Emotions and Deliberation in the Citizens’ Initiative Review
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Abstract

Emotions, their expression and significance, in deliberative democratic practices have been of interest to researchers and practitioners of democracy for many years. Scholars have not fully analyzed emotions in the context of deliberative democracy empirically. It is important to address this research gap given the fundamental role that affect – emotions, feelings, moods, and passions – plays in innovations aimed at promoting democratic procedures and legitimacy. We aim to provide an important development in both data collection and analysis with respect to the role of emotions in public deliberation by presenting findings on three deliberative mini-publics: Citizens’ Initiative Reviews (CIRs) in Arizona, Oregon, and Massachusetts in 2016. We focus on four central questions: 1) What emotions do participants report experiencing during deliberation? 2) What trends exist in the reported emotions across the four days of deliberation? 3) What emotions are evident in the interpretive research notes of teams of observers? 4) What explanations for the emotional trends emerge from these observer notes? Our argument brings together two complementary explanations that highlight how participants in a mini-public experience and express emotions in a group context mediated by procedural rules: The “Life Cycle” explanation, which explicates how groups develop over time and move through a predictable set of phases, including distinct emotions and the “CIR Procedures” explanation, which postulates that particular design features mediate emotional trends. We conclude that the procedures are salient in mediating the emotional dynamics within the CIR and possibly in other deliberative groups. While the life cycle explanation enables us to understand the broad emotional patterns and dynamics of the CIR, it is the procedures focus that provides us with even greater nuance into understanding the expression of emotions by panelists.

Introduction

Emotions, their expression and significance, in deliberative democratic practices have been of interest to researchers and practitioners of democracy for many years.¹ For reasons likely related to the lack of data, scholars have not fully analyzed emotions in the context of deliberative democracy empirically. It is important to address this research gap
given the fundamental role that affect – emotions, feelings, moods, and passions – plays in innovations aimed at promoting democratic procedures and legitimacy. We aim to provide an important development in both data collection and analysis with respect to the role of emotions in public deliberation by presenting findings on three deliberative mini-publics: Citizens’ Initiative Reviews (CIRs) in Arizona, Oregon, and Massachusetts in 2016. We focus on four central questions: 1) What emotions do participants report experiencing during deliberation? 2) What trends exist in the reported emotions across the four days of deliberation? 3) What emotions are evident in the interpretive research notes of teams of observers? 4) What explanations for the emotional trends emerge from these observer notes? By analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data, and employing a mixed methodology, we aspire to make a significant contribution to our understanding of group deliberation, democratic theory, and democratic innovations. Thus our contribution is significant in terms of nuancing our understanding of the role of emotions in collective deliberation and also amplifying the importance of collecting and examining both quantitative and qualitative data. Without the other methodological approach, each is insufficient in capturing and explaining the emotional dynamics that occur in the CIR deliberative process.

In what follows, we begin by highlighting the affective turn in deliberative theory and the few previous attempts at empirically investigating the role of emotions in deliberation. We then describe the 2016 CIRs in Arizona, Oregon, and Massachusetts, including how we collected our data, followed by the results from our quantitative analysis. These results provide evidence that participants experienced a range of emotions, with enthusiasm, happiness, and anxiety being the most common. Across the
four days of deliberation, however, they also illuminate patterns of variation: enthusiasm remained high throughout; happiness grew on day three and spiked upward on day four; anxiety was most prevalent early on, especially day two; and anger peaked on day three.

In order to explain these results, we then present the findings of our qualitative analyses which focuses on the patterns in the expression of anger. We chose this emotion because previous research has found that it is potentially the most destructive of deliberation. Our argument brings together two complementary explanations that highlight how participants in a mini-public experience and express emotions in a group context mediated by procedural rules: The “Life Cycle” explanation, which explicates how groups develop over time and move through a predictable set of phases, including distinct emotions; and the “CIR Procedures” explanation, which postulates that particular design features mediate emotional trends. Together, these two explanations highlight nuances in the emotional trends and dynamics that we see across the three CIRs. In particular, the procedures explanation serves to develop and deepen the more established life cycle explanation by bringing into focus greater detail. On its own, the life cycle explanation is somewhat coarse; modified by the procedures explanation, it becomes more granular, richer, and therefore more convincing. Ultimately, we contend that the activities and tasks of the group, as well as behaviors of participants and relationships among them, are all important factors that shape how people experience emotion, but that the procedures have the greatest influence in the CIR. Related to the procedures explanation, we see that panelists consistently situated their description of their own emotional experience in a larger democratic framework. The framing of the CIR as an important mini-public makes a significant difference in how panelists
experience the emotional dimensions of the group deliberation. At the end of the CIR, not only are they happy about completing the difficult task of group deliberation on a ballot initiative, they are simultaneously annoyed that elected public officials cannot seem to accomplish the kind of collective decision-making that they achieved in the CIR. The life cycle explanation suggests certain basic phases that the group moves through, but the procedural explanation helps us understand nuances in and contexts for the expressions of emotions and in corresponding emotional dynamics. Understanding the patterns of and explanations for affect is important for both theorists and practitioners of deliberative democracy, and we hope that the findings and explanations we present concerning enthusiasm, happiness, anxiety, and anger in the Citizens’ Initiative Reviews can help contribute to this and spur further research in this important field.

**Affect and Deliberation**

Political scientists have become increasingly interested in the role of affect in various political processes over the past few decades. Building on the theory of Affective Intelligence he developed with his colleagues W. Russell Neuman and Michael MacKuen, George E. Marcus makes several major claims about the relationship between affect and deliberation. His most prominent is that while “anxiety is an emotion that people find unpleasant and no doubt wish to avoid, it proves to have a vital role to play in democratic politics”. Recruiting reason and disabling habit, it “generates the very deliberative space that democratic theorists have been calling for”. In contrast to anxiety, enthusiasm, although it motivates political participation, arises from our habitual “disposition system” and therefore does not necessarily encourage deliberation.
Similarly, the habitual emotion of loathing motivates action while dampening deliberation, although it does so for darker reasons than enthusiasm. In an extension of this research, Marcus and Jennifer Wolak also claim that citizens who react to policy proposals with anger “resist middle-ground remedies and are less likely to support a compromise”, neither of which are conducive to deliberation. This research indicates that anxiety, enthusiasm, loathing, and anger all have significant effects on deliberation, but it is also important to note that it focuses on diffuse deliberation in the broader society; other researchers, however, have looked more specifically at emotion in more structured deliberative forums.

