

6-25-2010

# Spaña, New Mexico: Santos, Sonic and Second Cousins

Maria Elena C. Salazar

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**SPAÑA, NEW MEXICO: SANTOS, SONIC AND SECOND COUSINS**

**BY**

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B.A., Print Journalism and Spanish, The University of New Mexico, 2000  
M.A., Language, Literacy & Sociocultural Studies, The University of New  
Mexico, 2010

**THESIS**

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of

**Master of Arts  
Language, Literacy & Sociocultural Studies**

The University of New Mexico  
Albuquerque, New Mexico

**May, 2010**

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## **DEDICATION**

In memory of my sister, Stephanie D. Salazar, whose own educational and professional pursuits continue to inspire me. We will meet again one day.

This thesis is dedicated to the people of the Española Valley. In particular to my parents, Miguel and Cecilia, to my husband, Lucas, and to my children, Lilia, Estela and Roman. May they always be proud to say they are from “España.”

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

I owe gratitude to Dr. Elizabeth Noll, my adviser and thesis chair, for continuing to encourage me through these years of personal turbulence, for allowing me to pursue my own interests and for providing me with superior guidance.

I also thank my committee members, Elaine Burns Daniels, and Dr. Glenabah Martinez, for their valuable recommendations pertaining to this study as well as serving as extraordinary role models of high expectations. Gratitude is extended to the Estate of Emma Showman and to the UNM Office of Graduate Studies for the funding to pursue this research.

To my participants, Rebecca D., JD, Alice, Curtis, Keith, Graciela, Rebecca M., Daniel W., Miquella, Daniel R. and Anthony. Thank you for generously sharing your time and your stories.

To my husband, Lucas Gonzales, who listened to and read my work, and encouraged me to continue. To my parents, Miguel and Cecilia Salazar, who helped with the kids and pushed me to pursue my education. And to my kids, Lilia, Estela and Roman, who have spent their entire existences competing with my schoolwork.

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis sheds light on the multiple identities of the Hispano people of the Española Valley in Northern New Mexico, a population that to outsiders is commonly misunderstood and stereotyped. It is a population regarded with some mystery, awe, and admiration, as well as fear and hatred, a population that even to itself sometimes remains an enigma. The qualitative study undertaken examined the culture and life experiences of 11 native Hispanics living in this community and explored their perspectives on gender and generational differences. Data were collected through individual, semi-structured interviews, which were then analyzed through a recursive process of reading transcripts, coding and categorizing. The themes that emerged, including but not limited to land, religion, education and economics, are presented, and implications and recommendations are discussed.



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## Introduction

When my maternal grandma was a young girl, her exasperated mother gave her an ultimatum: “*la cocina o el rancho*” (the kitchen or the ranch). My grandma Cleo replied, “*Pues, el rancho*” (Well, the ranch). Probably at her full adult height of four feet seven inches already, the child Cleotilde sought her destiny on the fields of El Llano in Northern New Mexico. One day while working the land, my grandma was bitten by a rattlesnake and fell into a coma for over a month. People continually made efforts (though in vain) to awaken her, until one day a man on horseback happened by. When he learned about my grandmother’s snakebite, he requested *aceite mexicano* (Mexican oil), cheesecloth and a white cheese. He then rubbed the bite with the oil, spread the cheese on it and wrapped it with the cheesecloth. The next day Cleo awoke and the cheesecloth was removed, filled with fetid cheese. She was fine.

Cleo taught me how to fix a car, turn a profit, and lift three times my body weight. They say grandmas cook, I have heard. But my grandma only fed me one thing: boiled weenies on a fork. A coke on the side and a cigarette for dessert. Cleo was busy doing more important things, like selling the apples from our orchard out of her van, building a ramp outside her house for my grandpa’s wheelchair, or, literally, digging her own grave. She dug that plot for three in the Santa Cruz Cemetery, singing as she plunged her shovel deep into the dry soil at the crack of dawn. She scared the wits out of the groundskeeper one morning, as her singing drew him to the hole. The sight of this small, old woman climbing out of an open grave at dawn was too much for him.

At Cleo’s funeral, some eighty years after the snakebite, we lowered Cleo into that grave. One of my mother’s gazillion friends approached my mother at the funeral and said

that the mysterious man on the horse was, in fact, my mother's friend's father. During the eulogy, my mother mentioned the coma incident, and her friend made the connection. Her dad had told her stories about how he helped a little girl that was in a coma. My mother and her friend had never known the connection between their parents. My mom did not know the identity of the horseman and her friend did not know the identity of the little girl until that moment at the funeral.

When I think of Cleo, I think of a kindred *vagabonda* (vagabond) soul, whose love for family and land kept her going for 87 years, through the decades of my grandpa's crippling World War II injuries, the deaths of two sons, and countless other tragedies. When I think of Cleo, I think of Northern New Mexico.

Stories such as this one were told to me growing up, and are part of my cultural heritage. Stories like these illustrate growing up in the Española Valley of Northern New Mexico. These stories of everyday life experiences define who a person is and who they will become. They tell of love, loss, struggle, family, joy, triumph... These everyday experiences are the rites of passage associated with growing up in the Española Valley. Rites of passage mark a time of transition in a person's life, and can be an everyday experience and seemingly unimportant, such as smoking a cigarette, or a highly ritualized and formal event, such as a wedding. Throughout time various cultures have stressed the importance of life's rites of passage. The everyday experiences of life may have as much of an impact on who a person is and who they will become as highly-ritualized experiences.

Growing up in the Española Valley, I did not speculate on the cultural significance of my everyday experiences. However, as an adult, I have wondered: What are some of the everyday experiences associated with growing up in the Española Valley? Are these

experiences different for boys than they are for girls? Have these experiences of the Española Valley changed as the times have changed? How are my experiences different from or similar to those of my grandma's? These are some of the questions that led to my initial decision to conduct this study.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to document “everyday” experiences among native New Mexican Hispanics in the Española Valley of Northern New Mexico. It proposes to look at some of life's coming of age experiences-which are sometimes the little things that happen to us on any given day-and how they shape identity. This thesis proposes to preserve some of these experiences of a culture that may be “dying” or at least changing, in the face of increased globalization and a monolingual, homogeneous American population.

My thesis examines some of the characteristics that make the Española Valley what it is and its Hispano people who they are. For example, through my interviews with participants I explored an agricultural and ranching culture supported by a complex *acequia* (ditch) system, Catholic religion, Native American/Hispano relations and other issues related to these topics arose during the course of this study. The narratives I collected of real-life experiences and other oral traditions told among families, close friends and even among strangers expose cultural beliefs and traditions, rituals, superstitions, occupations, cuisine, family networks, etc. My goal with this study is to educate as well as to entertain. Perhaps these narratives will make their way into the libraries and minds of adolescents and adults alike.

## Need for Study

My desire is to provide an accurate depiction of the Hispano people of Northern New Mexico living in and around the town of Española. In conducting a review of relevant literature I discovered that (1) research on this topic in this geographical area is virtually non-existent, (2) the few existing “materials” are dated and (3) published writings of oral traditions of Northern New Mexico tend to take the form of *cuentos* (folktales) or other romanticized fiction, lessening the value of everyday experiences and ordinary people.

While conducting literary searches using LIBROS and other search engines like ERIC, Google, Moab, Infowebnewsbank and Yahoo, I was unable to find any qualitative or ethnographic studies on Northern New Mexico, or the Española Valley, per se. With the help of the librarians in the Center for Southwest Research at the University of New Mexico General Libraries, we conducted various searches using words like, “Hispano,” “ethnography,” “American Literature-New Mexico,” “history and criticism,” “women-New Mexico- life,” “biography,” “customs,” “Hispanic American Women,” “Mexican Americans,” “ethnic identity,” etc. The only research fitting the criteria that we were able to find were Peter Garcia’s dissertation *La Onda Nuevo Mexicana: Multi-sited ethnography, ritual contexts, and popular traditional musics in New Mexico* (2001) and the *Gloria Montoya Chavez Papers* (1994), both housed in the Center for Southwest Research at the University of New Mexico. The former is an excellent body of work, but is a multi-sited study focusing on music and cuentos, and the latter is a disorganized collection of cardboard boxes with no perceivable beginning or ending. Other ethnographic works included Fabiola Cabeza de Baca’s *We Fed Them Cactus* (1994) and Cleofas Jaramillo’s *Romance of a Little Village Girl* (2002). These last two works are not research but rather tales of life in New

Mexico, from which one may only infer information about New Mexico Hispanos. Also, the locations cited in these works are not specifically the Española Valley, the focus of my study.

In addition, I spoke with an employee of the Oñate Center just north of Española for information relevant to my study. The Onate Center holds important geographical, demographical and cultural information about the area, but as the employee put it, “To me it looks like a bunch of old books that I don’t know what to do with.” A more organized and concrete study is necessary.

My searches revealed that studies of Northern New Mexico are very outdated. The aforementioned published work by Fabiola Cabeza de Baca depict an early twentieth century New Mexico, before the existence of much technology, and before the onslaught of globalization. The same was true of other bodies of work that I found, such as Arthur Campa’s *Treasure of the Sangre de Cristos: Tales and Traditions of the Spanish Southwest* (1946) and *A Dictionary of New Mexico and Southern Colorado Spanish* (1983) by Rubén Cobos, which are also seriously dated. Despite the value of these literary depictions of life in New Mexico years ago, my goal was to find more recent research that would provide me with a foundation of knowledge on which to build my study.

I did discover a plethora of writings by local authors about Northern New Mexico, but they tend to be cuentos, folktales and other forms of “fiction,” that romanticize the culture. These include fiction by Sabine Ulibarrí, such as *El Condor and Other Stories* (1989) and *Tierra Amarilla: Stories of New Mexico=cuentos de Nuevo Mexico* (1993), Paulette Atencio’s *Cuentos From my Childhood* (1991), Joseph Ruiz’s *The Little Ghost Who Wouldn’t Go Away* (2000), and Luis M. Trujillo’s *Cuentos de Brujas, Diablos, y Quién sabe que más* (1987). The problem with using romanticized stories is that they don’t accurately



depict the people about whom the stories are written, and they may even reinforce stereotypes.

Storytelling has played a significant role in cultural development and tradition worldwide. Stories help build community and create change (Solinger, Fox, & Irani, 2008). The need for a study is critical because past works about New Mexico are either done by authors and researchers outside of the study group (as in the case with James Donald Wortham's thesis *Sharing the Water: A History of the Acequias of Northern New Mexico*, 2002), and therefore do not offer a true insider perspective. Although some authors have gained insider knowledge, such as in the cases of Joe Hayes, who was able to collect local folklore, and Rudolfo A. Anaya, with his children's books set in the Española Valley, neither meet all of the criteria I outline as a "local" of the valley (Hayes, 2003; Anaya, 1998). Furthermore, little to no work is done by younger generations or by women.

Although the lack of relevant and current research on Northern New Mexico was discouraging, it reinforced for me the need for this study.

Accurate accounts of the Española Valley and its people are important because of the prevalence of misinformation and skewed perceptions of the community. There are two extremes in which this community is currently portrayed in print, one being a romanticized society, and the other being stereotypes of a town of drug addicts, pregnant teens and corrupt jefes politicos. My intention with this study is to provide an understanding of Española that reflects the realities, or life experiences, of some of its Hispano residents.

### **The Line of Inquiry Used to Address Those Issues**

My initial questions that motivated this study mentioned earlier have evolved into the following research questions: (1) What do the participants' stories tell about New Mexican

Hispanos of the Española Valley? (2) How do their childhood experiences compare/contrast between males and females, and how do these differences shape their identities? (3) How are experiences of older members of the study population (Española natives) different/similar to those of younger participants, and how do these generational differences shape their identities?

### **Description of the Analytical Framework That Informs the Line of Inquiry**

This study is based upon the assumption that multiple realities exist. Multiple realities refer to the various ways in which we perceive ourselves, as well as how the world perceives us (Norton, 2004). For example, when I wake up in the morning I am a wife, mother, cook and on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays, a chauffeur. From eight to three I am a teacher and counselor. At 3:30, when I check in with my mother, I am a daughter. From four until bedtime I am a wife, mother, and cook again, and also a student and cleaning lady. Some Thursday nights I am an artist, and every day I am a Catholic.

To understand the multiple realities of my study participants, I drew upon certain epistemological questions, such as, How is knowledge acquired? What do people know? Why do we know what we know? My study used materialistic theory, which assumes that “material conditions, such as resources, money and modes of production are prime movers” (Creswell, 2003, p. 87).

## **Review of Related Literature**

“...Once a story is told, it cannot be called back. Once told, it is loose in the world” (King, 2003, p. 10).

In order to address what participants’ stories, or narratives, said about their identity, we must first look at the importance of stories in society. After knowing the importance of stories and their relationship to what they say about identity, I examined how gender and age affect the individuals’ life stories.

### **What is the Role of Stories in Society? What is Their Role in Research?**

Stories and narrative (I use the terms interchangeably to signify the accounts of people, as told orally) play a plethora of roles in the lives of people. Stories are entertainment, history, culture, social justice. Storytelling is a way of making sense of life’s events, and a way of transmitting knowledge, culture, values and behaviors (Erickson, 2008; Ross, 2008). Stories are a learning tool, and bad experiences are just as important a learning tool as good experiences. All stories basically follow the three-step formula of beginning, muddle, and resolution (Atkinson, 1998). Atkinson writes, “The basic pattern of conflict followed by resolution, or crisis followed by victory, is a way that stories continually remind us that difficulties can be overcome” (1998, p. 2). Through story, for example, Mayan youth learned about their people’s battle to survive, retain their land, and preserve their way of life. In this case, stories were also used to create dignity in one’s identity and culture in order to strengthen the youth (Aggabao Thelen, 2008). Stories and narrative contribute to the preservation of and dignity in one’s culture, and act as an identity shaper.

The life story is central to the identity of people, and is a shaping factor in their lives. Personal narratives represent people’s identities. Daiute (2004) writes that telling one’s story

creates self concept, and identity claims can be a part of narrative. In making claims about the self, speakers often tell stories. A person's inner self is expressed to the world through story, and these stories shape and construct the narrator's personality and reality. We know and discover ourselves through stories and reveal ourselves to others through them as well.

Write Stanley and Billig,

...Both story and identity are complex and multifaceted...identity has many layers and components....Regarding the concept of layers, we would like to propose that, in comparison with the quest for identity through contents of the life story, the structural aspects of a narrative are more attuned to the deeper levels of personality, less easy to manipulate, and perhaps more revealing (2004, p. 168).

Narratives have become an important research tool. Autobiographical narrative has become especially important in research, because, states Daiute, "...it is usually assumed to be the quintessential identity medium" (2004, p. 114). Narrative research is often used for social, cultural or ethnic studies to capture the point of view of minority social groups, who are often the targets of discrimination. Gary Alan Fine says, "Stories often provide a mirror of the group's social structure" (2002, p. 236). Narratives tell about a community and can connect the local to the global, the past to the present (Sparrow, 2008). Atkinson writes in his book, *The Life Story Interview*, "Story makes the implicit explicit, the hidden seen, the unformed formed, and the confusing clear" (Atkinson, 1998, p.7). Narrative is good for studying specific transitions in the life cycle, and theories of narrative development suggest that through the use of life stories, researchers can access a person's identity, and thus the key to understanding that person (Daiute & Lightfoot, 2004).

Related to this, narratives have become increasingly important in therapy. Experience shapes narratives and partially guides it (Gardner, 2002). Many studies indicate that the kind of story a person tells about some period in his or her life can have dramatic consequences for that person's well-being (Daiute & Lightfoot, 2004). Researchers note that a person can recall with accuracy a difficult or tragic event from childhood; an event that has become so ingrained in their minds that the story cannot be changed. Or, the story is comforting in terms of emotional ramifications (Daiute & Lightfoot, 2004).

On the other hand, Mary Gergen (2004) writes that in her study with ten participants, people changed narratives knowingly when confronted with an unwanted response from a listener or from a desire to preserve a particular form of identity. Change also occurred as participants aged or underwent other experiences, such as therapy. She also suggests that "looking at narratives as the construction of a single individual, without regard for outside factors, is too narrow a perspective" (p. 279).

Story contributes to social justice by affirming a culture and a people's value, especially of the oppressed, as exemplified in the story mentioned above about teaching youth about their culture. Stories also have the power to confront stereotypes, as is the case with King in his book, *The Truth About Stories* (2003). In this book a Native American author uses his stories to dispel myths about Native Americans. For example, he discusses how Indians are stereotypically seen as dark skinned and long haired, and how their "Indianness" is measured by their use (or lack of use) of "Native" dress (King, 2003).

The authors of "The Memory Book Project in Kampala, Uganada" show how AIDS-infected mothers are left feeling empowered by creating their own stories. By leaving a written history for their children, including wills, these mothers are able to write about their

accomplishments, dreams, etc., and to show their children that they were more than victims of a deadly disease (Ssweankambo, Kuteesa & Joyce, 2002). Cabeza de Baca (1994) may have also shared this viewpoint, using collective stories as a tool for depicting her culture in a light she deemed accurate, as well as a tool for self and community empowerment. Writes Loretta J. Ross, “Oral histories can be a vehicle for activists to speak for themselves...” (2008, p. 68).

Stories also force people to confront their own prejudices. In “An Unlikely Alliance: Germans and Jews Collaborate to Teach the Lessons of the Holocaust,” for example, one woman was forced to look at ordinary people and how they became involved in Nazism. By looking at their stories, she was able to see them more as ordinary people faced with tough choices, not unlike her Holocaust refugee ancestors (Roth-Howe, Roth, Schmitt, Wenz-Haubfleisch, & Steinberg, 2008). She was able to confront her own prejudices about Nazis.

Stories have understated importance in research, but should matter more in qualitative analysis, as a way of viewing how a group’s members define themselves and their identities, and as a way of determining what behaviors are legitimate and pertinent to that group. In other words, stories tie a person to their culture, and are a vehicle to understanding that culture (Davis, 2002).

### **Culture and Identity**

According to Cote Fagundes & Blayer (2007),

Identity refers to an individual’s life story, made up of the experiences that are specific to her life and the meaning that she gives to them... Identity is not static, but rather it is dynamic and is in a continual process of construction and reconstruction through the course of life events, one’s social relations, geography, history, culture,

knowledge and experiences (p. 62).

