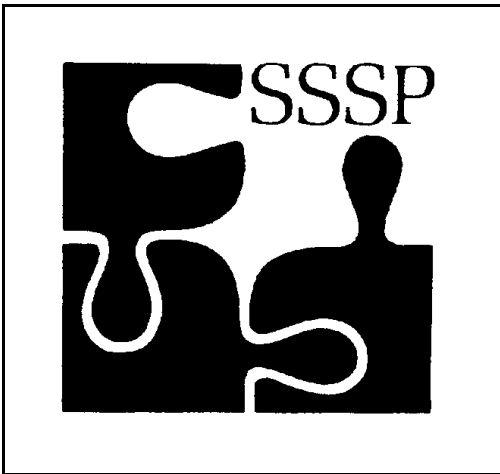


IE NEWSLETTER

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

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On the inside:

- Highlights from Australia conference
- Call for nominations and submissions
- Welcome to new members
- Members' news and notes
- Announcements from other sources

FROM THE DIVISION CHAIR

Marjorie DeVault

Greetings from Syracuse, New York, where I'm looking out on a cold rain that is due to change later today to ice and then snow. Fortunately, I can easily think ahead to summer, because I've been consulting with our session organizers, who are putting together a full and interesting program for the Annual Meeting, which begins this year on the last day of July (quite early, but that means that most of us will still have some time for a bit of August relaxation after the meeting). In addition to our IE sessions, SSSP President (and IE Division member) Nancy Naples has organized an exciting program around the theme of "Crossing Borders: Activist Scholarship, Globalization, and Social Justice." And Boston is a lively, very walkable city, with plenty of other entertainment, if you can squeeze it into your schedule. So it's time to get your travel plans in place!

The SSSP welcomes a new division this year, focused on disability studies, and I look forward to some fruitful collaboration with that group. When I reflect on my graduate methods teaching (in seminars where I introduce the institutional ethnography approach along with more conventional and other critical approaches to qualitative inquiry), I am struck by how frequently and enthusiastically students in disability studies engage with IE perspectives. Of course, the very notion of disability calls out for a "social organization of knowledge" lens, because it is so thoroughly constructed through labels and diagnostic categories embedded in the discourses and practices of particular social contexts. The "generous" definition of work at the core of IE inquiry, which encompasses the range of people's paid and unpaid activities, provides a way of conceptualizing the strategies that people with disabilities deploy in order to assert and sustain self-definitions, access and navigate social services and other assistance, and work to secure their integration into a variety of groups and organizations. *(continued on next page)*

(Division Chair's message continued)

Perhaps most important, given the enormous impact of institutional regimes (in schools, at work, in medical settings, and elsewhere) on the lives of people with disabilities, institutional ethnography offers the tantalizing prospect of knowing more about how such things happen as they do.

As usual, our members have been busy lately. In the article that follows this message, for example, we have news about the very impressive November 2007 conference in Australia. And I hope you'll check out the announcement on pages 7 to 8 of my forthcoming edited book*, based on a small conference I convened in 2004. The book includes both institutional ethnographic and other kinds of critical qualitative inquiries, in an attempt to piece together that kind of analytic "quilt" or map that IE researchers aim to produce. I don't usually brag so openly about my own publications, but this book includes such wonderful work by others that I don't mind doing a little self- and colleague-promotion.

Finally, congratulations to Sandra Tam, who defended her dissertation in September 2007, and to Jeremy Brunson, who has just taken up a teaching position at Gallaudet University for deaf and hard of hearing students in Washington, DC. For more news and notes from our members, please see pages 6 to 7.

Keep that good news coming to us, and look for the full IE Division program for the Annual Meeting in our next newsletter.

***[Editor's note: This exciting book provides an excellent opportunity for review in a future newsletter. Volunteer(s)?]**

A personal perspective on the Institutional Ethnography conference in Australia

By Lauri Grace

I'm delighted to report that the IE conference "Contexts, Organizations and Texts: Institutional Ethnographers in Transnational Dialogue", held at Deakin University in Geelong, Australia last November was a tremendous success.

The conference attracted approximately 70 participants, and 23 presenters from places as diverse as Canada, USA, UK, New Zealand, and the Australian states of Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia and Western Australia.

The conference began with a formal Welcome to Country by a member of the Wathaurong community. Each day of the conference opened with keynote presentations. Dorothy Smith's keynote address on Day 1 explored the power of IE.

Barbara Comber's keynote address on Day 2 spoke to why educational researchers and policy-makers need IE. Our participants were very receptive to how both of these themes enriched each day's discussion.