Several studies have examined the general role of emotions in structured deliberation. Scholars have examined the prevalence of emotion in juries, the positive and negative emotions in online forums in Poland, and the “biographical affect” expressed by participants involved in a deliberative patient involvement forum in the United Kingdom. These studies reach interesting conclusions, but they focus primarily on the presence, or the positive or negative valence, of emotions in deliberation. As such, they tell us little about the emotions Marcus and colleagues identify as key in deliberation: enthusiasm, loathing, anxiety, and anger.

In contrast, Colleen McClain presents data from a small-scale experiment examining the role of specific emotions in online deliberation. A sample of 100 undergraduates, after reading news coverage of a proposal in the state of Michigan to loosen restrictions on human embryonic stem cell research, participated in online deliberation. McClain used a 2 X 2 experimental design with pre-scripted comments from the other “users” to vary the synchronicity of the chat (synchronous versus asynchronous).
and the feedback participants received to their comments (supportive versus challenging). She then utilized the data to investigate the effects of the experimental manipulations, as well as participants’ self-reported emotions, on information seeking and intentions to participate in politics in the future. The post-test survey asked participants how enthusiastic, hopeful, excited, stressed, worried, anxious, afraid, irritated, angry, or outraged they felt as a result of the experience they had just had in the forum, and she then utilized factor analysis to create three additive indices of emotional response: anger (angry, irritated, and outraged), enthusiasm (enthusiastic, excited, and hopeful), and anxiety (worried, afraid, anxious and stressed).17

McClain’s data indicate that neither the feedback participants received to their comments, nor the interactive effect between synchronicity and feedback, affected participants’ enthusiasm or anxiety.18 Only synchronicity demonstrated significant effects, with enthusiasm higher in the asynchronous condition and anxiety higher in the synchronous environment. In contrast, challenging feedback did elicit higher levels of anger than supportive feedback. More relevant to our study, since it represents an attempted direct test of the Affective Intelligence hypotheses, the data reveal that increased enthusiasm, even after controlling for other variables, significantly increased subjects’ stated intention to participate in the future, both online and in general.19 In contrast, neither anger nor anxiety had significant effects on intention to participate.20 For information seeking, in an initial regression that entered all three emotional indices, only enthusiasm had a significant, positive effect. Anxiety, however, approached significance, and in a second regression that included only anxiety and anger, anxiety did have a significant, positive effect. McClain concludes: “it is possible that multicollinearity issues
between the enthusiasm and anxiety measures may be offsetting the impact of anxiety on information seeking,” and given the results of the model with only anger and anxiety, the Affective Intelligence hypothesis that anxiety leads to more information seeking “is partially, and very cautiously, supported”.21

We must interpret McClain’s results with caution. While cleverly designed, this was an artificial, laboratory experiment in which 100 undergraduates participated for “approximately 45 minutes”,22 and the pre-scripted responses of the other “users” could not be specific for each participant. Despite these limitations, the data provide preliminary evidence to support the claims from Affective Intelligence theory that enthusiasm increases participation, while anxiety increases information seeking. In contrast, however, McClain concludes that enthusiasm also spurs information seeking, while anger does not have significant effects on either information seeking or participation. We thus conclude that in the one study of which we are aware that examines the effects of specific emotions on deliberation, the evidence is mixed, although it does appear that enthusiasm, anxiety and anger are all important. Yet beyond these mixed results, we also note that none of the studies that examined specific emotions did so within the context of extended, face-to-face deliberation characteristic of deliberative mini-publics; our goal is to do just that.

Data and Methods
Involving a panel of 18 to 24 randomly selected citizens deliberating about ballot initiatives, the CIRs provide researchers important opportunities for collecting data related to public deliberation (see http://sites.psu.edu/citizensinitiativereview/about/).
Panelists meet for four or five consecutive days to produce a Citizens’ Statement containing arguments for and against a ballot initiative, which, in Oregon, is included in the Voters’ Pamphlet distributed to voters in advance of the election. During the CIR process, outside advocates for both sides and their witnesses make presentations in an attempt to win panelists’ support for their respective positions. This debate structure is complemented by intensive collective deliberation overseen by moderators in both plenary sessions and break-out groups. Panelists articulate their views on the initiative in the Citizens’ Statement, which includes statements from panelists who support both sides of the issue. This structure, which spurs competition between the two sides, but also facilitates collaboration among panelists, creates interesting dialogical opportunities – in particular, opportunities for the productive expression of both reasons for or against the initiative and emotions provoked by it.²³

The data we report came from CIRs held in Arizona, Massachusetts and Oregon in August of 2016. The Arizona pilot involved a stratified random sample of 22 registered voters convened to examine Proposition 205, which proposed “legalizing the possession and consumption of marijuana by persons who are 21 years of age or older”.²⁴ In Oregon, a stratified random sample of 20 registered voters scrutinized Measure 97, which would have removed the cap on the corporate gross sales tax and tax all sales in excess of $25 million at 2.5%.²⁵ The Massachusetts pilot involved a stratified random sample of 20 registered voters to study the Massachusetts Marijuana Legalization initiative, which proposed to “legalize marijuana but regulate it in ways similar to alcoholic beverages”.²⁶ During these three CIRs, we collected two types of data employing two different collection methods.
At the conclusion of each of the four days, we collected quantitative data from participants through surveys asking about their experiences, resulting in 62 surveys for each day of the CIR. We measured respondents’ self-reported emotions by asking them: “During today’s CIR sessions, which of these emotional reactions did you experience, if any? Circle all that apply.” Drawing from research cited earlier, we included anger, anxiety, and enthusiasm among the possible responses. Given the limited space available on the survey because of the numerous questions the research team wanted to investigate, we chose to use these three single items rather than taking McClain’s index approach.27 Various theorists have claimed that empathy plays an important role in deliberation,28 but we agree with Morrell that empathy is not itself an emotion.29 As an alternative concept related to empathy that is an emotion, we included sympathy among the possible responses. Finally, in order to capture positive and negative valence emotions similar to the research we cite above, we also included happiness and sadness as choices.

