St. Catherine University

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Ranked Choice Voting in Minneapolis 2013 Elections

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By

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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts in Organizational Leadership

St. Catherine University

St. Paul, MN

May 2014

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Abstract

Ranked choice voting (RCV), also known as instant runoff voting (IRV), is claimed to be a more inclusive electoral system compared to the two-round single-vote plurality system commonly used in the United States. RCV is argued to be more inclusive because it maximizes the number of people participating in the decisive election, and because it inspires more inclusive campaigning as candidates try to earn second choice and third choice votes. RCV is not widely used in the United States; there is not a great deal of research on whether RCV achieves these goals. Through interviews with campaign strategists and expert election observers, this research determined that there was some evidence that RCV was effective in promoting greater inclusivity in the 2013 Minneapolis city elections, and puts forth a justice-oriented framework in which inclusion can be assessed.

Introduction

My first experiences volunteering for a political campaign coincided with my enrollment in the Master of Arts in Organizational Leadership (MAOL) program at St. Catherine University. Campaigns are a way to advance a candidate who represents a set of ideals and priorities for governing, or an issue that is a priority for our collective existence. The City of Minneapolis uses a ranked choice voting (RCV) electoral system for municipal elections. My experience as a volunteer for a mayoral campaign in Minneapolis in the 2013 election cycle piqued my interest in how this system works for Minneapolis residents.

The first competitive mayor's race under RCV in Minneapolis led to a lot of discussion about the influence of RCV on that race. The media narrative advanced a number of theories as to what that influence would be. Being a first-time RCV voter, as well as a campaign volunteer and an interested citizen, I wondered whether the theories were realized. Some of the theories specifically named some inclusivity benefits of RCV. As a person with intersecting marginalized identities, I sometimes feel like my voice is not represented, and so I personally value inclusivity in public affairs. A socially just democracy includes the voices of everyone governed. Thus, my research sought to determine whether RCV facilitates inclusion in the democratic process of determining our collective priorities, asking: *Did the use of the ranked choice voting electoral system in the Minneapolis 2013 municipal elections achieve its purported benefits by functioning as an inclusive electoral system and by inspiring more inclusive campaigns?*

After a brief description of RCV in Minneapolis and the electoral conditions in Minneapolis in 2013, I will discuss the literature on RCV and on inclusion in democracy, then turn to the research findings, and finally analyze the findings in the context of the literature.

Since few places in the United States use RCV, this analysis of RCV as experienced in the 2013 Minneapolis city election will extend the literature on RCV in practice in the United States.

Ranked Choice Voting in Minneapolis

RCV is an electoral system in which voters select multiple candidates for a given office, and rank those candidates in order of preference on a single ballot. If a voter's first choice candidate is not popular enough to win, the vote then counts towards the second choice; if the second choice candidate is not popular enough to win, the vote then counts towards the third choice, etc. Under RCV, there are no primary or runoff elections. RCV is argued to be more inclusive than these two-round systems because it maximizes the number of people participating in the decisive election. RCV is also argued to be more inclusive than a single-vote plurality system because it inspires more inclusive campaigning as candidates try to earn second choice and third choice votes. The specific rules and implementation of RCV differ from place to place. St. Paul, MN also uses RCV, though its rules are different from those in Minneapolis. For example, in St. Paul, voters can rank up to six choices (Ramsey County Elections, 2013) whereas in Minneapolis, voters can only rank up to three choices (City of Minneapolis Elections & Voter Services, 2013b). More data on the use of RCV will provide insight into the effectiveness of the RCV system.

The City of Minneapolis adopted RCV by public referendum in 2006, and used it for municipal elections for the first time in 2009. In preparation for 2009 elections, the City of Minneapolis elections staff formally adopted the "ranked choice voting" terminology over "instant runoff voting" (IRV) to more accurately reflect the ballot casting process and to refrain from implying that results would be available "instantly" (City of Minneapolis Elections & Voter

Services, 2013c). Regular municipal elections take place in Minneapolis every four years; 2013 was only the second time RCV was used in Minneapolis.

FairVote Minnesota is a statewide organization affiliated with the national FairVote organization. Both organizations are experts in, and advocates for, electoral reform that removes structural barriers to participation in democracy. FairVote, the national organization, champions a variety of initiatives, including the use of a national popular vote to elect the President of the United States (FairVote, n.d.c). FairVote Minnesota, the statewide organization, is largely focused on implementing RCV across Minnesota (FairVote Minnesota, n.d.a). FairVote Minnesota advocated for the adoption of RCV in Minneapolis leading up to the 2006 public referendum in which Minneapolis residents adopted the system. FairVote Minnesota's RCV education efforts were prominent in Minneapolis in 2013. FairVote, the national organization, and FairVote Minnesota, the statewide organization, served as sources for this research. FairVote has advocated for the success of ranked choice voting.

Electoral Conditions in Minneapolis in 2013

In 2013, 35 candidates filed to run for mayor in Minneapolis and appeared on the ballot. The outgoing mayor, R.T. Rybak, was completing his third term and opted not to run again, leaving no incumbent in the race. Media coverage focused on eight mayoral candidates running structured campaigns with hired staff and active fundraising (Roper, 2013, October 13). Of those eight candidates, six filed as members of the Democratic-Farmer-Labor (DFL) Party: Mark Andrew, Jackie Cherryhomes, Bob Fine, Betsy Hodges, Don Samuels, and Stephanie Woodruff. The DFL party did not endorse a mayoral candidate. Two of the eight mayoral candidates with structured campaigns filed as independents: Dan Cohen and Cam Winton. Cam Winton, despite filing as an independent, was backed by the Republican Party (Gilbert, 2013).

In Minneapolis, there are 13 city council seats. Seven of those races were considered competitive in 2013 (Roper, 2013, October 13). Ultimately, more than half of the city council members elected in 2013 were new to the council. Also on the ballot were Park & Recreation Board commissioners, Board of Estimate and Taxation seats, and a pair of ballot questions pertaining to re-writing the city charter in plain language (City of Minneapolis Elections & Voter Services, 2013c). For all races on the ballot, but not for the ballot questions, voters had the option to rank up to three choices.

Research Purpose

This analysis seeks to answer the question of whether RCV promotes inclusivity in elections and campaigning. I conducted interviews with three campaign strategists to determine whether campaigns made different strategy choices under RCV in Minneapolis, compared to strategists' previous experiences under the two-round single-vote system. These interviews also address why campaign strategists made these choices. I also conducted interviews with two expert election observers to add broader context to RCV as it is used in other U.S. American cities and broader perspective on previous Minneapolis elections as compared to this one.

Because Minneapolis is one of the largest cities in the country to employ RCV, the research will have implications for the effectiveness of RCV in heterogeneous populations, in larger cities, and at different levels of government. My analysis of the social justice implications of RCV will inform further discussion and analysis in Minneapolis and in other jurisdictions. The data gathered through this study may inform further modifications to Minneapolis' specific RCV implementation, and analysis of campaign strategy could inform future campaigns. This research will send a signal – positive or negative – to other municipalities, to state or federal governments, and to voters, about the strategic and social justice implications of RCV.

Analysis of Conceptual Context

RCV is currently used in the United States for local elections in San Francisco, CA, Oakland, CA, Minneapolis, MN, St. Paul, MN, and Portland, ME, as well as in a number of smaller cities and by some states for overseas voters (FairVote, n.d.b). RCV has been in use for decades in national and local elections in Australia and Ireland (Richie, Kleppner, & Bouricius, 2000). The American Political Science Association and American Psychological Association have used it for elections (Richie et al., 2000). The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences uses it to determine the winner of the Best Picture award (Silver, 2011). It has more widespread use than we realize.

FairVote Minnesota (n.d.b) describes the RCV system thusly:

Ranked Choice Voting allows voters to rank candidates on the ballot according to their preference - 1st choice, 2nd choice, 3rd choice, etc. Voters cast their vote for their favorite candidate knowing that if he or she doesn't gather enough votes to win, their vote will count toward their second choice. In a single-winner election, votes cast for the least popular candidate are not "wasted", but rather redistributed to more popular candidates, based on the voters' second choices, until one candidate wins with a majority of votes. (para. 1)

RCV is also known as instant runoff voting (IRV) because it condenses two-round elections into a single event. In a two-round system, a primary election precedes a general election, or a runoff election follows a general election (Neely & Cook, 2008). Selecting more than one candidate in order of preference on one ballot, as with RCV, combines the two steps while preserving the process of counting votes. The RCV electoral system is most commonly referred to as IRV in the literature. Minneapolis switched from using IRV terminology to using

RCV (City of Minneapolis Elections & Voter Services, 2013c). While RCV and IRV electoral systems are effectively identical, it appears the choice of terminology is still evolving. Alameda County, in California, primarily uses the RCV terminology, but still makes mention of IRV. That locality held runoff elections before adopting RCV (Alameda County Registrar of Voters, 2012).

RCV is claimed to be advantageous over the single-vote plurality and two-round systems widely used in the United States for several reasons. In a plurality system, whoever gets the most votes wins, even if it's not a majority of votes (Richie et al., 2000). Some of the advantages of RCV are financial and related to the administration of elections and campaigns. It costs the city (and hence taxpayers) more to administer two rounds of elections. Election administration costs include printing, staffing, and ballot counting (Richie et al., 2000). Candidates must raise additional money for a second-round election, and short timelines for doing so affords influence to candidates with money or to donors willing to spend (Richie et al., 2000). Election administration and campaign finance, however, were outside the scope of this study. This study focuses on whether RCV promotes inclusivity.

RCV is claimed to be a more inclusive electoral process because it maximizes the number of voters participating in the decisive election, versus a two-round election where voter turnout in a primary election or runoff election is typically lower than in the general election (Jerdonek, 2006, p. 51). RCV is also said to inspire more inclusive campaigning because candidates need to appeal to more broadly to voters for second and third choice votes and cannot afford to alienate voters with negative campaigning (Richie et al., 2000).

In 2013, Minneapolis voters, potentially, had 35 mayoral candidates to study in order to select their top three choices. The rigor required to make an informed decision in casting a vote for mayor was a common narrative in media coverage (Roper, 2013, October 13). This is, in fact,

a criticism of RCV: the process of ranking choices and the increased complexity of the ballot are challenges to voters and may create barriers to participation (Neely & Cook, 2008).

The remainder of this section further describes the potential barriers to voter participation created by having to make ranked choices, and the theoretical inclusivity effects of the RCV electoral system. It will also examine reasons why inclusion is necessary for a just democracy.

Complexity Creates a Barrier to Participation

In order to cast a ballot, a voter must first decide for whom to vote. Voters must seek out information about multiple candidates as they normally would, via media, the Internet, fellow voters, issue advocacy groups, or direct contact with campaigns. But whereas in a traditional single-vote, two-round system, an ideological disagreement might eliminate a candidate from a voter's consideration, under RCV it might instead earn that candidate a lower ranking instead of no vote at all. Voters must make comparisons between multiple candidates on multiple issues, and then order candidates based on their positions and on the relative importance of those issues to the voter. A voter may instead decide that they only support one candidate and opt out of ranking additional choices.

Once a voter has decided, the ballot must be cast. In a plurality system, each candidate is listed on the ballot once, under a single heading for a particular office. On a ranked choice ballot, each candidate is listed once for each choice voters are allowed to make. In Minneapolis, voters can rank up to three choices, so for each office the list of candidates is printed three times, in a first choice column, a second choice column, and a third choice column (City of Minneapolis Elections & Voter Services, 2013b). See a sample ballot for the 2013 Minneapolis mayor's race in Appendix A.

The potential negative effect of this rigorous decision-making process on voting is known as information cost. Information cost can cause a voter not to turnout in the first place, or it can cause a voter in the booth to skip casting a ballot in a race due to lack of sufficient knowledge to make an informed decision (Neely & Cook, 2008).

The presentation of the ballot and the act of selecting multiple candidates for one office on that ballot complicates voting under RCV. Selecting more than one candidate and ranking them in order of preference requires more information gathering and more complex decision-making for voters. Multiple demographic groups —such as the elderly, the less educated, lower-income voters, and voters with language barriers — historically cast ballots that go uncounted due to these complications (Neely & Cook, 2008). Neely & Cook (2008) analyze undervote trends as indicators of information cost and overvote trends as indicators of ballot confusion. The observed trends with respect to undervotes and overvotes differ by demographic comparison. For example, compromised vision and hearing (more likely in elderly voters), or limited English-language skills are more likely to result in overvotes due to ballot confusion. Lower-income and less educated voters are expected to be more likely to undervote due to information cost (Neely & Cook, 2008). However, Neely & Cook (2008) found that electoral conditions such as having sufficient candidates to choose from, and adequate voter education and outreach might mitigate these complications.

