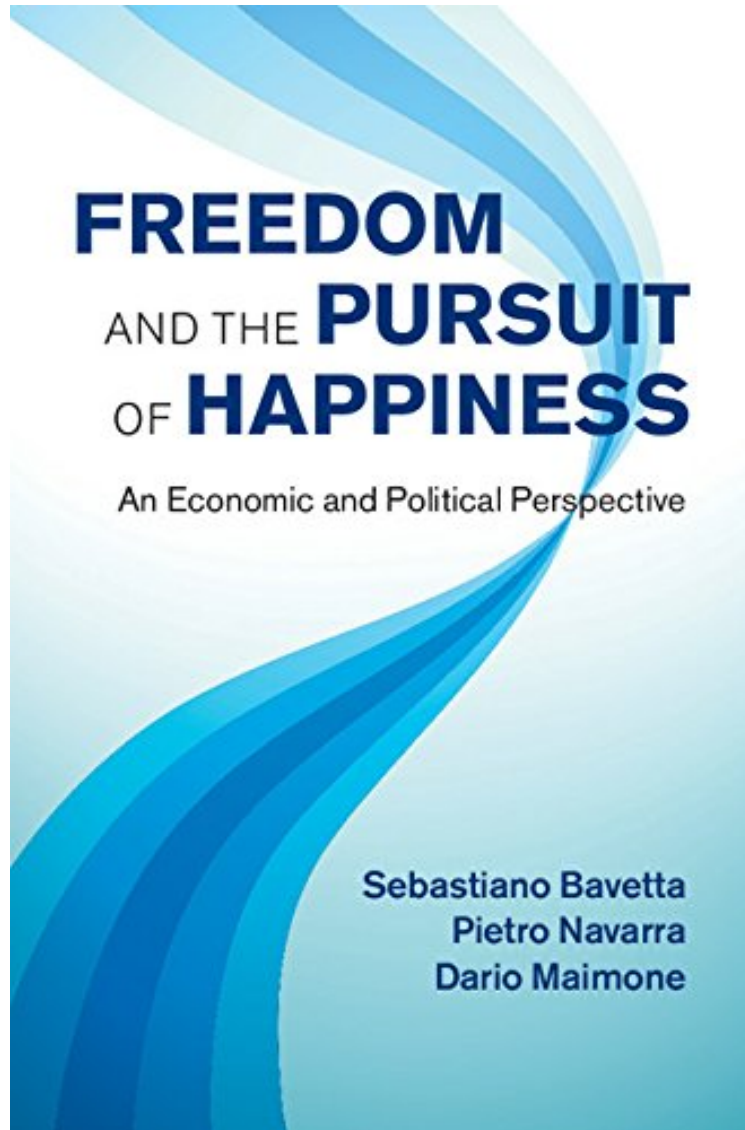


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Freedom and the Pursuit of Happiness: An Economic and Political Perspective

Sebastiano Bavetta, Pietro Navarra, Dario Maimone

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This book is about the relationship between different concepts of freedom and happiness. The book's authors

distinguish three concepts for which an empirical measure exists: opportunity to choose (negative freedom), capability to choose (positive freedom), and autonomy to choose (autonomy freedom). They also provide a comprehensive account of the relationship between freedom and well-being by comparing channels through which freedoms affect quality of life. The book also explores whether the different conceptions of freedom complement or replace each other in the determination of the level of well-being. In so doing, the authors make freedoms a tool for policy making and are able to say which conception is the most effective for well-being, as circumstances change. The results have implications for a justification of a free society: maximizing freedoms is good for its favorable consequences upon individual well-being, a fundamental value for the judgment of human advantage.

"The authors take the concept of freedom beyond anything that has been done before. They start with an appealing philosophical concept, translate it into a neat formal definition, give it a convincing operationalization, and put the whole thing to work in an intriguing empirical analysis of autonomy, freedom, and the welfare state. Bavetta, Navarra, and Maimone have given economics its freedom, and freedom its economics. This compelling book will fascinate readers, whether they are theoretically, empirically, practically, or philosophically inclined." Cristina Bicchieri, S. J. Patterson Harvie Professor of Philosophy and Psychology, University of Pennsylvania

"Freedom and the Pursuit of Happiness: An Economic and Political Perspective addresses fundamental questions in democratic theory from an empirical as well as a philosophical perspective. It focuses on freedom as autonomous options for choice and makes use of cross-national survey data at the individual level as well as aggregate economic data. In significantly extending the "human capabilities" approach of Amartya Sen, it provides an important corrective to the ideology-laden thinking found in many attempts by economists to measure economic freedom. By making central the perceived quality of life of ordinary citizens, it avoids treating economic freedom as synonymous with limited government or with measures of economic success that pay no attention to distributional issues." Bernard Grofman, Jack W. Peltason Chair of Democratic Studies, University of California, Irvine

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