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Examining illicit cross-border drug flows within the Pacific Northwest

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Examining Illicit Cross-Border Drug Flows Within the Pacific Northwest

By

Joseph Patrick Larsen

Accepted in Partial Completion
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

Moheb A. Ghali, Dean of the Graduate School

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MASTER’S THESIS
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Joseph Patrick Larsen
May 26, 2011
Examining Illicit Cross-Border Drug Flows Within the Pacific Northwest

A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of
Western Washington University

Accepted in Partial Completion
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

By
Joseph Patrick Larsen
May 2011
Abstract:

After the attacks of September 11th, 2001 the American government placed a new emphasis upon domestic security and scrutiny soon fell upon the US-Canada border. From 2001 to 2011 there has been a great expansion of border security on the US-Canada border. It is the objective of this thesis to examine how increases in security along the US-Canada border following 9/11 have affected or changed drug smuggling in the Pacific Northwest. It is the central hypothesis of this thesis that the smuggling of drugs produced in British Columbia for American markets has been pushed into the interior of the Pacific Northwest, both to less used ports of entry and to between ports of entry. This thesis examines an area in which there is a profound dearth of scholarly research. The hypotheses of this thesis were tested through the examination of data related to drug smuggling arrests and drug seizures at the border. Additionally, interviews with relevant border stakeholders were conducted.

The central hypothesis of this thesis has not been conclusively supported by the data acquired for this research. It appears, based on the drug seizure and interviews, as if drug smuggling in the Pacific Northwest has greatly decreased following increases in border security after 9/11. The substantial reduction in the amount of marijuana seized at the US-Canada border in the Pacific Northwest is significant, but it is inconclusive as to what is directly responsible for this decrease.
Acknowledgements:

I would like to express my gratitude towards the Border Policy Research Institute at Western Washington University for providing me with funding for this research through a thesis fellowship. This thesis would not have been possible without the tireless work of my committee chairperson, Dr. Donald K. Alper. His constant support and editing skills are greatly appreciated and have helped to make this thesis a reality. I would like to thank all those who took time out of their busy schedule to allow me to interview them for this research. Additionally, I would like to thank Julie Smith for helping with interview transcriptions and proofreading. I am also indebted to my fellow political science graduate students whose insights and support aided me in this research. Finally, I would like to thank my family, especially my soon to be wife Hee Ju Jeon for supporting and encouraging me to pursue my master’s degree. Without her encouragement, this process would have been much more difficult.
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Chapter 1

Introduction:

After the terrorist attacks of September 11th, 2001 the American government began to place a new emphasis upon domestic security. Scrutiny soon fell upon the US-Canada border, the “world’s longest undefended border,” which was beginning to be viewed more as a potential soft underbelly to enter and strike the United States (due to Canada’s more open immigration policies) than a symbol of an enduring friendship between two nations with the world's largest and most comprehensive trading relationship.¹ This suspicion was inflamed by the continued spreading of unfounded rumors by prominent American political figures, such as Hillary Clinton, that some or all of the hijackers from the September 11th attacks came to the United States via Canada.² This confusion has continued to persist to this day with the current Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security suggesting in a 2009 interview that some of the 9/11 terrorists had crossed into the United States from Canada.³

In the years following the attacks, the budgets for the different agencies responsible for border security⁴ rapidly increased to face perceived threats emanating from Canada and the rest of the world. At the time of the September 11 attacks there were only 334 US Border Patrol agents assigned to the 4,000 mile US-Canada border (excludes Alaska-Canada border) compared to the approximately 9,000 agents positioned

¹ “Background Note: Canada,” US Department of State: Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, 10 Sep 2010.
³ "Canada more lax than U.S. about whom it lets in, Napolitano says." CBC News 21 Apr 2009.
⁴ During the creation of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in 2002, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP) were both formed through the merger of various agencies.
along the 2,000 mile border with Mexico.\textsuperscript{5} Since then the total number of Border Patrol agents has doubled to more than 20,700 agents in 2011, while at the northern border there has been a 700 percent increase in the number of agents to approximately 2,200 agents.\textsuperscript{6} However, on a day to day basis this expanded border security apparatus has not been dealing with Al-Qaeda or other terrorist groups along the US-Canada border; rather the predominant target has been drug traffickers who aim to bring Canadian produced drugs to the largest illicit drug market in the world, the United States.

Though it is difficult to know if these new security resources placed at the border have deterred potential terrorists from entering the United States from Canada, it is almost certain the use of these new resources has had an effect on British Columbia based drug trafficking organizations (DTOs). It is the objective of this thesis to examine how increases in security along the US-Canada border following 9/11 have affected or changed drug smuggling in the Pacific Northwest. This examination will involve a comparison of Customs and Border Protection’s (CBP) sectors of Blaine and Spokane (See Figure 1).

\textbf{Figure 1: Border Patrol Sector Map}\textsuperscript{7}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{Figure1.png}
\caption{Border Patrol Sector Map}
\end{figure}

The border in the Blaine Sector is comprised of 89 miles of urban and rural land border and 63 miles of water border and is centered around the Interstate 5 corridor. The Spokane Sector, which stretches from east of the Cascade Mountains to western Montana, contains 304 miles of rural land border and 4 miles of water border.\(^8\) Recently there has been documented evidence of a significant increase in large scale drug trafficking activity in areas in Eastern Washington. For example, in October 2010, Border Patrol agents in rural Curlew, Washington, discovered over 310 pounds of ecstasy (MDMA) in backpacks hidden in the brush worth an estimated $9.4 million.\(^9\) Such activity indicates that drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) are exploring new and more isolated areas for their operations.

It is the hypothesis of this thesis that, as the high traffic ports of entry (POE) in the Blaine sector have seen large security increases (manpower, technology, etc…), the smuggling of drugs produced in British Columbia for American markets has been pushed into the interior of the Pacific Northwest, both to less used ports of entry and to between ports of entry. Furthermore, it is believed that there will be some similarities to what has been observed in drug trafficking on the US-Mexico border, similarities such as increased security driving the “professionalization” of DTOs, while also encouraging them to move to more profitable and easier-to-transport drugs. Nonetheless, it must be stressed that despite these potential growing similarities the drug trade at the US-Canada border is different in many ways from that of the US-Mexico border. One major difference (besides historical, cultural and economic differences) is that at the US-Canada border


there is a large two-way flow of illicit substances with marijuana and the synthetic drug, ecstasy (MDMA), going to the United States in exchange for cocaine (along with firearms and currency) going to Canada. However, the scope of this study is limited to the southern flow of drugs from British Columbia to Washington, Idaho and Western Montana. Although comparison with Mexico is outside the bounds of this thesis, it is important to point out key differences between the two borders in the sheer amount of drugs being smuggled, with those on the northern border being a mere fraction of what is seized on the US-Mexico border. This will be discussed later in the literature review.

This thesis examines an area in which there is a profound dearth of scholarly research. Both drugs and border security have received a great deal of attention in the popular press and in scholarly writings. However, very little work has been done on how the drug trade is related to border security. Therefore, to help rectify this lack of information, I am attempting to determine how the US federal government actions dealing with border securitization have influenced or changed the flow of drugs in the Pacific Northwest. A secondary goal is to explore how local law enforcement agencies in border communities have been affected by these actions.

The main areas of interest for this thesis will include the location of and methods used in smuggling, the amounts and types of drugs being smuggled and the number of arrests made. Marijuana and ecstasy will receive the majority of the attention due to the fact that they make up the majority of drugs smuggled from Canada to the United States.\textsuperscript{10} The comparison of Blaine and Spokane sectors will be accomplished through the examination of data, acquired from CBP with a Freedom of Information Act request,

related to drug smuggling arrests and drug seizures at the border. Additionally, interviews with law enforcement officials and other relevant border stakeholders were conducted to help create a well-rounded picture of what changes have transpired in the cross-national illicit drug trade during the past decade in the Pacific Northwest. The interviews are intended to provide qualitative evidence of drug trade activities and also give needed context and meaning to quantitative data that can tell only part of the story. Due to the clandestine nature of both illicit drug trafficking and law enforcement, it is unlikely that the data and opinions presented in this paper will fully reflect the reality of what is happening on the US-Canada border. Despite these shortcomings, it is felt that this is a worthwhile research topic due to the effects that both drug trafficking and border securitization policies have on border communities and on North America as a whole.

The governments of Canada and the United State both pay large sums of money to protect their borders and to combat drug trafficking. For example, in 2010 the government of the United States spent $2.9 billion to provide security on the northern border with Customs and Border Protection’s (CBP) budget at nearly $1.2 billion, Immigration and Customs Enforcement’s (ICE) at $716 million and the United States Coast Guard’s at $1 billion. Because of this large investment in security from each government it is important that research be conducted that seeks to understand the impacts of federal policies in this important area.

There exists a large body of research on drug dealing in the United States and Canada, as well as on issues dealing with smuggling drugs at the US-Mexico border. These studies (which will be explored in further depth in the literature review) have

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tended to look at drugs as being intertwined with other economic, racial, societal, and political problems. What is outside the bounds of this study is how drugs or the use of drugs affect American or Canadian society. What is important is how federal actions affect the routes of drug traffickers and border communities (in part because of unrelated issues such as terrorism and immigration).

As will be discussed later, the American border communities examined in this study are not suffering from major drug problems directly related to the US-Canada border, because the drugs being smuggled are both produced and predominantly used elsewhere (though many of these communities have non-border related drug problems). However, border communities still have to shoulder the burden of having to pay for the transportation, prosecution and imprisonment of drug smugglers whom the US Department of Justice have deemed not substantial enough for federal prosecution.\textsuperscript{12} In Whatcom County, Washington alone, the costs associated with prosecuting border related cases has been estimated to be over $2 million annually.\textsuperscript{13}

On the other side of the 49\textsuperscript{th} parallel in Canada, marijuana is a very big business, worth an estimated $20 billion (CAD) a year.\textsuperscript{14} According to a recent documentary (2010) by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, marijuana is a larger export than fish, of greater value than the wheat from the prairie provinces, and provides more jobs than the mining and forestry industries combined. An estimated 60 to 90 percent of marijuana grown in Canada is exported to the United States.\textsuperscript{15}

\textsuperscript{12}The amount of drugs needed for federal prosecution varies, but, according to an interview done for this research, it is typically around 100 lbs. of marijuana for someone without a criminal record.\textsuperscript{13}GAO, “Northern Border,” 35.\textsuperscript{14}Throughout the different sources consulted for this research, many varying figures are given and should be viewed with a healthy amount of skepticism.\textsuperscript{15}“Cannabiz,” Doc Zone. Canadian Broadcasting Corporation: 16 Dec 2010. Television.
Columbia is even greater, conservatively estimated to have revenues of $5 billion to $7 billion a year, worth approximately 5 percent of the province's GDP. According to a 2005 RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) report it was determined that if marijuana production was added into provincial accounts, British Columbia’s trade surplus would increase 230 percent.¹⁶ Throughout the province (in addition to numerous outdoor grows) it is believed that approximately 20,000 houses are used as marijuana grow sites or “grow ops”. Highlighting the widespread prevalence of marijuana-growing in British Columbia is the town of Grand Forks (300 miles east of Vancouver), where police believe upwards to one house in every ten contains an indoor marijuana growing operation.¹⁷ The houses used to grow marijuana can also pose a public safety hazard. Along with multiple environmental concerns, a 2005 study examining fires at homes in Surrey, British Columbia from 1997 to 2003, found that fires are twenty four times more likely to occur in houses used for marijuana production.¹⁸

Washington State also produces a large amount of marijuana, with a production value estimated at over $1 billion annually, making it the state’s second largest cash crop behind apples. In 2006, Washington ranked fifth overall among states in total marijuana production and second, only behind California, in the production of high grade indoor-grown marijuana.¹⁹ It is believed that increased border security has helped push marijuana grow operations into Washington State from British Columbia as a means to avoid potential difficulties at the border and to ensure better market access.

¹⁷CBC “Cannabiz.”
It is the goal of this research to contribute to a better understanding of the relationship between border security and drug trafficking issues as a whole and of the difficulties facing the border regions of the Pacific Northwest. Additionally, it is hoped that this research will help inspire potential border policy researchers to conduct further studies on drug trafficking on the US-Canada border.
Chapter 2

Literature Review: US-Mexico Border

To research drug trafficking, smuggling, and border security issues on the Canada-US border, it is important to examine key literature focused on drugs and security on the US-Mexico border. This literature is important because of the dearth of studies on drug flows on the Canada-US border and also because the US is the recipient of inflows of drugs from two borders in North America.

Peter Andreas is one of the leading scholars focusing on North American border security issues. *The Rebordering of North America* (2003), co-edited by Andreas and Thomas Biersteker, gives an overview of the "thickening" of the border in the aftermath of September 11th. The chapter authored by Andreas examines the results of North American integration that took place towards the end of the twentieth century and the side effects that have resulted from a thickening of the border following 9/11. The difficulties in keeping drugs from crossing borders into the United States are well outlined. To highlight this difficulty, consider that hundreds of thousands of cars and trucks enter the United States every day and it takes four well trained inspectors upwards of five hours to thoroughly check just one large truck.\(^{20}\) Furthermore, it takes only 40 containers full of cocaine to supply the United States for a year.\(^{21}\) Andreas also stresses the difficulties that large bureaucracies face in responding to fluid and adjustable drug networks.\(^{22}\)

In *Border Games* (2000), Andreas explores the militarization of the US-Mexico

\(^{21}\)Ibid., 15.
\(^{22}\)Ibid., 221.
border over the past three decades. Andreas rejects the over simplistic and sensationalistic media portrayal of the US-Mexico border as being “out of control,” which has been a recurring theme throughout American history. This portrayal leads to a fundamental misunderstanding of the problems at the border which result in calls for border security escalation, a tactic yet to be proven successful.  

Andreas attacks the idea that there was once an era where borders were “under control.” He believes the “out of control” rhetoric should be understood in the context of history where borders have been a useful political construct that have provided the appearance of control to provide political legitimacy for the state.

Andreas discusses the beginning of the modern drug war at the US-Mexico border. In 1982, the creation of the South Florida Task Force under the guidance of Vice President Bush helped to reroute the flow of cocaine to the United States from the Caribbean to the Mexican border. In the early 1980s only a negligible amount of cocaine crossed the US-Mexico border, but by 1989 it was nearly a third of the total and by the late 1990s it was between 75 and 80 percent, making one of the largest impacts of Reagan's escalated drug interdiction strategy the creation of more business for Mexican drug trafficking organization. Andreas’ findings about drug strategy on the US-Mexico border is relevant to the hypothesis of this thesis that, due to recent increases in border security at the US-Canada border, a similar rerouting of drugs and growth of Canadian DTOs is taking place.

Between the mid-1980s and mid-1990s the importance of drugs to the Mexican

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24 Ibid., 22.
25 Ibid., 43.
26 Ibid., 52.
27 Ibid., 45.
economy rose considerably. In 1994, Mexican officials estimated that the gross revenues of DTOs had reached $30 billion (US officials put it at $10 billion); in comparison Mexico's leading legal export, oil, brought in $7.4 billion in 1993.\(^{28}\) In British Columbia, as explored in the introduction, there are some similarities in the importance of marijuana and synthetic drugs to its economy but it is on a much smaller scale. Other differences include the fact that Mexico acts as both a transshipment point and as a producer of drugs for the American market, while Canada is primarily a producer of drugs for the American market; but also in contrast to Mexico, Canada receives drugs from the United States (which acts as a transshipment point for cocaine from Latin America).

Andreas points to how bribes and payoffs for officials in Mexico act as a tax on DTOs.\(^{29}\) As the securitization of drugs has increased in Mexico, so has the amount of money needed to bribe officials. Therefore, only the larger DTOs have the ability to pay the “tax” and the smaller operations are forced either to consolidate or go out of business. This consolidation of DTOs leaves non-corrupt law enforcement officials only the most formidable of foes.\(^{30}\) It is hypothesized that there should be some similarities in the consolidations and growing strength of DTOs on the US-Canada border; but we assume this consolidation would be driven by rising costs of doing business and the resources needed to pay for the means to avoid detection at a "thickening" border, and not by the need to pay for corruption.

Andreas questions the effectiveness of expanding the drug interdiction strategy at the border. A 1993 study by the Government Accounting Office (GAO) found that “interdiction has not had and is unlikely to have a significant impact on the national goal

\(^{28}\)Ibid., 60.  
\(^{29}\)Ibid., 62.  
\(^{30}\)Ibid., 63.
of reducing drug supplies to the United States. The enormous profits in cocaine make interdiction losses relatively inconsequential.” Similar conclusions could be drawn about the marijuana interdiction strategy at the northern border, and due to marijuana's comparative ease in production, disrupting its total supply would be considerably more difficult.

