

# IE NEWSLETTER

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

Winter 2015

Vol. 12, No. 2



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## *From the Division Chair*

*Lauren Eastwood*

Greetings!

While winter is in full force here in Upstate New York, I'm finding myself dreaming of summer. Not only am I excited for longer days and warmer weather, but the 2015 list of IE sessions for SSSP in Chicago [see pages 3 to 6] is really invigorating.

I want to thank all of you who have taken on organizing roles. I also really appreciate those who have submitted their work for presentation. I personally find the SSSP meetings to be a regular reminder of just how timely and important is institutional ethnography. My commitment to the method of inquiry grows stronger every time I get to hear from those who are doing interesting and innovative new work as well as those more "seasoned" scholars who are sharing the ways that they are thinking about how to apply IE in an ever-changing world.

While the details are still being worked out, I want also to mention we will be having an IE workshop again this summer. Like last year, the workshop will provide an opportunity for us to engage in a collective process of thinking through the various elements of institutional ethnographic work that is being contemplated or already in progress.

Until then, I wish you all the best of luck with your work. I truly treasure being part of the community of IE scholars.

Best,

Lauren

## IE at Canada's Congress

Each year, over 70 scholarly associations gather at a Canadian university for what is known as the Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences. This year, the University of Ottawa is hosting the event. Here are some details about two IE-related sessions, the first being held in connection with the meetings of the Canadian Sociology Association and the second being held in connection with the meetings of the Society for Socialist Studies.

### **Institutional Ethnographies of Changing Public Management**

Organizers: Alison Griffith and Dorothy E. Smith

Session Chair: Richard Darville

This session on institutional ethnographies of changing public management follows up a 2009 workshop that resulted in a collection of institutional ethnographies, edited by Alison Griffith and Dorothy E. Smith – *Under New Public Management: Institutional Ethnographies of Changing Front-Line Work* (University of Toronto Press, 2014). This session is intended to bring forward for discussion research that builds on institutional ethnographies with this same general focus (not all, of course, enclosed in the Griffith-Smith edited volume) and is open to presentations of institutional ethnographies, complete or in process. You are invited to bring forward what you have or are discovering about how new forms of management being imposed on the public sector – in Canada or in other countries – are reorganizing the work of front-line workers and/or of those receiving services.

### **Institutional Ethnography and Making Change from Below**

Session Organizer: Dorothy E. Smith

Institutional ethnography explores ruling relations from below and from people's experience. Recently institutional ethnographers have been investigating how forms of management based on those developed for corporations are being imposed by government on the provision of public services such as health, welfare, and education (at all levels). Workers at the front-line - nurses, doctors, social workers, teachers, university faculty and others - have found their professional autonomy undermined and displaced. This session is proposed to open discussion of how to make change from below in this new situation. What are some of the ways institutional ethnography can be useful and used in developing change from below? Draw on your experiences or what you've learned as an ethnographer to get us all thinking further and better.

## New scholarship in IE

Suzanne Vaughn and Paul Luken send word that a special issue of *the Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*, to be published in June 2015, will feature new scholarship in IE. Contributors to the special issue, which Suzanne and Paul edited, include:

Jessica Braimoh  
Janne Iren Breimo Paulsen  
Nicola Waters

Lisa Watt  
Megan Welsh  
Aaron Williams and Janet Rankin

## Notes and news from members

In November 2014, **Louise Dyjur** successfully defended her PhD dissertation in the Faculty of Nursing at the University of Calgary. Her dissertation is titled: *"Nurses' Medication Work: The Social Organization of Rule Breaking to Keep Patients Safe"*.

In June 2014, **Mary Ellen Dunn** successfully defended her Doctor of Education thesis (OISE/University of Toronto). The thesis is titled: *An Institutional Ethnographic Investigation of College Professors' Experiences Constructing Course Outlines*. This manuscript has also been accepted for publication as a book with an expected release date of December 2015.

