

Democracia Directa y Participación Cívica ¿Herramientas Pedagógicas?

The debate between supporters and detractors of direct democracy has been extensive [...] one of these critical points refers to whether direct democracy fosters or undermines the representative game through **enlightening citizens or alienating them** from participating at representative elections.

1. If citizens' concerns and demands can be addressed (and solved) directly by them at the ballot box, then why bother electing authorities?
2. An active use of direct democracy not only bolsters representative democracy through enhancing electoral participation, but also increasing citizens' political awareness, making them virtuous, and in some way, 'freerer' (Mansbridge 1999, Qvortrup 2002).

Tolbert, Caroline J., and Daniel A. Smith. 2005. "The Educative Effects of Ballot Initiatives on Voter Turnout." *American Politics Research* 33 (2):283-309.

Scholars have begun examining what Progressive reformers called the educative effects of direct democracy, especially the effect ballot initiatives have on voter turnout.

We analyze the impact of ballot initiative use on voter turnout from 1980 through 2002 using voter eligible population (VEP) turnout rates.

Cross-sectional time-series analysis reveals that

- (a) ballot initiatives increase turnout in midterm (1,7%) as well as presidential elections (0,7%)
- (b) the turnout effect in midterm and especially presidential elections is considerably larger than previously thought.

Given the closeness of the Electoral College contests, it is possible that the mobilizing effects of statewide ballot questions could be the determining factor in future presidential elections.

TABLE 1
Impact of Ballot Initiatives on Voter Turnout
1980-2000 Presidential Elections

Dependent Variable: Voter Eligible Population (VEP) Turnout

Variables	Usage of the Initiative Process		Quadratic Model of Initiative Use	
	β (PCSE)	p Value	β (PCSE)	p Value
Number of initiatives on state ballot _{i,t}	.312* (.112)	.005*	.689* (.200)	.001*
Number of initiatives on state ballot squared _{i,t}			-.030* (.013)	.022*
Southern state _{i,t}	-5.854* (1.402)	.000*	-5.806* (1.370)	.000*
Senate election _{i,t}	.625 (.611)	.306	.647 (.630)	.304
Gubernatorial election _{i,t}	-.844 (.571)	.139	-.861 (.541)	.111
Percentage high school graduates or higher _{i,t}	.022 (.139)	.873	.005 (.143)	.972
State racial diversity _{i,t}	-12.805* (3.294)	.000*	-12.571* (3.221)	.000*
Per capita income _{i,t}	-.131 ⁻³ (.235 ⁻³)	.579	.162 ⁻³ (.238 ⁻³)	.495
Registration requirement (closing date) _{i,t}	-.164* (.032)	.000*	-.168* (.032)	.000*
Constant	61.047* (10.561)	.000*	61.499* (10.595)	.000*
Number of groups (i)	50		50	
Observations per group	6		6	
R ²	.487		.491	
Wald χ^2	535.14	.000	572.68	.000
N	300		300	

SOURCE: For number of initiatives appearing on state ballots, 1980 to 1996, see Initiative and Referenda Institute (2002); for 1998 to 2002, see National Conference of State Legislatures (2004). For voter eligible population (VEP) turnout data, 1998 to 2002 see McDonald, 2004b; for 1980 to 1996 see McDonald, 2004c; McDonald & Popkin (2001); and McDonald's Web site: <http://elections.gmu.edu/> (1998, 2000, and 2002).

NOTE: Time-series cross-sectional data for the 50 states. Unstandardized regression coefficients with panel corrected standard errors (PCSE) in parentheses. The notation *i* indicates the unit to which the observations belong, in this case state number, and controls for variation in turnout rates between the states. **p* < .05. (two-tailed).

TABLE 2
**What Is the Effect of Each Additional Ballot Initiative on
 State Voter Turnout (VEP) in Presidential Elections?**

	<i>Turnout</i>
No initiatives on the ballot	55.6%
One initiative on the ballot	56.3%
Two initiatives on the ballot	57.0%
Three initiatives on the ballot	57.7%
Four initiatives on the ballot	58.4%
Five initiatives on the ballot	59.1%

NOTE: VEP = voter eligible population. Estimates are based on the assumption that there is a senate and gubernatorial race on the ballot and that it is a nonsouthern state. Percentage of the state population with a high school degree or higher, per capita income, racial diversity, the number of initiatives squared, and voter registration laws held constant at their means. Predicted probabilities are based on coefficients reported in Table 1, quadratic model of initiative use.

TABLE 4
**What Is the Effect of Each Additional Ballot Initiative on
 State Voter Turnout (VEP) in Midterm Elections?**

	<i>Turnout</i>
No initiatives on the ballot	41.3%
One initiative on the ballot	43.0%
Two initiatives on the ballot	44.7%
Three initiatives on the ballot	45.4%
Four initiatives on the ballot	47.1%
Five initiatives on the ballot	49.8%

NOTE: VEP = voter eligible population. Estimates are based on the assumption that there is a Senate and gubernatorial race on the ballot and that it is a nonsouthern state. Percentage of the state population with a high school degree or higher, per capita income, racial diversity, the number of initiatives squared, and voter registration laws held constant at their means. Predicted probabilities are based on coefficients reported in Table 3, quadratic model of initiative use.

**Freitag, Markus, and Isabelle Stadelmann-Steffen. 2010.
 "Stumbling Block or Stepping Stone? The Influence of
 Direct Democracy on Individual Participation in
 Parliamentary Elections." *Electoral Studies* 29 (3):472-83.**

This paper evaluates whether direct democracy supplements or undermines traditional representative democracy. [...] Our multilevel analysis of the 26 Swiss cantons challenges recent studies conducted for the U.S. states: In the Swiss context, where direct democracy is more important in the political process than the less salient parliamentary elections, *greater use of direct democratic procedures is associated with a lower individual probability to participate in elections*. Furthermore, by distinguishing between short and long-term effects of direct democracy, we show that the relationship observed is of a long-term nature and can therefore be seen as a result of adaptive learning processes rather than of instantaneous voter fatigue.

