



## HAMBURG POLITICAL SCIENCE SEMINAR SERIES – HPS<sup>3</sup>

### INVITATION

Please be invited to the Hamburg Political Science Seminar Series - HPS<sup>3</sup> in Winter Semester 2025/2026.

The HPS Seminar Series features international speakers presenting cutting-edge research in all subfields of political science and political economy.

It takes place on Wednesdays. For further information about dates and speakers in WiSe 25/26 please refer to the [HPS<sup>3</sup> Website](#).

We welcome on

**January 14, 2026 17:15-18:45 CET in VMP9 B130**

**Heike Klüver (Humboldt University)**

**Title: How democracies can survive: What works to strengthen democratic resilience**

**Abstract:**

Democracies across the world have come under increasing pressure in recent years, most visibly through rising electoral support for far-right parties as a central manifestation of democratic backsliding. While a large literature has focused on explaining these developments, we know far less about how democracies can be strengthened in practice. This book advances an informational theory of democratic backsliding that highlights the overlooked role of misperceptions. It argues that democratic erosion is driven not only by objective economic or cultural grievances, but by systematically distorted perceptions of societal problems, group-based disadvantage, and political unresponsiveness—distortions that far-right parties actively cultivate and that are amplified by social media environments rewarding emotional and polarizing narratives. Moving beyond diagnosis, the book asks a central question: what works to strengthen democratic resilience and contain far-right support? Drawing on original survey experiments, online field experiments, and large-scale field interventions, it evaluates three classes of corrective strategies: preventive interventions (digital literacy and party agenda-setting), informational corrections (norm recalibration and exposure of far-right hypocrisy), and experiential corrections (democratic innovations). The findings demonstrate that democratic backsliding is not inevitable: correcting misperceptions offers a comparatively low-cost, scalable, and politically feasible strategy to reduce far-right support and strengthen democratic resilience.

**We invite everyone interested to attend!**