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## From Gambits to Case Data

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### 1. Introduction

Ethnography is based on “writing” (*graphy*) about a group of “people” (*ethno*) who differ from the reader. In introductory anthropology classes we learned that ethnography can refer to “field” or “text,” or both. “Field” was defined as intensive, extended-time fieldwork among the people of a particular society, whereas the “text” was stylistic presentation of research findings on these people. Although these findings are often holistic, that is, all-encompassing on many facets of local culture, the place typically was a single community within one area of a town or city, if the research setting was not circumscribed as rural. We were further taught that ethnography is not the same as anthropology. As a professional endeavor, anthropology is a domain of knowledge grounded within a mission, whereas ethnography is a set of techniques that take place “in the field” and in “the text” after and even while fieldwork is occurring. The conventions that characterize the practice of ethnography are utilized by practitioners from other fields of endeavor. Some of the classic monographs were in fact written by practitioners trained outside the field of anthropology. Because they illustrated the practice of ethnography so well, they were included in the classes taught by full-fledged anthropologists. Effective ethnography is unlimited and has no disciplinary boundaries or theoretical orientations.

Publications and conference presentations ground the development of ethnographic theory. This can occur across a body of ethnographic literature, as authors or teams of authors develop and build theory within individual texts or across texts in relation to knowledge gained from research among similar people. Constructing theory is based on related issues but not always the same guiding questions. To explore in greater depth what this means for ethnographic practice, again for “field” and “text,” I take the case of field research on illicit drug use among agricultural workers. I first examine ‘gambits’ that researchers have used in handling the issue of drug use among farm workers, before outlining basic ideas on field samples and data analysis. Gambits appear among the first approaches to a forbidden topic such as drug use, versus investigations at later stages, by which time more researchers have entered the discussion and saturation begins to occur in text-data-theory.

As I write this essay on the practice of ethnography, it has been several years since the study of illicit drug use among agricultural workers has been liberated from prior silence. We owe much to these early glimpses that the behavior existed in farm labor, although no one had an idea how extensive it was, what forms it took, how it fit within the general pattern of cultural practices experienced by farm workers, or what personal and community

consequences there might have been for those who used and those who were affected by its presence. The topic was one of interest, whose conceptual development was taking place amidst shifting methodological strategies.

## 2. Gambits

Ethnographers approached with caution the subject of illicit drug use among agricultural workers. This is true of early references and those who later became involved in full-scale research on farm workers and drug use. Not wishing to accuse or criticize or taint or slander the people of their research, ethnographers were careful in how they presented field data and through presentation, how they represented their study people. The literature that refers to drug and alcohol use among agricultural workers has been circumspect, considering the historic association of migrant workers with marijuana in public imagination, following the “marijuana scare” of the 1930s (Musto, 1999). No doubt there were other reasons for caution in the way that fieldworkers elected to raise the issue of drug use in agricultural areas where farm labor was concentrated. I first examine gambits that were utilized by these early writers who chose to reveal the presence of drugs within farm worker settings, before presenting examples of cases as sources of ethnographic theory.

### 2.1 Resort to ubiquity

A “resort to ubiquity” is a statement without elaboration to indicate that “drugs are everywhere,” hence drug use can be expected with Community O, People K, Village A or Population Y. Author recourse to ubiquity generally lacks information on frequency of occurrence or specificity of use. Analysis is generalized and real-world cases often are lacking. One example of “resort to ubiquity” occurs in the study of perishable crop agriculture by Monica Heppel and Sandra Amendola (1992). They identified a behavioral attitude in the northwestern United States reportedly occurring among farm workers in one intensified agricultural county: “Growers complained about a new ‘cocky’ and ‘disrespectful’ attitude that they felt workers were beginning to exhibit.” In the same paragraph, they characterized this county as an area where farm workers use drugs, before they link the attitude to drug distribution: “The overall workforce is becoming increasingly difficult – a purported increase in drug trafficking and other criminal activities” (p. 66). The authors imply that drugs in this area are expected among agricultural workers, owing to a “purported increase in drug trafficking” in this farming county. Thus, the implication is: *If* drugs were available, because distribution has increased and their presence was increasing, *then* “drugs are everywhere.” We are never told how much drug use and/or distribution occurs among farm workers in the Northwest, and nothing is said to link these local behaviors (distribution and use) to farm workers elsewhere in the Northwest. The reasoning is circuitous.

### 2.2 Singleton

This gambit gives a single glance at the phenomenon and its consequences. A comment describes a single instance in no more than a sentence amidst thick description of the author’s thesis. More information is avoided to obscure a negative impression of the study community. This gambit works well with case analysis. One example of “singleton” appears in Juan Vincent Palerm’s (1992) illustration of a typical farm labor season, using the case of

Pedro, to provide a glimpse at pill dispensing to workers. Born in central Mexico, and coming to the United States at age 19, Pedro worked in two states in strawberries, asparagus, oranges, berries, celery, construction and day labor. Regarding celery work performed by Pedro, Palerm writes:

The foreman drove the crew hard and hardly gave the workers time to rest... When the workers began to show fatigue and become irritable, the foreman dispensed small triangular pills that he call "pinkos" which he claimed would re-energize the worker. (I suspect that he was administering amphetamines.) One afternoon Pedro cut his hand just above the thumb. (p. 363)

Alliterative expressions "hard" and "hardly" foreshadow "amphetamines" in parentheses to translate the term, 'pinkos'. Palerm does not suggest how extensive pill-dispensing might be or if it occurs elsewhere in the country or only in California. The author narrows his comment to a parenthetical remark, rather than expand this aspect of Pedro's experience to suggest how often he took pills in or outside celery work. It is not clear how much pill-dispensing occurred among the crew where Pedro worked. That the crew leader dispensed pills to more workers than Pedro is evident in the passage. If Pedro's case was meant to typify "workers," then we suspect that pill-dispensing was common among other celery workers. Significance of the practice is suggested by linking pill-taking (in parentheses) to Pedro's thumb injury. It is obvious Palerm intends to remove any hint of blame on Pedro, or other workers, for taking the pills, as we note the phrase, "the foreman dispensed..."

### 2.3 Serial nesting

"Serial nesting" is inserting a disparate characteristic or behavior in a series of traits. Generally the series goes beyond the three items customarily found in English texts. Attributes are listed to describe a vulnerable community, such as immigrants. The listing truncates activities that co-exist with variable frequency, among which is one that typically would be disvalued, such as drug use or drug selling, or smuggling. Hence, the negative or disvalued trait is sanitized by nesting its inclusion among a number of activities greater than the typical short list that the reader expects. In ethnography, identifying a few among many plays down the conceptual weight of the phenomenon and it avoids "blaming others" of unsavory activities. This gambit owes its effectiveness to revealing a full picture in a single sentence that shows good and bad; thus, the bad loses its taint. In ethnography, we read examples of valiant people and commendable acts, among which the author includes one or two that refer to unsavory activities. To strengthen the softening, the unsavory might have taken place in the past.

One example of this gambit appears in a study of immigrant women by Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo (1994), where one case among her sample of forty is that of a woman asked by her aunt to transport drugs across the U.S./Mexico border (p. 90). Another example is a collection of narratives by persons with agricultural experience in *With These Hands* (Rothenburg 1998), which includes the cases of two men who used crack-cocaine (pp. 155-159, 177-181) among a selection of seventy vignettes on aspects of farm labor including recruitment, labor practices, family life, housing, schooling, and so on.

A variation on this gambit can be accomplished in case analysis. To illustrate life on the U.S./Mexico border, three cases are presented by Carlos Vélez-Ibáñez in *Border Visions*

(1997), beginning with Larry Acosta (pp. 151-154). This case describes a cycle of early settlement, where one was prone to regretted choices. Although Mr. Acosta used drugs during time he moved about while working in mining in the southwestern United States, the case ends on a positive note. He received treatment for addiction and found work as a treatment counselor. Positioning drug use before recovery as a part of his past is unusual and cancels out the relative weight of having one user among a small number of cases. Cases of drug use in the literature are frozen in the *ethnographic present* rather than nestled into a life trajectory. Vélez-Ibáñez startles the reader with the immediacy of drug use in the first case, rather than one of the later cases. We receive the surprise before deepening description that broadens our understanding of difficulties workers faced and the means by which they persevered and overcame adversity.

## 2.4 Acknowledgment

“Acknowledgment” of drug use or distribution among farm workers occurs when neither one is the analytic focus. A limited number of statements in the text demonstrate the presence of some kind of drug-related activity. An acknowledgment seeks to appraise the community setting with minimal details that avoid a blame-the-victim attitude. Reference to drugs or drug traffic might occur more than once, as a single statement that requires no further elaboration.

One of the earliest references to illicit drugs in the ethnographic literature on farm labor is Linda Whiteford's (1980) study of gender relations in an agricultural area on the Mexico-Texas border. Completed as dissertation fieldwork (Whiteford, 1979), her research acknowledged that some residents were smuggling drugs across the international border from Mexico into the United States. It was smuggling and availability of more jobs with federal and state programs that provided an impetus for changes in gender relations, which is the focus of her monograph. She mentions the full cause before describing how changes in gender relations affected the local community. Whiteford (1980) is aware of the dilemma. Through a variant of resort to ubiquity she reports the involvement of local people: “Smuggling of drugs and guns is a delicate topic... smuggling is not relegated to a small group of “lower-class” hoodlums. People who smuggle, or at least peripherally involved in smuggling, are to be found at every level of the social system” (p. 107). She softens disclosure by recognizing the “delicate” difficulty of a practice (“smuggling”) that might be considered unsavory. At the same time she reveals local knowledge of the practice, before documenting how common was the practice through a 1977 grand jury investigation that found that one-third of the town was engaged in smuggling (p. 107). She continues by depicting local awareness that smuggling brought greater profits with less work (pp. 4, 108) and provides examples of commodity consumption that illustrates sudden wealth for those who once were poor (p. 110). Finally, she examines changes in local society, whose basis she attributes to money derived “directly or indirectly” from smuggling and the presence of more jobs that were subsidized through government programs (p. 111).

A short distance from the fictitious town, Frontera, studied by Whiteford, a small border town was home-base for journalist Isabel Valle (1994), who lived with a migrant family (parents/children) with whom she traveled to apple and potato harvests in Washington, Oregon and Idaho. She reports on drug dealing across the border and illicit transportation of drugs from South Texas to the Northwest as interrelated and common. She does not

mention local attitudes and provides no appraisal of effects these activities have on local people. Having learned of their occurrence in her one-year sojourn, she reports their existence, which we take to be valid, because she was living as an insider. Much like an ethnographer might plan and conduct a study of migrant life, Valle chose to study the situation by living and traveling with people from the community.

## 2.5 Exemplification

“Exemplification” is a gambit that celebrates the awareness of local people who recognize that a disvalued activity is taking place in their community. This approach relies on insider viewpoints. Rather than emphasize detriments of these practices, textual references to the activity remain silent on consequences. Presented evocatively in the reported words of practitioners and those directly affected by the practice, the style of exemplification is “hard and direct.”

Contractor-as-outlaw and city-as-cause are among several themes that appear in what might be the first published narratives in the literature that describe someone who performed farm work and used hard drugs. Four cases are documented in three ethnographies. Similar to the three cases in *Border Visions*, all four men “once” used drugs, and each of the four by one means or another fled the labor camp where he worked. Excerpts from narratives imply that each man, who previously used drugs, was coerced to continue using by labor contractors. In one case (Fred Sampson), these individuals formed a family where a few members were later convicted of violations of the Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act (Rothenburg, 1998:159).