We also collected interpretive-qualitative data using different teams of observers for each CIR. Observers were present during each CIR and took detailed notes about the process. There were 3 observers in Arizona and Massachusetts, and 4 in Oregon, for a total of 10 sets of observer notes. All observers worked with a common template corresponding to procedural segments of the CIR process. Although perhaps not as detailed as a fully developed set of ethnographic field notes,30 observer notes provide rich accounts of group dynamics.31 Observer notes describe group dynamics and capture details of the participants’ comments and dialogue throughout the process. Additionally, observers included notes about their emerging interpretations, which aid our conceptual analysis. In this way, observer notes have certain advantages over deliberation transcripts,
which often provide too much text, and not enough context, for an in-depth interpretive analysis.

Following standard processes of coding qualitative data, we examined the 10 sets of observer notes in three cycles. The first cycle focused on a preliminary reading in which we identified broad patterns in the emotional dynamics common to the three CIRs. We also started to teasing out two possible explanations – the Life Cycle and the CIR Procedures explanations – for these dynamics. The second cycle focused on identifying expressions and observations of emotions and on categorizing these in terms of either one of the two explanations. The third focused on more deeply understanding the interplay between these two explanations and exploring why the CIR procedures appear ultimately to have more explanatory power.

**Results of our Quantitative Analysis**

We begin our analysis by reporting the percentage of respondents across all three CIRs who reported feeling each of the six emotions we tested for each day, ordered from most to least frequent overall (see Figure 1).
The most frequently reported emotion by far was enthusiasm, with between 67.7% (Day 2) and 75.8% (Day 1) of participants saying they felt this emotion; cumulatively across all four days, the 62 subjects cited this emotion on 177 of the 248 surveys (71.4%). Since we have paired dichotomous nominal data, we use McNemar’s test to compare the different emotions reported each day. Participants were statistically significantly more likely to report feeling enthusiasm than all other emotions on all four days, with one exception. The gap between enthusiasm and the second most reported emotion was 45.2% on Day 1 (anxiety), 29% on Day 2 (anxiety), and 38.7% on Day 3 (happiness). On the final day, there was no statistically significant difference (p=.85) between enthusiasm (69.4%) and happiness (66.1%), but they both outpaced the third most common emotion, anxiety, by more than 40%.

The second most commonly reported emotion was happiness, appearing cumulatively on 90 of the 248 surveys (36.3%), but this total number was high primarily because of a large increase on Day 4. There was, thus, a large range across the four days,
with a low of 19.4% on Day 2, and a high of 66.1% on the final day. Not surprisingly, McNemar’s test revealed happiness to be statistically significantly different on Day 4 from anxiety, sympathy, anger, and sadness, all at the p<.001 level. Only enthusiasm was not significantly different from happiness on the final day. For the remaining days, happiness was significantly different only from sadness on Day 1 (p<.01), Day 2 (p<.05), and Day 3 (p<.01), and from anger on Day 1 (p<.05).

Participants reported feeling anxiety the third most often, with a range from 38.7% (Day 2) to 24.2% (Day 4); cumulatively, anxiety appeared on 77 of the 248 surveys (31.0%). McNemar’s tests revealed that anxiety was significantly different from several other emotions early in the CIR process. On Day 1, reported rates were different from anger (p<.05) and sadness (p<.01). By Day 2, it was the emotion that participants were most likely to report feeling other than enthusiasm, significantly different from happiness (p<.05), sympathy (p<.05), anger (p<.01), and sadness (p<.001). By Day 3, however, participants only reported anxiety significantly differently from sadness (p<.01), and on Day 4, the only significant differences were those reported above concerning enthusiasm and happiness.

The three emotions that subjects reported feeling least often, cumulatively, were sympathy (22.6%), anger (16.9%), and sadness (9.3%). Sympathy ranged from 17.7% (Day 2) to 27.4% (Day 1); sadness ranged from a 6.5% (Days 1 and 2) to 14.5% (Day 4); and anger had the broadest range, from 11.3% (Day 1) to 29.0% (Day 3). Other than the differences we already discussed, sympathy was significantly different from anger (p<.01) and sadness (p<.001) on Day 1, and anger was significantly different from
sadness on Day 3 (p<.01). We summarize the frequencies for all these variables by day in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Day 1</th>
<th>Day 2</th>
<th>Day 3</th>
<th>Day 4</th>
<th>Cumulative Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Enthusiasm</strong></td>
<td>47 (75.8%)</td>
<td>42 (67.7%)</td>
<td>45 (72.6%)</td>
<td>43 (69.4%)</td>
<td>177 (71.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Happiness</strong></td>
<td>16 (25.8%)</td>
<td>12 (19.4%)</td>
<td>21 (33.9%)</td>
<td>41 (66.1%)</td>
<td>90 (36.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Anxiety</strong></td>
<td>19 (30.6%)</td>
<td>24 (38.7%)</td>
<td>19 (30.6%)</td>
<td>15 (24.2%)</td>
<td>77 (31.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sympathy</strong></td>
<td>17 (27.4%)</td>
<td>11 (17.7%)</td>
<td>14 (22.6%)</td>
<td>14 (22.6%)</td>
<td>56 (22.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Anger</strong></td>
<td>7 (11.3%)</td>
<td>8 (12.9%)</td>
<td>18 (29.0%)</td>
<td>9 (14.5%)</td>
<td>42 (16.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sadness</strong></td>
<td>4 (6.5%)</td>
<td>4 (6.5%)</td>
<td>6 (9.7%)</td>
<td>9 (14.5%)</td>
<td>23 (9.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>N</strong></td>
<td>62</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>248</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to investigating which emotions subjects reported most often for each day, we are also interested whether participants evinced significant changes across the four days for each particular emotion. We again use McNemar’s tests to look for such differences, and these reveal that there were no statistically significant differences across the four days for three emotions: enthusiasm, sympathy, and sadness. Enthusiasm began as the most reported emotion and remained relatively high throughout the four days, with at least two-thirds of respondents indicating they felt enthusiasm on each day. While sympathy appeared to have dropped from Day 1 to Day 2, and sadness to have increased from the early days to the final one, these differences were not statistically significant.
The other three emotions – happiness, anxiety, and anger – all demonstrated significant differences across at least one pair of days. For happiness, the pattern of significant differences is rather easy to discern. There was a jump in reported happiness from 19.4% on Day 2 to 33.9% on Day 3 (p<.05). However, the largest difference was between happiness reported by 66.1% of subjects on Day 4, as compared with the 25.8% on Day 1, 19.4% on Day 2, and 33.9% on Day 3 (all significant at the p<.001 level). Substantively, these differences of 40.3%, 46.7%, and 26.2%, respectively, are the three largest in our entire sample.

