

Emanating Effects: The Impact of the Oregon Citizens' Initiative Review on Voters' Political Efficacy

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Abstract

Deliberative processes can alter participants' attitudes and behavior, but deliberative minipublics connected to macro-level discourse may also influence the attitudes of non-participants. We theorize that changes in political efficacy occur when non-participants become aware of a minipublic and utilize its deliberative outputs in their decision making during an election. Statewide survey data on the 2010 and 2012 Oregon Citizens' Initiative Reviews tested the link between awareness and use of the Citizens' Initiative Review Statements and statewide changes in internal and external political efficacy. Results from a longitudinal 2010 panel survey show that awareness of the Citizens' Initiative Reviews increases respondents' external efficacy, whereas use of the Citizens' Initiative Review Statements on ballot measures increases respondents' internal efficacy. A cross-sectional 2012 survey found the same associations. Moreover, the 2010 survey showed that greater exposure to—and confidence in—deliberative outputs was associated with higher levels of both internal and external efficacy.

Keywords

deliberative democracy, external efficacy, initiative elections, internal efficacy, minipublics

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Across the globe, the past two decades have ushered in a succession of deliberative minipublics—highly structured, face-to-face deliberative processes in which a representative sample of the public engages in decision making connected to macro-level policymaking

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(Gastil and Levine, 2005; Nabatchi, 2010; Nabatchi et al., 2012). Participation in these events can cause lay citizens to change their opinions, increase their political knowledge, alter their political efficacy, and heighten their political engagement (Boulianne, 2018; Fishkin, 2009; Jacobs et al., 2009; Morrell, 2005; Nabatchi, 2010). Such salutary effects on the participants, however, were not the principal aim of those who have advocated for minipublics (Dahl, 1989; Fishkin, 1991; Fung, 2003; Gastil, 2000; Goodin and Dryzek, 2006; Grönlund et al., 2014). Rather, the point was to achieve more urgent macro-level goals, such as forming broader policy consensus, shifting public opinion, altering the focus of media coverage, or bolstering the legitimacy of bona fide democratic institutions.

In theory, the presence of deliberative minipublics could change the cognitions and behaviors of the larger public—persons who did not directly participate but who were aware of a minipublic’s structure, purpose, and outcomes. Minipublics are designed to connect micro-level deliberation with macro-level discourse by incorporating their findings into the wider political discussion (Goodin and Dryzek, 2006; Grönlund et al., 2014; Parkinson, 2006; Warren and Gastil, 2015). Such processes may subsequently draw the public into quasi-deliberation by providing them with better information, argument analysis, and considered recommendations. Those who are highly aware of minipublics and their outcomes are, in a sense, themselves engaged in deliberation because they can incorporate these analyses into their internal reflections about those issues and their conversations (Goodin, 2000, 2003).

Thus, minipublics may shape the public’s civic attitudes in the same ways they influence the few who participate in them directly (Boulianne, 2018; Fung, 2003; Gastil et al., 2017; Goodin and Dryzek, 2006; Knobloch and Gastil, 2015; Nabatchi, 2010). The establishment of inclusive minipublics may signal to the public the development of a more legitimate and deliberative public sphere—a sign that governing officials are willing to listen to public input and desire the public’s involvement in decision making (Boulianne, 2017; Parkinson, 2006). Furthermore, seeing fellow citizens competently perform the tasks normally fulfilled by political professionals may increase the public’s confidence in its own political capabilities.

Fortunately, the macro-level civic impact of minipublics has begun to receive empirical attention. Learning the findings of minipublics can affect policy judgments (Ingham and Levin, 2018a, 2018b) and vote choice (Gastil et al., 2018). Shelley Boulianne (2017) took this method a step further, finding that learning about a minipublic’s work influenced respondents’ sense of government responsiveness. Our study extends this line of work, asking how different types of exposure to a minipublic impact the efficacy of the electorate it aims to represent.

This research assesses the potential for the Oregon (USA) Citizens’ Initiative Review (CIR), one of the only institutionalized minipublics in existence, to have what we call an “emanating effect” on the wider public’s political efficacy. We use this term to refer to a minipublic’s ability to spread civic attitude change far beyond the minipublic’s participants to reach a wider public. Although the introduction of a minipublic into a crowded public sphere may receive limited public attention (and thus have weak emanating effects), measurement of any effects for those who *do* learn about them will help us better understand the role of minipublics within the larger deliberative system. We begin by theorizing this effect and then present the results of two large-sample surveys of the Oregon public.

Minipublics and Deliberative Systems

A deliberative minipublic—what Dahl (1989) once called a “minipopulous”—consists of a body of citizens small enough for face-to-face discussion but still representative of the relevant political unit (see Fung, 2003; Grönlund et al., 2014; Parkinson, 2006). Minipublics provide structured settings for public talk and debate and strive to meet normative standards for democratic deliberation (Gastil, 2000; Goodin, 2008). Unlike deliberative processes that are either disconnected from macro-level decision making or have a direct role in governing (see Fung and Wright, 2003), deliberative minipublics may influence decisions by inserting deliberation into the broader public discourse on an issue.

In other words, minipublics are designed to draw the public into the deliberative process by exposing them to non-biased information, reasoned arguments, and diverse viewpoints (Goodin and Dryzek, 2006; Niemeyer, 2011; O’Doherty and Burgess, 2009). Consequently, engaging with minipublics could foster a quasi-deliberative experience for those who incorporate the knowledge produced through small-scale deliberation into their own decision making (Gastil, 2000; Goodin, 2000). In this way, minipublics can enhance a deliberative system by extending the impact of formalized deliberation into the sphere of everyday opinion formation and voting (Mansbridge, 1999; Niemeyer, 2011, 2014; Parkinson and Mansbridge, 2012).