Table 1
Use of direct democratic instruments and participation in elections in the cantons.

Canton	Average annual number of total ballot measures (1995-1999)	Short-term use of direct democracy			Avg. participation rates in cantonal elections (2000-2003)
		Ballot measures six months prior to elections	Concurrent cantonal ballot measures	Concurrent national ballot measures	
ZH	15.0	7	0	0	37.2
BL	13.6	1	0	0	33.5
SO	10.8	3	1	1	49.8
SH	9.8	7	0	1	59.2
GR	7.4	0	0	0	-
AG	7.0	7	0	1	39.4
AI	6.8	1	0	0	-
AR	6.2	1	0	0	-
GL	5.6	14	0	1	44.7
UR	5.2	2	1	1	50.4
NW	5.2	1	0	1	54.4
GE	5.0	0	0	0	37.0
SG	4.8	1	0	1	37.8
SZ	4.8	3	0	1	47.3
OW	3.8	4	0	1	50.9
BS	3.4	0	0	0	41.4
ZG	3.4	1	0	0	45.9
LU	3.2	1	0	0	50.4
BE	3.0	1	0	0	30.1
TG	3.0	1	0	1	31.6
VD	2.8	3	0	1	37.2
TI	2.5	1	0	0	64.2
NE	2.3	2	0	0	42.5
VS	2.0	1	0	1	62.3
FR	1.6	2	0	0	42.1
JU	1.0	0	0	0	54.4
Av.	5.4	2.5	0.1	0.5	45.4

Note: Ordered according to the average number of ballot measures decided upon annually. Source: Année politique suisse (various years); Abbreviations of the cantons: Argovia (AG), Appenzell Inner Rhodes (AI), Appenzell Outer Rhodes (AR), Basel-Country (BL), Basel-Town (BS), Berne (BE), Fribourg (FR), Geneva (GE), Glarus (GL), Grisons (GR), Jura (JU), Lucerne (LU), Neuchâtel (NE), Nidwalden (NW), Obwalden (OW), Schaffhausen (SH), Schwyz (SZ), Solothurn (SO), St. Gall (SG), Ticino (TI), Thurgovia (TG), Uri (UR), Vaud (VD), Valais (VS), Zug (ZG), Zurich (ZH). Official statistics regarding voter turnout rates in cantonal parliamentary elections for the cantons Appenzell Inner Rhodes, Appenzell Outer Rhodes, and Grisons are unavailable.

Table 2
Basic model (*Model 1*) for the explanation of individual electoral participation.

	Posterior mean	Percentiles	
	(SD)	10%	90%
Fixed effects			
Constant	-6.77 (0.39)	-7.27	-6.28
<i>Individual level</i>			
Sex (ref. cat.: female)	-0.02 (0.09)	-0.13	0.09
Age	1.72 (0.26)	1.39	2.05
Education	0.57 (0.14)	0.39	0.74
Internal efficacy	0.86 (0.24)	0.54	1.17
Duty to vote	1.05 (0.30)	0.81	1.30
Party ties	0.28 (0.09)	0.16	0.40
Political interest	1.41 (0.20)	1.15	1.67
Marital status (ref. cat.: single)	0.56 (0.09)	0.44	0.69
Residential stability	1.44 (0.18)	1.21	1.67
Trust in parliament	0.19 (0.25)	-0.13	0.51
Informal involvement	-0.09 (0.15)	-0.29	0.10
Membership in political associations	0.23 (0.11)	0.10	0.37
Satisfaction with performance of economy	-0.08 (0.05)	-0.15	-0.01
Participation in national ballot measures	0.42 (0.02)	0.40	0.44
<i>Contextual level</i>			
Compulsory voting	0.58 (0.29)	0.22	0.93
Catholicism	0.95 (0.27)	0.60	1.28
Party competition	-0.18 (0.44)	-0.74	0.38
Random effects			
Contextual level variance	0.05 (0.05)	0.01	0.11
N		4835 (26)	
Deviance		3577	
DIC		3607	

Note: Estimated in MlwiN and WinBUGS. 50,000 iteration (2 chains), burn-in: 10,000, diffuse gamma-priors. No signs of non-convergence.

Table 3
The long-term and short-term influence of the use of direct democratic procedures on individual electoral participation.

	Model 2			Model 3		
	Post mean (SD)	Percentiles 10% 90%		Post mean (SD)	Percentiles 10% 90%	
Fixed effects						
Constant	-6.54 (0.43)	-7.10	-5.99			
<i>Individual level</i>						
	<i>Models control for individual level variables as in Table 2</i>			<i>Models control for individual level variables as in Table 2, but not for political interest and trust in parliament</i>		
<i>Contextual level</i>						
Compulsory voting	0.73 (0.34)	0.31	1.14	0.69 (0.31)	0.31	1.05
Catholicism	0.80 (0.30)	0.42	1.15	0.79 (0.27)	0.45	1.11
Average number of total cantonal ballot measures per year	-0.03 (0.03)	-0.06	-0.00	-0.03 (0.02)	-0.06	0.00
Total number of cantonal ballot measures six months prior to cantonal elections	0.02 (0.04)	-0.03	0.06	0.02 (0.03)	-0.02	0.07
Concurrent cantonal ballot measures	0.14 (0.42)	-0.39	0.68	0.15 (0.40)	-0.35	0.66
Concurrent national ballot measures	-0.22 (0.20)	-0.47	0.03	-0.24 (0.18)	-0.46	-0.01
Random effects						
Contextual level variance	0.07 (0.06)	0.00	0.05	0.05 (0.05)	0.01	0.11
<i>N</i>		4835 (26)			4961 (26)	
<i>Deviance</i>		3576			3720	
<i>DIC</i>		3607			3784	

Note: Estimated in MlwiN and WinBUGS. 100,000 iteration (2 chains), burn-in: 10,000, diffuse gamma-priors. No signs of non-convergence.

