

IE NEWSLETTER

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

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On the inside:

- IE in Las Vegas
- Minutes of the 2011 business meeting
- IE in the ISA and call for papers
- Awards
- Work in progress
- New dissertation, publications, members and resources
- SSSP 2012

[Editor's Note:] In her first message to the IE Division membership (see Vol. 8, No. 2), Janet described her doctoral research with Marie Campbell at the University of Victoria. She wrote, "We were able to chronicle the historical coordination of the managerial turn in nursing when we combined my research conducted during the 1990s with Marie's own doctoral work of the 1970s." Janet's current research examines gendered forms of knowledge embedded in nurses' professional practices. She is committed to mentoring a new generation of IE scholars. She is a founding member and leader of the IE working group at the University of Calgary and recently she has played a central role in organizing a very successful, one-day workshop prior to the SSSP 2011 Annual Meeting in Las Vegas. In the Chair's message that follows, Janet reflects on the workshop and the meeting.

FROM THE DIVISION CHAIR

Janet Rankin

Hello everyone,

As I write this greeting, I am still thinking about the 2011 SSSP Annual Meeting in Vegas which brought 53 members of the IE community together. The papers were good and the discussions robust. For me, the discussions that follow the papers are always a highlight and throughout the conference I was reminded about the analytic importance of asking good questions. How useful it is to be reminded about some of the early IE work and foundational thinking; and how important it is to mentor and coach each other to keep *the activities* of people in view. These were the kinds of issues we discussed during a day-long IE workshop prior to the conference. Informal feedback indicates that the workshop was a success and plans are afoot for a workshop in Denver in 2012. The program for the 2012 workshop is being designed to facilitate more opportunities for conversations and networking. I'm thinking there may well be an advantage to hosting the workshop *following* the

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(Chair's message continued)

conference (August 19) because we will be more familiar with one another, with people's projects, and with common methodological challenges and insights.

One of the many interesting conversations I had at the conference focused on differences between working with IE in a nursing department and working with IE in a sociology department. As a nurse educator I find myself considering "IE as pedagogy" and wondering how I might build capacity to integrate IE as an approach to undergraduate nursing education. How can I teach the canons of nursing (alive and well in curriculum design and processes of regulatory accreditation) while simultaneously supporting students as they analyze their education as ideological practices? In the graduate courses, this seems easier. Students returning for graduate degrees have a better sense of "living" the contradictions that are embedded into their work – although even for graduate students, the aspects of nursing work that "chafe" are countered by entrenched understandings about the nature of professionalism, caring and healthcare sustainability.

In this, my first official message to the IE Division membership, I'd like to share a story of IE as pedagogical practice within my field of nursing education. This spring I taught a course on the social organization of nurses' work with five graduate nursing students. Prior to the start of the two-week intensive course, students prepared a detailed description of "tensions" in their practice. One student described her experiences as a nurse educator charged with supporting the implementation of a new model of nursing care. We spent time examining the teaching materials she had developed and contrasted them with the memos and documents being issued from the provincial health authority. We found related publications and began to examine the claims being made about the changed work processes that were being rapidly taken up across the health region.

As a group, we were well connected into the local health scene and this network supported me to organize an opportunity to conduct a field exercise. At the end of the first week of the course the students and I spent four hours on a "21st century" nursing unit. We each observed a worker (a care-aide, and licensed practical nurse, two registered nurses, and a charge nurse). I interviewed the manager. We spent the rest of the seminars examining this data and chronologically "mapping" the activities of each of these caregivers. We ethnographically established five lines of activity which we used to learn about how the work *actually* unfolded. Connecting the work processes within a discrete period of time was fascinating. We were able to identify all the "hidden" processes that each staff member was carrying out "behind the scenes" in order to hold the terrain of *their* work together. The experience provided students with a new way to understand work processes and to better understand how these work processes were embedded in a standpoint within the larger organization of the work.

The "professional" ideology was destabilized as students began to see how various (unauthorized) practices "made sense" when understood from the position of *that* worker. We could identify the contradictory practices embedded in the work processes. The students began to question how their work as registered nurses was being positioned. They launched a critique about the directions posted around the nursing unit that addressed the problems of staff "collaboration". They also questioned teaching materials focused on supporting all the unit staff to embrace an attitude of "trust, honesty and respect". They recognized how these "values" effectively covered over what was actually happening and controlled dissent. At the conclusion of the course the six of us developed a report that we shared with the unit managers who had facilitated the field experience. Moreover, this impromptu learning activity gave me insight into how I might support a team of researchers to enter a setting where nursing work is being conducted. These are the sorts of opportunities that are possible within practice disciplines that support the activism of IE – a sociology for people.