Two narratives appear in Daniel Rothenburg’s *With These Hands* (1998), an exposition of seventy narratives from a sample of more than one-hundred interviews with men and women across the United States (namely, Southwest, Southeast, Midwest) and Guatemala and Mexico. Most were persons in labor-intensive activities. The monograph includes two men paid by labor contractors in “wine and drugs,” which exemplifies addition of illicit drugs to the practice of advances (“loans”) from farm contractors to workers, which, according to Rothenberg in his introduction (p. xiv), already included licit commodities of food, cigarettes, alcohol (see Jankowski & Bradburd, 2003). Two stories in Rothenburg’s (1998) monograph, those of Fred Sampson (pp. 155-159) and Calvin Douglas (pp. 177-181), emphasize urban-based drug use and perpetuate an image of ‘the city’ as an influence that generates drug use. Each man is recruited to farm labor from a city with promise of good money and drugs. After losing a construction job, Sampson was recruited in a large city in Georgia, for example, and after business experience in Tennessee, Douglas was recruited in a city in Florida, within two years of his move to that state.

A third case appears in a collection of essays on the homeless, compiled by Steven Vander Staay (1992). A fourth case appears in a collection of essays on life trajectories of five gay men, prepared by Leon Pettiway (1996). Neither monograph focused on agricultural labor. But each includes one person with prior experience in farm labor. Albert was recruited from a homeless shelter in a city located along the west coast of Florida to work in the Carolinas and Maine, before he left the crew (Vander Staay, 1992:51-52). He took advances in drugs or alcohol, before paying back from his earnings what he had used. At one point, he owed money. His case is upbeat: at the time of interview he was organizing a march against

homelessness. 'Keisha' (street name) was raised and traveled with a migrant family, when younger. In the context of Pettitway's five-case study of sexual orientation, his background as that of a migrant who performed farm work in the South; four other cases were urban-based. Keisha makes the transition to drug use while leaving behind his family and farm work and on the street becomes more heavily involved in drug use.

Although the case of Keisha suggests that rural origins are likely to lead to drug involvement, the theme of city-as-cause in the other examples of exemplification (Fred Sampson, Calvin Douglas, Albert) ignore rural origins as "causes" of drug use. All four narratives are silent on distribution of drugs by not only contractors but also farm workers (Bletzer, 2004).

## 2.6 Elaborated inclusion

Generally occurring as a series of references scattered throughout a monograph (rather than nested in one place in the text), "elaborated inclusion" demonstrates an author's sensitivity to the unsavory within a community. The contexts in which drug using/selling might occur suggest variability. Similar to acknowledgment where the unsavory is not the analytic focus, elaborated inclusion is more nuanced. In *Mexican Voices, American Dreams*, for example, Marilyn Davis (1990) demonstrates awareness of "drinking" as an accepted, expected male activity in Mexico to alcohol consumption across the border, where it becomes a problem that requires intervention. Her first reference to alcohol occurs with the story of Don Benjamin Real, depicted "nursing a beer" in a tavern he purchased with funds from work in the states (pp. 45-46), and her final reference is the case of a disc jockey with a drinking problem that required treatment in the United States (pp. 389-395). Between comments on cultural differences, Davis occasionally refers to marijuana (one man assisted smuggling; one woman smoked), youth exposed to drugs in cities but do not use, greater susceptibility to robbery when one is intoxicated, and the lucrative business of drug sales. These mentions are generalized; no fictive names are given and extensive details are lacking. The author includes one case of a man in rural Oregon suspected of drug involvement, when he stopped communicating with his family. When his wife and mother visit him, he rejected them. This statement of female intervention on behalf of a loved one provides an unusual glimpse of what life is like for a migrant, where many forms of adversity present challenges.

A second example of elaborated inclusion is José Limón's *Dancing with the Devil* (1994), where he includes casual references to drug use after stating in his introduction that his monograph is a study of border relations in South Texas. He suggests the community he studied, which implicitly comprises an agricultural population, holds variable views of drug use. References to drugs range from a "soft substance" (marijuana) to a "hard drug" (heroin); examples of those involved and/or affected by drugs range from a mother who prays before a saint that her child be delivered from drugs to the author's contact with an implied heroin smuggler at a religious shrine, where he provided transportation to/from the site for his mother. Rare among ethnographic disclosures, Limón discloses his own anxiety toward drugs, when it occurred to him that informants, riding in his car, might have marijuana that would place him at risk of arrest. Attitudes attributed to local people in the community fit the notions of drug use that one would expect to find along the border. That is, some people favor drugs (pro), some are against them (con), and a few are involved in distribution and/or use. Going further than narratives about drug use among agricultural

workers or other forms of field research on farm labor, Limón provides the reader a glimpse of rural life through individualized close-ups, which are divergent in attitude on what it means to be a member of a border community.

### 3. News reporting

Newspaper articles provide an interesting counter-part to the ethnography of farm labor and drug use. It was the printed news that reported the discovery of crack-cocaine in farm labor settings. Although there is no disclosed intent to make the text ethnographic, news reporting shares one basic element with fieldwork, which is that of an experience-near report of a real-world event or person or situation or issue. Both journalism and ethnography rely on 'textual realism' in their message.

Anthropologists purportedly write for professionals and/or for students taking classes in anthropology, whereas journalists write for a public readership determined by a newspaper's distribution. Journalists seek hot issues. Anthropologists warm to the task of telling an audience what life is like among people with whom readers most likely will never interact (Appadurai, 1991). Journalists write in short word-bytes. Anthropologists take more space to elaborate ideas systematically into article segments or monograph chapters. Both journalists and anthropologists interview and observe, and each professes to utilize conventions to bring the reader closer to another world of experience. Each seeks engagement beyond vague evocation. Although the impression is that ethnographers spend more time in the field than journalists, each might spend an extended time getting to know the situation or the people under investigation.

Ethnographers in the study of farm workers were reluctant, until the past decade, to confront the issue of illicit drug use and drug sales among men and women who perform farm labor. In effect they were sidestepping inside knowledge within agricultural communities rarely articulated in public. Willing to write on farm workers and drugs, journalists in contrast sought to evoke a response to isolated realities (realism), whether they sought to generate a quick-fix or more extensive reform to illicit drugs that form one part of farm labor with its many organizational problems. Both groups were committing errors of representation. Ethnographers generally ignored the issue in publications and journalists sometimes over-reacted.

To extend my discussion, I explore news articles that refer to farm work and drugs from areas of the southern United States. While conducting fieldwork in several eastern states, I took time to review back issues of local newspapers in three locales around the time that crack-cocaine had appeared in the eastern United States. That is, the time period for this review was early to late 1980s. First, I describe the context in which news reporting covered introduction of crack-cocaine in the 1980s, which was followed shortly thereafter by news reports of crack use and distribution among farm labor crews.

#### 3.1 First news on crack-cocaine

The *New York Times* is credited with first disclosure of "crack" in a front-page article, November 29, 1985 (Goss, 1985), which covered the appearance of crack-cocaine sales in New York City. A four-part series on drugs, "The New Addicts," eighteen months earlier (Raab, 1984), made no mention of "crack," despite a careful description of a rising incidence

of middle-class users of cocaine and heroin. The tacit assumption is that crack first appeared on the east coast is challenged by a report of earlier discovery by a “basement chemist” on the west coast, someplace in Los Angeles, California (Erickson et al., 1994:23-24, citing James A. Inciardi at a technical meeting sponsored by National Institute on Drug Abuse; see also Rattner, 1993). “Crack” appears in the *New York Times Index* for the 1985 article, but is not mentioned for the 1984 four-part series on changes in new recruits among middle-class users. Possibly, the contacts generated for this series by *Times* reporters were used to explore “crack-cocaine,” apart from information already collected on new habitués. Similar to ethnographers, reporters build on information from previous research which often leads them into new areas.

### 3.2 Crack-cocaine among farm workers

The first reports on the elusive practice of commodity advances by labor contractors to farm workers appeared in local and national newspapers. Four years after the article on crack on New York City streets, another article in the *New York Times* (Kilborn, 1989) became the definitive source on infiltration of illicit drugs into agricultural labor. The article names a farming community in the Middle South [not named for confidentiality]. To this time, alcohol was most known for distribution by labor contractors. The *Times* article was cited by various professionals, for example, within opening remarks by Vander Staay (1992:53) that introduce a narrative from a man who once worked on a labor camp where drugs were distributed. Four days after the *Times* article, the local newspaper in this farming area reported on the same incident. Written by two local reporters, this article provides an alternative view of the arrest of a contractor for drug trafficking. His crew originated from the edge of the citrus belt in the Lower South. The county where the arrest took place was one of three later called “Cocaine Triangle” by the local newspaper, owing to drug trials that were becoming common in the district court.

Both articles focus on forms of peonage between management and farm labor, and each centers their story on discovery of an accounting ledger that allegedly contained itemized re-sales of food, cigarettes, alcohol and, possibly, crack-cocaine. Whereas the *Times* article begins with discovery of the ledger on a sweet potato farm, the local newspaper begins with an overview of labor recruitment by contractors, hired by growers to supply workers, a practice that varies throughout the United States. That is, the ‘contractor’ typically has supervisory contact with workers hired, unless he (or she) delegates supervision to one or more crew leaders. Making monetary advances to a worker is common, reported on east coast (Heppel, 1982), west coast (Zabin et al., 1993) and both coasts (Rothenberg, 1998). Commodities sold to workers in camps are over-priced. A worker is docked for what can become all his wages. When arrests for crack distribution took place in the 1980s, the grower and labor contractor were liable for overcharges in commodity re-sale. Sympathizing with farm owners, the local newspaper noted that government restrictions had forced some growers in the Middle South to leave farming. Sympathizing with farm labor, the *Times* article noted, “Drugs or no drugs, just about every transaction in the book [ledger] is illegal” (Kilborn, 1989:D23). The local news states that crack first entered the county with contractors, whereas the *Times* reporters refrained from attributing origins.

Discovery of the ledger in 1989 was preceded by an acceleration of drug seizures chronicled in the local newspaper, which started in 1985, the year the national media ‘broke the story’

of crack-cocaine. Seven months after the *New York Times* article, the local newspaper published its first story on local distribution of crack. This report originated with a talk at a luncheon by the state bureau of investigation director that led to the first local article on crack, June 19, 1986. The first cited “crack” arrest reported in the local newspaper seven weeks later (July 30) described two out-of-state men from New York and Maryland with 56 “crack” vials in their car. That same article credits a March 1986 arrest at a national airport some distance from the farming county as the state’s first “crack” arrest, when 239 vials of crack were seized. The next day (July 31) the article on the camp raid appeared. Editors thought it more newsworthy to have a full story with a photo of the arrested contractor from the Lower South than earlier arrests of men from the North caught with large amounts of crack. The raid that led to the arrest utilized an experience-near approach: “The cars continued down the dusty, rough road to the camp... The sun beat down as the officers approached the trailer. A group of officers entered the [crew leader’s] home... Thirty workers were sitting around three trailers that faced the crew leader’s trailer, the only trailer searched....” [1986]. Curiously, workers seated outside and those returning to camp in the crew bus were not subject to search, which was delayed an hour while sheriff’s deputies waited for a search warrant. The crew leader’s wife also made the news, as it was reported she was cooking her husband’s supper. This was the second drug bust for crack reported in the local paper. Whereas this one was a “raid” (July 1986), the first was a “bust” (March 1986). Local articles after 1986 to time of the ledger discovery reported nationally in the *Times* in 1989 continued to link crew leaders to crack-cocaine.

