

The Paradoxical Adoption (and diffusion) of Citizen-Initiated Mechanisms of Direct Democracy

Direct Democracy



For some people DD is the **salvation** for almost any problem affecting political life. For others,

It is a straightway to demagoguery, populism, and even “Chavism” (i.e. the **annihilation** of representative government).



Wait! Direct democracy is quite diverse!

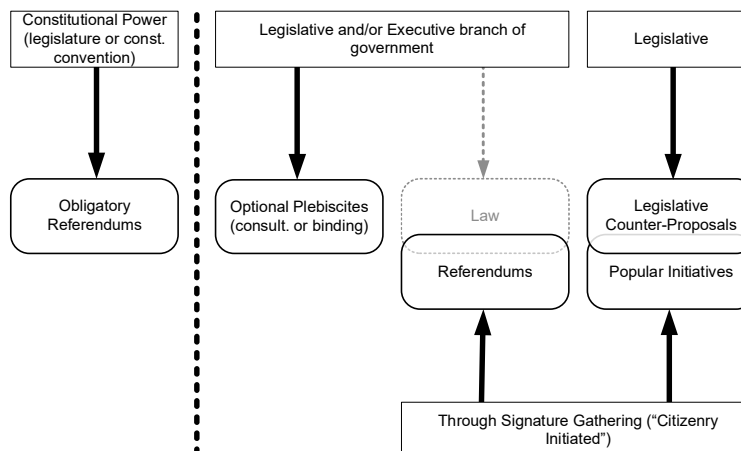
What Constitutes a Mechanism of Direct Democracy?

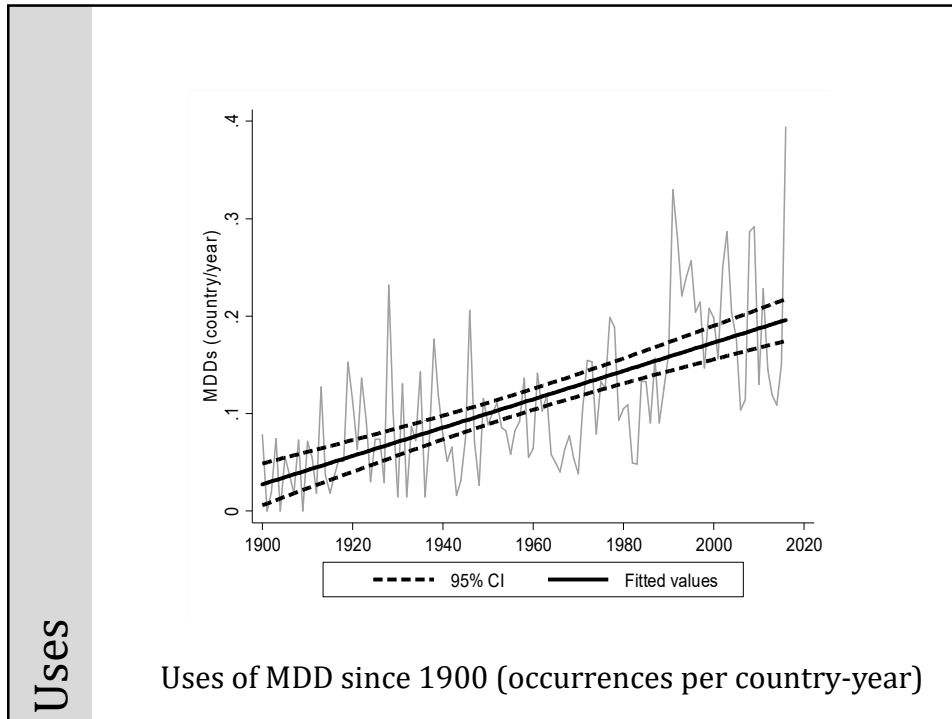
I define an MDD (“ballot measure”) as a publicly recognized institution wherein citizens decide or emit their opinion on issues – other than through legislative and executive elections – directly at the ballot box through universal and secret suffrage.

