

Hann, Chris, and Keith Hart. 2011. *Economic Anthropology. History, Ethnography, Critique*. Cambridge. Polity Press. ISBN-13: 978-0-7456-4482-0

In 2011, the book *Economic anthropology: History, ethnography, critique* was published, which represents a new introduction to the history and practice of economic anthropology written by two leading anthropologists in economic anthropology, Chris Hann and Keith Hart. The authors of this book show that anthropologists have a contribution in the understanding of three great questions of modern economic history: development, socialism and world capitalism. In doing so, the authors connect economic anthropology to its roots in Western philosophy, social theory and the world history.

This book began life as a position paper for a conference convened in June 2006 on the state of economic anthropology, with a particular focus on the contemporary relevance of the ideas of Karl Polanyi. Like the authors Chris Hann and Keith Hart say in the preface of the book, “When we came to prepare the proceedings for publication, our paper was clearly too long to fit into that volume. In the meantime it has continued to grow. Completion has been delayed not only by competing commitments (the usual academic excuses) but by the impact of the latest, most serious crisis of the world economy, which has diverted some of our energies and inspired us to give the subject of money even greater prominence in the text than it already had”.

Financial crisis and its social consequences may have taken most of the world by surprise, including economists, but it should not have been a surprise to economic historians or anthropologists, who have long been familiar with notions like “creative destruction” and “unequal development”. The authors did not allow the latest crisis to lead them to change the rationale and structure of this book, which combines a history of economic anthropology with a perspective on world history. In this book, an account of the history and present state of economic anthropology is offered as a contribution to understanding economic life, a field in which many scholars - not only economists and anthropologists but also historians and sociologists and many varieties under each of those labels must join forces. Some economists claim a special status for their discipline and trying to get distant from the social sciences. Chris Hann and Keith Hart take a critical view of such claims, and their aim is to bring the both disciplines closer to one another. Previous accounts of economic anthropology linked it to the founding fathers of modern social theory – notably Marx, Weber and Durkheim. But Hann and Hart argue that the core questions are much older than this. Ultimately, economic anthropology addresses questions of human nature and well-being; questions that have preoccupied every society’s philosophers from the beginning. Authors of the book make a case for an economic anthropology that is able to investigate this “human economy” anywhere in time and space, as a creation of all humanity. But, there have been tremendous changes in the world economy over the last half-century, especially since the end of the Cold War, and therefore the authors of the book give the highest priority to addressing these on-going transformations.

The book *Economic anthropology: History, ethnography, critique* is an excellent

introduction for social science students at all levels, and it presents general readers with a challenging perspective on the world economy today. For the sake of readability, the authors of the book have tried to avoid cluttering the text with footnotes or excessive references, quotations and citation marks. Instead of that, authors in “The Notes on Further Reading” which precede the bibliography, provide for interested readers with further detail concerning the materials presented in each chapter, as well as supplementary suggestions.

Gjoko Atanasov (Macedonia)