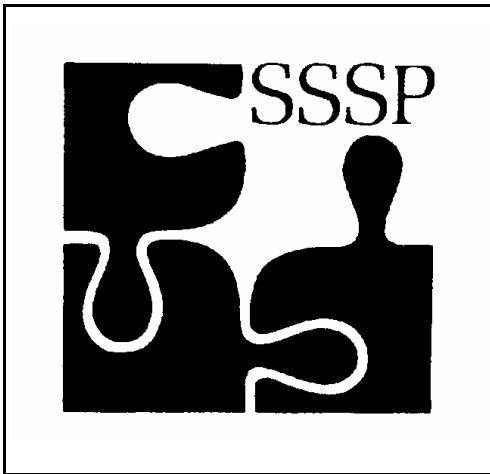


IE NEWSLETTER

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

November 2006

Vol. 3, No. 3



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FROM THE DIVISION CHAIR

Alison I. Griffith

Welcome to our first newsletter of the SSSP year. As usual, Paul has collected reviews, notices, announcements, and comments from the IE membership. This newsletter is an excellent example of what a good newsletter can look like. Congratulations, Paul, on another exemplary communication!

You will all have received notice that the Annual Meeting Call for Papers is on the SSSP website. IE will have nine sessions at the 2007 meeting in New York: Three are sponsored by the IE division and six are co-sponsored with other divisions. There is a good range of topics and I'm sure you'll find a session you'd like to submit a paper to. The conference is at a small hotel so it should be a great collegial experience.

This year we have a new award: the Dorothy E. Smith Activist-Scholar Award. This award will acknowledge the activist tradition envisaged by Dorothy as she developed Institutional Ethnography. It will honour our colleague(s) who have taken seriously the political dimensions of IE as activist scholarship.

The Canadian Society for Studies in Education and the Canadian Society for Sociology and Anthropology will be holding their Annual Conference at the University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, May 26-29, 2007. As the website states: "The CSSE Annual Conference is held in conjunction with the [Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences](#). This bilingual conference provides an opportunity for the discussion of educational issues among educational scholars from across the nation. CSSE encourages participative sessions in various formats including themed, symposium/panel, small round table, multiple paper, single paper, and poster (featuring the use of graphic or other multimedia material)." (<http://www.csse.ca/>). These conferences are a good venue to present IE papers and to meet the Canadian IE contingent.

And finally, this is Paul Luken's last year as the Newsletter Editor. We will be looking for someone to take his place. If you are an institutional ethnographer and have some experience doing newsletters, please volunteer. Send a note to Paul indicating your interest and your experience. We are hoping that three or four people will apply, which will give us a range of skills and interests to choose from. The IE Division Newsletter is widely read, both by our membership and by others who access it from the SSSP website.

Restful holidays to all of you.

A WORD FROM THE CHAIR-ELECT MARJ DEVAULT

I'm honored and enthused to be stepping into the role of Chair-Elect for the Division, and I've already learned a lot from Alison about how to do the Chair's work. She's organized a terrific line-up of sessions for next year's conference, so I urge you all to take a look and get to work on your paper submissions.

As I think about the growth of our community, one notable development is the publication of the outstanding pair of new Smith books, which provide some great new pieces in the continuing elaboration of Institutional Ethnography. As I read *A Sociology for People*, I recognized core ideas and discussions, but I also found new and extremely useful articulations of the methods that Dorothy and other practitioners have been developing in our growing corpus of studies. The companion book, *Institutional Ethnography as Practice*, is a tremendously exciting storehouse of pragmatic guidance on the various phases and aspects of Institutional Ethnography. It's also great fun to read because it has the juicy behind-the-scenes flavor that comes with detailed accounts of "what actually happens" in research. Thank you, Dorothy, for these very fine books!

