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UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

IN THE MIDDLE: MEDIATORS OF FAITH-BASED TRANSBORDER DEVELOPMENT

IN OAXACA, MEXICO

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

By

MARGARET C. HOLLEMAN

Norman, Oklahoma

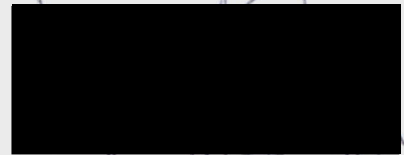
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IN THE MIDDLE: MEDIATORS OF TRANSBORDER FAITH-BASED DEVELOPMENT IN  
OAXACA, MEXICO

A THESIS APPROVED FOR THE  
DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

BY



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The Joseph and Margaret Holleman Trust

10/1/14

for your portfolio

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For Joseph and Kathryn Holleman, my loving and supportive parents. Thank you  
for your patience.

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INTEGRATION AND SOCIAL JUSTICE  
 POLITICS, ENVIRONMENT, AND MEDIOCRACY

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## Chapter **Abstract**

In this thesis I ask how transborder migration from the Oaxacan Mixteca has connected Indigenous communities with faith-based sustainable development organizations in the U.S. I focus on Guadalupe Miramar Yucuhiti, a coffee-producing community in the Mixteca region of Oaxaca and characterize residents' experience of migration as transborder. This term not only registers the crossing of physical international borders, but also highlights Mixteco migrants' crossing cultural, ethnic, and class borders. Transborder migration from Miramar to the fields of large-scale commercial farms in the northwest United States has linked this community with the Vista Hermosa Foundation, a foundation started by Cheryl and Ralph Broetje. The social justice-minded couple runs both their business and faith-based development organization with a ministry philosophy that emphasizes service. Using a feminist political ecology methodology, I investigate the meshwork linking the Broetje's foundation with the transborder community characterizing Miramar. My case study illustrates the key roles played by development mediators who share the Broetjes' desire to serve the needs of these communities. Two mediators, Chuck Barrett and Melanie Lopez-Grewal facilitate the sharing of knowledge, funds, and communication. My thesis examines how they arrived in their current positions and the ways they deploy their different bodies and identities to translate, literally and culturally, the needs and ideas of a transborder Indigenous community.

## Chapter 1: Introduction

I met Leticia when I was sixteen years old working as busser in a fine dining restaurant. Leticia is a petite woman who barely comes up to my shoulder. She was the first Mexican immigrant I had ever met and became friends with. We spent our first summer stumbling along communicating mostly with hand signals and charades. What I learned about Leticia, from what I could string together using my high school Spanish, was that she was from the Mexican state of Puebla, and she shared an apartment with her sister's family in the dirty Midwest city where we both lived.

I never thought to ask Leticia why she came to the United States, how she crossed the border, or why she chose to live in my part of the US. I did, however, wonder how she paid rent with the money she made. I know (hoped) she made the same amount of money I, a sixteen-year-old girl, did and I knew I was not going to be able to move out of my parents' house anytime soon. My friendship with Leticia that summer inspired me to go on a school-sponsored trip to El Salvador, the following spring. My high school, an all-girls, Catholic private school, offered service trips to Central America. The girls going on the trips either raised money for scholarships to donate to adolescent girls in El Salvador or traveled to Mexico to build houses and pour concrete floors.

My high school was founded by the Sisters of Loretto, an order of sisters known for their radical displays of political protest. We students heard the story of the Loretto sister who threw pig blood on the steps of the US Capitol in protest

of the Vietnam War. Our school had a reputation as bra-burning hippies who overused the “e-word” – empowerment – and whose teachers taught the brand of Catholicism that focused on social justice. The instructors and nuns taught me that I was lucky and that not all girls had the same access to education as I, a relatively privileged white girl from a middle-class family, did.

After raising money for girls to go to high school in a small, Indigenous town in El Salvador, and after visiting with families torn apart by civil war and migration, I returned to work the following summer with a different perspective and a better handle on Spanish. The things I never asked Leticia were now burning questions I was too shy to ask. The questions I never asked her were about why she moved to the United States, what her life at home was like, and how she lived as a single mother in a foreign country where she had no legal rights to the things she earned.

With a desire to learn more about the region, the summer before my final year of college, I traveled through Central America. I spent eight weeks living with a Mayan T’zutujil-speaking family. That trip was my first experience living with Indigenous people. Having learned about Mayans in history books, I never realized that people in Central America could still identify with the ancient civilization as well as live in modern society. Teenagers in the cybercafés spent hours on Facebook while joking with their friends in a mix of Spanish and their Indigenous language. “¿Cuál es tu Facebook?” my host sisters asked me. As our preferred form of communication, I still keep in touch with my host sisters and keep updated on their lives through the pictures they post on Facebook. The idea

of hybridity that Indigenous people can be both traditional and modern by Western standards interested me, which is why working with Dr. Laurel Smith who studies Indigenous video-technology in Oaxaca, Mexico, seemed like a good fit.

I came to the University of Oklahoma with a passion to learn more about my interests and what I had already experienced. Because of my educational and religious background, my experience traveling with Catholic workers, and my travels in El Salvador and Guatemala, I wanted to study faith-based development, focusing on coffee-producing Indigenous communities. Dr. Smith, at the time, was working on her own article about a video called *Mujeres del Mismo Valor*, about CEPCO, a Oaxacan coffee cooperative that started women's groups in Indigenous communities. These women lived in coffee-producing communities and experienced many gender-based inequalities and oppression. The cooperative formed women's groups in order to address these issues and empower the women to participate in development and decision-making processes in their communities.

While writing about the CEPCO video, Dr. Smith had done some preliminary research on the communities featured in the video. She passed on that information to me. One of the things she had found in her initial research was a YouTube video. It was a picture slideshow of a town called Guadalupe Miramar Yucuhiti in Oaxaca, Mexico. Miramar is a coffee-producing community located in the mountains of the Indigenous region of Oaxaca known as la Mixteca. What interested me about that video, however, was the tall, American man

featured in many of the images. The captions identified him as Chuck Barrett, from the organization Amanecer. That video would lead me to my thesis research.

### **Preliminary research and research questions**

My own preliminary research also began on the Internet. I searched and discovered Barrett's organization, Amanecer. The website details experiences and events from current projects that Amanecer supports. From its website I learned that Amanecer worked extensively with an organization called the Vista Hermosa Foundation. The website states, "Amanecer currently advises and undertakes rural development projects with the Vista Hermosa Foundation of Broetje First Fruit Orchards of Washington." I discovered that Amanecer works with Vista Hermosa to establish projects in Miramar focused primarily on food security. They include a project that provides materials for chicken coops for all families in the community and a project to build micro-tunnel greenhouses for household vegetable gardens. However, I did not understand very well the connection between Broetje Orchards and Vista Hermosa. So once again, I delved into Internet research.

What I found from this exploration fit nicely into my goals of studying faith-based development. Vista Hermosa is a foundation funded by the Broetje Orchards, an apple and cherry orchard business near Prescott, Washington. A couple, Cheryl and Ralph Broetje, established the foundation and the business. The Broetje family's motivation to start a non-governmental development

organization (NGO) came from their strong religious faith and dedication to social justice. With the profit from the orchard, the Vista Hermosa Foundation funds development projects in Haiti, Uganda, India, and Mexico. The projects in Miramar, those Amanecer helped implement, become particularly interesting as the orchard's website explains that many of their orchard employees are Oaxacan immigrants, and many originate from la Mixteca region and the community of Miramar.

What this research unveiled was a unique case study starting with migration from an Indigenous coffee-producing region of Oaxaca that connected communities with faith-based organizations (FBOs). It incorporated all of my initial interests in studying Indigenous geographies. This preliminary investigation sparked my original research questions. First, I wanted to explore how migration has linked Indigenous communities to FBOs through this particular case study. I wanted to research how and why Miramar residents and Vista Hermosa have worked together to design, introduce, and manage community projects. I particularly was curious as to how faith motivated and influenced the development. I also wanted to better understand the role of Barrett and Amanecer in the development and migration network. Lastly, I sought to study the relatively new ways women are participating in the transborder Indigenous development projects, organizations, households, and community governance in la Mixteca region of Oaxaca.

In order to tackle these questions, I contacted Barrett at the Amanecer headquarters in New Mexico. In October 2012, I visited him and his wife at his

home in Hillsboro, New Mexico. I explained my research objectives and my interests in mapping out the socio-spatial relationships between Miramar and Vista Hermosa while focusing on his role as the development mediator. During the visit we discussed much of his history working with labor unions in the US and development organizations and how it led him to start working with Vista Hermosa. He seemed willing to help me in my project.

I also asked Barrett about something I discovered through a link on his website. It is called *Paisanos Miramar*. Barrett explained that it was a communication portal between community members in Miramar and those living and working at Broetje Orchards. The purpose of the site is to create a secure exchange of information between the two communities. Anyone who has access to the site, any resident living on either side of the border, would be able to post pictures, video, and text. This project would support the exchange of media among members of the Miramar, a transborder community. The project, however, is still in the beginning stages and not yet as effective as a means of communication.

Barrett and I stayed in contact over the next few months as I was writing research proposals to travel to Miramar. My original research proposal included a six-week stay in the town of Miramar. My advisor and I agreed that six weeks seemed like a reasonable amount of time to stay in a community and get interviews without being overly intrusive. I was dependent on Barrett to make contacts in Miramar, a town where cellphone service and Internet connections are often inconsistent. At that time, he also mentioned he would be visiting

Oaxaca that summer. I was excited to accompany him on this trip. I would be able to see how he interacted with the community members. The trip was also going to be the first trip for Melanie Lopez-Grewal, who Vista Hermosa hired to take over many of the Barrett's duties as he transitioned into retirement.

### **Fieldwork in Oaxaca**

After successfully obtaining field research awards, the original research plans changed. First, unforeseen health issues kept Barrett from making the trip to Oaxaca, and therefore, keeping Lopez-Grewal at home, too. Because I was depending on Barrett for introductions to the community, my time in Oaxaca would have to be spent differently than originally planned. While discussing my changed summer plans, Barrett also told me that staying in the community for six weeks would be seen as intrusive, especially if I was not helping the community in any way. He asked important questions – why should the people of Miramar trust you? And what are you going to give back to them? After weeks of reading about culturally appropriate methods of research and feminist approaches to fieldwork, I had learned about culturally appropriate and participatory methods. However, I had not considered how I would address the questions Barrett had raised about my own research.

So I embarked on fieldwork in Oaxaca alone. I made it to the capital city of Oaxaca de Juarez and waited. Barrett, from his home in New Mexico, had introduced me not only to Lopez-Grewal, but also to his friend and colleague Rogel del Rosal who worked with Miramar and other Amanecer and Vista



Hermosa projects in Mexico. Del Rosal invited me to a meeting in the Indigenous Huasteca region of the Mexican state of San Luis Potosí. It was a workshop for *La Coordinadora de Organizaciones Campesinas e Indígenas de la Huasteca Potosina A.C* (COCIHP). This cooperative consists of organizations of coffee-producers and other agriculturalists as well as women's groups.

Community leaders from Miramar would be in attendance at the COCIHP workshop – my first face-to-face contact with town residents. In addition to Miramar residents, associates from the *Centro de Desarrollo Integral Campesino de la Mixteca* (Center for Integral Small Farm Development in the Mixteca CEDICAM) attended the meeting. Even though Miramar and CEDICAM are both located in the Mixteca Alta region of Mexico, the Miramar leadership learned about CEDICAM through Barrett. He became familiar with CEDICAM via his friend Phil Dahl-Bredine who worked with CEDICAM associates while living in the Mixteca, writing a book detailing Indigenous life in the region. CEDICAM is a center that teaches sustainable agriculture practices directly informed by Indigenous, particularly Mixtec, knowledge. Barrett arranged for Miramar leaders to attend a COCIHP workshop in San Luis Potosí so they could discuss their Vista Hermosa funded projects with CEDICAM.

During this event, I listened to a presentation about raising healthy *gallinas* (hens) by Jesus León Santos, the director of CEDICAM's sustainable agriculture program. Noel Vasquez of Miramar's community organization *Coordinación Pasado, Presente, Futuro de Miramar* (COPPFUMIR) followed with an overview of the projects at work in Miramar. After the workshop, I was able to

meet with Vasquez and his other colleagues from Miramar. A genial group of gentlemen, they happily invited me to visit Miramar. I got Vasquez's email address, and then I returned to Oaxaca City. I sent him an email about setting up a time to visit. Then began a long waiting process.

As I waited to hear back from Vasquez, a well-respected community leader, I had the opportunity to interview Lopez-Grewal who was stationed in Washington State in her new position with Vista Hermosa. She oversees and manages the Vista Hermosa's Mexico projects. She reports back to the board members about the projects after she visits the sites. When I talked with her, she had yet to visit any of the projects including Miramar. She had wanted to go to the workshop in San Luis Potosí, but she had just completed a training session in Tucson with Barrett and del Rosal, and could not manage the trip. I told her about my time at the workshop, and we began discussing her new role at Vista Hermosa. She also detailed her education and previous development experience in Washington D.C.

During that interview, she suggested I visit *Centro de Compartimiento* in Juchitán de Zaragoza in the southern part Oaxaca. The center is also a Vista Hermosa-funded project. The project funds secondary schooling necessary for young Indigenous women to pursue careers. The center currently consists of two houses where the young women live while they are in school. Because I was still waiting for a response from Vasquez about Miramar, I traveled to Juchitán in the meantime to talk to Adela Toledo Luis, *Centro de Compartimiento* director. We discussed how she works closely with Vista Hermosa to achieve the goals of the

foundation. She also mentioned how her religious beliefs are an important motivator for the work she does. From that interview I gained insight about the Broetje family and their dedication to helping young women earn an education and empower themselves to pursue careers.

Upon my return to the Oaxaca City, I finally heard back from Vasquez. I made my way to the town Tlaxiaco, the biggest town in the Mixtecan district where Miramar was located. Miramar had a taxi service that ran daily to and from Tlaxiaco. On my arrival in Tlaxiaco, I quickly realized the town did not get many tourists or “gringos.” Every taxi driver asked me why I was visiting Tlaxiaco. So for three days, I awaited more information from Vasquez about how to get to Miramar. Finally, he arrived at my hotel to discuss a plan. He had arranged for me to stay four days and three nights in the community. I did not want to intrude longer in the community. Vasquez is a community leader, so I respected his decision and judgment about the length of my stay. The next morning we met in Tlaxiaco’s town square and we would take a taxi to Miramar.

The taxi ride was nearly two hours long, up and down mountains and unpaved roads. When I got there, I first met his family. Then I got settled in at the “hotel” in town. It has one room with two beds and a small bathroom with a shower. They tell me it was built for visitors such as Barrett and Vista Hermosa associates. Vasquez introduced me to nearly everyone we passed in the street. We ate dinner at the town’s *comedor*. The following morning, Sunday, I asked him if I could go to Mass at the Catholic church. He led me to the church and, even though he was not religious, he attended the service with me. After Mass, we took

a tour of the town and showed me some of the estimated 80 micro-tunnel greenhouses in Miramar. He said nearly all families had one.

Vasquez also was aware that I wanted to talk to women in the community. I knew I would not be able to talk to as many as my initial research proposed. But I did interview two women, who were kind enough to speak with me. Crispina and I discussed how the projects – chicken coops and greenhouses – affected her everyday life, her transborder migration experience, and her leadership role in her women’s group. Enriqueta, Crispina’s sister-in-law, and I had a more private interview in her house while her husband and Vasquez were working in the taxi station in the center of town. This was the conversation that gave me the deepest insight into the personal struggles women face in migration. She told stories of her upbringing in extreme poverty, her first job as a nanny, her journey across the border, and the systemic domestic abuse that troubles her and many other women in the community.

Miramar residents seemed comfortable with my presence and patient with my questions. Although the town is located in the mountains of the Mixteca Alta region, it seems to have quite a few visitors – many on medical missions. I was even confused once for a psychologist. Enriqueta informed me that sometimes people from the United States and Europe come to do volunteer work in the community, offering health services. All community members I talked to recognized the name Barrett and Broetje. Unfortunately, I was not able to stay longer in the community, for I did not want to overstay my welcome and my trip to Oaxaca was coming to an end.

My time in Miramar proved to be a different experience than I had anticipated. Though I learned many things from the community, I was pressed for time. Through that experience, I recognized the difficulty a “stranger” encounters when entering a community. There are cultural as well as physical barriers to making this connection. Physically, technology in some places is unreliable and slow. Entering a community as a total stranger would have not only been inappropriate but fruitless. I also understand now that Barrett’s role certainly changed my approach to the research. His presence or lack of presence surely affected my access to the community, but his introductions enabled me to make my own connections – albeit probably more slowly than I would have if he were there with me.

His recommendations and experience with the community became invaluable information and transformed the way I attempted research in Indigenous communities. His suggestions, in hindsight, were helpful because, even though I did not spend much time in the community, I feel I left with there with a healthy and workable relationship with Miramar. I can maintain this relationship to address further questions that arise from this research. I also have the opportunity to return to Miramar to visit, research, and, as Barrett suggested, give back to the community.

### **Research Questions**

Less than a week after my return to Oaxaca City, I was on a plane back to the United States. I took a week at home with my family to relax and prepare

myself for rest of the research I had ahead of me. Because my trip to Oaxaca unfolded differently than I planned, I switched my focus to the United States and a new set of research questions emerged. I became interested in the idea of mediators and how they do not only facilitate the knowledge exchanges and development funds, but they also facilitate the research in the community. It became more apparent that mediators are key actors in development systems. But in what ways are mediators imperative to the development process?

In addition to understanding more about the role and power of mediators in development, I was curious as to how Lopez-Grewal would interact with the community in place of Barrett. Having interviewed her while in Oaxaca, I knew she was much younger than Barrett and had a different training in development. Barrett, who began his work as an activist, did not have the same education in development as Lopez-Grewal who received a Master's degree from John Hopkins international development program. She also worked in Washington D.C. with the Inter-American Development Bank, an institution that implements projects aimed at economic development and growth. Also, Lopez-Grewal is a woman mediator. In Indigenous communities, where gender roles and politics (as I discuss later) are different, her presence as a woman and mediator of Vista Hermosa development may transform the relationship Miramar has with the foundation. How does Lopez-Grewal enact and employ her identity as woman from the global North and a representative of a development foundation?

Lastly, I remain curious about the motivations of the individuals and organizations involved in this case study, particularly their faith-based

motivations. Knowing that Vista Hermosa Foundation is a FBO, I examine the ways in which their faith informs their development approach. I also ask: What motivates the mediators in this case study to dedicate their lives to working with Indigenous communities and immigrants? Does faith play a major or minor role in that decision? Does faith influence development approaches?

## **Discussion**

The shifts in the research questions adapt to the changes made in my original fieldwork proposal. But I think by focusing on mediators of development this research can give some insight into the important roles individuals play in creating development in Indigenous communities. Research in development studies often highlights the identities of people in the communities such as the effects on women. It also explores NGO and FBO structures and impacts, but rarely does it explore the identities of individuals fortifying these linkages.

However, the transformation of this research has left some questions by the wayside. For example, I was not in a position to focus my research on Miramar. Initially, I wanted to uncover the ways development affected women's involvement in decision-making forums. Every time I pressed the issue, I was met with reluctance to discuss the topic of women in government leadership. To really observe the ways women are either involved or excluded from decision-making processes would have required more time in the community. I also think this could be a better-discussed topic down the road when Lopez-Grewal has strengthened her relationship with Miramar.

Along the same lines, I wish to explore and utilize the interview with Toledo Luis at *Centro de Compartimiento* in the future. The program, a scholarship for Indigenous girls, speaks to the Broetje family's concern for women's empowerment and education. Toledo Luis is also a brilliantly fascinating person who has overcome many hardships in her own life. She has dedicated her time completely to the project because as a religious person she feels called to serve, and she maintains a close relationship with the Vista Hermosa Foundation and the Broetjes.

In addition, I was unable to focus on the media aspect of development, the Internet site through which community members on either side of the border share information and images. When I asked after this technology while in Miramar, Valesquez told me that they do not really know how to use it. He explained that Barrett set up the connection but the community was still unsure how it functions. When talking with Lopez-Grewal, she said one of her goals is to train people in Miramar how to use and maintain the portal. I wish to later explore the use of technology in connecting transborder communities.

Through Internet research, I did find that the town of Miramar has a Facebook page where people post pictures, mostly of the town and vegetation, and occasionally ask after the condition of community members living on either side of the border. I have also discovered other Internet videos of Miramar residents working on Broetje Orchards. The videos are shared through YouTube. However, technology use is not discussed at length in the thesis because I focus



on the individuals rather than communication technology that facilitate transborder relations.

Many of these subjects could have been addressed if I had more time. Creating meaningful research relationships and collaborations, especially among Indigenous communities requires trust, which is proven over time. Also, it would have been beneficial to travel to Washington to visit with the Broetjes, Lopez-Grewal, and employees of Vista Hermosa. However, I was limited by time (and funds). Yet, I believe this case study and the discussion of mediators supplements development literature pertaining to transborder Indigenous communities.

### **Thesis Summary**

In this thesis I ask how transborder migration from the Oaxacan Mixteca has connected Indigenous communities with faith-based sustainable development organizations in the U.S. I focus on Guadalupe Miramar Yucuhiti, a coffee-producing community in the Mixteca region of Oaxaca and characterize residents' experience of migration as transborder. This term not only registers the crossing of physical international borders, but also highlights Mixteco migrants' crossing cultural, ethnic, and class borders. Transborder migration from Miramar to the fields of large-scale commercial farms in the northwest United States has linked this community with the Vista Hermosa Foundation, a foundation started by Cheryl and Ralph Broetje. The social justice-minded couple runs both their business and faith-based development organization with a ministry philosophy that emphasizes service. For the past four years, their

foundation has supported development projects in Miramar because many of their orchard employees are from there.

Using a feminist political ecology methodology, I investigate the meshwork linking the Broetje's foundation with the transborder community characterizing Miramar. My case study illustrates the key roles played by development mediators who share the Broetjes' desire to serve the needs of these communities. Two mediators, Chuck Barrett and Melanie Lopez-Grewal facilitate the sharing of knowledge, funds, and communication. My thesis examines how they arrived in their current positions and the ways they deploy their different bodies and identities to translate, literally and culturally, the needs and ideas of a transborder Indigenous community.

### **Thesis Outline**

This thesis outlines a case study dealing with mediators of transborder faith-based development in the Mixteca region of Oaxaca, Mexico. It answers research questions dealing with the mediators of non-governmental organizations. In Chapter 2, I situate the research in a larger body of literature focused on post-Revolution development in Mexico. I explain how development in Mexico focused on modernization aimed to assimilate Indigenous peoples through the policies of *indigenismo*. With the assistance of anthropologists, government programs implemented by the *Instituto Nacional Indigenista* (INI) sought to integrate Indigenous communities into the cash economy. Then the anthropologists in the 1970s and 1980s incited institutional changes to the

development policies. As advocates in service of Indigenous people, anthropologists created programs that offered assistance to rural peasants following economic crisis. These advocates acted as mediators of development creating overlapping meshworks. In addition, I discuss and define faith-based development and how these organizations create development meshworks. Lastly, I describe how feminist political ecology (FPE) is especially helpful for examining these meshworks and how a FPE provides a desirable methodology for analyzing the role and identities of mediators of development.

In the Chapter 3, I expand on how the methodologies of FPE inform my study of FBO meshworks. I focus on the FPE approach to scale and how it allows for a multi-scalar study of individual bodies in relation to global meshworks of migration and development. Furthermore, I discuss how FPE approaches gender through a lens of intersectionality. In addition to introducing the key concept of intersectionality, I explain the importance of the feminist concept of positionality. I end the chapter by revisiting the study's research questions and discuss the methods used to answer these questions.

In Chapter 4, I begin an empirical study of Chuck Barrett, a development mediator who has worked in labor organizing and community development for a long time. I map out his history in activist work as well as ask after his personal motivations about doing development work. His time in development has led him to organizations such as the Vista Hermosa Foundation, which implements development projects in Oaxaca, Mexico.

Chapter 5 outlines the history of the organization starting from the Broetje Orchards and the Broetje family's experience as social justice activists and entrepreneurs. Their unique organization showcases the link between migration from Indigenous regions of Mexico and agriculture in the U.S. It also shows how migration along with faith and spirituality inspires Broetje Orchards to work toward development domestically and abroad. Moreover, their collaboration with other faith-based organizations creates transborder meshworks of development.

As the Vista Hermosa Foundation moves to manage their project in Oaxaca and Barrett settles into retirement, Chapter 6 introduces a new stage of development of the company through interviews with Melanie Lopez-Grewal. She is a new hire for the foundation; she is transitioning into Barrett's position as mediator between the foundation and the Broetje's of labor force in Washington. Lastly, I end with a conclusion that reviews the three stories I tell, specifically analyzing the varying degree that faith plays as a motivator in the work of the Barrett, Broetjes, and Lopez-Grewal. I discuss the key lessons learned from the three empirical chapters. I also highlight the shortcomings of this research and propose strategies to address them. The conclusion also ends with unanswered questions and sketches out future plans to build upon this research.

## Chapter 2: Development and Mediators in Mexico

This chapter outlines the bodies of literature that frame this case study of development mediators. It starts with a review of the history of development in Mexico. Development in Mexico cannot be understood without a discussion of ethnicity. Policies of cultural assimilation characterize the modernization approach to post-Revolution development. I review literature that highlights the role anthropologists played in constructing government policies of acculturation. Furthermore, the ways that economic restructuring followed Mexico's economic protectionist policies and led to a reduction of state-supported programs profoundly affected rural peasant Indigenous communities.

In the wake of structural adjustments undertaken in the 1980s, anthropologists working for the Mexican government stepped up to influence change. In the wake of the detrimental acculturation policies, some anthropologists emerged as advocates in service of Indigenous communities suffering economic devastation. The body of literature discussing the role anthropologists in Mexican development positions these advocates as development mediators, connecting Indigenous populations to necessary resources and inciting change both within and without government programs. In addition to focusing on the role of academics as mediators, research illustrates how mediators form transborder meshworks of development as they cross cultural and political borders in service to Indigenous communities.

