

**“Made in B.C.”**  
**An Overview of Lesbian-Specific Research in**  
**British Columbia**  
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for

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## **“Made in B.C.”: An Overview of Lesbian-Specific Research in British Columbia”<sup>1</sup>**

In the past 30 years, research on lesbian issues has grown and developed. Far from the scientific’ research of the early sexologists<sup>2</sup> that sought to diagnose and cure homosexuality, research on lesbians is now a rich field with studies encompassing a variety of areas.

In academic spheres, the cross-fertilization of gay and lesbian studies and other disciplines has been occurring for more than a decade. The developments of queer theories, with their dismantling of categories, has furthered this inter-disciplinary activity. Research on lesbian issues has been occurring within the humanities (e.g., philosophy, literature, history), social sciences (e.g., sociology, anthropology), law and policy studies, and the health sciences (e.g., nursing, medicine, social work, counselling psychology).

There are only a handful of academic researchers working on lesbian issues in B.C.<sup>3</sup> There are rich bodies of literature within several academic disciplines, and the work coming out of B.C. covers a number of them. From the University of Victoria, Holly Devor researches and writes on gender issues, particularly transgenderism and the intersection of gender and sexual orientation. At UBC, Becki Ross’s work has been concentrated within critical sexuality studies; this work has included studies of lesbian community formation and history, the practice of teaching sexual history, and the construction of femininity in women’s athletics at UBC, 1945-55. Ross currently studies the history of burlesque, subject matter closely tied to lesbian research in its investigation into the lives of sexual outlaws and the practices of constructing and regulating women’s sexuality. Lorraine Weir’s work on queer issues in literature illuminates the relationship between academic research and community issues; she has been active in the legal case of Little Sister’s Bookstore and in the recent case of Robin Sharpe. Heather Sykes’ work around the history of lesbians in physical education is a good example of the interdisciplinary work being done by B.C.-based researchers; Sykes’ marriage of queer and feminist theories to the sociology of sport brings interesting results.

While there are few career academics working on lesbian research within B.C. universities, research at the graduate level is abundant.<sup>4</sup> This research tend to mirror the evolution of gay and lesbian studies and the emergence of feminist, queer and post-colonial theories; Charting the thesis topics from the mid 1980s onward illuminates a shift from social work and counselling psychology research to a broad range of study in areas such as social policy and law, critical studies, sociology, history, geography, and health sciences.

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<sup>1</sup> This paper was prepared by Maria Hudspith, in consultation with Jannit Rabinovitch.

<sup>2</sup> Gilman, S. (1985). *Difference and pathology: Stereotypes of sexuality, race and madness*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

<sup>3</sup> For citations of this research, refer to the attached bibliography and research summaries.

<sup>4</sup> For citations, refer to the attached research summaries.

The topics explored in graduate level research often reflect the changing concerns of community members. Many theses have explored issues for queer youth, highlighting the experiences of homophobia in schools. Others have focused on the mental and physical health of lesbians, offering recommendations for change in practice and policy in the helping professions. Recent theses are focusing on issues such as the disruption of identity politics and the implications of this for community building and political organizing. The experiences of lesbian mothers also seems to be getting attention on the research agenda, with current studies examining legal, social and personal perspectives on the lesbian baby boom.

The academic research done in B.C. replicates the silences with the larger bodies of academic literature on lesbians. While Ross's research examines the intersection of multiple oppressions, much of the academic literature coming out of B.C. is silent on (or only whispers about) the relationship between race, class and sexuality. Nearly all of the research done in B.C. has privileged the stories of the dominant; the majority of the graduate theses and dissertations completed by B.C.-based researchers looked exclusively at the experiences of white, able-bodied, middle-class, urban women. Only a couple theses involved significant numbers of women of colour and/or working-class women as participants<sup>5</sup> and a few others, while not involving diverse groups of women as participants, centred the intersection of sexuality, race and class in the analysis<sup>6</sup>.

Research on lesbians has not just been occurring within academia. Given the relationship between the subject matter and political struggles for social justice, it makes sense that people from diverse communities are taking up research to explore their needs, to bolster political demands for equity, and to uncover queer history.

While academic research on lesbian issues occurs in both applied and theoretical areas, community-based researchers tend to focus on a specific issue in a particular locale. This work often emerges from the experiences of community members and usually proceeds with a concrete goal in mind: policy change, generating public awareness, or educating a specific profession around diversity.

The scope of community-based research in B.C. is similar to that occurring in other locations in Canada and the U.S.; Geographically based health projects have been particularly prolific and reflect a growing political movement around queer health.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> For example, Hudspith, M. (2000). Cultures of resistance: Identity, politicization and health promotion among lesbian activists in Vancouver, B.C., Unpublished Master's thesis, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C.

<sup>6</sup> For example, Holmes, C. (2000). The politics of naming the violence: Examining constructions of lesbian abuse in community educational discourses. Unpublished Master's thesis, OISE/University of Toronto, Toronto, ON.

<sup>7</sup> In the U.S. and Canada, there is increasing interest in LGBT health issues among government and the health care sector. In 2001, a national queer health conference was held in Saskatoon, SK to develop and support the growing movement. From this, the Canadian Rainbow Health Coalition has been formed. In the U.S., there have been several national conferences sponsored by the Gay and Lesbian Medical Association as well as a national research symposium on lesbian health organized by the Gay National Institutes of Health (1999).

The community-based research coming out of B.C. tends to reflect a greater diversity of representation than that conducted within the confines of B.C. universities.<sup>8</sup> For example, research on lesbian health has been conducted in Prince George and on Salt Spring Island, speaking to the specificity of rural concerns. Health research conducted in Vancouver for the production of “Your everyday health guide” involved First Nations women and women from diverse Asian backgrounds. The Lesbian Innovation Project involved lesbians of colour and women of colour were the “poster girls” for the media materials. For the most part, projects that were headed by women of colour and/or working-class women have made the connections between multiple oppressions more explicitly and included women from these groups among the research sample.

