

IE NEWSLETTER

Institutional Ethnography Division of the Society for the Study of Social Problems

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FROM THE DIVISION CHAIR

Kamini Maraj Grahame

Greetings from Pennsylvania. I have been thinking a good deal about transitions lately, as so much seems to be happening on the professional, personal, and political fronts. They are often messy and challenging but also afford an opportunity to re-evaluate, re-energize, learn new skills and forge new directions. The transition to Division Chair hasn't been messy but it has been a little challenging to get things on track, largely due to my need to learn some technological skills. Happily, I have learned to create a list-serve to communicate with you. Rosamund Stooke graciously agreed to take on the task of newsletter editor while Cheryl Zurawski continues to lend us her considerable skills as production and picture editor. Please help support their efforts by contributing to the newsletter.

As I sit here looking at the trees shed their leaves on a breezy fall day, summer in San Francisco seems such a long time ago. No doubt, the meetings provided the city with some much-needed economic stimulus. The IE sessions were lively and well attended. As always, it was wonderful to reconnect with old friends and colleagues and meet new ones. It is especially encouraging to see and hear newer scholars taking up IE and contributing to its growth and development. Our membership list is healthy but I'd like you to encourage your colleagues to join us. Our business meeting at the conference continues to be one of the most well attended and definitely fun.

As you know, the next annual meeting is in Atlanta. The call for papers has already gone out and is posted on the SSSP website. There is a slight change in the number of sessions that divisions can have and co-sponsor. All of the sessions have organizers many of whom have provided a brief description of their session (pages 6 to 7). You should submit your papers to them directly. *(continued)*

(Division Chair's message continued)

In addition to the regular sessions, there is a roundtable for the IE Division. The roundtable is designed for newer scholars with a more experienced scholar in the field as a discussant. Peter Grahame has agreed to be the organizer and a discussant for this session. Please feel free to contact the session organizers or me to discuss how to best include your work. We will make every effort to find a way for you to present your work.

It is not too early to start encouraging your students to prepare manuscripts for the student paper competition. The calls for those have also gone out – Liza McCoy and Alessandra Gabriel comprise the committee for the 2010 student paper competition (page 5). I especially urge you to begin thinking about potential nominees for the Dorothy Smith Scholar/Activist award (page 6). Please send your nominations to Tim Diamond at (timdiamond9@gmail.com)

In closing, I would like to thank Marj DeVault for her excellent leadership of the division over the last two years and the mentorship she has provided to me. In addition, I would like to thank Gillian Walker for her splendid stewardship of the newsletter over the last two years.

A note from the copy editor

Dear IE Division members:

This is my first newsletter, so I thought I should write a few lines to introduce myself. I teach courses in curriculum studies and literacy at the Faculty of Education at the University of Western Ontario in London, Ontario and have a strong research interest in the social organization of early childhood education and care. In August 2009 I attended SSSP for the first time. I very much enjoyed the IE Network Conference at the University of Victoria in 2002 when I was just beginning my doctoral research, but hadn't been able to attend an IE workshop or conference since then. My co-presenter, Suzanne Smythe, and I looked forward to presenting our work without a long explanation and justification for IE; at the same time we were looking forward to learning about others' research and hoped to participate in conversations about IE's future directions. We were not disappointed. The conversations during sessions were thought provoking and supportive and threads of conversations seemed to flow out into the hallways and restaurants where people gathered between sessions. Suzanne and I hadn't anticipated that the IE Division would create the best kind of small conference within the larger SSSP meeting.

By the time we arrived at the business meeting on Saturday afternoon, many of the faces around the table were familiar to us and we were able to enjoy the joking and bantering among "regulars." As our outgoing Division Chair, Marj DeVault, explained to the newcomers, "IE is one of the smaller divisions in SSSP, but we always have the best attendance at our meetings because we have fun." And so I found myself having fun and saying "yes" to the idea that I might like to take on the newsletter. "Don't worry," they said. "We'll help."

And you have helped. Thanks to all of you who've sent ideas and feedback. I'll be in touch. And thanks in advance to all of you who are contemplating contributing to future newsletters. For the next issue I'll be soliciting information about upcoming sessions at the Canadian Congress in Montreal. May/June 2010. I am also seeking more contributions and comments on the challenges and pleasures of teaching and learning IE. Book reviews, news items, workshop news, projects in progress, new ideas and commentary, all are welcome. Send them along.

