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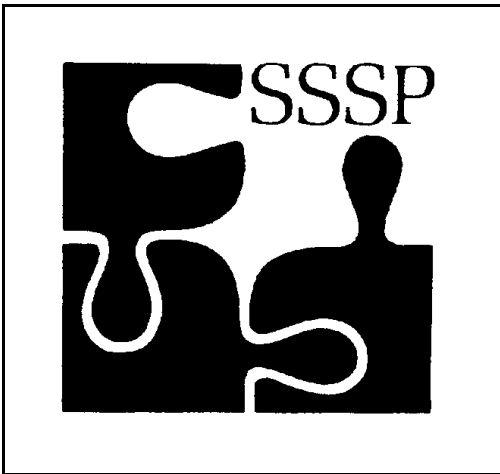
Institutional Ethnography Division of the Society for the Study of Social Problems

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On the inside:

FROM THE DIVISION CHAIR

Alison I. Griffith

Hello again! It's May in Toronto which means our long-awaited spring is finally here, flying forward towards summer with all the usual spectacular accoutrements. So too, we are moving quickly toward the end of our IE Division year which will be celebrated at our SSSP conference in New York, August 10 – 12 at the Roosevelt Hotel.

Paul Luken has stepped down as Newletter Editor after three years. He set a high standard for SSSP Newsletters by combining news, articles, book reviews, and announcements. Under his guidance, our newsletter has become the centre of our Division's communicative processes. Thank you, Paul!

Gillian Walker and Cheryl Zurawski are our new editors and this marks their journalistic debut. Some of you know the work of Gillian Walker. Her book *Family Violence and the Women's Movement: The Conceptual Politics of Struggle (1990)* is one of the best books ever written about the transformation of women's experience of violence into the administratively-manageable concept of family violence. She brings her long experience of teaching IE in the area of social work to the newsletter. Cheryl Zurawski is a PhD student at the University of Regina. Her area of research is the corporate learning development plans – text-reader conversations –that coordinate the activities that are counted as work-related learning. Cheryl brings an undergraduate degree in journalism as well as her IE expertise to our newsletter.

This November, there will be an IE conference at Deakin University, Geelong, AU. Details of the conference, entitled *Institutional Ethnography: Contexts, Organizations and Texts*, can be found on page 13. The conference will be chaired by Lauri Grace and Jill Blackmore of Deakin University. Dorothy Smith and Barbara Comber are keynote speakers.

While in Australia, several of us will also be going to the Australian Association of Research in Education conference in Fremantle from November 25 – 29, 2007. Definitely an Aussie year for IE.

This is my last newsletter as Division Chair. I've enjoyed my two years as Chair. The Division has grown and our sessions have been exciting to attend. Thanks to all who organized sessions, gave papers, and were such an attentive and discerning audience. I look forward to being able to attend some of the sessions when my duties as Chair are finished. Thanks, too, to those of you who gave time to support the work of the Division. The success of our activities depends on the invisible work of many of our members. And finally, thanks to Michele Koontz whose institutional memory and guidance meant that I got things done on time and we have an exciting conference to attend each year.

Marjorie DeVault is the incoming Chair. Marj has long been involved in SSSP and has held positions on many of the committees that keep the organization as interesting as it is. She has also written extensively in IE. I have found her article, with Liza McCoy, titled *Institutional ethnography: Using interviews to investigate ruling relations* to be an excellent teaching text. Happy Chairing, Marj! See you all in New York.

Reclaiming nurses's knowledge

Janet Rankin and Marie Campbell's book *Managing to Nurse* was published in March 2006 and the anniversary of its publication is the occasion for their proposal of an educational project of activism. *Managing to Nurse* argues that Canadian neoliberal policies have become the philosophical and organizational basis of health care reform, directly and indirectly undermining the capacity of nurses to work for *the public good*. The argument is that nurses' embodied knowledge is being displaced or distorted through incorporation of explicit organizational practices into new information forms; without nurses' knowledge or intention, this new information constitutes them (nurses) as participants in the neoliberal agenda, (which seeks, among things, to reduce the public sector in one way or another). The book's analysis shows how important nurses are to the achievement of the new public management and, what becomes so troubling in all this, is that their personal and professional commitments shift toward embracing *its* goals, as nurses take up the organizational practices. Rankin and Campbell argue that participation in this new organizational work changes nurses' consciousness so that they understand differently what is expected of them, and what is right and good as work

objectives; nurse managers also contribute to elevating management-oriented practice as exemplary nursing. *Managing to Nurse* contrasts this kind of new organizational knowledge with the embodied knowledge of nursing that is now being subjugated.