Although scholars have studied carefully the inner workings of individual minipublics, less research has explored how they operate within the public spheres into which they are introduced. What little evidence exists thus far is promising, though tentative given that most work references hypothetical or one-off minipublics not tied directly to elections or legislation (Boulianne, 2017; Fournier, 2011; Ingham and Levin, 2018a, 2018b; Warren and Pearce, 2008). The process studied herein, the CIR, has been shown to impact public vote choice, but this research does not address minipublics’ potential to influence attitudes unrelated to policy (Gastil et al., 2018). Advancing our understanding of how minipublics function within deliberative systems requires continuing this line of research into how such institutions can enable the wider public to adopt a “deliberative stance” (Owen and Smith, 2015).

One area for exploration concerns how minipublics influence the political attitudes of everyday citizens who do not themselves participate but are aware of their existence and utilize the information produced by them. Deliberation is intended not simply to produce specific policy or attitudinal outcomes but to create a more legitimate democratic process (Chambers, 2003; Parkinson, 2006), and perceptions of process legitimacy have been found to affect global perceptions of government such as efficacy and trust (Funk, 2001; Hibbing and Theiss-Morse, 1998; Kweit and Kweit, 2007). Seeing a normatively desirable government-sponsored process that incorporates ordinary citizens might affect people’s perceptions of the government itself and their relationship to it. Specifically, vicarious deliberation through these minipublics has the potential to alter the public’s internal and external efficacy (Fung, 2003; Nabatchi, 2010).

Internal Efficacy

Minipublics may boost the public’s internal efficacy—the belief that one is capable of effective political action and self-governance (see Niemi et al., 1991). Previous work has shown that face-to-face deliberative events can increase the political self-confidence of

participants (Fishkin, 2009; Gastil, 2004; Morrell, 2005). When members of the electorate use the outputs of such events, they may similarly increase their sense of political competence. Minipublics are designed to bring opposing viewpoints into conversation with one another, with the statements produced through them ideally reflecting the diverse viewpoints of the participants. The decisions or recommendations emanating from Deliberative Polls, Citizens' Juries, and other deliberative panels can create more analytically rigorous discourse by inserting detailed and relevant information into a policy debate and revealing discrepancies or falsehoods in claims made by advocates (Fishkin, 2009; Gastil and Knobloch, 2010). Members of the public who utilize these statements, then, are exposing themselves to information and arguments they otherwise may have missed or disregarded (Gastil et al., 2015, 2016; Warren and Gastil, 2015) and may see increases in their internal efficacy as a result. A pair of recent studies showed a slight overall boost in internal efficacy as a result of learning about a recent minipublic; the only individual item reaching statistical significance asked, "How much can people like you affect what the government does?" (Boulianne, 2017: 12).

One explanation for such a result is that minipublics rely on lay citizens, rather than professionals, to perform the tasks of opinion formation and decision making; this, in turn, legitimizes citizen voices as an influential form of public discourse (Goodin and Dryzek, 2006). Public forums create opportunities for non-professional citizens to participate and can allow lay observers to see other citizens competently engage in self-governance (Gastil and Levine, 2005; Nabatchi et al., 2012). They position everyday citizens as both representatives of and trusted information proxies for their fellow citizens (Bohman, 2012; Fournier, 2011; MacKenzie and Warren, 2012; Parkinson, 2006). Seeing ordinary citizens fill these roles may boost the public's confidence in its own capabilities.

Indeed, studies of Canadian citizens' assemblies found that voters who were more informed about the design of the assemblies were more likely to vote in accordance with their recommendations (Fournier, 2011; Warren and Pearse, 2008), indicating that knowledge of the process left voters confident in the decision-making capability of their fellow citizens. Other studies have shown that when a general public learns of a minipublic's findings, it can bring public opinion into closer alignment with the positions taken by minipublic participants (Gastil et al., 2018; Ingham and Levin, 2018a, 2018b).

More generally, initiative and referenda elections provide the public with direct power in decision making, and that experience of direct democracy can increase internal efficacy (Bowler and Donovan, 2002). Coupled with the fact that such processes can enlighten the public on complex policy issues, minipublics that provide timely information during elections may boost the wider public's internal efficacy as citizens begin to understand their minipublic peers, and potentially themselves, as capable of understanding and making competent decisions about complex problems (Warren and Gastil, 2015).

External Efficacy

In addition to boosting citizens' political self-confidence, minipublics might also influence the public's external efficacy—the belief that governing officials listen to the public and that there are legal ways to influence governing decisions (Niemi et al., 1991). Studies have shown that deliberative participation itself can increase external efficacy (Boulianne, 2018; Fishkin, 2009; Knobloch and Gastil, 2015; Nabatchi, 2010) as participants begin to believe that they can influence policy decisions and that such beliefs are

a motivating factor for citizen participation in minipublics (Jacquet, 2018). Similar effects might be found for the wider public.

Research has already linked the presence of direct democracy to increases in perceived government responsiveness because such institutional structures provide evidence of governing officials' willingness to hand over decision-making power to voters (Bowler and Donovan, 2002; Hero and Tolbert, 2004). The institutionalization of minipublics requires a similar transfer of power from elected or appointed officials to lay citizens, and thus they may similarly increase citizens' sense of external efficacy. Few structures give deliberative citizen bodies such *direct* decision-making power (Goodin, 2008; Johnson and Gastil, 2015; Smith, 2009), though exceptions include juries (Dwyer, 2002) and participatory budgeting (Baiocchi et al., 2011; Gilman, 2016). There are, however, processes that provide deliberative panelists with *indirect* power, such as the British Columbia Citizens' Assembly (BCCA), whose formal recommendation for revising the voting system was put to a province-wide vote (Fournier, 2011; Warren and Pearse, 2008).

The focal institution of this study—the Oregon CIR—took a slightly different route by placing one-page analyses of statewide initiatives in the official Voters' Pamphlet. Voters can utilize this citizen-generated information when casting their own ballots. These types of minipublics may be particularly adept at increasing the wider public's external efficacy as they combine the considered judgment and small-scale inclusiveness of the deliberative minipublic with the popular control and large-scale inclusiveness of direct democracy (Parkinson, 2006; Smith, 2009; Warren and Gastil, 2015).

