

# From protest to progress? Why addressing global discontent is essential to build back better from the COVID-19 pandemic with Alexander Pick, Head of New Development Policies and Institutions at the OECD Development Centre

This is a written transcription of Alexander Pick's Global Development Institute webinar. You can find a video or audio of the lecture below.

**YouTube video:** <https://youtu.be/XQEOEcqG70U>

**Soundcloud audio:** <https://soundcloud.com/globaldevinst/why-addressing-global-discontent-is-essential-to-build-back-better-from-covid-19-with-alexander-pick>

This report is part of the perspectives on global development series which has been running for about a decade, since 2010. And this one is called 'Perspectives on global development: from protest to progress?' which hopefully gives you some kind of sense of what we were trying to achieve with the report, and there it is on your slide. And also what is just a wonderful photograph of the unrest in Chile in 2019, and it's something we'll come back to later in this lecture.

So the purpose of the report is to examine the causes and consequences of discontent and what can be done to alleviate it. Now as Antonio says it's a big report and I'm going to focus more on the diagnosis than the response. I think this is where I'm on...well I think part of the message about the response is that it has to be, there is no particular...there's no clear answer to what has to be done; responses have to evolve. However on the diagnosis, I think I'm on slightly surer footing by providing you with evidence, and also to propose a framework to you. The report was prompted by a surge in political instability since the global financial crisis, probably starting with the Arab Spring, which certainly attracted the Development Centre's attention, because Tunisia was a country which had such strong, or stable at least, macroeconomic fundamentals; but suddenly there was this explosion of unrest which spread very quickly across the region and arguably was one of the motivating factors behind the occupy wall street protests and then what has really continued to be, and I'll show you in a second what it looks like, a sort of rise in political instability. And this actually continued in 2020 and in 2021, where we assumed while putting the report together that this surge that we saw in 2019, there were protests simultaneously across almost every Latin American country for example, we assumed that this would slow in 2020, due to the Covid pandemic but actually what has happened is that the number of demonstrations still rose in that year, despite the fact that for three or four months, or longer in some cases, people were largely confined to their homes and of course it has continued in 2021 with some dramatic events at the start of the year in the United States and really continuing across the year.

But we aren't necessarily just looking at this kind of political instability or rather we wanted to look beyond it, to a phenomenon that was perhaps both more easier to generalise but that's hard to grasp, and so we hit on the idea of discontent which we defined as a "collective frustration emerging

from feelings of vulnerability, injustice and unmet expectations". So it's already...where we're starting from a term that is not...it's not immediately obvious to people what discontent means but it was a way in which we could enter this topic and address the kind of themes we wanted to. But you know your thoughts on this topic, on this choice would be most welcome.

We saw evidence of this discontent in advanced and developing economies alike over the last decade. Of course some I've already mentioned; the protests, the Arab Spring, the protests in Latin America, and in other parts of the developing world there have been a large-scale protest over the past decade continuing today. But at the same time actually when we started putting... writing this, the real issue was populism in western countries and the emergence of ethno-nationalist parties and really a sort of perceived crisis in liberal democracy which is obviously continuing to this day. So while we are predominantly thinking about developing countries here, we are also...you know a lot of the evidence in the report, a lot of the thinking, comes from advanced economies as well.

What we also posit is that the causes of discontent go beyond economic and material concerns; it's discontentment as a psychological and a sociological phenomenon, with strong political dimensions both nationally and also internationally. So we sort of uh barge into the realm of international relations, political science, sociology, psychology, and anthropology. And as I said, you know we don't necessarily have legitimacy in any or all of these uh spheres but we wanted to convey how complex this phenomenon is. But also I think increasingly it's appreciated uh in academia, in organizations where we work as well... but you know multi-dimensional approaches are increasingly key to understanding the complex challenges we confront uh...and so this...actually this report or this presentation today isn't going to be so much on Covid-19, it's somewhat uh retrospective but Covid-19 was very much...you know in our minds when we were writing it and what the report tries to do is to explain how...the how of building back better.

