

## Research Paper

## Requiem for a CAMP: The life and death of a domestic U.S. drug war institution

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## ABSTRACT

The life and death of California's Campaign Against Marijuana Planting (CAMP, 1983–2012) offers a unique analytical window into the time and space of the U.S. war on drugs in a global context. This paper draws on CAMP report archives, ethnographic interviews, and secondary data sources to locate the significance of CAMP, its demise, and enduring legacy for the political economy of domestic illicit cannabis production in southern Humboldt County, where it was initially focused. I first introduce the economic geography of cannabis production in southern Humboldt County and California. In the first part of the paper, using theoretical frameworks from Critical Geopolitics and International Relations, I examine the geo-politics of CAMP's emergence. In the second part of the paper, I examine industrial reterritorialization associated with its geographies of enforcement over time. I conclude by discussing the eclipse of its foundational logic-and-practice (policing the "Emerald Triangle") by new political and economic geographies of power.

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## Introduction

This paper examines the birth and death of California's Campaign Against Marijuana Planting (CAMP), to construct a partial genealogy of the domestication of one particular illicit drug crop, cannabis, over a time period when the U.S. globalized efforts to police illicit drug crops, especially in Latin America (Corva, 2008). Today, Latin American heads of state, officials, and social movements are among the loudest critics of drug war institutions and militarized approaches associated with the U.S. model (Armenta, Metaal, & Jelsma, 2012). Similarly, at the moment of CAMP's discontinuation, California had gone further than any other U.S. state to liberalize laws associated with cannabis consumption and production. Given that the lifespan of CAMP, as a singular domestic drug war institution for policing rural illicit drug crop farmers, spanned that same time period, an analysis of its career offers a unique comparative window into the time and space of the U.S. war on drugs.

CAMP was a joint task force created in 1983 to coordinate federal, state, and local agencies for at least eight weeks every year between August and October to locate and eradicate primarily outdoor cannabis agriculture. It was timed to maximize garden visibility close to harvest time, usually the first rains of October. CAMP's funding sources came from an array of law enforcement and environmental bureaucracies that changed over time, but were dominated by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) and

California's Bureau of Narcotics Enforcement (BNE). Federal agencies that also contributed included the U.S. Forest Service, Coast Guard, Customs, Marshalls, Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms (ATF). Significant California agencies included the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Fish and Game, Forestry, Corrections and the California Highway Patrol (CHP). CAMP brought into coordination previously existing county and state efforts to police cannabis agriculture, and was initially focused on three Northern California counties: Humboldt, Mendocino, and Trinity counties, which were dubbed the "Emerald Triangle," a geographical imagination likely introduced by law enforcement as part of a media campaign meant to evoke comparisons with Southeast Asia's opium-producing "Golden Triangle."<sup>1</sup>

At the time, however, CAMP was especially focused on communities of countercultural growers that had settled recently redeveloped timber estates and ranches mostly in southern Humboldt but also in northern Mendocino, as well as a more varied demographic of growers in western Trinity. This trans-county network of mountainous watershed communities has outlasted

<sup>1</sup> This is a working hypothesis, derived from asking interview subjects who were there at the beginning of CAMP where the term came from. A selective sample of respondents who supported this hypothesis includes: current Humboldt County Sheriff Mike Downey, who served in CAMP extensively beginning in 1985; retired Humboldt County attorney Bob Kogon who defended cannabis cases in the 1970s and 1980s; anthropologist Jentri Anders, whose book *Beyond Counterculture* was based on participant observation of Southern Humboldt County culture from the early 1970s to the late 1980s; and organizer Bonnie Blackberry, who helped found Citizen Observation Groups (COG) and Civil Liberties Monitoring Project (CLMP) to monitor and take legal action against CAMP.

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CAMP and remains the outdoor capital of cannabis agriculture in California, with Garberville, southern Humboldt as the primary urban “peopleshed,” as longtime resident Paul Encimer puts it. In 2012, citing budget constraints, the California BNE was eliminated and CAMP was reconstituted as CERT, the Cannabis Eradication and Reclamation Team, with a primary focus on grows in public land and large private land, usually old timber estates. In its first year, 2012, Humboldt County Sheriff Mike Downey reported to me that CERT operated for four days in Humboldt, as opposed to CAMP’s eight weeks.

In a wider state context, California is now the largest producer of cannabis in the U.S.; the largest exporter of cannabis to other states, and the largest source of cannabis consumed in the U.S. According to a [Central Valley High Intensity Drug Trafficking \(2010\)](#) program report, using methodologies associated with the United Nations Office of Drug Control, California may supply up to 79% of the nation’s cannabis supply. California’s estimated production totals exceed those of Mexico, our next-largest source of cannabis, by about 45%. While accurate cannabis production numbers are impossible to come by, for obvious reasons, it seems likely that, were it a country, California would rank as the largest source of unpollinated cannabis flower (*sinsemilla*) agriculture in the world. The part of California that is the subject of this paper, Southern Humboldt County (SHC), is where this trajectory began, in the early 1970s. I capitalize the “Southern” in SHC to emphasize that the countercultural network of Mattole and Eel River watershed growing communities where domestic *sinsemilla* cultivation first spread crossed county lines, particularly into northern Mendocino County via Whale Gulch. It was centered in, not exclusive to, southern Humboldt County.

In the decade before CAMP’s creation, most cannabis consumed in the U.S. came from abroad. Between the 1960s and the 1990s, Mexico and Colombia at different times were the biggest sources for domestic consumption, although Jamaica, Thailand, and for a brief moment Belize exported significant quantities. It should be noted that in the days before CAMP a much greater quantity of hashish was imported from outside the hemisphere, a cannabis derivative with comparable THC concentrations to those found in *sinsemilla* today. While cannabis production tends to precede drug war interventions in each of these places, with the exception of Belize vast amounts of drug war funding correlate in the long run with increased, rather than decreased, production and transit of illicit drugs crops and commodity chains. Correlation does not prove causation, but it is worth asking into the role of policing illicit drug space in expanding illicit drug production ([Friesendorff, 2005](#)). This paper’s research question is thus derived from one usually asked in international contexts. What role have geographies of “drug war” policing, in this case the particular policing practiced by CAMP originally in the “Emerald Triangle,” played in the expansion and transformation of cannabis agriculture throughout California?

