

# Investigating the Influence of Domestic and International Factors on Youth Mental Health and Suicide Prevention in Societies at Risk of Autocratization

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*Abstract- This paper explores the critical interconnections between political-economic instability, mental health advocacy, and democratic resilience in polarized societies facing the risk of autocratization. As many nations encounter growing pressures from both domestic and international sources, the stability of democratic institutions is increasingly at risk. These pressures not only threaten the political landscape but also place a unique burden on young populations, who often experience heightened vulnerability to mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, and suicide ideation in politically polarized environments. This study investigates how the convergence of domestic challenges, such as economic inequalities and divisive political climates, with external pressures from global economic and political actors impacts both the democratic fabric of societies and the mental well-being of young people. By examining case studies of countries undergoing democratic backsliding, the paper assesses the efficacy of mental health advocacy initiatives in such environments and evaluates how they may contribute to fostering resilience against autocratic tendencies. The findings aim to provide a nuanced understanding of how targeted mental health support for youth can serve as an adjunct to political-economic strategies designed to safeguard democratic principles and*

*reduce the appeal of authoritarianism in polarized contexts.*

*Indexed Terms- Youth Mental Health, Democratic Resilience, Political Polarization, Autocratization, Mental Health Advocacy*

## I. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background and Rationale

The global increase in political polarization and autocratic tendencies represents a significant challenge for democratic resilience, particularly within vulnerable youth populations. Research shows that domestic factors, including economic instability and divisive political climates, contribute to societal pressures that can exacerbate mental health vulnerabilities in young individuals, especially in polarized societies as represented in Table 1 (Diamond, 2015). These pressures are further intensified by global economic dependencies and international political dynamics, which can destabilize democratic institutions and, by extension, influence youth mental health negatively (Owolabi, et al, 2024). According to Norris (2017), the erosion of democratic principles can create environments where young people face heightened risks of anxiety and depression due to uncertainty and political turmoil. In these conditions, youth are particularly susceptible to mental

health issues stemming from feelings of instability and social division. The focus on supporting mental health among young populations in autocratizing societies is thus not only a public health imperative but also a critical strategy to reinforce democratic resilience, as mentally resilient youth may be more capable of

resisting authoritarian influences. This paper aims to investigate how targeted mental health support can act as a dual strategy to safeguard democratic structures and support vulnerable youth in polarized contexts (Ijiga, et al., 2024)

Table 1: Key Factors Influencing Youth Mental Health In Polarized Societies

Aspect	Description	Key Implications
Global Political Polarization and Autocratic Trends	Increase in polarization and autocracy poses a challenge to democratic resilience, especially affecting vulnerable youth populations.	Democratic stability is threatened, raising mental health risks for youth in polarized societies.
Domestic Factors Influencing Youth Mental Health	Economic instability and divisive political climates contribute to societal pressures, exacerbating mental health vulnerabilities in youth.	Youth experience heightened anxiety and depression due to economic and social instability.
International Factors Impacting Democratic Stability	Global economic dependencies and political dynamics can destabilize democratic institutions, impacting youth mental health	Political and economic pressures from international sources exacerbate youth mental health challenges.
Need for Targeted Mental Health Support	Targeted mental health support is essential to reinforce democratic resilience, helping youth resist authoritarian influences.	Supporting youth mental health in polarized societies is crucial for public health and democratic stability.

1.2 Purpose and Scope of the Study

This study aims to analyze the intricate relationships between youth mental health and democratic stability within politically polarized societies at risk of autocratization. By focusing on both domestic challenges, such as economic inequalities and divisive political climates, and international pressures from global economic and political actors, the study examines how these factors collectively influence the mental well-being of young people. Youth in these environments often face heightened psychological vulnerabilities, including increased levels of anxiety, depression, and suicide ideation. Through an exploration of case studies from countries experiencing democratic backsliding, this study assesses the effectiveness of mental health advocacy initiatives in building resilience among young people. The findings seek to highlight how targeted mental health support can complement political and economic

strategies to fortify democratic structures and reduce the attraction of authoritarianism within politically polarized contexts.