This chapter also considers the rise of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in development in the region. As Mexico opened its borders to foreign development, the country saw an influx and emergence of NGOs, some of which are faith-based organizations (FBOs). I review the literature surrounding the contribution of faith in development. Scholars such as Gerard Clarke emphasize how non-material motivations – the betterment and service of marginalized communities – inspire people to participate in development. Using the concept of a continuum, research on FBOs illustrates how the role faith varies among FBOs from purely evangelical on the one end to purely material and secular on the other. The increase of NGOs and FBOs in development also constructs and contributes to transborder meshworks that connect with meshworks comprised of migrant communities. Individual mediators, activists who seek to serve transborder communities, facilitate the creation of these meshworks. Lastly, I review the work of feminist political ecologists in order to understand the concepts of situated knowledge and gendered division of labor in order to contextualize gender inequalities in coffee-producing Indigenous communities. The feminist political ecology approach to scale and the feminist methodological concepts of positionality and intersectionality also allow for the analysis of mediator's identity in relation to the communities with which they work.

### **Development in Mexico**

After the Mexican Revolution (1910-1917), the country underwent significant cultural and economic change. These changes were based in a

nationalist ideology that differed from the Europeanized Mexico during the pre-revolution dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz, known as the Porfiriato. During these heady days, and especially after the election of Lázaro Cárdenas, the *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (PRI) linked pre-Columbian imagery to nationalist causes in order to promote the party and its right to post-Revolution rule (González 2004). Racialized discourse and imagery became a key tool for promoting nationalist agendas. In order to modernize the country, the government felt it would first have to “Mexicanize” the country. This would entail constructing ethnic categories of “white/European” and “Indian.” The construction of racial difference along these two binary categories, however, was not a new concept. Spaniards also used racial difference, and what we could call racism today—that is the systematic and legal discrimination of some groups and the privilege of others—three centuries before the Mexican Revolution. Indigenous people and their rural lifestyles were thought inferior to those lifestyles and cultural achievements brought by European colonizers. This created a caste-like system that privileged European over Indigenous peoples and kept indigenous peoples marginalized in their traditional communities (Aitken 1996, 33; Knight 1990, 72). Throughout the colonial period and after independence from Spain, the category of “Indian” became more associated with class rather than a component of an ethnic identity.

The connection among ethnicity, class, and geographic location are highly relevant to Mexico’s economic history. Post-Revolution, white European and Indigenous ethnic categories were used in new ways. The government employed

a harmonious and glorified pre-Hispanic Indigenous imagery to promote nationalistic government programs that sought to modernize Indians, while simultaneously holding aloft contemporary indigenous culture as somehow backward and a symbol of underdevelopment standing in the way of modernization. It was assumed that if the country wanted to be modern, it had to assimilate the Indigenous population into the mythical Mexican race of mestizos (González 2004, 142). The national government emphasized the process of “Mexican-izing,” called *mestizaje*, using this process to assimilate Indigenous people into the Mexican society (Knight 1990). The policies designed to do this were wrapped up in a philosophy called *indigenismo*, a paternalistic approach to modernization and indigenous development.

The political project to culturally de-Indianize the Indigenous populations in Mexico stemmed from the government’s desire to rid the country of the “Indian Problem,” which was the first order of business in the country’s post-revolutionary development. The government enlisted the help of anthropologists to put forth a plan for cultural assimilation. Manuel Gamio with the help of Moises Saenz and Gonzalo Aguirre spearheaded the project. These guys argued their specialized knowledge of Indigenous populations in Mexico would make them most qualified to orchestrate the assimilation process (Gonzalez 2004, 143).

These anthropologists thought of their mission as emancipatory. Instead of leaving the Indigenous people out of cultural and economic progress, the goal was to elevate the status of Indigenous people to citizens of the country and full-fledged members of Mexican society. In order to accomplish this, they would first



have to erase the negative, “backwards” aspects of Indigenous life, which required the expertise and ethnographic methods of anthropologists. These policies, of course, were occurring across the globe and were even encoded in the UN’s first Indigenous and Tribal Populations Convention, ILO 107 of 1957, which by today’s standards was very paternalistic and assimilationist. In Mexico, however, cultural anthropologists decided which traditions the Indigenous people should keep and which they should forget. Artistic and expressive aspects of Indigenous populations were deemed positive because they represented the nationalistic ideal of the Mexican civilization but were “harmless” enough to allow the country as a united mestizo race and progress in its modernization development plan (Wortham 2013, 41).

#### *INI and the Mexican Miracle*

Education was the tool used to “liberate” the Indigenous people from their “backwardness.” Uniform education in the form of free schools delivered the assimilation agenda to the more isolated regions where Indigenous populations lived. These schools promoted a curriculum designed to educate and convert Indians culturally into full citizens. The teachers were thought of as soldiers of the state manning their posts in the rural regions and spreading the patriotism. One hindrance to Indigenous assimilation was the widespread use of Indigenous languages. Language was one aspect that anthropologists saw as detrimental to *mestizaje* nation building because it kept Indigenous populations from entering in Mexican social, economic, or political systems and presumably weakened their

acquisition and Spanish and the Hispanic culture woven throughout. The existence of diverse languages did not fit into the homogenous nationalistic identity of a united Mexican society. In the 1920s and 30s, *indigenismo* progressed into government policy and practice under the leadership Lázaro Cárdenas who created the Autonomous Department of Indigenous Affairs (Wortham 2013, 43). Then in 1948, Mexico's Ministry of Public Education established the *Instituto Nacional Indigenista* (INI) to further the efforts of *indigenismo* (Wortham 2013, 44).

Previous to the creation of this new agency, development and education programs were slowly spread town to town. Under the advisement of anthropologists, INI created regional cultural/geographic centers from where services could be disseminated more effectively (González 2004). These centers were based on anthropological research that showed that Mexico had regional market centers surrounded by peripheral villages. Services, ideas, and capital could diffuse from these market centers. This model also had international precedence and was called the "diffusion of innovation" by its supporters, and throughout Latin America the implemented model was referred to as "polos de desarrollo," or centers of development. By developing these centers, Indigenous people would have geographically closer access to markets, education, agricultural technical assistance, and health programs. But as a result, Indigenous villages became more reliant on these market centers for resources. Programs to develop and modernize rural Indigenous populations entangled them in markets and the cash economy while slowly eroding the self-sufficiency of their

subsistence livelihoods. Efforts to “integrate” resulted in unexpected forms of exclusion and oppression through the perpetuation of class differences (González 2004, Kearney 1996).

While Indigenous peoples in Mexico suffered cultural and economic changes on a regional scale, the country as a whole entered an era called “the Mexican Miracle.” This period started before World War II. From 1940 to 1980, the national average Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate rose to about 6 percent or higher annually. Between 1970 and 1980, the GDP grew to 6.68 percent annually (Santaella 1998), due to the increased attention to developing the urban, industrial, and commercial agricultural sectors.

State intervention and development strategies of import substitution industrialization (ISI) characterized this period of robust growth. Through taxation barriers, ISI encouraged national industrialization by making imported goods expensive and protecting national industries filling the void. Gates explains how investment in agriculture was part of a two-pronged modernization process in which the government sought to grow both commercial agriculture and industry. State investment in large-scale commercial farming developed agribusiness and rural infrastructure in the northwestern region of the country. Agricultural production not only created food products for foreign trade but also remained in the country to support the growing industrial labor force (Gates 1988). Furthermore, peasant agriculture was largely disregarded. Peasants were seen as a workforce that could subsidize the urban industrial sector by keeping wages low because food prices were low (Gates 1998; Smith 2002).

Agricultural development at this time focused on Green Revolution research for increasing production. Mexico's commercial agriculture sector used new hybrid maize seeds, irrigation systems, and costly chemical inputs to increase maize production. Meanwhile, Gates explains that in the 1950s, as the government concentrated more on commercial agriculture while putting an even greater emphasis on industrial development, the condition of peasant production in rural areas required state intervention. Rural peasant communities witnessed a food crisis and peasant disgruntlement created conflict throughout the countryside (Gates 1988).

To quiet the discontent, the government expanded agricultural development to the rural and subsistence areas. New state agencies such as the *Proyecto de Inversiones Públicas para el Desarrollo Rural* (The Public Investment Project for Rural Development, PIDER) offered technical agricultural assistance and training along with programs that were designed to address the social and economic inequalities in peasant production. The Mexican government used World Bank loans to support these agricultural development projects. In fact, PIDER (an umbrella agency that included many different sub-agencies and commissions focused on a rural development) was the largest World Bank funded program in the world during the mid-1970s (Gates 1988, 285).

In the 1970s, however, it became clear that Mexico was nearing the end of its economic prosperity. Mexico neared a financial crisis; between 1972 and 1975, the country's debt increased and its export earnings, tourist revenue decreased, the peso devalued by 42 percent, and inflation skyrocketed. To stop

the financial bleeding, President López Portillo capitalized on new oil discoveries. The administration depended petroleum revenue to maintain the image of the Mexican Miracle, PEMEX had created when all oil production had been nationalized in 1938 and its revenue used to support government subsidies and programs (Gates 1988). However, in the late 1970s it was clear that if Mexico wished to stave off necessary agricultural policy reforms and mollify the country's financial problems with concern to the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) debt, the government would have to increase oil production (Gates 1988, 290). The oil boom of the 1980s allowed the country to import food supplies from the U.S. as well as agricultural inputs such as fertilizers. Petroleum allowed the country to import more goods, but it simultaneously fostered an increasing reliance on oil. The government increased their debt to buy refinery equipment to increase oil production. During the López Portillo administration, Mexico's public and private sectors extended foreign debt to \$60 billion (Gates 1988, 291).

Mexico defaulted on its foreign loan debt in August 1982, requiring the government to change its development strategy. The implementation of this program initiated the country's shift from ISI and state-centered approach to development to one that shrank the profile of the state and created policies to attract FDI, or direct foreign investment. In short, Mexico turned toward market-based solutions of neoliberal economic policies reliant on foreign investment. Mexico was forced to accept structural adjustment programs (SAPs) and privatize many nationalized industries such as telecommunications in order to

receive loans from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The idea behind this new economic model was to depend on the global market to regulate production and trade, and attract foreign direct investment (Heredia and Purcell, 1994).

After Mexico defaulted on its loans to multilateral organizations and private banks, the Mexican government under its President Carlos Salinas de Gortari in the late 1980s and early 1990s opened the country to foreign investment. It also ended large-scale direct state investment within the country, some of which as we saw was actually detrimental to rural agricultural producers.

Indigenous cultural development in Mexico also underwent changes as the government called upon INI to help shape policy concerned with Indigenous development. Despite investment in Indigenous media projects that celebrated “pluriculturalism” within Mexico, and the ratification of the 1989 UN Convention on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples, ILO 169, constitutional changes pushed through between 1992 through 1994 helped transform many communal lands called *ejidos* into private property. These lands could then be sold to foreign business when Mexico entered into the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1994 (Wortham 2013, 39).

### *Indigeneity and development*

In 1994, NAFTA, a trade agreement opening the borders to free trade between U.S., Mexico, and Canada, went into effect. Consequently, Mexico experienced a rapid influx of foreign transnational companies. After trade

liberalization policies, economic activity increased in many sectors and geographic regions. The concentration of wealth escalated when formerly nationalized industries were bought as private companies by Mexican elite. But as the rich became richer during this period of economic restructuring, the gap between the country's wealthiest and its poorest widened. Despite the neoliberal development plans and the state's public service programs such as the anti-poverty campaign PRONASOL, much of the population resided in poverty (Knight 1996; Weiss 1996, 76; Wortham 2013, 39).

Extreme poverty in Mexico cannot be understood independently from Indigeneity (Kearney 1996, Ramirez 2006). In 2002, 69 percent of people living in Indigenous municipalities were considered extremely poor. Meanwhile, only 15 percent of people in non-Indigenous municipalities were considered extremely poor (Ramirez 2006, 155). In addition to the linkage between poverty and Indigeneity, there is a geographic component to class and Indigeneity. Ramirez notes that 11 percent of Mexicans are Indigenous. Seventy-two percent of them live in rural communities of 15,000 people or less while only 35 percent of the non-Indigenous population occupy rural communities (Ramirez 2006, 151).

By making the connections between class, Indigeneity, and geographic location, it can be said that the economic crisis of the 1980s acutely affected the Indigenous people in Mexico, affecting the livelihoods of many Indigenous peasant farmers. As previously mentioned, state institutions characterized Indigenous development in Mexico, starting with the creation of INI. Agriculture

projects such as PIDER provided materials such as seeds and fertilizers used in the development of agricultural production in rural areas. Peasant farming populations had become dependent on these centralized state institutions for goods and services, so the economic collapse and phasing out of these institutions critically affected rural populations. Coffee prices plummeted and the dissolution of the state-run Mexican Coffee Institute known as *Imnecafe* in 1989 contributed to further marginalization of Indigenous communities (Aranda Bezaury 2003).

Mexico is the fifth largest producer of coffee in the world. Coffee is a primary income-generating agricultural product in the Mexican economy. Much of the country's coffee is grown in southern Mexico in the states of Chiapas, Veracruz, Oaxaca, and Puebla (Aranda Bezaury 2003, 151). With 80 percent of Indigenous people living in the southern region of Mexico (Ramirez 2006, 151), small-scale Indigenous producers farm more than 80 percent of coffee cultivated area in Mexico. Coffee is produced in this region using the *rusticano* system, what Aranda Bezaury argues is an "indigenous system of coffee production." This system is known as "natural" coffee production, mostly farmed on mountainsides (Aranda Bezaury 2003).

Aranda cites four aspects of coffee production in Oaxaca that classifies the *rusticano* system as Indigenous. First, Indigenous farmers use traditional technologies to maintain coffee crops. This includes omitting the use of harmful chemicals that would harm the ecosystem. Second, coffee-production is a household endeavor. Even those family members not directly involved in the cultivating and harvesting process are expected to participate in the processing



the beans – drying and storing them until it is time to transport them. Third, coffee producing communities because of their location and lack of infrastructure face multiple hurdles that affect aspects of daily life such as health, education, communication, and transportation, which in turn affects their coffee-production and distribution. Last, Indigenous coffee growers are part of a community governed by traditional Indigenous systems. These systems enhance the sense of community and also shape the nature of coffee-production in the community (Aranda Bezaury 2003, 151-152).

Oaxaca is one of those coffee-producing states where coffee production is an Indigenous endeavor. Oaxaca has the second highest acreage of coffee planted and is third in the number of families that depend on coffee for their household income among Mexican states. Oaxaca is also characterized by its rich cultural diversity and is home to 16 different Indigenous groups (Aranda Bezaury 2003, 150). Here, coffee production and ethnicity are linked with class. Oaxaca, like other primarily Indigenous states of the southern region of Mexico, suffered the some of the worst poverty in the country even before the 1989 economic crisis. The coffee market collapse and the disappearance of Imnecafe, however, further worsened Indigenous Oaxacans' economic situation.

### **Mediators of Development**

In response to Indigenous poverty, anthropologists once again jumped into action. As demonstrated, anthropologists were integral in the creation of INI, which at its inception they believed to be an empowering development

institution. The institution's assimilation projects, however, tended to further marginalize Indigenous people. Recognizing this, a new generation of anthropologists catalyzed institutional reforms in the government that would address the shortcomings and the cultural devastation former policies and seek to serve the Indigenous communities that economic restructuring continued to affect. Acting as advocates in service of Indigenous communities, these academics could also be considered mediators of development creating an intricate transborder meshwork of advocate academics, state institutions, non-governmental organizations, and Indigenous communities.

### *Etnodesarrollo*

While the country underwent economic and political changes, social changes were also afoot, culminating in a resurgence of Indigenous identity. Guillermo Bonfil Batalla first sparked the counter movement to *indigenismo* in the 1960s. His anthropological study in the Yucatán asserted that the premise of *indigenismo* reforms blamed the Indigenous culture for Indigenous poverty and did not address the inadequacy of government programs that did little to remedy the poverty afflicting these communities (González 2004). By the early and mid-1980s anthropologists reconceptualized the Mexican's government's approach to Indigenous development. Departing from the previous understandings of former anthropologists such as Gamio who was a key actor in policy and programming of *indigenismo*, academic advocates in the Mexican government became catalysts for change. These advocates sought to empower rural Indigenous groups to restore

historical cultural practices that suffered extinction under the previous form of state development. Some of these traits and practices included the importance of collective will, a move to pre-capitalist means of production and distribution, and a resurgence of Indigenous languages (Smith 2002).

Rather than erasing these traits, anthropologists wanted to revitalize Indigenous ethnic identities. Even though at the inception of *indigenismo* the constructing and separating of ethnicities justified cultural assimilation policies, advocates defined cultural and ethnic differences as a tool to counter the past 50 years of reform (Clark 2000; González 2004; Stephen 1996). Smith writes about these advocates and their efforts to empower groups of Indigenous people of Oaxaca to celebrate their culture (2002). It is important to note, however, that these advocates also understood that the revival of Indigenous identity would also have to commune with the country's enforced colonial and neo-colonial political and economic systems. The goal is to empower cultural identity as well as recognize its cultural hybridity achieved after many culturally violent encounters with colonialism. While Indigenous maintain distinct traditions and social organization, they are agents within larger social, political, and economic systems. Their cultures are not merely relicts of the past or untouched global influences. Cultural hybridity also developed from years of migration in the country and across political borders as Indigenous communities searched for work in cities and in agricultural fields in the U.S. (Grieme 1980; Martínez Novo 2006; Smith 2002). Mediators and development practitioners, as Smith shows in her study of anthropologist advocates, work to preserve Indigenous ways of life

and epistemologies while also connecting them to resources that help them participate in the systems in which they are now integrated (2002).

Smith demonstrates how one UC Davis-based anthropologist, Stefano Varese, incited state policy reform as the director of the Oaxaca office of the federal cultural agency, *Culturas Populares*, by educating and training 36 bilingual Indigenous people to become “cultural promoters.” These individuals were to use this training and return to their communities and implement community development called *etnodesarrollo* (Smith 2002). *Etnodesarrollo* functions on the premise that Indigenous communities, who have survived more than 500 years, know best their needs and how to address them. Rather than anthropologists and bureaucrats deciding how Indigenous people will integrate into the cash economy or deciding for communities which traditions should be preserved, Indigenous groups decide for themselves how to implement culturally appropriate development. The differences in Indigenous cultures, as celebrated by anthropologist advocates, validate the Indigenous right to govern and development their communities’ culture and resources (Ríos Castillo and Solís González 2009).

#### *Transborder advocate meshworks*

In 1994, the Zapatista movement erupted a day NAFTA went into effect. Threatening the PRI’s control of the Mexican government and fearing the movement would spread to Oaxaca, on November 12, 1995, Indigenous communities of Oaxaca were granted autonomy over their municipalities. Four

hundred and twelve municipalities out of the state's 570 decided to govern their territory with a traditional system called *usos y costumbres* (Esteva 2010). However, before the government granted Indigenous communities this level of autonomy, *entnodesarrollo*, or Indigenous development in Oaxaca Transborder anthropologist advocates were integral to the Indigenous development movement. These were academics, like Varese, not only researched Indigenous cultures in Oaxaca but also used their knowledge to serve the communities where they worked.

Some researchers use the concept of meshworks to describe the particular type of network that emerges from these transborder development connections between Indigenous communities and organizations and non-Indigenous advocates who lobby on their behalf. Manuel de Landa describes meshworks as different from hierarchies because meshworks are self-organizing and decentralized while hierarchies are often linear, centralized, and homogenizing. Hierarchies also seemingly function to accomplish a particular goal. Hierarchies use organization or a "chain of command" to achieve the desired goal. Meshworks, on the other hand, do not work toward one single goal but use overlapping movements and networks to achieve many different goals, usually on a local level (De Landa n.d.; Escobar 2007). Escobar uses the idea of meshworks to specifically describe environmental social movements. Escobar describes meshworks as having three characteristics. Firstly, meshworks bring together diverse overlapping elements or groups. Secondly, meshworks consist of catalysts that foster connectivity. For example, these catalysts are individual

mediators or organizations that connect communities to development resources. These mediators can be academics, advocates, and activists. Lastly, there is a stable pattern of behavior produced from within the group (Escobar 2004). Both de Landa and Escobar recognize the hybridity of this type of network. Often development networks include a mixture of meshworks and hierarchies (Escobar 2007, 274). De Landa uses the metaphor of a computer, which has certain branches of control. The decentralized way software controls specific functions of the computer system explains how meshworks have many independent nodes but contribute to the function of the entire machine (De Landa n.d.). In development, inequality and social hierarchy at all levels of development exist; they are and perpetuated by the social interaction of ethnic and gender identities, which I explain in depth in the next chapter.

Escobar gives an example of the Pacific rainforest region of Colombia and a resistance movement against the invasion of transnational mineral extraction companies. The social movement consists of many different organizations and marginalized groups such as Afro-Colombians and Indigenous peoples. Social movements and transborder development consist not just of local groups but also of global social movements, individual activists, transnational NGOs, and mediators of development. The particular social movement Escobar studies is an exemplary model of functioning meshworks because the local organizations work with governmental and NGOs in order to combat encroaching land use violations, but simultaneously avoid further reliance on the World Bank (Escobar 2007). The goals of the meshworks Escobar examines are environmental but the aims

can differ from organization to organization, community to community. Furthermore, they are able to grow in unforeseen ways depending on the groups they encounter during the process of development. Therefore, local goals of development and the structure of ground-level organizations are flexible as they associate with other organizations within a larger movement.

Advocate meshworks in Oaxaca are also transborder. They do not only consist of academics from other countries but from other cultures, and they facilitate the exchange of knowledge and technology. These individual actors perform as mediators of development. Meshworks, although flexible, need catalysts to instigate connectivity. It takes mediators using their knowledge and social mobility to connect individuals and groups to larger meshworks of development. These meshworks also included foreign and Mexican NGOs and state institutions. Coinciding with political and economic restructuring of the 1980s and early 1990s, the state loosened its grip and allowed Indigenous organizations to expand geographically. This will be discussed in greater detail later with regards to faith-based organizations (FBOs). Smith writes about some of the mediators who played an important role in Indigenous development meshworks.

### *Mediators and coffee*

One academic advocate, in particular, helped serve Indigenous coffee-producing communities in Oaxaca. As noted earlier, when Mexico defaulted on its loans the country was forced to undertake structural adjustments in order to

access new loans to stabilize its economy. In the process, statist development programs that subsidized peasant agriculture fell apart between the years of 1982 and 1989. One of the organizations was Imnecafe, the national coffee institute, which was hit hard when price agreements maintained by the International Coffee Organization collapsed and prices for coffee dropped drastically (Aranda Bezaury 2003; Smith 2012).

In response to these struggles, Josefina Aranda, an anthropologist and faculty member at the *Universidad Autónoma "Benito Juárez" de Oaxaca* located in the capital city, and other colleagues established the organization *La Coordinadora Estatal de Productores de Café de Oaxaca* (CEPCO). Smith argues that, like many other anthropologists at the time, Aranda stepped into the role of mediator in service to Indigenous coffee producers. Her knowledge of Indigenous coffee production put her in a unique position to help alleviate the struggles many of these communities faced in light of economic restructuring (Smith 2012).

Aranda and her colleagues formed CEPCO to function differently than the Imnecafe's to-down development structure. CEPCO brought together pre-existing small producer unions and groups from throughout Oaxaca. It sought to avoid reliance on unpredictable government money and technical support. In pursuit of stability and sustainability, CEPCO's founders designed the organizational structure on the basis of common structures of Indigenous community governance. For example, leaders are elected through community consensus at the local and regional and state levels. CEPCO also allows regional autonomy



within the organization. Because CEPCO consists of different organizations and groups such as women's groups and organic coffee producers, these groups are encouraged to make their own decisions at these levels. The emphasis on autonomy stems from CEPCO's desire to remain independent from the influence of political parties (Aranda Bezaury 2003). The organization attempts to separate itself from the clientelism that existed previous to the market collapse and characterized the relationships between state institutions and communities under the rule of the PRI (Smith 2012). Other goals of CEPCO include market access, quality production of organic coffee, and financial self-sufficiency.

Building upon the Indigenous peasant nature of coffee-production in the state, CEPCO utilizes and respects local and Indigenous structures of governance. Under Aranda's guidance, the organization, however, also recognizes and attempts to balance the gender inequalities existing in coffee communities (Aranda Bezaury 2003). Women are not traditionally permitted to hold positions of authority, called *cargos*, in the system of Indigenous government called *usos y costumbres* (Chance 1990). Given her anthropological research interests, Aranda recognized the unequal burden of coffee production on women in coffee-producing households. In Oaxaca, Indigenous coffee production is a household endeavor. Women and children participate in the harvesting of coffee just as much as men. After the 1989, women also felt the brunt of the market collapse. They worked as unpaid laborers when the family could afford to hire people to help with the harvest. On top of their production responsibilities, women were also tasked with household reproduction and daily care of children, which, of

course, was also unpaid. Moreover, their husbands often have to leave during the year in search of work in other regions of the country or in the US, in which case women assume the duties of the head of household along with their other household activities (Lyon et al. 2010; Robles et al. 1993).

The video *Mujeres del Mismo Valor* from 1999 details how CEPCO has addressed the problem of gender inequality in coffee-producing towns in Oaxaca. Through the creation of women's groups, women have gained a voice in community development as well as recognition for the productive and reproductive work they do in the community. The video also shows how the creation of women's groups empowers the women to assert their opinions in their own household. Many women discuss how they have gained confidence within their women's group as well as in their marital relationships. Some have even taken leadership roles within their coffee organizations even if they still face resistance in the political sphere of their municipal and regional governments (Monteforte 1999, Smith 2012).