In order to answer this question, I draw on CAMP report archives; ethnographic interviews from two six-week iterations of 2012 ethnographic fieldwork in SHC; and secondary data sources to locate the significance of CAMP, its demise, and enduring legacy for the political economy of domestic illicit cannabis production. It is divided into two parts. First, I focus on the geo-politics of its emergence; and second, on industrial “balloon effects” associated with its geographies of enforcement. I conclude by examining the eclipse of its foundational logic-and-practice (policing the “Emerald Triangle”) by new political and economic geographies of power, particularly environmental issues and surging geographies of cannabis production in California.

Before discussing the geopolitics of CAMP’s emergence, a few methodological notes should be observed. First, due to the clandestine nature of the industry, and the fact that law enforcement prioritizes action over accounting, we should think about any

numbers presented or remembered as data shadows, rather than unquestionably accurate measures of price and plants. Second, the perspectives and memories of the folks who have been kind enough to give me their time are situated rather than universal knowledge claims (see [Haraway, 1988](#)). Between July and October 2012, I interviewed 40 people, half of whom have experienced the industry as professionals – lawyers, police officers, teachers, and community organizers – rather than as growers. In this paper I use the names of those who did not grow, while the growers are anonymized for source protection. Their memories provide more nuanced context for the archival data and secondary sources that have been consulted, but they do not and cannot provide the whole picture. The explanation that follows would be greatly enhanced by interviews with key policy makers involved in the formation of CAMP; as well as the location of missing CAMP reports between 1997 and 2003. Humboldt State University librarians first noticed their absence when collecting CAMP archives for the university in 2010, and have been unable to locate them since. Additionally, the 1996 and 2003 reports do not provide county-by-county eradication statistics. Nonetheless, enough evidence has been gathered to analyze the politics of CAMP’s emergence; material shifts in the industrial geography of cannabis agriculture in response to CAMP policing; and political and economic changes leading to its discontinuation in 2012. I begin by examining the multiscale geo-politics of CAMP’s emergence in 1983.

## The geopolitics of CAMP’s emergence

### *Geo-politics and networked scales*

Geo-politics, from the perspective of one of Geography’s interdisciplinary subfields, Critical Geopolitics, refers broadly to the partition of power relations in space. It includes state bordering practices and transnational geographies of global (dis)order (East-West, North, South, and so forth), but it also includes contestations and counter-geographies of such inscriptions above and below the scale of the nation-state ([Sparke, 2007](#)). Critical Geopolitics emerged from critiques of U.S. intervention in Latin America, El Salvador in particular, on the grounds that postcolonial revolutionary movements were but a pretext for the spread of communism ([Dalby, 2008, 2010](#)). Gerard Toal, the founder of the subdiscipline, sought to deconstruct state discourses of security that multiplied rather than mitigated conflicts that had their own local reasons for emergence and reproduction ([Toal, 1986](#)). At the end of the Cold War, new discourses of security and threat emerged that underwrote new legitimations for intervention from afar, that also seem to exacerbate rather than mitigate conditions of human security ([Slater, 1993, 1994](#)). One of these is the global war on drugs, which evolved over the course of a century but became codified and inserted into debates about security associated with processes and relations of political and economic globalization dating from the early 1970s ([Corva, 2008, 2010](#)).

### *Global geo-politics: narco-governance*

While the US has long produced interventions associated with policing illicit drug flows, it was not until the 1980s that the US began to systematize policies and practices for integrating drug war policing with modes of governance associated with globalization. At that time, illicit drug crop production as the source of transnational narco-disorder characterized primary strategic focus of the institutionalization of the global drug war ([Corva, 2008](#)). This was partially pragmatic, since illicit drug crop farmers were much easier to locate than transit and finance, and also because illicit

drug crop farmers are consistently located on the political and economic margins of modern state societies. That description more or less applies to the first wave of countercultural migrants who settled southern Humboldt and northern Mendocino watersheds such as Whale Gulch in the late 60s and early 70s. Unlike their *campesino* counterparts, their marginal positionalities were intentionally chosen rather than traditionally inscribed (Anders, 1990). These “new settlers” by and large were well-educated, white, and from middle class backgrounds, intent on moving “back to the land” for a wide variety of reasons particular to each person and family (Anders, 1990; Anderson, 1990; Raphael, 1985). They shared a common desire to make a different kind of life than that available by birthright or socioeconomic inertia.

They also shared an attachment to the consumption of cannabis for political and/or spiritual reasons. The new settlers planted cannabis in their homestead gardens as they would any favored herb or vegetable. By the mid 1970s, internal and external processes transformed their homegrown cannabis plants into viable export commodities. The spatial dynamics of identifying cannabis as an emergent social threat, and subsequent efforts to police it at multiple scales, had much to do with this. But before I address the political economy of policing cannabis, it is necessary to understand the political economy of policing countercultural subjects who came to produce it. The idea that cannabis was a threat to society was not simply produced, top-down, by naturally repressive state authorities. It was materially produced through local and national sites of conflict and contestation about the direction of post-industrial U.S.-American society. Although historically prohibited as part of ongoing dynamics of racialization and immigrant geopolitics, cannabis was re-worked as a subject of security and order through the upheavals of the 1960s, commonly referred to as “culture wars.”

#### *Countercultural geo-politics: the culture wars*

Contemporary politics of policing cannabis in the US emerged from the “culture wars” of the 1960s. Literally and/or figuratively, the first wave of settlers to what is now called the Emerald Triangle were veterans of campus activism across the nation, especially on University of California campuses, where Ronald Reagan made his political career persecuting student movements; and countercultural hippies who were often part of San Francisco’s Haight-Ashbury scene. New social movements (anti-racist, anti-war, free speech, and so forth) cross-fertilized with countercultural practices to produce hippie radicals like Abbie Hoffman’s Yippies, who owed much of their political philosophy to Bay Area Diggers (Lee, 2012). *High Times*, the most widely circulated and enduring cannabis trade magazine, was started in 1975 by Yippie Tom Forçade. The 1968 “Chicago 7” trial showcased a cross-section of radical left activism at that year’s Democratic National Convention that included Yippies Hoffman and Jerry Rubin; Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) leaders Tom Hayden and Rennie Davis; graduate student anti-war organizers John Froines and Lee Weiner; and non-violent activist, author and socialist David Dellinger. An eighth defendant, Black Panther co-founder Bobby Seale, was separated off for his own trial. Hoffman and Rubin were particularly associated with the cross-pollination of psychedelic politics and left political organizing, but cannabis consumption thoroughly permeated reformist and revolutionary left participants in social movements of the time.

