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# Illicit Interest Groups: The Political Impact of The Medellin Drug Trafficking Organizations in Colombia

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FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Miami, Florida

ILLICIT INTEREST GROUPS: THE POLITICAL IMPACT OF THE MEDELLIN  
DRUG TRAFFICKING ORGANIZATIONS IN COLOMBIA

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

POLITICAL SCIENCE

by

Patricia Helena Micolta

2012

To: Dean Kenneth G. Furton  
College of Arts and Sciences

This dissertation, written by Patricia Helena Micolta, and entitled Illicit Interest Groups: The Political Impact of the Medellin Drug Trafficking Organizations in Colombia, having been approved in respect to style and intellectual content, is referred to you for judgment.

We have read this dissertation and recommend that it be approved.

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Eduardo Gamarra, Major Professor

Date of Defense: March 30, 2012

The dissertation of Patricia Helena Micolta is approved.

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Dean Lakshmi N. Reddi  
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Florida International University, 2012

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## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband Robert Michael Yunk, my parents Helena and Jose Vicente Micolta, and to Camilo, Mariana, and Cheche for their continued encouragement, patience, happiness, and love.

I also dedicate this dissertation to Jair Bedoya, whose life was a reflection of the social impact of the illicit drug trade in Colombia.

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I would also like to acknowledge that portions of this project were published in a 2009 article I authored entitled, "Illicit interest groups and their influence on US-Colombian Relations: A study of the Medellin cartel," in the book titled: *Interest Groups & Lobbying in Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, and Asia*, edited by Colin McGrath through the Edwin Mellen Press (McGrath, 2009).

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

ILLICIT INTEREST GROUPS: THE POLITICAL IMPACT OF THE MEDELLIN  
DRUG TRAFFICKING ORGANIZATIONS IN COLOMBIA

by

Patricia Helena Micolta

Florida International University, 2012

Miami, Florida

Professor Eduardo Gamarra, Major Professor

Although drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) exist and have an effect on health, crime, economies, and politics, little research has explored these entities as political organizations. Legal interest groups and movements have been found to influence domestic and international politics because they operate within legal parameters. Illicit groups, such as DTOs, have rarely been accounted for—especially in the literature on interest groups—though they play a measurable role in affecting domestic and international politics in similar ways.

Using an interest group model, this dissertation analyzed DTOs as illicit interest groups (IIGs) to explain their political influence. The analysis included a study of group formation, development, and demise that examined IIG motivation, organization, and policy impact. The data for the study drew from primary and secondary sources, which include interviews with former DTO members and government officials, government documents, journalistic accounts, memoirs, and academic research.

To illustrate the interest group model, the study examined Medellin-based DTO leaders, popularly known as the “Medellin Cartel.” In particular, the study focused on the

external factors that gave rise to DTOs in Colombia and how Medellin DTOs reacted to the implementation of counternarcotics efforts. The discussion was framed by the implementation of the 1979 Extradition Treaty negotiated between Colombia and the United States. The treaty was significant because as drug trafficking became the principal bilateral issue in the 1980s; extradition became a major method of combating the illicit drug business.

The study's findings suggested that Medellin DTO leaders had a one-issue agenda and used a variety of political strategies to influence public opinion and all three branches of government—the judicial, the legislative, and the executive—in an effort to invalidate the 1979 Extradition Treaty. The changes in the life cycle of the 1979 Extradition Treaty correlated with changes in the political power of Medellin-based DTOs vis-à-vis the Colombian government, and international forces such as the U.S. government's push for tougher counternarcotics efforts.



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## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACDEGAM	Asociación Campesina de Agricultores y Ganaderos del Magdalena Medio
AUC	Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia
BACRIM	Bandas Criminales
DAS	Departamento Administrativo de Seguridad
DEA	Drug Enforcement Agency
DTO	Drug Trafficking Organization
ELN	Ejercito de Liberación Nacional
ERPAC	Ejercito Revolucionario Popular Anti-Subersivo de Colombia
FARC	Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia
GAO	General Accounting Office
IIG	Illicit Interest Group
MAS	Muerte A Secuestradores
MORENA	Movimiento de Restauración Nacional
NCA	National Constitutional Assembly
OPEC	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
PEPES	Perseguidos Por Pablo Escobar
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
TCO	Transnational Criminal Organization
TFP	Tradición Familia y Propiedad

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The human use and development of psychoactive drugs<sup>1</sup> has created a trade for these substances. The practice of chewing coca leaves in the Andes dates back 8000 years (Dillihay et al., 2010). The coca leaves have mild stimulating effects that can reduce fatigue, hunger, aid digestion, and help with altitude sickness. The Peruvian Altiplano society in the 1780-1930s not only used the coca leaf for its chemical qualities, but also as a form of currency to pay for services rendered (Jacobsen, 1993:298-299). During the 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries the psychoactive drug trade incorporated both formal and informal organizations. Governments, international governmental organizations, and businesses exemplify formal organizations that have attempted to control drug markets. The Dutch and British East India Companies<sup>2</sup> during imperial rule and Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang benefited from the trade of opium in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>3</sup> In more modern times, the dictatorship of General Manuel Antonio Noriega in Panama provided a

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this project the term “drug” is defined as “any chemical substance, natural or synthetic, that changes a person’s mental state and that maybe used repeatedly by a person for that effect” (Northern, 1998). Psychoactive drugs are defined as “chemical substances that affect mood, perception, or consciousness because they affect the functioning of the central nervous system (brain and spinal cord). Psychoactive drugs are divided into 3 groups: (1) Depressants- they slow down the central nervous system, for example, tranquillizers, alcohol, petrol, heroin and other opiates, cannabis (in low doses). (2) Stimulants - they excite the nervous system; for example: nicotine, amphetamines, cocaine, and caffeine. (3) Hallucinogens: they distort how things are perceived; for example: LSD, mescaline, 'magic mushrooms', cannabis (in high doses)” (Seymour & Smith, 1987, p.1; Northern, 1998).

<sup>2</sup> The Dutch and British traded opium illegally with China to reduce their trade deficit and open the Chinese market. The British East India Company introduced the opium trade in Burma, which was the main gateway for introducing opium to Chinese customers (Renard, 1996). The Chinese Qing Dynasty prohibited the trade of opium because it caused addiction among its population. According to John Stuart Mill, opium had become the British East India Company’s second biggest source of revenue (Mill, 1858, p. 21-22) because the prohibition of opium led to an increase in its price, as Chinese demand for opium continued. The Westminster Review’s account of the opium trade circa 1831 before the first Opium War (1839-1842), described a situation where opium smuggling into China was rampant, where Chinese smugglers and consumers disregarded Chinese laws, and in which prohibition was disregarded “by the (Chinese) government officers, who appear systematically to connive at the smuggling of opium, and to derive a large profit from the bribes of smugglers” (Bentham, Bowring, & Mill, 1831, p. 98-99).

<sup>3</sup> Though Chiang Kai-shek publicly denounced the opium trade, his political party and military efforts benefited from the profit of opium (Walker, 1991).

haven for laundering drug money in the 1980s, and associations of coca growers like the *Cocaleros* in Bolivia have advocated for the legal growth of the coca plant.<sup>4</sup> In contrast to these governments and associations, which have benefited or facilitated the trade in psychoactive drugs, the U.S. government has attempted to do away with the trade of psychoactive drugs since the 1920s.<sup>5</sup> In the same vein, the United Nations established the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), which studies the illicit drug trade and assists countries in developing counternarcotics efforts. Other supranational organizations, such as the European Union, have created counternarcotics programs, but concentrate mostly in funding alternative development programs, judicial reform, and humanitarian assistance (Department of State, 2005).

Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the psychoactive drug trade has also incorporated informal and illicit organizations: Chinese warlords,<sup>6</sup> Caribbean marijuana runners, country-specific Mafias,<sup>7</sup> Colombian and Mexican drug trafficking organizations,

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<sup>4</sup> See Lee (1990). According to Rensselaer Lee, an expert on the politics of drug trafficking, the Bolivian and Peruvian coca grower associations are active lobbies, which are well funded and have the capacity to mobilize its membership in opposition to counter-narcotics efforts. In Bolivia the *Cocaleros* operate as a legal interest group and have an active membership. At the millennium, the *Cocaleros* launched the presidential candidacy of Evo Morales, a *Cocalero* leader, who in December 2005 was elected President of Bolivia. Although Morales is the President, he continues to serve simultaneously as the Secretary General of the Coca Growers Federation. He has launched an international effort aimed at decriminalizing the use of coca for traditional purposes such as chewing and brewing teas.

<sup>5</sup> The U.S. government has had a policy of intolerance for the drug trade, however during the Cold War some of its agencies forwent anti-drug policies to pursue anti-communist forces in Asia and in Central America (Walker, 1991; The Iran-Contra, 2006).

<sup>6</sup> These organizations benefited from the growth and sale of opium to sustain their armies, which would fight against communist armies in the early to mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century China (Walker, 1991).

<sup>7</sup> Popular mafias have risen worldwide regardless of geographic location. The United States has had organized criminal organizations made up of differing ethnicities and races, and which hail from different cities, The Italian Cossa Nostra, the Russian Mafya, the Japanese Yakuza, and the Irish “Brat Pack” (who are suspected of assassinating Irish journalist Veronica Guerin) are examples of international crime syndicates that have or continue to venture in the drug business.

Burmese tribes, armed social movements,<sup>8</sup> Afghan warlords,<sup>9</sup> and street gangs in various countries including the United States, Central America, and Brazil are among countless other examples.<sup>10</sup> All of these organizations have profited from the demand of psychoactive drugs for gain or to fund other objectives.

Overall, both formal and informal organizations, whether they profit or prohibit the trade of psychoactive drugs, are part of the international system.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century the United States government heralded the creation of an international counternarcotics regime of prohibition. Since the 1920s, a number of international policies were created to restrict the psychoactive drug trade and in the 1960s, U.S. policymakers created the “War on Drugs” to raise the level of the perceived threat posed by drugs. Anti-drug policies tackled domestic consumption and the sale of illicit psychoactive drugs by establishing a prohibition regime with the objective of eliminating the supply of illegal drugs like opium into the United States.

Counternarcotics policies<sup>11</sup> consist of complementary domestic and international strategies. The domestic strategy involves the enforcement of anti-drug legislation,

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<sup>8</sup> Some guerrillas which have at some point participated in the drug trade have been the Sendero Luminoso of Peru, the Sandinistas of Nicaragua, the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) and the Ejercito de Liberación Nacional (ELN). The Loyalist Volunteer Force and Irish Republican Army were also involved in the drug trade at local levels, according to a U.S. Congress General Accounting Office (GAO) special investigation done in 2000 (Hast, 2000). Right-wing paramilitary forces such as the Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC) also participated in the drug trade.

<sup>9</sup> As reported by the Christian Science Monitor, the UNODC reported that opium poppy production increased by 49% in 2006 (Cooley, 2006), and according to pentagon correspondent Jim Miklaszewski, drug profits were being used to fund Taliban insurgents in Southern Afghanistan (Regan, 2006). Also Human Rights Watch, a watchdog organization, reported that warlords backed by the U.S. and Afghan governments were involved in the drug trade and in human rights abuses (Afghanistan, 2006).

<sup>10</sup> Street gangs in many urban populations throughout the world are major networks for the local distribution of drugs and weapons.

which penalizes and jails dealers and users. It also calls for the interdiction of illicit psychoactive drugs at U.S. borders, ports, airports, and along its maritime borders. The international strategy establishes agreements and treaties with other countries. Some treaties include extradition treaties, which allow the U.S. government to request the extradition of individuals accused of trafficking psychoactive drugs so they can be judged within the U.S. judicial system. Other agreements establish crop eradication programs in drug-producing countries, destroying crops manually or with aerial chemical pesticides. Since the 1920s, the United States has gradually escalated its investment in governmental, human, and economic resources geared toward controlling these criminalized psychoactive drugs. Paradoxically, the progressive increase in resources has not permanently curtailed the supply or use of the drugs in the United States, nor eradicated the international drug trade or the rise of illicit drug trafficking organizations. Many analysts argue that counternarcotics policies have unintentionally increased the trade of drugs by making drugs like cocaine a valuable commodity (Thoumi, 1994; Bertram et al., 1996; Reuter, 2004; Buxton, 2006).

Students of U.S. counternarcotics efforts also believe that policies formulated in the United States largely underestimate how informal organizations involved in the drug trade have a continued economic incentive to engage in the business (Thoumi, 1994; Bertram et al., 1996; Walker, 1996; Reuter, 2004; Buruma, 2004). According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the retail value of the global drug market is approximately 85 billion-dollars (UNODC, 2011). The UNODC's "World

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<sup>11</sup> This is the popular term for anti-drug policies. The name is a misnomer because counternarcotics policies target all types of psychoactive drugs not just narcotics. For example medically, cocaine—a prohibited drug, is a stimulant not a narcotic. However, cocaine is referred popularly as a narcotic because legally it is labeled as a narcotic by the U.S. government.



Drug Report 2011” indicates that in 2009 coca farmers in Bolivia, Peru, and Colombia earned \$1 billion (UNODC, 2011); in 2008 coca paste dealers in the Andes earned about \$400 million; and Colombian wholesale cocaine traffickers earned about \$2.4 billion per year (UNODC, 2010b, p. 79). The latest UNODC report issued, while this project was written, indicate that in 2009 “profits from international trafficking to North America and Europe amount to some US\$15 bn” (UNODC, 2011, p. 125). Given the continued multimillion-dollar earnings of cocaine traffickers in relation to other licit businesses operating in Latin American countries, the economic power of informal organizations involved in the illicit drug business provides informal organizations at the least, with the ability to affect domestic and international politics. The political influence of informal organizations involved in the illicit drug trade is the subject of inquiry of this dissertation project.

Although governments implementing counternarcotics policies and analysts of counternarcotics policies believe that drug trafficking organizations exist and have an effect on health, crime, economies, and politics, little research has explored these entities as political organizations. Legally established interest groups and movements have been found to influence domestic and international politics because they generally operate within legal state structures. Illicit groups, such as drug trafficking organizations (DTOs), have been rarely accounted for—especially in the literature on interest groups—though they play a measurable role in affecting domestic and international politics in similar ways, especially when non-violent methods for influencing policy are taken into account.

Using an interest group model, my dissertation analyzes drug trafficking organizations as illicit interest groups (IIGs) to explain their political influence. The

questions the dissertation hopes to answer are the following: Under what conditions do IIGs flourish/develop? What effect do IIGs have on policy? And, what are the effects of these groups on democratic institutions? An interest group analysis of IIGs includes a study of group formation, development, and demise (or potential demise) that examines how IIGs organize, what motivates them, and how effective they can be at influencing policy.

The study also relies on organizational theory to explain the rise and development of illicit interest groups. Specifically, this study assesses the literature on interest group models to create a Macro-Micro Interest Group Model that examines—(1) the external variables that lead to the rise of IIGs and (2) the internal variables that allow IIGs to influence politics. External conditions such as weak laws and law enforcement, large economic incentives derived from the illicit drug trade, and extreme income inequality among other factors can be hypothesized to have an impact on the emergence of IIGs. Moreover, internal conditions such as the availability of economic resources, leadership characteristics, the degree of group cohesion, expertise, membership size, the role of selective incentives in motivating members, as well as, the group's ability to promote its agenda to a greater sector of a population, among other factors, are hypothesized to influence a group's ability to impact policy.

The dynamic between governments and IIGs is also examined in this project. To address what effect IIGs have on democratic institutions, it can be hypothesized that the greater the economic and political cohesion and discipline IIGs have, the more likely they will influence democratic institutions to accomplish their goals. Factors such as state autonomy and capacity can shed light on the ability of governments to deal with IIGs. In

addition, factors such as an IIG's resources, representativeness, and cohesiveness can explain how IIGs use different tools to affect elections and government institutions such as the judiciary, the legislature, and the presidency.

To illustrate the interest group model and test organizational theory, the case study method will be used on the Medellin Drug Trafficking Organizations (DTOs), popularly known as the "Medellin Cartel." In particular, the case study method will focus on the external factors that led to the rise of DTOs in Colombia and how DTOs based in Medellin reacted to the implementation of counternarcotics efforts. The discussion will be framed by the implementation of the Treaty on Extradition of 1979 negotiated between Colombia and the United States. The treaty was significant because as drug trafficking became the principal issue of the bilateral agenda between the U.S. and Colombia in the 1980s; the extradition of Colombian nationals became an important and pivotal method of combating the illicit drug business. Illicit interests groups, like drug traffickers based in Medellin, became politically active in opposition to the extradition treaty because it endangered their livelihood by threatening DTO leaders with criminal punishment in the United States. The findings of my study suggest that DTO leaders based in Medellin had a one issue agenda and organized politically to influence the electoral system and all three branches of government—the judicial, the legislative, and the executive—in an effort to invalidate the Extradition Treaty. The impact of DTOs on politics will be shown in congruence to the life cycle of the treaty as it was invalidated in 1986, revived in 1989, banned through a 1991 Constitutional Article, and reinstated in 1997 as a result of a constitutional amendment. The changes in the life cycle of the 1979 Extradition Treaty correlate with changes in the political power of Medellin-based DTOs

in relation to the Colombian government and international forces such as the U.S. government's push for tougher counternarcotics efforts. For this reason, the analysis focuses only on the Medellin DTOs as pioneers in the drug trade and as protagonists of the "extradition debate" that took place in Colombia in the 1980s until the mid-1990s. Other groups such as: Cali based DTOs, the Cartel del Norte del Valle (a series of DTOs, which developed in the mid-1990s), guerrilla organizations involved in the drug trade such as the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (FARC) and the *Ejercito de Liberacion Nacional* (ELN), and paramilitary groups such as the *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia* (AUC), have also been affected by the 1979 Treaty of Extradition, but the Medellin-based DTOs were the first to actively engage in and affect the public debate on the policy of extradition. Although the scope of this study is limited to Medellin-based DTOs, data already gathered on the groups just mentioned will be the subject of future studies.

Developing a definition for IIGs alters the current notion of interest groups by demonstrating the political impact of groups normally regarded as criminal. The new conceptualization builds on scholarly work in security and political economy. Illicit groups, like drug traffickers, are commonly categorized as transnational criminal organizations (TCOs), and relevant studies explore the rise of TCOs in weak states, emphasizing the economic and political impact they have as industries.<sup>12</sup> An analysis of TCOs as interest groups can further develop our understanding of the political impact that these social entities may have on democratic institutions and international relations.

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<sup>12</sup> See Thoumi, Francisco work in *Political economy and illegal drugs in Colombia*. See chapters by Rensselaer Lee and Eduardo Gamarra in *Transnational Crime in the Americas: An Interamerican Dialogue*. Also, see Phil Williams' article in *World Security: Challenges for a New Century*.

The inclusion of groups commonly regarded as “criminal” into the scope of political science through the use of an interest group framework is not done to excuse criminal behavior such as homicide, kidnapping, extortion, or property damage, among other activities. The main intent of this project is to methodically study the development of DTOs which are criminal in nature, but which have political repercussions and are currently understudied. DTOs are usually dismissed as criminal organizations participating in political corruption, which is defined as “a *deviation* from the norms that involves a *hidden exchange* between a public agent and a third party” (Della Porta et al., 1999).<sup>13</sup> However, how can researchers study cases of systematic political corruption, where corruption is not a deviation but the norm—where the criminal-political nexus is pervasive? The purpose of this study is to examine the political influence of the illicit drug industry, since in the 1980s, Medellin-based DTO leaders participated openly, “in the light of day” and through the political system (especially since leaders did not have criminal charges against them in Colombia), which allowed some to feel entitled to participate in the political process. Moreover, evidence on the political nexus of DTOs in the 1990s (Lee et al., 1999) and 2000s (Ungar et al., 2010a & 2010b) suggests that since the 1980s, DTO leaders have continued to foster relationships with politicians, which have generated a systematically corrupt political system, one described by Lee et al. (1999) in which:

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<sup>13</sup> Della Porta et al.’s study on political corruption examines the relationships of mafias and politicians in Italy. In the book *Corrupt Exchanges*, she denotes a variety of political corruption styles depending on the state and social incentives given to politicians and criminal groups that engage in political corruption. Of specific importance is that Della Porta et al. adopt a definition of “systematic corruption,” where, “the illicit becomes the norm and... corruption (is) so common and institutionalized that those behaving illegally are rewarded and those continuing to accept the older norms penalized (Della Porta et al., 1999:16).

...corruption, viewed broadly as an exchange of values between criminals and government or political authorities, has become almost inseparable from the activities and purposes of statecraft in Colombia. Here the issue is no longer the delivery of specific services or favors in exchange for bribes but rather the management of relations with a powerful (if illegal) interest group to achieve specific political objectives (Lee et al., 1999).

My study has implications for policy studies. In the post-9/11 era, politically and financially motivated organizations such as traffickers, paramilitary, or guerrilla movements are regarded as terrorists because of the potential for aggressive attacks on civilian populations. Policymakers have criminalized the term “terrorist” to lessen the political importance and motivation of criminal and armed belligerent groups. This creates a problem for policymakers and scholars. For scholars, the “criminalization” dismisses the significance of viewing these groups as political organizations and may blur the focus of research about the root causes of the violence generated by illegal groups. Criminalizing such groups ignores their motivations, administrative and economic organization, and decision-making power. In essence, ignoring the political motivation of terrorists creates a significant research bias.<sup>14</sup> For policymakers, criminalizing “terrorists” leads to a superficial understanding of why these violent actors form, how they organize, and how their organizations persist. Ignoring these questions makes the creation of comprehensive solutions for resolving domestic and international problems a difficult task.

An example of criminalizing the term “terrorist” and how this confusion may lead to an erroneous analysis is illustrated in the perception of Pablo Escobar in a 2002 Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) drug intelligence brief (titled *Drugs and Terrorism: A New*

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<sup>14</sup> See Stanley Cohen’s, “Crime and Politics: Spot the Difference.”

*Perspective*). In this document Pablo Escobar is defined by the DEA as a narco-terrorist.

They define narco-terrorism as:

an organized group (or an individual) that is complicit in the activities of drug trafficking in order to further, or fund, premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets with the intention to influence (a government or group of people) (United States, 2002).<sup>15</sup>

Though the brief does mention that terrorism is a politically motivated form of violence, when the DEA further attempts to analyze Pablo Escobar and his political strategies, it focuses on Escobar's personality traits:

At the height of his success, Escobar was listed in *Forbes Magazine* among the world's wealthiest men. While on the surface, he was nothing more than a street thug who became successful by trafficking in cocaine, Escobar had political aspirations and strove to project the appearance of legitimacy, claiming his wealth was the result of real estate investments. He eventually ran for Congress and campaigned for foreign policy changes that would prohibit the extradition of Colombian citizens to the United States... Escobar had a penchant for violence. He wreaked havoc on Colombia while attempting to persuade the government to change its extradition policy. Due to the numerous assassinations of politicians, presidential candidates, Supreme Court justices, police officers, and civilians, as well as a number of bombings culminating in the bombing of an Avianca commercial airliner in 1989, Escobar enraged both Colombia and the world... Moreover, he funded his terrorist activities with the money obtained from his drug trafficking endeavors. He was the classic narco-terrorist; his cause was simply himself (United States, 2002).

Summarizing that Escobar's "cause was simply himself" ignores the conditions that led to his rise, his political motivations, the qualities of his business organization and the cost of his organization's actions on Colombia's democratic institutions.

Years after Escobar's death, Colombia has transitioned from being a drug-trafficking country to a drug-producing country. Many of the economic, social, and political conditions that were present when Escobar was alive still stimulate the illicit

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<sup>15</sup> See *Drugs and Terrorism: A New Perspective*. Retrieved February 1, 2012, from <http://usregsec.sdsu.edu/docs/DEASeptember2002.pdf>.

drug business not just in the Andes, but also throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. Criminology studies focusing on “kingpin” strategies have not reduced the rise of drug-trafficking organizations because they focus on the leaders, rather than on the conditions that motivate individuals to organize and act within illicit networks. Strategies like “Plan Colombia” implemented in 2000, focus mainly on eradicating cocaine plantations, helping the Colombian government attack insurgent groups in southern Colombia and restoring security around urban centers, but do not focus on structural, political, and economic incentives that stimulate drug traffic and fund the war effort of armed groups in the first place.

Colombia has weak democratic institutions, high economic inequalities, and suffers from a historical legacy of violence.<sup>16</sup> These conditions have given rise to many drug trafficking organizations and armed belligerent forces, which have become dependent on the illicit drug economy. In contrast to politically driven explanations, this study methodically studies the rise and political impact of DTOs as illicit interest groups so that the model can be used in understanding: (1) the development of DTOs in other countries with similar conditions, and (2) the political impact of DTOs.

The data used in this dissertation drew from author interviews, government documents, documentaries, newspaper and journalistic accounts, journal articles, and scholarly books. In-person interviews were conducted with ex-members of DTOs and government officials during 2004, 2005, and 2008. Many of the interviews with former

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<sup>16</sup> Colombia has about 3.7 million internally displaced persons (Human Rights Watch, 2012); the number of kidnappings has been reduced from 1,250 in 2004 to about 249 in 2011 (UNODC, 2010a; República de Colombia, 2004 and 2011); the number of homicides in 2004 was 18,579 and was reduced to 12,159 in 2011. The number of massacres in 2004 was 43, which took the lives of 243 people, and in 2011 the massacre number was 32 and took the life of 149 people (República de Colombia, 2004 and 2011).



DTO members were done with former *sicarios* (gunmen), middle traffickers, and coca farmers. First-person accounts recorded for the study complied with Institutional Review Board (IRB) requirements for working with human subjects, and the anonymity of subjects has been maintained throughout the dissertation. Much additional sources were derived from news media, journalistic accounts, memoirs, and academic research. Because of the difficulty in finding trustworthy sources on sensitive issues like the inner workings of DTOs, to make sure that sources acquired for this study were reliable, when possible several accounts were triangulated with other data sources.

An assessment of the literature on DTOs and on interest group models begins on Chapter 2. It also introduces the Macro-Micro Interest Group Model used to study illicit interest groups. Chapter 3 evaluates the external variables that gave rise to Medellin-based DTOs. Chapter 4 evaluates the internal variables, which allowed Medellin-based DTOs to impact politics. Finally, the concluding analysis examines the model's effectiveness and discusses the implication of this study on future research.

CHAPTER 2: USING A HYBRID MACRO-MICRO-MODEL EMPLOYING  
PLURALIST AND INSTITUTIONALIST APPROACHES TO STUDY ILLICIT  
INTEREST GROUPS

Studies on drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) highlight the social, economic, and political implications that the illicit drug business presents for nations like the United States and Colombia. The existing research typically analyzes the effects of DTOs on states (Thoumi, 1995; Lee 1989) and the strategies states implement to counteract DTO effects (Bagley and Tokatlian 1985; Bagley, 1988; Tokatlian, 1988). Colombian-based drug trafficking organizations, such as the “Medellin Cartel,” have been analyzed as participants of an underground industry and as transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) (Thoumi, 1995; Thoumi et al., 1999, Williams, 1998; Lee 1989, 1996, 1999; Bagley, 2003). The works of Francisco Thoumi and Rensselaer Lee pioneered the analytic study of the illicit drug industry by discussing the political and economic implications of these groups in Colombia. Lee’s *The White Labyrinth: Cocaine and Political Power* is one of the first analyses to acknowledge the political importance of these groups. His work on the cocaine industry refers to drug traffickers as “interest groups with extensive resources and political connections” that interact with “coca lobbies” in Bolivia and Peru (Lee, 1989).<sup>17</sup> Lee’s work extensively describes the objectives and actions of the early narcotics industry, but does not evaluate the drug industry in Colombia as an interest group, although in the 1999 journal article co-authored with Francisco Thoumi (entitled “The Criminal-Political Nexus in Colombia”) both authors refer to DTOs as the most powerful of interest groups:

In other words drug profits amounted to roughly 6 percent to 8 percent of Colombia’s Gross Domestic Product in the 1990s, which makes narcotics barons possibly the dominant interest group in Colombia. Colombian traffickers’ large surplus implies a significant capability for system penetration activities such as lobbying, bribes, and legal investments, as well as for the exercise of violence and intimidation against the Colombian state (Lee et al., 1999).

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<sup>17</sup> For other analysis on Bolivian coca farmer mobilization and TCO interaction see Eduardo Gamarra’s “Transnational Criminal Organizations in Bolivia” (Farer, 1999, p. 183).

The article highlights the criminal-political nexus and set the stage for further research, which is the starting point for my project as my research will link previous work on DTOs with political science models on interest groups.

An interest group model can explain three events: how structural conditions influence the formation of a political actor; how a group develops an internal organization; and what the dynamics are between a group and its environment. Because illicit interest groups (IIGs) engage in criminal activity and have used violence to influence policy, it is difficult to associate IIGs with the activities of legally established interest groups, for this reason it is important to examine the characteristics of interest groups, explain how they differ from social movements (which are on the fringes of society), and to explore how an interest group model can be useful in studying IIG political activity. Whether a group is defined as a politically influential criminal group, an interest group, or a social movement, it is valuable to analyze politically active groups with an interest group model as an analytical tool because the variables used are designed to measure the political impact of groups in general. An interest group model can explore external influences on a group, which may affect a group's organization or a group's capacity to formulate a policy goal. The variables of an interest group model are valuable because they can examine a group's internal dynamics, measure how its membership organizes behind a policy issue, and show how a group interacts with its external environment to influence politics.

The chapter provides a literature review and the theoretical basis for analyzing groups commonly depicted as criminal; moreover, the chapter defines these groups as Illicit Interest Groups (IIGs) by using a macro-micro interest group model derived from

pluralist and institutionalist analyses on interest groups. The model is used because of its explanatory power and because it reduces the deficiencies of interest group models; in particular, elite and corporatist interest group models which analyze power from the top-down. The usefulness of the proposed model is that it combines two different but complimentary models (the pluralist and the institutionalist), which examine external influences on a group and internal factors that allow groups to impact policy. The following discussion will: (1) discuss the literature on social movements and interest groups; (2) define the hybrid Macro-Micro interest group model; and (3) present the organizational framework used to analyze IIGs.

### Social Movements and Interest Groups

All societal groups (including interest groups and social movements) unite individuals who have common viewpoints even if they are considered criminal. Sometimes it is difficult to clearly differentiate social movements from interest groups because both may support a particular policy or use similar tactics to influence policymaking. The main differences between social movements and interest groups lies in the scope of their policy agenda, the tactics they use to influence policymaking, and their lifecycle. Determining the difference is important because it assesses whether a groups lies in the fringes of society (i.e. an armed social movement), or if it has become part of the political establishment (i.e. an issue specific lobbying association).

Social movements are generally composed of a broad network of organizations that can promote numerous policy agendas. These networks can include a variety of groups working loosely together or can lead to the creation of a substantial entity like a political party to represent the demands of a particular movement. But since social

movements promote broad policy agendas, participants usually have differing overall goals and values (Bashevkin, 1996:138).<sup>18</sup> For instance, some activists of a social movement may be preoccupied with advancing a general social cause while others belonging to the same movement may be participating to make more specific political demands. Social movements aim to transform the status quo by promoting new social institutions and consequently the movement either dissolves or transitions based on the effort's success or failure. Because of this, social movements have been defined as organizations that "cooperate to advance political claims."<sup>19</sup>

Social movements are regarded as confrontational actors because their tactics tend to challenge existing political systems. In many circumstances, social movements represent the demands of societal actors that do not have regular access to an established avenue for persuading government, and thus do not have equal access to methods of policy change. For this reason, the strategies that social movements typically employ can range from peaceful demonstrations to more extreme measures involving the use of violence towards civilians and property (i.e. terrorist events). The use of violence, as a strategy, is probably why violent elements and organizations on the fringes of society are commonly examined in the context of a social movement. Still, it has been observed that as organized movements become more developed, they regularly rely less on confrontational tactics<sup>20</sup> and in many cases form more standard lobbying relationships

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<sup>18</sup> While some activists may want to form political parties because their main goal is to obtain the power to govern, others may be solely concerned with furthering just one cause. An example of a broad social movement is the U.S. civil rights movement that agglutinated different groups, which specifically furthered the rights of women and people of color.

<sup>19</sup> See David Meyer et al., *The social movement society: Contentious politics for a new century*.

with political parties and/or public officials, morphing into a structure more similar to traditional interest groups if they succeed. Societal groups that use violent tactics to achieve a political goal are difficult to analyze, because their ambiguous legal status blurs how they are perceived by societies. Usually societies create polarized perceptions on violent groups, where those who oppose the violent social movements regard them as criminals, and those who support the group regard them as a movement, which makes a political demand. State authorities usually regard violent movements as “criminal” because in the defense of their political demands such violent social groups break laws. The ambiguous status of social armed movements is a predicament that researchers have when analyzing such groups especially when they engage in criminal activities. Should political science leave the study of these groups to sociologists, criminologists, or economists, even though these groups have political demands and effects on governments? In the case of Colombia, groups such as *Los Extraditables* (the Medellin-based DTO’s terrorist group), the FARC, the ELN, and the AUC, have made or continue to make political demands, but are illegal because they are either engaged in an illicit business or use violence to pursue their political demands (or both). Because of the political influence of these groups on state institutions, it is argued in this dissertation that these social groups should be studied within the scope of political science.

Political scientists have generally defined interest groups as individuals who share common attitudes and who band together to protect their established interests and seek to influence political decisions. Rather than challenging the status quo on a particular issue

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<sup>20</sup> See Meyer et al., (1998) for the development and institutionalization of social movements in industrialized states. By more developed it is meant that the social movement’s organization establishes a permanent professional staff, has centralized control, is well financed, and has a large number of supportive members.

in the way a social movement would, interest groups look after the welfare of the group by influencing government decision makers (Cigler et al., 1998; Bashevkin, 1996).<sup>21</sup>

For an interest group, having access to public officials is essential because it allows for the presentation (and fulfillment) of demands (Ainsworth, 2002, p.131). When public officials deny standard access to an interest group, it severely weakens their ability to influence policy.<sup>22</sup> These demands, or policy agendas, are typically narrow and usually represent a singular cause. Because of this, members of an interest group regularly have more cohesive ideas and goals than those of activists within a social movement. In democracies, a multitude of social groups have been represented directly by interest groups. Some examples include corporations, labor unions, women's rights organizations, and ethnic groups.

As will be suggested in more detail in further chapters, the Medellin-based DTOs, in addition to employing violent tactics, operated like any other legal interest groups by presenting their political demands to policymakers in an effort to affect the Colombian government's domestic and international policy agenda.

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<sup>21</sup> Cigler and Loomis base their definition on the David Truman's widely cited definition. "An 'interest group' refers to any group that on the basis of one or more shared attitudes makes certain claims upon other groups in the society for the establishment, maintenance, or enhancement of forms of behavior that are implied by the shared attitudes" (Truman, 1981). Other definitions for interest groups are: "Any association of individuals, whether formally organized or not, that attempts to influence public policy" (Hrebennar et al., 1993, p. 9); "An organization which seeks or claims to represent people or organizations which share one or more common interests or ideals" (Wilson, 1981); "An interest group is an organized association which engages in activity relative to governmental institutions" (Salisbury, 1970); and "[Interest groups] promote their interests by attempting to influence government rather than by nominating candidates and seeking responsibility for the management of government," (Key, 1964).

<sup>22</sup> It is probable that if an interest group is denied access to present its demands, then it will resort to more confrontational methods for influencing policy.



## Armed Social Movements and Illicit Interest Groups

One problematic area for political science and social studies is how to categorize, describe, and fully understand illegal social groups and how to best examine their relationships to other state entities. Labeled as “criminal,” belligerent groups often receive different treatment when analyzed or, as is the case when viewing them as a social movement, they are studied in the context of a lifecycle from emergence to decline.

The problem of categorizing a group as “criminal” is that it dismisses a clearer understanding of illegal groups that maintain an extended presence on the fringes of a state’s legal system and how those groups, even if depicted as movements, continue to affect policy from the outside. But by using interest group models, a closer analysis can reveal more. These fringe groups, for the purposes of this dissertation are referred to as illicit interest groups (IIGs); and in this study the focus is on the Medellin-based DTOs.

Research on interest groups has established different models for understanding the power interplay between social groups and the state. Such research focuses on the influence of legal interest groups on domestic and international politics.<sup>23</sup> Models encompass variables from sociological analyses and focus on environmental/structural conditions. They allow for an examination of internal conditions that can account for the differences in behavior of different groups such as a group’s internal power relations and the individual preferences of group members. Though they have mainly been used to describe legal entities, the models can provide insights into IIGs because, like legitimate groups, IIGs can similarly impact government decision-making.<sup>24</sup> Interest groups

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<sup>23</sup> See Thomas Risse’s “Transnational actors and world politics” (2002).

influence domestic and international politics and so do IIGs. Like interest groups, IIGs can finance political campaigns and have shifting bases of popular support. While interest groups can represent the formal foundations of various economic sectors, IIGs can represent certain informal counterparts.<sup>25</sup> Both exist within states, but both can be transnational in nature, and both can become politically active to counteract policies that affect them.

But IIGs promote illicit activities that challenge state authority by engaging in violent conflicts, trafficking arms, or engaging in illegal commercial ventures like the narcotics industry (Farer, 1999). While interest groups appear in all democracies, IIGs typically arise in weak states because the presence of the state apparatus is not capable of enforcing laws that will restrict their activities (Thoumi, 1994; Farer, 1999).

Applying an interest group model can reassess how armed movements are studied. It can confirm the structural influences that affect a movement, shed light on the qualities of individual members, and examine why IIGs persist.

### Traditional Interest Group Models

There are a number of interest group models that analyze and try to explain the power interplay between societal groups and the state. Some of the more traditional models include the power elite model, the pluralist model, the institutionalist model, and

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<sup>24</sup> The author of this dissertation considers that not all organized criminal organizations are illicit interest groups, organized criminal organizations need to be politically active, and they need to influence policy to be considered an illicit interest group.

<sup>25</sup> Examples of political-economic bases of support are: residents of Brazilian slums, which receive economic benefits from *donos da droga* (drug dealers), the strengthening of the coca growers movement in Bolivia, and the popular basis of support for armed groups linked to the drug trade such as the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) and the Auto Defensas de Colombia (AUC).

the corporatist model, but others provide a better structural starting point for a discussion of IIGs than others.

The models can be placed along an ideological continuum from those, on the one hand, that have a structure and philosophy more suited for explaining the strength of social group influence on state policy, to those models that have a structure and philosophy more suited for explaining the state's control over a social group. Certain models are better equipped to analyze the power interplay from the point-of-view of the state and social elites (a top-down approach) while others are better equipped to analyze the power interplay from the point-of-view of social groups (a bottom-up approach).

The power elite model, as described in *The Power Elite* (1970), by C. Wright Mills, diagrams a power structure to explain politics in the United States from the top down. Mills argues that a small cohesive business elite controls government decision-making. In so doing, the elite elements perpetuated political power by limiting the participation of other groups in society. Mills' model develops a pyramidal power structure containing an instrumental view of the state-interest group dynamic that attempts to show how a social group, in this case a business group, influences state actors to create policies that benefit a particular industry. Mills' approach may be an interesting and insightful way to analyze IIGs, but it leans toward providing a better understanding of established elites rather than nascent interest groups. Mills uses benefits and consequences in the model popularly known as the "iron triangle" to better understand the United States military-industrial complex. His model shows how the common interests of elite business groups, congresspersons, and bureaucrats align and reinforce

each other for long periods of time.<sup>26</sup> Although Mills' power elite model is helpful in depicting the political relationships among elites, it is not as useful when analyzing less elite interest groups. Especially interest groups that may not have the economic means, social status, or social pedigree to be able to coax, build social relationships, or "good ol'boy networks" with powerful and established politicians.

After C. Wright Mills proposed this model of representation, scholars such as G. William Domhoff in *Who Rules America* (2002) empirically expanded Mills's original research. Domhoff's research linked members of the upper class to the corporate economy concluding that a corporate elite exists. He also did surveys where respondents belonging to the political elite verified that they knew other members in corporate society at a personal level. While valuable for future discussions, this model explains more about the established groups than those along the fringe and so is less valuable to the purposes of this study.<sup>27</sup>

The pluralist model, on the other hand, developed as a response to the power elite model, and can be used to examine non-elite groups with more clarity from the bottom up.

Core pluralist theorists like David Truman and Robert Dahl were behavioralists and

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<sup>26</sup> For example, the defense industrial lobby provides electoral support to members of congress in exchange for favorable legislation. Congresspersons benefit from electoral support provided by defense lobbies such as campaign funding and/or votes. As a consequence, legislators create favorable legislation for the defense industry, and oversee the bureaucracy that enforces the desired policy. In turn, the defense bureaucracy obtains a mission as well as Congressional budgetary support to enforce legislation. At the individual level, bureaucrats could potentially secure future jobs in the private sector by working on a particular policy or by knowing the rules and procedures of the defense bureaucracy. Though it seems as though the relationships are equally beneficial for all parties involved, the defense industrial lobby is argued to be the most powerful party because it sets the agenda through the economic power that it has to advance the political careers of members of Congress and of bureaucracies and their officers.

<sup>27</sup> Although Medellin-based DTO leaders became multimillionaires by the time many were in their mid-twenties in the late 1970s, DTO leaders had the economic means to build relationships with politicians, however they did not have the status to penetrate the high social status held by Colombian political elites of the time. Since they were unable to build rapport with the political elite, many DTOs launched their own campaigns or funded the campaigns of local level politicians.

believed that policy outcomes in the United States could be better explained—not by observing governmental institutions—but by observing the behavior of societal groups. Before the behavioral revolution in the 1950s and 1960s, most institutional work was less analytical because it focused on describing the structure of formal government institutions and the rules and constitutions that produced those structures. Pluralists considered that focusing on the description of formal institutions did little to actually explain politics. They believed that they could understand political behavior if more attention was paid to social actors and their negotiations with state officials rather than to the legal process. An underlying assumption was the belief that societal group action could explain more about politics than institutional rules. Their social focus allowed them to believe that they were creating a more analytical version of political events.

Behavioralists reversed the emphasis on description by concentrating on creating functional models that explain political behavior. David Easton's *Framework for Political Analysis* (1965) depicts social activity as inputs and government activity as outputs. Using Easton's framework, pluralists concentrated on social aspects of political behavior like voting, interest group activity, and mass political behavior, while minimizing the importance of studying formal state institutions. The behavioralist focus on society partially explains why David Truman was the first scientist to define interest groups as groups that share common attitudes and make claims upon other groups.<sup>28</sup>

Though interest groups form to further their common interests this quality does not make social groups politically active. According to this perspective, groups become politically

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<sup>28</sup> An 'interest group' refers to "any group that on the basis of one or more shared attitudes makes certain claims upon other groups in the society for the establishment, maintenance, or enhancement of forms of behavior that are implied by the shared attitudes" (Truman, 1981).

active when they need to make claims upon others through the use of government institutions, especially when groups have a lot at stake and specific rights are not well established (Ainsworth, 2002).

As an interest group model created in response to the power elite model, pluralists disagree with elite theorists on the issue of interest group competition. Pluralists do not believe that group competition is limited to a privileged group. Instead, they assume that group competition for influencing government is fluid, open, and fair. Interest group access to different branches of government at local and national levels guarantees increased political participation. The model assumes that political access is available to all groups regardless of their economic status. Because of this assumption the political theatre is commonly referred to as a political “marketplace,” where various social groups representing opposing interests compete for influence in a level playing field. It is also believed that because of the existence of many divergent groups their claims balance each other out creating a natural equilibrium. Finally the model assumes that the state is an impartial actor that maintains order by settling disputes among competing interests.

In the pluralist model, the power of groups to influence policy is determined by five internal group characteristics: individual member characteristics, group resources, cohesion, expertise, and representativeness.<sup>29</sup> In a competitive political marketplace, it is believed that the group that excels in all of these characteristics will be the most successful at influencing policy. Besides focusing on internal characteristics of a group,

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<sup>29</sup> Member characteristics refer to socioeconomic status, media access, and the education of group leaders. Group resources refer to financial and human resources controlled by a group. Group cohesion is the degree of organizational control, discipline, and ideological unity. Group expertise refers to policy and administrative knowledge. Finally representativeness is the group’s policy position relative to society (Bashevkin, 1996).

pluralists like David Truman argued that external characteristics such as changes in the political, economic, social, or technological environment were important in accounting for group development and demise. These variables were incorporated in what is known as Truman's disturbance theory, which contends that groups form in response to changes in society and the economy (Truman, 1981). Disturbances such as war and economic recession can stimulate the creation of groups whose purpose is to "restore the balance in society."

A pluralist approach is important to discussing IIGs because it allows for a closer analysis of interest groups from the bottom up. By understanding the composition of a societal group through the use of a variety of variables, regardless of its legal status, social scientists can further explain the power interplay between a group, the state, or its social environment. For this reason, the pluralist model is an essential part of describing and analyzing IIGs in more detail. The pluralist model does have two main shortcomings: The first is its assumption that the state is an impartial actor. The second is that all groups can equally compete in the political "marketplace." The institutionalist approach to the study of interest groups addresses these biases.

Institutionalist models developed as a response to pluralist beliefs and question three assumptions of the pluralist model: the nature of group competition, the pluralist view of the state, and the nature of a group's internal workings. While still focusing on societal groups as opposed to the powered elite, and by studying the formation and effects of institutions, the model is therefore a helpful counterpoint to the pluralist model.

Two scholars central to the creation of an institutionalist model for interest group studies were E.E. Schattschneider and Mancur Olson. Both studied American politics,

but while E.E. Schattschneider concentrated on laying out the foundations of rationalist notions on group competition and the state, Olson explained group action by looking at the internal dynamics of a group.

Schattschneider was not satisfied with pluralist explanations of interest group competition in American politics. In his opinion, interest group competition was not free of favoritism: “the flaw in the pluralist heaven is that the heavenly chorus sings with a strong upper class accent” (Schattschneider, 1960). The freedom of competition was biased because the outcomes of group competition favored certain interests. Although pluralists believed that interest group competition at different levels of government dispersed power and allowed more segments of a population to be represented, in reality competition in the political marketplace concentrated power among the upper classes rather than dispersing power equally to other groups (Ainsworth, 2002). Schattschneider saw the class system as an institutional aspect that affected the fair play of ideas. To account for biases in social group competition, Schattschneider believed that it was necessary to move away from viewing societal groups as a sole reference point. While pluralist notions depicted the state as an impartial actor allocating resources among competing interests, Schattschneider believed that a state’s institutional rules and procedures structure the competition, and largely determine which interests survive for consideration among decision-makers.<sup>30</sup> By studying a state’s institutional mechanisms, policymakers, and norms, a larger understanding of the social context for how movements and groups form and compete could now be explained. Schattschneider’s

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<sup>30</sup> Though Schattschneider used an institutionalist perspective, it was an improvement on the “old” institutionalist school because rather than just describing the rules and procedures of an institution, Schattschneider and others explained the effects of these rules on the behavior of individuals.



model, has influenced contemporary scholars such as Peter Evans et al.'s in *Bringing The State Back In* (1985), John Ikenberry et al.'s *The State and American Foreign Economic Policy* (1988), and Thomas Risse-Kappen's in *Bringing Transnational Relations Back In* (1995) among others, to incorporate the study of state and its relation with non-state actors.

Mancur Olson's major question in *The Logic of Collective Action* (1971) dealt with why individuals join groups. The question led him to analyze the interactions within interest groups in order to identify common variables. His work (and that of others who have followed) has constructed models that indicate why groups form, why some are more successful in influencing policy, and why they eventually disband. Olson, like Schattschneider, was unconvinced with pluralist explanations of why interest groups formed and behaved. Whereas pluralists focused on environmental causes such as political, economic, social, and technological events<sup>31</sup> to explain a group's lifespan, rationalists like Olson did not believe that these events in themselves specifically stimulated a group's formation or demise. The traditional pluralist variables designed to measure a group's ability to influence policy such as member characteristics, group resources, cohesion, expertise, and representativeness, were inadequate in determining why certain groups failed to influence policy.

Another rationalist critique of the pluralist model was its assumption of why people joined a group. Pluralists assumed that members joined a group because of cohesion in beliefs and attitudes, and this quality allowed political scientists to study

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<sup>31</sup> Environmental effects on group behavior are usually referred to as Truman's disturbance theory. Any disturbance that affected the interactions within or between groups led to the demise of some and the creation of others.

interest groups as single entities, regardless of individual member preferences. Olson argued that this was a mistake; he did not believe that interest groups acted as monolithic entities where all members within an organization acted on behalf of a common interest. In his view, the pluralist treatment of interest groups committed an ecological fallacy in which individuals took on the qualities normally attributed to a group. Such treatment of interest groups assumed that individuals joined organizations to support a common cause, but never really inquired *why*. Olson believed that more could be explained about group action and success, if groups could be dissected to expose the different preferences of individuals belonging to a group. In other words, Olson considered that individuals within a group also had their own self-interest, and just because they joined a group, their own interest would not cede to the common interest of the group. For Olson, an inquiry on the preferences of individuals in a group would reveal the real explanations behind why individuals choose to form, belong, or leave a group.

Both Schattschneider and Olson developed institutional approaches to analyzing interest groups. By looking at the structures and mechanisms of states that affected interest group formation, competition, and demise; and by focusing on characteristics of individual members within a group, their efforts can also be drawn from the bottom up—focusing on individual and group effects on the competition for the attention of political/government elites. For this reason, incorporating an institutional approach is important to discussing IIGs because it allows for a closer analysis of the social purpose behind how groups act and the governing agents that can affect the supposedly “balanced” power play between competing groups and the state. The interaction between governments and groups makes the intuitionist model an essential part of describing

IIGs in more detail. This analysis can delve on a number of questions: how laws and law enforcement allowed DTOs to flourish, what were the perceptions of government elites towards DTOs and DTO leaders, and why did DTO members join DTOs, among others.

At the opposite end of the continuum is the corporatist model—where interest groups are dominated or incorporated into the state’s structure. There are two major categories of corporatist regimes: authoritarian corporatism and liberal, neo-, or societal corporatism.

In corporatist models, interest groups are recognized, licensed, or given a monopoly by the state. Competition among groups is limited and is organized according to a state’s design. In corporatist models, interest groups become an integral part of the state and this loss of political autonomy reduces the political impact of interest groups on society, thereby reducing conflict and competition. Alfred C. Stepan (1978), a well-known specialist on corporatist interest group models in Latin America, has shown that corporatism is an elite response to state crisis because elites can control an emergent group’s demands by using institutional mechanisms to incorporate social sectors into the state. Thus, corporatism emphasizes structured interactions with a state’s politicians, bureaucratic actors, and interest groups. The gist of the interaction is based on the state’s ability to control the selection of group leaders, group demands, and group support.

In corporatist models, the balance of power tilts toward state actors. In contrast to the power elite model, corporatist models believe that social actors do not manipulate the state because it is the state or state officials that determine group competition. Though in the pluralist model, group competition is refereed by state institutions, in the corporatist model the state intervenes in the internal decision-making process of interest groups, thus

regulating group competition according to a state's parameters. Similar to the power elite model, while valuable for future discussions, the corporatist perspective explains more about the state than those groups competing for change along the fringe of society and so it is less valuable to the purposes of the study at hand.