At Syracuse University, I continue to work with a hardy band of IE students, and there are some very nice dissertation projects taking shape. I've just returned from a visit to St. Thomas University in Fredericton, New Brunswick, where I found a lively group of faculty and students thinking about IE projects. And I know that things are happening in lots of other places. It's very exciting to see these ideas developing and traveling in so many directions. Wherever you are, let us know what you're doing, and what the Division might do to support your activities.

Business Meeting Minutes August 10, 2006

Dorothy Smith announced an edition volume *Institutional Ethnography as Practice* published by Rowman & Littlefield, 2006.

Marjorie DeVault will be the IE Division Chair, 2007-2009. Alison and Marj will work together over the next year in preparation for the changeover.



Alison Griffith and Marj DeVault

The George Smith Student Paper Award Committee announced that several submissions were reviewed. The Committee was looking for the best exemplar

of IE work. The winner is Lauri Grace, Deakin University, Geelong, Australia.



Lauri Grace (left) receiving the award from Kamini Grahame, Student Paper Award Committee Chair.

The committee also noted that papers submitted for the award do not have to be previously submitted to conference sessions.

Paul Luken thanked everyone for their contributions to the *IE Newsletter*. The newsletter has been rewarding work. It has increased in influence and importance since it has gone into electronic format. Liza McCoy formally acknowledged the work Paul does on the newsletter.

Each division may bring forward resolutions addressing social issues of equity and justice to the Resolutions Committee of the SSSP. They are then circulated to the news media as well as to anyone that is named in the Resolution. There was discussion regarding the amendment to the proposed Resolution by TASC regarding the global problem of torture. The attendees discuss the appropriateness of the SSSP to establish procedures to monitor members' activities. The Resolution was amended to include reference to the Canadian Government as a "collaborating government". Point 4 was deleted as written. Liza McCoy amended the language to the Resolution. A second Resolution was proposed by Roxanne regarding the

destruction of Native lands. This Resolution was to be forwarded to the United Nation's Committee on Human Rights. Both motions were presented to the SSSP General Meeting.

Alison proposed the creation of The Dorothy E. Smith Scholar-Activist Award. The parameters of the award will be discussed on email between Marj and Alison and others. The proposed award is to be given to a scholar who has successfully linked scholarship and activism in their work.

Janet Rankin and Marie Campbell are having a book launch at 6PM on Friday in the book display area.

The Syracuse website for IE listings continues to be active but needs more activity. IE papers and publications can be posted on this site.

IE has three sessions plus a number of others that are co-sponsored with other divisions for the 2007 SSSP meetings in New York City. The IE Division also invites others to self-organize regional meetings but acknowledges there is no current infrastructure to accommodate this. There is the possibility for an IE meeting (informal) at the CSEE/CSAA meetings in Saskatchewan, June 2007. — submitted by Alison Griffith

Welcome New IE Division Members

(June 7 – November 7, 2006)

Jennifer Wheeler Brooks
Julia Chuang
Michael K. Corman
David J. Gemmel
Benjamin Kelly
Teresa (Tracy) Luciani
Geraldine A. Manning
John McKendy
Jacqueline Preyde
Heather Laine Talley
Gillian Walker
Frank T.Y. Wang
Chris R. Wellin

Call for Papers – IE Sessions at SSSP in NYC in 2007

Nine institutional ethnography sessions are planned for the SSSP annual meetings in New York City, August 10-12, 2007. Check out the many offerings listed below. For instructions on how to make submissions to the sessions of your choice, go to <http://www.sssp1.org/index.cfm/m/267>. **The deadline for papers/abstracts is midnight EST on January 31, 2007.**

Institutional Ethnography Sessions

IE Session 1: Focus On Institutional Ethnography

Organizer: Paul Luken
Department of Sociology and Criminology
University of West Georgia
Carrollton, GA 30118
USA
pluken@westga.edu

IE Session 2: Representing Institutional Ethnography: Strategies and Challenges

Organizers:
Peter R. Grahame
Sociology and Anthropology Department
Shippensburg University
Shippensburg, PA 17257
USA
pgrahame@comcast.net

and

Kamini M. Grahame
Behavioral Sciences and Community Psychology
Pennsylvania State University-Harrisburg
Middletown, PA 17057
USA
kmg16@psu.edu

and

Janet Rankin
Malaspina University-College
Nanaimo, British Columbia
Canada
rankinj@shaw.ca

