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State-Narco Networks and the ‘War on Drugs’ in Post-Transition Bolivia, with special reference to 1989-1993

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the Degree of Doctor
of Philosophy

School of Humanities
College of Arts
November 2016
University of Glasgow

This work was supported by the University of Glasgow’s Lord Kelvin
Adam Smith Scholarship scheme.

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Declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow, or any other institution.

Signature:

Print name: Allan Gillies

Abstract | State-Narco Networks and the ‘War on Drugs’ in Post-Transition Bolivia, with special reference to 1989-1993

This thesis examines the development of state-narco networks in post-transition Bolivia. Mainstream discourses of drugs tend to undertheorise such relationships, holding illicit economies, weak states and violence as synergistic phenomena. Such assumptions fail to capture the nuanced relations that emerge between the state and the drug trade in different contexts, their underlying logics and diverse effects. As an understudied case, Bolivia offers novel insights into these dynamics. Bolivian military authoritarian governments (1964-1982), for example, integrated drug rents into clientelistic systems of governance, helping to establish factional coalitions and reinforce regime authority. Following democratic transition in 1982 and the escalation of US counterdrug efforts, these stable modes of exchange between the state and the coca-cocaine economy fragmented. Bolivia, though, continued to experience lower levels of drug-related violence than its Andean neighbours, and sustained democratisation despite being a major drug producer. Focusing on the introduction of the Andean Initiative (1989-1993), I explore state-narco interactions during this period of flux: from authoritarianism to (formal) democracy, and from Cold War to Drug War. As such, the thesis transcends the conventional analyses of the drugs literature and orthodox readings of Latin American narco-violence, providing insights into the relationship between illicit economies and democratic transition, the regional role of the US, and the (unintended) consequences of drug policy interventions.

I utilise a mixed methods approach to offer discrete perspectives on the object of study. Drawing on documentary and secondary sources, I argue that state-narco networks were interwoven with Bolivia's post-transition political settlement. Uneven democratisation ensured pockets of informalism, as clientelistic and authoritarian practices continued. This included police and military autonomy, and tolerance of drug corruption within both institutions.

Non-enforcement of democratic norms of accountability and transparency was linked to the maintenance of fragile political equilibrium. Interviews with key US and Bolivian elite actors also revealed differing interpretations of state-narco interactions. These exposed competing agendas, and were folded into alternative paradigms and narratives of the 'war on drugs'. The extension of US Drug War goals and the targeting of 'corrupt' local power structures, clashed with local ambivalence towards the drug trade, opposition to destabilising, 'Colombianised' policies and the claimed 'democratising mission' of the Bolivian government. In contrasting these US and Bolivian accounts, the thesis shows how real and perceived state-narco webs were understood and navigated by different actors in distinct ways. 'Drug corruption' held significance beyond simple economic transaction or institutional failure. Contestation around state-narco interactions was enmeshed in US-Bolivian relations of power and control.

Acknowledgements

Over the course of four years of research, countless hours in the office, trips back and forth across the Atlantic, and months of fieldwork in the Americas, I have inevitably indebted myself to a great many people. Their support has been invaluable to the completion of this thesis, and is well-worthy of recognition.

My PhD supervisors, Alex Marshall, Mo Hume and Jacqueline Atkinson, have provided strong guidance throughout the project. Their engagement with my work, patience and willingness to challenge my assumptions have been important during all stages of the PhD. I would also like to thank them for their advice and pastoral support. They have often gone above and beyond the duties of a supervisor, not least coordinating the replacement of a stolen passport between Buenos Aires and Glasgow. I am deeply grateful for their hard work.

I have been privileged to travel extensively in the completion of my fieldwork and language training. My thanks to everyone who made me feel welcome along the way, alleviating any feelings of homesickness. This includes: the communities of Sustainable Bolivia, and Spanish in Rosario; the Balderrama family in Cochabamba; Stephanie, Claudio and Juani in Rosario (*¡Aupa Central y Celtic!*); Maria del Carmen in Madrid; and Tessa Kahn and friends in Washington, DC. My thanks also to all of those who agreed to interviews. Participants were generous with their time, and helped me greatly with my research. Without their contribution, this thesis simply would not have been possible.

I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to my friends and family. Friends have endured my lectures on drug policy and Latin America, and listened to my complaints; celebrating and commiserating through the ups and downs of the PhD. Much the same goes for my family. Louise, Martin, Anna, Isabel, Jenny, Dominic, Liz and Kevy have shown great caring and encouragement. Finally, this thesis is dedicated to my father and late-mother - John and Angela - for their unwavering love, support and belief. Words cannot express my appreciation for everything they have given me.

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Abbreviations & Acronyms

ADEPA	<i>Asociación de Productores de Algodón</i>
ADN	<i>Acción Democrática Nacionalista</i>
APTA	The Andean Trade Preference Act
BAB	<i>Banco Agrícola de Bolivia</i>
CEDIB	<i>El Centro de Documentación e Información Bolivia</i>
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
COFADENA	<i>La Corporación de las Fuerzas Armadas para el Desarrollo Nacional</i>
COMIBOL	<i>Corporación Minera de Bolivia</i>
DEA	The Drug Enforcement Administration
DIRECO	<i>Dirección de Reconversión Agrícola</i>
DoD	US Department of Defense
ESF	US Economic Support Fund
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigations
FECLN	<i>La Fuerza Especial de Lucha Contra El Narcotráfico</i>
FINSA	<i>Firma Integral de Servicios Arévalo</i>
FMF	US Foreign Military Financing
FOIA	US Freedom of Information Act
GAO	US Government Accountability Office
IADB	Inter-American Development Bank
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INC	US International Narcotics Control Assistance
INCSR	US International Narcotics Control Strategy Report
INL	State Department Bureau of International Narcotics Law Enforcement (formerly INM)
INM	State Department Bureau of International Narcotics Matters
MAS	<i>El Movimiento al Socialismo</i>
MIR	<i>El Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria</i>
MNR	<i>El Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario</i>
NAS	US Narcotics Affairs Section
NSA	The National Security Archive
NSC	The US National Security Council

ONDCP	US Office of National Drug Control Policy
PDCR	<i>El Partido Democrática Cristiano Revolucionario</i>
Southcom	US Military Southern Command
SUBSEDAL	<i>Subsecretaría de Desarrollo Alternativo</i>
UDP	<i>Unidad Democrática y Popular</i>
UMOPAR	<i>Los Unidades Móviles de Patrullaje Rural</i>
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
USCIS	The Office of United States Citizenship and Immigration Services
USIA	US Information Agency
USAID	US Agency for International Development
USMILGP	US Military Group

Chapter 1 | Introduction

On 21 February 1981, Colonel Luis Arce Gomez reportedly met with Bolivia's top drug traffickers in Santa Cruz (Leclerc & Fallareau: 1981a).¹ The 'Minister of Cocaine', as he had been dubbed by the US press, represented the authoritarian military government of General Luis García Meza (1980-1981). The regime had gained international notoriety, not only for its human rights abuses, but for its strong links to Bolivia's burgeoning coca-cocaine economy. With US pressure mounting to take action against the drug trade, Arce Gomez advised the assembled traffickers to move their operations deeper into Bolivia's remote Beni department. He also requested payment to the regime of US\$500,000 to secure protection of production facilities, commercial operations and drug flights (ibid.). Such arrangements were indicative of the state-narco networks that operated in Bolivia at this time. In return for a share of the profits, trafficking organisations were co-opted by the promise of unhindered business. Rents from the coca-cocaine trade were in-turn utilised by the government to buy the loyalty of factions within the state, including, most significantly, the military. Shared interests were established, blurring the distinction between the state and the illicit sphere. This thesis examines the evolution of these state-narco networks following Bolivia's 1982 transition to democracy.

The development of the Bolivian drug trade during this period confounds the typical assumptions of the conventional policy and academic discourse, where illicit economies, weakened state capacity, instability and violence are held generally as synergistic phenomena (e.g. Cornell, 2007; Hargreaves, 1992; INCB, 2011; ONDCP, 2015; Youngers & Rosin, 2005). Alongside Colombia and Peru, Bolivia played a major role in the Andean cocaine trade. But while its neighbours descended into various forms of drug-related violence, Bolivia's coca-cocaine economy remained relatively peaceful. Furthermore, despite the exponential growth of its illicit trade, Bolivia sustained its long-promised democratic transition. All of this occurred against the background of escalating US militarised counterdrug efforts in the region, as Bolivia became a key test

¹ See Appendix D for a map of Bolivia.

case for the newly nascent ‘war on drugs’. This thesis considers the role of state-narco networks - a hangover from the authoritarian era - within these complex processes; an important factor in the function of the illicit trade, shaping its wider political, social and economic implications.

In so doing, my analysis addresses a weakness of the mainstream policy and academic discourse on illicit drugs: the undertheorisation of the relationship between the state and the drug trade in the Global South.² The broad assumption of synergy between drugs, violence and weakened state capacity fails to capture the nuanced forms of interaction that emerge between the state and the drug trade in different contexts, their underlying logics and diverse effects. The nature of these relations has wide implications: shaping the local political order (Goodhand, 2008), the workings of formal and informal institutions (Meehan, 2015; Snyder, 2006), and whether or not the drug economy is associated with high-levels of violence (Snyder & Martínez, 2011). As such, drug policy interventions and their subsequent (unintended) consequences interact with the function of state-narco networks (Mansfield, 2016). Centring on the introduction of the Andean Initiative (1989-1993), a multi-billion dollar US counterdrug aid package, I trace the relationship between the Bolivian state and the drug trade during a period of flux: from authoritarianism to (formal) democracy, and from Cold War to Drug War. The thesis thus aims to transcend the conventional analyses of the drugs literature and orthodox readings of Latin American narco-violence. In utilising an understudied case with distinct dynamics, my analysis provides additional insights into the relationship between illicit economies and democratic transition, the regional role of the US, and the course of the ‘war on drugs’ in the Andes.

To interrogate this topic, the thesis employs a novel mixed methods approach and develops original research in both the US and Bolivia to offer multiple perspectives on the object of study. This blends documentary sources with elite interviews of key US and Bolivian political actors from the period. The first

² The drugs literature classifies countries according to their role in the drug trade: producer, transit or consumer. During the period of study, Bolivia was primarily a producer of coca-cocaine.

strand of this approach uses secondary and documentary sources to reconstruct the relationship between the Bolivian state and the drug trade from 1964 to 1993. This serves as a rich base-line account of state-narco relations; tracing the interplay of the changing domestic and international political context, and the development of Bolivia's coca-cocaine economy. Such sources, though, are incomplete and, at times, difficult to verify. This is a common methodological issue of research into illicit activity. The second strand of my approach thus shifts focus to consider elite *interpretations* and responses to this phenomenon; thereby mediating this methodological limitation and providing new insights into the case. Drawing on interviews with key US and Bolivian actors from the period of the Andean Initiative (1989-1993) and employing elements of oral history methodology, I reveal differing perceptions of state-narco networks. These were folded into alternative paradigms and narratives of the 'war on drugs', and exposed competing agendas. These two strands of my approach simultaneously complement each other and offer discrete perspectives on the research topic, producing original findings.

First, local trafficking organisations were absorbed into existing political structures, which acted to manage and mediate the violent excesses of the coca-cocaine economy. Drug rents were, in-turn, integrated into informal forms of clientelistic governance, and used to reinforce the political order. Second, tacit-acceptance of drug links running through the military, police and the political parties was bound to the maintenance of fragile political equilibrium. Government toleration of such practices ensured the continued support of major political actors for democratisation. In this sense, the illicit economy was interwoven with Bolivia's uneven democratic governance. Third, the booming drug trade helped to stabilise the national economy during crisis and harsh structural reforms. The coca-cocaine economy acted as a social safety net, providing employment and inward investment, while also bolstering the banking system with foreign capital reserves. Taken together, these factors created ambivalence among the Bolivian political elite toward the illicit economy and resistance to the escalation of the US securitised counterdrug response. In contrasting US and Bolivian interview accounts, my analysis shows how real and perceived state-narco networks were understood and navigated by US and

Bolivian actors in distinct ways. 'Drug corruption' held significance beyond simple economic transaction or institutional failure. Contestation around state-narco interactions was enmeshed in US-Bolivian relations of power and control.

In this introductory chapter, I outline the main elements of my theoretical approach, methods and empirical analysis. First, I provide justification for my case selection, including discussion of the distinct characteristics of the Bolivian case. Second, I situate the research question within the wider literature on drugs and coercion, and elucidate my analytical framework. As part of this, I discuss my methodological approach and its influence on empirical analysis. Finally, I outline the main findings of the thesis. In this way, the chapter guides the reader through the rationale for the study and its main components.

1.1 Case Selection

As stated previously, the case of post-transition Bolivia contradicts the assumed link between drugs, violence, weakened state capacity and instability found in mainstream discourses of drugs. I argue that state-narco networks played a significant role in shaping the function of Bolivia's drug trade during this period. The country's 1982 transition to democracy, and its role as a major arena of the US 'war on drugs' constitute further interesting contextual dynamics for study. These factors serve as justification for the selection of the case, and its value to the theoretical development of drugs literature. In this section, I outline these dimensions in greater detail by providing historical background to the case and the establishment of the modern US 'war on drugs'.

The history of Bolivian state-narco networks pre-dated political transition and García Meza's 1981 regime. They had been a feature of Bolivian military-led governments since the mid-1960s, and were based in clientelistic and authoritarian modes of governance; a consequence of historic processes of state formation, and the country's political, social and economic development. General René Barrientos, who served as president between 1964 and 1969, encouraged elements within the army and police to manage emerging domestic coca-cocaine operations (Rodas M., 1996: 51). This created patron-client bonds

that enabled Barrientos to build support within both institutions. General Hugo Banzer (1970-78) adopted a similar model. The rapid expansion of the cocaine market in the 1970s meant that links between the state, economic elites and the drug trade were developed and deepened under his rule (Dunkerley, 1984: 315). These networks strengthened Banzer's regime, providing power bases both internal and external to the state. Rather than deviation from accepted norms, this form of 'corruption' was instead assimilated into engrained political processes. Bolivia's trafficking clans, based in kinship ties, sought accommodation with the state rather than conflict. Stables modes of exchange between the state and these traffickers engendered stability in the drug trade; helping to control violence.

The year 1982, though, represented a point of fracture for the state-narco networks of the authoritarian era. Transformations in the domestic and international context threatened the operation of well-established state-narco networks. Bolivia's democratisation and the emergence of the 'war on drugs' as a US foreign policy priority changed 'the rules of the game'. First, democratic reform promised an effective rule of law, the accountability of state officials, transparent government and civilian control of the military. In this way, the clientelistic and authoritarian practices of the past, which had contributed to the formation and maintenance of state-narco networks, would be swept away by the institutionalisation of democratic safeguards (Whitehead, 2002: 801).

Allied to this, the US began to push for heightened counter-supply efforts within Bolivia. The northern hegemon had previously backed Bolivian authoritarian governments with the aim of halting the spread of leftist influence. Cold War goals ensured tolerance of 'counter-subversion' tactics and even exploitation of drug revenue streams (Gamarra, 1999a: 182). The declining power of the Soviet Union in the late-1970s, though, resulted in the withdrawal of US support for military-led rule³ and, over the course of the decade, a shift in focus from Cold War to Drug War (Morales Q., 1989).⁴ Official complicity in drug trafficking

³ President Jimmy Carter's (1977-81) strong advancement of human rights in the Americas was also an important factor.

⁴ This was an uneven process across Latin America. In Central America, for example, President Ronald Reagan (1981-89) maintained a strong US focus on countering Left-wing influence.

would now provoke US diplomatic and economic sanction, as Bolivia's post-transition governments were pressured to take action against drug corruption.

President George H.W. Bush (1989-93) ramped-up the Drug War hyperbole and brought the issue to the fore. During the first year of his term, Bush (1989) solemnly addressed the nation from the Oval Office to unveil the government's response to the 'the gravest domestic threat facing' the nation: drugs. Holding-up a bag of crack-cocaine, apparently seized from Lafayette Park - just across from the White House - the President offered the picture of a country beset with drugs.⁵

It's as innocent-looking as candy, but it's turning our cities into battle zones, and it's murdering our children. Let there be no mistake: this stuff is poison. Some used to call drugs harmless recreation; they're not. Drugs are a real and terribly dangerous threat to our neighbourhoods, our friends, and our families. (Bush, 1989)

The administration's rhetoric and counterdrug strategy reflected the US Drug War Paradigm (outlined below). On the domestic front, prevention, education and treatment all received support, but the policy was overwhelmingly enforcement focused. Bush (1989) argued that the US needed 'more prisons, more jails, more courts, more prosecutors' and adjusted government spending accordingly. This hard-line response was replicated on the counter-supply side. In August 1989, Bush authorised National Security Decision Directive 18 (NSDD 18), sponsoring 'a steady expansion of the US military's role in drug interdiction, both along US borders and overseas, and (intensifying) US pressures on other governments in the Western Hemisphere to assign a greater role to their own armed forces in combating drug-trafficking' (Bagley, 1991: 14). Coming out of this was the Andean Initiative, the centrepiece of Bush's drug control strategy. With the US\$2.2 billion aid package, Bush signalled the US government's intent to hit the cocaine supply at source; establishing the foundations for the modern 'War on Drugs' in Latin America.

⁵ The Washington Post revealed later that the DEA had gone to great trouble to provide the President with his prop. They had lured a crack dealer to the park to give them their sensational sting. 'In fact, when first contacted by an undercover DEA agent posing as a drug buyer, the teenage suspect seemed baffled by the agent's request. "Where the [expletive] is the White House?"' (Isikoff, 1989).

Bolivia was viewed as a key test case for the US counterdrug approach. Although it was strategically less significant than its Andean neighbours, US policymakers nevertheless recognised both its role within the regional trade and its symbolic importance to US counterdrug policy in Latin America.⁶ In 1989, for example, Peruvian coca was estimated to constitute roughly two-thirds of the total market (US State, 1990). Colombia, meanwhile, was the epicentre of the trade, with international criminal organisations based out of Medellín and Cali controlling trafficking (Thoumi, 2003). However, Bolivia remained a vital point in the coca-cocaine commodity chain linking the Andes to the US, accounting for around a quarter of net coca cultivation in the Andes over the late-1980s (US State, 1986-1990). Coca producers and local trafficking organisations were vertically integrated into a structure headed by the Colombian Cartels (Painter, 1994: Ch. 2). In addition to this, as problems related to internal armed actors and powerful and violent traffickers were, unlike Peru and Colombia, largely absent in Bolivia, so too were the attendant complications of applying counterdrug efforts in such contexts (US OIG, 1991: Appendix A). The size and dynamics of the drug economy in Bolivia thus made success seem more attainable (Ledebur, 2005: 145).

Historical factors were also evident. The US had been the dominant partner in relations with Bolivia and viewed the country as falling within its sphere of influence (Lehman, 1999). The ‘war on drugs’ was a natural progression of its liberalising mission in the Americas: providing the security conditions for a liberal market democracy in the heart of South America. Giving new impetus to relations between the countries, the US placed counterdrug goals at the core of their relationship with Bolivia (Lehman, 2006: 132). Extensive US counterdrug funds were allotted to this end: from Operation Blast Furnace in 1986 - marking a shift towards the militarisation of US counterdrug policy - through to Plan Dignidad’s comprehensive, and controversial, program of eradication in 1997. The 1989 Andean Initiative, though, forms the focus of enquiry. Its three central

⁶ Former-ONDCP official, John Carnevale (interview, 2013) took a slightly different angle: ‘It’s always been, for the (ONDCP) drug czars, a source of irritation: (. . .) the (Bolivians’) view of the coca leaf and their resolve in ensuring that the US opinion didn’t prevail’.

tenets - eradication, interdiction and alternative development - formed the blueprint for US counter-supply efforts. While the Andean Initiative did not invent the US drug war paradigm, the policy institutionalised it; establishing a large drug war bureaucracy, which has reproduced itself through each US budgetary cycle.

Finally, different theories have been advanced for the relative lack of drug-related violence during this period. Thoumi (2003) argues that Bolivia was vertically integrated into cocaine transit routes in the 1980s controlled by the Colombian Cartels. As such, violent competition occurred further up the commodity chain, rather than in Bolivia itself. Added to this, Bolivia's society was said to be heavily influenced by indigenous cultural values: more peaceful than Colombia - valuing compromise over violence (Ibid: 250). Such an environment was thus unpropitious for the emergence of large drug trafficking organisations; an industry where the ability to deploy violence is viewed as a comparative advantage. The strong influence of the coca unions may be added as a contributing factor here. UNODC (2016: 156) suggests that the *sindicatos* have closed-off space for the growth of trafficking empires. While it is certainly the case that Bolivia's drug clans were dwarfed by their Colombian counterparts during the post-transition period, the power and influence these local groups held cannot be dismissed. They headed an industry estimated to be worth US\$ 674m by 1988, constituting 53.9 per cent of all Bolivian exports (Franks, 1991: 20). How exactly this revenue was divided between the various sectors involved in the coca-cocaine economy is uncertain, but the role of local organised crime in Bolivia in controlling a large share of this wealth is undeniable. Bolivia's organised crime sector was large and significant. Despite this, though, drug-related violence was largely absent; not only between traffickers, but also against the state and society. This thesis argues that state-narco networks played a pivotal role in this, mediating the coca-cocaine economy.

In sum, the post-transition period and the implementation of the Andean Initiative in Bolivia constitutes a crucial case study within the wider literature on drugs. My analysis speaks to the central themes of this literature, drawing out the competing agendas of US and Bolivian actors and their distinct

interpretations of the period. But in applying a different theoretical focus, the thesis transcends these discourses; focusing on a period of flux, when internal and external contextual factors were changing. The bases of Bolivia's long-established state-narco networks were also fragmenting. The dynamics of the Bolivian case during this period thus provide a distinct environment within which to explore aspects of the relationship between the state and the drug trade. This illuminates the factors that underpin Bolivia's divergence from the conventional assumptions of policy and academic discourse of drugs.

1.2 Advancing a Nuanced Understanding of State-Narco Networks

This thesis speaks to key themes of the drugs literature, such as prohibition versus decriminalisation/legalisation (e.g. MacCoun & Reuter, 2001), the social, political and economic effects of drug policy (e.g. Buxton, 2006; Tullis, 1995; Painter, 1994; Youngers & Rosin, 2005) and the role of the US in advancing counterdrug policies (e.g. Bewley-Taylor, 2002; Menzel, 1996; Musto, 1999; Reiss, 2014).⁷ The Drug War and Development Paradigms are present across this literature, and serve as overarching frameworks for analysing the causes of the drug trade, the appropriate response and, within this, conceptualisations of state-narco interactions and the effects of illicit economies on nations in the Global South. These alternative paradigms have also informed policy debates, and were evident during the negotiations and implementation of the Andean Initiative. Crucially for this thesis, they were frequently drawn on by US and Bolivian actors during our interviews. Both paradigms are critical to understanding the onset of the modern US Drug War in Bolivia; offering insights into US and Bolivian preferences for policy, and how actors responded to various facets of the 'war on drugs' and justified their actions. In addition to this, though, my engagement with both of these paradigms aims to expose the limitations of conventional academic and policy discourses of drugs in accounting for the exceptional case of post-transition Bolivia. Specifically, I argue that these discourses undertheorise the relationship between the state and the drug trade in the South and its nuanced effects.

⁷ There is overlap and interaction between these three broadly drawn themes.

Addressing this weakness, my analytical framework builds on theories of state coercion. The research agenda here centres on the role of formal and informal institutions of rent extraction - typically related to illicit economies - in processes of state formation (e.g. Meehan, 2015; North, et. al., 2007; Snyder, 2006), and/or conflict resolution (e.g. Le Billion, 2003; Reno, 2009a). For example, Goodhand (2008: 414) contends that the effects of drug corruption are dependent on underlying power relations between relevant actors, the nature of the agreements they make and the influence of international policies. As opposed to a source of instability and weakened state capacity - as typically assumed by the drugs literature - these may form a basis for political order. Aspects of this theoretical framework, therefore, provide insights into the development of state-narco networks and their varied effects. This is supplemented with analysis of uneven democratisation in Latin America (Auyero, 2007; Barrios M., 1994; O'Donnell, 1996). Following the Third Wave, clientelistic and authoritarian practices continued alongside formal elements of democracy across the region, as distinct forms of 'polyarchy' emerged during uncertain processes of democratisation. Bolivia's transition followed a similar path. This, I argue, was a crucial contextual factor in the function of Bolivian state-narco networks.

Drawing on these different areas of the literature, the thesis moves beyond the dominant debates and overarching paradigms of the 'war on drugs': tracing the development of state-narco interactions during a critical period in Bolivian history and the trajectory of counterdrug policy in Latin America.

1.2.1 Alternative Paradigms of the 'War on Drugs'

The Drug War Paradigm is based in US moralistic cultural attitudes towards drugs, and advocates prohibition policies (Gootenberg, 2009: 37). Drugs are viewed as a threat to US values and society that must be defeated with a hard-line approach (Reinarman & Levine, 1997a). As part of this, the issue is considered an issue of US national security, thus justifying the extension of the 'war on drugs' in producer nations (Bewley-Taylor, 1999). Grounded in themes

of American Exceptionalism, this is held to be beneficial to such nations in the Global South (Lundestad, 1986): freeing countries from the tyranny of the drug trade - including violence and institutional decay - and creating the conditions for liberal democracy and economic development (ONDCP, 1990). According to this paradigm, then, state-narco interactions are conceptualised one-dimensionally as drug corruption: deviant behaviour understood as personal moral failure, as well as institutional failure (Mares, 2004: 22). As both a cause and a consequence of a weak state (Meehan, 2011: 377), these represent a barrier to Drug War 'success' (Nadelmann, 1994: 259). This 'legitimises' US actions to bypass or eliminate corrupt local power structures.

By contrast, the Development Paradigm identifies demand in consumer nations, and underdevelopment in the South as the roots of the drug problem. Producer nations in Latin America are, therefore, 'victims' of the drug trade, its associated violence and destabilising effects. Counterdrug policies, it is argued, should focus on demand reduction, development and institution building (Younger & Rosin, 2005). Critiquing the US approach, the 'war on drugs' has made little progress and exacerbated the local harmful effects of the drug trade (Buxton, 2006: Ch. 10). Viewed through the prism of *el Imperialismo Yanquí*, the Drug War represents US hegemonic control in the hemisphere (Stokes, 2004). State-narco interactions are also viewed one-dimensionally as drug corruption here, but the emphasis is placed on drug consuming nations, i.e. drug consumption in the US has created powerful traffickers with the wealth to subvert institutions in the South (Thoumi, 2003: 39 & 179). The damaging effects of such practices, though, are most effectively addressed with a development-led response, rather than militarised counterdrug policies.

While these overarching paradigms of the 'war on drugs' diverge in significant ways, they thus share common assumptions of the effects of the drug trade and conceptualisations of state-narco interactions. The 'essentialised' linkages between drugs, instability, weak states and violence are reproduced across both paradigms (Meehan, 2011: 402). On a fundamental level, both view the drug trade as destabilising and conceptualise drug corruption as deviance, with attached corrosive effects for the state and society. In this view, the dividing

line between the state and the drug trade is held as clear and definitive (Heyman & Smart, 1999: 11), ‘illegality and violence are directly connected’ (Snyder & Martinez, 2009: 253), and ‘the drug economy is conventionally viewed as an index of state power, so that low capacity regimes are more likely to have a “drug problem” than high capacity regimes’ (Goodhand, 2008: 413). This thinking, then, has been evident across the conventional policy and academic discourse of drugs.

Considering the policy sphere first, counterdrug efforts have evolved since the inception of the modern ‘war on drugs’ during the 1980s. Public health responses have gained greater traction in the US and Europe, while several countries have experimented with decriminalisation (e.g. Portugal) and legalisation of drugs (e.g. Uruguay). In many ways, though, the discourse of prohibition and the assumed links between illicit drugs, violence and instability in the Global South still hold sway. The US Office of National Policy Drug Control Policy’s (ONDCP) 1990 National Drug Control Strategy - the first such strategy of the newly formed executive agency - demonstrates these enduring themes.

The cocaine producing industry is directly responsible for violence, drug-related corruption, and intimidation by drug traffickers of persons and governments in the three Andean countries where coca leaf is grown. (It) is, moreover, but one threat in the Andean region. Economic instability and insurgencies also present serious challenges to democratic institutions and stability in the area. The three are interrelated: addressing one without also addressing the others is unlikely to achieve reduced cocaine supply. (ONDCP, 1989: 63)

Here, the drug trade is both symptom and disease: indicative of weak state capacity, economic instability and deficient institutions, while simultaneously compounding these problems. Defeat of the drug trade through a militarised response was held as a catch-all cure for the multi-faceted issues the region confronted. In the 2015 version of this strategy, more emphasis was given to demand reduction, but similar assumptions around the effects of the drug trade were evident.

Drug trafficking networks severely threaten the security and prosperity of many countries in the Western Hemisphere and other regions. Dismantling these groups allows affected nations to develop stronger

institutions better able to withstand the corrosive and corruptive effects of the trafficking organisations. It also addresses the impunity of criminals and corrupt officials - a top priority for improving security in regions like Central and South America. (ONDCP, 2015: 65)

This is indicative of the dominant 'policy narrative on illicit drug production', which is 'underpinned by an idealised notion of the state' (Mansfield, 2016: 17). In drug producing nations, the state is viewed as 'weak', unable to effectively impose control over the national territory. As a result, state-building notions of strengthening institutions and bolstering the security forces have bled into securitised counterdrug responses. Attempts to create alternative rural economies and deny space for armed actors may be viewed as complementary to this agenda. This reflects international interventionist trends: the impulse to stabilise the 'ungoverned spaces' of 'weak states' that represent a securitised threat to Western nations (Duffield, 2007). While the correlation between illicit drug economies, violence and instability is undoubtedly clear, the top-down conceptualisations of the Drug War and Development Paradigms - both present in contemporary US policy discourse - underplay contextual factors within drug producing nations. As a result, US counterdrug policy has frequently failed to account for nuance in the form and function of the drug trade in Latin America and beyond; the complex inter-linkages between illicit drug economies and local social, political and economic structures. A one-dimensional conceptualisation of the relationship between the state and the drug trade is a significant aspect of this failure.

Internationally, the UN drug control regime has been criticised for simply reproducing the prohibition model favoured by the US (Bewley-Taylor, 1999). It is, therefore, unsurprising that similar trends are observed in international policy discourses. The 2015 Report of the International Narcotics Control Board (2016:4), for example, describes violence as 'perhaps the most visible and pernicious outcome of drug trafficking', arguing that 'when drug dealing becomes intertwined with political conflicts, horrific levels of violence may ensue.' Furthermore, 'corruption and drug-related problems are mutually reinforcing, and corruption and other social problems greatly contribute to the development of the illicit drug industry' (Ibid.). Relating this to questions of development, eradication of the drug trade is viewed as a necessary precursor to

ensuring security, stability, good governance and economic growth. Discussing the case of Afghanistan, for example, the following World Bank report displays such tendencies.

The nexus of drugs with insecurity and warlords - a vicious circle that would keep Afghanistan insecure, fragmented politically, weakly governed, poor, dominated by the informal/illicit economy, and a hostage to the drug industry - is clearly the most serious problem. This threatens the entire state-building and reconstruction agenda and as such outweighs all the combined economic benefits. (Byrd & Ward, 2004: i)

As the work of Chouvy (2009), Goodhand (2008) and Mansfield (2016) demonstrate, though, such linkages are overly simplistic. The conventional policy discourse ignores the ways in which the drug economy may become bound-up with uneven processes of state-building and development in such cases.⁸ In certain parts of Afghanistan, dominant coalitions have established 'cooperation and order by limiting access to valuable resources', such as the opium economy; securing elite loyalty to the system, limiting violence and reducing disorder (Goodhand, 2009: 23). Counternarcotics policies during this time have sought to centralise authority in the country and eradicate these rents; creating tensions and undermining 'emergent interdependencies between centre and periphery' (Ibid.). In this sense, counterdrug goals may in-fact run contrary to a state-building agenda.

By contrast, the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) World Drug Report 2016 marked a small shift away from the broad generalisation of the drug policy discourse. The report considered the complex ways in which illicit economies interact with issues of sustainable development in the Global South (UNODC, 2016: Chp. 2). For example, the report acknowledges that 'the connection between drugs and violence is not an automatic one' (Ibid: 95), noting that 'while violence is likely to be more prevalent in cocaine-producing countries, the different homicide levels demonstrate that socioeconomic and political factors mediate this relationship.' Although the report remains weighted to the conventional themes of the Drug War and Development

⁸ The area of the literature in which both Goodhand and Mansfield are situated is discussed below.

Paradigms, it indicates a move towards a more contextualised understanding of the phenomenon. As noted previously, failures in this regard have led to ineffective and counterproductive policies.

Rather than recognise the fact that the illicit drug trade is woven into the very fabric of societies, the prevailing counternarcotics narrative and the core analysis of the UN law enforcement system treats it as a separable problem - something akin to a malignant tumour that can be isolated and surgically removed from a healthy body. (But) it is not even remotely that simple: this is a tumour that cannot be easily removed. It has spread to become an almost necessary part of the whole body. (. . .) Removal could cause certain organs to fail. (Gutierrez, 2015: 2)

Areas of the literature also reproduce these conventional assumptions and, as a result, tend to undertheorise the relationship between the state and the drug trade. As the 'war on drugs' escalated during the 1980s and early-1990s, there were numerous examples in the literature of uncritical adoption of the premises of US counterdrug policy. For example, Mabry (1984: 4) argued that, 'the violence and corruption accompanying the drug business are destabilising' the Andean nations; their 'instability' was thus a 'threat' to US national security. Within the parameters of the Drug War Paradigm, the contextual factors that determined whether or not the drug trade was in-fact associated with violence were underplayed. State-narco interactions were equally generalised as one-dimensional corruption, with little attempt to understand the dynamics that underpinned such relations (e.g. Clawson & Lee III, 1996: 169-177). While critics of the US 'war on drugs' placed greater emphasis on the damaging effects of counterdrug policies, they too uncritically adopted many of the underlying assumptions of those on the other side of the drugs debate.

The drug trade itself, and the violence it generates, has had a devastating impact throughout the region. Drug trafficking breeds criminality, exacerbates criminal and political violence, and fuels armed groups. It greatly increases problems of citizen security, public order and ultimately law enforcement. Across the region, drug trafficking-related corruption has further weakened national and local governments, judiciaries and police forces. (Youngers & Rosin, 2004: 4)

Widening this discussion, Meehan (2011) points to the 'presumed linear relationship between drugs and conflict' as a contributing factor to the

conventional assumptions of the drugs literature. The greed/economic model of post-Cold War civil conflict, advanced by Collier (2000) and Le Billion (2001) for example, argues that lootable resources create the means and the motivation for armed campaigns. As such, illicit drugs are associated with violence, state breakdown and instability. In the cases that dominate the Latin American drugs literature, such theories hold resonance: Colombia and its mix of drug-funded guerrilla and paramilitary groups; Peru and Shining Path's ambiguous relationship to the coca-cocaine economy; and the emergence of quasi-narco-paramilitaries and the challenge to the state of powerful drug mafias in the Mexican Drug War. For example, Cornell (2007) argues that the 'crime-rebellion nexus' in Colombia had the effect of strengthening armed actors, while simultaneously weakening the state. The cocaine trade is identified as a key factor fuelling the internal conflict. It created economic incentives for fighters to reject peaceful settlement. For the understudied and exceptional case of Bolivia, though, such theoretical models have limited explanatory power. In order to understand the development of the Bolivian drug trade, the emergence of state-narco networks and their effects, the thesis draws on the literature on coercion and democratisation.

1.2.2 The Coercion Literature

These top-down conceptualisations thus fail to account for the distinct forms of interactions that arise between the state and illicit economies in different contexts. The 'frontier of the state' (Meehan, 2015: 258) dissolves as the drug trade is integrated into existing political structures and processes. The causes of state-narco interactions, then, may be more complex than moral failure or North-South economic disparities, and their effects less corrosive to state authority than the orthodoxy prescribes. Snyder's (2006) work on 'institutions of joint-wealth extraction'⁹ has utility in explaining such dynamics. Here, the state may form common interests with the illicit sphere; protecting and fostering illicit enterprise in return for rents. Through joint wealth-extraction, a level of order and stability may be achieved, as potentially hostile rivals are absorbed into existing political structures. Furthermore, drug rents provide the

⁹ 'Informal bargains rooted in personal ties among rulers, their cronies, and private elites' (Snyder, 2006: 954).

government with the tools to govern, and are used to reinforce authority. In the case of Mexico during the rule of the PRI, for example, ‘state-sponsored protection rackets’ created stable interactions with the illicit sphere, and ensured control of the violent excesses of crime (Snyder & Martínez, 2009). The hegemonic power of the ruling party, a political culture of clientelism and the coherent command structure of organised crime during this period, allowed for the creation of such systems. Organised crime was thus incorporated into the PRI’s centralised, mode of rule (Lupsha, 1992: 179). These particularistic systems helped to bind factional interests to the existing political order (North, et. al., 2007: 7). Linking this to historic processes of state formation and the centralisation of the means of coercion, Goodhand (2009: 9) argues:

Shadow economies may be seen as part of the long brutal politics of sovereignty. Illegality and the state have been constant companions, and control of illicit flows of revenue may actually strengthen the state.

This emerging area of the literature, though, generally focuses on authoritarian and/or (post-)conflict states. In studying the Bolivian case, therefore, I explore facets of this approach in a distinctive setting. This includes both the country’s shift to democratic government and its status as a crucial venue of the modern US ‘war on drugs’. Furthermore, Bolivia has not experienced high-levels of drug related violence compared to its neighbours in the region, and has maintained elected government. Such dynamics contradict common assumptions around the nature of the drug trade and narco-violence in Latin America, holding the drug trade as necessarily violent and destabilising. Snyder (2006: 965) notes the need for such research in this area, addressing democratic regimes and illicit drug economies in the Global South.

As part of this, then, the thesis provides insights into the relationship between state-narco networks and Bolivia’s democratic transition. O’Donnell (1996) discusses the distinct path of the Third Wave in Latin America, where transitions were determined by local context. This resulted in distinct forms of democratic regime - or polyarchy. Such regimes proved to be enduring, but showed little sign of movement towards a Western-liberal model of democracy, as assumed by theories of democratic consolidation. Bolivia was no different in this regard

(Whitehead, 2002). Clientelism and authoritarian remnants continued alongside formal elements of democracy. These legacies of military authoritarian government allowed for the survival and adaptation of state-narco networks. More than this, Bolivian elite actors viewed these legacies and tacit-acceptance of state-narco links in the military, police and political parties as necessary to ensuring, at least nominal, commitment to democracy of potential veto players (Levitsky & Murillo, 2014). For example, the military, often in conjunction with civilian politicians, had a long-history of political intervention. Such considerations entered into the calculations of elite political actors. The thesis thus builds on the political transition literature and integrates its insights into the literature on drugs, arguing that state-narco networks were interwoven into Bolivia's uneven democracy and post-transition political settlement.

In chapter 2, I discuss these two areas of the literature in greater detail; outlining how the thesis builds on these theoretical insights to construct a framework for analysis.

1.2.3 The 'War on Drugs', Violence and Instability

Of course, external pressure to adopt counterdrug policies also shapes the form, function and implications of state-narco interactions. Snyder (2006: 949-951) notes that the involvement of the state in drug trafficking risks international sanction. Cooperation, meanwhile, brings reward. In the case of the US Drug War in Latin America and the introduction of the Andean Initiative specifically, US decertification threatened foreign governments with the blocking of international credit and US aid; the adoption of counterdrug goals protected vital US economic support and brought increased budgets for the security forces. International legitimacy also played a key role in these dynamics, as supposed 'narco-states' would be marked as international pariahs (see Chouvy, 2015). In many cases, these were potent tools of US foreign policy and ensured the export of the 'war on drugs'. As a result of this, international pressure and resultant securitised counterdrug responses placed states in drug producing nations into a

conflictive relationship - a drug war - with the illicit economy.¹⁰ This would, in theory, inhibit the formation of shared interests between the drug trade and the state; and, by extension, the establishment of informal institutions of control. The Drug War Paradigm tied defeat of the drug trade to wider notions of security, order, democracy and economic development, i.e. the state-building agenda (Mansfield, 2016).

Critics argue, though, that this model of prohibition has not delivered on these supposedly complementary goals. Instead, it has exacerbated the violence and instability associated with illicit drug economies. In this sense, 'disruptive market interventions, weapons flows and training of paramilitary counter-narcotics units are the drivers of violence in the Global South, not the drug markets themselves' (Buxton, 2016). For Latin America, it is argued, such policy interventions have not only been ineffective in reducing the supply of cocaine to consumer countries, they have been 'counterproductive, severely jeopardising democracy and stability' throughout the region (ICG, 2008: 1).

The market effects of prohibition are identified as a key force underpinning these dynamics. Prohibition inflates the price of commodities such as coca-cocaine. Eradication and interdiction efforts thus have the perverse effect of inflating prices further by creating scarcity, encouraging more market activity (UNDP, 2015: 23). In other words, 'through the alchemy of capitalism, the lead of suppression has often been transformed into the gold of stimulus' (McCoy & Block, 1992: 11). To protect/widen market share in an unregulated market, trafficking groups heighten violence against competitors and bribe would-be suppressers of their business. While the coercion literature contends that informal mechanisms of control over the 'illicit' economy may emerge in certain contexts, the 'war on drugs' calls for all out confrontation rather than pragmatism. This dogmatic approach to the issue, it is argued, has led to a downward spiral of violence in Latin America and beyond.

¹⁰ Although in some cases, such as Colombia, it may be argued that such a war was in progress prior to the escalation of US counterdrug policies in the Andes.

Violence is not universally associated with drug trafficking, but it is intense and epidemic in settings where drug markets are heavily contested between competing gangs. Paradoxically, violence often intensifies as governments attempt to disrupt the drug trade by killing or arresting the heads of the criminal organizations: their semi-stable oligopoly is replaced by a multitude of warring factions. (Keefer & Loayza, 2010: 19)

The empirical analysis of Werb, et. al. (2011) supports these assertions. The study found that increases in the intensity of counterdrug interventions were positively correlated with increases in drug related violence. As well as creating a price incentive for organised crime, such interventions open gaps in the market for new actors. This may result in violent competition as rival groups fight for market share. In addition to this, a process of ‘target hardening’ may occur. Organised crime responds to the escalation of enforcement measures with its own more extreme measures, e.g. increased firepower or acts of intimidation.

Such trends are evident in the case of Mexico. For example, Guerrero-Gutiérrez (2011: 66-67) notes the relationship between the removal of drug kingpins and spikes in drug related violence. Competition to replace crime bosses and score-settling between groups at perceived grievances are linked to these outbreaks of violence. Such policies, then, may cause shocks to organised crime and its function, but are ill-suited to dealing with the fall-out from ‘successful’ operations as gains against organised crime are not consolidated. Castillo, Mejía & Restrepo (2014) take this analysis further. While the decapitation of criminal organisations may increase violence, they highlight the additional role of market scarcity as an important contributing factor. The authors argue that effective targeting of the Colombian cocaine trade during the last decade tightened the market in Mexico and increased prices. Where there was existing competition and high turnover of crime bosses, this scarcity had the effect of intensifying conflict between trafficking organisations. Such trends and an ever increasing death count in the Mexican Drug War have led to calls for new approaches to the illicit drug economy. For example:

The ‘war on drugs’ represents a poor application of strategy and tactics. Approaches must instead be measured and pragmatic if peace and

stability are to be restored where a culture of war has flourished. All-out militarized enforcement responses have, counter-intuitively, undermined security in places like Afghanistan, Colombia, and Mexico. (. . .) In some cases, militarized responses in one country have resulted in dramatic spikes in violence in others. (GCDP, 2015: 23-24)

As part of this, Chouvy (2007) notes the destabilising effects of eradication campaigns; deepening the economic imperatives (poverty and underdevelopment) that lead rural communities to drug production in the first place. Failure to adequately compensate communities in the Afghan and Burmese periphery, for example, instilled a sense of grievance and created fertile ground for armed groups. In such cases, this may also lead to the expansion of other predatory economies, such as human trafficking. The ‘war on drugs’, therefore, is associated with political, social and economic instability.

As section 1.1 describes, the US pushed for similar militarised counterdrug responses in Bolivia. Locally, though, the drug trade was not considered a threat to national security. There was ambivalence towards it, given its relatively peaceful nature and its importance to the national economy. Instead, US counterdrug policies were viewed as the main source of violence and instability in Bolivia’s illicit economy (Gamarra, 1997). There are, therefore, strong parallels with the preceding discussion: the drug trade itself was not viewed as inherently violent, but rather disruptive market interventions were identified as the root of such instability.

These strands of argument are drawn on throughout the thesis. Primarily, local elite opposition to US counterdrug policies and the ‘Colombianisation’ of Bolivia was underpinned by the belief that such a strategy would worsen violence and instability; jeopardising the country’s democratic transition. As such, these insights complement my analysis of state-narco networks and their role in mediating the drug trade. US counterdrug policies placed stress on long-established state-narco networks; inter-linkages that were interwoven with Bolivia’s post-transition settlement and uneven democratic governance. Among certain elements of the Bolivian political elite, the relatively ‘benign’ effects of the coca-cocaine economy were viewed as preferable to an escalated ‘war on

drugs' and potential democratic reversal. Resistance to the US Drug War Paradigm demonstrated recognition of its destabilising effects.

1.3 Studying Illicit Activity: a Mixed Methods Approach

My mixed methods approach to the study of the Bolivian case combines intense document analysis with oral history methods. In one sense, this compensates for certain methodological challenges in collecting data on illicit activity. For example, actors involved in drugs actively conceal their business from outsiders (e.g. see Vlassenroot, 2006: 196-197), while governments engage in politicised 'guesstimates' of drug production and trafficking flows (Allen, 2005: 2-3). Furthermore, attempting to observe state-narco networks 'directly' or eliciting open and honest accounts of illicit activity from those involved is doubtful. Ethical issues of risk management are also salient here, as the researcher may put himself/herself and participants in danger when collecting data (Felbab-Brown, 2014). These issues were thus taken into account and managed throughout the planning and conduct of my research. Secondary and document sources provided some insights into the dynamics of illicit activity, and these were used where appropriate to support my assertions. However, the nature of these sources, including the issue of unverifiable claims and unreliable/politicised metadata on the coca-cocaine economy, limits the strength of conclusions. I supplemented this strand of analysis, then, with interviews with key US and Bolivian elite political actors from the period.

Here, the focus shifts to their *interpretations* of state-narco interactions and attached issues; examining how these actors understood such relations and responded to them. This exposes distinct framing narratives of the 'war on drugs', and reveals the motivations and beliefs that underpinned the actions of key elite actors during this important moment in US-Bolivian history. As such, this mixed methods approach compensates for methodological constraints in studying illicit activity, while offering multiple and novel perspectives on state-narco interactions.

1.3.1 Creating a 'Base-line' Account

I gathered an extensive range of documentary evidence from various sources. This included Bolivian government publications, media articles, and reports from third sector and international organisations. The US government, though, proved to be the main source of documentary evidence. Extensive and detailed records of the US democratic process, and policy development, implementation and evaluation were readily accessible on US government websites, and internet search engines, such as the HathiTrust and Google. In the case of the Andean Initiative, a range of publicly available documents present the US government's official line, and the (contested) evidence that informed policy. The 1990 National Drug Control Strategy Report, for example, lays out the Bush administration's conceptualisation of the 'drug problem', its proposed solution and targets (UNODC, 1990). Over the years, the counter-supply aspect of the policy was evaluated against the development of the Andean coca-cocaine economy in the US State Department Bureau of International Narcotics Matters (INM)¹¹ International Narcotics Control Strategy Reports (INCSR) (US State, 1990...1994). Simultaneously, various US Congressional committees and sub-committees scrutinised the work of the executive branch (e.g. US Congress, 1990a; 1990b). Hearings and reports commissioned by these bodies often challenged the image projected by the administration and the various counterdrug agencies.

Unpublished US government materials added another level to the analysis. Through Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)¹² requests and archival research - the

¹¹ This is now named the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL).

¹² FOIA requests were slow-moving, and it was difficult to establish which documents were available on the topic. I placed two sequential FOIA request to the US State Department in the second year of my PhD for specific documents: the first took 8 months to complete; the second, 6 months. However, the NSA archive on the 'war on drugs' contained an extensive collection of declassified documents from the period of the Andean Initiative, themselves obtained through FOIA requests. This, then, replaced direct FOIA requests as my main source for unpublished US government documents. Some sections of the NSA's declassified documents, though, had been redacted by the US government, with claims of national security taking precedence over transparency. The FOIA process, while valuable, allowed US government agencies to exert some control on the release of information. Although elements of oversight can increase the researcher's confidence that such controls are well reasoned, it does raise questions over authenticity and the extent to which relevant information is withheld. In this sense, the 'insider' status of such sources does not necessarily render them as more complete or accurate.

National Security Archive (NSA) and the *Centro de Documentación e Información Bolivia* (CEDIB) - I obtained internal reports by the Government Accountability Office (e.g. GAO, 1989), US Embassy cables and bilateral US-Bolivian agreements (e.g. US NSC, 1989). Many of these sources also presented divergent accounts of US counterdrug efforts to those in some published sources. For example, an Office of the Inspector General (OIG) audit (1991) of the US Embassy in La Paz fundamentally questioned the basis of US counterdrug strategy and the management of the country team. In response, the US Embassy in La Paz accused the OIG of unprofessionalism, arguing that they had pre-judged their conclusions and failed to carry out a thorough investigation (OIG, 1991: 1). This demonstrates, not only the multifaceted nature of the US state, but also the competing (and at times conflicting) agendas and accounts of the 'war on drugs' in Bolivia.¹³

Comparison of documentary evidence from different sources thus informed the empirical analysis. Although inconsistencies in reporting are perhaps inevitable, the advancement of these competing agendas caused me to question how the 'real' policy on the ground emerged, and the distinct ways in which actors at the level of implementation made sense of policy, and their underlying motivations, beliefs and evaluations of the local context. These were important themes during subsequent interviews. In addition to this, though, these inconsistencies also highlight issues in drawing definitive conclusions on the illicit trade from such sources.

In working with documents generally it may be tempting to view them as more 'reliable' or 'factual' than information obtained from interviews; that documents allow the researcher to access 'an underlying social reality' (Bryman, 2008: 526). In my case, documents produced at the time of the Andean Initiative certainly had the advantage of being more immediate to events in comparison to the interviews I conducted. They provide more details, as well as figures, dates and places. But it is important to take into consideration the many factors that underpin these documents: the identity of the producer, the function of the document, the context, and its audience, conventions, structure

¹³ These themes are returned to in Chapter 2.

and implicit assumptions (drawn from Phillips & Brown, 1993). In terms of data on the size, structure and function of the drug trade, methodology and rigour of investigation must also be taken into account. Often these aspects of published data are obscured from the reader. These sources, or rather the actors who produce them, project their own version of 'reality' (Atkinson & Coffey, 2011: 78).

The INCSR, for example, is aimed at the public and those involved in the budgetary process. The State Department may have failed to make progress in certain areas, but yet it seeks to present the information in ways that highlight success and minimise failure. The 'facts' may also be highly politicised, with estimates of drug production used to apply pressure on foreign governments. This was arguably the case during the Paz Zamora administration, when INCSR 1990 presented data claiming that Bolivia had made the transition from coca to cocaine HCl producer (see Chapter 6.6). Such documents also entail a process of 'fact-making'; creating the 'official record'. This impresses connotations of legitimacy on the account and, by extension, its producer. Meanwhile, the Drug War Paradigm and American Exceptionalism are essential elements to many of these documents. The following quote from President Bush's letter to Ambassador Charles Bowers (Bush correspondence, 1991) is demonstrative of the latter theme:

As leader of the democracies, our Nation faces an historic opportunity to help shape a freer, more secure, and more prosperous world, in which our ideals and way of life can truly flourish. As President, I intend to advance these objectives around the globe, and I look to you, as my personal representative in Bolivia, as my partner in this task.

Rather than accessing an 'underlying social reality', they reveal the agendas being advanced in Bolivia at this time, and reflect the beliefs and 'facts' at play; they frame the issue of drugs in certain ways and define the parameters of the 'problem'.¹⁴

¹⁴ For example, while the Republican Bush administration argued for increased funds to US and Andean security forces as part of 'an international strategy designed to disrupt and dismantle' multinational drug trafficking organizations (US Gov., 1990: 49), the Democrat-led Committee on Government Operations framed drug production as a social and economic issue, stating that

Other sources dealing with activity in the illicit sphere are also often unverifiable and/or unreliable. Journalistic accounts may, at times, be laced with ‘best guess’, rumour and/or exaggeration, while ‘official data’ on the drug trade suffers from methodological problems and, at times, wilful manipulation to suit political agendas (Allen, 2005; Reuter, 2004; Thoumi, 2005). In formulating models on the size of the drug trade, for example, a range of assumptions are made on numerous factors, such as coca acreage and yield, the alkaloid content of coca leaves, and the efficiency of production processes. Information on these assumptions may be drawn from satellite imagery,¹⁵ and reports from coca farmers, police officials and various other actors. Unreliable estimates here, in-turn, further reduce the reliability of the model. Furthermore, as noted above, such figures may then be politicised to advance a particular agenda or narrative. Laserna (in Justiniano S., et. al., 1991) notes that the reporting of Bolivian government data on coca cultivation was frequently influenced by US eradication deadlines (these targets were tied to the release of crucial economic support). Equally, there remained questions around the size of Bolivia’s drug trade when US counterdrug aid began to increase during the 1980s, i.e. whether the Bolivian government sought to leverage the issue for increased assistance (Lehman, 1999: 199). Such examples urge caution around the use of this type of data.

Finally, uncertainty over how the illicit economy actually functions exacerbates such problems. For example, former-NSC official David Miller (interview, 2013) commented on how the US government encountered this issue in the formulation of policy.

I don’t think we understood the industry well. I think that it was the first time that we had taken on at a national level the production cycle of cocaine. Going right back down to Cochabamba and find the guy growing the stuff and say, ‘what are you doing friend? Why are you doing this? Don’t you want to grow peppers?’ It’s immensely complicated. It’s both a macro-economic issue, and a micro-economic issue about price

‘further ‘militarizing’ the present strategy will not address the roots of the problem in source countries’ (US Congress, 1990b: 9).

¹⁵ This technology and analysis was in its infancy at the time of the Andean Initiative.

elasticity and margins, and so on and so forth. It's an agriculture issue about what products might work in a market. It's a domestic consumption issue - some coca down there is just fine, folks love chewing on it and making it into tea. You can't go around and spray all the stuff with herbicide without killing people, so you get all that. Then you get a consumption problem, which was notionally off the NSC plate, that wasn't our problem, but it was Drug Czar Bennett's problem, and so you sort of say, how you going to win this thing if people keep using? And so did we understand it? Well, at the start I don't think so. It's like understanding the international automobile industry. Where's the best place to make spare parts for a Toyota? You want all the spare generators made in a plant in X, you want that dispersed around the world - what are the shipping costs of the generator versus the production costs? What percentage of the generator is labour? So what are labour rates? You know? It's a huge industry; I mean drugs are a huge industry. It's hard.

Miller's description of the problems the US government faced in formulating and evaluating counterdrug policy reveals some of the limitations of data on the drug trade. Falls in coca cultivation, for example, have frequently been used as an indicator of success in counterdrug policy in the Andean region. However, these figures say little in isolation about the overall function of the drug economy; how falls in coca supply are mediated by trafficking organisations, e.g. through changing their profit margins, stockpiling of coca paste, sourcing from alternative markets and/or improving production processes. Other factors further up the commodity chain may also have an effect, e.g. whether a specific trafficking route is opened or closed, and the comparative influence of different criminal groups at different stages. Vellinga (2004b: 319) notes the wide estimates of the size of the cocaine trade in the Andes (US\$ 8 to 12 billion) and the US (US\$ 46 to 74 billion) during the 1990s, and the considerable uncertainty over how this was divided-up between traffickers in the Andes, Mexico and the US. The mechanisms of money laundering add further uncertainty to estimates of export income returning to source countries. In the case of state-narco interactions, then, such figures may only be loosely correlated with the level of drug rents available to pay-off corrupt state officials. As such, attempts to draw direct causal effects between macro-data on the drug trade and state-narco networks should be avoided.

With these important caveats in mind, then, I triangulated documentary sources to formulate a detailed chronology of the development of the Bolivian coca-

cocaine economy, the Andean Initiative and various attached events. The types of factors described, which are crucial to understanding the evidence, are taken into account in my analysis of the data. However, interview data, and a distinct form of interpretivist analysis, formed a complementary parallel strand of my mixed methods approach. Rather than focus on a necessarily incomplete reconstruction of the relationship between the state and the drug trade, I supplemented documentary evidence and macro-data with analysis of how elite actors on the ground understood and responded to state-narco networks.

1.3.2 Oral History Methodology

I completed fieldwork in the US in 2013 and then Bolivia in 2014; conducting 41 interviews, mostly with elite political actors with backgrounds relating to the Andean Initiative.¹⁶ My data, then, is not representative, but rather particular: accessing the subjective experiences of these key actors. This research focus is informed by my conceptualisation of state-narco networks and their relation to the political dynamics of the post-transition period. This is outlined in greater detail in Chapter 2, but essentially these interactions are viewed as a Bolivian elite game involving political trade-offs. Additionally, in the course of pursuing the implementation of Drug War policies, elite actors within the US Embassy negotiated with Bolivian government counterparts. Their positionality to these Bolivian elite actors, as well as their influential role in determining the realities of US policy in Bolivia made their accounts pivotal to my analysis.¹⁷ Through comparison of these accounts, the thesis draws out the differing perceptions held by these important actors of the coca-cocaine economy, state-narco interactions and the 'war on drugs'. Their distinctive interpretations and priorities had important implications for how the drug trade and state-narco networks interacted with social, political and economic structures in Bolivia, and the nature of US-Bolivian relations.

¹⁶ Details on all interviewees are provided in Appendix C. The conduct of fieldwork is detailed in-depth in Chapter 3.

¹⁷ The US Embassy's key role in shaping counterdrug policy on the ground in Bolivia is also discussed in Chapter 2.

To analyse the accounts of these actors, I employ elements of oral history methodology. My application of this method helps to unfurl the various meanings these actors attached to state-narco interactions and the introduction of the Andean Initiative; mediating an overreliance on document sources and the associated issues described previously. However, this approach also provides novel insights into the phenomenon: contrasting elite interpretations of state-narco networks and the ‘war on drugs’. Borrowing from Auyero’s (2009: 26) understanding of Cubism, my research blends different sources and narratives to capture the object of study from multiple points of view.

Oral history is more typically associated with ‘lost histories’: individuals and communities marginalised in mainstream accounts of historical events (Abrams, 2010: 5). I nevertheless found the insights of this methodology useful in the practice and analysis of my interviews. The Andean Initiative was implemented in Bolivia over 25 years ago, and the accounts offered by interviewees were shaped by the intervening years. Factors such as the trajectory of history, ideology, beliefs, the present-day context and the interview situation itself also had to be taken into account. While interviews provided some ‘facts’ about the case, they revealed more about how actors understood events and their role within them. This had implications for how they responded to policy; what their priorities and motivations were, and how the ‘real’ policy emerged in Bolivia. Oral history methodology offered a way of plugging into these dynamics; understanding the subjective experience of the interviewee.

The unique and precious element which oral sources force upon the historian and which no other sources possess in equal measure is the speaker’s subjectivity. (Portelli, 2006: 36)

An oral history, then, is fluid, with the interviewee interpreting and reinterpreting historic events and their role within them in the act of recounting their memories (Abrams, 2010: 7). This had implications for my data collection.

Interviews were semi-structured, allowing space for the interviewee to engage the topic on their own terms. In giving voice to their experience, interviewees develop their own understandings of events, or at least the understanding they

wish to present to the researcher. These understandings may be structured in relation to episodes seemingly peripheral to the researcher's main theoretical interest. In these aspects of the account, though, lie meanings and motivations, for example, crucial to the interviewee. Therefore, I allowed interviews to flow, listening and responding to the accounts of interviewees rather than limiting discussion to a narrow range of questions. These features of oral history methodology are demonstrated by the following extract from my interview with former US Ambassador to Bolivia, Robert Gelbard.

Before re-counting the formulation of the US counterdrug strategy in Bolivia, Gelbard outlined his previous experience with the Peace Corps in 1960s Bolivia.

RG: I don't know if you know this but, you know I was a Peace Corps volunteer in Bolivia?

AG: Yes, I'd read that.

RG: Okay, so I first went to Bolivia in the mid '60s - '64 to '66 - and this is relevant. I did most of my time - have you been to Bolivia?

AG: Yes, I was there last summer.

RG: Okay. I did most of my time in the Cochabamba Valley, but actually I ended up living in a town at the foot of the mountains, and then working way up in the mountains with pure Quechua-speaking people. So I speak Quechua, or I did, I don't use it much anymore. But that gave me... and I was involved in setting up a national community development programme... but that really gave me - I believe - a much deeper grounding than the typical American ambassador in Bolivia would normally have, or the typical American policy maker working on those issues. This was '64 to '66. (. . .) I was not enthusiastic about going there as ambassador, having been a peace corps volunteer there and it having been the first time I had lived for any serious period outside of the US, I felt I could not be objective. I really had enormous affection for the country and for the people, but the then Secretary of State, George Schultz, insisted that I go because I had told him so much about Bolivia. (I felt that I) had some pretty good grounding in the country, and what I really tried to do was put together a much more comprehensive strategy to try to deal with all aspects of the drug problem within the context of Bolivia as a newly-renascent democratic society, and trying to fortify democratic institutions and at the same time trying to build up the economy, which was going through a big transformation after the collapse of the mining industry. (Gelbard interview, 2013)

This outline served to frame his subsequent account. His experience with the Peace Corps established both his good intentions in Bolivia and his credentials to advance an effective counterdrug policy. He told me that the strategy in Bolivia became the model for US programmes elsewhere in Latin America. The reasons for its success lay not only with the skills of his team, but in his deep understanding of the local context. As a result, eradication against peasant coca farmers was scaled-back and alternative development efforts were increased, while interdiction targeting corrupt officials and violent traffickers was emphasised. The laudable goals of supporting democracy and economic growth are also referenced. The underlying assumptions of the account, shaped by Gelbard's own personal history, justified his role and that of the US in Bolivia during this time. Themes of American Exceptionalism were present, as well as paternal attitudes towards Bolivia.

