Article

Rio Grande Weaving and A Community Based Business
–A Case Study of Los Ojos–

Kumiko Namba

Purpose

It is within the scope of this study to explore the characteristics of a small business which makes use of traditional textiles in a rural community; and to examine the elements of this successful business which has strengthened the community through textile production.

The community of Los Ojos, New Mexico in the U.S.A. was chosen as the focus of this study since it has created an effective business establishment, through the organizational efforts of Granados del Valle, centered on the people, culture, and local economy. Using Rio Grande Weaving as a foundation, a sustainable community enterprise was created through the collective efforts of many individuals.

The profile of Los Ojos is typical of many aging rural communities with declining populations as their young people leave in search of better jobs. The struggle to preserve the natural environment and cultural values while searching for ways to revitalize their frail economies are common concerns shared by all.

Profile of Los Ojos

Overview

Los Ojos is located just 5 mile south of Tierra Amarilla, and 15 mile south of Chama in Rio Arriba county, New Mexico, U.S.A. Los Ojos is more suitably called a settlement, or a village rather than a town, due to its small population (which was 393 in the 2000 census). The majority of the houses have been built around San Jose Catholic church at the heart of the village, leaving the large pastures which spread to the outskirts of Los Ojos, and surrounding area, for the grazing of livestock. From the village, it takes about 70 minutes by car, the only realistic mode of transportation, to the village of Espanola, a city of 9,688 people. After passing by several scattered houses in Cebolla, there are almost no houses in sight for the 20 minutes car-drive to Los Ojos. Its isolation and small size contribute to the unique character of this traditional earlier village settlement.

Natural environment

The small population in and around Los Ojos enjoys good access to the undeveloped natural environment which is rich in wild life.

Water is delivered by the Acequia (irrigating ditches) from rivers to the pastures and the cross-branching of creeks which flow through the fields and hills, nurturing the vegetation.

The high altitude and high desert climate provide only a short growing season (between the last spring frost and the first fall frost), one which is not suitable for growing crops (e.g. cereal grains, fruits, vegetables) in commercial quantities.

Presently, the vegetation and soil condition of most hills and fields in the area of Los Ojos is rather fragile despite its magnificent natural landscape. Serious over-grazing has occurred in the past and in recent years the prolonged drought has contributed to this condition.

The small population of this community has not yet promoted extensive land development and has worked to protect the existing natural environment, though there is always the threat of the large land developers who would like to bring in their golf courses and vacation resort facilities with all the "amenities" that go with them.

Demographic profile

In the census of 2000, the total population of Los Ojos was 393, i.e. 208 males and 185 females. Among these, 237 residents; 60.3% of the total population were Hispanic (also referred to as Latino or Spanish) versus the White (of European descent) population of 150 people.

Of the 393 residents, 328 were listed as above 21 years old, and the senior population (65 years and up) were recorded to be 94 in number.

The median age is 52 years old. This means there are 5 adults (over 21 years old) per every minor, and the median age is much higher compared to the U.S. average of 35 years old.

There are in total 355 housing units, 122 of which are only occasionally used versus 185 fully occupied housing units. The number of residents per square mile (2.56km²) is 2.
From these statistics it is seen that, Los Ojos is a village with a small population and a majority of adult hispanic residents.

**History and culture**

Close to two thirds of community members in Los Ojos are Hispanics, most of whose ancestors are the descendants of the Conquistadores (Spanish army which controlled the area as a colony of Spain) since 1598. In later years others immigrated from Spain via Mexico to homestead the land. Along with Los Brazos and La Puente, Los Ojos is one of the three major settlements around Tierra Amarilla which were established in the 1860's. This history has been reflected well throughout their culture up until the present day mainly due to its isolation and great distance from any larger city where diverse populations and cultures intermix.

Most of the Hispanic villagers practice Catholicism as their religion and San Jose Church takes a central role in their religious activities. Villagers in Los Ojos who can trace their roots back to this area over five generations have a tendency to share traditional Hispanic family values. They customarily have close ties among family members and a strong attachment to the family land as well as the natural environment.