The objectives of the project being proposed:
- to engage direct practice nurses in consciousness-raising about their work, its meaning to themselves and others;
- to undertake activities that will build analytic insights about how nursing is organized to be experienced and practised as it is;
- to generate some common understandings (among nurses) of how public health care might be protected at a grassroots level.

The current preliminary stage of planning requires the involvement of a broadly representative group of progressive and engaged nurses to advise on, support and champion the project, and perhaps take part in some aspects of it. A brainstorming meeting has been held to elaborate our tentative plan of activism, at which the relevance of project for the profession's current engagement with the crisis of 'nurse retention' was raised, and a long list of possible actions suggested.

New members

The following people joined the IE Division between February 22 and May 15 2007. Welcome!

Yvonne A. Braun
Bryan Gopaul
Annette M. Hunt
Virginia Husting
Raedeen Keahiolalo-Karasuda
Emma Mancha
Jill Peters
Jacqueline Smith
Kia Sorenson
Cheryl Zurawski

Notes and news from members

Margo Kushner writes that last September she took up a faculty position on the Salisbury University campus of the State of Maryland university system and is now living on the eastern shore of the U.S. Unfortunately, she will not be in New York for the annual meeting but hopes to make it to Boston next year to present her PhD findings. She has been asked to present them at the 44th Annual Conference of the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts in DC in June.

"This is a very difficult conference to crack as a speaker. It attracts judges, lawyers and professionals like child custody evaluators (expert witness types) from all over the world.

I used IE as my research approach and mapped the flow of text through the Alberta court system. I also had the rather unique opportunity to interview 22 Queen's Bench judges from Alberta. Apparently this is unique in that Canadian judges have never engaged in scholarly research and doing so using IE was a first. The dialogue with the judges confirmed exactly what the mapping process confirmed. How is that for a reliable and valid IE study?"

Margo is hoping to use the DC conference to contact another sample of judges from a different jurisdiction and to replicate the study. She would be interested in hearing from anyone who is aware of funding sources for justice/legal type research.

Kathryn Church sent news of a talk she gave recently at the University of Victoria (Human and Social Development):

"It was called *Wearing my Heart on my Sleeve: Unfolding the Politics of Dress among Women with Disabilities.* This was an extension of my talk at SSSP last year (a session organized by Marj Devault with her, Eric Mykhalovskiy and myself as speakers). The talk takes up Dorothy Smith's 'generous definition of work' in getting dressed.

I am still collecting data, but I talked about how the study is shaped to discover social organization in the closets of disabled women. Thus, it has some conceptual grounding in IE though not a direct tracing of textually mediated social organization. (Or not yet!). I also discussed, briefly, the way that the university 'captured' this research for its public relations 'machine' well before the data was actually collected. (Study still in progress.)

The talk was podcast and people can listen to it (and send comments to me, please!). Just google University of Victoria Engaging Disability 2007 Monday night lecture series. I think I was number seven. Although not visible through the podcast, the presentation included a backdrop 'visual essay' done by a colleague of mine (artist/sociologist) drawing on images (80 of them) from my childhood, scraps of memorabilia, dream images, slices of dress images from a previous project, fragments of photos from how the university is taking up this research that I am doing...a visually provocative imaging of the subjective sub-text of the talk."

Kathryn can be reached at the School of Disability Studies and the Ryerson-RBC Institute for Disability Studies Research and Education, Ryerson University, Toronto. Email: k3church@ryerson.ca

Max Travers sends the following note from the School of Sociology and Social Work at the University of Tasmania:

"I have been a member of the IE group through SSSP for the last few years, so thought it was worth sending some news for your newsletter. I am really an ethnomethodologist with an interest in critical politics and ethnography, rather than an institutional ethnographer in the sense of following Dorothy Smith's methodology.   On the other hand, I am sympathetic towards IE work, and wrote positively about this in my textbook *Qualitative Research Through Case Studies* (Sage, 2001).