This type of discursive framing was common across interviews. As I analysed my data, I sought to uncover these aspects of the interviewee's account; working back and forth both within the data set, as well as between data and theory. My aim was not only to understand the interviewee's experience on its own terms, but to relate this back to my main research questions and wider themes in the literature. This is tempered by modesty at the researcher's ability to access 'meaning' from the memories of interlocutors (James, 2000: 152). For many US officials, though, their accounts were framed by elements of the Drug War Paradigm. For example, the proposition that US counterdrug policy in Bolivia was justified because 'drugs were poisoning American kids', had clear parallels with the tone of the domestic debate at that time. Such ideas provided a morally unambiguous logic for the actions of US government agencies implementing the Andean Initiative. State-narco interactions and the Bolivian drug trade more generally, were viewed through the prism of securitisation.

Bolivian officials, meanwhile, tended to ground their responses in alternative discourses. One of these may be described as *el Imperialismo Yanquí*. This draws on the history of fractious relations between the US and its Latin American neighbours, and has numerous strands, from the Monroe Doctrine through to US backing of authoritarian regimes during the Cold War. There are

also more general elements present, such as the history of colonial exploitation in Latin America and North-South relations. This discourse manifested itself in claims that the US itself had been involved in the management of the cocaine trade in Bolivia, acting in collusion with local allies to manipulate Bolivian politics. Former-President Jaime Paz Zamora described one such conspiracy.

During my government, one of the problems we had with the US Embassy was that they said Bolivia was already a producer of cocaine. Until that moment, Bolivia produced coca paste and it was normally in Colombia or elsewhere that they processed it into cocaine. (. . .) But the Americans wanted to sustain the theory that Bolivia was already a producer of cocaine, a world producer of cocaine. I never accepted it, I rejected it. (. . .) Then, incredibly, all of a sudden from La Paz airport... an enormous plane leaves from La Paz to Lima with four tonnes of cocaine... four tonnes of drugs, but processed cocaine. How could they have managed this? Impossible! In Lima, they seized it. (. . .) It was a typical operation. We couldn't say anything about it in Bolivia: it was four tonnes of refined drugs. (. . .) The 'war on drugs', like the Cold War, justified everything. (These operations were) psychological warfare derived from previous Cold War methods, and they interfered with Bolivian democracy. (Paz Zamora interview, 2013)

Such conspiracies, which echoed with CIA complicity in shadow operations in Latin America and US alliances with regional military institutions, served to highlight US hypocrisy and diminish Bolivian complicity in the trade. Such narratives highlighted ambivalence towards the drug trade and its effects, and underpinned opposition to 'Colombianised', destabilising US counterdrug policies.

My application of an oral history methodology, then, helped me to uncover such dynamics. In the examples provided this included discursive framing of the case through reference to American Exceptionalism, moralistic attitudes towards drugs or the historical narrative of US imperialism in Latin America. These important discursive frameworks are detailed in Chapter 5. In contrasting US and Bolivian accounts, the thesis shows how real and perceived state-narco webs were understood and navigated by different actors in distinct ways. This aspect of my mixed methods approach, then, was crucial in establishing several of the thesis' key findings. These are summarised below.

1.4 Entrenched State-Narco Networks, Competing Narratives of the 'War on Drugs' and US-Bolivian Contestation

This thesis advances original findings along several dimensions. First, my analysis elucidates the interplay between Bolivia's political development and the adaptation of illicit economies. I argue that fragmented authoritarian era state-narco networks formed part of Bolivia's post-transition political settlement. Uneven Bolivian democratisation was reflected in the continuation of clientelistic and authoritarian practices, including police and military autonomy. As part of this, tolerance of drug corruption within both institutions was linked to the maintenance of fragile political equilibrium. Challenging mainstream discourses of drugs, the thesis shows how state-narco links were integrated into informal forms of governance, and used to reinforce the political order. These modes of exchange contributed to the relative stability of Bolivia's coca-cocaine economy, as drug traffickers sought accommodation with the state rather than conflict.

US and Bolivian actors from this era recognised these networks to varying degrees, but understood and responded to them in different ways. Their accounts of these interactions were interpreted and related through conflicting narratives of the 'war on drugs'. The US drug war paradigm and the Latin American development paradigm of illicit drugs offered frameworks of analysis for these actors: how they conceptualised 'the problem', the appropriate response, and the nature of US-Bolivian relations.¹⁸ In terms of the former, US-cultural attitudes towards drugs, the securitisation of drugs, and American Exceptionalism were present; for the latter, North-South economic analysis, the cultural significance of coca, and views of *el Imperialismo Yanquí* and the legacy of the Cold War, were all strong themes. While the accounts of US and Bolivian interlocutors therefore reflected common themes of the drugs literature, they were also distinctive along a number of dimensions. These exposed competing agendas, diverging US-Bolivian priorities, and alternative interpretations of what state-narco interactions represented and how they should be addressed.

¹⁸ These paradigms of the 'war on drugs' are outlined in detail in Chapter 2.

On the US-side, for example, Bolivia was viewed as both victim and perpetrator of the drug trade. The Bolivian coca-cocaine economy was acknowledged to be a consequence of underdevelopment, but it was also regarded as a threat to the US. Moralistic views of drugs and Western-centric theories of the relationship between the state and the illicit sphere were reproduced, e.g. the presence of the drug trade as both a cause and consequence of a weak state (Meehan, 2011: 376). The export of the US security apparatus and strident action against those involved in the trade were held as legitimate, as the US sought to bypass 'corrupt' local power structures. By contrast, Bolivian actors emphasised goals of democratic consolidation and political stability. Although incompatible with democratic government, state-narco networks formed part of a fragile political equilibrium. There was a degree of ambivalence towards them, with Bolivian actors arguing against the country's 'Colombianisation' and the breakdown of political order.¹⁹ Drawing on Bolivia's turbulent political history, they contrasted the Paz Zamora government's (1989-93) 'democratising mission' against the US 'war on drugs'. These accounts, then, reveal how US and Bolivian actors navigated state-narco networks, and the place of such systems within wider contested political dynamics.

This contestation, though, was most evident around interpretations of the Bolivian political class's relationship to the drug trade. Accusation/counter-accusation and attached conspiracy theories served both practical and rhetorical purposes. For US actors, perceived widespread corruption within the Paz Zamora government justified the extension of US control, and explained policy difficulties. US intelligence was used to remove 'uncooperative' Drug War partners, while the political implications of such practices were glossed over. For Bolivian actors, US actions were indicative of top-down control, following in the lineage of US Cold War politics. Linkages between politicians and drug traffickers were downplayed, with accusations of drug corruption assumed to have political subtext. This partly served to deflect the claims of US actors, as

¹⁹ During this period, Colombia was experiencing high-levels of drug related violence, as powerful drug trafficking organisations - the Cartels - carried out assassinations and bombings in response to government counterdrug policies.

former members of the Bolivian government argued that the US used the exposure of supposed drug corruption to manipulate the country's internal politics. Perceptions around state-narco networks were folded into historical narratives of US influence in the hemisphere. At this key moment in the escalation of the 'war on drugs' in Latin America, then, deep fault lines of trust ran between the US and the Bolivian government. Contested allegations of corruption were subsumed into accounts of US-Bolivian relations of power and control.

1.5 Conclusion

This chapter establishes the original approach of the thesis. Addressing an underlying weakness of the drugs literature, I explore the nuanced interactions between the Bolivian state and the drug trade at an important point in the historical development of the 'war on drugs'. As part of this, I utilise the literature on coercion. The Bolivian case, and the distinct dynamics that it represents, is understudied in this literature. My analysis thus advance this research agenda: exploring aspects of this approach in distinctive context. Furthermore, in my application of a dual analytical approach, the thesis offers multiple perspectives on the phenomenon. Interviews with key actors from the period form a rich historical account of the period, and reveal competing (and contradictory) narratives of the 'war on drugs'. In this way, the chapter draws links between theory, methods and empirical analysis. The thesis is organised as follows.

The next chapter outlines my theoretical framework. Drawing on the drugs literature, I outline the two main paradigms of the 'war on drugs', and the attached political and institutional factors that shaped the introduction of the Andean Initiative. This places the research in relation to the drugs literature, explains the onset of the 'war on drugs' in Bolivia and guides the reader through two important framing narratives of interlocutors. The second part of the chapter elucidates the main themes of the coercion literature and their application to the Bolivian case. As part of this, I examine uneven democracy as a crucial contextual factor. Building on aspects of these different areas of the

literature, the thesis both furthers and moves beyond the dominant debates of the 'war on drugs'.

Chapter 3 addresses methodology, specifically the conduct of fieldwork in the US and Bolivia. This concerns the influence of my fieldwork on the development of my methodological approach, detailing key steps of the research process. As part of this, the chapter considers the implications for empirical analysis of various ethical considerations, contested language, the researcher-researched relationship, my rejection of a positivist conception of elite interviewing and the juxtaposition of US and Bolivian fieldwork. Through discussion of these issues, I explore the parameters of my data and conclusions. The chapter thus gives the reader understanding of the development of the research project, while also standing alone in providing insights into elite interviewing methodology, and research on politically sensitive topics and illicit practices.

In Chapter 4, I trace the development of Bolivia's systems of joint-wealth extraction from the authoritarian period through to the immediate post-transitions period. This includes: the Barrientos regime and its model of patron-client politics (1964-1969); Banzer's role in the cocaine boom of the 1970s (1971-78); the 'cocaine-coup' of García Meza (1980-1981); and the post-transition governments of Siles Suazo and Paz Estensorro (1982-1989). The development of state-narco networks is understood in relation to the trajectory of Bolivian history over this period. The evolving structure of the drug trade and its ties to the state, are placed in the context of wider social, political and economic forces. This serves as important context for later chapters, as well as establishing out original findings.

Chapter 5 maps competing US and Bolivian narratives of the 'war on drugs'. I argue that these underpinned divergent agendas, and fractured relations between the US Embassy and the Bolivian government. Drawing on interviews with US and Bolivian actors, I outline their distinct conceptualisations of 'the drug problem', incorporating analyses of state-narco interactions, and wider political, social, and economic forces. I also consider how interlocutors conceived of US-Bolivian relations. This places American Exceptionalism against

historically-grounded narratives of the US role in Latin America. This analysis is crucial to the final two empirical, considering the discursive frameworks that shaped how elite actors understood and responded to state-narco networks.

Chapter 6 examines how police/military state-narco networks were interwoven in the political dynamics of post-transition Bolivia. I discuss Bolivia's post-transition political settlement and the introduction of the Andean Initiative as important contextual factors. In terms of the former, I argue that informalism contributed to the tolerance of drug corruption in the police and military; I detail the clash of US Drug War goals with the proclaimed 'democratising mission' of the Paz Zamora government and its ambivalent attitudes towards the coca-cocaine economy. My analysis shows how differing interpretations of drugs and state-narco networks informed divergent US and Bolivian counterdrug preferences. Distinct priorities led to competitive US-Bolivian relations of power and control.

This is followed by analysis of state-narco interactions in the Bolivian political class in Chapter 7. I consider the penetration of drug money through Bolivia's political parties, supporting the notion that the diffusion of power following transition led to new patron-client bonds between the state and the drugs trade. In addition to this, I detail how drug corruption accusations were enmeshed in US-Bolivian relations of power and control. At the time of the Andean Initiative, corruption claims - supported by seemingly rigorous US intelligence - were used to pressure for the removal of 'uncooperative' Drug War partners. US interlocutors now referenced such cases to justify the extension of the US Drug War model. By contrast, Bolivian interlocutors viewed the Embassy's actions within the historic logic of US Cold War tactics and the manipulation of Bolivian politics. This resonated with views of 'Yankee Imperialism', questioning the stated aims of the US in Latin America and assuming underlying goals.

In the final chapter, I pull together the main findings of the thesis. I outline their theoretical importance, and consider their normative implications. As Latin American leaders both past and present challenge the US Drug War orthodoxy and the international drug control regime comes under increasing

pressure, it is important to consider the historical foundations and underlying assumptions of the 'war on drugs'. The thesis contributes to a better understanding of the relationship between states and illicit economies, and how this interacts with newly-transitioned (formal) democracy.

Chapter 2 | Contextualising State-Narco Relations

In this chapter, I build on different areas of the literature to construct my framework for analysis. This incorporates elements of the literature on drugs (e.g. McCoy, 2003; Musto, 1999; Thoumi, 2003), coercion (e.g. Goodhand, 2008; Meehan, 2015; Snyder, 2006) and democracy in Latin America (e.g. Auyero, 2007; O'Donnell, 1993). First, my approach speaks to the research agenda of the drugs literature, drawing on its key findings to examine the escalation of the 'war on drugs' in Bolivia during the 1980s, and prevailing understandings of corruption. But in addressing the nuanced interactions between the state and the drug trade, a change of theoretical approach is needed. Challenging mainstream accounts of this relationship, I employ the coercion literature to advance a contextualised analysis. The form and function of state-narco relations is conditioned by local dynamics in producer nations. As such, I supplement this with insights from the literature on Latin American democracy, arguing that uneven democratisation in post-transition Bolivia allowed for the continuation of clientelistic and authoritarian practices, and thus the maintenance of atomised state-narco networks. Rather than a cause of violence and institutional collapse, these linkages were associated with the preservation of political stability. Building on aspects of these different areas of the literature, the thesis both furthers and moves beyond the dominant debates of the 'war on drugs'.

In the first part of the chapter, then, I utilise the drugs literature to provide an overview of two alternative paradigms of the 'war on drugs' in Latin America: the Drug War and Development Paradigms. Both contain conceptualisations of 'the problem', ways of understanding the drug trade, corruption and the parameters of response. Discussion of each paradigm is accompanied with an outline of the additional political and institutional factors that shaped the introduction of the Andean Initiative: US post-Cold War imperatives, and local Bolivian realities. This forms the first strand of my analytical framework, and serves two main purposes. One, this discussion relates my thesis to the drugs literature and elucidates its central themes. As well as serving as important background to the case, components of this literature are integrated into my

analysis, such as the securitisation of drugs. Two, these paradigms, and the wider political and institutional factors of the period, framed the accounts of US and Bolivian interlocutors. During interviews, they provided cues for how actors understood the period and the meanings they attached to state-narco relations. As part of my analysis, then, it is important to account for these perspectives and their underlying assumptions. These appear throughout later chapters, contributing to competing narratives of the period and crystallise conflicting US and Bolivian agendas.

These mainstream accounts of the ‘war on drugs’, though, are essentially limited in their theorisation of the relationship between the state and the drug trade. They underplay the complex ways the drug trade becomes embedded within political, social and economic structures in source and transit countries. The second part of my framework thus introduces elements of the coercion literature. I discuss the role of informal institutions of rent extraction in processes of state formation; how they evolve and their possible effects. I explore the main strands of this approach through reference to examples from Burma and Mexico, demonstrating the interactions that arise between the state and the drug trade in different settings. Finally, in laying out the nature of Bolivian state-narco networks, I draw on theories of uneven democracy in Latin America. This constitutes a crucial contextual factor of the Bolivian case. This facet of my analytical framework challenges orthodox understandings of state-narco relations.

2.1 The Drug War Paradigm

“Do you think the Russians allow dope? Hell no! You see, homosexuality, dope, immorality in general: these are the enemies of strong societies. That’s why the Communists and the left-wingers are pushing the stuff. They’re trying to destroy us.”

- US President Richard Nixon (1969-74), talking with aides in the Oval Office, May 1971 (quoted in McCoy, 2003: 392).

The Drug War Paradigm is a cultural and conceptual construct, underpinning the US response to the issue of drugs. With antecedents in the past, it is rooted in US cultural attitudes towards drugs. From the Puritans of the prohibition

movement to the Drug War rhetoric of Richard Nixon,¹ drug-use is viewed through a moral lens: as deviant behaviour, weakness and/or 'un-American'. Frequently, this has been used to demonise ethnic minorities and fringe groups in the US (Musto, 1999: 294-295). At the turn of the nineteenth century, for example, opium was branded a corrupting foreign influence, brought to the US by 'sexually deranged' Chinese immigrants (Steiner, 2001: 194). Later, the White population of the segregated South feared that cocaine use made African American men 'uncontrollable' (Reinarman & Levine, 1997a: 7). The 'crack epidemic' of the 1980s - outlined in more detail below - was another episode in this recurring cycle.

Drugs were viewed to tear at the very fabric of mainstream US society, so requiring hard-line policies. Such perceptions helped to entrench the US prohibition model of drug control, as politicians aligned with, and at times led, popular fears over the spread of drug-use. Thoumi (2003: 27) argues, for example, that the 'perceptions, principles and prejudices' of the US view on drugs have been a persistent and enduring influence on policy. Domestically, this has meant stringent law enforcement measures and an ever growing prison population of dealers and users alike. At an international level, the US has waged its 'war on drugs' in Latin America, with the aim of halting the flow of drugs to the North.

The promise of US drug policy is overwhelmingly exterminationist. Drug evils will be 'wiped out' or at least fundamentally contained. (. . .) These ideas enjoy great historical stamina, a powerful and power-laden genealogy, periodically invigorated by novel drug scares and refurbished imagery of social panic and disgust. (Gootenberg, 2009: 37)

The 'war on drugs' in Latin America (and beyond), then, is generally viewed as a US invention (e.g. Bewley-Taylor, 1999; Buxton, 2006; McCoy, 2003; Reiss, 2014;

¹ The term 'war on drugs' was first coined by Richard Nixon during his 1968 presidential campaign. Concerned by drug use associated with the 1960s counter-culture and the growing number of heroin-addicted soldiers returning from the Vietnam War, President Nixon formulated a response that would have a lasting legacy in the US. This included tough drug laws, the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) and the State Department's role in international counterdrug efforts. Securitisation of illicit drugs advanced at this time, with 'the metaphor and mind-set of war' (McCoy, 2003: 391) applied to the issue. However, the Cold War continued to dominate the security agenda and, by the time Nixon left power in 1974, the 'war on drugs' was no longer viewed as a priority.

Youngers & Rosin, 2005). Reflecting its strong global influence across the 20th century, the US has successfully lobbied for a system of international drug controls based on the principal of prohibition (see, for example, Gootenberg, 2008: Ch. 5; Reiss, 2014: Ch. 1). As such, the Drug War Paradigm has been transposed onto the UN drug control regime; promoting, perpetuating and legitimising ‘the current US-style prohibitionist-based approach to drug use’ (Bewley-Taylor, 1999: 174). International agreements, then, have been used to justify the vigorous pursuit of US counterdrug efforts in source/transit nations. Replicating hard-line domestic drug control measures, these policies lurched towards militarisation during the 1980s;² prioritising eradication and interdiction (McCoy & Block, 1992). These echo the moralistic view of drug-use, where trafficking is viewed as an evil and a scourge which must be fought with force.

Conceptually, production and trafficking of drugs are understood as being both a cause and consequence of a weak state and the absence of the rule of law (Meehan, 2011: 377). The solution is thus ‘more state’: tougher enforcement through militarisation and strengthening of the state’s security apparatus. Mirroring the moral dichotomies of drug-use, binary distinctions are made between organised crime and the state, and the licit and illicit spheres (Ibid: 399). Counterdrug responses seek to remove the ‘tumour’ of the drug trade, from the ‘healthy body’ of state and society (Gutierrez, 2015: 2). Under this conception, weak states unable to exercise control over their territory - as was argued in the case of coca-cocaine production in Bolivia - pose a ‘threat’ to the US. The borders of US security, therefore, were re-drawn to incorporate drug producing countries in the Andes. This is indicative of an interventionist US foreign policy stance in Latin America, which stretches back to the 1823 Monroe Doctrine and Manifest Destiny (Lehman, 1999: 29-31).

However, this is also held to reflect benevolent foreign policy intentions, justified through the prism of American Exceptionalism. The application of counterdrug efforts is aimed not only at cutting-off the supply at source, but freeing partners from the tyranny of illicit drug markets. This view is based on foundational US national myths around the idea of ‘the city on the hill’: a

² The post-Cold War escalation of the ‘war on drugs’ is discussed below.

country founded on liberty and democracy, which seeks to extend these ideals to the world (Ibid: x).³ In other words, ‘while other states had interests, the United States had responsibilities. Its prime mission was nothing less than to save the world’ (Lundestad, 1986: 405). This construct thus shaped and ‘legitimised’ the exercise of US power in extending the Drug War model (Hilfrich, 2012: 6). The ‘war on drugs’ was seen to complement wider US goals of promoting democracy and free market economics; establishing necessary preconditions of security and the rule of law.

From a critical perspective, though, this may instead be viewed as part of the US hegemonic project in the Western Hemisphere (drawn from Duffield, 2007; Newman, 2013: 145). Here, ‘the conceptual framework of US drug policy has traditionally served Washington’s quest for power and prestige in the Americas’ (Walker III, 1994: 13). In a similar vein, Reiss (2014) argues that the US used international drug controls - and the delineation between legal and illegal drugs - to project its power on a global scale post-WWII. This included privileging the interests of the influential US pharmaceutical industry and controlling access to medicines. For example, during the 1950s, the US sought to control opium flows and its ‘legitimate’ uses in medicine through the introduction of international drug treaties, while advancing the idea that Communist China was attempting to subvert US soldiers in Korea and the ‘American youth’ by encouraging heroin use (Ibid: 182-92).⁴ According to this view, the Drug War Paradigm was grounded in the pursuit of US strategic goals and efforts to exercise control in the Andes. These types of US-centric analyses assume power flows solely from North to South.

³ The foundational myths of the US are used in foreign policy by ‘imperialists’ (the US has the right to extend democracy) and ‘anti-imperialists’ (the US has the duty to refrain from aggressive behaviour and instead act as an example to the world) alike. The end, then, of democracy is agreed, but the means of achieving its spread is a point of contention. In both cases, though, appeals to Exceptionalism are used to instil legitimacy on foreign policy. The malleability of a term such as democracy, has allowed both camps to claim their strategy advances its cause (drawn from Hilfrich, 2012: 2-5).

⁴ These linked into domestic narratives which racialised heroin addiction. For example, it was associated with African Americans and the ‘rebel’, inter-racial, subculture of jazz music. Such groups challenged the beliefs, and order, of mainstream US society (Reiss, 2014: 206-9).

Elements of the Drug War paradigm may be identified across the three US imperatives that contributed to the progression of the ‘war on drugs’ during the post-Cold War period. Although source and transit nations in the South recognised the damaging effects of the illicit trade, the response to drug trafficking in the Americas during the 1980s was driven by the regional hegemon. By the end of the Cold War, the dominant hemispheric force had become the dominant global force. The realities of this new uni-polar world shaped the development of the ‘war on drugs’. During the Bush administration (1989-1993), Cold War shifted to Drug War in Latin America, as the US searched for new ways of defining itself and its role in the region. In the following section, I outline these political and institutional factors.

2.1.1 US Domestic, Foreign Policy and Institutional-Bureaucratic Imperatives

The advancement of the ‘war on drugs’ in Latin America during the 1980s occurred against a background of US public panic over the so-called ‘crack-epidemic’.⁵ A media frenzy surrounded the issue, with newspapers, magazines and television networks carrying sensationalised stories of ‘instantaneous addiction’, spreading unchecked throughout the nation (Reinarman & Levine, 1997a: 3). The very notion of ‘epidemic’ suggested that the US was in severe danger. In 1989, one third of the US public reported drugs as the primary problem facing the country (Riley, 1996: 35). As in past US drug scares, crack-cocaine was associated with a ‘foreign other’. In this case, low-level dealing and crack-use was linked with urban African American communities. The spillover effects of the trade were presented as a threat to ‘American values and society’ (Grayson, 2003a: 154). US politicians from both parties engaged in Drug War politics. President Reagan (1981-89), for example, stated that ‘drugs, in one way or another, are victimizing all of us’, and argued for ‘a national crusade against drugs: a sustained, relentless effort to rid America of this scourge,’ (Reagan, 1986). As part of this, Reagan issued National Security Decision

⁵ The prevalence data around this time on cocaine-use, and crack specifically, is difficult to interpret (e.g. disaggregating occasional and problem users), although it suggests a significant increase in use during this period (see Riley, 1996: Ch. 1).

Directive 21 (NSDD 21 - April 1986): branding illicit drugs an issue of national security, ascribing blame to Latin American nations for domestic US drug-use and 'legitimising' US military force against the issue abroad (McCoy, 2003: 443). This attempt to externalise the problem (Diamint, 2004: 53) complemented the association of crack-use with marginalised groups: the demarcation of the problem from mainstream, 'American' society (Bewley-Taylor & Jelsma, 2007: 271-2; Walker III, 1996: 231).

Despite the rhetoric, Cold War goals continued to dominate Reagan's presidential agenda. Under his successor, though, the 'war on drugs' gained greater prominence. As the Soviet Union declined, George H. W. Bush (1989-93) made the issue a cornerstone of his presidency. Viewing drugs as 'national security threat', Bush pursued counter-supply goals abroad with the introduction of the Andean Initiative. Making the case for the policy, Bush stated:

"The logic is simple. The cheapest way to eradicate narcotics is to destroy them at source. (. . .) We need to wipe out crops wherever they are grown and take out the labs wherever they exist." (Quoted in Crandall, 2001: 100)

In addition to the domestic threats to 'American society' noted previously, the cocaine trade's destabilising effects in 'America's backyard' were also used to justify Drug War measures. This included the violence of international criminal organisations and perceived links between the drug trade and left-wing Latin American guerrilla movements (Marcy, 2010: 90).⁶ The hemispheric threat to the US no longer came from Moscow-backed rebel groups and Castroite governments, but from 'narco-guerrillas', so-called 'narco-states'⁷ and notorious drug lord figures like Pablo Escobar. In search of a new 'crusade', illicit drugs and international criminal groups substituted for communism as the national 'enemy' (Thoumi, 2003: 25-26). Both responding to and driving the

⁶ Against the background of the Cold War, the Reagan administration sought to link the Nicaraguan Sandinistas with drug trafficking; arguing that drug money would enable them to sustain their campaign and damage American society by flooding the US with drugs. While these links were tenuous, the Iran-Contra scandal fully exposed the US-backed Contras' involvement in the drug trade and the CIA's role in facilitating this (see Scott & Marshall, 1991).

⁷ Chouvy (2015) highlights the lack of an agreed definition of this term in the literature, and notes its use by politicians to delegitimise certain countries and/or force them into accepting counterdrug efforts.

domestic-political agenda around drugs, President Bush entrenched the modern 'war on drugs' in Latin America.

These domestic-political dynamics thus fed into the foreign policy imperative of the 'war on drugs'. The US had become the single global superpower by the late-1980s, but policymakers were unsure of how to use this new dominance.⁸ Concerns around the balance of power between East and West, and avoiding open war with the Soviet Union had long dominated. The US now sought to define its new global role, its priorities and how it would engage with the world. The identification of non-traditional security threats, blurring the lines between domestic and international spheres (Loveman, 2006: 5), informed this process.

Reflecting an international trend toward securitisation,⁹ security threats were not restricted to matters of state survival and the stability of the international system, but incorporated wider concerns, such as the environment, the economic system and society. Emboldened with post-Cold War confidence, the US could now direct its vast political, economic and military resources to the new and diverse challenges of the 21st century. Illicit drugs were included under this broader conception. US political leaders advanced the idea that drugs posed an existential threat to US society and its institutions.¹⁰ In his first speech as President, Bush (1989) stated:

All of us agree that the gravest domestic threat facing our nation today is drugs. Drugs have strained our faith in our system of justice. Our courts, our prisons, our legal system, are stretched to the breaking point. The social costs of drugs are mounting. In short, drugs are sapping our strength as a nation. (. . .) If we fight this war as a divided nation, then the war is lost. But if we face this evil as a nation united, this will be

⁸ As Loveman (2006: 4) puts it: 'not yet the world's policeman yet determined to maintain a forward presence in the world'.

⁹ In a new unipolar world, traditional Realist concerns over international stability, the 'balance of power' and state survival, lost some of their resonance. New issues started to gain recognition, as wider conceptions of human security were advanced internationally, including economic and environmental agendas, societal identity and transnational organised crime, (Hurrell, 1998; Peoples & Vaughan-Williams, 2010: 7).

¹⁰ Buzan, et. al. (1998) argue that an issue becomes a 'security threat' through an act of securitisation. Adopting a constructivist stance, 'security is a quality actors inject into issues' through speech acts, which must then be accepted by the appropriate audience to become 'securitised' (Ibid: 204).

nothing but a handful of useless chemicals. Victory - victory over drugs - is our cause, a just cause.

Drug consumption, then, was viewed as criminal, deviant and 'other', while drug producing nations were 'security threats'. More than simple rhetoric, these ideas established the terms of the debate and influenced how US counterdrug efforts were understood. O'Driscoll (2008: 6) highlights 'the close connection between language and the constitution of political life', arguing that public rhetoric reflects 'the structures of meaning that govern the conduct of politics and public life at any given time'. The 'threat' of drugs thus justified the extension of US military resources and power to the Andean nations, as securitisation provided a new logic for US foreign policy in Latin America. During the next decade, NSDD 21 and the 'war on drugs' subordinated all US foreign policy goals in Latin America to the 'all-encompassing focus' of stopping the drug flow (McCoy, 2003: 443). This was proffered as advantageous to both parties: cutting-off the supply of illicit-drugs to the US; tackling the harmful influence of criminal networks in the region, strengthening democratic government, reducing societal violence and bolstering economic performance.

This newly defined security agenda also ensured sustained US security presence in Latin America. While the US continued to promote its liberal democracy/free market orthodoxy with Latin American governments, the extension of the 'war on drugs' allowed for the maintenance and strengthening of bonds with regional security partners (Bewley-Taylor & Jelsma, 2007: 286-287; Blixen, 1998). Isacson (2005: 21-2) argues that the notion of 'human security' replaced the National Security Doctrine as a rationalisation for a new regional, US-led security plan. Although outwardly supporting democratisation, military-to-military links - built-up during the Cold War - remained an important facet of US foreign policy in Latin America; providing a political 'safety-valve' for the US and its interests throughout the region (Ledebur interview, 2014). The securitisation of the coca-cocaine trade helped to serve this end.

As the prospect of budgetary cuts to Cold War-era funding loomed, the 'war on drugs' also fulfilled the pragmatic purpose of securing agency budgets (Andreas & Nadelmann, 2006: 157). The issue had taken centre stage and there was

political and financial backing for a comprehensive strategy. Standing at US\$11 billion in 1991, the Drug War constituted one of the largest US government programs (McCoy & Block, 1992: 1). Multiple US government agencies supported this agenda. In addition to swelling the budgets of the DEA and INM, counterdrugs brought new missions and funding to the US Armed Forces. The DoD had initially been reluctant to adopt a counterdrug mission during the Reagan administration, but as budgets threatened to dry-up, many within the Pentagon saw the advantages of an expanded role (Bagley, 1991). With few credible hemispheric security threats remaining, Southcom seized on the 'war on drugs'. As well as defending its own function in the Americas, Southcom has played a crucial role in securing funding for the armed forces of the region and promoting militarised counterdrug efforts (Loveman, 2006: 10 & 20). Counterdrugs 'filled the vacuum' left by the Cold War, ensuring levels of military assistance were maintained and even increased (Isacson, 2005: 15). These agencies thus played a key role in the formulation and implementation of the Andean Initiative.

The US policy process on the issue of international drug supply, though, involved multiple actors within government and the state. By the time of the Andean Initiative, the US counterdrug strategy was coordinated and consolidated under the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), part of the Executive Office of the President. Congress had long pushed for such a body, aimed at pulling together the different strands of both international and domestic drug policy from across the numerous federal agencies involved.¹¹ This reflected the growing political importance of the issue, as well as the rapidly growing budget apportioned to the 'war on drugs'. Congressional concerns that the money was not being spent effectively by the executive branch would be eased by the

¹¹ The ONDCP was preceded by the National Drug Policy Board (NDPB). Created in March 1987 by presidential decree, the NDPB was headed by the Attorney General and comprised of 15 different federal departments. Its purpose was to coordinate US drug policy, both foreign and domestic (Van Wert, 1988: 6-7). The formation of the NDPB, though, had been something of a compromise. While the Senate Judiciary Committee had advocated the creation of a federal agency with responsibility for setting overall policy, the Reagan administration opposed the creation of a powerful new government actor and proposed the NDPB, sitting within the Executive Office of the President. This reflected Reagan's focus on the Cold War rather than the 'war on drugs'. With the President's second term coming to an end, Congress tried again, and the NDPB was replaced with the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) in 1989 (Part of the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988).

creation of a central body, formulating a coherent national strategy (Carnevale interview, 2013).

Indeed, this demonstrated Congress' primary role in this policy area: setting and approving budgets, and providing oversight (Perl, 1989).¹² As part of this, Congress established the process of certification for drug producing countries. The 1988 Anti-Drug Abuse Act obligated the president to report to Congress on the performance of partner governments in the area of counterdrug policy. Decertified countries were at risk of a range of sanctions: withdrawal of US economic and military aid, blocking of export-import bank credits, US opposition to World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank projects, elimination of US government foreign investment insurance for US firms looking to invest in that country, and discretionary economic sanctions (Marcy, 2010: 88). Through these mechanisms, Congress was able to shape the US international counterdrug response, e.g. advancing the hard-line US counterdrug model abroad. During this period, the Drug War Paradigm generally dominated, i.e. appearing 'soft on drugs' had an electoral price (e.g. see Steiner, 2001: 200). While Congress provided strong criticism of the strategies of both Reagan and Bush (e.g. US Congress, 1990a & 1990b), the broad parameters of an enforcement-led response were largely unchallenged.

Returning to the ONDCP, President Bush worked through his 'drug czar' Bill Bennett (1989-1990) to set the direction for the government's international counterdrug strategy.¹³ Although the ONDCP had the strong backing of the President, as a newly created body, it lacked a degree of authority to direct other powerful state agencies (Miller interview, 2013). As such, Bush also

¹² Multiple committees and subcommittees provided such oversight. This included the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control, Senate Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere, Peace Corps and Global Narcotics Affairs, House Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs (Appropriations), House Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs, and the Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control (disbanded 1993).

¹³ The role and influence of the 'drug czar' is very much determined by the emphasis the sitting president places on the issue, as well as the political capital of the ONDCP director. For example, President Clinton's relative initial disinterest in the issue, in part, hamstrung ONDCP Director Lee Martin (1993-1996). Under political pressure, Clinton gave greater prominence to the issue toward the latter half of his presidency, appointing General Barry McCaffrey to the role (1996-2001). McCaffrey proved to be a more effectual operator in driving the direction of drug policy (Carnevale interview, 2013).

utilised the long-established National Security Council (NSC) to coordinate the relevant agencies, including INM, the DEA, the DoD (Southcom and the Coast Guard), the FBI and the CIA (Burke interview, 2013).¹⁴ International counter-supply efforts figured to greater and lesser degrees for each of these agencies, with slightly differing approaches and priorities.¹⁵ Each agency sought to bring its own expertise to bear in the formulation and implementation of the broad strategy of the Andean Initiative. They also sought to protect their budget and corporate interests.

While this policy did not invent the US Drug War Paradigm, then, it contributed to its institutionalisation; establishing a large Drug War bureaucracy that has reproduced itself through each budgetary cycle. This has included utilising agency links to Congress to apply political pressure (e.g. making ‘expert’ statements to congressional committees), and controlling the flow of information on the ‘progress’ of the ‘war on drugs’ (e.g. the INCSR). These can be effective means of shaping the governmental approach to the issue (Carnevale interview, 2013). This bureaucracy was thus a significant driver of US international counter-supply efforts during this era. The thesis draws on interviews with high-level representatives across these agencies to understand the perspectives of key actors from within these agencies. Furthermore, many of these actors had direct experience in the formulation and implementation of the Andean Initiative, e.g. David Miller (NSC), John Carnevale (ONDCP) and Terry Burke (DEA) (see appendix C). These interviews provide strong insights into the US policy process, and the key factors driving US engagement in the ‘war on drugs’ in Bolivia.

¹⁴ Further to this: ‘Section 1005 of the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988 requires that, while preparing the President’s National Drug Control Strategy, the Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) will seek advice from a broad range of sources -in government and out. Specifically, the Act requires the Director to consult with: heads of National Drug Control Program Agencies; Members of Congress; State and local officials; and private citizens with experience and expertise in demand and supply reduction’ (ONDCP, 1990: 130).

¹⁵ For example, INM was ‘responsible for developing, coordinating, and implementing the overall US international narcotics control strategy’, carrying out its responsibilities through ‘diplomatic efforts, assisting host governments in crop control and interdiction, training foreign personnel, participating in international organizations, and providing technical assistance’ (GAO, 1988: 10). The DEA was focused on law enforcement measures abroad, while the inclusion of the DoD indicated the ascendancy of more militarised responses. These overlapping jurisdictions raised the possibility of interagency friction. The Andean Initiative, though, required each agency to work together.

In addition to this, though, the ground-level implementation of the policy was crucial to these processes. As the Andean Initiative filtered down to region, the local US Embassies would play a major role in determining what that policy actually meant in practice. At times, this exposed gaps between the policy as planned, and the policy as executed. In the case of post-transition Bolivia, the country tended to be a low priority for US foreign policy. This allowed the US Embassy in La Paz a degree of autonomy in shaping the US counterdrug strategy in Bolivia. Of course, this had to align with the overall US approach, and the Embassy remained subject to oversight mechanisms (Bowers interview, 2013). However, policymakers in Washington also recognised the need to adapt the policy to local conditions, and balance the objectives of counterdrug policy with wider US aims within the country (Gelbard interview, 2013). Analysis of the course of the ‘war on drugs’ in Bolivia, therefore, must take into account the significant influence of the US Embassy during this period.

There are strong examples of this influence. This includes Ambassador Ed Rowell’s (1985-1988) advancement of Operation Blast Furnace in 1986, using Southcom’s assets in a counterdrug mission for the first time in Latin America (see Chapter 4). Robert Gelbard (1988-1991), meanwhile, was described as an ‘activist ambassador’ during his posting in Bolivia (El Tiempo, 1996). He claimed a leading role in forming US counterdrug strategy in the country at this time (see Chapters 6 and 7). As part of this, Gelbard drew on the expertise and skills of his country team, made-up of representatives from INM, the DEA, USAID, the CIA and Southcom (among others). Although these members of the country team were still beholden to their agency heads, the ambassador held ultimate responsibility for their actions while in Bolivia. High-level embassy officials were pivotal in setting the direction for policy in Bolivia and managing the day-to-day operation of the ‘war on drugs’ (Bowers interview, 2013).

The thesis draws on interviews with such actors, e.g. Robert Gelbard, Dick Bowers and David Greenlee (see appendix C). As part of their responsibility for US counterdrug strategy during this time, they had regular dealings with high-level officials in the Bolivian government; many of whom were also interviewed

for this thesis. Interactions between these elite actors were critical in determining counterdrug strategies, and how these policies responded to state-narco networks. How these actors understood and navigated the relationship between the Bolivian state and the drug trade was thus crucial to the form and function of state-narco networks. My analysis reveals how these were viewed from divergent perspectives, reinforcing competing agendas and subsumed into US-Bolivian relations of power and control. This serves a strong justification for my analytical focus on these elite actors and their particular perspectives of the illicit drug economy, the 'war on drugs', US-Bolivian relations, corruption and drug violence.

2.2 The Development Paradigm

"I have always thought of drug trafficking as the final stage of capitalist consumerism. The problem does not lie in the fact that a poor town produces coca leaves in the Peruvian jungle. The basic problem lies in the world's big consumer markets, consisting of the richest societies."

- Peruvian President Alan García (1985-1990), talking during a TV interview, July 1987 (quoted in Lee III, 1991: xv).

The Development Paradigm stands in contrast to the US Drug War Paradigm, and is based in Latin American views of drugs. Although the picture is now changing, cocaine-use was viewed as a North American issue. As the US sought to externalise its problems with drug abuse, Latin American leaders looked to shift blame back to the North. Their arguments were based in the discourse of development and the position that US consumption constituted the root of the problem. In Bolivia, for example, the drug trade was not viewed as an issue of national security (Gamarra, 1997: 224; Menzel, 1996: 85).

Drawing on the simple economic argument, 'where there is demand, there is supply', the presence of the coca-cocaine trade in the region is a consequence of the lucrative returns offered by the US illicit market (Thoumi, 2003: 39). Therefore, the harmful effects of drug violence and corruption are also traced back to consumer demand for Andean cocaine. While this demand created powerful incentives for the creation of the trade in Latin America, underdevelopment and weak institutionalisation allowed it to take hold. From a

development perspective, then, focus should be given to the structural factors that have contributed to the rise of the coca-cocaine economy in Latin America (Younger & Rosin, 2005: 4). Development and institution building should take priority over militarised enforcement efforts, which only serve to heighten drug violence and the social costs borne by local communities (e.g. see Tullis, 1995). The Development Paradigm, then, advances the idea that Latin American nations are victims of their circumstances: the stimulus of US drug demand, alongside socio-economic and political underdevelopment. The twin aspects of this narrative support calls for 'shared responsibility' between the US and Latin America. Not only should the US reduce domestic demand, but it has a duty to address the structural causes of the drug trade in Latin America (NSC, 1989: 4).

The role of coca farmers in the illicit trade demonstrates this view. Although the US incorporated alternative development into its counterdrug model (partly prompted by the demands of Latin American governments), the Drug War Paradigm designates coca farmers as legitimate targets for eradication efforts and justifies the extension of US power (Sanabria, 2004: 153). Such policies may be applied with force if farmers refuse to cooperate.¹⁶ The historic tradition of coca cultivation in Bolivia and Peru, though, means that *cocaleros* are viewed through a different lens in the Andes. Coca is woven into the cultural fabric of these countries, and is viewed as an historic 'right' (Healy, 1988b: 118).¹⁷ Therefore, it is argued that 'coca is not cocaine'; farmers should not be held responsible for the harms caused by drug trafficking, nor the choices of drug consumers in developed countries (Riley, 1996: 102).

In addition to this, coca cultivation may be explained by the lack of alternatives in rural, deprived areas: a livelihood matter, rather than exploitation of addiction in the North. The crop is one of the few viable and stable sources of income for coca farmers (Quiroga, 1990). But this income is modest in comparison to the profits made by those further up on the cocaine commodity

¹⁶ In Colombia, this entailed fumigation of coca, which frequently destroyed legitimate crops. Additionally, affected communities claimed negative health effects linked to the chemicals and environmental damage (see O'Shaughnessy & Branford, 2005).

¹⁷ The leaves of the coca bush have been used in the Andes since before the age of the Incas: as an integral part of indigenous religious ceremonies and customs, and as a stimulant and hunger suppressant, aiding work at high altitude (Mathewson, 2004: 14).

chain (Vellinga, 2004a: 7). Coca producing communities benefit least in the coca-cocaine trade, so it is unfair that counterdrug measures should focus on them. In this view, *cocaleros* are victims of the trade, rather than complicit. Where there are efforts to reduce cultivation, the US has responsibility to address the socio-economic fallout of withdrawing coca (Morales, 1994: 170-1). A revealing tension is exposed here, where the positive effects of coca-cocaine as a driver of development are tacitly recognised alongside calls for help in combatting the destructive effects of the trade.

Drug production and trade is seen simultaneously both as an answer to constraints on economic development and as a source of violence (and corruption). (Healy, 1988: 19)

As a reaction to the Drug War Paradigm, it critiques the imposition of abrasive US counterdrug policies in Latin America. Drawing on theories of dependency, the foundations for the trade in Latin America are viewed to be a result of historic structural inequalities and US neoliberal economic reforms (Tovar, 1994: 88). As 1980s neoliberal policies increased precarious living conditions throughout the region, the trade became an important source of revenue for those involved in cultivation and production of coca paste. Despite this, the US continued with a policy agenda that disregarded local social, economic and political conditions and trampled on national sovereignty (Lee III, 1991: xv).

Uneven power relations between centre and periphery, then, are evident in the function of the drug trade and the policies designed to address it. The process of certification, for example, was viewed as hypocritical, arbitrary and overtly political (Youngers & Zirnite, 1998: 217-8): not applied to US allies, but used to punish opponents of Drug War (and other US) policies. The fact that US demand was identified as the main cause of the problem added to this sense of injustice. Acting as judge and jury on the counterdrug efforts of foreign nations, for many, the policy embodied Yankee Imperialism.

At the top of its hierarchy of values, the United States always stood for democracy, except when a popularly elected Left-wing government could be seen working closely with the Soviet Union or when authoritarian law-and-order regimes were supported, for various reasons (Lundestad, 1986: 406).

Under this conception, the ‘war on drugs’ represents continued US interference and hypocrisy in Latin America. It reinforces US dominance in the hemisphere, allowing the US to exercise influence over Latin American governments and promote its neoliberal world order (Stokes, 2004: 47). As such, the identification of the Andean cocaine trade as security threat was used to legitimise US control in Latin America and strengthen its position as the regional hegemon (Walker III, 1994: 12).

2.2.1 Local Bolivian Realities

The Development Paradigm both reflected and intertwined with local Bolivian realities. The former provided ways of understanding the issue and the appropriate response. But social, political and economic factors also shaped the policy preferences of Bolivia’s post-transition governments. Gamarra (1994b: 218) argues, for example, that the governments of this period sought to balance the demands of international drug control with those emanating from ‘myriad social forces’ domestically. Where the Bush government had its post-Cold War imperatives, then, the Paz Zamora government (1989-93) responded to these local pressures. These added weight to Paz Zamora’s calls for a development-led response and greater economic support from the US.

First, the recovering, yet still fragile, Bolivian economy was reliant on the employment and wealth generated by coca/cocaine (Healy, 1988a: 106; Justiniano, 1992). Defining the relationship between a hidden illicit market, such as drugs, and the wider economy necessarily entails a degree of uncertainty. There may be both positive and negative effects. The drug trade may generate jobs and localised economic booms, while at the same time, practices such as money laundering can distort the licit economy (Vellinga, 2004b: 320). Hence Bolivia was no doubt subject to both positive and negative impacts. However, the general consensus held that coca-cocaine had been a crucial part of the national economy during this period (Toranzo R., 1988: 73). In 1991, for example, the President of Bolivia’s Confederation of Private Businesses was noted to have said, ‘if coca were to be eradicated today, the

country's economy would collapse' (US OIG, 1991: 10). As Morales Q. (1992a: 161) argues, 'cocaine was (a) logical method of economic survival, (but) a recent consequence of Bolivia's perverse and dependent economic system'.

Neoliberal structural reforms introduced first under President Paz Estensorro (1985-89) brought the economy back on track after a period of instability, but at significant social cost. Coca-cocaine had softened the blow of the stabilisation program, providing jobs both directly (cultivating coca and low-level transportation and processing) as well as indirectly (in boom areas such as Cochabamba, Santa Cruz and the Chapare). The trade constituted a significant part of Bolivia's already large informal sector. Conaghan & Malloy (1994: 198) estimate that around 50 to 60 per cent of 'the economically active population by the mid-1980s were located in the informal sector', while a US government source reported that 350,000 people were reliant on coca for living and up to 30 per cent of Bolivia's GDP was from the drug trade (US OIG, 1991: 2). Furthermore, cocaine dollars had helped to stabilise national reserves, with government banking reforms in 1987 removing capital controls and thus allowing traffickers to repatriate their profits (UDAPE, 1990). US counterdrug efforts, it was reasoned, should compensate for the possible economic effects of removing this source of jobs and inward investment.

Closely allied to these economic pressures were the demands of societal actors. Paz Zamora's electoral campaign had plugged into widespread disapproval of the 'war on drugs'. On the campaign trail, he had worn a coca leaf pin to emphasise his anti-drug war credentials (Lehman, 2006: 133). After taking office, he sought to portray himself as standing up to the US on matters of counterdrug policy, defending Bolivian national 'dignity' (Gamarra, 1994b: 228). For example, US-led, Operation Blast Furnace in 1986 was viewed in some sectors as an incursion on Bolivian sovereignty, with the sight of US military helicopters over Bolivian soil stirring-up anti-US sentiment (Lehman, 1999: 200). Opposition to militarised counterdrug policies came from politicians across the spectrum, organised labour, the media, academics, the Church and, perhaps most significantly, the coca unions or *sindicatos* (see Campaña de Soberanía Nacional, 1990).

Adopting militant tactics learned from the once powerful Bolivian miners, the *sindicatos* were able to mobilise *en masse* to stage protests, hunger strikes and blockades (Hargreaves, 1992: 44). Led by their then leader, Evo Morales, the Chapare arm of the coca growers union carried political clout, shutting down parts of Bolivia's national infrastructure (Lee III, 1998: 8). They defended their livelihood and their ancestral 'right' to grow coca in the face of global pressure to reduce the flow of cocaine from the Andes. As such, they plugged into anti-US sentiment and North-South narratives of globalisation: impoverished communities in the Andes were held guilty for the crimes of US drug consumers (see Sanabria, 1997). This held resonance with wider Bolivian opposition to the 'war on drugs'. Demands from below, then, placed certain political strains on Paz Zamora's government (Gamarra, 1994b: 219). To be seen to be too close to the US carried political consequences for Bolivian politicians, as did support for policies that targeted powerful societal groups.

Finally, compared to its neighbours, the effects of the Bolivian drug trade were viewed as relatively benign. In Peru, Shining Path guerrillas had partly funded their violent campaign with taxes on coca and trafficker flights (Palmer, 1994a). In Colombia, cocaine profits had created powerful Cartels, who challenged the authority of the state. The trade was also helping to fuel the country's long running internal conflict (Felbab-Brown, 2010: Ch.4). As such, coca-cocaine was linked to high-levels of violence and internal instability in both of these countries. In the case of Bolivia, there were no major operational armed groups to speak of, while its trafficking organisations, if acknowledged, were viewed as small-scale and subordinate to Colombian groups. Bolivia was portrayed as a 'victim' of the coca-cocaine economy, with its role largely limited to agricultural production. This links into Thoumi's (2003: 242) 'evil Colombian/foreigner' thesis, which he claims was prevalent in Bolivia. In this sense, responsibility for the trade and its associated violence was said to lie with powerful Colombian Cartels. Bolivia's role in the Andean cocaine economy was proffered to be limited to humble coca cultivation, with power and wealth accumulated further-up the commodity chain. Thoumi (Ibid.) argues that this 'provides a smokescreen behind which many of the social, political and

economic effect of the drug trade can be hidden and denied, (such as) the relationship between politics and drug money'. Whether one accepts this or not, Bolivian views of the nature of country's role in the coca-cocaine economy meant that there was generalised opposition to the US militarised approach (Morales, 1992: 362).

2.3 Conceptualising Drug Corruption

These overarching paradigms of the 'war on drugs', US post-Cold War imperatives and local Bolivian realities are critical to understanding the dynamics of the period of study. These are examined through survey of the drugs literature, and used throughout the analysis in later chapters of the thesis, e.g. helping to determine how policy was formulated and implemented, and shaping competing US and Bolivian agendas. Most significantly for my analysis, though, these were drawn on by US and Bolivian elite actors during our interviews; serving as frameworks for their interpretations of the period. This included certain underlying assumptions around the nature of state-narco interactions. In this section, then, I outline how both paradigms conceive of drug-corruption: causes, consequences and response. These largely reflect the conventional analyses of the relationship between the state and the drug trade found in the drugs literature.

2.3.1 The Drug War Paradigm and Corruption

The Drug War Paradigm views state-narco interactions one-dimensionally as corruption: deviant behaviour thus requiring stronger enforcement. US cultural views of drugs and Western-liberal political ideals are important factors in this conceptualisation. In terms of the former, moral failure and personal enrichment explain the actions of corrupt state officials and politicians. Deviance here refers to the traversing of social norms (US cultural views on drugs) and focuses on individual agency. When explaining the perceived corruption of the MIR after entering government in 1989, for example, Hargreaves (1992: 170) argues that the party 'had been in the political wilderness for 20 years and was now hungry for the privileges that (went) with

power.’ In this view, the corrupt actions of such politicians stem from dereliction of duty and greed: seeking personal gain from public office (Tullis, 1995: 9). This links into Western-liberal views of corruption: state officials must act according to the public interest (however that is defined) and be accountable for their actions. This aspect of the paradigm, though, centres more on the failure of institutions. Corruption represents deviance from how public institutions should function, i.e. in accordance with the rule of law and the principles of liberal democracy. Historic institutional and socio-economic differences in the South are underplayed, as producer nations are judged according to the standards of industrialised Western democracies (Thoumi, 2003: 175).¹⁸ States unable to enforce such standards are held as deficient and weak (Mares, 2006: 22).

The consequences of deviation from social and institutional norms are necessarily damaging. This includes, for example, social disintegration and the further weakening of the state. But more than this, corruption and the subversion of the rule of law are crucial to the function of organised crime: ‘to perpetuate their illicit activities, to operate with minimal interference from the authorities and to derive maximum profit from illicit drug markets’ (INCB, 2011: 1). State-narco interactions, then, limit counterdrug policy effectiveness, inhibiting US efforts to ‘defeat’ the drug trade (Nadelmann, 1994: 259). In an evaluation of the Andean Initiative, for example, the Congressional Committee on Government Operations (US Congress, 1990b: 40) reported that ‘institutional weakness and corruption’ in the Andes was a critical limiting factor in ‘the ability of host governments to confront the narcotics trade’. According to the securitisation agenda, the Andean drug trade and, by extension, corrupt state institutions posed a ‘threat’ to US national interests. In Colombia and Peru, this was also linked to the continuation of internal conflict and regional instability, as armed actors exploited drug revenue streams.¹⁹

¹⁸ Of course, many normalised practices in Western industrialised democracies may be viewed as corrupt. The influence of campaign donors on the votes of US congressmen, for example, would be considered corrupt in other countries. This speaks to the ambiguity around the concept, and its contextually bound nature.

¹⁹ ‘US government thinking has been dominated by the conventional view of the nexus between illicit economies and military conflict. (. . .) This is based on three key premises: belligerents make money from illicit economies; the destruction of the illicit economy is both necessary and

Liberal state-building perspectives and the greed-based analysis of contemporary conflict have encouraged policy-makers to view illicit drug economies as contributing to a downward spiral of intractable conflict and ever-weakening state capacity, embodying a security threat to the West by creating ungoverned spaces in which transnational crime and terrorism are able to flourish (Meehan, 2015: 259).

In responding to corruption, then, the Drug War Paradigm calls for more strident enforcement. The overriding priority of halting the northward flow of cocaine justifies the extension of US control in producer nations. For example, the US has exported its security apparatus to the Andes to bypass corrupt local power structures. This has included the creation of ‘Americanized’ anti-drug police units (Nadelmann, 1994); acting as Drug War proxies for the US.²⁰ In addition to this, diplomatic and economic pressure has been used to leverage ‘corrupt’ foreign governments and politicians (Joyce, 1999).

Again, American Exceptionalism held that US actions were to the benefit of the Andean countries: tackling the corrosive influence of drug corruption and so allowing democracy to flourish. This incorporates paternal attitudes towards the South, where ‘corrupt’ practices are viewed to be ‘cultural’. Latin America’s Hispanic colonial past is contrasted with the foundational myths of the US. Nadelmann (1994: 261) recognises that corruption is by no means unique to Latin America, but argues that the gap between the law and accepted norms in the region ‘is often strikingly broad’. In the US, the principles of a free press, the independent US judiciary and the integrity of the federal government ‘prevent it from descending into the levels of corruption found in much of Latin America’ (ibid: 264). Calling on similar lines of argument, the export of the ‘war on drugs’ against ‘corrupt’ states has been bound with the export of proclaimed US liberal-democratic values.

optimal for defeating belligerents because it will eliminate their critical resources; and belligerents who participate in the illicit economy should be treated no differently from criminals’ (Felbab-Brown, 2010: 5).

²⁰ Toro (1999: 629) argues that this DEA strategy, first devised and applied in Mexico in the 1970s, has been used throughout Latin America to circumvent sovereignty restrictions on US agencies: ‘Building indigenous drug-fighting capabilities in drug-producing and -transit countries, that is, transforming foreign police into “vicarious surrogates.”’

2.3.2 The Development Paradigm and Corruption

The Development Paradigm also recognises drug corruption as damaging to the societies, politics and economies of source/transit nations. According to this model, though, interactions between the state and the drug trade are a consequence of socio-economic conditions. Conceptualising Latin America as victim of the drug trade does not absolve those involved in corrupt activities, but apportions ultimate blame to consumer nations. Understood in terms of North-South interpretations of globalisation, consumer demand for cocaine in the US has contributed to exploitation, corruption and violence in the South. Cocaine dollars have created trafficking organisations with the power and wealth to undermine public institutions in Latin America. Underdevelopment and weak institutionalisation have rendered source nations susceptible to these forces. These pre-existing vulnerabilities are partly a result of historical dependency and Yankee Imperialism in the region (Lehman, 1999). Rather than focus on a failure of will/moral fortitude in the South, the responsibility of consumer nations in creating these uneven dynamics is emphasised.

The vast quantities of money generated by the drug trade can have a devastating impact. (. . .) Corruption has influenced the actions of politicians across the political spectrum. The drug trade undermines efforts to reform and improve the efficacy of police forces and the justice system. (. . .) (The drug trade) is creating new challenges for local governments already struggling to overcome endemic poverty and injustice (Youngers & Rosin, 2005: 8).

As part of this, the simple economics of corrupt transactions are highlighted. For example, poorly paid officials are deemed unlikely to resist bribes worth many times their annual salary. Discussing the Bolivian case in the early-1990s, Painter (1994: 71) notes that ‘such payments offer immediate benefits to the poor struggling to earn a living wage’, and ‘a form of life assurance for the professional classes in a country where pension schemes are not the norm.’ Developing nations, unable to pay their officials more or adequately resource their government agencies, are thus more vulnerable to rich traffickers.²¹

²¹ Although it should be noted that corruption ‘has occurred in all countries at some point in time, regardless of the level of economic or institutional development’ (Buxton, 2006: 128).

Furthermore, the threat of violence that typically accompanies the offer of a bribe - 'silver or lead' - is also taken into account (Garzón, 2014: 5). Under such conditions, accepting a bribe may be more a question of survival than greed.

In this way, the drug trade has weakened state institutions and society in source nations. When organised crime establishes 'an institutionalised presence in the state', 'freedom of speech is negated, political choice is restricted, rights of association are contained by the threat of violence and the rule of law is eroded' (Buxton, 2006: 129). Corruption is thus an obstacle to democratic development in the historically authoritarian political systems of Latin America (Thoumi, 2003: 177). But so too is the punitive, ineffective and harmful Drug War model of the US. Militarised counterdrug policies and hard-line diplomatic measures, such as decertification, are viewed to weaken state institutions further: damaging public trust and popular legitimacy. For example, democratically elected governments in source nations have been pressured into accepting counterdrug measures which are opposed locally. As part of this, the operation of militarised police units adds to public perceptions that state institutions protect the interests of the US (and local elite actors) rather than the general population (drawn from Garzón, 2008: 145). Impunity for those implicated in human rights abuses and/or the upper echelons of the drug trade exacerbate such grievance.

Buxton (2006: 129) argues that such conditions make state institutions more vulnerable to corruption: 'where mechanisms for democratic accountability, political renewal and constituency representation are precarious', politicians are more susceptible to corruption. The drug trade and the 'war on drugs', therefore, create a vicious cycle that locks source nations into weak institutionalisation. Rejecting US orthodoxy, the solution to eradicating the drug trade and associated corruption is instead to focus resources on counter-demand policies in the North, and encourage development and institution-building in the South. This approach would weaken organised crime, make source/transit nations more resilient to the drug trade's effects and deepen democracy - and democratic accountability - in Latin America.

2.3.3 Common Assumptions

There is a degree of overlap between the Drug War and Development Paradigms on the topic of state-narco interlinkages. Fundamentally, both view corruption as deviance and corrosive to the state. As part of this, they share similar conceptualisations of why drug traffickers attempt to subvert institutions. The illicit nature of the drug trade places traffickers in conflict with those who would enforce the law. Violence and corruption, therefore, are used to evade enforcement. In terms of the latter, this takes different forms at different stages of operations (Lee III, 1991: 121). This may amount to one-off payments for low-level officials to 'turn a blind eye', or regularised payments to high-level officials in the security forces to ensure non-enforcement. Drug money may also purchase a more direct role for state officials, such as passing intelligence to traffickers or targeting drug rivals. In addition to this, bribes to politicians - in the form of campaign contributions - may buy high-level protection. In the Colombian case, the Cali Cartel used its wealth to buy political support and so avoid the enforcement measures that were meted out to their more violent Medellin rivals (Thoumi, 2003: 208). The exchange of such payments reflects 'not only the penetration of the state but also penetration *by* the state', as influence flows both ways between the state and the drug trade (Andreas, 1998: 161).

These behaviours may form distinct models of drug corruption. Nadelmann (1994: 269-270) outlines this as a comparative typology: sporadic, systemic and institutionalised. Sporadic corruption does not follow regular patterns, and 'involves individuals or small groups' who do not share payments with others in the government. Systemic corruption refers to cases where numerous 'pay-off cones' are present, with different agencies establishing relationships with the drug trade and hierarchical systems of payments. Drug money flows up and down these structures, as state institutions exploit their position to extract rents. When these 'pay-off cones' are consolidated nationally or subsumed into one structure, corruption is said to be institutionalised. In this case, the 'effective authority', e.g. the regime, controls all aspects of major corrupt activity within the country. Nadelmann argues 'institutionalised' drug

corruption is more likely in dictatorships, due to centralised power, lack of accountability, and (typically) self-interested rule (Ibid: 271-6).

These mainstream analyses of drugs certainly have utility in explaining aspects of state-narco interactions. They provide insights into the causes and effects of drug corruption, the motivations of the actors involved and how these interlinkages develop. Such understandings, at times, were reproduced in the interview accounts of US and Bolivian actors from the period. These conventional analyses of the drugs literature, though, are also limited in several ways. The top-down conceptualisations and explanatory models of the drug literature do not deal adequately with the ‘structured variation’ of political, social and economic conditions in source nations (drawn from O’Donnell, 1993: 1360). While there are of course commonalities in corrupt behaviour across cases, the form and function of these relations is also grounded in distinct historic processes of state formation and local dynamics.