Ethnic identity refers to one's association with a larger social and/or ethnic group. A person's identity is multifaceted, and not determined at birth, but rather identity is influenced by one's place in history as well as his/her culture. Simply put, ethnic identity helps to shape personal identity (Hall, 1980).

Ethnic identity may be defined by the group, and can mean different things to different members of that same group. In the indigenous Yaqui community of Sonora, Mexico, for example, no one definition of ethnic identity is commonly accepted. Some Yaquis believe it is one's fluency in the Yaqui language, while others believe it is involvement in religious practices. Various members of this same cultural group may also argue that Yaqui ethnic authenticity is connection to ancestral land and resistance to newcomer influence, while still others argue that the true indicator is the maintenance of traditional practices, behavior and dress (Erickson, 1998).

As Tey Diana Rebolledo writes in her foreword to *We Fed Them Cactus* (Cabeza de Baca, 1994), Hispanic New Mexicans are conscious of their heritage and cultural identity. Cabeza de Baca, like many other female authors of New Mexico, realized that her culture was "slipping away." This "slipping away" of culture is also expressed in *Yaqui Homeland and Homeplace*, when the author speaks with a woman named Josefina, who identifies herself with the culture of the Yaqui people as they saw themselves before the Yoris (non-Yaqui) moved in, causing what she believes to be the deterioration of her culture. Her present-day identity is shaped by her past (Erickson, 1998).

This idea of identity shaped by the past also may be the case among Northern New Mexicans, therefore pertinent to this research. Rebolledo (Cabeza de Baca, 1994) seems to

believe that the genre of New Mexican literature (e.g. Cleofas Jaramillo, 2000; Levi Romero, 1996; Sabine Ulibarri, 1989, etc.) includes history with creative autobiography and personal detail in storytelling. From analyzing Cabeza de Baca's work, Rebolledo explains that this genre is written in the collective "I," with a collective voice. Various members of the community are regarded as storytellers and contributors to the community's oral tradition, history and identity, despite differences in economic and social status. The idea that members of the community are storytellers may be the result of Northern New Mexico Hispano emphasis on familial bonds and relationships. Common themes that emerge are the shift from Hispanic to Anglo power, and the bitterness and nostalgia over lost land, and how one's life (i.e. identity) are influenced by these changes (Cabeza de Baca, 1994). Taking into account these considerations of collective voice, personal detail and creative autobiography, the analysis of the stories of Northern New Mexico is more defined.

### **How Does Gender Affect Story?**

"There are men's stories and there are women's stories" (Davis, 2002, p. 235).

Research has shown that gender may shape narrative. For example, narratives about relationships with mothers had one form while narratives with fathers often had another (Daiute & Lightfoot, 2004). Gender plays a role in types of narratives. Girls' narratives tend to be descriptive while boys' narratives are more analytic. This is due to how we're raised. Girls are reared to be emotionally expressive while boys are reared to be more analytically thinking (DeBot & Makoni, 2005). Further, male-based narratives tend to place the male as the center of the story; the male is the protagonist and active agent (Gardner, 2002). In contrast, women's accounts are more relational, placing the female in a passive, supporting role, focusing on family (Gardner, 2002; Gergen, 2004; DeBot & Makoni, 2005).



Additionally, women's stories are told in the collective "I" form (Erickson, 2008; Gardner, 2002; Rebolledo, 1994). The narratives of men are filled with nostalgia while the stories of women emphasize suffering (Gardner, 2002).

Gender-specific experiences also shape the story. For example, childbirth is a theme of women's stories and not men's. However, some life experiences are not gender-specific, such as parenting, and are a theme in both male and female narratives (Erickson, 2008). Stories serve as a disciplinary Discourse, shaping identity and promoting established social hierarchies (Erickson, 2008; Gergen, 2004). Through stories, established social hierarchies, such as men as all-powerful, are maintained. Stories and their current form and purpose may contribute to the maintenance of gender hierarchies in societies worldwide. Stereotyped gender roles exist in literature. Men are cast as heroes in stories, according to the monomyth prototype. Females serve supporting roles. Women, if they are heroines, are passive, using the distorted version of the monomyth. And, when women are successful in the plot, they share the credit, as is evident in fairytales (Gergen, 2004). Has something about our narrative traditions as Americans impeded women's progress in the public realm? Mary Gergen (2004) cites that realistic pictures of women are lacking in literature. She writes,

Where are the stories that emphasize the wonderful futures of girls who solve difficult problems, invent new products, or govern nations? Conversely, where are the stories about the girls who drop out of school to have babies? Such missing stories could have vital potential for changing the lives of girls (pp. 271-272).

### **How Does Age Influence Story?**

Old age is proven to affect one's story, due to memory loss associated with aging, as well as diseases of the elderly, such as dementia (DeBot & Makoni, 2005). It is not clear if

multilingualism is an asset or a liability in aging, but a recent study shows a strong correlation between the two, bilingual elders having greater cognitive functioning in general than non-bilinguals. Age appears to contribute to discourse skills, perhaps increasing the richness of narratives, though there is no correlation between age and narrative complexity. However, elderly discourse aimed at conveying information is believed to be less effective than among younger people (DeBot & Makoni, 2005).

Most studies do not take into account education level, which may play a large role in the stories told, because there is a correlation between age and level of education in most Western countries. Older generations tend to have less formal schooling. Verbal fluency is a clear effect of education-higher educational level compensates for decline in access to vocabulary (DeBot & Makoni, 2005). Although extensiveness of vocabulary is tied to education (more education means more vocabulary), there is no correlation between education and narrative complexity (DeBot & Makoni, 2005).

People's personalities change with age, making stories among older generations more diverse. Similarly, "Disinhibition is likely to be the cause of verbosity that is often associated with aging..." (DeBot & Makoni, 2005, p. 33) The result may be longer and possibly more detailed stories.

## **Conclusion**

Storytelling is a tradition of transmitting knowledge about a culture, its history and its people. Stories and narratives shape and define identity. The story is influenced by the teller's gender, and stories traditionally have acted as maintainers of cultural and social rules, and frequently promote gender stereotypes and social hierarchies. The storyteller's age also influences a story in that older storytellers tend to be less inhibited and more verbose.

Analyzing stories is a means for researchers to look into the thoughts, feelings and beliefs of a society and a person.

## Methods

### Demographics

The Española Valley is commonly called the “heart of Northern New Mexico.” This nickname is derived from its central geographic location between Santa Fe and Taos, and its importance as a marketplace and gathering place for people of the northern communities, including the Eight Northern Pueblos of New Mexico, many of which surround and/or are part of the Española Valley. These pueblos are San Juan (now known as Ohkay Owingeh), Taos and Picuris to the north, and Pojoaque, Tesuque, Nambe, San Ildefonso and Santa Clara to the south. Native American/Hispano relations are mostly amicable, the two cultures having co-existed side by side for over four centuries, but it would be a lie to say there are no hostilities between members of the two.

The Española Valley is nestled between the Jemez Mountains to the west and the *Sangre de Cristo* (Blood of Christ) Mountains to the east. The city is at 5,595 feet, with much altitudinal variance. The valley is the meeting point of three rivers: the Rio Chama, the Rio Santa Cruz and the Rio Grande. Much of the valley is located within Rio Arriba County, while a small portion of its central and eastern section (including some of the community of Chimayo) is located in Santa Fe County.

Residents enjoy four seasons, experiencing temperature highs of about 91°F during the month of July, and temperature lows during the month of January, averaging 45°F. The mild weather allows residents to participate in many outdoor activities, like hunting, fishing, hiking and skiing.

Spaniards entered the area with the Conquistador Don Juan de Oñate de Salazar in July of 1598, and settled on the Rio Grande across from the Pueblo Indians of San Juan

(Ohkay Owingeh). Oñate named this Spanish capital, which was the first European capital in the United States, San Gabriel. In 1998, locals celebrated 400 years of Spanish residency in the valley. This *Cuartocentenario* was commemorated with many events, including the annual *Fiestas de Española*, a weeklong celebration of parades, *gran bailes* (grand balls), mariachi concerts, etc., hosted by a “royal court.” The royal court is comprised of Española Valley natives who can trace their Spanish lineage back several generations or several centuries even. The heads of the court are *La Reina* (the queen) and Oñate. A few years ago, fiesta council members tried to switch the head female position from La Reina to “*La Mestiza*,” which means “mixed,” referring to the blending of Hispanic and Native American blood. However, public outcry was such that the Mestiza figurehead only lasted one year.

Female Native American attendants are usually court members as well. Here I say usually because in past years local pueblos have boycotted the court, citing Oñate’s cruelty toward indigenous peoples. It is believed that Oñate and his men cut off the right foot of male members of Acoma Pueblo in west-central New Mexico, among other atrocities.

The late-teen/twenty-something Reina and her court are required to wear long, flowing dresses and wear their hair in buns adorned by flowers. These young women and girls are always accompanied by chaperones. Oñate (depicted by an older male) and his men wear clothing similar to those worn by the real Oñate and his fellow conquistadores (curvy, metal helmets, puffy blouses and knee-high leather boots), and spend much time riding horses and yelling. Most Hispano residents feel educated about their history and heritage, probably because of annual fiesta events, a local tradition of cultural pride and a family tradition of hearing about their history through oral narrative.

The city was incorporated in 1925, and may have taken its name in 1880 from a Spanish restaurant owner. The Denver and Rio Grande Railroad, also known as The Chile Line, was being constructed during that period, and railroad workers called the restaurant *Española's* after owner Josefita Lucero. The word *Española* means “of or belonging” to Spain or “of Spanish.”

Points of interest are natural attractions, like nearby Taos' Rio Grande Gorge, local landmarks, like the Santuario de Chimayo, and surrounding Indian pueblos. The local arts, both indigenous and Hispanic, are widely celebrated.

This geographic area is associated with many stereotypes and labels, including “The lowrider capitol of the world” and heavy drug use. There was an influx in heroin use during the early 1970's, and between 2001 and 2005, Rio Arriba County had the highest per capita rate of drug fatalities in the country (New Mexico First, 2010).

The city of *Española* encompasses 8.5 square miles of arid, valley land. Some of that includes the two Indian pueblos of Santa Clara and Ohkay Owingeh. However, many of the surrounding areas are considered part of *Española* by locals. Taking into account these surrounding communities, the population jumps from 9,691 (city limits) to around 30,000 ([www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)). Riverside Drive and Paseo de Oñate are the two main streets in “town,” run mostly parallel to each other on either side of the Rio Grande, and are connected by various bridges.

Most residents are accustomed to commuting from their small mountain villages and Indian pueblos to Santa Fe, Los Alamos, Albuquerque and beyond, for shopping, schooling and working. The Los Alamos National Laboratory, noteworthy for the creation of the atomic bomb, is a major employer. Many locals strive to find employment at the Lab, as

salaries are higher there, thus making up for the commute. Working in Los Alamos also allows people to stay in Northern New Mexico. To work locally in the Española Valley means for most taking blue collar jobs, the median income being \$27,144 ([www.cityofEspañola.org](http://www.cityofEspañola.org)). Española Public Schools creates many jobs, but there is some stigma associated with working locally. It is commonly seen as lack of success or motivation to remain in the valley after high school or college. The negative stereotypes associated with the valley have caused some natives to relocate permanently, or even to deny their heritage. Stigma associated with the valley has also caused many NOT to leave, fearing social ostracism.

Hispanics make up 84% of the population of Española. Recent increased immigration from Mexico has impacted these numbers. Because of New Mexico's close proximity to Mexico and retention of Spanish language usage, Northern New Mexico is a popular destination for Mexicans. Racial tensions have been fueled by these immigrations. Native Hispanics blame Mexicans for increasing poverty levels and drug distribution, as well as abusing social welfare programs like food stamps ("...those darn Mexicans are the ones that are bringing in the drugs from Mexico and there are so many Mexicans over here in the Valley. They're just all over the place." Rebecca, a study participant). Many New Mexicans of Spanish heritage likewise do not want to be grouped with Mexicans, who are often seen unfavorably: "...being a Hispanic from Northern New Mexico, I can trace my ancestors to Spain and France, and as a child, I felt that in some way I was superior to the Mexican people from Mexico. I hardly ever saw any in my younger years" (Alice, a study participant).

Despite increased globalization, locals are still fairly traditional, Catholicism being the dominant religion, and family membership strongly influencing daily life. Extended

family ties are very important. Family households make up 68.5% of all households, whereas non-family households make up 26.5%. Occupied housing units are at 91.3%, and 70.1% of those are owner-occupied. It is typical to see people either living in homes owned and/or built by their families, or else to see people place a mobile home on family land. New land is harder to acquire. Being geographically close to Santa Fe, Los Alamos and Taos has meant loss of land. Landowners are faced with higher property taxes, and the price value of land has skyrocketed. These changes have forced locals to live on ever-shrinking plots of land and abandon traditional ways of subsistence, such as farming and ranching. This shift is not only problematic in that it rejects traditional living but also because land is sacred to Norteños, and their “face” to the world. “Space, place and history converge in the constitution and negotiation of” Norteño identity (Erickson, 2008, p. 73).

### **Methodology**

This qualitative study takes an ethnographic approach in that it examines cultural artifacts. Ethnography is a tradition with a long history of literature, with the goal of telling the truth about the culture in which the researcher has come in contact (Edgerton & Angness, 1974). Through the study of oral tradition, the history and culture of a people can be viewed and understood. Shared experiences and emotions of a culture can be revealed (Garcia, 2001). Writes Fetterman (1989) about oral tradition,

Cultures often use folktales to transmit critical cultural values and lessons from one generation to the next. Folktales usually draw on familiar surroundings and figures relevant to the local setting, but the stories themselves are facades. Stories, [however], provide ethnographers with an insight into the secular and the sacred, the intellectual and emotional life of a people (p. 71).



For my study, capturing the stories, or narratives, of the Hispano people in the Española Valley provided a window into their culture. By looking at culture as expressed in my participants' daily experiences, such as love and loss, struggles and triumphs, etc., I hoped to create a profile about what constitutes the multiple identities of this Hispano population. It was important to me to listen carefully to their words, to the specific ways in which they described the meaning of their lives. As Fetterman (1989) writes,

Ethnographers take great pains to describe a cultural scene or event in tremendous detail... Verbatim quotations are [also] sine qua non of ethnography. They are a permanent record of a person's thoughts and feelings. Verbatim quotations convey the fear, anger, frustration, exhilaration, and joy of a human being, and contain surface and deep, embedded meanings about the person's life. They can present a host of ideas to the reader: basic "factual" data, social and economic indicators, and internal consistency or patterned inconsistencies. The reader can extrapolate the views and worldview of the speaker from these passages (pp. 114-115).

By using participants' own words in a manner they deemed appropriate, I gave significance to those things they deemed significant in their lives.

### **Participant Selection Procedures**

Eleven individuals, native to the Española Valley, between the ages of eighteen and sixty eight were selected as participants for this study. I used the following criteria in the selection process:

1. Eighteen years of age or older.
2. Of Hispanic descent, or, if of other descent, enculturated into the Hispanic culture of the Española Valley.

3. Born and raised in the Española Valley of Northern New Mexico.
4. Preference given to participants that are second generation or greater to the area.
5. Approximately half male and half female participants.
6. Of varying economic status.
7. Of varying social status.
8. Of varying educational background.
9. Of varying age with approximately half under the age of 45 and half over the age of 45.

Participants were chosen using “snowball sampling,” or a common method of sampling in constructivist work (Creswell, 2003). Key informants, or people who are known to be more knowledgeable about the community and culture, were also used to identify possible participants (Edgerton & Angness, 1974).

The selection of my interview participants was harder than I had initially thought it would be, using the snowball approach and representative sampling (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). I realized that I also needed to use self-imposed criteria in order to better ensure validity in my research, as a way for me to create diversity among interviewees, and as a way for me to not “research in my own backyard.”

These additional criteria for participant selection included not choosing anybody that was “close” to me, such as relatives and friends. This was not easy because both of my parents are from Española, and I have many relatives around the area. Although many are second, third or fourth cousins, these familial relationships are identified in our community, therefore they would be regarded as being close to me. I was surprised to find that many Hispanics are recent to the valley, or are more migratory within the “*Norte*” (North) than I

had previously known. They had come in from surrounding mountain communities like El Valle, Cebolla, and even from southern Colorado. Finding people of second or greater generations to the valley who were also unrelated to me was thus somewhat difficult.

Furthermore, my parents, my mother in particular, is very well known around Northern New Mexico, and she counts many, many people among her friends. I tried very hard not to interview people who fit these descriptors, but ultimately I did include a friend and a relative. I likewise deemed it absolutely necessary to include two participants for their ethnic diversity in Española. These were Curtis, who is part American Indian and part Hispanic, and Daniel W., who is what Northern New Mexicans refer to as a “*coyote*” (part Anglo, part Hispano). These two participants, I had hoped, would add unique perspectives to an otherwise culturally-homogenous population. (Marrying and having children outside one’s ethnic group is still fairly uncommon in both the Native American and Hispano populations of Española.)

I strived as well to get participants who were not related or associated with other participants, but this was also close to impossible to do. Thus, two of my participants were relatives: a grandmother and her granddaughter. I decided to allow this so that I could compare their generational differences. Finally, because I wanted to interview “ordinary people,” I consciously avoided using well-known storytellers of the Española Valley and well-known politicians, or people whose life stories are commonly known. I sought out participants from the various neighborhoods and communities of Española. I thought in doing this that I would be able to collect stories representing the richness of the areas. I worked very hard to pick participants who varied economically, socially, and in age from other participants. This meant finding people with little education to more well-educated

people, college instructors to unemployed persons to students, single people to divorcees, young adults to senior citizens.

Below is a table of how the participants break down by age. I have grouped them into two generations, the older generation being above forty five years of age:

Participants, Their Ages and Their Generations

Alice	68	Older
JD	65	Older
Anthony	53	Older
Rebecca D.	48	Older
Curtis	46	Older
Daniel R.	36	Younger
Graciela	36	Younger
Keith	32	Younger
Rebecca M. (Becky)	22	Younger
Daniel W.	19	Younger
Miquella	18	Younger

Through this research, certain participants emerged as being more knowledgeable about their culture, history and religion. These five participants are Curtis, Alice, Daniel R., Graciela and JD. Three of these participants belong to the older generation. Their verbosity, lack of inhibition, and richness of their accounts may be related to their age, as noted in the literature review on age and its effect on narrative. Further, four of these five participants are bilingual, and their bilingual status may have also contributed to their storytelling abilities

(also noted in the literature review, DeBot & Makoni, 2005). I cite them as key informants of this study.