1.3 Research Questions

This study is structured around the following research questions, which aim to investigate the connections between political instability, mental health, and democratic resilience:

- How do domestic factors, such as economic inequalities and divisive political climates, impact the mental health of youth in polarized societies?
- In what ways do international economic and political pressures contribute to the erosion of democratic stability and influence youth mental well-being?
- How effective are mental health advocacy initiatives in fostering resilience among youth in societies undergoing democratic backsliding?

- Can targeted mental health interventions serve as a supportive tool for political and economic measures aimed at sustaining democratic resilience in autocratizing societies?

Each question addresses a distinct component of the study’s focus, encompassing the internal and external pressures on youth mental health and democratic stability while highlighting the potential of advocacy efforts to promote resilience within these challenging environments.

#### 1.4 Structure of the Study

This study is organized into five sections to address the core elements of the relationship between political instability, youth mental health, and democratic resilience. The Introduction provides the background, purpose, and key research questions guiding the study. The second section, Domestic and International Factors Affecting Youth Mental Health, explores the impact of economic inequalities, political polarization, and global pressures on youth mental health in polarized societies. In the third section, Role of Mental Health Advocacy in Fostering Resilience, the study examines mental health initiatives aimed at supporting youth resilience in autocratizing environments, including case studies to highlight effective advocacy strategies. Integrating Mental Health Support to Strengthen Democratic Resilience, the fourth section, discusses how mental health support for youth can contribute to political stability by reducing authoritarian appeal and proposes policy recommendations for integrating mental health with broader political and economic strategies. Finally, the Conclusion and Future Research Directions section provides a summary of findings, policy implications, and suggestions for further research on youth mental health and political resilience. This structure ensures a thorough examination of each aspect, offering insights into the role of mental health advocacy as a potential

stabilizer for democratic principles in politically polarized societies.

## II. DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL FACTORS AFFECTING YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

### 2.1 Economic Inequalities and Political Polarization

Economic inequalities and political polarization are critical factors affecting the mental health of youth in societies at risk of autocratization. Economic disparities often exacerbate social tensions, particularly among young people who are increasingly vulnerable to the pressures of a polarized society (Ijiga, et al, 2024). Inglehart (2018) suggests that as economic inequality widens, trust in democratic institutions may erode, particularly among younger populations who feel marginalized and disillusioned by their limited economic prospects. This loss of trust in democracy correlates with rising anxiety, depression, and mental health concerns within these groups, as they grapple with uncertainty in both economic and political domains as represented in Table 2. Furthermore, Svolik (2020) highlights that the divisive rhetoric and ideological conflicts resulting from political polarization can intensify these issues, leading young people to experience heightened levels of stress, social disconnection, and psychological vulnerability. When combined, economic inequalities and polarized political climates create a destabilizing environment for youth, who often lack adequate mental health support (Ajayi, et al., 2024). This compounded strain not only challenges the resilience of young individuals but also raises concerns about the broader stability of democratic institutions as youth become increasingly susceptible to disillusionment and, consequently, to the appeal of authoritarian narratives (Ibokette, et al., 2024).

Table 2: Effects of Economic Inequalities and Political Polarization on Youth and Democratic Stability

Aspect	Description	Key Implications
Economic Inequalities	Widening economic disparities lead to feelings of marginalization among youth, weakening trust in democratic institutions	Economic inequality erodes democratic trust, especially among marginalized young populations.

Political Polarization	Divisive rhetoric and ideological conflicts increase social tensions and contribute to youth's sense of disconnection	Political polarization exacerbates stress and social isolation, affecting youth resilience.
Impact on Youth Mental Health	Economic and political instability heighten anxiety, depression, and psychological vulnerability among young people.	Youth experience compounded mental health challenges due to economic and social pressures.
Broader Implications for Democracy	Youth disillusionment with democracy may lead to increased susceptibility to authoritarian narratives	The stability of democratic institutions is at risk as vulnerable youth may turn towards authoritarianism.

