

## When Good Economic Policy Isn't Enough

**August 2023** – Puzzled by the lack of positive response to economic policies that have assisted low- and middle-income families, such as the extension of the Child Tax Credit during the COVID-19 pandemic (which reduced child poverty by 46 percent), Deepak Bhargava, Shahrzad Shams, and Harry Hanbury [explore the underlying dynamics that are fostering a sense of malaise among so many in the U.S.](#) and creating an environment open to the rise of authoritarianism.

**“Delivering for people on economic issues is an important goal in itself, but it is not an antivenom for the snakebite of authoritarianism.”**

—From “The Death of ‘Deliverism’”

They note that progressive economic policymaking must:

- take identity, emotion, and story seriously. Policies that deliver economic benefits but do not speak to a social identity are likely to have little political impact.
- offer ideas about issues they have tended to neglect such as violence, addiction, mental health problems, social isolation, loneliness, and a sense of social disintegration.
- articulate not just a string of worthy policies, but a vision of a good life grounded in ideas about how we should live, who we should care about, and what makes for a meaningful life.
- reinvigorate organizing and recruitment of new people into worker and community organizations. People are often mobilized on issues but are rarely invited to be part of a democratic community built on relationships that forge collective power.

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