Politics, Process, and Professionals:
A comparative study of municipal election reform in the United States 2014-2017

by
Victoria Mallett

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DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

Through a qualitative study of municipal elections in Seattle and San Antonio, I present and analyze the political opportunity structures which determine candidate viability both before and after electoral reform. I compare the networks of political actors to determine how candidate viability is affected in non-partisan local races. In addition to interviews and ethnographic study of the campaigns themselves, I draw from campaign contribution records in both cities as well as the archival records of the creation and implementation of the two reforms to fill out the story of how political networks and coalitions adapt to systemic changes. I find that the state processes for the reforms tend to be depoliticizing as they are rationalized by lay commissions rather than in arenas of political contestation. This is striking since the purpose of both reforms was to establish a more inclusive system of representation. I also find that it is the informality of candidate selection through elite brokers of influence which limits the choice of voters. I therefore, argue that 'influence work' should be treated as a specific and crucial resource in the study of campaigns and elections.

Literature on campaign professionals and political work is extremely limited. This study addresses these issues through a comparative analysis of rulemaking, consultant work, coalition building and candidate success amid electoral reforms. I do this not only by considering the unique cases of San Antonio and Seattle in implementing reforms for the 2017 city elections, but also by offering a distinct conceptualization of viability that breaks from the essential. Viability is environmentally specific, co-constructed, processual, and most importantly, accessible through certain political actors: the political elite.

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THE PRODUCTION OF CANDIDACY

"Freedom is not merely the chance to do as one pleases; neither is it merely the opportunity to choose between set alternatives. Freedom is, first of all, the chance to formulate the available choices, to argue over them—and then, the opportunity to choose…Beyond this, the problem of freedom is the problem of how decisions about the future of human affairs are to be made and who is to make them. Organizationally, it is the problem of a just machinery of decision. Morally, it is the problem of political responsibility. Intellectually, it is the problem of what are now the possible futures of human affairs" (Mills, 1959: 174).

Seattle 2017:
We were standing in line for the club as Alex Tsimerman handed out his "21-point Salute to the Nation". This was his plan for the city of Seattle upon his election as mayor. He was walking up and down the line cursing the event organizers, using various World War II era epithets for not including him in "Candidate Survivor." This event was put on by a youth outreach organization and various other political organizations and firms every election season. They invite the 'top' candidates for the 'top' positions for a night of fun performances and policy comparison. After several rounds of challenges and voting from the crowd of more than 400 people, one victor would emerge, "Survivor-style".
Seven of the twenty-one mayoral candidates were invited to participate, and Tsimerman was not one of them. He yelled, "These gestapo communists are denying my constitutional rights! I am running for mayor and these Nazis won't let me in!" (SE Fieldnote 7)

San Antonio 2017:
As I walked out of the mayoral debate, several candidates stood in the lobby behind tables. They were handing out flyers and manifestos. The debate had featured just three of the fourteen mayoral candidates. Those that stood outside told me they were frustrated that they weren't included. The consolation prize was being given one of these tables after the event.
One candidate said to me, "Who are they to say who can debate and who can't? I declared my candidacy. I paid my filing fee." He shrugged and handed me a flyer. (SA Fieldnote 1)

THE PROBLEM

When academics consider the study of campaigns and elections, they almost always look at voting. They tend to ask questions like: how many people turned out, what was the demographic makeup of the electorate, what tactics resulted in electoral success, and so forth. We can see the theoretical implications of this results-minded approach in the media's constant coverage of the electoral "horserace", the rise of polls and popular sites which aggregate them, and in the popular work of academics themselves, which tends to focus on issues like political tribalism amongst the electorate. Even when researchers look to specific issues using an interpretive approach, the subjectivity of the individual voter is often the object of inquiry. One of the most successful recent examples of this is Katherine Cramer's work, *The Politics of Resentment*, where she attended regular casual gatherings of rural community members in Wisconsin and listened to their conversations. She found that attendees framed their political experience as being subject to an urban-rural divide for varied and disparate political issues. Another example is Bill Bishop's, *The Big Sort*, which argues that the modern condition of American politics is one of increasingly extreme polarity and by extension partisanship. He argues that while conservativism and liberalism used to be terms once ascribed to members of either party, today, they are synonymous in valance with Republican and Democrat respectively. These approaches to explaining American political life offer a great deal to our understanding of voter behavior as well as fit relatively neatly into the larger political discussion of polls and voting blocs that we so often think of first when we consider the study of elections.

However, the focus on the electorate itself ignores the larger electoral systems in which they are participating, and the results documented in studies like the ones mentioned above (urban versus rural, left versus right) reflect the limits on choice presented to the electorate long before voters go to the polls. There are rules to elections which predate any given vote and those rules can have a significant influence on the voters themselves as well as the election results. This is, of course, not particularly surprising to anyone who has studied the history of voter suppression in democracy, but while we consider who is excluded from the process, we tend, again, to look only at voters, focused on the ability to vote itself rather than on who's on the ballot. There are largely unremarked machinations

through which individuals become candidates for office, as well as myriad ways in which elections can be influenced beyond voting. These include rules which affect who is eligible for office, how money for a campaign is raised and spent, deadlines and time periods for campaigning, division of constituencies, and the like. Therefore, any individual candidate's campaign is subject to a larger process and structure of power. What is critical to understand is who maintains that power, and how rules are created which consolidate it, both in implementing those rules and in the process of their creation. By examining how elections are organized and managed, we can observe and identify those with and without power in a democratic system. In this sense, the "winners" in an election might be better described as those who win influence over the electoral process rather than who wins at the polls on election day.

The research design of this study takes strategic advantage of key inflection points in local elections, namely, significant reforms to election laws in the two sites. As Pippa Norris' (2004) work suggests, an ideal opportunity to see the machinations of electoral systems is when there is disruption of some kind, particularly if there is a disruption that seeks to redistribute elite power in some way—when the rules are, in fact, being remade through the only system available to make the changes—political reform. Electoral reforms are special in that they almost always require the consent of the governed through a referendum. In principle, this grants the new system the most crucial element of democratic governance: consent of the people. However, the process of electoral reform still depends on existing channels of representation and power before they can reach the referendum stage, and there is ample opportunity to alter it afterward upon implementation. Political actors have plenty of time to shape the language of a reform as well as determine its potential impact long before it is presented to the public allowing them to adjust and adapt to the new system before it ever reaches the ballot. The moments when these conversations of reform are public versus private, the way they are framed among the political actors themselves, and the specific nuances of implementation which never go up for vote reveal who has influence over the electoral system and how they exert that influence. The reform then affects the campaign industry and the rulemakers effectively become a component of campaign management. As such, this study is about the holistic management of campaigns and elections.

Often campaign management is framed in terms of tactics (negative ads, doorknocking, etc.), and these are indeed the everyday tasks of the typical campaign manager. However, when I use the term campaign management, I am referring to the laws, regulations, norms, and networks which predetermine the activities of a campaign as well as the ability of an individual to achieve a robust campaigning structure when running for office. These different systems of management vary drastically from one location to another and can have unique and revealing idiosyncrasies. For example, owing to campaign finance limits, a candidate in city A may rely heavily on targeted direct mail paid for with donations from local realtors, while a candidate in city B with a similar background may rely on the local electrical workers union to knock on doors of fellow union members. Both of these scenarios depend upon the locality, sophisticated understanding of the resources available and the limitations present within that governing unit to execute. Therefore, the tools used by those with power and influence can also be location-specific. That is one of the reasons why this is a study of local elections: the particularities of contrasted place expose many of the tools and techniques of those maintaining, creating, consolidating and negotiating influence.

WHY LOCAL

At first blush, the overall importance of local elections may seem to be relatively low and diminishing. The once-trumpeted axiom "all politics are local," attributed to House Speaker Tip O'Neill, is belied by modern federal campaigning, and the nationalization of media and Party consolidation that buttresses it. It is no longer true, for instance, that members of Congress can reliably count on constituent support if they deliver pork to or increase jobs in their districts. This is the crucial consequence of Bishop's concept of *The Big Sort,* that political sorting occurs both ideologically and geographically via a nationalized political subjectivity which furthers drives all elections to national debates.

However, the ever-present check on this rise in nationalized politics is, of course, federalism. States and municipalities still have tremendous leeway in determining local policies and regulations when it comes to taxes, education, environmental regulation, real estate development, and local commerce. Local policies determine the political realities of every person far more than national

ones. They also have full control over any non-federal elections structures and systems. Despite the Republican Party claiming to be the party of states' rights, it is no coincidence that federalism increases in popularity with out-of-power party members each election cycle, whether that party is Republican or Democrat. The result of strong federalism is that for every federal measure, there are potentially dozens of countermeasures happening all over the country at the state and local level. Recent examples of this include the unequal and undermining policies surrounding local implementations of the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare)—found in Republican jurisdictions—and the declarations of many municipalities that they are "Sanctuary Cities" in defiance of President Trump's anti-immigration efforts—popular with Democratic municipalities. Federal measures may be legislatively coherent but can be practically dissimilar, as they must be negotiated and aligned within the context of the local political communities in which they operate. These differences may be targeted at national policies, but they reflect local interests, hence the varieties of implementation.

Despite the enduring importance and influence of local elections, local campaigns in the United States are often overshadowed by the high-rolling, personality-driven national political scene. This is not only a media phenomenon, but manifests in political participation, especially voter turnout. Average turnout rates for major US cities' mayoral elections have been as low as 6% in recent years, whereas presidential campaigns far exceed 50% (Caren, 2007). This holds despite that fact that policy choices which affect the everyday lives of voters, such as infrastructure, zoning, and local education curricula, occur primarily at the local level. This leads to an assumption by those who work in the campaigning industry and among candidates themselves that it is the allure of national politics which turns voters out on election day. Therefore, a campaign centered on national issues will turn more partisans out, and the campaign can win without much in the way of persuasion on local issues.

But again, even flashier national politics and campaigns are profoundly structured by events at the local level. Any politician who is not extremely wealthy usually must begin their career at the local level on city councils or school boards before they rise to the national stage. Therefore, the kinds of individuals who ultimately determine foreign policy, national services, national tax policy and the like are winnowed down beginning in smaller municipalities. That means local

politicians with any ambitions beyond the municipal campaigns must take national political positions early in their careers if they want to appear consistent and committed. All of this attention on federal elections and federal issues would make one think that most politicking happens there, but this is overwhelmingly false. In fact, 99.9% of governmental units are local and 96% of elected officials (totaling about half a million) represent local jurisdictions (U.S. Census Bureau 1995) (Marschall, Shah, Ruhil, 2011: 97). This means that most politicians must navigate the nuances of local relationships and interests before finding success further up the ballot.

For all these reasons, it is critical that academics redirect significant focus to local campaigns and elections, which have been woefully understudied and are consequentially minimally understood. One reason that more research has not been done at the municipal level is that American cities and municipal elections operate with relative autonomy when compared to the states and national elections, both in terms of established structures and of party rules. Given the historical differences and vast geography, which results in significant demographic variation, it is no surprise that this leads to somewhat different elite governing structures. Historically, these structures have nonetheless mirrored the national party institutions and election protocols, making them environmentally and structurally disparate yet functionally similar, which allows for sociological inquiry seeking the general in the particular. The most distinguishing difference, however, is the relative lack of party apparatuses at the local level. Seventy-five percent of American cities' elections are explicitly non-partisan (Nalbandian, 1991); therefore, researchers must approach municipal elections without the starting point of the party apparatus, the typical starting point in identifying political actors.

THIS STUDY

This is a study which answers the question: how do electoral reforms affect structures of democratic influence and how do actors go about exerting that influence to determine candidate viability for electoral success? Understanding the process by which individuals are deemed "viable" by elites, donors and voters themselves will illuminate why certain individuals are successful and others are excluded from politics entirely. The scale of municipal elections has always

allowed them to be more flexible than state or national elections. As a result, oftentimes, the most dramatic experiments in democracy happen at the lowest level of governance where questions of constitutionality are less present (Oliver, 2012). What is most overwhelming to scholars seeking the general in the particular of local elections is the sheer enormity of municipalities. Therefore, I decided to focus on two of these dramatic experiments in democracy—in Seattle, Washington and San Antonio, Texas—in the hope that the systemic electoral changes might reveal both the individuals with outsized political power and influence and the ways in which they adapt and maintain their influence/control in the face of democratic reform. I found that each city was home to a complex and informal network of political actors who coordinate their efforts and resources consistently in each local election cycle across various campaigns. Over the course of each cycle, these networks typically coalesce around candidates through the brokerage of highly influential individuals with sophisticated knowledge of the local political community. The reforms were an opportunity to disrupt the brokerage power of these individuals who might otherwise function as gatekeepers to the networks, funds, and local political knowledge.

Neither Seattle nor San Antonio are new to major electoral reforms. Both cities went through a similar reform when they switched from at-large city councils to district/ward systems. In both cases, there was a shift in the racial makeup of their city councils after the reforms showing that political power was systematically distributed in favor of White residents because they were significantly more likely to vote. This meant that campaigning in each city had to adapt to a new system which included appealing more to diverse interests and campaigning for smaller vote totals. However, the political establishment figures in both cities remained the same. In this study of reforms, we see two more attempts to disrupt power distribution, this time through candidate access to funds either in the electoral process or the governing process. Once again, while the ballots in the cities would seem more inclusive as record numbers of candidates filed for election, the existing political actors demonstrated their ability to maintain influence despite the disruption. And so, this study captures democratic reforms that seek to enhance participation and representation, but which nevertheless reveal that the winners of elections are the individuals with a sophisticated political

network and access to resources developed over many cycles, making them very good at resisting disruption.

The Cases

This study addresses the issue of reform and candidate selection within the context of two recent electoral reforms happening almost simultaneously, in two very different US cities, but both with the goal of increasing inclusion in the political process. San Antonio is a relatively poor city with historic lines dividing it along race and class-based neighborhoods. It is still mostly driven by development interests as well as a strong tourism industry, which despite the tremendous inequality, allows it to be one of the only cities in the US where working class families can afford the cost of living. San Antonio is politically siloed due to the fact that it is a left-leaning city in a Republican-dominated state. Seattle, on the other hand, is a wealthy city in the Pacific Northwest with a very modern economy steeped in technology. Seattle has long been a progressive bastion with powerful unions and a robust history of conservationist politics. Recently, Seattle has been struggling with an affordable housing crisis which cuts across both racial and class-based lines that in many ways typifies the modern economic disparity of the nation as a whole: that of a moneyed knowledge economy which produces an upper-middle class seeking urban lifestyles which push those in service industries out while still relying upon them. Seattle also has out-sized influence on state politics as it is the cultural and economic center of Washington, a left-leaning state. These differences in the cities are constantly reflected in the political cultures of their elections and campaigns, and my hope was to find distinct environments that offered context to the influence of political actors in the midst of electoral reform.

Beyond the ample comparative opportunities between these cities, I selected these two cases for several reasons. First, in limiting the number of cases, I was able to engage in a deeper qualitative study of the political actors in both cities. Second, these two reforms happened to occur during off-year cycles, meaning that the election cycle upon which the reforms were implemented did not occur at the same time as state-wide or national elections. This means that I could limit the external political variables and actors to some degree. For example, it

could be assumed that turnout would likely be driven primarily by the mayoral race in each city since that was the top ticket item, rather than by a senatorial or presidential race. Thirdly, these two reforms fit the key criteria of this study—to emphasize inclusivity and expansive democracy arguments in the campaign process. Lastly, because they occurred at the same time, this allowed for direct comparison in the broader national political environment.