*La Mixteca* region of Oaxaca is one of the regions where CEPCO provides support. The region overlies three southern Mexico states of Oaxaca, Guerrero, and Puebla. The Oaxacan Mixteca is further split into three geographic sub-regions: Mixteca Baja, Mixteca Alta, and Mixteca Costa. The coffee-producing Indigenous Mixteca region has suffered through the 1989 coffee crisis and from other neoliberal policies that eradicated agricultural subsidies and other forms of (sporadic) support. Even with the help of grassroots organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and state-level cooperatives, *la Mixteca*

experiences a high rate of out-migration to urban centers, commercial agriculture in the northern regions of the country, and to the US.

Martínez Novo documents migration of Mixtecos from Oaxaca to the northern regions of Mexico. In her case study in the field of San Quintín in the Baja California peninsula, she demonstrates how state development made the region a center for agricultural production of vegetables. With the implementation of intensive irrigations systems, government funding constructed a landscape that allowed for extensive large-scale commercial farming. Although region offered the landscape for commercial agriculture, it was sparsely populated. Businesses had to draw a labor force from other areas of Mexico, preferably a workforce that would accept lower wages than laborers residing in the north. Business owners imported Indigenous people from Oaxaca. These workers needed the seasonal labor provided by the commercial farming in order to send money home to supplement their subsistence economy (Martínez Novo 2006; see also Velasco Ortiz 2005).

In addition to discussing migration and marginalization among Mixtecos day laborers, Martínez Novo also recognized the role anthropologists associated with INI played in mediating Indigenous development noting that many of them identified as advocates rather than bureaucrats. These advocates focused the institution's efforts on preventing human rights abuses of Indigenous laborers living in border regions basing their initiatives on ethnic sensitivity rather than considering poverty a class specific issue. Indigenous women also suffer marginalization in border regions of Mexico. Migrating to work as vendors in

cities such as Tijuana, women are thrown into work in unofficial merchant sectors (marginally) capitalizing off of tourism. Indigenous women in selling merchandise in Tijuana are met with discrimination often deemed as beggars and representative of Mexico's "social problems." Competing merchants pushed out of market centers within the city to shield tourists from the social realities of Indigenous poverty. Because these women exist in the margins and sell their goods without vendor licenses, they are unprotected by the law and state institutions are unable to provide proper social services to these women (and their children).

In spaces where state institutions cannot reach, non-governmental organizations have stepped up to address Indigenous development. In her case study, Martínez Novo details the efforts of a community development NGO that attempted to provide direct assistance to Indigenous migrant communities. One goal of the organization was to provide jobs for Indigenous women in the formal sector. While framed as an organization serving Indigenous migrant groups, with deeper analysis Martínez Novo uncovers how these programs perpetuate ethnic inequalities. Rather than obtaining equality and dignity for Indigenous women, the organization worked to rid these spaces of the perceived "social problem" that is Indigenous poverty for the benefit of the national image (Martínez Novo 2006, 125).

### *Mediators of transborder communities*

Another mediator of development is anthropologist Lynn Stephen. Her work as mediator, researcher, and advocate began in Oaxaca when she studied Zapotec weaving communities. Being from the U.S., she makes up a part of the meshwork that advocates on behalf of Indigenous producers and artists. Stephen's recent work, however, concerns the Mixteca region as she follows the transborder lives of migrants from Indigenous communities living in Californian and Oregon. Stephen refers to these communities as transborder. The concept of transborder does not signify the transnational nature of migration and development. Transborder implies a deeper meaning concerning cultural transformation. She writes, "In many communities like San Agustín and Teotitlán, where migration to and from the other places has become a norm that spans three, four, and now five generations, the borders people cross are ethnic, cultural, colonial, and state borders within Mexico as well as the U.S.-Mexico border" (Stephen 2007, 23).

In this context, transborder refers to the sending community involved in development. These communities are multi-sited, much like the one featured in this case study. Stephen describes the many cultural transformations the community undergoes through migration that create hybrid identities always at play. Many of those are concerned with the role of women. The border that women cross affects their ideas of sexuality. For example, women who migrate to the U.S. from strict Catholic Indigenous families often struggle with the guilt they

feel from having sex. Freeing their daughter from sexual oppression through education is one way in which gender roles are changing through migration.

Another very important transformation in gender roles appears in governance. Groups of Mixteco and Zapoteco immigrants living in the U.S. form social and political groups. Stephen writes about *Pineros y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste* (PCUN). Women's organizations work in association with the PCUN such as *Mujeres Luchadoras Progresistas* (MLP). Stephen documents the progression of one woman, Antonia, became a member of the board of directors of the PCUN. Even though women are traditionally excluded from governance in their sending communities, away from their communities they are gaining leadership in migrant organizations in the U.S. while continuing to serve their transborder community (Stephen 2007).

Stephen also adopts the term meshwork to describe the connections between transborder communities Stephen shows in her work with transborder communities, communities existing in both spaces of dependency and spaces of engagement. Oaxacans in Mexico and Oregon participate in local customs and work with people from the U.S. and other Central American countries. The concept of meshwork illustrates these connections between communities and organizations better than the image of network. Networks utilize the binaries of scale (global and local), but in Stephen's example of migrant workers organization, the global and the local are undistinguishable.

As a mediator, Stephen facilitates connections between organizations and individuals within these meshworks. As an academic, she takes students to

Oaxaca to study and learn about Indigenous development and encourage them to start their own research projects. Her students in the U.S. also work with transborder community organizations. PCUN, for example, is based in Oregon and are the product of Indigenous cooperation between people from many different Central American countries. The migrant workers' lives overlapped because they are all tree-planters and farmworkers in the same state. The formation of this group, however, would not have been possible without United States citizens working as catalysts with the migrant farmers. Stephen's own students helped with researching migrant labor in Oregon and published the work on the Internet (Stephen 2007).

### **Faith-Based Organizations as NGOs**

In tandem with the academic advocate meshworks that serve transborder communities, an increase of non-governmental organization (NGO) meshworks addresses the needs of poor Indigenous communities in Mexico. A non-governmental organization is not associated with any government entity and is a not-for-profit organization. NGOs can be any groups ranging from international environmental advocacy groups to village savings groups and farmer cooperatives. NGOs come in different forms such as grassroots, service, regional and international. Livernash describes grassroots NGOs as mainly communities level as a local level. International NGOs, on the other hand, usually work for specific causes such as development, human rights, disaster relief, and food security. Most all NGOs form national, regional, and international networks

(Livernash 1992, 14). Faith-based organizations (FBO) are one type of NGO. International FBOs and other NGOs play an important role in development in Latin American beginning the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### *The rise of NGOs*

NGOs began to play a major role in development in Latin America during the 1970s. These organizations dealt with the repercussions of human rights abuses on of inflicted on citizens by authoritarian military regimes (Martínez Novo 2006; Livernash 1992). Then in the 1980s NGOs multiplied in the region coinciding with the neo-liberal reforms and structural adjustments transforming state interventions. In the 1980s, many countries experienced food crisis and a lack of funding for social services due to debt crises (Escobar 1995). Meanwhile, international funds became available for NGOs (Martínez Novo 2006).

During the 1990s, NGOs gained popularity with governments. The “New Policy Agenda” arose as a new outlook towards development inspired by the neo-liberal economic and liberal democratic discourse (Hulme and Edwards 1997, 5). The idea that private initiatives are more effective in reaching the poorest communities prevailed. Governments preferred that NGOs provide social services to underserved populations in substitution of state funding. Furthermore, states saw NGOs as vehicles of democratization, which was integral to the spread of the new agenda’s economic policies (Hulme and Edwards 1997, 5-6).

NGOs, however, often rely on a different set of methods for implementing projects by turning to ground-level approaches rather than the top-down



modernization projects and neoliberal development as well as the state-run development programs (Blauert and Guidi 1992; Clarke 2007). A focus on participatory development and new social movements centered on local/Indigenous knowledge characterizes the post-development strategy (Mohan and Stokke 2000; Peet and Watts 1993). This Post-Marxist grassroots development values local participation and a revaluing of local knowledge as an alternative to dominant development discourses emanating from the West (Mohan and Stokke 2000).

Although NGOs may have an adaptive capacity, an ability to work on smaller-scales and collaborate directly with communities, NGOs do not always empower and liberate those communities or movement they with which they are working, nor are they necessarily democratic or responsive to the needs of communities (as opposed to their donors). Mohan and Stokke actually argue both neoliberal and radical approaches to development have adopted this localized strategy. One type of NGO development, for instance, focuses on technical assistance, which differs from the development initiatives of the previous top-down approaches because it aims to train 'human capital,' known as capacity building, instead of implementing infrastructure and agricultural inputs. NGOs, usually from the global North, partner with local grassroots organizations. While technical assistance diverges from hegemonic capitalist development, technical assistance in places like Oaxaca reinforces hierarchies of knowledge production when the projects force the democratization, or Northern ways of decision-

making, override the traditional governing practices and organizational structures of Indigenous communities (Walker et al. 2008).

Furthermore, NGOs are not safe from gender, class, and ethnic inequalities. Some NGOs may attempt to work within cultural frameworks instead of disrupting pre-existing community organizations and governance. While this can be considered a culturally sensitive approach to development, it does not eradicate gendered oppression of a highly patriarchal system (Livernash 1992). Research about women in development and the uneven impact it has on gender was not widely studied until the late 1980s and early 1990s (Escobar 1995). Martínez Novo adds to the conversation with her study about an NGO working with Indigenous women on the U.S.-Mexico border. In her case study, she finds that even ethnic and class difference skews the perspectives of development concerning Indigenous people. The director of the organization is a woman, but she is a non-Indigenous woman from the upper class of Mexico society. Although the director is a woman and Mexican, her approach to development perpetuates a paternalistic, or what Martínez Novo calls maternalistic, relationship with the Indigenous women resembling the relationship between Indigenous people and the state before economic restructuring (Martínez Novo 2006).

Also, some scholars argue against NGOs capabilities to support the interest of the poor. NGOs emerging, in the 1980s especially, have been accused of corruption (Martínez Novo 2006). Clientelism was prevalent in rural communities in throughout Latin America. Lindsey writes about NGOs working in

El Alto, Bolivia, that promote the government's neo-liberal agenda rather than supporting the popular movements and rural labor unions emerging in the wake of these reforms (Gill 1997). In Mexico, the PRI party had a long history of clientelism. The party would buy votes in rural communities in exchange for social services. As the PRI lost its grip on the government many NGOs in Oaxaca, for example, aligned with themselves with aspiring politicians and competing political parties (Neal 2008).

Regardless of their pitfalls, NGOs undertake a considerable amount of the development community. Governments continually donate money to NGOs as a way to outsource development. In 1989, industrial NGOs distributed more money (in net transfers) than the World Bank, and one-third of aid from NGOs of the "global North" comes from government sources (Livernash 1992, 15). In addition, the total income of NGO finances derived from donors rose from 1.5 percent in 1975 to 30 percent in the mid-1990s (Hulme and Edwards 1997, 6-7). Based on the fact that many organizations receive donations, it remains important to understand why people donate money. Among those motivations is religious faith and spirituality. As FBOs make up a portion of NGOs working in Latin America, personal motivations related to religious beliefs and organizations distinguish FBOs from secular organizations.

### *Faith matters*

Faith is hard to define. Many scholars use faith to mean "the moral and spiritual regulation of individual conduct" (Clarke 2007, 78). Faith also refers to

the religious beliefs one possesses in connection to organized religion. These religions include but are not limited to Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism. Within these categories there are varying sects and subsects. Faith can also be used to mean the opposite of secular, which refers to the absence of religion or religious belief systems: though some would argue that secular humanism acts as a sort of quasi-faith that seeks to empower the emancipatory potential of the human spirit.

Clark argues that faith should continue to be a central concern to development studies because it gives insight into the motivations of those contributing to development. Recently, development scholars link the loss of religion to modernization. Secularization theory states that religious institutions lose their relevance as societies “modernize.” Clarke cites a trend of “materialistic determinism,” the neglect of non-material motivations of institutional behaviors and argues for a greater understanding into the intangible motivations of development organizations. “In this vein academics and policy makers alike perceived poverty as a matter of material deprivation and its elimination a technical undertaking; they systematically ignored the role of faith as an analytical lens through which the poor experienced and rationalized poverty and through which the well-off empathized with their struggles and provided practical support” (Clarke, 2007; 77-78).

Wendy Tyndale likewise expresses the possibility of faith motivation as an epistemology worth including in development analysis. Just as scholars urge development organizations to recognize and understand that certain groups of

people have alternative epistemologies or diverse knowledges of the world, development organizations also have diverse goals and understandings of what development looks like and means. They may not adhere to the same development discourse of modernization, and faith may offer alternative models of development (Olson 2008; Tyndale 2000).

It is, above all, in this area of 'empowerment' that the religions, in the best of cases, may have something qualitatively different to offer from secular development agencies. It is not, after all, only a question of becoming empowered by having more income, or by acquiring skills which enable you to compete in the market, or even of learning how to organize and thus to increase your social status and political bargaining power. For the faiths, 'empowerment' involves the concept of personal dignity, of self-worth, of a kind of contentedness, which does not depend either on the opinion of others or on fulfilling immediate desires (Tyndale 2000; 11).

Bradley explores the varying types of FBOs in development. He creates a continuum for defining the level at which organizations claim faith as motivation. Bradley argues that FBOs are as diverse as any NGO. Although an added affiliation to an organized religion may complicate power dynamics between FBOs and the communities where they work, all NGOs must navigate power inequalities in order to achieve development goals. Bradley recognizes that faith, however varies among organizations and FBOs can be defined along a continuum of characteristics taking into account to what extent "faith" is central to the organization's identity and to the degree "faith" shapes their practice of development (Bradley 2009, 104). Organization lumped into the category of FBO may have different worldviews and ideas about how development should be carried out. On one end of the continuum includes faith as an individual motivator to work for social justice for the poor. Organizations that use faith as a

fundraising strategy among members of a congregation fall somewhere on the continuum as well. Toward the other end of the continuum are FBOs that use development as a tool for spiritual conversion, a sort of spiritual clientelism – providing development only to those who join in their faith tradition. These organizations often have rigid worldviews and development strategies and are unable to accept diverse epistemologies of the communities with which they work (Bradley 2009).

Development funded by religious motivations, however, is not a new idea. In the 1960s churches began to focus their attention on developing regions. The World Council of Churches, which include the Catholic Church and other Protestant churches, pushed for “industrialized countries” to donate money to developing countries. For example, the Catholic Church, undergoing radical changes under Vatican II reforms at the time, urged congregants to focus their attention to eradicating poverty in the “global south.” However, much of this money at the time was channeled through United Nations food projects and bi-national volunteer programs such as the U.S. Peace Corps (Livernash 1992, 14).

### *FBOs in Oaxaca*

Religion has played an important role in development in Latin America since the time of the conquistadors. In Indigenous regions such as Oaxaca, Mexico, Christianity was used as a tool to marginalize and conquer Indigenous peoples. Christianity taught peasants to endure their poverty and suffering in the physical world in order to receive their reward in heaven. Religion sought to

subdue Indigenous populations, but it also mixed with Indigenous ways of life. For example, Catholicism mixed with pre-Columbian governance systems formed the now Indigenous governance *cargo* system. *Cargos* are civil service positions community members hold within the government. The duties of these positions include sponsorship of religious celebrations as well as civil society leadership (Chance 1990).

Religious organizations and institutions also continued to change political positions of Indigenous communities. Liberation theology is a movement in Latin America stemming from Catholic social teaching. Liberation theology critiques the colonial nature of the Church and its history oppression in the region. While liberation theological teachings originated before the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the movement took off in the 1960s. Activists within the Church called for consciousness-raising and the liberation of the poor and Indigenous populations from institutional violence caused by their own governments and supported by Church hierarchy (MacNabb and Rees 1993, 726).

NGO involvement in Latin America was highly politicized in the following decade, especially Catholic organizations inspired by social justice programs emerging from teaching of liberation theology. These politically charged NGOs caused contentious NGO-government relationships (Livernash 1992). In the 1980s, the number of FBOs has increased in the development sector. The mobilization of these charitable organizations accelerated during Ronald Reagan's presidency due to the rise of the Christian right and its participation in domestic and foreign policy (Clarke 2006). During this time, donor focus shifted

from mainstream Christian organizations (i.e. Catholic and Protestant organizations) to organizations associated with evangelical denominations. The presence of FBOs continued to rise throughout the 1990s and 2000s as a result of the US government awarding religious organizations with development projects and funding, causing concerns about the separation between church and state. The 2004 ruling on 'Participation by Religious Orders in USAID Programs' asserts that USAID cannot discriminate against organizations that combine development or humanitarian activities with religious or worship activities nor can it discriminate against organizations that provide civil services in a religious setting (Clarke, 2007).

Historically, scholars have argued that religion, more specifically Protestantism, attempted to destroy Indigenous cultures or 'mestizo-ize' Indigenous communities. More recently, scholars are demonstrating how a rise of Protestantism in Mexico interacts directly with ethnic identity and local politics in Indigenous communities and possibly renews indigenous identity. Gallaher examines how Protestant FBOs in Oaxaca have given Indigenous people a mechanism with which to fight corruption and gender inequality. On the surface Protestantism appears incompatible with Indigenous systems because converts use their religion as a way to undermine *caciques* and do not serve on traditional community labor positions or attend the community-wide celebrations. Gallaher argues that Protestantism that takes an Indigenous approach (such as using language to rally converts) targets Indigenous people but is not very different from previous widespread Protestant proselytizing (Gallaher 2007).



Many of these FBOs are transnational organizations that work in conjunction with other intermediary FBOs (Bradley 2009). They create extensive meshworks of NGOs, individuals, and rural communities. Bebbington describes the way in which these organizations overlap and become transborder/transnational development meshworks. "In social network terms, such aid chains can be understood both as relationships among organizations...and also as relationships among individuals working within and through these organizations. Furthermore, given the human agency and political commitments involved, *some* of these aid chains...can be understood as specifically *transnational networks*" (Bebbington 2004, 730; emphasis from original text). NGOs networks/meshworks are common and often these networks form out of necessity. Smaller organizations must scale up their community-based initiatives in order to gain the resources they need for development. In this case, intermediary organizations are integral in achieving community development goals. Larger regional, national, or international NGOs help smaller NGOs overcome greater obstacles. Livernash provides the example of farmer not being able to take their products to market because of impassible roads or a functional vehicle for transportation (17). Many of these networks and umbrella organizations emerged in the 1980s (Livernash 1992, 14).

FBO and NGOs meshworks intersect with migrant meshworks. Bebbington and Batterbury, in fact, assert that rural livelihoods can no longer be understood separately from organizations, formal and informal, such as Indigenous groups,

peasant movements, NGO organizations, government development programs, and fair-trade networks. They observe that, "In many cases these organizations are likewise parts of transnational structures and networks through which resources, ideas, information and commodities flow. So once again the analytical challenge is to explain livelihoods in terms of their relationships with these other transnational social spaces" (Bebbington and Batterbury 2001, 374). The multilocational transborder livelihoods link communities to development organizations. Bebbington, therefore, acknowledges the need to map out this global migration-development meshwork in order to understand why and how some communities connect with development meshworks while others do not (Bebbington 2004).

Although Bebbington argues for a broader analysis of NGOs that requires moving away from case studies, the formation and facilitation of FBO meshworks that span across often rely on individual mediators working in conjunction with institutions and privately-funded organizations. The emergent meshwork, as Bebbington also highlights, is often embedded in social networks that have a history of collection action with goals of inciting social change (Bebbington 2004). As Clarke explains, faith motivations inspire individuals to contribute financially to development initiatives. While not all actors cite faith as motivation person commitments urge actors/activists to join meshworks, or rather organizations within the meshwork, because of a shared goal (Clarke 2007; Bradley 2009).

work Those individual mediators, as demonstrated by anthropologist advocates working Oaxaca, connect directly with Indigenous communities. FBOs likewise rely on mediators in order to link with the communities they wish to serve. FBOs work with mediators to help facilitate the financial and knowledge exchange necessary to implement community-level projects. They not only facilitate the exchange of resources across political borders but cultural borders. For example, the anthropologists such as Josefina Aranda have the cultural awareness to provide sustainable, gender-sensitive development. That being said, because these mediators originate from varying social locations, it is important to understand how their identities relate and transform relationships between Indigenous people and the development meshworks to which they belong.

### **Feminist Political Ecology**

Feminist political ecology (FPE) is another body of literature used to contextualize the transborder meshworks that arise from migration and the role of mediators involved in development of Guadalupe Miramar Yucuhiti, the coffee-producing community featured in this case study. Miramar is a transborder community. Many of its members live or have lived in the U.S. Those who have not migrated in search of work certainly have friends and family living in the U.S. or in the urban areas of Mexico. Coffee-producing communities face many hardships, as explained earlier. Indigenous systems of coffee-production compounded with high rates of migration burdens women in particular. FPE is helpful in contextualizing not only the communities these FBOs and mediators

work in but also allows me to look at individuals and their relationship to development, as explained in the next chapter. FPE allows for a clearer analysis of how gendered power dynamics transform within FBO meshworks.

While many political ecologists have always studied gendered experiences of environment, (FPE) offers three pertinent frameworks for understanding the changing gendered relationship between women and the environment in coffee-producing Indigenous communities in *la Mixteca*. These three themes of FPE – situated knowledge, and the methodological concepts of positionality and intersectionality – provide a framework through which to study global-local relations, the FBO meshworks, and the individuals that influence people's relationships to the environment. The FPE concept of situated knowledge is useful for understanding gendered relationships with the resource access and control (Rocheleau et al. 1996). Women particularly have diverse and alternative relationships with the environments that differ even from other family members living in the same household. These relationships stem from gendered division labor and women's role in household reproduction (Carney 2004; Deere 1990; Nightingale 2006). Feminist political ecologists document how development projects capitalizing on natural resource production frequently rearrange, exclude, or upend gendered environmental experiences and threaten the sustainability of livelihoods (Carney 2004; Harris 2006; Momsen and Kinnaird 1993; Rocheleau 2008; Schroeder 1999)

In Rocheleau's study of forestry in the Dominican Republic, women's idea of forest management differs from men's because of the division of labor. In the

Sierra region of the Dominican Republic, women consider themselves more as housewives and farmworkers rather than farmers, a typically male role. Although their roles differ, women manage farms and commerce as well as run household reproduction such as subsistence gardening. Yet the environmental responsibilities of women coupled with uneven and gendered environmental rights relations give men land ownership and control of forest resources (Rocheleau 1996). The study illustrates how the implementation of the Forestry Enterprise Project, a sustainable development project planting Acacia trees for timber. The case study demonstrates that women's responsibilities in the home and their lack of political rights in the decision-making process prevented them providing gendered input about the species choice of tree. For example, many women wanted to plant fruit-bearing trees that could easily be harvested, eaten, and sold for income. Furthermore, on the household level many women could not decide whether to harvest trees on their families property solely because of their husband's status in the project or because women had no ownership of the land even in the absence of a male head of household (Rocheleau 1996).

Rocheleau demonstrates how environmental knowledge and access and control of resources are gendered. Women's relationship to the environment remains different than that of men. In certain communities, gender roles limit women's ability to infiltrate decision-making groups that manage these resources. Therefore, FPE aims to empower women by uncovering these inequalities and unpacking the discourse that exacerbate them. Exposing these inequalities leads to solutions. Women's lack of control and decision-making and

resource management in addition to the imposing influence of capitalism and development, gendered knowledge, those of women working in the household, can lose importance in a community. Mehta describes how the turn to commercialized farming in the central Himalaya valley strips women of any kind of political power and excludes them from community decision-making realm. Moreover gendered divisions of labor keep them from accumulating income (Mehta 1996). The silencing of women in certain political spaces allows for emerging grassroots movements and various forms of activism. Nagar documents the organization of in Chitrakoot, India, which used street theater to empower women in their fight against extreme gender inequality. The movement stemmed from a development project that educated women to perform what were formerly considered male tasks such as water hand pump technology, masonry, tractor use. Even though these programs leveled some of the gendered inequities in the community, women's groups creatively brought their voices from the private into the public sphere, a space from which they were ignored previously (Nagar 2000).

It is important to FPE and to this case study that the term gender does not refer only to women. McDowell explains how feminist geographers made a conscious choice to study women. It was a political decision to address the exclusion of women from subject of geographical research. Until that point, geographical research was relatively vacant of questions addressing gender power dynamics that characterize politics of resource access and control. However, equating gender studies with women studies proves problematic

because it assumes that the research is only about women and women only undertake this research. Women researcher would be left with the task of tackling gender inequalities while the topic goes largely unrecognized in the rest of geographical research (McDowell 1997). This case study does focus on the ramifications of development on gendered divisions of labor, but it also emphasizes the role of development mediators who work with Indigenous communities. The gender of these mediators remains important to how they implement development projects, and these mediators are both man and woman. Their gender differences influence their relationship with the community they assist. With a FPE methodology, I explore how individual bodies influence gendered relationships with the environment in the following chapter.

## Chapter 3: Methodology

A feminist approach proves useful for this study because of the methodology's discussion of the politics of representation and identity. This is particularly important when discussing transborder communities and the circumstances that force individuals to adopt a multitude of identities. In addition, poststructural feminism challenges socially constructed and enforced identities, especially identities of gender. This chapter focuses on the methodologies of feminist political ecology (FPE) are helpful to discussing development. The FPE fluid use of scale helps when exploring the position of individuals and their role in meshworks created by international division of labor. Furthermore, FPE approaches gender with a lens of intersectionality. This case study discusses gender, ethnic, and class identities. Intersectionality as a concept considers all these identities and explores the ways they overlap and contribute to inequalities emerging out of transborder interactions.

This chapter also situates me as well as my research within the case study. The feminist concept of positionality investigates how my relationship and my identities of gender, ethnicity, class, religion, and education play a role in fieldwork and emergent knowledge production. I discuss my personal identities and the epistemologies that inform my observations, giving insight into how I view transborder Indigenous development and development mediation. The chapter ends by revisiting research questions and explaining the methods I used to address those questions.



