

A Handbook of Economic Anthropology, Second Edition

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30 Africa south of the Sahara

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The earlier anthropological studies of economy in sub-Saharan Africa were conducted primarily by British scholars, and many were students of Bronislaw Malinowski. A pioneer is Richards, whose library-based thesis on the Bantu peoples of South Africa (1932) advocated Malinowski's 'functional method', arranging its chapters in terms of primary and secondary needs. Richards's later fieldwork among the Bemba of Zambia resulted in a better-known book (1939), a touchstone for the description of slash-and-burn or 'swidden' agriculture and its matrilineal setting. She described a rural economy undergoing rapid change and increased migration from countryside to town. Goodfellow (1939) initiated a sophisticated reflection on the utility of neoclassical economic notions for Africanist anthropology.

This interest in migration was important in the work of those at the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute in Central Africa (Wilson 1942). Godfrey Wilson, its first director, wrote together with his wife Monica on social change (1945; see also M. Wilson 1964 [1936]). Max Gluckman, a later director, studied the Lozi, including a general account of the economy (1941) and essays on property (1943). He analysed the way land was held and the role of descent groups, using Maine's idea of a hierarchy of rights. When he took over the directorship he imprinted his interest in urban and industrial studies, well ahead of his time. He laid down for the researchers of the Institute a representative sample of British Central Africa, to assess the effects of labour migration and urbanisation on family and kinship organisation, economic life and political values (Gluckman 1945).

Gluckman, who subsequently moved to Manchester, attracted a number of young researchers interested in social change. Among these, Watson (1958) argued that migration to industrial areas reinforced tribal allegiance rather than undermining it, because claims on rural land were tied to original community and kinship identity. Scudder (1962) described environment and agriculture in the middle Zambezi River. Later he collaborated with Colson to produce a significant body of longitudinal studies on the Tonga who were resettled because of dam construction (Colson and Scudder 1988; Scudder and Colson 2002). Turner's (1957) analysis of the Ndembu of Zambia included detailed information on their farming economy. The contribution of Manchester scholars was not

limited to Central and Southern Africa. Cohen conducted a seminal study of traders and butchers in Nigeria (1969) and of trade diasporas (1971).

Some important economic work by other British anthropologists was also conducted in Nigeria. Forde, originally a geographer, wrote on ecology and society (1934) and on Yakö economy (1964), and with Scott (Forde and Scott 1946) he undertook a survey of Nigerian small-scale farming that located it in its broader context. Nadel (1942) produced one of the most comprehensive ethnographies in West Africa, focusing on craft specialisation, markets and trade. M.G. Smith (1955) examined the effect of political structure on economic life among the Hausa. Paul Bohannan wrote a description of Tiv farm life in central Nigeria (1954) and then, with Laura Bohannan (1958), three sourcebooks for the Human Relations Area Files, the second devoted to subsistence, technology and economics. In two influential articles, Paul Bohannan introduced to Africa the notion of 'spheres of exchange' (see Isaac chap. 1, *supra*) from Oceania. Most of this was brought together and elaborated in Bohannan and Bohannan (1968), making the Tiv perhaps the best-known case in economic anthropology (see Hart chap. 10, *supra*).

Sahlins's influential *Stone age economics* (1972) exemplifies the larger impact of this work. Two chapters on the 'Domestic mode of production' rely greatly on quantified analyses by the authors mentioned above, and on Douglas's (1962) study of the Lele and Woodburn's (1968a, 1968b) of the Hadza. Sahlins's 'Original affluent society' chapter was largely inspired by the finding of an American project that Kalahari foragers spent little time on subsistence (Lee 1979; Lee and DeVore 1968). Also in the US, Netting (1968) presented a detailed account of a central Nigerian farming system where population growth led to agricultural intensification.

The notion of a development cycle of domestic groups is an important contribution of this period. Fortes (1949) linked the pattern of fluctuating membership of domestic groups in two Ghanaian towns to opportunities offered by matrilineal descent and other aleatory factors influencing residence decisions. An edited volume that he oversaw elaborated his basic insight (Goody 1958a; classic chapters are Goody 1958b, Stenning 1958). Elsewhere Goody (1962) discussed inheritance as a factor in religious and economic life in northern Ghana. As well, he (1977) examined the connection between African hoe agriculture and gender-linked property devolution, in contrast to Eurasian plough agriculture, dowry and inheritance by children of both sexes.

