

Queer Encounters: Exploring Experiences of (Gender)queers in Women's Public
Washroom Spaces

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is based on 13 qualitative interviews conducted with 12 individuals whom I refer to as (gender)queers in Winnipeg, Manitoba, and St. Catharines, Ontario. Drawing on queer theory and the literature of sexuality and space, I explore how (gender)queers experience women's public washrooms as gendered and heterosexualized spaces. I examine the degree to which a simultaneous heterosexing and female gendering of women's public washrooms is linked to the marginalization and sometimes violent exclusion of (gender)queers within these particular spaces. I also discuss the ways in which (gender)queers may use a variety of strategies aimed at navigating heterosexualized and gendered public washrooms. Finally, I explore alternatives to conventional washrooms spaces, including the gender-neutral washrooms, multi-stall non-gendered public washrooms, and public washrooms in queer spaces.