Texas Commission on
Alcohol and Drug Abuse

An Ethnographic Comparison of the Mexican American Drug Culture in El Paso, Texas: 1987 to 1997

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An Ethnographic Comparison of the Mexican American Drug Culture in El Paso, Texas: 1987 to 1997

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Contents

Chapter 1. Introduction

This report is based on an ethnographic study of 60 active and recovering injecting drug users (IDUs) in El Paso, Texas. Most study participants (97%) are Mexican Americans who refer to themselves as *tecatos*.[1] The term *tecato* will be used throughout this report to refer to the study participants. Initially, the term tecato was used to distinguish heroin users from opium users on the U.S.-Mexico border in the 1940s. However, tecatos now include people who inject heroin, cocaine, and "speedballs," a combination of heroin and cocaine. Data were collected by the author, an ethnographer, and by two research assistants, one a recovering addict and the other an ex-drug dealer.

This study was supported by a grant obtained from the Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse (TCADA) in the summer of 1997. This ethnographic research study was designed to revisit the El Paso area tecato drug culture to see if any social changes had occured that may affect substance abuse prevention, intervention, and treatment strategies offered to tecatos. The study presented a unique opportunity to follow-up on a similar study conducted a decade ago, and affirms TCADA's committment to explore substance abuse issues found on the Texas-Mexico border.

The objectives of the study were as follows:

- To learn if the drug population is open or closed, and if it is a new or an old cohort;
- To identify the 1997 drug cultural norms and values;
- To identify drugs of choice;
- To identify the following aspects of the El Paso drug culture: drug distribution patterns, methods of drug ingestion, hustles, network structures and functions, social stratification, and treatment histories; and,
- To compare the 1997 drug culture with the one that existed in 1987.

Background

El Paso, Texas was selected as the research site for these reasons: the principal investigator's past research on the El Paso's drug culture,[2] the city's geographic location on the Texas-Mexico border, and the city's high incidence of heroin abuse by some Mexican American residents. The principal investigator lived in El Paso from 1987 to 1990 and collected ethnographic data for a National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)-funded project. During that time period, he immersed himself in the addicts' lives, and as a consequence, he developed strong and lasting connections with many members of the target population. After leaving El Paso for San Antonio, Texas, he continued his relationship with members of the target population for the next five years through El Paso SAFE 2000, a drug prevention project which he evaluated.

El Paso is the fourth largest city in Texas, and the seventeenth largest city in the United States, with a population of 606,526.[3] Located on the Texas-Mexico border, it is contiguous to Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua, Mexico. The city of Juarez is the fifth largest city in Mexico, and it has a population of 1,166,246 people.[4] When combined, the El Paso and Juarez metropolitan population is slightly under two million people. The population of El Paso County is 70 percent Hispanic, 26 percent Anglo, and 3 percent African American. El Paso is one of the largest urban areas in the state,

as well as one of the most isolated cities, since El Paso and Ciudad Juarez are the only large cities within a 300-mile radius. The two cities are separated by the Rio Grande River which forms the border between the United States and Mexico. The Rio Grande border region is one of the busiest in the world, with an estimated four million border crossings each year. Due to the area's remote location and the constant surge of population movement between the two cities and nations, the El Paso and Ciudad Juarez area is a well-known and direct path for illicit drugs into the United States.

STATISTICAL DATA

The tecato culture is relatively unknown.[5] In past studies, researchers have focused on the characteristics of Mexican American injecting drug users' (IDUs) demographic characteristics, on drugs of choice, on their over representation in correctional institutions, and membership in gangs.[6] For example, Wiebel in his comparative study (1987-1989) of IDUs in Baltimore, Denver, and El Paso learned that: 1) El Paso had the largest number of respondents residing in their own home or apartment; 2) El Paso had the largest, and Baltimore the smallest, percentage of respondents receiving illegal income in the six months period prior to their interview; and 3) El Paso respondents were much older than their cohorts in Baltimore or Denver when they began injecting with a median age of 28.[7]

Numerical data is important, and it tells part of the Mexican American IDU's story. However, to get the rest of the story, ethnographic data is needed to learn how tecato cultural norms inform tecato stratification, tecato socialization, and patterns of behavior associated with the various roles tecatos play in using, buying, selling, and hustling to obtain heroin.

ETHNOGRAPHIC DATA

Information on El Paso tecatos and their culture derives primarily from Ramos' study along with Mata and Jorquez' study. Mata and Jorquez provide a general description of social networks and needle sharing practices of Mexican American IDUs in several southwestern cities including El Paso.[8] They identify two types of social networks: networks which are barrio-oriented and closed to outsiders, and networks which are open, multi-ethnic, and inter-community-oriented. They also describe two types of Mexican American IDUs: those who have control over their drug use and those who do not. Mexican American IDUs who exert this control are older and take fewer chances, whereas those who do not exert control are younger and are labeled "novices," "gutter hypes," and "burnouts." They suggest that younger Mexican American IDUs tend not to concern themselves with police surveillance and are more likely to share unsterilized syringes.

In his study of El Paso tecatos, Ramos finds that tecatos have their own culture, language, and system of stratification.[9] Tecatos stratify themselves into *tecatos buenos* (high status), *tecatos medianos* (individuals neither low or high status), *tecatos cucarachos* (low status), and *tecatos chafas* (low status but with the potential of being high status). Their drug cultural norms influence the buying, using, and selling of heroin, and the "hustles" (legal and illegal activities) they engage in to make money for drugs, and how the structure and function of a network influences needle sharing. The study also shows the role "straight" society members, some drug treatment counselors, and the parole system play in the maintenance of El Paso's tecato drug culture. As indicated earlier, an objective of the present study is to revisit the El Paso culture to ascertain if the cultural norms and values found in the late 1980s are still being used by members of the tecato culture.

Methodology

Data were gathered in three visits to El Paso, Texas, by the principal investigator. On each visit the principal investigator spent more than four days among the target population which included active IDUs and drug dealers. While in El Paso, he immersed himself into the subjects' daily lives, and he reestablished his relationship with the tecatos he met when he lived in El Paso from 1987-1990. Because of his past relationship with tecatos, the principal investigator was able to study tecatos "up close" and to ask his old acquaintances to help recruit study subjects.

BACKGROUND OF THE RESEARCH ASSISTANTS

To gain access to tecatos in unfamiliar settings and to facilitate data gathering, the principal investigator hired two assistants. Fernando is a recovering addict whom the principal investigator knows well and who is still seen as a high status addict by active tecatos. Besides having been an active tecato for 20 years, Fernando had been a street dealer and a distributor. Luisa, a middle-aged woman, does not have a history of drug use, but she knows the target population well because of her friendship with street dealers, middle level cocaine and heroin distributers, and marijuana smugglers. Both individuals speak the tecato argot well, and they also know active tecatos in El Paso's sister city, Ciudad Juarez, Mexico.

DATA COLLECTION

The principal investigator collected most of the data with the assistance of Fernando and Luisa. Prior to his data gathering visits to El Paso, the principal investigator conferred with Fernando and Luisa by telephone on the types of tecatos to be invited to participate in the study. They, in turn, recruited subjects either for focus group discussion sessions or for in-depth, unstructured interviews. The focus group sessions were conducted in subjects' apartments, back rooms of bars, and abandoned buildings that often functioned as shooting galleries. In-depth interviews were conducted in similar places as the focus group sessions, as well as in one of the research assistant's car.

On the occasion when a subject was not available for an interview, the principal investigator took advantage of that time to observe copping areas, where drugs are sold and used. He was always accompanied by either a research assistant or with an active tecato whom the principal investigator knew from his previous work in El Paso. Although time was limited during the data gathering phase, the principal investigator observed and talked with 15 respondents many times throughout the data gathering phase.

RESEARCH DESIGN

A total of 60 cocaine and heroin injectors (40 men and 20 women) were invited to participate in the study. Forty individuals (30 men and 10 women) were recruited for focus group discussion sessions, and 20 (10 men and 10 women) were invited for in-depth unstructured interviews. The principal investigator with the assistance of a research assistant conducted four focus group discussion sessions (three male and one female) with ten individuals in each session. Most study participants (40) were paid a $10 incentive fee for an interview or for participation in a focus group discussion session.

Respondents were asked a set of open-ended questions. Focus group discussion sessions were recorded on audio tape as were most in-depth interviews. For those interviews that were not audio taped, the respondents' answers were recorded soon after the interview. Audio-recorded data from in-depth interviews and focus group discussion sessions were transcribed and analyzed with Ethnograph, a program for computer-assisted analysis of text-based data.

All interviews and focus group discussion sessions were then coded according to the contents of each sentence, and multiple codes were often used. Ethnograph was then used to collate all text with similar codes.

Every attempt was made to get an adequate sample of people from the various drug-using and dealing networks in the different areas of the El Paso, such as the inner city (South El Paso), east, and northeast. Although no formal interviews and focus group discussion sessions were conducted in Ciudad Juarez, the principal investigator did talk informally with five active tecatos in Ciudad Juarez (three were U.S. citizens; two were Mexican citizens).

In addition to the 60 active tecatos, seven recovering tecatos were interviewed. They were individuals the principal investigator knew from the time that he lived in El Paso. They were interviewed because they had been high status tecatos when they were active users and because they could discuss barriers to and facilitators of intervention and prevention from the perspective of a recovering tecato.

DATA PRESENTATION

To provide for anonymity, all of the names used in this report are pseudonyms. Most of the quotes are presented in English after having been translated from the tecato argot to English. To give the reader examples of how tecatos use their language, some quotes are presented in the tecato argot, accompanied by an English translation.

Chapter 2. Ethnographic Sample

Sixty active tecatos (40 men and 20 women) were invited to participate in the study. An additional seven high status tecatos (four men and three women) in recovery were also interviewed, but they were not considered to be part of the ethnographic sample. These individuals in recovery were interviewed because they were over age 50 and could add a historical perspective on the El Paso drug culture and the recovery process.

Although the research plan called for inviting individuals ages 18 and older, three active injectors (two men and one women), ages 15 and 17, were included in the study. In all three cases, the guardian of these minors not only granted permission for their participation, but also had recruited the individuals. The guardians wanted these minors to participate in the study because they thought the principal investigator would advise them to become drug-free.

Tables 1-10 depict the sample population's characteristics. The numerical data presented in these tables describe half the story. The rest of the story is told with ethnographic excerpts. These excerpts are recounted in words of the respondents and are representative of what most respondents said about their life circumstances.

Drug Use

All the respondents were active polydrug users as seen in Table 1. All the respondents drank beer, and most of them (92%) injected a speedball, a mixture of cocaine and heroin. Three-quarters of the respondents smoked marijuana.

