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BOHANNAN, PAUL

Paul Bohannon (1920–2007), a prodigious representative of post–World War II anthropology, created, jointly with Laura Bohannon, an ethnographic corpus on the Tiv of central Nigeria that stands out as a unique achievement. The Bohannans conducted their Nigerian fieldwork between 1949 and 1953. Paul published in 1954 a description of Tiv farm life and in 1957 *Justice and Judgment Among the Tiv*, which is discussed below. With Laura Bohannon, he published *The Tiv of Central Nigeria*, five source books on Tiv religion and three source books on Tiv ethnography for the Human Relations Area Files, and *Tiv Economy*. In 1955, the Bohannans went for a second period of fieldwork among the Bantu Baluiya of western Kenya, an outcome of which was one of the four chapters Paul wrote in a book he edited in 1968, *African Homicide and Suicide*. From the 1960s through the 1990s, Paul Bohannon published several popular textbooks and edited or coedited high-profile volumes. This entry focuses on the areas of economic and legal anthropology, where Paul Bohannon exerted his greatest influence, although he also contributed theoretical ideas on religion, warfare, African homicide and suicide, and divorce in the United States.

In economic anthropology, Bohannon is known for the notion of "spheres of exchange." In two articles (published in 1955 and 1959), he explained that before the colonial period, Tiv exchanges fell into three categories. The first included locally produced foodstuffs, small livestock, household utensils, tools,

and raw materials, all normally bartered in marketplaces. The second consisted of cattle, slaves, brass rods, and a locally woven cloth. The third had a single item, rights in marriageable young women, because the giving of a bride could only be compensated by the return of another marriageable woman to her guardian.

The first article was "Principles of Exchange and Investment." Tiv men strove to convert subsistence goods to higher category wealth and were scornful of a person rich in food and livestock but unable to turn them into prestige valuables, but these very values made conversions difficult. Those who converted down, meaning from prestige goods to food, had to invoke catastrophic circumstances or the need to help kinsmen to explain their actions and avoid humiliation. People converted up with the ultimate aim of accumulating dependents and power.

The term *spheres of exchange* was adopted from Raymond Firth's 1939 book on Tikopia, an island in the Pacific Ocean (precedents are W. E. Armstrong's description of Rossel Island shells as nonconvertible exchange media and Bronisław Malinowski's contrast between Trobriand food exchanges and the reciprocal gifting of *kula* valuables). Although the Pacific islands had nothing like the trade and currency traditions of the African savanna, Bohannon followed Firth closely, save for accentuating "marriageable girls," which for Firth was only a tentative category. He also elaborated on the ranking of the spheres, which became an indirect expression of the competitive ambitions of Tiv men. Bohannon presented the spheres model as his own "systematization" but consistent with the Tiv covert ideology; even so, generations of Africanists not familiar with economic anthropology or Pacific ethnography believed that the Tiv thought explicitly in terms of spheres of exchange as delineated by Bohannon and searched for similar kinds of thinking elsewhere in Africa.

Bohannon's second paper focused on money and introduced *special purpose money*, a term that Karl Polanyi had borrowed from brokerage firms' practices to explain aspects of ancient Babylonian economy in a 1957 coedited book. In some societies of antiquity, Polanyi wrote, money could be used only to pay taxes or in noncommercial obligations such as blood compensation or bride wealth; or one kind of money served to make such payments and another kind to buy and sell stuff in the marketplace;

or things were valued in a notional money that did not exist physically, while actual transactions took the form of barter. Polanyi argued that currencies such as these, fulfilling only one function, differ fundamentally from that found in our monetary system; the impression that these remote societies had a commercial life like ours is an illusion, because with no "general purpose money" economic integration could only be achieved by political decisions. Bohannon now reasoned that Tiv brass rods, which were exchanged against all other goods within the second sphere but not very frequently against food, should be considered more like special-purpose money. He thus modified Polanyi's idea of "special purpose," which was connected to the functions of money and not to the range of goods it could buy. According to Bohannon, Tiv economy was "multi-centric" in the sense that barriers to exchange insulated different sectors from feedback effects. In the 20th century, however, colonial administration had introduced European coins and the obligation to pay taxes in them, and new commodities that could not be assigned to any sphere had flooded the markets. Women and junior men sold crops to outside merchants and used the proceeds to purchase local and imported goods. The administration also intervened to ban bride exchanges, encouraging instead the payment of bride wealth, which junior men favored. These developments had eroded the sphere boundaries and dissolved the multicentric economy, a source of great worry to community elders. The notion of spheres of exchange became one of the organizing principles in the book *Tiv Economy*, which Laura and Paul Bohannon coauthored in 1968.