Gulliver (1955) made an important contribution to the study of property management in his work on East African pastoralists. In contrast to the conventional stress on the homestead headed by the husband, he argued that the mother-child unit is critical for production, consumption

and inheritance, an argument that remains important in recent debates about the African household (see below). In an edited collection on the same theme (Gray and Gulliver 1964), Gray (1964) argues that rights and obligations around marriage focus on land and money transactions, and criticises the previous scholarly emphasis on structure and legalistic language at the expense of economic exchange, ecological constraint and social process.

The development of cocoa economy in West Africa stimulated pivotal studies. Hill's (1963) pioneering book on Ghana demonstrated how resourceful migrant farmers reinterpret older forms of collaboration to new ends, whereas Berry (1975, 2001) discovered that cocoa plantations in western Nigeria and in Ghana increased social mobility while their benefits remained unequally distributed and public and private wealth interpenetrated (for other important cocoa studies see Dupire 1960; Guyer 1980, 1984).

The formalist–substantivist debate in Africa

For many years, Herskovits was the leading figure of both economic anthropology and African studies in the US. He wrote on the 'cattle complex' (Herskovits 1926) and on the results of his fieldwork in Dahomey, now Benin (Herskovits 1938). However, his reputation as an economic anthropologist was established later, with a textbook (Herskovits 1940). A synthetic work of the type produced by many students of Franz Boas, it was presented as an introduction to 'comparative economics', to provide a base for a more universal economic science. His desire to generalise from a broad ethnographic base stands in tension with his desire to draw on the analytic apparatus developed by Alfred Marshall and other formal economists. In the 1950s these two orientations drove economic anthropologists in the US into two hostile camps, the substantivists and the formalists.

The substantivist position drew most directly on Karl Polanyi, a social critic and economic historian (see Isaac chap. 1, *supra*). Polanyi's first and most influential book (1944) is an extended commentary on the growth of English *laissez-faire* capitalism in the eighteenth century and its transformation in Europe at the end of the nineteenth. Polanyi argues that the self-regulating market erodes social life and triumphed only because of coercive measures promoted by an interested elite. Its success provoked social opposition, and may have led to ruinous outcomes if market forces had not been reined in. Polanyi stressed that in Britain the Crown often slowed the devastation visited by the Parliament; the idea of the monarch as proxy for society is echoed in his later work on archaic kingdoms (Polanyi 1966; his chapters in Polanyi et al. 1957). This work

presented models of two sorts of non-market economic organisation: reciprocity, modelled on Malinowski's Melanesia ethnography, and redistribution, illustrated with Babylon and ancient Egypt but also related to feudalism.

The ways that economies can be integrated in the absence of markets was further explored in a large interdisciplinary project that he led (Polanyi et al. 1957). In this book only two contributions (on Dahomey: Arnold 1957a, 1957b) concern Sub-Saharan Africa, but Polanyi's views shaped the other contributions on archaic and pre-Columbian empires. In his final years, Polanyi drew on Herskovits and on historical accounts by European Atlantic traders in work that focused on Dahomey (1966), which he presented as a kingdom with bureaucracy, administered trade, central planning and exchange rates fixed by royal decree.

Anthropologists became familiar with Polanyi's views through Dalton (1961), who was an economist by training but a frequent contributor to anthropology journals. Dalton conducted research in Liberia and published on economic development, but his anthropology publications are programmatic, with examples selected from the works of other ethnographers. His substantivist allies were Paul Bohannon and a number of young admirers of Polanyi. Although many shared Polanyi's political sympathies, his prophetic voice quickly gave way to more innocuous academic propositions, the clearest of which was that one could not apply formal economic theory to non-Western societies.

The substantivists' most important collective endeavour on Africa was a volume on markets edited by Bohannon and Dalton (1962). Two of Polanyi's ideas were central: marketplaces and trade could exist in a society without a 'market principle' regulating prices and factor allocation; there is a distinction between 'all-purpose' money, which cumulates the functions of exchange, payment and standard, and many historical currencies that served only one or two of these purposes (see Hart chap. 10, *supra*). Bohannon used 'all purpose' and 'special purpose' in a distinctive way, to fit his model of spheres of exchange: African moneys were special purpose in that they could be exchanged only against a limited range of goods (for this legacy as a mixed blessing, see Saul 2004).¹

Schneider, a student of Herskovits, was one of the leading formalists. After early work among the Nilotic pastoralist Pokot in Kenya, he established fame with publications on the Wanyaturu farmers of Tanzania (1970). Besides providing a wealth of meticulous data, he argued against the substantivists' communalistic view of economy and society, which de-emphasised selfish motives, and instead stressed conflict and competition. He proclaimed that formal economic theory could be applied to Africa.