As avenues for this type of citizen empowerment proliferate, more citizens may come to believe that governing officials care about—and seek to be responsive to—their judgments. This is even more likely when governments create institutional opportunities for participation that exhibit procedural fairness in their deliberative processes (Miles, 2011; Zhang, 2012). Thus, Boulianne (2017: 11) found that learning about a 57-person Citizens' Panel convened in Edmonton (Canada) caused the average survey respondent to place more trust in “the municipal government to make good decisions about climate change.” Whether such an effect would extend to an institutionalized minipublic has yet to be seen.

Hypotheses

In sum, we hypothesize that deliberative minipublics may have an effect that emanates far beyond their direct participants. When members of the general public become aware of a minipublic and/or use the information it provides, this can alter public attitudes in ways that mirror their direct effects on participant attitudes. First, we anticipate that these emanating effects involve the two common forms of political efficacy.

Hypothesis 1. Controlling for traditional indicators of political efficacy, the presence of a deliberative minipublic in a statewide election will have an emanating effect by increasing the wider public's (a) internal efficacy and (b) external efficacy.

In addition, we anticipate that increases in efficacy should be heightened in proportion to the *degree* of one's awareness of the deliberative process. Understanding the purpose and functioning of these structures may help increase their legitimacy (Fung, 2003). Those who see such structures as legitimate and important likely are more empowered by their implementation. Placing a high level of importance on such processes, then, may

increase the likelihood that knowledge of these structures will positively affect cognitions related to democratic citizenship. In addition, those more acutely aware of the CIR will likely have had more exposure to news and information regarding the event and may be more likely to have been affected by it (see Schenck-Hamlin et al., 2000: 59). In short, if our first hypothesis holds, then more exposure should lead to even larger changes.

Hypothesis 2. A minipublic's emanating effects will be strongest for those who (a) view its outcomes as important in their own decision making and (b) pay more careful attention to its deliberations.

Our theoretical model includes no interactive effects that anticipate a minipublic exposure varying in intensity based on different levels of, say, political interest or ideology. We include such measures in our analysis principally as statistical controls, but given that prior research has found contingent effects of information use (Ingham and Levin, 2018b; Xenos and Moy, 2007) and deliberative participation (Gastil et al., 2010), we also conduct post hoc analyses with these variables with an eye toward future theory development.

Methods

We tested these hypotheses with the 2010 and 2012 Oregon CIR. This unique process brings together 20–24 randomly selected citizens, stratified to match the electorate in terms of gender, ethnicity, age, party, place of residence, and voting history. The panelists met for five consecutive days to learn about a statewide initiative. At the end of their deliberations, panelists created a Citizens' Statement that appeared in the Oregon *Voters' Pamphlet*—a newsprint booklet that over 80% of Oregon voters reference when making choices in that state's entirely vote-by-mail elections (Gastil and Knobloch, 2010). In total, 42% of 2010 Oregon voters and 51% of 2012 voters became aware of the CIR, and reading the statements increased issue-specific knowledge for some voters (Gastil et al., 2018; Knobloch et al., 2012).

Each statement contained key facts related to the initiative, along with arguments for and against it and an indicator of how the panelists split when asked how they would vote. In addition, the statement contained information about the process itself:

This Citizens' Statement was developed by an independent panel of 24 Oregon voters ... The panelists were selected at random from the entire voting population of Oregon, and balanced to fairly reflect the state's voting population based upon location of residence, age, gender, party affiliation, education, ethnicity, and likelihood of voting. The panel has issued this statement after five days of hearings and deliberation (Oregon Secretary of State, 2010).

Study Design

To measure the changes that awareness and use of the CIR may have had on the wider public, we conducted two surveys. For the first, we contracted with YouGov Polimetrix in 2010 to conduct an online, two-wave panel survey of registered Oregon voters, with the first wave conducted from 5 August to 31 August 2010 and the second conducted 2 months later, during 22 October to 1 November (Wave 1 only $N=640$, Wave 1 and 2 $N=971$, Wave 2 only $N=509$; response rate=41%, using the RR3 metric; retention rate=60%). Respondents closely matched the Oregon voting population regarding party

affiliation and political ideology. The first wave was conducted before, during, and relatively soon after the CIR, when few voters would be aware of the CIR or its output. The second wave was disseminated in the weeks preceding the November 2010 election but after voters had received their Voters' Pamphlet.

The above survey will serve as the basis for most of the analysis presented herein, but a second survey was conducted in 2012 to test whether the results from 2010 were replicable. That year, we contracted with Qualtrics to conduct an online survey of registered Oregon voters in the weeks leading up to the election, October 25–November 5 ($N=1539$; response rate = 3.2%, using the RR4 metric). Although the overall response rate was low, our sample matched the wider electorate in party demographics and vote choice. Both the 2012 and 2010 surveys had sufficient statistical power (Cohen, 1988) to detect effect sizes equivalent to those found in the most comparable survey studies conducted to date (Boulianne, 2017; Ingham and Levin, 2018b).

Analytic Design and Survey Measures

The panel design of the first survey permitted us to pose questions to the panelists before the CIR occurred and directly before the election; thus, we were able to assess changes in respondents' beliefs in relation to their knowledge and awareness of the CIR. In statistical terms, we used a regression equation to predict Wave 2 attitudes based on awareness and use of the CIR Statements, after controlling for Wave 1 attitudes, demographics, and other variables (discussed below). The second survey solicited responses from participants at only one point in time; therefore, a regression analysis was again used to predict the effects of CIR awareness and use on efficacy, but this time controlling only for the demographic and other control variables.

Independent Variables. In both surveys (Wave 2 for the 2010 survey), respondents were asked if they were aware of the CIR via this item: "For two of the statewide initiatives on the ballot, there is a one-page Citizens' Statement detailing the most important arguments and facts about the measure. These were written by the Oregon Citizens' Initiative Review panels. Were you very aware, somewhat aware, or not at all aware of the new Citizens' Initiative Review?" Awareness was collapsed to a two-point scale, with 1 indicating awareness of the CIR and 0 indicating no awareness (2010 survey, $M=0.53$, standard deviation (SD)=0.50; 2012 survey, $M=0.55$, SD=0.50). Voters were additionally asked whether they had read the CIR Statement on either measure in 2010 ($M=0.20$, SD=0.40) or 2012 ($M=0.41$, SD=0.49) again on a 0–1 scale, with 1 meaning that they had read the statement and 0 meaning that they had not.

