THE HISPANO HOMELAND DEBATE: NEW LESSONS

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For decades observers of ethnicity in New Mexico have been encountering the phenomenon that Nancie Gonzalez called the "New Mexico legend."[1] At the heart of the New Mexico legend is the contention that, through the centuries, New Mexico has remained isolated from the rest of the world and, as a result, the cultural heritage associated with the native Spanish-surnamed people there is "distinctive," representing a legacy that is not Mexican in origin or nature. The list of scholars and other writers who have commented on this proposition is now quite long. The Spanish Heritage—the claim that the native Hispanic legacy in New Mexico is essentially 'Spanish' or 'Spanish colonial'—is but one among several Hispano distinctiveness versions. It is, however, one that makes quite provocative racial, cultural, and historical claims for *Nuevo mexicanos*. As a result, the overall history of published commentary on the subject of Hispano identity is marked by some radically dissonant conclusions.

Compare, for example, the following views from the past. In his 1943 community study, anthropologist Olen Leonard comments on New Mexico's famed historical isolation and states that the resulting uniqueness provided for ". . . the maintenance of old Spanish culture in the area to such an extent that an Andalusian of 18th Century Spain would probably feel at home in a village such as El Cerrito today."[2] Some years later, sociologist Armando Valdez chastised the whole suggestion of a Spanish culture in the Southwest, calling it a high-brow affectation commonly held by middle-class Mexican Americans in the Southwest. "Therefore," Valdez says, "to designate the Spanish-surnamed, Spanish-speaking population of New Mexico as Spanish American is not only grossly contradictory to historical fact but it is a vacuous ethnic taxonomy."[3]

As polarized as they appear, these pronouncements complement one another like adjoining pieces of a jig saw puzzle. In his naive fantasy, Leonard disregards fundamentally different societal contexts in situations existing centuries apart.[4] Valdez, for his part, falls back on the smug, rather easy assault on

the bourgeois ethnic. Together, the two attitudes demonstrate the power of New Mexico's ethnic dynamics, which have often ensnared observers within their own fields of ideological contestation. From this perspective, Leonard and Valdez form a classic rhetorical couplet within the greater, socially rooted, and highly ramified processes of ethnic identity in the Southwest.

Another, more recent, set of observations on ethnicity in New Mexico refer directly to each other. Geographer Richard Nostrand unwittingly sparked what is known as the "Hispano Homeland Debate" in his 1980 article, which used census data to chart the residence patterns of New Mexico Hispanos for the year 1900. Nostrand graced his otherwise useful figures and maps with the classic statement that Hispanos "are culturally distinctive among persons of Spanish-Indian or Mexican descent"; moreover, that in their areas of major concentration, "Mexican Americans and Indians were too few to have diluted their [Hispano] culture."[5] The cultural interpretation in Nostrand's piece drew two relatively quick critical responses, one from Niles Hansen and another from J. M. Blaut and Antonio Ríos-Bustamante, both of which argued that Hispanos in New Mexico are just as Mexican in cultural content and in their major ethnic identity as Mexican Americans elsewhere in the Southwest.[6] Nostrand proferred a reply to Hansen,[7] after which support for his position came in from Marc Simmons and Angelico Chavez.[8] Rounding out the initial phase of debate then were D. W. Meinig and Thomas Hall both of whom observed simply on the difficulties of analysis being raised on both sides of the debate.[9]

Unlike the off-hand remarks of Leonard and Valdez, Nostrand and his critics argue by resort to historical fact, cultural interpretation, census data, and social conceptualization. Yet many of their observations seem like dressed up representations of social rhetorics. As such, Hall and Meinig are entirely correct in observing respectively that in the whole exchange, "several levels of controversy are conflated," and that "matters of ethnic self-identity are notoriously complex, elusive, subject to change historically and cannot be resolved by the kinds of evidence offered in this case."[10]

Sylvia Rodríguez has since made the one notable advance in relation to the debate.[11] Rodríguez, an anthropologist with extensive field experience, transcends, through analytical clarity, the limited terms of the original debate. Lamenting the lack of ethnic theory in the debate, she introduces some key theoretical points of departure, and demonstrates the critical role empirical knowl-

edge must begin to play before the complexities of culture and identity in New Mexico can be fully appreciated.

Rodríguez registers the crucial distinction between the "etic" perspective of the observer and the "emic" perspectives of the actors in actual life. Rather than insist on the truth or insidiousness of the distinctiveness claim, the need is to recognize the 'reactive' nature of ethnic identity, usually in response to emergent conditions of ethnic contention over resources. In New Mexico the chief objects of ethnic contention have been land and water. Ethnic identities, including that of Hispano distinctiveness and homeland, are constantly being "constructed, deconstructed and reconstructed" to meet emergent contingencies of ethnic competition. A primordial right-or-wrong categorization may blind one to this important point. The root of ethnic difference does not lie in a contrast of culture traits. Rather, ethnic boundaries are sustained "to structure group relations and to organize differential access to and control over critical resources, particularly in situations of competition."[12] Ethnic boundaries are both situational (subject to adaptation in everyday life) and structural (resulting in relatively patterned behavior).

