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Open towns and manipulated indebtedness among agricultural workers in the New South

ABSTRACT
Reselling consumable commodities like food, alcohol, and cigarettes to agricultural workers has long been a strategy of control and indebtedness used by North American labor bosses to manage workers in situations of demanding and risky work. Recent inclusion of crack cocaine among advanced commodities has brought new risks for workers, as it has permitted them a precarious means to enter a once-restricted resale domain, and it has altered strategies of control and profit by labor contractors by conferring a veneer of independence on workers. Discussion emphasizes an inside view of crack distribution amidst the shifting agencies and counteragencies between labor and management. [*agricultural labor, strategies of worker control, distribution and use of licit and illicit substances, southern United States*]

"Why we left the camp? Most e'ery week ya work, you might git a balance due. You don't git no money." As we sat in the shade at the local park, C. J. explained to me the system of debt peonage that became an intrinsic core of the crew leader system in southern U.S. agriculture. As we talked, he mentioned the practice of *going down the line*, whereby a labor contractor deducts from a worker's wages what is owed that worker through advances on consumable commodities, and he introduced me to the counterpractice of *book-up* that workers once commonly used to avoid the debts they incurred. "You work the whole week. He put feedin' charges 'n all kinda charges on his book. Tha's after you be drinking 'n som'n. You go down the line, 'Owed this, you owed that, you owed that.' " C. J. took a breath, "Ya git to the end of the line, you might have five, six dollars paid out ta ya." Speaking in a southern cadence common among the older generation, his voice quickened with frustration as he concluded his story of worker resistance to tactics of labor control. "You git tired of owin' money. If they say, 'You owe me,' dat book is up." He chuckled with the memory. "We goin' ta 'nother camp. Da' book-up. You git on down the road."

More than three decades had passed since his migratory experience as a young man and that afternoon in the park, and C. J. concluded his stories in a lighthearted manner, even after recounting harsh and sometimes brutal working conditions. When I asked C. J. to expand on his experience, he elaborated on "book-up" and mentioned another means of preventing a worker from leaving a labor camp: If caught, the worker might receive a beating. As a young man, C. J. left many camps. The one time he was caught leaving a camp at night, he was beaten by five henchmen, a term used by older workers to refer to the contractor's associates. *Henchmen* is a gloss for those who oversaw work in the fields *(row bosses)*, stood guard at night to keep workers "on the camp," and meted out punishment when so ordered by a labor contractor.[1] More so in C. J.'s time than today, agricultural workers left camps when working and living conditions were unsatisfactory.

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C. J.'s reference to going down the line, also known as *running the line* or *going on the book,* is to a strategy of control and profit whereby a farmworker pays excessive amounts to a labor contractor in exchange for commodities (Griffith and Kissam 1995:252–260). Commodity advances to workers against the next pay period is a long-standing practice in farm labor, noted by Monica Heppel (1982) for the East Coast, Carol Zabin and colleagues (1993) for the West Coast, and Daniel Rothenberg (1998) for both coasts. The scientific literature is cursory but emphatic in mentioning the practice as a form of debt peonage, focusing on the consumable commodities of food, cigarettes, and alcohol. Ronald Goldfarb refers to "over-priced cheap wine, soda pop and sandwiches made of one slice of bologna between two of white bread, to sell to workers, miles away from the nearest store" (1981:28), and Carey McWilliams comments about the pre-Bracero era, "Workers owe[d] the contractor before they worked a day" (1942:178). Noting that crew leaders "control almost every facet of migrants' lives," Ingolf Vogeler (1981:235) describes 1960s legal testimony from one worker who paid 75 cents for cigarettes that cost 35 cents in local stores outside the labor camp and more than a dollar for a drink of alcohol that should have cost half that price in most southern states.[2] The worker told Vogeler, "I'm going into debt faster than I can get out. . . . Is there a difference now and when there was slavery?" (1981:236). Finally, David Griffith and Ed Kissam (1995: 257–259) describe the maintenance of two "books" by a southern contractor; the first was used to record weekly expenses, and the second recorded transactions of credit that occurred between Thursday evening, when payroll was figured, and payday on Saturday.

Today's practice of going down the line takes on new meanings, for illicit substances have become items of demand as commodities advanced to farmworkers. Although a few reports identify contractors as distributors of such substances, the story does not end there. Labor contractors are joined in distribution, at times reluctantly and at times willingly, by locals from outside the labor camps as well as by farm-crew workers who sell illicit substances, primarily crack cocaine, to coworkers. Contractors and workers alike who choose to distribute, face the risk of arrest and incarceration, and workers, more often than contractors, may also be using and face a risk of addiction to substances that differ from alcohol in their impact on the body. All this is part of a larger picture in which debt peonage continues and new strategies are devised to avoid the detection of illicit drug sales, to increase contractor profits, and to maintain viable work crews. An examination of the illicit within debt peonage can illustrate how agencies and counteragencies of farmworkers intermingle with labor-control strategies as well as provide a veneer of independence for the worker that was unknown in times past. To set the stage for a discussion of the illicit, I provide an overview of the system of advanced commodities in U.S. farm labor. I then describe how distribution and use of the illicit in farmwork was, until recently, a "public secret" (Taussig 1999), unmentionable to people outside agriculture but privately known and collectively denied by those inside.

Controlling and profiting from an indebted work force

Profitability in agriculture is dependent on the extent to which management controls its laborers. Climate and weather (too little rain, too much rain) and natural complications like plant diseases aside, farm production must coordinate the pacing of work for planting and harvesting to coincide closely with a window period in which these tasks are effectively completed. Worker-control strategies rely on the isolation of agricultural enterprises and the availability of an unrestricted supply of laborers. Late legislation of regulatory standards, followed by irregular legal enforcement, and entrenchment of labor-control tactics with their systematic creation of an oversupply of "casual labor" (Pugliese 1991) contribute to a tension among farmworkers, advocates acting on behalf of farmworkers, and those who control and manage agrarian production. Given their social, political, and linguistic isolation from reform mechanisms, farmworkers fare poorly in articulating strategies of legal resistance (e.g., strikes). They originate from marginal segments of populations that typically include minority peoples of the United States, increasingly recruited from urban areas, and immigrants who come to this country to escape political and economic problems in home countries or to find opportunities that permit them to remit monies to those who depend on them in home communities. These are the people who are raced and classed as subject to unskilled and low-skill work, jobs with little security, and periods of unemployment. Despite a potential for resistance by manipulating demand for the skills they bring to farm labor (Wells 1996), the more mobile farmworkers are positioned outside forums for legal and political representation. Thus, ample space exists for generation and maintenance of a practice like going down the line and for entanglement of agricultural workers in debt peonage.

Trade liberalization, deregulation of binational compacts, and fluctuating national economies generate increased numbers and movement of transnational workers from Latin America and the Caribbean into North American agriculture. These same conditions drive the market processes that form the basis for the informal economy of illicit drugs at a hemispheric level (Andreas 1999). Dissolution of the manufacturing sector and the disappearance of unskilled jobs, concurrent with increased employment in information technology, deterioration of neighborhoods,

and shifting economic bases in local communities, drive street-level drug economies in urban areas (Dunlop and Johnson 1992; Hamid 1990, 1991, 1992). Crack's appearance in agricultural areas, parallel to that in other sectors of society, follows similar processes of economic decay. Indeed, employment opportunities in rural areas may evaporate (e.g., factories may close), as fragmentation of the land base (Fitchen 1981) and decline in farming (Fitchen 1991) accompany a rise in multistate agrobusiness administered and managed by corporate cultures (Friedland 1981, 1984). Improved technology in agrarian production (e.g., mechanical cherry pickers in the Midwest, cotton mechanization in the South) displaced farmworkers in the processing of certain crops. Coupled with these economic and structural changes, the number of black farmworkers was reduced as opportunities increased outside farm labor for those with education or advanced skills (Lobao 1990) and as immigrant networks were expanded after cessation of the Bracero Program in the 1960s (Griffith and Kissam 1995; Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994). Use of immigrant workers created a need for strict regulations in hiring and employment at the same time that the presence of such workers increased the likelihood of unfair labor practices such as lower wages and management's neglect of payments to social security from wage deductions. These shifting circumstances and the social processes they generated have altered the way that agricultural management articulates with supervision of farm laborers, which generates a series of strategies both of resistance by farmworkers and of control by labor contractors.

Farm labor is the largest of the worker categories that have made the slowest progress in receiving protections under federal statutes that establish the legal basis for worker protection in the United States. What Goode and Maskovsky (2001) call "a regime of disappearance," characterized by a shift in neoliberal policies that eroded labor protections and safety nets over the past two decades, has been common for more than a century in the political economy of farm labor. Ignored by the National Labor Relations Act of 1935, which established the right to organize and set grievances, and the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (FLSA, pronounced "flisa"), which set minimum standards for wages and overtime work, agricultural workers have long experienced "invisibility" in relation to legal standards for worker protection and safety nets (unemployment insurance, public assistance) for times when work of any type is not available.[3] Nonetheless, there are occasional blips on "the popular and political radar screen" (Goode and Maskowsky 2001:1) that call attention to injustices experienced by men and women who perform farm labor. Coincident in time with the FLSA, for example, John Steinbeck's novel *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939) drew a strong public response and McWilliams's documentary-style *Factories in the Fields* (1939) found favor with farm-labor advocates. First published in 1935 and later reprinted after passage of the FLSA, McWilliams's work, with its thesis of a "voiceless" and "racially exploited" worker, was preempted by advocacy discourses emphasizing farm-labor invisibility, with decreased attention in the years that followed to racialization of people of color and to immigrant communities as subject to low-pay agricultural labor.[4] Although the works of Steinbeck and McWilliams galvanized advocacy initiatives in distinctive ways and gave a voice to the voiceless that momentarily disrupted the regime of disappearance in farm labor, more than 20 years would pass before a new generation of documentaries and exposés appeared, coinciding with legislation for protection of farmworkers. Although the early works called attention to injustices within agriculture, they concealed interrelated agencies and counter-agencies between labor and management that permeate the daily workings of manipulated indebtedness.

Edward R. Morrow's television documentary *Harvest of Shame* (1960) is credited by many advocates and supporters with spurring renewed attention to farm-labor issues in the early 1960s, the decade in which the most incisive statutes for farmworkers were legislated. Aiming its message about and its images of those who produced (first handlers) at viewers who partook of the plenitude (consumers), Morrow's report was televised, for impact, the evening after Thanksgiving Day, illustrating television's capacity to inform as well as to evoke, and it prefigured the 1960s as a decade of social reform in some but not all sectors of U.S. society. Diligent in its concern for equality, *Harvest of Shame* showed the face of migrant poverty to be that of minority peoples, largely black Americans, the group on whom reformers focused attention in the 1960s, as well as that of white Americans, the group with whom those most likely to own television sets at that time could identify.[5] Emphasizing low pay, substandard housing and transportation, and school absenteeism, Morrow's broadcast was silent on debt peonage.