I have attached details of a book titled *The New Bureaucracy: Quality Assurance and its Critics*, published recently by The Policy Press, Bristol, UK.

It is worth comparing methodologically as a contribution to critical analysis of neoliberalism with IE studies, such as *Managing to Nurse* and the labour process tradition in Britain.

In fact, the book does contain brief references to each, although I try to distinguish my approach as an ethnomethodological ethnographer, influenced by Weber more than Marx.

I can write a longer piece about my critical engagement with IE, if this would interest your readers. I should also add that a critical review article by me about Dorothy Smith's recent books will be published in the next issue of International Sociolinguistics, the internet newsletter of RC25, the Research Committee on Language and Society of the International Sociological Association (ISA). http://www.staff.hum.ku.dk/smo/smo2/rc25-home.htm

The aim is to generate debate about critical theorising and ethnography.

As you may know, we hold sessions at the four yearly ISA World Congresses. We were thinking about offering a session to IE researchers, although it may be that you are already represented in some other research committee's program.

RC25 aims to create dialogue between different traditions concerned with language and society, and we are trying to increase the number of traditions represented.

The next Congress will be held in Sweden in 2010, so there is some time before we need to start thinking about this. I have copied this message to Sandi Michele de Oliveira and Celine-Marie Pascale, our co-presidents, for information. Otherwise, I will keep thinking about these issues, and try writing a short piece at some point.

Celine-Marie Pascale responded to Max's message saying that she would welcome IE researchers in RC25 and would be very glad to brainstorm ideas about how we might be able to best be able to do outreach to IE scholars.

Women's NGOs in Kyrgyzstan, international funding, and the social organization of gender

Marie Campbell, PhD, Professor Emerita, University of Victoria, Canada, has received a grant from *Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada*'s International Opportunities Fund for a year of research beginning (in Kyrgyzstan) in June 2007.

Co-investigator is Elena Kim, American University of Central Asia; research collaborator is Dr. Sharon Horne, University of Memphis. The research will be housed in Aigine Cultural Research Centre, Bishkek, through the cooperation of its director, Dr. Gulnara Aitpaeva.

The Kyrgyz Republic is said to be a transitional state, meaning in transition from a soviet form of society to a market economy and democracy. Trans- and international donors have begun to recognize the importance of women's participation in the transition to democracy. In this context, gender has often been used to mean "women", but it may now also refer to specific institutional technology – such as gender mainstreaming – that embeds equity-oriented accountability in development efforts. Building on the United Nations' official follow-up of the 1995 Beijing Women's Forum, internationally-based development organizations operating in Kyrgyzstan have helped to put gender on the agenda of the Kyrgyz state, too.

The proposed research addresses the important role being played by local women's organizations as they mediate the everyday actualities of women's lives and the gender equity goals of the international organizations operating in the country.

The analysis is not evaluation of the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming practices, but the more complex question of *how* organizations carry development policy into local settings, translating those ideas into specific action on the ground - reported as "impacts" Our attention is drawn to the implicit narrative of accountability played out as certain people generate policy, design its implementation, fund projects and account for what happens; and others, located in project sites, take up the institutional technologies of projects and enact them - within the particular conditions of their own lives. What is being accounted for and to whom?

