

FALL 2021 ISSUE

MSU Sociology Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

NEWSLETTER



Message from your DEI coordinator



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Welcome to our second DEI newsletter from the Department of Sociology! I am thrilled to share with you the rich legacy of research from our department on **race and racial identity** through reflections by our faculty and alumni. We are indeed privileged to work with a group of award-winning scholars whose careers have left a lasting impression on students, MSU and on policies. Please join me in celebrating some extraordinary careers and new emerging scholars.

This issue of the newsletter contains a snapshot of highlights and special contributions by some of our faculty and graduate students. I am hoping to highlight many more contributions around race and equity especially around water, environment, community engagement, governance, and policing in our follow up issue in the Spring semester.

On other announcements:

1. 24 faculty and grad students participated in our just concluded 5-week Implicit Bias training!
2. The African Atlantic Research Team's Symposium, "Opacity, Transcendence, and Tradition in African Diaspora Religion of the Americas: Horizons of Knowing" is open for registration. This virtual event is scheduled for Friday, October 15th, 2021 and will celebrate AART's 25 years of mentoring students of color towards earning the PhD. Use this link to register: [AART Symposium Registration](#). Cost is \$25 for professionals and \$10 for students.

Finally, any conversation on our department's contribution to the literature on race and identity is incomplete without acknowledging the pioneering work of our late colleague Professor Ruth Simms Hamilton. Special thanks to Professor Jualynne Dodson and Professor Steve Gold for co-writing a special tribute to Professor Ruth Hamilton. It is indeed my honor to begin this issue with their tribute.

Sincerely
Soma Chaudhuri, PhD.
Associate Professor of Sociology and DEI Coordinator

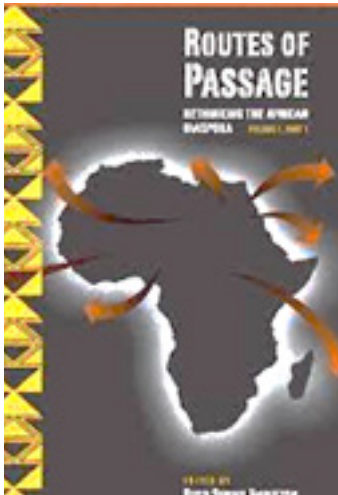
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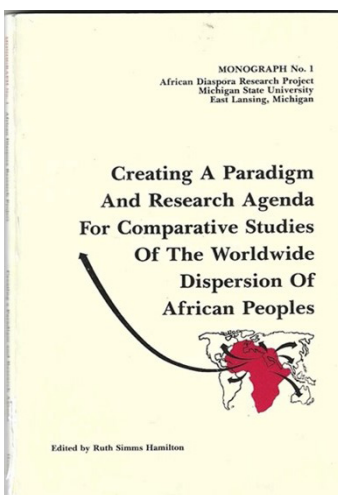
Ruth S. Hamilton's Legacy

By Professors Jualynne Dodson and Steve Gold



Ruth Simms Hamilton was on the faculty of Michigan State University (MSU) for 35 years. She was Professor of Sociology, and was Founding Director of the African Diaspora Research Project, and guided national and international graduate students in study and research on the global phenomenon. Her contributions to Michigan State University went far beyond course work as she consistently led theorizing on the academic study of the African Diaspora as a global social phenomenon, from its 16th century origins, to the Americas, and in its 21st century expressions.