Anxiety peaked on Day 2 (38.7%) and reached its lowest level on Day 4 (24.2%). While there appears to be a pattern of rise and fall in anxiety across the CIR, the only statistically significant difference we find is between the second and last days (p<.05). Substantively, the 14.5% difference is the same as the difference on happiness between Day 2 and Day 3. Although Day 2 had the highest level of reported anxiety, subjects were most likely to report feeling anger on Day 3 of the CIR. This level of reported anger is statistically significantly different from Day 1 (17.7%; p<.01) and Day 2 (17.1%; p<.05); although there is 14.5% difference between Day 3 and Day 4 levels of reported anger, it failed to reach statistical significance (p=.06).

There are several significant patterns these data reveal that are worth discussing. The most commonly reported emotions provide evidence that participants consistently embraced the CIR process. They reported feeling enthusiasm the most often across all four days, with only the similarly positive report of happiness on the final day failing to be significantly different. The gaps between enthusiasm and all other emotions, aside from happiness on the final day, are not only statistically significant, they are
substantively large as well. This is not surprising. After all, participants had agreed to spend four days deliberating about an issue of public concern facing their state, and thus they had already made a commitment to the CIR. Nonetheless, the organizers drew them from a stratified random sample of the greater population; there was no guarantee that any initial enthusiasm would continue throughout the process.

Participants indicated that another positive emotion, happiness, was the second most common emotion they felt, but there was a distinctive pattern in their responses across the four days. Early on, happiness was only significantly different from enthusiasm and sadness, but in Day 3 it increased significantly from Day 2, and was significantly different from enthusiasm, sadness, and anxiety. By Day 4, participants indicated feeling happiness much more than they indicated feeling any of the emotions other than enthusiasm, which was no longer significantly different. Happiness may have arisen for all kinds of reasons, ranging from satisfaction with the process to a sense of accomplishment or to relief at the end of a difficult four-day deliberation. In conjunction with the findings about enthusiasm, however, we feel confident in claiming that the high levels of happiness that started to arise in Day 3, and peaked in Day 4, reflect positively on the CIR procedures.

While we might think of enthusiasm and happiness as positive emotions, many see anxiety as more negative. While some anxiety was present from the beginning of the process, the data indicate that it likely peaked on Day 2, when it was significantly higher than every emotion other than enthusiasm. By Day 4, however, it was no more likely to appear on the surveys than sympathy, anger, or sadness. It makes sense to us that anxiety would be greatest early in the CIR as participants are trying to understand the process, the
issues involved, and their fellow citizens. Additionally, bearing in mind the work of scholars such as Marcus, Neuman, MacKuen, Wolak, and McClain, all of whom we cite earlier, this anxiety might contribute to better deliberation. Moreover, as almost a reverse image of happiness, the decrease in anxiety by the final day may provide further positive evidence concerning how the CIR mediates emotions.

As mentioned earlier, we included sympathy as a way to measure concern for others, and the data indicate it was significantly higher than both anger and sadness on Day 1, and sadness on Day 3. It also appeared on over 22% of the surveys across the four days. There were no significant changes, however, in the responses of sympathy across the four days. Thus, while we believe that sympathy is likely an important emotion for deliberation, and may have contributed positively to these CIRs, we cannot make any claims in this regard. Similarly, sadness did not change significantly across the four days, and very few respondents indicated feeling sad on the surveys. At least in these data, sadness seemed to play little part in the deliberation.

Finally, while anger was cumulatively only the fifth most common response on the surveys, we do see a pattern in the data. On Day 1, anger was much lower than all the emotions other than sadness. By Day 2, we see a small drop in happiness and sympathy, and a very slight rise in anger; these changes are enough such that only enthusiasm and anxiety are significantly higher than anger on this day. Anger peaks, however, on Day 3, such that there the only significantly higher emotion is enthusiasm. This change in the level of anger from Days 1 and 2 to Day 3 is also significant. After this peak, anger drops again, and is only significantly different from enthusiasm and happiness, and although this drop does not quite reach significance at the p<.05 level, it approaches it (p=.064).
We thus conclude that anger in the CIR process reached its highest levels in Day 3, although it was no more common on this day than anxiety or happiness. Still, given that previous research indicates that anger might provide an impediment to good deliberation, our data support the conclusion that the most likely time of a possible breakdown in good deliberation would occur on this day. While anger did not overwhelm the more positive emotions of enthusiasm and happiness expressed by CIR participants, it had the potential to do so, which makes it important to explore using the qualitative data that can reveal in more depth how this important emotion functioned during the deliberation.