As Rodríguez states, ". . . while the cultural repertoires (not to mention genetic makeup) of Indian, Hispano, and Anglo populations have undergone radical and continuous transformation during the past four hundred years, the boundaries between them persist and today seem to be maintained and protected with increasing self-consciousness if not intensity."[13] One way the boundaries have been reproduced is by reference to the "homeland" concept. The exact meaning of "the homeland," however, is determined, according to Rodríguez, primarily on the local level. Utilizing ethnographic materials, Rodríguez examines the threat to traditional Hispano irrigation methods that resort tourism has posed in the last fifteen years in Taos County. She describes an Hispano homeland identity based in the village locales that are under this economic siege actually intermeshing with a "Chicano" form of ethnopolitical identity. She interprets this pattern with reference to large-scale effects of economic development in creating localized forms of ethnopolitical identity. This identity pattern is then contrasted with the strictly *mexicano* form of ethnopolitical identity adopted by another group of Hispano activists in their land grant struggle in neighboring Rio Arriba County.[14]

Rodríguez provides valuable correctives for the study of ethnic culture and

identity in the Southwest by revealing in particular the over simplicity of imposing one's etic categorization upon communities of people who have their own reasons for identifying themselves as they do, and who display variable cultural patterns through time and across space. Still, it should be recogized that Rodríguez's contribution marks a beginning; numerous issues of historical and theoretical importance remain to be addressed. While Rodríguez sharpens our sensitivity to variations in localized settings within the greater Northern New Mexico cultural region, there is still, for example, the level of "New Mexico" as a geopolitical unit to consider as well. This is because some important aspects of the Hispano Homeland concept refer to New Mexico itself, and because Hispanos have competed for political resources at the state level.

Other key issues that require attention include: ethnic nomenclature and identity; Hispano and mexicano relations; the meaning of regional difference; the importance of political competition in the historical process by which the claim of Hispano distinctiveness came about; and the role of the Hispano middle class in the shaping of ethnic identity in New Mexico. To open up these matters, the discussion shall proceed to unpack the original Hispano Homeland Debate, looking specifically for the conceptual conflations that appear in the arguments of the participants.

Derivations of the Hispano Nomenclature

Nostrand writes in his first Homeland article that "Mexican Americans and Indians were differentiated from Hispanos because they did not share the latter's culture. . ."[15] Leaving aside how Nostrand might define "culture," this appears to agree with the view that Hispanos and Mexicans belong to virtually different ethnic groups. Already in his reply to Hansen however, Nostrand starts to leave this absolutist notion of Hispano distinctiveness by addressing the question of when a "Spanish consciousness" took root in New Mexico. At this point, as Rodríguez suggests, an important distinction should be understood between the (etic) realm of objective classification and the people's own (emic) ethnic identification. As Nostrand says, in the latter half of the nineteenth century, native New Mexicans referred to themselves as "Mexicans," not "Spanish" and that "Spanish" really began to flourish in the 1920s. As he comes to say, "Hispanos are not more 'Spanish' than anyone else, but relative to the larger minority they are *distinctively* 'Spanish' in a cultural sense."[16]

In his reply to Blaut and Ríos-Bustamante, Nostrand itemizes and accounts for at least nine elements which he says are associated with Hispanos and not Mexican Americans. The listing is presented as if to stand for a holistic or primordial culture, yet Nostrand compromises his position further when he says that they represent only "subtle" differences from Mexican culture. Nevertheless, he clearly concedes a shared categorical membership among Mexican Americans and Hispanos, even though his sense of the latter's distinctiveness is not backed by an adequate comparison with Mexican culture. Also in his reply, Nostrand holds his ground concerning "distinctiveness," referring to archaic residues and indigenous cultural forms, but he then violates his own distinction made a few paragraphs before when he says that what is also included here is the fact that Hispanos reject "that which is Mexican."[17]

In response to these conflations, it can be emphasized that when Hispanos reject "that which is Mexican," the act does not manifest traditional Hispanic culture, whatever that may be; rather, it expresses self-conscious identification. While a particular ethnic nomenclature can become culturally ingrained, the salient point about the construction of identification is that its communication depends on a kind of calculated manipulation of symbols that often has tenuous ties to the people's everyday lives. In the artifice of identification, there is no reason to expect an exact correspondence to the content of a greater cultural foundation. And yet, while he barely avoids the trap, Nostrand comes close to the many scholarly writings that make or accept the claim of true Hispano distinctiveness. This claim is based primarily on the Hispano ideological dissociation from a Mexican national type.

The objections raised by Hansen, and Blaut/Ríos-Bustamante represent the standard mode of explaining away the claim of Hispano or Spanish distinctiveness in New Mexico. Concerning stereotypes of the Feminist Movement, Ferree and Hess say that "Many long-accepted assumptions can be shown to rest on superficial impressions repeated so often that they become a kind of 'truth'."[18] The same can be said of certain aspects of the polemical attack on Hispano and/or 'Spanish' identification in the Southwest.