So a lot of people think...have recognized that building back better means environmental policies, it means addressing inequality, it means various different policies but beneath these are extremely complex political economy challenges as Antonio mentioned. And really we thought that by understanding discontent and helping policymakers perhaps to address it, this would enhance the chances of these changes actually taking hold and being effective.

So as I say this is...today's presentation is going to be based around a series of key propositions or ideas. I don't necessarily expect you to buy them all but I would be...i'm very interested to discuss them and I think uh these inform the report as a whole. So we argue that discontent has common causes and characteristics in different settings and that it is thus possible to apply a general framework for understanding discontent; but not necessarily predicting it. That's I think uh a work for...well, the very complexity militates against any kind of prediction of what form discontent might take, when it might occur, and what might be the spark for it. Uh...we also argue that subjective well-being and social cohesion matter much more than we think. By we, I really mean you know typical discussions around development and economic policy perhaps more broadly. We also...I think that discontent demands a rethink not only about the journey but also the destination of development.

So our story starts around 1990 which is the sort of the high water-mark...the end of the cold war, victory of liberal democracy as the model to export globally as a means of ensuring global stability and peace, but also the emergence of market, uh...not perhaps the market fundamentalism as we have today, but certainly importance of the value of markets as a key driver of development. Uh...we also argue that in developing countries the sources of discontent correspond to traps which is our, the Development Centre, what we call these kind of structural bottlenecks to inclusive and sustainable growth. We also argue and we won't, I won't really touch on this today because it opens a whole new area but the international dimensions of discontent are extensive and demand a rethink of global institutions. And finally, and this is a point i'll try and convey today but I think is not necessarily easy in the time available, but I think one of the things that defines discontent in this area, in this era, and makes it such a concern is that societies are finding it difficult to address the cause of discontent because the basis for collective action is absent, and because it's increasingly clear we don't even agree on the uh...the nature of a problem much less how to deal with it and i'll come back to that point later.

So first of all allow me to make the case for discontent, and this is based on the Albert Hirschman model of exit and voice which are your two options if you're unhappy with the situation, either you leave or you express your voice and try and create change and loyalty, which captures people's commitment to a particular cause or a particular system and that'll influence their decision whether or not to leave or whether or not to express their voice. And this you know works for consumers but it also works for countries so it's a very neat model. And so for voice obviously there's protests in the most obvious form of it; people taking to the streets and exercising their democratic right. So, important to note that we don't necessarily see protesters as anything abnormal; they're a part of a legitimate tool in a functioning democracy and so there's no insinuation, there's no attempt to stigmatize protest but nonetheless we do see protests having a certain way to certain importance and being indicative of a certain level of dissatisfaction perhaps with other democratic processes.

And so what we see is a quite sharp rise in a number of protests globally since...from the global financial crisis onwards and of course it's a bit choppy, but there's a clear peak in 2015 and in all cases there's been, across all regions, has been a noticeable trend upwards. But...you know protests in and of themselves are an extremely well-studied field and there's also different types of protests. So a very obvious distinction is the distinction between violent and non-violent protests. They are a different strategy, they're attempting to perhaps achieve a different result from the government and they certainly propose government with a different challenge. And just to give you a sense of how these trends might have changed in different regions, so here you have Africa and Asia Pacific. In Africa you see on the left-hand side, this sharp rise in protests over the last 30 years or so, but what you also see is an increasing number of protests being non-violent, or a higher proportion rather, being non-violent than violent.

Over the same period there's been a shift away from political protest towards economic protest. So you see the nature of the protest is changing, and the conversation with the government is changing. And in some cases that's a sign of a maturing of democracies in Africa. Uh, in Asia Pacific on the other hand, there perhaps hasn't been such a sharp increase but what there has been is...you know there hasn't necessarily been a switch towards a more peaceful form of protest, and the

proportion of violent protesters has increased. But as a footnote to that, actually Africa is the one region in 2020 where violent protests increase; violent political protests and also the number of fatalities in these protests was also up, unlike any other place in the world. So that suggests perhaps a worrying reversal in Africa.

