

Participedia Case Database: User Guide

Introduction

Participedia is an open-source, participatory knowledge tool that collects crowd-sourced information on democratic innovations worldwide and aggregates it into a database continually updated with new contributions. The research question guiding Participedia is: What kinds of participatory processes work best, for what purposes, and under what conditions?

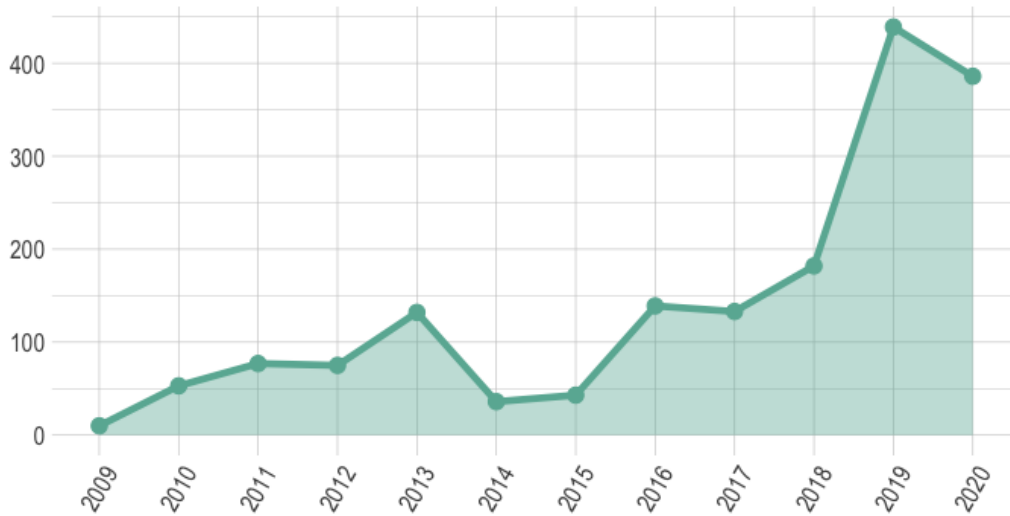
As part of our commitment to the study of democracy, Participedia provides open access to the case data. Researchers can use the database to conduct detailed studies on participatory processes within a given country or region, as well as to complement cross-national comparative studies around democratic innovations. In this user guide, we present an example of the latter. While the crowd-sourced nature of the data limits our capacity to generate country-level inferences, it provides rich and granular information about participatory processes that can complement larger research projects. In this user guide, we use the Deliberative Index of the Country-Year from the V-Dem Core dataset (Download V-Dem Dataset v10) and tests for correlation between this index and the Participedia cases dataset.

Participedia case data is available for download in [CSV format](#). As a result, the dataset can be manipulated using a wide range of programs such as Microsoft Excel, Stata, or Python. In the following user guide, we have conducted the analysis using RStudio software. The code is available in the Appendix.

Descriptive statistics

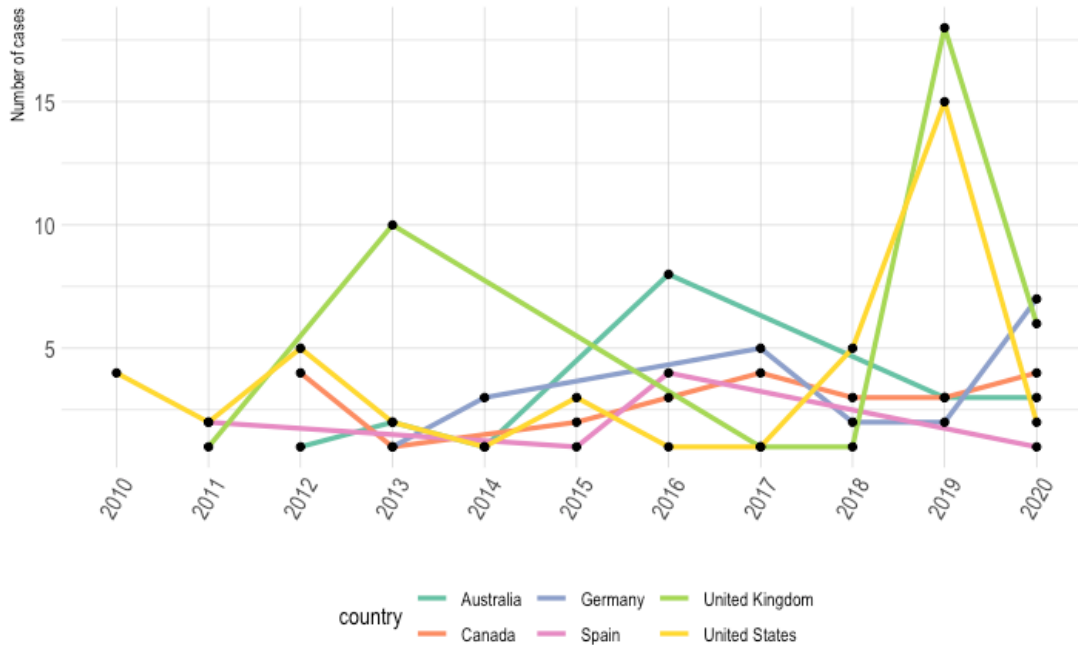
Participedia Cases dataset includes information about each of the website entries. In the following graph, we can see the evolution in the number of entries posted in Participedia by year. In 2019, almost tripled the number of cases reported, with 439 new cases compared to 182 in 2018.