The disparity between academic and community-based research, in terms of representation, seems common-sensical; although no research could be found on this topic, one might assume that this is due to the relative privilege of those pursuing academic studies. While this analysis might hold some water, writings by women of colour suggest that for many, working around race is more necessary than focusing on sexual identity.<sup>9</sup> These writings document the centering of the dominant in feminist and lesbian-feminist writing, research and organizing.

A preliminary overview of the made-in-B.C. lesbian research would suggest that B.C. is making a significant contribution to the larger lesbian research agenda. However, investigations into a number of B.C. specific issues would add to the knowledge pool. As noted, the silences in the literature are fairly consistent, regardless of the field of study; the stories of rural women, working-class dykes, lesbians who are immigrants and refugees, queer women of colour, Aboriginal dykes, and trans lesbians are only starting to be told.

The following two documents attempt to capture the current state of research in British Columbia at this time, May 2002. The first provides a reference list, including summaries, of research produced or underway in British Columbia and includes master’s theses, doctoral dissertations, scholarly papers and community-based reports. Of the 60 publications reviewed it is of interest to note that five were written in the 1980’s, 24 were completed in the 1990’s, 14 between 2000 and 2002 and 17 are currently in progress.

The second bibliography provides citations for articles published in journals and publications produced by BC-based researchers.

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<sup>8</sup> For citations, refer to attached bibliography and research summaries.

<sup>9</sup> For example: (1991). Man royals and sodomites: Some thoughts on the invisibility of Afro-Caribbean lesbians. In M. Silvera (Ed.). *Piece of my heart: A lesbian of colour anthology* (pp. 14-26). Toronto: Sister Vision Press; Khan, S. (1999). Colour me white. In K. Kleindienst (Ed.). *Dyke activists take on the 21<sup>st</sup> century* (pp. 126-135). Ithaca: Firebrand Books; McMichael, P. and Wallace, C. (1999). Who is the “we”? In K. Kleindienst (Ed.). *Dyke activists take on the 21<sup>st</sup> century* (pp. 152-165). Ithaca: Firebrand Books.

## Lesbian Research Produced or Underway in B.C.<sup>10</sup>

*Abrams, Eve. (1995). Lesbian transformations in dealing with heterosexism. Unpublished Master's thesis. University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C.*

Explores the strategies used by eight lesbians in dealing with heterosexism. Illuminates the nature of heterosexism, its impact on the lives of the participants, and the factors that made individual women's experiences of heterosexist oppression different. Implications for counselors and for counseling education are drawn.

*Adin, Emilie, K. (2000). Where's the Old Dyke's Home. Master's thesis. University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C. (contact: adin\_planning@lycos.com).*

“In cooperation with a community steering committee, a research study was conducted to determine the needs of lesbians aged 50 years and over to address the gap in knowledge among planners about the needs of this population. The needs assessment focused on the areas of health care, housing and community support services. The scope of the survey was the greater Vancouver area. The needs assessment was conducted using a comprehensive self-selected survey of 85 women, as well as six in-depth interviews of survey participants.

The study found that the areas of concern for older lesbians were invisibility, financial and physical accessibility, safety and isolation. The study also found that there is an opportunity for the lesbian community to use its internal social capital to support elder community members to age in place. In her conclusion Adin states, ‘Older lesbians - and planners - are at a crossroads. To the right, the *modus operandi* of elder care in recent times: specialized institutions, separated and segregated from community. To the left, another avenue: social caring networks, through which mutual aid can reaffirm the image of the older lesbian as a feminist icon, and assert her importance within our communities. There is much opportunity for change.’”

*Anderson, Lynda, Healy, Theresa, Herringer, Barbara, Issac, Barbara and Perry, Ty. (2001). Out in the cold: the context of lesbian health in northern British Columbia. Vancouver: B.C. Centre of Excellence for Women's Health. (<http://www.bccewh.bc.ca> contact: healy@unbc.ca).*

“Three primary research questions guided our investigation into lesbians' experiences of the formal health care system in northern British Columbia. First, how do lesbians describe their experiences of formal (allopathic) health care services? Second, what barriers do they experience? Third, how do lesbians negotiate these barriers and address their health and wellness needs inside and outside of the formal health care system?”

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<sup>10</sup> These summaries were compiled from a variety of sources, including websites, libraries and the author(s)/researcher(s) themselves. Summaries submitted by the author(s)/researcher(s) are in quotations.

This qualitative study illuminates the impact of the anti-lesbian/anti-gay social climate of the north and its permeation into health care services. For lesbians living in this context, considerations of personal safety and personal freedom are intricately intertwined with health. Significant changes are needed in services and in the community at large to bring down the barriers that obstruct lesbians' access to health care.

This report documents a uniquely collaborative participatory action research process that blurred conventional boundaries between researcher and researched and has led to social action initiated by participants.

#### Policy Recommendations

1. Increase capacity for lesbian-positive care within the system
2. Increase the capacity of the health information system to provide safe, anonymous care
3. Increase the capacity of the lesbian community
4. Increase the capacity of the professional training system”

*Barker, Donna. (1984). Lesbians couples: Attitudes of therapists and implications for improved services. Unpublished Master's paper. University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C. Thesis not available.*

*Barnett, Robin, Choong, Da and Hudspith, Maria. (2002). The Lesbian Innovation Project. (contact: Robin: rose2@telus.net, Maria: hudspith@interchange.ubc.ca).*

“Our ad-hoc research group conducted a qualitative research project that explores the relationship between lesbian identity and innovation. Our goals were to counter the invisibility of lesbians in the discourse on women and leadership, and to question conventional notions of leadership.

Our data analysis revealed 3 major themes:

- 1) Various aspects of identity, such as outsider status, contributed to the participants' visionary/innovative abilities. This outsider status was not just around sexuality but race, class, disability and other identities.
- 2) Participants had a grounded methodology that includes collaboration, facilitating, problem- solving, good communication skills and building networks.
- 3) For most of the participants, activist experience and community supports enabled risk-taking and innovation.