## A Feminist Framework

Feminist theory helps me study identity formation, difference, and knowledge creation. Most of all it inspires me to challenge the structures and assumptions that create unequal power relationships in development and transborder migration. It enables me to decolonize the understanding of these global processes, although total decolonization can never exist when doing research. As long as I am a non-Indigenous person trying to explain others' experiences through my own language, there will always be an inequality and colonial relationship between researcher and "the researched." But feminism leads to keen awareness of this relationship and provides methods that help minimize the inequality in research relationships.

Most importantly, feminist research strategies do not allow complacency. They permit me to be a researcher and advocate. "In their selection of research questions, their choice of conceptual categories, and their judgment of what constitutes relevant data," writes Susan Hanson, "feminists often design research with the aim of changing social, political, and economic structures so as to improve the life circumstances of women" (Hanson 1997, 123). In addition to adopting a feminist lens through which to undertake and view my research, I also embrace poststructural theories or an anti-essentialist epistemology. Poststructural feminism conceptualizes identities as never grounded or fixed but malleable and constantly recontextualized through social interaction (Gibson-Graham 2000).

Acknowledging gender as a key factor in social organization remains a central theme in feminism. To think of the world as gender neutral would, in fact, be ignorant. But to focus solely on gender would be just as detrimental to the understanding of social organization. The feminist theory of intersectionality posits that gender along with religion, ethnicity, age, and class affect the social roles shaping a struggle for equality. If focused on gender alone, feminist scholars would not consider the differences in the struggles women of other classes or of other ethnicities, or as particular to this research, Indigenous women and class. "Race" and "ethnicity" as a category or characteristic is an artificial classification to establish boundaries between the dominant and the "other," and/or the marginalized. Race relegates people not of the dominant class to the fringe or makes it possible homogenize the experiences of a group. However, postcolonial poststructural research asserts and recognizes that people experience multiple identities simultaneously. Therefore, there is no single standpoint epistemology for all those who identify as women (Dyck 1997).

Feminist poststructuralists understand gender as a spectrum. One does not have to adhere to cultural interpretations of what is masculine or feminine based upon their biological makeup. In fact, being male or female is also a social construction, and sometimes humans are equipped biologically with a variation of female and male anatomy. Furthermore, humans can identify with one or many sexual orientations, positioned somewhere on a spectrum between homosexual and heterosexual. All these identities exist on a spectrum where people can

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identify with some, all, or none of the criteria society has categorized as their gender identity, sexual orientation, biological sex, and gender expression.

Binaries can lead ultimately to exclusion and prejudice. Categorization of identities does not permit for a multitude of identities or various expressions of identities. Binaries are useful in creating the “other,” outliers of societal normative values. Awareness that the dichotomy of gender expression, in particular being masculine/feminine, helps me understand that gender is spatial. Gender roles change over space, and what is perhaps feminine within one culture would be considered partly masculine in another. Focusing merely on the difference between the binaries of man and woman is incomplete and polarized. The inequalities women face, or even the roles they adopt, varies over time and space (McDowell 1997). Women are a multitude of things apart from their biological classification, and assuming that each woman faces the same struggles and holds the same knowledge is normative and essentialist (Kobayashi 1997; McDowell 1997).

My research draws upon previous studies about the intersections of women involved in development work in their own Indigenous communities and researcher’s studies with such communities. It also takes into account their experience as migrant women and women who carry the burden of productive and reproductive labor in the absence of their male partners. Much of their station in life is dictated by their gendered identity within their communities. Even the development projects discussed in this case study have gendered implications. During fieldwork some women relayed to me the amount of time

and effort put into the daily upkeep of food security projects fall on the women because it is located within their space within the home. Feminist geographers insist that gender remain “spatialized” and examine how people perform gender roles according to their physical and cultural locations.

In the case study, I explore the ways ideas and capitals are exchanged among many different groups of people. The people in this study are activists, “Westerners,” women, “güeros(as),” Indigenous people, Mexicans, Americans, migrants, and citizens. These categories are not easily defined and many people identify themselves differently depending on their social and geographic location. Some actors live in the United States, some in Oaxaca, Mexico, and most have lived and traveled between both. Some are religious; many are not. Some are Catholic, others are evangelical, and several are neither. Some subjects and, even the researcher, would invoke one of these identities at different times and spaces depending on the context of a situation. Some of the subjects would not consider themselves part of any category, and why should they? These categories were created to more easily understand how people are similar or different. Yet, feminism offers more than just neat little categories for people. It is a feminists’ sensitivity to the multiple layers of identity that breaks down and unpacks the discourses that form these categories (Hanson 1997).

Additionally these identities are socially constructed as soon as they are articulated. Assigning language to describe something immediately excludes diverse epistemologies and knowledges from being expressed because language is how people convey meanings of things that are not so easily transcribed across

cultural borders and language barriers. "In poststructuralism," writes McKinnon, "all knowledge is inseparable from the uncertain and shifting language through which we come to know and express that knowing" (McKinnon 2007, 773). And while there may be no way to avoid exclusion, a feminist geographer can remain aware of this by understanding the knowledge, language, and perspective they bring to the research. For example, my social position as an English-speaking white researcher and my upbringing and education in social justice that shapes my knowledge.

Juanita Sundberg writes about her experience as a white researcher studying conservation in Guatemala. She examines the way people perform their identities according to the discourses that socially construct racial and gender categories. She also explains how interactions form these identities. They are neither natural nor *a priori*, but they do interact and inform each other. Through her research, she finds that her own identity plays out via the interactions she has with the women in the community. She makes her identity according to her assumed traits as a white researcher from a Western education background. In other words, people within the community identify her along the lines of her race, class, and occupation as a researcher. That role is created for her and she finds herself acting out that role (Sundberg 2004).

Whether she wants to perform this way or not, Sundberg raises an important point about reflexivity. The feminist notion of positionality and reflexivity upholds that knowledge is situated in place and is produced through social interactions. Just as power dynamics enable identities in the making, the

interactions between subject and researcher reflect back on the researcher to inform identities, self-claimed or enforced. How a person identifies themselves is often determined by individual personal interaction or social location in a certain place. Sundberg explains how she performed her identity as a white researcher, but also women in the community performed theirs. But these identities were transformed or employed differently depending on social spaces. Whether willingly or unwillingly, identities are relational and are constantly forming and transforming, just as Sundberg explains in her fieldwork in the Maya Biosphere. As a woman with an education steeped in Catholic social teaching, I self-identify as a woman and activist. This is where I situate my desire to conduct research. But as previously noted, even positioning oneself within the research does not erase all inequalities or colonial attitudes within the practice.

By recognizing my position as an academic or as a white, non-Indigenous person, I still acknowledge that, while aware of the power dynamics, the research will be filtered through my knowledge formed by my epistemology — or the way I produce knowledge. What I consider to be true or real based upon my belief system may not be how someone else knows something. Truth then becomes relative to certain epistemologies. My personal observations about a space and interactions within that space are distilled through my epistemological understanding of the world and how it works. Meanwhile someone else can understand those interactions and relationships differently based upon their world-view. Therefore, it remains the job of the feminist researcher to self-realize their position in relation to those they are collaborating within the field, the

“baggage” they bring to the action of conducting research, and the analysis of the data (Kobayashi 2005). However, Gillian Rose acknowledges how self-realization is not entirely possible. The questions that feminist scholars ask about how their positionality affects knowledge production are unanswerable. Just as being distance from research subjects creates a god’s-eye view of understanding, being so aware of one’s social position does not necessarily erase the social constructions of gender or race, for example. It may become a process of self-construction rather than self-critique (Rose 1997).

All these feminist concepts – difference, intersectionality, and reflexivity – come together to uncover the politics of representation. Feminist scholars dive into research aware of the many ways women are represented and pigeonholed, not only in everyday life, economic development projects, or media but also in previous academic research. They unpack the concepts of sameness and difference. They trace the patriarchal roots of gender identity and problematize the binaries that afflict the unequal implementation of global processes such as development.

Feminist scholars remain conscious of socially constructed difference and the subjugation of identities. For example, Carmen Martínez Novo builds on previous scholarly work on Mixtec identity among migrants at the US-Mexico border. What she expected to research was an enthusiastic Indigenous rights movement that turned out to be an exercise of government-propagated Indigenous identity formation. The government wished for the migrants to be identified as Indigenous in order to keep them separated and therefore

marginalized in Mexican society, which would maintain their standing as exploitable labor (Martínez Novo 2006).

Martínez Novo's work is a prime example of understanding the politics of representation and recognizing that the making of identities is always political and often violent. Even the title of her book *Who Defines Indigenous?* signals her feminist inquiry into Indigenous identity and the power dynamics encompassing her work with Mixtec women. Furthermore, her work typifies feminist scholarship because it adheres to Hanson's assertion that feminist research uncovers and unpacks these socially constructed binaries as well as advocates for an improvement in the social and physical conditions of women everywhere.

### **Methodologies of Feminist Political Ecology**

Feminist political ecologists take these feminist epistemologies and apply them to the study of resource access and control. By uncovering the unequal human and environment relationships, feminist political ecologists' work is emancipatory and calls for justice on behalf of marginalized groups. From a feminist perspective they approach the changing relationship of women to their environment in the face of development and migration. FPE is particularly helpful for this case study because of its multi-scalar outlook, its approach to gender through the lens of intersectionality, and the recognition of researcher's positionality.



### *FPE and scale*

FPE seeks to understand how hegemonic such discourses as development and neoliberalism manifest in local resource politics and the formation of institutions. It requires a broad understanding of global processes while observing local outcomes. FPE research concentrates on gender relating to the access and use of resources at the household and body levels. Such an approach to scale explores how processes such as neoliberal development strategies reconfigure gendered environmental relationships (Elmhirst 2011; Resurreccion and Elmhirst 2008). It is necessary to study these processes through a multi-scalar approach because many rural communities interact with global development meshworks, markets, and social movements. Migration, as demonstrated by this case study, also puts local communities into contact with FBO meshworks and other peasant organizations. Political ecologists and feminist political ecologists must consider communities as part of meshworks. Therefore, rural livelihoods can no longer be understood separately from organizations, formal and informal, such as Indigenous groups, peasant movements, NGO organizations, government development programs, and fair-trade networks. Bebbington and Batterbury write, "In many cases these organizations are likewise parts of transnational structures and networks through which resources, ideas, information and commodities flow. So once again the analytical challenge is to explain livelihoods in terms of their relationships with these other transnational social spaces" (Bebbington and Batterbury 2001, 374).

As Carney (2004) demonstrates in the Gambian wetlands, once commonly used resources are gradually changing into more privately managed resources as the global economy revalues resources and deepens the gendered inequalities of resource access. Meanwhile, development projects allow for year-round rice production. Even NGO horticultural projects that aim to increase female income generation actually burden many women. These programs improve women's access to the fields as laborers but do not address the inequalities pertaining to familial land ownership rights. Due to cultural practices in the Gambian wetlands, male heads of households possess control over surplus production, thus limiting women's disposable income (Carney 2004, 1993; Truelove 2011).

Feminist political ecologists' multi-scalar approach focuses on individual bodies and how a society's cultural-environmental values dictate a person's relationship with their environment. Notions about types of bodies limit or permit an individual's access and use of resources. Nightingale's work in Nepal shows that does gender, caste, and age restrict the spaces women live. In Nepal lower-caste women who are menstruating are not allowed to collect water for the household because they are seen as pollutants. Women must stay in certain places and may not even enter particular rooms during menstruation. Rituals exist in which women must purify themselves with water before reentering the house after giving childbirth. In this case, nature can take on the condition of women. During menstruation, women have to sleep in the stable with the animals because animals are considered less pure than men at that time of their cycle. Even the purity of the water source is subject to the time women use it. If a

woman bathes in the water at an inappropriate time that water sources is then deemed polluted, and women's bodies can damage the crop yields if they pollute that particular space (Nightingale 2003).

→ FPE understands gender as prevalent at all scales because global processes affect people on all levels. Also within meshworks of development the scales are complex and varied. While global development and market instabilities spur migration, for example, individual actors employ their motivations and means to make changes at the household and community levels. It is not necessarily a characteristic or imperative that feminist scholars study "closer scales" – the body and household – but it is their understanding that national and international power dynamics are manifested at those levels of analysis (Elmhirst 2011, 131). So FPE often examines the effects of global processes on individuals at the local levels. The studies showcase the gender inequalities in Indigenous communities where people are receiving aid. Yet, there seems to be less of a focus on individuals providing the assistance or going to these communities to assess needs. In this research, I call those individuals mediators, and argue that they too are influenced by development. The effects are manifested in their motivations to dedicate their lives to social justice. They are also individual bodies and they impact how development is implemented. Even the personal motivations and religious beliefs of individuals the FBO featured in this case study, which funds projects all over the world, affect how development is implemented at local levels.

### *FPE and intersectionality*

Because this case study analyzes the role of individual bodies in development, a discussion of intersectionality proves pertinent. Intersectionality is the concept that gender along with other characteristics such as race, class, ethnicity, and age are interconnected and cannot or should not be studied separately. All these traits transform interactions with others and with the environment. Nightingale's study of women in Nepal also provides an excellent example of intersectionality. When concerning resource access and control, there are other limiting factors aside from gender and many individuals experience more than one. Nightingale also makes clear non-Hindu women and women of different classes, including Nightingale herself as a Westerner, are beholden to the same practices and, therefore, not expected to wash her body in the same way as those of a different society and caste.

When development mediators in this case study, for example, enter an Indigenous community they bring with them many different characteristics, which they embody. These mediating bodies are also gendered bodies. They express male and female traits. These bodies are white bodies. These bodies are from the global North. These bodies represent the FBO that provides financial support. As Nightingale demonstrates in her research in Nepal, her ethnicity and class set her apart from the women she studies, not her gender. And like the women in the study who perform their roles dictated to them by society, she performs her role as a researcher.

Performance of roles and the embodiment of nature in Nepalese women remains an important concept as well. The fact that women play out their roles assigned to them in their caste, age, and gender while women not from the same position in life are able to disregard these customs shows that every person is situated differently and so is their knowledge (Nightingale 2011). But these knowledges and roles are performed and not inherent. Sundberg examines the practice of conservation and how it creates and reinforces dichotomies and identities such as men/women, white/indigenous, and modern/tradition. These dichotomies contribute and perpetuate racialized and gendered landscapes. Sundberg as a feminist political ecologist recognizes these performed binaries and unpacks the discourse that forms them. She takes her own research as an example. As the communities in the biospheres act out their parts as Indigenous men and women and the NGOs play their part, Sundberg falls into hers as a white researcher (Sundberg 2004).

As the roles are performed it becomes evident that each person involved in conservation brings their own baggage and worldviews into the situation. Feminist scholars refer to this concept as positionality. Sundberg writes, "As a white woman conducting research in northern Guatemala, I was (made) acutely aware of the ways in which my gender, race, and biography as a privileged U.S. citizen shaped all level of my research – from the questions I asked, to my interpretations" (Sundberg 2005, 1). For feminist scholars studying resource use and access, the processes that create inequalities, gender, race, and ethnicity of

the subjects only makes up part of the study. The other part is recognizing how people including oneself, the researcher, interact with those involved and how observations are formed and informed through the personal epistemologies and performances constructed by the researcher's social, cultural, and physical locations (Sundberg 2005).

A FPE multi-scalar approach to development allows this case study to discuss the involvement of individuals in development practices. The concept of intersectionality seeks to understand how other socio-spatial characteristics along with gender inform nature-society practices. FPE also draws attention to the performative roles of individuals involved in research. Central to this case study are the roles of development mediators within FBO-migration meshworks. Situating this research in a feminist framework uncovers how the positionality of these mediators allows them agency and mobility that differ from the people they aim to assist.

### **Research Questions**

Consciousness of my position as researcher along with my gender, race, and class has shaped all areas of my research. The questions I ask stem from my experiences traveling, from my educational background, and from my desire to understand social justice-oriented development. It is through my chosen methodology and its emancipatory objectives that I am able to formulate my research questions about the connection between migration and faith-based development in coffee-producing communities in Oaxaca, Mexico. Much of the

literature on transnational migration has focused on the global processes that incite out-migration from rural communities. I build on this literature by first examining the global processes that have affected coffee-producing communities such as neoliberal economic policies that have fueled migration and augmented the burdens of Indigenous women. Ample feminist research focuses on how economic and political restructuring impacts women. I am more interested in the ways development organizations—particularly faith-based non-profits—attempt to remedy the effects of economic hardship through short-term and long-term solutions to the issue of migration.

In the same vein, I aim to understand the motivations of individuals such as activists and development practitioners who are dedicated to remedying the suffering of migrants. Studies focus on local communities connected to global NGOs and the structure and effectiveness of advocacy networks, but these studies less often examine on the non-migrant individuals involved in the process – the mediators. Mediators facilitate flows of capital technologies and ideas. They work to translate the needs of the Indigenous communities for the organizational benefactors that fund development projects. Their expertise stems from their ability to connect people, serving as the glue that helps hold communities together while realizing the goals of sustainable/alternative development. My research aims to understand the individuals that devote their lives to mediating development. I ask after their motivations and perspectives. I also seek to understand how social justice and religious beliefs tie into their ideas of development.

Additionally, I ask after their knowledge of gender and ethnicity and their sensitivities to power relations within Indigenous communities. In what ways do they include women in development projects and decision-making? How do they navigate gender inequalities characterizing the structures of Indigenous governance? A feminist methodology encourages me to gauge the intersections of age, gender, ethnicity, and religion found in development mediation. I am also sensitive to the ways identities shift and are recontextualized through migration and through sustainable development. My research asks how knowledge is created amidst cultural differences and social positions and if the dominant discursive forms of knowledge still prevail in mediated transborder, faith-based development.

## **Methods**

In order to answer the questions I have outlined, I have selected a distinct group of research methods. Theoretical and methodological approaches are connected, and feminism lends itself to a particular set of methods. The feminist inquiry into how gender plays a part in the social structure of communities and practice of development frame the questions we ask (McDowell 1997). Not to say that feminist scholars do not use quantitative methods, but feminists recognize the structured nature of positivist research and the impossibility of achieving objectivity (Haraway 1988). Poststructural feminist theory posits that knowledge is situated and created by particular bodies that are fond of specific epistemologies. Furthermore, collaboration between researcher and subject



creates a space where these knowledges interact and transform. And just as there exists multiple situated knowledges there is no one universal truth although western positivist science would suggest there may be.

Feminist geographers also recognize that they are bodies within the research. Fieldwork is made up of personal interactions. The researcher is not a disembodied observer but in fact gendered and holds a set of visible and invisible characteristics and preconceived notions. There exist no neutral identities or observations as assumes positivist methodologies (McDowell 1997). When choosing qualitative research methods, one chooses to insert themselves into the lives of others through interviews or participant observation. A researcher's presence in a community is obvious. There is no way that a researcher can sit in the shadows without interacting with the community, especially in rural Latin American setting, as Sundberg demonstrates. As Sundberg suggests the possibility of objectivity remains unattainable. Previous geographers, assumed their minds are separable from their bodies and able to achieve a gods-eye view of a situation; they never questioned their authority to speak on the situations they observed. Feminist scholars declare that theoretical objectivity reproduces uneven politics of representation and perpetuates the binaries of difference that marginalize subjects (Sundberg 2005).

At the heart of feminist research is fieldwork because it allows researchers to witness the subjects' feelings and motivations – the way they react to others and to the researcher, the ideas they are willing to vocalize, and the spaces they inhabit. As Linda McDowell writes, "Doing feminist geography means looking at

the actions and meanings of gendered people, at their histories, personalities and biographies, at the meaning of places to them, at the different ways in which spaces are gendered and how this affects people's understanding of themselves as women or men" (McDowell 1997, 382).

For this reason, I chose to do six weeks of fieldwork in Oaxaca, Mexico. I traveled to various place to towns to conduct interviews with people involved in various development projects. I visited the town of Guadalupe Miramar Yucuhiti in the Mixtec region of Oaxaca after being invited to stay for four days. My plan was to interview women in order to learn about their involvement in development projects, their roles in community leadership, and their experiences with transborder migration.

Yet feminist methodology recognizes that doing fieldwork creates an inorganic space and is partly problematic. The research creates a space and time for the site of inquiry. While the researcher includes themselves in the space, they are also performing an act of "othering" the research participants by creating a space of inquiry and of intrigue apart from their home. Katz explains, "While the exoticizing impulse may be less strong than the past, ethnographers still generally rely on at least some displacement from home grounds to elsewhere to distinguish and differentiate the objects of their inquiries" (Katz 1994, 68). The creation of fieldwork in this case study proves slightly difficult and incomplete because of the multi-sited, transborder nature of the participating community. To mark off "the field," therefore, can only be the researcher's arbitrary endeavor.

I felt visiting the sites discussed in my case study was important in order to better understand how development project in Miramar are executed and maintained. Fieldwork also allowed me to talk to people who have worked with the Vista Hermosa Foundation and their associates. These voices are not often featured in the research materials I studied (websites, newsletters, articles, interviews, videos, etc.). I learned quite a bit about women's involvement in development, through what they said and through observing the ways in which they said it. A lot can be learned through the uncomfortable pauses, the giggles and sly smiles, or the nervous handwriting.

Fieldwork gives the researcher an opportunity to see the physical reactions and interactions, but it, once again, cannot be objective. The physical presence of a research will also affect the responses given to interview questions or inhibit the participation of usually active community members in planning meetings. As Sundberg also suggests, the politics of the field are particularly difficult to overcome in Latin America where racial identity is, more or less, obvious (Sundberg 2005). Even being able to speak Spanish could not change the fact that every time I entered a room as a white female U.S. citizen, people stared, stopped talking, or became instantly interested in what I had to say. No matter how accustomed to my presence community members became, I could never shake the label of *güera* or *gringa*. My physical features dictated how people addressed me. More than once, while sitting in the center of town, people came up to say "gracias," thank you. Taken aback, I had no response, so I would mutter "de nada," not knowing what they were thanking me for. It wasn't until one of my

interview participants laughed and told me people thought I was there as a psychologist doing pro bono counseling for battered women and alcoholics. The community members' past experience with "gringas" influenced how they viewed me. Fortunately for me, the community where I conducted fieldwork had positive experiences with foreign white visitors.

When in Oaxaca, I used a semi-structured interview method and participant observation to understand the organization of community development groups. Interviews were conducted one-on-one with women in the community or sometimes in the presence of a male community leader. In the case that a male authority figure was present, I made sure to take diligent fieldnotes observing the physical responses to questions and note the times the interviewee deferred questions to the authority figure when she felt uncomfortable. These manifestations of gender roles depict how the power dynamics affect the outcomes of research methods. While in Oaxaca, I was able to attend a planning meeting. I could not help but notice that no women were included in the membership, and the majority of the men also held positions in local or municipal government. Again, my identity as a researcher from the U.S. worked to my advantage. I gained access to a meeting that none of women in the community would have.

While my role in the meeting was minimal as I sat and took notes as quickly as I could, I was not a fly on the wall. My silent presence alone impacted the way the men spoke to each other. In a community where most people over the age of thirty years old spoke in a mixture of Spanish and Mixteco, the men

tried hard to speak purely in Spanish. That proved difficult for the older members of the group. Many times the men stalled trying to think of how to express themselves in Spanish even though they could more easily use Mixteco. At one point in the meeting, Noel, president of the organization, turned to me and said that the group would be switching to Mixteco. I sat and listened to the men while trying desperately to piece together fragments of Spanish. And just like that, they were able to exclude me from meeting. These cultural and racial differences are exploitable tools. My racialized identity allowed me access into spaces Indigenous women were excluded just as Indigenous language could just as easily curtail my understanding of community development and gender dynamics. But these are the politics of the field that feminist scholars grapple to understand even though they are seemingly impossible to overcome.

To answer the research questions concerning mediators of development, I also used qualitative methods of semi-structured interview. Before conducting interviews, I wrote and revised questions because, as poststructural feminism suggests, language is not neutral but socially constructed. Moreover, because an interview is an interaction between two people with perhaps differently performed identities and epistemologies, a feminist researcher must recognize that there is no objective truth to be found or discovered through an interview (McDowell 2010). How a researcher formulates a question and the language with which the interviewee responds is subjective and comes out of their situated knowledges. Additionally, an individual's appearance can be clues about their

position culturally or occupationally, at least for the personal interpretations of the researcher.

When distance, however, is a factor and development networks stretch across the globe, interviews must be mediated through telephones and/or computers. A researcher must consider the data that is lost when not being able to see the other person – their reactions to the questions or the general state of comfort in being part of a research project. Although some of the time, these issues are remedied through techno-visual interactions such as video calls. Yet, a researcher must be aware of the ways audio-visual mediation affects the interview process.

For members of development organizations, I used semi-structured interviews as a way to ask after their experiences in the field of non-profit development, the quality of their experiences with certain development organizations, their current and future plans to connect sending communities with migrant communities, and if their religious beliefs impact the way they approach development. For one mediator, Chuck Barrett, I decided to pursue life history interviewing. Life history interviewing is a research method utilized in oral history research. It seeks to record an individual's biographical information in hopes of creating a narrative. The goal of life history interviewing is to have the interviewee express their story in their own words, reminiscing about important memories in their lives. Instead of seeking answers to specific questions and ignoring possibly important bits of information, life history interviewing allows researchers to more effectively identify the motivations of the participant

(Jackson and Russell 2010). This is particularly useful when addressing my research question pertaining to the motivations of mediators who dedicate their lives to development work. It also sheds light on the importance of social justice in the lives of mediators working with Indigenous communities.

Life history interviewing is especially important to feminist research because it allows participants who have historically not been as vocal in research on development processes such as development mediators, to empower themselves through collaboration in the research objectives. In this case the objective is to tell the story of facilitators who are often the glue that holds activist and development networks together. Life history interviewing is not problematic for poststructural feminists because they are not preoccupied with objective truths. However, this research method is implemented in a different way than semi-structured interviews. While questions are prepared for the interview, they are meant to guide the interviewee through the interview. Unscripted follow up questions may be used to gain a better understanding of the interviewee's historical and geographical consciousness (Jackson and Russell 2010).