Table 1. Respondents' Drug Use

Drug	Total	Male	Female
Beer	60 (100%)	40 (100%)	20 (100%)
Cocaine	3 (5%)	0 (0%)	3 (15%)
Heroin	2 (3%)	2 (5%)	0 (0%)
Marijuana	45 (75%)	28 (70%)	17 (85%)
Speedball	55 (92%)	38 (95%)	17 (85%)

The sequence in which individuals consumed these substances is best explained by Domingo, a 46 year old tecato who now speedballs but who started injecting heroin at the age of 16.

> It depends. As you know, it depends on many things. Right now, my job is shoplifting. So, I have good days and bad days. When I come out ahead, I have a little money for heroin and cocaine and I hit myself with the two [speedball]. But, when things are hot and I can't hit any stores, I have a bad day and I smoke *mota* [marijuana] and drink more beer than when I have money for my speedball. Before, what? Eight years ago? You remember. When I met you, I was selling heroin. Then, I was using heroin most of the time, and I was starting to speedball. Then, I wouldn't do *mota* [marijuana]. For what? I didn't have a reason. I'd drink a little beer for the thirst, and not because I needed it. See, it all depends. If you got money or *la cura* [the fix], you don't need the beer or *mota* [marijuana] to fight off the *malillas* [withdrawal symptoms]. You can't say you

use only one thing because it all depends on your situation, and you go with the flow of the situation.

It also can be that you not only inject the two together [heroin and cocaine] *el speedball*, but that you inject heroin by itself and then a hit of cocaine by itself. Again, it all depends. I like to start out with *carga* [heroin] and then mix it later or just use *soda* [cocaine] by itself for a while. Some people might start the other way around. *Como le digo, todo depende.* [Like I'm telling you, it all depends.]

Age

The respondents ranged in age from 15 to 60 years old.

Table 2. Age of Respondents

Age Range	Total	Male	Female
15 - 20	9 (15%)	5 (13%)	4 (20%)
21 - 30	16 (27%)	11 (28%)	5 (25%)
31 - 40	15 (25%)	9 (23%)	6 (30%)
41 - 50	14 (23%)	9 (23%)	5 (25%)
51 - 60	6 (10%)	6 (15%)	0 (0%)

Ethnicity

As might be expected for a U.S.- Mexico border city, the majority (97%) of the respondents were Mexican American (Table 3). Although several African American and Anglo addicts were invited to be in the study, all but two Anglos declined to be interviewed. They did not give a reason for declining the invitation to be interviewed.

Table 3. Ethnicity of Respondents

Ethnicity	Total	Male	Female
Anglo	2 (3%)	0 (0%)	2 (3%)
Mexican American	58 (97%)	40 (67%)	18 (30%)

Education

As illustrated in Table 4, most respondents (90%) did not graduate from high school. One-quarter of the men and one-third of the women did not go beyond the sixth grade.

Table 4. Respondents' Education Level

Level of Education	Total	Male	Female
Under Grade 6	14 (23%)	10 (25%)	4 (20%)
Grade 7 - 9	26 (43%)	19 (48%)	7 (35%)
Grade 9 - 12	14 (23%)	7 (18%)	7 (35%)
High School Grad.	4 (8%)	2 (5%)	2 (10%)
GED	2 (3%)	2 (5%)	0 (0%)

Most individuals gave one or more of the following reasons for leaving school: poverty, lack of English language fluency, and substance abuse. Female respondents also reported pregnancy as a reason for dropping out of school.

The following ethnographic excerpts from interviews with Dario and María are representative of the reasons respondents gave for leaving school before high school graduation. Dario is 28 years old, and he left school in the seventh grade.

I left school because I was behind, and I was getting into trouble at the end. *La bronca* [the problem] is that we were very poor. Well, we're still very poor, but back then, you know, there was no money for school clothes and all those little

things that you need to take, so I didn't go all the time. I'd stay home because my *jefita* [mother] didn't want to send me all poor looking. And also, I couldn't speak English, and I didn't want to go either for that reason. Then, like I told you, I started drinking and smoking *mota* [marijuana]. Then, I didn't know I would need education. I didn't give a damn. Now, I know I need to speak English and to read complex things, but being like I am, *prendido* [hooked] there is no chance that I will get more schooling. I would like to go, but well, it doesn't look like I'll go. Maybe I could get some training when they arrest and send me to the state penitentiary.

María is 22 years old, and said she first left school in the eighth grade.

La neta [truth], I left school in the sixth grade. I tell people, like I just told you, that I left school in the eighth, but I didn't really go through the seventh or eighth. I was gangbanging with my homies smoking marijuana, so after sixth grade I'd register and not go. They [the school] just passed me to the eighth. Then, my *ruco* [boyfriend] at that time got me *gorda* [pregnant], so I stopped going. My *jefita* [mother] didn't care because she wasn't around. I was living with my grandmother because my *jefita andaba de loca* [mother was an addict]. You know, I was doing my own *jales* [stuff], and she was doing her stuff, so I stopped going [to school] when I got together with my *ruco* [old man].

Marital Status

Many (70%) of the respondents were divorced (Table 5). All of the divorced respondents reported that their marriages had been common-law marriages.

Table 5. Respondents' Marital Status

Marital Status	Total	Male	Female
Single	13 (22%)	9 (23%)	4 (20%)
Divorce	42 (70%)	30 (75%)	12 (60%)
Married	4 (7%)	1 (3%)	3 (15%)
Widow	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	1 (5%)

The women were more open than the men in discussing marital relationships. Men would simply state that they were single, married, or divorced, while most women gave reasons for their marital status. For example, Gloria, a 43 year old tecata, explained her situation.

The tecata's marriage depends on many things. You get together with a *vato* [guy] out of necessity as much as out of love. Sometimes, to be honest, I don't know the difference between love and necessity. For me, it's a marriage of convenience, and I think it has been that way with the last three guys. A lot of *rucas* [girls] are going to tell you that they are married to their guy because they are madly in love with him. But, if you watch closely, you'll learn that there are other reasons for their being together. As God is my witness, it's going to be like this: she's with that guy because he's a connection, or he provides a place and food for her kids. Or, he protects her from other men. You know, being out here [on the street] you have to have protection, specially *si andas moviendo* [if you are selling drugs]. I don't want to bad-mouth marriages, but ask yourself the question, "Why is it that many tecatos have a common-law marriage?" It's for the reasons that I'm telling.

> We [women] cry that men take advantage of us. They do to a certain point, but we also take part in getting messed up… A woman can sweet talk you, *y con eso le tapa el sol con el dedo chiquito* [and with her talk she can pull the wool over your eyes]. That's why you have to be very alert, doctor. You have to learn when the marriage is the real thing or when it's a *movida* [strategy].
>
> For me, a marriage offer is real when he offers to marry me in church, when he has a real job, not one selling *mugrero* [heroin], and when he gets me a real house and not one of these apartments in the *presidios* [public housing]. But, while I'm a tecata and he's a tecato, it's going to be common-law and to our convenience. I look for stability, a hard working man who will give me a home for me and the children, but I know that I'll never find it while I'm hooked on heroin. That's the tragedy.

Living Arrangements

Slightly more than a third (38%) of the respondents, lived in their own place while the remainder (62%) lived with a relative or a friend (Table 6).

Table 6. Respondents' Living Arrangements

Place of Residence	Total	Male	Female
Own Place	23 (38%)	14 (35%)	9 (45%)
With Relatives	21 (35%)	15 (38%)	6 (30%)
With Friends	16 (27%)	11 (28%)	5 (25%)

Even though most respondents did not report being homeless, there are occasions when these individuals were homeless. What leads to homelessness? Again, all respondents reported that it depends on the situation. Roberto explained it this way:

> I would say that there is a place to stay, be it with family, a friend or your own place, but there are times you get so strung out that your family, be it your wife, parents, or other relatives, or friends who are always other tecatos, get tired of your crap, and they don't want you around. That's when you are homeless for a little while. Then, after awhile, one of these people takes you in because they feel sorry for you when you come around crying.

Employment

Most of the respondents (90%) were unemployed (Table 7). The few employed males worked mainly in construction and on a day-to-day basis. These individuals usually worked for a relative who was a subcontractor for a larger construction company. Although none of the women were working at the time of the study, some (about 35%) reported that they had worked as assemblers in the garment industry and as hotel maids.

Table 7. Respondents' Employment Status

Employment	Total	Male	Female
Employed	6 (10%)	6 (15%)	0 (0%)
Unemployed	54 (90%)	54 (85%)	20 (100%)

Many male and female respondents reported that it was easier and more profitable to obtain money illegally than through legal and regular employment. Poncho, a tecato for 20 years, explained his employment situation as follows:

> Even if I wanted to, I couldn't make enough money to support my habit. I inject three, four times a day. That's three or four *medios* [hits] a day. At $20 a *medio* [hit], that's $60-$80 a day. There is no way I can make that kind of money in a regular job. If I was like those rich professional *gavachos* [Anglos] who connect *soda* [cocaine] over here, I could make it, but with no education to earn, its better to steal or sell *carga* [heroin]. It's also the reality that there aren't all that many jobs here either. So, why break my head thinking about getting money legally? To prevent *malillas* [withdrawal symptoms], I don't waste time thinking about this or that, legal or illegal, I just go get money the best way I can. That's the truth. But, as I said, if I had a professional job like these *gavachitos* [little white boys], it would be a different story. I'd get money legally. Who wouldn't want to do it that way?

Number of Children

As shown in Table 8, all of the women had children. Data was not collected on the number of children male respondents had because many men did not want to discuss their children. Most male respondents reported that their child or children stayed with the biological mother and that, in some cases, the fathers did not communicate with their children because of the fathers' drug abusing lifestyle. The majority of the men also reported that they saw themselves as failures and that they tried not to have their children see them the way they were.

Table 8. Number of Female Respondents' Children

Number of Children	Total
None	0 (0%)
One	2 (10%)
Two	8 (40%)
Three	3 (15%)
Four	3 (15%)
Five	4 (20%)

According to female respondents, if their children were not with them, the children were with a relative such as the biological grandmother or the mother's siblings or aunts. None of the women reported ever having had their children in foster placement. These women, as with the men, did not want to discuss their children. Most of these respondents made a comment such as the following: "*Me da verqüenza. La regué de amadre con mis chavalos.* [I'm embarrassed to talk about it. I messed up greatly with my children.]"

Male respondents reported that it was difficult and painful to have a relationship with their biological children. In most cases, their ex-partners did not allow them to see the children. Their lifestyles as active addicts and incarceration also prevented them from maintaining a relationship with their children.

Treatment History

As indicated in Table 9, slightly more than half of the male and female respondents had been in treatment. The men in treatment were participating in an outpatient program by court order.