We disseminated our results through a multitude of avenues. We conducted a humorous, bold media campaign aimed at young women to generate public debate, counter inaccurate mainstream media messages, and to provide positive role models. This street level campaign included posters, stickers and rave cards based on a pulp fiction aesthetic. All advertised our website: [www.oddgirlout.org](http://www.oddgirlout.org). We also did media interviews in both the queer and mainstream press, as well as publishing an article in the CRIAW journal, *Feminist Voices/Voix Feministe*.”

*BC Centre of Excellence for Women's Health. (2001). Empower yourself. (available online at www.bccewh.bc.ca).*

Postcards address health issues important and specific to lesbian and bisexual women: parenting, maintaining healthy friendships, looking for a doctor and making healthy choices.

*BC Centre of Excellence for Women's Health. (2001). A tip sheet for health care providers. (available online at www.bccewh.bc.ca).*

Outlines how providers can improve health care for lesbian and bisexual women patients.

*Bouthillette, Ann-Marie. (1995). Queerscapes: Patterns and processes of gay male and lesbian spatialization in Vancouver, BC. Unpublished Master's thesis. University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C.*

Compares gay male and lesbian neighbourhoods (the West End and Commercial Drive) in Vancouver, BC. Historical gay male sexual marketplaces are found to form the foundation of gay male geographic communities while feminist politics seem to create lesbian communities in neighbourhoods with a counter-cultural underpinning. Spatialization was also determined by the presence of a large number of apartments (West End) or low-rent, family-oriented housing (Commercial Drive). The West End was also found to be more openly gay, with gay-owned businesses and institutions. The spaces on Commercial Drive tended to be lesbian-friendly; the author notes the difficulty in creating and sustaining lesbian-specific institutions and highlights the ways women find their own niche within the existing landscape. The study also points to the manifestation of queer politics in geography, identifying increasing fluidity between the two neighbourhoods as well as lesbian and gay migration to traditionally heterosexual spaces such as the suburbs.

*Butot, Michele. (in progress). Healing. Master's thesis. University of Victoria, Victoria, B.C. (contact: mbutot@hotmail.com).*

“Research on the intersection of a love ethic and healing, both individually and in community.”

*Carter, Connie. (1998). Not just another story: Lesbian femmes, social narratives and subjectivity. Unpublished Master's thesis. University of Victoria, Victoria, B.C. (contact: ccarter@uvic.ca).*

Research examining the ways femme lesbians appropriate and redefine narratives of womanhood and lesbian identity. The author investigates the ways study participants are shaped or constrained by discourses of gender and sexuality. She also illuminates how research subjects challenge hegemonic conceptions of femininity.

*Cartier, Coralee. (in progress). Sex/Gender and sexuality: An analysis of transgendered perspectives. Master's thesis. No further information available. (contact: cdcartier@telus.net).*

*Cosco, Vanessa. (1997). "Obviously then I'm not a homosexual": Lesbian identities, discretion and communities in Vancouver, 1945-1969. Unpublished Master's thesis. University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C.*

Examines the oral histories of nine lesbians living in Vancouver during the period 1945-1969, illustrating how they related to dominant gender and sexuality discourses. The author argues that in the context of marginalization, the participants reinterpreted and resisted hegemonic discourses by refusing or claiming lesbian identities, developing strategies to negotiate heterosexual space and by participating in lesbian communities. The issue of discretion and secrecy is also explored, highlighting the influence of sexist and homophobic oppressions in the lives of the subjects.

*Couldwell, Margo. (1984). Toward an understanding of lesbian and gay male relationships. Unpublished Master's thesis. University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C. Thesis not available.*

*Cross, Kathleen. (2001). The trans biography project: stories from the lives of eleven trans people in BC. In collaboration with the Women/Trans Dialogue Planning Committee and the Trans Alliance Society. Vancouver, B.C. (contact:communications@transalliancesociety.org or call 604-875-8262).*

*Dean, Amber. (in progress). The lesbian body. Master's thesis. Simon Fraser University. Burnaby, B.C. No further information available. (contact: amber\_dean@yahoo.com).*

*Diane, Susan. (1999). Amazing grace(s): A qualitative study of lesbian helping professionals. Unpublished Master's thesis. University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C.*

Narrative research explores the lived experiences of six lesbians work in the helping professions (social work, teaching, nursing and counseling). Explores structural issues such gender socialization, homophobia/heterosexism and limited career options, and the ways in which participants mediate these. Suggests strategies to improve education in the helping professions.

*Dias, Karen. (in progress). The social inequality of body & eating problems: The intersections and implications of race, class and sexuality. Master's thesis. University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C. (contact: diaskaren@hotmail.com).*

“In this paper, I explore the social construction of so-called eating 'disorders' as issues affecting predominantly young, white, middle to upper class, Western women. The 'privileging' of these issues both pathologizes the individual and hides the structural, historical and social inequalities underlying them. I explore the implications of 'erasure' for women of color, working class, poor, and lesbian women.”

*Duder, Karen. (2001). The spreading depths: Lesbian and bisexual women in English Canada, 1910-1965. Unpublished PhD Dissertation. University of Victoria, Victoria, B.C. (Contact: kduder@xtra.co.nz)*

“This dissertation examines the lives of lesbians and bisexual women in English Canada between 1910 and 1965, focusing particularly on the formation of subjectivity in relation to same-sex desires, relationships with partners and families of origin, sexual practices, and community. Dominant formulations of same-sex relationships between women before 1965 have obscured and made culturally unintelligible the lives of lower middle-class lesbians and bisexual women who were neither politically active nor fighting publicly for urban lesbian space. This dissertation analyses the lives of this neglected group of women and argues that their subjectivities were constructed not only in relation to sexual attraction, but also in relation to class. This dissertation also suggests that women in same-sex relationships before 1965 may actually have had slightly better relationships with families of origin than would later be the case.”

*Durie, Helen and the Victoria Lesbian Seniors Care Society. (1996). Lesbians and Aging: Housing and Services for Senior Lesbians. (contact: hdurie@pacificcoast.net).*

“In Spring 1996, The Victoria Lesbian Seniors Care Society conducted a survey to obtain the views of lesbians on housing and other services that they would like available in their senior years. Approximately 450 surveys were distributed, through the local *LesbiaNews* and various women’s and lesbian venues and events, and 81 were returned.

