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Hegemonic Knowledge and Situated Knowledge: A Conceptual and Epistemological Clarification for Researchers in Guinea

Saïkou Oumar Sagnane
Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence[1] and Bayreuth International Graduate School for African Studies (BIGSAS), in Bayreuth University / Germany

ABSTRACT

What is power? What is knowledge? What is the link between power and knowledge? This paper interrogates the relationship between knowledge and power in the context of Guinea's epidemic crises and political events. It draws on observational data collected during the Ebola epidemic (2013-2016), the Covid-19 pandemic (2020-2022), and the ongoing military transition in the country since September 2021. The article first looks at the conception of the relationship between power and knowledge in decolonial literature and the writings of Amadou Hampâté Bâ. The text then describes this relationship in the context of the Ebola and Covid-19 epidemics, and in the ongoing political transition. Finally, the analysis provides an epistemological reflection on knowledge-situated in Guinea to rethink the conceptual and empirical research perspective on the production and circulation of (academic) knowledge in the country's knowledge ecology.

Keywords: Guinea, Power, Knowledge, University, Event

INTRODUCTION

Debates on decolonial approaches are growing in African studies and in the production of academic knowledge, both in African and European universities, and where scholars from both continents sometimes meet and discuss. They believe that international relations established on principles of domination between the imperialists of the last century and their abused former territories strongly influence the production, promotion, and

circulation of knowledge. As a result, these unbalanced power relations dehumanize some of the world's peoples. They contribute to the commission of epistemicides, crimes against knowledge and cultures (Santos, 2014). Africanization of universities (Ashby, 1961; 1965), cognitive justice (Santos, 2007), globalization of knowledge (Meyer, 2007), epistemic rupture and freedom (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018), reciprocity of knowledge and reflexivity of authors (Breton, 2019) are among other concepts used in academic debates to describe and address the weakening and dismantling of marginalized knowledge.

Although advocating diverse positions, the academic debates are still part of a dichotomization of perspectives: theorists from the Global South versus those from the Global North. This article examines the relationships between power and knowledge on the one hand, and between different knowledge on the other, in the practical context of Guinea's epidemic crises and political events. These relationships are not analyzed *a priori* from the dichotomous perspective of Southern and Northern knowledge. Academic knowledge, for example, is not seen as a foreign body from the North, but as an element of knowledge, that is part of the Guinean knowledge ecosystem. The data was derived from field observations during the Ebola (2013-2016) and Covid-19 (2020-2022) epidemics as well as during the ongoing military transition in the country (2021-2023).

The article first looks at the theoretical conception of the relationship between power and knowledge in decolonial literature and the writings of Amadou Hampâté Bâ. The text then describes this relationship in the empirical context of the Ebola and Covid-19 epidemics, and the events of the ongoing political transition. Finally, the analytical part attempts to redefine the meaning of 'hegemonic knowledge' and to construct a meaning for what is considered in this text as 'situated knowledge'. The aim is to rethink the conceptual and empirical perspective of research on the production and circulation of academic knowledge in the knowledge ecology of Guinea.

POWER AND KNOWLEDGE IN DECOLONIAL LITERATURE

In his sociological theory, Talcott Parsons (1964) modelled the social system on four dimensions: political, economic, social and cultural. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2022), after an extensive critical review of the postcolonial literature, describes these four elements as constitutive of the colonial matrix of domination and exploitation of the colonies. For Quijano (2007), too, this systemic model has represented the framework within which the power of the colonial state has long been conceptualized. The colonial regime exercised political authority over the conquered territories. It controlled the economy, the factors of production, distribution, and consumption. It structured gender and sexuality at the social level. It controlled knowledge and subjectivity at the cultural level. In the year 2000, Quijano already indicated how power and knowledge are linked when he argued that in addition to the coloniality of power, the coloniality of knowledge and the coloniality of beings must be added.