IE Session 3: Using Institutional Ethnography to Map the Texts of Contemporary Change

Organizer: Marjorie DeVault
Department of Sociology
302 Maxwell Hall,
Syracuse University
Syracuse, NY 13244
USA
mdevault@syr.edu

Co-sponsored Sessions

Session 49: The Organization of Knowledge Across the Life Course

Co-sponsored with Youth, Aging and the Life Course

Organizer: Suzanne Vaughan
Arizona State University
Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences
P.O. Box 37100
Phoenix, Arizona 85069
USA
svaughan@asu.edu

Session 48: Ethnographically Examining Welfare State Knowledge Creation and Use

Co-sponsored with Sociology and Social Welfare

Organizer: Frank Ridzi
Department of Sociology
Le Moyne College
1419 Salt Springs Road
Syracuse, NY 13214
USA
ridzifm@lemoyne.edu

Session 7: Activist Possibilities with Institutional Ethnography

Co-sponsored with Conflict, Social Action, and Change

Organizer: Naomi Nichols
Faculty of Education
York University
4700 Keele St
Toronto, Ontario
Canada, M3J 1P3
NNichols@Edu.YorkU.CA

Session 24: Mapping Educational Training Across the Ages: Institutional Ethnographies Spanning Schooling from Childhood to Adulthood

Co-sponsored with Educational Problems

Organizer: Lois Andre-Bechely
Division of Applied & Advanced Studies in Education
Charter College of Education
California State University, Los Angeles
5151 State University Drive
A3040 King Hall
Los Angeles, CA 90032-8143
USA
loisab@calstatela.edu

Session 44: The Social Organization of Disability

Co-sponsored with Health, Health Policy, and Health Services

Perceived on the one hand by the medical profession as a pathological condition and, on the other hand, by disability rights activists as the result of an interaction between a subject's impairment(s) and his or her social and physical environments, this session seeks papers that use institutional ethnography to explore the social relations that generate the disjuncture between these two different ways of knowing disability in our schools, in our communities, and in our workplaces.

Organizer: Jean Louis Deveau
Department of Sociology
University of New Brunswick
Canada
jlpdev@nbnet.nb.ca

Session 33: Institutional Ethnographies for Families and Schools

Co-sponsored with Family Division

Alison I. Griffith
Faculty of Education
York University
4700 Keele St
Toronto, Ontario
Canada, M3J 1P3
AGriffith@Edu.YorkU.CA

Call for Nominations

Dorothy Smith Award for Scholar-Activism

In 2007, the Institutional Ethnography Division will inaugurate the Dorothy Smith Award for Scholar-Activism. This award will recognize 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 recipient will be chosen each year by the Dorothy Smith Award Committee, to be appointed by the Division Chair (and typically including the Chair, Chair-elect, and two other members). This year's committee is chaired by Marj DeVault and includes Alison Griffith, Paul Luken, and Tim Diamond. The committee invites members of the Division to send one-page statements describing the contributions of nominees to Marj at mdevault@syr.edu. The deadline for nominations is May 1, 2007. The honoree will be recognized and awarded a certificate during the Division's meeting in New York City.

— Marj DeVault

Lauri Grace Wins Student Paper Award

Congratulations to Lauri Grace of Deakin University, the 2007 winner of the George Smith Award. Her paper, "Mapping the Social Relations of the Australian VET Sector," is available online: <http://www.sssp1.org/index.cfm/m/21/pageId/296>.

Social Problems Editorial Search

The Editorial and Publications Committee of the Society for the Study of Social Problems is searching for the next Editor of Social Problems. The three-year term of the new Editor will begin at mid-year 2008 with responsibility for editing Volumes 56-58 (years 2009-2011). All members of the SSSP are encouraged to apply or nominate colleagues.

