Mexican Migrants in the United States.* pp. 125-143. Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies and Center for Comparative Immigration Studies at UCSD. 2004.

In this article, Martínez-Saldaña analyzes local participation in indigenous migrant organizations in California by examining the FIOB in the Fresno area. He also discusses the importance of Benito Juarez and Ricardo Flores Magon, historical leaders from Oaxaca. Projects carried out by the FIOB in Fresno, such as the Guelaguetza, Civic Participation Project and an important Zapatista voting referendum that took place in Chiapas, Fresno and other parts of Mexico and the United States in 1999 calling for the recognition of indigenous rights.

Ortiz, Velasco. **Mixtec Transnational Identity** (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2005).

This book provides an understanding of the social, political and ethnic dynamics of transnational communities, such as the FIOB, and their role in the United States and Mexico.

Rivera-Salgado, Gaspar: "**Migration and Political Activism: Mexican Transnational Indigenous Communities in a Comparative Perspective.**" Dissertation submitted for Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology. UC Santa Cruz. September 1999.

Rivera-Salgado's dissertation is an in-depth study focused on the important themes of ethnicity and transnational activism in relation to shifting migratory patterns, a background of indigenous migrant communities, the emergence of transnational organizations among Mexican migrants, binational political actions and the emergence of transnationalized spaces for citizenship and the political participation of indigenous migrants.

Surman, M., and Reilly, K. "**Appropriating the Internet for Social Change: Towards the strategic use of networked technologies by transnational civil society organizations**" A project of the Social Sciences Research Council's Information Technology and International Cooperation Program, November, 2003.

Videos:

Cruz, Yolanda: **Mujeres que se Organizan Avanzan (Women Who Organize Make Progress)**. 15 min. Petate Productions. petate.com
The film shows the accomplishments of a group of Mixtec women in Oaxaca who have organized a network of savings clubs to promote community development.

Freidberg, Jill: **Granito de Arena (Grain of Sand)**. 60 min. Corrugated Films. corrugate.org
Granito de Arena is the story of hundreds of thousands of public schoolteachers whose grassroots, non-violent movement took Mexico by surprise, and who have endured brutal repression in their 25-year struggle for social and economic justice in Mexico's public schools. The places the Mexican teachers' struggle in a global context, clearly spelling out the relationship between economic globalization and the worldwide public education crisis.

-- **A Little Bit of So Much Truth (Un Poquito de Tanta Verdad)**.
The story of media activism and the people who put their lives on the line to give a voice to the struggle in Oaxaca.

Mal de Ojo TV: **True to My Pledge (Compromiso Cumplido)**. 64 min.
The film documents some of the horrors committed against the civil society of Oaxaca, and shows the strategy of state terrorism employed by the local governor. There are many short videos available at maldeojotv.net.

Sedillo, Simon: **El Enemigo Común (The Common Enemy)**. 64 min. Austin Independent Media Center. elenemigocomun.net
The film "el enemigo común" scratches beneath the surface of neoliberalism, at some of the most hidden atrocities in recent North American history. An exposé of repression and resistance, "el enemigo común" documents paramilitary activity against indigenous communities in Oaxaca, Mexico from 2002 through 2005.

Business Plan and Project Dissemination

This website is being created for the FIOB so they can have a virtual home, their own space on the Internet, to take advantage of the more recent advances in self-publishing website technology. The FIOB's website will distribute and archive news and analysis, consisting of text and multimedia to their members and indigenous peoples around the world. This includes activists and academics, governmental and non-governmental organizations, and anyone else looking for information on the Internet about indigenous organizing. Indigenous men and women living in regions where the FIOB is active, such as California's Central Valley, will be encouraged to utilize the FIOB website. This will be accomplished by including the website address on all flyers and discussing relevant online content at informative gatherings, such as the indigenous health and safety presentation I attended in Madera on August 18, 2007.

Indigenous peoples have been underserved when it comes to use of the Internet. This project provides a sophisticated website which is easy for groups with traditionally limited access to technology. They can quickly and easily add and update news, analysis and multimedia from any Internet connection with just a web browser. The website will facilitate that sharing of knowledge and skills since it is easy to teach newcomers through in-person meetings and workshops.

I have developed a close working relationship with members of the FIOB based in Fresno, but also with a member of the FIOB living in Santa Cruz County

named Miguel Zafra. Miguel and I have organized numerous film screenings in Santa Cruz County and we traveled together to Greenfield and Madera. Our close relationship and discussions have inspired the formation of a new organization, called Santa Cruz–Oaxaca Solidarity. Starting in Santa Cruz, we hope to improve the networking between activists in United States, the FIOB and other social movements in Oaxaca, all of Mexico and the world.

The website and its contents will be distributed by many methods. Publicity of the website itself will take place through email, links from other websites, newspaper articles, flyers, videos, radio announcements and word of mouth. All brochures and published materials will include the address of the website. Other technological tools for promoting the website include the use of syndication and email lists. I helped the FIOB set up an email list for their members and another list to disseminate information to their supporters. People who visit the FIOB's website will be encouraged to join the email list with a link to the signup form from the homepage.

Users will navigate through the rich content of the website comprised of text and multimedia, mostly in Spanish. Contributions will come from members of the FIOB and other writers and media makers. The most recent communications of the FIOB are clearly featured on the homepage. There is a sidebar on the left for the supporters email list, announcing upcoming events, categorizing the website's articles, linking to other organizations and searching the website by

keyword. Article abstracts for the four most recent articles are presented on the homepage with links to the full articles. Six more article titles are linked below the four most recent articles meaning that the FIOB's ten most recent articles are only a click away.

