



# TALKING DRUM



February 2021

## The Africa Scholars Forum's Newsletter

### Upcoming Events at ASF- Spring 2021

-  **February 26, 2021:** ASF Black History in Africa Series and Spring Business meeting
-  **March 24-26, 2021 – 2<sup>nd</sup>** International Colloquium of African Studies: Migration, Security and Inequalities

**ASF Panel Title:** Lusophone Africa: Transnationalism's, Movements and New Human Securities Panelists

- i. **Rita Kiki Edozie, Ph.D.** – Chair/Discussant
- ii. **José Cossa, Ph.D.** (Pennsylvania State University)
- iii. **Abel Djassi Amado, Ph.D.** (Simmons University)
- iv. **Anna Mester, Ph.D.** (University of Massachusetts Boston)
- v. **Aminah Pilgrim, Ph.D.** (University of Massachusetts Boston)

 **April 30, 2021** – Africa Day 2021 (Theme: COVID Africa: Intersection of Public Health, Governance, and Cultural Life)

 **May 14, 2021** – eUbuntu Award Ceremony 2021

### UMass Boston Africa Scholars Forum Welcome and Business Meeting



Special Guest Speaker

**Layla D. Brown-Vincent, PhD**  
Associate Professor of Africana Studies  
College of Liberal Arts, UMass Boston



## Black History in Africa Series

**SAVE THE DATE:**  
**Friday, February 26, 2021 at 2:00PM EST**

SAVE THE DATE for the Africa Scholars Forum at UMass Boston for the **Black History in Africa Series** featuring faculty **Layla D. Brown-Vincent, Ph.D. Assistant Professor of Africana Studies, College of Liberal Arts, UMass Boston.**

**AGENDA:**

- 2:00 - 3:15 pm Faculty Presentation
- 3:20 - 4:00 pm ASF Business Meeting

For more information, visit the event [webpage](#) or contact us via the email below.

For disability-related accommodations, please visit [www.ada.umb.edu](http://www.ada.umb.edu) prior to the event.

NATIONAL AUTONOMOUS UNIVERSITY OF MEXICO \ UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS BOSTON  
BOSTON UNIVERSITY \ UNIVERSITARY PROGRAM OF STUDIES ON ASIA AND AFRICA \ UNAM-BOSTON \ UNAM-SOUTH AFRICA

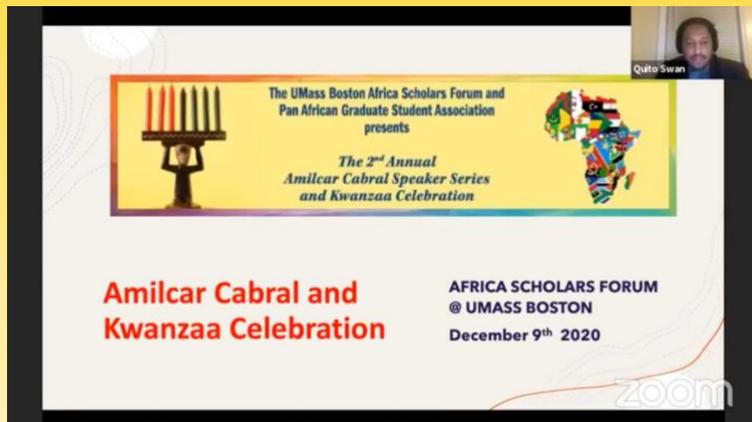
2<sup>nd</sup> INTERNATIONAL COLLOQUIUM  
- OF -  
**AFRICAN STUDIES**  
MIGRATION, SECURITY AND INEQUALITIES  
MARCH \ 2021

