

Research Article

Shifting from Village-Based Networks to Locally Generated Networks: Undocumented Mexican Agricultural Workers Who Use/Used Hard Drugs

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Hardships that face transmigrants working in agriculture include the potential for drug use. Reliant on village-based networks that facilitate border crossing and developing a plan for a destination within this country, transmigrants who try new drugs/alcohol and/or continue on accustomed drugs/alcohol are facilitated in these endeavors through locally generated networks as alternative forms of access and support. Seven cases of undocumented men from Mexico are reviewed to show how use of illicit drugs is minimally affected by economic success and time in the United States, or village-based networks that first facilitated entry into this country. Prior conditions, especially childhood difficulties and search for socioeconomic autonomy, precipitate new and/or continuing drug use within the United States on this side of the border, where both forms of drug use are facilitated by locally generated networks.

1. Introduction

Like many men and women who preceded him, Pepe Gardel crossed the border between the United States and Mexico without immigration papers. Risks for those who cross without papers are as great, if not greater than they once were: higher fences, citizen desert patrols, kidnapping and banditry, and technological surveillance by government agents. Mr. Gardel walked for three days across the Sonoran Desert into the state of Arizona. Unlike those who renew contacts in locales to which they return near the border, or secure rides through commercial or underground transportation to distant points in the states, Mr. Gardel came for the first time at age 26. What set him apart was ten days he spent by himself in southern Arizona, living off edible plants and several armadillos that he hunted, cleaned and cooked one by one, before he went to Texas to work for a year in agriculture and construction and again returned to Mexico.

Beginning at age 11 in his home province, Mr. Gardel drank heavily as a teenager and as a young adult. Several years before he crossed the border that first time, he became a member of *Alcohólicos Anónimos* (AA) in Mexico. After

working a year, he left Texas and rejoined AA when he returned to his hometown in Mexico. As a continuing impetus to migration [1, 2], when the local economy provided him with few alternatives in Mexico, he came to the states a second time. Caught eleven times by authorities over the next few years, he repeatedly returned to work in agriculture and off-season construction in the state of Texas. He built a house for his family in Mexico with earnings that he remitted. At times, he worked in Mexico, supervising construction projects. All this took place over a few years, with occasional return to drinking. Nine years after his first entry, he resettled in the eastern United States. After two seasons of harvesting tobacco and noting a need among immigrant men from Mexico and Central America, he founded a Spanish-speaking chapter of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA). Immersing himself in supporting the chapter, guided by the principles of AA (*Doble A* in Spanish), he experienced continuing sobriety. His activism and organizational skills facilitated the formation of additional Spanish-speaking chapters in counties surrounding the small town where he settled with his family.

Except for the distinction of founding an AA chapter and ten days of wilderness survival the first time that he

crossed the international border, Mr. Gardel's story shares similarities with several generations of men and women in US agriculture from Central America and Mexico: (a) persistent return to this country despite deportation [3–6], (b) low-paid employment and little security [7–13] and inconsistent enforcement of safety regulations [10–12], (c) investment of earnings to purchase property, consumer goods, and house construction in Mexico [3, 5, 14, 15], and (d) difficulties that accompany consumption of alcohol [16–19] and drugs [20–22].

After Mr. Gardel brought his family to the states, his return trips to Mexico decreased. Family members including grown children currently reside with him or near him. Difficulties that he faced with alcoholism in his teens and early 20s in Mexico and in his late 20s and 30s in the United States reappear in a different form among a new generation of men from Mexico in the states in their 20s, 30s, and 40s. They too face the constancy of drinking in or near the places where they live and work in agriculture and in places where they secure employment outside agriculture. Some of these immigrant men and, only rarely, immigrant women, become users of crack-cocaine. In recent years, men from Mexico are joined in consumption of alcohol and, for a few, use of crack, by increasing numbers of both Latino and indigenous immigrants from Central America and the Caribbean.

In this article, I examine initiation into crack-cocaine among transmigrant men who become agricultural workers in the southern United States. I focus on men from Mexico without papers, describe habitual drug use not previously included in discourse on undocumented workers in the United States, and discuss the effects of a cultural shift from village-oriented to locally generated networks. The latter is a major component of social processes that lead to new use of illicit drugs (primarily, crack-cocaine) with which most immigrant men, whether farm workers or not, rarely have prior experience in home countries [23–25]. By *transmigrant*, I refer to men who have left a former place to arrive in a new one, whereas *undocumented*, also known as “without papers” (*sin papeles*), refers to construction of identity that leads to vulnerability as “cheap labor” [26] and, for this analysis, vulnerability to the availability of drugs and alcohol in agricultural settings.

2. Background

Drug use evolves with social changes. Its transformation as a contemporary illicit practice is linked to *scapegoating* “others” with little power and few economic resources, providing them a role as individuals whose drug use renders them “socially useless” [27]. Men and women who immigrate often incur intolerance, associated with whatever disvalued illegal drug is popular at the time. Mexican workers, for example, were once feared as bearers of “reefer madness” that was associated with crime and a relaxation of sexual inhibitions in the 1920s and 1930s. At the time, a legacy of “scapegoating” users of illicit drugs already existed: Chinese immigrants and opium in the late 1800s; foreign-born immigrants in the early 1900s, viewed as morphine fiends; and Southern Blacks in the prewar 1900s, feared as cocaine-maniacs [28]. A central concern of

these “scares” is the belief that transmission will pass from outsiders (users) to insider-citizens (nonusers). Drug policies during the era of “reefer madness” and stereotypic portrayal of men who perform farm work [28] bear a lingering image of a Mexican immigrant who supposedly smokes marijuana and drinks heavily.

Cultural variability has become an anthropological truism to explain recurring drug use among different peoples for different types of drugs, usually articulated for alcohol [29] with innovations through time [27]. Nonetheless, research has not sought to correlate drug use in a home country before emigration with continuing and/or new use after immigration into a new country. The only comprehensive review of drug use among transmigrants was completed in 1998 by Rebhun [30], dividing the literature into alcohol and tobacco studies, as common legal drugs, against use of illicit drugs ranging from marijuana to cocaine and heroin. Remaining in tune with fluctuating popularity (e.g., heroin's wane after the 1970s, resurgence in the 1990s) and availability of particular drugs (e.g., crack-cocaine introduced in the 1980s, followed by its appearance in rural areas a few years later), the anthropology of drug use has grown slowly, as its boundaries and theoretical terrain are being redefined [31].

Rebhun's meta-analysis of drug use by Latin American immigrants [30] emphasized the acculturative process. Research questions included what controls are lacking in translocation and resettlement of immigrants, what means of survival provide alternatives when legitimate economic opportunities are kept from immigrant-*cum*-minorities, and what tensions lead transmigrants to seek reprieve from daily stressors within the new society. Thus, little research exists on the effects of prior experience on illicit drug use before immigration, whether in hometowns, or during internal migration in home countries, or during border crossing into the United States.