Andreas stresses the role of policy feedback and image management. He sees the policies of escalation as a political mechanism to deal with the consequences of past policy decisions. The escalation of security has been "smart politics, but dumb policy" that offers rewards and political coverage for politicians and law enforcement officials. This is a theme that will be seen repeated later in other literature reviewed. Almost any practical measure of progress on the border can either be interpreted as progress or as a sign that more resources are needed. In conclusion, Andreas emphasizes that borders have not been transcended like some scholars of the 1990s had envisioned. Rather they have been transformed to a place where military defense and economic barriers have declined but where policing functions will continue to expand. Published in 2000, this conclusion has proven prophetic.

In *The Three U.S.-Mexico Border Wars* (2006), Tony Payan examines the US-Mexico border. He separates three different conflicts at the border; the drug war, immigration issues, and security issues involving terrorism. Payan divides the border into four different eras: the frontier border, the customs border, the law enforcement

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31 Ibid., 82.
32 Ibid., 148.
33 Ibid., 140.
34 Ibid., 144.
35 Ibid., 152.
The frontier era lasted from 1848 to 1910, and was open with little restriction for the movement of Americans and Mexicans. The customs era started during the Mexican revolution in 1910 when the United States wanted to make sure the violence did not spill into its territory. This era was also marked by Prohibition and rising anti-immigrants sentiments especially towards Asians and Eastern Europeans, who would cross the southwestern border as a way into the United States. Payan does not give a definite date to the start of the law enforcement border era but sees a transition to more emphasis being placed on law and order in regards to drugs and immigration in the 1970s and 1980s. The current security era was created in the aftermath of 9/11. Payan feels that this has been a dramatic change due to the speed in which it has occurred, contrasting with the law enforcement era, where security was progressively increased over decades. A major difference at the US-Canada border is the lack of a law enforcement era, because in the second half of the twentieth century illegal immigration and drugs coming from Canada were not significant concerns to the United States.

When exploring the drug war Payan focuses on simple economic and geography issues that favor the flourishing of the trade. He believes that policy makers and academics must learn to understand: the nature of underground business, the creativity of drug cartels, the effect of US escalation policies, the effect of the media, and finally the effect of violence and bribery used by the cartels. Near the end of the drug war section,
Payan concludes that there have been no strategic successes in America's drug interdiction strategy and all that the drug war at the border has accomplished is the consolidating of the drug cartels into four well-oiled drug trafficking machines.\textsuperscript{44}

It is expected there are some similarities and many differences between the operations of Mexican and Canadian DTOs. Despite what is often written in the media, most drugs at the US-Mexico border are smuggled in at major POEs in vehicles. Prevalent drugs like heroin, cocaine, and methamphetamine at the US-Mexico border are viewed as too valuable to risk taking over the border by foot through the wilderness so DTOs try to minimize risk and uncertainty by building networks of corrupt officials and employees of legitimate businesses to help their product flow safely to the market. Marijuana on the other hand is often smuggled between POEs because it is not nearly as valuable (due to its bulk), so Mexican DTO leaders are much more willing to risk monetary losses in its smuggling.\textsuperscript{45} Timothy Dunn, in \textit{The Militarization of the US-Mexico Border 1978-1992}, lends support to Payan’s ideas about the location of smuggling on the US-Mexico border. For example, from 1981 to 1992; virtually all the cocaine and heroin came through POEs, while only half of marijuana did so.\textsuperscript{46} Therefore it is expected that at the US-Canada border a higher percentage of smuggling occurs between POEs because the majority of the trade is driven by marijuana. Furthermore, another large difference is expected to be the amount of corruption at the two borders. The leading Mexican cartels have the resources to bribe officials on both sides of the border. For example, a Mexican drug cartel can pay up to $20,000 to a US border agent.

\textsuperscript{44}Ibid., 52.
\textsuperscript{45}Ibid., 32.
(who makes $30,000 – $50,000 a year) to turn a blind eye and let in one “clavo” or drug smuggling vehicle. At the US-Canada border there is certainly some amount of corruption, but one would expect to find much less opportunity for DTOs at the US-Canada border due to many economic and political factors (less money involved overall, less inequality between the two countries, more professionalized enforcement officials, lower cost of living at most northern border communities compared to Southern California, comparative poverty rates between southern and northern border communities, etc...).

Payan uses the ideas of Bentham and Foucault to discuss what he calls the “panopticon border”. The panopticon border, according to Payan, has been recently created through increased militarization and use of surveillance technology. Through these tactics the American government has tried to make the borderlands a place of total control and complete surveillance. Payan believes that these tactics provide short term successes but fail to fix long term problems and calls for a new approach to border security that “takes into consideration the tension between globalization and security” with the ultimate goal being able to keep the border open and secure.

Throughout the book, Payan discusses his own experiences with border guards; he uses these experiences not to personally attack the individual guards but rather to make a point about their perceived shortsightedness as an indictment against policy makers in Washington, DC. This shortsightedness has in part been caused by increasing conflation of public and national security. The “War on Drugs” and, to a greater extent,
the attacks of September 11th have caused policy makers to look at the borders not as
dynamic places of cultural and economic exchange (with the occasional bad element
getting through) but rather as a front line in a new type of war for the twenty-first century.
This conflation and calls for continued securitization only lead to a costly self-
perpetuating security bureaucracy.\textsuperscript{51}

\textbf{American and Canadian Drug Issues:}

In \textit{The Crime That Pays} Frederick Desroches explores the Canadian drug
underworld through interviewing a large number of incarcerated drug traffickers. With
effective use of large quotes from interviews, Desroches helps to dispel the myth of
“organized crime” as the paramount force in the drug trade. Instead, what he points to is
a fluid informal network of individuals working together to complete a task. This is quite
different from the rigid hierarchical organization that is often portrayed in media or films.
The small size of most DTOs makes them difficult to detect and infiltrate and, due to the
large number of them, it is unlikely that “taking down” or arresting all the members of a
single organization will have a large effect on the distribution of drugs in society.

Throughout \textit{The Crime That Pays} it becomes clear that most drug traffickers are
not caught red handed with numerous hockey bags (a preferred method of transportation
on the US-Canada border) full of illicit drugs. Rather it is criminal conspiracy laws that
are predominantly used to arrest and prosecute DTO leaders.\textsuperscript{52} This finding supports the
idea (as will be seen later in the interview section) that most successful operations in
hindering the flow of drugs are driven by intelligence operations and not through

\textsuperscript{51}Ibid., 124.
\textsuperscript{52}Frederick Desroches, \textit{The Crime That Pays} (Toronto: Canadian Scholars Press, 2005), 206.
patrolling and random searches at the ports of entry.

Desroches highlights how DTOs organize to ensure security. For example, ethnic solidarity helps maintain group cohesion, while the use of a foreign language can greatly benefit a DTO in helping to maintain secrecy from the police.\textsuperscript{53} Additionally, the redundancy of workers’ roles and assets in a DTO helps maintain their business if one aspect is arrested, seized etc.\textsuperscript{54} From Desroches’ interviews with drug traffickers it is also learned that Canadian and American law enforcement officials are engaged in little direct corruption\textsuperscript{55} and there is less use of violence than might be imagined by most outsiders.\textsuperscript{56}

\textit{The Crime That Pays} underscores the difficulty in stopping or impeding drug trafficking because, even when certain individuals are arrested and drugs are seized, this provides other DTOs with new opportunities to step in and take their place. Moreover, when large amounts of drugs are seized, supplies may decrease and, if demand stays relatively constant, there will be a corresponding increase in the price for the drug, giving other DTOs financial incentive to stay in the illicit drug trade.\textsuperscript{57}

While Desroches examined drug trafficking on a micro-level by interacting with convicted drug traffickers, various government agencies have created informative macro-level reports looking at the drug trafficking. The \textit{National Drug Threat Assessment} produced by the United States Department of Justice (DOJ) every few years reports on the trends in the illicit drug market, and, most relevant to this thesis, provides important statistics about the drugs seized at the Canadian and Mexican borders. These reports

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{53}Ibid., 121.
\item \textsuperscript{54}Ibid., 123.
\item \textsuperscript{55}Ibid., 132.
\item \textsuperscript{56}Ibid., 121.
\item \textsuperscript{57}Ibid., 209.
\end{itemize}
show, similar to what will be seen in more detail in the data section concerning the Pacific Northwest, that after 9/11 the drugs seized at the US-Canada border rose dramatically between 2002 and 2005 but after this period seizures have declined to pre-9/11 numbers.

The 2010 *National Drug Threat Assessment* report finds that an increasing amount of ecstasy is being smuggled between ports of entry thought to be because of increased security at the POEs. For instance, the number of dosage units seized between POEs in 2009 was greater than the 243,000 dosage units seized in 2008, which was far greater than in 2007 when no pills were seized the entire year at the northern border between POEs. In this section dealing with ecstasy it is reported that ecstasy use is expanding to new user groups (Hispanics and African Americans) which is increasing the demand for the drug, breaking previously held stereotypes that pigeonholed the drug as a “rave” or club drug predominately used by Caucasians.

The report provides an informative chart regarding the amounts of drugs seized on both the northern and southwestern borders of the United States:

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59 Ibid., 41.
Along with highlighting the massive disparities in the volume of drugs being smuggled at each border, it can be seen that marijuana smuggling from Canada to the United States is down considerably from 2005, and that Canada continues to be the dominant source country for ecstasy in the United States. In Table 2.2 the “hit or miss” nature of ecstasy seizures is seen in the yearly shifting seizures levels:

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60Ibid., 20.
Moreover, for the southern drug flows from Canada to the United States, the relative insignificance of cocaine, methamphetamine, and heroin is affirmed.

The *Drug Threat Assessment* also discusses different smuggling techniques. Important for the Pacific Northwest with its numerous ports is that smuggling via commercial maritime vessels remains relatively underutilized by DTOs with the total amount of drugs seized from ships in 2009 at less than 1 percent of the drugs seized on the Mexico land border.62

Marijuana production in the United States is detailed, and as will be affirmed later when examining the interviews with law enforcement officials, it appears as if the amount of marijuana being produced within the United States has recently increased immensely. This is supported by data from 2004 to 2008 showing that the number of eradicated indoor and outdoor marijuana plants more than doubled:

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61 Ibid., 40.
62 Ibid., 21.
Table 2.3 Number of Plants Eradicated From Indoor and Outdoor Sites in the United States, 2004-2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indoor</td>
<td>203,896</td>
<td>270,935</td>
<td>400,892</td>
<td>434,728</td>
<td>450,986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor</td>
<td>2,996,225</td>
<td>3,938,151</td>
<td>4,830,766</td>
<td>6,599,599</td>
<td>7,562,322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3,200,121</td>
<td>4,209,086</td>
<td>5,231,658</td>
<td>7,034,327</td>
<td>8,013,308</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The rise in the popularity of indoor grow sites in the United States is believed to be due to a greater emphasis being placed on the detection and eradication of outdoor grow sites. Indoor grow sites provide DTOs with greater levels of secrecy, and allow for multiple harvests throughout the year with controlled environmental conditions that help foster the growth of more potent and, therefore, more valuable marijuana. For purposes of this thesis, the important point here is the finding that some DTOs have shifted marijuana production from Canada to the United States to avoid potential setbacks with border security.64

Additionally, the amount of marijuana plants being found and eradicated on public land has increased greatly from 2005 to 2008. These large scale outdoor grow ops are believed to be predominantly controlled by Mexican DTOs. The use of remote federal or state land for marijuana production is advantageous for DTOs because public land cannot be seized by law enforcement officials like private land, and because of its remoteness, chances of detection are limited.

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63 Ibid., 38.
64 Ibid.
### Table 2.4: Number of Plants Eradicated From Federal Lands, 2004-2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Forest Service</td>
<td>718,447</td>
<td>992,264</td>
<td>1,245,324</td>
<td>2,176,952</td>
<td>3,079,923</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Department of the Interior</td>
<td>294,641</td>
<td>263,005</td>
<td>590,352</td>
<td>715,071</td>
<td>963,308</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In a similar study at a more local level is the latest report from the Northwest High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (NWHIDTA), entitled *Threat Assessment and Strategy for Program Year 2011*. NWHIDTA was created in 1997 by the Office of National Drug Control Policy, and is responsible for coordinating drug policy for 14 different counties in Washington State, predominately the counties along the Interstate 5 corridor and in Southeastern Washington. NWHIDTA reported that the marijuana being smuggled from British Columbia to Washington has decreased by 81 percent since its peak in 2003. Similar to the DOJ’s findings, NWHIDTA believes this decline is in part due to the relocating of Asian DTOs who have shifted marijuana grow ops to Washington and Oregon from British Columbia. This relocation decreases the chance of seizure at the border, and at the same time it reduces transportation costs and gives better market access for drug producers. Moreover, DTO bosses can remain safer from prosecution by conveniently running their operations nearby in Canada. NWHIDTA also believes (as do a number of interview subjects) that drug seizure levels at the border could be down because DTOs are moving smuggling operations farther into the more desolate and rugged areas of Eastern Washington, Idaho, and Montana, where low flying helicopters

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65 Ibid.
67 Ibid., 14.
68 Ibid., 14.
and planes are less vulnerable to being spotted. Furthermore, the report states that many DTOs have developed relationships with land owners on the border who will allow DTOs to transport drugs across their property.\footnote{Ibid., 15.}

In Canada, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) Criminal Intelligence issued the \textit{Drug Situation in Canada 2007}, which gives recent data on Canada’s effort to combat illicit drugs. This report finds that in recent years marijuana production in Canada has spread to more rural areas and, similar to the findings of the previous two reports, finds that as border security has increased there has been a corresponding increase in number of indoor marijuana growing operations in the United States. In 2007, 90 percent of all the marijuana seized in Canada was seized in just three provinces -- British Columbia, Ontario and Quebec.\footnote{Criminal Intelligence, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, \textit{Drug Situation in Canada 2007}. (Ottawa: RCMP, 2007), 3.} The smuggling of poly-drug shipments of marijuana and ecstasy into the United States in exchange for cocaine, firearms and currency has continued to be a trend, with some Canadian DTOs reportedly preferring to trade marijuana for cocaine rather than for US currency.\footnote{Ibid., 9.} The report speculates that the increase of indoor grow ops in the United States may force marijuana produced in Canada to find new markets, specifically in Asia and Europe.\footnote{Ibid., 3.}

Canada’s recent emergence as the world leader in ecstasy production (in contrast to its development as a major marijuana producer) seemingly has not been entirely driven by the nearby American market; rather it is new emerging markets in Asia, where DTO members (Vietnamese and Chinese) often have ties, which have helped drive this...
development.\textsuperscript{73} The report points out the lack of cross border activity concerning methamphetamine. Canada’s domestic production is for its home market and for export to Asia-Pacific markets while the production and trade in the United States continues to be dominated by Mexican DTOs.\textsuperscript{74}

On a more provincial level, Plecas, Malm, and Kinney's \textit{Marihuana Growing Operations in British Columbia Revisited (1997-2003)} delves deeply into the growth of British Columbia's marijuana industry. The study examines all cases of alleged marijuana cultivation coming to the attention of the police in British Columbia from 1997 to 2003. During this period, indoor marijuana grow ops grew larger in size, were more technologically sophisticated, and became more widespread throughout the province, with particularly large increases in the eastern portion of the province. In 1997 the average amount of plants seized was 149, but by 2003 this had risen to 236.\textsuperscript{76} The 2003 ending date of this article is important because, as will be seen later, this year marked the high point for marijuana seized at Washington State POEs. Along with these numbers the study provides information about the amounts of marijuana seized and electricity stolen, along with the demographics (age, sex, and race) of the arrested growers and the sentencing they face. This article highlights the difficulties facing Canadian law enforcement officials when dealing with marijuana growers due to the sheer amount of growing operations and comparatively weak sentencing that growers face if caught and convicted. For example, only 16 percent of those convicted for marijuana production in the time period examined received a prison sentence, with an average length of 5

\textsuperscript{73}Ibid., 16.
\textsuperscript{74}Ibid., 18.
\textsuperscript{75}Canadian literature on illicit drugs often uses the older spelling of “marihuana”.
months. In stark contrast, if these people had been convicted in Washington State, under state guidelines, 49 percent of those convicted would have received a prison sentence of at least 5 years (no one in BC received a sentence of similar length), while 77 percent would have served at least three months in prison; in British Columbia only 7 percent of prison sentences were for three months or more.