24<sup>TH</sup> 8-13:30H (MEXICO) 9-14:30H (BOSTON) 16-21:30H (SOUTH AFRICA) 25<sup>TH</sup> 8-14H (MEXICO) 9-15H (BOSTON) 16-22H (SOUTH AFRICA)  
26<sup>TH</sup> 8-14:30H (MEXICO) 9-15:30H (BOSTON) 16-22:30H (SOUTH AFRICA)

webinar registration <https://tinyurl.com/africaboston2021>




## Fall 2020, December 15 - Amilcar Cabral and Kwanzaa Celebration featuring Prof Quito Swan and Vernon Robinson

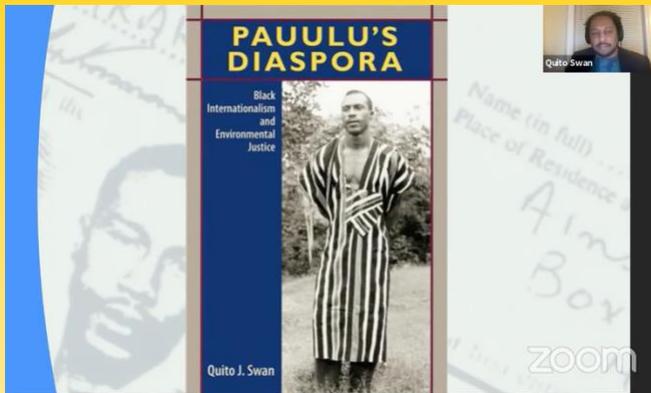


It was on a festive, musical, and historical tone that the 2020 Africa Scholars Forum (ASF) Amilcar Cabral and Kwanzaa celebration concluded, an atypical year for us all. Despite being distant from one another in the midst of the pandemic, this year's event was all about joy, community, music, and

history. The opening of the celebration featured a musical note when Associate Dean and ASF Chair, Professor Rita Kiki Edozie, introduced the virtual community to African music by the way of a Nigerian multi-instrumentalist, singer, and songwriter, Bisade Ologunde, best known by his performance name Lagbaja. As Dr. Edozie noted the importance of music in Africa and its diaspora, she added that the event will cover the ethno-musicality, which carries African unity, culture, and identity. Most importantly, she emphasized the knowledge being shared as the celebration happens, as it focused on work inspired by Amilcar Cabral and black history. Originally from Cape Verde, Cabral was a Pan-Africanist, anti-colonial, and revolutionary that began the revolution that led to independence for Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau.

***“we are in a very stressful and very strange time and there are two things that are really needed now: community and joy.”***

Beyond discussing the meanings of African music and the event's aspirations, the Dean of the McCormack Graduate School of Policy and Global Studies, Dr. David Cash, stressed the importance of community and musicality. As he explained, *“we are in a very stressful and very strange time and there are two things that are really needed now: community and joy.”* Next the Vice President of the Pan-Africanists Graduate Students Association (PAGSA), Nike Ojelabi, expressed her gratitude for being part of a binding community. She expressed that, *“In the midst of our challenges we are strengthened by each other, and we are still going strong. We are proud to be pan-Africanist and to be part of this great*



community.” For the first session, the keynote address by Deborah Dauda, a PhD student in the School of Global Inclusion and Social Development, gave a detailed introduction of the Keynote Speaker Professor Quito Swan, whose scholarly work was influenced by Amilcar Cabral. As she expressed, “I admire his work and his

*Professor Quito J. Swan Presenting on book Pauulu’s Diaspora* *ideas about liberation struggles and being connected to popular culture.”* Prof. Quito Swan is the Director of the William Monroe Trotter Institute for the Study of Black Culture, and Professor of Africana Studies at UMass Boston. For the keynote address, Professor Quito Swan engaged one chapter of his newly published book, *Pauulu’s Diaspora*. In the chapter titled, “Mine crafting a Black Pacific,” he discussed the works of Pauulu Kamarakafego, Merze Tate, and the fact that the Black world has always had thinkers and ideas of liberation struggles against white imperialism, as far back as the early 1900s, and that it is not a new frontier.