The two models that explain the political impact of societal groups, which focus the effect of environmental factors that influence their actions and formation, while at the same time offering insights into internal group characteristics are the pluralist and institutional models of interest group analysis. By analyzing IIGs through both models, a better picture can be illustrated of criminal organizations and how they can affect domestic and international policy.

#### The Hybrid Macro-Micro-Interest Group Model

In addition to taking an hybrid of institutionalist and pluralist approaches, the interest group model used in this exploration of Colombian drug trafficking organizations is made more efficient by including two additional aspects: a macro-view and a micro-view. The two perspectives organize how external and internal factors influence group behavior. The macro-micro-model tries to predict the character of internal reforms that can result from environmental demands on a societal group. Without analyzing the dynamics within the internal organization of a group and the motivations of a group's individual members, it is difficult to assert whether an environmental factor has any effect. The hybridization of two models is derived from an organizational model created by Amie Kreppel in her study on the institutional development of the European Parliament (Kreppel, 2002). Some of the hypotheses used and tested in my dissertation are derived from Kreppel's organizational development study.

Using a hybrid approach makes sense because one model by itself can only partially describe the qualities of interest groups. In my project it is necessary to combine the two models to produce a more complete and comprehensive explanation of IIG behavior. **Table 1** below shows the fusion of variables used to analyze groups in the study.

**Table 1: The Hybrid Macro-Micro-Model Employing Pluralist and Institutional Approaches**

	<b>Macro-model variables (external variables)</b>	<b>Micro-model variables (internal variables)</b>
<b>Pluralist approach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Political events</li> <li>• Economic events</li> <li>• Social events</li> <li>• Technological events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Membership characteristics</li> <li>• Resources</li> <li>• Cohesion</li> <li>• Expertise</li> <li>• Representativeness</li> </ul>
<b>Institutionalist approach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A state's legal parameters</li> <li>• Individual preferences of state officials</li> <li>• Autonomy</li> <li>• A state's capacity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Selective incentives</li> <li>• Group size</li> <li>• Existence of high- and low-demanders</li> </ul>

The Macro-model column variables listed in the left column of **Table 1** above, assumes that external variables will influence internal group behavior and those internal changes will follow external events (Kreppel, 2002:26, 214). The following hypotheses can be used to test Macro-model variables as they explain how an interest group flourishes and develops:

- **Hypothesis 1:** The presence of favourable external variables (occurring within a larger political environment) is more likely to influence the formation

and development of illicit interest groups, and a group's formation and development should follow external events.

- **Hypothesis 1a:** Changes to the internal organization and structure of an illicit interest group should be related and deal with the environmental events that influence the group, and the changes made should be collective goods because they benefit the organization as a whole.

**Hypothesis 1** identifies external conditions that influence the emergence or development of a group. It also tries to determine a causal relation between an external event and the changes within the organization. **Hypothesis 1a** determines whether a group's internal organization is affected or if a group creates a policy objective as a result of an external event. **Hypothesis 1a** also tries to ascertain whether the internal organizational changes are of collective benefit to all group members or just a few.

The Micro-model column variables, listed in the right column of **Table 1** above, can be used to determine how a group affects policy. The Micro-model variables in **Table 1** can be used to effectively describe how individuals within a group will act to achieve a common goal and can help to explain how a group's action will be constrained by group dynamics (Kreppel, 2002:214). For example, in order to understand another facet of how members achieve policy goals, the preferences and interests of the leaders of drug trafficking organizations can be examined. The following hypotheses can be used to test Micro-model variables as they explain how an interest group develops and impacts policy:

- **Hypothesis 2:** The presence of internal variables, which favor a group's mobilization towards the accomplishment a policy goal, will allow an IIG to affect governmental policy.
- **Hypothesis 2a:** If members of an illicit interest group need to deal with a particular issue, members will work together and the political achievements obtained by the group will benefit all members.
- **Hypothesis 2b:** Once a group has clear leadership and influence, the group will have greater incentive to discipline its membership and attain internal cohesion.
- **Hypothesis 2c:** When a group has no clear leadership, or is unable to impact policy, there will be little incentive for a group's leader(s) to organize and discipline their members.
- **Hypothesis 2d:** When a group has realized a common goal, in periods of transition, consensus among a group's membership will decrease and may deteriorate group development.<sup>32</sup>

**Hypothesis 2** examines whether the presence of internal variables has an effect on a group's ability to affect policy. **Hypotheses 2a-2d** look at the internal organization of a group when it is formed and once it begins to unravel. By examining the different internal variables, it is possible to determine whether a group will stay united to implement a policy or if it will begin to disband.

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<sup>32</sup> **Hypotheses 1-2d** are derived from Amie Kreppel's organizational study on the European Parliament (EP) (Kreppel, 2002, p.25,48), and participating political parties, but in this study the hypotheses are applied to the study of interest groups.

Finally, to gauge on the effect of IIGs on democratic institutions, **Hypothesis 3** is formulated:

- **Hypothesis 3:** The greater the economic and political cohesiveness and discipline IIGs have, the more likely they will be able to influence democratic institutions to accomplish their goals.

#### Macro-model Variables

The Macro-model external factors that make up the pluralist area of group study and investigation concentrate on describing how external events (**political, economic, social, technological**) can influence a group's formation, development, or demise. These external factors are part of David Truman's "Disturbance Theory," which contends that groups form to counterbalance opposition and to respond to changes in society and the economy (Truman, 1981). As introduced earlier, disturbances such as war and economic recessions can stimulate groups to "restore the balance in society."

The institutionalist model's external variables include looking at a state's legal parameters, the preferences of government officials, and a state's autonomy and capacity.<sup>33</sup>

An explanation of a **state's legal parameters** is a general description of the legal environment within which IIGs develop. It helps to frame the context that shows how IIGs become politically active and can identify how a state's legal system may bias certain social groups. In addition, ambiguities in a state's legal system can lead to social conflicts and loopholes, making an understanding of legal parameter relevant for analysis.

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<sup>33</sup> Statist research defines institutional capacity as the "ability of the bureaucratic state to execute its actions," (Bashevkin, 1996, p. 148) this entails concentrating, coordinating, and exploiting state resources.



Looking at the **preferences of state officials** explores the state's elite executives and/or legislators who are appropriate to the case study based on their policy agendas, political platforms, and campaigns. These preferences can either counteract IIG policy agendas or can be the result of IIG influence, making them valuable aspects to discovering how IIGs are influenced by a state's policies or how IIGs affect state policies. This variable is important because the scholarly work of E. E. Schattschneider, and more contemporary scholars such as Stephen Krasner (1978), Evans et al. (1985), John Ikenberry et al. (1988), and Peter Katzenstein (1985) have found that state actors have the capacity to intervene in group competition and are not impartial actors.

Evaluating **autonomy** gauges the degree of political independence (from other state institutions and social actors) that state executives enjoy while governing. Studying autonomy builds an understanding of a leader's political maneuverability, which can, in turn, directly affect an understanding of the nature of a leader's coalitions, negotiations, deal-making options, and willingness to compromise. Autonomy as a variable is different from state capacity because autonomy measures the degree of independence that state actors have from societal groups for making decisions. When state actors are more autonomous they will be less concerned about societal group opinion, and consequently, state actors will be more apt to act on their own. Once an executive has the autonomy to act, state capacity is the ability of a leader to act on his/her will. The level of a state leader's autonomy also has a large influence on the potential power of an IIG, and vice-versa, so is an insightful area of research.

**State capacity** is an evaluation of the state's ability to function effectively; meaning its ability (or inability) to efficiently monopolize the use of force and collect

taxes. More specifically, state capacity is the aptitude of government elites to manage the state apparatus so that policies can be implemented through state institutions. Exploring the variable is valuable because, Joel Migdal in his work *Strong Societies and Weak States* (Migdal, 1988) found that countries with an ineffective state capacity to collect taxes, enforce laws, or distribute resources, are overshadowed by social actors. The capacity of social actors to surpass the state is important to note, because having an ineffective state capacity can create a political environment with a higher propensity for the development of IIGs. In *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*, Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan also found that a functioning state is a necessary condition for the consolidation of democratic regime (Linz et al., 1996, p. 7). If the state is not able to effectively establish rule of law, then democratic institutions will be vulnerable. This observation is important to the study of illicit interest groups because groups thrive in areas that cannot be regulated. Linz and Stepan refer to this as the “problem of stateness” (Linz et al., 1996, p. 18) where a state’s institutions are unable to “effectively exercise [their] claim to the monopoly of the legitimate use of force in the territory, could not collect taxes, and could not implement a judicial system” (Linz et al., 1996, p. 18). The “problem of stateness” is an obstacle for consolidating democracies such as Colombia’s democracy, because a weak state is unable to protect the rights of its citizens due to the lack of state capacity throughout its territory. The “problem of stateness” for many countries becomes cyclical because the lack of state capacity, in turn, leads actors to resolve more conflicts through the use of violence and corruption, instead of a state’s legal institutions, which in turn, continue to weaken a state’s institutions.

## Micro-model Variables

Micro-model variables drawn from a pluralist approach look at the internal factors of a group. Macro-model seeks to understand the development and institutionalization of a group by examining descriptive elements such as a group's membership characteristics, resources, cohesion, expertise, and representativeness. These attributes focus mainly on aggregate qualities rather than on the individual preferences and incentives of a group's members. Pluralists hypothesize that, the group that excels in all of these internal characteristics will be the most successful at influencing policy.

Exploring **membership characteristics** includes investigating the socioeconomic status and education of the group's executive or elite members compared to the remaining membership population.

Examining **resources** means identifying the financial and human forces leveraged by the group. This includes studying a group's financial and human resources to see how these are used to influence policy.

**Cohesion** is the degree of organizational control, discipline, and ideological unity present in a group. In particular, this study focuses on describing the level of economic and political cohesion evidenced in efforts to move agendas forward. Economically speaking, this means looking at how effectively groups gather, manage, and pool financial resources. Politically, it means analyzing how coordinated and structured the group's efforts are in their effort to achieve a policy objective.

**Expertise** refers to a group's policy and administrative knowledge that yields a discussion about a group's internal operations, such as how effective and developed its

communications network, technological know-how, security apparatus, legal representation, and public relations capacity may be.

**Representativeness** is a measure of the group's policy position relative to society (Bashevkin, 1996). Representativeness can be evaluated by studying how a group is able to sell its particularistic policy agenda to the rest of society by shaping public opinion. This variable can also explore how groups approach politicians with the effort to present their policy agenda. In the case of Colombia the presentation of interests is usually done through campaign donations, but also through the use of clientelist networks. Clientelism is generally defined as a patron-client relationship that takes place between people of unequal status, which is characterized by an unequal exchange of favors, and that relies heavily on face-to-face contact (Martz, 1997:10). The role of DTO leaders within clientelist networks to obtain their policy objectives will be explored. Also, it is expected that IIGs that have aspects of their agenda successfully conveyed and supported (even if they are only partially supported) by a larger population have an easier path for social acceptance and development than groups who do not.

The hybrid interest group model used in the study at hand derives variables from the institutionalist approach to examine the internal structure of an organization by focusing on factors such as selective incentives, group size, and the nature of the group's high- and low-demanders. These attributes mostly concentrate on the individual characteristics of interest group members and are useful in analyzing the state-group dynamic by studying actor interests, preferences, and strategies.

**Selective incentives**, as referred to in Mancur Olson's *Rise and Decline of Nations* (1984), are benefits or deterrents that are determined by a group's leadership and

are applied to the membership of an organization to induce the appropriate collective action. Olson's incentives help explain what motivates members to join a cause, what keeps them involved, and to what degree they will remain in an organization to accomplish a collective goal. By looking at selective incentives in an IIG, an understanding of the group's potential motivations and commitment at the member-level can be revealed. Selective incentives can prevent group deterioration by attempting to keep the membership satisfied and united. As Olson describes, these incentives can be positive or negative.

Positive selective incentives yield benefits that reward individuals for belonging to the group. Though members may perceive a larger, more long-term collective goal, they may need short-term positive selective incentives to inspire continued support. Collaterally, these incentives may help members identify more strongly with the larger cause and commit their support further, which in turn allows for the unification and survival of the group.

Selective incentives can also be negative. A particular group may find it necessary to coerce its membership or impose a negative incentive in order to achieve its central goals. Negative incentives can range from collecting monthly dues to resorting to violence, punishment, or fear.

In the case study analyzed in this dissertation, it is valuable to be aware of certain types of selective incentives: material, expressive, and solidary (Ainsworth, 2002)—all of which aim at building cooperation, but which employ distinct and different methods. Material incentives are tangible goods received or levied in exchange for a person's allegiance. An example of a positive incentive could be cash or a paycheck, while its

negative counterpart could be a fine. Both use objective value as a method for asserting compliance. On the contrary, an expressive incentive is an intangible, ideological benefit received from participating in the purposive attainment of a clear cause: the individual receives psychological reward by feeling that they are part of a solution or movement. In some cases, while the attainment of the larger ideological mission of the group may remain farther off (or even unattainable), providing certain opportunities that allow individuals to express their participation or support toward a future goal can yield a rewarding benefit that leads to group compliance and teamwork. A solidary incentive, as James Q. Wilson describes, is a motivation that yields “rewards arising out of the act of associating that can be given or withheld from individuals” (Wilson, 1995). Examples of this type of incentive, such as social recognition, honors, or deference toward a member of a group, can result in positive benefits to an individual by the mere fact that it signals favor or special treatment. When referring to groups, solidary selective incentives are used to inspire positive group interactions that strengthen the ideals of membership, focus the overall mission, and bolster the group’s identity. Members receive a benefit from the psychological feeling of exclusivity and through convivial interaction with other members. These types of selective incentives are also intangible.

Conclusions can be drawn about the precision with which leadership organizations, within a group, control their individual members by evaluating intangible selective incentives and discovering them within IIGs studied—selective incentives are what drive a group’s cohesion. Different incentives signal different strategies of motivation, each with their own strengths and weaknesses. While material selective incentives can be used efficiently to direct individual actions in most situations, it is often

a less useful method for inspiring the desired outcome when motivating larger groups.

On the other hand, expressive incentives can be more motivational and self-inspiring for a group, making certain incentives more valuable for certain purposes. It is expected that in this study on IIGs selective incentives will enhance the cohesion and discipline of a group.

**Group size** is another important measure worth considering when analyzing IIG behavior. According to Olson's *Logic of Collective Action*, in small organizations members can voluntarily<sup>34</sup> do the work necessary to obtain a collective good because it is more likely that the benefit will exceed the costs of doing the work. Olson refers to a "collective good" as a good that cannot be excluded or kept from being consumed by the rest of the group. In democracies, an example of a collective good could be a state's military defense or law enforcement, in which case even those who are not forced to pay taxes may still gain benefits. Olson's theory establishes that garnering collective goods are easier to develop and maintain in smaller groups because the benefits will not have to be divided to the same degree. The size of the group allows the membership to coordinate their actions quickly and small groups are able to keep their members more accountable. The close relation among members of an association allows a mechanism of "social sanctions" as Olson terms it (Olson, 1971, p. 60-65) —a type of peer pressure, to make members increase efforts and hold each other accountable.

In contrast to small groups, Olson argues that large groups have a more difficult time achieving a collective good. This problem occurs because the brunt of the work is

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<sup>34</sup> By voluntarily it is meant that individual members will provide a good without the use of incentives or of coercion.

done by a small number of people in larger organizations, and a majority of the people benefit from the efforts of the small, active core. The inequity in the amount of work done by the membership is the central challenge to the survival of organizations. Although the members of a group may support the idea of obtaining a collective good, they may not have the incentives available to motivate action at that larger, broader scale. The discrepancy between the belief in obtaining a collective good or benefit and the actual work required is termed the problem of collective action:

Though all of the members of the group therefore have a common interest in obtaining this collective benefit, they have no common interest in paying the cost of providing a collective good. Each would prefer that the others pay the entire cost, and ordinarily would get any benefit provided whether he had borne part of the cost or not. (Olson, 1971, p. 21)

The demise of larger groups can usually be attributed to the collective action problem. The disparity in the workload, be it physical or mental, may discourage members because, for some, the costs may become greater than the benefits. A collective action problem is minimized by providing or increasing selective incentives.

Olson's theory provides a backdrop from which a comparison can be made to the IIGs in this study. The question of how group size affects an IIGs ability to deal with the problem of collective action can test and also enlighten the analysis with another angle explaining the potential threats to a group's ability to affect domestic and international policy.

The third internally focused institutional variable that will be used in analyzing IIGs in this study is measuring the presence and quality of **high-** and **low-demanders**. In Ainsworth's *Analyzing Interest Groups*, high- and low-demanders are depicted as individuals who place a different value on a particular good. In relation to the collective



good, high-demanders are viewed by Ainsworth as members who value a good to a point where they are willing to dedicate most or all of the effort required for achievement, which is then enjoyed by low-demanders, who enjoy a free ride on the efforts of others. In this relationship, there is little collective effort between the two types.

In a larger organizations, Olson believes that the benefits are distributed among a larger number of members and that the work done is more costly: “the larger the group, the smaller the fraction of the total group benefit any person acting in the group interest receives...the smaller the share of the total benefit going to any individual... and the larger the costs” (Olson, 1971, p. 48). High-demanders in larger organizations may have to spend more time and money communicating and coordinating strategies toward the achievement of a collective good. According to Olson, large organizations also have more members who are low-demanders as a result of the wider distribution of selective incentives. So, the larger the group, the more difficult it is to counter-balance the effect of low demanders, and the more difficult it is to achieve a common good. In contrast a smaller group has an easier time in achieving collective good because it was a greater number of high-demanders. The smaller the size of a group, the more efficient it is in attaining a collective good.

Though high demanders need less incentive to produce a collective good, they may have more at stake and so may act due to personal interest, which is an interesting point when studying IIGs. For example, Pablo Escobar’s efforts, which will be discussed in more detail in a future chapter, show that he had a large personal stake in attempting to derail the extradition policy between Colombia and the United States, although the collective good, from his effort to invalidate the Extradition Treaty, would have affected

all individuals in the society who prospectively could be extradited. Escobar acted as a high-demander, while others who potentially would have benefited from his actions could be depicted as low-demanders. This example points out the positive aspect of evaluating the qualities of high- and low-demanders within IIGs—to explain the development, nature, and strategy of collective action within a group.

### Analysis

Using a hybrid interest group model with micro- and macro- viewpoints that pulls together variables from both institutional and pluralist interest group studies and applies them to organizations often deemed as criminal provides a new vantage point for evaluating: how structural conditions influence the formation of a political actor, how a group develops an internal organization, and what the dynamics are between a group and its environment. In the chapters that follow, I will illustrate how the interest group model described in this chapter is a valid method for identifying how these groups operate politically. By focusing on both the institutional and pluralist elements that effect illegal groups, and by framing the description with an understanding of societal groups from the bottom up, a clearer picture can be made of illegal groups that affect domestic and international policy.

CHAPTER 3: EVALUATING 1980s-ERA MEDELLIN DRUG TRAFFICKING  
ORGANIZATIONS USING AN INTEREST GROUP MODEL: EXTERNAL  
VARIABLES

As described in the last chapter, a hybrid Macro-Micro-Model has been formulated to help analyze illicit interest groups consisting of an investigation of the "macro" (external environmental) variables and "micro" (internal organizational) variables relative to a given group. This chapter will examine aspects of the Macro-model's external variables that influenced the rise, development, and transformation of 1980s-era Colombian drug trafficking organizations.

As shown in **Table 2** below, the external variables are only part of the entire picture crafted by the model. In this chapter I will focus on the characteristics in the left column classified as Macro-model variables that fuse pluralist and institutionalist approaches. External factors include: political events, economic events, social events, technological events, a state's legal parameters, individual preferences of state officials, autonomy, and a state's capacity.

**Table 2: The Hybrid Macro-Micro-Model Employing Pluralist and Institutionalist Approaches**

	<b>Macro-model variables (external variables)</b>	<b>Micro-model variables (internal variables)</b>
<b>Pluralist approach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Political events</li> <li>• Economic events</li> <li>• Social events</li> <li>• Technological events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Membership characteristics</li> <li>• Resources</li> <li>• Cohesion</li> <li>• Expertise</li> <li>• Representativeness</li> </ul>
<b>Institutionalist approach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A state's legal parameters</li> <li>• Individual preferences of state officials</li> <li>• Autonomy</li> <li>• A state's capacity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Selective incentives</li> <li>• Group size</li> <li>• Existence of high- and low-demanders</li> </ul>

## Political Events

At the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the United States government's international counternarcotics campaign consisted of a series of international agreements and laws that sought to reduce the international psychoactive drug trade. In particular, the U.S. government was concerned with stopping the opium trade. The series of early international agreements provided the legal precedent by which the U.S. government would seek international cooperation in curtailing the traffic of other psychoactive drugs. For the purposes of this discussion the most significant political event, which influenced the rise of drug trafficking organizations in Colombia, was the declaration of the "War on Drugs" by the Richard Nixon administration.

The U.S. government became concerned about the effects of psychoactive drugs because of a rise in consumption among domestic youths (Nixon, 1969a) and troops abroad in Vietnam. Following his campaign promises, President Nixon established several Task Forces and implemented Operation Intercept to stop marijuana imports from Mexico in 1969. In particular, the war focused its efforts on marijuana and heroin. Marijuana was considered a "Liberal hippie drug" and heroin had become popularly used among U.S. troops stationed in Vietnam. United States officials argued that the control of drug traffic was a vital interest that needed to be addressed because of an increase in the costs of crime, public health, and worker productivity. In 1970 Nixon launched the Comprehensive Drug Abuse Act and in 1971 he declared, "America's public enemy number one was drug abuse. In order to fight and defeat this enemy, it is necessary to wage a new, all-out offensive" (Nixon, 1971). For symbolic justification, and to enhance political acceptance, policy makers utilized a "Tough on Crime" approach, to promote the

idea that psychoactive drugs were a threat at the social, economic, and military levels.

Drugs were depicted as “exogenous” to American society, which needed to be prevented from permeating U.S. borders (Tokatlian, 1988). In a 1972 speech addressed to athletes attending a White House conference on drug abuse, Nixon explained why the drug war needed to be fought abroad:

We are attempting to wage a battle against drug abuse... it is what we might describe as total warfare against drug abuse in the United States and in the world... we want to try to stop drugs coming into this country at the source. We don't produce heroin, for example, in the United States. They do produce it—the poppy that grows heroin-- in Turkey. They produce it in some parts of Southeast Asia... (Nixon, 1972).

Nixon's speeches not only revealed the international strategy for combating the heroin trade, but that it had domestic implications, since he believed that by targeting drugs in source countries he could reduce addiction and crime in the United States:

Evidence has continued to build up during 1973 indicating that we are now on the way to winning the battle against this grave problem. International sources of heroin supply are being pinched off, narcotics prices are up while the quality of narcotics supply is down, and the capabilities for drug enforcement and treatment have been upgraded at all levels of government (Nixon, 1973).

By 1974, President Nixon concluded that his administration had resolved the heroin problem:

Drug abuse is a problem that we are resolving in America. We have already turned the corner on heroin. But the task ahead will be long and difficult, and the closer we come to success the more difficult the task will be... Drug traffickers must be dealt with harshly, and where the law is not sufficient to the task, we must provide new laws, and we must do so rapidly (Nixon, 1974).

And in line with his “Tough on Crime” approach, throughout Nixon's presidency counternarcotics efforts strategy consisted of stopping drugs abroad and at home by targeting U.S. mafias and small time dealers, and rehabilitating drug users. His efforts continued to follow the 1970 Comprehensive Drug Abuse Act, which was an original ten-

step counternarcotics framework (Nixon, 1969a).<sup>35</sup> The Act was revamped by the Reagan administration in 1980 to further reinforce counternarcotics efforts domestically and internationally. The Reagan administration strengthened the implementation of the Act by allocating more economic resources. However, one difference between the two administrations was that the Reagan administration dramatically increased law enforcement resources and did not allocate significant resources towards the rehabilitation of addicts. Another difference was that Reagan's efforts targeted the cocaine trade, whereas Nixon's strategies and speeches do not mention cocaine; Nixon's administration did not consider cocaine a problem.

Although the Reagan administration had already established a domestic agenda focused on crime reduction as a major priority, events such as the elevated homicide rate in South Florida and the 1986 cocaine-related death of professional basketball player Len Bias, catapulted the issue of drugs and drug abuse into mainstream culture and facilitated the implementation of a new "tough on crime" policy.

According to the *1996 Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics* (1997), Americans changed their perception of the issue of drugs as "the most important problem facing the country" between 1986 and 1989. In 1986, 8% of the American population believed the drug issue to be the most important social problem to address, but by

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<sup>35</sup> Some of the provisions included: correcting deficiencies in the Marijuana Tax Act, coordinating federal and state law, strengthening international cooperation to stop drugs at the source, suppressing of illegal imports by strengthening interdiction efforts, suppressing of national traffic by increasing law enforcement resources and organizing Task Forces, and funding education, research, rehabilitation, training programs, and law enforcement conferences.

November 1989 that number had reached nearly 38%, putting it above other fears such as nuclear war, international tensions, and unemployment.<sup>36</sup>

To respond to the public's worries and continue with his crime reduction agenda, When the Reagan administration formulated its anti-drug agenda it increased budgets for law enforcement agencies like the FBI and DEA (Crandall, 2002). The administration also changed the mission of many departments that were not involved in counternarcotics efforts. For example, the 1982 Posse Comitatus Act reformed institutions like the military, making them more involved in counternarcotics efforts. Overall, the Reagan administration empowered all counternarcotics agencies to persecute the drug trade at home and abroad. At home, Reagan-style drug enforcement concentrated on prosecuting drug users and dealers with Task Forces and other criminal justice methods such as minimum mandatory sentences. The administration also sought to protect the U.S. borders through military surveillance. To stop the flow of narcotics coming from abroad, the "1988 United Nations Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances" was introduced as an effort to generate greater global cooperation from U.N. members to combat the drug trade. In addition, the administration increased monetary aid given to producer countries for reducing the supply of drugs being produced or trafficked within producer countries. Regardless of the increased funding, most of the responsibility and costs to combat drug traffic rested on producer countries usually with scant economic resources (Tokatlian, 1988; Bagley, 1988).

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<sup>36</sup> According to the 1996 sourcebook, by 1992 which was a presidential election year public opinion towards the issue of drugs dropped to 8% trailing behind the economy at 42% then unemployment, poverty, healthcare, respectively, and tied with education, government spending, and government dissatisfaction.



The strategy implemented by the Reagan administration was unilateral. Although the United States was the biggest consumer of cocaine, the U.S. government largely passed the responsibility and blame of the drug problem onto foreign producing countries, which were pressured to implement tough counternarcotic efforts, even though these countries had weak law enforcement institutions and limited budgets. In contrast, the policy of prohibiting the cocaine trade increased the price of the commodity and continued to increase profits for DTOs.

### Economic Events

Three major economic events influenced the rise of DTOs in Colombia. The first is the establishment of an economic logic for counternarcotics, which for the last 40 years has continued to work under the philosophy of limiting supply to force an increase in the price of illicit drugs thereby lowering buyer demand. The supply-side policy has resulted in the opposite effect: lower per kilo prices for cocaine and expanded participation involving a broader collection of producers. The second event deals with economic developments in the Colombian market that have made illicit activity both more profitable. The third event is the Colombian tradition<sup>37</sup> of smuggling and its influence on the modern illicit drug trade.

Since the 1970's Comprehensive Drug Abuse Act, the economic strategy of cocaine counternarcotics efforts has been to reduce supply in order to raise retail price so that it becomes unavailable and unaffordable in U.S. markets. However, economists like

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<sup>37</sup> Because of high protectionist import tariffs placed by the Colombian government to protect the national industry, many Colombians have developed the practice of importing smuggled goods, which were sold in the black market at lower prices, than products legally imported into the country. Also, Colombians have also been adept at exporting smuggled goods such as precious stones, like emeralds, pre-Columbian figures, and cattle, consequently, smuggling networks which pre-dated the drug trade became useful once the illicit drug trade was established in the 1960s and 70s.

Francisco Thoumi argue that this line of reasoning is flawed. His research shows that the price of illicit drugs such as cocaine is not dependent on its supply, but on the risk involved in smuggling (Thoumi, 1994). For this reason, the higher the regulation of the drug trade, the higher the risk involved and the higher the price and profit. U.S. authorities and international drug control agencies believe that success in counternarcotics efforts can be measured through the retail price and purity of drugs in drug consuming countries and on the number of domestic seizures. The 2010 report compiled by the United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC) argues that the retail price of cocaine is rising and that the purity of cocaine is lowering because of a shortage of cocaine in the illicit market. UNODC reported that this “success” is due to the efforts made by Andean countries in eradicating illicit crops and an increase in global cocaine seizures. The same report registers the wholesale price of a kilogram of cocaine at \$12,500 in the United States (UNODC, 2010, p.79). However, when the current price for a kilogram of cocaine calculated by UNODC, is compared to kilogram prices of wholesale cocaine over the past decades, the trend shows that prices have been actually falling down, not up. In the 1970s, a kilogram was around \$60,000, in the 1980s the price was \$45,000, in the 1990s the price was around \$18,000 (Gomez, 1990, p. 63). The drop in prices is evidence that the number of actors involved in the drug trade, not only in Colombia, but also in most countries throughout Latin America and the Caribbean has been increasing. The decrease in the wholesale price of cocaine in the millennium does not discourage cocaine traffickers from the trade because it is estimated that Colombian traffickers still earn \$2.1 billion per year, so the profit-margin is still higher and comparable to most legitimate and freely traded products (UNODC, 2010, p. 79).

When Medellin drug trafficking organizations began to smuggle cocaine in the 1970s and 1980s, they were motivated by the astoundingly high profit margin. Since there were fewer actors involved in cocaine and marijuana trafficking in the 1960s and 1970s, the supply of drugs was also smaller which affected wholesale price. Cocaine in the 1970s was smuggled mostly by “mules”—people smuggling cocaine in small amounts. Once cocaine began to be smuggled in large-scale shipments, the supply of available cocaine in U.S. markets multiplied and supply became less of a factor in calculating wholesale price.

The decreasing trend in wholesale cocaine prices across time suggests that more actors are becoming involved in drug trafficking, and this economic trend continues to support the observation that DTOs are not economic cartels. During the 1970s and 1980s, pioneer cocaine traffickers were able to build full-service, vertically integrated drug trafficking organizations, where a trafficker could own every aspect of the supply chain in the production of cocaine. The creation of full-service DTOs led U.S. government officials to believe that they were working together to control the price as an economic cartel would operate. Following this logic, DTOs, it was assumed, would profit from the high demand for a commodity that was in short supply. However, full service DTOs based in Medellin never operated like economic cartels.

The first reason is that the illegal status of cocaine drove the market price, not the supply. Second, cocaine was easily produced and is not a commodity like oil that is in a specific geographical location requiring a high-degree of technology to extract. Third, the barriers for entry into the cocaine business are low, so it is difficult to control the number of actors that supply cocaine (Thoumi, 1994, p.149-150). Finally, the supply

method of Colombian drug organizations has been to flood the market with cocaine in order to reduce risk and make profit. Even if 80% of shipments of cocaine are lost, the traffickers can still make a significant profit from the remainder 20%.

Drug trafficking organizations were initially called cartels by the U.S. State Department for political reasons, to present these organizations in the same negative light as the economic cartel known as Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) in the late 1970s and early 1980s.<sup>38</sup> By associating Medellin DTOs with a foreign organization, that already had a negative image among the U.S. public, departments and agencies in the U.S. executive branch were able to more easily manage expectations and shape public opinion.

The second economic event that influenced the rise of Colombian DTOs was the inability of the Colombian market economy to reduce unemployment, economic inequality, and inflation. In the early 1980s, the foreign aid and domestic economic reforms that were made during the 1970s, placed the Colombian economy in a relatively favorable economic position during the regional recession of the 1980s, especially when compared with other countries in Latin America that were undergoing a debt crisis. To deal with the regional recession the government drew from its foreign exchange reserves to compensate for both trade and national account imbalances (The Library of Congress, 1988).

But despite good macro-economic indicators, individual social and economic indicators measuring quality of life suggested that Colombia was still a society with high inequalities. Per capita income in 1986 was approximately \$1,330 dollars, which placed

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<sup>38</sup> In the 1970s OPEC caused two oil crises, which led to a worldwide inflation of prices in general.

Colombia tenth among the nineteen Latin American countries. According to the Library of Congress's macro-economic analysis of 1988, "real change in per capita GDP had consistently lagged behind change in aggregate GDP by two percentage points since 1982 and was actually negative for 1982 and 1983" (Library of Congress, 1988). Moreover, it was believed that the economy and government policies failed to distribute the gains of economic production any more equitably in 1986 than it had fifty years earlier. To boot, income inequality continued to be high and in the 1980s as much as 70 percent of income was earned by only 20 percent of the population (The Library of Congress, 1988). Also, the Gini coefficient on average from 1960 to 2008 was around .52 (Conference Board of Canada, 2011; Economic Commission on Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), 2010), one of the highest levels of income inequality in Latin America—where the income ratio between the richest decile was 25 times richer than the poorest (ECLAC, 2010).

In the 1970s and 1980s the economy also suffered from unemployment and inflation. Although manufacturing, mining, and agricultural sectors grew, the economy was unable to absorb enough labor to reduce unemployment below 10%. By the 1990s, the informal labor sector comprised about 46 percent of the workforce (French-Davis & Machinea et al., 2007, p.226). The economy also suffered from unemployment and high inflation—persistent annual increases in the consumer price index of 20 to 25 percent had been evident since the mid-1970s (The Library of Congress, 1988).

Economic problems like inequality, unemployment, and inflation, which took place in the 1970s and 1980s can be seen as core external factors that nurtured the development of drug trafficking organizations in Colombia. Lack of economic

opportunities and low wages led many Colombians to take advantage of the economic opportunities found in the smuggling of imported goods and later in the trafficking of illicit drugs like marijuana and cocaine. High levels of income inequality, unemployment, and inflation were typical ailments of economies in Latin America,<sup>39</sup> the reason why these macroeconomic factors can be seen as contributive causes to the rise of DTOs is because at the least, in Colombia people of low socioeconomic status could take advantage of the opportunities provided by the illicit drug industry to avoid the limited economic opportunities offered by the licit economic sectors.

During the 1980s economic areas associated with cocaine and marijuana trafficking exacerbated levels of inflation, because this informal sector generated an inflow of U.S. dollars. The inflow of dollar, changed the financial, real estate, construction, and agricultural industries disproportionately to other legal sectors, because of their capacity to absorb laundered money (Gomez, 1990, p. 75-81; Thoumi, 1994). The increased buying power of those associated with the illegal drug industry led to an increased demand and price for goods, which led to greater inflation. The price of land also continued to rise and failed to correlate with median wages. The Gini coefficient for land concentration since 1960 has been of .86, which is the sixth-highest in the world (Cardenas, 2002, p.6; UNDP, 2011, p.197).<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> the 1980s, which is popularly known as the “lost decade” because of the debt crisis that afflicted the region.

<sup>40</sup> In 2011 the United Nations Development Programme reported that the concentration of land in Colombia is one of the highest in the world, where 52.2% of the arable land is in the hands of 1.15% of the population (UNDP, 2011, p.206) and that land concentration has increased from 2000-2009. The report also suggests that land concentration is due to historic legacies, market forces, revenues from illicit drug industry, and government policies.

Among the early Colombian traffickers, who reportedly arose from humble beginnings and may have seen trafficking as an economic issue rather than a moral one, include Jaime Builes. Builes was from Fredonia, Antioquia, and was reportedly the son of a very poor peasant family who worked for a landowner. Builes became known for trafficking marijuana and cocaine in the mid-1970s and bought the landowner's estate where he and his family had worked. He also bought all large parcels of land surrounding the town. He eventually owned most of the small businesses in the town and in doing so inflated the prices for real estate in the region (Castro Caycedo, 1996). Years later, Builes was tortured and killed in Mexico by authorities in the early 1980s, and because he owned most of the properties in Fredonia, the economy of the region plummeted because family members were unable to manage the lands and businesses Builes had acquired. Jaime Builes's case illustrates the economic opportunity taken by early trafficking pioneers and their incredible capacity to profit from drug prohibition policies. The new found wealth allowed Builes to acquiring lands and businesses that would not have been possible to acquire had he not been involved in the drug business, since the high degree of economic inequality in rural areas greatly reduces upward mobility.

The third economic event that led to the development of DTOs is the specialization of smuggling that evolved in Colombia. Francisco Thoumi notes in his seminal work, *Economia Politica y Narcotrafico* that having a tradition of exporting smuggled goods and networks of immigrants in consumer states can explain why the illicit drug business arose more readily in Colombia. The availability of international networks necessary to market cocaine and launder money in the black market in the United States and Mexico created an economic advantage (Thoumi, 1994, p.178-179).

Many smugglers that started smuggling emeralds, coffee, and cattle during the 1950s, gradually became involved in the drug trade in the late 1960s and 1970s as the cocaine business became more lucrative. According to Thoumi, the ability to export smuggled goods was the comparative advantage that Colombians had over other Andean countries and other Latin American countries. Bolivian and Peruvian traffickers may not have had the networks to transport cocaine to other countries, and for a while Bolivia and Peru remained coca paste producers, whereas Colombian traffickers were first and foremost international traffickers before delving into the production of coca paste in the 1990s.

Colombian traffickers began smuggling marijuana in the 1960s and 1970s especially after the implementation of 1969 Operation Intercept, which blocked the U.S.-Mexico border. In Medellin, Alfredo “*el Padrino*” Gomez Lopez headed one of the first organizations trafficking cocaine along with emeralds and other smuggled goods (Castillo, 1987; Salazar, 2001). His associates were Jesus Emilio Escobar Hernandez and Fabio Restrepo Ochoa. The Ochoa brothers became powerful Medellin DTO leaders in the 1970s and 1980s and were relatives of Fabio Restrepo Ochoa (Castillo, 1987, p.52). Gomez Lopez used his pre-existing contacts with Bogotá-based emerald traffickers to utilize their Mexican networks for the sale and distribution of cocaine.<sup>41</sup> The Gomez Lopez/Escobar Hernandez/Restrepo Ochoa trafficking organization was dismantled in 1976 after U.S. authorities disrupted its networks. Gomez Lopez later left the business, but new traffickers took over the smuggling networks while he was detained for a year on a minor charge.

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<sup>41</sup> In the 1970s politically, Gomez Lopez was affiliated with the Conservative Party and contributed to its congressional campaigns. In 1974 he is said to contribute to the unsuccessful political campaign of Conservative presidential candidate, Alvaro Gomez Hurtado (Salazar, 2001, p.53).



## Social Events

Two of the most influential social events that led to the rise of illicit drug trafficking organizations was Colombian immigration to the United States and the change in demand for cocaine among international consumers.

During the 1960 and 1970s Colombians immigrated to the United States. Some immigrants from Medellin or Cali formed hubs in cities like Miami, New York and Los Angeles, and became key personnel in receiving and distributing drugs in these cities. Dealing with fellow Colombian nationals reduced the risk that authorities could infiltrate trafficking networks (Thoumi, 1994).

A change in demand for illicit drugs was another external social factor that influenced the rise of the illicit drug business in Colombia. Because of the limited supply of cocaine in the 1970s, and its increased popularity in American society, the wholesale price of cocaine was more expensive than marijuana. A 1977 *Newsweek* magazine article titled "The Cocaine Scene" depicts the early trends in the consumption of cocaine in the United States:

Among hostesses in the smart sets of Los Angeles and New York, a little cocaine, like Dom Perignon and beluga caviar, is now de rigueur at dinners. Some party-givers pass it around along with the canapés on silver trays; some fill ashtrays with cocaine and set them on the table. Others dispense it more grudgingly. "Hostesses say it ruins appetites," says one Hollywood partygoer, "and they get upset to see their guests playing with the beef Wellington" (Steele et al., 1977).

The *Newsweek* article depicts how cocaine was a status drug of the rich and famous which consequently increased the demand. In interviews conducted by the U.S. public television program, PBS's *Frontline*, traffickers like the Ochoa brothers and George

Jung<sup>42</sup> commented that the popularization of cocaine in Hollywood and among the rich, increased the marketability of the drug for them:

**Frontline:** But did you ever sense that you were getting a lot of free advertising in the United States--in Hollywood movies, in magazines--in the way it was portrayed as a glamour drug?

**Juan David Ochoa:** Yes, of course. It was given publicity because it's consumed by people of high status in society, and that gives you publicity. That made it actually sell more" (*Frontline*, 2000b).

**George Jung:** It became an accepted product, just like marijuana. I mean Madison Avenue promoted cocaine. The movie industry. The record industry. I mean, if you were well to do and you were a jet-setter, it was okay to snort cocaine. I mean Studio 54 in New York, everybody was snorting cocaine, everybody was laughing and having a good time and snorting cocaine. I don't think that the government of the United States had any idea what the hell was really happening until it was too late... Because there's a mindset in this country that it's okay for upper class white America to do drugs and it's okay and they shouldn't be punished severely for it. If you're from the ghetto or what have you and you do drugs, then you should be punished severely. The government allowed the media and the record industry and the movie industry to promote [cocaine] and nobody ever stood up. Nobody ever said no to this" (*Frontline*, 2000c).

As cocaine became a "status drug," it became a highly desired commodity, because the "status label" led to an increase in its price, profitability, and production.

### Technological Events

Overall technological innovations helped traffickers because technological innovations contributed to the development of drug trafficking in Colombia. Airplanes, cellular phones, radar equipment facilitated trade. Moreover, as DTOs became wealthier, they were able to use the latest technology to hide or transport illegal drugs, which continued increase their wealth.

The technology to refine cocaine was not complicated or expensive; the barriers to entry into the business were low. The low barriers to entry allowed a number of actors to participate in the drug trade as it became more popularized. In the beginning of cocaine trafficking the transportation and shipment of illicit drugs was not complex

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<sup>42</sup> George Jung was a close associate of Carlos Lehder and a pilot for Medellin-based DTOs.

because packages were small and only required hidden compartments in bags, pieces of luggage, or in clothing.

As demand grew and traffickers became wealthier, DTO leaders were able to create industrial sized refineries in remote jungle areas of Colombia that were difficult to detect (Lee, 1989, p. 30; Clawson and Lee, 1996, p. 38-39). Once traffickers were capable of shipping larger quantities transportation and communication became more complex. Cocaine was often hidden in secret compartments or, with the aid of advanced technology, transformed into book pages, statues and foodstuffs. Initially, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, it was the use of small Cessna planes that allowed DTOs to increase their shipment capacity and dramatically increase their wealth. Some of the technological innovations that were used by traffickers, before they became more affordable and used by the general population, included cellular phones and radar equipment for planes and boats.

Technology also was also useful for authorities in their surveillance of air traffic and coastal areas. Greater surveillance of the Caribbean in the mid to late 1980s led traffickers to move their routes to Central America. Greater surveillance at airports led DTOs to use more precautions when sending mules or small shipments in packages.

Overall, technology enhanced cocaine traffic and allowed drug trafficking organizations to avoid authorities and increase their capacity to make profit, which in turn provided DTOs with economic and political power.

#### State's Legal Parameters

The discussion on how a state's legal parameters affects the growth of Colombian DTOs focuses on the issue of money laundering because lax laws allowed DTOs to

obtain great wealth. On the international side, the United States government, which had heralded a war on heroin in the 1960s, was not controlling the traffic of cocaine in the 1970s, even though a prohibition on the trade and consumption of this drug was in place. Lax regulation on drug traffic transferred over to the financial sector. Since international counternarcotics efforts were centered on heroin instead of cocaine, authorities were unaware that millions of dollars were being filtered in the financial system, which allowed for the growth of DTOs in Colombia.

In the 1960s, the absence of strong laws indirectly allowed for the creation of loopholes in banking procedures in Colombia and permitted monetary transactions without governmental regulation. However, money-laundering laws were weak not only in Colombia but also internationally. Traffickers were able to smuggle American dollars into Colombia through financial institutions, such as American banks, off-shore banks in the Caribbean, banks with secrecy laws in countries like Switzerland, Luxemburg, and Panama, and *casas de cambio* (money exchange/transfer stores).<sup>43</sup> Most of these institutions were not prepared in the late 1970s and early 1980s to prevent drug traffickers from using their services to launder money, and many bankers did not want to prevent these funds from being deposited.

Carlos Toro, who worked with trafficker Carlos Lehder, said he would often meet with legal bank representatives to discuss narco-dollar deposits (*Frontline* 2000). The money would be easily wired to Colombian accounts where it was further laundered (Chepesiuk, 2003, p. 90). The Gilberto Rodriguez Orejuela brothers of the Cali DTO and

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<sup>43</sup> Money laundering through money exchange stores is still a problem. In April 2008, Wachovia refused to do business with these stores because they sent a lot of unaccounted money to Mexico. The money is believed the proceeds from Mexican DTOs, which are using stores to laundering money.

Jorge Ochoa bought the First Interamericas Bank in Panama with the objective of laundering drug proceeds. Manuel Noriega, Panama's military leader, would take a percentage for every dollar laundered throughout the country's banking system (Castillo, 1991, p. 115; Lee, 1990, p. 181).

Not until 1980, after the launch of Operation Swordfish, a DEA money laundering operation, did the U.S. government place restrictions on the amount of money that could be declared when sending or receiving wires, and when depositing money in U.S. bank accounts (Castillo, 1987, p. 171). After December 1980, amounts greater than \$10,000 had to be declared. The owner of proceeds greater than \$10,000 dollars had to justify how he/she earned the money and also had to justify these funds to a banking institution and the government through Currency Transaction Receipts (CTRs). Such regulation was done to prevent money laundering in banks, and it reduced large deposits from entering the financial system, which in turn left traffickers with the problem of legalizing and being able to actually receive their profits.<sup>44</sup> However, traffickers devised ways to circumvent restrictions by using different mechanisms such as what is popularly known as the "smurf system"<sup>45</sup> (Chepesiuk, 2003, p. 90). In the "smurf system" a number of people were hired in the United States and in Colombia to deposit, send, and eventually withdraw small quantities of money that would be less than \$10,000 dollars.

Money laundering was also facilitated through the use of monetary policies. In Colombia, presidential administrations with the objective of strengthening Colombia's

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<sup>44</sup> Yet, this declaration in the end became a way to launder \$10,000 dollars at a time. The customs form used to declare the proceeds could be used to legalize small amounts of cash. If the person was ever audited he/she could show that these small \$10,000 dollar amounts were declared so they were legal.

<sup>45</sup> The "smurf system" is how the system is popularly known, as it refers to the popular 1980s cartoon "The Smurfs," which were essentially a community of blue little characters with different roles.

international monetary reserves have unintentionally facilitated the laundering of illicit money by implementing economic policies that would allow citizens to exchange large amounts of dollars for pesos. Tax amnesties were a type of economic policy was popularly known in Colombia as *la ventanilla siniestra* (sinister window) and it legalized large proceeds without the need to report their origin. Throughout the years, various presidential administrations have used similar techniques regardless of political party affiliation. For example, during the Belsario Betancur Presidency, Law 9 of 1983 implemented a big dollar exchange amnesty due to an economic crisis, which needed foreign exchange reserves; Law 75 of 1986 Article 50 and Law 49 of 1990 during the presidencies of Virgilio Barco's and Cesar Gaviria's respectively, gave exchange amnesties. Law 49 of 1990 allowed Colombians abroad to deposit money in Colombia without much control, so in trying to prevent capital flight the government encouraged the laundering of drug proceeds. In 2008, during Alvaro Uribe's presidency, the increase in oil prices and the international devaluation of the U.S. dollar, led the Colombian central bank to buy dollars with the intent of stabilizing its price vis-à-vis the Colombian peso, which was becoming overvalued. The use of this monetary strategy was implemented so that Colombian exports would not become expensive in the international market. However, buying dollars unintentionally benefited traffickers, because it allowed their profits to enter the market with relative ease.

Law enforcement, during the "Golden Era" of drug trafficking from 1969 to 1984,<sup>46</sup> was practically non-existent in Colombia and abroad. In many cases police

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<sup>46</sup> The time period of this so-called "golden era" starts with Operation Intercept that moved the marijuana traffic from Mexico to Colombia. The "golden era" ends with the assassination of Minister of Justice Rodrigo Lara Bonilla, who is assassinated in April 1984, and which started the persecution of DTO leaders.

forces knew who the traffickers were, where they lived, and where they operated, but there was little enforcement of laws to stop nascent drug trafficking organizations.<sup>47</sup> The high concentration of wealth obtained by the illicit drug business, gave traffickers the power to bribe judicial and enforcement agencies. Newspapers reported the arrest of traffickers, but they were released either on legal technicalities or because they escaped from jail (Castillo, 1987). Therefore, even when select representatives of the judicial system were able to obtain prosecutions for drug traffickers, other more powerful elements would use bribes to pay off politicians, judges, and the police to look the other way.

International enforcement was also weak. According to George Jung,<sup>48</sup> a pilot who worked with Carlos Lehder and who was a pioneer in the marijuana and cocaine drug traffic in the 1970s and 1980s, the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) was not informed and/or had little funding to stop cocaine traffic in its early years:

At that time you have to remember also that DEA was really not on top of what was going on in the Caribbean. I mean, they were offloading huge motherships constantly out there off the Bahamas and off the coast of Florida day and night and as far as aircraft coming and going they really didn't have the equipment or the manpower to do anything... I think that they knew about it but they didn't think it was that much of a really major problem and they just couldn't get the funding anyway because nobody believed it and nobody really cared (*Frontline*, 2000).

The lax enforcement of anti-narcotic laws in the 1970s and early 1980s allowed the cocaine business to grow and develop. Law enforcement officials corroborate George Jung's opinion of law enforcement at the time. In an interview with journalist Ron Chepesiuk, Ken Robinson an ex-member of the New York Enforcement Task Force

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<sup>47</sup> Fabio Castillo's journalistic work in *Los Jinetes de la Cocaína* has an appendix which he obtained from the Colombian police in 1987 with the names, profession, and addresses of known drug traffickers, their boats, airplanes, and air strips, yet little was done in the 1970s and early 1980s to confiscate trafficker assets.

<sup>48</sup> The movie "Blow" stars Johnny Depp and is a biography of George Jung's life.

(NYDETF) asserts that the DEA efforts in the 1970s concentrated on combating heroin because cocaine was thought of as a “small time” drug. Moreover, government policy documents in the 1970s during the Gerald Ford Presidency believed that cocaine was not a problem, because it did not result in crime or hospital emergency room admissions. Instead a Task Force organized by the Ford Administration concluded that the focus should be on heroin, amphetamines, and mixed barbiturates (Chepesiuk, 2003, p. 31).

The weak legal system in Colombia and abroad contributed to the rise of DTOs because it created an opportunity for them to do business. Lack of regulation in the different aspects of the business from the acquisition of drugs, the transportation, and finally the laundering of drug proceeds, allowed traffickers to become wealthy and politically powerful, primarily because it was easy for them to remain in business.

#### Individual Preferences of State Officials

On a social level, at the beginning of the drug trade, most of Colombian society was unaware of or indifferent to the level of economic and political power that was being amassed by trafficking organizations. Colombian society did not foresee that the drug trade had negative consequences such as violence, corruption, and addiction. The society focused more on the economic benefits of the drug trade such as the influx of dollars to the economy. Although society enjoyed the monetary benefits of the trade, drug traffickers were frowned upon by elites largely because of the differences in social class and education.