A More Inclusive Electoral Process

Despite the potential barriers caused by ballot complexity, RCV is claimed to create a more inclusive electoral process in a structural manner by consolidating two rounds of voting into one. Voter turnout at primary elections and runoff elections is typically far lower than general elections (Jerdonek, 2006). Turnout in primary elections is skewed towards highly

partisan voters and magnifies race and class-based disparities in voter participation (Jerdonek, 2006). Thus, election results are skewed. In Minneapolis in 2005, the last municipal election before RCV was adopted, primary election voter turnout was 15%, while general election voter turnout was 30% (City of Minneapolis Elections & Voter Services, n.d.). Massey (as cited in Jerdonek, 2006), of the Minneapolis Better Ballot Campaign, the precursor to FairVote Minnesota, noted primary voter turnout of 8% versus general election turnout of 24% in Minneapolis in 2005 in wards represented largely by communities of color. Those figures are corroborated by data reported by the City of Minneapolis for Wards 4 and 5 (City of Minneapolis Elections & Voter Services, n.d.). Overall, in Minneapolis in 2005, voter turnout at the general election was twice that of the primary election. In one part of the city with a larger proportion of communities of color, voter turnout at the general election was three times that of the primary election. Under RCV, decisive voting happens in one election, where the most people are participating (Jerdonek, 2006).

RCV also indirectly affects the inclusivity of the electoral process. By mitigating the "spoiler" effect and supporting the viability of all candidates, RCV allows voters a framework in which to vote for candidates they proactively support. In a plurality system, "spoilers" can significantly impact a race with more than two candidates. A spoiler is a candidate who is unlikely to win an election, but is able to gain enough votes to impact the race between the two leading candidates (Richie et al., 2000). Ross Perot in the 1992 presidential election, Ralph Nader in the 2000 presidential election, and Tom Horner in the 2010 Minnesota gubernatorial election are examples of candidates who created possible spoiler effects. Perot, Nader, and Horner each represented a political party outside the Democratic and Republican parties. Each of their candidacies impacted the leading Democratic or Republican candidates in their respective

races. RCV encourages participation by candidates such as these who may be considered less likely to win in a plurality system. Voters can support such a candidate without worrying that they are wasting a vote on someone who will not win, or that their first choice will undercut the ability of a more-desired frontrunner to be elected over a less-desired one (Hill & Richie, 2005).

These "less viable" candidates may come from political parties outside the two dominant parties, and they may represent viewpoints – and hence, people – who are historically under-represented or marginalized, such as the Socialist Alternative Party candidate for Minneapolis City Council (Moore, 2013). The presence of more desirable candidate options creates enthusiasm for voters, thus potentially leading to increased turnout (FairVote, n.d.a).

Neely and Cook, in their examination of demographic differences in the casting of ranked ballots over several years of IRV elections in San Francisco, discussed the potential effects of electoral conditions on voter behavior, where voter behavior is quantified by rates of undervotes and overvotes (2008). Neely and Cook define undervotes as ballots left blank (2008). In this discussion, Neely and Cook supposed that the number of candidates on the ballot would matter, as a dearth of acceptable candidates may result in undervotes. That is, if voters do not like any of the candidates available to them, they are more likely to skip voting all together, or to decline to rank all their choices. This is consistent with Richie, Kleppner, and Bouricius' assertion that by consolidating two rounds of voting into one, voters will have more choices available to them in the decisive election and will be more likely to like the choices they have (2000).

More Inclusive Campaigning

RCV is claimed to promote more inclusive campaigning because, in addition to first choice votes, candidates are trying to earn second and third choice votes from voters who are supporting other candidates. It incentivizes campaigns to run more issue-oriented campaigns and

to be inclusive in addressing the needs and concerns of different constituencies (Richie et al., 2000). In this manner, campaigns are working to attract support for their candidate, and are incentivized to maintain a more positive tone by refraining from negative and personal attacks, in order to earn second and third choice votes. This is in contrast to the use of negative campaigning in the traditional plurality system, in which campaigns may work to simply turn a voter away from an opponent, instead of earning a voter's support for one's own candidate (Richie et al., 2000). Personal attacks are one way campaigns distinguish candidates from each other. With RCV, when candidates cannot be distinguished based on policy positions, candidates may be less likely to use negative attacks to make distinctions because of the need to earn second and third choice votes (Richie et al., 2000).

Inclusion in Democracy and Elections

In order to assess whether the inclusivity benefits of RCV were met, an understanding of inclusivity in the context of elections and democracy must be established. This study assumes that justice in democracy is held as an ideal. Weil (as cited in Staples, 2012) described social justice:

> [S]ocial justice implies commitment to fairness in our dealings with each other in the major aspects of our lives—the political, economic, social and civic realms. In society, social justice should foster equal human rights, distributive justice, and a structure of opportunity and be grounded in representative and participatory democracy. (p. 287)

> Young (2000) sets out the following principles of justice in democracy:

> Participants arrive at a decision not by determining what preferences have greatest numerical support, but by determining which proposals the collective agrees are supported by the best reasons. This model of democratic processes entails several

normative ideals for the relationships and dispositions of deliberating parties, among

them inclusion, equality, reasonableness, and publicity. (p. 23)

Though Young, in this passage, is describing participatory democracy, the framework can

still be applied to electoral democracy. Young's description emphasizes not the ultimate choice,

but the *process* of arriving at that decision. Of the normative ideals Young calls out, inclusion

and political equality have specific relevance to this study. Young (2000) explains them thusly:

Inclusion. On this model, a democratic decision is normatively legitimate only if all those

affected by it are included in the process of discussion and decision-making… *Political*

equality. As a normative ideal, democracy means political equality. Not only should all

those affected be nominally included in decision-making, but they should be included on

equal terms. All ought to have an equal right and effective opportunity to express their

interests and concerns. (p.23)

In the above definitions, Young points to both discussion and decision-making as related

but separate elements of the democratic process. In using Young's participatory democracy

framework to analyze electoral democracy, I cast election day as a significant point of decision-

making. I consider the public deliberation leading up to the election day decision as the period of

time in which campaigns are ongoing, how campaigns act, and how voters interact with and

around them. The two parts of the research question also map to these elements. The question of

whether RCV functions as an inclusive electoral system speaks to what happens on election day,

when votes cast are translated into a collective decision on who should hold elected office. The

question of whether RCV inspires more inclusive campaigns speaks to the public deliberation

process that happens over the course of a campaign.

Under this social justice point of view, inclusion and equality are two guiding principles for both the public deliberation and the public decision-making elements of the democratic process. This ideal of justice in democracy explains why the notion of inclusivity is important, and why the potential inclusivity effects of RCV are considered to be beneficial.

Community Organizing and Civic Participation

Staples (2012) defines community organizing as "collective action by community members drawing on the strength of numbers, participatory processes, and indigenous leadership to decrease power disparities and achieve shared goals for social change" (p. 288). This definition articulates some specific components of community organizing, illustrating that it is not just a process for encouraging people to vote, and to vote a certain way. Community organizing is a specific way of going about civic participation.

According to Shaw (2005):

Community organizing is a key to electoral success because it helps people make the connections between the problems they face… and decisions by specific politicians…. Participants in community organizing become more optimistic about their ability to make government work for them, and are far more likely to vote for a candidate who pledges to address their concerns. In contrast, the unorganized remain disconnected from collective action, have no personal experience in seeing government work for them, have less confidence in their ability to shape the forces impacting them, and are more likely to respond to appeals based on fear. (p. 35-36)

Shaw explains that community organizing influences electoral politics by connecting voters first to an issue that impacts them, and then by connecting candidate positions and past performance to the issue (2005, p. 38-39). Community organizing leaders may also situate

themselves in positions of influence within the electoral system, for example by acting as a

precinct leader during a Get out the Vote (GOTV) campaign. Indigenous leadership – leadership

from within an organizing community – and leadership development is an integral part of

community organizing; linking leadership in issue organizing with leadership in the electoral

process helps to maintain integrity in a community organization and connections between issues

and elected representatives (Shaw, 2005, p. 39).

Shaw's description demonstrates the relationship between community organizing and

political campaigning. Community organizing is an activity of citizens. It is a mechanism of

public deliberation that co-exists with political campaigns and potentially integrates with them at

the time of elections. Community organizing is inherently a civic engagement strategy in that it

facilitates discussion and then action from citizens. Community organizing efforts can be

leveraged to address specific issues, in order to achieve the adoption or defeat of a policy. In an

electoral context, community organizing efforts can be leveraged in several ways. Community

organizing can be leveraged by a campaign, for the purpose of getting a candidate elected, by

engaging citizens on multiple issues in the candidate's platform. Community organizing can be

leveraged by an issue-interest group, independently of or in coordination with a campaign, for

the purpose of getting a candidate elected, based on one or more of the candidate's policy

positions. Also, community organizing can be leveraged by an issue-interest group,

independently of a campaign, to achieve a specific policy outcome, by engaging citizens on that

issue and by advocating for candidates who support that policy.

Christens examines community organizing as a relational activity, citing evidence that

community organizing processes result in an increased sense of community among participants

(2010, p. 887). The Minnesota Compass project examines sense of community as experienced in

Minnesota. Minnesota Compass is an ongoing research project tracking social indicators that measure progress in the state of Minnesota (Wilder Research, n.d.). Minnesota Compass defines sense of community as "a sense that [social] networks exist and can work for the benefit of the community" (Wilder Research, 2013a, para. 1), and considers strong communities to have strong social networks where residents "share information, support one another, and work on common issues" (Wilder Research, 2013a, para. 1). Minnesota Compass uses four factors to define and measure civic engagement: sense of community, perceived ability to improve community, volunteerism, and voter turnout (Wilder Research, 2013a). These four factors influence each other in reciprocal fashion. For example, a perceived ability to improve community might inspire one to vote or to volunteer. Voting might increase one's sense of community. Further, Minnesota Compass states as its civic engagement goal, "Our state will foster a climate of inclusion that encourages active participation from everyone living in our community" (Wilder Research, n.d., para. 1).

Given the Minnesota Compass definition of sense of community as a part of civic engagement, and a stated goal of the Minnesota Compass project to encourage active participation from everyone in a community, I suppose that strategies that enhance sense of community lead to increased civic engagement. If community organizing is a driver of increased sense of community (Christens, 2010, p. 887), then community organizing could contribute to increased civic engagement. Supposing that the four factors of civic engagement do affect each other reciprocally, we can also see how the community organizing process has multiple effects on civic engagement. The improved sense of community fostered by community organizing also has the potential to increase voter turnout, increase volunteerism, and increase one's perceived ability to improve community. For example, my personal perceived ability to improve my

community led to my continued volunteerism for a mayoral campaign that employed a community organizing strategy in Minneapolis in 2013.

Christens described a model of community organizing in which conversations are used as a method for building public relationships between people (2010). Christens defined public relationships as one-to-one relationships built specifically through the organizing process (2010). According to this model, these one-to-one conversations are lead by organizers or volunteers. The conversations are semi-structured in that they aim to obtain and share specific information. This model of community organizing supposes that isolated attempts at change stemming from isolated experiences of hardship are disempowered. The purpose of this model is to build relationships through conversation so as to remove that isolation and hence create social power to effect change (Christens, 2010). Christens identified three relational components in these conversations: broadening networks of relationships, developing new understandings of the social world, and strengthening commitment to civic involvement (2010).

One example of how these one-to-one conversations are carried out in an electoral campaign context is the voter persuasion conversation. A campaign executes this strategy by tailoring the voter persuasion script used in its phone banking and door knocking activities. A script might employ the relational component of developing new understandings of the social world by inviting a voter to speak freely about an issue of concern.

Having discussed the use of conversations in community organizing for the purpose of building relationships between people as a means to develop social power, let us now look at another way conversation-based community organizing influences civic participation. Young speaks to cultural forces by which people are excluded from discussion and decision-making in politics. Young's definition of cultural exclusion addresses ways that "people lack effective

opportunity to influence the thinking of others even when they have access to fora and procedures of decision-making" (2000, p. 55). Community organizing serves to mitigate these cultural exclusion forces by developing individuals' ability and opportunity to influence others' thinking through the practice of carrying out one-to-one conversations. As a campaign organizer or volunteer with the ability to contact voters, one has access to the formal decision-making process. By developing skill at voter persuasion through conversation, an organizer or volunteer can better influence others' thinking from within this formal structure.

Young also identifies social difference as a political resource, in which individuals' sharing of personal experience helps to create a broader understanding of a social situation.

Aiming to promote social justice through public action requires more than framing debate in terms that appeal to justice. It requires an objective understanding of the society, a comprehensive account of its relations and structured processes, its material locations and environmental conditions, a detailed knowledge of events and conditions in different places and positions, and the ability to predict the likely consequences of actions and policies. Only pooling the situated knowledge of all social positions can produce such social knowledge. (2000, p. 117)

Christens' concept of developing new understandings of the social world is well aligned with Young's principle of social knowledge as a necessary component of promoting social justice through public action. One-to-one conversations in which participants seek to develop new understandings of the social world by sharing information allow participants to co-construct social knowledge based on what each participant shares about their own social position. The public relationships built from this model of community organizing through conversations empower collective action.