Table 9. Respondents' Treatment History

History	Total	Male	Female
In Treatment	5 (8%)	5 (13%)	0 (0%)
Had Trtmt	33 (55%)	21 (53%)	12 (60%)
Never Had Trmt	22 (37%)	14 (35%)	8 (40%)

Much can be said about the individuals who reported having been in treatment. When asked to describe their treatment experience, some of these individuals referred to the detoxification process they experienced while incarcerated as treatment. These respondents, as well as individuals who had been in a treatment pro-

gram, were not clear on what constituted treatment. Those who actually had been in a treatment program did not connect with whatever treatment program they experienced. These respondents described seeing movies, and hearing lectures on different drugs and on triggers that cause relapse, but they did not understand that these activities were part of a treatment program. Apparently, the treatment staff did not explain to their clients that the different activities were part of a treatment program designed to help them become drug-free. José's comments were representative of what these respondents said.

> From your questions, it occurs to me that the different activities I had at the [treatment] center were to be related or tied together. It didn't happen that way for me. We had this, a movie, and then a talk or you know, different things here and there. None of it was tied together for me. The others here [in the focus group] can speak about their experiences, but for me there has never been a program that had an introduction that explained what was going to happen and what were supposed to be the results at the end. They don't tell you, "We are doing this because we want you to come out with these results or this relates to what we'll be doing this evening."

> Treatment hasn't helped me because it's been like different balloons floating in the air. They go everywhere. It's [treatment] disorganized, and I don't even know that it is treatment but different activities. You can say to me, "*Pendejo* [dumb fool], didn't you go to there for treatment? Therefore, you are getting treatment?" For me, the problem is that it is assumed that my reason for being there is the same as the staff's. I may just go there to reduce the amount of drugs I'm using, or to get a rest, or to obey a court order, or to get my probation, or parole officer off my back. What I'm saying is that everything has to be explained because the staff cannot assume that the tecato is thinking like he is.

It appears that the effort to learn more about men who have had sexual intercourse with men is having an unintended consequence in treatment programs. Some respondents going through an outpatient program and others who had been in a residential program reported being offended by treatment counselors who were overly concerned in learning about men who had sexual intercourse with other men. Federico was in an outpatient program, and he described this situation succinctly:

> With all due respect, I'm going to tell it to you *al la brava* [without mincing words]. The counselors *no valen madre* [are not worth a damn]. *No mas están allí para curase contigo*. [They are only there to get their kicks with you.] They got this thing about sex with men, and they won't let go of it. I can understand being asked once, but every time you see the guy *está chíngi, chíngi, chíngi contigo* [he is messing, messing, messing with you]. You tell the guy, "No, I don't have sex with guys." Two minutes later, *otra vez* [once again], "Some guys like to do it with guys, do you?" Before you leave, he hits you with the question again! "*Hombre! Es el colmo!* [Man! It's the ultimate!]" You would think that after meeting with you once or twice, he would learn *que no eres jóto* [that you are not queer].

> You also can't confide in them. There is no trust. Sometimes you want to tell them the truth, like you have the urge to shoot up *o que te diste un resbalón pero que no te has tirado otra vez* [or that you slipped once, but that you haven't shot up again.] But, you can't tell them that. If you're smart, you tell them nothing.

Some respondents who had been in treatment described one treatment activity as *brujería* [witchcraft]. They described activities that led the principal investigator to conclude that they were talking about role playing, and it was apparent that they were not familiar with role playing and its possible uses in treatment. Ramiro explained the situation as follows:

> In the drug abuse program in the federal prison in Terre Haute, Indiana, the people, well educated people, would put a chair in front of me and ask me to talk to the chair. In what way is my talking to a chair going to help me? *Eso viene haciendo como brujería.* [That ends up being like witchcraft.] Then, the counselor would say, "Imagine that your father is right there and you are talking with him." My father was dead at that time, and I wasn't going to talk with a dead person. Talking with the dead is witchcraft, and it does not bring good results. [The other members of the focus group agreed with him, and they concluded that role plays with dead people were dangerous.]

Probation and Parole

Many of the respondents were either on parole or probation (Table 10). About three-quarters of those who reported not being on parole or probation had been involved with law enforcement before, but had completed their probation or parole.

Table 10. No. of Respondents on Parole/Probation

Status	Total	Male	Female
Involved	41 (68%)	28 (70%)	13 (65%)
Not Involved	19 (32%)	12 (30%)	7 (35%)

Chapter 3. Drug Using Networks

Is the El Paso tecato population a closed or an open one? In a comparison of 1987 ethnographic data (320 in-depth interviews) with the findings from this study, the principal investigator concludes that the tecato population has gone from a closed to an open population. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss this change.

A Closed Network: 1987

JUAREZ, MEXICO

Being new to the border area in 1987, the principal investigator was surprised to learn that few active El Paso tecatos crossed into Mexico to inject, even though El Paso heroin came from Juarez. There were several reasons El Paso tecatos did not cross into Mexico. First of all, heroin was not readily available on Juarez streets. In addition, El Paso tecatos, like non-tecatos, feared Mexican police. Juarez police were and still are known for mistreating El Paso residents. Finally, most tecatos feared going through customs when they crossed back to the United States. They feared that, if detained by customs officials, they might go through *malillas* [withdrawal symptoms], and they wanted to avoid that situation.

Juan, a 60 year old tecato, explained why he and most others tecatos did not go to Juarez. His comments are representative of what other tecatos reported:

> There is no reason for a tecato to go. The best *carga* [heroin] is here on every street corner of the Segundo Barrio or any of the other barrios. I can buy my hit or two here without any trouble. Over there [in Juarez], I'd have trouble finding my fix or two. I can buy an ounce of *carga* [heroin] easier than a hit or two.
>
> Also, why run the risk of getting robbed and beaten up by Mexican police. Those bastards will find any excuse to stop you, search you, beat you up, and throw you in jail for the simple reason that you didn't have any money to give them.

Tecatos did cross into Mexico. However, those who crossed went because they wanted to stop their drug use or because they wanted to get away from the El Paso police or from a bad drug deal. These individuals generally stayed with relatives in Juarez.

EL PASO

El Paso consists of different barrios or neighborhoods. In 1987, tecatos bought and used drugs almost exclusively within their barrio. Even though a tecato had two or three connections from whom he or she bought heroin, these connections not only sold within the tecato's barrio, but also in many cases lived in their clients' barrio. Tecatos, like youth gang members, had and knew their turf, and they rarely crossed turf boundaries to buy or use drugs.

Roberto's comments were representative of what most (94%) tecatos reported about staying in their barrio in the 1980s and early 1990s.

You should know that the one thing a tecato doesn't want is problems. A problem for sure will keep a tecato from getting what he needs, a *cura* [fix] or the money to get it. A problem is going to another barrio than your own to buy or use. In the first place, a connection in another barrio, let's say in Chihuahuita, may not want to sell to me because he is going to wonder why I'm over there trying to buy. A *vato* [guy] from the Segundo Barrio is out of place in Chihuahuita. So, the connection or one of his *camelladores* [workers] is going to wonder if the guy from the Segundo is over there to put the finger on him because the guy from the Segundo made some deal with the cops. *Vatos de relaje* [informants] sometimes do that. Instead of burning someone from their barrio, they burn a guy from some other barrio.

In the second place, a tecato cannot only get beat up in some other barrio, but also he has nobody to help him. Here we all know each other *y nos damos esquina* [and we support each other]. If I'm in somebody else's house [barrio], I put my faith in God because chances are nobody is going to help me if I get into a problem.

INJECTING NETWORKS

In 1987, tecatos stayed within their own neighborhood injecting networks. Most (98%) injecting networks were made up of friends of long standing and relatives. Carmen succinctly described the close relationship between network members.

I'm always *tirándome* [shooting up] with the same people. It's like family. If I'm not with my cousins or brothers, I'm shooting up with the same friends I was in school with. It's this way because of trust. I don't mean that I trust all my relatives, but I always stay with people in the family or close friends who I know and trust. It's that way in jail and prison. I'm with family.

When you are a tecato, you can't trust nobody. That's the name of the game. Now with all these diseases, AIDS and hepatitis, you have to worry about besides being ripped off, it's best to stay with people you've known all your life.

Armando, another respondent, gave reasons for injecting with network members.

This *jale* [injecting] is a thing of being with your *camaradas* [buddies]. Rare is the person who *talonea* [works] alone. You work with your *bola* [network] to get the money. Like, I go with two or three others, depending on the job. *They're gente de confianza* [people I trust], and that I've known for years. We do the job, and then we pick up [buy drugs] and then *nos arreglamos justos* [we inject together]. That's more or less how I always inject with people I know.

Open Network: 1997

JUAREZ, MEXICO

By contrast, Juarez is "wide-open" in 1997. Now, there is a great deal of tecato traffic going to buy and to inject drugs in Juarez. Several tecatos in a focus group discussion compared the situation in Juarez now to the situation in 1987.

Interviewer: Have things changed in Juarez?

S: Oooo, Juarez has changed a great deal. It's wide open in Juarez, and you can connect everywhere and anywhere. Before, the people from Juarez would come to El Paso. People over there would make *vaquitas* [little cows, i.e, pool their money] and send two or three *chavos* [guys] to connect in El Paso and return to Juarez. Now, it's very different. Now everybody goes to Juarez. You can get in a taxi, and the driver can take you to any corner to buy *chiva* [heroin]. Before, you couldn't do that.

Interviewer: Why is it open now?

Ru: Corrupted government. You hear that judiciales [judicial police] from Mexico City have come to control things, but they don't control anything. The place is wide open completely.

Interviewer: When did all of this start happening?

D: It's been changing for some time, but it burst open about three years ago.

Interviewer: So, the guys from here go over there to connect.

S: No, not all of them. A great deal of people go to Juarez, but many stay here because they know that the *judiciales o los federales* [Mexican police] can stop them, take their money away, and give them thirty hours in jail. The cops won't leave you in peace. That's why a lot of tecatos stay on this side of the border. They prefer to pay $10 here than spend $5 over there and run the risk of being stopped by the *federales* [Mexican police].

Interviewer: What's the selling price? What's the price of heroin over there?

S: Little ball for $5. There are different prices. For example, there are papers for $5, $10, $20, and $40. Whatever you want to pick up they sell to you. They'll sell you whatever quantity you want to buy.

Interviewer: A gram? An ounce?

S: Whatever you want to buy. *Estás en el mero clavo.* [You are at the main source.]

EL PASO

In 1997, El Paso tecatos are not as loyal to their local barrio drug connections. While in 1987 El Paso tecatos mainly bought and used within their respective barrios, they now travel outside their networks. Some individuals even cross the U.S.-Mexico border into Ciudad Juarez to buy and use drugs outside their barrios. Martin, a forty year old tecato, describes the change between 1987 and 1997.