A major tactic of the "standard reaction" is to point out contradictions in Hispano claims. Hansen first takes issue with Nostrand's use of the term "Hispano." Blaut and Ríos-Bustamante agree with Hansen that "Hispano" is a generic referent among all Spanish-speaking groups; therefore, they conclude,

Nostrand's application is "unique." Blaut and Ríos-Bustamante accuse Nostrand of ignorance concerning things Latino. On the question of objective distinctiveness, Hansen also conflates the question of traditional culture and that of identification by claiming that "there is little in the appearance and origins of Hispanos that makes them really different from other Mexican Americans." Moreover, he trots out Arthur Campa's well-known observation that while New Mexicans may call themselves "Spanish" in English, on the other hand, they call themselves *mexicano* when stating what they are in Spanish. Hansen cites Campa's own conflated interpretation that in English, the word "Mexican" represents a national designation to Hispanos, but a term of racist denigration to Anglos, while in Spanish, the word "mexicano" expresses a cultural category to the Spanish-surnamed because, quoting Campa, "both groups have comparable folk heritages, with similar folk songs, folk tales, and customs".[19]

What is sorely missing amid this speculatory discussion is a solid grounding in the intricacies of Spanish American identification as it actually occurred in New Mexico. In point of fact, and contary to Blaut/Ríos-Bustamante, the word "Hispano" was indeed appropriated by New Mexicans beginning in the 1890s precisely to designate a regional heritage, and it was done originally in Spanish. This becomes apparent in any reading of the historical archives and records of the time. Moreover, some of the Hispano identity formulations of that era, roughly 1890-1930—not simply the 1920s as Nostrand states—displayed an awareness of the issues raised by Hansen, Blaut/Ríos-Bustamante, and even Campa. A prime example is the essay entitled "*Hispano-Americanos, o simplemente Americanos*," by one L. E. Bernal, which appeared in Santa Fe's *El Nuevo Mexicano*, May 6, 1920. "*Durante los últimos años*," Bernal wrote,

> ha habido un aumento notable de actividad en los asuntos de esta nuestra patria por el elemento Hispano Americano. Y el termino 'Hispano Americano' en este artículo, deberá de usarse como aplicado, no al elemento de habla española de Florida o Georgia o Louisiana o de alguna otra de las grandes ciudades como Nueva York o Chicago, sino a lo de Texas, Arizona, California y especialmente Nuevo México y Colorado."[20]

As is evident, Bernal's definition of "Hispano" stresses a three-pronged reality—being at once 'Latino,' indigenous to the region, and citizen of the U.S. The comprehensiveness in Bernal's construction is illustrated best by quoting at length:

> Es cierto que casi todos los paises al sur de los Estados Unidos son llamados "Hispano América" y sus habitantes "Hispano Americanos." Y esto ha guiada a una gran confusión en la mente de aquellos que no saben las diferentes conecciones en las cuales esos nombres se usan. Sin embargo, ha guiado a una confusión mayor en el uso del otro nombre, esto es "mexicano." Este nombre conforme se aplica a los poseedores del primer idioma europeo de los Estados del Sudoeste, ha causado [que] se escriban libros por las plumas de los escritores mal informados, en los cuales ellos tratan del pueblo mexicano como de un pueblo extranjero con costumbres extranjeras y coneciones extranjeras. En sus mentes la palabra "mexicano" tiene una relación inevitable con México, lo cual es un error. Es solamente aquellos que han vivido por muchos años en alguno de los estados del Sudoeste y que han tomado suficiente interés para investigar un poquito acerca de los primero pobladores en nuestro Sudoeste hispano, son los únicos que pueden distinguir entre las diferencias en aplicación de la palabra "mexicano" entre los hijos nativos de los Estados Unidos y los de México. El mismo nombre de por si es algo asi como un problema, no en sus efectos sobre los que lo llevan, sino en cuanto a la actitud de los que no conocen su significado local. Es probablemente innecesario decir que se puede cambiar, y . . . sin ninguna perdida . . . ni en prestigio ni en el efecto moral de los interesados.[21]

What is crucial here is that the author, while emphasizing "Hispano," is not denying "mexicano" in its common everyday usage. He is arguing (in opposition to Campa's assumption) that "mexicano," as a folk term applied to the long-time natives of the Southwest, means something different from Mexican national identity or common cultural continuity.

In the paragraph that follows, Bernal interprets the past in terms of a colonial society that was established in the Southwest, and which developed on its own terms apart from Spain itself, and outside the bounds of Mexican history proper. Thus,

> Ni el nombre 'español' ni el de 'mexicano' se pueden aplicar a los constituyentes de habla española. Otro nombre o nombres deben procurarse o buscarse . . . El nombre más apropiado, aunque no deja de tener escolos a causa de la America Espanola, es el de "Hispano Americano.[22]

Bernal is clearly taking into account the difference between Mexico and the United States, and the distinctiveness of *Nuevo Mexicano* society to derive a regionally specific definition of Hispano. This meaning should be kept in mind when referring to the historical association between Nuevo Mexicanos and 'Hispano'. The matter of regional effects is taken up again below.

In short, Bernal's piece shatters Nostrand's assumption that the distinctiveness argument as formulated by Nuevo Mexicanos reduces itself only to being

"distinctively 'Spanish' in a cultural sense." Moreover, assuming that it is possible to objectively designate a general or folk culture, the fact is that the entire process of how and when the New Mexico legend and the homeland concept came about, is still poorly understood, Nostrand's critics included.

