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Interviewed by: Sheena Sargeant, 1999

SS: How did you get involved in researching adolescent pregnancy?

DK: Based on my dissertation research which had been in alternative schools in California, I noticed that one of the schools had set up its daycare and all the support services for young mothers in what was a very remedial, almost punitive, program. Not all alternative schools are like this, but in this particular district they were sending gang members and kids who were dealing drugs in school, and that kind of thing, to the school. And so, I found it kind of funny that in a low-income area where young women wouldn't have support otherwise, they really didn't have a choice. If they wanted to continue with their schooling, they were put in this remedial, punitive program, and I thought that that was not ... just. But it wasn't the focus, really, of my research.

When I came to BC to take this job in '91 there was just starting to be talk about monies available for setting up daycare inside high schools. I thought this was really an exciting opportunity to look at some of the dilemmas of trying to integrate a group that's been deemed "different" into a regular program. So at the start of it I saw it as one piece in a larger research program that I had been working on, "Dilemmas of Difference." But, many years later, I've found that this project that I thought would be smaller had a lot of richness to it. And it's been a springboard for looking at other issues like adolescent sexuality and school responses to that in general.

SS: What was your approach to the research?

DK: I had already done a small-scale participatory-action research project with some young people at one of the alternative schools, and that had been really exciting. The young people were really into it, but that also had its politics, and I felt pretty constrained. So I had already known that to do action research in a context of school you couldn't do a full-blown participatory-action research project, precisely because of the way schools define young people, and some of the things that they have to worry about. I had a little bit more lee-way in the alternative program because it was "alternative." In that particular school a lot of the teachers were very influenced by ideas coming out of the '60s about student empowerment and so on. So they were pretty excited about having me do the project. Where that ran into trouble was when we tried to go beyond the school and into the more mainstream system. But I still wanted to have an action research component in the School Responses to Teen Pregnancy Project, or have the flexibility of doing that if an issue arose.

The other thing was that I really wanted to have the teen mothers themselves be theorists, and, hopefully, as a result of participating in the research, see themselves as agents of change. So I looked around for schools that would be somewhat compatible with my ideas. Now, the root of the problem arose because these programs were partnerships, and I found much more compatibility and enthusiasm on the part of people who were running the daycare part of it because they tended to be the community-based

organizations. So, there was a lot of initial enthusiasm for my ideas, and it got off to a strong start. I went into one of the schools and did a presentation with the students about being a sociologist, being a feminist. We brainstormed about how they had felt stigmatized and labeled by the wider community, and so they - and the teacher - were enthusiastic.

Part of the initial research was having them do journals because I was interested in how accepted they would be in the school, and how I, by my very presence, would change their relationships. If I'm hanging around, shadowing the teen mothers through their school day - which I did - it would change the dynamic as they interact with their peers and with their teachers. So I thought that the journals would also complement what I was trying to do nicely because they could reflect day-to-day on situations where they felt accepted and situations where they felt judged. I also didn't restrict them to school, because I thought that might be interesting to see: Are the judgements coming from the school context? Or are they coming from their family context? Or from their interaction with health-care workers? As it turned out, school was actually one of the more accepting places for them. Where examples of judgement came in was often from just riding the public transit system, and from interacting with people that didn't know them very well but who could see that by their age and the fact that they were carrying schoolbooks and a baby, that they were young mothers.

So, as a result of reading those journals and just talking with young women at lunch and at breaks, it really seemed that transit was emerging as an issue that we might enable us to do a small-scale action research partnership. And it came from the young mothers, which had always been my intention. When you read about participatory-action research, it's often done with adults, and the idea is that it would come from within the community. When you're working with young people, it gets a bit more complicated. But I was excited because this issue came from the teen mothers themselves. One of them had the idea of a simple change, like expanding the courtesy signs in the bus from "the elderly" to include "people travelling with very small children." That consideration is already given to people travelling on airplanes, so it didn't seem outrageous or revolutionary. I had a research assistant working with me at that school, and she and I decided to work with the moms on crafting a letter. It became very complicated because how would they identify themselves? At one point, my research assistant drafted a letter based on what we were talking about, and it very clearly said "DRAFT" on the top of the page. She had raised the issue of whether to use school letterhead, and I immediately told her that that would not be appropriate. But that draft with all those caveats was what the teacher first saw.