> You know, you always try to find the best *chiva* [heroin]. In the past, we had our connections here in the barrio. I'd go to this place or that, and you know, I

> could always count on them to tell me *es buena* [it's good] or not. You know, I had a relationship with each one of them, but now it's all business. Well, it's always a business, but they trusted me to buy if they told me the truth, and I bought because we had that relationship. Now, there are people here [in the barrio] who I don't really know, so if there is someone with good stuff way over on the east side, or west side, or wherever I go for it. You know, if I'm really *malillas* [drug sick], I buy here *a huevo* [out of necessity], but if I'm not *malillas* [drug sick] and I got some [heroin] to hold me over until I get to where the good stuff is, I just take the time to go outside the barrio.

Faustina, a heroin injector for the past 25 years, also describes buying and using drugs outside the barrio.

> Now, if I don't want to have any trouble finding some fairly good *carga* [heroin] that I can depend on, I go downtown to the plaza, or to Juarez. Over there [Ciudad Juarez], I get more for my money. In Juarez, I can fix for as little as $5, but I usually get a $10 paper or two and with that I'm fine. The *carga* [heroin] on the plaza is okay, but the *carga* [heroin] in Juarez is much better. It seems to me that it's better, but you know, some tecatos are never satisfied, and they are going to tell you that it's all bad everywhere.

INJECTING NETWORKS

Network membership has also changed. Now, in some networks, there are members who are not long-standing friends and who come from different barrios. Furthermore, there are network members who are not Mexican American, and in some cases individuals are from out of state. For example, the two Anglo female respondents were from California and Michigan.

Most respondents were not certain why the network membership opened. Some respondents speculated that the change occurred because Juarez opened up and made available inexpensive heroin. The inexpensive price of heroin in Juarez brought different groups of people together.

As Jaime, who now connects and injects in Juarez, explained:

> I started going to Juarez about three years ago. My *camarada* [buddy] told me that we could stay fixed for $20 over there. He found a good connection where we can buy some good *carga* [heroin] for $5 a hit, so for $20 or $25 each we can make it all day.
>
> Over there, you meet all kinds of people, Negros, *gavachos* [Anglos] from everywhere. So, I've been fixing with some of these people when they come back to this side [El Paso].

Other respondents speculated the breakup of closed networks occurred because of fights between the different El Paso heroin and cocaine distributors. Pedro expressed this theory as follows:

> In the past, when you [principal investigator) were around here, the syndicate [a gang] was doing all the moving [distribution of heroin]. Then, slowly the Braves and the Mafia [two gangs] started to come in. Those people, you know, selling to us on the street started getting into problems with people from these three

> groups, so connections started to dry up, and in my case, I started going to Juarez because it got to where you couldn't depend on many connections over here. Before going to Juarez, I started connecting in the Segundo barrio and in the northeast, something that I'd never done before.
>
> In a way it got to be like when there are these police sweeps and panic sets in and nobody sells for a while. But this business between the gangs was not like that, you know, the *panico* [panic] of the old days. Then, things got back to normal after a few hours. There other *panico* [panic] was caused because it got to where they were killing people, even tecatos who had nothing to do with selling. You could be at the wrong place at the wrong time and get hit [killed].

Pedro's speculation on why network memberships changed also helps explain why barriers between different barrio turfs changed. The gang fights between the different gang distributers made it possible for tecatos from the different barrios to interact with one another out of necessity.

Furthermore, the gang fights also caused the "opening" of a central place where some local neighborhood dealers went to sell. This situation presented the opportunity for dealers and buyers from the different barrios to interact with one another. A result of the interaction between new acquaintances is that old relationships in the local barrio injecting network were abandoned.

Conclusion

The change from a closed to an open population of tecatos poses important policy implications for HIV infection rates for El Paso and Ciudad Juarez. In the past when the tecato population was "closed," the HIV infection rate was about 3 percent. It may be assumed that the rate will increase with the opening of network membership to IDUs from Ciudad Juarez and from other parts of the United States.

In conclusion, the change from a closed to an open tecato population may be an indication that El Paso and Juarez tecatos have moved from a rural to an urban type of social arrangement.

Chapter 4. Tecato Cultural Norms and Socialization

The cultural norms and values of the El Paso tecato culture have changed. This change is most evident in the areas of social stratification and of socialization of new members.

1987 Social Stratification

SOCIAL STATUSES

Early on in the course of ethnographic studies done from 1987-1997, the principal investigator observed, and also had pointed out to him by a wise outreach worker, that tecatos stratified themselves into four statuses: *tecatos buenos*, *tecatos mediano*, *tecatos cucarachos*, and *tecatos chafas*. He learned that these statuses were achieved and not ascribed. A tecato's status was either apparent by his/her behavior or, if the situation warranted it, someone else pointed it out. A high status tecato was a *tecato bueno*, and a low status tecato was a *tecato cucaracho*.

A *tecato mediano* was a tecato whose status was neither high nor low. Although the Spanish term *mediano* means medium or middle, the term does not mean middle as in a mid-level position. Rather, the term *mediano* denoted a state of being. A *tecato mediano*, while neither a *tecato bueno* nor a *tecato cucaracho*, had the potential to function in either capacity at times.

A *tecato chafa* was an individual whose status was somewhat ambiguous because the term *chafa* has two meanings. In one sense, an individual who was an occasional heroin user because he/she did not want to spend much money on drugs was a *tecato chafa*. In another sense, an individual who was injecting occasionally because he/she was at the start of his/her heroin-using career was a *tecato chafa*. This status was ascribed to an individual due to periodic heroin use. The status label changed for the novice after he/she became addicted and went from an occasional to a daily user. However, the status *chafa* did not change for the individual who continued to be an occasional user. For the novice who became a regular user, the status label could change to one of the three other statuses, depending on the individual's personal qualities and behavior.

PATTERNS OF BEHAVIOR

A set of behavior patterns are attributed to each of the different statuses. Tecatos recognized an individual's status by his/her presentation and behavior, and tecatos also interacted with one another according to the expected patterns of behavior of the incumbents of each status. Social status among tecatos, as in "straight" society, was determined by how an individual coped with practical circumstances. For the tecato, norms associated with each status influenced how tecatos bought and used heroin, hustled, and kicked a drug habit. In 1987, these were the behavior patterns associated with each of the four tecato statuses.

Tecato Bueno: Tecatos used the term *bueno* to mean honorable, dependable, leader, respectable, and responsible. These were admirable qualities for any individual to have, but it did not mean what a *tecato bueno* did was honorable (i.e., use and sell drugs, and steal), at least to members of non-drug using society.

Tecato buenos displayed their personal qualities in the several ways. *Tecato buenos* did not buy drugs on credit. They usually had a legitimate job or a lucrative hustle (a

legal or illegal activity that generated income). If they did not have money to purchase drugs, they went without them. If they had to "kick the habit" (stop taking drugs) because of lack of money or because of an arrest, they did so with dignity. They suffered quietly without complaint. This type of stoic behavior also indicated why a tecato bueno was sometimes called either *a tecato maciso* [tough] or *tecato tecato* [real tecato]. *Tecatos buenos* had the *huevos* [balls] to withstand withdrawal symptoms without a whimper.

Furthermore, *tecato buenos* kept their word among tecatos. They did not lie to people within the drug culture, but they did to "squares" (people in non-drug society). They followed through on promises. Tecatos who stole from or cheated *tecato buenos* expected quick retribution. If the norm violator did not redeem him/herself or make amends for the misdeed, he/she expected the first corrective, a beating (i.e., a *calentada*). The second and final corrective was a visit from the plumber (i.e., the hitman). *Tecato buenos* were self-motivated drug dealers and leaders. They knew where there were good quality drugs to buy, the places to "hit" (steal from), and the good "fences" (people who buy stolen goods). Incidentally, most heroin dealers were *tecatos buenos*.

Tecato buenos looked respectable; they dressed well and rarely looked unkempt. They showed respect to others. They did not "burn" (steal or cheat) other tecatos. They helped friends when they were in need of drugs or money and gave the help without comment. The following was said about *tecatos buenos*: "He comes through when he is needed, but he doesn't keep score."

In the late 1980s, tecatos referred to the *tecato bueno's* qualities as the values of the "old" school. *Tecatos buenos* taught their behavior to promising, younger tecatos. *Tecatos buenos* also discouraged minors from associating with and among tecatos because they did not think it was proper and because they knew adolescents could not be trusted.

Tecato Mediano: A *tecato mediano* differed from the *tecato bueno* in two respects. While the *tecato bueno* was strong and a leader, the *tecato mediano* was a follower. They were not motivated to go out either to "connect" (buy drugs) or to find a way to get money (i.e., steal). *Tecato medianos* waited around for someone to invite them to do a job or to connect. *Tecato medianos* were similar to Riesman's other-directed person.[1] This individual was maleable, and this person's other-directed behavior was more apparent when the *tecato mediano* became "strung-out" or intoxicated. When things became difficult, they cheated others, appeared unkempt, and begged for a few drops of heroin or the *algodas* (cottons or filters used to filter the heroin when the heroin is syphoned from the cooker with the syringe). These behaviors were expected of *tecatos cucarachos*, and they would not be associated with *tecatos buenos*. The *tecato mediano* was a weak person, and therefore did not have the "strength" to be a *tecato bueno*.

Tecato Cucaracho: An individual earned the label *tecato cucaracho* [literally, cockroach] by being around a drug connection, not buying drugs, and begging from those who bought heroin. The *tecato cucaracho*, like the namesake the roach, appeared where there was food. *Cucarachos* were found in shooting galleries, around street dealers, and tecatos who regularly bought more than one hit of heroin at a time. *Cucarachos* got their fixes mostly by lending syringes to others and by extracting the residue from the cotton that they begged from others.

The *cucaracho* was distinguished from the other tecatos by appearance and by begging. For example, the *cucaracho's* unkempt appearance was the one social scientists attributed to most IDUs, and it was the stereotypical image of the dope addict held by the public. A *tecato cucaracho* used language other tecatos would not, such as the phrase, *móchate con las algodas* (share the cottons). A *tecato bueno* never used that expression, and a *tecato mediano* used the expression only on those rare occasions when things became difficult.

Although *cucarachos* were low status, they were rarely called *cucarachos* to their faces, except when they violated a cultural norm and a disparaging remark was directed at the individual. The term was used whenever the personal qualities of an individual were being discussed. Most often an individual's status was known, and individuals did not have to invoke the label.

Cucarachos rarely got hooked. If they got any heroin, as indicated it was from what was left either in the cottons, cooker, or syringe from some other tecato. *Cucarachos* got a "taste" by doing favors or little odd jobs for other tecatos and street dealers.