In 2010, those who had read the statements were asked additional questions. To determine the total amount of time spent with each section of the Voters' Pamphlet, voters were asked, "Thinking ONLY about the section on Measure [73/74, regarding ...], please estimate how many minutes you spent reading each section." The number of minutes recalled spending on the three sections of each statement was summed to create a scale measuring the total minutes of CIR reading (six items; $\alpha=0.885$, $M=17.75$, SD=19.12). For comparison, similar questions were included measuring the amount of time spent reading the other sections of the Voters' Pamphlet.

To assess how important voters considered the CIR Statements, for both measures respondents were asked "how helpful was it to know whether the Citizens' Initiative Review panelists supported or opposed the measure?" Responses were recorded on a

scale from “Made no difference” (1) to “Very helpful” (3). In addition, respondents rated the importance of each of the three sections of the CIR Statement (the Key Findings, Arguments in Favor, and Arguments in Opposition) using the following prompt: “Thinking ONLY about the section on Measure [73/74, regarding ...], please estimate how ... important that section was in deciding how to vote on Measure [73/74],” on a scale from “Not at all important” (1) to “Very important” (3). Averaged together, this yielded a reliable eight-item scale ($\alpha=0.876$, $M=1.93$, $SD=0.54$).

Principal Dependent Variables. Both waves of the 2010 panel survey included questions regarding internal efficacy (three items; Wave 1 $\alpha=0.792$, $M=3.07$, $SD=0.60$; Wave 2 $\alpha=0.794$, $M=3.04$, $SD=0.59$) and state-specific external efficacy (three items; Wave 1 $\alpha=0.875$, $M=2.31$, $SD=0.81$; Wave 2 $\alpha=0.863$, $M=2.32$, $SD=0.77$). Response options ranged from strongly agree (1) to strongly disagree (4), with negative items reversed and higher scores indicating greater efficacy. Respondents in the 2012 survey were asked questions regarding internal efficacy (three items, $\alpha=0.840$, $M=3.86$, $SD=0.79$) and state-specific external efficacy items that differed slightly from those asked in 2010 (four items, $\alpha=0.709$, $M=2.70$, $SD=0.76$). The 2012 survey participants were additionally asked questions concerning initiative-specific efficacy, which measured, for example, whether they felt “well-qualified to participate in Oregon initiative elections,” on a five-point scale from strongly agree (1) to strongly disagree (5) (three items; $\alpha=0.886$, $M=3.73$, $SD=0.76$).

Control Variables. As specified in Hypothesis 1 that an effect would be seen on internal and external efficacy only when demographic variables were controlled for, both studies also measured these demographic and political characteristics. Both gender and political interest have been found to have a strong effect on efficacy (Schlozman et al., 1995; Verba et al., 1995), while education, income, and age have been strongly linked to political participation, a key outcome of efficacy (Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993). Political ideology has also been found to moderate the effects of deliberation on political attitudes (Gastil et al., 2008).

Therefore, the surveys contained a number of control variables to ensure that the influence of these traditional influences on efficacy did not interfere with our understanding of the CIR’s effects. These variables included age, gender, education, yearly income, party affiliation, political interest, and political knowledge (details about each of these variables, including question wording, means, and SDs, can be found in the Supplementary Information of this article). To measure political knowledge, participants answered six multiple-choice questions related to politics. The 2010 survey respondents were asked about both national and statewide politics, and the 2012 survey respondents were asked only about statewide politics. Each correct answer earned one point, with “don’t know” treated as incorrect (0). Scores were summed to create a knowledge index, albeit one with modest reliability (2010 $\alpha=0.568$, $M=3.74$, $SD=1.36$; 2012 $\alpha=0.453$, $M=4.05$, $SD=1.24$).

Results

Effects of CIR Awareness and Citizens’ Statement Use

The first hypothesis held that simply being aware of the CIR or reading the statements produced by the citizen panels would increase internal and external efficacy. For the 2010

Table 1. 2010 Awareness and Use of the CIR Predicting Changes to Internal and External Efficacy.

	Internal efficacy (Wave 2)		External efficacy (Wave 2)	
	B (SE)	β	B (SE)	β
Constant	1.015 (0.100)**	–	0.426 (0.109)**	–
Controls				
Age	–0.001 (0.001)*	–0.064	0.003 (0.001)**	0.062
Gender	–0.026 (0.031)	–0.022	0.034 (0.033)	0.022
Education	0.018 (0.012)	0.044	0.034 (0.013)**	0.062
Income	0.003 (0.004)	0.020	–0.002 (0.004)	–0.010
Party	0.007 (0.007)	0.025	–0.017 (0.009)†	–0.047
Political interest	0.147 (0.022)**	0.208	–0.030 (0.022)	–0.033
Political knowledge	0.049 (0.012)**	0.112	0.011 (0.014)	0.019
Summary treatment	–0.037 (0.034)	–.027	0.035 (0.038)	0.019
Internal efficacy (W1)	0.473 (0.028)**	0.485	–	–
External efficacy (W1)	–	–	0.714 (0.024)**	0.744
Predictors				
Aware of CIR	0.036 (0.034)	0.031	0.118 (0.037)**	0.076
Read CIR Statements	0.118 (0.042)**	0.081	–0.003 (0.046)	–0.002
R ² (%)	46.6		62.8	

CIR: Citizens' Initiative Review; SE: standard error.

N = 1340. Coefficients are unstandardized regression coefficients (standard errors in parenthesis) followed by standardized coefficients controlling for variables listed (age through external efficacy Wave 1).