Thus, neither of these belong to DD:

- Deliberative Democracy
- Participative Budgeting
- Democratic Decentralization
- Advisory Citizen Commissions
- Even, the *Landsgemeinde*

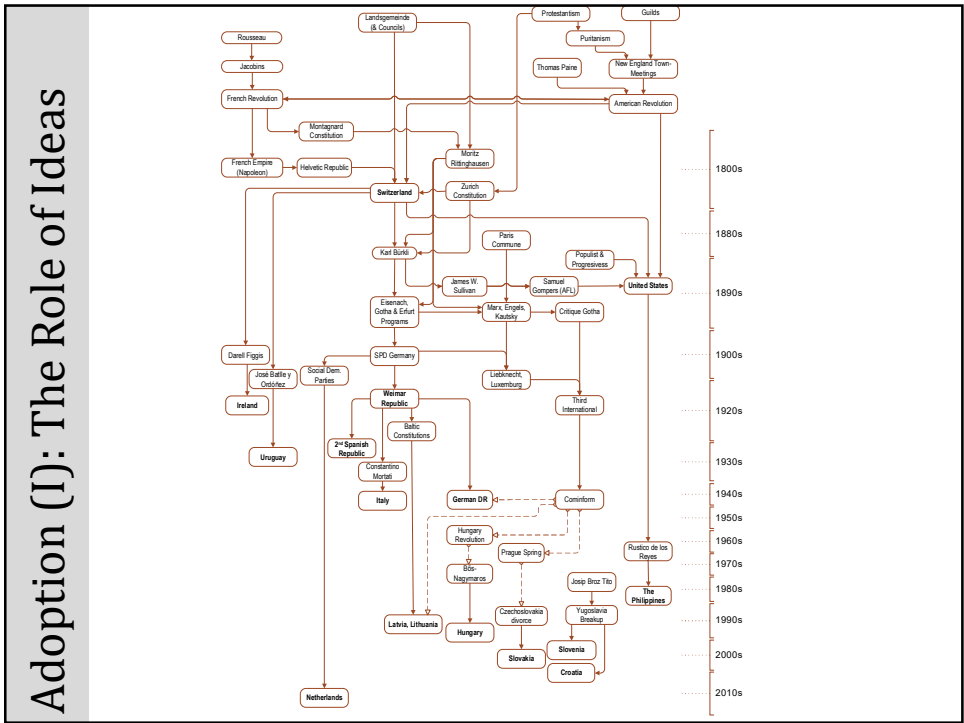
Direct Democracy - Types





When studying the adoption of citizen-initiated mechanisms of direct democracy (CI-MDDs) in any country, there is an ever-present paradox:

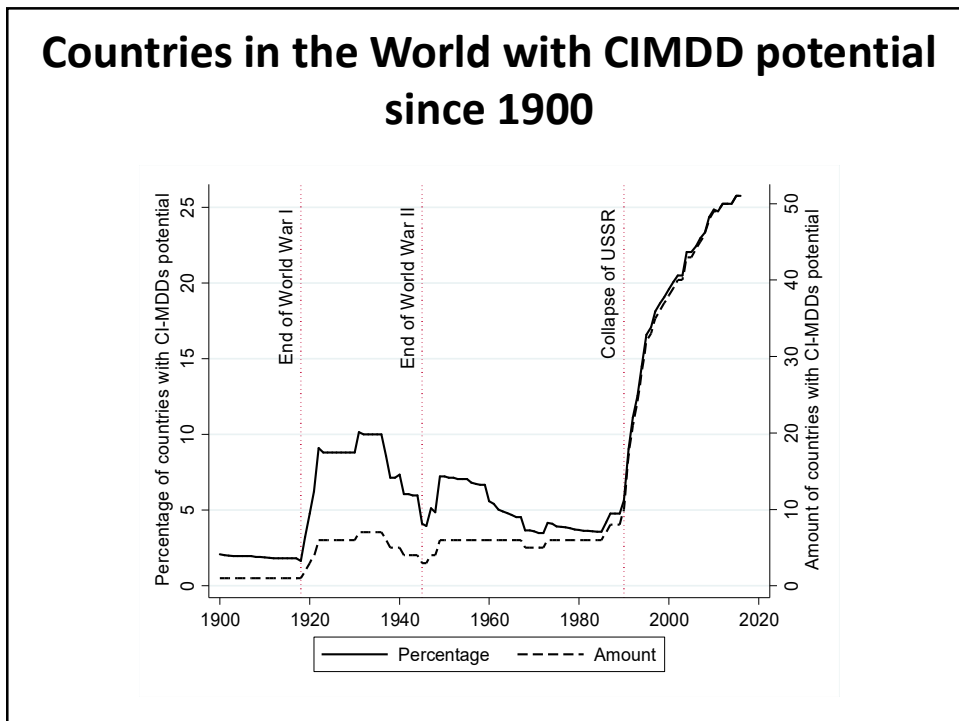
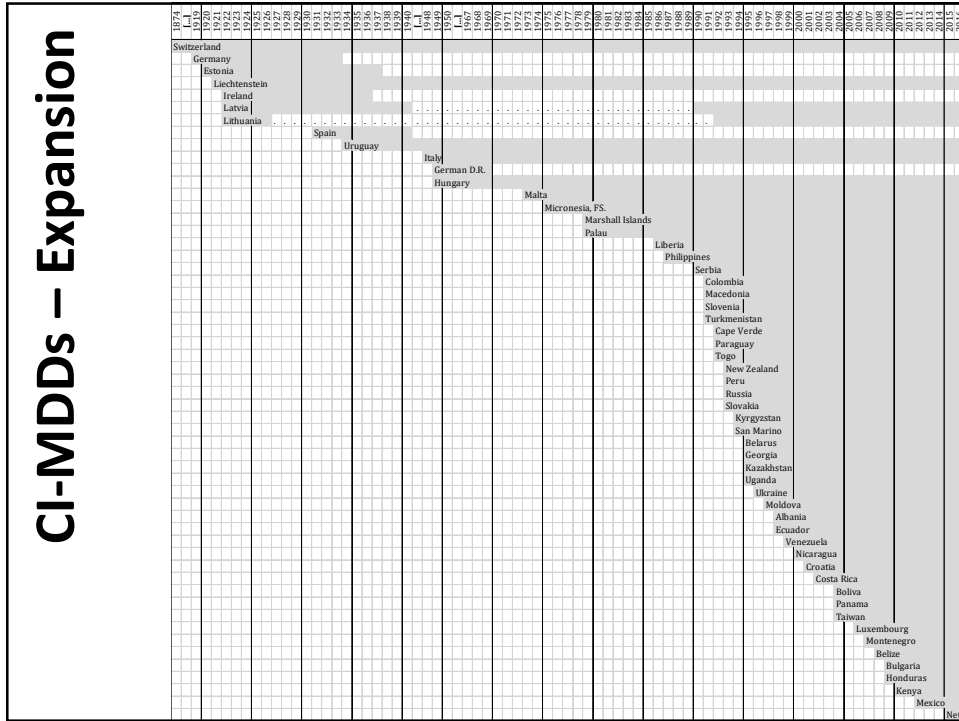
- Why would politicians create institutional tools that limit their decision-making abilities?
- Why would they create a device for citizens to stand in the way of party-led legislation?