Now we've had voice, the other approach is as I say 'exit'. So this is when you perhaps feel so disenchanted or disaffected with the political system that you simply step back; you don't vote, you decide that none of the parties offer you anything. You refuse really to exercise the basic democratic responsibility of casting your ballot and we see there's this kind of long-term decline in elections, or voter turnout rather, across all regions, which is...you know accelerated over the course of the 1980s; it is not...continued to decline in the 2000s it's not really a great advert for the third wave of democracy. And then we have loyalty.

So loyalty suggests that, you know...that changes the calculus to what extent are people going to protest, or they're going to opt out of the political system, or maybe they'll just...they have confidence in the government so they'll see how this plays out. And what is very worrying in many parts of the world, most parts of the world indeed apart from in Asia, is that there have been uh...there's been a sharp decline in confidence in the government, in the last ten years or so, ten years between 2006 and 2018. Now because this is post-Covid, you know these figures almost certainly will have changed, but I don't think we can necessarily be sure they'll have changed for the better and there is certainly this reduction in trust and in confidence in governments in many parts of the world. And then if we see, look at it from a different a time frame, or a different level rather, here's the system as a whole; confidence in democracy. In Africa we see confidence in democracy has stayed more or less constant; whereas in Latin America there's been a you know...there was a 10 point decline in confidence in democracy across the last uh 25 years or so, as a result of which barely half of the population on average across Latin America believes that you're better off; democracy is the best system that's out there, which is quite a dramatic decline.

Okay, so uh...that's you know a very quick tour of our making the case for discontent; these downward trajectories on a number of indicators. Now I'm going to propose our framework for examining it. It's not mind-blowingly complicated by any stretch but one thing that we were keen to avoid is this kind of um...because let's be honest this is a very, everyone has a theory as to why their country has gone wrong or why people aren't happy. There's a lot out there, and a lot of it sort of falls into the trap of uh post-hoc ergo prop you know... there is an inequality therefore that must be the cause of discontent; or there is you know...everyone has their pet theory and it's very very hard to really sort of join, make that that link clearly; why does inequality for example lead to discontent? And it's not to say it doesn't but I think you know it behooves us as social scientists to to try and understand these kind of relationships much better than perhaps is the case. So our framework is as I say not very complicated. It separates three different factors; so you have the spark which is the immediate cause of visible discontent; and then you have outside that the grievances, which is the sort of the immediate context. This is the fuel if you will for discontent related to day-to-day struggles and injustices, and often these are kind of materially based. And then within these grievances in turn have to be understood within, in terms of the structural factors that are

fundamental, you know, how society is organized, and imbalances in how power and resources are shared. These are huge questions around the social contract and the relationships citizens have with themselves; the inclusiveness of the economy, these are a huge questions and um...but they also are you know, they're very historical, they're almost...they're infinite. But if you don't try and understand these more structural factors then any attempt to understand there is a discontent of the day, or even how a particular protest came about, is always going to be somewhat limited. The sort of paradigm or, i'm not sure I ever know the right word, but the sort of the perfect example of our framework, it's almost too perfect, was provided by the unrest in Chile in October 2019.

So as i'm sure you know there, what happened...what started the protest was because of a very small increase in metro fares. These metro increase irritated a great deal of the people who used the metro [and] who started avoiding it. They just sort of invaded metro stations, jumped on trains, didn't pay their fares, uh the police treated, were very heavy-handed, uh...the violence flared and it spread outside the capital of Santiago, nationwide and very quickly. The protests were about a lot more than the price of metro fares.