† $p \leq 0.10$; * $p \leq 0.05$; ** $p \leq 0.01$.

surveys, we utilized a simple linear regression to determine if awareness of the CIR or reading the Citizens' Statements produced by the panels was associated with changes in efficacy after controlling for Wave 1 measures of these attitudes, as well as age, gender, education, income, party, political knowledge, and political interest.

As illustrated in Table 1, awareness of the CIR had no effect on internal efficacy but did cause a significant, but modest, increase in external efficacy ($\beta = 0.076$, $p = 0.002$). Knowledge of the CIR's existence, as a novel deliberative structure added to the conventional Oregon political process, caused respondents to feel that the government was more responsive, even if it did not alter their own sense of political capacity. By contrast, reading the CIR Statements had its lone significant effect on *internal* efficacy ($\beta = 0.081$, $p = 0.005$). The act of reading the CIR Statements was positively associated with Wave 2 political self-confidence, even after controlling for Wave 1 measures of internal efficacy and the raft of other control variables.

Laying aside the advantages of regression, consider a comparison of means. Wave 1 external efficacy scores for respondents were similar regardless of whether one would subsequently become aware of the CIR ($M = 2.22$ for aware and $M = 2.32$ for unaware). By the end of the election, however, the external efficacy of those unaware of the CIR remained stagnant (2.21), whereas those who learned of the CIR showed higher Wave 2 external efficacy (2.41) (SDs ranged from 0.79 to 0.86). A more striking pattern was found for internal efficacy. Those who read the statements had similar initial levels of political self-confidence as non-readers in Wave 1 ($M = 3.22$ and 3.12, respectively). By

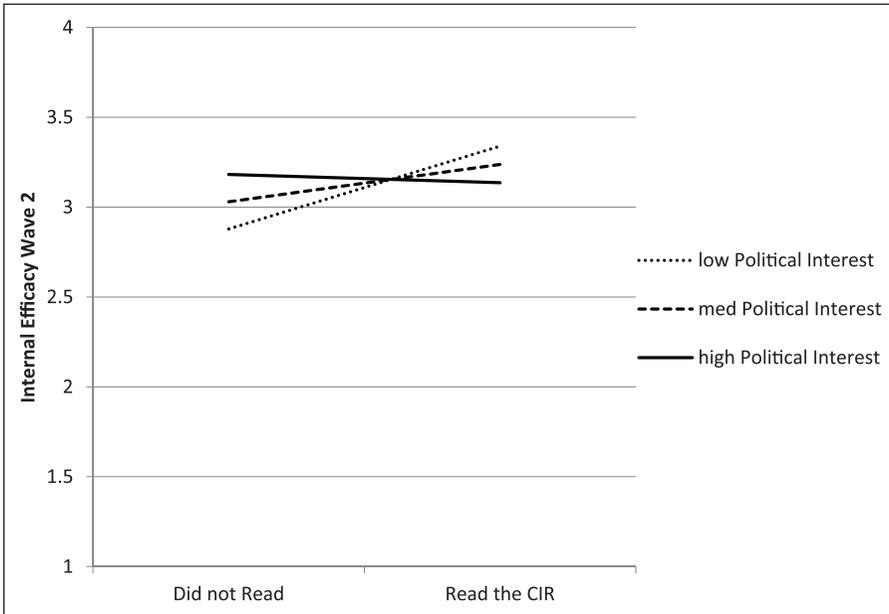


Figure 1. Reading the CIR by Political Interest Predicting Internal Efficacy. *N* = 1335. The figure shows Wave 2 internal efficacy (measured on a scale from 1 to 5) predicted by having read the CIR by political interest, controlling for Wave 1 internal efficacy as well as age, gender, income, education, party affiliation, political knowledge, political interest, and having received the summary treatment.

Wave 2, however, non-readers’ internal efficacy dropped to 3.02, whereas that of readers rose to 3.26 (SDs ranged from 0.49 to 0.59). Although these effects are still within the SD, the difference in directionality points to their import. While those who did not read the statements saw a decrease in internal efficacy over the course of the election, those who read the CIR Statement bolstered their feelings of political capability.

Having found modest effects for CIR awareness and use on internal and external efficacy, we ran an additional post hoc analysis with the purpose of discovering whether or not any of the control variables had a moderating effect on the results. One of the most consistently influential control variables in this study was political interest, and the post hoc analysis indicated a significant negative interaction between political interest and reading the CIR Statements on internal efficacy ($\beta = -0.575, p < 0.001$). Figure 1 illustrates the pattern: reading the statements caused less interested voters to sharply increase their internal political efficacy, while reading the statements had little effect on those with high political interest. In other words, reading the CIR Statement reversed the political self-confidence gap between the uninterested and the engaged.

Party identification also interacted with awareness and use of the CIR in affecting changes to external efficacy. Awareness of the CIR interacted with party affiliation, affecting voters’ levels of external efficacy ($\beta = 0.172, p < 0.001$). Collapsing the seven-point identification variable into three categories, the first graphic in Figure 2 shows that Democrats who were aware of the CIR tended to increase their external efficacy more than moderates, while Republicans were largely unchanged.

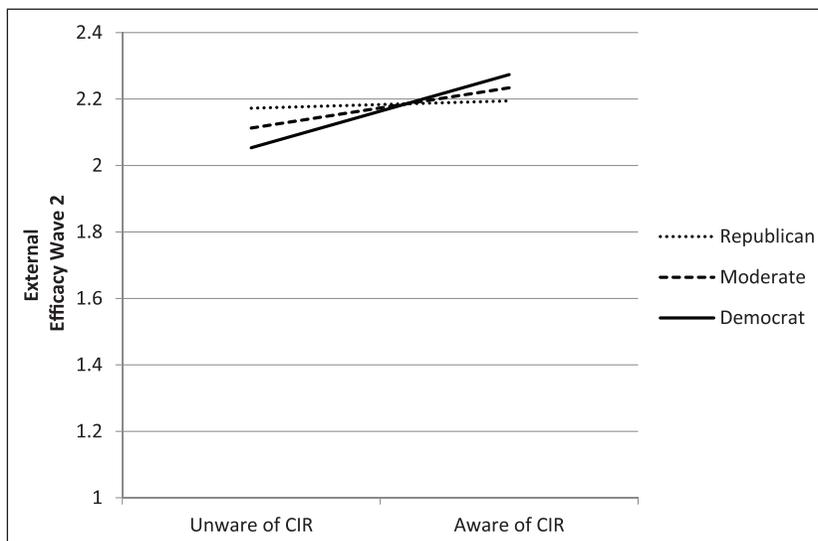


Figure 2. CIR Awareness by Party Identity Predicting External Efficacy.