Intellectual movements, whether anti-colonial, post-colonial or decolonial, all agree that the abolition of colonization and the political independence of the colonized states did not put an end to the relations of domination between the former imperialists and their colonies. This situation results from the cognitive grip poured onto the conquered territories and, the invasion of the mental universe of the colonized (Santos, 2018). This cognitive crisis is the product of epistemicide; the liquidation of rooted knowledge on the one hand,

and the imposition of a vast array of names, theories, and frameworks as new modes of knowing, thinking, and acting (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2020).

Growing voices are calling for cognitive justice and preaching epistemic freedom (Santos, 2016; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018) for a better balance of power relation. Where anti-colonialists critique colonization, Walter Mignolo (2007) and Samir Amin (1990) employ the rhetoric of rupture. In European universities, cognitive justice emerges from debates on African studies. These invite the reciprocity of European and African knowledge (the central theme of the VAD conference in Freiburg in 2022). In the South Americas, this is the era of epistemologies of the South (Santos, 2018). All these currents of thought converge on knowledge's multiplicity and power's multipolarity. They invite the opening up of different perspectives of knowledge and action by considering epistemic positions more among geographical and social positions.

The decolonial literature remains focused on the relationship between the South and the North universities. However, the university in Africa has a history, its own history (Lulat, 2005). It belongs to the African knowledge ecosystem even if it borrows its models and programs from Europe (Ashby, 1965; 1961). Addressing the relationship between African university knowledge with other forms of knowledge existing in the same ecosystem, opens up a more profitable opportunity to grasp the relationship between knowledge, and the relationship between knowledge and power. It is this perspective that this paper attempts to address by taking as its empirical object the recent epidemics and the ongoing political transition in the Republic of Guinea. The method focuses on observing the spaces of power in which knowledge interacts, develops, and is transformed before being put into circulation.

POWER AND KNOWLEDGE IN THE WRITINGS OF AMADOU HAMPÂTÉ BÂ

Authors such as Georges Balandier (1981; 1980; 1978a; 1978b), Michel Foucault (1980; 1975; 1971) and Jean François Bayard (1989; 1979), among others, have produced important literature on power. They have used sociological, anthropological, and political knowledge to analyze power. Amadou Hampâté Bâ, a West African novelist who lived through the colonial and post-colonial period (1900-1991, that is), gives an account of the relationship between knowledge and power in the traditional ecosystem of Fulani[2] knowledge, and from the Fulani epistemic position. His work resonates with that of authors of decolonization in this contemporary era: an *emic* posture situated among multiple epistemologies (thinking from one's geographical, social, and epistemic position). In two works of his trilogy of Fulani initiation tales, Hampâté Bâ (1977; 1974) gives a metaphorical account of the constitutive elements of power, namely knowledge, strength and wealth held by a wise man among men and cons, elevated above his desires, capable of serving with humility and sacrificing without condescension.

Power is therefore a position carried by the invariant elements of knowledge, strength, and wealth on the one hand, and on the other hand, is declined according to the catalytic elements of service, sacrifice, and character (wise character, human character and jerk character). It is advised that only a wise man is entitled to power. Knowledge is not enough

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[2] The Fulani are one of the largest ethnic groups in West Africa

to carry power, but it prevails over the other two elements of wealth and strength. When a human or a jerk comes to power, the risk of strength or wealth prevailing over knowledge is great, and the probability of a catastrophe is imminent. This is why Fulani initiation tales teach that: (i) if a wise man finds himself among humans or jerks, he should be left alone, because he can pull cunts towards men and men towards wise men; (ii) if a jerk finds himself among humans or wise men, he should be brought back to his place, because he will only bring trouble to the other two.

Hampâté Bâ (1974), through metaphor, indicates that power is the head. The head is the part that accumulates knowledge. Knowledge guides jerk and wealth. When the head is lost, the limbs pervert or die. Cheikh Hamidou Kane (1979), in his novel 'Aventure ambigüe', describes that when his father, the clan chief, wanted to decide to send the children to the French colonial school, he had to consult the greatest erudite in the village. The decision was suspended as long as the latter had not put forward clear recommendations. This shows how knowledge and power are linked: the loss of knowledge blinds power. Hampâté Bâ (1985) describes the importance of gathering as much information as possible before acting in the absence of knowledge about an unknown event. However, other factors must be taken into account, notably fate, the unknown and uncertainty.