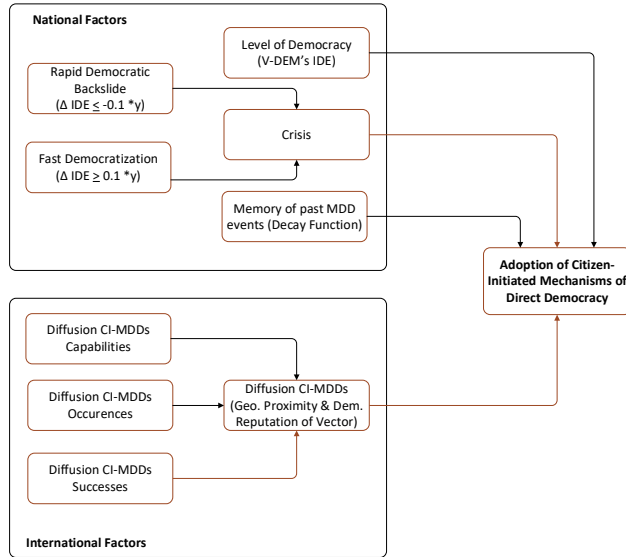
Like any other important institutional reforms (such as P.R., Secret Ballot, Women Enfranchisement), once CI-MDDs are adopted, it is extremely **hard to go backwards**



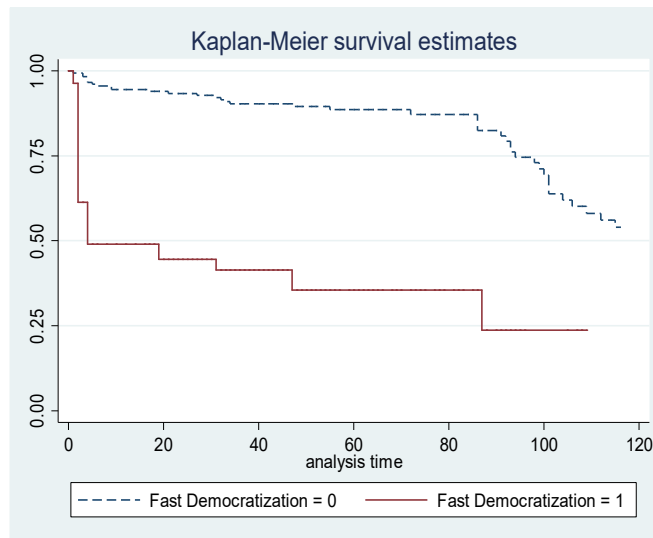
We can see the adoption of CI-MDDs as a **survival function**, where the "death" here represents the end of a purely representative regime (which occurs when CI-MDDs are adopted).