**Education**

There are schools nearby up to the high school level; but to attend a college or university the young people in Los Ojos must travel 65 miles to Espanola, Taos (82miles), Santa Fe (94miles), or Albuquerque (154miles). Therefore if a person wishes to pursue a higher education, he or she needs to travel far which often means living away from their village. Of the total population, those who are over 25 years old, 74% are high school graduates. (compared with U.S. average 80%, New Mexico state average: 79%, Rio Arriba county average: 73%) Of those graduating students 22% hold bachelor's degrees or higher. (U.S. average: 24%, New Mexico state Average: 24%, Rio Arriba County average: 15%.) This data shows that the education level of Los Ojos falls in the margin of New Mexico state and county averages.

**Economy**

The median household income is $28,625 vs the U.S. average of: $41,994, New Mexico state average: $34,133, Rio Arriba county average: $29,429. This shows that statistically Los Ojos is even below Rio Arriba county ratings. Individuals below poverty level are 18% (vs U.S. average : 12%).

Available employment opportunities within the Los Ojos area are mainly in the school system, at a community clinic, at the U.S. Post Office, at the Forest Service (including its extension services), or at a fishery operated by the State Game and Fish Department. All of the positions mentioned above are held by Government or non-private workers who have a tendency to hold their jobs for a long time, often through their retirement. Therefore the Government related jobs do not have a high turn over.

The rate of government workers in Los Ojos is 24%, of the 157 people who are employed. Major work categories are in "arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services" which share 20%, the highest of all categories; followed by 19% in "educational, health and social services", 14% in "public administration", 10% in "retail trade", 9% in "agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining" Private businesses like motels, restaurants, merchantiles, including gas stations, etc. do exist in the neighboring villages of Tierra Amarilla but these business are only marginal and cannot thrive due to the low level of tourism in the area.

Many local businesses try to accommodate the occasional traveler or those driving through to other destinations and villages for their immediate needs.

As consumers, the residents of Los Ojos need to go out of town and spend money elsewhere in order to purchase a greater variety of food, home appliances, building supplies, and other miscellaneous household items to maintain their lives.

Yet, the small size of the population and its great distance from major cities cannot support the prospect of bringing such retail businesses to Los Ojos. As a result, the cash flow of Los Ojos is not well balanced; more money is pulled out from the village than is brought in.

The last and only option for many is self employment, traditionally in the cattle or timber business, although many artists or craft persons have also succeeded in creating a network for marketing their works elsewhere.

The shortage of jobs in Los Ojos, and their limited variety has always been an economic obstacle. This has worked against those people who wish to look for a new job.
The weaving

History

Today the other, while maintaining their own uniqueness. i.e. Native Americans, treadle looms and wool had not had knowledge and skills in loom making, weaving and woven by these own use under weaving as well as Mexican weaving have by the Spanish Conquerors) in the Rio Grande weaving become a part of their textile practice. Since textiles made by the Spanish settlers were from villages and settlements along the Rio Grande River, these textiles are now identified as "Rio Grande Weavings". Originally they were woven by these settlers as an essential commodity for their own use under the scarcities of frontier life. But later these weavings became one of the major commercial trade goods sought for their high quality. As a result of the mixed marriage and close contact between the society of Spanish and Native Americans, Rio Grande weaving and Navajo weaving as well as Mexican weaving have influenced each other, while maintaining their own uniqueness. Today the descendants of the Spanish armies and early settlers weave Rio Grande Weaving.

The weaving

Wool is used (for weft and in some pieces for warp) for rugs and blankets. Though some of the Rio Grande weavings made in earlier periods show strong similarity in weight to the northern Mexico serapes which were finely woven and quite light-weight, the majority of Rio Grande Weavings are rather thick and bulky (average of 6 warp threads per inch and 20–30 weft threads per inch). This thickness makes the weavings more adaptable to the much colder and harsher climate of northern New Mexico as compared with the mild climate of central and southern Mexico, or even to central and southern Spain, where the Conquering Army originated.

The traditional designs in Rio Grande Weaving are simple banded designs, diamonds and Viejillo Stars (six pointed stars). The style of design with a centered diamond (sometimes configured as a circle ) is called saltillo and can be seen in Rio Grande weaving, representing an influence from the northern Mexico serape weavings.

Banded design is the most typical in Rio Grande weaving. These weavings are also recognized by their stripes, which are found in every part of the world as one of the most fundamental elements of design. Then what makes this design attractive in Rio Grande Weaving? One answer may be, that people (the consumers) sense and adore the simple, down to earth lifestyle of northern New Mexicans reflected in these simple and bold designs. The weavings with banded design can match well with most home-interiors without giving an overpowering impression.