Power does not equal knowledge. The 'good' leader is recognized by his or her qualities. Their capacity to consult, serve, sacrifice and honor. They must be helped, followed, assisted, and even fought for the right cause until they come to their senses. Hampâté Bâ (2012), relates a Fulani anecdote about the power pronounced by King Aguibou when twenty of his relatives wanted to plot his removal or death.

> Au pays où les audiences se donnent à l'ombre des grands arbres, le roi qui coupe les branches tiendra ses assises en plein soleil. Tuer un être sans défense est facile ; mais c'est l'art du bourreau. L'art royal consiste à laisser vivre et à faire prospérer, et ce n'est pas toujours un art aisé. (P.151)[3].

Knowledge is a tree whose branches branch out and diversify (Bâ, 2012). This metaphor teaches the initiates of circumcision the primordial unity of knowledge. All knowledge derives from the same seed, branching and dispersing like branches and leaves. At the end of each branch, there is fruit. Even if the branches shade each other or new branches grow continuously, there is tolerance between them. Hampâté Bâ (2012) recalls a teaching of his Koranic master Tierno Bokar about knowledge and the fact that it is distinct from writing.

> L'écriture est une chose et le savoir en est une autre. L'écriture est la photographie du savoir, mais elle n'est pas le savoir lui-même. Le savoir est une lumière qui est en l'homme. Il est l'héritage de tout ce que les ancêtres ont pu connaitre et qu'ils

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[3] "In the country where the audiences are given in the shade of the big trees, the king who cuts the branches will hold his sittings in full sun. To kill a defenseless being is easy; but it is the art of the executioner. The royal art consists in letting live and making prosper, and it is not always an easy art."

nous ont transmis en germe, tout comme le baobab est contenu en puissance dans sa graine. (P.173)[4]

In his childhood story (2012), Hampâté lived with his parents until he was seven. He has all the freedom to learn things that open his mind. Then he joined the association of initiated names and created his age group (*waaldé*). In this space, he learned to live with nature: going into the bush, setting traps, going to the sea, practicing wrestling, and learning the social structure of society. Then he went to the nightly wakes where he learned the tales and widespread philosophical knowledge of his society. He went to the Koranic school, where he learned about God. He went to the colonial school where he learned French and the culture of the French community. During the circumcision of his brother, he was initiated into traditional knowledge: discovering the meaning of life, of society, of nature; finding resources in nature both to provide for his needs, and above all to understand and explain society (the conceptualization and theorization of human behavior and social relations based on phenomena observed in the environment, in nature, in the universe). All this knowledge learned in different spaces, is used daily, interwoven, and mixed to deal with a given situation in a specific circumstance. In this context, power is the ability to combine different types of knowledge to create a hybrid knowledge that enables a concrete situation to be addressed in a given space and a given circumstance.

POWER AND KNOWLEDGE IN GUINEA'S EVENTS

Indeed, the replacement of knowledge systems and cultural emancipation have always been present in the political history of Guinea. Extrapolating the arguments of critics of colonization (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2020), French imperialism was established in Guinea on the condition of human domination through military power, expropriation of land and plundering of economic resources, as well as the dismantling of rooted knowledge. During independence, Guinean President Ahmed Sékou Touré organized his struggle around political liberation, economic sovereignty, and cultural emancipation (Kasanka, 2015). From the change of regime in 1984 following the death of President Sékou Touré, President Lansana Condé adhered to the option of liberal democracy, conducted the policy of structural adjustment, and adopted the globalized offer of Education for All (EFA). These sequences from Guinea's past perfectly illustrate the junction between power and its three key components (strength, wealth, and knowledge) described in Fulani initiation tales. How do power and knowledge infuse into event situations in Guinea? How do social and political events inform us about (i) the relationship of different knowledge to each other and (ii) the relationship of knowledge to power?