The research approach, institutional ethnography, makes it possible to bring together the different sides (and sites) of international development work. We will analyse program intentions, and what they actually come to, in two projects in Kyrgyzstan. Central to our methodology is recognition of the powerful role of institutional texts in organizing and representing development work and its achievements, and especially in our research, its gender impacts. Gender, rather than being a binary variable (male or female) is understood as socially constructed relations of power and hierarchy that are differentially accessible to differently-sexed individuals or groups, but that are shaped by culture, ethnicity, age, class or religion; these relations are "in play" in development projects, as elsewhere. Gender inequity is a major problem around the world, but according to the statistics of the Kyrgyz Republic, in spite of much international aid targeted to women's empowerment since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the status of women there is in sharp and continuing decline. Kyrgyzstan thus offers a useful site for systematic reflection on and analysis of the workings of internationally-funded projects aimed at empowering women, including those projects that employ gender mainstreaming strategies. The findings will be generalizable to other development activities that are structured similarly. The goal is to build new knowledge about what is actually happening that will engage donors, policy-makers, international development professionals, and feminist academics and activists in reflective dialogue about their own efforts to advance women's rights and capacities, and build gender equity. Through this international collaboration we plan to establish a network of researchers for whom our analysis can act as the catalyst for further research into the social relations of gender occurring at the intersection of institutional and experiential action.

Institutional Ethnography at the SSSP Annual Meetings

Following is a list of IE sessions being sponsored by the Institutional Ethnography Division of the SSSP at the upcoming annual meeting in New York City's Roosevelt Hotel. Co-sponsors are also listed. Please check the final program for changes.

Friday, August 10

8:30 am – 10:10 am
Focus on Institutional Ethnography
Room: East End Suite

Organizer, Presider & Discussant: Paul C. Luken, University of West Georgia

Papers:
"Changing Knowledge Relations: Institutional Ethnography and the Challenge of Collaborative Community-based Policy Research," Susan Marie Turner, University of Guelph

"'*Join* OUR Dialogue or We Will Speak Ill of You [and by the way also starve you]': Examining the Textual Relation between Hamas and the US Congress," Mark Ayyash, York University

"Institutionalized Helpers and Natural Helpers in Year of Restoration after an Earthquake: A Case Study in Taiwan," Fan-Ying Tao, Providence University

"Researching Research: Using IE Experience and Scholarship to Explore Social Production of Knowledge," Ercument Gundogdu, York University

"Thinking About Thinkers on a Moving Train: Toward Subjects as Plural," Timothy Diamond, St. Thomas University

10:30 am – 12:10 pm
Using Institutional Ethnography to Map the Texts of Contemporary Social Change
Room: East End Suite

Organizer & Presider: Marjorie DeVault, Syracuse University

Discussant: Liza McCoy, University of Calgary

Papers:
"Going the Distance: How Policies Impact Northern Care Giving Women in Housing Choices," Barb Keith, RSW Private Practice, Anita Vaillancourt, University of Northern British Columbia, Heather Peters, University of Northern British Columbia, Dawn Hemingway, University of Northern British Columbia, Jo-Anne Fiske, University of Lethbridge, Christina McLennan, Thompson Rivers University and Anne Burrill, University of Northern British Columbia

"The Social Organization of Volunteer Work in Toronto for Skilled Newcomers Seeking 'Canadian Work Experience,'" Bonnie Slade, OISE/University of Toronto

"The Making of the Migrant Domestic Worker in Taiwan as a Cold-blooded Female Killer," Frank T.Y. Wang, National Yang Ming University

"Using Institutional Ethnography to Analyze Global Phenomena: The Case of Anti-trafficking NGOs in Russia and Ukraine," Nadia Shapkina, Georgia State University

12:30 pm – 2:10 pm
The Social Organization of Disability
Room: East End Suite

Co-Sponsor: Health, Health Policy, and Health Services Division

(August 10 continued)

Organizer, Presider & Discussant: Jean Louis Deveau, University of New Brunswick

Papers:
"Part-Time Work and the Disabled Worker: Beyond Workplace Accommodations," Adam Orfanakos, York University

"He Ain't Nothin' but Half a Man: The Social Loss of Masculinity through Disability," Alexis A. Bender, Georgia State University

"Putting the Federal 'Functional Equivalency' Directive into Everyday Practice: Interpreter Accountability in the Provision of Video Relay Services," Jeremy L. Brunson, Syracuse University

"Workplace Accommodation for Disabled Workers in the Canadian Federal Public Service: A Textually Mediated Social Organization," Jean Louis Deveau, University of New Brunswick

2:30 pm – 4:10 pm
Institutional Ethnography Division Meeting (open to all SSSP members)
Room: Broadway Suite

