# Practicing Applied Anthropology Across Discontinuous Social Fields

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By

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I dedicate this book of multi-sited ethnographic encounters to contributory multi-sided encounters with college advisors and/or committee members and/or project supervisors at four different universities; students at these same institutions whose original ideas and creative field strategies inspired me to apply what I was learning in a creative fashion through original methodologies; and numerous co-workers and supervisors at the projects where I have been employed, some of which are described in this book.

Advisors, committee members, and supervisors, who served as important mentors at the universities I attended include the following (alphabetical by surname): E.B., N.H., J.H., B.J., J.K., M.K., C.L., O.L., M.N., A.R., L.S., J.S., and S.W. Acting as supportive colleagues as well as mentors, students include the following (alphabetical by surname): W.A., M.A., H.B., J.C., A.F., S.M., C.S., among others, whose ideas were memorable. Those identified typically generated visibility across various professional endeavors that were similar to my own.

Related to acknowledgement of individuals in formal roles, I acknowledge children where I lived, who provided my earliest experience with multi-sited endeavors, while receiving a pre-college education (kindergarten to 12th grade); 21 children lived on the street where we lived in 13 housing units on the west side (houses and a few duplexes) and six units on the east side (houses and duplexes, one empty lot). Housing where children lived included 11 residence units on both sides of the street. In addition, 11 children lived in seven residence units along an adjacent alley behind the housing in the neighborhood. Six children, all in school (one was a winter visitor), were older than me. The rest were my age (n=6) or younger. Among the 32 total children, 14 were female and 18 were male.

Finally, I acknowledge the all-important family members who comprised consanguineal and affinal relationships before and during the time that I attended school (kindergarten through 12th grade in one state; one college and three universities in different regions of the United States), while I was living within their respective household unit for two or more years. Communications have continued among living family members into the present time, as I prepared this book.

# PREFACE AND INTRODUCTION: A COMPOSITE DESCRIPTION

The monograph title, *Practicing Applied Anthropology Across Discontinuous Social Fields*, is adapted from discussions about anthropologists who work outside academia as well as adjunct instructors, who teach college-level courses and/or provide services to universities and colleges. Among anthropologists, "practicing" generally refers to *applied anthropology*. Another related term is "itinerant" that refers to a non-tenured affiliation without medical and/or pension benefits. Someone working as an applied anthropologist in contrast generally has been hired and, thus, receives financial compensation with related benefits. General reactions by itinerant adjunct faculty have ranged from negligible feelings of alienation as a "gypsy scholar" (Garubo, 1986) to more recent reactions that describe a devalued experience (Navarro, 2017). In other contexts, "itinerant" refers to alternative medical recommendations (Knopes, 2015) that may include "vacations" and "spas" (Naraindas and Bastos, 2011), organizational "contracting" (Barley and Kunda, 2006), professional "sojourning" (Jones and Anderson, 2015), provision of supportive assistance for special needs education (Kluwin, Morris, and Clifford, 2004), Third World street-vending in urban market places (Babylow and Chinyere, 2014), and sporadic work in agriculture (e.g., Gregory, 1989, 66-67; Vogeler, 1981, 66-67; Schob, 1975, 79-81, 91). Recently, Mary Leighton (2020) has examined the "performative informality" that masks hierarchies in North American archaeology. She uses "adjunct" rather than "itinerant" for one woman in her sample, who left active practice in archaeology "to pursue another career" (451). Academic hierarchies are not limited to the field of North American archaeology and can be found in other social sciences, such as sociology (see Atkins, 2020).

The author's experience as an "itinerant" university employee has been rare and typically took place over non-consecutive periods. Through experiences outside a university setting with community projects across four regions of the United States, the author first and foremost is a practitioner of *participatory anthropology* in "itinerant" field settings that represent short-term *applied anthropology*. Most were funded through grants secured by a community organization that received monies for a

project lasting two, three, or four years. In one earlier experience, two-year employment was with a metropolitan organization in New York City as one of ten national sites selected for a youth assessment created and sponsored by the Institute of Behavioral Science at University of Colorado (Elliott, Aceton, and Huizinga, 1976). As a unique occurrence, four-year funding was secured through a university medical school center in the Southeastern United States by two co-principal investigators for a multi-state Migrant Worker Risk Study (Weatherby, et al., 1999; Weatherby, et al., 1997) that was part of a multi-state nation-wide Cooperative Agreement funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

In each field setting across four regions of the United States, no matter what the funding source, ethnography was incorporated to complete assigned responsibilities, whether salaried, stipend-paid or collegial, for tasks that ranged from [reverse chronology]: analyzing *restorative justice* sexual violence transcripts and analyzing incidents of sexual assault among women from three cultural groups for co-authored publications (Southwest); designing-implementing a pre-test/post-test to assess increase in knowledge among program staff who received organizational capacity building assistance training (Southwest-based national program); teaching writing skills through classes in Biology, Earth Science, and Adolescent Health to charter high school students (Southwest); representing low-income multi-cultural clients in benefits-based administrative hearings (Southeast); twice weekly consulting on how to prepare program reports and co-writing four grants that totaled six years of funding from the state health department to a Middle Eastern community organization (Midwest); conducting HIV/AIDS education for three summers May to October in migrant farm labor camps (Midwest); and designing-supervising a four-community Hispanic Latinx youth survey to justify the provision of age-appropriate services for a growing suburban immigrant population outside New York City (Northeast), among others.

