

# R. J. Chambers on Securities and Obscurities: Making a Case for the Reform of the Law of Company Accounts in the 1970s

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## **Abstract:**

This study examines the contribution of Raymond J. Chambers to the British inflation accounting debate in the early-to-mid 1970s, from the perspective of the reception of his book, *Securities and Obscurities: A Case for Reform of the Law of Company Accounts*, published in 1973. To structure the empirical narrative, drawing on previously unpublished documents from the R. J. Chambers Archives, we employ Czarniawska and Joerges' (1996) notion of the 'travel of ideas', and Mumford's (1979) observation of the existence of 'inflation accounting debate cycles'. The result is a narrative that traces the environmental and material circumstances that led to Chambers' book having a lesser impact on the British inflation debate than one would expect based on the international exposure of his ideas, his influence at the time, and the empirical rigour of his proposal. The purpose of this exercise is to assess how contextual factors, such as the choice of publisher, use of promotional material, and distribution methods, can be as (or more) important than the substance of the proposed ideas, arguments, and solutions.