Respondents ranged in age from younger lesbians in their 20s to an older lesbian in her 70s. Almost half were in their 40s, with the remainder falling fairly evenly in younger and older age groups. Lesbians were asked to identify issues that could affect them personally as they aged from a list provided. Financial security and health were the most commonly reported aging issues, with over two-thirds of lesbians indicating that income, pensions, health issues, and the impact of government cutbacks on health services were of concern. Lack of affordable housing was the next most frequently identified issue. Other concerns included difficulties in obtaining employment, the availability of job training programs, the impact of technological advances, isolation and loneliness, and being a primary caregiver. Concerns that were less broadly shared included abuse, crime, fraud and exploitation, and fear of death and dying. Ageing issues volunteered by respondents included lack of family support, lack of places to meet older lesbians, fear of becoming incapacitated, homophobia and its effects on social attitudes and services for lesbians, inadequate mental health and social services, homelessness, and global conflict and environmental destruction.”

*Farr, Margo. (1998). Lesbian group art therapy: A feminist perspective. Unpublished Graduate Art Therapy Thesis. BC School of Art Therapy. (contact: mfarr@pinc.com)*

“Lesbian identity issues can be significantly addressed in feminist-based group art therapy. Common to lesbian experience are issues of isolation, invisibility, and marginalization. A feminist perspective in a safe lesbian-only group setting provides a venue for acknowledgment and visibility and encourages connection, empathy, and mutual empowerment. Through support by the art therapist and the group members, similarity and diversity can be recognized and celebrated. Art making furthers the experience of becoming visible and of finding one's voice. Lesbian developmental stages, often dismissed or unnoticed in a traditional therapeutic environment, can be explored from a healthy, sensitive, and appropriate perspective. With the support and empowerment that grow from shared ritual, personal insight, and group process, it is possible for a lesbian to find authentic pride in her sexual identity and to celebrate a place for herself in lesbian culture and community. This paper describes some of the issues of lesbian identity in the context of a six-week feminist art therapy group of four participants which was conducted concurrently with the research. The relationships between structure, flexibility, and safety within the group dynamic were examined from a feminist perspective. Outcomes of the application indicate that the use of art with a lesbian group is extremely valuable in the exploration of visibility and pride.”

*Fox, Chris. (in progress). Female homosociality, indogeneity, and nation-building at WACOUSTA. To be presented in Toronto, Congress 2002 conference. (contact: chrisfox@uvic.ca).*

“The objective is to investigate lesbian writers use of fiction-theory to affect readers and lesbian subjectivity in literature/culture & make lesbian literature more widely known/appreciated. - literary criticism with a queerly lesbian-feminist bent.”

*Gallagher, Karen. (1996). Centering the margins: What can be learned from listening to the voices of lesbians over 55? Unpublished Master's Thesis. University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C. (Contact: Karen.Gallagher@gems5.gov.bc.ca).*

Within gerontology discourses, the existence of older lesbians is invisible. This invisibility is mirrored in lesbian communities. To counter this invisibility, interviews were conducted with four lesbians ranging in age from 57 to 82. The women's stories were categorized into the following themes: (1) heterosexism and homophobia, (2) ageism, (3) financial concerns, (4) housing and senior-serving institutions, (5) health problems, (6) vulnerability to crime and abuse, (7) isolation, (8) sexuality, (9) grief and loss, (10) organized religion, and (11) feelings about the lesbian community. Implications for social work's policies and practices are drawn, with an emphasis on the inclusion on experiences of older lesbians in education and research.

*Greatheart, Garth. (1994). Making family and choosing kinship ties: Inclusion of lesbian and gay couples in Canadian adoption legislation. Master's thesis. University of Victoria, Victoria, B.C.*

A critical examination of Canadian adoption legislation, specifically looking at the following questions: who can adopt? Who must consent? What is effect of the adoption order? What are the best interests of the child? The research also examines legislation for statutes making explicit reference to sexual orientation. Findings include the use of neutral, non-specific language in some provincial jurisdictions. This language does not overtly exclude gay and lesbian couples from the right to adopt. However, the wording, while complying with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, makes invisible the role of gays and lesbians as adoptive parents.

*Henderson, Patricia. (1986). Social relationships of lesbian and heterosexual feminist women. Unpublished Master's thesis. University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C. Thesis not available.*

*Holmes, Cindy. (2001). The politics of naming the violence: Examining constructions of lesbian abuse in community educational discourses. Unpublished Master's Thesis. OISE/ University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario. (contact: holmes@endingviolence.org).*

“Completed a lit review on violence in lesbian relationships for her thesis. She is currently coordinating an education project about violence in lesbian relationships as part of her job with the BC Association of Specialized Victim Assistance and Counselling Programs. Has also co-authored an unpublished paper on the topic of violence in lesbian relationships with Janice Ristock.”

*Horwitz, Nicole J. (1995). Primary caregiving and “mothers with a difference”: A feminist analysis of developments in custody law. Unpublished Master's of Law thesis. University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C. Thesis not available.*

*Hudspith, Maria. (2001). Rev. ed. Caring for lesbian health: a resource for health care providers, policy makers and planners. Ottawa: Health Canada, Status of Women and BC: Ministry of Health and Ministry Responsible for Seniors, British Columbia Centre of Excellence for Women's Health. (available online at [www.bcewh.bc.ca](http://www.bcewh.bc.ca)).*

This resource was originally published by the Ministry of Health in British Columbia in 1999 and was picked up by Health Canada for national distribution after several reprints. It outlines the main issues from the lesbian health literature and provides tips for health providers on making their services more accessible and appropriate. Suggestions for health policy and planning are also made.

*Hudspith, Maria. (2000). Cultures of resistance: Identity, politicization and health promotion among lesbian activists in Vancouver, BC. Unpublished Master's thesis. University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C.*

Examines the relationship between activism, identity and well-being among seven lesbian activists in Vancouver, BC. Highlights the connection between stigmatized identities and resilience and

explores the relationship between activism and physical and mental well-being. Disrupts utopian visions of lesbian communities as ideologically homogeneous, stable and nurturing, uncovering a more complex network where differential power relations exist and dominant racial and class-based subjectivities are privileged. While the demands of political activism were seen to have a negative impact on physical health, engagement in social justice work was seen to increase participants' sense of purpose, connection and power.