Power and Knowledge in the Ebola and Covid-19 Epidemic Crisis

In the context of the Ebola virus outbreak, I worked as a data collector in research conducted by the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Sonfonia, and later at the

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[4] "Writing is one thing and knowledge is another. Writing is the photograph of knowledge, but it is not knowledge itself. Knowledge is a light that is in man. It is the inheritance of all that the ancestors were able to know and that they transmitted to us in germ, just as the baobab is contained in power in its seed."

Laboratoire d'Analyse Socio-Anthropologique de Guinée (LASAG). I was a research assistant, from 2015 to 2016, in the "[Re]living after Ebola in Guinea" project, abbreviated as PostEboGui. After the declaration of the covid-19 epidemic on March 12, 2020, I worked in the communication and social mobilization commission of the ANSS. I was focused on strategy design and activity planning, and then on surveillance and rumor management. It was in these different positions that I obtained ethnographic information on the social and political dimensions of the epidemic, and had enriching discussions with members of the Network of Anthropologists Working on Emerging and Re-emerging Epidemics (RAEE).

In the Ebola virus epidemic (2013-2016), the national epidemic management coordination worked with multiple knowledge. The medical response mechanism, based on World Health Organization (WHO) standards, was the first knowledge to be deployed to contain the spread of the virus. The epidemiological effectiveness and ethical problems that this knowledge has posed are discussed in the work of Calin and Poncin (2015), and Gomez-Temesio and Le Marcis (2017). The social sciences were only called upon when the medical model reached its limits; where Hampâté Bâ's writings invite to the combination of knowledge. Not only was the involvement of social sciences late, but the first teams of researchers involved were foreigners (Anoko, Epelboin & Formenty, 2014). The country's largest social science university, Sonfonia University, was only involved in response to the epidemic about a year after the outbreak was declared, in November 2014. Nevertheless, it became clear very early on that the foreign 'experts' involved in response to the epidemic may have known about the virus. However, they did not know much about the Guinean knowledge ecosystem. They spent weeks in Conakry's hotels with no major input into the epidemic management efforts. One of them told Dr Sakoba Keita, national coordinator of the response, that his presence in Guinea was more about learning than expertise (Keïta, 2021).

It was only after the Womey tragedy (2022, July 21) that social mobilization and community engagement activities were intensified, to tap into the other forms of knowledge in the Guinean ecosystem. Religious leaders, traditional healers, transport unions and other actors were called upon more often. They invested their respective personalities in circulating knowledge they already had or that was made available to them. Paul Richards (2016) informs us that people in areas affected by the virus developed their science for disease prevention, care of the sick and locally adapted responses to the spread of the virus by interweaving endogenous resources and information gleaned from elsewhere.

When the Covid-19 pandemic broke out in Guinea with its socioeconomic consequences (Balde and Petit, 2022), health authorities drew on new knowledge gained during the management of the Ebola epidemic to establish the first response plans. They circulated Ebola knowledge in the context of Covid-19. They hoped to contain the spread of the coronavirus (Sagnane, 2020, Avril 21). But it soon became clear that the adoption of health behaviors by citizens did not keep pace with health authorities' recommendations (Atta et al., 2022). The circumstances were not the same. The fact that the coronavirus was a pandemic was crucial in redefining paradigms. Furthermore, the knowledge conveyed by Guinean nationals living abroad - in family platforms on social networks - had enough resonance with the population. These nationals sometimes convey their knowledge. They circulated knowledge from other spaces, other contexts, and other circumstances. Their

influential role in the circulation of knowledge and information was also observed during the Ebola epidemic.

In the context of epidemic crises, the junction of knowledge is clear. Those who manage epidemics are aware that knowledge is dynamic. It is established, circulated, meets other knowledge and is transformed. This knowledge travels from one space to another, from one time to another. However, what these managers seem to overlook, which is nevertheless a unique situation, is that power is not always where we think it is. The centers of power are not fixed. The epidemic coordination and management offices are of course centers of knowledge. However, they are not the only centers and not always the centers of knowledge. The role of nationals speaks volumes about this situation. The metaphor of the knowledge tree and its assumption of primordial unity provides an excellent opportunity to revisit the relationship between knowledge types (or knowledge systems) by considering various branches in formulating responses in epidemic contexts.