**Daniel Grace** sends word that he recently began a new role as Assistant Professor in the Dalla Lana School of Public Health at the University of Toronto. He also passed along the following citation of a meeting abstract that appeared in *Lancet*, a leading medical journal.

Grace, D., McGill, E., Lock, K. and Egan, M. (2014). "How do Cumulative Impact Policies work? Using institutional ethnography to evaluate local government alcohol policies in England". *Lancet*, 384: S34.

## Welcome to new members

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

Anjuli Verma  
Sienna Caspar  
Charlotte Ross  
Maureen Sanders-Brunner

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



The deadline for submission of papers recently passed. Nonetheless, to give IE Division members a little more information on the sessions being planned, the list of sessions that appeared in the last newsletter is now supplemented by a short description.

## Sessions Sponsored by the IE Division

### **Title: Using Quantitative and other Mixed Methods in Institutional Ethnography**

Session Type: Critical dialogue

Organizer: Frank Ridzi ([ridzifm@lemoyne.edu](mailto:ridzifm@lemoyne.edu))

In institutional ethnography, texts and numbers have often been within the domain of the ruling relations. But what happens when local community-building efforts seek to bring about community change for the better? Can the people making these efforts use numbers to measure their success and if so how does this invoke ruling relations and the ability to transform them? What about other efforts to examine ruling relations? Can the people making these efforts use quantitative analysis or does this invoke the same ruling relations that are often the target of analysis for institutional ethnographers? This critical dialogue session is intended to engage participants in discussion about these questions.

### **Title: New Research in Institutional Ethnography**

Session Type: Four papers plus discussant or five papers

Organizers: Suzanne Vaughan ([suzanne.vaughan@asu.edu](mailto:suzanne.vaughan@asu.edu)) and Liza McCoy ([mccoy@ucalgary.ca](mailto:mccoy@ucalgary.ca))

This is an open-topic session intended to showcase institutional ethnography as a project of inquiry. Presentations on research in any empirical area are invited. Papers should display an institutional ethnographic analysis.

### **Title: (Thematic) The Social Organization of Race, Class Gender and Other Relations of Ruling**

Session Type: Critical dialogue

Organizer: Elizabeth Brule: ([ebrule@yorku.ca](mailto:ebrule@yorku.ca))

Many institutional ethnographers have worked to uncover and explore the social organization of race, class, gender and other relations of ruling in people's everyday lives and practices. This critical dialogue session invites exemplars and discussions of the ways in which institutional ethnography can be used to explore the social organization of race, class, gender and other relations of ruling. What kinds of contradictions and limitations come up for those researchers who are trying to uncover the social organization of race, class, gender and other relations of ruling? What kinds of possibilities are opened up when institutional ethnographers explicitly take up inquiries that work to explore and challenge relations of subjugation and domination? This session will address these questions and others.



## Co-Sponsored Sessions

### **Title: (Thematic) Personal, Institutional and Professional Resistance: Gender, Race and Poverty**

Session Type: Four papers with discussant or five papers

Co-Sponsors: Sociology and Social Welfare Division and the Poverty, Class and Inequality Division

Organizer: Sobia Shaikh ([sobia\\_shaikh@hotmail.com](mailto:sobia_shaikh@hotmail.com))

While institutionalized relations of oppression underlie professional, organizational, community and/or family contexts, people continue to navigate and resist inequity stemming from racism, sexism, poverty, classism, heterosexism, ableism, sanism, and other oppressive social relations. The focus of this session is on the social organization of opposition/resistance to inequitable social relations within a variety of neoliberal settings. We invite papers that consider the everyday work of service users, community activists, professionals and other social actors who take up or create opportunities to work against inequitable bureaucratic and institutional arrangements in organizations. In particular, we are interested in papers that offer an analysis of the contradictions of resisting institutionalized inequities and power differentials, and the possibilities of social transformation.