Ruth Simms was born in Savannah, Georgia in 1937. She attended Talladega College in Talladega, Alabama. She earned her bachelor's degree from the 150+ years old college, one of earliest African American educational institutions, and became one of a small group of students from Talladega College who eventually joined the MSU faculty. Talladega College was organized by formerly enslaved women and men. Its Savery Library contains the internationally acclaimed six-panel mural of the 1839 Amistad Munity. The mural's six panels depict the shipboard uprising of enslaved Africans, the Connecticut trial of the freedom fighters, the repatriation of the freed captives, the Underground Railroad, the Opening Day of Talladega College, and the building of the campus's Savery Library. During 2012 to 2015, the mural toured several prominent city museums including the Smithsonian. Ruth Simms Hamilton experienced the celebrated artwork as a student and was among thousands of persons who have kept alive the campus' over eighty-year tradition about it. The marble floor entrance to Talladega's Savery Library accompanies the renowned Hale Woodruff mural as well as an inlaid replica of the Amistad Ship that was installed in 1938. Since its installation, students, faculty, staff, and campus visitors have been requested not to walk on the inlaid floor because of its historical significance.



Ruth Simms Hamilton left her beloved Talladega and earned the master's and Ph.D. in sociology from Northwestern University, home to the first formal African Studies program in the U.S. Dr. Hamilton's scholarly focus was on Ghana. At Michigan State University, Dr. Hamilton was a founding and core faculty member of the African Studies Center and served as Associate Director in the 1970s. She pioneered the study of gender in African development, specifically Ghanaian women's cooperatives, and led the focus of urbanization on the continent when others' attention was on villages and rural areas. Her efforts received many external and internal awards, including the 1971 MSU Teacher-Scholar Award;

the Distinguished Scholar Award from the Association of Black Sociologists; the 1987 Michigan Association of Governing Boards Distinguished Faculty Award; and the 1995 Ralph Smuckler Award for Advancing International Studies and Programs at MSU.

While an outstanding sociology professor at MSU, Ruth Hamilton also served as a key member of the Board of Trustees of Teachers Insurance and Annuity Association (TIAA) from 1989 to 2003. During that tenure, she served on the Board's Corporate Governance and Social Responsibility Committees as well as the Board's Executive Committee. Dr. Clifton Wharton Jr., past President of MSU and CEO of TIAA-CREF, commented that Dr. Hamilton, "was a rare human being whose life made a difference to us all. Her life was a priceless jewel that will always be remembered."



Ruth Hamilton mentored dozens of U.S. and international students who became faculty members at colleges and universities around the world. Hamilton's ground-breaking African Diaspora research informed her courses in sociological theory, race, ethnicity, as well as the African Diaspora as a global social system. She was a demanding and supportive professor who insisted on the highest level of research scholarship students could produce.

She was a member of the Rockefeller Foundation-Funded Commission on U.S. Policy on South Africa that resulted in the ground-breaking volume, *South Africa: Time Running Out*. The Commission helped to shape Washington, D.C. policies that contributed to the 1986 Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act thereby playing a part in the release of Nelson Mandela and democratic elections there. Dr. Hamilton also served as Trustee Emeritus of the Carnegie Corporation of New York.

She co-chaired the Task Force on Urban and Metropolitan Affairs in the MSU College of Social Science to chart a course at MSU for studies of urbanization around the globe. She was the founding editor of the MSU Journal *African Urban Studies*, established the African Diaspora Newsletter, *Connexoes*, and edited the Working Paper Series on the African Diaspora. Her published books and articles include *Racial Conflict, Discrimination, Power; Urbanization in West Africa*; "The African Woman as Entrepreneur: Problems and Prospects for Development;" "The African Diaspora in the Late Twentieth Century World System: Recent Observations;" and "Conceptualizing the African Diaspora."