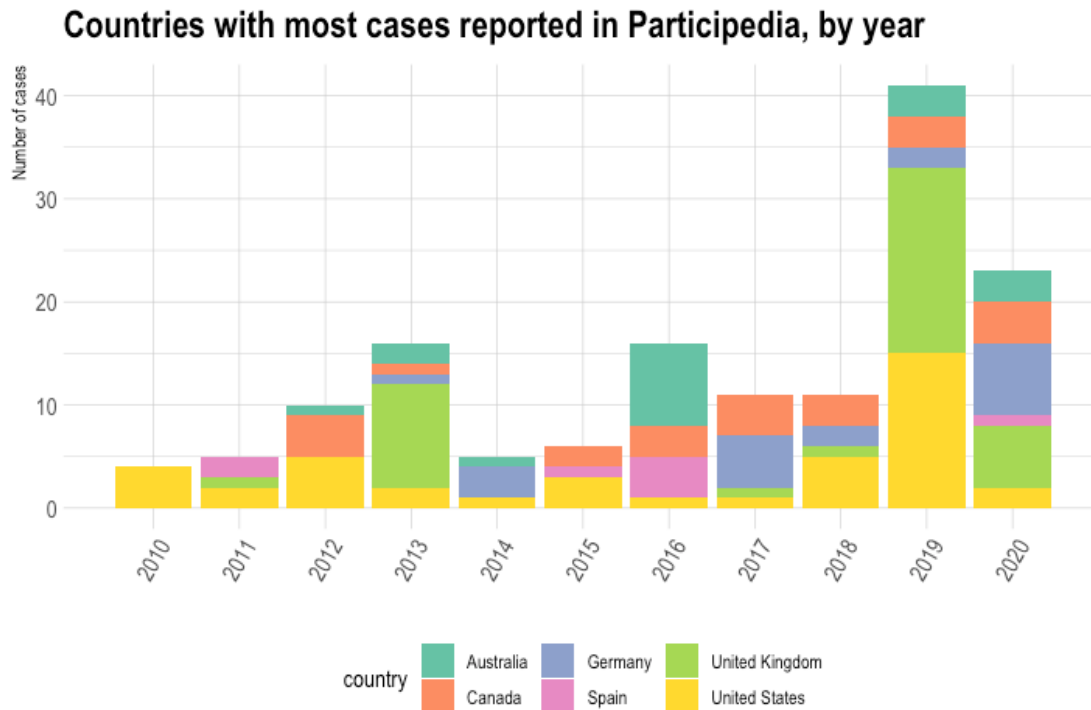
Number of cases posted in Participedia , 2009-2020



When divided by country of origin, we observe that the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Australia, Germany, and Spain are the countries that reported the most participatory processes in Participedia. The US, specifically, reported a total of 264 cases. In the following graphs, we show the evolution of the number of cases reported by each of these countries and the cumulative number of cases reported by this cluster of cases.