A researcher must also be cognizant of the sensitivity of the topics and the emotions some memories invoke. Fieldnotes are particularly helpful during these interviews because they record the reactions connected to the stories give insight into the unspoken emotions of the participant. Writing or "jotting" notes in a moment can help preserve a researcher's observation as well as feelings toward an interaction. This way social interaction is recorded as a process unfolding with

in the fieldwork. Fieldnotes in a practical sense help researchers remember small details and feelings that occurred. It is important to record these instances; however, the act can seemingly inhibit the immersion process and distract or intimidate the research participants (Emerson et. al. 1995). Some fieldnotes, and during my time in the field, were recorded after the fact. I had a nightly reflection of the day when I recorded electronically all the details I could possibly remember as well as spend time interpreting the notes I did make throughout my day. These notes became an amalgamation of personal thoughts, details about projects, and questions that arose out of the information learned. I was able to take very detailed notes in organizational meetings because I was not a contributor to the proceedings. During recorded interviews I had more time to write notes concerning my feelings toward the material or the expressive insights of the interviewee.

To analyze those fieldnotes in a systematic way I used coding. I identified patterns, connections and relations, and refined ideas while rereading my notes. Coding is not a way to objectify or quantify data, although some researchers do quantify their notes and interviews via coding software. No data in qualitative (or quantitative research, for that matter) is objective, especially in ethnographic endeavors when the researcher is considered an outsider to the community (Watson and Till 2010). Coding proves more appropriate for revisiting ideas and themes reoccurring throughout the course of the research project. It “is more of a practice of discovery than an ‘objective’ form of reporting” (Watson and Till 2010, 126). Reading through and highlighting the key themes in the fieldnotes



and then comparing them to the themes of the interview transcripts uncovered certain themes that were not originally a main area of focus of the study. Moreover, some original emphases of the project did not occur prominently in the interviews or field observations.

### **Case Study**

I knew I wanted to focus on coffee-producing communities and faith-based organizations. While doing preliminary research, I stumbled upon a video on the Internet. It was a slideshow constructed of the town Guadalupe Miramar Yucuhiti. Pictures flashed by to the tunes of *cumbia* music and Mexican pop songs. In those pictures appeared a tall man with glasses, obviously a “gringo.” The slideshow said his name was Chuck Barrett of organization Amanecer. Barrett reminded me a little of the Catholic workers of previous generations – the Catholic workers that taught me in school and had instilled in me a desire for social justice.

Although I understood that these activists and teachers were a necessary ingredient in the quest for justice, I never knew how important and involved they were in the process of development. They often remain silent actors in the success story and many of them do not seek the limelight or tout their credentials. “I was never anything more than just a foot soldier. I want to make that very clear I was not a leader of any kind,” Barrett said to me about his involvement in the Civil Rights Movement. While that may have been true at the time, Barrett is no longer a foot soldier but a significant agent of change.

For these reasons, I begin the case study with Barrett's (partial) story, what I gained through two life history interviews. The first chapter is an attempt to uncover how he arrived at doing development work with Indigenous peasants in Oaxaca. This is a journey that starts with in growing up in time and place of inequality and turmoil. I ask after the extent religion and his identity as an advocate and activist informs his development approach and a little on his experiences with faith-based organizations. Barrett is a perfect example of a mediator, not only in his physical and practical position in the network of actors as a provider of funds and leadership training but his desire to facilitate knowledge production and collaboration between communities. He is a catalyst in the process of development as well as contributing to the reversal and/or change of migration from a region of Oaxaca, Mexico.

The connections Barrett has made throughout his years working as a mediator and activist are integral to this case study. I, therefore, focus on his current relationship with the Vista Hermosa Foundation. Vista Hermosa is a faith-based organization. Cheryl and Ralph Broetje who established the foundation openly cite their spiritual beliefs as main motivator for the development work they do. I was able to gain sense of this through electronic materials and previous interviews and articles published about the Broetjes. I was also able to talk with their daughter Suzanne who is at the helm of the foundation's widespread activities. The chapter highlights those values that drive the organization's vision and how it characterizes their approach to development work.

The Vista Hermosa Foundation proves interesting geographically because of their unique position as employer and development funders. A tongue-in-cheek description of the organization is a “one-stop shop.” As business owners participating fully in a neoliberal process, the same one that contributes to out-migration from Oaxaca, the development profits from the orchard fund projects in the sending communities of their employees. It is a site within an overlapping migration and development meshworks as well as engrained in the global economic system. Also, Vista Hermosa collaborates with many other mediating organizations such as Barrett’s Amanecer. Recently, however, the foundation has initiated a direct connection with funded projects in Mexico as Barrett slowly steps away from his role as mediator between Vista Hermosa and the Mexican projects that make up a network of peasant organizations called the *Red Campesina de Pequeno Productores* (RCPP), the small farmers’ network.

In aiding Barrett’s transition, the foundation has hired Melanie Lopez-Grewal to maintain communication between projects abroad in Mexico and the foundation’s board as well as between the employees of the orchard and their home communities. Unlike Barrett Lopez-Grewal lives in community with Vista Hermosa employees, many of whom are Indigenous Oaxacans. Newly embedded within the community, she fills an important position as mediator. Although Lopez-Grewal works directly for Vista Hermosa, I also classify her as a mediator because she acts in spaces the foundation is unable to reach on a constant basis. I end discussing her previous experiences in development as well as her motivations. These experiences make up quite a different journey from Barrett’s.

She represents a new generation of development creating a position within the foundation and within the migrant community that is all her own.

Lopez-Grewal's new position also demonstrates the identities mediators assume in the relationship between funder and community and the gendered interactions that characterize development mediation. The new position represent a new relationship between Vista Hermosa and the Guadalupe Miramar that will bring about changes that will call for further inquiry. I conclude this research outlining the further line of question and research I wish to address in the future. I sketch out the possibilities afforded by the research and the direction my relationship with these individuals and the organizations they work with may take me.

## Chapter 4: Chuck Barrett

Beginning with the story of Chuck Barrett's experience growing up in the southern U.S., this chapter explains how he became a development mediator. His professional and personal history touches on important concepts of race and class and their intersections. Barrett has dedicated his life to leveling inequalities. Barrett discusses how race and class are interconnected, not only in the South, but also in the regions where he works currently. This chapter touches on the similarities between his time as a union organizer in the U.S. and his role as a development mediator in Mexico.

Barrett began working in development after many years of labor organizing. But his story begins with his upbringing. In his early life, he witnessed the battles people of color fought for equal rights. His quest for social justice came from this social movement, and the leaders of this movement inspire him today. Barrett also has worked with faith-based organizations (FBOs). This chapter explores the role religion and faith plays in his work and how, or even if, it inspires him.

Also, Barrett has spent many years advocating for equal rights and justice for groups of people from both the U.S. and Mexico, which is how his relationship with the Mixteco community of Miramar began. He is truly a mediator of development who has dedicated most of his life to connecting people with the resources they need to sustain their livelihoods and live with dignity. This chapter demonstrates how Barrett's facilitation has created and connected

development meshworks through the exchange of environmental knowledge and funding.

## **Introduction**

Chuck Barrett grew up in an American South characterized by social inequalities between whites and blacks in the mid-20th century. The cruelty of this era depicted in cinema and retold in history books was a lived experience for Barrett. His experience took him on a journey that eventually situated him in a complex story of development, migration, and ethnicity. But when he was growing up, the problem was more clearly and literally black and white. Race and class hierarchies were structures of oppression. Race, an indelible issue in the South, was often pitted against class politics in order to keep the white working class people working. Racialized divisions made it impossible for white workers to understand that their position in the economic system was not much better than the position of the blacks. However, racial conflicts were palpable in the daily lives of anyone growing up in that area of the country. And the history is not far removed from the race issues of today.

People of color, any color, experience oppressive mechanisms similar to those that the racialized South struggled with. The same economic and social, or what Barrett deems “oppressive” machine is destructive to those in other countries such as Mexico. As demonstrated in this case study, the heartbreaking results appear literally in our own backyards, mowing our lawns, cooking our food, taking care of our children, and picking our apples. Barrett is someone who

has lived through these transformations and been a part of the movements that fight to bring justice to these processes. Maybe the racialized identities of the people he works with have changed, but the problems have not. Race and class remain an important intersection to keep in mind when working with groups from different cultures, holding different values about the environment and community. It is his experience with race and economic injustice that make him mediator he is today – an invaluable linchpin of development in Oaxaca, Mexico, a fearless Robin Hood working for social justice. The journey to becoming a mediator began in his early adulthood and stems from his social and geographical location.

### **Race in the South**

Barrett grew up in the South during the 1940s-50s during a time he terms the Southern apartheid when the races were segregated through the Jim Crow laws. At a young age, Barrett was aware of race relations to a certain extent. Because of the color of their skin, his family benefitted from the racial inequality. While his parents were not openly racist or didn't participate in the terrorism inflicted upon blacks, they did not choose to fight against that system in place at the time. Barrett told me, "My parents were not out-and-out bigots. They weren't Klansmen...they didn't use the 'n-word,' and they told us not to do that, but they

didn't challenge the system either. And they were beneficiaries of white racism, and they pretty much went along with it in a lot of ways," Barrett said.<sup>1</sup>

In the South, the oppression blacks faced was official and unofficial. The system, as Barrett said, was organized for repression. It was a system that kept blacks from being able to fight for their rights. The most obvious form of oppression was through economic means, where the business class could enforce inequality.

You have at the top of the heap of the repressive mechanism; you had the White Citizens' Council. These were blue bloods, these white, silk stocking people – bankers, businessmen, and church hierarchy – people that were nominated and appointed by the governor in every state. And they were well-to-do folks who made sure that code of segregation was followed and they ostracized people, punished people from deviating from that. They could make sure that businesses failed. They could make sure that people got fired from jobs.

At this point in history, economics and race intertwined. The system was made so that poverty and the perpetuation of poverty were a weapon against those who resisted the system. This system was multi-layered and permeated all official and unofficial institutions in the Southern society, making it impossible for blacks to get to a level of equality. This is why Barrett's parents never fought too hard to change it. While his parents were not of the business class, they were thoroughly southern. His parents were both North Carolinians. His father's family hailed from Kentucky, where they faced their own oppression as Appalachian people. The Broad Form Deed, a fraudulent mineral rights deed, deprived Barrett's great-grandfather of his land. They later settled in Raleigh, North

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<sup>1</sup> All interview and quotations come from two telephone interviews I conducted with Chuck Barrett on November 21, 2013 and January 20, 2014.



Carolina, where his grandfather worked on the seaboard railroad as a locomotive engineer.

When Barrett was born, his father was a naval air instructor in Pensacola, Florida. After World War II, his father became a reporter for the Associated Press assigned to Atlanta, Georgia, and later assigned to cover the U.S. House of Representatives, so the family set down roots in Alexandria, Virginia. Again, while Barrett's parents were not necessarily part of the mechanism that drove inequality, and though his family had suffered injustice in the past as citizens of lower socio-economic status, the system worked in their favor. "Well every white person was a beneficiary of white racism because it created a privileged class of people. African-Americans did the work the white people didn't want to do ... and white people benefitted economically because of that and socially because of that."

Barrett explained the ways in which race served as a scapegoat to keep lower-class people ignorant of their position in the system. Race and class were surely connected, but race was a tool of oppression within class organization. Barrett believed that the injustice emanates from class inequality – a theme that would drive his work in the following years: "It [racism] gave lower income working-class white people somebody to feel better than, you know. It was a way in which, well, society was organized for repression."

Later, working as a union organizer in the South, Barrett would address these inequalities among white, black, and Hispanic laborers in the U.S., and then among agricultural laborers, which led him do the same among peasant farmers

in Mexico. As explained in Chapter 2, the racialized division of people in Mexico served to oppress Indigenous populations in the same manner. Although originally meant to “develop” and “modernize,” the process of making Indigenous people mestizos only further marginalized them. The ramifications of this development process continue to affect the transborder communities Barrett works with today.

### **Religion in Social Justice**

“Later on, one of my friends said that 11 o’clock on Sunday morning was the most segregated hour in America, which referred to church services,” Barrett said. Growing up in the South in a white Baptist Church, religion was a segregating force. Even within the same denominations, churches and ministers preached contradictory messages of oppression and freedom. The Protestant Christian Church, as an institution, has a long history in the South, much like the Catholicism in Latin America. Religion can often play opposite sides of the field. An institution that can enslave and subjugate a people can also be a weapon against the oppressors, as seen in liberation theology. In the South, it seemed both good and bad according to Barrett. As a child and young adult, the ministers of his white church were able to perpetuate the discourse surrounding segregation.

Yet it was some other people involved in the religion that ushered Barrett into the Civil Rights Movement. Further on in his career, religion was first a calling, but quickly turned into a motivator. Barrett strayed from organized

religion and from its teachings, but his call to social justice grew stronger. Certain moral lessons remained important to Barrett, whether he named it religion, faith or spirituality. Barrett now says that religion is no longer a main motivation for his development work, but it has played a role throughout his career. It also provided opportunities to participate in social justice activism as well as openings to participate in development projects. Religious organizations, or FBOs, afford him many opportunities to work with the poor and ushered him into the development work he does today. But his current organization Amanecer is not a faith-based organization, although he continues to collaborate with faith-based organizations as well as with other secular organizations.

Not only did Barrett attend a white Baptist Church while growing up, he also never attended an integrated school, including college. He grew up in a segregated society, including school and church, institutions that tended to engrain prejudice into the hearts and minds of youth. However, Barrett felt a change, a sense that there were questions to answer. He remembered, "When I was 19...just a couple days after my 19th birthday, I had been working. I had a lot on my conscience, [it] had started bothering me when I was 18 and was in high school about the racism and everything that had saturated the atmosphere, the air that I breathed as I grew up in the South." It was in college that he became uncomfortable with the inequalities he had witnessed growing up. Through community service, he met people that would encourage him to join the social movement percolating in the region. The first kick came from a religious figure, a Presbyterian minister who recruited Barrett to work at a recreation center with

black children and teenagers. This minister spurred a process of change for Barrett by challenging him to question many of the beliefs he grew up with concerning race. It is through his work at the recreation center and his interaction with blacks that later propelled him in to the movement.

One day after talking to a young black man at the center, he vowed to join the march for Civil Rights and become an activist for social justice.

And one day, this one Friday, this kid named Jethro who was 17, I was 19, gave me a flyer about a rally that was going to be held the next day and he said, 'You be there, white boy.' And so I left my all-white enclave of Baptist-sponsored college that I was attending and went to the rally, which was a Civil Rights rally, unbeknownst to me. And Dr. King spoke.

That day in May 1963, Barrett listened to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.. The rally was a replication of the Birmingham campaign that had started earlier that year. King undeniably impacted the life of Barrett, who speaks with great reverence when reminiscing about the famous Civil Rights leader. Barrett told me how King's speech was familiar to him in a way that was similar to the preaching he heard from his own church on Sundays, though the content was radically different. It was not the same message the white preachers touted, but rather the opposite. "He spoke and I heard, you know, the beautiful voice of his, the powerful words that he spoke reminded me of the Southern Baptist preaching that I had grown up with. But [it] had an ethical content that was 180 degrees different than what I had heard growing up."

The rally took place in an African Methodist Episcopal church. Christian churches, as a Southern institution, had played a prominent role historically in the black community stemming from Reconstruction. So churches naturally

fostered the movement for change. Church communities, as Barrett explains, offered strength, roots, and safety out of which the Civil Rights Movement could grow. Participating in the movement meant that one would inevitably work with the church in one way or another. Even the secular organizations collaborated with church leaders. Churches offered a physical meeting place for those involved in the movements as well as a previously established leadership base. "If you were organizing, say, [during the] Mississippi Freedom summer in 1964," said Barrett, "you were going in and out of local churches and drawing local leaders out of those churches."

Barrett's transition into an activist was cautious but unstoppable, as he could not stand idly by and watch. Yet it took some push to undermine a whole system of oppression held in place by a dominant discourse of racism. The boy he had met the previous day, the person who encouraged (or perhaps dared him to show up to the rally) pulled him further into what would become his life's work.

Jethro looked at me, he said, "You gotta be in the march, white boy." And I said, "No way." It took everything I could do to violate all the conditioning and, you know, cultural conditioning that I had grown up with, that was deeply rooted inside of me, to go to the rally much less, but I was not going to march. At the same time, but I was so moved by what had happened in the rally... So I went down the sidewalk as they marched down the street, down Broad Street in Richmond. And as I got down the street, you know, my fellow rednecks, my fellow whites were on the sidewalk screaming and yelling and throwing rocks, peeing in Dixie cups and throwing urine on the marchers who were, you know, who are working people and business people and grandmothers and children and all ages, and all types of African-Americans were marching down the street. And they were singing "Oh Freedom," which was one of the freedom songs, and Jethro saw me on the sidewalk. And he danced over to where I was and he saw my fear and he just stuck out his hand and he said, "Take my hand." And I took his hand and I stepped into the street and I like to say that I stepped into the rest of my life because I've been an activist, social justice activist ever since. And that was over 50 years ago.

From the time Barrett began working as an activist, religion has played some sort a role in his career. At the time of the Civil Rights Movement, the Church was a partner as well as an outlet for the social justice movement. It acted as a vehicle for community outreach and organizations. Barrett spoke about the time that he truly wanted to follow in King's footsteps. He spent the years 1963 and 1964 participating in marches and organizing fellow white activists to join the March on Washington and marches in Richmond and Petersburg, Virginia, and the Civil Rights demonstrations in Danville, Virginia.

In 1965, Barrett was a part of a project sponsored by the Southern Conference Education Fund and the Committee of Southern Churchmen that attempted to bring black and white workers together in various places. During this time, he was a labor organizer stationed in Lancaster, South Carolina, at Springs Cotton Mills. Barrett, along with a black colleague, would go and talk to the workers. They would try to bring workers together in dialogue groups that bridged racial lines. The goal was to build black and white unity so that labor organizing could succeed. These dialogues proved difficult because of the attention Barrett and his black fellow organizer encountered. "I was run out of there after about six weeks by the Ku Klux Klan with an African-American partner [colleague]."

Later, Barrett followed King's inspiration north to Philadelphia. Using his new experience in labor organizing, and aiming to bring racialized groups into dialogue, his new task was to chip away at the racism of white people in order to

bring them into solidarity with blacks. Once again, religion and faith walked hand in hand for Barrett as it brought him closer to the emulation of his role model, King. Seeking to follow closely in King's footsteps, in 1967 Barrett enrolled in Krozer Theological Seminary, the same seminary King attended. At the time, for Barrett, ministry seemed like a calling just as it had been for King. Organized religious institutions as proven by the Civil Rights Movement became to be a channel of activism. The seminary also had a School of Social Change that, after his assassination, was renamed Martin Luther King School of Social Change.

Religion and spirituality has played an important part in Barrett's life — first as a contributor to the racial inequalities witnessed in his early life, but then as a changing force and source of inspiration. "I, of course, grew up as a Southern Baptist and even though a lot of what I was taught were their lies and it made me very angry, the ideology I was given; nevertheless, I had a very strong faith-based component to my personal realm, my personal beliefs. And so when I became aware of and learned from King...I gravitated to that element within the movement that appropriated the New Testament and that appropriated the teachings of Jesus..." The emulation of King's spiritual leanings may have brought Barrett to the seminary, but he found institutionalized religion was not the right place for him to foster these beliefs and teachings.

Barrett soon found fault with the institution because it taught seemingly in contradiction to the teachings of Jesus and the preaching of King. It was not what he thought it should be. "So I was kicked out of three different seminaries," Barrett laughed. "I finally, as it describes in the New Testament, wiped the dust

off my feet and moved on to other bases of support for my work.” Although he may have parted ways with organized religion, Barrett still finds it an inspiration, but his motivation is no longer confined to the formal worship and study of theology. There remain certain teachings from Christianity that inform his work, and as does the image of what he calls a “radical Jesus.” Faith-based organizations have allowed him to continue his calling as a social justice activist and development mediator. As we will see, he has been a consultant for Catholic Relief Services and continues his work with Vista Hermosa, a faith-based organization inspired greatly by the founders’ spiritual beliefs.

### **Class in Social Justice and Development**

While striving to overcome racism in the U.S. was an important focus for a young Barrett, class inequality also proves to be a common theme in his work as a labor organizer and development mediator. His experience in the South showed him that often race was an issue that those of the highest economic class used to purposefully overshadow the pressing issues of class inequality. His perspective as a white man from a working-class background informed the projects in which he would participate. He worked as a labor organizer in the cotton mills on South Carolina where he tried to raise awareness of employers using race to divide their labor force and prevent unionization. For Barrett, class inequality is an underlying problem for many of the social movements of the past century. Certainly race was a problem in the South, but social movements of the day such as the Farmworker Movement, Latino Movement, Welfare Rights Movement of



Appalachia, and the Anti-war Movement during Vietnam shared the underlying theme of class inequality in addition to racial injustice.

When speaking about his time organizing in the cotton mills in South Carolina, Barrett said, "You know, when I was an organizer in the cotton mills in South Carolina, I used to say, 'hey man,' to my fellow whites. I would say, 'hey, look at the foot that's standing on your neck and tell me what color it is.'" With this statement Barrett sought to signal that class inequality among the labor force is the main problem poor people face. Unity between races is important not only for the sake of humanity, but also for the effectiveness of creating fair conditions for workers. Racism is a real and cruel matter, in the South especially, but it goes hand-in-hand with issues of class. Barrett links class issues with race issues in his activism and with the work of his non-profit organization. They are inseparable in many ways. Barrett's time with the Poor People's Campaign demonstrates how race and the Civil Rights Movement comprised one aspect in a larger social movement for economic justice.

Barrett's involvement in the Civil Rights Movement led him to working with the Poor People's Campaign starting around 1968. After deciding to forgo the seminary and enrolling in the School of Social Change at Krozer Theological Seminary, Barrett once again followed the leadership of King. He began organizing for the Poor People's Campaign, working for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in north Philadelphia. Following the assassination of King, Barrett continued his involvement in the movement. He gathered people to participate in Resurrection City, a tent city set up in the National Mall of

Washington D.C. “It was a tent city in which thousands, initially, of people lived – poor people, all different races and backgrounds [from] all over the country came to live and demonstrate every day and try to link all of their issues together in massive, ongoing, live-in demonstration against poverty in favor of economic justice.” The Poor Peoples’ Campaign emphasized the role economic injustice plays in a multitude of other social issues. No matter the racial or social cause, poverty was seemingly the great injustice that linked the other movements. The connections between these movements, the broad nature of cause, are what Barrett cites as what made King and others an intolerable threat to the powerful ruling class of the United States.

Barrett went on to work with the labor movements of the US. He also spent many of those years raising a family. We did not discuss much of the time in the interim between his work with King and various social movements and his time working with migrant workers in the 1990s. While raising his family, his experience in labor organizing with the United Farm Workers brought him to the development projects showcased in this case study. The connection between race and class also remains pertinent to his work across borders. The injustice people of color face, at home and abroad, continues to be the focus of Barrett’s work. Today, his development work focuses on peasant farmers in Mexico where ethnicity and economic injustice are indelibly linked. The pursuit of economic justice, especially within the labor class, steered Barrett to his role as a development mediator between farmworkers in Mexico and organizations in the United States.

## *Labor organizing*

While Barrett has never called himself a mediator of development, his role connecting farmers to other farmers and facilitating the exchange of knowledge, and more practically money, across political and cultural borders makes him one. Many of the people he helps are Indigenous peasants, who are not part of the Mexican ruling class. Because of their racialized status as Indigenous people, they often experience violations of environmental and economic rights. The injustice that plagues the Indigenous farmers of Mexico makes it nearly impossible for them to sustain their livelihoods. The resultant transborder migration is an issue Barrett addresses in his work. His goals are to create solutions, share knowledge, and organize people into a network in order to help peasant farmers remain autonomous and maintain their livelihoods and connection to their home environment.

Barrett's work started north of the U.S.-Mexican border, as an organizer for the United Farm Workers through the late 1990s. He was an organizer and served on a junta, a monthly group of workers and organizers that designed strategies for campaigns, such as the strawberry campaign. At this time, he was also a founding member of Amanecer, formed in 1994. Barrett and colleagues from the farmworker unions wanted to help farmworker non-profits develop projects and train unions such as the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) in leadership development so they were better equipped to obtain healthy working and housing conditions. The mission

of Amanecer is to mediate and communicate the ideas and concerns of the groups they work with. Their website states:

We serve as the catalyst that takes the germ of ideas from the people we work with and help plant them in the ground of organizations, skills, and funding. We have always started at the home base of the underdog, the farmworkers in the U.S. and the poorest of farmers and rural villages in Mexico, and we work from their perspective. We have never lost the vision of cooperation, the sight of the similarities.

Amanecer specializes in uncovering and then adhering to the “local” perspectives of the people they assist. These are people from communities and in communities on both sides of the border.

Instead of highlighting the racial differences that divide workers, much like racialized working conditions in the South, Barrett and his colleagues attempt to understand and translate literally and culturally the needs of the labor class, which in agriculture are often Indigenous Latinos. More practically, Amanecer also helps find funding for these groups, which led him to work in Mexico. He was attending a farmer-rancher conference in Las Cruces, New Mexico when the head of Catholic Relief Services (CRS) Mexico Project, Erica Dahl-Bredine approached him to enlist the help of Amanecer to raise money for CRS Mexico projects just as Amanecer had previously raised for peasant labor initiatives.

And she said, ‘Do you think that Amanecer would be interested in... fundraising?’ And a lot of what [Amanecer] did was raise money for these different projects – for the farmworker movement in the U.S. She asked me if I thought that kind of thing would work for CRS Mexico. And I said, well, we could do a research project and find out. I said I didn’t know. And she said, well, would you do that? So we worked up a plan and she approved it, and we did and discovered that yes we could in fact raise money for similar kinds of projects in Mexico and so then she said would you like to implement it? (He chuckles) And at that point some of these

projects had come to a close in the U.S. And I thought, well that sounds interesting, so that's how I got involved with CRS.