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Does an Active Use of Mechanisms of Direct Democracy Impact Electoral Participation? Evidence from the U.S. States and the Swiss Cantons

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1. One way to assess this relationship (if there is one), would be to find very similar countries (to control for other potential unobservables) with different degrees in the use of MDDs and to assess whether their respective turnouts follow any specific pattern. (E.g., Lithuania and Bolivia?)
2. Another strategy would be to find a country that shifted from a pure representative democracy to the coexistence of representative and direct democratic institutions. [...] However, endogeneity becomes a quandary....
3. I follow the literature and proceed in studying sub-national uses of MDDs and their impact on electoral participation. This research uses the U.S. states and Swiss cantons as units of analysis

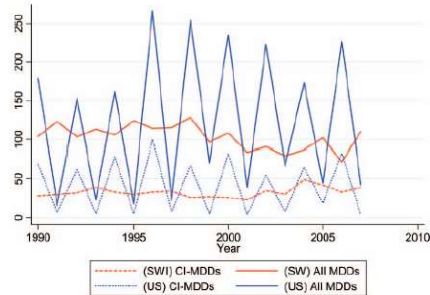


Figure 1. Amount and type of MDDs in the U.S. and Switzerland (sub-national) since 1990.

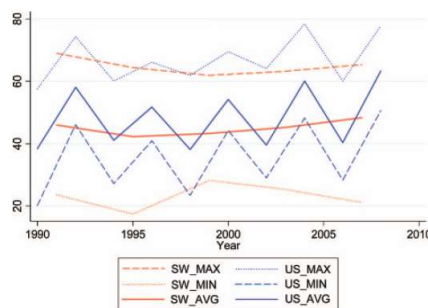


Figure 2. Electoral participation rates in the U.S. and Switzerland (sub-national) in legislative and presidential elections since 1990.

CI-MDD				TD-MDD		
Table 1. Impact of citizen-initiated mechanisms of direct democracy on voter turnout, evidence from the U.S. states and Swiss cantons				Table 2. Impact of top-down mechanisms of direct democracy on voter turnout, evidence from the U.S. States and Swiss cantons		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3		Model 5	Model 6
	U.S.A. (50 States)	U.S.A. (CI-MDD States)	Switzerland		U.S.A. (50 States)	Switzerland
Number of MDDs	0.3184*	0.1493	-0.0067	Number of MDDs	-0.6338**	-0.9799***
	0.1380	0.1856	0.2410		0.2390	0.1035
Number of MDDs ²	-0.0142	-0.0061	0.0148	Number of MDDs ²	0.0408**	0.0351***
	0.0102	0.0113	0.0168		0.0135	0.0057
Natural log of population	-0.5373**	-0.7667*	3.1666***	Natural Log of Population	-0.6097***	3.6614***
	0.1747	0.3085	0.9395		0.1793	0.9345
Population density	0.0010	0.0059	-0.0007***	Population density	0.0006	-0.0087***
	0.0011	0.0087	0.0002		0.0011	0.0001
Social heterogeneity	-19.063***	-17.624***	-1.9896	Social heterogeneity	-17.8206***	-4.9642**
	1.5804	2.3934	1.9823		1.8763	2.0920
Per capita income	0.0005**	0.0004*	0.0001***	Per capita income	0.0005***	0.0001***
	0.0002	0.0002	0.0000		0.0001	0.0000
Political uncompetitiveness	-0.1081**	-0.0839	-0.0348*	Political uncompetitiveness	-0.1098**	-0.0324*
	0.0380	0.0435	0.0146		0.0374	0.0160
Registration requirements	-0.4435***	-0.6043**	-	Registration requirements	-0.4850***	-
	0.1365	0.1983	-		0.1235	-
Southern state	-2.5602**	-1.8010**	-	Southern state	-2.9781***	-
	0.7594	0.6676	-		0.6947	-
Compulsory vote	-	-	19.5610***	Compulsory vote	-	21.6458***
	-	-	1.2761		-	0.6812
District magnitude	-	-	-0.3968***	District magnitude	-	-0.4430***
	-	-	0.0466		-	0.0961
Constant	58.8946***	62.4653***	28.5919***	Constant	61.0964***	31.9176***
	3.7929	5.9221	4.3765		3.5297	2.8105
N	255	135	109	N	255	109
Number of groups(i)	51	27	23	Number of Groups(i)	51	23
Obs. per group (avg)	5	5	4.73	Obs. per group (avg)	5	4.73
Wald X ²	10503	2462	223256	Wald X ²	6256	189428
R ²	0.4876	0.4205	0.3529	R ²	0.5062	0.4091
Model: Time-series cross-sectional data; unstandardised regression coefficients (in bold) with panel corrected standard errors (PCSE).				Model: Time-series cross-sectional data; unstandardised regression coefficients (in bold) with panel corrected standard errors (PCSE).		
*** p < 0.001, ** p < 0.01, * p < 0.05				*** p < 0.001, ** p < 0.01, * p < 0.05		

Conclusions

Enlarging the universe of analysis has provided not only a methodological challenge, but more importantly, a test for the previous path-breaking works.

Second, in contrast to previous research, it delves into the world of direct democracy and shows that not all MDDs are the same, nor do they have the same political effects.

The impact of MDDs on electoral participation in general elections is clearly context-sensitive. This research shows that the American evidence in terms of how citizen-initiated MDDs affect turnout does not necessarily travel well to other cases.

Yet, there are some problems with previous research...

Problem (1)

The menace of a credible citizen-initiated mechanism of direct democracy (CI-MDD), plays a crucial role in moderating political decisions and shifting the political course even before the gathering of signatures starts.