Dr. Ruth Simms Hamilton (1937 - 2003)
Professor of Sociology
Faculty Member, African Studies Center and
Faculty, Center for Latin American and Caribbean
Michigan State University

Faculty Spotlight:

Professor Jualynne Dodson



Jualynne Elizabeth Dodson was born in Pensacola, Florida, the eldest of four children in a two-family network whose descendants are seven generations' born in the U.S. She is the family's first to earn the PhD and her journey represents the nation's racial inequities in education and generational social advancement. Jualynne earned the PhD in Sociology of Religion from the University of California, Berkeley and served as Research Director for Atlanta University School of Social Work, and Dean of Seminary at Union Theological Seminary in New York city. Dodson founded the African Atlantic Research Team at University of Colorado, Boulder from which MSU invited her to serve as 'John Hannah Distinguished Professor' before recruiting her to join the faculty and align AART's work with the campus. Subsequently, MSU invited Dodson to be a tenured member of the sociology faculty where she regularly teaches graduate and undergraduate courses in Classical Theory, Qualitative

Research Methods, Contemporary Communities, Developing Society, and Migration and the African Diaspora.

The Award Winning African Atlantic Research Team (AART) that accompanied Dodson's recruitment to the East Lansing campus is a mentoring collective that guides undergraduate students of color toward earning the PhD. At least five have studied research method in Cuba with AART while conducting individual investigations. Dodson received the Association of Black Sociologists' "Life Time Achievement A. Wade Smith Award for distinguished Teaching and Mentoring Service" while the Research Team has earned Awards of Excellence for its accomplishments. More than a dozen AART students have completed post-graduate Masters and Ph.D. and Team members have earned such academic excellence awards as Cum Laude diplomas, Phi Beta Kappa, Marshall Fellows, and 'Deans List' graduation. Significantly, African American men are well represented in AART's statistic of 0% attrition rate with only one student, of more than thirty, not completing the Bachelor's degree. The Team's accomplishments are exceptional and above proportional achievements of the population in most U.S. colleges and universities.

Dr. Dodson has authored numerous journal articles, encyclopedia inclusions, book chapters, and her book publications include: Religion, Culture and Spirituality in Africa and the African Diaspora; Engendering Church: Women, Power, and the African Methodist Episcopal Church; Sacred Spaces: Religious Traditions of Oriente Cuba, and Afro-Centric Education: Toward a Non-Deficit Perspective in Services to Families & Children. She is regularly invited to consult and speak nationally as well as internationally, including the United Nation's Education Scientific and Cultural Organization's selection of her research on Cuba's distinct religions to be included in their Conference Proceedings, "Intangible Heritage, Sharing Cultures," held in Portugal's Atlantic Ocean Azores Islands.

Faculty Spotlight:

Professor Monique D.A. Kelly

My research broadly focuses on racial/ethnic identities, attitudes, stratification, and inequality as well as on immigration processes connected to those social dynamics. I use both qualitative and quantitative methods to examine how race, measured as a multidimensional construct, structures life chances within the Anglophone Caribbean and larger Black diaspora. Thus, advancing the discourse and understanding of racial dynamics in patterning overall socioeconomic inequality and the variation of the utility of “race” across contexts. It does so by complicating racial inequality discourse by highlighting the heterogeneity within the Black diaspora as it moves beyond commonsense notions of race. Additionally, utilizing mixed methods to interrogate the complexities of race leverage important insights.



My latest publication, “Examining Race in Jamaica” <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12552-020-09287-z>, investigates how race, measured as racial category and skin color, systemically shapes socioeconomic inequality in Jamaica, despite national rhetoric to the contrary. Using the 2014 AmericasBarometer social survey in Jamaica to analyze educational attainment and the availability of household amenities, I found that racial category, but more so skin color, starkly structured outcomes. These findings challenge longstanding beliefs that marginalize the effects race on social inequality within the country. It also lends support for the importance of a multidimensional approach to studying the effects of race in understanding stratification dynamics in a context such as the Anglophone Caribbean.

