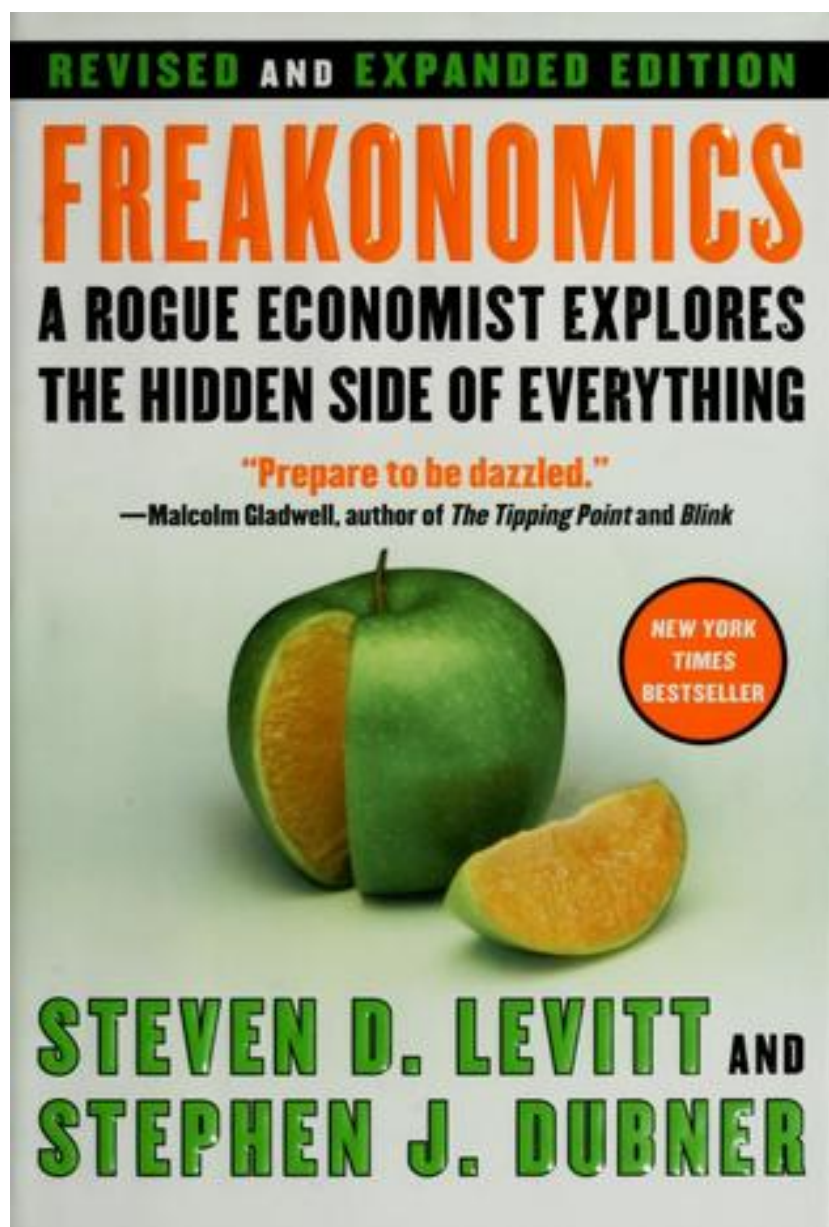


Freakonomics: A Rogue Economist Explores the Hidden Side of Everything Book PDF Download



By:
Steven D. Levitt

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What people Say:

Jim

This was an interesting book. I say it was interesting because I started liking it (a lot) when I first read it, as time passed I liked it less and less. In that way I call it a candy book, tastes good at first but leaves you worse off for reading it.

In my opinion, there are two problems with the book: First, Stephen Dubner comes across as a sycophant. Way to much of the book is spent praising Levitt. Secondly, I was disappointed in the lack of detail provided about Livitt's hypothesis. I wante

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In my opinion, there are two problems with the book: First, Stephen Dubner comes across as a sycophant. Way to much of the book is spent praising Levitt. Secondly, I was disappointed in the lack of detail provided about Livitt's hypothesis. I wanted more. It was like reading War and Peace and discovering that you read the abridged version and in fact the book wasn't 100 pages long. This disappointment may have come from my engineering background and my strong desire to really understand economics. This book didn't offer any of that, only a titillating glimpse of the economics.

In some regards one may think my single start rating is to harsh. As mind candy this book was quite good. I

enjoy reading it at the time. Whats more, it did encourage me to study real economics. I am currently enrolled in a masters program in economics and this book did play a

small roll in that decision process. However, as I learn more about economics I realize how shallow the book in fact was.

While this is not the forum for a comprehensive review of the topics presented in the book, or an analysis of how good the economics in Freekanomics are, a review in "Journal of Economic Literature (Vol XLV, Dec. 2007 pp 973)" quotes Livitt as saying: "There is no question I have written some ridiculous papers." The article then goes on to quote a paper by Noam Scheibler(2007) describing Livitt's comparing some of his papers to the fashion industry. "Sometimes you write papers and they're less about the actual result, more about your vision of how you think the profession should be. And so I think some of my most ridiculous papers actually fall in the high-fashion category."