The writer Gonzalo Guillen, a journalist who met with then congressman Pablo Escobar, while traveling to Spain to cover Felipe Gonzalez’s inauguration as Prime Minister, pejoratively refers to Pablo Escobar’s physical appearance:



I spoke of generalities with a funny speaking *antioqueño*<sup>49</sup> man, who had a sneaky look in his eyes, wore sneakers, jeans and a silk shirt with prints that were annoyingly flashy. It was extravagant that this common individual who looked like a crook would travel representing an official committee... I did not see the man again until three days later... I recognized Escobar because of his black, greasy, and curly hair, which would fall on the right side of his face and because of his primitive mustache... (Guillén, 2007).

Such disdain for traffickers was expressed by traditional elites throughout Colombia, because traffickers although wealthy, were not considered to have the socially ascribed status, education, manners, or taste. A popular anecdote involving Jose Santacruz Londoño, a Cali based trafficker, relates how Santacruz was denied entrance to a Cali social club called *El Club Campestre*. Although Santacruz had enough money to buy a membership, he did not have the pedigree.<sup>50</sup> In response, Santacruz constructed an exact replica of the social club's building for himself and his friends just to mock the *Club Campestre's* directors (Castillo, 1987; Chepesiuk, 2003, p. 68; Rodriguez, 2007, p. 165).

On a political level, elites saw drug trafficking at this time as a problem of consumer nations such as the United States and Europe. President Belisario Betancur was very vocal on this issue and towards the beginning of his term in 1982, he refused to extradite nationals for trafficking based on a nationalist argument (Kavass, 1990, p. 157). U.S. Ambassador to Colombia Lewis Tambs who served during the mid-1980s in an interview with PBS's *Frontline* comments on Colombian society's perception of the drug trade:

The Colombians felt that it was not a Colombian problem. First of all, is that they didn't use it and, basically, it was going to the consumers in the United States. They were making money.

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<sup>49</sup> An antioqueño is a man from the department of Antioquia, of which the capital is Medellin.

<sup>50</sup> The Rodriguez Orejuela brother's in Cali and the Ochoa brothers in Medellin were also socially discriminated against. The Rodriguez Orejuela brothers entered a few social clubs, but their membership at the Club Riviera and Club Campestre were revoked once Gilberto Rodriguez Orejuela was arrested for trafficking in Spain (Rodriguez, 2007, p. 165). The Ochoa brothers were not able to enroll their children in prestigious schools in Medellin, so they opted to construct a bilingual school for their children (This author's interview with the wife of a trafficker, 2005).

And it was a U.S. problem, not a Colombian problem... the fact is, if our people did not consume this, they would not produce it. That's just the reality of the equations of the free market, right?" (*Frontline*, 1995).

When Juan David Ochoa a member of Medellin-based DTOs is asked whether the cocaine trade was accepted in Colombia he replies, "It wasn't properly accepted, but nobody ever said anything about it" (*Frontline*, 2000). Due to this indifference, many politicians in Colombia turned a "blind eye" to the drug trade and in some cases politicians collaborated with members of drug trafficking organizations to influence policy in favor of trafficker interests.

As time passed, society became aware of the dangers associated with drug traffic such as drug addiction, crime, narco-terrorism, and paramilitarism. However, society and politicians tacitly accepted traffickers because of the legal and illegal business DTOs generated, primarily because DTOs became an industry that provided employment for many people.

### State Autonomy

The Two-level Game Model devised by Robert Putnam in his article "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two Level Games," is useful because of its focus on a government's executive branch. The focus on the executive branch allows the researcher to examine both, international and domestic, influences that affect the executive's ability to reach an agreement and/or carry out a policy linked to an agreement. Specifically, a two-level game model argues that, in democracies, state autonomy plays a role in determining whether an international agreement will be reached or implemented. The less social constraints a chief of government has at a domestic level, the greater the autonomy enjoyed and the easier it is for the executive branch to reach an agreement with

an international actor. Alternatively, if an executive is able to acquire more autonomy from international pressures, then it is easier for the chief of government to enact policies that appease the demands of domestic groups.

In the case of counternarcotics efforts, Latin American presidencies have to negotiate how counternarcotics treaties and efforts will be implemented at an international level, but also at a domestic level. At international levels, Latin American presidencies negotiate with the government of the United States to reach agreements on issues such as: economic aid, military aid, extradition, fumigation of illegal crops, maritime space and surveillance, and immigration, among others. When negotiating an international agreement, Latin American presidencies also have to consider domestic pressures from institutions or social actors. Some of the domestic actors that can be involved in the negotiation of an international agreement can include the business community, environmentalists, military and police personnel, other branches of government, and illegal interest groups such as drug trafficking organizations.

A two-level game analysis has been used in studying counternarcotics efforts in Colombia. Tatiana Matthiesen, in *The Political Art of Conciliation*, analyzed the Virgilio Barco and the Cesar Gaviria presidencies. She compared the implementation of Barco's confrontational counternarcotics policies against DTOs to Gaviria's conciliatory counternarcotics policies with DTOs. Matthiesen's main argument highlighted the ability of the Cesar Gaviria government to create a turning point in Colombian counternarcotics efforts, as his presidency sought more independence from U.S. government pressure to implement a conciliatory policy with DTOs, which would establish negotiations with this illegal sector in an effort to reduce violence.

Specifically, during Gaviria's tenure, Government-DTO negotiations were centered on agreeing to waive DTO leader extradition to the United States and compromising on the terms of surrender, if DTO leaders would agree to turn themselves over to authorities. Matthiesen's analysis focuses on Cesar Gaviria's role as a great conciliator of international and domestic pressures, because Gaviria created a domestic solution to the problem of urban violence in Colombia. Gaviria believed that whereas narco-trafficking was an international problem that the international community had to resolve, narco-terrorism was a Colombian problem that could be resolved through negotiation. In Matthiesen's view, Gaviria adeptly sold the negotiation process to the George H. W. Bush Administration by riding the coattails of Virgilio Barco's confrontational policy with DTOs and promising to continue to disrupt the illicit drug trade, implementing a series of early and successful anti-drug efforts (such as arresting traffickers, intercepting shipments, grounding airplanes, confiscating properties, and reforming the justice system), and by gradually changing from a policy of confrontation to a policy of conciliation (Matthiesen, 2000, p. 264-267). Within a month of taking office, Cesar Gaviria was able to obtain the necessary trust from U.S. authorities to confidently implement his policy of conciliation.

Matthiesen's research is an in-depth historical analysis, which presents the dynamics between U.S.-Colombian relations on the implementation of counternarcotics efforts. However, Matthiesen's two-level game analysis has some limitations related to the model and the period of time chosen for the study. First, since the model's focus is the executive branch, it highlights the decision making power of the executive branch in its handling of international and domestic influences, but at the same time minimizes the

impact of very powerful international and domestic actors, which were more powerful than Gaviria's government—the U.S. presidency of George H.W. Bush and Medellín-based DTOs. The power of these two actors greatly reduced President Gaviria's political autonomy on the issue of extradition, because while the Bush Administration was pursuing a policy of escalating the "Drug War," Medellín-based DTOs were pressuring for a ban on extradition and favorable terms of surrender.

Even though Matthiesen showed that Gaviria obtained more political maneuverability from U.S. government officials in the implementation of counternarcotics policies, the two-level game model assumes that Presidents Gaviria and Bush can negotiate on equal terms, when in fact the leaders have great economic and political power disparities. The disparities always favored the more powerful country. Starting in 1989, during President Virgilio Barco's tenure, newly elected President George H. W. Bush had already created a more cooperative agenda, which escalated the drug war by increasing funding to Andean countries. Whereas in 1987 Colombia received \$11.55 million dollars towards counternarcotics efforts, the Bush administration increased counternarcotics aid by giving \$75 million dollars in 1989, which included a \$65 million dollar emergency aid contribution,<sup>51</sup> given right after the August 1989 assassination of Presidential Candidate Luis Carlos Galán (Walker, 1996, p. 209; Crandall, 2000, p. 32). Historian, William O. Walker, shows that by the February 1990

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<sup>51</sup> This aid package was a symbolic gesture because in reality the gist of the emergency aid was aimed at helping the military and was composed of conventional military equipment. The aid was not geared to the police and did not include munitions to pursue DTOs such as surveillance equipment, weapons, bulletproof vests, armored vehicles, and the like (Walker, 1996, p. 209). The military aid reflects that the Bush Administration, although sympathetic to President Barco's plight, was still in a Cold War mentality. The Administration was sending funds to militarily protect U.S. companies in Colombia from left wing insurgents, rather than sending funds to the police for counternarcotics efforts.

Cartagena Drug Summit, George H.W. Bush had reached a more broadminded appreciation of the illicit drug trade in which he acknowledged and shared responsibility on the issue. The policy required the United States to work on consumer demand and for Andean countries to work on the supply-side of cocaine production (Walker, 1996).<sup>52</sup>

During the Gaviria government, bilateral relations between the United States and Colombia centered first on counternarcotics efforts and second on economic issues, since the Cold War era was over, and at the time, counter insurgent efforts were not as imperative. President Bush increased economic aid and continued to increase military and counternarcotics aid as laid out by the Cartagena Summit, thus increasing funding in 1991 to \$126 million dollars (Crandall, 2000, p. 32). By increasing its support to Andean countries, the Bush Administration sought to implement a more efficient anti-drug policy than that implemented by Ronald Reagan's administration,<sup>53</sup> which provided little funding and failed to recognize the human toll accrued by Colombian society as a consequence of a policy of confrontation with DTOs. The interaction between the Gaviria and Bush Presidencies was cordial and U.S. government officials acknowledge that Bush personally liked Cesar Gaviria, so the Bush Administration was tolerant of Gaviria's policy of conciliation with DTOs: "George Bush loved him so we had to work with him even though we thought he was soft on drugs" (Crandall, 2000, p. 146). Gaviria's adeptness in pursuing a policy of conciliation relied in reassuring the Bush administration

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<sup>52</sup> At the Cartagena Summit, Bush established the Andean Regional Initiative to open U.S. markets for Andean goods to increase revenue for these countries, so they could fund their counternarcotics efforts.

<sup>53</sup> The Reagan Administration placed the issue of extradition and counternarcotics efforts atop of its agenda with Colombia. When Jorge Luis Ochoa was released by a judge in 1987, the Reagan Administration criticized Virgilo Barco's counternarcotics efforts and reprimanded the Barco Administration (the first to administer harsh anti-narcotics efforts amidst great DTO leader resistance) by refusing to grant Colombia's entrance into General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and by denying visas to Colombian citizens among other measures (Matthiesen, 2000).

that he would continue to implement counternarcotics efforts, despite of government-DTO leader negotiations that his government was going to undertake.

Although Gaviria was able to obtain George H.W. Bush's trust, the problem with Gaviria's conciliation policy was that he lacked the necessary political autonomy to broker a negotiation that would be favorable for the Colombian government. DTO leaders had the capacity to fund political campaigns for the 1991 constitutional assembly, to use violence to coerce a negotiation process, and to mold public opinion. Even Gaviria's decrees, written to establish a legal parameter for the surrender of DTO leaders, were written in response to DTO offensives. For example, Gaviria created Decree 2040 of September 5, 1990 in reaction to the August 30<sup>th</sup> kidnapping of journalist Diana Turbay, ex-president Julio Cesar Turbay Ayala's daughter, by the group *Los Extraditables*—a group led and funded by DTO leaders. The Diana Turbay kidnapping was the start of a campaign<sup>54</sup> (referred to as the Liberal kidnapping campaign) that led to backdoor negotiations with DTO leaders plans for their surrender to authorities. The hostage situation reduced Gaviria's political autonomy because he was unable to oppose DTO negotiation terms without fear for the safety of hostages. Consequently, by the end of the process, the Treaty on Extradition was constitutionally invalidated. Pablo Escobar, who was allowed to construct his own prison *La Catedral*, and choose his own prison guards, "surrendered" the same day. As news of Escobar's prison lifestyle and of executions within the prison surfaced, Gaviria ordered Escobar's transfer but Pablo Escobar escaped. Retrospectively, Cesar Gaviria has acknowledged that the government

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<sup>54</sup> The Liberal kidnapping campaign resulted in a ten-person hostage situation whose victims were relatives of President Gaviria's and colleagues within the Liberal party

should not have given so many concessions to Pablo Escobar, “we made a huge mistake (*La Catedral*), we underestimated the capacity of Escobar for corruption and intimidation” (Keane, 2003).

The other slight limitation of Matthiesen’s research with regards to the issue of political autonomy is the time span of the study. Although her research on counternarcotics policy is an extensive in depth analysis of the dynamics of foreign policy and its domestic constraints, an analysis of two presidencies does not provide a historical trend regarding the Colombian presidency’s political autonomy in the implementation of extraditions. Matthiesen argues that Gaviria was successful because he conciliated international and domestic demands to reduce narco-terrorism. However, even though Gaviria was able to convince U.S. authorities that his presidency would continue to combat the illicit drug industry, while simultaneously establishing negotiations with DTO leaders, his success in implementing two incompatible policies was short lived. Gaviria’s policy of conciliation only lasted for about a year and ten months from September 1990, when negotiations with DTO leaders began, to July 1992 when Pablo Escobar escaped from his own prison. The policy of conciliation, as implemented by Gaviria’s administration, instantly became a policy of confrontation with DTOs, which became a year and a half long manhunt for Pablo Escobar. Immediately after the *La Catedral* fiasco, President Gaviria returned to a policy of *total* counternarcotics cooperation with the United States, which was the policy that Presidents before Gaviria practiced, and that Presidents who followed Gaviria continued; thus leading to a permanent re-institutionalizing of counternarcotics policies including the



Treaty on Extradition, which was officially reinstated in 1997 with Ernesto Samper's presidency.

A comprehensive historical approach of the impact of presidential political autonomy on DTOs would have to look at presidencies in the period from at least 1979-2010. The starting point would be 1979, which was the year that the Treaty on Extradition was established between the United States and Colombia. This was also the first major counternarcotics agreement between the two countries. The existing power disparity between the United States and Colombia has to be considered because of the capacity of the United States government to set the agenda in bilateral relations. As the policy has developed, certain counternarcotics elements have become standard parts of each presidency's policy. The Colombian executive has little power to sway away from U.S. counternarcotics demands, because if they do, the United States government has many diplomatic and economic tools at its disposal to sanction Colombian governments, such as the annual counternarcotics cooperation certification process. Consequently, Colombian presidencies enjoy little to no political autonomy to oppose U.S. government counternarcotics demands. Political autonomy, in this case, examines the ability of Colombian presidents to follow U.S. counternarcotics efforts independent of domestic opposition. A high degree of autonomy would indicate that the president enjoys enough independence or support from domestic actors where he or she is able to carry out a policy or make an international agreement without domestic constraints. A moderate level of autonomy indicates that the president has some independence or support from some domestic actors, but not enough to implement a policy. A low degree of autonomy

indicates that the president has little to no autonomy to carry out a policy because of great domestic opposition.

Of the seven Colombian presidents between 1979-2010 that have had to implement counternarcotics efforts and enforce the Treaty on Extradition, most have enjoyed high to moderate levels of autonomy on the issue of extradition. With regards to the issue of extradition, five of seven presidents Julio Cesar Turbay Ayala, Belisario Betancur, Ernesto Samper, Andres Pastrana, and Alvaro Uribe Velez have all enjoyed high levels of political autonomy on extradition because they faced little to no opposition on the implementation of extradition from domestic groups. In contrast, Presidents Virgilio Barco and Cesar Gaviria experienced moderate to low levels of political autonomy on the issue of extradition because they faced higher levels of domestic opposition, which was illustrated by public opinion polls, newspaper editorials, public official statements, and by violent DTO attacks on political elites, government institutions, and on civilians.<sup>55</sup> Moreover, only three presidents: Belisario Betancur, Cesar Gaviria, and Alvaro Uribe Velez have tried to sway away from U.S. counternarcotics efforts by opposing extradition or using extradition as a discretionary negotiation tool. All failed in their efforts and eventually returned to a policy of complete alignment with U.S. counternarcotics policy. Betancur opposed the treaty on nationalist grounds. He had some leeway to refrain from enforcing the Treaty on Extradition because the Cold War was still the more important issue in the region so the U.S. government did not impose sanctions. However, when Betancur's Minister of Justice Rodrigo Lara Bonilla was assassinated, his policy on extradition changed and he implemented the Treaty without

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<sup>55</sup> this evidence will become evident in the section on cohesion and representativeness.

strong domestic opposition. Gaviria and Uribe obtained tentative support from U.S. Administrations in the use of extradition as a discretionary tool, coincidentally, from the father and son presidencies of George H.W. Bush and George W. Bush. But both, Gaviria and Uribe, eventually aligned with U.S. policy. President Gaviria completely aligned with U.S. policy after Escobar escaped *La Catedral*. President Uribe tried using the extradition policy as a discretionary policy to negotiate the demobilization of paramilitary leaders of the *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia*, but quickly extradited the paramilitary heads once they were publicly divulging their relationship with politicians who belonged to his political coalition. Uribe extradited these leaders without domestic opposition.

Political autonomy is the strongest tool at the disposal of Colombian governments to implement counternarcotics efforts and attack DTO leaders and their organizations. This is especially true while Colombia's legal institutions remain weak.

From this observation, it can be hypothesized that when state autonomy is high, DTOs find it difficult to mobilize politically against the government. They may participate in politics by funding political campaigns, but it is unlikely that they will use violence to challenge state institutions. On the other hand, when state autonomy is low, DTOs find it easier to challenge state authority, including the use of violence to challenge the state on issues that they seek to affect. As it will be discussed in this project's section on group cohesion and representativeness, Medellin-based DTOs were actually able to lower presidential autonomy by shaping the public debate on extradition through the use of violence.

Finally, although the political autonomy of a president does not affect the formation of drug trafficking organizations, it does affect the longevity of organizations

once their leaders become known and established, because once they are known, they can be persecuted and potentially extradited. Over the years, the high political autonomy that Colombian presidents have enjoyed with regards to the issue of extradition, has led this policy to become institutionalized by subsequent governments. Its practice has not been challenged, since Pablo Escobar's escape from prison in 1992, because this event epitomized the weakness of legal institutions to enforce laws on wealthy and powerful traffickers. In cases where legal institutions are weak, and as long as public opinion continues to believe that legal institutions are weak, it is likely that the autonomy of the presidency to extradite nationals will continue to be high, because the only authority that can effectively be enforced, is that of the international authority requesting the traffickers.

### State Capacity

The Colombian state has been unable to enforce the rule of law throughout its territory especially in rural areas where there is little state presence in the form of police stations, education facilities, hospitals, or courts (Garcia, 2008). Reduced state presence creates a "problem of stateness" (Linz and Stepan, 1996), where state institutions are not able to prevent people from using violence to resolve conflicts. Because the state is unable to permeate the entire Colombian territory it is not able to impose and enforce stricter laws to drastically reduce high levels of impunity and violence.<sup>56</sup> The "problem of stateness" is one of the main and direct causes for the rise of illicit interest groups

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<sup>56</sup> In the late 1990s and early 2000s, Colombia had a homicide rate of around 70 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants (UNODC, 2011). By 2008 the homicide rate was reduced to 33 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants, which was the same homicide rate as in 1988 (Desde Inicio, 2009). To put these numbers into perspective, in 2010 Honduras peaked the homicide list with 88 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants and Mexico's homicide rate was 18 per 100,000 the highest since the government started implementing counternarcotics efforts in 2004 under President Felipe Calderon (UNODC, 2011).

(IIGs) such as the Medellin-based drug trafficking organizations (DTOs), because the lack of law enforcement allows non-state actors to rise and operate without constraints.

When the marijuana traffic moved to Colombia from Mexico in the 1970s, the areas where the traffic established was suitable for growing and smuggling marijuana, because areas in Northern Colombia had a reduced state supervision, and geographically Colombia's coastline was close enough to the American market via smuggling routes throughout the Caribbean; the proximity of Colombia to the United States' coastline allowed small planes packed with drugs to travel across the Caribbean (*Frontline*, 2000). The unsupervised marijuana smuggling networks became useful once cocaine traffic was established in the mid 1970s.

Colombia's rugged geography also exacerbated the "problem of stateness," and contributed to the rise of drug smuggling in the country. The mountainous terrain and the Amazon canopy of this large country kept many rural areas isolated, making it difficult for local and national governments to monitor (Thoumi, 1994:179-178). Consequently, it was easy for DTOs to construct airstrips, foster coca crop cultivation, and build refineries in isolated areas. The terrains were virtual "no man's land" with little to no state authority and where non-state actors like paramilitaries and guerrillas were able to establish their own rule of law, while benefiting from different aspects of the drug trade.

The tradition of using violence to resolve conflicts, as established by the civil conflict known as *La Violencia* in the 1950s, led Colombian traffickers to be ruthless in the manner that they conducted business especially in cities (Thoumi, 1994). Many rural émigrés to urban centers like Medellin used violence instead of courts to resolve social conflicts in poor neighborhoods. The neighborhoods lacked police posts, and eventually

became hotbeds for traffickers and hit men known as *sicarios*, when the cocaine trade became established in the 1970s and 1980s. Hit men usually belonged to gangs, which controlled entire neighborhoods oversaw different aspects of the illicit drug business. Some gangs or *bandas* enforced their style of security on the population of the neighborhood and delimited the entrance of authorities, people, and vehicles into the gang's neighborhood (Salazar, 1990). To establish neighborhood security, gangs developed the practice of extortion and charged businesses, public transportation, and commercial vehicles a fee for operating in their neighborhood.

Moreover, while doing fieldwork for this project I was able to observe how gang leaders in their early twenties function like city managers, within their neighborhood. Their role as neighborhood leaders evolves from the fact that gang leaders become authority figures as a consequence of their power over the control of violence within their geographical area. So even though street gangs are involved in a high degree of illegal activity, as "neighborhood leaders," gang members also engage in legal activities such as arranging that public utility companies service a neighborhood. In the case of the Pablo Escobar neighborhood, the gang leader arranged with the local water company for the necessary tubing to service the neighborhood's water supply.

In sum, since the whole process of establishing city settlements took place without state supervision, state law enforcement institutions unintentionally ceded the monopoly over the use of force to gangs. The process of re-establishing rule of law in these neighborhoods has been cyclical and has depended on the power struggles that take place among DTO leaders and on the haphazard incursions of law enforcement into gang controlled neighborhoods to put down flare ups of violence.

In sum, the geographical closeness to the U.S. market, the lack of state presence in rural and urban areas in terms of law enforcement allowed the non-state actors to establish their own areas of power. Drug trafficking organizations took advantage of lax law enforcement to plant illegal crop, create industrial-size refineries, to fund paramilitary organizations, and to use urban gangs for the settling of trafficking disputes and other DTO related activities.

### Analysis

A central question this project set out to answer was under what conditions do illicit interest groups, such as DTOs, flourish/develop? For this purpose this Hypothesis 1 was developed to explain the relationship between the external environment and the development of DTOs. It hypothesized that,

The presence of favorable external variables (occurring within a larger political environment) is more likely to influence the formation and development of illicit interest groups, and a group's formation and development should follow external events.

Overall, the analysis of external variables provides evidence supporting the above hypothesis. Political, social, economic, technological, factors led to development of DTOs. The indifference of government officials, the lack state capacity, and the reduced states autonomy also influenced DTOs to flourish and become powerful.

The implementation of the “War on Drugs” first in the 1960s and later in the 1980s has attempted to curve illicit drugs at their source, to prevent drugs from reaching U.S. borders. However, the unintended consequence of the U.S. counternarcotics policy since the 1960s has been the rise of Colombian DTOs and the spread of illicit drug traffic throughout Latin America. Since cocaine became an illicit commodity in high demand, it transformed into a high priced commodity not because of its lack of supply, but because

of the risk involved in smuggling the drug to major markets like the United States and Europe. The high profit margin gained from smuggling cocaine opened a profitable opportunity for traffickers who had experience with underground smuggling networks. Many of the environmental and institutional conditions that led to the rise of the illicit drug business in Colombia were factors that reduced the risk of conducting business. According to Thoumi, Colombians were not culturally more violent or corrupt than other citizens of the world; Colombia simply had the “best package of incentives to lower risks,” (Thoumi, 1994) which led to the growth of the illicit drug industry (Reuter, 2004).

Of the seven factors described above, six lower the risk of apprehension by authorities, which inevitably stimulated the economic development of DTOs. A weak legal system allowed traffickers to do business without the fear of being investigated or apprehended. Colombia’s geography lowered the capacity of government monitoring, and this factor decreased horizontal accountability of government officials to the central government, especially in remote areas. Colombia’s rugged geography coupled with the absence of state presence decreased state supervision, and increased the likelihood of corruption. Having a heritage of exporting smuggled goods such as emeralds decreased the risk of doing business because trustworthy business contacts were already established to smuggle cocaine through secure routes. A network of Colombian immigrants in the United States also helped reduce risks, because immigrants could be trusted to receive drugs, distribute them, and send money back to Colombia without fear that the connections would be infiltrated by U.S. law enforcement. A change in U.S. demand for cocaine as compared to marijuana became a better venture for drug traffickers because cocaine had a lower risk of being detected by anti-narcotics agents since it was less bulky.



Finally, the simple technology for refining cocaine also reduced the risk of being caught by authorities, since the refining process was cheap and easily emulated. Technological innovations also allowed traffickers to transport and hide cocaine from authorities.

Finally, external factor such as the indifference of Colombian elites to the power of the illicit drug trafficking organizations, and the lack of international focus on money laundering or even on cocaine as a “problem drug,” facilitated the growth of the cocaine industry in Colombia, because DTOs flourished under the radar for about 15 years during the “golden era” of drug traffic between 1969-1984. The economic power acquired during this period allowed traffickers to gradually increase their power vis-à-vis the government and eventually led to a decline in state autonomy, which led to destabilization of the political system and a temporal invalidation of the Extradition Treaty with the United States.

CHAPTER 4: EVALUATING 1980s-ERA MEDELLIN DRUG TRAFFICKING  
ORGANIZATIONS USING AN INTEREST GROUP MODEL: INTERNAL  
VARIABLES

As described in chapter 2, a hybrid Macro-Micro-Model has been formulated to help analyze illicit interest groups by investigating the "macro" (external environmental) variables and "micro" (internal organizational) variables relative to a given group. Chapter IV will examine aspects of the Micro-model's internal variables that influence the rise, development, and transformation of 1980s-era Medellin drug trafficking organizations.

As diagrammed in **Table 3** below, the internal variables are only part of the entire picture crafted by the model. In this chapter, we are concerned with the characteristics in the right column classified as either a pluralist or institutionalist approach. Internal factors include: membership characteristics, economic resources, group cohesion, group expertise, group size, high and low-demanders, selective incentives, and representativeness.

**Table 3: The Hybrid Macro-Micro-Model Employing Pluralist and Institutionalist Approaches**

	<b>Macro-model variables (external variables)</b>	<b>Micro-model variables (internal variables)</b>
<b>Pluralist approach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Political events</li> <li>• Economic events</li> <li>• Social events</li> <li>• Technological events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Membership characteristics</li> <li>• Resources</li> <li>• Cohesion</li> <li>• Expertise</li> <li>• Representativeness</li> </ul>
<b>Institutionalist approach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A state's legal parameters</li> <li>• Individual preferences of state officials</li> <li>• Autonomy</li> <li>• A state's capacity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Selective incentives</li> <li>• Group size</li> <li>• Existence of high- and low-demanders</li> </ul>

For the purposes of the case study, discussion of the association of Medellín-based drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) centers on a few key leaders, even though the association was known to encompass trafficking organizations all over Colombia. The leaders of the Medellín-based DTOs are: Pablo Escobar, the Ochoa Brothers, Gonzalo Rodríguez Gacha, and Carlos Lehder Rivas.

### Membership Characteristics

A discussion of the socioeconomic status and education of group members allows the measurement of homogeneity and/or specialization of an organization's membership. It is also a descriptive variable that provides a general survey of a membership's composition, historical context, and ability to influence policy. This section introduces the characteristics of major Medellín DTO leaders and employees.

#### Leadership: Pablo Escobar

In 1949 Pablo Escobar was born in Rionegro, Antioquia, a town on the outskirts of Medellín. His maternal grandfather was involved in the business of smuggling whisky. His father was a peasant and his mother a public school teacher. The family was economically disadvantaged and in the 1950s would move often because of *La Violencia*—a ten-year period of civil conflict in Colombia (1948-1958). In 1961 the family relocated in Envigado, a town south of Medellín, and settled in government housing. Escobar finished high school and after graduation attended college at the *Universidad Autónoma* where he took some accounting classes but never obtained a degree (Salazar, 2001:32-44). In his youth he also worked with his cousin Gustavo Gaviria stealing and reselling tombstones. He also stole cars and later became involved in two smuggling organizations. The first smuggling organization was run by Don

Alberto and the second was run by Alfredo “*el Padrino*” Gomez Lopez’s organization where Escobar was a gunman (Castillo, 1991, p. 50; Castro, 1996, p. 283; Salazar, 2001, p. 55). Gomez Lopez’s organization specialized in importing American cigarettes and appliances into Colombia and also had contacts with emerald smugglers in Bogotá, who exported to markets in Mexico (Castro, 1996). In an interview granted to journalist German Castro Caycedo (1987), Pablo Escobar recounted how he became involved with the cocaine business:

**Pablo Escobar:** In this country one is bred in war, I was brought up in the war, a very violent war, which was the war of Malboro (cigarettes). I swear that not even the *paisas*, unless they were bandits of that time, knew about that fight. Let’s say that is what existed before coca began, (which was the war) where the first drug traffickers came from and which created the first *sicarios* (hit men)...

It is true that Don Alfredo always was a smuggler of cigarettes, whisky, watches, and second hand pianos. He would buy these up there in the United States, then he would bring it by boat, and would smuggle it through Turbo or through Tolú. Once he brought in thirty-eight trucks. I remember the scandal that broke... That was the part of history when smugglers started going into the drug business. At that time I was working for another smuggler, Don Alberto, who was my mentor, because he was a warrior, intelligent, and resourceful...

I had just graduated from high school. Look, I have started to think about those things and it becomes clearer for me that those examples (set by the first smugglers) determined the future of my life and the life of other kids who started to live with many illusions, but who did not want to work at a factory or a store. What we saw (in those smugglers) was the opulence, plus adventure, plus the power that money brings. Or are you going to tell me that money does not provide power and fame. And you cannot tell me that there exists one single human being in this world who doesn’t like money, fame, and power, especially at that age (Castro, 1996, p. 283).

According to Pablo Escobar in this 1987 interview it was the wealth of early smugglers that motivated him to become a smuggler in spite of the violence practiced within this sector. It was through these smugglers that he learned about the profitable drug trade by working as a cargo escort and gunman. As an armed escort for smuggled cargo, Escobar became familiar with smuggling routes and as a gunman he regularly used violence to intimidate. Early smugglers taught Escobar how to manage the underground economic structure for smuggling goods. It was through Don Alberto and Gomez Lopez that he

learned to payoff customs, police, and military officers as well as the use of small town politicians to transport illegal cargos through Colombian highways (Castro, 1996). Aside from economic incentives to gain favor amongst authorities, the violent wars Escobar refers to as the “Malboro wars” taught him how to intimidate competitors. An interview I conducted in 2005 with a 1970-1980s DTO worker reveals that Pablo Escobar only rose to power because he was violent:

**DSS0040:** Escobar would terminate the small “kitchens,” (popular name for coca paste refineries) because he wanted to be the sole provider of refined cocaine. And he finished with (production in) Casquilla and Caldas. At first he would offer to buy production at a low cost, but if they wouldn’t agree to the price, he would finish their production of refined cocaine. He would finish with their owners, their workers, and the refinery itself... Pablo surpassed the Ochoas, well every trafficker had to go through him (to buy cocaine to send), so they kept their head low (Interview DSS040, 2005).

Early smugglers earned the respect of many in society because they brought in affordable imported goods desired by all social circles of society, but especially by affluent and middle class sectors that could easily afford them. Moreover, the capacity to earn absurdly large amounts of money, sufficient enough to bribe authorities, gave smugglers an untouchable aura because they provided a service to high-end clients. At the same time, state authorities were easily persuaded because smugglers provided them with alternate sources of income. Recalling how his mentor Don Alberto smuggled 32 trucks full of merchandise, Escobar described how authorities reacted when they found out:

In that ride, all of the police along the way (From Turbo to Medellin) received money. Man, at that time even the Communal Action Juntas came out and asked for money and so did the police inspectors of the surrounding villages because the shipment became general gossip the moment the cargo was unloaded from the ship, to the bongos, and loaded into the trucks... (Castro, 1996).

Respect and economic power gave Colombian smugglers a special status within the very rigid class system in which they operated. Smugglers had the ability to create jobs and

provide normally unaffordable goods at affordable prices by undermining the government's import tariffs. Finally, because of the profitability of their trade, smugglers provided an avenue for upward mobility to many Colombian's of humble origins like that of Escobar himself.

The Gomez Lopez smuggling organization based many of its operations in the *Santisima Trinidad*<sup>57</sup> neighborhood of Medellin, considered a warehouse and prostitution district (Salazar, 2001, p. 55). In the *Santisima Trinidad* neighborhood Pablo Escobar, and his cousin Gustavo Gaviria, became acquainted with early entry-level and mid-level cocaine traffickers like Carlos Lehder and Griselda Blanco.

When Carlos Lehder was released from Connecticut's Danbury prison in 1975 he contacted Pablo Escobar who at the time was smuggling a few kilos of cocaine through drug mules (Streatfeild, 2000). After the Escobar/Lehder meeting, Escobar became Lehder's cocaine provider and this connection allowed Lehder to become a key player in the transportation and selling of cocaine in the U.S. market.

Another mid-level cocaine trafficker who Escobar became acquainted with was Griselda Blanco, who was better known by U.S. law enforcement circles as the "Godmother," "the Queen of Cocaine," or the "Black Widow of Cocaine."<sup>58</sup> By 1975

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<sup>57</sup> This neighborhood is also known as Barrio Antioquia, and is located in the warehouse district right next to the Olaya Herrera International Airport, which was a central point for the import and export of smuggled goods.

<sup>58</sup> See Gugliotta and Leen (1989), Merlmestein, Max (1990), Eddy et al. (1988), Smitten (1990) and the documentaries "Cocaine Cowboys" and "Cocaine Cowboys Two" for more information on Griselda Blanco and South Florida's involvement in the illicit drug trade in general. Griselda Blanco became a mayor distributor of cocaine in Miami during the late 1970s and early 1980s. She became known as the "Black Widow of Cocaine" in the United States because she reportedly bragged that she killed one of her three husbands. Before becoming a cocaine distributor, she was a young prostitute until she married Jose Dario Trujillo who had criminal connections to organized crime (La Viuda Negra, 1994). During the early 1960s she had three children with Trujillo and became acquainted with the members of the drug business.

Griselda Blanco had already been a major cocaine distributor in New York, and in the late 1970s Blanco became a distribution leader in the Miami cocaine market. The contact between Escobar, other Medellin-based DTO leaders, and Griselda Blanco contributed to the cocaine market takeover of Miami by Medellin-based DTOs. It was in 1979 that *Time Magazine* described Miami as “Trouble in Paradise” (South Florida, 1981) because of the crime wave typified by the “Dadeland Mall massacre” where rival drug dealers opened machine gun fire on each other (Gugliotta et al., 1989, p. 10).

Once Pablo Escobar and Gustavo Gaviria became fulltime cocaine traffickers in the mid to late-1970s, they developed a business strategy that involved procuring coca paste in Peru and Ecuador, and refining and shipping it through 20-30 routes (Mollison et al., 2007, p. 56) to their distributors in the United States. By 1977, Escobar was twenty-eight, a millionaire property owner, and one of Medellin’s up-and-coming drug traffickers (Salazar, 2001). Although Escobar became rich while young, his rise within the drug business was not accidental, it was due to: learning the trade from trafficking

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Trujillo died in the late 1960s in Queens and shortly after Blanco married Alberto Bravo her second husband—a pioneer in the cocaine business, with whom she lived with in Queens, New York in 1971. By 1972 she and Bravo became wealthy distributing cocaine for “El Padrino” in Medellin (Castillo, 1987, p. 53). In 1975 U.S. authorities indicted Blanco and Bravo for smuggling cocaine to the United States and arrested members of her distribution ring (Castillo, 1987, p. 53; Lubasch, 1976). It is believed Griselda Blanco moved to Miami and Carlos Bravo returned to Colombia to avoid U.S. authorities. Soon after the U.S. government indictment, Griselda Blanco and Alberto Bravo had a personal standoff, and Blanco reportedly killed her second husband in Bogotá (Corben, 2006). In the mid to late 1970s Blanco married Dario Sepulveda her third husband, with whom she had a fourth son named Michael Corleone Sepulveda around 1977. Pablo Escobar worked for *El Padrino*’s organization in the early 1970s at the same time Griselda Blanco and Alberto Bravo were leaders of cocaine distribution in Queens, New York (Salazar, 2001, p. 47-49). Pablo Escobar and the Ochoa brothers became suppliers of cocaine for Blanco once she established herself in Miami. However, her dealings with Escobar and the Ochoas would end around 1985 because of her use of violence. She not only reportedly had her husband Dario Sepulveda killed over a child custody battle, but she also killed a first cousin of the Ochoas, Marta Ochoa Saldarriaga who was supplying Blanco with cocaine in Miami (Mermelstein, 1990; Gugliotta et al., 1989, p. 214; Smitten, 1989). These murders led major traffickers to cut Griselda Blanco out from the cocaine supply chain and Medellin DTO leaders placed a bounty on her (Mermelstein, 1990; Corben, 2006). U.S. authorities finally arrested Griselda Blanco in 1985 and she spent 20 years in prison for drug trafficking and murder until her release in 2005.



pioneers Don Alberto and Lopez Gomez, using the ruthlessness he learned as a professional hit man, forging valuable business contacts that allowed him to reach U.S. markets, leveraging the high profit margin for trafficking cocaine, and taking advantage of the weak law enforcement in Colombia and abroad.

#### Leadership: The Ochoa Brothers

The next important leaders of Medellin-based DTOs were the Ochoa brothers—Jorge Luis, Juan David, and Fabio Ochoa. The Ochoa brothers were born into a family known for breeding and training *Paso Fino* horses in Colombia. Their great-grandfather won awards for his horses and their father was a recognized horse breeder and the owner of the famous restaurant *Las Margaritas*, a place frequented by horse aficionados and traffickers. Journalistic accounts suggest that Hernando Restrepo Ochoa and Fabio Restrepo Ochoa, uncles to the Ochoa brothers and themselves pioneers of the marijuana drug business of the 1960s and early 1970s, introduced the Ochoa brothers to the drug trafficking business (Salazar, 2001; Castillo, 1987, p.65; Gugliotta et al., 1989, p. 26). Juan David and Jorge Luis Ochoa officially claim that a friend introduced them to the business (Interviews - Jorge Ochoa, 2000; Interviews - Juan David Ochoa, 2000), but it is believed that Fabio Restrepo Ochoa ceded his business to the Ochoa brothers around 1976, and shortly after—in 1978, Fabio Restrepo Ochoa was murdered (Castillo, 1987, p. 65; Gugliotta et al., 1989, p. 27).

The Ochoa brothers claim that their ranching family was wealthy so they did not enter the drug business because of economic need (Interviews - Jorge Ochoa, 2000; Salazar, 2001, p. 73-74; Castillo, 1987), but some biographical accounts suggest that Jorge Luis Ochoa, the eldest brother, went to Miami to work off debts (Salazar, 2001, p.

74). While in Miami, it is believed that Jorge Luis Ochoa discovered the profitability of the cocaine trade versus the marijuana trade. Regardless of the Ochoa brothers' economic standing, the illicit drug business provided them with an opportunity to profit. By 1978, Jorge Luis Ochoa was sending cocaine from Colombia to his youngest brother Fabio, who was stationed in Miami (Gugliotta et al., 1989; Eddy et al., 1988). Fabio Ochoa worked with Miami-based distributors Rafael Cardona and Max Mermelstein; together, the three men were in charge of managing pilots, receiving and selling cocaine shipments to distributors like Griselda Blanco, and laundering and/or sending money back to traffickers in Colombia (Mermelstein, 1990, Castillo, 1987).

During the early 1980s, the Ochoa brothers worked with Pablo Escobar, Jose Gonzalo Rodriguez Gacha and Carlos Lehder to try to consolidate the upstream and downstream stages of the cocaine trade. Rodriguez Gacha would manage the acquisition of cocaine paste and Escobar would control cocaine refinement. In the downstream stages of the cocaine trade during this period, the Ochoas and Lehder would organize the transportation of cocaine to the Caribbean and into the United States (Eddy et al., 1988, p. 290). The mutual cooperation between these traffickers allowed them to send large shipments of cocaine into U.S. markets by plane or boat, which marked a clear progression between the cocaine traffic of the 1980s when compared to the marijuana traffic of the 1970s that relied on the use of mules. Whereas mules could only traffic a couple of kilos, the transportation of cocaine via airplanes and boats from the late 1970s onward could transport tons of cocaine.

Little to no information exists on the level of the Ochoa others. Aside from their experience in the illicit drug business, they had managerial skills because they supervised

a range of other legal businesses throughout Colombia. In Jorge Ochoa's words, the cocaine business was a great part-time job,

**Frontline:** I still don't quite understand what you did on a day-to-day basis?

**Jorge Ochoa:** One doesn't dedicate all one's time to that... I also dealt with horses. I had a lot of activities. I wasn't solely dedicated to the business; it doesn't take all of your time.

**Frontline:** So drug trafficking was a lucrative part-time job?

**Jorge Ochoa:** Part-time, yes (Interviews - Jorge Ochoa, 2000).

From biographical accounts on the Ochoa brothers, it is known that they had a more comfortable upbringing than that of Pablo Escobar. The Ochoa brothers were influenced by their familial connections to the drug trade and the family restaurant allowed them to absorb information on trade routes and to make connections with members of the smuggling world (Interviews - Juan David, 2000; Guggliotta et al., 1989, p. 26-28). It is reported that the Ochoas were among the echelon of DTO leaders because of their transportation links to the United States since they were able to use their *Hacienda Veracruz* in the outskirts of Barranquilla, Colombia as a transshipment point because the property had a large airstrip to send off planes full of cocaine across the Caribbean (Eddy et al., 1988, p. 296; Guggliotta et al., 1989, p. 127). According to pilot George Jung, the Ochoas also became important because they had political connections that could provide for the protection of trafficking routes (Interviews – George Jung, 2000; Streatfeild, 2000). Moreover, in 1981 they were involved in the formation of the group *Muerte A Secuestradores* (MAS), to stop guerrilla and common criminals from kidnapping the relatives of traffickers.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> The guerrilla group M-19 had kidnapped their sister Martha Nieves Ochoa.

Leadership: Jose Gonzalo “el Mejicano” Rodriguez Gacha

The third important DTO leader was Jose Gonzalo ‘*el Mejicano*’ Rodriguez Gacha. Little information exists on the upbringing of Jose Gonzalo Rodriguez Gacha. He was born in Pacho, Cundinamarca in 1946, a small town located in between Bogotá and the emerald mines of Muzo, Boyacá. At the beginning of his career he worked as a gunman for Alfonso Caballero, an emerald smuggler who would sell his clandestine merchandise in Mexico and Miami. Jose Gonzalo Rodriguez Gacha became very important to Medellin-based traffickers because of his international trade connections via Mexico.<sup>60</sup>

According to journalistic accounts, Rodriguez Gacha did not have registered identification with the Colombian state (Castillo, 1987). He was called “the Mexican” because of his reported love for all things Mexican. Most of his properties were named after Mexican *ranchera* music that depicts stories of macho hustlers and heartbreak. In 1976, police records began to register Rodriguez Gacha’s involvement in the drug business. Pablo Escobar and the Ochoa brothers worked with Rodriguez Gacha in upstream and downstream aspects of drug trafficking. In the early 1980s Rodriguez Gacha already had amassed many properties and was a pioneer in the cultivation and refinement of coca in the jungle regions of southern Colombia. Some of the most well-known industrial-sized refinement complexes were in the jungles of the Caqueta department and the complexes were known as Villa Coca, Coquilandia, and the infamous

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<sup>60</sup> Other traffickers that benefited from the Mexican smuggling routes were the brothers Builes in particular Jaime Builes from Fredonia, Antioquia who exported cocaine through Mexico to California, Louisiana, and Florida (Castro, 1994).

*Tranquilandia*. These complexes were constructed around 1982 and destroyed in 1984 by Colombian authorities.

Rodriguez Gacha created a security apparatus that would protect trafficker properties in rural areas, such as the *El Magdalena Medio* region of Colombia where large tracts of land were bought cheap because armed guerrillas, specifically the FARC, had a sphere of influence. Politically, Rodriguez Gacha became important because he was instrumental in creating counter-insurgent paramilitary groups in the 1980s, which later evolved into the *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia* (AUC), which were a powerful force from around 1994 to 2004.

Overall, Rodriguez Gacha, like Escobar and the Ochoa brothers, learned about the smuggling trade from mentors. Rodriguez Gacha's learned trafficking from 1960s emerald smugglers, but he surpassed his mentors because he industrialized the production and smuggling of cocaine. Specifically, Rodriguez Gacha adopted the Mexican trade routes established by the illegal emerald trade. The Mexican routes were forged in two ways. The first way consisted of selling the smuggled product to Mexican traffickers who would transport it into the U.S. market. The second way the routes were created was by paying off local Mexican authorities (politicians, state police, or federal police) to transport merchandise through Mexico and into the U.S. border (Castro, 1994). The "Mexican connection" allowed Rodriguez Gacha to own the Mexican routes and become a cocaine intermediary between Medellin-based DTO leaders who wished to send shipments through Mexico. Many of the Mexican smuggling routes and/or contacts used by Colombian smugglers in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century would continue to be in use in the early

2000s, as the Mexican drug trafficking organizations increased their capacity to control vast amounts of territory and smuggle cocaine through the U.S./Mexican border.

Leadership: Carlos Lehder Rivas

The final leader of significance in this discussion is Carlos Lehder Rivas. Lehder Rivas was born in 1950 in the small city of Armenia, Quindio. He was born into an upper middle-class home. His father Guillermo Lehder was a German citizen who settled in Colombia after World War II and married Helena Rivas Gutierrez, a former beauty queen with whom he had four children (Orozco, 1987, Streatfeild, 2000). Lehder's father was known in Armenia because he established a German restaurant. According to George Jung, an associate of Lehder and a former DTO pilot, Lehder's father and mother separated. She moved to New York City and brought Carlos Lehder with her when he was in his teens (Streatfeild, 2000). When Carlos Lehder was about 25 years old in 1974, he was convicted for dealing marijuana and stealing cars<sup>61</sup> in New York and spent 16 months in prison. Once out of prison, Lehder bought properties in the Bahamian Island called Norman's Cay, which he reportedly bought for a little more than \$150,000 dollars. The properties included a house, a marina, a yacht club, a hotel, and more importantly: an airstrip. To acquire properties and smuggle cocaine, he allegedly paid Bahamian Prime Minister Sir Lynden Pindling an amount between \$4,000 and \$8,000 dollars to prevent surveillance by Bahamian authorities.<sup>62</sup> On September 1979, fleeing from a possible

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<sup>61</sup> According to an interview with George Jung (Streatfeild, 2000; Eddy et al., 1988), Carlos Lehder would steal cars in the United States and ship them to Colombia where they would be sold. Cars in Colombia during most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were expensive items comparable in value to a real estate investment such as an apartment. The high value of cars was due to exchange rates and the import tariffs placed by the Colombian government on imported goods, which made smuggling profitable.

arrest for trafficking cocaine to the United States, Lehder returned to his hometown of Armenia, Quindio a multi-millionaire (Orozco, 1987).

Fellow traffickers suggest that Carlos Lehder was an adventurer, which possibly explains why he became involved in the illicit business (Interviews - Juan David Ochoa, 2000). It is unknown how Lehder became initially involved in criminal activities. An interview with George Jung, who was Lehder's cellmate at Danbury U.S. Federal Prison, suggests that one of his older brothers was involved in importing stolen cars from the United States and selling them in Colombia (Streatfeild, 2000; Eddy et al., 1988). However Jung explains that much of Lehder's education occurred while imprisoned, that he was a methodical apprentice, and that he made many connections:

It was basically a school. My bunkmate was Carlos Lehder, he said he was from Colombia and he spoke excellent English, well mannered and his clothes were pretty neat... he asked me if I knew anything about cocaine...

He said, "Did you know it sells for \$60,000.00 a kilo in the United States?" And I said, "No. I had no idea. How much does it cost down in Colombia?" and he said, "\$4,000 to \$5,000."

Carlos and I spent close to a year together, working and planning everyday... But Carlos never ceased, never stopped. He was like a student is, constantly pumping people's brains about money laundering, about this, about that, about automobiles, about airplanes, about boats. In fact there was a guy in there for smuggling with boats and he spent hours and hours with him learning navigation, and there was a president of a bank in there and he pumped him constantly about the banking system in America and how one can launder money, and he kept files and files on everything. He kept notes constantly. He never stopped. He was obsessed with it (Interviews - George Jung, 2000).

Although his middle class upbringing may not clearly explain why Carlos Lehder became a cocaine trafficker, the connections and knowledge acquired while imprisoned allowed Lehder to become a valuable link for DTOs operating in the Caribbean.

According to Jung, when Lehder was imprisoned in Danbury he did not know Pablo

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<sup>62</sup> Lehder boasted about his Bahamian connections in Colombia, and his statements were the basis of an investigative report on Lynden Pindling's involvement with drug traffickers by the U.S. television network NBC. Moreover the Bahamian authorities organized an investigative commission, which found that Sir Lynden Pindling and his wife were spending more than they earned, but Bahamian authorities were unable to prove that Prime Minister Pindling's wealth was tied to drug trafficking (Eddy et al., 1988).

Escobar (Streatfeild, 2000). Once Lehder returned to Colombia in 1976, he made contact with Pablo Escobar and George Jung began flying planes and selling larger quantities of cocaine for Escobar and Lehder. When Lehder bought property in Norman's Cay, Bahamas, in 1978, he used the island as a transshipment station for planes carrying drugs and money.

Politically, Lehder was one of the most extravagant actors involved in the drug trafficking sector, and he was a one of the most vocal critics of the U.S.-Colombian Extradition Treaty. Lehder's political rhetoric borrowed from fascism, populism, and 1960s liberal ideas on drug use.

Lehder's rise within the international cocaine trafficking sector was directly influenced by four external factors: the shift in demand from marijuana to cocaine, the established smuggling networks left by the marijuana trade that were used for cocaine distribution, the lack of enforced counter-narcotics laws in the Western Hemisphere, and the lack of money laundering controls in the United States. These external factors provided an economic incentive for Carlos Lehder to enter the cocaine trade. Carlos Lehders rise to political power, especially in Quindio's local politics, was due to the tolerance of political elites with drug traffickers and the lack of controls on how politicians financed their political campaigns at national and local levels.

Around 1986, once disagreements split Colombian cocaine traffickers into two groups—those traffickers based in Cali and those based in Medellin, the main actors in the Medellin DTO association became Pablo Escobar, the Ochoa brothers, Gonzalo Rodriguez Gacha, and Carlos Lehder. It should be stressed that these individuals managed their own DTOs, but many times worked together to pursue common economic



and political interests. This cooperation can be found in the creation of *MAS* and *Los Extraditables*.

