

Crossing Channels
Interdisciplinary answers to today's challenging questions
A Podcast series hosted by Rory Cellan-Jones
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Episode VIII
Can democratic political leaders ever meet our expectations ?
With
Zachary Garfield (Institute for Advanced Study in Toulouse)
Roberto Foa (Bennett Institute for Public Policy)

Can democratic political leaders ever meet our expectations?

SPEAKERS

Dr Roberto Foa, Assistant Professor in Politics and Public Policy, University of Cambridge
Dr Zachary Garfield, Research Fellow, Institute for Advanced Study in Toulouse

HOST

Rory Cellan-Jones,

Rory Cellan-Jones 00:06

Hello and welcome to Crossing Channels a podcast collaboration between the Bennett Institute for Public Policy at the University of Cambridge, and the Institute for Advanced Study in Toulouse. This series is all about using the interdisciplinary strengths of both institutions to explore some of the many complex challenges facing our societies. I'm Rory Cellan-Jones and today's episode asks the question: Will Democratic leaders ever live up to our expectations?

We're going to look at what we expect from our leaders, how that's changed over time, and whether democratic leaders are particularly prone to disappointing us.

To explore these issues today, we have Roberto Foa from the University of Cambridge, Roberto remind us of your main research interests.

Roberto Foa 00:53

Good afternoon. It's a pleasure to be with you here today. The core of my research has really centred on the study of public opinion. And then from there, how that relates to the functioning of democracy and of government more broadly.

Rory Cellan-Jones 01:06

Plenty for us to chew on there. And from the IAST, we have Zachary Garfield. Zach, what do you focus on?

Zachary Garfield 01:13

Thank you for the introduction Rory, it's a pleasure to be here. My main research focuses on cross cultural diversity of leadership and followership and the evolutionary psychological and cultural underpinnings of diversity in human leadership systems.

Rory Cellan-Jones 01:26

So we've got two very different insights, specialisms here, which should make for a rich and interesting conversation. So let's get going. Let's start by looking at whether we are disappointed by our democratic leaders or not; what's the evidence? And has that changed over time? Roberto, why don't you kick us off?

Roberto Foa 01:45

Sure. Well, trust in politicians is certainly in a long-term decline. And that's actually not a new story. It's been declining for at least a generation, if not longer than that. However, I should say the extent of that decline really varies a lot from country to country. So it's worse in the United States than in the United Kingdom, for example. And it's worse in the United Kingdom than in a country like Germany or Sweden. But I think that word disappointment is very interesting, because disappointment is always relative to expectations. I think in that regard, there has been a change recently in that in western democracies, we used to have very high expectations, and then would be upset that those expectations were not being met. But I think if there's one thing that concerns me now, is that we've reached a point in public life in some countries where many citizens voters have reached a point of cynicism, where they expect politicians to lie or cheat or swindle. And so when they do, they don't actually care about that reasoning that all politicians are bad as each other.

Rory Cellan-Jones 02:42

You're saying, it's not such a shock these days, it would have been cataclysmic 50 years ago, for your trusted politician to let you down. But now, hey, that's what you expect?

Roberto Foa 02:51

You know, or the negative news is kind of already out there. So I think that when you reach that point of cynicism, then that's something that really enables politicians like Donald Trump, or basically, there's no scandal that can really bring them down. And certainly, when you put that together with very high levels of partisanship, at least, you know, your own supporters will never abandon you.

Rory Cellan-Jones 03:10

Now, Zach, I think you might have a kind of different insight into this. You're an evolutionary anthropologist, you're presumably looking at all sorts of different societies, and the concept of leadership in smaller forums and as well as across nations.

Zachary Garfield 03:24

Exactly. So a lot of my work does focus on what we sometimes refer to as small scale societies. But these are generally politically acephalous, or non-industrial populations that have been either described by ethnographers or observed by anthropologists. And regarding leadership, I think leadership and both democracy are interesting phenomena because they necessarily involve an individual relinquishing their autonomy. But a lot of evolutionary models of cooperation and decisionmaking, often emphasise that, you know, we have these capacities because they allow us to make good decisions that benefit ourselves. But in the case of leadership and followership individuals willingly or not lose that autonomy. And so it puts them out, puts them in a vulnerable position to be exploited by leaders.

Rory Cellan-Jones 04:05

Are we seeing that change over time as those societies change? As they become more sophisticated? Do their attitudes to leadership change?