The following types of weavings are often mentioned in discussing Rio Grande weaving.

Chimayo

Often used synonymously with Rio Grande weaving. The settlement of Chimayo had a number of successful business establishments by the 1840’s. Retailers were selling Rio Grande Weavings as trading goods in high demand; the product of many home weavers and spinners. As production soared in quantity, the commercially milled (mechanically spun and dyed) yarns took over the hand-spun and natural dyed yarns. The traditional practice of Chimayo weaving is well preserved to the present day by many Hispanics in and near the community of Chimayo. The old method of weighing large quantities of finished weavings on a scale to determine the weaver’s payment, which made good business sense in the past, is still being practiced today by many weavers.
Serapes

The wearing of blankets which originated in the Saltillo region of northern Mexico and brought to what is now New Mexico are called serapes. These are thought to have been woven by the settlers who came directly from Spain. Serapes characteristically consist of two pieces sewn together leaving the center open for the head. Typically, the design structure has the motif of a diamond or a circle as the central focus which falls around the neck and shoulders with borders all around the rectangle. The background is filled with small patterns usually made of argyles or diamonds. These weavings are more finely woven and therefore light-weight (22 warp threads per inch and 84 weft threads per inch). There is a distinct contrast between these and the heavy-duty utility weavings created by such tribes as the Tarahumara Indians; one of the indigenous people in the northern region of Mexico.

Los Ojos and wool

There are many villages in Northern New Mexico where Rio Grande weaving has been practiced as the traditional art and trade. In this sense, Los Ojos is not unique. By in large sheep raising is counted upon as a livelihood where as in other villages more kinds of trade are available. The climate in Los Ojos is not suited for growing food crops on a commercial scale, as the yield is unreliable and all artificial efforts to boost production have not proven to be energy efficient. Traditionally the villagers in Los Ojos have found an income source in raising cattle by utilizing the ample fields in and around the community. Since sheep were introduced by the Spanish at the same time that the settlement of Los Ojos was established in mid 1800’s, the people of Los Ojos have been raising sheep through generations. They handled sheep long before cows started to monopolize the cattle business in northern New Mexico and the rest of the United States. Switching livestock from sheep to cows was not easy in many ways and most of all, it was not financially possible for many villagers. Often their sense of pride carried them through with the demands of their sheep raising tradition.

Ganados del Valle

History

A Hispanic land grant activist named Maria Varela (born in 1940) was encouraged to work on community issues by a local leader, Reies Lopez Tijerina who eventually provoked a short lived raid at Rio Arriba Court House in June 1967, only months before Maria Varela’s arrival to Los Ojos.

A community organization called Ganados del Valle meaning Flocks of the Valley, was founded in 1983 in Los Ojos under the direction of Maria Varela and other villagers who shared common ground with her vision. As a means of strengthening the community through sheep and wool production, they planned the setting up of a textile business by leasing an old trading post in Los Ojos. Its prime mission was the preservation of community life and heritage and to create an enterprise which would have low impact on the pristine environment. Though the Ganados del Valle project had real merit in utilizing what were historically rooted opportunities in the community, weaving was not, then, an everyday activity in Los Ojos anymore than elsewhere.

In 1985, Ganados del Valle was granted tax exempt status. It carried the mission of preserving the traditional life-style, culture and natural environment of rural communities and their valued heritage; and of developing sustainable economies in order to re-vitalize and strengthen these communities. The textile business has since become a leading development in furthering the successful enterprises of Ganados del Valle. In 2003, twenty years after its establishment, the organization now serves 14 rural communities and involves 150 local members and over 100 members from New Mexico statewide. The businesses that Ganados del Valle has set up are now exploring and re-examining their own possibilities.

Layout of the business

There are 3 major sections in Ganados del Valle:

Ranching / sheep raising

Securing the grazing fields for sheep through state agencies is very important for the ranchers especially in severe draught times. Until Ganados del Valle was organized, the sheep ranchers had to negotiate their grazing permits each year individually. The worry and uncertainty associated with this arrangement eventually led many ranchers to withdraw from the ranching business. Ganados del Valle has focused on the rare and historical breed of "Churro" sheep. One reason was to gain
advantage in a competitive market by offering a specialty meat and exotic fibers, (the very intentions of the Spanish army when they first introduced this breed into the area).