How can we quantify something that we might never see, even though its potential use still has an enormous impact on political life?

Problem (2)

Thus, if the previous statement is correct, counting MDDs is senseless for the objective of measuring how much direct democracy there is in a given country.

(Conceptually, two different places might have the very same 'amount' of direct democracy, but in 'A' several MDDs are held per year and in the other, 'B', MDDs appear only once in a while.)

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The Potential of Direct Democracy: A Global Measure (1900–2014)

David Altman¹

Direct Democracy Practice Potential...

$$\left(\begin{array}{c} \text{How easy triggering an MDD is?} \\ + \\ \text{How easy approving an MDD is?} \end{array} \right) * \begin{array}{c} \text{How credible the menace of an} \\ \text{MDD is?} \\ * \\ \text{How legally effective an MDD is?} \end{array}$$

$$DDPP_{xt} = \sum \left[(\exists_{xti}) (1 - S_{xti}) (CT_{xti}) + (1 - SQS_{xti}) (AQ_{xti}) \right] (D_{xti}) (T_{xti})$$

(How easy triggering an MDD is? + How easy approving an MDD is?) * How legally effective an MDD is?

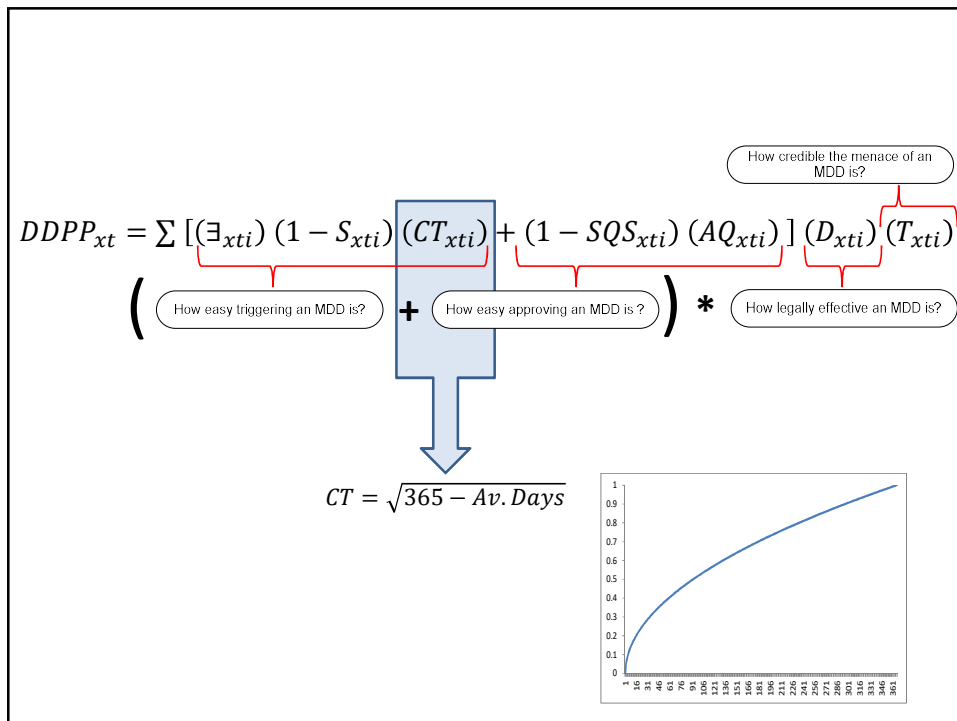
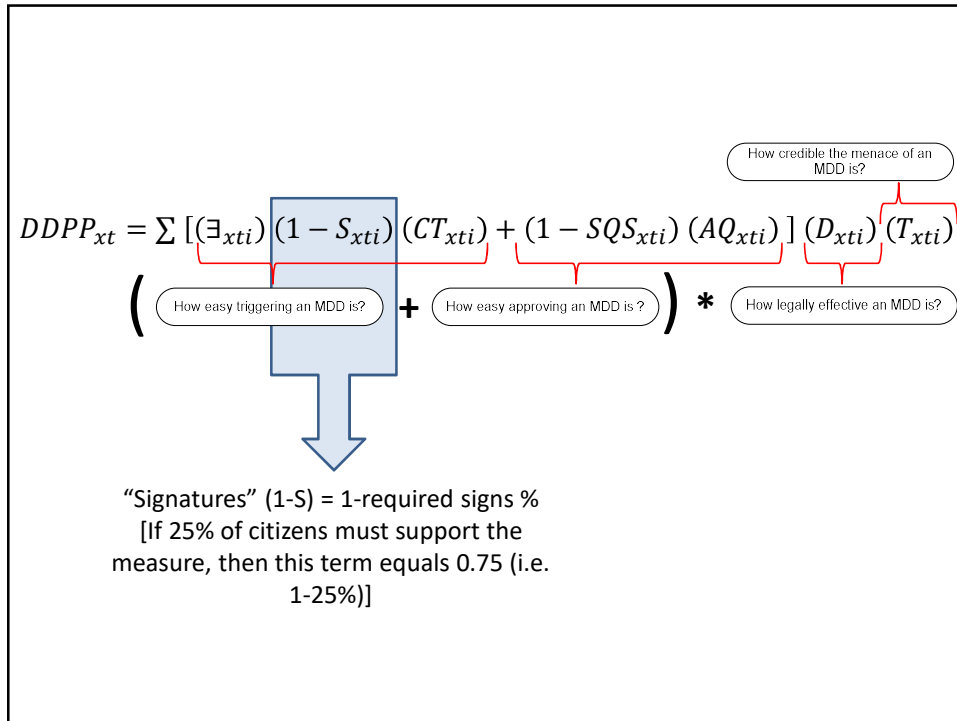
How credible the menace of an MDD is?

