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IE Newsletter

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

Dear SSSP IE division,

Here in Minneapolis, we have just come through a long and bitterly cold winter, a season that in many ways mirrored the broader social and political climate. We have witnessed how extremist ideology, when embedded in institutional texts, shapes the everyday lives of people who are simply trying to live and support their communities. As ICE moved through neighborhoods, many documented events using their phones, making visible what might otherwise have gone unseen. What those images could not capture was the severity of the cold in which these events unfolded.

Yet even in these conditions, there was hope.

Hope emerged through collective witnessing, through standing together, and through refusing to accept injustice as inevitable. These moments reflect a core strength of Institutional Ethnography: beginning from the standpoint of people's lived experiences and tracing how ruling relations organize those experiences. In doing so, we create possibilities for change.

Last year's SSSP conference was also marked by uncertainty. Many colleagues were unable to attend, and others expressed hesitation about traveling to a United States they no longer recognized. As I assumed the role of Division Chair with only a small number of members present, I experienced genuine concern about the future of our division. Since then, we have seen meaningful progress.

Our second virtual IE members meeting was well attended and highly engaging, and we will gather once more in June 2026. The long-anticipated Institutional Ethnography journal has become a reality, thanks to the leadership of Laura Parson. Division membership has increased, and we are once again on stable footing.

We anticipate presenting all IE Division awards this year, reflecting the strength of scholarship within our community. We also received more presentation submissions than available conference slots, signaling growing interest in Institutional Ethnography. Our presence on LinkedIn continues to expand, with nearly 70 followers reflecting increasing global engagement. You can follow the division [here](#).

These developments are a direct result of your continued commitment and participation.

Our next virtual IE Division meeting will take place on June 24, 2026, at Noon (EDT). I encourage you to attend and contribute to these ongoing conversations.

As we move forward, I am reminded of the importance of staying grounded in the principles of our work: starting from people's experiences, listening carefully, and making visible the social relations that shape everyday life. In doing so, we not only deepen understanding but also sustain the possibility for meaningful change.

With appreciation,
Hans

IE Summer Division Meeting

SSSP IE Division Summer Meeting will be held from 12:00 noon to 1:00 pm EDT on June 24, 2026

For your convenience here are the times for whatever US time zone you are in:

11:00 am – 12:00 pm Central Daylight Time, CDT

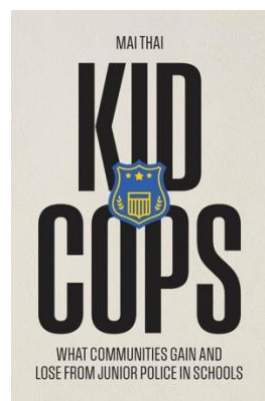
10:00 am – 11:00 am Mountain Daylight Time, MDT

9:00 am – 10:00 am Pacific Daylight Time, PDT

The Meeting will be held on [Zoom](#).

Members' News and Notes

Mai Tai announces the publication of her new book: *Kid Cops: What Communities Gain and Lose from Junior Police in Schools*. *Kid Cops* is an ethnography about police in schools—but with a twist.



Moving beyond detentions, suspensions, and arrests, it takes a critical look at junior police academy programs, school-police partnerships that offer young people opportunities but are often located in communities most affected by the criminal justice system. It asks, does good, friendly policing exist—especially if it continues to tether low-income communities of color to the criminal justice system?

Building on her 2022 *American Journal of Sociology* [article](#): “Policing and Symbolic Control: The Process of Valorization,” *Kid Cops* is written in an accessible tone that balances the seriousness of inequality with the playfulness of the study’s youth. Consider it for course adoption in sociology, education, criminal justice, or qualitative methods.

Purchase from the University of Chicago Press [website](#) with the code UCPNEW for a 30% off discount.

Morena Tartari’s 2025 paper “Practicing Dorothy Smith’s feminist alternative sociology in the criminal justice system: A case study,” is published in *Genders, Crime and Criminal Justice*, Vol 14. No. 28. The paper is open access and you can view it [here](#).

Erica Jablonski was elected by the SSSP membership to serve on the Nominations Committee for the 2026-2029 term. Be sure to contact her with your nominations!

David Jed Swartz will be presenting two papers at the upcoming American Sociological meetings in New York City: “A sociological and historical critique of psychoanalysis as well as a retrospective critique of an overly empirical and overly objective contemporary sociology;” and “Resuscitating Psychoanalytic Technique.”