These participatory experiences took place in a "dialogic" setting or constructed "social world" that Holmes (2013, citing Bourdieu, 2004, 273) describes as a *field* (184), which is both "intellectualist" in its social interactions (Harman, 2016, 121-122) and culturally constructed by "mutual relationships among social structures, the bodily dispositions produced by them, and the symbolic structures reinforcing them" (Holmes, 2013, 184). This definition of *field* describes the author's multi-sited "participatory anthropology" experiences that benefitted from a field-based ethnographic "process" that yields "results" (Nelson and Braff, 2020, 16) and makes a strange (new) setting "familiar" (Nelson, 2020, 48). Inevitably, multi-sited

encounters within distinct "social fields" reveal an underlying multi-sightedness in everyday activities that focuses on grant requirements, and/or in-place organizational policies, and/or socio-cultural composition of staff who engage in fulfilling formally designated program goals, especially when a project is grant-funded. This multi-dimensional aspect of the author's unusual multi-sited encounters resembles the multi-dimensionality of ethnography, as earlier identified by George Marcus (1998), who suggests that the usefulness of tapping into discourses that originate elsewhere without an initial idea what will be encountered will propel "the single ethnographic project into challenges and promises of a multi-sited space and trajectory" (120) that may include "elites" and/or "subalterns" who reveal issues "raised by the ethnographer's movement across different kinds of affiliations within a configuration of evolving sites in a particular research project" (121; see also Marcus, 1995, note 52, page 320). The primary difference between what Marcus describes as a focus on one place that is "elsewhere" and the author's experience of multiple places is multiple social fields across different time periods in which the author as an *in-situ* ethnographer gradually learns to function effectively across a range of social fields and community-based settings. If asked, what is the main idea of this monograph, the response would be:

> To be effective in the practice of anthropology, as an *applied anthropologist*, a person must seek and/or accept roles with new tasks and responsibilities, which can be better understood and completed through informal as well as formal ethnographic inquiry.

Rather than distinguishing between *practicing* and *applied* anthropology (cf. Singer, 2000), and overlapping methodologies, ultimately, the socio-cultural/political-economic aims and goals are similar to an updated Public Anthropology (see Borofsky, 2020, 2019, 2016). Examples of the diverse roles assumed by the author and described in this monograph include (chronological): Ethnographer and doctoral candidate (Chapter 3), camp-based HIV/AIDS Project Educator-Ethnographer (Chapter 1), community-based capacity building assistance Trainer/Evaluator (Chapter 8), bilingual South-Florida-based Funded-Researcher-*cum*-Paralegal [simultaneous but separated organizationally] (Chapter 5), secondary school Teacher-Ethnographer [one charter high school; two public high schools] (Chapter 10), correspondent with a maximum security prisoner that covers more than a decade and continues to the present time (Chapter 12), community college Adjunct Instructor-Ethnographer (Chapter 11), designer of alternative resumés (Chapter 14), among others.

Thus, the monograph focuses on continuously shifting experiences with a multiplicity of (alphabetical) aspects, facets, features, and, importantly, social fields. Similar to the absence of a singular path that leads to drug use among farmworkers, which departs from an academic canon of anthropological writing that prefers a single case or representative example (see Chapter 6), for some readers this monograph extends a main idea that accepts diversity within a multiplicity of seemingly distinct "social field" experiences. For other readers, the main idea will be the novelty of experiencing "other places," a concept created by a recent editor-in-chief of the *American Anthropologist*, the flagship journal of the American Anthropological Association, increases relevance for participatory anthropology across varied "social fields."

The author has been (a) full-time on five grants and three-quarter-time on one grant, none of which were affiliated with a university, (b) full-time for 3.5 years and fifteen percent for nine months on one project, whose funding was the university-affiliated grant. Regardless whether the grants were full-time or part-time, or what organization had secured them, when the grant ended after a typical duration of two to four years, employment ended. For a one collegial arrangement, collaboration continued through publications after fulfillment of the degree requirements for a second Master's degree in Public Health. For a few others, collegial collaboration was sporadic. Thus, formulation of "itinerant" assumes an expectant discontinuity and/or occasional irregular employment, rather than continuing status as a part-time and/or a full-time employee at a university or college.