Weekly newspapers from adjacent farm towns in the Lower South share features of daily reporting from the Middle South, but they avoided associating labor contractors or farm workers with drug arrests. For these two communities, farm workers were not viewed as intrusive. Each county relied on winter agriculture. Some residents who live year-round in these rural towns are also farm workers. They migrate to areas outside the county and the state to work in agriculture. Farm counties in the Middle South are one area where farm workers are viewed as non-residents who arrive/leave. Four articles appeared in 1986 in the weekly newspaper in the first county of the Lower South: arrest of three for prostitution and intent to sell or deliver a controlled substance (crack) on April 20; crack arrest for possession on August 6 (“rock” = “highly purified form of freebase cocaine”); and crack arrests on November 19 and December 10. Amounts were specified but not the paraphernalia. Charges and prior arrests were identified; law enforcement units rather than officers were credited with arrests; names of arrestees were accompanied by a local address, a few of which were migrant living sites in town; and the place of arrest was not listed, if it would jeopardize an ongoing *sting* (“set-up”).

Although the first article that mentioned “crack,” August 20, 1986, appeared after a talk by a state senator at a local Lions Club in the second county of the Lower South (similar to the Middle South), no public appearance led local reporters to investigate crack among farm workers in the second county. The reporter from the first county in the Lower South referred to “street corner delivery” and compared the cost of a crack “smoke” at \$5 to \$10 to “the cost of a movie or a box of popcorn.” The analogy is surprising: this farming community never had a movie theater. The next issue for the second farm town one week later provided information on “rock” [crack] in the local area. This report was unconcerned about revealing techniques: details appear on modes of administration (laced cigarettes,

home-made pipes, flattened soda cans) and local price (\$20). The reporter obviously “checked around” to secure information. Two weeks after first mentioning crack, the paper published its first article on a “crack sweep” that resulted in eleven arrests for sale, delivery and manufacture of “rock” (September 3). In another article, the same reporter named a local drug area (“A quick drive in the ‘Quarters’”) and added to a list of paraphernalia the use of aluminum foil with a piece of automobile antenna. Her report that crack users “scrape the pipe bowl for residue and re-light it” is testimony to her perseverance to get a story and provides early-in-the-history documentation that rural crack users had learned how to generate additional “hits” through remnants and residues, a phenomenon reported in urban drug research, similar to users that collected ‘roaches’ from discarded marijuana ‘joints’ (remaining stub) or injector-discarded ‘cottons’ initially used to strain impurities from a heroin solution.

All three newspapers (one daily and two weekly) from these Middle South and Lower South farm communities utilized a style of writing called “con-use” (Fan & Holway, 1994) which stresses negative drug effects. In their analyses, this was crack. Whereas one weekly newspaper reported details of local arrests, interweaving then-known “facts” about crack during the first year of its local reporting, the other two newspapers (one weekly, one daily) used an investigative slant to portray the practice of crack use as unsavory (Hartman & Golub, 1999), which often provoked unintended interpretations that could be construed as “pro-use” (Fan & Holway, 1994). One of the two rural newspapers, for example, identified local ‘copping areas’ and described ‘paraphernalia’ used to smoke crack, whereas the other clearly presented pro-grower sentiments. Moreover, the two latter papers were inclined to identify the atypical in their news stories. Black labor contractors were stigmatized for introducing crack to rural areas of the Middle South, for example. The third newspaper, more known for its con-use style, minimized valorization, focusing on “arrest facts” in police reports, occasionally mixed with then-known “facts” of crack. Interestingly, this newspaper followed a style of generalized reporting: reporters neither accompanied law enforcement nor sought out users and dealers to interview. I had the opportunity to interview two successive editors of this newspaper, each of whom emphasized the need to avoid the “magnification of evil.” They instructed reporters “to not alarm the community.” Newspapers in various areas of the country have sometimes, often unintentionally, attributed greater involvement than was the case (see Musto, 1999:221, quotation from a report from the Federal Bureau of Narcotics presented to the U.S. Congress).

#### 4. Sampling in ethnography

If we believe that a sufficient number of workers use illicit drugs, then we must select a reasonable means of sampling to investigate one or more aspects of use patterns. *Case intensification* best fits situations where we need to find the individuals who share a characteristic or engage in a practice that is generally limited, such as drug use or drug sales (Figure 1). Once we have collected sufficient field data, we can reliably analyze *typical* and *atypical* characteristics of the entire sample or select one or more individuals to illustrate what is common and not so common (Figure 2). ‘Typical’ and ‘atypical’ refer to “cases,” that is, individuals who engaged in a practice or its characteristics, such as paraphernalia, frequency of use, user preferences for one or more drugs, and other facets of using drugs that might emerge as the field data are being collected.

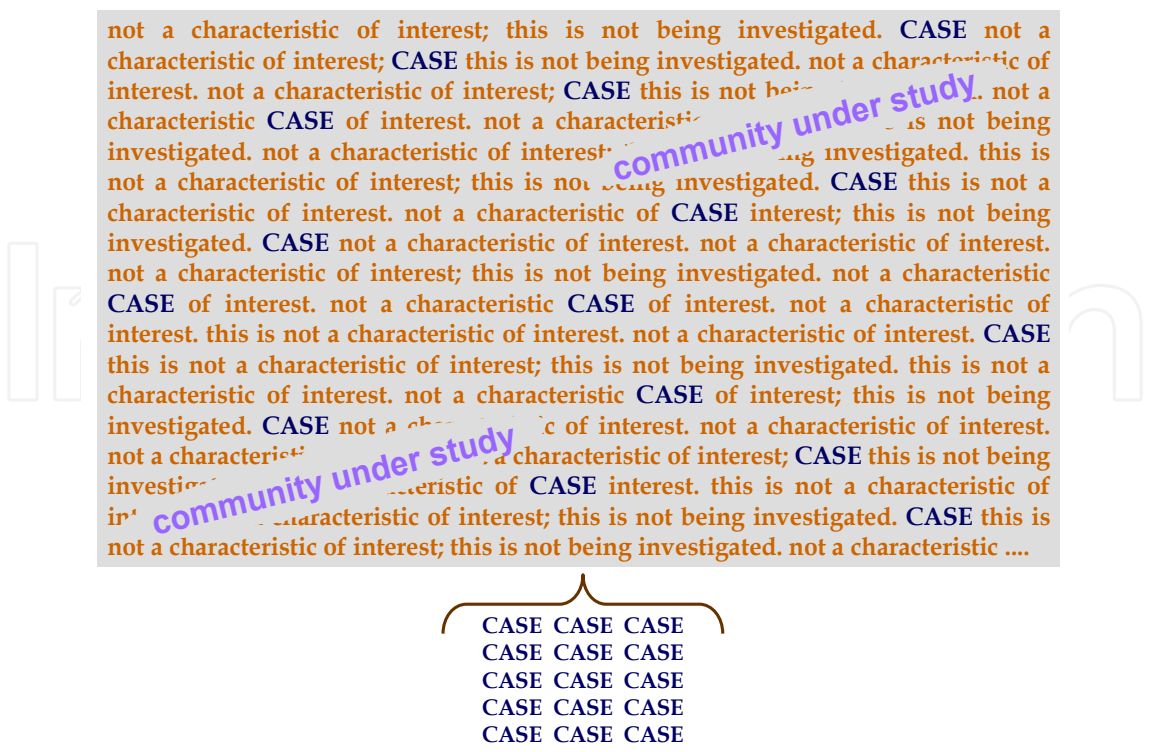


Fig. 1. Intensification in the “field” where unusual and/or hard-to-find cases are sampled

Because agricultural workers who use drugs are not that common, the means of sampling that I most often utilized was *intensification* of workers in agricultural areas where I was conducting ethnographic fieldwork. I traveled among various states but three in the southern United States were where I collected most my field data from six primary sites and fourteen secondary sites. There were a number of casual sites where I spent time, rarely more than a single visit, but each produced usable field data. A few casual sites became secondary sites, which I continued to visit on a regular basis.

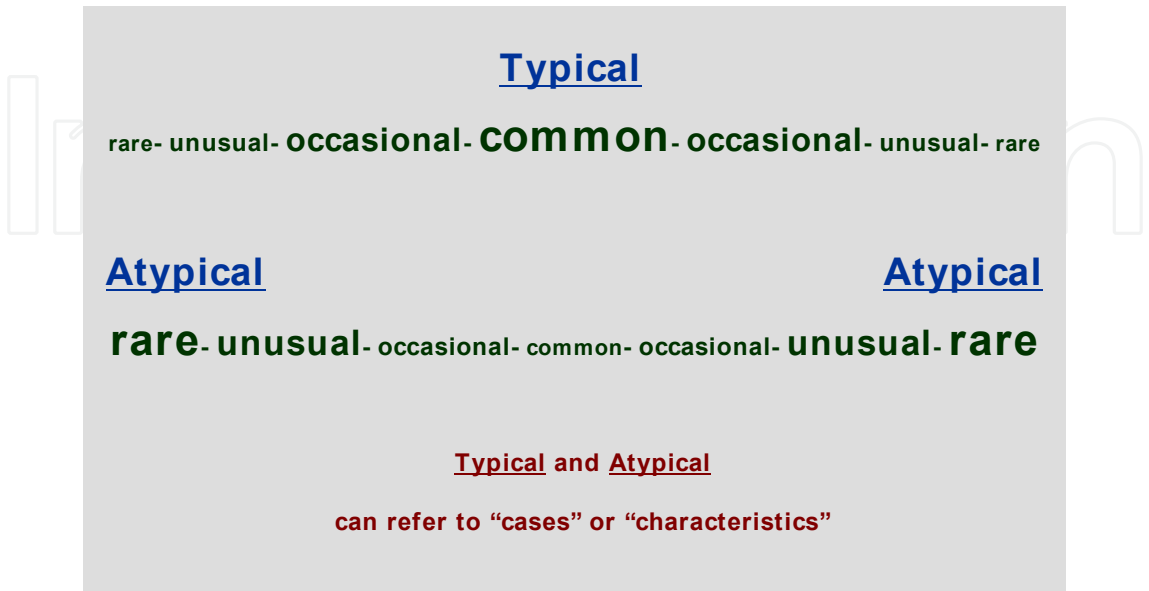


Fig. 2. Incorporation of atypical and/or typical cases into ethnographic “text”

Given the population of interest is agricultural workers, another issue appears. Farm workers are not stationary in residence. They move around. Some follow crops for short periods of time or longer, which means they leave communities of residence, and some perform local work. Thus, sampling “in the field” must consider farm labor mobility. For a community that exists more or less permanently in one locale, as occurs in the classic ethnographic monographs, an ethnographer can return later and find many of the same people. That might not be possible with farm workers, if an encounter site was seasonal. Instead, we might choose the locale to which farm workers return when not on-the-season. Sampling decisions might require both types of sites, seasonal and home-base, and, if so, how many of each.

Which cases to present in “text” is the next choice an ethnographer must make. For this essay, I chose to randomize selection. Why random cases? Random sampling is not usually used by ethnographers, even at the time they initiate research. It takes place with a few kinds of social science research. Ethnographers rely on *emergent sampling*, where a sample develops over time (“field”), and *emergent discovery*, where field data are examined through case analysis (“text”). That is, knowledgeable people are identified over the first weeks or any time during fieldwork on farm workers, where men and women are coming and going, and often leaving for extended periods, whether on the east coast (Tolney, 1999) or west coast (Du Brys, 2007).

Ethnographic findings come from field data collected and analyzed over time, rather than specific pre-planned data. At least this is the path that I chose for this study. When I began with the Migrant Worker Risk Study, a team-based epidemiological investigation (I was hired as on-site project director), I was constrained to exploratory fieldwork in high-risk agricultural settings. The initial data led to ideas I wanted to explore through narratives. So, I secured funding to continue fieldwork as a “single investigator.” My home-base for both studies was Agton, a rural town with an intensive agricultural economic base.