Rachel

Sure, this book was a compelling read that offered us all some great ammo for cocktail party conversation. But ultimately I think most of what Leavitt claims is crap.

He dodges accountability with the disclaimer about his book NOT being a scholarly work, but then goes on to drop statistics, theories and expert opinions. These assertions laid, he doesn't provide readers with enough information to critically examine his perspectives.

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Ultimately I have a problem with the unquestioned, unaccountable role of the public intellectual. Leavitt dances around with his PhD on his sleeve, but is never subject to peer review or any sort of academic criticism. I think it's irresponsible.

Manny

I loved this book, though I think the title is a bit misleading. It's not really about economics. In fact, he's showing you what interesting things you can discover when you apply statistical analysis to problems where you wouldn't normally think of using it. I use statistical methods a fair amount in my own work, so I found it particularly interesting. The most startling and thought-provoking example is definitely the unexpected reduction in US urban crime that occurred towards the end of the 2

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Levitt crunched the numbers, to see what proportion of the variance could be ascribed to the different factors. This is a completely standard technique; it just hadn't been used here before. He came to the conclusion that the single most important factor, by far, was the ready availability of abortion that started to come in after

. Other things, like more resources for policing and tougher sentencing policies, probably helped, but not nearly as much. I didn't at all get the impression that he had been expecting this result from the start, and just wanted to prove his point. He processed the data, and went where the numbers led him. That's how you're supposed to do science.

The clincher, at least as far as I was concerned, was the fact that crime statistics peaked at different points in different states, the peaks correlating very well with the dates when each state started making abortion available. States that brought it in early had correspondingly early peaks in their crime rates. It's hard to see how that could happen if Levitt's explanation weren't correct.

I am surprised that there hasn't been more discussion of Levitt's findings in the political world. Maybe it's just regarded as too hot to handle. But if Levitt is right, and at the moment I would say it's up to his critics to explain why he isn't, then pro-life campaigners would seem to be heading in a very unfortunate direction.

Andrew Muckle

Jesus H Tittyfucking Christ on a bike! Could these two tossers be any more smarmy and self indulgent? Levitt and Dubner and probably the kind of smart arse nerds who snigger at you because

you don't understand linux but sneer at you because you've actually spoken to a woman.

This book is much like the Emperor's New Clothes, people are so scared about being left out if they don't like or understand it because some sandal wearing hippy in the Guardian said it's 'This year's Das Capital' or some su

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This book is much like the Emperor's New Clothes, people are so scared about being left out if they don't like or understand it because some sandal wearing hippy in the Guardian said it's 'This year's Das Capital' or some such bollocks that they feel compelled to join some sort of unspoken club where they all jizz themselves silly over a book that effectively is 300+ pages of pure condescension.

Only buy this book if a fascist regime ever seizes control of your country and instigates a book burning policy.

Justin

I guess some people don't like this book because it's not centered around one theme. Instead, it's more about the seemingly diffuse academic work of one of the authors Steven D. Levitt (the other author is a journalist, Stephen J. Dubner). Levitt is something of an economist but more like a social scientist using the tools of Microeconomics applied to other fields that happen to catch his interest (often having something to do with cheating, corruption, crime, etc.). In the back of the book he m

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scientist using the tools of Microeconomics applied to other fields that happen to catch his interest (often having something to do with cheating, corruption, crime, etc.). In the back of the book he mentions how he considers himself a student of Thomas Schelling who is kind of like the father of Game Theory (strategy theory?), except much more of a 'man of ideas' than what one might think of when one thinks about game theory today, which is much more mathematical.

Anyway, as for the book itself, I thought it was really great. I really like what Levitt is doing as far as using the tools of Microeconomics in other fields. One of my intellectual heroes (I only have a few) is Kenneth Waltz who did the exact same thing in the field of International Relations in the '70's and wrote the seminal book

, which pretty much the single-handedly invented defensive (neo) realism. More generally, I think Economics is probably the most formalized of the social sciences and the one to which others should esteem. A lot of the Political Science field concerned with both voter behavior and how legislatures work is now pretty formalized as well, and, I, for one, think this is a good thing. I don't see how anyone could think it's not (good) unless they a) think the scientific method cannot be used to analyze human behavior; or b) have a visceral aversion to mathematical languages. Actually, I am one of the latter, but I, at least, see the value in having a formalized language to work with.

As for the book itself, there's some maybe-controversial things in there like Levitt did some work that showed that the legalization of abortion in the U.S. (Roe v. Wade) was one of the main reasons that crime in the U.S. dropped in the '90's and continues at the same rates today. He stands behind it pretty hardily though and it doesn't seem like he has a moral agenda at all. Some might argue that the best writers are those who are best able to disguise their moral agenda, but considering he writes about all kinds of not-very-serious things like how sumo wrestling in Japan is probably corrupt as far as matches go and there's stuff in there about how real estate agents sell their houses for more than they sell their customers' houses (which, may or may not be surprising), I really don't think he has a hidden pro-life agenda.

Anyway, there's a bunch of stuff in there (the book), hence the 'freak' in Freakonomics. It's well-written. It's not dry. It's written for a lay audience. I recommend it. Read it and feel the power of social science! ;-)