The author has secured grant funding for three research projects. One was based in lower Central America (doctoral field research) and two took place in the United States. One project before doctoral research was a Hispanic-Latinx youth survey in the Northeastern United States. After receiving an anthropology doctorate, the third funded project was a multi-year study of initiation and consequences of drug use among farmworkers across eight states in the Eastern and one state in the Midwestern United States. Most itinerant projects in contrast comprised full-time or part-time employment on research and/or program grants across four regions of the United States (chronological): Northeast, Midwest, Southeast, and Southwestern United States, where the author currently lives.

This view of "itinerant" resembles what some practitioners call *patchwork ethnography* (Günel, Varma, and Watanabe, 2020) of an "Independent Scholar" (Donaldson, 2023). Reasons proposed for developing the concept

of *patchwork ethnography* were changes in anthropology before COVID-19, especially the expectation for extended immersive contact with an isolated cultural group. After completing doctoral field research and returning to the United States to write-up his dissertation, the author was focusing on intermittent "social fields," wherein each had a distinct objective and a related goal within a new setting, which initially was unfamiliar. Thus, the term "itinerant" as suggested above identifies immersion within salaried employment, proportional stipends, and/or collegial collaboration, which partially parallels the "intersectional responsibilities" mentioned for *patchwork ethnography* (Cardoza, Watanabe, Günel, and Varma, 2021). When his field research entailed farm labor, for example, the logical strategy was intermittent contact across numerous field sites in multiple states, which usually remained the same geographically but shifted for who was regularly present, who was seasonally present, who was a newcomer, who had departed. This reflects the multi-sited nature of long-term or short-term field research within the particular social field of farm labor, as well as an experience of a new setting with related responsibilities, when farm labor employment changes, within the same (social) field of endeavor, or for the author of this monograph, within a new unfamiliar setting and social field related to agricultural work.

While conducting doctoral field research with an Indigenous people, the author lived with a local family, but occasionally accompanied one or more persons to visit other homesteads by walking and/or by boat. Once a visit was completed, he returned to the nuclear family household of his male and female hosts, where he was living. Travel companion(s) returned to their family household. The social field might shift, contextually, but it fit an overall belonginess to the same cultural-linguistic group. Unlike certain limitations of *patchwork ethnography*, while employed across different regions of the United States, the funded "endpoint" for the author was never unexpected but known to be the closure of a designated grant period. Shifting from one "field" to another, greater "productivity" was generally expected through expanded knowledge for himself and/or his collaborators as part of their plasticity as human beings. Later opportunities for re-connecting with collaborators recognizably parallels a desire for "long-term commitments, language proficiency, contextual knowledge" in *patchwork ethnography* (Günel, Varma, and Watanabe, 2020, *passim*). Finally, another occasional feature of *patchwork ethnography* is the absence of a connection to a formal institutional setting (Pertierra, Durban, Kanjilal, et al., 2021). Regardless what he was doing in one or another "social field," the author benefitted from access to a university library in

each of four regions of the United States where he has lived. In each region, his connections ranged from student enrollment or an appointed professional position and/or a courtesy affiliation, respectively. His connectedness to university libraries more recently has been augmented by "technology [that] has revolutionized access to knowledge, expanding it far beyond the physical boundaries of libraries" (Donaldson, 2023, 7).

Beyond the consideration of itinerant field settings, further impetus for this monograph considers professional changes within anthropology. The number of journals with "anthropology" in their title has increased. Many are open access – which identifies another change for writing style. Anthropologists can circulate, create, and/or secure information via internet technology, such as blogs, film-making, social media, videos, among others. *American Anthropologist*, for example, initiated a new section on Multimodal Anthropologies in early 2017 that considers these changes (Collins, Durington, and Gill, 2017). Another primary journal, *American Ethnologist*, advocates proficient writing which befits anthropology as a social science that seeks responsive "social justice" for cultural group(s) studied by professional anthropologists (Besnier and Morales, 2018), whatever the means and/or frequency of interaction. This axiom of "social justice" is an inherent perspective within *applied anthropology*, also known as *practicing anthropology*, and, more recently, as one or another variation of *Public Anthropology* (e.g., Borofsky, 2020, 2019, 2016). Nonetheless, multi-sited inter-personal engagement is the foremost expectation for everyday activities in participatory anthropology, which reflect the multi-sighted perspectives of persons affiliated with a project to the multi-dimensional considerations that are more closely related to the specified administrative structure of the sponsoring organization.