**Regards,
Roz**

Governance and the front line

--Alison Griffith

In mid-October, more than 20 invited researchers (faculty and senior graduate students all of whom were familiar with and/or had taken up institutional ethnography as a research approach) gathered at York University in Toronto to launch their collaborative work towards the publication of an edited volume tentatively titled *Governance and the Front Line*. Alison Griffith and Dorothy Smith organized the workshop with funding from Canada's Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC).

Organized as an event for talking, reading and writing rather than a conference for the presentation of academic papers, the workshop allowed the invited researchers to explore what Alison and Dorothy describe as "the rapidly developing forms of governing that operate across institutional boundaries". As they go on to elaborate: "For the past 20 years, students from different disciplinary sites have been researching changes in governance of professional work at the front lines of public institutions. As economic turmoil spreads globally, researchers from different academic and professional disciplines in Canada, Australia, the United States and the United Kingdom are finding increasing evidence of strong similarities in the management, accountability, and financial processes across disciplinary, national and international boundaries."

Attendees broke out into four smaller groups formed by Alison and Dorothy based on their discovery of similar or complementary interests articulated in briefing notes submitted in advance of the workshop. The briefing notes provided a point of departure for the remainder of the workshop discussions. By the time the workshop adjourned, the editorial direction of the volume had begun to emerge. The volume will be edited by Alison and Dorothy in cooperation with Stephan Dobson and published by University of Toronto Press.



Mandy Frake-Mistak of York University (left) and Lois Andre-Bechely of California State University (Los Angeles) were among the participants at the governance and the front line workshop organized by Alison Griffith and Dorothy Smith.

How can you learn IE when you are not surrounded by experts?

--Laurie Clune RN, PhD

As a doctoral student learning, developing a working knowledge, understanding, living with and articulating the method of the inquiry is an important element of the academic research journey. This is especially challenging for a student when committee members are unfamiliar with the approach that guides the research design. It is easy for the student to be misdirected by well meaning faculty unfamiliar with the ontological and epistemological underpinnings or analytic approaches used in institutional ethnography.

At my institution, doctoral students' access to IE courses is limited. While one IE course was available at my university, the session was closed to me, first because it was over-subscribed and second because I hailed from a different school within the university and special permission to enroll in the course was denied.

(continued)

How can you learn IE...? (continued)

This is a facet of the social organization of a doctoral student everyday life I suppose. While written texts about IE were helpful, they did not totally fit with my learning style.

One way I learned about IE was by searching the web. To my surprise I found that an intensive learning session at my university was to be facilitated by Dorothy Smith, but my access came to me only by chance. In a similar way I found out about a Canadian nursing IE group facilitated by Janet Rankin of the University of Calgary that meets via teleconference and about a workshop on mapping social relations conducted by Susan Turner. I am so grateful for these learning opportunities. They have given me the foundational knowledge which enables me to clearly articulate the approach to my committee and justify my study. While I know that this is a part of doctoral work, it is extremely difficult for students who do not have IE mentors to learn and explore this research approach and to become a part of the IE community.

So, how can students and others learn IE if we are not surrounded by experts? The answer might be to create learning and social networking opportunities. Social network technologies such as podcasts, Skype, YouTube, blogs and even Facebook might help us to form connections, gain mentorship, ask analysis questions or simply generate discussion. Since writing these comments I have set up a Facebook group called Institutional Ethnographer networking group. Hope you can join us! Any other suggestions?

New IE Division members

Welcome to the following new members:

LisaRose Blanchette
Lori Lundell
Kimberly Nailler
Linda Pulliam
Linda Shorting

Recent publications and theses

Kushner, Margo. 2009. A Review of the Empirical Literature about Child Development and Adjustment Post Separation. *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage*, Vol. 50 (7), October 2009. pp. 496-515.

In a recent article published in *The Journal of Divorce and Remarriage*, Dr. Margo Kushner critiques a body of text that she describes as “not helpful in the substantive area of children, the courts and child custody. The article examines literature about children exposed to high conflict divorce and the processes by which the futures of the children are planned. It attempts to unravel and reveal the knot of methodological impairments in the literature that for twenty years or more has steered the work of the child custody and access experts designated by the courts. Dr. Kushner concludes, "The risk at the present is that the confusing and contradictory picture of how children are affected by family breakdown has led the general population, the media, politicians, policymakers, child custody evaluators, and judges to base strong and somewhat rigid views on empirical data that fail to address the numerous factors affecting children's adjustment post separation."