Meat processing and sale
Instead of limiting themselves to raising sheep, leaving the rest to others, Ganados del Valle has started to control the whole stock and trade of the sheep business themselves. This change has brought them a sense of ownership, of clear vision, and effective control of the decision making process. Their lamb’s meats has received “Organic Certification” and has been contracted as a “house specialty” by restaurants in Santa Fe who serve an increasing number of environmentally and dietary conscientious dinners. Aiming at this rapidly growing market for “organic food” which brings higher profits has proven to be a sound business strategy and is best suited to the small production capacity of Ganados del Valle, making their meat a desired brand product.

Textiles
“Tierra Wools” was originally founded by Ganados del Valle, and begun under a co-operative style with the village women. There is an unmistakable link between the end product of sheep raising (wool) and textile goods, which have in turn become the seeds of other enterprises. At the present time the following businesses innovations are being offered at Tierra Wools.

- Wool fleece scouring service and sale
- Yarn processing and sale
- Dyeing and sale
- Weaving/ woven goods sale
- Cafe and gift shop of area arts and crafts
- Lodging
- General Store
- College credit and workshops
- Gallery space
- Recycled tire products

During the first 6 months of operation Tierra Wools sold $11,000 worth of their products. This gave Ganados del Valle immediate and strong encouragement. It was a significant sum of money in the strained village economy of Los Ojos. This success demonstrates that careful preparation for marketing is very important from the beginning of the project, e.g. developing production and marketing side by side.

In 1998, 18 members joined to purchase Tierra Wool’s assets from Ganados del Valle and have formed L.L.C. (profit Limited Liable Company) re-designated as a collaborative rather than a co-operative. Presently Tierra Wools employs 30 to 55 people depending on the season, and since its establishment in 1986 has earned $4.6 million through weavings, yarns, and woven goods sales, yarn processing orders, in addition to operating weaving workshops.

Analysis
Leadership
The clear vision of Maria Varela, her organizational skills and experiences in politics played a key role in the success of Ganados del Valle. Naturally, it took several years for Maria to be recognized and for her intentions to be taken into account by the villagers since her arrival, as a "newcomer" to the remote and rather isolated village of Los Ojos. To seek support for the new project, first gaining the understanding and mutual respect between the project leaders and the local people was crucial. This is often something that can only be achieved over time.

Involvement of the local leader, Antonio Manzanares, a sheep rancher has been a great boost to Maria Varela. Together they led the project and also helped gain the support of local women who soon lent their strength to the advancement of the project. Antonio Manzanares had his own reason to be a part of the project as a sheep rancher searching for a grazing permit. This pressing need made him a serious subscriber to the program. Had it not been for his strong motivation towards the project, the success of Ganados del Valle might never have been fully realized.

Balanced viewpoint
Ganados del Valle was established with a number of different goals in sight. Presenting the bigger picture to those involved in the Los Ojos project allowed for greater objectivity in evaluating each phase of the project and helped its members clarify what was needed in making short term adjustments.

This broader framework also helped establish a more inclusive program in which sound working relationships could prevail. As a result the proponents of the Ganados del Valle projects included not only select core members but members of the community at large. In this way the
tendency to become a tight-knit organization (i.e. textile business) with only a marginal role in community affairs was avoided.

**Expertise**

Since Maria Varela and other leaders were in need of additional professional skills and knowledge in some fields, asking the appropriate professionals for direct support in developing the project proved to be the right choice. The following are among those people who have been involved in the textile project of Granados del Valle.

**Lyle McNeal**

Professor, Department of Animal, Dairy, & Veterinary Science at Utah State University, Logan, Utah. With great concern for the preservation of the Churro breed, Dr. McNeal has worked intensely since the 1970s on bringing back 425 sheep from near extinction. In collaboration with him, a successful Churro breeding program was established at Ganado del Valle. This breed has now reached about 25% of all the sheep within Ganado del Valle's membership. The northern New Mexico area has recovered over 1,000 registered sheep, and is now the largest Churro herd in the U.S.

**Rachel Brown**

Author of "The Weaving, Spinning and Dyeing Book" and founder/owner of Rio Grande Weavers Supply and textile gallery "Weaving Southwest", Rachel Brown, herself, a professional weaver, has broad experience training women in weaving and making woven-goods; retailing and managing business through the establishment of her "Craft House" in the rural community of Arroyo Seco, near Taos, New Mexico.