In furthering this work and my overall research agenda, I have been recently awarded a Partnerships for Innovative Research in Africa (PIRA) on the Global African Diaspora Grant by the Alliance for African Partnership in International Studies and Programs at MSU. This is a collaborative project with colleagues in Barbados, Kenya, and the US. The project uses the cases of Barbados and Kenya to examine the role of race/ethnicity in circumscribing citizenship in the postcolonial state and how it structures the allocation of state resources as well as socioeconomic wellbeing. This project seeks to understand the legacies of colonialism in both countries and how race/ethnicity affects interpretations, practices, and inculcation of citizenship. In an aim to move beyond conceptual studies of post-colonial citizenship and identity, we will utilize a mixed methodological approach that provides a more nuanced examination of the question of post-colonial citizenship. This study represents a comparative and transnational African diasporic dimension to existing research on citizenship. Findings of this project will have strong implications on public policy outcomes in Kenya and Barbados, hence, opening conversations with the relevant governmental authorities about policy alternatives to the current condition.

Altogether, my research aims to demonstrate how operationalizing the different dimensions of race can more aptly explain the opportunities available to racial minorities, particularly those within the Black diaspora.

Faculty Spotlight:

Professor Rubén Martínez

Rubén Martínez is a specialist in the fields of political sociology and social stratification with emphases on intergroup relations, social inequality, and social change. Particular areas of study include the roles of education, land, and labor in the sustainability of subpopulations in society. His studies have contributed to making transparent the mechanisms and effects of racial domination and the identification of societal transformational processes critical for achieving more just and inclusive social orders. His work is grounded in the view that the ultimate aim of science is the amelioration of the human condition.



His early writings began with the examination of racial roles in society and how they reflect and perpetuate patterns of group subordination. That work was followed by studies on the impact of race and gender on the self-esteem of youth. He and his colleague, Richard Dukes, published a series of articles using data collected from high school students. In 1987 they published one of the earliest studies using “ethgender” as an independent variable. They tested the view that minorities develop inferiority complexes as a result of American racism. They found that self-esteem differs by domain—public and private domains. In the public domain, where they are subject to evaluation by the dominant group, ethno-racial minority youths have lower levels of self-esteem than their white counterparts. However, in the private domain, where they are evaluated by their own cultural standards, they tend to have higher levels of self-esteem than their white counterparts. They also found that higher levels of self-esteem are positively associated with academic performance.

His work in the area of education relative to ethno-racial minorities is linked to labor and has focused on Chicano and Latino students and Latino leaders in higher education. With colleagues, he has highlighted the barriers to higher education for Latinos, the challenges they experience in colleges and universities, and provided recommendations for developing multicultural learning environments.

His work on leadership in higher education is informed by experiences as a faculty governance leader and as a senior administrator. Conceptually, he and colleagues have integrated diversity leadership in higher education with principles for the transformation of higher education institutions. He and Adalberto Aguirre developed a framework for transforming predominantly white institutions into multicultural institutions. Using the concept of co-optation, they posit that institutional leadership allocates resources to pursue the mission of the organization. As universities constitute spaces in society, they are subject to environmental influences that disrupt the pursuit of their respective missions. Disruptions include demands by ethno-racial minorities, women, and progressive movements. The way institutional leaders typically respond to these types of social disruptions is by co-opting them as they seek to continue the pursuit of the organizational mission. He and Aguirre call this approach the “additive model,” which is intended to cool out the disrupters without transforming the core practices of the university. Politically, this approach was called “tokenism” during the 1960s, but the concept was not grounded in the internal logic of Western organizations. This approach results in limited resources for the added

units, which are maintained on the margins of the university.

They further argue that the additive model maintains the core processes and practices at universities and sustain institutionalized patterns of racism and discrimination. Needed is a transformational approach by which a university adopts diversity as a core value and policies and practices are aligned with it. The tacit values of universities and other organizations grounded in Western models are effectiveness and efficiency. By adding diversity to them the organization must perforce transform its policies and practices from those of a predominantly white institution to one that is multicultural and democratic.

Finally, his work on land is focused on the recovery of Hispano land ethics, environmental justice, and Latino farms. The project on Hispano land ethics is rooted in the land management practices by Hispanos in northern New Mexico that developed over a period of two hundred years prior to the American Mexican War. Some of those practices are rooted in Islamic principles of water management and collide with the American water management principle of first priority. The principle of water sharing in times of scarcity places Hispano collectivism directly in conflict with American individualism.