Power and Knowledge in the Military Regime of Political Transition

As part of my doctoral research[5], I conducted observations and interviews on the coup and military transition that took place in Guinea on 5 September 2021. The Groupement des Forces Spéciales (GFS) of the Guinean army overthrew President Alpha Condé and handed power to the Comité National du Rassemblement pour le Développement (CNRD). The coup was hastily plotted and executed by a tiny group of individuals. The conspirators quickly mobilized men who could think urgently about the first actions to legitimize the CNRD. They chose from among their close circle of friends, men of confidence and experience, without regard to their areas of competence and knowledge. It was the knowledge of these men that determined the first actions of the CNRD.

Colonel Mamadi Doumbouya endorsed the CNRD's seizure of power in a communiqué. He attempted to justify the *coup d'état* and set out the elements that would become the main thrust of the political transition: the rehabilitation of trust in the judiciary, the recovery of looted state property and domains, the reconciliation of Guineans, and the rebuilding of the administration. Of course, a new constitution had to be drafted and presidential elections organized to designate the country's future president. In order to begin the implementation of these axes, the members of the CNRD themselves organized the first national consultations by meeting a multitude of political, economic, social, cultural and religious actors at the People's Palace in Conakry. They did not go far in examining the knowledge required to conduct these consultations.

The first government team, after its installation, also toured some regions of the country to exchange with decentralized and deconcentrated territorial administrators. The administrators had useful knowledge and experience in the conduct of state affairs and in the determining of societal and governance issues. The National Transitional Council (NTC) members, composed of political and socio-professional categories, also conducted national surveys in all the country's prefectures to gather the population's opinions on specific provisions to be included in the draft Constitution. Finally, with a view to national reconciliation, the president of the transition entrusts the leaders of the Muslim and

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[5] My doctoral research is part of the Junior Research Group "Politics of the Unknown: Conspiracy and Conflict" within the African Multiple Cluster of Excellence, University of Bayreuth.

Christian religions with the task of conducting new national consultations to formulate recommendations for social cohesion.

It seems that the country's universities and social science faculties have not been involved in these various reflection processes that will potentially lead to a social project for the country. In the offices and corridors of the University of Sonfonia, for example, spontaneous and informal discussions about the coup and the transition did not dry up. Teachers and students alike had something to say. However, no initiative came from the academics. They wait peacefully in their corners until someone comes to take their knowledge. Some researchers are instead in a logic of seeking administrative positions with the actors of the new regime, acting in the shadows, and using their connections, looking for niches to obtain high positions in the decision-making chain. When the transition president entrusted the conduct of the national consultations for peace to religious leaders, academics criticized this situation, feeling that they were better placed to lead the consultative actions for so-called 'methodological' reasons.

Academic knowledge is therefore at the margins of addressing the concrete problems posed or raised by the military transition. In the first few weeks after the coup, the Guinean Political Science Association (2022) conducted an opinion poll. Then the International Centre for Research and Documentation (CIRD) organized a scientific day, which resulted in the formulation of a memorandum on the conduct of the transition (2022, May 05). Lastly, the National Transitional Council (NTC) organized a symposium on the model constitution for the country (2023, February 21). Some academics took part in this intellectual meeting. After all, academic knowledge has not yet come to the forefront of the current government's concerns, as was the case during the management of the Ebola epidemic for example.

Indeed, unlike epidemics, which at first sight seem to be a matter of medical expertise, in the political field, trust between actors takes precedence over areas of knowledge. This is more a matter of the logic of gaining and keeping power. The issue here is not the hierarchy of knowledge, but rather that of services and sacrifices: who serves whom and who sacrifices what.