### **Data Collection Methods**

As the investigator in this qualitative study, I was also the primary instrument of data collection. I designed my interview questions (see Appendix A) to elicit real life stories from my participants, establish participants' historical and familial connections to the Española Valley, and to find out what participants believed were generational and gender-related differences in the valley.

An informal interview was the approach I chose, the benefits being, (1) the interviewee could talk at length about things of their own interest, volunteering and elaborating on topics, (2) it is more like a conversation, (3) it allows the researcher to take a more "natural" approach, (4) the researcher can more easily gain an insider's perspective, (5) they are useful in establishing and maintaining a healthy rapport, and (6) informal interviews are useful in comparing and contrasting one person's views with another's (Edgerton & Angness, 1974; Fetterman, 1989). Prior to interviewing each participant, I presented and discussed with them a consent form (see Appendix B) that outlined the purpose of the thesis and participant's role, possible risks and benefits, and the fact that the interview would be tape recorded.

Participants were given a choice of where they wanted the interview to take place: at their homes, or at a neutral location, such as the public library, or at my house or my parents' house. Each interview was approximately an hour long. Follow-up member checking was conducted after all data had been collected and analyzed to verify that my interpretations were accurate. Only one participant disagreed slightly on one finding. Graciela noted that she

would do more activities with her father had she been born a boy, whereas I wrote under Gender that she would have had a stronger relationship with her father.

I had begun my research looking specifically for local folklore and stories told among families, which exemplified life's rites of passage. However, when the interviewing process was completed, I realized that what I had collected, rather than rites of passage, was more of the nature of everyday experiences. These experiences tended to be traditions and routines in families. I now find fault in my interview protocol. In hindsight I see that I should have included questions, like, "Which of the Seven Sacraments did you complete?" and others that specified rites of passage.

I also realized that the taping of an interview can have a detrimental effect on the quality and quantity of what participants are willing to voice. Although some of these "ordinary" people were quite articulate, when put in front of a voice recorder and after signing a consent form, they froze up, spending much time looking at the recorder and/or fidgeting. This was very much the case during the interview of Rebecca D., whose life is "one big soap opera," as they put it in Española. While driving to the interview site, Rebecca was very talkative, telling stories about her son. When we sat down to conduct the interview, she stated in response to many questions that she "didn't want to talk about it" and was, to say the least, not forthcoming with information. Once the recorder was off, she exploded into tales about the community again.

For future research I will strive to create a more relaxed environment, or seek other ways in which to make participants feel comfortable. I could have acquired richer language (i.e., colloquialisms) and more intimate stories had participants felt more at ease with being recorded. I also think participants felt that they had to speak properly when being

interviewed, and felt that it had to be done in English. Some asked permission before speaking Spanish, for example. In any recorded or documented setting, I think the people of the Valley will hold back, as it is part of our culture to not “air the dirty laundry to the whole world,” and locals are also weary of outsiders. Even being an insider was a drawback in interviews in that participants did not elaborate because they assumed I already knew what they were talking about.

### **Analysis of Stories**

“The truth about stories is that’s all we are. ‘You can’t understand the world without telling a story,’ the Anishnaabe writer Gerald Vizenor tells us. ‘There isn’t any center to the world but a story’” (King, 2003, p. 32).

Stanley and Billig (2004) address the ways in which stories are currently analyzed, and suggest that “instead of assuming that memories, beliefs, and so on are internal mental structures, psychologists should be examining how in ordinary talk, people use terms such as ‘memory’ and ‘belief’ and other lay psychological language” (p. 159). They also suggest that it is important to know the social context of storytelling, including immediate social context, and the broader ideological context. As an insider to this research, I entered the study with background understanding of the social and ideological contexts of my participants.

According to Daiute and Lightfoot (2004), the problem with life stories is they are dynamic and ever-changing. They ask, “If people became convinced that their narratives were constructions, open to change, what impact would this have on their sense of their own narratives and their sense of who they were? Would this notion of instability of narratives have negative implications for their sense of integrity?” (p. 275) Many factors influence the way the story is told, such as the relationship between interviewer and interviewee.

Whatever may influence the story, such as age, gender, relationship between interviewer and interviewee, or social status of the storyteller, social constructionists accept that narratives are not so black and white as true or false, but are regarded as “renditions of events, cohering to certain cultural standards, which make sense of life to someone in a particular context” (Daiute & Lightfoot, 2004, p. 270).

### **Analysis Techniques**

My first step in analyzing the data was to read and reread my interview transcripts several times. I also listened to them to catch any mistakes the transcriptionist had made in regard to grammar, but most especially for Spanish language usage as well as local colloquialisms (i.e. “*frajo*” for “cigarette”). I then compiled a list of approximately twenty categories that I saw pop up, or talked about to some extent, throughout various interviews, that highlighted everyday experiences, such as school experiences, employment and drug abuse. Whenever I realized something was mentioned in more than one interview, and relevant to identity, gender or age, I saved it on an office document. From there I narrowed the list down to seven main categories in which to place every topic, from ditches to superstition to traditions. In some cases, I was able to combine categories (e.g., family and drug abuse) and other times I changed the term to encompass two or more other categories (e.g., agriculture to land). In one case, I discovered that a category could be discarded as it did not pertain to the focus of my study. These seven remaining topics were: family, land, religion, ethnicity, education, generational experiences, and economics. At this point I created a simple visual showing the narrowing-down of topics. This graph was not very helpful to me, so I created an outline of themes and subthemes (see Appendix C).



To cross-reference my work, I then went through each interview for coding, a careful, fine-toothed process of identifying themes. I used six colored highlighters to correspond with the seven themes (the seventh I used two colors on). After that I eliminated generational experiences and rerouted them into the narrowed-down six categories of family, religion, ethnicity, land, education and economics (italicized in each theme) in order to get subcategories of generational experiences.

In my next step in the process of analyzing, I went through each interview on the computer screen, copying passages that pertained to each theme and then pasting them onto a separate document. This helped me realize which themes held more importance in interviewees' eyes. This hierarchy of importance also helped me to create an outline from which to present my results. I created a chart, with each of the six themes in a bubble and arrows pointing from bubble to bubble, representing their dependence on one another. However, I soon realized that each bubble was connected to every other bubble (see Appendix D). This reinforced my thoughts that identity cannot be isolated, and that every aspect of life is dependent and connected.

The above-mentioned six themes that emerged throughout the eleven participant interviews were so intricately intertwined that it was difficult, and in some cases impossible, to separate one from another. This is evident in the following quote from Alice, who explained:

He was away at that time and I had no knowledge other than in later years I did come to the realization that he had been a prisoner of war in Japan. But to get back to when I was born, or around the time I was born, my mother and grandmother struggled to earn a living since in that era, during the Depression, jobs were scarce. And they lived

far into the northern hills of New Mexico. They had no car, but managed to move to Hernandez, New Mexico, which is about five miles north of Española where I was born.

What theme would that passage fall under? She mentions her father, grandmother and mother, so it may be family. Or it could be economical, generational, agricultural, or even cultural identity, with its references to geographical locale. Says Norton (2004) in the book, *95 Theses on Politics, Culture, and Method*, “No element of culture, no person, no event, no artifact can be isolated from this network [of culture] without impairing our ability to see its significance” (p.2).

In the following chapter I will present my findings, organized under three categories- identity, gender and generational differences- that are reflected in my research questions: (1) What do the participants’ stories tell about New Mexican Hispanos of the Española Valley? (2) How do their childhood experiences compare/contrast between males and females, and how do these differences shape their identities? (3) How are experiences of older members of the study population (Española natives) different/similar to those of younger participants, and how do these generational differences shape their identities?

### **Positionality**

I was born in the Española Valley of Northern New Mexico to a Hispanic family. Both my maternal and paternal families have been in Northern New Mexico, specifically the Española Valley, for centuries. I spent most of my developmental years in Española, and I graduated from Española Valley High School. I left to attend college, but returned after graduating in four years from the University of New Mexico. I currently live in Española and have been an educator in the valley for ten years. Having spent most of my life in the valley,

as well as having family history with the area, I have acquired an in-depth understanding of Española. Additionally, my academic studies, both undergraduate and graduate, have focused on history, heritage and culture of New Mexico (mainly Northern New Mexico) and Hispanic culture. All of these facts attest to my claim as an insider of the Hispano population of Española, New Mexico. Being an insider permits me to know and understand my participants and their stories.

### **Trustworthiness**

Here I note what I have done to ensure objectivity, the results of member checking and the diversity of my participants, which contribute to the validity of this study.

### **Insider Status**

“There is no substitute for local knowledge...” (Geertz, 2000, p.83)

As mentioned earlier, being a member of the population of this study, I assumed an “insider” role. As is true of any researcher, especially those who are insiders to the community they are studying, I entered this study with certain assumptions and biases. However, I have taken great pains to maintain objectivity. To guard against unconsciously trying to prove my biases, I sought to make the “familiar unfamiliar,” and continually interrogated my interpretations of my findings. Although it is difficult to detach oneself emotionally from a situation, the advantages of insider perspective are manifold. My job was to adopt a “social scientific” mentality, and my goal was, as Geertz (2000) puts it, to stay detached and do the work I had come to do. My scientific method here was to create a fusion of the personal and the professional.

## **Member Checking**

Member checking is contacting participants after the interviewing process in order to clarify information and get their input into how their interviews were interpreted. I conducted my member checking via telephone with participants Daniel W., Graciela, Keith, Miquella, Becky, Daniel R., Curtis and Alice. I was unable to reach participants JD, Anthony and Rebecca for comment at this time. I spoke with my participants to verify the accuracy of statements made about them and about my findings in this study. For example, all participants contacted agreed that there is a drug problem in the Española Valley. Graciela agreed on most points, but clarified that when speaking of gender, she thought she would be able to do more with her father. I note in my findings that Graciela felt she would have had a closer relationship with her dad had she been born a boy. Daniel W. said he did not identify with being Anglo. Beyond those two differences, my member checks verified statements made in this study.

## **Diversity of Participants**

Great measures were taken to ensure the variety of participants as a means of creating a representative sample of the native Hispano population of the Española Valley, based on my criteria of participant selection. Of the 11 participants, approximately half male and half female participants were selected to have equal representation of the sexes (I kind of feel that I am the twelfth participant, contributing my own life experiences to the body of this work). The ratio of male to female participants (excluding myself) is six to five. I made sure to include people from different families and neighborhoods to provide representation of different family ideologies and community ideologies. My participants' interviews illustrate an array of personal experiences. Their ages, genders, and social and economic status

contributed to the diversity of life experiences. Ages ranged from eighteen to sixty eight, encompassing most of the adult years (Note: I attempted to include participants older than sixty eight, but was unsuccessful due to none being available because of mental incapacity, did not want to participate, were hard to find using the snowball approach, or other reasons). Finally, I ensured that participants varied economically and socially.

## **Findings**

### **Identity**

As noted in my literature review, I define identity as how a person sees herself. Identity is made up of one's personal experiences and the meaning she gives to them. Identity is dynamic, in constant transition, and in continual construction and reconstruction. Identity is further shaped by an individual's social interactions, history, culture, knowledge and geography (Cote Fagundes & Blayer, 2007). Identity is multi-dimensional, and not determined at birth but instead is the product of a person's place in history and in her culture. Finally, I agree with Hall (1980) who asserts that ethnic identity shapes personal identity.

### **Family.**

In the Española Valley of Northern New Mexico, both individual and ethnic identities are strongly influenced by family. When one local first makes the acquaintance of another local in Española, they usually ask each other two questions: "What part of Española are you from?" And, "Who's your family?" The importance of these two relationships quickly became apparent to me when speaking with participants. If stories shape identity and identity shapes stories, then it is easy to see how family shapes the identity of a native Hispano from Española. Identity is further shaped by specific locations. For example, a person from the community of Chimayo may initially be looked at differently than a person from the community of La Mesilla. The arroyos and fields of Chimayo, although very beautiful, hold the stigma of drug abuse. So, when I think of a person from Chimayo, I might first think that that person might use drugs, speaks fluent Northern New Mexican Spanish, and lives down an arroyo. However, if someone were to say they are from La Mesilla, a picture of a privileged lifestyle (if one even exists in Española) may emerge, La Mesilla commonly being

regarded as a more affluent area of town, with bigger houses and landscaped yards. Finally, if I hear the surname Mercure, for example, I immediately assume this person has roots in the Northern New Mexico town of Chama as everyone I have ever met with this surname uncommon in Northern New Mexico is from Chama.

Family relations also give a glimpse into who a person is. Many people in Northern New Mexico express the sentiment, “Everyone is family.” This is a common belief, as seen when two locals are first introduced; they go through their respective genealogies, and usually discover a common family member.

My participants consistently and at length spoke of family. Family was mentioned across my initial themes, such as when speaking of economics or agriculture, two important aspects of Norteño life. This finding coincided with what I know of the native Hispano people of the Española Valley. It would be accurate to say that family is the sun around which everything else in participants’ lives and experiences orbited. This centrality of family is illustrated in the plethora of expressions in Española that stress the importance of family: “Blood is thicker than water,” “No matter what, he/she is still your brother/uncle/mom,” “Don’t deny your family.”

### ***Family and conflict.***

Although the source of strength and support, families are not without their share of conflict. Because such large extensions of family are recognized, such as third or fourth cousins or great uncles, there are many relationships to navigate. And because family relations are so highly valued, no matter who your family members are, you must learn to deal with and love these people. Here we look at the experience of JD, the son of a verbally

and physically abuse father, who lives this struggle of dealing with a difficult family member:

And then...I must have been around 28? Had a buddy... wanted to come hunting, and I asked my father for a whole year to get a Saturday off, and asked him every month. I said, 'Don't forget.'...And the month before, I started reminding him every week, and the week before, I reminded him every day, and then when the Saturday came around, he says, 'You know what? Go ahead and take your Saturday. ...Why don't you go ahead and take the month. Take the whole year off.' He says, 'Why don't you just take the rest of your life off? You're fired.' I said, 'Okay, Dad. I'll see you later.'... I was terrified of him, but I still loved him, and I love him with all my heart still. Cause he was my father.

Despite the harsh physical and emotional treatment JD received throughout his life at the hands of his father, he said that he still loved his father. His family was so important to him that he was able to overlook the abuse and continue to love his father. Miquella likewise noted love for her stepfather despite the frequency with which he leaves home for long periods of time: "...it'll be for the night and he'll come back the next afternoon. The longest has been weeks. Like he's taken off and gone to Colorado, where he's from, for a long time, for two weeks."

Keith noted how his family looked out for his well-being despite his illegal activities. He said, "I had my cousin, my cousin that lived behind us. She worked for the district attorney and I know that she, she had come down and she would tell us that we were being watched." In addition, Keith told me that he had a strong relationship with his parents despite



his parents moving out of the house when Keith was only 13 years old, leaving him and two of his brothers to raise themselves.

The above quotes are examples of my finding that, no matter what a family member does to you, or how antagonizing a personality they may have, the Hispanos of Española still accept, help and love their family.

***Family and reputation.***

Families in Española have reputations that may go back generations or be based on more recent events. Family reputations play a part in shaping an individual's identity, as exemplified in my interview with Becky, who did not want to attend the same schools her older sister attended because of her sister's reputation:

...When [my teacher] found out that my sister was Johanna she immediately disliked me, gave me bad grades for no reason. I was a straight A student in 4<sup>th</sup> grade and after that I was getting like C's and D's on my homework and on my assignments, and it was all because my sister spit on her dress and then the teacher ended up slapping her. So [the teacher's treatment of me] kinda influenced me because I didn't want to go to Española High School. My sister with her somewhat bad reputation...I didn't want [teachers] to associate me the same way.

Because in Northern New Mexico family bonds are so strongly recognized, an individual is typically identified and associated with their family and their family's reputation. For example, I am commonly introduced as "Cookie's daughter," or as "Lucas's wife," or even as "Adelina's cousin." In politics, where individuals "run on the family name," Lujan is associated with Northern New Mexico. Some capitalize on this "family identity" such as in the case of having a politician as a relative, and some reject it.

I know people who have left Española in order to get away from their family's bad reputation. Handling the negative reputation that is connected with your family name can make you want to flee a town that has a hard time separating the individual from the family.

***Family and substance abuse.***

"I love Española, it's a beautiful valley ... but obviously I don't like the problems there" (Graciela).

"I would say in this town ... it's sad to say that, but I think there's lots of stereotypes ... but I would have to be ignorant to say there isn't a drug problem....I would have to be stupid, close my eyes and say, 'No, there's not a drug problem.' There is. There is" (Keith).

Widespread substance abuse is something that unfortunately is a reality in the Española Valley. Who in the valley has not had an uncle, friend, cousin, classmate, or all of the above, die of an overdose? Who does not know who S\*\*\*\*\* is, eternally walking the streets of Española, shaking and scratching his acid-eaten head?<sup>i</sup> Expressed Becky, "That's a big thing here in Española [that] there's a lot of drugs around. A lot of deaths. I've had a cousin who's died from an overdose." When I began this study, I had hoped to avoid the topic of drug abuse, fearing I would be reinforcing a negative stereotype of Española. In fact, one of my initial motivations for embarking on this study was to show that Española is much more than just the negative news reports associated with it. But it was unavoidable. Each of the eleven participants alluded to substance abuse. As Daniel W. acknowledged, "...we have a big issue with drugs, because, like, we're ranked, obviously, nationally in drug overdoses." Daniel's observation is verified by records at [www.forbes.com](http://www.forbes.com), which claimed that Española has 42.5 drug-related deaths per 100,000 people, versus the national average of 7.3 deaths per 100,000 people (Vardi, 2009). The site for a local new station, [krqe.com](http://krqe.com), posted that

Española is consistently ranked by the U.S. Department of Health as having the highest per capita rate of drug-related deaths in the United States (Gutierrez, 2010).

As a researcher, I know that it is my ethical responsibility to report my findings about drug abuse as accurately as possible, even though doing so may make me uncomfortable. This is not an unusual dilemma for researchers who are “insiders” to the community they study. Geertz (2000) acknowledges that when being an insider of a studied population, it is difficult to separate oneself personally. However, I recognized that one’s findings, particularly in qualitative research, are multi-dimensional. That is, the richness of participants’ comments can provide deeper understandings of particular phenomena. Thus, in my analysis and interpretation of drug abuse in Española, I have sought to understand and reveal the complexities that move beyond a simple judgment of “good” or “bad.” Further, my wishes are to do accurate research.

