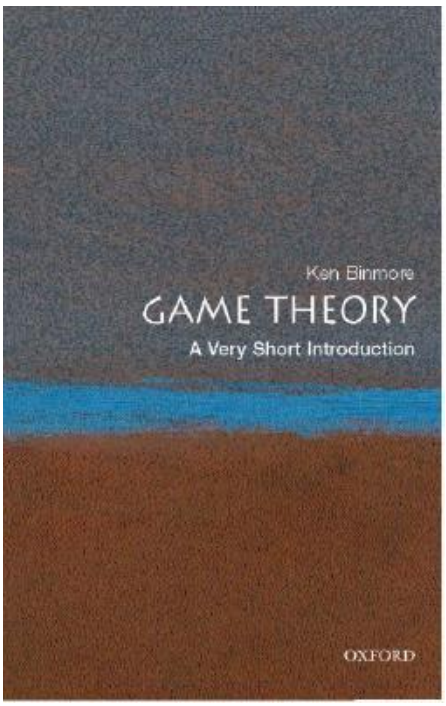

Game Theory: A Very Short Introduction

Ken Binmore

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Game Theory: A Very Short Introduction Ken Binmore
Games are everywhere: Drivers maneuvering in heavy traffic are playing a driving game. Bargain hunters bidding on eBay are playing an auctioning game. The supermarket's price for corn flakes is decided by playing an economic game. This *Very Short Introduction* offers a succinct tour of the fascinating world of game theory, a ground-breaking field that analyzes how to play games in a rational way. Ken Binmore, a renowned game theorist, explains the theory in a way that is both entertaining and non-mathematical yet also deeply insightful, revealing how game theory can shed light on everything from social gatherings, to ethical decision-making, to successful card-playing strategies, to calculating the sex ratio among bees. With mini-biographies of many fascinating, and occasionally eccentric, founders of the subject--including John Nash, subject of the movie *A Beautiful Mind*--this book offers a concise overview of a cutting-edge field that has seen spectacular successes in evolutionary biology and economics, and is beginning to revolutionize other disciplines from psychology to political science.

About the Series: Oxford's **Very Short Introductions** offers concise and original introductions to a wide range of subjects--from Islam to Sociology, Politics to Classics, and Literary Theory to History. Not simply a textbook of definitions, each volume provides trenchant and provocative--yet always balanced and complete--discussions of the central issues in a given topic. Every Very Short Introduction gives a readable evolution of the subject in question, demonstrating how it has developed and influenced society. Whatever the area of study, whatever the topic that fascinates the reader, the series has a handy and affordable guide that will likely prove indispensable.

Game Theory: A Very Short Introduction Details

Date	:	Published January 1st 2008 by Oxford University Press, USA (first published October 25th 2007)
ISBN	:	9780199218462
Author	:	Ken Binmore
Format	:	Paperback 184 pages
Genre	:	Nonfiction, Science, Economics, Mathematics, Philosophy

From Reader Review Game Theory: A Very Short Introduction for online ebook

Ilya says

a mediocre introduction to a very interesting subject. the book doesn't really flow - just gives example games without connecting the subjects well. the big problem i had with the book is that the author is way too defensive about negative perceptions of game theory, and thus wastes a lot of space trying to remedy these misconceptions. also, without math it was hard for me to internalize some of the game theoretical results.

some of the interesting points:

* discussion of auction mechanisms, with examples of US and British Telecom auctions - I wish the author went into more detail on these instead of just referencing them.

* a discussion of fallacies presented as paradoxes, which are attributed to game theory, in particular those arising from the prisoner's dilemma game. the evolutionary interpretation makes a lot of sense.

* "signalling" as a way of communicating your "type" to the other player in order to push them towards a more profitable equilibrium.

* evolutionarily stable strategies - how equilibria evolve within species.

Aya Fawzy says

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Marta Pascual Perez says

Un libro muy interesante aunque me ha decepcionado por la ausencia casi absoluta de matemáticas. El libro se ja centrafo mucho más en el razonamiento que en las mates pero, de cualquier manera ha sido miy interesante.

Mohammed-Makram says

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Dan Cohen says

I was disappointed by this introduction. The author writes with considerable style and covers some aspects well, but I think that the core principles of game theory are not explained at all well and the examples and diagrams are explained particularly poorly. Not surprisingly, the book is best when covering the author's speciality - auctions. I also feel that the author devotes too much time to arguing against the straw man of ethical objections to game theory analyses - these could be dealt with (as he does) just once and not bothered with over and over again in different parts of the book.

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Game Theory ????????????????????????
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Scott Stratford says

Pretentious garbage - this is what happens when a mathematician tries to write a book
Only read if you are autistic and think that your entire life experience comes down to a game of heads or tails.

Sarah Shahid says

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Venkatesh-Prasad says

After enjoying a couple of Very Short Introduction (VSI) books, I was hoping to enjoy this. However, it was disappointing (I gave up half way) because it kept dropping terms without introduction (e.g., sub-game).