By asking her involvement in the early stage of setting up Tierra Wool, Ganado del Valle was quite fortunate to absorb what Rachel Brown had previously experienced at Arroyo Seco. Under her guidance a curriculum was offered to local women to hone their skills and knowledge of weaving, spinning, and dyeing. This same curriculum has been used to train new members, making Brown's curriculum indispensable for the self-sufficiency and independence of Tierra Wool.

She introduced a large spinning-wheel in order to replace the Spanish *malacate* or hand-spindle. It is likely that Rachel Brown felt that speeding up the spinning process was crucial to the new business in order to meet the necessary level of production. To achieve this, she introduced the "Rio Grade Spinning Wheel" which she designed herself.

Brown's expertise also included business management in textiles. There are many professional weavers in New Mexico but, in terms of business management, few weavers could match her realistic and objective approach. Her knowledge has given Tierra Wools a reputation for having good business sense and, thanks to Rachel Brown, their weavers have gained one more important survival skill.

**Connie and Sam Taylor**

On their ranch "Cerro Mojino Woolworks" in Tres Piedras, New Mexico, Connie and Sam Taylor have become successful and self-sufficient Churro sheep growers. They have firsthand knowledge of sheep raising over many years in the stark high desert environment of northern New Mexico. The Taylors operate a highly innovative wool processing business as well, including the washing and carding and custom-dyeing of wool, with methods, facilities and equipments suitable for a small yet substantial business. They also purchase and market locally grown wool to support the sheep ranchers.

The working relationships between Connie and Sam Taylor, Rachel Brown, and Lyle McNeal were important in bringing the most effective support from other experts to the project. Together, these four community leaders came equipped with not only professional expertise covering many regional issues in detail but also they often demonstrated an exceptional ability to examine key concerns from their broad experience and point of view.

**The co-op style**

Granados del Valle adopted the co-operative style, naturally, through the original purpose of serving the community. But asking the more experienced co-op members to train new members was a unique plan. Though there is a danger of diluting the training and quality of content originally passed down by the experts, there are likely advantages.

First, people become more motivated to learn and acquire experiences that they will be expected to teach to others later on. Second, people become more responsible in the learning and teaching process when their performance
determines the quality of the next generation of trainees. And third, people can often develop more independence and self esteem in seeing themselves not only as apprentices but also as teachers who have an important function and something of social value to offer.

The supporters
One of the keys to a successful business is in the number of people a project can bring together. People have to first understand and agree with the ideas of the project before supporting it. The professionals from many fields, mentioned above, who have given their support did so along with many others in and outside the region. Among them, offering one of the most critical and effective contributions during the early phase of its establishment was the actor/director Robert Redford.

He allowed Ganados del Valle the right to organize the premiere of his film "Milagro Beanfield War" for fund raising purposes. Redford also helped the co-op market their products nationwide. Their products were well received due to the fascination and nostalgia of city people towards village life in the early settlement portrayed in Redford's film. And interestingly, this nationwide recognition sparked an instant interest in Tierra Wool's business and products.

Maximizing the image
The use of the old and abandoned general store building was a natural choice for Ganados del Valle to conserve their resources. But maintaining the characteristics of its rustic atmosphere seemed to be intentional, attracting the attention of city people who were looking for their unique, regional, and high quality products. Through the support of Robert Redford, Ganados del Valle has learned that the very thing which they were trying to preserve was, coincidentally, a good match to what the sophisticated urban market really wanted.

Independence and self-esteem
From the start, one of the main purposes of the Granados del Valle project was to establish independence and self esteem, ultimately leading to the re-evaluation of the community and the preservation of its traditional life style. Whether or nor she chose to be, Maria Varela became a role model for empowering many other women. For them, obtaining a professional job, especially in the traditional arts was tremendously important in helping them raise their self-esteem. Until then, local women only had the choice of working in meager private businesses or in government related employment.

The women of Los Ojos could not otherwise be counted as wage-earners because many of them were engaged in domestic household jobs as part of the secondary labor force. Raising self-esteem, especially among women, has given strength to Ganados del Valle's development.

Conclusion
The sense of commitment to the community has played a key role in the development of a successful business along with the good working relationships between the project leaders and the community members. This alliance based on mutual concern had to be tested over a prolonged period of time as the project unfolded.

Aside from the clear vision of the project leaders, the co-operative spirit under which the project was directed eventually lead to the self-sufficiency of the project.