When analyzing current drug securitization policies and potential alternatives it is important to look at the economic implications of marijuana prohibition. In a report looking at the economics of marijuana prohibition entitled “The Budgetary Implications of Marijuana Prohibition” by economist Jeffery Miron, it is estimated that the legalization of marijuana would save the US government $7.7 billion a year ($5.3 billion for state and local governments, $2.4 billion for the federal government) through the elimination of expenditures on the enforcement of prohibition. Furthermore, if marijuana were sold and taxed at similar levels to tobacco and alcohol it would bring in an additional $6.3 billion annually. Potential marijuana legalization would have a great impact on drug smuggling on the US-Canada border because, as seen in the earlier reports examined, marijuana makes up the vast majority of drugs smuggled from Canada to the United States. Although legalization would not be the panacea many activists portray it as, it would free up law enforcement agencies to deal with more serious threats while cutting off a large revenue stream for DTOs.

Whatever fiscal logic drug criminalization may or may not make, when examining the popular discourse of powerful stakeholders over prohibition policies, the

77 Ibid., 53.
78 Ibid., 56.
difficulties in creating possible policy alternatives become abundantly clear. *Drug Trafficking*, through a collection of essays, and newspaper and magazines articles, contains a strong overview of the conservative outlook on drug prohibition and the nearly continuous escalation of the “drug war” since the Nixon administration. The essays by the Director of National Drug Control Policy (the “drug czar”), the National Governor's Association, or the DEA demonstrates the sort of political dialogue that has developed through the use of security rhetoric over the last 25 to 40 years, which allows for little or no pragmatic solutions to this complex issue.  

Additionally, throughout the transcripts of a US Congress joint hearing entitled *Drugs and Security in a Post-September 11 World: Coordinating the Counter-narcotics Mission at the Department of Homeland Security*, a conflation of security, terrorism and drug issues is widely seen through the use of security rhetoric. Drugs are deemed weapons of mass destruction by many congressmen, and drug dealers are seen in the same light as terrorists.  

Much like *Drug Trafficking*, this transcript shows the political climate in which drugs inhabit, putting severe limits on potential policy alternatives.

**Securitization:**

In the field of International Relations, the concept of security has moved from a strong association with states, national governments and sovereignty during the Cold War era and before, to a more complicated set of issues involving traditional security concerns along with new concerns over threats from non-state actors, inter-cultural conflict, and

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issues involving economic and environmental security. Additionally, scholars in the post-Cold War era have emphasized how threats are socially constructed (Buzan, Waever, and de Wilde, 1998). The changing views of what makes up national security are important for this thesis because the threats at the US-Canada border, which emanate from non-state actors (terrorist syndicates and DTOs), are viewed through a security prism which influences the responses to those threats, particularly, increases in security resources.

In Security: A New Framework for Analysis, Buzan, Waever, and de Wilde help to define modern security studies by adding multiple sectors (environmental, economic, societal, and political) for analysis in addition to the military sector. Furthermore, these authors, representative of what has become known as the Copenhagen School, outline and describe the process of securitization. Issues become securitized when they are portrayed as an existential threat that requires emergency measures that necessitates actions outside the bounds of typical political procedure. Securitization itself is viewed as a “speech act,” what matters is not the actual threat but how the threat is vocalized, framed and perceived. If something is deemed a threat by political elites, the state can claim the right to use any means necessary to stop a potential threat. Not everything that is deemed a threat by the state will necessarily be securitized. The perceived threat must be accepted as an existential threat by the audience of the security speech act. This concept of securitization drawn from the Copenhagen School is helpful in

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84 Ibid., 26.
85 Ibid., 21.
86 Ibid., 31.
understanding how non-military “threats” become a matter of national security.
Marijuana, for example, has been traditionally treated as this kind of existential threat. However, this could be changing as record levels of Americans are now in favor of its legalization according to a 2009 Gallup poll. Moreover, a majority of Americans living in Western States, and a majority of those aged 18-49 are in favor of its outright legalization.\textsuperscript{87} This is important at the US-Canada border because marijuana makes up the vast majority of the drugs seized at the border. Therefore, if this trend of acceptance continues, those who are charged with securitization policies related to drugs will need to try to change the public’s mind about marijuana, begin to emphasize new threats associated with other drugs, or simply refocus on other threats such as potential terrorist plots originating in Canada.

Securitization can become institutionalized if the threat is persistent or recurrent, which is the case with all of the issues driving border securitization (the “war on terror”, the “war on drugs”, and concerns over illegal immigration). To confront actual and perceived threats, governments will establish standing bureaucracies, procedures and military establishments (or in some cases paramilitary establishments) which, by virtue of their very existence, will serve to put these “securitized” issues beyond political debate. Once institutionalization of threats occurs, there does not need to be a pressing crisis to justify the existence of an expensive security apparatus.\textsuperscript{88} These security practices become legitimated and accepted by the public through the regular use of security rhetoric which reduces the public's ability to influence or question security policies on an issue.

\textsuperscript{88} Ibid., 27
This point I have found to be very true in conducting research for this thesis. While not judging or downplaying the actual security threats at the border, the use of security rhetoric at times unconsciously influenced me and my outlook on this project more than I would have originally imagined. In the process of doing this research, in reading many government reports loaded with security rhetoric, and interviewing personable and confident government officials, with uniforms, guns, and other accouterments of authority, I believe I was initially unconsciously influenced to accept this “securitized” language and used it as my own, perhaps helping to reinforce the ideas driving securitization.

In examining the two borders, it becomes clear that the border securitization model and the associated language that developed on the US-Mexico border has now been at least rhetorically applied to the US-Canada border. In the article “The Mexicanization of the US-Canadian Border” (2005), Peter Andreas explores this concept and argues that since 9/11, Canada has faced political pressure from the United States that had been traditionally reserved for Mexico, causing a partial “Mexicanization” of the US-Canada border.

After the ratification of NAFTA, both Mexico and Canada grew increasingly reliant on the American market for their goods. This reliance created an asymmetrical interdependence in North America, giving the United States a large amount of leverage over its neighbors. Since the late nineteenth century the US-Canada border has often been a political afterthought (apart from concerns over Asian and Eastern European immigration issues in the early twentieth century and “rum running” during Prohibition),

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89 Andreas, "Mexicanization."
80 Ibid., 450.
overshadowed by the numerous issues plaguing the US-Mexico border.\textsuperscript{91} The 1999 arrest of Ahmed Ressam, the “Millennium Bomber”, in Port Angeles, Washington, was the beginning of change of American rhetoric towards Canada, and after 9/11 this new focus was intensified and Americans began asking more questions about perceived problems involving Canada and the border.\textsuperscript{92} To address the logistical problems of guarding the border, the US Congress called for the tripling of Border Patrol agents at the border and established five air and marine bases along the border, the first of which opened in Bellingham, Washington in 2004.\textsuperscript{93} Andreas questions this logic of increased securitization because tactics similar to the ones now used at the US-Canada border have been used for decades at the US-Mexico border on a wider scale for a shorter border and have not been proven successful.\textsuperscript{94}

The economic stakes for Canada in keeping an open border are staggering. In 2008, 75 percent\textsuperscript{95} of Canada's exports went to the United States giving the United States an immense amount of leverage over Canada and the policies it makes.\textsuperscript{96} Andreas concedes that a full “Mexicanization” of the US-Canada border is unlikely due to the numerous differences between Canada and Mexico, and their historical economic and political relationships with the United States. Despite these differences, both borders are increasingly being viewed through a national security prism, causing the policies for the two borders to become more alike.\textsuperscript{97}

\textsuperscript{91}Ibid., 451
\textsuperscript{92}Ibid., 455.
\textsuperscript{93}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{94}Ibid., 456.
\textsuperscript{95}“Background Note: Canada,” \textit{US Department of State: Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs}, 10 Sep 2010.
\textsuperscript{96}Ibid., 458.
\textsuperscript{97}Ibid., 462.
A closer synchronization of southern and northern border policies by the United States has happened because of the way threats at the border are framed by political elites and the media, and because most CBP agents who work on the US-Canada border have had years of experience at the southwestern border, making it natural for them to perceive problems and policies related to their previous experience. Furthermore, with the increasing centralization of border security policies after the creation of DHS in 2002, it is not surprising that a security model developed on the much more politically pressing southwestern border has been applied in part on the US-Canada border. This bureaucratic and institutional inclination to treat both borders the same was highlighted by a 2009 statement from the secretary of DHS (and former governor of Arizona), Janet Napolitano: "One of the things that I think we need to be sensitive to is the very real feeling among southern border states and in Mexico that if things are being done on the Mexican border, they should also be done on the Canadian border… In other words, we shouldn't go light on one and heavy on the other." 98

This statement does not acknowledge the reality of the vast differences (historical, economic, geographic, etc…) between the two borders. However, the sentiments within this statement reveal the political realities inherent in US border policy which helps to strengthen the concept of a uniform border policy.

Edward Alden's *The Closing of the American Border* explores changes in security in the aftermath of 9/11 and postulates two competing approaches to border security; the “cops” versus the “technocrats”. For those who subscribe to the “cops” approach, every

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security problem has the same solution, strict enforcement of laws at the border.99 The “technocrats” approach emphasizes the use of technology, particularly the sharing of information to catch terrorists and other “undesirables” before they enter the United States. Technocrats believe the overzealous “cop” approach causes unnecessary disruptions in the flow of legitimate people and goods.

Alden, similar to other authors reviewed in this chapter, argues that the conflation of problems at the border (drugs, terrorism, and illegal immigration) leads to bad policy. In his view, immigration enforcement and counter-terrorism are two different issues and should be treated as such. He stresses that the American public needs to accept the idea of risk management because there will always be risk and if we try to eliminate all risk through the “cop” approach, the cost to do so will be greater than the original risk.100 Despite the fact that The Closing of the American Border is primarily about terrorism and immigration issues, this last point is also true in regards to drug trafficking at the border. Both the “war on terror” and the “war on drugs” are issues that have been securitized and both are similar in the fact they are “wars” that cannot be truly won. They are problems that must be monitored and managed but hopefully in way where the cure will not be worse than the disease.

In this section I have briefly discussed some of the ideas central to the changing concept of security in the field of International Relations generally and in the context of Canada-US relations more specifically. The once satirized “boring” US-Canada border has now became a place for greater security concerns in the post-Cold War era due to the rising importance of non-state actors and in the way national and global security

100 Ibid., 291.
processes have evolved and changed. The securitization of the threats emanating from non-state actors (terrorism, illicit drugs, and illegal immigration) has kept border issues at the forefront of American security policy. Furthermore, the issue of anti-terrorism has been centralized and institutionalized through the creation of the DHS and the expansion of the border security apparatus, which in turn has helped to develop a “one border policy fits all” mentality for both the northern and southwestern borders of the United States. Additionally, this centralization of border security has helped to reinforce and support the transfer of security rhetoric once reserved for the US-Mexico border to the US-Canada border. The use of rhetoric about dangerous borders (increasingly applied to both the Canadian and Mexican borders) and the institutionalization of border security has helped lead to the conflation of security issues (terrorism, drugs, and illegal immigration) at the border.

Numerous examples could be sited to show the linkage of language, threat and securitization. At a May, 2011 hearing before a US Senate subcommittee, Alan Bersin, the commissioner of CBP (or the “border czar”) stated that the US-Canada border posed a “more significant threat” to American security in regards to terrorism than the southwestern border. Such statements begin a complex set of events which help to advance further justification for additional resources along the US-Canada border, illustrating the importance of the use of security rhetoric or speech acts to create a securitized mindset.

In the next section, I will examine background information regarding drug trafficking in the Pacific Northwest along with a discussion of how the border security

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bureaucracy is organized along the US-Canada border.

**Border Security: Background, Organization, and Current Issues:**

After 9/11, the world became a more threatening place for Americans, and the US-Canada border was thought to be a focal point of potential threats. It was believed security could be increased with an almost ready-made solution (increasing the concentration of resources) that did not require the vision or the political will to implement new ideas in relation to border security. In examining the border security literature in the last section, a reflexive tendency to call for an expansion of traditional ideas was evident.\(^\text{102}\) This tendency materialized because the security rhetoric that developed on the vastly different US-Mexico border has been transplanted to the northern border following 9/11, helping to maintain a conventional understanding of a US-Mexico view of securitization at the northern border.\(^\text{103}\) The expansion of this conventional understanding has led to the disruption of the integration of US-Canada border regions, an integration that many believe would increase the economic competitiveness of North America while simultaneously improving the quality of life for individuals living in border communities.

In this section, I will provide a basic overview of the US border security apparatus, show how security is organized along the US-Canada border, and shed light on some of the current issues confronting the security agencies on the northern border.

In “US Border Enforcement: From Horseback to High-Tech” (2005) Deborah Meyers examines the development of border security along the US-Mexico border and raises important questions about the effectiveness of recent approaches towards border


\(^{103}\)Andreas, "Mexicanization."
security. She defines borders as a “concrete representation of a nation’s statehood” and sees border security as not simply patrolling the southwest border but, more holistically, accounting for all ports of entry and areas in between.\footnote{104}

Beginning in 1904, seventy-five immigration inspectors on horseback started enforcing immigration policy on the US-Mexico border. Two decades later, an independent Border Patrol was established with 450 employees placed along both borders in response to the United States enacting tougher immigration standards. After the repeal of Prohibition in 1933 and the onset of the Great Depression, the need for border security greatly lessened. Consequently border concerns remained on the periphery of American politics until the 1970s.\footnote{105}

In 1993, Operation Hold the Line began in El Paso, Texas, which led to a major shift in tactics and greatly increased the amount of resources and manpower available for Border Patrol and Immigration and Naturalization Services.\footnote{106} This new strategy was based on two core concepts: “prevention through deterrence” and “targeted enforcement”. The Border Patrol decided to concentrate its resources on the more widely used corridors, so the program was centered on the two most important areas on the US-Mexico border -- West Texas and Southern California.\footnote{107} This concentration of resources resulted in pushing more illegal activity towards isolated areas in Arizona and New Mexico.

In my own research, similarities have been seen in the concentration of resources on the US-Canada border in the Pacific Northwest. Over the past decade, the yearly operating budgets of both Spokane and Blaine Sectors for Border Patrol have nearly
quadrupled and, other than a couple of years of moderate differences, the size of budget for each of the two sectors is remarkably similar (see table 2.5) despite the fact that Spokane Sector (304 Miles) contains more than three times the amount of land border miles as Blaine Sector (89 Miles).\textsuperscript{108}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Blaine Sector</th>
<th>Spokane Sector</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>577,857</td>
<td>577,323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>601,500</td>
<td>646,850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>1,381,981</td>
<td>1,534,087</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>1,442,818</td>
<td>1,580,933</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>1,369,580</td>
<td>1,759,343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>1,529,849</td>
<td>2,030,920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>2,292,077</td>
<td>2,451,513</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>2,094,440</td>
<td>2,580,778</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>2,091,381</td>
<td>2,089,884</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

So just as illegal activity has been pushed into the deserts of Arizona and New Mexico due to a larger concentration of resources at the more widely used corridors, it is likely that there has been, albeit on a considerably lesser scale, the pushing of narcotics smuggling into the rural areas of Eastern Washington, Idaho and Montana. This idea will be explored in much further detail in the data and interview sections of this thesis.

As touched upon in the introduction to this section, 9/11 brought increased attention to border security policies, but according to Meyers the attacks only made small changes in the day to day operations and tactics of the Border Patrol. This may be true for the vast majority of Border Patrol enforcement that operates along the US-Mexico border, but it has led to immense changes for the US-Canada border. For example, the amount of manpower available for Border Patrol on the US-Canada border has expanded

\textsuperscript{108} GAO, “Northern Border,” 5.
\textsuperscript{109} From CBP FOIA data received 07 Apr 2011.
from 334 at the time of 9/11 to over 2,200 in 2011. Accordingly, with such an increase, changes in day to day operations along the US-Canada border would have to be expected.  

Additionally, 9/11 also caused a new emphasis to be placed on information sharing among the different security agencies due to the perceived intelligence failures prior to the attacks. This strong emphasis on information sharing and partnerships will be seen in the interviews with various law enforcement officials conducted for this thesis.

The biggest visible change in the aftermath of 9/11 was the creation of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in 2003 through the merger of 22 different agencies. In the new DHS, both CBP and ICE (created through mergers), and the US Coast Guard are the primary actors in providing border security. Within CBP there are multiple sub-agencies involved in border security, including the Border Patrol whose task it is to detect, interdict, and apprehend individuals who attempt to illegally enter or smuggle contraband into the United States between POEs. CBP also contains the Office of Field Operations which is responsible for running the POEs and the Office of Air and Marine which is responsible for operating marine and air forces to deter, interdict, and gather information on unlawful border activity. ICE acts as an investigative agency at the border, probing into the world of border related illicit activity, ranging from human trafficking to the movement of illegal goods, and the US Coast Guard secures major waterways.