The reform in San Antonio was called Amendment 2 and was a law which established, for the first time, an annual salary for its ten city councilmembers, as well as the mayor ($45,722 per year and $61,725 per year, respectively). It was passed via referendum by the electorate of San Antonio in 2015 and went into effect upon the 2017 mayoral and city council election. Prior to Amendment 2, city councilmembers were paid just $20 per meeting (about $1,000 per year) and the mayor received $4,040 per year meaning that only those with another form of income could hold office. These new salaries created stakes heretofore unseen in San Antonio political contests and could fundamentally change the cast of political characters in one of America's largest municipalities because individuals without an alternative source of income could now reliably count on the city council paycheck should they win office. This meant that running for city council or mayor no longer required independent wealth or tremendous leisure time. While it had significant consequences for the types of candidates who chose to run, this new salary system did not happen in a vacuum.

San Antonio has a rich and complex political history with well-established political actors and an entrenched economic and cultural elite. These political actors and elite are comprised of family dynasties, political professionals, activists, and individuals with business interests that have limited the role of the city in state politics but ensured its constant expansion over the last century and a half. In recent years, most of that growth has happened in the northern part of the city. San Antonio is divided into ten city council districts, district 1 is in the center, and districts 2 through 10 are positioned like a pinwheel starting at the three o'clock position encircling district 1. Each district is unique, but the political professionals I spoke with tended to talk about the "upper three" and the "lower seven". "Upper", in this case refers not only to the geography of districts 8 through 10 (which encompass the north side of the city) but also to the fact that these three districts are home to the wealthiest residents of the city – the upper socioeconomic class.

They are also the districts with the largest White, non-Hispanic populations. Meanwhile, the lower seven districts are home to the historic and touristic economic features of the city.

Salary creation for elected officials in San Antonio modified the political landscape bringing stark relief to exactly how candidate viability and selection function in constructing and understanding local democracy. Consultants took on an unprecedented number of clients including those without preexisting ties to local elites. Therefore, they demonstrated over the course of the election cycle how candidate viability is produced by leveraging resources and professional political networks. To build my evidentiary base for this case, I reviewed past records of political donations, observed the elections themselves, interviewed political actors, reviewed audio and video recordings of commission and council meetings, and reviewed archival documents of those same meetings. This research created the groundwork to understanding the bureaucratic, state-driven process by which Amendment 2 came to be, and how it affected the political actors in the city upon implementation.

Meanwhile, two thousand miles away in Seattle, Washington, reform with the same aim to increase political inclusion, but through a very different mechanism, was happening in concert with the municipal elections. In 2015, the city of Seattle passed a law adopting a system of public financing wherein residents would receive $100 worth of Vouchers to contribute to the city council, mayoral or city attorney candidates of their choosing. Candidates participating in the program agreed to various restrictions in exchange for access to a first-come, first-serve pool of money. The theory behind this system is that it levels the playing field in terms of monetary requirements to run a successful campaign. Therefore, there is greater access to candidacy for those without preexisting ties to large moneyed interests. This is similar to the reform in San Antonio in that the goal was to widen political participation. Advocates for the reform held the explicit intention of increasing citizen participation in the election process through Voucher donations effectively creating a new vein of political engagement with an alternative currency. The municipal elections saw the pilot version of the program implemented for the city attorney's race along with the two at-large city council seats, districts 8 and 9. Glaringly, it was not used in the mayoral contest which operated under the old system of fundraising in parallel to the other races in 2017.

Seattle extended the program in 2019 to the seven ward-based city council districts and finally to the mayoral race in 2021.

Representationally, Seattle has been somewhat tumultuous in recent years. There have been eight different mayors in the last twenty years and in 2013, voters opted to change the at-large system of city council members to a mostly ward-based system. Councilmembers were paid $129,686 per year, making them second only to Los Angeles in terms of compensation, and ensuring that city council representative is a highly sought-after position by political elites. In part due to this high compensation, Seattle stands in stark contrast to San Antonio regarding its culture of transparency in elections. The city has multiple agencies with oversight of both campaign funding and vote counting, and the limits on campaign coordination are quite strict. As the economic driver of the state and home to a large population of progressive leftists, Seattle politics often become a competition between who can *perform* as the more ideologically leftist candidate and those who might push for economic growth. I emphasize the word perform because, in practice, Seattle has been very growth-minded in its policies and has seen a very large number of public-private partnerships forged over the last several decades. As with my research in San Antonio, I observed the 2017 election cycle, analyzed donor rolls from past election cycles, and interviewed local political actors. Additionally, I studied the bureaucratic entity responsible for implementing and administrating the Voucher program through archival ethnography.

Through my research, I found that the process of passing and implementing each of these reforms were products of complex rulemaking which were relatively inaccessible to the public at-large. This was despite both reforms being about making elections more accessible. The inaccessibility was primarily because rulemaking was in the hands of unelected technocrats serving on municipal commissions. Both reforms had the strong backing of local political actors with established influence in local elections implying that the coalition members which supported the reforms did not believe their influence would be threatened by them. In fact, many welcomed them and contributed significant resources to their passage and implementation. The elections in which the reforms were implemented marked minimal shift in the relationships between political actors and in the tools and techniques they used to exert influence. However, the reforms did have some impact on the criteria for candidate viability in the initial stages of the campaigns.

What these reforms revealed is that candidate viability is not produced through rules, but through rulemaking and the ability of political actors to adapt their existing tools to the new structure. Therefore, candidate viability is a material product rather than an essential characteristic.

The two reforms also revealed stark differences in the political environments of both cities. Seattle has a broad network of political actors who are devoted to political work full-time in a professionalized capacity. On the other hand, San Antonio has a somewhat incoherent network of political actors who primarily maintain fundraising connections to candidates and engage in little coalition development and maintenance. It is unsurprising therefore that the two cities addressed the issue of enhancing democracy in different ways. If we consider the practice of democracy as the co-constitution of participation and representation, then Seattle, a city with robust coalition work and networks which can coordinate voter engagement looked to participation of the broader public, while San Antonio, a city with a political class closely tied to economic elites, looked to address identity representation. The contrast between the two approaches exposes the ways in which political actors are able to maintain influence despite the ideological goals of democratic reforms. They do this primarily by controlling access to candidate resources including money, influencers, political labor, and a sophisticated knowledge set of the municipality's political culture. The confluence of these resources is the means by which political actors, and especially political consultants are able to produce viability among their chosen candidates. I demonstrate throughout this these that these reforms aimed at expanding participation in local elections reinforced professionalized and highly managed campaigns.

POLITICAL STRUCTURES AND THEORY

This study speaks primarily to literature concerning the professionalization of politics, candidate viability, and political influence. It also addresses larger theoretical discussions regarding the nature and function of participatory democracy, representation, the state, and elite local power. What these literatures tend to recognize is that there is a governing political class in any given unit of governance that is distinct from the populace as a whole. This political class exerts

influence and authority in campaigns and helps to determine which candidates are acceptable to both the political class itself and the majority of voters. What they tend to leave unaddressed is that viability is itself a production of the campaign by the political class rather than an innate pre-determinate of candidate success. Therefore, the election campaign of a given candidate is less about the individual ability to appeal to voters and more about the process by which the voting population, candidate, and elite network are co-constructed throughout the cycle with the leverage of various resources by a series of brokers. Additionally, candidate viability is typically seen in the literature through a nationalized, and consequentially, homogeneous lens listing experience, wealth, status, attractiveness, etc. as various determinates. However, I offer a different explanation that sees viability as environmentally-dependent and because it is produced in a campaign, it is contextual.

Wonks? Hacks? Politicos? Elites? Who is the chattering class?

The concept of politics as a profession within sociology is as old as the writings of Weber who discussed the politically gifted as having roles in journalism or within parties (1994: 352). More recent literature discusses the political professional's evolution out of the party structure and into the more modern world of candidate-driven campaigning (Sheingate, 2016; Medvic, 2000 and 2003; Kolodny and Logan, 1998; Thurber and Nelson, 2000; Sabato, 1981; Johnson, 2001). These scholars tend to agree that the decline of political parties in the United States bears a relationship with the rise of professionalization in electoral campaigns as well as the increased power of interest groups in political life, effectively offering a structural replacement to the party apparatus. Without the formal party leading the candidate push, this gave way to a more open primary system where there emerged a semi-public 'invisible primary' in which candidates shop themselves to various endorsers and funders in the hope of building a base before they begin campaigning to the public. This has gone on at every level of elections, however, in-depth research into this has again traditionally been directed toward the presidential level and, to a lesser extent, toward the congressional level (Bawn et al, 2012; Cohen et al, 2008; Grossman, 2009; Issenberg, 2012; Thurber, 2010).

Despite significant institutional, temporal and geographic variations, scholars have found common accounts of party elites and allies creating a 'bench' of potential candidates and coordinating their efforts in electing anointed individuals for office. These coalitions of political actors include all politically active interested parties with significant influence to be relevant in candidate success. Models of these networks vary significantly from scholar to scholar in the same way that exactly who is considered deserving of inclusion varies based on the object of study. However, they generally include candidates, elected officials, political consultants, party staff, lawyers, union leaders, and major donors. They sometimes meet as a unit or coordinate through one-on-one interactions (Masket, 2009; Kousser et al, 2012; Bawn et al, 2012; Cohen et al, 2008). Stephen Masket defines this type of network by explaining, "I suggested that the best way to understand a party was not as a legislative coalition or a hierarchical organization or a group of like-minded voters…Rather, my model sees parties as loose alliances of policy demanders…often operating at the local level, outside the legislature, who manipulate party nominations to control the government" (2009: 53).

In order to understand these networks, scholars have most often engaged social network analysis as a means of explaining findings. Social network analysis was employed by Bernstein and Dominquez to demonstrate the existence of factions or coalitions in the 2000 Presidential nominating process by assessing the concept of loyalty (2003), Yang et al used the same type of analysis to compare donor networks in the pre-Presidential primary in 2004 and 2008 (2013), Heaney et al used social network analysis to show that delegates at nominating conventions form highly polarized networks (2012), and Koger et al also used this method to show factionalism in the 2004 presidential race by reviewing exchanges of donor lists among political organizations (2009). These studies demonstrate the highly relational nature of politics at the elite level and reaffirm the notion of a political class which controls the interaction between the candidates and the voters.

Other researchers have looked specifically at congressional campaigns and have been able to identify the critical role of political consultants and staffers. For example, Kolodny and Logan who assessed the efficacy of national-level consultants (1998) and Nyhan and Montgomery who outlined consultant networks with candidates in the 2002, 2004 and 2006 elections (2013). A study by Skinner et al shows the exchange of staff members between political campaigns and

organizations over time, demonstrating a close, highly partisan set of networks (2012). All of this social network analysis has relied upon quantitative or binary network methodologies. There are a few exceptions that did expand the methodology to include interviews and participatory observation techniques, such as Masket's study in southern California (2009). Because of the nature of network theory, demonstrating a complex multi-dimensional narrative is difficult, meaning these studies are very good at showing the trend of the network but not necessarily the *how* or *why* of candidate viability and selection which is the focus of this study.

To understand how viability works, we first need to define the members of political networks. Specifically, who are these people in the business of politics? For my study, I include those individuals whose primary market value is a skillset applicable mostly to election work and policy lobbying and who approach this work with an ideology that adheres to the interests of the organization or firms to which they are loyal. The first and most obvious group are campaign consultants. Nationally, these consultants tend to be overwhelmingly White (98%), male (85%) and college educated (96%) (Dulio, 2000: 12). Most consultants get their start working on campaigns or for political parties and tend to maintain partisan loyalty when taking on clients. Literature on political consultants describes the process of candidate selection as a mutual job interview between the consultant and the interested individual, typically explaining how party officials seek out a "bench" of prospective candidates and then assess those individuals with the consultants (Sabato, 1981; Luntz, 1988; Medvic, 2001; Issenberg, 2012; Thurber, 2010). As I explained previously, this focus on the role of political parties leaves out most campaigns across the country, including the majority of campaigns featuring political consultants.

The actual work of consultants however, can be generalized regardless of campaign level, partisanship, or candidate to some degree. The general consultant handles most of the top-tier hiring of staff, develops a campaign budget, creates core messaging, establishes the overall 'look' of the campaign, and selects voters to target. They also create a fundraising strategy (Sheingate, 2016; Medvic, 2003; Johnson, 2000; Thurber and Nelson, 2000; Dulio, 2004). However, this study is not about those things, at least not directly. Instead, I treat the consultants as members of an elite political network whose relationships develop over years of participation in local elections. Consultants develop reputations not just because

they're good at providing services, but because they've been around the political scene for a long time and have cultivated relationships and reputation. This way of seeing the consultants and the political work they do is in line with contemporary literature on parties I discussed earlier, which identifies a preexisting network of influential people and organizations which coalesce around candidates in different ways. Another way to think about the tendency for powerful networks to select a certain candidate is that the network is simply the establishment, an institutional concept.

Literature on campaign professionals and political work is extremely limited: 1) it ignores municipal and nonpartisan elections almost entirely; 2) it tends to focus on demographic and historical analyses of the industry, while favoring the most successful individuals in the research design; 3) it defines success through scalable resources such as money and total votes/wins in order to determine systematized criteria for political work; 4) it does not address electoral reforms specifically. This study addresses each of these issues through a comparative analysis of consultant work, coalition building and candidate success amid electoral reforms. I do this not only by considering the unique cases of San Antonio and Seattle in implementing reforms for the 2017 city elections, but also by offering a distinct conceptualization of viability that breaks from the essential. Instead, my thesis considers the collective cultural capital employed by the network surrounding a candidate (i.e. their coalition) as the construction of viability over the course of the campaign. Viability is therefore environmentally specific, co-constructed, processual, and most importantly, accessible only through certain political actors: the political elite.

Power and Democracy: What's at stake?

Conceptualizing the political elite is difficult and how elites function generally in governance has been hotly debated for decades. Elite power theories hardly mention the process of candidate selection and elections, effectively arguing that they hold little influence in the ultimate policy outcomes and long-term power dynamics of a society/community (Mills, 1956; Domhoff, 1967). C. Wright Mills' original concept of elite power theory failed to fully acknowledge the clique-like nature of these power groups (Kornhauser, 1959). Mills attributes the formation of

the power elite to class, but for Mills, class is highly economical. However, the inclusion of union leaders, party staff, non-profit activists and local consultants functioning in these groups, along with high level donors in candidate selection shows that this political power is not equivalent to economic. While class is an important component, it does not sufficiently address the networked aspect of urban elite structures today. For this reason, this study will treat the power elite as something closer to Batzell's (1964) idea of the "the establishment" or to Domhoff's notion of the power elite being those with "command positions," thereby allowing this study to define motivations of the actors outside of Mills' limited scope (1967: 10). This matches closely with empirical findings elsewhere. For example, Gilens and Page find through extensive analysis of individual and group policy preferences that government is most responsive to powerful interest groups and, even more so, business elites. They state, "When the alignments of business-oriented and mass-based interest groups are included separately in a multivariate model, average citizens' preferences continue to have essentially zero estimated impact upon policy change, while economic elites are still estimated to have a very large, positive, independent impact" (2014: 575). Gilens and Page argue here that the US fits an Economic-Elite Domination model or Biased Pluralism model of democracy much more closely than the idealistic Majoritarian Pluralism model offered up by early community power theorists (Dahl, 1961). Pluralism, of course, is a highly individuated conception of power.