Webster, Fiona. 2009. *The Social Organization of Best Practice for Acute Stroke: An Institutional Ethnography*. PhD thesis.

Since 1995, a thrombolytic therapy, rt-PA, has been approved for use with acute stroke that significantly reduces, and sometimes reverses, neurological damage. Treatment has to be given within a few hours of the start of symptoms and can only commence once a CT-scan has confirmed a particular type of stroke. In the evidence-based medicine and knowledge translation literature, variations in practice are constituted as a problem to be solved. It is assumed that a physician decides whether or not to use this therapy based on his/her evaluation of the scientific evidence. *(continued)*

Less evident in many of these claims are issues related to the social production of knowledge. Little attention is paid to who conducts research, who promotes its findings, and who is expected to implement them. The positivist discourse of evidence-based medicine assumes that research produces knowledge that is neutral and can be translated into treatment that is in the patient's best interest. Yet these assumptions remain empirically unexamined, despite social science critiques. My study renders visible how in real life settings things work in a way that links back actual people to the texts, or discourse organizing their experiences. In so doing, I am able to uncover some of the assumptions and hidden priorities underlying the current emphasis on translating scientific knowledge in medicine into practice.

Congratulations to Dr. Webster. She defended her PhD thesis, which was supervised by Dorothy Smith, on June 29. She is working as a knowledge translation scientist at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre and as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Surgery at the University of Toronto with cross-appointments to Health Policy Management and Evaluation (HPME) and the Wilson Centre. She is currently undertaking a few IE studies in the area of orthopaedic surgery and also intraprofessional collaboration between internal

medicine and emergency medicine in an acute care teaching hospital.

Laurie Clune will present a paper entitled *When the nurse gets hurt: How participant maps of their injury experience illuminated the social organization of injury management* at the 27th Annual Qualitative Analysis Conference: Social Pragmatism as a Conceptual Foundation. Wilfrid Laurier University, Brantford Campus, Brantford, Ontario, Canada from May 13-15, 2010

Abstract: While the use of maps has been described by many qualitative researchers as helpful in data analysis and understanding complex social processes (Clarke, 2005; Pence, 2003; Turner, 2006; 2009), the use of cartographic techniques to collect ethnographic data from informants during interviews seem absent in the literature. This presentation describes how maps created and used by the researcher pre and post data collection, and participants during interviews shaped new perspectives of injury management processes in an institutional ethnographic study with injured nurses. The technique proved valuable in focusing participant discussion during interviews, identifying new areas for data collection and presenting research findings about a complex social process.

Call for IE Division award nominations

GEORGE W. SMITH GRADUATE STUDENT PAPER COMPETITION

Deadline: May 1, 2010

The Institutional Ethnography Division solicits papers for its 2010 George W. Smith Graduate Student Paper Competition. Papers should advance institutional ethnography scholarship either methodologically or through a substantive contribution.

Authors must be currently enrolled graduate students or have completed their degree since September 2009. Prizes include a \$100 cash award, registration fees, an opportunity to present the paper at the 2010 SSSP meetings, and a ticket to the SSSP awards banquet. Students who submit papers should be prepared to attend the conference. Send one copy each to Liza McCoy mccoy@ucalgary.ca and Ali Gabriel aligabriel@asu.edu.

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DOROTHY E. SMITH AWARD FOR SCHOLAR-ACTIVISM Deadline: May 1, 2010

The Institutional Ethnography Division is pleased to solicit nominations for the 2010 Dorothy E. Smith Award for Scholar-Activism. This award recognizes the activities of an individual or group who has made substantial contributions to institutional ethnographic scholar-activism in either a single project or some longer trajectory of work. The contributions may involve IE research conducted and used for activist ends, or it may involve activist efforts which have drawn upon or contributed to IE scholarship. The award committee invites members of the division to send a one-page statement describing the contributions of the nominee to Tim Diamond timdiamond9@gmail.com. The honoree will be recognized with a certificate at the Institutional Ethnography Division business meeting during the SSSP annual meeting in Atlanta, GA.

