

# IE NEWSLETTER

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

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**On the inside**

- Review of Billo & Mountz
- The line-up for Chicago
- New books by Barbara Gurr and Bonnie Burstow
- Member news and notes

## *From the Division Chair*

### *Lauren Eastwood*

Greetings!

Spring has finally arrived here in northern New York State, an indicator that soon my academic year will be ending and I'll have more time to concentrate on research and writing. In light of that, I always look forward to the SSSP annual meeting as an opportunity to reconnect with other institutional ethnographers. The sessions invigorate me, as do the conversations with other scholars who are struggling with (or being excited by) similar conundrums and insights. I always come away from the annual meeting with a renewed excitement for institutional ethnography and a great boost of energy.

This year promises to provide all of us with intellectual stimulation, as many fantastic sessions are confirmed and the program for our annual workshop has taken shape. For details, please see pages 4-10. Regardless of where you are in your work with institutional ethnography, please consider attending the SSSP annual meeting, coming to the business meeting, and registering for the workshop. We are so fortunate to have such a supportive and invigorating community of scholars and practitioners doing varied and important work.

While I will be turning over the official Chair duties to Naomi Nichols this year, I've been honored to have had the opportunity to serve as Chair of the IE Division. From the early IE conferences through to our incorporation into SSSP, I have always appreciated the fact that we are such a vibrant, active and supportive group. Thank you for contributing to that. Hope to see you in Chicago!

Best,

Lauren

## Review of Billo and Mountz

-submitted by William Payne

*In March of this year, an article by Emily Billo (Goucher College) and Alison Mountz (Wilfrid Laurier University) was published online in Progress in Human Geography. Thanks to William Payne, a doctoral candidate in critical human geography at York University, for submitting this review of the article. The article citation is provided at the end of the review.*

Part manifesto and part guidebook, Emily Billo and Alison Mountz's recent article provides readers with an insightful look at how institutional ethnography (IE) nicely lends itself to a spatial perspective. This publication offers geographers and others an overview of a pedigree of research that takes as its cue Dorothy Smith's recognition of the myriad ways in which our variously positioned lives are shaped by institutions, but also further extends it through a spatially endowed consideration of the messiness of the relevant power dynamics.

As late capitalism seeks to engulf every aspect of our existence, the academy burgeons with the inquiries of those who have either witnessed or experienced firsthand the banal realities of social injustice. We have flocked to its doors to figure out why things are as they are and how things might be different. In this publication, Billo and Mountz demonstrate how IE is a useful tool for geographers, pointing out that many who employ IE are explicitly building on their own prior experience of activism that seeks a better world. And they propose that more needs to be done so that IE's full potential among geographers and other scholars who see the value of a spatial lens is fully realized.

In their own work, both authors focus squarely on those who have suffered in the context of modernity and its first cousins, colonialism and capitalism. Billo has attended to the everyday experiences of Indigenous peoples while Mountz has kept her sights on those who have been compelled to migrate. Rather than add to a vast literature scrutinizing the lives of oppressed peoples, these scholars have demonstrated in both their own work and in their exegesis of the work of others that a sideways glance that makes its object of study the social geography of layered institutions and state structures implicated in these stories of marginalization can aid in finding the cracks in these seemingly totalizing structures.

They note that a turn towards the tools of embodied ethnographic research is underway as scholars with "critical or liberatory goals" (p. 2) turn to the study of everyday life. Billo and Mountz outline how many geographers are already examining institutionality, but express concern that they need to "pay more attention to the everyday contexts out of which organizational actions emerge..." and propose that "IE is valuable, useful and productive" in this regard (p.2-3). Eschewing stances that start with theory, they instead focus on the "exercises in power and interpretation in everyday life... in order to a better understand how institutions structure daily life" (p.5). They also point out that this emerging trend towards "studying up" is part of a larger shift in geography towards ethnographic inquiry that deploys a critical or post-structural feminist understanding of the world.

Geographical contributions to IE have started to address the lacunae in other IE research through specific attention to spatiality and to what Billo and Mountz call the "messiness of institutions in everyday contexts" (p.7). This article complements a temporal review of the work of geographers who have employed an IE approach with the authors' own typology of five approaches that geographers have used to explore the place of institutions in the production of the everyday. Billo and Mountz include a reflection on cutting-edge geographical scholarship in the IE tradition, particularly feminist approaches that shun masculinist approaches bent on penetrating the institution and instead interrogate the lived experience of those involved through thick description.