Minutes of the IE Division's 2011 business meeting (August, 19, 2011)

About 30 people attended the meeting which began with introductions. The outgoing Division Chair, Kamini Grahame, welcomed incoming Division Chair Janet Rankin.

1. Awards:

This year there were no nominations for the Dorothy E. Smith Scholar-Activist award. Members were encouraged to forward nominations for next year's award, and there was discussion and general approval of carrying over nominations from one year to the next.

The George W. Smith Student Paper award went to Laura M. Bisailon for her paper entitled *Mandatory HIV Testing Policy and Everyday Life: A Look Inside the Canadian Immigration Medical Examination*. The Awards Committee Chair, Lauren Eastwood, provided a brief summary of the paper which deals with the Canadian government policy of mandatory HIV screening of refugee and immigrant applicants. Bisailon examines applicant, physician and federal government employee work practices associated with the HIV testing and shows how the practices contribute to the ideological work of the Canadian state and serve state interests rather than those of applicants.

Faculty were asked to encourage their students to submit papers for next year's award.

2. Newsletter:

Kamini expressed thanks to our newsletter editor, Rosamund Stooke, and production editor, Cheryl Zurawski, for their work on our excellent newsletter.

3. SSSP nominations and elections:

Members were reminded that nominations for SSSP elective offices are due earlier than in the past, and were encouraged to consider nominating themselves or other members of our section. Members may also express interest in the appointed committees, as part of the membership renewal process. Kamini encouraged all members to consider serving the organization in some capacity.

4. Thanks to outgoing Division Chair, Kamini Grahame:

Kamini passed the "gavel" to our new chair, Janet Rankin, who expressed gratitude and appreciation on behalf of all members to Kamini her for her two years of excellent service and mentoring.

5. Sessions for next year:

Janet led the assembled group in a discussion of possible sessions and organizers for next year's SSSP Annual Meeting program. Members brainstormed topics for three division-sponsored sessions and for additional sessions that will be co-sponsored with other divisions in areas likely to attract papers from our members. Volunteers were identified as potential session organizers. Janet undertook to take the proposals forward to the conference organizing committee in early September.

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6. Institutional ethnography workshop – this year and next:

This year saw the first day-long workshop sponsored by the IE Division, and the consensus was that the workshop was very successful. Janet reported on her discussions with SSSP Executive Office on possibilities for future workshops. Generally, proposals must be submitted two years in advance and Janet has indicated that we wish to propose a workshop for 2014; however, there is also workshop space available for next year due to another division's cancellation. Janet has arranged for the IE Division to use that slot. Thus, we plan to hold IE workshops again in 2012 and 2014.

As a preliminary to planning next year's workshop, the group discussed this year's event. Several graduate students reported that they found it very useful and a great opportunity to meet and talk with members. Attendees especially appreciated sessions focused on the development of institutional ethnography, its theoretical foundations, and some of the tensions and new developments in the approach. The opportunity afforded by the mapping session to discuss ongoing research was also seen as quite valuable. Suggestions for future workshops included small-group discussions; more attention to theoretical foundations and situating IE in relation to other approaches; and more opportunities for attendees to identify topics for discussion.

Janet will appoint an organizing committee to go forward with planning for next year.

7. Announcements:

Janet announced that the IE Division will hold an election this year for our next Chair-Elect. Members should watch for an online nomination process.

Ellen Pence announced the availability of new materials for training in "institutional analysis," a community change approach based on institutional ethnography that she and Dorothy Smith have been developing in the fields of domestic violence case processing and child welfare. The new materials include two papers outlining the approach, one by Dorothy, for researchers, and one by Ellen, which is written for lay community partners. The materials are available for \$55 in a DVD set, which includes video of team members conducting interviews of the type used in institutional analysis projects. To obtain copies of these materials, send a check to: Praxis – Attention: Jeannie Maxwell, 179 Robie Street East, Suite 260, St. Paul, MN 55107.

Paul Luken announced that there is now an Institutional Ethnography Thematic Group in the International Sociological Association (ISA), with Alison Griffith serving as its president. Upcoming meetings of that group include a conference in Buenos Aires in August, 2012, with seven proposed sessions for IE work. Submissions are due by December 15. Check the website for details, at <http://www.isa-sociology.org/tg06.htm>. The ISA's next World Congress will be held in 2014 in Yokohama, Japan. Paul reminded the group that although the ISA membership dues may appear higher than expected, that cost covers a four-year membership; one may also join the Thematic Group without taking a full ISA membership.