A close reading of formalist publications reveals that they felt affinity

with the broader generational rebellion in British anthropology against structural functionalism (to which the US substantivists were assimilated) and in favour of the study of negotiation, change and conflict. In the late 1960s, two popular readers appeared that represented the two rival camps. One, edited by Dalton (1967), included eight chapters on Africa; the other, edited by LeClair and Schneider (1968), included five.

Although the dispute is commonly called the formalist–substantivist debate, the two camps were internally heterogeneous and were speaking past each other. For instance, the substantivists included some principled opponents of neoclassical economics (institutionalists, quasi-Marxists) and others who were simply comparativists, or principled culturalists who moved from empiricism to idealism and anti-theory. These strands co-existed in Dalton's work, but he made the unobjectionable point that in those parts of Africa where land and labour were not commercialised, much neoclassical analysis had little utility. For Bohannan the issue was simply that anthropologists did not ask the same questions as economists (quoted in Dalton 1961: 12). In polemic, however, few distinguished between the variety of economic theories and schools or levels of analysis. Dalton thought that anthropologists were attracted to formalism because they felt 'naked before their mathematically padded colleagues', the economists (1968: xxxix); the political strength of free-trade conservatism also favoured formalism; discordantly, a third factor that made formalism popular was that some scholars thought it implied greater respect for 'the native'.

While the debate was central to economic anthropology in the US, it was largely ignored in Britain. Raymond Firth's students, who continued Malinowski's actor-oriented anthropology, sided implicitly with the formalists, as did the historians who criticised Polanyi and Bohannan. Barth (1967), going further, wedded Bohannan's idea of 'spheres of exchange' to 'entrepreneurship', showing how obstacles to conversion between spheres in southern Sudan stimulated the desire to overcome them for gain, leading to changes in the spheres. In a way, 'new institutional economics' (Ensminger 1992), premised on rational choice but focusing on market constraints using game theory, also bypasses the formalist–substantivist opposition.

Marxism

While Marxist ideas have long influenced economic anthropology, in the 1970s Marxist vocabulary gained greater currency (see Robotham chap. 3, supra). A group of French scholars provided the impetus, their impact in the English-speaking world being mediated by young British anthropologists (especially in the journal *Critique of Anthropology*). The pioneer was

Meillassoux who, following fieldwork in Côte d'Ivoire, set forth his major insights in a widely quoted article (Meillassoux 1978 [1960]). His account of African farm communities focused on self-provisioning and a hierarchy that had senior men at the apex and junior men the bottom, with women being a subordinate side group with its own internal hierarchy. Senior men's authority was based on technical and ritual knowledge; young men were dependent on them because senior men controlled access to the prestige goods necessary to acquire wives. Meillassoux argued that, in these communities, the reproductive role of women was more important than their labour power. He also considered how this economy could absorb limited commercial exchange. A monograph on the Gouro followed (Meillassoux 1964) and he developed his theoretical reflection in a further volume (1981 [1975]). Meillassoux was inspired by the Bohannans, and through them British social anthropology, and expressed sympathy for Polanyi against the formalists. The bridge he established to Marxism, the themes of conflict between elders and juniors and men and women, and the political aspect of the circulation of wealth objects, found enthusiastic audience among a younger generation of Africanists.

Important in the revival of Marxist thought in Europe in the 1960s was the concept of the 'mode of production', a label for the relation between productive resources and classes and the flow of products from one class to another. An important aspect of this was a debate on the 'Asiatic mode of production', described in Marx's writings on India and Russia and now added to the standard list (Ancient, Germanic, Feudal and Capitalist). One early product of this debate to reach English-speaking anthropologists was a paper by Dupré and Rey (1968). Writing for theoretical clarification during fieldwork in the Congo, they start with an extended critique of the substantivists for setting out 'marketless society' in contrast to capitalism, in the absence of a satisfactory theoretical treatment. Then they provide a synoptic history of four centuries of relations between Congo societies and Europe, from the slave trade to colonisation. It is remarkably bold and original, showing that African social and economic organisation did not dissolve with increasing European contact, but was transformed as the political needs of the Congolese elite changed in response to changing European merchant interests. Their work draws on Meillassoux, but goes beyond him with a more profound historical understanding and a greater attention to class conflicts. Perhaps the most significant contribution of their work was the notion of 'articulation' between a 'lineage mode' and the capitalist mode of production.