As the Vietnam War abroad and the war on inner city people of color at home intensified at the end of the 60s, a radicalized faction of the SDS formed the Weather Underground, which sought to redefine “nonviolent” direct action to include violence against property. On May 21, 1970, their first communiqué was released and read on airwaves across the nation. The following is an excerpt:

Hello. This is Bernardine Dohrn. I’m going to read A DECLARATION OF A STATE OF WAR. This is the first communication from the Weatherman [sic] underground. All over the world, people fighting Amerikan imperialism look to Amerika’s youth to use our strategic position behind enemy lines to join forces in the destruction of the empire. . . . We fight in many ways. Dope is one of our weapons. The laws against marijuana mean that millions of us are outlaws long before we actually split. Guns and grass are united in the youth underground. Freaks are revolutionaries and revolutionaries are freaks. If you want to find us, this is where we are. In every tribe, commune, dormitory, farmhouse, barracks and townhouse where kids are making love, smoking dope and loading guns—fugitives from Amerikan justice are free to go (Dohrn, 1970).

This quote demonstrates that it was not just state authorities that came to characterize cannabis, and by association countercultural hippies, as enemies of society. The culture wars on both sides created exaggerated impressions of cannabis-related social disorder that politicians from both parties would mobilize in the coming decades as political capital (Reinarman & Levine, 1997). This was a national political context that was reinvigorated by the election of countercultural arch-enemy, Ronald Reagan, to the presidency in 1980. At the state level, this coincided with the California governorship succession of Jerry Brown – nicknamed “Governor Moonbeam” for his countercultural sympathies – by Republican George Deukmejian. Deukmejian, in turn, was succeeded as California Attorney General John van de Kamp, a law and order Democrat responsible for the formation of CAMP in 1983.

#### *California geo-politics and the birth of CAMP*

The global context for CAMP’s emergence, and the national political climate informed by the culture wars, tell us a little about how a state initiative like CAMP could sound good to federal drug warriors, but less about the joint federal, state and local task force as an interscalar node of governance linking political interests across space and through time. Although the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) provided the key resources for CAMP, especially helicopters, it did not have the authority to constitute CAMP as a state-level institution. The 1980s were marked by the emergence of a national “moral panic,” especially around drug crimes (Beckett, 1999). Beckett locates the source of that panic not in rising violent crime rates, which were actually on the decline, but in the rise of national-corporate media coverage more interested in selling spectacular stories than empirical accuracy. The saturation of the nation’s airwaves and newspaper pages with stories of spectacular, usually racialized, urban drug disorder, helped make the war on drugs political capital for Democrats and Republicans alike. CAMP reports do seem to systematically exaggerate the relationship between cannabis agriculture and violence. The 1983 report asserts that “Violence has become a way of life in the marijuana growing communities,” an assertion contested albeit often in a nuanced fashion by most of my interviewees.

Current Humboldt County Sheriff Mike Downey, who moved to Humboldt in 1985 and participated in CAMP extensively over time, provides a more nuanced context. According to Downey, Van de Kamp was responding to Northern California law enforcement appeals for federal help to deal with violence associated with rapidly growing cannabis agriculture in the region. CAMP documents refer to reports of hikers threatened by armed individuals thought to be protecting clandestine grows in remote areas, but in the biggest growing areas – privately owned homesteads in remote watersheds – such phenomena are unlikely to have been an issue. This is not to say that such reports were inaccurate, but that they

contributed to a growing perception that violence and cannabis agriculture were directly connected.

My interviewees considered the assertion that violence had proliferated to a wide extent to be fairly exaggerated, but many acknowledged problematic social effects caused by migration of people to the region specifically to make money, on the one hand, and the generalization of gun ownership for protection against rip-offs as prices rose and media coverage followed. New settler anthropologist Jentri Anders identified a *San Francisco Chronicle* front-page story by Moore (1977) as a tipping point for this phenomenon. The story was titled “How a Town got High,” and was accompanied on the front page by a map showing how to get to Garberville from San Francisco (see Fig. 1).

CAMP was constituted by Van de Kamp shortly after his election to Attorney General of California, at a time when backlash against the countercultural sixties met the wave of spectacular media coverage identified by Beckett. His predecessor, recently elected California governor George Deukmejian, had in fact “donned a flak jacket” for a staged cannabis eradication operation in northern Mendocino country in September, 1979 (Hurst & Garlington, 1979: A8). There was clearly a favorable state-wide climate for a rural policing program against hippie communities that had recently discovered that their favorite sacrament could also make back to the land life a little more comfortable. The culture was inscribed cannabis, particularly radical cannabis users, as threats to national society at the same time that a state-level iteration of law-and-order politics in California associated cannabis growers in Northern California with increasingly violent disorder significant enough to warrant the creation of an institutionalized rural policing task force. These geo-political imaginations converged historically with other representations of “drugs” at large as an emergent global threat. I conclude this consideration of the geopolitics of CAMP’s emergence with a particular focus on CAMP’s geographies of enforcement during its most geographically focused and well-funded period, the 1980s. My method for doing so is to locate competing representations of CAMP policing practices and how local communities responded during Van de Kamp’s two terms as California Attorney General.

#### *CAMP geo-politics*

CAMP had a clearly defined territorial logic that focused on the Emerald Triangle. This meant that each of the three counties was the primary operating space for helicopter-based eradication teams that treated neighboring as peripheral staging grounds to Emerald Triangle cores. The vast majority of CAMP resources were focused in Southern Humboldt and Northern Mendocino counties, where back to the land communities were most heavily concentrated. According to one interviewee, early raids were especially concentrated in Sprowl Creek, a watershed just southwest of the Redway prison camp, where confiscated plants were taken to be burned. The raid teams operated from a playbook that included legally problematic tactics: they usually did not have search warrants, flew helicopters extremely low to the ground disrupting livestock and damaging property, and did not read citizens their rights before detaining them. Broadly, it was a set of rural policing practices that sometimes deviated from standards of professional police conduct toward citizens with constitutional protections, even when said citizens might be breaking the law.