Two Explanations from our Qualitative Analysis

With respect to our qualitative data, we present themes discerned from an interpretation of the observer notes taken during the three 2016 CIRs. Specifically, we engage the qualitative data to explore two possible explanations for the emotional trends focusing on anger. The first is the Life Cycle explanation, which is based on studies of group development. This research emphasizes that groups who work together over time experience phases of their development. The phases are marked by shifts in the group members’ orientation to each other and the task and, they are marked by different types of emotions. When groups are newly formed, they emphasize “inclusion and dependency” where members attempt to learn what behaviors are acceptable in the group. The second phase is described as “counter-dependency and conflict,” as group members struggle for power, authority, and status in the group. In this phase, emotions such as frustration and anger are common. The third phase involves the development of
trust, and negotiation of roles and goals, and the fourth phase involves a more focused attention on accomplishing the tasks. Groups with a finite ending time, such as the CIR panels, experience a fifth phase, associated with adjournment. As the end of the group’s time together comes to a close, group members may engage in conflict if the tasks are not clearly accomplished, and they feel increased time pressure. However, this phase also includes expressions of positive emotion and discussion of separation.38

Early work on group development argued that groups go through these phases sequentially, although the exact timing for each phase varies depending on context.39 Bruce Tuckman’s early model of group development had catchy names for each phase (e.g., Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing, and Adjourning), which have been taken up in popular press books on leadership and facilitation. Many deliberative facilitators recognize that groups go through predictable phases as they move through the work, and that at some point groups will reach “the groan zone”40 where disagreement, frustration, and anger surface. Although emotions have not been the primary focus of the group development literature, this body of work suggests that life cycle phases have emotional dimensions that are likely to emerge regardless of the particulars of the group.

The second explanation we explore is the CIR Procedures explanation, which postulates that there are particular design features of the CIR that mediate emotional trends. The CIR is designed as a multi-day program that requires panelists to complete fairly difficult coordinated tasks such as analyzing information, prioritizing claims, coming to agreement on facts, and creating a statement to represent their views before the end of the program. Design features include small group discussions, expert presentations, large group discussion, and several specific activities structured to help
participants accomplish the tasks. The CIR procedural design also includes an active facilitation process where organizers guide participants through these different activities.

As members of a mini-public, CIR participants represent a wide range of education levels, professional experiences, and demographic characteristics. It is quite likely that they have a range of different expectations about how to complete tasks as a group, including different approaches to time pressure, which are relevant to their emotional experience during the CIR. Group research shows that group members’ perspectives on time matters a great deal for their performance of tasks and that deadline pressure or group members’ differing construals of time can create coordination problems for groups. Such coordination problems can be frustrating for group members, and are related to design elements such as the time allotment for different activities within the CIR. Previous work on the CIR has argued that the overall procedural design of the CIR helped participants mediate both emotion and reason. Our current project extends that investigation by examining emotional trends more deeply and across cases, paying particular attention to the function of life cycle dynamics and CIR procedures with respect to expressions of anger.

*Interplay between Life Cycle Dynamics and CIR Procedures*

In the very early stages of the CIRs, we see an interplay between life cycle dynamics and CIR procedures. As described below, much of the activity on Day 1 was about orienting the panelists to the task and the overall purpose of the CIR. The communication from organizers and panelists at this time is consistent with a life cycle approach, which argues that early formation of the group requires members to learn the goals of the group and what behaviors are expected. CIR procedures for Day 1 attend to that need by offering
activities that help group members successfully accomplish the needs of the first phase of
group development. In all three CIRs, the first half of Day 1 involved a spokesperson
from the host organization welcoming panelists and introducing them to the process.
Moderators introduced themselves and provided an outline of the process. They then led
panelists through an icebreaker exercise. Common to all of the CIRs, the moderators
provided many instructions concerning the process itself and the process of deliberation.
Many of these instructions took the form of basic procedural rules. For example, panelists
were not to speak about the initiative outside the room, even on breaks, and they were not
to speak about the initiative with anyone who was not another panelist or moderator.
Other instructions were less procedural and more aspirational, focusing instead on the
dispositional stance participants were encouraged to take when engaging in collective
deliberation. Deliberation should be positive; disagreements should be positive.
Participants should be open to other views; they should listen and learn.

Observers also noted lots of priming in all three CIRs concerning the importance
of the process for the voters of the state. Both spokespersons from the host organization
and moderators consistently and frequently articulated the importance of the civic task
and/or duty involved in being a CIR panelist. As noted by a member of the team that
observed the Massachusetts CIR,

John Hecht – State Representative in Watertown. His office, Tisch College, and
Healthy Democracy are the three sponsors of this CIR. Shows appreciation for the
panel to devote their time and energy in exploring this policy program and in
exploring whether this program is good for the state of Massachusetts. ‘Politics is
not a spectator sport. Clearly you all get that by being here.’ CIR will allow us to take ‘politics not being a spectator sport’ another step. You are looking at the Massachusetts’ voting population. Through your efforts, we are going to have a product that is going to in turn serve to empower voters all throughout the state. This gives voters power. A sense of control. A sense that they are truly in charge of the voting system that they have. Speaks about the privilege to vote and how this enhances that privilege and that right (Observer #3, MA).

In terms of group dynamics among the panelists, observers noted early signs of social bonding in all three CIRs, which is typical of life cycle dynamics. They also noted early signs of panelists taking the process very seriously. Most panelists appeared to be very interested and engaged in the process. There are no obvious expressions of emotion documented by observers. In the second half of Day 1, moderators ran a simulation exercise in which panelists practiced deliberating and practiced identifying strong and reliable evidence. Observer notes indicate that most panelists actively engaged in this process. Toward the end of the day, moderators reviewed the initiatives, and advocates made their initial presentations. Some panelists asked questions at the end of the day concerning how to conduct independent research and if a printer would be available. Observers noted that panelists remain engaged despite the lengthy day. Despite observers noting that there were no obvious expressions of emotions, the engagement and enthusiasm expressed by participants at the end of Day 1 are consistent with a life cycle explanation that the group was successful at its inclusion and dependency phase.
The first part of Day 2 began with moderators encouraging panelists to “stay in a learning mode.” Moderators reminded panelists of their task for the day, which was to gather information. Some panelists shared the independent research they conducted overnight. The first set of group exercises focused on panelists identifying and developing questions for the advocates or experts. Observers began to note, with reference to the small group exercise to develop questions, expressions of minor irritation related to the CIR procedures. We present examples of these expressions of irritation in Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2: Expressions of Minor Irritation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Edith: ‘Why are we doing this now, and not when they read the text of the measure, or something. Huh?’ She seems put out by the order in which things are happening … ‘why we didn’t get a chance to ask questions before?’ (Observer #1 AZ).</td>
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<td>Tara expressed concern about the dot process to Natalie. Worried that it might overshadow the diversity of concerns or cause people to vote for something they might not have otherwise voted for because it doesn’t have the dot (Observer #2 MA).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Linda says that she is triggered with use of ‘we’… ; Jenny wants to use ‘we’ to refer to the whole group, but this makes Linda uncomfortable. Jenny says that this ‘we’ is necessary for the conversation since they are working together as a group (Observer #2 OR).</td>
</tr>
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</table>

