

Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin
für Sozialforschung

What is Democratic Resilience & How to Strengthen it?

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Unity & Diversity
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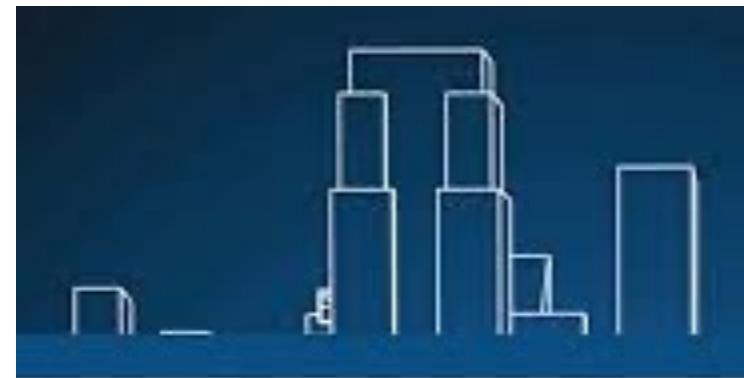
Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin



Fragility and Resilience of Democracy



CEU Democracy Institute



Edited by

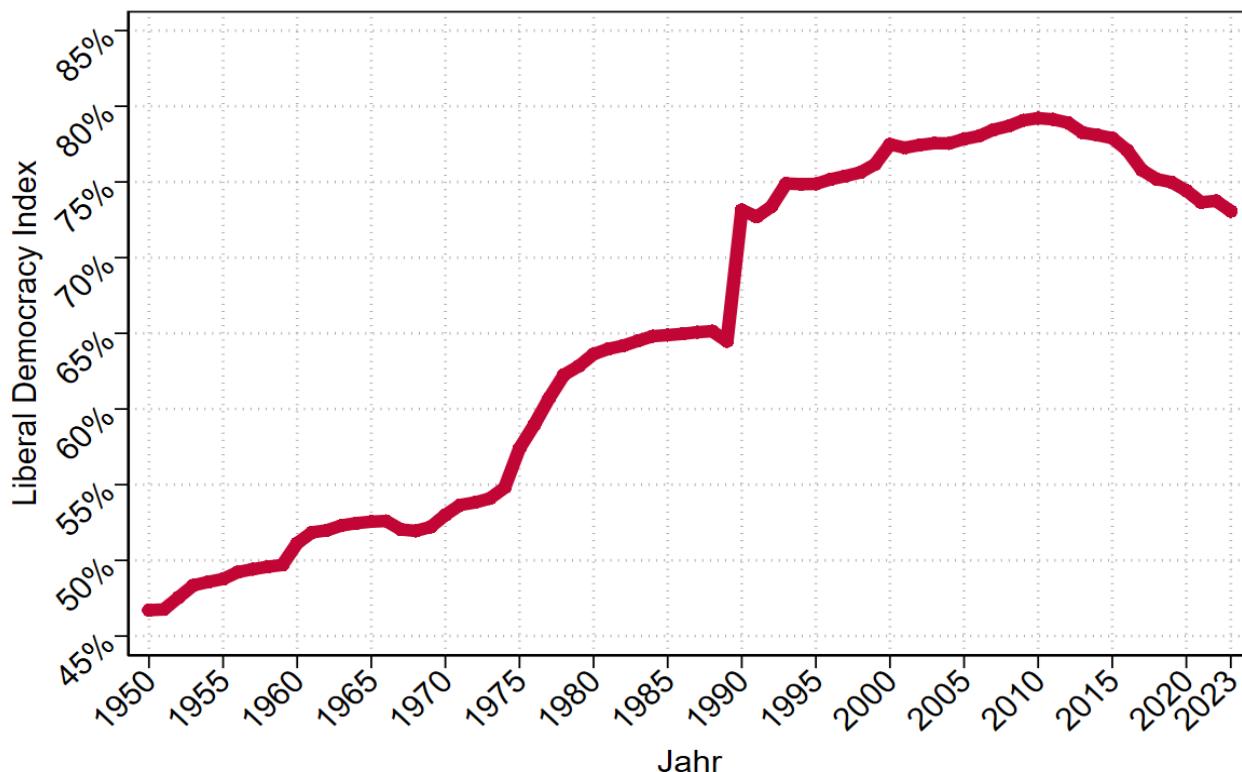
Anja Lührmann and Wolfgang Merkel

Structure: 4 Steps

- Erosion of Democracy
- What is democratic resilience?
 - Building blocks of a concept
 - Structures, Actors, Functions, Interdependencies
 - Definition
- The Concept
- How can we strengthen Democratic Resilience?

Liberal Democracy Index 1950-2024: Average

EU, UK, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, USA, Japan



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Quelle: V Dem - Varieties of Democracy: Durchschnitt der 26 EU-Mitgliedstaaten (exkl. Malta), Vereinigtes Königreich, Australien, Neuseeland, Kanada, USA und Japan