*Hunnissett, Rowena. (1983). A phenomenological study of crisis experiences in a lesbian community: Implications for counselors. Unpublished Master's thesis. University of Victoria, Victoria, B.C.*

Explores five lesbians' experiences of crisis, examining how their identity and their involvement in a lesbian community impacted the experience. Highlights the particularities of experiencing crisis in the context of homophobic and heterosexist social environments. Illuminates the benefits of lesbian community as a support mechanism for members in crisis, as well as the power of spirituality in dealing with personal difficulties. Examines the role that participants' feminist analysis played in mediating crisis in their lives.

*Hurley, Kelevelyn. (1993). A qualitative study of sexual identity among bisexual and lesbian women in a lesbian-feminist community. Unpublished Master's thesis. University of Victoria, Victoria, B.C. (contact: 1-250-642-3763).*

Explores the inter-relationships between women's beliefs about the nature of sexual orientation, their involvement in lesbian-feminist community, and their choice of sexual identity. Interviews were conducted with eight women who identify as lesbian-feminists or bisexual-feminists and who are actively involved in the lesbian-feminist community of Greater Victoria. Examines how sexual identity choices are influenced by various factors, including how women interpret their sexual histories, the pressures of bi-phobia and radical feminist lesbian separatism within the women's community, and systemic oppressions. Illuminates the participants' negotiation between their sexual feelings and behaviours, and the range of labels available to them from the dominant discourses of science, medicine, law, religion and lesbian-feminism.

*Jordan, Sharalyn. (in progress). Coming (out) to Canada: Narratives of women who have immigrated to Canada as part of a same-sex couple. Master's thesis. University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C. (contact: srjordan@interchange.ubc.ca).*

“I am using a narrative method working from individual interviews as well as the letters women write for their applications. Hoping to learn about the ways that the experience of migration shapes women's identities, specifically the importance of cultural context, perhaps something about how women negotiate multiple identities. No conclusions yet just lots of questions.”

*Kelley, Caffyn. (2000). Gay and lesbian health on Salt Spring Island: A resource for health care providers. Salt Spring Island, B.C.: Glossi (Gays and Lesbians of Salt Spring Island). (contact: caffyn@saltspring.com).*

A resource for health care providers developed and published by Gays and Lesbians of Salt Spring Island, this booklet covers issues such as invisibility, families, community support, coming out and confidentiality. It offers suggestions to practitioners around making their services more welcoming and offers a listing of local resources for gays and lesbians on Salt Spring Island. This booklet names the strength and resilience of queer people, often built through living in a hostile environment, as something that promotes health.

*Kendel, Monica. (1998). The boundaries of womanhood: Lesbian and non-lesbian feminist opinions about transsexuals. Unpublished Master's thesis. University of Victoria, Victoria, B.C. (contact: Monica.Kendel@gems3.gov.bc.ca).*

Explores the concepts of womanhood, using survey methodology to examine lesbian and non-lesbian feminists' attitudes about transsexuals. The research is contextualized in the historical feminist debates on the (im)mutability of sex and gender and within the continuum of radical feminist, radical lesbian feminist and lesbian separatist theories.

*Kranz, Karen. (in progress). Love is what makes a family: Lesbian couples with children conceived through anonymous donor insemination. PhD Dissertation. University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C. (contact: kranz@interchange.ubc.ca.)*

“Doctoral dissertation about how lesbian couples with children conceived through the use of anonymous donor insemination live and experience family. As lesbian families with children conceived through the use of anonymous donor sperm create new familial patterns and new living arrangements which push the boundaries of present family forms into new areas of potential (Romans, 1992, p. 100), the purpose of this research is to understand the unique experiences of these families. The primary goal of this research is to provide mental health professionals who work with lesbian couples and their children conceived through the use of anonymous donor sperm with information that may help them when working with these families. By understanding how these families negotiate family life in a largely homophobic and heterosexist social environment, it is hoped that the needs of these families can be examined and sources of support can be identified. This research will also help mental health professionals become aware of the needs and issues specific to lesbians who are considering the use, and living with the consequences of, creating their families using anonymous donor sperm. Further, focussing exclusively on lesbian couples with children conceived through the use of anonymous donor insemination raises the issue of what role the biological father plays in both the child's life and the family constellation (Dalton & Bielby, 2000, p. 47). By investigating this new family form, it is hoped that this research will expand our understanding about the salient features involved in healthy child development and family functioning and, as such, will contribute to the literature on child development and family theory. Finally, it is hoped that by focussing

exclusively on lesbian couples with children conceived through the use of anonymous donor insemination, unique and beneficial aspects of this type of lesbian family may be brought to light.

No study published to date, has sought to explore lesbian families with children conceived through the use of anonymous donor sperm in terms of how lesbian couples experience, live, and give meaning to family given the current historical, social, and political worlds in which they live. For this study, an interpretive interactionist approach (Denzin, 1989) employing largely unstructured interviews and participant observations will serve to elucidate the meaning and experiences of family for lesbian couples who conceived their children through the use of anonymous donor insemination.”

*Kranz, Karen (in progress). How do lesbians experience and make meaning of saying to heterosexual others, I am a lesbian ? (contact: kranz@interchange.ubc.ca).*

“Research has sought to explore the meanings women attach to telling heterosexual others that they are lesbian. For this study, a qualitative approach, interpretive interactionism (Denzin, 1989) employing six focus groups with 27 women will serve to elucidate the meanings and experiences of saying to heterosexual others, I am a lesbian. Coming out is, in a heterosexist patriarchy, a lifetime project (Heyward, 1989).”