We live in labile times. For those who guide students at the undergraduate or graduate level, this article provides a superb outline of the field of institutional ethnography for spatial scholars. It also offers a succinct introduction for seasoned scholars - geographers and others - who seek new modes of inquiry to assist in the

tasks of understanding and changing the world. The kind of studying up that these authors propose will help take the microscope off of the so-called 'oppressed' and refocuses it on the oppression itself.

Billo, E., & Mountz, A. (2015). For institutional ethnography: Geographical approaches to institutions and the everyday. *Progress in Human Geography*. Advance online publication. Doi: 10.1177/0309132515572269

## Book by Barbara Gurr

**Barbara Gurr**, an Assistant Professor in Residence in the Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies Program at the University of Connecticut, passes on some particulars about her new book.

In *Reproductive Justice: The Politics of Healthcare for Native American Women* (Rutgers 2014) Barbara Gurr analyzes the experiences of Native American women to provide the first book-length analysis of their reproductive healthcare. Following an institutional ethnography logic and using interviews, archival research, and descriptive policy analysis, the book examines reproductive healthcare as it is provided by the Indian Health Service, a federal agency in the department of Health and Human Services. Gurr traces the development of reproductive healthcare policy generally, and for Native women in particular, paying close attention to the impact of research on funding streams, the role of numerous federal authorities in organizing reproductive healthcare for women in marginalized communities, and the historical development of reproductive healthcare for specifically raced and classed populations. She considers experiences throughout Indian Country but focuses on Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, shedding much-needed light on Native American women's efforts to access prenatal care, contraception, abortion services, and care after sexual assault. *Reproductive Justice* reveals how the general organization of reproductive healthcare, and the specific organization of healthcare for Native women, results in vastly different experiences for Native and non-Native women. Importantly, Gurr outlines the strengths that Native communities can bring to the creation of their own reproductive justice, and considers the role of the Indian Health Service in fostering these strengths as it moves forward in partnership with Native women. Finally, Gurr's transparent presence throughout the work, reflecting both feminist and indigenous methodologies, allows the reader to engage critically not only with the subject matter, but also with the complexities of feminist research.

## Book by Bonnie Burstow

**Bonnie Burstow**, faculty member in adult education and community development and member of the Institute of Women's Studies and Gender Studies at the University of Toronto, has a new book out that combines IE with critical discourse analysis to unpack "mental health" discursive practices.

*Psychiatry and the Business of Madness* (Palgrave Macmillan) deconstructs psychiatric discourse and practice, exposes the self-interest at the core of the psychiatric/psychopharmacological enterprise, and demonstrates that psychiatry is epistemologically and ethically irredeemable. Burstow's medical and historical research and in-depth interviews demonstrate that the paradigm is untenable, that psychiatry is pseudo-medicine, that the "treatments" do not "correct" disorders but cause them. Burstow fundamentally challenges our right to incarcerate or otherwise subdue those we find distressing. She invites the reader to rethink how society addresses these problems, and gives concrete suggestions for societal transformation, with "services" grounded in the community. A compelling piece of scholarship, impeccable in its logic, unwavering in its moral commitment, and revolutionary in its implications.

## Welcome to new members

Three new members joined the IE Division since the publication of our last newsletter. Welcome all!

Lisa Garland Baird

Crystal Weston

Susana Agama

## Notes and news from members

**LaNysha Adams** (University of New Mexico) successfully defended her doctoral dissertation titled “*An Institutional Ethnographic Account of Mandatory Professional Development in New Mexico*” in June, 2014.

**Michael Corman** passes on two pieces of news. First, he has accepted a position, effective August 2015, as a permanent lecturer (sociology of health) at Queen's University Belfast in the Department of Sociology, Social Policy, & Social Work. Second, he is also currently working on a book based on his dissertation. The book (University of Toronto Press) is titled: “*On and Off the Streets - The Work of Paramedics in the Age of Technological Governance.*”

In April 2015, **Elizabeth Noll** (University of Pennsylvania) also fulfilled all the requirements of her doctoral program with a successful defense of her dissertation. Elizabeth's dissertation is titled: “*Navigating the Discourse of Dependency: Welfare-Reliant Mothers in College, An Institutional Ethnography*”.

