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Profile Project: Amartya Sen

As a food and farm studies enthusiast, I am used to studying stories of farmers and rural landowners, environmental advocates, and those who use farming and subsistence to gain independence and autonomy. Many of these narratives center on people who are deeply connected to their land and feel the desire to protect the environment because they believe in its intrinsic value. In my experience, these stories are usually told through the lenses of history, anthropology, sociology, and other social sciences. However, I have to admit that I have noticed that the field of economics and other related disciplines are often left out of this conversation. As a student immersed in the humanities and social sciences, I have grown aware of how the topics I study in college are often placed at the end of some imaginary spectrum in which economics is at the other end. Yet, I think that this is a false dichotomy.

One of the figures who disproves this spectrum most is the economist Amartya Sen. Sen was born in present-day India in 1933 and is a world-renowned academic and scholar. He has written extensively on the field of welfare economics and has centered social policy in his economic theories. As a young boy, Sen witnessed the 1943 Bengal Famine in which 3 million people died, prompting him to study famine and food security. His work has influenced countless policymakers, governments, and international organizations and its future impact is yet to be told. Sen is a perfect example of the value of incorporating the field of economics into the humanitarian disciplines of food and farming and I think he should be included in any conversation about hunger and food policy today.

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Additional Links

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EN5esbvAt-w&t=25s>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5xc4CXqaeA>

<https://www.howtopronounce.com/amartya-sen>