The teacher then took that draft to the school principal, and got him involved, and so I found myself being called down to the principal's office. When I had originally gotten access to that school there had been another principal, and I had talked to that principal and he had understood very well where I was coming from. But this was a brand new principal, so -

SS: This is the principal for both the alternative and the mainstream school?

DK: Yes, because the young mothers' program was run in the main school. So it was right in the school itself, but it had its own identity, even though maybe a third of the

young mothers were fully integrated in the regular classes. What it came down to, then, is that the principal and the teacher did not see this as “educational.” And, without really stating it in such bald terms, it seemed that what was troubling them was the fact that the teen mothers would write this letter together and that it would be collective action. And I had been talking to them about how their voices would be stronger if they did write together. But we were going to append individual statements to the letter. That was our compromise. At one point I had a conversation with the teacher, and she felt that the whole process was creating what she called a “we/they” situation.

SS: “We” being the teen mothers, and “they” being...?

DK: - the transit authorities. And, so this coincided with a few other things going on. I think that it illustrates how ethnography can get incredibly messy – it’s very political, precisely because you’re interacting with all these people. At the beginning of the project, I needed the adult authorities to allow me access to do the research, which is very important, and I understand the reason for that. The school board needs to sign, the school principal, and the teacher, as well as the community-based organization that ran the daycare. So, it’s quite a long, involved process to actually get access. So after investing so much time in this, you don’t want to have it all blow up. At the same time, I really was focused on how the teen mothers were accepted.

So most of my time was being spent with the teen mothers – less in the program, because I was interested in the ones who were being fully integrated. So a lot of my time was being spent shadowing the teen mothers through their day. But, I think that what that meant – and I’m just speculating – was that maybe the teacher involved started to feel like I was siding with the teen mothers against her. And as conflicts arose in the program, as they inevitably do, that became an issue. But it was an unstated one, which became very uncomfortable. I tried to allay anxieties as best I could. This is the third ethnographic project that I had done, and, really, versions of this arise every time I’ve done this type of research because people see you a lot, and they know that you’re doing research. And, unless they know you and trust you, paranoia can creep in, and they start to think that you’re a spy ... for God knows who!

But there are real issues at stake. I don’t want to belittle that on the other hand, either. Because although you promise to protect the anonymity of the program and the school and the district, people worry about how you will portray things, and what ramifications that might have on their program.

Anyway, to get back to the journals, the teacher decided to end the journal project at roughly the same time that I went down to have a talk with the principal. It had kind of a cooling effect on the more participatory – or what I would call “feminist” – elements of the ethnography, and it became a bit more of just a traditional ethnography. It also had an effect on the second site – that second case study occurred the next year, and was in a much more ... conservative community.

SS: Was the first site “Town School,” or “City School”?

DK: The first site was the City School and the second site was the Town School, so it was also a smaller community. Whereas the City School program had been much more

established, the Town School was just starting up, and there was some controversy over it, to the point where the program was being forced on that particular school by the school board. And the Ministry of Women's Equality, which was giving funding for the daycare, was working with the community-based organization that was setting up the daycare. So there was will – political will – on that end. From the school-partnership point-of-view, it was not necessarily wanted. So within that climate a lot of rumors were rampant, as though there would be all these teen mothers “raining down” on this school, and it would mean extra work for teachers. These things weren't true, but they were being said, and that was affecting the start of the program. I certainly didn't want to feed into any controversy by trying a more ambitious research approach. So, there I did serve in an advocacy role, but it was much more low key.

SS: What were the effects of this shift in methodological approach on the mothers themselves in the first school? Can you speculate at all?

DK: They really noticed. And so my loyalties were very divided. To make it even more messy, some real conflicts were coming to a head between the members of the partnership of that program. The more community-based folks were at loggerheads with the school-based folks, so I found myself somewhat in the middle of that. I really tried to navigate between that. But it was really taxing, very emotionally draining. I was very happy to have a research assistant on that site, and she spent an equal amount of time with me in the school. We found ourselves almost daily calling each other, and just saying, “Yikes!”, because it really got political.