Hispanos and Mexicanos

Notwithstanding the validity of mexicano as a cultural designation, what Campa's classic formulation sidesteps is the degree to which American-born, American-socialized Mexicans have usually felt a significant measure of distinction between themselves and mexicanos from Mexico.[23] At times this is expressed as a rejection and a prejudice, but not always and not necessarily, as Bernal's essay proves. In other contexts, it may reflect real culture difference in terms, for example, of the important matter of Spanish-language proficiency and dialect. In fact, third generation Mexican Americans and their descendants, who form the largest Mexican American sub-group, tend to be different, those native to the United States being in some way or other also "U.S. American."

Nor should the basic fact of citizenship be underestimated as a criterion by which Mexican nationals and Mexican Americans perceive difference among themselves, even as they may logically deduce a shared membership in the same broad social category. If these points hold across the Southwest, then Hispano dissociation from a national Mexican prototype appears less an example of false consciousness and more like the elevation of a point of difference to the level of ideological cleavage. The question for research then becomes: Under what conditions will this cleavage open up?

Blaut and Ríos-Bustamante effectively counter Nostrand's inferring of cultural relations between Mexican Americans and Hispanos based on demographics. The value of Nostrand's demographic study lies in illustrating the low level of migration from Mexico into New Mexico and in specifying the areas of relative Hispanic concentration in 1900. However, Nostrand is not justified in concluding that the New Mexico-born children of Mexican-born parents did not "assimilate" with Hispanos. To the contrary, there is every reason to believe that they would necessarily have had to do so, especially as one moved north into the core Hispano counties. Blaut and Ríos-Bustamante appear to question, without justification, the fact that, until fairly recently, Mexicans arriving from Mexico into northern New Mexico had little choice but to adjust, if per-

haps not "assimilate," into long-standing Hispano communities. That they also augmented Hispano culture with their own cultural input must also be recognized.[24]

In the standard reaction to the Hispano Heritage tradition, Blaut and Ríos-Bustamante call Nostrand's work ideology. The first charge in this vein is that Nostrand is simply propogating a myth of Spanish purity in New Mexico which Hispanic elites invented for their own purposes. But the sum of Nostrand's writing in the Homeland Debate can be seen to fall more accurately within a tradition of scholarship that seeks to give the distinctiveness thesis an empirical test. In fact, Nostrand's piece is actually a replication (albeit uncited) of a little-known work by Wolf and Craig, who conducted the same demographic exercise for New Mexico using data from the 1960 census, and who found Nostrand's identical pattern concerning native-born and Mexican-born Spanish-surnamed people in the same northern and southern counties. On the assumption that national nativity is socially and culturally consequential, they therefore conclude that time of settlement is one of the dimensions by which the two Spanish-speaking "communities" could be differentiated.[25]

Such study then is a response to the fact that "distinctiveness," as generally propagated in New Mexico, comes to form an empirical issue. Within the perspectives of demography and other fields, the thesis is allowed a measure of plausibility without necessarily tying it into the more manifest ideological expressions of the New Mexico legend. Thus, mindful of the uses to which the distinctiveness notion is often put, Wolf and Craig say: "To note and confirm that there are two or more subcultures among the Spanish-speaking residents of New Mexico is not to endorse class snobbery or claims for intraethnic superiority. Nonetheless, in practice, the distinction between Hispano and Mexican is frequently intended to denote social class." Wolf and Craig also state that the significance of these two communities should not be exaggerated. Rather than cultural difference, Wolf and Craig see an important political distinction, that is, the sense in which the older community has had the time to "hone" political astuteness in New Mexico, while the newer arriving mexicanos could not be expected to "achieve comparable skills until the third or fourth generations in this country if their rate of political acculturation is comparable to that of other immigrant groups."[26]

The basic but key conclusion from these kinds of studies is that there are

both native and immigrant experiences among the Spanish speaking in New Mexico, the latter having been more prevalent historically. The interesting question is how the two experiences have interrelated and interlaced in real life. Others prefer to examine whether or not the distinctiveness thesis, whether ideologically or objectively derived, has any validity. This is simply an empirical question that is available for research consideration, and not ideological *per se*.

Blaut and Ríos-Bustamante charge Nostrand with what they call the "Traditional Anglo-American Scholar's View of Latinos in the United States." Nostrand allegedly contributes to the racist diminishment of the role that Mexicans have played in the Southwest by distorting Mexican American history, and ignoring Mexican ethnic organizing, thus denying it legitimacy. The charges refer to writings not directly related to the Homeland Debate. They may or may not have justification. I would only point out that Blaut and Ríos-Bustamante's response conforms point for point to another standard critical response, this time to Anglo social science research. Octavio Romano initiated the Mexican American's confrontation with the biases of American scholarship in 1968.[27] His tenor and specific arguments find periodic echo in various Chicano writings. If mainstream scholarship on the Latino experience represents a strain of ideology in American letters, Blaut and Ríos-Bustamante represent its vigilant and predictable counter-ideology, which may partially explain their imprecise reading of Nostrand's Homeland writing.