## **FBOs and Development**

Later, in 2004 Barrett began his relationship with Vista Hermosa and the Broetje family. At that time he was helping CRS develop a program for their apple farmers in Chihuahua, Mexico. A CRS fundraising staff member suggested to Barrett that Vista Hermosa Foundation might be interested in helping fund the apple farmers project. The Vista Hermosa had supported a previous CRS project in India and was involved in other agricultural projects. So Barrett contacted the Vista Hermosa Foundation in order to enlist their support in the Chihuahuan apple producers' endeavor. Vista Hermosa is an FBO established by the Ralph and Cheryl Broetje and supported directly with the funds from their apple business First Fruits orchard of Washington. I cover their story and mission in the following chapter.

Vista Hermosa was willing to help support the CRS project in Chihuahua. This unique support was not only financial. Being fellow apple farmers, Vista Hermosa, with the Barrett's mediation, helped educate and empower apple farmers in Chihuahua who endured low prices for their products. The farmers faced many disadvantages in the apple industry, apart from market fluctuations. Buyers in Mexico took advantage of their desperation to maintain a livelihood as apple producers. Many of them were at the mercy of *coyotes*, individuals who would buy apples from the small-scale farmers and resell them on the market, making profit off the cheap product. Barrett explained the predatory nature of

coyotes “[The coyotes] would come to [the farmer’s] apple orchard and say, ‘I’ll give you 70 pesos for everything on your trees.’ And they were so desperate, of course, that most of them didn’t even have the money to complete their harvest, so they would take whatever he would offer.” In order to find a solution to this problem, Barrett facilitated the exchange between Vista Hermosa and the Chihuahuan apple farmers.

In 2005, Vista Hermosa funded the apple project. The money was used to send Tom Shotzko, an agronomist at Washington State University and consultant for the Washington Apple Commission, to Chihuahua to train the farmers in market analysis and to monitor the stock market so the farmers could sell their product at the most economically opportune moment. The farmers could wait and sell their apples at triple the price. In addition, Shotzko also taught the farmers how to grade their apples. The goal was to raise the apples’ quality in order to get a competitive price in the global market. Barrett and Shotzko together came up with the idea of a pledge loan system where farmers would withhold their apples from the market instead of selling them immediately to the coyotes. Using organizing experience along with the grant money he obtained, Barrett created cooperatives in Chihuahua and set up a revolving fund that would provide the farmers group financial support so they could afford to put their apples in storage until the market prices went up.

## Race and environmental knowledge

During this process, cultural borders were breached. With the knowledge of apple growing flowing into the Chihuahuan apple farmer community from Washington State, Barrett addressed issues of knowledge translation between the agriculturalists. In order to get better quality apples, the farmers needed to learn pruning techniques. What emerged was a continual exchange between farmers. Barrett organized and brought a delegation of promoters from Chihuahua to Broetje Orchards to learn about apple tree management and how to prune. Broetje Orchard employees also went to Chihuahua to work alongside the farmers. Barrett recalled a misunderstanding between the Chihuahuan apple farmers and the Washington apple farmers' practice of pruning:

The Broetje family responded by sending their best people, their top horticulturalists down to Chihuahua to work alongside the producers in Chihuahua to teach them even further how to do pruning, and it was a shock, an absolute shock because these guys were horrified when one of the guys in particular who they said, 'He's crazy. Definitely crazy.' They almost got into fights because they would start lopping off branches.

For the Chihuahuan apple farmers, the agricultural techniques of the farmers from the U.S. were foreign and difficult to understand. They had never seen such a thing as pruning – what they saw as purposely damaging their trees.

This reaction represents a clash in ecological knowledge, as well as a site of knowledge exchange and production. The Chihuahuan farmers were hesitant and fearful to adopt this new technique at first because they depended greatly on their trees for money. Barrett describes the response and outcome of the exchange:

Wack! Wack! Wack! 'No don't! You're going to kill my trees. You're going to destroy [them]. I'm not going to have any apples! We'll lose money.'...Now several years later, the same guys are selling number 1s and extra fancies and making three and four times the money because they are getting much higher prices because of the high quality of apples.

Barrett's ability to speak Spanish allowed him to facilitate knowledge exchange between two communities. But he also began the process of creating a meshwork of peasant farmer in Mexico that spans four Mexican states. Barrett connected a 2004 CRS project called *Escuela Campesina* with the *Frente Campesino Democrático* de Chihuahua, which includes the Chihuahuan apple cooperatives. Around 2008, Vista Hermosa donated \$100,000 to the *Escuela Campesina*. Later, CRS pulled out of the project and the organization evolved into the *Red Campesina de Pequeño Productores* (RCPP), or the small farmers network. This network, or meshwork, also receives financial support from Vista Hermosa and includes Vista Hermosa's projects in Guadalupe Miramar Yucuhiti, Oaxaca.

Barrett has been a mediator to the projects involved in the network during and, now, after its evolution into the RCPP. Barrett and his non-profit organization Amanecer travel to the project sites. Barrett, who lives in New Mexico, also relies on his colleague Rogel del Rosal, whose own non-profit organization—Yankuik Erandi Rural—works to connect the projects of the network and helps facilitate ideas between the cooperatives and communities in four Mexican states. The RCPP, according to Amanecer's website, is "working to help Indigenous communities to attain higher levels of food security and market income for their food products as well as to organize their communities for progressive policy advocacy."



## Economic and Environmental Mediation

As demonstrated by the above statement, Amanecer's role as translator and advocate for Indigenous rights includes an environmental aspect. Food security for the communities it assists is just as important as Indigenous rights, market access, and safe working conditions. The projects Amanecer has implemented in Miramar reflect this mission and offer an alternative to the transformations of neoliberalism. Miramar has seen an alteration to their economic system. Instead of raising food to eat, Miramar and many other Indigenous villages grow food and/or coffee to sell outside the community for money, which they then use to buy food for their families. The products then leave the community and outside money trickles in. The community focuses more on transforming money into commodities, which are then sold for more money rather than exchanging goods and keeping the money within the community (cf. Katz 2004).

To help reverse this process Barrett used his connections in Mexico to foster a "campesino a campesino" exchange of knowledge between the *Centro de Desarrollo Integral Campesino de la Mixteca* (CEDICAM) and Miramar. CEDICAM began as an environmental development project in 1997 and was formed out of the Center of Appropriate Technology Studies for Mexico (Cetamex). The center now focuses on community and sustainable agricultural development. Its development strategies promote the utilization and return to Indigenous practices. CEDICAM developed sustainable practices of growing traditional foods

through the crop growing system called *milpa*, which is prevalent in Indigenous Central America. The foods grown are used for *autoconsumo*, for individual consumption and the food security of the community. The mission of CEDICAM is sustainability, but not solely environmental sustainability but also cultural and community sustainability and conservation. Jesus León Santos, coordinator of CRS supported project Agriculture for Basic Needs Project, said during a workshop in San Luis Potosí that there is a difference between organic and sustainable agriculture. The purpose of *agricultura sostenible* is to keep money and people home and keep traditional ecological knowledge in the community. León Santos iterated many times during the workshop that “*no es mas importante producir, es mas importante conservar*” (It’s not important to produce, it’s more important to conserve). The meaning of his statement is vague, but it speaks to the nature of Indigenous development similar to *etnodesarrollo*. Instead of depleting the ecological system through intense agricultural production in order to survive in the market-based economic system, it is more important to conserve the land for subsistence production. In the process of returning to a self-reliant community and family structure, Indigenous communities will simultaneously conserve their cultural practices.<sup>2</sup>

CEDICAM offers workshops for communities that would benefit from a return to sustainable agricultural practices. Miramar participated in this training and now serves as an example of “campesino a campesino” knowledge exchange. The knowledge the community gained through CEDICAM, a connection they

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<sup>2</sup> From a presentation given by Jesus León Santos in Xilitla, San Luis Potosí, June 29, 2013.

made through Barrett, has led to the implementation of food security projects in the community. These include *microtúneles* (small greenhouses) and *gallineros* (hen houses/chicken coops). These projects address environmental and human development issues in the community and are not exclusively economic development projects. Barrett recognizes the importance and linkages between environmental and economic justice.

I think one of the failures of the labor movement in its classic sense in the 40s and 50s was the failure to include the concept of environmentalism in it, and, therefore, it became a handmaiden to some of the worst deprivations of the environment perpetrated by the industrial capitalist system or the military industrial complex. And we're only now in some parts of the labor movement beginning to be aware of and beginning to work to try to undo that history.

Environmental issues are never separate from Barrett's work with Indigenous peoples. In fact, it is the Indigenous respect for the environment that inspires him the most. "Their communitarian values based on sharing and based on reverence for the earth and the environment and based on the idea of collaboration rather than open competition for resources." These resource values, he believes, are directly related to the Indigenous economic outlook. "They're anti-capitalist or a-capitalist in the sense of, you know, their non-capitalist ideas and they're non-capitalist structures around which they organize their communities and societies," said Barrett. "And so that's inspirational to me," he adds.

Capital, however, remains an important ingredient in development mediation. One of Barrett's many jobs is to procure money for projects in Mexico. It is how he came into contact with Vista Hermosa Foundation when he began the Chihuahuan apple growers project. Among his many skills, Barrett has learned

techniques for funding many projects. His philosophy on grant money fits his goals for development – to help the underdogs. He calls this the Robin Hood strategy. With the help of his wife Melody Sears, he finds organizations giving money for development that are willing to fund the projects. “That’s one of the things that we did was that we researched and found out where the money was and raised money. I raised, I don’t know, \$25-30 million dollars over a period of years for those organizations which don’t ordinarily get much money. But...if I do say so myself,” admits Barrett, “we got to be pretty good. My wife is an excellent researcher. We got to be pretty good at finding where the money might come from, and we got to be pretty good at pitching the right kinds of things and getting money from them.”

Although he says he would never compromise the goals of the project or the community he is working with in order to receive money, he has no qualms about taking money from the rich and giving it to the poor, hence the “Robin Hood” strategy. This has led to a relationship with an array of funders such as the National Network of Grantmakers and the “mainstream big boys” like Ford, Kellogg, and MacArthur. Amanecer gives workshops on this funding strategy to communities and organizations that would benefit. He explains the goal of the training as “*Como recuperar dinero robado*,” or “how to get back the money they stole from you.”

Amanecer has recently become a partner of the Vista Hermosa Foundation. Barrett and Sears no longer spend much time looking for grant money, but rather help implement and connect the communities. Yet the

organization still functions as a mediator in a practical and legal way. “And now what happened is in recent years since Amanecer has kind of moved into a position in [which] we’re kind of in dual partnership with the RCPP and Vista Hermosa,” explained Barrett. “... I’m no longer out hustling money from other places. I mean, we’re partnering with Vista Hermosa, so they’ve already made a commitment to funding the RCPP.” Miramar’s community organization, *Coordinación Pasado, Presente, Futuro de Miramar* (COPPFUMIR), has officially joined the RCPP. However, the RCPP is an *asociación civil* – civil association (A.C.). This organizational status does not allow them to receive funds from Vista Hermosa. In order for the RCPP member organizations to legally receive funds, the money must come from Amanecer. In this way, the organization facilitates the exchange of money between communities and organizations, and Vista Hermosa must rely on Amanecer for these services, as I explain in the following chapter.

## **Conclusion**

Barrett’s experience with race and class inequalities has led to his work with Indigenous communities in Oaxaca, Mexico. His activism, which started at a young age, has not wavered during his years as a labor organizer and development practitioner. His passion for helping people has driven him to devote his life to addressing inequalities and, most importantly, advocating for these groups on a global scale. He claims his motivation for continuing on comes from the people he works with, the underdogs who do not often get to speak for themselves.

Although he has never described himself as a mediator, Barrett through his organization Amanecer fills an important role in the development process. His life experience and outlook makes him an excellent translator of the cultural disparities people face. He understands the economic burdens Indigenous people carry because of their racialized identity. His organization Amanecer is also a practical and legal mediator of development necessities such as money. Because his role in the process is changing as he retires, so is the structure of the meshwork he has created. This transformation will lead to new and exciting questions for future development relationships between Oaxaca and U.S. organizations.

## Chapter 5: Vista Hermosa

This chapter introduces the Vista Hermosa Foundation, a faith-based organization (FBO) connected with and funded by Broetje First Fruits Orchards in Prescott, Washington. The owners of the orchard started the foundation to carry out development projects in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, as well as at home in their own orchard. Drawing from online materials, articles, previous media interviews, and conversation with their daughter, Suzanne Broetje, I explain how Ralph and Cheryl Broetje's faith inspires them to participate in development in other areas of the world. As discussed in chapter 2, Bradley (2009) defines FBOs as an organization motivated by a religious belief or faith. Research materials demonstrate that the Broetjes' inspiration stems from their Christian values and, therefore, their organization Vista Hermosa can be considered an FBO. This chapter showcases some projects the Broetjes fund through their foundation, Vista Hermosa. These projects demonstrate how the foundation, as part of the Broetjes' mission, approaches development as a transborder holistic process.

This chapter also explores how faith shapes the Broetjes' view of their environment, as they use the profit from their land as a tool of development in six countries on three continents. The experience and hardships the family overcame to become a successful business also fuels their desire to help the migrants that work as employees. Many of those employees migrate from Indigenous communities where they can no longer sustain their livelihoods as peasant

farmers. The solidarity the Broetjes feel with farmers from these communities and their strong faith convictions shapes their efforts. Lastly, this chapter shows how the Vista Hermosa Foundation relies on mediators such as Barrett to manage and maintain development projects. The foundation along with a multitude of other mediating organizations creates an FBO meshwork in which Miramar participates.

## **Introduction**

With a total of 6,000 acres of apple and cherry orchards, Ralph and Cheryl Broetje own the largest contiguous orchard in the United States, according to the Broetje First Fruit Orchard website. Their main orchard is located in Prescott, Washington, and spans 10 miles along the Snake River in southeast Washington State. It is approximately 4,300 acres. The Broetjes have other apple and cherry crops in Benton City and Wallula, Washington. Their orchard offers 10 varieties of apples, both conventional and organic. According to their website, Broetje Orchards is the also largest employer in Wall Walla County, Washington. Ralph and Cheryl's success in the apple industry, however, required lots of hard work.

Suzanne Broetje, Ralph and Cheryl's daughter, told me the history of the family farm. I have to admit, Suzanne made it entertaining. It's a good story. The history of the company starts with a dream. As a young teenager around age 15, Ralph Broetje told his pastor that he wanted to grow apples to help starving children in India. Ralph had attended a youth group retreat where he learned about hunger in India. He was inspired to help. Ralph Broetje came from a



farming family in the Yakima Valley (Warner 2009). In an interview with *Ethix* online magazine, Cheryl Broetje recalls that she and Ralph met in traffic court as teenagers. After marrying in 1967, the couple bought a small cherry orchard in Benton City, outside of Yakima, Washington. For three years, the orchard failed to produce anything. At all. In the fourth year the orchard finally began producing fruit. Many years of successful growing seasons followed. The couple began to focus on apples instead of cherries. The Broetjes bought more and more acreage as their business thrived throughout the 1970s. Ralph recalls, “I kind of lost track of why I was farming” (Ponder, 2009). But then their business collapsed. The bank recalled the company’s loans and they had to sell everything but some acres of cherry orchard in Prescott. Suzanne says that the ordeal was a “wake-up call from God.” The remaining cherry trees did not produce much at first. So Ralph and Cheryl decided to donate the trees to ministry. They decided that all profits made from that particular cherry orchard would go to a ministry, mission, community, or development organization. In 1980, the Broetjes were in a position to purchase 400 acres of land in the Columbia Basin at the confluence of the Snake and Columbia Rivers. The area was covered in sagebrush, and no one had planted apples in that area. The first year the Broetjes planted 350 acres. The apples grew well, and over the next three years they planted 900 acres.

### **Migration and Social Justice**

In the 1980s, Cheryl remembered, “In the early days, our workforce was made up of white migrant workers who started in Texas, moved to California, and

then came up the coast to Washington, following the harvest. Almost overnight this group stopped coming and was replaced by people with brown faces who spoke Spanish and were primarily young males.” In order to learn about their new workforce, the Broetje family went right to the source. In 1982 the family took a trip to volunteer with an organization called Los Niños on the border near San Diego. The family’s experience gave them perspective on their new employees’ situations at home and the reason why they had to migrate.

With a new outlook, Cheryl Broetje recognizes the workforce as economic refugees rather than immigrants. When I talked to daughter Suzanne, she mentioned that her mother felt solidarity with the migrants. The family, at one point, had to sell all their land and move. They had moved every year for four years before their apple orchard was successful again. “We, too, were migrants when we first moved to the orchard, because we had moved three times in less than four years. So the Broetjes were a migrant family.” Using the term “refugees” to describe immigrants from Mexico shows that the Broetjes believe the Mexicans are victims of oppressive socio-economic forces, much like Barrett describes the people he has dedicated his life to assist. The term also suggests that people have no choice but to migrate in order for survival. The Department of Homeland Security defines refugees as anyone who has been persecuted or fears they will be persecuted due to their race, religion, nationality, or membership in a particular social group. Chapter 2 explains how Indigenous people in Mexico have been victimized and marginalized. The term refugee seems an apt description of

their condition in the U.S., especially given the conditions that led to heavy outmigration in the Mixteca.

Lastly, deeming migrants as refugees also suggests that the Broetjes accept these migrants' right to be in the country and that they deserve assistance and fair conditions. On their website, the Broetjes write that they understand that Latino immigrants are not a welcomed population in much of the country, but they care for their employees because their, faith calls them to serve. They also seem to recognize the connection between Indigeneity and class in Mexico. When the Broetjes took initiative and decided to research for themselves the conditions of people in sending communities, they discovered the multitude of reasons Indigenous Mexicans face extreme poverty and forced migration. The Broetje First Fruits website claims,

Our family decided to travel to Mexico to try to gain understanding of [the employees'] context and resulting exodus to the U.S. What we found over the next few years caused us to believe that here was a group of economic refugees who had been forced off their lands due to various issues ranging from lack of water table, good roads or assessable markets for those who had owned land, to oppression and political violence against indigenous people groups within Mexico and Latin America.

As they explain later in this chapter, the Broetjes business-as-ministry approach prioritizes their immigrant employees' wellbeing. They utilize the profits from their fruitful harvests to provide social services. After learning about the causes of economic refugeeism, the Broetjes addressed the immediate needs of their employees first by hiring them. It is worth noting that the relationship between the family and the employees is a mutually beneficial because Broetjes also rely on their employees to pick apples. While it is certainly apparent that the

company wishes to provide healthy safe working conditions, the production of the company depends on the people who perform the labor. Without the labor force to maintain the business, the orchard and the Broetjes' development projects would collapse.

This dependent relationship became apparent in 2012 when Washington experienced a labor shortage. National Public Radio featured the orchard in a feature about the shortage. The story stated the orchard needed the about 200 more employees to pick apples. The need for more pickers required the company to advertise jobs in different parts of the US. Roger Bairstow, the field manager was quoted saying, "The longer an apple stays on the tree, the worse the condition gets and the less likelihood of getting a good price on the market. So at some point, it's not even worth picking" (King, 2012). The profit of the company relied directly on the employees. But according to their company's mission, it is the relationship between the Broetjes and their employees that inspires how they do business.

### **Business, Environment, and Ministry**

Broetje Orchards and Vista Hermosa Foundation provide an excellent example of how faith can inform development. As agriculturalists, business owners, and spiritual people, their dedication to social justice culminates in a business-as-ministry model of development. When immigrants arrived at their orchard to work, the Broetjes wondered why families had to separate and why people could not remain in their home communities. They understood, as

farmers, not being able to maintain a livelihood when crops did not produce and there was not economic support.

Faith also informs how they use their land, as well as why they are farmers. Their business is an extension of their mission to seek social justice for people suffering around the world. Because their business depends on environmental conditions, they have reconceptualized their specific place and its resources as a development tool that can improve the condition of people globally. The Broetje Orchard also represents a unique meshwork of migration, economics, and development. An economic crisis forced Mexicans to migrate to Washington, but it put these migrants in contact with an organization. This business-as-ministry model focuses on a Quadruple Bottom Line. The orchard's website explains that their business' bottom line focuses on four "Ps" – profit, planet, people, and purpose. These four themes are interconnected because of the unique relationship between the Broetje's business, their employees, and their philanthropy.

The Broetjes call this business model "servant leadership," a term created by former business executive turned university lecturer Robert Greenleaf. Greenleaf wrote about servant leadership and how they can improve the ethical framework of businesses and institutions. A servant leader, according to Greenleaf, is someone that "serves first" implying that a good manager is someone who improves the condition of the people they lead. The goal of servant leadership is to ensure that the people being served "become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves a servant" (Greenleaf 1977, 13).

Using servant leadership and faith, the Broetjes' business philosophy seeks to aid their employees who they consider economic refugees.

### *Apples*

The Broetjes repeat often that their business interests and their faith do not remain separate. Apples are part of their mission. Cheryl claims, "We believe we're marketplace ministers" (Ponder, 2009). So when other businesses talk about the "bottom line," they are usually referring to the profit margin they can make by cutting costs in the production process. The people – *and* profit – focused aspects of their bottom line demonstrate the way in which the orchard and the Broetjes themselves view business as a form of faith activism. Concentrating on people who work for them, the company claims to invest in their employees as "whole individuals." It also, in turn, produces profit for the company. According to Suzanne, Broetje Orchards employs between 1,100 and 1,200 permanent employees as well as 900 seasonal employees. The orchard is able to provide year-round employment through the planning of Ralph Broetje.<sup>3</sup> He has found a system of staggering varieties of apples, and planting cherries in order for the work to continue. In addition, permanent employees are put to work pruning when the harvest is over and do general maintenance during the spring, which is the slowest time of the year for the company "Cherries come on in July, we're picking something straight through to when the snow flies in November," explains Cheryl Broetje in an interview. "Now, as soon as those

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<sup>3</sup> Telephone interview with Suzanne Broetje on February 6, 2014.

apples are off, then they start immediately with pruning and that takes months – we have close to a million trees out there! Early spring is our lowest time, but there’s painting to be done and new varieties to plant” (Broetje 2005).

The company not only produces year round in order to increase profit and also to keep their workforce employed and living in the community. Balance is a word that comes up when talking about the quadruple bottom line. Their attention to profit, according to the explanation on their website, refers to the way they have vertically integrated their apple business by building a packing warehouse and shipping their own products. They own the entire production process, making them a one-stop shop for apple production and non-profit development – whole business and development processes owned and operated by Ralph and Cheryl Broetje. This also requires them to care for the environment that provides this profit. Concerning the planet, the bottom line refers to their safe food certification. As stated on the orchard’s website, “We are one of the first growers in the nation to receive the certification, which involved an independent audit of all farm, warehousing, and packaging operations by an independent third party certifier, NCSI Americas.” Cheryl Broetje asserts that the business is 99.9 percent toxin free and has been for years.

Maintaining a sustainable business also requires maintain a sustainable community. An investment in their workforce is an investment in their business. In 1988, the Broetjes established the Vista Hermosa Foundation (Beautiful View) in order to provide child care for their employees with families. The year previous, the Broetjes had built a warehouse as part of their vertically integrated

business plan. They had hired about 150 women to work in this warehouse. Many of these women had children but did not have access to child care. Cheryl remembered that children were locked in homes and apartments while their parents went to work, and older siblings were pulled out of school to take care of younger children (Broetje 2005). So the Broetjes built on on-site daycare and preschool.

However, this was just the beginning. Families needed more than child care, they needed proper housing. When the Broetjes heard about the conditions many of their workers were living in, they decided to build homes. This was the beginning of what became the Vista Hermosa Community. The project grew from that point on and continues to grow. With Vista Hermosa now functioning as a funding agency and the Broetje Orchard a profit-making business, the Broetje family has created a unique self-supporting system of development that includes a focus on their quadruple bottom line of profit, people, planet, and purpose.

### *Vista Hermosa Community*

The Broetjes established the Vista Hermosa community when they realized the conditions of their employees did not match the success of their business. “By 1990, our orchards were producing well, and we had \$5.5 million in the bank. We had achieved the ‘American dream.’ But our employees were excluded from that. So we decided [to] build some housing next to the warehouse,” says Cheryl Broetje. The initial project started with about 100 homes ranging from two to four bedrooms (Broetje 2005). The community, at



first, was supposed to be transitional housing. Now 136 families live on 60 acres of the Snake River housing. It is a sustainable community with an on-site grocery store, laundromat, Christian elementary school, daycare/preschool, computer lab, afterschool programs, a camp for at risk-youth, healthcare programs, bilingual library, and mobile dental clinic. The community also has access to counseling for family, drug, and alcohol issues. The community continues to grow as the Broetjes address growing needs of the community (Suzanne Broetje and Broetje 2005). Most of the services, however, are faith-based and do not address the religious differences in the community.

The original residents of the Vista Hermosa community needed the housing because many mothers were concerned about their children joining gangs in the nearby town of Pasco, Washington, where the problem was rampant. According to Suzanne, about one third of the original residents of the Vista Hermosa community were part of gang activity. "We keep discovering new needs that, if not addressed, will become barriers to the health, stability, and development of our families" (Broetje 2005). The current issue at hand is that of legal immigration. It is difficult to determine if their employees are all documented. According to Melanie Grewal-Lopez who conducts employee outreach for the foundation "Most of them are illegal. It's the nature of the work..."<sup>4</sup> Cheryl Broetje would estimate that more than half of the employees are without legal documents. "We require proper I.D. and they give us I.D., but we can't be detectives to determine which I.D. is real. When the government calls us

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<sup>4</sup> Melanie Lopez-Grewal, interview by Margaret Holleman, July 10, 2013

or sends out those nice little papers saying please advise this person that something's not right with their card, we do our 'due diligence'"(Broetje 2005). While the business adheres to the proper laws required of all employers, they wish to see immigration reform that allows immigrants to acquire legal short-term work permits, as well as help with the citizenship process for those who want it (Ponder 2009).