Delving further than Morrow's account into the system of debt peonage, Truman Moore's *The Slaves We Rent* (1965) provided one of the earliest field reports of illicit substances among the consumable commodities distributed to workers. Presenting six vignettes in a chapter on crew leaders, he starts with one who is honest, Little Jim, who worked from Florida (no mention of birth place), before describing Hamp, born in New Orleans (mentioning no work base), who recruited men and women "in the first stages of alcoholism." Moore describes Hamp's strategy of distributing "white mule" (moonshine) and "little white packets of dope" (cocaine). Securable en route to work sites, moonshine was "good money," but the "real money" was cocaine (Moore 1965:29–30). Hamp eventually stopped providing cocaine, owing to the difficulty of obtaining it. Moore collapses an indeterminate stretch of

management history, concluding that Hamp "let pushers into the camp, and charged them a cut of what they made. ... That was the trouble with pushing—everybody got a cut" (1965:29–30). Other than this account of one crew leader's activities as an *outlaw contractor* (my term), Moore provides no appraisal of the extent of this or other illicit drug activities in farm labor.[6] Despite the depth of Moore's account and the impact of Morrow's, it would take two decades before contractors and growers held "joint responsibility" for adherence to wage guidelines and deductions as well as responsibility to disclose what arrangements were available to workers for employment and housing.[7]

Two decades after exposés by Morrow, Moore, and others, crack cocaine began to appear as a desired commodity among farmworkers. Prepared by "cooking" powder cocaine (a hydrochloride salt) in boiling water and baking soda, crack became popular in urban areas because it was safer to use than precursors (cooked with baking soda rather than ether and ammonia, it was noncombustible). It was less costly to produce and readily marketable because it was easy to conceal and transport for distributor and user alike (in the form of small, hard rocks, rather than packets of powder). Its means of administration, "smoking" (vapor inhalation), produced a "jolt" that took effect quicker than snorting powder cocaine. This "compelling high" increased a potential for dependency (Inciardi 1986, 1989). In rural areas where I worked, I heard people say of the craving for crack, "You want more and more and more." An addicted person was described as "caught in the grips" (English) or "cast aside" (*tirado*, Spanish).[8] Former users in recovery or in treatment, and even current users, told grim stories of sporadic experimentation before they reached a point at which they sought crack over everything else, including money, food, and continued responsibilities in social relationships. It is these stories and their discussion of distribution within the context of agricultural labor to which I turn in the final section of the article.

I next outline the local history of my main field site and then move to an ethnography-grounded discussion of worker discourses that circulate talk on wages and expenses for necessities and illicit commodities. I draw on data from two projects in which tales of "drinking and drugging" were a part of worker discourse. Disillusioned with single and paired case framing that easily generates a modal characterization, my presentation takes shape from the desires of farmworkers to tell their stories, and my intent takes impetus from the raised stakes that position contractors and workers dealing illicit drugs in a sustained struggle over rights-protected livelihood. Worker agencies and counteragencies are absent from discourses contoured on the premise of an "invisible" farmworker who is incapable of resisting. When resistance occurs but drifts from circumstances that show workers as the "deserving poor" (Goode and Maskovsky 2001), one needs to develop ways to account for these circumstances. My critique acknowledges the irony that an illicit substance accompanied weakened restrictions on debt peonage at the same time that it pulled workers into illegal behavior and generated a set of risks that were unknown in the time that men like C. J. performed farm labor.

A base of operations, a place for ethnography

Agton is a real place. The name is fictitious. Agton's history is mirrored in the histories of agricultural communities throughout the Lower South. The town was my main site of fieldwork over a six-year period, first with a team project and then as a lone investigator, and also served as a base from which I traveled to other agricultural areas of the Lower, Middle, and Upper South.[9] Lacking any appreciable industry, the two-county area surrounding the town is heavily dependent on agricultural and around-the-clock packing work. Most men and women who work in the fields and in the packing plants are employed as unskilled workers.

Agton can be viewed from two extremes. One sees the community as a rural town that exudes agricultural abundance, where upbeat imagery can transform a locale of nearly 18,000 persons during the agricultural season into an ideal tourist destination. Perusing tourist books, one occasionally finds a description of local festivals and travel directions to the town. These festivals are scheduled during the agricultural season, because the town loses more than 40 percent of its population during summer with the migration of workers to other towns and states.[10] A second perspective associates the town with an ethos of rugged individualism.

Following the arrival of white settlers in the 1870s (U.S. born and European born), ranching became the main economic enterprise, which led to the formation of cattle companies in the 1900s. A railroad was completed in the 1920s, attracting lumbermen and sawmills, and a highway was constructed in the 1950s that linked the town to coastal cities. Similar to other areas of the South, the railroad was instrumental in local settlement, and the lumber industry stimulated economic growth as well as prepared land for agricultural development. As the system of roads improved, the railroad ceased its operations. The transition period from raising cattle to farming was a time of minimal services in town. Women, for example, were dependent on midwives for birthing and on gardens to provide food. Trips to the county seat were rare. The town center gained a reputation for its "wild" atmosphere, and ladies were not allowed there. The town's rough-and-tumble reputation originated with its ranching period and continued into the era of agricultural production.

Agton's reputation for rugged individualism is expected. Rural towns throughout the Middle and Lower South variously owed their development to railroad construction, lumber mills (turpentine production in the Lower South), and farming. According to a writer describing an early era in a farm town of the Lower South, "Fighting was not uncommon, and drinking hard liquor was the item of the day," and families had to "fight for a clean and quiet town" (Wildes 1990:37). An account of another farm community in the Lower South described downtown as a place where "rowdies would drink until midnight and fight until daybreak" (Stone 1989:79). An account from the Middle South provides a testimonial from a former slave, who described the local area as "wild and sickly" (Whayne 1996:12). These conditions occurred in settings where one's identity was constructed around a willingness to risk the body outside one's job. Similar to inhabitants of farming towns elsewhere in the South (Jensen 1981; Tolnay 1999), Agton's settlers had to overcome the area's geographic isolation and difficult terrain to establish, first, male-centered cattle raising, and, later, family-based farming. Even as the town was developed economically, its services were minimal. People depended on what they could produce from their own physical labor. Their bodies were conduits that resonated with cultural meaning, sometimes manifested in men's inclination to engage in fighting and drinking. As townspeople accommodated to newcomers of different backgrounds who expanded the local labor force, and as migrants became townspeople, the agricultural base was extended to include citrus, migrant crew leaders made greater use of the town as a recruitment center, and local services increased. Over time, African American workers were joined by Caribbean contracted workers, workers of Mexican ancestry from South Texas and Mexico, and indigenous men and women from Guatemala and Mexico. As the workforce diversified, crack cocaine was becoming available in Agton, as across the country.[11] Accompanying the introduction of crack was a reduction in the fighting that often had occurred with drinking behavior. One man with whom I spent time "in the street" explained his theory of the shift from an era of roughhouse behavior to the less volatile climate that accompanied the introduction and use of illicit substances: "The way I figure it, people want to live to the next day for that [crack] high. That's why it changed."

I came to Agton several years after crack had appeared in town. It was a time when many businesses had passed to minority ownership. The names of founding fathers of the town common in local histories no longer were the names on property deeds.[12] Although most roughhouse behavior had disappeared, people were correct in suggesting that drugs were prevalent. My first year in town one worker told me, "There's drugs every place we [migrants] go, but here it's worse." His comment confirmed the choice of the community as a research site for a team project for which I served as director. Drug tests of 600-plus farmworkers recruited in Agton validated his allusion to easy access to illicit substances.[13] Readiness to risk the body was evident among men and women heavily into drugs and alcohol. Doing violence to the body through crack cocaine use and a willingness to continue risk taking after the appearance of HIV, were part of a new chapter in Agton's history.[14] What had not changed was the demanding and often dangerous work in agricultural fields and packing plants, the poor purchasing power of wages, and the lack of safety measures.

Who's using

At the time that I joined the team study of migrant worker risk behavior, no literature existed from which to generate a sketch of illicit drug use by farmworkers. Unless one goes back to the "marijuana scare" of the 1920s and 1930s that crystallized political support for passage of the Marijuana Tax Act of 1937 (Musto 1999:1–23, 210–229), drug use among farmworkers is hidden by a silence in the farm-labor literature.[15] Allusions to such use, however, occasionally appear in other venues. One of the three gangs in East Los Angeles from which that area's contemporary drug culture stems, for example, originated in the San Fernando Valley, an area originally settled by agricultural workers (Moore 1978).

As I tracked responses to survey questions on substance use by respondents at all levels of migratory experience and became better informed through conversations in the field, I became aware that alcohol and crack cocaine were common substances used by farmworkers. Most workers with lifetime experience of these two substances were current users. Among those with lifetime experience of marijuana, there were fewer current users; even fewer workers had lifetime experience of or currently used cocaine; and heroin use was rare. Beyond discovery of the common substances, I learned that farmworkers varied in their consumption patterns across work categories. Significant differences between winter-demand and summer-demand farm labor appeared in patterns of monthly use of crack cocaine and alcohol. Heavy use was distributed differentially, with notably greater daily alcohol consumption by those on disability and those performing pinhook farm labor, greater daily crack use by commercial sex workers, and heavier monthly and daily use of crack and alcohol among watermelon workers.[16] Awareness of differential use informed my inquiry into crops and work activity and age at onset of substance use, when I began to collect life stories from farmworkers. I found that alcohol was the first substance used by most workers; marijuana was second, although some transnational workers initiated inhalant use and some U.S.-born workers used acid or other hallucinogens as their second substance; and crack

was often the last substance initiated (Bletzer 2004).[17] Although U.S.-born and foreign-born workers typically used their first drug at the same age (U.S. born = 13.6 years, foreign born = 13.7 years), U.S.-born workers continued trying new substances later into their twenties (Figure 1).

