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Eric M. Baus
Indiana University - Purdue University Fort Wayne

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THE ETHNOGRAPHIC RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GENDER AND POWER IN SERVICE-BASED INTERACTIONS

Eric M. Baus
(Beth Simon, Associate Professor of English and Linguistics)
Department of English and Linguistics

My general topic of research is the ethnography of workplace and service-based interactions focusing specifically on how gender affects the power dynamic of these interactions. I am interested in finding out how and in what ways gender affects different kinds of (service-based) interactions such as doctor-patient relationships, coworker relationships, customer-employee relationships, etc. My assumption is that gender shapes the exchange in ways that can be studied, and that in looking at individual exchanges through an ethnographic lens I will be able to come to some conclusions about how the different participants' gender empowers, disempowers, or do not affect directly the amount of power and control the individual has in a given interaction. I am also concluding with a reexamimantion of what the term "power" denotes and a reconsideration of its use in my hypothesis.