I argue that relationships ultimately matter more than any one individual because it is through relationships that power solidifies. Galaskiewicz addresses the power elites through a networked model, stating that "collective power is really nothing more than the exercise of private power on behalf of collective interests" (1979: 30). In his discussion of "Towertown," he explains that the social structure of influence in a democratic environment shows how relationships define political results. This study is far less explicit in defining those networks as such, but it does treat authority similarly to Galaskiewicz in that it is individualized and private before being exercised through public arenas and channels. The consequence of this is that political consultants, "performed the critical task of building electoral coalitions out of groups motivated by discrete issues and demands, turning diffuse and inchoate interests into organized blocs of support for a particular policy goal or on behalf of a specific candidate" (Sheingate, 2016: 133). In doing this, "…the

consulting industry is contributing to a broader shift toward a professionally managed public sphere…" (3).

One might think that all of this comes down to kingmaking, or the idea that people with exceptional reputations among the voters and well-respected by those in the network endorse their chosen candidates and that the endorsement itself is the practical definition of "viable". In other words, a candidate is viable because certain individuals say it is so, not because of any intrinsic qualities of the candidate. However, I argue that this is more of an institutional role than that of individual leadership, and that candidate viability is fundamentally driven not by individual support but by these coalitions of political actors accessed primarily through consultants or people who do consultant work. That's not to deny the extensive academic works supporting individual agency as a rebuttal to the institutionalist era of local power structures. However, the relational aspect of political work inherently dilutes the power of any individual acting alone. That work is most visible when there are changes to rules because rule changes can reconfigure interest in elite political participation and reveal which relationships are most critical to success. As Josh Pacewicz puts it, "…people's efforts to wield public authority are intertwined with their efforts to play the local game—to jockey for public esteem with those whom they regard as peers." (2016: 21) In San Antonio and Seattle, the changes in election rules were both aiming to take on elite domination of local representation. In doing so, they revealed how reformers thought about democracy and laid bare a set of idealized values for representation in local government. Recent theorists of democracy and representation help to illuminate the thinking behind these reforms and help contextualize the reformers' vision.

In the 1990s, social justice theorists embraced the descriptive representation model—that the representatives should have similar identities to those of their constituents. One of the most important representation theorists of this time was Bernard Manin. Manin (1997), focused on the inherent problem of power inequity in the act of representation, referring to representatives themselves as an elective aristocracy. He framed this aristocracy as performers to an audience of voters, calling it "audience democracy". In campaign terms, the industry of campaigning is overt in its treatment of voters as an audience, employing

traditional entertainment media and framing candidates as aspirational figures. In this way, identity in descriptive representation is nominal rather than comprehensive. In San Antonio, for instance, there should be Latinx representatives because the majority of the city is Latinx, but they should all have obtained college degrees despite less than 30% of the population of the city having done so. The audience democracy conceptualization is therefore useful because it demonstrates that there are identities which voters wish to see reflected in representation and identities which they do not need to see reflected.

This led to extensive and seminal work by Nadia Urbanati, who states, "representative democracy is neither an oxymoron nor a merely pragmatic alternative for something we, modern citizens, can no longer have, namely direct democracy" (Urbinati, 2006: 10). Urbanati argues that representative democracy is not an imperfect system that comes closest to governance by will of the people, but rather a better system, to be considered on its own merits. She rejects the physical nature of representation (that a representative physically stands in place of the represented), and instead sees representation as the structural flow of power so that it includes institutions, norms and judgement. (Urbinati 2006: 113).

In this study, I apply this idea of democracy to the process of reform. To do this, I employ Pacewicz' conceptualization of the public sphere as "a genre of activity that is recognized by locals as legitimate for adjudicating between competing interests, coordinating collective action, or otherwise initiating action on the community's behalf" (2016: 21). I look to the goals of reformers to create 'better representation' in both cities and compare it to the practices used to implement those reforms. In the public sphere, debates around reforming democracy rarely include models which go beyond descriptive and symbolic conceptions of representation. However, as the works of more recent elite power theorists as well as representation theorists show, power structures in democracy are not so individuated. Instead, I focus on the exclusionary practices endemic to elections and rulemaking around campaigns to shed light on the ways in which managed democracy develops its own logics and structures of influence.

STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

In this chapter, I presented the topic and cases of this study. I reviewed the research question, general approach, and the theoretical grounding I used to both conduct fieldwork and analyze my findings. I included several aspects of political sociology and political science literature which rarely speak to one another: theories of political power, networked candidate viability, political consultants and professionals, and representation theory. Each of these theories and fields of research were critical to my analysis in some way, and each enabled me to formulate the arguments that follow as well as helped me to better understand and present the impacts of my findings. Importantly, I pointed out in this chapter where the existing literature is insufficient in helping us to understand municipal politics. In particular, there is a dearth of elections research by sociologists. Instead, that ground has been ceded to political science, for the most part leading to more normative, institutional, and quantitative analyses, which do not orient the process in the relational (Mudge and Chen, 2014). In the chapters that follow, I attempt to help rectify some of that insufficiency and reconcile these disciplinary theories with one another.

"Chapter 2: Studying Democracy as a Process" details the methodological choices of this study. As this is a mixed methods study, each data source warrants explanation as does the interaction between the sources in their respective cities. Just as importantly, I describe the differences between the cities in data availability. My primary methods were interviews, archival ethnography, and database research. This began in January of 2017 and continued throughout the elections and after. Drawing from personal connections, I initially considered using a qualitative form of social network analysis. However, this method proved both too time consuming for interviews with elites and failed to offer a means of locating the state in the study. I also felt that a deeper relational approach would offer something new and sociologically meaningful to the study of campaigning. Therefore, I chose to abandon a traditional network analysis approach and focus on a qualitative thematic comparison. To establish an empirical baseline for this work, I chose to use campaign finance data to determine traditional coalitions for the respective cities and discussed those coalitions in the interviews. I also outline the changes to my analysis after my examiners requested corrections.

The interviews themselves were semi-structured and the depth and intimacy differed based on roles and relationships of the interviewees. I have long-standing relationships with several of the subjects due to my background in political campaigning, and I discuss the effect these relationships had on the study and particularly on the subject availability in the chapter. Lastly (though this data comes first in the study) are the recordings (and lack thereof) of the state entities involved in the political reforms. I studied three different state entities: The Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission (SEEC), the Charter Review Commission (CRC), and the San Antonio City Council. For the study of these three bodies, I used audio/visual recordings of meetings, attended meetings in person, and drew from archival documents. The chapter details the reasoning with which I approached these methods and discusses their limitations and advantages.

I divided my substantive chapters into two sections. "Part 1: Reforming Democracy through Technocracy" contains the two chapters about the state bodies responsible for the implementation of the reforms in both cities. The first of these two chapters, "Chapter 3: The Value-Practice Contradiction", outlines the goals of each reform as stated by the reformers themselves and within the context of the state bodies tasked with implementing them. I then look at the norms, rules, and practices of these state bodies to show how they undermine the very democratic values reformers championed. Instead, I show how failing to apply the values of the reforms to the practices involved in designing and implementing reform leads to exclusion and technocratic domination of democratic ideals. The result is distancing between the electorate and the arenas of democratic decision-making: depoliticization.

This chapter gives an in-depth account and analysis of the procedural techniques elites use to confer authority within the bureaucracy of the state as it is constructing rules of political engagement with the populace. Here, I draw from archival ethnographic analysis along with a review of meeting minutes of the SEEC meetings' video recordings and of the San Antonio City Council meetings' recordings and minutes from the CRC meetings. I argue that it is through the depoliticization of the election structures that these bodies were able to claim authority in designing and implementing the reforms as well as obscure the role of the state in constructing its own electoral systems. More specifically, I discuss the context of city issues and demonstrate how the city council took a transportation

petition, depoliticized it, and converted it into salary reform for themselves. I also discuss how the political professionals in Seattle took an effort to democratize campaign funding and handed all management and oversight of the program to an unelected, relatively obscure, city commission. Through this depoliticization of both reforms, I argue that the shift toward technocracy is just as robust at the municipal level as at the state and national level in the United States, if not more so.

The second half of Part 1, "Chapter 4: The Technocrats", extends the discussion about the two commissions but instead of looking at their practices, I analyze their composition. I look at who gets to speak with authority on the nature of election reform, and therefore, manage the reformation. I begin by laying out the criteria for authority in both cities, defining both the type of individual who gets to be a commissioner and the ones who are afforded deference and credibility in the public discussions of the reforms. I then describe specific scenes which demonstrate this criteria in practice. Lastly, I engage in a direct comparison of those same scenes in the two cases showing that the logic of technocracy is consistent and exclusionary. I then carry that sense of the expert as a resource into Part 2 of the thesis, which addresses the campaigning industry and political communities in each city.

"Part 2: Influence and Expertise" is comprised of four substantive chapters. The first of these, "Chapter 5: Political Communities Prior to Reform" is an analysis of interviews referencing past and existing relationships in each city. Here I take a critical in-depth look at each city and determine if there is a consensus among political actors in what makes a candidate viable. In order to determine that viability, I dissect the political networks in each community and contrast them to one another. In doing so, I find that the two cities have stark differences. Seattle has a highly professionalized network of explicitly campaign oriented individuals. These people are political directors of labor unions, 501(c)3s, activist organizations, and political consultants. The members of this network are well-known, and operate at the state level as well as the local allowing them access to myriad resources. Access to this network is the main determinant of candidate viability. San Antonio on the other hand, has a much less professionalized, less cohesive and transparent network of political actors. Legacy politicians, lobbyists cyclically acting as consultants, and highly reputed activists play kingmakers while

growth-oriented business interests back safe allies for office. This chapter's findings and analysis establish something of a baseline upon which I compared the impact of the two reforms in subsequent chapters.

"Chapter 6: Fundraising Value and Transparency" discusses money in American elections drawing both from the literature on election funding and the research data in San Antonio and Seattle. In doing so, I describe the critical relationship between funding and elections as well as the existing political communities and networks in the two cities while bringing context to their placement in the larger question of how viability is determined in elections. This chapter has a disparity worth mentioning: Seattle's data on campaign contributions is extensive and meticulously gathered, and it is publicized both from the state level and city level agencies going back a decade. San Antonio has never provided that level of transparency. Rather than viewing this disparity as a detriment to the research, however, I view it as an additional opportunity to analyze power structures in the city, and it offers insight to answering many of the economic questions of the state's role in reproducing economic elite power and the technologies of influence of experienced political operatives.

"Chapter 7: Reform in the First Round" dives deeper into the stories of the 2017 municipal elections in Seattle and San Antonio, respectively drawing primarily from interviews conducted in both cities along with voter data. The analysis builds directly on the previous chapters to tell a coherent story of electoral viability in the two cities during the 2017 primary elections[1]. In previous chapters, much of the interview schedules focused on defining the existing coalitions. However, upon analysis of the results and donor patterns in 2017, these coalitions turned out to be much murkier than the political professionals themselves would assert. I consider whether this is a result of the reforms. Both cities, but especially San Antonio, had a huge number of people run for office immediately following the reform implementations. In that sense, I argue that the biggest impact of the reforms in both cities is that it inspired different people to run for office than had

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[1] Seattle officially refers to its first round of elections as 'primary elections' and the second round as 'general elections.' San Antonio officially refers to the first round as 'general elections' and the second round as 'run-off elections'. Interviewees in both sites colloquially referred to the first and second round as 'primaries' and 'generals', respectively. When I use the word 'primary', I am referring to the first round in both cities, and when I use the word 'general', I am referring to the run-off elections in both cities.

in previous cycles. However, while the incentive structure to run for office changed, the power structure of the campaign industry did not. I use these findings of relational power within the elite political networks to discuss community power theories more generally and make a case for why we should look at elections as their own field of study with their own characters, roles, and institutions.

"Chapter 8: The 2017 Run-off Elections", is where the discussion of political professionalization is most relevant. With so many candidates running, it may have forced elites to divide more than usual, and it certainly offered lucrative opportunities for campaign experts. Here I discuss the work being done by coalition brokers. In the case of Seattle, these were consultants, but in San Antonio, they were legacy politicians, lobbyists, and seasoned activists. I describe the process of establishment consolidation that defined candidates as the establishment pick in each race. By outlining each coalition, I can draw direct comparisons between the two cities in campaign resource allocation. I am then able to situate political brokers within the literature on political consultants, and make a case for the work of the consultant as a resource unto itself. After describing and analyzing the work of these brokers, I then turn back to the reforms and discuss how and why campaign experts were able to exploit them and maintain their power.

Finally, in "Chapter 9: Structures of Influence", I review the major arguments and findings of each chapter. I also discuss the impact of these findings on the existing literature on local election reforms and candidate viability. Then, I propose potential further research that can be drawn from this study in several fields. In truth, much of this study argues that the notion of kingmaking has simply become institutionalized and professionalized. This shifts the burden of proving one's authority from the voters or the party to the political professionals and legacy politicians/lobbyists. It also dilutes agency and by extension, accountability. These reforms demonstrate that once these political brokers exist, it is very difficult to win elections without them regardless of the rules of the game. I end the chapter and the presentation of this study with a consideration on the social value of these systems and practices, what they mean for democracy, and what they mean for representation in American cities.

Chapter 2:

STUDYING DEMOCRACY AS A PROCESS

This is a comparative study of political actors in varying electoral structures and political communities in two large municipalities in the United States. The goal of this study is to present and analyze power structures and candidate viability in two cities in the midst of electoral reform. In order to study this, I chose a qualitative approach. Existing literature tends to use quantitative or network analysis models to explain candidate support from voters, endorsers, and donors. However, while those approaches allow for large scale data to be presented, they have most often been focused on the state or national level elections, for which more, and more consistent, data is available. In fact, scholars have mostly kept their focus away from local elections partially because of the lack of large databases. As a result, while their results typically have much quantitative support, they may lack the ability to comment on the more nuanced aspects of races that do not have this same reportage available, i.e., local elections. Thus, while this study of local politics lacked much of the typical data available to other scholars of state or national elections, a qualitative approach to candidate success allows for a relationally-driven study that avoids the reductionist nature of quantitative or network analysis.

The most important reason why I chose a qualitative approach is because of the dearth of research on municipal elections. Without rigorously developed variables that can be applied throughout electoral systems regardless of structure, an approach that maximizes exploration is most appropriate. It is the nature of local elections that the variables are anything but uniform. As the issues that matter to constituents become more and more personal, as happens as one drills down on a

political level, it becomes more difficult to force the data into a clean set of 6, or 8, or 10 variables. The most meaningful way to identify and investigate variables is through an intense, explorative approach. Otherwise, it is left to the researchers to crunch numbers, identify trends, regress data to clean sets, and thereby potentially lose the actual meaning of personal viewpoints and behavior. In other words, they lose the explanation for the data. Therefore, this study was conducted in semi-structured interviews, ethnography, and analysis of donor databases. The study is limited to two sites for a direct comparison, and predominately features a single election cycle in each city.

In order to develop my research question, I, of course, read extant literature and found that there were many places where more research could be done. I felt that this important area was woefully understudied and that shedding light on political machinations at the local level of democracy would not only provide fruitful information not just for a historically underexplored phenomenon, but would be a catalyst for other lines of inquiry. I felt qualified to conduct this difficult research, and it was of great interest to me due to my own experience as a practitioner. Many researchers have tangential relationships, or some knowledge of, their subjects; however, in my case I had actually worked in campaigns as a field organizer, lobbyist, fundraiser, digital media producer, and campaign manager. I also served as a legislative assistant. During my time working in campaigns, I lived in five different states and encountered wholly different electoral systems both legally speaking and socially. Political party influence varied dramatically based on geography and the level of government. My campaign work taught me that, while this might not be visible to the voting public, campaigns actually begin long before anyone declares a candidacy and that political professionals (like most professionals of any kind) have rich social lives amongst their colleagues. In my campaign work, I witnessed complex inter-relationships with extensive cooperation between groups and organizations that led to one candidate being favored over others. However, when I read literature on the industry of campaigning, I struggled to see my own or my colleagues' experiences in it, which boiled down to one thing: that campaigning is both political and personal. Most sociologists and political scientists only see it as political and economic, ignoring the complexity of personal professional relationships over

time. In order to address this issue of approach in the literature, I selected my methods based on how they might expose the relations of a campaign.