Crack-cocaine appeared on the national scene in the 1980s, recognized as a “new drug” with a front-page article in *The New York Times* in the winter of 1985 [32]. Several men and women in my study pointed out that crack-cocaine evolved over several years of unpublicized and illicit experimentation with base-cocaine, also known as “freebase” (English) or *basuco* (Spanish). The appearance of crack-cocaine (“rock” and “ready rock” in English; *piedra* in Spanish) generated concern in the late 1980s and early 1990s among agencies responsible for public safety or those designed to stop drug use. Public reactions were common on crack's infusion into the informal economy of poor neighborhoods. At the same time, crack-cocaine generated academic response from researchers that led to a brief literature on detriments of crack use in North America [33, 34] that mostly emphasized its association with sex-for-drug exchanges and related risk for HIV [35, 36]. An implicit concern considered residential spaces where crack-cocaine might impact “the public,” that is, persons living outside low-income areas who might use their mobility to access these social spaces of illicit drug access. Social science monographs are rare that consider crack use by immigrants, beyond the fieldwork of Philippe Bourgois [37] of mostly second-generation men who sold and used crack in an immigrant Puerto Rican neighborhood in

Spanish Harlem and Terry Williams [38] on crack sales by several entrepreneurial Dominican adolescents in immigrant communities of The Bronx and upper Manhattan. Both focused on areas of New York City, the site where crack-cocaine was revealed to the rest of the country through the media, at the same time that it remained an iconic site of immigrant peoples who “arrive” and “gather,” as transmigrants, in search of a better life.

3. Drug Use among Farm Workers

For studies of drug use other than alcohol among agricultural workers, the more recent their appearance in the literature, the more likely the focus on social problems. Whiteford [39] in dissertation fieldwork on increased economic opportunities that led to shifting gender relations in a fictive town on the border in South Texas, for example, acknowledged an informal economy infused with monies from local smuggling (mostly marijuana) in the 1960s and 1970s, parallel to employment of women in human services. She does not discuss whether local drug use increased with expanded smuggling and, understandably, provided no ethnographic data on smuggling. Valles [40], a journalist, described travels with a migrant family and noted that migrant men occasionally acted as couriers to transport drugs from Texas to the northwestern United States. Her observation is reiterated in Heyman [41]. For their effort, these migrants were enticed with what is difficult to obtain for a recently arrived individual in the United States: disposable cash and free accommodations en route. Limón [42] discussed border relations for people of Mexican descent in South Texas, where agriculture was assumed to be a foundation of the local economy. He enlivens his writing to (a) acknowledge the presence of drugs in the community he studied, (b) refer cautiously to type of drug and context of use (mostly marijuana and one casual contact with heroin smuggling), and (c) demonstrate awareness of the Mexican American community within the surrounding Anglo-dominated society, which recognized presence of illicit and licit drugs in the local area. Neither Whiteford nor Valles nor Limón was a drug researcher at time of their fieldwork, but each was aware of ways that the public perceives drugs, which affects the way that researchers might choose to describe those who use or sell, and those close to men and women who are involved/have been involved with drugs.

4. Field Methods

Recognizing a sparsity of materials on drug use among men and women who perform farm labor, I conducted extended fieldwork on drug-using farm workers by selecting persons known to use or had used crack-cocaine (based on prior team research with the School of Medicine at University of Miami) and new individuals selected through respondent-driven recommendations by persons already participating in my lone-investigator fieldwork. I interviewed both men and women who engaged and/or had engaged in farm labor at some point in their lifetime (current; recent past; childhood), seeking to sample individuals with long-term and short-term

experience in agriculture who use/used drugs; transmigrants and US-born; Black, White, Native American, and Latino; women in commercial sex work (with previous experience in agriculture). Sampling variability among interviewees corroborated recurrent flexibility in economic livelihood among laborers who supplement their working *in* agriculture by occasional work *outside* agriculture [9, 10, 13, 43]. Fieldwork was conducted and here reported, following the Standards for Reporting Qualitative Research (SRQR).

For each person whom I interviewed, I provided informed consent on my research and intent to publish without using real names and explained the rights of human subjects, including a right to discontinue an interview at any time. None chose to stop. Everyone completed their interview. Each participant signed a consent form, which I described as “stored separately” from field notes (I visibly moved the signed form into a new folder, as the participant watched). Each participant was compensated for the time they spent in a field interview.

All together I conducted formal interviews with 127 men and women who had performed farm labor at some point in their lifetime. Each of the 127 was an active or once active user of drugs and/or alcohol [21]. Each interview was taped in English or Spanish, as appropriate. Field interviews were transcribed by English-speaking and/or Spanish-speaking individuals whom I trained. Most were undergraduate or graduate students at Arizona State University; two were staff at a southeastern university. Each was paid for transcription services. I explained to each transcriber the importance of human subject confidentiality and reviewed each transcript against the corresponding field tape.

5. Farm Workers Who Use Drugs

Born in this country or overseas, Latinos in agriculture combine rural and urban experience to find work, or they aggregate experience in the course of short-term agricultural labor in the United States. Some have uniquely rural experience on both sides of the border. Like other areas of the country [12], farm labor in the southern United States is increasingly Latinized as well as indigenized [44]. Men and women originate from varied Mexican states outside the traditional sending areas comprising Guerrero, Zacatecas, Guanajuato, Jalisco, Puebla, San Luis Potosi, and Durango [5, 14, 44] and increasingly include Central American countries outside Mexico. Nearly one-fourth of the persons in my sample lacked legal documentation. Most of these were born in Mexico. Reasons for their emigrating share a common theme of seeking opportunities; for some, the immediate impetus was personal survival for those who left areas of civil strife.

The trajectory of drug use includes a potential for indulgence as well as abstinence. Recovery may be short-term, followed by a return to the same or another drug, or it may be long-term and result in termination of drug and/or alcohol use. I found this conceptual framework useful in considering the life stories of men and women whom I interviewed. Tales of onset into drug use described “slides” from no prior experience to heavy use, as well as the common pattern of

slow progression into heavy use over a number of years, followed by retreat and mild continuation, or replacement with another drug, or, occasionally, complete cessation. Some individuals were able to maintain moderate use with moderated “binge behavior” (usually a weekend). This process of retreat for heavy users was facilitated by their shift in drugs from heroin to crack, for instance, or from crack to alcohol, as well as compelled discontinuation (incarceration; stabilization of social relationships; diminished access in a new locale; and/or increased cost), and a “support system” within the local area where one works, lives, and passes time outside work.

6. Paperless Border Crossings

I chose seven cases from the 30 men in my sample who lacked formal documents (i.e., visa or work permit) to provide a glimpse at the process of initiation into drug use, as well as retreat from heavy use. These 30 “without papers” (*sin papeles*) were among 45 transnational workers, and the remaining 13 were men and two were women who had legitimate permission to enter the country (both women came as children). Thus, 15 persons entered the country “legally” (11.8%) and 30 did not (23.6%). The seven men were chosen as representative of the thirty narratives provided by persons living in this country, who previously had lived for varied periods of time from birth into adolescence and/or adulthood in a country outside the United States. Four of the seven men without papers I knew through prior research (Lower South), and three were men without papers whom I met in another state (Middle South). I followed the activities of these seven over extended fieldwork.