### 2.2 Global Pressures and Democratic Stability

Global economic dependencies and international political pressures significantly impact democratic stability and the mental health of youth in polarized societies (Igba, et al, 2024). Levitsky and Ziblatt (2019) argue that when nations face external economic pressures, such as trade dependencies and financial instability, democratic institutions may weaken, affecting young people's perceptions of national stability and personal security. This economic fragility can intensify stress and anxiety among youth, as uncertainty surrounding political stability compounds their psychological burdens as shown in Figure 1. Diamond (2020) further asserts that international political influences, such as foreign interventions or support for authoritarian leaders, often destabilize democratic frameworks, exacerbating tensions within polarized societies. As young people confront these destabilizing forces, they may experience a profound sense of disempowerment and fear, which can contribute to mental health challenges, including anxiety and depression (Aboi, 2024). This study considers these global pressures as key contributors to the destabilization of democracy and the increasing mental health needs of youth in politically polarized environments. By understanding how external forces undermine democratic structures and youth well-being, this analysis emphasizes the urgent need for mental health initiatives that address both individual and systemic vulnerabilities in fragile democracies (Ayoola, et al, 2024).

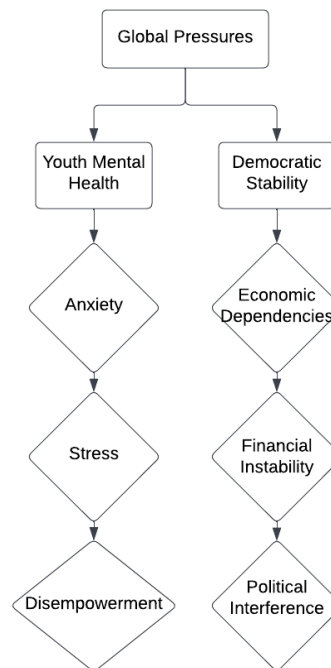


Figure 1: A Block Diagram Depicting the Influence of Global Pressures on Democratic Stability and Youth Mental Health

Figure 1 illustrates how global pressures, including economic dependencies, financial instability, and political interference, contribute to the destabilization of democratic structures and exacerbate mental health challenges among youth in polarized societies. At its center, global pressures branch into two primary areas: Democratic Stability and Youth Mental Health. In the Democratic Stability section, factors like economic dependencies and political interference erode trust in democratic institutions, weakening their resilience. Concurrently, in the Youth Mental Health section,

these global pressures heighten levels of anxiety, stress, and disempowerment among young people, intensifying the psychological burden of living amid political uncertainty. Figure 1 highlights the pressing need for mental health support systems and initiatives to address these intersecting vulnerabilities, ultimately fostering resilience among youth and reinforcing democratic integrity in impacted societies.

### 2.3 Access to Mental Health Resources and Barriers

In polarized societies at risk of autocratization, youth often face limited access to mental health resources, a barrier that significantly impacts their resilience and well-being (Atache, et al, 2024). Patel et al. (2018) highlight the global disparities in mental health services, noting that young people in economically and politically unstable countries often lack adequate access to mental health care due to systemic underfunding and socio-political challenges. This scarcity of resources leaves youth, particularly those affected by political polarization and social stressors, without essential support to address rising levels of anxiety and depression as shown in Figure 2. Similarly, Vigo, Thornicroft, and Atun (2016) underline the substantial gap between mental health needs and available resources worldwide, which is even more pronounced in societies experiencing political turmoil. In such environments, mental health is often deprioritized, further limiting young individuals' ability to manage stressors associated with instability and polarization (Enyejo, et al, 2024). The restricted access to mental health resources in these contexts exacerbates psychological vulnerability among youth, posing a serious risk not only to their well-being but also to the stability of democratic institutions, as mentally unsupported youth are more susceptible to disengagement and disillusionment within their societies (Ijiga, et al, 2024).

Figure 2 above highlight the critical importance of mental health accessibility for young people, particularly in politically unstable or polarized societies. The first image uses a profile of a human head filled with positive mental health words like "hope," "control," and "positivity," encircled by bright, colorful pencils, symbolizing the diverse approaches needed to support mental well-being. It represents the mental resilience youth require to thrive amidst societal challenges. The second image, which

features happy children and the phrase "Breaking the Barriers: Ensuring All Children Have Access to Mental Health Services," highlights the necessity of removing obstacles that hinder young people from obtaining essential mental health support. Together, these visuals emphasize the link between accessible mental health resources and the stability of democratic societies, showing that fostering resilience in youth through adequate mental health care is not just a public health priority but a pillar for sustaining democratic values in the face of autocratization.