So the effects on the teen mothers were that they noticed that the project shifted. And yet it wasn't too big of a deal because I think they kind of liked just having an adult presence who was non-judgmental and very interested in their lives, but who wasn't assuming a therapeutic role. That role that you're in – which is not as a counselor, but as a very active listener – can sometimes lead to disclosure of information that leads to ethical conflicts. The two that can come up are where a young person is reporting a situation of abuse, which must be reported. And basically, since I was doing research in schools, I'm bound by some of the same guidelines that affect teachers, for example. But the young women were pretty well aware of that, and so, where they did talk about abuse it was very much in the past, when some of them had been made wards of the government. So they were well out of the abusive situations. I didn't feel that I had to, re-report something like that, it was taken care of.

The one really tricky situation that arose was right near the end of the journal project, where one of the young women seemed to me to be expressing suicidal feelings. The journal was not intended to serve that purpose because they had rather strict guidelines on what they were supposed to be talking about. However, if you've ever done journals, or been in a classroom where students are doing journals, you really can't contain it. People associate writing in a journal with writing in a diary, and I think you just have to be prepared for some more personal stuff. And so I was in a quandary because I didn't want to violate that confidentiality. I'd also been very clear that I'd respect confidentiality, and the young women had all chosen pseudonyms to write under.

And the journals were being locked in file cabinets. But I felt that I had to do something about that. Luckily, because of the ethnographic approach, I knew a lot about

some of these young women, and I knew that this particular young woman had made a very close friendship with the school nurse. So I contacted the school nurse and confided in her because I also thought she'd be much more aware even than I was about the protocols about suicide. She took it from there, and I felt very satisfied that it had been handled well. But it was very nerve-racking going through it. There are no easy solutions, but I think you have to have your eyes wide open when you go into this kind of research because it's fraught with all sorts of ethical problems that you don't run into when you just hand out a questionnaire.

I thought I was being a little bit wiser going into this particular project because, I really made an effort to link up with like-minded folks. But there's a lot of change in this business, and getting the funding took a long time, getting the access took a long time. By the time that was in place some of the key actors had changed. In the case of Town School, it had originally been slated to go into a school where the principal was really excited about the project. I had gone to that school, and had spent days observing. I had interviewed the principal, interviewed all these people. And then at the last second the school district had decided to switch the site to a school where the principal was ambivalent about the project. He was also coming from a pro-life point of view, which was not ever clearly stated to me, but which I have strong evidence of. For example, in the library I ran across some pro-life material that he had given permission to have. There's a letter from him giving permission for this pro-life material to be in the library. Things like that. So, you can't control that. I mean life just goes on. Another one of my really close collaborators died in the middle of the project – very unexpectedly came down with a life-threatening disease, and died. That was very emotional for me as well because when you're doing this type of work, you really make friends with people. So it's ...

SS: ... so it's fraught all over the place with different emotional and political ties.

DK: But that's also what makes it so fascinating. Sometimes when I read more mainstream sociology journals, I find myself just being utterly bored. I get these journals and I glance through the titles. I could take one off the shelf and read it to you, and I think you'd agree! They're really pretty dry! So I guess that's why I've continued to pursue this line of inquiry, this methodology.

SS: One of the questions that I had on my list concerns how it affects you, like in your daily life. And I guess some of these things that you've identified really speak to that as well. Not just the research, but the methodology, too.

DK: I think it keeps me energized though, too. And maybe it's partially an illusion, but I think it's partially true that it allows you to be more involved in the community. And I think the hesitation that I had about going into the academy was that what I did would be too divorced from community concerns. This sort of research allows me to at least feel as though I'm involved. And I think that there's some truth to it. I was able to link up to the BC Alliance, "Concerned with Early Pregnancy and Parenthood." For a year or so I worked with one of their committees looking at how programming might take into account the fact that a fairly high number of young women who get pregnant and carry

their pregnancy to term have been sexually abused. And they have provided a forum for me to get some of my findings out there. They publish a quarterly newsletter that goes out around the province and into the Yukon and beyond. So I'm able to communicate with people who are trying to get these programs up and running, or are involved already, and programs that try to help young parents.