The underlying assumptions of much of the drugs literature - e.g. corruption as moral failure, or an outcome of North-South disparities - fail to account for the nuanced interactions which arise between the state and the drug trade in different contexts. As part of this, the state here is synonymous with the law, and involvement in the illicit sphere is viewed as deviation; ‘the line between “legal” and “illegal” is held to be clear and definitive inside a given state’ (Heyman & Smart, 1999: 11).²² In reality, though, such distinctions may be fluid, as different facets of the state establish symbiotic relationships with the ‘illicit’ sphere.²³ ‘What is legitimate in formal law, in real practices done in the name of the state and in the eyes of the population’, therefore, may diverge and change over time (Ibid: 1). In this vein, James (2012: 227) highlights the problem of placing actors in binary conceptual categories, i.e. ‘criminal’, ‘political’ or ‘state’. For example, drug traffickers may be viewed as *caudillo*-

²² These kinds of distinctions are evident in the previous quote from Andreas (1998: 161).

²³ In the case of 1940s Mexico, for example: ‘Far from being ranged against each other in (metaphorical) trench warfare, police and narcos operated in a shared no-man’s land, in which the supposedly sharp line dividing the state and the criminal world was blurred’ (Knight, 2012: 121).

style leaders and enjoy local legitimacy, while the police, engaged in various facets of criminality, are feared by citizens and viewed as ‘Mafia-esque’. The blurring of these theoretically-bound categories highlights this limitation of the drugs literature.

The perception that criminal networks mark the frontier of state authority appears to reflect underlying normative assumptions about the role of the state, rather than being an accurate empirical analysis of the political economy of illicit commodities in source countries. (Meehan, 2015: 258)

In this way, the implications of state-narco interactions may also diverge from those prescribed by these mainstream discourses. The assumptions of both paradigms, that the presence of the drug trade necessarily is associated with violence and weak state capacity, may be challenged (Heyman & Smart, 1999: 15). In some case, the establishment of state-narco networks may in fact reinforce the authority of the state. Although state-narco networks may well be defined by personal enrichment and greed, they may also create stability, control the drug violence and reinforce the authority of the state (Le Billion, 2003: 415). This is not to make a normative case for such networks, but to understand their varied causes and effects under different conditions. In order to problematize state-narco interactions in the Bolivian case and account for this weakness of the mainstream analyses of drugs, I thus draw on the coercion literature.

2.4 The Establishment of State-Narco Networks

I utilise the term ‘state-narco networks’ to refer to stable, regular modes of exchange between ‘state actors’ and ‘the drug trade’. The function of such networks often blurs such distinctions, so these terms - as well as ‘legal/licit’ and ‘illegal/illicit’ - are defined in their formal sense. These modes of exchange, typically involve the extraction of drug rents for non-enforcement and/or official protection, establish shared interests and entrench the drug trade in state institutions. As such, the ‘political’ is incorporated into the ‘criminal’, and the economic power of the trafficker becomes political power (Garzón, 2008: 138). The form and function of these networks, though, is dependent on local factors. For example, the constellation of actors involved,

the underlying logic and the implications of these networks may change depending on the context.

Whether drug-related corruption is stabilizing or destabilizing depends on the level of centralization, the nature of the bargains struck between rulers and private actors, and the role of international policies. (Goodhand, 2008: 414)

My conceptualisation shares characteristics with Nadelmann's (1994: 270) systemic and institutionalised models of drug corruption, but challenges the assumptions that underpin this typology and the dominant paradigms of the wider drugs literature. This broad definition of state-narco networks draws on Snyder's (2006) concept of 'institutions of join-wealth extraction'.

Snyder (Ibid.) questions why lootable wealth, such as coca-cocaine, is associated with civil conflict in some cases, but peace and stability in others. He advances models of rent extraction as important explanatory factors. In one scenario, private interests may exploit the resource exclusively. As these actors consolidate wealth, competing centres of power are created that lead to conflict. Alternatively, no extraction occurs when the state sacrifices potential returns to block rivals benefitting from the resource. In the case of drug source nations, such actions may be rewarded by international actors in the form of counterdrug aid. Although, as the experience of the 'war on drugs' has shown, private actors may be able to circumvent such blocks. On the other side of this, the 'sticks' of international counterdrug policies inhibit the model of public extraction, i.e. monopoly state control of the resource risks international pariah status. Finally, joint-extraction occurs when the state and private interests exploit an illicit income stream together. The threat of enforcement and the potential benefits for both parties create this impulse. Chouvy (2015: 8) argues that the formation of such systems based around drug crops, such as coca, is unlikely due to the low barriers to entry to this level of the trade and its diffuse nature. As such, it is unlikely that state actors would be able to exercise effective control over cultivation and thereby establish joint-wealth extraction. For this reason, such systems are more likely to occur further up the commodity chain, where actors are fewer and the value of the lootable resource is greater.

The formation of ‘institutions of joint-wealth extraction’ - ‘informal bargains rooted in personal ties among rulers, their cronies, and private elites’ (Ibid: 954) - create common interests between the state and the illicit sphere that may form a basis for political stability. This can take different forms, ‘from public taxation of privately extracted resources to government-run protection rackets’ (Ibid: 948). Referring to the case of Burma, Snyder (Ibid: 959-962) argues that the military regime protected and encouraged the development of the heroin trade in peripheral areas. State institutions, such as state-run banks, were utilised as part of this, incentivising once hostile armed groups to integrate into the existing political order. The regime subsequently reaped the benefits of stability, reduced ethnic tensions and economic growth fuelled by drug wealth. Rather than erode the state’s authority, the drug trade provided the resources to govern and consolidated state power.

Meehan (2011: 376) also addresses the case of Burma and the heroin trade, outlining the incentives (‘legal impunity, protection, money laundering’) and threats (prosecution) used by the regime to co-opt and coerce insurgent groups. He argues that these became integral to processes of state formation by centralising the means of violence and extraction. The historic development of the Burmese state is an important factor here. Departing from the Western, Weberian model, distinct dynamics were created by uneven state control, feudal relations and autonomy in the periphery. These factors created their own logic of interaction between the state, society and the drug economy. The profits of the heroin trade and a system of state protection have converted former opponents to ‘proxy state actors’ in Burma’s periphery (Ibid: 397). As well as eliminating rivals and protecting market share, selective application of drug control against those who would not be co-opted enhances Burma’s international image. Meehan (Ibid: 402-403) argues that these complex inter-linkages and the role of the drug trade in such processes have been ignored in the mainstream policy response to drugs.

The rationale for state involvement in the drugs trade may extend far beyond mere greed and corruption and may instead be instrumental in creating ‘symbiotic interactions between the upper- and underworld’ (van der Veen, 2003: 104), forming a foundation for peace and stability.

This draws on the concept of 'limited access orders' (North, et. al., 2007). In most modern industrialised nations, the state has the monopoly on violence and guarantees open access to the political system and the economy. Within these 'open access orders', competition between different factions occurs within these settled boundaries and violence is controlled. These conditions are often not met in developing nations, and limited access orders are instead formed. Under this conception, the state generally lacks coherence, and constitutes 'the major avenue for accumulation and inter-factional competition' (Goodhand, 2008: 411). Factions may capture the state and maintain control by distributing economic benefits: pacifying rivals and building support. In such cases, political elites maintain social order (and control violence) by dividing rents from the economy (Ibid: 412). As violence and disorder reduce rents, the interests of elite actors are bound 'to support of the current political system' (North, et. al., 2007: 7). State-narco networks may constitute one aspect of this system of control; where drug corruption functions according to the logic of political order and the consolidation of elite power. The uneven application of the law and the apparent failure of state institutions are explained through reference to these underlying dynamics. As such,

It is not the presence of illicit drug production itself, but instead the social relations surrounding production and trafficking that determines the relationship between drugs, conflict and state consolidation/breakdown. (Meehan, 2015: 260)

Echoing this argument, Snyder and Martinez (2009) discuss the function of 'state-sponsored protection rackets' in Mexico from the 1940s to the late 1980s, during the rule of the PRI. These are defined as 'informal institutions through which public officials refrain from enforcing the law or, alternatively, enforce it selectively against the rivals of a criminal organization in exchange for a share of the profits generated by the organization' (Ibid: 254).²⁴ The hegemonic power of the PRI, a political culture of clientelism and the coherent command structure of organised crime during this period,²⁵ allowed for the creation of such systems.

²⁴ Lupsha (1992: 182) also notes that protected-traffickers were also expected to give-up rivals and associates to provide the police and judicial system with sufficient convictions.

²⁵ At this time, Mexico was a major producer of heroin and marijuana for the US drug market (Chabat, 1994). During the 1980s, its importance as a transit point for Andean cocaine entering

Trafficking groups were entrenched in the state's hierarchical, centralised system of patron-client bonds (Lupsha, 1992: 179). While these relations certainly demonstrated corruption and the greed of state officials, they were integrated into the PRI's clientelistic mode of governance and its attempts to colonise of all aspects of Mexican society (Astorga, 2004). This system helped to bind regional actors to the federal government, and manage the violent excesses of Mexican criminal organisations, thereby contributing to the stability of the PRI's rule.²⁶

There was sporadic violence, as new narcos challenged the old (necessarily, the leadership of such enterprises could not be determined by transparent shareholder voting), but in general the system ticked over quite peacefully and certainly no threat to national security was perceived. The political elite did not want to besmirch the *Pax PRIista*, so violence tended to be limited and exemplary; and, as businessmen, albeit illicit businessmen, the drug dealers also liked a measure of order, stability, and predictability. The allocation of dealerships (or *plazas*) operated according to well-known informal rules, like so much of the *PRIista* system. In short, the political elite retained substantial control and the drug 'problem' seemed minor and manageable. (Knight, 2012: 125)

Beginning in the late-1980s, increased political competition, anti-corruption reforms and changes in organised crime within Mexico - including the influx of Colombian traffickers - led to the breakdown of these rackets (Snyder & Martínez, 2009: 262). Fracturing power led to the rupture of alliances between the state and the drug trade (Garzón, 2008: 137-8). These factors are implicated in the heightened drug violence now seen within Mexico: 'the old "Leviathan of the Zócalo"²⁷ had abdicated, (leaving) the drug cartels (. . .) to fight their own battle in a Hobbesian "war of all against all"' (Knight, 2012: 129-30). Indeed, it may be argued that public trust in the institutions of the Mexican

the US market would grow. Following US success in targeting the Caribbean-Florida route in the early-1990s, Mexico became a pivotal point of the Andes-US cocaine commodity chain. This coincided with the fall of the Colombian Cartels, and the rising strength of the Mexican Mafia (Gootenberg, 2012: 168).

²⁶ In the mid-1970s, though, the Mexican government bowed to increasing US pressure to take action against the country's heroin and marijuana trades. Operation Condor, as it was named, involved fumigation of crops. While the US and Mexican authorities claimed success, others have argued that the PRI protected aspects of the trade and that crop failure was the decisive factor in the temporary decline in Mexican production. (See Scott & Marshall, 1991: 38-42)

²⁷ Referring to the Mexican federal government, the Zócalo is the main plaza in Mexico City.

state has been badly damaged by this breakdown in political order, with some sectors calling for a restoration of the old *Pax Mafiosa* and an end to the violence (Watt & Zepeda, 2012: 182). The state's complicity in violence against its own citizens - part of the US-backed crackdown²⁸ on the Mexican Cartels under President Felipe Calderón (2006-2012) - has deepened this legitimacy crisis.

2.5 The Fragmented Bolivian State, Uneven Democracy and State-Narco Networks

In the Bolivian case, state-narco networks were established during the military authoritarian government of Barrientos (1964-1969), then extended and deepened under the rule of Banzer (1971-1978) and García Meza (1980-1981). These formed one facet of the clientelistic mode of governance that enabled these regimes to co-opt political support and hold power. Clientelism is defined by interpersonal links, 'not mediated by formal or bureaucratic organisations' (O'Donnell, 1977: 67). It entails a mode of exchange, where a patron selectively bestows benefits, typically state resources, to a client for some kind of political gain (Mainwaring, 1999: 177). This form of politics had long been a feature in Bolivia, tracing its lineage back to the colonial period. As the coca-cocaine economy boomed over this period, drug rents became part of such practices.

These military authoritarian 'coalitions' included factional interests within the state - most significantly, the military. Drug rents were used to reward the loyalty of supporters and pacify potential rivals. In addition to this, Banzer employed similar practices to cultivate societal support, forming an alliance with influential agri-business elites in Santa Cruz who made the transition from cotton to cocaine. This included the provision of soft loans for coca-cocaine ventures from state-backed banks. In many cases, these patron-client relations were based in kinship ties between Bolivia's small economic and political elite (Rodas M., 1996: 54). Levels of drug-related violence were low, as traffickers sought accommodation with the state rather than conflict. The function of

²⁸ The 2007 Mérida Initiative committed the US government to US \$1.7 billion of counterdrug aid to Mexico and Central America.

these networks thus entrenched the drug trade in state institutions. The coca-cocaine economy enjoyed a level of protection, as drug rents provided these regimes with the tools to govern. Authoritarian government, and the acquiescence of the US in Cold War-mode, ensured these networks encountered little interference (Gamarra, 1999a: 182).

The Bolivian state may be conceptualised as highly fragmented during this period. It deviates from the Weberian ideal-type that dominates the connected discourses of the international counterdrug and state-building agendas.²⁹ The state here is defined by its capacity to exercise effective control over the national territory; it is a permanent core of institutions, autonomous from societal interests (drawn from Centeno, 2002: 2). According to this view, the presence of drug production/trafficking is an indicator of state ‘weakness’ (Goodhand: 2008: 413), thriving in territories where state power is contested or state actors lack the political commitment to enforce the legal norms of the international drug control regime (Mansfield, 2016: 18). It may be argued that this idealised notion of the state is problematic, both on its own terms and for its lack of historical contextual analysis (Evans, et. al., 1985: 348). For example, it underplays the multi-faceted nature of the modern state; composed of distinct state actors (e.g. agencies), pursuing particular agendas.³⁰ Furthermore, the notion of state strength/weakness is highly ambiguous. It may be measured along distinct dimensions, including efficacy,³¹ domestic/international legitimacy,³² and/or longevity (Knight, 2002). Scoring

²⁹ These interlinkages are discussed in Chapter 1 of the thesis.

³⁰ Government agencies, for example, are informed by their organisational imperatives, and draw on their own distinct bases of societal and economic support (Allison & Zelikow, 1999).

³¹ Such a term may be imprecise. The state’s ‘effectiveness’, for example, may be uneven across the national territory and in certain policy domains (both domestic and international). This may fail to account for occasions when ‘strong’ Western states (or more accurately, particular state actors) choose not to act due to its inability to achieve an outcome; or in other cases, its reliance on the implicit consent/support of societal actors. Cases of corporate tax avoidance in the West would lend credence to this point. The US Federal Government’s inability to enforce its drug laws on cannabis prohibition in Colorado and Washington would also suggest ‘strong states’ are not uniformly strong across all policy areas.

³² Mansfield (2016: 22) highlights how international legitimacy may be increased, while domestic legitimacy is damaged. In the case of Afghanistan, certain political leaders sought international patronage - and strengthened international legitimacy - through pursuit of counterdrug policies. However, they were unable to establish national legitimacy, and relied on development assistance, payments to local elites and the coercive power of foreign military forces in attempting to enforce a ban on opium. These factors and ultimate failure in counterdrug goals

high on one measure does not automatically entail high scores on others. For the states of Latin America, for example, non-uniformity across these indicators has been common and is partly a consequence of historical factors (Centeno, 2002; Vellinga, 1998). As such, Migdal (1988: 9) notes that the broad terms 'strong' and 'weak' are blunt in accounting for the 'duality' of such states: 'their unmistakable strengths in penetrating societies and their surprising weaknesses in affecting goal-orientated social change'. Nevertheless, this top-down, idealised conceptualisation has underpinned the assumed link between 'weak' states and illicit drug economies in the South.

While the Bolivian state certainly falls short of this ideal-type, such assumptions fail to account for its distinct historic development and the drug trade's interaction with these processes. Historically, the Bolivian state has been patrimonial in nature, with uneven presence across the national territory and fractious relations with a divided and diverse society (Domingo, 2003). Bolivia's dependent relationship to the US and the loss of 'national sovereignty' that this entailed may be added as further evidence of the state's deviation from the Weberian ideal-type (Ibid: 374; Lehman, 1999). However, the Bolivian state's relationship to the drug trade is more complex than the drug policy/state-building orthodoxy prescribes. The coca-cocaine economy was absorbed into state structures and used by certain actors to extend political order. As such, the drug trade was not 'a cause and a consequence' of state weakness. Instead, it was used in processes of state-consolidation, as regime leaders looked to build 'limited-access orders' (North, et. al., 2007). Drug rents were one factor in the 'shifting alliances of power between elites and social actors' that determined the uneven and 'discontinuous construction of state authority' in Bolivia (Gray Mollina, 2008: 11 & 13).

This is evident in the highly clientelistic systems of governance of the authoritarian era. Regime leaders used the patronage of the state to bind different political actors to the existing political order, as 'the state became

exposed the structural weakness of the central authority (Ibid: 280). As such, exogenous forces placed the Afghan state into a losing conflict with the drug trade, thereby undermining its attempts to consolidate, while creating competing centres of political authority.

associated almost exclusively with executive power' (Malloy & Gamarra, 1988: 7). This reflected the typical Latin American experience, where the historical legacy of patrimonialism and intra-elite competition meant that state, regime and government were often practically indistinguishable (Vellinga, 1998: 5). The Bolivian bureaucracy was politicised with regime appointees, while the legislative and judicial branch were packed with political supporters. These institutions thus lacked autonomy. Furthermore, the police and the political parties were also subordinated to the military (Quintana, 2005: 96-97). In this sense, the military became the preeminent institution of the Bolivian state, not only in its control of executive power, but through the military officers assuming 'political posts at the local, provincial and national levels, and important managerial posts in a variety of state enterprises', as well as the institution's ties 'to peasant groups and crucial political elites in places like Santa Cruz, the Beni and other traditionally isolated regions' (Malloy & Gamarra, 1988: 21). Drug rents constituted an important facet of this system of control, as military authoritarian regimes sought to colonise the illicit drug economy with political allies. This included state actors (military officers) and 'crucial political elites'. In this sense, drug rents were a tool of state-building: political actors exploited the illicit economy to extend state authority.

In addition to this, the very presence of the drug trade in Bolivia - proof of state weakness in the mainstream drug policy discourse - was not indicative of a loss of state control over the national territory. The expansion of coca cultivation in the Chapare and the development of the drug trade in the eastern departments occurred in concert with the state.³³ Colonisation of the Chapare was encouraged by state development of the region in the 1960s; there was little appetite for eradication campaigns and the 'retaking of state control' of the region following the expansion of coca (e.g. Dunkerley, 1984: 318). Although not necessarily fostered by the regimes of the period, coca cultivation was viewed as a benign influence within Bolivia. Informal political pacts between rural sectors and the military (Mitchell, 1977: 98) also underpinned this view. Meanwhile, the drug clans of Santa Cruz and the Beni were supported by the Banzer regime. State-narco networks were established, as the regime sought to

³³ This is examined in detail in Chapter 4.

solidify its base of societal support (Rodas M., 1996). The coca-cocaine economy was thus interwoven with wider political dynamics. The top-down analysis of the conventional drug policy discourse does not account for such nuances in the parallel development of the state and the illicit economy.

Democratic transition in 1982 represents a point of fracture in these processes. First, democratisation threatened to shine a light on interactions between state actors and the drug trade, and tear-up the certainties of the old, particularistic system. While authoritarianism grants the government and its cronies impunity, democratic government promises a free press, political competition, the rule of law and an independent judiciary. As such, democracy would be expected to reduce drug corruption (Whitehead, 2002: 801). Furthermore, renewed US interest in the 'war on drugs' meant that state collaboration in the drug trade would be met with diplomatic and economic sanction. These dynamics resulted in the atomisation - but survival - of state-narco networks. Where before, relatively settled and centralised modes of exchange functioned between the state and the drug trade, now multiple political actors - the political parties, the military and the police - formed patron-client relations with traffickers. Rather than state-consolidation and the building of factional coalitions, these relationships held significance in Bolivia's post-transition political equilibrium. During Bolivia's uncertain transition, vestiges of former governance systems continued to order interactions between the state and the drug trade.

Drawing on Dahl's theory of polyarchy,³⁴ O'Donnell (1996) argues that uneven democracy has been common across Latin America following the Third Wave. Formal elements of democracy, such as regular elections, have been institutionalised, while the wider social and political rights associated with modern, Western-liberal democracy have been deficient. The assumption that these cases are moving towards (or away from) consolidated democracy in the image of the West has been challenged, as distinct, enduring forms of polyarchy were formed. Informal rules and particularism, for example, operated outside

³⁴ O'Donnell (1996: 35) summarises this concept. Polyarchy provides a schema for comparing different forms of 'democracy', broadly defined as a form of government that is responsive to the will of the population. Its seven attributes are: '1) elected officials; 2) free and fair elections; 3) inclusive suffrage; 4) the right to run for office; 5) freedom of expression; 6) alternative information; and 7) associational autonomy.'

of formal institutional structures, but were no less important in shaping behaviour and expectations, helping to determine who wields political power (Ibid: 38-41). This was clear in the Bolivian case as the 'old reflexes and assumptions, and vested interests created by the previous history' stood alongside democratic institutions (Whitehead, 2002: 807).

The historic development of the Bolivian state and the legacy of authoritarianism thus continued to hold influence. The factionalised Bolivian state of the post-transition period functioned through patronage and informal pacts. As described below, this included military and police autonomy, and the state-narco networks that ran through both institutions. In addition to this, political power remained concentrated in the executive branch (Malloy & Gamarra, 1988: 226-227). The judiciary was packed with political appointees and so lacked independence, while the legislature was a vehicle of patronage for the political parties (Gamarra, 1991 & 1996). These trade-offs allowed Bolivia's pacte-democracy to function.³⁵ As such, the Bolivian state remained 'weak': non-unitary and fragmented. Again, though, the illicit drug economy's role within these processes was complex. Coca cultivation in the Chapare was viewed as a vital social safety net following the neoliberal structural reforms that had neutered organised labour (e.g. see US Embassy La Paz to Secretary of State, 1985b & 1986b). Although Chapare coca could not be formally endorsed given US counterdrug pressure, there was no impulse to 'retake state control' of the territory and confront the coca unions. Furthermore, drug rents were extracted by the main political actors of the post-transition period - the military, the police and the political parties - and subsumed into a finely balanced post-transition settlement. Elements of the drug trade, therefore, remained embedded within state structures, partly as a hangover of the authoritarian era. This was indicative of Bolivia's uneven democracy.

Military and police autonomy constituted one facet of this uneven democratisation.³⁶ The former's longstanding political role made many civilian political leaders wary of provoking the institution during the post-transition

³⁵ This is discussed in Chapter 6.

³⁶ These are discussed in detail in Chapter 6.

period. As such, politicians practised a policy of non-interference in the internal matters of the military (Barrios M., 1994). The recalibration of the police's role was partly a result of this uneasy relationship. As well as reflecting the new principles of Bolivian democracy, increased police resources and prerogatives were designed to counteract the military's predominant role. An informal reciprocal arrangement was formed, where the institution enjoyed autonomy in return for supporting the interests of the government (Quintana, 2005: 96-7). As a consequence, both the police and military operated with little transparency and accountability. This allowed elements within both institutions to carry on with entrenched practices of drug corruption. The 'compromise' of non-enforcement and lack of civilian oversight - holding state officials to the rule of law - was justified in maintaining political stability and (formal) democracy. Here, 'institutional endurance is rooted in the systematic absence of enforcement', as such actors are induced 'to accept rules they would otherwise seek to overturn' (Levitsky & Murillo, 2014: 204).

Pockets of authoritarianism meant that factional interests were able to operate without accountability. Bolivian state actors - such as regional military or police commanders - formed alliances with private actors to exploit drug revenues; eroding notions of an even and universal the rule of law (O'Donnell, 1993). Autonomous military and police institutions stood beyond accountability. The pursuit of these particularistic interests thus limited notions of meaningful democracy, as political competitors are locked out of the process.³⁷ This may be supplemented with Auyero's (2007) concept of 'grey zones' of the state: where state and non-state actors collude in illicit activity to pursue common interests.³⁸ In such cases, these interactions become part of the normal practice of politics, thus dissolving normative boundaries between these categories. Arguing in the same vein, Thoumi (2003: 176-7) argues that the application of Western-centric conceptualisations of corruption, for example, may be inappropriate due to local conditions.

³⁷ The application of locally-opposed US counterdrug efforts may be added to this. At the behest of an external actor, the Bolivian government has implemented policies which large swathes of the population believe to be against the country's interests.

³⁸ Auyero (2009) addresses state collusion in violence, using the case of public disorder in 2001 Argentina.

Authoritarianism has deep roots in the Andes, where governments have not had a tradition of accountability. At best, they have to account for their actions to powerful economic groups, but are not accountable to the general public, and individuals lack mediating institutions that could exact government accountability. (. . .) In patrimonial and clientelistic political systems, the enrichment of those in power by the use of power is a normal way of life. Corruption makes sense only when private benefit is gained through the abuse of power in the democratic context.

Focusing on the period of the Andean Initiative, US interlocutors interpreted these processes through the Drug War Paradigm. Perceived ‘rampant’ corruption in the Bolivian state and political class, for example, justified the extension of US control against ‘corrupt’ local power structures. Bolivian interlocutors, meanwhile, recognised these networks as being part of a fragile political equilibrium. While not endorsing state-narco relationships, they viewed the political order and Bolivia’s recent transition as inextricably bound up with them. This partly underpinned both opposition to Bolivia’s ‘Colombianisation’, and calls for a development-led response to drugs. Additionally, US efforts to remove ‘corrupt’ politicians were framed against the legacy of US Cold War political manipulation. In this sense, the US was viewed to be more interested in leveraging supposed state-narco links to shape Bolivia’s internal politics, than tackling drug corruption in the Bolivian political class and consolidating democracy. Contested narratives around these cases of drug scandal emphasise the competing agendas of US and Bolivian actors around this time. Their distinct understandings of state-narco interactions were folded into narrative of US-Bolivian relations of power and control. These arguments are fully examined through Chapters 5, 6 and 7 of the thesis.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter thus builds on different areas of the literature to construct an original framework for analysis. Elucidating the main themes of the drugs literature, I outline the two overarching paradigms of the ‘war on drugs’, and the associated political and institutional factors that affected the course of policy. These are vital to understanding the dynamics of the period, and providing important background on the introduction of the Andean Initiative,

e.g. the post-Cold War escalation of the US ‘war on drugs’, and the social, political and economic priorities of the Bolivian government. As part of this discussion, I consider how the Drug War and Development Paradigms conceptualise the drug trade, and attached phenomena. Such conceptualisations framed the interview accounts of elite US and Bolivian actors. In Chapter 5, I examine in depth how these shaped their perspectives of the ‘war on drugs’, and their interpretations and responses to state-narco networks. Therefore, the analysis that follows is in conversation with the drugs literature, addressing key themes such as the securitisation of drugs, and the clash of enforcement and development-led visions of drugs.

However, this chapter also highlights the limitations of the drugs literature, and the need for a shift in theoretical approach. Employing the literature on coercion, my analysis problematises the relationship between the state and the drug trade, and breaks with the assumption of synergy between the drug trade, violence and weak states. In this way, the thesis aims to provide a contextualised account of Bolivian state-narco interactions. In providing an overview of this literature, I argue that it offers insights into the complex and myriad ways the drug trade becomes embedded in local social, political and economic structures. The cause and effects of these relations may extend beyond the typical assumptions of the drugs literature; as evidenced in my discussion of the examples of Burma and Mexico. In the case of post-transition Bolivia, uneven democracy and entrenched political interests ensured the survival of atomised state-narco networks. Incorporating elements of the literature on Latin American democratisation, my analysis raises questions around the entanglement of the drug trade in process of political transition. This theme is returned to in Chapter 6.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the unique dynamics of the (understudied) Bolivian case offers new insights into state-narco interactions. Shifting from authoritarianism to (formal) democracy and constituting a major arena of the US ‘war on drugs’, the study of Bolivia allows for exploration of the propositions of the coercion literature in a distinct setting. My theoretical framework,

therefore, crosses and advances the research agendas of different areas of the literature.

Chapter 3 | Linking Theory, Methods and Empirical Analysis: US and Bolivian Fieldwork

Reflecting on methodology is a critical part of the research process. From formulating the research design to gathering data in the field and responding to unforeseen challenges, decisions are made which shape the findings of the thesis. In mapping and considering the implications of these choices, the interplay between theory, methods and empirical analysis is drawn out. Closely allied to this, open and transparent discussion of the research process ensures that others may assess its validity. This is a foundation of good research. The researcher should detail and evaluate each stage of the process. The strengths and limitations of the data and the robustness of the methodology may then be weighed, and the findings compared with similar cases (Jacobson & Landau, 2003: 2).

This chapter describes how these principles underpinned my research. Discussion of my mixed methods approach is included in Chapter 1. Here, I outline the planning and conduct of crucial fieldwork trips to the US and Bolivia, which yielded my original interview data. As part of this, I discuss the principles of ethical research, strategies for gaining access, formulating interview schedules and dealing with unanticipated issues. Although there are commonalities across the fieldwork trips, I explore the distinct challenges faced in the US and Bolivia. In the US, for example, the discourse of the ‘war on drugs’ has become contested. This caused me to recalibrate my approach, and consider the changing interpretations and perceptions of illicit drugs and counterdrug policy. In Bolivia, I encountered issues around researcher-researched power differentials, ‘ethnographic seduction’ (Robben, 1995) and reflexivity. These shaped my thinking on the competing US and Bolivian agendas of the period, and the use of framing narratives in conceptualising state-narco networks and their implications. In this sense, the juxtaposition of US and Bolivian fieldwork had a profound impact on my analysis. The chapter thus considers the experience of my interviews, and my shift from a positivist model of elite interviewing to oral history methodology.

As such, these factors had important implications along a range of dimensions. For example, in defining the field, researchers take theoretical and methodological decisions that necessarily privilege certain perspectives over others. In my case, this entailed a focus on political elite perceptions of state-narco interactions. While this was primarily informed by the analytical considerations described in the previous chapter, practical decisions in the field also held influence. Furthermore, a sampling strategy of ‘snowballing’ interviews also contributed to the historical perspective of the thesis and consequently my selection of an oral history methodology. Both of these features are unusual within the wider drugs literature, but were pivotal to the establishment of several of the original findings of the thesis. In sum, this chapter gives the reader understanding of the development of the research project, while also standing alone in providing insights into elite interviewing methodology, as well as research on politically sensitive topics and illicit practices.

3.1 US Fieldwork

The primary aim of this phase of fieldwork was to interview US officials who had either direct or indirect experience of the ‘war on drugs’ in Bolivia. Although I planned to slowly focus my analysis and resources on a particular period, I adopted a wide lens initially. As well as ensuring a broad knowledge base of the case, it also meant that different research paths were open to me during fieldwork. Locating and gaining access to officials, past and present, was uncertain as I had few prior contacts to draw upon within the population of interest. This flexible approach ensured more avenues of investigation were open to me during the fieldwork.

I frequently encountered blocks when attempting to penetrate US government agencies. Aside from the low priority of my work to these agencies, the decline of US-Bolivian relations meant that current officials were typically less willing to participate. This included both a general lack of experience with the case (US government aid and cooperation with Bolivia has been scaled back since the rise

of Morales) and the politically sensitive nature of the topic (e.g. the Bolivian government's expulsion of the DEA in 2008).¹ One potential participant criticised my selection of the Bolivian case on the basis that it had become 'somewhat pro-drug culture' (Personal correspondence to the author, 2013). Additionally, the public affairs departments of agencies also sought oversight over the involvement of officials.² Current officials tended to be well-briefed on the official policy line, recycling publicly available materials. As such, there was an effort to control and sanitise the outflow of information.

By contrast, I found that ex-officials, most of them semi-retired, were more willing to participate. 'Snowballing' from these interviews was also more successful and my interviews began to cluster around the era of the Andean Initiative. As a result, I started to focus more of my resources on this period. This methodological consideration, then, also played a role in case selection and the historical perspective of the thesis. Further to this, though, these interviewees seemed more open and frank in their responses. Of course, they too presented a particular version of events, but their accounts also had an added richness. From an oral history perspective, they had evaluated and reflected on their experiences over the years, interpreting and reinterpreting events.

These interviews provided an interesting point of comparison with documents created at the time of the Andean Initiative. The 1990 National Drug Control Strategy Report (US Gov., 1990), for example, outlined the Bush administration's counterdrug policy and was aimed at garnering public support. It reinforced the securitisation of illicit-drug and set bold goals for dismantling the international drug trade. In retrospect, one official recognised how 'winning' the Cold War had emboldened those charged with formulating the Andean Initiative (Miller

¹ 'Timing is everything, and it is particularly relevant when interviewing elites during moments of political sensitivity, as it impacts on access to interviewees and the quality of information exchanged' (Desmond, 2004: 266).

² Subsequently, during my fieldwork in Bolivia, I had made contact directly with an individual working in the US Consulate in La Paz. He had been keen to speak to me, but decided to run it past his superior before proceeding. The Consulate, in turn, sought approval from State headquarters in Washington DC. After a few days, the official phoned me to apologise, and relay the news that the interview had been refused because the US would be unable to control the information I published and US-Bolivian relations were at a sensitive point.

interview, 2013). Post-Cold War optimism had brought with it a naïve belief that the US was capable of achieving whatever goals it set for itself. This belief had knock-on effects on how actors conceptualised both the problem and the solution to illicit drugs. The failure of the Andean Initiative to meet its targets and the intervening years, though, seemed to have provoked personal reflection. The ex-official developed these ideas as a way of explaining the policy and the motivations and beliefs which had driven it. This historical perspective thus brought with it new insights.

The process of planning and conducting this fieldwork is outlined in more detail below, including specific issues around the ethics process, contested language and interviewing elites.

3.1.1 Ethics Process

Prior to commencing the fieldwork, I gained approval for my research from the University's Ethics Committee. Guided by the principle of 'do no harm', I deemed the associated risks for participants and myself to be minimal. Interviews would cover the professional lives of officials and no sensitive personal information would be sought. Although I thought it unlikely, interviewees may have divulged details of incriminating activity. Under such conditions, the researcher cannot guarantee anonymity and, indeed, may choose not to protect the participant.³ I decided that, should such a situation arise, I would stop the participant and make this fact clear to them. Participants may also have damaged their career prospects by sharing information deemed to be inappropriate by current or future employers. It was important to clearly outline the nature of the research to participants and how their data would be used, so that they could judge for themselves the possible consequences of their participation (Homan, 1991: 71).

³ If the researcher has made no prior commitment not to report illicit activity, they may feel compelled (and ethically justified) to pass on information to the authorities, for example. Even when such promises have been made, legal proceedings may force the researcher to hand over recordings and transcriptions, e.g. see the case of the 'Boston Tapes' (McDonald, 2014).

Interviewees would also be given options around anonymity, i.e. whether they permit use of their name and/or direct quotes in any publications, as well as selection of the venue for the interview and use of audio recording. These issues would be addressed with participants through the process of informed consent. The consent form contained details along all of these dimensions and I planned to invite questions on the issues covered. I would also provide interviewees with an information sheet for their own reference, detailing the project, the consent agreement, and up-to-date contact details of both me and my supervisor. Finally, participants would also have the opportunity to ask for a final report of the main findings of the thesis. Such measures are in keeping with standard guidelines for ethical social research.

Generally, the ethical safeguards I put in place seemed to be robust. I was able to address any questions raised by participants, and all seemed comfortable with the parameters of the project. However, ethical considerations should not end with the receipt of ethical approval. There may be a tendency to fall back on the processes and procedures outlined during ethical approval as a final fail-safe. In this sense, ethical approval allows the researcher to transfer responsibility to the ethical review committee. For example:

A signed consent form becomes a guarantee that interviewees are informed about the research and consent to participate. Unfortunately, this procedure leads to perceive moral responsibility as something to get done initially, something to be ticked off as 'done', as a symbol of goodness. (. . .) External policing also tends to turn research ethics into an either-or issue: participants either consent or they do not, things are good or bad, harmless or not. (Ryen, 2011: 428)

Ethical issues are fluid and social research occurs in complex environments. As such, fieldwork may develop in unexpected and challenging ways. While these issues can be minimised by careful planning, it is impossible to anticipate all of the implications of the research. On occasion, these may fall outside of agreed ethical safeguards and require the researcher to make their own judgements in the field. I thus attempted to stay alert to this when conducting my fieldwork. The following example demonstrates how I adapted my approach to conditions in the field.

3.1.2 Don't Mention the 'War on Drugs'

The information sheet I circulated with potential interviewees contained a brief description of the research project (see Appendix A). This had been included as part of the ethics process. In outlining the project, the researcher must be open and truthful to ensure informed consent, but careful not to disclose 'too much' information, thereby prejudicing the interview. I balanced these two aspects in the formulation of the information sheet. Furthermore, as the 'war on drugs' is a divisive contemporary issue in the US, I sought to pose my research in neutral language. Within the first two weeks of fieldwork, though, my research goals were challenged by one potential participant. On the basis of my information sheet, I was accused of having an agenda against US counterdrug policy. For this individual, my research outline had placed me alongside opponents of the 'war on drugs' and he was, therefore, unwilling to participate. The examples I had presented of policy difficulties in Bolivia during this period (themselves drawn from US government documents) and the very term 'war on drugs' caused controversy.

The lineage of the term 'war on drugs', therefore, had analytical implications for my research. Richard Nixon is credited with first using the term in his 1968 run for the presidency, but it was under Ronald Reagan and then George H. W. Bush that the idea entered into common parlance. For example, President Bush had used the language of war during a televisual address on the administration's drug policy: 'If we fight this war as a divided nation, then the war is lost' (Bush, 1989). Such rhetoric underpinned the justification for US counterdrug policies in Latin America; a logic which stated a 'war' against drugs was necessary due to the existential threat of Andean cocaine to US society. While such ideas are still present in US counterdrug policies today, the language of war now has less traction. The term 'war on drugs' has become politically charged, used by opponents of the policy as shorthand for the 'failed' aspects of US counterdrug policy, e.g. mass incarceration and the perpetuation of drug-related violence in Latin America.

(ONDCP-head) Gil Kerlikowske said the bellicose analogy was a barrier to dealing with the nation's drug issues. "Regardless of how you try to

explain to people it's a 'war on drugs' or a 'war on a product', people see it as a war on them," he said. "We're not at war with people in this country". (Fields, 2009)

Former and present US officials were uncomfortable with this characterisation of the policy and sought to play down the Drug War rhetoric. Although they continued to draw on elements of the Drug War Paradigm - viewing the issue from an enforcement perspective, for example - interviewees emphasised alternative development, institution building, and the rule of law. These strands of policy placed the concerns of the Bolivian people at the centre of justification for US counterdrug efforts in the country, linking back into ideas of American Exceptionalism. Shifting rationalisations were couched in their own dialect: securitisation, war and threat, on one hand; technocratic development and institution building, on the other.

Although I had been sensitive to these dynamics in the planning of my fieldwork, by highlighting well-known policy issues and using the term 'war on drugs' I had marked myself out as a critic of US counterdrug policy. At times, past and present US officials with a stake in the policy were immediately wary of my research.

So emotive is the use of language that key words can potentially restrict access or give the impression during fieldwork of bias on the part of the investigator. The nomenclature of the researcher is replete with politically sensitive words. (Knox, 2001: 215)

In order to engender the trust of interviewees, I decided to further soften the tone of the information sheet: leaving the question of how agencies had worked together hanging and removing examples of common policy difficulties (see Appendix B). It was crucial to reassure participants that they would be treated fairly and objectively, and that I was a credible researcher with no hidden agenda (Knox, 2001: 211). However, as my research deals explicitly with the idea of the Drug War Paradigm, I decided to keep the term 'war on drugs' in the information sheet. Morris (2009: 213) argues that selective presentation of information, whether to gain trust or access, is essentially duplicitous and should be avoided. Placing the term in inverted commas, I was confident that most participants would recognise that I was consciously referring to the term in its

historic sense, rather than expressing a preconceived judgement. In this way, I ensured that the revised document continued to reflect the main focus of the project.

The different versions of the information sheet elicited different responses from participants. In an early interview with an ex-US official, for example, I had encountered a degree of suspicion about my aims. He seemed to view the interview as adversarial. At one stage, as I paused to consider my next question, he laughed and remarked ‘Did I mess up your questions?’ Additionally, he was able to speak at length about US policy successes, but shut down when I approached more critical aspects. This may have been an attempt to counteract my perceived ‘negative agenda’ against US counterdrug policy. While these tensions may have occurred regardless of the wording of the information sheet, I noticed a difference in the interviews following my amendments. Respondents were typically less defensive. In a subsequent interview, for example, an ex-official expressed his enthusiasm for the project and its potential value to future US government officials in formulating and implementing multi-agency policies. He appeared more open when discussing both positive and negative aspects of his experience. His interview and the research generally would help to pass on the lessons he had learned during his career to future generations. Of course, the attitude of participants to the interview was dependent on a number of factors. How I initially presented myself and my research, though, contributed to the interview dynamic.

3.1.3 Interviewing Elites and Oral History⁴

Originally, I had started with a positivist conception of what kind of data could be obtained from the interviews. In this sense, the interviewee is thought of as a ‘witness’ and the interview is used to access ‘facts’ about the case.⁵ While

⁴ I define ‘elites’ broadly as individuals who have risen to the top of their field: ‘someone of interest because of the position he or she holds (or has held), rather than because he or she is representative or typical of a group’ (Seldon & Pappworth, 1983: 6).

⁵ A positivist epistemology assumes that the social world exists independent of observation (an objectivist ontological position), and that this reality can be accessed through the senses. With roots in the natural science, the aim of social science is to search for law-like generalisations in the social world (Morris, 2009: 210).

the interviewee's account will have its own biases and reflect certain beliefs, for example, these may be identified and filtered through triangulation of sources. This is not to say that such biases are analytically unimportant, but that the researcher is orientated towards validating the data in search of general theories with universal application. In this sense, there is an effort to separate belief and perception from objective facts. I soon found this positivist model of interviewing to be unsuitable, and adapted my methodological assumptions in the field. This involved a shift to elements of oral history methodology, as outlined in Chapter 1. The accounts of interviewees were, therefore, dynamic: memories recalled and reworked in relation to experience, evolving identity, external factors and the interview situation itself (Abrams, 2010: 7).

Returning to contestation around the term 'war on drugs', American Exceptionalism supported the accounts of many interviewees. Furthermore, US actions in Bolivia were, at times, rationalised in the discourse of development rather than war, while I was viewed variously as neutral, a threat or an ally. As a result of this, my research findings too were 'relational' (Desmond, 2004: 263): a product of the time of the study. In this sense, the perceived ineffectiveness of the policy and polarisation around the 'war on drugs' more generally, affected the kind of data I obtained. The same questions posed to the same interviewees in 1993 instead of 2013, for example, would likely have been couched in different discursive terms, explanations and analysis. Where opinions, beliefs, rumours and conspiracies are of secondary importance under a positivist paradigm of interviewing, oral history methodology places these aspects of the account at the centre of analysis. Often these illuminate the meanings and understandings participants have attached to their experience.

Revising the epistemological assumptions of my interview methodology had practical implications. I had left space within my interview schedules for interviewees to take the discussion into different areas, but my questioning was aimed at picking apart their experiences. In this sense, I was attempting to uncover the 'facts' of the case, with verifiable details and examples. These types of positivist assumptions underpin a number of articles on the methodology of elite interviewing (Morris, 2009: 211). Berry (2002) argues that elites use

interviews to project their own agenda onto the historical record, at times obfuscating or distorting. He then goes on to provide advice on how the researcher may avoid these pitfalls and gain a more truthful account. For example, the researcher should offer critiques of what the participant has said/done from a third party rather than presenting them directly. In so doing, the researcher will appear sympathetic to the elite's point of view (Ibid: 680).⁶ Some of this practical advice was useful, e.g. putting the interviewee at ease. But in aiming to illuminate the participant's understanding of the case rather than uncovering an objective reality, I changed to a more collaborative style of interviewing. This is illustrated by the twin issues of monologues and 'factual inaccuracies'.

Many officials began the interview with long overviews of their thoughts on the topic and their experience in general. Initially, I viewed these monologues as an attempt by the 'elite' to take control of the interview and dictate the agenda. In this sense, he/she had come into the interview with a clear idea of what they wanted to say on the matter and the image they wished to project. It was, then, a defensive move, designed to counter my efforts to 'extract the truth'. From an oral history perspective, though, these monologues are valuable. While the interviewee may have been seeking to drive the direction of the discussion, attempts to steer the interview away from or to particular areas are revealing. For example, in downplaying the rhetoric of war and emphasising development, interviewees hinted at how they justified their own role in the 'war on drugs'. These long overviews also represented the verbalisation of memories. This is a form of interpretation: part of the active process of creating meanings (Portelli, 2006: 37). Linking into an inductive, semi-structured approach to interviewing, monologues, at times, took the discussion into new areas and demonstrated the analytical links these actors made between different issues (McEvoy, 2006: 187). As Chapter 5 describes, this includes viewing state-narco networks in the context

⁶ Similarly, Lilleker (2003: 207) poses the rhetorical question, 'How would Paxman deal with this?' This suggests that the interview situation is confrontational: the interviewee is as a possessor of facts and, in order to extract them, the researcher must use various techniques. This includes 'buttering-up' the participant with praise, but being careful not to appear 'too sycophantic' (Ibid: 209). In the same vein, Leech (2002: 666) advises researchers to begin with 'nonthreatening questions' as a disarming mechanism, before moving onto 'threatening questions'.

of the pressures of an uncertain democratic transition or, alternatively, the perceived national security threat of Bolivian cocaine on US streets.

Equally, responding to 'factual inaccuracies', 'lies' or 'exaggerations' also posed questions for my interview methodology. If the purpose of the interview is to validate and verify the data, then the researcher may be inclined to (softly) challenge these parts of the account. Indeed, I was unsure of how far to push with certain lines of questioning for fear of alienating the interviewee.

Underlying these concerns was the idea that the interview was similar to an interrogation: I was attempting to formulate an interview schedule which would get the 'witness' to give a full and truthful account. The subjectivity of the interviewee, though, was the valuable element of the interview. Their perspective, including inaccuracies or exaggerations, was part of this. Portelli (2006: 36) states that 'what informants *believe* is indeed a historical fact (that is, the fact that they believed it)'. In this sense, various US accusations of high-level corruption in the Bolivian government, said more about fault lines of US-Bolivian trust rather than the machinations of a 'corrupt' political system.

However, it was also important to encourage the participant to explore all aspects of their experience. This meant probing such claims to force the interviewee to consider them more deeply. For example, I invited 'elaboration in a bland and naive way' (Wood, 2006: 382) and presented alternative accounts from other parties. This was designed to encourage the interviewee to question their own assumptions and reflect on their analysis of events. Generally, though, I found participants went into interviews with a very clear idea of what they wished to share and what was off limits. Part of this may have simply been memory gaps of events from many years ago, but the experience of these officials also meant they were well-versed in handling interviews. A positivist model of elite interviewing offers ways of trying to overcome these barriers; oral history methodology questions what these barriers mean in terms of the actor's understanding of events. For example:

Acts considered legitimate and even normal or necessary in the past may be viewed as unacceptable and literally cast out of the tradition. In these cases, the most precious information may lie in what the informants hide,

and in the fact that they do hide it, rather in what they tell. (Portelli, 2006: 38)

The emphasis interviewees gave to some events over others, the issues they were reluctant to address and unsupported or outlandish claims, then, were all indicative of how these actors made sense of state-narco networks and the 'war on drugs' in Bolivia.

3.2 Bolivian Fieldwork

My Bolivian fieldwork was informed by my experiences of conducting research in the US. First, as I had begun to narrow my analytical focus on the Andean Initiative, I concentrated more of my resources on gaining interviews which addressed this period. Second, many of the ethical issues to consider were comparable to those from my US fieldwork, and so I implemented similar ethical procedures. Alert to the issue of contested discourse and with the challenge of interviewing in a second language, though, I took additional measures aimed at ensuring my research did not deviate from ethical guidelines. This included working with native speakers in the formulation of research materials. Third, I applied my altered interview methodology to my Bolivian fieldwork.

Although interview dynamics were comparable to those in the US, distinct themes were also present. For example, several Bolivian interviewees related their accounts back to the legacy of the Cold War and critiques of the Morales regime. In addition to this, I started to question more deeply the researcher-researched relationship. The notion of the 'powerless researcher', as assumed across the literature on elite interviewing, was challenged. I recognised instead fluid relations, where both parties held power due to their respective positions. This caused me to reflect on my experiences of interviews in the US. These issues and their implications for empirical analysis are outlined below.

3.2.1 Gaining Access, Managing Resources and Defining the Field

The primary aim of this leg of fieldwork was to conduct interviews with key actors from around the period of the Andean Initiative, as well as individuals

with general experience of the ‘war on drugs’ in Bolivia. This included members of the government, state officials and representatives of third-sector organisations. I looked to explore the perspectives of these actors, comparing and contrasting these with the accounts of US officials. I lay foundations for this fieldwork during a trip to Bolivia in the first year of my PhD: investigating the feasibility of my project and making contacts for my later return. I thus started fieldwork with existing contacts and a good sense of the research environment. As well as interviewing these individuals for their own thoughts and experience of the case, I sought their advice on gaining further interviews. I was able to ‘snowball’ several interviews in this way.

However, both here and throughout my fieldwork, interviewees were often unable to provide an introduction or contact details for other potential participants. Many from within the population of interest had retired from public life and had fallen out of touch with their old peer group. I tended instead to rely on making contact directly with interviewees, using internet searches and the phone directory to locate participants. My success rate in finding interviewees was variable and ‘cold-calling’ may have placed individuals on the defensive.⁷ For example, I noted a degree of scepticism/suspicion from some individuals, questioning how I got their number and what the goals of my research were. Having explained who I was, and why I was in contact, though, most were open to participate. In total, I conducted 19 interviews over a two month period.

My Bolivian interviews mirrored those I had gained in the US. Most interviewees were from a similar cohort: mid- to high-ranking ex-government officials. As in the US fieldwork, their accounts were rich with reflection and analysis of historic events and their role with them. There were similarities too in the way these ‘elites’ conducted themselves in the interviews; perhaps unsurprising given their shared demographics (gender and age) and professional background. Most were confident and authoritative in giving their accounts. Furthermore, these Bolivian and US interviewees often had dealings with each other in the

⁷ This tactic was suggested to me by an existing contact in Bolivia, with experience of conducting research in the local context.

formulation and implementation of counterdrug policies. Bolivian interviews then provided a counterpoint to those conducted in the US. Officials from both sides interpreted the same events in different ways, drawing on different readings of history and ideologies, and outlining distinct motivations and beliefs. The juxtaposition of US and Bolivian fieldwork, and its implications for my research are discussed in the conclusion to the chapter.

The limitations of my fieldwork strategy and the realities of managing resources, though, also shaped the focus of my analysis. Certain sectors are not represented in my interview data set, such as low-level officials from the police and military. This is partly a consequence of ‘snowballing’ interviews, i.e. my interviews clustered around one group. Because I was generally unable to find names for police and military officers who had served around the era of the Andean Initiative, I was also unable to contact them directly. I had sought access to the FECLN, *el Ministro de Defensa* and *el Ministro del Interior*, with the intention of using them as a gateway to this population. In each case, emails, official requests and follow-up phone calls went unanswered. I focused my resources on gaining interviews within the population I had already accessed. I sought to manage my resources and, in this sense, practical considerations of time and money influenced the analysis.

This links into a wider process of ‘defining the field’. Desmond (2004: 264) argues that ‘the demands of conducting a coherent piece of research’ force the researcher to demarcate the place and period of the research, and the population of interest. But such demarcations are artificial. For example, the function of state-narco interactions not only touches mid- to high-ranking officials, but traffickers and frontline police and military officials, as well as the coca growers and communities who occupy the intersection between the licit and illicit spheres. While accounting for such factors in my analysis, I also narrowed my field of interest to the actors who formed and implemented counterdrug policy. My research privileges their experience over the other groups mentioned. In this sense, conducting fieldwork entailed a process of inclusion and exclusion of various actors (Ibid.). Although these decisions were primarily based on theoretical concerns (producing ‘a coherent piece of

research'), such practical considerations inevitably shape the parameters of fieldwork.

3.2.2 Establishing Credibility and Approaching Sensitive Topics

Ethical safeguards formulated as part of my fieldwork in the US served as my template in Bolivia. As the subject matter and population of interest were similar, I implemented similar ethical procedures along the dimensions of informed consent, confidentiality, and privacy. However, I also considered the distinct issues I might face in conducting research in Bolivia. My previous feasibility study was valuable in this regard. I discussed my research with local organisations and familiarised myself with the Bolivian research environment. In this way, I sought to apply a process of 'risk management' and follow the principle of 'do no harm'.

First, when setting-up interviews, I provided a letter of introduction from my supervisor alongside my own research information sheet. This is customary in most of Latin America, but it may also have helped to establish my credentials as a researcher. Alongside using the names of past participants during first contact, the introduction letter may have reassured interviewees of my credibility as a researcher (Knox, 2001; 211-213). Second, some interviewees may have felt uncomfortable signing a consent form. This is linked to historical factors around the country's authoritarian past, where signing one's name was associated with coercive and exploitative practices. Although this would more commonly be associated with marginalised groups in Bolivia, I made provision for interviewees to give oral consent.

My experience of contested discourse of the 'war on drugs' in the US also figured highly in my planning for the Bolivian fieldwork. Prior to and during my fieldwork, I consulted with native Spanish speakers over the formulation of my research materials. This was not simply a matter of translation. I wanted to ensure that I approached potentially sensitive topics in an appropriate way, identifying phrases or words with wider connotations and ensuring that the tone of such materials was suitable. Again, my use of language would determine 'my

position' in the eyes of interviewees. In balancing the principle of transparent research (an ethical concern) and forming a rapport with the participant (avoiding language or terms that would alienate them), I provided cues for interviewees to construct an identity for me, e.g. as 'critic', 'neutral' or 'ally'.⁸ My gender, age and background, as well as the process of establishing credibility - letter of introduction, using the name of the university and/or a previous contact when arranging the interview - may also have prompted certain assumptions around 'my position' (McEvoy, 2006: 184). Such factors have consequences, not only in terms of access, but in the kind of data interviews yield. For example, whether the participant feels defensive and therefore downplays negative aspects, or confident, presenting more open reflections on their experience and drawing on assumed shared beliefs.

Translations for both the information sheet and consent form reflected closely the amended versions from my US fieldwork; couched in neutral language but providing a clear outline of the research for the participant. As part of this, I decided again to include the term 'war on drugs' - a key concept of my research - in these materials.⁹ My use of the term, though, seemed to be less divisive in Bolivia: the Drug War was generally viewed as an external imposition on Bolivia and US influence has declined significantly in the country. Indeed, it may have marked me as sympathetic to the Bolivian perspective, evoking the critical narrative of the 'war on drugs' which certain US officials railed against.

The issue of corruption, meanwhile, was more sensitive. Practically all arms of the Bolivian state have been implicated in drug corruption at one time or another, from the government and the judiciary, down to local authorities, the police and military. In the case of the Paz Zamora administration, there were several high-profile scandals, with various members of the government accused of having links to the drug trade. Furthermore, the notion of 'the corrupt Bolivian state' feeds into the discourse of the US Drug War Paradigm, which

⁸ This is not to say that these two principles are necessarily in conflict with each other. Around certain emotive issues, however, the researcher may be wary of presenting information which would be read as bias by the participant.

⁹ I did note the use of several interchangeable terms for the 'war on drugs' in Bolivia. For example, as well as '*la guerra contra las drogas*', '*la guerra contra el narcotráfico*' and '*la lucha contra las drogas*'.

blames the drug trade on producer countries. Formulating questions on this topic, then, posed challenges. In one sense, how I approached the topic would shape the interviewee's perception of my positionality. Additionally, there may have been a general reluctance to talk about corruption due to fears over incrimination of former colleagues, for example. It was important, then, that I was non-accusatorial in my questioning. In practice, this meant changing from direct questions on the subject to talking around 'corruption' and presenting alternative views for a response. The following are sample questions from my interview schedules.

Was there resistance in the Bolivian state to some elements of the US counterdrug approach?

Can you describe relations between the US Embassy and the Bolivian Government? I have read that the Embassy applied pressure on officials with presumed links to drug traffickers to force the Government to comply with US drug war goals.

Annex III proposed a greater role for the Bolivian Military in counterdrug operations. What was your opinion on this?

In general during this period, was it difficult for the Bolivian Government to avoid contact with the illicit sphere? For example, cocaine dollars had penetrated the national economy.

Can you describe relations with the DEA? From my previous interviews, several US officials stated that operational details were often withheld from UMOPAR until the last minute for fear that they would be leaked. How would you react to this?

Despite these measures, at times, the mood of the interview would change as discussion moved into this area. One interviewee refused to discuss accusations against former colleagues, while others seemed uncomfortable and had little to contribute on the topic. Of course, these individuals may simply have been unwilling to make statements on such an ambiguous issue. At other times, interviewees responded in interesting ways to the issue. For example, some drew on conspiracy theories of US involvement in the trade and/or brought the discussion back to democratisation and development. Although it cannot be said definitively what the effects of more direct questioning would have been on my interviews, this strategy helped to establish my identity as an unbiased, credible researcher, and contributed to a collaborative interview dynamic.

3.2.3 The Researcher-Researched Relationship

I applied my amended interview methodology in Bolivia: semi-structured interviews, drawing on elements of the oral history tradition. As stated previously, there were commonalities between the interviews in terms of their form, but different themes were present. For example, where discrediting of the ‘war on drugs’ acted as a present-day contextualising factor in the US, Bolivian interviewees often related their accounts back to critiques of the Morales administration. The rise of a former *cocalero* to the presidency has brought with it substantial changes to Bolivia’s counterdrug approach; chief among them, a diminished role for the US. Some interviewees believed Bolivia’s problems with the trade had heightened under Morales, with suggestions that the administration had little interest in addressing the issue. Former-Under-Secretary for Alternative Development (1990-1993) Jose Salinas made an argument along these lines.

I would say that there are many people from this government linked with drug trafficking. Nothing is said about it, no-one uncovers anything, because they are well protected, right? (. . .) Furthermore, during the past few years, the Bolivian government... Evo’s government... has expelled the DEA, who controlled (the trade); they’ve expelled USAID, so there are now no alternative development programs, no American programs. There are no government programs of in the Trópico now, right? These programs have died. This has facilitated also more people entering drug production, because there was control and now there is no control. The government says, ‘yes, the police are going to control it’, but this is simply a screen. Drugs continue to be produced. (Salinas interview, 2014)

There was also more general criticism of Morales. For example, former-President Jaime Paz Zamora argued that Morales’ confrontational approach with the US had been to the detriment of Bolivia, undoing a free trade agreement his government had put in place.¹⁰

The other Andean countries, when they saw that we were negotiating (a free trade agreement) with the US, were brought into the negotiation and hence it became an Andean Initiative. But the idea came from Bolivia. (.

¹⁰ Paz Zamora was referring to the APTA agreement, struck as part of the negotiations over the Andean Initiative.

. . .) The paradox now is that Ecuador, Peru and Colombia still, I think, continue to benefit from (that agreement), but not Bolivia, because Evo Morales manufactured a fight with Obama and (so) they refused free entry to the American market. This is the paradox we have now. (Paz Zamora interview, 2014)

Such critiques served as favourable comparisons to the political records of these actors. Many accepted the flaws of past counterdrug policies and their inability to resist US pressure. Criticising Morales helped to mediate these aspects of their account, hinting at the consequences of an alternative course of action. In the examples above: ‘development efforts failed to make much progress in the Chapare, but the problem has worsened in their absence’; and ‘the US did impose drug war policies on Bolivia, but my administration extracted valuable concessions’. These beliefs and explanations provided justification for their own role in the ‘war on drugs’. My amended interview methodology helped to plug into these interpretations; uncovering the relationship between narrative, history and present-day context, and how these are used in self-representation (James, 2006: 86).

These types of justifications had wider implications. Interlocutors were working out their own understandings of events, but they were also trying to convince me as ‘the researcher’ of their point of view. Robben (1995) conceptualises this process as ‘ethnographic seduction’: the personal defences and social strategies used by participants (consciously or unconsciously) to ‘seduce’ the researcher into adopting their worldview. These include both verbal and non-verbal devices. For example, Robben (Ibid: 90-91) describes the rhetorical skills of ex-members of the Argentine junta in his interviews: ‘appealing both to my common sense and to the dispassionate logic of reason that is supposed to be the hallmark of a scientist.’ As part of this, these officials had assessed the identity of their interviewer, not only as ‘scientist’, but in terms of his gender, nationality, class and ideology. More subtle influences were also at play: the palatial setting of the Buenos Aires Officers Club, the good manners of the officials and their charming and charismatic demeanour. The collective effect of these factors is to lead the researcher away from their intended focus, subverting their understanding of the phenomena under study ‘by dissuading an inquiry beyond appearance’ (Ibid: 85). Ex-members of the junta, then,

advanced technocratic explanations for their application of ‘dirty war’ tactics, grounded in the exceptional context of warfare. These ‘logical’, dispassionate arguments did not address the morality of such actions, nor their devastating consequences. Through their presentation, Robben’s interlocutors sought to change the parameters of the issue, and the standards against which they should be judged.

I became more attuned to these dynamics during my Bolivian fieldwork. In adopting elements of oral history, interpretations, justifications and the ways in which interviewees projected a particular agenda were already an important part of my methodology. However, I began to question what effect they had on the researcher-researched relationship and, as a result, the conduct of my interviews, underlying assumptions and interpretation of the data. For example, many of my interviewees were charismatic and effective speakers, with long careers in the public eye. They had extensive experience (greater than mine) of interviews and presenting their arguments. The framing of issues in the discourse of democratisation and development was part of this, as were references to the country’s authoritarian past. These aspects of their account gave them and their accounts added weight, appealed to my sense of empathy over events in Bolivian history, and mediated critiques of Bolivian government corruption. For example, former-Interior Minister Guillermo Capobianco (1989-1991) outlined his generation’s efforts to establish democracy during the era of military authoritarianism.