Image of Website in Production



Here you can see an image of the website, a work in progress (see fiob.org/index.php). Websites are usually created as an ongoing, open-ended piece of work. Unlike a documentary which has a finite ending and product, the FIOB's website will always be changing with new articles being added, tools implemented and overall user experience being improved. At any given point in time, the website chronicles most of the FIOB history, written mostly by the FIOB itself.

The website will also feature articles, photos, audio, video and artwork created by allies of the FIOB. Including work produced by many people mutually benefits the FIOB and the creator of the content because more people are exposed to the work. The website will offer users an exciting and informative venue for learning about the FIOB, indigenous culture, political views and much more through text articles, photographs, audio and video. People will be encouraged to download, reproduce and distribute content as part of the effort to raise awareness about indigenous human rights issues. This offers a valuable and effective tool for disseminating information.

Project Staff Biographies

Bradley Allen is an Indymedia activist and graduate student at UC Santa Cruz. For the past two years, he has been involved with efforts to raise awareness of ongoing human rights violations taking place in Oaxaca, Mexico by helping to publicize movements that resist institutionalized forms of violence. While visiting Oaxaca City and Mexico City in August 2006, he photographed and participated in political demonstrations. The photographs have been featured in several documentaries, including “True To My Pledge” by Mal de Ojo TV and “A Little Bit of So Much Truth” by award-winning producer, Jill Freidberg. Bradley’s role as a documentarian goes beyond being an “embedded reporter.” Rather, he is an open and active participant in the anti-corporate globalization movement. Bradley enjoys the mediums of photography, audio and video, however his skills in

creating and maintaining websites are proven to be the skill-set in greatest demand.

Leoncio Vásquez speaks three languages, his native language, Mixteco, Spanish and English. He immigrated from his village, San Miguel Cuevas, Oaxaca to the United States when he was 14 years old. When his dad past away in an automobile accident, he was forced to drop out of Fresno State University order to seek a full-time job to support his grandmother back home. His life was completely changed in 1998 when he met the Oaxacan Indigenous Binational Front (FIOB) and was offered the position as Indigenous Interpreters Project Coordinator. He was in charge of this project for three months when he was offered the position of Operations Manager. It was in this position where he learned a variety of tasks, such as grant writing, making appropriate project reports and designing the FIOB's website and newsletter (El Tequio).

Rufino Domínguez seeks to promote the human rights of indigenous peoples from Oaxaca, throughout Mexico or born in the United States. At the same time, he is a leading voice in the movement to maintain the cultural, social and linguistic integrity of indigenous communities. Dominguez is one of the FIOB's founding members. Prior to the FIOB, he co-founded the Organization of Exploited and Oppressed People (OPEO) in Sinaloa, Mexico. Dominguez works hard everyday to mobilize grassroots support for greater governmental and non-

governmental responsiveness to the rights and needs of indigenous peoples.

Rufino is currently the FIOB's Executive Director.

Work Timeline

March 18, 2007 – Attend Oaxacan Cultural Celebration in Greenfield with Miguel. Meet Rufino Dominguez and discuss project big picture and possible steps to take. Take photographs of celebratory dress, musicians, food, etc.

May 6, 2007 – Attend a FIOB outreach meeting in Hollister. Take photographs of organizers and meeting attendees and learn more about the FIOB by listening to presentations and speaking with meeting organizers. Speak with Rufino and elaborate on plans and FIOB's goals for the website.

May, June, July and August 2007 – Copy the FIOB's website from the NetFirms server to Tom Belote's server. All website files are copied and transfer includes all @fiob.org email accounts.

August 18, 2007 – Attend FIOB event in Madera on Indigenous Health and Safety. Meet Leoncio for the first time and discuss current status of the project and get feedback about current site functionalities and limitations. Take photographs of event.

August and September 2007 – Work on structure, design and function of actual site framework. Copy articles from old website to new website, a labor-intensive process because it must be done one-by-one.

September 5, 2007 – Meet with Rufino, Leoncio, Oralia and Nayamín at the FIOB's office in Fresno to work on the website. Discuss current status of project.

September 30, 2007 – Attend the FIOB's California Guelaguetza in Fresno. Take photographs of traditional dress, food and dancing. Collect materials, like literature, for the website.

October, November and December 2007 – Finish copying old content to new website and add content that was not on the previous website. Meet with FIOB organizers in Fresno to teach website editing and other media skills to the FIOB.

January 2008 – Launch new website at fiob.org and begin publicity of new website. Ongoing skill shares in person, on the phone and through email. Assess the changes that have been made and plan to evaluate our next steps.

Sample Work

The website “El Enemigo Común,” <http://elenemigocomun.net>, is an example of a website which serves as a guide for the development of the FIOB’s website.

You can follow the development of the FIOB’s new website by visiting <http://fiob.org/index.php>. The website is fully functional at this point. There is still a lot of work to do before the website will be ready for the general public.

Both websites have been tested using the most popular operating systems and website browsers. No special hardware or software is needed to view or update the websites. The only required tools are a computer with an Internet connection and web browsing software.



Budget

The FIOB will continue to pay \$15 per year to maintain their domain name, fiob.org. All the software in use is freely available on the Internet. Tom Belote is graciously providing the FIOB's website hosting free of charge as an in-kind donation.

The costs I anticipate incurring as a direct result of this project are the costs associated with putting gasoline in my car when I drive to the Central Valley. It costs \$30 in gas to drive from Santa Cruz to Fresno and back. A budget of **\$300** will enable me ten visits to the Central Valley. After the initial set up and training for the new website, visits to the Central Valley will be less frequent.