In this chapter, I will detail the methodological choices I made throughout the rather iterative process of conducting this research. I will begin with site selection, then continue through my initial research plan. Next, I will discuss how that plan shifted in light of the electoral reforms passed in each city. I will then outline how the donor databases in each city present data and the role that presentation has in data interpretation. I will follow this up with my considerations for data analysis, including corrections, and finally, I will address the ethical concerns and risks that I encountered.

SITE SELECTION

There were many considerations for site selection. Firstly, election timing was critical. My fieldwork was expected to be completed between September of 2016 and the summer of 2017. That meant that either I would observe the final months of elections taking place during a national presidential election or I would observe an off-year election. That is to say, an election which does not take place in an even year when national seats are typically sought. I decided that because the question of candidate selection might be answered very early in the election cycle, it was important for me to observe as much of the early campaign work as I could, preferably before anyone even declared their intent to run. From campaigns and elections literature, I knew that it is during this precursor time that the more nuanced aspects of candidate grooming and pre-selection take place. It is when foundations for electoral success are lain. In addition, I decided that I wanted to limit the variables from up-ticket campaigns as much as possible so that the municipal elections would be the driving factors of voters on election day. The draw-backs to this decision are that: 1) politics does not happen in a local vacuum regardless of cycle timing and more information might be better when it comes to up-ticket effects; 2) many cities do not have off-year elections which limits site options significantly. Still, I felt that I could utilize my own knowledge as a former practitioner and my knowledge of social science research methods to create meaningful and provocative results.

In total, there were 34 cities in the US which held mayoral elections in 2017. Of those 34, three were in New Jersey which also has off-year state level elections. I then decided to select the comparator cities based on diversity of the city populations, electoral and governing structures, proximity to large metro areas and comparative potential. Certain cities like New York, Boston and Atlanta have been thoroughly studied by other scholars, and entry into the political community in these places would likely take longer than in other cities. I then looked at cities based on total municipal population and selected the larger ones. Communities of fewer than one million in the metro area were unlikely to have political consultants, key figures in the scholarship I hoped to address, so those areas were eliminated from consideration. Lastly, my experience as a campaign worker meant that I had professional connections in several cities that might allow more efficient access to the political community.

In the end, I chose to research Seattle, San Antonio, and Cleveland. These cities developed their electoral structures at different times in US history, varied in terms of electoral partisanship, varied in terms of labor union rights, varied geographically, and were each the central municipality in metro areas over two million in population. However, after an initial round of interviews with local contacts, I learned of electoral reforms taking place in both Seattle and San Antonio while no comparable major reform was taking place in Cleveland that cycle. I felt that this created a great opportunity for more focused research to compare and contrast the two reform cities at a much deeper level, but it also meant sacrificing Cleveland as a research site.

While I had initially decided to focus on the campaigns in the cities, and conduct fieldwork exclusively within campaign work and events, the electoral reforms caused me to adjust the scope of my fields within San Antonio and Seattle. I decided to include the city council meetings, and governmental meetings affiliated with elections and the reforms, as ethnographic field sites. Many of these meetings were available for review by video. Since I was not in the field during the actual reform referendums, I treated the governmental digital archives as field sites as well.

The following is a rough break down of the time I spent in each city:
May 2016: Cleveland
June-July 2016: San Antonio

August-September 2016: Seattle
October-December 2016: Off-site research planning after initial round of interviews
January-February 2017: San Antonio
March 2017: Seattle
April-June 2017: San Antonio
July-August 2017: Seattle

Once selected, I tried to spend equal amounts of time in San Antonio and Seattle, and ensured that I was present in the final weeks of both cities' primary elections. Unfortunately, I had to leave and return to University after August, which meant that I was not in the field for the Seattle general election. However, I conducted remote interviews during that time. The practical circumstances surrounding the conduct of the research varied across the cities. For example, cost of food and entertainment in Seattle is far higher than in San Antonio. This meant that I was limited in how much I could interact with political professionals in public locations (meeting for lunch, drinks etc). Also, I had access to private transportation in San Antonio, making me much more mobile to meet interview subjects anywhere they wished. I did not anticipate the difficulty of public transportation in Seattle and struggled to accommodate the schedules of subjects at times. The high cost of living in Seattle also meant that I had to stay in a dorm-style hostel while I had contacts in San Antonio that allowed me to stay in a private home. The physical surroundings affected my ability to transcribe, conduct phone interviews, and maintain secure field notes. In Seattle, at times I was forced to place my devices in a locker rather than delete them from my personal device. These differing research conditions may have influenced my ability to collect data or maximize the comfort, and therefore candidness, of interviewees.

METHODS

Interviews

For this study, I conducted 36 semi-structured interviews in Seattle and 29 in San Antonio. The interviews began in September of 2016 and continued through November of 2017. Two interviews occurred after this period in San Antonio because I needed to confirm some of the findings. The structure of the interviews depended strongly on the role of the individual I was interviewing. In order to

identify appropriate subjects, I first contacted a political consultant in each city. These two consultants then contacted other individuals on my behalf, those individuals then contacted other subjects, etc. This was not exactly a snowball sampling method because the number of nominees was not controlled and I did not continue the method throughout the study. Instead, it was a chain-referral method of sampling combined with cold-calling individuals mentioned in interviews but not necessarily directly contacted by anyone other than myself (Biernacki and Waldorf, 1981). Often, interviewees would specifically instruct me not to mention them by name when making these contacts.

Due to this request, it became clear over the course of the study that anonymity of subjects would be important. While most interviewees gave explicit consent to use their names, and while none of them would be considered members of an at-risk population, it was clear that the small nature of the political community of the cities meant that, with very little additional information, tracing individual quotes would be a simple task for an insider. Therefore, the professional integrity of interviewees was potentially precarious, and I chose to make all interviews anonymous.

In my interviews, I was highly aware of my mostly insider status, and I am aware that this status can cause limitations in the ability of the researcher to recognize sociological importance and fully explore areas which may seem mundane from a practitioner's perspective. More fundamentally, there is of course a tension between what might be considered "insider truth" versus "outsider truth" (Merton, 1972). Most scholars address the issue of reflexivity of the insider within the context of identity, generally referring to the researcher as native or indigenous to a particular community or population. However, a few approach it organizationally, which is more appropriate for this study. In particular, Brannick and Coghlan's work find no reason why being a member of an organization might disqualify a researcher. To the contrary, instead it affords them access to otherwise closed groups both through status and the ability to negotiate organizational politics. What is important is for the researcher to ensure that they are reflexive in their approach while conducting fieldwork and that they develop an analytical framework which offers exploration beyond the direct experience of the researcher (2007; Hellawell, 2007; Berger 2013).

During my first interview in San Antonio, I was asked if I would be voting in the upcoming election. Initially, I did not have an answer. While my registration is in San Antonio, I still found myself surprised by the question. I responded honestly, "I don't know yet," and we moved on with the interview. Afterward, I considered the question further. How might this affect interviewees? Do I want to be seen as a potential vote within the interview context? What opportunities might this grant me throughout the fieldwork process? In the end, I decided against voting in the election. It was good that the question occurred early and that I made the decision quickly because I was asked the same thing in most of my subsequent interviews. I believe that this decision was critical in ensuring the comfort and candor of the interviewees.

I always allowed the interviewees to select the location of the interview, preferring that they chose a location familiar and comfortable for them. They chose cafes, bars, and their own places of work. One interviewee invited me into their home where they have a home office set up. With each interview, I would introduce myself and discuss my background working in politics. This immediately oriented me as an insider within the professional political community, but as an outsider to the city itself. Often it meant that we had mutual contacts or experiences to discuss, which would then set the interviewees at ease. Often during the interviews, they would say things like "you know from your work how it is" or employ insider-jargon. This was both good and bad, while it meant that the interviewees could remain casual and comfortable, it also meant that I was required to do more interpretation than I was comfortable with at times. If I sensed a pattern of this insider coding, I would slow down the interview and ask for clarification, often asking if their meaning was the same as my understanding from my own experience. Another common issue which required redirection and clarification was the tendency of interviewees to "drift" into discussing politics at the state-level. To derail this, I would ask if the trend or characteristic they were discussing applied to city government, as well. Usually, it did not and they switched back to a municipal focus. Below is a sample interview schedule:

Personal:
What is your work now generally?
What is your work in the 2017 election cycle?
How did you get into the work?

General San Antonio:
Who are the more frequent consultants? How do they stack up?
Who are the most important "gets" in SA? In your district?
What coalitions typically form?
How important is the right consultant or campaign manager?
Can you win without one?

2017 Specific:
Who were the staff/consultants in the race?
What were the coalitions in the district race?
How did they form? (are they people and groups that almost always work together? *Did* they actually coordinate?
How what was the day-to-day like on the campaign?
How did the mayoral race affect the district race?
How did the new CC salaries affect the race?

Last question:
What's the most important thing I should know to understand politics in San Antonio?

The most common type of interviewees were political consultants and campaign managers. For these individuals, first time interviews included questions about professional, educational and political background. I then asked about their client selection process. Next, I asked for a typical campaign fundraising approach, including to whom the first ten phone calls made by the candidate should be. Next, I asked more general questions about who the major political players were in the city, and whose endorsements were most valuable. Typically, during this portion, interviewees would offer their "theory of the case" regarding how politics worked in the city. They would offer up ideal-type candidate descriptions and describe local voter idiosyncrasies. I then asked about electoral reform, their opinion on how it might change their work, and how it might affect campaigning. Lastly, depending on the state of the campaigns at the time, I asked about specific races and candidates. These interviews ranged in length from thirty-two minutes to two hours and twelve minutes.

The next group I focused on were political directors of activist/advocacy organizations and unions. I asked similar questions about background and the political reforms, but I also asked about their organizational endorsement process. Additionally, at times, I requested interviewees to speak for only themselves as individuals rather than as organizational representatives. These individuals tended to use journalistic rhetoric when speaking to me, such as wishing to be "on

background" etc. When this occurred, I would clarify that my role was not as a journalist, but a researcher and that the information they provided would be anonymous, but might be included as direct, unattributed, quotes. For many of my interviewees this was the first time they had been a part of a research study and, as a result, they often remained suspicious.

Lastly, I spoke with candidates and campaign staff members. By far, staff members were the most concerned about anonymity and, as such, they are directly quoted only minimally in my writing. The structure of these interviews was very similar to that of the consultants but included additional questions about the consultants themselves, their role in the city, and their relative status. Candidates often wanted to discuss specific city policies, which I welcomed. However, from a research standpoint it was most important for me to identify which organizations supported those policies and what the political process would be for making it happen, rather than discussing the individual merits or drawbacks of a given policy. This allowed me to gain insight into who they believed to be most influential. However, candidates, perhaps due to the rote behavior of promoting themselves in campaigns, preferred to redirect the conversation to voters instead of organizations and associations.

There were a few individuals with whom I spoke who did not fit into any of the previously mentioned categories: one was a neighborhood association leader, two were city workers and one was a local journalist. These interviews were far less structured than the other ones and were also far more specific to the individual's professional/leadership role. I also had many conversations with city elections officials who explained rules and regulations in detail but I did not consider these interviews in my dataset. Of course, within these interviews, I was viewed to have far less of an insider status. Ultimately, that orientation allowed me to regularly step out from the practitioner's perspective and reorient the conversation focus to my field sites. I often took time after these interviews to reread my notes from previous fieldwork to ensure that I was clear on the local concepts and practices.

As the campaigns proceeded, and as election day approached, interviewees understandably became increasingly less forthcoming and unavailable. The majority of follow-up interviews took place one month before election day and after election day. The stress, the demands of scheduling and the paranoia about

the opposition had a strong chilling effect on my access. I therefore used this time in the field primarily for ethnographic work as well as for preparation for the other site. Luckily the San Antonio elections took place in May and June, while the Seattle elections were in August and November, allowing me to switch focus when subjects became less accessible.

I ended every interview with the question, "If I'm really going to understand politics in [city], what do you think I need to know?" I say "ended" every interview in the sense that it was the last prepared question I had. In reality, this question usually led to a lengthy conversation with clarifying questions. It also reoriented me as an outsider. Most of the people I interviewed were autodidactic and many were suspicious of an academic approach to understanding political dynamics. This question allowed them to fully explore their beliefs about the city's political ecology from years of experience. In almost every case, this question proved to be the most fruitful for later analysis.

Far and away, the most useful data for my study was found in the interviews. For low-level district campaigns, it is often unclear whether a candidate has hired staff or a political consultant at all much less who those people are and what relationships and reputations they have within the political community. The findings in this study, while much of it may seem publically available, generally were not and could only be sussed-out through real-time, on the ground fieldwork. This is especially true in San Antonio where both campaign contribution and expenditure data is only temporarily public. Without speaking to political professionals and local fundraisers, it is impossible to know how much money is historically needed to win in a particular district, for example. Similarly, in Seattle, information on the relationships between consultants and organizational leadership can only be gleaned through interviews. This is fundamentally a closed and elite community and the lack of available public information on the machinations of election campaigning is a core finding of this study which I will address in the conclusion.

Ethnographic Work

Initially, this study was intended to be significantly more ethnographic in nature than the result. Originally, I secured a position to manage a campaign/assist

a consultant in San Antonio and be a hired hand on a campaign in Seattle doing mostly fundraising work. Neither of the positions bore out. Unfortunately, the consultant for whom I intended to work fell ill at the start of the election season, and had to take the entire year off from work, and the campaign in Seattle changed their mind when I said I would still be conducting interviews with other political professionals over the course of the study. I decided to shift away from the ethnography of campaign work, and instead rely on interviews for that aspect of data collection. However, I still employed ethnographic methods when possible.

My ethnographic work was atypical for a sociological study. I was not imbedded in an organization, nor was I in a single environment for multiple days. Instead, my ethnographic work can be divided into three categories: observing the work of consultants in their place of business, campaign events, and governmental meetings both in-person and observed in archives. Each of these sites required a different ethnographic approach. In the case of the consultants, I used a person-centered approach. During this time, I asked questions throughout the day and acted as a passive-participant. At campaign events, I interacted with other observers and asked questions. I took cues from the other attendees and oriented myself as an active-participant. In terms of the archival ethnography, I was a non-participatory observer (De Walt and De Walt, 2011).

I asked a consultant in each city if I could observe their work for a day. Both agreed with stipulations that I not quote them or record any of the time spent with them. One of the consultants worked from an office rented by his firm. The other worked from home during the morning and knocked on doors for one of his candidates in the afternoon. Throughout the day I inquired about their activity, but was unable to take notes per their requests. While I did not use this data directly in my study, it did inform me of the frequency with which consultants communicate with clients as well as potential endorsers and donors on that particular day. It also allowed me to further develop a rapport with the individuals, which I believe allowed for greater access later. The most important evidence of this was that the following week, one of them allowed me see his donor list as long as I agreed not to take any notes.

My approach to these "day-in-the-life" ethnographic sessions might not be considered actual ethnographies by many. After all, one of the key tenets of ethnography is that duration should be extensive. However, I struggle to call it

anything else since each was a full day of observing a professional routine. I did not prepare significantly for these days since I was unable to take notes or report on their specificities. Instead, I used them to inform future interviews and develop my relationships with the subjects.