Young also explores the relationship of democratic representation and social perspective:

[R]epresentation and participation are not alternatives in an inclusive communicative

democracy, but require each. Institutions of representation help organize political

discussion and decision-making, introducing procedures and a reasonable division of

labour. Thereby citizens have objectives around which they can organize with one

another and participate in anticipatory and retrospective discussion, criticism, and

evaluation. (2000, p. 132)

Young continues to explain representation:

What do I mean when I say that I feel represented in the political process? There are

many possible answers to this question, but three stand out for me as important. First, I

feel represented when someone is looking after the interests I take as mine and share with

some others. Secondly, it is important to me that the principles, values, and priorities that

I think should guide political decisions are voiced in discussion. Finally, I feel

represented when at least some of those discussing and voting on policies understand and

express the kind of social experience I have because of my social group position and the

history of social group relations. (2000, p. 134)

Campaign strategies based on community organizing principles, such as one-to-one

conversations with voters, may help voters decide which candidates best represent them.

Community organizing as described by Shaw and Christens convenes citizens for public

deliberation through one-to-one conversations. It co-exists and potentially integrates with

political campaigns at the time of elections, and can serve as one mechanism for the

representation and participation Young describes by helping to organize political conversation.

In doing so, it also potentially shifts the power to define the terms of the discussion away from

established systems and to the organizing community. Community organizing practices can be carried out by political campaigns, independently of them, or in coordination with them. Community organizing also can play a role in defining a community's shared interests, in defining principles, values, and priorities, and in communicating social experiences. In all these ways, community organizing can be a powerful tool for public deliberation and a means to create and maintain inclusion in the democratic process.

Methodology and Validity

My research sought to answer the question: *Did the use of the ranked choice voting electoral system in the Minneapolis 2013 municipal elections achieve its purported benefits by functioning as an inclusive electoral system and by inspiring more inclusive campaigns?* I used two research methods to collect data: a literature review, and interviews with subject matter experts. I also consulted publicly available election data for voter turnout and ranked choices.

Methodology

I began with a review of the literature to more deeply understand and articulate the concept of RCV. This review explained how RCV works from the perspective of both voters and of election administrators, and explained the arguments in favor of using RCV over the two-round single-vote electoral system commonly used in the United States. It also revealed concerns about potential barriers to voter participation created by RCV, uncovered existing studies that demonstrate the effectiveness and disadvantages of RCV, and helped to define concepts of social justice and inclusion in democracy.

Next, I conducted scripted interviews to obtain qualitative data on campaign strategy. I identified campaigns of individuals who ran for elected office in Minneapolis in 2013. These primarily included individuals running for mayor or for city council, but also included

individuals running for Park and Recreation Board or Board of Estimate and Taxation. In selecting campaigns to approach for interviews, I assessed via reputational approach (i.e., from personal experience or a preliminary inquiry) if a campaign employed any strategy specific to RCV. Whether the candidate won or lost their election did not impact their campaign's eligibility for inclusion in the study. Among those selected, I interviewed campaign managers and other staff responsible for determining strategy. Such individuals are subject matter experts when it comes to campaign strategy. They were likely to be more knowledgeable and more accessible than the candidate.

Interviews with campaign strategists helped to determine what specific strategy choices were made that were unique to the RCV process, why those choices were made, and how those choices differed from choices made under the previous electoral system. Those sources spoke to the benefits and disadvantages of RCV as an inspiration to more inclusive campaigning. I obtained access to campaign staff through candidate websites, and through personal contacts gained through my volunteer experience and engagement with campaigns during this election cycle. I conducted three interviews with campaign strategists. Campaign strategist interviews were conducted under the condition of confidentiality; strategists will be identified throughout this study as Strategist A, Strategist B, and Strategist C.

I also conducted semi-scripted interviews with two expert observers of elections and of RCV. David Schultz is a professor of political science at Hamline University, and also a professor of law at both the Hamline University and University of Minnesota Law Schools. Schultz has observed and taught on elections in Minnesota, across the United States, and in Europe. He has observed RCV specifically in multiple jurisdictions, including Minneapolis, MN; St. Paul, MN; Cambridge, MA; Oakland, CA; and Australia.

Josh Nussbaum served as the Education Campaign Manager for FairVote Minnesota in 2013. Nussbaum has served as a campaign manager and in other campaign strategy roles for issue, candidate, and legislative campaigns. Nussbaum's experience in Minnesota and elsewhere in the United States includes municipal, county, and statewide races. He has also overseen issue campaigns in India, at the local level and in a national election context.

Schultz and Nussbaum provided context for the use of RCV in other locations outside of Minnesota. They also provided context on the impact of RCV on this election in Minneapolis as compared to previous elections. These interviews explored RCV as an inspiration to more inclusive campaigning, and also provided additional data addressing the benefits and disadvantages of RCV as a more inclusive electoral system. I identified potential expert election observer sources through review of the literature, personal contacts, and local media exposure.

Interviewees were all asked for consent to be identified by name, and for consent to be audio-recorded. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed, then categorized and coded to identify any emergent themes. I compared and contrasted campaign strategy choices and results as described by the interviewees, and then compared that data to the espoused inclusivity advantages of RCV. The research instruments used in both sets of interviews can be found in Appendix B.

I supplemented the qualitative data with quantitative data. Election results, including voter turnout and ranked choice data for each precinct, are publicly available. I looked at voter turnout in Minneapolis municipal elections from 2001-2013 and Minneapolis federal elections from 2006-2012 to identify trends. I also looked at expert analysis of this turnout and ranked choice data as part of my literature review. A sample ballot from the Minneapolis 2013 municipal election can be found in Appendix A.

I then analyzed my findings on RCV's effectiveness in promoting inclusivity to assess RCV's ethical implications for campaign strategy and voter participation. The principles of justice and inclusion in democracy, presented in the conceptual context, are the framework for this analysis.

Validity

Two common sources of bias were likely in conducting this research. Researcher bias was a strong possibility. To a lesser extent, reactivity was also a possibility. I came to study this topic precisely because I personally volunteered for a mayoral campaign in the election in question. I followed the mayor's race and some city council races closely, having frequent interactions with candidates, other volunteers, interested citizens, and campaign staff. I was frequently exposed to discussion and media coverage of both the election and the RCV system. My personal involvement with this campaign was disclosed to all subjects. Additionally, the use of FairVote and FairVote Minnesota as resources are a potential source of bias. National and local FairVote organizations are experts on the topic of RCV; much of the RCV literature comes from them. FairVote Minnesota advocated for the adoption of RCV and led public education efforts on RCV for this election. A representative from FairVote Minnesota was a source for this research. In order to ensure a valid study, a number of techniques were employed, as described by Maxwell in his book *Qualitative Research Design* (2013).

I gathered rich data by ensuring variability in my interview subjects. I interviewed strategists representing different campaigns for a given office and representing campaigns for different offices, and subject matter experts on local elections and RCV who were unaffiliated with any particular campaign. My interview questions asked for specific examples to encourage

storytelling and to draw out concrete evidence. Additionally, all interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed to eliminate the researcher bias inherent in note taking.

Triangulation was employed to a limited extent. Campaign strategists and expert election observers provided different perspectives on the research question. Some claims put forth in interviews were corroborated by publicly available election results. All subjects were asked to compare and contrast their experience and observations of this election to other elections in which a system other than RCV was used.

Finally, research and interview questions can easily be reframed for the purpose of identifying and analyzing discrepant evidence and negative cases. If discrepant evidence is found and alternative conclusions cannot be determined, the data will nonetheless be reported.

<div align="center">**Findings**</div>

The campaign strategists and expert election observers I interviewed described a number of RCV-oriented strategies that campaigns used in Minneapolis municipal elections in 2013. Interviewees reported that campaigns broadly used the word "choice" in talking about support for candidates, that campaigns expanded their voter communication universes, and that campaigns used personality-based strategies for distinguishing candidates from competitors. Coalition campaigning, one possible RCV strategy observed in other municipalities, was not seen as a factor in Minneapolis in 2013. This section will further describe each of these observed RCV-oriented strategies and describe how campaigns assessed the success of RCV-oriented strategies. This section will also present strategists' and observers' characterizations of public education on RCV, outreach to historically under-represented populations, and positive versus negative campaigning.

Campaigns Used RCV-Specific Tactics

All of the campaign strategists I interviewed reported employing some RCV-oriented strategy, though RCV-specific tactics were used to widely varying degrees. In general, mayoral campaigns were more sophisticated and had bigger budgets than city council campaigns, and were more likely to use RCV-specific strategies. Given interviewees' experiences, the results and findings here are relevant to mayoral and city council races but are not representative of races for Park & Recreation Board or for Board of Estimate and Taxation.

The language of choice. While not every campaign had an explicit strategy to earn second and third choice votes, every campaign did use the language of "choice" in soliciting support. Earning second and third choice votes is important because, under RCV, votes for less popular candidates are redistributed to more popular candidates, according to second and third choices, until one candidate has a majority of the remaining votes. Schultz said, "[T]he most important [strategy I observed] was clearly asking to be second choice." Nussbaum similarly observed that, "Most of the top-tier mayoral candidates would say instead of 'Support [Candidate X]' it was '[Candidate X], your top choice for mayor' or 'your first choice for mayor.' They'd incorporate 'choice' into it somehow."

Canvassing scripts instructed phone callers and door knockers to ask voters who they were ranking as their first, second, and third choices; and if voters would consider a candidate as a first, second, or third choice. According to Strategist C, "Our first ask was 'will you support [our candidate] in the election?' If they said, 'No, I'm supporting this person,' it was 'Great I understand that, will you consider [our candidate] for your second choice vote?'"

Broader voter communication universe. The voter communication universe is the group of voters that meet a campaign's criteria for contact. In this RCV election, campaigns stayed in communication with some voters who were identified as supporting a different

candidate, and made strategic calculations about which of these voters to include. According to

Strategist A, "In a ranked choice voting election you have to talk to everybody because even if

they're voting for [someone else], you want them to make you second." Strategist C explained:

> We felt like it was between [our candidate] and [another frontrunner] and so… anybody
>
> who we [identified as supporting] any of the other candidates, we kept them on our list
>
> for direct mail, we kept them on our list for blast emails, and we actually kept them on
>
> our door knock list so we could check in with them again and ask about, track their
>
> second place votes…

Interviewees indicated that had this been a non-RCV election, campaigns typically would

not have talked to voters they identified as supporting other candidates. Said Nussbaum,

"Traditionally in a non-RCV campaign you'd just go after people identified as voting for you…

If you identify someone who's not supporting you, you don't talk to them anymore." Strategist A

reported the same. Strategist C, however, said that had this been a traditional election, the

campaign might have talked to voters supporting other candidates anyway.

> [Our candidate], [the other frontrunner], and [a third candidate] would have all been in
>
> the same primary which means that as far as our communication with [the third
>
> candidate] was concerned, we would have treated it the exact same leading up to the
>
> primary. Following the primary it would be, "I know [the third candidate] was your first
>
> choice, here's some of the things we have in common, here's why, now that [the third
>
> candidate] is out, we hope we can earn your support."

This example Strategist C gave for a non-RCV election, in which a campaign stays in

contact with another candidate's supporters, mirrors a voter contact strategy described by other

strategists and by expert election observers as being RCV-specific. This example seems to

indicate that this campaign strategist would apply an RCV-oriented strategy in a non-RCV election, and that its effectiveness might depend on the electoral conditions, such as having two clear frontrunners in a small field of candidates.

When a campaign determined that its candidate was likely one of two frontrunners in a given race, the campaign chose not to stay in contact with identified supporters of the other frontrunner. As frontrunners, both candidates would remain in the race as other candidates dropped out due to lower vote totals. The two frontrunners would never have their second and third choice votes counted; thus, as one frontrunner, it was not important or useful to court second or third choice votes from supporters of the other frontrunner. However, it was important to court second and third choice votes from supporters of candidates who seemed less viable, because it was more likely those second and third choice votes would actually be counted. Strategist A, as a representative of a front-running campaign, said, "It became clearer and clearer the closer the election got that if we were on other people's ballots, other than [the other frontrunner's], they were first place votes for us eventually."

Campaign strategists also contrasted voter targeting in a traditional campaign versus an RCV campaign, saying they would have first targeted the smaller number of likely primary voters before pivoting to broader outreach between the primary and the general elections. Strategist A said, "Through public data available at the Secretary of State's office we know the voters who vote in primaries. We know their names, their phone numbers, and their addresses. And that is a very small pool and it's a pool that's very hard to grow in a campaign." Strategist A further explained how campaign staffing would have differed in the traditional two-round system: "In a primary and general election scenario we would have had a smaller field staff at

the beginning to focus on what would be a pretty defined primary election universe that we probably wouldn't spend a whole lot of time trying to expand…."