## How Ethnography Is Perceived / Formulated / Practiced / Revised

Throughout the time the author was incorporating "Applied Anthropology" in distinct social fields, the field of Ethnography was being critiqued from a range of viewpoints. Recently, a multi-authored article systematically examines Ethnography through a review of 1,354 syllabi utilized in educational settings that focus on one or another aspect of Anthropology and/or the Social Sciences, which include 140 "methods syllabi" and "107 syllabi for courses that were explicitly about 'ethnographic methods'" (Ruth, Mayfour, Hardin, Sangaramoorthy, Wutich, Bernard, Brewis, et al.,

2022, 403). This article concludes that "ethics, research design, participant observation, interviewing, and analysis are widely taught" (408). The opening paragraph suggests, "While a pedagogic culture of social science research methods is rapidly developing [two sources not cited here], a pedagogic subculture regarding ethnography is harder to define" (406). This article reflects the common idea of Anthropology as a "writing culture" in contrast to a less common perception of Ethnography as a pedagogic subculture. One central observation, "historically, ethnographic methods were rarely taught in the classroom" (402), leads to the idea that there is "an unmet need to move beyond this history of hidden and informal methods training" (402). Based on syllabi coding, common topics included (sequentially) "interviewing (96%), analysis (92%), ethics (91%), single-site ethnography (90%), observation (i.e., participant observation [73%] and field observation [19%]), research design (83%), writing ethnography (77%), transcription (57%), coding (55%), field notes (53%), sampling (53%), visual ethnography methods (52%) and digital ethnography (27%), reflexivity (47%) and positionality (19%). Percentages are based on Table 1: Coding Categories and Code Percentages (404) and categories are adjusted according to a description of common syllabi appearance (404-407). Least common were rapid assessment (4%) and gatekeeper (2%); four others had percentages less than these (Table 1, p. 404).

What is unique about this particular article (Ruth, Mayfour, Hardin, Sangaramoorthy, Wutich, Bernard, Brewis, et al., 2022) is the co-authorship of 21 authors from universities in 12 states of the continental United States (alphabetical): Midwest (n=3), Northeast (n=2), Northwest (n=3), and Southwest (n=5). 123 cited sources were included from previous years: 2022 (n=2), 2021 (n=1), 2020 (n=5), and 115 were from earlier. 28 sources were from the past century (earliest 1967) (pp. 408-412). Two are sources in 4th edition and one is 5th edition. The 21 authors recognize the validity of a multi-conceptual array of settings and shifting aspects of Ethnography. The experience of this monograph's author is less extensive, to be sure, but similarly represents the continual shifting from settings and social fields in four regions of the United State, as well as time in Central America (more than four years over two periods), Caribbean (three months), South America (12 months) and South America (one month). His experience attests to a multiplicity of ethnographic nuances that are identified and analyzed in the intensively elaborated 21-author analysis.

The 21-author article elicited course syllabi from 21,344 American Anthropological Association members and identified-analyzed 117 syllabi

by generating a codebook with 35 key terms (p. 403). One table lists six categories: Research Basics, Entering the Field, Designing Research, Ethnographic Basic, Ethnographic Approaches, as well as Syllabi (Table 1, p.404). These six categories are accompanied by text for 35 codes, and each of the 35 codes identifies a corresponding percentage of Syllabi (2% to 96%) (pp. 404-407).

Terminology in the 21-author article represents an everyday vocabulary that lacks common buzzwords, such as Public Anthropology with noteworthy contributions by Robert Borofsky (2020; see also 2019) for four strategies to increase public credibility: (a) Academic accountability (469-470), (b) Explanation of results (471-473), (c) Collaboration, e.g., Partners in Health (469, 474-475), and (d) Benefit to others (463, 470, 474-476). Borofsky identifies these four strategies in both editions of a digital textbook, published by the American Anthropological Association, titled *Perspectives*: *An Open Introduction to Cultural Anthropology*, co-edited by Brown, McIlwraith, and Tubelle de González (2020), who wrote none of the chapters that were written by 24 authors. Four persons authored and/or co-authored two chapters. The author of the present monograph teaches beginning college students at a southern Arizona community college and incorporates descriptions of the ways that these digital textbook authors vary in how they portray ethnography as the core methodology for Cultural Anthropology. Another common term missing in the 21-author article is "social justice," which the monograph author has long recognized as reachable through effective ethnography.

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# CHAPTER ONE

# FARMWORKER HIV/AIDS EDUCATION IN THE MIDWESTERN UNITED STATES

## Background

Following the axiom that a professional career *begins after graduation*, this monograph begins with a field experience of the first job secured by the author, after completing a doctorate in anthropology. Once the formal degree requirements were completed, the first questions his advisor began asking centered on HIV/AIDS. He was ascertaining prior knowledge, and, more importantly, he was checking to see whether the author might have hesitations (qualms) about working in this social field. Little was known about HIV/AIDS in the late 1980s. Funding for HIV/AIDS programs that were aimed at minority populations was minimal to non-existent. The author's training was through a funded medical anthropology program (at that time one of two graduate programs in the United States), so there was no need to ask about that. As it were, while conducting doctoral fieldwork, the author occasionally went to a national university in the capital city on rare times that he was not in his field site, where he perused the historic archives on his dissertation population and professional journals with a few articles on the appearance of an unknown malady. When he finished dissertation fieldwork and returned to the degree-granting university, the new malady had a name: "acquired immunodeficiency syndrome" (AIDS in English) and *syndrome de imuno-deficiencia adquirida* (SIDA in Spanish). Several physicians and medical practitioners in the country of his field site had spent a few months during the early years of HIV/AIDS in New York City, which was one of its two *epi-centers*. San Francisco, CA, was the other. These professionals were anticipating the possibility that this health crisis would soon appear in lower Central America, given frequent travel of many persons across the region.