$N=1322$. The figure shows Wave 2 external efficacy (measured on a scale from 1 to 5) predicted by awareness of the CIR by party affiliation, controlling for Wave 1 external efficacy as well as age, gender, income, education, political knowledge, political interest, and having received the summary treatment.

Effects of Importance of the CIR and Time Spent with the Citizens' Statements

With evidence that awareness of the CIR and use of the statements could influence voters' efficacy, we tested Hypothesis 2, which held that effects would be stronger for those who relied more extensively on the statements. Regression analyses examined those voters who read the statements focusing on two independent variables: the first differentiated those who found the CIR important in casting their votes from those who gave it no great significance; the second measured minutes spent reading the statements. As indicated in Table 2, those who considered the statements to be important were more likely to gain external efficacy compared to those readers who did not deem them important ($\beta=0.139$, $p=0.005$). The same effect was not observed for internal efficacy. By contrast, the time spent on the statements was associated with greater increases in internal efficacy ($\beta=0.268$, $p<0.001$) but no changes in external efficacy. These results parallel those found within the general population, with awareness of the CIR leading to external efficacy and use of the CIR leading to internal efficacy.

To ensure that these effects were not simply a result of having read the Voters' Pamphlet, a post hoc analysis was performed to study the effects of two additional independent variables on changes to respondents' internal and external efficacy. The first compared the time spent with each section of the Voters' Pamphlet, including the CIR Statements as well as the state-produced summary information and the advocate-produced paid arguments. The second measured how important respondents considered each section. Results suggest that the boost in internal efficacy is not merely a matter of having spent time reading information about the initiative. As shown in the middle columns of Table 2, when compared to the time spent with the other sections of the Voters' Pamphlet,

Table 2. 2010 Involvement with CIR Process Predicting Changes to Internal and External Efficacy.

	Internal efficacy (Wave 2)		External efficacy (Wave 2)		Internal efficacy (Wave 2)		External efficacy (Wave 2)	
	B (SE)	B (SE)	B (SE)	B (SE)	B (SE)	B (SE)	B (SE)	B (SE)
Constant	0.981 (0.248)**	0.101 (0.272)	0.736 (0.212)**	0.378 (0.244)	0.507 (0.297)*	0.216 (0.304)		
Controls								
Age	-0.002 (0.002)	0.003 (0.002)	-0.002 (0.002)	0.003 (0.002)	-0.002 (0.002)	0.003 (0.002)		
Gender	-0.029 (0.063)	0.027 (0.071)	-0.018 (0.063)	0.011 (0.071)	-0.056 (0.064)	0.040 (0.071)		
Education	0.020 (0.024)	0.033 (0.027)	0.024 (0.024)	0.024 (0.028)	0.037 (0.025)	0.028 (0.028)		
Income	0.008 (0.008)	-0.003 (0.009)	0.008 (0.008)	-0.004 (0.009)	0.002 (0.008)	-0.002 (0.009)		
Party	-0.002 (0.015)	-0.010 (0.019)	0.001 (0.014)	-0.008 (0.019)	0.004 (0.015)	-0.010 (0.019)		
Political interest	0.161 (0.045)**	-0.012 (0.048)	0.170 (0.045)**	-0.039 (0.048)	0.123 (0.047)**	-0.005 (0.048)		
Political knowledge	0.072 (0.026)**	0.014 (0.030)	0.058 (0.027)*	0.036 (0.031)	0.055 (0.026)	0.019 (0.029)		
Summary treatment	-0.035 (0.070)	0.023 (0.080)	-	-	-	-		
Internal efficacy (Wave 1)	0.468 (0.059)**	-	0.488 (0.058)**	-	0.514 (0.061)**	-		
External efficacy (Wave 1)	-	0.706 (0.051)**	-	0.745 (0.052)**	-	0.713 (0.050)**		
Predictors								
Minutes spent reading	0.008 (0.002)**	-0.002 (0.002)	-	-	-	-		
Considered statements important	-0.100 (0.061)	0.198 (0.069)**	-	-	-	-		
Minutes reading CIR	-	-	0.008 (0.003)**	-0.001 (0.003)	-	-		
Minutes reading summary	-	-	-0.004 (0.002)†	0.007 (0.003)**	-	-		
Minutes reading paid arguments	-	-	0.007 (0.003)*	-0.012 (0.004)**	-	-		
CIR important	-	-	-	-	-0.218 (0.086)*	0.256 (0.095)**		
Summary important	-	-	-	-	0.249 (0.095)**	-0.104 (0.104)		
Paid arguments important	-	-	-	-	0.108 (0.078)	-0.023 (0.086)		
R ² (%)	51.6	63.9	52.2	64.5	48.5	63.9		
N	263	262	262	262	271	271		

CIR: Citizens' Initiative Review; SE: standard error.

N = 271. Coefficients are unstandardized regression coefficients (standard errors in parenthesis) controlling for variables listed (age through external efficacy Wave 1).

†p ≤ 0.10; *p ≤ 0.05; **p ≤ 0.01.

spending more time with the CIR Statements contributed to higher increases in internal efficacy ($\beta=0.263, p=0.002$) than did the time spent with the paid arguments ($\beta=0.156, p=0.046$). Turning to external efficacy, the time spent with the summary information about the measure significantly increased external efficacy ($\beta=0.226, p=0.006$) and the time spent with the paid arguments decreased it ($\beta=-0.198, p=0.004$).