The Importance of Regional Effects

If Nostrand starts with an absolute conception of Hispano distinctiveness and then loosens it in the face of Hansen's objection, Blaut and Ríos-Bustamante hold to an understanding of "Mexican" so monolithic that it would obliterate the importance of regional distinctiveness altogether. The Chicano Reaction thus has its own way of regarding the Spanish Heritage as constructed, without acknowledging the specific historical construction that went into the rise of 'Mexican' as a social rubric in the first place.

Anderson et al. note the paradox of the aboriginal heritage mystique (*indigenismo*) in the national ideologies of Mexico, Guatemala, Peru, Bolivia and Paraguay. "When we note that the apostles of Indigenismo have been white or mestizo intellectuals, and not the Indians themselves," they write, "we

are perhaps very close to the heart of the paradox." And more specifically,

> The advocates of Indigenismo in post-1910 Mexico were almost entirely members of the dominant Hispanicized community, although some were of mestizo racial background.... What was at issue, of course, was not so much Indigenismo as Mexicanism. For the nationalized elites of Mexico, long departed from Indian culture themselves, this was a search for the distinctive roots of national identity; it was a search for the Mexican Volk.[28]

The unquestioned manner in which the category "Mexican" is applied by critics of the Spanish Heritage is a measure of national hegemony, the dominant identities associated with established state-societies largely succeeding in getting themselves taken for granted. The standard critique tends to consider Mexican culture and society as strong monoliths having few valid definitional features. But it is more accurate to conceive them as fragmented, having many elements that are loosely bound and sometimes contradictory.

Blaut and Ríos-Bustamante deny that New Mexico experienced any particular isolation after its initial Hispanic settlement, a prime example being the covered wagon trade that existed throughout subsequent generations. And yet, they do acknowledge "the old regional cultures" of California and Texas which were "buried" under a "generalized modern Mexican culture."[29] They don't, however, entertain the possibility that New Mexico's "old" regional culture may not have been so fully buried. This would raise the possibility that the vestiges of this old culture—the land grants and the classic lay brotherhood, Los Hermanos de Nuestro Padre Jesús Nazareno (popularly known as *los penitentes*) being two prominent examples—may indeed be significant for defining a distinct culture and sense of group membership.

The conflation being made in the Homeland Debate concerns levels of analysis in relation to ethnic categories. Social categories are aggregates of people sharing a common characteristic. As such, all categories—ethnic ones most assuredly—are internally complex. Their members differentiate among themselves for many important reasons, for example, in their memberships in still other categories. This is the routine sociological analysis that has been applied to Mexican Americans, who are, perhaps, the most complex, diverse and internally differentiated of all major ethnic groups in the U.S. Regional dispersal is one of several major causes of Mexican American diversity.[30] Indeed, regional concentration is an important differentiating factor among Mexicans in Mexico.[31]

Distinctiveness, Protest and the Hispano Elite

Hansen also raises the oft-repeated point that the claim of cultural distinctiveness in New Mexico is a cover for denying that Hispanos are a conquered and socially subordinated minority group, a charge that Hall rightly disputes based on the constructionist definition of ethnic identity. Until recently, skeptical observers were virtually unanimous in equating Spanish American identity with Anglo-American values, integrationist goals, assimilationist policies and similar orientations that can be considered conservative for their 'other-directedness.'

The accusation gains greater charge when it is associated with the Hispano "elite" class. In this regard, the tendency is to attribute a stereotyped self-centered and essentially psychological construction to the way that the Hispano middle class has expressed Hispano distinctiveness. Rodríguez herself inserts this mode in her otherwise valuable contribution, citing those who have held that the "Spanish American" myth was "originally perpetuated by the Mexican (and mestizo) or Mexican American elite and middle classes as a self-protective strategy against the progressive institutionalization of Anglo American racism"; that this strategy "simultaneosly served their own class interests and reflected Spanish racism against Indians . . . [which is] remiscent of a similar pattern still observable in other isolated parts of Latin America . . ."; and further, that this genteel Spanish fantasy was "fostered by proponents of statehood who wanted to 'bleach' the native population and thereby assuage anti-Mexican anxieties in Congress . . ."[32]

As Hansen demonstrates in his contribution to the debate, this element of the common critique tends to conflate the level of logic, which postulates that since Hispanos consider their blood-line European, they *must* be identifying with Anglos, on one hand, and, on the other, the question of whether or not this logic has always applied in all situations of ethnic affirmation and activity in New Mexico.