### Leadership Analysis

The characteristics of the leadership of Medellin-based DTOs suggest that they were all entrepreneurs who had an ambition to become wealthy without much formal education. All of them were contemporaries, born in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Their training was mainly practical experience, learning their trade at an early age. By the time they were in their thirties all Medellin-based DTOs were multi-millionaires. Drug Trafficking Organization (DTO) leaders initially became millionaires because there were few traffickers in the business.<sup>63</sup>

With the exception of Carlos Lehder, all of them had a clear link (sometimes even a family link) to illegal activities early in life. Once these Medellin-based traffickers became leaders in their own right they started “industrializing” their cocaine smuggling operations. Instead of using mules to carry drugs, they created huge refineries and used small airplanes.

One difference found among DTO leader backgrounds, which influenced their different attitudes towards the use of violence, was the nature of their initial experiences in the business. Because Pablo Escobar and Gonzalo Rodriguez Gacha were originally trained as gunmen in smuggling organizations, their use of violence was more regular. Carlos Lehder and the Ochoa brothers had been known to use violence, but mostly within

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<sup>63</sup> The price of cocaine in the late 1970s and early-1980s was approximately \$60,000 per kilo.

trafficking circles to resolve business disputes.<sup>64</sup> Their socio-economic backgrounds and attitude towards the use of violence had implications for their operations and efforts to influence the political agenda. For example, the Ochoas were very discreet and more concerned with co-opting the political establishment. They had no ambition to obtain direct political power. Though Lehder was in charge of *MAS*<sup>65</sup> political propaganda, he never targeted Colombia's traditional political establishment. Lehder, a white supremacist, saw himself an elite due to his German heritage and also because of his success as an entrepreneur. Rodriguez Gacha was not as ruthless as Pablo Escobar in warring with the political elites, but he was ruthless with leftist guerrillas and was responsible for the decimation of the *Union Patriotica* (Patriotic Union), the FARC's legal political party. Rodriguez Gacha became a sworn counterinsurgent and allied himself with cattle ranchers who ruthlessly opposed guerrilla harassment in the Middle Magdalena region. In contrast to most Medellin-based DTOs, Pablo Escobar's overnight success as an entrepreneur led him to believe that he deserved a role in the political and economic establishment. Escobar used violence on political elites and innocent people to obtain results.

#### Membership Characteristics and Selective Incentives: Lower-level DTO Members

A discussion of the people who worked for Medellin-based DTO leaders is important because it provides insights about the internal structure of the cocaine industry in Colombia. It also provides an explanation of why individuals join such organizations.

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<sup>64</sup> The Ochoas for example were accused of sending an assassin to kill cocaine pilot-turned-DEA informant Barry Seal in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

<sup>65</sup> An organization created by traffickers to kill guerrillas who kidnapped traffickers. This organization will be discussed in the Organizational Cohesion section.

Analytically, it is futile to discuss the membership characteristics of workers such as their socio-economic status and education without considering the effect of selective incentives. This section will delve into membership characteristics and the incentives that drive workers to join DTOs.

The socio-economic status and educational levels of workers of Medellin-based DTOs depended on the type of work. Based on first-person interviews I conducted with former, non-elite DTO workers, most participants were very carefully hired based on a family, friendship, or neighborhood connection –not necessarily on skill.

**Patricia Micolta:** Was it easy to get people to work in the organization?

**DSS0031:** It was not easy, but once a really good friend or family member saw you make money, then it was easier to get someone to work for you or get them in the business. But it had to be someone that you could back up or they could back you up, but you wouldn't do this with some one that you didn't know. The person had to be very recommended.... (Interview DSS0031, 2005).

**DSS0040:** Pablo did not like *vitrinas* (show-offs). The quieter you were the longer the relationship you would have in the organization" (Interview DSS0040, 2005).

Close familial relationships created the necessary trust to reduce the infiltration of police informants, but it also was a way to enforce discipline within the organization.

Employees who made a mistake might have to pay with his/her life or the life of relatives and friends. For the most part, because many DTO employees were related, the majority of employees had similar backgrounds usually coming from poor socio-economic and educational levels.

The objective of individual trafficking organizations was to make profit, reduce risks, and avoid authorities. Drug trafficking businesses employed coca farmers, drivers, pilots, cocaine refiners, mules, people to ship out and receive merchandise, gunmen/bodyguards, and professionals such as accountants and lawyers. Although it is difficult to determine the socio-economic, educational status, and familial linkage that all

DTO employees had with total certainty, the overall trend among DTO workers was that the socio-economic status and educational levels of non-professional employees was very low. Most workers did not have an elementary level education and worked with DTOs out of economic necessity.

One agrarian DTO worker who was interviewed indicated he earned about 20,000 pesos<sup>66</sup> per day on legal crops whereas a coca farmer can earn about 100,000 pesos per day and are given room and board (Interview raspachin, 2008). Considering that the minimum monthly salary in Colombia in 2008 was about \$461,500 pesos, which equaled approximately \$256.39 dollars, coca farmers could make in one week what they would otherwise have made in a month.

The reason why many people do not become coca farmers, even if they are unemployed, is because coca crops are located in isolated regions of Colombia far from their families and of course there is a risk of getting caught by authorities. Farmers get paid once the coca paste is sold to cocaine processing labs in cities, so there is a risk that if authorities confiscate the coca paste or intercept a cocaine processing organization, peasants may not get paid for three months worth of work. The job of a coca farmer (or *raspachin*), is ideal for single peasant young men or women who do not have children. Yet many peasants in need of money who have families also work in coca plantations because cocaine paste dealers pay well and have a constant demand for unskilled labor.

Coca paste refiners are also composed of unskilled laborers whose salaries are similar to coca farmers. Coca paste refiners in 1982, when *Tranquilandia*, the industrial-

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<sup>66</sup> \$20,000 pesos was about \$11 dollars a day in 2012, and \$100,000 pesos was about \$55 dollars, at an exchange rate of \$1,800 pesos per dollar.

sized cocaine lab was made, were paid around 100 pesos per month, which was around three times the minimum wage of the time (Eddy et al., 1988, p. 290). If these amounts are compared to the wages of a coca farmer in 2008, the salary changes of these workers through time have matched mainstream inflation rates.

Once U.S. drug enforcement agencies became more fully aware of the cocaine trade at the end of the 1970s and the early 1980s, mules started “body-packing” cocaine. On average, a person can carry 65 cocaine pellets in their intestines. Women are known to carry more cocaine in their sexual organs as well.

The demographics of drug mules can vary. In the 1970s, U.S. citizens and airline workers were commonly hired to transport drugs and money. With time Colombians increasingly participated in the drug trade as mules and were usually recruited from poor neighborhoods or small rural towns. In the last decade, research suggests that mules are paid about \$100 dollars per pellet or as much as approximately \$6,500 dollars per round-trip. This is substantial when compared to the \$256.39 per month that constitutes a minimum monthly wage in Colombia.<sup>67</sup>

Drug Trafficking Organization (DTO) gunmen or bodyguards (depending on the job at hand) usually came from marginal urban sectors, had little to no education, and often started as minors. While they risked their lives, they received very little compensation for their work at least \$100 for a job, but compensation depended on the importance of the target<sup>68</sup> (Eddy et al., 1988, p. 30; Las Fachadas, 1999). In a country

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<sup>67</sup> For more information on Colombian drug mules see the director’s commentary in the DVD *Maria Full of Grace*.

<sup>68</sup> During the late 1980s in particular around 1989 *the Extraditables* ordered the killing of police officers. During this time hit men were paid around \$2,500 dollars for policemen, \$2 million dollars for military

like Colombia, with high unemployment among the unskilled labor force, being hired as a gunman or *sicario* was an opportunity to have a job that paid more than the minimum wage. I conducted interviews with ex-*sicarios* in Medellin, which revealed that these men often entered this line of work because of money, but also because they wanted to be thought of as “tough,” because an older brother was already a *sicario*, or because they wanted to get back at someone as an act of revenge:

**DSS0040:** My older brother was the first to go down the path of the *sicariato*<sup>69</sup> this was in 1970, when I was 13 years old I ran away from home... I went to another city I dedicated myself to living a “low-life” to attack, to rob, and I became part of a *combo* (a gang) and we would kill... From 13 to 16 I did “low-life” jobs and then at 16 I wanted to do more “finer” work... I dedicated myself to the *sicariato* (became a professional hit-man). I became a leader and managed 63 *sicarios*. We did the dirty work and would receive jobs from the different organizations. We would receive contracts we would be sent a picture and address and we would do a job” (Interview DSS040, 2005)

**Jair Bedoya community leader of Casa Mia**<sup>70</sup>: When I was in school the *Magnificos* (the popular name for traffickers because they became rich overnight as if through a magic act) would provide us with school supplies. So they were our heroes. We started to join *bandas* (gangs) and do jobs, buy a motorcycle wear name brand clothes. Parents couldn’t provide with such things

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officers (Mollison et al., 2007, p. 150). Government numbers suggest that between 1989-1993, 1000 police officers died. However, for every 1 police officer that died, 10 gang members were killed in retaliation. The conflict skyrocketed the homicide rates specifically in Medellin and in 1991, at the peak of the violence, 7,081 people were murdered and the homicide rate was of 296 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants. To give a comparison the Latin American homicide rate is of 25 per 100,000 and the most recent homicide rate for Medellin in 2010 was at 60 homicides per 100,000 (UNODC, 2011b:79).

<sup>69</sup> The career of a hit-man is popularly referred to as an institutional career like that of the clergy, academia, the bureaucracy, and in the streets of many towns in Colombia and in Latin America sadly enough being a hit-man is a career path.

<sup>70</sup> Jair became a *sicario* as a teenager in the 1980s and in the mid-1990s. He and others in the neighborhood of Sandander in Northwest Medellin formed *Casa Mia* a non-profit organization to create peace in marginal neighborhoods. The power vacuum that overtook Medellin after Pablo Escobar was killed, and other DTOs were dismantled, raised the level of violence in marginal neighborhoods in the mid-1990s. Gangs and emerging DTOs vied for power to control Medellin’s neighborhoods and the drug traffic (wholesale coca paste, cocaine refinement, and retail sale of cocaine and other drugs). Eventually, *Casa Mia* through its effort to forge peace was recognized internationally and obtained funding from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). *Casa Mia* implemented programs like Restorative Justice—the creation of justice by implementing conflict resolution strategies. Grass roots organizations like *Casa Mia* became mediators of peace and justice in societies where state institutions are often unable to establish justice. However, this society-based mechanism for peace has had limitations as funding by the UNDP for the organization was pulled and Jair died on 2008. When I interviewed Jair he was armed because he had recently suffered a severe knife wound caused by a juvenile gang member in his neighborhood. *Casa Mia* still exists as a community organization led by Marta Macias, who has been very vocal about the 2009 increase in homicide rates at the *Comuna 6*, where the neighborhood Santader is located.

because people here are very poor. So in the 1980s our motto was who could be the first to kill, and in the 1990s the motto was who could do a bigger job like robbing an Exito (supermarket)... Things began deteriorating because kids started killing people just because they were seen as weak, because they were easy pray, so people began banding together and forming militias” (Interview Jair Bedoya, 2004).

Accounts by members of DTOs, such as Jhon Jairo Velasquez Vasquez, who dealt with providing security or organizing assassinations for Pablo Escobar, show the relational closeness of these workers. Many hit men operated in gangs composed of entire families. For example, the well-known gang, the *Muñoz Mosqueras*, consisted of 15 children from the same family. Five of the children were eventually killed and three were jailed as a result of their drug-related activities (Salazar, 2001, p. 172). If gangs of gunmen were not family related, they belonged to the same neighborhood such as the infamous gang *Los Priscos* who worked for Escobar and lived in the Aranjuez neighborhood in the northeast hills of Medellin. The northeast hills of Medellin have become notorious for its gang wars, especially during the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s. Excluding the hilly neighborhood of *El Poblado* located in the southeast hills where middle and high-income individuals live, in the new millennium Medellin still remains a city surrounded with hills composed of hundreds of poor neighborhoods controlled by gangs whose leaders rarely reach 25 years of age.

The socio-economic and educational level of more trained workers like pilots, accountants, and lawyers was substantially higher than those who did unskilled labor, and at this level, the DTOs also used an international labor force. Many of these employees came from middle-income origins, which allowed them to pay for educational training. At professional levels of training and status, the increased earnings were much more attractive than what could be earned in comparable licit jobs, for example, pilots in the

1980s could get paid a percentage of every kilo transported; a pilot transporting cocaine could make thousands of dollars in one shipment. George Jung, who flew for 1980s Medellin DTOs, (it is estimated) made close to \$100 million U.S. dollars (Interviews - George Jung, 2000), yet the risk of getting detained by authorities, or being extradited to the United States due to their status in the organization was high. For example, the two well-known American pilots who flew cocaine for Medellin-based DTOS, George Jung and Mickey Munday, were both apprehended and convicted by U.S. authorities. Both pilots were given sentences of 30 and 9 years respectively (Streatfeild, 2000; Hunter, 2006).

#### Analysis

The membership characteristics of Medellin-based DTO members have been mainly influenced by external variables. Prohibitionist anti-narcotics policies as established by the United States government, for example, helped maintain the international price of cocaine at high levels and these prices translated into high profit margins. These high profit margins motivated many established imported goods smugglers or emerald exporters to become marijuana or cocaine traffickers in the early to mid-1970s.

In this analysis of Medellin DTO leaders, many of the brief biographies suggest that DTO leaders became leaders because of three factors: they learned their trade from a mentor or family member, they built international networks, and they used their skills to profit from the cocaine trade. These member characteristics are not unique. With every generation, leaders emerge who learn their trade from veteran traffickers and new organizations are created. In many cases the unknown understudy becomes a leader until



he/she retires, is apprehended, or is killed. In 1987, Pablo Escobar was already aware of generational changes within the industry before he became a DTO leader:

**Pablo Escobar:** The war of Malboro (smuggled cigarettes) was the...

**German Castro Caycedo:**The prelude?

**Pablo Escobar:** Yes that's it. The prelude to all the wars that later took place. I think if we were going to remember and do history, you would have to break this (period) in three. Let's say that until 1973 you have smuggled goods and smugglers. From 1973, until 1979, the first two generations of cocaine traffickers, and from 1980 until now (1987), the last group (of years) is the one the gringos apparently refer to as "the cartel"... (Castro, 1996).

The continuous training of traffickers from generation to generation fueled by the profitability of the cocaine trade explains the rise of drug traffickers not only in Colombia, but also in Latin America and the Caribbean.

An interesting aspect of the illicit drug industry is that it provided unskilled laborers hailing from lower socioeconomic sectors with upward social mobility. The profitability of the international cocaine trade allowed individuals in these sectors to bypass the strict class structure and the high-income inequality that has existed in Colombia's economy. The economic stimulus of the illicit drug industry continually feeds the illusions of many underprivileged Colombians who believe that a *sicario* from a poor neighborhood can become rich. The illusion is fed by the exceptional real-life cases in which obscure hit men became millionaires. Whereas Pablo Escobar and Jose Gonzalo Rodriguez Gacha both exemplify the illusion of the 1980s, after their deaths, other leaders have emerged, like the case of "Don Berna," who in the 1990s rose to become a leader of the cocaine trade and the subsequent paramilitary organizations of the 2000s (*Quien Es*, 2003).

The economic success of this industry was the main driving force that motivated unskilled workers to become part of the industry and of DTO organizations. While

skilled/professional workers may have had better opportunities in finding work in legal industries, unskilled workers had more limited and less lucrative options. The economic success of the illicit drug industry, versus the low economic status of unskilled workers, has distorted any cost-benefit analysis, thus skewing the analysis towards the benefits associated with having a job and an above average salary. In contrast, the costs such as, jail time and death, which are often associated with becoming a mule, a hired gunman, or a coca farmer, are often ignored. The motivations to have a well-paid job, coupled with lax laws and a weak economy, led many individuals belonging to low socio-economic sectors to choose jobs associated with the illicit drug industry.

In creating an industry, Medellin-based DTOs economically benefited its direct membership by creating jobs, and it also benefited spin-off economic sectors in the Colombian economy. However, the major problem with this business has been its illicit nature. Since DTOs trade with an illicit commodity, DTO leaders created conflict for Colombian society because they have to protect all organizational divisions from authorities and from rivals. So even though DTOs may provide economic opportunities to a variety of social sectors, the illegality of the business creates violence and corruption, and weakens democratic institutions, which leads to a greater cost to society because problems generated by this industry permeates many social sectors. The following discussion explores the economic resources of Medellin-based DTOs and the use of these resources to gain political influence.

### Economic Resources

Studies on the illicit drug business have had difficulty establishing the exact earnings of drug trafficking organizations in Colombia. Since the business is illegal,

there is no certainty on how many kilograms of cocaine were produced each year and exactly how much was sold in the international market. It is also difficult to establish exact upstream costs to produce a kilogram of cocaine and exact downstream costs to ship a kilogram of cocaine and to launder money. But some economists have attempted to calculate the net earnings from the cocaine industry in the 1980s and 1990s; estimates range from as low as \$170 million to as high as \$5 billion per year (Clawson et al., 1996; Thoumi, 1994). In comparison, in 1994 towards the end of the Medellin DTO's lifespan, the oil industry's earnings were about \$3 billion a year or 5.7 percent of Colombia's GDP.

It is estimated that the Medellin-based DTO leaders were billionaires by the mid-1980s. Some conservative estimates indicate that Pablo Escobar was worth \$3 billion, while other estimates such as the one calculated by *Forbes* magazine in 1989 declared that Escobar was the seventh-richest man in the world with an estimated fortune of \$25 billion (Gibbs, 2009). Rodriguez Gacha's worth was also estimated in the billions at \$1.3 billion (Lee, 1990). When PBS's *Frontline* asked the Ochoa brothers how much money they had made from drug trafficking, Juan David Ochoa said he probably made about \$26 million from drug traffic (Interviews - Juan David Ochoa, 2000). Regardless of this discrepancy in trafficker earnings, the money fueled support for the businesses that became an additional sources of income and employment in Colombia.

Lehder and Escobar owned newspapers that spread their political propaganda. Escobar sponsored a television program on issues that affected the Department of Antioquia. Lehder also bought a bank (*El Banco de Caldas*) to launder money, which was managed by his uncle. Because security was a prime objective for traffickers, they established private security firms with the permission of the Ministry of Justice. For

example, Escobar owned a security firm called *Seguridad Nutibara*. The establishment of private security firms allowed for unlimited access to personal bodyguards. Other investments included the establishment of two executive airlines by the Ochoas and a fleet of fumigation planes owned by Rodriguez Gacha. Types of businesses established to launder money or to invest DTO earnings included hotels, football clubs, bus fleets, cycling teams, cattle and horse ranches and businesses that could be used both, legally and for the transportation of cocaine, such as a fleet of buses.

Although the exact earnings of the industry are incalculable, what is known is that DTO leaders made millions of dollars. Earnings allowed them to run their operations, provide jobs, and influence policy. Their impact on society can be observed by the number of economic investments they made in 1980s Colombia with little to no governmental or social oversight (Gomez, 1990). Given that hindsight is twenty-twenty, it was difficult for authorities of the time to know that the emerging cocaine industry would become a long-term institution. However, Colombia's weak legal system allowed DTO leaders to easily obtain permits for airplane and bus fleets and private security companies. The ease in which DTO leaders were able to hide their assets through the use of "straw owners" also made it difficult for authorities to know exactly who owned the companies that applied for permits. The weakness in the legal system may have stemmed from having weak money laundering laws, but weaknesses also stemmed from the great ability of DTO leaders to use their millionaire assets to bribe public workers and politicians. The use violence and the limited government protection for public workers also increased corruption because, in the face of violence, bribes became more attractive proposals for workers facing the dilemma of granting or prohibiting public favors to a

DTO leader. The intent of this analysis is not to excuse public officials for failing to strengthen the legal system or for being unethical; however, given the enormous economic resources available to traffickers in the 1980s and 1990s, it was easy for DTO leaders to override the very weak legal mechanisms that existed to stop the political influence of the cocaine industry.

### Group Cohesion

Group cohesion is the degree of organizational control and discipline that a group when implementing an agenda. Many journalistic accounts narrate events that suggest that DTOs had some degree of cohesion because DTO leaders organized business meetings, were vocal anti-extradition advocates, and contributed to the same political campaigns (Castillo, 1987; Orozco, 1987; Gugliotta *et al.*, 1989; Salazar, 2001; Legarda, 2005). To assess the degree of cohesion, this section will first discuss the development of early DTO associations such as MAS, then it will focus on the economic and political cohesion of DTO leaders based in Medellin, and finally the section will examine the development and cohesion of *Los Extraditables* (The Extraditables Ones). Overall, the discussion on cohesion will show that the economic and political organizational cohesion of DTO leaders was gradual and that it peaked with the formation of the group *Los Extraditables*, which was formed to overturn the 1979 Extradition Treaty.

#### Development of Early Trafficking Cooperatives and MAS

Initially Medellin-based DTOs worked with traffickers throughout Colombia to ship drugs to the United States. From the early 1970s until 1988, Cali based traffickers, such as the Rodriguez Orejuela brothers, had cordial business relations with the Medellin organization and worked to reduce risks involved with the traffic of drugs. For example,

Colombian trafficking organizations cooperated in laundering money through a bank called *El Banco de Trabajadores* owned by the Rodriguez Orejuelas. Another example of cooperation between Cali and Medellin DTOs was their joint investment in Spain's financial sector and the sharing of legal teams to prevent their extradition to the United States (Castillo, 1991; Rodriguez, 2007, p. 105-110). DTOs also cooperated in security and political matters; for example, on December of 1981 traffickers organized to form the group *Muerte A Secuestradores* (MAS, Death to Kidnappers). *Muerte A Sucuestradores* (MAS) was created in reaction to the November 12<sup>th</sup> 1981 kidnapping of Martha Nieves Ochoa, a sister of the Ochoa brothers who was abducted by the M-19 guerrilla group. Whereas MAS's official<sup>71</sup> paramilitary operations ended around 1982 once the Ochoa sister had been returned to her family, its economic networks ended around 1988 when Medellin and Cali based DTO leaders engaged in a war for the control of the international cocaine market.

The formation of MAS to avenge a kidnapping is evidence of the inability of the Colombian state to be able to monopolize the use of force throughout its territory to the degree that the state may control the development and activities of violent non-state actors like paramilitary groups such as MAS or guerrillas like the M-19. Given that DTO leaders were involved in the illegal drug trade, they could not resolve conflicts through legal institutions by turning to Colombian authorities for help. The incapacity of the Colombian state to provide security allowed non-state actors to arm themselves and resolve conflicts through the use of violence.

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<sup>71</sup> This project defines "official MAS operations" as those anti-kidnapping operations, which MAS members publically sought to implement through communiqués and which resulted in the truce between MAS and the M-19 guerrilla group. Other killings and paramilitary operations were attributed to MAS after 1983, but were implemented by other criminal or paramilitary groups.

Traffickers have not been the first to use violent conflict resolution, because other legal actors throughout Colombia's conflictive history of civil conflict have used this tradition of resolving conflicts. For most of Colombia's history, landowners have provided for their own security, to protect their lands and families and to combat common crime and for protection during periods of civil strife. The period of *La Violencia* during the 1950s was the last major conflict, before the 1980s, where landowners armed themselves to resolve rural disputes over land. As traffickers began to accumulate wealth from the illicit drug trade they became landowners and bought large tracts of land, some of which were located in areas controlled by guerrilla groups. Traffickers like other landowning elites, who sought to protect their property and family, created *Muerte A Secuestradores*.

As a predecessor paramilitary organization, MAS sought to punish guerrillas who kidnapped and practiced extortion by collecting "taxes" (popularly known as *vacunas*) from rural landowners. The M-19 and most importantly the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (FARC) were two guerrilla groups that mainly contributed to the political mobilization of traffickers via the formation of paramilitary groups such as MAS and later the *Asociación Campesina de Agricultores y Ganaderos del Magdalena Medio* (ACDEGAM). ACDEGAM became the organizational precursor to the group the *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia* (AUC, the United Self-Defenses of Colombia), which demobilized from 2004-2008. ACDEGAM was composed of cattle ranchers and traffickers, like Gonzalo Rodriguez Gacha, who was one of its founding members and who helped create it to combat FARC influence primarily in the Middle Magdalena region (Reyes, 1990).

Different accounts reveal how MAS formed. Some say that it was the Ochoa brothers that invited 20 of Colombia's major traffickers to their famous restaurant/club called *Las Margaritas* in Medellin (Castillo, 1987), yet other accounts believe the meeting was composed of 223 traffickers and held in the city of Cali (Eddy et al., 1988, p. 287; Gugliotta and Leen, 1989, p.92-93). Other reports reveal that 100-200 traffickers met, but instead, they were invited to Pablo Escobar's *Hacienda Napoles* (Salazar, 2001). Though the number of traffickers and the location is disputed in all accounts (Castillo, 1987; Salazar, 2001; Eddy et al., 1988, p. 287, Gugliotta and Leen 1989), all of them suggest that this meeting or series of meetings were significant because the illicit drug industry's leadership gathered to pool money for a security apparatus to counter guerrilla harassment and discuss business matters. The purpose of MAS, as a loose coalition of DTO leaders, was to monitor guerrillas in their regions and alert each other on the actions and whereabouts of kidnapped victims. At the time, besides kidnapping the Ochoa sister, the M-19 guerrillas had kidnapped the children of another trafficker and attempted to kidnap Carlos Lehder. The summit or series of summit allowed some traffickers to meet and discuss business matters such as creating insurance companies, making connections to finance shipments, renting or sharing routes, offering courier services within the United States, designating colors for identifying shipments, and the distribution of the U.S. market and their areas of operation in Colombia (Castillo, 1987, p. 114-115; Castillo, 1991, p. 202-204). It is also probable that the creation of *Tranquilandia*, an industrial-sized coca paste-processing lab in the Colombian Amazons, which was owned by a cooperative of several traffickers, was also discussed during the MAS meetings (Eddy et al., 1988, p. 290-291). In the 1980s between 60% and 80% of the U.S. market was



divided between the Medellin and Cali groups; the Medellin DTOs operated mostly in Miami and the Cali DTOs mostly in New York (Castillo, 1991, p. 19; Thoumi, 1994, p. 151). Although this functional division may have occurred prior to the development of MAS, the group's economic networks allowed a loose association of traffickers to cooperate not only in business interests, but also in political concerns, such as establishing death squads to counter guerrilla harassment.

*Muerte A Secuestradores* engaged in a media campaign to denounce guerrillas. Its formation showed the ideological differences between these emergent economic groups and guerrillas. Although both traffickers and guerrillas often came from similarly marginal sectors of society, the trafficker political agenda was capitalist while that of guerrillas was communist. Through the use of airplanes, MAS pamphlets were dispersed over soccer stadiums in major Colombian cities to spread their anti-guerrilla sentiment (Terrorismo, 1982; Eddy et al., 1988:288). An 11-point communiqué dropped from a helicopter into a soccer stadium announced the creation of MAS and its purpose,

...2. Kidnappings have been carried out both by common criminals and subversive elements, with the latter trying to finance their activities by targeting people like us, whose hard-earned money has brought progress and employment to this country, and much needed schools, hospitals and etc.;

3. At said meeting, the 223 mafia bosses, representing every region of the country, agreed to finance this endeavor through personal contributions of \$2 million pesos each [approximately \$20,000 dollars], which, put together, add up to \$446 million pesos [approximately \$4.4 million dollars]. In our effort to fight the practice of kidnapping, these resources will be used to pay for rewards, execution of perpetrators, and equipment... (Eddy et al., 1988, p. 288).

The MAS communiqué was written in a matter-of-fact style and detailed all the money and manpower to be used to combat kidnapping and guerrillas.

It is widely believed that Carlos Lehder was in charge of MAS propaganda (El Destape, 1983; Castillo, 1987, p. 113) because another leaflet, which was dispersed and

printed in 1982 in the newspaper *El Mundo* in Medellin, was signed by Lehder and had the following message:

“What I (Carlos Lehder) propose is an anti-kidnapping project, similar to the Peace Commission, but it is paramilitary. That this commission... use two forces: a team of judges and prosecutors; and the other force will be tactical and will be made up of the best ex-military and ex-agents, the most expert paramilitary civilians, civil defense, foreign mercenaries... A force of two thousand men would be sufficient. A force that we *Los Secuestrables* (the potentially kidnapped ones) would help finance, because we prefer to spend our fortunes defending our families and towns than have them taken away from us... MAS is a movement... that should be of worry exclusively to common kidnapers and subversives” (Salazar, 2001, p. 84).

Unlike the succinct MAS communiqué, this leaflet was a confused train of thought, which likens a “peace commission” to a “paramilitary manhunt.” The only similarity between the two flyers was that both propose to combat kidnapping with funds and a force of about 2000 men (the communiqué mentions a force of 2,230 men (Eddy et al., 1988, p. 288)). A reason why this second flyer is interesting is because in it its author, Lehder, considers himself part of a traditional commercial and landed elite. In an earlier paragraph Lehder states:

“When you kidnap the entrepreneurs and managers, our economy crumbles... In the last ten years hundreds of prestigious families have had to leave the country in fear. The industrialists and constructors sold and left. And kidnapers shot at me... but miraculously, I escaped” (Salazar, 2001, p. 83).

The flyer is interesting because in his mind Lehder is not a smuggler but rather an entrepreneur and a leader, who proposes that elites –like him– and the government should unite to fight kidnapers.

Soon after the distribution of MAS propaganda, M-19 guerrilla members were chained together and placed in front of newspaper buildings with signs that read, “I am from the M-19 and I am a kidnapper” (Orozco, 1987; Castillo, 1987). Other actions taken by MAS included kidnapping and killing several M-19 members in the department

of Antioquia, and turning M-19 members to the Colombian military. Due to these actions, the M-19 returned the kidnapped Ochoa sister and stopped harassing traffickers.

The creation of MAS also allowed for an increase in economic partnerships. Cocaine trafficking in time became a sophisticated business that insured shipments to spread-out risks and reduce losses. The level of organizational formation can only occur when individuals form associations or cooperatives. Max Mermelstein, a shipment receiver for Medellin-based DTOs in Miami, explains in an interview for PBS's *Frontline*, "We would bring in 400, 450, sometimes 500 kilos on a shipment and if it all belonged to one person and we did take a loss, it would be a bad hit. It would hurt" (Cran, 1997). So to reduce losses, a shipment would bring cocaine from several traffickers to spread the risk. Insurance companies for illicit drugs would pay for 100 percent of a trafficker's shipment at Colombian prices if a shipment was confiscated, but if the shipment reached its destination the insurance would take a percentage (about 10%) from the shipment's gains (Castillo, 1987, p. 114; Thoumi, 1994, p. 148; Clawson et al., 1996, p. 38). Many insurance companies were established by seasoned traffickers to make profit on the shipments of smaller traffickers who wanted to send cocaine, but did not have routes or planes to transport drugs (Clawson et al., 1996). If traffickers needed money to send a drug shipment, they could ask a financier to invest some money on the shipment, and once the shipment reached its destination the investor would get a large return for financing the shipment. This type of financing was popularly known as *la apuntada*<sup>72</sup> (Thoumi, 1994; Clawson et al., 1996). When cocaine wholesale prices dropped in the mid-1980s and traffickers disputed ownership of routes they previously rented or shared,

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<sup>72</sup> Literally translated as the sign-up, as in "sign me up to send a shipment."

insurers like Escobar or Ochoa became powerful figures because most traffickers had to pay them to transport drugs.

To conclude, the formation of MAS allowed independent trafficking organizations to network and establish business and security ties. The benefits of associating separate DTOs resulted in the co-ownership of the *Tranquilandia* lab and the sharing of money laundering mechanisms through the First Inter-Americas Bank co-owned by Jorge Luis Ochoa and Gilberto Rodriguez Orejuela. Other functional ties, such as mutual insurance and the sharing of routes, allowed DTOs all over Colombia to reduce risks. Politically, the creation of MAS to counter-balance guerrilla influence led groups like the M-19 guerrilla to stop harassing DTO leaders.

Trafficker networks established through MAS more or less continued to function, but they definitely ended on January 13, 1988 when the Cali and Medellin-based DTOs fought each other for the ownership of trafficking routes and the U.S. markets. After the M-19 and MAS leaders negotiated a truce, the group's reason for being seized to exist. However, political cooperation and economic ties among traffickers based in Cali and Medellin continued until January 13, 1988. At national levels, political cooperation among traffickers centered on invalidating the 1979 Treaty on Extradition and on funding the political campaigns of anti-extradition candidates. No evidence exists that MAS directly coordinated the efforts of Medellin and Cali based groups to invalidate the extradition treaty, but traffickers based with both cities influenced the same political process.

The economic ties that were enhanced by MAS leadership meetings continued, until economic tensions began to flourish resulting from a decline in the international

wholesale price of cocaine in the mid to late 1980s. Price decline occurred because Medellin and Cali based DTOs shifted from shipping small quantities of cocaine to shipping tons of cocaine in cargos via ships and airplanes. As tons of cocaine was being produced and shipped, the cocaine market became saturated, and consequently caused the price of a wholesale kilo to drop from US\$60,000 to about US\$22,000 dollars (Lee, 1990:18-19). The decrease in price also reveals that DTOs are not economic cartels, because if they were, DTO leaders would have successfully colluded to rig wholesale prices so that prices remained high. As the cocaine market became more saturated and profits decreased, divisions among traffickers began to develop and the subtle cooperation established during MAS trafficker summits dwindled.<sup>73</sup>

Wars between drug trafficking organizations were not new events among Colombian traffickers. Pablo Escobar's explanation of why cigarette smugglers in the 1970s fought each other, is very reminiscent of the late 1980s wars between the Medellin and Cali DTOs

(The Marlboro cigarette war) It started because Don Alfredo would bring in so many trucks, Don Alberto would bring in other trucks, and Jaime Cardona would bring in some other trucks. The cigarettes would be placed in the market and because the saturation of product everyday was higher, the competition increased, the price would go down and everyone would lose money. So, the first bullets started flying. As a consequence, the business started heating up...(Castro, 1996, p. 289).

The cigarette war led many traffickers who had started to dabble in the cocaine trade to become full-time cocaine traffickers because more money was to be made in the cocaine trade as compared to the importation of smuggled cigarettes. Ironically, Pablo Escobar's explanation for the cause of the cigarette war, that market saturation caused "the

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<sup>73</sup> It should also be mentioned that the explanation mainly offered here is the political-economic version of the rupture between Colombian DTOs. Other more sociological reasons for the break-up suggest that the disagreements over women and conflicts among lesser dealers (ajuste de cuentas) resulted in the violent conflict between Medellin and Cali DTO leaders (Legarda, 2004, p. 99-101; Chaparro, 2005, p. 212).

Marlboro War,” he and other traffickers essentially repeated the very same economic missteps with the cocaine market. Cocaine traffickers in the 1980s flooded the market by sending cocaine in large shipments, which in turn, eventually led to a drop in the price of wholesale cocaine as the drug became more readily available in U.S. markets. Instead of dealing with the fact that the cocaine market had saturated, DTO leaders based in Medellin and Cali started fighting over market share. Also, in similar fashion, some traffickers sought to expand into opium poppy and heroin production, as an alternative to the cocaine trade. Because of plummeting wholesale prices, it is believed that Pablo Escobar tried to collude prices with Cali based traffickers to attempt to increase profits; however, the Rodriguez Orejuelas did not agree that Escobar should become the sole leader of the mafia group (Chaparro, 2005, p. 213). Since they did not come to an economic agreement, a war between DTOs ensued.

The economic explanation for the divisions between Medellin and Cali based DTO leaders can be easily measured because of the negative change in the price of wholesale cocaine as a result of market saturation. Other explanations of the rift between the two organizations rely on the personal characteristics of DTO leaders. Most accounts suggest that Pablo Escobar was not as tolerant with Cali based DTO leaders, as the Ochoa brothers were, mainly because Escobar had a different philosophy on the use of political violence than the Rodriguez Orejuela brothers, who were the major players among Cali DTOs (Gugliotta et al., 1989, p. 336-337; Castillo, 1991, p. 27; Giraldo, 2005, p. 44; Chaparro, 2005, p. 215). Most information on Medellin and Cali DTOs suggest that the Ochoa brothers and the Rodriguez Orejuelas shared a similar philosophy towards politics and authorities, which consisted on minimizing the use of violence and maximizing the

use of campaign contributions to politicians and bribes to public officials in order to benefit their business interests. Evidence of business and personal affinities between the Ochoa brothers and the Rodriguez Orejuela brothers is their co-ownership of the First Inter-America's Bank, their investments and vacationing in Spain, and their legal cooperation (they were simultaneously apprehended in Spain and the U.S. government asked for their extradition for drug trafficking). In addition to their joint business ventures, the Ochoas and the Rodriguez Orejuelas had the same philosophy on politics and violence. They never ran for political office like other Medellin-based DTO leaders did, and tried to distance themselves from any use of political violence on government officials. The use of violence, by the Ochoas and the Rodriguez Orejuelas, was mostly limited to the drug business. The Ochoa brothers did use political violence and formed paramilitary groups like MAS, but the violence was applied to non-governmental actors like the M-19 guerrillas, when this group kidnapped their sister.

Escobar's ambition to dominate the U.S. market and his unilateral and incremental use of violence against government officials—starting with the 1983 assassination of Rodrigo Lara Bonilla, Colombia's Minister of Justice—soured relations between him and other Colombian DTO leaders. According to journalist Camilo Chaparro, while both, Jorge Ochoa and Gilberto Rodriguez Orejuela were jailed in Spain, Pablo Escobar had taken over some of the Rodriguez Orejuelas' routes, imposed a system of taxes onto other traffickers, and charged for the use of routes. Whereas traffickers such as Gonzalo Rodriguez Gacha and Carlos Lehder agreed to Escobar's terms, traffickers based in Cali were not pleased with Escobar's demands and fought him (Chaparro, 2005:211-212).

Philosophical disagreements between Medellin and Cali DTOs over markets and the use of violence escalated to such a degree that violent confrontations erupted throughout Colombia. The escalation resulted in the January 13<sup>th</sup> 1988 bombing of the apartment building, *Edificio Monaco*, where Escobar's family lived. In retaliation, Pablo Escobar bombed a chain of pharmacies called *Drogas La Rebaja* owned by the Rodriguez Orejuelas throughout Colombia. The Ochoa brothers and Jose Gonzalo Rodriguez Gacha tried to mediate between Escobar and the Rodriguez Orejuelas to no avail (Gugliotta et al., 1989, p. 337; Castillo, 1991, p. 257; Interviews - Juan David Ochoa, 2000; Chaparro, 2005, p. 214), until a truce was finally negotiated during 1990 and 1991 in preparation for the 1990 elections of assemblypersons to the National Constitutional Assembly. Traffickers believed that their biggest concern that year was to concentrate resources to obtain a legal ban on the extradition of nationals in the new constitution, so DTO leaders in Cali and Medellin negotiated a truce (Castillo, 1991, p. 253-258; Rodriguez, 2007, p. 201). The eventual death of Pablo Escobar in 1993 put an end to the DTO market dispute, for obvious reasons. However, Cali DTO leaders only dominated the U.S. cocaine market for two years until 1995, when Colombian authorities apprehended them. Their capture led other up-and-coming DTOs, such as the traffickers based in the *Norte del Valle*,<sup>74</sup> to emerge and challenge Cali DTO leaders' control over market share (Castillo, 1997; Chaparro, 2005, p. 212).

In sum, the creation of MAS is politically and economically significant because it shows the ability of traffickers to network and emulate business strategies, but its break-up would provide early clues for the later demise of the loose association of Medellin-

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<sup>74</sup> North of Valley, Valle del Cauca is the department where they operate.



based DTOs. External variables such as: the problem of stateness, reflected in the weak law enforcement capacity in Colombia and abroad; policymaker indifference to drug traffic; and high profit incentives found in cocaine traffic due to prohibitionist economic policies, created a favorable environment for an organization like MAS. As an organization, MAS was created when major cocaine traffickers were at the peak of their wealth, during a period, which could be termed as the “Golden Era of Cocaine Traffic” in Colombia. This era started in 1971 when the “Drug War” was officially created in the United States, and ended in 1983, when Pablo Escobar was forced to resign from a congressional post, at which point Escobar waged a war against Colombian political elites. During this era, and specifically in 1981 when MAS was created, most Colombian DTO leaders, such as: Pablo Escobar, the Ochoa brothers, and the Rodriguez Orejuela brothers based in Cali, were relatively unknown and worked and lived in Colombia without fear of being apprehended by authorities because none had pending investigations or charges against them.

Two major factors that led to the demise of MAS are: the drop in price of wholesale cocaine and different philosophies in the use of violence. The drop in international prices for cocaine reduced the profit margin for traffickers, which in turn led to rivalries between DTO leaders as they scrambled to obtain greater international market share. The proposal to unite all cocaine traffickers under Pablo Escobar to collude prices was not well received by Cali DTO leaders who wanted to maintain their business autonomy. Differing philosophies on the use of violence also led to MAS demise. Pablo Escobar’s ruthlessness in the use of political violence gradually distanced him not only

from Cali DTO leaders, but also from other traffickers based in Medellin like the Ochoas –whom preferred managing a business to waging war against the state.

The creation of MAS enhanced economic cooperation between fellow DTO leaders, and it became an organizational model for coordinating political goals— primarily for uniting DTO leaders to counteract guerrilla harassment. In the case of MAS, its creation supports this study’s Hypothesis 1, which states:

*Hypothesis 1:* Developments in the internal organization of an illicit interest group should follow changes to its role within a larger political environment.

MAS formation was influenced by external variables: a high profit margin derived from the illegal cocaine traffic, weak law enforcement in Colombia, and the inability of the United States to curtail drug traffic. The high earnings derived from prohibitionist economic policies increased the international price of cocaine and allowed Colombian traffickers to amass millions of dollars. The high profit margin, derived from cocaine, allowed traffickers to form and finance militias and print propaganda for MAS.

The formation of MAS also supports Hypothesis 1a, which states:

*Hypothesis 1a:* Changes to the internal organization and structure of an illicit interest group should be related and deal with the environmental events that influenced the group, and the changes made should be collective goods, because they benefit the organization as a whole.

When DTO leaders throughout Colombia decided to create MAS as a counterweight to guerrilla harassment, DTO leaders create an organization to mitigate environmental issues that affected their newly acquired lands, their lives, and those of their relatives.

The issue of security became a collective good that the organization wanted to achieve for the benefit of its membership. Through the formation of MAS, DTO leaders sought increased security as a collective good that they would enjoy if they employed their resources in similar fashion to a “crime watch association,” but which had much deadlier

implications. The MAS pamphlets dispersed in soccer stadiums illustrate the resources in terms of men and money, which were invested to crackdown on kidnapers and subversive groups like the *Movimiento-19 de Abril* (M-19).

The creation of MAS also supports this study's Hypothesis 2, which tests micro model. Hypothesis 2 states:

*Hypothesis 2a:* If members of an illicit interest group need to deal with a particular issue. Members will work together to solve the issue, and the political achievements obtained by the group will benefit all members.

The issue of insecurity led DTO leaders to unite resources to stop guerrillas from kidnapping family members and extorting *vacunas*. Once MAS united and suppressed the M-19 guerrilla who had kidnapped Martha Nieves Ochoa, the M-19 leadership returned the Ochoa sister. Although M-19 submission directly benefited the Ochoa brothers, the M-19 submission to and eventual truce with traffickers increased security for all traffickers because they would no longer be harassed by the M-19—the political objectives of counteracting guerrillas were achieved and benefited all traffickers.

Hypotheses 2c and 2d, which deal with the demise of a group, explain the unraveling of MAS as an economic and political agreement among DTO leaders. The demise of MAS supports this study's Hypothesis 2c, which relates to the leadership of a group and its influence on the capacity of a group to impact policy. Hypothesis 2c states:

*Hypothesis 2c:* When a group has no clear leadership or is unable to impact policy, there will be little incentive for a group's leaders to organize and discipline their members.

Since MAS was a loose association of DTO leaders who voluntarily pulled their resources together, members were not forced to contribute specific amounts of men, money, or weapons. As a voluntary organization, it did not have a clear leadership or rules to enforce cooperation from traffickers. Consequently, without intra-organizational

enforcement mechanisms, MAS can only be considered a moderately cohesive organization. However, after the return of the Ochoa sister, the organization became weak and less cohesive. *Muerte A Secuestradores* (MAS) did not create another political goal, DTO leaders became divided on the use of political violence, and even if the economic networks that were obtained through MAS continued to exist, the networks existed until the international wholesale cocaine prices declined and trafficker rivalries erupted in 1988. Lacking leadership and enforcement mechanisms, once the primary objectives of the organization were met, MAS gradually lost cohesion.

*Muerte A Secuestradores* (MAS) definitely disbanded when disagreements among DTO leaders led to wars among Medellin and Cali based DTOs for the control of domestic and international markets. Hypothesis 2d states:

*Hypothesis 2d:* When a group has realized a common goal, in periods of transition, consensus among a group's membership will decrease and the membership will pursue individual goals, which may deteriorate the development of a group.

After Colombia's leading traffickers united through MAS to obtain increased security the group gradually disbanded. Events like the assassination of Minister of Justice Rodrigo Lara Bonilla exacerbated differences among traffickers and startled those that would have preferred to avoid the use violence to influence the political system. Although MAS increased economic networks among cocaine traffickers, after accomplishing the goal of suppressing the activities of subversive groups like the M-19, economic cooperation dwindled. Gradually the economic cooperation deteriorated because increased cocaine production saturated U.S. cocaine markets and resulted in a decrease in wholesale cocaine prices. Once the objective of counteracting guerrillas like the M-19 was

achieved, traffickers concentrated on managing their own businesses and on increasing their profit margins.

The following discussion on the economic and political cohesion of Medellin-based traffickers will show that the creation of the group *Los Extraditables*, to ban the extradition of nationals to the United States, corrected MAS' weaknesses.

#### Cohesion of Medellin-based DTOs

Medellin-based DTO leaders actively participated in MAS as a national organization that enhanced economic networks among traffickers and operated as a paramilitary organization to stop guerrilla harassment. Whereas MAS operated politically between the years 1981 to 1982, individual DTO leaders engaged in mainstream political pursuits especially during the years 1981-1983. The following section on economic and political cohesion will explain how individual DTOs influence mainstream politics and why the group *Los Extraditables* emerged.

#### Economic Cohesion

The economic cohesion of individual DTOs based in Medellin not only allowed DTOs to function as profit making organizations, but also allowed DTO leaders to become economically influential actors in politics. The discussion will analyze the cohesion of DTOs as profit making businesses.

As business entities designed to make profit, the different Medellin DTOs had at least six main divisions. It was possible for one organization to take care of all the levels of the process, but based on trafficker accounts, the beginning of cocaine trade in Colombia involved a high degree of specialization where different organizations specialized only in one aspect of the business. When Escobar, the Ochoa brothers, and

Rodriguez Gacha started in the drug trade each participant would specialize in one aspect of the business, but as these entrepreneurs became wealthy they created organizations that encompassed all levels of the business. On the basis of the criminal diagrams of Medellin DTOs (Castillo, 1987) and economic studies like that of Francisco Thoumi's (Thoumi, 1994, p. 140-150), all-encompassing organizations like that of Pablo Escobar occasionally outsourced stages of production from smaller more specialized organizations. Thoumi suggests that because traffickers needed to avoid authorities, the need for secrecy was a major factor that created business specialization. For major traffickers, it was convenient to have different divisions be unaware of the rest of the business. As such, if authorities discovered one part of the business, the other parts would not be affected. Juan David Ochoa in an interview granted to PBS's *Frontline* not only confirmed Thoumi's belief, but also illustrated why Colombian DTOs were not economic cartels. According to Juan David Ochoa three major methods existed to send a shipment. The first method involved subcontracting the upstream aspect of the business. So once the processed cocaine was bought, the trafficker would only pay for the downstream aspect of the business—the shipment and selling of wholesale cocaine. The second method consisted of outsourcing all of the stages, so the shipment would simply be an investment for the trafficker. The third method avoided subcontracting, so the trafficker through his/her full service DTO paid for all costs involved in producing processed cocaine and in shipping the wholesale product:

I had several ways of doing this. One was to buy the cocaine and to send it the way I explained, and my partner would sell it there. The other way would be to have your own lab where you would process it. You'd have your own way of transporting it, a plane or a boat or something like that. You send it at your own cost. Another way, you'd end up having to subcontract with other people to do the different stages, like processing, transport, and the transfer of sales to the person that you had contracted in the United States. (Interviews - Juan David Ochoa, 2000).

The statement implies that various organizations were involved in the production of wholesale cocaine, which confirms that experienced DTOs like that of Escobar, the Ochoa brothers, or Rodriguez Gacha could not control the supply cocaine like an economic cartel would. In fact, if DTOs could not outsource certain aspects of the business it would be hard for them to stay in business, in the event that authorities were successful in confiscating their own downstream and/or upstream business divisions. Since DTOs needed flexibility to stay one step ahead of authorities, contingency plans and the use of subcontractors were ways to keep the business “on the move.” A case in point was the seizure and destruction of the processing lab *Tranquilandia* in 1984. The lab was a cooperative owned by several traffickers<sup>75</sup> in the early 1980s. When authorities took over, those same traffickers that lost their investment recovered loses by processing cocaine in other labs or buying processed cocaine from third parties and shipping it to salvage loses:

**Jorge Ochoa:** A lot of people were part owners (of *Tranquilandia*). Lots of people worked there... Everybody who wanted to buy a kilo or who had a kilo or who wanted to bring it from Bolivia, or from Ecuador--they would bring it to *Tranquilandia* and process it there. . . . But it wasn't like *Tranquilandia* had an owner. Everybody who wanted something would have access to this supermarket. So *Tranquilandia* was a sort of . . . a cooperative among several people...

**Frontline:** The DEA and the Colombian police had never seen such a laboratory. How big of a blow was its loss to the cocaine business? **Jorge Ochoa:** I don't think it affected the traffic much. There were many other labs all over the country, in many places. . . . (Interviews - Jorge Ochoa, 2000).

**Juan David Ochoa:** The initial owner of *Tranquilandia* was Gonzalo Rodriguez [Gacha], the Mexican. We had a part in that lab. It was very important because it was a bridge between Bolivia, Peru and Colombia. You could very easily process the cocaine there, because it was in the middle of a jungle where it was very difficult to go. There was no other way to go but by plane... (*Tranquilandia*) became very popular, very well known, and so there came a moment when authorities destroyed it. They confiscated it. It was well known that it existed, that it was a very large lab through which a lot of coca paste entered. You didn't just process coca there. It

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<sup>75</sup> *Tranquilandia* is popularly known as having a single owner—Gonzalo Rodriguez Gacha, however, trafficker interviews like those conducted by Frontline reveal that *Tranquilandia* was actually a cooperative where several traffickers were part owners of this large-scale cocaine refinery.

was also a bridge for other coca that was processed in other labs; because the airstrip was very large and very good for the airplanes . . . (After the destruction of *Tranquilandia*) Each of us on our own kept doing our own thing. We never did anything together as a society again... to set something like this up, in the middle of the jungle, is incredibly expensive. We might have lost around \$5 million or \$10 million, something like that... But there were laboratories all over the place. There were a lot of people who could sell the cocaine that was ready. So we stopped processing the cocaine directly, and we had to buy the cocaine through third parties that were producing . . . (Interviews - Juan David Ochoa, 2000).