Janet announced that she coordinates an online IE working group, based at the University of Calgary and open to anyone who is interested. The group typically meets on the second Tuesday of each month from 2:00-3:30 p.m. Mountain Time. For more information, contact Janet at jmrankin@ucalgary.ca.

--Submitted by Marj DeVault

Las Vegas in pictures



The editors wish to thank Laura Bisailon and Laurie Clune for these pictures to include in the newsletter.

Top: Laurie Clune discussing her mapping technique at the IE workshop.

Middle left: From left to right Kamini Grahame, Janet Rankin and Graham Barnes at the IE Division business meeting.

Middle right: From left to right Eric Mykhavlovskiy, Liza McCoy and Marj DeVault, also at the IE workshop.

Bottom right: Laura Bisailon on the left receives the George W. Smith Graduate Student Paper Award from Lauren Eastwood.



Dorothy E. Smith Award for Scholar Activism

(The deadline for the 2012 Award is May 1, 2012).

The Institutional Ethnography Division is pleased to solicit nominations for the 2012 Dorothy E. Smith Award for Scholar-Activism. This award recognizes 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 award committee invites members of the division to send a one-page statement describing the contributions of the nominee to Janet Rankin at jmrankin@ucalgary.ca. The honoree will be recognized with a certificate at the Institutional Ethnography Business Meeting during the Annual Meeting in August 2012 in Denver.

George W. Smith Graduate Student Paper Award

Faculty, please circulate this Call for Papers to your graduate students.

(The deadline for the 2012 Award is also May 1, 2012).

The Institutional Ethnography Division solicits papers for its 2012 George W. Smith 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 have completed their degree since September 2011. Prizes include a \$100 cash award, registration fees and an opportunity to present the paper at the 2012 SSSP Annual Meeting, and a ticket to the SSSP awards banquet. Students who submit papers should be prepared to attend the conference. Send a copy to Laura Bisailon at lbisa082@uOttawa.ca and Marie Campbell at mariecam@uvic.ca. (For an overview of institutional ethnography and the purposes of the IE Division, see the [IE Division webpage](#).)

Work in progress

Susan Turner and Dorothy Smith have been putting together an edited collection of work by institutional ethnographers called (at present) *Texts in action: The ethnographic exploration of ruling relations*. We hope to complete a draft by the beginning of December when it will go to the University of Toronto Press to be reviewed for publication.

About the edited collection, Dorothy writes:

“Each chapter exemplifies in a distinctive fashion how texts enter into the coordinating of people's work in the sequences of action that make up the ruling relations that organize our lives. The collection of 'text-in-action' ethnographies include Gerald de Montigny's auto-ethnographic account of how what he experienced when entering an apartment where a child's neglect or abuse had been expected in terms of the categories of child

protection discourse required in the writing of his report enabling the legal removal of the child; Katie Wagner's account of the specialized work of an organic farmer in keeping records and designing his farming practice to meet the government inspection on which accreditation as an organic farm will depend; Liza McCoy's study of how designing and imposing accounting procedures enabling performance comparisons to be made among departments reorganizes the work of departments and instructors in a community college in Ontario. These are only three examples of a collection we have designed: a) to make available just how integral texts are to the organization of the trans- or extra-local relations that we participate in but cannot observe from our local sites of being; and b) to show just how effective is their inclusion in such ethnographies.”

New members

Welcome to the following new IE Division members.

Susan Bearns
Wendy Cadge
Sarah Diefendorf
Nina Eliasoph
Ian Hussey
Andrew Le
Elisa Martinez
Sophie Pomerleau

New publications

Bisaillon, L. (2011). Mandatory HIV testing and everyday life: A look inside the Canadian immigration medical examination. *Aporia*, 3(4), 5-14.

Mykhalovskiy, E. (2011). The problem of 'significant risk': Exploring the public health impact of criminalizing HIV non-disclosure. *Social Science & Medicine*, 73(5), 670-677.

New resource for community change

As noted on page 4, there are some new materials available for training in "institutional analysis," a community change approach based on institutional ethnography. For copies, please send a check for \$55 to:
Praxis
Attention: Jeannie Maxwell
179 Robie Street East
Suite 260
St. Paul, MN 55107

New dissertation

Laura Bisaillon will defend her dissertation on December 16. (Janet Rankin methods advisor and Eric Mykhalovskiy external reader).