The Editor is responsible for soliciting, reviewing, and making final decisions on manuscripts, and for preparing four issues of the journal for publication annually. The editorial office is responsible for managing the review process and for copy editing and proofreading in accordance with customary publishing standards.

The SSSP seeks an individual with a distinguished scholarly record, previous editorial experience (e.g., service as a journal editor or associate editor), strong organizational and management skills, an ability to work well with others, and a familiarity with and commitment to Social Problems.

The SSSP supports the editorial office with an annual budget and provides a modest stipend and travel expenses for the Editor. Support is also expected from the host institution. This support may include office space, utilities, the use of computers and other office equipment, stipends and tuition waivers for office personnel, faculty release time, and other basic expenses. Each year the Editor will be expected to submit a budget to the SSSP to cover operating expenses that the host institution does not support.

Applications, requests for further information, or names of potential nominees should be sent to: James D. Orcutt, Chair, SSSP Editorial and Publications Committee, Department of Sociology, Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL 32306-2270; [850] 644-6416 (Office); [850] 644-6208 (FAX); email: jorcutt@fsu.edu.

**Deadline for Initial Nominations and Inquiries:
January 31, 2007.**

Become the Next *IE Newsletter* Editor and Free this Woman!

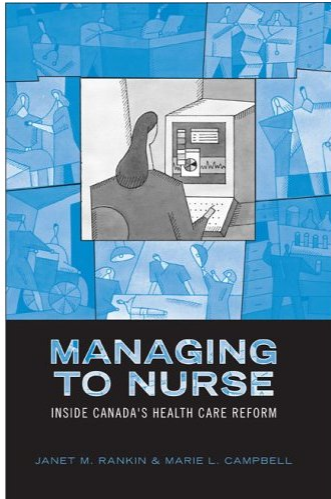


This is a behind-the-scenes look at the *IE Newsletter* in process: Helen Helwig proofreading the very issue that you are now reading, just as she has done for every issue over the past three years. Now is my opportunity to publicly thank her for all of her work on the newsletter, and it is your opportunity to release her from this job. How? Why not apply to become the next newsletter editor?

I have truly enjoyed my term as editor, but it is time to pass the position to someone else. If you think you might be interested, email pluken@westga.edu or call 678-839-6333. Do it for yourself. Do it for the IE Division. Do it for Helen.

Book Reviews

***Managing to Nurse: Inside Canada's Health Care Reform* by Janet M. Rankin and Marie L. Campbell. Toronto: University of Toronto Press 2006. 224 pages.**



This is an important book, not only for what it tells us about the travails of our ailing health care system from the perspective of nurses and their patients, but also for what we can extrapolate from it about a range of ills that beset our public institutions. Using institutional ethnography, the authors build on interviews and observation, factoring in data gathered from examining the texts and documents that are an increasingly significant component of institutional management. These procedures and protocols involve information technologies that indirectly but significantly affect the work of nurses and the experience of patients under their care.

In meticulous and fascinating detail Rankin and Campbell track the history of the restructuring process to which hospital nursing, along with so much else on the neo-liberal agenda, has been subjected. Their own experience as nurses and educators provides the entry point to these studies. We see them on the wards observing the daily routines, and talking to nurses, patients and families. They interview nursing managers and administrators. Rankin also participates in hospital care when a relative is taken ill, providing her with

insights into patient care from the perspective of a family member.