After the questions, his advisor provided a phone number and explained that a state-wide farmworker service organization had received a grant to implement an HIV/AIDS education program. The author called, made an

appointment, went for an interview, and was hired. Based in the same city of Michigan where the university is located, the agency was one of five in a regional Midwest consortium funded by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The CDC recognized New York City and San Francisco as coastal *epi-centers* for HIV/AIDS. Given the potential for other areas to have this challenge, CDC provided funding in the Midwest to a community organization in Chicago (urban) and a consortium of state-based farmworker services agencies in five states (rural): Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, and Wisconsin (lead agency). Each state had a funded statewide program that provided services to farmworkers. The agency in Indiana opted-out, so an agency in Nebraska was invited and became a fifth member of the Consortium. These Consortium states had the largest numbers of farmworkers in the Midwest. Michigan had more farmworkers than each of the other four states.

For three years as a practicing anthropologist (ethnographer), the author, as Project Educator, developed and implemented camp-based HIV/AIDS education in rural areas of Michigan for an extended agricultural summer (May through early October). Each year he expanded the educational program and its geographic targets, and, over time, he spoke with activists from HIV/AIDS initiatives across the state, concerned for the known as well as potential occurrence of HIV/AIDS in urban as well as rural areas. Although farmworkers were generally not available until late afternoon and/or early evening, by leaving early, the Project Educator could visit Latinx counseling services and the home agency's Migrant Head Start program in rural locales. He was welcome, first, because he was working for a community organization known to serve Latinx farmworkers and other Latinx individuals who were experiencing socio-cultural-economic inequities. Second, because little was known about HIV/AIDS, interested counselors and staff could ask questions. Not only was the Project Educator providing basic education services to farmworkers, mostly Latinx as well as other backgrounds, he offered suitable information, if he knew it, and offered reading materials for these professionals, most of whom shared an interest in serving workers in agriculture and anyone else who was Latinx.

And in turn, through these public contacts, the Project Educator learned a little about hidden histories of the state's rural areas, which was useful for conducting HIV/AIDS education outreach. The most instructive was information on which growers and which farm administrators were hesitant about provision of services to their workers. Two growers in the state had a known reputation for not allowing services to workers they hired.

Several growers in contrast were encouraging and showed the Project Educator where their workers were staying and suggested appropriate times for visitation, when they left the fields or orchards. Two growers offered the farm's communal room. The ethnographic finding which offered the most insight was the decision-making process. For two-generation farms, managed by son-and-father, rather than one alone, sons sent the Project Educator to speak with their father, whether permission should be given to talk to workers. Three times that this happened, the father denied permission to provide HIV/AIDS education to their workers. Conversations with various fathers, and observing son-and-father interactions and one instance of daughter-and-father as farm co-owners, revealed that farm management decisions were made by the next generation's owner-manager, such as scheduling workers, which fields to crop, what fertilizers to use, and so on. The adult son in turn gave the father the important task of approving educational services to their hired farmworkers.

The point-of-view assumed by Project Educator was that HIV/AIDS education could and should be provided to everyone – including farmworkers. This chapter is based on several earlier analyses that reflect this position. Adjustments appear in the original language (notably 'Latinx' replaces *Latinos* and/or *Latinas*) in order to emphasize a retrospective account of a first job as a 'practicing anthropologist' who had completed a doctorate in anthropology. At the time of this HIV/AIDS education program, an initial conceptualization had dissipated that HIV/AIDS was a syndrome concentrated among a particular population. Instead, the altered position was everyone in a wide age range was at risk for contracting HIV, except very young persons, if they were HIV-negative at birth. Initially, the very old were believed to not require attention. Since that time, elderly persons have become active recipients of HIV/AIDS education and related health services (Andriote, 2020; Nguyen and Holodniy, 2008).

Efforts to publish aspects of this field experience continued the advice received from Dr. Richard Navarro (personal communication 1988), who was a colleague of the Project Educator's dissertation advisor, in a conversation a few weeks after beginning employment at the statewide farmworker service agency. He made the suggestion of encapsulating elements of the project's activities, whenever speaking with the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). This would provide succinct information on one project, and, if other employees were doing the same thing, the CEO would have a basic but comprehensive view of the organization's activities, which would prove useful for management of the agency. The

Project Educator extended this idea outside his work efforts for the camp-based framework that he was developing-implementing to publish in non-anthropology journals, whose focus was HIV/AIDS.