In describing Get out the Vote (GOTV) strategies, campaign strategists revealed that the structure of the GOTV operation was conventional, relative to campaigning in a traditional two-round election. There was a dedicated GOTV Director role on the campaign staff. In the final week before the election, campaign staff and volunteers contacted voters through phone calling and door knocking to remind voters when and where to vote. There were two targeted voter populations in the GOTV phase of the campaign. The first population was identified supporters who needed to be reminded or encouraged to vote. Canvassing scripts focused on election day logistics and confirmation of support. The second population was likely voters who still needed to be persuaded to support a candidate. Canvassing scripts for this population still largely focused on persuasion, but also included election day logistics.

The only differences in GOTV operations mirrored the differences in voter persuasion strategy described above. Campaigns stayed in communication with voters who supported the candidate as a second or third choice and included those voters in GOTV phone calling and door knocking efforts. Observed Nussbaum, "Traditionally in a non-RCV campaign you'd just go after people identified as voting for you. Betsy Hodges, for instance, they turned out people that not only were top Betsy, but they turned out people that were second and third choice Betsy." Campaigns who considered their candidate to be one of the top two in a race did exclude the other top candidate's supporters from their GOTV program as well.

Distinguishing the candidate from competitors. The strategy for distinguishing the candidate from competitors varied based on the stage of the campaign and the number of competitive candidates in the race. Standing out in a field of 35 candidates for mayor (with eight

competitive candidates) warranted a different strategy from a city council campaign with two top candidates. Endorsements from issue organizations played a role. A candidate's previous experience played a role.

Candidates did distinguish themselves by their positions on the issues, but there were many cases where candidates did not significantly differ in their policy positions. Among mayoral candidates, several of the eight leading candidates supported investment in streetcars, several opposed streetcars, several supported investment in education, and several supported improvement of basic city services. Most of the eight leading mayoral candidates opposed expanding capacity at a county facility that burns garbage for energy recovery. For each of those policy positions, there was more than one leading candidate who supported it.

The identity of the candidate played a role; in some cases, simply being a woman and/or a person of color was a distinguishing feature. In the mayor's race, out of 35 candidates, six were women; of the eight candidates running structured campaigns, three were white women (one of whom identified as LGBT), one was a man of color, and the remaining four were white men.

According to campaign strategists, city council campaigns mostly focused on candidates' positions on issues and on candidates' qualifications. For example, Strategist C's campaign research indicated that voters thought that the previous holder of the office wasn't responsive enough to constituents, so the campaign crafted an image of responsiveness for the candidate. "One of the things we heard early on was a lack of constituent services and support from the office before then so we wanted to make sure that that was a top priority for us, that [our candidate] was seen as responsive." Strategist C had the candidate do a large proportion of the campaign's voter contact. The campaign also made the candidate's contact information widely

available, instructing the candidate to answer the phone as much as possible, and to return phone calls and emails in a timely fashion.

The ways in which campaigns distinguished candidates from competitors, by focusing on a candidate's positions and qualifications, demonstrated the choice to largely remain positive in campaigning and to not overtly bash competitors. For example, one mayoral candidate frequently stated in candidate forums that she said the same thing to everyone, everywhere she went. This deliberate word choice implied that one of the other candidates did not do so, and effectively communicated that message without explicitly calling out the candidate in question and without even directly referring to that candidate. Mayoral candidates often explicitly agreed with each other in candidate forums; many of the highest profile candidates were from the same political party and had largely similar ideological positions on many issues.

Mayoral campaigns employed a more complex and nuanced approach to distinguishing candidates. Mayoral campaigns had larger budgets relative to city council races (on average, for competitive campaigns), a higher media profile, and more public events such as candidate forums. At the mayoral level, it was also clear that personality and comportment of both the candidate and the campaign were specifically leveraged to distinguish a candidate's brand from competitors. One mayoral campaign distinguished its candidate by emphasizing the youthful energy of the candidate (who was not young) and that candidate's support from youth groups, as well as by driving a Toyota Prius hybrid electric car decorated in the campaign's colors, dubbed the "Energy Express." One mayoral campaign emphasized the candidate's affinity for Wonder Woman; the candidate wore Wonder Woman themed shirts to casual events, and the campaign staff and volunteers wore Wonder Woman themed shirts at the endorsing convention and other events. One mayoral campaign held a series of attention-grabbing press conferences, including

one where the candidate stood in a pothole while talking about public works and another where

the candidate ran a vacuum cleaner while talking about airport noise.

Strategist A discussed the makeup of the campaign staff and supporters:

The campaign itself stood out. Our folks came from their communities. Our campaign

looked like the City of Minneapolis. That's not to say that other folks didn't have

African-American or Latino or Somali support. Obviously [other candidates] had a lot of

Somali support but I think if you went to campaign events we were the most diverse

campaign both in staff, volunteers, and supporters, as any out there. That really made us

stand out.

Speaking of a pre-election day rally, Strategist A said, "I couldn't believe the diversity in

that room. I mean, gender, age, ethnicity. That was presidential diversity right there. I felt really

good about the campaign when I saw that." Strategist A also noted the personality of campaign

staff as indicative of the personality of the campaign. "We went into these forums and you had

the other campaign staffs in suits and ties, all buttoned up like they're supposed to, and in walks

[our staff] in their combat boots and red hair. It was awesome."

Assessing success. There was no standard indicator of success in earning second and

third choice votes, but campaigns did have some metrics that they tracked. Prior to the election,

one metric was the number of canvassed voters who indicated support for a candidate as one of

three choices. Correspondingly, after the election, one metric was the number of ballots on which

a candidate appeared in total, as one of three choices.

Strategist A cited longer-than-average conversations with voters as a metric, noting that

the campaign emphasized community organizing strategies for its voter contact program.

Strategist A credited the skill of the campaign's field staff, many of whom had experience from

prior campaigns using community organizing strategies that specifically emphasized long conversations with voters, "versus some of the other campaign staffs that had your traditional party hacks as organizers who were used to having one minute conversations about who were they voting for."

Winning the election was considered one metric of the success of an overall campaign. Strategist A's campaign considered the total number of first, second, and third choice votes as a metric of success. Winning the election was not, however, considered a clear indicator of success in earning second and third choice votes in this election. While election results were not a factor in determining which campaigns to interview, participants did not represent a diversity of election outcomes. It's possible that winning or losing the election could have biased a campaign strategist's perception of other indicators of success. Some interviewees believed that ultimately election results would have been the same in all city council races in the traditional system, because the allocation of second and third choice votes did not cause one candidate to be elected over another candidate who led based on first choice votes alone.

Strategist B articulated a different perspective on success, apart from the number of votes cast, instead focusing on who cast votes. Strategist B's campaign observed that a Somali candidate whom they did not consider a viable contender garnered support and turnout from Somali voters. Strategist B asserted that the campaign, with the capacity that it had, could not target these Somali voters in the usual way because the voters did not have a regular voting history. Strategist B speculated that, in a traditional campaign, those Somali voters may have participated in the primary to support the Somali candidate, but when the Somali candidate did not make it through the primary to participate in the general election, it was, in Strategist B's opinion, unlikely that those voters would have turned out for the general election. There would

have been no Somali candidate to connect with those voters, and other campaigns wouldn't have

had the ability or capacity to reach them via traditional targeting methods. Further, because those

Somali voters did rank their choices in this RCV election, their second and third choice votes

were counted in the decisive election (with some of those votes going for the eventual winner),

instead of being exhausted in the primary. Said Strategist B:

> RCV also allowed the Somali community to show and vote for a Somali person, and then
>
> help elect [our candidate], which otherwise, without RCV, that community would not
>
> have been able to do that. So… successful for what? Successful for [our candidate, who
>
> won]. But I also think successful for the Somali community because they were able to
>
> really use two votes in that way.

Coalition campaigning. Richie et al. (2000) identified coalition building as an

advantageous strategy for an RCV campaign, as a means to appeal more broadly to voters, and in

particular to appeal to supporters of other candidates. Roper (2013, October 28), in reporting on

RCV elections in California as potential indicators of what could happen in Minneapolis,

described the campaign of Jean Quan, the eventual winner of the 2010 race for mayor of

Oakland, CA:

> Quan's victory is often attributed to the alliance she struck with several other candidates
>
> who coalesced around the goal of beating Perata, a polarizing and well-financed former
>
> state senator who outspent his opponents. Quan and her allies held a joint news
>
> conference accusing Perata of trying to buy the election, and Quan instructed her
>
> supporters to list her City Council colleague Rebecca Kaplan as their second choice.
>
> (para. 10)

Some explicit coalition campaigning tactics were evident but not prominent in this election. One city council campaign made a strategic agreement with another campaign in the race that each would instruct their supporters to list the other candidate as a second choice. One of the candidates was a frontrunner in the race; the other candidate was not. The frontrunner's campaign decided to communicate the voting strategy near the very end of the race, in the last week leading up to election day, so while the coalition message was communicated, the campaigns did not otherwise behave in a sustained, coordinated way.

At a public forum, some of the leading mayoral candidates indicated which other mayoral candidates they would vote for as their second and third choice, revealing a loose coalition of mutual supporters (Roper, 2013, October 11). A group of fringe mayoral candidates met regularly, dubbing themselves the "Mayoral Council," to discuss the election (Nelson, 2013).

Schultz observed that coalition campaigning was not prominent in this election, and that it has not been prominent in other ranked choice voting elections in the United States.

> We have no evidence one way or the other, based upon two elections in Minneapolis or in St. Paul. And really no good evidence, at least in the few elections run in the United States. You may have other incentive structures in Australia and around the world for doing coalitional if they have that, but again, the jury is out at this point.

Outreach to Historically Under-represented Populations

Subjects were asked about campaigns' outreach to historically under-represented populations. Mayoral campaigns employed sophisticated structures for targeting voters based on demographics, such as gender or ethnicity. At the city council level, such targeting varied widely based on demographics of the ward and the candidate's personal history. The most common way

to incorporate this outreach was through hiring staff and garnering support of key volunteers connected to various communities.

Strategist A described having culturally-specific outreach plans for Somali, Latino, and Native American communities, as well as LGBT voters and women. These outreach plans included using staff and volunteers who spoke Somali or Spanish, prioritizing these groups' events over others, using culturally-specific literature, seeking endorsements from culturally-affiliated groups, cultivating donors from within these communities, and tailoring canvassing scripts to the identified priorities of different groups.

Campaign strategists acknowledged that, while they considered it important to be in contact with as many potential voters as possible, they thought it would not have been possible to win without doing so, and choices made about doing such outreach were specifically made with the goal of earning votes and winning the election. They were keenly aware that, where demographics are diverse, appealing across interests and identities is crucial. Strategist A said:

> What ranked choice voting does do is it makes you talk to everyone, which I think is a
>
> great great great thing.… In a regular general election, we would have been able to cut
>
> the campaign field staff in half, because we would only have needed to talk to half the
>
> number of people that we did.… I think this was a huge mistake that the other campaigns
>
> made, is that they didn't have an operation to go city-wide.
>
> Strategist B noted:
>
> A majority of the people who voted for [our candidate] were white. This is still a white
>
> town.… [W]hen you look not at population but on voting, the majority of voters are not
>
> people of color. But in terms of making that difference, both in [our] getting the
>
> endorsement and getting elected, those under-represented communities made a

difference. Made *the* difference.… It's the values, too, but this campaign did not do things that were not about advancing the campaign.

Schultz spoke to this reality as well. "This is a city whose diversity is starting to rapidly change…. It's hard to separate out what I call the demographic shift versus the ranked choice voting shift."

This does not hold true in all parts of the City of Minneapolis, though. Strategist C, when asked about outreach to historically under-represented populations, said that the campaign did not do any, because the demographics of the Ward do not include such populations.

Some campaigns effectively leveraged community organizing strategies to engage under-represented communities throughout the electoral process. Affinity groups are organizations that have formed to serve the needs of a group of people who share similar characteristics, such as ethnicity or location. Many of these organizations already existed to serve the needs of under-represented communities and participated in these engagement processes as well. This organizing turned out caucus-goers, elected delegates to endorsing conventions, engaged on community-specific issues, leveraged existing affinity groups to carry out voter persuasion, raised funds, and turned out voters on election day. This process also illuminated that identity-based affinity for candidates is a continuing phenomenon. The clearest example was Strategist B's story of the Somali candidate that drove turnout among Somali voters, even though the Somali candidate was unlikely to win.

RCV Education

Interviewees observed voter education on how to cast a ranked choice ballot from several different sources. The City of Minneapolis conducted a voter education campaign which included sending a sample ballot to all residents as well as support at polling places. FairVote

Minnesota also did public education work. Both the city and FairVote Minnesota carried out education efforts by attending or convening community events. Public education efforts were accessible online at their respective websites as well as in the media.

