

REPORT ON PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GRANT SPRING 2008

Social Disorganization and Meth: A Preliminary Investigation into Contextual and Attitudinal Factors of Meth use in Rural Arkansas

Dr. Sean Huss and Dr. Dennis Williams

Abstract: Whether or not methamphetamine use is at epidemic levels is a matter of dispute; yet, while meth use is a problem for all communities, few dispute the fact that rural communities have disproportionately experienced the negative consequences of meth. In response to drug use more generally, and meth use particularly, many smaller communities in Arkansas have begun to organize citizens and work to better understand how and why meth becomes a problem for them. Such community groups have reached out to researchers in the hopes of finding a solution to their problems. As part of a larger community-based effort to understand how and why some rural communities in Arkansas experience higher rates of meth use than others, this research investigates the relationship between contextual factors, attitudes on drugs, and arrest rates. More specifically, this research seeks to illuminate why some stable rural communities will have higher methamphetamine use than other communities. Based on analyses of 30 inmate interviews, survey data (735 surveys), and arrest data, the relationship between properties of disorganization and meth production, distribution and use in rural Arkansas communities is discussed. Further, drawing on Bursik and Grasmick's revision of Social Disorganization theory, this research demonstrates the importance of private, public, and parochial controls that influence methamphetamine use in different types of rural communities.

Purpose/Objectives: To share information at the national, professional level obtained from local community/university research through the River Valley Meth Project. Specific focus is given to parental attitudes regarding drugs and subsequent drug use in children. In light of high estimates of meth use by adults and parents in child welfare caseloads, it is important to share information at a broader level.

Significance/Need: *Professional enhancement.* Application was made to the Southern Sociological Society to present findings of current research based on survey data collected by the River Valley Meth Project. These research results were presented by Dr. Sean Huss (PI) and Dr. Dennis Williams (co-author) for professional enhancement purposes.

Process for Attainment of Objective/Goals: The event was held at the Southern Sociological Society Conference, April 9-12, 2008 in Richmond, VA at the Richmond Marriott Hotel. Five faculty members and five behavioral sciences undergraduate students traveled together to the conference site utilizing university transportation. We departed from Russellville on April 8th and returned on April 13th.

Dissemination of Results: The paper was presented in the session on drug use. The co-authors distributed contact information at the site and are currently working to publish the paper in a national sociological journal.

Budget: Funds were used for registration fees, meals and lodging for Sean Huss and Dennis Williams. Mileage costs were included in this budget. The following costs were expected:

<u>Expenditure</u>	<u>Details</u>	<u>Total</u>
Registration fees:	50.00 x 2	100.00
Lodging:	125.00 x 2 x 5 nights	1,250.00
Meals:	32.20/day x 2 x 5 days	322.00
Mileage:	2056 roundtrip mileage	884.08
Grand Total		2,556.08

Receipts were submitted to the appropriate offices and reimbursements have been made to the applicants.