Although traffickers like the Ochoa brothers claim that there was no “official” association of traffickers, a good level of coordination by a group of traffickers had to exist to organize a shipment and to form networks that would “spread the word” around about business needs such as: shipment financing, getting raw material, information on authority operations, and especially about international routes, among other needs. According to the Ochoa brothers, “there was no group or association that was ‘the cartel of Medellin’... There were groups of people that were friends of course, but... it wasn't an association or anything like that (Interviews - Juan David Ochoa, 2000).” Business ventures like *Tranquilandia* were called a cooperative by Jorge Ochoa (Interviews - Jorge Ochoa, 2000), but regardless the name chosen for DTO coordination, the comments by the Ochoa brothers on the illicit drug business suggests that DTO leaders had to have good networks of communication with other DTO leaders to help each other on business matters.

“Full service” DTOs like those headed by Pablo Escobar, the Ochoa Brothers, and Jose Gonzalo Rodriguez Gacha had six divisions of which 4 were business related and 2 divisions dealt with politics. The first division of a DTO was in charge of getting the raw material for making cocaine. The second division refined the coca paste to cocaine. The third division packed and transported the cocaine to the United States and Europe. The fourth division of the business picked up the wholesale shipment and sold it to U.S.



retailers, and then returned the money directly to Colombian traffickers via airplanes or via international money laundering mechanisms. The fifth division of the business dealt with security issues. Finally, the sixth division was the legal and administrative division.

Individual “full service” DTOs had to be cohesive enough to coordinate all the divisions of labor, but, again, in the event that authorities caught one or some of their divisions, DTO leaders could still have the flexibility to outsource a service. The only divisions that were difficult to outsource were the security and the legal/administrative divisions. These divisions required very loyal personnel due to the violent activities security providers had to engage in. Loyalty was highly valued in the legal/administrative division because of the legal and economic importance of the information handled by the staff.

When the cocaine business started, traffickers motivated by the opportunity to make an enormous profit tried to create economically cohesive organizations for exporting cocaine. However, the different divisions of the illicit drug business had a logical orientation towards producing cocaine and collecting profit, but economically speaking this was a hard business to coordinate in a true cohesive manner because its illegal nature kept the business constantly moving and the profit margins constantly changed. According to Francisco Thoumi, the drug business was unable to set profit margins or to market its drugs, through the creation of brands, to target key customers like legal businesses, because the business’s illegality kept the divisions ready for constant change. The need to keep ahead of authorities was more important than creating marketing strategies, so DTOs were cohesive enough to make profit and ‘keep on the move,’ but had low marketing cohesion. Compared to legal businesses, which could last

hundreds of years, the economic cohesion of Medellin-based DTOs only lasted at most 10 years, without major disruptions to their trade.

Economic organizational control can exist through discipline and selective incentives. In a business organization the overall incentive is to make profit. Former DTO employees interviewed for this project readily mentioned that profit was the major incentive for working in a DTO. Members of a DTO, from the coca farmer to the mafia boss, were driven by economic incentives. The desire to make money made the organization work. For example, if a *raspachin* was contracted to work for 3 to 4 months planting and scraping coca leaves in a remote location, he expected that at the end of the job he would get paid. The expectation of payment by all DTO employees drove their labor, so payment was a positive material incentive, especially when employees were paid higher than average wages for similar work in legal sectors.

However, if one of the divisions did not work as it was intended in this illicit industry, negative selective incentives such as, intimidation and violence forced the system to work. The reason familial, friendship, neighborhood, or community ties, were important qualifications for workers involved in this industry was because such ties were a basis of interpersonal trust, which were built on a system of reciprocity. If the workers knew each other it was believed that they would not betray each other. The logic in this relationship was that individuals in this labor force could be trusted to do their jobs, primarily because several people vouched for an individual's behavior. If an individual did not follow through, he/she would be punished, but since the DTO knew who the individual's family was and where said family it lives, violent reprisals could also affect the individual's family members and this threat theoretically kept the individual in check.

Drug Trafficking Organizations (DTOs) insured economic cohesion through the use of intimidation, but the use of violence if not used cautiously could disturb business and draw the attention of authorities. For this reason, if a DTO wanted to earn profit, it was in their economic benefit to cooperate, keep violence at a minimum, and to keep a low profile to avoid authorities. Inter-personal trust was important because if all actors wanted to forge long lasting working relationships in the future, they created reciprocal working relationships of trust among employees. Trust reduced the transaction costs of looking for new personnel every time a crop needs harvesting or of looking for new buyers when for example coca paste dealers want to sell products. If a coca paste dealer did not pay his farmers, he/she would most likely forgo future earnings because farmers would not work for someone who steals wages. If farmers failed to produce output, they would not be contracted in the future. If a cocaine refiner did not pay paste dealers, aside from using violence to resolve the impasse, the paste dealers in all probability would not use that refiner in the future.

Throughout the different stages of cocaine production armed personnel supervised transactions between the different divisions within a DTO to prevent divisions from cheating, since large amounts of money were involved. As the cocaine business was not legal, courts did not resolve business disputes and conflicts were resolved through violence. Again, the weakness in the Colombian government's law enforcement capabilities allowed DTOs to use violence on a regular basis without fear of government persecution. Although a high level of intimidation has existed in the drug trade, it is in the economic benefit of all actors involved that transactions run smoothly so that authorities

are kept at bay and more durable as well as reliable trade relations among divisions can be achieved.

In sum, the discussion on economic cohesion found that DTO leaders created for-profit organizations that were flexible and well prepared for change. A DTO's ability to master different methods for exporting cocaine allows trafficking organizations to: avoid authorities, and recover losses in case authorities do happen to confiscate or discover a division in the trade network. Also the flexibility of DTOs to outsource the different divisions of cocaine production shows: that a high degree of specialization exists, that many organizations are involved in the business, that these organizations communicate, and that it is difficult for one DTO to control other organizations. The need of a DTO to be flexible by outsourcing production to avoid authorities counters the idea that DTOs are economic cartels that can control the supply of drugs. Finally, the need for DTOs to constantly change to keep ahead of authorities leads to short-lived businesses, because these organizations cannot plan for constant profit margins or marketing strategies that could extend the business's lifespan. Drug Trafficking Organizations (DTOs) can only hope to avoid authorities to continue profiting from the cocaine trade.

Second, the discussion found that even though DTO employees are driven by profits, interpersonal trust and violence are tools that ensure discipline and organizational cohesion. Employees are motivated to do their jobs in a DTO because they enjoy the material economic benefit from working in a DTO, more so than expressive or solidary benefits. Though workers may know each other because of familial ties, illicit drug industry employees do not join a DTO to enjoy the expressive benefit of feeling satisfaction from refining cocaine. But overall, interviews conducted with former DTO

employees sustain that money is the main incentive that drives the drug trafficking machinery. Most members of a DTO do not join to receive solidary benefits, where they feel satisfied because they are forming relationships with other members of the group. Gang members living in marginal neighborhoods, who work as *sicarios* or bodyguards, are the most likely among DTO employees to receive solidary benefits from belonging to a gang because they feel part of a community. Otherwise, DTO profits motivate individuals to join a group.

Finally, this section on economic cohesion argues that interpersonal trust and the use of violence are necessary to ensure discipline and organizational cohesion. Employing family and friends in a DTO reduces the risk that employees will betray an organization by turning to authorities. The employment of family and friends can also be used as a way to coerce a person into following orders, since a DTO employee knows that if they make a mistake his/her family is at risk. Interpersonal trust reduces the need to use violence and ensures longer future relationships with employees and different DTOs. Finally, if the desire to make profit and interpersonal trust fails to motivate a DTO employee to follow DTO rules, the use of violence functions as a coercive method to ensure discipline and group cohesion.

#### Political Cohesion

As business organizations, the ideological objective of individual Medellin-based DTOs was primarily capitalist—to make profit and reduce risks. However, during the 1980s traffickers like Pablo Escobar, the Ochoa brothers, Carlos Lehder, Gonzalo Rodriguez Gacha, and other traffickers associated with Medellin trafficking networks also had direct and indirect political ambitions. The DTO leaders became interested in

politics because as they became extraordinarily wealthy they also desired to become political elites. At first Medellin-based DTO leaders pursued individual political projects, but as time progressed the separate political projects converged and became focused on overturning the 1979 Treaty on Extradition. The political cohesion of Medellin-based DTOs can be divided into three major periods. The first period dates from the 1981 to 1983 and it is marked by the direct participation of DTO leaders in electoral politics. During this period the political goals of traffickers differed in agenda and strategy, so it is a period with limited political cohesion. The second period dates October 20<sup>th</sup> 1983, to June of 1991. In this period Medellin-based DTO leaders increasingly unified their political agenda to nullify the Extradition Treaty. DTO leaders continued to influence electoral politics, but indirectly, through their sponsorship of anti-extradition candidates. Overall during this second period, the strategy of Medellin-based DTOs increasingly became violent and the creation of the terrorist group *Los Extraditables* in late 1984 best expresses the increased degree of cohesion among most DTO leaders. Finally, the period from 1991-1993 marks the organizational disintegration of *Los Extraditables*. This final period was paradoxical, since DTO leaders reveled in the 1991 constitutional ban on extradition, but simultaneously the organizational cohesion of Medellin-based DTO leaders dwindled. The following discussion details how the political cohesion of Medellin-based traffickers evolved as their need to overturn the 1979 U.S.-Colombian Treaty of Extradition increased.

#### Political Cohesion of Medellin-based DTOs 1981-1983

At the same time that Medellin-based DTO leaders were involved in the creation of paramilitary groups, like MAS to counterbalance the power of guerrillas, many DTO

leaders were participating in Colombia's electoral process. One could claim that Medellin-based DTO leaders were involved in electoral politics before 1981, however, most journalistic records only report the political involvement of Medellin DTO leaders from 1981 onward. In preparation for the 1982 electoral year, traffickers based in Medellin began sponsoring politicians and in some cases launching their personal political campaigns. Even though individual traffickers were active participants in elections, DTO leaders did not unite their political agendas nor focus solely on overturning the 1979 Extradition Treaty. One concludes that each DTO leader had separate political objectives, although some political campaigns had similarities in agenda issues.

Pablo Escobar's strategy for the 1982 elections was to sponsor a few powerful local and national level candidates and to run for office. His objective was to run as an alternate for a congressional seat headed by Jairo Ortega Ramirez while he also sponsored the senatorial candidacy of Alberto Santofimio Botero, who was already a major leader within the Liberal Party. Escobar's agenda was populist and vague, exemplified by a proposal to sponsor sports. In 1982 Pablo Escobar succeeded in obtaining the votes for his candidates and became an elected congressional alternate, but his political career ended on October 20<sup>th</sup> 1983 when his congressional immunity was removed because he was accused of being a drug trafficker. After this fiasco, Pablo Escobar's strategy became focused on overturning the 1979 Extradition Treaty by waging a war against political elites.

Carlos Lehder's electoral strategy was similar to Pablo Escobar's because he was public about his political aspirations. Lehder sponsored politicians for the 1982 general

elections and for the 1984 local elections in the Department of Quindío. For the 1982 elections, Lehder, Escobar, Rodriguez Gacha, and the Ochoa brothers contributed funds to the campaigns of the presidential candidates representing the Liberal and Conservative Parties, Alfonso Lopez Michelsen and Belisario Betancur, respectively. In contrast to Pablo Escobar's vague campaign agenda, Carlos Lehder's was very vocal about opposing the extradition of nationals. In 1983 Lehder openly admitted in television and radio interviews that his wealth came from illicit businesses. Later, during the 1986 general elections, Lehder continued to sponsor politicians and even ran for a congressional post, until he was arrested and extradited on February of that year.

Jose Gonzalo Rodriguez Gacha's participation in electoral politics concentrated in sponsoring politicians with anti-extradition and anti-insurgent agendas, who were based in Colombian's Magdalena Medio region. Rodriguez Gacha was also outspoken against politicians who favored extradition and later in 1986 Gacha admitted his wealth came from drug trafficking while being interviewed for a television show with journalist German Castro Caycedo (Castillo, 1987, p. 89).

The Ochoa brothers, Jorge, Juan David, and Fabio, were very discreet about their political activities. According to George Jung, who was Carlos Lehder's business associate, the Ochoa's were important within trafficking circles because they knew many politicians (Streatfield, 2001). During the Liberal Party Convention of 1982 it is widely reported that the Ochoa brothers, along with rest of the Medellin-based DTO leaders, met the Liberal presidential candidate, Alfonso Lopez Michelsen, and bought raffle tickets to sponsor the candidacy (Salazar, 2001, p. 95; Lopez et al., 2001, p. 142).



On the basis of early electoral participation of the Medellin DTO leaders examined here, the early involvement of DTO leaders in electoral politics had little organizational cohesion. The different DTO leaders had their own political agendas and sponsored politicians in their geographical areas of influence. The only event during this period in which the participation of Medellin DTO leaders overlaps is in their sponsorship of the 1982 Lopez Michelsen and Belisario Betancur presidential campaigns. Before October 20<sup>th</sup> 1983, the date in which Pablo Escobar is forced to resign from his congressional post, most DTO leaders (with the exception of Carlos Lehder) hardly mention their opposition to the 1979 Treaty on Extradition. It is only after Escobar is criminally investigated and the Congress lifts his congressional immunity that traffickers begin to publicly admit their involvement in the illicit drug industry, admit their opposition to extradition, and become more cohesive in sponsoring anti-extradition politicians. From 1983 to 1991 DTO leaders located in Medellin would continue to use the electoral process as way to influence policy. However, instead of running direct personal campaigns, traffickers would fund the campaigns of politicians that would run with an anti-extradition platform. The following section on representativeness will further discuss the electoral influence of Medellin-based DTO leaders.

#### Political Cohesion of Medellin-based DTOs 1983-1991

From 1983 to 1991 the organizational cohesion of DTO leaders increased. Traffickers used a combination of three major strategies to influence policymakers. The first consisted of disputing the validity of the 1979 Treaty on Extradition through the judicial process. The second strategy was a legislative strategy that consisted of sponsoring anti-extradition politicians to congress and the National Constitutional

Assembly (NCA). Finally, the third and most dominant strategy consisted of resorting to violence as a way to coerce policymakers into overturning the extradition treaty and negotiating a legalization of their criminal status. To accomplish this last strategy, leaders of Medellin-based DTOs created the group *Los Extraditables*.

### Judicial Strategy

The first strategy pursued by Medellin-based DTO leaders was to block the implementation of the 1979 Treaty on Extradition by questioning its constitutional validity. Drug Trafficking Organization (DTO) leaders hired legal teams headed by Guido Parra and Humberto Buitrago for this purpose (Interviews – Juan David Ochoa, 2000; Legarda, 2005, p. 79). On July of 1985, a lawyer Javier Hernando Hernandez filed a suit questioning the constitutional validity of Law 27<sup>th</sup> of 1980, which integrated the 1979 Extradition Treaty into Colombia's legal code. However, legal proceedings were interrupted because on November 6<sup>th</sup> 1985, the leftist M-19 guerrilla attacked the Palace of Justice, where Colombia's Supreme Court was housed. Eleven justices were killed as a result of the initial M-19 attack and the ensuing battle between guerrillas and the military. After the debacle, Colombia's Supreme Court proceedings were stunted for a year, since it was difficult to replace the Court's 24 justices. Moreover, many qualified judges and lawyers felt intimidated by the rise in violence and did not want to risk their lives and those of their families<sup>76</sup> (Lee, 1990, p. 121-126). In addition to the 1985 M-19 attack, judges investigating trafficking related cases were threatened or assassinated. All

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<sup>76</sup> During the period 1984 to 1986 several assassinations were geared at judges to intimidate the legal community. Among the assassinated judges are: Judge Tulio Manuel Castro Gil on July 1985, Penal Customs Judge Carmencita Londoño Rojas on May 1986, the assassination of Hernán Baquero Borda, an Colombian Supreme Court Justice on July 1986, and Superior Court Judge Gustavo Zuluaga Bernal on October 1986 (Lee, 1990; Castillo, 1991; Escobar: Escobar: 17 años, 1993).

of these events played in to the hands of DTO leaders because the implementation of the Treaty on Extradition was blocked.

By December of 1986, 24 new justices were selected and they had to oversee the year and a half old judicial case that questioned the constitutionality of the 1979 Extradition Treaty between Colombia and the United States. The Supreme Court of Colombia ruled that the Treaty was invalid because then President Julio Cesar Turbay Ayala, as Chief of Government and the ultimate authority regarding international matters, did not sign the treaty himself (Kavass, 1990, p. 158-162). Instead, his Minister of Government, German Zea Hernandez, signed the Treaty into law as Law 27 of 1980. Consequently, the court ruled that Minister of Government German Zea Hernandez did not have the necessary international jurisdiction because this role was solely assigned to the President, so on the basis of the technicality, the 1979 Treaty on Extradition was invalidated on December 12<sup>th</sup> 1986.

The DTO legal victory was spoiled when President Virgilio Barco, who had originally negotiated the Extradition Treaty with the United States as part of the Turbay Ayala administration, issued Decree Law 68 of 1986 on December 14<sup>th</sup> 1986 in order to continue extraditing drug traffickers to the United States. Again, the Colombian Supreme Court had to decide the constitutional validity of the decree, and it took half a year for the court to make a decision. In the meantime, Carlos Lehder was the only trafficker extradited through Decree Law 68 on February 4<sup>th</sup> 1987, the same day that he was captured by Colombian authorities.

Once the Supreme Court was ready to decide on the validity of Decree Law 68 of 1986, the justices were tied 12 to 12 and had to appoint a special justice to break the tie.

Once again, because of the high level of fear among the legal community, as a result of the ongoing assassination of judges, eligible judges did not want to serve as justices, so the first three individuals nominated for the interview process declined the nomination. Finally, a fourth nominee, Alfonso Suarez de Castro, accepted to serve as a special justice and broke the tie (Kavass, 1990, p. 162). On June 25<sup>th</sup> 1987, the Supreme Court determined that even though the 1979 Extradition Treaty was still internationally viable, President Virgilio Barco had no ability to launch a decree based on the fact that no existing domestic law could allow him to implement extraditions. If President Barco wanted to implement the Treaty he would have to start legislation through Colombian legislature and have it approved as a law. Since it was believed that members of the legislature were not going to approve passing a law permitting the extradition of nationals, the Colombian presidency was unable to extradite drug traffickers to the United States from 1987 to 1989.<sup>77</sup>

The judicial strategy was a victory for the Medellin-based DTOs because their intimidation of judges coupled with the proficiency of their legal experts enabled DTO leaders to invalidate an international treaty that threatened their safe heaven in Colombia.

#### Legislative Strategy

The second strategy used during 1983-1991 by Medellin-based DTO leaders involved participating in Colombia's legislative process primarily as political campaign financiers. After 1983 the issue of extradition became the central issue in the political agenda of Medellin-based DTO leaders and as a result they tried to influence politicians

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<sup>77</sup> In 1989 President Barco extradited four traffickers via decree law (Matthiesen, 2000, p. 221).

on two major policy options: to permanently overturn extradition and to agree to favorable terms of surrender.

The DTO support for anti-extradition candidates after 1983 was given in secret, because of the public outrage against DTOs and as a consequence of their suspected involvement in the assassination of Minister of Justice Rodrigo Lara Bonilla. The secrecy made it difficult to link drug traffickers directly to politicians. Also, since Medellin-based DTO leaders were never arrested or criminally processed for financing political campaigns, evidence of how much money was donated or which candidates received DTO support is weak. The only record that exists on these campaign donations relies on the declarations made by close associates of Medellin-based DTO leaders, journalist investigations on the link between politicians and traffickers, and allegations made by U.S. government counter-narcotics officials (Yo acuso, 1994).

It is necessary to make a caveat regarding the issue of extradition and also regarding whether a person/politician opposed the extradition of Colombians during this time period. Having an anti-extradition stance did not mean being pro-Drug Trafficking Organization (DTO). A politician or an individual could oppose the use of extradition on the desire to uphold Colombia's sovereignty vis-à-vis the United States and still be opposed to the existence of drug trafficking organizations. Many Colombians especially in the period between 1988-1991 were exhausted with the upsurge in overall violence, as a direct consequence of DTO opposition to the U.S.- Colombia 1979 Extradition Treaty and inter-DTO wars. Instead of conceding to U.S. foreign policy demands, many Colombians believed that a domestic solution could be created primarily to solve the problem of violence by prohibiting extradition and jailing traffickers in Colombian

prisons. Because of this nationalistic reasoning, it is impossible to say that all politicians who opposed extradition were DTO representatives and were being directly financed by DTOs. The latter point was especially true when hard evidence showing DTO electoral influence was weak since the governments of the time headed by Virgilio Barco and Cesar Gaviria did not open up thorough official investigations on the corruption allegations being raised by journalists and U.S. officials (Castillo, 1991; Morales, 1990; Yo Acuso, 1994). Regardless of whether DTOs funded the campaigns of some or all anti-extradition politicians of the time, DTOs benefited from the support of anti-extradition nationalist politicians because these politicians furthered the DTO's cause by placing the debate on the national stage.

Medellin-based DTO legislative influence was made evident by two attempts to nullify the extradition policy. The first attempt consisted of changing a 1989 legislative amnesty granted to left-wing guerrillas so that it would simultaneously benefit traffickers. The second attempt was done either through direct money donations or by financing the political campaigns of anti-extradition assemblypersons participating at the 1990 National Constitutional Assembly (NCA). These assemblypersons would be in charge of drafting the new 1991 constitution and DTO leaders wanted their representatives to permanently ban the extradition of Colombian nationals.

The first attempt to abolish the 1979 Extradition Treaty was done during the 1988-89 legislative year in an attempt to pass the 1988 Constitutional Reform. The Colombian government was in the midst of attempting to demobilize leftist guerrillas by integrating them into democratic politics and for the purpose demobilizing leftist guerilas congresspersons created a legislative amnesty. At that time the President of the House of

Representatives, Norberto Morales Ballesteros (Morales, 1990) and other representatives created a bill on November of 1989, which would change said political amnesty so that it would extend amnesty to traffickers. The proposed bill changes would allow traffickers to negotiate as political actors without fear of being extradited (Castillo, 1991, p. 273; Salazar, 2001, p. 263-264). These congresspersons proposed a referendum on extradition and an inclusion of more crimes in the political amnesty so that the amnesty would therefore apply to traffickers.

Liberal politician, Horacio Serpa, during a speech on the issue of extradition, accused the 1988-89 legislature of being bribed and politically compromised:

And when bribes (have not worked), it has been the terrible power of crime, the assassinations: Rodrigo Lara, Luis Carlos Galan, and now Low Murtha. It is evident that there are no guarantees and that the push to modify this (extradition) law is evident by the pressures that exist and by the strange environment, which surrounds the Assembly... (Frenada la extradición, 1991).

Serpa's declarations were corroborated by testimony given by John Jairo Velasquez Vasquez, Pablo Escobar's gunman and state witness against ex-Senator Alberto Santofimio Botero during the Luis Carlos Galan murder case. According to Velasquez Vasquez, Santofimio Botero was the Medellin-based DTO leaders' congressional point man during 1988-1989. The ex-Senator was in charge of giving money to congresspersons and to constitutional assemblypersons, so that they would legally prohibit the extradition of nationals during the late 1980s (Legarda, 2005, p. 239).

The organizational cohesion of Medellin DTO leaders was high as they attempted to influence the 1988-89 Congress into negotiating favorable terms for their surrender. However, the group's high level of cohesion failed to provide an amnesty for traffickers, because pro-extradition congresspersons and the Government Minister Carlos Lemos Simmonds rejected the proposed legislation. No institution exists in a vacuum and the

legislature was influenced by the high political violence affecting Colombian cities during the years 1988 and 1989. Although political violence usually intimidated many pro-extradition legislators, the public assassination of Presidential Candidate Luis Carlos Galan on August 18<sup>th</sup> 1989 was still in the country's memory and an outraged public opinion emboldened pro-extradition legislators against Drug Trafficking Organizations (DTOs). The legislature's negative vote against Norberto Morales Ballesteró's DTO Amnesty bill was a vote of protest against DTO violence. Even though newspaper editorials reflected the public outrage with Morales Ballesteró's bill (Morales, 1990), no in-depth government investigation was pursued by President Virgilio Barco's administration to find out whether DTO leaders bribed congresspersons.

The second attempt at changing the policy on extradition through the use of legislative mechanisms took place at the 1990 National Constitutional Assembly (NCA). Once the NCA members were elected, ex-Senator Alberto Santofimio Botero reportedly distributed amounts ranging from \$50,000 to \$100,000 dollars to 27 assemblypersons (Legarda, 2005, p. 239). The pressure of the illicit drug business lobby was significant in the NCA because in addition to Medellin-based DTOs, many other traffickers especially those linked to the Cali based DTOs financed the NCA campaigns of assemblypersons so that they would raise the extradition issue at the NCA and subsequently pass a constitutional article abolishing extradition (Castillo, 1991). In exchange for trafficker funds, assemblypersons argued to overturn the 1979 Treaty on Extradition in their respective NCA committees. They did so by appealing to the nationalist sentiment of assemblypersons and appealing to Colombia's public opinion.



Again, it is not possible to know with certainty whether all NCA assemblypersons that argued against extradition received DTO funds because President Cesar Gaviria's government did not investigate the allegations made by journalist, pro-extradition politicians, and U.S. government counter-narcotics officials. Also, nationalist arguments against the use of extradition were valid in the sense that anti-extradition assemblypersons were attempting to uphold Colombia's sovereignty. Many assemblypersons like Fabio Villa and Oscar Hoyos for the Democratic Alliance M-19, or like Francisco Rojas Birry, the representative for indigenous peoples, believed that extradition was an imposition made against Colombian sovereignty by the United States' government (Torres, 1991),

**Francisco Rojas Birry:** "No country should renounce its sovereignty, this entails the execution of its own laws and permitting that its citizens not be judged by foreigners" (La no extradición, 1991)

Characteristically, anti-extradition assemblypersons argued for the passage of an article to permanently overturn extradition based on three reasons: The first was that it was the right of a sovereign nation to ban the extradition of nationals. The second reason was that such a constitutional article would be a positive step for reducing Colombia's institutional system since the policy of extradition had had negative effects such as the increase in violence (Torres, 1991). The final and third argument was that extradition would violate human rights because the hundred year prison sentences<sup>78</sup> that existed in the United States would make it impossible for a person to become re-adjusted to normal society after being imprisoned for so long, even if they survived the sentence (Torres, 1991).

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<sup>78</sup> Many legislators cited Carlos Lehder's case because he was condemned to a life sentence without parole plus an additional 135 years in prison.

The second legislative attempt at abolishing the Treaty on Extradition was successful because on June 19<sup>th</sup> 1991, after months of debate, the National Constitutional Assembly permanently abolished the extradition of nationals by a secret vote of 51 to 13. The legislative strategy was successful because the organizational cohesion of Medellin DTO leaders not only distributed financial resources to ensure an anti-extradition vote, but they also pressured the NCA vote with the use of violence. During the NCA debates the group *Los Extraditables* was holding journalists hostage and Medellin was suffering a terrible bout of violence with 1200 homicides and 500 policemen dead just in February of 1991. The malleable public opinion, which had been outraged by the assassination of Luis Carlos Galan at the end of 1989, was exhausted with violence and optimistic that a new Constitution would create greater avenues of representation and provide peace by June 1991.

The legislative process of the NCA initially debated the issue of extradition in committees before it was brought to a vote in the assembly after almost four months of debate. Key debate dates, April 18<sup>th</sup>, May 15<sup>th</sup>, and June 19<sup>th</sup> 1991 at the NCA matched the outcomes of backdoor negotiations that Pablo Escobar was undergoing with President Cesar Gaviria's government officials. On April 18<sup>th</sup> 1991, the first round of subcommittee discussions on extradition, the subcommittee drafted an anti-extradition article to be voted on and on April 22<sup>nd</sup> Pablo Escobar agreed to surrender to authorities and confess to a crime. On May 15<sup>th</sup> 1991, the subcommittee on extradition voted to approve an anti-extradition constitutional article that would be sent to the general assembly (*Frenada la extradición*, 1991) and on May 24<sup>th</sup> *Los Extraditables* released Francisco Santos who was the last journalist to be held hostage. Finally, on June 19<sup>th</sup> the

NCA voted to abolish the extradition of nationals and on the same date Pablo Escobar surrendered to authorities.

### Violent Strategy

The third concurrent strategy implemented by Medellin-based DTO leaders during 1983-1991 was the incremental use of violence to influence policy. Medellin DTO leaders organized as *Los Extraditables* to coerce politicians into permanently overturning extradition and to legalize their status by negotiating favorable terms of surrender.

The group *Los Extraditables* was first mentioned in Colombia's major newsmagazine *Semana* on August 1<sup>st</sup> 1983 (El destape, 1983). According to *Semana*, the group *Los Extraditables* signed anti-extradition messages that appeared as massive newspaper ads, bought during a 1983 media campaign against the 1979 Treaty of Extradition. In the article, *Semana* attributed the authorship of the anti-extradition ads to Carlos Lehder for two reasons: First, because the ads matched the populist-fascist ideology prevalent in Lehder's own political movement, *Movimiento Civico Latino Nacional*. Second, because *Semana* editors also matched the 1981 pamphlets signed by Carlos Lehder for the group *Muerte A Secuestradores* (MAS). On July 1983 Carlos Lehder revealed in a morning radio interview with journalist Juan Guillermo Rios that he was a "mafioso," consequently *Semana* editors felt compelled to write a brief biography to explain Carlos Lehder's bizarre ideology and his link to *Los Extraditables* and MAS, as he was a self-confessed trafficker:

**Juan Guillermo Rios:** Mr. Lehder in all reality, for some time now it is said throughout Colombia's central region that... you are a 'mafioso,' please excuse that we ask you such a question in such a frontal manner, but we would like to know your position and that is why we are interviewing you...

**Carlos Lehder:** I don't deny that I have participated in Colombia's great bonanza, but I also don't deny that we (the country) are enjoying a monetary amnesty, in which many "hot monies" may have entered (the economy) (El destape, 1983).

In this radio interview Carlos Lehder accepted the journalist's accusation and incriminated the government by being frank about the "double standard" held in society, where 'mafiosos' were considered pariahs while the government unintentionally enjoyed the dollar reserves that it received as a result of manipulating economic monetary policy.<sup>79</sup> The *Semana* writers seemed astonished at Carlos Lehder's blunt honesty and *Semana's* first analysis on *Los Extraditables* explained the group's anti-extradition message and linked the issue of extradition to drug traffickers. Although this article is the first mention of *Los Extraditables* in the Colombian media, the group would not launch its first official communiqué until November 15<sup>th</sup> 1984.

A series of four events led to the official launch of the first communiqué by *Los Extraditables* on November 15<sup>th</sup> 1984. The first event was Pablo Escobar's forced retirement from Congress on October 23<sup>rd</sup> 1983. After this event, it was evident to DTO leaders that they could not openly participate in the political system as political candidates. To influence policy DTO leaders changed strategies. As a consequence, besides sponsoring anti-extradition politicians and influencing the judicial process, DTO leaders began using violence. The shift towards violence led DTO leaders to behave less like mainstream candidates or interest groups, and more like armed political movements or terrorist groups.

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<sup>79</sup> The Colombian governments periodically practice "reformas tributarias" where the central bank buys dollars to stabilize the value of its currency vis-à-vis the dollar. Lehder was alluding to the fact that some of the dollars come from the black market and are usually derived from cocaine sales.

The second event that led to the launch of *Los Extraditables*, and shook Colombia's political system, was the assassination of Minister of Justice Rodrigo Lara Bonilla on April 20<sup>th</sup> 1984. Rodrigo Lara Bonilla, during the years 1983 and 1984, was the first high-ranking government official to aggressively pursue cocaine traffickers by: opening closed criminal investigations, grounding trafficker planes, and seizing the industrial-size cocaine refineries. The seizure of the refinery *Tranquilandia* on March 10<sup>th</sup> 1984 was praised in international news. However, as a consequence of this seizure, criminal investigations revealed that Rodrigo Lara Bonilla was harassed by DTOs, because his telephone was wiretapped and he received death threats. Finally, on April 30<sup>th</sup> 1984, gunmen linked to Medellin-based DTOs assassinated Rodrigo Lara Bonilla and this event marked the first time that DTOs would use political violence to express their discontent with the government's extradition and counter-narcotics policy.<sup>80</sup> It would also lead to the implementation of the Extradition Treaty by the Belisario Betancur Presidency.

The third and fourth events that led to the official launch of *Los Extraditables* was the implementation of extradition by Colombian authorities and the arrest of Jorge Luis Ochoa in Spain. The assassination of Lara Bonilla was significant because the Colombian government felt compelled to pursue DTOs. Consequently, Belisario Betancur's government reversed its policy on extradition and placed extradition as the main tool to punish known traffickers. The implementation of the extradition treaty placed extradition atop of DTO leader agendas. Juan David Ochoa conveys, on a

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<sup>80</sup> Most evidence suggests that Pablo Escobar was the sole author of Lara Bonilla's assassination and only one gunman, an eighteen-year-old Byron Velazquez Arenas, was arrested and convicted to 15 years of jail time. The second gunman died while fleeing the crime and Colombian authorities linked both assassins to gunmen organizations in Medellin.

televised interview with PBS's *Frontline*, how this event became a turning point in the lives of traffickers since the fear of being persecuted and extradited became a reality:

**Juan David Ochoa:** Since the pressure after Lara Bonilla, the persecution was so hard against us and our families. We thought it was a very dark future for us, so we decided that the best thing would be to leave the business alone. We proposed this to ex-President Lopez, but that had no answer...

**Frontline:** What did extradition mean to you?

**Juan David Ochoa:** Extradition was something that we thought was very grave for us. If someone would extradite you, that would be like being buried alive. We respected and feared extradition... very much (Interviews – Juan David Ochoa, 2000).

Because of the government clamp down and the potential threat that extradition posed for major traffickers, Medellin DTO leaders fled to Panama and on May 26<sup>th</sup> 1984 held negotiations with Colombian government's Attorney General Carlos Jimenez Gomez and former President Alfonso Lopez Michelsen (Eddy et al., 1988, p. 299; Castillo, 1987; Interviews - Juan David Ochoa, 2000).

This first negotiation united Colombian drug traffickers and it led DTO leaders to propose to dismantle their cocaine businesses, which at the time controlled 70-80 percent of the world's cocaine trade. In exchange, traffickers wanted the Colombian government to grant them an amnesty to avoid being extradited to the United States (Eddy et al., 1988, p. 299; Clawson et al., 1996, p. 103). The Betancur government rejected the trafficker proposal because it believed that its justice system could pursue arrests and extradite the traffickers responsible for Lara Bonilla's death. On July of 1984 the Betancur government signed U.S. government extradition requests and arrested the first traffickers whom were extradited on January of 1985. On July 19<sup>th</sup> 1984, U.S. Federal Judge Herbert Shapiro issued an arrest warrant for Pablo Escobar and Jorge Luis Ochoa to begin the process of extradition to the United States, as a direct response to the

assassination of Barry Seal, cocaine pilot turned DEA informant. The arrest warrant had a menacing effect on traffickers because they were officially being accused of a crime in the United States, which may lead to their eventual extradition.

Since the Belisario Betancur government refused the DTO leaders' Panama proposal, the leadership of Medellin-based DTOs dispersed to other countries like Ecuador, Nicaragua, Spain, and Brazil, and later in 1984, as the government abated its pursuit, most traffickers returned to Colombia. The only exception was Jorge Luis Ochoa, who was the only major trafficker, based in Medellin, who did not return to Colombia because he was arrested on November 15<sup>th</sup> 1984 in Spain. As a consequence of his arrest, Ochoa had to await legal proceedings in Spain because the United States government placed an extradition request for him and Cali based trafficker Gilberto Rodriguez Orejuela.

The time period from April 20<sup>th</sup> 1983 to November of 1984 was a period of drastic change for Medellin-based DTO leaders, as it marked the end of cocaine trafficking's "golden years." Drug Trafficking Organization leaders would have to worry for the first time about being pursued by Colombian and international authorities. The culmination of these four events—the inability to openly participate in Colombia's political system, Rodrigo Lara Bonilla's assassination, the implementation of extradition by authorities, and the Jorge Luis Ochoa arrest in Spain—made the issue of extradition the number one priority for DTO leaders based in Medellin and the focus of their organizational cohesion. As a result, the group of traffickers headed by Pablo Escobar and Jose Gonzalo Rodriguez Gacha took the idea of *Los Extraditables*, originally ascribed to Carlos Lehder in July 1983, and launched the group's first communiqué on

November 15<sup>th</sup> 1984—the same day of Jorge Luis Ochoa’s arrest in Spain (Legarda, 2005). According to Jhon Jairo Velasquez Vasquez, Pablo Escobar’s gunman, on the same date a campaign was organized in Medellin to tag street walls by spray-painting the slogan “Say no to extradition.”

Whereas in 1981 the creation of MAS allowed traffickers to use violence against the M-19 guerrilla to stop kidnappings, in a similar fashion, after their legal political options were diminished, *Los Extraditables* targeted key politicians and members of the justice system to fulfill two objectives: First, to convey their opposition to the 1979 Extradition Treaty with the United States. The second objective was to coerce politicians in an effort to reach a negotiation so that DTO leaders could legalize their criminal status. The creation of *Los Extraditables* allowed DTO leaders based in Medellin to unite and form a more cohesive organization opposing extradition. The DTO leaders would essentially use a “carrot-and-stick approach” to ban extradition and legalize their status. The violence generated by *Los Extraditables* would be used as the “stick” in this approach. The “carrot” or incentive that DTO leaders’ provided was their willingness to negotiate surrender to government officials in exchange for a permanent ban on extradition. The DTO leaders and government officials periodically organized backroom negotiations with an effort to reach an agreement. The following discussion will center on the cohesion of *Los Extraditables* in their effort to accomplish their political goals. The discussion will focus on the group’s leadership, decision-making process, the group’s discipline, and how its internal organization allowed the Medellin DTOs to secure a ban on the extradition of nationals and favorable terms of surrender.



In contrast to Muerte A Secuestradores (MAS), which had no clear leadership that could impose an organizational objective, *Los Extraditables* had a clear leadership and a more organized discipline because the group was able to collect funds from member traffickers with a decision-making style that was cohesive. From the launch of the first *Los Extraditables* communiqué in 1984, it is widely believed that Pablo Escobar and Jose Gonzalo Rodriguez Gacha headed the group (Legarda, 2005; Casación 31761, 2011, p. 52). As leaders, Escobar and Rodriguez Gacha were responsible for deciding political targets and organizing terrorist attempts. Jairo Velásquez Vásquez a.k.a. “Popeye” testified that former Senator Alberto Santofimio Botero, Escobar’s political running mate, guided Escobar by choosing political targets (Legarda, 2005, p. 58). Colombia’s Supreme Court corroborated Velásquez Vásquez testimony by studying other testimonial accounts, which showed that Alberto Santofimio Botero knew and was a close advisor to Pablo Escobar from 1982-1989, but also that Santofimio Botero was the intellectual author of the assassination of presidential candidate Luis Carlos Galan Sarmiento (Legarda, 2005, p. 58; Casación 31761, 2011, p. 20 & 23). The Supreme Court ruled that the motives behind Alberto Santofimio Botero’s advice were grounded on his own political aspirations, since on August of 1989 Luis Carlos Galan was only a pre-candidate vying for the Liberal party’s nomination. The Court’s conclusions indicate that when Escobar carried out the Galan assassination, Alberto Santofimio Botero –as a leader of the Liberal party– benefited from such action for two reasons: First, Alberto Santofimio Botero still had a chance at obtaining his party’s nomination in 1989. Second, even if Santofimio Botero did not receive the nomination, he benefited from the assassination by furthering his position of power within the Liberal party, especially if he sought to

support Hernando Duran Dussan, who was more likely than Botero to win the Liberal presidential nomination of 1989 (Casación 31761, 2011, p. 42).

Even though the Colombian Supreme Court and several journalistic and scholarly accounts have determined that the leaders of *Los Extraditables* were Pablo Escobar and Jose Gonzalo Rodriguez Gacha, the extent of the Ochoa brothers' participation in the leadership and funding of *Los Extraditables* is uncertain. In contrast to some journalists who have written on the Medellin-based DTOs (Gugliotta et al., 1989; Eddy et al., 1988, p. 312-314), Colombian officials from Medellin who were interviewed for this project and who were involved in counter-narcotics efforts during the 1980s, make a point of explaining that the group *Los Extraditables* did not include the Ochoa brothers. Although the Ochoa brothers were deeply involved in the drug business and had business associations with other traffickers (Castillo, 1987; Gugliotta et al, 1989; Eddy et al., 1988, p. 290), it is difficult to ascertain the degree of decision-making power that the Ochoa brothers had within *Los Extraditables*. Newspaper accounts of testimony given by Escobar gunman Jhon Jairo Velasquez Vasquez suggests that the Ochoa brothers contributed a monthly fund of \$250,000 dollars to *Los Extraditables* (Hermanos Ochoa, 2009).<sup>81</sup> Most of these inquiries are difficult to verify because Colombian authorities never investigated the role of the Ochoa brothers in *Los Extraditables* and the group's main leaders were killed. Moreover, the Ochoa brother's surrender to Colombian authorities in 1991 muted all further allegations against them.

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<sup>81</sup> This amount of money coincides with amounts given by Clawson et al. on the "war tax" that Pablo Escobar expected from the Kiko Moncada and Fernando Galeano DTOs.

Most journalistic investigations on *Los Extraditables* focus on Pablo Escobar and Jose Gonzalo Rodriguez Gacha as the main decision-makers among DTO leaders.

During the years 1983-1991, in which *Los Extraditables* were active, the Ochoa brothers were described by journalists and academics as marginal actors who participated in the invalidation of the Extradition Treaty in 1986-87 and who gradually negotiated their surrender with Colombian authorities in 1990 and 1991 (Clawson et al., 1996; Legarda, 2005; Salazar, 2001:265; Gugliotta et al., 1989:336).

During the time that *Los Extraditables* were in operation, the Ochoa brothers seemed to be less confrontational and more open to a negotiated solution to the illicit drug business than Pablo Escobar (Ochoa, 1989; Salazar, 2001, p. 161). In his book, *Un Narco Se Confiesa y Acusa*, Fabio Ochoa explains that the problem of drug traffic in Colombia was political for several reasons:

Yes it is political because... according to the government and the military the narcos want to take over the country and power... it is a livelihood, it is a social problem, it is an international problem, it is a war, it attempts against the democratic stability of the country, it is a class problem, people want a dialogue with traffickers, it is an economy, it is political because it benefits and affects millions of Colombians, because it is a pretext for creating state intervention policies, because it has created paramilitary forces that finance themselves with drug money...(Ochoa, 1989, p. 106-107).

Fabio Ochoa's claim the book reads like an extended rant and attempts to show that drug traffic has political, social, and economic ramifications that should be publicly debated and dealt with.<sup>82</sup> The book also suggests that as powerful entrepreneurs, government officials should take cocaine traffickers into account and, through the argument of being entrepreneurs, the Ochoa brothers actively sought a negotiation with state officials

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<sup>82</sup> The book is also full of sarcasm and tries to show the double standard confronted by traffickers, where members of high levels of society like their "narco-money," but at the same time high levels of society did not want to associate with them because they are not formally educated or because traffickers come from a low socioeconomic status.

especially during 1990-1991 to legalize their status and prevent their extradition to the United States.

Since Pablo Escobar's death in December 1993, the Ochoa brothers have publicly distanced themselves from *Los Extraditables*. In interviews they have explained that they did not believe that the use of violence against the state and society was useful in banning the extradition of nationals (Ochoa, 1989; Salazar, 2001:161; Interviews – Juan David Ochoa, 2000).

Also, the Ochoa brothers have expressed that they were intimidated by Pablo Escobar's use of violence, because he killed their brother-in-law<sup>83</sup> of theirs. In the interview that the Ochoa brothers granted to PBS's program *Frontline*, when the interviewer asks Juan David Ochoa to explain who *Los Extraditables* were, Juan David Ochoa takes the opportunity define the group by distancing himself and his brothers from the group:

**Juan David Ochoa:** The extraditables were all of us who are asked for in extradition . . . That's who the extraditables were. But the group called "the extraditables" was a nickname that Pablo gave himself, so that he could direct all his violence and his terrorist actions towards the extradition. It wouldn't point to him personally, but "the extraditables" terrorist group was Pablo Escobar (Interviews – Jorge Ochoa, 2000).

During the interview Jorge Luis Ochoa's mentions the fear he had of Pablo Escobar:

**Jorge Luis Ochoa:** Frankly, he intimidated us, and many other people in Medellin, Cali, and Bogota. He intimidated everyone... He even killed my brother-in-law.

**Frontline:** What did you say to Pablo?

**Jorge Luis Ochoa:** I couldn't say anything. I was in prison in Spain when Pablo had him killed. But I couldn't say anything to him--what could I say to him? The same thing would happen to me (Interviews – Jorge Luis Ochoa, 2000).

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<sup>83</sup> According to Gugliotta et al., Jorge Luis Ochoa's brother-in-law was a pilot and DEA informant, so this is why he was killed. Also Gugliotta et al. suggests that it was not Pablo Escobar who killed him, but Ochoa's own gunmen (Gugliotta et al., 1989:78).

Considering Pablo Escobar's experience as a gunman, his rise to power, and his control over criminal gangs and gunmen in the city of Medellin, it is very possible that Pablo Escobar was feared even in trafficker circles. So it is quite possible that coercion is how Pablo Escobar and Jose Gonzalo Rodriguez Gacha were able to enforce discipline within *Los Extraditables*—where fellow traffickers were forced into supporting a war against political elites to obtain a ban on extradition.

Having said how fear and coercion played a role at the time that *Los Extraditables* were active, given the common desire of most traffickers to paralyze the Extradition Treaty so that they would not be turned over to U.S. authorities, and given the fire power most DTO leaders possessed—it is very possible that DTO leaders willingly cooperated with Pablo Escobar to obtain a ban on extradition without feeling intimidated by him. In fact, a problem with the narrative painted by the Ochoa brothers, which describes them as victims of Escobar, is that during key moments when Jorge Luis Ochoa was apprehended in Spain in 1984 or when he was jailed in Colombia in 1987, communiqués were sent by *Los Extraditables* to major newspapers demanding Ochoa's release (Gugliotta et al., 1989, p. 313; Interviews – Jorge Luis Ochoa, 2000). In addition, judges who presided over Jorge Luis Ochoa cases, in Colombia in 1986 and later in 1987, released him under controversial judgments, which caused much embarrassment to the Virgilio Barco government<sup>84</sup> (Jorge L Ochoa, 1991). Also, the Ochoa brothers have admitted that they

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<sup>84</sup> The Reagan Administration penalized the Barco government because of Ochoa's release by opposing Colombia's inclusion in General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, among other measures. DTO analyst Rensselaer Lee, believes that the Ochoa brothers offered judges "plomo o plata," in other words, death if they convicted Ochoa, or a bribe of \$3-20 million dollars to judges so that they would arrange for Jorge Luis Ochoa's release from jail. These large amounts of money show the cynicism and huge bribing capacity traffickers had because they undermined the United States government's offering of \$500,000 for Ochoa's arrest and conviction (Lee, 1990, p. 125).

were involved in legally fighting the judicial validity of the extradition treaty (Interviews—Juan David Ochoa, 2000), but this process also involved the use of violence to intimidate judges. Although these events tie the Ochoa brothers to *Los Extraditables*, it is still uncertain whether the Ochoa brothers actively participated in the decision-making process of *Los Extraditables*. Statements made by Pablo Escobar's gunman, Jhon Jairo Velasquez Vasquez, suggest that they only provided funds to the group (Hermanos Ochoa, 2009). Finally, regardless of whether the Ochoa brothers had full, partial, or no involvement with the decisions and activities organized by *Los Extraditables*, their negotiations with Colombian authorities during 1990-1991 benefited from the violence and kidnappings generated by *Los Extraditables* because the Ochoa demands seemed less confrontational.

Carlos Lehder's involvement in the leadership of *Los Extraditables* was minimal. As the newsmagazine *Semana* suggests in their 1983 article, Lehder's major contribution to *Los Extraditables* was the group's name and its anti-extradition stance. However, from 1983 to 1987 it is difficult to know the decision-making power Lehder had in helping select the political targets or in funding the group because, as time passed by, many accounts suggest that Carlos Lehder became an unreliable member of the group whilst he became very vocal about his political views to the media—at a time when most traffickers were trying to avoid the attention of authorities (Streatfield, 2001; Eddy et al., 1988, p. 168, 290, & 325-326). According to journalists, by the time Lehder was apprehended and extradited to the United States on February of 1987, DTO leaders based in Medellin had already shunned him (Gugliotta et al., 1989, p. 312; Streatfield, 2001), so

if Lehder had any decision-making power within *Los Extraditables* it lasted from 1983 to 1987.

Throughout their bloody campaign *Los Extraditables* were very cohesive in selecting political targets to be bombed, assassinated, or kidnapped. When government officials killed Jose Gonzalo Rodriguez Gacha in 1989, the main leader became Pablo Escobar, which simplified the group's decision-making process of selecting political targets and increased the cohesiveness of *Los Extraditables*. Most accounts given by Escobar's gunman and others close to Medellin-based DTOs during 1983-1991 suggest that Escobar acted on his own without consulting other traffickers as to whom to assassinate or kidnap, so the organization was very cohesive (Legarda, 2005; Garcia, 1996; Interviews – Fernando Arenas, 2000). According to a pilot for Carlos Lehder, Fernando Arenas, who witnessed Carlos Lehder's reaction to the Rodrigo Lara Bonilla Assassination, Pablo Escobar did not consult anyone when he made the decision to assassinate the Minister of Justice:

When it happened... Carlos was angry--not about the assassination or the attempt--but because he was not warned by Pablo Escobar about what he was going to do. We were caught with our guard down (Interviews – Fernando Arenas, 2000).

Juan David Ochoa conveys on a televised interview with PBS's *Frontline* that Pablo Escobar did not consult him on the Lara Bonilla assassination either. He also explains how this event became a turning point in the lives of traffickers:

**Juan David Ochoa:** The government of Belisario Betancur started the persecution against drug trafficking because of Lara Bonilla's death... That was from Pablo Escobar. He made the decision. He didn't talk to any of us. He simply thought, he had ideas and he carried them out. At that time, since he was involved in politics, surely, maybe Bonilla was an obstacle for Pablo or something.

**Frontline:** When you heard the news of Lara Bonilla's death, how did you react?

**Juan David Ochoa:** I heard the news and I thought, "Oh, this is grave news." Because you can't stand up to the government and society in that way. I think it was a grave mistake to kill him, or anyone else, of the people that were killed...

**Frontline:** Did you make a phone call to find out who had ordered it? What did you do?

**Juan David Ochoa:** No. I simply heard it on the news, and a few days later the persecution against us started. And that's when we left for Panama.