The first priority of the newly created CBP was the “preventing of terrorists and

terrorist weapons, including weapons of mass destruction, from entering the United
States,” followed by traditional concerns over migrants, drugs, and trade. The new list
of priorities reflected a new reality for the United States after 9/11 but also reflected the
adaptability of the border security apparatus to be able to change with threats (illegal
immigration, drugs, and terrorism). Myers believes that Border Patrol has been more
effective than most government agencies in generating resources due to its ability to
change its rhetoric to match the perceived threat of an era, but this effectiveness has
helped to result in an expansion of old ideas, a “reflexive tendency to do more of the
same,” and not a new vision for border security.

Meyers calls for a clear separation of issues at the border to be able to create more
effective and efficient policy. She further contends that there needs to be a clear chain of
command in border security, and the United States needs to rationally decide how border
enforcement fits into a wider set of policy goals. Regrettably, because increases in
resources for border management have largely been driven by the conflation of threats
and the use of security rhetoric, and as the border security bureaucracy becomes more
entrenched, it grows more unlikely that new policy alternatives for creating a new and
more efficient model for border security will be politically feasible.

Large inter-agency differences over the appropriate roles for each border security
agency are seen throughout the 2010 Government Accountability Office (GAO) report,
Border Security: Enhanced DHS Oversight and Assessment of Interagency Coordination
Is Needed for the Northern Border. This report examines security operations in four

114 Ibid., 18.
115 Ibid., 20.
116 Ibid., 21.
different sectors (Blaine, Spokane, Detroit, and Swanton) on the US-Canada border, and the bureaucratic conflict seen throughout this report is in strong contrast to the cooperative picture drawn by the different CBP officials interviewed for this thesis.

In the Spokane Sector, Border Patrol officials felt that ICE was conducting surveillance operations on the border, which is Border Patrol's responsibility.\(^\text{117}\) Additionally, ICE officials in Detroit, Spokane, and Swanton sectors stated they are hesitant to share intelligence with the Border Patrol because they felt it may negatively affect ongoing ICE operations, while Border Patrol officials in Blaine felt that a lack of communication leads to a misuse of resources when they pursue individuals believing they are DTO members but who in actuality are undercover ICE agents.\(^\text{118}\)

According to the GAO Report, these disagreements are a direct result of each agency competing for performance statistics, the basis for DHS resource allocation.\(^\text{119}\) Perhaps then, it not surprising that the drive for impressive statistics (used as justification for border securitization policies) has helped to push various agents to work outside their officially mandated roles and caused disagreements over how credit for apprehensions and drug seizures at the border should be divided amongst the agencies.\(^\text{120}\) At times, even when the official responsibilities of agencies are followed, they can overlap with other bureaucratic entities and lead to disagreements. For example, DEA is responsible for all national and international drug investigations, while ICE is responsible for those at POEs, which can lead to confusion and operational coordination difficulties because, as would

\(^{117}\) GAO, “Northern Border,” 26.
\(^{118}\) Ibid., 27.
\(^{119}\) Ibid., 39.
\(^{120}\) Ibid., 26.
be expected, DTOs do not just operate in one area.\textsuperscript{121}

Highlighting the use of multilevel governance to manage the border, the report discussed the success of Operation Stonegarden, a federal government grant program that gave $11.2 million in 3-year grants to various northern border state, local, or tribal governments to help fund overtime and buy equipment to support Border Patrol operations.\textsuperscript{122} In Blaine and Spokane sectors between October 2009 and July 2010, it was estimated that Operation Stonegarden was responsible for 287 arrests and 5,535 vehicle stops.\textsuperscript{123} The importance of Operation Stonegarden to local law enforcement agencies in northern border communities will be highlighted later in the interview portion of this thesis. The authors of the GAO Report believe that Operation Stonegarden helped to facilitate communications among different law enforcement agencies and led to the effective sharing of resources.\textsuperscript{124}

The report also contained the headline grabbing statement that only 32 miles of the US-Canada border was under an acceptable level of operational control.\textsuperscript{125} The rest of the border was deemed unacceptable because it was “vulnerable to exploitation due to issues related to accessibility and resource availability...”\textsuperscript{126} Additionally; only 1,007 miles of the US-Canada border had attained full situational awareness (an area with a high probability of detection of unlawful activities) for Border Patrol.\textsuperscript{127} Such a prognosis leads one to believe that Border Patrol has an incredibly high standard for security and/or that bringing an “acceptable level of control” to the northern border is

\textsuperscript{121}Ibid., 33.
\textsuperscript{122}Ibid., 38.
\textsuperscript{123}Ibid., 18.
\textsuperscript{124}Ibid., 20.
\textsuperscript{125}“Fresh fears over U.S.-Canada border security as only 1% of 4,000-mile stretch is „under control‟.” \textit{Daily Mail}, 02 Feb 2011.
\textsuperscript{126}GAO, “Northern Border,” 36.
\textsuperscript{127}Ibid., 37.
nearly impossible. If Border Patrol spent nearly $1.2 billion to control 32 miles, at a similar rate it would cost around $150 billion, an amount larger than yearly GDP of New Zealand,\textsuperscript{128} to provide an “acceptable” level of operational control for the entire US-Canada border (excluding the Alaska-Canada border). This exorbitant cost highlights the senselessness of expanding the conventional securitization model along the northern border to deal with comparatively small drug trafficking and illegal immigration problems and terrorism threats that could be dealt with more effectively and efficiently through other security policies.

In the conclusion, the report pragmatically recommends DHS-level oversight to ensure that Border Patrol and ICE properly follow their outlined roles in establishing and maintaining border security. It also suggests using inter-agency forums to ensure that there is not a duplication of efforts on the US-Canada border.\textsuperscript{129} While the GAO Report was more concerned with bureaucratic issues within border security agencies, it is important to hear from law enforcement stakeholders on the US-Canada border who deal with issues that relate directly to the issues and questions posed in this thesis. Therefore, it is necessary to examine the transcripts from past congressional hearings.

In the transcript from an August 2006 Congressional joint hearing entitled *Assessment of Risks at the Northern Border and the Infrastructure Necessary to Address Those Risks*, there is testimony from multiple stakeholders at the US-Canada border relevant to this research. Throughout the transcript, the use of security rhetoric to justify additional resources at the US-Canada border is pervasive. The then-director of the Seattle Field Office for CBP, Thomas Hardy, stated that more manpower was needed at


\textsuperscript{129}\textit{GAO, “Northern Border,”} 42.
the US-Canada border, especially at the POEs because, as Border Patrol proved more successful at drug interdiction between POEs, illicit traffic would be directed back towards the POEs.\textsuperscript{130}

Ronald Henley, the former chief patrol agent of the Blaine Sector for Border Patrol, discussed how increased manpower for border security in the Blaine Sector has pushed drug smuggling eastward, often into the neighboring sectors, concurring with the main hypothesis of this thesis. Moreover, in 2005 smugglers made greater use of aircraft to fly drugs over Border Patrol’s new tactical deployments and attempted to use tunneling as a smuggling method, as was revealed in the discovery of a smuggling tunnel in Lynden, WA.\textsuperscript{131} Henley was a proponent of the use of unmanned aerial vehicles ("drones"), but believed that, though it is beneficial to have more sophisticated means to detect criminal activity in isolated areas, additional resources are still required to be able to physically apprehend law breakers.\textsuperscript{132}

Dale Brandland, a Washington state senator for northern Whatcom County and the former Whatcom County Sheriff, testified on how his county has faced an unfair burden when dealing with border related crime. He applauded the decision to hire more federal agents for the US-Canada border but saw this contributing even more to the overloading of the criminal justice system for border communities.\textsuperscript{133} Brandland, along with Senator Maria Cantwell and Rep. Rick Larsen, pushed for more federal funds for local level criminal justice systems that have been overburdened due to border related crimes. This

\textsuperscript{130}U.S. Congress. House of Representatives. Committee on Homeland Security. \textit{Assessment of Risk at the Northern Border and the Infrastructure Necessary to Address Those Risk}, 2006. 109\textsuperscript{th} Cong., 2d sess., 25.
\textsuperscript{131}Ibid., 20.
\textsuperscript{132}Ibid., 29.
\textsuperscript{133}Ibid., 35.
issue of communities being overburdened due to border related crime will be seen throughout the interviews with local government officials later in this thesis.

The intent of this section was to review key literature pertinent to drug trafficking and border security. This overview describes an expanding border security apparatus, its organization and the issues it faces. Next I will analyze the data acquired from CBP and ICE through a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request to examine what have been the detectable effects of the expansion of border securitization policies on drug trafficking at the US-Canada border in the Pacific Northwest.
Chapter 3

The Process of Acquiring Data and Problems Encountered:

When I began this research I believed it would be relatively straightforward to acquire data, either through already published sources or through a simple request with local representatives of the appropriate law enforcement agencies. Initially, I wanted to limit my research to comparing the bi-national DTO activity in Whatcom and Okanogan counties in Washington State, neighboring counties that border British Columbia but that are on different sides of the Cascade Mountains. I planned to focus on the border and the two drug “pipelines” in Washington State, Interstate 5 and Highway 97, which run north to south from the US-Canada border to California. I looked into acquiring arrest and drug seizure data for each county but was told it would be necessary to contact CBP and other federal agencies for such data. I then learned how Border Patrol is divided into various sectors and, therefore, if I were to use this prospective data I had to enlarge my study to include the rest of Washington State, Idaho, and Western Montana (which makes up Blaine Sector and Spokane Sector). I made contact with representatives from CBP but was soon told it would be necessary to make a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request to acquire all the data I required for this topic.

In my request (and through later communications) with the CBP FOIA office I made clear the goals of my research and the data I would like to acquire. I submitted my FOIA request in late October 2010. In February 2011, I was told I would have to pay $608 for my request (to pay for the labor involved in compiling the data) because it had been classified as a commercial request. It had been deemed a commercial request because requests that can lead to personal gain (in my case receiving college credit)
cannot qualify as an educational request (which would have been free). Additionally, the CBP FOIA office mistakenly believed that the Border Policy Research Institute, which provided me with a grant for this research, was a commercial entity. I then challenged this classification of my request with help from the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS). It was then reclassified as an “all other requests” and my fee was brought down to $540. I begrudgingly sent in the $540 check but, fortunately when I received the data on April 7th, 2011, I was told it was compiled much faster than originally envisioned, requiring less labor, and CBP FOIA refunded me $375.

I additionally made a FOIA request with the ICE FOIA office, which was both a more pleasant and timely experience. (I made the request in February 2011 and received the data in early May 2011). For similar services rendered they did not charge a fee; moreover, someone from their office went out of their way to call and alert me about potentially consulting OGIS for help after I had told them about my problems with the classification of my CBP FOIA request.

The data from the CBP FOIA office accounted for the drug seizures at all Washington State land POEs and some marine POEs\textsuperscript{134} from 1996-2011,\textsuperscript{135} with an extensive, yearly drug-by-drug breakdown at each POE. This data did not include apprehension numbers for each POE, which made judgments about changes in smuggling tactics more difficult (for example, have DTOs moved to smuggling smaller or larger loads, etc…?). It appears the data corresponds to the federal fiscal year, which begins on October 1\textsuperscript{st} of the previous year. So, for example, at the Lynden, WA POE on October 31\textsuperscript{st} 2006, CBP seized 567 pounds of cocaine on an outbound vehicle search, but in the

\textsuperscript{134}I believe these are the POEs for international ferry terminals but Seattle was not included.

\textsuperscript{135}The data includes 2011; I received the data on April 7\textsuperscript{th} 2011, but was not told how far the data extends into 2011.
data this is the total amount of cocaine listed as being seized in 2007.\textsuperscript{136} Information regarding the overall amount of “incidents” at the POEs and CBP’s budget for the Blaine and Seattle Field Offices were also provided, but the data came with no explanation of what it meant, and when I contacted the CBP FOIA office for further clarification, I was informed that they do not offer clarification for any of the data provided in a request.

I also received from the CBP FOIA office Border Patrol records regarding drug seizures\textsuperscript{137} and apprehensions for 1993-2010, and the budgets for Blaine and Spokane Sectors from 2002-2010.\textsuperscript{138} This data did not disclose any information about where in the sector (near a town, in the mountains, etc...) or how the apprehensions and drug seizures took place (was the smuggler hiking, using a snowmobile, helicopter, etc...), information that would have been extremely helpful for this research. I also cannot determine the quantity of drugs that were seized on average at a single time because the apprehensions also include immigration violations; which appear (based on the data) to be more common and which normally involve more people than drug smuggling does because individuals are the contraband. Another problem with the Border Patrol data is that the “marijuana seized” category can also include domestic grow ops discovered near the border. In 2009 in Spokane Sector, for example, 24,332 lbs. of marijuana was seized, while in the other 17 years combined (1993-2008 and 2010) the data lists a total of 27,290 lbs. seized in the sector. I was immediately struck by this large outlier and thought there had been a mistake in inputting the data. I contacted the Public Affairs Officer for

\textsuperscript{136}“CBP Officers Seize Cocaine Valued at $6.5 Million,” \textit{CBP.gov}, 01 NOV 2006.

\textsuperscript{137}The drugs were categorized as: marijuana, heroin, cocaine, other drugs, and dosage units. All were in pounds except dosage units. Dosage Units are thought to include just illicit substances and not prescription medicines.

\textsuperscript{138}2002 was the year DHS was created.
Spokane Sector and was told that Border Patrol also helps with domestic grows located near the border, which is understandable, as the predominantly rural counties near the border in Eastern Washington, Idaho, and Montana may not have the manpower to deal with dismantling large outdoor grow ops. This wrinkle in the data may indicate how increased border security has helped to spur increases in the American production of marijuana, but unfortunately it also muddies the meaning of the data, making it more difficult to get an accurate perception of trends for in-between POE drug smuggling. Moreover, it also illuminates the peculiarities that may arise in record keeping for law enforcement agencies when resource allocation is determined by drug seizure levels.

A problem exists in comparing the POE and Border Patrol data to determine if more smuggling has been pushed between POEs because Spokane Sector also includes Idaho, and Western Montana but CBP FOIA office did not provide the data for POEs in those two states. Judging from the small amounts of drugs seized at the lesser-used Eastern Washington POEs, I suspect that these POEs likely see a limited amount of drug seizures, but the comparison between the smuggling at and between POEs would have been more effective if I had data for all the POEs within Spokane Sector.

Fifty-six pages of information were acquired from the ICE FOIA office. This data encompasses 2003 to February 2011, and lists drugs seized at the Washington State POEs, including POEs not listed in the CBP data such as Seattle-Tacoma International Airport and the commercial marine ports of Everett, Seattle and Tacoma. These locations are problematic for this research and will not be examined, as they would likely include drugs being smuggled from locations other than British Columbia.

This ICE data set is more in-depth than what was received from CBP because it
lists the amount of a certain drug seized at a POE in a year along with the number of
incidents/arrests associated with that drug, thus making more accurate identification of
trends possible. For instance, if 80 lbs. of marijuana were seized at POE “X” in 2005 but
there were 1000 incidents involving marijuana at the POE, this means this marijuana was
predominantly being smuggled for personal non-commercial use. If there was only one
incident for the 80 lbs. of marijuana at this hypothetical POE, this would mean the
smuggling would have been for wholesale commercial purposes and therefore more of a
concern. Though this data is more useful it can also be problematic because, if 1000 lbs.
of marijuana were seized in ten incidents, I cannot tell if each incident involved 100 lbs.
or if one individual smuggled the vast majority while the nine others who were also
cought only had trace amounts.

Similar to the problems with the information from CBP, the data from ICE did not
come with any clarification. This can be confusing for cities or POEs listed that are not
located on the border. For example, it lists that in Spokane (approximately 2 hours away
from the border) in 2003, 812 lbs. of marijuana were seized, but we cannot t know if the
812 lbs. were seized at the border through an investigation that was run out of the
Spokane office, or if smugglers were arrested at a train or bus station in Spokane.

The CBP and ICE sets of data for the POEs will need to be examined separately
because in certain years they are in concurrence with their seizure numbers but in other
times they are not. One example of the problems in this information is for the Lynden,
WA POE in 2007. Both sets of data list the same amount of cocaine seized, while for the
same year they have vastly different numbers for the amount of marijuana seized. This
problem in dividing up credit for drug seizures was seen as a persistent issue in the GAO
Drug Trafficking and Quantitative Research Issues:

Researching and making determination about trends in a clandestine activity such as drug smuggling is rife with problems. To begin with, the data acquired from the government does not measure the successes of DTOs, only failures, which can raise innumerable questions. For instance, what if increased security resources at the border have caused a professionalization of drug smugglers, either through the scaring away of smaller operators or through the arresting of less skilled individuals because of security enhancements, creating a sort of natural selection for DTO members allowing the fittest to thrive and go undetected in their activities using refined smuggling tactics?