When reporting research findings, ethnographers develop materials for presentation, based on cases they select as the most representative for what they wish to illustrate. Cases emerge in organizing and analyzing data through *emergent discovery*, which crystallizes steps that precede data selection for presentation in publications. Randomization “in the text” is not common in ethnography. Field data typically are derived from community immersion and consistent inter-personal engagement over time, or by pre-arranged contacts, rather than secured and sorted from pre-existing data bases.

For me this style of research became unwieldy. I was immersing myself in settings where actors regularly changed over time. I collected data over multiple sites in several states, but spent most my time in one home-base community. My fieldwork style duplicated the multi-sited lifestyle that migrant workers experience: move / return home / move again / followed by more returning / moving. Usually, the time to go/return was fixed. People whom I met shifted in time-space. Some left and returned one-two-three-four years later. Some left, never to be seen again. Others replaced them. As I built the emergent sample of people to whom I am indebted, I wondered how I might best illustrate, fairly and accurately, aspects of their lives. Exploring these lives, I wanted to tell the story of the people in my field data. I needed an equitable way to select stories. So I randomized cases for “text.” I selected twenty-four transcribed interviews to construct a picture of farm labor drug use. For this essay I include ten of these cases that illustrate three migrant family

themes: father as primary figure, mother as primary caretaker and wage earner, where her children might continue farm labor into adulthood or shift to non-agricultural work.

#### 4.1 The sample of narrators

Most the 127 Narrative Life Story interviews that form the basis of fieldwork were conducted in English with 82 men and women born in the United States, usually in the South and elsewhere in the United States. Forty-five individuals of the 127 were born outside the United States, most of whom spoke Spanish (90 percent preferred their interview in Spanish). Six men born in Latin America or the Caribbean spoke languages other than English, Spanish or French, including nine non-European languages (three Creole-based; six indigenous), and home country language (mostly Spanish, also French). Several came with family members to the states their first time; some were the only members of family to ever travel or live in states.

One similarity in the sample was means of transportation. More men and women rode a bicycle or walked than owned and/or drove an automobile during their lifetime. This is not surprising. The National Agricultural Workers Survey (NAWS) consistently found vehicle owners in less than half of their sampled workers; percentages range from high 40s to low 40s, or fell below, but never above (Department of Labor, 2000). In my study, more than 85 percent of 127 men and women relied on walking or rode a bicycle, used public transportation or solicited rides within and between local towns. Most rode in harvesting buses or vans and trucks to the fields, orchards, groves, nurseries, packing houses, and distribution warehouses where they worked. A second similarity was incarceration. Four-fifths of the men and more than one-fifth of the women among 127 sampled persons were incarcerated at some point in their lifetime. This is not surprising; estimates from the Border Patrol suggest that ten to fifteen percent of the undocumented they detain have prior arrest records (Banks, 2008). At the high end in my study, 15 men and women served a total of almost sixty years in state prison, mostly for street-level drug sales and auto theft. Another 48 spent time “in and out” of jail, mostly for disorderliness and public drunkenness; robbery and burglary; and parole violation. Twelve women and men spent a few days in jail, once or twice in their lifetime.

Apart from similarities of minimized mobility in transportation and maximized immobility through incarceration, and the criteria of drug/alcohol use and agricultural labor that determined eligibility for the field research, men and women who became narrators of the Narrative Life Stories told a variety of good and bad experiences. Some were sought, some were not. Some were horrendous, but many were not unlike experiences that one might hear in a life story narrated by someone from mainstream society. Humor was embedded in the narrative style of those interviewed (Bletzer, 2010; also Gamburd, 2008).

Important first times are remembered. Many of us, perhaps, can recall the first time we took a bus, jitney, taxi, tram, subway train, or street car. Most all cities have public transportation of some kind, and many rural areas have inter-county bus or shuttle services, so this experience is likely remembered. Many of us also can remember the first time we drove a motor vehicle. Probably it was an automobile, if we lived in a city or the suburbs, or truck or lawn mower or tractor, if one lived in a rural area. These experiences are close to many of us. For other societies, important “firsts” differ from those we emphasize. Can we remember our first community ritual, or the first time we were taken by parents into the forest to harvest yams or fetch firewood, or taken to sea to fish, or the forest to hunt, or the first time we saw costumed

dancers for a religious festival? For many of us, experiences such as these might not seem to be a big event or one that was important when it took place. To people in communities that hold traditional ideas of what the world is about, these events are crucial steps to adulthood.

Some 'firsts' take people into other worlds of experience. These "worlds" are associated with experimentation while growing up. Do you remember the first time you smoked or drank? Possibly there never was a first time for smoking or drinking. Or, you might be among less than ten percent of the United States population that report they have used an illicit drug at some point in their lifetime. For men and women I met through my research, these events they recalled, such as *first drug ever used*, each drug used thereafter *for the first time*, the *last time* a new drug was initiated, or the point where some "ceased using" and gained sobriety from alcohol and/or drugs. Each instance of drug use onset was significant and personal (Adams, 2008).

## 5. Use history

Seventy percent of the 127 narrators who told Narrative Life Stories were active in farm labor at the time of interview. Each one had current or recent experience in agriculture and all were currently using or had used one/more drugs or alcohol in the recent past. Ten percent received disability or were recovering from injury; twenty percent were inactive in agriculture. Fifty-five percent of the 127 were active users at the time of interview. Mostly they smoked crack and/or drank alcohol. The other forty-five percent were in recovery or in treatment. All together, participants had experienced 12 different classes of drugs, and reported a total 525 onset events that ranged from (a) oral intake by sipping, guzzling, chewing, or swallowing, (b) vapor inhalation through the mouth by heating a drug to melting point, using paraphernalia, (c) smoke created by burning a semi-flammable substance, inhaled through mouth or nose, and (d) injection, by needle and syringe, into the blood stream through a vein or under the skin. These various drugs ranged from commercial beverage alcohol, to illicit street dope, to those that were derived from natural plants.

Three-fourths the first drugs *ever used* by these 127 men and women were initiated in their "hometown" (72.4%). Because many initiated more than one drug in their lifetime, onset for one-half (50.8%) of the 525 drugs/alcohol initiated occurred in a place of birth, if the individual had remained in their hometown into late adolescence (Figure 3). This was common, although most the men and women whom I interviewed had traveled often and/or moved about and lived in multiple places and locales. What was surprising was to find that a small percentage of drug use onset actually occurred in a place of sojourn, whether it was first ever or later, when these places of temporary short-term abode comprised a large proportion of time experienced, both as a younger person, usually during adolescence, and later in life as a young adult and even later.

*First Onset* is first use of any drug or alcohol, whereas *Later Onset* is initiating another drug/alcohol after first drug onset. Later events might pull someone into continuing experiences or they begin a process of gradual or sudden cessation.

### 5.1 Ten vignettes

Ten vignettes were derived from 24 randomized cases of the full sample of 127 men and women interviewed for Narrative Life Stories. Vignettes summarize life trajectories,

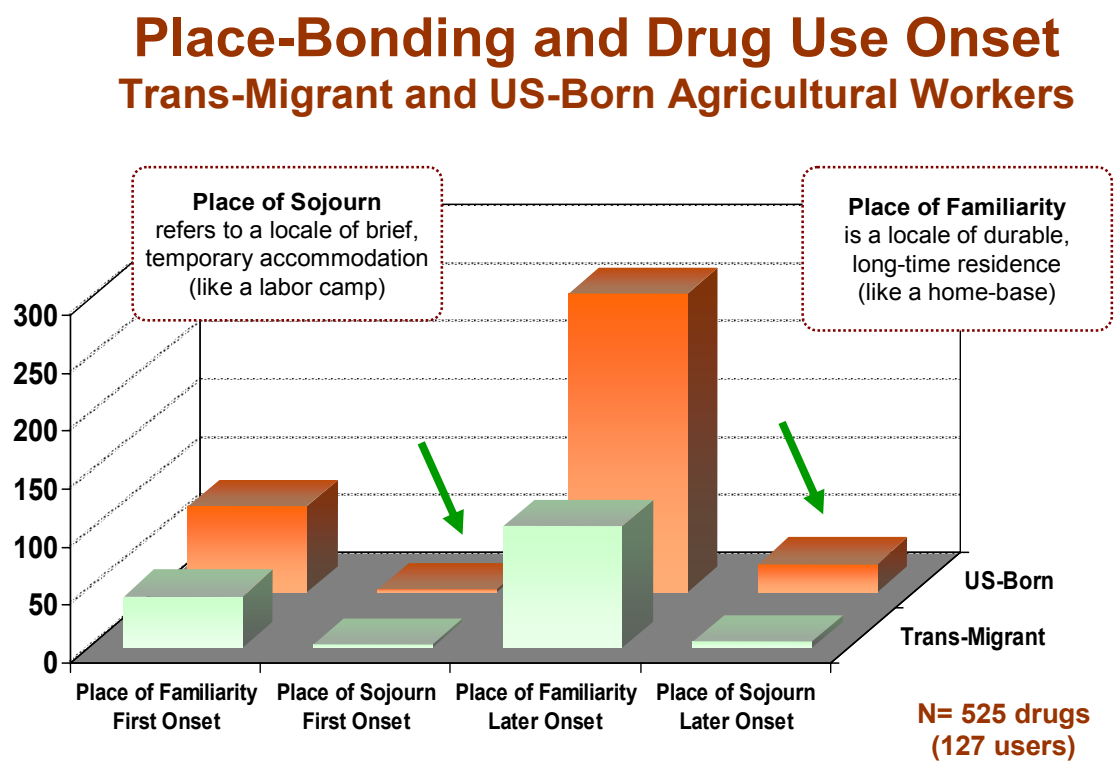


Fig. 3. Variation in first and later onset between place of familiarity and place of sojourn

describe drugs each narrator had used or was using when interviewed, and highlight the social world best known to them. After presenting a mini-summary that identifies onset specifics, I include an illustrative story from each that describes an aspect of use or an incident that was unusual or redemptive or humorous, as a self-reflexive view of life by someone that had developed a consuming passion for drugs. Number of drugs among these 24 cases ranges from two men who drank alcohol, to two men at the high end with fourteen and twelve. Random sample of the 24 is similar to the sample of 127: mean onset age 13.21 (13.64 for entire sample), mean number of drugs used at 4.35 (4.10 for sample) and mean age for last drug initiated 24.58 years (25.61 for sample). Mean age of 36.88 years was younger than 38.57 years for the entire sample, and the mean time in farm labor at 11.00 years was less than 12.73 years for the entire sample.

We start with the case of Arnie, whom I met in the Middle South. To follow the convention of ethnographic texts, I use only fictive names for men and women in case vignettes, and for any individual or place that is named. Arnie’s situation was unusual. When he first came to the states, he had never drunk alcohol or used a drug. He spent his youth in a rural area of Mexico, where he went to school, before he left to assist his mother’s brother in the local markets, selling perishable produce. Arnie was the oldest child. His father left for the states when Arnie was ten, and for six years neither his wife nor children heard from him. At age 16, Arnie crossed the border without papers (legal age is 18), in search of his father, who worked in agriculture, when he last communicated with his family. This search for the “Prodigal Father” led Arnie to drink.

Assisted by a paternal uncle, Arnie made an undocumented border crossing. To avoid capture they slept by day and walked at night in isolated areas. Arnie remembers carrying

water. Once they arrived in the states, they spent seven days at the edges of two cities, hiding in trees, bathing in irrigation canals, and eating fruit from nearby fields. He and his uncle joined eight men to be taken by a coyote to the Northwest. Upon arrival the van driver left with a backpack and never returned.