Good news about funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (Canada) for a doctoral fellowship was passed along by **Matthew Strang** (York University). During his fellowship, Matthew will complete a project titled: “*(Un)bounded bodies?: Investigating 'modern' conceptions of the body through organ donors.*” Matthew will use IE to aid in mapping co-constructing processes that occur between people and the social organization of knowledge and understandings of the body and body loss.

## IE sessions in Chicago (August 21-23, 2015)

*The program for the SSSP annual meeting in Chicago will feature the sessions and papers listed below. Readers are also encouraged to check out the item on the IE Workshop (planned for the day after the annual meeting ends) on the last page of the newsletter.*

### Friday, August 21

*Time:* 8:30 - 10:10 am

**Session 4: CRITICAL DIALOGUE: Reflections from the Field of Community-Based Research;**  
Room: Atlantic D

*Sponsors:* Community Research and Development Division; Institutional Ethnography Division

*Organizers and Presiders:* Amie Thurber, Vanderbilt University; Alison Fisher, York University

*Papers:*

“(Re)negotiating power and challenging White supremacy?: Reflections from a racial-justice youth participatory action research project,” Leah Marion Roberts, Vanderbilt University

“Confronting constrained participation in participatory research,” Amie Thurber, Vanderbilt University

“Doing interviewing: The local production of interview content and form in peer-interviews,” Abby I. Templer Rodrigues, University of Massachusetts, Amherst

“Exploring the challenges of publishing community-based research,” Charlotte Ryan, UMASS - Lowell

“Right here in River City: Two decades of applied sociology at a university-based research center,” Jeffrey A. Will, University of North Florida

“Stories for empowerment: Giving voice to environmental justice through community-based research,” Erin E. Robinson, Canisius College, Erin Heaney, Clean Air Coalition of WNY and William Siegner, Canisius College

“The sociologist as curator: Reflections on an organic public sociology project,” Robert Nonomura, University of Western Ontario

“Waste yute, mandom and everything in between: What we can learn from the participation of justice-involved youth as researchers,” Alison Fisher, York University

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*Time:* 12:30 - 2:10 pm

**Session 24: CRITICAL DIALOGUE: The Social Organization of Race, Class, Gender, and other Relations of Ruling;** Room: Atlantic D

*Sponsor:* Institutional Ethnography Division

*Organizer & Presider:* Elizabeth Brule, York University

*Papers:*

“Mutually established exclusion: Opting out of institutional health care,” Rebecca Hughes, University of Toronto

“Rethinking antiracist feminist praxis through institutional ethnography and an interlocking analysis of racialized, gendered, and classed oppression,” Sobia Shaheen Shaikh, Memorial University

“Time well spent: Youth experiences of schooling in jail,” Jessica Braimoh, McMaster University and Naomi Nichols, York University

“Torn between the evil spirit and the state,” Frank T.Y. Wang, National Chengchi University, Taipei, Taiwan

“Turning the screw of interpretation on the archive,” Karida L. Brown, Brown University

“What do White women’s experiences of the dust bowl tell us about inequality and privilege?” Christina D. Weber, North Dakota State University

“My job is defined by my visa...”: Paid and unpaid labor in families of skilled migrants,” Pallavi Banerjee, Vanderbilt University

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*Time:* 2:30 - 4:10 pm

**Session 36: New Research in Institutional Ethnography;** Room: Atlantic E

*Sponsor:* Institutional Ethnography Division

*Organizers:* Suzanne Vaughan, Arizona State University; Liza McCoy, University of Calgary

*Presider:* Suzanne Vaughan, Arizona State University

*Papers:*

“IE studies in social welfare: New research on old research,” Paul C. Luken, University of West Georgia and Suzanne Vaughan, Arizona State University

“Doing discourses of recovery: An institutional ethnography of addictions counselling recovery work,” Emily M. Doyle, University of Calgary; Athabasca University

“An institutional discourse beyond ‘wife batters’: An institutional ethnographic analysis of men in the batter prevention program,” Wen-hui Anna Tang, Sun Yat-sen University

“Criminalizing HIV transmission using model law: Troubling ‘best practice’ standardizations in the global HIV/AIDS response,” Daniel Grace, University of Toronto, Dalla Lana School of Public Health

“Get me bodied: Bringing the body (back) into institutional ethnography,” Matthew Strang, York University