I studied in Chile for one year with a scholarship from Christian Democratic Party... I started in the Christian Democrats; my mother was a fervent Catholic. So I went for one year to Santiago, Chile. After, I spent almost three year in Belgium, at the University of Leuven, where future leaders went to be formed in Christian Democrat ideology. This was in the 1970s. (. . .) So we were there for there for nearly three years, before we returned in secret to fight militarism, three years underground, clandestine against the dictatorship of General Banzer. We defeated Banzer. (. . .) The topic of drugs wasn’t a priority for us. It wasn’t. Transforming the country was. That the country enters a transition from the dictatorship of Banzer to democracy: this was our priority. Political stability, economic stability, these were our priorities and the topic of drug was nothing... an important thing, but as I say, it wasn’t what I judge... it wasn’t the priority. There were other more important things in that moment. (Capobianco interview, 2014)

The process of constructing 'my position' may have contributed to this, as the interlocutor subconsciously tailors their account to the perceived identity of the interviewer. Linking back to oral history methodology, the account obtained is shaped by the interview situation itself, of which the researcher-researched relationship is a crucial component.

Other social cues were also part of this 'seduction'. In one case, the interviewee sent his driver to pick me up and gave me a tour of his grand residence in the countryside. In other cases, 'trophy' were presented in the form of photos of the interviewees with famous people, a 'man of the year' award from a Bolivian magazine, and a presidential letter. These acts certainly demonstrated the courtesy of interviewees and their willingness to aid me with my research. However, they may also be viewed as an effort to impress upon me the importance and seriousness of the participant; part of a subconscious effort to sway me to their worldview. Although my aim was to facilitate the interviewee's own understanding of events, the interview was also an opportunity for the interviewee to convince me of their interpretation.

This insight challenges the idea of the 'powerless researcher' in researching elites. This is prevalent in the literature on elite interviewing, where 'interviewing up' is assumed to pose distinct challenges to 'those encountered in studying down' (Desmond, 2004: 265). For example, the researcher is overly dependent on a narrow elite group for access and cooperation,¹¹ and elites will use this 'power' to control the interview/researcher. This conception of the researcher-researched relationship, though, underplays the various facets of the researcher's power. As 'researcher', I was viewed to be the keeper of the historical record, with power to shape how a wider audience saw the interviewee and their role in events. In other words, these informants had a stake in making me adopt their 'truths': 'we will retell their stories and through our investiture as scientists provide them with the halo of objectivity that our

¹¹ The prospect of denial of access, both at the time and for future research, places the researcher in a difficult position (Aldred, 2008: 894). He/she may be reluctant to be overly critical or challenging for fear of impeding their research.

academic stature entails' (Robben, 1995: 97). In addition to this, I defined the field of interest, including and excluding certain actors from my analysis. Furthermore, having given their account, the participant has little control over how their responses will be interpreted and integrated into the researcher's thesis (Morris, 2009: 214). Indeed, many individuals requested I check back before using direct, attributable quotes.¹² This was arguably a defensive mechanism, aimed reclaiming a degree of control and contradicting the idea of the 'powerless researcher' (Desmond, 2004: 265-266). Relations of power, then, were fluid. In this way, the researcher is neither inherently powerless or empowered (Aldred, 2008: 892; Smith, 2006: 650).

3.3 Conclusion

In conclusion, my methodology and experience of fieldwork had numerous implications for analysis. For example, this shaped my shift to oral history methods, my focus on elite interpretations of state-narco networks, and the historical perspective of the thesis. These elements of my approach were key to several of my original findings. Through exposition of these aspects of the research process, the chapter contributes to methodological knowledge, including interviewing elites and oral history, and research on political sensitive topics and illicit practices.

Finally, the juxtaposition of US and Bolivian fieldwork had a profound impact on my approach by clarifying the contrast between distinct US and Bolivian accounts of the 'war on drugs' and differing interpretations of state-narco interactions. During both periods of fieldwork, I interviewed former political leaders and state officials on their experiences of the implementation of the Andean Initiative. There was often divergence between US and Bolivian interviewees on how they conceptualised problems and interpreted events. The former viewed the issue through the prism of the Drug War Paradigm, while the latter drew on discourse of development and the legacy of the Cold War. US interviewees, for example, typically explained Bolivian corruption through weak

¹² All participants who requested this courtesy were duly contacted. Each of them responded, and all were comfortable with the quotes being used with some minor corrections.

institutions, and/or personal enrichment/greed. These elements were also present in the accounts of Bolivian interviewees, but so too was the lineage of state-narco links from the authoritarian era to post-democratisation. The potential consequences of challenging such system for political order, the economy and, by extension, Bolivia's democratisation, figured highly in their accounts. As shown in Chapter 5, 6 and 7, these different discursive frameworks were used in the accounts of interlocutors. In adopting elements of an oral history methodology, my analysis draws out the diverging interpretations and meanings key actors have attached to the period: identifying competing narratives and US-Bolivian contestation around state-narco networks and the 'war on drugs'.

Chapter 4 | The Development of State-Narco Networks (1964-1989)

Authoritarian military government benefitted the development of Bolivia's cocaine economy. Shared interests were established between the state and the drug trade under the regime of René Barrientos in the 1960s, developing during the Banzer period and the cocaine boom of the 1970s, before reaching their zenith with García Meza (1980-1981). Regime leaders used rents from the cocaine trade to solidify patron-client relations and so engender the support of factions within the state and wider society. As such, they provided protection for the expansion of illicit enterprise in Bolivia. Forming variable patterns of state-narco networks, these stable modes of exchange contributed to stability in the drug trade. Drug traffickers sought accommodation with the state rather than conflict. Authoritarianism and US Cold War politics facilitated such systems, while Bolivia's clientelistic politics 'normalised' such practices. As opposed to representing state weakness, the drug arena was colonised and fostered by factions of the Bolivian state to advance particularistic interests.

Democratic transition in 1982 and evolving US foreign policy priorities in Bolivia threatened to dismantle the state-narco nexus. For example, institutionalisation of democratic norms of accountability and transparency would expose interlinkages between the state and the illicit sphere; the extension of the Drug War Paradigm would target corrupt officials. But despite these changing domestic and international dynamics, Bolivia's state-narco networks adapted and survived. As the old political order and its factional coalitions fractured, so too did their attendant state-narco complexes. These networks became atomised as power became more diffuse. Drug traffickers sought patron-client bonds, not only with elements of the military, but an emboldened police institution and the political parties. Local actors mediated and circumvented counterdrug policies imposed from above, resisting the onset of US control. Clientelistic and authoritarian practices, including police and military autonomy, continued into the post-transition period; indicative of Bolivia's uneven

democracy. While incompatible with a democratic rule of law, these networks formed part of Bolivia's fragile political equilibrium.

In this chapter, I trace the development of Bolivia's state-narco networks using both existing literature and primary document sources. This serves as important context for later chapters, and demonstrates the interaction between Bolivia's historical trajectory and the coca-cocaine economy. As such, the chapter shows continuity and change in Bolivian state-narco networks from the authoritarian period to transition, and Cold War to Drug War. This analysis also provides new insights into the relationship between the illicit economy and the state, such as the integration of emerging drug rents into long-standing clientelistic practices and their role in 'regulating' the drug trade, and the effects of international transformations on these relations. This historic overview thus spans: the Barrientos regime and its model of patron-client politics (1964-1969); Banzer's role in the cocaine boom of the 1970s (1971-1978); the 'cocaine-coup' of García Meza (1980-1981); and the post-transition governments of Siles Suazo (1982-1985) and Paz Estensorro (1985-1989). As part of this, key aspects of Bolivian history and their effects on the form and function of state-narco networks are examined. These include: the legacy of the 1952 Revolution, Cold War politics, democratisation in 1982, the advancement of neoliberal structural reforms under Paz Estensorro, and the emergence of the modern US 'war on drugs'. The evolving structure of the drug trade and its ties to the state are placed in the context of wider social, political and economic forces; moving beyond the conventional analyses of mainstream accounts of drugs.

4.1 Patron-Client Relations and the Barrientos Regime (1964-1969)

The Bolivian military was temporarily disbanded following the National Revolution of 1952. It had been a prominent political force throughout Bolivian history, but military leaders were swept aside by the populist *Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario* (MNR) and their allies (Dunkerley, 1984: 39). The new MNR government, led by Víctor Paz Estensorro (1952-1956), re-established

the institution and attempted to instil within it the values of the revolution.¹ This also meant diminishing its internal role through a radical overhaul of its personnel and funding. By the 1960s, though, the military had re-emerged as a potent, autonomous political actor (Malloy, 1977: 475).

As the divided MNR government struggled to resolve economic crisis and maintain societal support, Paz Estensorro (elected to serve his second term as president in 1960) looked to co-opt the military's political support through increased funding (Lehman, 1999: 149-50; Malloy & Gamarra, 1987: 95).² In so doing, the MNR re-legitimised the military's political role. This was reinforced by increased US military aid to Bolivia. Reacting to the Cuban Revolution, President John F. Kennedy's Alliance for Progress and the new US National Security Doctrine supported an enhanced domestic role for the Bolivian Military; as supposed agents for development and a bulwark against Leftist influence. US foreign aid accounted for 20 per cent of Bolivian GDP by 1964, making Paz Estensorro's government reticent to challenge encroaching US influence (Field Jr., 2012: 149). The conditions were thus set for the military's return to government.

Supported by the Pentagon - at least tacitly - General René Barrientos³ headed a coup that took power from Paz Estensorro in November 1964 (Lehman, 1999: 141). With the MNR seemingly unable to resolve unrest from across sectors, including the country's crucial tin mining industry, Barrientos' regime promised to restore political order and suppress 'radical' elements within Bolivia. But in comparison to incoming military regimes in Brazil and Argentina, the Bolivian

¹ Mesa, et. al. (2008: 521) describes how the MNR sought to replicate the corporatist, one-party state model of the PRI in Mexico. In this sense, they asked the military to swear loyalty to the party, rather than the nation (or *la Patria*). This entailed restructuring, reappointment, and the establishment of a new officer corps. In the end, this same officer corps would get rid of the MNR, claiming they were 'saving the revolution'.

² Hernan Siles Suazo served as president between Paz Estensorro's two terms. Although generally anti-military, Siles Suazo also deployed the military to restore domestic order during his administration (Lehman, 1999: 150).

³ Barrientos had, in fact, run alongside Paz Estensorro on the MNR presidential ticket as vice-president. He held political ambitions, though, and maintained links to anti-MNR elements within the military and exploited US doubts over the viability of Paz Estensorro's leadership (Dunkerley, 1984: 114-119).

military was divided and lacked modernisation (Dunkerley, 1984: 120-122).⁴ Divisions existed along the military's role in national development and security, for example, as well as its relationship with the US (Morales, 1992b: 359). The Barrientos regime was personalistic, representing a faction within the institution rather than a unified military government.

In Bolivia's fragmented state and society,⁵ the regime relied on clientelistic relations to sustain itself in power (Malloy, 1977: 479).⁶ Lehman (1999: xii) argues that it has been one of the defining elements of Bolivian political culture, rooted in the country's history of exploitation and dependency. Barrientos thus formed the *Pacto Militar-Campesino* with the rural sector to establish a base of societal support. This committed the military to the protection of gains made by *campesinos* during the revolution, such as agrarian reform, in return for unwavering loyalty (Mitchell, 1977: 98). In addition to this, though, clientelism was used build factional coalitions within the state itself. Malloy & Gamarra (1987: 98) argue that 'given the dependent nature of political institutions, the real basis of executive and state power was military force.' Therefore, Barrientos' ability to engender the support of the military through patron-client ties was fundamental to his rule. The (re-)emerging coca-cocaine trade was incorporated into the government's clientelistic system.⁷

⁴ Although regionally, the Bolivian military was not unusual, as Pion-Berlin (2001: 24) argues: 'the typical Latin American military is a divided one, with officers clustered into factions that reside within or across services, functions, and ranks and embrace their own ideas.'

⁵ The Bolivian state lacked modernisation and strong centralisation, while different sectors were frequently in competition, e.g. rural peasants, landowners, urban middle-classes, business and organised labour (see Dunkerley, 1984).

⁶ Repression was also an important tool of governance for the Barrientos regime. Sectors who would not be co-opted through patronage, e.g. the Left, faced brutal repression. The June 1965 San Juan massacre of at least 87 miners and their family members, agitating for workers' rights, demonstrated the regime's willingness to use violence to hold power (Dunkerley, 1984: 148).

⁷ The coca-cocaine economy's history in Bolivia stretched back to the discovery of cocaine during the mid 19th century. US and European demand for cocaine medicines and consumer products, most notably Coca-Cola and Vin Mariani, transformed Bolivian coca into an international commodity (see Gootenberg, 2008).

4.1.1 The Nascent Coca-Cocaine Trade and Early State-Narco Networks

Compared to what was to come, Bolivia's coca-cocaine economy was relatively minor in the 1960s. Producers and traffickers were small-scale, disparate, and poorly integrated, while coca cultivation for illicit purposes was still at modest levels. The coca-cocaine trade, though, was growing, and Bolivia was at its centre. The turbulence of the immediate post-1952 period had allowed trafficking operations to take hold within the country (Gootenberg, 2012: 163-164). Allied to this, peasant migration to the Chapare coincided with the emergence of coca processing and trafficking operations in Santa Cruz and the Beni.⁸

Both of these latter phenomena were linked to the program of post-1952 land reform and the development of Bolivia's subtropical and lowland regions. In 1950, for example, the traditional coca zone of the Yungas near La Paz had accounted for 67 per cent of total Bolivian coca cultivation; by 1967, the Chapare had overtaken it and accounted for over half (Justiniano, et. al., 1991: 79). Although the total area of cultivation was steady during this period and remained primarily directed to the domestic market, larger yields in the Chapare (Ibid.) suggested that sizeable amounts of coca were being syphoned to processing labs. Some estimates indicated that around half of Bolivia's coca was being used for illicit purposes by 1962 (Gootenberg, 2008: 286). Meanwhile, the vast, remote Beni department provided cover for clandestine labs, and Santa Cruz increasingly became known as a hub for trafficking operations (Gootenberg, 2008: 286; Rodas M., 1996: 52).⁹ These areas had comparative advantages over the Yungas and the Chapare: their geography enabled traffickers to easily hide their production facilities and transport operations (Bascopé, 1982: 58-59). Local elites - cattle ranchers in the Beni and agri-business interests in Santa Cruz - also helped to foster the trade. With both groups benefitting from growth in

⁸ See Appendix D for a map of Bolivia.

⁹ Ernesto 'Che' Guevara's ill-fated *guerrilleros*, who based their operations in Ñancahuazú on the edge of the department of Santa Cruz, were first identified by a Bolivian police unit investigating reports of a possible cocaine smuggling operation (Salazar O., 2009: 246).

agricultural exports, they started to invest their profits in coca-cocaine ventures (Hargreaves, 1992: 57).

As coca-cocaine was a peripheral part of the national economy in the 1960s (Canelas O. & Canelas Z., 1983), the regime relied more heavily on other forms of patronage to sustain itself in power, such as its control over US military aid and the *Pacto Militar-Campesino*. Nevertheless, Barrientos utilised spoils from the drug trade in the creation of patron-client relationships. State-narco networks functioned through both benefit and the threat of sanction. The regime sought to solidify support within the state, primarily the military and the police,¹⁰ by distributing rents from the drug trade (Rodas M., 1996: 51). Barrientos encouraged supporters within these institutions to facilitate, and profit from, cocaine production in the departments of the Beni and Santa Cruz. As well as buying support, this form of patronage also gave Barrientos leverage over political actors. The benefits of continued support for the regime sat alongside the fear of being exposed as corrupt (Roncken, 1997a: 37).

Further to this, lands were granted to backers of government in Bolivia's eastern departments. Barrientos had courted the peasant sector and presented itself as being in line with one of the key principles of 1952 revolution: land reform. But rather than advancing the cause of agrarian reform for *campesinos*, the government awarded 'larger plots to fewer people in a more discrete exploitation of the statute for political ends' (Dunkerley, 1984: 132). As well as benefitting newly emerging agricultural elites, parcels of land in the Beni and Santa Cruz would be used by military officers to set-up processing labs and hidden landing strip (Thoumi, 2003: 120). These operated under the protection of the regime. As well as reinforcing support, these practices helped to create linkages between the state and the nascent drug trade. Relationships were formed which would develop alongside the growth of the coca-cocaine economy.

¹⁰ Quintana (2005: 57) argues that the police were subordinated to the military by Barrientos. This included changing their role, structure and depoliticising the institution. They were used by the military regime to repress societal opposition, under the National Security Doctrinal notion of fighting 'enemies of the state and public order' (Barrios M., 1994: 99).

During this period, the US was largely disinterested in Bolivia's drug issue (Brewin, 1990: 51; Gamarra, 1999a: 182). While the Federal Bureau of Narcotics (FBN) had noted Bolivia's growing role in the trade (Gootenberg, 2008: 276), Cold War goals dominated US foreign policy in the region. The US looked on military institutions throughout the Americas as partners against the spread of Soviet influence. The Bolivian military was no different and became closely tied to the US through funding and training provision. In 1963, for example, the entire senior class of the Bolivian military academy was trained in jungle warfare at the School of the Americas, while in the same year Bolivia had more graduates from the US Army Special Warfare School in Fort Bragg than any of its Latin American neighbours (Lehman, 1999: 151). Anecdotal evidence suggest that the Pentagon was willing to 'turn a blind eye' to the indiscretions of its anti-communist security partners in the South (Gamarra, 1999: 183). Members of the Bolivian Left, though, received different treatment. Exposing supposed links to the drug trade served to discredit opponents of US policy. For example, labour leader and then MNR vice-president Juan Lechín was subject to accusations of drug corruption from the US Embassy and Bolivia's right-wing press in 1961 (Gootenberg, 2008: 282-4). Whether accurate or not, the episode contributed to Lechín's isolation from the MNR and (temporary) withdrawal from Bolivian politics. As described above, this political tactic was adopted by Barrientos (Rodas M., 1996: 51); a method of control where the drug trade is used to manipulate perceived rivals.

Under the Barrientos regime, therefore, state-narco networks were folded into a clientelistic mode of governance. Snyder's (2006: 954) definition of joint-wealth extraction echoes with Bolivia's patron-client politics: 'informal bargains rooted in personal ties among rulers their cronies, and private elites.' Coca-cocaine rents were simply another source of patronage for Barrientos to distribute, designed to bind state factions to the regime. The threat of enforcement, i.e. exposing drug corruption, guarded against fragmentation of support. State institutions, the military and the police primarily, began to occupy this growing trade and so it became integrated into political structures. In the absence of accountability and transparency, Barrientos had few limits on the dispensation of patronage; even in the ostensibly illicit coca-cocaine economy. These

systems were relatively *ad hoc*, reflecting the nature of the trade at this time. As discussed in the next section, though, the growth and consolidation of the drug trade dovetailed with the deepening of Bolivia's state-narco networks.

4.2 *Banzerato* State-Narco Networks (1971-1978)

Barrientos was killed in a helicopter crash in April 1969,¹¹ sparking a scramble for power between 'array of personalistic and quasi-ideological' blocs within the military (Malloy & Gamarra, 1987: 99). Over a turbulent two year period, Left-leaning regimes headed by General Alfredo Ovando (Sep. 1969 - Oct. 1970) and then General Juan José Torres (Oct. 1970 - Aug. 1971) sought to consolidate their power. The military's conservative elements, though, united behind General Hugo Banzer. Supported by the middle-classes, fearful of the rise of the Left (Mesa, et. al., 2008: 547), Banzer staged a successful coup in August 1971. The period again demonstrated the factionalised nature of the Bolivian Military. Where Ovando and Torres had struggled to build a solid base of support, Banzer's regime achieved stability. Based on 'the manipulation of byzantine clientelistic networks' (Malloy & Gamarra, 1987: 103) and with US-backing,¹² Banzer held power for close to seven years.

The Banzer government shared characteristics with the Barrientos era. As part of this, the repression tactics favoured by Barrientos and other contemporary South American military governments were utilised. At times, these were turned against military rivals, but more frequently they were used to silence dissent from societal opponents, such as members of the Bolivian Left (see Dunkerley, 1984: 206). Banzer also used of drug rents as a form of patronage. The cocaine boom of the 1970s and the mid-decade collapse of international cotton prices, though, meant that coca-cocaine took on greater importance. Links between the 'licit' and 'illicit' spheres were extended, creating complex

¹¹ There were suspicions that Barrientos had been the victim of sabotage. Major Faustino Rico Toro, who would serve under the García Meza regime and was at the centre of political scandal during the Paz Zamora administration, was held on charges related to the incident, but subsequently released (Dunkerley, 1984: 156).

¹² Banzer had strong connections to the US, serving previously as military attaché in Washington and training at the School of the Americas (Lehman, 1999: 165).

state-narco networks. Crucial to these dynamics were Banzer's close ties to Santa Cruz.

Bolivia's eastern departments had become the engine of the national economy over the first few years of the regime. In addition to the region's booming nationalised oil and gas industry, agricultural exports grew rapidly. Although the development of the eastern lowlands had been initiated by the MNR and supported by US assistance in the 1950s (Lehman, 1999: 185), Banzer made the region a focus of government policy. Where Barrientos had formed the *Pacto Militar-Campesino* as a source of societal support, Banzer - as a *Cruceño* himself - looked to the emerging agri-business elite (Rodas M., 1996: 54). As such, the regime sought patron-client relations with this group: 'not with a class as such, but with individuals and groups who became his personal retainers' (Malloy & Gamarra, 1987: 104). The growth of agricultural exports was encouraged by favourable fiscal policies, subsidies, development aid, and cheap credit. For example, the state-backed *Banco Agrícola de Bolivia* (BAB) was a key financier for Santa Cruz-based business. Between 1972 and '77, loans to this sector constituted 67 per cent of the BAB's total lending (Conaghan & Malloy, 1994: 57). Furthermore, Banzer's government ramped-up the Barrientos practice of exploiting land reform laws as a form of patronage (Rodas M., 1996: 55).

Santa Cruz's new prosperity extended beyond the landowners transforming themselves into large-scale agricultural producers, to the private banks financing expansion and the hallmark commercial businesses of a boom town, such as car dealerships and import houses (UDAPE, 1990). As noted previously, some of the region's excess wealth was already being diverted to coca-cocaine ventures in the 1960s. However, the collapse of cotton prices in 1975-1976 marked a watershed in the Santa Cruz elite's relationship to the coca-cocaine economy (Ramos S., 1980). High prices for cotton had brought large investments in the crop, leading to an increase of 70 per cent in the total area under cultivation between 1972 and 1975. This extension was largely fuelled by loans from the BAB. When market prices fell dramatically, therefore, both producers and the bank were left in financial difficulty. The coca-cocaine trade offered a solution.

Increasing demand for Andean cocaine in the US and lucrative returns on investments meant that many cotton producers became involved in the drug trade (Malamud-Goti, 1992: 10).¹³ In the second half of the 1970s, the coca-cocaine economy would grow exponentially in Santa Cruz and the neighbouring Beni department as agri-business elites turned their attention to illicit enterprise. Large increases in coca cultivation in the Chapare, which was crucial to the growth of the drug trade in Bolivia, were indicative of this trend. By the time Banzer left office in 1978, the area of coca cultivation in Bolivia had increased from 5,340 hectares in 1971 to 18,860 hectares, with the Chapare accounting for almost 80 per cent of this final total (Justiniano, et. al., 1991: 79). During this period, ‘the illegal industry grew and developed a tight nexus with Santa Cruz’s elite and the military’ (Aguilo, 1992: 52).

4.2.1 From Cotton to Cocaine

Bolivian journalist René Bascopé (1982: Ch. 3) suggests intimate state involvement in the shift from cotton to cocaine. Bascopé claims that the regime was warned of the impending fall in cotton prices by the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) and so proceeded to carry out a detailed study of the coca-cocaine market as a possible substitute. This included the identification of current producers and traffickers, investigation of production methods and access to precursors, and planning of trafficking routes. The plan was then put into action in alliance with members of the *Asociación de Productores de Algodón* (ADEPA - Cotton Producers Association). Lands of ADEPA members north of Santa Cruz were used to set-up new processing labs and landing strips, while the BAB continued to provide credit, this time, to directly finance the drug trade (Canelas O. & Canelas Z., 1983: 130; Lee III, 1991: 119; Malamud-Goti, 1992: 72). This analysis would suggest the development of the coca-cocaine industry was largely state-led during this period. Considering this through the lens of Banzer’s clientelistic mode of governance, the regime sought to exploit coca-cocaine revenues to maintain patron-client relations with agri-business elites.

¹³ Lehman (1999: 186) states that some cotton producer instead turned to sugar production. Towards the end of the 1970s, though, a fall in this market meant that these producers also began to invest in coca-cocaine.

As well as making up for shortfalls in economic growth and loan defaults caused by plummeting cotton prices, coca-cocaine rents served to underpin an important societal base of regime support.

Bascopé (1982: 90-91) argues that this ADEPA-Santa Cruz operation constituted one of three geographical axes of the Bolivia coca-cocaine trade at this time. In addition to the state planning and financial backing described above, ADEPA's shift into cocaine was supplemented by personal links between state actors and traffickers. Most notably, Roberto Suárez Gómez - *el Rey de la Cocaína* (the King of Cocaine) - was well-connected to Bolivia's elite circles (Gamarra, 1999b: 176). Suárez came from an 'aristocratic' Bolivian family, who had made their fortune in rubber around the turn of the nineteenth century. They had historic ties to the military stretching back to Bolivia's 1902 war with Brazil (Levy, 2012: Ch. 1). Suárez was first cousin to Colonel Luís Arce Gómez; later dubbed García Meza's 'Minister, but at this stage, still establishing his connections to the drug trade. He had also been gifted lands by Banzer (Aguilo, 1992:251). A network of shared interest was formed through such personal links: patron-client relations running between state and economic elites. Other prominent landowners in the ADEPA-Santa Cruz axis contributed to this network, such as Banzer's brother, Wily Banzer Ojopi, who was reputed to have made the transition from cotton to cocaine (Ibid.).

The second axis of the coca-cocaine trade was centred in the Beni, and focused more on transportation than coca processing. The Medellín Cartel had become a major force in the Andean coca-cocaine economy, buying-up sizeable amounts of Bolivian coca paste to feed their supply chain to the US (Gamarra, 1999b: 176). Local traffickers, such as Suárez, developed relationships with counterparts in Colombia. Light-aircraft, though, were unable to make the non-stop flight from Santa Cruz to the southern Colombian town of Leticia - the entry point for coca paste to Colombia (Dunkerley, 1984: 316). They were forced to make stop-overs in the Beni. These operations were facilitated by the department's sparse population, remoteness and thousands of hidden landing strips. As a result,

Suárez's home town of Santa Ana de Yacuma became an important centre for Bolivian trafficking operations.¹⁴

Military allies of the Banzer government also benefitted from the Beni's growing importance to the Andean coca-cocaine trade. Redistribution of lands had been accelerated under Banzer, and many military officers had been granted lands in the Beni (Rodas M., 1996: 55; Bascopé, 1982: 76). Such officers, working alongside local land-owning elites (Hargreaves, 1992: 58), were able to extract rents for use of their land as a logistical stop-off point for trafficker flights. Their connections to the government guarded against external interference. As the coca-cocaine trade grew, several officers made the transition into drug trafficking (Hargreaves, 1992: 110). More formal institutional involvement was also alleged. Paraparáu, a privately owned cattle farm, was taken over by René Barrientos in 1966 and later inherited by *la Corporación de las Fuerzas Armadas para el Desarrollo Nacional* (COFADENA) - the development arm of the Bolivian military set-up in 1972. COFADENA became implicated in processing and trafficking operations at Paraparáu. Commander of the powerful Second Army Corps of Santa Cruz, Hugo Echeverría, was rumoured to have oversight over this operation (Bascopé, 1982: 63).

The third geographical axis of Bolivia's coca-cocaine trade was based on the border area between the departments of Cochabamba and Santa Cruz. It had quietly emerged around 1977 as an important producer of coca paste (Ibid: 92). This group was believed to be composed of traditional large landowners, and based in bonds of kinship (Dunkerley, 1984: 317). Here as well, elements of the axis were linked to the military, e.g. prominent trafficker, Willy Sandóval Morón, was an advisor to Arce Gómez (Bascopé, 1982: 95). These types of interactions - along all three axes - would suggest that drug rents had become entrenched in the Bolivian state, forming a system of patronage to reinforce the authority of the Banzer government.

¹⁴ The 'King of Cocaine' exploited his twin lands in Santa Cruz and the Beni to extend his business.

While in other drug producer/transit nations, the existence of distinct axes of drug trafficking might be associated with competition and violence, in Bolivia, relations were cordial and cooperative. This breaks with mainstream accounts of Latin American narco-violence. These groups avoided violent confrontation with each other, preferring collaboration. Various explanations have been proposed for this, e.g. the role of personal ties and the closeness of Bolivia's elites (Rodas M., 1996: 217); cultural factors, i.e. the influence of Bolivian 'Indian society', which is considered to be less violent and seeks peaceful resolution to conflict (Thoumi, 2003: 250); and/or profits were enhanced by cooperation, hence the avoidance of competition. The function of state-narco networks, though, can also be added to this list. The account presented above suggests that the state, more specifically the regime and its military allies, had a large degree of control over the operation of the drug trade. As such, trafficking was subsumed into a centralised political structure and a level of political order was maintained.

The restructuring of the drug trade along these three axes was part of this: streamlining state-narco interactions. Over the course of the decade, existing small-scale producers were marginalised by state-linked trafficker networks: losing their land, absorbed into the new axes, arrested or assassinated (Bascopé, 1982: 60). The consolidation of the Bolivian trade by state-narco networks was also accelerated by the consolidation of trafficking routes and cocaine processing by Colombian export syndicates (Gootenberg, 2008: 306). In effect, the Cartels turned the Andean coca-cocaine economy from 'mom and pop'-type operations into a multinational, corporate business. Bolivian traffickers were vertically integrated into expanding Colombian transit chains. Snyder & Martínéz (2009: 256) note that this kind of consolidation eases systems of rent extraction, by reducing the number of actors and creating more certain transactions. As such, the colonisation of the drug trade by the state and the consolidation of its structure helped to create more stable modes of joint-wealth extraction.

4.2.2 A Note of Caution

As discussed in Chapter 3, there is a certain degree of uncertainty around the veracity of claims on the nature of state-narco interactions. Aspects of Bascopé's thesis outlined above are certainly open to challenge. First, his journalistic account is based largely on informant and second-hand accounts, which may be embellished and/or distorted by rumour. Additionally, Thoumi (2003: 119) casts doubt on one of Bascopé's key claims, stating that it was highly unlikely that the IADB would have had the capacity to predict, years in advance, the dramatic fall in cotton prices. As such, the claim that the state actively led a process of substitution - cotton for cocaine - may be called into question. While Dunkerley (1984: 315) gives credence to Bascopé's three axes assessment of the Bolivian drug trade in the 1970s, he takes the position that incontrovertible evidence 'to prove a concrete policy of unqualified state backing and patronage under Banzer' is absent'.

But whether one accepts the theory of a centrally planned state-led expansion of the coca-cocaine economy or not, it is difficult to refute the development of state-narco links during Banzer's regime. Thoumi (2003: 351) argues that Bolivia's authoritarianism, overtly-political military institution and small elite meant that 'the illegal drug industry had to involve people close to the top of the power structure to operate successfully'. In other words, the significant expansion of any industry in Bolivia - even an illicit one - would not have escaped the attention of Banzer's military authoritarian government. At the very least, the trade would have required the general ambivalence of the regime, occasional backing and high-level co-conspirators in order to function (Dunkerley, 1984: 315). In this way, state-narco networks formed one facet of Banzer's clientelistic mode of governance. This analysis demonstrates the integration of the illicit economy into the political complexes of Bolivian military authoritarian government. The stability of these modes of exchanges was a factor in the largely non-violent, stable Bolivian coca-cocaine economy. These findings thus challenge conventional analyses of drugs linking the illicit trades with state weakness and violence.

4.3 The 'Cocaine-Coup': García Meza's Regime (1980-1981)

The Banzer regime ran into problems similar to those experienced by other military authoritarian governments in the region. Economic mismanagement of key resources, such as tin and oil, and profligate government spending had led to a ramping-up of foreign debt. In the absence of legitimacy at the ballot box, the delivery of economic development and modernisation was viewed as a substitute by authoritarian regimes of the period (Loveman & Davis, 1997: 8). By 1978, though, it was apparent that economic growth achieved under Banzer was built on insecure foundations (Lehman, 1999: 168). In addition to this, suppressed popular sectors began to assert political demands. This included the labour movement, the peasant sector and political parties from across the spectrum (Rodas M., 1996: 65). While coca-cocaine had acted as an important tool in the maintenance of certain patron-client relations, the regime lacked the political 'legitimacy' of a wide-base societal support. Even within the military itself, support for Banzer was less stable than it appeared, as factions of officers pursued their own political ambitions (Malloy & Gamarra, 1987: 108). This would suggest that the government's control over drug rents was also insecure, i.e. allies and rivals could pursue rent extraction independently of the regime. Furthermore, the government's international patron changed tack. Jimmy Carter was elected to the US presidency in 1977 and took action to advance human rights and democracy in the Americas. As part of this, Banzer was pressured to open-up the political system (Gamarra, 1999a: 186).

The government's efforts to hold onto power, while satisfying both US demands and those from Bolivian society backfired; leading to a period of political contestation. Banzer's chosen successor, General Juan Pereda Asbún, was elected in limited elections in July 1978, but was unable to sustain the regime (Lehman, 1999: 170). Two year of political instability ensued, with further elections failing to provide a decisive result and the military continuing to flex its political muscle. Finally, elections in June 1980 delivered a clear win for *Unidad Democrática y Popular* (UDP) - an alliance of Leftist political parties

headed by Hernan Siles Suazo.¹⁵ This was met with opposition from a faction of right-wing military officers, led by General Luís García Meza and his close ally Colonel Luís Arce Gómez. They rejected the new government, calling on familiar themes of South American military authoritarianism, e.g. saving *la Patria* from internal ‘Castroite’ enemies (Dunkerley, 1984: 290). As part of this, rumours circulated of CIA involvement in the overthrow of the leftist UDP (Opinión, 1993). Working with Argentine Military advisors, and Nazi war criminal Klaus Barbie¹⁶ and his mercenary paramilitary group *los Novios de la Muerte* (the Bridegrooms of Death), García Meza executed a coup in July 1980. In Bolivia’s recurring cycle of coup d’état, though, this one stood-out as the first planned and funded with the aid of drug traffickers.

In building support for his coup, García Meza looked to exploit links to the drug trade. As detailed above, close ties had developed between the coca-cocaine economy and elements of the Bolivian state during the Banzer regime. Arce Gómez, in particular, had become deeply involved in the drug trade.¹⁷ For example, his light-aircraft business was used to transport cocaine (Hargreaves, 1992: 107); and, as first cousin to Roberto Suárez, he had important associations at the top of Bolivia’s drug clans. General Hugo Echeverría, a rival of García Meza, reportedly had the backing of individuals within the Beni axes of the drug trade. But García Meza was able to call on the support of Arce Gómez and, by extension, the rents of the Santa Cruz-ADEPA and Beni axes. Reports suggest that this caused other high-ranking military officials to fall in behind García Meza as leader of the new junta (Aquí, 1980).

¹⁵ Jaime Paz Zamora’s *el Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria* (MIR) was part of this alliance. Paz Zamora was chosen to serve as vice-president.

¹⁶ Barbie was an officer in the Nazi SS. He committed atrocities in Lyon during WWII, but escaped to Bolivia after the war, reportedly with the help of the CIA who considered him a useful asset. There he became linked to the Bolivian Military, acting in an advisory role. Barbie took an active role in recruiting mercenaries for the paramilitary group *los Novios de la Muerte*, largely drawn from European Fascist groups (Hargreaves, 1992: 109). He was extradited to France during the Siles Suazo government in 1983, and convicted of crimes against humanity (McFarren & Iglesias, 2013),

¹⁷ García Meza was also rumoured to have his own processing facilities, built on lands gifted to him during the Banzer regime (Thoumi, 2003: 251).

García Meza distributed patronage in the form of drug rents around the military institution. For example, it was reported that one month prior to the coup, the commanding officers of the Cochabamba and Oruro military division, and the Tarapacá Regiment in La Paz were each paid US\$50,000 in return for their support (Leclerc & Fallareau, 1981b). Patron-client relations were also cemented by allowing military officials to extract their own drug rents. In addition to allies such as Rico Faustino Rico Toro and Ariel Coca, Hugo Echeverría also maintained his interests in the trade (Morales, 1992b: 356). Dividing lines between state actors and the drug trade became evermore ill-defined.

Allied to this, Bolivia's drug traffickers played an active role in the installation of García Meza. Fearful of the potential business implications of open, democratic government, traffickers provided financial backing for García Meza. Suggestions that the incoming UDP was consulting with the DEA to increase counterdrug cooperation with the US seemed to confirm the suspicions of the illicit trade (Dunkerley, 1984: 320). It was reported that Roberto Suárez convened Bolivia's top drug traffickers several months before the coup to pull their resources and support for García Meza and Arce Gómez (Hargreaves, 1992: 108). Echoing National Security Doctrine, Bolivian traffickers justified their actions in nationalistic tones, claiming to be saving Bolivia from dangerous leftist influence and political chaos (Canelas O. & Canelas Z., 1983: 141). Leaving aside questions of the sincerity of their stated aims, the promised benefits of a pro-cocaine regime were undeniable. As one US State Department official commented, 'for the first time, the mafia has bought itself a government' (Sivak, 2001: 243).

These organisations, though, did not pose a direct threat to the state. Bolivian traffickers, such as Suárez, seemed to have little interest in challenging the state, unlike their counterparts in Colombia, but rather attempted to work through existing power structure. They viewed themselves as 'functional economic actors' and, working through elite networks, pursued 'a strategy of peaceful coexistence with the state' (Roncken, 1997a: 37). In this sense, the interests of traffickers entered into the calculations of would-be regime leaders,

such as García Meza. Drug rents could be diverted to political rivals, as in the case of Echeverría noted above. The new government thus called on its personal ties to these traffickers and co-opted their support with the promise of protection. This included the elimination of competitors, allowing Suárez and his associates to consolidate their control of Bolivia's coca-cocaine economy (Gamarra, 1999: 178; Hargreaves, 1992: 109).¹⁸ Actions against such trafficker were also an attempt to placate the US, demonstrating the regime's supposed anti-drug credentials. These dynamics created 'a virtual symbiosis between drug trafficking and the state' (Lee III, 1991: 199).

Aside from adding to personal wealth of García Meza and his cronies, drug money was used to buy-off potential challengers. For example, García Meza paid out over US\$2 million in bribes to 26 military officers in June 1981 to stave-off a coup plot brewing in the institution (Dunkerley, 1984: 334-335). This also extended to elements of the police, who were rewarded for their role in repression with drug rents (Quintana, 2005: 60). In addition to this, the regime utilised drug rents to fund *Los Novios de la Muerte*. The paramilitary group sat outside of the military and were formed on the advice of Barbie and the regime's Argentine military advisers. This reflected García Meza's uneven control of the Bolivian military, incorporating elements whose backing of the regime was low and/or contingent. *Los Novios'* purpose was to carry out repression and intimidation against the 'enemies' of the regime; importing a strand of Argentina's 'dirty war' tactics. At times, this meant eliminating rival trafficking organisations as part of the consolidation process described earlier. More often, *los Novios* took part in abuses against opponent societal groups. In January 1981, for example, the regime was responsible for the torture and murder of nine unarmed MIR members in the Sopocachi neighbourhood of La Paz (Hargreaves, 1992: 111).

¹⁸ Gamarra (1999b) discusses claims from former-DEA agent, turned author Michael Levine, that Suárez headed *la Corporación*: an organisation of traffickers, based out of Santa Ana, who had established a monopoly over the Bolivian coca-cocaine economy. Levine argued that this organisation was transnational in scope and produced pure cocaine, but successfully avoided the limelight. This contradicts much of the literature, which asserts that the Colombian Cartels were the primary players in the Andean cocaine trade during this period. Furthermore, expressing the view of the US Embassy of this era, former Deputy Chief of Mission Alexander F. Watson (1997: 254) stated that, 'the Colombians probably ran almost everything, one way or the other. What they didn't run, they tolerated.' At the very least, it seems to be the case that Bolivia's traffickers were loosely aligned and cooperated in some respects.

4.3.1 Changing US Priorities

Such notorious human rights abuses, alongside the state-narco nexus, provoked a strong reaction from the US. For example, President Carter had cut-off all relations with Bolivia shortly after the coup (Gamarra, 1999a: 186). Despite the support of other military regimes in the region, the patronage of the US still mattered greatly. The loss of US\$125 million in US assistance was keenly felt, as was the withdrawal of US\$40 million in Venezuelan assistance as part of the country's exclusion from the Andean pact (Lehman, 1999: 177). The regime's actions had turned Bolivia into an international pariah just as it was struggling under the weight of massive foreign debt. García Meza gambled on a Reagan victory in the upcoming US presidential elections, hoping for an endorsement of his government's anti-communist stance. It was reported that he had been encouraged by members of the DoD mission in Bolivia, as well as US Senator Jesse Helms, that US assistance would be restored once Reagan came to power in January 1981 (Gamarra, 1999a: 186). Although Reagan did return to a Hawkish, Cold War policy in Central America, the regime remained isolated: 'even the Reagan administration regarded the Bolivian military as unsuitable protégés' (Whitehead, 2001a: 32).

Reagan refused to lift sanctions, primarily due to the issue of drug corruption. The DEA played a key role in highlighting the state-narco links, circulating evidence and rumours to the media (Lehman, 1999: 177). For example, in February 1981, a *60 Minutes* TV special on the 'Minister of Cocaine' - Arce Gómez - brought the spectre of a 'narco-state' into American homes. A shift in US foreign policy emphasis was beginning to occur, with the 'war on drugs' re-emerging as an important theme in US politics (see Chapter 2). The DEA helped to drive this agenda. Under pressure from an external international actor, the Bolivian government thus incurred penalties for state involvement in illicit activity (Snyder, 2006: 950). Elements within the Bolivian Military were dismayed at these developments and the sully of the institution's reputation (Dunkerley, 1984: 329). Institutionalists thus united to remove García Meza in

August 1981, and slowly plan the institution's retreat from the political sphere and a transition to democracy (Malloy & Gamarra, 1987: 114).¹⁹

The García Meza regime and Reagan's slow adoption of the 'war on drugs', therefore, represents a watershed moment for US-Bolivian relations; where Drug War substitutes for Cold War in the logic of US foreign policy engagement in Bolivia. As stated previously, Cold War goals had dominated in Bolivia. The DEA (and its previous incarnations) had been a marginal actor, and the US was willing to accept allies with interests in the illicit sphere. Under Banzer, for example, evidence of state-narco networks was largely ignored.²⁰ Instead, under-resourced, token efforts to improve US-Bolivian counterdrug collaboration during Banzer's government supposedly proved anti-drug resolve (e.g. see Dunkerley, 1984: 318; Gamarra, 1999a: 185). By contrast, post-transition civilian governments would see US-Bolivian relations consumed by the 'war on drugs'.

4.4 Post-Transition Atomised State-Narco Interactions (1982-1989)

The previous analysis maps the evolution of state-narco networks, from the Barrientos period to the 'cocaine-coup'. The form and function of these interactions were shaped by changing social, political and economic dynamics, and the development of Bolivia's coca-cocaine economy. Growing demand for cocaine in the North was key to the expansion of Bolivia's drug trade and the increased rents that were available as a result. These became an important part of the clientelistic systems which sustained military authoritarian governments. Typically, the distribution of rents to factional rivals within the state - most crucially, the military - acted as a governing tool of regime leaders. Under Banzer, this was extended to societal actors, as agri-business elites moved into

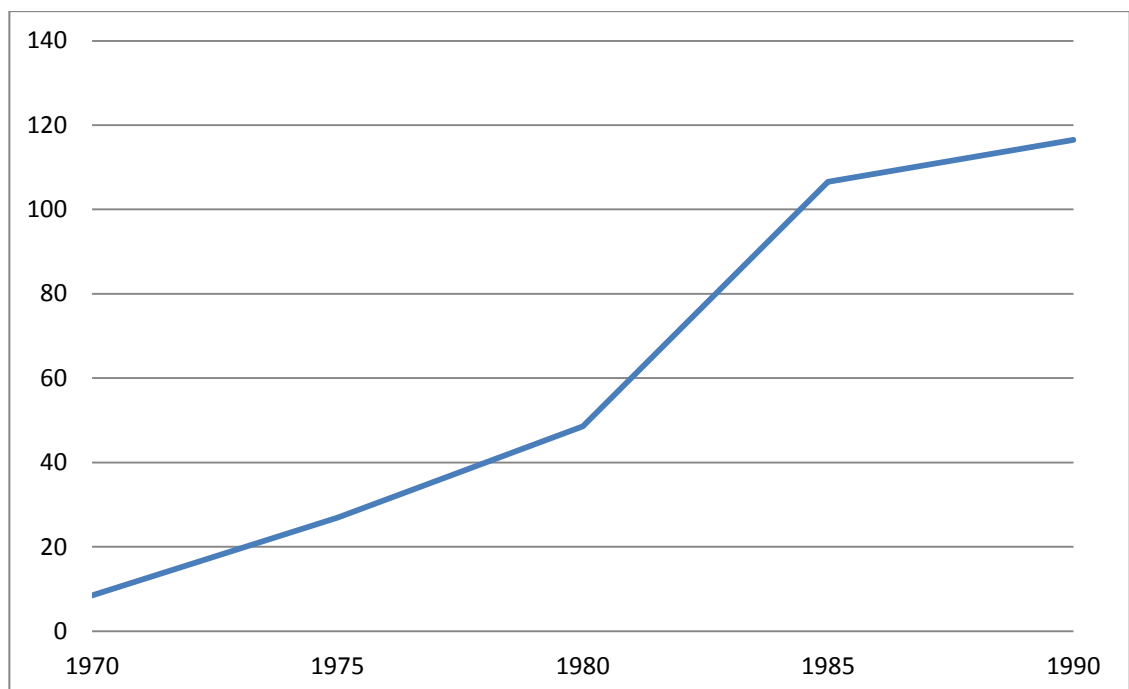
¹⁹ In addition to this, Dunkerley (1984: 326) argues that, although the regime's links to cocaine hastened its downfall, 'more familiar factors' also played their part: 'working-class resistance, regional discontent, a generalised sentiment of anti-militarism, and seemingly endless downward spiral of the economy'.

²⁰ This was also the case with the General's personal connections to the drug trade, during his rule and into the 1980s. This included drug scandals involving Banzer's wife, children, family and associates, and even the discovery of a trafficking operation on his ranch in the Beni in 1980 (see Thoumi, 2003: 252-3).

the coca-cocaine trade. These pervasive links dissolved the borders between the state and the drug trade, and licit and illicit economic actors.

During this period, figures around the Bolivian coca-cocaine economy are scant. It was not until the mid-1980s that the US began serious efforts to gather and publish data on the size and composition of the Andean drug trade; UNODC efforts (UNFDAC and UNDCP in its previous incarnations) would not begin until the late-1990s. The Bolivian government's own estimates of coca production over this longer period - collected through SUBSEDAL (*Subsecretaría de Desarrollo Alternativo*) - may be challenged for their accuracy, e.g. there are questions around the methodology used. However, Figure 4.1 approximates the exponential growth of Bolivian coca production from 1970 to 1989. Although this does not account for a range of crucial factors (e.g. coca-paste productivity), it serves as an indicator of the rapidly increasing size of the Bolivian coca-cocaine economy during this period.

Figure 4.1: SUBSEDAL Estimates of Total National Coca Production in Metric Tonnes (1970-1989)



(Justiniano, et. al., 1991: 79)

As discussed in Chapter 1.3.1, drawing firm conclusions between this type of metadata and the function of state-narco networks is problematic. For

example, there are gaps in knowledge around how the coca-cocaine economy actually worked, e.g. the value added at each stage of the trade, the exact number of actors involved and how wealth was divided between them. However, it may reasonably be concluded that the Bolivian coca-cocaine economy was growing rapidly over this period and, as a result, greater drug rents were available. The likelihood of competition over market share (caused by scarcity) between drug trafficking clans was thus also reduced. Additionally, drug rents became increasingly more significant as a tool of governance for the military authoritarian regimes of the pre-transition period.

To some extent, then, Bolivia's political system during this period resembled a 'limited access order' (North, et. al., 2007), with competition between elite factions reduced through the apportionment of drug rents. As such, regimes co-opted and coerced different groups, 'through the provision of legal impunity, (. . .) and protection' on one hand, and 'the threat of prosecution' on the other (Meehan (2011: 379). The networks formed, woven through the state, entrenched these modes of exchange within political structures. They were typically hierarchical in nature, with a large degree of central control, e.g. the use of the BAB in financing coca-cocaine ventures or Arce Gomez's close contact with Roberto Suárez and his cohort. Consolidated trafficking organisations, meanwhile, created a level of stability in interactions with the state (Snyder & Martínez, 2009).

Of course, the factors underpinning the maintenance of these governments extended beyond state-narco networks. In the case of Barrientos, for example, his pact with the rural sector was crucial to sustaining his rule, while Banzer's delivery of economic growth largely formed the basis of his government's 'legitimacy'. Left-Right divisions within Bolivia, against the background of the Cold War, also engendered support for these authoritarian regimes from factions within the military and police, right-wing political parties, business and the middle-classes, and the country's international patron, the US. Shadowing this, violent repression suppressed opposition from those who would not be co-opted. Furthermore, the brief rule of García Meza demonstrated the limits to rule grounded solely on state-narco networks (Henman, 1985: 156; Thoumi, 2003:

254). In addition to lacking a base of societal support and the changing priorities of the US, the regime's blatant profiteering of the drug trade and the military's descent into 'little more than a collection of predatory warlords parcelling out pieces of the state' created a backlash from elements within the institution (Malloy & Gamarra, 1987: 114). Drugs rents alone could not be relied upon to solidify García Meza's rule. In this sense, the role of Bolivian state-narco networks in reinforcing - or indeed weakening - regime authority must be considered in relation to these wider factors. The thesis does not claim, therefore, that the function of state-narco networks and the distribution of drug rents alone determined relations between elite actors. Falls in drug rents (and increased competition for market share), therefore, would not necessarily be expected to lead to violence between elite actors. Rather, these were utilised as one resource among many in establishing clientelistic webs of political support (although with the caveat that this resource was more central to García Meza's short-lived regime).

Into the post-transition period, then, these networks and the logic that underpinned them both changed and remained the same. This is examined in-depth in Chapters 6 and 7, but here I introduce the main arguments for the adaptation of post-transition state-narco networks and outline key contextual factors during this period (1982-1989).

Reflecting Bolivia's uneven democracy, clientelistic and authoritarian modes of governance persisted. This included police and military autonomy, with both institutions resistant to civilian oversight, and democratic principles of accountability and transparency. This allowed them to maintain linkages to the drug trade and extract rents. These lubricated internal institutional patron-client relationships (e.g. see Hargreaves, 1992: 95). In addition to this, the political parties were implicated in taking campaign contributions from traffickers, as the latter sought high-level patronage. A tacit vow of silence between the parties meant that few politicians were ever held accountable for taking 'kick-backs' (Painter, 1994: 72). The extent of influence that such payments bought is uncertain, but it was clear that drug rents continued to permeate political structures.

In both cases - drug links in the security forces and the political class - non-enforcement of the rule of law was associated with maintaining political stability. During the uncertainty of the transition period, support for democracy from these various actors was viewed as contingent. As such, non-enforcement limited the potential resistance to democratic institutionalisation of 'informal veto players', inducing 'powerful actors to accept rules they would otherwise seek to overturn' (Levitsky & Murillo, 2014: 204). Bolivia had transitioned to formal democracy, not because of any convergence between factional interests, but because other routes to power had been exhausted. There was 'democratisation by default', with the main 'praetorian' actors - the military and the far-Left - 'discredited and marginalised rather than persuaded of the benefits of cooperation' (Whitehead, 2001a: 29).

(The transition) both revealed and exacerbated the deep fissures in every part of Bolivian society; it was marked by power struggles inside the armed forces, extreme discord within the civilian political elites, and both class and regional conflicts. (Conaghan & Malloy, 1994: 89)

As such, 'democracy had triumphed but was known to have feet of clay' (Dunkerley, 1984: 344). The military, for example, were in political retreat, but their history made definitive assertions over their commitment to democracy less secure (Barrios M., 1994). The police, meanwhile, had benefitted from the transition. Where previously they had been subordinated to the military, they now saw their funding and prerogatives enhanced. Post-transition governments looked to the institution to keep order and act as counterweight to the military; in return, granting the police a high degree of autonomy from civilian control (Quintana, 2005: 96). Finally, pacted democracy between the parties,²¹ allowed political elites to share power and divvy-up the patronage of the state. Accusing opponents of corruption served as a rhetorical weapon, but pursuing convictions threatened to expose drug links throughout the political establishment and bring down the whole edifice (e.g. Thoumi, 2003: 256). As such, uneven democracy, and the tacit acceptance of state-narco networks, mediated factional interests.

²¹ The *Pacto por la Democracia* is described below, while the *Acuerdo Patriótico* is discussed in Chapter 6.

As Roncken argues (1997b: 24), 'Bolivia moved toward democracy, but proved unable to part with the power structures erected during ten years of dictatorship'.

State-narco networks, though, fractured and became more diffuse following transition. This occurred due to changes in the pattern of political power and the drug trade itself. In terms of the former, the centralised systems of the authoritarian period were dismantled as the government was open to political competition. The military retained a level of power and independence, but the police and political parties became more influential. As such, the military's loose monopoly over the control of the drug rents was broken, creating multiple potential 'patrons'. Allied to this, US pressure made the kind of systems that had flourished during the authoritarian period unfeasible. Post-transition governments, struggling with a collapsing economy, could ill-afford the economic and diplomatic sanctions that accompanied non-compliance with the 'war on drugs' (Gamarra, 1994a). No politician wished to be associated with the García Meza period and Bolivia's international shaming as a 'narco-state' (Giacoman interview, 2014). In this sense, drug rents were not used to build factional coalitions behind a central authority, as was the case during military authoritarian governments, i.e. the state's disbursement of material benefits to reduce competition between elite actors. Rather, different political actors pursued their drug rents independently (to different degrees). Tacit-acceptance of these practices between different actors was tied to the maintenance of a post-transition political settlement. The legacies of authoritarianism were tolerated within an uncertain process of political transition.

Restructuring of the drug trade mirrored these changes, evolving over the course of the 1980s. A new generation of traffickers emerged from the shadow of Roberto Suárez and his contemporaries. For example, by the time of Suarez's arrest in 1988, the 'King of Cocaine' had already been surpassed by his nephew. Jorge Roca Suárez - or '*Techo de Paja*' - undercut his uncle with Colombian traffickers (Hargreaves, 1992: 59). Reports suggested that he had widened his profit margins by expanding cocaine processing facilities within Bolivia, and

opening-up his own smuggling routes via personal connections in Los Angeles²² (Painter, 1994: 31). Techo was believed to be member of a loose collection of drug trafficking groups operating out of Santa Ana in the Beni that included other prominent traffickers, such as Carmelo ‘Meco’ Domínguez. Meco’s business incorporated a paste-buying setup in the Chapare, processing labs in the Beni, and connections with US-supply chains via Colombia and Mexico.²³ According to the DEA, his was the most lucrative of all Bolivian trafficking operations (Gamarra, 1994b: 230). However, this was no duopoly. Reflecting the fragmented nature of Bolivia’s post-transition coca-cocaine economy, Roca Suárez and Domínguez shared the market with approximately 30 other trafficking groups (Rodas M., 1996: 219).²⁴ As in the past, these were based in family ties, and relations between the groups were largely cordial and cooperative (Hargreaves, 1992: 58).

While these changes cannot be explained by one cause, the dispersal of political power was a contributing factor. Gamarra (2004: 32) argues that ‘the very process of democratisation had the paradoxical effect of democratising the structure of organised crime’. As described above, the drug trade had become consolidated during the authoritarian period, creating stable modes of exchange with the state. Now multiple actors sought connections with different facets of the political complex. As before, Bolivia’s drug trafficking clans preferred to work through these structures rather than challenging them (Rodas M., 1996: 229).

(Bolivia’s drug organisations have) deepened rather than extended previous systems of kinship-patronage and corruption, building on existing modes of illegal practice in the armed forces, police and leading political

²² Techo had spent most of his youth in the US, only returning to Bolivia in the early-1980s to work alongside his uncle.

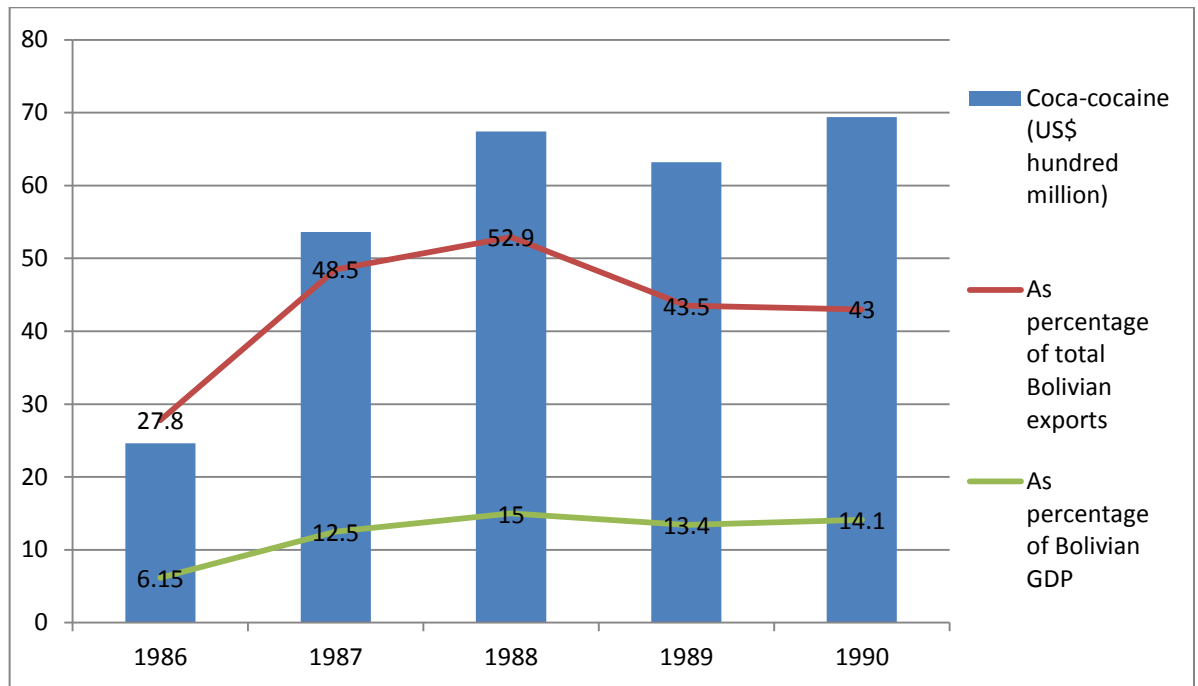
²³ It was reported that Bolivian traffickers, such as Meco, were also increasingly looking to Europe as a new export market, due to the higher prices on offer in comparison to the US (Durr, 1989).

²⁴ Of course, this is an estimate and there are uncertainties over how such groups may have been organised. For example, the inter-connections between them and their distinct roles at different stages of the trade make it difficult to define where one group ends and another begins. FELCN-head General Lucio Añez claimed that there were six trafficking clans with ‘international connections’ in Bolivia (Gamarra, 1994b: 234). By contrast, Jorge Alderete, then Subsecretary for Social Defence, stated in early-1989 that 13 traffickers controlled between 75 and 85 per cent of Bolivia’s drug trade (Painter, 1994: 31).

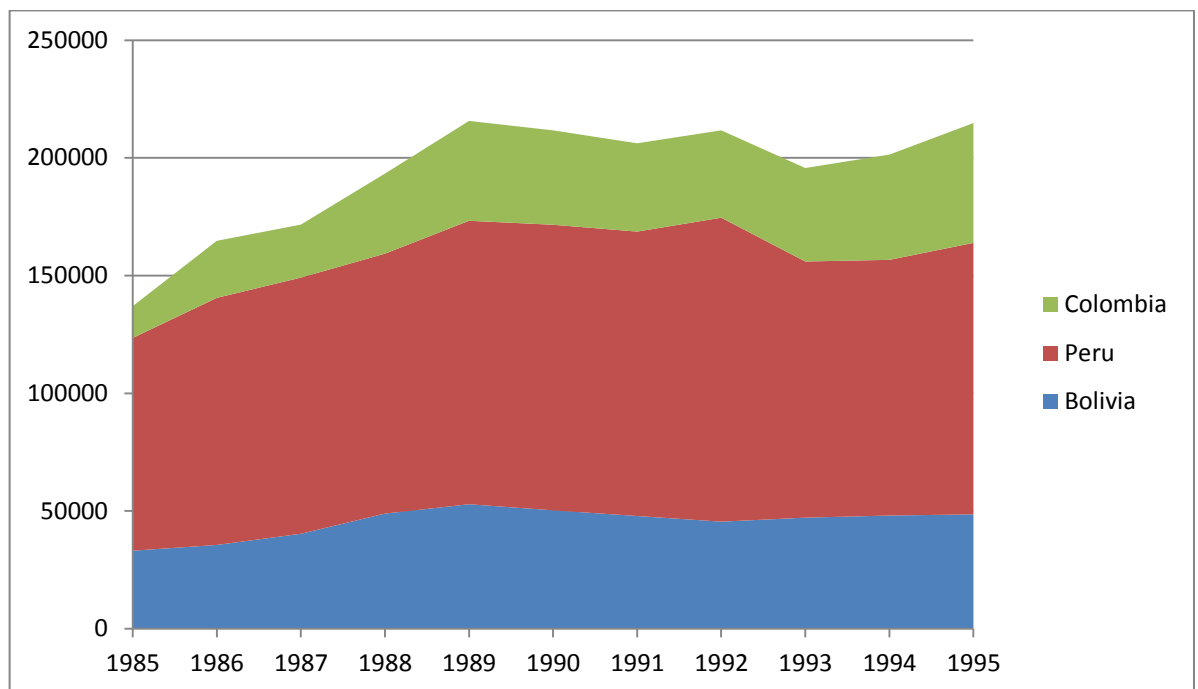
parties in a relatively 'unpartisan' fashion. The legacy of the open association of the military regime of 1980-82 with the cocaine trade has been a pattern of discreet infiltration - not the much vaunted 'takeover'. (Dunkerley, 1990: 4)

The following figures demonstrate that the size of Bolivia's coca-cocaine economy remained relatively stable during this period. Again, great caution must be taken in drawing links between this metadata and the function of state-narco networks. However, such figures would suggest that extensive drug rents were available during this period. This would reduce the possibility of violent competition and instability in relations between actors in the illicit economy; as well as possible instability between elite actors as drug rents dry-up. Furthermore, Figure 4.2 shows how important the drug trade was to the Bolivian national economy in the 1980s, both as percentage of exports and GDP. Such facts added to local ambivalence towards the coca-cocaine economy. Figure 4.3, meanwhile, indicates Bolivian coca's overall position in the Andean coca trade. While Colombia would later emerge as the largest producer of coca due to a range of factors, the role of each country in the trade during this period remained stable and well-defined: Bolivia and Peru as producers of coca and low-grade coca products, Colombia as epicentre of the trade with its organised crime responsible for cocaine production and transport.