Conference activities comprised concurrent paper sessions and symposia with 22 individual papers across a range of themes including governmentality, family, professional lives, identities, community, texts & contexts, and research as subjectivity. There were also spaces in the program that we had conceptualized as 'individual research conversations' – opportunities for experienced and novice IE researchers to have collaborative conversations across different fields of study and national contexts.

IE Conference in Australia (continued)

Each day concluded with a plenary session exploring the common themes emerging from the presentations and discussions. Alison Griffith and Barbara Comber chaired a panel discussion as the plenary at the end of Day 1, and Lois Andre-Bechely and I chaired the discussion at the end of Day 2.

The two-day conference was followed by a one-day workshop which Dorothy Smith opened by addressing the question ‘How do you know it’s IE’?, after which participants chose between workshops on designing IE research, conducting text analysis, and planning strategies for activist teaching practice.



Lauri Grace not only wrote this report on the IE conference in Australia but was also instrumental in conference organization. Former Division Chair and conference attendee Alison Griffith provided this photo to include here as an acknowledgement of Lauri’s efforts.

As the organizers had anticipated and hoped, participants and presenters represented a range of experience in IE. A number of IE researchers reported on projects that had been planned and conducted as IE studies. Other researchers who were interested in IE but experienced in different fields of study reported on their research projects, and the subsequent discussions explored resonances

with IE and also opportunities to use IE in addressing the same issues. And we had several researchers who were in the initial stages of planning their research projects; these presentations and the discussions that followed focused on what IE had to offer each project. I was particularly excited that we had a number of graduate students and graduate student supervisors who attended the conference for the specific purpose of exploring IE as a possible approach for the projects they were working on. As a recently completed graduate student and new graduate supervisor, I am keenly aware of the power of being able to talk about your research with established IE scholars.

As you can imagine, the diversity made for some very rich conversations around IE, and the spaces we had allowed in the program were well used by people sharing ideas, establishing contacts and exploring the possibility of collaborative research.

Something noted by most participants was that, even with the wide range in fields of study and individual experience with IE, the increasing textual organization of everyday experience emerged strongly as a common theme throughout the two-day conference.

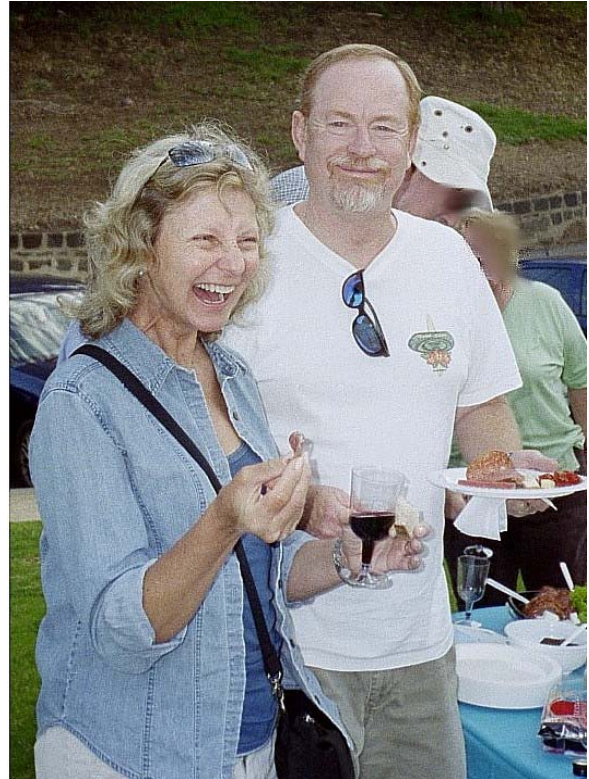
The Learning Futures Faculty Research Group from the Deakin University Faculty of Education generously donated two prizes for papers by graduate students or early career researchers. The award selection panel of Alison Griffith, Barbara Kamler, Jill Blackmore, and myself awarded the prizes to Naomi Nichols from York University, Canada for her paper entitled “‘My entire life I’ve slipped through the cracks’”: Investigating the social service interface from the standpoint of youth”, and Pam Feldman from Monash University, Australia for her paper ‘Problematizing the research question’. The panel also gave a special commendation to Janice Ollerton from the University of Western Sydney, Australia for her paper ‘Rights, Camera, Action! A collaborative exploration of social barriers to self-determination for people with learning difficulties’.