Labor-control tactics and economic constraints

One would be hard put to find a published description of overall improvement in farm-labor conditions and farm-labor management at any time in history. Journalists and researchers who continue the legacy of earlier exposés readily agree that, if anything, the lot of the farmworker has worsened in all but housing and health care, two areas where legislation has provided workable programs and guidelines. Hourly wages for workers differ by crop, market, locality (Wells 1996), and hours worked per day and week (Heppel and Amendola 1992). Payment by a "piece rate" is the standard for buckets (vegetables), bushels (legumes, vegetables), boxes (vine crops), and bins (tree fruits). Citing surveys and experts on agricultural employment, a front-page article in the *New York Times* concluded that farm labor has "trailed stubbornly behind inflation for the past 20 years" (Greenhouse 1997: A1). The *New York Times* reporter examined material from California's Central Coast, where wages for strawberry workers dropped from $9,000 per year in 1985 ($6.55 an hour) to $8,000 in 1997 ($6.25 an hour). Advocates attribute wage fluctuation to the uncertainty and irregularity of agriculture, which alter daily work and vary days worked per week and per season. Advocates and researchers point to labor oversupply that maintains

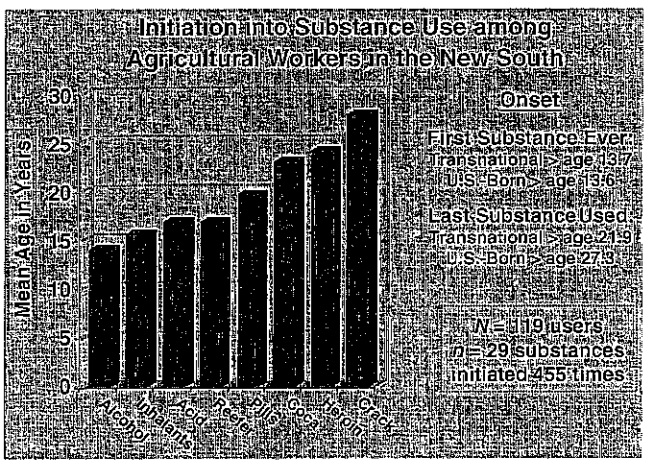

Figure 1. Mean age of onset for primary substances used by agricultural workers (data from Inscription in Drug Use among Farmworkers project). Proportion of sample (n = 119) who self-reported lifetime use of these primary substances: alcohol (116/119), marijuana (95/119), crack cocaine (86/119), cocaine (54/119), pills/speed/psychotherapeutics (32/119), acid/synthetic hallucinogens (15/119), and inhalants/solvents (10/119).

wages at levels lower than in other industries (Griffith and Kissam 1995; Pugliese 1991). Activists argue that working conditions remain unchanged (reiterated, e.g., in forewords by Robert Coles in Goldfarb 1981; Johnston 1985; Martin and Martin 1993; Rothenberg 1998), if one considers decreased buying power of farmworkers' wages and what they might consume, if anything, beyond their daily necessities.[18]

Farmworkers note variation in income across crops and locations, distilling the essence of their experience into appraisals of daily or weekly pay and specific expenses (Table 1). Those working in fruits and vegetables describe deductions by labor contractors or reimbursement of a camp cook for food that they consume. They recall rent they pay a camp owner (grower or labor contractor) and one-time expenses like a cross-state ride, the fee for a visa and work permit at the border, or cost of equipment like gloves and a citrus bag. Major seasonal expenses are rent, which occasionally is waived, and food. Besides rent and food, while working in a winter home base, laborers pay a few dollars per day for a ride to the field. Watermelon and citrus workers, and fruit pickers in areas of the East, expect higher earnings, double the earnings for other crops, even when workers in other crops are paid a piece rate. Watermelon workers rarely live in camps and are typically paid by the day. Hence, their discourse on expenses centers on motel costs, divided by number of men per room, as sharing is a tactic to reduce cost. Transnational workers compare expenses in the United States, especially more costly housing and alcohol, to low earnings but greater purchasing power outside the states. Farmworkers tell numerous stories of difficulties in recent times, when they were forced to live in shelters, eat in soup kitchens, skip meals, hitch rides, pilfer from grocery stores, and borrow against future wages. Unlike use of era-centered nostalgia to criticize current difficulties (Swedenberg 1995), today's farmworkers describe increasing difficulties through time. For them, there are no nostalgic times, except the "good times" of worker gatherings, nonagricultural jobs for which wages were high, and working for an occasional generous grower. Given a reluctance to use banks, farmworkers in all crops convert earnings after expenses into expendable cash that may go toward purchase of licit and illicit substances.[19] The higher one's earnings, depending on crop, market fluctuations, and agricultural locality, the greater is day-to-day engagement in high levels of consumption by those farmworkers who use illicit substances.

The discourse on wages is accentuated by references to one's "best day," that is, the highest earnings one receives in a particular crop. The reference period for a "superlative exchange" of one's labor for wages usually is a single day (rather than the hourly wage or annual salary of other industries and professional work), which occurs after one has gained experience in that crop. A few workers

add the amount harvested, such as number of citrus bins filled with oranges or grapefruit, or number of buckets of tomatoes or peppers removed from the field. One receives a token or ticket ("chit") in exchange for each unit, such as bin, box, bucket, or bushel: A high count is retained in memory. Watermelon workers add to their mystique by referring to "trailers loaded," rather than to number of "boxes filled."

One's best day gambit is paralleled in discourse on substance use by reference to the most that one spent in a given night on a drug, usually crack, rather than drugs whose use is easily extended over a few days (marijuana) or those where overdose would be lethal (e.g., cocaine, heroin). Night serves as an appropriate temporal reference for this discourse, as drug purchases occur outside the space of a day of work. This temporal positioning in farm-labor talk about work and leisure is not unlike that of established time frames in the Western world, for example, the happy hour in bars and lounges during hours that follow close behind the workday (Baer et al. 1997). In

Table 1
Agricultural Work Remembered: Selected Crops Ranked by Average Daily Wage

Crop	Work Unit	Average Work Done	Rate Paid Per Unit	Average Daily Wage	Other Average	One's "Best"	Usual and/or Unusual Expenses
'Melon*'90s	trucks-field	2–3 trucks/hour	$17 ... $20[a]	$136... $200	±$2400 locale	$300 day	motel: $40 ... $60÷ "n" men.
'Melon-'80s	trailer-market	1–3 trailers/hour	$0.01–0.03[b]	$200–$250	$2800 season	$400 day	motel: $32÷4 men, $36÷3 men.
Apples-'80s	bag to bin	12–13 bins/day	$15 bin	±$180	not reported	$2800 seas.	$0.30 each $1.00 per day to cook.
Apples-'80s	box	full day	$0.80 box	($120–$140)	1–3 trees / bin[c]	not reported	hired by grower (no contractor).
Onions-'90s	field rows	± 10 rows/day	$15 row	$150	not reported	$13 saved	$50 rent, $2 beer, $3 cigarettes.
Oranges-'90s	bag to bin	7–8 bins/day	$17–18 bin	($119–$144)	not reported	$160 day	food, rent, and $10 daily ride.
Oranges-'80s[d]	box	7.6 boxes/hour	$0.45–0.60	($25–$36)	$5,786 year	n/a	rent was 20% to 29% of pay (FL).
Grapefruit* 90s	bag to bin	22...26 bins/day	$4.50 bin	$90...100	$400...500 week	$109 day	$20 daily to girlfriend for crack.
Peas-'80s	bushel	±25–26 per day	$7.50 bushel	2 days only	"first pass"	$195 day	$140 bus ticket "vacation" NY City.
Strawberry 80s	crate/pan	12–15 crates/day	$5.50...6.30 hr	($24.20)	$6,290 yr	$12,000 year	$250–300 *coyote* winter trip to Mexico.[e]
Vegt.* '80s	bucket	varied by crop	(varied)	$30 ... $120	not reported	$132 day	$4–5 laundry, $15–18 daily for food.
Vegt.* '70s	varied	varied by crop	(varied)	$25 ... $35	not reported	not reported	$5–6 sex worker; $5 day ride to field.
Vegt.-'50s	bucket	"sun to sun"	$5–$6 day	$5–$6	not reported	not reported	$26 bail for spouse release from jail.[f]
Potatoes* '90s	bucket	80...100 per day	$0.35...0.50	$20 ... $50	not reported	not reported	$14 daily for beer, rock, cigarettes.
Peppers-'80s[d]	bucket	8.75 piece/hour	$0.40 bucket	$28–$30	$5,786 year	n/a	rent was 20% to 29% of pay (FL).
Peppers-'70s	bucket	100-plus per day	$0.15 bucket	$30–$32	not reported	200 buckets	food, rent; $0.40 half pint moonshine.
Tomato* '90s	bucket	varied	piece rate	$40 ... $42	not reported	$150 day	food, rent, $5 daily ride to field.
Tomato* '80s	bucket	varied	daily wage[g]	$25 ... $26	not reported	not reported	$5 "permit" for Haitian workers.
Tomato-*'70s	bucket	varied	minimum	$5 ... $8	not reported	not reported	"five & two" (woman $5, motel $2).
Tomato* '60s	bucket	varied	daily wage	$3 ... $5	not reported	not reported	food, rent, and ride to field.

contrast to a superlative summation of most earnings in a particular crop, the most spent on crack inverts implied skill and prowess that one communicates in popular farm-labor discourse. Workers were quick to spend and recounted $40 or $60 spent of each $100 earned, or a binge session when one might spend up to $400. One man was invited to a crack house in his home-base community the day he returned from a season of fruit picking and spent all but $25 of the $1,000 dollars that he had saved during the season. This was his only excursion into crack; he returned to "reefer" and "booze." A few men described instances when wages paid on a weekend were gone in 24 hours, or even the same night, noting that they had subsequently "borrowed food" until next payday. This discourse of extravagance reveals a leisurely abandon to illicit drug use, despite the suggested inexperience brought to the activity, particularly in cases of one's first use of crack. At the same time, this discourse, ironically, counters that of a superlative exchange in work, wherein one shows one's mastery of a particular crop and its corresponding labor tasks. Demand for heavy labor and excess in crack use are met with bodily abandon, even as we move into a stage of postmodern agricultural production.

Whereas wages have increased slowly for bins, boxes, buckets, and bushels that have remained the same size, the reverse is true of drug exchanges. Users point to a decrease in the size of "rocks" (crack) or in the contents of a "bag" (marijuana or cocaine, also heroin). The most common quantities in which hard drugs are sold are "nickels" and "dimes," that is, an amount corresponding to a $5 or a $10 purchase. Rural users note differences in sizes of nickels and dimes in different areas. "Further you go up North, the smaller the rocks get," is how one man with experience in apples, watermelon, and peaches affirmed variation in amount that one secures across the Lower, Middle, and Upper South, and in the North. Other workers described a need to purchase a "$20 piece" in the Middle and Upper South to get the same amount expected in a "$10 rock" in the Lower South.[20] Some men and women cited this increased cost of an equivalent amount to achieve an expected high as a reason to cease crack use during the agricultural season. But not altogether; many substituted alcohol until returning to a home base. Gator, one of my long-term contacts, explained how one now had "to run back and forth to get high," compared with an earlier time when a single purchase would suffice for a whole evening, whether in a camp or in one's home town.

Agencies and counteragencies in distribution strategies: Involvement and prohibition

Two extremes of provision practices within farmwork are those of drug distribution by labor bosses during the season and enforcement of an internal no-drugs policy in a labor crew. I weave into this typology an appraisal by two men from different islands of the Caribbean, because it provides a view of U.S. farm labor by outsider men who quickly became insiders to a dimension of labor control that includes illicit substances. Although Jean-Paul and Marcel corroborated elements of contractor-initiated dispersal of drugs described by Rothenberg (1998:156–159, 177–180) and Steven Vander Staay (1992:54–56), each man added details about other forms of illicit distribution in agricultural settings. Both men became more involved with drugs in the United States than they had been in the islands. Familiar as a child with *ganja* (marijuana, Creole) and as a teen with *pipiting* (cannabis mixed with cocaine,

NOTE: Unless indicated, data were derived from taped life story interviews (n = 119 men and women). Talk of wages and expenses was most extensive by those with 15 or more years in farm labor. Each row represents one or more speakers. Asterisk (*) by crop and ellipsis (...) by amount identify data from two or more speakers for same time period and same agricultural area (e.g., grapefruit: 22–24 bins by one worker, and 24–26 bins by second worker), and a hyphen (-) shows wages reported by one speaker. Estimates from other data are shown in parenthesis. Hours per day vary. Expenses are selective.