For each of the seven men I use a randomly chosen fictitious name. I also include occasional supplemental data on 72 US-born farm workers whom I interviewed. Given a sparsity of related publications on drug use and agricultural labor as a combined theme, I draw from an infrequent literature that extends over the past four decades. To simplify state names where the seven men spent time, I use the terms *Lower South* (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, and Mississippi), *Middle South* (Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee), and *Upper South* (Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia).

Anselmo Dulzón (Age 40). He was raised in a small border town, later lived in a small city, left home at age 14 to work in tomato harvesting for three months in a nearby province (internal migration), and first came to the states that same year at age 14. While working, Mr. Dulzón arranged a border crossing with a group of 25 (he was youngest), assisted by a human trafficker (*coyote*); they spent three days and two nights walking across the Sonoran Desert. Among survival strategies, they filtered water from cattle troughs with handkerchiefs. Once they crossed the border, Mr. Dulzón joined one of the smaller groups that split from the main group, but he soon left them and went by train to the West Coast, securing food from people who spoke Spanish. He worked 12 years on the West Coast in small towns, including two years in a large metropolitan city. Caught four times those

first years, each time he returned on his own to the same state.

In 1984, he came to the Lower South where he worked in two states, before settling in a third state at age 16, gaining experience in perishable crops produced locally and seasonally elsewhere in Lower South, East Coast, and the Midwest (summer-demand labor for separate companies). He preferred farm work in tomatoes, peppers, and oranges and life in a rural town over living in a city, despite his opinion that urban work was easier, based on his West Coast experience with washing dishes, cleaning hotels, construction, landscaping, and yard work.

He recalled youth as a time of hardship, owing to familial poverty. He appreciated time with his father much more than being raised by paternal kin or his mother, whom his father left, when Mr. Dulzón was age 7. He spent his youth with paternal aunts and uncles. For a brief time, he lived with a stepmother, whom he remembers for her beatings (*golpes*) and coldness (*desprecio*). As the middle child within a precarious family, he suffered beatings from an older brother. His four brothers and one sister remain in Mexico. He is the only one who lives in the United States. Several years ago, one brother came for a month but returned to Mexico. Mr. Dulzón recognizes the impact of childhood difficulties that pushed him to leave home and likened his departure to the flight of birds, a metaphor of freedom and the ability to go elsewhere: “Like little birds, when they’ve had enough (*los pajaritos, que no más quieren*), they leave.” Owing to a childhood that was difficult, he has not visited and has no desire to return to Mexico.

Juan González (Age 35). He was raised in a central state of Mexico and first came to the States at age 14 with his father, who knew the Midwest, and an older brother (these three plus a cousin crossed the border on their own). When he first arrived, Mr. González worked a few weeks in the tomato harvest in the Midwest. His brother found him a factory job in East Chicago, where he continued to work for four years; his brother and father returned to Mexico a short time later. When their father was killed by a neighbor’s son with whom he quarreled, his brothers together assumed responsibility for family property. Although they continued to work in the states, they switched to Texas to make return to Mexico easier. After five years in the Midwest, Mr. González moved to the Lower South, where he worked in perishable produce. Over that time, he migrated to work in peaches for 3-4 seasons in an adjoining state, apples for 4-5 seasons in the Northeast, and brief tobacco work in the Middle South, as well as other migrant work elsewhere in the South. For a few months, he lived in another county of the same state. He preferred harvest labor in tomato and pepper and working for *pinhookers* (“pinhooking” is grower-subsidized, entrepreneurial harvest of a remnant crop after the main harvest is completed) to regular labor contractors, particularly the benefits of furnished meals and alcohol often provided by pinhook contractors.

Despite less time in the United States, his brothers recently arranged their legal status. Mr. González recalled that he had this opportunity at a time of national amnesty.

Recognized as a good worker, supervisors encouraged him to seek residency, but he chose not to. Mr. González recounted pleasant memories of his deceased father and living mother, especially his mother's cooking in Mexico. While working in the Midwest, he remitted money to his family, similar to the practice of his father before him, but he stopped a short time after his father was murdered.

Antonio Calvillo Toledo (Age 32). Pump assistant at age 6 at a gas station across the street from his parents' house in the capital city of a sending area in a west-central province; youngest of two sons, he left home age 12, worked as mason's helper 4-5 years in Tijuana (two-day bus ride from home), returned home age 16-17, and first lived in the States at age 23. On a whim as a teenager, he crossed the border alone "to check out" trains he had heard about in his *colonia* (returnees often discussed travel by trains between cities in the states). His curiosity satisfied, he returned home on his own that same week. At age 23 he came with a friend from his *colonia*; they crossed into a border state, where they caught a train from a large city to the Lower South.

Owing to parental separation, Mr. Calvillo Toledo was raised by grandparents. When they died, he was sent to live with his now-separated parents (shared custody), which he did not like. For this reason, he went to Tijuana; his first night in town he found a job as a mason's helper. His younger brother in turn was obtaining academic credentials to go to law school (currently an attorney in Mexico). Hearing from hometown friends whom he encountered in Tijuana that his mother was sad, he returned home, where he stayed a few years, before coming to the states with hometown companions.

After arrival, he worked odd jobs for three-four years in rural areas of the Midwest and in cities like Chicago, Denver, and Kansas City. He spent two-three months in each place, before continuing "to wander" (*de vago*). After five months of picking oranges, he joined a watermelon crew for four months that worked in five states of the South and Midwest, before returning to the Middle South. Watermelon work was active and lucrative in these five states (two Western states round-out these five as top watermelon producers in the United States). The labor contractor for orange harvesting was a brother of the watermelon contractor, thus facilitating transition from one crew to another.

Recalling the farm town where he once had lived, where the author occasionally conducted fieldwork, we shared memories of places where migrant men went for diversion. These were not places he went at this time in his life, since he was not yet "heavily" into drugs. After visiting his family of birth, and wife and two sons, in Mexico, he returned to the Middle South, where he worked in emergency reconstruction of family homes. When work ended, he went to a nearby city where he spent five years, finding occasional work through labor pools (construction and cleaning) and experiencing periods of no work without unemployment compensation. By this time, he had quit migrating and stopped performing agricultural work.