In my interviews I discovered that it is was among family members that some participants were first exposed to substance abuse. Note the following experience of Miquella, who was first exposed to drug abuse in her father’s home:

I was visiting my father...[he] was having a party and all of his friends are alcoholics or drug addicts.... I walked into the main bathroom...and my dad was sniffing cocaine so I kind of freaked out and walked out...And I kind of just agreed with him I was like, ‘Oh yeah everything is fine,’ just cause I didn't want him to like tell me more or get mad at me or something because he's very scary....

It occurred to some participants that drugs and alcohol have been abused in certain families for so long it has become a family tradition. Some participants noted substance abuse among several generations and several family members. JD, an elementary school bus

driver, drove two generations of a family to school in his bus. He noticed how the son's behavior reflected that of the father:

And you can see which ones are gonna turn out to be bad and which ones are gonna turn out to be good, because when you have a problem and the parents deny, deny, deny, those kids make the newspaper, the front page, period. We just buried one of the kids that rode my school bus...Ivan Garcia, gave me a lot of problems because of the way he was raised, and I talked to his father the night of the rosary, and he says, I don't know, J.D. I said, one day at a time, Anthony (JD).

Drug and alcohol abuse have become a part of the family culture or identity of some participants. Keith's father is an alcoholic, which was one of the reasons why his parents divorced. Keith turned to drug use and drug dealing after his parents divorced and moved out of the house. He had to raise himself. To Keith, drugs and alcohol became a part of his everyday existence—a habit as well as a source of income. He was left under the guidance of his two older brothers, who were teenagers themselves. Other teenagers around the Española Valley realized that Keith's house was a place without parental supervision, and began to frequent it in order to participate in illicit behavior. Keith, who found himself without economic means, turned to drug dealing in order to support himself. He explained a typical day for him:

I would probably wake up, probably, 'cause there was people already in my living room. From there, get up, start drinking, looking for something to do, looking for a way to make some money, maybe get some weed, get an ounce...go to school for lunch, sell a few joints, get a few fifths, go to school, sell 'em there, and then from there I would—the rest of the day was spent partying. Partying all night, maybe take

some mushrooms or whatever, whatever was around... Oh, yeah, yeah... a guy actually died at—[laughing]—a guy died at my house. Sorry. Slipped my mind. Yeah, that actually happened from, from partying and stuff like that (Keith).

Keith said he regretted how his youth was spent, selling drugs and not getting an education. However, he felt that at the age of thirteen he had no choice. He claimed that because of how he spent his youth he is living a different life as an adult. Curtis also felt he was living his adult life without the presence of drugs because of experiences in his youth. Curtis, a good-natured, hard-working, smiling person has never mentioned to me in the ten years that I have known him how his father died until this interview:

Yeah he was pretty rough. He lived a really hard life and he ended up dying of a heroin overdose so drugs and alcohol were a big part of his life and I think that's why they divorced and my mom couldn't put up with that anymore so that was one of the reasons why he left us at a young age.

It seemed to me that Curtis has been so affected by drug abuse that he has chosen to lead a drug-free life. Additionally, I think because he has spent most of his life without a father, he is very close to and supportive of his two sons.

Because of strong familial bonds, Española Hispanos feel the need to stay close to home despite some problems that may exist in their families, such as drug abuse. Some of the participants cited various family members who were involved in drugs, are alcoholics or have died of substance abuse. It appeared that several generations of some families were impacted, such as in the case of Rebecca, whose husband and son are alcoholics, the latter suffering from psoriasis of the liver at the age of 32. In some families, substance and/or drug abuse

have become part of their identities, influencing their daily lives, and how they interact with the world, i.e. their “face” to the world.

**Land.**

“...and I live around my whole family, there in my little neighborhood there that was inherited from my dad’s side of his family” (Rebecca).

If I had not grown up drinking water straight from the well outside our house, crisp and cold in January, eaten the *moras* (mulberries) that fell upon and stained purple our dirt driveway in May, or watched my uncles hang a slaughtered pig by its rear legs from a horseshoe-shaped stand at sunset in September, I would not be the person I am today. But even if I had not grown up in Española I would still clearly see in my participants their love of land in time and place, see their relationships with their own *puño de tierra* (piece of land), and capture their identities through that piece of land. Just as the New Yorker’s identity is shaped by the sidewalks, hi-rises and hustle and bustle of Times Square, so is the Española New Mexican’s identity shaped by the slow-moving traffic down Riverside Drive and the open field in the backyard.

JD’s memories are similar to mine in that they are tied to the land. He remembers sitting in his family’s acres of, “... Apples, peaches, pears, apricots, cherries, everything. It was beautiful. It was a beautiful place...” (JD) Similarly, Graciela, who came from a family of shepherders, spoke about her memories of the land where she grew up:

So we had chickens, so we’d collect eggs every day... We had sheep and chickens and horses and... during the different times of the year, there was always something going on.... In the spring, when the sheep were having babies, there was cute little lambs jumping across... the little ditch... the ditch was a big part of our life of course, because

we had a big garden and we have alfalfa fields, so they've used the irrigation system to water the garden and to water the fields, so all of that has been a part of my life, you know, growing up. So all those old traditions and then harvesting the garden, making *ristras* (chile stringed together), roasting the chile, canning the vegetables... We've always had a lot of chile. And besides that, corn, carrots, potatoes, peas, just everything...

For Graciela and many other participants, the land represents a place of positive memories. Most participants noted their childhoods with nostalgia, referring to adventures on the land. Even the younger participants cited land as a part of their identities. They all explained how their youths had been spent outdoors, playing in ditches, climbing trees, and interacting with domesticated animals. In addition, it appeared that land and its care required a daily commitment. Animals must be fed daily, gardens must be watered regularly, and there are many activities that must occur annually, such as the cleaning of the ditches, or acequias. JD speaks about this tradition in his family:

[We] clean the ditches in February and March. And we were doing the feeder ditches, not the main ditch.... You know, shoveling is a lot of work. You've gotta work two, three days to get it plane. And dug well enough to where you get all the dirt and silt that's come down the ditch during the year, and you get it cleaned up again. That's the story of the whole valley. We all do it.

This quote exemplifies an important rite of passage among Norteños. Cleaning acequias are a part of life, a way of life, and are life for Northern New Mexicans. I think every little Norteño grows up believing that one day land will be theirs. Land is our passion. The word acequia means ditch, and, explains The New Mexico Acequia Association, "refers to the

historic communal irrigation system that supports the culture and livelihood of thousands of families in New Mexico” ([www.lasacequias.com](http://www.lasacequias.com)). Water sharing through acequias is a New Mexican custom called *repartimiento*, brought here by the Spaniards with colonization. Water is a precious resource in New Mexico, and its usage and distribution are continually of debate among legislatures, economic developers, and private citizens.

Along with traditions associated with the upkeep of land is also the way in which land is commonly obtained in Northern New Mexico. Participants Rebecca, Becky, Anthony, Curtis, Graciela, Daniel R. and Keith noted that they live on land inherited from their families. I too was raised on land that belonged to my Grandma Cleo’s family (although it was not inherited). The history of family-owned Hispanic lands dates back to the arrival of the Spaniards in New Mexico and land grants. Private (to individuals) and communal (to groups of people) land grants were made by Spain and later Mexico for the purpose of establishing settlements in New Mexico. Land grants are constantly in dispute in New Mexico, because many families and groups have lost their land to what they consider unfair practices on the part of the United States government (such as presenting legal documents in English to a Spanish-speaking population), beginning with the Treaty of Guadalupe, when New Mexico became part of the United States. Since much of the land in Northern New Mexico is family-inherited, this accounts for who the neighbors of many Norteños are-their families. Since land has been in families for generations, these parcels have taken on the importance of more than a place to live. Land, to participants, is a symbol of heritage, history, entertainment, economy and family. Land is part of their cultural heritage, thus a part of their identities.



### **Culture and ethnicity.**

I think we're proud people. I think the world doesn't know about us, and we should tell 'em who we are....They get a shock, and you know what? In a lot of ways, we're going to have to grow up...because we're getting a lot of outsiders in and we're very arrogant, all of us are....We're going to have to learn our manners...We need to remind people that we have layer upon layer of more history here than both Santa Fe and Taos together (JD).

According to Norton, “Subjects have multiple identities” (2004, pg. 7). This concept of multiple identities is especially true among Española Hispanics, who live multiple identities attributed to any given person (i.e. mother, wife, lawyer), but also must grapple with other identities. When referring to the cultural identity of an Española Hispano, one must look at a few factors: cultural identity, Española town identity and ethnic terminology. By cultural identity I refer to being a Northern New Mexico Hispano, the experience characterized by open landscapes, Spanish ancestry and language, religion, food, etc. Many Hispanos of Española are proud of their lineage, and are educated about it.

As noted in the demographics section of this study, Spaniards entered Northern New Mexico over 400 years ago with the Conquistador Don Juan de Oñate de Salazar. Many locals can trace their ancestors back several generations, and are proud to hold that information. Northern New Mexico was very geographically isolated until recent generations, which contributed to the homogeneity of the population, most being Hispano descendants of the Spanish colonizers and conquistadores. Because interracial marrying was discouraged, some feel they are genetically “purer” than other populations. The music, food and artwork are distinct to this area. New Mexican music is typically sung in Spanish, is polkas and *cumbias*, with themes about love, family, food and land (i.e. “*Vamos a la matanza*”).

*de mi tío*,” or “Let’s go to the animal slaughter and feast of my uncle.”). The cuisine is unlike that of other Latin populations, a hybrid of Native American flavors like corn as well as ingredients brought by the Spaniards, such as lamb. Further, Northern New Mexican Hispanos distinguish themselves from Southern New Mexican Hispanos because of the strong Mexican influence in the South. Because of the geographic isolation of the Norteño, many historians say that the culture has retained a lot of the characteristics of the original Spanish colonizers, such as the Catholic religion, Spanish surnames, and the dialect of Spanish used. This dialect of Spanish is called *Cervantino*, referring to its antiquity. For example, many Norteños use the word “*tocante*” instead of the commonly used “*sobre*” for the word “about,” or “*medias*” instead of “*calcetines*” for the word “socks.” These language differences can be linked to the lack of change over centuries of the Spanish, *medias* meaning tights in modern Spanish, an indicator of the dress of the conquistadores and colonizers that brought Spanish language usage to Northern New Mexico. Verb forms also differ from contemporary forms, such as *hablates* (you spoke) versus the contemporary *hablaste*, and Norteño Spanish commonly using the formal “*usted*.” Norteños largely are proud of their cultural heritage, and don’t mind discussing it. Note the following passages from Daniel R.’s interview:

My family has been here for 402 years, primarily within the Medanales and Cuarteles regions [of Española], two different sides of my family. My dad's family [is] from Medanales, my mother's [is] from Cuarteles. And I have numerous family members throughout the region and my family primarily settled in the Española Valley area.

Norteños likewise like to note their families' contributions to the state and national picture. Daniel R., in the following quote, noted how his family is connected to the land and its history in the following quote about land grants:

My family was tied up with 13 other families that were the original owners of what is now the city of Los Alamos, which is known as the Manhattan City, where the Manhattan Project began or the atomic bomb city. At the time my family were homesteaders that along with 12 other families that settled the region and were grazing cattle and raising crops up on the plateau up there. This was my mother's side of the family and it was my great grandfather David Quintana that was the owner. And in the archives the Manhattan Project begins with the acclamation of my family's lands by the federal government along with 12 other families' lands in which the government came in and took the land for use for the Manhattan Project which was the development of the atomic bomb and still to this day continues to utilize the property to house Los Alamos National Laboratories. But that was my family's contribution to the atomic bomb.

Here Daniel R. shows that he is both knowledgeable and proud of his heritage. This pride in culture and heritage is sometimes seen as arrogance, and in fact is arrogance, among some people. Alice noted this arrogance in herself, citing her feeling of superiority over Mexicans. She said, "...being a Hispanic from Northern New Mexico, I can trace my ancestors to Spain and France, and as a child, I felt that in some way I was superior to the Mexican people from Mexico. I hardly ever saw any in my younger years" (Alice). This quote shows the attitude of ethnic superiority felt among some Northern New Mexicans. It also is an example of the geographic isolation of Northern New Mexico until around the mid

twentieth century. Although New Mexico borders Mexico, many people from older generations claim to have not known Mexicans in their youths.

Despite being secure in their ancestry, participants noted lack of a proper ethnic label to describe Norteño Hispanos. Ethnic terminology refers to labels that society places on an ethnic group in order to distinguish them from other groups. Ethnic identity refers to one's identification with a particular ethnic group, adopting that group's thoughts, perceptions, feelings and behaviors. One's ethnic group is the group to which individuals claim heritage. Different ethnic terminology used to describe the Norteño Hispano is something that appeared in various interviews, pointing to the fact that no one ethnic term can describe this population, or meet the satisfaction of outsiders as well as the Norteño Hispano himself (i.e. Spanish, Chicano, Latino, New Mexican, Hispanic, etc.). Further, although the Española Hispano can relate to other Hispanos from Northern New Mexico on two levels (cultural identity and ethnic terminology), the Española Hispano is isolated in terms of its town affiliation due to outside views of the valley and how they are internalized. Many negative stereotypes are associated with the Española Valley, such as drug abuse and criminal activity. How is identity impacted when others have a negative view of you as a social group? Kenneth J. Gergen (1999) discusses how our views of ourselves are impacted by how others see us. He calls these public portrayals of social groups "identity politics," and says that negative portrayals of social groups (i.e. women as helpless) inform the public. Gergen writes that identity politics are problematic not only in how the public sees these groups, but also in how these groups see themselves. He writes that being viewed by others in a negative fashion creates resistance, pitting "us against them" and, "Put in this light, one's ethnic, racial or religious identity is a site of struggle-often bitter. At a simple level it is a contest between

your control [of your own identity] vs. the control of others” (Gergen, 1999, p.44). Miquella spoke about how knowing that others had negative perceptions of Española impacted her cheerleading team’s behavior:

Española is better than what a lot of other states or cities and people think of us. Like for cheerleading we would always try and be very positive and have good sportsmanship and present ourselves well because of how people thought that we were, said that we were. So we could try and change their minds to see us in a better light than how they do and try and see us the way we see ourselves, not just the bad things.

Because of others’ views of what an Española Hispano is, and the exposure to those views, identity is affected. Miquella explained this further, mentioning how the Española youth are treated at sporting events:

Yeah, they do treat us a lot differently... The teams from other places are scared of us. And they're real snotty towards us because they think that we're real low down dirt people, that we don't do anything good in our lives, that we aren't successful at anything. So they treat us real different than others. Like there was last year at a basketball game when I was in cheerleading we were playing against Hobbs, and after the game I even talked to one of the basketball players and he was telling me how his coach said for them to all stick together, for no one to go by themselves because that we would probably fight them or even shoot them or stab them or something. And so all the basketball players and their cheerleaders were really scared of us.

This passage to me is so poignant and typical of the experiences of the Española youth, venturing out into the bigger world for the first time, only to have their hopes and

expectations shot down. Just as a young Black man first realizes how the world outside his house sees him, so too is it a part of our identifying experiences to endure the prejudices associated with being from Española. (As JD noted, “We're the, we're the front end of jokes. We need, we need to let the world know that we're somebody.”)

Like JD, Daniel W. defends his Española identity. Daniel said,

People ask where you come from...I've met friends and they're like, 'Yeah, I'd be embarrassed saying [I'm] from Española.' I'm like, 'Well, whether you're embarrassed or not, I could care less what you think, 'cause I'm from there, and if you're embarrassed of hanging out with me, then you could find another friend....'

My participants appeared to say that they either stood up for their Española identity or denied it. Some, like Becky, deny ever having been from Española. Becky, a December 2009 graduate of the University of New Mexico, explained her desire to be disassociated with Española while attending UNM: “Even if they ask me where I'm born I'll tell them, I was born in Santa Fe. I'll just say I'm from Santa Fe. If I tell them I'm from Española right away they'll judge you and think of you as a different person...” Like Becky, I also faced discrimination against people from Española while attending UNM in Albuquerque. My mom says that when she attended UNM in Albuquerque in the 1960's, people would say that “all the most beautiful women come from Española.” When my sister and I went to UNM in the 1990's, people would make disparaging jokes. They'd say, “Why do people in Española have those little steering wheels in their lowriders? So they can drive with handcuffs on!” My sister left UNM after one semester.

While some of my participants indicated that they had always been aware of differences between themselves and people from outside of Española, Graciela did not realize that her cultural identity was anything unique growing up. She said,

...you come from Española, and there's...you're all the same. I mean, everybody's...Chicana or Hispanic, whatever you call yourself, but you're all pretty much the same...Even the few white kids, the few African-American students, we all had the same accent, you know.

Anthony also recognized this sense of homogeneity in saying, Española was a small, small town and pretty much everyone around my age they all had grew up and had similar experiences that I did growing up as far as traditions and life experiences and things like that you know.

However, when Graciela came into contact with populations outside of Española, she began to question her own identity:

I think just the Spanish part, you know, you question, you wonder...about all the aspects of your culture. So, ...being from Española, I've always been aware that I have Spanish roots, Mexican roots, Native American roots, and I guess I've explored all those areas to some degree or another...

But it was at the University of New York in Rochester where Graciela realized the lack of knowledge of her culture among other Hispanics. The other Latin American students who attended the college with Graciela asked her why, with the name Graciela Garcia, her Spanish speaking skills were so terrible. It was then that she began to question her cultural identity. Graciela said, "I started to think, well, yeah, why is my Spanish terrible?"

This experience also made Graciela think about the terms she used to identify herself when filling out forms that asked about ethnicity:

Depending on what I'm asked to fill out, I was raised as a Chicana, or Hispanic, I don't mind using that, or Latina, I don't mind using that either, so it just depends. But I was born and raised in Northern New Mexico.

The last sentence illustrates my own feelings that, because of outsider ethnic labeling, many Norteños have chosen to say that they are "New Mexican." This term, to me at least, means we are Hispanics from New Mexico. This also connotes a lack of ties to any Latin country, particularly Mexico, where some people think we are from. To me, identifying ourselves as "New Mexican" recognizes that we are a unique population in regard to our Spanish ancestry.