When examining the data it is difficult to determine the actual amount of illicit activity that has taken place and to determine at what rate it has increased or decreased because, with increased border security and more “boots on the ground,” it is reasonable to expect that more previously unnoticed activity can now be seen and interdicted. Are more trees falling in the forest or is it just that now someone is there to hear them fall?

The narrow focus of this research (smuggling at and between the land POEs) also poses problems because activity at the small segment of land border encompassed by the thesis scope is only a small part of a larger system of DTOs. I do not have data related to drugs seized at airports other than Seattle–Tacoma International Airport; conceivably as security has thickened at the land border, airports in the United States that are closer to the markets where these drugs are predominantly used (California and the Midwestern

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139GAO, “Northern Border” 26.
US) with direct flights from British Columbia, have seen large increases in smuggling. Additionally, DTOs could have started to make greater use of commercial shipping vessels to transport large quantities of drugs. Moreover, if someone was arrested trafficking a large amount of drugs from British Columbia but was caught transporting the drugs in Oregon or California, this would not be included in my data. The smuggling of drugs could also have been pushed even farther into the interior of the Western United States, which would concur with one of the main hypothesis of this thesis, but would not be seen within the data. The problems in using quantitative data for illegal activities are numerous. Yet, these data, limited as they are, help us measure changes in bi-national drug trafficking in the Pacific Northwest.

**Utilizing the Data:**

Through closely analyzing the data I attempt to determine if an increase in the amount of drug smuggling has occurred either between POEs or at smaller POEs located in the interior of the Pacific Northwest. To do this, we will examine the total amounts of drugs seized at POEs and between POEs and the proportions to one another. In other words, is a larger percentage of the total drugs seized being seized at a certain POE or being seized by Border Patrol between POEs? Additionally, the makeup of the drugs seized will be analyzed to see if larger amounts of more compact and profitable drugs are being smuggled instead of marijuana. I will examine the general drug seizure trends at the higher-used POEs to determine what the effects have been of increased security. I will also attempt to determine how the operating budget for Border Patrol relates to the amount of drugs seized between the POEs. To attempt to offset the many weaknesses of
data related to drug smuggling discussed in this section, I conducted 15 interviews with key enforcement personnel and stakeholders to get a collective “view on the ground” of how and in which ways drug smuggling has changed at the US-Canada border in the Pacific Northwest.

**Background Information for Interviews:**

The goal of using interviews in this thesis is to attempt to provide a more complete picture of the changes that have occurred in bi-national drug trafficking over the past decade in the Pacific Northwest. Moreover, they will be used to help qualitatively determine the effects of the border and its securitization on border communities. Though these interviews have proven to be very illuminating for this research, they, too, present methodological problems. When I first planned this research I envisioned first acquiring the seizure and arrest data, and then conducting the interviews with questions based from analysis of the data. Unfortunately, as discussed earlier, the CBP FOIA request took much longer to process than originally anticipated, so I did not receive the data until after all the interviews had been completed. Furthermore, some of the key law enforcement agencies (ICE and DEA) that I had hoped to interview for this thesis refused to be interviewed. Other officials were contacted numerous times, stated they would get back to me, but never did. This is an inherent problem of doing research involving law enforcement personnel. Fortunately, all those who did assent to be interviewed were extremely helpful and encouraging, which helped to offset the frustration of certain rejections and delays.

When this research topic was being explored I naturally thought of trying to interview former or current DTO members involved in the smuggling of drugs. I soon
recognized the difficulties in setting up, conducting and having such interviews approved, when I read about the adversity and the amount of time involved in using such interviews for established crime researchers such as Desroches (2005). These interview subjects could perhaps be better made use of in future research on this topic.

The candor of some of the individuals interviewed was very refreshing while others individuals seemed not as comfortable to openly speak their mind, and appeared rather to emphasize bureaucratic talking points. While I desired interview subjects who would speak freely and candidly, their close guardedness in such a setting is understandable. Despite the fact that a variety of opinions were offered on the subject of drugs and the border, it is reasonable to assume that the viewpoints of those interviewed was influenced by how they earn their livelihood, which, for the vast majority, involved working in law enforcement. This fact may have initially unconsciously changed my own outlook, which was perhaps influenced by the prevalent use of security rhetoric by the majority of those interviewed.

For this research I interviewed: a high level narcotics officer from RCMP in British Columbia, four individuals from CBP; a Border Patrol Agent from Blaine Sector (who was interviewed twice), a Border Patrol Agent from Spokane Sector, and two individuals from the CBP Air and Marine base (including the director of air operations) in Bellingham, WA. I also interviewed two individuals from a county sheriff’s office in North Central Washington, the under-sheriff of a county in North East Washington State, a narcotics investigator from a county sheriff’s office in Idaho, the police chiefs for two Western Washington border towns, two attorneys (including the chief deputy for the Whatcom County Public Defender’s Office) with a large amount of experience dealing

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\(^{140}\)Desroches, *The Crime That Pays.*
with border issues based in Bellingham, WA, an official from Whatcom County Health Department, and a professor of criminology at a university in British Columbia. I attended a large community meeting in Blaine, WA on February 16th, 2011 organized by CBP to help address issues related to public outcry about an area man arrested and prosecuted for shining a flashlight at a CBP helicopter and the general displeasure over the increased presence of the border security apparatus in Whatcom County. Finally, I also attended a panel discussion (involving two of the individuals interviewed for this research) dealing with the US-Canada border at Western Washington University on February 23rd, 2011 which was done in conjunction with a week of events for the book, *Border Songs*, a work of fiction where the protagonist is a Border Patrol agent working at the US-Canada border in the area explored in this research.

**Interview Methods:**

For this research I used semi-structured interviews rather than structured or unstructured interviews. I chose the semi-structured interview style because I wanted to give the interview subjects latitude in their responses, allowing their words and experience to stand out, but at the same time ensure some structure to help move the interview forward in a consistent and systematic way. As Weiss (1994) notes, allowing interview subjects to speak on their own terms, as long as it is near the topic of interest, will produce more robust data. Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2011) believe that semi-structured interviews allow for a more natural conversation appropriate for qualitative research.

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143 Ibid., 49.
research. This more conversational form can take the interview in unexpected places which may elicit valuable information.\textsuperscript{144} My list of questions, which was refined throughout the two month process of conducting interviews, acted as an interview guide. This interview guide served as a “substantive frame” by grouping questions by topic.\textsuperscript{145} The specific order of the questions suggested areas where I wanted to take the discussion but also allowed improvisation if necessary.\textsuperscript{146}

Part of the reason I did not use highly structured interviews is because of the varying positions and locations of those interviewed. Moreover, I believe the data section sufficiently serves as the quantitative side of this research. These interviews were designed to reflect on the ground experience upon border security and drug trafficking, and not designed to create additional quantitative data.

Before each interview I emailed a list of questions to the interview subjects in advance so the subjects would have a better idea of what I would be asking them about. Additionally, for some of the federal government employees this was necessary because they had to have the questions ahead of time to get approval from those higher up in the chain of command.

The interviews ranged in length from 20 minutes to nearly two hours. In some cases, additional questions were asked to prompt subjects to address important points that were not eliciting adequate answers to the standard questions. Moreover, often for clarification, a response would necessitate another question that was not on the list. I generally asked the same questions to all those interviewed but often had to modify the

\textsuperscript{144}Sharlene Hesse-Biber and Patricia Leavy, \textit{The Practice of Qualitative Research} (Los Angeles: Sage, 2011), 102.
\textsuperscript{145}Ibid., 103.
questions depending on the position and location of the interview subject. The questionnaire included approximately 15 questions (see Appendix A). Some interviews tended to be more conversational while others predominantly followed the list of questions and were very businesslike.

All but one of the 15 interviews was done in person at the place of the interviewee’s business. Personal interviews bring to the researcher a more human understanding of the subject’s circumstances and work, and add a workplace and geographical context to what otherwise would be simply data gathering. Additionally, throughout the process of conceiving and executing this research I spent time cycling the roads that parallel the border and through the border communities of Blaine, Lynden, and Sumas in Washington State and White Rock, South Surrey, Aldergrove and Abbotsford in British Columbia. These comparatively densely populated communities are located at the western end of the area explored in this research and are located in a relatively flat area that stretches for about 30 miles from Salish Sea to the beginning of the Cascade Mountains. Traveling in this area helped give me a stronger and up-close understanding of the unique nature of the US-Canada border and the challenges border security agencies face in stopping smuggling, when the border is often little more than a two-foot ditch next to a road or a farm. This experience, and driving across the region to do the interviews, drove home the diversity of the terrain of the border in the Pacific Northwest, which at one point is sandwiched by dairy farms on both sides, and in a comparatively short distance is a very mountainous and treacherous area.

In the next section, the findings of my research are discussed. I will group and summarize the responses of the interview subjects on the various topics and provide an
assessment of the general trends detected as a result of the interviews. I will make use of direct quotes from the interview subjects because their language is often more poignant than mine is in matter-of-factly summarizing the information. Furthermore quotes are valuable because they reveal subtlety of thinking and deeper knowledge on a particular topic or question, making the opinions and perceptions of the interviewee more important and worth exploring in further depth when compared to other interview subjects who may have very little or no knowledge about a certain topic.
Chapter 4

Data Findings:

The data acquired for this research shows that following 9/11 drug seizures at POEs in Washington State (see table 4.2) increased considerably in the fiscal years of 2002 and 2003, more than sextupling from 2001 levels. Seizures by Border Patrol in both sectors looked at in this research peaked in 2004 but did not see the same dramatic increase as the POEs (see table 4.8 and 4.9). In recent years there has been a remarkable reduction in the total volume of drugs seized (due to large decreases in marijuana) at Washington State POEs and a return to pre-9/11 levels for Border Patrol. Concurrently, drugs other than marijuana have started to make up a much larger percentage of the total drugs seized. For example, at the POEs, according to the data from CBP, drugs other than marijuana made up 66 percent of drugs seized in 2010 and 31 percent in 2009, while in 2000 they made up a meager 7 percent of the total drugs seized, and in 1996 they were only 1 percent of the total.

This downward trend in the volume of drugs seized corresponds with a 62 percent increase in CBP’s overall budget from 2006 to 2010 (See table 4.1), and a near quadrupling of Border Patrol’s budget for the two sectors looked at in this research from 2002 to 2010 (See table 4.2):
Table 4.1: Total Budget Authority (in thousands) \(^{147}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>CBP</th>
<th>ICE</th>
<th>DHS (total)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>5,057,000</td>
<td>2,730,000</td>
<td>xxxxx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>5,887,000</td>
<td>3,262,000</td>
<td>31,182,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>5,942,000</td>
<td>3,654,000</td>
<td>36,541,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>6,344,398</td>
<td>3,127,078</td>
<td>38,474,277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>7,109,875</td>
<td>3,866,443</td>
<td>40,493,950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>7,743,581</td>
<td>4,696,641</td>
<td>43,117,414</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>9,285,001</td>
<td>5,054,317</td>
<td>47,454,648</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>11,250,652</td>
<td>5,968,015</td>
<td>52,771,076</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>11,540,501</td>
<td>5,741,752</td>
<td>56,169,614</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2: Sector Allocated Non-Pay Resources \(^{148}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Blaine Sector</th>
<th>Spokane Sector</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>577,857</td>
<td>577,323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>601,500</td>
<td>646,850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>1,381,981</td>
<td>1,534,087</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>1,442,818</td>
<td>1,580,933</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>1,369,580</td>
<td>1,759,343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>1,529,849</td>
<td>2,030,920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>2,292,077</td>
<td>2,451,513</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>2,094,440</td>
<td>2,580,778</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>2,091,381</td>
<td>2,089,884</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examining the data immediately brings the "hit or miss" nature of drug interdiction to the forefront. In one year there can be a record high for a drug seized, then in the next year there may be little or none of that drug seized. This point is well illustrated in the ICE seizure data for the Blaine POE (see table 4.4). In 2005, 858 lbs. of cocaine were seized in seven separate incidents, while in 2006 there were the same number of incidents but only 0.31 lb. of cocaine was seized.

When comparing the two separately acquired sets of data for drug seizures at Washington POEs, CBP’s numbers (years included 1996-2011) for the amount of drugs


\(^{148}\)From CBP FOIA data received 07 Apr 2011.
seized at each POE are usually less than the amounts shown in the data provided by ICE (years included 2003-2011). For example, at the Lynden POE in Western Washington, the ICE data from 2003 to 2010 has a total of 2868 lbs. of marijuana seized while the CBP data in that same time frame was only 1821 lbs. This ratio of difference seems to be consistent throughout the two data sets, but the general trends in drug smuggling seen in both sets appear to be the same. In the interviews done for this thesis, many of the subjects emphasized the importance of investigations for drug interdiction; the higher numbers from ICE (the investigative branch for the border security apparatus) supports this viewpoint.

In the data section of this chapter, we first look at trends at Western Washington POEs, then move to Eastern Washington POEs, and then close by looking at the Border Patrol data and give a general overview of the perceptible trends for drug seizures at the border in the Pacific Northwest.

**Western Washington POEs:**

In the CBP data, Blaine, along with the other “Mainstreet Cascadia” POEs in Western Washington; Lynden and Sumas were responsible for 87.5 percent of all the drugs seized at POEs in Washington State from 1996 to 2011. If Oroville, the most important POE in Eastern Washington, is added, these four POEs are responsible for 96 percent of the drugs seized at the 15 different POEs in the data (see table 4.3):

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Table 4.3: CBP Selected Drugs Seized at most important Washington POEs
(all drugs in lbs.)\(^{150}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Blaine POE</th>
<th>Cocaine</th>
<th>Ecstasy</th>
<th>Ephedrine</th>
<th>Marijuana</th>
<th>Lynden POE</th>
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<th>Ecstasy</th>
<th>Ephedrine</th>
<th>Marijuana</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<th>Ephedrine</th>
<th>Marijuana</th>
<th>Oroville POE</th>
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\(^{150}\)From CBP FOIA data received 07 Apr 2011.
The decrease in marijuana seizures at the Blaine POE, by far the most used POE in this study, is the most attention grabbing trend in the data. At the Blaine POE from 2000 to 2007 an average of 4,130 lbs. of marijuana were seized annually, with a highpoint of 9,070 lbs. in 2002; in the past 3 full years (2008-2010) of available data, the average has been only 11.8 lbs., with a low of 1.57 lbs. in 2009.

Though there has been a great reduction in the sheer amount of volume of drugs at the Blaine POE, cocaine\textsuperscript{151} and ecstasy are still being seen in increasingly significant numbers. In 2009 and 2010, two of the three largest seizure years for cocaine (Lynden in 2007 was the largest at 568.78 lbs.) in the data were at the Blaine POE. This could indicate stepped up outbound searches by CBP, which could mean seizure of more drugs that previously passed freely into Canada; or perhaps DTOs are progressively moving to traffic in a more profitable substance.

The rise of the seizure of ecstasy at the border nearly mimics the rise in security at the border. At the Blaine POE, its rise in consistent seizures begins in 2005 after the highpoint for marijuana seizures. Though ecstasy smuggled has not continuously risen, it has not seen the dramatic falloff evident for marijuana seizure at POEs. This fact gives some credence to the hypothesis that security at the POEs could help drive the switch to smuggling the more compact and profitable drug, but this also could have been influenced by other market factors as explored in the literature review.

\textsuperscript{151} It is believed that all the cocaine is being seized on out bounded searches of vehicles at the POEs.
In the middle of the last decade (2000s) a large amount of ephedrine, an important ingredient for cold medicines, diet pills and methamphetamine, was seized. This activity has seemingly ceased as Canadian law enforcement (similar to earlier efforts by many western states in the United States) has strengthened laws against the purchasing, importation and exportation of ephedrine.\textsuperscript{152}

In the ICE data for the Blaine POE, similar trends (but in greater volume) are seen in marijuana and ecstasy smuggling but considerably higher amounts of cocaine seizures are seen. For example, in 2009 in the ICE data there was nearly as much cocaine seized as there was in the entire time frame in the CBP data.

