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Benjamin Radcliff
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The Political Economy of Human Happiness

How Voters' Choices Determine the Quality of Life

This book is devoted to applying the data, methods, and theories of contemporary social science to the question of how political outcomes in democratic societies determine the quality of life that citizens experience. Benjamin Radcliff seeks to provide an objective answer to the perennial debate between Left and Right over what kind of public policies best contribute to human beings leading positive and rewarding lives. The book thus offers an empirical answer to this perpetual question, relying on the same canons of reason and evidence required of any other issue amenable to study through social-scientific means. The analysis focuses on the consequences for human well-being of three specific political issues: the generosity of the social safety net and the size of government more generally, the degree to which workers are organized, and the extent to which workers and consumers are protected by government regulation of the economy. The results indicate that in each instance, the program of the Left best contributes to citizens leading more satisfying lives – and that the benefits of greater happiness due to such policies accrue to everyone in society, rich and poor alike.

Benjamin Radcliff is a Professor in the Department of Political Science and is affiliated with the Rooney Center for the Study of American Democracy and the Higgins Labor Studies Program at the University of Notre Dame. He has also held academic positions at Rutgers University and Vanderbilt University. He has been a Fellow at the Merriam Lab for Analytic Political Research at the University of Illinois, the Robert Penn Warren Center for the Study of the Humanities, and the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Studies. Radcliff has published extensively in the leading peer-reviewed journals in political science, including the *American Political Science Review*, the *American Journal of Political Science*, the *Journal of Politics*, *Perspectives on Politics*, and the *British Journal of Political Science*, among others. His work has also appeared in prominent journals in sociology (including *Social Forces*), labor studies, and public policy.

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