



Call for participation in the [Feminist Africa](#) and [Caribbean Review of Gender Studies](#) action research workshop to be held during the [Kwame Nkrumah Festival](#) on Sept 23<sup>rd</sup> 2021.

Convenors: Amina Mama (University of California) & Halimah DeShong (University of West Indies)

### **“Transatlantic Feminisms: New Challenges to Empire in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”**

Caribbean and African feminisms have emerged on both sides of the Atlantic, with earlier Black feminist internationalism taking on pan-Africanist, internationalist and national governmental forms with the attainment of political independence that took place in Haiti (1804) and thereafter, during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Outstanding women emerged as key players in the anti-colonial, revolutionary socialist and nationalist and independence struggles of the epoch. With the emergence of modern, Western-style states, women’s equality remained a site of negotiation and struggle, even as women made significant contributions to national development. In keeping with the prevailing Western-capitalist global norms, African and Caribbean women remained politically and economically marginalized at home. From the 1960’s on, elite women from the former colonies took the struggle for equal rights up in the international governance arenas of the United Nations and the global development industry. There women and feminists pursued a politics of inclusion, demanding peace, equality and development, but also concrete rights such as education, health and welfare services, for the most part demanding public policy changes to alleviate the continued exploitation and oppression of the poor majority, and called for an end to the feminization of poverty as a result of male-centred modern national development paradigms that exacerbated the situation of poor women. By the 1990’s the public provision of education had ensured growing pool of educated women, and this new cadre turned their attention to political arenas, on the understanding that increased political power, would make women more effective at securing the legal and policy gains needed to bring about gender equality. Many such gains have been made, yet gender equality has remained elusive, despite policy improvements, and advances towards gender parity in politics in a few states. However, the 21<sup>st</sup> century sees most nations falling short of gender parity, and massive setbacks, as the late 20<sup>th</sup> century policy advances have failed to transform the

oppressed and marginalized status of most people, and particularly women, in most African and Caribbean nations, notwithstanding differences of scale and degree. How can we understand the persisting of inequalities of gender across most of Africa and the Caribbean (the Americas)? Where can political, legal and policy advances be seen to have made a significant difference, and where have they failed to do so? There are clearly difference of scale and proximity to the USA, and the various strategic interests of the centre of global power in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. What can be learnt from the different scenarios that have defined women's movement responses to oppression and violence that have prevailed within each region. What might be learnt from the various ways in which feminist movement have sought to resist the ongoing oppression and exploitation of women in diverse African and Caribbean states?

This project will set out to explore a number of key questions emanating from feminist discourses that seek to transform lives, the harsh conditions under which poor people labor, improvise, and migrate in pursuit of decent lives.

The research will explore the cultural and economic strategies through which women, men and gender nonconforming communities pursue meaningful lives under the challenging conditions of contemporary neoliberal globalization, and its attendant, commodification of sexuality. Action research locations will be identified in response to the following questions:

- Where and what are the frontlines of women's organizing in Caribbean and African contexts in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?
- How and to what extent have i) neoliberal globalization and ii) new forms of feminism intervened and influenced gender normativity at different locations?
- What forms of gender struggle are taking place beyond the global gender policy discourses of "good governance", "gender equality" "gender mainstreaming" and "women's empowerment" and their uptake by NGO's.

The Kwame Nkrumah Festival (Sept 20-24 2021) is calling for interested Caribbean and African researchers (including ethnic, sexual and racial minorities) to attend a generative workshop to share and discuss the latest research and its relation to popular feminist thought and action in all spheres of culture, law and the economy. The purpose of the workshop will be to develop action research possibilities under the rubric of Pan-African Feminist Studies.

*To join this Transatlantic conversation, please register your interest in joining us here: [www.kwamenkrumahfestival.com](http://www.kwamenkrumahfestival.com) for program updates.*

*If you are a researcher, please email a summary of your research interests and expertise to: Amina Mama and Halimah DeShong at [info@feministafrica.com](mailto:info@feministafrica.com) before 30<sup>th</sup> August 2021.*