

IE NEWSLETTER

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

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From the Division Chair

Lauren Eastwood

Greetings all!

I'm hoping that people are weathering the winter. We've had unusually cold weather here in Plattsburgh, which makes me feel that summer is in the distant future.

However, by the time this newsletter comes out, abstracts will have been submitted and session organizers will be in the process of selecting papers for the 2014 SSSP meetings in San Francisco. As we continued to build on the momentum we have been gaining, I anticipate some very exciting and stimulating sessions this year.

Additionally, we will continue our tradition of having an Institutional Ethnography workshop in conjunction with the SSSP annual meeting. It will be held on August 14, 2014, the day before the other meetings start. We are still very much in the early planning stages for this workshop – if you would like to be involved, or if you have innovative ideas for the program, please contact me to let me know.

We're also beginning the process of compiling nominations for the next Chair of the IE Division (2015-2017). There is more information about this process on the next page, and please note the due date for nominations is Friday, February 28 (sent to eastwole@plattsburgh.edu).

For those of you in session, good luck with the semester, and I look forward to seeing everyone in San Francisco!

-Lauren

Nominations for IE Division Chair

The process of soliciting nominations for the 2015-2017 Institutional Ethnography Division Chair is underway. You may nominate yourself or another member of the IE Division who is willing to serve. In either case, please include a brief academic biography that will be included in the ballots.

Nominees must be current members of the IE Division. **Please send nominations directly to Lauren Eastwood (eastwole@plattsburgh.edu) by February 28, 2014.** Information on roles and responsibilities can be found at: http://www.sssp1.org/index.cfm/m/462/Roles_and_Responsibilities_of_Division_Chairs/

For more information, please contact:

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New book by Naomi Nichols

The University of Toronto Press is publishing a book based on Naomi Nichols' dissertation. The book is titled *Youthwork. An Institutional Ethnography of Youth Homelessness* and expected in late spring. The following description will appear in the publisher's May 2014 book catalogue.

“Combining institutional ethnography and community-based research, *Youthwork* is a sophisticated examination of the troubling experiences of young people living outside the care of parents or guardians, as well as of the difficulties of the frontline workers who take responsibility for assisting them. Using more than a year of on-site research at an Ontario youth emergency shelter, Naomi Nichols exposes the complicated institutional practices that govern both the lives of young people living in shelters and the workers who try to help them.

A troubling account of how a managerial focus on principles like ‘accountability’ and ‘risk management’ has failed to successfully coordinate and deliver services to vulnerable members of society, *Youthwork* shows how competitive funding processes, institutional mandates, and inter-organizational conflicts complicate the lives of the young people that they are supposed to help. Nichols’s book should be essential reading for those involved in education, social services, mental health, and the justice system, as well as anyone with an interest in social justice.

Naomi Nichols is a postdoctoral fellow with the Canadian Homelessness Research Network in the Faculty of Education at York University and the principal investigator on a five-year SSHRC Insight grant studying Schools, Safety, and the Urban Neighbourhood.”

Other new publications

Grace, D. (2013). Transnational institutional ethnography: Tracing text and talk beyond state boundaries. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, Vol. 12. Retrieved from: <http://ejournals.library.ualberta.ca/index.php/IJQM/article/view/18929/15914>

(Other new publications continued)

Proding, B., & Turner, S. (2013). Using institutional ethnography to explore how social policies infiltrate into daily life. *Journal of Occupational Science*, 20(4), 357-369.

Notes and news from members

In December 2013, **Andrea Ingstrup** successfully defended her thesis titled: *The social organization of mothering work for a First Nations' mother* as a Master of Nursing Student at the University of Calgary.

Elena Kim, a doctoral student at the University of Bonn's Center for Development Research also recently and successfully defended her doctoral dissertation. Elena's dissertation is titled *International development and research in Central Asia: Exploring the knowledge-based social organization of gender*.

