



Department of Sociology  
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY



ALLIANCE *for* AFRICAN  
PARTNERSHIP

# Race/Ethnicity and the Question of Postcolonial Citizenship in the Black Diaspora

**Oct. 20-21, 2022**

Lincoln Room of the Kellogg Hotel &  
Conference Center, MSU

Registration:

7:45 a.m. to 12 p.m. both days

Hosted By Dr. Monique Kelly (MSU), Professor Aaron  
Kamugisha (Smith College), Dr. Joan Phillips  
(UWI-Barbados) and Dr. Moses Onyango (USIU-Africa)

SYMPOSIUM HELD AS PART OF THE PARTNERSHIPS FOR  
INNOVATIVE RESEARCH IN AFRICA (PIRA) GLOBAL  
AFRICAN DIASPORA GRANTS SPONSORED BY THE  
ALLIANCE FOR AFRICAN PARTNERSHIP (AAP) AT MSU



## Thursday, October 20, 2022

8am – 9am

Breakfast

9am – 9:15am

Welcome and introduction of PIRA Grant team and Hosts of symposium: Dr. Monique Kelly (MSU), Professor Aaron Kamugisha (Smith College), Dr. Joan Phillips (UWI-Barbados), and Dr. Moses Onyango (USIU-A)

9:15am – 9:30am

Opening remarks by Dr. Jose Jackson-Malete, AAP Co-director

9:30am – 10:50am

Panel – Black Radicalism, Marxism, and the Critique of Neocolonialism. Panelists: Dr. Yutaka Yoshida, Tokyo University of Science; Professor John McClendon III, MSU; Dr. Stephen C. Ferguson II. North Carolina State University

10:50am – 11am

Break

11am – 12:05pm

Keynote: Professor Alissa Trotz - “Not just any (body) can be a [CARICOM] citizen”: Shanique Myrie V. State of Barbados.

In a public lecture in what was then British Guiana in 1958, CLR James described how he saw Federation, as “the means and the only means whereby the West Indies and British Guiana can accomplish the transition from colonialism to national independence, can create the birth of a new nation; and by reorganizing the economic system and the national life, give us our place in the modern community of nations.” In his remarks, James recognized the anxieties that could be produced by freedom of movement as part of a single economic space but concluded that “no such problem can be an obstacle to Federation.” It would take thirty years for the Caribbean Community to begin to move towards freedom of movement, but in a context significantly different from the one that shaped James’ vision. Reflecting on territorialization, citizenship and migration, and through a discussion of the case brought before the Government of Barbados by a Jamaican citizen in 2012, this talk explores the shift from James’ articulation in which Federation means national independence “or it will mean nothing,” to the contemporary moment in which competing notions of regional and national sovereignty play themselves out at the border, refracted through the internally othered body in the Caribbean.



12:05pm – 1:20pm Lunch

1:30pm – 2:50pm Panel – Dilemmas of Postcolonial Citizenship in East Africa Panelists: Ngare Willsmith Ochillo; Dr. Quin Elizabeth Awuor; Dr. Moses Onyango; Dr. Nicodemus Minde

2:50pm – 3pm Break

3pm – 4:05pm Keynote – Professor Macharia Munene. Race, Ethnicity, and Postcolonial Identity: The East African Perspective

The people of Eastern Africa suffer identity maladies related to the establishment of colonial states. Competing European powers had destroyed African beliefs and institutions, sovereignty, freedoms, and sense of legitimacy. They transferred the source of legitimacy to agreements in European capitals, imposed layers of new identities to make people subservient to external wishes. Africans became European subjects and property labeled ‘natives’ when serving colonial interests. They were also reduced to ‘warring tribes’ in need of European pacification when they tried to challenge the colonial state. They were not citizens, just slaves in situ. At independence, the effort to create new identities ran into challenges of acceptability within and outside the new states. Did the people accept they were part of the new state ruled by people who were not European? The challenges, connected to colonial conditioning, were both internal and external and had religious, ethnic, racial, language, and ideological attributes. Neighboring states shared border people who wondered what they were or why they had to choose between two or more states. Then there were extra-continental powers, seemingly determined to ensure that the African post-colonial state failed. Extra-continental forces supervised the transition from colonialism to independence. They largely succeeded in placing their chosen African leaders, as ‘neo-colonial’ agents, in critical governance and economic positions. These were to protect external interests against internal challenges and became good at denigrating anything African, and some regretted they were born black. In their mental subservience, they tended to glorify the colonial past and allowed imperial interpreters of Africa perpetually to interpret what is good for Africans. They became sources of identity friction and collided with those trying to distance themselves from colonial evils. The ensuing struggle to recreate identities that promote the essence of being African and sense of Pan-Africanism amid hostile imperial designs affects one’s perspective on belonging.

5:15pm – 6pm Meet and Greet

6pm – 7pm Dinner



## Friday, October 21, 2021

8am – 9am

Breakfast

9am – 10am  
project

Welcome and presentation on PIRA Grant

10am – 10:10am

Break

10:10am – 11:15am Keynote: Professor Carole Boyce-Davies - "I Am a Woman's Rights:" Women Advancing Global Citizenship and Leadership Paradigms

In 1901, Catherine McKenzie, a Black and women's rights activist in Jamaica, asserted that "[T]he subject of "Woman's Rights" is before the world ...a subject which is here to stay, to be discussed, and to be settled. It may be said to be the progeny of the nineteenth century; but it is to grow and develop into full maturity during the century upon which the world has just entered." Here we have a fitting women's rights counterpart to W. E. B. DuBois's parallel assertion on the prominence and permanence of the color line made a year before, at the first Pan African Conference in 1900 in London, i.e. "The problem of the 20th century is the problem of the color line" meaning that the problematics of race would be the issue dominating the 20th century. The fact that we know only DuBois's assertion speaks to the issues which describe how women's rights are rarely represented in male supremacist world culture. Retrospectively, we can just as easily see, through this lens, the 20th century as one in which women's rights were going to be centrally positioned and indeed, they were. This presentation will address some of the contemporary manifestations which reposition women's rights to leadership.

11:15am – 11:25am Break

11:25am – 12:25pm Open discussion

12:30pm – 1:50pm Lunch

1:15pm – 1:25pm Closing remarks by Professor Aaron McCright, Chair of the Department of Sociology