Samuel Juarez (Age 41). He was raised in a *ranchito* (unincorporated rural area) outside the capital of a central state in Mexico, served one year in the Mexican military at age 19, and first came to states at age 21 with a village friend, directly to the Lower South. He did poorly as an orange picker. A few weeks later, he went with someone whom he met (his friend remained) to a town farther South to harvest tomatoes for six months. From there, he went to a third town to work for a local crew leader in a county adjacent to the one where he first arrived, before performing seasonal work in peaches with another crew in the Middle South. Five years later, he returned to where he had first harvested tomatoes to work with a pinhook contractor in watermelon. Over time, he has worked in tomatoes, oranges, and palmetto berry (*bolita*), a summer harvest activity mainly in the Lower South. Recently, he worked in watermelon in an adjacent state; this past year, he was "main packer" in his crew. He is the first one contacted by the contractor, "Coming this year, or should I get someone else?" For five years, he has replied, "I'll go. Call me the day before you leave." Although each year most of the crew is new, a few have worked with other watermelon crews. At some point, his brother wrote to tell him that his first border-crossing companion had been shot and killed, while living in the United States.

David Crespo (Age 41). He was raised in an interior town of a border province, lived briefly on the border, and first came to the states at age 27 with a man from his village; they spent 15 days in a large Texas city, before he went to the Midwest to work in watermelon. There he met a friend who brought him to the East Coast, where he worked briefly in tomatoes. He remembers slow work the first four days: "Everybody was beating me, then I caught on" (*agarré la onda*). A few weeks later he came with three companions to another nearby farm town. One man later went to a border state, and he does not know whereabouts of the other two. Mr. Crespo prefers work in watermelon. He has worked oranges in the Lower South, tobacco in the Middle South, tomatoes in several areas of the Lower South, maintenance on a horse ranch, and briefly in construction of driveways in the Lower South.

Mr. Crespo mixes opportunities whenever he can, often leaving a job when the work slows to find other work where more hours and pay is possible, which he called "jumping crew." Over the years that I knew him, he worked locally for several people and seasonally migrated outside the state. He left fruit picking shortly after he arrived from Mexico, when he learned there was more money in watermelon work. At the time of his interview (seated in my car), Mr. Crespo told me that he was planning to seek other work, even though the rent-free housing provided by his crew boss had television and appliances. It was the month of January, which was "slow." He preferred the movement of "fast-moving work." If he left, he could return, owing to his work skills, more than his sustainability for a long-term arrangement.

Mr. Crespo remits money to his wife and three sons in Mexico (ages 21, 19, and 8), whenever he can; he calls to notify

them of its arrival. Given that two sons are economically independent, his last remittance was nearly two years ago. He meets local women in this country but has chosen to not take up residence, which to him implies a serious commitment to their economic welfare. He recently met a woman (Anglo) who accompanied him on the season in several states, which men call *unión libre* "open relationship." He acknowledged her work skills as excellent: sweet potatoes in the Middle South, watermelon in the Midwest, and oranges in the Lower South. Owing to his vow to avoid partnership responsibility, he left her after several months. (Months earlier she told me that she was seeking custody of her children in foster care, so she went to another state.)

Roberto Sanchez (Age 34). He was born and raised in a small town in a central province that serves as a sending area; as a youth he spent more time with a clique of buddies than in ranch and farm work with his father, or his schoolwork. Mr. Sanchez first came to states at age 20 to escape a troubled home and harassment from a town policeman; he crossed the border with four hometown friends; they came by train to the Lower South. One of them bought beer. After drinking, they discussed robbing a store for food. When he was "volunteered" for the task, Mr. Sanchez declined. He fought one man (the drunkest) and was winning, but his buddies beat Mr. Sanchez and left him unconscious on the tracks. Alone when he regained consciousness, and without English skills, he asked directions to return to the place where they entered the country. Having this initial dislike of the United States, he planned to return home. He misinterpreted information he received and found himself farther South, after taking a train in the wrong direction. On leaving the train, he met a man from Puerto Rico who took him to the local mission for free food and a place to stay.

A few weeks later, he went to the Lower South, where he picked oranges by day and barhopped at night. Shortly, he moved into a rented house with eight men from Mexico whom he met at a bar. They worked in oranges. During this time, he called his parents. They were happy to hear he was alive; a companion had told them that he was killed by a train. After difficulties with housemates (one of them was killed, he believed, by a drug dealer from whom the young man stole a pistol), he spent five months on the street, before he moved to the Middle South. Vowing to avoid problems that he had in the Lower South, Mr. Sanchez began living with a woman he met working in tobacco, a few weeks after arrival in the new state. By this time, his English skills were better, and they continued to improve with his new female companion.

José Ramos (Age 36). He was raised as the fourth oldest in a close-knit family in his mother's childhood home (father born in another province) in the capital of a province seldom identified as a sending source; he sold vegetables and fruits along a public street. He first came to the states at age 18 with an older brother and they worked on a farm in a border state; when his brother was injured and returned to Mexico, Mr. Ramos stayed with an aunt and uncle in a nearby city, where he worked in a local factory. He prefers the states, owing to few opportunities in his province. He disclosed that he never

sought "liberated land" adjacent to his hometown, despite participating in political takeover of agrarian lands that gave the poor an opportunity of owning a home.

The idea that I was going to build a house in Mexico never entered my mind (*nunca se me sembró en la mente*). Although I used to accompany local land invaders [party-supported], I myself never petitioned for land (*nunca pedí terreno*) that had been confiscated.

Mr. Ramos made four extended trips to the states, living in cities (e.g., Dallas and Chicago), and rural locales of the South and Midwest. In urban areas, among various jobs, he worked as groundskeeper for a golf course, sales clerk in a hardware store, assembly line worker, and in the rural areas orange picker, assistant in bread delivery to Mexican-owned stores, and construction-roofer. When he visited Mexico, he resumed his work as a street vendor of vegetables and fruits.

7. Synopsis of the Seven Cases

Little on the surface of these narratives of seven undocumented men differs from descriptions in the literature for men and women who perform farm labor in this country. Utilizing the social capital of village-based social networks comprising family and/or friends resonates as the main reason cited in the literature [3–9, 12–15, 40–42, 45–47] as well as these seven men's reason for coming to the states in search of a better life, socially, economically, and politically. Six of the seven came with someone from their home community. Two came with family members (Mr. González, father; Mr. Ramos, brother) and five traveled with friends (Mr. Calvillo Toledo; Mr. Juárez; Mr. Crespo; Mr. Sanchez). The remaining man, Mr. Dulzón, came to the states with older companions that he met outside his hometown. He first worked in Mexico outside his hometown, after leaving home, owing to mistreatment.

Four of five utilizing a village-based cluster lived and worked in Mexico prior to coming to the states: Calvillo Toledo and Dulzón as emancipated minors in a hometown and/or neighbor province, respectively; Crespo with border work as a young adult; Juárez through three years of military service in Mexico. Two men who came with close kin had no experience with internal migration in Mexico (González, Ramos). Having a destination plan becomes possible through village-based networking and travel [5, 6, 9, 12, 13, 15, 17, 18, 45–47]. Despite a destination plan prior to their crossing, Mr. González and father, brothers, and cousins (Midwest) and Mr. Ramos and his brother (border state), each of the two has spent most of their time in another state. Neither is married, but each has "lived" with a local woman, and each has returned more than once to visit family in Mexico. Three of the five men, prior to leaving Mexico, decided on the Lower South (Calvillo Toledo, Juárez, Sanchez). The remaining two decided their destination after they had crossed the border (Crespo to Midwest and Dulzón to West Coast). One of these five still lives in the state to which he originally came (Juárez in the Lower South).