In the final part of this chapter, I provide a broad overview of post-transition state-narco networks prior to the main period of study. This includes social, political and economic contextual factors, US-Bolivian relations and discussion of important events, such as the 1986 Huanchaca scandal. The next section thus addresses the government of Hernan Siles Suazo. This period was characterised by economic instability, governmental ambivalence towards coca-cocaine and the low-prioritisation of US Drug War goals.

Figure 4.2: Size of Bolivian Coca-Cocaine Economy (1986-1990)

(Franks, 1991: 20; World Bank, 2016)²⁵

Figure 4.3: Andean Coca Cultivation in Hectares (1985-1995)

(US State, 1991 & 1995)

²⁵ Franks' (1991) estimates of the size of the Bolivian coca-cocaine economy have been plotted against World Bank (2016) data on Bolivian GDP.

4.4.1 The Siles Suazo Administration (1982-1985)

Subject to competing pressures, the Siles Suazo government struggled with severe economic crisis throughout its term. The IMF and Bolivian business called for neoliberal structural reforms to tackle the country's deficit, foreign debt and hyperinflation, while popular sectors simultaneously pressed for increased wages and government support (Conaghan & Malloy, 1994: 121). Groups such as the unions and the peasant sector had long been suppressed and excluded from political participation. They now staged strikes and protests to advance their interests and demand government action. This added to the sense of national chaos, but Siles Suazo - embracing the new ideals of democratic openness - refused to resort to repressive tactics (Ibid: 123). He was also wary of escalating the situation, fearing the consequences of applying harsh economic policies. The country's new democracy was fragile and such policies would heap more hardship on suffering societal sectors. The economic programs advanced by his administration were thus a compromise between international and domestic priorities. In the end, they proved to be woefully inadequate. Bolivia's tin mining industry declined rapidly, the country defaulted on its foreign debt in May 1984, and hyperinflation reached 25,000 per cent the following year (Lehman, 1999: 194).

Bolivia's coca-cocaine trade was one of the few successful areas of the national economy. Indicative of this, the population of the Chapare increased from 40,000 to 215,000 between 1980 and 1987, while the total area of coca cultivation grew from 16,370 to 51,798 hectares (Durana, et. al., 1987; Justiniano, et. al., 1991: 79). The informal economy of coca-cocaine provided employment and a source of growth in the national economy. It acted as a safety-net for former miners and peasants,²⁶ who migrated to the Chapare in search of work (Healy, 1994: 203). As a result of these factors, Siles Suazo was reluctant to take action against the trade. He recognised the political implications of an aggressive counterdrug policy that targeted the livelihoods of these sectors (Malamud-Goti, 1992: 27). In this view, tackling the drug trade

²⁶ Drought in central and southern areas of the country in 1982 had a devastating impact on farming in these areas (Painter, 1994: 6).

would only serve to aggravate economic crisis and societal unrest; threatening ‘to close off a critical economic safety-valve’ (Dunkerley, 1990: 45). Again, though, the Bolivian government was caught between international and local demands.

The ‘near bankruptcy’ of the formal economy meant that restoring US assistance, post-García Meza, was a priority (Dunkerley, 1984: 325). With the US pressuring for measures against the coca-cocaine economy, channels of counterdrug cooperation were thus re-opened. In April 1983, for example, Siles Suazo accepted US counterdrug aid and eradication targets. The bilateral agreement included US\$30m in narcotics control aid, US\$53m in development aid, and coca eradication targets of 5,000 hectares each year until 1985 (Malamud-Goti, 1992: 65). Aid was conditioned on the achievement of eradication goals and ‘satisfactory’ cooperation in the war on drugs (GAO, 1988: 48). The US thus showed its prioritisation of Drug War goals over local concerns of the potentially damaging implications of its approach. The social and economic impact of targeting coca/withholding aid was ominous to Bolivia’s transition; worsening internal instability. The US itself also recognised the precariousness of Bolivia’s democratisation. For example, in a cable to the Secretary of State shortly after this period, the US Embassy (1986c) expressed concerns over the security of US counterdrug investments.

Program planning for Bolivia this far in the future (for INC funding in 1988) requires a degree of confidence in the survival of Bolivia’s democratic system and some reasonable hope for the nation’s economic recovery. An unforeseen change in government caused by economic pressures and frustrations could conceivably result in the type of regime that governed Bolivia in 1980-81, under which a narcotics assistance program would be unwelcome.

US economic leverage over Bolivia and the shadow of García Meza’s ‘narco-state’ left the Siles Suazo with no alternative. The government accepted the US approach. But progress on these counterdrug commitments was underwhelming. The Bolivian government lacked the necessary resources to carry out an effective program of eradication and missed its targets (Gamarra, 1994a: 123). In addition to this, the newly created police anti-drug unit, UMOPAR (*Los Unidades Móviles de Patrullaje Rural*) clashed with coca unions in the ‘lawless’

Chapare region, and failed to make 'operational progress' (US Embassy La Paz to Secretary of State, 1985). Local tensions were further heightened by the Chapare Offensive in July 1984. Siles Suazo bowed to US pressure and sent in 1,500 army troops to restore order and support UMOPAR's operations. Concerns over granting the military this internal role were outweighed by a threat from the US Congress to block foreign assistance aid (Malamud-Goti, 1990: 39). Conforming to what would become a recurring cycle of counterdrug policy in Bolivia, success in disrupting the coca-cocaine economy proved to be temporary; the operations of high-level traffickers were little affected. Adopting counterdrug goals it would never achieve, Siles Suazo's government sought to placate the demands of the US, all the while, showing ambivalence to the coca-cocaine economy and its domestic effects.

An abortive coup attempted brought home the fragility of Bolivia's new democratic consensus. The government was in disarray, as UDP 'partners' and opposition parties alike turned-on Siles Suazo for his handling of the economy. This discontent extended to the military and the police. In June 1984, members of UMOPAR and the army took Siles Suazo hostage for several days (see Prado S. & Claire P., 1990). Loss of faith in the government was the apparent reason behind the rare show of military-police unity (Quintana, 2005: 137), but suggestions that drug interests lay behind the coup attempt hung in the air (Malamud-Goti, 1992: 28). On this occasion, opposition from within the military and the US Embassy helped to secure the President's release. The government, though, remained in crisis. In September, the major political parties discussed the possibility of a 'constitutional coup' and the installation of vice-President Jaime Paz Zamora of the MIR (*El Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria*) as interim-president (Conaghan & Malloy, 1994: 125). Talks mediated by the Catholic Church would eventually lead to a settlement, where Siles Suazo agreed to early elections in May 1985. However, these episodes demonstrated that the new 'rules of the game' were not settled. Support for democracy remained conditional. Factions within the military and police, and even the political parties, were willing to consider extraordinary means to remove the government. As described previously, these dynamics had implications for the function of state-narco networks.

Finally, scandal towards the end of Siles Suazo's term suggested another aspect to the President's realism on the drugs issue. Rafael Otazo, head of the *Consejo Nacional de Lucha contra el Tráfico Ilícito de Drogas* (CONALTID) and close ally of Siles Suazo, revealed that he had met with Roberto Suárez in June 1983 under the orders of the President. Siles Suazo had apparently asked Otazo to approach the 'King of Cocaine' to explore the possibility of a low-interest loan to help solve the country's economic problems (Gamarra, 1999a: 190). In the ensuing Congressional investigation, Otazo implicated other members of the government in trafficking operations. His accusations were never substantiated and it remains unclear what Suárez had supposedly been offered in return, but they added to the pressure on Siles Suazo and contributed his early withdrawal from office. Whether the case represented a new state-narco nexus between the civilian democratic government and the drug trade or the unfounded allegations of a political rival attempting to depose an unpopular leader, is open to speculation. It established, though, a pattern of scandal that suggested links between the political elite and the drug trade, as well as the use of drug corruption accusations on political conspiracies. This theme is returned to in Chapter 7.

4.4.2 The Paz Estensorro Administration (1985-1989)

By contrast to Siles Suazo, President Paz Estensorro fully embraced the neoliberal economic agenda.²⁷ Looking to overcome the congressional blockages that had hindered his predecessor and ensure the passage of his reform program, the veteran leader of the MNR formed a voting alliance with the centre-Right ADN, led by the former-dictator, Banzer. ADN's backing ensured the government had the congressional votes to push ahead with its stabilisation plan: *la Nueva Política Económica* (NPE - New Economic Policy). The ADN had proposed a similar program in the run-up to the election and so was willing to

²⁷ One US Embassy official (interview, 2013) described his view of Paz Estensorro: 'It was the fourth time he had been elected over a period of 35 years. (He) was in his late-70s at that point, (and) his objective was to correct the errors he had made in his three previous administrations. It was a noble activity. By that time, he had the maturity and the experience to have figured out (things) he wished he had done differently, and to make a stab at it.'

support the government. However, they still extracted a number of concessions, such as control over state corporations. These powers were used to feed the party's patronage machine (Gamarra, 1991: 13). The *Pacto por la Democracia* thus gave Bolivia's 'new' politics a decidedly retro feel, both in terms of the actors involved and the clientelistic practices which sustained it. Nevertheless, the Bolivian government's close adherence to the NPE, and the positive macroeconomic performance it achieved, made Bolivia a model for the Washington Consensus. Hyperinflation was brought under control, tax revenues increased, debt shrunk and modest levels of economic growth were registered (Lehman, 1999: 197).

These achievements, though, had severe social costs, as levels of poverty increased, living standards dropped and unemployment soared (Conaghan & Malloy, 1987: 186-187). Furthermore, tin prices collapsed two months into Paz Estensorro's term. This caused both a surge in unemployment and further drops in Bolivia's exports. While in 1980, tin accounted for 40 per cent of Bolivia's exports, by 1987, this figure had fallen to 8 per cent (Ibid.). This time, opposition to the government's policies was met with force (Mesa, et. al., 2008: 581-583). For example, as the unions moved for a general strike in mid-1985, Paz Estensorro declared a state of siege. Here, pacted democracy gave the executive a freehand to implement the NPE over social opposition. In addition to this, the government was reliant on the police to quell the societal unrest. In return for supporting this agenda, the police were guaranteed their autonomy (Quintana, 2005: 96). As discussed in Chapter 6, these dynamics were demonstrative of Bolivia's uneven democracy. Informal rules continued to govern relations between elite factional interests; reflected in the informal modes of exchange between elements of the state and the drug trade.

As in the case of Siles Suazo, coca-cocaine eased the pressure on Paz Estensorro's government. The drug trade helped to mediate the harsh societal effects of the NPE by providing employment for a large sector of Bolivian society; a fact recognised by the US Embassy in the following cables:

While accepting the necessity of continuing to pursue the traditional priority on eradication, (the Embassy's strategy) argues for greater

emphasis on interdiction. The latter appears to have a far more immediate impact on coca by depressing prices (and implicitly cultivation), provokes far less governmental and opposition resistance and ultimately comes closer and faster to (counterdrug) objectives. (US Embassy La Paz to Secretary of State, 1985b)

No, repeat no, Bolivian government has been able to survive against strong and united *campesino* opposition (*campesinos* increasingly view coca cultivation as the main escape from abject poverty). (US Embassy La Paz to Secretary of State, 1986a)

Furthermore, coca-cocaine also boosted national reserves and stimulated inward investment (Conaghan & Malloy, 1994: 198; UDAPE, 1990). For example, in 1987, the President announced a tax amnesty on repatriated capital, relaxing disclosure requirements and banning investigations into new wealth brought into the country (Menzel, 1996: 11). As such, drug money flowed unencumbered into Bolivian banks, helping to stabilise the economy, augment internal investment and bolster national reserves (e.g. see Ramos, 1988).²⁸ The reforms were technically in keeping with the neoliberal orthodoxy advanced by the IMF, i.e. relaxing regulation and capital controls. But they also indicated Paz Estensorro willingness to put economic, social and political goals ahead of the ‘war on drugs’.

His government had already sought to leverage support for US counterdrug goals for greater economic assistance (Lehman, 1999: 200). Paz Estensorro looked to reverse US perceptions that the Bolivian government was uninterested in the ‘war on drugs’ and re-establish good relations.²⁹ In collaboration with the US Embassy, the Bolivian government helped form 1986’s Operation Blast Furnace: a landmark militarised US-Bolivian joint-operation that included the US army for the first-time in counter-supply efforts abroad (Walker III, 1994: 3).³⁰ In addition

²⁸ The policy has clear parallels with efforts by the Burmese government to induce drug traffickers to share their wealth (see Snyder, 2006: 960).

²⁹ As a result of Bolivia’s failure to meet eradication targets, US Congress had withheld US\$9.5 million in economic and military assistance for FY1986 (GAO, 1988: 49). Funds were withheld again in FY1987, this time, US\$8.7m. (GAO, 1988: 49), before US Congress became convinced of the Bolivian Government’s commitment to the ‘war on drugs’ (Gamarra, 1999a: 191).

³⁰ US agencies distrusted UMOPAR, believing corruption was rife. For this reason, they were often only informed of the identity of targets at the last minute (Menzel, 1996: 18; Painter, 1994: 82). Through a combination of leaks and press coverage of the operation, though, traffickers were able to anticipate raids and escape before the arrival of the security forces (Malamud-Goti, 1990: 41).

to this, Paz Estensorro passed the 1988 *Ley del Regimen de la Coca y Sustancias Controladas* (Law 1008) in response to US concerns over Bolivia's fragmented and incomplete laws on coca-cocaine (GAO, 1988: 55). Law 1008 established distinctions between legal and illicit coca, and brought in tough penalties for trafficking.³¹ Taken together - Law 1008 and militarisation - these elements formed the basis for counterdrug policy in Bolivia through the 1980s and 90s, and reassured the US of the Bolivian government's commitment to the 'war on drugs'

There was a certain tension, then, in Paz Estensorro's approach to the 'war on drugs': extending counterdrug operations with the US, while balancing the reality that coca-cocaine was hugely important to the economy and, by extension, political stability. Indeed, this tension may be identified across the Bolivian administrations of this period. Economic and political realities made cooperation in the 'war on drugs' unavoidable, but the terms demanded by the US 'could not possibly have been met without destroying both the constitutional order and the economy' (Dunkerley, 1990: 4). The web of state-narco interactions were part of this calculus, as these networks formed part of the post-transition political order.

4.4.3 The Huanchaca Case

The case of Huanchaca, though, suggested that the interests of the political class in the drug trade extended beyond pragmatic concerns of political stability. In September 1986, the murder of well-known Bolivian biologist Noel Kempff and two of his colleagues at the hands of drug traffickers shocked the country. The expeditionary team of scientists had stumbled upon a large coca-cocaine processing facility, near Huanchaca, in the remote border region of the department of Santa Cruz. The incident and its fallout seemed to confirm publicly, the deep and enduring links between the state and the drug trade.

First, the slow response to the murders raised suspicions that both the US and Bolivian authorities were protecting the traffickers behind the murders. A

³¹ However, it also made concessions to *cocaleros*: banning chemical eradication methods and committing the government to development as a condition of eradication (Painter, 1994: 79-80).

passing civilian plane spotted Kempff's burned-out plane around 24 hours after last contact and rescued a surviving member of the team (Malamud-Goti, 1992: 52). Despite the reports that followed, it took the DEA and UMOPAR three days to make it to the scene of the crime. By then the traffickers had escaped, along with most of their assets. The response of the Bolivian government was also slow. Minister of the Interior, Fernando Barthelemy, rejected calls for local Bolivian military personnel in Santa Cruz to be sent to the area. He instead gave responsibility for the incident to an air force anti-drug unit, hundreds of miles away in the Beni. The unit's mission was cancelled altogether after they encountered mechanical problems (Rodas M., 1996: 111). The following day, Barthelemy then declared that UMOPAR had already begun operations in Huanchaca. These formed part of a series 'inexplicable' order and counter-order that were characteristic of the bungling response from all levels of government (Ibid.).

Public criticism increased when it was found that the authorities had been told of the facility four months prior to the murders (Thoumi, 2003: 254). The source of the information, Ariel Coca, raised even more questions. As detailed above, Coca had been part of the García Meza regime and had developed deep interests in the drug trade. His sudden conversion to informant caused surprise. There were suggestions that Coca's motives stemmed from a dispute between different factions of Bolivia's state-narco networks. Rodas M. (1996: 127) claims that Huanchaca lay at the heart of a power struggle between *Banzerato* and *Garcíamescista* drug-linked officers, and the emergence of the new generation of traffickers led by Jorge Roca Suárez. Regardless of his reasons, the information was taken seriously. The DEA and UMOPAR carried out reconnaissance on the location and confirmed Coca's account (Malamud-Goti, 1992: 52). US Embassy communications, though, played down the size and significance of the Huanchaca facility. Furthermore, planned operations were cancelled on three occasions due to weather conditions, or technical issues (Gamarra, 1994a: 50).

These details fed rumours that the US also had interests in Huanchaca it wished to protect. The conspiracy held that the facility was part of the CIA's shadow

operations against the *Sandinistas* in Nicaragua (Marcy, 2010: 113; Scott & Marshall, 1991). According to the theory, Bolivian coca paste produced in Huanchaca fed a supply-chain linking right-wing Colombian traffickers and Cuban exiles to the *Contras* (Hoy, 1988). Cocaine sold on US streets would thus fund anti-communist operations in Central America. The DEA had long complained that CIA operations had undermined counterdrug goals, with the intelligence agency employing the well-known tactic of exploiting the underworld for information and 'off-the-books' funding (McCoy, 2003). In the case of Huanchaca, reports that a DEA agent had filed a protest with the US Embassy over obstructions against their operation, seemed to lend credence to the theory of US complicity in the Bolivian drug trade (Roncken interview, 2013).

Alternatively, problems of bureaucratic politics, and the poor capacity of Bolivian counterdrug agencies support the idea that mistakes were due to incompetence rather than conspiracy. This occurred at the same time as Operation Blast Furnace, where inter-agency conflicts occurred due to overlapping duties (Malamud-Goti, 1990: 42). For example, there were disagreements over which laboratories should be raided and when. The Huanchaca site was apparently listed number 157 on the task force's targets (Menzel, 1996: 18-9). One US army officer later asserted that 'he would vehemently oppose any attempt to stage another operation', as 'coordination and cooperation among the participating forces was deplorable' (Malamud-Goti, 1992: 31). Menzel (1996: 19-20) also asserts that delays in the destruction of precursor chemicals found at the site were caused by debates over the environmental impact of using explosives to destroy the store. Such explanations go some way to counteracting the conspiracy theories.

Congressional investigations into Huanchaca, though, failed to provide any definitive answers. The first in 1986 cleared the MNR government of wrongdoing and was branded a whitewash. The findings were delivered after the assassination of the man originally charged with leading the investigation: Congressman Edmundo Salazaar. There were indications that Salazaar was uncovering links between Huanchaca and Paz Estensorro's administration. Minister Barthelemy, for example, was said to have close ties to trafficking

organisations in Santa Cruz (Gamarra, 1994a: 51). The murder of Salazaar added to the sense of national shock; an act more in keeping with the ruthless violence of the Colombian Cartels than Bolivia's trafficking clans. Several suspects were rounded-up and charged, but all were acquitted. The poor handling of the case by both the police and the courts led many to conclude that drug money had penetrated the judicial system (Malamud-Goti, 1992: 53-6). Others who attempted to shed light on state-narco links were also targeted. For example, three would-be whistle-blowers - police lieutenants *Ciro Jijena Centeno* and *Waldo Panoso Meneses*, and navy Captain *Jaime Paredes Sempértegui* - were subject to smears and counter-accusations (Roncken, 1997b: 27).

In 1992, the Bolivian Congress agreed to open another investigation into the events around Huanchaca. This time, the investigation descended into a political game of claim and counterclaim. The MNR argued that reopening the case was designed to discredit the party and harm their prospects in up-coming presidential elections. For example, *Barthelemy* was accused of ordering the death of Salazaar. The MNR, in-turn, pointed the finger at the MIR and Banzer's ADN for the numerous drug scandals that had engulfed the parties (see Chapter 7). As the accusations intensified, the situation threatened to discredit all the main political parties. Finally, in an attempt to bring a close to events, Congress voted to expel *Barthelemy*, lift his parliamentary immunity and hand responsibility for the investigation over to the judiciary (Gamarra, 1994a: 152).

For many, the former minister appeared to be a useful scapegoat, as the parties sought to draw a line under Huanchaca and the issue of drug corruption in the political parties. Again, the political subtext of corruption accusations made separation of fact and fiction near impossible. The belief continued, though, that behind Huanchaca lay a network which included elements of the government, the state and the illicit sphere. *Rodas M.* (1996: 252) argues that the case was grounded in the history of state-narco relations: the creation of a *Cruceño* elite who owed a proportion of their wealth to coca-cocaine and the patronage of the state, e.g. land redistribution and financing. As such, Huanchaca threatened to uncover the systems of joint-wealth extraction that had been established between these elites and elements of the state. Whatever

the truth of Huanchaca, state-narco networks had adapted to the post-transition period.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter, then, provides a historical overview of the development of state-narco networks. The trade became integrated into the governments of the authoritarian era, serving as crucial form of patronage in the building of factional coalitions. As such, these became integrated into state structures. Transition and the onset of the 'war on drugs' changed the 'rules of the game', leading to the fracturing of state-narco networks and the atomisation of interactions between traffickers and different facets of political authority. These evolving relations were grounded in the changing political, social and economics dynamics of these different eras, as well as the changing structure of the drug trade and the preference of the regional hegemon.

This analysis provides important grounding for the following chapters, raising key themes. These include: both continuity and change from the authoritarian era to post-transition, both in terms of political dynamics and the function of state-narco networks; the shift in US foreign policy priorities, previously linked to tacit-acceptance of state-narco networks during the Cold War, but now focused on Drug War goals; and the political subtext and ambiguity of drug scandals. But in addition to this, my analysis provides new insights into the relationship between the state and the drug trade. Challenging conventional analyses of drugs, the chapter elucidates the distinct relationship that emerged between the state and the illicit economy and its place within wider social, political and economic processes. This was associated with the preservation of a limited political order, and a stable drug trade based in personalistic ties. Dividing lines between state actors and illicit actors were blurred as a result. This breaks with the typical assumptions of the mainstream drugs literature. Furthermore, across this period, the preferences of the US had important implications for the form and function of state-narco networks. These webs of interactions were affected by international changes, with knock-on effects for Bolivian domestic politics.

My conclusions here are drawn from secondary and documentary sources and, as such, they are necessarily tentative. The clandestine nature of these interactions creates a level of uncertainty in assertions around their form and function. In the remaining chapters, then, I change tack. I explore in greater detail links between the security forces and the drug trade (Chapter 6), and the political class and Bolivia's drug traffickers (Chapter 7), continuing to utilise secondary and documentary sources where appropriate. However, I also incorporate interview data with key actors from the period to examine differing interpretations of state-narco interactions, their attached meanings and significance, and their relationship to the wider dynamics of US-Bolivian relations and the 'war on drugs'. As part of this, the following chapter considers the narratives that informed these interpretations, and the competing US and Bolivian agendas at work during this period. In this sense, I explore the object of study from multiple perspectives.

Chapter 5 | Contrasting Perspectives of the ‘War on Drugs’

The introduction of the Andean Initiative exposed divergent US and Bolivian agendas. As the US Embassy sought the escalation of the Drug War in Bolivia, the Paz Zamora government proclaimed its ‘democratising mission’ and called for a development-led counterdrug response. US-Bolivian relations were marked by low-levels of trust and competition for control. This chapter maps the competing narratives of the ‘war on drugs’ that underpinned these dynamics. Drawing on contemporary interviews with key elite US and Bolivian actors,¹ I focus on two main aspects. In the first section of the chapter, I outline US and Bolivian conceptualisations of ‘the drug problem’, incorporating analyses of state-narco interactions, and wider political, social, and economic forces. While these actors reproduced strands from the mainstream discourse of drugs (see Chapter Two), their accounts also transcended these debates. In the second section of the chapter, I consider how interlocutors conceived of US-Bolivian relations. This places American Exceptionalism against historically-grounded narratives of the US role in Latin America. In this way, the chapter reveals the motivations and assumptions underlying contrasting US and Bolivian perspectives of the ‘war on drugs’ and the relationship between the state and the drug trade.

This analysis is crucial to the chapters that follow, considering the discursive frameworks that shaped how elite actors understood and responded to state-narco networks. US securitised notions of drugs, for example, justified the extension of US control and efforts to bypass or target ‘corrupt’ local power structures. Bolivian ambivalence towards the drug trade and the prioritisation of political stability led to compromises over uneven democratisation, tolerance of police/military drug corruption, and opposition to US Drug War policies. In addition to this, narratives of US-Bolivian relations informed contested interpretations of state-narco networks. Drug corruption accusations and attached political subtext were folded into US-Bolivian relations of power and

¹ Details on all interviewees are provided in Appendix C.

control. These facets of state-narco networks are examined in Chapters 6 and 7 respectively. The chapter, then, grounds this analysis in the overarching narratives of the ‘war on drugs’ employed by US and Bolivian interlocutors. As such, it also provides insights into the development of US counterdrug policy in Latin America: how key actors made sense of the Andean Initiative and its implementation in Bolivia.

This chapter thus marks a shift in focus: from the analysis of secondary and documentary sources to exploration of the interpretative frameworks that were employed by US and Bolivian actors in the formation of their accounts. Employing elements of oral history methodology in this analysis, these included: the Drug War and Development Paradigms, and narratives of Bolivian democratisation, American Exceptionalism and the legacy of the Cold War. James (2000, 123) argues that interlocutors ‘construct stories’ with the twin aims of legitimising their role to an external audience and making sense of the period for themselves. Discursive techniques, such as framing narratives, are constitutive of this process. To persuade me of their worldview, then, interlocutors interpreted events, and defined how they should be understood (see Chapter 3). But these frameworks also gave meaning to their own role, and provided explanations. These combined personal experience with cultural understandings, theories and ideologies, both past and present. Interview accounts, therefore, reveal how these actors responded to important contextual factors, such as the end of the Cold War and Bolivia’s democratic transition. These perspectives are woven through my analysis in Chapters 6 and 7.

5.1 Conceptualising ‘the Problem’

The two overarching paradigms of the ‘war on drugs’ and attached political and institutional factors (outlined in Chapter 2) shaped the accounts of interlocutors. US actors typically adopted the assumptions of the Drug War Paradigm in their conceptualisations of drugs. This included US cultural constructs, the prohibition model, drug corruption as deviance, and the securitisation of the issue. By contrast, Bolivian actors called on the conceptual framework of the Development Paradigm in their explanations, such as the stimulus of US demand

in the creation of the Bolivian coca-cocaine economy. In this sense, these elite actors reproduced mainstream discourses of drugs when framing their accounts.

In addition to this, though, interview accounts both crossed-over and diverged from these dominant themes. For example, the interpretations of US interlocutors displayed a duality in their conceptualisations of Bolivia's role in the drug trade. Moralistic judgements on illicit behaviours sat alongside more sympathetic readings of Bolivia's circumstances. This perpetrator/victim narrative thus displayed synergy with both enforcement and development-led models of the 'war on drugs'. This duality helped to reconcile militarised responses to drugs with modern critiques of US policy and ideas of American Exceptionalism. For Bolivian actors, the historically grounded 'Democracy Generation' narrative exerted a strong influence over their accounts of the period. This establishes democracy as an overriding priority, and justifies their opposition to a destabilising, 'Colombianised' counterdrug approach, and their ambivalence towards aspects of the coca-cocaine economy. Where the US had its Drug War, so the argument goes, the Bolivian government had its 'democratising mission'. Utilising passages from these interview accounts, these narratives and their application are examined below.

5.1.1 The US Drug War Perspective

There was a view in the Bush administration that addicts were casualties of the Drug War and there wasn't much you could do. Once someone was addicted, you couldn't really save them, so don't waste your time focusing on them. (. . .) The budget has always been around 60-70 per cent for domestic law enforcement, interdiction and international, and that was driven by the belief that stopping drugs would stop people from using them. (. . .) There was a decade long push, probably starting in '88 to around '97 or '98, where that ideology or thinking really drove the drug strategy, so that the focus on an Andean strategy, which includes Bolivia of course, was big. (Carnevale interview, 2013)

The above quote from former-ONDCP official, John Carnevale, identifies the 'ideology' of the Drug War Paradigm as a key factor in the introduction of the Andean Initiative in the late-1980s. This 'ideology' and its underlying assumptions still hold influence, as evidenced by the interview accounts of US actors. In discussing the crack-cocaine scare of the 1980s, for example, US

interlocutors called on US cultural understandings of drugs and securitised notions of the issue. Forming an important component of their accounts, these instilled a sense of urgency and moral right to the US counterdrug role in Bolivia. The following description from Ambassador Charles Richard Bowers emphasised the necessity of US action against the Bolivian drug trade. The powerful assertion that cocaine produced in the Andes was ‘killing our kids’ reinforces the idea that the drug trade represented a threat to US national security. It also echoes the moral dichotomy of the Drug War Paradigm, where drugs are viewed as an ‘evil’ that must be defeated.

I mean, the reason we were down there to begin with was because of the massive flow of cocaine into the United States which was killing our kids. Still is. That’s a whole other argument about Drug War... not Drug War... but the basic thing is, that product made its way into the United States, so the goal was to stop that product coming in. (Bowers interview, 2013)²

In this example, though, Bowers pulled back from using the contested term ‘Drug War’. This reflects the effects of contemporary criticism of US counterdrug policy on the accounts of US actors.³ Interlocutors such as Bowers implicitly responded to these critiques in the construction of their historical accounts.

Following in this vein, Ambassador David Greenlee explained the logic of US counterdrug efforts in Bolivia. Greenlee externalised responsibility for the ‘devastating’ effects of crack-cocaine in urban-America. Intervention in Latin America to address the problem was rationalised against the background of perceived domestic crisis.

I think what really intensified the focus on Bolivia and the coca producing countries was the advent of crack-cocaine. Before, cocaine had been a sort of high-end drug... the doctors and lawyers... and it was quite refined, and it was a problem, (but) it wasn’t devastating the inner-cities. Crack-cocaine really changed the game. (Greenlee interview, 2013)

² Bowers (interview, 2013) finished the interview by stating, ‘the root of the problem - if you want one final quote - there would be no problem if American kids stopped using the product’. While this contradicts the externalisation of the problem, puritanical elements of the Drug War Paradigm are evident: abstinence from drug use (deviant behaviour) would solve the problem.

³ This is discussed further in Chapter 3.

It is interesting to note here the delimitation between high-end cocaine-use among ‘doctors and lawyers’ and crack-cocaine in the inner-cities. The effects of the former are largely dismissed, while the latter is viewed as a ‘game-changer’. During this period, these types of perceptions were reflected in wide disparities in prison sentences for each form of cocaine.⁴ Those caught in possession of the ‘ghetto drug’ were subject to draconian mandatory sentences. As such, some commentators argue that the ‘war on drugs’ caused more harm to predominantly African-American, inner-city communities than crack-cocaine itself (e.g. see Reinerman & Levine, 1997c). This was viewed to reflect the country’s ‘racialised’ history of drug control, its intermittent cycle of drug scares, and the division between mainstream US society and marginalised sectors. Although Greenlee does not engage directly with these issues (and it would be unfair to extrapolate from his account), this passage demonstrates the subtle influence of the conceptual framework of the Drug War Paradigm on the interpretations of US actors.

In terms of defining the parameters of the response, the Drug War model prescribes enforcement-led policies. Adopting the vocabulary of war, the ‘enemy’ of the drug trade should be met with the US security apparatus and defeated. Such ideas informed the formulation of the Andean Initiative and the process of defining a new post-Cold War security agenda in Latin America. Ambassador David Miller, who headed the drug unit of the NSC (National Security Council) under Bush, suggests that US government agencies, emboldened by post-Cold War euphoria, adopted this thinking.

We were ploughing new ground, and I think it is important to bear in mind that there are some issues that they’ve already thought out and the NSC has wrestled with for many years. The idea of a co-ordinated Drug War in South America was something that had not been done. And so you had a lot of serious, separate commentary from people. (But) I think everybody was very enthusiastic, and they had a President who cared a lot about it which makes a difference. And it was new and exciting. I mean at that point people weren’t wandering around saying, ‘I wonder if this is going to work’. They were sort of wandering around saying, ‘well this is really

⁴ This assumed harsher sentencing and counter-supply efforts abroad were more effective in addressing the problem than alleviating social deprivation in inner-city areas.

different; we're going to try and see if we can solve the problem at its origins'. (Miller interview, 2013)

Searching for new missions in this new era, government agencies adopted notions of human security. This chimed with American Exceptionalism: addressing the 'threat' of drugs - and by extension drug corruption - would create the conditions for human rights, democracy and development. But there were also more prosaic explanations for sudden bureaucratic interest in the drugs issue. Former-Deputy Administrator of the DEA Terry Burke (interview, 2013), described the post-Cold War scramble for a share of the newly expanded counterdrug budget: 'these other agencies... that were searching for funding and wanted to expand... they decided, "gee, let's get into the drug business". (. . .) It got so out of hand!' Accordingly, the onset of the 'war on drugs' in Bolivia and US preferences for policy are partly explained by the institutional drive of these government agencies.

This institutional-bureaucratic narrative was also identified by Bolivian actors, but applied differently. Taking a more critical view, conceptualising drugs as a security issue, and the policy responses that this elicits, had been used to institutionalise the 'war on drugs'. The discourse of security and the militarisation of counterdrug policy have fed the Drug War bureaucracy, often to the detriment of the South. Former-President Jaime Paz Zamora argued along similar lines.

The problem was it turning into a war, or it becoming 'Colombianised' or 'Mexicanised'. (. . .) The American agencies... in this respect, the European agencies are different... they need the problem to continue to survive. They aren't interested in resolving the problem. They'd be left without work... it's an interesting problem. It complicates their daily work, as they have to keep on generating situations that will make the news... a violent act, etc... so they appear like heroes who are in the front line, fighting for the mental health of the people, etc. Here, on many occasion, (the problem) was exaggerated, so they could survive. And this occurred with all agencies, including the UN. It's something that has to be done because everyone needs to survive. So there are always more problems, always more things, more bureaucracy. That was our experience. (Paz Zamora interview, 2014)

In this way, the interests of counterdrug agencies were bound to continual insecurity and the survival of the drug trade. There is a gap between the stated aims of US counterdrug policy and the interests of those who execute it. As discussed in the following chapter, US securitised notions of Bolivia's coca-cocaine economy were resisted by the Paz Zamora government. While US interlocutors adopted the assumptions of securitisation and looked to extend the Drug War in Bolivia, local actors rejected this conceptualisation and considered it detrimental to local priorities. Here, Paz Zamora argues that the US agenda was linked to bureaucratic politics. Along this and many other dimensions of the 'war on drugs', elite US and Bolivian actors' interpretations stood in contrast to each other.

5.1.2 Bolivia as 'Victim' and 'Perpetrator'

The Drug War Paradigm was also reflected in hardened US interpretations of Bolivia's role in the coca-cocaine economy. Under this conception, those involved in the drug trade were viewed as criminals, exploiting drug-use for profit and threatening US society. The following passage from Ambassador Greenlee's account outlines the growth of Cochabamba on the back of the coca-cocaine economy. He suggests an element of extortion to the Bolivian position on the issue.

So you look at Cochabamba... you were there recently... there are some nice tall buildings in Cochabamba. Well believe me, back in the mid '70s there weren't. When I was a Peace Corps volunteer in that area, everything was low rise, the adobe kind of buildings. The skyline of Cochabamba was built with profits from drug trafficking and that's where it's from and you can even talk to Bolivians about, like, 'What would it take you to get out of the trafficking business, to really crack down on this thing?' And Bolivians would say, 'well, you know, this is four or five hundred million bucks for our country's (economy)'... back when that money meant a little bit more and... 'we would have to be compensated for that'. It's sort of like, 'we will stop robbing the bank if you give us what we're taking out of the bank'. It was almost like that. (Greenlee interview, 2013)

Former-INC head Melvyn Levitsky expressed similar sentiments. For example, *cocaleros* were characterised as shrewd operators rather than 'idyllic farmers' (Levitsky interview, 2013). As such, they moved into coca cultivation because of

the potential for large returns, rather than poverty and desperation. Other elements of Bolivian society had also profited from US drug-use, spending their returns on conspicuous consumption. Drug boom towns, such as Santa Cruz, contradicted conceptions of Bolivia as a poor, developing nation.

Santa Cruz, you would see a pretty rich, very rich city, very fancy hotel, car dealerships that sold expensive cars. It was very clear that it was a city that was fed by the cocaine trafficking. So it was had to deal with embedded beliefs, pretty much, in that society. (. . .) It was quite an eye opener in terms of, here was a very poor country, one of the poorest in Latin America, South America, and you saw a lot of examples of wealth which was certainly tied to drug trafficking. (Levitsky interview, 2013)

Such ideas serve as justification for the extension of US control and the installation of Drug War policies. Bolivia's active role in the coca-cocaine trade, and the benefits that it had accrued, underpin a hard-line counterdrug response. As part of this, then, *cocaleros* who did not accept the rules of alternative development became legitimate targets for crop eradication; and uncooperative government officials were legitimate targets for US pressure.

However, the accounts of US actors also exhibited a duality. Bolivia was viewed simultaneously as both perpetrator and victim of illicit activity; exploiting cocaine for profit, but also driven to the drug trade due to economic necessity. As such, elements of the Development Paradigm were present in the accounts of US interlocutors. The following passage from an interview with a US Embassy official, stationed in Bolivia in the mid-1980s, mirrors this view.

The farmers growing the coca have a huge investment in this. They have no cash, capital resources. If you take away the coca, their families starve. (. . .) It's not that they loved growing coca, but it was reliable. If you grew the coca, you could sell it. The price was always high enough so you could make a living. You weren't going to get rich. You were always going to be a *campesino*. But you could make a living. (. . .) I had proposed that we finance the carry-over from eradicating coca to getting something that was harvestable, that was different. But the authorities in Washington thought that coca was an evil product and people who grew it must be bad, and therefore they didn't deserve any financing. That's a hard message to sell. (US official (A) interview, 2013)

As this passage demonstrates, there was certain recognition of political and economic realities within Bolivia at this time.⁵ This stance clashed with views back in Washington, where coca was ‘evil’ and coca cultivators were ‘bad’. Again, the potency of the Drug War Paradigm and its moral dichotomies in shaping policy is identified. In this case, though, the US Embassy tried to defend the interests of ‘victims’ of the coca-cocaine economy.

These victim-perpetrator narratives thus expose a tension in the way US interlocutors perceived the coca-cocaine economy and the Bolivian government. To a certain extent, US actors who had been on the ground in Bolivia sought to distance themselves from aspects of the Drug War model. This helped to rationalise their role within Bolivia, advancing benevolent foreign policy goals. Accordingly, such actors frame their accounts with ideas of American Exceptionalism: extending constructive support to a country struggling with coca-cocaine and underdevelopment. Narrating these perspectives from the present-day, including current debates of the ‘war on drugs’, affected such interpretations. US actors, therefore, engaged with the contradictions of US policies, local context, and their own experiences; their role as faithful servant of the US government and their re-evaluations of the implications of the ‘war on drugs’ in Bolivia.

It’s the conundrum... it’s kind of like America and guns. There’s this sacredness to the coca leaf, like there’s Americans’ right to own guns. Some people look at it from outside and think, ‘this is kind of crazy’. So the idea that there was this bad coca, which we were supposed to get rid of and eradicate, and there’s this good coca over here, and the line between the two of them gets rather fuzzy. Theoretically, all the coca down in the Chapare is bad coca, (and) at least most of the coca down in the Yungas is okay. But then all of a sudden coca production in the Yungas mushrooms like crazy, and stuff was being syphoned off onto the drug side. That was a major disconnect. (. . .) The fact that most of the folks who are involved in the lowest level of transit of cocaine to the United States, were poor, uneducated, humble people, trying to feed their families, who had few, if any, alternatives. And doing that, the repressive big colossus from the North, working with the Bolivian power elite to try and get them out this business. I guess if we could have done

⁵ Such considerations were evident in the US Embassy-led shift away from coca eradication to focus on interdiction (see Chapter 4).

one thing differently on my watch, it would have been to push harder on the alternative development side. (Bowers interview, 2013)

This duality also extended to conceptualisations of drug corruption. Continuing with Ambassador Bowers' account, for example, he discussed corrupt politicians as 'crooks'. This is grounded in Western liberal ideals of government and dyadic legal/illegal categorisations, where interactions between the state and the illicit trade are labelled one-dimensionally as corruption: deviance, requiring stronger enforcement of the law. He developed these ideas over the course of the interview, highlighting weak Bolivian institutions and greed as causes of corruption, and contrasting Bolivian political culture with the 'Anglo-Saxon' political tradition. This passage, then, introduces important themes in US perceptions of Bolivian state-narco interactions.

There were a number of people who were not... totally on-board, with what we were all trying to do, and, in fact, they were corrupt and were filling their pockets and were being bought off by the narco traffickers. That plays into Bolivian politics, and it plays into how the Bolivian people see their government as being independent and democratic, versus 'they just do whatever the *gringos* tell them'. There were always those tensions. (. . .) So you work through the Bolivian political process; sit-down with the president and say, 'you guys want to be our partners in this, then you've got to be our partners. We'll do our part, but you have got to do your part; you've got to clean-up this corruption. You've got to get rid of this guy who has clear - dead to rights - been taking money from the narcos'. (. . .) The higher ranking the individual was... the corrupt individual... the more difficult it could be. Likewise, the party politics comes into play. And if this particular person has been a loyal member of the party for a long time, then for the party bosses to cut him off at the knees, gets tougher. And the Anglo-Saxon, American view of what is appropriate and what is moral and what is ethical... inherited from our UK brethren... does not fit totally with what that view might be in Latin America. (Ibid.)

Bowers' account indicates deep rooted corruption running through Bolivian institutions, and these are presented as barriers to US counterdrug interests. In seeking to address the problem, though, the US was faced with severe challenges. This included anti-US sentiment, lack of local political will, and Bolivia's model of patronage politics. Diminishing the role of US coercion, Bowers here suggested a level of collaboration with the Bolivian government in the removal corrupt officials. But the former-Ambassador also emphasised

‘cultural’ differences in how actors from both sides conceptualised corruption. He argues that ‘Western values’ clashed with ‘normalised’ local practices. Reproducing the Drug War Paradigm, then, he understood corruption as moral and ethical failure.

More sympathetic discourses of drug corruption in Bolivia, drawing on the conceptual framework of the Development Paradigm, ran parallel to this type of framing. Focusing on ground level state-narco interactions, for example, the following anecdote from one US Embassy official highlights the power of drug traffickers as a key causal factor. In this view, accepting bribes was often a matter of self-preservation rather than greed and moral failure.

There was a Bolivian army officer, who had been very, very good and they had had a series of army officers in the Cochabamba region who had been - I'll put it in quotes - ‘corrupted’. And this Bolivian army officer had an outstanding reputation, a very good person. He went to Cochabamba, and approximately two weeks after he arrived, there began to appear in his mail box, photographs of his wife and his daughters: inside school classrooms, inside friends’ houses, inside the hairdresser, inside the restaurant. And these pictures just kept on appearing, and nothing. Then finally, there was a message that reached him and it said, ‘be sick next Monday, and don’t go to work, and you will have a year’s earnings in your bank account. But if you’re not sick, your wife and daughters will be fatally ill’. What do you do? (US official (A) interview, 2013)

According to this narrative, then, the wealth and violence of drug traffickers allowed them to subvert institutions and the rule of law. In this example, the Bolivian officer is placed in an impossible position, and the drug trade itself is identified as the cause of ‘corruption’. The coca-cocaine economy is thus portrayed as an invidious force within Bolivia, i.e. the country as victim rather than criminal. As above, moral dichotomies between ‘good’ and ‘bad’, and parallel distinctions between ‘state/drug trade’ and ‘licit/illicit’ are assumed. Arguing along similar lines, Miller cautioned against judgement of officials in producer nations who ‘succumb’ to corruption.

In general, my overall sense is that there is so much money involved, and so much violence it would be foolish on our part... because we don’t live with those pressures... to assume that folks on the other side are immune to those pressures or that if they succumb that somehow or other they must be inferior human beings. They’re living in a terribly difficult

environment, so from a personal standpoint I always sort of look carefully at people to say, 'I hope they're okay... I hope they're straight... I hope their family survives... I hope they survive... I hope their country gets better'. But it's tough. I mean if you've been researching this you'll know as well as I do, it's a tough, tough situation. Overall that's sort of how I looked at it and how I look at heroin production in Afghanistan, or the Golden Triangle or anyplace else. This is a big, dangerous industry. (Miller interview, 2013)

In sum, these conceptual dualities of the Bolivian coca-cocaine economy frame interpretations of the US role in Bolivia. For interlocutors, they help to reconcile the extension of US control in addressing an 'existential threat', and deeply held beliefs around how the US uses its influence in the world. They balance the idea of waging a 'war' against drugs in the Andean Highlands, with contemporary critiques of this approach, personal experiences, and noble intentions of extending democracy and development to the South. In Chapters 6 and 7, I draw out these dualisms in interpretations of state-narco interactions.

5.1.3 Development Discourses and Bolivian Ambivalence

Where the US Drug War Paradigm externalises accountability for domestic drug consumption, Bolivian interlocutors frequently conceptualised the coca-cocaine economy as a demand-side problem. Drawing on the Development Paradigm, then, the Bolivian drug trade was explained by simple market forces. Former-Interior Minister Guillermo Capobianco (1989-1991) accepted Bolivia's obligation to repress the drug trade, but ultimately he claimed US responsibility for the problem.

On one hand, I can understand the feelings of American families affected by drug consumption... the families of those young people. But on the other hand, it's a market. (. . .) We were conscious that we should provide help to the United States for the fight against drugs, but on two dimensions. (One), to attack consumption there, the market for drugs, (. . .) because as any undergrad of any university can tell you, it's supply and demand. If there is no consumption, then what production would there be? So we were always of this judgement that the alliance with the United States had to have a double dimension. Repression, okay, but also control of consumption. (Capobianco interview, 2014)

In this view, the US should focus its counterdrug efforts closer to home. This interpretative framework underpinned Bolivian arguments against the US counterdrug response and criticisms of the country as a drug producing nation. This perspective thus contrasts with US securitisation of the Bolivian coca-cocaine economy and the extension of control. As shown throughout this and the following two chapters, such ideas were important in the pursuit of competing US and Bolivian agendas.

In addition to counter-demand efforts, Bolivian actors called for a development-led counterdrug response. This holds that the presence of drug trade in the South is also a consequence of underdevelopment. Bolivian interlocutors integrated these ideas into arguments emphasising the cultural significance of coca in the Andes. These historical claims are powerful themes within Bolivia, and portray coca farmers as victims of the drug trade.⁶ Former-Subsecretary of Social Defence Gonzalo Torrico, drew on these ideas when laying-out the rationale for alternative development. The focus on coca producing countries such as Bolivia, rather than industrialised nations, who produced essential precursor chemicals, highlighted the imbalance of the ‘war on drugs’.

The coca leaf is not harmful. The drug is produced when the coca leaf is mixed with precursor chemicals, and the vast majority of Latin American countries don’t produce these chemicals. The precursor chemicals come from North America, they come from Europe, they come from Asia. Coca is produced in the Andes (but) it has (local) uses and an ancient history. So we searched for an important component, which was alternative development. (Torrico interview, 2014)

As part of this, the accounts of Bolivian actors displayed a level of ambivalence toward the coca-cocaine economy. Although the necessity of action against the drug trade was assumed, its effects on the Bolivian economy and society were

⁶ Some Bolivian interlocutors were more sceptical of coca. For example: ‘the *campesino* practice of coca leaf chewing is a tradition that, in some ways, is also getting high. (. . .) Many scientists have said that the mouth is cocaine lab’ (Salinas interview, 2014). In addition to this, former-UMOPAR Commander Luis Caballero (interview, 2014) argued that ‘the influence of drug trafficking in the (Chapare) region was, effectively, quite substantial. The mobilisations of the major *campesino* sectors cost money, quite a lot of money. It was never explained how thousands of *campesinos* in vehicles were mobilised in the road. Who was paying for this? There was influence from drug traffickers in this type of mobilisation. Why? Because drug trafficking is protective of its interests’.

viewed as relatively benign. Taking the economy first, coca-cocaine had softened the blow of the neoliberal structural reforms, providing jobs and inward investment (see Chapter 4). Member of Bolivia's business community and former-Interior Minister, Carlos Saavedra (interview, 2013), stated, 'that in the 1980s (the coca-cocaine trade's influence) was very strong. (. . .) It constituted a large weight on the economy'. The implications of this are two-fold. First, the drug trade was not viewed according to the moral dichotomies of the Drug War Paradigm, as its effects were not uniformly negative. Second, Bolivia should be compensated for eliminating this vital sector of the national economy. Looking back on the period now, one member of the Paz Zamora government remarked:

The United States was always more pro-eradication than alternative development, and I think that was a waste. (. . .) I think we made a mistake when we signed those agreements with the US. We said 'You're going to aid us, give us so much money'... I think we should have asked for much more. We didn't realise the impact that drug trafficking (had) on the economy. And I think it was a mistake on our part not to ask for more. (. . .) When we started the eradication plan, it created a problem of foreign currency and income in the country, without a doubt. It was quite difficult. I think that the amount of help that the US gave us on this was relatively small compared to what impact it had on the economy. (Bolivian official (A) interview, 2013)

As such, there were political consequences in taking action against coca-cocaine. While normatively opposed to the drug trade, Bolivia's social, political and economic realities had to be recognised. Paz Zamora (interview, 2014) highlighted some of these:

We had to go on creating alternative jobs because, if not, the social problem would be unmanageable. It could end up in violence because, what could we do with that number of coca producers? They had already lost their jobs when they were expelled from the mining sector, due to the shock plan that was applied in Bolivia in 1985 to address hyperinflation. So, to address hyperinflation, what they did was reduce the public sector, reduce the fiscal deficit. Because of this they had to greatly reduce the jobs in mining. So there were thousands of workers on the streets and they found a source of income in the coca fields of the Chapare. They went there to survive. So we couldn't enter directly with full eradication, because it was going to generate a social problem too great. In the meantime, then, to reduce these areas, you had to generate

jobs and investment for these people who were going to be displaced.
(Paz Zamora interview, 2014)

Aside from the political (and electoral) pressures Paz Zamora faced, these economic and social dynamics placed strain on Bolivia. Societal upheaval and demands from below had formed part of the dynamic of Bolivia's post-revolutionary history. Polarisation and contestation had contributed to a cycle of *coup d'état*, military authoritarianism and repression. In the 1980s, economic crisis under Siles Suazo and the neoliberal reforms of Paz Estensorro had resulted in similar social turbulence. In the latter case, 27,000 miners of the once-militant COMIBOL were laid-off (Lehman, 1999: 198). As Paz Zamora describes, coca-cocaine softened the blow and provided an alternative for such groups. In the context of Bolivia's recent democratisation and relatively untested political consensus, these dynamics were a source of concern. This underpins an ambivalent attitude towards coca-cocaine, and a contrasting perspective to those of US actors.

Such views of the drug trade also extended to other aspects of the Bolivian perspective. The accounts of Bolivian interlocutors echoed Thoumi's 'evil Colombian' thesis (2003: 242). As outlined in Chapter 2, Bolivia's role in the drug trade is viewed as being largely limited to coca cultivation, and absent of violence. Returning to Saavedra's account, he drew comparisons between the situation in Colombia and Bolivia. His interpretation recognised the stability of Bolivia's coca-cocaine economy and, again, its benign effects.

In Colombia, the government was torn apart by Pablo Escobar's (proposed) extradition. Here, drug trafficking was not violent. Here, there had been no bomb blasts or kidnappings of politicians, journalists or judges. Here, there had been practically no revenge killings by traffickers. If there had been deaths, it had been among the traffickers themselves. (. . .) Despite Bolivia being the second or third largest drug producer, violence wasn't something that had existed here, like it had in Colombia, or equally Peru. (Saavedra interview, 2014)

By arguing that 'Bolivia is not Colombia', these actors rejected the orthodoxy of the US Drug War model. Coca-cocaine was not viewed as an issue of national security and its effects were more complex than assumed by US counterdrug policy. These types of interpretations are important in understanding how

Bolivian actors perceived state-narco interactions and the meaning they attached to them. Below, Capobianco describes a level of general 'permissiveness' to the drug trade; a period in which it was viewed much like any other business.

I think in this era of the '80s, there was a lot of social permissiveness towards the major traffickers. Right? There was permissiveness. It wasn't an issue. And I can tell you, they appeared in the grand social clubs... people linked to these (traffickers) appeared, and there was no indiscriminate repression. I think, in this sense, those were very different times to those we live in now. (Capobianco interview, 2014)

This does not amount to an endorsement of the drug trade. Capobianco himself noted, for example, how the Huanchaca scandal caused public shock, changing how traffickers were perceived. Furthermore, the spectre of the García Meza period had changed the domestic conversation about the coca-cocaine economy (Meza, 2008: 584). Political parties seen to be in some way endorsing it risked punishment at the ballot box and, at the same time, the international environment created pressure to act (Giacoman interview, 2014). However, normative opposition to coca-cocaine and a desire to remove Bolivia from the drug circuit also gave way to more benign conceptualisations of the problem that contrasted with US securitisation. This links into democratisation narratives of the Paz Zamora government.

5.1.4 The 'Democracy Generation'

For several Bolivian actors, development discourses and ambivalence toward the coca-cocaine economy were subsumed into the 'Democracy Generation' narrative. The term was offered by Paz Zamora (interview, 2014), forming a discursive framework that establishes Bolivia's democratic transition as an overriding priority of his government. As part of this, conceptualisations of the 'drug problem' are viewed through the lens of democratisation. This includes, for example, opposition to destabilising 'Colombianised', US policies. Although the US viewed counterdrug and democratisation goals as complementary, Paz Zamora's government contested the political, societal and economic implications of the 'war on drugs'. Going into negotiations for the Andean Initiative, dealing with the US Embassy and responding to state-narco

interaction, Paz Zamora's government was first and foremost concerned with sustaining Bolivia's democratic transition.

I'm from what's called... from what some in Bolivia call... the Democracy Generation. We were first moved to consider the idea of a democratic Bolivia, because we were born in the Bolivia of the military *golpista*.⁷ Bolivia is one of the few countries in the region where, since its birth as a republic, it had only military governments. Civil-military *golpismo* became a model of government, a mode of governing the country... There was gunfire when they entered the presidential palace, and gunfire when they left. The political parties were organised with the aim of finding a military leader and staging a coup, until another party would find a different ally in the military and remove them. In many ways, we were a barbaric and unpredictable nation. Anything could happen in any moment. So this affected our generation. In this, I played a leading role... because of this cause, I entered into public service. (Paz Zamora interview, 2014)

The narrative thus situates Paz Zamora and his contemporaries on the path of Bolivian history. They had lived through the era of authoritarianism and political instability, where the military had been the dominant political actor. Due to this experience, he and his generation were instilled with a sense of purpose: to bring democracy to a country that had only ever known military government. Pacted-democracy between the MIR and ADN was part of this, reconciling leftist and right-wing political factions (see Chapter 6). In making the *Acuerdo Patriótico*, Paz Zamora had helped to bring the cycle of military '*golpismo*' to an end.

There was a problem when democracy began in Latin America. The Left - influenced by Cuba - said, 'no, this is bourgeois. This isn't the road of the Left'. We thought that the Left should participate. So we were the first - the first - the first party of the Left in South America, if not Latin America, that entered the electoral process. (Working) among parties of the Right, it was hard for us. Nowadays, this is normal for the Left... for the Latin American Left, right now. Lula treated us like traitors.⁸ President Lula with his *Grupo de San Pablo* released a document against us for entering democracy. What do you make of that?! The continent has changed a lot since then. (Ibid.)

⁷ This translates as 'coup d'état'.

⁸ Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva became President of Brazil in 2003.

Developing the historical perspective of the ‘Democracy Generation’ narrative, Paz Zamora emphasises themes of struggle and sacrifice. For example, the MIR was at the vanguard of the region’s shift to electoral democracy, despite the criticism of prominent members of the Latin American Left and the difficulties of dealing with former adversaries, such as Banzer. The persecution of the Left in Latin America during the Cold War adds further substance to these themes (e.g. see Smith, 2009: Ch. 7). The MIR’s experiences of repression mirrored those of other Left-wing parties in the region. Paz Zamora here alludes to his own imprisonment under Banzer, although there are other significant cases of authoritarian abuses he could have drawn on. For example, it is widely accepted that he was subject to an assassination attempt by Right-wing elements of the Bolivian military in June 1980.⁹ This is the potent history from which the ‘Democracy Generation’ narrative rises: leaving bitterness in the past to support the installation of a viable democratic government.

Before talk of left or right, the issue for Bolivia (was) democracy or not; to be a modern nation, to be a nation. So this was our struggle. We were 7 years in the underground resistance against the military, with all that entailed: exile, imprisonment. I was imprisoned in one of the military prisons here... that gives an idea of what it was like for that generation, that Latin American generation; like the current president of Uruguay¹⁰ (and) Rouseff in Brazil.¹¹ (But) our efforts would close this cycle in Bolivia definitively, the military *golpismo* mode of government. It was finished, closed; opening democracy. I was the third democratic president, and the first vice-president of democratic government in Bolivia. Democracy was installed for the first time in Bolivia. We couldn’t say, as they could in Chile or Uruguay, that we were reinstalling democracy... Chile had democracy, but it was halted by Pinochet, it was the same in Uruguay. In Bolivia? No, there hadn’t been a democratic system. In the Constitution, yes, but that was only a piece of paper. So to finish this military cycle, to establish democracy in 1982 and to try and get a country that doesn’t have a democratic culture to develop one,

⁹ Paz Zamora was the sole survivor of a plane crash during the 1980 electoral campaign (Dunkerley, 1984: 284). He was part of a joint-Leftist ticket with Hernan Siles Suazo, which was opposed by General Garcia Meza and his allies. Few doubted that the latter were responsible for the ‘accident’. Paz Zamora’s house had been bombed a day prior to the crash, and later it was found that the plane had been hired from a company owned by Colonel Norberto Salomón, a close ally of Arce Gomez. In addition to this, under the Garcia Meza regime, nine members of the MIR were gunned down during a party meeting in La Paz. Arce Gomez was also implicated in this case.

¹⁰ Paz Zamora here is referring José Mujica, who served as President of Uruguay between 2010 and 2015.

¹¹ Dilma Rouseff became President of Brazil in 2011.

little by little... we had a very prominent role. At times, the necessity of guaranteeing the democratic governability of the country wasn't understood; we weren't used to that here. So we had our own government, headed by the MIR, but we made alliances. We helped make it happen, including political factions that were not aligned with our values. We were part of international socialism, the social democratic parties of Europe... all of this. I was vice-President of the Socialist International... that, from the start, made me appear a little untrustworthy. Anyway, in this way, with these objectives, we set the trajectory, and today we can see that this line may continue and that we have left a mark on a modern democracy in Bolivia. (Ibid)

Paz Zamora's interpretation is thus couched in wider historical trends. For example, his actions as president were shaped by his formative political experiences under Bolivian *golpismo*. In these passages, the Cold War remains in the background, but Paz Zamora suggests that his leftist roots made him 'appear untrustworthy'. This hints at his explanation for the fraught relationship between his government and the US.¹² Situating the case in the present, he places himself alongside contemporaries of the new-Left in Latin America. In some ways, the 'war on drugs' seems less compelling to him than the history of the Third Wave and the significant political changes it wrought. Such context, though, gives his account a rich historical perspective, where he emphasises structural factors in the course of his own life story. As such, these are viewed as affecting personal agency. The former-President's self-representation and sense of legacy are part of this; strands that become even more pertinent when questions are raised around his government's commitment to counterdrug goals and involvement in cases of corruption.

The idea of maintaining 'democratic governability' is also important here. Because of their experiences under authoritarianism, the 'Democracy Generation' was heavily invested in a democratic Bolivia and understood the fragility of this political consensus. This included compromises around pacted-democracy and a concern to ensure political stability. In the following chapter, I argue that aspects of this narrative are used to justify uneven democratisation and the tacit-acceptance of state-narco networks. In other words, imperfect democratic institutionalisation, ambivalence towards coca-cocaine, and the

¹² In the next section, I outline this parallel framing narrative, emphasising the effects of the Cold War legacy on the 'war on drugs'.

remnants of authoritarianism and clientelism, were the price of maintaining democratic transition. The US 'war on drugs' was viewed as contradictory to these goals. Opposition to the US approach, then, was not indicative of a lack of political will, corruption or anti-Yankee sentiment, but grounded instead in the goals of political order and democratisation. As elected government has been sustained and parties of the Left across the region have engaged in the democratic process, the MIR's actions are given historical weight and legitimacy. According to the 'Democracy Generation' narrative, then, the US had its Drug War, while the Bolivian government had their 'democratising mission'.

5.2 The Nature of US-Bolivian Relations

As the preceding discussion shows, US and Bolivian interlocutors drew on different interpretative frameworks. Often, these perspectives diverged in significant ways, solidifying divergent agendas. In this section, I consider another important facet of this dynamic: how these actors conceived affairs between their countries. These narratives of US-Bolivian relations are important to Chapters 6 and 7, in mapping contestation around the escalation of the 'war on drugs' in Bolivia, the extension of US control and cases of political drug scandal.

