

**“Anthropology, ergonomics and Technology Transfers :
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Introduction

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The fact that techniques are social productions is a reason why technology transfers may be a field of interest for applied anthropologists. Since the 1930's, France has been a country where research into the ethnology of techniques has been institutionalized, in le Musée de l'Homme in Paris as well as in the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique in the laboratory named "Techniques et Culture". In this line of research, technology is no longer considered a phenomenon completely detached from the social environment. On the contrary, it is closely tied to other social phenomena. Although the study of techniques in anthropology is sometimes considered a « poor relation » to anthropology, some anthropologists have generated a solid base of experience in sociological description and analysis of techniques and technical systems. Considering the aims of this issue, I will first focus especially on this French tradition in regard to technology transfers. I am conscious that, since the 1930's, other disciplines such as sociology and other anthropologists in the United States, United Kingdom and France have contributed to enlarge our vision of the innovation processes but I think that in these debates, the French field has been partly neglected. This is the reason why in this paper, despite the academic and epistemologic interests of these productions, I will focus on this field. I am conscious too that the term « technology transfers » is often associated with an acculturation and diffusionist process. The reality is more complicated and its explanation would take far more than twelve pages. Keeping "technology transfer" alive in practice means for me to be critical in regard to this concept and its reality in the field. It is also a good opportunity to be understood by the people involved daily in such processes on the political and economical stages. At last, through my field experience in Guinea, I will discuss the efficiency of the methodology used in ethnology of techniques when we combine it with the one of the French ergonomics traditions, in an applied perspective to technology transfers.