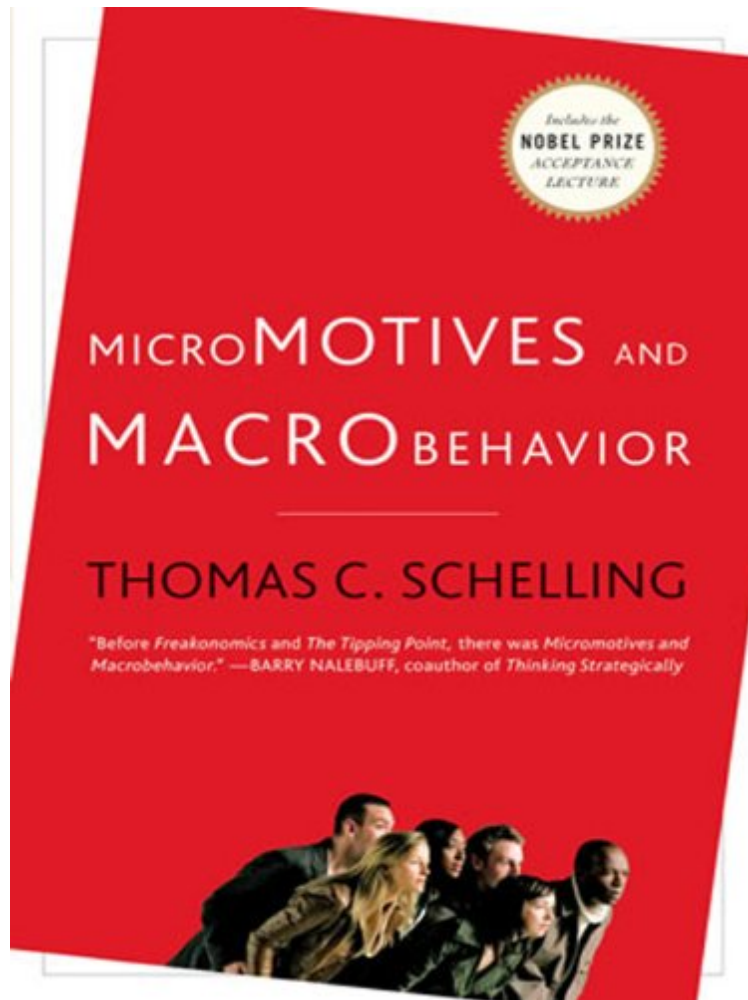


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Micromotives and Macrobehavior

Thomas C. Schelling

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Thomas C. Schelling : Micromotives and Macrobehavior before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Micromotives and Macrobehavior:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A change in perspectiveBy TakisPeople take decisions, based on their environment, which is compromised of the decisions others have taken, based on their environment, and so on... Sometimes people have no information beforehand, so they have to guess what will the rest decide. For a book dealing with these questions, it's only natural to resort to game theory. Schelling extends the 1-vs-1 Prisoner's Dilemma to a multitude of persons taking part in it. Another major theme is social sorting, like how do neighbourhoods of blacks and whites form into clusters. Schelling's segregation model is now quite famous and I'd suggest you give it a look on-line for starters to get the basic picture of the book. Many examples are mentioned as to how our choices affect the demographics that interest us or how we sometimes fulfill our own "prophecies". I give it 4 stars, because it wasn't "pop" enough for me. The algebra was mild (and supposedly basic?), but I still couldn't do it, because I don't know s*** about algebra. Other than that, once you get the gist of reading the graphs on the last chapter, you'll start feeling

like a genius. It's easy to read and it can be fun experimenting around with the models/graphs on your own. This is a book that shifts your perspective for good. You'll start thinking differently when you're watching groups of people cluster together now (e.g.: surfers vs swimmers at the beach).

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A delightful book

By Kindle Customer This is a delightful book. Schelling's writing style reminds me of Feynman, which I consider very high praise. The book is essentially Schelling playing with a variety of simple models of individuals making decisions with collective impact, and seeing what sort of surprising dynamics and equilibria can be found.

7 of 8 people found the following review helpful. The Golden Rule and Self-Restraint

By Matthew Rafat Schelling's book covertly drafts a model of economic support for the Golden Rule. While many of his examples may be repetitive, ultimately, we learn that by restraining ourselves in various enterprises, such as energy conservation, we are able to produce overall benefits for society. However, the hitch is that without critical mass or some basis for keeping rebels in line, no one adheres to the collective system and therefore no one benefits. Thus, the author intelligently posits an argument that in properly regulated environments, cooperation and selflessness produce stability and will lead to long-term success.

What is more interesting are Schelling's numerous examples and asides about human behavior that, once examined carefully, yield a greater understanding about everyday phenomena. For example, he writes, "Most people think that inflation reduces purchasing power without stopping to notice that their own pay increases are somebody else's inflation, and at least some of it must cancel out." This book is filled with such astute and not easily apparent statements. He also carries economic theory into social theory, showing that if all men married women four years younger than them where population is growing at three percent annually, eventually women of marrying age may outnumber men by more than 12%. The book has several of these nuggets, but leaves out an obvious and one of my favorite lessons about education: when a student goes to school, s/he not only "loses" the money s/he spends on tuition, but also her/his earning power during the years spent studying. For this reason, one could argue that it seems more sensible to attend school when there is a recession and to work when unemployment is low.

The glaring gap in this book is the problem of freeloaders--what do we do, for example, about the neighbor who waters his lawn excessively during a water shortage, thereby creating less incentive for others to conserve water? The author most likely believes that education will assist this problem, but this may be an idealistic notion at best. Still, Schelling manages to prove that cooperation rather than competition in some cases may produce better results, leading to viable arguments against selfish behavior.

Before *Freakonomics* and *The Tipping Point* there was this classic by the 2005 Nobel Laureate in Economics. "Schelling here offers an early analysis of 'tipping' in social situations involving a large number of individuals." —official citation for the 2005 Nobel Prize

Micromotives and Macrobehavior was originally published over twenty-five years ago, yet the stories it tells feel just as fresh today. And the subject of these stories—how small and seemingly meaningless decisions and actions by individuals often lead to significant unintended consequences for a large group—is more important than ever. In one famous example, Thomas C. Schelling shows that a slight-but-not-malicious preference to have neighbors of the same race eventually leads to completely segregated populations.

The updated edition of this landmark book contains a new preface and the author's Nobel Prize acceptance speech.