The right-hand columns of Table 2 show that considering the CIR Statements important decreased readers' internal efficacy ($\beta=-0.202, p=0.012$), though appreciation of the summary statements increased it ($\beta=0.249, p=0.009$). Turning to external efficacy, the only significant change was caused by placing importance on the CIR statements, which caused a reader to see increases in perceived system responsiveness ($\beta=0.180, p=0.008$). This mirrors our earlier findings that importance of the CIR, but not time reading, boosts external efficacy.

2012 Survey Results

To replicate and extend the test conducted in 2010, we conducted an additional survey during the 2012 Oregon statewide election. We again utilized a simple linear regression to determine if awareness or use of the CIR was associated with changes in internal and external efficacy, though this study also addressed its impact on initiative-specific efficacy. Unlike the 2010 study, we did not have pre- and post-measures of efficacy, but we did control for the same confounding variables: age, gender, education, income, party, political knowledge, and political interest. Although these methodological limitations prevent us from looking at change over time, they can provide clarity around the replicability of the findings from the first study, and the results closely match those found in 2010. As shown in Table 3, simple awareness did not affect internal efficacy but was associated with higher external efficacy ($\beta=0.123, p=0.016$). In contrast, reading the statements was associated with higher internal efficacy ($\beta=0.150, p=0.001$) but did not lead to higher external efficacy.

Finally, we asked whether awareness of the CIR and use of its statements resulted in higher levels of initiative-specific internal efficacy or one's confidence in their capability to participate in initiative elections. Although not tested in 2010, these results were even more promising than those found for external and standard internal efficacy. Voters who were aware of the CIR statement saw higher initiative-specific internal efficacy ($\beta=0.138, p=0.003$), and reading the CIR Statements created an additional bump in initiative efficacy over those who were simply aware of the process ($\beta=0.106, p=0.023$).

Discussion

This study tested two propositions: Minipublics connected to macro-level decision making can foster increases in the wider public's political efficacy, and these effects should be greatest for those who value and spend more time engaging with the minipublic's deliberative outputs. Using the case of the 2010 Oregon CIR, we found the hypothesized effects on measures of internal and external efficacy, though results show differences in the impact of awareness versus use of the CIR's Citizens' Statement. A replication study of Oregon voters in 2012 confirmed the impact that use and awareness had on internal and external efficacy, and it showed an additional impact on initiative-specific internal efficacy. The sizes of these effects were modest, but they were in line with past research into the effects that emanate from a small-scale deliberative process to influence the attitudes of wider publics (e.g. Boulianne, 2017).

Table 3. 2012 Awareness and Use of the CIR Predicting Changes to Internal, Initiative, and External Efficacy.

	Internal efficacy		External efficacy		Initiative efficacy	
	B (SE)	β	B (SE)	β	B (SE)	β
Constant	1.104 (0.247)	2.165 (0.280)	2.165 (0.280)	–	1.601 (0.257)	–
Controls						
Age	–0.003 (0.002)	–0.048	–0.001 (0.002)	–0.020	0.000 (0.002)	0.009
Gender	–0.227 (0.064)**	–0.144	0.020 (0.072)	0.013	–0.125 (0.066)	–0.082
Education	0.133 (0.036)**	0.157	0.098 (0.041)*	0.120	0.066 (0.037)	0.081
Income	0.007 (0.019)	0.015	0.000 (0.021)	–0.001	–0.017 (0.019)	–0.039
Party	0.012 (0.014)	0.036	–0.110 (0.016)**	–0.329	–0.004 (0.014)	–0.013
Political interest	0.456 (0.051)**	0.383	0.069 (0.058)	0.060	0.313 (0.053)**	0.273
Political knowledge	0.131 (0.027)**	0.207	0.046 (0.031)	0.076	0.153 (0.028)**	0.251
Predictors						
Aware of CIR	0.063 (0.068)	0.040	0.187 (0.077)*	0.123	0.209 (0.071)**	0.138
Read CIR	0.240 (0.069)**	0.150	–0.044 (0.078)	–0.029	0.164 (0.072)*	0.106
R ² (%)	40.2		18.1		30.6	

CIR: Citizens' Initiative Review; SE: standard error.

N = 951. Coefficients are unstandardized regression coefficients (standard errors in parenthesis) followed by standardized coefficients controlling for variables listed (age through political knowledge).

* $p \leq 0.05$; ** $p \leq 0.01$.

Different types of interaction with the CIR led to distinct changes. Although those who were simply aware that the CIR existed increased their external efficacy and their initiative-specific internal efficacy, they did not increase their global political self-competence. Those who *read* the CIR Statements saw a wider scope of changes, depending on how much they used them and whether they found them an important aid in voting. Those who read the statements tended to increase their internal efficacy, both holistically and in the context of initiative elections. Those who considered the statements valuable experienced increases in external efficacy relative to those readers who did not deem them important.

In other words, simply being aware that such structures exist tended to boost voters' faith that average citizens play a vital role in the democratic process. This validates the theory that the visible presence of deliberative minipublics can bolster democratic legitimacy (Fung, 2003; Gastil, 2000; Goodin and Dryzek, 2006; Nabatchi, 2010; Warren and Gastil, 2015). Those who took the time to read the Citizens' Statements increased their internal efficacy. For that finding, we offer two interrelated explanations. First, seeing other citizens competently perform legislative-analytic roles generally delegated to political professionals may give citizens greater confidence in their ability to self-govern. Second, deliberative minipublics are designed to draw the larger community into vicarious deliberation (Goodin, 2000, 2003), and as other studies have shown, deliberative participation can increase participants' internal efficacy (Fishkin, 2009; Gastil, 2004; Morrell, 2005). Personal deliberation, then, may have some of the same benefits as interpersonal deliberation.