[a] Cutter who "cuts and turns" watermelons paid $6 an hour in 1980s or 1970s (1980s data from male worker A, 1970s data from male worker B), raised to $8 in 1990s (worker A); person who assembles watermelon boxes paid at $6 an hour at packing shed (data from female worker C).

[b] One to three cents per watermelon unloaded and loaded by second handlers at farmer's market, usually by a team of two persons who divide "60–40" (60% for man who "stacks," 40% to man who "passes off").

[c] Three workers estimated how many trees filled a bin. Preference was one tree per bin; one efficiently moves ladder on return from bin, when citrus bag is empty, and continues picking in the next tree.

[d] Based on 1989–90 "Farm Labor Study" from Griffith and Kissam 1995: crop data in Table 2.3, p. 53; annual income was composite of all crops for workers who used a farm labor contractor in Table 2.4, p. 61; and average cost of housing was composite of all crops in Table 2.1, p. 36.

[e] Range per hour for strawberries $4.66–$7.02, citrus $6–$8, and all crops (combined) $3.97–$5.24, from Wells 1996:153–159, 169, 198.

[f] Daily wage for men $6 and daily wage for women $5 (higher for "productive" women). Remaining in the family's home-base town, spouse often was in jail for drunkenness; hence, on return of wife and teenage son from the season, bail for release from jail was $26 (data from retired worker).

[g] Rate in late 1980s was 35 cents per bucket for Pedro Silva, whose family was followed on the season in *New Harvest, Old Shame* (Galán 1990).

Creole), Jean-Paul alternated between moderate and binge use of crack in the Lower South. He once experimented with wine injection, but returned to crack.[21] Experienced in the use of cocaine (snort), pills (oral), heroin (snort), and crack (smoke) in his home town on the island, Marcel ceased using all drugs except crack throughout his years as a farmworker. City-initiated Marcel and rural-initiated Jean-Paul each contributed to a family farm in their respective countries, and both had worked outside their natal communities before coming to the United States. Jean-Paul's account was based on a few weeks in one labor camp, and Marcel's narrative was based on six years of experience in agricultural labor.

Direct involvement

Jean-Paul had lived in a large city of the Lower South for ten years when he was approached by a labor recruiter in the homeless shelter where he was staying. Unfamiliar with farm-labor recruitment, Jean-Paul says that he "was sold a dream" with talk of easy money. Raised on a Caribbean potato farm, he had never performed agricultural labor in the states. He and four men from the city shelter were taken to a tobacco farm in the Middle South. Two of the men had had agricultural experience; their talk in the van and the "nice clothes" the driver wore "made the dream sweeter." Once in the camp, Jean-Paul was surprised by the availability of drugs: "I didn't wanna get into that no more, everybody there, they were yus'n." Jean-Paul was reluctant to join other men of color who used on the camp, despite street skills he had learned in the past. He continued, "We work hard all day. But to relieve us with beer or drugs?" His rhetorical question indicates frustration with a place where he had expected an opportunity to work and to leave substance use behind. Jean-Paul was concerned about the advances that workers were permitted in the camp. Exercising self-restraint, he rationed what little he earned. Managing by "stretching it," his personal pain was great: "When I couldn't use I just, (inhaling) go through withdrawal. ... That was rough on me physically, cause if I wanted to *credit* some I could. But I said, 'No no.' " Hospitalized once in the Lower South for a heart problem from drug use before recruitment, he began to have a recurrence of the problem. He convinced the crew leader he should go to the clinic. He had planned to seek drug treatment at the shelter prior to recruitment, and he used the recurrence of his heart problem in the new setting to extract himself from the camp and to enroll in treatment.

Marcel worked in ten camps in the Lower South and Middle South. Well informed and politicized, he likened drug sales by labor contractors to a form of "slavery" that was intended to "keep the money within the compound" among family.[22] He explained how the introduction of crack had been accompanied by shifts in labor control tactics:

> Techniques contractors are using, they are changing with the times. Once upon a time, [workers] were mostly alcoholic. Labor contractors would flood the camps with red dollar wine. When crack became permanent in society, contractors switched over right along with it. They know they're doing wrong, but they hate to take a loss.

Marcel described how contractors extended the way they used "red dollar wine," an early means of profit, to crack. He explained the contractor's motivation for manipulated indebtedness: "[He's thinking] 'If you do drugs an' I pay you in cash, you'd go out and buy drugs from somebody else.' His theory was, 'I'll provide you with bed, drugs an' alcohol at a price, during the week, and I'll deduct it from your pay, on Saturday.' " He summarized a worker's dilemma: "On Saturdays, some guys got no money." Marcel thus confirmed that extension of credit to farmworkers was expanded to include illicit substances, as described by C. J. in the opening paragraph and as narrated by three former users in works by Rothenberg (1998: 159–162, 177–180) and Vander Staay (1992:54–56).

The system outlined by Marcel and others varied in tactics. Reiterating the notion that drugs were supplied or secured by crew members, Marcel explained that drugs rarely were provided the first week by labor bosses who distributed: "First week, they don' issue no drugs to you. Any drugs you got come from somebody else on the camp, or a dealer outside of the camp. But the second week, that's when they start giving you drugs." His comment suggests a caution on the part of the contractor as well as the contractor's understanding of the dynamics, for some, of craving, and, for others, of addiction. At times, illicit drugs were a "bonus" at the season's end, similar to withholding a portion of wages for end-of-season reimbursement as a "bond" to ensure a worker's full-season presence. More often, their provision was a supplemental perk to regular pay in cash, like the first rock that Fred Sampson received to hire on or the offer of an increased supply of crack to entice Calvin Douglas to remain with a crew leader, as reported in cases of two former users presented by Rothenberg (1998:159–162, 177–180).

Based on long-term experience in farm labor, Marcel and others emphasized that most contractors were legitimate. Their gambit of noting the goodness of many, before singling out a few bad ones, draws on the discursive tactic of isolating what is unusual from what is common and parallels the first sentence in Moore's chapter on crew leaders: "Little Jim was a good crew leader" (1965:25). Marcel told me, "[Some bosses] provide you with beer and cigarettes; for drugs you were on your own." The few

contractors who distributed illicit substances took precautions to lessen the risk. One strategy to avoid detection was separation of drug business from labor business, a practice that Acker (2002) calls a "dispersion of assets." Marcel described one summer when he rode a work bus from the Lower to the Middle South. From time to time, the "dope man" came in a second vehicle to provide the bus driver with the men's food money. The labor contractor rode in a third vehicle. None of the men on the bus knew which of three vehicles had the drugs that they would receive at the camp. Contractors who distributed also put capital property such as vehicles and heavy equipment under another name to deter its confiscation, if they were caught. Similar to what Mark Fleisher (1998) calls a "drug seller's bank account," that is, the stereos, radios, and gold jewelry that adolescent drug dealers in Kansas City invested in, the vehicles and equipment of a contractor could be converted into legal funds, should the need arise.

Both Jean-Paul and Marcel experienced the "lines" in which weekly wages and commodities were reconciled on payday, all in a matter of moments. Another man recalled deductions of $40 and $50 at the end of the week for two or three small rocks four times a week, plus deductions for a pint of wine, beer, and cigarettes. A fourth man explained how easy it was to receive no pay: "If you earn $70, you can get one rock and $60; but if you do eight rocks, you done went in the hole." Not everyone was taken by the system, however. Among men who traveled with Jean-Paul from the shelter, Alvin Graham had lived all his life in the city. As a novice on his first day in the labor camp, Alvin received 25 tokens for 25 buckets of potatoes, which he exchanged for $10 of credit in the boss's book that evening back at the camp. Noting the boss had tokens stacked in piles of ten, the next night, after a better day in the field, Alvin placed his tokens in stacks of seven. Counting them quickly, "Ten, 20, 30, 40," he reached 100 and pushed five more stacks forward, telling the counter, "An' I got 50 more chits." Amidst the confusion of "people crowding around the table, an' people with children," he mixed his piles together before the ruse could be discovered, pushing them to one side to permit the next person to move forward. He did this for three days, and then he left the camp. On payday, a similar fast process lessens risk to the distributors, when drug distribution goes from the contractor to the worker.[23] Coupled with the one-stop arrangement of the "line," which acts as a built-in precaution, the spatial isolation of camps behind buildings and hidden in woods encourages labor control in general (DiPerna and Light 1986; Griffith and Kissam 1995).

Family members involved in distribution typically are consanguineal kin (like sons, brothers, and nephews) or affines (ususally brothers-in-law). Permitting other individuals to distribute externalizes the risk away from the contractor. A variation on diversification of assets is dividing the responsibility for crew management. The young man who recruited Fred Sampson (Rothenberg 1998), for example, was the son of a female labor contractor. When a male contractor runs afoul of the law, particularly if his license is revoked, his wife often takes responsibility for management, because her name is "clean." More than likely, the labor crew in which Sampson received crack had had problems in the past that required a shift to a paper boss (wife), who was assisted by the real labor boss (her husband). The expression that Marcel used, keeping money "within the compound," makes sense if one considers that a labor contractor is providing an economic venture for family members, thus assuring cooperation from a small cluster of trusted individuals.

In sum, the inclusion of crack cocaine within the system of commodity advances continues the labor contractor's control through debt peonage, but only for those few who assume the risk of arrest (the "outlaw contractors" in news accounts). Profit is assured, given a drug craving that overrides a compulsion for food and for the classic cravings for cigarettes and alcohol. Distributing an illicit commodity creates a need for the contractor to devise safeguards to prevent detection at the same time that it maintains older forms of labor control. Distinct from times past, recent relationships between supervisor and worker may not develop into worker dependence on the labor boss (Heppel and Amendola 1992). When this happens, it occurs in crews in which the contractor distributes, which are the crews that workers often leave. These crews recruit workers who already use, rather than seek to entice nonusers into addiction. Becoming indebted to a contractor who faces risk of arrest and incarceration for illicit selling, workers may continue their accustomed drug use at the same pace or, in a manner distasteful to many workers, be encouraged to upgrade their level of use.

Antidrug activity

In contrast to those who distribute, some contractors enforce a no-drugs rule in crews and in the camp. Enforcement methods vary. The most obvious is refusal to hire someone who is known to use illicit drugs. Given the circulation of talk in rural settings where contractors and workers live during the off-season, who uses often is common knowledge. If not, a labor contractor may "profile" a potential worker as a user by demeanor, manner of dress, and appearance. One camp in a fruit-growing area of the Middle South, for example, was run by a contractor based in Agton, who was well-known among the summer staff at local agencies for his scrutiny of potential workers and for his no-nonsense refusal to hire workers who used drugs while working for him.