I have mentioned earlier when discussing participants that there were two bi-ethnic participants in this study: Curtis and Daniel W. Curtis is a Tewa Indian from Ohkay Owingeh Pueblo. This pueblo holds a reputation of strong maintenance of cultural beliefs. His father was a Hispano from Ranchitos, a neighboring community of Ohkay Owingeh. Curtis explained the distinction of cultures between the Hispanos and Native Americans thusly, "...My mom being from the reservation it's kinda been interesting because it's like living in two worlds..." Curtis said, "We [Tewa Indians] call them *pates*, you guys call them *hornos*" and, "...they're called *Abuelos* as you guys call them in Spanish I guess, like grandparents right?" When speaking of the outdoor ovens found in New Mexico, Curtis made a distinction between the two of us. He did not identify with his Hispano ethnicity. Or, when discussing his sons' "percent Native American," as defined on their Certificates of Indian Blood (CIB), he made it a point to express how "Hispanic" they are versus him: "actually they're eleven sixteenths because their mom's an



eighth Spanish.” He further expressed his separateness when talking about visits with his Hispanic grandparents, and how his identity marker was his skin color:

...I mean us as children [my siblings and I] never really felt comfortable around my dad's family because we were always darker skinned. I remember when my grandma would give us a bath she'd scrub us like she could rub the brown off us but it wouldn't come off. So and cause [my Hispanic cousins] were very light complected compared to the way we were...(Curtis)

Based on his comments, we can see that Curtis does not regard himself as Hispanic. This claim of one ethnicity over another can also be seen with Daniel W., who does not know the origin or meaning of his Anglo last name. He said, “I don’t know [laughs]. A lot of people [in Española] ask me that, and ...I really don’t know,...the origin of my last name.” Deriving from the experiences of Curtis and Daniel W., they were favoring one race over the other. Perhaps Curtis separating himself ethnically from Hispanics is his way of choosing his identity, since he doesn’t speak Spanish and is dark complected, thus not “fitting in” to his own family, and Daniel W. not wanting not know where his Anglo surname originates, are survival mechanisms, living in a town that is predominantly Hispano, and favors cultural homogeneity. Yes, despite being discriminated against, the Hispanos of the Española Valley do their share of discriminating. Or it may just be that Daniel W. was raised by a single mother, was enculturated into her society and he has no bonds with his father. Daniel W., I discovered, may be a “different” type of Hispano in Northern New Mexico. Daniel W. may be an example of another type of Norteño Hispano who does have an Anglo in their family tree, but the family has been marrying among other Hispanos for so long as to “dilute” out its Angloness. Whatever the case may be, despite the homogeneity of the native Hispano population in

Española Valley, race and ethnicity are of much concern. What I mean here is, for example, someone may be regarded as being “more Hispanic” if they speak Spanish, or someone may be regarded as “less Hispanic” if they have an Anglo father. Further, it is “preferable” to be more Hispanic than not. Just like the Yaqui Indians of Sonora, Mexico, I think that in Española, ethnic indicators, such as language and dialogue, factor into how other Norteños view one’s ethnicity (Erickson, 1994).

Every individual leads a life of multiple realities. James Paul Gee calls these multiple realities “Discourses” (1992). We have both primary and secondary Discourses. Gee explains that primary Discourses are those that are learned early on in life, such as in the household, from “people like us.” Secondary Discourses are learned later when we engage in unfamiliar settings, such as school. Gee (1992) writes that [Discourse] “constitutes our personal persona and is part of what gives a sense of unity and identity to our multiple social selves (constituted by our many secondary Discourses)” (192). He contends that engaging in multiple Discourses can cause internal conflict where individuals feel they must disown “people like us (me).” Gee says, “...the result can be a sense of self-hatred” (p. 109). It appears to me that this self hatred is illustrated earlier, in the case of Becky, who denies being from Española, or below, in JD’s parents, who destroyed their southwest furniture. Because of stigma caused by the outside world, JD’s parents got rid of furniture he described as palatial:

They had 'em from way back when, and they gave 'em away, they sold 'em, they, they were embarrassed with 'em. We had, we used to have Southwest furniture in our house, in the hacienda, the home that we were raised in. Old furniture, and my mother went to Montgomery Ward and bought new furniture. She said, you guys do whatever you

want with the old furniture. We took axes to it and burned it, and that's pretty well what everyone else did. We did it.

It appeared to me that participants were saying that some Hispanos from Española make attempts to distance themselves from their cultural ethnicity. The examples of Becky and JD's parents are opposite what Gee calls the allegiance to or defense of Discourses (1992). This is visible in the case of Daniel W. who defends Española to people who are not from there. This allegiance, writes Gee, creates an "Us vs. Them" mentality, and is a human survival mechanism, intended to ensure not being annihilated or outcompeted by neighboring groups (1992).

### **Religion.**

I just remember...feeling so refreshed from the rain, and just at that moment, talking to God in such a sincere way, and telling God that I knew I could not do this on my own and that I would need God to help me...and then also really feeling comforted by God that...He was going to be there, not feeling afraid ...feeling really powerful...feeling really strong, and really excited, and...seeing life brand-new again for the first time in a long time. Just looking out and seeing the world as God's creation and knowing God had placed this creation inside me, and then knowing I was responsible for a life—it was just a really powerful moment, and it just continues to be very powerful...(Graciela)

Graciela, like many other participants, felt the strong presence of religion in her life. Religion, according to participants, holds a major place in their lives, and has a large impact on the Española community. When Lent descends upon us each year, the face of Española temporarily changes. The gym where my husband plays basketball shuts its doors for "forty

days and forty nights,” local bands go on extended break, and the special at Dandy’s Burgers switches from “taco and a drink” to “fish sandwich and fries.” On Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent, half the town walks around with ashen crosses on their foreheads, while the other half asks each other, “Are you going to church?”

Religion was given major importance in participants’ lives. It was the source of art, well-being, entertainment and even conflict for some people (see Appendix E for religious folklore story). Religion was a big part of participants’ identities as well as a shaping factor in other arenas of Northern New Mexican life, such as economics. It was striking to me how many of life’s experiences happened under the Church’s watchful eye, be they formal, like completing the Seven Sacraments, or informal, like doing artwork with your mother, according to participants.

One huge source of identity-religious identity, personal identity and local identity- is Spanish Colonial Art. Spanish Colonial Art, the local art of Native New Mexican Hispanos, can be found in just about every home. It is locally appreciated for its religious significance as symbols of Catholicism and a medium, if you will, to the Divine, as well as appreciated for its artistic beauty. It is a source of local pride. Oral tradition states that the Catholic religious artifacts arrived in Northern New Mexico with the first Spanish settlers and conquistadores. My mother and other people her age, including JD, say that in the old days “you couldn’t give it away.” However, JD explained in our interview how and when it became popular. He said Spanish Colonial Art emerged as an art-form in 1933 in El Rito, New Mexico, a neighboring community of Española. JD said, “But it wasn’t *santos* and it wasn’t *retablos*, it was tinwork, furniture, straw applique. *La Escuelita* [The School], Benji Lopez, Felix Lopez, those guys

brought back the santos in the '70s.” Catholic religious artwork holds manifold importance in the daily lives of the Española Hispano. It is spirituality, art, economy, and identity.

It was interesting to me to learn that Curtis, the straddler of the two dominant cultures in Española (Hispano and Tewa), said that the religion of his indigenous ancestors is very similar to Catholicism. He said he believes his life has been easier because he was raised very traditionally, with traditional values. Because his maternal grandfather was a medicine man and his father’s family was active in the Catholic Church, religion was a major part of his life. In both religions he was taught to treat people right, and to instill good values in his children. Curtis said,

....The things that they tell you in the native language are pretty much the things they're telling you in the Catholic Church. So in a sense it's the same religion to us; it's just that we go to two different churches. One's a kiva and one's a Catholic Church.

Religion, according to Curtis, is a part of his everyday life and identity.

Northern New Mexicans are a spiritual people who believe that we Earth dwellers have a connection to the supernatural world, and our lives are influenced by this spirituality. Daniel R. illustrated this experience when he spoke of a time he was working on religious artifacts. He said:

...I was staining [the crosses and] I would contemplate...what each cross represented as far as the individual that [it] was being created for. As I was doing so I was in...my family's yard and an individual came up to the gate and tried to come in and I said, ‘Oh, I'm sorry you have to go around.’ And I thought it was the neighborhood kid and as I looked up there was no one there but incidentally I was...finishing the cross my father had carved for the young man we were reburying...So I think I saw the ghost of the

young man who I was finishing the cross for and thinking of and praying for, because I was praying as I would create the crosses...(Daniel R.)

Ortega Martinez (2009) noted this in her dissertation, *Chicana/o Grottesque*, recognizing the existence of spirituality in the culture of Southwest Hispanos. In Chicano culture, for example, it is manifested in the *curandera/o* (Medicinewoman/man, as called in the Hispanic culture). Curanderos are known to rely on both spirituality and herbal remedies, and usually have some formal medical training, such as in nursing. This spiritual connection may have something to do with Norteños' strong connection to the land and a long history of human inhabitation in Northern New Mexico.

Graciela mentions her family permanently affixing crosses to the walls in her house as a way of dealing with the supernatural:

...the house itself, there was a blessing on the house...I guess they must have thought it was needing a blessing, so...the priest came and did a blessing on the house way before I was born. And so to this day, there's little crosses...they put little crosses into, on the walls of the house.

On another occasion a friend of Graciela's had a "visit":

I've had some friends sleep over, and one of my friends told me that a male ghost was like pulling on her foot and woke her up...and they had some conversation, and my friend [said] it was a nice conversation, so it didn't scare my friend, but he let her know that everything was okay...

Miquella, the youngest participant, noted feeling like someone or something is around her at night when she is trying to go to sleep. She said she prays in order to relax and to try to sleep during these times when she feels like she is not alone in her room.

This connection, although it may seem ridiculous to outsiders, is part of our way of life. These experiences are further legitimized by the fact that the events happen in front of more than one person. Keith, who recognized his lack of religious practice during our interview, cited a time when a friend seemed to know the future. He claimed,

[My friends and I] kept seeing falling stars that night, and I'm not sure if it was a meteor shower or what, but anyway, we'd see falling stars, and [my friend] kept saying ...that somebody's gonna die tonight. And we, everybody just laughed at him...nobody...took him serious (Keith).

However, the friend that claimed somebody was going to die died sometime during that night. Daniel R. also had a spiritual experience where others were witness. Daniel R. was part of a project to relocate the bodies of infants and soldiers, whose burial ground in Santa Fe was needed for urban development. According to Daniel, the land was an ancient cemetery from the early 1700's. Some of the individuals that were buried there were conquistadores and their families, as well as a couple of American soldiers. Most of the dead, however, were infants and a few young people in their early 20's. During the burial Mass, he claimed, "...as we were having the mass to go and rebury them you could feel the warmness and light voices of what would appear to be children in the air, like, just subtle voices" (Daniel R.).

Many Northern New Mexicans believe there is also a mystic power constantly bringing us together. Alice believes powers greater than her brought her to her husband. She was told the following story about her husband:

As the story goes, one day Cruzita [our landlords' adopted daughter] went to visit my mom, Maxine, and her baby, me. She took Manuel [her adopted brother], who was two years old. And during the course of their visit, Cruzita spoke to Alice—which was

me—and told her, “This little boy I’m holding is your boyfriend, and one day you two will get married.” And guess what? Her prophecy did come true. My husband and I have been married for 46 years (Alice).

This passage is funny to me, since it is similar to the story of my parents and of my husband and me. Recently my mother pulled out her First Holy Communion picture. She did a double-take when she saw the face of the little boy standing on the San Juan Church steps behind her. It was my father. These two had been leading parallel lives, but believe it was divine intervention that ultimately brought them together as young adults.

JD, who has devoted his life to religious artwork as a *Santero* and college art instructor, likewise believes the divine are part of our daily lives. He says the *bultos* and *retablos* (free-standing statues and paintings of the Catholic saints) he makes are huggable, and believes they have a spirit. The walls, tables, sideboards and every other available surface of his house are covered with religious artifacts. As we sat on his living room couch he told me about an experience with San Antonio, the saint of lost and stolen items, the poor and the travelers. San Antonio is usually depicted holding the baby Jesus. JD laughed:

I made a derogatory statement about a San Antonio [bulto] I had made, and no sooner did I make the statement and finish painting him and the phone rang. It was Ray from Portero in Chimayo, and he asked me if I had a San Antonio bulto. And [if] I had [one where] the baby was removable, and I said, “Yep.” He said, “Well, bring it to [sic?] to me.” And I sold it within the hour. But it was over something [derogatory] I said [that San Antonio left my house].

Daniel R. also believes in the power of San Antonio, the saint he claimed is his family’s patron saint. He said:



In my family it is St. Anthony has always been our predominant saint and it's kind of neat that I was actually born on the [Native American] feast day of St. Anthony... which is June 13<sup>th</sup>. And I've been very blessed that I was born on this day, not only within my own Hispanic community but within the Native American community, primarily Santa Clara [Pueblo]... I've always been treated kind of special in a way based on my time of my birth and my day (Daniel).

Daniel is referring to the annual celebrations among the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico in honor of the Pueblos' patron saints. He believes, like Curtis, that spirituality has some universal aspects to it, and can be felt by all people across cultures.

Finally, two of the youngest participants, Miquella (“...it's said that children can see evil in adults”) and Becky acknowledged the spirituality of the valley. Some locals like to claim the Indians settled in the Española Valley because of Northern New Mexico's spiritual significance. Then the Spaniards felt it. In the last few decades the Sikhs (a religious group that is a hybrid of Islamic and Hindu traditions) felt it.

### **Conclusion.**

When speaking of Española, although in this instance solely the Hispano population, the population cannot be separated in such a black and white manner leading to the exclusion of the Native Americans. One must always remember that Española is surrounded by and comprised of Indian pueblos. The individual cannot be separated from the family or the land. Cultural and ethnic identity strongly impact the persona of the Española Hispano. Spirituality is so important here. One must remember that we are home to the Santuario de Chimayo, where it is said the land holds mystical powers. Family, land, ethnicity and religion appear to be the major identity shapers for the Hispano of the Española Valley.

## Gender

I examined gender in this study in order to find the distinctions Española Hispanos saw among the sexes, and how these differences impacted their identities. Gender has a major impact on identity and shapes it. Because gender identity is something we wear day in and day out, it shapes our daily lives and experiences. Gender is further influenced by culture. In the Hispano culture, there is the notion of *machismo*. It is probably safe to say here that machismo is alive and well in Española. Machismo is an idea associated with Latino culture, which says that men are strong, powerful and the boss. When I think of machismo, I also think that this mentality makes men feel all-important, and leads them to believe they are the most important person in the family, relationship, etc. Said Alice, “And being Hispanic, we come from very macho, men are very macho, and what they say goes.” Here Alice noted that men are given the authority in social groups, such as the family. Graciela also commented on how growing up as a girl in Española was different from growing up as a boy, thus saying, “I never had to deal with, like, getting in fights, or getting in, or having to, you know, defend my macho-ness, or do any of that.” I assume she is saying that men clash because in Española boys are raised to believe they are the most important, and when socializing with other males, they compete for supremacy. Miquella also commented on physical violence being a part of male identity, stating that had she been a boy she would have probably joined a gang. Participants noted how their gender differences were in part due to machismo, men asserting themselves while women were more demure, and how gender-determined roles defined their identities.

When asked how experiences would be different for participants if they had been born a male instead of a female, or a female instead of a male, participants held the beliefs

that women are regarded as the keepers of house and home, while men are more encouraged to explore the land and the outdoors. Curtis realized gender roles were enforced in the Española Valley across ethnic cultures. He noted the distinction between and the power imbalance of the sexes:

Well I think males have it easier because here [in Española] it's more of a man's world. You know, the women, they have their place, as they call it here. The men are more, they're the ones that do everything and the women pretty much are homebodies and they're housewives and they're mothers. So growing up here, even though my aunts and my grandma and everyone were very strong and everything in their faith, they used to say, 'Well, you men are the ones that have to [go out into the world], it was always you men.' You know, so we kinda knew our place. For a woman I think it's very hard growing up here because you don't get [to do all the things men can do or have the same opportunities]. I mean like I would say education-wise you can go to college, you can get a degree, but it's the man they'll look at first before they look at the woman (Curtis).

Preconceived notions of what it means to be male and what it means to be female in the Española Valley seem to be in large part shaped by family and other primary Discourses (It occurred to me during this study that as a town-and even as a state, since fiestas are celebrated in towns across New Mexico-we enforce the idea of machismo through our annual fiestas events.), and these roles, according to my participants, were enforced in the home, on the land and in the classroom.

### **How gender roles are shaped by family.**

...when I was just little...When I'd take a bath, there was a little blue thing that looked like a boat. And Mom and Dad and my sisters would take off in the evening, and say... [you and your brother] are here by yourselves...You can watch TV. Oh, and I'd take my own bath, I'd get one of the little boats and play with it...When [my parents and sisters] came home, I'd get another one....One day I got in the backseat of the car, we were coming into town, and there was a little boat...And it had syrup in it, and the remnants of ice cream and different things. It was a banana split. My mom and dad, the assholes, were taking my sisters into town for goodies, and my brother and I didn't get nothing. That's 'cause you know [we were boys]... (JD)

When I asked JD how his life would have been different had he grown up a female instead of a male, he surprised me by saying his family would have treated him better. Throughout the interview, he had explained how he and his brother had spent a lot of time outside tending to the family's 15 acres of orchard. I had already known the notion of machismo, but it was not until the course of these interviews that I learned that men thought they were discriminated against too.

Daniel R. felt his sisters were given more leeway in the house while he was given more outside the house. He thought that his sisters were treated more delicately. He explained,

As a male you were taught to let the girls do whatever they want and let them have their way and you didn't bother the girls...I think inside the house I would have got more my say, I could have done more of what I wanted (Daniel R.).

Keith believes he may not have been left to raise himself as a young teenager had he been born a girl. His father took his sister, but left Keith and his two brothers. He thinks more concern for his well-being would have been exhibited by his divorced parents if he had been a girl too. He remembered a specific occasion when his father showed lack of concern:

I went to jail one time and when I went to jail, it was right before Christmas...my dad went, bailed me out, gave me a 30-pack [of beer], five bucks, a pack of frajos [cigarettes] and told me to stay out of trouble [and left] (Keith).