The timing of this dynamic is typical of the life cycle approach, which would imply that the group was entering its counter dependency and conflict phase where group members struggle for status or authority in the group. However, as we see in Table 2, panelists’ specific concerns focused on aspects of the CIR design, which lends support to a procedural explanation for the emotional trends (i.e., the order of tasks, reliance on dot process, and use of “we”). More support for the procedural explanation comes from the fact that, on the whole, observers noted very few negative emotional expressions. They
noted good interactions and engagement among panelists; all of the participants seemed to be taking the process seriously. So, despite noting minor irritation, observers made note of a “good group vibe” during the first half of Day 2.

In the second half of Day 2, observers noticed and documented a change in group dynamics but, still, very few explicit expressions of negative emotions. Here again we see interplay between the life cycle dynamics and the procedures. Indeed, a major theme in the notes relates to group bonding, with panelists interacting well during the plenary and small group sessions, as well as during breaks. The afternoon of Day 2 focused on presentations by the advocates (AZ) or experts (MA and OR), both those in favor of the initiative and those against it. Panelists all seemed appreciative of advocates and experts, posed to them good questions, and appeared to engage among themselves in good deliberation. Observers noted that deliberative leaders started to emerge. They also noted that panelists were starting to form and express opinions in development of new claims and concepts. Groups representing different sides started to emerge. Another theme in the notes is that panelists were starting to look tired, and a few were “checking out,” but that they continued to take the process seriously. Generally, observers reported there was good deliberation in the plenary sessions and small groups. For example,

The group is being pretty copacetic. Folks are clearly showing their colors – pro and anti-govt expansion – but are remaining very respectful of one another. There’s no talking over each other; people are taking turns. … The process ISN’T RUSHED. Things are running pretty smoothly. So far, at least, the CIR seems to be working (Observer #1 OR).
The fact that participants are “showing their colors” in terms of their positions on the issue, but doing so in a way that is “respectful,” is consistent with a life cycle explanation. This explanation highlights group members moving between the second and third phrases of development, where they try to develop trust and negotiate their individual roles within the group. However, the observer who made this note attributes the successful communication here with the CIR procedures: an unrushed process that “seems to be working” (Observer #1 OR).

**Mounting Anger and Frustration**

Day 3 marked further developments in the group dynamics, with panelists becoming more expressive of their views and forming clearer subgroups. The procedure for the first half of Day 3 required panelists to work to identify new claims, sort through these claims for reliability, and vote on claims (in MA and OR; not in AZ). They then broke into pro and con groups to start drafting out the statements. These tasks were analytic and somewhat challenging, requiring panelists to use what they learned from the past two days to evaluate information and judge the quality of the claims.

The upward spike in anger on Day 3, seen in our survey data (Figure 1), is evident in observer notes (Table 3), which demonstrated that personal opinions were developing, tensions were surfacing, and emotions were starting to be expressed more explicitly. There were some disagreements among panelists, including some hot tempers and heated exchanges, concerning the substance of the claims. Observers noted that it was getting “messy.” They also noted several expressions of anger and frustration.
Table 3: Spike in Frustration and Anger

| Gets PRETTY heated here, Edith is agitated. Ben steps in with a comment that gets a lot of yeahs … That’s great, that helps defuse the situation a little bit. … OK now they get into the ‘proximity to schools’ claim, and some people get a little wound up. Ruth ALMOST loses the room here as people are arguing about K12 schools or just any schools, or something – BUT she steps in and reins in the crowd a bit and refocuses everyone into the small groups (Observer #1 AZ). |
| This group has a lot of strong personalities. Malik and Kelly are going at it a little bit. Kelly is trying to put it in plain language (for a senior citizen). Malik is saying it will ‘address’ the opioid crisis, and Kelly wants to make sure it doesn’t sound like it’s solving the crisis. They don’t want to report out even though all the other groups are done. Kelly doesn’t want to move on. Kelly seems pissed. Malik is trying to calm her down. Nora is also trying to calm everyone down. I think she’s just got a hot temperament. Alan is shaking his head. I think he’s frustrated with the time crunch (Observer #1 MA). |
| Matt: ‘I think it’s going to be that we don’t ever give them enough money; I don’t have a lot of faith in this panel’ … ‘we’ve got to throw as much sh*t into this as we can, cause we’re the minority guy; if it fits in it does, if not it doesn’t.’ Matt is getting frustrated (Observer #2 OR). |

These comments from observers indicate that panelists expressed frustration and anger in the morning of Day 3. Some observers attributed the expression of anger to the panelists’ personal characteristics noting, for example, that group participants have “strong personalities” or that someone has a “hot temperament.” However, other observers note that the emotional dynamics are group-oriented. The formation of subgroups or coalitions is common in the second and third phases of group development according to life cycle explanations. Yet, at this point in the CIR panelists’ work together, they should be moving toward the fourth phase of accomplishing tasks and performing collaborative work. This seems to be a difficult transition for the group, which could be brought about by frustration and anger with respect to the procedure. The observer notes provide support to this interpretation (Table 4).
All new claims are starting out as questions. Individuals want more information it seems. But the process disallows more information. ... Folks still seem to not understand the process and their expectations. Seems to be the same folks who don’t quite understand their exact expectations (Observer #2 AZ).

