



EVIDENCE IN E-PARTICIPATION

More diversity through eParticipation or just a lot more of the same? Plurality in the parliamentary review process



Legal context

- results of an enquete-commission on strengthening democracy in Austria 2015
- motion for a resolution of all parliamentary parties 200/E 2017
- "Significant projects" are to be subjected to "crowdsourcing according to the Finnish model"
- Parliament should provide a platform for exchange of communication and information



Stages of extension of e-participation in legislative processes

- Support („like!“) of petitions citizens‘ initiatives 2011
- Contribution and support of statements on ministerial drafts 2017
- Crowdsourcing platform 2020
- Contribution and support of statements on all parliamentary materials 2021



Starting point: observation of copy & paste

- Series of 4330 contribution with identical parts of text:

Ich spreche mich entschieden gegen die geplante Änderung der Regelung zur Hausdurchsuchung aus (§ 112a StPO). Hausdurchsuchungen sind ein wichtiges Instrument der Korruptionsbekämpfung. Durch die geplanten Beschränkungen der Hausdurchsuchungen wird die Bekämpfung von Korruption bei Behörden und in der Politik de facto verunmöglich. Ich fordere die Streichung des geplanten § 112a StPO aus dem Entwurf oder seine Beschränkung auf nachrichtendienstliche Daten im Sinne der Entschließung des Parlaments aus dem September 2019.

Eingebracht von: Koch, Andreas

Eingebracht am: 13.04.2021

W.o.

- Very short texts:
- Very „creative“ texts...



Starting point: observation of copy&paste

Eingebracht von: Schwarz, Susanne A. M..

Eingebracht am: 04.05.2021

- (text repeated until limit of 10.000 characters completed)



Research approach

- Research Question:

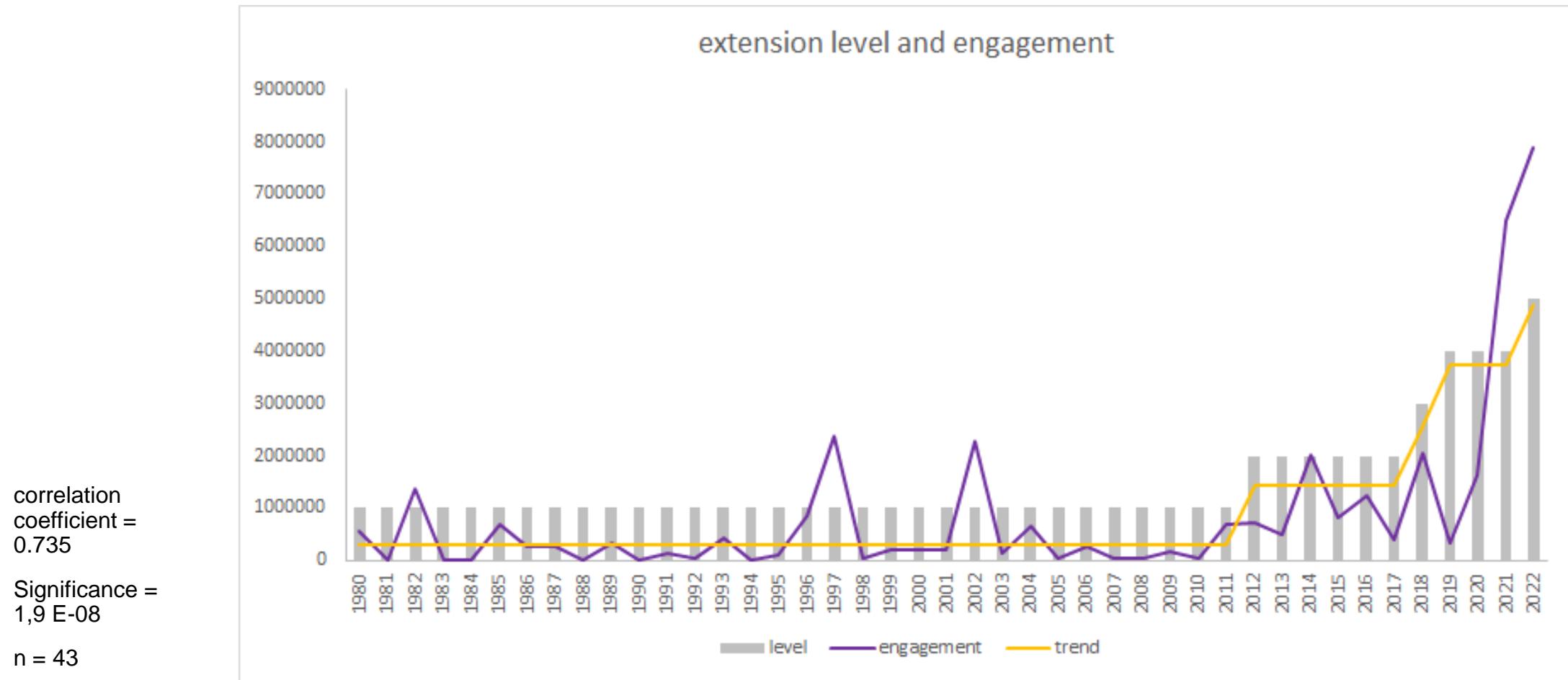
To what extent and how do the actors involved in the parliamentary review process, their texts and their reference to other texts differ?