Zachary Garfield 04:14

Well, yes, and no, there seem to be broadly universal features of leaders across cultures. And some key dimensions of this would be that they're generally respected individuals; you have to have some respect and clout with the community to achieve these roles. And this is an important distinction, whether leadership is like achieved or ascribed. And another key quality of leaders across cultures is this idea of generosity. So if you are able to offer pro-social solutions and outcomes to the community, you're generally preferred as a leader.

Rory Cellan-Jones 04:45

And what about the age and characteristics of leaders? Have they traditionally been the venerable old, presumably men, mostly, of a society and is that changing?

Zachary Garfield 05:00

So yes, that's correct. But we need to also think about the social context. So for talking about the sort of community level political leaders, these are often older men who have accomplished some expertise within the community. And but if we go within different contexts within a particular economic group, or within a kin group, or within various social groups, we might see more diversity along with the sort of age dynamic.

Rory Cellan-Jones 05:23

Roberto, what do we generally expect from leaders in a democracy? And is it uncommon for those expectations to actually be met? Have we had enough years in many democracies to get used to the idea of disappointment?

Roberto Foa 05:41

I come at this question, almost from a survey research background. And I guess the first principle in survey research is that there's a lot of variation among citizens within the electorate. So I think in terms of what do citizens expect from politicians, I would say that the real problem today is that you have two portions of the electorate whose expectations are not well anchored in reality. So you have one proportion of the electorate whose expectations have continued to rise and rise and now expect politicians to be angels and meet impossible standards, and so that that set of citizens will always be upset by every non-scandal that is out there in the public domain circling on social media. But then you also have this more cynical

rump of the electorate who are exhausted, and I say, literally exhausted, because it actually takes a lot of energy nowadays, to separate what is a fake story from what is a real scandal. And so you have one portion of the electorate who are so exhausted by that, that they've given up on standards in public life, and those citizens in the electric, and they'll always be cynical, and actually, there's nothing politicians can actually do to impress them. I think that, you know, psychologists would look at that and say that there's almost a sort of democratic personality disorder going on, whereby, you know, you have a large section of the electorate whose expectations are not real.

Rory Cellan-Jones 06:53

Is there a bit of golden ageism here going on? Was it the case that, you know, leaders of the forties and fifties, you know, the Harry Truman's, the Clement Atlee's in the United Kingdom, were trusted in a way and delivered on their promises in a way that politicians don't today? Or was that purely a matter of perception?

Roberto Foa 07:20

Well, here I would separate trust and trustworthiness. So were politicians more trusted in the past? Yes. Were politicians more trustworthy in the past? There I'm not so sure. And in fact, that's something that we kind of know, we don't know, because many whatever scandals occurred at that time, I'm gonna guess that, you know, 80 or 90 percent of them, never, never saw the light of day, and therefore, now, now, never will, because whoever would have known those secrets as long since passed, six feet under. So I don't know whether there is a golden age with respect to standards in public life. But what I think we can say is that we've gone through three stages of expectations. There was a stage in that golden age, when we had really low expectations, those expectations were met, and we're very happy. Then we had a phase when our expectations had risen, politicians are falling short, and we're very unhappy. And now I think we're in a phase where you've got a lot of people who have really low expectations, because they think all politics is corrupt. And they're always happy, but not because their expectations are not being met. But because they've given up in a sense on the system.

Rory Cellan-Jones 08:25

Zach give us some sense from your field work of what comes through about leadership on a smaller scale, and what works and what doesn't?

Zachary Garfield 08:36

Well, evolutionary social scientists like myself, we're often thinking in terms of costs and benefits. And ideally, benefits outweigh cost if systems are to progress and be promoted. And so in a relatively small scale society, most people can interact face to face, most people know each other, they have these complex social relationships and histories. And there's the opportunity for followers to directly hold their leaders accountable. If they make decisions that are unsavoury for them at time one, you can sort of bring that back up at time two and say, hey, you know, you didn't consider me, my family, our group when you made this particular decision, when you solve that conflict, or propose this policy for the group to move or to take on some new activity. And so that opportunity for followers to continually sort of be in the front of the face of their leaders, I think, is more consistent with our evolutionary psychology of just face to face dynamics, and is a big difference between the sort of mass global scale of politics and political dynamics we face today.

Rory Cellan-Jones 09:36

And what about timespans? Here are the societies you examine more patient in terms of giving their leaders a lot of time to do the job, or do they want to swap around every couple of years or not?