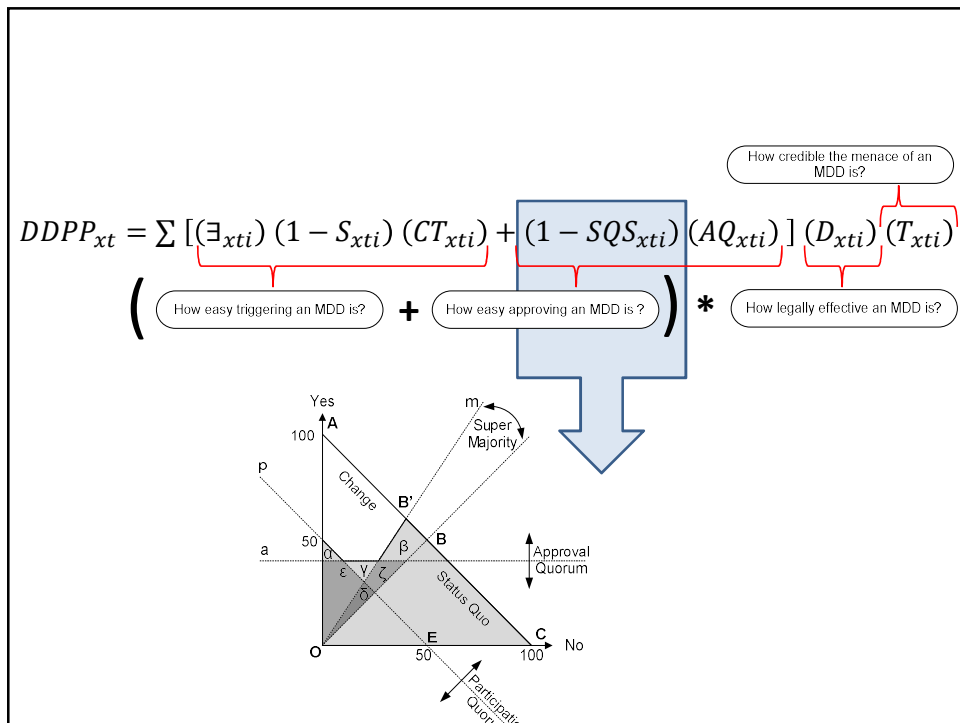
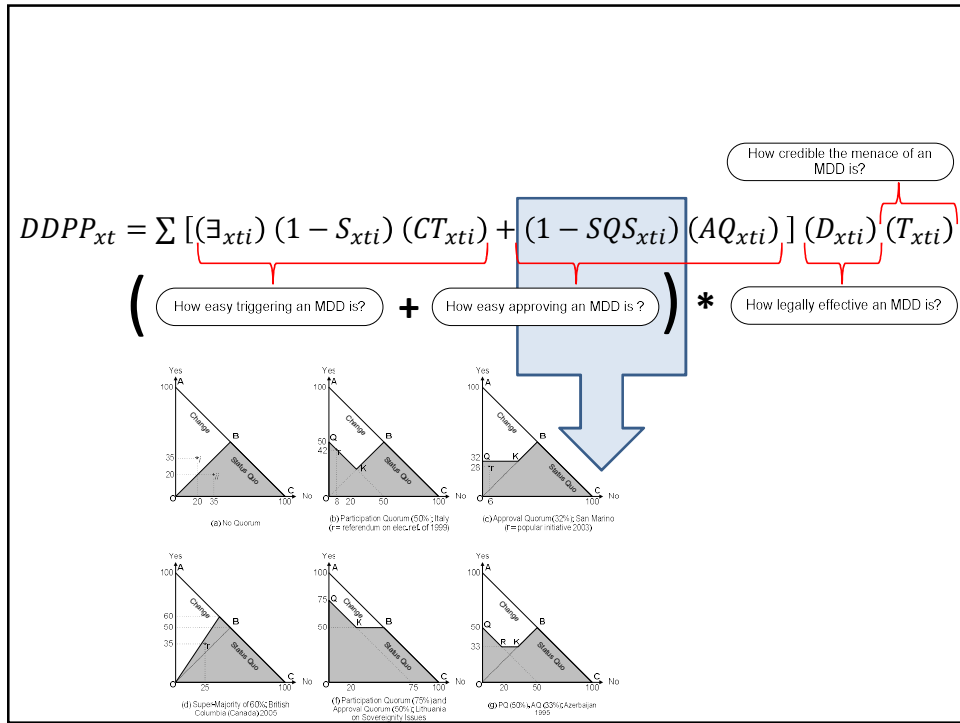
$$DDPP_{xt} = \sum \left[(\exists_{xti}) (1 - S_{xti}) (CT_{xti}) + (1 - SQS_{xti}) (AQ_{xti}) \right] (D_{xti}) (T_{xti})$$

(How easy triggering an MDD is? + How easy approving an MDD is?) * How legally effective an MDD is?

How credible the menace of an MDD is?

Existence (∃) = Dummy {0,1}





$$DDPP_{xt} = \sum \left[\underbrace{(\exists_{xti})}_{\text{How easy triggering an MDD is?}} \underbrace{(1 - S_{xti})}_{\text{How easy approving an MDD is?}} (CT_{xti}) + \underbrace{(1 - SQS_{xti})}_{\text{How credible the menace of an MDD is?}} \underbrace{(AQ_{xti})}_{\text{How legally effective an MDD is?}} \right] \underbrace{(D_{xti})}_{\text{How credible the menace of an MDD is?}} \underbrace{(T_{xti})}_{\text{How credible the menace of an MDD is?}}$$