IE Conference in Australia (continued)

Of course, the social activities of the conference were an important part of the overall experience. With so many interstate and international visitors staying at the Deakin Management Centre on the evening before the conference, the conference organizers decided to welcome them with a truly 'Geelong' experience – an informal gathering at the Geelong Waterfront where about 20 people enjoyed the cool evening of a typically hot Australian summer day, helped by good food and good wine. It was a great start, and by the time the conference proper began the next morning we had well and truly broken the ice and were already into conversations about our shared research interests.

Following the conference at Deakin a group of researchers with interests in educational research travelled to Fremantle Western Australia to present symposia and participate in the Australian Association for Research in Education annual conference. From the perspective of someone interested in exploring the opportunities for IE in educational research, AARE provided a valuable insight into current and emerging issues and trends in Australian educational research. There are already a number of fledgling ideas for IE studies taking shape from these conversations. We are building a social networking site for the conference. It's currently in an early stage of development, but there are photos (with more soon to be uploaded), a discussion forum, and a few other items of interest. Please join in – the URL is <http://ieoz07.ning.com/>

Where to from here? The conference at Deakin immediately preceded our end of academic year in Australia. Now that we have returned from the summer break, planning has begun for the next phase. As the IE conference drew to a close, there was some interest in the suggestion that a collection of papers be published, so this is our next priority. In view of the diversity of papers presented at the conference, one challenge will be to devise an approach that will faithfully represent the various research projects.



Lois Andre-Bechely and her husband Paul at the informal pre-conference picnic on the Geelong Waterfront.

At this early stage it has been suggested that the focus of a publication might be around the conference theme, "Contexts, institutions and texts". This could encompass the range of papers that explored this theme in different ways, some using IE and some using other approaches. This is still to be considered by the conference committee, and we will keep you informed of developments.

For me, the experience of organizing and participating in this conference has been a very exciting one, both professionally and personally. It has certainly affirmed my enthusiasm for IE. There are many people whose efforts made the conference possible, and I would like to acknowledge my fellow organizing committee members Jill Blackmore, Alison Griffith, Heather Davis and Jill Loughlin. Lois Andre-Bechely and Janet Rankin also contributed significantly, in particular to planning and running the workshop activities.

IE Conference in Australia (conclusion)

Barbara Kamler was an invaluable member of the student/ECR prize selection panel. And the conference would not have been what it was without our keynote speakers Dorothy Smith and Barbara Comber.

Postscript: In addition to the social networking site to which Lauri Grace refers in her Australia IE conference report, Alison Griffith and her partner Harvey Swanson have picked up on the interest in sharing photos taken down under and opened a Flickr account. What follows is their invitation for you to join them in the photo sharing world of Flickr.

Flickr is a free photo sharing program that is part of Yahoo! Opening an account gives you access to millions of online photos and the ability to upload and control your own photos. Flickr also has a forum function where a number of online discussions can take place.

We have created the group "Institutional Ethnography" (www.flickr.com/groups/ie). Presently, things are pretty small. The group has 8 members and 18 pics from the Geelong conference. The group is semi-public to maintain some level of privacy. That means the public can find it but membership is required to access the discussions or pics. Membership is by invitation. We hope to invite everyone in the IE community to join. If you would like to receive an invitation please send an email to ie.wayinwitch@rogers.com

Call for Nominations: Dorothy E. Smith Award for Scholar-Activism **The deadline for nominations is May 1, 2008**

The IE Division is pleased to solicit nominations for the 2008 Dorothy E. 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 E. Smith Award Committee, to be appointed by the Division Chair. This year's committee will be chaired by Suzanne Vaughan. The committee invites members of the division to send one-page statements describing the contributions of nominees to **Suzanne at svaughan@asu.edu** The honoree will be recognized and awarded a certificate during the Annual Meeting in Boston.

Previous winner:
2007-2008 Inaugural Dorothy E. Smith Award for Scholar-Activism: Marie Campbell

Graduate Student Paper Competition **The deadline for submissions in May 1, 2008**

The IE Division solicits papers for its 2008 Graduate Student Paper Competition. Papers should advance institutional ethnography scholarship either methodologically or through a substantive contribution. Authors must currently be enrolled graduate students or have completed the Ph.D. by March 2007 or later.

Prizes include a \$100 cash award, registration fees and an opportunity to present the paper at the 2008 SSSP meetings, and a ticket to the SSSP awards banquet. Students who submit papers should be prepared to attend the conference. **Send one copy each to: Peter Grahame (1009 Kent Drive, Hampden Twp, PA 17050) and Michael Corman, mkcorman@ucalgary.ca**

**Make your travel plans for this year's
SSSP Annual Meetings**

July 31-August 2, 2008
Boston Park Plaza Hotel and Towers
Boston, MA

Notes and news from members

Paul Luken writes that he is looking into creating an Institutional Ethnography Working Group or Thematic Group within the International Sociological Association.