Another important aspect of the Los Ojos example can be found in the Rio Grande weaving itself. The project leaders introduced the attractiveness of traditional textiles effectively to the villagers who then became the foundation of the entire project by continuing to be involved in related textile activities.

Above all, the leaders and planners at Ganados del Valle knew primarily what they wished to protect and could sell in the marketplace; while striving to sustain their traditional life style, the natural environment; and the integrity of their community. Even in targeting market opportunities to achieve a short-term goal or in working on immediate strategies, this collective, sustaining vision was properly placed.

Endnotes:

*Tierra Amarilla*
Located 5 mile northeast of Los Ojos. The main social organization is Rio Arriba County Court House.

Population: 750 / 81.5% Hispanic (U.S. average: 12.5%). The median age is 36.8 years old. Among the 452 residents who are 25 years and over, the rate of high school graduates or those with higher education is 68.4%, and of those holding bachelor's degrees and higher is 16.8%. The median household income is $27,917.
Chama
Located 15 mile north of Los Ojos. The main organization is the Cumbres & Toltec Railroad Station offering a scenic narrow gauge ride between Chama and Antonito, Colorado.
Population: 1,199 / 71.2% Hispanic. The median age is 38.1 years old. Among 988 residents who are 25 years and over, the rate of high school graduates or those with higher education is 74.6%, and those holding bachelor’s degrees and higher is 11.6%. The median household income is $31,983.

Espanola
Located 69 mile south of Los Ojos. The capitol of the state was originally stationed in Espanola by the Spanish government in 1598 till it was moved to Santa Fe in 1610. From this historical fact, the city of Espanola has been the core of Rio Arriba county to which many north central villages like Los Ojos, Tierra Amarilla, and Chama belong.
Population: 9,688 / 84.4% Hispanic. The median age is 33.9 years old. Among 6,223 residents who are 25 years and over, the rate of high school graduates or those with higher education is 74.5%, and those holding bachelor’s degrees and higher is 16.5%. The median household income is $32,255.

Taos (excluding Ranchos de Taos, Taos Pueblo, Taos Ski Valley)
Located 82 mile east of Los Ojos. The main trade is tourism centered on Native American culture and related arts. There are many accommodations, restaurants, gift shops, galleries aiming at the tourist trade.
Population: 4,700 / 54.3% Hispanic. The median age is 41.1 years old. Among 3,286 residents who are 25 years and over, the rate of high school graduates or those with higher education is 80.2%, and of those holding bachelor’s degrees and higher is 28.2%. The median household income is $25,016.

Pagosa Springs
Located 58 mile north of Los Ojos. The main industries are tourism and lumber. There are a good number of lodgings and time-share getaways (part-time occupancy / real estate) aimed at summer & winter vacationers. There are businesses geared to tourism; gift shops, restaurants, golf courses, and the hunting related enterprises / accommodations utilizing the wilderness areas.
Population: 1,591 / 43.2% Hispanic. The median age is 37.1 years old. Among 1067 residents who are 25 years and over, the rate of high school graduates or those with higher education is 73.1%, and of those holding bachelor’s degrees and higher is 16.8%. The median household income is $29,469.

Santa Fe
Located 94 mile south of Los Ojos. Capitol of New Mexico state.
Population: 62,203 / 47.8% Hispanic. The median age is 39.8 years old. Among 43,997 residents who are 25 years or over, the rate of high school graduates or those with higher education is 84.6%, and of those holding bachelor’s degrees and higher is 40.0%. Median household income is $40,392.

Rio Arriba County
Located in the north-central part of New Mexico State, adjoining the Colorado State border.
Population: 41,190 / 72.9% Hispanic. The median age is 34.5 years old. Among 25,930 residents who are 25 years and over, the rate of high school graduates or those with higher education is 73.0%, and of those holding bachelor’s degrees and higher is 15.4%. The median household income is $29,429. Individuals below poverty level: 20.3%.

New Mexico State
Population: 1,819,046 / 42.1% Hispanic (U.S. average: 12.5%). The median age is 34.6 years old. Among 1,134,801 citizens who are 25 years and over, the rate of high school graduates or those with higher education is 78.9% (U.S. average: 80.4%) and of those holding bachelor’s degrees and higher is 23.5% (U.S. average: 24.4%). The median household income is $34,133 (U.S. average: $41,994). Individuals below poverty level are 17.6% (U.S. average: 18.4%).

Reference:
Three Weavers, Joan Potter Loveless, University of New Mexico Press, 1992.