***I admire his work and his ideas about liberation struggles and being connected to popular culture.”***

Pauulu, Swan explains, meets Kwame Nkrumah and Maya Angelou, travels to Kenya to support Jomo Kenyatta, and meets Malcom X. He experiments with bamboo and then merges his political and ecological ideas together. Pauulu hosts the first international Black Power movement whose keynote speaker was C.L.R. James, who advised the youth not to play with revolution. Pauulu introduced the idea of a Sixth Pan-African Congress and how Black internationalism reached across the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian oceans, especially through the struggles of Vanuatu, as well as how Black movements were able to define their movements as Black. Professor Quito sought to move away from the narrative of the Black Atlantic movement, to study the influence of the Black Pacific movement. He noted the involvement of movements in Bermuda, Vanuatu, Australia, Tanzania, Fiji Islands, Antigua, and Trinidad and Tobago. He explained how pivotal they were in the Black Power movements and how they are a treasure trove in information on the influence of the Black Pacific movements.



A Q & A session was moderated by Krystal-Gayle O Neil, a PhD student at the McCormack Graduate School. The moderator commented on the profound beauty of Professor Quito's work, with Professor Edozie also asking

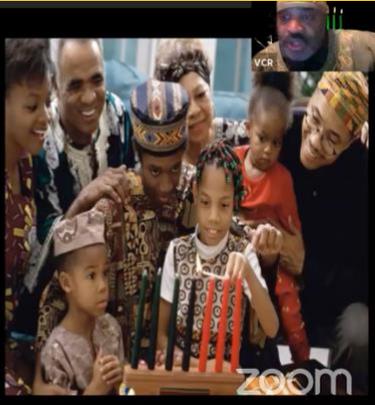
about the inspiration behind Pauulu Kamarakafego changing his name from Roosevelt Brown. Bwanda Jerome asked how youths can be educated in Pan-Africanism and the Professor stated the need to go back to the music. He posits music as the best way to reach the youths, going back to reggae and dancehall. The final question, concerning his next book, was "Why Oceania?" He answered that there was a need to understand the islands and the African influence in Diaspora but that there was a handicap in studying the actual islands as history only puts them in a range of roughly 500 years, whereas Oceania has had a lifespan of close to 70,000 years. After such a profound exposition on Black internationalism and the Black Bacific, the Q & A session was rounded off by the moderator stating how much enlightenment had been garnered from listening to the keynote speaker.

**The seven principles and values in Africa being Unity, Self-Determination, Collective work and Responsibility, Cooperative Economics, Purpose, Creativity and Faith.**

The next session kicked off with the Afro-fusion tunes of Burna Boy's *African Giant* and a cover of Burna Boys song "Ye" by Jamaican reggae artist Koffee. Balkissa Diallo, a PhD Candidate at the McCormack Graduate School then discussed its ethno-musicality and meaning. She explained how the music is greatly influenced by the style of Anikulapo Fela Kuti and how he talks about socio-cultural issues, such as the concept of amassing wealth. She noted the influence of the song on the Diaspora, based on Koffee's cover and how his style of music is becoming a worldwide influence in the African Diaspora.

The next session was anchored by Bwanda Albert, a doctoral student in the School for Global Inclusion and Social Development. She gave an introduction of the Kwanzaa Curator for the session, Vernon C. Robinson. The Curator then gave an introduction to what Kwanzaa is and how it means the "Harvest of the first fruits" in its full Swahili name. It was a creation of Dr. Maulana Karenga, who believed in the indispensable need to preserve African culture. He stated that it could be traced back to Ancient Egypt, Nubia, Ashantiland, and Yorubaland. He stated that it was

Finally, it is important to note Kwanzaa is a cultural holiday, not a religious one, thus available to and practiced by Africans of all religious faiths who come together based on the rich, ancient and varied common ground of their Africanness.



placed to reintroduce the seven principles and values in Africa. The principles being Unity, Self-Determination, Collective work and Responsibility, Cooperative Economics, Purpose, Creativity and Faith. He expounded on the seven symbols of kwanzaa and their symbolic meanings. He talked about

its flag, which is the color of the Black nation: Black for the color, red for the struggle, and green for the hope of a bright future. He reads his poem, “Nguzo Saba,” for Kwanzaa.

