

Development as Freedom



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DEVELOPMENT AS FREEDOM

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GRIN Verlag Jun 2011, 2011. Taschenbuch. Book Condition: Neu. 210x148x2 mm. This item is printed on demand - Print on Demand Neuware - Seminar paper from the year 2009 in the subject Economics - Economic Cycle and Growth, grade: 1,0, Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz, language: English, abstract: About 2500 years ago the brilliant Greek philosopher Aristotle surveyed in his Nicomachean Ethics the ends to which our conduct should be directed. He concluded with deep insight that wealth is obviously not the good we seek, for the sole purpose it serves is to provide the means of getting something else [emphasis added] (Aristotle, 1975, p. 31). Until recent times, economists struggle for a commonly accepted primary end as an overall policy goal. The ideas range from income and wealth maximization (often expressed in the per capita GNP) over the pursuit of happiness as an unalienable right in the US Declaration of Independence of 1776 to well-known measures of something else such as the Gross National Happiness in Bhutan (cf. DiTella and MacCulloch, 2008). Another, indeed very famous, proposal originates from the work of Amartya Sen. He suggests to define freedom as the primary goal for societies and to measure the achievements in the space of feasible functioning, the so-called capability set. In this paper I seek to present Sen's theoretical conception of development as freedom and to provide both the background for tracing the process of origin as well as some exemplary applications to give an idea of the impact of his vision on economic problems. I will focus on the theoretical structure of his conception and will not go into details regarding empirical and historical data that can easily be found in standard literature on development economics. The theoretical background to Sen's approach, however, is not that intensively discussed and my aim is to contribute to the understanding of the theoretical structure of his...

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