There were some exceptions to the above description of the *cucaracho*. There were cases when *cucarachos* got hooked whenever they lent or turned their homes into a shooting gallery. In this case, *cucarachos* got more than a "taste"of heroin. They received a large quantity of drugs because of this service.

Cucarachos were considered devious. They had the reputation of "burning" some people. Although a *cucarachos* might burn a tecato, they generally burned such people as a novice, an undercover police officer, or a police informer. Often, a tecato-turned-police-informant attempted to use a *cucaracho* to lead the police to a drug connection. If a *cucaracho* thought that it would be profitable, the individual did lead the informer to a connection. Often the drug dealer was someone from a barrio other than the *cucaracho's* own.

Finally, the *cucaracho* depended on others for support. A *cucaracho* was a *vato sin vergüenza* [a shameless guy] because the individual often depended on a woman to support him. Often, the "wife" was a woman with children on welfare. Or, as pointed out above, a *cucaracho* worked odd jobs for a drug connection.

Tecato Chafa: Because *tecatos chafas* did not inject daily, they were not part of a hustling network. In a sense, they also were not part of an injecting network. *Tecatos chafas* were not trusted partly because they were not part of established networks and partly because they were defined as individuals who would not follow through on a job since *chafas* did not have the need to complete the job.

1997 Social Stratification

SOCIAL STATUSES

To some degree, El Paso tecatos still stratify themselves into the four statuses of *tecatos buenos*, *tecatos medianos*, *tecatos cucarachos*, and *tecatos chafas*. However, the status of *the tecatos buenos* is in decline and as a result leadership is being lost as is the stability of local barrio networks. The leadership roles that *tecatos buenos* performed are being filled by *tecatos cucarachos* and non-tecatos with no loyalty to the local barrio networks. With local barrio network members going to Juarez to buy and inject, barrio networks are becoming unstable.

CHANGES AND CAUSE OF CHANGE

Respondents reported that there is a "great deal of disorder and lack of respect among tecatos today." Many (67%) active respondents and the seven individuals in recovery reported that the problems of disorganization and lack of respect among

tecatos resulted from Ciudad Juarez dealers retailing drugs to local people. These respondents claimed the change in copping sites [places to obtain drugs] from El Paso to Ciudad Juarez put some local street dealers out of business. This change impacted negatively on the *tecatos buenos* who generally are drug dealers. The problems generated by the change in copping sites were compounded by the infighting not only among Mexican American suppliers but also among the major distributors in Ciudad Juarez.

The following excerpts are examples of what many respondents reported, especially the older individuals who had lived through the change from a stable to an unstable situation.

Jesus: Look! The disorder and lack of respect comes from the fact that many of the *buenos* [i.e., tecatos bueno] are no longer in control. Any *pendejo* [dumb fool] can go across and bring in his supply to sell or for his use. This situation is also facilitated by the *Indios* [adult gang], *vatos* [guys] like the mafia, and the syndicate [two gangs] who now have power with the people in Juarez. They [Indios] get their percent from these new people and either they don't know what their action is doing to the old school where the *buenos* had the dignity that influenced the others, or they don't care and they are only in it for the money. I think they are only in it for the money.

I don't know if I'm explaining myself right. Now, *gente cucaracha* [low status tecatos] are moving [i.e., selling drugs]. As you must know, these are people who are not respectful and they burn people. So, you have all this disorder.

Julio: It has changed now. It's not like it used to be when you knew the people and they knew you. We all knew what was expected because we all knew each other. We'd behave ourselves. If there was a problem, you know, there were codes of behavior that had to be respected. Now, if there is a problem, an individual can come and be rude to you in front of your mother or woman. Worse, he can come and shoot you and everybody else with you. It wasn't that way before.

Lola: What is happening, doctor, is that, it is not only the people from here [El Paso] going over there [Ciudad Juarez], it is people from everywhere mixing together. We don't have like the old cliques. Now we have *gringos* [Anglos], *mayates* [African Americans]. I don't want to sound racist, but these *gringos* [Anglos], and *mayates* [African Americans] are like mostly transients. They are not *de los buenos* [high status tecatos]. *Y, esta gente pendeja* [And, these dumb people] don't know about *gente buena* [high status people]. They deal with everyone like they are all the same and in most cases like other tecatos are like they are, *gente cucaracha* [cockroach people].

These new people are like low class people. You have disorder and no respect when you get these people with the *cucarachos* [low status tecatos] from here and the new *tecatitos* [young tecatos] from here who don't know who to respect and who not to respect because they [young tecatos] have not been taught.

SOCIALIZATION

As these respondents imply, young tecatos are not being socialized in status appropriate behavior. The break in the social stratification system leaves young tecatos without role models. A consequence of this break in the system is that individuals are permitted to join tecato networks at a younger age. As Manuel states:

> Right now, there are more little *chavalitos* [kids] than before. Besides injecting, some are selling. You are not going to believe this, but yesterday my *camarada* [buddy] bought from a sixteen year old. What is he doing selling this stuff! Sooner or later, *lo van a torcer* [they are going to arrest him], and they will send him to the state [prison]. Right away, one of these gangs in there is going to force him to join them. So? What is he going to learn? Worse than what he is doing now.
>
> In the past, as soon as he got close to a connection, he would have gotten a slap and sent home. If his father was a tecato, he would have been told to take care of his *chavalo* [kid]. But, now if he can make some connection money, they have him working. What disorder and lack of respect. It's not like before when the [high status tecatos] *buenos* controlled, and they enforced the order.

Conclusion

The statuses individual tecatos occupy are known by members. The knowledge of who is what kind of tecato is taken for granted and functions as background knowledge. It is shared by members of a reference group. It includes "everyone who is one of us," i.e., members of a neighborhood injecting network. Membership implies knowledge of common language codes. For example, a tecato saying, *mochate con las algodas* [share the cottons] identifies the individual as a *tecato cucaracho*. Tecatos who hear the utterance know the meaning of those codes and know how to proceed in their relationship with the tecato asking for *algodas* [cottons]. Because this background knowledge is taken for granted, outsiders cannot observe it. This background knowledge contributes to group functioning because it is embedded in ongoing activities and provides members with the cues and nuances of situations used to manage their daily lives.

Because new tecatos are not being socialized within the traditional tecato IDU networks, they are outsiders to local barrio networks. These new members do not know the background knowledge used to pick up the cues and nuances of situations used to manage daily life in networks effectively. As Lola states: "New *tecatitos* [young tecatos] from here who don't know who to respect and who not to respect because they have not been taught." Manuel further points out that the disorder among tecatos is caused by the absence of *tecatos buenos* who are not around to control and enforce order. In conclusion, the tecato stratified system may be on the decline with the opening of local barrio injecting networks to members of other ethnic groups and people from other barrios.

Chapter 5. Drug Use and Distribution Patterns

Drug use and drug distribution patterns did change between 1987 and 1997. The price and the types of drugs consumed also changed within this ten year span. Ciudad Juarez also changed from a city with little retail drug dealing to a city where illegal drugs are sold on downtown street corners.

1987 Drug Use Patterns

HEROIN AND PRICE OF HEROIN

In 1987, heroin was known by the following names*: brea, café, carga, chiva, chapopote, cura, goma, la buena, mugrero, piedra, polvo, and tecata.*

In 1987, a hit of heroin was called a *medio* [half a gram], and it sold for $20. Few exceptions were made on the selling price of a *medio*. However, street dealers were known to give friends and steady customers a discount. For example, if an individual bought three hits during one purchase, some dealers gave the client a $5 discount. This discount practice encouraged some tecatos to pool their money to get more "bang for their buck."

The selling price for the various units of heroin above an individual dosage were as follows: *quarenta* [40] = $40; *ochenta* [80] = $75-$85; *quarta onza* [quarter ounce]= $150-$160; *media onza* [half ounce]= $500-$550; *onza* [ounce] = $1,300-$1,400

COCAINE AND PRICE OF COCAINE

In 1987, cocaine was known as *soda* and *blanca* [white], and the price of an individual dosage was $15. The selling prices for the various units above an individual dosage were as follows: *treinta* [30] = $30; *medio ocho* [one-sixteenth ounce] = $75-$85; Ocho [one-eighth ounce] = $150-$170; *medio onza* [half ounce] = $550-$800; *onza* [ounce] = $1,200-$1,400.

DRUG OF CHOICE

Heroin was the drug of choice for most tecatos in 1987 and continues to be the drug of choice in 1997. Then, most tecatos saw cocaine as a "rich man's drug" because it was expensive and the high did not last long. Roberto described the tecato's preference for heroin.

> *Carga* [heroin] is better than *soda* [cocaine].The *soda* [cocaine] hits you and in a minute or two the rush is gone, so why spend $15? With *carga* [heroin], I can do three good hits, and with that I can be very contented all day long. With *soda* [cocaine], I've seen some guys hit [inject] themselves and right away they need another fix of that stuff. Cocaine is for rich people. What tecato has that kind of money? Or, the time to be out hustling to raise the money to be satisfied with that stuff? That's why I say cocaine is for the rich. It's not for me.

OTHER DRUG USE PATTERNS

In 1987, there was minimal interaction between members of the Ciudad Juarez and El Paso drug using communities. As already indicated in Chapter 3, few El Paso tecatos went to Juarez , while some Juarez tecatos did crossed the border into El Paso to buy and use drugs. Then, Ciudad Juarez had a small heroin retail market and the price of one dosage of heroin was the same in both cities. At that time, there was little incentive for El Paso tecatos to go to Juarez.

In 1987, the amount of heroin used was influenced by the availability of drugs and money. Then, on average, tecatos injected at least four times and possibly five times a day if they were successful in their money generating activities. Data were not collected on the heroin potency for either 1987 or 1997. Many respondents did not know the actual potency of what they injected. To them, heroin was either good or bad. If heroin was exceptionally good, they reported that it had a "terrific kick."

1997 Drug Use Patterns

HEROIN AND PRICE OF HEROIN

The names for heroin have not changed in the last 10 years. Heroin is still known by the names listed earlier.

The prices for the different units of heroin above an individual dosage remained the same between 1987 and 1997. However, the price of a dosage did change around 1991 when one street dealer lowered the price from $20 to $10 a dosage. This individual was allowed to under-sell his competitors because he was supported by one group of the El Paso/Juarez distributors who planned to take over the heroin distibution network in the El Paso area. A relative of this dealer described what lead to the change in price:

> My brother found a practical solution to a problem most dealers were having; many customers did not always have the $20. They'd come around begging him to let them have it for $18 or $15. It was all very unpleasant. He knew that they needed it, but he just couldn't let it go for less than the $20. If he gave it for less, he knew that he would get taken advantage of because one person would tell another and pretty soon everybody would be coming to him and he would lose money. So, one day it just occurred to him to cut the *medio* [hit] in half and sell it for $10. This solution solved the problem, but it created another one.
>
> Word got around and other dealers got mad at him. They threatened to beat him up, but the Braves [an adult gang and his supplier] supported him. This group was taking over the distribution for El Paso, and they saw a chance to beat their competition and to make some money as well.