One of the things that people were unhappy about was the low value of pensions, and the low minimum wage, but especially pensions which are privately run in Chile and have been delivering a very low retirement income for people, for generations; even though the Chilean model is sort of hailed as, or for a while was hailed as, the shining light of pension reform in the 1990s. So here i'm asking whether the cause of the El Estallido, as it was called in Chile 'the explosion', was it the increase in metro fares? Or was it the low value of pensions? Or was it the poor quality of public services? So you know education and health are...people are very unsatisfied with the quality of those, and also other public services as well, so high in cost-low in quality. Or the fourth option is the the Pinochet era constitution. So it was agreed in 1980, while Pinochet was in charge, and then in 1990 it sort of took effect. And what it did was, that constitution sort of set in, even after Pinochet left, it made sure that his economic model but also his sort of, his government's vision for society more broadly, which was extremely market driven, neoliberal...it made it, it kept it in place, it's very difficult for successive governments to change very much. And so, I mean you can't uh...this banner is absolutely perfect at the protest; "It's not about 30 pesos [which was the increase in metro fares] it's about 30 years, you know this long-held injustice that was enshrined, codified by the Pinochet era constitution. And so the answer to the question is; well all of those. All of these were factors behind uh this explosion, this outburst in violence. But the only way in which Chile could really move forward, was by fixing the constitution. So the referendum was held, the population voted overwhelmingly for a new constitution, and then this year uh voters were again asked who they would like to write this constitution. And what was fascinating is that they by and large voted for political outsiders. No-one from the, or only a very small proportion of members of this constituent assembly, will come from the mainstream parties; whether they be left, or centre, or right-wing. This was a wholesale rejection of a political system, of an economic system, almost of a social system. So this is uh...you know this is what we we're trying to convey through this framework, of the understanding these kind of structural grievances and then the spark and how the fix often bears absolutely no relation to the spark itself. And by, for the record, the president did try and said okay

we won't raise the cost of the metro and we'll improve pensions but you know that wasn't, it wasn't nearly enough.

Okay so these grievances let's...I'll move quickly through these um...because they're fairly obvious you know, but a point I think to start from is that to understand the impacts of the higher discontent, and instead of assuming uh one thing or another, looking at slow GDP growth, or high levels of unemployment, low wage growth; all of these are important but it's very helpful just to listen to people. And so we spent, we looked a lot at regional opinion surveys 'Latino Barometer', the 'African Barometer', there's some very good surveys in Gallup of course, and what we saw was that economic concerns are typically top of people's worries. So for example, only 12% of Latin Americans considered the economic situation in their country to be good or very good in 2018; that's down from 25% in 2013, and this is pre-Covid, so one can only imagine how they view their situation now. Equally, 65% of African respondents in 2019-20, again prior to Covid, felt their country was going in the right direction versus uh sorry, going in the wrong direction, followed by 50% in 2011- 2013. So there was this big increase in Africa of people who thought their country is just not going the right way. But it's not just about economics, people we see want better public services, greater security, better governance, as well as more voice in the way their country is run. And we can, it goes without saying that Covid-19 has exacerbated these grievances.

So when I say...you know, the subjective indicators are key, this one, I love this chart uh, this one is from Gallup and you know, it tells such a compelling story. So this is the proportion of people living comfortably, or getting by, so this is, if you think about the people who don't count, these people are the rest; everyone else isn't getting by, is effectively poor, impoverished, isn't making ends meet on a daily basis, and you can imagine the stress that's associated with that. So there are two things to notice; for example the extremely low level in sub-Saharan Africa. That means that less than 40% of people in sub-Saharan Africa were making ends meet in 2018 and that's lower than in 2007, even though economic growth over that period should have raised incomes, well did raise national incomes, quite significantly. Equally there's also a decline in Latin America and in the Caribbean such that more than 40% of the population wasn't, didn't feel that they were getting by in 2018. And when you think about this figure compared with the story we're told by extreme poverty data, it's obviously nothing to do with this. The extreme poverty has fallen from 35% in 1990 to 10% in 2015, so we would expect many fewer people to be feeling poor across the world, and indeed a very small proportion. And yet what's happened is quite a high proportion of people feel poor still, and more people were feeling poor in 2018 than were in 2007, which I thought was very striking.