In the morning, the uncle suggested that each one go their own way (*cada quien*). Arnie stayed with his uncle, who called a local contact. Forty-five minutes later the man arrived and transported Arnie and his uncle to a farm. It was the sugar beet season and time for the harvest. Most the other men went to a dairy farm. When the season ended, Arnie left the Northwest for the Lower South. This part of his story is vague. He was young, spoke no English, carried money he saved from the beet harvest, knew little about the West (three states) or agricultural labor (one crop), and knew nothing about the United States. He arrived with someone he met en route (not his uncle). Nothing about departure or the cross-country trip he mentions, which otherwise would have been a momentous experience. His story starts at the moment that he reunites with his father. Importantly for our consideration, the locator “there” (*ahí*) in his story communicates non-movement.

There (*ahí*) he was; there (*ahí*) I found him. When I arrived at--he didn't know me. ((inhale)) ((surprised voice)) He didn't know me. Later I told him that they told me when I asked, “Do you know where a man called Urbano lives?” His name is Urbano Sanchez. They told me, “Yes, in that trailer. They chased out the rest. That man is still there, alone.” I ask, “But is he Urbano?” “Yes,” they told me. “He's short?” they asked. “Yes,” I told them. I didn't know he was there. I went--it was good fortune to arrive there.

Surprise in his voice, Arnie says, “He didn't know me,” before he takes a breath, and repeats the phrase. Later in the narrative he will repeat the same phrase for himself, after he explains how he found the trailer, by asking several men standing outside, which is a common sight in places where migrants leave early for work. For the listener's benefit, he gives his father's full name. A first name, Urbano, was sufficient to ask the men. To confirm identification, the men give a defining trait, “He is short.” Arnie confirms that he is. Arnie minimizes the good fortune he had in locating his father. He continues:

I didn't know him, well I knew him. It's just that, ((motions circle around imaginary bed)) it had a pile of bottles like this on one side of his bed and he was asleep ((head to one side)). I believe he had just gone to sleep. It was like seven o'clock. Others outside were there (*allá*) to leave for work. ((pause)) ((sadness)) It gave me great sadness, right, to see him there (*ahí*), as if cast aside, encircled by the booze bottles.

Here Arnie relies on imagery from Mexican popular music, where someone forlorn is surrounded or encircled by bottles. According to Tim Mitchell (2004:141), this scenario alludes to a man that drinks, when saddened by a woman. In this case, it was Arnie who is saddened, which did not come from an experience with a woman, but his own father.

I felt sad. I was by myself. I came with a friend that I met in the truck. Well, if something were to happen to me here (*aquí*), may the Lord not will it, who would give the message to others? Who'd know where I am? There (*allí*) I saw my dad, I said to him, I just asked him, ‘You're Urbano?’ ‘Yes’ he told me, ‘Who are you?’ ((pause)) ‘Well, I came looking for a man called Urbano, I believe he is my dad’ I said. He just stared at

me. 'Who are you?' he asked, 'What's your name?' 'My name is Arnie. I'm Arnie Sanchez'. ((inhale)) 'My mom is named Ursula' I told him, 'My mom Ursula and I are from Roldano' I told him. My town where we live, it's called Roldano. 'I am from Roldano, I came to find a man called Urbano'. He got up, sleepy-like, drunk-like, and, so, he hugs me, now that he's seen me and starts to cry. 'Don't' I tell him, 'Don't cry' I tell him, 'Here I am' I tell him, 'I came to find you'.

Arnie identifies his given name (Arnulfo) plus nickname (Arnie) with surname (Sanchez), his mother's name and town name where they live. His style is formal. Location phrases that are part of his narrative of encounter, "there" (*ahí, allí*) and "here" (*aquí*), are associated with non-movement, whereas the men ready for work, outside, are associated with movement through an alternative phrase "there" (*allá*). Arnie's tone in the final part of the story resembles an adult who is comforting a child. Except in this instance, it was the child comforting a prodigal parent who had spent many years apart from his family. The imagery of unexpectedness is palpable, no doubt from an image of this personally significant event that was interpreted within cultural practices he learned as a youth (Cravey, 2005; Gamburd, 2008; Limón, 1994), which Arnie carried with him.

For seven months Arnie stayed in the trailer with his dad. He describes the times that he went looking for his father in bars. Because he was underage (state law prohibited a minor to enter bars), he would ask the manager "to bring that man" to him. "Let's go," he'd tell his dad. "Well, let's go," his dad would reply, "What time is it?" "It's twelve, or ten, or eleven." Arnie would take his father home and prepare a meal, "I wanted him to eat, so the beer would not harm him." Sometimes he made him drink coffee, "without sugar, very bitter." Even when his dad returned after 5:30 AM, he was expecting to go to work. Arnie described the toll this took on him, slowing his speech in the process: 'Later it made me want to, begin drinking. At first I didn't drink. I would say, "No." Then I drank one beer. Later, it was two, then three. Buddies would invite me, "Let's go to a dance," "No, I can't, they won't let me." What could I do? Everybody was older. I was the youngest.' He chuckled. Unlike men and women in the *first ever* sample of 127, and most every instance in the remaining 398 onset events, where various stories delineated the time and place of first use or consumption, Arnie was imprecise on when he first drank. Instead, he tells how his departure from usual behavior set him on a new path, which was the onset of drinking alcohol.

Six weeks later, Arnie had a confrontation with his dad. He had been with friends and came home on a day that his father had been at work in the fields. When his dad asked, "'What's wrong?," Arnie told him, "Nothing." But his father knew enough from his own experience to decipher Arnie's demeanor, "You're drunk, aren't you?" "Yes," Arnie told him, before he went to his small room in the trailer to sleep. Later they argued:

I told him, "It's okay for you to drink, but you want me not to. Do you think I don't feel anything, when you're drunk?" Talking to him like this, I felt bad, but I had to. In the morning he came to tell me he wanted me to stop my drinking, and I told him, "If you stop drinking, I'll stop drinking!"

Arnie eventually talked his father into returning to Mexico to visit his family who had not seen him in several years. He returned while Arnie remained in the states. From that visit by

his father to Mexico, Arnie's mother gave birth to a daughter; she already had two other children. Arnie continued working in places that he knew along the East Coast, but by the time the daughter was four-years-old, he went back to Mexico. Arnie took her places within the community and he generally assumed a role of responsibility for her overall well-being and safety. He explained that parenting was not a role his father took with him. Like his father who again left his family, shortly after the daughter was born, Arnie too returned to the states. Neither of them, however, ever convinced the other that he should stop drinking.

By the time he was 21 Arnie had lived with cousins in a crack-house (never tried crack) in another county of the same state and performed farm labor in four additional southern states and one western state. Once when he returned to the Northwest, he said people he earlier met for the beet harvest told him that he had changed, meaning he seemed "distraught." Among his experiences: lost his driver's license in the Lower South and forfeited a car he was driving for Drinking-While-Intoxicated; spent forty days in jail for intoxication and later was beaten while drinking in another locale; spent thirty days in jail for intoxication in a Western state; and was robbed returning home drunk in the Middle South. After a binge episode that left him in a coma, he was taken to a detoxification unit. From there he was transferred to the residential treatment program, where we conducted the first of two interviews. In the evening I spent time with him and other men formerly in treatment, currently in Alcoholics Anonymous. One evening while several of us attended a church event to which they were invited, when the night air turned cold, I gave Arnie my flannel over-shirt. He was wearing a T-shirt and visibly shaking.

### 5.1.1 Father figures in farm labor

For the next three vignettes, we follow this theme of father's presence among those in farm labor. For these three individuals, most their early farm labor experiences involved a strong father figure. Each narrator was raised in a family unit in the Lower South that performed migrant farm labor. Father was the primary individual. The adult male in the first case was a stepfather, who lived and worked with his step-son on a year-round camp. The second father arranged work for his family each summer in a northeastern state. In the third, the adoptive father was a labor contractor, who monitored crew leaders in the home-base and regularly took his family on-the-season each summer. Each narrator had reflected to some extent on their drug use, like all those who provided a Narrative Life Story. Through the interview they had an opportunity to express ideas on migratory experiences. At this point I begin each with a fictive name for the randomized case that was selected.

**Jay:** Born and raised in the Lower South, Jay spent his youth in a small town with no more than 5,000 people the entire time he lived there. After he graduated, he went to live with his sister in a small city in an adjacent state. A year later he moved to a year-round labor camp owned by a large agricultural business in the same state, where he and his step-father lived and worked in citrus for fifteen years. Most summers he migrated to work the lands owned by the agricultural business in other states, or worked for an outside contractor, in crops such as apples and pears in the Upper South, tobacco in the Middle South, and watermelon, cabbage and cauliflower in the Lower South. When his step-father retired, Jay moved to Agton. At the time of his interview at age 40 he had been living there for three years. He had not visited any members of his family for fifteen years, even though all but two siblings were living in the Lower South, two to eight hours by automobile or bus.

Alcohol (age 17) and Marijuana (age 17): First drank with high school friends at his graduation party with beer purchased by his mother, and first smoked a few days later with buddies from his hometown. Next time he smoked was one month later, with new friends he met in an adjoining state, where he had moved to live with his sister.

Crack-Cocaine (age 22): First smoked crack at a crack house, when he returned from a season of watermelon work in the Upper South to the city where his sister was living. Jay went with six co-workers to a crack-house, where he was told they would buy reefer. Instead, they stayed inside two hours and used crack multiple times, "For about an hour, it was steady using... I tried it and I gave it up." Jay stays in contact with the men. Some still use, but a few have died from drugs or AIDS.

**Once is Enough:** Jay tried crack but once. After that he returned to marijuana. It might seem unlikely given the myth that crack is consistently addictive. Because I would ask how many people were present the first time one used, the answer from Jay of 'several hundred' surprised me. To that interview (Jay was among the first 25), everyone using crack first tried it in small groups of two or three. When I told him, 'It couldn't have been hundreds,' he explained, 'It was a dope house... This guy was standing at the door. You go in, hit your stuff. You buy it right there... But you got to spend money. If you aren't spending, you got to go.' Jay told me he spent nearly all the money he saved on-the-season, 'I had a thousand dollars. Before I left, I was down to twenty-five dollars.' To my next question, Jay said the other guys spent most their money. The place to buy marijuana was next to the crack-house. When Jay told them, 'I got to get my weed, they say, "Come one, let's try this",' so they went to the crack-house. Jay said the high 'felt pretty good... Yeah, this is all right.' They stayed two hours with an hour of 'steady using.' Having tried and ceased crack in two hours, Jay echoed other sampled African Americans: 'You got to have your mind to get on it. You can have a strong mind to get off it.'

**Quentin:** Born on his grandfather's farm in the Lower South, which later was sold, Quentin was a pre-teen when he moved with his family to a farm town within the same state at the center of an agricultural breadbasket [farming area where local economy depends on one or more agricultural crops]. From this town, he and his family migrated to the Northeast each summer, where his father arranged for the family and a few local men to return to the same farm. As a young man, Quentin later lived year-round on a labor camp owned by a large agro-producer (where Jay had lived with his step-father), and from there he moved to Agton. Quentin was at the high end of drugs initiated. All together by age 42, he had initiated twelve different drugs over a span of twelve years from age 15 to 27. Unusual within my sample, most were initiated on-the-season.

Alcohol (age 15) and Marijuana (age 16): First drank alcohol with an age-mate at a sock-hop, several years after his family had moved to the farming town. Next time was a few weeks later. He recalls going from 'town to town' in the agricultural breadbasket to attend teen dances. He said he did not like the taste of beer, but continued with it, to which he added liquor and wine as he grew older. First smoked marijuana on a rainy day, when he and an older guy stayed dry in a car, 'I liked the high. I got real high, ((inhale)) then I kind of leveled off.' He was close to high school graduation. Next time was that same evening. He said he never liked the smell, but later he smoked with his wife in their hometown; much later, they separated.