Mindy [moderator] was visibly frustrated. She should have handed the microphone to Nicole to interact with panelists rather than pushing forward when irritated. The process needs to be protected, but when a panelist is confused there needs to be something in place to help them understand what is going on (Observer #2 MA).

Matt, Ethan, and Doug – comments about not having faith in the process, about their preferences, and about their political leanings as well; seems like all of the other groups were a lot more neutral and open and taking their role as panelists seriously (Observer #2 OR).

In all of these descriptions, observers noted that panelists are critical of – even angry or frustrated with – the process. They express concern with aspects of the task and with the word counts of the statements and the exact phrasing of them. Panelists express lots of frustration about the process, but they remain respectful of each other. It thus appears that the CIR procedures explanation helps explain the emotional dynamics of this day. While a life cycle approach would account for some aspects of coalition forming, role negotiation, and task orientation, the specific CIR procedures seem to play an especially important part in panelists expressing emotions such as frustration and anger.

Interestingly, during the second half of Day 3, tensions did not seem to carry over. Observers described the second half of Day 3 in largely positive terms, despite recognizing that the CIR was behind schedule. This change in mood is best explained through a CIR procedures explanation. The mood likely lightened in part because the session immediately following lunch required the panelists to engage in their work differently. Rather than actively participating in a large plenary session or intensely working in small groups, they listened to afternoon final presentation by advocates,
which puts panelists in the role of audience. This procedural design reduced the interaction between panelists and required them to listen, reflect, and ask questions. After this session, panelists then split into two groups – one pro and one con group – and moved on to statement drafting near the end of the day. Drafting the statements required their interaction, which given the time pressure could have been tense and conflictual, but the procedural design of having like-minded individuals work together facilitated good-natured collaboration. Observers of all three CIRs noted this change in mood, examples of which are provided in Table 5.

<table>
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<th>Table 5: Interaction and Collaboration</th>
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<td>This is going pretty well, I think. The revised wordings of all of these things are much better than I was anticipating. … We are way behind schedule, though. Nearly an hour behind, I think (Observer #1 AZ).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are running super late, but the participants are still really wanting to talk about the issue. Haven’t actually heard the participants complain (Observer #1 MA).</td>
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<tr>
<td>All panelists are carefully reading and taking notes; virtually everyone has pen out as they go through; they are all ranking their key findings; everyone is engaged; fascinating that everyone is taking this so seriously; no one is speeding through them; everyone is taking time to read and consider carefully; no one is talking or looking at someone else; everyone is focused on ranking the key findings; seems like an intense process (Observer #2 OR).</td>
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**Saliency of Procedures**

During the first half of Day 4, observers noted that anger concerning the procedures resurfaced. In particular, panelists appeared to experience the pressure of time to complete their statements; they appeared to become irritated with each other. This anger over the feeling of time pressure is common for groups who have a finite ending time and is consistent with the life cycle explanation. Observers also noted that panelists were frustrated that they could not edit claims that were finalized earlier in the process. This
source of frustration is related to the CIR procedures. Thus, we see evidence of both of these explanations in the beginning of Day 4. For instance, Observer #3 from the Oregon team writes:

Overall, this segment was very rushed, the process wasn’t clear, Willow esp, but most of them wanted to dig deeper, but couldn’t b/c of time constraints and rules about not being able to make substantial changes. The group dynamic was intriguing, with the time pressure, people were on the edge and at one point Naomi shut down Willow, which was surprising considering that they seem to be good friends between Day 1-3 (Observer #3 OR).

However, once again we see a mood change after lunch. The end of Day 4 involved a concluding activity to wrap up the event. Many who study mini-publics do not give much analytic weight to the closing statements. But we think that, in a study of emotions and deliberation, they are important to examine. In part, the closing statements of all three 2016 CIRs are consistent with a life cycle explanation of the “adjourning” phase that concludes with positive emotion and talk about separation of the group and the future. However, in these final statements we see strong evidence that CIR procedures help shape panelists’ emotional experiences and the way they talk about the meaningfulness of their participation. In the closing procedure, panelists sat in a circle and took turns saying what they were taking away from the process. Their comments were overwhelmingly positive, and many panelists reflected on how their group had successfully accomplished the difficult deliberative tasks. Unlike other mini-publics, in
CIRs, both the pro and the con sides get to produce a statement that is published in the Voters’ Pamphlet and sent out to all eligible voters. This is in contrast to other mini-publics where participants either do not produce anything substantial as a group (e.g. deliberative polls), and are thus not able to publicly articulate their reasons for or against a proposal, or they have to vote on one set of recommendations (e.g., Citizens’ Assemblies), and are therefore effectively silenced in terms of expressing dissenting preferences. Another standout theme related to the CIR procedures explanation is the way that panelists consistently situated their description of their own emotional experience in a larger democratic framework. The examples in Table 6 highlight examples of how panelists compare their own emotional experience to the work of legislators and other public officials. They express pride in their hard work but also frustration that they, as volunteers, as laypersons, and as regular citizens, are able to deliberate collectively while their elected officials cannot.

<table>
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<th>Table 6: Emotions and Disappointment with Public Officials</th>
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<td>Emily: amazing how a diverse group can come together and disagree and still encourage one another and give support to one another (Observer #3 AZ).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Natalie: I don’t understand that if we can sit here as a group with a problem and get along, why can’t they (politicians) do the same. Kate: well said, Natalie. Echoes other comments. Really appreciates the way … people here had a difference of opinion … respectful and honorable way that everybody behaved really touched her, thanks everyone. Right now in our country, there is a lot of hostility and anger - we can do with a lot more cooperation and peace (Observer #3 MA).</td>
</tr>
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</table>
| Doug: ‘I don’t want to be a negative nellie, but I just can’t help it.’ ‘We’re here because other people [legislators?] don’t do their job.’ ‘We can work together in four days … and we have representatives who we elect, and they can’t agree … or come to a conclusion on hardly anything.’ Write to your representatives and tell them ‘to get their butt to work.’ ‘We take time out of our lives to do their jobs.’ The reason we’re in this pickle: ‘They don’t want to take responsibility for a decision that will make voters unhappy.’ ‘I’m glad you all had this opportunity to work together with people of all kinds of
different opinions and different backgrounds … Nobody’s mad at anybody. Nobody’s frustrated about anything … Thank you all for being nice to me’ (Observer #1 OR).