<p>| Table 4.4.: ICE Blaine POE selected drugs with number of incidents (drugs in lbs.)\textsuperscript{153} |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Blaine</th>
<th>Cocaine</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>Ecstasy</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>Marijuana</th>
<th>#</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>213.04</td>
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<td>29.69</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>180</td>
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<tr>
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<td>288.88</td>
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</tr>
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<td>620.39</td>
<td>11</td>
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<td>107.14</td>
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</table>

The Sumas POE has seemingly risen in importance, with drug seizures there making up a much greater percentage of the total amount of drugs seized at Washington POEs in recent years. The Sumas POE saw even greater marijuana seizures in 2008 and


\textsuperscript{153} From ICE FOIA data received 03 May 2011.
2009 than the Blaine POE, the traditional leader (see table 4.5). This may suggest DTOs
are using POEs closer to areas of production because just across the border from Sumas,
is Abbotsford, BC, well known as a base area for Canadian DTOs.\footnote{Bolan, Kim. "Cracks in UN gang appeared long before leader Clay Rouche's arrest." \textit{Vancouver Sun}. 15 Dec 2009.}

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Sumas</th>
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<th>#</th>
<th>Average</th>
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</thead>
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<td>30.171</td>
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<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>0.01</td>
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</table>

The above ICE numbers, in addition to showing the Sumas POE's growing
importance as a POE for marijuana smuggling, illustrates how misleading the number of
incidents at a POE can be. When I acquired this data from ICE and saw that each year of
drug seizures was accompanied by a number of incidents, I believed this could be a great
tool to help determine trends (shipment size) in drug smuggling. However, because the
data does not separate personal use amounts and wholesale amounts, it is less useful for
determining trends. The declining size of the average amount of marijuana per incident
at most POEs suggests shipment sizes may be getting smaller but it could also mean that,
overall, fewer large scale drug smugglers are being caught while the amount of
individuals caught with personal use amounts of marijuana has remained consistent.

\footnote{From ICE FOIA data received 03 May 2011.}
Marine POEs and Other Drugs:

In the data acquired from ICE FOIA office, much more drug activity is seen at POEs that are, or can be, water POEs. To reiterate an important point from the last chapter, because this data did not come with any clarification I can only make educated assumptions about the data or how credit is divided by location and the location of arrests. However, in 2008, at the Bellingham POE 16,743 lbs. of marijuana (a high for this research) were seized in only 3 incidents. This could mean that large shipments of drugs discovered were being transported in boats. If the latter is true this could suggest that smugglers are increasingly utilizing the sea as a place for drug trafficking. This idea is supported by other incidents; in 2009 nearly 4,400 lbs. of marijuana were seized at the Tacoma POE and in 2010 over 500 lbs. of marijuana were seized at the Port Angeles POE.  

Additionally, to the three main drugs of interest for this thesis, other drugs have recently been seen in large quantities at the Western Washington POEs. In 2009 and 2010 a combined amount of over 500 lbs. of the amphetamine-like drug, Benzylpiperazine (BZP), which is illegal in the United States but legal in Canada and often used in combination with other substances for “mimic” or fake ecstasy pills, was seized at the Blaine POE by ICE. Additionally, in the ICE data at the Blaine and Bellingham POEs, over 1300 lbs. of opium were seized in 2010 and 2011 combined, and over the past three years at the Seattle, Blaine and Bellingham POEs over 243 lbs. of heroin has been seized.

---

156 The data does not indicate whether or not this marijuana came from Canada.
157 A larger amount for that year than the 4 main land POEs (Blaine, Lynden, Sumas, and Oroville) combined.
158 From ICE FOIA data received 03 May 2011.
Eastern Washington POEs:

The amount of marijuana and other drugs seized at Eastern Washington POEs was far smaller than what was originally hypothesized, with no other POEs other than Oroville seeing consistent and significant drug seizures. These sets of data suggest that drug smuggling has not been pushed to smaller POEs in the interior of the Pacific Northwest. In the seven POEs other than Oroville, there have been no years of marijuana seizures larger than the relatively small amount of 304 lbs. (see table 4.6):

Table 4.6: CBP Marijuana Lbs. Seized at Eastern Washington POEs (Oroville Excluded) 161

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<thead>
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<th>Year</th>
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<th>98</th>
<th>99</th>
<th>00</th>
<th>01</th>
<th>02</th>
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<th>06</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

Moreover, Eastern Washington POEs have not seen the rise in seizures for non-marijuana drugs. There have been only two years of seizures of larger than personal usage amounts for drugs other than marijuana in Eastern Washington, both taking place at the Oroville POE (2005 and 2007). To illustrate the dearth of drug seizures reflected in the CBP numbers for the Eastern Washington POEs, six of the eight POEs have not seen

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161 From CBP FOIA data received 07 Apr 2011.
cocaine or ecstasy in any year from 1996 to 2011, with a seventh, the Frontier POE, seeing only a small amount (0.13 lbs.) of cocaine in 2002. This could mean no activity is taking place or that smugglers are just not being caught; and in regards to cocaine perhaps there could be fewer outbound searches at POEs in Eastern Washington.

The data from ICE shows similar but slightly more amounts of drugs passing through Eastern Washington POEs. The Metaline Falls POE has seen a comparatively (to the other Eastern Washington POEs) large amount of incidents involving an eclectic mix of drugs, likely due to the annual Shambhala Music Festival in nearby Salmo, British Columbia, but the total amount of drugs seized has been extremely small.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Marijuana (lbs.)</th>
<th>#</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>20.05</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To illustrate some of the differences between the data sets for the smaller Eastern Washington POEs, at the Danville POE from 2003 to 2011 according to the CBP data, 182.53 lbs. were seized while in the ICE data 254.69 lbs. were seized. This 72.16 lbs. difference (over a nearly nine year period) may seem significant at first glance in comparison to the rest of the drug seizures at other Eastern Washington POEs, but in the big picture this amount is almost irrelevant when compared to the seizures at the Blaine

\[162 \text{ From ICE FOIA data received 03 May 2011.}\]
POE or the US-Mexico border, where in February 2003 at the Otay Mesa POE near San Diego, there was a single seizure of 19,957 lbs. of marijuana from one semi-truck.  

Some more significant differences exist in the two data sets for Eastern Washington. For example, in 2006 at the Oroville POE in the ICE data over 2,277 lbs. of marijuana were seized while in the CBP data less than one pound was seized. All the other levels of drugs seized for the Oroville POE either reflect the typical difference between the two data sets (CBP totals are usually about 60 to 70 percent of ICE totals) or are the same.

**Figure 4.8 ICE Spokane and Oroville POE Marijuana lbs. seized with number of incidents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Spokane Marijuana</th>
<th>Spokane #</th>
<th>Oroville Marijuana</th>
<th>Oroville #</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>812.4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2404.34</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>1112.98</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1409.94</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1312.34</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2277.14</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>351.21</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>157.56</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>1288.08</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>704.8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ICE data also includes seizure data (seen in figure 4.8) for the Spokane POE, but because this data did not come with clarification it is not clear what it refers to. (Spokane is two hours away from the border). If it were Spokane International Airport, I am somewhat certain it would be listed as such because Seattle and Seattle-Tacoma International Airport are counted as separate POEs.

In 2009, the Spokane POE had the second highest level of marijuana seized in the state and in 2010 it had the highest at 705 lbs. These seizure levels reiterate how sharply

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164 From ICE FOIA data received 03 May 2011.
marijuana smuggling has declined recently in the region but it also supports the hypothesis that a larger percentage of the total drug smuggling is now taking place in the interior of the Pacific Northwest since increases in border security; but once again because it cannot be determined (from the data) where these drugs were seized, it is difficult to provide an accurate interpretation of smuggling trends.

When examining the data and seeing years and years of zeros for the amount of drugs seized it seems hard to believe that there is no activity taking place, especially considering the amount of marijuana production that takes place in Eastern British Columbia. This lack of data does not necessarily mean that the original hypothesis of increased drug activity taking place at Eastern Washington POEs is false; rather there is just a lack of overall seizure data to support this conjecture. Furthermore, when looking at the amount of drugs seized by Border Patrol between these POEs in Spokane Sector, it is clear that DTO activity does take place in the area, which once again brings into question the apparent general absence of drugs being seized at most Eastern Washington POEs.

**Border Patrol:**

While Border Patrol has seized fewer drugs in the recent past, this decrease has been less pronounced as it has been at the POEs, and currently seizures between POEs are making up a larger share of the total drugs seized, supporting one of the hypothesis of this thesis. This is particularly true in Blaine Sector (see table 4.10), where in the past three years of data available for this research (2008-2010) an average of 2008 lbs. of marijuana was seized annually, while at its three year high point from 2003 to 2005, an
annual average of 3669 lbs. of marijuana was seized, approximately a 45 percent
decrease in the annual marijuana seizure average. In contrast, from 2003 to 2005 at the
three main Western Washington land POEs, according to the ICE data, an annual
combined average of 10,926 lbs. (CBP average 7229 lbs.) was seized, while in 2008-2010
1439 lbs. were seized (CBP average 118.5 lbs.), a reduction of 87 percent. In addition to
the smaller reduction for Border Patrol seizures between the two time periods, in the
earlier time period (2003-2005) marijuana seized between the POEs by Border Patrol was
only 33 percent of that seized at the three main POEs. In contrast in the more recent three
year period (2008-2010) it was 140 percent of the marijuana seized at the three main
POEs in Western Washington.

The seizure data from CBP has not supported the hypothesis that more drug
smuggling has been pushed across the Cascade Mountains and into the interior of the
Pacific Northwest, and more specifically between the POEs in Spokane Sector (see table
4.11). When first examining the data I was surprised to find that from 1993 to 2001 more
marijuana had been seized in Spokane Sector (11,256 lbs.) than in Blaine Sector (9951
lbs.), while after 9/11, more marijuana, heroin, cocaine, and dosage units were seized in
Blaine Sector, with approximately the same amount of “other drugs” seized in the two
sectors. Furthermore, seven out of the top ten years for seizures in Spokane Sector (not
counting 2009) came before the large increases in the budget for Border Patrol in 2004.
Therefore, Border Patrol appears to have been finding more drugs with fewer resources,
possibly suggesting that either there was much more activity in this earlier period,
making smugglers easier to discover, or smugglers were less skilled and tended to get
cought more easily.
As touched upon in the last chapter, in the fiscal year of 2009 Spokane Sector seized an extremely large amount of marijuana, but this number does not come from DTO members being caught smuggling between the POEs; rather in August 2008\(^{165}\) Border Patrol helped with an investigation that led to the seizure of more than 24,000 marijuana plants in Stevens County in the Northeast corner of Washington State. This number of plants seized suggests they counted each plant as one pound of marijuana, likely meaning that in 2009 very little marijuana was actually seized from smugglers coming from British Columbia by Border Patrol in Spokane Sector.\(^{166}\) The reductions seen in marijuana seizures in Spokane Sector suggest that less activity is taking place but possibly this activity has been pushed into more isolated areas where it is not being seen or to other sectors along the US-Canada border.

Ecstasy or dosage unit seizures seem to be hit or miss. When ecstasy is found it is typically in large amounts as seen in 2009 in Blaine Sector when 819,384 dosage units were seized amounting to 77 percent of the dosage units seized in both sectors over the whole time frame examined.

### Table 4.9: Border Patrol Blaine Sector (all drugs in lbs. except dosage units)\(^{167}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Apprehensions</th>
<th>Marijuana</th>
<th>Cocaine</th>
<th>Heroin</th>
<th>Other Drugs</th>
<th>Dosage Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>4473</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>3999</td>
<td>544</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>5000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>4067</td>
<td>554</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>2224</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.94</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>2684</td>
<td>1280</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>394</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>2403</td>
<td>1671</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>4.04</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>2421</td>
<td>1160</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>11,326</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{165}\) It must have somehow made it into the next fiscal year.
\(^{167}\) From CBP FOIA data received 07 Apr 2011; apprehensions are thought to primarily deal with illegal immigration apprehensions.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Apprehensions</th>
<th>Marijuana</th>
<th>Cocaine</th>
<th>Heroin</th>
<th>Other Drugs</th>
<th>Dosage Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>2581</td>
<td>2667</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>2089</td>
<td>1748</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>1732</td>
<td>2561</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3808</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>1380</td>
<td>3206</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>1354</td>
<td>4604</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>1001</td>
<td>3272</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>55,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>811</td>
<td>714</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8864</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>749</td>
<td>599</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>954</td>
<td>2246</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>843</td>
<td>1882</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>819,384</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>673</td>
<td>1897</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>454</td>
<td>1577</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>36,438</td>
<td>30,934</td>
<td>952</td>
<td>10.37</td>
<td>13156</td>
<td>996,812</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.10: Border Patrol Spokane Sector (all drugs in lbs. except dosage units)\(^{168}\)

\(^{168}\)From CBP FOIA data received 07 Apr 2011, from CBP FOIA data received 07 Apr 2011; apprehensions are thought to primarily deal with illegal immigration apprehensions.
Reasons for Decrease in Drug Traffic and Future Trends:

In an interview done for this research, a leading Canadian scholar on marijuana production suggested that over 70 percent of marijuana produced in British Columbia is exported to the United States. This estimation makes it difficult to believe that the marijuana in British Columbia has either seen an incredible reduction in its production or has now found other large markets to take the place of the American market, which is unlikely. What this suggests is that DTOs have found new ways to get their product (with perhaps some decreases in production) to market that are not seen in the data available for this research.

Along with increased security acting as a deterrent (discussed in the opening of this section), the large decreases in the drug seizures numbers could also be attributed to the rising number of American based grow ops throughout Washington, Oregon and California. These locations offer quicker market access for DTOs which do not have to worry about their product being seized by CBP, although they would potentially face longer prison sentences for being caught in the United States. As will be noted in the interviews, as the reputation of the quality of marijuana from other areas grows, perhaps this taken some of the sparkle off of “BC Bud” brand, leading to less demand for Canadian grown marijuana.

Another factor that could be related to decreased seizures is the fluctuating exchange rate between the American and Canadian dollars. The rising strength of the Canadian dollar in relation to the American dollar nearly parallels the decreases in marijuana seizures at the border (see Charts 4.1 and 4.2). In 2002, at the height of marijuana trafficking a pound of marijuana selling for $2,200 CAD would have cost an
American $1,600 US, but by 2007 when the two currencies reached near par, a pound would cost $2,400 CAD and $2,400 US, raising the price for Americans by 50 percent and perhaps allowing American and Mexican DTOs to undercut Canadian DTOs.  

The expansion to other potential revenue generating substances (cocaine and ecstasy) should continue to be a trend as Canadian DTOs face growing market competition in the United States from the increased production of high quality American

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170 From CBP FOIA data received 07 Apr 2011.  
171 Historical currency exchange rates charts. (08 May 2011).
marijuana. Furthermore, as the American dollar loses strength in relation to the Canadian dollar, it makes greater sense for Canadian DTOs to use in-kind drug trades to maximize profits, while minimizing the risk of potentially getting caught laundering American currency. According to the 2007 United Nations World Drug Report in 2005, a kilogram of cocaine in the United States could range from $7,000 to $34,000, with an average wholesale price of $20,500, while in Canada it ranged from $28,225 to $48,387 with an average price of $32,258.172 Therefore, Canadian DTOs could maximize profits by possibly buying or trading for cocaine in California (the main market for their marijuana) and bringing it back to Canada to sell or re-export to other countries to maximize profits.173

Due to the large amount of opium seized at the Blaine and Bellingham POEs, and large amounts of heroin seized at the Seattle and Blaine POEs in the past three years (2009-2011), for future research, an eye should be kept on the amounts of opium and heroin seen trafficked in the United States and Canada. This is due to the fact that along with the unstable political situation in the leading production region, Southwest Asia (Afghanistan and Pakistan), according to the United Nations, the amount of land being used for poppy production in Mexico tripled from 1995 to 2008.174 Furthermore, when examining the differences in average prices of heroin in the United States and Canada (where it far more expensive) we may begin to see with heroin trends similar to what has happened with cocaine going north to Canada.175

Next I will examine the interviews done for this research to try to shed light on

174Ibid., 138.
175Ibid., 151.
issues that could not be seen through analyzing drug seizures.

**Interview Findings:**

As outlined in chapter 3, of this thesis I conducted 15 interviews with various stakeholders concerned with the topics covered in this research. Law enforcement officers made up the largest number (11 out of 15) of those interviewed. Thirteen Americans and two Canadians were interviewed. This disparity is due to the fact that because this research is primarily concerned with the southward flow of drugs, it was determined that US law enforcement personnel and other stakeholders would be most knowledgeable about drug flows into the United States.