Keith shows here that his father was unconcerned, despite Keith having spent some time in jail. He said his parents were “watchful of [my sister], versus me. They always, they figured I could take care of myself” (Keith). There appears to be a trade off for boys between freedom and a sense of being less cared about. While boys are given more freedom, they are also less cared for because men are seen as being very physically and emotionally strong. Becky cited the ideas that men are stronger and more faultless than women when she said, “...boys get away with so much more than girls do...boys are tougher, they can handle more things.” JD mentioned this gender stereotype of women being physically weaker. He further said that women are more appearance-oriented when he commented that women are “more prissy. Know what prissy is? More clean, more, more doodling with your nails and doing your hair.” Daniel R. noted that his sisters were always dolled up in tights and dress shoes. Here it is evident that women are viewed as being high maintenance and are expected to keep up their physical looks. This is probably because of traditionally-established cultural roles, as noted by Becky when she said, that Española is very “cultural, very strict.” Curtis cited the rigidity of cultural gender roles when he explained the gender-defined activity of baking

Indian bread. He said, “The men chop the wood and the women bake the bread, so that’s how it’s always been done here” (Curtis).

While male participants cited the voice in the home that women in Española have, women noted that men were given more power, leniency and are considered stronger. Alice angrily declared,

...males rule the roost...Being from a Latino culture, the male is always the head, if it’s the father or the sons, they’re always put in a domineering position. And, people accept them no matter what. It seems that they’re fault-free and can almost do no wrong...

It struck me in interviews with female participants that they believed men in Española stuck together and had tight bonds. Women said they would have had stronger bonds with their fathers had they been born male. Miquella believes her father would have tried harder to build a relationship with her after her parents divorced had she been a son. I think Graciela shared this view that men are closer to their sons. She believes she would have been included in more dialogue and known her father’s personality more had she been a boy. Men also cited bonds with other males. Anthony, Keith and Daniel R. all cited doing “manly” activities with their fathers, like hunting. Because women were not included in activities associated with being male, like hunting, their relationships with their fathers suffered, they said. Here the distinction among the gender between male and female goes beyond the family to another identity shaper of the Española Hispano-the land.

***Family and land.***

I grew up in a time where there was still a lot of gender stereotypes where I got the opportunity to go hunting and I have pictures of myself at two years old with my

hunting rifle decked to the teeth in camouflage with bullets strapped up to me and my sisters were in pigtails with little dresses and tights and little white shoes....

(Daniel R.)

Here again we see the distinction of roles and physical appearances associated with gender identity. The above quote shows that men are given more freedom to explore outside, while a woman's place is in the home. Men seem to be encouraged and expected to be physically active outside, tending to the land, building houses (as seen in the interviews of Daniel R., JD, Curtis and Graciela) and even making a living off the land, whereas women seem to be expected to care for the home. The division of labor is apparent in the cases of JD, Curtis, Daniel R., Graciela, and Rebecca. JD, Daniel R. and Curtis all spoke at length about how their roles as men were to be keepers and explorers of the land. Rebecca noted how in her family the men take care of the garden while the women prepare the produce once it is harvested. Graciela explained that she never helped with yard work and was never involved in land-related discourse. She said, "...as far as me doing anything, I never helped clean the ditch...The men, my dad would go out and clean the ditch...[and] they'd have the *mayordomo* elections...I never was really active in that..." (Graciela) Rather, women were involved with household activities, like cooking, as was noted by Rebecca, Becky, and Graciela. Rebecca explained that while male members of the family worked outside, the women were inside. She explained, "...my grandma, she was a great cook. She used to make jellies, and I remember her making bread and all kinds of jellies....And we always used to ...count all the food that we had to put away for the winter" (Rebecca). Rebecca, who is a traditional Chimayo weaver, noted another male-female division of labor, saying that while she and her mother make the rugs, her father builds the looms and collects textile materials.

Graciela explained her gender duties in the home, explaining how she tends to her father and son, saying, “I cook for my dad and I feed him dinner, and he’s perfectly able, but I, I feed him and my son dinner and take care of the house.”

Women noted that men have more opportunities in the world, as seen in Daniel R.’s, Keith’s, Curtis’s and JD’s experiences. “I think if I was a boy, I would actually do more,” explained Graciela. “Where, as a man, [you can travel alone and] you can take your hammock and go sleep out on the beach if you want...” (Graciela) She sees herself as limited because of her gender.

### ***Gender and education.***

Many male participants felt that females are encouraged more in school. I find this in sharp contrast to what I thought of mainstream American society, as well as in schools in the Española Valley. Despite what I had previously thought, many participants noted that they think girls do better in school, and are encouraged more in schooling. Keith said girls do better in school because girls are more responsible. He said, “...Girls...it seems like they’re more responsible. Guys...they don’t think of the consequence[s]...”No ‘I gotta go to school tomorrow,’ it’s like, ‘ah, fuck it. If I make it, I make it, if I don’t, I don’t’” (Keith).

Anthony also thought that girls are more successful in school because of something in their genetic makeup that makes girls more responsible:

I think a girl vs. a boy probably maybe [girls] concentrate more on things than boys do and maybe that's why a lot of girls do better and out in the workplace too because...they focus more, they're more disciplined in a way than boys are. Boys have a tendency to go this way ...and girls walk that straight line more than guys [who] have more distractions I think.



Keith and Anthony thought that girls do better in school because girls are more disciplined and responsible than boys are. Daniel R. said that girls do better in school because of the different ways in which girls and boys are treated at home:

...the way I was taught to read and write [at home], my sisters the way they were taught was different than me. I was given books and kind of left...[to] take it upon myself to read and to write. My sisters were like in my mind taught and shown examples of how to do so. I was kind of like picked it up from listening to people and instead of instructional them showing me how to read and write I would just kind of from seeing them doing it secondhand in passing, I would pick up things in passing and that's the way I was taught. Not that my parents weren't good educators, not trying, I just saw the styles were different with me and my sisters.

Daniel said that the way he was taught to read was different than the way his sisters were taught, and this is a difference that appeared in his home rather than in the school. This seems to coincide with what male participants said about girls being more cared for in the home.

### **Conclusion.**

Gender is a shaping factor in the identity composition of the Española Hispano. Existing gender roles and models, such as the existence of machismo, are enforced within this Hispanic population. Participants suggested that men are regarded as being physically and mentally stronger with more freedom on the land and feel more confident to explore the world, while women are described as keepers of the home, who are expected to have neat appearances and demure personalities, and need to be taken care of. Women were said to do better in school because of their gender as well as having received more academic guidance,

while men were described as receiving little guidance in their education and also as expending less effort. Generational differences we shall discuss in the next section, and may in part be the result of parents “wanting more for their kids,” like in the case of JD, who spoiled his children. He said, “you know what, my kids didn't even help me pull weeds. I pulled weeds. They were allergic to 'em. They got everything I never had. Just like you'd do with your kids, I'm sure” (JD).

### **Generational Differences**

#### **Land.**

All the people that live around me are my relatives. My uncle... bought the biggest part of the land of my grandpa...and my dad, he got the back part of the land and then his sister, she got the other side and now through the years it's just been separated through the children. My dad separated his land between his children, he gave all of us a little piece there so we wouldn't have to go and rent somewhere else so that was a good help (Rebecca).

The above passage exemplifies just one of the many ways in which land usage has changed in the Española Valley during recent generations, being divvied up among more and more family members, decreasing the size of each piece that each individual owns. Land, land, land. That is something that the Norteño once had plenty of. Still, even with owning less land, the Norteño continues to cherish the vast blue skies, the snowy mountain peaks of the Sangre de Cristos and the red tomatoes grown in a neighbor's yard. In the past, when people of this area owned large tracks of land, they made their living off of that land.

Graciela illustrated this when speaking of her family's trade:

My grandpa, when he was younger, he was a shepherd, and he and my father and...my other uncles would actually shepherd sheep. I mean hundreds of sheep, across hills all the way to Colorado. And then he would...that was the way he made his money, and so as a result, we always had a lot of wool blankets at the house.

However, recent generations have moved away from agriculture and have become more reliant on a commercial economy. Curtis said, "You have Wal-Mart now so a lot of people don't raise a lot of animals anymore, they go shop in stores." This has caused many to leave the valley (permanently or commuting daily) for economic means. This shift in economic means has also meant younger participants do not necessarily know an agricultural lifestyle.

Despite the fact that people are not relying on land for their livelihood anymore, the land is still very important to the Norteño. Land is a symbol of culture, heritage, history and family. Its continued importance is a symbol of how the Hispano of the Española Valley is raised, believing that land is an important source of identity, connected to heritage.

### **Religion.**

I remember walking to the Santuario (church) in Chimayo for the first time as a little girl. My dad, two of my sisters and I walked the seven miles, taking nothing but an extra sweater. Even at the crack of dawn those seven miles were filled with other pilgrims, making their Good Friday pilgrimage to Chimayo, just like every other good Catholic in the valley. Naturally we knew people along the way, walking on both sides of the road, going to and coming from Chimayo-kids from school, relatives, the cashier from Center Market-said hello, and kept walking. We passed men dragging crosses, people in wheelchairs, babies in strollers. In the Santuario de Chimayo we prayed and scooped dirt from the sacred hole and

put it into a baggie, to be given to whomever was sick or in need of Divine intervention. Afterwards we walked out through the room full of crutches, canes, pictures, rosaries, everything and anything filling the walls and floor of the little rectangular room, testimonials to the healing power of the dirt. Then we walked home and waited for Easter.

Later in life, when I was away at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque I would drive home, usually on Thursday, the night before Good Friday, filled with anticipation for the next day's walk, my faith reassured by the visions of people walking along the highway northbound from Santa Fe, Pojoaque, and even Santa Cruz.

My most recent walk was five years ago, when I was pregnant with my first child and my friend Marcy was alive. She yelled at me to continue on through that day's snowstorm, past girls in tight clothes, faces covered in makeup; guys yelling pick-up lines from cars, obviously holding a beer between their legs; and Siks and other opportunists at roadside tables, selling drinks and food. I do not remember too many people walking back home. Most walk just one way these days. The relics no longer filled the exit room, having been exposed to vandals and thieves for too long. Good Friday used to be a sacred day; now it is more of a party day. Nowadays it is the official day to pull your lowrider or other fancy car out for the season, to cruise up and down the winding roads to Chimayo and back and forth on Riverside Drive.

The paragraphs above reveal how, to me, religion has changed. Judging from interviews, religion seems to be holding less importance in the daily lives of people, and they are not taking their Sacraments as seriously. Older generations blame the loss of ways among youth on loss of religion. In the past, church was more integrated into the lives of youth. For older participants, such as JD, Alice and Curtis, church held a major role in their lives. Alice

talked about wetting down her braids and walking alone to church as a young girl. JD, influenced by his religious beliefs, has made a career out of religious artwork, and Curtis is proud to say he is involved in both his Native American rituals as well as his Catholic rituals.

However, in the interviews of the youngest participants Miquella, age 18, Becky, 22, and Daniel W. 19, organized religion was not mentioned. Some younger participants realized these lost ways in themselves, and felt weakened morally because of lack of spirituality. For example, Keith, 32, realized after years of living recklessly that his life had no meaning. He said he was living his life without a purpose and asked himself, ““Why the fuck am I doing this, what, what is the point of me?”” (Keith)

The shift from strong religious beliefs to weak religious beliefs seems to be in these youngest of participants, since those who are even just a few years older DO mention religion, such as in the cases of Daniel R. and Graciela, both 36 years old. Daniel talked extensively about religion, and has redirected his artistic talents away from what he called personal pursuits to religious pursuits, in order to benefit more people, he said. Daniel said that he wanted to make artwork for everyone to enjoy, instead of making art for the sole purpose of profit, and now makes not for profit religious art. Graciela explained that she feels religion is a big part of her life. Graciela discussed needing God in her life after finding herself an unwed mother:

I've just gotten a lot closer to God. I've started to read the Bible, to learn about what God wants for my life. I've learned what God's promises are...I was living with [my son's] father at the time, not married, just kind of with him...not really even thinking about my body...as a temple for the Holy Spirit...[Before now] I was...living...the

way the world lives and the way we...live for today, you know, have fun, live for today, those kind of ideas, you know...

Perhaps there is a shift in later years, such as in a person's thirties, where they realize the need for religion and spirituality in life. Older participants did not mention being lost spiritually but rather had strong claims to religion as a part of their identities. Both Alice and Curtis grew up in a time when other religions were coming into the Española Valley, trying to convert the Catholics. As we talked, Curtis told me that part of his family had split from the Catholic Church. Despite their constant attempts to convert him, he claims he will never convert. Alice referred to the cruel ways in which she was treated by her cousins because her mother was a Catholic despite the rest of the family converting to the Assembly of God, a fundamentalist religion. She says during that time period of conversion,

This epidemic [of conversion from Catholicism] grew, as most viruses do, and resulted in the burning of Catholic statues, prayer books, pictures, rosaries, [etc]...[and] they cautioned my cousins about me, because I was Catholic and I was a sinner and I was gonna go to hell and they weren't (Alice).

Alice's mother told Alice that it was her grandfather's dying wish for Alice and her mother to remain Catholic. She claims her grandfather died of a broken heart because he felt Catholicism's influence was decreasing in Northern New Mexico. This seems to me to illustrate how deeply imbedded Catholicism is in the identity of older generations.

Religion, as seen in the interviews, has changed in one important way. Younger generations did not mention a strong presence of spirituality in their lives, thus creating a separate sort of identity from older generations, largely unknowledgeable about the teachings of the Bible and Catholic doctrines. In the past, religion was a major influence on the lives of

the Norteños, whereas with younger participants it is not. This may be related to the shift from a more isolated, homogenous community to a contemporary community strongly influenced by mainstream American values.

**Social norms.**

Alice, who was born to a single mother in the 1940's, and Daniel W., who was born to a single mother in the 1990's, have remarkably different attitudes about being raised by a single mother. Daniel said,

...[My mom] taught me...how to be a better person....If I could go back in life and have both my parents, I don't think I would 'cause I don't think I'd be the person I am today. I mean, I've grown up with three girls, I mean, my mom and my two sisters, and that's all I really need.

Alice, on the other hand, was uncomfortable with her status as an illegitimate child in the 1940's, and cited her illegitimacy as the cause of physical, social and emotional problems. Her difficult birth, she claimed, was a source of physical problems:

...my mother believes that she was never able to have [more] children because when she was in labor to have me, she denied having labor because of the shame she felt. So consequently she held me in her system, and she had a very hard delivery to the point of where I was born with forceps and I was literally yanked out of my mother's system because there were no surgeons, there was no hospital in Española, and it was probably the doctor's feeling that I either take this baby out or this mother and child are both dead. And I had the lumps on my head and my cheek to prove that I was really yanked around (Alice).

Beyond physical problems associated with her difficult birth, Alice believes being illegitimate has caused her social problems. She equates her birth to something of a crime:

In the 1940s', a pregnant woman with no husband was treated as though she committed a crime, my mom said. She continued telling me, she endured the shame from hell, and she was so unhappy she wanted to die. I was such a timid child, and I loved my mom so much, that the very moment she told me this story—I was about six at that time—I began to hate myself so much (Alice).

And at school she was the constant victim of bullies. One social situation that impacted her identity she said occurred when an unknown classmate addressed a Valentine card to her using her biological father's name. She said, "I just wanted to die, I was so embarrassed" (Alice).

Like Daniel W., who did not experience social discrimination due to illegitimacy, Graciela, who is a young unwed mother, also did not. Both her parents knew she was living with her child's father before she became pregnant and, according to Graciela, they did not make a big deal when she told them she was pregnant. She thinks as parents they were probably disappointed, but they did not show any negative feelings. Whereas in Alice's mother's case, although her mother became pregnant without her consent, according to Alice, she still longed for her baby's father to marry her and make them "one big happy family" (Alice). Alice grew up in the mid-twentieth century. More recently, Graciela chose to exclude her child's father from her life. Curtis too felt that unwed mothers and illegitimate children are more accepted in recent times, speaking of the changes within his pueblo of Ohkay Owingeh. He said that in the past, land was given to married couples by the tribal



council, and was not just given to anyone that wanted land. He explained the societal changes that have occurred:

Well now we have families where women are having children, they're not married, so now they [the tribal council] do give them homes, you know property to build a life for their children. Also they do that for men too who are more or less are raising children. So there's that opportunity as well, so that has changed too, it's been modified (Curtis).

Curtis's comment attests to the "loosening," if you will, of values in the valley. He went on to discuss the change in attitudes in the youth of today. He said,

...and I just think these new generations need to open their eyes because they're missing out on a lot and they don't see what we saw when we were growing up. For them it's easy not to be friendly and it's easy to treat people unkindly...(Curtis)

Miquella mentioned this as well. She said,

...If [my parents] were an older generation I think they would be different, more old-fashioned and respect each other better and treat each other better. Because nowadays it's real open to just do whatever and cheat and fight and argue with anything (Miquella).

Likewise, Keith thought his parents would have stayed married had they come from an older generation. He said they would have been more likely to "stick it out" and resolve their differences, because marriage was a more respected institution generations ago.

Another participant, Daniel R., noted the increased violence since his generation, perhaps due to lack of respect. He said today it is different from when he was a kid, because differences were settled without violence. He said,

...us where we settled our differences 90% of the time instead of physically fighting we would dance fight in which you would try to outperform your opponent with pretty wild and off the wall dance moves in order to show them up in front of your peers that you were a better dancer and that's how your arguments were settled back then (Daniel R.).

This new way in which people settle their differences, becoming physically aggressive more readily, is another sign of how respect is less commonly shown among Norteños to other people. Participants noted the changes in social norms are less respect for the institution of marriage (perhaps related to less religious influence in lives) and less respect people show to each other in general.

### **Education.**

Education, be it formal or informal, shapes one's personality and identity. Everyone becomes educated, whether it is on the streets of Mexico City, in a small hut in Indonesia, or in a stale classroom in the United States. In all of these cases, children learn certain Discourses. Referring to formal education, Weiss et al. (2008) observe, school is an important place for youth to learn other Discourses, such as social interaction, male/female relationships, and how to be more independent from the home.

In the Española Valley, with the strong Catholic influence, educational history is tied to Catholicism. Teachers used to be nuns, and the priest was the principal. The experiences of my older participants differ greatly from the younger generations.