In retrospect, interactive communications in rural areas and choosing where to publish share the intent of *public anthropology* (Borofsky, 2020, 463-464) and the original aim of *applied anthropology* (466-467) on "targeted transparency" (Borofsky, 2019, 190-191). The basic idea was providing analyses to third parties in different areas of the United States that would be most able to act on behalf of diverse persons who were performing farm labor and challenged by structural health vulnerabilities and precarious socio-economic conditions. This was taking place across the state of Michigan, where individuals in rural towns and urban areas were occasionally initiating and/or performing HIV education activities for migrant farmworkers. Given a dispersal of farmworkers throughout the United States, third parties with experience and/or knowledge of HIV/AIDS services might be in a position to encourage and/or activate HIV/AIDS education for farmworkers in various rural locales of other states. As another way to consider the participatory commonalities of *public anthropology* and *applied anthropology*, this process of informational sharing was "practicing anthropology" with targeted farmworkers as well as individuals inside and outside the state who were concerned about combatting the phenomenon of HIV/AIDS.

Information and analyses need not be written. They can be participatory through meeting presentations. There was an active network of professionals who regularly met during in-state HIV/AIDS conferences and multiple workshops. In these collaborative efforts, information was shared among diverse urban and rural communities across Michigan. The Project Educator attended large-group presentations and participated in small-group break-out sessions. Variations existed for farmworker education, beyond the statewide program being developed-implemented. Other individuals at one time or another were providing HIV/AIDS education in local labor camps, during off-work hours. None of them received funding, until a local American Red Cross office received funding for one county in western Michigan. Visiting these activists while he was developing and implementing the farmworker HIV/AIDS education program in rural Michigan, the Project Educator was able to learn from them, through the time that they took to meet and share ideas.

Some content from original sources is summarized in this chapter to which are added unpublished notes in order to provide the context for how

ethnography was used to assess the HIV/AIDS education program as it was being developed-implemented. This enabled effective revision over a three-year period by participatory ethnography by the Project Educator, who simultaneously was the project designer and practitioner. As described by Cascio, Grond, Motta-Ochoa, et al., (2020) the rural Michigan project was similarly "open to emerging forms of engagement" (4) where, despite a different context, participatory ethnography offered "valuable insight in the agentive work of working together" (10). The efforts for their project involved 14 persons over a multi-week project: five neurodivergent students as the main bio-music designers, one filmmaker, two ethnographers, and five university members. Each of the five member agencies of Midwest Regional Farmworker AIDS Education Consortium in contrast was developing a viable field program for a shifting, spatially-diverse population of seasonal and migratory, as well as home-based farmworkers. One variation was that the author as Project Educator added a layer of purposeful ethnography through participatory field practices.

# HIV/AIDS Education among Farmworkers in the Midwestern United States

J. Raúl Magaña (1991) was the first anthropologist to publish on risk for HIV/AIDS among agricultural workers. Significantly, his research was conducted in a borderland city in California (Magaña and Carrier, 1991). At that time, the states of Texas, California and Florida ranked one-two-three in number of farmworkers, which has shifted slightly to California, Texas, Washington, Florida, Oregon, North Carolina (Wiltz, 2016, para. 8). California, Florida and Texas have ranked continuously among the highest in newly diagnosed cases of HIV (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020, Table 18, p. 108) and among the four highest states (California, Florida, New York, Texas) in total number of persons living with HIV (Table 19, pp. 109-110). At the time that the camp-based HIV/AIDS education program was being developed-implemented for farmworkers in Michigan, that state ranked 18th in HIV cases. It ranked 14th in newly diagnosed HIV cases a quarter century later in 2015, behind the first five states of Florida, California, Texas, New York, and Georgia (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2017).

Farmworkers in Michigan typically worked from May through October. Their numbers peaked in June and July. Over three years with the HIV/AIDS education program, Michigan "received" more migrant farmworkers each year than other Midwestern states. Texas, Florida and Mexico were places of origin for most of the state's migrant farmworkers (Bletzer, 1991, 174). This general pattern has recently shifted. Numbers in eight of the 12 Midwestern states in the first decade of this century were three times greater than an increase in the Latinx population across the entire United States (Valerio-Jiménez, Vaquera-Vásquez, and Fox, 2017, 7-8).

The first year that the camp-based project was operational, similar percentages of its participants self-identified as Mexican or Mexican American, which corresponds to an official Information Sheet distributed one year later by the Inter-Agency Migrant Council in Michigan. Because farmworkers originated from states among the highest in diagnosed cases of HIV (i.e., Florida and Texas), there was a concern that those who entered the state may have been exposed to HIV prior to arrival, wherever they might have traveled, and/or they might become infected through engagement in risk behavior after arrival in a destination state and transmit it in other places, when they left the state of Michigan.

