Review of *Policing Methamphetamine: Narcopolitics in Rural America* by William Garriott

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Policing Methamphetamine: Narcopolitics in Rural America examines the contextual factors associated with methamphetamine use, production, and dealing in a rural West Virginia town. William Garriott focuses on how the criminal justice system reacts to societal concerns of drug use and how communities frame drug use and dealing as an interactional process. He coins the term *narcopolitics*, which "refers to any practice of governance whose rationalization lies in concern with narcotics" (p. 5).

Couched in the anthropological tradition of ethnography, Garriott conducted in-depth interviews with criminal justice personnel (federal and local law enforcement agents, probation officers, judges, etc.), social workers, psychologists, school employees, and current and recovering meth users in Baker County (a pseudonym). Additionally, he conducted an extensive content analysis of all known criminal cases involving methamphetamine in Baker County and regularly observed how these proceedings were handled in court. Furthermore, Garriott immersed himself in the local community, joining the community choir, attending social events, and actually living in the area he studied. The anthropological approach enabled Garriott to provide real-life examples of how these lived experiences influenced practice – how narcopolitics functioned in a rural American community.

Garriott's book begins by situating his study in the broader context of the war on drugs, detailing the countrywide trends of drug enforcement in general and concluding with the expansion and emergence of methamphetamine specifically. The contextualization of drug enforcement enables readers from all fields to learn the broad issues surrounding the topic before diving into the specific issues in Baker County. Much appreciated is the use of community-member quotes in chapter titles. Coming directly from his data, they add substance to the issues covered.

Three key themes consistently ran through this book. First being the criminal justice system's effort to target substances and their effects rather than people and their actions. This is particularly salient in his discussions about who the meth users were and how identifying them became commonplace in this rural community. His study revealed that the individuals tasked

with identifying users, dealers, or producers grew in to professions as far reaching as highway cleanup crews. People in these communities came to identify plastic grocery bags on the side of the road as indicators of meth production and disposal. The second theme relates, again, to intervention strategies, specifically the "simultaneous use of multiple methods of intervention to do the work of narcotics control" (p. 9). By this, Garriott refers to the number of ways that intervention is be used as a means of narcotics control. For example, the increasing reliance on drug tests at schools, work, and home shifted the responsibility of intervention to the hands of parents and school teachers and away from law enforcement agents. The last theme Garriott identifies is the "bridging of punitive and actuarial modes of governance" (p. 10). He devotes much space to articulating the criminal justice system's reliance on professional (psychologists, probation officers, school counselors, etc.) assessments of the individual in relation to sentencing. Garriott observed that although criminal justice officials (e.g., judges) relied on these professional assessments to determine an appropriate punishment, they rejected them, instead citing major addictions as reasons for not allowing rehabilitation as an intervention and sentencing individuals to imprisonment.

Though highly intelligible, Garriott's book adheres to the highest scholarly standards and exemplify methodological rigor. While there are implicit references to many theories (for example, labeling theory, social control theory, learning theory, and social bond theory), only Michel Foucault's work is brought to the forefront. Specifically, Foucault's theory of biopower that describes how people are labeled and then these labels are used to control the individual. Garriott explains this by stating, "Most drug offenders are considered addicts and are understood to suffer from a disease that drives their criminality" (p. 130). This shift in focus relies on individuals outside of the criminal justice system to give expert testimony on behalf of the addict; testimony that is then used to adjudicate and sentence the individual. In other words, they are being tried for their addiction rather then the crime they committed because of the addiction.

Though I wrote this review seven years after the book's publication, Garriott's offering is more relevant now than ever before. Currently, West Virginia is suffering from an opioid epidemic that has received national attention for the past few years. Garriott's study provides insights that could be used to understand the current issues surrounding the opioid crisis in many rural West Virginian towns. This is an excellent study, providing the lay reader and academic alike with detailed knowledge of the mechanisms behind the drug world of rural West Virginia. Anyone seeking to understand how law and society intersect and interact to address a perceived social problem should read this brilliant work.