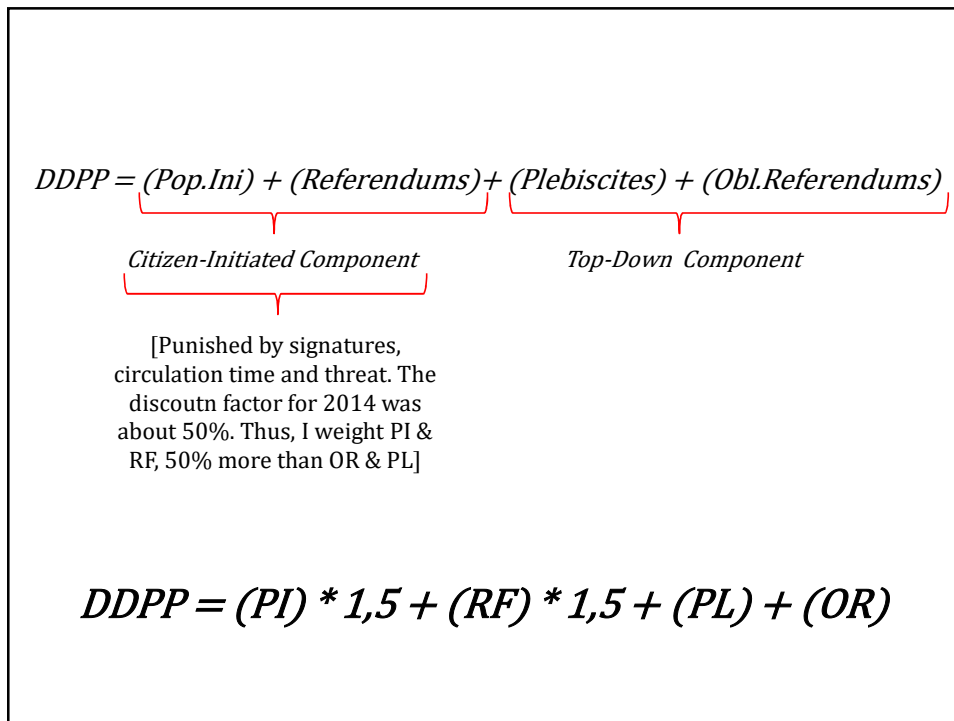
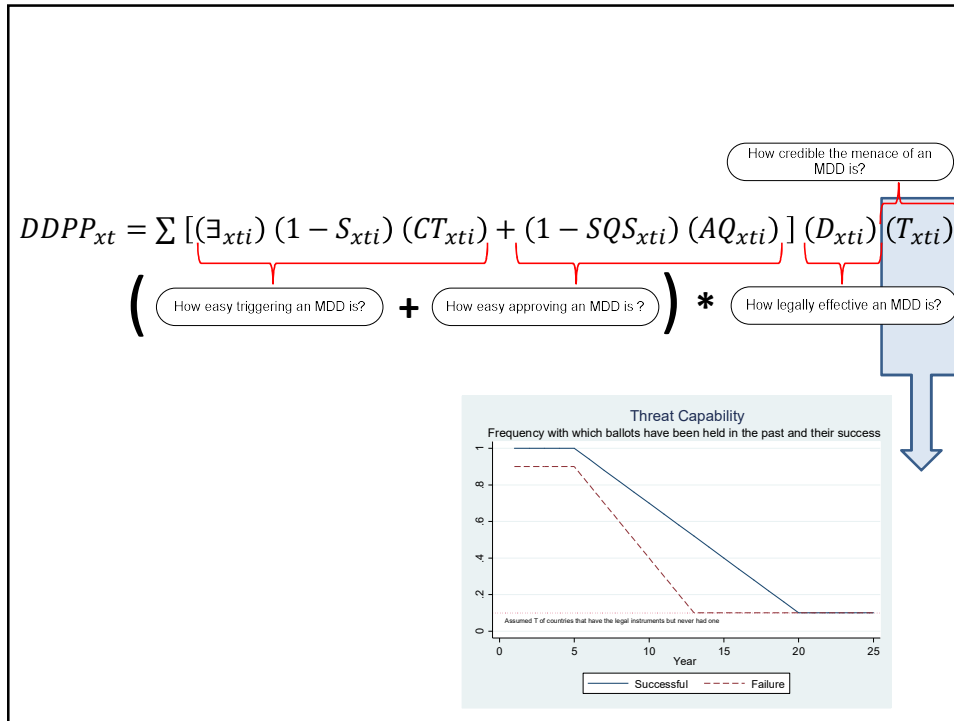
$AQ = 0.5 + \left(\frac{1-R}{2} \right)$