Community groups also did RCV education. Nussbaum named the Minnesota Voice Table, a coalition of community organizing groups who are focused on civic engagement, as well as the Minneapolis Foundation.

Both convened groups of people that were focusing on engagement of under-represented populations and a big focus of both those tables' work was education around the system and reaching out to people who like to get involved in the process, so that happened to an extent that I haven't seen in general.

The city's post-election report (Minneapolis City Council Standing Committee on Elections, 2014) offered a complete description of its voter education activities. According to the report, the city's Elections team partnered with multiple city departments on voter outreach and education, including Communications, Neighborhood & Community Relations, Minneapolis 311, and Information Technology. Election information was made available via the city's website, social media, and internet chat, and through videos, handouts, and a voter information guide which was mailed to every household. A sample ballot for the mayor's race can be found in Appendix A. The city's Voter Ambassador program trained community-based leaders, campaign staff, and a small number of community organization staff on RCV. Elections staff, in cooperation with voter ambassadors and FairVote Minnesota, reached voters face-to-face at National Night Out activities, at education sessions (with a particular focus on faith communities and senior citizens), at community events and festivals, through neighborhood organizations, and through National Voter Registration Day events. Further outreach targeted high school and

college students, candidate forums, and employed traditional advertising (Minneapolis City

Council Standing Committee on Elections, 2014).

The city's post-election report also included mention of a post-election survey conducted

on behalf of the city (Minneapolis City Council Standing Committee on Elections, 2014), but did

not offer a complete assessment of the effectiveness of the voter education program. Schultz

offered one criticism of the city's education efforts. He said that while education efforts were

better in 2013 than they were in 2009, the city "still [doesn't] have good evidence in terms of

how effective it was. You'd want to know more about who they reached, who they educated,

what they did, and then actually find out what the results were compared to 2009." The post-

election report indicated that the 2013 post-election survey largely mirrored the 2009 post-

election survey so the two could be accurately compared (Minneapolis City Council Standing

Committee on Elections, 2014). As such, it is unlikely that Schultz's criticism regarding

assessing the effectiveness of voter education can be addressed with the data collected.

Some campaigns did explicit voter education on the process of casting a ranked choice

ballot. Said Strategist C:

>We had script trainings. …We did trainings for every one of our volunteer events. We
>
>explained exactly what we're trying to talk to people about as far as [our candidate] and
>
>then exactly what we were trying to explain about the voting process. Everybody got
>
>trained to talk to voters about what's gonna happen when they get to the polling room on
>
>election day… We were gauging whether or not to do any more voter education based on
>
>the response we heard at the door. For the most part, we felt like they understood exactly
>
>what was going on.

Some campaigns chose not to do voter education on RCV. Strategist A said:

You had an entire organization called FairVote Minnesota that was doing voter

education. And frankly, our opponents were doing voter education on how to do ranked

choice voting. Smart, I suppose. But all they were doing was teaching their voters how to

vote for us in second place… There was so much media coverage [and] work put into

ranked choice voting and education on it, we didn't have to do any of it.

Voter education was also inherent in campaigns' identification and persuasion process,

simply by talking to voters about first, second, and third choices.

Lastly, education on ranked choice voting took place within campaigns. The City of

Minneapolis and FairVote Minnesota offered training for campaigns, as mentioned in the

discussion of the city's post-election report. Additionally, some campaign strategists and

candidates did their own research into what strategies were employed in other races in this

election, and in elections in other municipalities, including the 2010 Oakland, CA mayor's race.

Strategist B said:

We would spend time trying to figure out what difference this would make and should we

be doing something different. We would have those conversations educating ourselves,

[asking] what does this mean? What impact will this have? So there was a lot of learning

about ranked choice voting, but it was internal to the campaign. The mayor's race was a

great educator.

Positivity and Lack of Negative Campaigning

Campaigns, mostly, did not use negative campaigning. Schultz defined negative

campaigning as attack ads or other overt personal attacks, as distinguished from criticism of rival

candidates. All interviewees observed that overall, the tone amongst campaigns was unusually,

remarkably positive. Nussbaum made this observation:

I would say, broad strokes, it was the most positive election I've observed. As far as, we

did not see any pieces of mail, all the traditional attack [ads], mail, TV, phone calls, like

anything a campaign would do, we didn't observe a single instance of negative

campaigning, which I've never seen before. It included independent expenditures. So I

think that led me to believe that there was an intentional choice by the campaigns not to

do that. I think that if I were in their shoes it would be because I wouldn't want to

alienate other people's supporters because I would want their second and third choices…

It's the opposite of what you'd traditionally see which would be trying to bash these other

candidates.

Campaign strategists also said they would have been more likely to engage in negative

campaigning in a non-RCV election; Strategist A explained, "If you, in a regular election, find

somebody who is supporting the opponent, you just go and bash the opponent, say good things

about you, and try to get them to switch their vote."

At the same time, most interviewees noted that there was negativity to be found. For

example, Strategist B stated that racial politics were prominent at the party endorsing

convention; the ward in which this campaign took place is very ethnically diverse, as were the

delegates in attendance at the convention. Despite that, Strategist B observed that efforts were

made to stay positive.

It got to be a very nasty campaign… but people tried really hard to be positive. It's that

liberal culture, anti-conflict culture. As much as there were contrasts that both campaigns

were making, they didn't want to beat up on the other candidate. Every contrast that was

created, it was thought very thoughtfully about what the impact would be.

Strategist A saw it both ways:

I think this is, of all the positive things people say about a ranked choice voting election, about how they're better than the other ones, you know people say. "Well, it's more positive." True this time, kind of? But it didn't have to be. This campaign could have gotten really nasty, and that's just the way it would have been. I think we saw some nastiness.

Nussbaum suggested that the threshold at which such negativity is noticed is relative and observed that the threshold in this election was much lower due to the overall positivity, and gave examples from the mayoral race.

I think you're definitely seeing instances in other municipalities where negative campaigning really backfired, and I think you saw definitely the one or two times that people did go negative in debates having it really blow back. Those were just so jarring because it wasn't happening, so for instance where Mark Andrew said about Betsy Hodges, she has the disease of a small vision. I mean that was a big deal. In any other political context, it would have been nothing, but the fact that it was so jarring because it was really one of the only instances we had in the campaign we could point to of actual negativity happening, with the exception of Cam Winton who I think just made a habit of kicking the crap out of Mark Andrew. I think people reacted.

Schultz speculated on potential explanations for the positive tone:

It could be also an indication of within the City of Minneapolis… that we're seeing a generational shift going on in politics, that maybe there's a sense in which — maybe, I can't prove it — with a generational shift there's less support and more distaste for negative campaigning. There could be lots of factors out there. Some of it could be self-fulfilling. Some could be due to ranked choice voting. Some of it could be due just to the

personalities of people who ran. We are looking at two elections now with ranked choice

voting in Minneapolis… You could still argue from a social science perspective, two is

not enough to tell us a lot.

So while, overall, interviewees observed that an abnormally high level of positivity from

campaigns was evident, it is not clear that this particular strategy choice will endure. There were

some conspicuous but rare instances of negativity. However, it appears that the positive tone

could have been a self-fulfilling prophecy, as part of a narrative put forth by the media (Roper,

2013, October 13) and by FairVote Minnesota through its public and campaign education efforts.

Campaign strategists, most of whom were learning about RCV strategy for the first time, were

taught that campaigning with RCV means campaigns have to stay positive so as not to alienate

voters who are willing to grant second and third choices. Most campaigns chose to stay positive,

and the few high-profile instances of negative campaigning were judged harshly, according to

interviewees.

This section has described a number of RCV-specific campaign strategies and tactics,

according to strategists' and election experts' observations of 2013 municipal elections in

Minneapolis. Campaigns used the word "choice" in asking for support. Campaigns kept in

contact with voters identified as supporters of other candidates and made strategic choices in

doing so. Coalition campaigning was not a significant factor in any municipal races in

Minneapolis in 2013, as has been observed in other municipalities. Voter education was

significant and conducted by multiple entities, but its effectiveness was not fully assessed

following the election. Historically under-represented populations were engaged to varying

degrees, and several observers indicated that this is increasingly a necessity for winning

elections. Campaigns largely maintained a positive tone and abstained from negative attacks,

though there were isolated instances of negativity; some interviewees did not think that such a high level of positive campaigning would necessarily continue to be observed under RCV. The next section discusses the implications of these findings for the inclusivity effects of RCV.

Discussion

As described in the context set forth previously, RCV is claimed to be a more inclusive electoral process because it maximizes the number of voters participating in the decisive election, and because it mitigates the spoiler effect. RCV is also claimed to inspire more inclusive campaigning because candidates need to appeal to voters for second and third choice votes. My research question seeks to determine if these two conditions were met.

I consider social justice to be an ideal in democracy. The democratic process consists of two parts. The first part is public deliberation, which I have cast as the activities of campaigns and of citizens in interaction with campaigns and each other. The second part is public decision-making, which I have cast as election day. Two of our ideals for that democratic process are inclusion and equality. Inclusion means that everyone affected is part of the democratic process, making the decision legitimate. Equality means that everyone affected has equal right and effective opportunity to participate in the democratic process.

When I said that I was studying RCV and inclusivity, interviewees were quick to ask what my definition of inclusion was. I provided with them with the premise stated in the research question, which is the twofold concept of an inclusive electoral process, and inclusive campaigning. I also invited them to give me their campaigns' own working definitions of inclusion. Strategist C articulated inclusion as the need to talk to more voters, without any more specifics or nuance than that. Strategist B talked about engagement of historically under-represented populations as examples of inclusion. Strategist A mentioned both of those

definitions, also saying that the campaign goal was simply to talk to as many voters as possible, but that doing so necessarily includes engaging historically under-represented populations.

Interviewees' individual concepts of inclusion can provide insight as to how campaigns make strategy choices. Regardless of those conceptions, however, I propose using Young's (2000) concept of inclusion in democracy — in which a just democratic process consisting of public deliberation and public decision-making is inclusive and equal — to assess campaigns' practices in Minneapolis in 2013. To determine whether RCV inspired more inclusive campaigning consistent with Young's social justice ideals, I will consider how campaign behavior and strategy choices as described in the findings contributed to inclusive and equal public deliberation. Similarly, to determine if RCV functioned as an inclusive electoral system consistent with Young's social justice ideals, I will consider whether RCV contributed to inclusive and equal public decision-making.

The Role of RCV in Inclusive Public Deliberation

Gastil and Black (2008), in examining public deliberation in political conversation, describe it as a dual process of information gathering, which is task-oriented and analytical, paired with a relational, social process.

Analytic and social processes of public deliberation. Gastil and Black (2008) describe the analytic process as having five components: creating a solid information base, prioritizing key values, identifying potential solutions to address an issue, weighing those solutions, and finally making the best possible decision.

These components of an analytic process can be matched with campaign trail activities that satisfy these analytic needs. Using Gastil and Black's terminology in this context positions candidates for elected office as solutions to be weighed. Candidates meet individually and in

small groups with voters. Candidates participate in public forums on a variety of issues and in a

variety of locations; such forums are usually organized or sponsored by community-based and

issue-based groups. Campaigns use paid media such as direct mail, possibly television and radio,

and other advertising means to convey information to the public. Campaigns also use owned

media, primarily the Internet and social media, and earned media, like word of mouth and

journalistic media coverage, to convey information about candidates to the public.

How does RCV make this discussion more inclusive, where everyone affected is

Via these channels, campaigns and voters communicate with each other, in order to

provide voters with the information they need to satisfy the analytic process of public

deliberation. Voters continue to discuss this information with each other, possibly staying in

conversation with campaigns while doing so. These discussions take place in person or in digital

formats, such as by email or via social media.

How does RCV make this discussion more inclusive, where everyone affected is

participating, and more equal, where everyone affected has effective opportunity to participate? I

posit that RCV works by influencing the social process in public deliberation.

Gastil and Black (2008) describe the social process of public deliberation as having four

components: adequate opportunity to speak, a right to comprehend what others are saying, an

obligation to carefully consider what others are saying, and respect for fellow participants.

Gastil and Black (2008), in applying this framework to elections, describe both individual

voter behaviors and electoral system functions according to both the analytic and social

processes. Individual voter behavior is clearly defined as seeking, receiving, and assessing

available information on candidates, and ultimately casting a vote.

It should be noted that Gastil and Black's conception of the electoral system differs from

the definition we are working with. Where the RCV literature more narrowly defines the

electoral system as the procedures by which votes cast are translated into elected officials, Gastil

and Black (2008) consider the electoral system as a larger structure that also includes conveying

communal values, supplying potential candidates accordingly, and facilitating the public

deliberation. Nevertheless, some theoretical benefits of RCV, and some observed campaign

behaviors in Minneapolis in 2013 under RCV, speak directly to components of Gastil and

Black's social process of public deliberation.