At campaign events, I took traditional field notes. These events were two debates, three fundraisers, a parade, three neighborhood association meetings and several election night candidate parties. These events were useful in that I was able to determine the tone of the races. I heard candidate stump speeches, observed crowd sizes and reactions and spoke with potential donors informally about their thoughts on all the candidates. I also ran into political professionals at these events and was able to make connections for future interviews through them. I took my role as participant-observer in these situations to mean that I should adopt the view of a voter. That was the target audience of campaign events, and I wanted to experience them as close to how they were intended as possible. These events mostly exposed how the candidates wished to articulate themselves to voters. They did not expose meaningful information on the cities' professional political communities, but they did offer insight into campaign framing and helped me to get a sense of which issues voters were most concerned about, which informed later interviews.

There were two sites where I conducted archival ethnographic work. The first was the Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission meetings. I also attended three of these meetings in person. I observed the structure of the room, camera placement, and location of the commissioners relative to the observers and witnesses in my analysis. When in person, I chose not to speak, and exclusively observe. I was never the only person doing this, so I believe that my presence was minimally disruptive or influential to the events. In total, I observed 22 meetings. I then transcribed those meetings when anything related to the Democracy Vouchers was discussed and noted the events and individuals present when they were not being discussed.

The second site for archival ethnography was the San Antonio City Council meetings. I separated out the meetings before the formation of the Charter Review Commission and the meetings which took place after its formation, which totaled 11 and 10 respectively. Other city council subcommittee meetings which might have been relevant were not recorded, and the meetings of the Charter Review

Commission were also not recorded, though the minutes were sometimes available publicly.

Archival ethnography is a relatively new addition to anthropology and sociology. Archives have historically been seen as tools of dominating groups and individuals to reify languages of power and establish narratives which are hegemonic (Zeitlyn, 2012; Foucault, 1970; Derrida, 1995; Bourdieu, 1977). Nevertheless, according to many scholars, it is possible to conduct archival ethnographic work subversively and critically by seeking moments of contention, creation, or decision-making and observing the dynamics of power in these moments (Gracy, 2004; Comaroff & Comaroff, 1992; Zeitlyn, 2012). This is where I focused my research.

There are many ways to view archival ethnography. I chose to use Taylor's notion of performance records in which the researcher views the archival record as a theatre piece. This view ties in closely with the theory of audience democracy discussed in the previous chapter, and it acknowledges the structure of these documents as they are for public consumption, feature staging (room setting), a camera as well as a live audience (attendees), lines and scripted norms (procedure), and speechmaking (Taylor, 2003). Thinking of the archival records this way also allowed me to maintain critical distance at all times, as one would when consuming fictional media of any kind.

In order to conduct my ethnography in San Antonio, I downloaded all supplemental documents before listening to the city council meetings then read along as they were referenced in an attempt to recreate the experience of attending the meeting in person as closely as possible. I then went back and transcribed the meetings. Luckily, no one spoke without being introduced, so I can be confident that my transcription attributions are accurate. However, I was unable to witness most physical reactions or interactions, and while I went to a regular city council meeting to observe the seating arrangements and space, I could not see all of the specific individuals of the meetings in this study.

The two sites were very different. The SEEC met in a room on a high floor of the city government building. The actual meeting room often varied. The tables and chairs were arranged at the same level and there was a single camera in the back corner, aimed at the commissioners, meaning the witnesses facing them were only visible from behind. In contrast, the San Antonio City Council A meetings

took place in a large formal room with an elevated dais for the councilmembers and the mayor. City staff had a designated area to the side of the dais and a projection screen at the front of the room complimented anyone who was addressing the audience of the room. A podium in the center faced the council for witness testimony and there were courtroom like rows for attendees which extended to the back of the room. Multiple cameras, which were manually selected, switched depending on who was speaking. The B meetings, which is where many details were hammered out, took place in a secondary room in city hall. The room only held a few people in addition to speakers, and there was no opportunity for public statements. This room, and these B meetings, were for bureaucratic work, while the A meetings were for political work.

Doing ethnographic work in the setting of government is tricky. The dominance of written regulation and the hyper formality of the interactions may lead one to imagine that little thick description can be gained beyond regurgitating procedure (Geertz, 1973). However, in these environments, cultural norms are nuanced and sophisticated. Only in dedicated observation can a researcher fully internalize these norms and appreciate the dynamics of interactions they determine. Within the field of political ethnography, bureaucratic institutions are often ignored, "From all appearances, this is not an arena of political action at all. Bureaucracy, as some of our favorite literary work have shown us, obviates individual agency. The humanness of the human condition gets lost in the files, the halls, the shufflings of bureaucratic administration" (Bernstein and Mertz, 2011).

In this case, a city council is not a bureaucratic body but a hybrid of both elected officials and bureaucrats coordinating to fulfill cultural norms in the process of governing. Similarly, a commission is comprised of both appointed officials and staff members who support their decision processes. Both entities are public-facing yet are engaging in bureaucratic procedures making them each a unique and fruitful location of political ethnography (Benzecry and Baiocchi, 2017; Forrest, 2017; Joseph and Auyero, 2007). Scholars of political ethnography tend to frame themselves and their fields outside of formal political institutions entirely. However, I chose to employ the principles of political ethnography, that of critically observing how power manifests in everyday life, to formal governing bodies. In this way, I was able to see practices of governmental visibility, inclusion, interpretations of democracy and resistance (Sady, 1990; van Hulst, 2008).

With the exception of the archival ethnographies, my ethnographic work was minimally informing in my final data analysis. Instead, attending events and observing consultants helped me to remain "in-the-know" about the various campaigns and campaign issues. Aside from the commission/council meetings, I therefore considered my ethnographic work to mostly compliment interviews rather than as a comprehensive ethnographic study. In both the analysis and writing up, I used it to explain that certain statements and opinions were born out in my experience at events rather than treating the ethnographic work as a stand-alone source. The vast majority of campaign work takes place through one-on-one interactions, which I was unable to observe. Indeed, the lack of ethnographic data is itself a fact of American elections and democracy. The inaccessibility of the average voter to the dynamics of candidate selection and support is itself an important finding which I will address in my concluding chapter.

Donor Databases

Like all cities, Seattle and San Antonio are required by federal law to collect information on donor contributions. The extent to which they are forthcoming and diligent in the tracking of this data differs. I downloaded all city level data available and applied industry codes when the information on occupation and employer was present. These codes were as follows:

L-Lawyer, Attorney, Partner at a Law Firm
R-Realtor, Partner in a Real Estate or Development Firm
O-Office Administrator
S-Software Developer, Engineer, Manager, Leader at a Technology Firm
N-Not-employed, Retired, Student, Unemployed, Volunteer, Homemaker, Housewife
G-Governmental Employee
B-Business Owner, Business Manager, Executive, Self-employed without Occupation listed
T-Teacher, Professor, Educator

I was only able to consistently apply these codes to Seattle contributors. As I will discuss in Chapter 5, San Antonio did not collect information in occupation or employers from contributors. I based these codes on the work of Brian E. Adams, who developed them after studying and comparing contributor attributes

across eleven major US cities (Adams, 2010). Had this study been exclusively about the donor pools in each of the cities, I would have researched the detailed information of each contributor in both cities. However, because this study is about relationality not just of donors but of endorsers, political leaders, consultants and others, I was not able to do this. That however, would be an excellent avenue for future study.

I also used the data to determine total contributions to each candidate over the 2017 election cycle and isolate funds given to the candidate by the candidates themselves versus by traditional contributors. In Seattle, I was also able to collect data of independent expenditures, both in terms of who contributed to them and which campaigns they supported. This data was not collected by the city of San Antonio. I did not use the databases for any advanced modelling or statistical information. Initially, I had planned to develop a network analysis of donors over time in both cities. This type of analysis would contribute nicely to the larger conversation of donor roles in campaign selection where network analyses have demonstrated donor closeness, party differentiation in donor habits, and identified important nodes.

However, because donors are not tracked at the city level over time as they are in national elections, this approach proved to be beyond the scope of this study. Instead, I filled in the data on influential donors through interviews. Nevertheless, the donor information was extremely useful in comparing the relative success of candidates throughout the election cycles, and in identifying the donor culture of the two cities and their bureaucratic institutions. Ultimately, I was able to contextualize Seattle's contributor information within the literature of donor coalitions and I was able to contextualize San Antonio within the literature on total campaign funding as well as contribution timing. The imbalance of information was itself a rich source for comparison between the two cities and their interpretations of democratic transparency and privacy. I will discuss all of these points thoroughly in Chapter 6.

I was asked several times during my fieldwork whether I would be doing a racial or gender analysis of donors. I ultimately decided against such an approach. The main reason for this is that it is very difficult to determine whether an individual is contributing in their own name or their spouse's. Many married couple share accounts and give in each other's names, which would make a gender-

based analysis inexact at best. There is also no way to guarantee that a traditionally gendered name applies in each case. The question of racial composition is more complicated. Members of the Latinx community in Texas tend to self-identify as White at much higher rates than in other states. Additionally, again the only way to infer a person's race would be based on their names, and I was not confident that this would offer any real insight into the makeup of the donor pool within the cities.

Other options for categorizing donors that I considered were geographic location, contribution bands, and rate of giving across multiple campaigns. I ultimately chose a little of each. I looked at the geographic location of businesses and business owners which gave to campaigns, looked at the top campaign contributors and looked at the those who gave to multiple campaigns within the same race. Each of these approaches offered insights which were confirmed in interviews, which I discuss in Chapter 6. However, when looking at all the data as a whole, I determined that the occupational data was the most appropriate way to group donors.

ANALYSIS AND WRITING UP

The vast majority of scholarly work on elections utilizes donor databases. A few use the databases plus media reports or a networked model of political staff trading. On the other hand, researchers studying political preferences and subjectivity as well as organizational studies often use interviews and ethnography to reveal relational dynamics. A small handful of researchers, mostly based in California, study campaigns qualitatively using these methods. This meant that I could not very easily model my analysis or presentation off of others' work. Studies of election reform focus entirely on voter data, to determine outcomes such as turnout and campaign financing. However, my interests lie in the flow of power and the way we construct democratic values. Therefore, my analysis was thematic and iterative rather than outcomes focused.

When I set about analyzing my data, I first divided it into three categories: the governmental meetings, the campaigns, and the donor lists. Each grouping revealed key information about the reform in each city. The first, the governmental meetings, showed the process. I started by evaluating what was available to me as

a researcher and what was not. I then took a step forward and evaluated what was available to meeting attendees/witnesses and what was not. This included speaking time, recordings of consequential meetings, time and locations of the meetings, and general deference to procedure versus inclusivity. I found that practices of in/exclusion and the (in)visibility of the state were subtle to navigate and required both relationships outside of the meeting setting and a sophisticated understanding of the norms. Those with these resources had higher rates of participation and influence than those without regardless of attendance frequency.

I then assessed the political process of passing, implementing, and applying the reforms by looking thematically at critical moments of change or advancement in the processes, who spoke the most about them, and what decisions were made in public versus private. These findings broadly asked about the reforms and the degree to which they were politicized and depoliticized in the governing bodies. By using (de)politicization as my primary thematic concept, I was able to speak directly to research on the both governance and theories of democracy and power.

In order to develop a clear and coherent story in each city, I organized everything chronologically then set about identifying the coalitions which formed around each candidate using interview references and donor data. This came through identifying who interviewees deemed to be the most important endorsements, donors and activist leaders in each of the cities. It also incorporated a comparison between interviewees within each city on the relative importance of labor, advocacy groups, the business community and other coalitions referred to by interviewees themselves. Next came the issue of donor money. I felt that in order to sufficiently address literature, it was vital that I look particularly at donor databases both in terms of the information they provide and what role the databases themselves play in city politics. As I discussed earlier, direct comparison between the content of the databases was impossible, but the effect they had on the political professional networks was significant.

After analyzing and presenting the two cities' political communities along with the processes for the reforms and donor databases, I was then able to analyze the 2017 elections themselves. To determine whether the reforms affected both the coalitions and the types of candidates that found success, I first had to look at the candidates' backgrounds. In Seattle, I was able to use donor data to look historically at the occupations and employers as well as independent expenditures

to see which candidates different types of contributors gave to and how often they coalesced. I then took my analysis of the coalition groups in Seattle before the 2017 elections to create potential lanes of success for candidates. The three lanes were labor, business, and leftists/community groups, with the last often being in opposition to the other two. I detail the specific characteristics of these three coalitions in the latter half of the thesis.

In San Antonio, the lack of a clear coalitions corresponded with a lack of campaign professionalization as well as a lack of well-defined candidate types. However, a few patterns emerged, for example, the claiming of authenticity by younger Latinx candidates through family-centric childhood photos and professional success and self-funded candidates with ties to the business community. However, these candidates were never referred to as "the business candidate" or the like. Each would simply argue why they were in fact better for business, though the kind of business differed. Instead, business support split geographically, and labor was minimally involved. This meant that there was minimal articulation of the candidates to the voters in a way that could be generalized outside of the individual districts. This may be related to the consistently low voter turnout in San Antonio.

My approach to this analysis was thematic. However, there were limitations in comparison. Only half of interviewees agreed to be recorded as part of their consent, which ruled out language analysis programs. In order to compare the two cities, I instead looked at each individually. As I stated earlier, I determined the coalitions and city level power brokers based on interviews. Comparing those results in the two political communities offered stark contrasts. My research was purposefully exploratory, which meant that I somewhat avoided predetermined variables when approaching interviews. Nonetheless, I was able to directly compare degrees of professionalism among paid political actors, the influence of organizations, the role of money, and theorize on the impact of the electoral reforms in each city. I then structured each of the substantive chapters comparatively.

Corrections

After my viva voce, my examiners asked that I complete corrections for my thesis. The primary request was that I reconsider my analytical approach to the data and to add significant analysis to the final write up. Previously, I had taken a primarily descriptive approach to my writing. In order to begin this analysis, I stepped back and revisited the data I had collected. I considered what was most important about the story I was trying to tell through heavy description. I concluded that this research revealed a great deal about how we perform and think about democracy and power. Through the process of election reform, advocates, organizers, volunteers, politicians, professionals and candidates articulated their vision for a more representative democracy while reinforcing and reconstituting existing electoral power dynamics. I then revised each chapter to analyze aspects of these dynamics to demonstrate the endemic nature of exclusionary power in the electoral reforms. Ultimately, the way power manifests in these two local democracies pre-determines and produces candidate viability long before the campaigns begin.

The substantive sections of my original write-up were originally divided into four parts which focused each on the commissions and government bodies developing the reforms, the political community structures prior to reform, the way donors have given historically and during the reform cycle, and the political community structures after the reforms. The new version still has these four sections, but they have been restructured and elaborated upon for deeper conversation with extant literature and analysis. The first section, regarding the government processing of reform, is now divided into two chapters. The first discusses the practices of the government bodies and how they exist in contradiction to the stated values of the reformers, and the second chapter focuses on inclusion and the individual people granted status and authority to influence the reforms. I then move on to the political communities prior to reform, analyzing the coalitions which exist before campaigns and what the relationships mean for the academic discussions of community power and campaigning as an industry. Next, I discuss the money in each city. Because this chapter addressed two hypotheses from extant literature, I did not change it very much. I only added more analysis and moved much of the findings to appendices to improve the experience for the

reader. Lastly, I divided the chapter about the political communities after reform into two: the primaries and the generals. In the chapter about the primaries, I analyzed patterns and comparisons between candidates and the coalitions they formed, and for the chapter on the general elections, I focused on the coalitions again but discussed the brokers involved in forming and coalescing those coalitions. Both chapters allowed me to better position my work in contrast to literature on campaigns and elections as well as community power theories.