SS: Tell me more about the advocacy role that you played at the Town School.

DK: These were non-neutral roles that I took on. One was a sounding board because the program was not yet up and running. I became a third partner in the City School program, where communications were breaking down between the community-based partners and the school partner. In the start-up program at Town School, where there were also communication problems, I found, almost unwittingly, that I was the most important person. I was going between all the groups as I was trying to find out about how they were all perceiving the politics of trying to implement this program. So I found myself dispelling rumors. Progressive teachers were seeking me out, using some of my preliminary research to rebut more conservative staff members' opposition to the daycare. I was being inadvertently used as an advocate there.

Some progressive teachers invited me in to be a guest speaker. One teacher, the drama teacher, was very inspirational for me, and she had young people creating plays about their lives, and she allowed me to use drama to interview students who had not been young parents. Of course I got their parents' permission to do that, but I wanted to interview Grade 8 students who were the youngest students in the school. And I was told by a couple of teachers and counselors that they "wouldn't really know anything," that they're not really a "high priority." But I persisted with that, and I found that to be fascinating because I found that it was precisely at the Grade 8 level where some of the young women were being pressured by boyfriends a couple years' older than they were to have sexual intercourse. Some of them didn't feel ready, some of them were kind of confused about their own feelings. So I found that it wasn't too young of an age here to be talking about that.

I ended up being invited by that teacher to come and answer students' questions. And a lot of the questions that they had were about abortion, which was really a divisive issue in this community to the point where teachers didn't want to talk about it. So I felt safe. I mean, I'm coming from the outside, not in that community, as a researcher with at least an appearance of expertise. And I was just very frank with students. Shared my views. They weren't getting that in their regular sex education programs. There's just a lot of silence around issues that were considered divisive which included abortion, access to contraception, sexuality/sexual orientation. So, ironically, you have a school with a daycare for young women who have become young mothers, but there are still all these silences. I was able to break those silences to a certain extent. I had young women coming and asking me if there was a place in the community where they could get contraception. And there was. There was a youth clinic where they could go and they didn't need parental permission for that, and that's a publicly funded resource. It's there, but they didn't know about it.

You have to realize that this was a school in the lowest-income part of a town, and I think maybe more middle-class young people have more knowledge, or their

parents might make them aware, better access to the information. If they find themselves pregnant, there's a lot of pressure on them, actually, to get an abortion. I mean, there's no doubt in their heads that they're going to have the resources to go on to University. Their futures are so bright that they just simply conclude that they can't become parents. But a different context is operating for young people who are living in poverty. So those are some of the advocacy roles that I played.

SS: You commented that in the first school some of the different roles you played were really draining a lot of the time. How did you feel about your advocacy role?

DK: Coming at the research as a feminist and having framed it as I did – which was with a clear commitment to this program and to integrating teen mothers – I felt less of a conflict in that more limited advocacy role. I was really up front with people that I don't believe in the traditional view of research, which is that the researcher is very detached and value-neutral. That doesn't mean that anything goes. I was there to find out how other people felt, and to document some of the politics of trying to put a program like this into place. What works? What doesn't work? So I wasn't trying to manipulate the situation. So the tension comes from the fine line there. I found that what I worried about is that if I was too associated with the daycare then I wouldn't get to learn about the views of people who didn't feel comfortable with the daycare.

So I was pretty low-key about it. And my strategy there was that if somebody would ask me to share my view, then I would say that I'm here to find out the range of views. And I deliberately sought out some of the teachers who were leading the opposition, who tended to be more vocal in the faculty meetings, for example. I had to do a little bit of persuasive work to have them talk to me. Not because they didn't think that I wouldn't listen, I think, but because they felt the daycare was already a fait accompli, so why did they need to talk to me? But I really did care very much to learn about their views, and I think that I tempered some of my own views probably as a result. And it makes for richer research.