The introduction is dense but the persistent reader is rewarded by the six lively chapters that follow. These tell, in detail, the history of the managerial redirection of nursing and nursing education, the effect on patient care of technologies of bed utilization, the way in which health care workers are subjected to mindset re-adjustment, nurses' own resistance to restructuring and the management of this resistance within the profession, the technological manipulation of "patient satisfaction", and the reorganization of nurses' professional identity

Each chapter tells a compelling story that demonstrates how information technologies in the form of texts, documents and procedures for decision-making create a serious disjunction between the knowledge gained from being close to patients and their care and the other knowledge – expressing the discursively organized, efficiency-oriented priorities of managerialism. In the process, nurses' own consciousness is reorganized through a form of language manipulation that makes use of nurses' professional and altruistic ideas while reinforcing the importance of controlling costs, emptying beds, patient satisfaction and so on. The public, too, is drawn into this way of thinking. Problems are framed in terms of "accessibility" or 'wait-times' and public response is "managed" in relation to such already worked up categories. In B.C., for example, "wait-times" has been the focus of everybody's anxious attention and the big picture is lost. Wait-times, meanwhile, are being used to justify the use of private facilities. The authors point out that while no one objects to the notion of accountability, flaws are built into methods of accountability that rely on managerial facts. These facts systematically submerge the differences between cost and quality.

In their introduction and conclusion Rankin and Campbell argue that nurses' caring work and patient welfare are seriously undermined by the current

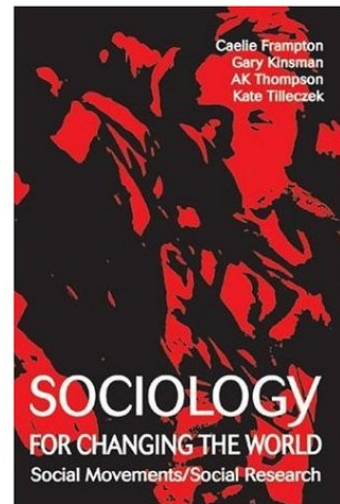
health care management agenda. Accounting logic demands that cost orientation is embedded into care-related activities through the information-based technologies central to new public management. Such technologies create a virtual reality in which accounting logic and efficient use of resources are substituted for the knowledge of patient needs that was previously the domain of professional nursing. Nurses are actively implicated in this process and come to see efficiency measures as an adequate and necessary basis for professional judgment and practice. Examining these topics from the position of those who do the work of caring or who are the recipients of that work, gives the authors a research standpoint that is outside the managerial framework. Their account provides for a different understanding of how serious gaps occur in patient care. Having done this analysis, the authors are able to refute existing versions that blame the difficulties of the system on the deficiencies of individual workers, be they nurses, nurse managers, cleaners or administrators. Nor are they impressed by the remedial strategies to which such accounts lead. Instead they aim to “tell the truth” about what is actually going on, a truth that is concealed by the new public management approach. In fact, they argue, managerial practices *prevent* us from understanding and acting on specific organizational circumstances that create the difficulties in the first place. Their project of developing knowledge from what is happening on the ground, in the daily work of nurses, opens up the possibility for alternative accounts of what is going on that suggest directions for oppositional work on behalf of patients.

Dorothy Smith, at a recent launch of this book, spoke of its “magical” quality. For me the magic is to be found in the vivid stories told and voices heard, allowing us as readers to both understand what is going on in our hospitals and at the same time to see the broader forces at work. Rankin and Campbell note that these changes to nursing reflect what is happening across the board in our public institutions. “[W]ithin the new public management ‘the public’ is an endangered terrain...in a world governed by neoliberal capitalism...a sense of

‘public’ is replaced by private interests ... downsizing, contracting out – throwing experienced workers into under or unemployment.” Their work gives us immediate and powerful access to the process and to the experience. This is institutional ethnography at its most useful and appealing; it provides an excellent resource for researchers, students, nurses engaged in resistance, activists and all concerned with mapping the ruling relations that are reorganizing our world.

— reviewed by Gillian Walker

***Sociology for Changing the World* edited by Caelie Frampton, Gary Kinsman, AK Thompson, and Kate Tilleczek. Fernwood Publishing, 2006. 288 pages.**



This collection of papers is a product of many participants whose collective process began in part at the *Sociology for Change the World* Conference at Laurentian University in northern Ontario in November 2002. The contributions are rich and diverse. It is an apt tribute to George Smith, a scholar, researcher and activist whose work, writing, gentle humour and incisive inquiry touched the lives of many activists and researchers alike.