Rey (1971) amplified these themes in a seminal monograph, packed with ethnographic and historical information and ranging freely over a wide variety of theoretical subjects. Instead of constructing an ideal

pre-colonial past, he focuses on colonial dislocation. In later work, he (1973) elaborated on the phases of 'articulation', arguing that during colonial transition traditional authorities were complicit in drawing young men to markets and wage labour. An acclaimed review article by Foster-Carter (1978) assessed Rey's work and its impact in Britain, where the dependency school ruled (see Eades chap. 2, *supra*).

Meillassoux's ethnography also inspired an extended commentary by Terray (1972 [1969]), which re-examines production and consumption units with a new rigour, partly inspired by Rey. For Hart (1982: 187), this was 'the best single essay to have emerged from French Marxist anthropology'. For Terray, kinship is shaped by influences from three areas of social life: forms of cooperation in production, juridico-political rules, ideology. He greatly refines the idea that kinship is dominant in this mode of production by taking kinship to be an element in the realisation of the mode of production. As well, he argues against Rey's view that elders exploit juniors. (In his ethnographic work, he explored pre-colonial class and exploitation among Abon military leaders, slaves and Jula traders in Côte d'Ivoire; Terray 1975.)

Meillassoux rejected Rey's idea of articulation and the usefulness of mode of production analysis for his African material. He went on to conduct fieldwork in Mali, as well as more historical analysis. In 1970 and in 1971 he organised two series of colloquia in Paris. The first was on commerce (resulting in Meillassoux 1971); the second was on slavery (resulting in Meillassoux 1975). Besides the great richness of individual contributions, Meillassoux's introductions to these collections demonstrate his masterly control of the sweep of West African history.

These contributions changed the anthropological landscape. Conflict between generations, between men and women and between classes entered the literature. Ethnography became more concerned with history and the impact of colonialism. These themes also featured in the rise of the intra-household and gender literature (see below). One important consequence of Marxist debates for US economic anthropology was to defuse the substantivist-formalist debate, creating an interest in developing an analytic frame of research to deal with all sorts of economies. Donham (1981) proclaimed the end of the opposition between formalists and substantivists, and then published detailed monographs on southern Ethiopia to substantiate the point (Donham 1985, 1990). However, the bulk of French ethnographic work that inspired the debates, and especially the erudite and historically-inflected subsequent work by its authors, remained little known in the English-speaking world (for example Dupré 1982, 1985; Meillassoux 1968, 1970, 1991 [1986]; Olivier de Sardan 1969, 1984; Terray 1969, 1995).

Household and gender

African anthropology contributed significantly to the interdisciplinary study of household and gender since the 1970s, and this literature contains substantial concern with economy. Kinship studies provided one impetus. The keen analysis of interpersonal relations associated with the idea of the developmental cycle alerted critics to extra-domestic ties and to limits on the scope of the conjugal bond. Cases where spouses maintain separate interests and claims to property in joint ventures outside of the household, or undertake only limited production and consumption together, or do not even live together, are more common in sub-Saharan Africa than elsewhere and gave feminist scholarship a sharpened analytic awareness. With growing confidence, Africanists challenged the joint-household utility models of neoclassical economics and the 'peasant household' (see Harris chap. 25, *supra*).

The interest in conflict and negotiation between spouses and between generations was reinforced by the debates that Meillassoux, Terray and Rey stimulated. This influence is easily missed today, because initially Meillassoux drew more criticism than praise for blurring social and biological reproduction and for failing to elaborate on women's subordination (Harris and Young 1981; O'Laughlin 1977). The contribution comes to light in two literature reviews: Guyer's (1981), which establishes continuity with mainstream anthropology, and Moore's (1988: chaps 3, 4), which places the debate within feminism.

Husbands' claims over wives' labour, often limited to specified activities, may expand or contract with struggle or negotiation under changing circumstances, but regional patterns appear to have remarkable continuity. Hill (1969, 1972), writing on northern Nigeria, and Dupire (1960), writing on cocoa and coffee planters of Côte d'Ivoire, describe in detail the implications of spouses maintaining separate estates. Moreover, this pattern is not limited to West Africa (for a Muslim area in Tanzania, see Caplan 1984). That spouses engage separately in production does not imply equal access to resources. When dependants have private fields, women may have to work both in their husband's and in the larger household's fields before they can turn to their own (Berry 1985). In the Ghana cocoa belt, the food women grow complements men's cash crops or migration, but some women choose to live separately (Bukh 1979). Guyer (1980) explores the factors accounting for the contrast between Ghana and Nigeria in the historical development of women growing food and men cash crops. In Kampala, village wives become independent by bringing food to the city and taking back money, but men are ambivalent about successful women (Obbo 1980). Linares (1992) offers an exemplary study comparing different division of labour patterns in communities that combine wet-rice and

rain-fed cereal and peanut farming in southern Senegal, and describing how these patterns change with current developments (for a survey of four decades of research, see Linares 2009).