In late 1995, dealers in Ciudad Juarez also started to sell $5 and $10 heroin dosages. This practice has continued until the present. It was not clear if the change in price occurred because there was an abundance of heroin in Juarez or because the Braves were part of the Juarez group attempting to take control of the Juarez cartel. Following this scenario, perhaps the Braves and their Mexican colleagues wanted to destabilize the established Juarez cartel, so that they could take over. Some mid-level heroin and marijuana suppliers reported that the price change was part of a strategy to destabilize the established Juarez cartel.

COCAINE AND PRICE OF COCAINE

In 1997, cocaine was still known as *soda*, and *blanca* [white]. However, the price of an individual dosage was $10, $5 cheaper than in 1987 when it sold for $15 a hit on both sides of the border. The prices of units above a dosage remains the same as in 1987.

DRUG OF CHOICE

As indicated in Table 1 of Chapter 2, most respondents now speedball (a mixture of heroin and cocaine) and inject cocaine. However, heroin still remains the drug of choice.

OTHER DRUG USE PATTERNS

Between 1987 and 1997, drug use patterns did change, and that change occurred on two levels. One level pertained to the place tecatos bought and used heroin. Prior to 1995, few El Paso tecatos went to Juarez to buy and inject drugs because of the small heroin retail market in Juarez. However, by the middle of the 1990s, the Ciudad Juarez heroin retail market increased and offered inexpensive heroin. Therefore, many El Paso tecatos went there to buy and inject heroin.

The second level on which change occurred pertained to injecting practices. Prior to the early 1990s, El Paso tecatos injected among friends and relatives. By 1997, many El Paso tecatos were not only injecting among strangers in Juarez shooting galleries, but also in El Paso they were injecting among non-relatives and non-close friends who were allowed into neighborhood injecting networks.

In 1997, the amount of heroin El Paso tecatos use is the same as in 1987 because the amount of heroin injected is still influenced by the availability of drugs and money. On average in 1997, tecatos still inject at least four or five times a day, if they are successful in their money generating activities. However, it might be assumed that El Paso tecatos are injecting more in 1997 because of the inexpensive and ample supply of heroin in both cities. In contrast to El Paso, the Juarez tecato population is now larger, and they appear to be using more heroin because of the increased availability of inexpensive heroin being sold in Juarez in 1997.

1987 Drug Distribution Patterns

As indicated in previous chapters, drug distribution patterns did change between 1987 and 1997. In 1987, heroin was sold through small networks which were embedded in a local drug dealing structure. The local structure consisted of a distributer, called a *macuco*, a street dealer (generally known by a nickname), one or more workers called *camellos*, and one or more *tecatos cucarachos* who assisted the *camellos*, and the buyers called *pajaros* [birds].

NETWORK STRUCTURE

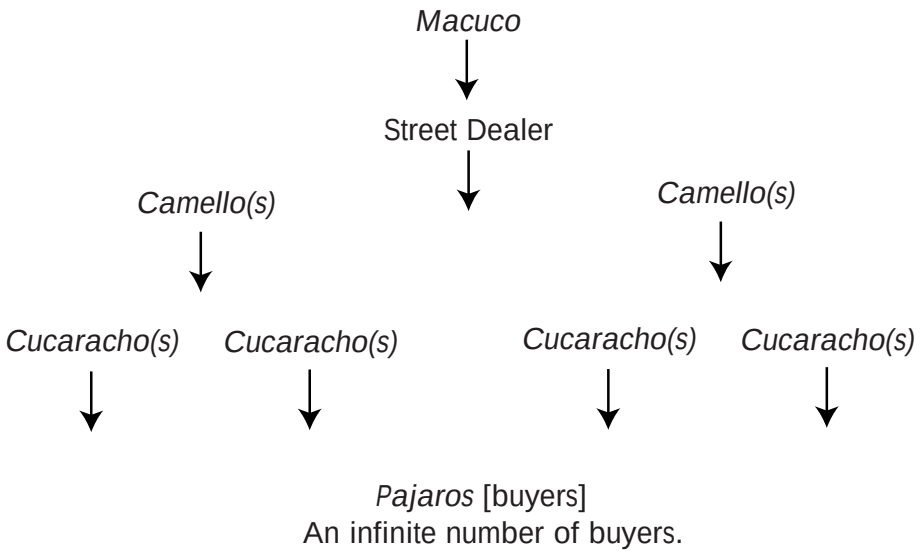
A small network consisted of the street dealer, two or more *camellos* and at least four *cucarachos*. Networks became larger when the number of *camellos* and *cucarachos* under the street dealer were increased. Figure 1 depicts the structure of a small selling network, and Figure 2 depicts an enlarged selling network.

Figure 1. A Small Drug Distribution Network

STRUCTURAL INFLUENCE

The basic drug selling and using arrangement of a network was as follows: The street dealer worked for the *macuco*, and the *camello* worked for the dealer. The *camello's* job was either to sell for the dealer or to direct buyers to the dealer. The buyers were usually in the company of a *cucaracho* who functioned as a broker for the buyers (*pajaros*). The dealer and the *camello* knew

Figure 2. An Enlarged Drug Distribution Network



each other and in most cases were close friends. The *cucaracho* was a trusted acquaintance of the dealer and *camello* who trusted the *cucaracho* in the sense that they counted on him/her not to inform on them or to bring the police to them. The street dealer and *camello* showed deference to the *cucaracho*, but they did not refer to him as a friend.

These small networks worked as follows: Each morning the *macuco* gave the street dealer 30 *medios* [hits or 15 grams] of heroin. Each *medio* was wrapped in a small balloon. Street dealers were to sell 20 *medios* for the *macuco* and to keep 10 *medios* for themselves. At the end of the day, street dealers brought the money for the 20 *medios* ($400) to the *macuco*. If street dealers wanted to sell more in a day, they called the *macuco* and arranged for a new supply and early payment.

Street dealers did several things with the 10 *medios* [hits]. They sold some, saved some for personal use, and paid the *camellos* for their services. *Camellos* usually received one *medio*. *Cucarachos* were also paid for services rendered. The *cucarachos* got a dosage by lending a syringe and by serving as a broker for the buyer. Thus, the *cucaracho's* pay was a small amount (a few drops) of heroin the buyer and the *camello* left in the syringe.

The number of *medios* that street dealers either sold or used depended on how hooked they were and on how much in the "hole" (or *hoyo* as called in their argot) they wanted to get with the *macuco*. If the street dealer was a good customer and friend and if the *macuco* was having a "good" year, the *macuco* might allow the dealer to go into debt for as much as $2,000. However, this did not happen often.

Some street dealers got indebted to a *macuco* in the following way: In the morning, the dealer received from the *macuco* 30 *medios*. As indicated above, the street dealer was to sell 20 *medios* for the *macuco* and keep 10 medios for personal use. At any time during the day and certainly by the end of the day, the street dealer had to return to the *macuco* the price of the 20 *medios* ($400) that belonged to the *macuco*. Payment to the *macuco* was called *cobrar caja* which meant "pay the cashier." The dealer had to pay the *macuco* $400, and the *macuco* did not take partial pay-

ment. Street dealers got into difficulties with the *macucos* whenever they were unable to repay the $400 owed to the *macuco*. A problem was created whenever street dealers either used some of the *macuco's* 20 medios because they had developed a heavy habit, lost, or had stolen some of the *macuco's medios*. If a street dealer lost the *medios* because of an arrest, he/she was not expected to pay the *macuco* for the *medios* confiscated by the police, especially if the street dealer did not implicate the *macuco*. The arrest and loss of the *medios* was seen as part of the hazards of selling.

However, street dealers were required to pay the *macuco* if they either used or the *macuco's medios* were stolen. *Cucarachos* often were the ones who stole from a street dealer who either had gotten too high to know what they were doing or passed out. Tecatos referred to getting robbed as *bajar* which meant "to lower." Street dealers who were indebted to the *macuco* had to explain what happened. If the *macuco* knew the street dealers, he/she often gave the street dealer a grace period. If the street dealers did not make amends and bragged about cheating the *macuco,* the dealers got a *calentada* [a warning, i.e., a beating]. If the street dealer did not get the message and continued this "arrogant" behavior, the *macuco* sent the *plomero,* which meant plumber or "hit man" to settle accounts with the errant dealer. If the plumber was not sent, then the errant dealer was given a "hot shot," i.e., an injection of battery acid. Usually, the dealer was given a fix of good heroin which was then followed by one containing the battery acid. Often death by a "hot shot" was listed as an overdose in the medical examiner's records.

Generally, the street dealer did not open the balloons to cut the heroin further. If street dealers did so, the *macuco* soon found out that the product was being cut. The *macuco* found out because people quit buying and because the word got out that the heroin from this particular street dealer was weak or not good. As punishment for cutting the heroin further, the *macuco* had the option either to fire the street dealer or put him/her on probation.

This structure for selling heroin was the rule in 1987. However, there was an exception. The arrest of all or part of a network membership could destroy the network. When this happened, the stability of the distribution process and the quality control of the heroin was disrupted. If a police sweep was extensive and successful, many established and "reputable" dealers were no longer available to the *macuco*. The *macuco,* then, had to depend more on people called independents. There could be some reputable dealers left after a police sweep, but the independents became the majority of the sellers.

Independents were of two types. One type was the individual who was always around and who occasionally bought a gram or two *medios* [hits]. This individual used part of the gram for personal consumption and part of it for selling. Independents generally diluted the heroin to be sold to the point that most tecatos considered the *medios* [dosage] weak. The other type was the individual who wanted to get into the selling part of the business. This second type was usually a novice to the drug business. This type of individual, like the other type of independent, severely diluted the heroin simply to make more money.

Most independents did not have a good reputation. The *macuco* tended not to trust them with the drug, so he sold to them by the gram, a smaller amount, rather than give them 30 *medios* [15 grams], as was given to the regular dealer.

Panico [panic] developed when the dominant sellers were independents. Tecatos claimed that panic occurred because independents were not careful. They sold to anybody, and they got anybody to help them sell. This situation provided an oppor-

tunity for undercover police to arrest those helping the independent dealer. Furthermore, independents diluted the heroin with "just about anything." In a sense, when the independents dominated the selling, it was every person for themselves.

Drug Trafficking

In many ways, the smuggling and transportation of drugs into El Paso and into the interior of the United States remained the same between 1987 and 1997. To get a current and past perspective on the transportation of illicit drugs on the U.S.-Mexico border, four drug traffickers (two females and two males) were interviewed in 1997. Although these individuals contributed information to the study, they were not counted as part of the study sample.