Three of the seven have or once had female partners in this country and/or in hometowns (Juárez in Lower South in

still in “common law” arrangement; Calvillo Toledo separated from wife in Mexico; Crespo is still married to his wife in Mexico). Four of seven had partnerships with women in the states (Sanchez in Middle South and Mexico; Crespo by “free union” over an entire season; González in Lower South; and Ramos in the West [twice], Lower South, and Middle South). Each arrangement type provides a stability otherwise missing in farm work, as well as an opportunity to improve interpersonal language skills in English and/or open economic doors to other kinds of employment and improved living conditions. All seven men spoke of a desire for these things, singly (social by Mr. González; economic by Mr. Ramos; political by Mr. Sanchez), or in combination (Mr. Calvillo Toledo, Mr. Crespo, Mr. Juarez, and Mr. Dulzón).

These seven men differ in some ways from examples appearing in social science literature on Mexican men and women who come to work in agriculture in the United States.

Firstly, they relied more on their own resources, or someone they knew. Six of the seven men came their first time without a *coyote* (“human trafficker”) on their own, more than others in my sample, who often relied on the fee-contracted assistance of a *coyote*. The seventh man came his first time at age 14 (one of three who came as adolescents). He later crossed on his own, once he gained the requisite knowledge for crossing the border. Few transmigrants who participate in social science research, whether in this study or others, enter the United States at an official checkpoint along the four southwestern states. Border crossing without papers parallels several centuries of hardship journeys for man and women of many nations who enter and have entered this country. Reliance on self and the use of social capital from one’s rural village to cross the border and enter the states is evidenced by these seven men and other undocumented persons in my sample who have used illicit drugs.

Secondly, some but not all of the seven men experienced hardship in family and kin relations during childhood in Mexico. Except for Mr. González, the men who left at a younger age were those who experienced extreme difficulties. This difference is tenuous and may be an artifact of my study methods. Because the data that I collected focused on “drug use,” the men and women occasionally offered reasons for engagement in alcohol and drug use. Within the open questions, I sometimes asked the men to describe family circumstances, and several made a conceptual link between circumstances of a difficult childhood and their own drug use.

Thirdly, drug use is the primary difference in the seven men from agricultural workers from Mexico in the literature. Each one used alcohol in Mexico and all but one had experience with licit and/or illicit drugs before crossing the border. Sometime after they crossed, they increased use and/or included new drugs within their repertoires. Each eventually used crack-cocaine. I therefore chose to separate immigration from the discussion of new drug use. My objective was to illustrate how each narrative could be sanitized to capture basic features of narrative histories in the literature of men and women coming to the states to perform farm work. None of 100-plus men or women from Mexico with agricultural experience in the states whose narratives appear in Davis [45] or Rothenberg [6] talks of illicit drug use for self or family

members prior to entering this country. None of the men or women in the respective vignettes each author presents used drugs beyond alcohol, one of the two drugs often associated with migrants from Mexico. The second, as mentioned earlier, is marijuana. Narratives of the two crack-using farm workers in Rothenberg [6] and one vignette in Vander Staay [48] describe men who came to farm work *from the city*. Each began illicit use in an urban environment. Hence, drug use is portrayed as a characteristic of the city rather than as a possible normative occurrence in a rural area. One consultant and one architect, both of Mexican descent, whose narratives appear in Davis [45], however, describe dope smoking and drug smuggling in their youth, respectively.

In the remainder of this article, I present field materials with attention to what might be the primary consideration for new use, not unlike references to onset of alcohol use in Spicer [49], occurrences of illness in Becker [50] and Riessman [51], and matters other than personal health in Finnegan [52].

8. Initiation into Drug Use

I return to narrative summaries for each of the seven men. The order of presentation has been altered to emphasize influence of a different social context than that of “village-based networks” that facilitated border crossings for entry into this country and any general knowledge of a place to which they were headed. Instead, I emphasize locally generated networks that were crucial in the onset of crack-cocaine, which I have called, “new use” [21].

Calvillo Toledo (Crack Onset Age 27-28). Before leaving for Tijuana, Mexico, which was the first time he traveled outside his home state, Mr. Calvillo Toledo had tried paint thinner, marijuana, and alcohol as a member of a *colonia*-based age-cluster (*pandilla*). The time that Mr. Calvillo Toledo spent in Tijuana, where he made good money in construction, exacerbated his liking for alcohol and marijuana, and in Tijuana he substituted shoe cement for thinner. Returning home in his late teens, he renewed contact with a friend who had been planting and selling marijuana in the local area, who supplied him, for free, with regular quantities.

Returning to the states after a quarrel with his wife, he came on his own. One week after his arrival in the Middle South, he tried cocaine, which he used a few times, and crack, which he began to use on a regular basis. Mr. Calvillo Toledo had been exposed to men and women who used drugs throughout four-plus years of migratory travel the first time that he was in the states, but not until a second trip did he first use cocaine and crack. Initiation into drugs on his return followed a quarrel with his wife in Mexico, which precipitated departure (she later remarried); he maintains contact with his children. He had met the individuals who supplied the crack after his return, none of whom were from Mexico. After reconstruction work ended in the Lower South, he began to use habitually, while living in abandoned cars and warehouses and under bridges. If he secured regular day-haul work, his supervisor would meet him in the park or at a prearranged site and retrieve other workers at their place of residence.

If work continued, the boss might assist him to find a place while working for him.

One reason that Mr. Calvillo Toledo decided not to return to migrant farm work, which he had performed during his first sojourn in the states, was availability of crack in the labor camps. He was concerned about labor contractors who provided drugs and then subtracted from a worker's wages what was consumed that week. Mr. Calvillo appraised the situation, noting the process and its outcome: "One never sees the money or a change of clothes." After ceasing use of crack following more than four years of regular use, he was injured by a car on the way home from a drinking binge. Time in the hospital and recovery activities in a treatment program provided psychosocial support he needed to quit drinking (he had left crack a month before the accident). Institutional contacts through the treatment program assisted his securing on-the-job training in restaurant work in a nearby town.

Dulzón (Crack Onset Age 31–33). Prior to living in the states, Mr. Dulzón first tried marijuana in Mexico at age 14 and was the only initiate among the seven to first use in Mexico outside his hometown. He briefly tried heroin (2–3 times over a 3-day period) at age 24 on the West Coast two years before living on the East Coast. One year after arrival in the Lower South, fifteen years after entering the states, he tried crack-cocaine offered by a friend who spoke no Spanish but had loaned him a pipe. He continued crack smoking for 12 years. Over time, he learned to use crack to remove the hunger sensations that accompanied smoking marijuana. Poly-use (mixing drugs) is practiced for desired effects and in some instances to reduce negative drug effects. Mr. Dulzón used briefly but heavily after new use of crack. He credits moderate use with a desire to avoid incarceration, noting that many users spend more time in jail than in town. Lack of money when not working both justifies and facilitates his moderate use of crack.