For US interlocutors, themes of American Exceptionalism were present, as they pursued the 'three Ds' in Bolivia: drugs, democracy and development. These goals were believed to be mutually-reinforcing, and beneficial to both the US and Bolivia. US paternal attitudes towards Latin America may also be identified, i.e. the Northern patron providing assistance to its underdeveloped Southern client. Bolivian actors, meanwhile, rationalised their fractious relationship with the US Embassy against the background of the Cold War. Its legacy continued to shape US-Bolivian relations. For example, the former-leftists of the MIR were viewed with suspicion by US Cold Warriors, who continued to engage in the political subterfuge that had characterised the authoritarian era.

This historical framing was largely absent from the accounts of US interviewees.¹³ At least outwardly, they drew a sharp division between the Cold War and the ‘war on drugs’. The interpretations of Bolivian interlocutors, though, were grounded in a longer view of history. Their period of reference was not neatly demarcated ‘1989-93’. This type of historical contextualisation is not only crucial to their analysis of the formulation, negotiation and implementation of counterdrug policies, it also provides insights into how they conceptualised interlinkages between the state and the illicit sphere. In this sense, uneven democratisation - the continuation of clientelistic and authoritarian practices - and the compromises these actors made to ensure stability (e.g. pacted democracy), are interpreted against the development of Bolivian history. Here, the path to democratisation and the Cold War period are crucial, incorporating the nature of state-societal dynamics, civil-military relations and the role of the US in Bolivia. It is through reference to these factors that such actors interpreted state-narco interactions and the onset of the ‘war on drugs’.

5.2.1 The ‘Three Ds’

US counterdrug efforts in Bolivia formed a triumvirate of foreign policy objectives, alongside democratic consolidation and economic development: ‘We had what we called “the three Ds”: democracy, drugs and development. That’s what we were about; what we were trying to do’ (Bowers interview, 2013). These goals were proffered as complementary. For example, dismantling the drug trade would allow for institutionalisation of democracy and enable economic growth; and free market policies would reduce the drug economy by creating growth, and so strengthen democratic institutions. Solving ‘America’s drug problem’, then, would not just be to the benefit of the US. Informed by themes of American Exceptionalism, US counterdrug policy was defended in terms of shared interests with the country’s regional partners in the South. The

¹³ Ambassador Bowers noted the importance of this when describing his relationship with the Paz Zamora government: ‘We got on fine. I went to the University of California, Berkley, and they were Latin-Leftists, so they were aware that Berkley was sort of at the fore-front of free-speech movement and the Leftist insurrections of the 1960s that took place in the United States. Whether I had anything to do with that or not’ (Bowers interview, 2013).

following quote from a letter from President Bush to Ambassador Bowers (Bush correspondence, 1991) is indicative of these beliefs.

As leader of the democracies, our Nation faces an historic opportunity to help shape a freer, more secure, and more prosperous world, in which our ideals and way of life can truly flourish. As President, I intend to advance these objectives around the globe, and I look to you, as my personal representative in Bolivia, as my partner in this task.

Paternal attitudes towards Bolivia were also evident in this US narrative. North-South disparities are underplayed, as are more critical readings of US influence in Latin America. The US, as the 'City on the Hill' is charged with the responsibility of extending its ideals to the world. Possible US complicity in creating, for example, past-authoritarian governments or violent trafficking organisations, is glossed over. US exploitation of uneven North-South power relations for its own ends is similarly ignored. Instead, this strand of the narrative emphasises benevolent US foreign policy intentions within Bolivia, and portrays the country as a poor relative, unable to properly manage itself. Addressing Bolivian reactions to the withholding of US aid linked to eradication, Ambassador Bowers (interview, 2013) stated:

Well they would say, 'we've tried very hard... we've worked very hard... we're doing this... you don't understand... politically we can't go down and do this right now... you have to give us a little more slack, a little more time'. So most of the time it was more a bargaining than it was, 'of course we signed this contract, so of course we're going to live up to the terms of it'. So that gets back to mind-set... that is different. And they had a lot to lose if things go south. And they've gone south, I mean not on my watch, but in the last few years. Evo Morales was known to the Embassy. I don't remember ever meeting him, but he was known as a low-level rabble-rouser, not very bright, not very educated, but was able... had a charismatic capability and now he's president of the country.

In this example, the US plays the role of guardian to Bolivia's errant child. Bowers' commentary suggests a lack of will, as the Bolivian government is reluctant to honour the terms of its 'contract'. He also alludes to the consequences of failure to comply with these agreed goals: Bolivia 'had a lot to lose'. The discussion of President Evo Morales (2006-) is interesting in this regard. The Morales government's anti-US stance, including expulsion of the

DEA in 2008, has entailed a rejection of its Northern patron. Bowers here is dismissive of Morales and argues that the country has ‘gone south’ under his rule. In terms of US paternalism, then, Bolivia has suffered in the absence of the guiding hand of the US. These kinds of attitudes bleed into interpretations of the US counterdrug role in Bolivia during the period of study.

Looking back, though, some US interlocutors recognised the inadequacy of aspects of US policy. For example, former-Ambassador David Greenlee (2002-2006), who also served as Deputy Chief of Mission to the US Embassy from 1987 to 1989, suggested that the ‘war on drugs’ had been detrimental to wider US objectives. He believed that democracy and development goals were frequently diminished in favour of US counterdrug objectives. Simply put, US politicians were more concerned about cocaine on their streets than US strategic interests in Latin America. Budgetary and domestic political realities drove the US agenda in Bolivia.

I would always say our interest is a consolidation of democracy, the stabilisation of the country and so forth. I would not say it’s the drug effort. I never said that. But, in-fact, because of where the money went, there was so much money going into that, that it was a kind of distortion of what I think our real priorities ought to be. When people say, ‘well what is it about Bolivia that links back to the States that makes things, really touches our interests?’ It was, in those days, back in the late ’80s particularly, it was Bolivian cocaine hitting the streets of the US. (. . .) I was always a little bit sceptical about how useful this great concentration on the anti-drug stuff was in terms of our bigger interests in Bolivia, which were less tangible: democratisation and helping Bolivia move from its very chaotic kind of revolutionary history into something more stable. (Greenlee interview, 2013)

Greenlee was US Ambassador to Bolivia when former-*cocalero* Morales became president and adopted an anti-US stance. It is perhaps unsurprising, then, that he see the contradiction in US foreign policy.¹⁴ Several other US interviewees also made the connection between US counterdrug policy and the rise of Morales. Such views recognised the dominance of US counterdrug goals in

¹⁴ Former DEA official, Terry Burke (interview 2013), observed the frustration of certain US Embassy officials being forced to pursue the ‘war on drugs’: ‘Most people don’t go to the State Department to run enforcement operations, most of these people were economics folks or whatever, and law enforcement was not their forte’.

Bolivia, as development aid was conditioned on the eradication targets and ‘the advancement of democracy - beyond the technical matter of holding regular elections - received little more than lip service’ (Lehman, 2006: 132). As discussed in the following chapter, the vigorous pursuit of Drug War goals came before local concerns around political, social and economic instability caused by counterdrug policies. This included the installation of Drug War proxies to circumvent ‘corrupt’ local power structures, and direct pressure on uncooperative partners in the Bolivian government, all aimed at exerting US counterdrug control.

5.3.2 The Cold War Legacy

The Cold War Legacy narrative provides insights into how some Bolivian interlocutors made sense of their relations with the US. First, they believed US policy was influenced by the politics of the past and so the US Embassy was suspicious of the once radical MIR. Linked into this, the US security apparatus was populated by the same officials from the Cold War era: although the focus had changed to the ‘war on drugs’, the ‘Cold War mentality’ remained (Paz Zamora interview, 2014). Second, the US is portrayed as controlling and, at times, ruthless. Reflecting themes of *Imperialismo Yanquí*, interlocutors discuss the role of the US in the region’s unstable history and its efforts to shape Bolivia’s internal politics. As the Cold War ended, the realities of a new unipolar world placed the US in an even stronger position to influence events within Bolivia. From this perspective, then, the ‘war on drugs’ may have substituted for the Cold War, but both are placed along the same unbroken line of US-Bolivian history. These aspects of the Cold War Legacy framing narrative are illustrated in passages from interviews with Guillermo Capobianco and Jaime Paz Zamora.

Capobianco was a founding member of the MIR, and went on to serve as Interior Minister in Paz Zamora’s government before resigning under the weight of US drug corruption allegations. He made reference to wider historical dynamics in his analysis of the period; from his foundational political experiences in post-

revolutionary Bolivia to the great upheavals of the Cold War. Throughout his account, the US is often portrayed as the antagonist.

During this time,¹⁵ we began to blame the United States for everything... imperialism... and we would go and protest. (. . .) We would go to USCIS,¹⁶ throw stones and everything... a typical young anti-imperialist... a revolutionary of the period. (. . .) The radicalization of the Cuban Revolution in 1961¹⁷ divided Latin America in two. Because of the battle at the Bay of Pigs and the revolutionary victory, the presence of guerrillas trained in Cuba begins to spread like wildfire through Latin America.¹⁸ I've been to Havana a number of times. I went there because we were friends with the Cubans... the MIR, like other revolutionary parties of the era, were friends of the Cubans: the ELN, the Communist Party, Marxists, *MNRistas*, etc., and among them, the MIR. But the most terrible... most terrible of all this, *querido joven*,¹⁹ was the reaction of the United States. It was brutal. It was criminal. At least, 50,000 young people died between the Bay of Pigs and the 1970s, before Carter became president and human rights and all of that. At least 50,000 young people! The brightest of the middle classes... academics, professionals... full of ideals. It was... It was... the decade of dreams... the decade of socialist utopia, in which we participated because our heroes were the *Barbudos de la Sierra*, who arrived on the first of January and all of that. So all of this is what I call... I think I'm the only one... 'the Holocaust of the Latin American Youth'. (Capobianco interview, 2014)

The upheaval in Latin America over the 1960s and '70s informs Capobianco's understanding of the US. It links into US 'distrust' of the MIR, in the sense that his party was aligned with the Latin American Left during this period of great division in the region. More than this, though, the MIR is portrayed as being part of an idealistic movement that was then crushed by the US. The 'brutal' use of US power to fulfil geopolitical goals and intervention in the internal politics of

¹⁵ Capobianco here is referring to his days as a student during the 1950-60s.

¹⁶ The Office of United States Citizenship and Immigration Services.

¹⁷ This was the year of the Bay of Pigs invasion. Right-wing Cuban exiles, based out of Miami and supported by the CIA, launched an ill-fated attempt to depose Castro and his government. In the aftermath, the Cuban government became more closely aligned with the Soviet Union.

¹⁸ Capobianco (interview, 2014) here segues into Che Guevara's revolutionary expedition in Bolivia: 'In Peru, in Argentina, in Chile, in Bolivia... *focos* and guerrillas appeared with theories taken from Régis Debray. Okay? The guerrilla *foco* was his theoretical work and that was adopted by *el Comandante* Ernesto Guevara; and he came because he was convinced of Debray's theory. But life was different. He arrived in a country where there had already been a revolution. The *campesinos* already had land, agrarian reform had been introduced'.

¹⁹ Roughly translates as dear boy/young man/son. Capobianco also uses the word '*joven*' in his subsequent description of those young people killed during this period. Subconsciously or not, he placed me as a young academic alongside those young people who had lost their lives under authoritarianism.

foreign nations are central themes of Latin American notions of Yankee Imperialism (Smith, 2009).

From the Monroe Doctrine and the backing of oppressive authoritarian regimes to economic exploitation and Dependency Theory, the US is said to be overwhelmingly self-interested, acting frequently to the detriment of its less powerful southern neighbours. Local priorities, such as democratisation, are placed secondary to US foreign policy goals. This idea continues to hold relevance for certain sectors in Latin America and instils a sense of grievance against the regional hegemon. Lectures from US politicians over drug production, trafficking and corruption may be countered with a list of crimes - real or perceived - committed by the US.²⁰ Paz Zamora makes these connections in the following passage.

So this is what I can tell you... of what was our experience. There are important issues. For example, the fact that all of this occurred between '89 and '93, in the context of a brutal change in the planet, with the end of the Cold War and the beginning of a new age. This had a huge influence on the US personnel. From 1989 a new unipolar international political system starts. So this is shown in Bolivia in the 'war on drugs', in the imposition of the neoliberal model. That is to say, 'this planet is ours, including Bolivia'. They were already involved in everything here. It was already very difficult... that a military leader could take power... they controlled all of the armed forces and the police. It was very complicated... that it was they who had won the Cold War. (. . .) We were the first Leftist party in Latin America that entered electoral politics. Our party, the MIR... before Lula in Brazil. After Allende, the first Leftist president in South America was me. After the tragedy of Allende and just as the Cold War was ending. At that time, the Americans felt victorious. I tell you this because it had a lot to do with the way they confronted the issue of drugs. They faced it with the Cold War mentality, because it was the same personnel that had fought the Cold War, in the intelligence services, etc... the fight against communism, all of this. The same personnel... (they) didn't retire, they moved on to another enemy and they took the issue of the day which was drug trafficking. I was three months in government when the Berlin Wall fell. I was the only Leftist president in South America and the Berlin Wall fell. I didn't know where to go! Two years later, the Soviet Union falls. So, this is context in which I happened to face these problems. (Paz Zamora interview, 2014)

²⁰ As discussed in Chapter 2, this is an important strand of the Development Paradigm.

The end of the Cold War was, therefore, a crucial contextual factor for Paz Zamora's presidency and the 'war on drugs' in Bolivia. He made reference to themes of Yankee Imperialism, in the projection of US power and control in the South, for example. The changing international balance, though, imbued the US with almost unchecked influence. Echoing institutional-bureaucratic narratives and the securitisation agenda, the search for new missions brought the 'war on drugs' to the fore. But there was also continuity in personnel and attitudes. This entails Paz Zamora's position as an outsider, and enduring US influence within Bolivia, reaching into the security forces. In his account, he was a leftist in the mould of Allende, faced with the same 'Cold War mentality', and the same US personnel who had provided support to Bolivia's past authoritarian regimes.

The Cold War Legacy narrative thus provides insights into how these Bolivian actors rationalised US-Bolivian relations. As discussed in the following two chapters, historical undercurrents underpinned their interpretations. The US was viewed, in many ways, as the same Cold War actor, who had interfered in Latin American politics and sabotaged the goals of the Latin America Left. Although the MIR had changed, the US continued to judge them through the prism of Cold War politics. For these interlocutors, this explains the top-down control of the US in the 'war on drugs', as well as the turbulent relationship between Paz Zamora's government and the US Embassy. In addition to this, the outpouring of post-Cold War triumphalism - or hubris, as some interviewees would suggest - led to the extension of US power: 'that is to say, "this planet is ours, including Bolivia"' (Paz Zamora interview, 2014). Stated normative US goals, such as protecting 'America's Youth' and 'liberating' Latin American democracies from violent traffickers, are dismissed in this narrative. Instead, US conduct in the advancement of counterdrug policy is explained through existing and long-standing models of power and control in Latin America.²¹

²¹ This cynicism is also present in the conspiracy theories which frequently emerged in my interviews with Bolivian actors. As discussed in the Chapter 7, these aspects of their accounts diminish Bolivia's implied guilt for its role in the coca-cocaine economy.

5.4 Conclusion

Gamarra (1997) argues that lack of progress in US-Bolivian counterdrug efforts owed much to a clash of perceptions, where US actors saw drugs as matter of national security and Bolivians did not. Contributing to this failure, the level of mistrust between the Bolivian government and the US Embassy during this period was an open secret. This chapter unpicks the contrasting perspectives of US and Bolivian actors, which underpinned such dynamics. Their distinct conceptualisations of Bolivia's coca-cocaine economy, the 'war on drugs' and the nature of US-Bolivian relations, reflected and entrenched distinct agendas. Analysis of these interpretative frameworks brings into focus competing US and Bolivian priorities. For example, the Embassy's Drug War stood alongside the Paz Zamora government's 'democratising mission'; American Exceptionalism clashed with the Cold War legacy. These are crucial to how these actors understood state-narco interactions, and how they navigated them. The narratives mapped in this chapter thus inform the analysis in the final two empirical chapters: uneven democracy, and links between the security forces and the drug trade; and contestation around drug scandals in the Bolivian political class.

Chapter 6 | Uneven Democracy and Uneven Power

This chapter examines how police/military state-narco networks were interwoven in the political dynamics of post-transition Bolivia. Drawing on the accounts of US and Bolivian actors, I discuss Bolivia's post-transition political settlement and the introduction of the Andean Initiative as important contextual factors. First, uneven Bolivian democratisation entailed the continuation of clientelistic and authoritarian practices alongside formal institutional processes. Transition had brought relatively free and fair elections, but pacted democracy,¹ and military and police autonomy perpetuated informalism. I argue that this limited transparency and accountability, and contributed to the maintenance of state-narco networks running through the security forces. During this period of uncertainty, when the 'rules of the game' were still in flux, such governance was viewed to form part of a fragile political equilibrium. As such, the installation of the US Drug War model challenged the local political order and the preservation of Bolivia's imperfect transition. As negotiations for the Andean Initiative unfolded and policy filtered down to Bolivia, distinct US and Bolivian agendas came into focus. US Drug War goals clashed with the proclaimed 'democratising mission' of the Paz Zamora government and its ambivalent attitudes towards the coca-cocaine economy. My analysis shows how differing interpretations of drugs and state-narco networks informed divergent US and Bolivian counterdrug preferences. Distinct priorities led to competitive US-Bolivian relations of power and control.

The first half of the chapter outlines the *Acuerdo Patriótico*, the political-police pact and unreformed civil-military relations as important facets of uneven Bolivian democracy. Moving beyond conventional accounts of drug corruption,

¹ This draws on O'Donnell & Schmitter (1986: 37-47), who define a pact as 'an explicit, but not always publicly explicated or justified, agreement among a select set of actors which seek to define (or better, to redefine) rules governing the exercise of power on the basis of mutual guarantees for the vital interests of those entering into it.' This takes on different forms in different countries, but such agreements generally represent well-established interests, limit competition and accountability, control the policy agenda and distort citizen equality. Pacts may be used to reduce uncertainty between key actors/institutions in the process of transitioning to democracy. In the Bolivian case, this included the *Pacto por la Democracia* between the MNR and ADN during Paz Estensorro's presidency, and the subsequent *Acuerdo Patriótico* between the MIR and ADN.

my analysis provides insights into the function of state-narco networks during this period and their relation to processes of political transition. I argue that this also reveals how Bolivian actors prioritised their ‘democratising mission’, opposing destabilising, ‘Colombianised’ counterdrug policies, and rejecting US securitised notions of drugs. In the second half of the chapter, I consider how this view clashed with US perspectives during the introduction of the Andean Initiative. As the policy was implemented at ground-level, the US Embassy exerted control over the Bolivian government, attempting to bypass local ‘corrupt’ power structures and install its own Drug War proxies. However, the US approach was resisted by the Paz Zamora administration. The passing of a repentance law, for example, reflected long-standing Bolivian government tendencies of seeking accommodation with the drug trade rather than confrontation. Through this discussion, I elucidate competing Bolivian and US agendas, underpinned by different conceptualisations of Bolivia’s drug ‘problem’. The chapter, therefore, explores how elite US and Bolivian actors understood and responded to state-narco networks in different ways, against the background of uneven democracy and the escalation of the ‘war on drugs’. This analysis furthers understanding of the interactions that evolve between the state and the drug trade in different contexts, US-Bolivian relations, and the development of US counterdrug policy in Latin America.

6.1 Pacted Democracy: the *Acuerdo Patriótico*

The MIR and ADN formed the *Acuerdo Patriótico* following 1989’s indecisive presidential election.² The agreement made Jaime Paz Zamora (MIR) president, and gave Hugo Banzer’s ADN significant influence within the new government. It was emblematic of the great changes that had occurred within Bolivian politics: on one side, the former radical leftist embracing democracy and free market economics; on the other, the dictator turned democrat passing-up his opportunity to become president. The MIR and Banzer’s fractious shared history

² The top three candidates each gained around a quarter of the poll, with Sanchez ‘Goni’ Gonzalo de Losada (MNR) narrowly ahead of Hugo Banzer (ADN) and Jaime Paz Zamora (MIR) respectively. According to electoral rule, when no candidate was able to take over 50 per cent of the popular vote, Congress was required to select the next president. The *Acuerdo Patriótico* ensured Paz Zamora had the support of the ADN in Congress and so sufficient support to become president.

added to the symbolism. The left-wing MIR had been caught-up in the often violent repression that characterised periods of Banzer's authoritarian rule. In the run-up to the 1989 election, Paz Zamora had expressed still lingering animosity, stating: 'a river of blood separates the MIR and Banzer' (Comas, 1990a). The subsequent pact between the former enemies, then, drew accusations of political opportunism. Speaking at the UN General Assembly shortly after his inauguration, Paz Zamora (UN, 1989: 7) addressed such criticisms, arguing that 'a new cycle' had begun, making 'consensus, agreement and harmony, rather than conflict and confrontation, the foundations of Bolivia's democratic policy.' This was a view shared by former-government minister Gonzalo Torrico (interview, 2014) of ADN.

Bolivia had already left behind the era of '*los golpes de estado*'. There had been a political maturity... democratic compromise. And between the political parties as well, there existed a dialogue, there existed a democratic culture. (Torrico interview, 2014)

Actors such as Paz Zamora (interview, 2014) highlighted their repression under Banzer, but stated that the MIR had left this in the past to bring 'the military *golpismo* mode of government' to a close, and open democracy. Aligning with factions who did not share their political convictions, Paz Zamora argued that 'the necessity of guaranteeing the democratic governability of the country wasn't understood' (ibid.).³ According to this view, the agreement between the parties was crucial to ensuring effective government (Azcuí, 1989). It represented the beginnings of a new way of doing politics, as these factions settled matters through negotiation rather than *coup d'état*. Learning the lessons of the Siles Suazo period, for example, such agreements prevented deadlock and ensured the government's agenda passed Congress (Gamarra, 1996: 74-5). Drawing on historical perspective and the symbolism of the *Acuerdo Patriótico*, this established 'democracy' and political stability as overriding goals of the Paz Zamora government. Consequently, US counterdrug goals and securitised responses to drugs were diminished.

³ The full passage of the interview transcript in which these quotes appear is produced in Chapter 5.1.4.

The topic of drugs wasn't a priority for us. It wasn't. Transforming the country was. For the country to transition from the dictatorship of Banzer to democracy: this was our priority. Political stability, economic stability, these were our priorities, and the topic of drug was nothing... an important thing, but as I say, it wasn't what I judge... it wasn't the priority. There were other more important things in that moment. (Capobianco interview, 2014)

The claimed 'democratising mission' and political pragmatism of the MIR and ADN, though, was also subject to more negative assessments. Rather than building and maintaining democratic political consensus, it was argued that Bolivia's 'old ways of doing politics had survived' (Gamarra, 1991: 14). In this view, such arrangements were used by political elites to limit popular representation, implement popularly opposed policies, and distribute the spoils of power among themselves. Reducing transparency, this established a policymaking process 'reminiscent of the exclusionary processes of previous authoritarian experiences' (Ibid.). This included the trading of political patronage between the parties (Morales Q., 1992a: 106). While notionally committed to the neoliberal ideal of reducing the size of the state, for example, the government created three new ministries, 16 new vice-ministerial posts and added 20,000 new public sector employees. Areas of Bolivia's 'new politics' were thus characterised by particularism.⁴

This form of clientelism led to accusations of 'widespread corruption' in the Bolivian political system (Conaghan & Malloy, 1994: 230). Reflecting this view, James Cason (2009: 346-347), the US Embassy's Political Counsellor at this time, argued that such pacts were used by political elites to 'steal as much money as they could for themselves'.

The traditional politicians in the ADN, the MIR, and the MNR had run the country for years, excluding the indigenous majority from political life. They looked after themselves and their particular interests. (. . .) There was a lot of manoeuvring going on between the elite trying to keep power. I'm very cynical about it, but it's realistic... to steal as much money as they could for themselves, to get rich. They didn't care about the poor people. Indians didn't get much out of this. So this was an elite

⁴ O'Donnell (1996: 40) uses this term to refer to informal practices that contradict the universal rights and formal processes promised by modern, liberal democracy, including patronage and nepotism.

game they'd played for centuries, divvying-up the pie. That's why they made these strange alliances of the Right and Left, which didn't make any sense, such as you looked at them as a way to divvy up the resources of the country for themselves.

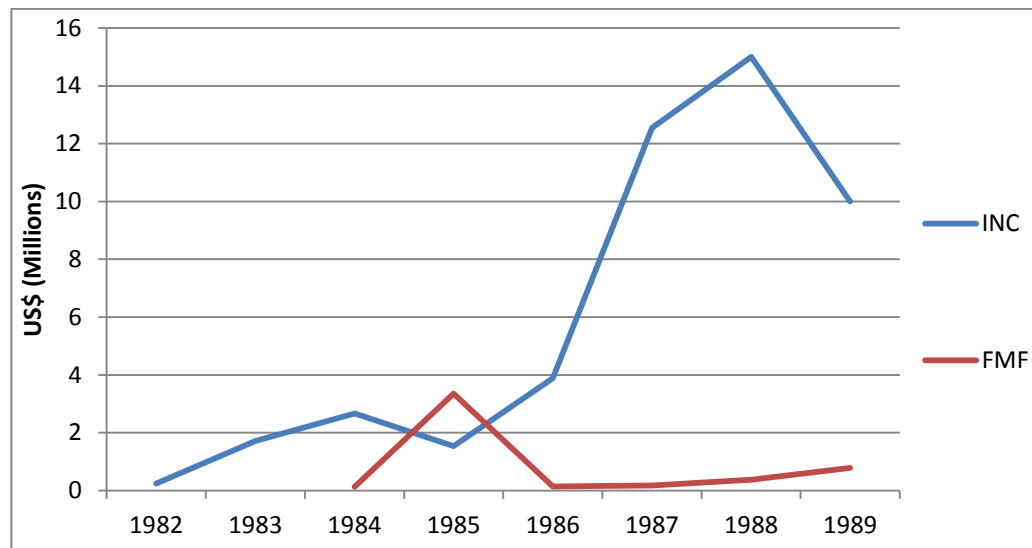
Viewed from the 'Anglo-Saxon, American' perspective (Bowers interview, 2013), political pacts and the systems of patronage that maintained them, amounted to little more than corruption. Under this conception, uneven democracy and informalism were divorced from their political context. This stands in contrast to the interpretations of Bolivian interlocutors, who looked on the *Acuerdo Patriótico* as a symbol of democracy. Although open to accusations of opportunism and self-interest, for actors such as Paz Zamora, the pact was the culmination of years spent in opposition to authoritarianism. Bolivia's turbulent political past justified these compromises. These were essential to establishing a new mode of politics. As such, the 'Democracy Generation' accepted imperfect democratisation - including police and military autonomy - as the price of maintaining the transition.

6.2 The Political-Police Pact

Informalism was also evident in relations between the political class and the police institution. During the authoritarian period, the police had been subordinated to the military and used as part of the repressive state apparatus (Gamarra, 1991: 23). Post-transition, the balance of power between the institutions was recalibrated. The military saw its internal role reduced, while the police grew in stature (Barrios M., 1993: 4). The police benefitted from increased prerogatives, protected budgets and foreign counterdrug funding (see Figure 6.1). Such changes would bring Bolivia in-line with the principles of modern liberal democracy and a democratic rule of law. But this shift was also grounded in civilian fears of a return to military government, and their reliance on the police to maintain internal order (drawn from Quintana, 2005: 100). The political-police pact established mutual interests, and was aimed at maintaining the post-transition political settlement. First, the military's commitment to democracy remained uncertain, and so civilian governments looked to bolster the police as an institutional counterweight. Second, against the background of economic instability and the implementation of unpopular structural reforms,

the police were called upon to maintain order. Mirroring the limited competition and accountability of pacted democracy, societal opposition was quelled by the police. This included, for example, the suppression of a general strike during Paz Estensorro's government (Mesa, et. al., 2008: 581-3). In return for fulfilling these roles, the police enjoyed independence from external control.

Figure 6.1: US INC and FMF Assistance to Bolivia (1982-1989)⁵



*No figures were available for FMF assistance to Bolivia prior to 1984. (USAID, 2013)

Institutional reform of the police was placed on hold, as the political parties instead utilised patron-client bonds to achieve their aims (Barrios M., 1994: 95). This included power over appointments to command positions, and disbursement of discretionary government funds. Particularism thus defined relations between politicians and the police. In addition to this, though, post-transition governments feared that encroachments on the institution risked their support (Quintana, 2004: Para. 96). Lack of reform meant that the authoritarian tendencies of the police remained unchallenged: limiting transparency, accountability and oversight (Ibid: Para. 95).⁶ Furthermore, as political leaders

⁵ International Narcotics Control Assistance (INC) is part of the Foreign Assistance Act (FAA - passed 1961, INC amendment 1971). At this time, the Bolivian air force and navy benefitted from assistance in the creation of two counterdrug support unit, but the police were the main beneficiary. Foreign Military Financing (FMF) is used in the purchasing of US defence equipment, services and training for foreign armed force.

⁶ Efforts to reform the police and address issues of corruption under Paz Zamora fell short, as the government gave-up control of the process to the institution itself (Quintana, 2005: 167-8).

were reluctant to push for prosecutions of officers suspected of corruption or abuses, impunity was common. Between 1982 and 2002, for example, 20 national police commanders were linked with significant cases of corruption, many of these related to drugs, but not one was prosecuted (Quintana, 2005: 206). In this way, the political-police pact led to tolerance of illicit practices.

As outlined in Chapter 4, state-narco networks atomised in the post-transition period. Linkages between the police and the drug trade formed one aspect of this constellation of interactions. The institution's natural proximity to illicit activity, of course, created numerous opportunities for the extraction of bribes. Poorly-paid officials in the Chapare, for example, were able to supplement their wages with *ad hoc* pay-offs, allowing contraband to flow in and out of the region (US OIG, 1991: 32).⁷ Reports suggested, though, that police drug corruption was not only 'sporadic', but that drug rents were also integrated into 'pay-off cones' (Nadelmann, 1994: 269-270). The police had been incorporated into state-narco networks during the authoritarian era⁸ and, in the post-transition period, such practices continued. Patron-client interactions within the unreformed police institution were solidified with drug rents (Hargreaves, 1992: 95). Formal codes and institutional arrangements ran parallel to irregular practices, such as hierarchical systems of corruption (Mansilla, 2003: 11). Bolivia-based academic and activist, Theo Roncken, described how this worked; suggesting a clientelistic system running through the institution, reaching as far as the government

One person here in Tiquipaya told me... he is an ex-official of the police... it's done like this: the president has to assign a new head of the police, the Bolivian National Police force. This person pays \$100,000 or a similarly high amount to get his job and then he has to assign ten officials to his command. So they have to pay, in total, double the sum that he paid for his job and then the same with all those at the next rank. This is how corruption is continued. (Roncken interview, 2014)

⁷ In addition to this, 'the Department of State's 1987 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report noted that the average salary for an UMOPAR Lt. Colonel, the normal rank for a unit commander in the Chapare, was \$440 per month. This notwithstanding, NAU and DEA personnel in the Chapare region reported that drug traffickers were offering from \$20,000 to \$25,000 for 72 hours of "protection," asking only to be left alone while airplanes were being loaded and during take-off from clandestine airstrips, or during a major movement of coca paste during this period of time' (US GAO, 1988: 54).

⁸ This is outlined in Chapter 4.

According to this view, relationships with the drug trade were cultivated to raise these patron-client payments. Jose Salinas, who worked in the Chapare during this period, believed that such linkages included regular meetings with high-level traffickers, to plan and coordinate their operations. In this way, state officials extracted drug rents through non-enforcement.

You have to recognise that there has been, and there is, a lot of corruption; a lot. There have been police officials involved in drugs that were narcos. We haven't yet figured out exactly how these connections work, but we supposed... we supposed... that they planned meetings in Santa Cruz or the Beni, and they entered into agreement, saying: 'Okay, this our program for transporting drugs... these are the roads, the vehicles, and all of this is going to happen on such a date. So, you police go somewhere else and let it pass.' So the counterdrug units would go to the other side of the road, and let the vehicles go by freely. So this was, more or less, the agreement between the traffickers and the police. (Salinas interview, 2014)

As is typically the case with assertions on illicit topics (see Chapter 3), there is a degree of ambiguity around these interactions. These sources suggest, though, that drug rents were integrated into the police institution, creating stable modes of exchange between the state and the drug trade. The political dynamics of Bolivia's post-transition period safeguarded the autonomy of the institution, impunity for its officials and thus the maintenance of state-narco interlinkages.

6.3 Unreformed Civil-Military Relations

The military also enjoyed a high degree of autonomy during this period. Civil-military relations to an extent mirrored the political-police pact. Post-transition governments retreated from institutional reform, and instead formed an informal-tacit agreement of non-interference with the military. Given its history of political intervention, there was reluctance to challenge the interests of the institution: a potential veto player to Bolivia's (formal) democracy. As such, civil-military relations and the institution itself remained unreformed.

The military, though, had been severely damaged by the García Meza period. The institution had come to the point of disintegration, and its public reputation

was in tatters (Morales, 1992b: 357).⁹ The military's international patron had also changed tack, with US funding and support in decline due to changing foreign policy priorities (Avilés, 2010: 131). Added to this, neoliberal economic reforms impinged on military budgets, as its prominent role in Bolivian politics and society was diminished (Gamarra, 1996: 86). Responding to these factors, institutionalist factions within the military were in the ascendency. Keen to rebuild trust in the institution, they looked to remove military officers who had been implicated in the drug trade under García Meza (Dunkerley, 1984: 346). Ambassador Greenlee (2009: 208) argued that, 'the military knew their game was up. The world had changed and they had failed utterly in government'. Looking back on the period now, in the context of Bolivia's subsequent political development, the withdrawal of the military from the political arena seemed inevitable. This was a theme of the 'Democracy Generation' narrative, where Bolivian actors could now point to their role in bringing the 'cycle of *golpismo*' to a definitive end (Paz Zamora interview, 2014).

As time went on, the risk of a return to *coup d'état* and a military state diminished, because (Bolivia's politics) had matured. There was a political maturity. (Torrico interview, 2014)

However, during this time, the memory of authoritarian government was fresh. There remained concerns that the military's support for democracy was contingent (Barriós M., 1994: 74-5). The civilian political leaders of this era had lived with a politicised military for decades, and so continued 'to fear its political leverage and a possible return to military rule' (US Congress, 1990b: 68). Reports of an abortive coup attempt in early-1984, planned by recently discharged officers Faustino Rico Toro and Norberto Salomón (Morales, 1992b: 357), supported such suspicions. Indeed, the suggestion that the plot had been hatched in the wake of attempts to investigate the military for their involvement in coca-cocaine confirmed the anti-democratic tendencies of certain factions. Many officers who had served under authoritarian regimes

⁹ Mesa, et. al. (2008: 569) argue that nearly all factions of the military had been behind the García Meza coup, but discord grew as the regime engaged in practices which contradicted internal norms and codes of behaviour.

continued to hold prominent positions.¹⁰ They now professed support for democracy, but these were the same military leaders against whom Paz Zamora's generation had previously struggled. While the tide appeared to be turning toward democracy, then, Bolivian civil-military relations were still delicately balanced (Youngers, 1991: 10).¹¹

Institutional reform of the military was thus delayed (Barrios M. & Antonio M., 1994: 8). Questions around the military's role in modern Bolivian society, the professionalisation and modernisation of the institution, and its adaptation to democratic modes of governance, including civilian oversight, were unresolved.¹² Instead, an informal pact existed between the military and the civilian political elite. Each practised a policy of non-interference in the affairs of the other (Barrios M., 1994: 95). The military would stay out of politics, in return for institutional autonomy. As part of this, politicians looked to cultivate support within the institution through political patronage, e.g. appointments to the high command for loyal supporters (Quintana, 2004: Para. 49). As well as demonstrating the role of informalism in Bolivia's uneven democracy, it also showed the continued political relevance of the military. Post-transition governments were keen to keep the institution on side and reduce the chances of political intervention. Therefore, the military continued to enjoy autonomy

¹⁰ For example, Vice-Admiral Alberto Saenz Klinsky, who had attended the School of the Americas in 1973 and served as a cabinet minister in the García Meza government (Equipo Nizkor, 2015), was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the military in October 1991 (Gamarra, 1994b: 241).

¹¹ The court case of García Meza demonstrates how Bolivia's recent authoritarian past sat uneasily alongside its democratic present. The former-dictator had already been expelled from the military when, in 1986, he was summoned before the Bolivian Supreme Court alongside 54 of his collaborators to stand trial for crimes committed during his government. The prosecution appeared, again, to be a positive sign for Bolivian democracy. It would take until 1993, however, for the court to find García Meza and 47 of his allies guilty (HRW, 1993). By that time, the former-dictator had gone into hiding. Hargreaves (1992: 115) claims that his escape would have been 'impossible without high-level protection from the police, and military and government officials. Many suspect that García Meza's chief protector (was) General Banzer, who (was) known to have paid him a visit a few days before the coup. "Military men stick together," says one prominent MNR politician'. Additionally, human rights groups accused the authorities of a lack of will to capture García Meza while he was still rumoured to have been in Bolivia (Long, 1993). He was, though, eventually located in Brazil and extradited to serve his 30 year sentence in a Bolivian prison in 1995.

¹² Paz Zamora had stated that modernisation of the military was crucial to the consolidation of democracy (Gamarra, 1994b: 241). Attempts to redefine the military's role during his government, though, actually had the effect of reinforcing military autonomy, as there was no civilian input into this process (see Barrios M., 1994: 107-8).

from the government, and clientelistic and authoritarian elements of its internal organisational culture persisted.¹³

This had implications for drug corruption within the institution. Increased factionalisation and the military's retreat from power meant that the centralised systems of rent extraction of the authoritarian era no longer functioned (Gamarra, 1999: 184). As described previously, institutionalists targeted corrupt officers who had brought the military to the brink. But the reach of this 'token purge' was limited, meaning that elements of the institutions continued to pursue their interests in the drug trade (Dunkerley, 1990: 45). In key areas of the coca-cocaine trade especially, military regional commands deepened links to drug traffickers. Pay-offs to secure profitable posts in the Chapare and the Beni then filtered through the institution (Hargreaves, 1992: 118). The Chapare Seventh Army division, for example, was believed to be closely connected to the drug trade, to the extent that they inhibited DEA-UMOPAR operations.¹⁴ Inter-institutional rivalry was supposedly the cause of such clashes, but official protection of the coca-cocaine economy was also suspected. In mid-1989, the division's commander, General Arrázola, was charged with drug offences after his superiors reported him (Malamud-Goti, 1992: 72). Other high-ranking members of his command fled before they could be arrested. The fact that such corruption now elicited a response demonstrated changed attitudes towards such practices within the institution, as well as the effects of US Drug War pressure. They also indicated, though, that state-narco interactions remained deeply embedded in the military.

The US government shared this perception. For example, a 1989 DEA report stated that 'all elements of the military are involved in drug trafficking to some

¹³ A shared history contributed to this stance, as many politicians were implicated in the authoritarian period. Striking-up alliances with military leaders to enter power, political leaders of all stripes had engaged in 'a provocative style of politics that courted military intervention' (Conaghan and Malloy, 1994: 90). There were, then, enduring common interests between the parties and certain factions within the military. Barrios M. (1994: 92) suggests that the indirect complicity of political actors - in human rights abuses, as well as drug trafficking - led to the protection of potentially guilty partners within the military.

¹⁴ Santa Ana de Yacuma in the Beni provides another example of close military involvement in the drug trade during this period. A clash between the local navy garrison and the DEA-UMOPAR is discussed in the following chapter.

extent' (Painter, 1994: 71). Such sentiments were replicated across US government reports: 'most United States and Bolivian officials' admit corruption is 'widespread and generally accepted within the Bolivian military' (US Congress, 1990a: 63).¹⁵ Given all of this and the institution's intimate past relationship with the drug trade, Andean Initiative proposals for an expanded counterdrug role for the military came under scrutiny.¹⁶ Elements within the military had also been opposed to such a move, fearing that close proximity to the trade risked heightened corruption and institutional integrity. The Bolivian government, meanwhile, argued against the militarisation of counterdrug efforts, reflecting local pressures, as well as concerns that an increased internal role for the military would destabilise the post-transition political balance. In other words, the wounded and pacified military would emerge again as a prominent political actor. As described in the following section, on this and other facets of the Andean Initiative, distinct US and Bolivian agendas may be identified. Where the US had its Drug War, the Bolivian government professed its 'democratising mission' (Paz Zamora interview, 2014).

6.4 Uneven Power: Negotiating the Andean Initiative

Bolivia's uneven democracy, then, contained contradictions. Free and fair elections, the military's retreat from politics, and governing agreements between the parties fed into democratising narratives of the period. But these existed alongside informalism, limited accountability, and clientelistic and authoritarian practices. Consequently, this led to continued tolerance of drug corruption in the police and military, as state-narco interactions became entrenched in the post-transition political settlement. Non-democratic elements, such as unreformed civil-military relations, contributed to the maintenance of political stability, and ensured factional interests and institutional actors adhered to the transition. Placing this in historical

¹⁵ Of course, US assessments of Bolivian drug corruption extended far beyond the military to almost every level of the state.

¹⁶ One DEA official considered the introduction of the army counterdrug role as, "the biggest mistake we have ever made. You haven't seen corruption till you've seen the military involved in fighting drugs" (quoted in Painter, 1994: 94).

perspective, Bolivia's turbulent political past seemed to justify such a compromised approach.

These themes informed Bolivian preferences for counterdrug policy. They dovetailed with other concerns, such as the national economy's reliance on coca-cocaine and demands from societal actors, and were also grounded in Development Paradigm conceptualisations of the 'war on drugs'. In short, the Paz Zamora government argued against destabilising 'Colombianised' policies and called for a development-led response. This was viewed to prioritise the preservation of Bolivia's transition, but clashed with the US enforcement-led approach. Uneven power relations between the countries, though, meant that US policy preferences were advanced in Bolivia. Describing his impressions of the introduction of the Andean Initiative, Paz Zamora (interview, 2014) argued that the process was marked by top-down control and Cold War-era US thinking.

Where we had problems was in the way the United States acted in Bolivia. Before, they had ensured their presence through agreements made during the Cold War, that is joint-defence, etc., and everything else. Now, as it had it turned out, their presence, their... their influence... their domination over the country was exercised through the 'war on drugs' and the economic system of the country... with pressure from the monetary fund of the World Bank due to the neoliberal politics agreed in Washington. That would be the Washington Consensus. Overnight the Cold War in Bolivia was changed to two objectives: drug trafficking and neoliberalism. Except in politics... this complicated the reality in Bolivia for us enormously, because it distorted things.

Paz Zamora argued that the legacy of the Cold War was evident in the way the US pursued their objectives in Bolivia. Cold War goals changed 'overnight' in Bolivia, but the same 'mentality' remained. In this view, the 'war on drugs' and neoliberalism were tools of US 'domination' over Bolivia. This US agenda was identified as being harmful to Bolivian politics and contrary to local priorities. The demands of the World Bank ran parallel, placing pressure on Bolivia's society and economy. The 'war on drugs' links into this, in the sense that coca-cocaine economy alleviated the effects of structural reforms.

Bolivia was beginning to construct its democracy. But the abuses that were committed in the 'war on drugs', as well as the demands of the World Bank were also damaging the development of democracy, human

rights, etc. So here we had problems of a distinct and very complicated type. I was the first president that clashed with the United States on this issue, although I got on very well with the President, the people from the State Department and everyone else. They made a very important invitation to me to go the United States; to make an official visit to Washington. And during this visit, they wanted me to approve a new extradition treaty. That was bad for Bolivia. And always with their militaristic tendency... that the army enter the fight against drug trafficking... things which damaged the internal life of the country and the democratic system. (Ibid.)

According to this view, the US Drug War approach was incompatible with Bolivia's efforts to construct democracy. This includes militarised policies, which threatened human rights and gave the army an internal role. While Paz Zamora resisted US pressure for an extradition treaty,¹⁷ he eventually agreed to an enhanced counterdrug role for the army. A US government report (US OIG, 1991: 41-2) noted widespread opposition to the proposal due to fears that 'an invigorated army may endanger Bolivia's fragile democratic institutions', and cause 'an escalation in human-rights abuses and drug-related corruption' and 'unrest among farmers, fostering an insurgent movement like those in Colombia and Peru'. Paz Zamora's acceptance of such policies ran contrary to his 'democratising mission'. He sought to reconcile this both through reference to the gains his administration made in negotiations and historical narratives of US dominance over Bolivia.

I more than achieved my objectives. I went (to Washington) with the problems of opening the market and the external debt. We achieved them thanks to direct conversations with the President. So here the problems were, at root, problems with drug trafficking on one side and, on the other, economic policies. Neoliberalism that began with Lady Thatcher and continued with Reagan; it had already become global. This had a lot of influence on Bolivia's democratic development because it brought the politics that one day would bring a government like that of Evo Morales. (. . .) Bush was a very good president, but the administration was bad. Because the administration still had the mentality of... they acted with Cold War mentality... those from the DEA, all of them... the State Department, the diplomatic corps. (Paz Zamora interview, 2014)

¹⁷ To the US Embassy's consternation, a policy of 'repentance' was instead introduced to deal with the country's major traffickers. This is discussed below.

Again, drug policies (and, in this case, neoliberalism) are identified as ‘the problem’, as opposed to the drug trade itself. This chimes with the ‘evil Colombian thesis’ (Thoumi, 2003: 254) and the rejection of securitised notions of drugs. It also dovetails with the prioritisation of ‘democratic governability’, and tacit-acceptance of state-narco networks. In the next section, I draw out these themes in the negotiations for the Andean Initiative. First, I address Paz Zamora’s efforts to advance his development agenda, before describing clashes with the US Embassy and its vigorous pursuit of Drug War goals. As such, Bolivia’s uneven democratisation contrasts with the escalation of US counterdrug efforts.

6.4.1 ‘*Coca por Desarrollo*’¹⁸

Paz Zamora spent the first few months of his term on the international stage attempting to realise a shift to a development-focused counterdrug policy. In September 1989, for example, he addressed the UN General Assembly and called for the international community to recognise the principle of shared responsibility (UN, 1989). This included the provision of development alternatives for Bolivia: ‘*coca por desarrollo*’. During his speech, Paz Zamora employed a North-South perspective of power dynamics between the US and Bolivia. For example:

As the President of a poor and humble country, I would recall the wise message of Ecclesiastes, where it is written that, ‘Wisdom is better than strength. Nevertheless, the poor man’s wisdom is despised, and his words are not heard’. (Ibid: 32)

To the chagrin of the US, he criticised the Andean Initiative for its bias towards repression (Gamarra, 1994b: 225).¹⁹ Although alternative development formed part of US counterdrug policy, the Bush government’s new strategy marked an

¹⁸ This translates as ‘Coca for Development’.

¹⁹ Paz Zamora had intended to diminish the US counterdrug role in Bolivia by turning towards Europe and his connections to the region’s social democratic parties. European support, though, was not forthcoming, as the EU was reluctant to involve itself in a US policy domain (Saavedra interview, 2014).

intensification of militarised enforcement measures.²⁰ There was a belief among the Andean governments that the US was acting unilaterally, installing a militarised approach in the region with little thought for its local implications (Bagley, 1994: 64). Faced with the US Drug War Paradigm, the Bolivian government sought to persuade the US directly of its approach. Paz Zamora summarised his government's stance.

Here is the Bolivian position of the form (counterdrug policy) should take. It was our position. It was sound as far as we were concerned. In that moment, I began a kind of ideological war... that Bolivians are still in agreement with... where I said, 'coca is not cocaine'. I kept saying it until it became something of a slogan, specifically, to beat the Americans psychologically... a little like they had always done. So it was always part of the discussion: 'why is (coca not cocaine)? Why (are they the same)? In what sense are they (the same)? In what sense are they not?' I said 'coca is not cocaine' because to become cocaine there has to be the products that produce cocaine... chemicals that we didn't produce. It is impossible to make cocaine without them. So fine, we launched that and we launched something (else) that was very important: the concept of shared responsibility. There hadn't been this concept. (. . .) Under this principle of shared responsibility, we said, 'very well, Bolivia is willing to be at the forefront of this fight against drugs, in interdiction as well as eradication, but we believe that it has to be made very clear that Bolivia does this in return for receiving certain benefits of alternative development'... or in other words, all the areas that produce coca and the profits that the country extracts from coca money, that is invested in the country, etc. Dirty money, but (money) that enters our country... (investment) that will die if we combat (the trade)... In return, Bolivia has to have alternative development. (Paz Zamora interview, 2014)

Paz Zamora's interpretation was thus grounded in the Development Paradigm.²¹ Externalising responsibility for Bolivia's drug trade, he distinguished between coca and cocaine, highlighted the role of precursor chemicals and called for shared responsibility. These kinds of arguments played well to the domestic audience, as demands from societal actors shaped the government's position (Gamarra, 1994b: 219).

²⁰ Alternative development had been included in US counterdrug strategy for some time. In 1972, USAID started its first crop-substitution projects in the Chapare (GAO, 1988: 45). Even Law 1008, which had been introduced to placate the US, linked coca eradication to alternative development (Bolivian Congress, 1988: article X).

²¹ Themes from the Cold War Legacy narrative were also present in Paz Zamora's reference to the psychological tactics 'they had always' used.

Ambivalent attitudes towards coca-cocaine were also part of this (see Chapter 5). For example, the notion of shared responsibility, in this case, refers to the costs of fighting the 'war on drugs' as opposed to the negative effects of the drug trade itself. In other words, coca-cocaine had brought benefits to Bolivia. International counterdrug efforts, which were not necessarily in the best interests of the country, should compensate for this fact. According to this view, then, the impulse for the Drug War came from outwith. Bolivian interlocutors expressed general normative opposition to drugs and a desire for Bolivia to remove itself from this 'dirty' business. But such views were accompanied with pragmatism concerning the coca-cocaine economy's role in Bolivia (Comas, 1990b). The Bolivian government did not share the crusading Drug War drive espoused by Bush; its position to the drug trade and counterdrug policy was a matter of expediency. Alternative conceptualisations of the problem, and distinct priorities could thus be identified.

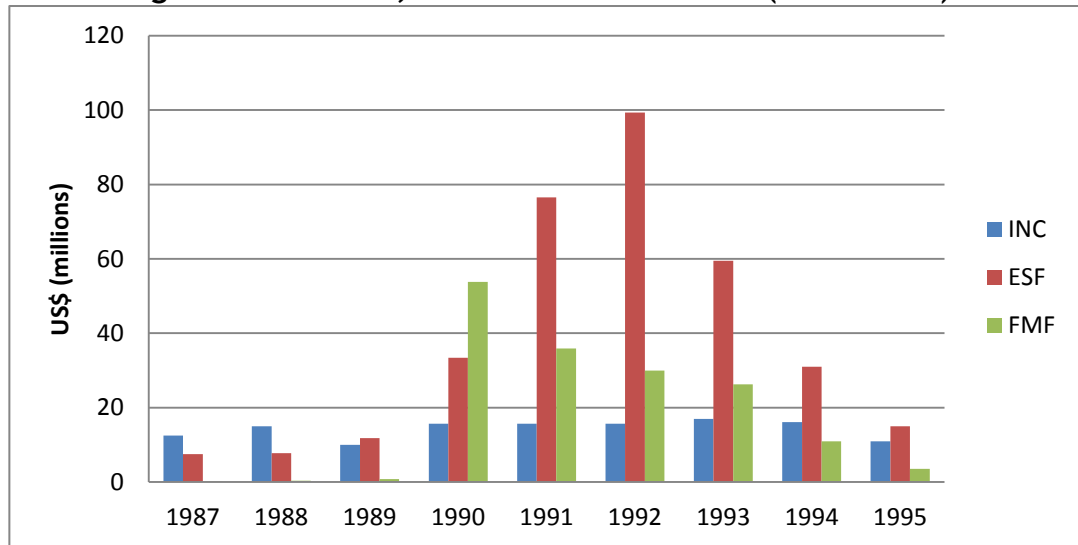
The US met with the governments of Bolivia, Colombia and Peru to negotiate the Andean Initiative at Cartagena de Indias. Paz Zamora claimed a prominent role, as the governments of the Andean region argued for greater emphasis on institution-building and development (Lozano, 1990).²² The US ceded ground. The final agreement included additional funding for alternative development, formal recognition of the idea of shared responsibility, and a free trade agreement (US NSC, 1989: 4).²³ In the case of Bolivia, it was estimated that the country would receive US\$830 million in aid over the course of the planned five year initiative. A sizeable proportion of this was allotted to economic support, used to compensate for the economic effects of curbing the drug trade and

²² Each government, though, had slightly different priorities. Internal conflicts in Peru and Colombia, linked to the drug trade, complicated matters for the governments of those countries.

²³ The Andean Trade Preference Act (APTA) was designed to foster greater trade between the US and the Andes, by lowering trade tariffs. As it passed through the US Congress, though, a number of the region's exports were exempted in order to protect US producers. Bolivia, due to its lack of exports, was relatively unaffected by these exemptions, according to Paz Zamora (interview, 2014). Furthermore, he expressed frustration over President Morales' perceived carelessness with his government's inheritance: 'The drive for (APTA came from the Bolivian government) and the paradox now is that Ecuador, Peru and Colombia as well, I think, continue to benefit from the Andean Initiative. And Bolivia? No, because of Evo Morales. There was a fight between him and Obama and they refused us free access to the American market. That's the paradox we have now' (Paz Zamora interview, 2014).

paying-off part of Bolivia's external debt.²⁴ Both then and now, the Bolivian government believed it had won significant concessions. Although US assistance was conditioned on 'satisfactory cooperation' with counterdrug goals, the US had agreed to short and long term measures aimed at developing Bolivia's economy. The *Acuerdo Patriótico* ensured the agreement with the US was passed with little public debate or congressional scrutiny (Gamarra, 1994b: 227).

Figure 6.2: US INC, FMF and ESF to Bolivia (1987-1995)²⁵



(USAID, 2013)

However, US preferences for policy survived largely intact. As suggested previously, this support came with conditionalities, such as coca eradication targets. Supply-side, repressive policies, including increased funding for militarised counterdrug police units, remained the main focus of US counterdrug strategy. This entailed a strong US presence within Bolivia, from the DEA to

²⁴ Discussing efforts to have Bolivia's external debt forgiven, Paz Zamora (interview, 2014) stated: 'It was the first time in South America the problem of external debt was debated. Fidel Castro held events in Havana against external indebtedness. He held three, four events with professionals, workers, intellectuals, etc. I was with one of them, seated with Gabriel Garcia Marquez at the same table there in Havana, and so I said, "the one thing we ask for in this fight, is that the consumers, the consuming nations and particularly the United States and Europe, agree a special policy on the treatment of Bolivia's external debt"'.

²⁵ Economic Support Funds are administered by the State Department, providing funds to governments in areas of US strategic interest. They can be used for a variety of purposes. In this case, funding was used primarily to relieve external debt. Painter (1994: 137) states that balance of payments support was designed 'to compensate the government for income and foreign exchange earnings lost because of coca eradication. The funds were used to finance government payment of US and multilateral debt and US exports to the Bolivian private sector.' As Menzel (1996: 61) notes, however, 'there was no mandatory reciprocal commitment on the part of the Bolivian government to use these savings in support of the anti-drug policy.'

Southcom military trainers. Furthermore, the US agitated for the Bolivian army to take on a greater counterdrug role (described below). Such policies threatened to tip the balance of Bolivia's post-transition political order. Using the levers of US diplomatic and economic power (the promise of US funding on one hand; decertification, and economic pressure on the other), though, the US ensured the Drug War model would be exported to the region. Such dynamics left the Andean governments 'scant room for manoeuvre in American narcopolitics' (Walker III, 1994: 14). Within Bolivia, the strategy was criticised for its perceived central focus on interdiction and eradication over development (Opinión, 1991c).

One Bolivian government official ((B) interview, 2014) from this time summed-up the clash of enforcement-led and development perspectives of drugs. He argued that the stated commitments of the US - making concessions to the Bolivian position - tended to fall short.²⁶ US Drug War Paradigm conceptualisations of the problem dominated the policy on the ground.

The reaction of the United States was good, but it was a great discussion between two distinct visions. The vision of the Andean countries was a vision of development, that's to say, 'we have to attack this problem together with alternative economic and, of course, social development'. The vision of the United States was more repressive, that's to say, 'you have to attack the problem, okay, development, okay, but you have to attack the problem hard from the point of view of interdiction'. So, this was the difficult part, to unite these visions. In the end, an effort was made and they arrived at a certain equilibrium. The United States understood that our principal objective was the search for opportunities for economic development, such as open markets, transfer of technology, investment; in short, consistent help from the United States. But in the main, in my opinion, the plan didn't work, because we were never able to give the same intensity to the two dimensions. The United States each time pressured us more on the issue of repression, interdiction, repression... and they didn't show anything tangible, verifiable, about the opening of the market, the topic of technology, the topic of investment,

²⁶ Analysis of the alternative development strand of this policy falls outwith the bounds of this thesis. However, both Painter (1994: Ch. 6) and Thoumi (2003: Ch. 11) argue that, despite some successes, these were generally underfunded, and plagued with problems of planning and implementation. Jose Salinas (interview, 2014) admitted that policymakers struggled to find a crop that could compete with coca: 'The supply is here, but the demand is in the United States, in Europe, in Asia... everywhere. If there is a market, then people will produce. Because of this, I would say, "ooft... I hope to God there exists the same demand for bananas!"'

etc. So this reduced the importance of the plan, until it was finally left as a piece of history.

Negotiations for the Andean Initiative, then, attempted to reconcile alternative US and Bolivian 'visions' of drugs. But as the policy filtered down to Bolivia, a disjuncture was exposed between the final agreement and the implemented policy. This official noted continuous US pressure to apply more repression, as development efforts were diminished. There was a sense across Bolivian interview accounts that US counterdrug goals were prioritised over local concerns, with uneven power dynamics in evidence. Dismantling the coca-cocaine trade in the absence of *viable* alternatives risked plunging the national economy into recession, and provoking societal unrest. Uneven democracy was also part of this equation.

The 'war on drugs' threatened the settled political order, not only in targeting clientelistic modes of governance and state-narco networks, but in expanding the internal role of the military. Arguing against the 'Colombianisation' of the country (Paz Zamora interview, 2014), the Bolivian government opposed policies that would escalate conflict with traffickers. There was ambivalence to a trade that was considered stable and a relatively benign force within Bolivia. In this sense, US counterdrug policy was viewed to conflict with the post-transition political settlement. As the next section describes, though, the US Embassy - under the leadership of Ambassador Gelbard - pursued counterdrug goals vigorously. Distinct agendas came into conflict, as the US extended control; installing a Drug War security apparatus aimed at bypassing 'corrupt' local power structures.

6.5 Gelbard's Embassy

Ambassador Robert Gelbard took a prominent role in formulating US counterdrug strategy within Bolivia. Discussing the Embassy's high-degree of autonomy, he stated, 'first, I was convinced I knew Bolivia a lot better than (Washington) did. Second, I convinced them that I knew Bolivia a lot better than they did' (Gelbard interview, 2013). Gelbard also gained a reputation for his bold, abrasive style of diplomacy. A US OIG (1991: 4-5) audit of the Embassy went as far as

commenting on this, stating that while impressed by his leadership and influence, ‘we suspect that US counternarcotic objectives could have been achieved in a more diplomatic, low-profile manner’ (US OIG, 1991: 4-5).²⁷ Described as an ‘activist ambassador’, Gelbard often intervened in Bolivian politics, and used his connections in Washington to garner support for his initiatives (Gamarra, 1994b: 221-223; El Tiempo, 1996). He could also call on backing within the Bolivian government. Banzer – a Cold War ally of the US – and his ADN party were viewed as being more sympathetic to US goals than Paz Zamora’s MIR (Gamarra, 1999: 195). The threat of withholding US assistance and decertification, though, were the Embassy’s most effective tools in realising counterdrug goals. During this period, the US applied significant pressure on the Bolivian government to advance unfettered US-led counterdrug operations, the introduction of the army into the Drug War, and the removal of ‘corrupt’ officials and politicians.²⁸

The Embassy’s relationship with the Paz Zamora government, and the Bolivian state generally, was characterised by low-levels of trust. On one hand, there was frustration that the Bolivian government did not share the US assessment of the country’s ‘drug problem’. Counterdrug goals dominated the US agenda in Bolivia, but the Paz Zamora administration did not view it with the same urgency. This constituted a clash between securitised notions of drugs and the ambivalent attitude of the Bolivian government towards the coca-cocaine economy. Under this view, the local lack of political will to advance counterdrug goals and apply hard-line approaches stemmed from differing priorities and understandings of the issue. In the following cable, for example, Ambassador Gelbard expressed his frustration at Paz Zamora government’s lukewarm response to the capture of prominent drug trafficker, Carmelo ‘Meco’ Dominguez.

²⁷ Other US actors were more appreciative of Gelbard’s approach. David Miller (interview, 2014) of the NSC stated: ‘Gelbard is a classic, superb, wonderful, hard-nosed, crazy ambassador. There’s never been a concrete wall that he has not run through. If you see little holes in concrete walls, you’ll know Bob has visited your neighbourhood. (. . .) Because of Bob Gelbard’s nature, drugs got a lot of attention and I think he did fine’.

²⁸ The issue of drug corruption in the Bolivian political class is discussed in the following chapter.

Paz Zamora - along with the bulk of Bolivians - continue to engage in a process of denial regarding virtually any other aspect of the drug problem in Bolivia other than coca cultivation and the sense that it is a problem only of economic development and poverty. This accounts for the extraordinary lack of reaction on the (Bolivian government's) part after the truly impressive success in the operation against the Meco Dominguez organisation, i.e. if they were to acknowledge successes against drug trafficking organisations they would have to acknowledge the existence of a problem. (US Embassy La Paz to Secretary of State, 1990)

In addition to this, though, low-levels of trust were also due to US perceptions of pervasive Bolivian drug corruption. The US Embassy 'viewed it as the largest, single problem affecting US narcotics control efforts' (US GAO, 1988: 54).

According to the Drug War Paradigm, such deviant behaviour should be targeted forcefully. As discussed in the next chapter, this led to US efforts to remove 'corrupt' politicians and officials; at times, threatening to halt US economic support for failure to comply. In terms of the Bolivian security forces, the US focused its efforts on the creation of 'vicarious surrogates' (Nadelmann, 1994: 204).