These statements, and many others like them, indicate that CIR panelists see connections between their experiences with the CIR and the work of both representative and deliberative democracy. Panelists appear to recognize the emotional challenges associated with the work, and the difficulty of the tasks they were given. But in the end, they are not only satisfied with their own experience, but they also recognize that the current political system is deficient and view the CIR as a model for other deliberative bodies. From our analysis of the observer notes, it appears that, if participants as political novices can withstand the stresses and frustrations associated with political deliberation, they expect their elected officials to do the same. While the life cycle explanation enables us to understand the broad emotional patterns and dynamics of the CIR, it is the procedures focus that provides us with even greater nuance into understanding the expression of emotions by panelists – including their enthusiasm and happiness, but especially their frustration and anger.

**Conclusions**

In summary, the findings from our quantitative analysis of the participant surveys in the 2016 CIRs provide good evidence that citizens felt enthusiasm throughout the process, an increasing level of happiness as the process proceeded, an early level of anxiety that peaked on the second day, a moderate but consistent level of sympathy on all four days, a moderate peak of anger on the third day, and very low levels of sadness during the deliberation. There was no guarantee that any initial enthusiasm would continue
throughout the process, and that it did so is evidence that should satisfy the organizers of
the CIR, and it suggests that others organizing mini-publics may be able to learn from
studying the CIR process. This is consistent with the CIR process explanation.

With respect to our qualitative analysis, we focused on the emotion of anger since
it is potentially the most disruptive of deliberative processes. Our analysis reveals a
complex interplay between life-cycle dynamics and CIR procedures in the expression and
mediation of anger. However, there are times when CIR procedures appear to play a
dominant role in the emotional experience of participants in both positive and negative
ways. While a life cycle approach would account for some aspects of coalition forming,
role negotiation, and task orientation, the specific CIR procedures seem to have a
significant effect on how panelists experience and express anger and frustration. This is
particularly true during difficult task segments in which participants are confused about
the process or feel constrained by inflexible rules. Similarly, however, the procedures
also seem to account for how, in the end, the CIR tempers the possibly disruptive
emotion of anger, and thus, allows for a successful deliberation.

Given the inevitability of emotional dynamics in the context of group deliberation
and the potential of these dynamics to derail deliberation, we conclude that the
procedures are salient in mediating the emotional dynamics within the CIR and possibly
in other deliberative groups. What stands out, in terms of a CIR procedures explanation,
is the way that panelists consistently situated their description of their own emotional
experience in larger a democratic framework. The way this is framed as a mini-public
makes a big difference in how people experience the emotional dimension of adjourning.
At the end of the process, panelists express happiness and appear content with their
accomplishments, but they also express frustration with their elected public officials and their inability to collectively deliberate. Our qualitative analysis brings to the fore the procedural explanation, which in turn helps us see nuances in the emotional patterns and dynamics of deliberative participants. Our procedural explanation essentially provides a richer understanding of the particular life cycle of CIRs. While, we are well aware of the limitations of our study and the importance of further quantitative and qualitative analysis, given the unique nature of our data and the different types of analysis we were able to conduct with these data, we believe we have been able to provide some significant insights into the role of specific emotions in the context of mini-public deliberation.

Endnotes

1 See, e.g., Fraser 1997; Johnson, Black, & Knobloch 2017; Mansbridge, Hartz-Karp, Amengual, & Gastil 2006; Morrell 2010; Sanders 1997; Thompson & Hoggett 2001; and van Stokkom 2003
2 see, e.g., Marcus 2002
3 Wheelan 2005
4 Johnson, Black, and Knobolch 2017
5 see Brader & Marcus 2013 and Demertzis 2014
6 Marcus, Neuman, & MacKuen 2000
7 Marcus 2002
8 Ibid., 116
9 Ibid., 116
10 Ibid., chapter 5
11 Ibid., chapter 7
12 Wolak and Marcus 2007, 183
13 Hickerson & Gastil 2008
14 Sobkowicz & Sobkowicz 2012
15 Komporozos-Athanasiou & Thompson 2015
16 McClain 2009
17 Ibid., 57-58
18 Ibid., 63
19 Ibid., 61-62
20 Ibid., 62-63
21 Ibid., 62
22 Ibid., 56
see Johnson, Black, and Knobolch 2017
24 Gastil, Reedy, Morrell, & Anderson 2016
25 Gastil, Johnson, Han, Rountree 2016
26 Gastil et al. 2016
27 McClain 2009
28 see, e.g., Fleckenstein 2007 and Morrell 2010
29 see Morrell 2010, Chapter 3
30 Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw 2011
31 Black, Burkhalter, Gastil, & Stromer-Galley 2010; Knobloch, Gastil, Reedy, & Walsh 2013
32 Saldaña 2015
33 \( p < .001 \) for all comparisons except for the Day 2 comparison with anxiety, where \( p < .01 \)
34 see, e.g., Marcus, Neuman, and MacKuen 2000
35 Wheelan 2005
36 Tuckman & Jenson 1977; Wheelan 1994; and Wheelan, Davidson, & Tillan 2003
37 Wheelan 2005
38 Ibid.
39 Bennis & Shepard 1956; Tuckman 1965; and Tuckman & Jenson 1977
40 Kaner 2014
41 Knobloch, Gastil, Reedy, & Walsh 2013
42 Arrow et al. 2004
43 Ballard & Seibold 2000
44 Johnson, Black, & Knoboch 2017
45 All names are pseudonyms.
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Oregon Legislative Assembly. House Bill 2895. 75th Assembly, 2009 Session.