Ray Raphael, historian and Whale Gulch new settler, interviewed CAMP commander Bill Ruzzamenti in his 1985 book *Cash Crop*. Ruzzamenti’s quote establishes how one CAMP commander represented the institutional challenge in this region:

The situation that’s developed in southern Humboldt and northern Mendocino particularly is that you have vast enclaves of marijuana growers . . . We’re going after the community support system that makes it appear as a viable and legitimate enterprise, since everyone around you is doing it” (Raphael, 1985: 108–109).

This quote establishes that community support system disruption, not just plant eradication, was considered part of CAMP’s policing mandate. An unintended consequence of CAMP’s long-term failure to de-normalize cannabis agriculture in the region may have been to strengthen practices of community support and social solidarity. Many subjects reported that CAMP united antagonistic old and new settler factions over a common objection to seasonal federal occupation.

While heavy-handed tactics succeeded in generalizing feelings of insecurity in the region, they also produced a counter-movement. Local citizens, especially those who had been participating in the anti-nuclear movement of the late 1970s and early 1980s, used their knowledge of nonviolent resistance and organizing to create community-based Citizen Observation Groups, or COG. COG teams would assemble at CAMP raids to document legally problematic CAMP procedures, gathering evidence that would later be used by a legal team, CLMP, to file lawsuits against CAMP. A legal injunction filed by CLMP slowed CAMP down in 1984, and with the threat of legal action CAMP was pushed to professionalize its tactics, to some degree. Although CAMP reports contested such representations, the success of CLMP lawsuits suggest otherwise.

According to some of my research subjects, COG organizing served to refocus back to the land communities on cultural and political ideals that first brought them there. It also materially brought together topographically distant communities by bringing people in from, and around to, remote watersheds that may have otherwise been evolving apart. Legally contestable practices aside, CAMP produced conditions of material insecurity to which people responded by returning to practices of community formation that may have been eroding with the rise of cannabis as an economic commodity rather than a cultural-political practice. The community support system was in this sense strengthened, rather than weakened, by CAMP. Of course, the culture of fear and secrecy it inspired worked against the health of communities in other ways. But for the focus of this paper, I now turn to CAMP’s economic “unintended consequences,” which I will analyze through a re-worked “balloon effect” theoretical framework. How did geographies of CAMP enforcement, and changes over time, reterritorialize shifting economic geographies of cannabis agriculture in California?

#### **Industrial reterritorialization: CAMP “Balloon effects”**

The first half of this paper situated the emergence of CAMP, as a federal-state joint task force, through the territorialization<sup>2</sup> of cannabis as a social threat at the national and state scales. The second half of this paper examines transformations in the economic geography of cannabis agriculture in SHC influenced by CAMP geographies of enforcement, in conjunction with other independent causal factors that for the focus of this paper remain

<sup>2</sup> The Dictionary of Human Geography defines “territory” as “a unit of contiguous space that is used, organized and managed by a social group, individual person or institution to restrict and control access to people and places.” In this article, territorialization refers to the process by which a unit of contiguous space is created for such purposes. Domestic growers territorialized cannabis cultivation to manage risk of exposure to enforcement. CAMP territorialized its policing efforts to increase that risk.

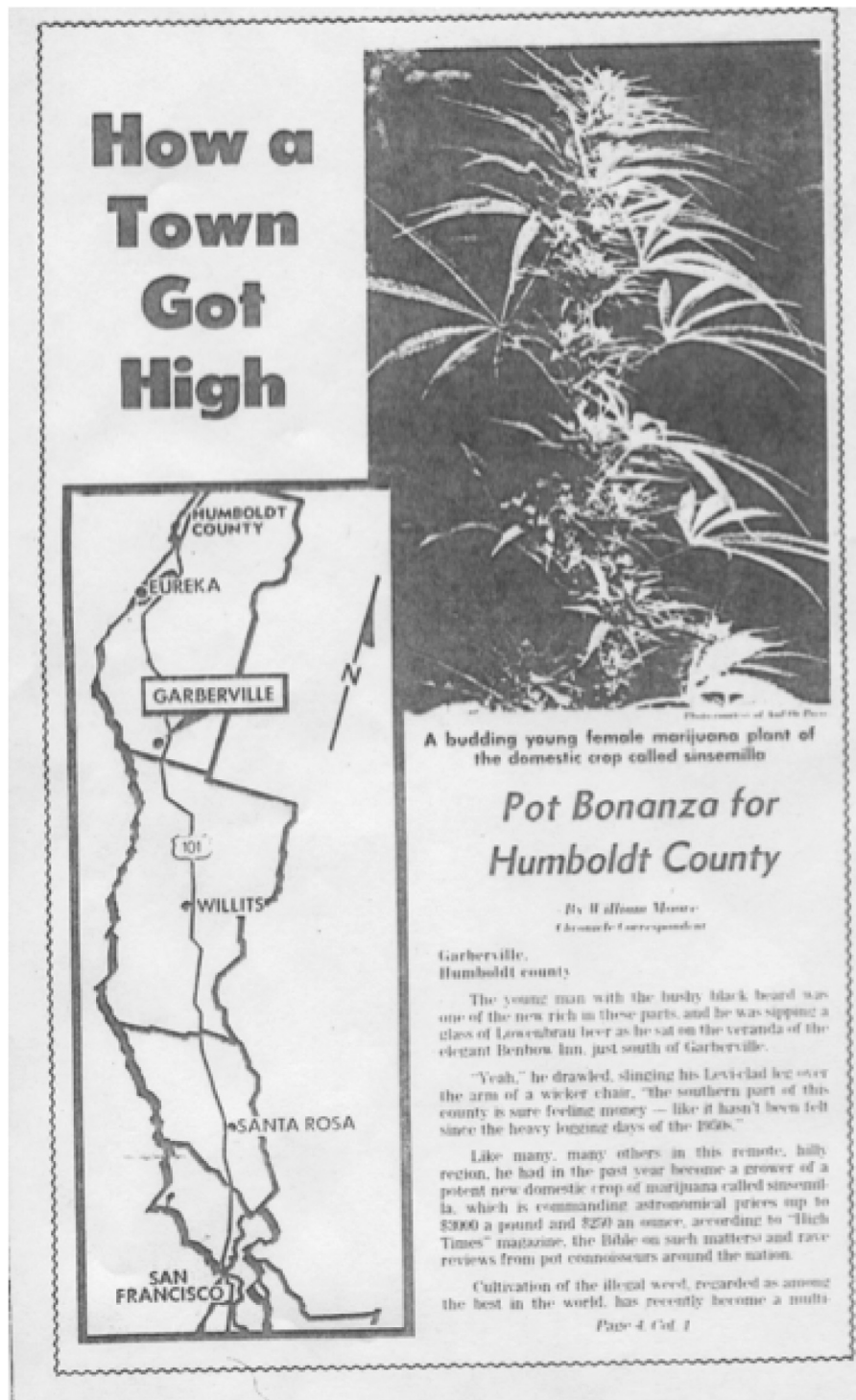


Fig. 1. Map from 1977 San Francisco Chronicle front page article, "How a Town Got High".