Acid (age 17); Pills (age 18); THC (age 19); Mescaline (age 20); Angel Dust (age 21): Quentin tried a new drug each summer, when his family worked for a grower in the Northeast. Each drug of these five he obtained mostly from rural White youth.

Powder Cocaine (age 22); Free-Base (age 24); Heroin (age 25); Crack-Cocaine (age 27): First tried hard drugs, while working summers with his family. He and a buddy from the surrounding community would use in a nearby city. Crack was one drug Quentin continued, when he returned to home-base. He describes the crack high as 'automatic, explosive, devastating... It stuns you... Once you inhale that smoke, you are already high... The smoke, it has a sweet taste.'

**Summer Time:** Quentin was experienced with multiple drugs: 'Most drugs I just experimented. I didn't cling to them... I wouldn't mess with anything that made me do weird stuff or act strange... Some you just don't like the high... I liked drugs I could basically control.' It was a sense of control that gave Quentin an "edge-up." He wasn't irritable or frantic. Most his onset was limited to the summer. For acid, for example, he first took it Friday evening, because no one worked the weekend. Its twelve-hour high would have interfered. Next time was the following weekend and two times en route to Lower South. He took 'many kinds of pills,' especially Darvon. For THC (marijuana derivative), 'I liked it.' Mescaline and angel dust were easy, given prior experience. He snorted powder cocaine with his girlfriend's brother off-season, after the season ended. Next time was a few days later; he used a few times, but stopped, because he did not like the "high." Despite having a wife in his home-base, his girlfriend (her family knew he was married) was one reason he chose to stay one summer off-season. After that stint in the Northeast, Quentin in later summers initiated three more drugs: smoked free-base on a pipe; snorted heroin but never injected or smoked it; shifted from free-base to crack. Because the girlfriend held a good job, the most she used was smoking reefer with her brother and Quentin.

**Glow:** Born in a nearby isolated community, Glow was adopted at age 9 by a family in Agton where she remained all her life. Raised with four sisters (two adopted), her adoptive father owned property, worked for the county, leased a grocery store, and built a boarding house where Glow lived when she was older. He was a licensed labor contractor. Glow avoided 'robbery gangs' and 'drug gangs,' she says, growing up. Once she was caught as a juvenile with a stolen car, having stayed on the scene, when two teens fled. Grounded for two months, she was restricted from the graduation dance. She worked in local packing plants, grading tomatoes and cucumbers. She never worked local fields, but spent summer with her family, when her father took crews to the Upper South. At age 24 she adopted a four-year-old boy and raised him with her two children.

Alcohol (age 14) and Powder Cocaine (age 15): First drank alcohol with a close friend. Glow and her friend broke into the liquor cabinet in her dad's home. They used a nail file to pick the lock, drank from a bottle (Canadian Club), replaced missing liquor with food coloring and water, and returned the bottle to the cabinet. A couple days later, her father went to give a drink to a visitor. Becoming curious, he poured from the bottle, smelled it and called his daughter. She told him she wasn't alone. This was the first time he spanked her. The next time she drank was ten years later. She first injected cocaine with the same friend. Taking cocaine by mouth she remembers the taste. She says she heard bells ringing. She tried 'shooting it' but stopped when her arm developed an abscess requiring a clinic visit, 'They

had to dig down in there 'n' clean it out.' Her friend told her father they were using cocaine. He spoke to his daughter, telling her drugs were 'bad' and must never be a reason to abuse 'God's Cherubs.' He began giving her \$100 a month for expenses to keep from having to perform sex work or steal, which was common for those with drug habits in Agton. Glow never used marijuana, 'I don't like the smell of it....'

Crack-Cocaine (age 28): First smoked after she stopped traveling on-the-season. By this time she was the manager of the boarding house her family owned and her father was giving her an allowance. She was with a friend downtown at a store, when the friend mentioned "The Rock." They went back to the boarding house. The friend retrieved her drug pipe, 'I'm going to try it,' and Glow told her, "I'm scared of it." Her friend placed ashes atop a piece of aluminum foil, tied the foil around the pipe bowl with a rubber band. When finished, she offered Glow the pipe, 'You try it,' and she did, 'I pulled that smoke...I was scared what it was going to do to us, because my heart was beating real fast. I was thinking that I was going to die... I was seeing things... So I got scared... Awhile later I tried it again by myself. ((softly)) That's when I really started.'

**God's Cherubs:** One element that kept Glow from continuing drugs was her interest in children. She took care in raising her children and those living in the boarding house. Most the tenants, she says, were 'good people.' She fondly remembers Chalo, his wife and two children: 'I just loved her.' Sometimes she unknowingly rented to someone that sold drugs. One guy, 'He selling wide open... He had women up 'n' down the hallway. That's not good for children.' She put a lock on his door. Police came to say she couldn't do that. She removed the lock and later he left. To my question, she told me she couldn't tell the police what he was doing because 'I would get into trouble' (she herself was using, but secured from someone else). Not having 'a man' with her, she did not know what the tenant of the locked apartment might do. Most every story she told of drugs, she mentioned a mistake she had made or she brought "children" into the narrative... Once she was inside a local restaurant: 'I was seven months pregnant... A guy come in there with a shotgun, stood up in the door 'n' went to pumping 'n' shooting... I got to the back door 'n' fell down the steps... My baby survived.' (Shooter intended "to scare" people I later learned: No one was killed or injured) Another time she was walking with her child to the shower at the back of the boarding house, when a man accosted her, 'This guy threw this gun in my face ((mimics gun pointing straight ahead))... I told him, "Listen, if you going to kill me, do that, but not in front of my baby. Take my baby in there." ((inhale)) Then we recognized each other: he had been "talking" to a drug dealer behind the house. He say "I know you. We went to school together. I won't do anything if you take the baby 'n' go into the house." Again, the dilemma was resolved and no one got hurt. Her children remained safe.

### 5.1.2 Mother figures in farm labor

The next group of three persons performed farm labor with family in separate breadbaskets of the same state in the Middle South, as children and teenagers. None of these three ever migrated on-the-season. All their experience in agriculture came from mostly summer work that was locally available in the surrounding counties, which generally included perishable crops such as watermelon, tomatoes, cabbage and tobacco, among other crops. For all three

individuals, their respective mother was the main person who assumed responsibility for both caretaking and raising her children, and for securing family work to earn a living. Mostly the work was farm labor. Although other family members lived in nearby towns or counties, each of the three family households was self-sufficient. In each instance, it was the mother who carefully instilled in her children an ethic for work, where the willingness to perform hard labor was expected to bring in sufficient money to survive.

**Blake:** Born and raised in the Middle South, Blake spent his early childhood on his maternal grandfather's farm, where he performed farm labor with other family members. Most the rest of his childhood he lived and worked in a large town near the farm. Family narrative tells how his grandfather and his brother "jumped a train" from a large farm in an adjoining state, and set-up a new homestead in the low-terrain at the edge of town. Blake left school in tenth grade, as he was caught for a home burglary, but later was sentenced for intent to sell marijuana at school. He spent 18 months in three youth camps. As an adult, Blake returned to local farm labor, and three months each in a grain factory and textile factory, in the local area, after working five years in tree trimming, two years in a hog plant (cutting the inner shank), nearly five years "drinking and drugging," which led to four years in prison for deadly assault, with two additional years on work release. He was working a year as jet-operator in a textile factory, before his interview in a treatment program where I met and spent time with him.

Alcohol (age 12): First drank with buddies with whom he regularly played pick-up basketball in the projects. From this first experience, he says, 'I been drinking every since.' He described his overall progression into drug use as, 'one drug was hand to hand with the next.' He continued to drink as an adult.

Acid (age 17-18): First and only time he used acid was at a youth skating ranch. His first use at a locale of sojourn was rare among men and women in my sample. He recalls the experience, 'Weird things I saw... People kept coming toward me.'

Marijuana (age 14); Powder Cocaine (age 20); and Crack-Cocaine (age 22): First smoked a joint with his cousins. Next time was with the same cousins two to three weeks later. After this, he generally smoked every weekend. First snorted cocaine with cousins, in The Bottom (name used in the South to refer to "lowlands"). Next time and only time thereafter that he used was one year later. First smoked crack with his cousins in 'a house full of people,' a month after he first had tried powder cocaine. He continued using crack for awhile, until he entered a residential drug treatment program in the Middle South.

**Learning to Use:** His favorite cousin told him, "'Man, try this, man, try this'." At the time Blake knew nothing of drugs, although where he lived they were common. 'I say, "What is that?" He say "Man." He looked all high 'n' wild.' He paused, 'See that's the thing about crack. I was curious, what it did, so I wanted to see what it would do ((chuckle)) so I did it.' Like frequent reports in the literature, Blake had to learn to use. 'I told him, "It ain't doing nothing for me." So he showed me-told me how to do it. He instructed me the first time. Because I blew it out. He say, "Man, that's not it".' Blake was having difficulty. 'I say "This ain't doing it for me." He said, "Cause you ain't doing it right." Then he showed me how to pull it through a pipe. It was different. It was like my, my head was ((pause)) like a little buzzing sound, like zzzzzzz. I was high. ((pause)) I felt-I don't know, like, ((pause)) I can't explain it. I never felt that way and I

never felt that way again.’ Next time he used crack was one week later with the same cousins. As he began to use regularly, he would buy crack on credit. He says that his family was too poor to loan money, even if he had asked his mother for the twenty dollars. He was working most the time, and generally used what he earned to pay for crack. Once, when he couldn’t pay the seller, he left home to avoid getting his family into trouble.

Blake was close to most drug activity in his rural area. He had reflected on what it entailed, its effects on men and women, and difference between intra-personal violence from alcohol and inter-personal degradation from exchanging sexual services for crack. He reported that some crack house managers allowed one to buy and smoke inside, but for some who permitted “buys,” one had to leave to smoke. He noticed over time that a prostitution house was less apt to get ‘busted’ than a crack house.

**Pioneer:** Born and raised in the Middle South, Pioneer spent his childhood in rural areas as the third child of seven siblings (5 boys, 2 girls). He was the only half-sibling. His mother had an affair. When his step-father found out he agreed to care for Pioneer. His family worked tobacco farms in the local area, and sometimes ‘left at night’ to another farm to leave debts they had accumulated. Their strategy was spend-again-owe-again: ‘I out-ran my school records ((chuckle)). Before I get settled in, we moving to another place.’ As an adult, he worked fifteen years as a school custodian, and later he started a company with a buddy, which they closed for lack of business. Living a mile from his mother’s house, he and his wife built a small house with scrap lumber and later put a trailer on the property. Recently they built a larger house on the same property. He and his wife have two sons in their 20s, and he has a third son with another woman. Pioneer is among the few in my sample that demonstrate substantial evidence for social mobility through “settling-in” by establishing a household and supporting their family outside agriculture. He was among the unusual cases in that his wife visited him a couple of times while he was in treatment, where I interviewed him. I had the opportunity to meet and talk with her briefly (he introduced me).

Alcohol (age 16) and Alternatives to Alcohol (age 44): First drank beer with four classmates. They came to class “smelling like beer,” so other students would know. Beer escalated to wine. He remembers his parents drank and fought. As an adult, Pioneer tried alcohol alternatives, ‘Dominance by alcohol... It dominated me, real bad.’ He once he drank his wife’s cologne, and another time rubbing alcohol, for which he was taken to the hospital: ‘I went into, uh, a dark hallway ((pause)) I could see a light. I could hear people screaming. I woke up; I heard somebody say, “We got a pulse”.’ He named drinking buddies: ‘Andrew “Joe” Dover, overdose. Charles Bell, alcoholic, has seizures. Randall Watkins, got clean. And me, I’m an alcoholic.’