**General Trends:**

When questioned about the general trends in drug smuggling and trafficking in the region over the past decade, a variety of answers were received, typically reflecting the interviewee’s position and amount of time in that position. On the general question of changes in large scale drug trafficking activity in Eastern Washington after 9/11, the pattern is a mixed one. One observation pointed to the importance of low flying aircraft in boosting drug quantities throughout Eastern Washington:

*In the last 8 years, from 2002-2003 there seemed to be a heavy increase. Probably for the first 4 or 5 years we had lot of drugs coming across, and then it kind of got insane. We were getting reports of helicopters, aircraft landing on all the lakes around here and when they were landing, the helicopters, too, they would fly in, land, dump the drugs, lift off and then when people were picking up. I mean we had witnesses all over the county. And so it was really getting crazy. We were averaging 1, to 2, 3 reports a week and then it started coming to an end, and we got several loads, task force got one... the*
tribe (Colville) shot an aircraft on the Columbia. It was dropping off drugs and they ended up shooting the engine. It was on the ground and then the guy escaped and the next morning we caught him and he had drugs he was dropping. Then about 2, 3 years ago they did a real big bust, the Canadians and our side, the feds, and everything calmed down quite a bit. It is still going on but it’s eased up.

North Central Washington, County Sheriff

Some of the interview subjects seem to believe that more drug trafficking activity has been taking place in the interior of the Pacific Northwest and that there has been more smuggling between POEs. However, it appears as if some do not believe that these changes are due to the post 9/11 increases in security, but rather to the behavior of DTOs in constantly probing the border to find weak points:

...if the point of your exercise here is to ascertain whether border security since 9/11 has changed anything in terms of drug trafficking, it really hasn’t.

RCMP Narcotics Officer

I don’t think the border’s an issue. They are not stopping it; they are slowing it down a little bit but not a lot. There is so much money involved these guys are going to find a way to get it in and out. So it just makes it hard. When everything broke loose, they really enforced the hell out of Western Washington and it pushed everything this way. That’s why we had so much activity but then the feds really came here. So we had like a little army here for quite a while and it just pushed it farther east and it started going into Idaho and Montana. It just keeps moving.

North Central Washington, County Sheriff

There was wide agreement that drug smuggling is down overall in both Spokane and Blaine Sectors due to a variety of factors, including the fact that greater marijuana production in the United States (which has been partially driven by the increase in border security) has lessened the “pull” factor for British Columbia marijuana exported to the

176 Interview 07 Feb 2011.
177 Interview 11 Mar 2011.
178 Interview 07 Feb 2011.
United States:

*And I think over the last three to four years... our seizures of B.C. Bud have continued to decrease, and that’s along with the proliferation of those types of indoor grows being established here, not only in the State of Washington, but we see them in California; we see them in Oregon, and in other states of the country.*

Northwest High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Official\(^ {179}\)

The officials interviewed and reports published indicate that DTOs are becoming both more professional and more numerous. A criminology professor in British Columbia said that there has been an explosion in the number of organized crime gangs in British Columbia, increasing from eight a few years ago to currently over one hundred. Furthermore, it appears as if DTOs have increased their contracts and are more willing to work with a variety of people. Perhaps even the term “drug trafficking organization” is misleading because they are less structurally hierarchical and are becoming in a certain way more like corporations in their international reach and use of subcontracting:

*We’re seeing more organization between Canadian criminal organizations and Mexican criminal organizations. That relationship is more prominent than it was in the past.*

Blaine Sector, Border Patrol Official\(^ {180}\)

When looking at smuggling tactics it appears that there has been a considerable lessening of the blatant smuggling techniques of running over the border with a hockey bag full of marijuana in the towns located next to the border in Western Washington, or entering the United States through the high traffic POEs with a trunk full of drugs and hoping not to be randomly searched. This decrease is believed to be predominantly due to an increase in the presence of Border Patrol and security officials at the POEs.

*I think you are seeing a lot less of that (smuggling) in the community now because the Border Patrol has stepped up, since 9/11, their*

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\(^ {179}\) Interview 28 Mar 2011.

\(^ {180}\) Interview 22 Mar 2011.
“As far as the border is concerned ... we used to get smuggles all the time in trunks of cars and hockey bags and ... that kind of stuff and it was ... almost ma and pa-type operations. ... And then as it tightened up ... after 9/11 ... and the border people started looking in trunks and poking their heads in doors, which they didn’t use to do, it became more sophisticated and you would get things like marijuana inside inflated tires on cars, marijuana ... below false floors in trucks.”

Western Washington Border Town Police Chief #2

When asked about emerging trends for new smuggling tactics that are replacing these less imaginative methods, some of the interview subjects responded they really could not speak about overall trends. Interviewees stated that, by the time certain tactics had been identified by law enforcement, DTOs had already moved on to using different techniques and tactics. A never-ending game of cat and mouse seems to have been common, where as soon as security agencies are confident in their ability to counter a popular tactic from DTOs, smugglers moved elsewhere, or used other modes of transportation:

*We found over the years that, as we do a better job in between the ports of entry or at the ports of entry, it shifts onto the water or into the air. So these organizations will do whatever they can in order to get their commodity to market.*

Blaine Sector, Border Patrol Official

Officials from the Air and Marine branch of CBP in Bellingham, WA, who had prior experience on the southwestern border, stated that smuggling techniques of DTOs have started to resemble more those on the US-Mexico border, but due to “security reasons,” they would not elaborate. Furthermore, DTOs have become more secretive in

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181 Interview 22 Feb 2011.
182 Interview 01 Mar 2011.
183 Interview 22 Mar 2011.
smuggling operations. Prior to the increase in the presence of CBP, DTOs would land planes at Bellingham International Airport in Washington State, unload the drugs while never having been searched by security officials. More recently, DTOs have changed tactics to evade the increase in law enforcement presence around the airports in the region.184

A Border Patrol official in Spokane Sector felt that, due to the remoteness and treacherous nature of the border in many places in the Pacific Northwest and the relative small amount of weight an individual can carry hiking, it did not make much sense to smuggle by backpacking in remote areas, a method often utilized in the past. Therefore low flying aircraft, undetected by radar and able to quickly carry large amounts of drugs across the border, are seen as the main drug threat in Spokane Sector. Additionally CBP officials spoke about the large difference between the two borders and the unique nature of the US-Canada border in the Pacific Northwest:

Spokane sector has about 270-some agents. The one station I supervised in San Diego, Chula Vista, had 386 agents, for six miles of border; 270 for 300 miles.... Our environment’s different. Our neighbor to the north is different. Our history with our neighbor to the north is different. Their economy’s different. Dynamics. The environment. We take everything into consideration. The biggest thing for the southern border, it’s resource intensive. You need bodies. You need personnel. You need technology. You need tactical infrastructure. On the northern border you need situational awareness. You need to know what you need to know, and you need technology, and you need personnel. We don’t need fences with Canada. We don’t have the levels of activity. But we need technology, and we do need personnel. Because they’re out there. Spokane Sector, Border Patrol Official185

There seems to be some disconnect between what is seen in the data and what was said in the interviews. Though many of the interview subjects acknowledge the decrease

184 Interview 28 Feb 2011.
185 Interview 31 Mar 2011.
in marijuana smuggling at the border, most seemed unaware of how large the decline has been in the data. It may be that interviewees were unaware of the data and as „on-the ground” enforcement officials; it is quite possible that the smuggling they contend with had not shown up in the seizure data. It is also possible that it is not in the interest of enforcement agencies to acknowledge decreasing threats due to how resources are allocated by the government. To support the former, it was postulated by some that perhaps smuggling is just taking place out in more isolated areas and not being reported:

So I can’t with certainty say that there’s been a decrease. I just know that there’s been a decrease in the reporting of it.
Spokane Sector, Border Patrol Official

A hypothesis of this thesis is that increased security has driven the growth of manufacture and exporting of ecstasy due to its relative compact size and profitability. Similar to what is seen in the data, it seems as if ecstasy smuggling increased immensely in the middle of the last decade (2000s), but has stayed at consistent levels since then. When ecstasy is smuggled across the border it is often in very large amounts and commonly between the POEs.

From an interview with an RCMP Narcotics officer, it was learned that the increase in ecstasy production in British Columbia is tied to Vietnamese DTOs who use their profits from the marijuana trade to purchase the precursor chemicals for ecstasy from Asia, then produce the ecstasy in British Columbia, smuggle it to the United States and then use these profits to purchase cocaine to import into Canada.

**Effects on Communities:**

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186 Interview 31 Mar 2011.
187 Interview 11 Mar 2011.
Questions were asked about how communities are affected by drug trafficking related to the border. In Canada, as DTOs and the illicit drug production industry has matured, British Columbia is beginning to see a larger amount of cocaine imported to further the profits of Canada based DTOs. The cocaine can either be sold and used in Canada or exported again to another country:

*They’re able to import cocaine into this country because of the vast amount of profits which both marijuana and synthetic drugs produce. With that, again, having a relatively small user group, the cocaine is then moved offshore yet again to take advantage of some profits -- more significant profits in dealing cocaine offshore than actually in Canada. Such other countries involved in that would be Australia, Japan and some of the other European nations.*

RCMP Narcotics Officer\(^{188}\)

It is felt by some of the interview subjects that the profit tied to the production and exportation of drugs has helped increase the amount of violence in British Columbia, and, in addition to being victims of this violence, the taxpayers of British Columbia have had to pay hidden cost besides the costs of enforcement:

*Not everybody today dies from an immediate gunshot wound. There’s a lot of carnage out there which isn’t necessarily fatal and people are left on life support systems or to the control of the state, which, yet again, equates to an extreme amount of costs associated, yet again, to the taxpayer; at least in Canada because we carry these individuals on our medical system.*

RCMP Narcotics Officer\(^{189}\)

There are many side effects to the activities of DTOs or of the marijuana production industry in Canada that many people may overlook or neglect to think about. Because production is predominantly done clandestinely in private single family homes, numerous homes throughout British Columbia are then effectively taken out of the family housing market because they are used as places of production and not as living spaces,

\(^{188}\)Interview 11 Mar 2011.

\(^{189}\)Interview 11 Mar 2011.
which, in turn presents problems for working class families in British Columbia's expensive housing market:

So I think it's helped the high-end...product market...and it's definitely -- I think it's hurt housing because...there's, say 10,000 houses which are being used to grow marijuana. Well, if those 10,000 houses were all of a sudden on the market as vacant houses that would help lower house prices ...and help people who need affordable housing... it's a positive and negative impact.

British Columbia Criminology Professor

Turning to the American side of the 49th parallel, there was a general consensus amongst the interview subjects that most of the drugs flow through border communities, to larger market such as California or the Midwest where they can yield much larger profits:

Drug trafficking at the commercial level does not have a major effect on the general citizenry. Simply because the quantities are such that the product and the people originate someplace else and they end up someplace else. We are a turnstile, we're a transmitting point.

Western Washington Border Town Police Chief #1

It really doesn't affect us a lot. Most of the drugs are just traveling through.

North Central Washington, County Sheriff

The drug problems in the border communities looked at in this thesis involved drugs produced elsewhere. Western Washington communities seemed to have a larger problem with heroin, while Eastern Washington seemed to have a larger problem with methamphetamine, both of which are produced in Mexico. Interestingly, in the interviews it was learned that both Western Washington and the lower mainland in British

190 Interview 04 Mar 2011.
191 Interview 28 Jan 2011.
192 Interview 07 Feb 2011.
Columbia have problems with heroin; but the heroin used in British Columbia comes predominantly from Afghanistan or Southeast Asia, while the heroin seen in Western Washington is of the "black tar" variety which is produced in the highlands of Mexico.

In the interviews, respondents were asked how increased security at the border had affected their communities. It was learned that these communities often have to deal with extra costs due to their geographical location. For example, if someone is caught smuggling drugs at the border, the federal government has the option of federally prosecuting this individual, but if a person has under a certain amount of marijuana (usually somewhere around 100 lbs.) the federal government will decline prosecuting the case and the burden of the prosecution will shift to the county:

_Prospecting all that stuff is really costly and really expensive and ... goes probably way beyond what the feds ... dribble out to cover the cost of a few drug prosecutions...if you look at a pie chart of the county budget and look how much of it is law and justice you'd be shocked._

Western Washington Border County, Public Defender

This becomes problematic, especially during times of economic hardship, as the threshold becomes higher and higher and counties have to take on more cases. Furthermore, since counties cannot afford to imprison large numbers of individuals for long amounts of time, it was reported that the average sentence for smuggling anywhere up to around 100 lbs. is only six months in prison (if the smuggler has no previous record). This relatively light sentencing, along with extremely light sentencing for drug production in Canada (compared to the United States), does not offer much of a deterrent for DTOs or other criminal entrepreneurs when large amounts of money can be made.

This conundrum illuminates the precarious nature of drug prohibition. If you want to

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193 Interview 01 Mar 2011.
deter drug traffickers, stronger sentencing is needed, but these stronger sentences come with increased costs. To highlight direct expenses, in Washington State, the average yearly costs for an inmate in a state prison can range from around $20,000 to nearly $50,000 a year. These and other costs raise questions about marijuana and other drug prohibition policies. Some of the communities have seen large decreases in tax revenue due to increased border security. Many Canadians are now less willing to take the extra effort required to cross the border and spend their money in border communities, thereby hurting the generation of tax revenue. One Western Washington border town has seen its police force reduced from 14 commissioned officers, to 11 commissioned officers in the last five years because of the economic issues related in part to decreased border traffic after 9/11.

Being located on the border can lead to other problems for smaller local law enforcement agencies. For example, if an individual was caught at a POE with an amount of drugs under a certain threshold, or committed some other border related crime, the county’s sheriff office had to send deputies to the border to help transfer the arrested individual to the county seat, which could be from 50 to 80 miles away from the border. This could be problematic, due to the low amount of law enforcement officers in rural Eastern Washington counties. If officials were needed in other parts of the county they would not be able to quickly respond because they were helping to transfer someone who had a personal usage amount of drugs in his car:

I can never figure out, well, why don’t they just call the Border Patrol. We’ve got 30 Border Patrol guys in our county. Why don’t they just get these guys to come up and handle that?

194 "In Washington State, the average prisoner costs nearly $30,000 a year to lock up." KOMO News, 26 Nov 2007.

195 Interview 28 Jan 2011.
North East Washington, County Under-Sheriff

Highlighting trouble in border enforcement issues, in one Eastern Washington county, if a Canadian was arrested at a POE with a level of drugs under a federal threshold, the Canadian would have his drugs confiscated and be allowed to return to Canada, while an American in the same situation would have been arrested and prosecuted.

At the start of 2011 this changed, and a Canadian caught with a small amount of drugs at a POE would be transported to the county seat to have his initial hearing, but would be allowed to go back to Canada before the start of the trial. This caused another problem because even if an individual wanted to come back for trial he was prevented from doing so because he was placed on a blacklist at the border and not allowed to enter the United States. However, this issue has been corrected and there is now paperwork that can be used when a Canadian is initially arrested to allow him to return to the US for trial if he chooses.

Law Enforcement Partnerships:

In the interviews, subjects were asked how their relationship with other law enforcement agencies had changed since 9/11. Nearly all the American law enforcement officials interviewed emphasized the importance and strength of their partnerships with law enforcement officials. Local law enforcement agencies claimed they interacted and partnered with Border Patrol, and they had the most positive things to say about these relationships. It was pointed out how important it is for the smaller local law

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196 Interview 30 Mar 2011.
197 Interview 30 Mar 2011.
enforcement agencies to work well with federal agents due to the size of the area they police and a shortage of resources:

_ I just know when we took over (subject was elected Sheriff in 2002) we opened up a better relationship with all the outside agencies just because we had to; we’re too small and we work well with all the federal agencies._

North Central Washington, County Sheriff

The Western Washington border towns of Blaine, Lynden and Sumas share a dispatch center with Border Patrol which allows the different security agencies to communicate better and more efficiently:

_ That ability to have us connected, hand to hand, minute to minute, hour to hour, Border Patrol and police personal knowing what each is doing, that's a godsend... We've gone to calls regarding drowning infants and found Border Patrol agents already doing CPR on the infant; you cannot put a dollar sign on something like that._

Western Washington Border Town Police Chief #1

Contrary to what was seen in the GAO report examined in the literature review, all federal agents interviewed had extremely positive things to say about their counterparts in other sectors and other border security agencies. I suspect a great deal of this good will is genuine but I also assumed interview subjects were exercising a strong sense of discretion in talking to outsiders. From an Idaho county-level law enforcement officer there was a complaint that at times ICE would not allow local law enforcement agencies to assists in investigations, but other non-federal officers had generally positive things to say about the investigative branches of the federal government. All the American law enforcement agents had highly positive things to say about their Canadian

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198 Interview 07 Feb 2011.
199 Interview 28 Jan 2011.
201 Interview 30 Mar 2011 #2.
counterparts, emphasizing that cross-border partnerships were necessary to be able to
“take on” the higher ups in DTOs and not just arrest the mules who transport the drugs
over the border. On the Canadian side, views on relationships among enforcement
officials were positive but more nuanced than what was found on the US side:

*I will tell you this: That we work with American law enforcement agencies as much as we can. There are some vast differences between Canadian law enforcement and US law enforcement, most of which exists in and around our judicial system and what evidence is required to actually prosecute someone on the north side of the border versus the south side is two different things. But all that to say, it is ... to describe it as close ... again, that’s pretty subjective. To describe it as a working relationship, that, at times it works, yes.*

(Interviewer: Probably close compared to Mexico)

Well, actually, I don’t know about that. That’s even arguable when I say that and I’ll tell you why. My experience -- and this isn’t, of course, the experience of the RCMP or the RCMP saying it, it’s (name deleted) who’s saying it -- is ... in terms of the US, the US works very closely with a lot of countries in terms of drug trafficking activity because they support some of the resources and some of the financial aspect. Whereas in Canada, we don’t. ... And again, this gets into defining just how close we do work. So in Canada we’re not maybe as close as, say, the Mexicans might be to the U.S....