- Method of research:

Empirical analysis of metadata and text documents stored in Austrian Parliaments systems providing services for electronic participation in the parliamentary review process based on theory of participation, subjectivity and deliberation. Automated document comparison using Oracle built-in algorithm “`utl_match.edit_distance`” counting Levenshtein Distance between texts.

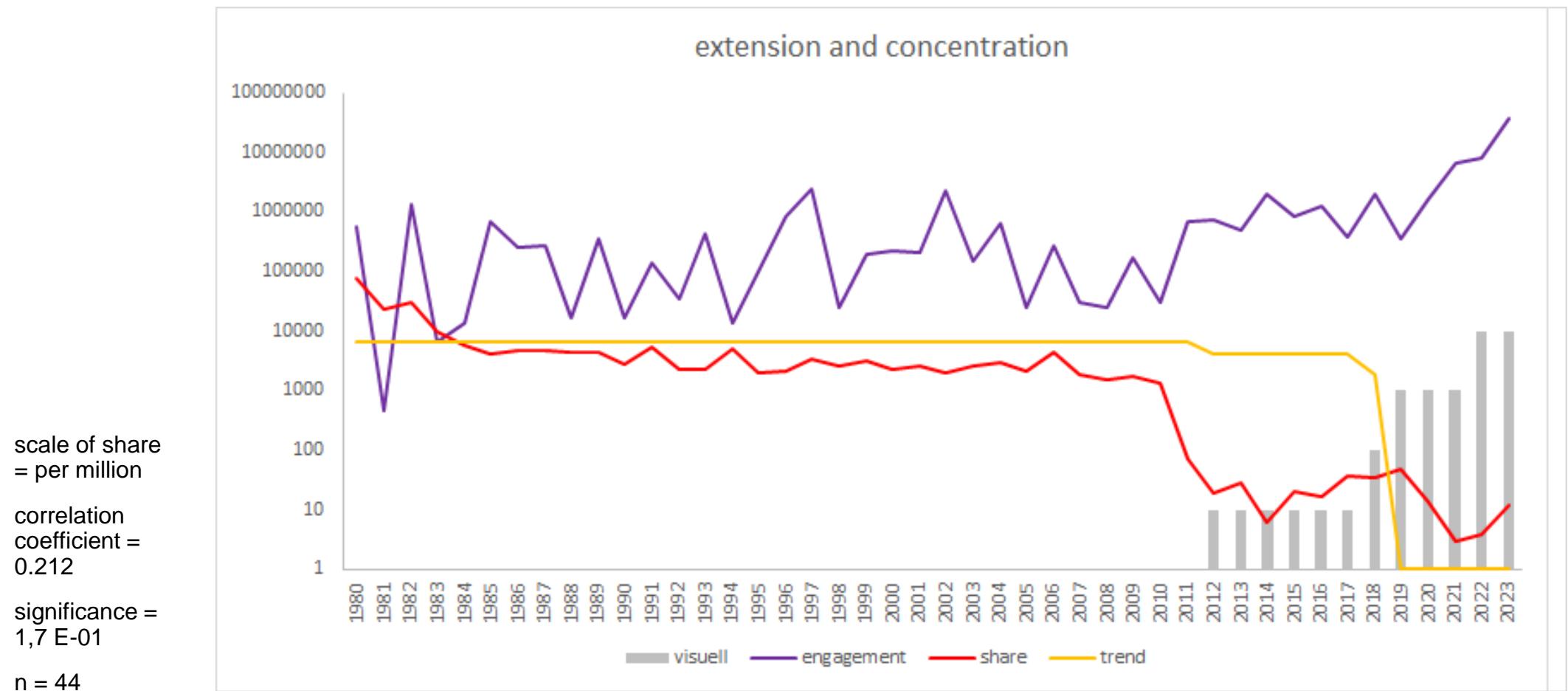


Sample results: impact of extensions

