

Text and Image from UCD–NUI Dublin Website

Actor Milo O'Shea; Classical Musician, Alfred Brendel; and Nobel Economist, Professor Amartya Sen (Right) honoured by UCD

At the ceremony which took place on 15 June 2007, UCD honoured Professor Amartya Sen in recognition of his work on famine, human development theory, welfare economics, the underlying mechanisms of poverty, and political liberalism. Professor Sen was conferred with an Honorary Doctor of Laws.



In 1981, Professor Sen published ‘Poverty and Famines: An essay on entitlement and deprivation.’ In this book he showed that famine was not the result of a lack of food but rather the result of inequalities of the mechanisms of food distribution, explained Professor Morgan Kelly, UCD School of Economics.

However, Sen’s revolutionary contribution to late twentieth-century development economics was the concept of ‘capability.’ Using this concept he argued that governments should be measured against the concrete capabilities of their citizens, because top-down development would always win over human rights as long as the definition of the terms remained in any doubt.

Today, Professor Sen has turned his attentions towards understanding the nature of violence in society. According to Professor Sen, the illusion of singular identity is skillfully cultivated and activated by the commanders of persecution and carnage.