“To understand and describe what meanings lesbians attach to telling heterosexual others they are lesbian. This research project addresses a number of topics of interest to lesbians, mental health professionals who work with lesbians, and the general public. I hope this research will help women who identify as lesbian to articulate why it is important to them to tell heterosexual individuals that they are lesbian. I hope this research will educate mental health professionals about issues of lesbian identity, invisibility, and coming-out, such that they can assist their lesbian clients who are grappling with these concerns. I hope this research will help educate the general public about why lesbians feel compelled to disclose their lesbianism in settings in which heterosexual others are present. I have often heard heterosexual people ask why lesbians have to tell everyone that they are lesbian; after all, heterosexual people don't walk around telling people they are heterosexual. Hopefully, this research will be able to educate the general public about lesbian psychology such that they understand the necessity of speaking out about one's lesbianism in a society with heteronormative ideas about sexuality, relationships, politics, and identity.”

*Lightwater, Judy and Rabinovitch, Jannit. (2001). Lesbian issues in Canada: A Profile of Victoria. (contact:jrabinovitch@shaw.ca).*

The main themes, emerging from 150 self-identified lesbians, dykes and queer women who participated by completing a questionnaire or attending a focus group, were:

1. The need for increased access to appropriate and affordable health care, particularly counselling and mental health services.

2. The need for information and training on lesbian issues and concerns, particularly for health care providers and educators.
3. The need for legal and societal recognition of lesbian relationships and equal rights for lesbian couples.
4. The need to eliminate discrimination before the law against lesbians in all walks of life.
5. The need for support for senior lesbians ranging from counselling to seniors housing and long-term care.”

*Long, Anne-Marie. (1999). Ragtime: Revisioning menstrual praxis: Implications of personal, societal and commercial interests in menstruating and alternative and mainstream menstrual products. Unpublished Master's thesis. Dalhousie University, Mount Saint Vincent and Saint Mary's Universities, Halifax, Nova Scotia. (contact: amlong@equity.ubc.ca).*

Explores women's attitudes toward menstruation and their bodies and charts their experiences of alternative and mainstream products. Contextualizes the research with theoretical and media/pop culture analyses. Lesbians were found to be more likely to have positive views of their cycle and were more likely to have used or be open to using alternative products. Argues for the environmental, health, social, personal and economic benefits of alternative products.

*Luce, Jacquelyne. (working title). Queer conceptions: Reshaping cultural meanings of sexuality and reproduction. PhD Dissertation. York University. (contact: jluce@YorkU.ca).*

“I wanted to look at queer women's experiences of assisted conception, from very low-tech to high tech within the context of new developments in reproductive technology and same-sex rights legislation.

As a medical anthropologist I was interested in issues related to queer women's health and well-being and how women's experiences were informed by social, legal, and medical ideas about family, reproduction and sexuality. I conducted open-ended interviews with 80 women who identified as lesbian, bisexual, queer, trans, or women who date women and who live in British Columbia. The study included women's narratives about trying to conceive, pregnancy loss, conception, pregnancy and adoption.

Women's choices about donors, use of health services and use of fertility programs are intimately linked to the value they place on being out about their plans, their sexualities and their partners. While a narrative of medicalization explains queer women's use of assisted reproductive technologies and clinical inseminations as a response to the risk of HIV transmission and as a natural method of conception for women who are defined as socially infertile women's narratives demonstrate a more nuanced reasoning. At the forefront is a negotiation of the sense of legal risk involved with using a known donor. By interviewing women who are not using clinical services and women who did my research showed competing discourses and evaluations of risk and natural methods. As well, narratives expanded conception narratives to include experiences years before even trying to conceive and addressed the often invisible experiences of pregnancy loss and difficulties conceiving.”

*Luce, Jacquelyne. (forthcoming). Making choices/taking chances - Lesbian/Bi/Queer women, assisted conception and reproductive health. (contact: jluce@YorkU.ca).*

“Focuses on queer women’s experiences of trying to get pregnant and/or become parents within the context of new developments in assisted reproductive technologies and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender rights legislation. The researcher shows the complex ideas, expectations and experiences that inform lesbian/bi/queer women’s reproductive health and well-being. Based on ethnographic fieldwork conducted over almost two years, this paper is a narrative of the researcher’s own experiences as a queer woman doing research on other queer women and reproductive health, as well as an account and analysis of the stories of lesbian/bi/sexual women who had tried or were planning to try to get pregnant. Fieldwork took place in a variety of geographical and cultural contexts throughout BC, which prompted the researcher to address the effects homophobia and heterosexism have on this type of research and the methodological as well as the daily challenges faced by queer health researchers.”

*Luce, Jacquelyne with Janet Neely, Teresa Lee and Ann Pederson. (2000). Documenting visibility: Selected bibliography on lesbian and bisexual women’s health. Vancouver: British Columbia Centre of Excellence for Women's Health. (jluce@YorkU.ca).*

A comprehensive bibliography of research on lesbian and bisexual women’s health. Available on the web at [www.bccewh.bc.ca](http://www.bccewh.bc.ca).

*Luinenburg, Oline. (1994). Lesbians and safer sex discourses: Identity barriers, fluid practices. Master’s thesis, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, B.C.*

Examines lesbians’ place in discourses around HIV/AIDS, exploring how lesbians negotiate their positions within discourses that represent them as invisible, stereotypical and/or essentialized identities. Methodological approaches include synthesis of queer and feminist theories, critical ethnography and anecdotal knowledge about lesbians. Data from interviews speaks to the need for lesbian self-representations in safer sex discourses, representations that address the intersections between identity, marginalization and sexuality.

*MacKenzie, Edith. (1986). A phenomenological investigation of how parents come to terms with a gay son or lesbian daughter. Unpublished Master’s thesis. University of BC, Vancouver, B.C. Thesis not available.*

*MacLeod, Phyllis. (1996). Boxing in our youth: lesbian adolescents speak out about their secondary school experiences. Unpublished Master’s thesis. University of Victoria, Victoria, B.C.*

This paper looks at the stories of four lesbian adolescents to uncover the experiences of young lesbians in a B.C. secondary school. School was reported to be a hostile environment for lesbian

youth, with experiences of ridicule commonplace. Strategies for teachers to combat homophobia are outlined.

