
In the 1960s the young Gudeman, armed with the latest neo-classical economic theories in decision theory and game theory and some anthropology, set off to study a small village in rural Panama. His first encounter with a farmer who grew rice and maize for household consumption presented him with a dilemma: how could his activity of burning the earth and planting seed with a stick be illuminated by a super-abstract game theoretic approach? Something had to give. Gudeman, to his credit, abandoned the theory and began a long quest to reconceptualise the economy in an anthropologically informed way. This book is the product of that long march, one that has passed many significant milestones.

His first milestone was to find a theoretical framework to make sense of his fieldwork. He found this in the Latin American dependency theory which he modified in the light of his reading of the Marxian and neo-Ricardian economic literature. After the publication of his first book, The Demise of a Rural Economy (1978), he posed himself the question: What is cultural economics? This led him to the library where he worked his way through the classics in the history of economic thought. The third milestone was passed when he returned to the field, this time in Columbia, with a colleague, Alberto Rivera, and published Conversations in Columbia (1990), a study of local language and practices. The final milestone is the book under review, a synthesis of almost forty years of research, teaching and thinking about the concept of the economy as it manifests itself in today's globalised world.

While the book obviously reflects his experiences of working in Latin America, the aim is to construct an historically and anthropologically informed conception of the economy. His does this by literally sketching a model and illustrating...
In The Anthropology of Economy, noted anthropologist Steve Gudeman presents a model and lexicon for thinking about and discussing "things economic." About the Author. Stephen Gudeman is Professor and Chair of the Department of Anthropology, University of Minnesota. 1. Community, Market, and Culture. 2. Economy at the Base. 3. Sharing the Base. 4. The Great Estate: Power, Extraction, and Expansion. "This is the first book to propose a cross-cultural model of the economy inspired by anthropology. Gudeman succeeds magnificently in weaving the results of decades of anthropology into an original synthesis." Caroline Humphrey, University of Cambridge. "A stimulating rethinking of anthropology's contribution to our understanding of economics. Patrick Heady 17 The anthropology of markets. Kalman Applbaum 18 One-way economic transfers. Robert C. Hunt. He is currently completing a book entitled Culture, society, economy: bringing the economy back in (2004). Terry Roopnaraine has research interests in extractive industries, development and economic transformation in Amazonia. Those who work in economic anthropology are aware of the importance of the economy in public thought and debate. In retrospect, Adam Smith might well have titled his book The health of nations, for in our day, if not in his, it seems that the health of a country is defined by its wealth, just as the final judgement of an activity is its bottom line, how it gains or loses money.