



# The Methamphetamine Industry in America: Transnational Cartels and Local Entrepreneurs (Critical Issues in Crime and Society)

By Henry H Brownstein, Timothy M. Mulcahy, Johannes Huessy

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Galax, a small Virginia town at the foot of the Blue Ridge Mountains, was one of the first places that Henry H. Brownstein, Timothy M. Mulcahy, and Johannes Huessy visited for their study of the social dynamics of methamphetamine markets—and what they found changed everything. They had begun by thinking of methamphetamine markets as primarily small-scale mom-and-pop businesses operated by individual cooks who served local users—generally stymied by ever more strenuous laws. But what they found was a thriving and complex transnational industry. And this reality was repeated in towns and cities across America, where the methamphetamine market was creating jobs and serving as a focus for daily lives and social experience.

*The Methamphetamine Industry in America* describes the reality that the methamphetamine industry is a social phenomenon connecting local, national, and international communities and markets. The book details the results of a groundbreaking three-stage study, part of a joint initiative of the National Institute on Drug Abuse and the National Institute of Justice, in which police agencies across the United States were surveyed and their responses used to identify likely areas of study. The authors then visited these areas to observe and interview local participants, from users and dealers to law enforcement officers and clinical treatment workers.

Through the eyes and words of these participants, the book tells the story of the evolution of methamphetamine markets in the United States over the past several years, given changes in public policies and practices and changing public opinion about methamphetamine. The authors look closely at how the markets are part of a larger industry, how they are socially organized, and how they operate. They also consider the relationships among the people involved and those around

them, and the national, regional, and local culture of the markets. Their work demonstrates the importance of understanding the business of methamphetamine—and by extension other drugs in society—through a lens that focuses on social behavior, social relationships, and the cultural elements that shape the organization and operation of this illicit but effective industry.

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## **Editorial Review**

### Review

"*The Methamphetamine Industry in America* is best described as *Breaking Bad* from a sociological perspective."

(*Contemporary Sociology*)

"Excellently written, logical, and coherent, *The Methamphetamine Industry in America* is an exemplary book that is quite unique in focusing exclusively on the macro-scale methamphetamine industry."

(Thomas Mieczkowski *University of South Florida*)

"This multi-method study of the social networks involved in the distribution and manufacture of methamphetamine provides a level of understanding unmatched in previous research. Using multiple sources, the authors masterfully weave a tale that reflects the complexities of the business while using personal stories to present a human face on larger social processes."

(Dr. Ralph A. Weisheit *Illinois State University*)

"Brownstein, Mulcahy, and Huessy weave interviews with users, dealers, producers, and law enforcement professionals involved in the methamphetamine drug trade to give readers a vision of the local, national, and international drug industry. The authors adopt a social organization approach to identify and analyze social patterns among the people involved in the meth trade. Useful for professionals responsible for prevention and treatment services and enforcement of drug laws as well as students in these areas. Recommended."

(*Choice*)

### About the Author

**HENRY H. BROWNSTEIN** is associate dean for research and professor and director of the Center for Public Policy at the Wilder School for Government and Public Affairs at Virginia Commonwealth University. He has written extensively on drug markets and is the author of four books, including *The Problems of Living in Society*.

**TIMOTHY M. MULCAHY** is a program area director in the Economics, Labor, and Population Studies Department at NORC at the University of Chicago, and was co-investigator of the methamphetamine market study.

**JOHANNES HUESSY** is a principal research analyst at NORC at the University of Chicago and research associate for the methamphetamine market study.

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

**Armando Lemaire:**

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