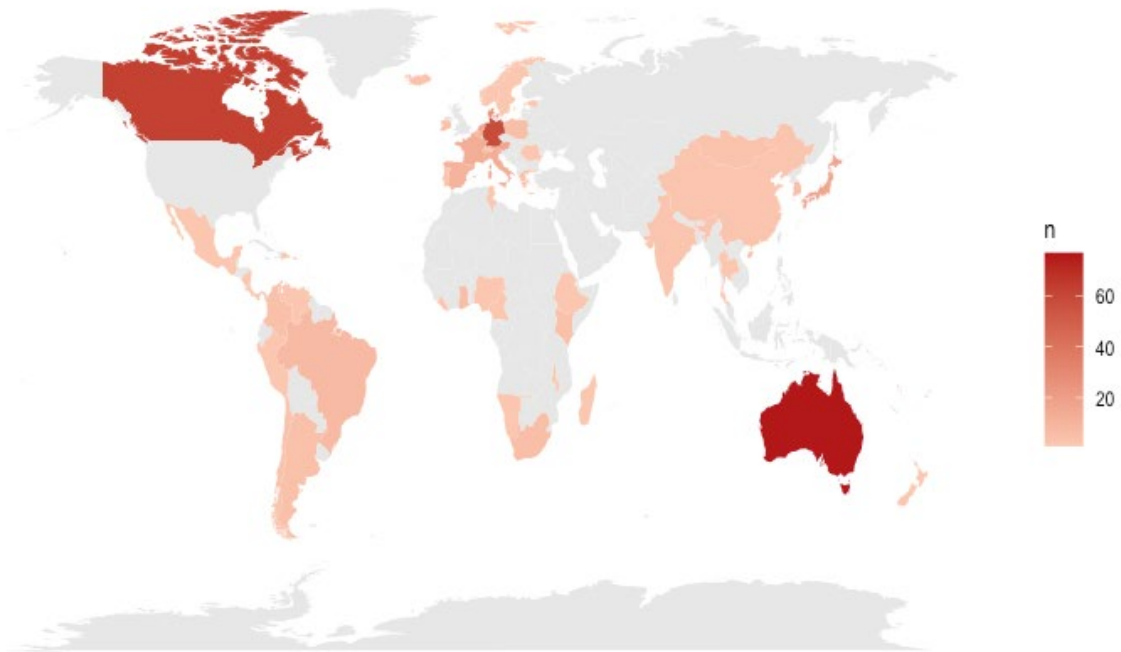
Countries with more cases reported in Participedia, by year





Participedia case data also distinguishes between the different types of methods of participatory processes such as collaborative approaches, direct democracy, protests, participatory arts, etc. Given that this user guide focuses on using the database to complement a study on deliberative democracy, we are filtering the cases for those corresponding to “deliberative and dialogic process”. In total, we have 611 processes self-reported as deliberative. The following figure shows a heat map, where the countries in darker red are those with the highest number of deliberative processes reported.