Research published since the onset of the Hispano Homeland Debate suggests the facileness of assuming that Hispano distinctiveness in the hands of the middle class was at all times a psychological salve against racism, that it was always a way of appeasing Anglos for sociopolitical rewards, or that is was only a way of isolating middle-class interests from the interests of working-class *Nuevo Mexicanos.* It is clearer now that a politically active underpinning to Hispano was indeed more important than was the conservative or accomadationist ver-

sion precisely during the statehood period. While conservative interpretations of Hispano identity have always been present, there was also a "progressive," (i.e. a competitive and protest motivated) part played by that identity, which formed part of a homeland arsenal applied in direct action confrontations with Anglo racism and social domination. This action occurred most prominently within the conventional political system just as Hispano political power was declining under the onslaught of Anglo American inmigration and economic development.[33]

To the extent that it was an "elite" that propelled a competitive Hispano identity at this time, it is vitally important to identify the type of elite that was involved in this, and all other cases of middle-class political involvement in given historical eras. In this particular case, it is clear that it was a political group (clearly not an economic or business one) which struggled for inclusion in the state's public institutions on behalf of all Hispanos in the state, and which resulted in educational and citizenship rights for "Spanish Americans" being specifically incorporated into the state constitution.[34]

The point is that understanding the political motivations of Spanish American expression may be no easy task whether one would wish it ill or well. But there is no reason why a Europeanist form of identification should necessarily mean a desire for social association with the dominant group or with the history of American Manifest Destiny. This is an entirely historico-empirical question. And just as Rodríguez demonstrates that homeland identity is constructed, deconstructed, and reconstructed on the basis of competition affecting Hispanos at the grassroots level, so must we be willing to accept that the Hispano ideology has also undergone its variable construction through time. Moreover, middle-class constructions of protest identity were also important, for in addition to land and water issues, the question of Hispano participation in the political system has also been a classic bone of ethnic contention through the history of New Mexico as a U.S.-owned entity.

The theoretical shortcoming here involves an adequate approach to the middle-class sectors of the greater Mexican American population. A starting point was suggested long ago by W.E.B. DuBois, who referred to the "peculiar situation" of the Black middle class, its suspension, that is, between the dominant white leaders of the community and the socially subordinated Black mass. As Leo Kuper later argued, the term "bourgeoisie," while perhaps suggesting a

"verbal fantasy" in view of its Marxist derivation, was nevertheless appropriate to the upper echelons of an otherwise stratified social grouping.[35]

With E. Franklin Frazier's 1957 work, *Black Bourgeoisie*,[36] much progressive scholarship tended to inveigh against middle-class racial ethnics as pretentious, confused in their group loyalties, and accepted by neither the racist white society nor working-class Blacks. More recent work has argued for the necessity of seeing a much more complex reality in which some bourgeois elements of an ethnic subaltern are capable of progressive thought and action under the right conditions. A great deal depends on the political and economic aspects of national and regional contexts as well as developments within the working classes. Examining the ideological and cultural characteristics of the Black middle class from 1960 to 1990, for example, Banner-Halley recognizes this group's own sources of social indignation over systemic social inequality. Banner-Halley characterizes the relationship between the Black middle class and the Black mass as an "integrative cultural diversity" signifying a complex and evolutionary response and action to oppression.[37] Torres and Amado have taken initial steps toward such an approach in their work on middle-class Mexican Americans in Arizona.[38] The same approach needs to be taken with regard to the Hispano middle and professional class in New Mexico. In given situations, the Hispano elite will act the part of the bourgeois in its tendency to over identify with the American middle-class, but under certain conditions will presume to take a certain lead in what is considered equality and justice for its people in a racist society.

In this regard, while it may stretch the imagination of those who constantly attack the notion of a Hispano heritage as only conservative political values and assimilationist ethnic policies, research is showing that, at least for the period between 1890 and the mid-1930s, Hispano identity was indeed applied for competitive purposes by an Hispano political elite. There is, for example, the case of a mobilized Hispano community that, in 1933, protested the exclusionist practices of the University of New Mexico.[39] What is becoming clearer is that the Spanish Heritage took a predominantly conservative turn under conditions of the New Deal and World War II, when new political goals beyond those associated with statehood, were set in New Mexico.[40]

Finally, what has to be recognized is the fact that, since the New Mexico legend was formed and disseminated after the turn of the century by an elite

corps of culture makers, including the well-known folklorist and scholar Aurelio Espinosa,[41] the Hispano nomenclature was installed as a generic ethnic terminology which has been adopted by working-class Hispanos as well. What exactly the meaning of the term "Hispano" or "Spanish" is for this subcategory is still in need of systematic investigation. Preliminary work in an urban setting seems to indicate that working-class Hispanos do not use it as an elaborated ideological way of characterizing their cultural heritage, but rather as a term of casual or customary reference in order to distinguish themselves broadly from people from Mexico and other ethnic groups.[42] In this case, it could well have a logical validity given the older Hispano communities in New Mexico.

Conclusion

This essay has sought to clear away empirical and theoretical ground regarding issues of ethnicity in New Mexico and the Southwest. What has been lacking in the whole range of commentary on this topic is precise knowledge concerning the exact history of Hispano identity in New Mexico, including the uses to which it has been put during different periods, the variations in its symbolic content, and the original reasons for its prevalence in this region. Without a perspective derived from such knowledge, too much of the debate will remain mired in useless argumentation revolving around the question of the truth or falsity of the Spanish and Homeland claims in New Mexico. In addition, more theoretical work is needed to give the data a sophisticated interpretation, with reference, for example, to the ethnic bourgeois elements and the evolution of ethnic nomenclatures.