D. C. Dorward and J. H. Latham, historians of Nigeria, criticized this abridged account of economic history that Bohannon provided. It was also said that it misleads about the precolonial West African savanna economy, which was one of the most monetized in the premodern world and made room for strong drives to self-actualize, as evident from subsequent ethnographies of Nigeria and prefigured also in the Bohannans' own. But those who popularized Bohannon's ideas should share the blame; reduced to caricature and reproduced endlessly as a text-book vignette, Bohannon's spheres of exchange were distorted beyond recognition to suggest almost the opposite of what he had meant by them.

In the 1960s, Bohannon, along with fellow economist at Northwestern George Dalton, became

known as a promoter of Polanyi's ideas and, in the great rift that divided economic anthropology, a prominent substantivist. Their collaboration produced a book called *Markets in Africa*, which included 28 essays by acclaimed anthropologists. The introduction stressed, following a lead by Polanyi, that the marketplaces observed in many parts of Africa did not indicate a market principle-based economy. In those markets, women traded small amounts of perishables, or people sold one thing only to buy another, while households produced the bulk of their subsistence; more substantial exchanges materialized as gifts or obligations; land was allocated within household and kinship groups; and a king could administer trade in valuables. If these marketplaces manifested fluctuating prices and the play of supply and demand, these reflected only temporary scarcities and had no bearing on production decisions. Land and labor were not sold, and the market process did not serve to allocate resources, as it did in commercial economies. It is unclear how much these sound comparative economic systems ideas (which Polanyi highlighted in polemics against Central European opponents who were hostile to government regulation and planning) were understood among other substantivist or formalist anthropologists, mostly trained in the empiricist Boasian tradition. The downside was that these ideas downplayed, once again, West African long-distance trade connections to the Mediterranean and, from the 16th century onward, to the Atlantic. The introduction provided a typology for nonmodern economies: marketless (the Pacific), peripheral market (much of precolonial Africa), and peasant, where export crops sales had become indispensable for farmers, forcing other changes (20th-century colonial situations).

Bohannan's legal anthropology was built on litigation cases in Native Authority courts, which the British had introduced in their African colonies and on which the discipline of legal anthropology flourished in the United Kingdom and the United States. Bohannan aimed to understand Tiv ways of looking at disputes and their settlement, their "folk theory," which differs from "law," the folk theory of the Western world. He presented his project as the translation of Tiv categories of thought and action into those of the English language, to allow readers to make sense of them. But the influence of linguistic philosophers at Oxford, where he was trained, added a level of subtlety to his idea of "translation,"

and Bohannan set forth something more complicated than simple juxtaposition. First of all, not all Tiv notions are articulated or even "conscious"; the anthropologist needs to make explicit what was not said, discover premises, deduce ideas from behavior, and sometimes construct elaborate representations that hopefully correspond to Tiv agency but that were not verbally communicated by them. This "folk model" is a product of ethnographic theory, not a plain transcription of observations. Second, the English terms that are solicited for this task come loaded with meanings deposited by European institutions and culture history, which the anthropologist needs to strip away, or at least make manifest, in order to convey the Tiv mindset rather than distort it with unwarranted projections. This necessitates a double movement: As Tiv principles are interpreted, English legal terms also need to be explicated with an eye toward Tiv institutions. Bohannan conceived of a comparative jurisprudence, which would be based on the work of scholarly predecessors and remain distinct from the English folk model of law; Tiv material could illuminate analytic comparisons to build such a comparative discipline, but the idea remained embryonic in his writing.