While my substantive chapters still feature significant description, they now orient that description in direct comparison between cases allowing for clearer and more useful commentary on democracy and power. I eliminated my original attempt to apply literature about the nature of contemporary political parties to the research. This allowed my findings and analysis to be in conversation with more varied and more developed literatures that speak directly to systems, institutions and meaning-making in politics. Most importantly, it allowed me to analyze the very specific kind of political work being done by the individuals and organizations in the cases which then produce viable candidates without forcing them into existing scholarly definitions and functionalities of political networks.

ETHICS AND RISKS

The risks of this study were minimal. The United States is a relatively safe country and the cities in which I conducted research were familiar to me. The risks for me therefore were unrelated to the actual work including driving, everyday crime and the like. The one exception to this is the occasional act of violence against candidates for office or their property which occurs in the US. However, I did not consider this to be a significant enough risk to warrant sacrifices in fieldwork.

The nature of studying political actors is that they are in fact, political. Occasionally, the politics of interviewees offended me. My desire to understand the city political machinations meant that I was able to ignore this for the most part and redirect conversation away from nationalized concerns. There was only one interview when I could not hide my frustration. I excused myself and then did two follow up interviews with the individual after better preparing myself for what might be said.

The larger concerns with this study were in the realms of ethics. As I discussed earlier, I decided to anonymize all interviewees regardless of whether they consented to being named. Additionally, I limited the information I gathered from donor lists which were shown to me in San Antonio in agreement with the providers. However, there were two major incidents which created ethical quandaries for me.

The first was that I witnessed a political actor engage in illicit fundraising activity, effectively lying to donors. While this is not illegal, it is certainly questionable and potentially relevant to my study. However, the incident occurred with a donor to a state-level seat, not municipal, and I have no way of knowing whether it was a one-off incident or a pattern. When I asked about it, I was told to just ignore it. Ultimately, I chose to exclude the incident from my data, but I asked about hypothetical ways of fundraising that were ethically questionable in future interviews with campaign workers. I felt this line of questioning produced some information without directly challenging and potentially alienating the interviewees.

The second incident occurred while I was with several political professionals at a bar after an event. During campaigns, campaign workers often gather after work at the nearest bar. Throughout the campaign season, the regulars grow to include members of other campaigns and political leadership in organizations as well as consultants. Owing to my insider-status, I was often invited to these gatherings, which I sometimes agreed to. At one such event, five individuals asked if I wanted to join them in hard drug use. I declined. There was a particular uneasiness to this incident as criminalized drug-use was a major talking point of some campaigns. I was forced to consider that the personal behavior of political professionals is sometimes hypocritical when compared with their professional behavior. Ultimately, I decided to dismiss the incident in my future interactions with these individuals as I had not previously included personal behavior or predilections in my research.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I discussed the various sources of data I used to conduct and analyze the elections of 2017 in San Antonio and Seattle as well as my

methodological approaches to that data. In addition to explaining my site selection, methods of analysis and ethical considerations, I described my approach to interviews with individuals based on their professional/political roles and backgrounds. I also discussed my varied and iterative ethnographic work including archival ethnography. Finally, I compared the various sources of donor data in both cities.

My ethnographic approach was, for the most part, that of observer. However, my background in campaigning exposed me as an insider to anyone who knew me and resulted in some shifts in access. For my archival ethnography, I was fully an observer, but engaged in principles of political ethnography to observe critically. My interview approach was semi-unstructured. I set the goal in each interview of covering specific topics and had a few questions I was sure to ask in order to collect comparable data, but these questions and topics often became starting points for longer unstructured conversations. For these interviews, I used my role as an industry insider as much as possible to make interviewees comfortable and to gain access to otherwise closed and elite subjects. My approach to the donor databases was that of a user. I did not go into the campaign reporting functions of the databases, and instead used only data available to the general public, as a voter might do. In switching between these approaches, I believe I was able to maximize the data I could to collect during my time in the field. Often in the process of analysis, I was able to draw on complimentary information to confirm, contradict, or clarify findings, which helped me to confidently report my conclusions. By remaining open and exploratory while keeping my fundamental research question in mind, I was able to move quickly between environments and subjects, which proved necessary to a relational conceptualization of political activity.

In combining interviews, ethnographic work, and donor database information, I will now tell two distinct stories of political reform in municipal elections. I am then able to compare these stories race by race, candidate by candidate, and bureaucratic structure by bureaucratic structure. Organized both temporally and thematically, the following chapters present the data and analysis gleaned from this mixed methods dataset.

Part 1

Reforming Democracy through Technocracy

Chapter 3:

THE VALUE-PRACTICE CONTRADICTION

Henry Rodriguez, the Executive Director of the San Antonio chapter of the League of United Latin American Citizens, was speaking at the San Antonio City Council meeting on August 7, 2014. He talked about the allocation of funds for a streetcar initiative and specifically about the petition to bring funding for the initiative to a referendum vote. The petition drive had gathered enough total signatures to trigger a vote, but many signatures were found to be invalid bringing the total below the referendum threshold. Nonetheless, the city council was holding a hearing to air the concerns of the signature gatherers. Rodriguez said:

> "We talk about things that happen out there—gerrymandering and suppressing the vote—that's exactly this…we want a vote in November. The people want to vote in November. This is what they're saying and right now that petition–I'm still picking up names…if they did more manpower, more time, we would have really had big big numbers. We cannot hide behind technicalities and not allow people to vote. That is just an excuse for not letting people—the people that elected you—be part of the process."

Several supporters and leaders of the petition drive spoke in favor of a referendum vote. Then the councilmembers made statements. Councilmember Rey Saldaña talked about the people petitioning the streetcar spending. He praised the signature gatherers' efforts, but he also said:

> "…the people that you see riding the bus are folks who can't take the time to be here at 'Citizens to be Heard' at 9am on a Thursday. The people who ride the bus are the working poor that come from Indian Creek on the southwest side of San Antonio to be a concierge at the Hyatt or bus tables downtown on the Riverwalk. Those folks

don't have the type of time or the resources to be able to organize. The sort of working poor that can't come together and say 'look, a comprehensive plan is something that we would love to see'…There's a lot to be said about giving people the power to vote, but you have to realize that there's folks who have an oversized voice in that system…"

According to the city council, the solution to the streetcar problem was a charter review commission to determine the best way to empower the voice of the citizenry in future city government decision making. This Commission eventually presented the plan for electoral reform that is a focus of this study.

In this chapter, I discuss the state practices involved in the electoral reforms. In doing so I answer the question: How are political reforms implemented? This question is intentionally mechanical because I show two examples of how technocracy functions in practice. I am analyzing the norms and systems of the state and its actors. I also demonstrate the disconnect between the values attributed to the reforms and the institutional practices. The primary value of both reforms is that of broad inclusion and empowerment of underrepresented political voices. This chapter shows how values are simultaneously articulated and undermined systematically through institutional practices. As I demonstrate, the goals of access, inclusion, and equality in both reforms, and the state practices which process them, often seem in opposition, but they work in concert to allow technocracy to function with minimal contestation and to justify actions implicitly. The result is distancing between the individuals thought to be empowered by the reform and the actual locus of decision-making. This distancing through rules and procedure is a type of depoliticization that is intrinsic to a technocracy (Flinders and Buller, 2006).

THE RULES OF THE GAME

In San Antonio, I was able to trace the reform from its public inception to its passage in the San Antonio City Council meetings. This was possible because the idea for, drafting of, and decision to put the reform to a public vote all occurred within the activities of the state. There was no follow up discussion as its implementation was simple and automatic. By contrast, the reform in Seattle was developed primarily by non-state actors. However, the reform was both complex

and required extensive interpretation and rulemaking for implementation, which was all done by lay commissioners appointed by elected officials. Therefore, I will outline the state management which led to the passage of the reform in San Antonio, and the state management which implemented the reform in Seattle. While this chapter focuses on institutions and procedure, the following chapter addresses the same timeline of events with a thematic focus on the individuals involved.

Here, I will address process and institutional power, themes which emerged from observing the practices of the state bodies. Ultimately, the process of election reforms is critical to understanding political power structures and electoral campaigns in a given city because they set the rules of the game. They are important because they affect who governs and how they govern within the bounds of various institutions. Most importantly, they establish the norms of inclusion. In that sense, rule makers and governors are simultaneously vested in the rules and must accommodate them. The drafters of the reforms and the other individuals involved in the processes argue throughout the meetings for many of the traditional goals of democracy such as transparency, increased participation, better representation, etc. However, the processing of the reforms undermines those goals. The two cases demonstrate the nature of technocracy and managerial government, which establishes layers upon layers for both processing political engagement and the resulting election structures presented to the public. In creating these layers, and limiting inclusion in the process, the state actors are fulfilling Flinders and Wood's definition of depoliticization, "the denial of political contingency and the transfer of functions away from elected politicians" (2014, p.135). The most important transfer in this study is the establishment and increased power of the lay commissions I studied in each city: San Antonio's Charter Review Commission and the Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission.

Often when we think about power and the state, the latter's monopoly on violence and ability to coerce are the first things that come to mind. However, in city government, the everyday use of power mostly refers to "the construction of meaning in people's minds through mechanisms of cultural production and distribution" (Castells, 2016: 2). Within this conceptualization, the classic community power debate of pluralists versus elitists expanded to reject much of what we think of as institutional power. As Harding states, they were

"methodologically individualist; they saw individuals as the basic explanatory unit for all social phenomena in the last instance" (2009: 29). Later, Marxist-inspired theories like growth coalition and regime theory argued that capitalist structures and the hegemonic value of growth led to coalitions of governors acting in benefit of the coalition rather than through institutional mechanisms (Molotch, 1976; Logan and Molotch 1987; Stone 1989).

However, institutions clearly have a role to play and, in my findings, they are critical in explaining the structure of power in electoral reform. Works within new institutionalism acknowledge this while maintaining the individuals as agentic in the process. As March and Olsen state, "the organization of political life makes a difference" (1984: 747), and Jon Pierre expands, "the structure of government–the inclusion or exclusion of different actors and the selection of instruments–is not value neutral but embedded in and sustains political values" (1999: 390). We can think of institutions as the 'rules of the game' and the rules are purposely designed with particular values in mind. These rules can be formal or informal, and frequent players come to understand their subtleties. Players consist of organizations, elected officials, community leaders, etc. (Lowndes, 2009: 94).

Electoral reforms are the perfect means by which those values can be brought to light because they offer an opportunity to expose the 'rules of the game'. Lowndes furthers, "Attempts at reform provide an opportunity for 'the discovery, clarification and elaboration' of the values that undergird existing and alternative institutional arrangements, and the way in which they can contribute to the 'good society' (March and Olsen, 1989: 90)" (Lowndes, 2009: 97-98). These normative ideas of what is good for society (and in this case, democracy) have often been ignored in governance theory partially because elections themselves have been deemed secondary to existing power dynamics of the city. However, if institutions are 'carriers' of values (Pierre, 1998), then it is worth analyzing how those values manifest in contrast to the articulated values of democratic reforms. In my analysis, I therefore differentiate between value in speech and value in practice. The disparity between those two sets of values is not new to electoral reform in the US. In fact, my findings add to a long tradition of reform in the name of better

representation and good governance that depoliticize elections themselves in the process.

Depoliticization in the American City

To combat political machines in large cities, Progressive Era reformers set out to depoliticize local government. They felt that "good representation" meant that local governments should not be beholden to the changing winds of national politics or ideological motivations. Instead, local governance should be an administrative task which holds the entirety of the city's wellbeing as a central motivation. The resulting reforms of the movements were codified to varying degrees into city charters by 75% of American cities through the 1960s. Collectively, the reforms are referred to as "good governance" practices (Nalbandian, 1991; Molotch, 1976). They are:

1) Employing a city manager, a position designed to be apolitical in nature, filled through traditional hiring processes of selecting the best trained and experienced candidate. The underlying idea was that while the mayor and city council members might outwardly represent the citizens of the city, the actual managing of the city government, including agenda setting, legislative drafting, and budget proposals would be handled by the city manager - a professional and permanent position.
2) Off-year elections meaning city elections would take place in a different year from national and state level elections.
3) City/municipal elections would be explicitly non-partisan.
4) City-wide (or at-large) elections, as opposed to the lineation of the city into districts. The rationale was that representatives elected in a city-wide election would not be focused strictly on the concerns of their own area of the city but would be concerned with its welfare as a whole.
5) City representatives would not collect salaries for their service. In the majority of cities, representatives would be paid only a stipend for time spent at city meetings. This would ensure that government officials, functioning in an advisory role, would be essentially "voluntary".

Each of these reforms had normative democratic aims–to ensure that democracy would rule from a rational, local perspective that considered the good of the city as a whole. Despite the expectation that these reforms would lead to greater participation, they actually drove down participation in the cities in which they were implemented (Logan & Molotch, 1987). In response, in recent years, cities have sought to improve local representation through scaling back many of

the older reforms; thus, changing aspects of the election process. Many cities have switched back to lineated (ward or district) based representation, allowed political parties to endorse candidates, and placed caps on municipal campaign contributions in line with national and state-wide funding laws.

A crucial part of most post-progressive era reforms were commissions made up of lay citizens. Significant examples of these commissions were the ones formed in New York City in the 1970s and 1980s in efforts to restructure that city's government. Several features made these commissions notable—their extensive public communication efforts (a novel attempt to legitimize their findings and recommendations), a specific composition of individuals designed to reflect the population of the city (such as by racial or gender make-up), and a specific amalgamation of expertise, which, by definition, means that these were not entirely comprised of "lay" citizens involved in the process (Benjamin & Mauro, 1989).

Now, the establishment of commissions as part of local election reforms for US cities has become not just commonplace, but routine. The result is a tactic used by elected officials to shift the burden of responsibility for decisions from themselves to another group of individuals. Flinders and Wood describe this type of abdication as institutional depoliticization, "Institutional depoliticization - cast frequently around the creation of 'non-majoritarian' institutions – is, to some extent, designed to release the agent (and its sphere of responsibility) from short-term political considerations - vote seeking, populist, short-term pressures to which elected politicians are subject" (2006, 298). At the local level, this management is one which denies the overtly political a place in public sphere. Pacewicz agrees, saying, "Whereas community and political conflicts were once one and the same, politics now appeared as a world divorced from and opposed to community governance" (2016: 15). This was exactly the reasoning used to task the commissions in Seattle and San Antonio with the reforms I studied. It was seen as inappropriate for elected officials to handle campaign finance reform and pay for city councilmembers, which meant the tasks must be given to an unelected and unaccountable bodies.

SEATTLE: THE SEEC AND DEMOCRACY VOUCHERS

Compared to other cities, Seattle, Washington has a long history of campaign finance reform. In 1936, the city amended their charter to require the disclosure of every campaign contributor's name and address for public record. They also adopted many of the original good governance practices such as off-year and non-partisan elections, no compensation for members, and at-large council seats. Only the first two are still in place. In 1971, the city established a formal code of ethics which included a campaign spending limit of thirty cents per registered voter for mayoral candidates or ten cents for council candidates. This same ordinance created the Board of Ethics and the Fair Campaign Practices Commission (FCPC). The work of this Commission led directly to the most comprehensive finance disclosure scheme for any city in the United States.