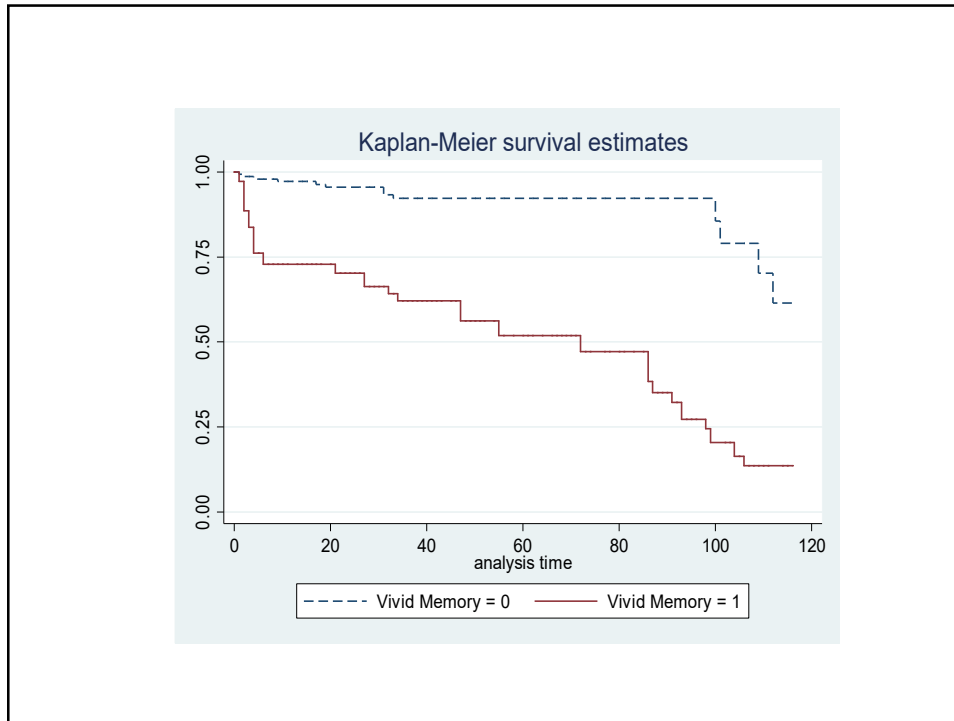


Model adoption CI-MDDs



CI-MDD capabilities is calculated as follows: diffusion effect on country i , at time $t+1 = \sum_{n=1}^n \left(\frac{c_{n,t}}{p_{i,n}} * d_t \right)$, where $c_{n,t}$ is the CIC capability of country n at time t , p_{in} is the proximity between capital cities of country i and n , and d_t is the democratic reputation (five-year average of country n at time t .)