Zachary Garfield 09:49

I do think that just social life in general moves at a much slower pace or when you're considering a population that is not involved in technology, especially non literate societies, oral histories. are very important and sort of how communication is shared. And there is a sort of sense that you have to wait for a lot of things to come about.

Rory Cellan-Jones 10:06

Give us an example of one society that you've looked at and one leader possibly Does anything come to mind that we can draw a lesson from from a particular case study?

Zachary Garfield 10:16

Some of my dissertation work was with the Chabu, they're a group of forager horticulturalists, who live deep in the forests of Southwest Ethiopia. And this was an interesting case, because they had recently begun to elect sort of democratic leaders in this relatively egalitarian society. This is the risk sort of neighbourhood administration system. And so this was mostly kind of the younger men, there's also a system for women being elected to these formal leadership positions. But sometimes they would not make decisions that were beneficial for most people. And in this context, the elders were advised to sort of come in and sort of coach these younger sort of aspiring political leaders in a sense, to make better decisions, maybe to reduce their temper to maybe not enforce punishments so strictly, and there was a lot of leeway, I think, given to these individuals, to sort of find the best strategies that would work for the group in consultation with the elders who had more of this cultural repository of information,

Rory Cellan-Jones 11:13

Right. So the society gave power to younger leaders, but also gave that restraining power to the elders?

Zachary Garfield Foa 11:19

Exactly. So in this sort of transitional period, where you have a community that is engaging with a sort of democratic process, for the first time, essentially, there was a lot of patience and leeway given to these new leaders who are learning new skills. They're learning how to interact with the government officials. In many cases, they're increasing their linguistic capacities by learning the national language. They don't speak that language, they don't learn it as children. So there's a lot of skills that these individuals had to learn.

Rory Cellan-Jones 11:44

Roberto, is there a paradox here that the more mature to use, maybe a loaded word, the more democratic a democracy, the more the population is likely to be easily disillusioned with leaders, whereas in again, to lose, use a loaded word immature and partial democracies, like Russia, leaders like Vladimir Putin find it relatively easy to stay popular?

Roberto Foa 12:09

I'm not sure the premise is entirely correct. I mean, you have a lot of partial democracies, like Venezuela, or Malaysia prior to the 2018 election, where leaders are deeply unpopular. And in fact, they remain in power precisely because the system is set up in such a way that it's very hard to get rid of them. So it's not really you know, such a clean divide, I would say there. But it really all comes back to expectations again, so and I think with respect to long standing democracies, there's a question of how expectations are really informed by experience. So in the West, we have somewhat higher expectations, because, broadly speaking, we do actually have a better track record of integrity and accountability in public life than in most developing democracies. And so you mentioned Putin, and I think secret of Putin success is that by the end of 1990s, in Russia expectations were set so low, that it was very, very easy to surpass them. And indeed, when you watch interviews with Russians about why they support Putin, what they come back to again and again, is you know how bad things were in the 1990s. And basically, that that very low expectation base.

Rory Cellan-Jones 13:15

Zach, what's your take on this? As the societies you examined, get more quotes democratic unquotes? Do their leaders find it more difficult to prosper?

Zachary Garfield 13:24

Well, I'm not sure if I can speak to that directly. But I was thinking that, you know, this idea of a disappointment, disappointment in elected leaders is really a bargaining strategy in many in many ways. Followers want their welfare to be taken into consideration. And by expressing this lack of contentment, it's an opportunity to vote with your emotions and with your lack of satisfaction. And as you have more options, so as the sort of marketplace for democracy or leaders might increase that can sort of drive the opportunity to use this sort of socio-emotional component of followership, as a way to, ideally bias decision making in your favour. If those options don't exist, human psychology is also very good at, we're quite resilient, we can call it making the best of the bad situation, and leaders like Putin or in other cultures where they have much an authoritarian control over the social system. They're often using a complex system of economic control, military control, relying on a large social network and ideological control. And this is really a complex system for the mind to navigate. And when they have effectively mastered these four domains of control, there's not much opportunity for individuals to express much discontent.

Rory Cellan-Jones 14:35

That kind of brings me on to thinking about what does go wrong for leaders who start their leadership in in very positive popular mode, and then things go wrong. There are two different things that can go wrong. I suppose. They can actively do things that disappoint people and one thinks of Prime Minister Boris Johnson in the UK, whose popularity has absolutely plummeted over actual breaches of lockdown rules, and then there are external events, Gordon Brown and earlier Prime Minister wasn't hugely popular, but his popularity was cut off at the knees as it were, by global financial crisis. Due populations distinguish between those two things where they are very much the responsibility of the leaders themselves, moral failings and external events where they have some responsibility. But there's not a lot they can do about, for instance, a global pandemic or a global financial crisis arriving?