Prince De-Makele, a doctoral student, also explores the musicality of a “conscious Congo” in the style of Mulele Matondo and the song “Ingeta” through a PowerPoint. Mulele, according to Prince, criticizes corruption, murders, poverty, and politics in Africa. He sees Africa as a whole and calls for a return to conscience. Mulele also talked about the tragedy of former Burkinabe President Thomas Sankara and how Africans kill each other at the behest of white people. He stands against Eurocentrism and the need for our own religions. The song “Ingeta” can be seen as a sort of activism and it’s used to say that the people who are standing for justice will be victorious in the end. It was wrapped-up by Professor Edozie, who stated the need for a conscious music across the board.

**The seven symbols of Kwanza Unity, Self-Determination, Collective work and Responsibility, Cooperative Economics, Purpose, Creativity and Faith.**

In the final session, a TED-talk by Olivia, a Rwandan born and raised in Belgium, on decolonizing the mind was moderated by Professor Edozie, Hannah Brown, and Gifty Debordes-Jackson in the form of a round table discussion. Participants shared about experiencing systemic racism, particularly in getting jobs. Another discussant talked about the need for accepting all identities and the need not to drop one for the other. The final discussant discussed identification as “Black” and its negative perceptions. He explained that his skin is not Black and that there is a need for a much more accepting and accurate categorization. The series ended with the “Jerusalema” challenge, a video with the producer explaining the inspiration and production behind the song. Professor Edozie ended the event with an expression of thanks to the keynote speakers, the doctoral students, and the behind-the-scenes events and management staff, as the song “Jerusalema” played in the background—a perfect ending to a series done in celebration of the richness that is BLACK CULTURE.



by Daniel Ojemire

# Global Governance and Human Security (GGHS) Proposal Dissertation Defenses Spotlight - December 2020

**Balkissa Diallo, GGHS PhD Candidate**



*Balkissa Diallo Dissertation Proposal Defense*

**Please introduce yourself.**

My name is Balkissa Diallo, I am originally from Niger and I am a third year PhD Candidate in the Global Governance and Human Security program, here at UMass Boston.

**Tell us a little about your research work and why it is important to you.**

My research is on African informal migration to Europe and its governance. I chose this topic because it has always been an interest for me to understand and investigate migration phenomena in Africa and particularly the movements of people from West Africa to Europe via unauthorized channels. Moreover, offering a sending region and African perspective on migration is the overall goal of my research, and that is what makes it important to me. Beside doing research on migration, I also have interests in environmental studies and conflict resolution.

**My research focuses on African informal migration to Europe and its governance**

**What are the factors responsible for the successful defense of your dissertation proposal?**

Preparation. I rehearsed my presentation many times before the day of the presentation. In terms of putting my proposal together, I had brainstorming sessions with my advisor Professor Edozie. This helped me define the scope of my research and develop a narrative about the significance of the study. I also received a constructive feedback from my committee members Prof. Jeffrey Pugh and Prof. Dolly Daftary which was instrumental in positioning my study within a broader set of literature and thinking about my field work. In summer 2020, I attended the UMB-SSRC Transdisciplinary Dissertation Proposal Development workshop where I had the opportunity to discuss my research and see it through multiple disciplinary lenses. I also was awarded the David Matz fellowship which provided me with the resource to support my proposal development success despite the pandemic situation. Last, and certainly not least I received an incredible

support from the program's department – especially from our former Graduate Program Director, Prof. Stacy VanDeveer, who provided me guidance in navigating the different stages in the program and in soothing the process. I am also lucky to have a supportive family and friends who helped think about my topic. The list is long, and I can only be grateful for that. As an African proverb says, "Alone, you go fast. Together, you go far"- this philosophy has always been the factor for my successes.

**Where do you see yourself in terms of the prospect of your dissertation after completion?**

I see myself doing research. Publishing papers and writing books. I also see myself working with International Organizations, teaching, doing research at Universities, and being a consultant.