Escobar's lack of consultation with other traffickers when making decisions on political targets would become his *modus operandi* especially in 1989 when the activities of *Los Extraditables* became more violent. Pablo Escobar's hired gunmen obeyed his orders and carried out the assassinations and kidnappings, which made the coercive nature of this organization highly cohesive. Journalistic accounts suggest that other traffickers had little decision-making power as to who was killed or kidnapped, even though they would pay a "war tax" to fund *Los Extraditables*, so that Pablo Escobar could organize terrorist activities through the organization (Legarda, 2005, p. 168-169). According to Jhon Jairo Velasquez Vasquez, Supreme Court witness to the assassination of Luis Carlos Galan (1989), Pablo Escobar made his decision by consulting with ex-Senator Alberto Santofimio Botero alone. When Escobar informed fellow members of *Los Extraditables* (whom helped fund and carry out the operation) of the assassination plan, Velasquez Vasquez claims Escobar told them the target was not up for discussion: "I am not consulting you, I am informing you so that you find good hiding places; either we finish him or he finishes us" (Legarda, 2005:168).

The existence of a "war tax" strongly suggests that *Los Extraditables* had organizational discipline over its membership. *Los Extraditables* collected funds from member DTO leaders located in Medellin to organize their attack against political elites in an effort to permanently ban the extradition policy. Besides the major DTO leaders



explored in this project, other less internationally known but important DTOs in Colombia and whom contributed funds to *Los Extraditables*, were: Kiko Moncada, Fernando Galeano, Henry Perez, Ariel Otero, Albeiro Areiza, Jairo Mejia, and Fidel Castaño, among others (Clawson et al., 1996, p. 48; Salazar, 2001, p. 195; Legarda, 2005, p. 169; Hermanos Ochoa, 2009). The total number of traffickers that contributed funds to *Los Extraditables*'s war effort is unknown, but it is suspected that members gave around \$200,000 dollars a month to fund the violent campaigns to overturn the extradition treaty (Clawson et al., 1996, p. 48; Hermanos Ochoa, 2009).

It is unclear if DTO leaders linked to *Los Extraditables* voluntarily gave funds to the effort or if they were required to contribute funds, but journalistic and scholarly accounts suggest that both positive and negative selective incentives played a role in obtaining group discipline. Whereas some DTO leaders funded *Los Extraditables* voluntarily, those who refused to cooperate voluntarily were forced to cooperate through the use of coercion. For some DTO leaders it was in their interest to see the extradition treaty permanently banned to prevent their potential extradition to the United States. For these leaders it was beneficial to contribute funds to *Los Extraditables*. However, DTO leader assassinations suggest that contributions were obligatory, so if DTO leaders did not cooperate with *Los Extraditables* they were threatened or killed. Early discussion in the project at hand on the Ochoa brothers' involvement in *Los Extraditables* suggests that the main enforcer of these "war taxes" was Pablo Escobar (especially after 1989), as he had significant amount of control over gangs of gunmen in Medellin. Evidence of DTO leader assassinations, in particular the Kiko Moncada and Fernando Galeano

assassinations,<sup>85</sup> suggests that DTO contributions were required and enforced by Pablo Escobar because organizational discipline in *Los Extraditables* was ultimately enforced through violence. Also the Moncada and Galeano assassinations provide evidence that it was very probable that the Ochoa brothers contributed funds towards *Los Extraditables*'s war effort to prevent disagreements with Pablo Escobar after the death of Gacha. Since Pablo Escobar was the group's sole decision maker and tax enforcer, his leadership made the actions taken by *Los Extraditables* highly cohesive because at least from 1983-1991 the group was united in their objectives and member gave funds.

*Los Extraditables*' violent campaign against political elites was done to pressure government officials into overturning the treaty on extradition and obtaining favorable terms for their surrender. Coercion in the form of violent events led the Virgilio Barco and the Cesar Gaviria presidential governments to establish backdoor negotiations with DTO leaders in an effort to end urban violence. The following discussion will focus on the major events organized by *Los Extraditables* and how such events led to three DTO leader- government negotiations.

The first communiqué that launched *Los Extraditables* was sent to major Colombian newspapers on the 15<sup>th</sup> of November 1984 on the same day Jorge Luis Ochoa was arrested in Spain. The communiqué had a logo with the picture of Hernán Botero, one of the first traffickers arrested on July 1984 by Colombian authorities with the intent

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<sup>85</sup> Kiko Moncada and Fernando Galeano were killed in *La Catedral* prison when Pablo Escobar was incarcerated because he was reluctant to continue paying a "war tax" to Pablo Escobar after permanently banning the extradition policy.

of extraditing him to the United States.<sup>86</sup> The letterhead of each communiqué released by *Los Extraditables* read “we prefer a tomb in Colombia than a dungeon in the United States.” The first message called for abolishing the extradition of Colombian nationals to the United States (Legarda, 2005, p. 58-59; Mollison et al., 2007).

After the initial launch of the first communiqué in 1984, *Los Extraditables* wrote about 50 communiqués (Extraditables, 1991) as their anti-extradition campaign became more violent. One in particular was written to threaten the lives of the Supreme Court justices deciding the constitutionality of the Extradition Treaty on December 1986. This communiqué sample shows the level of intimidation public officials were exposed to from 1983-1991:

We declare war against you. We declare war against all members of your family. As you may suppose, we know exactly where they are—we will do away with your entire family. We have no compassion whatsoever—we are capable of anything, absolutely anything. We also have families. Baquero (a pro-extradition Colombian Supreme Court Judge murdered earlier that year) had a family too, wife, sons, parents, and brothers. He was a miserable government patsy and an anti-nationalist, pro-yankee traitor to his country (Lee, 1989, p. 122).

During 1986 violence against members of the justice system ensued: two judges and a coronel of the police were assassinated, and when the Supreme Court invalidated the 1979 Treaty on Extradition, newly elected President Virgilio Barco tried to extradite traffickers via decree by issuing Law 68 of 1986 on December 14<sup>th</sup> 1986. In retaliation, *Los Extraditables* assassinated Guillermo Cano three days later on December 17<sup>th</sup> 1986. Cano was the chief editor of *El Espectador*, Colombia’s 2<sup>nd</sup> most important newspaper and harsh critic of Drug Trafficking Organizations (DTOs).<sup>87</sup> To emphasize *Los*

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<sup>86</sup> Hernán Botero was charged with money laundering and finally extradited to the United States on January 5<sup>th</sup> 1985.

<sup>87</sup> Guillermo Cano not only uncovered Pablo Escobar’s criminal past, but also questioned the government’s ability to deal with the institutional threat posed by DTOs in Colombia. One of his articles was “Donde

*Extraditables*'s opposition to extradition, on January 13<sup>th</sup> 1987, a political assassination was orchestrated against the outgoing Minister of Justice Enrique Parejo, because he was the first to authorize the extradition of traffickers.

During the remainder of 1987 *Los Extraditables* were relatively inert because of their success in legally invalidating the extradition treaty. In contrast, the Virgilio Barco administration sought to pursue DTO leaders not only by extraditing them, but also by confiscating their assets in Colombia. The Virgilio Barco presidency was the first to create anti-money laundering laws via decree, which led authorities to search and confiscate DTO properties. Such a hardline enforcement of counter-narcotics efforts eventually led *Los Extraditables* to react with various acts of violence that were logistically planned to try to obtain a negotiation with government officials. On January 1988 *Los Extraditables* kidnapped Conservative politician Andres Pastrana, the son of former President Misael Pastrana, and the Attorney General Carlos Mauro Hoyos. The kidnapping of Attorney General Carlos Mauro Hoyos on January 25<sup>th</sup> 1988 resulted in his immediate death, as a consequence of bullet wounds he received while being kidnapped. Consequently, as a sign of peace, *Los Extraditables* released Andres Pastrana to use him as an emissary who was to speak with President Barco about a negotiation with traffickers. However, the early negotiations never took place. Instead, *Los Extraditables* delayed pressing for negotiations with the government because the rivalry between the Medellin and Cali DTOs broke out on January 14<sup>th</sup> 1988, when Cali DTO leaders bombed the residential building "Monaco" where Pablo Escobar's family resided. As a

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están que no los ven?" ("Where are they, that you don't see them"), this article criticized the government's inaction in arresting traffickers whose whereabouts were public knowledge (Castillo, 1987, p. 197). His final article was titled, "Se le agüó la fiesta a los mafiosos" ("The party is over for the mafiosi"), and it was written when Virgilio Barco launched the decree law that would extradite traffickers (Legarda, 2005, p.86).

consequence of this war between DTOs, the operations by *Los Extraditables* to obtain a negotiation with the government were on hiatus until September 1988.

Although the period between January and September 1988 was one of relative peace for government officials who had been targets of *Los Extraditables*, the political environment in rural and urban areas was violent. Virgilio Barco's four-year presidential tenure witnessed 78,000 homicides, 300 car bombs, and 250 police officer murders (El Tiempo, 1990). The urban violence mainly proliferated from the wars between drug trafficking organizations and the paramilitary extermination of the *Union Patriótica* political party members (Dudley, 2004). As a consequence of this turbulent climate, when *Los Extraditables* sought to pursue a negotiation with government officials during September 1988, the government was willing to listen to proposals. One of the proposals, which will be referred to as the Vallejo Arbelaez negotiation, was put forth by Joaquin Vallejo Arbelaez (a former cabinet member who became a trafficker emissary<sup>88</sup>) as he met with the Ochoa brothers, Rodriguez Gacha, and Escobar and heard their proposals (Salazar, 2001, p. 232). According to Vallejo Arbelaez, during September of 1988 and February 1989, he met around 10 times with Presidential Advisor German Montoya to discuss a negotiation deal. Traffickers proposed to surrender their drug trafficking business in exchange for permanently banning extradition and an amnesty for crimes committed. In contrast to the 1984 Panama negotiation, during the Vallejo Arbelaez negotiation traffickers sought to keep their economic assets:

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<sup>88</sup> Apparently Vallejo Arbelaez had written a newspaper editorial in which he suggested a government-trafficker dialogue to resolve the problem of violence in 1988, and right after, he was contacted by Guido Parra, Pablo Escobar's lawyer, who proposed that Vallejo Arbelaez should become an emissary to propose a negotiation between the government and traffickers.

The “group A” is made up of the so-called Medellin Cartels, Bogota and the Coast, that controls the bigger share of the drug trafficking business in Colombia, and the names of the persons involved in these groups will be presented once the amnesty is approved. The so-called “Medellin Cartel” that includes Bogota and the Coast, offers to retire completely from the drug business... to collaborate with the government in the eradication of the business and to return to a normal life under the law... The counteroffer: a) To end the extradition of Colombians. b) An amnesty for crimes committed. c) Patrimonial amnesty. d) That subversives disarm since they kidnap, extort, and threaten properties... (La Bomba, 1989).

Besides a patrimonial amnesty, DTO leaders were also proposing an agreement that would negotiate guerrilla disarmament. This last point reflected Jose Gonzalo Rodriguez Gacha’s desire to limit the power of left-wing guerrillas and their sympathizers because through his paramilitary organization, Asociación Campesina de Agricultores y Ganaderos del Magdalena Medio (ACDEGAM), he had already been engaging in the extermination of the *Union Patriotica* (Patriotic Union), the political wing of the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (FARC). The Vallejo Arbelaez negotiation was officially rejected by the Virgilio Barco government and instead the government launched “Operation Springtime,” which seized several cocaine labs in the Magdalena Medio region on February 1989.

The year 1989 continued to be a bloodstained year, but increasingly so for Colombia’s political class because *Los Extraditables* began another campaign to press for negotiations. On March of 1989, a judge and a lawyer were murdered for investigating Pablo Escobar’s role in the assassination of newspaper editor Guillermo Cano. On May, the headquarters of a broadcasting network was bombed and an assassination attempt on the head of the Colombian intelligence agency, *Departamento Administrativo de Seguridad* (DAS), was thwarted. On July of 1989, a bomb killed the Governor of Antioquia, Antonio Roldan Betancur and On August 18<sup>th</sup> 1989 the popular Presidential Candidate Luis Carlos Galan was assassinated. All of these attempts at cornering the

Barco Administration into negotiating with DTO leaders failed to get traction, and instead, the attempts outraged the general public. Luis Carlos Galan was a staunch anti-extradition candidate whom was heading public opinion polls (La Guerra, 1989) because he was perceived as a reformist candidate who represented a younger generation that never had strong ties to the traditional Liberal and Conservative parties of the National Front.<sup>89</sup> People's perception of Galan's leadership was reflected in newsmagazine *Semana's* article analyzing how Colombia's narco-violence killed Galan:

When Rodrigo Lara Bonilla was killed, *Semana* editorial board chose "Death Foretold"<sup>90</sup> as the title for the magazine's cover. When they assassinated Guillermo Cano, the title was "On Foot!"... On Friday August the 18<sup>th</sup>, at 11:30 in the evening, when we had to make a decision on the front cover's title for the assassination of Luis Carlos Galan, the same journalists could not find words. There was such a sentiment of frustration that could not be expressed. So the decision was to publish the leader's photo and his birth and death dates... Sometimes the intimidation gives them (*Los Extraditables*) a temporary success. They have succeeded in neutralizing the justice system, in infiltrating the Armed Forces, in preventing extradition, and in threatening the population. This has produced a sense of impotence, which has led many to give up... With the assassination of Galan, they (*Los Extraditables*) thought they would unify public opinion in favor of a negotiation. But the opposite has taken place. Public opinion unified not to capitulate, but to keep fighting no matter how much blood this implies...(La Guerra, 1989).

As a result of the public's frustration with Galan's assassination, a poll taken by the newspaper *El Tiempo* right after the assassination showed a 77% approval for the policy on extradition (Matthiesen, 2000, p. 221). Consequently, the Barco Government increased its persecution of DTO leaders and with the approval of the Supreme Court issued Decree 1860 of 1989 to extradite traffickers (p. 220). The revival of the extradition policy led *Los Extraditables* to increase their capacity for generating violence. After targeting specific political targets, the group began to stage dramatic and indiscriminate

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<sup>89</sup> The National Front was a power sharing agreement established in 1958 between the two major political parties, the Liberals and Conservatives, which were elite political parties that maintained electoral power through the use of patronage and clientelism.

<sup>90</sup> "Death Foretold" is also an ironic reference on the title of Colombian Nobel Laureate Gabriel Garcia Marquez's fictional book "Chronicle of a Death Foretold," published in 1981 about the failure of a community to stop the murder of the main character from taking place.

acts of violence. In addition to the ongoing DTO wars and the paramilitary extermination of left wing political parties, during the last months of 1989, one hundred bombs were placed in public places such as supermarkets, hotels, banks, schools, and electric and telephone facilities (Escobar: 17 años, 1993). One major act of violence occurred every month, with the first taking place on September 2<sup>nd</sup> 1989 when a truck filled with explosives blew up the newspaper *El Espectador's* headquarters. On October 17<sup>th</sup> 1989 the headquarters of the newspaper *La Vanguardia Liberal* of Bucaramanga were also blown up. On November 27<sup>th</sup> 1989 an Avianca Airliner was blown up with 107 passengers on board and finally, on December 6<sup>th</sup> 1989 the *Departamento Administrativo de Seguridad* (DAS) building was bombed killing 70 and injuring 500 people (Escobar: 17 años, 1993).

The government's pursuit of Medellin-based DTOs was able to locate and kill one of *Los Extraditables* main leaders, Jose Gonzalo Rodriguez Gacha along with his oldest son and his bodyguards on December 17<sup>th</sup> 1989. Although Colombian authorities tried to close in on Pablo Escobar, he continued to be a fugitive and became the sole leader of *Los Extraditables*. Finally on December 20<sup>th</sup> 1989 *Los Extraditables* kidnapped the son of Presidential Advisor German Montoya, which culminated in a series of strategic kidnappings of 20 family members of the Department of Antioquia's political and economic elite. This last campaign will be termed as the Antioquia kidnapping campaign.

On December of 1989, after witnessing daily acts of violence, public opinion swayed again and 58 percent of Colombians favored negotiations with traffickers and 60 percent believed traffickers should be granted amnesty if they retired from the cocaine trade (Clawson et al., 1996). The shift in public opinion and the kidnappings of elite



members of society led the Barco government to strongly re-consider negotiating with traffickers.

During December of 1989 a group called *Los Notables*,<sup>91</sup> composed of three ex-presidents, Colombia's Catholic Archbishop, and a member of the left-wing party Patriotic Union, served as mediators with the objective of getting the release of 20 hostages. Santiago Londoño White and J. Mario Aristizabal, who were Escobar's emissaries, were Medellin-based politicians that had dealt with Escobar during his short mainstream political career. During the second negotiation effort, termed as the Lodoño-Aristizabal-Montoya negotiation, Presidential Advisor German Montoya was determined to rescue his son and met with Escobar's emissaries. As a result, on January 15<sup>th</sup> 1990 President Barco called a National Security Council meeting to discuss a negotiated solution with the Minister of the Interior, the Director of Intelligence, the Director of the Police, and the Military General in Command of the Armed Forces (Salazar, 2001. p. 234).

*Los Notables* and Escobar's emissaries were able to write a third negotiated proposal, which was reportedly approved by the government official German Montoya (Clawson et al., 1996, p. 107). The third proposal differed from the Panama and the Vallejo Arbelaez proposals because, in addition to surrendering their drug trafficking business and their weapons, traffickers offered to personally surrender to authorities in exchange for agreed upon constitutional and legal guarantees (Clawson et al., 1996, p. 107; Salazar, 2001, p. 233).

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<sup>91</sup> *Los Notables* were composed ex-President Alfonso Lopez Michelsen, ex-President Misael Pastrana, ex-President Julio Cesar Turbay Ayala, Monseigneur Mario Rebollo, and Diego Montaña Cuellar Leader of the Unión Patriótica.

Virgilio Barco's government strongly considered a negotiated solution to resolve the violence generated by *Los Extraditables* by holding a National Security meeting with Escobar's emissaries. However, at the January 15<sup>th</sup> meeting the Minister of the Interior Carlos Lemos Simmonds and Miguel Maza Marquez, the Director of Colombia's now extinct intelligence agency the DAS, who had recently survived several attempts on his life (including the bomb attack that destroyed the DAS building a month and two weeks earlier), objected to the idea of negotiating with *Los Extraditables*. In contrast, President Barco and German Montoya were more flexible in considering the proposal drafted by *Los Notables* and Escobar's emissaries (Clawson et al., 1996, p. 108; Salazar, 2001, p. 233-235). For President Barco a negotiated solution to the problem of violence seemed attractive, whereas for German Montoya the return of his kidnapped son was paramount. Overall, President Virgilio Barco was undecided on whether to accept the latest trafficker proposal primarily because of the objections posed by his cabinet members and since Barco's administration had been the only presidency to confront DTOs head on. In contrast, the problem of violence was overwhelming and since *Los Extraditables* were providing the government with signs of credibility, while President Barco contemplated negotiating with DTO leaders, he delayed the administrative extradition of several traffickers to obtain the release of hostages and to honor the proposed truce offered by traffickers.

To reciprocate the gesture made by the Barco government to meet with Escobar's emissaries, on January 17<sup>th</sup> 1990 *Los Extraditables* announced a truce with the government and released German Montoya's son along with other kidnapped victims (Clawson et al., 1996, p. 107; Salazar, 2001, p. 233-235). On January 29<sup>th</sup> *Los*

*Extraditables* continued to give signs of credibility by turning over a bus loaded with dynamite. On the eve of the February 14<sup>th</sup> 1990 Cartagena Summit organized by President Barco to discuss the “Drug War” with U.S. President George Bush and other Andean Presidents, *Los Extraditables* surrendered three large cocaine refineries in the Darien Jungle bordering with Panama (Traffickers surrender, 1990; Clawson et al., 1996, p. 107; Salazar, 2001, p. 233).

President Barco continued to be indecisive about negotiating with DTO leaders while he hosted the Cartagena Summit on Drug Control on February 15<sup>th</sup> 1990. At the Summit, then U.S. President George H. W. Bush recognized that the “Drug War” was a global problem shared by cocaine producing and consumer nations. As such, he promised to allocate \$2 billion dollars towards counternarcotics efforts in Latin America. In expectation of increased U.S. counter-narcotics aid and reportedly after confiding with President George Bush on government-trafficker negotiations at the 1989 Cartagena Summit, President Barco opted not to negotiate with traffickers. According to Clawson et al., Bush reportedly discouraged Barco from holding negotiations because he believed that Barco should use extradition as the centerpiece of Colombian counter-narcotics strategy (Clawson et al., 1996, p. 108).

After more than two months of relative peace, on March 29<sup>th</sup> 1990, the truce between *Los Extraditables* and the Barco government ended when military General Harold Bedoya declared Pablo Escobar’s hometown of Envigado a military emergency zone. As a consequence, *Los Extraditables* announced that they would renew the war against the government because of human rights abuses perpetrated by Colombia’s national police, but their underlying intention was to pressure the government to begin

another negotiation (Escobar: 17 años, 1993; Mollison et al., 2007). From April to July of 1990 *Los Extraditables* targeted the Medellin police and the number of assassinated police officers rose to 250 assassinations. Also *Los Extraditables* began placing car bombs in public places in Bogota, Cali, and Medellin (Escobar: 17 años, 1993; Salazar, 2001, p. 244), killing 93 people, injuring 450, and resulting in 3.7 million U.S. dollars in material damages. The use of bombs subsided on July of 1990 in expectation of a change in the presidency.

On August 9<sup>th</sup> 1990, Cesar Gaviria became the President of Colombia. After, promising to distinguish between drug trafficking and narco-terrorism, President Gaviria sought to provide DTO leaders with a political option so that they would surrender to authorities. To test the seriousness of the Gaviria government proposal, on August 30<sup>th</sup> 1990 *Los Extraditables* began a second series of kidnappings to speed up negotiations. These kidnappings will be referred to as the Liberal kidnapping campaign.

In response to the kidnapping of a team of journalists headed by Diana Turbay on August 30<sup>th</sup> 1990, President Gaviria issued Decree 2047 on September 5<sup>th</sup> 1990, which stipulated that if traffickers turned themselves to authorities and confessed to a charge, they would not be extradited. However, *Los Extraditables* rejected Decree 2047 because of two issues: First, the ban on extradition was conditioned to the admittance of a crime and *Los Extraditables* wanted total amnesty. Second, there were no guarantees that the extradition ban would be respected in future presidencies—it was not a permanent ban on extradition. After Decree 2047 was issued, the Ochoa brothers began negotiations with the government.

In reaction to Decree 2047, *Los Extraditables* continued the Liberal kidnapping campaign and kidnapped five relatives of Colombia's political elite in less than two months, from September 19<sup>th</sup> to November 7<sup>th</sup> 1990. The kidnappings were done to increase the pressure on President Cesar Gaviria so that he would permanently ban extraditions as stipulated in the 1991 Colombian Constitution.

The Liberal kidnapping campaign mobilized influential politicians,<sup>92</sup> hostage relatives, and public figures, like television personality Father Rafael Garcia Herreros, to act as mediators between *Los Extraditables* and the Gaviria government. The main purpose of the kidnapping campaign was to obtain a negotiation with the Gaviria Administration to discuss: an extradition ban, the terms of surrender for DTO leaders, and the release of hostages. Among those kidnapped were: Diana Turbay who was Ex-President Julio Cesar Turbay Ayala's daughter. Francisco Santos Calderon<sup>93</sup>—the son Hernando Santos the owner of the newspaper *El Tiempo*. Marina Montoya was kidnapped in an act of revenge that would end her life because she was the sister of German Montoya, the advisor of Ex-President Virgilio Barco who failed to bring the 1988 trafficker-government negotiation to fruition.

The sister and wife of congressman Alberto Villamizar, who led the First Congressional Committee dealing with constitutional reform and international treaties was also kidnapped. Villamizar was a political colleague of President Cesar Gaviria because both Villamizar and Gaviria belonged to Luis Carlos Galan's *Nuevo Liberalismo*. As a member of the *Nuevo Liberalismo* and as a leader of the House of Representatives,

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<sup>92</sup> Among the politicians involved were the group known as Los Notables, who were composed of three Colombian Ex-Presidents, among others.

<sup>93</sup> Francisco Santos became President Alvaro Uribe's Vice President 2002-2010.

Alberto Villamizar was an ally of the Bentacur government in passing Colombia's first anti-narcotics statute in 1985; as such, Villamizar was himself targeted by DTOs and survived an assassination attempt. Therefore, it is ironic that to save his wife and sister, Alberto Villamizar was forced to act as the main mediator between *Los Extraditables* and the government.<sup>94</sup>

The family members of the victims were influential members of the Liberal party, Gaviria's political party. The group *Los Extraditables* was very strategic when it selected its victims because all of the relatives had influence over Gaviria with the exception of Marina Montoya, who was kidnapped and killed as an act of revenge (Garcia, 1996). President Cesar Gaviria was chosen to be the 1990 Liberal presidential candidate precisely because the son of assassinated presidential candidate, Luis Carlos Galan, publicly nominated Gaviria at his father's funeral. The kidnapping of many of his colleagues' family limited Gaviria's negotiating tools because he could not "play hardball" if he had Villamizar as intermediary.<sup>95</sup> President Gaviria's position was difficult because he had to negotiate knowing full well that *Los Extraditables* held his colleague's wife and sister as well as the sons and daughters of Colombia's most influential families. The group's compelling strategy created a hostage crisis, and this situation forced President Gaviria to negotiate with *Los Extraditables* and make quick decisions in a period of six months.

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<sup>94</sup> For more information on how the kidnappings and the trafficker-government negotiations took place see *Noticia de Un Secuestro* by Gabriel Garcia Marquez.

<sup>95</sup> Villamizar's wife Maruja Pachon was the sister of Gloria Pachon the widow of Presidential Candidate Luis Carlos Galan who was assassinated.

Alberto Villamizar and Pablo Escobar's lawyer Guido Parra mediated this fourth and final DTO leader-government negotiation, which will be referred to as the Villamizar negotiation. As negotiations ensued, *Los Extraditables* and the government exchanged signs of credibility. At the end of November 1990, Escobar ordered his men to slowly release members of the television crew that accompanied Diana Turbay when she was kidnapped. *Los Extraditables* proposed the surrender of 200-300 traffickers in exchange for the following demands: (1) No extradition, (2) An amnesty, and (3) Special detention centers (Clawson et al., 1996). The release of hostages on November and December of 1990 led to the creation of Decree 3030 on December 17<sup>th</sup> 1990. Decree 3030 gave two conditions: (1) A person condemned for various crimes could serve their sentences concurrently, and (2) To prevent extradition and receive lower sentences, traffickers had to surrender and confess to a crime. At this point Fabio Ochoa turned himself in on December 18<sup>th</sup> 1990. *Los Extraditables* did not accept Decree 3030 for the same reasons as before; the group wanted an amnesty and a permanent ban on extradition.

During January 1991 a dramatic turn of events led Cesar Gaviria's Administration to issue Decree 303. Jorge Luis Ochoa surrendered on January 15<sup>th</sup>. On January 24 *Los Extraditables* assassinated Marina Montoya after the Medellin gang *Los Priscos*, who were hit-men working for Pablo Escobar, were killed by authorities. The next day, Diana Turbay was accidentally shot while authorities tried to rescue her from kidnappers. On January 29<sup>th</sup> 1991 the government issued Decree 303 to prevent further hostage deaths and to reassure that it was committed to the negotiation process. Decree 303 gave reduced sentences to persons that admitted to one crime and no extradition for persons

that turn themselves in. In response to Decree 303 Pablo Escobar released Alberto Villamizar's sister on February 4<sup>th</sup> 1991.

The creation of Decree 303 was also tailor-made to suit the Ochoa brothers. Decree 303 was an improvement on prior decrees because its language was more precise in specifying that those who surrendered would not be extradited and because it gave reduced sentences to persons that admitted to one crime, instead of giving concurrent sentences for the admittance of various crimes. Also this decree would retroactively cover persons that turned themselves in prior to January 29<sup>th</sup> 1991. Still, at this point, extradition was not yet permanently banned. However, on February 16<sup>th</sup> Juan David Ochoa became the last Ochoa brother to surrender to authorities.

The political environment in the first two months of 1991 was deadly and this created a need for peace, which benefited *Los Extraditables*. By February 1991, 1200 murders had taken place just in Medellin; this is a rate of 20 violent deaths per day and a massacre every four days. About 500 policemen were dead and indiscriminate acts of violence against civilians were common. For example, on February 16<sup>th</sup> an explosion at Medellin's bull fighting ring *La Macarena* killed 25 people and wounded 143 people (Escobar: 17 años, 1993). The explosion set by Medellin gangs was supposed to blow up a police station nearby, but instead it led to civilian deaths.

On March 4<sup>th</sup> 1991 Alberto Villamizar co-authored a letter with the Ochoa Brothers to mediate the start of a negotiation for Pablo Escobar's compliance with Colombian authorities. The negotiation involved the plans to build a new jail and its security, which was part of the negotiation demands made by Pablo Escobar.



After the Constitutional Assembly drafted an anti-extradition article to permanently ban extradition on April 18<sup>th</sup> 1991, on April 22<sup>nd</sup> Pablo Escobar agreed to surrender and confess to a crime. On May 15<sup>th</sup> the Constitutional Assembly started the debate on the extradition of nationals. On May 21<sup>st</sup> Pablo Escobar's lawyer presented three key points for his surrender: The first, demanded to screen the jail's security. The second discussed the police and military's role within the jail. And the third requested the retirement of the head of the DAS, then General Miguel Maza Marquez.<sup>96</sup> In view of Pablo Escobar's eminent surrender, the government basically allowed him to plan all aspects of his incarceration but did not agree to fire Gen. Maza Marquez.

Pablo Escobar designed the jail on a piece of property that he exchanged with the municipality of Envigado months before his surrender. Envigado was the city where Escobar grew up, so he had a lot of political influence. The Envigado government constructed the *La Catedral* jail with \$2 million dollars that Escobar donated for its construction (Clawson et al., 1996; Legarda, 2005, p. 255). In all probability the credibility of the committee chosen to screen jail security was compromised based on the political posts these committee members held. The committee was composed of the Mayor of Envigado, the prosecutor of Antioquia, and the Colombian Director of Prisons.<sup>97</sup> After the conditions of Escobar's incarceration were agreed to on May 24<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> DAS was the Departamento Administrativo de Seguridad an equivalent to the United State's Federal Bureau of Investigations.

<sup>97</sup> During this period in Colombian history the Mayor of Envigado could not have made any decisions without the consent of traffickers. Pablo Escobar had increased the budget of Envigado through donations from 1983 to 1989 by tenfold, so the city was spending about \$40 dollars per capita on its citizens (Clawson et al., 1996:112). Medellin is the capital of the Department of Antioquia. If the regional attorney general of Antioquia wanted to remain alive, he could not make decisions that went against the wishes of Medellin-based DTOs, since many public officials during this time, including the Governor of Antioquia, received death threats if they did not succumb to DTO leader demands. The Director of Prisons in

1991, *Los Extraditables* released the last hostages: Francisco Santos and Alberto Villamizar's wife. On May 25<sup>th</sup> 1991, the government called off all operations to capture Escobar and on May 29<sup>th</sup> the government vowed to guarantee that Pablo Escobar would not be extradited if he surrendered.

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of June, DTO leader-government mediator, Father Rafael Garcia Herreros, announced that Pablo Escobar would surrender to authorities along with 100 other traffickers. Finally, after much debate on June 19<sup>th</sup> 1991, the Constitutional Assembly voted in favor of banning extradition and added Article 35 to the 1991 constitution. On this same date Pablo Escobar surrendered to authorities. On July 3<sup>rd</sup> 1991, *Los Extraditables* through their final communiqué announced that they were dismantling their military organization because of the National Constitutional Assembly's vote against the extradition of Colombian nationals (Extraditables, 1991).

The discussion on the political cohesiveness of Medellin-based DTO leaders' use of violence finds that, once DTO leaders made the issue of extradition a top priority in their agendas, they gradually and cohesively used violence to pressure political elites and government officials to permanently prohibit extradition. As events unfolded, in addition to banning extradition, DTO leaders based in Medellin used violence to pressure government officials into negotiating favorable terms for their surrender to authorities. Also the discussion on DTO leaders' use of violence highlights three major

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Colombia has always been a legally compromised post because Directors have to deal directly with powerful criminals. Uncorrupt directors do not last long because they cannot do their jobs without being threatened or bribed. Prison directors are caught between the demands of powerful criminals that can buy them or kill them and the potentially corrupt politicians that supervise prison directors. For this reason, directors usually retire early or receive bribes to survive such a dangerous post.

characteristics of this phase of organizational cohesion: the leadership's persistence in obtaining its goals, its learning capacity, and finally its initial rifts among DTO leaders.

From the first incident that marked use of DTO violence—the assassination of Rodrigo Lara Bonilla on April 20<sup>th</sup> 1983—to the indiscriminate use of car bombs, the major terrorist attacks, and the final kidnapping campaign of 1990-1991, the main objective of the group was to oppose the policy of extraditing Colombian nationals to the United States. Because Pablo Escobar was the sole decision maker, the group's cohesiveness was strong. Usually the violent acts were characterized by retaliations against the actions of government officials or offensives that consisted of pro-actively using violence to pressure politicians into negotiating a ban on extradition and favorable terms of surrender. The cohesiveness of the violent strategy goes through two phases. The first was a selective assassination phase taking place from 1983-1988. Whereas the second phase from 1988-1991 still used violence in a highly selective manner, but it was used in conjunction with indiscriminate terrorist activities to create havoc and a sense of urban insecurity. As a consequence, the second phase was more successful in pushing politicians to negotiate with DTO leaders.

During the first violent phase, the selective assassinations of Rodrigo Lara Bonilla, Supreme and criminal court judges, Guillermo Cano the editor of *El Espectador*, Ministers of Justice, and of Luis Carlos Galan, were used by *Los Extraditables* to retaliate against the policy of extradition and push for its prohibition. However, these acts led the government to counterattack.

In the second violent phase, as DTO leaders progressively obtained negotiations with cabinet level officials from the end of 1988 to the middle of 1991—during the

Virgilio Barco and the Cesar Gaviria presidencies—the use of violence was done selectively, but in combination with terrorist actions to corner the respective administrations into negotiating. Specifically, as negotiations broke down, the use of violence became more indiscriminate to show DTO power and conversely to show the government's inability to control violence. As a consequence, the use of indiscriminate violence such as the explosion of an airliner and the destruction of the DAS building was done to make the government capitulate. What aggravated the problem of violence for the governments in power during the second violent phase was that violence was not only generated by DTOs against the state, but also by DTO wars, and by paramilitary and guerrilla groups.

When indiscriminate violence, such as car bombs, was paired with the use of selective violence, such as the kidnappings of business and political elites, this environment created a higher level of pressure for Presidents to negotiate because the kidnappings created crises. The combination of discriminate and selective violence was effective because Colombian Presidents were unable to control terrorist acts and, in addition, the violence used by DTO leaders became more personal for Presidents in power because they knew the people who were affected by DTO attacks. For example, Virgilio Barco seriously considered negotiating with DTO leaders when his Presidential Advisor's son was kidnapped along with 20 prominent business elites from Antioquia on December of 1989. The Antioquia kidnapping campaign was the event that led to the first DTO leader-government truce and because of this crisis Virgilio Barco made negotiations with DTO leaders a top cabinet level issue for the first time. In contrast, prior to the Antioquia hostage crisis, the violence generated by DTO leaders only pushed

Colombian Presidents Belisario Betancur and Virgilio Barco to increase their counter-narcotics efforts, such as reinstating extradition via Decree 1860 in 1989. In addition, selective assassinations bolstered public outrage with DTOs assassinations.

During the second violent phase, the final rise in indiscriminate violence from March to July of 1990, coupled with the Liberal kidnapping campaign resulted in the fourth and final Villamizar negotiation, which led to a permanent Constitutional prohibition of extradition and in a negotiated surrender of the major leaders of the Medellin-based DTOs—the Ochoa brothers and Pablo Escobar. The organization of the Liberal hostage crisis was a success for DTO leaders because they finally obtained the Presidential attention needed to reach an agreement with the government.

The decision making process of *Los Extraditables*, which mainly relied on the opinions of its leader, Pablo Escobar, showed the high degree of organizational cohesiveness that the group had in pursuing its political objectives and in implementing its violent strategy. The accounts presented in this project suggest that Pablo Escobar was the group's sole decision-maker, which made deciding the group's goals and strategies a highly cohesive process. It is important to note that Pablo Escobar was able to learn how to strategically use violence to obtain political results at each stage of the event.

During the first violent phase from 1983-1988, when Pablo Escobar was selectively assassinating public officials, the group *Los Extraditables* was unable to convince politicians to negotiate with DTO leaders or their mediators because the assassinations only strengthened the Colombian presidencies of Belisario Betancur and Virgilio Barco to pursue counter-narcotics policies since these mentioned Presidents felt their actions were supported by public opinion's outrage. In fact, the Andres Pastrana

and Carlos Mauro Hoyos kidnapping on January of 1988 was the first attempt by *Los Extraditables* to use hostages in an effort to establish negotiations. However, this first hostage attempt failed because Hoyos died and Pastrana never became an emissary once released. When *Los Extraditables* organized the Antioquia kidnapping campaign on December of 1989, for the first time the group obtained the attention of the Barco government because the government allowed Pablo Escobar's emissaries to present the DTOs leadership's concerns at a cabinet level meeting. However, because *Los Extraditables* released all the hostages in mid January and committed to a truce, as a gesture of "good faith" (since they believed that the government would engage in negotiations) once the hostages were released, *Los Extraditables* lost their negotiating leverage. Consequently, the Barco government, uncompelled to negotiate with DTO leaders, went on an offensive against Escobar on March of 1990 by declaring Envigado, his hometown, a military objective.

As the leader of *Los Extraditables*, Pablo Escobar learned from the Antioquia kidnapping campaign how to implement a more effective hostage crisis. From March to July of 1990 police officers were targeted and car bombs were placed in urban centers to create chaos as soon as DTO-government negotiations fell. Once Cesar Gaviria took over the Presidency on August of 1990, *Los Extraditables'* Liberal kidnapping campaign quickly started a negotiation process. Instead of releasing hostages once the government agreed to hear DTO proposals, as was done during the Antioquia campaign, the Liberal kidnapping campaign became a prolonged process to obtain political results, which coincided with the proceedings of the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA).

The similarities between the Liberal hostage crisis and the Antioquia crisis relied on the ability of *Los Extraditables* to choose hostages that would personalize the crisis for the presidents in power. Since the Liberal hostage crisis involved the relatives of colleagues belonging to President Gaviria's own political party, the Liberal Hostage Crisis became a highly personal event were Gaviria had to negotiate to save the lives of people he knew. Another similarity between the two kidnapping campaigns was that Pablo Escobar kidnaped the family members of a key politician, so the politician would become both a victim and mediator. Whereas in the Antioquia campaign German Montoya became a DTO leader-government mediator to Barco, as Montoya's son was kidnapped; similarly, in the Liberal hostage crisis, Alberto Villamizar became the main DTO leader-government mediator, since both his sister and wife were hostages.

The Liberal kidnapping campaign became a more effective hostage crisis because Pablo Escobar stretched the crisis by releasing hostages according to their political importance and, also as negotiation points were accomplished. Consequently, and in contrast to the Antioquia hostage crisis, Escobar as the leader of *Los Extraditables* did not cede his negotiating leverage until most of his demands were met. During the Liberal hostage crisis Pablo Escobar's lawyer asked for: no extradition, an amnesty for crimes committed, and special detention centers, but the final DTO-government negotiation resulted in the following compromise: no extradition, a reduced sentence for admittance of one crime, and the construction of a special detention center.

Finally the Liberal kidnapping campaign coupled with the Medellin DTO leaders influence on the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) was a convergence of the legislative and violent strategies to permanently ban extradition and obtain favorable

terms of surrender. While the executive was forced to reach an agreement with DTO leaders on their terms of surrender (as a consequence of the hostage crisis), the financial influence of DTO leaders on NCA assemblypersons facilitated the passage of the Constitutional Article forbidding the extradition of Colombian nationals. Both strategies came to fruition when on June 19<sup>th</sup> 1991, the NCA voted against extradition and Pablo Escobar surrendered to authorities at *La Catedral*—the detention center constructed for Escobar in the city of Envigado.

The discussion on the cohesiveness of the DTO's violent strategy as implemented by *Los Extraditables* also highlights the initial rifts separating DTO leaders. By 1983 following the Rodrigo Lara Bonilla assassination, as the Colombian government intensified its pursuit of traffickers, DTO leaders realized that to avoid state persecution they had to seek a negotiated solution to their legal troubles. The DTO leaders also agreed that the issue of extradition became the most important agenda, since traffickers wanted to avoid being sent to the United States on drug trafficking charges. While Pablo Escobar was willing to fulfill these objectives by using violence, others—in particular the Ochoa brothers, preferred peaceful negotiation with the government. The accounts presented here suggest that in 1984 Medellín-based DTO leaders created *Los Extraditables* to force a negotiation process with government officials. At the beginning *Los Extraditables* was highly cohesive in pursuing and fulfilling their objective because Pablo Escobar was the group's main decision-maker and because DTO leaders based in Medellín provided funds to launch the violent campaign against political elites. Nevertheless, the initial rifts between DTO leaders began to show towards the end of 1990. While *Los Extraditables* organized the second kidnapping campaign from



September to November of 1990, as soon as President Cesar Gaviria issued Decree 2047 on September of 1990, the Ochoa brothers began negotiating with the government separately from Pablo Escobar. By December of 1990 Fabio Ochoa surrendered to authorities, and by mid February of 1991 all of the Ochoa brothers had surrendered to authorities following Decree 303. In contrast, Pablo Escobar organized the Liberal hostage crisis and turned himself in once extradition was permanently prohibited in the 1991 Constitution. The Ochoa brothers' separate negotiation process suggests that they wanted to resolve their legal status separate from *Los Extraditables'* Liberal hostage campaign, even if it meant being extradited by another presidency or serving long sentences for admitting to one crime as the early Decree drafts demanded. Moreover, the Ochoa brothers were tired of the government's pursuit:

When we presented ourselves to the law, there was a lot of violence. But the whole world knew it was Pablo Escobar. We presented ourselves even when the treaty was in force. They had not removed the treaty... In 1990 we presented ourselves, and the [extradition] treaty was repealed in 1991. And so then we were very removed from everything. We were hiding and they were looking for us at that time to kill us... They weren't looking for us to extradite us, but to kill us. And I think that we paid very highly for that (Interviews- Jorge Luis Ochoa, 2000).

Once in jail, the Ochoa brothers became intermediaries between mediator Alberto Villamizar and Pablo Escobar to obtain the release of hostages and to negotiate Escobar's terms of surrender (Interviews – Juan David Ochoa, 2000).

Finally, this section on the cohesiveness of the violent strategy shows the evolution of the terms of the four DTO leader-government negotiations. The 1984 Panama Negotiation was the most generous offer proposal created by the DTO leaders. Traffickers proposed to dismantle their businesses, surrender laboratories, runways, and aircraft, which according to DTO calculations would set the illicit drug industry back for at least 10 years. Drug Trafficking Organization leaders proposed to bring their financial

assets to Colombia, which would be taxable income that would increase government revenue and to “help rehabilitate drug addicts” (Lee, 1990:140-143). In exchange DTO leaders wanted an amnesty for crimes committed and to not be extradited.

In contrast, the 1988 Vallejo Arbelaez Negotiation was the least generous proposal created by the DTO leaders. In the Vallejo Arbelaez Negotiation DTO leaders proposed to surrender their illicit business in exchange for a permanent ban on extradition and an amnesty for crimes committed, but in addition they wanted a patrimonial amnesty and the surrender of leftist subversives—a demand the government had little ability to implement.

The 1989 Londoño-Aristizabal-Montoya Negotiation was a more pragmatic proposal created by DTO leaders and emissaries, also it served as a blueprint for the fourth and last negotiation. The 1989 Londoño-Aristizabal-Montoya Negotiation terms were basically the same as the 1988 Vallejo Arbelaez proposal, but the emissaries suggested that the DTO leaders should surrender to authorities in order to add more credibility to the proposal.

Finally for the 1990-1991 Villamizar Negotiation, it was the Cesar Gaviria government, based on the previous negotiation, that set the negotiation proposal through Decree Law 2047 published on September 5<sup>th</sup> 1990, which stipulated that traffickers should: surrender and confess to a crime to avoid extradition. The proposal would set off a series of offers and counter offers. As the leader of *Los Extraditables*, Pablo Escobar’s counter offer was: no extradition, an amnesty, and construction of special detention centers. Finally, the government issued Decree Law 303 on January 29<sup>th</sup> 1991, which gave reduced sentences for admitting to one crime and no extradition for persons that

surrendered. After agreeing to Decree Law 303, on May 21<sup>st</sup> 1991, Pablo Escobar was granted the construction of the special detention center, *La Catedral*. Although DTO leaders did not get the amnesty they wanted, they were successful in obtaining a patrimonial amnesty, such as not disclosing business assets (like airstrips, cocaine refineries, or routes); more importantly, they were promised not to be extradited, received low sentences for admitting to one crime, and were allowed special detention centers.<sup>98</sup> In exchange, the government obtained their surrender and hoped to decrease urban violence.

### Political Cohesion of Medellin-based DTOs 1991-1993

The organizational cohesion of Medellin-based DTO leaders drastically weakened after Pablo Escobar and the Ochoa brothers surrendered to authorities. During the 1990-91 Alberto Villamizar negotiations between DTO leaders and government officials, the Ochoa brothers sought a separate negotiation process, which allowed the brothers to surrender to authorities by February of 1991, while *Los Extraditables* were in the midst of a hostage campaign. The Ochoa brothers saw the Gaviria government decrees as an opportunity to avoid being held responsible for the violence generated by *Los Extraditables* and to end the government's persecution:

**Frontline:** Why did you decide to turn yourselves into the government?

**Juan David Ochoa:** We were tired of having to run. We were afraid we would get killed. We wanted a normal life with our family, to dedicate ourselves to our businesses, to our kids, and once and for all to finish with the headache, that nightmare that we lived.

**Frontline:** Did the government win the war?

**Juan David Ochoa:** All of us won. The government won, in the sense that they didn't have to persecute us anymore. And we won also because we solved our problem. There's no winners or

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<sup>98</sup> Although Pablo Escobar constructed his own detention center, the Ochoa Brothers and other DTO leaders that surrendered to authorities added amenities to their prison cells like kitchens, offices, televisions, phones, and computers, and took advantage of family and conjugal visits as permitted by Colombian penal code.

losers. Everybody was a winner, when there is a settlement like ours (Interviews – Juan David Ochoa, 2000).

The Ochoa-government agreement illustrated fissures between the Ochoa brothers and Pablo Escobar as the leader of *Los Extraditables* because Escobar wanted to obtain a negotiation process through the use of violence, while the Ochoa brothers believed that non-violent methods to obtain a negotiation process would result in a more favorable outcome. Although the Ochoa brothers distanced themselves from *Los Extraditables* and the violence generated by this group to obtain a negotiated solution to their legal status, they indirectly benefited from the violence because it led President Cesar Gaviria to start negotiations with them. Without the use of violence it seems improbable that the government would have negotiated with traffickers because both the Betancur and Barco governments failed to be receptive to trafficker demands when their proposals were offered in the midst of relative peace—at the 1984 Panama negotiation, or at the beginning of 1990 during the Antioquia kidnapping crisis, when DTO leaders released all the hostages without conditions. As discussed earlier, the government was most responsive to DTO leader demands after *Los Extraditables* engaged in both indiscriminate violent campaigns and hostage crises. In fact, the theatrical terrorist acts of late 1989 and the pervasive car bombs of the 1990s led President Cesar Gaviria to condemn “narcoterrorism” while campaigning. Yet, the violence also led Gaviria to create a negotiated opportunity of surrender for traffickers with the objective of reducing urban violence. Consequently, the Ochoa brothers took advantage of this opportunity.

Other Medellin-based DTO leaders also began to distance themselves from Pablo Escobar once he was imprisoned at *La Catedral*. As the leader of *Los Extraditables*, Pablo Escobar had organized the war against the political establishment and had received

contributions from fellow traffickers to fund the war, where payments ranged from \$100,000 to \$250,000 a month to obtain a prohibition on extradition (Aranguren, 2001, p. 145; Clawson et al., 1996, p. 47; Hermanos Ochoa, 2009). Escobar had agreed with other DTO leaders that, once he surrendered to authorities, DTO leaders based in Medellin would continue paying Pablo Escobar the “war tax” while he was imprisoned. They agreed because Escobar was powerful and he had pushed for a constitutional ban on extradition. According to some accounts (Clawson et al., 1994; Salazar, 2000), after Escobar surrendered, he had increased the “war tax” from \$250,000 a month to a million dollars a month by July of 1992. As a consequence of this increase, once DTO leaders refused to pay, a conflict ensued which resulted in the death of four DTO leaders: Kiko, William Moncada, Fernando, and Mario Galeano. Some accounts (Legarda, 2005; Salazar, 2000; Aranguren, 2001) suggest that in addition to the “war tax,” because Escobar had little monetary liquidity as a result of his “war effort,” he continued his activities in the drug business and used kidnappings of fellow traffickers to support his organization.<sup>99</sup> It is believed that Pablo Escobar had the Galeano and Moncada brothers killed to set an example for other DTO leaders, who: (1) thought about refusing to pay the war tax, or (2) considered taking over Escobar’s market share in the cocaine trade. As a result, some traffickers that had supported the activities of *Los Extraditables* in their anti-extradition efforts united to oppose Pablo Escobar because of the exemplar DTO leader assassinations. Consequently, the vigilante group *Perseguidos por Pablo Escobar*

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<sup>99</sup> The Jhon Jairo Velasquez Vasquez, a.k.a. “Popeye” (Legarda, 2005), account suggests that some of Escobar’s gunman stole \$20 million dollars from Fernando Galeano and when Galeano and Moncada went to *La Catedral* prison to speak with Escobar, Escobar refused to give the money back and had Galeano and Moncada killed and, allegedly, their assets were signed over to Escobar (Legarda, 2005).

(PEPES, Persecuted by Pablo Escobar) emerged following the death of the Galeano and Moncada DTO leaders on July 3<sup>rd</sup> 1992. This group's leaders, Carlos Castaño and Don Berna,<sup>100</sup> who in the mid-1990s would participate the anti-insurgent paramilitary group Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC), pursued Pablo Escobar and his allies, and created a feud among Medellin-based DTO leaders.

