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REPORT ON THE WORK PROGRESS SEMINAR FOR POINT SUD MASTER'S AND DOCTORAL STUDENTS

Introduction

16 and 17, 2026, Point Sud organized a seminar dedicated to the presentation and discussion of the progress made by master's and doctoral students. This academic gathering, held at Point Sud's offices, is part of an ongoing effort to support young researchers and strengthen their research skills.

The seminar's primary objectives were to enable graduate students to present the progress of their research, to subject their theoretical and methodological choices to academic discussion, and to benefit from the observations and recommendations of experienced researchers and other participants.



The research presented spanned several disciplines, including geography, sociology, history, political science, literature, and visual anthropology. This disciplinary diversity fostered a comparison of approaches and methods across a variety of research topics. The program featured ten presentations. However, Moukoro Abari Dominique, a master's student, was unable to present his research on "Socioeconomic and Cultural Factors Contributing to Academic Failure in Mali: The Case of the Babou Dioni School Complex in the Urban Municipality of San" due to a traffic accident. The opening ceremony featured welcoming remarks by Dr. Issa Fofana and Co-Director.

I. Proceedings of the First Day

1. Morning Presentations

The first session, moderated by Dr. Seydou Togola, featured three presentations. Abdiase Douyon, a master's student in Decentralization and Local Governance, presented a research paper titled "Local Governance of Solid Waste in Bamako: Roles and Responsibilities of Local Governments in the Context of Decentralization." The presentation sparked a discussion on local waste governance and the distribution of responsibilities among the various institutional actors in the context of decentralization.

The second presentation, delivered by Mounérou Djiré, a Ph.D. candidate in geography, focused on an analysis of road safety in the District of Bamako and its surroundings.

Finally, Alou Coulibaly, a Ph.D. candidate in geography at ED-DESSLA, presented research on the impacts of rainfall variability on cotton production and adaptation strategies in the municipality of Nangola.

Following the three presentations, a discussion session was held. Participants' comments focused on the scientific choices made by the researchers, the formulation of their research questions, their methodological approaches, and the consistency between the research questions and the data used. The seminar report notes that these discussions took the form of contributions, suggestions, critiques, and questions.

2. Afternoon Presentations

The afternoon session was moderated by Dr. Yacouba Dogoni. Two presentations were given. Assitan Konané, a master's student at the Collaborative Visual Anthropology Laboratory (LAVISCOL) at Yambo Ouologuem University in Bamako, presented research on "Collective Marriage Among the Samogos: The Example of the Village of Komoro in the Municipality of Loulouni." The presentation was accompanied by a video screening on collective marriage.



The ensuing discussion focused on several aspects of the subject under study. In particular, participants asked the student about:

- the exact moment when the wedding begins in the footage presented;
- the significance of the brides wearing kepis and braids;
- the nature and relevance of the film analysis employed;
- the significance of applying ash to the bride's chest;
- the differences between the Samogos and the Duuns;
- the significance of the bride sitting on the Tehéro;
- the significance of the various dances observed during the ceremony.

These questions reflect an interest in the ethnographic contextualization of the observed practices and the need to link audiovisual data to a rigorous anthropological interpretation.

The second presentation of the afternoon was given by Amadou Oumar Ban, a doctoral student in Literature, and focused on the representation of Europe in *Return to Ceuta and Melilla* by Mame Diarra Diop and *Le Moabi cinéma* by Blick Bassy, with a body of work set to expand.



The questions posed to the researcher focused primarily on conceptual clarification and the delineation of the subject matter. In particular, participants asked:

- to define the concepts of “true color” and “the true face of Europe”;
- what has changed in Europeans’ perception of Africans;
- the reasons behind the choice of this topic;
- how Europe represents Africa;
- the geographical boundaries of Europe adopted in the research.

These remarks underscore the need for the researcher to specify the central concepts of his analysis, to better define the scope of his study, and to clarify the spatial and discursive framework within which his research is situated. The first day concluded with the closing of the proceedings at 4:00 p.m.

II. Proceedings of the Second Day

1. Morning Presentations

The second day, held on Friday, July 17, 2026, began with Prof. Ibrahim Traoré, a sociologist of education, serving as moderator.