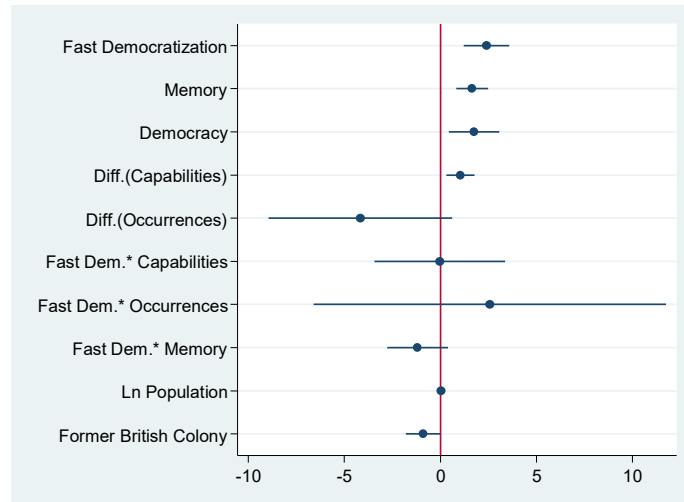




	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	_t	_t	_t	_t	_t
Fast Democratization	6.909*** (5.54)	6.152*** (4.14)	12.74*** (4.20)	12.29*** (4.20)	12.15*** (4.12)
Rapid Dem. Backslide	2.470 (1.22)				
Memory	5.101*** (4.46)	5.114*** (4.35)	6.645*** (4.50)	6.586*** (4.48)	6.116*** (4.25)
Democracy	3.824* (2.23)	3.669* (2.16)	3.687* (2.14)	3.990* (2.14)	5.641* (2.56)
Diffusion Capabilities	2.871** (3.05)	2.988** (2.92)	3.056** (2.88)	3.050** (2.86)	2.860** (2.76)
Diffusion Occurrences	0.0361 (-1.79)	0.0215 (-1.62)	0.0184 (-1.62)	0.0186 (-1.61)	0.0141 (-1.72)
Fast Dem.* Capabilities		0.702 (-0.19)	0.849 (-0.09)	0.892 (-0.06)	0.953 (-0.03)
Fast Dem.* Occurrences		10.66 (0.50)	16.41 (0.56)	14.64 (0.53)	14.06 (0.56)
Fast Dem.* Memory			0.294 (-1.48)	0.296 (-1.48)	0.259 (-1.68)
Ln Population				1.039 (0.43)	1.037 (0.38)
Former GBR Colony					0.415 (-1.89)
N	11217	11217	11217	11186	11186
Log lik.	-183.8	-184.2	-183.2	-183.0	-181.0
chi2 test	89.37	87.64	62.49	62.59	68.26

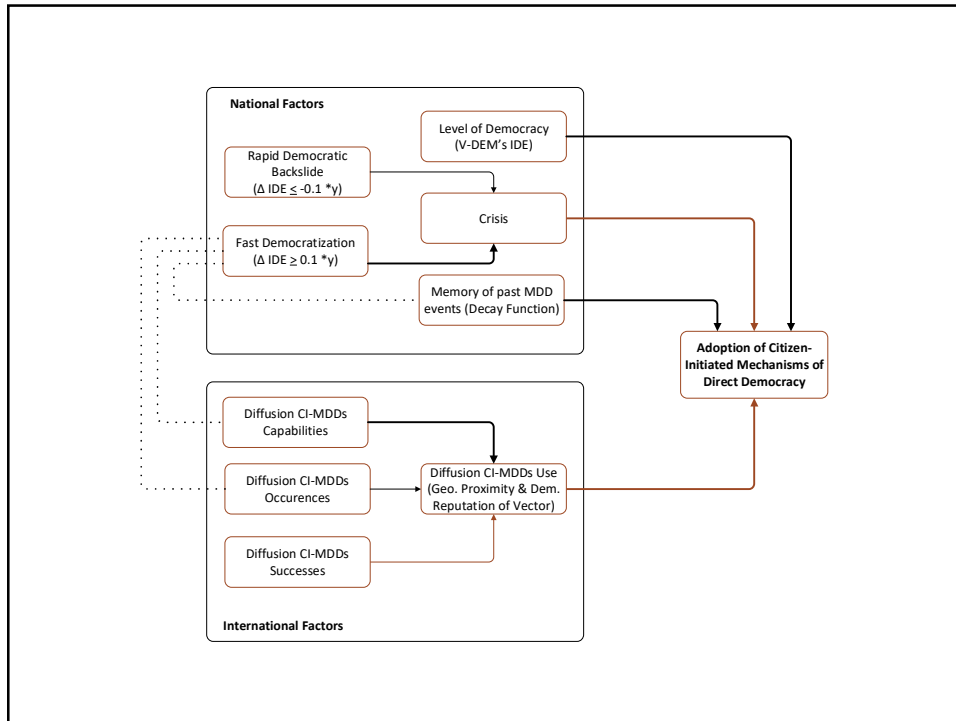
Exponentiated coefficients; *t* statistics in parentheses
 * *p* < 0.05, ** *p* < 0.01, *** *p* < 0.001

Hazard Coefficients Predicting the Adoption of Citizen-Initiated Mechanisms of Direct Democracy



Comparison of Countries at Time of CI-MDD Adoption v. the Rest

	(1)				(2)				Ratio (2)/(1)
	Countries that had not adopted CI-MDDs				Values at Year of Adoption				
	Mean	SD	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD	Min.	Max.	
Memory	0.30	0.4	0	1	0.66	0.46	0	1	2.2
Rapid Democratization	0.04	0.19	0	1	0.19	0.39	0	1	4.8
Polyarchy	0.41	0.29	0.01	1	0.57	0.24	0.12	1	1.4
Diffusion Capabilities	0.28	0.76	0	18.63	0.59	0.69	0.03	2.85	2.1



Venn Diagram of CI-MDD Adoption (Selected Cases, Acronyms-Year)