So you don't go into doing ethnography thinking you've got it all figured out. The tensions arise from seeing some of what you're seeing, and being troubled about it. You have some young people coming to you who've already said that they're really in a quandary, they're thinking about having sex, but the double standard is still very much in operation, they're very confused. What I did in that case was direct them. By that time I had interviewed all the counselors, and all of the Grade 8's had a male counselor, and the young women didn't feel comfortable going there for whatever reason. He was a nice man and all that, but I think that they wanted to talk to a woman. I could direct them to the woman counselor who I thought would be the most receptive to them. Little things like that.

I guess that you're floating around and you're talking to everybody so you do have this amazing informal knowledge of the school, and yet you're outside of the school structure and the students know that. And you're going to go away. So they're not losing any face by acknowledging that they might want to have sex while they're in Grade 8, which, to my mind, if that was my daughter that might be too young of an age to handle it emotionally. But they can talk to the counselor. That's why I sent them to the counselor that I did, somebody who wouldn't be judgmental. It's tough work.

SS: How do you pull yourself out of that? I mean, you're in there in all these facets interconnected in so many different ways. I imagine it would be difficult to just go, "O.K. It's over! Bye-bye!"

DK: It's hard. I would write up little interim reports after talking to all the students about sexuality education issues. I issued a little report, and I went to talk to the classes where I had gotten the students to be interviewed. Not everybody felt comfortable being interviewed so I also was able to communicate to their peers. And went back and did some in-service with the staff. So there's a little bit of closure, sharing what I found out, giving them an opportunity to ask me questions. And I still have contact with the coordinator of the program. In fact, she just sent me a letter yesterday! As I've been writing stuff, I send it to her.

I felt pretty pleased because she's been able to use some of my research to do in-service with her staff and with other people. So, for example, what we both felt after I had interviewed the teachers was that maybe they had come out of working-class backgrounds, but, by virtue of their current status as teachers, they were middle-class. And some of them were losing sight of the context in which a lot of the young women who had children were living. So, you might have a single mother, but a middle-class teacher saying, "Well, if I can find alternate care, then these teen mothers should be able to find alternate care." That's really not the case, especially if they're living on social assistance. They may not be in contact with their family anymore. They may have come out of an abusive situation, and they don't want to put their own child back into that by calling on their family to help them out with alternate care if their child is sick and can't go to the daycare. So she was able to do an in-service with the teachers just about what it's like to live on welfare, how these young women's lives differ from the lives of better-off single parents. It may seem obvious to you, but I think these were points that had to be said, and kind of said back to the teachers.

SS: What about City School? Do you still maintain connections with them in various ways?

DK: That's where more staff changes have taken place. I've continued to send stuff that I've written to them, but I haven't gotten any feedback. I think that partly reflects some of the politics that I ran into in that school. Also, it was a more established program, so I think that there was less practical need for what I was able to provide because they already had an up-and-running program, and they liked the way it was being run.

SS: So, it's been more of a filtering out?

DK: It's been very hard to maintain contact with the young mothers themselves. Even during the research. One day they just might not show up again. And nobody would ever see them again. So you're left wondering what happened to them. Others, I know, went on to post-secondary education, which is great, and I was able to write some letters of recommendation for some of them. I tried to keep in touch, but, especially in the more remote site, it's hard because people don't have time to write letters. I think that they're

just moving on.

SS: You've talked, in a couple of different aspects, about how class has affected your research and the interactions between the young mothers and the school and teachers. As a researcher, did you find that that was something that came up as an issue?

DK: I get the label in this department of "Sociologist." So I guess as a sociologist I'm always aware of how class affects interactions. It modifies the language that I use. But I do that, regardless, because I think that when we're talking to ourselves or to graduate students we can get caught up in a more theoretical language. So it's almost like I'm bilingual. I've been at this for a while – I can go into my "plain" talk.

They also knew that I was at UBC, which for many of them was very remote. One of them had a mother who worked cleaning up at the hospital. That's maybe the context that they would have of UBC. So UBC represents something that's very upper-middle-class. So I try to downplay that because that's a distancing thing. The way I dressed, that's a day-to-day issue. Now, I'm a pretty casual person to begin with, and I eschew designer clothing, but I don't think that you would want to go in for that if you're doing that type of research. But neither do you want to pretend that you're somebody who you're not.