IE in the International Sociological Association (ISA)

Thanks to the hard work of several IE Division members, institutional ethnography now has a Thematic Group within the ISA. Information about the group and its activities can be found at <http://www.isa-sociology.org/tg06.htm>

President

Alison I. Griffith, York University, Canada
agriffith@edu.yorku.ca

Vice-President

Paul C. Luken, University of West Georgia, USA
pluken@bellsouth.net

Secretary-Treasurer

Suzanne Vaughan, Arizona State University, USA
svaughan@asu.edu

The objectives of the group are:

- to develop international contacts among sociologists and social activists interested in institutional ethnography as a mode of inquiry;

- to encourage the worldwide exchange of research findings, methodological advances and theoretical developments relevant to institutional ethnography;
- to promote international meetings and research collaboration by scholars and social activists using institutional ethnography.

There is an interview with Alison Griffith about the thematic group and more at http://www.isa-sociology.org/pdfs/tg06newsletter_nov_2011.pdf

IE Division members are reminded about the Thematic Group's Call for Abstracts for the Institutional Ethnography ISA Forum of Sociology in Buenos Aires, Argentina, August 1-4, 2012. The deadline for submissions is 11:59 pm EST, December 15, 2011.

Sessions are being organized on the following topics:

- Puzzles and Challenges in Institutional Ethnography Research
- The Social Organization of Knowledge

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(IE in the ISA continued)

- New Directions in Institutional Ethnography Research
- Researching and Working in the Community
- Transnational Ruling Relations
- Social Justice and Institutional Ethnography

Descriptions of these sessions can be found at <http://www.isa-sociology.org/buenos-aires-2012/tg/tg.php?n=TG06>. From this website, you

can click on “On-line Abstract Submission” to submit a 300-word abstract electronically. Also, please note, since we did not have time to organize workshop sessions, presentations that are primarily instructional are certainly welcome.

For more information on the Thematic Group on Institutional Ethnography or to join the ISA and the Group, go to <http://www.isa-sociology.org/tg06.htm>.

Membership is for four years.

2012 SSSP Annual Meeting in Denver

The 62nd Annual Meeting of SSSP will be held August 16-18, 2012 at the Grand Hyatt Denver Hotel in Denver, Colorado. This year's theme is The Art of Activism. The Call for Papers is live at www.sssp1.org/index.cfm/m/478/. Please also view www.sssp1.org/index.cfm/pageid/1436 for the Student Paper Competitions and Outstanding Scholarship Awards announcement and consider submitting a paper or nominating a scholar!

For quick reference, the following sessions are being sponsored or co-sponsored by the IE Division. For more information, please email the relevant organizer(s).

Session 14

Title: Collaborations: Professionals, Researchers and Community Activists

Organizer: Alison Griffith agriffith@edu.yorku.ca

Co-Sponsor: Conflict, Social Action and Change Division

Session 40

Title: Educators as Activists

Organizer: Elizabeth Brulé ebrule@yorku.ca

Co-Sponsor: Educational Problems Division

Session 59

Title: Institutional Ethnographic Approaches to Governance

Organizer: Lauri Grace lauri.grace@deakin.edu.au and Lauren Eastwood eastwole@plattsburgh.edu

Co-Sponsor: Global Division

Session 66

Title: Nursing Work: A Peculiar Eclipsing

Organizer: Janet Rankin jmrankin@ucalgary.ca

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

Session 68

Title: IE ‘New Research’

Organizer: Eric Mykhalovskiy ericm@yorku.ca

Sponsor: IE Division

Session 69

Title: IE That Makes a Difference

Organizers: Naomi Nichols

naomi_nichols@edu.yorku.ca and Graham Barnes gbarnes@bwjp.org

Sponsor: IE Division

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(2012 SSSP in Denver continued)

Session 70

Title: New Modes of Presentation and Method in IE Research

Organizer: Liza McCoy mccoy@ucalgary.ca

Sponsor: IE Division

Session 71

Title: Law Policy and Influence on Everyday Life

Organizer: Laura Bisailon lbisa082@uottawa.ca

Co-Sponsor: Law and Society Division

Session 72

Title: Social Problems and the Active Text:
Explorations in Institutional Ethnography and
Social Problems Theory

Organizer: Jared Del Ross Delross@bc.edu

Co-Sponsors: Social Problems Theory Division