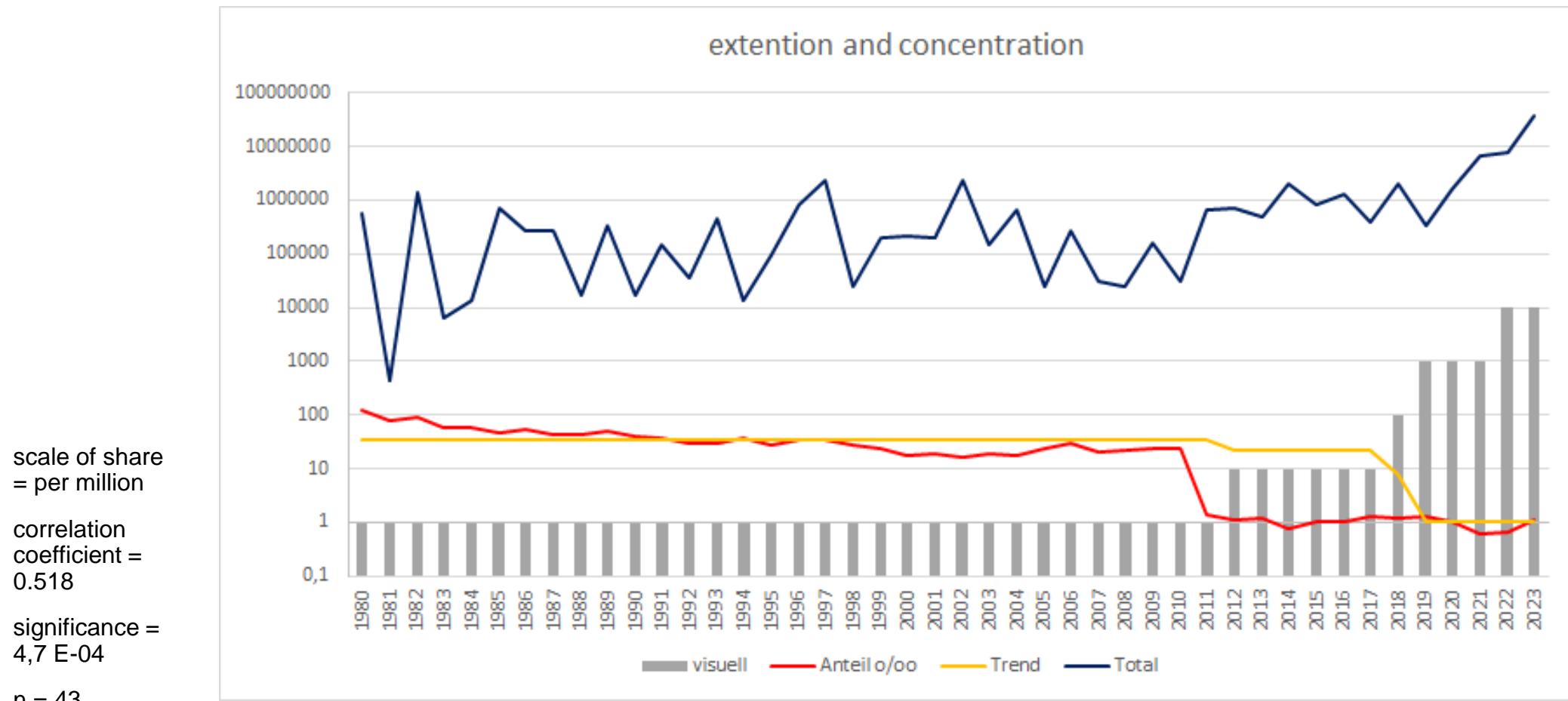




Sample results: plurality of participants

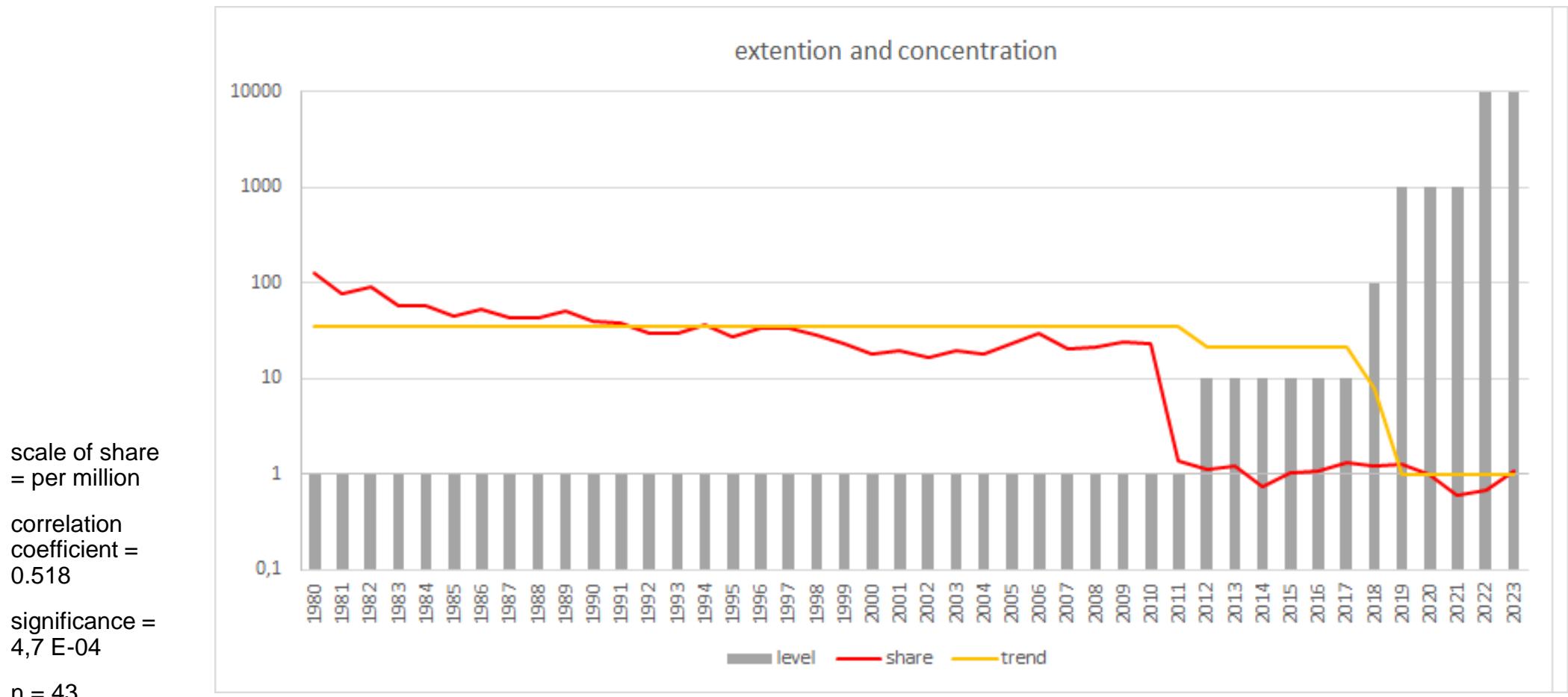