Strategist B offered this observation of the deliberative nature of voters in the mayor's

race in Minneapolis in 2013, highlighting consideration and respect in the social process:

One of the things that was interesting to me about the mayor's election was three weeks

out, everyone knew how many candidates were running for mayor and nobody would say

who they were supporting, because they took it all very seriously, and they studied it very

thoughtfully. People made their decisions – active always voters, not undecided voters or

swing voters – at the end, weighing a lot of information and taking it very thoughtfully.

And that was an impression that I was left for ranked choice voting and in part because

that mayor's campaign, in my opinion, never got nasty outside of the inner circles of

Minneapolis politics.

One expectation of RCV is that campaigns need to broaden their appeal to try to earn

second and third choice votes. By refraining from negative attacks, they stayed in a place of

consideration and respect. My findings described the largely positive tone observed in the

mayor's race and in some city council races in Minneapolis in 2013. Campaigns also stayed in

contact with more voters under RCV, in Minneapolis in 2013, showing consideration and respect

for voters as fellow participants in public deliberation.

When campaigns chose which community events to attend and which issues to publicly debate in a forum, they made choices about which communities to include. Similarly, communities and organizations organize such activities to bring the candidate to the community. Strategist A described, as reported in the Findings, how that campaign prioritized events geared towards women and the LGBT community over other events. Those choices help broaden the access of citizens to the information gathering process, and also convey an additional analytical message to a voter that a candidate is considering a community's unique issues.

It is important to note that the elements of the social process might manifest differently in different communities, according to those communities' cultural norms. Structured elements of the political process are based on a normative expectation for how conversations between people "should" go – either between voters and campaigns, or among voters. However, different cultural groups have constructed different norms for how conversations are carried out. Such norms might dictate elements such as the language used, body language used, slang used, the order in which participants are allowed to speak and whether they might interrupt, or whether there are gender-based rules about who participates.

The role of community organizing in public deliberation. Another tool that is useful in influencing the social process of public deliberation is community organizing. According to Staples (2012), there are principles that are inherent to the community organizing process: collective action, participatory processes, indigenous leadership, and decreasing power disparities, all for the purpose of achieving shared goals.

One of the primary strategies for community organizing effort in a campaign context is conversation. Campaigns use phone banking and door knocking to persuade voters to support a candidate. A community organizing strategy changes the nature of what canvassers are saying to

voters, for example by employing the relational component of developing new understandings of the social world by inviting a voter to speak freely about an issue of concern.

If a campaign is using an RCV-oriented strategy, when a voter says that they are supporting another candidate, instead of discontinuing the conversation, a canvasser instead seeks a commonality between the candidate the voter is supporting and the candidate the canvasser is working for. This allows a campaign to engage voters on issues first, and to refrain from negative attacks in doing so. According to Strategist A:

> Second and third place voters were treated like undecided voters and given the same persuasion messaging, versus a general election where it's two or three people, you're just trying to take those first place votes. So if you, in a regular election, find somebody who is supporting the opponent, you just go and bash the opponent, say good things about you, and try to get them to switch their vote. This one, it was "Oh well that's great you're supporting [another candidate]. We like [that candidate], too. Can I tell you something about [our candidate]?"

Some campaigns had endorsing organizations such as labor unions doing voter contact, in which union members identified themselves as such and advocated for a candidate based on the candidate's positions on the union's issues. In this way, campaigns leveraged staff and volunteers with key connections to issues and related organizations or communities to legitimize the campaign in its engagement with voters on issues, and to lend authority to the assertion that a candidate will be responsive to voters on those issues. Strategist C spoke of engaging voters on issues first, with the help of labor unions:

> Firefighters were a great help to us in terms of actually going out to do some door knocking and talk to people about some of the important issues there. [Our candidate]

was on an ambulance in college and did emergency service work, so… they talked a great

deal about the importance of safety in the community and things like that as well. There's

also a fair amount of firefighters who lived in the area that wanted to talk to their

neighbors… It was a way to have a conversation with a group of people who cared

deeply about a specific issue. For example [with] the firefighters it was safety of the

community and also safety of the firefighters.

Nussbaum gave another example of engaging voters on issues first:

I think it was a general consensus that [certain candidates] were not in the running for

actually winning, so [other campaigns] would send targeted mail to people that they

identified as those people's supporters saying "I know [the candidate you support] is a

big education candidate." They would send mail targeted to those supporters saying, "I

support the same positions as [that candidate], I stand with [that candidate] on this issue, I

would appreciate your second choice."

Community organizing around an election, from within a community instead of a

campaign, also allows a community to carry out the public deliberation with its own social

process. Strategist B spoke of the relational nature of deliberation, naming campaign supporters

who were influential members of historically under-represented communities, carrying out one-

to-one conversations with others in their respective communities regarding the candidate and the

candidate's responsiveness to issues important to that community.

I think it's important in campaigns to recognize that this is both done through formal

organizing and informal organizing. I think if not for the informal support, the campaign

couldn't have won itself by just the formal organizing. Especially in this district of

activists who know everybody.

Strategist C also described efforts to organize from within a community, even from the campaign's perspective:

We tried to keep the volunteers local. For example we were doing door knocking in [one neighborhood in the Ward], we talked with the volunteers we had there, as opposed to people in [another neighborhood] or elsewhere. …We really wanted to make sure that it was a neighbor to neighbor, peer to peer, grassroots organization where we could talk about everything as a conversation about what's happening in our community. You know, "I'm a member of that community, I live a couple blocks away from you, and I want to talk to you about this issue, and talk to you about [this candidate]." We really did make an effort to make sure we were putting people into places they were familiar with, because not only was it easier for them, people don't want to get a phone call from a stranger and have no basis for [connecting].

Further, there are power disparities when formal political structures are dictating the social process. For example, my experience at the DFL Party endorsing convention for city offices in Minneapolis in 2013 was that the proceedings were conducted in English and followed a version of Robert's Rules of Order for parliamentary procedure, as dictated by the DFL Party and its leadership. If I did not understand English well, or if I were unfamiliar with parliamentary procedure, I would have been at a disadvantage in understanding and hence influencing the proceedings. Community organizing is a way of bridging that gap, by facilitating the analytical process of choosing and ranking candidates while making room for alternative social processes for public deliberation. Strategist B described how community organizing in the Latino community benefited the campaign:

[Our candidate] would not have gotten the DFL endorsement if the Latino community

hadn't shown up. Interesting thing to acknowledge that her DFL convention may have

been, I think, 15-20% Latino. So it's not a situation where the Latino community showed

up and then they just took over. But that endorsement was so close, if that community

had not shown up, [we] would not have gotten the endorsement. And that was community

organizing. There were leaders in [our] campaign in the Latino community who were

organizing for [us], and that was a lot of leadership development, because there were lots

of people who were at their first caucus. First caucus and first convention.… And then

that continued throughout the election so that there was Latino community-based work

happening through the campaign. There were lists, and there were callers, and there were

volunteers.

A community organizing campaign strategy that focuses on conversations between the

campaign and voters necessarily requires people to carry out this relational activity. It cannot be

carried out via paid media. So in using a community organizing strategy, the public deliberation

process is more inclusive and more equal by engaging more people and by accommodating

different social processes for deliberation. Strategist A spoke about staff and volunteers carrying

out an organizing strategy:

By the time the… general election came around, our staff and our volunteers were well

acquainted with asking for second and third place votes, whereas some of our opponents

openly bragged about not asking for second place votes. So when it came time for them

to do so, they didn't know how…Our average conversation length was nine minutes with

a voter. In a regular general election that is horrible. In a regular general election you

want minute-long conversations because it's quantity, not quality.

With RCV, campaigns need to appeal to more voters than just first choice supporters, and they need to appeal to voters in a more relational way to attract second and third choice support without negatively attacking an opponent. That makes a community organizing strategy particularly effective under RCV.

The best example we have of that from Minneapolis elections in 2013 is Betsy Hodges' campaign for mayor. Her campaign used an explicitly organizing-oriented strategy. Her campaign hired organizers to staff a field program months ahead of when they would have been hired in a traditional race. Strategist A named the total number of first, second, and third choice votes as a metric of success. Ultimately, Hodges appeared as a first choice on 35% of ballots. Further, she appeared as a first, second, or third choice on 63% of total ballots cast.

The interview findings suggest that RCV influenced the public deliberation process, from the campaigns' perspectives, by broadening the number of voters in the contact universe, and by improving the quality of discussion amongst candidates and their supporters. In Strategist A's opinion:

> Ranked choice voting makes it imperative, whether or not that is a value of yours to run that sort of campaign. I think ranked choice voting makes it imperative to run that kind of campaign, and I think that's what we saw in the mayor's race. The most well-funded campaign did not win. The campaign with the most endorsements did not win. The campaign with the longest track record in Minneapolis politics did not win. This campaign I think shows very clearly that the campaign that had the biggest field operation and talked to the most voters - talked to - won. I think this campaign shows that it's absolutely imperative in ranked choice voting to have the biggest campaign, the most inclusive campaign. In terms of regular elections, you can, yeah, if you can afford a

bigger field operation, get a bigger field operation if you can. But the reality is you don't

need that to win a regular primary-plus-general election.

The interview findings show that campaigns didn't engage diverse communities for the

sake of being inclusive, but with the goal of winning the election. However, in using a

community organizing strategy to engage voters, relationally, on issues that matter to them, the

benefits of greater inclusion are achieved regardless of the campaign's intention.

The Role of RCV in Inclusive Decision-Making

Young (2000), in linking inclusion and political equality, notes that a decision is

legitimate only if all who are affected by it are included in the decision-making process. Further,

all those affected should effectively have equal access to the decision-making process (Young,

2000).

Voter turnout. I will consider whether RCV met Young's standards for inclusive and

equal public decision-making in Minneapolis elections in 2013. RCV is claimed to be more

inclusive as an electoral system because it "brings the election to where the voters already are"

(Jerdonek, 2006, p. 53). RCV addresses this in a structural manner by consolidating two rounds

of voting into one. Under RCV, decisive voting happens in one election, where the most people

are participating (Jerdonek, 2006). It is not expected that RCV will directly boost or depress

turnout relative to the general election in a non-RCV system. General election day, historically,

has better turnout relative to primaries or runoffs. A review of voter turnout in Minneapolis

shows that there is a clear, long-term difference in turnout for primary elections as compared to

general elections. Figure 1 shows municipal election year voter turnout in Minneapolis from

2001 to 2013. In 2001 and 2005, before the adoption of RCV, there is a clear gap in turnout
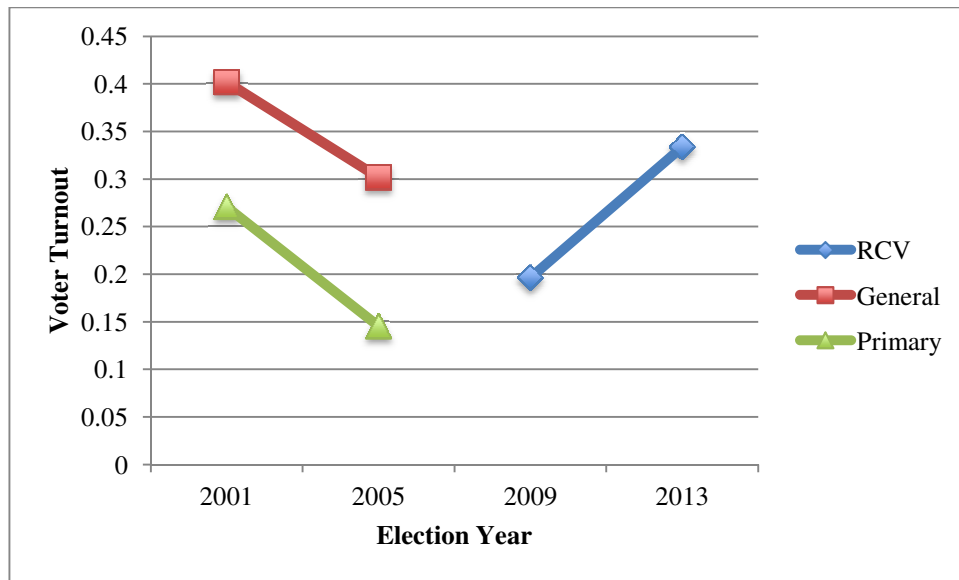
between the primary and general elections.

Figure 1. Minneapolis municipal election voter turnout for the years 2001-2013.

Figure 2 shows federal election year voter turnout in Minneapolis from 2006 to 2012.