Naomi Nichols and **Alison Griffith** send along information about a project involving a small team of university scholars and community-based practitioners who have received five years of Social Sciences Humanities and Research Council (SSHRC) funding to conduct a community-based institutional ethnography on the work organization of safe schools in Ontario, Canada. The project is a partnership between York University and a community-based organization for youth in North West Toronto called Promoting Education and Community Health (PEACH). We are also collaborating with three school boards, Canada's largest youth jail, and the Ministry of Child and Youth Services. Currently, the team is using a team-based field-work approach to map the inter-institutional processes, policies and discourses used to designate youth as unsafe and initiate various institutional courses of action, under the umbrella of risk-mediation. Because of the complexity of the project and the dynamics of our team, the project operates through a series of connected research streams. For instance, this summer our two community youth researchers will train and lead a team of young people to design, conduct and communicate small pieces of research about their neighbourhood. For more information about the project, please contact naomi_nichols@edu.yorku.ca

The Canadian Institute of Health Research (CIHR) has awarded **Fiona Webster** \$100,000 for a study titled *Finding the complex patient in patient-centred care: An institutional ethnography of chronic pain management in family medicine*.

Megan Welsh, a doctoral candidate at the CUNY Graduate Center/John Jay College of Criminal Justice, was recently awarded a \$30,000 Graduate Research Fellowship from the National Institute of Justice for her IE dissertation, entitled *How women and front-line workers manage the bureaucratic process of reentry*. Megan and her advisor, Valli Rajah, also have an article forthcoming in *Feminist Criminology* based on Megan's project. The article, *Rendering invisible punishments visible: Using institutional ethnography in feminist criminology* will be published in November of this year.

Welcome to new members

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

Aron Hall
Neil Schuldiner
Leslie Irvine

Gianmarco Savio
Amie Levesque
Karida Brown

Vicky Lafantaisie
Jonathan Gordon

San Francisco session descriptions



Since our last newsletter, organizers have worked up short descriptions of their sessions (sponsored solely by the IE Division or jointly with others in the SSSP). Please see below and through to page 7.

IE Division sessions

Title: New Directions in Institutional Ethnography Research

Organizers: *Sophie Pomerleau and Annie Carrier*

This session provides a place to talk about innovative ways institutional ethnographic research is carried out, whether investigating a novel problematic, collecting and analyzing data, presenting results to various audiences (practitioners, academics, activists, policymakers, journalists) or even writing up a proposal for funding without ‘selling out’. The emphasis of the session is on trying new things and extending the range of institutional ethnography. Topics might include interesting ways to generate rich data or establish novel connections with community partners; new-to-IE domains of institutional practice; analytic approaches incorporated in institutional ethnography inquiry; creative ways to write up analysis; innovative presentational materials; new solutions to old problems; or original funding proposals. Papers will generally describe and reflect critically on specific empirical research projects, with a focus on matters of method, analysis and/or presentation. Papers might also discuss methodological or presentational matters from a hypothetical perspective.

Title: Methodological Innovations in Institutional Ethnography (Critical Dialogue)

Organizers: *Liza McCoy and Suzanne Vaughan*

This session will present a structured dialogue among panelists about critical methodological concerns and innovations in doing institutional ethnographic research. To start, each panelist will be asked to briefly outline their research to provide a context for discussion. Then the panel will address a set of methodological queries organizers have drawn from the papers submitted by the panelists.

Title: The Social Organization of Health Professional Work

Organizers: Nicola Waters and Karen Melon

Health care and health care professionals' (HCP) work is undergoing significant reform within the context of changing social trends. Demographic shifts, scientific development, technological innovation, economic pressures and greater professional accountability contribute to this rapid transformation. Institutional priorities, centered on improving productivity and efficiency, are increasingly being imposed on health workers' decisions and actions through the use of strategies that expand the capacity for systematization, standardization and control of practice. There are negative consequences borne by patients, families *and* health professionals.

This session will showcase a selection of institutional ethnographic (IE) research projects that explicate how management knowledge of health work processes is constructed on the basis of concepts and priorities that are quite different from HCPs' knowledge of their own work. Although improving patient outcomes and managing resources may be common aims, disparate views of what constitutes good, efficient and effective care arise as problematic when health professionals' knowledgeable practice is routinely restructured to produce administrative goals.