HEGEMONIC KNOWLEDGE AND SITUATED KNOWLEDGE: CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

The way knowledge interacts with each other and with power in the context of events in Guinea profoundly questions the idea of dominant and marginal knowledge on the one hand, and the dichotomy between universities in the Global North and those in the Global South more generally. This polarization is essentially ideological. This is what Meyer et al. (1992) said about globalized school knowledge:

> If there were much ambiguity about whether, or in what respects, mass education is a general good, it would be hard to explain why the institution has become so universal. This leads to the idea that the same worldwide processes that have made the virtues (necessity, even) of mass education so universally apparent have also tended to standardize at least the general categories of its content. (P.9)

Meyer et al., (1992) then invite reflection on the forces in society that create a dominant knowledge that becomes global. Meyer and Scott (1992) attempt to answer this

same question in their book *Organizational Environments. Ritual and Rationality.* In practice, knowledge is rather parallel, competing, interchangeable and reachable.

Knowledge: Dominant, Parallel, Competing, Interchangeable

The cross-cultural encounter often represents an opportunity for the emergence of a new knowledge system (Lulat, 2005). However, our data indicate that when the encounter of cultures is coupled with a clash of powers, each party mobilizes its power and wealth to propel its knowledge, dismantling the knowledge of others, committing epistemicide (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2020). Dominant power generates force so that its power pushes back or destroys the structures of dominated knowledge. In this sense, we speak of hegemonic knowledge in decolonial discourse. Ultimately, this dominant knowledge, which tends to be globalized, is only based on ideology supported by the power and wealth of the 'victor' (Meyer et al., 1992). In Guinea, the colonial conquest and the struggle for national liberation are part of this confrontation. The colonial empire, the socialist regime, and the liberal democracy each put forward a knowledge system that differed from the previous era.

When a single power deals concomitantly or successively with several knowledge types/systems, parallel knowledge manifests. Each time a knowledge type/system, when confronted with the facts, demonstrates its limitations, the power readjusts it, increases it or replaces it with other types of knowledge. Intentionally or unintentionally, in the same space, the same power uses one type of knowledge, another type and then another type, whether integrated, separate or cumulative, to the desiderata of the facts. This is what happens in the case of epidemic management in Guinea. The epidemic management body representing the government starts by deploying standardized medical knowledge according to WHO norms. When this fails, it calls on the knowledge of the social sciences. When these are exhausted, it turns to community knowledge by encouraging social mobilization.

Parallel knowledge becomes competing in certain circumstances; when the center of power ceases to be fixed and becomes fluid in the same space of actions. Where power is thought to be, it is not, or even if it is, its intensity frequently varies. In this confusion, different knowledge types flow from other spaces of power, legitimized or not; they intermingle, complement or clash. In reality, the established power loses control over knowledge. As the centers of power fluctuate, circulating knowledge generates new knowledge that structures people's ways of thinking. This brings us closer to the register of rumors on the one hand, and to what Paul Richards (2016) calls 'People's Science' in the register of the Ebola epidemic on the other.

In the end, a single power can play with multiple knowledge interchangeably, depending on the interests it seeks to serve and the sacrifices it is willing to make. This situation differs from one in which knowledge is parallel. The decision of the power to use one type of knowledge over another depends, not on the resistance to the facts, but on the political stakes, specific interests, and sacrifices to be made. In this case, we see the perversion of knowledge. No ethical values matter. This is what is happening in the current military transition in Guinea. The government uses religious knowledge, political experience, and administrative knowledge to conduct consultations and socio-political

dialogues on the one hand, and to defend its own position in the face of the demands of political actors and civil society on the other hand.

Knowledge: Hierarchy, Rupture, Reciprocity, Globalization

By combining postcolonial literature, the writings of Hampâté Bâ and empirical descriptions, we are creating situated knowledge through this text. Whether in health crises or political events in Guinea, our data demonstrate the presence of multiple knowledge in spaces of power. This result leads to a new question: how to deal with the multiplicity of knowledge? Various schools of thought have addressed this issue. The first perspective is that of the hierarchisation of constructed categories of knowledge. This trend, criticized for its imperialist nature, is blamed for its alleged involvement in the dismantling, destruction and inferiorisation of certain forms of knowledge across the world (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2020; Santos, 2014).