Agriculture is one of the most hazardous industries in the United States. Researchers and advocates distinguish between seasonal agricultural workers (SAW) who perform farm labor in the state where they live, and migrant agricultural workers (MAW) who leave a home state to travel-migrate to other states, where they perform farm labor. For both migrant and seasonal farmworkers, risks to health include musculoskeletal injuries from bending, kneeling, lifting, pulling, pushing, sorting, squatting, stooping (Holmes, 2013; Wilk, 1986), as well as exposure to allergenic chemicals, unsafe or improperly operated farm machinery, poor sanitation in labor camps and fields, and general deterioration of health through dehydration and extreme labor conditions (Horton, 2016). More recently, beginning April 2020, Doctors-Without-Borders and Dr. Seth Holmes (University of California, Berkeley) confirmed multiple cases of COVID-19 among farmworkers in an agricultural area of southern Florida (Sankey, 2020).

Researchers began reporting on farm labor health near the end of the past century (e.g., Fritsch, 1976; Coye, 1985; Wilk, 1986, 1993; Scheder, 1988; Dever, 1991; Slesinger, Christenson, and Cautley, 1986; Slesinger, Wheatley, and Wellin, 1988; Slesinger, 1992). As expected, research on farm labor health continues into this century (e.g., McCurdy, Samuels, Carroll, et al., 2003; Villarejo, 2003; Brumitt, Reisch, Krasnoselsky, et al., 2011; Osborne, Blake, Fullen, et al., 2012; Holmes, 2013; Arcury, Summers, Talton, et al., 2015; Horton, 2016; Unterberger, 2018). Since the previous century (e.g., Wehrwein, 1925), before studies on farmworker health, publications regarding farm labor inequities emphasized farmworkers' socio-economic status, often with imaginative titles that are highlighted with poignant terminology (alphabetical): *American Exodus* (Gregory, 1989), *As You Sow* (Goldschmidt, 1978), *Bitter-Sweet Soil* (Chan, 1986), *Bottom Rung* (Tolnay, 1999), *Caste of Despair* (Goldfarb, 1981), *Hired Hands and Plowboys* (Schob, 1975), *Shadow of Slavery* (Daniel, 1972), *Slaves We Rent* (Moore, 1965), *Throwed Away* (Flowers, 1990), *Wandering Workers* (Heaps, 1968), *Working Poor* (Griffith and Kissam, 1995). Interest in socio-economic inequities increased after Depression-era research by Carey McWilliams, published as *Factories in the Fields* (1939) and *Ill Fares the Lands* (1942). Possibly the earliest interest in low socio-economic status among workers in agriculture is *The Agricultural Ladder* (Spillman, 1919).

When the Project Educator began providing health education in migrant labor camps in Michigan, he had little interest in publishing in an anthropology journal. Having witnessed the many ways that Latinx

residents were offering HIV-related services to farmworkers in Michigan, he wanted this message to go out to an audience beyond anthropologists. As it were, rare publications on HIV/AIDS among farmworkers appeared in community health journals and typically described farmworkers in the Eastern United States (e.g., Giocochea-Balbona, 1977, 1982; Castro, Lieb, and Jaffe, 1988; Castro and Narkunas, 1989; Frees, Polkowski, Farmer, et al., 1992; Foulk, Lafferty, Ryan, and Robertson, 1989, Rodman, Misak, Taylor, et al., 1988). Initial writing by the Project Educator on the Midwest farmworker experience relied on these early publications by non-anthropologists for background information.

Apart from HIV/AIDS education among farmworkers who came to Michigan to perform farm labor and those residing in Michigan year-round who performed seasonal labor, the Project Educator offered HIV/AIDS education among staff at migrant and community health clinics, and a few private clinics that served farmworkers and low-income communities. He conducted HIV/AIDS education workshops twice each year (pre-season) for outreach supervisors, who worked with self-selected or peer-recommended farmworkers to serve as Camp Health Aides for labor camps where they lived and/or sometimes nearby labor camps, whose residents might need triage to outside services and/or health-related consultations. Most Camp Health Aides were women. A few were young men. Personal contact with Camp Health Aides during the Michigan agricultural season revealed that these women and men, despite their main activity of farm labor, provided effective health education and were able to triage camp residents to outside services, when the need arose.

As a recent graduate in anthropology, the Project Educator held a view that ethnography was a field tool to better understand what it is about farmworkers that situates them as a people at risk to HIV infection. He considered the primacy of ethnography simultaneous with HIV/AIDS education that took place in typically on-the-farm labor camps. These camps housed mostly migratory farmworkers, who came to Michigan from other states or Mexico, as well as a few camps of seasonal farmworkers from nearby locales in Michigan. Throughout camp-based intervention contacts, farmworkers became informed through “talk” of things that concerned them. Both men and women were willing to discuss issues related to sexual practices that were related to HIV transmission, similar to the findings reported by Milagritos González Rivera (1992, 132) in her doctoral fieldwork in Ingham County labor camps of central Michigan.