4:30 pm – 6:10 pm
The Social Organization of Knowledge Across the Life Course
Room: East End Suite

Co-sponsor: Youth, Aging, and the Life Course Division

Organizer, Presider & Discussant: Suzanne Vaughan, Arizona State University

Papers:
 "Still Razing the Red Barn: Regulating Children's Knowledge of Farm Animals," Cattryn Somers, Arizona State University
"The Everyday World of the Entrepreneur," Jill Peters, Arizona State University

"The Kitchen Debates: Decorating and Remodeling in the Age of Consumption," Paul C. Luken, University of West Georgia and Suzanne Vaughan, Arizona State University

"Diagnosing Attention Deficit Disorder: An Institutional Ethnography," Erik Rodriguez, University of West Georgia

"An Institutional Ethnographic Analysis of the Psychiatric Diagnostic Process," Rebecca Godderis, University of Calgary

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Saturday, August 11

12:30 pm – 2:10 pm
Representing Institutional Ethnography: Strategies and Challenges
Room: Broadway Suite

Organizers & Presiders: Peter R. Grahame and Kamini M. Grahame, Pennsylvania State University

Discussant: TBA

Papers:
"Is Institutional Ethnography a Variant of Social Constructionism?" Liza McCoy, University of Calgary

"Policing Equity Initiatives: The Challenges of Representing an Institutional Ethnographic (IE) Project on Equity in Colleges," Linda Muzzin, OISE/University of Toronto and Diane Meaghan, Seneca College

"Accounting of Individuals through Texts," Paul K. Lawton, University of Calgary

"Institutional Ethnography and the Ethnographic Enterprise," Peter R. Grahame and Kamini Maraj Grahame, Pennsylvania State University

2:30 pm – 4:10 pm
Mapping Educational Training Across the Ages: Institutional Ethnographies Spanning Schooling from Childhood to Adulthood
Room: Broadway Suite

Co-sponsor: Educational Problems Division

Organizer, Presider & Discussant: Lois Andre-Bechely, California State University

Papers:

"Professor- An Intellectual Voice in the Hands of Ruling Relations. Discourse, Text, Praxis and the Everyday Life of a Professor in the Light of Institutional Ethnography," Karin Widerberg, University of Oslo

"Using Institutional Ethnography to Explore the Dynamics of Students' Reading-Writing Activities in Doctorate Programs in the Social Sciences," Suzanne F. Miller, OISE/UT University of Toronto

"Professional Socialization among Pre-Service Teachers: The Role of Peer Cultures in Shaping New Teachers' Perspectives on Working in Schools," Judson Everitt, Indiana University

"Organizing Public School Parents: Activism in the Midst of Ruling Relations," Lois Andre-Bechely, California State University, Los Angeles

"From Braxton Hicks to Preterm Labour: The Work of Preterm Birth Prevention Texts," Karen MacKinnon, University of Victoria

4:30 pm – 6:10 pm
Coordinating the Family/Household
Room: Broadway Suite

Co-sponsor: Family Division

Organizer, Presider & Discussant: Alison I. Griffith, York University

Papers:
"Practices in the Protection of Children's and Women's Rights in Dominican Republic: Attempting Institutional Ethnography in Latin America," Henry Parada and Ken Moffatt, Ryerson University

"Follow the Paperwork: An institutional Ethnography of Child Welfare," Christine M. Patterson, University of Missouri, Columbia

"The Standardizing Work of Filling 'Autistic Shells' - Using Institutional Ethnography to Explore Textually Mediated Health Relations in the Diagnosis Process of Autism," Michael K. Corman, University of Victoria

"Parent Involvement among Teachers and Italian Mothers in Germany," Elisa Fanelli, University of Trento

"The 'Right' Way to Shop: The Discourse of Grocery Shopping," Shelley L. Koch, University of Kansas

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Sunday, August 12

12:30 pm – 2:10 pm
Activist Possibilities with Institutional Ethnography
Room: York Suite

Co-sponsor: Conflict, Social Action, and Change Division

Organizer, Presider & Discussant: Naomi Nichols, York University

Papers:
"Government/Community Consultation in Australian Vocational Education Policy Development: Narrative Accounts and Organisational Responses," Lauri Grace, Deakin University

