

Gudeman, Stephen. 2016. *Anthropology and Economy. Part of New Departures in Anthropology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. vii+225 pp. Pb.: \$29.99. ISBN: 9781107577206.

With the economic crisis in the US and Europe, economic topics have returned into the focus of social and cultural anthropology. In this field, Stephen Gudeman shows another time how eye-opening his comparative perspective on the economy can be. Whilst Gudeman is often seen as the ideal representative of a culturalist approach, in his newest work he offers a broader view as he moves from household economies to the world of finance. However, Gudeman still aims to understand local concepts and spheres, even when analysing market economies. *Anthropology and Economy* is not a renunciation of his original mindset; it can rather be understood as a logical progression of it. To his anthropological lens, Gudeman adds, as he calls it, the perspective of an 'over-the-shoulder economist' (p. 8), which the author himself qualified for by taking a master's degree from Harvard Business School. With these different views, Gudeman wants to examine people's economic concepts ranging from the inhabitants of the mountains of Columbia to Harvard professors. Using highly diverse examples, the author develops a theory of how economies are established in five spheres: the house, the community, commerce, finance, and meta-finance. The connection between these spheres can be viewed differently: 'From one perspective, the house is the universal space of economy. Without it, the others do not exist. From a different perspective, the other spheres increasingly dominate house economies in the service of self-interest and profit, which is expressed as the need for efficiency and growth.' (p. 21). As the central connector between and within the spheres, Gudeman identifies rents as they flow between and within them. The author also uses the spheres mentioned above to structure his book as follows: starting with house economies and their relation to markets, Gudeman moves on to economic connections outside the house and the role rituals play in creating and maintaining these connections. Furthermore, he puts a focus on markets and their different spheres. By doing so, Gudeman offers an alternative perspective on financial crises and does not hesitate to offer suggestions on how to reach a higher level of economic stability.

Gudeman explores household economies by going back to his initial field studies in Columbia and Panama. His findings suggest that the material life in these regions is highly influenced by the life energy of the local people. The strength of the people keeps the rural economy running and is, as Gudeman argues, also their currency. This stands in contrast to standard models of the economy on the one hand, which state that self-interest is the main influence, and to those suggested by many anthropologists on the other, who claim that social relationships are central to economies. In regard to the significant role rents play, as a first proof Gudeman states that the connection between household economies and the material world is established through the claims and payments of rent. The local people formulate this relationship as 'giving and taking with the earth' (p. 50).

In the next chapter, Gudeman takes a step back by looking at some classical theories of economic anthropology. Here he states that Marshall Sahlins had discovered a similar concept to the one suggested by Gudeman when he interpreted Marcel Mauss'

idea of the Maori *hau*. Sahlins saw the *hau* as life energy, which is thereby similar to Gudeman's notion of 'strength' as they are both examples of how people constitute connections with the material world and other people. The author continues with this idea by presenting four different ethnographic examples from southern Africa and South America. Gudeman takes his idea of connection and mutuality onwards to markets and shows how, for instance, the Rothschilds maintained their financial imperium by family connections and marriage within the extended family. Next, the author shifts his focus towards the role rituals play in economies as they make social connections and strengthen mutuality. He also shows how magic is central to markets and analyses advertising as a "spell" that fills the gap in market economy between the cost-saving customer and the profit-seeking seller. In the following chapter, Gudeman moves on to celebrations and how they support the market. For this, he uses amongst others the examples of Mother's and Father's Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas. In analysing the ritualised transactions that are connected with these festivities, Gudeman shows how giving and receiving creates sociability and at the same time is one of the driving forces of the economy.

In the next chapter, the relationship between markets and household economies is described as the first colonising the latter. In analogy to this, he sees anthropology and economics as mutually colonising the other.

Within the last two chapters of *Anthropology and Economy*, the author brings the five previously named spheres together by analysing how money is used within and across them. Furthermore, he analyses the major financial crisis of the last decades and does not hesitate to name the following as the central urgent problems of market economies: 'Growing economic inequality, Increasing degradation of the environment, and Persisting bubbles and blowouts' (p. 170). As a solution to these problems and in order to realise greater economic stability, Gudeman suggests employing 'house therapy' (p. 170). With this therapy, he means to highlight the values of sufficiency, sustainability, and ecological awareness in the economy.

In this book, Stephen Gudeman shows how to apply central anthropological concepts such as sharing and reciprocity to the spheres of commerce, finance, and meta-finance. With *Anthropology and Economy*, however, Gudeman does not content himself with an analysing perspective but also offers solutions for some of the most pressing problems of our time.

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