unaddressed.<sup>3</sup> The primary theoretical framework for explaining these transformations draws from and complicates a theory of

<sup>3</sup> The argument here is not that CAMP was the sole determinant of shifting geographies of enforcement, but that it played a pivotal "push" role up until at least the end of the 1990s. Other causal factors included the dissemination of cultivation techniques by publications such as *High Times* and *Sinsemilla Tips*; a milieu for relatively secure experimentation with strain hybridization and cultivation techniques in Amsterdam; and the relative decline of cannabis use in the U.S. during the 1980s followed by its steady increase since the 1990s.

illicit drug industry displacement commonly used by International Relations (IR) scholars and state actors called the "balloon effect" (Friesendorff, 2005, 2007). The balloon effect is a "push" theory of illicit drug commodity chain relocation due to successful policing efforts. It appears to have been invented in the 1970s, by U.S. drug policy functionaries, in response to the intensification of opium poppy production in Mexico after the U.S. successfully disrupted production in Turkey. The basic metaphor means when one applies pressure to a balloon, the air pops up somewhere else – the air in this case a metaphor for illicit plant cultivation.

I begin by highlighting the emergence of cannabis agriculture in SHC as a side effect of U.S.-led efforts to eradicate cannabis elsewhere. At the transnational scale, this dynamic “reterritorialized” the source of cannabis consumed in the U.S. from one dominated by foreign production to include a variety of domestic places and regions where cannabis production for domestic markets surged. The related terms “territorialization” and “reterritorialization” are used to denote complex spatial reconfiguration of two dynamic, connected spatial phenomena: cannabis agriculture for domestic consumption and policing such agriculture. I use these terms rather than, for example, “relocation” and “location.” The latter would imply that the phenomena in question moved from one place to another, rather than developing a complex network of social relations that reconfigured the politics and economics of cannabis across space and through time. As pressure was put on cannabis imports, domestic production stepped in to make up for decreases in foreign supply. This is a straightforward application of the balloon effect theory. I then complicate my explanation for enforcement-related reterritorialization of cannabis agriculture specifically in SHC, first by applying a critique derived from Friesendorf and then considering the effects of the withdrawal of policing via CAMP decentralization and enforcement change over time. Friesendorf has complicated the balloon effect framework by highlighting the significance of industrial “pull” factors unrelated to enforcement to explain the relocation of coca agriculture from Bolivia and Peru to Colombia in the late 1990s. I add to his critique in two ways. First, “displacement” is not the only side effect of push and pull factors. Cannabis growers stayed in place by changing the spatial logic of cannabis agriculture, in a number of ways. Displacement is thus one of two possible effects on the spatialization of cannabis agriculture in response to enforcement – thus the appropriateness of “reterritorialization” as a concept to cover intra- and inter-local geographic reconfiguration. Second, I examine the significance of the withdrawal of enforcement in reconfiguring geographies of cannabis agriculture. Similarly, CAMP policing itself was reterritorialized over time, first by spreading out across the state even as budgets declined, and later shifting focus from policing growing communities to large grows on public and private lands. It makes sense, then, to examine a “deflation effect” as the risk of exposure to policing fell and cannabis agriculture both returned outdoors and proliferated at a more rapid rate.

#### *Balloon effects related to transnational policing*

Transnational policing practices are widely credited with facilitating the rapid expansion of California *sinsemilla* production in the late 1970s. The most significant of these has to do with U.S. funding to eradicate cannabis agriculture in Mexico. In 1972, the U.S. began efforts to get the Mexico to eradicate cannabis and poppy fields using manual eradication. In November of 1975, the Mexican government commenced spraying marijuana crops with paraquat at the behest of, and substantially funded by, the U.S. government, primarily to purchase and maintain equipment in support of aerial eradication (Smith Boe, 1985: 503). By 1979, government sources estimated that these efforts decreased marijuana supplied from Mexico by 75%, with a substantial portion of that drop occurring in the last two years of the program. The State Department estimated that Mexican imports dropped from 40% in 1977 to 9% in 1980, and attributed most of that drop to the use of paraquat (ibid 505).

The effectiveness of the paraquat eradication program was not simply, or even mainly, attributable to its effectiveness as an herbicidal defoliant. The widely publicized and controversial practice acted as a strong deterrent to the consumption of Mexican cannabis, on the one hand, and a perhaps equally strong incentive for the consumption of cannabis that could be reliably identified as produced

elsewhere. “Elsewhere,” at this time, included domestic production – California but also the traditional hemp-growing Appalachian region – and Colombia, parallel with the burgeoning coca-cocaine commodity chain.

Transnational enforcement “pushes” combined with decentralized local ones to raise the wholesale price of California *sinsemilla* fairly rapidly, reaching around \$2000 a pound by 1980. This price rise created a strong pull effect for U.S. citizens to grow what had become a significantly valuable cash crop. This was especially strong for *sinsemilla*, which was unseeded and therefore readily identifiable as domestic. In SHC, the intensification of cannabis agriculture was the result of at least three factors, in no particular order. First, significant media coverage spurred new migration to remote watersheds of people who came explicitly to make money, rather than move back to the land. Second, rising wholesale farm-gate prices opened up the possibility of socioeconomic mobility to “nouveau poor” back-to-the-land families. The latter manifested itself most strongly in the extent to which second- (and now third-) generation new settlers embraced the chance to achieve material comforts their parents had (often literally) fled. And third, “old settler” families who were suffering through the timber bust found in cannabis agriculture a way to preserve and indeed enrich rural livelihoods. This was the first “Green Rush,” and it never really stopped. It was, however, reterritorialized by balloon effects related to CAMP enforcement.