"Learning about 'Empowering' Women in Kyrgyzstan: Institutional Ethnography, Gender, International Development and Accountability for Results," Marie Campbell, University of Victoria
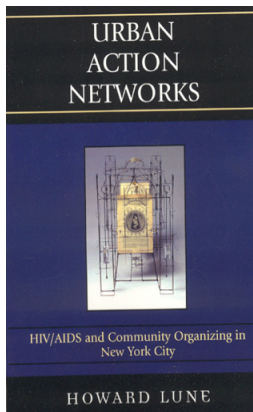
"'Women in Computing' as a Textual Practice: Creating the Subject of 'Female-Friendly' Computer Science," Susan Sturman, University of Toronto

"Learning Institutional Work: Lessons from Working with an Advocacy Group for Migrant Workers," Li-Fang Liang, Syracuse University

"Youth and Institutional Engagement: Institutional Ethnography as a Participatory Action Research Strategy," Naomi Nichols, York University

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Book review

Urban Action Networks: HIV/AIDS and Community Organizing in New York City. Lune, Howard. NY: Rowman and Littlefield, 2007.

Book review by Naomi Nichols
PhD Candidate, York University
Graduate Program in Education

As the book begins, Howard Lune brings his reader to the scene of a 1994 protest march unfolding along the Brooklyn Bridge in New York City.

He locates himself amidst the organized mass of people winding its way noisily through the streets. The protest has been organized in response to Mayor Giuliani's public suggestion that New York City's Division of AIDS Services be shut down. Lune begins here because this march – organized within a single working day of Guiliani's public announcement – represents the complex interorganizational network that is New York City's AIDS community: the "ambiguously defined, rapidly shifting, politically inconsistent, angry, conciliatory, powerful, disenfranchised network of private individuals and nonprofit organizations" (p. 1). Lune's project in this book is to examine the organizational practices of this diverse and coordinated group of actors who made up the grassroots response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic in New York City. His empirical focus is not on the work activities of specific actors, but on mobilization *processes* in general, as these were embedded in a changing political-institutional environment. Lune leads us from the scene on the bridge through an examination of the "emergence and growth of the community-based nonprofit groups engaged in HIV/AIDS related work" (p. 11).

In Part One: Responding to HIV/AIDS, Lune describes the nature of the study, the historical and political contexts in which events unfolded, and his theoretical contribution to discussions of networks, field, and contentious politics. In the first chapter, he documents the official medical, social, and political responses to HIV/AIDS in the 1980s, and purposefully guides his reader from here into an examination of emergent grassroots and community-based responses occurring at the same time. He describes the interorganizational activities of individuals and community-based organizations as an 'urban action network'.

As Lune uses the term, an urban action network describes relations constituted through multiple forms of action and divergent work activities carried out by individual actors and organizations within a particular organizational field.

Part Two: Community Organizing in New York City examines the "patterns of emergence" (p. 16) of various organizations within an evolving urban action network. In the second chapter, Lune documents what he refers to as the first and second waves of organizing. He describes the emergence of the 'HIV/AIDs early risers' and their initial efforts to gain information about, and then recognition for, people with HIV/AIDS. Like he does throughout this book, Lune situates the organizational activities of these early activists in the context of politics, medicine and culture. He captures changing organizational goals and shifting alliances among early community-based organizations as these led to eventual interorganizational activities. In chapters three and four, Lune describes how tight bonds between organizations served to increase organizational reach and standardize practice. At the same time, these bonds created gaps in service provision. He describes the emergence of community-based organizations with mandates to meet the specific needs and cultural practices of African-American or Caribbean-American men and women, Latino/a community members, Asian and Pacific Islanders, injection drug users, and women and families with HIV/AIDS. Still other groups branched off from larger organizations to tackle specific issues associated with HIV/AIDS, such as homelessness. This third wave of community organizing involved the creation of a number of smaller, more specialized institutions within a framework carved out by the prior two waves of organizing.