Another tactic is punishment. Although violence by labor bosses became less common with greater legal protection for farmworkers, occasional beatings may occur for slacking at work or for using drugs. Marcel also described the common tactic of punishing an offender with excessive fines (withholding pay). The contractor gains if the offending worker remains, because the worker's pay is reduced. If the worker leaves (thus receives no pay), the contractor is free of a troublesome offender at the same time that he has gained work for no compensation. Calling in police is rarely an option for the contractor, who seeks his own method of responding to someone who is selling to the crew. Workers, however, may select this option. Jean-Paul told of a worker who called the police after he felt cheated by a coworker who was dealing in the camp. Jean-Paul chuckled while telling the story, because a man among men is expected to settle his problems without recourse to outside assistance. The outcome was ironic because the police arrested the man who had filed the complaint, rather than the alleged dealer on the camp.

In sum, contemporary contracting arrangements include policies by some labor bosses to prohibit drugs in crews and camps. More commonly, contractors incorporate forms of control that require a deduction from one's earnings as a fine for breaking the no-drugs rule. This high-fine deterrent allows the labor contractor to profit from a worker at the same time that it serves the alternate purpose of discouraging a troublesome worker from staying with a labor boss. Workers who use drugs and choose self-expulsion are among those difficult to manage. Hence, their departure goes without notice, which differs from an earlier era, when everyone, whether rule adherent or rule indifferent, was subject to punishment if caught leaving a camp.

Agencies and counteragencies in distribution strategies: Enabling practices

Several scenarios fit the middle ground between the extremes of contractor-as-dealer and contractor-as-enforcer. These cases involve drug procurement and dispersal by crew workers "on the season" but do not involve distribution by a labor boss. Instead, they require a level of tolerance on his part. I follow a suggestion by Marcel, who used the expression *enabler* to describe a contractor who provides an environment that permits use and distribution. Legal scholars call this form of complicity "willful blindness," wherein an occurrence of an illegal activity is ignored.

A contractor who enables remains outside of drug distribution. He or she may loan money to workers as an advance on pay and charge a high interest rate. Or he or she may permit a driver to transport the crew to commercial areas near where drugs are sold as well as personally inform workers where cooperative suppliers are found locally. Transportation of workers near areas where drugs can be obtained invariably occurs during trips to town for laundry and shopping. By taking a trip to town a short distance from the camp, workers learn of places to acquire drugs and later may go to those places on their own. Because of its size and visibility, a crew vehicle would not be used to enter an area where illicit substances are sold, nor would a labor boss take the risk.[24] Knowledge of locations and routes, however, may be discussed "to pass the time" while a vehicle is en route, occasionally by the driver, or by a fellow worker who may share his knowledge of the town.

"Stagger" Jones described how a contractor with whom he worked in an area of produce farms in the Upper South told workers where the "best buy" could be found in a nearby town. Stagger recognized that the labor boss was seeking to channel workers who inevitably would use to a spot with little police surveillance, where dealers were customer friendly. The contractor's intent was to protect workers from arrest as well as reduce their risk of being cheated or becoming involved in violence that might occur while "copping" in a new spot. "Laser" Hayes related that a contractor rarely was worried about someone in his crew selling, if he himself was not selling: "That's what keep the crew motivated, to go to work the next day." Referring to the craving for crack, he added, "It's like a chain reaction." He further explained how one contractor encouraged him to obtain drugs by stipulating a store in town that was a "jitterbug" (black youth) hangout. Mimicking the contractor, Hayes repeated instructions he received, "Make sure ya get some good stuff, cause we got some watermelon layin' behind."

Minimalist approaches to distribution incorporate worker initiatives and contractor complicity. Cholón exemplifies these contrastive positions. Cholón was present the first day I visited a camp in a sparsely populated area in the piedmont of the Middle South. Then on disability, he had been living in the state for 15 years. He talked of his travels outside the South to Texas, Oregon, and Michigan, and he named three bars that he knew in Agton. From my head notes on current and past bars in Agton, I recognized the names of two that were preferred by labor contractors. A few days later, I learned that Cholón was the brother of a contractor who worked for an apple grower. During visits to the same camp the rest of that season and part of the next, I learned about the local area from Cholón, who contributed food to the camp and cooked, ate, and drank with the workers. More than once, he sold marijuana to workers, who rolled and smoked in my presence. One evening in the camp, three men in the group in which I stood left for town to "score" crack cocaine with a visitor who had a car. Because the camp

was small, Cholón heard the car leave, and he walked from behind a trailer to name four *tratos* (negotiations, implies "deals") that had taken place that evening while I was in the camp: for *cerveza* (beer), for *mota* (cannabis), for *una ruka* (sexual liaison with a woman) in a trailer, and for *piedra* (crack; the three men I was with who left the camp). Smiling as he spoke, he was clarifying the range of activities in which workers negotiate for entertainment, inspiring me to add to my field notes an analytic note that there was no coercion in this camp.[25] Cholón provided the men marijuana, and men using other substances obtained them elsewhere. This camp's management style replicated the dependency of the past in certain areas (e.g., housing and employment). At the same time, this camp was one of a growing number that provided workers with a veneer of independence from managerial control in the form of freedom to leave the camp when not working. Given the newness of migrant workers locally and few efforts to regulate migrant housing in this part of the state, Cholón and his brother faced little competition from other contractors and, thus, could afford to be relaxed in their style of crew management.

Outside the crew

Workers I met at labor camps in the Upper, Middle, and Lower South had contacts in nearby towns from whom they could obtain crack and marijuana, if they had not brought a supply or if their supply ran out. And they relied on coworkers with local contacts. My generalization is based on cases in more than a dozen camps in two states each in the Lower, Middle, and Upper South in which I witnessed men leave camp with intent to score, or heard men as they planned to score or debriefed others on their return. At one camp in an area of the Upper South with more than 100 years of experience with migrants, for example, I had been present for fewer than 30 minutes when I heard two men invite a third "down the road" to share *la pipa* (pipe, refers to "crack stem") with men in town, rather than drink with the six men among whom I stood. Gator is an example of a worker with numerous camp-to-town drug connections. Because he, his father, and his brothers returned to the same farm in the Northeast where the grower hired them directly, Gator developed well-established contacts in his late teens and early twenties. He would go to a nearby town for certain drugs (mescaline, acid, pills, and angel dust) and, over time, developed contacts in a city in the adjacent county where he had a girlfriend. By the time he was 22, his girlfriend's brothers had introduced him to snorting cocaine, injecting heroin, and smoking freebase. His father and brothers knew about the girlfriend, a secret that they all kept from Gator's wife in the South, but they were unaware of his drug use until he told them about it a few years after he stopped traveling with his family.

Older workers remembered when towns in some areas to which they traveled were closed to them in terms of liquor and drug purchases and even general shopping. At times, camps were located close to towns. In the past, workers visited towns during the season in vehicles or on foot to patronize clubs and juke joints. Only alcohol and marijuana were consumed. Over time, as African Americans were joined by transnational migrants, workers made a transition to hard drugs. What they once brought from home became available locally. English-speaking farmworkers use the expression *open town* to identify a locale in or near an agricultural area where illicit drugs are easily obtained. Farmworkers describe more open locales existing today than in the past. The term *open* historically connoted towns without liquor ordinances and those that accepted and encouraged farmworker shopping. In their life stories, men and women reiterated the ease with which illicit drugs are currently secured in rural areas. Although ethnographic data are lacking for the distant past, availability most likely is greater at present. One substance not available in the past was crack cocaine. Life stories added a number of towns and camps I had not visited, covering six states where I had already visited–observed other towns and camps, plus two additional states, thus strengthening my confirmation of the pervasiveness of active camp–town connections along the East Coast and throughout the southern United States.[26]

Some camps are located a significant distance outside town. More workers have vehicles today than the past, a time when William Friedland and Dorothy Nelkin (1971: 61–66) could rightly identify "wheels" (i.e., management's monopoly on transportation) as the number one labor control tactic used by contractors. Friedland (1967) described the case of a man who was warned by fellow workers not to damage a truck the crew leader loaned him to drive to town, or the crew leader might punish everyone by restricting workers to the camp. Greater access to transportation in recent years has resulted in few labor bosses who seek to restrict workers to a camp. Labor regulations stipulate that workers must be provided regular opportunities to leave camp to meet their personal needs. Contractors may oblige by providing weekend transportation to town. Even if they do not, distance to town is an inconvenience, not an obstacle. "Lash" McDaniel claimed lack of transportation was a deterrent to use of illicit substances on a camp. At the time that I met Lash in Agton, he said he was using "24/7," meaning that he used 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. He had become a moderate user a year or two before he began seasonal migrant work, and he stopped using the two seasons he worked. As he told me, "Cause we was on a camp and it was far off, you couldn't get to drugs." He had a relationship with a woman in the crew during his second season in the Upper South, as an adult in his thirties. After they

argued in the camp, however, she returned to Agton (her hometown and his). After she left, Lash began end-of-the-day use, securing drugs from other workers, and using singly or with partners in the camp.

Local dealers or users from towns near camps do not commonly visit camps. Because the labor contractor lacks control over outsider activity and because increased visibility of drug use is undesirable, he seeks to discourage the presence of local dealers in a camp. Marcel had witnessed local dealers in a camp and reported that chasing away a dealer is more apt to occur if the contractor is selling. A contractor recognizes the signs of dealing; he is conscious of people coming and going in the camp; and he wishes to avoid all high-visibility traffic of an outside dealer who is competing with his distribution business. Thus, local dealers who come to a camp to distribute with commercial intent satisfy a need, but they provide only on a short-term basis.

Inside the crew

It is common for contractors to permit dealing by workers. Men and women who sold during the season told of two ways to secure drugs: One either stocked up before one left a home base or one replenished a supply locally when it ran out.[27] Sellers like James Noble took a vehicle with them during the season, allowing them to easily return to a home base. Laser Hayes, in contrast, mixed local purchases of crack with occasional return trips to his home base. He never owned a vehicle but traveled by crew bus and, on his own, by commercial bus. When securing locally, he took precautions to avoid arrest by sending another person into town for the drugs: "I pay him ... I chop it up [*cookie*], 'n open shop, 'Come on in' I tell them."[28] Laser illustrated by opening an imaginary curtain in a "V" shape to signal "open for business." To discourage listening in by motel management or neighbors in adjoining rooms, he turned on the radio. Laser traveled with a crew in which he estimated the average worker made $65 a day for a six-day week. Through his sales, Laser earned the equivalent of almost an entire week in one day. If he were selling in a town rather than the equivalent of a camp, he would have a larger clientele and he might earn a larger sum. From visits I made to the same motel two years earlier while traveling in the Upper South, I learned that direct sales go in both directions.[29] Local men and women visited the motel in the evenings, either to procure from or supply those who worked on farms outside town. On my first visit to the motel, I was asked if I had come "to buy something special." On later visits, I received nods of recognition, and I was permitted to talk with motel occupants. From activity at the motel, including my contact there with a contractor's brother from Agton, I learned that business was initiated by a "regular" from town or by a migrant worker at the motel at the start of a season or when new workers for different crops replaced crews who had occupied the motel earlier in the season.