Sample results: regional plurality

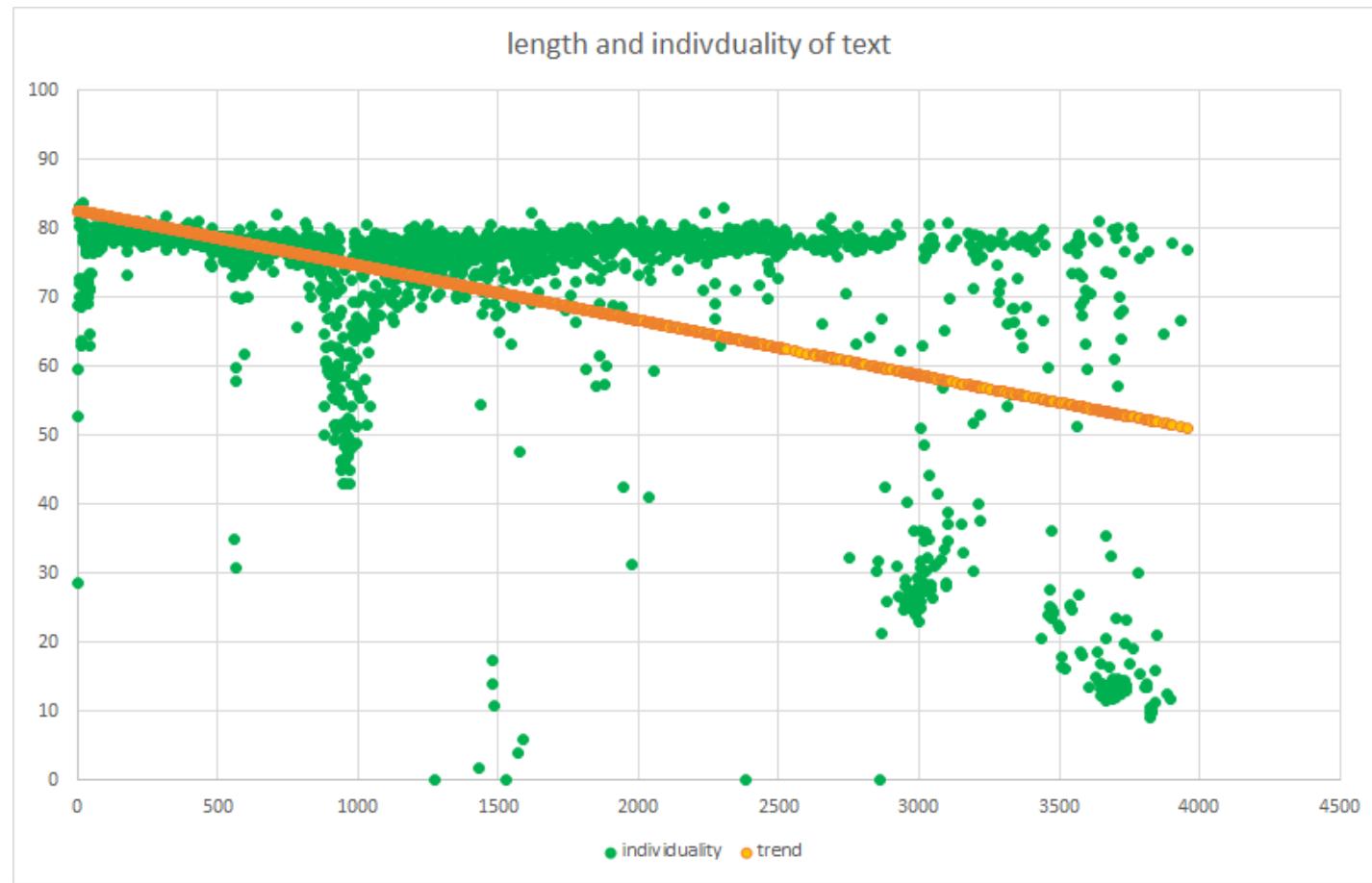




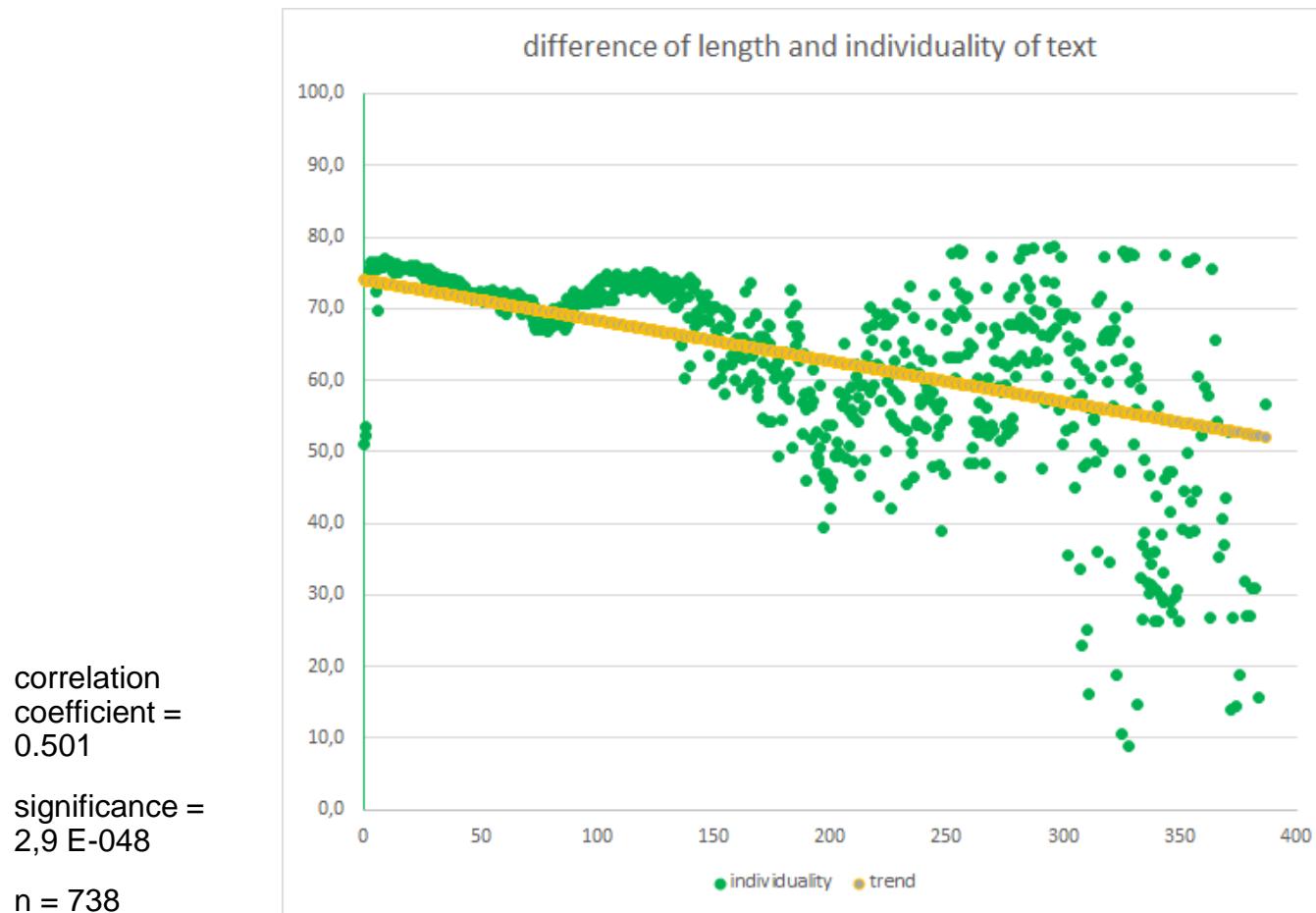
Sample results: regional plurality (zoomed)