*McCreary Centre Society. (1999). Being out: Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth in BC: an adolescent health survey. Burnaby: McCreary Centre Society. (contact: mcreary@lightspeed.bc.ca).*

“Gay and lesbian youth in BC are at higher risk for emotional health problems and suicide compared to their heterosexual peers. Lesbian and gay youth find the strongest personal support from close friends and female family members. School is not a safe nor supportive place for most gay and lesbian youth. Most non-heterosexual youth are reluctant to disclose their sexual orientation to teachers, health care workers, and social service providers. Gay and lesbian youth are more vulnerable than heterosexual youth to self-destructive behaviours such as substance abuse and risky sexual activities. Lesbian and gay youth in British Columbia are at an alarmingly high risk for suicide. Almost half of the youth surveyed (77) reported having attempted suicide. The average age at their first suicide attempt was 13 years.”

*McInnis, Anne Marie and Kong, Sook C. (1998). Your everyday health guide: A lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community resource. Vancouver: LGBT Health Association. (no contact information available).*

A resource for queer consumers in the health care system, published by the now-defunct LGBT Health Association. Covers issues such as human rights, diversity, access, legal issues, addressing the specific needs of LGBT communities. Outlines major health issues for specific communities and provides a listing of health (broadly defined) services in Vancouver. Print and web-based resources are also offered.

*McMackon, Bonnie. (1998). Lesbian social workers experiences in their professional working relationships. Unpublished Master's thesis. University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C.*

Explores the workplace concerns of five lesbian social workers, all middle-managers in the health field. The participants discuss their experiences in their work environments, identifying factors that contributed to it being ‘gay positive’: the presence of “visibly gay or lesbian” co-workers and supportive supervisors were two key factors. Being out as a lesbian was compromised by internalized homophobia, systemic discrimination, and the lack of feminist principles within hierarchical organizations. Implications for policy and practice are addressed.

*Michael, Heather. (in progress). Lesbian partner abuse. Master's thesis. No further information available. (contact: hjmichael@hotmail.com).*

*Millbank, Jenni. (1994). What do lesbians do? Motherhood, ideology, lesbian mothers and family law. Unpublished Master's of Law thesis. University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C.*

Examines the application of ideologies of motherhood in family law cases involving lesbian mothers. The cases are used to explore the ways that lesbian mothers are characterized as 'bad mothers', in turn making visible the characteristics of 'the good mother'. The author relates the story of horror and fear of lesbian mothers told in these cases, and contextualizes this tale in popular cultural representations of lesbians since the 1930s. The following themes underpinning judicial outcomes are illuminated: "the necessity of maternal altruism and lack of agency, fear of maternal animality and fear of male dispensability in child rearing."

*Mills, Josephine. (1993). Theoretical play in a field of desire: a road map for negotiating a space of lesbian feminist subjectivity. Unpublished Master's thesis. Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, B.C.*

This masters thesis examines the work of lesbian artists Margot Butler, Shani Mootoo and Susan Stewart and places their work in the context of feminist literary and film theories, psychoanalytic theory as well as queer and race theories that deal with issues of representation. Explores hegemonic ideologies that exclude and constrict lesbian/feminist art practice in Canada. Turns a critical eye on mainstream art criticism and offers new understandings of representation, encouraging the creation of space where "diverse 'Other' subjectivities can flourish."

*Pustil, Jude. (1996). Power in lesbian relationships. Unpublished Master's thesis. University of Victoria, Victoria, B.C.*

This research examines eight lesbians' stories of power dynamics in their partnered relationships, including their perceptions of factors influencing these dynamics. Examines the participants ways of thinking about power, aspects of their relationships that relate to power (boundaries, respect and trust, communication), focal points of power struggles (money, children, sexuality), playing out of power dynamics (differing perceptions, abuse, leaving), patriarchal constraints, and healing (attention to self and the value of support).

*Randall, Carla E. (in progress). Experience of nursing faculty in response to lesbian content in nursing courses. Doctoral dissertation. No further information available. (contact:mergalan@interchange.ubc.ca)*

*Ross, Becki. (in progress). Striptease in Vansterdam: Making nudity pay. (contact:becki@interchange.ubc.ca).*

*Sample, Sarah. (2002). We are family: Lesbians/bisexual women living with cancer. (contact:ssample@bccancer.bc.ca).*

Research done for a workshop to be presented at Canadian Association of Psychosocial Oncology conference in May 2002 with Dr. Helen MacRae.

*Sample, Sarah (in progress). Evaluation report from pilot support group for lesbian/bisexual/transgendered at the BC Cancer Agency. (contact: ssample@bccancer.bc.ca).*

*Savage, Christina. (2001). Deconstructing lesbians' internalized homophobia. No further information available. (contact: ceesa33@hotmail.com).*

“Focused on three main areas: body image problems, childhood sexual abuse and lesbian relationships. I had hoped to demonstrate how these issues manifest themselves as internalized homophobia.”

*Sorrell, Sue and Watson, Janet. (1997). And they lived happily ever after. Prince George: University of Northern British Columbia Women's Centre.*

“Two researchers conducted interviews with sixty lesbian and bisexual women in nine communities in Northern BC. 46% of the participants lived in the Prince George area. 36% lived in communities with populations of five to ten thousand. The remaining 18% lived in communities of less than five thousand people. Nine women identified as bisexual. The report concludes with recommendations for specific actions identified by the participants that would help to improve the quality of their support systems.

1. Come out - A consistent thread running through many of the interviews was an urgency to “come out.”
2. Create positive and accurate reflections - Many of the recommendations involved having their lives, as lesbian and bisexual women, reflected back to them through a film festival, a community anthology, an art exhibition, a documentary, etc.
3. Celebrate achievements and role models - Resources need to be put toward celebrating individual and collective accomplishments.
4. Create gay or gay-friendly establishments - Women said they need safe places to meet outside of their homes, especially for youth.
5. Create gay or gay-friendly programs - Several participants were concerned with how an assumption of heterosexuality affects clients accessing programs who are not heterosexual. Programs under discussion included drug & alcohol programs and seniors residences.
6. Organize political groups - Many women advocated the organization of groups committed to political action.
7. Initiate support groups - Few lesbian and bisexual women with children have been able to access formal support services for their children, or for themselves in their role as parents. Coming out groups need to be available as well as support for lesbian teachers and school support staff.
8. Support gay-friendly establishments, organizations, events and individuals - Participants stated it is important to support those individuals who stick their necks out in order to support equality for gays, lesbians and bisexuals like the minister at a local church who boycotted an anti-homosexual conference.