The line-up for Atlanta

The IE Division will meet in Atlanta from August 13 to 15 as part of the 2010 annual meeting of the SSSP. The call for papers for both division-sponsored and co-sponsored sessions appears over the remaining pages. IE Division members are encouraged to contact session organizers or Division Chair Kamini Grahame to discuss where and how to include their work in the 2010 annual meeting. The deadline for submissions is midnight (EST) on January 31, 2010. Please consult the SSSP website for further information.

<http://www.sssp1.org/index.cfm/m/1>

Division-Sponsored Sessions

Title: New Research in Institutional Ethnography

Organizer: Jeremy Brunson, Gallaudet University

Email: Jeremy.Brunson@gallaudet.edu

Institutional ethnography is an approach to sociology that begins in people's lived experiences. This approach encourages researchers to explicate the ruling relations that organize the everyday/everynight in an attempt to understand the interconnectedness of their experiences. For this panel we seek papers about empirical work in various stages of development that take up this approach.

Title: Institutional Ethnography and the Work of Social Justice

Organizer: Lois Andre-Bechely, California State University, Los Angeles

Email: loisab@calstatela.edu

Institutional ethnography can make important contributions to social justice advocacy and activism. Papers in this session will illustrate both

conceptually and methodologically the ways in which institutional ethnography can take up social justice issues.

Title: Roundtable

Organizer: Peter R. Grahame, Pennsylvania State University

Email: prg11@psu.edu

The roundtable is designed for newer scholars in the field.

Co-Sponsored Sessions

Title: Exploring Text-Mediated Practices of Disabilities and Mental Health: Investigations into the Coordination of Stigma and Inequality

Organizer: Janet M. Rankin, University of Calgary

Email: jmrankin@ucalgary.ca

Co-Sponsors: Disabilities and Mental Health Divisions

The social organization of disabilities and mental health are vested in particular work processes that
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link local, national and international practices. This session invites research that empirically examines how social justice and advocacy work done by people with disabilities and mental illness and workers (both paid and unpaid) who support them actually play out in everyday experiences. This session is particularly interested in papers that examine the text-mediated local practices of ability/disability and mental health/illness work and the broad institutional practices that arise from and/or organize those local experiences.

Title: Justice for the Marginalized

Organizer: Jeralyn Faris, Purdue University

Email: jlfaris@purdue.edu

Co-Sponsor: Law and Society Division

People who are marginalized in our criminal justice system can be served by activist-oriented scholars who are focused on issues of law and society. Institutional ethnography is a theorized process of discovery for exploring how the everyday lives of people involved in the criminal justice system are organized. This method of inquiry is useful for critical analysis of the relations that rule people's lives. Scholars in both the IE and Law and Society Divisions of SSSP are encouraged to submit papers.

Title: Teaching Institutional Ethnography

Organizer: Michael K. Corman, University of Calgary

Email: mkcorman@ucalgary.ca

Co-Sponsor: Teaching Social Problems Division

This session seeks papers/presentations that explore different ways of teaching institutional ethnography to undergraduate/graduate students, researchers, activists, etc. Papers might focus on methodological issues or analytical and conceptual issues that institutional ethnographers take up in research and practice.

Title: Labor Market Reorganization: Immigration, Globalization and Racialization

Organizer: Roxana Ng, OISE/University of Toronto

Email: roxana.ng@utoronto.ca

Co-Sponsors: Labor Studies and Racial and Ethnic Minorities Divisions

This session explores how IE can be used to examine and map the reconfiguration of labour markets locally, regionally and globally. The focus is on how the transnational movement of people resulting from economic globalization may create new forms and relations of inequality based on "race", gender and other axes of difference.

Title: Globalization, Ruling Relations and Social Justice

Organizer: Henry U. Parada, Ryerson University

Email: hparada@ryerson.ca

Co-Sponsor: Law and Society Division

Please contact the session organizer.

Title: Impact of Cuts on Social Services and Education

Organizer: Henry U. Parada, Ryerson University

Email: hparada@ryerson.ca

Co-Sponsor: Educational Problems Division

Please contact the session organizer.

**Please mark your calendars
for upcoming
SSSP Annual Meetings**

**August 13-15, 2010
The Sheraton Atlanta Hotel
Atlanta, GA**

**August 12-14, 2011
The Blackstone, A Renaissance Hotel
Chicago, IL**

**August 16-18, 2012
The Grand Hyatt Denver Hotel
Denver, CO**