Roberto Foa 15:32

Yeah, I mean, you know, the linkage between the economic cycle and public opinion has waste really depressed me, because it's the one thing that politicians really are not responsible for. Even Gordon Brown, of course, he had been Chancellor for a very long time before the global financial crisis. However, that's sort of true over time within countries. But I think that there is some evidence of a pretty good evidence that citizens around the world are able to reach reasonably objective judgments about the kind of functioning of their democracy more broadly. So when you compare between countries, you have certain places that have permanently high satisfaction with democracy, like in Scandinavia, and certain places like Southern Europe, where it's more or less, permanently low. And when we run statistical models, and try and explain why those cross country differences exist, a sort of objective assessment of the extent of corruption like that produced by Transparent International, tend to be one of the best predictors of those differences. So the economic factors, they kind of get washed out, eventually. But the institutional factors, those effects prove persistent.

Rory Cellan-Jones 16:38

So people are actually more offended by corruption than incompetence?

Roberto Foa

Absolutely. Yes.

Rory Cellan-Jones

Zach, does that play through in the smallest societies you look at?

Zachary Garfield16:49

Yeah, I was thinking the exact same thing as Roberto was talking. There's widespread evidence that preferences for fairness, and taking a balanced and equitable approach to decision making is probably a fundamental and deep seated aspect of our psychology. And we can see that I think, too in non-human species, you know, a key function of leadership among primates and other social animals is to resolve conflicts. And there are experimental studies with primates illustrating that when there's a lack of equity and outcomes, individuals are very sensitive to that.

Rory Cellan-Jones 17:17

Right. So that is built into us. Roberto, you wanted to come in?

Roberto Foa 17:21

Yeah. No, I agree with that. I mean, I think that it is fundamental to human psychology. And it's true in politics, that the one thing that people absolutely do not forgive is hypocrisy, and related to that betrayal. So it's fine, or at least it's not, it's not great, but it's not too bad. If a politician fails to deliver on their promises, however, if they make a promise, and then do something completely different, particularly if it's to a key constituency of theirs, or they turn out to have completely different values from what they claim to have, that is something that creates deep, deep, deep unpopularity for a politician. I mean, just look at you know, look at the respective fates of David Cameron and Nick Clegg, during that coalition, I think it's a very good illustration of that.

Rory Cellan-Jones 18:04

That's interesting, isn't it? Because they were joint leaders, as it were, David Cameron was the senior partner, of course, but they were both responsible. One of them won a sweeping election victory the next time the other saw his party in his own political career completely destroyed. And that you're saying was because his particular constituency felt betrayed by one particular Policy on Student Finance?

Roberto Foa 18:29

But that was the big one. Yeah. I mean, of course, it wasn't the only one.

Rory Cellan-Jones 18:33

Has our modern media landscape. In particular, social media made a difference here? Made people make up their minds for good or real much faster, giving Democratic leaders, less time, frankly, to think long term to get things right, Zach, I know a lot of us, the societies you study, presumably don't have access to social media. But what's your feeling?

Zachary Garfield 18:57

Well this is actually something I'm interested to study long term as populations, these rural populations that I work with gain more access to internet, social media, mobile technologies. But my impression would be that, yes, certainly just the social life moves much slower. It takes time to gather consensus, consult with your your family members, your friends, your larger kin group. And these societies generally have many cross cutting, or we call sodalities, there's corporate membership in complex social organisations. And it takes a while to identify the best sort of policy or strategy within each of these nested groups within a society or community.

Rory Cellan-Jones 19:35

I mean, we've seen haven't we, I mean, Myanmar is a classic example of the devastating effect the arrival of social media can actually have on not just on the politics of a country but on community relations. In Myanmar, the arrival of Facebook was effectively blamed for the persecution of the Rohingyas.

Zachary Garfield 19:55

And it can't be overemphasised how important social institutions are in guiding much of behaviour and decision making and inter-individual interactions. And I think one thing that social media can do is begin to undermine some of these new long standing social institutions.

Rory Cellan-Jones

And that can happen incredibly fast?

Zachary Garfield

I believe it can, yes.

Rory Cellan-Jones 20:14

Roberto in Western societies. How has social media changed the game for for Democratic leaders? How has it sped up potentially? What they have to do? How quickly they have, for instance, to fulfil their promises?