**What are the challenges faced and how did you overcome?**

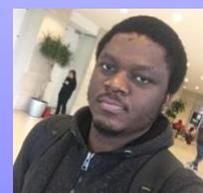
The challenge I faced was related to the pandemic situation, and the fact that the University was closed, so I had no access to the library where I work faster. But having the graduate writing center operate online despite the situation helped me overcome this challenge. It was also difficult to come to term with my literature review because of the expansive nature of migration research.

So, discussing this with my advisor and my colleagues both in my cohort'18 and other cohorts further along in their dissertation work helped me shape a final literature review relevant to the problem my study addresses.

**It was difficult to come to term with my literature review because of the expansive nature of migration research**

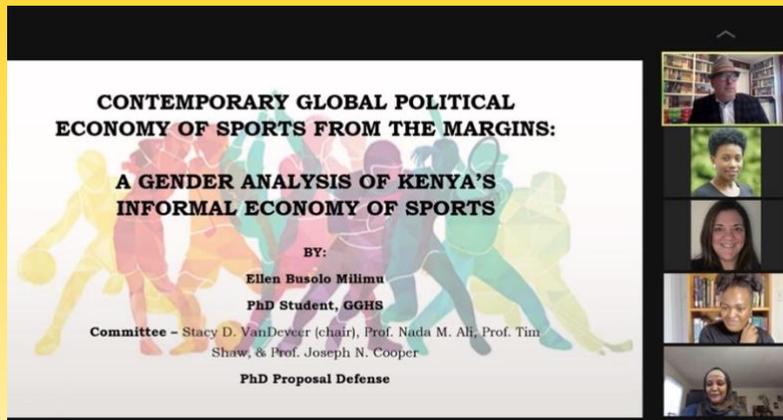
**What advice do you have for upcoming students who are also preparing for their proposal defense?**

My advice is to write every paper assignment according to their research interests. Either broad or specific. Over the years those pieces accumulate into a solid background research for the topic chosen, and it makes it easier to look for literatures at the right place later. Also, do not hesitate to reach out to other cohorts (even if they have already graduated) in the program working similar topics – they can offer advice and tips and help you think more on your study. Finally, it is important to maintain a good mental health hygiene. It is prayer, meditation, music, and cooking for me. Find what keeps you at peace and stick to it.



by Daniel Ojemire

## Ellen Busolo Milimu, PhD Candidate GGHS



### Please introduce yourself.

My name is Ellen Busolo Milimu from Kenya. I hold a master's in diplomacy from the Institute of Diplomacy and International Studies at The University of Nairobi as well as a BA in Journalism and Media Studies from same

university. I am the Co-founder of a Community Based Sport Organization, Simama Africa, at Kariobangi area in Nairobi, Kenya. And currently a third year PhD Candidate in the Global Governance and Human Security program, here at UMass Boston.

### Tell us a little about your research work and why it is important to you.

While African countries participate in mega-sports events, their contribution to the global sports economy is neither recognized nor well documented. One of the reasons may be because 85.8% of African economies are informal which is at odds with mainstream documentation that claims global political economy of sports is multi-billion-dollar industry. Mainstream literatures claim that regions like Africa struggle to create a market for sports due to issues such as corruption and under-development. Although, I find these critiques valid, I hypothesize that the type of economy in regions like Africa could be part of the reason for the struggling sports industry. Operating on this basis, I ask, ***how do we characterize the structure and operation of contemporary informal sports economy using gender theory?*** The informal economy in Africa influences labor, capital, and demand especially. The purpose of this research is to decolonize the global political economy of sports by exploring and understanding the experiences and contributions of nations in understudied regions like Africa in sports. The study will be a qualitative narrative case study of Kenya exploring esports, sports betting and voluntary football. It will thus not compare it to the 'ideal' sports economy that centers European and North American sports systems and models while 'othering' regions like Africa as subordinate or uncivilized leaving them on margins of global sports economy.