RCV was not used for these elections, but the data further illustrates a trend in the turnout gap

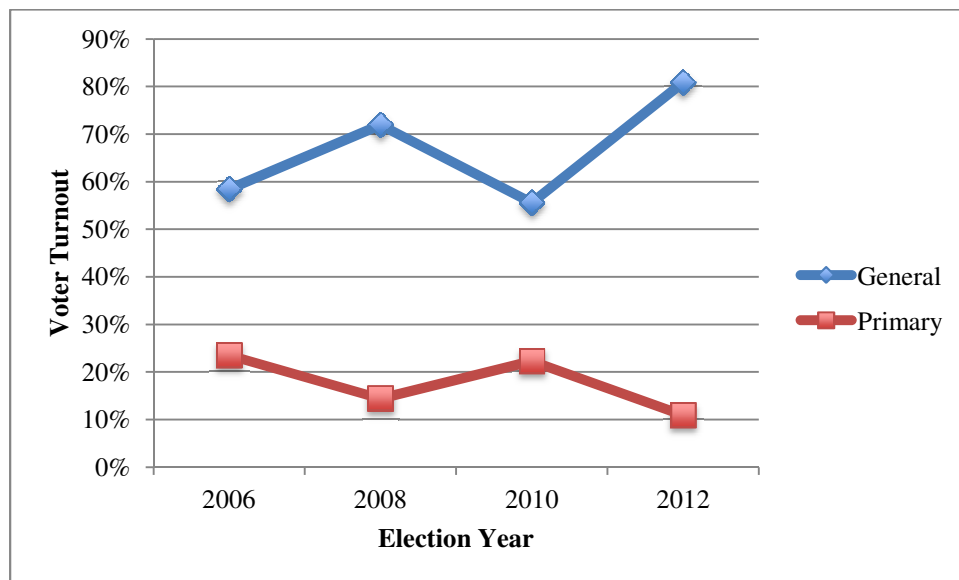between primary and general elections in Minneapolis.

Figure 2. Minneapolis federal election voter turnout for the years 2006-2012.

There is also evidence, using data from Minneapolis elections in 2005, that there is a

larger voter turnout discrepancy between the primary election and the general election in areas of

Minneapolis that have higher proportions of communities of color, as compared to areas of Minneapolis that have very few communities of color. In 2005, in Wards 4 and 5, which cover North Minneapolis, voter turnout at the general election was three times that of the primary election (City of Minneapolis Elections & Voter Services, n.d.). Citywide, in 2005, voter turnout at the general election was twice that of the primary (City of Minneapolis Elections & Voter Services, n.d.). Ward 13, covering much of southwest Minneapolis, has a very low proportion of communities of color; in 2005, primary election turnout in Ward 13 was 22%, nearly three times the primary election turnout of 8% in Wards 4 and 5 (City of Minneapolis Elections & Voter Services, n.d.). Wards 4 and 5 were the only wards in 2005 that saw single digit voter turnout in the primary election (City of Minneapolis Elections & Voter Services, n.d.). By eliminating the primary election where voter turnout is lower and demographically skewed away from historically marginalized populations, RCV contributes to more inclusive and equal decision-making by ensuring a larger, more diverse population is participating in the election with all the candidates on the ballot.

Interview subjects agreed that electoral conditions in any given election year are more likely to influence general election day turnout than the electoral system itself. According to Schultz, turnout for Minneapolis municipal elections in 2013 was likely up compared to 2009 due to a competitive mayor's race.

> It could be the fact of 35 candidates on the ballot, perceived that this is an election that's close, at least among 3 or 4 candidates. Everybody mobilized their constituencies really hard. Voters were contacted. Voters felt that their vote might make a difference. All that is consistent with any models in political science for why voter turnout would tick up.

It is, however, still possible that in the longer term RCV can have indirect effects on turnout. To the extent that RCV leverages and magnifies the effectiveness of community organizing for the purposes of achieving electoral outcomes, and that community organizing continues to be a prominent tool in campaigns in RCV elections, the civic engagement created by community organizing activity could potentially translate to higher voter turnout.

Additionally, having more desirable candidate options on the decisive election day, as is the case with RCV, can also have a positive influence on voter turnout. Kenig asserts that restricting potential candidates from participating reduces competitiveness (2008). If it follows, in the reverse, that enabling more potential candidates to participate increases competitiveness, then removing the primary election and allowing all candidates to participate in the general election, as RCV does, could potentially increase voter turnout. Strategist B also acknowledged that only having one primary competitor reduced the likelihood of using ranking-oriented strategies. "If there was not a DFL endorsement, there would have been a lot more candidates on the ballot, and more need to be running ranking-oriented messages." If a campaign sees no need to using ranking-oriented strategies because there are no competitors whose supporters are a source of second and third choice votes, that may reduce the breadth of outreach to voters that a campaign will attempt. Similarly, Nussbaum observed that diluting a base of support, as is the case when there are many competitive candidates with similar ideologies such as in the mayor's race in Minneapolis in 2013, requires campaigns to reach out more broadly to earn support. In these ways, by keeping the most possible candidates on the election ballot, RCV may increase competitiveness, which could, in turn, increase voter turnout and inspire more inclusive campaigning.

Voters ranked their choices. FairVote Minnesota conducted a post-election survey, incorporating exit polling and public election return data (FairVote Minnesota Foundation, 2013). This analysis determined that high percentages of voters across the city and across different races ranked their votes. This analysis also determined that high percentages of voters across demographics — age, ethnicity, income, and education — found RCV simple to use and were familiar with it before going to the polls, and majorities of voters across demographics want to continue using it and to use it for state elections. Tables 1-3 summarize the key findings reported by FairVote Minnesota Foundation (2013).

Table 1

Minneapolis 2013 Voters Who Ranked Candidates for a Given Office

Jurisdiction – Office	Ranked 2 Candidates	Ranked 3 Candidates
Ward 5 – City Council	75%	63%
Ward 5 – Mayor	84%	76%
Ward 13 – City Council	83%	63%
Citywide – Mayor	88%	78%

Note. From "Ranked choice voting by the numbers: 2013 key Minneapolis election findings" by FairVote Minnesota Foundation, 2013.

Table 2

Minneapolis 2013 Voters Who Found RCV Very or Somewhat Simple to Use

Demographic Attribute	Found RCV Simple
Total	85%
Aged 18-34	91%
Aged 65+	81%
With a College Education	88%
Without a College Education	81%
Income Above $100,000	87%
Income Below $100,000	83%
People of Color	82%

Note. From "Ranked choice voting by the numbers: 2013 key Minneapolis election findings" by FairVote Minnesota Foundation, 2013.

Table 3

Minneapolis 2013 Voters Who Support Continued Use of RCV

Demographic Attribute	Support RCV
Total – For Municipal Elections	68%
Total – For State Elections	61%
Aged 65+	62%
People of Color	59%
Without a College Degree	63%
Income Below $50,000	68%

Note. From "Ranked choice voting by the numbers: 2013 key Minneapolis election findings" by FairVote Minnesota Foundation, 2013.

A post-election survey conducted on behalf of the City of Minneapolis, according to the

Minneapolis City Council Standing Committee on Elections report on the 2013 election, showed

that "older residents who voted indicated a lower level of understanding of how Ranked Choice

Voting functions than other age groups, and among non-voters, were more likely to indicate a

belief that the Ranked Choice Voting system is difficult" (2014, p. 23-24). The FairVote

Minnesota Foundation (2013) report found that 81% of voters aged 65 and older found RCV

simple (compared to 91% of voters aged 18-34). This report also found that 62% of voters aged

65 and older would like to continue to use RCV in municipal elections. The Minneapolis City

Council committee report is publicly available, but does not include the full results of the survey.

So while the city's report notes differences observed with this older demographic, the report does

not include survey numbers, making it impossible to discern a direct comparison between these

two surveys.

The FairVote Minnesota Foundation report also indicates that 88% of voters ranked a

second choice and 78% of voters ranked three choices (the maximum allowable) in the mayoral

race (2013). This analysis also cited low error rates; 0.5% of all ballots cast in the mayor's race

had errors, and voter intent was able to determined (and hence the vote counted) for 90% of those ballots.

FairVote Minnesota Foundation (2013) identified Ward 5, which is the southern half of North Minneapolis, as the city's most ethnically diverse ward. FairVote Minnesota's survey found that 84% of voters ranked a second choice and 76% ranked three choices in the mayor's race. In that same ward, 75% ranked a second choice and 63% ranked three choices in the city council race. The analysis reports that less than 1% of ballots in this ward had errors on mayoral votes and zero ballots had errors on city council votes.

Neely and Cook found that information cost historically contributes to the elderly, the less educated, lower-income voters, and voters with language barriers casting ballots that go uncounted (2008). However, Neely & Cook (2008) found that electoral conditions, such as having sufficient candidates to choose from and adequate voter education and outreach, might have mitigated such discrepancies. Analysis of Minneapolis 2009 municipal elections, the first use of RCV, indicates that voter confusion could be an issue but that firm conclusions could not be drawn (Schultz & Rendahl, 2010). The 2013 post-election polling included in FairVote Minnesota Foundation's analysis of the 2013 election indicated that 85% of voters found RCV very or somewhat simple to use (2013). Eight-two percent of voters of color found RCV to be simple. Eighty-eight percent of voters with a college education found RCV to be simple, versus 81% of voters without a college education.

FairVote Minnesota's determination was that there were no significant discrepancies across demographic groups in understanding and casting of ranked choice ballots in Minneapolis in 2013 (FairVote Minnesota Foundation, 2013). There were significant public education efforts around RCV from multiple sources in Minneapolis in 2013. The mayor's race had 35 candidates

and so the top race on the ballot offered many candidates to choose from. It's not possible to directly connect these conditions to error rates with the information available, but the mitigating conditions that Neely and Cook (2008) described did exist in this election and could have had the expected effect of reducing barriers to voting.

This discussion has shown how RCV makes public deliberation more inclusive and equal by influencing the social process of deliberation that accompanies the analytic process of deciding. Community organizing strategies are particularly effective for influencing the social process. This discussion has also shown how RCV makes public decision-making more inclusive. Diminished voter turnout discrepancies between primary and general elections, high rates of ranked choices, low rates of ballot errors, parity across demographics, and high satisfaction ratings indicate that RCV was effective in translating votes into a collective decision on who should hold elected office in Minneapolis in 2013.

Summary

My research sought to determine if the use of the ranked choice voting electoral system in the Minneapolis 2013 municipal elections achieved its purported benefits by functioning as an inclusive electoral system and by inspiring more inclusive campaigns. Review of the literature established how RCV works and what its espoused benefits are, as well as a framework for assessing inclusion in democracy, background on electoral conditions and competitiveness, and a conception of community organizing as a relational activity for public deliberation. Interviews with campaign strategists and expert election observers collected data regarding campaign strategy, decision-making, results, and broader observations about RCV and this election. Multiple strategies were employed to ensure validity of the data. Analysis of the data and

comparison of election results to RCV's espoused benefits shed light on the effectiveness and social justice implications of RCV.

I determined that municipal elections in Minneapolis in 2013, in practice, did exhibit some evidence of greater inclusivity under RCV. In some instances, RCV did inspire more inclusive campaigning. Campaigns using RCV-oriented strategies maintained broader voter contact so as to earn second and third choices, maintained a positive tone, largely refrained from negative attacks, and used the language of "choice" in soliciting support for candidates. Some campaigns used elements of community organizing as RCV-specific strategies, including using relational conversations for voter contact. A community organizing strategy is more inclusive and equal – and hence more desirable – because it allows for different communities to carry out public deliberation using culturally-appropriate social processes alongside the analytic process of ranking candidates.

Further, by removing primary elections, RCV functioned as a more inclusive electoral system by eliminating turnout discrepancies historically observed between primary and general elections. RCV also potentially functions as a more inclusive electoral system because it fosters competitiveness by keeping all candidates on the ballot for the decisive election, which in turn can boost voter turnout and inspire more inclusive campaigns. Finally, data suggests that voters across demographics ranked their choices and also found RCV simple to use, indicating that barriers to participation due to complexity may have been mitigated.

By functioning as a more inclusive electoral system and by inspiring more inclusive campaigning, RCV in Minneapolis in 2013 did facilitate progress towards a more socially just democratic process. However, campaigns that behaved more inclusively by taking a more positive tone and staying in communication with more voters did not necessarily specifically

engage historically under-represented populations. In my estimation, failure to engage these

communities does not fully satisfy commitment to social justice in our democratic processes,

though it is understandable how resource constraints and district demographics can make such

outreach difficult for individual campaigns to achieve. Campaigns that used community

organizing strategies to engage diverse communities more fully satisfied this commitment to

fairness.

Areas for Further Study

There were observed differences in campaign strategy in Minneapolis in 2013 based on

the office candidates were seeking (mayor's office versus city council) and the size of the

population represented (city-wide versus individual wards). There was an order of magnitude of

difference between typical spending on a mayoral campaign and a city council campaign. There

may be yet another order of magnitude difference in spending between city council races, and

Park and Recreation Board or Board of Estimate and Taxation races. Different levels of spending

and the number of voters in a jurisdiction have an impact on campaign strategy choices, and this

interacts with how RCV-specific choices are made.