Roberto Foa 20:29

Yeah, the one aspect of it is the shortening of attention span. And the way that that undermines long term strategic thinking, which is essential in governance in general, not specifically in democratic politics.

Rory Cellan-Jones 20:40

This is an interesting question. There's been a controversial book out recently claiming our attention span has been massively shortened by social media. The other argument is that social media has given people a lot more information than they ever had before.

Roberto Foa 20:56

Yeah, well, there's two things there. So I think one thing is that when you look at political life today, you don't have the cycle that you used to have. So particularly, if you look at a country, like the United States used to have a system in which an ordinary citizen didn't really need to be that interested in politics for much of the time, you had, you know, congressional elections, and you had the presidential election and the rest of time, and you could just be a somewhat parochial citizen going about your business. And that provided an accountability mechanism, right, with these intervals. Now we have a situation where the drama of politics is kind of continuous. Right. So there's a big shift. And I think, you know, that shift is almost illustrated by watching. Yes, Minister and the one hand and then you watch. The Thick Of It. And you've got two separate portrayals of how politics operates that are both extremely accurate for the time that they're describing and quite different. So one thing I say, is the attention span issue or the time interval. Now, the other thing you alluded to that information will issue, right, that we've completely lost quality filters with social media. And that is a huge problem. Right? I mean, the current war in Ukraine is a great example. Because every day we're being bombarded with accusations and denials, counter accusations. And at present, there are very few people on the ground to do independent fact checking. Of course, that is happening now.

Rory Cellan-Jones 22:08

We probably know a lot more, but we know a lot more that is false, as well as a lot more than is accurate.

Roberto Foa 22:14

Right? And that's actually, you know, that's a deliberate strategy. Okay. So I think a lot of people misunderstand Russian propaganda in this sense, because I think a lot of people have this idea that the Putin regime is bombarding its population with propaganda on TV to whip them into a nationalist frenzy and okay, maybe for a certain subset of the population that's happening, and that works. But the much more significant effect is you confuse people who may be accessing other media sources, but you bombard people with so much information that they no longer know what is true or false anymore. And a lot of disinformation, not just in authoritarian regimes, but actually in political campaigning generally, is precisely about that. You use the lack of filters in social media, to create ambiguity. And in that way, you can actually allow unscrupulous politicians simply to hide in plain sight. So just think about this, right? It used to be the case that nobody knew about a scandal, then a newspaper broke it, it was a huge thing, people would talk about it. Now, what is kind of crazy is that most of the political scandals out there are, most of the political scandals that hit public debate. Turns out they'd been in the public domain for years before anyone paid attention to it. But you know, social media, you know, this can just circulate in this information fog. So I say that actually, both of those, you know, undermine the accountability mechanism of politics.

Rory Cellan-Jones 23:37

Which is ironic, because the internet idealists utopians thought it ushered in a whole new era of democracy, participatory democracy, and it hasn't is what you're saying?

Roberto Foa 23:49

Well, it hasn't, because part of the problem here as well as it that politics, has an aesthetic function for some people, politics, and it's particularly true in social media, on Twitter, and so on, that politics has become almost like a team sport. And that is not a helpful way of addressing public policy issues.

Rory Cellan-Jones 24:06

You mentioned Ukraine, which brings me around to talking about the Ukrainian leader of Volodymyr Zelensky, who I'm thinking I'm right in saying had very low popularity levels before the war, and he is a democratic leader who has exceeded expectations and has proved hugely popular, what is it about his leadership that has led to this? Let me get Zach in there, what's your take on Zelensky?

Zachary Garfield 24:34

Yeah, I think it's an interesting and display of really a leadership style strongly rooted in what we call prestige style leadership. Where you know, Zelensky is an individual who has a background in the arts in law. So he's educated, he sort of evokes these ideas of Plato's philosopher king, and he has this sort of oratory, ability many leaders do have, but that is also a characteristic of leaders who are typically a humble and generous. And so when he is using these internet platforms to sort of evoke a call to arms to bring support to his country, I think we find that quite appealing. And it's, I think, as we've seen, quite effective, at least to some, to some extent.

Rory Cellan-Jones 25:14

It's an old fashioned leadership style in many ways. It's sort of over the ages, the man, usually the man who leads his nation in war and shows himself to be brave, and to be out there with them, has won enormous respect.