Some compelling urban research has been conducted in Ghana. In Accra, women possess considerable freedom and choose to remain single (Dinan 1977). Sanjek's (1982) study of a suburb of Accra is important not only for its findings, but also for its methodology. It starts with the set of co-residents, and examines the functions performed within it and members' links to people outside. This approach highlights relationships that tend to be obscured when using demographic techniques elaborated for the study of European societies. A collection where West African women scholars are well represented explores in what domains spouse collaborate or keep separate interests under evolving conditions (Oppong 1983). Another collection brings together contributions by historians and anthropologists on urban women in different parts of Africa (Hafkin and Bay 1976).

For the colonial period, Etienne (1977) argued that women lost ground among the Baule of Côte d'Ivoire, because the crops men and women started producing were not commercialised to the same extent. Migration also can affect men and women differently. In a historical study of kinship in Lesotho, Murray (1981) finds a growing number of female-headed households and women assuming a greater role in agriculture. Female-headed households are not necessarily poor, however, as Peters (1983) argues in a critique of research in Botswana, and urban migration can be a response to better opportunities (Izzard 1985). One of the gains of the 1970s was breaking down the category 'women', and questioning the assumption that they lost ground uniformly because of colonisation. Instead, some women did well during colonialism and after independence (Guyer 1984; Stone 1988).

Trade

The study of trade and markets, primarily in West Africa, has had influence well beyond those concerned only with the subcontinent.² One aspect of these studies, Hart's (1973) notion of the 'informal economy', is probably the most visible contribution by economic anthropology to international research and policy making (see Chen chap. 28, supra).

In the last two decades, studies of commerce have taken a more historical approach or turned to transnational linkages. One edited volume by Guyer (1987) explores the grain trade since colonial times and another (Guyer 1995) traces the legacy of the Atlantic encounter between West Africa and Europe. Robertson (1984) offers a panorama of Ga women's economic participation in Accra, growing sex segregation giving women

autonomy and strength in the colonial period, but eroding now with class differentiation and the reassertion of male authority through wealth. Clark's (1994) impressive study of the Kumasi market in Ghana shows how heterogeneous groups coalesce without necessarily sharing all interests, and how gender and ethnic transmission of skill and wealth accounts for the present configuration of trade networks and marketplaces. She shows that market women generally lost capital, although some benefited from the competition for relative position and privileged access to sources of supply.

A set of French works known as *anthropologie de l'entreprise*, focusing on the distribution of consumer goods, deserves better recognition in the English-speaking world. Cordonnier's (1982) study of Togolese women cloth wholesalers was the forerunner of these works. They belong to the coastal trade bourgeoisie, whose better-educated men were in civil service jobs or politics. Gender stereotyping benefits the richest women, for example in not having to keep formal accounts, which results in lower taxes. Another work, by Labazée (1988) on well-known businessmen in colonial and post colonial Burkina Faso, started a trend. In a special issue of *Cahiers d'Études Africaines* Labazée (1991) presented another set of articles, including his own on the rich women traders called 'Nana Benz' in Lomé, and Grégoire's (1991) on the smuggling between the port of Benin, Niger and Nigeria (see also Collins 1976). Some contributions link seemingly wasteful ostentatious spending to access to resources, an argument also made more broadly for the evolution of southern Nigerian economy (in Berry 1985).

Important work also focuses on trade diasporas and cross-border trade (Grégoire and Labazée 1993). For example, Lambert's (1993) study of women traders on the Dakar-Bamako railroad line shows the oldest and wealthiest among them providing organisation and protection for the weak, but also obstructing their growth. An important feature of this work is that it rejects the distinction between formal and informal economic spheres, arguing that the state and cross-border trade affect all sectors of the economy. As well, it makes use of biographic case studies to better describe social and economic linkages and historical trends.