### **Vista Hermosa in Mexico**

The commitment to seeing employees as "whole individuals" and not just a workforce motivates the Broetje family to address the problems that push people to migrate. Considering their employees economic refugees, Broetje's development strategy is multi-sited because of the transborder nature of their workforce. Having traveled to Mexico to better understand the conditions pushing people across the border in search of work, Ralph says on the orchard's website, "It gave us more insight into what their needs are, and it reminded me of why we had this orchard. It wasn't so we could keep building things for ourselves. It was so we could try and give back to the families we worked with as much as we can." Cheryl and Ralph Broetje established the Vista Hermosa foundation in 1988 in order to address the needs of their workers, particularly the need for childcare for their employees living in the Vista Hermosa community. Their focus on helping those in their fields soon spread to helping those around the world – the home communities of their employees.

### *Mixteco migration*

The U.S. Department of Labor estimates that 17 percent of farm workers in the country identify as Indigenous (Barbassa and Valdes, 2010). The Mixtecos are one of these groups comprising the population of Indigenous migrants. As discussed in Chapter 2, economic restructuring by the Mexican government and the drop in coffee prices forced many people to migrate to the U.S. in search of work. Migration of Indigenous Mexican laborers to the United States started before the World Bank and IMF development began in Mexico during the 1980s and 1990s. The Bracero Program of the 1940s brought in migrant labor to work the field in California and Florida. Since the 1960s Mixtecos were drawn to the northwestern part of Mexico to work in the agricultural sector booming in the region (Velasco Ortiz, 2005) As agribusiness continued to grow after the war, it not only drew more rural migrants to work on large farms but also encouraged agricultural companies to go abroad for cheap labor and land (Grieme, 1980). In the early 1990s, the Mixteca region experienced the most emigration in Oaxaca with approximately 90 percent of all households affected (Clark, 2000).

According the Broetje Orchard website, a 2010 census of their employees shows that 20 percent of their workforce originated from the Oaxacan Mixteca. With the help of Barrett's organization Amanecer, research conducted by Vista Hermosa discovered that Guadalupe Miramar Yucuhiti was one of the communities from where their employees came. Miramar is a coffee-producing community located in the Mixteca Alta region in the district of Tlaxiaco. With that knowledge, Vista Hermosa and the Broetje family started projects at in the

community as part of their Paisanos Unidos project supported by the foundation. This initiative creates direct ties between the orchard and the community of Miramar. The program aims to create stronger ties between employees and their sending communities.

### *Experience*

During fieldwork in Oaxaca, it was impossible to avoid the topic of migration. Every person I met, recognizing or at least assuming I was from the U.S., asked me where I was from. When I told them, "*los Estados Unidos*," they would always nod their head in understanding and say, "*Sí pero que parte?*" (Yes, but what part?). I would tell them I was from Missouri and then explain where it was located. Nearly everyone expressed recognition of the state. Then they would proceed to tell me all the places they had been. While there, I began to make a mental map of all the locations to see if there was a pattern of migration. The places were literally all over the map – Oaxacans had traveled to Virginia, Georgia, and Kansas, to name a few. When I traveled to Miramar, the same thing happened. Everyone I talked to asked me where I was from. Whenever they responded with their travel stories, however, I did notice a trend. Many of residents, both men and women, in Miramar migrated to the U.S. Northwest – to work as seasonal laborers in northern California, Oregon, and Washington. Even when people had not migrated, they had close family members who have. Frequently, older women would tell me that their son or daughter was in the U.S.

When in Miramar, I talked to a woman named Enriqueta about her migration experience. Enriqueta lived with her husband who worked at the taxi station in town. She told me residents commonly migrated to pick grapes and other fruit in the Northwest. Starting part of the season picking apples in Washington and then moving south to northern California to harvest grapes, Enriqueta remembers joining her husband in the fields where they got paid by the bucket-full. She recalled a story of about her and her husband picking blackberries in Oregon. She said her husband could pick about 100 buckets a day. So they scrambled and worked 12 hours hunched over picking berries. At the end of the day, when they went collect their compensation, the field manager threatened them with a knife. Not being able to fight back or call the police because of their immigration status, the two left for the day without pay. Enriqueta also spoke about the terrible housing conditions for migrant workers. She said she stayed months in a wooden shack with six other women. The cramped space also served as their kitchen for there was one stove in the shack among the many bunk beds.

Although migrants find work in the U.S., the nature of that work is often dangerous and unfair. Not all employers are like the Broetjes. So when I spoke to people in Miramar that had migrated, they describe their experience at the Broetje Orchard more fondly. Many of them had gone there because they had family members working on the orchard and living there permanently where they had started their own families. But still some residents returned to live in Miramar. They returned to newly built houses paid for by years of sending back

remittances. Many relied on those remittances to continue living there knowing that, most likely, they would eventually have to return to the U.S. in search of more work.

### *Miramar projects*

Knowing that Miramar residents have difficulty maintaining livelihoods in their sending community, Vista Hermosa has funded projects that seek to sustain the community so people no longer have to migrate. In 2010, Barrett conducted a site visit talking to 54 residents of Miramar. The visit was diagnostic, identifying the greatest needs of the community. According to the website, Vista Hermosa planned to support projects dealing with capacity building and food security. In response, the community formed a group that now has the designation of *asociación civil* or A.C. The members named the organization *Coordinacion Pasado, Presente, Futuro de Miramar* (COPPFUMIR). The organization represents a commitment to helping the community. As an A.C. the organization is not just a group set up for economic benefit.

While visiting Miramar I spent time with members of the organization. Noel Vasquez the president of the organization allowed me to attend a meeting of the leadership council of COPPFUMIR. Their current projects under the organization's supervision include chicken coups managed by women's groups in the community, microtunnels for growing food year-round, and now a taxi service that shuttles residents to nearby markets and to the capital city of Oaxaca. The service also owns a van for carrying groups to other states in Mexico. The

taxi service is not specifically a Vista Hermosa project. It was started by a group of men returning home from the U.S. with an idea to start a business based on the transportation needs of the community. They bought cars and a van to shuttle Miramar residents to nearby towns and market centers. Upon request, they will travel to any part of Mexico.

Although Vista Hermosa does not support the taxi project directly, the project emerged from the support of a revolving fund the foundation created for the community. Vista Hermosa granted money to COPPFUMIR, which is to be used as a loan for start-up businesses. The leadership of COPPFUMIR, with the input of the community, decides who will receive the loan. Later, the loan must be paid back with minimal interest. Recently, the community decided to give loans to families of coffee cooperatives, so they have money to live on before the harvest. After the harvest, the loans are to be repaid with a low interest rate. The purpose of the interest rate is to grow the fund for later business endeavors.<sup>5</sup>

### **Mediators and Meshworks**

Vista Hermosa Foundations supports many projects around the world, although they claim to have special relationship with Miramar, that focus on four main components – youth and education development, agribusiness and market access, conservation and resource management, and social justice advocacy in the U.S. In order to participate in these projects, Vista Hermosa partners with organizations in the countries of Kenya, Uganda, India, Haiti, and Mexico. The

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<sup>5</sup> Lopez-Grewal, Melanie. email to Margaret Holleman, March 26, 2014.

foundation awards grants to these organizations. Other than the projects in the Vista Hermosa community, the foundation does not implement their own projects in these countries. Rather they support mediating organizations working in other countries.

In order to choose organizations to which Vista Hermosa grants funds, the Broetjes and their daughter, Suzanne, who has a doctoral degree in International/Global Studies from Michigan State University and has been the Executive Director of the foundation since 2002, have a set of criteria. According to their website, besides having to work in one of the five countries, organizations must be community-based and founded on a local leadership initiative. Furthermore, the projects must be sustainable in design and implementation. In addition to these criteria, the organizations must be faith-based in some aspect and dedicated to a holistic approach to human “and spiritual” development, which seems to refer to a general desire for serving others first, as Robert Greenleaf would say. Suzanne reiterates that because faith and spirituality is fundamental to the work they do, it is important that their partners are spiritually led on some way. However, the denomination of the partners remains seemingly unimportant to the organization. Although the organizations are Christian or vaguely so, they include Catholics, Methodists, Quakers, and not-religiously-identified organizations such as Amanecer, a social justice organization.

The last of the criteria remains that as an international partner, the organization must be “servant led, based on inclusivity, purpose, and service to



the common good.” Suzanne tells me that they take a proactive approach to awarding grants.<sup>6</sup> They do not take unsolicited grants and they encourage the grantees to come to the orchard and meet with the foundation. Half or more of the after-tax profit from the orchard for that year is given to the foundation. In 2011, the orchard gave a total of \$1,704,272 to Vista Hermosa. About \$730,000 went to grants for development projects in other countries.<sup>7</sup> The board decides, under the supervision of the Broetje family, which organizations they wish to fund. They budget for three year grant periods because performing holistic development is a long-term process. Some organizations have worked with them for more than three years.

The structure of these financial relationships creates a wide-spanning meshwork of development FBOs, of which Amanecer is part. Amanecer is a prime example of a mediating organization that has had a long-standing relationship with Vista Hermosa. As explained in the previous chapter, Chuck Barrett of Amanecer first worked with Vista Hermosa and the Broetjes on a Catholic Relief Services project with apple farmers in Chihuahua, Mexico. Since then, Barrett went on to form the *Red Campesina de Pequeños Productores* (RCPP) out of the CRS project *Escuela Campesina*.

After CRS pulled out of the project, Vista Hermosa has made a commitment to help fund the RCPP, which incorporates the individual projects listed on the organization’s website. This includes COPPFUMIR, the official

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<sup>6</sup> Telephone interview with Suzanne Broetje, interview by Margaret Holleman, February 6, 2014.

<sup>7</sup> Department of the Treasury Internal Revenue Service. (2011) *Return of Private Foundation or Section 4947(a)(1) Nonexempt Charitable Trust Treated as Private Foundation* retrieved from <http://www.foundationcenter.org>

community organization in Miramar that oversees the community development projects. Barrett, however, did more than connect Vista Hermosa with the RCPP. Amanecer is a practical and legal facilitator of funds for COPPFUMIR. Without Amanecer, Vista Hermosa would not be able to give money to Miramar because of COPPFUMIR's status as an *asociación civil*. Because COPPFUMIR is not a 501c3, Vista Hermosa must undergo an expenditure responsibility process in order to create a direct funding link between the foundation and Miramar. Vista Hermosa, therefore, provides financial support to Amanecer, which then funnels it to organizations within the RCPP. For the other member organizations of the RCPP located in other Mexican states, Vista Hermosa grants money to Amanecer and that money goes to Barrett's friend and colleague Rogel del Rosal who has a mediating organization called Yankuik Erandi Rural based in Mexico City. In turn, Yankuik Erandi Rural is able to distribute support from Vista Hermosa, which came through Amanecer, to Miramar and other projects in Oaxaca and San Luis Potosí.

## **Conclusion**

In the past two years, however, Barrett and Amanecer are lessening their involvement in the RCPP. Vista Hermosa, in response has hired a new person to take over the management of the projects in the RCPP, particularly the projects in Miramar. In order for Amanecer to exit the meshwork, COPPFUMIR must achieve a different organizational status that will allow them to work directly with Vista Hermosa as well procure funding from other organizations in the U.S. and Mexico.

Amanecer and Vista Hermosa have strongly encouraged the Miramar organization to obtain that status in the next few years. Once they have done that, Vista Hermosa's development relationship with Miramar will be vertically integrated as Melanie Lopez-Grewal takes over mediating responsibilities for Barrett.

Barrett has undertaken some of Barrett's duties in order to ensure that the organization and its projects in Mexico. Here, I explain how this transition is being managed as her past experiences working in development. Barrett has spent her previous experience working for development agencies in various countries. Her journey to working with a first-world organization like Miramar was quite different than that of Barrett's although they are experienced in social justice, which led them to the Vista Hermosa Foundation.

Lopez-Grewal was born in the United States, specifically in a small town and raised in Creston, Iowa, Columbia, Mo. She grew up attending an Episcopal church. She says that attending many different churches while she was growing up. Her work in development started with her master's thesis focusing Central and South America. To advance the work of the organization in the region, she enrolled in a graduate program to earn a Ph.D. in development studies.

Not only does Lopez-Grewal's development background complement Barrett's, but also so does her physical location. Barrett is based in Mexico City. Lopez-Grewal lives near and works at the same location as Barrett and other Miramar employees. She is able to directly communicate with Barrett and Barrett's staff.

<sup>1</sup> Email from Melissa Lopez-Grewal to Margaret Holleran, May 7, 2014.

## Chapter 6: Melanie Lopez-Grewal

This chapter highlights the new role Melanie Lopez-Grewal plays as a mediator working for the Vista Hermosa Foundation. Recently hired, she has undertaken some of Barrett's duties as intermediary between the foundation and its projects in Mexico. Here, I explain her role in the organization as well as her past experiences working in development. Drawing upon her previous experience working for development agencies, I wish to demonstrate how her journey to working with a faith-based organization (FBO) was quite different than that of Barrett's although both are committed to social justice, which led them to the Vista Hermosa Foundation.

Lopez-Grewal was born in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada and raised in Creston, British Columbia. Her family did not belong to one particular church. She says they attended many different ones while she was growing up.<sup>8</sup> Her work in development stems from her experiences traveling Central and South America. To address the poverty she witnessed while working in the region, she enrolled in a development program where she got her master's degree.

Not only does Lopez-Grewal's development background differ from Barrett's, but also so does her physical location and her professional affiliation. Lopez-Grewal lives near and works at the same orchard as Broetje Orchards' Miramar employees. She is able to directly communicate with these employees,

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<sup>8</sup> Email from Melanie Lopez-Grewal to Margaret Holleman, May 5, 2014.

learn their stories, and address their needs. Like Barrett, her social mobility and citizenship allow her to travel between the Washington and Mexico communities as a mediator – and not only a development practitioner performing due diligence for the foundation.

This chapter emphasizes how mediators are key actors in transborder development and how a mediator's identity interacts with the community it supports. As mentioned in Chapter 2 and 3, feminist political ecology examines how development affects women differently than men. Projects can transform gender relations in community through the infusion of resources vital to residents' livelihoods. Likewise, migration can often bring more work for women. I use my fieldwork experience as an example of these transformations in Miramar. I explore how Lopez-Grewal's identity as a woman from the global North and representative of a funding organization allows her to address gender inequalities in community development decision-making structures in ways that differ from Barrett, me, and women within the Miramar community.

## **Introduction**

When I first met Chuck Barrett in October 2012, he mentioned that Vista Hermosa was in the process of hiring a person to help manage the Mexico projects. Because he was nearing the end of his career, or at least cutting down on fieldwork, Barrett suggested to Vista Hermosa that it may be wise for the foundation to take over some the process. "I talked to Suzanne at Vista Hermosa, Suzanne Broetje, and I said, 'you know, it's time, you guys....it's a lot bigger now

than it was then and you need somebody full-time to manage it.' Suzanne Broetje oversees the Vista Hermosa-funded projects in Kenya, India, and Haiti, so having an additional full-time staff person to manage the Mexico projects made a lot of sense to everyone. As a result of these conversations and with input from Barrett, the foundation interviewed and hired Melanie Lopez-Grewal as staff member of Vista Hermosa.

I met Melanie Lopez-Grewal through Barrett. He introduced us by email while I was in Oaxaca in June 2013. Lopez-Grewal had just gone through orientation with Barrett and his colleague Rogel del Rosal in Tucson, Arizona, where she met with members of the *Frente Democrático Campesino* (FDC), a collaborating organization supporting Chihuahuan apple farmers. As mentioned in Chapter 1, after corresponding with Lopez-Grewal, I set up a Skype interview with her in a noisy café in Oaxaca City after return from a meeting in San Luis Potosí where I met the community leaders of Miramar.

Lopez-Grewal had not met this group yet, but was due to visit in October to tour the projects she would be overseeing in Miramar, as well as projects Vista Hermosa supports as part of the RCPP. Interviews with Lopez-Grewal differed from the life history interviews I conducted with Barrett. Therefore, the knowledge of Barrett's life in development diverges from that I have of Lopez-Grewal's. I asked after her past experience in the field of development and how she was settling into her new position in the foundation. A key focus of the interviews was to discover how her job description, objectives, and personal outlook on development differed from Barrett's and Amanecer's. The differences

were apparent from our first interaction. My first appointment with Lopez-Grewal was cancelled because her young daughter was sick. As a new mother starting a new job in a rural apple farming community, Lopez-Grewal had many stressors to deal with.

### **Mediator of Development**

Lopez-Grewal now mediates many things on behalf of Vista Hermosa as she steps into Barrett's role. This means she travels to communities in the *Red Campesina de Pequeno Productores* (RCPP), particularly Miramar, and checks on the condition and progress of the existing projects. Her job-related tasks require that she listen to the needs, concerns, and ideas of these community members and communicate them to the foundation. Lopez-Grewal also links Broetje Orchard employees and their home community of Miramar. The role is similar to that of Barrett and his organization Amanecer, which has acted as mediator between Miramar and Vista Hermosa.

Lopez-Grewal is, however, the first employee of the foundation to also take on this position, which embodies the foundation's first step in creating a direct connection between Miramar and Vista Hermosa. She works directly for the foundation from an office at the orchard in Prescott, Washington, where she manages the grants for Mexico projects. "I manage the grants that go [to Mexico]. I work with the organizations. I make recommendations to the board. I sift through things, so not everything that comes our way is going to be presented to the board. I make a lot of those decisions." As a mediator, many of those grants

applications go through her, but she evaluates those grants based on Ralph and Cheryl Broetje's criteria. "I make sure I follow what route Cheryl and Ralph want. I follow up with their monitoring and evaluating. I talk to them on a regular basis. And then I'm going to all the projects [part of the RCPP] doing due diligence and also working with employees here,"<sup>9</sup> explains Lopez-Grewal.

Lopez-Grewal's position within the foundation and within the meshwork of development is new. She works directly for Vista Hermosa while Barrett and his organization Amanecer partnered with the foundation. Having started a new position within the Vista Hermosa development meshwork, she has time to define her role within the organization and as a mediator between locales. Right now her job focuses on connecting a transborder community.

The other thing that I love about this job in particular is that I have over a thousand employees that are from Mexico...so I get to spend a lot of my time doing outreach with them. I'm working on a survey where I'm interviewing as many of them as I can, so I know more about their stories – where they're from, you know, what's the situation with their families and it's wonderful to me to get to talk to them every day and to be part of that. I get to tell them what's going on in Mexico with their projects. I'm going to Miramar...so that when I'm there they haven't seen their family members that live there in ten or fifteen years and I get to be that link between them. That's amazing.

Unlike Barrett and Amanecer headquarters, Lopez-Grewal works near the Miramar community members living in the Vista Hermosa employee community. She, therefore, is more attuned to happenings on that side of the transborder community. But like Barrett, Lopez-Grewal enjoys a mobility that many of the Indigenous Oaxacans do not. The mediators become mediators because of their

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<sup>9</sup> I conducted two interview withMelanie Lopez-Grewal, interview by Margaret Holleman, July 10, 2013.



mobility along with their dedication to development. In other words, mediators must possess the means to travel across border as well as across cultures. An understanding of the poor living conditions in Latin America is also invaluable. Lopez-Grewal gained that during her time living and working in Mexico, traveling through Central America, and studying in Chile during her undergraduate career.

### **Motivations and Work in Development**

Like Barrett, Lopez-Grewal stumbled into development work as a personal cause after having witnessed extreme poverty. It was not so much the issues that she found in her own backyard, as it was for Barrett. There was no race issue that affected her life as it did Barrett's as he lived in the middle of a segregated South. Lopez-Grewal's mobility helped her find her calling in development.

After graduating with a bachelor's degree in Spanish from Central Missouri State University, Lopez-Grewal worked as service manager for the Wall Street Institute English School in Mexico City. The Wall Street Institute is a language school teaching individual and corporate clients with a method that is, as the website states, "a practical and results-oriented way of learning to communicate effectively in English." Lopez-Grewal managed its educational programming from August 2006 through February 2007. While working in Mexico, she discovered her motivations for working in development. "When I lived in Mexico, I would see so much poverty," says Lopez-Grewal. "It was just, like, everywhere I looked and I wanted to do something about it. And I, I didn't know what to do. I was 22 years old. I was overwhelmed." Lopez-Grewal went

back to school as result of her experiences and sought formal training and education. “I went on to study, to learn more, to figure out what I can do, how I can help. And that’s why I am doing what I’m doing now because I feel like I have the education. I have the training.” Lopez-Grewal received her master’s degree in international economics and international relations from John Hopkins University’s Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS). The brand of development taught in the program looks at national-level development strategies for economic development. All students must concentrate their studies in international economics and choose a second emphasis in a global region or a “global theme.” These include American foreign policy; energy, resource and environment; international development; conflict management; and “strategic studies.” The program steers students to work at large government agencies or private institutions. The website claims that 41 percent of the 2011 graduates went into the private sector, 25 percent joined the public sector, and 17 percent went into non-profit work.

Following graduation, Lopez-Grewal worked with ThinkImpact in Washington, D.C., a social enterprise, or for-profit business using profits to help a social cause. ThinkImpact, according to its description, offers 3- and 8-week study-abroad trips to countries in Africa and Latin America where “students identify opportunities and co-create products and services with a social impact” in the local communities. Lopez-Grewal had previously worked for the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) in Lima, Peru in 2011, a multilateral lending institution for Latin America and the Caribbean. Established in 1959, the IDB has

provided grants, loans, and technical assistance to borrowing countries. It also claims to provide “knowledge services” for development interventions and focuses on economic progress as an indicator of development. The IDB states that it uses “evidence for making decisions and measuring the impact of these projects to increase its development effectiveness.” The agency seeks to design projects that produce “tangible” results. IDB concentrates on addressing the needs of small “vulnerable” countries and the economic and social inequalities prevalent in them by encouraging development through the private sector.<sup>10</sup>

When Lopez-Grewal talked about her time at IDB, I got a feeling that the agency lacks the ability to truly address the needs of those they were trying to help - not really listening to what the community needed but doing what they at IDB thought the community needed. The plans were short term or implemented quickly. “Short-term development,” Lopez-Grewal tells me, does not exist. Making meaningful change requires a long-term commitment. Development also requires a connection with the community that Lopez-Grewal wasn’t able to make working in Washington. “They do great work. They do great projects,” says Lopez-Grewal. “Just personally...I wanted to be more connected with the people, and I didn’t feel connected there.”

### **Vista Hermosa**

What Lopez-Grewal felt was lacking from her experiences at the Inter-American Development Bank, she hopes to find at Vista Hermosa. The ability to

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<sup>10</sup> “Inter-American Development Bank,” accessed April 1, 2014. <http://www.iadb.org>.

connect with the communities at the ground level and maintain a relationship between communities is precisely brought Lopez-Grewal to Vista Hermosa. Lopez-Grewal lauds the Broetje family's clear vision and unwavering dedication to social justice and explains how much she believes in the goals of two-pronged approach to create livable conditions for their employees as well as addressing economic and environmental injustices south of the border continue.

Lopez-Grewal says Vista Hermosa finally gives her a sense of how development is a long-term process, requiring a long-term relationship between the foundation and the community. Her first visit to Miramar was an eye-opening experience that differed greatly from her time in Washington D.C. It was her first time participating in development at ground level. But that is what she most appreciates about Vista Hermosa's approach to development. Lopez-Grewal told me that she traveled around Mexico visiting sites in the RCPP, she realized the long-term relationship sustainable development requires. Her former job did not allow her to participate in conversations at ground level as she does now.

It's complicated when you work with people...it's never just a black and white issue. And I think when you sit in Washington D.C. or you sit somewhere and make grant proposals, it's easy to forget about that level of interaction and that's what you're hoping that your funds will do. And when you're actually there and you see how messy it is and how complicated it is and how difficult it is and how long-term it is, it's just a really good reminder of...to cause change is a long-term commitment.

This difference between her previous experience and Vista Hermosa's approach to development attracted Lopez-Grewal to her new position. And this form of development and her new role as a ground-level mediator is something she is eager to tackle. "I think it's challenging – really, really challenging. But I love

challenges and I love the values of the organization. They really resonate with me, and I just think the approach is really logical in that you do have to really look at people as a whole. You can't just do microfinance, for example...you're just looking at the financial aspect of it."

Development for Lopez-Grewal became, then, more a holistic practice. Being able to talk directly to the community members she is helping is a perk she never had in Washington D.C., and it is very much an eye-opener. She told me that she learned people face more than just economic marginalization in Oaxaca. Within their communities, they are dealing with other inequalities and abuses. Women, for example, may not only be worried daily for their financial wellbeing, but also for their physical and mental health. While these abuses may lessen with the alleviation of poverty, the gender inequalities, particularly, remain heavy on the mind of women.

Lopez-Grewal discussed how her interaction with a community member made her realize that other challenges need to be addressed along with the lack of economic security that is so prevalent in Mexico. "Like when I was in community, I met this woman who had been abused and just gone [through] all manner of horrific things. And before she even ever wanted to be a part of anything, before she could even think about that, it was overcoming all these other challenges that had happened to her in her life, which makes complete sense."

## Women and Development in Miramar

As a new mediator for Vista Hermosa, Lopez-Grewal now has the chance to address the social inequalities found in development work. Although Vista Hermosa's approach takes a ground-up, community-based approach to development, gender inequalities still exist within the communities perpetuated by the patriarchal Indigenous governance structures. As previously explained in Chapter 2, women in coffee-producing villages are often left with double the reproductive and productive responsibilities when economic crisis disrupts the livelihoods of the community. Feminist political ecology (FPE) addresses the ways migration and development also transform gendered labor practices.

In addition, FPE eschews the notion that women's struggles are universal; even women in the same community face different hardships. As my field observations attest, some of these hardships come with the inability to perform the societies' assigned female identity. Even though Vista Hermosa has created strong long-term relationships with Miramar residents living in Oaxaca and in Washington State, women in Miramar still experience the dual burden of household reproduction and coffee-production perpetuated by gendered divisions of labor and exacerbated by migration. Furthermore, women continue to be excluded from community decision-making and project design even though they are tasked with the physical labor needed to maintain these projects.