Anthony, 53, recalled with a cracked voice how he was very excited to go to school, and how his attitude changed quickly when he did go to school. Despite his initial excitement, when he met the strict nuns and priests, he became terrified. He recalled his

educational experiences to me in a quiet voice: "...the nuns were strict and intimidated me to a point that...I struggled that much to where they held me back" (Anthony). Corporal punishment and shame were the disciplinary methods used by the schools, according to Anthony:

When I was real young...[the principal] slapped me around a few times...And kept me in for punishment from recess and stuff like that, which led to ...less self confidence and more intimidation but that's the way they dealt with things. And yeah one time they even hit me in front of my sister which was kinda disappointing that she had to see it. But she was only herself like maybe in the third grade, fourth grade. And of course if you didn't eat all your food in the cafeteria you got punished or if you were real bad of course they'd hit you, hit you with a ruler or a paddle.

Daniel W.'s younger generation saw more leniency in the classroom:"I see...girls in my class are shopping online while my teacher's giving lecture."

But one thing seems to have stayed the same across generations: Northern New Mexican politics, that is, those in power, influence what goes on in the schools. JD recalled how politics were put above common decency:

... there was two bathrooms in the school. And Candido [the principal] had the keys to one of the bathrooms, and the whole school had to use the other one, including all the kids and all the teachers. The key that he had for the bathroom, he used it, his wife used it, and his children used it...my mother, [one of] five teachers committed a crime, they complained about it to the superintendent. And my mother [and the other four teachers got transferred to separate schools within the Española district].

Daniel W. noted politics influencing school policy as well, citing his choice to attend school in nearby Pojoaque because of the politics in the sports programs in Española. He said that some players were given more play time than others because of who they are related to. Leaving Española schools, as Daniel W. did, has caused a depletion of talent in the valley, especially among high school athletics. The valley's talented youth are enhancing other academic and athletic programs, thus increasing the educational gap between Española and surrounding communities, such as Los Alamos, Santa Fe and Pojoaque. Here I quote Daniel W., a very decorated athlete:

‘Cause the fact of the matter is, these kids are from Española. And I mean, if we really wanted to, and all the kids went back to Española and played for Española, we'd dominate sports...it's sad, because we're from here, but yet we don't play for them.

Education has shifted from a religious-run entity to a public-run entity. Younger participants felt that it is easier for them to be successful in schools because of leniency shown in the classroom as well as their access to technology versus older participants. Younger generations are leaving the public school system for various reasons, such as to be disconnected with local politics. Politics, sadly, still influence educational policy.

### **Ethnicity.**

It occurred to me while coding the data that older generations seemed to be more secure in their ethnic identities. In the old days people from Northern New Mexico said they were “Spanish.” My parents are Spanish. My grandparents (all four of them) were Spanish. Their parents were Spanish. It was that simple. Now we have to be Latino, Hispano, Hispanic, Chicano, etc., etc. I think this has something to do with bilingual status. Among all

five participants characterized as members of the older generation (Alice, JD, Anthony, Rebecca and Curtis), bilingualism is part of their identities. Curtis, although not fluent in Spanish, is a speaker of his indigenous language Tewa. In contrast, among younger participants (Daniel R., Daniel W., Graciela, Becky, Keith and Miquella) only Graciela is bilingual, despite all of their respective parents carrying bilingual status. Furthermore, Graciela is fluent in Spanish by her own design, having learned Spanish through her various travel and educational experiences. Younger participants expressed the desire to be bilingual. Miquella explained that by being bilingual like her parents, she would be able to understand her culture more. Miquella said, “I think that if maybe I was in an older generation I would understand it more, like my culture and be able to communicate with more people and understand them better.”

Yet, even though the younger generation may not be bilingual, I think there is a strong sense of cultural and historical pride present across generations. Participants, despite having a variety of ethnic labels for themselves, do feel that they know their ancestry. Becky did not realize knowledge of own family tree was something unique until she went to college. She said,

I think it's made me realize important family values and culture ... because that's a lot that we hold here, definitely Spanish and New Mexican culture mixed up together. I know where I come from. I've heard other people in classes when we talk about identity and they're like, I don't know where I'm from I don't even know where my grandparents are from. And I can say, ‘You know, I know that part of my family was from France, my mom's side, and I know that part of my family from my dad's side was from Spain (Becky).

For my participants, it was difficult if not impossible to separate their ethnicity and identity. The two are so intertwined that it is hard to speak of one without mentioning the other. Older participants, because they are bilingual, felt more secure and rooted in Spanish ancestry. However, younger participants felt that because they do not speak Spanish, they are not as secure in their cultural identity, which, to many Norteños, is tied to fluency in Spanish.

### **Economics.**

“I think that Española has many opportunities for people. It's just that it's a small community so people want to leave and branch out. But my mom and my grandparents always said, ‘You always go home, you always go back to where you came from,’ and you see that happening a lot” (Curtis).

Economics are the backbone of all societies. In this section one can see how economics have changed in recent generations due to shifts in land usage, as well as increased migration and immigration into the Española Valley. Economics in the Española Valley, in the past, was dependent on an agricultural society. Graciela, 36, reflected that in just her dad’s lifetime the shift in economics was swift. Her grandfather and father were shepherds, but now her father works for the city of Española. She said, “I mean, like I said, my dad was helping my grandpa as a shepherd, and so the economy then switched, changed, from one generation to the next” (Graciela). Rebecca remembers the days when people earned a living off the land. She said,

...we were always *escarlandoing* (harvesting) and all that and then when I was about 14 I started the trade of weaving...[My in-laws] used to go sell cucumbers down the street because their dad used to plant too, he used to be a good good gardener. They had tons of cucumbers to sell, they would go selling cucumbers (Rebecca).

However, gardening, ranching and other forms of subsistence reliant on the land, such as wool use for weaving, have decreased, and the people of Española have increased reliance on neighboring communities for economics. The Los Alamos National Laboratory, for example, is 30 minutes “up the hill” from Española, and has been a source of financial means as well as a hated entity for the people of Española. While providing well-paying jobs, the Lab’s physical proximity has put Española in jeopardy for chemical exposure, has caused migration into the area, and has made Española locals yet another source of jokes for those migrating to Los Alamos from points elsewhere.

Economics have impacted religion and art as well. As noted earlier, older generations in the valley did not see a strong artistic appreciation for Spanish Colonial Art. This art’s purpose was more for religious practices. However, Spanish Colonial Art has become too expensive for locals to buy. JD noted this, and cited the increased cost of Spanish Colonial Art as the reason why he became a Santero. He said that he wanted a piece of art for his birthday and his friend said it was too expensive. JD said, “I said, how much is it? She said \$4000. I said, you know what? For \$4000, I’ll make one.” This is an example of a change in local economy. It is an example of what locals refer to as not being able to afford their own culture (such as the land).

It appears that older generations grew up believing they would stay and live in Española. Younger generations may be raised believing they need to leave their community in order to be successful, or in order to be deemed successful, as noted by Becky and Daniel W., two of the youngest participants. Becky felt that since she was attending the University of New Mexico she was more successful than people who still live in Española. She viewed education as a way of escape: “I mean I got out of here, I’m at UNM,” and she called New

Mexico “the Land of Entrapment,” referring to its lack of job opportunities (Becky). Daniel W. recognized this “leave to succeed” ideology. He said, “...many people say, ‘No, I don’t want to move back. Who wants to stay stuck in Española, there’s no opportunity...’” (Daniel W.) He added,

I think there is opportunity if you put yourself out there... you could be a doctor and you could live in Española...you might have to travel to Santa Fe. But you could still be a doctor and live your dream (Daniel W.).

Younger generations are seen as having more opportunities, as mentioned by Graciela, Daniel War, Curtis, JD, and Becky. These participants believed that technological and white collar jobs were easier to obtain in today’s Northern New Mexican society and that opportunities to travel and get an education are more prevalent. In past generations, claimed participants, one of the few ways to see the world beyond Española was by being in the military. Among older generations, as well as among the older participants of the younger generation, we see more with military backgrounds. Anthony noted the various members of his family who had been in the military:

My dad went to war, one of his brothers. But one of my other uncles went to the Korean War, plus a bunch of my uncles went to war in World War II and the Korean War but mainly World War II.

In discussing her father, Alice commented, “He was away at that time and I had no knowledge other than in later years I did come to the realization that he had been a prisoner of war in Japan.” Among middle generations, Keith and Graciela noted their fathers’ military service: “My mom said when he came back from Vietnam ...he was a little tripped out,” said Keith. Graciela observed, “I don’t think [there were opportunities to travel in the past.] ...In



my parents' generation, you know, my dad did a lot of traveling because he was in the Navy.”

Because of this concept of leaving to succeed, said some participants, the valley is losing its young talent. I have noticed that many people of my parents' generation are retiring, and there are not enough qualified local, young applicants to fill their positions. They are filled by “new blood” into the community; people are migrating into the valley from outside and filling positions, like schoolteachers or the director at the electricity company.

### **Substance abuse.**

“Yes...a lot of the young generation are dying from alcohol abuse” (Rebecca).

Based upon the data I collected, substance abuse appeared to be more prevalent among younger generations. Although most participants mentioned it as a reality of living in the valley, the younger participants are the ones that mentioned partaking in illicit drugs and alcohol. Miquella noted that she has tried drugs and alcohol because of peer pressure. Daniel W. likewise noted doing drugs and trying alcohol among friends. And Becky justified staying away from Española because of the likelihood of being exposed to substance abuse.

However, among the participants that mentioned they had dabbled in drugs and alcohol were the ones that mentioned family histories of substance abuse. Miquella noted that her maternal grandfather was an alcoholic as is her mother. She believes this is what led her mother to her father in high school, because he [her father] was and still is a substance abuser. Before Keith's parents moved out, he remembers his dad partying every Friday. This leads me to assume that substance abuse has become part of the structure and identity of some families in Española. In addition to the examples above, it is evident from Curtis's

experience with his father dying of a heroin overdose, and JD's being raised by an alcoholic father (both members of the older generation) that substance abuse has been a reality of the valley for some time.

### **Conclusion**

The experiences of older generations differ dramatically from those of younger generations. In younger generations, with the loss of the Spanish language as well as changes in traditional lifestyles, like living off land, people are questioning their heritage more and more. Participants noted with nostalgia and dismay how the Española Valley has changed, including increased drug abuse since the 1970's, more child rearing out of wedlock, less participation in church traditions, and decreased reliance on land and community and more reliance on careers in technology, located farther and farther outside the valley.

However, I did find three things that did NOT seem to change much from one generation to the next. There is still a strong bond of kinship among friends and families, poverty is still a reality of the valley and, despite ethnic prejudices and conflicts, Norteños largely remain a proud people. Finally, the identity and experiences of Española Hispanos across generations are so intricately woven across themes, it is hard if not impossible to separate various aspects of life into predetermined categories. One must look at the whole in order to see the sum of the parts.

## Discussion

### Summary

I went into this research hoping to collect stories involving life's rites of passage that were passed down in Hispano families from the Española Valley of Northern New Mexico. These stories, I had hoped, would be of extraordinary feats of ordinary people, or clever cuentos of old. However, I soon realized that participants much preferred to talk about themselves, centering themselves as the protagonists in stories, with their families and friends serving as supporting characters. In their stories it appeared that women played centering roles, just like men, despite what I found in research about gender and narrative. Furthermore, I had expected each hour-long interview to consist of one long, detailed story. What I got were a series of smaller stories. These stories took on the form of autobiographies, and exemplified how life's everyday experiences have shaped participants' identities.

My research was guided by three research questions: (1) What do the participants' stories tell about New Mexican Hispanos of the Española Valley? (2) How do their childhood experiences compare/contrast between males and females, and how do these differences shape their identities? (3) How are experiences of older members of the study population (Española natives) different/similar to those of younger participants, and how do these generational differences shape their identities? I chose these research questions because I wanted to see how the Española Valley and its people have changed since my grandmother's generation, examine gender identities among these New Mexican Hispanics, and let the people of the valley tell the stories of their identities themselves.

I interviewed 11 Hispanos from Española of both genders, who varied in age, economic status, social status, education level and community of Española from which they

are from. Through listening to stories of their childhoods I learned about what they consider the important aspects of their lives and constitute their identities. These six themes were family, religion, land, ethnicity, education and economics. My research shows that the identity of the Española Hispano is so intricately intertwined among these six themes, attesting to their dependence upon one another.

In comparing and contrasting the experiences of older generations versus younger generations I found that the Hispanic culture of Northern New Mexico is in transition, and has been in this rapid transition during the past century. This suggests a change in local culture, and poses a struggle for the Hispano people, who fight to maintain their Norteño lifestyle and heritage, despite the impeding “McDonald’s Americanization” of the region. Through my research I have also come to the conclusion that oral tradition is being lost among younger generations, most specifically those less than 30 years of age. These participants, as noted in the cases of Becky and Daniel W., felt that their parents had sheltered them from the hardships and evils of the valley, and preferred to talk less to their children about the woes of the valley. Oral tradition of the Hispano people of the Española Valley may be lost, say for written documentation.

### **Discussion of the Results**

Among the six themes that emerged as significant in the lives of the Española Norteño, family seems to be the most important. Despite conflict, families stick together through good times and bad times, and familial bonds are strongly recognized. Land was also seen as important, tied to economy, family and cultural heritage. Unlike family bonds, which did not seem to change across generations, the landscape and land usage of Northern New Mexico has changed, from an agricultural society to an industrial society. Religion has seen

change as well. Spirituality is still evident in younger participations, and is a source of Norteño identity, but religious routines are not as widely practiced, and faith does not seem to be as strong. A third theme seemed to change from one generation to the next. This is cultural and ethnic identity, which younger participants noted not feeling as confident about because they do not speak Spanish. These younger participants, despite their linguistic disadvantage to older participants, felt they have the advantage in school and in the economy. Participants noted more opportunities for younger generations, but it was commonly noted that opportunities lie outside the valley and apart from the traditional agricultural lifestyle of Northern New Mexico.

As this study reveals, the identity of the native Hispano people of the Española Valley is influenced by factors such as family, religion, land, ethnicity, education and economics. These are complex issues and not without contradictions. Leave or stay? Hispano, Hispanic, Chicano, Latino or Other? Agricultural or technological? To be a Chicana/o means to struggle with identity and origin. Ortega Martinez (2008) noted that the identity conflict present in Chicana/os, as reflected in Latin texts, is due to the shifting identity of Hispanos, from pre to post Colonialism. From Indian Identity to Hispano Identity to Anglo Identity. Chicana/o identity, “oscillates between cultures, tradition, languages, politics and histories...” (Ortega Martinez, 2004, p.222) To be a Hispano from Northern New Mexico means to grapple with these identity conflicts day in and day out, and is a search to find a comfortable middle ground.

### **Implications for Future Research**

My study has several implications for educational practice and policy. First and foremost, as revealed through my participants’ school experiences, it is important to learn

about the students we teach. When teachers make the effort to understand their students' home, linguistic and cultural backgrounds, they are better able to access their students' prior knowledge and create a learning environment that students deem meaningful. Most participants noted feeling disconnected and/or alienated from the schools.

As noted by Gee, school Discourses conflict with home Discourses of minority populations, thus making the school an inhospitable place (1992). Gee wrote, "...there are deep conflicts between many minority home-based primary Discourses and various dominant Discourses in the schools and the society at large, which are often controlled in the interest of the elites who are reluctant to truly share power with minorities" (1992, p. 109). For example, at school the individual is often placed above the group, which is in conflict with the home values of the Hispano student from Española, where family bonds are highly stressed. Instead of polarizing the Discourses of home and school, educators should look at how important family is in the lives of Hispanos of Northern New Mexico, and capitalize on those experiences in the classroom by providing relevant literature, writing experiences, guest speakers, cultural events, etc. We have seen that art, especially religious art, is of some significance to this studied population. This shows a need for returning art to the schools as an important learning tool, an outlet of expression and possible future income.

We live in a bilingual state where bilingualism is taught in the classroom, yet only one of the younger participants of this study is bilingual. The other young participants noted with dismay their lack of bilingual status. Acquisition in this context means being apprenticed into something, or subconsciously learning through observation, whereas learning in this context means learning through conscious reflection and involves analysis and description (Gee, 1992). Students, like my participants, who do not grow up speaking

Spanish at home stand less of a chance to learn the language of their ancestors in the classroom. In order to improve the learning and teaching of native languages, a model of acquisition-based learning may be adopted. This model of learning through acquisition, says Gee, is especially useful in teaching languages (Gee, 1992). This model may be applied to the teaching of Spanish in New Mexican classrooms in order to retain the Spanish ancestry of this area and state, for personal growth as well as for future opportunities for our students. By learning Spanish, our students can maintain ties with their ancestors, become more secure in their ethnic identity, and improve their future earning potential. Spanish language usage is an important part of the culture of this area. Younger participants believed they would feel more confident in their cultural identity if they were speakers of Spanish.

Culture is another thing that, as educators, we need to reinforce in the classroom. The various elements that comprise the Española Hispano identity, which is so intricately woven and connected among religion, land, family and ethnicity, should be taken into consideration in order to provide culturally-relevant learning experiences. By teaching students their history and their culture, we can instill in them cultural pride, and better prepare them for facing the outside world, with its prejudices and discriminations. Gee writes that faith in one's Discourses equals success (1992). If we can teach students to have faith in themselves, then they will be more successful in the outside world.

The ways in which we teach students based on gender also needs to be addressed. Participants noted how boys are taught differently than girls, and how this has been to the detriment of boys. Educators must be aware of gender inequalities, and more gender equality needs to be practiced in the classroom.

Where did the stereotypes of the Española Valley come from? Who is perpetuating them? How can we dispel them? The various stereotypes about the Española Valley are of concern to me as a member of this studied population. Like my participants, I have faced these stereotypes in my own personal experiences. Like Thomas (2003), I have wondered, How do certain sociopolitical conditions cause changes or lack of changes in stereotypes from one generation to the next? This is something that I believe needs to be examined further. One can argue that the rapid change, as well as the lack of change, such as is the case with familial relationships influencing all aspects of life, are causing an inner struggle in this society of Hispanics.