The organizational cohesion of Medellin-based DTO leaders broke down because of four main reasons: the death of Jose Gonzalo Rodriguez Gacha, the imprisonment of the Ochoa brothers, Pablo Escobar's imprisonment, Escobar's war tax increase, and finally, Escobar's assassination of the Moncada and Galeano brothers. Rodriguez Gacha's death left a void in terms of gun power and funding for the activities of *Los Extraditables*. The imprisonment of the Ochoa brothers, removed their leadership position within DTO leaders and distanced them from violent acts. Escobar's imprisonment reduced his capacity as an enforcer of DTO leaders because he was running out of funds, and because other DTO leaders such as Don Berna began challenging Escobar's capacity to control urban gangs of gunmen throughout Medellin. In addition, some DTO leaders believed that since the group's main objective—a ban on extradition—had been accomplished, a war tax was unnecessary. Finally, because Pablo Escobar had four of his fellow DTO leaders killed, DTO leaders believed Escobar could not be trusted. The creation of *Personas Encontra de Pablo Escobar*, People Against Pablo Escobar (los PEPES), signified the collapse of Medellin-based DTO leader

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<sup>100</sup> "Don Berna," a.k.a. "Adolfo Paz," is Diego Fernando Murillo Bejarano who had worked as chief security man for the Fernando Galeano organization and was well connected among gunmen in Medellin (Aranguren, 2001). He became part of the AUC and after Pablo Escobar's death "Don Berna" became one of Medellin's most powerful DTO leaders because by 2004 he consolidated power among gangs in Medellin. He was extradited to the United States on drug trafficking charges on 2008.

cohesion, because the Pepes epitomized the collective action problem that Medellin DTO leaders were having after the Extradition Treaty was banned and Pablo Escobar surrendered to authorities. The accomplishment of a goal such as banning extradition and the failure to create a new organizational objective, coupled with a distrust of Escobar as a leader, led DTO leaders to decrease their cooperation since they did not have a new common goal to accomplish.

### Analysis

The discussion on the economic and political cohesion of DTOs showed the influence of external events over these organizations, and the capacity of DTOs to change their environment through the use of resources to impact politics. Economically, DTO leaders were able to take advantage of the trade opportunities available as a consequence of the U.S. counternarcotics policies, which prohibited the sale and production of cocaine domestically and internationally, thereby inflating the price of a good that has a market demand. In addition, the risk involved in producing and transporting cocaine from Colombia to the United States increased the price of this commodity at each stage of the trade, which makes the trade on a prohibited commodity like cocaine a profitable venture for smugglers. The high earnings that DTOs obtained from the cocaine trade also allow traffickers to wield political power. The great political influence allowed DTOs to run for public office and sponsor politician campaigns, but their increased political power also led to their increased persecution. The following discussion will summarize how the economic and political cohesion enjoyed by DTOs allowed them to fulfill their political objectives.

Economically, the organizational objective of Medellin-based DTO leaders was to reduce risks and increase profit. Whereas at the beginning of their incursion in the cocaine trade DTO leaders were small specialized dealers, by the time they became wealthier Pablo Escobar, the Ochoa brothers, Jose Gonzalo Rodriguez Gacha, and Carlos Lehder were able to create full service DTOs or had large scale specialized smuggling organizations. When smuggling cocaine DTO leaders could use their full service organizations designed to produce and export cocaine, but they could also work with freelance dealers specialized in specific trade functions. If a trafficker would use his own full service DTO, all employees worked cohesively to fulfill the objective of making profit.

The organizational cohesion of a drug trafficking organization was driven by positive and negative selective incentives. The main positive incentive driving DTO leaders and employees to work cohesively and with discipline was the higher than average salaries received from working in a DTO. Whereas DTO leaders made millionaire profits, DTO employees at all stages of production earned higher than average profits. A *raspachin*, who is one of the lowest paid workers in the trade, could make earnings equivalent to the Colombian minimum monthly wage in one week. The need to make stable profits led DTO leaders and employees to create networks of high interpersonal trust to avoid using violence and to ensure organizational discipline; because the higher the degree of interpersonal trust that existed within an organization and among DTOs, the lesser need for violence to enforce discipline and resolve conflicts. For this reason, strong familial and friendship networks were built to prevent DTO member betrayal.



The use of negative selective incentives within and among DTOs also resulted in a high degree of organizational cohesion and discipline. Violence was a negative incentive that was widely used to enforce contracts among DTOs and to insure organizational cohesion within a DTO. Intra-DTO violence deterred employees from cheating DTO leaders, and since many employees had familial and friendship ties, it was easier for organizational enforcers to track down cheaters within an organization. Inter-DTO violence was used to settle disputes among DTOs in the absence of legal conflict resolution, such as courts. Although violence was widely practiced to enforce discipline within and among DTOs, as a consequence of the weak law enforcement institutions in Colombia, the use of violence for some DTO leaders was an enforcement mechanism of last resort because its use attracted the attention of authorities, which could pose legal problems for organizations.

The section on the economic cohesion of DTOs also delves on the economic relationships among DTO leaders. Cooperation among DTO leaders was done in an effort to maximize profits in practicing economies of scale and to allow the cocaine trade to be flexible enough to avoid and keep ahead of authorities. One of the most notorious cooperation among national level DTO leaders was the creation of the industrial sized coca paste refinery called *Tranquilandia*, where DTO leaders would process coca paste in massive quantities so that it could be exported in ton quantities on airplanes or in cargo shipments. The economic cooperation among national DTO leaders lasted from 1983, with the creation of the group MAS, until January of 1988, which marked the start of the war between the Medellin and Cali drug trafficking organizations—Pablo Escobar and

the Cali based Rodriguez Orejuela brothers primarily fought over the control of cocaine market share when international wholesale cocaine prices plummeted.

Politically, DTO leaders based in Medellin cohesively worked to influence politicians. DTO leaders ran in elections, donated to political campaigns, contested the judicial validity of the Extradition Treaty, and used violence to fulfill their main political objectives—to prohibit extradition and resolve their legal problems. Although the electoral, judicial, and legislative strategies worked because they invalidated the Treaty on Extradition through the use of the legal system, underlying all of these strategies was the strategy of violence used by DTO leaders to influence politics. Using violence as a strategy allowed DTO leaders to reduce presidential autonomy. The creation of *Los Extraditables* was done to coerce policymakers into invalidating the 1979 Treaty on Extradition, which was seen as the main threat to DTO leaders.

In general, the political cohesion of *Los Extraditables* was strong because Pablo Escobar was sole leader, had clear objectives, and was supported and unchallenged by other DTO leaders. Moreover the activities organized by *Los Extraditables* were well funded by Medellin-based DTO leaders who contributed monthly dues of approximately \$200,000 dollars a month. From 1983 to 1991, this strong organizational cohesiveness allowed Pablo Escobar to have the necessary coercive power to compel Presidents Virgilio Barco and Cesar Gaviria to negotiate with DTO leaders.

The interest group model used in this project is useful to look at the evolution of Medellin DTO leader cohesion because it answers two questions: (1) how do environmental factors affect a group's cohesion? And (2) how does a group change its internal dynamics to cohesively achieve policy objectives? In the case of Medellin-based

drug trafficking organizations, the hypotheses of the Micro and Macro interest group model explains group cohesion and fragmentation.

Hypothesis 1 of the Macro Model, designed to test the influence of external events on groups, states that: developments in the internal organization of an illicit interest group should follow changes to its role within a larger political environment. In the case of Medellin-based DTO leaders, the salience of the issue of extradition in 1983 and 1984, led DTOs to invalidate the Treaty on Extradition, as a consequence of— Pablo Escobar’s forced retirement from Congress on October 23<sup>rd</sup> 1983; the assassination of Rodrigo Lara Bonilla that increased Colombian government counternarcotics efforts; the U.S. Government indictments on Pablo Escobar, Jose Gonzalo Rodriguez Gacha, and the Ochoa brothers; in addition to the Spanish government arrest of Jorge Luis Ochoa. These events led Medellin-based DTO leaders to realize that the extradition of nationals should be prohibited and that is why they began to influence policy through legal and violent means.

Hypothesis 1a states that: changes to the internal organization and structure of an illicit interest group are related and deal with the environmental events that influence the group and, furthermore, the changes made should be collective goods because they benefit the organization as a whole. In the case of Medellin-based DTOs, the Extradition Treaty’s invalidation was seen as a collective goal because, if achieved, DTO leaders would have a Colombian “safe-haven” from U.S. legal prosecution. Consequently, Medellin-based DTO leaders cooperated and collectively funded the implementation of several strategies to invalidate the Treaty.

Both Hypotheses 1 and 1a test the Macro model because they show how external variables influence internal group behavior. In the case of Medellín-based DTOs, external factors examined in this section provide evidence that supports the claim that DTO leaders were motivated to organize based on environmental factors that consequently influenced their behavior. Environmental factors, like increased Colombian government persecution, U.S. indictments, and trafficker arrests, led DTO leaders to view extradition as an important issue, the model allows a researcher to focus on the type of internal changes that an organization may undergo. The formation of the group *Los Extraditables* to counteract the Treaty on Extradition is an obvious internal change to an environmental challenge. However, when the discussion on cohesion focuses on the use of violence and the capacity that Pablo Escobar had for learning and changing strategies, the model allows for a focus on subtleties—even though it is popularly known that Pablo Escobar and *Los Extraditables* used violence to influence policymakers and to change policy—the model allows the researcher to learn why a group's violent targets changed from selective political assassinations to selective political kidnappings and also answers why selective political kidnappings were used in conjunction with indiscriminate targets like car bombs or blowing up buildings, airliners, and newspaper headquarters. Without a closer examination of the environmental factors that influence a group's leadership, it is impossible to fully understand a group's inner workings to predict the strategies that will be implemented to change policy.

The first hypothesis that tests the Micro Model is Hypothesis 2a, which states: that if members of an illicit interest group need to deal with a particular issue, then they will work together to solve the issue and, as a result, the political achievements obtained

by the group will benefit all actors. Because overturning the 1979 Treaty on Extradition became Medellin-based DTO leadership's highest priority, DTO leaders worked together in a cohesive fashion. Consequently the period of 1983-1991 was the period of highest cohesion, as most DTO leaders funded and employed a judicial, a legislative, and a violent strategy—to achieve the invalidation of the extradition treaty. Traffickers pooled funds to hire lawyers that disputed the judicial validity of the 1979 Treaty, and successfully obtain favorable judgment. Drug Trafficking Organization leaders also financed the campaigns of congresspersons and NCA assemblypersons to constitutionally ban extradition. Concurrent with the judicial and legislative strategies, DTO leaders pooled funds to organize violent campaigns against judges and politicians through *Los Extraditables* to compel them to annul the policy of extradition. It is during this period that Medellin DTO leaders' actions appear more akin to a terrorist organization than an interest group.

Hypothesis 2a complements Hypothesis 2b that states: once a group has clear leadership and influence, the group will have greater incentive to discipline its membership and attain internal cohesion. Medellin-based DTO leaders, in particular Pablo Escobar, learned from the formation of MAS that to achieve a common goal, a group needed clear leadership and discipline. *Muerte A Secuestradores* (MAS), as an anti-subversive organization, was a loose association of traffickers with little discipline. *Muerte A Secuestradores* (MAS) was a more pragmatic organization created to deal with a hostage crisis, but it disintegrated because other DTO leaders did not want to succumb to the leadership of Pablo Escobar. Whereas MAS was short-lived, it took Medellin-based DTO leaders about a year to create *Los Extraditables* in 1984, but this organization

would now have clear leadership, funding, and discipline: Pablo Escobar and Jose Gonzalo Rodriguez Gacha became the group's leaders until Rodriguez Gacha's death. DTO leaders based in Medellin agreed to contribute funds to finance campaigns and violent offensives. Finally, Pablo Escobar, as the group's chief enforcer, was respected and feared among DTO leaders for his power and economic wealth, which allowed him to convoke DTO leaders, create strategies, and finally enforce DTO leader agreements if leaders failed to cooperate.

Hypothesis 2d, which also examines the internal workings of a group, states that: when a group has realized a common goal, in periods of transition, consensus among a group's membership will decrease and the membership will pursue individual goals, which may deteriorate the group development. The period dating from June 1991 to December 1993 was a transitional period for Medellin-based DTOs because of their success in prohibiting extradition, but also because Pablo Escobar surrendered to Colombian authorities. This period was paradoxical because DTO leaders accomplished their objectives, but their alliances were beginning to disintegrate as a consequence of their political success. Some of these alliances began to deteriorate as early as 1990 when the Ochoa brothers began their own negotiation with government officials. During this period of transition marked by Escobar's surrender to authorities on June 19<sup>th</sup> 1991, DTO leaders began pursuing individual pursuits. Although they initially agreed to continue to pay a "war tax" to Pablo Escobar, their support for Escobar began to wane especially after two events: (1) When Escobar raised individual DTO leader contributions from about \$200,000 dollars a month to one million dollars a month. (2) When he ordered the assassination of four DTO leaders for questioning his authority. After these

two events, which culminated with Pablo Escobar's prison escape in July of 1992, several Medellin-based DTO leaders challenged Pablo Escobar and created their own group, Los PEPES, to assassinate him.

Hypothesis 2d complements Hypothesis 2c, which states that: when a group has no clear leadership or is unable to impact policy, there will be little incentive for a group's leaders to organize and discipline their members. The period, from July 1992 until Pablo Escobar's death on December 1993, was a period of chaos where Medellin-based DTOs had no policy impact and in which these groups were essentially criminal groups engaged in organizing vendettas. Revenge killings were difficult to control, and they affect DTOs' leadership and general membership because the violence generated at all levels was hard to reign. The DTO leaders and gangs in the city of Medellin initially became divided between those who followed Pablo Escobar and those who followed Los PEPES, and this clear division finally ended when authorities killed Escobar. However, the period that followed Escobar's death (1994-2004) was a period of chaos and death in Medellin because different DTO leaders vied to control the cities gangs and cocaine trade, and eventually, after about ten years of conflict, Don Berna consolidated power in 2004, but this "peace" only lasted for about four years, ending when Don Berna was extradited to the U.S. in 2008.

To conclude, tracing the evolution of organizational cohesion of DTOs and DTO leaders allows researchers to examine how groups are affected by external events and how a group's internal structure is reorganized to manage such events with an effort to alter policy, so that policy suits the group's best interest. If the Macro organizational aspects of this discussion are left out, the historical account can become mythological

biographic tales of individual drug dealers and their larger than life experiences, because the conditions that gave rise to these leaders are omitted from the analysis. If the Macro, external factors, influencing DTOs become the sole subject of discussion, then it is impossible to know with certainty how DTOs adapt to their environment and consequently impact policy. Moreover, focusing only on the Micro organizational aspects, by studying the individual actions of DTO leaders and their interaction, the study would leave out interactions between DTO leaders (as participants in an organization similar to a trade association) and their greater social context. Omitting the social context would reduce the capacity to understand how individuals impact policy. Finally the analysis of a group's cohesion, coupled with an analysis of selective incentives and an organizational approach is important because the model explains and illustrates why individuals are driven to work for a common goal, but also how such alliances form and dissolve.

#### Group Expertise and Technology

A group's expertise focuses on a group's human capital and how a group uses such skills to influence policy. The expertise the leaders and employees of Medellin-based DTOs evolved over time because as DTOs became wealthier and more specialized, the organizations became both economically and politically relevant. The economic specialization was faster than the political specialization because DTOs were primarily businesses. As DTO leaders became millionaires, around 1978, DTOs grew and developed which led a greater number of employees to be hired by the specialized divisions of said Drug Trafficking Organizations. Also with growth came more specialization, since DTO leaders were less involved in the more basic shores of a DTO.



It is not until the 1982 elections that DTO leaders openly delve into politics and hire consultants or become surrounded by politicians.

When DTO leaders analyzed in this project started trafficking cocaine in the mid 1970s, traffickers would specialize in one aspect of the business, such as the acquisition of coca paste, whereas others specialized in the actual transportation and smuggling of cocaine to the United States. For example, Jose Gonzalo Rodriguez Gacha specialized in acquiring coca paste from Bolivia and Peru and refining it in Colombia. The Ochoa brothers specialized in transporting refined cocaine to the United States at first, through the use of human mules, and later through the use of small airplanes. Pablo Escobar also specialized in procuring coca paste in the early trafficking stages, when he would pick up the coca paste in Ecuador or Peru via land or air, but would outsource the management of human mules to the United States to mule managers, like Griselda Blanco, whom associated with Escobar and other traffickers to export cocaine. Carlos Lehder specialized in cocaine transportation to the United States and in providing landing facilities to other traffickers.

With time, specifically in the early 1980s, DTO leaders became wealthier and the business grew to such a degree that drug entrepreneurs were able to build “full service” organizations that encompassed most aspects of the trade. At this point of development, DTO leaders still relied on outsourcing certain aspects of the business at their convenience, but they could also delegate the work to specialists within their own organization. Coca farmers, coca paste refiners or “cooks,” coca paste dealers, chemists, hidden compartment builders, engineers, pilots, radio operators, security personnel, lawyers, accountants, public relations consultants, and real estate agents, among other

workers, were hired by DTOs for the six divisions of what can be termed as “full service” DTOs.

The six divisions of full service DTOs organized the workload involved in the traffic of cocaine and used specialized labor to produce cocaine. In the 1970s and early 1980s most traffickers obtained coca paste from coca farmers in Peru and Bolivia because Colombia had not yet become a coca producer. For this reason this project’s DTO divisions start with the procurement of coca paste in other Andean countries instead of with coca farming. The first division of the illicit drug traffic was in charge of obtaining raw material for making cocaine. Initially traffickers like Pablo Escobar and his cousin Gustavo Gaviria would pick-up coca paste from Ecuador by land or air transport. Once Escobar became wealthier, the procurement of coca paste was delegated to workers within his organization or by outsourcing coca paste from other organizations specialized on dealing with coca paste.

The second division of a DTO was responsible for refining coca paste. Coca paste refinement was done in small countryside labs, in urban centers, and at industrial sized labs found in hard to reach jungle areas—the most notable refining lab was *Tranquilandia*. The use of industrial sized labs was done once DTO leaders were wealthier and were able to finance large-scale labs, which were monitored by workers close to each DTO leader involved in such cocaine refining cooperative (Eddy et al., 1988). Labs hired security personnel, managers that would monitor input materials used to transform coca paste to cocaine as well as the output, and cooks that would do the actual transformation. The third division of the business was in charge of shipping the cocaine through routes. This division involved human mules and their managers, pilots,

cocaine distributors in destination countries, and government officials such as politicians and/or police. The cocaine shipping was one of the riskiest parts of the business, but also the most profitable for wholesale cocaine dealers. The Ochoa brothers and Carlos Lehder became very rich because they were the first to specialize in the most lucrative aspect of the cocaine business. However, Carlos Lehder made traffickers that specialized on the production of cocaine like Pablo Escobar very rich because, when Lehder began trafficking, he needed cocaine producers to supply his routes. As a consequence, specialization was how business associations were made between major traffickers like Escobar and Lehder, and others.

Finding safe routes was pivotal to a successful cocaine business and this division of traffic needed the assistance of government officials. When the traffic started and cocaine was shipped through the use of human “mule” and small airplanes that would fly directly to secret airstrip along the U.S. coastline, finding safe and remote places for refueling or for loading shipments was instrumental. Carlos Lehder’s ownership of Norman’s Cay in the Bahamas, from the late 70s to the early 80s, was essential for traffickers because they could land and refuel at a “safe station.” However, many times “safe stations” were created with the aid of government officials in Central America and the Caribbean Islands (Clawson et al., 1996). Paying off officials in countries where layovers were done to refuel, pick up cocaine, or drop off money was a necessary business cost to reduce risk. This is why Panama’s General Antonio Noriega and Bahamian Prime Minister Lynden Pindling were key players for money laundering and/or to facilitate cocaine shipping (Eddy et al., 1988). Lower level officials were also paid off to facilitate traffic. During the 1970s Mexican local officials and police were

paid off to allow traffickers to land airplanes in small airstrips. Pioneer traffickers like Jaime Builes would pay off the Mexican police to allow his shipments to land so that they could be transported through the Mexican border into the United States (Castro, 1994).

The fourth division of the business picked up the wholesale shipment and sold it to U.S. retailers. In addition to distribution managers, this division employed money launderers. Pick-up teams like those established by Fabio Ochoa, Max Mermelstein, Jon Roberts, Mickey Munday, and Rafael Cardona Salazar or by Griselda Blanco's organization, were all infamous Miami wholesale distributors for the Medellin DTOs that would manage the product pickup and money delivery (Mermelstein, 1990).<sup>101</sup> This division would then have to send the money back to Colombia either by shipping it directly in hidden compartments of goods like laundry machines or cars, or by starting the laundering process at financial institutions in the United States or elsewhere. Money launderers varied in skill, they could range from high-end bankers working for financial institutions to non-skilled workers employed by a DTO. Non-skilled money launderers were in charge of regularly wiring small amounts of cash or by depositing small amounts of cash in U.S. banks, which then could be withdrawn through the use of automated teller machine (ATM) cards in the United States and Colombia.

The fifth division of the business dealt with security, since DTOs needed a security apparatus to protect themselves from authorities from guerrillas, but also to resolve disputes among traffickers. The security division involved payment of bribes so authorities would allow traffickers to obtain gun permits, smuggle shipments, and to establish informants on the activities of law enforcement (Castro, 1996). The security

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<sup>101</sup> For more information on this team see the documentary "Cocaine Cowboys."

division of DTOs also involved hiring gunmen to carryout political assassinations, silencing witnesses, and intimidating judicial system officials. To defend their assets and families from guerrilla harassment, traffickers created small militias to fend off guerrillas. Jose Gonzalo Rodriguez Gacha was strongly anti-guerrilla and was the first DTO leader to organize militias in conjunction with cattle ranchers to oppose FARC guerrillas in the Magdalena Medio region. *Muerte A Secuestradores* (MAS) and *Asociacion Campesina de Agricultores y Ganaderos del Magdalena Medio* (ACDEGAM) were created for this purpose, which have left a legacy of paramilitarism in Colombia.

Since the drug industry cannot turn to courts to settle business disputes, traffickers settled disputes among themselves through the use of “trafficker mediators,” where DTO leaders discuss how to resolve a problem at the lower levels (Castillo, 1987). However, the use of violence was another way to resolve problems and this led traffickers to hire bodyguards and gunmen.<sup>102</sup> Violence in Medellin became a specialized business on its own right, where assassins were contracted to kill in venues termed as “offices” or *oficinas*. Assassin managers would pay out the contract once it was carried out on behalf of the client, but if an assassin failed to carryout the contract in a specified period of time, then his/her death would be contracted to another assassin, and so forth (Interview Jair Bedoya, 2005; Interview DSS0040, 2005).

The sixth and final division of the business was the legal and administrative division. This aspect of a DTO sought to create ways to represent DTO leaders in courts and to launder cocaine money proceeds by establishing legal businesses and to clean up revenues from the drug traffic. The legal teams managed the ownership of properties,

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<sup>102</sup> Castillo (1990) suggests that Rodriguez Gacha mediated between Escobar’s DTO and Cali based DTOs.

supervised contracts, and represented traffickers in commercial and criminal courts. Teams of lawyers specialized in extradition were hired to invalidate the 1979 Treaty of Extradition in 1986, and to write the language for constitutional Article 35 that banned the extradition of nationals in 1991. Accountants and financial planners managed and created legal avenues that would clean drug proceeds by ‘fixing books’ that disguised revenues through creative accounting, establishing faux businesses, and managing legal businesses to make more licit money. Finally this division many times was in charge of funneling trafficker funds to political campaigns, and some DTO leaders hired many politicians and consultants to run campaigns or their political organizations.

The specialization and expertise of DTOs allowed these organizations to run their business with the overall objective of making profit, which in the 1980s, the estimated billions of dollars that DTO leaders made translated economic wealth into political power. DTO leaders invested their money into their political campaigns or those of receptive politicians in order to have greater status and influence within Colombian society. Gradually, as legal avenues were closed to DTO leaders, DTO wealth and expertise was used to fund violent offensives primarily aimed at public officials. Many of the employees like lawyers and security personnel hired to manage the economic aspect of the business later handled political aspects of the business for DTO leaders, such as judicially invalidating the 1979 Treaty on Extradition, lobbying legislators, and/or advising on the political targets for the implementation of the violent offensive—to ban extradition and obtain a negotiation process.

Throughout every division of the business, illicit drug organizations relied on technology for their development. Technology helped DTOs conceal the cocaine trade

from authorities. In the 1980s, even before Global Positioning System (GPS) devices became commercially popular in the new millennium, GPS devices aided in the navigation of boats and planes to avoid authorities, but also in locating the coordinates where shipments that had been unloaded in the ocean. Communications equipment such as landline telephones, fax machines, portable two-way radios, beepers, satellite and cellular phones allowed DTOs to communicate with their U.S. distribution cells and keep track of shipments, which facilitated transactions and were also used to avoid authorities. Fishing boats, speedboats, and small aircraft allowed traffickers to transport cocaine shipments. Compartment builders were hired for hiding drugs or money in clothing, luggage, airplanes, boats, and within shipments of goods. Chemists were hired to create products that would be made out of cocaine, which would pass off as ceramic figures or as book covers (Caen, 2008; En caja, 2008). Engineers were hired to construct shipping vessels such as submarines and geneticists developed high quality coca crops that grow at a variety of elevations. In sum, the use of technology allowed traffickers to reduce risks and increase profits, which in turn gave traffickers greater economic and political power.

#### Group Size, High Low Demanders

The size of a group is an important variable because it can determine the interest and capacity that a group's members have in achieving a common good. It is believed that small organizations are more efficient than larger ones because its members have a greater interest in achieving objectives. In small organizations members can voluntarily<sup>103</sup> do the work necessary to obtain a collective good because it is more likely

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<sup>103</sup> By "voluntarily" it is meant that individual members will provide a good without the use of incentives or of coercion.

that the benefit will exceed the costs of doing work. If the membership is smaller, the benefits will not have to be divided among so many members, which gives members a greater incentive to do the work necessary to achieve a group's objective. The size of the group allows the membership to coordinate their actions quickly. Small groups are also able to keep their members accountable for their responsibilities because the members know each other. The close relation among members of an association allows a mechanism of "peer pressure" (or "social sanctions," as Mancur Olson would have put it (Olson, 1971:60-65)) to make members to evaluate their coordinated effort and keep members accountable for their actions.

The exact number of DTO leaders based in Medellin during the 1980s is not known but some researchers and journalists estimate that around 10 to 60 core organizational leaders existed in the 1980s. When they started to operate, DTOs were composed of a very small number of merchants that specialized in a particular part of the trade. According to Juan David Ochoa, only about 50 to 60 merchants existed in Bogotá, the Coast, Medellin, and in southern Colombia, in his words, "...There were groups of people that were friends of course..." (Interview – Juan David Ochoa, 2000). This number is vague because it does not differentiate between DTO leaders and managers. Clawson and Lee's analysis of the illicit drug industry in the 1990s estimate that around 10 to 13 core organizations were involved in the drug trade (Clawson et al., 1996:19-21). They cite Sidney Zabudoff's<sup>104</sup> study that suggests that 10 core organizations existed with 500 hundred-core managers. Francisco Thoumi suggests that 13 core organizations managed

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<sup>104</sup> Sidney Zabudoff, "Colombian Narcotics Organizations as Business Enterprises," in U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Research and Intelligence and the Central Intelligence Agency, *Economics of the Narcotics Industry Conference Report* (Washington DC: State Department and CIA, 1994).



the industry. Journalistic accounts based on the MAS meeting suggest that at the peak of Medellin-based DTOs, there was a number between 20-200 DTO leaders that met to discuss business, political influence, and paramilitary activities, but these numbers again do not distinguish between leaders and managers. If the numbers for the core organization leaders provided by Juan David Ochoa, Zabudoff, and Thoumi are considered then it could be said that there were at least 10 and at most 60 core organization leaders.

This number is small enough to constitute a small business association that organized to discuss business and policy issues. From this project's discussion on the organizational cohesion and the representativeness of the Medellin-based DTOs cooperation among DTO leaders in Medellin was at least moderate, since DTO leaders pooled resources for business ventures like *Tranquilandia* and donated funds to anti-extradition politicians, or to form the groups MAS and *Los Extraditables*. Their coordination generated great economic and political benefits for each DTO leader since the extradition of nationals was an issue that concerned all DTO leaders of the time and many voluntarily contributed resources either in funding or manpower to convince or coerce politicians and public opinion that a ban on extradition was necessary.

Besides "peer pressure," some DTO leaders, in particular the Ochoa brothers, reported that fear was also a motivating force, which drove DTO leaders to cooperate in the campaigns organized by *Los Extraditables*. "Peer pressure" in a small group like Medellin-based DTO leaders, would have manifested itself by the need for each DTO leader to show to others that he/she was doing their part in invalidating the Extradition Treaty –so as to look involved in the process. If a DTO leader did not do their respective

job or avoided paying dues, it is suggested that coercion was used by a groups' leaders to prevent "free riders," i.e. people who did not contribute to a collective effort but benefit from the efforts of others (Ainsworth, 2002:225). In the Medellin case study, an example peer pressure can be the expressions of fear that the Ochoa brothers have mentioned about Pablo Escobar. An example of coercion used among Medellin DTO leaders was the Moncada and Galeano assassinations, where Pablo Escobar, as the enforcer in *Los Extraditables*, collected a "war tax" from fellow traffickers so that he could pressure the government to ban extradition. Escobar allegedly raised the "war tax" in July 1992 from \$200,000 to \$1,000,000 a month. When members of the Gaelano and Moncada organization failed to comply, Escobar ordered their assassination to enforce discipline (Clawson et al., 1996:47-48).

The size of an organization, as a determinant of what drives a group of individuals to accomplish a common good, is complemented by whether the organization has high demanders or low demanders for a good. In small organizations, typically most of its members are high demanders for a good and will strive to accomplish said good. In the case of Medellin-based DTOs, all leaders were high demanders for banning the extradition of nationals because they did not want to be sent to a jail in the United States where they could serve long sentences. When Carlos Lehder was extradited he was condemned to serve 100 plus years. In the following quote Juan David Ochoa expresses the fear of being extradited, "...If someone would extradite you, that would be like being buried alive. We respected and feared extradition..." (Interviews - Juan David Ochoa, 2000). The fear, of being far away from their family, losing their property and lifestyle, is the reason the political coordination among DTO leaders made them an illicit interest

group. High demanders are members who place a higher value on a particular good than the rest of the membership. Consequently, a high demander may be more apt to pay most if not all of the cost of producing a collective good. Pablo Escobar and Gonzalo Rodriguez Gacha, in forming *Los Extraditables*, crowned themselves as the highest demanders for the extradition ban because, apart from financing political campaigns, they used violence to compel government officials. The motto of *Los Extraditables* communiqués read “we prefer a grave in Colombia to a dungeon in the United States,” and in line with their motto, Jose Gonzalo Rodriguez Gacha and Pablo Escobar died invalidating extradition. Yet, all the violence generated by DTO leaders only resulted in ephemeral results, since U.S. government pressure on Ernesto Samper’s presidency amended Article 35 of the 1991 Constitution to allow for extradition of nationals from 1997 onwards.

Low demanders for extradition in DTOs were lesser known DTO leaders and DTO employees that did not contribute much from their own resources to ban extradition, but benefited when the ban took place. Lawyers or accountants of DTOs, who had a high risk of getting extradited if they were apprehended by authorities, were low demanders for extradition since they did not contribute much of their resources to overturn the Extradition Treaty, but benefited from not being extradited.

The combination of small groups of 10 to about 60 DTO leaders and their high demand to see the 1979 Treaty on Extradition invalidated, so that they would not be sent to the U.S. legal system, allows the cooperation among DTO leaders to be very effective since they were willing to contribute resources for a common good. Whether it was peer pressure to do their part in banning extradition or fear of being punished for not

contributing resources to overturn the 1979 Treaty on Extradition, the high demand for banning the policy extradition drove DTO leaders based in Medellin to cooperate in achieving this common objective, which they believed would allow them to remain in Colombia with their lifestyle intact.

### Representativeness

Representativeness is a group's policy position relative to society (Bashevkin, 1996). This variable measures the ability a group has to convince members of society that its political objective represents them. It is assumed that if a group represents a wide sector of society, then it is possible that it will receive support for its cause and consequently it will be successful at influencing policy. Medellin-based DTO leaders not only built local, but also national electoral and public support for overturning the 1979 Treaty on Extradition. Pablo Escobar, Carlos Lehder, Gonzalo Rodriguez Gacha, and the Ochoa brothers created a nationalist argument, which presented the issue of extradition as a violation of Colombia's sovereignty. They proactively campaigned against extradition by sponsoring candidates, launching their own political campaigns, and distributing propaganda on the issue. In forming paramilitary organizations to combat leftist guerrillas, some DTO leaders also sought to increase their representativeness among traditional cattle ranchers and landowners. The following discussion will be limited to the Medellin-based DTO leaders—Pablo Escobar, Carlos Lehder, Gonzalo Rodriguez Gacha, and the Ochoa brother's—involvement in politics, legal and illegal, to show their desire to influence public opinion and the opinion of politicians in Colombia.

Pablo Escobar started his political life by mainly sponsoring Liberal politicians. In his quest for a national congressional seat in the 1982 elections, around 1979, Escobar

established two social organizations, a newspaper, and sponsored a political party (Legarda, 2005:35). The social organizations were *Civismo en Marcha* (Civic-mindedness on the March) and *Medellin Sin Tugurios* (Medellin Without Slums). He created a party that was an offshoot of the Liberal party called *Renovación Liberal en Antioquia* (Liberal Renovation in Antioquia) and a newspaper called *Medellin Civico* (Civic Medellin). *Civismo en Marcha* allowed Escobar to fund social projects and donate about 100 lit soccer courts to marginal neighborhoods throughout Medellin (Salazar, 2001:78). *Medellin Sin Tugurios* was a project that built about 500 homes for people that were living in Medellin's trash heap called Moravia. These two organizations along with other social projects in towns surrounding Medellin allowed Escobar to build a strong base of electoral support among the urban and rural populations. At the end of his life, when he was being pursued, it was this populist base of support that viewed him as a hero and allowed him to remain in hiding and survive persecution from government and enemies.<sup>105</sup>

Pablo Escobar's political party, *Renovación Liberal*, sponsored Jairo Ortega for a congressional position. Ortega was a former lawyer for the Lopez Gomez organization that employed Escobar (Castillo, 1987; Salazar, 2001, p. 91). Escobar's campaign

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<sup>105</sup> Many people tell stories of Pablo Escobar when he was a fugitive. People of Medellin and in surrounding towns give accounts that people knew where Escobar was, but did not report him to authorities because at some point in time Escobar did something for their own neighborhood or town. Overall he was seen as a hero for sharing his wealth with less fortunate sectors, who would hide him throughout Medellin. A popular account in the town of La Ceja, Antioquia (where at some point Escobar had bought his father a farm) reports that around 1984 during the persecution, Pablo Escobar would dress up as a nun. Townspeople knew it was Escobar, but no one did anything because he had not done anything wrong in La Ceja. He reportedly offered to improve healthcare services in La Ceja, but was turned down by town officials. The fact that he shared his wealth with poor sectors was enough to get sympathizers. Some people believe that they did not report Escobar to authorities even though there was a bounty on his head, because it is believed that whoever picked up the reward money could be killed in reprisal (Author's interview with locals from La Ceja).

centered itself on the defense of natural resources and on the promotion of sports. For his background information, Escobar presented himself as a sportsman who promoted sports in various municipalities and as an industrialist and a developer.

In preparation for the 1982 general elections Pablo Escobar and Jairo Ortega initially joined a new faction within the Liberal party called *El Nuevo Liberalismo*. Luis Carlos Galan and Rodrigo Lara Bonilla, who were two up-and-coming politicians, launched this faction to separate themselves from the clientelist practices of the Liberal Party. Galan and Lara Bonilla were perceived as reformers and inspired a lot of optimism amongst people who wanted a less corrupt system of politics associated with Colombia's mainstream political parties. Ironically, it is believed that Pablo Escobar wanted to belong to the *Nuevo Liberalismo* faction because Galan and Bonilla were a new force in the political system and Escobar was hoping that, as a new force, the *Nuevo Liberalismo* faction would accept him since he was presenting himself to mainstream society as a progressive entrepreneur (Entel, 2009). In the documentary "Sins of My Father," about the life of the son of Pablo Escobar, the film reveals how Escobar initially expressed his support for Galan and Lara Bonilla's *Nuevo Liberalismo*. Rodrigo Lara Restrepo, Lara Bonilla's son recalls the event:

He (Rodrigo Lara Bonilla) told me, that they, my father and Galan, went to the Magdalena Medio and he told me that they did not understand why they were receiving so much support. Why so many euphoric people were coming (to the political rallies) to support them, when they had never in their lives been to these municipalities, so they didn't understand! So my dad said, 'that is great, what a success, what resonance the campaign has had!' So they started to ask (people), 'so tell us why are you... who is the political leader that is bringing you over here (to the rally)?' And they (the people at the rally) said, 'that is Don Pablo Escobar who tells us to vote for you and Don Pablo is generous, he gives us refrigerators, and gives us money!' and (my father would say) 'who is this Don Pablo Escobar? Who is so nice, this Mr. Escobar!' He (Rodrigo Lara Bonilla) asked around, and would tell me, if my memory doesn't fail me, and he asked some one at the Medellin stock market, and they said, 'look, that man is extremely rich, but extremely dangerous' (Entel, 2009).

As the interview reveals, the two politicians investigated who Pablo Escobar was and found out that he was a drug trafficker. When Galan and Lara Bonilla found out that Jairo Ortega joined their movement and was placing Escobar as his alternate, they were outraged. Because they were the reformers of corrupt political practices, Rodrigo Lara Bonilla and Luis Carlos Galan publicly expelled Escobar from the *Nuevo Liberalismo* faction at a campaign event held at the landmark Parque Berrío in downtown Medellín (Salazar, 2001, p. 92). This expulsion made Lara Bonilla and Galan political enemies of Pablo Escobar and very likely cost them their lives.

After being publicly humiliated, Pablo Escobar and Jairo Ortega allied with Alberto Santofimio Botero's wing of the Liberal Party. Alberto Santofimio Botero had been a Minister of Justice for the Alfonso Lopez Michelsen presidency and the president of the lower chamber of congress in 1978—a seat he had to resign from because of a corruption scandal (Guillen, 2007, Salazar, 2001, p. 92). For the remainder of the electoral campaign, Ortega and Escobar were able to mobilize the votes of people from marginal neighborhoods that benefited from Escobar's social projects. Their political appeal was that they represented a new emerging entrepreneurial force. The trio, Santofimio, Escobar, and Ortega, would campaign using Escobar's airplanes and would arrive at political rallies with an entourage that included other politicians and a famous television presenter Virginia Vallejo (La bella, 2006). The 1982 political campaign was a success because it won Botero a senatorial seat, Ortega a lower chamber seat, and Escobar became Ortega's congressional alternate. Escobar and Ortega arrived at the Colombian House of Representatives to openly oppose the extradition of nationals.

Escobar's incursion into legal politics ended about little over a year after becoming a congressman. The newly appointed Minister of Justice, Rodrigo Lara Bonilla, started clamping down on traffickers in late 1982 and early 1983 by: opening closed investigations, grounding trafficker airplanes, showing trafficker links to football and politics, and limiting weapon permits domestically and abroad (Salazar, 2001, p. 116). During 1983 and 1984, the United States government had processed many extradition petitions. However, since the newly elected President Belisario Betancourt was opposed to the extradition of nationals on the basis of being an infringement of Colombia's sovereignty, Lara Bonilla ignored the petitions. Nevertheless, because the government was beginning to crack down on traffickers, as the extradition requests were being processed, and in reprisal for being expelled from the *Nuevo Liberalismo* faction, Pablo Escobar and Jairo Ortega orchestrated a congressional debate on August 16<sup>th</sup> 1983 to tarnish Lara Bonillas' moral prestige. They presented a campaign check signed by trafficker Evaristo Porras and cashed by Lara Bonilla. After much scandal and controversy, President Betancur backed his Minister of Justice. Many experts on this subject believe that Betancur showed support to Lara Bonilla because he was afraid that traffickers would use their contribution records to extort favors or silence politicians, since many campaigns that year received trafficking proceeds otherwise termed as *dineros calientes* ("hot monies") (Castillo, 1987; Salazar, 2001).

After the debate on "hot monies," a September 1983 report on ABC news presented Pablo Escobar's involvement in the cocaine business. Soon after, Guillermo Cano, the director of the newspaper *El Espectador* openly accused Escobar of being a cocaine trafficker by exposing a 1976 arrest. It is at this point that Lara Bonilla begun a



judicial investigation into the 1976 assassination of two DAS agents killed after Escobar and his cousin were arrested for trafficking cocaine paste from Ecuador. After Escobar's criminal past was uncovered, on October 20<sup>th</sup> 1983, Escobar's parliamentary immunity was lifted and he was forced to resign his post, which ended his legal political career. Soon after, Rodrigo Lara Bonilla was killed in April 30<sup>th</sup> 1984 after the government took over the industrial sized cocaine lab, *Tranquilandia*, at service of Medellin-based Drug Trafficking Organizations.

The direct electoral involvement of Pablo Escobar in politics is brief and representatively inconsequential. His political campaign dealt with superficial issues. Even while in Congress, the major debate Escobar participated was to tarnish the image of a politician (Lara Bonilla) who crusaded against drug trafficking. Ironically, while Escobar was an alternate congressman, he was unable to push for policies that would undermine the 1979 Treaty on Extradition, his biggest political objective (Eddy et al., 1988, p. 300). What little social representation Escobar achieved, he mostly accomplished in a preparation for the congressional elections while building an electoral base of support. It was during this early stage that Escobar helped marginalized sectors of society by constructing housing for the homeless and soccer fields in low-income neighborhoods.

Besides forming legal political ties with marginalized sectors, Escobar formed links to guerrilla and paramilitary organizations. These links were apparent especially active after he is denied participation in legal politics. Pablo Escobar was not generally regarded as an individual with leftist ideological leanings precisely because he was a pioneering entrepreneur of the illicit drug business. However, his populist politics and

the social work he did for marginal neighborhoods throughout Medellin point to his leftist tendencies. He forged a relationship with M-19 commander Ivan Marino Ospina after a truce was achieved between MAS and the M-19 after the kidnapping of the Ochoa sister, Martha Nieves Ochoa (Salazar, 2001, p. 102-104). According to paramilitary leader of the Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC), Carlos Castaño, he and other traffickers were present when M-19 Commander Carlos Pizarro spoke to Pablo Escobar about the 1985 attack on the Palace of Justice that killed eleven Supreme Court Judges (Aranguren, 2001, p. 39-48). Castaño mentions that traffickers present at the meeting (including his brother Fidel Castaño) pooled weapons and money. According to interviews done with M-19 members, they admit to a relationship with Pablo Escobar, but they suggest that the relationship was forged at first with M-19 commander Jaime Bateman and especially with commander Ivan Marino Ospina (Salazar, 2001, p. 102-104). According to Jorge Luis Ochoa and Jhon Jairo Velasquez Vasquez a.k.a. “Popeye” who was one of Pablo Escobar’s gunmen, both mention that Pablo Escobar discussed the 1985 Palace of Justice attack with Ivan Marino Ospina (Legarda, 2005, p. 142).<sup>106</sup> *Movimiento 19 de Abril* (M-19) Commanders, Jaime Bateman and Ivan Marino Ospina died before the November 1985 attack of the Palace of Justice materialized. So, Carlos Pizarro, as the new M-19 commander, possibly had some communication with Pablo Escobar to use his airstrip at Hacienda Napoles for the receipt of munitions from Nicaragua. The deaths of the two commanders and the interviews with former M-19 members indirectly corroborate Carlos Castaño’s account that he witnessed a meeting between Escobar and

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<sup>106</sup> Ironically, around 1985, Carlos Lehder while on a radio program declared a newfound admiration for M-19 politics because of their anti-extradition stance even though he helped form MAS because the M-19 tried to kidnap him (Orozco, 1987). Lehder admitted to the press that he met with Ivan Marino Ospina. As a result, M-19 commanders demoted Marino Ospina.

Pizarro (Aranguren, 2001, p. 39-48). According to M-19 members, the 1985 Palace of Justice attack was the idea of the M-19 command and that Pablo Escobar did help, but that he did not provide much armament or money (Salazar, 2001, p. 141). Jorge Luis Ochoa believed that Escobar knew that burning legal records on extradition would not benefit him judicially because authorities had copies. Ochoa said that the original plan involved kidnaping the Justices to another country, and that Escobar wanted to support the attack just because he liked the action (141). Even so, the deaths of eleven Supreme Court Justices stalled the judicial process for at least a year. The inability to fill these vacancies stalled the process of revising extradition cases and the further assassination of judges led many judges and lawyers to avoid becoming justices because many feared for their lives. Escobar's involvement in the M-19's Palace of Justice attack failed to materialize into support from left-wing or general sectors of the population because this attack has been one of the most unpopular events in contemporary Colombian history and has tarnished the political careers of former M-19 members that have attempted to participate in electoral politics.

*Los Extraditables*, a group that has been extensively discussed in the cohesion section of this project, was instrumental in changing the political attitudes of Colombian society on the issue of extradition. *Los Extraditables*, created to pressure politicians into invalidating the 1979 Extradition Treaty and to open a negotiation with traffickers, was successful in shaping people's attitudes towards the issue of extradition. Although at first the public was indifferent to the 1979 Treaty on Extradition, the initial violence generated by DTO leaders led public opinion to be outraged at DTO violence. The first instance of public outrage was felt on April of 1984 with Rodrigo Lara Bonilla's assassination.

When the press covered news of a Panama negotiation, people were outraged that government officials would negotiate with traffickers and this latter anger led the Belisario Betancur and Virgilio Barco governments to pursue traffickers. The last bout of public anger against DTO leaders position on extradition took place when Presidential candidate Luis Carlos Galan was assassinated on August 1989.

However, as the war between DTOs, *Los Extraditables* and the state, and between paramilitaries and guerrillas became prolonged events, the public grew tired of urban and rural violence. In late 1989, the targets of *Los Extraditables* became less selective and their violent campaign sought to demonstrate their power by blowing up large targets to forcefully convince the general public that a negotiation with authorities was needed to obtain peace. By targeting people's sense of insecurity *Los Extraditables* succeeded in changing public opinion, from public outrage towards early political assassinations, to public acceptance of DTO leader demands such as the need for negotiation, amnesty, no extradition, and peace. In December 1989, four months after Galan's assassination, a survey done by the newsmagazine *Semana* found that 58 percent of those polled favored a negotiation with traffickers and 64.3 percent favored pardons for traffickers if they retired from the trafficking business (Clawson et al., 1996:100).

Because of Galan's assassination, Cesar Gaviria –a friend and member of Galan's *Nuevo Liberalismo* wing of the Liberal Party, was elected by a wide margin of votes on March of 1990 mainly as a show of popular support for Luis Carlos Galan. Cesar Gaviria was a complex candidate because his campaign message was conciliatory instead of

combative, which is what many<sup>107</sup> expected since he was a close advisor<sup>108</sup> to Galan before his death. Gaviria campaigned promising to end narco-terrorism and the violence it generated by offering traffickers a negotiated option, which coincided with public opinion polls. On November of 1990 another survey conducted by *Semana* found that 60 percent of those polled favored an amnesty for traffickers and 80 percent answered that they would accept an “Extraditable” as a cabinet minister –if it meant that Colombia would be at peace (Clawson et al., 1996, p. 101). The poll reflected the general exhaustion with the car bombs attacks in Colombia’s major cities and that most people wanted peace at any cost.

By November of 1990 most indiscriminate acts of violence perpetrated by *Los Extraditables* had subsided, while the selective Liberal kidnapping campaign was underway. This campaign led Gaviria to negotiate terms of surrender with traffickers. By 1991, 82 percent of the Colombian population believed that extraditing nationals should be invalidated through the creation of a Constitutional Article (Botero, 1991). This opinion gave NCA assemblypersons the support they needed to prohibit the extradition of nationals in the 1991 Constitution. The immediate need for an end to urban violence was an argument that helped many Colombian’s rationalize their support of invalidating the 1979 Extradition Treaty as a tool to combat DTO leaders. In the view of many Colombians, the “War on Drugs” was going to be a prolonged war because the demand for cocaine would continue to fund DTO leaders’ war against the state, consequently, many believed that the bloodshed in Colombian streets would be difficult to stop.

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<sup>107</sup> Members of the George H. W. Bush administration thought Gaviria would continue Barco’s hardline approach.

<sup>108</sup> Cesar Gaviria was Luis Carlos Galan’s chief of debate in Galan’s presidential campaign.

According to this logic, if politicians could reach an agreement with DTO leaders, the agreement would not end the “War on Drugs,” but it was thought that in the least a DTO-government agreement could end the violence in Colombian streets. In 1991, this anti-violence position aligned with the anti-extradition position pursued by DTO leaders increased the representativeness of Pablo Escobar as leader of *Los Extraditables* vis-à-vis the general population.

Pablo Escobar’s involvement with MAS gave way to his participation in other paramilitary organizations. *Muerte A Secuestradores* (MAS) had little representativeness impact in Colombian society because it was a subnational organization in pursuit of another subnational organization, the M-19, and though it sought to obtain the acceptance of the general population or authorities by spreading anti-kidnapping flyers in stadiums, it was an organization that appealed mostly to traffickers.

Soon after, Pablo Escobar joined forces with Rodriguez Gacha and other landowners to fund right-wing paramilitary forces that would primarily protect their properties from FARC harassment in the Middle Magdalena region. According to judicial investigations into the massacre of individual leftist activists or sympathizers of the FARC’s political wing the *Union Patriotica* (UP), Pablo Escobar was involved with the *Asociación Campesina de Agricultores y Ganaderos del Magdalena Medio* (ACDEGAM) (Castillo, 1990, p. 233). The ACDEGAM was a paramilitary group composed of cattle ranchers and drug traffickers turned landowners in the Magdalena region. *Asociación Campesina de Agricultores y Ganaderos del Magdalena Medio* ‘s (ACDEGAM) leaders were Jose Gonzalo Rodriguez Gacha and Henry Perez. Pablo Escobar’s involvement in ACDEGAM was less extensive as was Rodriguez Gacha’s, but

Gacha sought to defend properties located in the region from being taxed by the guerillas and that is why he gained legitimacy among landowners and paramilitary leaders in the Magdalena region such as Henry Perez. However, after the 1989 death of Rodriguez Gacha and Henry Perez the relations between Pablo Escobar and paramilitary groups was short lived, especially after 1992 when Escobar escaped from prison since many of these paramilitary leaders, in particular Carlos Castaño, formed *Los PEPES* to pursue Escobar.

In sum, of all the organizations that Escobar formed or participated *Los Extraditables* had the most representativeness and policy impact. The local social projects he built had a following among marginalized sectors of Medellin whom felt much loyalty towards him. *Los Extraditables* was a violent organization, but its persistence and strategy gradually led the general population to oppose extradition and to approve of a negotiation with traffickers.

Carlos Lehder became politically active when he returned to Colombia around 1978. Around 1980 he began offering money to politicians for their campaigns (Orozco, 1987, p. 63). He created the political party *Movimiento Latino Nacional* (MLN) in 1983 and bought a newspaper called *Quindío Libre*. In a sociological analysis of Lehder's impact on the town of Armenia, Quindío during the early 1980s, Jorge Eliécer Orozco depicted how Lehder destabilized the political and social environment of the town. Lehder launched the careers of politicians with budgets that far surpass those of career politicians with 20 years of service. Politicians sponsored by Lehder were given: airplanes to campaign across the Department of Quindío, free media (Lehder would buy newspaper ads and stories), and organized events called 'Patriotic Saturdays.' During Patriotic Saturdays candidates could explain their platforms and people were given

lunches with cash prizes. Basically, Lehder obtained votes by appealing to the masses through populist messages and by giving out money (Orozco, 1987). People would write to Lehder asking him for money to fix their houses, pay tuitions, and hospital bills among other favors. Carlos Lehder even created an organization so that peasants could buy land without needing down payments. All of the economic favors were popular and done in an effort to obtain political support.