#### *Local balloon effects related to CAMP enforcement*

As noted above, it is necessary to complicate the balloon effect theoretical framework by considering any spatial change, or reterritorialization, that directly resulted from CAMP’s shifting geographies of enforcement, rather than simply as geographical displacement or dispersion. A dispersive balloon effect occurred when CAMP focused its federal and state resources in the Emerald Triangle. Cultivation spread to other counties while Humboldt, Mendocino, and Trinity counties drew fire. *Sinsemilla* cultivation was already going on elsewhere, but intensified as the 1980s marched on. CAMP reports provide an interesting insight into how law enforcement perceived this effect. In the early- to mid 1980s, CAMP reports note anxiety from other county law enforcement that growers from the Emerald Triangle would literally move themselves elsewhere, and that increasing cultivation in their counties was hypothesized to be the result of that. This sort of hypothesis emerged from a problematic understanding of cannabis cultivators as a new organized crime group, rather than a networked collection of new settler homesteaders and old settlers, *in addition to* mobile newcomers incentivized by rising prices. CAMP considered the hypothesis but by 1987 report finding no evidence that this was the case. Instead, it appeared that growers in other counties were being pulled into the industry by rapidly rising prices that were partially the result of a classic “push” balloon effect, limiting cultivation from increasing as rapidly as it had in the late 1970s. In fact, the 1987 report, which dismisses the significance of existing grower displacement from the Emerald Triangle, is also the last CAMP report that used the Emerald Triangle as a place name. CAMP shifted discursively from emphasizing a tri-county territorialization of cannabis agriculture in California to the whole state. This was in line with shifts in its material geographies of eradication. For example, Humboldt County declined from 53% of total California plants reported eradicated in 1984, when CAMP operated in 14 counties, to 22% in 1989, when CAMP operated in 41. That share rose and fell annually in the years that followed. Humboldt and Mendocino often alternated at the top of the list, with Trinity barely registering after 1991. But in the long-term statistical volatility replaced consistent share until the early 2000s, when Lake

and Shasta counties regularly shared the highest CAMP eradication numbers.

Displacement to other counties was accompanied by enforcement-motivated shifts within SHC, where cannabis agriculture continued to grow albeit probably at a slower rate. My re-worked mobilization of balloon effect as a theory of how geographies of policing effect spatial change can also be applied to how landscapes of cannabis cultivation changed in the Emerald Triangle, in addition to being dispersed throughout the state. Some of the changes were not exclusive to the region, but pioneered new methods for managing risk of exposure to CAMP enforcement that would be echoed elsewhere – most notably the shift to rural indoor growing, usually off-grid and powered by diesel generators. But many growers remained outdoor, shifting techniques to manage risk of exposure to enforcement.

Outdoor growers that previously may have grown tall, robust plants in the most favorable location for sunlight adapted their plants to less favorable locations. They planted multiple gardens rather than single, closely grouped ones, multiplying the labor necessary to realize harvest. They planted in the shade, where the plants were harder to detect from the air. They even planted up trees. One Salmon Creek homesteader recalled selecting a spot with less shade but at an angle to the sun that could maximize in the fall, when plants were finishing. All of this meant smaller yields per plant, and again, more plants were needed to maintain income levels, although rising prices surely helped.

Smaller plants were also increasingly grown indoors. Today, indoor production is everywhere – in urban and rural areas throughout the state, and indeed throughout the country. In the watersheds of SHC, many growers responded to CAMP's main surveillance innovation – helicopters – by adapting indoor structures into enclosed gardens. While outdoor grows did not need a search warrant because they were spotted from the air, enclosed gardens added a legal obstacle to eradication. The indoor strategy, on a mass scale, seems to have been pioneered by the homestead's second-generation growers, who were perhaps less reluctant to use ecologically problematic off-grid diesel generators than their parents. The technique was neither entirely new nor particularly effective at first. One of my second-generation interviewees took me to structure where he and his brother attempted the first indoor grow in their Salmon Creek watershed community, around 1982. It was not a financial success, the effort was not repeated, and it did make a big mess. Over the next two decades, diesel grows multiplied in the hills and the art of indoor growing improved dramatically. The move indoor moved the plants into another legal space, protected more securely by laws protecting private property. The proliferation of “diesel dope” created new economic linkages and new environmental problems. Indoor gardens required different kinds of equipment – grow lights, for an obvious example – that were a boon to local supply stores and gas stations selling diesel fuel. I should note here that infrastructural cost of indoor grows, on the grid or off, is significantly greater than that of outdoor, and was made possible by the rise of wholesale prices over time.

CAMP reterritorialization effects helped maintain cannabis industrial structure as a highly decentralized network of smaller producers, which Ray Raphael called “democratic capitalism.”

As the government eradicates the larger, more visible plantations, the less visible and safer enterprises might enjoy a greater share of the market. Governmental eradication of marijuana agribusiness therefore can serve as a protective subsidy for small, independent growers, doing as much for the cause of democratic capitalism as the Small Business Administration could ever hope to do (Raphael, 1985: 171).

CAMP's “protective subsidy” inflated and sustained the commodity boom that, in a licit market, always ends in overproduction that drives down prices. The effect was the same as that produced by economic cartel formation, where a group of producers agrees to restrict production to gain economic rents above those that would be possible in a competitive industry. Higher prices made more expensive indoor production not only possible, but profitable, like how higher oil prices make offshore drilling much more attractive than when prices are low.

There are no reliable quantitative data on wholesale price changes over time. According to Kevin Jodrey, head gardener for the Humboldt Patient Resource Center, prices rose in the early 1980s to around \$4000/lb and more or less plateau-ed for the next twenty years, with a price decline that began around 2006 and fell dramatically in 2009 to around \$1500/lb well below the nominal price reported in 1980 of \$2000/lb. This qualitative representation corresponds well with the (usually vague) memories of each new settler grower that I interviewed. It also corresponds well with incomplete price data available from CAMP reports.