While I agree it is hard to be thorough in short introductory books, I think using terms without introducing them by examples or definition (not for short introductory books) is worst kind of mistake in books. Now, to be fair, I might have enjoyed other VSI books as I was familiar with terms used in them as opposed to this book; however, I doubt this was the case as the book does not state any prerequisite knowledge to grok its content.

Mohammad Javad says

Ken Binmore is the right person for introducing Game Theory. He knows what he is talking about. Although, at times I felt like a short introduction like this could be easier to read. Some pages, I really needed to stop a few mins and read it a few times.

Maurizio Codogno says

Come cambiano le cose nel tempo! Quando mi capitò di vedere per la prima volta un libretto che raccontava la teoria dei giochi (una vecchissima edizione Zanichelli di fine anni '70) il tutto era senz'ombra di dubbio matematica. Questo libretto della meritoria serie OUP "A Very Short Introduction" è un testo di economia,

con una rapida incursione nel campo biologico. Il teorema del minimax, ai tempi al centro della trattazione, è buttato lì quasi come un inciso; gli equilibri di Nash, che allora non erano neanche trattati, sono rapidamente spiegati già nelle prime pagine, e sono visti quasi come un postulato, mentre si lavora molto sui giochi a informazione non completa, avvicinandosi spesso all'introduzione della casualità.
Una trattazione di questo tipo risulta sicuramente più appetibile per chi è allergico alla matematica, e che trova un testo abbastanza discorsivo e senza troppe formule; il rovescio della medaglia è che ho trovato piuttosto difficile seguire i vari teoremi, che sono stati dimostrati in una maniera pericolosamente simile al metodo "handwaving", e che i vari esempi di giochi a due persone sono sì minimali e distinti, ma proprio perché minimali rimangono spesso difficili da confrontare al volo. Forse qualche esercizio svolto in più sarebbe utile per impratichirsi di più della materia; ma per essere una introduzione non si deve pretendere chissà che cosa.
Ultima nota per gli anglofobi: la traduzione italiana del libro dovrebbe uscire per Codice entro fine anno.
(anche sul mio blog, http://xmau.com/notiziole/arch/200810... - ho scritto una recensione più classica su Galileo, http://www.galileonet.it/recensioni/1...)

Andrew says

I will admit my head hurts after this book and no its not a bad thing. I will start though by saying that to me mathematics is about numbers and not concepts - my line of work and experience makes me see numbers not symbols or concepts - so I will admit that I have had to work at this book. But why read something that is hard work - well for me the concept is fascinating - game theory has been quoted, mis-interpreted and yes even abused so many times it was about time to see what it was all about - and the "Very short introduction" book is a great way of achieving that without reducing me to a gibbering wreck.

The book tires to explain the various concepts that go to make up Game Theory without overloading the reader with loads of mathematics - wherever possible illustrations are used giving real life examples to an idea or concept. The book also gives a little bit of history of where the various theories came from both good and bad and shows a little illumination of where the theories have been used.

This has not been an easy book to read- but for me (who is notorious for asking too many questions at the best of times) it helps answer the question about why Game Theory is seen as being so important and how what can often be seen as a high concept actually does have relevance (and even power) in our society today. This book is not for everyone and I will admit I will have to return to it to understand it more in the future but for maths I did find this accessible and interesting, I just need to stop now as my brain is full.

Darwin8u says

"...game theory isn't able to solve all the word's problems, because it only works when people play games rationally."
--Ken Bilmore, Game Theory, A Very Short Introduction

Ken Binmore's Very Short Introduction (VSI #173) to Game Theory is my second selection of Oxford's huge, gigantic VSI series (quickly approaching 500 books). It was probably closer to 3.5 stars, but mainly

because of the structural problems with surveying Game Theory in less than 200 pages. At less than 200 pages Binmore is able to break down Game Theory into chapters on chance, time, conventions, reciprocity, information, auctions, evolutionary biology, bargaining and coalitions, puzzles and paradoxes.

For the beginner, the problem with this book will be how quickly the book expects the reader to pick up on some of the accepted standards of game theory thinking and explanations (boxes, game trees, subgames, etc). For the non-beginner, the book sometimes skims over areas that the reader (or perhaps, just this reader) might want to wade deeper (more maths) into. This is the inherent tension in all the VSI. It is the dance, the game of the series. You have to be able to present your information in a package designed to be broad in scope, but small in application. Binmore does a good job, however. I was very satisfied with the progression of the book, and loved getting a bit more info on such game theory notables as Nash, Von Neumann, etc.

I was also excited by the whole chapter devoted to game theory and evolutionary biology. It took me back to reading Robert Wright's Nonzero: The Logic of Human Destiny and The Moral Animal: Why We Are the Way We Are: The New Science of Evolutionary Psychology, and The Evolution of God. This book also was good in giving me a couple more GT books to read in the future on cooperation.

Jay Little says

While short, it's also to the point and lives up to it's title. It is a very short introduction to game theory, but it hits the important notes and gives just enough information to whet the whistle and prepare the reader for more complex, detailed books discussing game theory... such as the rest of Ken Binmore's books.

Think of it not so much as a primer or cliff notes version of Game Theory, but more of a sampler appetizer platter -- you get to try a little bit of everything before deciding if you want to commit to a larger portion.

Walaa Fathi says

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