### **Conclusions**

In this thesis I examined the experiences of Hispanos of Española. Because of increased Americanization in the Española Valley and in Northern New Mexico in general, younger generations are experiencing a different cultural identity than older generations. The identity of the Hispano people needs to be strengthened; youth need to be taught pride in their identity. This is not a unique phenomena but rather a global issue we face, as we enter into a “global” century of increased monolingualism. However, the Hispano population of Northern New Mexico *is* unique from other populations of European descent in the United States as well as other Hispanic populations, because a European homeland is not recognized. Although most Hispanos realize that their ancestors once upon a time came from Spain, because of the length of time Hispanos have been settled into this geographic region, *Northern New Mexico* is considered the homeland. One can associate this population’s ties to homeland with those of Native Americans, albeit Native Americans have occupied this continent much, much longer. This connection to homeland within the United States has



caused confusion for peoples outside this Hispano population, who believe that all Hispanos are immigrants, or must speak Spanish. Furthermore, the native Hispano population of Northern New Mexico has been judged harshly by other Hispanos, who also believe that Hispanos must all speak Spanish, or else feel that Northern New Mexico Hispanos are denying their Mexican or other heritage.

This conflict, caused mostly by outside opinions, has created an inner conflict in younger generations. This “identity crisis” I compare here to Native American populations, who also struggle with being Native American as well as being American (Gaztambide-Fernández, Harding & Sordé-Martí, 2004). I see in Northern New Mexico the feeling of being separate from the United States while still being a part of and within the United States, just like the Native American. As Sandy Marie Anglás Grande (2004) states in her writing about the American Indian identity,

The fact that nearly two-thirds of American Indians remain closely tied to their reservations not only points to the continued significance of land in the formation of American Indian identity, but also suggests that a large portion of the Indian population remains fairly segregated from the rest of the nation (p. 195).

This is similar to the Hispanic Norteño of New Mexico, who, until recent decades, has been fairly geographically isolated from the rest of the United States. This rapid onslaught of enculturation has caused inner conflict among native New Mexican Hispanos, who have seen their ways of life change drastically from one generation to the next, and who do not want to be lumped into predetermined ethnic terms but would rather be identified as a unique population. This population is characterized by connection to family, land and God.

Furthermore, as noted in the body of the thesis, strong familial bonds influence the identity of the Hispano of Northern New Mexico. Because of lack of economic opportunities in this region, many feel compelled to leave in order to succeed. However, because of strong familial bonds, one is torn between leaving and staying. This plays a major factor in what is life for Española Hispanos. The identity of the Española Hispano is in constant crisis, always a struggle between two or more things-family vs. self, land vs. urban development, the past vs. the present. The complex issue of identity, I believe, will continue to be a challenge to the Hispanos of the Española Valley for years to come.

**APPENDICES**

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**APPENDIX A**  
**INTERVIEW PROTOCOL**

Project: España Rites of Passage-Growing up in the Española Valley of Northern New Mexico

Permission to use the words and content of this interview in verbatim or otherwise is granted by the interviewee to the interviewer, Maria Elena Salazar, henceforth known as MES, for use in above-mentioned project as agreed upon in a signed consent form. A pseudonym will be used at the request of the interviewee.

Date of interview:

Time of interview:

Place:

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

Interviewee phone number:

Brief description of interviewee (Age, ethnicity, occupation, etc.):

Questions:

1. What is your relationship/family's to the Española Valley? Specific areas? (Alcalde, Sombrillo, Westside, etc.)
2. Please tell me your story.
3. What made this incident so remarkable?
4. What impact has this event had on your life? (How has this shaped you as a person?)

Follow-up questions:

- a.) I'm curious to understand how you think gender is portrayed in this story. How might this event have been different if you were a male/female instead?
- b.) How are generational differences portrayed? Do you think if you were of a different generation this experience would've been different?
- c.) What does this story say about the people of the Española Valley?

# APPENDIX B

## CONSENT FORM

### The University of New Mexico Main Campus IRB Consent to Participate in Research

#### Spana Rites of Passage: Growing up in the Española Valley of Northern New Mexico

##### Introduction

You are being asked to participate in a research study that is being done by Maria Elena C. Salazar, who is the Principal Investigator and a graduate student, from the Department of Language, Literacy and Sociocultural Studies in the College of Education. This study is supervised by faculty on her thesis committee. This research is studying stories of Northern New Mexico and how they reflect the culture of the area.

During the course of this study, Ms. Salazar will collect narrations of real life experiences of the Hispanic people of the Española Valley. The stories she hopes to collect will involve "rites of passage", or events that have occurred in an individual's life that help to shape the life of that person. These experiences may be something small, such as the first time a person goes fishing, or something big and highly organized, such as a wedding. Through these stories, Ms. Salazar hopes to capture everyday experiences of the people of the Española Valley for literary use as well as for qualitative research (i.e. looking at the culture of the valley).

You are being asked to participate in this study because you live in Española, New Mexico, and know stories that reflect the culture of the area. Ten people will take part in this study at the University of New Mexico.

This form will explain the research study, and will also explain the possible risks as well as the possible benefits to you. We encourage you to talk with your family and friends before you decide to take part in this research study. If you have any questions, please ask one of the study investigators.

##### What will happen if I decide to participate?

If you agree to participate, the following things will happen:

- \*You will be interviewed regarding a true event you experienced or know about, or a unique cultural tale.
- \*Your story will be recorded using interviewer notes as well as a tape recorder.
- \*Your story may or may not be used in a thesis prepared by Ms. Salazar for the University of New Mexico.
- \*Your interview will take one to two hours. In addition, Ms. Salazar may ask to meet with you again for approximately 30 minutes to clarify information.

Please initial if you agree with the following statements:

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\_\_\_\_\_ My name and likeness may be used in the thesis and any products of this thesis. If I do not wish to have my name used, a pseudonym will be used. Note: No photographs will be taken. However, Ms. Salazar may describe my physical appearance when providing background information associated with my interview.

\_\_\_\_\_ Ms. Salazar may retell my account to her desire or use it verbatim.

\_\_\_\_\_ Ms. Salazar may quote me.

\_\_\_\_\_ Ms. Salazar may use my story for her purposes, personal or professional.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that I can refuse permission for certain items to be used, and still participate in this study.

**How long will I be in this study?**

Participation in this study will take a total of one to two hours over a period of one day, with possible follow-up for verification of facts, clarification of confusing points in story, etc. The interview will take place between August 1, 2009 to December 15, 2009. A possible follow-up interview will also take place during that time frame, within a month of the initial interview.

**What are the risks of being in this study?**

- Risk is loss of privacy through narration and sharing of personal stories.
- There are risks of stress, emotional distress, inconvenience and possible loss of privacy and confidentiality associated with participating in a research study.

For more information about risks, ask one of the study investigators.

**What are the benefits to being in this study?**

There will be no monetary benefit to you from participating in this study. However, a benefit you may experience is the enjoyment of telling your story to me. Also, it is hoped that information gained from this study will illustrate the unique culture of Northern New Mexico and preserve the culture for future literary use and scrutiny.

**What other choices do I have if I do not want to be in this study?**

You do not have to participate in this study if you do not feel comfortable or do not wish to.

**How will my information be kept confidential?**

We will take measures to protect your privacy and the security of all your personal information, but we cannot guarantee confidentiality of all study data.

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Information contained in your study records is used by Ms. Salazar, The University of New Mexico IRB that oversees human subject research, and other regulatory entities will be permitted to access your records. There may be times when we are required by law to share your information. However, your name will not be used in any published reports about this study.

**What are the costs of taking part in this study?**

There are no costs for participating in this study.

**Will I be paid for taking part in this study?**

There is no pay for participating in this study.

**How will I know if you learn something new that may change my mind about participating?**

You will be informed of any significant new findings that become available during the course of the study, such as changes in the risks or benefits resulting from participating in the research or new alternatives to participation that might change your mind about participating.

**Can I stop being in the study once I begin?**

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You have the right to choose not to participate or to withdraw your participation at any point in this study without affecting any services to which you are entitled.

You may be withdrawn from the study if your account is not deemed valid or your credibility is in question.

**Whom can I call with questions or complaints about this study?**

If you have any questions, concerns or complaints at any time about the research study, Maria Elena C. Salazar, or his/her associates via Dr. Elizabeth Noll, her faculty advisor, will be glad to answer them at 505-929-2498/ 505-277-9610. If you need to contact someone after business hours or on weekends, please call 505-929-2498 and ask for Maria Elena Salazar. If you would like to speak with someone other than the research team in regards to any complaints you have about the study, you may call the UNM IRB at (505) 277-0067.

**Whom can I call with questions about my rights as a research subject?**

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If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, you may call the UNM IRB at (505) 277-0067. The IRB is a group of people from UNM and the community who provide independent oversight of safety and ethical issues related to research involving human subjects. For more information, you may also access the IRB website at <http://hsc.unm.edu/son/research/HRRC/maincampusirbhome.shtml>.

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**Consent**

You are making a decision whether to participate in this study. Your signature below indicates that you read the information provided (or the information was read to you).

I have had an opportunity to ask questions and all questions have been answered to my satisfaction. By signing this consent form, I agree to participate in this study. A copy of this consent form will be provided to you.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Adult Subject (print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Adult Subject

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**INVESTIGATOR SIGNATURE**

I have explained the research to the subject or his/her legal representative and answered all of his/her questions. I believe that he/she understands the information described in this consent form and freely consents to participate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Investigator/ Research Team Member (type or print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of Investigator/ Research Team Member)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**APPENDIX C**  
**OUTLINE OF THEMES**

Themes

- I. Family
  - A. Support, Bonds and Connections
  - B. Fathers and Veterans
  - C. Courtship
  - D. Married vs. Unmarried
  - E. Stories-Local and Familial
  - F. Traditions and Routines
  - G. Substance Abuse
  - H. Male vs. Female
  
- II. Religion
  - A. Spiritual Experiences
  - B. Art
  - C. Stories
  - D. Superstition and Beliefs
  - E. Lost Ways
  - F. Split from Catholicism-Personal or via Other Religions
  - G. Traditions
  
- III. Agriculture
  - A. Ditches
  - B. Acreage
  - C. Male vs. Female
  
- IV. Ethnicity
  - A. Cultural Identity
  - B. España Pride vs. Nonpride
  - C. Ethnic Terminology
  - D. American vs. New Mexican
  
- V. Education
  - A. Good
  - B. Bad
  - C. Remedial
  - D. Male vs. Female
  - E. Leaving to Succeed

VI. Economics

A. Leaving to Succeed

B. Employment

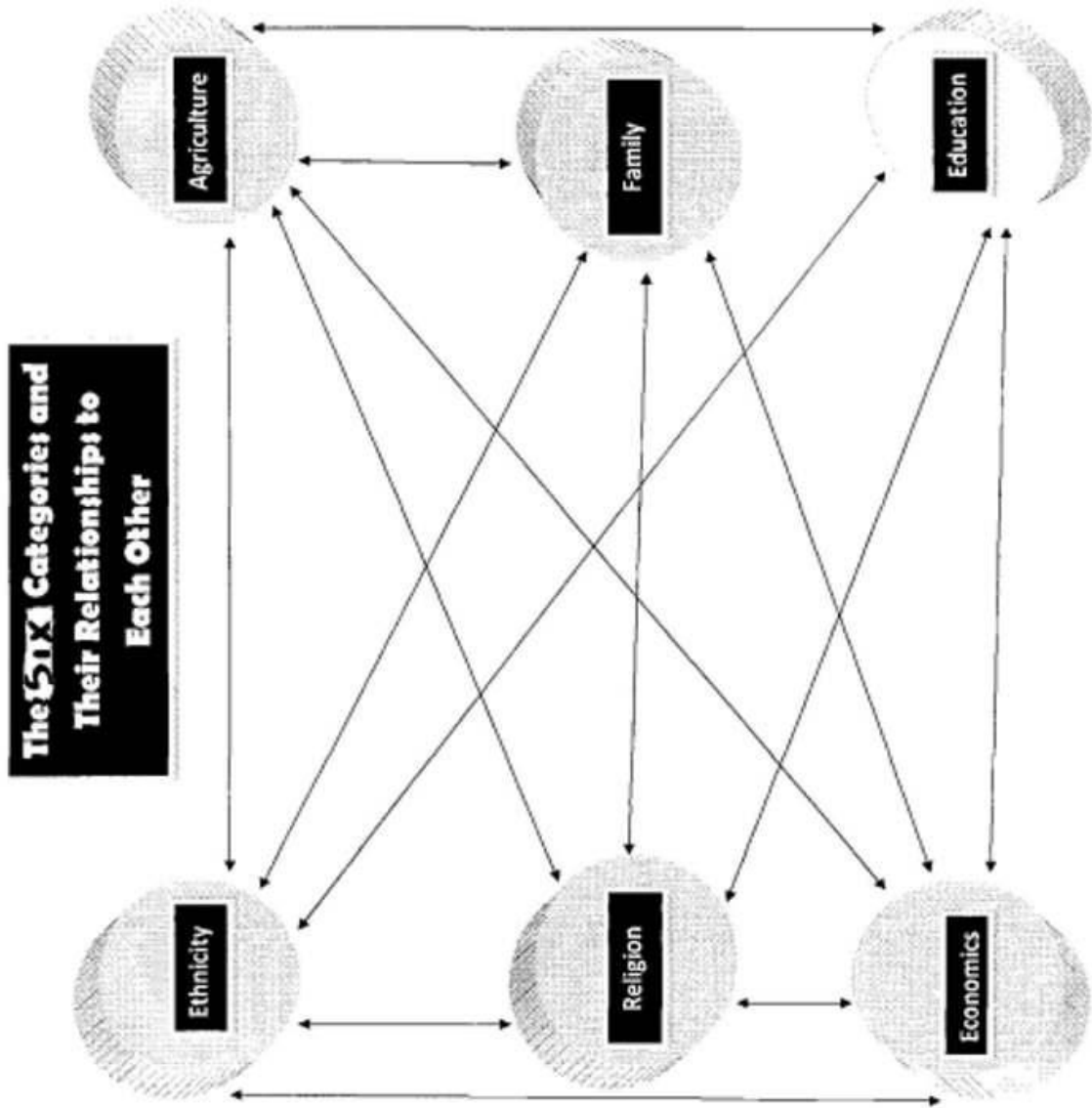
C. Poverty

D. Generational

Generational italicized throughout.

APPENDIX D

VISUAL OF THEMES AND THEIR CONNECTION TO ONE ANOTHER



## APPENDIX E

### THE NAMING OF SANTA CRUZ

Okay I'm gonna tell you how I learned about what Santa Cruz de la Canada meant and growing up there I would always hear stories about that there was war there and a battle between the Spanish and the Mexican army and the American army there, never knew what it meant or how it got its name. I was hearing about a lady named St. Helen and she was a British princess who, this was like in the first century A.D., and she married the emperor of Rome and their kid was named Constance the Great. And this lady she was a Pagan princess and she believed in Pagan gods and what not, and she had a vision when she was an old woman and she dreamt that she would find the true cross that Jesus was crucified on. And so she went and she went on this holy pilgrimage to Golgotha where Christ supposedly was crucified and she found these crosses and brought them back, some stakes and whatnot.

And her son who was the emperor of Rome was also a Pagan and he was in shock that his mom had gone and gotten these crosses and threatened her life and also his being that they were Pagans and they prayed to different gods, and he believed that these crosses were the true crosses or whatnot but he begged his mom to get rid of them so she did so they wouldn't burn them or destroy them she had them split into slivers of wood, little wooden slivers and put into reliquaries which were a bunch of crosses, put with gems or whatnot but had little pieces of wood that were embedded inside of them. And they were shipped all around the world and every community that was named Santa Cruz was founded and named that because one of the crosses was housed there. So I wondered if this is really true and being that I grew up just hundreds of feet from the church I went and asked the priest if this was true and he said that yes this was true. And that I could come and see the cross on one special

day which was for *Cinco de Mayo*. And I could come in and witness it and the whole community could see it firsthand every year on this special day. And it was true, we had one of these holy crosses that was over 1900 years old...I got to see it with my own eyes...Got to see the cross, not the pieces of wood but the cross that houses them. It's inside the church and it's buried there inside. It's not buried but it's inside the church but it only comes out once a year. And it's a small cross, not very large, a few inches. But it's beautiful (Daniel R.).

## APPENDIX F

### EXAMPLE OF RELIGIOUS FOLKLORE

...And it was a story about a little old man and his wife and they were very poor people and the wife had prepared a full chicken for her husband which at that time was very luxurious, it was a lot for one man to eat by himself because they were poor people. And she had saved up and told her husband, you know this is for you, honey, I want you to take this with you, you're a good man and you work hard for your family and I want you to be strong today. Don't share it with anyone. And he took it with him and he left on his way. Well as he's walking he comes upon a man and the man tells him, hey I see you have a full chicken. I'm starving. Will you share it with me? And he tells him, well who are you? Well I'm the devil. And he tells him, no, I won't share it with you. And he tells him, well why not? He says, because you're not just. You corrupt those around you, you tempt them, you torture their souls. No, be away from me, I will not share my food with you. And he continues on his path.

As he continues he comes across another man and that man as well tells him, I see you have a chicken there will you share it with me? He tells him, well who are you? He says, I'm God. And he tells him, why should I share my chicken with you, you are not just? He says, what do you mean? You take those who you want, you lay favor on those that you wish and torment and let those others around you suffer. And let their souls be condemned. He said, no, I will not share my chicken with you because you are not just. So he continues on his way and he comes across a third man. And the third man tells him, hey I see you have a chicken there how about sharing your food with me? Who are you? He says, I am death. Sure sir, sit with me because you are just. You take the old, you take the young, you take the sick

and the healthy. You take the happy and the sad. Sit with me my friend because you are just. The only justice there is in this world and the only true test of faith is death. My father in law shared this at the cemetery with all of us and it brought to me the true meaning of faith. The true meaning of faith is expressing love and gratitude to those that are living and praying for those that are dead. And until that moment I didn't realize what we were accomplishing and what we were doing. We were honoring our fellow man who had departed hundreds of years before us and we were relaying their remains back to God and re-sanctifying their deaths and acknowledging their existence, but at the same time we were acknowledging and bringing together our family and our friends and our community that this was something special that we gotta acknowledge those that are living around us and not ignore them. So that's what faith is. Being true and being honest and being respectful of the living and praying for those that are dead (Daniel R.).



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<sup>1</sup> It is local lore that S\*\*\*\*\* lost his wits to a bad hit of acid. I am unclear on the real cause of his mental illness.