Chapter five offers a detailed account of the formation and evolution of ACT-UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power), a non-hierarchical, decentralized activist collective integrating numerous strands of community organizing in opposition to the state. Lune documents how the coalition was comprised of numerous working group committees, each pursuing its own activist goals.

Towards the end of the chapter, he examines the way in which the structure/mission of the organization shifted to account for increased involvement with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). In chapter six, he describes how evolving relations between community-based organizations and the state changed the work activities of activists and the organizational structures of various activist groups and/or initiatives. He illuminates a relation between state funding regimes and increased accountancy work, hierarchy, and centralized leadership strategies within the interorganizational network of activist organizations. Further, he describes how political activity decreased within this structure, as organizations became increasingly focused on service provision.

Part Three: Networks and Contentious Politics, draws Lune's description of the HIV/AIDS urban action network in New York City into a general discussion of social movements and contentious politics. He proposes the urban action network as a model for understanding contentious politics in an era of globalization.

While not an institutional ethnography, Lune's focus on the interorganization of activism in New York resonates with some of the kinds of work institutional ethnographers do (see, for example, Ellen Pence's use of institutional ethnography to investigate – and advocate for changes to – the criminal court system in Duluth, Minnesota[1.]). Indeed, this book offers a complex map – outlining the various points of intersection among community-based activists, medical knowledge, people with HIV/AIDS, and the state.

What is missing on this map, however, is Smith's (2005[2.]) 'you are here' sign. While Lune begins this book situated bodily amidst a mass of protesters, the research lens quickly zooms out, and his character disappears from the story. His role shifts from embodied actor to omniscient narrator.

Presented from a bird's eye view, one is left wondering what the map looks like from the standpoint of people on the ground. Thus, for institutional ethnographers, this book is useful to the extent that it describes an extensive organizational terrain, within which our own investigative projects may be embedded.

Notes:

1. Pence, Ellen. (1997). Safety for Battered Women In a Textually Mediated Legal System. A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy in Education, Toronto, ON: OISE University of Toronto.
2. Smith, D.E. 2005). *Institutional Ethnography: A Sociology for People.* Toronto: Altamira Press.

On the other side of the Webcam
By Cheryl Zurawski

As part of her introduction to the March 2007 *IE Newsletter*, Division Chair Alison Griffith commneted on her "unusual teaching experience" during a qualitative research methods course last semester at York University.

The unusual experience allowed me, a University of Regina PhD student, to join the weekly face-to-face meetings held at York University from the comfort of my home office approximately 2,000 miles away. As the student on the other side of the webcam, it's my turn to share some reflections on the learning experience that a willing professor and an able technician made possible for me.

My research interest (broadly stated) is work-related learning. In the summer of 2006, I wrote a first draft dissertation proposal with IE as my research approach. I was attracted to the possibility of inquiry from other than the dominant managerial standpoint of my discipline.

As I continued to look for IE resources, I came across Marjorie DeVault's website at Syracuse University. After surfing there, I sent email asking Marj if she knew of any online courses that a newcomer to IE might take. To my delight, Marj's reply pointed me in Alison Griffith's direction. I was lucky to learn from Alison that a winter offering of a graduate course in qualitative methods with an IE focus was on the horizon and that she would be willing to work with me. To say that I was delighted, and motivated to jump through the hoops of admission as a special student at York University, was an understatement.

Alison's 12-week course was instrumental in my ability to write a second draft dissertation proposal that has recently been forwarded to my PhD committee. I owe a lot to her and the discussions with my cyber-classmates both for the ideas and insights they shared as well as their patience on those nights when we had a little trouble connecting or needed to adjust volume settings or the location of the microphone in order for me to hear the lively discussions going on. I would be remiss if I neglected to mention Obadiah, the York University technician who never failed to be there when we needed help with the technology before or between classes. He always knew just what to do to make things work.

The opportunity to take part in an online IE course could not have come at a better time for me.   Not only did I accomplish my learning objective, but I also built some budding relationships with people in the IE community. Volunteering to help Gillian Walker with the production of this newsletter is one small way in which I am expressing my gratitude for the help support and top quality instruction that I've received.