Transnational trade is at centre stage in Steiner's book (1994) on African art objects in the global marketplace, which emphasises African participants. MacGaffey and a set of collaborators (MacGaffey et al. 1991) published an unconventional study of smuggling and other income-generating activities in Mobutu's Congo. Similarly, Little (2003) studied Somalia in the early 1990s, when the state had collapsed, and shows how an economy can thrive on cross-border smuggling. A study that is equally original followed the two-way trade between the two Congos and Europe

by various individuals, including airline employees, church members, former students and high-fashion dandies (MacGaffey and Bazenguissa-Ganga 2000).

Development

Economic anthropologists made substantial contributions to development thinking in Africa, as either applied scholars or critics. Many works already mentioned have such dimensions. Scudder and Colson (2002), for example, chronicled the middle Zambezi valley from the late colonial infrastructure projects to resettlement, the post-independence hopes fanned by copper exports, the plunge into crisis and industrial contraction with the escalating oil and tumbling copper prices of the 1970s, the foreign aid boom, the structural adjustment programmes imposed to service foreign debt, massive unemployment, and the AIDS epidemic, leading to 1990s pessimism. In a prolific career, Mair (1934, 1969) studied East African responses to new technologies and market, becoming a pioneer of applied anthropology.

Beginning in the 1970s, major donors such as the World Bank and the leading world powers became predominant sources of public funding in most parts of Africa, implementing their development policies and bloating countries' foreign debt with fruitless projects; they also provided employment to expatriate anthropologists, which resulted in academic publications on the topic. In more recent decades, with the partial withdrawal of the large donors and a state of insolvency left behind from earlier intervention, smaller non-governmental organisations proliferated to disburse foreign aid and provide services that the paralysed governments could not. Anthropologists participated in this newer phase in a more limited way. The wisdom accumulated in such development work can be reviewed in Edelman and Haugerud (2005).

Ferguson (1994) argued in a celebrated book that the very notion of 'development' blurs interconnections between the contrasting fortunes of different regions, turning poverty and production relations into technical issues to be resolved within the boundaries of isolated countries. He thus reproduces the principal theme of dependency theory, albeit without the economic analysis or the political urgency of the latter, and also with a tinge of disapproval of any transformation as assimilation to Western ways, which has strong precedents in older anthropology. Olivier de Sardan (2005 [1995]) followed a different course by focusing attention on the complex interactions between aid agencies, their field personnel, local intermediaries, government institutions and the intended beneficiaries, to uncover clashing ways of reasoning, purposes and interests, which none-the-less accommodate each other. This research is deliberately

non-normative and steers clear of both apology and denunciation, or the 'politically correct' and postmodernism; but the insights it produces can inform evaluative assessments or applied research, and the newsletter of the APAD (the *Association Euro-Africaine pour l'Anthropologie de Changement Social et du Développement*) it inspired publishes both broad reflections on aid philosophy and investigations on issues of well-being in project settings in Africa. Finally, in the middle tome of a major trilogy on Kenya, Shipton (2009) examines the legacy of freehold tenure that the colonial government introduced and the national governments expanded, to argue for its incompatibility with African practice and worldview, and unravel its unforeseen and undesirable outcomes, voicing a critical perspective also espoused by earlier anthropologists.

Conclusion

As this chapter shows, Sub-Saharan Africa has been an important region for economic anthropologists since the early decades of the twentieth century. Issues significant in the subdiscipline, and indeed in the discipline as a whole, have emerged from work in the region, and some of these have gone on to influence broader international policy making. In this chapter, work in the region has been presented in terms of a distinct set of issues. However, it is important to remember that, underlying the differences between them, they are united by a common recognition that economic activities, processes and structures can be understood only by attending to their links with the social, cultural and political fields in which they exist.

Notes

1. A more recent comparative work by Shipton (1989), grounded in Kenyan ethnography, provided a somewhat different perspective on the kinds of restrictions that can be imposed in spending money. Shipton pointed to a belief that retribution will befall people using money that has been procured in disapproved ways (the sale of ancestral land and gold, some cash crops sales, criminal activity) in livestock and bridewealth transactions. This kind of moral check on circulation can be contrasted to 'special purpose money', in either Polanyi's or Bohannan's senses, in its political effects. An edited collection returns to the theme that money and trade can be present without capitalism (Parry and Bloch 1989).
2. In addition to the work of Nadel, Cohen and Meillassoux, mentioned already, see Hill (1966, 1970), Hodder and Ukwu (1969), Little (1973) and Sudarkasa (1973); an important work from beyond West Africa is Gray and Birmingham (1970).

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