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In the last few years, many textbooks in Economic Psychology have been published. However, the majority of such textbooks are edited volumes that include contributions from several different authors. Sometimes, this makes their structure fragmented, and the reader might find it hard to grasp a homogeneous and linear picture of the discipline.

The textbook written by Erich Kirchler and Erik Hoelzl is a welcome exception, because it is entirely written by the two authors. This avoids many of the drawbacks of edited books, including the fragmentation and disparity of styles, as well the possible repetitions between one chapter and another. Furthermore, “Economic Psychology: An Introduction” succeeds in incorporating also the pros of edited books with several contributors, namely the extreme specialization and depth of analysis deriving from the fact that each chapter is written by an author that ranks among the best experts in their own disciplinary field. At least two reasons can be found to support this. First, Kirchler and Hoelzl are among the world's top scholars in many of the specific domains of economic psychology which are addressed in the book (e.g., the psychology of taxation, money management in households, the psychology of credit use, consumers’ perception of prices, etc.). Moreover, they served for many years as the Editors in chief of the Journal of Economic Psychology, so that they accumulated a deep and wide knowledge of the different lines of research in the area. Therefore, the book succeeds in balancing specialization and scientific updating with consistency of rhythm and style of writing along all the nearly 400 pages. For these reasons, each section of the book shows a clear and logical flow, both within and between chapters. The structure of the index itself suggests the harmony of the volume: after an

introduction on the history of the discipline and an overview on the main topics and its applications, the book is comprised of three "triads" of chapters. In the first triad (chapters 2-4) the authors present the fundamentals of the discipline, starting from the comparison between normative and descriptive models of economic decision-making up to lay theories on economic processes. This section is an excellent report of the historical path that, starting from the pioneering works of Katona, led to the public recognition of this field of study recorded in the last 20 years with the Nobel prizes won by Kahneman and Thaler and with the spreading of behavioral and nudge units all over the world. The following triad of chapters is dedicated to the psychological analysis of three different markets in which individuals and institutions operate (i.e. consumer markets, labor markets and financial markets), and the last triad (chapters 7-10) presents social and collective aspects of economic psychology, including fiscal psychology, psychosocial aspects of work and unemployment, and the relationship between wealth and happiness.

The book is also remarkable for at least three other valuable aspects.

First of all, in the age of behavioral economics and nudges, it puts a spotlight on the psychological analysis of economic behavior. Boundaries between Economic Psychology and Behavioral Economics may be debatable, since beyond their original perspectives (psychology in the first case, economics in the second one) the two disciplines tend to converge on a fairly overlapping field. Nevertheless, one feature that distinguishes Economic Psychology is perhaps the fact that it does not only observe or predict behaviors, but tries to explain them in terms of which mechanisms occur in the black box of human mind. In other words, it allows us to learn not only what the effects are, but also "why" they occur. In this fashion, Kirchler and Hoelzl always discuss the mental processes behind our economic decisions, thanks to the constant references to different paradigms of psychology, from cognitive and behavioral approaches up to social or

developmental psychology. I find that only one paradigm of psychology – i.e. dynamic psychology – is sometimes missing in the text, for example in relation to the symbolic meanings, often unconscious, associated with money and economic choices, or the clinical aspects related to dysfunctional economic behavior. However, we must admit that the use of a psychodynamic approach in Economic Psychology is still rather infrequent and, perhaps, should be further developed.

The second strength of the book is the frequent references to a historical and cultural perspective. Researchers in Behavioral Economics, while criticizing the supposed universalism of *homo oeconomicus*, tend sometimes to view *homo psychologicus* as a new universal model, with the same cognitive biases and processes in all ages and in all cultural contexts. Kirchler and Hoelzl, instead, provide a constant contextualization of the historical and cultural differences, with frequent references to history, sociology and anthropology (see in particular the chapter on shadow economy and tax paying, or the analysis of the historical changes in the meaning of work in chapter 9).

Finally, even if one of the purposes of the book is to provide a first introduction to economic psychology, it avoids the dangers of an oversimplification. An example is the conclusions of the section on wealth and happiness (p. 337), where in 11 lines the authors manage to summarize the whole chapter by acknowledging the complexity of a phenomenon that cannot be reduced to a yes or no answer (i.e. whether money makes you happy).

In summary, the reason to read this book can be twofold. On the one hand, it is well suited to introduce Economic Psychology to students both in Psychology and in Economics/ Business, with several pedagogical features (study questions, suggested further reading, keyword highlighting, and a key term summary) and illustrations that are well integrated in the text and successfully reiterate key concepts and ideas. On the other hand, it is also a great in-depth resource for more

expert scholars, since, with more than 1300 biographical references, it certainly allows to grasp the state of the art and the main reference readings on the various topics it addresses.

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