Twelve papers follow a forward by Dorothy Smith which directly deals with the theoretical and ontological questions George grappled with, and out of which he developed an “activist ethnography” as this text calls it. What George put forward was what

he discovered both as an activist and an academic. As Dorothy Smith puts it “What the activist learns in the course of his or her engagement with contemporary practices of power is knowledge of the same phenomena that the institutional ethnographer explores.” (p. 20) George described this as the knowledge of the actual workings of politico-administrative regimes. You could start ethnographic inquiry from where you are located as an activist in struggle with those actual workings.

The first paper is George Smith’s “Political Activist as Ethnographer” reprinted from *Social Problems* Vol. 37 No. 4: 629-648 1990. It is a frequently cited article that tracks his two major “studies of ruling” – policing the gay community in Toronto and the management of the AIDS epidemic in Ontario – and outlines six features of what George pointed out comprise a “scientific account of the social organization of a ruling regime.”

The remaining papers include a range of tributes to activist ethnography, institutional ethnography and to George’s work and inspiration for how to practice ethnographic research that is committed to identifying opportunities for real change in how our everyday lives are shaped and ruled. Among them, authors explore ruling relations they discover from their locations working with immigrant workers in the garment industry, transsexuals in Quebec, non-status (“illegal”) people in Canada, and union and anti-poverty groups working with people living in poverty. William K. Carroll points to the extension Dorothy Smith has made from Marx’s materialist analysis of capital to the striking and pervasive fact of the textual mode of ruling relations and organization of contemporary society.

The editors of *Sociology for Changing the World* provide a thoughtful and challenging Afterword called “New Directions for Activist Research.” In it they identify the languages and dichotomies that stall us and divide those of us who are committed to social change, and the forms of conventional research that operate against the kinds of collaborative, engaged ethnography outlined for us

by George Smith and Dorothy Smith. All of these authors reinforce that “it is through our own practices, relations and struggles that capitalist social relations are produced, and we have the social capacities to transform them.” Again, a fitting tribute to George Smith and his engaged ethnography.

— reviewed by Susan Marie Turner

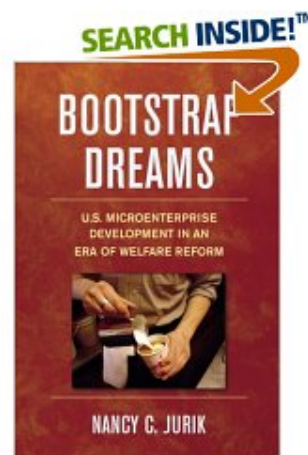
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***Bootstrap Dreams: U.S. Microenterprise Development in an Era of Welfare Reform* by Nancy C. Jurik. ILR Press, 2005. 252 pages.**



Look for a review by Kamini Grahame in an upcoming issue of *Social Problems Forum: The SSSP Newsletter*.

Graduate Student Paper Competition

George Smith Award in Institutional Ethnography

The Institutional Ethnography Division of the Society for the Study of Social Problems solicits papers for its 2007 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 PhD's who have completed their studies by March 2006 or later. The papers must be student-authored; co-authored papers are acceptable as long as all authors are students. The papers must not have been previously published and should be a maximum of 40 pages including all notes, references, and appendices.

To enter, submit a copy of the paper as an email attachment and send it to Brenda Solomon at bsolomon@uvm.edu or Lauri Grace at lauri.grace@deakin.edu.au. All entries should specify that they are being submitted for the Graduate Paper Competition in Institutional Ethnography, and the author should note if the paper had already been submitted as part of the Society for the Study of Social Problems' "Call for Papers." Papers must be received by May 1, 2007.

The winner of the George Smith Award will be recognized at the annual banquet of the Society for the Study of Social Problems. The prize includes a cash award, registration fees, a banquet ticket, and the opportunity to present the paper at the annual meeting. The meeting will be held August 10-12, 2007, in New York City.