In sum, drug procurement is enabled through contractor complicity. Contractors may make high-interest loans to workers to score illicit drugs, provide information directly or indirectly about where one can cop and use safely away from the camp, and permit workers to score outside but use inside the camp. Also common is contractor laxity in allowing certain workers to sell illicit substances among crew coworkers, which was unheard of during an earlier era of peonage through the advanced commodity system. These circumstances have positioned the crew-level dealer as an inside vendor. As such, the crew-level dealer differs from a vendor who comes to the edge of the work site to sell beverages and food or used clothing.[30] Because the contractor is not dealing, a crew-level dealer does not compete with him. He lives with other members of the crew, rather than arriving for business at the living site (like a vendor). The crew-level dealer makes less than a labor contractor who distributes drugs, and less than counterparts who sell in populated areas. Both sell a ready-made product, but the town seller has a larger pool of habitués as clients. Whereas drugs-on-credit crews (whose contractors distribute) attract men unlikely to find work outside farm labor, owing to their advanced addiction, contractors who enable can be selective in hiring, insist on full work as a condition of continuing employment, and exercise more control over drugs that likely will be used by workers. They also minimize risk of arrest to themselves, because it is their workers who purchase and secure or use, both in and away from the camp.

Cultural capital in agrarian settings

All of this activity combining use with sales has led to and has been augmented by investment in forms of cultural capital that permit acquisition of knowledge and skills by certain farmworkers without ideological commitment to a particular sector of society. Outside a farm-labor crew, a worker may serve as an intermediary who facilitates the purchase of illicit drugs by acting as a go-between for a supplier and buyers. He or she serves as a broker across ethnic groups and languages for individuals who lack street skills or who prefer to not enter places where illicit drugs are sold. Go-betweens usually are users who facilitate linkages to maintain their own high-level use. They may operate from a home-base town, serving those working in the immediate area, as well as from a labor camp during the season. In a home base, the buyer in need typically is an outsider. This is illustrated by the first transaction that I observed in Agton. One Saturday, while spending time in the commercial area of Agton, Justin Rayson walked to the edge of a gathering site by the store

where I stood with a group of men. I had met him a couple of months earlier when he came to town to work in the packing plant. As Justin waited, Gator, a ten-year resident of Agton, left the group and walked across the street to an overgrown empty lot, which was known as a place where illicit substances were available and were used. Gator came back minutes later and exchanged what he had secured for the cash that Justin offered him. After Gator returned to the group, Justin left in the direction from which he had originally come. No one in our cluster mentioned the transaction. As I came to know Gator better, I learned that he would arrange connections that required little or no talk, once the buyer (like Justin) came to the prearranged place.

During the season, sellers and buyers may be outsiders to an area. Baxley Router was an experienced user (of alcohol, crack, marijuana, pills, and heroin), whose first experience in farm labor took place on a tobacco camp in the Middle South, when he was in his thirties, a few years after he separated from his wife. Born in the North, he was white like buyers who came to the camp, whereas the supplier and the rest of the camp workers were black. Asked to purchase crack for local men and, at times, to secure for men on the camp, he profited doubly. "Go get us a fifty," visitors would instruct him. He would buy a dime and three $20 pieces of crack, all for $30 (he received a discount from the camp seller, given the business he brought in) and pocket $20. Pleased with his work but unaware of transaction details, buyers often gave him the dime rock. If he was given a $100 order, he would buy a "sixteenth" for $75 (one-half of an "eight-ball," or 3.5 grams), pocket $25, and receive something as payment (like $20) from the buyers. For those rare times when supplies on the camp were low, Baxley purchased for workers from a source he knew who lived nearby. Although he used heavily that first summer, both in camp and on the work site, particularly behind plants in the field, Baxley had social skills that facilitated intermixing exchanges with his own use for a full eight-month tobacco season.

The broker role requires prior experience in interethnic relations. One source of experience was the mainstream interaction skills that English-speaking black farmworkers developed through school integration in the southern United States in the 1960s and beyond that provided them with cultural capital to expand from same-group to interethnic contacts to procure and use illicit drugs. Maureen Mahon's (2000) analysis of black rock-and-roll musicians who were teens during the 1960s and 1970s describes shifting ethnoscapes amidst which new identities for young black men were enacted after civil rights changes of the 1960s. The interests of black musicians in rock-and-roll music, which coincided with those of mainstream youth, have their parallels in the world of African American men who live and travel within the world of farm labor. Men who traveled seasonally noted that illicit substances available in the North in the 1960s and 1970s were acid and pills, not the cocaine and marijuana with which they and their friends had experimented in the Lower South.

Amassing cultural capital may occur in a reverse direction (from minority to majority) and across ethnic groups in which language is a key factor in communication. Clifton Track, for example, was a white male over the age of 30 when I met him. Raised on a farm that went bankrupt, he had learned to cop drugs in two farm towns in adjacent counties, where he lived as an adult. Both towns had a sizeable population of white, black, and Hispanic men and women who hung out in the street. Prior to initiating crack cocaine use, he scored powder cocaine in one town and heroin in the other. Although he had a longtime friend as a use partner, he was the one who bought the crack they smoked. Pulled into heavy use after he lost a lucrative construction job, he lived for a time in Agton, a period of unemployment and drug use that he characterized as "eatin' outta soup kitchens, stealing batteries to get crack, and never having money to buy a girl a hot dog."

Language has not been an insurmountable barrier to making connections with Latinos since their introduction into farm labor. Seated in a men's gathering one evening in a farm town eight hours from Agton where migrants (many from Agton) worked in vegetables, I met E. Z., a town native. When interacting with Latinos, he often punctuated his talk with Spanish phrases. In his youth, he traveled with black farm crews to nearby farms. As an older black teen, he lived in the Southwest, where he spent time with Latinos. Back in the Lower South, he made strategic use of the cultural capital he had amassed. One evening behind a store, Lagre and E. Z. were talking. Twice E. Z. told him, "I have a good friend over here." He paused each time he repeated the phrase, in the way one does to ensure comprehension by someone with limited language skills. Shortly, a second black man approached and greeted men in the group—Doñoni, Lagre, Conejo, Rogelio, and myself. Taking a small bag from his shorts, he opened it. Lagre leaned over to smell its contents, and asked, "Mexican pot?" Despite their language differences, the man replied, "Jamaican." Assured by its smell, a quality test of marijuana smokers, Lagre told the cluster in Spanish, "If it's Jamaican, it's superb pot (mota)." Glancing at the $2 he was offered, the seller quietly asked, "Two dollars is all you have?" He walked with Lagre to one side, adding, "How about crack?" "Marijuana," Lagre repeated. Similar to E. Z.'s repetition of phrases, the seller again asked if Lagre wanted crack. Lagre paid $2 for less than a bag of marijuana. When Lagre returned to the group, nothing was said of his purchase, which he smoked that night near the trucks in which the men slept in a nearby field. Another member of the cluster, Rico, once called E. Z. "*vínculero*"

(connector) because of skills E. Z. used to put people together to meet substance needs. Whereas Gator worked in Agton within speech communities of U.S.-born agricultural workers, some of whom were white, E. Z. centered his efforts on Latinos who lacked English skills, whom he included with his regular black clients.

Finally, the case of Francisco Lopez illustrates bilingual brokering in contexts in which it can become risky business. After engaging in farm labor in the Southwest and factory work in the Middle South, Francisco fell on hard times. During five months of unemployment, he was offered free beer and meals to accompany an acquaintance on business. For several weeks, he served as a Spanish–English translator for medium-range illicit drug deals. Tempting as the offer had been at a time when he was not working, he left after reflecting that, if he was ever caught, his involvement could lead to prison. An open invitation to enter into the illegal is not unusual among workers who come to this country with few resources or who lose jobs. Josiah Heyman (1999) describes the case of Ismael, who was caught acting as a drug courier in the western United States and sentenced for this one act. Unlike Ismael, who risks reprisal if he seeks reentry to the United States through the imposition of immigration laws that construct him as "a criminal," Francisco never faced a future in which he had no hope of reentry. Although a brief participant in one sector of the informal economy, he was never caught. There is irony in these two cases. After his return to Mexico, Ismael founded a successful fruit trucking business, married, and began a family. Francisco, in contrast, struggled with a drinking problem for many years, shuffling from job to job. The last time that I spoke with him was nearly two years after he had completed treatment for alcoholism and had obtained U.S. citizenship, which facilitated his receiving permission to bring his fiancée, whom he met on return trips to his home village, into the United States.

The accumulation of cultural capital along multiple interethnic axes made possible procurement and use in situations once off-limits to workers of distinct backgrounds and helped create opportunities for crack distribution. Language affinity or competence in speech style between a buyer and seller was requisite in this process of procurement and use. At times, procurement was facilitated by a go-between with high-use needs but not yet at a stage of debilitation. Men and women worked cooperatively and individually to buy and sell illicit substances, drawing on collective repositories of cultural capital gained in multiethnic contacts across speech communities in agricultural settings. As in the case of E. Z. and his "friend," considerable effort was extended to ensure understanding when linking persons with few skills in English. Researchers of divergent populations (e.g., Fleisher 1998; Goode 2001) observe that the conflicted and disruptive aspects of ethnic differences often dissolve when a common purpose is recognized, and interethnic cooperation can then take place. Such a process occurs in street settings in open towns like Agton.