RCMP Narcotics Office

It is likely the different positions of RCMP officials and US border security
personnel would influence how cross-border relationships were perceived. RCMP
officials are more involved in the overall investigations of narcotics trafficking in British
Columbia while many of the Americans interviewed are at the local or ground level of
trying to stop drug trafficking where it is happening. The American counterparts (ICE
and DEA) of the RCMP officer interviewed refused to be interviewed for this thesis.

202Interview 11 Mar 2011.
**Future Trends:**

Interviewees generally believed that the increased production of high quality marijuana in the United States will continue to help to reduce the demand for “BC Bud,” and drive down potential profits for Canadian DTOs and the total amount of smuggling. Some thought that the smuggling of pharmaceuticals or their counterfeits and precursor chemicals for methamphetamine will rise in importance at the US-Canada border. It was felt that DTOs will begin to make greater use of waterways for smuggling, perhaps copying the use of “semi-submersible” ships that are being used in smuggling from Latin America. A continuing tactic for DTOs (and necessary for their existence) is always to try to be a step ahead of law enforcement, so if CBP increases its air presence to deter smuggling via low flying aircraft, DTOs will likely move out to the water; then if CBP increases its presence there, DTOs will move elsewhere, and so on. As long as there is a border and large profits are possible (and in the case for smaller amounts of marijuana, prison sentences are relatively short) drug smuggling will continue to persist.

**What is to be Done?**

When asking the interview subjects what they would like to be done on a national or bi-national level to help them more effectively do their job, almost all of the interview subjects emphasized their need for more resources. One interview subject was worried about the stopping of the Operation Stonegarden grant program for northern border communities. Operation Stonegarden provides federal funds for local law enforcement agencies on the US-Canada border to pay for overtime and new equipment, but this subject believed that all the funds for this grant program would be given to law
enforcement agencies located on the southwestern border. Others, however, did not have the same concern. One recommended the extension of the Stonegarden program for the US-Canada border, as well as the revisiting of former federal programs no longer used that allowed local law enforcement agencies to work more closely with federal border security officers.

An official from Border Patrol in Blaine Sector hoped for the day when they will be able to jointly enforce laws with their Canadian counterparts and be able to work together in teams and cross each other’s border to make arrests together. From some of the interview subjects, there is hope that Mexico, in the long term, will be able to overcome its current problems, making a North America security perimeter a politically feasible security project.205

On the Canadian side of the border there is the wish that Americans would have a greater understanding of the Canadian legal system and what is required for convictions because currently it appears as if the reluctance of the United States to share criminal evidence with international partners is negatively affecting the ability of Canadian law enforcement officials to prosecute DTO members:

The current policies of the United States, in terms of sharing some of that information, doesn’t work very well with Canadian law... if I were to sit back and say, well, the problem is -- or what needs to be changed is, Americans have to understand what it takes for a prosecution in Canada if we’re going to work jointly.

RCMP Narcotics Officer204

203 Interview 22 Mar 2011.
204 Interview 11 Mar 2011.
Many of those interviewed envisioned a day when marijuana would be legalized, and some seemed generally in favor of it, without perhaps directly expressing it, while others lamented this fact, and felt it would open a large number of problems.

*I think we need to have a broad national conversation about what is in the best interest of the citizens moving forward and what effect that might have on the economic pressure in regards to drugs because drugs are a business... it is going to be a difficult national debate. You just need to run the numbers and think of it is as a business.*

Western Washington Border Town Police Chief #1

*So while...we talk about legalization and that’ll take care of all the problems, it actually won’t make one iota of a change. In fact, all it does is it insulates or covers what’s truly going on with marijuana and that’s most of it out the back door....” “I have nothing to do with the United States or the decisions in the United States, but I could only give you the advice that I know, and that’s from what I’ve seen in 30 years of policing. And that is a constant, steady increase towards marijuana production will bring you all kinds of problems.*

RCMP Narcotics Officer

**Conclusion:**

These interviews supported many of the hypotheses of this research, more so than the drug seizure data, but these changes in bi-national drug trafficking in the Pacific Northwest have seemingly been driven less by changes in border security and more by general economic issues in the illicit drug trade and the general probing nature of DTOs. The production and exportation of drugs other than marijuana from British Columbia to the United States seems similar to a maturing business, with the development of large scale marijuana production serving as a starting point. For example, a legitimate company may start manufacturing less complex goods, then use the profits and know-how acquired from selling these goods to expand into manufacturing and selling more

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205 Interview 28 Jan 2011.
206 Interview 11 Mar 2011.
complex and profitable goods. As this happens, other competitors (American and Mexican marijuana growers) may emerge to compete in the selling of the less complex product (all the while, the currency exchange rate is changing and barriers to international trade are developing hurting the strength of exports), and therefore the company may begin to focus more on the higher end goods. It is felt that Canadian DTOs are making such changes.

In many of these interviews a strong emphasis was placed on the need for more resources at the border. This need seemingly remains even as the resources available on the US-Canada border have greatly increased over the past decade. This emphasis spotlights the impossible job border security officials have on the US-Canada border due to unrealistic expectations, and a reflexive tendency to call for more resources. This tendency exists because it has proven successful in the past for increasing the amounts of resources available to the border security apparatus. Moreover, these officials cannot change national border security policies so, for them to more effectively do the job they are tasked to do, they need a forever-expanding amount of resources to patrol and interdict drugs and other threats on the diverse and expansive geography of the US-Canada border.
Chapter 5

Summary of Work:

The central hypothesis of this thesis has not been conclusively supported by the data acquired for this research. Taken together, the data on drug smuggling interdictions and the interviews with various law enforcement officials throughout the region have not offered concrete evidence that there has been a large scale shift of drug smuggling from the main POEs to between POEs or to the lesser used POEs in the interior of the region.

It appears as if drug smuggling in the Pacific Northwest has greatly decreased following increases in border security after 9/11. Immediately after the attacks, drug seizures at the border hit record levels, with marijuana seizures peaking in 2002 and 2003 at the POEs, while Border Patrol in both Blaine and Spokane Sectors seized record amounts of marijuana in 2004, the same year both their budgets more than doubled. This activity has seemingly declined with seizure numbers going down in almost all categories since 2007. However drug smuggling between the POEs, especially in the Blaine Sector, has not seen the same decreases that smuggling at the POEs has. According to the data provided by CBP, the Blaine POE has seen a 99.9 percent decrease in the amount of marijuana seized from 2003 to 2010, while in Border Patrol’s Blaine Sector the drop has only been 59 percent from its high in 2004. Furthermore, the amount of marijuana seized in Blaine Sector is around similar levels seen prior to 9/11, while seizures at the Blaine POE have fallen considerably below the levels seen before increases in security after 9/11. This suggests there has been some shift, at least in the Blaine Sector (Western

207 With the exception of cocaine being seized on exit searches and ecstasy at the Blaine POE in the ICE data.
Washington), of a higher total percentage of smuggling taking place between ports of entry in relation to smuggling at the POEs, with most of this involving marijuana. The recent trends in smuggling at the US-Canada border revealed in the seizure data is consistent with what has been seen on the southwestern border. That is, when cocaine is smuggled it seems to be at the POEs while marijuana is more likely than other drugs to be smuggled between the POEs.

The almost non-existent levels of drug seizures at seven of the eight Eastern Washington POEs was surprising and did not support the hypothesis that drug trafficking, due to increased border security, had been pushed from high traffic POEs to more isolated areas. Even the Oroville POE, the Eastern Washington POE which saw multiple years of large drug seizures in the mid-2000s, has not seen significant seizures for more than five years. Furthermore it was surprising to find that Border Patrol in Spokane Sector had actually seized more marijuana than Blaine Sector in the years before 9/11, and that seven of the top ten years of drug seizures in the Spokane Sector took place before 2004 when there was the large budget increase in both sectors, suggesting that there has not been large scale shift in smuggling.\(^{208}\) Some interviews with law enforcement officials in Eastern Washington supported the idea that initially following the increase in security after 9/11, drug smuggling did shift towards the interior region, but it seems as if this shift was short lived or that increased flows of drugs are now going undetected.

The substantial reduction in the amount of marijuana seized at the US-Canada border in the Pacific Northwest is significant, but it is inconclusive as to what is directly responsible for this decrease. Numerous factors could have played a role including

\(^{208}\text{This does not count 2009, when marijuana plants seized from a large domestic grow op was included in the total.}\)
economic factors such as competition from drug producers in the US and changes in the exchange rate between the US and Canadian dollars touched upon earlier. It is also possible smugglers are taking different routes or using different methods that go undetected. The answer is likely a combination of these aforementioned factors.

At the beginning of this research it was suspected that increased border security had helped to push DTOs into trafficking in more compact and profitable substances. To the extent that this has occurred, it is unclear if strengthened border security has been a factor in expansion of trafficking of other substances. Instead, the interviews and patterns at the Mexican border suggest this expansion may have been driven by simple economics. DTOs likely are just diversifying the products they offer to maximize their profits.

It is interesting how few of the drugs smuggled actually stay in border communities, and instead move immediately to larger markets. Even more interesting is the lack of cross border activity for certain drugs such as heroin or processed methamphetamine, when there is a demand for both of these drugs in both countries. The fluctuation of seizure levels for certain drugs or chemicals seen throughout the data, suggests that DTOs will exploit any sort of differences between each nation’s drugs laws for profits. It is expected that American border officials will continue to see the drug Benzylpiperazine (BZP) at the US-Canada border until Canada follows the lead of the United States and other countries which have made the drug illegal.\footnote{B.C. woman arrested at border for smuggling attempt…” King 5 News, 21 Sep 2009.}

Local governments and law enforcement agencies were affected in many ways by their proximity to the border. All stressed their positive relationship with Border Patrol.
Border communities have faced lost tax revenue (and therefore less police staffing) because of the general downturn in cross border travel by Canadians. The sheriff’s office of one border county has had to help CBP with less serious border enforcement issues, which stretches thin their already small number of law enforcement officers. Border communities will likely continue to deal with extra costs due to their location near the border.

**Limitations of Current Work:**

As discussed in considerable detail in chapter three, any researcher exploring a clandestine activity is bound to run into great difficulty in gaining an accurate picture of the levels of illegal activity taking place. At the beginning of this research I was confident in being able to identify trends in bi-national drug trafficking from the seizure and arrest records at the US-Canada border, despite being aware of the limitations of using drug seizure levels as an indicator of trafficking trends. Perhaps if I had access to more records related to drug seizures and arrests at the border (at other Border Patrol sectors, POEs in other states, etc…) and more clarification of what certain data meant it would have been possible to gain more certainly about drug trafficking trends at the US-Canada border. However, even with additional and more accurate data, this information contains only records for the smugglers who are caught.

In addition to the unavoidable problems with the data, not being able to interview certain government officials has also affected the outcome of this research. If it had been possible to speak to an agent from ICE or DEA perhaps they would have given a better overall picture of what has transpired over the past decade in bi-national drug trafficking
on the US-Canada border. The individuals interviewed from Border Patrol and local law enforcement officials have a different and more direct focus because they deal with problems as they happen and do not do large scale investigations, thereby making it less likely that they would be familiar with broader trends and tactics for DTOs. Moreover, if it had been possible to interview the Office of Field Operations\footnote{This refers to the branch of CBP that runs the POEs.} more information about activity at the POEs would have been available.

**Recommendations for Future Work:**

It is hoped that this thesis, despite its limitations, will increase understanding of drug smuggling patterns on the US-Canada border and provide useful insights into methodological issues in researching this important topic. Individuals interested in doing future work about border related drug issues should put in their requests for information from the US federal government very early in their research process, preferably six months to a year. The research would have greatly benefited from interviews with current or former DTO members, drug smugglers, or marijuana growers. These interviews could serve as effective counter weights to interviews with law enforcement officials.

The impacts and extra costs associated with added security and drug enforcement on local governments in border communities was touched upon in this research but this could be expanded in future works. Multiple in-depth case studies could be done in different border communities along the geographically diverse US-Canada border to highlight similarities and differences in the challenges they face when dealing with
border related issues.

A further study could be done to look at the total economic costs of securitization at the US-Canada border. This study raises serious questions about how much enhanced security impacts the flow of illegal drugs across the border and it is possible that greater security since 9/11 has deterred drug traffic. However, the evidence from interviews of law enforcement personnel and the extensive literature focused on the US-Mexico border suggests otherwise. The central question is more likely: How much does increased border security at the US-Canada border impede legal trade and travel versus how much illicit trade or other threats it may help keep out of the United States?

**Conclusion:**

The relatively small amount of drugs seen seized at the US-Canada border (in comparison to the southwest border and America’s own domestic production) brings into question the effectiveness of and justification for a “securitized” northern border for the United States. Drugs brought into the United States from Canada do bring some social ills and it is reasonable to try to interdict them at an appropriate cost. But they should also be viewed as a tolerable side effect to the largest bi-lateral trading partnership in the world.

It is acknowledged that border security is still a necessity along the US-Canada border and the pre 9/11 levels of Border Patrol personnel at the border were probably inadequate. The findings in thesis, however, indicate that a “forever escalating” securitization of the US-Canada border is unlikely to be worth the costs whether in terms of dollars or strains on the social fabric of border communities. Decades of evidence
from the US-Mexico border, where there is currently ten times the number of Border Patrol agents for a border that is less than half as long with better security infrastructure and fences, yet millions of kilograms of drugs still annually cross the border indicating that the drug interdiction strategy has been largely ineffective. Such a strategy on the US-Canada border is both impracticable and economically unfeasible.

Those who defend increased border security would state that a “thickened” border’s primary mission is to stop terrorists with weapon of mass destruction from infiltrating the United States, and stopping the flow of drugs from foreign sources to the United States is a secondary objective. However, there are more effective and less economically disruptive ways to keep Americans safe from the threats emanating from non-state actors. The questionable effectiveness of the existing interdiction strategy is again illustrated by decades of evidence along the southwestern border, where Border Patrol agents have been unable to hold back the tide of humanity and stop large numbers of migrants from crossing the border. Preventing terrorist infiltration along the border, just like stopping large scale DTO smuggling operations, is driven by investigations, intelligence, and effective partnerships amongst law enforcement agencies along the US-Canada border. The importance of this message was heard throughout the various interviews conducted for this research, but what will be important in the future is to see what policy pathways will be taken. As the growing border security apparatus becomes more entrenched it will likely become more difficult for the American public to have a meaningful debate about other potential policy paths regarding security along the US-Canada border.
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**FOIA Data:**

The seizure and budget data for this research was acquired through two separate Freedom of Information Act Requests (FOIA). The first request was with Customs and Border Protection FOIA Office where the information was received via email on April 7th, 2011. The second was with Immigration and Customs enforcement and the information was received via email on May 3rd, 2011.
Appendix A: Questions

What is your background dealing with drug trafficking and the border?

How is your community affected by drug trafficking/smuggling?

What changes have you seen in the structure of smuggling rings/drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) in the past decade?

What general trends have you seen in drug trafficking and smuggling over the past decade in the region?

How do you feel increased border security has affected drug trafficking organizations?

Have you seen more bi-national drug trafficking related activities (drug production, smuggling, etc.….) taking place in rural areas over the past decade?

Has more smuggling been taking place at more remote ports of entry and/or between ports of entry since increases in border security?

Where and how do you arrest the most drug smugglers and drug trafficking organization members?

What drug have you seen the largest increase in the past decade? What do you believe is the cause of this increase?

How do you feel technology has changed drug trafficking/smuggling (both for law enforcement and for DTOs) in the past decade?

How closely do you work with other enforcement agencies in narcotics investigations?

How has increased border security affected your work?

What trends in drug smuggling/trafficking do you see developing in the next ten years?

On a national or bi-national level what policies would you like to see enacted?

Who else would you suggest I contact for this research?