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*Time:* 4:30 - 6:10 pm

### ***THEMATIC***

**Session 55: Immigration: Representations, Institutions, and Identities;** Room: Black Sea

*Sponsors:* Institutional Ethnography Division; Social Problems Theory Division

*Organizer:* Fatima Sattar, Boston College

*Discussant:* Kamini Maraj Grahame, Penn State University

*Papers:*

“‘I’m not the only one struggling’: Immigrant women’s recognition and responses to translocal processes that coordinate economic and social integration,” Heather Holroyd, University of British Columbia

“(Un)deserving Iraqi refugees? Racialized moral boundary constructions among US resettlement bureaucrats,” Fatima Sattar, Boston College

“A danger to US citizens: Concepts of threat, belonging, and morality in deportation proceedings of detained immigrants at the Chicago Immigration Court,” Michelle M.F. VanNatta, Dominican University

“‘Just be American’: Exploring the links between immigration policy opinions and national identity opinions,” Laura Landers, University of Illinois, Chicago

## **Saturday, August 22**

*Time:* 8:30 - 10:10 am

**Session 66: The Body and Embodiment in Institutional Ethnography;** Room: Pacific 3

*Sponsors:* Institutional Ethnography Division; Sport, Leisure, and the Body Division

*Organizer & Presider:* Matthew Strang, York University

*Papers:*

“Bodily locations: Institutional ethnography and ethnographic entry,” M.C. Whitlock, University of South Florida

“Interviewing and the body: Embodiment, racial sexualization and the interview,” Azar Masoumi, York University

“Sex worker or student? Legitimation and master status in academia,” Jennifer M. Heineman, University of Nevada, Las Vegas

“The work of embodiment: social relations of race, class and gender for street involved youth,” Alison Fisher, York University

“‘My body is and is not mine’: How cases of murdered transgender women of color reveal the circulation of violence, bodies and matter,” Rachel R. Bogan, The Graduate Center, CUNY

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*Time:* 12:30 - 2:10 pm

### ***THEMATIC***

**Session 95: Personal, Institutional, and Professional Resistance: Gender, Race, and Poverty;** Room: Pacific 3

*Sponsors:* Institutional Ethnography Division; Poverty, Class, and Inequality Division; Sociology and Social Welfare Division

*Organizer:* Sobia Shaheen Shaikh, Memorial University

*Presiders:* Elizabeth Brule, York University; Sobia Shaheen Shaikh, Memorial University

*Papers:*

“Emotion work and the rationalization of a mental health institution,” Samantha Snow Plummer, University of Pittsburgh

“Intersectional resistance: An institutional ethnography of subaltern women’s activism in Iran,” Fae Chubin, University of South Florida

“Professional resistance to the relations of ruling of professional development,” Cheryl Zurawski, Athabasca University and LaNysha T. Adams, University of New Mexico

“The difficulty of speaking back in a culture of evidence-based practice,” Naomi Nichols, York University

“‘Walking our talk’: Moving beyond the token inclusion of Latinas in a White feminist organization,”  
Alexandra Ornelas, University of California, Santa Barbara

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*Time:* 2:30 pm - 4:10 pm

**Session 108: CRITICAL DIALOGUE: Accountability, Productivity, and Digital Coordination of Human Service Work;** Room: Pacific 3

*Sponsors:* Institutional Ethnography Division; Labor Studies Division

*Organizers:* Marie Campbell, University of Victoria; Hans-Peter de Ruiter, Minnesota State University, Mankato

*Presiders:* Hans-Peter de Ruiter, Minnesota State University, Mankato; Marie Campbell, University of Victoria

*Papers:*

“The electronic medical record: Abstracted knowledge run amok,” Janet M. Rankin, University of Calgary, Qatar and Marie Campbell, University of Victoria

“Standardization, accountability and optimization of efficiency: How the social organization of Québec homecare services pulls occupational therapists’ work away from improving population’s health and well-being,” Annie Carrier, Université de Sherbrooke, Andrew Freeman, Université Laval, Mélanie Levasseur and Johanne Desrosiers, Université de Sherbrooke

“Hunting for ‘paper gangsters’: An analysis of proactive patrol work under an intelligence-led policing model,” Crystal Weston, Wilfrid Laurier University

“The textual account of ‘quality’: Institutional technologies that coordinate the scheduling of community nursing for children with diabetes in Ontario schools,” Lisa Watt, McMaster University

“Institutional ethnographic mapping reveals changes in academic freedom for college teachers,” Mary Ellen Dunn, University of Toronto

“Where is “compliance”? Accountability in policy and on the front line,” Marjorie DeVault, Syracuse University, Michael Schwartz, Syracuse University and Rebecca Garden, SUNY Upstate Medical University