BLANCA: A CASE STUDY

Blanca, a drug broker, smuggler, and heroin manufacturer, was one of the four individuals interviewed. The other three individuals were more drug dealers than brokers and smugglers, and their comments in these two areas were limited. Therefore, their comments were not considered for this section of the report.

The principal investigator met Blanca when he first arrived in El Paso in 1987, and he has kept in touch with her since then. In the following excerpts from her interview, Blanca described her work and the El Paso and Juarez context in which the movement of illicit drugs takes place. What she described in 1997 was similar to what she and others reported in 1989.

Heroin Production and Trafficking

Interviewer: Okay, when you were making heroin for example—lets talk about that. How much heroin would you make at one time?

Blanca: The most that we ever tried to make was 3 kilos. No, not 3 kilos of heroin, but 3 kilos of *goma* [sap]. It would produce about 300 grams, 340 grams of heroin.

Interviewer: Was your operation sort of the average kind of operation, or were you in the middle or the little guys, or were you the big guys with your 3 kilos of *goma* [sap] production?

Blanca: It's kind of, as far as heroin goes, it's in the middle.

Interviewer: You were in the middle. You were not the little guys or the big guys.

Blanca: No, but then I didn't work for anybody. I worked for myself.

Interviewer: Thinking back or of the people who are still into that business, how much do the big guys make in terms of production? You worked with 3 kilos of *goma* [poppy gum].

Blanca: They don't make no more than that. You don't make no more than that. I don't know anybody that makes more than that. They say, I've heard, but I've never seen it. I can't vouch for it. I've heard that in Guadalajara they make like 20, 30 kilos at a time, but I've never seen it. There is no way you can do it. There is no way that it will come out all right. Because they [DEA] say a "lab!" They don't know what they are talking

about when they say a "lab." You can set up shop anywhere. You don't need any complicated equipment.

Interviewer: The way you described it to me before, is that the way it is made even by the big guys?

Blanca: Yeah, it's still the same way. It's made the same way the Chinese made it. You know, the ones who came and made the railroad. That's the recipe they brought. That's the same one people are still using.

Interviewer: In reading what gets written, they talk about the big guys, like the Hererras who used to move kilos in Chicago. You know, the Hererras from Durango.

Blanca: I know. I worked with some of them. I know a lot of them. A very good friend of mine is in jail in Chicago because he took two kilos of heroin and got busted out there at O'Hare.

Interviewer: Okay, so the Hererras were making the same amount that you were making.

Blanca: Yeah, only that there is a lot of them.

Interviewer: So, they just got it all together?

Blanca: Yeah.

Interviewer: How do they move it? Like *la mota* [marijuana] comes in semi-trailers by the ton. How does the *carga* [heroin] come?

Blanca: It gets here, it depends, it depends how much money the people who bring it are willing to spend.

Interviewer: Let's say the average.

Blanca: I don't know what to tell you about average. What is average? Some people have money to do business. Some others don't. Some people bring what their uncles made or others bring what their father has made, and they bring it for him because he couldn't come to the border.

Interviewer: How much is that?

Blanca: It depends. There is no set of rules. You can have 10 ounces, and somebody else can come with a 100 grams.

Interviewer: And how do they bring it? Just on their person?

Blanca: Usually on their person because it's a small quantity, and it doesn't take that much space.

Interviewer: Okay, in bringing marijuana across the border, of course it's bulky, so you've got to have a car. It's not like you place it here on your chest. How does the *carga* [heroin] get across?

Blanca: Like that, on a person. The people who I've known get it across that way. I usually get it across for a lot of people, but the rest of the people they just come across the river with it. They bring their own.

Interviewer: If a person wanted to state working [selling heroin] does he have to clear through them [adult gangs, Syndicate or Braves]?

Blanca: Yeah. If you don't want to get beaten. Look at Avelardo, you remember him? He used to get beat up and have all his money taken away every other day becasue he wouldn't pay the Syndicate [gang]. When my brother found out about it, Avelardo talked with my brother, and my brother talked with some people and they let him sell. He didn't have to pay protection or nothing. But, you have to pay them. He didn't have to pay because my brother and him are good friends from the prison. Avelardo does not belong to the Syndicate or the Braves. He is a freelancer, so everybody attacks him and they want to take away his dope.

Interviewer: Who does he buy from? Doesn't he have to buy from someone who is either part of one of these two groups?

Blanca: No. *La chiva* [heroin] is not completely controlled. The heroin belongs to the people who bring it, and they are usually the people who make it or a relative of the manufacturer. It is not controlled by them [American groups]. It is controlled by Mexicans.

Cocaine Trafficking

Interviewer: How does that compare with cocaine?

Blanca: Cocaine is completely different. Cocaine is, there is more of it. People don't deal—I know people who buy a kilo and turn it into eighths and sell it like that and take about two months to sell it. And, they don't never get their whole, all, their money together, and they go—like this guy, the big guy that's in the middle of this picture. Okay, he does that. He buys a kilo. He burned somebody for a kilo because he did that to my friend. He turned it into eighths, and he ended up using up most of it. He didn't sell it and he didn't get the money back. He was never able to pay her. He got completely ruined because he got into it [using].

It depends how much money the people that are buying it, like I know people in Albuquerque that come and get two or three kilos at a time. Other than that, some people move it in large quantities, but I don't know who.

There is not that much money to be made. Nobody wants to, if the rate, the cocaine price is like $13,000 per kilo. How much can you

make of it? Everybody knows that you can buy it at 13. If you can find a good friend of yours to sell it to you for 12, you might make $2,000 on a kilo. If you get busted with a kilo, you get at least 15 years in prison. It's not worth it.

Conclusion

In this chapter, several changes were said to have occurred between 1987 and 1997 in the areas of drug use and drug distribution patterns. First, the price of a heroin dosage changed in the El Paso/Ciudad Juarez area from $20 to $5. Second, the Ciudad Juarez IDU population increased because more Juarez citizens became addicted and because of the influx of El Paso tecatos to Juarez. Third, the local neighborhood injecting networks changed from a closed to an open form. This change meant that tecatos in each neighborhood went from injecting among relatives and close friends to injecting among strangers. This change in neighborhood injecting networks increased the chances of El Paso tecatos contracting HIV. Finally, the control of drug trafficking by Mexican authorities appeared to have gone from being somewhat under control to being out of control, although it was also shown that the drug trafficking patterns have remained somewhat the same between 1987 and 1997.

Chapter 6. Recommendations

At the end of each in-depth interview and focus group discussion session, the respondents were asked: "If you had the power to change things for tecatos, what would you do to make your life better?" All the respondents gave two or three answers to the question. The top three answers pertained to the acquisition of detoxification and drug treatment, employment, and social services. Most respondents suggested that detoxification and steady employment coupled with family counseling would be more helpful than enrollment in residential treatment.

Respondents also suggested intervention and prevention strategies to help them deal with their individual substance abuse problems and their family problems. Their suggested strategies were based on the respondents' notion that solutions to their problems had to deal with their total life circumstances and not only with their drug addition and their risk of HIV infection.

This chapter concludes the report with a list of recommendations gleaned from the respondents' comments and from the principal investigator's observations. Most respondents were aware of the dangers that confront them as addicts and of the many family problems that overwhelm them and prevent them from becoming drug free. The more prominent suggestions in the areas of intervention and prevention, treatment, and research are discussed below.

Intervention and Prevention

All of the respondents are from multi-problem families. Each respondent's drug problem resides within the context of the individual's other problems and within a larger community in which substance abuse is endemic. Each respondent's family also lacks resources to help the respondent in his or her recovery and to improve the life circumstances of the respondent's significant others. Therefore, any strategy to help tecatos must contain elements of intervention and prevention.

Francisco, a middle aged tecato, gave advice on what would help in the areas of intervention and prevention. He gave the advice in the form of a story.

> Think about the problem and about the solution to the problem as if it were an old car. The car's motor, tires, and transmission are bad, and there is no garage in which to park the car, so it stays outside to weather the elements. You drive it along and now and then you replace a tire with a used one, change a spark plug or the battery. You know that you need to redo the car from top to bottom, but because you have no money, the motor and transmission don't get replaced or overhauled, and the four tires never get replaced at the same time with new ones, so often you are without a car because it's not running.
>
> That's the way it is with the tecato and their families. The tecato, if he is lucky, might get into detox and maybe even into treatment. Even if the treatment is excellent, I can tell you that it is not all that good around here, but that's not my point. My point is that the help that exists only fixes one little part at a time. It doesn't fix the whole system at the same time.
>
> Have you been to the schools in the barrio? The schools need to be fixed. The tecato's family needs to be fixed. The tecato's employment needs to be fixed. He

needs a job to feel good about himself. He needs a decent place [house] for his woman and kids, not one of these two room shacks in the presidios [tenements].

On the one side, you need to fix the tecato to get him off [of drugs] and on the other side, you need to help his kids, so they don't follow his footsteps. You cannot do one thing without doing the other thing, because if you do, the situation will continue like it has been.

Francisco's suggestions, and the advice from other respondents, is formulated into the following recommendations:

SUBSTANCE ABUSE

- Provide family counseling to intact families of active addicts. Ideally, it may be court-ordered and made a stipulation for receiving probation.
- Provide a tutor and a mentor to the children of active addicts.
- Ensure that an active female addict's children who are in foster placement are not placed in the home of an addict's sibling without a complete home study by Child Protective Services. A strategy some female addicts play is to have their children placed with a sibling or some close relative. When that occurs, female addicts only "lose" their children on paper because in reality she still has them. As a consequence, an addict's children are still exposed to substance abuse by their mother, even when they are in "foster" placement with a relative.
- Provide each addict with a mentor who can advocate on behalf of the addict and the addict's family in the areas of education, employment, housing, probation and parole, and social services.
- Provide educational and recreational weekend retreats for gang members and their parents.
- Provide after-school and summer employment for youths.
- Solicit the help of *tecatos buenos* to prevent youth from joining injecting networks.
- Organize mothers in low-income neighborhoods and help them develop alcohol, tobacco, and other drug prevention programs.

HIV / HEPATITIS / STDS

- Establish a needle exchange program in El Paso and Ciudad Juarez shooting galleries.
- Place small bottles of bleach and water in El Paso and Ciudad Juarez shooting galleries, so addicts will have the resources to clean their gear.
- Provide condoms as well as organize and train El Paso and Ciudad Juarez barmaids in HIV/Hepatitis/STD prevention.