In 1976, the US Supreme Court ruled that money used in campaigns was a form of free speech and that no law could limit the amount of expenditures a campaign could have. Having lost the ability to limit expenditures, over the next two decades the city experimented twice with forms of public campaign financing, but neither were successful. In 1991, Seattle combined the Board of Ethics and the FCPC into one entity: the Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission. The Commission was given unprecedented powers to levy campaign violation fines in the thousands of dollars. In 1997, Seattle became among the first cities to require online contribution filing and public disclosure databases (Van Noy, 2000). Today, it is among the most detailed and accessible campaign databases in the country at any level of governance.

The November 2015 Seattle ballot included Initiative 122, commonly called "Honest Elections Seattle". The Initiative had many functions in attempting to reform the donation system to campaigns, but the most important aspect was that Honest Elections Seattle established a property tax levy to fund the Democracy Voucher program. Democracy Vouchers are sets of four "coupons", each valued at $25, which are sent to every adult resident of Seattle for individuals to contribute to campaigns for mayor, city council and city attorney. The Vouchers must be filled out by the donor and are cashable by recipient candidates that have chosen to participate in the program. In order to participate and gain access to this pot of

money, candidates must agree to specified contribution limits. These limits include what are called independent expenditures (IEs), which are spending by groups with political action committees (PACs). PACs are usually linked to issues-based organisations with their own political agendas that often work together to support a candidate without coordinating directly with their campaign, as per federal law. In the 2015 Seattle local elections, IEs totalled $784,644.

To study this reform, I observed meetings of the Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission (SEEC). This body regulates electoral contributions and spending and was responsible for designing and implementing the Democracy Voucher program. The SEEC holds monthly meetings which are open to the public and include a public comment portion along with a set agenda of discussion items (Seattlechannel.org, 2018). They also have the power to impose fines on campaigns which break the city's code of ethics. They are an entirely unelected body, nominated by sitting city council members and then approved by the existing members of the SEEC.

Understanding these meetings and the construction of the Democracy Vouchers program is important to outlining the purpose of the Initiative in redefining what makes a candidate viable. That is to say, they are attempting to change the terms of viability by diminishing the incentive for potential candidates to court big campaign donors and by connecting candidates with individual residents. Supporters argued that this would make the candidates both more authentic politicians and would mean that a strong set of network connections to wealthy individuals would no longer be necessary to successfully run for office. Further, residents of Seattle would have a new way to engage in political participation. The hope was that this might help curb rising cynicism toward a political system that had emerged as a result of the US Supreme Court's Citizens United[2] decision, which empowered extremely wealthy individuals and organizations.

The primary task of the SEEC is: "to administer the City's Code of Ethics (Chapter 4.16); to administer the Election Campaign Code and its campaign matching fund program (Chapter 2.04); to publish the City's election pamphlets
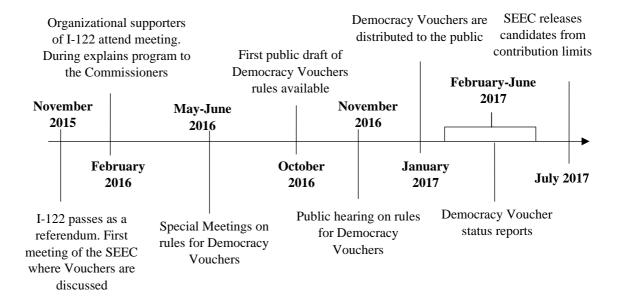
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[2] A 2010 Supreme Court ruling which prohibits the government from restricting IEs. See also Buckley v. Valeo.

(Chapter 2.14) and to administer the Whistleblower Protection Code Sections 4.20.800 through 4.20.880)" (3.70.010 of Seattle Municipal Code). There are seven commissioners: three appointed by the mayor and confirmed by the city council, three appointed with a two-thirds vote of the city council and a seventh appointed by the other six commissioners with confirmation by the city council. The Commission then selects the chair and vice-chair. The commissioners serve three-year terms but can be reappointed to additional terms. The Commission also has a staff, which includes an executive director (ED) who can appoint additional staff members. The ED attends all meetings and manages the day-to-day responsibilities of the Commission.

While the applications to the city council to be on the Commission are open to everyone, the majority of the commissioners either are, or previously were, attorneys. This is understandable given that the SEEC does levy fines and adjudicates regulations. Law prohibits the commissioners from affiliating with any campaign while serving on the Commission, and they are not compensated for their time. The website for the Commission prominently displays the motto, "Your advocate for fair, open and honest government," characterizing their primary responsibility as a check on the corruptibility of public servants and candidates. The statement is clearly directed toward ideas of values and aspirations and, importantly, it presents the Commissioners as representatives of the people, despite their "lay" status and unelected roles.

This research draws from meetings of the SEEC between May of 2014, when public financing was first mentioned to the Commission as a future possibility, and December of 2017, the first meeting held after the first election cycle to include Democracy Vouchers (see Figure 3.1). During this period, numerous people cycled through as commissioners and the chair changed two times. Of the forty-five meetings that occurred during the span of this study, twenty-six mentioned public financing, including Initiative 122.

Figure 3.1-Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission Meetings Timeline

SAN ANTONIO AND THE CRC

When designing its city charter in 1951, the city of San Antonio, Texas adopted all five of the original good governance practices. In 2014, all were still in place with the exception of at-large city council seats. San Antonio now has ten city council districts which are elected in a ward-based system that was implemented in the 1970s as a change from the at-large governing structure.

In 2015, voters approved Amendment 2, a city charter amendment which established salaries for city council members and the mayor. Prior to this law, city council members were paid $20 per meeting (about $1,000 per year) and the mayor received $4,040 per year. The law set the new salaries at $45,722 per year for all city council members and $61,725 per year for the mayor. It is worth noting that the city manager, Sheryl Sculley, made $558,294.62 per year–or ten times the average household income for the metropolitan area and twelve times the average income of other San Antonians.

The reform took place through the creation of a charter review commission, which was originally established to handle a controversial transportation initiative (see Figure 3.2). The funding for a streetcar project received significant pushback from certain members of the public who organized a petition to remove

transportation funding from the responsibilities of the city council. The petition failed to get the required signatures, but the council decided to form a charter review commission to tackle the issue. By August 2014, the funding for the Streetcar Project was pulled and City Clerk Carlos Contreras presented the plan for the Charter Reform Commission (emphasis mine):

> "The charter commission would be charged with bringing forward language that requires a vote of the citizens prior to the city's participation in the streetcar or light rail system. It would also be charged with other options to bring forward recommendations for other items including potential procedures for filling mayoral vacancy, **city council compensation perhaps**, as well as updates to resolve any potential conflicts between state law or federal law in our city charter…"

At the next meeting in September, Contreras listed the charges of the CRC in the new ordinance: reviewing the charter and identifying sections or provisions that are obsolete or inconsistent, preparing recommendations regarding mayoral mid-term vacancies, and considering city council compensation. This was the second time that city council compensation was mentioned in relation to the CRC, and now, the Streetcar issue went completely unmentioned. The ordinance passed unanimously. The members of the Commission were mostly civic leaders with specified professional expertise and lawyers, all of whom were appointed by the mayor's office. The commission concluded that city council members and the mayor should be paid a living wage salary in line with the median household income of the city overall (not of their districts).

I studied the meetings of the city council and the Charter Review Commission, following the process by which Amendment 2 was first proposed, designed, and passed by the voters (City of San Antonio, 2018). In my observations, I learned that most of the elected officials and members of the Commission, as well as local leaders, believed that changing the city council roles from volunteer-based to salaried would professionalise the city council, empower individuals from different class backgrounds to run for office, and reinforce the managerial role of city government.

Figure 3.2-San Antonio Charter Amendment 2 Timeline

CRC meets and drafts Amendment 2 recommendations

City council hears from the public on amendment proposition

Streetcar funding pulled. CRC established. First mention of council compensation reform

July 2014

September 2014

December 2014

February 2015

May 2015

August 2014

March 2015

Streetcar controversy comes to a head. Mayor suggests forming a CRC to handle it

Council votes to put forth referendum limiting powers on transport funding

CRC members present recommendations to city council

Amendment 2 passes

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF MEETINGS

What follows is an analysis of the process of the two electoral reforms in two very distinct cites, where I examine the two "lay" commissions. In my analysis, I divide the procedures and events I observed into value/practice contradictions in order to compare the values of the reform with the values being carried by the institutions (Pierre, 1998). These contradictions are 1) accessibility/inaccessibility of meetings, 2) inclusion/exclusion from agenda setting, and 3) equality/inequality in speech. Each of these values was articulated in public meetings by multiple actors advocating and/or drafting the reforms, and each contradicting practice was enacted by commission members or elected officials in service of passing and implementing the reform. I conclude with an overarching value/practice contradiction that is the stated goal of both reforms and the results of my findings: empowerment through political participation/depolitization.

Access and Locating the Meeting

The Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission meets in a downtown office building, on a high floor, on the first Wednesday afternoon of each month. Parking

is expensive in downtown Seattle and it's hilly. Obviously, the timing and location of the meetings makes it difficult for the average Seattle resident to attend; nonetheless, the meetings are open to anyone.

The SEEC quickly incorporated the Initiative 122 rulemaking and its implementation into their regular activities. Over time, the Commission hired a staff to handle the Voucher program and most public meetings covered its day-to-day implementation as progress reports but not a discussion item. Then, on the 24th of May, 2016 and 21st of June, 2016, the SEEC held two special meetings. These meetings were not put on the website and minutes were not published. The evidence that they occurred were pre-meeting announcements on the SEEC website: *"An advisory committee will meet to discuss the implementation of I-122. A quorum of commissioners may attend, so we are posting this as a public meeting out of an abundance of caution."* It then included contact information and the next regular meeting date and time. The special meetings were technically public, but they were not brought up in regular SEEC meetings and no record of the discussions are publicly available. The resulting draft of the rules did not make its way to the public until the October 2016 meeting (a full five months later), with a public hearing scheduled for the November meeting. The Vouchers themselves were due to go out in January 2017.

Back at the February 2016 meeting, Alan Durning, the primary author of the Initiative, presented its details to the Commission. He was very clear in much of the reasoning behind the reform, stating:

> "The other hope is to make it possible for candidates to run for office through grassroots campaigning, through houseparties, doorknocking, and community forums and online outreach…One thing to underline about this right now is that the initiative gives tremendous authority and responsibility to this Commission, not only for writing detailed rules for administering the program but also for adjusting the program between cycles…the municipal programs of public funding that are trying to encourage a stronger voice for ordinary people need to have the tools to adjust in response."

Durning is articulating the value of access in democracy in talking about direct access to candidates by voters. In his view, the reform forces candidates to engage in direct communication at a more individuated level rather than through large buys for mass communication. At the same time, he acknowledges that the rule making

is housed primarily within the commissioners' purview and expects that the SEEC as an institution will carry these values forward.

Despite this, the actual rulemaking took place with minimal public input and minimal opportunity to criticize that process. A Commission of unelected individuals who came from a similar professional background discussed the best practices among, primarily, themselves. While all meetings were publicly announced and a hearing was held, the functional aspects of the process diminished accessibility as much as possible because the core debate and decisions about the program were handled in those special meetings.

A similar limit on accessibility occurred in developing Amendment 2 in San Antonio. The San Antonio City Council meetings occur twice a week on Wednesday afternoons and Thursday mornings. The Thursday sessions are referred to as A Sessions meaning that actions can be taken and there is dedicated time for 'citizens to be heard', and the Wednesday B Sessions are where discussion items are addressed in more detail. These meetings can last several hours. The A Sessions are in the main area of City Hall, while the B Sessions are usually in a smaller conference room. They are all open to the public. Most public discussion on Amendment 2 took place during the 'A Session' meetings of the city council.

Between December of 2014 and February of 2015, the Charter Review Commission held seven meetings to determine the details of their proposals. However, after the ordinance establishing the CRC, no mention of it was made in city council meetings again until the commission presented their recommendations. The CRC held two public hearings that winter, neither of which were recorded. However, there are agendas and accompanying documents for each of the meetings. They then presented their recommendations at the B Session city council meeting on the 18th of February 2015. At the next week's A Session, the city council proposed charter amendments for referendum and passed them the following week.

At the February 18th, 2015, meeting, city councilmembers articulated their values when advocating for the reform. Councilmember Ron Nirenberg was one of the most vocal. He said:

> "I'm in 100% agreement that one of the core tenets of democracy is giving people the opportunity to govern themselves, and that's the issue with access to the ballot for making sure that it shouldn't

matter how much you get paid or what your socioeconomic status is in order to run, to govern your community…"

Like Durning in Seattle, Nirenberg is advocating access to governing power in the city. As we see, however, the process of hammering out the details and in fact the very creation of Amendment 2 mostly took place away from elected officials and all but a few voters. The value of access to governing either through direct interaction with candidates or through running for office was clearly a priority for the reformers in both cities. However, in both cases, meetings where the most critical details of those rules were hammered out limited access to the public. This happened in three ways. The first was through meeting location and timing. The public hearings in both the SEEC meetings and the San Antonio City Council occurred during the week and during work hours limiting the kind of people who would be able to attend. However, the CRC's two public hearings did take place in the evenings. The second way access was limited was by designating the work of executive or closed meetings as separate from public hearings. This is where most contestation took place and was only among members of the Commissions. Lastly, the third was by empowering these Commissions to be the arbiters of reform in the first place rather than the elected bodies.

Inclusion and Setting the Agenda

The main portions of the SEEC meetings include "action items" and "discussion items", the latter of which generally includes an "Executive Director's Report". The report at the meeting immediately following the passage of Initiative 122 ended with the director, Wayne Barnett stating, "The Vouchers are entirely new, so at some level, we will be inventing the wheel. And we're going to be a model for the nation. People who are interested in this proposal have their sights set on more than just Seattle, so we have a lot of work to do."

After the referendum passed in November of 2015, the SEEC dedicated most of the February 2016 meetings to the drafter and coalition members of the Honest Elections Initiative. This is where Alan Durning presented the rules written into the Initiative, which gave broad authority of revision and implementation to the SEEC. After that meeting, they did not include a dedicated discussion about the rules and procedures for the Vouchers on the meeting agenda until October of

2016 when they presented the draft of the rules and then held a public discussion of them the following month. The Vouchers were due out in January, just two months later.

At the November 2016 meeting, people were frustrated by the lack of clarity in the rules. Alan Durning suggested that it would be good if the Commission provided "some kind of additional guidance" for organisations of what is allowed in campaigns. He then said that he wanted the Commission to make clear in the rules what the intent of the program is, to limit "big money interests". He said:

> "…the city can't do much…to prevent that outright, but it could put a stake in the ground by stating in program materials that the Commission intends to uphold the program's true intent, which is widespread citizen participation and creating an opportunity for candidates to win races for office through popular participation, grassroots campaigns, and that it would be watching for activities that might undermine the intent of the program…"

Despite the author of the Initiative stressing inclusion as an integral value of the Democracy Voucher program, the SEEC excluded anyone from developing the rules and procedure. They did this by excluding it from the agenda for months until it was effectively too late to make significant changes or challenge the thinking behind particular decisions. Similarly, in San Antonio, agenda setting was used as an exclusionary practice despite inclusion being an articulated value of the reformers.

The streetcar petitioners in San Antonio had gathered enough signatures to get the attention of the city council and add discussion to the agenda. The petition was far-reaching, demanding that all future transportation initiatives be voted upon in referendum. This kind of blanket rule required an amendment of the city charter. The councilmembers and mayor decided to establish the CRC to address the petitioner's proposal. They then added compensation reform to the CRC's mandate along with several other reforms to election protocols.