Several points are established in this article: first, there are several "Hispano distinctiveness" versions, not all of them reducible to "Spanish American" identity; second, Hispano identity itself has had a varied and complex history of meaning and significance in New Mexico, only part of which has been alluded to here; third, in terms of "New Mexico" generally, the political system has been a major arena for ethnic competition and a source of ethnopolitical identity; and fourth, regional identity forms a key differentiating factor among Mexican Americans throughout the Southwest and an important context for the relations between Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans. Finally, much work remains to be done before we fully understand the role of the Hispano middle class in the formation of ethnicity and identity in New Mexico.

Other primary research is beginning to present a historical analysis of Hispano identification in New Mexico as it relates to political ethnicity. In its sum total, ethnic identity has been vital to the greater New Mexico story and for this reason deserves the respect of a serious interpretive reading. In Max Weber's method of *verstehen*, it is important to discover ". . . what makes [a person] do this at precisely this moment and in these circumstances."[43]

Thus, for example, there was a sociohistorical and cultural context which served as an important backdrop to Bernal's essay and which must be discerned if the identity patterns of his generation are to be completely comprehended. Hispanos in New Mexico belong to the greater Mexican American category certainly, but this realization should not bring us to the point of implied or actual conflict with those whom we wish to understand in historical perspective.

But verstehen does not entail automatic or total acceptance of the native's point of view. Nor does it mean that the researcher must pretend to a scientistic ideology of objectivity in which the actual world is kept at a sterile distance. What it permits, rather, is entrance into historical situations, enabling us to see the conditions which may constrain people from effective social action, or free them for creative struggle.

NOTES

1 Nancie L. Gonzalez. *The Spanish Americans of New Mexico: A Heritage of Pride*, Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 1969, p. x.

2 Olen Leonard. *The Role of the Land Grant in the Social Organization and Social Processes of a Spanish-American Village in New Mexico.* Albuquerque: Calvin Horn Publisher, 1970 [1943], p. 96.

3 Armando Valdez. "Insurrection in New Mexico," *El Grito* 1 (Fall 1967), p. 18.

4 Clifford Geertz. *The Interpretation of Cultures.* New York: Basic Books, 1973, p. 232.

5 Richard Nostrand, "The Hispano Homeland in 1900," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 70, 3 (1980), pp. 382, 396.

6 Niles Hansen, "Commentary: The Hispano Homeland in 1900." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 71, 2 (1981): 280-282; J. M. Blaut and Antonio Ríos-Bustamante, "Commentary on Nostrand's 'Hispanos' and Their 'Homeland.'" *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 74, 1 (1984): 157-164.

7 Richard Nostrand, "Comment in Reply (to Hansen)," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 71, 2(1981).

8 Marc Simmons, "Rejoinder." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 74, 1

(1984):169-170; Fray Angelico Chávez, "Rejoinder." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 74, 1 (1984): 170-171.

9 D.W. Meinig. "Rejoinder." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 74, 1 (1984):171; Hall, Thomas D. "Rejoinder." Annals of the Association of American Geographers 74, 1 (1984.):171.

10 *Ibid.*, p. 171.

11 Sylvia Rodríguez, "The Hispano Homeland Debate Revisited," *Perspectives in Mexican American Studies*, 3 (1992): 95-114.

12 *Ibid.*, p. 97.

13 *Ibid.*, p. 98.

14 *Ibid.*, pp. 106-110.

15 Nostrand, "The Hispano Homeland in 1900," p. 384.

16 Richard Nostrand, "Comment in Reply (to Hansen)," p. 283. Nostrand has restated but not substantively changed his argument in his recent book, *The Hispano Homeland*. 1994. University of Oklahoma Press, Chapter 1.

17 *Ibid.*

18 Myra Beth Ferree and Beth B. Hess. *Controversy and Coalition: The New Feminist Movement*. 1985. Boston: Twayne Publishers, p. x.

19 Hansen, "Commentary," pp. 281-2.

20 Translation: "In the past few years, there has been a notable activity in the affairs of our country by the Hispanic American element. And the term, 'Hispano Americano' in this case should be applied, not to Spanish speaking people in Florida or Georgia or Louisiana or any of the other big cities like New York or Chicago, but rather to Texas, Arizona, California and especially New Mexico and Colorado."

21 Translation: "It is certain that almost all of the countries south of the United States are called 'Hispanic America' and their citizens "Hispanic Americans." And this has led to a great confusion in the minds of those who do not know the different connections in which these terms are used. Moreover, a major confusion arises in the use of another term, this being "mexicano." This name [which] is properly applied to the speakers of the first European language in the southwestern states, has caused malinformed writers of books to treat the mexicano community like it was a foreign country with foreign customs and foreign relations. In their minds, the word "mexicano" means an inevitable relation to Mexico, which is an error. Only those who have lived many years in the Southwest and who have taken enough interest to investigate some into the first settlers of the Hispanic Southwest that can distinguish between the different meanings of the word "mexicano" among the descendants of natives in the United States and of those in Mexico. The same name in itself is something of a problem, not in its effects on those who use it, but in terms of the attitude of those who do not recognize its local significance. It is probably unnecessary to say that it can change and without any loss whatever in prestige nor the morality of those to whom it refers."

