Economics, in this chapter, is defined as the study of institutions and variables that may affect certain “economic” choices that are relevant in ascertaining levels of wealth, health, material assets, and other possible sources of happiness. Mindful economics, or neuroeconomics—which veers away from “mindless economics” or an approach that utilizes rational choice and revealed preferences—attempts to make use of neural data in generating a neutral discipline and mathematical approach in dealing with economics. Such an approach would employ data from brain imaging, Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS), psychophysiological indicators, and other such measures. This chapter presents how behavioral economics, which integrates psychology and neuroeconomics which refers to neuroscience, can be considered in coming up with economic choice theories.

It has been suggested that cooperative outcomes may be more ubiquitous in traditional hunter–gatherer societies, which are characterized by economic systems that more closely resemble those in which most human psychological mechanisms behind economic choice,
fairness, and cooperation probably evolved. This idea is examined by playing the Ultimatum Game and the Public Goods Game with the Ache Indians, a tribal group of recently contacted hunter-gatherers in Paraguay, who are well known in the anthropological literature for their extensive food sharing, although they now spend most of their time in permanent reservation settlements: two settlements were involved in the study – the large Chupa Pou settlement and the smaller Arroyo Bandera settlement. The chapter examines how individual choices in the two games are affected by methodological permutations of the game and how the choices on one game are associated with choices in the other. Consideration is also given to how choices in the games are associated with other relevant individual characteristics – age, sex (whether male), whether from a large settlement, game played in public (rather than anonymously), times game played, amount of food production, and food sharing pattern (how much kept by family). The results provide various insights into concepts of fairness in human societies and into the social forces behind the observed sharing patterns.

What Can Neuroeconomics Tell Us About Economics (and Vice Versa)?

Mark Dean

in Comparative Decision Making

Published in print: 2013 Published Online: May 2013 Publisher: Oxford University Press DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199856800.003.0018

This chapter evaluates the progress and impact of neuroeconomics, showing how models and data can be linked to provide mechanistic insights into a classical decision-making field. The focus is on the development and testing of models of the economic choice process and of neurobiological mechanisms themselves. Just what this approach generally contributes to understanding the questions addressed by economists is controversial, but there are arguments for the value of both an inspirational role that helps generate new mechanistic models and an enhanced ability to break process models into manageable pieces. The author emphasizes the importance of as if logic in classical utility maximization, arguing that this approach is vulnerable to uncertainties about how environmental conditions map to decision-making outcomes. The prevalence of these uncertainties makes a focus on neural mechanisms particularly useful. The last two sections of the chapter describe axiomatic modelling.
The economic theory of choice has proved to be useful in explaining aggregate choices and guiding policy using just three moving parts: stable preferences, information, and constraints. Cognitive science and neuroscience can supplement this model by showing how attention, emotion, cognitive difficulty, and other variables, also influence choices. This chapter describes two ‘case studies’ of these effects. The first part showed that the way familiar choices are described or presented can dramatically influence bidding prices. The second part shows that emotional regulation of the fear of loss could lower the behavioural tendency toward overweighting losses compared to gains (loss-aversion), and is also manifested in autonomic responses to feedback about actual losses when chosen gambles are immediately played for money.
detailed nativist exploration is relatively new, including cultural learning, creativity, economic choice, culture, and morality. The expansion of nativist theorizing into all these new areas shows both the power and the promise of nativist approaches, and points the way to the future.

Founding Choices
Douglas A. Irwin and Richard Sylla (eds)

Published in print: 2011 Published Online: February 2013
Item type: book

The political decisions made by the founding fathers were crucial to the success of the early republic. But the economic decisions they made were just as pivotal, ensuring the general welfare and common defense of the United States for decades to come. This book explores these economic choices and their profound influence on American life, westward expansion, and influence abroad. Among the topics covered are finance, trade, and monetary and banking policy, with a focus on the factors guiding those policies and their end result.


Richard I. Cohen (ed.)

in Place in Modern Jewish Culture and Society

Published in print: 2018 Published Online: August 2018
Item type: chapter

This chapter reviews the book Judaism in Transition: How Economic Choices Shape Religious Tradition (2014), by Carmel U. Chiswick. In Judaism in Transition, Chiswick examines the evolving nature of Judaism, primarily in America but also in Israel. Using the principles of cost-benefit analysis, Chiswick argues that economic choices influence participation in all areas of Jewish life. Focusing on historical and current choices such as Jewish education and synagogue membership, she not only highlights the role of economics in the time-allocation decisions of Jews, but also stimulates thinking on these issues for other religious and cultural groups. Chiswick makes a distinction between the “Great Tradition” that defines Judaism and the “Small Traditions” of Jews living in particular cultural contexts.
The Lonely Furrow
Venu Madhav Govindu and Deepak Malghan


Published in print: 2016 Published Online: September 2016
DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199460816.003.0009
Item type: chapter

This chapter details Gandhi and Kumarappa’s struggle to promote village industries in the face of indifference and criticism. The early years of the AIVIA are described and located within the context of the politics of the time that include Gandhi’s proposal for Nai Talim or New Education and Kumarappa’s role in and eventual resignation from the National Planning Committee (NPC) of the Congress. A substantial portion of the chapter is also devoted to explaining the nature of the criticism against Kumarappa and the AIVIA. Of particular significance is the debate between Kumarappa and Jayaprakash Narayan on economic choices. This debate is far more insightful than the schematic presentation of the differences on economic questions between Gandhi and Nehru that is often discussed in the literature. Additionally, the health problems that plagued Kumarappa are also discussed.

Demographic Dividends
Philip Auerswald

in The Coming Prosperity: How Entrepreneurs Are Transforming the Global Economy

Published in print: 2012 Published Online: April 2015
DOI: 10.1093/acprof:osobl/9780199795178.003.0003
Item type: chapter

This chapter focuses on population growth as an example of paradox prosperity. At the start of the 20th century, public intellectuals in the United States and Great Britain embraced the notion that certain human populations were prone to excessive procreation and should be systematically controlled. The ideology of this human breeding was named “eugenics”. However, by 1974, “eugenics” was ignored and the challenges posed by a growing global population were more emphasized in terms of economic choice than reproductive force.