Zachary Garfield 25:29

Yes, it's fusing both this idea of valour and intelligence and knowledge, but also bravery and willingness to take risks on account of the constituency

Rory Cellan-Jones 25:38

Roberto. What's your take?

Roberto Foa 25:40

Well, I think you're right that before the conflict Zelensky was disappointing expectations domestically. And now, of course, that's completely turned around. And there was an opinion poll done at the end of March that suggested while they said that, I think it was 81% voting intention for Zelensky in the next election in Ukraine. So that's pretty incredible. That's like, not even Vladimir Putin, but I think can get there. So that is a response to the success of his leadership style in this war. So while there may be old fashioned elements to it, but I think really what I see here is, you know, before this conflict happened, we were talking a lot about hybrid conflict, right. And we're talking about Russian hybrid conflict and the Russian ability to use information and cyber warfare, etc, etc, etc. And but really, I mean, the real surprise is that

the Ukrainians have turned out to be much better at hybrid warfare than the Russians ever were, and in a way that's completely bamboozled them. And you've got to remember Zelensky and his team. They've been doing this all their career. Zelensky is an actor, you've got people around him from a TV/ arts background. And so they're absolutely geniuses at this new political game, the social media publicity campaign, the war for hearts and minds, as we used to call it, basically, they've taken those skills that they use so successfully to win the 2019 presidential election as a complete outsider candidate from nowhere, except for his TV series, and reapply those skills from the domestic audience to a global one with incredible success. It's impressive, because I mean, you know, the Ukrainians have terrible set of cards going into this conflict, and they've played them well. And they realised that the only hope they ever had of winning, or at least getting to this point, was that they couldn't face the Russians one on one, they would have to leverage global public opinion in western democracies in order to apply pressure on Russia through sanctions. And then, of course, through the no fly zone, which didn't happen. And then, of course, through the direct aid to Ukraine, notably in rearmament. So I think it's it's ingenious, it certainly wins my, you know, Machiavelli prize, I think, for 2022.

Rory Cellan-Jones 27:38

Finally, I'd like to sort of wrap this up by asking what your recipe is for good leadership in this difficult era, where democracies are, in some cases, crumbling a bit, where social media is undermining democracies in some areas of the world and changing our expectations of our leaders. Roberto, Zach, imagine you're a democratic leader with a new mandate. How do you keep the population on side? What's your manifesto, Zach?

Zachary Garfield 28:09

Well, I think this was alluded to a bit earlier, but when individuals feel like they have had the opportunity to voice their opinion, even if the outcome is necessarily not consistent with their initial perspective, that generally makes people feel better about whatever policy is enacted. And so like we've seen with Zelensky, if politicians and governments can use these platforms to communicate more directly with followers, I think that would generally lead to greater satisfaction with elected leaders.

Rory Cellan-Jones 28:35

So it's referendums is the answer, the Swiss have the answer, they have a referendum every two minutes.

Zachary Garfield 28:41

I think that's along the lines of what I'm thinking about. I mean, polling is obviously an important and huge component of political science. But I think there's a new way to think about polling in terms of allowing individuals to feel like their points of views are being taken into account and not just for voting for an individual, but for engaging in policy decisions that affect them directly.

Rory Cellan-Jones 29:01

Roberto what's your manifesto for your successful leadership of Cambridge and the world?

Roberto Foa 29:09

Ok ay well I think I would, I would paraphrase Tolstoy here by saying that you know, all successful happy democracies tend to look alike, but unhappy democracies or tend to be unhappy in their own special way. So I think that the solution really depends from country to

country. I mean, you have some countries where the problem is just a total lack of integrity in public life, and dealing with corruption is the core issue. You have other countries where the issue is about the electoral system or lack of representation in other countries where the problem is institutional and about the lack of protection of civil rights and liberties. So I think that you know, each country where there is a legitimacy crisis, or malaise, a softer term, you know, has its own unique problems.

Rory Cellan-Jones 29:50

Well that's a great point on which to end I'm going to vote for both Roberto and Zach and I hope neither of you let me down. That's all we've got time for on this episode. Thanks to our expert panel Roberto Foa from the University of Cambridge, and Zachary Garfield from the IAST. Let us know what you think of this seventh edition of Crossing Channels - you can contact us via Twitter - the Bennett Institute is @bennettinst - the Institute for Advanced Study is @IASToulouse and I am @ruskin147.

If you enjoyed this programme, then do listen to our other Crossing Channels episodes, notably our recent edition with the Kyiv School of Economics talking about the Ukraine Invasion.

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