Once a candidate is elected to office, they have to govern. Schultz said:

If we're taking a broader notion, of which no one has argued yet so far, does ranked

choice voting fundamentally change politics of a community? Well, depends on how you

define fundamental changes. Does it change policy outputs? Hard to tell. Pretty much

most of the places that have adopted ranked choice voting are liberal enclaves in the

United States." There is a great deal to be learned about how campaigning and winning in

an RCV election translates to policy choices, the effects of those choices on constituents,

and ultimately on candidates' chances for re-election. A longitudinal study to this effect would be instructive.

As previously stated, the role of community organizing in elections is not a new phenomenon. It was leveraged in different ways in different campaigns in this election. An interesting area of inquiry would be the impact of the RCV electoral system on the effectiveness of community organizing as a tool to develop individual and community power to achieve social change in the form of policy change carried out by elected representatives.

As noted, Gastil and Black employ a more expansive concept of the electoral system than most of the RCV literature, considering campaign behavior and some aspects of public deliberation (2008, p. 10-13). An interesting analysis would be to examine more closely how a conception of RCV per Gastil and Black's broader electoral system definition holds up under Young's inclusion principles.

Schultz also said, "[T]he City of Minneapolis is… becoming a significantly multi-racial city and if you decide you're just gonna appeal to the old DFL urban white liberal coalition, you're not gonna win. " An examination of voting patterns of historically under-represented populations over a period of several elections, along with correlations between that turnout and electoral conditions could identify if turnout patterns track differently with RCV than they did before Minneapolis adopted RCV. Such an examination might reveal if the use of RCV changes the degree to which electoral conditions affect turnout.

The Future of RCV

As Schultz noted in our interview, it is difficult to draw any conclusions about the long-term success, effects, or implications of adopting RCV after just two elections. Based on my findings and analysis, I have concluded that there is value in the continued use of RCV as an

electoral system that encourages campaigns to talk to more voters, and to do so in a way designed to attract, rather than repel voters.

I find value in the deliberative process, and in accommodating the needs and rights of citizens to carry out that process in a manner that is appropriate to each individual's cultural background (for example, one in which English is not the first language), not necessarily uniform across communities, and not necessarily dictated from the viewpoint of any group that has historically had the power to define the process (such as the political party leadership at a party's endorsing convention). The potential for RCV to afford leverage to community organizing approaches to campaigning is exciting to me. It is hard to trust the wisdom of the crowd when the crowd decides differently from you as an individual, but it is a bit easier to respect the wisdom of the crowd when there is inclusive and equal deliberation, and when there is integrity in the decision-making process.

It is interesting to think about Gastil and Black's supposition that an electoral system ought to also have a responsibility to supply qualified candidates, juxtaposed with the expectation that community organizing ought to build leadership in its participants. These things working in concert, ideally, ensure a successfully functioning representative democracy in which public deliberation selects elected officials who further deliberate on decisions which in turn affect the electorate. Community organizing has long built community leaders. It is exciting to think of a future in which RCV creates the leverage to propel such leaders—who came into their power through an inclusive, equal, and just democratic process—into elected positions, where they can then govern from that inclusive, equal, and just perspective. By building social power with and for others, community leaders born of the organizing process will earn my trust that they can truly represent my interests, my values, and my experiences.

My own aspirations to indigenous leadership from within the communities I inhabit, or possibly even elected representation, rest firmly on my belief that a more inclusive electoral system like RCV brings further value to the democratic process. Minneapolis has shown that RCV can be successfully implemented, and that it can spur a public conversation about how we self-determine our governance. RCV may still be considered novel even in Minneapolis and the other U.S. cities where it has been adopted. But the fact that the RCV electoral system itself is even a topic of conversation is a victory, because we are publicly deliberating on our democratic process, with a hopeful and optimistic (if cautious) outlook.

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Appendix A

Minneapolis 2013 Sample Ballot, Mayor's Race

MAYOR		Rank your first, second and third choice candidates in the columns below. One to be elected.		
1	1st Choice Select One	**2**	2nd Choice, if any Must be DIFFERENT from your 1st choice. Select One	**3**	3rd Choice, if any Must be DIFFERENT from your 1st and 2nd choices. Select One

1st Choice	2nd Choice	3rd Choice
○ JEFFREY ALAN WAGNER Democratic-Farmer-Labor	○ JEFFREY ALAN WAGNER Democratic-Farmer-Labor	○ JEFFREY ALAN WAGNER Democratic-Farmer-Labor
○ CHRISTOPHER CLARK Libertarian Party	○ CHRISTOPHER CLARK Libertarian Party	○ CHRISTOPHER CLARK Libertarian Party
○ MARK ANDREW Democratic-Farmer-Labor	○ MARK ANDREW Democratic-Farmer-Labor	○ MARK ANDREW Democratic-Farmer-Labor
○ CAM WINTON independent responsible inclusive	○ CAM WINTON independent responsible inclusive	○ CAM WINTON independent responsible inclusive
○ JOHN CHARLES WILSON Lauraist Communist	○ JOHN CHARLES WILSON Lauraist Communist	○ JOHN CHARLES WILSON Lauraist Communist
○ NEAL BAXTER Independent	○ NEAL BAXTER Independent	○ NEAL BAXTER Independent
○ JAYMIE KELLY Stop Foreclosures Now	○ JAYMIE KELLY Stop Foreclosures Now	○ JAYMIE KELLY Stop Foreclosures Now
○ ALICIA K. BENNETT Democratic-Farmer-Labor	○ ALICIA K. BENNETT Democratic-Farmer-Labor	○ ALICIA K. BENNETT Democratic-Farmer-Labor
○ MIKE GOULD Democratic-Farmer-Labor	○ MIKE GOULD Democratic-Farmer-Labor	○ MIKE GOULD Democratic-Farmer-Labor
○ TROY BENJEGERDES Local Energy/Food	○ TROY BENJEGERDES Local Energy/Food	○ TROY BENJEGERDES Local Energy/Food
○ OLE SAVIOR Republican	○ OLE SAVIOR Republican	○ OLE SAVIOR Republican
○ KURTIS W. HANNA Pirate Party	○ KURTIS W. HANNA Pirate Party	○ KURTIS W. HANNA Pirate Party
○ ABDUL M RAHAMAN "THE ROCK" We the people...	○ ABDUL M RAHAMAN "THE ROCK" We the people...	○ ABDUL M RAHAMAN "THE ROCK" We the people...
○ BILL KAHN Last Minneapolis Mayor	○ BILL KAHN Last Minneapolis Mayor	○ BILL KAHN Last Minneapolis Mayor
○ STEPHANIE WOODRUFF Democratic-Farmer-Labor	○ STEPHANIE WOODRUFF Democratic-Farmer-Labor	○ STEPHANIE WOODRUFF Democratic-Farmer-Labor
○ JOHN LESLIE HARTWIG Independent	○ JOHN LESLIE HARTWIG Independent	○ JOHN LESLIE HARTWIG Independent
○ DAN COHEN Jobs Downtown Casino	○ DAN COHEN Jobs Downtown Casino	○ DAN COHEN Jobs Downtown Casino
○ BOB "AGAIN" CARNEY JR Demand Transit Revolution	○ BOB "AGAIN" CARNEY JR Demand Transit Revolution	○ BOB "AGAIN" CARNEY JR Demand Transit Revolution
○ JAMES EVERETT Green Party	○ JAMES EVERETT Green Party	○ JAMES EVERETT Green Party
○ DON SAMUELS Democratic-Farmer-Labor	○ DON SAMUELS Democratic-Farmer-Labor	○ DON SAMUELS Democratic-Farmer-Labor
○ BETSY HODGES Democratic-Farmer-Labor	○ BETSY HODGES Democratic-Farmer-Labor	○ BETSY HODGES Democratic-Farmer-Labor
○ RAHN V. WORKCUFF Independence Party	○ RAHN V. WORKCUFF Independence Party	○ RAHN V. WORKCUFF Independence Party
○ BOB FINE Democratic-Farmer-Labor	○ BOB FINE Democratic-Farmer-Labor	○ BOB FINE Democratic-Farmer-Labor
○ MARK V ANDERSON Simplify Government	○ MARK V ANDERSON Simplify Government	○ MARK V ANDERSON Simplify Government
○ GREGG A. IVERSON Democratic-Farmer-Labor	○ GREGG A. IVERSON Democratic-Farmer-Labor	○ GREGG A. IVERSON Democratic-Farmer-Labor
○ EDMUND BERNARD BRUYERE Legacy-Next Generation	○ EDMUND BERNARD BRUYERE Legacy-Next Generation	○ EDMUND BERNARD BRUYERE Legacy-Next Generation
○ CAPTAIN JACK SPARROW Count All Rankings	○ CAPTAIN JACK SPARROW Count All Rankings	○ CAPTAIN JACK SPARROW Count All Rankings
○ JACKIE CHERRYHOMES Democratic-Farmer-Labor	○ JACKIE CHERRYHOMES Democratic-Farmer-Labor	○ JACKIE CHERRYHOMES Democratic-Farmer-Labor
○ CHRISTOPHER ROBIN ZIMMERMAN Libertarian	○ CHRISTOPHER ROBIN ZIMMERMAN Libertarian	○ CHRISTOPHER ROBIN ZIMMERMAN Libertarian
○ CYD GORMAN Police Reform	○ CYD GORMAN Police Reform	○ CYD GORMAN Police Reform
○ JOSHUA REA End Homelessness Now	○ JOSHUA REA End Homelessness Now	○ JOSHUA REA End Homelessness Now
○ MERRILL ANDERSON Jobs & Justice	○ MERRILL ANDERSON Jobs & Justice	○ MERRILL ANDERSON Jobs & Justice
○ DOUG MANN Green Party	○ DOUG MANN Green Party	○ DOUG MANN Green Party
○ JAMES "JIMMY" L. STROUD, JR. The People's Choice	○ JAMES "JIMMY" L. STROUD, JR. The People's Choice	○ JAMES "JIMMY" L. STROUD, JR. The People's Choice
○ TONY LANE Socialist Workers Party	○ TONY LANE Socialist Workers Party	○ TONY LANE Socialist Workers Party

Appendix B

Research Instruments

Research Question: *Did the use of a ranked choice voting electoral system in Minneapolis 2013 municipal elections achieve its purported benefits by **functioning as an inclusive electoral system** and by **inspiring more inclusive campaigns**?*

Campaign Strategists

Purpose: Establish RCV theory-in-use.
Objectives: Determine campaign strategy choices. Determine if/how those choices differ from previous system. Determine if inclusion was explicitly addressed in strategy. Determine if strategies were considered effective.

1) Can you briefly describe your experience in politics prior to working on last fall's campaign?
2) What was your role in the campaign you contributed to?
3) Thinking about that campaign, describe some strategies your campaign implemented or considered that were specifically aimed at earning second and third choice votes. Prompt: Did you consider this strategy successful? How did you assess that? Prompt: Are there any others?
4) How were your strategy choices in this election different from elections where a primary election takes place?
5) Did your campaign specifically target any historically under-represented voting populations? If so, what was the campaign's reason for doing so? How were those populations chosen and what did that targeting look like? If not, describe how that decision was made.
6) Describe your campaign's voter turnout (GOTV) strategy.
7) Describe how your campaign distinguished the candidate from ideologically similar competitors.
8) Describe your campaign's voter education efforts around ranked choice voting.
9) Tell me about a time when the candidate's or campaign's ethics or values were discussed in the context of a strategy choice.
10) In your opinion, how did ranked choice voting foster inclusivity in this election from a voter's perspective? From a campaign's perspective?
11) Do you have any other observations of how this election differed from a non-RCV election?

Expert Election Observers

Purpose: Establish RCV espoused theory. Gather expert assessment of RCV theory-in-practice.
Objectives: Describe purported benefits of RCV system, specifically regarding inclusion. Expert analysis of outcomes in RCV elections in Minneapolis. Expert analysis of outcomes in RCV elections in other localities.

1) What is your current title and role?
2) Can you briefly describe your experience as it relates to the study of elections?
3) What strategy choices did you observe/have you observed that were specifically aimed at earning second and third choice votes. Prompt: Did you consider the strategy successful? How did you assess that? Prompt: Are there any others?
4) What strategy choices did you observe/have you observed in ranked choice voting elections that differed from elections where a primary election takes place?
5) How did you observe candidates and campaigns distinguishing themselves from ideologically similar competitors?
6) How would you characterize public education efforts from the city or from campaigns as a means of mitigating the complexity of casting a ranked choice ballot? Prompt: Specific examples from the city? Specific examples from a campaign?
7) In your opinion, how did/does ranked choice voting foster inclusivity in this election from a voter's perspective?
8) In your opinion, how did/does ranked choice voting foster inclusivity in this election from a campaign's perspective?
9) What did you observe in this election as far as enfranchisement or disenfranchisement of historically under-represented populations?
10) Do you have any other observations of how this election differed from a non-RCV election?