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## **Sunday, August 23**

*Time:* 10:30 am - 12:10 pm

**Session 131: CRITICAL DIALOGUE: Using Quantitative and other Mixed Methods in Institutional Ethnography;** Room: Atlantic D

*Sponsor:* Institutional Ethnography Division

*Organizer & Presider:* Frank Ridzi, Le Moyne College/ CNY Community Foundation

*Papers:*

“Institutional ethnography: Issues of method,” Dorothy E. Smith, University of Victoria

“Pragmatically building knowledge for change: Mixed method opportunities,” Janet M. Rankin, University of Calgary, Qatar

“Social ontology matters,” Paul C. Luken, University of West Georgia

“The schools & staffing survey in an institutional ethnographic account of mandatory teacher professional development,” LaNysha T. Adams, University of New Mexico

“Using quantitative and qualitative methods in institutional ethnography of coalition building,” Frank Ridzi, Le Moyne College/ CNY Community Foundation

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*Time:* 12:30 - 2:10 pm

**Session 149: The Body and Embodiment in Relations of Ruling and the Social Organization of Life and Health;** Room: Baltic

*Sponsors:* Institutional Ethnography Division; Sport, Leisure, and the Body Division

*Organizer & Presider:* Matthew Strang, York University

*Papers:*

“Autism and applied behavioural therapies: Embodiment, evidence, and governance,” Julia F. Gruson-Wood, York University

“Eligibilizing bodies: An ethnography of eligibility and embodiment in a California HIV clinic,” Katherine Weatherford Darling, University of California, San Francisco

“Negotiation and conflict within the relations of ruling,” Patricia Lengermann and Gillian Niebrugge-Brantley, George Washington University

“The negotiation of citizenships: The Black body living with sickle cell disease in Brazil,” Melissa S. Creary, Emory University

“The social organization of feeding babies: Finding late preterm infants in ‘safe’, highly technological settings,” Cathy Ringham, University of Calgary

*Time:* 2:30 - 4:10 pm

**THEMATIC**

**Session 162: Migration and Human Rights;** Room: Baltic

*Sponsors:* Global Division; Institutional Ethnography Division; Law and Society Division

*Organizer:* Lauren Eastwood, SUNY College at Plattsburgh

*Presider:* Laura Bisailon, University of Toronto, Scarborough

*Papers:*

“A tragic irony: Corporate personhood and human rights,” Tanesha A. Thomas, The Graduate Center, CUNY

“Clandestine youth: Securitization, humanitarianism, and unaccompanied minors in the US borderlands,” Emily Magee Ruehs, University of Illinois at Chicago

“Constructing human rights of Roma migrants: Dimensions of inclusion and globalization,” Chloë Delcour and Lesley Hustinx, Ghent University, Belgium

“Immigration medical policy and HIV: Policy controversies and their purposes,” Laura Bisailon, University of Toronto, Scarborough

“Permanent aliens? A study of high skilled migration in the Pacific Northwest,” Samit Dipon Bordoloi and Sondra Cuban, Western Washington University

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## IE Workshop

Building on the success of last year’s workshop, the IE Division is again hosting an interactive workshop on Monday, August 24, 2015 (the day after the conclusion of the SSSP annual meeting). The workshop is intended for researchers who use or are interested in using Dorothy E. Smith’s sociology for people (institutional ethnography) in their work. The workshop will feature a combination of small-group discussions of specific (pre-identified) pieces of work and larger group discussions of themes, common challenges, and interesting developments related to work with institutional ethnography. Dorothy will attend the workshop and engage directly with participants in small group discussion, as well as offer remarks to the group. The workshop is designed to be useful to people who are working through institutional ethnographies in the proposal, analysis, and final writing stages.

Please register for the workshop through the SSSP site when registering for the annual meeting. The program for the workshop is available at [http://www.sssp1.org/index.cfm/m/637/Institutional\\_Ethnography\\_Workshop/](http://www.sssp1.org/index.cfm/m/637/Institutional_Ethnography_Workshop/). Individuals who are interested in submitting work that would serve as the anchor to small group discussion should contact Lauren Eastwood ([eastwole@plattsburgh.edu](mailto:eastwole@plattsburgh.edu)) and Naomi Nichols ([naomi\\_nichols@edu.yorku.ca](mailto:naomi_nichols@edu.yorku.ca)) by July 1, 2015.