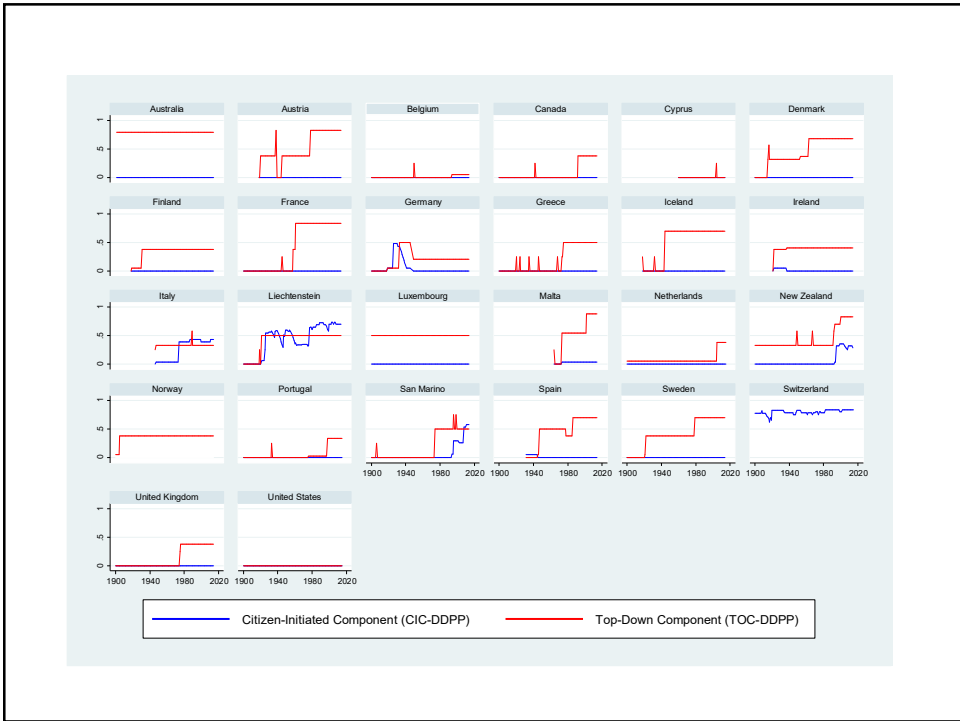
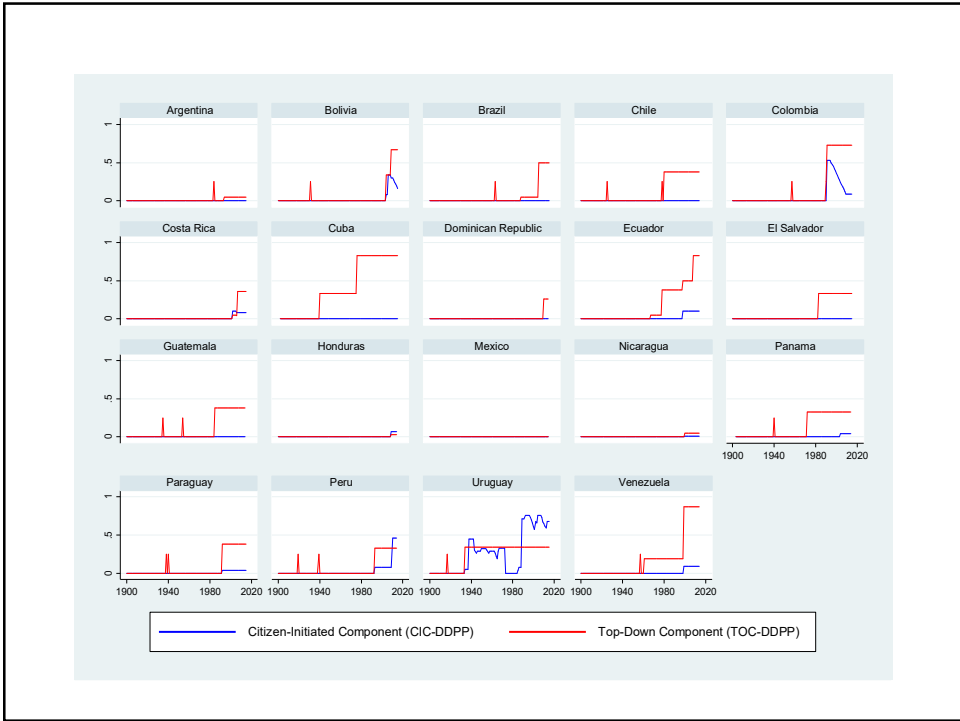
where RD represents the fraction of the required districts for approval.

$$DDPP_{xt} = \sum \left[\underbrace{(\exists_{xti})}_{\text{How easy triggering an MDD is?}} \underbrace{(1 - S_{xti})}_{\text{How easy approving an MDD is?}} (CT_{xti}) + \underbrace{(1 - SQS_{xti})}_{\text{How credible the menace of an MDD is?}} \underbrace{(AQ_{xti})}_{\text{How legally effective an MDD is?}} \right] \underbrace{(D_{xti})}_{\text{How credible the menace of an MDD is?}} \underbrace{(T_{xti})}_{\text{How credible the menace of an MDD is?}}$$

$D = 1$ if binding resolution,
 $D = 0,75$ if simply an expression of popular desire.

Regardless of whether the decision is binding, any decision taken directly has a great dose of legitimacy that is hard to undermine, particularly under a democratic regime. Thus, a consultative vote is more than “half” but less than a binding one.





Satisfaction With Democracy: When Government by the People Brings Electoral Losers and Winners Together

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Lucas Leemann¹  and Isabelle Stadelmann-Steffen²

The last decade has witnessed the rise of populist parties and a number of actors that question liberal democracy. Many explanations of this rely on dissatisfied citizens. We ask in this article whether and how institutions allowing citizens to participate in policy-making affect differences in democratic satisfaction within varying representative contexts as well as between electoral winners and losers. To do so, we first develop a measure of sub-national direct democracy and then use it together with extensive survey data to investigate how direct democracy is associated with citizens' evaluation of their democratic system. *We conclude that direct democracy is not generally related to more satisfied people but rather closes the "satisfaction-gap" between electoral winners and losers.* In contrast to previous research, we demonstrate that this mechanism holds across different representative systems.