A



B

Figure 2: Illustrating the Need for Accessible Youth Mental Health Resources (Masundire, 2021 & Kaela's Blog, 2023).

## III. ROLE OF MENTAL HEALTH ADVOCACY IN FOSTERING RESILIENCE

### 3.1 Importance of Advocacy Initiatives for Youth

Mental health advocacy initiatives play a vital role in fostering resilience among youth in societies facing political polarization and autocratization (Ijiga, et al, 2024). Betancourt et al. (2013) emphasize that mental health advocacy efforts that focus on building resilience are crucial for youth who experience high

levels of social and psychological stress. In such environments, these initiatives provide essential support by raising awareness, enhancing coping mechanisms, and empowering young people to face the unique challenges they encounter as shown in Figure 3. Additionally, Wessells (2015) highlights the effectiveness of community-based mental health interventions, noting that initiatives centered around youth mental health advocacy can increase accessibility to mental health services, even in low-resource or politically unstable regions. These advocacy programs not only address immediate mental health needs but also contribute to long-term resilience, enabling young people to navigate polarized societies with greater psychological strength (Abdallah, et al, 2024). This approach emphasizes the significance of sustained mental health support for youth, which is integral to building a generation more capable of resisting authoritarian pressures and preserving democratic resilience (Enyejo, et al, 2024).

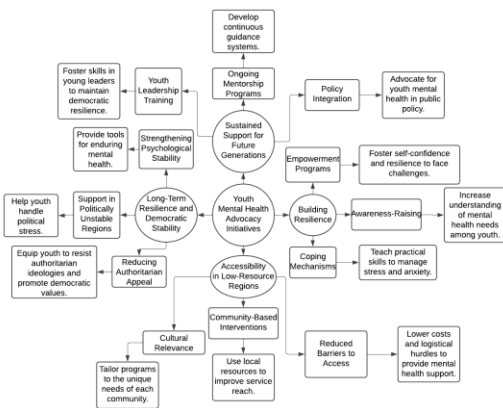


Figure 3: A Classification of Advocacy Initiatives for Youth Resilience and Political Stability

Figure 3 illustrates the multifaceted approach of youth mental health advocacy initiatives in fostering resilience and supporting democratic stability within polarized societies. At its core, advocacy initiatives aim to empower youth by focusing on Building Resilience through awareness, coping mechanisms, and empowerment programs that equip young people to handle social and psychological stress. In Accessibility in Low-Resource Regions, advocacy emphasizes community-based and culturally relevant interventions that make mental health support available, even in economically and politically challenging areas. The Long-Term Resilience and

Democratic Stability branch highlights how sustained mental health initiatives strengthen psychological resilience, helping youth resist authoritarian influences while promoting democratic values. Finally, Sustained Support for Future Generations underscores the need for ongoing mentorship, leadership training, and integration of mental health advocacy into policy, ensuring future youth are equipped to support democratic resilience. This comprehensive approach reflects how advocacy initiatives contribute to both immediate mental health needs and the broader goal of fostering a politically stable and resilient generation.

### 3.2 Case Studies of Effective Advocacy

Examining case studies of mental health advocacy in polarized societies offers valuable insights into how such initiatives can support youth resilience (Idoko, et al, 2024). Miller and Shinn (2005) analyze community-driven mental health programs, demonstrating that grassroots advocacy efforts can be particularly effective in reaching marginalized youth and fostering resilience. These programs provide safe spaces, mental health resources, and a platform for young people to engage in collective problem-solving, which is especially important in politically polarized societies where youth may feel isolated as shown in Figure 4 (Ijiga, et al, 2024). Ostadalidehaghi, (2020) further illustrate how advocacy programs that focus on empowering youth through education and community support can help mitigate the effects of political instability and social inequality. By engaging young people in advocacy and resilience-building activities, these programs offer practical tools for managing the stressors of a polarized environment, ultimately reinforcing democratic values and reducing the likelihood of authoritarian appeal (Idoko, et al, 2024). This analysis points out the critical role of community-based initiatives in promoting youth mental health and resilience in the face of political and social challenges (Awotiwon, et al, 2024).