Discussion and conclusion

One outcome of increased regulation of farm-labor management in the United States has been the relaxation of structural constraints on farmworkers, which softened older forms of labor control. Restriction to a camp and physical beating, for example, were reduced considerably as forms of labor control from times past, and fidelity improved in making payroll deductions and reporting wages, owing to greater accountability. Debt peonage, however, continued. Contractors have long relied on strategies of commodity resales, generally licit distribution of alcohol, cigarettes, and food, as a means of controlling and of profiting from workers. Recent changes in debt peonage include advances of crack cocaine in camps and among crews, where illicit sales are not recorded. Few contractors, understandably, distribute this new commodity. The risk of detection increases the longer one is involved in possession or sale. Contractors who include crack among advanced commodities are compelled to develop a series of practices to avoid detection (e.g., externalization of assets and diversification of management) that they add to safeguards already in place (e.g., isolated locations and the rapidity of distribution). Arrest of a dealer–contractor occasionally occurs and may deter distribution of crack, but conviction is rare.[31]

Strategies of control are not unique to farm labor in this country. They parallel processes in other contexts in which recruiting (Scully 1992) and retaining (Baker 1992) low-skill laborers to work under demanding and risky conditions (e.g., in agriculture and mining) are difficult. In an often-cited analysis, Charles van Onselen (1982) discusses the application of a colonial policy for production, distribution, and authorization of use of liquor after the discovery of gold in the Witwatersrand of South Africa. He notes that liquor sales to migrant workers toiling in colonial mines facilitated proletarianization by creating a need to pay back travel advances and reducing a need to return home for recreation (i.e., community festivals) that lengthened the period of migratory labor, thus resulting in a stabilized work force. Christine Eber (2000) describes how liquor was provided to indigenous men in highland Guatemala, who were obligated to work outside their communities to pay off labor contracts. Her analysis shows the subsequent problems of excess alcohol consumption among local women, supporting a hypothesis of second-order transmission beyond the men who originally were supplied with alcohol and entangled within labor contracts. Closer to home, the historic era of the North

American fur trade provides an example of enticement into debt through an offer of alcohol from trader to hunter, which denied the receiver a comparable value for services and goods and generated community consequences beyond low rates of return. Known to encourage "taking a shot" on completion of a fur exchange, Europeans used "deceit and coercion in forcing liquor upon the Indians" (MacAndrew and Edgerton 1969:100–135). Over time, the result has been creation of a lucrative trade in bootleg liquor near "damp" reservations that permit consumption but not sales and an increased risk of accidents on rural roads near "dry" reservations, where Native Americans who drink are compelled to purchase and consume off reservation (May 1992; Wolf 1992).

As a social process in an early stage, the initial consequences of providing crack to farmworkers are risk of arrest and incarceration for possession, faster depletion of earnings and lessened ability to invest earnings in other than a limited range of consumable commodities (drugs, alcohol, cigarettes and food), and risk of addiction that differs from the dependence on alcohol of times past. Quicker than alcohol absorption, the effect of crack is short-lived and it encourages multiple consumption, spatially distributed in time. Thus, anticipated earnings dwindle rapidly. Whether advanced commodities are licit or illicit, wages and purchasing power remain low, a constant in the employment and management of agricultural labor. Decreased labor control entices some workers to engage in sales, which brings the risk of increased criminal penalties, beyond those of drug possession, for the few who follow this route. Moreover, the risk of arrest is greatly augmented if a worker makes use of a cumulative cultural capital of knowledge and sales skills to distribute in local settings beyond the isolated security of a "safe camp."[32]

Unlike urban poor over the past two decades who experienced a "regime of disappearance" (Goode and Maskovsky 2001), farmworkers have long experienced outlier status in relation to worker protections, safety nets when not employed, and health insurance and pension benefits. The appearance of an illicit substance (crack) in agricultural settings of the United States occurred within a historical context of a weakened rural economy that permitted farmworkers a means to dismantle a portion of the system of control and profit based on commodity resales. Proliferation of open towns where farmworkers find seasonal employment assures a ready supply of illicit substances, particularly crack, that can supplement an initial supply transported from a home base or a previous work site. Unlike hard drugs, such as cocaine and heroin, crack has all of the elements for ready incorporation into use: It is less expensive, produces a "compelling high," and is easy to transport. Less stringent strategies of labor control enticed agricultural workers, as crew workers and townspeople, to assume the task of provision to fellow workers. This was not possible historically with licit commodities. Enacting transactions that revise those of labor bosses in the camps, a few self-selected farmworkers became crew-level dealers. Many of those who took this path of agency gone awry who distributed in home-base communities already were using. They were familiar with tactics to reduce the risk of detection. The veneer of independence on a camp encourages a sense of loyalty to the contractor who enables one to sell and use within the safe space of his crew. The worker assumes the risk of arrest and incarceration, not the contractor, and it is the worker who faces a potential for addiction, if business is good and he uses too much of the product. Moreover, the worker–dealer's precarious economic situation may decline further when there is little return on investment (e.g., when reduced rates are extended to buyers with limited cash).

For the rare labor contractor who deals drugs to his workers, typically during the migrant season, rather than in a home base, the move to include crack within the system of advanced commodities lessens the economic viability of business as well as places him at risk of detection and arrest. For the contractor who does not distribute drugs but enables others to secure and use them (e.g., by providing insider advice on local suppliers and sites), the risk of detection is reduced. Contractors may profit by other means, such as high-interest advances to buy drugs and high-fine deterrents to crew workers who become abusive with drugs. By relinquishing this dimension of commodity resale, the contractor ensures greater operational longevity and retains greater control over workers and productivity. At the same time, he adds to this new management style a veneer of independence for workers, who have greater freedom to leave the camp, are at less risk of physical beating, and have the opportunity to spend (some) earnings in ways that they choose. It is within these enabled settings that workers may engage in distributing illicit drugs. Procured on consignment and resold, or produced and sold, crack, ironically, succeeded in placing the worker as an actor within the system of manipulated indebtedness, whereas decades of activism, disclosure by the media of farm-labor travesties, and public outcry fell short in this regard. Workers who engage in this new arena of illicit commodity distribution experience a freedom that was unknown to their counterparts of the past, who typically fled a camp or crew through the tactic of book-up, rather than fight agrarian strategies of labor control.

Reference to crack in farm-labor discourse subverts the talk of superlative exchange of labor for daily wages. Crack has become a metonym for wasteful extravagance, leisurely abandon, and limited paths of advancement within agriculture. Entrepreneurs among farmworkers

who extend distribution to the street level in a home-base community assume risks not faced by those who limit themselves to small-scale, camp-based operations: among them, the potential for addiction to the product they sell and increased criminal penalties if they are caught distributing. These risks differ from those of the past, when workers faced excesses of labor control, such as beatings, lack of transportation from or permission to leave a labor camp, and severe usury.

As illicit substance use has remained a secret in the world of agriculture, a parallel professional secret has been maintained, until recently, among journalists and social scientists. Part of the difficulty in revealing illicit use in agriculture concerns what is acceptable to the public as legal and licit, and, by extension, an appropriate pastime. Some actions are viewed as appropriate to the "deserving poor," and some are characterized as acts of the less deserving (Goode and Maskovsky 2001). This is particularly true if the actions in question are illegal or are considered immoral. The quandary of representation is illustrated by the analytic means that writers may choose to refer to the illicit. One way is to buttress the illicit within a range of licit activities beyond the three-item series common in English (i.e., X, Y, and Z), inundating the reader with a series of wholesome examples and only one item that falls outside the series. This is the strategy of Rothenberg 1998 and Vander Staay 1992, which together provide vignettes of only three crack users from more than 100 individuals assumed to be nonusers of illicit substances, and Moore (1965), who includes one drug dealer (Hamp) among six crew leaders he describes.[33] Similarly, of more than 40 cases of women who illegally crossed the border into the United States, Pierette Hondagneu-Sotelo (1994) presents only one involving drug smuggling. The rest of her cases are of women who come to this country to seek adventure, earn money, or join their husbands.

Authors sometimes briefly mention the illicit as unsavory and as a threat, before returning to other matters. This latter gambit evokes an image of deleterious consequences (e.g., violence as an outcome of drug activity). In the volume edited by Judith Goode and Jeff Maskovsky (2001), for example, the case of Juanita and Anna in Philadelphia illustrates agency of the "deserving poor," given their sharing of neighbors' reports of drug sales with undercover police (Hyatt 2001). At the opposite extreme in this same volume is the case of Fuzhounese youth who earn low wages and are recruited as gang enforcers to extort money from fellow immigrants (Kwong 2001). For farmworkers who use or sell drugs, opposing images of "deserving" and "less than deserving" alternate illicit engagement with admiration for performance of demanding labor embodied within the term *farmworker*. Thus, the analytic device in this article has been to delineate the illicit in the varied dimensions of sale and use with which it pervades settings and open towns where farmworkers live, work, make licit purchases, form friendships, and seek recreational pursuits. Rather than represent a single event or act or a contrastive pairing of the illicit against a listing of wholesome activities, I have taken the reader inside an arena of action in which agricultural workers purchase, distribute, and use illicit drugs by means of a multifaceted process involving strategies and counterresponses generated within the system of debt peonage.[34]

At first glance, the availability of illicit substances appears to be a new wrinkle within the system of labor control in agriculture. At the time that Moore (1965) wrote in the 1960s, contractors like Hamp had difficulty securing drugs for distribution en route to a work site. None of my contacts, despite triangulated questioning in the course of interviews, could recall distribution of substances other than alcohol and cigarettes to labor crews in the past. If the illicit was a public secret in agriculture in times when men like C. J., and men and women before him, performed agricultural labor, it has faded from or was too rare to have retained a place in collective memory. Whether drug use existed but was secret or only recently became a reality with the introduction of crack, its voracity has been felt deep within communities beyond major metropolitan areas, where the illicit has become an icon for poverty and thwarted aspirations of minority communities. Crack's introduction into farming areas of the New South was followed by emergence of a series of agencies and counteragencies of contractor involvement, prohibition, complicity and enabling, as responses to agencies and counteragencies of agricultural workers purchasing, using, and, eventually, selling illicit substances.[35] All of this occurred as management shifted strategies in continuing efforts to control and profit from farmworkers through manipulated indebtedness. Other than crack's deployment by management as a further means to stabilize the labor force by indebting workers, draining them of meager resources and augmenting risks that extend outside work sites, the long-term consequences of its distribution and use in agriculture have yet to be determined.

Notes

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1. Labor contractors hire and dismiss workers and prepare payroll, or they hire and pay crew leaders who supervise and, in turn, pay their workers. Since the 1950s, when the U.S. economy was at its best during the past one hundred years, migrants have been saying "on the camp" (residence), "on the road" (travel), and "on the season" (work) to contrast the intensive, short-term employment of farm labor to the permanent year-round employment of other workers "on the job." In this article, I use "on the camp" when it reflects migrant seasonality and "in the camp" for other situations.

2. Alcohol prices were lower in small towns of the Upper South than in the Middle and Lower South in the late 1970s and 1980s, based on "Cost of Living Indicators," published quarterly by the American Chamber of Commerce Researchers Association. Estimated cost of cigarettes is from Vogeler 1981.

3. Exclusion of farm labor from the FLSA was part of a political compromise that avoided a southern filibuster and a likely defeat of the impending legislation (William Friedland, personal communication, 2003). Additional pressure for its exclusion came from large growers in California (Wells 1996).

4. Strategies of presentation are repeated in major works on farmworkers. The Joads of *The Grapes of Wrath* (set in 1938), for example, are mentioned in McWilliams's *Ill Fares the Land* (1942) and in Edward R. Morrow's *Harvest of Shame* (1960), suggesting attention to Steinbeck's characterization of migrant life as place-to-place wandering. Multiple sites *(Ill Fares the Land* and *Factories in the Field)* appear in later studies (e.g., Goldfarb 1981; Moore 1965) and a trope of travel *(The Grapes of Wrath)* appears in documentaries such as *New Harvest, Old Shame* (Galán 1990). The study having students travel with farmworkers from the Lower South to perform farm labor in the Northeast (Friedland and Nelkin 1971) combines these strategies of multiple sites and seasonal travel.