Native Authority courts were a colonial innovation. Tiv built them into their culture by using the framework and vocabulary of *jir*, proceedings among kinsmen. Bohannan arranged his cases to explain how a complaint is brought; the behavior of defendants, judges, and witnesses; and how settlements were reached. He privileged Tiv expressions, because the language in which the process is conducted is key to the folk system. Bohannan also discussed substantive law as applied to marriage and debt. Tiv courts did not proceed by reference to a set of distinct rules and precedents. The Tiv also did not distinguish between tort, contract, and property, treating them all as forms of debt. Decisions depended on what was right in particular cases, to counteract the damage done by the breach of proper behavior. The plaintiff could also resort to self-help, and occasionally court settlements allowed for that. Yet the *jir* restored social relations, whereas in former days, self-enforcement could lead to revenge, which is not a jural mechanism. Tiv also sought redress by composing scandalous songs about a wrongdoer, which then turned into a contest and, in former times, often ended in a violent showdown between two groups.

Bohannan last presented proceedings that he called "moots," where neighbors and kinsmen decided disputes following death, illness, or an evil omen within the group under the guidance of community elders. These involved a different idiom and a set of images from Native court disputes. Eliciting the cosmology and mystical human agency underlying these proceedings, Bohannan rose to the summit of his ethnographic powers. The reparative actions following a moot were not secular but ritual, made to stand for many individual corrections of social relations.

Both court cases and moots made communities run smoothly. Bohannan displayed little interest in social alignments and causes, or in the conflicts that generated the cases he studied. His analyses open with the plaintiff bringing a grievance, the eruption of disorder, and end when the disturbance abates, at least temporarily, with the judges' settlement or the ritual concluding a moot. Durkheimian interest in cohesion subtends the analysis.

The term *folk system* perhaps conceals difficulties in Bohannan's work. Like the Tiv, most Euro-Americans do not distinguish between tort and crime; lawyers' language differs from common English speech; the boundary between lawyers' categories and comparative jurisprudence remains elusive. Max Gluckman complained that Bohannan's emphasis on Tiv culture made their proceedings look too different. On the one hand, a legal expert could identify many categories of action in Tiv proceedings that they do not recognize, as is true of British and American publics. On the other, Edmund Leach had already indicated that among the Kachin of Burma as well, "debt" subsumed multiple social relations; furthermore, the connection between debt and other social obligations survives also in some expressions of the English language.

Elsewhere, Bohannan generalized about law. Social institutions involve norms everywhere, but only some societies restate these norms as rules intended for a special institution that applies justice. When such a legal institution exists, trouble situations are disengaged from their social matrix and brought to the court to be handled according to this body of rules. Where "law" exists as a separate body, it can modify other social institutions because it can be out of phase with them, either because it lags behind changes in customs or because it is used for innovating. Bohannan noted, as did other legal

anthropologists, that Tiv court cases did not end with a verdict but with compromise, where parties concurred in the principles and provisions of the settlement. Multicentric situations with multiple judges, moots, contests, oracles, and self-help lead not to neat systems of law and formal *corpus juris* but to less precise restatements of norms. Bohannan's legal anthropology does point to generalizations beyond the rich description of Tiv culture, although perhaps not as boldly as his economic anthropology.

Mahir Şaul

See also Durkheim, Émile; Firth, Raymond; Gluckman, Max; Polanyi, Karl

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BOURDIEU, PIERRE

With more than 35 books and a considerable number of scientific papers to his credit, Pierre Bourdieu (1930–2002) is regarded as one of the most important social scientists of the 20th century. His key concepts (*habitus*, *field*, *capital*, *symbolic violence*) and his analyses have had a decisive impact on all disciplines in the humanities and the social sciences.

Brief Biography

Pierre Bourdieu grew up in a small village in a remote area of southern France (Béarn). The son of a post office clerk, he was first sent to high school in the closest city and then to Paris to study philosophy at the renowned *École Normale Supérieure*. Coming from a lower class background, during his school trajectory, Bourdieu was subjected to "symbolic violence" that deeply affected his perception of social life and later his work, as he explained in his "non-autobiography." He did military service in Algeria for 2 years and then taught for another