Figure 4 illustrates the multifaceted approach to youth mental health advocacy in conflict-affected regions, highlighting the importance of addressing both immediate psychological challenges and long-term resilience-building. It starts with the psychological challenges faced by youth, such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and suicide risk.

To combat these issues, mental health advocacy emphasizes the importance of providing mental health services, psychological support, and trauma-informed care. This advocacy is bolstered by international partnerships, including U.S. collaborations with NGOs, the World Health Organization (WHO), and other global organizations, which enable targeted interventions aimed at displaced and vulnerable youth. Furthermore, figure 2 also outlines how U.S. foreign policy integrates mental health support into humanitarian responses, with a focus on youth-specific needs and infrastructure rebuilding. Finally, long-term recovery efforts involve comprehensive mental health services, such as training for local professionals and community-based rehabilitation programs, to build resilience. These initiatives promote coping strategies and encourage youth reintegration into their communities, reinforcing both mental well-being and societal stability in post-conflict environments.

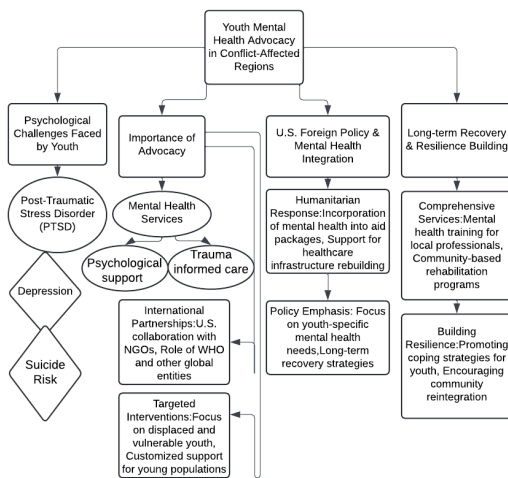


Figure 4: Holistic Approach to Youth Mental Health Support and Resilience in Conflict Zones (Ijiga, et al., 2024).

### 3.3 Challenges and Opportunities for Advocacy

While mental health advocacy plays a crucial role in supporting youth resilience, there are significant challenges and opportunities in implementing these initiatives within polarized and politically unstable societies (Idoko, et al, 2024). Patel et al. (2016) discuss the barriers posed by limited resources, such as inadequate funding and infrastructure, which restrict the reach and effectiveness of mental health programs in low-resource or politically tumultuous environments. These limitations make it difficult to address the mental health needs of vulnerable youth, who may struggle with stressors linked to political and economic instability as presented in Table 3. Conversely, Tol et al. (2011) highlight the potential of innovative community-based models to overcome these obstacles by creating adaptable mental health frameworks that are culturally relevant and accessible. These frameworks leverage local resources and community participation, which can enhance the sustainability and impact of advocacy initiatives in challenging environments (Balogun, et al, 2024). By addressing both the constraints and possibilities for mental health advocacy, this analysis emphasizes the importance of flexible, community-driven approaches that can be implemented even within the restrictive conditions of autocratizing societies (Ebenibo, et al, 2024).

Table 3: Addressing Challenges and Leveraging Opportunities in Youth Mental Health Advocacy

Aspect	Description	Key Implications	Suggested Solutions
Challenges in Mental Health Advocacy	Mental health advocacy faces obstacles in politically unstable and polarized societies	Political instability complicates the reach and impact of youth mental health support.	Develop locally sensitive advocacy strategies that work within political constraints
Resource Limitations	Limited funding and infrastructure restrict the effectiveness of mental health programs.	Lack of resources hinders the ability to meet mental health needs of vulnerable youth.	Seek alternative funding sources, such as international grants and partnerships.
Opportunities through	Community-based models offer innovative, locally-driven	Community participation fosters cultural relevance	Encourage grassroots involvement to leverage

Community-Based Models	approaches to overcome resource challenges.	and accessibility in mental health initiatives.	local knowledge and resources.
Importance of Adaptability in Advocacy	Flexible frameworks that leverage local resources enhance sustainability and adaptability in restrictive environments.	Adaptable approaches are essential for effective advocacy in autocratizing societies.	Implement adaptable models that can respond to changing political environments.

