

## ABSTRACT

This research explores the experiences and perspectives of women providing front-line service in organizations and agencies, both feminist and mainstream, whose mandate includes support for women experiencing violence, particularly women in prostitution. There is significant research into the experiences of women in prostitution, however, little is known about the experiences and perspectives of front-line workers employed in paid and unpaid positions in the social service industry who are providing support to women in prostitution. Their views of prostitution and the policy frameworks that inform their work are the focus of this inquiry drawing attention, in particular, to how policies framed as harm reduction shape what kinds of support women in prostitution are offered. Harm reduction is an approach initially used to reduce morbidity and mortality associated with the use of illicit drugs. Since the 2003 opening of Insite, North America's first supervised injection facility (SIF), tactics called harm reduction have been applied to other social problems, including street-level prostitution. This study argues for an approach that goes beyond mere reduction of harm, and explicates and extends a feminist response to male violence in pursuit of good old-fashioned women's liberation.

Data for this inquiry included in-depth interviews with 16 women providing front line services. This study also examined key governmental reports on prostitution and recent court challenges regarding the legality of prostitution, including the 1985 *Fraser Report on Pornography and Prostitution in Canada*, the 2006 Federal report called *The Challenge of Change: A Study of Canada's Criminal Prostitution Laws*, and affidavits gathered by Pivot Legal Society in 2003 from women engaged in prostitution in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver.

Using a methodology informed by Dorothy Smith's sociology for women and critical discourse analysis, the contemporary and historical contexts of Vancouver's response to social inequality as it is expressed in public discourse about prostitution and harm reduction was examined. Smith's approach also informs analysis of the study participants' perspectives. This work challenges the de-politicizing and pathologizing discourses of harm reduction ideology in Vancouver, and provides a forum for women on the front-lines to offer alternatives that may move us to harm elimination.

## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Place of Birth: Regina, Canada

Academic Studies: B.A. University of Lethbridge, 1986  
M.A. University of British Columbia, 2007

Current Position: Sessional Instructor, UBC  
Instructor, Stenberg College, BC

## GRADUATE STUDIES

Field of Study: Sociology of Education, Feminist Anti-violence organizing and activism, Social Movements

### Selected Courses

INDS 530A Crossing Methodologies  
EDST 508D Interviewing Methodology  
SOC 503 Qualitative Research Methods  
ADHE 501 Adult Education and Community

### Instructors

Dr. Rajdeep Gill  
Dr. Shauna Butterwick  
Dr. Wendy Roth  
Dr. Daniel Pratt

## AWARDS

2011 - Faculty of Graduate Studies Research Grant \$850 University of British Columbia  
2008-2009 - University Graduate Fellowship \$16,000 University of British Columbia  
2007 - Special UBC Graduate Scholarship \$4500  
2007 to 2011 PhD. Tuition Award, UBC  
2006 - Patricia Dyer Memorial Award. Department of Educational Studies, UBC \$700  
1984 - Agnes Turcotte Memorial Scholarship. University of Lethbridge. \$2500

## PUBLICATIONS

Graham, E. (2014). Locating Adult Education within Teacher Education, in *Canadian Journal of Studies in Adult Education, Special Issue: Adult Education within Teacher Education*. 26, (2) 21-32.

Graham, E. (2006). This Trauma is Not Vicarious. *Canadian Woman Studies*, 25 (1).

## SELECTED PRESENTATIONS

Graham, E. (April, 2007). Rounding 'em up on the East Side of the Wild West: Four Pillars? Or One Big Corral? American Educational Research Association. Chicago, Illinois, USA

Graham, E. (May-June 2008). "Living in Community" with Sacrificial Women: What's the Harm in Harm Reduction? Canadian Society of Studies in Education (CSSE) and Canadian Women's Studies Association (CWSA). University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC

Vancouver Rape Relief and Women's Shelter, (Nov 25-Dec 10, 2008).

Flesh Mapping: Vancouver Markets Pacific Women

Participant in 16 days of art and action against violence against women. A public 'artful conversation' between women from Pacific Rim countries, all active in anti-violence work and feminist activism. Vancouver Art Gallery and Gallery Gaget, Vancouver, BC

Graham, E. (May 2009). Harm Re(pro)duction: Why Settle? Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Education. Carleton University, Ottawa, Ontario

Graham, E. (April 2011). Voices of Experience: Women on the Front Lines on Harm Reduction and Prostitution. European Society for Research and Study on the Education of Adults  
Bogacizi University, Istanbul, Turkey

Graham, E. (July 2011) Feminist imagining and action beyond harm reduction responses to prostitution. Women's Worlds, 2011 University of Ottawa, Ontario  
Panel organizer and presenter.

*Panel members: Dr. Kathleen Lahey, Queen's University; Trisha Baptie, founding member Exploited Voices now Educating (EVE); Cherry Smiley, Aboriginal Women's Action Network.*

#### **SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE**

Dr. Shauna Butterwick, UBC EDST  
Dr. Jo-Anne Dillabough UBC EDST  
Dr. Janine Benedet UBC LAW



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THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

## **Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies**

#### **PROGRAMME**

The Final Oral Examination  
For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY  
(Educational Studies)

#### **ERIN JOAN GRAHAM**

MA University of British Columbia, 2007

Friday, July 11, 2013 4:00 pm  
Room 200, Graduate Student Centre  
*Latecomers will not be admitted*

**"More than Condoms and Sandwiches: A Feminist Investigation of the Contradictory Promises of Harm Reduction Approaches to Prostitution"**

#### **EXAMINING COMMITTEE**

Chair:

Dr. Susan Cox (School of Population and Public Health)

Supervisory Committee:

Dr. Shauna Butterwick (EDST)  
Dr. Janine Benedet (Law)

University Examiners:

Dr. Pierre Walter (EDST)  
Dr. Margot Young (Law)

External Examiner:

Dr. Angela Miles  
Department of Women and Gender Studies  
University of Toronto  
Toronto, Ontario