More recently, he has taken an interest in Latino businesses, examining their needs and challenges, and focusing on Latino farms as business. He has also taken an interest in the study of working landscapes and the issues that pervade the ways by which universities engage communities of color and address their needs. Within these topics specific attention is given to, issues of epistemological distance, land ownership and dispossession, and environmental racism.

Alumni Spotlight:

Crystal Nicole Eddins, PhD



I completed a dual major PhD in African American & African Studies and Sociology at Michigan State University in 2017. My years at MSU ingrained in me a commitment to community engagement, interdisciplinary research, and a focus on the ways people of African descent have organized themselves into collectives that affirm their humanity and liberation, and resist oppression and exploitation through rebellion, revolt, and revolution. My work relies on archival histories, and uses conceptual and theoretical frameworks from Black/African Diaspora Studies, the sociology of social movements, postcolonial historical sociology, and Atlantic World history. Since my time at MSU, I have continued with my research on African Diaspora collective consciousness, resistance to slavery, and the Haitian Revolution as a full-time faculty member

in the Africana Studies Department at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. At UNC Charlotte, I teach classes including African Diaspora Theory; Introduction to Africana Studies; Slavery, Racism, and Colonialism in the African Diaspora; Social Justice Movements in the African Diaspora; and Revolutionary Haiti and the Atlantic World.

My book manuscript, *Rituals, Runaways, and the Haitian Revolution: Collective Action in the African Diaspora* published with Cambridge University Press (November 2021). It examines the networks between enslaved people, maroons, and a small number of free people of color, built in sacred ritual spaces and during marronage, that helped facilitate the racial solidarity that influenced the Haitian Revolution's success. The book includes content analysis of over 10,000 runaway slave advertisements from colonial Haiti, along with careful examination of other archival material, to study the relationship between enslaved people's sacred ritual activities, their collective consciousness, and their patterns of escape from slavery. I argue that these micro-level behaviors and actions of self-liberation from slavery helped to make possible the macro-level project of emancipation and nation-building during the Haitian Revolution.

I have published a co-authored article, "Repression, Revolt, & Racial Politics: Maroons in Early Eighteenth Century Saint Domingue and Jamaica" in the *Haitian History Journal* (2019), as well as two single-authored journal articles: "Runaways, Repertoires, and Repression: Antecedents to the Haitian Revolution 1766-1791" appeared in the *Journal of Haitian Studies* (2019), and "'Rejoice! Your wombs will not beget slaves!' Marronage as Reproductive Justice in Colonial Haiti" was published in *Gender & History* (2020). "'Rejoice!'" was a finalist for the Society of French Historical Studies' William Koren Prize. I have several journal article manuscripts at various stages of review, and I am currently co-editing a special issue of the *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* focusing on the theme of "Subversion, Slavery, and the Work of Empire." I also have contributed essays and book reviews to public academic writing outlets like *Black Perspectives*, the blog of the African American Intellectual History Society, the *Age of Revolutions* blog, the *Mobilizing Ideas* blog, and *Public Books*.

My research has received support from various entities, including the African American Intellectual History Society C.L.R. James Research Fellowship, the University of Florida Library Travel Research Grant, the UNC Charlotte Faculty Research Grant, and the UNC-Duke Consortium in Latin American and Caribbean Studies. These funding sources allowed me to spend time at the Library Company of Philadelphia, the University of Florida Library, the National Archives in Paris, France, and the British National Archives to collect archival data for my book and other works. I also was selected as the Ruth J. Simmons Postdoctoral Fellow at Brown University's Center for the Study of Slavery & Justice for the 2018-2019 academic year, during which time I drafted my book manuscript and hosted a manuscript workshop.