Mr. Dulzón was physically abused as a child. Owing to age and birth order (middle child), he experienced the worst beatings wielded by a stepmother, which exacerbated a feeling of loss for his biological mother. He told a story that highlights the sadness that he has held all these years.

Ten years ago, I worked for a tomato company. I met this man from the town where I was born. "What family are you from?" "I'm from the Dulzones." "Your uncles?" "My father is Fulano, my uncle is Fulano; my other uncle is Fulano." He replies, "I know your mother; I know your uncles, your brothers, your sister. . . ." Two months later he was going back home: "Let's go." "No," I say, "I'll stay [voice fades]. Do not tell my kin that you met me." "Okay," he told me.

When he returned, I saw him. . . . He says, "Paísa [countryman], I have news for you." Next day, he hands me four letters from my mother, father, brothers, and sister. I opened one. . . . I read four or five lines, but I couldn't read the rest. I never read them. I stopped with the letter from my mother: "Selmo, my son, I want to see you." That phrase

stuck in my mind. . . . I rolled the letters into a ball and lit a match (snaps fingers for imaginary flame). I burned them.

His story is reminiscent of a narrative in Davis [45] of the wife of a man living in a rural town in the Northwest who rejected his mother and wife, when they went to the states to check on him. Davis suggests that drugs were involved, citing possessions described to her by the two women on their return to Mexico, whom she interviewed in the town where she taught school. Unless she means "drug paraphernalia," possessions point away from *heavy* drug use, since "things" can become currency to pawn, trade, or sell on the street, to enable a drug habit. Davis does not consider the perception of abrupt confrontation by two women, who acted in a manner outside their expected gender roles to go a great distance to check on a son/husband. For Mr. Dulzón, the situation was different. He left with a plan to never return. During his years on the West Coast, while living close to the border, he never did return home. By burning family letters, he enacted the intent of a plan that he had conceived many years ago.

Crespo (Crack Onset Age 28). Mr. Crespo first tried marijuana in a *colonia* of his hometown (four hours from the border) at age 14 and tried cocaine at age 22 living on the border. He described the ethos among companions in his *colonia*, and among those he met in the border town, as one of "sharing" (*mocharse*) with encouragement to use and participate in group activities such as dances. In the states, he stopped using cocaine, because he preferred Mexican cocaine, which he described as "purer" than that available in this country. Living on the border, he went on nine short trips to secure peyote. Hence, he carried with him the idea of drug-altered consciousness as a learning experience.

Mr. Crespo was introduced to crack along the East Coast within a few weeks of arrival in the states. He was staying in an area where Latinos of several nationalities were living. An outgoing person, he permitted a young Latina not from Mexico, whom he befriended, to use the bathroom where he rented. After a few days, her daily visits aroused his curiosity. When he found out that she was using the bathroom to smoke crack to avoid discovery by those with whom she lived, he asked her if he could try it. She showed him how to use a crack "stem" (pipe) and he became a regular user. He continued irregular marijuana smoking and moderate drinking; he tried smoking crank (*cranque*, a type of methamphetamine), provided on one occasion by a contractor while he was picking citrus.

Sanchez (Crack Onset Age 21–22). Mr. Sanchez began to use marijuana around age 11–12, alcohol around age 12–13, and *Resistol* a few years later. He was expelled from school at age 16 for misbehavior. His father sent him to live with a grandmother, whom he adored. She once took him under pretense to a mental hospital, where an intern feigned that he was "working-up" Mr. Sanchez for admission. The patients he showed him left a lasting impression on the young man, as well as a verbal warning to stop using drugs "to not become like the patients." For a few years he ceased using drugs and

alcohol. This changed, when he and several friends went to an adult theater to celebrate his son's first birthday. Discovered by the theater owner, they were asked to leave. His son's mother was the former girlfriend of a local policeman, as it turned out, who was summoned by the owner. The policeman held Mr. Sanchez, still a teen, as he was beaten by the theater owner. The altercation included accusations and counter-accusations by both parties on moral character. At the time, Mr. Sanchez was no longer a marijuana-user; he had quit after the hospital visit. He described the blasphemy of the theater owner criticizing their behavior, when he, the owner, was showing adult films to adults and minors ("carding" or age verification was rare in his town). After the altercation, Mr. Sanchez resumed marijuana use with friends. Several months later, fearing for his safety, he came to the states.

In the Lower South, he briefly lived in one county before moving to another. Living with men he had recently met, none of whom he had known previously, Mr. Sanchez was introduced to crack. His housemates were heavy users. Paychecks were spent on crack: "The next day we did not have money for lunch." The men "panhandled" change on the street or they asked for an advance from the labor boss or a coworker. Mr. Sanchez preferred smoking crack in private, since using with housemates made him paranoid. After a housemate was knifed and killed, he left the house and moved to another state, where he ceased using crack-cocaine. However, he continued drinking alcohol. As he reflected: "I began to mess up. I wanted to move forward (*progresar*) in this country, but I couldn't do it all at one time."

Living with a woman for six years in his new state of residence, Mr. Sanchez experienced times of drinking and, while attending a local church, times of abstinence. Occasionally his live-in companion used crack; because he was working, he did not use. During a period of drinking, he was caught stealing; on his third trip into a wine shop, the clerk asked him to stop. The police found him and a buddy hiding nearby and jailed them. After release, five months on the street, and rearrest, the Sheriff asked him to leave the county. He went to another part of the state and met participants in a Spanish-speaking chapter of Alcoholics Anonymous, facilitated by Mr. Gardel, who helped him get treatment. After graduating from the residential treatment program, he lived briefly in a rented house with recovering users. A few weeks later, he left the house after a housemate suggested that he monitor acquaintances, if he wanted "to stay clean." One person criticized was a woman whom Mr. Sanchez wanted to help "clean up." She was a crack smoker. As Mr. Sanchez explained to me, he was remembering his beloved grandmother and wanted to return the kind gesture toward him by helping women whom he met in the states.

Ramos (Crack Onset Age 31-32). From his first experience with inhalants at age 12, alcohol at age 14-15, marijuana at age 15-16, and pills at age 17-18, Mr. Ramos was familiar with drug use prior to arrival in the states. Working as a fruit vendor in Mexico, he sold pills "on the side," to enable continuation of his craving for alcohol and pills. He shared earnings from fruit sales with his parents. In the states, he was able to

resist temptation to sell illegal drugs. Instead, Mr. Ramos emphasized beer drinking rather than use of illicit drugs.

In my mind, I was carrying only thoughts of beer. To think I was going to eat, to think that I was going to work, it never entered my mind. So constant was the thought, that it spilled into action, and I had to carry a bottle in my hand (tenía traer la botella en la mano).

