

# SOCIAL COHESION DAYS

# New perspectives: Happiness is not individual by Benjamin Radcliff, University of Notre Dame



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## **Happiness**

(across all income groups) is politically produced through:

#### The Welfare State (and

the general level of governmental consumption)

Reduces poverty and increases living standards, reduces market insecurities, reduces social pathologies associated with poverty, promotes agency, improves physical health.

### Labor Organization

Provides members greater job satisfaction and security, gives workers more power in the workplace and politics, raises the wage/benefit floor for most workers, and provides political support for the welfare state and labor market regulations. educes

### Labor Market Regulations

Protects workers by setting maximum hours, minimum earnings, ease/cost of dismal, worker safety, paid vacation/sick/family leave, etc.

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We need only imagine the profound psychological distress that comes from unemployment to understand how emotionally rewarding the finding of a job means to those who need one; we need only imagine the loneliness and isolation that comes from wishing to love and be loved to appreciate how fulfilling the finding of love can be. Now, consider that the effect of moving from the least to the most decommodifying [generous] welfare state would produce three times the improvement in one's quality of life than that achieved by escaping from unemployment. Or consider that this same difference in the welfare state would provide one with twice the increase in life satisfaction that finding a life-partner would. Seen in this light, it seems difficult to overstate the significance of the welfare state as an agent for human happiness.

• Radcliff, The Political Economy of Human Happiness (p. 129).



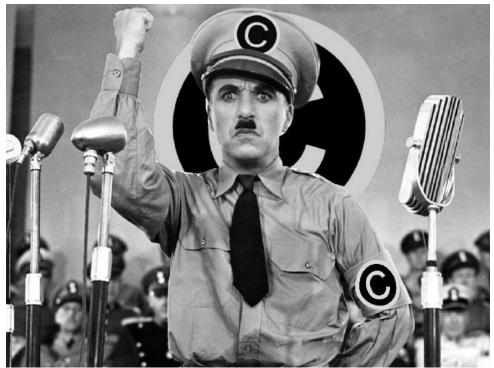






The Great Dictator (1941)

Written and Directed by Charlie Chaplin



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