I have delivered invited talks, participated in podcast interviews, and organized workshops and symposia both inside and outside of the academy about Haiti and the Haitian Revolution, women and gender, and race and inequality. These include appearances on The Dig podcast and the New Books in African American Studies podcast; I co-organized the "Subversion, Slavery, and the Work of Empire Symposium" hosted by Brown University, as well as the 2021 Juneteenth Celebration Symposium on "From Reconstruction to Reparations" for a South Carolina-based Black historical organization; I also have given talks to the L'Ouverture Cultural Society and the UNC-Duke Haiti Teacher Fellows on the topic of women's contributions to the Haitian Revolution.

Crystal Eddins, Ph.D. | Department of Africana Studies | UNC Charlotte

Alumni Spotlight:

Christian Ramirez, PhD



I completed a dual major PhD in Chicano Latino Studies and Sociology at Michigan State University in 2021. My most recent publication titled, “Decolonizing Migration Studies: A Chicana Studies Perspective and Critique of Colonial Sociological Origins,” explores the assumptions, limitations, and epistemic privileging within westernized migration studies and sociology. I also interrogate how Chicana Studies systematically addresses these assumptions by confronting colonization’s impact on how sociologists temporarily study, measure, and analyze human behavior including migration. One of the goals of this paper is to humanize Chicana populations and their historic migratory life ways and not simply treat their migration as algorithmic decisions. I look to the work of borderland

theorist Gloria Anzaldúa to underline the force that drives Chicana and Mexican migration. She asserts that Chicana migration is part of their ontological and epistemological connection to their Indigenous tradition of “long walks” across recent politicized borders. This publication also addresses the lack of epistemic diversity in the way sociologists theorize and analyze Mexican migration to the United States.

These theoretical concerns are addressed in my dissertations titled, “Palenque!: Cross Cultural Exchange among Indigenous and African Peoples in 17th century Veracruz, Mexico.” While Immanuel Wallerstein is not centered or featured in this work I do think his world-systems analysis may be an entry point for hesitant sociologists to acknowledge the dynamic and impactful social changes that occurred in the Americas with the arrival of 16th century colonists. Spaniards imposed new geopolitical identities, racial and cultural hierarchies, and the transformation of social relationships between and among Indigenous communities in Mesoamerica. This was common knowledge prior to my time at Michigan State University.

I later learned, through my interactions with Dr. Jualynne Dodson and the African Atlantic Research Team, that the Spanish were accompanied by both free and enslaved Africans who transformed the social, cultural, and racial structures of what would later become New Spain. What struck me was the consistent forms of rebellion by both African and Indigenous people against their colonized experiences. Thus, I began to explore the histories of two Afro-Indigenous palenques, or self-liberated settlements, by the names of San Lorenzo de los Negros (Yanga) and Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe de los Morenos de Amapa (Mandinga). In doing so, my dissertation reconstructed a sociological narrative about Afro-Indigenous alliances and their multiple forms of collective rebellions in the coastal and interior mountainous regions of Veracruz. Additionally, my goal was to demonstrate how European modernity was a key operating ideology in the assignment of their racial/ethnic identities. This ideology continues to dominate racial discourse in 21st century Mexico.

Last, my dissertation accomplished the following: 1) it traced the historical processes that made colonial Veracruz a location of cross-cultural exchange; 2) it examined how two distinct colonized groups adapted themselves to their new social relations initiated by Spanish colonialism in order to form their respective palenques; 3) it outlined how the Spanish racialization project reorganized the racial/ethnic identities of its' subjects for colonial stability. Overall, my dissertation addresses the literary gap in Sociology and Chicano/Latino Studies concerning the social processes that created the need for palenques during the colonial Mexican era. I hope sociologist at all levels will consider colonialism as an important and viable historical process that shapes our everyday interactions with one another and our social institutions.

Christian Ramirez | Department of Sociology | Michigan State University