Risk behaviors for HIV infection among farmworkers differed from those that typified Latinx urban populations in Michigan (e.g., Bracho de Carpio, Carpio-Cedraro, and Anderson, 1990) and other states (e.g., Marín, 1988), which was the focus of materials on HIV/AIDS at this point in time. One study of farmworkers in the state of Georgia confirmed the use of needles for vitamins and medications, but not illicit drugs (Lafferty, 1991). Ear piercing and tattooing were possible uses of needles among farmworkers, mentioned at the conferences in Michigan. Little evidence suggested that farmworkers used injectable drugs in Michigan, although several men who could repeat popular names for drugs that they learned from non-farmworkers outside the state. The drugs of preference among farmworkers in Michigan were alcohol and marijuana, one of which (alcohol) at that time was declared not to be an antecedent to or a co-occurring factor with risky sexual behavior (Bolton, Vincke, Mak, and Dennehy, 1992).

Unprotected sex was a more likely risk behavior among farmworkers through contracted sex with sex workers, and consensual sex between men. As it were, little was known about the consensual sex practices between farm labor men and women or whether issues of sexuality for this group replicated those emphasized in Latinx HIV education reported for other states (e.g., Amaro, 1988; Singer, Castillo, Davison, and Flores, 1990a; Singer, Flores, Davison, et al., 1990b), as well as one program in Detroit, Michigan (Bracho de Carpio, Carpio-Cedrano, and Anderson, 1990), whose founders often presented workshops at the statewide HIV/AIDS conferences in Michigan. Practices of unprotected sex between women and men became a later issue with cases reported of infected migrant men, when they returned home to Mexico, whether they were single or married (e.g., Magis-Rodriguez, del Rio-Zolezzi, Valdespino-Gomez, and Garcia-Garcia, 1996; Mena, 2000; Salgado de Snyder, Acevedo, Díaz-Pérez, and Saldivar-Garduño, 2000).

Farmworkers knew that contractual sex varied in Mexico and Michigan. They described the sex workers in Mexico City who performed contractual sex in "dating strips" with regulated houses of prostitution (*zona de citas* or *zona registrada*), whereas North American sex work in rural areas usually entailed women as well as men who were "in the life" and worked the streets. Migrant men knew where to locate sex workers "on the stroll" in rural towns near labor camps. Although they more often talked about sex workers who worked in local taverns, sexually active men availed contractual services of women who visited the labor camps, as "heels on wheels." More than once, and in more than one county, outsider women

were in camps, or arriving, simultaneous with the scheduled camp-based HIV/AIDS education. Each time they ignored the Project Educator and went about soliciting men as they drove through the camp, sometimes using men's names. At one camp, a man joked, "Give them some pamphlets" (*hay que darles las pamfletas*), that he knew the Project Educator distributed to farmworkers. In another county, a similarly risky activity was revealed when a vehicle arrived, driven by an older adolescent male with an older adolescent female seated in the middle of the backseat. They obviously had been in the camp before, as they parked at a cabin where two men had waved them to stop. On another occasion, in the late afternoon at a camp along one side of a rural road, a vehicle with several women drove past the single-room cabins that were visible from the road and slowly headed to the rural community room located at the end of the road. The Camp Health Aide explained to the Project Educator, "They park their car behind the building at the end of the road and the men go there."

HIV/AIDS education messages disseminated for Latinx in Michigan had been minimal at the time of the camp-based farmworker program. The state's HIV/AIDS campaign began in English "media and print" in January 1989 (television, radio, posters, newspapers, leaflets) that were expanded in June 1990 to include "paid ads" and Public Service Announcements on local cablevision in Spanish and English (Jan Ruff, Michigan Department of Public Health, personal communication, 1992). Many farmworkers who worked in the state, however, lacked sufficient language skills to benefit from English information that was aired through broadcast media, and even more lacked the literacy skills to benefit from written messages.

Ottawa County in western Michigan was the state's earliest, if not the first, instance of farmworker HIV/AIDS education. That county is neither heavily urbanized nor located near the state's urban centers (Detroit in southeastern Michigan, Lansing in central Michigan, Saginaw and Flint in northeastern Michigan). Similar to the participatory approaches for other Latinx HIV/AIDS programs in Michigan (e.g., Bracho de Carpio, Carpio-Cedraro, and Anderson, 1990), visits to Ottawa County labor camps began as efforts initially conducted as drug abuse outreach by a trained bilingual counselor. She was including HIV/AIDS materials the summer before the official release of a Latinx video, *Ojos Que No Ven* (Latino AIDS Project, 1987). The HIV/AIDS literature and this bilingual video at this point in time, however, were designed to target urban groups, where needle-sharing with injectable drugs was a primary risk behavior. In Kalamazoo