#### *Complications in the balloon: pull factors*

At the industry level, reterritorialization strategies were successful. CAMP had to do more work to find gardens, on the one hand; and indoor growing's year-round seasonality meant that CAMP was not even looking for them ten months out of twelve. Rather than eliminating SHC agriculture, CAMP policing in the region produced intra- and translocal balloon effects that evolved regional cannabis agriculture locally; spread it throughout the state; and reinforced outdoor and indoor growing developments throughout the country. The spread of indoor and outdoor cultivation throughout the state meant that CAMP itself had to decentralize. CAMP spread from its initial focus on the watersheds of Humboldt, Mendocino and Trinity counties to most of the rest of the state by the end of the 1980s. While plenty of resources remained in Humboldt and Mendocino, Trinity became just another minor county amongst literally dozens of others by the end of the 1980s. The eradication numbers for each county are fairly volatile. A large bust in a given season indicates that a large bust was discovered and acted upon, not that there were not other large grows in each given county. In addition, plant counts are not necessarily accurate, since the CAMP law enforcement officers were focused on getting grows over keeping meticulous counts. Another complicating factor is the emergence of clone operations to supply indoor and outdoor gardens: a clone is a clipping from a mother plant but counts in the eradication statistics just like a full grown plant would. Although the statistics are based on non-transparent and problematic recordkeeping, the basic story is consistent between archives and community memories. Over time, CAMP became one of many other county and local law enforcement institutions engaged in policing indoor and outdoor cannabis agriculture.

The territorial logic of CAMP policing attempted to keep pace with balloon effects that were significantly the result of its material geographies of enforcement. At the same time, state politics came together in such a way that the CAMP budget was reduced substantially between 1990 (\$2.5 million) and 1995 (\$462,000). The geo-politics of its creation forgotten, CAMP evolved as a bureaucratic institution from a skirmish amongst many others in state and national culture wars to a systematic, statewide node for policing cannabis production and consumption. That evolution clearly included its professionalization, as COG and CLMP civil liberty lawsuits and grassroots action brought its operations more in line with constitutional protections afforded the policing of citizens rather than fighting enemies of society.

Because CAMP appears to have lost track of the reports it produced between 1997 and 2002, there are no data shadows from

Top 10 California counties by share of total CAMP eradication, 1984-1995	Average CAMP plants eradicated, 1984-1995	Share of CAMP plants eradicated, 1984-1995
Humboldt	40311	36.8%
Mendocino	28298	25.9%
Trinity	5686	5.2%
Santa Cruz	4887	4.5%
Santa Barbara	4050	3.7%
Butte	4029	3.7%
Sonoma	3105	2.8%
Monterey	2391	2.2%
Shasta	2062	1.9%
San Luis Obispo	2045	1.9%
Lake	1924	1.8%

Fig. 2. Top 10 CAMP counties, 1984–1995.

Source: CAMP Reports 1984–1996.

which to derive hypotheses of gradual change during this time period. The conclusion of this paper examines marked shifts in the territorial logic and practice of CAMP policing since that gap, leading up to its discontinuation in 2012, with a little context from my interviews to clarify the picture.

### Conclusion: the transformation and institutional end of CAMP

When the trail of available CAMP reports picks up again in 2004, it is clear that the logic and practice of CAMP policing had changed dramatically. Eradication numbers dwarfed those produced in the intense 1980s, which peaked at 147,518 in 1987. Between 2004 and 2009, total state eradication rose from 621,315 plants to 4,463,917. As SHC lawyer ED [sic] Denson notes, the dramatic rise in numbers probably reflects seizures of cloning operations sourcing of larger and larger grows, as well as larger mature plant gardens on public and private lands. For that time period, Lake and Shasta counties rank at the top of the list, with 15.2 and 13.4% of eradication share per county, respectively. Mendocino ranked fourth behind Tulare at 8.3%, while Humboldt ranked seventh behind Riverside and Fresno at 4.5% (see Figs. 2 and 3). Without historical memory we might call Lake, Shasta and Tulare the Emerald Triangle during the last decade of CAMP's existence. One thing is clear: a lot more cannabis was eradicated on public lands by the early 2000s than had been the case in 1996. Whether this is because massive public land grows had gone undetected before is unknown. CAMP helicopters disappeared from the traditional Emerald Triangle practically unnoticed: virtually everyone I asked could not remember the last time they saw a helicopter in their neighborhood. The long-term trend away from CAMP's helicopters concentrating in the Emerald Triangle clearly took root in the late 1980s and transformed over the course

of the 1990s. Most of my interviewees could not recall when CAMP helicopters virtually disappeared from the landscape. In the small office above the Garberville town square where CLMP still operates, Bonnie Blackberry laughed when I asked her that question. She responded, "When they all went off to Iraq!" While there is currently no evidence to directly link the 2003 Iraq invasion with the decline of CAMP helicopter presence in SHC, the time frame corresponds with CAMP archives. The 2004 report indicates that raids had become programmatically concentrated on public land mega-grows, and comparably sized operations on timber estates. How and when the ratio of public to private land CAMP raids changed over time remains unclear, given the disappearance of CAMP reports from 1997 to 2003. It also corresponds historically with the passage of new state legislation, Senate Bill 420 (SB 420), that made arrests and prosecution of cannabis growers much more difficult.

Sheriff Downey, as well as my SHC grower and lawyer interviewees, clarified the impact of Proposition 215, California's 1996 medical marijuana initiative, on this shift. It was not just Proposition 215, but SB 420, that had a major impact on the reterritorialization of cannabis agriculture and its enforcement. SB 420 allowed local municipalities to set their own limits on 215 garden sizes and afforded smaller producers increased legal protections for any one with one or more 215 cards. The Humboldt County Board of Supervisors set the state's most liberal plant count allowed per card at 99 plants, one plant under the federal mandatory minimum sentencing limit. Many growers formed cooperatives with multiple cards – sometimes as many as they could gather – that could provide legal protection for gardens with hundreds of plants.

The shift in CAMP's priorities to public and private land mega-grows was accompanied by two new discourses of social threat, which is clear in the emphasis of CAMP reports between 2004 and 2006. First, CAMP became predominantly legitimized as a rural task force concerned with environmental damage. This was not a new discourse. Early CAMP reports included but did not prioritize descriptions of environmental damage associated with cannabis agriculture. This discourse of legitimation does not seem to be exaggerated, although it is not clear just what percentage of cannabis agriculture in California can be attributed to mega-grows on public or indeed private land. Nonetheless, it seems reasonable rather than exaggerated grounds for turning CAMP's attention to environmental damage from outdoor mega-grows. In addition, it was a non-controversial and even popular strategy for everyone I have spoken with, not surprising given that cannabis growers in SHC have spent so much of their spare time participating organizing around environmental issues. The shift in territorial logic of CAMP policing marked its decline as my research subjects knew it, as an antagonistic outside force. CAMP's politics as it reached maturity

Top 10 California counties by share of total CAMP eradication, 2005-2009	Average CAMP plants eradicated, 2004-2009	Share of CAMP plants eradicated, 2004-2009
Lake	333505	15.0%
Shasta	286151	12.9%
Mendocino	184192	8.3%
Tulare	153648	6.9%
Fresno	144882	6.5%
Humboldt	109646	4.9%
Los Angeles	91113	4.1%
Riverside	89195	4.0%
Trinity	73294	3.3%
Napa	67719	3.0%
Kern	66957	3.0%

Fig. 3. Top 10 CAMP counties, 2004–2009.