Congratulations Doctor!

Fredricka Saunders from North Dakota State University, defended her dissertation *Navigating Academia and Motherhood: An Institutional Ethnography of International Graduate Student Mothers’ Lived Experiences* in May of 2026 under the supervision of **Dr. Laura Parson**. Congratulations Dr. Saunders.

Below is her abstract:

In this dissertation, I examined how international graduate student mothers navigated the daily work required to persist in higher education in the Upper Midwest United States. Using institutional ethnography informed by

feminist standpoint theory, I explored how university structures, immigration systems, and gendered expectations organized participants' everyday lives. I collected data through semi-structured interviews, institutional document analysis, and field records. My findings revealed that participants performed extensive academic, caregiving, financial, emotional, and immigration-related labor while navigating institutional systems not designed to support caregiving or noncitizen status. Disjunctures between institutional expectations and lived realities led to academic disruption, financial strain, emotional stress, and increased immigration risk. I argue that persistence among international graduate student mothers involves sustained labor coordinated through institutional and immigration ruling relations. This dissertation contributes to institutional ethnography, feminist scholarship on motherhood and academic labor, and research on international students while calling for stronger alignment between institutional policies and lived realities.

Call for Volunteers

The Institutional Ethnography Division of the Society for the Study of Social Problems is seeking Division members who are interested in serving on one of our three award selection committees for the 2026–2027 academic year.

At our upcoming 2026 SSSP meetings in New York City, we will proudly present all three IE Division awards. These awards recognize outstanding contributions to Institutional Ethnography through scholarship, mentorship, activism, teaching, and graduate student research. The continued success of these awards depends on the thoughtful work and commitment of Division members who serve on the selection committees.

The IE Division would like to sincerely thank the current committee members whose dedication and careful review process made these awards possible. We deeply appreciate their service and sincerely hope that they will consider continuing to serve on the committees for another term.

We are currently seeking volunteers for the following award committees:

- **George W. Smith Graduate Student Paper Competition:**

This committee reviews graduate student papers that advance Institutional Ethnography methodologically and/or substantively. The award supports emerging IE scholars and recognizes outstanding graduate student scholarship.

- **Dorothy E. Smith Award for Scholar-Activism:**

This committee reviews nominations recognizing individuals or groups whose work demonstrates significant contributions to Institutional Ethnography scholar-activism through research, organizing, advocacy, or community-engaged work.

- **Alison I. Griffith Award for Distinguished Contribution to Institutional Ethnography:**

This committee reviews nominations for distinguished IE scholars whose careers have significantly contributed to the advancement of Institutional Ethnography through scholarship, teaching, mentoring, organizing, or leadership.

Serving on an award committee is an important opportunity to support the Division, strengthen our scholarly community, and help recognize and encourage meaningful contributions to Institutional Ethnography and social justice work internationally.

If you are interested in serving on one of these committees during the 2026–2027 year, please contact:

Hans-Peter de Ruiter at hans-peter.de-ruiter@mnsu.edu

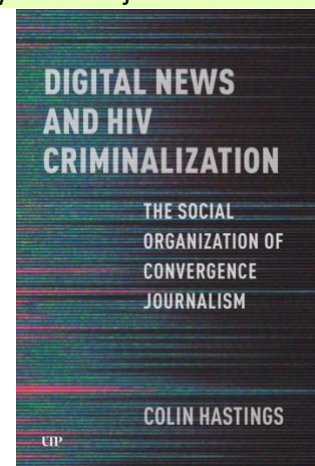
IE Book Of Interest

Published at the beginning of 2025, **Colin Hastings'** *Digital News and HIV Criminalization: The Social Organization of Convergence Journalism* is an important addition to the IE scholarship in legal and media studies. The publisher's blurb says: "*Digital News and HIV Criminalization* investigates the everyday work of journalists and uncovers how newswork routines are hooked into other institutions, including the criminal legal system, police, and public health, that regulate the daily lives of people living with HIV.

This lively institutional ethnography offers key insights into how the digital news media ecosystem is socially organized. It reveals that the fast-paced conditions of digital news media in the age of convergence journalism require the constant, rapid production of sensational news stories that will be consumed widely by online audiences, often resulting in news writing that perpetuates social harms connected to stigmatizing, racist, and anti-immigrant views. The book illustrates how biased reporting on HIV criminalization reflects broader trends in online news and presents opportunities for HIV activists to form coalitions with other groups negatively affected by the current landscape of convergence journalism.