And here's another thing I think to pay attention to, and it's people's expectations. So this graph just shows you uh...people were asked in 2014 how much on a scale/ladder of one to five, or one to ten, how much your life will improve in the next five years? And you see so people in sub-Saharan Africa were very optimistic; they thought their life would be miles better five years from now. People in Latin America as well, they thought their lives would be better, and across the world generally people had high expectations. The actual change, well things improved a little bit in sub-Saharan Africa but really went downhill in Latin America; people thought their lives were less good five years on than they had been in 2014. So what does that do? It's not just about how you feel today, it's you know...the mental, the frustration of being further behind than you were five years previously.

And just a very quick look at governance. Here we have around 50% of the population are irritated, or 50% of the population also in Latin America feel that corruption is pervasive in government. So that really does reduce your confidence that the government will fix these uh...will improve, play a role in improving livelihoods. So then we go, so we have the grievances and now we move quickly to the structural factors.

So here, inequalities, atomization and polarization. You sort of capture it but uh...obviously there's a structural practice, as I said they're everything; they're historical, they're social uh...you need a polymath approach to really grasp it and infinity of time. But we generalize these as being related to deeper rooted systemic issues that sort of, the default lines within society, and this is why discontent cannot be adequately addressed by matching policy to grievance; pensions are low, we'll raise your pensions. It's not necessarily likely to work and often the question is not whether a specific government delivers, but whether a system delivers. So it's not necessarily an administration that you know people have lost faith in because an election might change that, but rather it's any hope that any government would be able to to fix their problems. And also these systems are not just economic, they're also political, and social, and they're not confined to the national level. In an increasingly interconnected world there are many factors that can reinforce imbalances and bottlenecks at a national level. And when we understand, one of the things that emerged while we were examining this phenomenon is how, it was quite striking, is that often discontent is concentrated amongst the middle classes and in middle income countries. So these are people who have achieved a certain uh...have advanced, have improved their living standards perhaps, perhaps they're among the people who are no longer considered poor and they're in countries that have experienced a certain amount of growth. And then typically they've experienced some kind of uh...impediment that has stopped them advancing further. And so to raise Hirschman again, he has this wonderful tunnel metaphor which I probably don't have time to go in for now, but it's worth looking into, perhaps in the Q and A.

So structural factors, well here's a short list uh...just to give you some idea of the kind of issues we were looking at. So there's inequality, there's deterioration of interpersonal trust, loss of support networks, decline in civic engagement, rising stress levels and anomie, and these really kind of speak to an individual's kind of isolation, and the fragmentation of society. And then you have the culture wars, political dysfunction, and new technologies which sort of reinforce the polarization; yes they fragment and they atomize, but it's also that the polarization of opinion that is so dangerous in these times. And because we're talking about development, very quickly these sort of structural weaknesses overlap with, as I said, what we call these 'development traps' around low productivity, weak institutions, social vulnerability, and unsustainable environmental models all of which get extremely difficult to address. Not only do these exacerbate fragmentation because invariably there are people who are better off and those who aren't, and sort of closing the gap between them is extremely hard because of these bottlenecks, but they're also a source of discontent; they sort of exacerbate...they make it very difficult to achieve the reforms needed to address the grievances.

But these traps uh...point to the importance of better quality growth. So the report points out that in some ways we've never had it so good in that GDP grew around the world almost uninterruptedly for 30 years after 1990. So why has discontent risen over this period?

Well in the report we identify the sort of the usual suspects of: rising inequality [and] uneven improvements in living standards. So yes there have been improvements in some, but not necessarily others. And also living standards have followed the same kind of inequality; so for some part of the population they have improved but in other intersections much less so. And then a big one which is the deterioration of working conditions which has created ug...well I mean i'm a big fan of the concept of the 'precariat' by Guy Standing, and I think it means different things in different places of course; so when you're thinking about developing countries perhaps it's less about people in insecure jobs in the gig economy and more about the working poor; people trapped in informality or child labour. But there is this sense that a small portion of the population has got very rich off the back of a large proportion of the workforce that is suffering from increasingly bad conditions. And it is worth noting that even prior to Kobe, the number of people in child labour had risen for the first time, and indeed 10% of children globally were engaged in child labour which is a terrible statistic. And then of course, perhaps most urgently, we have the environmental catastrophe that's associated, the rise in emissions is so closely linked to GDP growth, and it's not just obviously about emissions it's about biodiversity loss and a general kind of assault on natural systems.