Sample results: plurality of texts

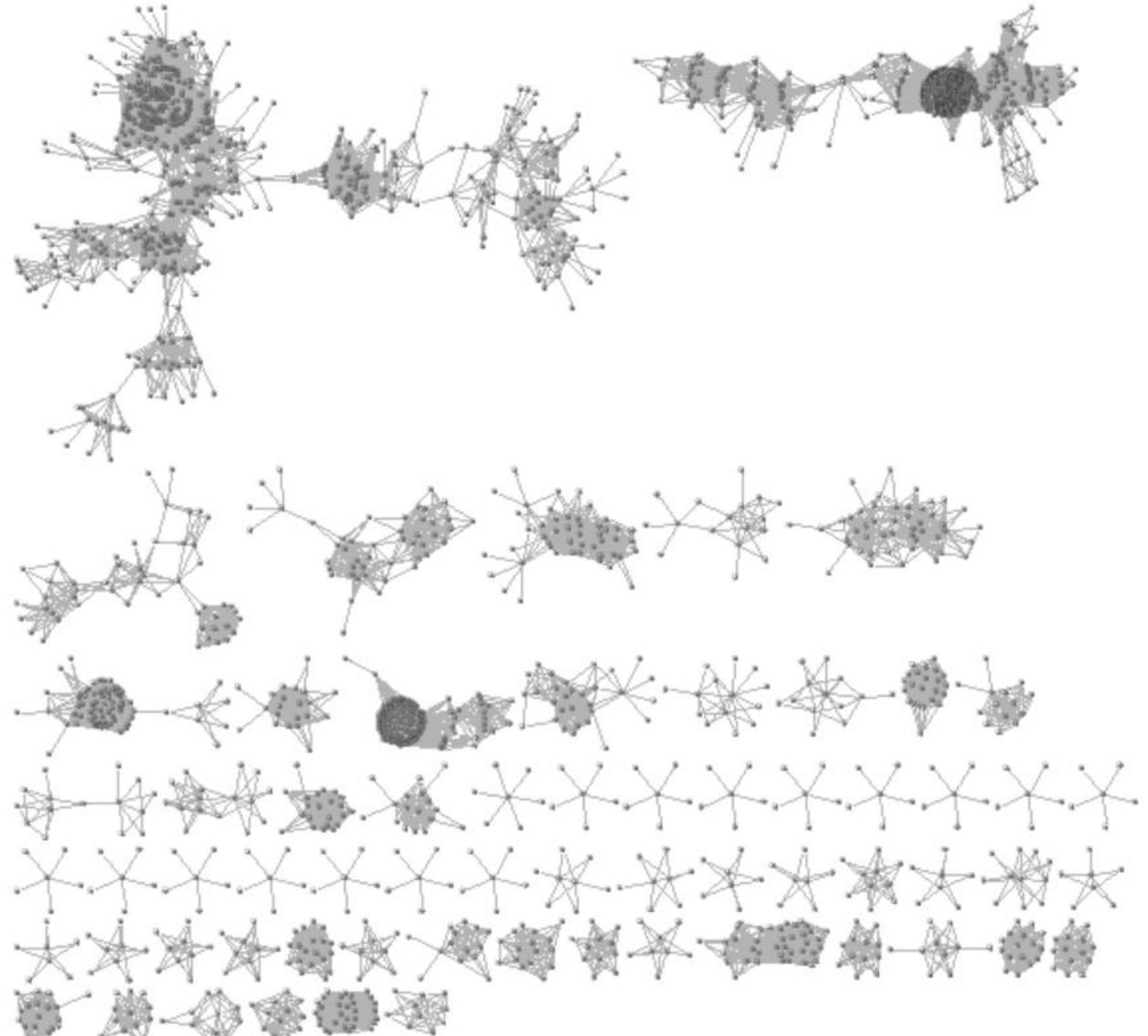


Sample results: prediction of similarity?