IV. INTEGRATING MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT TO STRENGTHEN DEMOCRATIC RESILIENCE

4.1 Youth Mental Health as a Strategy for Political Stability

Fostering mental health resilience in youth is essential to promoting political stability, particularly in societies facing polarization and autocratization (Godwins, et al, 2024). Slopen et al. (2015) emphasize that mental health vulnerabilities, exacerbated by social stressors, can increase susceptibility to despair and disillusionment, especially in young populations subject to political and economic uncertainties. By addressing these vulnerabilities through mental health support and resilience-building strategies, societies can enhance young people's coping mechanisms,

reducing the risk of psychological crises that may destabilize social and political harmony as presented in Table 4 (Enyejo, et al, 2024). Betz, Barber, and Miller (2011) further illustrate how mental health interventions targeted at youth can act as protective measures, not only for individual well-being but also for the collective stability of communities. In polarized environments, where youth often grapple with stressors that can trigger mental health issues, targeted support enables them to actively participate in democratic processes and resist the allure of authoritarian narratives (Ibokette, et al, 2024). Therefore, investing in youth mental health initiatives contributes directly to sustaining democratic resilience by empowering young people to engage constructively in the face of societal challenges (Ijiga, et al, 2024).

Table 4: Enhancing Political Stability through Youth Mental Health Initiatives

Aspect	Description	Key Implications	Suggested Actions
Importance of Youth Mental Health	Youth mental health resilience is crucial for promoting stability in polarized and autocratic societies.	Youth mental health initiatives enhance societal stability and resilience.	Implement resilience-building programs focused on mental health.
Impact of Social and Political Stressors	Social and political uncertainties increase mental health vulnerabilities, leading to despair among youth	Increased resilience among youth reduces risks of psychological crises and despair.	Address the impact of political stressors on youth mental well-being.
Role of Mental Health Interventions	Targeted interventions provide coping mechanisms, helping youth manage psychological stressors.	Mental health support fosters individual well-being and collective community stability.	Expand access to mental health resources and interventions for youth.
Contribution to Democratic Stability	By supporting mental health, societies empower youth to resist authoritarian narratives and engage in democracy	Empowered, resilient youth contribute to democratic resilience and social harmony	Promote policies that integrate youth mental health with democratic engagement



#### 4.2 Mitigating Authoritarian Appeal through Resilience-Building

Resilience-building among youth plays a crucial role in reducing the appeal of authoritarianism in polarized societies (Idoko, et al, 2024). Reich and Reich (2006) note that authoritarian tendencies often gain traction in populations facing social or psychological instability, as authoritarianism may appear as a source of structure and certainty. However, by equipping young people with resilience skills, mental health initiatives can help counteract this appeal, enabling youth to withstand the allure of authoritarian ideologies as shown in Figure 5. Duckitt (2001) supports this view, suggesting that psychological resilience can buffer against ideologies that exploit fear and uncertainty. Resilience-building programs provide youth with coping mechanisms and critical thinking skills, fostering a mindset less susceptible to authoritarian narratives (Igba, et al, 2024). In societies at risk of autocratization, promoting resilience among youth not only benefits mental health but also strengthens democratic values, as resilient youth are more likely to support pluralism and resist authoritarian control (Balogun, et al, 2024).

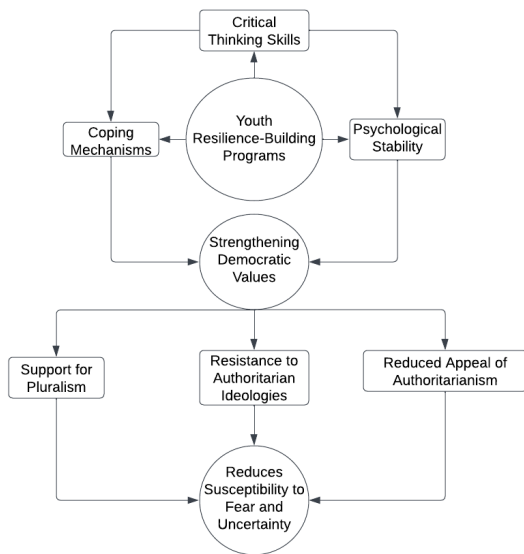


Figure 5: A Diagram Showing How Youth Resilience Mitigates Authoritarian Appeal

Figure 5 illustrates how resilience-building programs for youth serve as a powerful tool to counteract the appeal of authoritarianism in polarized societies. At the center, resilience-building programs focus on fostering coping mechanisms, critical thinking skills,