The US Embassy had their own people in the Bolivian police and the army... their own people. There were problems with the US when we did things without their people. (Paz Zamora interview, 2014)

The establishment and close monitoring of US Drug War proxies - specialist anti-drug police and military units in the South - constituted an attempt to circumvent local state-narco networks and exert US control. The FECLN,²⁹ for example, was completely dependent on the US for its resources, and intelligence, making the anti-drug police beholden to the DEA and INM (Quintana, 2004: Para. 117). Furthermore, UMOPAR³⁰ was funded and subject to oversight mechanisms from the US State Department Bureau of International

²⁹ The *Fuerza Especial de Lucha Contra El Narcotráfico* (FECLN), was established by presidential decree in July 1987. It is the lead counterdrug law enforcement agency in Bolivia, with personnel drawn from the Bolivian National Police. It has under its control a number of specialist units, including UMOPAR. The US monitored personnel, and had complete access to internal reports and records (Williams, 1997: 25).

³⁰ The *Unidades Móviles de Patrullaje Rural* (UMOPAR) were created in 1983. 'Nominally responsible for interdiction efforts, these encompass destroying coca processing pits and laboratories; seizing paste, base and cocaine; intercepting the flow of precursor chemicals; and arresting traffickers. (. . .) Its director is usually a retired army officer (in part to appease the army's concern that their traditional rivals, the police, provide the recruits for one of the best armed units in the country)' (Painter, 1994: 81).

Narcotics Matters (INM), trained by Southcom Special Forces in paramilitary tactics, and directed in operations by the DEA (Presencia, 1991). Such controls were justified in terms of guarding against corruption and inefficiency, and improving capacity. A close working relationship with the DEA was engendered, with the US Embassy planning major operations.³¹ As such, these controls allowed the US to bypass the Bolivian government and the wider police institution; factions considered 'corrupt' and/or opposed to US Drug War goals.

Former-DEA Deputy for Operations Terry Burke, recognised different levels of corruption within the Bolivian police and described how the DEA would work around the issue. According to Burke, the DEA's close relationship with these units enabled them to deal with these state-narco interactions.

What we would find, and Bolivia is an example, is... there's a lab in the Beni, and you want to go raid it. And normally you would go to General García... he's worked with you before, and taken action... so you say, 'come on General García, we've got to go raid this place'. 'Eh... why don't you go talk to General Lopez over there and get him to do it'. In other words, 'I'm on this guy over here's pay roll, and if I go raid him, I'm in a lot of trouble'. And so we'd go over to this guy over here, who has got no connection, and we'd use him to go do the raid. It's really a matter of building personal relationships, by being in the field with them. (. . .) Some of the greatest problems were, the more senior you went in the local authority, the more you had problems, because then it became very political. You know, these guys are in bed with these guys... many of them are not... and politically it became more sensitive to cooperate with us, whereas the local commander on the ground didn't always have those conflicts. (Burke interview, 2013)

There were limits to US control. As outlined above and suggested here by Burke, sporadic and systematic corruption remained a problem within these agencies. Gelbard (interview, 2014) claimed that high-level officials in the government added to this problem. The US was typically permitted vetting of appointments, but the final power over this remained in Bolivian hands. According to Gelbard, this was exploited by corrupt elements within the government to sabotage US counterdrug efforts. 'Honest', reliable and effective US counterdrug partners

³¹ The level of collaboration between the DEA and UMOPAR led a Bolivian army area commander in the Chapare to brand their rivals in the police as 'Yankee co-conspirators' (Malamud-Goti, 1991: 147).

represented a threat to the interests of these actors. In this way, Gelbard argued that US counterdrug efforts clashed with local agendas.

We were engaged in trying to train highly capable Bolivian units, the idea being that we would try to work ourselves out of jobs. Hard to do because people would get transferred. Sometimes if they became too capable, they would get transferred, because the government didn't want people to be too capable. (Gelbard interview, 2013)

The US Embassy thus sought the extension and deepening of US counterdrug operations in Bolivia. Actors such as Gelbard, though, were frustrated by the differing priorities of the Bolivian government, viewed to be underpinned either by a rejection of securitised notion of drugs or corruption. The Bolivian government's divergent conceptualisation of the country's drug trade and the appropriate response were most evident in the introduction of a repentance law for traffickers and resistance to an enhanced counterdrug role for the army. In the case of the former, this reflected ambivalent attitudes towards the 'benign' coca-cocaine economy, and efforts to find accommodation with the illicit sphere rather than conflict. For the latter, US counterdrug plans threatened to unsettle Bolivia's post-transition settlement.

6.6 The Repentance Decree

The US had argued that Bolivia's role in the drug trade had changed by the time Paz Zamora was in office. Whereas before, Bolivian coca paste had been exported to Colombia for final processing, it was claimed that local traffickers were now producing and transporting cocaine via their own routes. As Ambassador Gelbard (interview, 2013) put it, Bolivia 'was still shipping coca paste to Colombia, but not nearly as much, and instead all stages of production were occurring more and more and more within the country'.³² If such assertions were accurate, greater profit margins would be gained by these

³² 'US drug officials estimate that by 1990 as much as one-third of Bolivian cocaine paste - or between 150 and 200 tonnes of cocaine - was being processed into HCl within Bolivia. US officials were adamant that Bolivia had become the second-largest cocaine producer after Colombia' (Painter, 1994: 28).

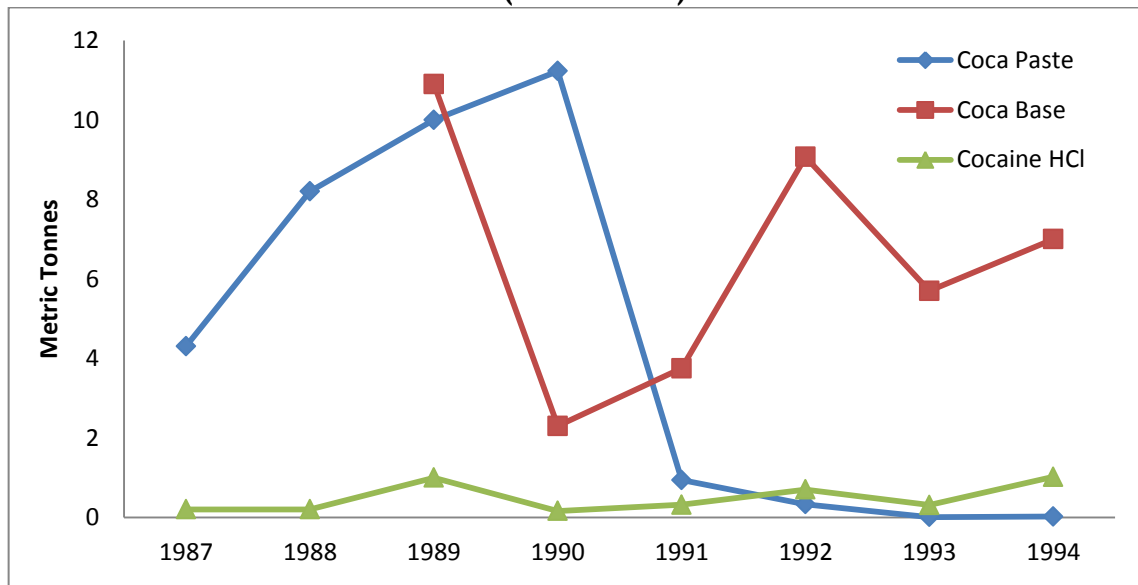
groups with resultant increases in the available drug rents.³³ However, drugs stats from the State Department and the DEA (shown in Figures 7.2 and 7.3) were far from conclusive.

Table 6.1: US State Dep. INCSR Figures for Labs Destroyed (1989-1994)

	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
Cocaine HCL	26	45	40	33	34	17	10	32
Coca base/paste	1,112	3,542	6,957	1,446	1,461	1,393	1,300	1,891

(US State, 1991: 88-9; & US State, 1995: 72)

Figure 6.3: US State Dep. INCSR Figures for Coca-cocaine Seizures in Bolivia (1987-1994)



(US State, 1991: 88-9; & US State, 1995: 72)

*No figures reported for coca base prior to 1989.

**After 1990, INC claimed that local producers had largely eliminated the stage of coca paste production from their process.

***From 1991-onward, figures for coca base include seizure figures for *Agua Rica* (coca base suspended in a weak acid solution).

****In 1991, INC estimated that 35 per cent of Bolivian cocaine HCL production occurred in Bolivia, with the remaining occurring in Colombia.

*****In INCSR 1994, 'coca base' was reclassified as 'cocaine base'.

First, cocaine seizures in Bolivia around this time remained relatively flat.

Although there is an increase in the cocaine labs destroyed from 1988, coca

³³ One might generally expect this to cause increased competition (and violence) between groups, as they compete for a share of the larger revenue available. Alternatively, this may reduce scarcity and reduce competition. In the case of Bolivia, there was no concurrent spike in violence.

paste/base seizures and lab destructions continued to dominate the figures. Such trends would seem to contradict US claims of Bolivia's shift to cocaine production. It should be noted, though, that coca paste/base loses around half of its mass as it is processed in cocaine HCl, so lower weights of seizure for the latter would be expected. In addition to this, labs for producing coca paste/base were both less sophisticated and costly, and generally more prevalent due to the greater number of producers at this stage. Further to this, cocaine HCl labs may have had greater capacity, i.e. fewer labs are needed to produce greater amounts. These factors may underpin the disparities between the numbers of coca paste/base and cocaine HCl labs destroyed. In addition to this, coca paste/base producers in the Chapare may have been less adept at evading interdiction efforts than those further up the coca-cocaine commodity chain, or counterdrug operations may have been more focused on this aspect of the trade. These issues demonstrate some of the problems in interpreting such data. There is a degree of ambiguity when attempting to draw conclusions over the amount of drug rents available to state-narco networks. Fluctuations in rates of production and changes in the role of certain actors (e.g. moving to the greater profit margins of cocaine HCl production), may not be accurately picked-up in this data. It should be noted, furthermore, that Figures 4.2 and 4.3 both indicate stability in the size and revenue of the Bolivian coca-cocaine economy during this period. Such considerations partly underpin the justification for my mixed methods approach. The beliefs and agendas advanced by key actors during this period were as important in defining events as (supposedly) hard data.

Regardless of how one interprets such figures, the US looked to counter the Bolivian narrative that the country's role in the drug trade was limited to that of humble coca cultivation.³⁴ The US Embassy painted a picture of increasingly influential native criminal organisations, who posed a threat to Bolivian society and politics. A US OIG (1991: 11) report stated that these organisations had 'both the inclination and wherewithal to manipulate corrupt officials and undermine government drug control programs.' Plugging into this narrative, the

³⁴ Following the 'evil foreigner/Colombian' thesis (Thoumi, 2003: 242), true power and wealth was said to lie with external actors (see Chapter 5).

US Embassy planned their biggest operation to date in June 1991. A raid designed to secure state authority and law and order in 'Bolivia's Medellin', Santa Ana de Yacuma in the Beni. The implication: the Bolivian state had lost control of a town, overrun with powerful Bolivian trafficking organisations.

The US Embassy claimed the operation as a success, disrupting the drug trade and re-establishing 'Bolivian sovereignty of Santa Ana' (Gamarra, 1994b: 233), but no major traffickers were arrested. In the aftermath of the raid, discord and controversy began to spread. For example, the local navy garrison commander was detained in the midst of the operation, and accused of collusion with drug traffickers.³⁵ Military officers rallied against the DEA and UMOPAR's actions, claiming that the commander had been assaulted, and that the DEA had exceeded its authority (Primera Plana, 1991). Gelbard's robust public defence of the operation and further accusations of high-level corruption in the Bolivian military added to anti-US sentiment (Menzel, 1996: 56). Furthermore, reports of heavy-handedness and police brutality caused a public backlash. For example, a local parish priest alleged that the security forces had 'roughed-up' local residents and caused significant property damage (Youngers, 1991: 14).

Bolivian ministers believed that they had been marginalised by the US in the execution of the Santa Ana operation. The Bolivian government capitalised on the negative spin around the episode to reassert control. This included new limits on DEA operations (Williams, 1997: 16) and, more significantly, introduction of the *Decreto de Arrepentimiento* (Repentance Decree) in July 1991. Drug traffickers who turned themselves-in, cooperated with the authorities, and forfeited their drug gains would be compensated with significantly reduced sentences. This represented a rejection of the US Drug War Paradigm. The Bolivian government argued that dialogue and compromise would be more effective in combatting the drug trade than militarised US policies. Carlos Saavedra (interview, 2014), who replaced Capobianco as Interior Minister in March 1991, claimed a key role in this change of tack.

³⁵ A previous raid on the town in 1989 had ended in clashes between the DEA-UMOPAR, and drug traffickers, residents and the local navy garrison (US Congress, 1990a: 57). For the US Embassy, the incident clearly demonstrated local and official complicity in the drug trade.

The DEA operation was a big opportunity, (out of it) came something very, very interesting. I go to Santa Ana to make a record (of what had happened) with the local residents, okay? They were going to help in the fight against drugs, because they didn't want drug traffickers there. They hadn't helped the drug traffickers. They were terrorised by the drug traffickers, because nightclubs were brought to city, Colombians arrived and, at times, there were deaths, including among the population. It was decided (they would) collaborate with the government in the fight against drugs. It was decided that the DEA wouldn't carry-out more operations. It was one of the decisions, right? (. . .) That night I sleep in Santa Ana, we sign the documents and peace returns to the city, because the city had been very angry about the intervention. The army had arrived, the police, planes, so the population was afraid... kids... people sought refuge in the churches... (it was) like a film. So as I am returning (home), a woman comes to me and delivers me a letter, and says to me... it's a Mrs Roca... that her husband wants to turn himself in, right? A Mrs Roca delivers me a letter in the hotel, in which she explains that her husband wanted to turn himself in. I took the letter away, I read it and it said that her children couldn't study in foreign schools because the American and Europeans knew about their life and they blocked their studies. And that they didn't have a social life, they lived hidden and the family were cast-outs, because of the husband. She recognised that he was involved in the production of cocaine and drug trafficking. So there, an idea came to me. I had read that in Colombia they had made a type of decree for people to turn themselves in, not to be extradited to the United States. (. . .) In Colombia, the no extradition decree was torn apart because of Pablo Escobar. Here, drug trafficking was not violent. Here, there had been no bomb blasts or kidnappings of politicians, journalists or judges. Here, there had been practically no revenge killings by traffickers. If there had been deaths, it had been among the traffickers themselves. So I began to prepare the decree.³⁶

Saavedra's account reflects the typical Bolivian view over the nature of the country's drug trade, i.e. the 'evil Colombian' thesis (Thoumi, 2003: 242). In this sense, the residents of Santa Ana were victims of drug traffickers rather than accomplices. They were willing to contribute to efforts against the drug trade, but not on the abrasive terms of the 'war on drugs'. While Saavedra noted that Bolivian drug traffickers, and their Colombian partners, had brought problems to the town, they too were not as the US portrayed them. The story of 'Mrs Roca' shows the traffickers as family men, not dangerous criminals in the

³⁶ Saavedra typically recounted his anecdotes of this period in the present tense during our interview. It gave the effect of placing both of us more immediate to events. He also wrote notes and timelines of what he was saying as he said it. I left with the impression that he was re-living/picturing the events in his mind as he spoke to me.

mould of Pablo Escobar. Starting from this position, the ‘Colombianisation’ of Bolivian counterdrug efforts was unwarranted and ineffective.

This was the best road for the counterdrug fight in Bolivia. Why? Because there wasn’t violence, and if violence was arriving in Bolivia, like in Colombia, it was going to be worse. So the Bolivian drug traffickers... I said, ‘there are great possibilities to have them turn themselves in, and ultimately, this can help the counterdrug fight in Bolivia’ (Ibid.).

The surrender of seven of Bolivia’s top ten traffickers suggested Saavedra had been right to introduce the law. Furthermore, the testimonies of the traffickers appeared to confirm the idea that Bolivia’s drug clans were based in family networks. The ‘repentant ones’ were primarily ranchers and businessmen rather than international criminals (see Irusta M., 1992). Gamarra (1994b: 235) writes that, ‘by Colombian standards, Bolivia’s drug kingpins were paupers.’ However, some were left with the sense that the trafficker had not been held properly to account, receiving token sentences for their ‘confessions’. It was clear that they had agreed together to hand themselves over to the authorities (Irusta M., 1992: 83). There were doubts over the veracity of their testimonies, and statements accounting for their drug wealth. The traffickers all claimed minor roles in the drug trade and were unable to shed light on the illicit trade beyond the activities of their fellow ‘repentant ones’, nor indeed on their relationship to elements within the state. As such, the Repentance Law may be viewed as a ‘sweetheart deal’ (Snyder, 2006: 961): the state protected elements of the drug trade, while demonstrating to international actors its ‘commitment’ to counterdrug goals. The US Embassy, though, was far from content. The establishment of an extradition treaty for drug trafficking offences had long been a priority for the US, but it remained elusive. The Repentance Decree stood in stark contrast to US conceptualisations of the Bolivian coca-cocaine trade and the appropriate response. Accommodation between the Bolivian state and the drug trade, and the reassertion of Bolivian control, clashed with the top-down control of the US Embassy.

6.7 Entry and Withdrawal of the Army

US plans for an enhanced counterdrug role for the Bolivian army also came into conflict with local priorities.³⁷ Paz Zamora came under sustained pressure to sign Annex III of the 1987 US-Bolivian anti-drug agreement (Gamarra, 1994b: 228). Annex I and II had committed the nations to cooperation on interdiction efforts and crop-substitution; Annex III concerned the army's counterdrug role (see Gamboa, 1993: 389-450). The policy reflected the securitisation and militarisation trend of US counterdrug policy at this time, which included Southcom's increased role in the Drug War.³⁸ It was sold as being necessary to support the out-gunned Bolivian police, against the 'security threat' of Bolivia's drug traffickers. In addition to this, though, counterdrug funding to the military would re-balance the institution with the police (US OIG, 1991: 42). Historic inter-institutional rivalries had re-emerged, with the military jealous of increased budgets to better-armed and more prominent police anti-drug units (Quintana, 2004: Para. 157). Having served their penance for the García Meza episode, concerns over the institutional implications of being close to the drug trade were placed to one side, as budgetary considerations took centre stage.³⁹

They were it all for it, likes bees to honey, because these were guys who had a transportation battalion with two World War II jeeps in it, one quarter tonne truck, and all of a sudden they're going to get 25 big brand new trucks. So from their perspective, it was good deal. (Bowers interview, 2013)⁴⁰

³⁷ The air force and navy had, since 1987, preformed a logistical, support role to UMOPAR. The *Diablos Rojos* (Red Devils) provided aerial support for counterdrug operations, while the *Diablos Azules* (Blue Devils) provided riverine support for counterdrug operations.

³⁸ The DEA were against the policy, preferring to maintain a law-enforcement response to the drug trade (Painter, 1994: 94).

³⁹ Indicating that there were differing opinions within the military on this, Greenlee (interview, 2013) stated: 'When I was DCM (Deputy Chief of Mission), the military had been reluctant to get involved in the drug stuff because they saw it as corrupting and something that had corrupted the police'. In addition to this, Ambassador Rowell (1995: 317) noted the lasting-effects of the 'cocaine-coup' on the institution: 'The Bolivian Armed Forces were determined to stay out of the anti-drug business. (. . .) Involvement in the drug traffic (during García Meza) had corrupted the armed forces. It had hurt internal discipline and unity in the armed forces. In effect, it was tearing apart an institution that meant a great deal to the people who were in it.'

⁴⁰ In a meeting with Bolivian generals, DoD officials were reportedly surprised that the Bolivians were satisfied with 'post-Korean war scraps' and wondered why they had not demanded submarines and aircraft-carriers (Malamud Goti, 1991: 147).

Aside from fears of the implications of giving the army an internal role, Paz Zamora had campaigned against militarisation. There was resistance to the policy from within government, and across Bolivian society and politics. However, the link between US development and security assistance was clear. In May 1990, Paz Zamora travelled to Washington and signed Annex III.⁴¹ On his return, he attempted to convince the public that he had not reneged on his demilitarisation pledge; that the agreement had secured significant economic support for Bolivia and the military were ‘an inseparable part of the global strategy of alternative development’ (Gamarra, 1994b: 228). For critics, Annex III was emblematic of the prioritisation of US counterdrug goals over local concerns.

Despite the agreement, the Bolivian government stalled on releasing the funds to the army, and so initiating their entry into the Drug War (Gamarra, 1993: 51). Gelbard exerted ‘fierce’ pressure on Paz Zamora to acquiesce to US demands (CSM, 1991b). A cable from October 1990 (US Embassy La Paz to Secretary of State, 1990) provides insights into this, and the distinct US-Bolivian perspectives of the period. First, Gelbard used back channels of communication to Banzer’s ADN to pursue the Embassy’s goal. Speaking with Carlos Iturralde (ADN), the Bolivian Foreign Minister, he raised US objectives ‘that are either being ignored by the GOB (Government of Bolivia) or have been the subject of broken commitments’, and stated that this was creating a ‘credibility’ problem. Iturralde was reported as saying, ‘in a straightforward manner that the ‘problem’ is Paz Zamora, who is still not convinced that there really is a need for interdiction in Bolivia because he is really not convinced of a cocaine manufacturing problem and drug trafficking problem’. As such, distinct conceptualisations of the issue led to differing priorities and policy preferences.

Further to this, Gelbard and Iturralde discussed the implications of failure to adhere to Annex III. Gelbard stated that ‘if (counterdrug) assistance were provided to the army and (it was) not used for counternarcotics purposes

⁴¹ US FMF would be provided to Bolivia for the creation of four new army battalions: two anti-drug (named *Jórdan* and *Manchego*), one engineering and a transportation unit (which became known as the *Diablos Verdes*), all to be trained by Southcom personnel (Menzel, 1996: 49).

(Bolivia's) entire FY91 assistance package, including economic assistance, could very well be jeopardized'. He also argued that the withholding of promised funds to the army could cause further tensions between the police and military. Although Gelbard discounted the potential for *coup d'état*, the following passage demonstrates that the issue still entered into the considerations of these actors. The cable also shows the willingness of the US to circumvent the Bolivian government to deal with old allies from the Bolivian military (past and present).

We intend to discuss these issues with the appropriate GOB officials, including President Paz Zamora, military commanders and other political leaders, particularly including General Banzer. While I do not feel the current lack of definition and mishandling by the GOB has the potential for creating army unrest as to generate the possibility of a coup, it is symptomatic of the Paz Zamora's mismanagement of many important issues through a lack of clear leadership and decision-making ability and does have the ability to continue to weaken this government for the foreseeable future. (Ibid.)

Paz Zamora's perceived indecision on Annex III may be interpreted against the background of competing US and local demands (Gamarra, 1994b). In this sense, the Bolivian government was dependent on US economic support and pressured to conform to US counterdrug goals. At the same time, though, there was reluctance to introduce policies that were opposed locally, and that had the potential to cause economic and political instability. For Gelbard's Embassy, though, this was emblematic of the administration's weakness and lack of leadership. Gelbard's damning indictment of Paz Zamora is indicative of their poor relationship, the dominance of US Drug War goals, and contrasting US and Bolivian perspectives of the 'war on drugs'.

The cable also plugs into the dynamics of the MIR's Cold War legacy narrative, including: top-down US control, attempts to bypass a democratically elected government by appealing to right-wing allies, and on-going distrust of the former-radicals. In the following passage, Capobianco (interview, 2014) calls on similar themes and argues that their relationship with the Embassy was doomed from the start.

In the past, the United States had a different status in Latin America; the United States was tough, definitely... it was very powerful. The international context was totally different to what we have now. (. . .) The US supported Goni,⁴² but who won the elections? General Banzer... (in) democratic elections. (But neither he nor Goni) gained the votes they needed for one of them to become president. So Jaime Paz, a great strategist... military as well, although he was never in the army... political strategy... he said to Banzer - we had already reconciled with Banzer - he said to the General, 'I can't make you president, because my votes in Congress won't allow me. I can't make it happen. If I could, I would make you president, but I can't'. So General Banzer... a wise man, a military man, a dictator... he was a very intelligent man... said to Paz Zamora, 'Sir, you cannot make me president, but with my votes in Congress, I can make you president, so you will be president'. Huge, huge shock worldwide! But above all in the US, because the US was sure, sure, that Goni was going to be president.

Capobianco emphasised the status of the US in Latin America during this period, and their influence in the internal politics of Bolivia. But on this occasion, their preferred candidate - Goni - had lost, and the US had been outmanoeuvred by Paz Zamora and Banzer. The reconciliation of the MIR and Banzer, and the formation of the *Acuerdo Patriótico*, reflected the change in Bolivian politics. For Capobianco, though, the pact and the MIR's history produced US distrust.

They didn't think that the MIR... at this time, considered an ultra-leftist party... not ultra-leftist, but progressive and leftist... The Americans couldn't believe it. (But) so it was: we entered government. (We) had, in sport it's called a handicap, due to entering government in this way. Why? Because we had an American ambassador who was a fanatic! A fanatic of his country. He was very, very... How can I put this? Fanatical, that's the word. He was called Mr... Gelbard, American Ambassador. So from the first moment, the Americans had no confidence in the MIR; there was distrust of our party due to the way we entered government. (Capobianco interview, 2014)

According to this view, then, the Cold War cast a shadow over US-Bolivian relations post-transition. This included both US hegemonic influence in the politics of the South, and the continuing Left/Right division of Latin American enemies and allies. Differences between the US Embassy and Paz Zamora's government thus ran deeper than alternative visions of counterdrug policy. The introduction of the Andean Initiative, the installation of the Drug War security

⁴² Sanchez 'Goni' Gonzalo de Losada of the MNR.

apparatus and US accusations of corruption are viewed through the prism of top-down US control in Bolivia.

Finally, in early-1991, Paz Zamora bowed to US pressure and deployed the army in counterdrug operations. Interior Minister Carlos Saavedra recognised it as a ‘costly decision, with a huge political price’ (Opinión, 1991b). However, due to a number of reasons, their counterdrug role proved to be short-lived. Societal protests, including *cocalero* blockades, and opposition from Congress ensured a government commitment preventing army-led operations in the Chapare (Painter, 1994: 99). This significantly reduced the army’s utility in counterdrugs. Indeed, there was confusion over the army’s specific role, whether solely as logistical support to the police or as fully-fledged independent units. National Police Commander Felipe Carvajal argued for the former, stating publicly that the army would be subordinated to the police (Mansilla, 2003: 18).

“We’re going to live in a permanent climate of mutual accusations. We’re going have permanent friction. It’s inevitable.” (Anonymous police chief, quoted in La Razón, 1991)

Such statements stoked inter-institutional rivalries, and the issue of the post-transition balance of power. Added to this, the results of the first operations of these new units were underwhelming, challenging their suitability to this new mission (Williams, 1997: 7). US Embassy officials and policymakers in Congress thus began to question the soundness of their investment (Gamarra, 1994b: 240). With Gelbard now gone as ambassador, replaced with Charles Bowers in August 1991, the policy was slowly rolled back. On a trip to Washington in July 1992, Bolivian Interior Minister Carlos Saavedra announced that Bolivia would be the first Andean nation to de-link the army from counterdrug efforts (Painter, 1994: 102).⁴³ Despite complaints from the military over the cut in funding (Gamarra, 1994b: 241), the Bolivian government was able to claim some level of success in resisting the US Drug War model.

⁴³ The *Diablos* were the only anti-drug military units to survive this shift in strategy.

6.5 Conclusion

The preceding discussion demonstrates how state-narco networks were entrenched in the politics of Bolivia's post-transition political settlement. Uneven democratisation ensured pockets of clientelism and authoritarianism, in which, state-narco interactions continued to function. While incompatible with the principles of modern, liberal democracy, these were viewed to be part of the stable political order. Ensuring factional interests and institutional veto players remained bound to the transition, police and military autonomy, and, by extension state-narco networks, were tolerated. My analysis thus maps the effects of the changing political context on the relationship between the Bolivian state and the drug trade. This breaks with the conventional analysis of the drugs literature, and one-dimensional conceptions of drug corruption. The significance of state-narco networks extended beyond 'mere greed' (Meehan, 2011: 402), deviance or institutional failure. These were instead considered to be integrated into relations between political and institutional actors, processes of transition and engrained political practices. As part of this, then, the drug trade was absorbed into political complexes, and levels of drug related violence remained low. These dynamics shaped the perspectives of elite Bolivian actors, and informed their preferences for counterdrug policy.

The second half of the chapter addresses the clash of these Bolivian views with US securitised notions of drugs. In essence, I argue that elite US and Bolivian actors viewed the drug problem and attached state-narco networks from different perspectives and responded to them in different ways. The introduction of the Andean Initiative brought this to the surface, as the US and Bolivian governments pursued distinct agendas. The Paz Zamora's claimed 'democratising mission' and ambivalence towards the coca-cocaine economy partly underpinned calls for a development-led response, and opposition to destabilising US Drug War policies. By contrast, the Drug War Paradigm shaped US actions. As my analysis shows, US counterdrug goals dominated; pursued vigorously by the US Embassy, despite local concerns. The extension of US control was designed to circumvent 'corrupt' local power structures, as the US established Drug War proxies to execute counterdrug operations. Bolivian

resistance to such policies was viewed to stem either from denial of the true parameters of the country's drug problem, or corruption. The introduction of the Repentance Decree clarified these distinct conceptualisations. Where Bolivian actors viewed the drug trade as relatively benign and sought accommodation with traffickers, US actors looked to exert control and 'defeat' the drug trade.

The chapter thus demonstrates the interplay between these distinct interpretations of the 'war on drugs', US-Bolivian relations and the development of counterdrug policy. Therefore, my contextualised analysis of the relationship between the Bolivian state and the drug trade, grounded in uneven democratisation and the introduction of the Andean Initiative, advances the research agenda of the coercion literature. This includes the contrasting perspectives of elite US and Bolivian actors on this phenomenon and how they navigated state-narco networks during a key moment in the trajectory of the 'war on drugs'. The period was thus marked by competitive US-Bolivian relations of power and control. Distinct interpretations of drugs and state-narco networks were pivotal to this dynamic. In the following chapter, I develop this theme; considering how this played out around the issue of corruption in the Bolivian political class. This reveals further contestation around state-narco interactions.

Chapter 7 | Corruption Accusations and the Bolivian Political Class

Nadie es virgen, ni nadie es santo (Reinicke interview, 2014).

The quote above translates as, ‘nobody is a virgin, nobody is a saint’. Godofredo Reinicke, the former Human Rights Ombudsman for the Chapare (1997-2001), made the comment when I asked about his perceptions of drug corruption. He accepted that it was a problem in the Bolivian state, but argued that other actors were also guilty. For example, he believed that the US had collaborated with organised crime in the past for reasons of political influence and intelligence. ‘Drug trafficking has not only corroded the governmental sphere in Bolivia,’ Reinicke stated, ‘but the United States itself’. While his account may be supported by key authors of the literature,¹ it was also indicative of the role of accusation and counter-accusation in understandings of the ‘war on drugs’ in Bolivia. Allegations of state-narco interactions in the political class were enmeshed in competing US and Bolivian agendas. As the extension of the Drug War model met local opposition, such accusations held significance to the form and function of US-Bolivian relations, Bolivia’s internal politics and the course of counterdrug policy. In this chapter, I draw on the accounts of US and Bolivian actors to explore claims of drug corruption, and the nature of state-narco links within the Bolivian political class.

My analysis reveals US-Bolivian contestation and political subtext around these phenomena. Interlocutors incorporated narratives of power and resistance into their accounts, advancing distinct interpretations of drug scandals and what they represented. Building on the findings of the previous chapter, I map US efforts to exercise counterdrug control in Bolivia and navigate perceived drug corruption in the Paz Zamora administration. As part of this, I examine Drug War ‘wins’ of the period. This exposed deep US-Bolivian fault lines of trust, as ‘corrupt’ elements of the Bolivian government were bypassed in the rendition of

¹ For example, McCoy (2003) and Scott & Marshall (1991) both discuss historic cases of CIA complicity in drug trafficking.

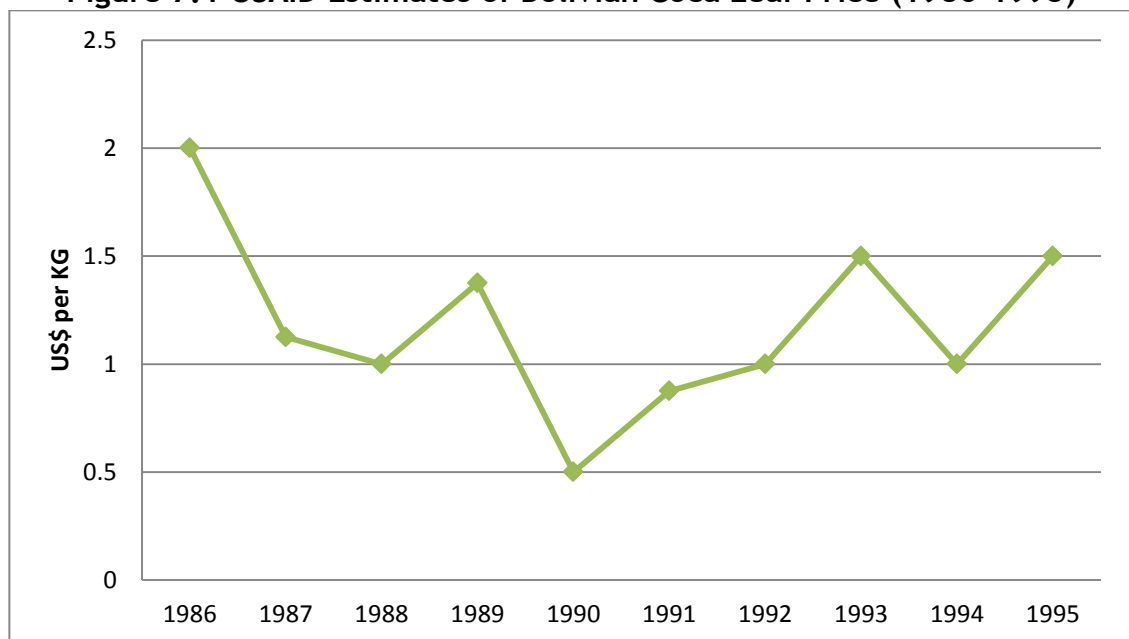
Arce Gomez. The final part of the chapter considers the drug corruption accusations that engulfed the Paz Zamora government. At the time of the Andean Initiative, corruption claims - supported by seemingly rigorous US intelligence - were used to pressure for the removal of 'uncooperative' Drug War partners. US interlocutors now referenced such cases to justify the extension of the US Drug War model. By contrast, Bolivian interlocutors viewed the Embassy's actions within the historic logic of US Cold War tactics and the manipulation of Bolivian politics. This resonated with views of 'Yankee Imperialism', questioning the stated aims of the US in Latin America and assuming underlying goals.

The chapter, therefore, provides novel insights along three dimensions. First, relating back to Chapter 5's analysis of atomised state-narco network, I consider the penetration of drug money through Bolivia's political parties. This supports the notion that the diffusion of power following transition led to new patron-client bonds between the state and the drugs trade. It shows the adaptation of these linkages, and the close interactive effects between local political dynamics and the drug trade. Second, the form and function of US-Bolivian relations were shaped by elite perceptions of state-narco networks. The relationship between the US Embassy and the Paz Zamora government was marked by distrust and competition. This links to the analysis of the previous chapter and has implications for common understandings of the development of the 'war on drugs' in Latin America. Third, the chapter draws out the legacy of the Cold War on Drug War politics, and the use of 'corruption' as a rhetorical device. In terms of the former, old tribal dividing lines were viewed to have shaped the implementation of US counterdrug strategy; for the latter, allegations were exchanged back and forth, as elite actors defended their record and pursued their particular goals. My analysis thus demonstrates how contested interpretations of this facet of state-narco networks formed part of competing US and Bolivian agendas.

7.1 The US Embassy's Strategic Approach

As the Andean Initiative filtered down to Bolivia, the US Embassy directed resources in the service of its own country-specific strategy. This included plans to identify and map drug trafficking organisations. It was believed that such an approach would enable counterdrug forces to disrupt the coca-cocaine trade and dismantle its framework. Ambassador Gelbard (interview, 2013) argued that this targeted approach was more suited to Bolivian political realities. Rather than implement counterdrug efforts that aggravated the *cocaleros*, with little long-term effect on the trade, the strategy would drive down the coca price and encourage the uptake of alternative development projects. Indicating a level of success, at least in the first strand of this approach, Figure 7.1 shows a correlation between the execution of the strategy and a (temporary) decline in coca prices.²

Figure 7.1 USAID Estimates of Bolivian Coca Leaf Price (1986-1995)



(Figures drawn from Clawson & Lee III, 1996: 40)

*Estimate for each year taken in the month of June, although prices fluctuate throughout each year.

² It is difficult to establish causation here, as coca prices may be affected by multiple factors, e.g. patterns of coca cultivation elsewhere in the Andes, over-supply in the Chapare, or changes in the configuration of trafficking organisations further up the commodity chain.

The US Embassy's counterdrug efforts, though, also extended into the political sphere. US intelligence was used to target 'corrupt' politicians and officials: cutting state-narco links and ensuring the implementation of the US Embassy's strategy. Relations between the Embassy and the Bolivian government were marked by growing distrust. As described in the previous chapter, the perception that many within the Bolivian government were either not interested in counterdrug goals and/or involved in the cocaine trade was prevalent both then and now. For example, a US OIG (1991: 2) report of drug control activities in Bolivia noted that the 'political will' of the Bolivian government was 'questionable, as demonstrated by some recent appointments of corrupt officials to key drug control positions.' Furthermore, Gelbard (interview 2013) stated, 'we were hurt for a couple of reasons. First, we were dealing with a corrupt government'. The US Embassy thus saw the Paz Zamora government as an unreliable ally, and sought to target its 'corrupt' elements. For US actors, such as Gelbard, this partly justified the Embassy's dominant role, and its actions in bypassing the government in the execution of counterdrug operations.

James Cason, the Political Counsellor for the Embassy La Paz (1987-1990) played a key role in rolling out the Embassy's plan. In order to construct 'family trees' of Bolivia's drug trafficking organisations, Cason established a system of intelligence gathering that involved the trawling of public registries, electoral rolls, business records and media reports (Cason, 2009: 343).³ From this 50,000 name database, the US identified the properties of suspected drug traffickers, their associates and family members. In addition to planning drug raids, the database was also used to vet state officials and politicians. Cason's (Ibid: 345-9) description of this system demonstrates an unwavering belief in the strength of the Embassy's intelligence, and elements of the Drug War Paradigm: the belief that the 'war on drugs' may be won through sustained effort against 'deviant' actors.

I had very, very complete family trees on the major traffickers that included the kinds of data needed to identify them, all coming out of the electoral registries. And eventually I got the complete computer tapes of

³ Cason won the CIA National Human Intelligence Prize in 1989 for his work in Bolivia (Cason, 2009: 343).

every voter in the country. That kind of background material allowed us to dismantle the organizations and to identify the corrupt people in the government. We managed to get a number of interior ministers, police chiefs and other people fired and jailed using, in part, this kind of data. (For example), when Jaime Paz Zamora became president we told him not to appoint certain corrupt police as chief: 'don't put the police chiefs in these cities because they're narco-traffickers.' And we showed them the information and they took our suggestion. And when they did put people in who turned out to be corrupt, with narco ties, we provided information to them about what they were doing and the President fired them. With the intelligence we had we were able to put a lot of heat on the government. Unfortunately, too often, they'd put another guy in and he turned out to be a narco as well. So it was a never ending battle, but we were at least tactically successful at blocking a lot of appointments and getting people fired during the three years that Gelbard and I worked along with others on this issue.

Cason presents these cases as relatively straightforward, but there were often grounds for doubt.⁴ For example, Gelbard's Embassy denied a visa to Max Fernandez, a beer magnate with presidential ambitions. There were questions over how Fernandez had made his fortune and his ties to the drug trade. The decision to deny the visa was a public marker that the US considered him to be corrupt and/or a drug trafficker.⁵ It would serve to undermine his bid for the presidency and his efforts to create a political movement outside of the established parties. When Ambassador Charles R. Bowers replaced Gelbard in August 1991, he reconsidered Fernandez's case.

So the secretary of state gives you this letter, (and) there is a classified version, which would get into areas which are not necessarily public. Like, you know, 'we're concerned that this guy, who is the minister of justice, is a crook'. And, 'hey, we want you to find out if he is a crook, and if he is, start working with the government to get him out of office, cause we don't want him to be working for the narco-traffickers'. Before my time in Bolivia, the Embassy had declared that an individual named Max Fernandez, who was a rather flamboyant beer magnate, who ran for president ... he died a few years ago... that he had been involved with the

⁴ Finding links between politicians and someone involved in the drug trade was by no means unusual in the relatively small circles of the Bolivian elite (Hargreaves, 1992: 184).

⁵ Cason (2009: 348) suggested that visa denial had more mundane, but effective, implications. 'Cason: We began to use the visa weapon there against traffickers. Bob Gelbard was very supportive. Q: Well, I would think the visa weapon would be particularly potent, not for the narco guy, but for his wife and the kids. Cason: Exactly. I've found everywhere that when you take away the ability of the fat cat to take his kids to Disney World and his wife to go shopping, they get really upset. And lots of times they break down and cry. But we denied visas on solid information. We kept them from coming to the United States.'

narco-traffickers. And so when you get involved with the narco-traffickers, the United States did not look kindly on that. 'No more visas for you, you can't come to the United States, you're not invited to any parties,' and whatever else. After I was down there, we looked into this in a very detailed fashion, and determined that the previous determination was wrong. The guy wasn't involved. So I had to try and roll this back up, and Washington really fought that, but eventually, we worked back-up. (Bowers interview, 2013)

While admitting flaws in the system, Bowers restated the right of the Embassy to make these kinds of determinations. On the surface, the US was solely using the diplomatic tools at its disposal to pursue its counterdrug objectives; at times, making honest errors. These were presented as direct punishments for perceived transgressions. Similarly to Cason, the US response to alleged cases of corruption was described in plain policy terms of cause and effect.

There was recognition that such decisions had social and political ramifications - that was partly the point - but the idea that the US was shaping internal Bolivian politics, and the validity of this, was little discussed. Returning to Fernandez's case, he was forced to field questions about his background and fitness for public office. He had not been convicted of a crime, yet his political career was, in-part, dependent on convincing the US of his innocence.⁶ The sense that the US sat as judge and jury on matters of drug corruption, and the lack of conclusive evidence in such cases, was a source of contention in Bolivia. It fed into anti-US sentiment: viewed as another aspect of overbearing US influence in Bolivia, and the legacy of its Cold War politics. However, for US interlocutors, informed by the Drug War Paradigm and ideas of American Exceptionalism, such actions were held as legitimate. In terms of the former, the US was pursuing those who inhibited their counterdrug goals; for the latter, benevolent US foreign policy had targeted actors who have transgressed ethical norms.

⁶ Paz Zamora himself would also be subject to this tactic, when his US visa was revoked in 1996 (see section 7.4). He believed this to be a calculated attempt by the US Embassy and his political rivals to sabotage his chances of re-election.

7.2 Fault Lines of Trust

The US Embassy was able to claim the effectiveness of its strategic approach following the arrests of major drug traffickers, such as Carmelo ‘Meco’ Dominguez and Jorge Roca Suárez.⁷ Subsecretary for Social Defence Gonzalo Torrico claimed that Bolivia’s drug trade had received its most significant hit to due to the capture of these ‘*peces gordos*’ (Opinión, 1991a). The capture of García Meza’s ‘Minister of Cocaine’, though, was perhaps the Embassy’s most significant Drug War ‘win’. After years on the run, Luis Arce Gomez was caught in Santa Cruz in December 1989. Still apparently wary of provoking the military by attempting prosecution within Bolivia, President Paz Zamora agreed that Arce Gomez should face trial in the US on drug trafficking offences. Despite the absence of an extradition treaty, the former-Colonel was flown out of the country by the DEA and arrested in Miami. Both Ambassador Gelbard and former-Interior Minister Capobianco, claimed Arce Gomez’s capture as a triumph, but viewed the episode through different lenses. They narrated their memories of the case in the form of anecdotes,⁸ with diverging emphases and explanatory frameworks e.g. American Exceptionalism (and paternal attitudes towards the South) and the Drug War Paradigm, and Yankee Imperialism and the Cold War legacy. Their anecdotes, situated within the assumptions and conceptualisations of such frameworks, reveal the fault lines of trust that divided the Embassy and the Bolivian government during this period.

Taking Gelbard’s (interview, 2013) account first, the former-Ambassador set the scene for the operation by outlining some of the crimes of the García Meza regime. As such, he stressed the US Embassy’s lead role in identifying Arce Gomez and advanced US foreign policy as a force for good. The fascist and Nazi links of the García Meza regime and its involvement in human rights abuses and drug trafficking created a moral imperative for the US to act. Ideas around the US role as the ‘City on the Hill’ and its ‘responsibility’ to project its liberal

⁷ These traffickers are discussed in Chapter 4.4.

⁸ James (2005: 172) argues that, ‘anecdotes are in some fundamental way morality tales with both social and individual register: they are about proper and improper behaviour, responsible and irresponsible actions, about the way the world is and the way it ought to be.’

democrat values support this view. Gelbard sought to underline the positive role of the US Embassy in Bolivia.

You know the García Meza government was this Right-wing narco-fascist dictatorship? (. . .) (*60 Minutes*) did a feature on (Arce Gomez) calling him the Minister of Cocaine, and he bragged about all the things that he was doing. He was also responsible for the murder of hundreds of people and the torture of thousands of people. Klaus Barbie, the Nazi war criminal, was one of his advisors. There was an Italian fascist terrorist named, Stefano Delle Chiaie who had sought refuge in Bolivia after blowing up the Bologna train station. He was an advisor to these guys. They would torture and do horrible things. Meanwhile they were actively involved in the cocaine business with Roberto Suarez. After the García Meza government fell, Arce Gomez disappeared and escaped, ultimately, to Argentina, where the military dictatorship hid him. He was arrested in the mid '80s and apparently bribed an Argentine judge a couple of million dollars to release him. He disappeared again. In early '89 we began getting reports that he was in Santa Cruz, which is where he was from. Don Ferrarone came in to see me one day and said that the DEA office in Santa Cruz had had reports that the man was there, walking around openly. A doctor I knew in Santa Cruz came in to see me - same thing. All these people were really scared of him because of what he had done, justifiably. And the doctor said he had seen Arce Gomez just walking along the street. So we did all the surveillance and we discovered that indeed he was there and staying at his house, with his family, brazenly!

Gelbard accentuated his surprise at the apparent openness of Arce Gomez's lifestyle, despite having been indicted by US and Bolivian courts. Although fear is noted as a factor here, there is also the hint of official complicity. In the overall context of Gelbard's account, either the Bolivian authorities lacked the will and ability to bring Arce Gomez to justice, or corruption was involved (Arce Gomez had already bribed an Argentine judge). The US was often portrayed as struggling against an uncooperative/unable local state apparatus and pervasive corruption. Linking into this, he continued the anecdote by describing the reaction of President Paz Zamora to the news of Arce Gomez.

So I went to the President of Bolivia, Jaime Paz Zamora, and I said, 'Jaime, you've got a problem'. (. . .) Paz Zamora was from a leftist political party that had been severely persecuted by Arce Gomez, some of his people had been massacred in a notorious attack by Arce Gomez and the military. Many of them had been tortured; bad, bad stuff. So I went to President Paz Zamora and I said, 'look, we got a problem. We have a problem together. Arce Gomez is in Santa Cruz'. He just blanched. I said, 'it seems to me we have three possibilities - the first, we could try

to ignore this but I don't really think we can, because the man's walking around Santa Cruz brazenly', I said, 'or second, we could do an operation together and he could be turned over to you'. And he said, 'oh no', he said, 'I wouldn't be President for more than six weeks after that'. He still feared a military coup, even though the military was discredited. I said, 'or we could do a joint operation and you could turn him over to me'. He said, 'I like that'. So we did this by the numbers, and with the approval of the President of Bolivia. We had a specially trained Bolivian Police unit go pick him up. It was a beautiful sunny day, he was barbecuing in Bermuda shorts wearing an apron. The Bolivian Police unit picked him up.⁹

There are three important strands to this passage. First, continuing with the theme of American Exceptionalism, Gelbard gave himself and the US Embassy the preeminent role in the operation against Arce Gomez. The former-Ambassador expressed sympathy for Paz Zamora and the MIR's history under García Meza, but the Bolivian President was portrayed as a passive actor in Gelbard's recounting of the story: Paz Zamora was frozen with shock by Gelbard's revelation, which compelled the Embassy to step-in and take decisive action. US control, in this sense, was a matter of necessity and benevolence. Second, Gelbard noted Paz Zamora's continuing concern with military intervention in the political system. As discussed in the previous chapter, there was an uneasy relationship between the political class and the military institution. Although this issue was largely dismissed by Bolivian interlocutors - the intervening years perhaps adding greater certainty - Gelbard identified this as an important factor in Paz Zamora's approval of Arce Gomez's rendition. Third, Gelbard described the operation as 'by the numbers', but, in truth, regular legal procedures were cut to enable Arce Gomez's trial in the US. Bolivia's uneven democracy was evident in both the denial of due legal process and concerns over the status of civil-military relations. In this sense, the requirements of the rule of law and constitutional government were compromised. As described in the previous chapter, Bolivian political actors had been willing to make such compromises to ensure 'democratic governability', and, in some ways, this decision fits with their claimed pragmatism. In

⁹ Part of Gelbard's anecdote is cut here for reasons of space. The cut section includes a description of a misunderstanding between the Bolivian police and the DEA, which meant that the Embassy lost track of the operation for several hours.

Gelbard's anecdote, this expediency was defended against the crimes of Arce Gomez and his role in the drug trade.

The next day they put him on the plane. He got on the plane and he thought he was going to La Paz, so they started flying and he was surrounded by DEA people, and he started cursing at them and telling in very graphic terms once he was freed what he... he said he would remember who these DEA people were and he started talking about what he was going to do to their wives, daughters and girlfriends, in really pornographic, nasty terms. And the DEA people just sat there, and they flew for two and a half hours and finally he said, 'we've been flying a long time, are we going to La Paz?' And the chief DEA guy said no. He said, 'where are we going?' He said, 'Miami', and (Arce Gomez) began crying. He got a thirty year sentence. Now, by the time he was freed he had been indicted by the Bolivian government, convicted in absentia for horrible crimes - murder, torture - and sentenced to life imprisonment or whatever it is in Bolivia. By the time he'd finished nineteen years they were going to let him go for good behaviour, he had been through prostate cancer and other things and the US was ready to deport him. The US government asked me to go and be the witness in favour of his deportation, so I had the wonderful job of getting him coming and helping him go. So he is back with García Mesa in prison for the rest of his life in Bolivia, which I saw as a great object lesson in terms of the drug traffickers.

Guillermo Capobianco's (interview, 2014) account of the case differs substantially in emphasis. President Paz Zamora is presented as the main protagonist in Capobianco's anecdote, and its primary purpose is to demonstrate Bolivian compliance in the 'war on drugs'. Where Gelbard highlighted Arce Gomez's role in the abuses of the García Meza regime, Capobianco focused on Arce Gomez 'the drug trafficker'. By the time of his arrest, it was widely believed that Arce Gomez was no longer a major player in the cocaine trade and, given his history with the MIR, it is perhaps surprising that Capobianco made little reference to the past crimes of the 'Minister of Cocaine'. In countering US accusations of corruption and lack of political will, though, the anecdote advanced the Bolivian government's agency in the expulsion of Arce Gomez.

I was relaxing one afternoon, having a BBQ here, when General Añez comes in, (. . .) and he tells me, 'Minister, we have taken prisoner, *el Señor...*' the biggest trafficker at that time, who (had been) a minister of state, and he tells me (. . .), 'Arce Gomez, we've taken Arce Gomez'. 'Shit!' I said, 'bloody hell!' And so we composed ourselves, and set-up a

meeting, and President Paz Zamora, a man, a strategist, spoke with... I think that he spoke with President Bush, until finally he said... although he never agreed an extradition treaty... (he said), 'Take him'. Because of a decision - not constitutional, not legal - President Paz Zamora authorised the extradition of this major trafficker, Luis Arce Gomez. He was taken prisoner at three in the afternoon and at seven in the morning, I was already informing the country that, in a joint operation between Bolivia and the US Embassy, the political decision had been made to send this major drug trafficker to the United States. As such, when the country learned this at nine in the morning, the man was already in the United States; because of a political decision. I would like to say, then, that President Paz Zamora was right when he (made this agreement with) the US representatives... that the most important thing was the attitude, the conviction to fight against drugs. It was more important that signing a treaty and the proof was Arce Gomez. He departed at dawn in a DEA plane, authorised by us, without a treaty, only due to friendship, to work together, between Bolivians and Americans. This is the proof I can give you of how our relations... they were difficult, but in a crucial moment like this, President Paz Zamora did not waiver. Because, what was it that President Paz Zamora feared? He feared that, following the seizure of him, the factions that controlled certain levels of drug trafficking would be able to act against the government, right? (But) this is the proof of how the relationship between the US Embassy and our government (worked).

In addition to the pivotal role of Paz Zamora, Capobianco noted the unconstitutional nature of the decision, and the threat posed to the government by Arce Gomez and unnamed drug trafficking factions. In one sense, Capobianco seemed to echo doubts over the strength of Bolivia's institutions to deal with the implications of Arce Gomez's arrest. Around this time, for example, Paz Zamora had justified the irregular rendition by citing the 'terrible weaknesses and the terrible immorality which plagues our judicial system' (Hargreaves, 1992: 117).¹⁰ Capobianco, though, also described it as a 'political decision'. The anecdote stresses the Paz Zamora government's willingness to engage with the US on the topic of drug trafficking and, in this context, the rendition of Arce Gomez is designed to placate the US. But according to Capobianco, the US was still mired in Cold War-thinking. As detailed below, he argued that the Bolivian government's desire for a productive working relationship with the US was met with old Cold War-era suspicions.

¹⁰ This may be linked to the drawn out prosecution of García Meza, which would not reach its conclusion until 1993. At this point, the former-dictator was on the run.

Capobianco described how he was frequently marginalised in the planning and execution of counterdrug operations. In the case of Arce Gomez, he stated that during ‘the most important operation of my time with respect to combating the mafias, I was at a barbeque. (. . .) Nobody had told me’. Such actions were not unusual. The US actively sought to bypass ‘uncooperative’ officials, utilising its allies in the government and its Drug War proxies, such as UMOPAR, as part of its approach. As noted in the previous chapter, there was frustration at the Bolivian government’s refusal to prioritise counterdrug objectives and accept the Embassy’s securitised assessments of the country’s coca-cocaine economy. Suggestions that the Paz Zamora administration’s lack of political will also stemmed from links to drug traffickers added to the atmosphere of distrust. For example, Gelbard (interview, 2013) justified Capobianco’s relegation from the Arce Gomez operation in the following terms.

I didn’t trust Capobianco. We didn’t trust Capobianco. When we did the Arce Gomez operation, we didn’t tell Capobianco what we were doing because we were afraid he would blow it. He was from Santa Cruz and we didn’t know what his connections might be with Arce Gomez.

Fault lines of trust, then, were explained not only by the perceived weakness of the Bolivian government on the issue of drugs, but through reference to corruption. For actors such as Gelbard, Drug War goals validated the abrasive US approach.

By contrast, Capobianco claimed that Gelbard’s Embassy considered the MIR to be anti-US and this shaped their relations. US top-down control and distrust, then, was traced back to the legacy of the Cold War, rather than the Bolivian government’s lack of political will and/or corruption.

We had a strong-willed ambassador... of a type... how should I put it? A fanatic. So, he was the man who pressured the government. (. . .) We were well disposed to carry forward the fight against drugs, but not as an absolute priority, you realise... due to the way we got to government, no. (But) there was pressure. There was pressure on President Paz Zamora. I recognised it many times, that there was great pressure for the policies to combat drug trafficking to be more indiscriminate, for example: that they might be more tough, give more emphasis to repression, less emphasis to prevention or alternative development and all of this. There definitely was pressure, it was clear. (. . .) The level of dependence of the

government with respect to the United States (meant) that the suggestions of the Ambassador were not really suggestions. They were orders, okay? So when the Ambassador suggested something, it wasn't a suggestion. He was saying, 'right, *carajo*,¹¹ do this'. It was hard. It was hard. (. . .) I was the Minister of Government, a very strong and powerful minister. (. . .) What did I have to do? Maintain order within the country and combat drugs. I got the poisoned chalice,¹² no?! Of combatting drugs. (. . .) The American Ambassador did not want me. He considered me a bloody Lefty,¹³ I'm sure. But in my party, I was always politically moderate. (Capobianco interview, 2014)

The US Embassy's Political Counsellor from this period, James Cason, indicated that Capobianco's beliefs were not without some substance. He stated that the Embassy had 'wrongly' viewed the MIR as an 'extremist far-left party', and noted the US 'tendency in those days, unfortunately, to stay away from the Left, rather than to try to get to know them and influence their thinking' (Cason, 2009: 349). As such, Capobianco folded US distrust and accusations of corruption into narratives of the Cold War.

7.3 Corruption Scandals and Political Leverage

Following in this theme, Paz Zamora (interview, 2014) argued that the US took extraordinary measures to pursue their counterdrug agenda in Bolivia. As outlined in the previous chapter, the US had argued that Bolivia was now a major producer of pure cocaine. Paz Zamora rejected the US analysis. Accepting the Embassy's claims entailed the adoption of US views on the nature of Bolivia's drug problem, and hence acceptance of the response favoured by the US. Paz Zamora had argued against this during negotiations for the Andean Initiative, and continued to view the issue through the prism of the Development Paradigm. Crucially, the Bolivian government sought to avoid politically destabilising, 'Colombianised' counterdrug policies. Paz Zamora (Ibid.) claimed that the US employed underhanded tactics to stimulate the 'war on drugs' in Bolivia.

¹¹ *Carajo* may have different meanings depending on the emphasis of the speaker and the context. Here, Capobianco uses it as a pejorative, disrespectful term.

¹² Capobianco used the term, '*el presente griego*' or 'Greek present', referring to the Trojan Horse from Greek mythology.

¹³ In Capobianco's words, '*un izquierdista de mierda*'.

During my government, one of the problems we had with the US Embassy was that they said Bolivia was already a producer of cocaine. Until that moment, Bolivia produced coca paste and it was normally in Colombia or elsewhere that they processed it into cocaine. (. . .) But the Americans wanted to sustain the theory that Bolivia was already a producer of cocaine, a world producer of cocaine. I never accepted it, I rejected it. (. . .) Then, incredibly, all of a sudden from La Paz airport... an enormous plane leaves from La Paz to Lima with four tonnes of cocaine... four tonnes of drugs, but processed cocaine. How could they have managed this? Impossible! In Lima, they seized it. (. . .) It was a typical operation. We couldn't say anything about it in Bolivia: it was four tonnes of refined drugs. (. . .) The 'war on drugs', like the Cold War, justified everything. (Paz Zamora interview, 2013)¹⁴

According to this view, the seizure in Lima formed part of a conspiracy and wider trend of US manipulation of the Bolivian government. Placing his government in opposition to the US Embassy, Paz Zamora argued that US priorities damaged the gains made by the 'democracy generation'. The implied conspiracy theory follows in the lineage of US Cold War politics, and its relations of top-down control over Bolivia. In one sense, this was used to reconcile his own beliefs over the nature of both the Bolivian coca-cocaine economy and US influence in Latin America. However, it also portrayed the US as a duplicitous actor, countering US assertions that the Bolivian government was 'totally corrupt', as stated by Gelbard (interview, 2013). Such theories acted partly as a defensive rhetorical device for Bolivian interlocutors, suggesting hidden US agendas and tactics. When it came to the US Embassy's strategic approach, subtext was assumed.

Such dynamics were evident in the corruption scandals that engulfed the Paz Zamora administration and the MIR. These cases seemed to suggest the existence of state-narco networks running into the heart of government. For example, drug traffickers looked to penetrate Bolivia's political parties, attempting to engender patron-client bonds through campaign contributions and 'kick-backs'. The US Embassy's actions and the contemporary accounts of officials certainly support this thesis, as the Paz Zamora government and the MIR

¹⁴ This event, in-fact, occurred in September 1995, after Paz Zamora's presidency. It is known as the *Narcoavión* scandal (e.g. see Roncken, 1997b).

were viewed as heavily compromised by drug corruption. For Bolivian interlocutors, though, such cases were based on flimsy evidence and instead represented US attempts to manipulate the political process. As such, corruption accusations were used as political leverage by the US. Competing theories around corruption scandals demonstrated the political dimensions of real or imagined state-narco networks. The true parameters of these relations and the extent of their influence were contested.

7.3.1 The Cases of Rico Toro, Capobianco and Carvajal

Following the appointment of Faustino Rico Toro¹⁵ to the head of the FECLN in February 1991, the US Embassy's relationship with the Bolivian government began to unravel. To many observers, his appointment was baffling. The former-Colonel had been heavily implicated in drug trafficking and human rights abuses during Bolivia's authoritarian period (Gamarra, 1994b: 118). In replacing Lucio Añez - a trusted US drug war ally - with Rico Toro, Paz Zamora came under immediate pressure, as the Embassy threatened to block all US and international foreign assistance to Bolivia. Although Rico Toro's appointment was soon reversed, the scandal continued to roll on. Ambassador Gelbard seized the moment to successfully push for the removal of Capobianco and Police Chief Felipe Carvajal.

Paz Zamora (interview, 2014) outlined his reasons for appointing Rico Toro to head of the FELCN. The former-President argued that this was part of the Bolivian government's efforts to re-take control of counterdrug efforts within its borders.