5. White workers are shown with families when not working (children's images are edited in), in contrast to black workers, who are shown on buses, in camps, or working in fields. Transnational workers appear once near the end of the documentary, as a line of men waiting for work permits. Waiting in line evokes a key image of the depression years when work was scarce.

6. No one in my study recalled purchasing, or had ever heard of, an advance of marijuana. Moore 1965 is the one source I found that reports on provision of marijuana and cocaine, years ago, by contractors. Hamp's dropping cocaine from his repertoire of commodities raises the issue, suggested by a reviewer, of whether contractors profit from commodity sales (licit or illicit), or whether such sales stabilize cash flow. Labor contracting may be less precarious than farm labor, but very few contractors amass exorbitant wealth or retire early.

7. Legislation included the 1962 amendment to Title III of the Public Health Service Act to authorize migrant clinic community grants (P.L. 87–692); the Farm Labor Contractor Registration Act of 1963 (7 U.S.C. 2041); and the 1966 amendment to the Fair Labor Standards Act that repealed exemption of farm labor from minimum wage guidelines (P.L. 89–601). Later legislation focused on "joint responsibility" between growers and contractors for wages and deductions and for disclosure of work and housing conditions. The Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act of 1983 (29 U.S.C. 1801) was followed by an amendment in 1986 that made it illegal to hire undocumented workers (P.L. 99–603) and by one in 1995 that set requirements for unemployment compensation and that mandated safer transportation (P.L. 104–49). Inspection guidelines are found in Athey et al. 1991.

8. I use *craving* to mean a persistent desire for a drug that may be stymied by incarceration, migrant travel and, less often, a lack of funds. *Addiction* refers to regular substance use that disrupts daily routines and relationships.

9. As on-site director and ethnographer of a research–education project, I worked in Agton and made two to three supervisory visits each to field stations in four states, where I visited all but one of 32 sampled living sites, and I spent one summer in a travel–work study in states of the Lower, Middle, and Upper South, complemented by a second two-site study the next summer (Lower South). As a lone investigator, I later taped one or more life story interviews with active and former drug users (men and women) who were performing or had performed farm labor (n = 119) in three areas that I knew and three areas of which I had little prior knowledge. For this article, I gloss 14 southern states as "Lower South" (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, and Mississippi), "Middle South" (Arkansas, Kentucky, North and South Carolina, and Tennessee), and "Upper South" (Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and West Virginia). Authors with whom I am familiar refer to Lower, Middle, or Upper South but typically do not designate which states compose which area. My breakdown varies from the "Agricultural Regions" defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture in the National Agricultural Workers Survey.

10. Most farmworkers in Agton travel within a circumscribed circuit either of the home base and other areas of the Lower, Middle, and Upper South or of areas outside the South. Those remaining in the home-base state usually spend time in a local three-county area; very few such workers travel to other areas of the state.

11. Crack first appeared in major cities like Los Angeles, Miami, New Orleans, New York City, Philadelphia, and San Francisco (Inciardi 1986:82, 1989:689; James and Johnson 1996:23–29). Journalist Andy Furillo (1984: CC1, 8, 10) described "rock sales" and "rock houses" in Los Angeles one full year before a better-known story about crack appeared in the *New York Times* (Goss 1985). I reviewed newspapers in three agricultural areas in two southern states and found two to four articles on "crack busts" per area within 6 to 12 months of the *New York Times* story. Contrary to the myth of trickled diffusion from large cities to small towns, crack "rushed" from metropolitan areas to a few agrarian areas where marketability was feasible.

12. I reviewed records in the county appraiser's office for several sections of Agton within and beyond the six-block commercial area where I conducted systematic field observations.

13. Field kits were used to collect urine specimens to test for cocaine–crack, marijuana, and heroin. We initially tested for amphetamine but discontinued doing so when no positive tests were returned. As ethnographer both on the team project and as a lone investigator, I did not test for drugs but relied on self-reports of prior and emergent contacts.

14. Agton had high rates of HIV early in the epidemic that continued into the late 1990s.

15. Friedland and Nelkin (1971:167–172), for example, devote attention to drinking, noting its frequency in camps of upstate New York. James P. Spradley's classic study, *You Owe Yourself a Drunk* (1970), reports that men incarcerated for drinking in Seattle

received early release from jail to work apple harvests elsewhere in Washington. Neither study reported drug use.

16. I gloss quantitative distinctions articulated in survey questions as follows: "days used in the previous 30 days" is monthly use and "times used in the previous 30 days" is frequency of use per day. Qualitative statements are based on percentages calculated from responses of 681 men and women in Agton (collected during the team project). Data are not incorporated from 301 individuals who were recruited in four seasonal field stations. Pinhook contractors lease a field picked one or more times and recruit workers to clear the "remnant crops." Assisted by the workers they hire, they "grade by size" (*clasiar*, Spanish) the remnant produce they sell on their own.

17. Research has considered alcohol, cigarettes, and marijuana as "gateways" to further use. No studies, to my knowledge, discuss age at which use of last drug in a sequence is initiated, which becomes important in calculating a continuing trajectory of sporadic initiation of new substances beyond adolescence (see Bletzer 2004). Focusing on "first substance ever" and generally limiting samples to adolescents or students, investigations emphasize a policy concern with a potential for substance use among youth.

18. *New Harvest, Old Shame* (Galán 1990), includes economic data from a study of "real wages" by Marshall Barry (Florida International University) that estimate the purchasing power of farm-labor wages in the late 1980s to have been one-half to one-third of what it was in the 1960s.

19. J. Bryan Page (personal communication, 1996) suggested the concept of "expendable cash" for populations that manipulate expenses and disregard necessities. Expendable cash has long been a part of farm labor. Friedland and Nelkin (1971:169), for example, describe the case of Raymond, who spent $23 on wine from the $28 per week that he earned during the season in the 1960s.

20. Similarly, marijuana smokers remembered when a "joint" (*toque*, Spanish) cost $1 in the 1970s ($2 in the 1980s), noting that a bag of marijuana today generates fewer joints. A reversal in geography occurs for heroin. Heroin users reported prohibitive heroin cost in the Middle South compared with the Northeast. Several men and women enumerated variations in the price of heroin across states of former and current residence.

21. Page and Miguez-Burbano (2000) note that alcohol injection in South America is a way that teens ensure a "good high" and avoid "alcohol breath" before they return home. Besides students, other groups also engage in the practice, which is rarely reported in the literature.

22. Marcel's politicization is reflected in his refusal to refer to the exchange side of a superlative performance. He emphasized personal prowess in proclaiming a record for loading trucks with squash at one farm where he worked in the Lower South: one truck loaded in 25 minutes, three in 80 minutes, and 12 trucks in one day.

23. Speed facilitates nondetection. Xavier Andrade and colleagues (1999) describe sales in New York City, estimated at ten seconds per drug transaction, which sum to no more than a few minutes to accommodate 40 to 50 users.

24. A news article provided to me by Greg Schell quotes a former migrant, who describes a crew bus going to a wooded area, where dealers sold drugs to riders on the bus. It is not clear if this was a clandestine site of drug use near a camp, where users also were selling, or a contractor-arranged "copping site." I witnessed drug use in woods and near rural towns but never as a prearranged rendezvous involving farm-labor crew vehicles.

25. Contributors to Sanjek 1990 produced a flurry of appreciation for identifying how field notes are conceived, constructed, analyzed, and cherished by anthropologists, but few ethnographers have incorporated their insights on scratch notes, field notes, analytic notes (all on paper), and head notes (memory enhanced by the process of having prepared field notes) into ethnographic writing.

26. These are emergent data. My purpose in visiting camps was to conduct general ethnography on camp life. One dimension of camp life that emerged was camp–outside connections.

27. Women and men participated in both studies, but women were fewer in number. Women in farm labor may participate in drug sales in home-base communities (several in my sample did), but rarely in the seasonal camps. Except for "sheltered users" abetted by siblings, cousins, or husbands (see Bletzer 2004:104–111), women who use drugs in street settings typically engage in sex work, which introduces different issues from those of male agricultural workers (see Bletzer 2003).

28. A *cookie* is hardened cocaine hydrochloride of sufficient size to cut and sell as individual rocks. Two larger sizes, *brick* and *slab*, were beyond Laser's buying power on the season.

29. The motel occupied by Laser was one of at least six sites that I both observed on my own and heard described during the taped interviews.

30. Commodity vendors compete with contractors for sales of food and nonalcoholic beverages, but less often for clothing. Vendors, as a courtesy and for protection, usually seek the permission of contractors in camps. Leo R. Chavez (1998:211) uses the term *fayuquero* (vendor) for one who sells food and other items at exorbitant prices, especially to illegal workers.

31. The man who recruited Fred Sampson was imprisoned for conspiracy to hold workers in peonage. By plea-bargaining, his parents (as contractors) escaped conviction, which enabled them to continue the family business (Rothenberg 1998:159). Labor contractors generally are convicted for lesser offenses, such as evasion of income tax (Greg Schell, personal communication, 2001). Crack sales rarely are entered on the account books, thus impeding conviction for drug distribution; see the case described by Kilborn (1989:D23), who notes, "Drugs or no drugs, just about every transaction in the book [ledger] is illegal."

32. Facing prison terms for sale and possession of narcotics, two men were interviewed prior to sentencing for conviction after repeated arrests for street sales in a home-base town. Each was raised in a migrant family. Other workers spent time in jail for petty theft or served short sentences for first-time street sales, in contrast to contractors who generally do not serve time for drug dealing.

33. Each of three men in vignettes presented by Rothenberg (1998:159–162, 177–180) and Vander Staay (1992:54–56) was recruited from a city, an icon of the illicit, rather than from a rural area, not yet a space that is recognized for the illicit. One of the two in Rothenberg (i.e., Calvin Douglas) sold drugs in one state prior to becoming a farmworker in another. The only other drug dealer appearing in the literature is Hamp in Moore's (1965) account; like all the other four associated with the drug industry, he too is linked to a city (born in New Orleans).

34. In analyzing cocaine in South America, Edmundo Morales (1989) takes a similar tack, detailing production and harvest of *coca* (leaf), transportation of the harvest to isolated areas for conversion into *basuco* (coca paste), transformation of the paste into powder cocaine, then accumulation of the powder in quantity in alternate sites and its subsequent introduction as a smuggled commodity into what typically are industrialized nations. All the

while, he intersperses his account with cases and vignettes of persons who profit as well as suffer from this illicit trade, using and seeking newfound monies for house and store construction, protection devices, travel outside the country, legal fees, supplemental cash flows for legitimate business, arms and ammunition, funds for college education, politician and police payoffs, new vehicles and farming equipment, as well as radios and new clothes. His most telling image is that of children smoking basuco in one of the jungle towns where coca paste is manufactured clandestinely, the same town where he conducted an informal survey that found that 215 coca paste addicts were age 15 and under (Morales 1989:117).

35. I borrow the apt phrase "agencies and counteragencies" from one of the three reviewers.

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