and psychological stability in young people. These foundational skills equip youth with the ability to manage stress and uncertainty, which are often exploited by authoritarian narratives. As these resilience components strengthen, they collectively support democratic values by promoting support for pluralism, resistance to authoritarian ideologies, and a reduced appeal of authoritarianism. Additionally, the diagram shows how resilience-building directly addresses fear and uncertainty, further decreasing susceptibility to authoritarian influence. By reinforcing mental and emotional stability, these programs empower young people to actively uphold democratic ideals even amidst social and political pressures.

#### 4.3 Policy Recommendations

To strengthen democratic resilience through youth mental health, targeted policy interventions are essential. Patel et al. (2007) recommend prioritizing mental health as a public health issue, with policies that focus on accessibility, affordability, and sustainability of mental health services, especially in politically polarized environments. By establishing robust mental health infrastructures, governments can provide young people with consistent and meaningful support, thus enabling them to cope better with the societal stressors that may otherwise lead them toward authoritarian ideologies (Oloba, et al, 2024). Saxena et al. (2007) argue for the equitable distribution of mental health resources, highlighting the need for efficient use of limited resources to ensure access even in low-resource or politically unstable areas. Policies that integrate mental health within broader public health and democratic resilience strategies create a supportive environment that not only addresses the immediate mental health needs of youth but also reinforces democratic stability (Ijiga, et al, 2024). These recommendations stress the importance of proactive, inclusive approaches to mental health that empower youth and protect democratic values (Balogun, et al, 2024).

### V. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

#### 5.1 Summary of Key Findings

This study has highlighted the intricate relationship between youth mental health and democratic

resilience within polarized societies facing autocratization risks. Findings highlights those domestic challenges, such as economic inequalities and political polarization, create a destabilizing environment for young people, heightening their vulnerability to mental health issues. These issues are further compounded by global pressures, including economic dependencies and international political influences, which contribute to democratic instability and psychological stress among youth. Mental health advocacy initiatives have been shown to play a crucial role in building resilience among young populations, equipping them with coping mechanisms that strengthen their ability to withstand political and social stressors. Furthermore, integrating mental health support with political and economic strategies offers a dual benefit: promoting individual well-being while reinforcing democratic principles. Through case studies and policy evaluations, the study demonstrates that mental health resilience-building is not only a public health imperative but also a valuable tool for counteracting authoritarian appeal and sustaining democratic stability.

### 5.2 Policy and Practical Implications

The findings of this study emphasize the need for targeted mental health policies aimed at supporting youth in politically unstable and polarized environments. Practical implications include prioritizing mental health services as a key component of democratic resilience, ensuring that young people have access to resources that enable them to cope effectively with societal stressors. By investing in mental health infrastructure and resilience-building initiatives, policymakers can create a supportive environment that empowers youth and discourages authoritarian tendencies. Additionally, integrating mental health advocacy within broader political-economic frameworks could strengthen community cohesion and democratic engagement among young populations. Policy efforts should therefore focus on making mental health services accessible and sustainable, particularly in low-resource regions and politically challenging contexts. These steps would support the long-term goal of fortifying democratic institutions by promoting psychological resilience and reducing the appeal of authoritarian ideologies among vulnerable youth.

### 5.3 Future Research Directions

This study opens pathways for further research on the intersection of youth mental health and democratic resilience in societies vulnerable to autocratization. Future research could explore the specific psychological mechanisms by which political polarization impacts young people's mental health, providing a deeper understanding of the mental health-democracy nexus. Additionally, longitudinal studies could examine the long-term effects of mental health advocacy on democratic stability, helping to identify best practices for resilience-building in politically polarized societies. Comparative studies across different geopolitical contexts would also be valuable in assessing the effectiveness of various mental health initiatives in supporting youth and reinforcing democratic values. As political environments continue to shift globally, understanding the evolving role of mental health in sustaining democracy and fostering resilience among young populations remains a vital area of study.

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