So I, you know i'm conscious of time, so I want to move quickly through these. A point of about inequality here though, I mean as I mentioned previously, inequality is often cited as the foremost cause of discontent and it's very, you know it's obviously there, but you know what i'd encourage us to do is better understand what form of inequality we're talking about. So income inequality, great for us to measure, sorry that point is slightly confusing, it's you know we can as economists understand income inequality because you take your household survey and, you know, it's very neat; but for anyone in the real world it's extremely difficult to understand income inequality because you don't know how much that your neighbour owns and often you have a very bad sense of how much you own relative to the population as a whole and the Gini coefficient is not particularly intuitive. Moreover income inequality isn't necessarily a source of discontent. People might just say "well you know, that person's has got ahead because I live in a fair society, and and they work very hard. They had a great idea whatever it might be...I'm happy with my income." It's always dangerous to assume that people won't themselves understand some kind of stratification. However, what research shows is that inequality of opportunity really does irritate people a great deal, and that's much more closely linked to discontent than income inequality, and the inequality of opportunity is really another way of saying social mobility. And when we think of social mobility it's a nice term because it conveys the broader implications of this, because there's always political and social factors behind people's capacity to move and there's a real danger, and I think it's exacerbated, polarization within societies, to pretend that everything is a meritocracy, so people who've got ahead assume that they've got ahead because they are brilliant and anyone who's left behind, well they don't owe them anything because they're less brilliant and they didn't work as hard. So this sort of, you know, this notion of meritocracy is important for people to believe in but it's very dangerous it's a false variety thereof.

The other thing we wanted to draw attention to in the report is how much more relative deprivation is felt more strongly by groups than by individuals. So an individual who looks at the neighbours, or his or her neighbour, and thinks well they've got a nicer car and a nicer house, they'll more than likely blame themselves. However if they see that their entire neighborhood, or their entire city, has

fallen behind and they see that there is a group to which they belong that is somehow disadvantaged, that's when, you know, this often turns to kind of social mobilization. And this collective inequality can be: ethnic, or geographical, or gender-based, and often it's a combination of factors that make it extremely difficult to unpick.

And the importance of relative deprivation doesn't necessarily weaken, it doesn't necessarily mean we shouldn't worry about absolute deprivation, but studies of absolute deprivation generally suggest that they're there even when food or fuel is suddenly very expensive, and people are worried about how they'll get through the next day. There is more often than not some kind of sense of grievance or frustration of broader inequalities.

And so just [to] give you a sense of structural factors, interpersonal trust is extremely low in developing countries including in Africa and Latin America. So here you see barely 20% of people, and often much lower, in Africa believe that other people can generally be trusted, and in Latin America also, there's been declines over this period which is quite difficult to believe. But the general point is of course there's a terrible basis for social cohesion, it's a terrible basis for economic development because so much trust is the lubricant is so much of what underpins the processes that underpin development and so this combined with the low trust in government really points to an extremely low social, a weak social contract, not only in terms of you know the relationship between the state and society, but also relations between different parts of society and I think that's one of the things we wanted to bring out; the social contract isn't just about what the state owes you or you or the state, but also what people owe each other.

We also see stress levels rising sharply, especially in sub-Saharan Africa for example. So almost 50% of the global population, in many regions close to 50% of people are living with stress on a daily basis.

And then we have the culture wars which probably take us into an area which is extremely rich and extremely important, but I would say that the most important point here is that, as I mentioned earlier, these kinds of...this competition for recognition and power between different groups, and indeed dwindling resources in the Covid-era, are generating culture wars that are based around different values and outlooks that can usually live side by side, but in the current context find it increasingly hard to live with each other, and this makes it extremely difficult to agree on even the most fundamental challenges; so Covid-19, whether it be mask wearing or climate change, does this even exist? We're still having these conversations, migration you know...these issues go so far beyond the 'facts', in inverted commas and the science, or whatever you would like to say, I mean we can't address these through rationality alone.