22 Translation: "Neither the term 'Spanish' nor 'mexicano' is applicable to the Spanish speakers. Other names should be sought out . . . The most appropriate name, while it is not necessary linked to Spanish America, is 'Hispano Americano.'

[23] See Harley L. Browning and Rodolfo O. de la Garza, editors, *Mexican Immigrants and Mexican Americans: An Evolving Relation*, Austin: University of Texas, 1986, particularly the introduction by the editors; also Susan E. Keefe and Amado M. Padilla. *Chicano Ethnicity*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 1987.

[24] A prototype for the general process of Mexican incorporation into the Hispano community, at least for the period prior to World War II, is Octaviano Larrazolo, a Mexican born in Chihuahua who came to New Mexico as a youth and eventually became a governor, U.S. Senator and outspoken advocate for Hispano rights in New Mexico. See Paul Larrazolo, *Octaviano A. Larrazolo: A Moment in New Mexico History*. New York: Carlton Press, 1986; Alfred G. Cordova, "Octaviano Ambrosio Larrazolo, the Prophet of Transition in New Mexico: An Analysis of His Political Life." M.A. thesis, University of New Mexico, 1950; Maurilio E. Vigil, *Los Patrones: Profiles of Hispanic Political Leaders in New Mexico History*. Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1980, pp. 122-130; Lynn I. Perrigo, *Hispanos: Historic Leaders in New Mexico*, Santa Fe: Sunstone Press, 1985, pp. 78-81; and E.B. Fincher, *Spanish Americans as a Political Factor in New Mexico, 1912-1950*, New York: Arno Press, pp. 138-141.

[25] T. Phillip Wolf and Elmer Craig. "New Mexico's Spanish Americans: Geographic and Political Patterns," *Politics '73*, edited by Tinsley E. Yarborough, John P. East, and Sandra Hough. East Carolina University Publications, No. 4 (March 1973):86-91).

[26] *Ibid.*, pp. 91-92.

[27] Octavio Romano. "The Anthropology and Sociology of the Mexican Americans: The Distortion of Mexican-American History," *El Grito* 2 (Fall 1968):13-26.

[28] Charles W. Anderson, Fred R. von der Mehden and Crawford Young. *Issues of Political Development*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall. 1974, pp. 45, 55, 49.

[29] Blaut and Ríos-Bustamante, "Commentary," on their citing the old Spanish culture.

[30] For one delineation of the major regional areas shaping Mexican American culture, see Ernesto Galazara, "Mexicans in the Southwest: A Culture in Process," in Edward H. Spicer and Raymond Thompson, editors, *Plural Society in the Southwest*, 1972, New York: Interbook, Inc., pp. 266-267.

[31] Walker Conner "Who are the Mexican-Americans?" in *Mexican Americans in Comparative Perspective*, edited by Walker Connor. Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute Press. 1985, pp. 10-16.

[32] Sylvia Rodríguez, "The Hispano Homeland Debate Revisited," p. 99.

[33] Phillip B. Gonzales, "The Political Construction of Latino Nomenclatures in Twentieth Century New Mexico," *Journal of the Southwest* 35, 2 (1993): 158-185; "The Anti-Fraternity Bill of 1933." *New Mexico Historical Review*, 61 (1986, October):281-299; "A Perfect Furor of Indignation: The Racial Attitude Confrontation of 1933." Ph.D. dissertation, 1985, University of California Berkeley, 1985.

[34] See Robert W. Larson, *New Mexico's Quest for Statehood, 1846-1912*, Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 1968, pp. 177, 276, 279-80.

[35] W.E.B. Dubois, *The Philadelphia Negro*. Milwood, N.Y.: Kraus-Thomson Organization, Limited (1973 [1899]), p. 317; Leo Kuper, *An African Bourgeoisie*. New York: Yale University Press (1965), p. 3.

[36] E. Franklin Frazier, *Black Bourgeoisie*. London: Collier Publishing Co. (1970 [1957]).

[37] Charles Banner-Halley, *The Fruits of Integration: Black Middle-Class Ideology and Culture, 1960-1990*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1994, passim.

[38] David L. Torres and Melissa Amado, "The Quest for Power: Hispanic Collective Action in Frontier Arizona." *Perspectives in Mexican American Studies*, Vol. 3, 1992.

[39] Phillip B. Gonzales, "Spanish Heritage and Ethnic Protest in New Mexico." *New Mexico Historical Review*, Vol. 61 (1986, October): 281-299.

[40] Phillip B. Gonzales, "The Political Construction of Latino Nomenclatures in Twentieth Century New Mexico," pp. 168-171.

[41] *Ibid.*, pp. 163-164.

[42] For initial steps at analyzing in this direction, see Louise Lamphere, Patricia Zavella, Felipe Gonzales, with Peter B. Evans, *Sunbelt Working Mothers: Reconciling Family and Factor*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993, pp. 28-31; and Patricia Zavella, "Feminist Insider Dilemmas: Constructing Ethnic Identity With 'Chicana' Informants." *Frontiers: A Journal of Women's Studies*, Vol. 13 (No. 3:53-76), 1993.

[43] Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*. New York: The Free Press. 1966 [1947]. p. 95.