Amadiguin Josué Douyon, a Ph.D. candidate in history, presented research on the factors contributing to the spread of Christianity in Mali from 1900 to 1960.

Idrissa Diarra, a Ph.D. candidate in political science, presented research on descent-based slavery in the Sahel, through a comparative analysis of Mali and Mauritania.



The discussion surrounding this presentation focused particularly on methodological and epistemological choices. The main questions posed to the researcher concerned:

- the reasons for choosing Mali and Mauritania as areas of comparison;
- the methods planned for reaching victims of slavery;
- the observation framework to be used in the study;
- the criteria used to select the study areas;

- how political science and sociology would be integrated in research addressing an interdisciplinary topic.

These questions highlighted the importance of rigorously justifying the choice of study sites and populations, as well as clarifying the disciplinary approach and analytical tools.

Moussa Dembélé, a Ph.D. candidate in Linguistics, then presented a study titled “Description of French in the Print and Broadcast Media in Mali.”

The morning presentations were followed by further sessions of exchange and discussion, then by a summary that reviewed the main takeaways from the presented work.

2. Afternoon Presentations

The afternoon session was moderated by Dr. Oumar Dembélé, a geographer. Two presentations were on the agenda.

Mamadou Marico, as part of the ED-DESSLA program, presented research on decentralization in Mali and drinking water governance in the rural commune of Baguinéda Camp.

Aly Diallo, a master’s student in sociology at LMI-MACOTER, presented research on pastoralism in the context of the security crisis in the Inner Niger Delta, including an analysis of the constraints and resilience strategies developed by transhumant communities in the Tenenkou area.

These presentations were followed by a session of exchanges and discussions before the official closing of the seminar.

III. Summary of scientific comments, questions, and recommendations

An analysis of the discussions that took place over the two days reveals several cross-cutting concerns regarding the conduct of research.



1. Clarification and Delimitation of the Research Focus

Several questions centered on the need to better define concepts and delimit the scope of the study. Discussions regarding the representation of Europe, in particular, highlighted the importance of clarifying the concepts used and the geographic scope of the research. This is essential to avoid overly general formulations and to enable a scientifically rigorous analysis.

2. Justification of methodological choices

The discussions also placed significant emphasis on methodological choices. The questions posed to Idrissa Diarra regarding the selection of field sites, access to respondents, the observation grid, and the criteria for selecting survey areas illustrate this concern. It emerges from these discussions that every methodological choice must be explicitly justified in light of the research question and objectives.

3. The Need for better integration Between Theory, Fieldwork, and Analysis

The questions posed to the various researchers also highlighted the need to ensure a coherent integration between concepts, empirical data, and analysis. In the case of visual anthropology, for example, participants asked for clarification on film analysis and on the significance of the various elements observed.

4. Strengthening Research Skills

The overall summary of the seminar reveals a significant need for training among master's and doctoral students in four areas: literature review, formulating research questions, methodological approach, and discussion of results. These four dimensions constitute fundamental steps in the development of a scientific study. They should be the focus of specific support within the framework of Point Sud's future activities.

Conclusion

The seminar on the progress of Point Sud's master's and doctoral students provided a genuine forum for scientific exchange and research training. Beyond the diversity of the presentations, the major value of the meeting lay in the quality of the discussions sparked by the research.

The questions and comments raised focused primarily on the definition of concepts, the delimitation of research objects and fields, the justification of methodological choices, access to research participants, the construction of analytical frameworks, interdisciplinary integration, and the discussion of results.

Thus, the discussions served as a reminder that the quality of research depends not only on the relevance of its subject but also on the researcher's ability to formulate a precise research

question, justify methodological choices, master the empirical data, and situate the results within a broader scientific debate.

Finally, the seminar highlighted the need to strengthen methodological training for young researchers, particularly in the areas of literature review, problem formulation, methodology, and the scientific discussion of results. With this in mind, continuing such meetings appears essential to consolidate the scientific skills of master's and doctoral students and to strengthen the collective research dynamic within Point Sud.

Rapporteur

Dr. Issa TOGOLA

Bamako, July 20, 2026