In Texas after breakup with a Mexican American woman, his first relationship in the states, Mr. Ramos began to drink heavily in this country. He acknowledged briefly smoking crack but stopped: "I got sick. It made my stomach turn (*me hacía mal del estomago*)." Similar to Mr. Calvillo Toledo, whom he met while living "on the street," he was exposed to illicit drugs in nearly every area where he had worked and lived throughout the South, Midwest, and West. He first tried crack in the last state where he was living after breaking-up, well after a full year of experience in that state and more than a decade of experience in the United States. He barely knew the men who supplied the crack, none of whom were from Mexico. Mr. Ramos linked the "symbolic death" that he experienced for the first drug he used in Mexico to a recent binge and "near physical death" (two-day clinical coma) that led him to enroll in a residential treatment program and to acquire sobriety after many years in the United States.

Juarez (Crack Onset Age 25-26). Mr. Juarez's family owned a small billiard room next to a bar in their *rancho* (unincorporated rural community) where he was raised; his father worked during the day and left his son to watch the pool tables in the afternoon. "I was still a child; I couldn't see the billiard balls," he told me, placing a hand under his eyes to show table height. When his father returned to the hall, he would find his son drunk (customers gave him beer) and take him home to bed. Mr. Juarez learned to play pool, a skill that he brought to the states: "I was very good at pool. In no time (*de volado*) after I arrived, I used to win beer, and I won cash, too."

After working watermelon in the third town he lived, he tried marijuana with his drinking companions (cost him two dollars). Three years later a new set of companions not from Mexico introduced him to crack (smoking through a soda can with ashes). A few weeks after trying each, his use progressed to "daily," first marijuana and then crack, and he continued on return to a second town where he had worked briefly. After several years and three states in the Southeast and growing awareness of the money that he was spending on drugs, he decided to quit. Over a single month, facilitated by increased drinking, he gave up crack. Several months later, he reduced heavy drinking to twice a month. It was at this time that he met a Latina of other than Mexican descent, with whom he has lived for nearly eight years. Each had a same-sex parent who owned a billiard hall, where they spent time as a child. Mr. Juarez visited his family in Mexico after more than 15 years of not returning home. Prior communication with them had been by letter and telephone. His wife stayed in the Lower South (she herself last visited her family several months after she met him, before they decided to remain together as a couple).

González (Crack Onset Age 24). Mr. González had never been outside his home state when he came to this country as a teen. Unlike the other seven men, he had used no drug prior to his arrival in the Midwest, where he first began to drink alcohol and try marijuana at the invitation of age-mates in the labor camp where he lived with his father and brother. He used briefly and kept it secret from his family. He continued moderate drinking and marijuana use after moving to the Lower South.

Several years after seasonal work in an agricultural town not far from his home-base, Mr. González tried cocaine with friends not from Mexico that came with him from his home-base. Susceptible to nosebleeds, he quit. A short time later he tried crack laced in a joint of marijuana and recently tried pills in the same site but quit after two-three times. His current use is limited to crack, alcohol, and marijuana in the farm town, a place that he says encourages drug use more than when he is working on the season. He credits a girlfriend in the town to which he migrates with his nonuse on the season. Worried over the cost of crack, he once stopped for two years, mostly on the season and, briefly, in the farming town (home-base). The last time that he used crack was three weeks before his interview, and the last time that he smoked marijuana was the same day as his interview.

9. Implications of Drug Use in the States

All seven of the undocumented men are/were poly-users, often replacing one drug with another (e.g., crack for cocaine by Mr. Crespo, alcohol for crack by Mr. Juárez), or increasing one to leave another (e.g., heavy use of alcohol to quit pills for Mr. Ramos), or new use of crack to complement drinking (e.g., Mr. Calvillo Toledo), or reducing hunger sensations associated with marijuana (e.g., Mr. Dulzón), or switching preferred drug, depending on living companions (e.g., Mr. Sanchez), or first trying crack “laced” [mixed] in marijuana (e.g., Mr. González).

Five of the men with the longest time in the states diverged in new use of crack. Two tried crack within a week of their return from Mexico to the same town and state where they had been living: Mr. Calvillo Toledo after four-plus years in urban and rural locales and Mr. Dulzón after 12-plus years in rural and urban locales on the West Coast. Each of these two had separated from a partner prior to returning: Mr. Calvillo Toledo in Mexico and Mr. Dulzón on the West Coast. When they first tried crack, Mr. Ramos and Mr. González had more than ten years in the states; each had been living more than a year in the town where new use occurred. For these five, the state where new use of crack occurred was not the state where they first arrived and worked in this country. For the remaining three, new use of crack took place in a town where they were living or had been living previously. Mr. Juárez first tried crack a few years after arrival in the first state where he worked, and Mr. Crespo and Mr. Sanchez each tried crack several months after return to an area where they previously lived. Mr. Sanchez had left a difficult situation in Mexico, where he feared for his personal safety. Mr. Crespo in contrast had been living outside his hometown for some time

(on the border; in the Lower South), and he had learned from prior peyote treks to treat drugs as a “learning experience.”

Four of the seven men eventually quit using crack. Two participated in a formal treatment program, after months of hardship that included, “living on the street.” Two others quit crack on their own; one experienced negative effects, and one felt forced to quit, once he became aware of long-term effects. The four men having difficulty in maintaining or finding work, owing to crack use that interfered with work performance, were those who quit. The remaining three shifted from heavy to moderate use in the recent and distant past. These three remain crack users who work regularly in agriculture, and all three continue to migrate on the season.

Three of the seven had a difficult childhood. As teenagers, Mr. Calvillo Toledo experienced parental separation and left home. Mr. Sanchez did not get along with his father or townspeople other than his age-mates (buddies). An abusive stepmother painfully reminded Mr. Dulzón of the loss of his mother. The other four men recalled age-mates in their *colonia* (neighborhood) that provided supportive space for psychosocial development in teen years as well as the impetus for new use of alcohol, marijuana, and inhalants.

None of the seven men used illicit drugs other than marijuana prior to living in the states, except Mr. Crespo, who had previously tried cocaine and peyote on the border. At two extremes, Mr. González used no drugs before arrival in the states, and Mr. Ramos had tried several drugs during youth. Introduced to drinking at an early age, Mr. Juárez never went beyond alcohol in Mexico, but he briefly escalated to crack in the states, which he later quit. Each of the other six added drugs and varied in their alcohol use in the states. None of the men experienced new use of crack with members of their family or persons from hometowns in Mexico.

Most companions with whom these seven men first tried crack, however briefly, did not speak Spanish. When companions spoke Spanish, which was rare, their origins were from other Spanish-speaking countries of Central America, or in one instance, from another area in Mexico outside a hometown and province. In all instances, their (new) companions with whom they had first tried crack were part of one or another local network. Thus, this residential stability through connections to local drug networks enabled their new and/or continuing drug use and facilitation of drug use in others of more or less the same age.