Source: CAMP Reports 2004–2009.



changed in a way that was more favorable to those it once policed, as well as to voters that were increasingly acceptant of cannabis in society, but increasingly concerned about environmental issues.

The second shift in the territorial logic of CAMP policing is a bit more complicated. It was alleged that the main source of environmental damage was Mexican cartels growing on public lands. The 2004 report attributes precise percentages of public land grows to Mexican organizations, and indeed there is no evidence to dispute their precise if unverifiable calculations. Most of my interviewees agree that it seems likely that many large outdoor grows on public lands were, and remain, attributable to organized crime. However, they point out that they know of many mega-grows done by second-generation new settlers and organized crime groups from around the world, not just Mexico. While Mexican drug trafficking organizations do seem to be a significant part of the picture, CAMP's confident assertions that they were all of the picture were clearly not distributing responsibility in an accurate or transparent, evidence-based fashion. It seems to many of my subjects that such exaggeration plays into racial politics that have shaped drug war policy since the beginning of the 20th century, but in a 21st century context where such representations play into public debates about immigrants and immigration in the age of NAFTA.

Beginning in 2006, CAMP reports consisted of one page listing basic eradication and arrest statistics for each participating county. For whatever reason, possibly budgetary considerations, CAMP stopped reporting on why it was policing where it was policing and simply published the results. Federal and county policing efforts had by then shifted from rural to urban cannabis agriculture associated with the explosion of medical dispensaries operating in and around legal gray zones opened up by 1996's Prop 215, 2003's SB 420, and the dizzying ecology of county and local ordinances relating to cannabis agriculture that are still ongoing. These were beyond the scope of CAMP as a seasonal, outdoor-oriented drug war institution, and it seems clear that the DEA, in conjunction with county sheriffs and California's U.S. attorneys, see dispensaries as the frontline of ongoing debates about the place of cannabis in public order. When California's long budgetary decline flared into a flirtation with bankruptcy in the wake of the 2007 financial crisis, the writing may have been on the wall. In 2012, CAMP was laid to rest. It remains to be seen what its successor institution, CERT, will do or evolve into, but state resources associated with CERT are funneled through environmental agencies such as the BLM, rather than a policing institution such as the BNE. In some ways this seems to be just a reconfiguration of what CAMP had already evolved into.

I conclude by briefly assessing what I am tentatively calling the reinflation effect, an industrial reterritorialization that has been partially shaped by the withdrawal of CAMP focus from the Emerald Triangle. Many of my interviewees express a sometimes ironic, sometimes sincere, nostalgia for the days of CAMP. Foremost on their minds is usually the price decline associated with the sort of overproduction that usually signifies the end of a commodity bust, though it appears that Federal policing efforts elsewhere in conjunction with other factors seems to have stabilized the wholesale price per pound at the moment. But they also express sadness for the return of a phenomenon associated with the end of the 1970s, when more and more people migrated to watersheds intent on making a lot of money, not concerned with establishing themselves in a community and certainly not too concerned with environmental damage. On the plus side, the evacuation of CAMP from the area in combination with community organizing has returned watershed production outdoors, which is less environmentally damaging by far. Community organizing has also emerged around questions of water conservation. More and more homesteads now have water tanks for collecting rainfall in the winter to water their gardens in dry, late summer and early fall months. This eases pressure on

watersheds that have been devastated by many factors besides cannabis agriculture: forest regrowth draws more and more water from the ecosystem every year, in addition to yet to be understood effects related to global climate change. This sort of organizing was less tenable when CAMP helicopters roamed the skies, looking for evidence of gardens from above. Water storage tanks would have been a dead giveaway.

The end of CAMP in SHC has intensified regional tendencies that began in the late 1970s. In the absence of police pressure, cannabis agriculture has intensified but so has community resolve to address the primacy of economic interests over environmental and social well-being that drove so many of the new settlers to the region in the first place. All of this is happening in a new historical context, where cannabis prohibition is being challenged from the local to the global level. As medical marijuana and now outright legalization legislation spreads throughout the country, traditional cannabis growers are facing geographical competition that spells the sure end of a decades-long commodity boom. CAMP is officially over, but by the mid-2000s it had already been transformed into a regime of governance that rarely influenced the livelihoods of SHC growers. As the common threat of small-producer policing receded, watershed communities found themselves dealing with new issues, some of which intersected with those of CAMP's policy directors: the proliferation of cannabis agribusiness, environmental degradation including watershed depletion, and the relative absence of regulatory frameworks that could reduce harms associated with big agriculture in general. These issues are not specific to cannabis, per se, any more than the criminalization of cannabis in the first place was specific to the plant itself. The social structures in which cannabis agriculture are embedded are transforming at a dizzying pace, and the end of CAMP is but one of the ongoing dynamics reflective of these transformations.

One of the central arguments of this paper is that in the U.S., as elsewhere, the repressive drug war model did not simply "prohibit" illicit drug crop agriculture. CAMP policing contended with cultural politics and regimes of political order on the ground to produce a form of *de facto* regulation that favored agricultural innovation, decentralized production, and high farmgate prices that allowed small farmers to flourish. This ran against the grain of contemporary transformations associated with globalization. As CAMP became more focused on policing public and private land "mega-grows" throughout the state, cannabis agriculture was effectively de-regulated in SHC. This is the other side of winding down the drug war on the solid premise that it has produced much more harm than good, as a global drug policy. How are licit markets to be regulated? Who will be permitted to grow? How should they grow? Where should they grow? For licit agricultural commodities in the age of transnational agribusiness, the answers to those questions are problematic, potentially moreso in underdeveloped countries where alternative formal sector employment may be scarce. At sunset, from the top of Brice-land's Elk Ridge, the hills of SHC sparkle with reflection of the fading light glinting off of new greenhouse constructions. CAMP is gone, and the small farmer it once policed may not be far behind.

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