Tracing how work that produces and circulates a standard genre of news story about HIV criminalization is coordinated across time and space, *Digital News and HIV Criminalization* offers a groundwork for political action aimed at disrupting the production of stigmatizing news stories."

You can purchase a copy [here](#).



Welcome New Members

Eleven new members have joined the IE Division since the publication of our last newsletter. Welcome all!

Seon Britton

Yuuko Johnson

Ambria Jones

Isabel F. Levin

Maren A. Lujan Aranda

Isaac Mensah

Alex Nelson

David Jed Schwartz

Benjamin Curren Wills

Zhehang Zhang

New Journal of Institutional Ethnography

The Journal of Institutional Ethnography (JIE) is a new open-access, peer-reviewed scholarly journal dedicated to research and writing that advances institutional ethnography (IE) as a method of inquiry and a sociology for people. The journal provides a home for scholarship that begins from individuals' everyday experiences and maps the institutional relations that organize and coordinate those experiences. Our first issue is scheduled to be published in Fall 2026. We still have room for the inaugural issue, and we will be publishing four issues in 2027, so please consider the JIE for your IE work now and moving forward. We are reviewing manuscripts for publication on an ongoing basis.

For more about the journal and to submit, visit this [link](#). If you have any questions, please reach out to Laura Parson (Editor) or Fredricka Saunders (Managing Editor) at journalofie@gmail.com.

The journal editors would also like to include IE book and media reviews, so if you are interested in reviewing a new IE publication, please reach out to the editors to discuss potential options for review. This is not an opportunity limited to graduate students, but it would be a great way for a graduate student or group of graduate students to write for JIE, experience the peer review process, and work toward a peer-reviewed publication.

SSSP 2026 Annual Meeting: New York, New York Resisting Colonization of Lifeworlds August 6-9, 2026



Photo by [Luca Bravo](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Friday, August 7

Time: 8:30 AM - 10:10 AM

Session 003:

Time:

Room:

Sponsor:

Organizers:

Presider:

Advocacy and Change

8:30 AM - 10:10 AM

Ambassador II

Conflict, Social Action, and Change; Institutional Ethnography

Lauren Eastwood, State University of New York, Plattsburgh

C. Michael Awsumb, Northwest Missouri State University

C. Michael Awsumb, Northwest Missouri State University

Description:

This session features presentations that broadly address advocacy and social change. Institutional ethnographers begin from the “everyday,” with the premise that people’s experiences are organized by larger ruling relations. However, to paraphrase Marx, the goal is not simply to analyze these phenomena but to change them, as “ruling relations” refer to power dynamics that generate disjunctures, inequalities, and marginalization. The papers in this session take up this dynamic through research, activism, or both.

Papers:

“At All Costs: Testifying for Housing Justice through Canada’s Federal Human Rights Review Panels,” Alex Nelson, Western University, Honorable Mention of the Institutional Ethnography Division’s Student Paper Competition

“Call It Power and Resistance: Naming and Conceptualizing, Carefully, in Institutional Ethnography,” Brenda Solomon, University of Vermont

“Layered Youth: How a South Korean Housing Movement Made ‘Youth’ Politically Usable,” Eunchoong Cho, University of California, San Diego

“Playing Their Game(s): Legible Contention through Strategic Mirroring at the Paris 2024 Olympics,” Sara Lancieri, Sapienza University of Rome

“The Role of Women in the Promotion of Peace and Social Justice in the Philippines: Lived Experiences, Challenges, and Lessons,” Diana Therese M. Veloso, De La Salle University

“The Social Organization of Health Work among Women with Autoimmune Diseases,” Dara Gordon, University of Toronto

Saturday August 8

Institutional Ethnography Divisional Business Meeting

Time: 12:30 PM - 2:10 PM

Room: Majestic Ballroom

Time: 2:30 PM - 4:10 PM

Session 057: New Directions in Institutional Ethnography

Room: Broadway II

Sponsor: Institutional Ethnography

Organizer: Katherine E. Koralesky, University of British Columbia

Presider: Lauren Eastwood, State University of New York, Plattsburgh

Description:

This session explores innovative applications of Institutional Ethnography (IE) that address contemporary social issues, shifting political contexts, and emerging methodological intersections. Presenters highlight how IE continues to evolve as a critical, justice-oriented sociology for uncovering ruling relations in everyday life.