“The first step in the process of forming a Working Group is a petition with signatures from 10 supportive ISA members.

I would like to know which members of the IE Division are also ISA members. If the numbers are very small, it may not be worth the effort. I am asking that any division members who are also ISA members and would like to see the formation of a Working Group contact me at pluken@westga.edu”

Margo Kushner was invited to present her research findings pertaining to procedural issues/flaws within the court system at the 44th Annual Conference of the Association of Family & Conciliation Courts. The conference took place in Washington, DC in June 2007.

Dr. Kushner’s presentation demonstrated how mapping the flow of procedural text through institutions of governance can depict procedural flaws that in actuality can oppress the very individuals the courts attempt to assist.

Specifically investigated was the flow of court procedural text that was intended to assist divorcing families who sought the court's assistance with child custody and access matters.

This presentation provided Dr. Kushner the opportunity to meet Chief Judge Bell who oversees the operations of the Maryland court system.

Consequently, Dr. Kushner has been provided the opportunity to duplicate a study she completed in Canada titled, "Child Custody Planning In A Textually Structured Court System". The court system in Western Australia has also expressed an interest in duplicating Dr. Kushner's research.

Sandra Ho See Tam has completed her dissertation titled: “Young Women’s Provisioning: A Study of the Social Organization of Youth Employment” and sends this abstract:

“This study uses institutional ethnography (IE) to address the question of how young women, considered to be “at risk” youth, make decisions about their working lives. Based on interviews with young women and program workers in housing, employment, young mothers’ and girls’ programs, field observations, and document analysis at Gen-Y (pseudonym for a women’s

community-based social services agency), young women’s provisioning experiences are used to critique current program and policy models that feature notions of choice and risk.

Provisioning is a concept that captures a wide range of work and work-related activities that young women perform for themselves and people they feel responsible for. IE is applied to understand how institutional processes and practices give rise to the conditions under which young women participants at Gen-Y make career and life decisions.

The findings are twofold. First, Gen-Y young women provision by making the kinds of career, educational and caregiving choices expected of them, but having few resources at hand to deal with the exigencies of everyday life, they often settled for short-term over long-term gains. The young women used these provisioning strategies even though they may be putting their future economic security at risk. Once deemed “at risk,” these young women participate in community programs. This precipitates the second finding: that the youth employment program complex is organized to influence young women’s career options through locally based funding arrangements and program evaluation practices.

These institutional processes are embedded in social relations of gender and race that coordinate young women's decision-making with program workers' and administrators' efforts to meet their professional obligations and organizational mandates. While Gen-Y programs were developed to help young women, it is argued that the funding pressures shape the organizational context in such a way that program workers' and administrators' applications of anti-discrimination and diversity, access and equity initiatives

inadvertently reproduce the social inequalities they are meant to eliminate. The thesis ends with theoretical and practice implications for social work and social policy."

New members

Welcome to the following members who have joined since the last newsletter:

Walter Aikman
Jodie Atkinson
Matt Bakker
Sylvain Bordieuc

Carrie Boyd
Laura Charles
Helanda Crespín
Esther Hernandez-Medina
Jennifer Flad
Patricia Krueger
Marcia Marx
Joan Meyers
Roxana Ng
Christopher Oliver
Lisa Patel Stevens
Emily Porschitz
T.C. Sanders
Sobia Shaheen Shaik
Christina Sinding
Jill Weigt
Rachelle Zeitlin

People at Work: Life, Power, and Social Inclusion in the New Economy

(announcement of a book edited by Marjorie L. DeVault forthcoming in March 2008 from New York University Press)

Marjorie L. DeVault
–Introduction and Conclusion

Part I: Ideologies of the neoliberal economy

Nancy Jackson and Bonnie Slade
–“Hell on my Face” The Production of Workplace II-literacy

Alison I. Griffith and Lois Andre-Bechely
–Institutional Technologies: Coordinating Families and Schools, Bodies and Texts

Nancy C. Jurik
–The Promises and Realities of U.S. Microenterprise Development

Rannveig Traustadoittir
–Disabled People and Disability Policy in Europe

Part II: Mobile bodies: Incorporation without inclusion

Payal Banerjee
–Flexible Hiring, Immigration and Indian IT Workers' Experiences of Contract Work in the U.S.