### **Title: Accountability, Productivity and Digital Coordination of Human Service Work.**

Session Type: Critical dialogue

Co-Sponsor: Labor Studies Division

Organizers: Marie Campbell ([mariecam@uvic.ca](mailto:mariecam@uvic.ca)) and Hans-Peter de Ruiter ([hans-peter.de-ruiter@mnsu.edu](mailto:hans-peter.de-ruiter@mnsu.edu))

The extent to which the managerial turn in governance has reformed the organization of the human services has been made possible by digital technologies. Institutional ethnographies have tracked some of these changes in and across organizations. Griffith and Smith (2014) point out that rendering the social world into objective categories for computerized data entry and the processing that allows organizations to take advantage of electronic sorting “reshapes the work organization at the front line while reframing the *raison d’etre* of that work” (p. 82). This session invites submissions that elaborate this topic in any manner and direction: e.g., what kinds of human services are implicated in the digital makeover and how? How is gender implicated in the changing work organization? How do perspectives on digital technologies in a human service organization differ and for whom? Knowledge, accounts and evidence: who knows what’s true and what actually matters? How do professionals participate in construction of virtual realities that degrade people’s own knowledge? How can participants respond effectively and responsibly?

### **Title: Migration and Human Rights**

Session Type: Four papers with discussant or five papers

Co-Sponsors: Global Division and Law and Society Division

Organizer: to be determined

This session seeks papers that utilize ethnographic/institutional ethnographic methodologies to analyze dynamics associated with migration and human rights. For example, research that examines the social organization of policy or the ways in which text-mediated institutions organize individuals’ lives related to migration would be appropriate for this session.

**Title: Reflections from the Field of Community-Based Research**

Session Type: Critical dialogue

Co-Sponsor: Community Research and Development Division

Organizers: Alison Fisher ([Alison\\_Fisher@edu.yorku.ca](mailto:Alison_Fisher@edu.yorku.ca)) and Amie Thurber ([amie.thurber@gmail.com](mailto:amie.thurber@gmail.com))

There is an increasing call for researchers to meaningfully partner with those directly affected by social problems in shaping inquiry, designing research, collecting data, analyzing and interpreting results, and informing dissemination. Researchers committed to community based and participatory action research models often work in partnership to support and contribute to local community organizing efforts, base building and social change. Through these models, research and community teams must navigate the powerful, inspiring and often treacherous terrain of fieldwork together.

This critical dialogue session invites participants to share best practices and consider the challenges in confronting relationships of power and inequality within community based and participatory action research projects. Topics could include - but are not limited to – researcher experiences with hierarchal power relations between researchers and community members, or within research teams; the interpretative process involved in knowledge production; the role of emotions in research; reflexivity and reflective practices.

**Title: (Thematic) Immigration: Representations, Institutions, & Identities**

Session Type: Four papers with discussant or five papers

Co-Sponsor: Social Problems Theory Division

Organizer: Fatima Sattar ([sattarf@bc.edu](mailto:sattarf@bc.edu))

Contemporary conflicts, changes in the global political economy and global relations have contributed to diverse patterns of migrant movement. This session will examine global representations and identities of immigrants and refugees and/or the institutions that contribute to classed, gendered, racialized or other identities of immigrants. What macro or micro factors influence global representations? How do representations enter into the societal discourse of host or sending nations or global institutions, and how does this affect native and immigrant relations? We are open to papers that explore a diverse range of immigrant groups.

**Title: The Body and Embodiment in Institutional Ethnography**

Session Type: Four papers with discussant or five papers

Co-Sponsor: Sport, Leisure and the Body Division

Organizer: Matthew Strang ([matthew.strang@gmail.com](mailto:matthew.strang@gmail.com))

This session poses the question: how do we/can we research embodied aspects of ruling relations of racialization, sexualization, gender, ability, class, age, etc. in people's everyday lives? 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, which is not only text-mediated but "body-mediated" (Strang, SSSP 2014). In addition to including papers that make these links, this session will include papers that reflect on how IE's theoretical and methodological frameworks, as well as other frameworks, are 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.