A conference in the land down under

**Contexts, Organisations and Texts: Institutional Ethnographers
in Transnational Dialogue**

Geelong, Victoria, Australia, November 20-22, 2007

Call for Abstracts Now Open Via the Conference Website http://www.ieoz07.com

Deakin University Educational Futures and Innovation Research Cluster and the Institutional Ethnography Network extend a warm invitation to scholars with an interest in Institutional Ethnography to participate in a collaborative dialogue across different fields of study and national contexts.

Conference Theme

This conference will be of interest to a broad audience of scholars in the fields of education, health, social work, mothering, nursing, community work, management and organization studies and related fields.

The program provides opportunities for those who are already familiar with or using Institutional Ethnography in their own research, and those who would like to be further informed about Institutional Ethnography.

Conference sessions will incorporate a variety of activities including keynote presentations by leading institutional ethnographers; opportunities for researchers who are already familiar with Institutional Ethnography to work collaboratively with colleagues in a variety of fields of study and national contexts; workshops to address the needs of scholars who have only a basic knowledge of Institutional Ethnography and who would like to develop their understanding and expertise; and panel discussions that illustrate the use of Institutional Ethnography across institutional and national boundaries.

The social activities included in the conference will provide excellent opportunities for delegates to network with colleagues beyond the formal conference sessions themselves and meet in interest groups.

Post-Conference Workshop

Following the two-day conference there will be a separate one-day workshop, designed for both novice institutional ethnographers who seek to extend their knowledge of the field and established scholars in Institutional Ethnography to explore a range of theoretical and methodological issues raised by IE. This workshop will also provide an opportunity for researchers in various fields to bring examples of their own research to share / workshop with others with a view to identifying and discussing "global" institutional relations and thus begin to map collaborative research and writing projects that cross national boundaries.

There will be separate proposal submission and registration processes for the two-day conference (November 20-21) and the one-day post-conference workshop (November 22).

Both events are being held at the Deakin Management Centre, Deakin University, Geelong, Victoria, Australia.

Keynote Speakers

Professor Dorothy E. Smith

Title of keynote presentation: To be announced

Dr Dorothy E. Smith is the founder of the Institutional Ethnography (IE) movement and is Professor Emerita in the Department of Sociology & Equity Studies in Education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) at the University of Toronto and adjunct professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of Victoria. She holds B.Sc. in sociology from the London School of Economics and a Ph.D. from the University of California at Berkeley. A renowned sociologist and pioneer in the field of feminist sociology, Smith's work is focused on developing a sociology for people and on applying a feminist perspective to sociology and institutional ethnography.

Professor Barbara Comber

Title of keynote presentation: *Why Educational Researchers and Policy-Makers need Institutional Ethnography: Changing Educational Landscapes and Everyday Workplaces*

Barbara Comber is a key researcher in the Centre for Studies in Literacy, Policy and Learning Cultures and Deputy Director of the Hawke Research Institute at the University of South Australia. Her particular interests include literacy education and social justice, teachers' work and identities, place and space, and practitioner inquiry. She has worked on a number of longitudinal collaborative research projects with teachers focussing on innovative and critical pedagogies which address contemporary social challenges.

Call for Proposals

The conference provides the following alternatives for presenters.

* *individual papers* of 30 minutes (preferably 20 minutes presentation plus discussion 10 minutes). As far as possible these papers will be grouped into themes and institutional areas (for example education, nursing, social work, international contexts, immigrant women, management studies and so on) to encourage discussion

* *symposia* (including workshops) These will be in 90 minute sessions (usually three papers etc) but longer symposiums can go over 2 sessions (180 minutes)

While each session is open to the discretion of the author(s), it is anticipated that the focus, regardless of the field (for example, education, mothering work, community work, the organization of nursing work, immigration, health, and organisation studies) will have a focus on some aspect of Institutional Ethnography as theory and as method eg discovering a problematic; embedding an inquiry in a standpoint; working with texts, teaching institutional ethnography and so on.

Additionally, it is anticipated that the international and interdisciplinary character of the conference will encourage exchange of cross-national, institutional knowledge that will be built on throughout the conference to be consolidated and extended in the plenary and post-conference workshop.