General Lucio Añez was the counterpart of the DEA, in the fight (against drugs). But our General Añez, who they already knew was suffering from heart problems, was bad. Not only could he not work, (but) his character was failing, he was fading. The DEA and the entire American Service

¹⁵ Rico Toro was a Colonel in the Bolivian army until his discharge in 1982. This was part of the institution's attempt to purge itself following the García Meza regime. Rico Toro belonged to the *Banzerato* wing of the army and was a well-known 'hardliner', with political ambitions. Posing a challenge to García Meza's rule, the dictator awarded Rico Toro a US\$200,000 'loyalty payment' to ward-off any coup attempt. Years prior to this, Rico Toro had been held on suspicion of the assassination of Barrientos in 1968 (Dunkerley, 1984: 156, 294, 335 & 346).

where abusing this, and they did things as they liked. So I said, 'right, we're going to put in a Bolivian military man from days gone by. A military man with nerve'. And Rico Toro was there, who was this type of guy, and he hadn't been involved in drug trafficking. Okay? But he was from that era, this cycle of Bolivian military (government), and he carried out certain functions. He was the President of the *Corporación del Desarrollo de Cochabamba*, and he was a member of General Banzer's party, who was our ally. So I put him in. I didn't know him well, but I put him in because he was a man... tough... and the Americans wouldn't be able to do whatever they wanted with him. This was the problem; as simple as that. But how awful! They laid all of this on poor Capobianco, who had nothing to do with it. He was the Minister of the Interior, he had to sign (Rico Toro's) name, and he named him. It was ultimately my decision, but Capobianco paid the price. Nothing more! And to show democracy... that they hadn't been wrong... the US asked for (Rico Toro), and took him to the United States, but they had nothing to charge him with. So they applied this thing that the Americans have, that you'll recognise... a misdemeanour... they give you a year. Rico Toro served it and now lives content in Cochabamba. They took him, they never had... when they saw that they had no proof of anything... but they couldn't drop it, so they forced him to incriminate himself of something. Of what, I don't know. He spent one year in prison.

Paz Zamora's explanation of Rico Toro's replacement of Añez raises several points. First, Añez was viewed as a close ally of the US. From the US perspective, he was considered an honourable man, who could be trusted with operational details. This occurred while other high-level Bolivian officials were excluded. Paz Zamora here claims that the US Embassy took advantage of Añez's ill-health to take such actions. Rather than a relationship of trust and respect, the US was perceived to have exploited the situation: Añez provided the constitutional cover required for US officials to operate in Bolivia with minimal interference. Putting Rico Toro in place would reverse this. Despite Paz Zamora's own history with the military, Rico Toro's army background was seen as a positive, i.e. a strong character who will stand-up to the US. He refuted the idea that Rico Toro was involved in drug trafficking and passed-off the former-Colonel's short prison sentence in the US as a face-saving exercise by the US. Paz Zamora argued, then, that this case should be understood in the context of Bolivian resistance to the exercise of US control. Corruption allegations were viewed as a tool of US political leverage.

Paz Zamora also highlighted patronage politics as a factor in Rico Toro's appointment.¹⁶ The former-Colonel was associated with Banzer and ADN, rather than the MIR. Indeed, Rico Toro was known as a *Banzerato* during the authoritarian period, and was a prominent actor in ADN's *Cochabambino* branch (Dunkerley, 1984: 294). As part of this, ADN had given Rico Toro the role of President of the *Corporación del Desarrollo de Cochabamba*. Nevertheless, according to Hargreaves (1992: 166), the US Embassy held Paz Zamora and the MIR wholly responsible. ADN members had apparently shared in the US Embassy's fury over the appointment, and claimed that they had taken no part in the decision (Ibid: 164). Where relations between the MIR and Gelbard were strained, Banzer and ADN were considered to be 'friendly' to the US.

Old political alliances seemed to underpin these relationships. In addition to Cold War-era links (Lehman, 1999: 165), Banzer's party adhered to neoliberal orthodoxy, and was more sympathetic to the US. ADN did not carry the radical, left-wing baggage of the MIR. Hargreaves (1992: 166) claims that Gelbard found the ideological tendencies of the MIR and Paz Zamora 'distasteful'.¹⁷ ADN gave the US an influential ally within the Bolivian government. Given Banzer and ADN's own connections to the drug trade, the US Embassy's apparent trust was somewhat surprising. As discussed in Chapter Four, the coca-cocaine trade had expanded rapidly during Banzer's authoritarian regime. A series of drug scandals involving Banzer and family members added further questions. In 1980, for example, a police raid on his property in the Beni found it being used by Colombian drug traffickers (Rodas M., 1996: 68). Furthermore, various relatives, including Banzer's wife, Yolanda Prada de Banzer, were caught up in drugs arrests abroad (see Thoumi, 2003: 252-3). Finally, in 1988, two former-Banzer ministers were filmed meeting Roberto Suarez, and accused of accepting campaign contributions on behalf of ADN (Rodas M., 1996: 255). In all of these cases, Banzer pleaded ignorance and publicly committed himself to US Drug War

¹⁶ Gamarra (1994b: 231) notes uncertainty over the reasons behind Paz Zamora's 'perplexing' decision to appoint Rico Toro. However, he states that, 'the nomination may have had something to do with the patronage requirements of the ruling *Acuerdo Patriótico* alliance'.

¹⁷ Gelbard was also reportedly angry at the Bolivian government's refusal to back the US intervention against Saddam Hussein in the first Gulf War (Hargreaves, 1992: 167).

goals. Whether one accepts Banzer's defence or not, politics appeared to have influenced the US Embassy's differential treatment of ADN and the MIR.

Gelbard's (interview, 2013) account largely glossed over these political factors and focused on the perceived corruption of Paz Zamora's government. He described how the US Embassy took decisive action to get rid of Rico Toro, and later Capobianco and Carvajal, whom he considered to be implicated in a wider criminal conspiracy. His account outlined state-narco networks, linking the government to drug traffickers through the police. While Paz Zamora argued that Rico Toro's appointment was an attempt to defend the Bolivian government's interests, Gelbard claimed that corruption lay at the centre of the decision.

We were dealing with a corrupt government. We knew that Jaime Paz Zamora's government had been receiving drug trafficker money for their election campaign. We knew from the beginning that the Minister for Interior, Guillermo Capobianco, was the bag man for all this. We knew that the man who became National Police Chief was the collection man, and that he passed the money over to Capobianco. At a certain point, we were having a strategy meeting in Santa Cruz when the Foreign Minister called me and said, 'you're not going to believe this, I am horrified, I am ashamed, I am embarrassed, but the President has just appointed a man named Rico Toro to be the head of the counternarcotics police'. Rico Toro had been the deputy to Arce Gomez as Interior Minister. Utterly corrupt, utterly involved with drug trafficking when he had been deputy Interior Minister. Why would anyone want the job as head of the counter-narcotics police if he has that kind of record? To make lots of money. I was shocked. I was horrified by the brazenness of Paz Zamora giving the job to Rico Toro. I was stunned! And as you probably know, that government was a coalition government between Paz Zamora and his people, and General Hugo Banzer and his people. The Foreign Minister¹⁸ was from the Banzer side. There were some very, very good people on Paz Zamora's side too, but there were some people who were not so good. (Ibid.)

For actors such as Gelbard, Rico Toro's appointment confirmed suspicions that certain members of the MIR were using their position to advance interests in the coca-cocaine economy. It was theorised that Capobianco, with or without the direct knowledge of other prominent members of the MIR, was putting allies (including Rico Toro and Carvajal) in key positions to ensure the smooth running

¹⁸ Carlos Iturralde, a prominent business leader in Bolivia, was an ADN appointment.

of trafficking operations (CSM, 1991a). Such assertions were reportedly backed-up by US intelligence and the revelations of soon-to-be convicted drug trafficker, Carmelo Dominguez.¹⁹ They suggested the existence of patron-client relations between traffickers, state officials and members of the government. Gelbard reportedly held secret talks with Banzer and convinced him to pressure Paz Zamora to reverse Rico Toro's appointment. Paz Zamora took Banzer's advice, and sent the former-dictator and Oscar Eid, a prominent leader within the MIR, to ask Rico Toro for his resignation (Hargreaves, 1992: 166). Rico Toro accepted and stepped down, just three days after his appointment.

At the time, though, there were a number of theories surrounding Rico Toro's appointment.²⁰ For example, the Paz Zamora administration had grown frustrated by Añez's closeness to the US and his vigour in pursuing drug war goals. This included the targeting of FINSA (*Firma Integral de Servicios Arévalo*); a small savings bank in Cochabamba, which was providing suspiciously large rates of interest for its numerous investors.²¹ Capobianco had reportedly advised Añez that an operation against FINSA would cause 'a lot of problems for the government'. The DEA, though, reportedly continued to pressure for action against the savings bank (Opinión, 1992). When Añez went ahead with the investigation and closed down FINSA, Capobianco demanded his resignation 'on health grounds' (Ibid: 179).²² Such stories may be interpreted as the prioritisation of other goals beyond the 'war on drugs' (i.e. protecting the

¹⁹ According to Hargreaves (1992: 171), Carmelo 'Meco' Dominguez claimed under interrogation that Capobianco and Carvajal accepted regular bribes. US officials argued that this revealed 'a sophisticated network of pay-offs which went higher than anyone imagined' (Ibid.). There were, though, questions around the over-extension of the DEA's authority. The US stated that Meco's interrogation was done jointly by the DEA and UMOPAR. However, Bolivian officials claimed that the DEA had carried out the interrogation alone, raising further doubts over the veracity of the accusations (Ibid: 173).

²⁰ One of the more lurid theories was the claim that Paz Zamora had granted Rico Toro the role to get close to his daughter, a Miss Universe semi-finalist (Hargreaves, 1992: 165).

²¹ Providing monthly interest rates of 5-6 per cent, it was believed that FINSA was a money laundering front for drug traffickers. When its assets were frozen, partly due to Añez's investigation, around 20,000 depositors lost their investments. These included police chiefs, politicians and high-profile members of society (e.g. folk music group Kjarkas), as well as resettled miners, sacked factory workers and *cocaleros* investing their eradication compensation. Shutting-down FINSA, then, placed the government under pressure to prove the accusations and/or return the lost investments (Painter, 1994: 61-2).

²² Añez had undergone a double bypass. In addition to this, though, Menzel (1996: 56) states that Añez had also been implicated in a corruption scandal around this time by the US Embassy, but he does not provide further details.

savings of thousands of Bolivians) or government complicity in drug trafficking. In Paz Zamora's (interview, 2014) account, it is the former: the US had used a weakened Añez like a puppet to pursue policies contrary to Bolivian interests. For Gelbard (interview, 2013), the case resonated with his negative view of the Bolivian government's commitment to the 'war on drugs': 'sometimes if (counterdrug officials) became too capable they would get transferred, because the government didn't want people to be too capable'.

So the Foreign Minister urged me to do everything in my power to get rid of Rico Toro. So the first thing I did was freeze the entire aid pipeline, which was about US\$700 million. That elicited a lot of screams back in Washington because some people would have preferred that I had consulted with Washington and had some kind of inter-agency decision. I decided that time was of the essence, that we needed to show the Bolivian government immediately that this was way beyond the bounds of the permissible, that this was a man whose background was so egregious that we could not be seen supporting him under these circumstances. So I called the Foreign Minister back up and told him what I had done and he was shocked, but said he understood. My aid director was shocked. He didn't understand, but so be it. But the Foreign Minister and others really began to put pressure - I went to see General Banzer and I said, 'this is just beyond the pale, unacceptable, this will destroy the relationship, I have frozen all our aid, I will get others to do so too. I will get all our aid, all your aid from the IDB - the Inter-American Development Bank - the World Bank, the IMF, get all that frozen too.' Fortunately, the man who is the assistant secretary for the Western Hemisphere back here, Bernard Aronson, supported me all the way. It took less than 72 hours for Rico Toro to be fired. (Ibid.)

Gelbard's account thus emphasises the Embassy's efforts to exercise control over the Bolivian government. It was clear that Bolivia was heavily dependent on external financial support, and that economic pressure would have serious implications for the government. Gelbard fully exploited this, and ensured the compliance of Paz Zamora's administration. Within Bolivia, these were viewed as bullying tactics, demonstrating top-down control over sovereign Bolivian matters. Torrico (interview, 2014) stated, that the decision to name the head of the FELCN fell within 'the minister's power,' and that 'Capobianco told (the US) that this is a sovereign country, that the government can name whomever it sees fit'. However, the Embassy noted the US government's own sovereign right to act in its national interest (Hargreaves, 1992: 167). Indeed, the reaction of the

US Embassy showed just how much the ‘war on drugs’ had become the overriding priority in Bolivia.

I decided that this was the opportunity to leverage (the Rico Toro case) into pushing the President to get rid of the Interior Minister, Capobianco, and the national Police Chief. The national Police Chief first had been appointed illegally, there is a law in Bolivia, or was at the time, saying that to be named national Police Chief the candidate had to have been a General already. This guy had been a Colonel, so it was pushed through illegally. But that was trivia. The more important issue was that we knew he had been the one going around collecting the drug money and then giving it to Capobianco. (. . .) I called the President and I told him I really needed to talk to him about further corruption problems. He invited me over to his house, we sat down and went through a bottle and a half of Scotch whisky. I remember... my wife remembers... I stumbled home and I fell into bed saying, “God what I do for my country!” But he agreed to get rid of them. A couple of days later, he invited me - there was a big football game, I was an honorary member of the Board of Directors of Bolivar, one of the big teams there - still am, as far as I know - and I think Bolivar was playing River Plate. By coincidence the Argentine Foreign Minister was visiting, Guido di Tella, who was a friend of mine. And so the President invited me and he said bring somebody along if you want, so I brought my USIA guy, public affairs guy. And we sat there, and there was Capobianco sitting all the way at the far side of the Presidential box looking like he had leprosy. Nobody would go near him. So at that point my aide and I looked at each other and we said, he’s clearly been told he’s fired. And sure enough, they were both fired. (Gelbard interview, 2013)

Gelbard stressed combatting Bolivian government corruption as his primary motivation, the ‘war on drugs’ and the US national interest. In this sense, the Drug War Paradigm shaped his account, i.e. drug corruption as deviance and the drive to ‘defeat’ the scourge of drugs. He was keen to highlight his proactive and uncompromising approach in pursuing these goals. In addition to meeting personally with Paz Zamora, Gelbard and the DEA leaked stories to the *Miami Herald* laying out the case against Capobianco and Carvajal. Despite no formal charges being laid against Capobianco and the refusal of the US Embassy to make their evidence public, the pressure was enough to cause the Interior Minister and Carvajal to step-down.

I asked Capobianco for his recollections of his resignation during our interview. His account overlaps with Gelbard’s in the sense that both saw the US Embassy as pivotal in pushing him out of the government. He himself chose not to engage

with the accusations and instead argued that his resignation was due to a personal vendetta against him. Alongside old Cold War animosities and the prioritisation of democratic institutionalisation, Capobianco claims he was unable to establish the trust of the US. He discussed his own impulsiveness and mishandling of Ambassador Gelbard as key factors in provoking the US Embassy to act against him.

The Ambassador practically ordered the party to sack me as minister. For what reason? (. . .) I'm only going to comment with one anecdote, and you're going to draw your own conclusions. In this era, I was the minister of state, and information arrived that said things were not good in the Chapare, that our officials were not content. So, one fine day, without consulting with anyone, with some journalists... above all, a foreign journalist, an English journalist who was a friend of mine... we went to the Chapare. So I arrive unexpectedly there. People from the DEA were there, people from the NAS, right? So I arrived and I called out the officials... I give them the presidential salute and I say to them, 'good people, tell me, I've been told things aren't well. Speak, tell me what's happening.' Silence. 'Okay', I say, 'so nothing's wrong here?' Then an official raises a finger timidly, and says to me, 'Minister, the weapons don't work'. (I say to him), 'are you serious? What are you trying to tell me? That they don't fire?' 'Yes, they don't fire.' So I was a very, very strong political leader... I ordered them, 'bring out all your weapons, here to the patio. I want to see them here, all of them in front of me.' And they brought out around 100, 150 M1 rifles... the rifles they had fought with against Che. (I said), 'sir, give me the rifle'. I wasn't in the army for ideological reasons, but I knew how to handle a rifle. So - clack, clack, clack - I put the bullet in the chamber, pointed it in the air, pulled the trigger... What do you reckon? It doesn't work... it didn't work. I started to become agitated, and the DEA people were watching all this, everything, listening and watching. (*He describes repeating the rifle test three more times, becoming more agitated.*) This infuriated me. It made me very, very angry. I said to them, 'but how is this possible, that you are practically without any defence, without arms. This can't be! It's incredible, it can't be'. I said strongly, in raised voice, 'I'm giving a 72 hour deadline for the Ambassador to change these arms for the officials, and to put in place modern arms that function'. (Capobianco interview, 2014)

David Greenlee (2007: 89), who was the US Embassy's Deputy Chief of Mission around this time, also noted the issue of providing modern weapons to UMOPAR. Although the US Congress had opposed boosting the Bolivian police's firepower due to concerns over their lack of training and record of human rights abuses, the Embassy was eventually able to gain backing. Capobianco's account, though, claims US inertia on this issue and he uses it to emphasise his willingness

to stand-up to the US on behalf of Bolivia. His resignation over corruption allegations is thus transformed from a story of shame to one of nobility. As he continued, Capobianco recognised his political miscalculation and describes his decision to fall on his own sword.

That was, I think, an audacious action, without regard for myself, because afterwards I drew another conclusion. I say, and will continue to say now that you should meet directly with North-American gentlemen, right? This was my fault, my error, because on this occasion I created a spectacle... that the rifles didn't work and instead of saying this (to Gelbard), I give him a deadline. I appeared more like a *Masista*²³ in this period. (. . .) I should have called the Ambassador and, in a more collegial way, more direct like friends, like allies, in a gesture as important as the fight against drugs... I should have spoken with him, not through the press. (. . .) I think the Americans never forgave me for this. So after 20 months, sure enough, the head of the party with Jaime... Oscar Eid came and said to me, 'look, old friend'... It was March (or) April... 'you have to go in August'. I told them, 'I don't want to, I'll go tomorrow. I'm not interested in being here without political power'. (Capobianco interview, 2014)

Ultimately, Capobianco returns to the theme of US control in Bolivia and uneven power relations. He places his resignation in this context rather than the corruption allegations and the 'war on drugs'. In the absence of conclusive evidence against Capobianco, political undercurrents were assumed to have played a role in the accusations. These ranged from Capobianco causing offence to the US Embassy and his radical history, to US displeasure at seeing Añez replaced with Rico Toro, a non-sanctioned appointment with a very questionable CV. The new Interior Minister, Carlos Saavedra (interview, 2014), stated that, 'this turned into a war against Minister Capobianco'. Torrico (interview, 2014), meanwhile noted, 'the tense relationship' with the US that 'obliged' Paz Zamora to get rid of Capobianco. He also described 'the willingness of a politician of great bravery' to present his resignation and so prevent 'harm to the democratic process' (Ibid.). As such, whether or not Capobianco was in-fact involved in state-narco networks was diminished by Bolivian interlocutors in favour of the narrative of US top-down control.²⁴ Paz Zamora (interview, 2014) developed this

²³ This is a reference to Evo Morales and his MAS party, who have had antagonistic relations with the US.

²⁴ The fact that Saavedra and Torrico would also be subject to corruption allegations from the US (see Meza, et. al., 2008: 603) may also have influenced their accounts.

interpretation in his account of the MIR's links to drug trafficker, and former-army captain, Isaac 'Oso' Chavarría. In addition to control over the 'war on drugs', he argued that the US used corruption accusations to manipulate the Bolivian political process.

7.3.2 The MIR and Chavarría

Prior to his presidency, Paz Zamora had come under scrutiny after pictures emerged of him together with Chavarría. This was at the height of the 1988 'Narcovideo' scandal, when officials from both the MNR and ADN were filmed meeting with Roberto Suarez. The political parties closed ranks and decided to bury the issue in the run-up to the 1989 presidential elections (Thoumi, 2003: 256). But questions around Chavarría and the MIR would not go away. As Gelbard (interview, 2013) alludes to in his account, the US Embassy believed they remained closely linked. This included campaign contributions and 'kick-backs', in exchange for protection (Salazar O., 2009: 283). While the US Embassy ensured the removal of Capobianco and Carvajal, Paz Zamora remained in place.

Following the end of Paz Zamora's term, though, the allegations re-emerged. Chavarría was captured in January 1994 and began to disclose details of the relationship. A congressional investigation resulted in the arrest and prosecution of Oscar Eid - a prominent *MIRista* - for his role in accepting campaign contribution from Chavarría; but both Paz Zamora and Capobianco were spared (La Razón, 1994). The US Embassy also weighed-in, stating that it first obtained evidence in 1988 'that Paz Zamora and others in his political party had received funds' from Chavarría, as well as accusing Paz Zamora 'of providing cover for Chavarría during his tenure as president of Bolivia' (Gamarra, 1999: 195). As a result, Paz Zamora's US visa was revoked in 1996, alongside Carlos Saavedra and several MIR members (Meza, et. al., 2008: 603).²⁵ US Ambassador Curtis

²⁵ These were later restored in 2002, apparently due to Paz Zamora's personal relationship with former-President George H.W. Bush. It has been suggested that Bush Senior made a petition to his son, President George W. Bush to resolve the matter.

Kamman (interview, 2013), who arrived in Bolivia in November 1994, described the US perspective.

The previous President of Bolivia, Paz Zamora, had been accused, and I think credibly so, of taking campaign contributions from drug smugglers and this had put him sort of in a *persona non grata* position *vis a vis* the US Government. He had political ambitions to come back into office. (. . .) Paz Zamora, who did have a fairly broad political base in Bolivia, was keen to get back in our good graces, but we were unable to give him what he wanted... namely legitimacy... because we were pretty well convinced that he had taken campaign contributions from people involved in the drug trade. So that was a kind of a problem that we had. It was also the case that other important political players in Bolivia would turn out to have drug contacts, and maybe money flowing from drug traffickers. (Kamman interview, 2013)

The withdrawal of US ‘legitimacy’ thus had political implications for Paz Zamora and the MIR. Paz Zamora announced his intention to leave Bolivian politics off the back of the allegations (El Pais, 1994). Similarly to other US interlocutors, Kamman discussed the case as ‘transgression and punishment’, and conceptualised the relationship between Chavarría and the MIR in simple terms.

Called to testify before a congressional inquiry in April 1994, Paz Zamora refuted the portrayal of the US Embassy (Azcuí, 1994). He accepted that Chavarría was friendly with the MIR and that he had provided ‘in-kind’ support to election campaigns (e.g. access to transport), but claimed that no money had been taken. He argued that this did not constitute a narco-political nexus. While Paz Zamora admitted that he had spent time with Chavarría personally, he claimed that neither he nor the party were aware of his interests in the coca-cocaine economy. The meetings were dismissed as ‘an error, but not a crime’ (Laserna, 1997: 190). The death of the drug trafficker as he awaited trial in 1995 left many questions unanswered. The only member of the MIR to be prosecuted in relation to the case was Oscar Eid, sentenced to four years imprisonment for aiding and abetting a drug trafficker (El Tiempo, 1994; Meza, et. al., 2008: 603).

When I finished in government, as I already said, there was a Mr Chavarría, who had been in the military during the dictatorship of García Meza. During that time, it’s clear that I didn’t know him, because in that era... the last Bolivian military government, that of García Meza... we fought them clandestinely (and) they assassinated eight leaders of the

MIR... that government: eight leaders of our party. The military had a type of organic link with drug trafficking. The officers themselves, of lower rank, obeyed orders from above. But there was a gentleman called Chavarría, that afterwards, many years after in 1986, when I was standing for the Presidency of the Republic, he approached us because he sympathised with me, our type of politics. He lived legally. Years before he had had something... like all the military officers of that time... but now, no. So politically, the other parties saw that this type of guy had approached us, and they all used it politically against me. And later, the American Embassy used it, but (only) when I had left the presidency. (Paz Zamora interview, 2014)

Again referencing the travails of the MIR under the authoritarian period, Paz Zamora claimed that Chavarría drug links were historical, due to his military background, and that he had changed his ways. He described how accusations of corruption were used as a political weapon. In this case, the established parties and the US sought to sully the reputation of Paz Zamora and the MIR.

Incredible! We were the youngest party, the new boys that had (just) entered the program. If anyone had problems with drug trafficking, it was the old parties, the MNR, ADN. (. . .) (The US) carried out an operation called '*los narcovínculos*' (against me and the MIR), I believe to sanction... sanction a president who had rebelled against certain things and to give a message to the political world: be careful! But they made it up, something that never happened. It's the only drug case where not one single gram of drugs (was found); not one gram. I don't know the truth... no idea. An individual (*Chavarría*) wanted to help us and collaborate with us to produce election leaflets. These were the kind of typical psychological warfare operations that came from (US) Cold War working methods. But they interfered with Bolivian democracy. (Paz Zamora interview, 2014)

The idea that the US had used supposed drug-links to target political enemies had a long history in Bolivia. As part of this, the US was said to hold back evidence of drug links until opportune moments. This may have been to maintain control over troublesome actors, protect allies or eliminate rivals. As discussed in Chapter Four, for example, prominent leftist Juan Lechín temporarily withdrew from politics following accusations of drug corruption from the US Embassy and Bolivia's right-wing press in 1961 (Gootenberg, 2008: 282-4). In addition to this, Rodas M. (1996: 128) argues that former allies of García Meza were targeted for their involvement in the drug trade post-1982, while Banzer-aligned officers and politicians were kept in play. The reason: Banzer and ADN

continued to be useful assets for the US. The threat of corruption scandal, then, forced,

the major political parties into a constant state of alert, (keeping) Bolivian policy in line with the demands of the US. (. . .) Those Bolivian collaborators closest to the US embassy generally (had) skeletons in their own closets. (Roncken, 1997a: 50)²⁶

Paz Zamora's (interview, 2014) interpretation chimes with this analysis: the accusations against him served a political purpose for the US and their co-conspirators.²⁷

I confronted the Americans on these issues, that is to say, I confronted them on the way they wanted to act in counterdrugs and also on their neoliberal policies. I finished my government with 60 per cent approval, but the United States... the American Embassy has already apologised (for this), but if it's all already in the past, what good are apologies? They do nothing. But President Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada, who was a North American... I think he has a US passport, Sanchez de Lozada. The American Ambassador spoke better Spanish than him... So between them, they formed a conspiracy against me, so I wouldn't be re-elected. After I left government - and I left it with good ratings - I could have been re-elected, (but for) the way I participated in the drug trafficking debate, to try and address the abuses and the militarisation, the violence. I didn't want violence to arrive here. I think Bolivians are a peaceful people. Sanchez de Lozada started the privatisation, the capitalisation of the largest companies - Yacimientos, Entel, etc. - after me, after my government. They were sure that I was going to return after Sanchez de Lozada and reverse all of this here, because it wasn't positive for the country. (. . .) So this cost me personally. (Paz Zamora interview, 2014)

In this view, corruption allegations formed part of the US agenda of control in Bolivia. This included both the Drug War and neoliberal structural reforms. Calling on themes of the 'Democracy Generation' narrative, Paz Zamora argued that his government opposed the militarised and violent US counterdrug approach. This demonstrates the ambivalent Bolivian view of the effect of the

²⁶ When Banzer finally won the presidency in 1997, he implemented a hard-line policy of forced eradication in the Chapare. Given Banzer's controversial record with the drug trade, *Plan Dignidad* was said to be an effort to soothe US doubts of the new Bolivian government's drug war credentials.

²⁷ At the time, Paz Zamora stated to a congressional inquiry that the allegations were based in US displeasure at his 'coca diplomacy' and Bolivia's relations with Cuba: 'our difficulties with the United States reached their highest level with the arrival of Fidel Castro in La Paz' (Azcuí, 1994 - translated by the Author).

drug trade compared to the destabilisation of US 'Colombianised' policies. Paz Zamora claimed he paid the price for his opposition, as drug scandals were essentially used as political leverage. As such, he diminished claims of pervasive corruption in the Bolivian state and securitised notions of the coca-cocaine economy's influence. Political stability and the post-transition political settlement were instead prioritised.

7.4 Conclusion

Many questions around the relationship between Bolivia's political class and drug traffickers remain unanswered. It is difficult to refute the penetration of drug money in Bolivian politics, but drawing firm conclusions on what these represented also presents challenges. For example, addressing the Chavarría-MIR scandal, Laserna (1997: 190) argues:

If it can be proved in court that Isaac Chavarría was an important drug trafficker, it would demonstrate that he made enormous efforts to get close to presidential circles, and that he also documented his actions with his intention to use files as leverage at a later date, but his approach served him very poorly, and it was unable to affect presidential decisions except perhaps marginally. Chavarría himself in his testimonies complained of how the former president evaded him, denying him influence in his business with the Government.

In this sense, there is uncertainty concerning the parameters of these relations. However, it seems clear that the drug trade adapted to the post-transition period and sought new patron-client bonds with the political parties. The interactive effects between the changing political context and the state's relationship to the drug trade are thus evident.

As the preceding analysis demonstrates, key actors from the period conceptualised these relationships and their significance in distinct ways. US interlocutors viewed corruption as widespread, interpreted it in relatively simple policy terms, and sought to exert US power to combat it. Moralistic and enforcement-led prescriptions from the Drug War Paradigm were utilised, as the political implications of US actions against 'corrupt' politicians were underplayed; a by-product of US efforts to stem the flow of cocaine north.

Bolivian interlocutors, meanwhile, understood such accusations in terms of relations of US top-down control of Bolivia. Viewed in historical perspective of US policy in Latin America, corruption accusations could be dismissed as dirty tricks. Counter-accusations in the form of conspiracy theories were part of this, and served to deflect criticism, calling into question the true motives of the US. Political subtext was assumed. As such, alleged linkages between the political and illicit spheres served rhetorical and practical purposes.

This facet of state-narco interactions was thus intertwined with competing US and Bolivian agendas of the period. In the case of the former, US actors looked to expose supposed drug corruption in the advancement of Drug War goals. Who within the political class was targeted and who was spared, though, also seemed to be linked to old political alliances. The US had long-standing ties to Banzer, with ADN demonstrating closer affinity to US economic goals in Latin America. These were nurtured and cultivated by the US Embassy, while Paz Zamora's MIR was subject to pressure both during and following government. For Bolivian actors, then, accusations of drug corruption could be largely dismissed. Their opposition to US counterdrug policies was emphasised; alleged involvement with drug traffickers was downplayed. In this way, my contextualised analysis demonstrates that complex webs of state-narco links were understood and utilised by different actors in different ways. 'Drug corruption' held significance beyond a simple economic transaction between state official and trafficker, or institutional failure. Instead, contestation around interactions between the political class and the drug trade were crucial to US-Bolivian relations of power and control. As such, the implications of Bolivia's post-transition state-narco networks crossed both domestic and international spheres of politics.

Chapter 8 | Conclusion

Tracing the relationship between the Bolivian state and the drug trade from authoritarianism to formal democracy, this thesis proposes a contextualised analysis of state-narco interactions. My analysis of original document sources and in-depth interviews with key elite actors from the period reveals the role of fragmented authoritarian era state-narco networks in Bolivia's post-transition settlement. Uneven Bolivian democratisation was reflected in the continuation of clientelistic and authoritarian practices, including police and military autonomy. As part of this, tolerance of drug corruption within both institutions was linked to the maintenance of fragile political equilibrium. The thesis challenges mainstream discourses of drugs, including assumptions of synergy between illicit economies, weak states and violence. Instead, I argue that state-narco links were integrated into informal forms of governance, and used to reinforce the political order. These modes of exchange contributed to the relative stability of Bolivia's coca-cocaine economy, as drug traffickers sought accommodation with the state rather than conflict. This stands in contrast to conventional readings of Latin American narco-violence, holding the drug trade as necessarily violent and destabilising.

Furthermore, real and imagined state-narco networks were also enmeshed in US-Bolivian relations of power and control. Contrasting the accounts of US and Bolivian elite actors, the thesis shows how distinct interpretations of this phenomenon - informed by alternative paradigms and narrative of the 'war on drugs' - were folded into competing US and Bolivian agendas. The extension of US Drug War goals and the targeting of 'corrupt' local power structures, clashed with local ambivalence towards the drug trade, opposition to destabilising, 'Colombianised' policies and the claimed 'democratising mission' of the Bolivian government. 'Drug corruption' held significance beyond simple economic transaction or institutional failure. Contestation around state-narco interactions was entangled in the dynamics of top-down US control and local resistance. This strand of my analysis thus illuminates how key actors from the period understood and navigated state-narco networks. It speaks to key themes of the drugs literature, such as the installation of the US Drug War model in the South

and the (unintended) consequences of policy interventions. But in breaking with the orthodoxy of this literature, the thesis transcends these themes to examine the multiple facets of state-narco interactions and their implications across spheres of domestic and international politics.

In this concluding chapter, I discuss the theoretical contributions of the thesis; providing an overview of my main findings and relating these back to the literature. First, the study of the Bolivian case advances the research agenda of both the drugs and coercion literature, providing fresh insights into the development of state-narco interactions, and how this phenomenon relates to processes of democratic transition. Second, my analysis of the accounts of US and Bolivian interlocutors elucidates the escalation of the ‘war on drugs’ in Latin America, considering how key elite actors perceived and responded to the introduction of the Andean Initiative. Third, the thesis furthers understanding of the nature of US-Bolivian relations, showing how contested interpretations of state-narco interactions shaped this relationship. The final part of the chapter draws out the normative implications of these findings, and considers their relevance to contemporary debates around counterdrug policy in Latin America and beyond. I argue that the Drug War has typically failed to account for embedded state-narco interlinkages, thereby causing social, political and economic instability in drug producing and transit nations. This raises important questions of how drug policy decouples exclusionary and corrupt systems of rent extraction from such states, while avoiding widespread violence and institutional decay. In the first section of this chapter, though, I restate the rationale for study in order to contextualise my findings.

8.1 Rationale for Study

Bolivia constitutes a crucial, if understudied, case of the drugs literature. The country has been a major drug producer since the 1970s, but, unlike its Andean neighbours, it has not experienced high-levels of drug related violence. While Pablo Escobar and the Cartel declared war on the Colombian state, Bolivian traffickers rarely made headlines for spectacular acts of violence. In addition to this, Bolivia transitioned from military authoritarian government to formal

democracy in 1982. This transition was sustained even as the illicit coca-cocaine economy grew. Furthermore, as the US heightened its counterdrug efforts during the 1980s, Bolivia became a key testing ground for the 'war on drugs'. The US has often been described as Bolivia's northern patron and the post-Cold War advancement of the US Drug War followed in that lineage (Lehman, 1999). Drugs literature studies on Bolivia have tended to focus on this power imbalance (e.g. Gamarra, 1994a), the role of coca cultivation in Bolivian society and politics (e.g. Healy, 1988a), and the effects of development and/or enforcement-led counterdrug policy (e.g. Ledebur, 2005; Menzel, 1996; Painter, 1994). Within such studies, the form and function of state-narco interactions is undertheorised. But as this brief synopsis suggests, the development of Bolivia's drug trade, in different ways, confounds the typical assumptions of this area of the literature; namely, the 'essentialised' linkages between drugs, weak states and violence (Meehan, 2011: 402).

As outlined in Chapter 2, the two dominant paradigms of the 'war on drugs' provide distinct perspectives on the drug trade, corruption, and their causes and effects. The Drug War and Development Paradigms are drawn from the drugs literature, and have informed mainstream discourse on the topic. In the case of the former, the issue of drugs is securitised, conceptualised as deviance, and viewed as a contributing factor to institutional weakness in producer nations. For the latter, the drug trade is understood as a problem of underdevelopment and North-South social, political and economic disparities, i.e. drug consumption in the US has created wealthy and violent drug traffickers with the power to challenge vulnerable Latin American states. In both cases, illicit economies and state-narco links are viewed as essentially destabilising, and typically a cause of violence. The bounds between the state and the drug trade, and categorical distinctions between legal and illegal, are held as clear and definitive (Heyman & Smart, 1999: 15). The Bolivian case, though, shows the limitations of these top-down conceptualisations of drug economies and their relationship to the state. Although the generalisations of the drugs literature are certainly not without merit, this thesis sought instead a contextualised account of Bolivian state-narco interactions. Its aim, therefore, was to problematise this relationship, account for the peculiarities of the Bolivian case, and to

understand how these relations developed during a period of flux: from authoritarianism to democracy, and Cold War to Drug War.

This analytical approach was influenced by the literature on coercion. Focusing on the role of formal and informal institutions of rent extraction in processes of state formation and/or conflict resolution, this area of the literature provides insights into the development of state-narco relationships, their underlying logic and effects. Crucially, as opposed to a source of instability and weakened state capacity - as typically assumed by the drugs literature - these links may form the basis of political order. Snyder (2006) identifies the formation of 'institutions of joint-wealth extraction' as an important factor here, as public and private actors come together to exploit a 'lootable resource' and so form common interests. Studies in this area, though, have generally addressed cases outwith Latin America. These include studies of post-conflict societies, such as Afghanistan (e.g. Goodhand, 2008), and authoritarian states, such as Burma (e.g. Meehan, 2015). In selecting the Bolivian case, the thesis examines the approach and propositions of this emerging literature in a new context. This incorporates the particular conditions of the Bolivian drug economy, and the country's specific social, political and economic development. But in addition to this, Bolivia was not subject to armed campaigns from internal actors, it successfully transitioned from authoritarian government, and it was subject to strong external counterdrug pressure. These are distinct and interesting dynamics within which to explore interactions between the state and the illicit economy. As such, the thesis crosses and contributes to two areas of the literature. My analysis speaks to the key themes of the drug literature by investigating a crucial case in the modern-day US 'war on drugs', while also advancing the research agenda of the coercion literature.

The illicit nature of this topic, though, posed methodological challenges. This included limits to data collection on clandestine activity. Managing such issues, I applied a mixed methods approach, offering discrete yet complementary perspectives on the object of study. First, I utilised primary and secondary document sources to establish a detailed base-line account of the evolution of Bolivia's coca-cocaine economy, and crucial social, political and economic

factors across the period of study. This runs through my empirical chapters and contributes original findings on the development of Bolivian state-narco networks. I supplemented these sources with interviews from key US and Bolivian elite actors. This constituted a shift in analytical approach, examining how these actors perceived and responded to state-narco relations, and other facets of the 'war on drugs'. My use of elements of oral history methodology helped to complicate and unfurl the various meanings elite actors had attached to state-narco interactions and the introduction of the Andean Initiative. The historic perspective and mixed methods approach of this thesis are unusual within the drugs and coercion literature. As I argue below, this innovative approach yielded novel insights.

8.2 Theoretical Contribution

Analysing interactive effects between Bolivia's political development, the changing international environment and the coca-cocaine economy, this thesis makes theoretical contributions along a range of dimensions. First, Chapter 4 maps the evolution of Bolivia's state-narco networks from the authoritarian era to the immediate post-transition period (1964-1989). This serves as crucial context to the main focus of study, as well as providing new findings and original analysis. I demonstrate how drug rents were used by authoritarian military regimes to reinforce authority. They formed part of clientelistic webs of governance that bound factional interests to the existing political order. For example, under Banzer's government, allies within the military were granted access to drug rents in the form of lands in the Beni department. These served as landing strips for trafficker flights to Colombia. Additionally, agri-business elites made the move from cotton to cocaine with the assistance of state-backed bank loans. The nascent drug trade went from strength to strength, stimulated by booming demand in the North. State-narco relations developed alongside this growth, solidified by kinship ties between Bolivia's small political and economic elite. This illicit economy, though, was characterised by low levels of violence, as centralised rent extraction systems created stable modes of exchange between the state and the drug trade.

Similarly to PRI-era Mexico's 'state-sponsored protection rackets' (Snyder & Martínez, 2009), Bolivia's expanding drug trade was colonised by elements of the state and absorbed into institutional structures - most notably, the military. The Bolivian case also has clear parallels with North, et. al.'s (2007) theory of 'limited access orders'. Illicit rents were used as tools of governance, controlling competition between elites and leading to relative stability in the drug trade rather than disorder and violence. In this sense, my analysis accounts for the nuanced interactions that emerged between the state and the drug trade, challenging the typical assumptions of the mainstream drugs literature.

However, democratisation in 1982 and the changing foreign policy priorities of the US represented a point of fracture. This led to the atomisation of authoritarian era state-narco networks, as power became more diffuse across Bolivia's post-transition political system and traffickers sought new patron-client bonds. The US shift from Cold War to Drug War was also crucial in this regard. Where before drug involvement had been tolerated in Cold War allies, now the US looked to pressure the Bolivian government to take action against the drug trade. Centralised systems of rent extraction, then, came under attack from an external actor. Focusing on this period of flux, the thesis demonstrates the effects of domestic and international political changes on the function of state-narco networks. Echoing Snyder (2006: 950), authoritarianism and the tacit-acceptance of the regional hegemon were important conditions for centralised forms of Bolivian drug rent extraction. This analysis thus demonstrates the interplay between Bolivia's political development and the adaptation of the drug economy.

Fragmented state-narco networks continued to function following democratisation and the escalation of the 'war on drugs'. As outlined previously, these were integrated into the post-transition settlement between different political and institutional actors. Clientelistic and authoritarian practices continued within the bounds of Bolivia's uneven democratisation. First, an autonomous police institution benefitted from increased prerogatives. Civilian governments bolstered the police as an institutional counterweight to the military, and looked to it to maintain societal order as unpopular structural

reforms were rolled out (Quintana, 2005). This informal pact reduced transparency and accountability, and ensured impunity for police officials. Drug rents lubricated hierarchical patron-client bonds within the institution. Equally, politicians remained wary of the military and their political ambitions. A tacit-agreement of non-interference was struck, where civilian government's respected military autonomy in return for the military's respect for civilian rule (Barrios M., 1994). As a result, state-narco links within the institution went unchallenged. Third, Bolivia's political parties also became embroiled in corruption scandals, accused of accepting campaign contributions from drug traffickers (Torranzo R., 1988: 73). A pact of silence between these parties reflected the pacted nature of Bolivia's post-transition democracy. Political parties negotiated and traded patronage, and avoided destabilising actions. Pulling at the threads of corruption scandals, in which actors from across the political spectrum were implicated, threatened to bring the whole edifice down (Thoumi, 2003: 256).

This analysis builds on the coercion literature. It demonstrates how systems of joint-wealth extraction formed part of a limited, democratic political order. Elements within the police, military and the political elite were linked to the drug trade to varying degrees. Tolerance of these relations formed part of a strategy of non-confrontation with potential veto players to Bolivia's new formal democracy. 'Institutional endurance' was bound to the 'systematic absence of enforcement', inducing such actors 'to accept rules they would otherwise seek to overturn' (Levitsky & Murillo, 2014: 204). As such, the formal features of democracy, such as free and fair elections, existed alongside the old vestiges of the authoritarian and clientelistic system. As O'Donnell (1996) argues, these informal systems are no less important in shaping behaviour and the expectations of political actors. The thesis thus shows how state-narco networks interacted with processes of uneven democratisation; limiting accountability, transparency and competition, but binding factional interests to (formal) democracy.

This further supports the rationale for contextualised analysis of the relationship between the state and the drug trade. For example, the drug trade, and its

assumed violent and corruptive effects, are typically held as anathema to democracy. While my analysis indicates that state-narco networks certainly ran contrary to the principles of modern liberal democracy, it also demonstrates their place within an uncertain process of transition. This does not constitute a normative endorsement of such practices, rather it highlights the importance of considering the distinct political dynamics of such cases. Referring to the Latin American Third Wave, for example, O'Donnell (1993: 1360) noted that top-down conceptualisations of democracy failed to adequately account for the 'structured variation' of regional political, social and economic conditions. In this sense, Bolivia's uneven democracy did not fit the model of Western democracy. Operating according to both formal and informal processes, this formed a point of equilibrium, grounded in Bolivia's specific conditions and historical development. Consequently, state institutions interacted with the drug trade in particular ways. These formed part of the post-transition political settlement, and were also linked to the control of drug-related violence. The illicit economy's effects on 'democracy' - or, perhaps more fittingly, 'polyarchy' (see Chapter 2) - are not uniform, but a result of contextual factors.

Even as these networks atomised and new traffickers emerged, then, levels of drug-related violence in Bolivia's post-transition period remained relatively low. Carrying on from the authoritarian period, drug trafficking organisations were based in kinship ties and practised a strategy of non-confrontation with the state. This level of stability added to attitudes of ambivalence towards Bolivia's drug trade. Coca-cocaine had provided jobs and inward investment during a period of economic instability, without the kind of widespread violence seen in Colombia. The García Meza regime had openly profiteered from drug rents, bringing international notoriety to Bolivia and causing general opposition to the coca-cocaine economy. However, this was balanced with pragmatism and the view that the effects of the drug trade on Bolivia were relatively benign. By contrast to developments in the US, it was not conceptualised as a national security threat. These distinct perspectives, along this and other dimensions of the 'war on drugs', formed part of competing US and Bolivian agendas. Chapter 5 draws these out, and considers how they shaped the accounts of US and Bolivian actors. These were important in defining how these elite actors

understood and responded to state-narco networks, contributing to the fractured US-Bolivian relations that defined the period.

For US actors, the Drug War Paradigm led to securitised notions of drugs, and moralistic, one-dimensional views of drug corruption. Bolivia was intermittently viewed as 'victim' and 'perpetrator' of the drug trade, but ultimately, the extension of the US Drug War model was prioritised. This was justified against ideas of American Exceptionalism, where US counterdrug policy would liberate partners in the South from the drug trade, and create the conditions for liberal, market democracy. Reproducing elements of the mainstream discourse of drugs, the drug trade was viewed as both cause and consequence of a weak state (Meehan, 2011: 377). The US sought a 'more state' solution, attempting to remove the 'malignant tumour' of the drug trade, from the 'healthy body' of Bolivia's society, politics and economy (drawn from Gutierrez, 2015: 2). As such, the blurring of boundaries between these categories in Bolivia's post-transition period was underplayed by elite US actors.

Bolivian actors, meanwhile, called on development discourses of drugs and, as noted previously, displayed ambivalence towards the drug trade. They argued that Bolivia's role in the drug trade was limited to humble coca production and that large sectors of the population were dependent on it for their livelihood. They called for a development-led response, and placed responsibility for the drug trade on drug consumers in the North and powerful Colombian Cartels. This underpinned opposition to the enforcement-led policies of the US. However, distinct interpretations of state-narco networks, and their wider implications, also held influence. This included arguments against the 'Colombianisation' of Bolivia. Drug traffickers had not been in conflict with the state in Bolivia; relations were stable, and entangled in the political dynamics of uneven democracy. The stability of Bolivia's post-transition political system was prioritised, as Bolivian interlocutors talked of the 'democratising mission' of the Paz Zamora government, and the compromises made to ensure 'democratic governability'. In this sense, the extension of the US Drug War model represented a greater threat to post-transition stability than the drug trade itself. Grounded in an historical perspective, the 'war on drugs' in Bolivia was

said to follow in the US Cold War model of top-down control and interference in Latin America.

My analysis shows the influence of the dominant themes of the drugs literature on elite actors, and how these applied to their understanding of state-narco networks. Where Drug War goals dominated the US response, Bolivian actors balanced these against local priorities. This links into debates around the effectiveness of drug policy interventions and the role of the US in advancing its prohibition model of drug control. In this case, the US and the government of a producer nation conceptualised the problem in different ways, and proposed responses that were at odds with each other. Negotiations for the Andean Initiative attempted to reconcile these views, but as described below, these agendas clashed as the policy filtered down to Bolivia. Securitised notions of drugs, which were key to the escalation of the US Drug War, glossed over the embeddedness of illicit economies in producer nations and assumed their effects. As described in the final section of the chapter, such misconceptions are linked to the damaging unintended consequences of drug policy.

The implementation of the Andean Initiative in Bolivia thus exposed these competing agendas. The US Embassy, for example, sought the installation of Drug War proxies to bypass 'corrupt' local power structures. US interlocutors described pervasive drug corruption in the Bolivian state, and applied an abrasive approach designed to target state-narco links. Securitisation of the issue underpinned justification of the extension of US control within Bolivia, as the Embassy sought to navigate perceived state-narco networks. US actors expressed their frustration at the Paz Zamora government's refusal to accept the Embassy's securitised conceptualisation of Bolivia's drug problem, and its general lack of political will on counterdrugs. However, this was indicative of differing US and Bolivian priorities. The Bolivian government demonstrated resistance to the US approach. This included the introduction of the Repentance Decree, reflecting the government's efforts to find accommodation with the drug trade rather than confrontation. Furthermore, Paz Zamora's stalling on Annex III revealed concerns over an enhanced internal role for the military. This represented a destabilising threat to elected government.

Relating this back to the coercion literature, the extension of US control clashed with the local political order. Again, the Drug War rather than the drug trade was viewed as representing the greater threat to post-transition political, economic and political stability. The thesis therefore shows how these differing perspectives influenced policy preferences and disputes over implementation. As such, I argue that contested interpretations of state-narco interactions were enmeshed in US-Bolivian relations of power and control. Nowhere was this clearer than in cases of drug scandal, and alleged links between the political class and the drug trade.

As described in Chapter 7, relations between the US Embassy and the Paz Zamora government were characterised by deep mistrust. US accusations of corruption were used to remove 'uncooperative' Drug War partners, who jeopardised US counterdrug goals. The political implications of such actions were underplayed, as the US capitalised on uneven power relations to extend counterdrug control. But these allegations had political subtext. ADN and Banzer - considered US allies - were spared, while the former radical leftist Paz Zamora and his MIR party came under pressure. US drug corruption accusations leveraged opponents of counterdrug policy. Bolivian interlocutors, who were caught-up in these scandals, dismissed their alleged complicity in corruption, and focused instead on US manipulation of Bolivia's internal politics. In both cases, state-narco networks were folded into combative relations between the Bolivian government and the US Embassy. The purpose of the accusation formed the focus, rather than the substance of such claims. Complex webs of state-narco links were thus understood and utilised by different actors in different ways. 'Drug corruption' held significance beyond a simple economic transaction between state official and trafficker, or institutional failure. Instead, state-narco links, whether real or imagined, shaped the course of US-Bolivian relations, and competing agendas of the 'war on drugs' in Bolivia. The implications of Bolivia's post-transition state-narco networks crossed both domestic and international spheres of politics.

8.3 Normative and Contemporary Relevance

This thesis addresses a key juncture in the trajectory of the modern US ‘war on drugs’. Drug War rhetoric, the prohibition model of drug control and counter-supply efforts were nothing new, but the Andean Initiative, in many ways, set the template for US counterdrug policy for the subsequent decades. This includes the post-Cold War securitisation of the drugs issues, militarised counterdrug units, and the creation of a large Drug War bureaucracy. The US approach, though, has been subject to frequent criticism for both its ineffectiveness, and its harmful effects on Latin American society. While an evaluation of US counterdrug policy in Latin America is clearly beyond the scope of this thesis, in this final section, I aim to draw out some of the normative, contemporary implications of the thesis.

Bolivia itself has undergone significant changes since the period of study, including the rejection of US counterdrug policies under the government of Evo Morales. Relations between the US and Bolivia have deteriorated significantly, with the expulsion of the DEA in 2008 marking a low point. Echoing Paz Zamora’s ‘coca is not cocaine’ slogan, the Bolivian government has argued for the lifting of international bans on coca exports, hoping to commercialise the product and direct cultivation to licit markets. Control of coca cultivation is sought through consultation with *cocaleros*, rather than conflict and forced eradication. Development-led conceptualisations of Bolivia’s coca-cocaine economy, therefore, continue to hold sway. As part of this, the ‘evil Colombian’ thesis has been expanded to include Peruvian, Mexican, Brazilian and Argentine organised crime (e.g. McDermott, 2014). The Morales government has called for assistance in aerial interdiction, arguing that Bolivia has now become a major transit point for Peruvian cocaine on its way to Western drug markets. Foreign trafficking organisation are said to have set-up in Santa Cruz and the Beni, bringing with them violence and placing strain on local law enforcement.

This indicates the endurance of many of the themes raised in my analysis. Development perspectives of Bolivia’s drug problem and organised crime conceptualised as an external phenomenon are still evident. Equally, the clash

of US and Bolivian views of drugs has contributed to the deterioration of inter-governmental relations between the countries. However, as the Bolivian government pursues an alternative policy approach and in the absence of an internal US security presence, there is scope for investigation on how the state now relates to the drug trade. Post-transition state-narco networks were partly a consequence of long-established political practices within Bolivia. The country's political development since this period has been dramatic, but whether this has extended to state-narco networks is an open question. Furthermore, there have also been great changes across the wider Andean coca-cocaine economy. These have shaped Bolivia's own drug economy, and have likely affected state-narco interactions. If Bolivia is now truly a hub of Latin American drug trafficking, how are local state actors responding to these dynamics? As this thesis demonstrates, assumptions that such developments will necessarily lead to increased drug-related violence and state weakness should be challenged.

In addition to this, re-thinking the linkages between illicit economies, violence and weak states has important implications for drug policy. In Bolivia, state-narco links were viewed to be interwoven with political order. Local actors resisted US Drug War policies that would either directly or indirectly threaten this equilibrium. Across Latin America, counterdrug efforts aimed at defeating the drug trade and establishing security have frequently been associated with heightened violence. Drug War 'wins' destabilise the drug trade, lead to the emergence of new actors and (violent) competition to establish supremacy. The causes of drug related violence in Mexico, for example, are complex, but the breakdown of the *Pax Narcotica* has been identified as a contributing factor (see Chapter 2). Although links between the state and the drug trade run contrary to modern liberal democracy, they may also bring stability. As noted above, these relationships may play a role in managing and mediating the violent excesses of the drug trade. Ordinary citizens in drug producer nations may well prioritise peace and order over the chaotic effects of fighting a war against the drug trade.

As this thesis and the wider coercion literature argues, whether the drug trade is associated with violence or stability is dependent on the informal institutions that arise around it. Counterdrug policies must adequately account for local context, and be clear on what they are trying to achieve. The prioritisation of Drug War goals may fracture the local political order, causing insecurity and further limiting the civil rights of local communities.

Of course, this is not to say that such networks are desirable or sustainable in the long-term. In the Bolivian case, these relations were part of an uneven democracy, that contributed to limited transparency, accountability and competition. Stability and the maintenance of transition may have been used to justify such practices, but they also represented the accumulation of wealth and power among elite actors. As Gutierrez (2015: 7) notes, 'this kind of stability is short-term and may come at the expense of building more legitimate and accountable governance institutions'. This raises important questions of how such particularistic and exclusionary systems may be decoupled from the state, while avoiding violence and institutional decay. Returning to the Mexican case, democratisation and the implementation of institutional anti-corruption reforms were perversely related to the outbreak of widespread drug violence, as the state lost overarching control of criminal activity. These dynamics plug into Hobbesian/Lockean debates, concerning the tension between political order, and the extension of full civil and political rights to all citizens. State-narco networks may contribute to the former, while inhibiting the latter. As Latin American leaders both past and present challenge the US Drug War orthodoxy, local demands for both security and democracy may form the future focus of responses to the drug trade.

Appendix A | Original Ethics Information Sheet



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Inter-Agency Dynamics and the ‘War on Drugs’ in the Andes: a Case Study of Counterdrug Policy in Bolivia, 1986-2012

The US ‘war on drugs’ has spawned an extensive bureaucracy. A myriad of agencies, spread between the US and source and transit countries, are engaged in different aspects of international counter-supply efforts: from interdiction and eradication, to anti-money laundering and alternative development. Conflicting aims, overlapping jurisdictions, poor coordination, and rivalry for funding, however, have been prevalent. The research project investigates the effects of such inter-agency dynamics on the implementation of counterdrug policy in Bolivia, 1986-2012.

In the second year of my PhD at the University of Glasgow, I am currently in the US to complete interviews which will explore this topic. As such, interviews will be sought with individuals from a range of institutions who have experience in this field. These include government officials and policymakers, both past and present; representatives from NGOs, think-tanks and civil-society groups; and academics. Interviews will last approximately one hour, and will be recorded if consent is given. In terms of confidentiality, participants have three options:

- Retain anonymity and no direct quotes will be used.
- Retain anonymity but direct quotes may be used.
- Name and direct quotes may be used.

The information given may be included in my PhD thesis and in future publications, both print and online. It will, though, be held securely to ensure confidentiality. Only my supervisors, external examiners and I, will have access to the material. Participants may request a report outlining the main findings, which will be sent on completion of the research. The material will be held on secure drives at the University for a period of 10 years, to ensure accountability should questions of authenticity arise. Should you have any questions regarding the conduct of the research, you may contact either my supervisor or me through the channels listed above.

Appendix B | Amended Ethics Information Sheet



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Inter-Agency Dynamics and the ‘War on Drugs’ in the Andes: a Case Study of Counterdrug Policy in Bolivia, 1986-2012

The US ‘war on drugs’ has spawned an extensive bureaucracy. A myriad of agencies, spread between the US and source and transit countries, are engaged in different aspects of international counter-supply efforts: from interdiction and eradication, to anti-money laundering and alternative development. These agencies, though, have distinct goals, corporate identities and stakeholders. How, then, do they interact in the execution of counterdrug programmes? The research project investigates the effects of inter-agency dynamics on the implementation of counterdrug policy in Bolivia, 1986-2012.

In the second year of my PhD at the University of Glasgow, I am currently in the US to complete interviews which will explore this topic. As such, interviews will be sought with individuals from a range of institutions who have experience in this field. These include government officials and policymakers, both past and present; representatives from NGOs, think-tanks and civil-society groups; and academics. Interviews will last approximately one hour, and will be recorded if consent is given. In terms of confidentiality, participants have three options:

- Retain anonymity and no direct quotes will be used.
- Retain anonymity but direct quotes may be used.
- Name and direct quotes may be used.

The information given may be included in my PhD thesis and in future publications, both print and online. It will, though, be held securely to ensure confidentiality. Only my supervisors, external examiners and I, will have access to the material. Participants may request a report outlining the main findings, which will be sent on completion of the research. The material will be held on secure drives at the University for a period of 10 years, to ensure accountability should questions of authenticity arise. Should you have any questions regarding the conduct of the research, you may contact either my supervisor or me through the channels listed above.

Appendix C | List of Interviewees

Date & Location	Interviewee	Biography
7 May 2014; La Paz, Bolivia.	Bolivian official (A)	High-level official during the Paz Zamora government.
8 May 2014; La Paz, Bolivia.	Bolivian official (B)	High-level official during the Paz Zamora government.
8 May 2014; La Paz, Bolivia.	Bolivian official (C)	High-level official during the Paz Zamora government.
9 May 2014; La Paz, Bolivia.	Bolivian official (D)	Police official during the Paz Zamora government.
12 Apr. 2013; Nashville, TN, USA.	Bowers, Charles R.	US Ambassador to Bolivia 1992-1996.
5 May 2014; La Paz, Bolivia.	Caballero, Luis	UMOPAR Commander, 1990-1996; subsequently head of FELCN in the early-2000s.
16 Apr. 2014; Santa Cruz, Bolivia.	Capobianco, Guillermo	Bolivian Interior Minister, 1989-1991.
26 Apr. 2013; Washington, DC, USA.	Carnevale, John	ONDCP official, 1988-2002.
3 May 2014; La Paz, Bolivia.	Céspedes, Jaime	Commander of the Bolivian National Police, 1990-1992.
8 May 2013; Washington, DC, USA. (Phone interview)	Coomer, Mark	Southcom official, 1985-1996, and ONDCP, 1995-2009.
17 May 2014; La Paz, Bolivia.	Dalence, Tatiana	Current official at the Bolivian Ministry of the Government
7 May 2014;	EU official	Official of the EU Delegation to

La Paz, Bolivia.		Bolivia.
13 May 2013; Washington, DC, USA.	Gelbard, Robert	Ambassador to Bolivia 1988-1992 and Assistant Secretary State of INL 1993-1997.
14 Apr. 2014; Cochabamba, Bolivia.	Giacoman, Diego	Official at DIRECO, 2000-2004, and the Bolivian Vice-Ministry of Social Defence, 2004-2005.
26 Apr. 2013; Washington, DC, USA.	Greenlee, David	Deputy Chief of Mission to the US Embassy in La Paz, 1987-1989, and US Ambassador to Bolivia 2002- 2006.
5 May 2013; Washington, DC, USA.	Healy, Kevin	Academic and grant officer of the Inter-American Foundation.
28 Apr. 2013; Washington, DC, USA.	Isacson, Adam	Senior associate for regional security policy at WOLA (the Washington Office on Latin America).
2 May 2013; Chicago, IL, USA. (Phone interview)	Kamman, Curtis	US Ambassador to Bolivia, 1994- 1997.
7 Apr. 2014; Cochabamba, Bolivia.	Ledebur, Kathryn	Director of the Andean Information Network
7 May 2013; Ann Arbor, MI, USA. (Phone interview)	Levitsky, Melvyn	Assistant Secretary State of INM, 1988-1992, and current board member of the UN's International Narcotics Control Board.
9 May 2014; La Paz, Bolivia.	Lupo, Javier	Secretary of CONALID, 1990-1991.
3 May 2013; Washington, DC, USA.	Miller, David	NSC Deputy Assistant Secretary 1988-1992.
26 Apr. 2013;	OAS Official	Current official of the Organisation

Washington, DC, USA.		of American States (OAS).
26 Apr. 2014; Tarija, Bolivia.	Paz Zamora, Jaime	President of Bolivia, 1989-1993.
18 Apr. 2014; Cochabamba, Bolivia.	Reinicke, Godofredo	Human Rights Ombudsman for the Chapare, 1997-2002.
6 May 2013; Washington, DC, USA.	Reuter, Peter	RAND Corporation
4 Apr. 2014; Tiquipaya, Bolivia.	Roncken, Theo	Director of <i>Acción Andina</i> .
15 Apr. 2014; Santa Cruz, Bolivia.	Saavedra, Carlos	Bolivian Interior Minister, 1991-1993.
23 Apr. 2014; Cochabamba, Bolivia.	Salinas, Jose	Bolivian Under-Secretary for Alternative Development, 1990-1993.
16 May 2014; La Paz, Bolivia.	UK official	Current official of the British Embassy in La Paz.
6 May 2013; Washington, DC, USA.	US official (B)	ONDCP official.
7 May 2013; Washington, DC, USA.	US official (C)	ONDCP official.
8 May 2013; Washington, DC, USA.	US official (D)	State Department official.
8 May 2013; Washington, DC, USA.	US official (E)	State Department official.
8 May 2013; Washington, DC,	US official (F)	State Department official.

USA.		
8 May 2013; Washington, DC, USA.	US official (G)	State Department official.
2 May 2014; La Paz, Bolivia.	Torrico, Gonzalo	Bolivian Vice-Minister of Social Defence, 1989-1993.
29 Apr. 2013; Washington, DC, USA.	Youngers, Coletta	Senior Fellow, at the Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA).

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