To be sure, the sizes of these effects are relatively small. However, widespread use of minipublics could have a multiplier effect. The current case study was relatively narrow,

concerning the implementation of only one deliberative intervention into a complex electoral system and addressing only two of the over half-dozen measures being voted on in each of the 2010 and 2012 elections. Moreover, a little under half of Oregon voters were still unaware of the presence of this new institution by 2012, and an even smaller percentage utilized the CIR Statements. Were deliberative minipublics employed more broadly, whether on a wider range of issues, in more places, or with more decision-making power, the effects could magnify as members of the public more frequently observe and interact with such processes.

A closer look at these findings showed that those who were unaware of the CIR actually decreased their internal efficacy over the course of the election, while those who read the statements increased their feelings of political self-confidence. Although we had predicted a net increase in internal efficacy—not one contrasted against a concomitant decrease in efficacy for the comparison group, this unexpected finding warrants investigation in future research. Perhaps, as the election progressed and voters were exposed to traditional media and organizational routines, those remaining unaware of the CIR felt disempowered by conventional politics. By contrast, those who discovered the statements had the opposite experience.

Again with an eye toward future research, we note that a post hoc analysis suggested that these effects were moderated by political interest and party. For internal efficacy, reading the CIR had an impact only on low-interest voters, suggesting that the CIR may be more efficacious when it is providing novel information. And for external efficacy, being aware of the CIR had a greater effect among Democrats.

Although this study cannot tell us why party affiliation influenced the impact the CIR had on the wider public, it does begin to highlight the influence that political affiliation may have on one's perception of deliberative democracy. Perhaps, knowing that deliberative processes exist increased Democrats' perceived system responsiveness because they assumed that open and egalitarian processes would grant liberals greater influence over government decision making. Such readings go far beyond our data, but we offer them for future studies that look more directly into the different conceptions and perceptions of deliberation across the ideological spectrum.

Turning to the second hypothesis, those CIR Statement readers who considered them important when voting experienced increases in their external efficacy when compared to those who thought them less important, without the same change in internal efficacy. This mirrors the findings from the full electorate, which showed that simple awareness was the catalyst for increased external, but not internal, efficacy. Those who spent time with the statements increased their internal, but not their external, efficacy. Again, this matches the finding that reading the statements, but not mere awareness, spurred political self-confidence. This largely confirms the prediction that changes to political attitudes would be greatest for those who were most aware of the process and its outcomes, and it indicates that the existence of the CIR may have greater effects as voters become more aware of the CIR and more fully utilize its statements.

Reading the statements had effects distinct from other sections of the Voters' Pamphlet. The time spent with the statements increased internal efficacy relative to the time spent with other parts of the statement, particularly the summary information that marginally decreased readers' internal efficacy. The time spent with the statements in comparison to other sections of the voters' guide, however, did not alter readers' external efficacy. Official summary information boosted readers' external efficacy and the paid-for arguments decreased it.

Measures of how important voters considered each section further complicates the picture. Those who considered the CIR Statements important were the only group to increase their external efficacy compared to those who considered other sections important. Measures of internal efficacy produced different results. Considering the CIR Statements important decreased internal efficacy, while considering the summary information important increased it. Although these findings are contrary to our original hypothesis, they align with results found in a study measuring the electoral impact of the CIR Statements in which researchers found that voters became more uncertain of their voting choices after reading the statement (Gastil and Knobloch, 2010). In that study, the researchers hypothesized that the introduction of new information may have raised previously unconsidered questions for voters who were now less confident in their knowledge about the measure.

Conclusion

Our investigation of the Oregon CIR suggests that deliberative minipublics can bolster positive political attitudes among wider publics, particularly for those who most utilize the minipublic's published findings. This finding lends credence to the broader hypothesis that macro-level attitudinal change is possible through the influence of highly visible minipublics (Fung, 2003; Gastil, 2000; Goodin and Dryzek, 2006; Nabatchi, 2010; Niemeyer, 2011; Warren and Gastil, 2015). This conclusion also accords with prior empirical research on the attitudinal impacts of hypothetical and one-off minipublics (Boulianne, 2017; Ingham and Levin, 2018a, 2018b).

As minipublics become more common, institutionalized, and powerful, they may produce even greater attitudinal shifts for the general public and cause voters to have more confidence in themselves and their political institutions. This could spread to behavioral changes, as members of the public begin to feel that they have an important role to play in democratic government that extends beyond voting (Leighninger, 2006; Verba et al., 1995).

Even so, the results presented here are applicable to a limited context. The Oregon CIR is the first of its kind, though it is derived from Citizens' Juries (Crosby and Nethercutt, 2005) and bears some resemblance to the BCCA (Fournier, 2011; Warren and Pearse, 2008). Civic organizations, academics, and elected officials have explored the adoption of a CIR process in other locations, including California, Colorado, Massachusetts, and Arizona in the United States, as well as Finland, Sweden, and Switzerland. None of these pilot projects, however, has been institutionalized permanently by a government. This limits our ability to measure the effects a CIR-like entity would have in other locales, particularly in more ethnically diverse or politically divided settings where deliberative interventions may go awry (Fuji-Johnson, 2015; Hendriks, 2006). A CIR-like process may be more contentious when involving a more diverse population or may have to be altered to meet the needs of particular publics. This could affect the power of the CIR to spark large-scale attitudinal change.

Moreover, the CIR holds significant power when compared to many existing minipublics. Its results appear in the statewide Oregon Voters' Pamphlet, and it is a permanent part of that state's initiative elections. A process that does without this power and reach would likely not produce such widespread change. To understand the effects of different types of minipublics, the research presented herein must be replicated across contexts with the goal of understanding which processes are most likely to affect change.

Finally, our results deal primarily with what we call emanating effects—the impact that a minipublic can have on members of the wider public who had no direct connection to the process or participants. First-level emanation may be even greater for those who are not minipublic panelists but who do have social network connections to those who participated. Might the panelists’ own civic changes rub off on this wider set of individuals? Researchers may find powerful effects as minipublic participants bring new attitudes and skills back home. Having produced evidence of wider emanating effects from deliberative minipublics, such influences on family, friends, and one’s local or online communities seem eminently plausible.

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Supplemental Material

Additional supplementary material may be found with the online version of this article.

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