There was a supper club that was starting up, because for the young women who were on social assistance, it was hard to get enough to eat toward the end of the month. So I would come to that, and I would get fed as a result of participating with everybody else in making the dinner and cleaning up. So that was kind of fun. And actually my partner went along with me because it was in the evening, and so that kind of put more of a human face on me. I think that when you're doing this type of work, people want to know what kind of music you listen to, just are you a human being? And in the middle of it, we found that we were moving and we had some furniture that we were getting rid of. I tried to turn it in to a fun thing where we had a contest. I can't remember, I think that it was decorating something, and whoever won got a free desk.

I liked the idea that it was a desk because it was associated with education. So one of the young women won that, and we brought that over, and she was really happy to get it. So, you find that you're becoming aware of how little resources some young people are getting by on. You don't want to go into the charity model, which would be kind of condescending, but part of you wants to help out in small ways. So I tried to do that.

At the time that I was doing the research, I was thinking of having a child myself, and in fact, when I did the research in Town School, I found myself pregnant, and coping with morning sickness. I was sitting in these classrooms where you're not supposed to eat. And so, I was sneaking these little crackers and stuff! And I found that that was really fun because I really don't have a lot of family around me in BC, and it was my first child, and I didn't really know a lot about going through pregnancy, or becoming a new mother. So I found myself just asking advice from the young women. And they got a big kick out of that. They weren't often asked for advice. They were given a lot of advice, which is always blame, right? So, I think I was just trying to find ways of showing a common humanity. Not creating distance, which some middle-class people do in a way.

SS: How would you like to see your research communicated to a wider audience?

DK: I think, maybe by being in the Faculty of Education, or coming from a feminist perspective, which I see as wanting to make positive social change, and it doesn't just focus on gender. I mean, I've been very influenced by critical feminist thought, so trying to hold in mind the intersections of class, race, sexuality, age, all these factors, gets very, very complicated. And it's hard to hold these distinctions in mind, but I wanted to try to challenge unequal power relations. Being an educator, I really want to communicate my research findings beyond an academic audience. I tried two strategies. One was that I gave a big public talk, which became a way of trying to get some publicity, and it was pretty successful. I worked with somebody in the faculty of education who knew about writing press releases. So from a press release, I drew some radio, drew some TV spots, and did some interviews that found their way into print. This happened a couple of years ago, but, on the basis of that, I had practitioners and politicians contacting me for more information. So that was gratifying.

And I know that we already talked about how I tried to reach the practitioners, the front line workers. As part of the BC Alliance, I was encouraging that organization – and I think that they wanted to do that independently of my research – to think about ways that young women can be advocates for themselves. And it's really hard to do that beyond just a token thing. Typically, the Alliance has a conference every year, and they almost always try to get a panel of young mothers to be involved. But it's really tempting to select the most articulate speakers, and maybe those who echo some of our unexamined class assumptions. So that's, I think, the big challenge for the future. And that's a question that I have had in all the research that I've done, because it's almost always involved some youth. And I find that they're not treated as full citizens, and that bothers me. So, I've tried to create roles for them in the research that would give them an opportunity to voice their concerns. It's hard, and you are constrained by consent laws and stuff like that. I did get special permission from UBC and the school board to treat the teen mothers as adults so that they didn't have to get written permission from their parent or guardian to participate in the research. So I think that I've been fairly successful at communicating the findings to wider audiences.

SS: We've sort of touched on it, but what's the next stage for you personally?

DK: Well, I'm writing this up. I've already written a lot on it, and I'm trying to gather it all together in a book. And that will mark, for me, the completion of this project. Flowing out of it, though, I still have maintained an interest in sexuality education issues, and how we can do a better job of that, and how we can create a curriculum that is more respectful of youth. That's difficult because the people, I think, out in the community, doing those progressive works in this conservative climate, don't want to draw attention to what they're doing, ironically. It's hard to highlight progressive practices, which would be my first inclination. Most of my efforts, lately, have been more involved with a teaching project that I've been doing. We've started a special program, a teacher education program that enrolls people who are in Secondary Social Studies, English, or both. It focuses on the themes of Humanities and Social Justice. So, there are a few things on the horizon.