Nancy A. Naples
–Economic Restructuring and the Social Regulation of Citizenship in the Heartland

Part III: The fictional worlds of “unencumbered workers”

Brenda Solomon
–Training for Low-Wage Work: TANF Recipients Preparing for Health Care Work

Ellen K. Scott and Andrew S. London
–Women's Lives, Welfare's Time Limits

Catherine Richards Solomon
–Personal Responsibility in Professional Work: The Academic “Star” as Ideological Code

(book announcement continued)

Katrina Arndt

–“Use What You Have, Be Thankful You Have It”:
One Student’s Experience in the Workplace

Part IV: Fiscal discipline: The texts of public-sector budget cutting

Frank Ridzi

–Exploring Problematics of the Personal
Responsibility Welfare State: Issues of Family
and Caregiving in Welfare-to-Work and Medicaid
Consumer Directed Care Programs

Yvette Daniel

–The “Textualized” Student: An Institutional
Ethnography of a Funding Policy for Students with
Special Needs in Ontario

Marie Campbell

–(Dis)continuity of Care”: Explicating the Ruling
Relations of Home Support

Announcements from other sources

Invitation to apply for Visiting Fellowships

Sweden’s Linköping and Örebro Universities are the base for the “Centre of Gender Excellence - Gendering Excellence (GEXcel): Towards a European Centre of Excellence in Transnational and Transdisciplinary Studies of Changing Gender Relations, Intersectionalities and Embodiment”. With support from the Swedish Research Council, GEXcel is carrying out new research and seeks to become the foundation for a more permanent Sweden-based European Collegium for Advanced Transnational and Transdisciplinary Gender Studies.

A Visiting Fellows Program has been organized to attract scholars at different career stages from Sweden and abroad with a variety of disciplinary backgrounds, who will carry out thematically organized, joint gender research, under the direction

of one of the six professors in Sweden who are responsible for the program and working in collaboration with invited senior researchers.

In 2008-2009, one of the research themes is “Deconstructing the Hegemony of Men and Masculinities” directed by Jeff Hearn, Professor of Gender Studies (Critical Studies on Men), Linköping University. Positions for doctoral and postdoctoral researchers to participate in thematic research on Deconstructing the Hegemony of Men and Masculinities are now open for competition. Postdoctoral researchers may or may not have graduated recently.

Proposals are invited from doctoral students outside Sweden for five one-month fellowships (2-3 from September 2008; 2-3 in Spring 2009). Fellowships include salary, housing stipend and travel to Sweden.

Proposals are invited from postdoctoral scholars (priority given to applicants from Europe, including Sweden) for two fellowships of up to 6 months’ duration (one from September 2008; one in Spring 2008). Applications for periods less than 6 months are also welcome. Fellowships include salary, housing stipend and travel to Sweden.

It is also possible for successful doctoral and postdoctoral candidates to extend their stay at Linköping with their own funding.

Proposals must include a current CV, an abstract of the proposed project, a description (maximum: 5 pages) of the project to be undertaken during the fellowship, and a short bibliography. Applicants should explain how the work will contribute to understanding at least one of the sub-themes (body/ageing/disability; transnationalisation; virtuality/ICTs) of the Deconstructing the Hegemony of Men and Masculinities research theme (see detailed description at: <http://www.genderexcel.org/node/101>).

Doctoral candidates must include the name and contact information for their research supervisor(s). Postdoctoral applicants must also include two samples of their work (published or unpublished) on the topic in their application.

All proposals and supporting materials should be submitted electronically to: Professor Jeff Hearn, GEXcel Research Theme 2 Director (jefhe@tema.liu.se)

A committee will evaluate all applications and select those who are successful, with the approval of the GEXcel Board.

Application Deadlines:

March 14, 2008 for Autumn 2008 (Awards Announced in May 2008)

October 14, 2008 for Spring 2009 (Awards Announced in November 2008)

New criminology website

"Comparative sociology is not a particular branch of sociology; it is sociology itself, in so far as it ceases to be purely descriptive and aspires to account for facts."

– Emile Durkheim, *The Rules of Sociological Methodology*.

In the 21st century, comparative criminology is a branch of sociology in which cross-national analysis has increasingly become a major focus.

Announcing a new global criminology website where sociology professors and students can: research subjects in global criminology by accessing Interpol and United Nations datasets and text information for all countries of the world; publish papers, works-in-progress, and articles pertaining to global criminology.

The global criminology website, called *Crime and Society: A Comparative Criminology Tour of the World*, can be viewed at <http://www-rohan.sdsu.edu/faculty/rwinslow/index.html>