9. Boycott unsupportive establishments, organizations, events and individuals - A local health food store was identified for its explicit support of homophobic literature.
10. Demand the formal recognition of same sex relationships by the federal & provincial governments - Most participants said that certain fundamental changes in their lives experience as lesbians or bisexual women will only occur if both the provincial and federal government officially recognize same-sex couples, giving them the same rights and responsibilities as heterosexual couples.
11. Implement the GALE recommendations in public schools throughout BC - The public school system was one of the problem areas most frequently mentioned by women in all communities visited. the Gay and Lesbian Educators of BC have made informed recommendations regarding the development and distribution of relevant educational resources, as well as for the integration of gay, lesbian and bisexual issues into school curriculum at all levels.
12. Create awareness among professional communities and the general public through educational materials, workshops and public events - The groups which were frequently cited are the police, teachers and school administrators, lawyers, physicians and nurses, mental health professionals, social workers and parents of school age children.
13. Network within and across communities in the central interior - One of the biggest themes to emerge from the project was just how much lesbian and bisexual women rely on each other for support. In order for this informal support system to continue working, women said individuals and communities need to develop and improve methods of communicating with each other through existing newsletters, email, web-sites, information phone lines.”

*Spencer, J. Michelle. (2001). For better or worse: The marriage of human rights and social movements: A case study in Canadian equality litigations. Unpublished Master's thesis. University of Victoria, Victoria, B.C.*

Examines the utility of court challenges for actualizing and sustaining progressive social change. Using case studies of Charter of Rights and Freedoms arguments on same-sex spousal recognition, the author illuminates the tensions between legal victory and fully realized social change. Explores how the dominant liberal legal code and a formal equality decision organize and constrain specific feminist, lesbian and gay goals for family status and equality. Legislative responses are determined to reassert and reinforce traditional familial ideologies over equality considerations.

*Stainsby, Jill. (1996). Within these walls: Mental patients speak out.*

A 30 minute video of seven consumer/survivors describing issues around mental health hospitalization in B.C. over the last 40 years. It includes footage of myself and my mother. I was the Executive Producer and a Production Team member as well. The video won several awards and still sells.”

*Sykes, Heather. (1998). Teaching bodies, learning desires: Feminist poststructuralist life histories of heterosexual and lesbian physical education teachers in Western Canada. Unpublished PhD dissertation. University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C.*

Examines the life histories of six women (three lesbian, three heterosexual) who taught physical education in Western Canada. Incorporates poststructural, psychoanalytic and queer theories about sexual subjectivity into a feminist approach to life history. Explores the different role that sports played in the lives of the participants; women's team sports were a support structure and source of community for lesbian PE teachers while heterosexual PE teachers engaged in mixed-gender sports. Contextualizes the research within the sexism and homophobia historically embedded in physical education as a profession, and examines how the discourses of gender, sexuality and sport have been embodied and resisted by women in the field.

*Tutte, Susan K. (1998). The lived experience of being a daughter of a lesbian-headed family. Unpublished Master's thesis. University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C.*

Explores the lived experiences of five women raised in lesbian-headed families. The main themes that emerge are: feelings of difference, a sense of being torn, reclamation of identity, resistance to culturally prescribed femininity, close relationship with the mother, and a heightened awareness of social justice. The participants identified feelings of shame and embarrassment about their families but also acknowledged a sense of pride in themselves and their family form. The author links these experiences with those of other minority groups and relates them to minority identity development models.

*Weir, Lorraine. (in progress). (contact: lweir@earthlink.net).*

“I've served as expert witness in two cases concerned with freedom of expression in the community, with emphasis on the gay and lesbian community in the Little Sister's case, and with emphasis on defining literary merit in the context of short stories with gay themes in the John Robin Sharpe case. I was also involved in the Surrey School Board Case (concerned with the inclusion in the primary school curriculum of children's books depicting gay and lesbian families). This legal/theoretical work has been the occasion of further research on censorship in Canada, including an essay entitled *The Ethos of Censorship in English Canadian Literature: An Ontopornosophical Approach* .

I am currently working on a book on the literary theory of the Canadian courts, with particular reference to cases involving censorship and the gay/lesbian community.”

*White, Caroline. (in progress). Education for trans, transsexual and intersex inclusion in sexual assault centers and transition houses. Master's thesis. University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C. (contact: carolinw@netinfo.ubc.ca)*

“This research examines the educational strategies employed by sexual assault centres and transition houses working toward trans, transsexual, and intersex access and inclusion. A survey was distributed to 104 sexual assault centres and transition houses in British Columbia, and eleven individual interviews with gender/sex educators and activists were conducted.”

*Wimbush, Wendy. (1998). The pride and promise of lesbian youth: Implications for counselors in working with gay and lesbian youth. Unpublished Master's paper. University of Victoria, Victoria, B.C.*

This project examines how youth develop gay and lesbian identities in the context of societal and familial homophobia and heterosexism. The paper provides an overview of gay and lesbian identity development, exploring five major psychosocial issues: myths and stereotypes, isolation, harassment, family and health risks. Suggests intervention strategies for counselors dealing with gay and lesbian youth.

*Wood, Teresa. (in progress). Sex, lies and medical tape: The shaping of our sex lives by the dangerous liaison of dated medical "findings" and sex-negative education (contact: onmybicycle@yahoo.com).*

"I am studying the ways in which sex education can affect our understanding of bodies, gender, sexuality and sex practices. I am interested in how medical education, sex education, and careless research/publications around bodies, sexual function, "safe sex" and various genders complicate and problematize otherwise safe, enjoyable sexual practices."

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