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Embodied Theories: Local Knowledge(s), Community Organizing, and Feminist Methodologies in Caribbean Sexuality Studies

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Abstract

This essay is a collaborative project that interrogates the role of the diasporic researcher and writer around issues of sexuality/sexualities in the Caribbean in a way that also describes methodologies useful to anyone working in this field. We outline and address the significance of feminist methodologies in Caribbean sexuality studies through embodied theories that encompass the importance of community organizing and attention to the local. We will identify various theories and languages that offer insights into the experiences and multiplicities of identity in terms of gender and sexuality and their intersections with race, class, and religion. This project troubles the divide between academia and community and demonstrates the myriad ways our theorizing must bridge this gap. We engage the work we both have done with the Caribbean International Resource Network in terms of marginalized populations, oral histories, building digital archives, and community organizing (local, regional, and diaspora). We address the following questions: how and where do we disseminate information about marginalized Caribbean sexual minority communities? Do this information, research, and data benefit these communities? How do gender and sexuality intersect with race, class, and religion for Caribbean sexual minorities? What have been some of the successes of community organizing in the region and what impact has this had, or not, on academic research and methodologies related to Caribbean sexuality studies? Overall, this project will assert the importance of feminist methodologies that are embodied theories and grounded in local knowledge and community building.

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