10. Invisibility of Prior Experience

The hardships experienced by these undocumented men especially that wrought on them by families and/or townspeople differ from descriptions in the literature of experience in a home country prior to immigration. Where they share similarities is economic necessity. The literature consistently emphasizes the “American dream” when discussing transmigration, and hardships that preface success are reported as transmigrants seek social-economic-political opportunities in the United States. Certain hardships such as illicit drug use, particularly crack-cocaine, are typically sanitized from accounts that appear in the literature, or illicit use may really be absent.

Researchers have been inclined to seek the source of immigrant difficulties within the place to which one has arrived (e.g., absence of interpersonal skills appropriate to another cultural setting, such as office work [37]) and not consider a contribution to hardship in the place from which one originates. To do this is the antithesis of common sense in anthropology. Blaming the former background would implicate home culture by emphasizing immigrant insensitivity to a homeland rather than domestic insensitivity against those who arrive from outside this country. Exceptions to sanitized reporting include Conover's [7] account of the year he spent living and traveling with immigrant men in the states and in home provinces in Mexico and Davis [45] presentation of 70 narratives of men and women who come to the United States from Mexico, some of whom later returned to Mexico. Conover describes men and women separating, owing to tensions in living arrangements, for example, precipitating departure of one or more persons from a shared house. A few narratives in Davis monograph tell of squabbles within families and between couples prior to immigration or on return to Mexico, with or without a later departure a second time to the states. Exceptions to reports of prior hardship often are found in the study of refugees, where researchers theorize that the previous experience in war-ravaged countries and refugee camps may be linked to difficulties they later face in this country [53, 54].

Several men and women in my research experienced a form of debt peonage similar to that reported by Rothenberg [6], Kilborn [55], and Vander Staay [48], wherein crack was added to commodities, such as food, shelter, transportation, alcohol, and cigarettes provided by a contractor, who subtracted from weekly wages what a worker had consumed. This continues a practice of manipulated indebtedness in other parts of the country, reported for all but crack, for example, by Heppel [56] in dissertation fieldwork conducted in perishable crop camps in the Lower and Upper South. At the other extreme, contractors and growers exist who dismiss those they find selling or using drugs. Conversely, some labor bosses seek "to not know" what crews do when they are not working. Crack use by farm workers in the United States overdetermines how we perceive the injustices of agricultural labor [57] and obscures a complex system [10, 11, 43], complete with actors and players engaged in activities similarly available to drug users and alcohol consumers in the larger society.

11. Discussion and Conclusion

Drug use in agricultural areas of the eastern United States is one consequence of changes in the past century affecting landed and landless alike. Rather than continue residence in rural areas, for example, African Americans in agricultural areas of the Lower South often left home to seek fortunes in urban areas, or they settled in rural farming areas of other states [58, 59], or relocated to farming towns, when local agrobusiness began to expand. Some secured land on which to place a trailer or construct a home. A few purchased property to rent for profit and/or they purchased equipment for harvesting crews that they organized and managed. These

agricultural crews were supplemented by those of Texas-born Chicanos who came to the Southeast from the Southwest, later followed by men and women from common sending areas and nontraditional areas of Mexico, and most recently from Central America and the Caribbean. These immigrants found opportunities and reasons to settle in the Lower South farm town, where I conducted most of my fieldwork, rather than include it as a part of a "seasonal circuit," which more often existed in locales further north in other states. For this reason, the farm town was a destination that often became a home-base for men and women working in agriculture.

Later generations encountered increased property values, as the town's elite accommodated to these arrivals. Hence, later immigrants were less likely to find a steady economic niche within agriculture. Many were compelled to continue migrating, while extended kin served as "anchor" [10] to whom they could return after seasonal agricultural work. Having a history as a wilderness town conducive to alcohol consumption and later to illicit drugs, the farming community made a transition from home-brewed to commercial liquor and later from freebase to crack-cocaine, when the latter became available across the country in the mid-1980s [32]. Like female crack users in Atlanta studied by Sterk [33], illicit users studied by Lende [60], and male and female crack users in two studies in New York City [61, 62], a number of men and women in the farm town began crack use after adolescence. Some were undocumented workers, similar to the seven men whose stories of transmigration and border crossing I presented above.

Unlike Latinos in the Lower South, those who came to the Middle South found work within an agricultural economy that historically used local farm labor in areas dependent on cotton and tobacco economy [57, 58, 63]. When work in perishable crops and tobacco remained steady, these transmigrants found an opportunity to work and settle [3, 6, 8, 9, 13–15]. Early arrival of Latinos, like Mr. Ramos, Mr. Sanchez, Mr. Calvillo Toledo (from another state), and Mr. Pepe Gardel, in agricultural areas of the Middle South, has a history of less than twenty years or one-third of the time of Latino settlement in the farming town that served as my principal research site in the Lower South. Although Mr. Calvillo Toledo and Mr. Ramos traveled more than Mr. Sanchez, each of them used crack for periods ranging from weeks to years, before they quit (each was recovering from crack addiction at the time of interview). All three men initiated crack in their late 20s, two inside and one outside a home-base state. The appearance of crack in recently formed settlements of new immigrants presents a challenge for drug use remission activities, such as the contributions of Pepe Gardel, as he sought to bring programs of value to immigrant communities in his local area.

Hidden histories [64, 65] permeating these storied accounts of inscription into illicit drugs might have been negotiated differently, if they had taken place at different times in the history of each home-base community [14, 63, 64, 66, 67]. Through reflection on recent and bygone pasts, narrators revealed personal experience of brief opportunities, difficulties, and contradictions that form an integral core of agriculture within the eastern United States. Their narrative

accounts of changes reflect a link to the larger society in which agriculture plays a prominent role. For each of these seven undocumented men, the path to illicit drug use was initiated through locally generated networks in the spirit of increasing personal independence, greater freedom from social persecution, and a longing for new experiences. For each, similarly, their entry into the United States was propelled and facilitated by village-based networks [5, 47, 66] that gave way to locally generated networks that facilitated new and/or continuing use of illicit drugs, particularly that of crack-cocaine.

Competing Interests

The author declares no competing interests.

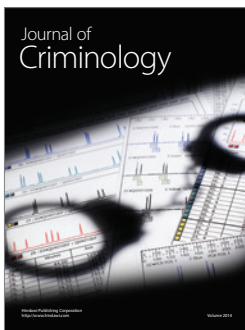
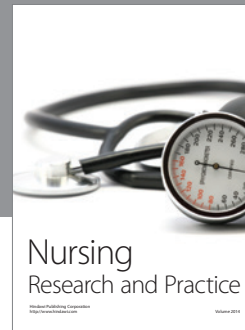
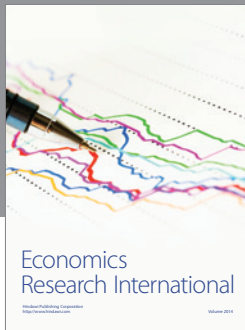
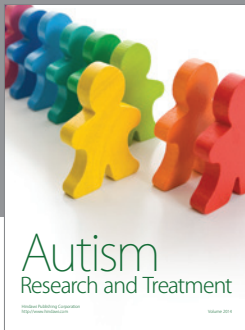
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