Marijuana (age 20): First time he smoked marijuana was with his cousin Yo-Yo in a barn: ‘We sitting on a sack, just smoking dope. I felt so foolish, just watching airplanes go by ((chuckle)) I’ll never forget it.’ They initially used on weekends but later he escalated to daily use when he was working as an apprentice brick layer. He last smoked marijuana three years ago.

MDA (age 26): First and only time he used MDA he had hooked-up one night with a young woman. He took Spanish-fly so that he could “perform like a regular super-stud.” As a reward she gave him some MDA, which he used that one time.

Crack-Cocaine (age 36): First smoked crack with a sex worker, at the time he lost his custodial job: 'I got a little hooked on crack--I met this girl... in Rhubarb, at a place called Sam's. This little-old ugly knotty-head girl kept walking by me, walking by me, she said, "First time I looked at you, 'Uh-Uh' ((Black approval)) I got to have you." I didn't know she was a crack-head 'n' she had to have it. One time she say, "Why don't you try it?" So I tried it. I got to looking forward to a hit. I made 300-something dollars a week. We get paid in cash. ((inhale)) I got to asking for 20 dollars when I get off work. That 20 dollars grew 'n' and grew 'n' grew. One day, I owed twelve dollars. So, I told my wife check machine broke down, I didn't get paid. Next week, I told her I got robbed. I'm really out there... Next week my wife told me plain, she said, "This week I need money in this house. Check machine did not break down 'n' if you try to get robbed, you better be a fast running son of a, ((chuckle)) bring money." So I, I held on pretty tight.' First equipment he used was a car antenna with Brillo in it, and tape around it. He later would borrow a glass pipe from a buddy. He stopped two years later, after a near-death experience.

**Resilience through Birth:** Main theme of interview was *I was hated because I was Black, from the day I was born.* 'My mama left my-my stepfather, ((inhale)) for my father [CR]. She left him for a few months. Then she-they got back together. So, before I was ((voice strained)) even born, I was hated. My mama told my step-daddy, she said, "I'm pregnant with [CR] baby." My step-dad, he a man, ((tap table)) he did the same thing with his niece. He got a child by her. He said "To-tomorrow morning, I'll go see [CR]." He said, "Listen, I understand you got my wife in trouble." I wasn't born. He said, "We'll take care of the child." ((tap table)) Said he'd take care of me. [CR] said "Yeah." That [CR] he left the same day, ((chuckle)) moved to the East Coast. 'I seen my father three times ((voice strained)) in my life. First time he gave me a pint of liquor. Second time he gave me a fifth. Third time I saw him, we went to look at a tract of land; he said he'd get me some money from that. Only thing he wanted me to do was drive for him. He called me, ((pause)) maybe, six, seven years ago. Said something to me that I got so mad I could have, bit a dog in two. He said, 'I'm in a bind.' "What kind of bind you in?" He said, "I need somewhere to stay." I said, "What?" He said, "I'd like to stay with you for a few months." I said, "He-ll-ll NO. You left me to starve." {You talked to your mom about this?} She was dominated by my step-dad ((pause)) She always tried to show a little love. ((inhale)) {She recognized it?} Yeah. Sunday dinner she'd give me the biggest piece of chicken. She recognized hurt inside me. She came to me many days: "I'm so sorry" ((pause)) "I'm so sorry he's not your father." I was hated since the day I was born, cause of my skin color ((tap on table)) Rest my brothers and sisters looked like that door ((points - light tan)) maybe darker. Then God popped a red baby' ((chuckle)) That's me!

**Cal:** Born in the Middle South, Cal spent his entire life, all 49 years, in his home state. One of four siblings (3 boys, one girl), his activities fluctuated between a small home community and the state capital. As children, guided by their mother, he and his siblings performed farm labor: 'That's how we got school clothes... They wouldn't give Momma child support.' Starting his senior year in high school Cal worked eight jobs (school custodian, farmer's market, fast food server, and cologne factory, among others), before he returned to tobacco work. His first two drugs he initiated in his hometown, the third in the capital.

Alcohol (age 16): First drank alcohol at a club, next time was two weeks later at the same club: 'I didn't like it at first. That hangover it was just something else.' He drank to bolster

courage: 'With it I could talk; I could be more myself. Otherwise I was sitting over in the corner, half-way scared to talk...' For awhile he would drink heavily for two to three days and stop two to three days, before he slowed down and drank less often.

Marijuana (age 17): First smoked reefer in a hang-out at the edge of town called The Den. Cal says, 'It was a trip the first one I had. My eyes were red and laser-looking.' Unable to hide the appetite he suddenly acquired, when he arrived home, his mother scolded him ((shifts register)), "Boy, you better quit smoking that damn stuff, causing you eat up everything." He explained with affection in his regular voice, 'My momma, she down to earth.' At The Den he was taught to draw on a joint: 'It burned my lungs. Then you do that coughing. I don't inhale it that long... They want you to hold it in awhile.'

Crack-Cocaine (age 22): First smoked crack while living in a cooperative house in the state capital. Initially he was the only one among its occupants who did not use but one day he tried it. Next time was the next day.

**Not Asked, He Told:** Despite a small drug repertoire (three), Cal initiated each drug with a distinct group of people: strangers in a public setting at local clubs (alcohol); cousins, public to family, private to outside world (marijuana); and housemates in a private setting (crack). His growing awareness that alcohol gave him courage became useful in one club when he reached age 21: 'It built up -- I'm sure they figured that I WAS. But--they would ask me this 'n' that. I'd play it off, "No-o, I ain't like that." Or I might go over to talk to a girl, just to try throw them off. But, deep down inside, I wanted to come out ((pause)) I finally did: I got drunk ((chuckle)) of course you say things you wouldn't say sober. So I had to deal with what I had said the nights before about, "No, not me" ((pause)) But it felt so-o-o good, telling it drunk. It did. I-I can remember, it was real ((pause)) It felt good because, they were not expecting me to say that I was gay.'

### 5.1.3 Farm workers who left farm labor

Next group of three persons had experience in farm labor as children and teens, but to a lesser extent as adults. After a father left, each respective mother was a key person in arranging local farm work from a breadbasket of the Lower South. Most the migratory work that each of the three had performed while younger, they arranged themselves while still an adolescent. Each of the three cases is unusual owing to circumstances that two individuals currently are on disability, and the third was injured, but never qualified for disability. Each left farm labor but not drugs or alcohol, as they moved into adulthood.

**Lebat:** Born in the Lower South, Lebat was youngest of four siblings (2 girls, 2 boys). He spent his youth in a boarding house run by his mother in a medium-sized city in one state, older adolescence in a small city in a second state, and adult years in Agton. For a brief time he and three older siblings lived with his mother's sister, when his mother moved to the county adjacent to Agton, where she worked in farm labor. As a pre-teen, Lebat migrated with his mother "on-the-season." By age 14, he was migrating as an emancipated teen on his own but returning each winter to stay with family. He migrated summers and regularly shuttled (commuted) back and forth between Agton and his home-base during winter. He migrated on-the-season until age 26 (total of fifteen years) and continued to travel by work bus as a seasonal agricultural worker to Agton, until age 37, when he settled in Agton. All

told, he worked a total 23 years in agriculture. In Agton he later worked in packing plants and, later, as a warehouse watchman. Recently he was approved for diabetes disability. He used his one-time allowance to pay several debts and to purchase a bicycle for himself; the farm town is permissive on bicycles around the town, especially for those who cannot afford a motor vehicle or those who no longer have a driver's license.

**Moonshine** (age 10): First drank 'corn liquor' with his older brother in the boarding house operated by his mother. He called it a 'bootleg house' because his mother sold moonshine. He and his brother continued 'sneaking 'n' drinking' after that first time. More than once their mother spent time in jail. Then 'the law fell' where they were living and she fled that state to her hometown in the adjoining state, where she stayed with her brother. She left her children with her sister. She later re-married and moved to a third state. She settled in Tangelo, in the county next to Agton, and sent for her children. As a child, Lebat remembers returning from the season with his mother, and going to the town jail to bail-out his stepfather, who drank while his wife and her son worked on-the-season. Lebat says he was sentenced to two days in jail only once for public intoxication.

**Marijuana** (age 21): First smoked with a co-worker when offered a reefer, working in Agton, after several years of commuting from/to his home-base. He described the practice of smoking reefer: 'Buy a bag, load it up 'n' hit it. Might get some beer, some wine, drink that 'n' get high... Look like you float.' He smoked three years after that first time, but later decreased his use to emphasize alcoholic beverages.

**Reefer Sadness:** Lebat lived in his mother's home-base in a county adjacent to Agton where he regularly worked in the fields. He came on a work bus, 'People use to come o'er here all the time on those busses.' Lebat never came, except to work. He explained how during the day time, two Black policemen, the first in Agton, kept people from the streets, 'You had to be out there, doing a job, picking cucumbers or whatever.' One time, he came with his older brother, five years before he tried marijuana. Lebat was sixteen. His older brother drove Lebat and two others. They were sitting in a car on a side street: 'Local cop rolled-up on us, "You-all boys must have had fun" ((chuckle)) "No," we told him, "We're from Tangelo." "Well, y'all can't be sitting around here. Better get back to Tangelo." {This was Derek Bonner?} I remember it was Sam Horace, "Get your butts outta here." Years back we couldn't walk the street.' His brother liked the first state, where the family had lived, and he returned home after one month. He never came back to visit his family in the third state. As he grew older, Lebat sometimes stayed overnight in Agton and came home late the next day, having worked two days in the field. After seven years of commuting between Agton and his home-base, one day he was offered a reefer cigarette after work, which he accepted, 'I was drunk... A guy gave me my first hit on that stuff. I said "Man, oh man, that's good".' He was one of the few individuals in my sample to choose something new, while on the effects of another drug ('drunk'). Most everyone, even those at the high end of use, tried a new drug, while in a normative state. Only when someone had already been using, they would *poly-use* two already-familiar drugs (Bletzer, 2009).

**Kevin:** Born and raised in the Lower South, Kevin was the second youngest of five boys and two girls. He and two sisters were raised by his grandmother in a town less than a thousand residents, except for a year he lived with his mother's sister in a nearby city. After

completing high school, he moved to Agton, where his older brother and mother had been living and performing farm labor. He spent ten years in the fields (cucumbers, tomatoes and peppers) but mostly he worked in packing plants. Age 27 he severed hand ligaments the first week he was on a new job. When he went for compensation, they denied his claim, giving the reason he had not worked long enough for the company. After that, he was limited to odd jobs through the labor pool. At the time of interview, he was working occasional jobs and staying in boarding houses.

**Crack-Cocaine (age 24):** First smoked crack with three people; he remembers his 'heart pump fast.' Next time was four days later with four individuals behind a dance club in downtown Agton: 'The stem you put it to your mouth 'n' ((draws breath))' he mimicked with his right index finger and thumb close to his mouth, as he held an imaginary mouth piece. 'You just smoke it; smoke it like that 'n the smoke come, let it get you high 'n' just blow the smoke back out. It was a real high ... My heart pumped. You ready to go. You be on the move.' He began using most every day, once or twice, with people he knew.

**Marijuana (age 26) and Alcohol (age 27):** First smoked marijuana by himself, having bought a small bag of reefer (\$10) and cigarette papers (\$1.50). He rolled it the way he had watched others do and he smoked it behind Sam's Tavern [where I often conducted observations several years later]: 'I knew about how you roll it up 'n' start smoking, like you would smoke a cigarette. I had seen other people do it.' Shortly after marijuana, he stole a pint of wine from a store, which he drank alone: 'I used to see the people drinking Budweiser 'n' Miller in a bottle. I just thought I would start drinking Thunderbolt Wine.'