### What are the factors responsible for the successful defense of your dissertation proposal?

I had a very good committee. They supported me mentally when I had brain freeze, they'd discuss what I was trying to do. They'd reach out when I was too quiet and probe me by asking where I was in the process. I had a good committee and a good team, especially during the pandemic. Professor Stacy VanDeveer was a good leader for the committee, and he set the tone. He would reach out as often as possible and we'd set deadlines on the work he expected me to bring in. Tim, Joe, and Dr. Nada were the same; they'd reach out and give feedback on time. They prioritized my work and it felt good to have such people in my corner.

**It was  
really hard  
to focus  
and be  
productive  
when the  
future is up  
in the air**

Preparation for me started from day one. I feel like it did for me. I got new ideas and new frameworks I got to incorporate into my research. Some of the courses that were very instrumental in shaping my ideas were global governance for sure, international organizations, because in those classes I was able to research different aspects of sports. These were the most important to me because I was able to break down the topic of sports using global governance and international relations theory. And human security too.

### **Where do you see yourself in terms of the prospect of your dissertation after completion?**

I don't know! That's so far away (laughs)...I will give a diplomatic answer here and say it would be wonderful to get an opportunity in a post-doc to continue working on my dissertation. I also see my research as a life work, so my dissertation is just a part, an opening for what I'm preparing to do. It will follow me the rest of my life; hopefully I'll be able to work on it more and add on the global economy of sports. Hopefully it will be helpful to the governance of sports. I also wish to publish, hopefully I'll work on it with my committee as I prepare the dissertation.

### **What are the challenges faced and how did you overcome?**

The toughest challenge was the mental strain and overall conditions created by the pandemic. It was really hard to focus and be productive when the future is up in the air. Part of drafting a proposal is predicated on the future goals and plans to accomplish the research. So, trying to figure out how you will go to the field while the lockdown is ongoing was another huge challenge.

### **What advice do you have for upcoming students who are also preparing for their proposal defense?**

Mental health...you need to make sure you're observing your mental health. Use your support system; if you have a good team around you, you can meet your goals. I'd say your mental health and creating a good support system, in both your committee and in your personal life.



## Recent article on “Researchers Across Disciplines Develop Emerging African Studies Program” published in The Office of Graduate Studies’ Research Magazine (February 15, 2021)



*Professor Rita Edozie*

The Africa Scholars Forum at UMass Boston is drawing from over three decades of research, programming, and teaching to create a formal African studies program at the university. The interdisciplinary coalition formed in 2018 to build a

program from existing offerings, including courses in the Africana Studies Department; study-abroad programs in South Africa, Cape Verde, Togo, and Senegal; and the Center for African, Caribbean, and Community Development, which collaborates on research and projects in West Africa with a Boston-based nonprofit, the West African Research Association. As many regions embrace global cooperation on initiatives to combat pressing problems such as climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic, UMass Boston’s deep capability in African studies provides a platform to participate. The founder and chair of the Africa Scholars Forum is Rita Kiki Edozie, a professor of international relations and associate dean of the McCormack Graduate School of Policy and Global Studies. A political scientist drawing from multiple

For more details on this article click the link below:

[https://www.umb.edu/news/detail/researchers\\_across\\_disciplines\\_develop\\_emerging\\_african\\_studies\\_program](https://www.umb.edu/news/detail/researchers_across_disciplines_develop_emerging_african_studies_program)

### **AFRICAN SCHOLARS FORUM EDITORIAL BOARD**

Professor Rita Kiki Edozie—Chairperson of ASF & Editor-in-Chief

Ojemire Benjamin Daniel—Managing Editor

Margaret Gatonye—Managing Editor

Gifty Debordes-Jackson—Senior Program Assistant

Balkissa D. Diallo —Program Assistant

For more information, contact the African Scholars Forum at [AfricaScholarsForum@umb.edu](mailto:AfricaScholarsForum@umb.edu) or at 617.287.5550