So these culture wars in the end...so i'll just show you very quickly, means huge disparities in acceptance of migrants around the world, and also satisfaction with efforts to preserve the environment, both in different regions and also within different income groups in different regions. And then you know, there's this kind of political failure that we've remarked, identity politics associated with the culture wars but it's bigger than that, and it's, you know what we're seeing is a shift towards a politics that is what some called post democracy. It's personality driven, it's transactional often, it's it's very much governed by which party appears better able to manage the

economy and then no more than that. And there's been the traditional political identities of the left and the right and there's also, it's not been helped, by these technocratic approaches to government which often lack a project for the future and it's an uncertain future at that and also assume that we have all the tools we need so, you know people are unhappy; well we can fix that. We as government have the technical solution to your problems, and more and more these technical solutions obviously don't work for everyone and in many cases they don't work at all. But also they're more...in a different way, the commitments to reduce inequality are undermined by political systems themselves, what we call sort of a winner takes all politics whereby economic and political inequality reinforce each other from lobbying, or to the fact that you know politicians come from an elite class, all these different kind of factors are extremely damaging to the integrity of the democratic system which is effectively meant to represent the interests of everyone. And what we see is emerging is a sort of distance between political systems and and the people, which is hastened by the demise of secondary institutions. So where people engage less, when they belong less to unions or religions, or churches or political parties; when these kind of institutions are weak then there isn't an interlocutor for people. They don't have someone to sort of collate their voice, to aggregate their voice and make it heard politically, so we have this this growing gulf between political systems and people that populist leaders have really been able to exploit, along with broader failings of governments, in the last 20 or 30 years. And, you know, it's very easy when governments are unable to address inequality, people have been left behind and no one is speaking to them yet, so why isn't this person? And now the truth is that the evidence suggests the populist leaders typically tend to completely lack a program that's capable of addressing the problems societies confront, and moreover they tend to worsen polarization and weaken trust. So even if, as has often been the case, Covid has exposed their limitations, the damage these leaders can do is extensive. And finally we have the impact of new technologies and I think I should move through this as well because i'm sure you all know pretty well these kind of stories around digital divides, the fragmentation of echo chambers, the dangers of misinformation and weakening trust.

And indeed the point perhaps to end on is that social media is emerged as a game changer for mobilization, we have had twitter revolutions for the last decade, but it doesn't necessarily correlate with effective social movements because what people have remarked is that there's a lack of infrastructure to these movements. Yes, you can mobilize people very quickly but there isn't a sort of depth to it that's going to sustain the effort, and will reach out and extend and persuade people. And, you know people who mobilize might move on quickly to something else and it's worth bearing in mind that digital surveillance is a game changer for repression as well.

So what next? Well we argue, that it's impossible to build back better without fostering inclusion, cohesion and consensus, and this is important not only for addressing discontent but also for development, and also for confronting the challenges that lie ahead; particularly environmental. We make a strong case for development strategies as a starting place, provided that these are inclusive in vision, and in formulation - so there are a lot of voices involved.

We also recognize the importance of social capital, by which we mean the trust, and the networks, and the tacit knowledge that exists within society; not necessarily in companies, we're not talking

about economic capabilities, but we're talking about sort of you know the qualities that are intrinsic to any society and that can actually foster development.

We also think that the decentralisation of power and resources is key to fostering participation and, not only that, but also to deliver innovation. Environmental protection has to stop being a trade bill, it has to stop being an either or; the social implications of environmental policies are often pitched against each other, and it's obviously complete madness. Whereas the economic sphere is left on it's own. So uh...very inarticulately, but it's obviously environmental protection is key, climate change is key, and I really try and explore different approaches to making sure that it gets higher status in government thinking. And fundamentally new ideas, new approaches, and new mindsets are needed and that's why it's so good to have this opportunity to present here today.

So thank you very much again for this opportunity.

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