I'd like to do some action research with student teachers in cooperation with in-service practicing teachers, and it's under this broad umbrella of social justice, which would allow some focus but would, you know, allow a particular school to identify what a need is in that school. And I'd like to be able to facilitate that, and get the new teachers thinking about ways that they can have an activist element to their practice. The challenge there is that, as you can appreciate, a new teacher is really overwhelmed with just becoming a teacher, so they're really focused on "How am I going to control the class? How am I going to come up with a lesson plan that day?" So the challenge for me is to get them thinking that way without overwhelming them. That's kind of a new project. And somewhat connected to that, I've just been part of a team that's submitted a very preliminary project on looking at the intersections of gender, poverty and race. I've been working with some historians in this department and people outside of the department, to really put a focus on poverty and social class as it intersects with gender and race.

The interest that I have there is this debate that's bubbling up, lately. The problem of the so-called "underachieving" boy. Some leading educators have taken it up somewhat problematically because the debate doesn't take into account class and race and sexuality. It just posits the issue very dichotomously as "boys vs. girls," and, "now that we've gotten all these girls into math and science, that problem's solved and now the problem that we face is too many boys that aren't doing well in school." I think there's some truth to the way the problem's been posed, but I think it needs to be clarified. So I hope to do that, but that's at the very beginning stages.

SS: You have already identified your work as "feminist." But I guess that I'd just like to conclude by briefly asking, how is that so? What does that mean to you?

DK: There are many different ways of thinking about feminism. But, I think, for me, there is a commonality, which is challenging unequal relations in power between men and women, but with all the complications that we've talked about because that intersects with class and ethnicity and so on. So I identify myself as feminist in that sense, and that influences the sorts of topics that I choose, and the way I go about answering research questions, and the way I think about communicating my results. But I don't think there's an inherently feminist methodology. A lot of people are drawn to ethnography because they think it's going to set out being more feminist. And I think it can allow you more flexibility to be more collaborative and maybe to have a more reciprocal role, which are some themes that have come out of feminist critiques of traditional social science, for example.

But it's fraught with a lot of ethical dilemmas. It's certainly a constant struggle. And I think you can do some more traditional methods and still be framing it in a feminist way. So for me what makes it feminist is not the methods. It's your stance, your goal, your way of looking at research, challenging some of the traditional, positivist notions, like the detached, value-neutral observer. Challenging that. That's also the challenge from a post-structuralist, post-modernist point of view. You don't have to necessarily be a feminist to have that insight. Although I think feminists have been really key in challenging that traditional route of research. But for me, it's wanting to make a positive social change, which a lot of post-modernists are so skeptical about, that they

just step away from doing ethnography and step away from politics. And I don't think that we can afford to do that. I think that we have to be really humble and really careful for all the reasons that I've discussed, but I don't think we want to throw up our hands. I think that research can help make a difference. It can help change the world. It can be a step in that. It can help us re-frame dominant ways of talking about social problems, for example.

SS: And you see that falling into the research you're doing on teen mothers, too?

DK: I do. I think that teen mothers have been demonized, and that demonization has been part and parcel of an effort to cut back our social safety net, to implement a much more restrictive, limiting sex-ed curriculum, and so forth. So what I hope is that I've challenged a lot of negative stereotypes that have become attached to teen mothers, and tried to direct attention to what I think are some of the more root problems, like the fact that our labor markets are segregated by race and gender. And, you know, things like that draw attention to the Right's agenda, which is trying to make abortion and contraception, once again, less accessible, to the point of extinction, like the whole effort in Surrey around banning the books. It's trying to silence a discussion of diverse sexualities. So I think it's an ongoing struggle, and feminists are weighing in at certain points in that, and trying to reframe things.

SS: I think we're at our time limit. Is there anything else you would like to add?

DK: No, it's been fun, and I wish that I had had a class like you're having!