Co-sponsored sessions

Title: The Social Organization of Families Under Scrutiny (Thematic)

Co-Sponsoring Division: Families

Organizer: Elizabeth Brule

This session seeks papers that address how families and the social services that purport to support them are increasingly under scrutiny. The work that families must undertake to acquire social services for their children is extensive. This session will focus on the increasing surveillance of the family and the managerial requirements of social services in providing those services to them. Papers sought for the session include those that use an ethnographic approach and address race, gender, class, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age and/or an ability standpoint.

Title: Institutional Ethnographers Organizing for Change: Making Change from Below (Critical Dialogue)

Co-Sponsoring Division: Conflict, Social Action and Change

Organizers: Marie Campbell and Cheryl Zurawski

This critical dialogue introduces a web-based project in which institutional ethnographers activate their research knowledge to help people make organizational change from below. The project website is being constructed as a platform to crowd-source participants interested in changing troubling aspects of their engagement in organized settings, through making use of consultation with the project's team of researchers. We want to discuss the following questions: How might this work? Who can be involved? In what stage of development is the project now, and what comes next? On the basis of a "show and tell" presentation, an open discussion will ensue on the merits of the project, and the obstacles to be confronted and overcome to support people taking action in their own settings.

Title: The Organization of Trans-local/Global Governance, Law and Policy

Co-Sponsoring Division: Global

Organizer: Lauren Eastwood

This session is designed to highlight research that is conducted in the spirit of institutional ethnography, has a trans-local focus, and addresses some dynamic associated with governance, law, or policy. The session will include papers that investigate the ruling relations of policy or legal frameworks and how these frameworks operate on a global level, for example. Papers that investigate global governance from a perspective that is compatible with institutional ethnography are also appropriate.

Title: Technology and its Impact on the Everyday: Institutional Management of Risk

Co-Sponsoring Division: Environment and Technology

Organizer: Hans-Peter de Ruiter

This session will focus on how technology impacts the work and everyday lives of people. Some presentations might focus on how lives of individuals are changing e.g. how it can lead to alienation, or how the use of technology leads to social changes such as surveillance, consequences of social structures or the impact on social justice. Other presentations might focus on how technology is being used to protect institutions and the impact of this focus on individuals.

Title: Are You Being Served? Institutional Ethnographies of Social Services and Frontline Workers in an Age of Austerity (Thematic)

Co-Sponsoring Divisions: Labour and Sociology and Social Welfare

Organizer: Matthew Strang

This session will feature papers that discuss issues and tell stories of the tensions marginalized people experience as they hook into institutions for survival and yet find more struggle. In connection to SSSP's 2014 theme, this session utilizes a broad understanding of poor encompassing not only socio-economic status (SES) and class but other and any aspects of 'capital' that render a subject marginalized in our current globalized neoliberal context. Thus we seek papers that reflect conventional (financial) and broad understandings of 'the poor'. Along with IEs generous conceptualization of work, this session promotes a generous understanding of frontline workers that includes both those accessing and providing service. Papers will generally describe and reflect critically on specific empirical research projects.

Title: Power, Knowledge and the Politics of Reality

Co-Sponsoring Division: Social Problems Theory

Organizer: Jared Del Rosso

This session explores contestations over knowledge and power in everyday life, professional practice, policy, and/or social problem construction. Of particular interest are the ways that texts – defined broadly to include both written and audio-visual texts, as well as both virtual and material texts – mediate knowledge of social reality and, in turn, the ways that power affects the forms that reality takes in those texts, as well as the prevailing meaning of them in everyday, institutional, and public discourses.

Title: Bodies of Knowledge: Technologies of Embodiment and Social Organization

Co-Sponsoring Division: Sport, Leisure and the Body

Organizer: Matthew Strang

This session poses the question: how do we/can we research ruling relations of racialization, sexualization, gender, ability, etc. in the everyday lives of people using IE? The work that people do in their everyday lives is always embodied and thus, as researchers, how can we incorporate people's bodies (how they are read and the relationship between bodies) into our projects? A distinctive contribution of institutional ethnography is in making empirical links between everyday life and its social organization. In addition to including papers that make these links, this session will include papers that reflect on how IEs theoretical and methodological framework is used to understand/map embodied ruling relations. Papers can describe and reflect critically on specific empirical research projects, or focus on the challenges of explicating embodied ruling relations using IE.