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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.