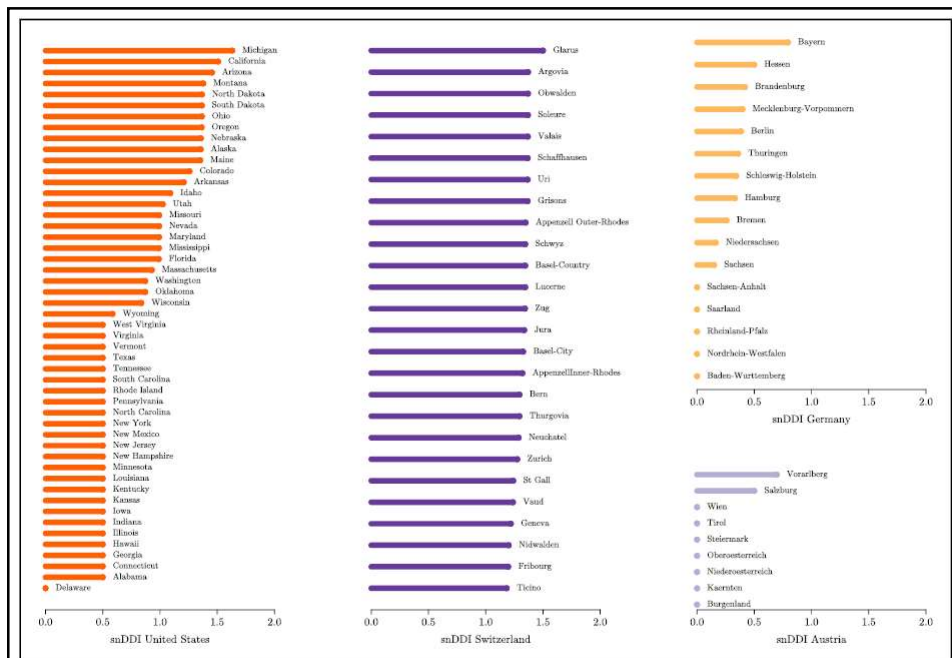


Figure I. Comparison of sub-national direct democracy index.

Satisfaction with Democracy in General

Table 2. Ordered logit models.

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Voted for Party Government	0.42*** (0.04)	0.40*** (0.04)	0.38*** (0.04)	0.38*** (0.04)
Direct democracy	0.34*** (0.07)	0.29*** (0.07)	(-0.09) (0.10)	(-0.56) (0.61)
Size of majority		1.08*** (0.28)	0.03 (0.30)	-0.01 (0.32)
DD X indicator AT				0.40 (0.70)
DD X indicator GE				0.63 (0.65)
DD X indicator US				0.45 (0.62)
Individual-level variables	✓	✓	✓	✓
Country FE	x	x	✓	✓
τ_1	-2.48***	-1.91***	-3.64***	-4.48***
τ_2	0.46'	0.12	-1.61***	-2.45
τ_3	2.65***	3.23***	1.50***	0.66
<i>ll</i>	-11348.46	11341.11	11314.93	11314.35
$N_{Individuals}$	11,318	11,318	11,318	11,318
N_{Groups}	101	101	101	101
$\hat{\sigma}^2_{Groups}$	0.13	0.11	0.05	0.05

***p < 0.001, **p < 0.01, *p < 0.05, all models include a gender indicator, age and age², indicators for seven education categories, whether somebody participated in the last elections, and six employment categories.

Across all models, electoral winners display a significantly higher satisfaction with democracy than electoral losers. Turning to direct democracy, the picture is less clear. But once we allow for unobserved country-level factors there is no indication anymore that there is a significant relationship between direct democracy and individual satisfaction with democracy. (...) These first tests fail to provide systematic empirical evidence in favor of the satisfaction hypothesis.

Winners and Losers When There is Some Direct Democracy

Table 3. Ordered logit models.

	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7
Share of voters in government		-0.01 0.30	(0.07) 0.35
Direct democracy	0.06 (0.11)	0.06 (0.11)	0.05 (0.11)
Voted for Party Government	0.76*** (0.10)	0.76*** (0.10)	0.86*** (0.23)
DD X voted for Gov	-0.31*** (0.08)	-0.31*** (0.08)	-0.31*** (0.08)
Voted for Gov X size of majority			-0.17 0.35
Individual-level variables	✓	✓	✓
Country FE	✓	✓	✓
τ_1	-3.42***	-3.43***	-3.38***
τ_2	-1.38***	-1.39***	-1.34***
τ_3	1.75	1.74	1.79
<i>ll</i>	-11286.78	-11286.78	-11286.67
$N_{Individuals}$	11,318	11,318	11,318
N_{Groups}	101	101	101
$\hat{\sigma}^2_{Groups}$	0.08	0.08	0.08
$\hat{\sigma}^2_{Groups}$	0.08	0.08	0.07

***p < 0.001, **p < 0.01, *p < 0.05, all models include a gender indicator, age and age², indicators for seven education categories, whether somebody participated in last elections, and six employment categories.

Across all models in Table 3, we find a consistent negative and statistically significant interaction effect between the winner-loser gap and the extent of direct democracy afforded to citizens. (...) Conversely, the significant interaction coefficient describing direct democracy's potential to close the gap between electoral winners and losers persists even after taking into account the extent of horizontal power sharing.

To illustrate the model interaction, we resort to predicted probabilities across the full range of potential values for direct democracy. The simulated outcomes are shown in Figure 2.

The figure demonstrates that the satisfaction gap between electoral winners and electoral losers closes the higher the level of direct democracy is.

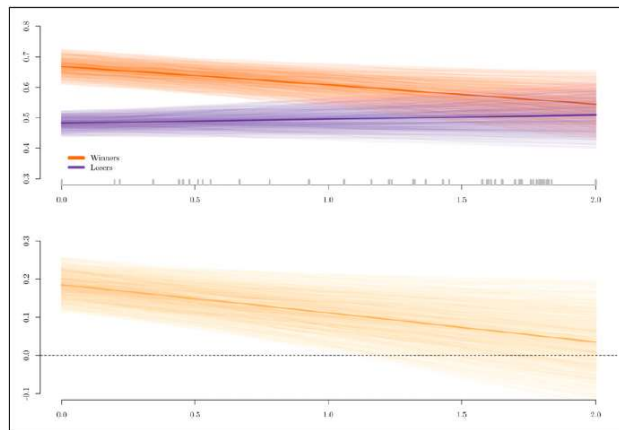


Figure 2. Satisfaction with democracy at varying levels of direct democracy for winners and losers. Note: Upper panel shows predicted probabilities to be satisfied with democracy. Lower panel shows difference in satisfaction with democracy for electoral winners and losers. All results are based on simulated predicted probabilities from posterior vector.

Overall, these results clearly suggest that direct democracy closes the gap between winners and losers in an electoral system. This mechanism is not bound to one particular representative system, as suggested by previous literature but seems to be relevant across the majoritarian and consensual sub-national democracies of Switzerland, the United States, Germany, and Austria.