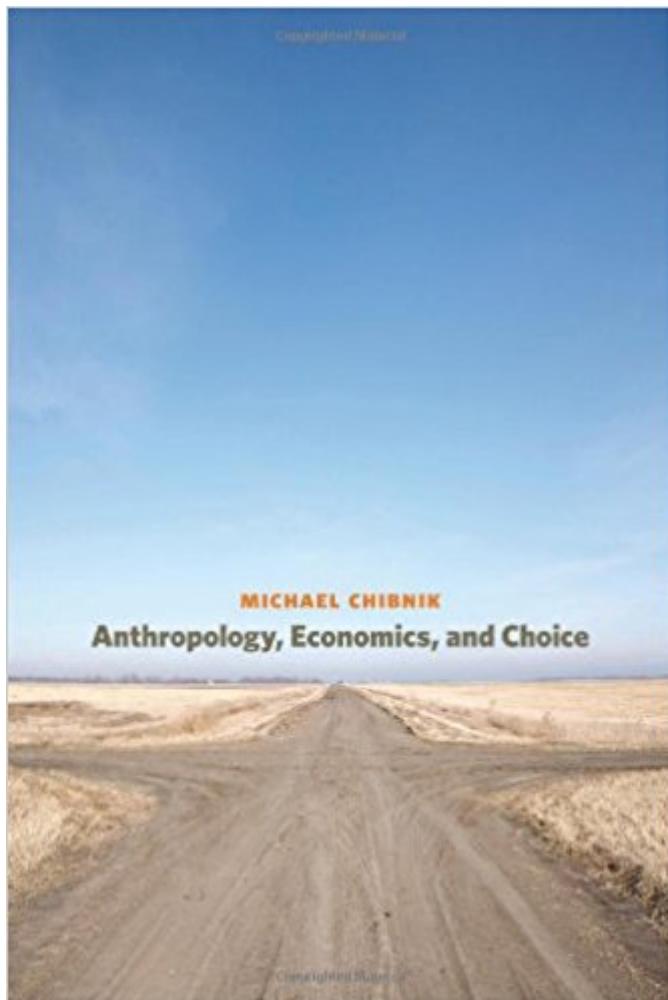


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Anthropology, Economics, And Choice



Synopsis

In the midst of global recession, angry citizens and media pundits often offer simplistic theories about how bad decisions lead to crises. Many economists, however, base their analyses on rational choice theory, which assumes that decisions are made by well-informed, intelligent people who weigh risks, costs, and benefits. Taking a more realistic approach, the field of anthropology carefully looks at the underlying causes of choices at different times and places. Using case studies of choices by farmers, artisans, and bureaucrats drawn from Michael Chibnik's research in Mexico, Peru, Belize, and the United States, *Anthropology, Economics, and Choice* presents a clear-eyed perspective on human actions and their economic consequences. Five key issues are explored in-depth: choices between paid and unpaid work; ways people deal with risk and uncertainty; how individuals decide whether to cooperate; the extent to which households can be regarded as decision-making units; and the "tragedy of the commons," the theory that social chaos may result from unrestricted access to commonly owned property. Both an accessible primer and an innovative exploration of economic anthropology, this interdisciplinary work brings fresh insight to a timely topic.

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"Beyond its wealth of information, this book is well organized, comprehensible, and engaging." - Carrie Sampson, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, International Social Science Review "The book is essential to any economic anthropologist reflecting on the role of the discipline and its relationship to other social sciences. Chibnik ably answers these questions and provides a complex introduction

to how economic anthropologists go about their studies. The author's research experience and his thorough understanding of economic anthropology become evident in the book, which accurately portrays the sins scholars from both sides are tempted to commit." - Social Anthropology/Anthropologie Sociale

Michael Chibnik is Professor of Anthropology at the University of Iowa.

How do people really make choices? In this brilliant book, Chibnik shows that there is more than one way to answer this question. He compares approaches from economics and anthropology, showing the strengths and limitations of each. We need more of these kinds of books that put aside disciplinary narcissism to show what different kinds of research contribute to knowledge production.

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