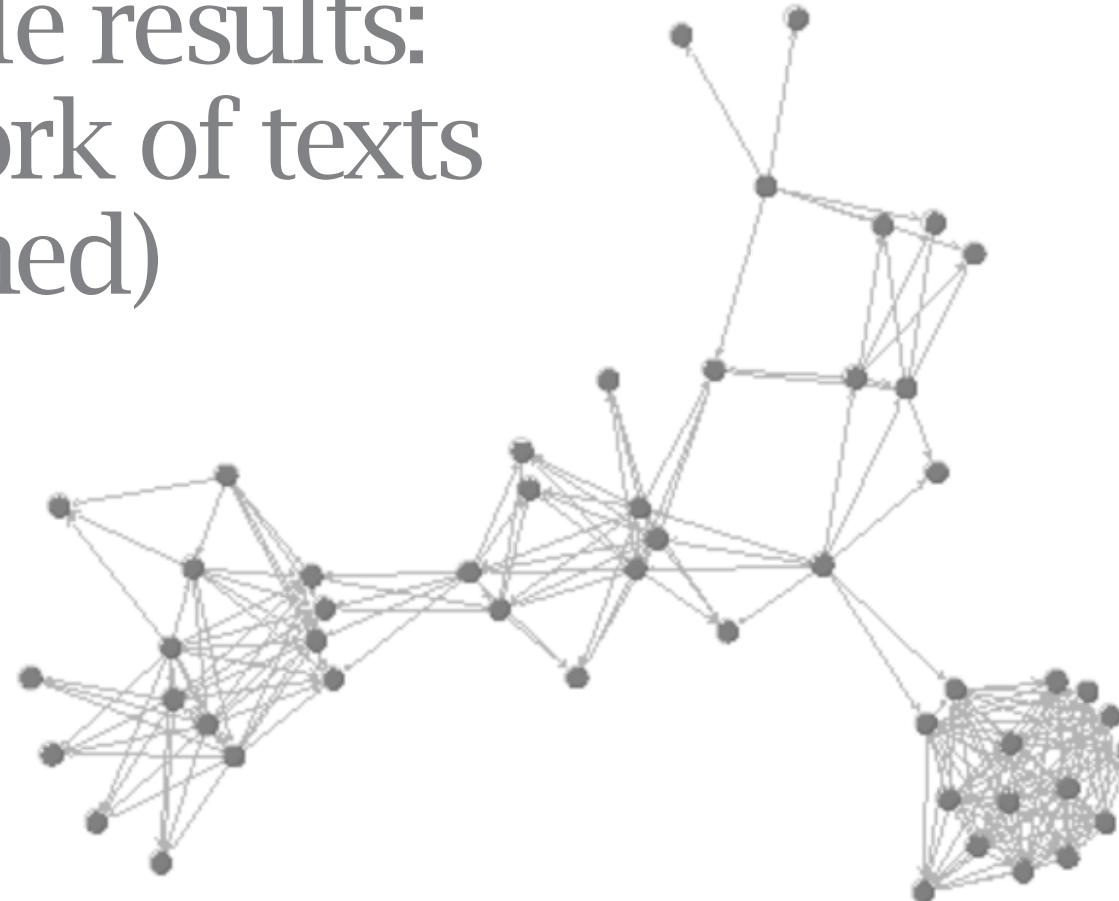
Sample results: network of texts



<https://www.parlament.gv.at/genstand/XXVII/A/2172>

n = 2306

Sample results: network of texts (zoomed)



[https://www.parlament.gv.at/
genstand/XXVII/A/2172](https://www.parlament.gv.at/genstand/XXVII/A/2172)

n = 2306



Sample results: network of texts (drilled down)



The abolition of
reimbursement rates for
medical services that do not
correspond to the
requirements of the medical
association undermines the
relationship between doctor
and patient and destroys the
relationship of trust!
HERE I AM AGAINST!!!

<https://www.parlament.gv.at/gegenstand/XXVII/SN/103645>
(translated by Google)

<https://www.parlament.gv.at/gegenstand/XXVII/A/2172>

n = 2306



Potential benefits for parliamentary praxis

- correctness or falsification of assumptions and assertions?
 - ✓ support evidence-based decisions on expanding or improving the existing implementation of parliamentary participation opportunities
- dealing with large amounts of information in a short time:
 - ✓ proof of concept for using technology to inform decision-makers
 - ✓ indicators for reduction of number and scope of texts and actions that are characterized by repetition and mutual reinforcement by aggregation and to present their content in a condensed form
 - ✓ Increase of plausibility that texts are taken into account in the short time available



Reflection on theory and praxis

- Current discussion on improvement of services is focusing on quantitative aspects such propagating support of statements instead of contribution of copied text, which is forcing a shift to quantitative measures.
- Theory on deliberative discourse is leading to plurality and qualitative measures, which could not be object of my research here.
- This was social science study, interdisciplinarity with technical profession would have been required for advanced technical levels of algorithms such as sentiment analysis.



Thank you!