The second perspective on the multiplicity of knowledge invites the globalization of knowledge. It identifies and invents social structures that produce, reproduce, and validate circulating bodies of knowledge. The perspective thus looks at establishing and developing a single system of knowledge that determines the standards of validity of knowledge (Meyer, 2007). Given the multiplicity of knowledge and epistemologies, Brock-Utne (2000) questions the type of knowledge that serves as a reference for this globalization process. At the same time, other authors draw attention to the strong 'academicisation' of knowledge and the policy of extracting data from other forms of knowledge. These practices question the subjectivity of a single mode of referencing knowledge in a context of multiplicity of knowledge and diversity of epistemologies. Finally, globalized knowledge is essentially based on one subjectivity among others, on one ideology among others (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013).

Post-colonialist authors inscribed the first and second trends on the multiplicity of knowledge in the register of epistemicide. They call for cognitive justice to stop and repair this crime against knowledge (Santos, 2014). The authors located in the Global South literature encourage an epistemological rupture that they inscribe in the concept of "delinking". They invite epistemic freedom and the consideration of the epistemic position of the narrator, the *locus-enonciatus* (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018). Authors in the Global North literature speak instead of reciprocity of knowledge and the reflexivity of authorship. These two tendencies can receive the same criticism; they are part of the dichotomy opposing the categories of knowledge of the North and the South, of so-called modern knowledge and so-called traditional knowledge. They are part of the referential complex of superiority and inferiority, and thus of the complex relations of power, domination, and ideology. On the other hand, all criticisms remain valid. However, at the same time they do not invalidate the different perspectives experienced daily in various situations by the same people who criticize them.

Ultimately, there are no standard knowledge patterns, as the writings of Hampâté Bâ indicate. Knowledge is combined and transformed over time, through imperialism, research, travel, study, circumstance, among other things. The work of Hampâté Bâ provides three complementary ways of thinking about the different positions on the multiplicity of knowledge: (i) replacing the 'or' that links the different perspectives on knowledge multiplicity with 'and'; (ii) considering, in a given power space, the ecology of

knowledge by locating each type of knowledge among the other types; and on using them in the way they were intended to be used in order to advance an objective (iii) conceptualizing situated-knowledge not as model-types of knowledge, but as mixed knowledge that is generated by the circumstances in which it emerges and which it helps shape.

Moreover, in evoking the teachings of his master Tierno Bokar, Hampâté Bâ (1980) asserts that if each type of knowledge were a mountain, each human or each institution should be able to drain the spring water from each of these mountains in order to make them meet in the bed of the same river. Each river is formed to address a particular need, such as irrigating a field, watering livestock, or treating humans. In the end, each river flows into the ocean of the Great Knowledge that no human can possess, or that cannot be embodied in any standard knowledge patterns.

It must be recognized that Africanist, anti-colonial, decolonial or post-colonial debates contribute to the polarization of epistemologies and the counter-productivity of knowledge. In practice, however, each piece of knowledge is shaped according to a situation, in a given circumstance, and a given space. People, in the course of their lives, pass through various spaces on a daily basis and learn multiple patterns of knowledge. They later use this multiple knowledge to create situated knowledge, as circumstances dictate. Situated knowledge is a tree in the image of 'primordial unity'. If situated knowledge is this tree, then the trunk must be identified and the roots planted in a given circumstance; and the branches and leaves must be allowed to intertwine and untwine according to the desiderata of the climate, depending on whether there is a storm, a lull or good weather. On the one hand, the branches are born, grow, branch out and die. On the other hand, they allow new branches to appear, form, transform and impose their authority. The work of Hampâté Bâ indicates not the simple identification of distinct categories of knowledge, but the dynamics of the interweaving and joining of these knowledge types/systems according to circumstances to produce meanings and behaviors in the face of a given situation.