Papers:

“Everyday Experience, Institutional Context, and Global Learning: The CRIISIS COIL Model,” Hans-Peter de Ruiter, Minnesota State University

“Insulating Public Health Policymaking: Regulatory Counterpower and Lessons from Chile,” A. Susana Ramírez, University of California, Merced

“Navigating Power and Identity: A Queered Institutional Ethnography of LGBTQIA+ Youth under Title IX in Secondary Education,” Kelley Larson, North Dakota State University

“On the Value of Voting,” Paul Luken, University of West Georgia

“Towards an Institutional Ethnography of Resisting State Violence,” C. Michael Awsumb, Northwest Missouri State University

“When Flexibility isn’t Flexible: How International Graduate Student Motherhood is Institutionally Coordinated,” Fredricka R. Saunders and Laura J. Parson, North Dakota State University

Sunday August 9

Time: 12:30 PM - 2:10 PM

Session 082: **THEMATIC: How Institutional/Systemic Factors Impact Family, Health & Well-Being**

Room: Broadway I

Sponsors: Health, Health Policy, Social Services; Institutional Ethnography

Organizer & Presider: Hans-Peter DeRuiter, Minnesota State University

Description:

This session explores how institutions extend their reach into the lifeworlds of individuals and communities, shaping the rhythms of daily life in ways that often remain hidden. By mapping these processes, we uncover how policies, organizational practices, and global systems influence personal choices, relationships, and opportunities. Drawing on examples from diverse contexts, the session highlights both the subtle and overt ways institutions colonize lived experience, and considers how approaches such as Institutional Ethnography (IE) can make these dynamics visible and open pathways for change.

Papers:

“‘Reading for Social Organization’ in Music Students’ Health Research: What Institutional Ethnography Makes Visible,” Jeffrey Sabo, University of Ottawa, Winner of the Institutional Ethnography Division’s Student Paper Competition

“An Institutional Ethnography of Graduate Student Enrollment and Retention,” Fredricka R. Saunders, Laura J. Parson, Isaac Mensah, Doriane E. Paso and Francisca Dadzie Nyarko, North Dakota State University

“Disappearing by Design: The Disabling Politics of Homelessness,” Brenna E. Jones, Illinois State University

“Making the Model Work for All: Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in Hospital-at-Home Programs,” Nels R. Paulson, University of Wisconsin-Stout, Andrew D.A. Marshall and David M. Levine, Harvard Medical School

"Mental Health of U.S. Return Migrants to Mexico City," Esmeralda Ramirez, The University of Texas at Austin, Alice Cepeda and Jessica Frankeberger, Arizona State University, Kathryn Nowotny, University of Miami, Nefertari Rincon-Guerra and Avelardo Valdez, Arizona State University

"When Policy Meets Practice: How Healthcare Systems Shape Nursing Clinical Care Leaders' Work," Emily S. Johnson and Laura J. Parson, North Dakota State University

Time: 2:30 PM - 4:10 PM

Session 088: **THEMATIC, CRITICAL DIALOGUE: Mapping Colonization of Lifeworlds: "How Institutions Invade Daily Life"**

Room: Melville

Sponsors: Global; Institutional Ethnography

Organizers: Lauren Eastwood, State University of New York, Plattsburg
Brenda Solomon, University of Vermont

Presider/Discussant: Brenda Solomon, University of Vermont

Description:

This session examines how powerful institutions shape and colonize everyday life across the globe. By tracing how rules, policies, and systems embed themselves into daily routines, the session explores how these "invasions" influence personal experiences, limit choices, and transform the ways people live, work, and relate to one another.

Papers:

"We Work for the Elderly, Not the Form!": Institutional Ethnography as a Decolonizing Practice for Indigenous Care," Frank TY Wang, National Chengchi University

"Institutional Ethnography of the Promotion and Tenure Processes in Higher Education," Laura J. Parson, North Dakota State University

"Mapping Policy Lifeworlds: Sexual Citizenship in Transnational Feminist Perspective," Nancy Naples, University of Connecticut

"Mapping Policy Lifeworlds: The Daily Life of 'the Environment' Subsumed under UN Discourses," Lauren Eastwood, State University of New York, Plattsburgh

"Reflections on Institutional Capture: Intentional and Unintentional," Paul Luken, University of West Georgia

"The Ship and Her Captain: Discursive Formations of Global White Space(s)," Samantha Marazzi, University of Connecticut