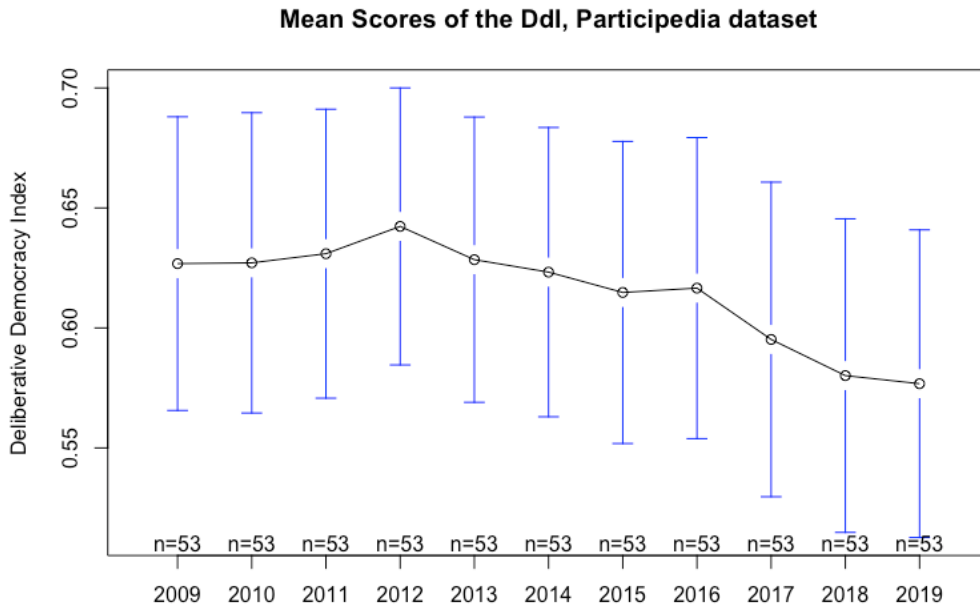
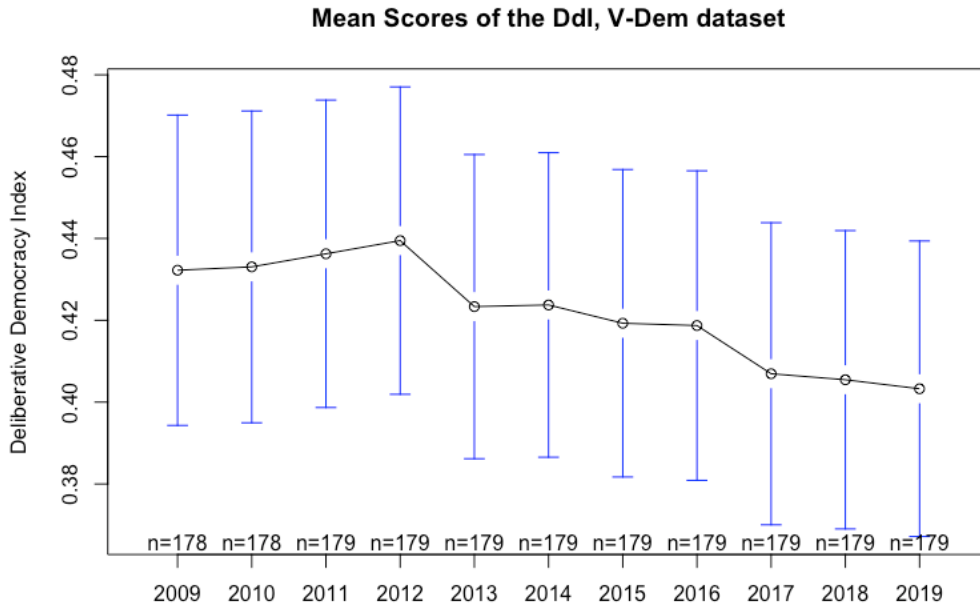
Deliberative processes in the world



Analysis

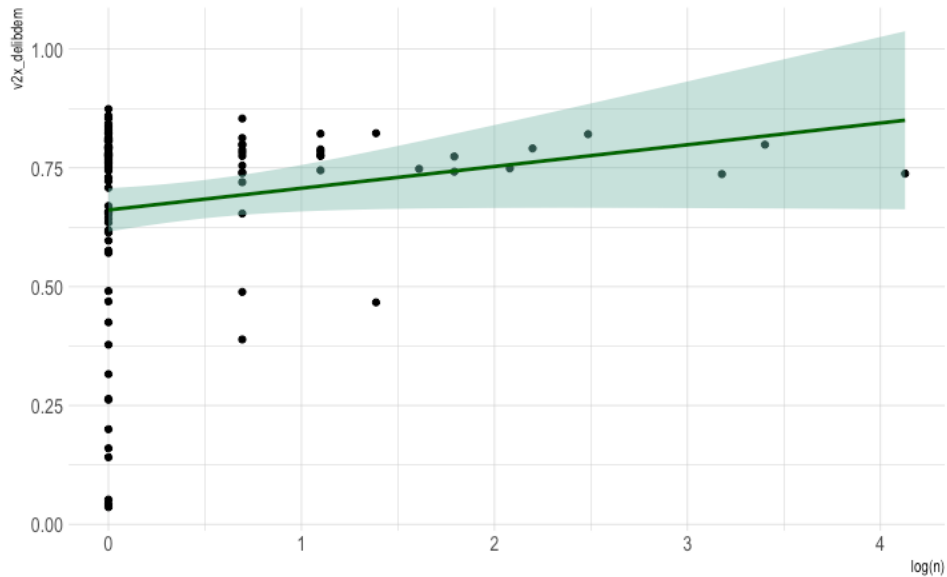
In this section, we introduce the V-Dem deliberative index and test for correlation with the Participedia cases database. According to V-Dem data, the deliberative principle of democracy focuses on the process by which decisions are reached in a polity. A deliberative process is one in which public reasoning focused on the common good motivates political decisions—as contrasted with emotional appeals, solidary attachments, parochial interests, or coercion. According to this principle, democracy requires more than an aggregation of existing preferences. There should also be respectful dialogue at all levels—from preference formation to final decision—among informed and competent participants who are open to persuasion. To make it a measure of the deliberative principle and democracy, the Deliberative Democracy Index (Ddl) also takes the level of electoral democracy into account.