Lehder's financing of political campaigns included contributions to the campaigns of his opposition. He did this to compromise them so that they would not accuse his candidates of receiving 'dirty money.' Since Lehder's money was tempting, many opposition candidates received the money because without Lehder's contribution the electoral competition would be skewed towards Lehder's own candidates, so opposition candidates received contributions to level the playing field (Orozco, 1987:145). In an interview, Lehder said to have contributed to the political campaigns of national politicians in both the Liberal and Conservative parties—which included Senatorial candidate Alberto Santofimio Botero (Escobar's Candidate) and both Presidential Candidates Alfonso Lopez Michelsen and Belisario Betancur (Orozco, 1987:145 and 225-226). In 1982 and 1983 when President Betancur would openly refer to the 1979 Treaty of Extradition as an infringement to Colombia's sovereignty, Lehder praised Betancur for being a defender of Colombia and regarded him as a proud exponent of "Colombia's peasant heritage" (Orozco, 187:157).

In Lehder's newspaper, *Quindío Libre*, he would present a variety of political ideas. Lehder opposed traditional political parties, the imperialist American government, multinational companies, and also the policy of extradition (Orozco, 1987:154-172). He



was a nationalist, and his paper promoted a form of fascism (where the Latin race, specifically “the Paisa” culture of north central Colombia, was regarded as the supreme race). Lehder fostered Colombian industry, promoted environmentalism and the legalization of marijuana. When speaking against the 1979 Treaty on Extradition, Lehder denounced President Turbay Ayala and his Ambassador to the U.S. government Virgilio Barco, referring to them as “damned puppets of the imperialist mechanism at the service of the American interests and government” (168).<sup>109</sup> He believed that Article 17 of the Penal Code protected Colombian nationals from being extradited because it stated, “that in no case would Colombia offer the extradition of nationals nor would concede those already condemned of political crimes” (208). Lehder believed that Law 27 of 1980, which recognized the 1979 Treaty of Extradition between Colombia and the United States, should not exist because, according to him, the constitution should not override the penal code. He would use this nationalist stance to appeal to people’s sense of patriotism and therefore gain political support.

Initially Lehder’s political party was seen as something innovative and was offering ideas that were more practical than what traditional parties had done in the past. Many students, unions, and politicians linked to traditional parties became part of the Movimiento Latino Nacional (MLN) because they saw Lehder and his politicians as innovative, but overall they saw him as a person with a lot of economic means that could fund their own political projects (Orozco, 1987, p. 153). Lehder’s own political aspirations lasted until 1986 when he ran for the Senate. However his movement was

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<sup>109</sup> This quote denotes how Lehder was so hard to classify because he referred to himself as a fascist but his rhetoric was communist.

weakened as early as June 1983 when Lehder openly admitted of being a drug trafficker to Yamid Amat, a journalist of the national Caracol Radio chain. During the interview he spoke of Norman's Cay, his transportation business, and denounced the 1979 Treaty of Extradition. After these declarations, on October of 1983 Lehder was a fugitive and his economic largesse was being misspent. For the March of 1984 elections MLN obtained 10,857 votes out of a total of 97,422 departmental votes but, despite the low number of votes and thanks to proportional representation, Lehder's party won two Departmental congressional seats and 11 city council seats.

On April 30<sup>th</sup> 1984 ,when Minister of Justice Rodrigo Lara Bonilla was assassinated, President Belisario Betancur changed his nationalist anti-extradition policy in order to actively pursue traffickers. After holding President Belisario Betancur in high regard, in a letter written on September of 1984, Lehder expressed that Betancur was a traitor and a hypocrite. According to Lehder, Betancur not only received funding from traffickers, but also that Bentacur campaigned using trafficker airplanes, one of which was painted in the Conservative party's blue campaign colors (Orozco, 1987, p. 226; Escobar, 2000, p. 158; Salazar, 2001, p. 93). Given the national turmoil over the violent impact of drug trafficking in 1984, the Governor of Quindío forbade Lehder's candidates from taking over their elected posts. Even as a fugitive, Lehder ran for a Senatorial seat on March of 1986, which he lost. He was later captured on February 4<sup>th</sup> 1987 and immediately extradited via decree. Although Lehder used the same clientelist strategy and formed the same type of organizations and media outlets as Pablo Escobar to obtain political power, Lehder's political message failed to obtain traction with the public in Quindio or in Colombia because his ideas were scandalous and less mainstream. Mostly,

politicians and some citizens were interested in his money than his nationalist, populist, and fascist ideas.

Jose Gonzalo Rodriguez Gacha “*El Mejicano*” was a major contributor to political campaigns of Conservative politicians and a founder of paramilitarism in Colombia. According to Fabio Castillo, a journalist who did in-depth inquiries on the lives of traffickers at the height of their power, Rodriguez Gacha was the primary benefactor of Belisario Betancur’s presidential campaign in 1982 (Castillo, 1987). Rodriguez Gacha along with Carlos Lehder, Pablo Escobar, and the Ochoa brothers admitted they contributed to the 1982 presidential campaign of Liberal candidate Alfonso Lopez Michelsen so he would oppose the extradition treaty. Though Lopez denied that he knowingly received the funds, his campaign manager was Ernesto Samper Pizano. Samper later was involved in one of the biggest campaign finance scandals when he became President in 1994 and was accused of receiving \$6 million dollars from Cali DTOs. Lopez only admitted that while campaigning in Medellin, for Samper, he stepped into an Intercontinental Hotel suite full of people, but that he did not know who they were (Salazar, 2001, p. 93-95; Lopez et al., 2001, p. 142).

Jose Gonzalo Rodriguez Gacha also supported the political campaigns of many local level politicians especially in the Middle Magdalena Region throughout the 1980s. The Magdalena region was an area where he owned large tracts of land.<sup>110</sup> Rodriguez Gacha like Lehder also admitted to being a drug trafficker in a TV interview granted to

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<sup>110</sup> During this period of time many traffickers bought large tracts of land in areas harassed by guerrillas because they were cheap, as landowner wanted to sell them because they did not want to deal with guerrillas. The Magdalena Medio region was one harassed by guerillas were Pablo Escobar, Rodriguez Gacha, and many other traffickers bought land. Needless to say this area has suffered from violence because it, to this day (2012), is caught in the crossfire between traffickers turned paramilitaries and guerrillas.

journalist German Castro Caycedo. Rodriguez Gacha did not see anything wrong with his profession probably because he was brought up surrounded by illegality throughout his life. He believed that he had a right to his wealth even if it was made by dubious means. His frankness to the media on his profession was evidence of his amorality when it came to the drug business and the use of violence. Since he funded the careers of politicians, and because in many instances police and military forces provided him with protection against guerrillas, in his view, legal sectors in Colombia were compromised and had little credibility (Castillo, 1987, p. 238). For Rodriguez Gacha, people were naïve if they did not know the system worked through corruption and violence. In his “dual” worldview, where people were his allies or his enemies, politicians, members of the justice system, and guerrillas operating in the Colombian political system could be bought, but if legal sectors and guerrillas were an obstacle they thus could be killed.

In the face of FARC guerrilla harassment in the Magdalena Medio region, and because of ideological and business disagreements he had with the guerrilla’s leadership (Dudley, 2004; Castillo, 1990), Rodriguez Gacha formed alliances with cattle ranchers and founded *Movimiento de Restauración Nacional* (MORENA). This group was a movement that agglutinated the supporters of the ACDEGAM with those of Tradición Familia y Propiedad (TFP). While ACDEGAM was a military organization that coordinated counterinsurgency efforts (Clawson et al, 1996, p. 187), MORENA was the political wing of this counterinsurgent paramilitary group. Its political platform supported: democracy, the right to life, education, political, social, and economic development, but it opposed the leftist UP, which was the political wing of the FARC in the 1980s. Fifty percent of MORENA was supposedly funded by Rodriguez Gacha

himself and the rest of the movement was to be funded by cattle ranchers led by Henry Perez (Castillo, 1990, p. 238-239). For the 1988 elections, MORENA was able to fund the careers of Magdalena Medio politicians and won six mayoral races (Lee, 1989, p. 136; Dudley, 2004, p. 121). Rodriguez Gacha became a true patron who worked within clientelist parameters because he not only launched the careers of politician, but also personally paid citizens to vote for his candidates (Cockburn et al., 1990). Pablo Emilio Guarin Vera, a famous paramilitary leader, won a congressional seat for MORENA. One of MORENA's mayors, Luis Rubio had a warrant for his arrest because he was charged with helping mastermind a massacre that killed 40 people in two villages of the banana-growing region of Uraba in the north of Colombia (Lee, 1989, p. 161, Castillo, 1991, p. 228, Clawson et al, 1996, p. 189, Dudley, 2004, p. 121). Besides making allies with legal sectors of Colombia's cattle ranching community, Rodriguez Gacha's paramilitary operations in the region involved organizing massacres and assassinations of UP members, which were done with the complicit knowledge of police and military commanders (Castillo, 1991, p. 228; Dudley, 2004).

In sum, Rodriguez Gacha's political views coincided with those of newly rich traffickers and traditional landowners who had been harassed by guerrillas, such as the FARC, which charged landowners guerrilla war-taxes on their property. Rodriguez Gacha's participation in electoral politics shows that he contributed funds to the same anti-extradition candidates as other traffickers. He also sought to finance the campaigns of extreme-right wing politicians who saw the political left as an enemy that should be eliminated. Rodriguez Gacha like Pablo Escobar and Carlos Lehder used clientelist methods to buy votes and obtain support for the campaigns of his candidates. Although

Rodriguez Gacha was skeptical of the legality of government officials, he believed in the need to defend private property at all costs and that is why he was respected among landowner and paramilitary circles.

The Ochoa brothers were politically less vocal than the rest of the Medellin-based DTO leaders analyzed in this project. The Ochoa brothers were not concerned in forming a political party or movement, they used violence to a lesser degree than Pablo Escobar and Jose Gonzalo Rodriguez Gacha, though they were key actors in the formation of MAS in order to rescue their sister Martha Nieves Ochoa and the Ochoa brothers were suspected of organizing the assassination of U.S. Federal Witness pilot Barry Seal. The main interests of the Ochoa brothers was to make profit and use their money to influence politicians in order to ban extradition. Since the Ochoa family was famous nationally for raising horses, they had a higher social status than most traffickers (Terrorismo, 1982; Eddy et al., 1988). Due to their higher social status, the Ochoa brothers built ties with Colombia's political and economic elite without recurring to violence (Streatfield, 2010). Proof of their good political networks were the declarations of key businessmen done to vouch for the origins of their wealth and their legal standing, which were done during the 1984 detention of Jorge Luis Ochoa in Spain (Castillo, 1991, p. 64).

As it has been mentioned, especially during the 1982 presidential elections, the Ochoa brothers gave money to the presidential campaigns of Liberal Alfonso Lopez Michelsen and Conservative Belisario Betancur. These donations reflect that IIGs behaved similar to legal interest groups because the Ochoa brothers and other DTO leaders gave funds to opposing parties to insure that whomever won would enact favorable policies. Yet, individual DTO leaders had their own preferences and according

to Juan David Ochoa, the Ochoa brothers favored Liberal candidates since they considered themselves Liberals (Interviews - Juan David Ochoa, 2000). Their political involvement during the 1982 elections highlights some moderate coordination among Medellin-based DTO leaders because the Ochoa organization supported the same candidates as other DTOs leaders.

### Analysis

The wealth generated by illegal drug proceeds allowed DTO leaders based in Medellin to become politically powerful at local and national levels. At local levels Pablo Escobar, Carlos Lehder, and Jose Gonzalo Rodriguez Gacha were able to build strong bases of support by exchanging economic favors for redundant electoral support. This type of exchange was not new in Colombia because its political culture has strong clientelistic overtones especially in rural and poor urban sectors where political patrons of all stripes broker favors, such as government services, for votes. The emergence of cocaine traffic simply injected more money in the clientelistic electoral system and DTO leaders themselves not only became political patrons or leaders that could buy votes from citizens, but also launched the campaigns of many political candidates. In contrast to traditional party patrons, traffickers during the 1980s did not need to control the state bureaucratic apparatus to dole out favors to citizens; traffickers had their own cocaine proceeds to finance political campaigns. The political rally example of Lara Bonilla and Galan's first encounter with Pablo Escobar's economic power illustrates that these traffickers were looking for "the political leader" that would send them outstanding electoral support—a public support that was bought through gifts of household appliances. Whether it was Escobar's *Renovación Liberal*, Lehder's *Movimiento Latino*

*Nacional*, or Rodriguez Gacha's MORENA, all of these political parties or movements used clientelism to gain local support and were successful in doing so. Also, the interaction of DTOs with politicians showed their capacity to act as illicit interest groups because they were able to fund political campaigns in exchange for policy outcomes.

By participating in legal electoral politics, be it their personal candidacies or the sponsoring of anti-extradition politicians, traffickers were able to place the issue of extradition on the political agenda of many politicians and the general public specifically by focusing on nationalist arguments. Traffickers were able to sell their particularistic goal—their right not to be extradited for drug traffic—as a violation of national sovereignty, a general issue that affects all Colombians. Though their electoral strategies varied, the donations to similar politicians with anti-extradition positions like Alberto Santofimio Botero, Belisario Betancur, and other candidates, showed that DTO leaders had some degree of coordination.

Although DTO leaders used clientelism and legally participated in the electoral process, they also worked with or founded illegal armed groups such as M-19, *Los Extraditables*, MAS, and ACDEGAM. Pablo Escobar's collaboration with the leftist guerrilla M-19 was of a utilitarian nature where he helped them acquire munitions so they would destroy judicial records. DTO leader participation in paramilitary organizations like MAS and ACDEGAM was also utilitarian, where these right-wing organizations were created to counteract actions of left-wing guerrillas and to defend the lives of hostages and to protect private property. However, in contrast to the collaboration of some DTO leaders with left wing organizations, the right-wing agenda was accepted by legal sectors such as landowners and cattle ranchers in the Middle Magdalena region.



Finally, although a wide range of the population repudiated many of the actions committed by *Los Extraditables*, the public's opposition to the group's actions was malleable. The power and ruthlessness of DTOs in their creation of *Los Extraditables* and in their implementation of violent campaigns showed the weakness of the presidency in its inability to monopolize the use of force. Although DTOs sold the issue of extradition as a broad nationalist concern, for urban dwellers, the issue of extradition became a personal safety issue because people were more concerned about their own safety in cities living amidst violence. *Los Extraditables* violated dwellers sense of personal security with the staging of car bombs, or the blowing up of airliners, government buildings, and police stations. For the great part of the population, if approving of negotiations with DTO leaders, amnesties, and cabinet positions for members of *Los Extraditables*, would lead to peace, then support for such policies was acceptable, rather than suffer persistent terrorist attacks employed by *Los Extraditables*. The issue of personal security was more important for urban populations than was the Liberal kidnapping campaign, or fighting "the Drug War." The latter two issues were not problems directly affecting the general population. Instead, the concern of popular opinion was the increase in the use of indiscriminate violence by DTOs. The violation of personal safety was essentially the success of the DTOs violent campaign because it showed the power of DTO leaders to coerce the general public into accepting their policy demands not only on extradition, but also for an amnesty for crimes committed, if peace could be achieved. As a consequence, the issues pursued by DTO leaders overlapped those pursued by the general population thereby increasing the representativeness of DTO leaders vis-à-vis the general population. The use of clientelism, the use of

nationalist rhetoric, and finally the use of violence and the states' inability to control it, led public opinion to accept the traffickers' position on the issue of extradition as a means to put a stop to urban violence and to increase the public's sense of personal security. As a consequence, Cesar Gaviria was able to win the 1990 presidential elections by being able to tap into the public's desire for security, by offering a negotiated option to traffickers.

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

With an effort to understand the political influence of informal organizations involved in the psychoactive drug trade, I ask three main questions at the outset of this project: Under what conditions do illicit interest groups (IIGs) develop? What effect do IIGs have on policy? And, what are the effects of these groups on democratic institutions? The questions are influenced by my own research on U.S.-Colombian relations and by the works of Francisco Thoumi and Rensselaer Lee's real-time research on Drug Trafficking Organizations (DTOs) in Colombia. Both Thoumi and Lee conclude that DTOs—although illegal—operate in similar fashion to interest groups, which band together to protect their established interests and, as a consequence, actively seek to influence political decisions.

My previous research on U.S.-Colombian relations focused on the Colombian executive branch and its capacity to implement international counternarcotics agreements. My research conclusion was that “pressure groups” such as DTOs have a significant impact on the implementation of bilateral counternarcotics agreements.

In addition, Francisco Thoumi and Rensselaer Lee's pioneering work during the 1980s paved the way towards a serious inquiry into: (1) how the cocaine industry works (Thoumi, 1994; Lee, 1990); (2) what were the early incentives that allowed DTOs to flourish (Thoumi, 1994); and, (3) the dynamics between the government and DTOs (Lee, 1990; Clawson et al., 1996). Thoumi and Lee's initial insights on the relations between DTO leaders and politicians inspired my project. Both Thoumi and Lee concluded that “...narcotics barons (were) possibly the dominant interest group in Colombia” primarily because of their substantial economic power (Lee et al., 1999).

In another study analyzing DTO-government negotiations, Lee and Clawson (Clawson et al., 1996) concluded that DTO leaders had limited political agendas, which I found to be an interesting conclusion because such behavior was reminiscent of legally established interest groups that have narrow agendas and have valuable political impact. Consequently, my dissertation sought to build on previous research by analyzing illicit groups, such as DTOs, through the lens of an interest group model. The interest group model allows for the study of DTOs as informal political organizations. Initially I argue that an interest group model would be useful, especially in analyzing real-life circumstances because DTOs play a measurable role in affecting politics in similar ways to established groups. Specifically, when a DTOs' non-violent mechanisms for influencing policy are taken into account.

My dissertation's main argument is, however, that although DTO leaders' agenda may be limited, their political impact merits the study of DTOs as illicit interest groups. In studying "criminal" organizations through an interest group model researchers can fulfill three goals: (1) examine external influences that lead to a group's development; (2) examine internal dynamics that permits a group's organization the pursuit of a common policy objective; and, (3) examine a group's political impact on its environment. As such, it is possible to learn why informal organizations continue to exist and have an impact on politics.

To answer the project's three main research questions on the political influence of Medellin-based DTOs I devised an interest group model that studied their effect on politics, as well as, an organizational analysis to study their political lifecycle. The

following discussion will center on: a brief overview of the model, the project's three main questions, implications, and areas for future research.

In a nutshell, the interest group model created for the analysis of Medellín-based DTOs is a hybrid model called the Macro-Micro-Model (covered in Chapter 2).<sup>111</sup> The structure of the model fused two differing schools of thought within interest group literature—the pluralist and institutionalist schools of thought—which have complementary approaches to the study of societal groups and their interaction with state institutions. The theoretical differences between the two models may lead researchers to conclude that these models are theoretically incompatible. However, the opposite is true because the models' differences compensate for each model's own deficiencies. The fusion of both models increases their explanatory power, by utilizing their deficiencies as complementary parts, in similar fashion to pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. For example, the more descriptive aspects of the pluralist model are compensated by the analytical qualities of the institutionalist approach. Also, the “impartial absence” of the state in the pluralist model is compensated by the institutionalist focus on how a state's institutions delimit group competition. Consequently, the hybrid Macro-Micro-Model provides for a more complete explanation of interest group behavior.

The Macro-Micro-Model is useful because it works with valid variables that have previously been used to measure the effectiveness of group's effort in influencing policy. In essence, the model provides two sets of independent variables. The Macro-model studies a set of external influences on group development. As such, the Macro-model

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<sup>111</sup> The name of the model was derived from Amie Kreppel's organizational analysis on the EU legislature (Kreppel, 2002).

focuses on the conditions or context in which a group flourishes. The Micro-model on the other hand, examines a set of internal variables of a group's organizational dynamic to explain policy successes or failures. Since the Micro-model examines a group's internal dynamic, it can focus on showing why and how a group embarks on achieving a policy goal. The Micro-model can also show how a group's internal dynamic leads to a group's demise. Finally, the model also studies a group's influence on democratic institutions by examining the interaction between an IIG's organization and a state's autonomy.

The hybrid Macro-Micro-Model I constructed in the dissertation allows researchers to draw a causal relationship between external variables and the internal functioning of a group, while at the same time identifying the influences that cause a group to develop and disband. In The model, as applied to Medellin-based DTOs in this project, shows how external variables affect a group to form and, in turn, how internal variables allow Medellin DTO leaders to influence policy, but also how the group dynamic results in a group's decline.

The first question my dissertation set out to answer was: under what conditions do illicit interest groups, such as DTOs, develop? My research found supporting evidence that external environmental conditions do, in fact, lead to group development.

Political events such as the creation of the "Drug War" by the Nixon Administration had political and economic effects, which led to the formation of DTOs as economic entities. When an historical perspective is taken, the role of Medellin-based DTOs in the psychoactive drug trade was opportunistic and its behavior was similar to other informal organizations that have participated the trade. United States government policies designed to prohibit the production and sale of psychoactive drugs, like cocaine,

overvalued the drug's price because the policies increased the risk involved in trading cocaine across U.S. borders. Consequently, the policies, which aimed at reducing the supply of drugs in the international market, unintentionally stimulated trade as an illicit commodity, by default of the high profit margins to be had by traffickers.

Directly influenced by the profitability of the cocaine market and following an economic logic, Medellin-based DTO leaders sold cocaine to meet the international market's underground demand and to benefit from the high profit margins at a time (a wholesale kilo of cocaine was priced at \$60,000 dollars). In the words of Jorge Ochoa, "The business started growing like any other business. It becomes like a ball of snow. It grows by itself, and demand makes it grow... It seemed like a game, and nobody paid attention to it. Nobody, nobody. That was something very easy, I thought" (Frontline, 2000a).

The last phrases of Jorge Ochoa's quote is telling of the deficiencies in state capacity, which directly contributed to the economic and political rise of drug trafficking organizations. My research found that DTO members and law enforcement authorities concurred that, during the mid-1970s, heroin and marijuana were of primary concern for U.S. law enforcement officials, in part because heroin and marijuana were socially trendier than cocaine during this period. It is not until the early 1980s that U.S. authorities begin to focus law enforcement capabilities on the cocaine trade. Consequently, during in the 1970s, when DTO leaders began to experiment with the cocaine business, the lack of international and domestic controls on the cocaine trade allowed DTO leaders to obtain great economic wealth and to increase their trafficking organizations to the point of creating vertically integrated businesses, otherwise known as full service DTOs.



Weak state capacity in the form of corrupt law enforcement allowed DTO leaders to purchase influence in order to protect their trafficking routes. The accounts of Pablo Escobar's early incursions into the smuggling world revealed that DTO leaders learned from their mentors how to buy off public officials. These accounts also reveal that public officials, specifically police and military personnel, sought smugglers to obtain extra income, which shows how corruption is a symbiotic relationship. My study found that counternarcotics efforts create contrasting roles for law enforcement officials because, on one hand, officials have to enforce the law and curbe smuggling operations but, on the other hand, the high profits derived from the drug trade lure authorities to become active participants and sometimes facilitators of the trade.

The study also found that weak state capacity contributed to the rise of non-state actors like rural paramilitary groups, left-wing guerrillas, and urban gangs. In the absence of state institutions that may provide security throughout the Colombian territory, power vacuums have created a "problem of stateness" because state institutions do not enforce rule of law equally throughout a territory. Subnational groups fill the geographic power vacuums in rural and urban areas left by state institutions and set their own authority upon the population. My research found that DTOs created paramilitary groups to protect their newly acquired rural assets—*Muerte A Secuestradores* (MAS) developed to counteract the M-19 guerrilla's harassment, and later another paramilitary group, ACDEGAM, was created to fight off FARC guerrilla activity in the Magdalena Medio Region. Even though MAS and ACDEGAM ceased to exist, the legacy of DTO funded paramilitary groups persists today (2012). Evidence of the persistence of paramilitary activity is the emergence of the now demobilized *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia*

(AUC) during the mid-1990s, and the current development of a myriad of other armed groups linked to new DTOs termed by Colombian government officials as BACRIM—*Bandas Criminales* (Criminal Bands). The BACRIM operate throughout Colombia and have mainly formed to fend off FARC guerrilla activity. The BACRIM span across the Colombian territory and have taken over the illicit drug business of DTO leaders who have been arrested, extradited, or killed by Colombian authorities (El Espectador, 2011). Some of the known BACRIM groups are: *Los Urabeños*,<sup>112</sup> *Aguilas Negras*, *Los Rastrojos*,<sup>113</sup> *Los Paisas*, and the *Ejercito Revolucionario Popular Anti-Subersivo de Colombia* (ERPAC),<sup>114</sup> among others. Since the 1980s, the creation of DTO-linked paramilitary groups has continued a legacy of protecting rural properties with non-state actors and has led to human rights violations, forceful land takeovers, an internally displaced population of 3.7 million (HRW, 2012), and a high homicide rate of 33 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants (UNODC, 2011).

State capacity is also an important variable, when discussing the rise of urban gangs because the inability of state institutions to establish the rule of law in urban centers has caused the creation of hundreds of gangs linked with DTOs, which in turn

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<sup>112</sup> The group, *Los Urabeños*, (during January 2012) staged a boycott, which forced businesses to close and which blocked several highways in Northern Colombia to protest the death of one of its members by the Colombian government. This has led many to question the capacity of the Colombian government to keep paramilitary groups from influencing commerce and security in many regions (El Tiempo, 2012, January 5; El Tiempo, 2012, February 26).

<sup>113</sup> Recent reports on BACRIM activities suggest that different paramilitary groups have negotiated a cease-fire with left-wing guerrillas, in particular the FARC, to profit from drug trafficking, illegal mining, and extortion. Where the FARC supplies the different DTOs with coca paste for cocaine production and DTOs become responsible for exporting the cocaine (El Tiempo. 2012, February 15).

<sup>114</sup> The ERPAC, on December of 2011, engaged in talks with Colombian government officials to arrange a process were its members and its leadership would be able to surrender to authorities (El Tiempo, 2012, January 17).

have professionalized networks of hit-men or gunmen and have extended their activities into the practice of urban extortion and the urban retail sales of drugs. The role of gangs in urban centers supplants state actors because gang member leaders not only provide security but also oversee and arrange the installation of public utilities and roads.

In addition to the economic logic that clearly motivated many individuals towards the business of trafficking illicit drugs, my research found that the state of the Colombian economy is a distal but contextual cause that led many individuals to pursue a career in smuggling. Colombia's high-income inequality and constrictive social class structure provides few options in terms of upward mobility and consequently leaves individuals of low socioeconomic status with limited low-income job prospects. The low socioeconomic status of most DTO leaders drives many to enter the illicit drug business because they desire to rise above their original social status. During the 1970s the illicit drug business became a vehicle for social mobility, so the smuggling of imported goods and the export of illicit commodities like cocaine provided many individuals with the opportunity to become, in some cases, wealthier than traditional economic elites. In addition, my study found that the "special" social status enjoyed by smugglers within Colombian society made smuggling goods an attractive career choice especially for many young men and women of low income. Although smugglers belonged to the underworld, they were respected and considered businessmen who met a demand for imported products at affordable prices. The biographical sketches of most traffickers, but especially of Jaime Builes, Pablo Escobar, and Jose Gonzalo Rodriguez Gacha, illustrate how smuggling provided instant upward mobility even in a society with high income inequalities and rigid social class structures. Because the economic incentives that drive

the cocaine industry have not changed, since the 1970s and 1980s, the illicit drug industry has become a career choice not only for young people in Colombia, but throughout Latin America as the informal trafficking networks have expanded beyond Colombia.

Social conditions such as consumer tastes and immigration trends also led DTOs to flourish. The shift in consumer demand for cocaine and the establishment of cocaine as a “status drug” increased the demand for the illicit drug in the 1970s. The demand directly influenced Colombian DTOs because as demand grew, industrial-size labs like *Tranquilandia* were built to refine cocaine. Drug Trafficking Organizations transported bigger shipments of cocaine to meet demand. Instead of shipping kilos through human *mules*, during the 1980s DTOs modified their operations to send large shipments so that tons of cocaine could be transported via airplanes or in cargo ships.

Today methamphetamine is “the fastest-growing illicit drug in the world” and its consumption ranks second to marijuana as the most-used illegal drug. According to the United Nations, consumption of synthetic drugs has surpassed cocaine and heroin (Beaubien, 2012). U.S. consumer demand for methamphetamines and increased regulation of precursor chemicals to make methamphetamines in the United States has caused the wholesale price of a kilo of methamphetamine to increase to \$25,000 dollars (The Economist, 2012; Beaubien, 2012). In similar fashion to the Colombian DTOs of the 1980s, the rise in price and demand for methamphetamine has driven Mexican DTOs to industrialize their drug production of methamphetamine to meet demand. The industrialization of methamphetamine has risen chiefly because the price of selling a wholesale kilo of methamphetamine is higher than a wholesale kilo of cocaine, which is priced at about \$12,500 according to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

(UNODC, 2010, p.79). Also, the production of methamphetamine is a more efficient business venture for Mexican DTOs because a smaller dosage of “meth” has a greater psychoactive effect than cocaine. Consequently, DTOs can obtain more profit from a kilo of methamphetamine than a kilo of cocaine. Mexican criminology experts believe that the market of methamphetamine has also developed because the drug’s production is more efficient than the marijuana and cocaine production in Mexico. For instance, the production of Mexican marijuana is less profitable and requires DTOs to rely on farmers to grow the plant. The cocaine traffic relies on other intermediary dealers to send wholesale shipments from the Andes to Mexico. Instead, methamphetamine production can be done in Mexico, which thereby increases the profit margin for Mexican Drug Trafficking Organizations (The Economist, 2012).<sup>115</sup>

The increased involvement of Mexican DTOs and other country specific DTOs in the illicit drug industry vis-à-vis their Colombian counterparts can be explained by the existence of immigrant networks in the United States. The availability of Colombian immigrant networks in the United States, from the 1960s to the 1980s, initially allowed Colombian DTOs to have a comparative advantage over all other DTO networks in Latin America. Colombian DTOs had both, access to the illicit commodity and access to the U.S. market. The linkage to the U.S. market during this period was made via a network of Colombian immigrants in major U.S. cities who were linked to DTOs. Peruvian, Bolivian, and Mexican DTOs of the time did not have as much access to both, the upstream and downstream aspects of the business. Originally Colombian smuggling networks were

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<sup>115</sup> Mexican DTOs do have to obtain precursor chemicals from India, China, and other countries to create methamphetamine. The international market for precursor chemicals is difficult to control because precursors are legal and can be shipped to any number of countries, which can later send the precursors to Mexican DTOs.

initially helpful at reducing the risk of U.S. government infiltration into a DTO's operations. However, once U.S. authorities focused their efforts in targeting Colombian DTO networks within the United States, the networks became conspicuous and authorities successfully disrupted the smuggling networks. The disruption allowed Mexican DTOs and other country specific DTOs to take over most of the U.S. cocaine distribution networks. In addition, the dissolution of the Medellin and Cali DTOs that operated in the 1980s until the mid-1990s contributed to the rise of other country specific DTOs which operated from the Caribbean, Central America, and Mexico. Immigrants from these areas took over the U.S. distribution cells for the "new" DTOs. The loss of Colombia's comparative advantage in the U.S. distribution market led Colombian DTOs to become specialized solely on the cocaine wholesale traffic to Mexican DTOs, and to DTOs operating in Central America, Latin American transit countries, and Europe.

In contrast to Colombian DTOs, Mexican DTOs currently have a comparative advantage to other country specific DTOs because of their proximity to the U.S. border, but also because of the larger Mexican immigrant population (when compared to the smaller Colombian immigrant population), which resides in the United States. Since Mexico has a larger immigrant population, it makes DTO networks less conspicuous than the smaller Colombian DTOs that operated in the 1980s. Mexican DTOs operating with Mexican distribution cells in the United States are harder to disrupt because they can hide within the larger population of Mexican immigrants. Moreover, the smuggling networks built by Mexican DTOs throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century for the smuggling of marijuana are currently being used for cocaine and methamphetamine (Astorga, 2004, p. 90; Beaubien, 2012).

Although technology plays a minor role in the political development of DTOs, it plays a major role in the economic rise of drug trafficking organizations. Airplanes and communications equipment allowed pioneering DTOs to increase their wealth by allowing for the transport of massive quantities of illicit drugs to international markets. Since the technology to produce and refine cocaine has been relatively accessible, the simplicity of the technology has allowed a many actors to participate in the trade and contribute towards the expansion of the drug trade. With the passage of time, DTOs were able to develop technology to create transportation innovations. Whereas traffickers in Colombia have developed the use of submarines to transport drugs, Mexican traffickers have created long underground tunnels to facilitate the trade and reduce the risks of being apprehended by authorities.

My study found that a state's legal parameters also had an influence in the development of DTOs in Colombia. The lax regulation of practices like money laundering and political campaign financing has been instrumental in the development of DTOs both economically and politically. Economically, early counternarcotic efforts (1960s and 1970s) underestimated the demand and market value of cocaine. The legal system had little control over dollar transfers and such deficiencies benefited DTOs because they could readily obtain the drug proceeds without much supervision. Consequently, once traffickers became wealthy enough they acquired banks to directly control and legalize their drug proceeds through money laundering schemes. In the area of campaign finance, the Colombian legal system did not regulate how politicians obtained their political funding until as late as the mid-1990s. As such, it was not illegal for politicians to receive funding from DTOs and this lack of regulation allowed

traffickers to have great political influence. DTO influence was evident not only in the 1982 election but also during the 1991 Constitutional Convention, which led to the invalidation of The 1979 Extradition Treaty (via a Constitutional Article). At the frontline of the “war” against political corruption, some politicians have tried to protect regulations on money laundering and on financing of political campaigns, and others, influenced by DTOs, have introduced legislation to limit regulations or punishments. Since the 1980s, legal battles have taken place during major political scandals involving politicians and the Cali DTO (mid 1990s), and some politicians and the AUC paramilitary group during the 2000s. Both scandals have implicated at the least 10% of congresspersons during the respective congressional years in which the scandals took place.

The individual preferences of Colombian officials examined in the study suggest that government officials created a permissive environment that allowed for the development of DTOs. During the 1970s, as the cocaine trade began to take off, authorities did not regulate the trade because they did not believe or foresee that the trade would have negative repercussions on society, such as high homicide rates, the disruption of the court system, and terrorism. For example, the 1979 Extradition Treaty was not implemented until 1985 because President Belisario Betancur (1982-1986) was philosophically opposed to the Treaty claiming an infringement to Colombia’s sovereignty, rather than on the calculus that the treaty was the only legal tool available with which to regulate DTO leaders and the illicit drug trade. Also, economically, the cocaine trade benefited the growth of legal sectors of the economy. Consequently, political elites or state officials did not perceive traffickers at the time as a security threat. The DTO leaders examined in this research did not have pending investigations and they



were not actively pursued for their involvement in the cocaine trade in the 1970s or early 1980s. Socially, DTO leaders *were* discriminated against by elites because of their lack of formal education and social status. To counteract their lack of social pedigree, traffickers constructed parallel social institutions like social clubs and bilingual schools in order to lead a comparable lifestyle enjoyed by elites.

Politically, DTOs (as emergent economic groups) were implicitly accepted by politicians during the 1970s and consequently became more powerful during the early 1980s. I found that the 1982 election year was a turning point in the relationship between politician preferences and DTO leaders. During the 1982 elections, many politicians from all political parties openly accepted campaign donations from DTO leaders. Because of their wealth, DTO leaders of the time believed that they were entitled to participate in the political process and to make demands like any other legal actor. The 1982 presidential elections were a turning point in the interaction between politicians and DTO leaders primarily because reformist politicians like Rodrigo Lara Bonilla and Luis Carlos Galan began to politically and publicly exclude traffickers from the political system. The political exclusion gradually led to the use of violence a means to represent DTO interests. For the most part, and after the 1984 assassination of Rodrigo Lara Bonilla, in rhetoric, state officials and the presidency condemned DTO involvement politics. However, political scandals such as the “narco-cassettes” and “proceso 8000” scandals of the 1990s, and the ongoing “parapolitica” scandal, which developed in 2006, reveal that some politicians continue to accept DTO leader influence and campaign donations. The implicit acceptance of politicians towards DTO leaders continues because of electoral concerns such as (1) the continually rising political campaign costs and (2)

major governability issues as a result of state capacity problems—in many areas of Colombia, politicians have to ask permission from DTO leaders to run for public office (Semana, 2010, April 29). This last factor reveals that the “problem of stateness” does have great implications for the quality of a democratic regime because it is difficult to say that a consolidated democracy exists when candidate selection in a geographical area depends more on the political influence of DTO leaders rather than on the influence of voters.

After examining the external variables that influence a DTO’s economic and political development, it is evident that the variables used to study DTO development are useful across time and space. Variables such as: the profitability of the illicit drug business; income inequalities; weak law enforcement and laws; the preferences of state officials; the tastes and demand of drug consumers; and the presence of immigration networks among others, were useful in analyzing group development in Colombia in the 1980s, and they are still useful to explain group development in the new millennium because said external influences can be used to analyze the rise of new DTO groups or new paramilitary groups. As such, the use of the Macro-model goes beyond analyzing the rise and actions of one kingpin or a singly drug trafficking organization, and it is useful in analyzing the development of a variety of groups given same contextual setting.

The second question my project sought to answer was: what effect do IIGs have on policy? The dissertation focused on the policy of extradition *because* DTOs challenged the 1979 Treaty on Extradition. The treaty became an issue of concern for DTO leaders when Pablo Escobar, Jose Gonzalo Rodriguez Gacha, and Carlos Lehder perceived that their livelihood was threatened due to two major events: The first event

was the increased government clampdown on traffickers in reaction to the assassination of Minister of Justice Rodrigo Lara Bonilla. As part of the government's pursuit, the Betancur administration implemented the 1979 Extradition Treaty for the first time. The second event, which led to the official launch of the terrorist group *Los Extraditables*, was the arrest of Jorge Luis Ochoa in Spain on November of 1984. The arrest personally and directly affected a major DTO leader, especially since the United States used the arrest as an opportunity to issue indictments against Jorge Luis Ochoa and the other Medellin-based leaders in an effort to have Jorge Luis Ochoa extradited from Spain to the United States.

For the first time, since Medellin-based DTO leaders began trafficking in the 1970s, the three events threatened DTO leaders with the stark reality of serving actual prison time in the United States. The realization led Medellin-based DTO leaders to unite human and economic organizational resources to invalidate the 1979 Extradition Treaty.

The different skillsets that DTO leaders acquired early in their youth influenced how they pursued changes in policy. DTO leaders studied in this project obtained training while smuggling goods when they were young. All had mentors that taught them the smuggling trade and how to deal with authorities. As a result, the level of formal education did not have an impact in their ability to influence politicians, whereas informal training did have an impact. Pablo Escobar and Jose Gonzalo Rodriguez Gacha were initially trained as gunmen, while Carlos Lehder and the Ochoa brothers began their training in the actual smuggling of goods. The difference in training marked how DTO leaders dealt with politicians. Lehder and the Ochoa brothers were less confrontational with politicians, whereas Escobar and Rodriguez Gacha were purposively confrontational.

Overall, the Ochoa brothers seemed more prone to seek a negotiated solution to problems not only with politicians, but also with other traffickers.

The economic resources derived from the drug trade enhanced the capacity of traffickers to make contacts with politicians willing to adopt their policy demands. The wealth derived from the cocaine traffic enabled traffickers to launch their own political campaigns and the campaigns of politicians at national and local levels of government. Drug trafficking organization leaders went to political party conventions, used their own airplanes to fly candidates to events, and funded political campaign material like banners, flyers, and newspaper advertisements. Traffickers used their wealth to create charity programs such as the construction of homes for people living under levels of extreme poverty, soccer stadiums, and provide school supplies for school children, among other activities. These charity programs allowed DTO leaders to obtain followers. In addition, the wealth of DTO leaders allowed DTOs to hire experts to help carryout policy demands. When DTOs engaged in the *judicial strategy* for overturning the 1979 Treaty on Extradition, they hired teams of lawyers to engage in the legal battle.

Drug trafficking organizations increased their issue's representativeness by successfully influencing politicians and by appealing to a wider sector of society through nationalist arguments in favor of invalidating the issue of extradition. When DTO leaders began their political participation, they practiced non-violent means to influence the political system. DTOs financed the careers of politicians at all levels of government (local, departmental, and national). Drug trafficking organization leaders relied on traditional political practices used such as clientelism to launch the careers of politicians and to obtain popular support for their agendas. During this time period, it is probably

more useful to analyze these groups as simply another set of political actors engaging in a very traditional Colombian political practice—clientelism (Martz, 1997). The anecdote, in which the son of former Minister of Justice Rodrigo Lara Bonilla shares the story of how his father stumbled upon the name Pablo Escobar while on the 1982 campaign trail, reveals the ease in which nouveau rich traffickers emulated clientelist political customs to obtain political power (Entel, 2009). According to the anecdote, Rodrigo Lara Bonilla is told by a political rally attendee that Pablo Escobar was the political leader who gave people appliances in exchange for their attendance to Lara Bonilla's *Nuevo Liberalismo* political rally. The account, which describes how political leaders exchange material goods for political participation, is not any different, than the actions of established Colombian politicians of the time, whom disbursed government jobs, scholarships, a bag of groceries, or a lunch to constituents in exchange for constituent participation at a political rally or for their vote (Leal Buitrago et al., 1991). During 1982, none of the DTO leaders discussed in this project had an active criminal investigation against them; they were relatively unknown and the image they were trying to present of themselves was of being business entrepreneurs. Their “clean record” and economic power allowed DTO leaders to feel entitled to participate in the political process. Funding campaigns to obtain favorable political outcomes can also be seen simply as the exercise of another traditional practice of any large-scale business bent on influencing the policy process. The difference is that in contrast to licit business interests, once legal avenues were closed, DTOs used violence and started acting like an armed social movement with a limited political agenda.

Of the traffickers that actually campaigned for public office, only Carlos Lehder mentioned his opposition to the 1979 Extradition Treaty between the United States and Colombia. Other traffickers, who were candidates or political campaign financiers, were initially silent on the matter in an effort to become elected to office. Paradoxically, once in office, DTO candidates like Pablo Escobar failed to obtain policy objectives because, as soon as their trafficker backgrounds were disclosed to the general public, they were ostracized from public life by political elites within the legislature. The ousting of DTO leaders led them to focus more on financing the campaigns of politicians instead of directly running for office.

In implementing policy objectives, Medellin-based DTO leaders efficiently carried out strategies to accomplish policy goals because said association was a small sized group of approximately 10 to 60 DTO leaders. The small group of DTO leaders was comprised of high-demanders for the invalidation of the 1979 the Extradition Treaty as all of them were threatened with extradition to the United States if apprehended by authorities. The desire to ban extradition was a major incentive to unite economic resources. Consequently, DTO leaders organized and implemented a *judicial*, a *legislative*, and a *violent* strategy to invalidate extradition. Moreover each paid a “war tax” of about \$200,000 to the terrorist group *Los Extraditables* to wage a war against political elites with the objective of banning extradition and obtaining favorable terms of surrender with an effort to legalize their status in Colombia.

In particular, Pablo Escobar and Jose Gonzalo Rodriguez Gacha were such high demanders for a ban on extradition that they became the leaders of *Los Extraditables*, which gave them a high degree of decision-making power. Since Escobar and Gacha

were known for their ruthless use of violence, both had the capacity to collect the “war tax” from other DTO leaders and insure discipline. However, at least from 1983-1991, the incentive to ban extradition to protect their livelihoods in Colombia increased the political cohesion of all Medellin-based DTO leaders in an effort to invalidate the extradition treaty. Also, during this time period, the presence of internal variables such as strong political cohesion, leader skillsets, economic resources, group incentives, and capacity to ensure discipline, allowed DTO leaders to obtain short-term policy successes such as the judicial invalidation of the 1979 Extradition Treaty in 1986 and the Constitutional invalidation of extradition in the 1991 Constitution; but the successes were strongly tied to the use violence.

My study found that initially, when DTOs engaged in non-violent mechanisms for influencing policy, DTOs behaved more like an interest group, however, as legal mechanisms to influence government policy closed off, Medellin-based DTO leaders began engaging in politics by other means and behaved more like a terrorist organization. Drug trafficking organization leaders gradually changed their political strategies to mimic existing guerrilla movements—in particular, the actions of the urban guerrilla group the M-19. Drug trafficking organization leaders organized as *Los Extraditables* to protest Jorge Luis Ochoa’s arrest in Spain and, on November 15<sup>th</sup> 1984, launched their first communiqué. Since the organization’s political objective was to overturn the 1979 Extradition Treaty, *Los Extraditables* used violence to intimidate or assassinate government officials especially those tied with law enforcement. *Los Extraditables* used a variety of terrorist methods including the use of car bombs, the staging of theatrical bombs on buildings and airplanes, and the use selective political kidnappings. The violent

actions were done to pressure government officials, in particular the presidency, to invalidate the policy of extradition and to create a negotiation process that would allow DTO leaders to receive a criminal amnesty similar to that received by guerrilla group members. Although DTO leaders were not granted the political status or the amnesty given to the members of guerrilla organizations like the M-19 and other contemporary guerrilla organizations, the violent strategies used for closing off the presidency's policy options did work and allowed DTO leaders to negotiate favorable terms of surrender.

That violence reached such extreme levels is rooted in the fact that the state itself relied on violence to respond to these groups. As Thoumi and others have argued, the use of extreme violence is a perverse logical extension of the illicit nature of the industry and the absence of legal mechanisms to resolve disputes either between competing trafficking groups and between these and the state. My findings indicate that the confrontational dynamic between the state and Medellin-based DTOs allowed Medellin-based DTO leaders to influence policy because they used a combination of selective and indiscriminate violence which was effective in reducing the presidency's political maneuverability but also in targeting public opinion. First, the use of selective kidnappings reduced President Gaviria's capacity to use violence on *Los Extraditables* because it was feared that in retaliation *Los Extraditables* would assassinate the kidnapped victims. Second, the use of violence worked as a political strategy because DTO leaders were able to shift public opinions on the issue of extradition to the point that public opinion polls showed that people supported a negotiation with traffickers and, in 1991, 82 percent of the Colombian population believed that extraditing nationals should be invalidated through the creation of a Constitutional Article (Botero, 1991).



Finally, the use of violence worked as a political strategy because violence was an effective tool in reducing the general public's morale in support for government's efforts to stop narco-terrorism with violence. Moreover, the pervasive use of violence by all existing non-state actors in Colombia during 1989 and 1990 exhausted public tolerance for violence. During the end of 1989 and the beginning of 1990, the Medellin-based group through *Los Extraditables* was able to use violence to shift public opinion's concern with the issue of extradition. As a consequence of car bombs and other urban violence, public opinion increasingly associated the extradition issue with public security concerns, instead of an issue concerning international relations and drug trafficking. As a security issue Colombian urban dwellers believed that invalidating the extradition of nationals was of paramount concern to reduce violence.

In sum, to offset counternarcotics efforts economically powerful DTO leaders pooled resources to ban extradition. The creation of a group like *Los Extraditables* allowed DTO leaders to intimidate political elites and law enforcement institutions to obtain a negotiation process. This last point leads to the third question I asked at the outset of this project—what effect do IIGs such as drug trafficking organizations have on democratic institutions? Drug trafficking organizations had short-term and long-term effects on democratic institutions. In the short run, DTOs had a disastrous effect on the judicial system. The systematic killing and intimidation of judges presiding over criminal cases and the M-19 attack on the supreme court, which was partially funded by Pablo Escobar, had a devastating effect on the ability of judges uphold rule of law. The high level of intimidation led many to abstain from practicing their professions or to receive bribes to avoid death.

It is known that DTO influence did reach the legislature in 1982 as is evident with the election of Pablo Escobar and Jairo Ortega to Congress and Santofimio Botero to the Senate. Yet the degree of influence that Medellin-based DTOs had on the legislature from 1982-1991 is unknown because no in-depth government investigation was ever done on the legislature in order to ascertain the degree of Medellin-based DTO influence on the 1989 legislature and the 1991 Constitutional Assembly.

My study's analysis of state autonomy shows that DTO leaders specially reduced the presidency's maneuverability. Starting in 1986, with the invalidation of the 1979 Extradition Treaty, the presidential power of Virgilio Barco was dramatically limited on the issue. From 1990 to 1991 President Cesar Gaviria's power was also reduced as DTOs used coercion via selective kidnappings and through the use of indiscriminate acts of terrorism, which shifted public opinion in favor of DTO policy objectives—a permanent ban on extradition and favorable terms of surrender.

In the long run, DTO influence on democratic institutions is mixed. After DTO leaders accomplished their policy goal of invalidating the 1979 Extradition Treaty on June 1991, the group's cohesion and discipline began to disintegrate, as a consequence of internal disputes. The group's unraveling also decreased the DTO leaders' capacity to maintain their pressure on politicians or government officials. With time, in the absence of DTO pressure and because the U.S. government pushed the Colombian presidency to reinstate the policy of extradition, the constitutional ban on extradition was repealed, albeit without DTO reprisals thereby increasing state autonomy on this matter.

On the one hand, the rise of DTOs has increased counternarcotics efforts, strengthened the judicial system, and placed some legal restrictions on activities like

money laundering and campaigns finance. On the other hand, the long-term effect of DTOs on democratic institutions is that their political influence is pervasive especially at local and national levels of government and within the state bureaucracy. The influence is substantiated by the cyclical political corruption scandals involving presidents, senators, congressmen, city councils, mayors, and all types of state agencies. Another long-term effect is the continuous rise of DTO financed paramilitary groups and gangs, both of which dramatically reduce the quality of life for those living in marginal sectors where the state is unable to protect populations from the whims of powerful sub-national actors.

The practical significance of this study is that its analysis can be used to examine the political influence of the illicit drug trade, as the trade has gradually expanded to more countries in Latin America since the 1980s. Many countries that had an insignificant illicit industry in the 1980s are now major transit countries for cocaine and other drugs. Some of these countries possess similar economic and political contexts to Colombia, which have led to the political rise of DTOs. As the drug trade has spread from the Andean region to Central and South America, studying Colombia and the rise and development of DTOs can help explain the political impact of DTOs on the democratic institutions of countries newly engulfed by the illicit drug trade. For example, many countries in the region have: an increased number of actors engaged in the illicit drug trade because it is profitable; high levels of income inequality; weak law enforcement and laws; legacies of using violence for resolving conflicts, clientelistic practices; a reliance on private security to protect property and lands; a strong legacy of smuggling; and a large immigrant populations in the United States.

The use of the hybrid Macro-Micro-Model allows for a holistic examination of the persistent social, economic, and political context that continuously gives rise to DTOs. It avoids focusing solely on the personal characteristics of DTO leaders. It also corrects research biases by examining the political impact of “criminal” groups, especially in contexts where the state apparatus is weak vis-à-vis DTO leaders. Future research on the political influence of DTOs will test the model across time and space by including more cases within Colombia and throughout region.

Finally, the study of drug trafficking organizations is politically valuable even if their policy agenda is limited. Their political impact should be studied because they are economically powerful, organize continuous attempts to undermine the legal system over time, finance campaigns at national and local levels, and enhance the formation of armed social movements in weak states.

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