In the summer of 2013, I traveled to Miramar to speak with community members involved in the projects Vista Hermosa funded. I particularly wanted to talk to women of the community. I met many women in Miramar and I was able

to talk in great depth with two women about their experiences of migration, the issues they face now in Miramar, and how they participate in development projects and decision-making. Their names were Enriqueta and Crispina. The two were actually sister-in-laws, I discovered later. Crispina had two children and Enriqueta had none. The two women faced many of the same challenges common among women in Miramar and had many similar experiences in migration. They also had a few key differences. Enriqueta, for example, could not have children. She has tried many times. This struggle has caused her much pain physically and emotionally. Enriqueta was a very outspoken woman and open to discuss her thoughts toward the community. She felt a deep divide between her and other women because she is childless. Motherhood is a trait of femininity in her community and childlessness is portrayed as a sign of inadequacy. These insecurities weighed on her, proving that women faced more challenges than just economic disparity.

Women in the same community were not necessarily a united group, either. It was not fair to lump all women into a category and generalize their problems even in one location. Enriqueta told me how not having children has made her feel like an outsider to the community. Women were mean she said with tears in her eyes, making her feel inadequate for not being able to have children. Crispina, on the other hand, did not face this problem. However, with the role of mother came many other difficulties and burdens. Crispina had two young children under the age of seven. Migration of men put extra pressure on women in sending communities. Crispina told me that when her husband was

gone, living in the U.S. or working in other parts of Mexico, she was in charge of the household.

Households in Miramar do not merely consist of a house. Family land could be geographically extensive. Crispina worked her husband's *milpa*, or household food plot, which was located away from the house further up on the mountain. This was true for coffee crops as well. Most people grew coffee on family plots far from their homes. Women usually helped male family members — husbands, brothers, and fathers — harvest the coffee. When the men left, coffee harvesting was left to the women primarily.

Crispina explained to me that before their coffee crops were sold through coffee cooperatives, of which the town had three. During the harvest, producers would only receive around 200 pesos a week (roughly twenty U.S. dollars). This money was not enough to support families, especially because coffee production was a seasonal activity. Crispina mentioned that even with the coffee cooperatives, it was still difficult to make the money last throughout the year, for growers only get paid after the harvest. Even with higher prices, migration to the United States was necessary. Crispina and Enriqueta have both migrated. Crispina, for example, worked at Broetje Orchards for six months. Enriqueta also showed me photographs of her time in the United States, including her trip to Yosemite National Park. Crispina told me that women usually get married when returning from their time abroad. She mentioned that women's groups are comprised of mostly married and older women who have returned and have stayed in the community to raise children. There are nine women's groups, one



for each *colonia* within the community. She said it was rare for unmarried women to join these groups.

Enriqueta migrated for the first time when she was 14 years old. She worked as a nanny in Oaxaca City and then picked nuts in northern Mexico. She told me this was how she learned how to speak Spanish. Growing up in a very rural area on the outskirts of the *municipio*, her parents only knew how to speak Mixteco. A child herself, she cared for other women's babies. She said she felt part of the family herself as she showed me pictures of a birthday party her employer threw for her. Enriqueta has maintained these connections in the city. She told me that she wanted to accept a job in the city but was nervous to breach the topic with her husband. Because she did not have children, Enriqueta had a certain mobility other women did not have, but she still needed permission from her husband to leave. She was also afraid to leave because she said the last time she did, the house had not been cleaned or taken care of the entire time she was absent. So she returned to a house where there was more work waiting for her.

On the other hand, Crispina felt obligated to stay at home now that she had children and was married. Absent male family members worsen the issue. She told me that when men are gone women must take care of the coffee fields, the chickens, and the *milpa* while also caring for the children. Sometimes, Crispina has had to enlist the help of her small children. Carrying them on her back up the mountain to her family's coffee plants, the children learned at a young age how to harvest coffee. She said she made a game of it. The youngest child remained strapped to her back while she picked the ripe coffee beans.

Enriqueta divulged that she did not like to see her nieces and nephews work in the fields. She felt they should be in school or be able to play like other children. Having none of her own, she did not face the same dilemma of raising children and managing her husband's milpa as Crispina does. Even though she did not have children, Enriqueta still had many responsibilities in the home. Enriqueta and her husband Efraín's house and land were slightly larger than surrounding homes. Bought with money from her and her husband's time in the US, her house was filled with large furniture and a decent size refrigerator. The outside of the home was more striking. The land around it was lush and featured a productive garden filled with animals and plants. The additional land, however, meant more work for Enriqueta. Her husband worked in the town's center about a 20-minute walk uphill. While he was away at Miramar's taxi station, she was in charge of the reproductive duties of the household.

While talking to Enriqueta, she continued about her business hanging clothes and feeding the animals. I helped her feed the cows, cutting long grass and tossing it in the trough while she stood back and laughed at me starting to sweat. Not having children may afford Enriqueta's family more land and animals, but because they were located within the domestic realm, for which she is responsible. She told me that she and her husband were one of a few households that kept cows. She said it was her husband's idea to raise cows and sell the meat. Yet Enriqueta was the person who fed them several times a day. She listed her chores- she cleaned the house on Mondays, did laundry by hand on Tuesdays, fed the cows twice a day, fed the chickens every day, cooked every meal for her

husband, and had to look for plants (*yerba*) to feed the rabbits every other morning.

Miriam She admits that many women had it harder because their children depended on them. But the time she did not spend on raising children, she used to work at the taxi station with her husband. In fact, she was the only woman I saw working there. She did not drive the taxis but was a dispatcher at the station Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays starting between 3 and 5 a.m. On those days, she woke up at 1 a.m. to complete chores and bathe before leaving the house.

Development projects also reflect the gendered labor practices and gendered spaces in Miramar. The project most specific to gendered divisions is the *gallinero* project. It was one of the first projects that Barrett suggested and Vista Hermosa funded because it was an improvement on an existing practice. The foundation, through Amanecer, provided funds for materials to build better chicken coops. This resulted in heartier chickens that survived through the rainy season, thanks to tin roofs provided by the project.

Moreover, Barrett arranged for an exchange between CEDICAM, the agricultural development organization described in Chapter 4, and the community. Through a workshop, community members, nearly all of them women, learned how to make nutritious chicken feed for their hens. This way the hens would produce healthier eggs and grow bigger. The ingredients, which are commonly found in the community, consist of eggshells, beans, maíz, and rice. However, these ingredients need to be toasted and ground into feed, which is time consuming and is a woman's job. And, of course, the more chickens a family

has, the more feed is needed. Crispina says she makes the *alimento*, feed, once a week or every 15 days because it is a long process. There are 126 gallineros in Miramar with between 10 and 20 chickens in each. The chickens are used mostly for eggs and meat. Some are sold. When Amanecer came to the community for the first time, Barrett left the project management to the existing women's groups. Crispina holds a position in the Loma Bonita group. Her job is to check the maintenance and productivity of the coops. If there is a problem, the women's groups have to meet with the COPPFUMIR, the community organization that works directly with Amanecer and a member of the RCPP. But Crispina tells me that they feel more comfortable talking among themselves. They not only meet to talk about the chickens, but also, as Enriqueta tells me, women's groups meetings are a time used to talk about other problems in the home or to socialize. They act as support groups, not just project management meetings.

However, women usually do not hold higher positions in municipal government. Women's groups remain separate from the governing bodies in the *municipio*. Even though COPPFUMIR – the official community organization that manages the projects and receives money from Vista Hermosa – consults with the women's groups regularly, no women hold positions in this decision-making group. In order to maintain a semblance of power, the women have a revolving fund of their own. The money they make from selling chickens goes to support those in the groups that need help with their chickens with things like antibiotics for chickens. The women's groups together decide how to spend the money. In this way, they enact autonomy as women in the community.

Still, many of those gender inequalities are perpetuated in the Indigenous system of governance because women are traditionally not allowed to serve in *cargo* positions (municipal government office), and in the case of Miramar that remains true. When asking Noel about women in government, he said that is not common for women to hold office “Women do not do that” was often the response I got when I pushed the subject. Women, however, are *promotoras*, health promoters. In Miramar, a group of women plan schedules for cleaning houses and teaching other women hygienic practices for keeping a healthy household. The women range from young to old and are focused on educating families, mostly other women, about cleanliness and hygiene. The women meet in Miramar’s health clinic, and only women attend. Teaching other women is an important task. In a geographically remote place, a long bumpy ride from the nearest city, education and prevention are key. So health begins in the home.

Although women feel empowered themselves within their gendered spaces in the household, that is not the case outside of it. During my time in Miramar, I was able to attend one of the *promotora* meetings. Noel asked them if I could sit in and listen. He sat with me. It was very difficult to follow along because the majority of the meeting was conducted in Mixteco, and the meeting lasted hours. Noel sat quietly as I watched. I’m not sure if my presence affected the meeting dynamics in anyway. I’m sure it did as I suspect Noel’s presence does as well, but there was no way for me to be sure. I didn’t take any notes, not that I really could have. Then politely, mid-meeting Noel and I excused us. When leaving I purchased a raffle ticket, a fundraiser the women were having. The

prizes included wooden furniture. Needless to say, I did not win the raffle, as far as I know, but the women were very kind and hospitable to me.

### **Gender, Ethnicity, and Development – Making Identities**

When visiting, Lopez-Grewal was also able to meet with these women. She seemed excited to work with them in creating other projects in the future. She told me about possible plans for future projects, such as a money management project called a savings group. Lopez-Grewal's enthusiasm about involving women in the development process in the future is a change from Barrett's development approach. Barrett conveyed a desire to include women more in project design and leadership, but his identity as male, he perceived, hindered this. A feminist epistemology suggests that people perform their identities and employ their identities in relation to others, and in certain situations and interactions these identities change. Therefore, a female body such as Lopez-Grewal's will interact with the community differently than Barrett's. The goal then, perhaps, is her presence in place of Barrett's will make women more comfortable with participation in projects.

Whether or not Lopez-Grewal purposefully utilizes her female identity as a tool in development, it is a factor in development mediation. An FPE viewpoint on scale stresses that development involves and influences individual bodies. This is true for mediators. Development mediators are gendered and originate from distinct ethnic and class backgrounds and possess diverse epistemologies. They are not neutral facilitators of money or information; their physical presence

and performed identities influence and challenge the existing patriarchal power structures in the community. Not to mention, Lopez-Grewal's identity as a woman and the duties given to her as mother sets her apart from Barrett.

Likewise, the feminist concept of intersectionality remains useful for understanding Lopez-Grewal's relationship with Miramar. Not only is she a woman but she is also a woman from the Global North and a representative of Vista Hermosa, a funding agency. This is an identity she is comfortable undertaking. Lopez-Grewal is fully aware of her position as an outsider to the community. Therefore, she is afforded more liberties and leadership in an Indigenous community where women are traditionally not allowed to hold public office or participate in decision-making groups.

#### *Women in development*

Lopez-Grewal would like to confront gendered inequalities in her work with Miramar. She feels strongly about including women in the decision-making processes, which in Miramar does not happen much. To Lopez-Grewal the shortage of women's participation was obvious. "I do think that women should have a voice, and so when I was there one of my recommendations to the leadership, especially since we're providing that support was that there needs to be more incorporation of women," she explains. "There needs to be that. I feel really strongly about that."

Barrett recognizes the role Lopez-Grewal can play in the community as a woman, something his expertise cannot reach based upon his own gender. When

I asked Barrett about including women more and the strides Lopez-Grewal will be able to make as a mediator, he says, "That's a really important piece, and it's not something that I could do just as easily. I can advocate and all that, but, you know, it is much more powerful when a woman is there to be able to bring the sisterhood together, so to speak."<sup>11</sup> Whether or not Lopez-Grewal will have a different relationship to the women of Miramar than Barrett is yet to be seen, however.

Barrett recognizes the role Lopez-Grewal can play as a woman by working gaining valuable access and meaningful participation from women's groups in the community. In fact, she may have different limits than Barrett when it comes to rallying the women. As a mother herself, traveling to Mexico proves more difficult. The amount of time she has to be "in community" as she says, is less than what someone like Barrett whose children are grown, can spend. Sometimes Barrett's wife, Melody Sears, is able to visit Miramar with him due to extra mobility afforded by their age. When I asked Noel Vasquez if Barrett's wife ever visited he said she did. When I asked him what she did he said that she was there to support Barrett. Sears is also an Amanecer associate in addition to being Barrett's supporter, but their professional and personal partnership does prove useful when taking on development projects.

Lopez-Grewal must consider her family when acting as a mediator. "Traveling, I love it. Obviously I love to travel but I think...after we were married and you have kids, traveling is amazing but has another element. You miss time

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<sup>11</sup> Chuck Barrett, interview by Margaret Holleman, January 20, 2014.



with your family,” says Lopez-Grewal. Yet traveling remains an aspect she loves very much about her job with Vista Hermosa, even though at this stage of her life travel is different than it used to be.

I wanted an organization that does this kind of development, so it's me going to Oaxaca and going out to the villages...Like when I talk to my friends that aren't involved in development they tend to think, 'Oh yea, you get a cushy job. You're going to Mexico...' I have to be on a tiny bus six hours after 20 hours taking a flight to some small town. Yea, at that point, it's traveling but not traveling the way that I used to think about it. I used to just think it was fun...for me it's about a deeper purpose now.

Being a mediator of a transborder community and having more duties because of her position at Vista Hermosa, the job stretches her between two places. Her job involves being “in community” in Miramar and back in Washington. Her affiliation with Vista Hermosa and her physical location within the FBO meshwork affects her differently than it does Barrett. She expressed her frustration with only having two days in Miramar and not having the time to develop the relationships with individual community members.

### *Class and ethnicity*

Lopez-Grewal acknowledges that her relationship or role as a foundation representative gives her leverage in addressing the gender inequalities in Vista Hermosa projects and in Miramar. She toes that line as lightly as she can while still making suggestions on how to better the community's efforts. “You want it to be an organic process in the community because at the same time we're not just writing checks, we're involved in that process in the sense that we walk beside people and we can make those kind of recommendations and make those kind of

observations, and so that was a discussion I had with the leadership. I'm sitting there with ten men and where are the women?"

In addition to identifying as a woman, Lopez-Grewal identifies as an employee of Vista Hermosa. As an outsider to the community she represents the foundation as funder, a source of money. Once again, mediators are not neutral entities that funnel money and resources to communities. As with any other linkages and development money there comes baggage. People are positioned at the intersection of ethnicity, gender and class. These things also allow mobility in certain situations. Lopez-Grewal, although a woman, is able to infiltrate decision-making meetings and enter into dialogue with community leaders because of her role with Vista Hermosa. Where Barrett was welcomed, Lopez-Grewal has also been invited.

Her gender may be a positive attribute for organizing women, but she also does not feel that her female identity inhibits her from making suggestions to the community authorities, which are all men. Her association with Vista Hermosa, the projects' funding source, puts her in the position to make suggestions about leadership and decision-making. Her association with the foundation even set her apart from a woman from the same class and ethnic background such as me. My inquiries into improvement in women's participation in government and planning were met with reluctance. Lopez-Grewal, however, was not shy in expressing her opinion on women's involvement, and her suggestions were accepted more readily. My role as researcher gave me a different response than the she received. She was comfortable pushing the topic because of her

involvement in the project. She explained, "I'm outside of this community they don't see me the same way as they do someone who is in the community, so coming in at that leadership role is just expected of a funder.

## **Conclusion**

Although Lopez-Grewal has extensive formal training in economic development, she continues learning about development through working with transborder Indigenous communities. Before working with Vista Hermosa, she was rarely able to see the affects her efforts had on the communities for which she was working. Now that her job as mediator allows her work directly with communities on both sides of the border, she is astounded by the humility and their dedication to the wellbeing of their community.

What I loved about [my visit] was, like when I would meet with them it wasn't this...when you come in as a funder, there's always this tendency to ask you for things, ask for money, for this and this, and it wasn't how it was at all...it was just one incredible meeting of just wanting to talk about, you know, what's going on in their community, what have they been up to, just all that sort of things. And it was just completely different than other experiences that I've had.

While she readily adopts the identity of representative of Vista Hermosa, she is starting to navigate her responsibility as mediator. The role may be new to her, but she has capabilities and the motivation. Lopez-Grewal, while not outwardly religious, has many of the same motivations that inspire Barrett and the Broetjes which is promote social justice in poor communities in the U.S. and abroad, to keep families together, and to strive for gender equity in the communities where she works. She also has the attitude that fits in to Vista

Hermosa's vision of development, as well as allows her to fill Barrett's shoes. Barrett himself voices his confidence in her abilities, "She has a real heart for it. And she's really jumped in, and I think the experience she hasn't had can be acquired." He admits she also possesses more than education and training, something most important to development work, "I think what she does have [is] the right kind of heart for it...yeah, you can't fake that. You can't learn that. You either have it or you don't."<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Chuck Barrett, interview by Margaret Holleman, January 20, 2014.

## Chapter 7: Conclusion

### Feminist Political Ecology

The framework of feminist political ecology (FPE) proves very useful for studying the role of mediators in development. Much of the FPE literature focuses on individual bodies within global development networks. While this case study does the same, it concentrates on mediators who facilitate the exchange of knowledge and funds. Mediators are not merely neutral channels through which resources flow. FPE also offers the concepts of positionality and intersectionality. Positionality situates the mediators within the meshwork created by faith-based organizations (FBOs) and transborder Indigenous communities. Conscious of the social and geographical locations of mediators, intersectionality proves a useful concept for recognizing the multiple and diverse identities these mediators perform in relation to Indigenous development. This case study shows how two mediators working with the Vista Hermosa foundation are different in many ways, which shapes the relationships they have with Miramar.

As Lopez-Grewal suggests, when she is in Miramar, the people of the community will always see her as a representative of Vista Hermosa and an outsider coming into the community. Because of her physical features and her job description, she gains access to spaces other women in the community cannot. Barrett, likewise, cannot escape his physical features and his identities. He is a white male from the U.S. and when he comes to town people listen. When I was in Miramar, Enriqueta told me that people respect Barrett and the other *gringos*

because they have showed the community kindness. *Él extendió la mano*, she told me. (He extended his hand). They were grateful for the support they received. Enriqueta told me that many women feel guilty if anything happens to the chickens because they do not want to disappoint Barrett. Or women feel proud of their chickens and want to impress him with their progress. Barrett's presence in the community invokes these feelings because they have an emotional attachment to him. Mediators, therefore, cannot be understood as objective hubs of development meshworks.

The characteristics of identity are what set Barrett and Lopez-Grewal apart. It is also what makes their relationships with Miramar unique to each of them. Lopez-Grewal will have to create her own relationship with the community. Her new position will also transform the relationship between Miramar and Vista Hermosa. Lopez-Grewal's identity as a woman, as a mother, and as a young person will allow her to help where Barrett could not, but it may also inhibit her in other ways. Also, Lopez-Grewal finds herself embedded in the Miramar community in a way Barrett does not. Living and working in Washington at Broetje First Fruit Orchards, Lopez-Grewal has the opportunity to be a direct mediator between the two communities because she is embedded but possesses more mobility than much of the Miramar residents working on the orchard.

## **uFaith-based organizations**

Not only Lopez-Grewal's gender and age but also her background in development diverges from the education and training of Barrett who came to work with Indigenous people in Oaxaca, Mexico by stumbling into the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s. Barrett took a long journey to development. It started with his experience with racialized inequalities in the South. He is an activist turned practitioner. Lopez-Grewal entered the development field in a more calculated way. She saw a problem and she equipped herself with the tools she believed would create a solution. Despite the differing histories, both Barrett and Lopez-Grewal came to work with the same FBO-apple orchard in Prescott, Washington. So what do these two share that brought them to the same organization?

I think Barrett came close to answering the question when he talked about Lopez-Grewal having heart. Heart is what the Broetjes call faith and what Barrett calls social justice. Whatever they want to call it, there underlying spark that inspires each one of them to dedicate their lives to fixing an injustice, a wrong they have witnessed or experienced. For Barrett, it was the racism he witnessed over 50 years ago that brought him to this point. Now, he says it is the people he works for that inspires him. When speaking with Lopez-Grewal, she witnessed extreme poverty while working in Mexico, which spurred her into action. The Broetje family calls it faith and Barrett calls it "heart." Whatever "it" is, the people featured in this case study have something that inspires them to devote their

lives to the people they assist. So that underlying inspiration that moves people to act is the first ingredient to address injustice in the world.

Bradley (2009) describes the differences between FBOs. They are not all the same, which is why it is useful to define FBOs on a spectrum. The Broetjes are religious but their participation and approach to development is greatly inspired by the work of Robert Greenleaf's servant leadership philosophy. To serve is to lead. The Broetjes shape their business with this in mind. They are not only business owners seeking to make a profit, but they think about how they use that profit and how it can assist their employees. While many of their programs are faith-oriented, especially in the Vista Hermosa community in Washington, their goals are focused on the betterment of the community rather than proselytizing and conversion (Bradley 2009).

When studying FBOs, religion and faith can complicate the power dynamics in development. Just as gender, class, and ethnicity intersect and interact with other identities and development relationships, so too does religion. Clarke urges development scholars to study FBOs because they are increasingly involved in international development. These FBOs are powerful in mobilizing faith motivations of donors (Clarke 2007). Vista Hermosa does the same when working together with other FBOs, creating an extensive meshwork of development organizations.

Every person in this case study has some personal motivation for doing the work they do, and it does not necessarily a faith tradition. Then why is faith important to this study if only the Broetjes identify religion as a motivating



factor? Rather than being merely inspirational, faith plays a more of a practical role in development by the forming vast meshworks. In the early 1990s, when the government outsourced development to smaller organizations, FBOs emerged as one type of NGO participating in international development. Because there are now so many, FBOs offer numerous jobs for development practitioners and activists. Barrett, for example, who separated himself from formal religion early in his career continued to work for FBOs. He does not identify with any denomination and he has worked with Lutheran, Catholic, and now with the Broetjes who are progressive evangelicals.

### **Transborder Communities**

In other words, what drives and motivates development matters, yes. But the effectiveness of development depends on the methods, which is what makes the Broetje family's approach to development unique is their dual position as employers and philanthropists. When operating in the migration meshwork of Indigenous Oaxacans, particularly migrants from the Oaxacan Mixteca, they possess the tools to address development from a different perspective. They use their motivations and servant leadership approach to become a business and FBO interested in assisting an entire transborder community rather than one site of the community.

Literature on migration and development in Mexico characterizes migration from the Mixteca as transborder. These communities experience high rates of out-migration to other parts of Mexico and the U.S. Classifying these

communities as transborder rather than transnational demonstrates how the political boundaries are not the only borders Indigenous people cross. They cross cultural borders as well. Development policies in Mexico sought to integrate Indigenous people in to the economy. They were deemed as “backwards” because of their traditions and subsistence way of life. Through this process they were marginalized in many aspects, but these communities also possess a cultural hybridity that is ever changing because of the meshworks of which they are a part. Even though Indigenous communities are presented as “traditional” and “underdeveloped,”

The Broetjes and Vista Hermosa have come to understand this unfortunate tradition and have taken this knowledge to shape their development approach. Because they took the time to go to Mexico and try to understand why their labor force consists primarily of Indigenous Oaxacans, their multi-sited approach to development not only takes care of the needs of economic refugees living Washington, but also addresses the persecution these people face in their own country. The Broetjes have made the connection between Indigeneity and class and, therefore, understand that oppression comes from global processes such as neoliberal market-based development. Furthermore, the Broetjes stand in solidarity with peasant farmers. They empathize with pressures that come with agricultural livelihoods, and so they are willing to share the knowledge that helps buffer farmers from the disasters that can damage their occupations and way of life. It is this approach to development that draws people like Barrett and Lopez-Grewal to Vista Hermosa.

The Broetjes did not only ask, “how can we help?” They asked “how do we fix this?” Yet, once again, having the desire to help is not the same as making a positive impact. Motivation is not necessarily useful without the know-how. The Broetjes have the money from the apple orchard, their foundation Vista Hermosa, and their faith, but they cannot effectively use money or motivations without mediators. Mediators are essential for the creation of development meshworks that include other development agencies and practitioners, migrants, peasant farmer organizations, and funders. This case study demonstrates how Barrett connects communities to other organizations that can provide funds or technical assistance.

### **Indigenous Development and Mediators in Mexico**

Previous literature about development in Mexico recognizes the connection between Indigeneity and class. Post-Revolution approaches to development sought to modernize Indigenous people through acculturation policies called *indigenismo*. This development relied on the input and knowledge of anthropologists. As the reforms sought to integrate Indigenous people in to market and cash economies, state institutions subsidized peasant farming. Communities became reliant on these programs, although the funding was often sporadic. When the government defaulted on their loans to private banks and undertook structural adjustment programs, funding for the state institutions that provided technical support to peasant Indigenous farmers diminished.

In reaction to the lack of state funding, NGOs and projects often spearheaded, once again, by anthropologists assisted Indigenous farmers. Using their knowledge of Indigenous communities for the purpose of empowerment, anthropologist advocates acted as mediators in service of Indigenous communities. Their transborder connections facilitated the exchange of resources and knowledge. Their positions within the government inspired change and implemented new culturally appropriate forms of development.

This case study proves particularly fruitful for development research of mediators in Mexico by providing a focus of transborder actors working to address the needs of Indigenous communities. Only giving partial insight into the role of mediators in FBO and development in Mexico, many aspects remain to explore. As Lopez-Grewal continues in her role as mediator, I wish to return to Miramar and speak with the women in the community and see if there has been an improvement in their involvement. I would also enjoy traveling to Broetje Orchards to talk with the employees from Miramar. I particularly want to ask how they communicate with their families back at home. While technology facilitates the flow of information and money between communities, I suspect that individual mediators like Barrett and Lopez-Grewal may always play an invaluable part in transborder development and the sustainability of development meshworks.

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