The next graphs show the difference in mean scores of the index throughout the years. The first one shows the means score for all the countries included in the V-Dem dataset, and the second graph shows the means scores for the countries included in the Participedia dataset.



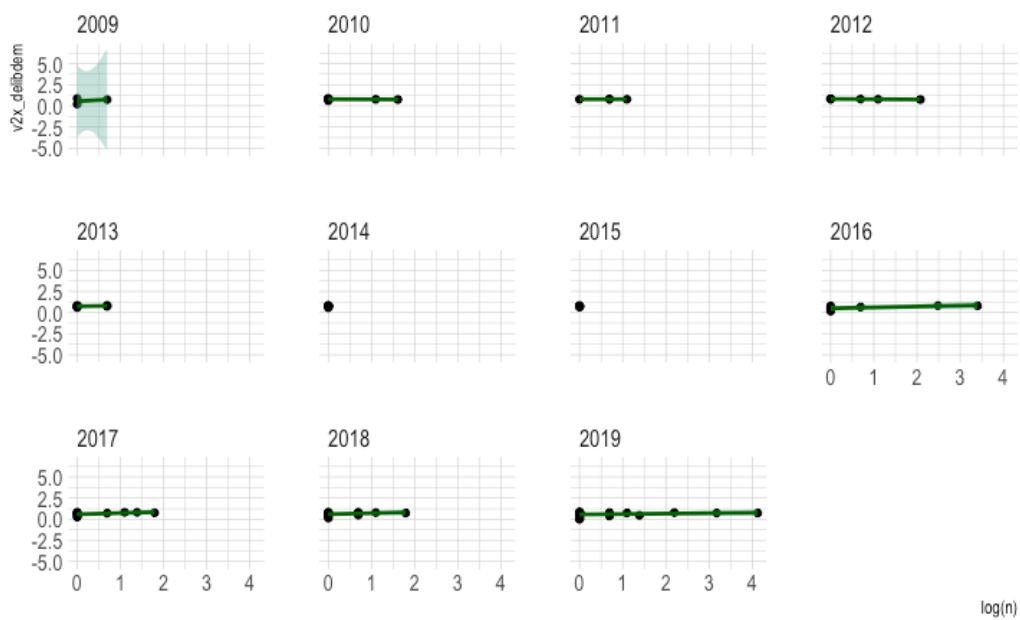
Given that we are testing for correlation between the Participedia cases dataset and the deliberative index of V-Dem, we will only conduct the analysis for the cases that self-reported as “deliberative”. In the following graph, we show the correlation between the number of deliberative cases per country with the Ddl.

Correlation between Participedia cases and Ddl



We plot the correlation by each year. The following graph shows that there is no clear correlation between the number of reported deliberative processes in Participedia and the V-Dem deliberative democracy index.

Correlation between Participedia cases and Ddl per year



Finally, to specify the correlation, we conduct Fixed-Effects Estimations. First, we use a Poisson likelihood given the count nature of the variable n from the Participedia case data. The results indicate that the correlation we observed in the graphs is not statistically significant, with a p -value of over 0.05. As a result, we cannot reject the null hypothesis that the correlation results from random chance. Second, we estimate the same relationship by OLS. The results align with the previous estimation, and we cannot reject the null hypothesis. The summary of the results of both estimations is shown in the next table

	Poisson estimation	OLS estimation
Estimate	0.001344	0.000926
Std. Error	0.001174	0.000759
Pr(> z)	0.251985	0.229323
Observations	95	95
Fixed-effects	country: 41, year: 11	country: 41, year: 11

Conclusion

Using the Democratic Deliberative Index from V-Dem, we have shown how to use Participedia case data to complement research projects focused on deliberative democratic processes. While the case data appears to be correlated with the V-Dem Index, this correlation is not statistically significant. Given the crowd-sourced nature of the data, these results are not unexpected. Our user guide's goal is to show how researchers can analyze Participedia case data using different statistical software such as Rstudio.

If you do any analysis, data visualization, or other types of projects with this data, we would love to see it. Please [email us](#) or share your project with us on [Twitter](#).

Appendix

[RStudio script.](#)