Violence denied, bodies erased?  
An anti-colonial queer framework for anti-violence organizing

Cindy Holmes, PhD candidate, UBC

Abstract

For three decades in North America, feminist activists have been organizing against violence against women, by speaking out about the prevalence and nature of sexual and domestic violence and developing services for women survivors, such as shelters and rape crisis centres. Some researchers and activists (largely women of colour, Indigenous women, lesbian, bisexual, queer and transgender communities and youth) have argued that the established anti-violence frameworks that have dominated the movement, have focused too narrowly on gender-based interpersonal violence in the private sphere of the heterosexual home and have lacked an analysis of the intersecting and interlocking nature of gender, race, sexuality, class and disability — thereby ignoring the complex, diverse and multiple forms and contexts of violence in women’s lives.

In this talk I draw on the work of critical race and queer feminists to reflect on these issues from my perspective as a white queer feminist anti-violence activist and scholar. I will highlight some examples from my work that illustrate the need for a shift in how violence is conceptualized and the strategies we develop to prevent, resist and respond to violence.

Bio

Cindy Holmes is a PhD candidate in Interdisciplinary Studies (Women’s Studies, Sociology, Geography) at the University of British Columbia. She completed her MA in Sociology and Equity Studies in Education from OISE/University of Toronto. Her SSHRC-funded dissertation research applies an interlocking feminist framework to the study of anti-violence and health promotion strategies in queer communities. Her other research interests include hetero/homonormativity; racial violence in white settler societies; violence against women; geographies of belonging and human rights; and racial politics within social justice movements. Alongside her academic work, Cindy has worked with community groups for over twenty years in the areas of community-based research, evaluation and anti-violence, health and anti-oppression education. Her publications have appeared in the journal Gender, Place and Culture (2009), and numerous books including Intimate Partner Violence in LGBTQ Lives (2011), Who’s Your Daddy? And Other Writings on Queer Parenting (2009) and Survivor Rhetoric: Negotiations and Narrativity in Abused Women’s Language (2006).