In the end, situated knowledge, in the perspective of Hampâté Bâ, more than *locus enonciatus* and epistemic freedom, does not invite breaking off a branch from its trunk or accepting, or accepting that the trunk is made up of only one branch, or the simple defense of the reciprocity and equality of branches. The situated knowledge that is formed in a space, in front of a situation and according to a circumstance, invites in a methodological angle to:

(i): Determine, in a specific situation, the epistemological conditions in which knowledge is hierarchized, globalized, distinguished (rupture) or equalized/balanced (reciprocity);

(ii): Grasp the parallel, competing and interchangeable manifestations of knowledge in a space, in a circumstance, and the face of a situation;

(iii): Analyze the modalities of circulation, discussion, transformation and validation of situated knowledge.

Situated knowledge, declined under these conditions, allows us to rethink power and its relation to knowledge. Firstly, power refers to the ability to choose, define and use the knowledge needed in the prevailing situation. The idea is not to impose a type of knowledge in the belief that this knowledge is superior and imposes itself on any situation. Such an

attitude is more like brutality than power. It ties back to how some types of knowledge were brutally asserted during colonization, while others were brutally obliterated (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2020). In this case, the superior knowledge corresponds to the situated knowledge that best responds to the situation that emerges from the circumstance in which this same situated knowledge was formed. Secondly, power is the capacity to join different knowledge to address a given situation in a specific circumstance. Therefore, power has different knowledge from different spaces. In a complicated or complex situation, whatever it may be, power interweaves the different knowledge to confront the situation that prevails in a given space. Third, power is the ability to join and interweave knowledge, power and wealth together, to create meaning, sustain change, and/or maintain a position.

CONCLUSION

The relationship between knowledge and power is dealt with in written literature and oral philosophy. This paper explored this relationship both in decolonial literature and in the writings of Amadou Hampâté Bâ, which generally relate to Fulani epistemologies. From the theoretical perspective, the decolonial academic debate is focused on the critique of the concepts of hierarchisation and globalisation of knowledge. They denounce the practice of dismantling 'marginal' knowledge by dominant powers (epistemicide) and call for cognitive justice in defence of the multiplicity of knowledge and epistemologies. The manifestation of this multiplicity lies in the epistemic freedom the authors of delinking allow themselves and the definition of new positionalities for the *locus enonciatus* in the authors of reciprocity. In the writings of Hampâté Bâ, the emphasis is on the primordial unity of multiple knowledges, like the metaphor of the tree with its roots, trunk, and branches. These knowledges are the lights that illuminate power, and guide strength and wealth. From the empirical perspective, the relationship between knowledge and power is analyzed in relation to epidemic crises and political events in Guinea. The data showed the parallel, competing, interchangeable and joinable nature of knowledge in relation to power.

The empirical data and literature analysis indicates that knowledge is not a pure model or category. They are objects of circulation, discussion and transformation. Situated knowledge is the product of this discussion, circulation and transformation from one given space to another, from one defined time to another, in given circumstances and in the face of a given situation. Faced with the same situation, power uses epistemologies of rupture, continuity, or reciprocity to address the facts. At the same time, the knowledge sought is parallel, competing, and interchangeable according to the circumstances. Finally, all these dynamics generate a specific knowledge (a mixture of multiple knowledge) situated in a space to face a precise circumstance with regard to service and sacrifice issues. It is the study of this specific knowledge, generated for the circumstance, which begins to circulate and transform itself at the whim of power; this we invite researchers in Guinea to take an interest in and to take into account in their teaching and research works. These researchers should observe and analyze the way in which a citizen, an institution or a power in Guinea combines its religious, school, family, initiation, academic and other knowledge to address a discussion, a fact or an event in a given space and in given circumstances. Then observe the circulation of this situated knowledge and its transformation when it enters another space, meets other knowledge, or is reinvested in another circumstance.

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SAIKOU OUMAR SAGNANE, MA, is a Doctoral Researcher in Bayreuth International Graduate School for African Studies (BIGSAS) within the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence at the University of Bayreuth. His major research interests lie in the area of disruptive events, circulation of information, micro-space study, and knowledge ecosystem. Email: saikou.sagnane@uni-bayreuth.de