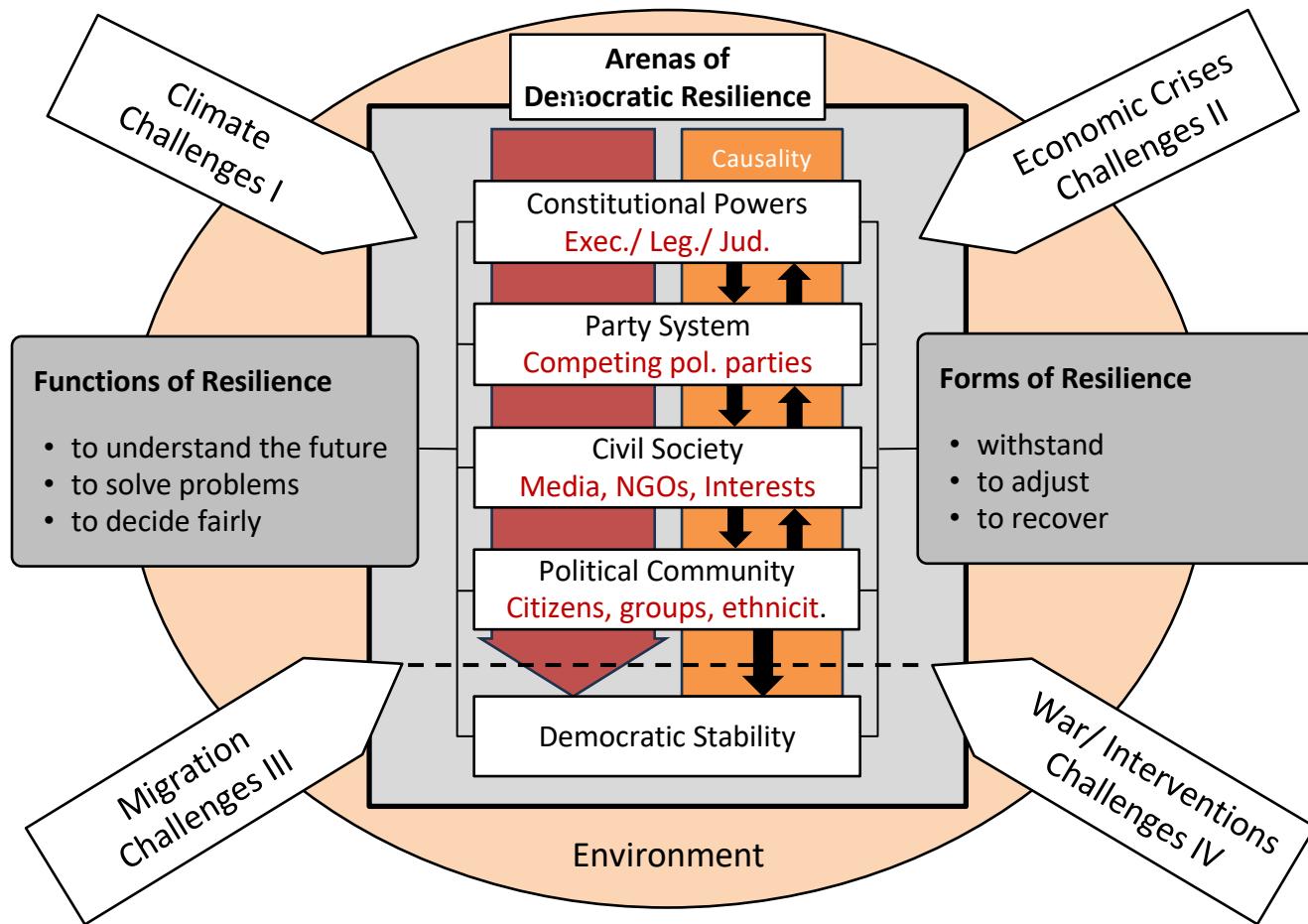
What is (democratic) resilience?

- A scientific key concept in the first decades of the 21st century
- Used in many disciplines of science
- ***Definition:***
- ***R. is the ability of a system to absorb, withstand or recover (from) disturbances and stressors without undergoing a regime change, while maintaining its basic structure and functions.***
- R. has a double meaning: it is an analytic-descriptive term and a normative action orientation in terms of governmental interventions

Theory: Building Blocks

- Function: basic functions
- Structure: Institution(al arenas)
- Actors/ Actions: forms of resilience
- System: Challenges, interdependence, feed back

A multi-arena model of democratic resilience



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Strengthening democratic resilience on 4 levels:

1. Constitutional Powers

- Rebalancing executive – legislative (in/ after „new“ crisis)
- Judiciary: AC & CC checking the executive
- Re-strengthening parliaments
- Complementing parliaments by opening deliberat. arenas
- Rebalancing input-, throughput-, output legitimacy

2. Parties & Party Systems

- Isolating anti-system parties
- Converting semi-loyal parties
- Reviving democratic opposition
- Strengthening representativeness and responsiveness

3. Civic Culture & Civil Society

- Reducing societal polarization
- Producing bridging social capital
- Reducing bonding social capital
- Opening new participatory spaces

Political Community

- Strengthening common sense of belongingness
- Paying respect to diversity
- Avoiding moralistic exclusion/ polarization
- Softening socio-econ. and socio-cultural cleavages
- Fair burden sharing (esp. In times of crises)
- Investing into people & their live chances

The Importance of Output/ Outcomes

- Input, throughput, output
- Growing importance of output in times of T & I
 - Solving problems
 - Understanding future
 - Deciding fairly

Conclusion I: Strengthening Democratic Resilience

- Decade of multiple unresolved/unresolvable crises
- Major attack comes from RWP illiberalism
- Avoiding Illiberal reactions of liberal parties in „new crises“
- Do not exclude moralistically!

Conclusion II: Building Bridges

- Nationalists & Supranationalists
- Cosmopolitans & Communitarians
- Well educated & less educated
- Epistemizers & Deniers (climate; pandemic)
- Social Classes: Supporting the poors
- Fair burden sharing in crises among social classes
- Depolarize conflicts, don't deplurallise politics



**Thank You
Aitäh!**