**Sheltered:** Raised by a single mother who did farm labor, Kevin's childhood was similar to many African American men in my sample. Mothers often did local farm labor with their children, but they left children, sometimes, with relatives and migrated. At age 18 Kevin moved to Agton, where his mother had been living. Age 21, he visited his father in the Northeast. For one year he lived with a woman in another town. On these two events, Kevin says, 'That's all the traveling I done.' After several years in Agton, crack was the first drug he ever used. Like most everyone in the sample, onset occurred once he had lived some time in his new home-base. Unlike the others, his first drug was crack, which he followed with marijuana and alcohol, age 25. He used these two drugs in Agton after leaving a woman with whom he had lived in another city. To my question, he said he would use one or all three drugs between two in the afternoon to midnight, outdoors, with a group of a few individuals behind a building, downtown. Kevin recognized his lifestyle had changed once he came to Agton. He told me that when he was growing up, 'I never did nothing like that.'

**Wesley:** Born and raised in the Lower South, Wesley was the oldest of five siblings (2 girls, 2 step-sisters, himself). He and his sisters spent summers with their mother performing farm labor within the local breadbasket. At age three, his father left to return to a home community, leaving his mother with three children. Age seven, he learned to harvest cotton and hang tobacco in curing barns; age 12 he learned to crop tobacco. At age 15 he learned "to bump" watermelon (load onto trucks). Age 16 he worked at a local sawmill until he graduated. He attended a segregated grammar school and middle school, and played basketball at an integrated high school. One summer he and his sister, one year younger, visited a maternal aunt in Agton. When Wesley graduated, he moved to town to marry the women he was dating; his sister married her cousin. He helped his aunt with her juke-joint

and went to local clubs, before his brother-in-law found him a county job that he held for more than a decade, which was unusual for anyone in my sample. Nine years before his interview, he was fired.

**Alcohol (age 15) and Marijuana (age 16):** Wesley first drank with classmates from high school. He never drank much in his hometown or in Agton. He first smoked reefer with teammates from the basketball team, 'We was riding in a car; just seem like it were hot 'n' sweaty 'n' it felt different, made you laugh, mellow like.' Next time was a few days later, with teammates.

**Crack-Cocaine (age 34):** First smoked crack with two co-workers from the county job; both were previous users. 'I got a rush the first time... That first hit you feel it. Later you spend \$20 or \$30, you don't feel it. It's a waste of money. You want more 'n' more 'n' more.' Next time was three years later, when his son died. He likens 'craving for crack' to 'craving a cigarette.'

**Turnaround:** After Wesley married, he and his wife earned good money. Each owned a car and drove to work. Later they had a son that died at age 3: 'He wasn't sick. Went to the ice cream truck; when he came back he fell down. It turned my life around.' That same week, Wesley began to deal marijuana. After buying a pound, he smoked a little and re-sold the rest. He partnered with a man who 'knew about selling' and wanted to take-over. Shortly Wesley tried to get out. He was 'scared of police' and 'smoking up the product.' To my question, he estimated (based on a full-time county job) that it would take three or four weeks to sell six ounces. When things got difficult with the loss of his son, Wesley went to a spiritual healer and was told his drug partner was doing 'root magic' against him. Shortly, he lost his job (reprimands for late lunches) and his car, and was jailed for driving without a license. While in jail, his wife divorced him and moved to her home county. Wesley had developed contacts for marijuana and the spiritual healer, because he traveled on his job. He had a rare opportunity to build a resource network, unlike men in farm labor living in Agton who traveled seasonally. These men mostly spent time with other workers. His turn to crack followed his son's death, 'I thought it would help, but it didn't.' He credits his family for insistence that he stop using. Primarily, it was his mother: 'Who else?' he says. At the time of his two interviews, four months apart, he was on medication. We first met, six years earlier when I first came to Agton for the team research project. Shortly thereafter he further reduced his use through counseling with a community program, which since then had to close its doors, owing to reduced funding.

## 6. Seasonal drug use in farm labor

Farm workers take pride in their work. They gain prestige among peers for physical prowess and stamina, as workers, and a sense of self-respect for earnings (however low or infrequent) by which they live independently. Much like migrant workers who take the view that hard work is the means to assure a sufficient income for at least the basic necessities (Cravey, 2005; Gomberg-Muñoz, 2010), even agricultural workers who use drugs and alcohol communicate in self-disclosures a sense of pride in living independently. They recognize the hardships they have faced and most likely will continue to face as laborers, whether they work in agriculture or secure other employment. They can recite details from events in their lives that led to where they are at

present, occasions when life was going smoothly and there were fewer worries, and those periods when nothing seemed to fall into place or fit how they felt about life, owing to escalated use that took them from meaningful social relationships (Adams, 2008). Specifically, attitudes toward work are reflected in decreasing drug use for summer labor and increased use for winter labor, which for most workers takes place in their home-base where drugs and alcohol are found more easily (Figure 4).

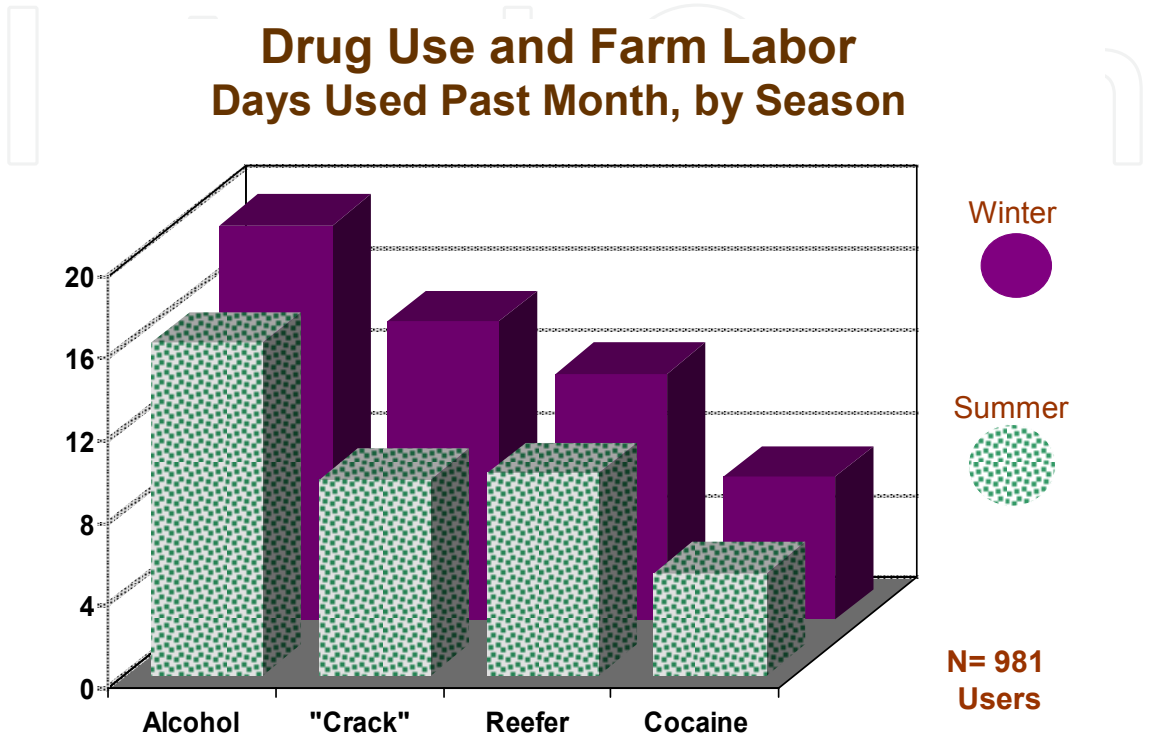


Fig. 4. Comparison of four prevalent drugs according to winter or summer seasons

7. Conclusion

Ethnography over the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century allows for collection of field data from groups of people increasingly more divergent than decades past. If the interest is drug-using agricultural workers, as indicated in this essay, ethnography provides the methodology to conduct field research to better understand their lives and the difficulties they experience that might not be possible through other methods. Ethnography provides a unique methodology to secure personal narratives that describe the implications of generalized research findings. The basic requirements of ethnography are listed in Figure 5 (below).

Drug use continues to be a concern for people of all backgrounds (Marez, 2004). Farm workers can provide new insights into drug and alcohol use, where traditional assumptions about use, recovery and relapse are based on individuals typically fixed-in-space. That is, these study populations live in the same communities over many years. Some might move from city to city, but not as frequently as the mobility experienced by farm workers. Field data from farm labor portray a different side of drug and alcohol use that takes place as a time-filler when individuals are not working, a means of physical restoration through analgesic applications, and relief from work-demand stresses they face in performing farm labor (Bletzer, 2009).

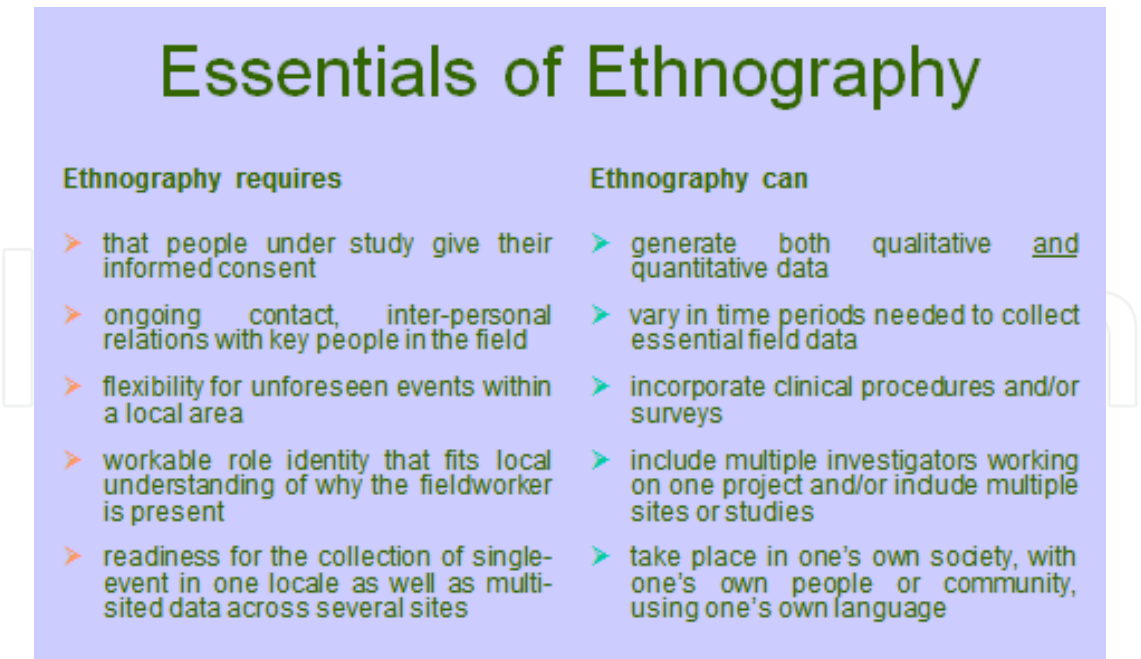


Fig. 5. Parameters that fieldwork should have to be ethnography

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## **An Ethnography of Global Landscapes and Corridors**

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The chapters presented in this book draw on ethnography as a methodology in a variety of disciplines, including education, management, design, marketing, ecology and scientific contexts, illustrating the value of a qualitative approach to research design. The chapters discuss the use of traditional ethnographic methods, such as immersion, observation and interview, as well as innovative ethnographical methods which have been influenced by the new digital culture. The latter challenges notions of identity, field and traditional culture such that people are able to represent themselves in the research process rather than be represented. New approaches to ethnography also examine the use and implication of images in representation as well as critically examining the role and impact of the researcher in the process.

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