- Design, implement, and test HIV/STD and substance abuse intervention strategies that are based on the addicts' coping strategies. Addicts, like non-addicts, use their common sense knowledge to develop coping strategies. The problem is not the absence of knowledge, but in defining situations with limited knowledge or outdated knowledge. For example, to manage their daily activities, addicts have the perception that if a partner is similar to oneself, he/she is "safe." Consequently, individuals share injecting equipment and engage in unprotected sexual intercourse with their parter(s) because they have defined them as "safe" when in actuality their partners may pose a risk to HIV/STD infection. In the area of substance abuse intervention, an individual may not perceive that either a friend or partner will lead him/her towards addiction because of trust and because of the belief that friends do not harm each other. A first step in the design of an effective intervention is learning the common knowledge that addicts use to evaluate sexual and substance abuse situations. It is this knowledge that informs their definition of risk.

- Implement HIV/STD and substance abuse intervention strategies in El Paso and Ciudad Juarez shooting galleries and in the back rooms of bars in drug copping areas. Proprietors of bars and shooting galleries often want to run a trouble-free place. Therefore, many proprietors are open to having a discreet HIV/STD and substance abuse outreach workers operating in their place of business.

- Design, implement, and test HIV/STD and substance abuse intervention strategies with prison inmates six weeks prior to their release from prison. Prison inmates are a "captive" audience, and they are more open to listening to invervention messages than when they are out on the street. Therefore, a six-week long, in-depth intervention strategy implemented while individuals are in prison may be more effective than the short, street corner interventions used by most programs.

- Do not overdo the questioning on men having sex with men. Some respondents found counselors insulting when they were asked too many times about men having sex with men.

RELAPSE PREVENTION

- Locate employment for individuals in recovery.

- Provide counseling to the individual in recovery and include the addict's significant others.

- Teach individuals in recovery how to use leisure time in non-substance abusing activities.

- Reduce the caseload of parole and probation officers so that they have time to get to know their clients.

- Assign parole and probation officers who can help their clients get into detoxification and treatment centers at the first sign of relapse.

- Do not pressure parolee and probationers for their parole or probation supervision fees.

- Provide parolees and probationers with a place and an atmosphere where they can discuss their problems staying off drugs and to reveal relapses without being punished.

Treatment

TREATMENT PROGRAMS

The following recommendations may improve treatment outcomes and prevent relapse.

- Pitch treatment programs to the client's level of learning.

- Accommodate clients' different learning styles during the course of treatment.

- Develop highly structured, well-supervised treatment programs that have a clearly defined beginning, middle, and ending, so clients know that they have experienced and completed a specific program. The program should have a start and a finish instead of a series of activities that are often perceived by clients as unrelated and that the client does not identify as part of a treatment program.

- Test clients at the end of each phase of the treatment program on their mastery of content.

- Present information on topics other than substance abuse.

- Involve the client's significant others and family members in the treatment process.

- Provide sufficient activities to account for most of the client's awake hours. Respondents reported that treatment programs provided too much free time that allowed groups of clients long stretches of time to sit and reminisce about the quality and quantity of drugs ingested in the past. Respondents reported that this recounting of experiences only whetted their appetites and encouraged clients to buy and use drugs when allowed to go on home visits or to go seek employment.

- Provide counselors who speak the tecato argot.

OTHER RELATED SERVICES

The following services may are an attempt to integrate treatment services with related services that many of these clients appear to need.

- Family counseling which covers non-substance abuse problems such as conflict resolution, healthy relationships, and parenting.

- Youth counseling for the client's children.

- Decision-making exercises.

- Training on use of leisure time activities that do not involve substance abuse.

- Classes that provide information on STDs/HIV infection
- Basic adult education and computer literacy.
- A case manager who advocates on behalf of clients.

Avenues of Further Research

A great deal of time and energy is spent researching the risk behaviors of IDUs and their success and failure in recovery. It is further recommended that this research be expanded to include a study of three treatment programs, a successful, an unsuccessful one, and an average program. Such a study might focus on these questions:

- What is the program content?
- What is the logic or theory underlying the program?
- Is the program geared towards meeting different client learning styles?
- Do clients identify with the program? If so, why? If not, why not?
- Are treatment staff trained to implement the program as designed and to obtain the intended program results?

Language Competency

Except for the two Anglo respondents, none of the respondents spoke English fluently. Most of the respondents were more comfortable speaking in a language mixture of tecato argot and Spanish words. Therefore, any prevention and intervention strategy needs to be implemented by individuals who are fluent in both Spanish and the tecato argot spoken by clients.

One day in December in 1987, an El Paso IDU in recovery gave the principal investigator advice on how he might proceed in the study of tecatos. This report concludes with that advice which has held the principal investigator in good stead through the years.

> If you want to learn about drug use and about tecatos, you have to be in the fire with them. Then, you will learn how they talk, how they use words, and what the words mean to them. By being there, you will learn what it means to be there, and what things mean, even when nobody talks, but things happen. By being in the fire with them, people will get to know you because you will have experiences with them. At first, people will not say much. Then, after they get to know you, they will talk with you. They will tell you, and you will learn by being there, hearing and seeing who has the best drugs, which tecatos help or cheat, and what the police, parole officers, and others do to tecatos.

Endnotes

Chapter 1

1 See Reyes Ramos. 1990. "Chicano Intravenous Drug Users." in Elizabeth Lambert and Wayne Weibel. (Eds). *The Collection and Interpretation of Data from Hidden Populations* (Rockville, MD: National Institute on Drug Abuse, NIDA Research Monograph 98): 128-145.

2 See Ramos, ibid; —. 1992. *Black Tar Heroin Use In Three Southwestern Cities.* (Rockville, MD: National Institute on Drug Abuse, National Institute on Drug Abuse Report. DHHS Publication No. (ADM) 92-1909); "To Be In The Fire: Drug Trends in El Paso, Texas," in Elizabeth Lambert ed. *Epidemiologic Trends in Drug Abuse, June 1989.* (Rockville, MD: National Institute on Drug Abuse): section III, 121-129.

3 These figures were reported by the City of El Paso's Planning Department, 1997.

4 City of El Paso, ibid.

5 See Sally Stevens, Julie Erickson, and Antonio Estrada. 1993. "Characteristics of Female Sexual Partners of Injection Drug Users in Southern Arizona: Implications for Effective HIV Risk Reduction Interventions." in Dennis Fisher and Richard Needle, (eds). *AIDS and Community-based Drug Intervention Programs: Evaluation and Outreach.* New York: The Haworth Press, Inc.; Jane Maxwell and Richard Spence. 1993. *The History of Drug Abuse in Texas: Selected Metropolitan Areas.* (Austin, TX: Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse); Joan Moore. 1993. "The Chola Life Course: Chicana Heroin Users and The Barrio Gang." Unpublished paper.; —. 1991. *Going Down to the Barrio: Homeboys and Homegirls in Change*. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press); —. 1990. "Mexican-American Women Addicts: The Influence of Family Background." in Ronald Glick and Joan Moore, eds. *Drugs in Hispanic Communities.* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press); Mary Booth, Felipe Castro, and Douglas Anglin. 1990. "What Do We Know About Hispanic Substance Abuse? A Review of the Literature." in Ronald Glick and Joan Moore, eds. *Drugs in Hispanic Communities*. (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press): 21-44; Mario De la Rosa, J. Kholsa, and B. Rouse. 1990. "Hispanic and Illicit Drug Use: A Review of Recent Findings." *The International Journal of the Addiction* 25 (6): 665-691; Ronald Glick and Joan Moore, eds. 1990. *Drugs in Hispanic Communities.* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press); Joan Moore and Mary Devitt. 1989. "The Paradox of Deviance In Addicted Mexican-American Mothers." *Gender & Society* 3 (1): 53-70; James Diego Vigil. 1988. *Barrio Gangs*. (Austin: University of Texas Press; J. Maddux and David Desmond. 1984. "Mexican-American Heroin Addicts," *American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse* 10(3): 317-346; —. 1980. *Careers of Opiate Users*. (New York: Praeger Publishers); —. 1974 "Obtaining Life History Information About Opiate Users." *American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse* 1 (2): 181-198; Joan Moore, Roberto Garcia, Carlos Garcia, Frank Valencia, and Luis Cerda. 1978. *Homeboys: Gangs, Drugs and Prisons in the Barrios of Los Angeles*. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press); Bruce Bullington. 1977. *Heroin Use In The Barrio*. (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books).

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8 Mata and Jorquez, ibid.

9 See note 2.

Chapter 4

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APPENDIX A. Glossary of Tecato Argot

1. Mexican American Injecting Drug User:

- Tecato [male user]
- Tecata [female user]

2. Drugs

Cocaine:

- Blanca [white]
- Coca [name of the plant, Coca]
- Soda

Heroin:

- Brea [tar]
- Café [brown]
- Carga [load]
- Chiva [goat]
- Chapopote [black tar]
- Chicle [gum]
- Goma [gum]
- La buena [the good one]
- Mugrero [trash, dirt]
- Piedra [rock]
- Polvo [powder]
- Tecata [heroin]
- Zoquete [mud]

Marijuana:

- Grifa
- Leno [joint]
- Mary Jane
- Mota
- Toque [hit or dose]

Methadone:

- Medicina [medicine]

3. Injecting Equipment:

Cooker:

- Cuca
- Ficha [bottle top]

Filter:

- Algodas [cottons]

Syringe:

- Cohete [ricket]
- Erre [works]
- Fierro [iron]
- Pico [needle]

4. Injection:

- Arreglamos [fixed]
- Dejar Caer [to drop]
- Eskinnear [skinpopping]
- Fierrazo [to hit with iron]
- Filorear [to prick]
- Hacer La Vaquita
- Tirar [to shoot]
- Darse Un Chiquito [give oneself a small one]

5. Dosage:

- Aliviane
- Cura [fix or dose]
- Medio [hit or dose of half a gram]

6. High:

- Andas locas
- Arreglado
- Curado

7. Addiction

- Malillas [dope sick]
- Prendido [hooked]

8. Hustle:

- Andas moviendo [selling]
- Avientar [to sell]
- Calentada [beating]
- Jale [work, item, or thing]
- Mover [to sell]
- Movida [strategy]
- Rayarse [positive outcome]
- Talonear [hustle /prostitute]
- Transa [transaction or deal]

9. Setting:

- Aguaje [shooting gallery]
- Bola [network]
- Estado [state penitentiary]
- Federal [federal penitentiary]
- La Lumbre [area where drugs are bought, sold and used]

10. Participants:

- Camellador [drug dealer's assistant]
- Parjaro [street dealer's client or buyer]
- Macuco [street dealer's supplier]
- Plomero [hitman]
- Tecato Bueno [high status addict]
- Tecato Chafa [an occasional user]
- Tecato Cucaracho [low status addict]
- Tecato Mediano[an addict without high or low status]
- Vatos de relaje [informant]