According to the agendas, by December the primary focus of the CRC was to establish city council compensation. The first public hearing occurred on the 7th of January 2015, and at that hearing, the purpose and scope of the CRC was still not clear to the public. Eight citizens spoke about their desires for the CRC. The first spoke about streetcars, three spoke about city water, and three discussed

council compensation (two in favour and one saying that the people should be able to vote on it). The eighth commented on what the others had said. Later, the Commission would state that they also received citizen input via email. Those emails were made public.

The city council voted to put the streetcar funding up for a referendum, which was a concession to the anti-streetcar petitioners and a way to show they were listening to their constituents. However, The purpose of the CRC, its agenda and the agenda of the city council had changed slowly over the months and weeks since the CRC's inception. When the CRC presented their recommendations to the city council in February of 2015, there was no mention of the streetcar petitioners, or future transport initiatives whatsoever. There was no recommendation for tying large funding initiatives to referendums at all. The recommendations were mostly devoted to changes in council salary and rules surrounding council structure and composition.

At the meeting where the CRC presented their recommendations, Mayor Ivy Taylor thanked the commissioners for their work. Before commencing the question-and-answer session among the councilmembers and the commissioners, she explained the reason why she wanted to set up the CRC:

> "…my goal was for us to create a regular process that would allow us to update and amend the charter so that we can remove it from being a political instrument–that the idea that changes to the charter are somehow tied to some political agenda–but instead it's just a regular part of what we do as ensuring that we have good governance mechanisms in place. And so we also need to make sure that the charter reflects the will of the people here in San Antonio and that's why we're putting the Streetcar Initiative on the ballot in May..."

Mayor Taylor is indicating that the CRC was established not in response to a very specific call from petitioners about transportation, but that it was part her vision for a less political system. Looking at the city council meetings alone, the thread between the two is lost, but when considering the language of the city councilmembers, especially the mayor, it's clear there were ongoing discussions between them outside of public meetings where the true intentions of the CRC were articulated.

The ability to set the agenda, in this case establish the CRC, allowed Mayor Taylor to retroactively define its purpose without holding the debate about it in

public. They established the CRC with a primary mandate of handling the streetcar dissention, added secondary mandates, then reshuffled the priorities and claimed it was meant to be that way all along. The council was able to limit contestation and inclusion of outside perspectives simply through agenda setting.

As we see in both Seattle and San Antonio, agenda setting excluded perspectives and limited the terms of the reform. While both reforms were touted by supporters as an effort to represent the "will of the people", the agendas were used to systematically limit the space and time of discussion and outright exclude civic discourse around the specifics of the reforms. In the case of San Antonio, it also redefined the origin of the CRC.

Agenda setting is a well-documented means of asserting power (Bachrach and Baratz, 1962), and in this case, there is clearly also a strong case for an institutionalized conception of that power. The SEEC is an unelected body of lay commissioners who set their agendas and function bureaucratically. The ability to exclude discussion came from their authority in their roles as commissioners. Similarly, the San Antonio City Council was able to pass the ordinance establishing the CRC and eventually raise the pay of city councilmembers through bureaucratic means. The authority granting nature of the state as an institution allowed the agendas to be set with delineated space and time for public discussion. The SEEC limited discussion when they ran out the clock on the Voucher distribution, and the San Antonio City Council limited discussion when they gradually and privately changed the mandates of the CRC. Both cases demonstrated the articulation of inclusion in the reforms while practicing exclusion through agenda setting.

Equality and Prioritizing Speech

At the SEEC, attendees are permitted to speak for up to three minutes during the public comment section at the beginning of the meeting or during discussion items. However, the commissioners sometimes interrupt to clarify, or sometimes debate, and there does not seem to be a standard for whether these activities are deducted from the speakers' time—it's at the Commission's discretion. In the first meeting dedicated to implementing I-122, several organizational leaders attended along with representatives from Sightline, a think tank whose executive director was Alan Durning. All attendees from formal

organizations and advocacy groups were in full support of the initiative. Sophie Madden was a campaign organiser for WashPIRG, a left-leaning organization which has several causes, one of which is campaign finance reform. She discussed the work WashPIRG did to help pass Honest Elections Seattle (Initiative 122) and believed it would set a template for helping other cities get away from big donors. She said she was "ready to see it in action" and that the people her organization talks with place "democracy reform" at the top of their list of concerns. Amy Winn was with an advocacy organization for Asian American and Pacific Islanders which helped pass I-122. She said the Initiative was really about equity, that it is an opportunity for people who "look like us to come to positions of power", and that they want to be involved in the implementation process. Mary Winn (not-related) was with Washington Community Action Network and said that low-propensity voters are very excited about Honest Elections passing and that they want to share that they are committed to helping implement it.

These individuals and organizations did not attend the public hearing that October on the rules and procedures. However, they may have still been involved in drafting the rules because the Commissioners met with an advisory committee during the intervening months. This committee did not keep published minutes. Instead, they selected individuals from various organizations to meet, thereby giving their voices elevated status. They also allowed Alan Durning to present the rules and purpose of the Initiative to the Commission for over an hour. His voice was given elevated status because he was the author of the Initiative. Months later, at the public hearing, the commissioners limited some speakers to the three-minute rule but would sometimes interrupt and debate or challenge the speaker. No one kept close track of the time and whether a person got to finish their thoughts was up to the whim of the Commissioners themselves. Lastly, the Commissioners could speak at length on their perspectives and there was no limit or system for their speaking time.

A similar division of speaking time based mostly on status happened in San Antonio. At 'Citizens to be Heard', the regular time for members of the public to voice their concerns, the speakers are given three minutes. The councilmembers do not interrupt or follow up the on the statements. Then the councilmembers go around and comment on specific agenda items. Often those items were addressed by members of the public earlier. When the CRC presented their recommendations

to the city council, they were given a designated agenda slot, meaning they could speak at length about the specific items. The councilmembers then commented on their feelings about the recommendations or asked clarifying questions. Councilmember Rey Saldaña was strongly in favour of the pay increase saying, "I would say that it is probably one of the most discriminatory, prejudice policies that we have on the books in our charter. And the folks that should be the most outraged by this are low-income San Antonio residents…"

From Saldaña's perspective, this reform was first and foremost about equality. Nonetheless, the system of speaking at the council meetings and within the CRC was unequal. The CRC was described by councilmembers as a 'Blue Ribbon Committee', which elevates the opinions of people with specific expertise above people without it. They were able to not only set the language of the reforms in their committee meetings, but also frame the recommendations to the city council. Members of the public would have had to attend the 'B Session' where the presentation took place (a small meeting room that can hold only a few people beyond the councilmembers) then attend the "A Session" to state their opinions. By breaking up the presentation and the public hearing into two separate meetings, they limited the people who could attend both. At the public hearing, the city council allowed people to speak and asked members of the CRC to make additional comments during the same section when members of the public could address the issues. Ultimately, most of the 'members of the public' who spoke to the recommendations were themselves members of the CRC.

Both the SEEC and the San Antonio City Council gave dedicated time to the authors of the reform. This is despite the fact that they already had outsized voices in the process of drafting the reforms themselves. Additionally, in Seattle, the unclear nature of speaking time in practice made it difficult for individuals to know the structure of presenting their opinions. As we see in the next chapter, this led to some tense moments between the commissioners and speakers.

The structure of speaking in both cases made it impossible to uphold the value of equality while processing the reforms. San Antonio was somewhat more balanced in that they stuck to the three-minute rule for public discussion, but by allowing CRC members to draft the recommendations, present them for an extended time, and then advocate for them in the public discussion undermined equality. In Seattle, limiting discussion of the rules to a single hearing with unclear

speaking procedures while earlier holding meetings with a special advisory committee undermined equality by giving privileged status to those individuals and organizations already known to the SEEC.

TOP-DOWN INCLUSION

The reality of city governance is that disruption of mundane administrative tasks can bring real harm to the body public by slowing down necessary services or limiting the distribution of resources. Therefore, as the governing systems stand now, there do have to be subcommittees, bureaucratic departments, and special commissions to handle the day-to-day of governing a large city. However, the task of election rulemaking is not directly about meeting the basic material needs of people and communities, nor does it demand a particular type of expertise like civil engineering might. It is an opportunity to debate the political values of a society. It is a way to scrutinize competing notions of representation and participation. It is the very structure of politics. Fawcett and Marsh state:

> …because problems are complex in late modernity, politics is not simple, rather it is, and must be, constituted in, and through, the actions of citizens in a reflexive political community that must be recognised and nurtured. Within this political community, citizens are capable of recognising the complexity of politics and the importance of difference. As such, it is not a community based on the possibility of generating consensus, but, rather, on the necessity of recognising and accepting difference. It is crucial that both citizens and political authorities acknowledge and accept the need to foster such a political community (Fawcett and Marsh, 2014: 184).

By entrusting the rulemaking and drafting of these reforms to lay commissions, there was no effort to create a political community in either city that can develop a sophisticated democratic system. Ultimately, the values of the reforms (access, inclusion, and equality) were undermined as the institutions of the state processed them. The reforms were depoliticized by removing opportunities for contestation through holding inaccessible meetings, exclusion through agenda setting, and providing unequal speaking privileges. There was no effort to cultivate a political community as Fawcett and Marsh describe that both establishes and is empowered within their democratic system. Instead, we see a process that separates the citizens ostensibly empowered by the reform from the process of reformation.

Advocates in both cities stressed that the reforms would empower historically marginalized groups by creating a path for political participation and access. The message of reformers was that in a democracy, all voices matter. The way in which reformers discussed the reforms was similar to what Nina Eliasoph calls 'empowerment talk.' This term describes missions and firms which employ a particular mantra for political engagement that focuses on diversity, inclusion and transparency. While creating these reforms, elites framed elected office and elections themselves in almost identical terms, further driving the shift toward a managerial style of governance which became thematic in these meetings (Eliasoph, 2016). Despite the rhetoric of empowerment, I find that in reality, this was not the case.

Ultimately, the reform process in both cities looked more like the industry of democracy and engagement we've seen develop in public-private partnerships (Lee, McQuarrie, and Walker, 2015), worldwide through non-governmental organizations (Krause, 2014), and in the entrepreneurial trend in civic life and public engagement (Lee, 2015; Baiocchi et al, 2014). The two reform processes were similar to Eliasoph concept of 'empowerment projects', which "cultivate the grass roots from the top-down" (Eliasoph, 2016). This chapter showed what the reformers thought they were doing, what values they held, and what their goals were for local democracy. However, these democracies in practice are incongruous with the goal of expanded participation because they hold to technocratic logics and values which supersede participatory values, and instead impose a top-down system of democratic reform and expanded participation.

This affects candidate viability directly because it shows that the entire systems of elections in both cases are exclusionary and that there is a culture of technocratic values throughout the campaign ecosystem that extends from election rulemaking and, as I will show, into the private industry. This culture is what allows political professionals to establish and maintain power, including and especially political consultants. It legitimizes the logic of managed democracy in the name of empowerment and participation beyond the arena of governance and into the campaigns and elections. By extension, it legitimizes the political professionals themselves. This system and the legitimized actors within it then produce candidate viability. In this chapter, I focused on institutions and the functional mechanisms by which the reforms were rationalized. In the next chapter,

I consider the individuals involved in the reforms and address the other side of the power coin: the actors themselves.

Chapter 4:

THE TECHNOCRATS

As with most meetings, Chair Bruce Carter called the meeting of the Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission to order and asked for public comment, which allowed anyone who signed up when they entered the room to make statements. Queen Pearl spoke first. She was frustrated by the physical placement of city councilpersons at their meetings, and she noted that the current Seattle Mayor, Ed Murray, never releases a public schedule like former Mayor Mike McGinn did. She then stated that the city council and SEEC are racist and equated their operational methods to fascism. When her time ran out, she said they should listen to Alex Tsimerman who, at a previous meeting, had pointed out that speakers have no way of keeping track of how much time they have to speak.

Tsimerman, who would later run for mayor, often attended public meetings held by various bureaucratic bodies and the SEEC was no exception. He took the seat, turned directly to the camera and held up a huge red sign that read "Stand Up America." "I want the camera to see my sign," he said with a strong Russian accent. His complaints were very similar to Queen Pearl's: physical placement of city council members within the chamber, and the inaccessibility of the mayor, who he referred to as a "Nazi with Down's Syndrome." The room did not react to his inflammatory language, a sign of his frequent attendance. He then accused the commissioners of being there only to advance their careers. When his time ran out, he said "See you next month, motherfuckers." He kept his word.

Queen Pearl and Alex Tsimerman were mostly ignored or tolerated by the members of the SEEC and the other attendees in this February 2016 meeting and at others. The system of speaker sign ups and time limits with no mechanism of follow up allowed the commission to manage them and people like them. I argue

that in this scene, the SEEC is fulfilling "the reflexively technocratic practices of state managers trying to deal with citizen-activists incapable of fulfilling the role of the ideal-typical 'good partner', the sociable, problem-solving entrepreneur" (Davies, 2011: 119). Instead, they "erect administrative barricades against dissenters, using the 'inarticulate grumblings' of citizen-activists as grounds for excluding them through 'restructuring'" (Davies, 2011: 118).

I described those barricades and restructuring methods in the previous chapter. If that chapter was the how, this one is the who. Here, I consider whose voices exist and are valued in constructing election and campaign rules, who is given deference, authority and control. Accepting the common assessment that most American governance has transitioned to technocracy and managerialism, this chapter examines the actors and asks who gets to be a technocrat? Who gets to be a manager? And who comes up short when there are 'good partners' and 'bad partners' in the projects of the integral state?

Technocracy is of course, simply rule by a network or coalition of experts. Modern technocracy draws on both public and private experts (city managers and city planning consultants, for instance) and it follows particular normative logics. "Programmes of governance are rolled-out that enable claims of expertise to be constituted through specific 'strategies, structure[s], and silences' that 'transform the expert into a spokesperson for what appear as the forces of development, the rules of law, the progress of modernity, or the rationality of capitalism'" (Mitchell, 2002:15 as cited in Raco and Savini, 2019: 21). As individuals, these experts are simply that, experts, but drawn together through a network of the integral state and granted authority in policy creation, they become technocrats.

I studied the meetings of the two commissions tasked with managing the reforms along with the meetings of the San Antonio City Council through ethnographic and archival work. In my analysis, I construct the criteria for what Davies refers to as a 'good partner' for the state (Davies, 2011). The criteria I find are three-fold: 1) professionalism: they are lawyers, c-suite business people or financiers, academics, and successful political non-profit/think tank leaders. Simply, they are successful members of the knowledge economy; 2) familiarity: they often have an existing relationship with members of the government or bureaucracy because they are civic-oriented; and 3) value technocratic principles: they hold expertise up as an objective good which will progress society, they strive

for consensus, and engage in institutional deference. I approach this study therefore with an assumption of technocracy as a theory of network governance, and as such, it holds the network of expertise as a hegemonic authority (Davies, 2011).

The hegemonic nature of technocracy permeates the world of campaigns. In understanding who has the title of "expert" we can further understand how electoral viability is produced by campaign experts, an elite group of political actors who have the power to filter potential candidates for office. These campaign experts are effectively brokers, offering a network that can provide resources along with their expertise on both formal and informal campaign practices. These practices are contingent to the locality, which allows for sophisticated knowledge and an industry of campaigning to develop at the city level. By studying the power structure of the technocracy especially as it relates to electoral values and regulations, we can better understand why campaign experts filter individual candidates for the election.

THE RULE OF THE EXPERT

When discussing individuals with elite power in city government and policymaking, the question has often been "who rules?". Theorists within both the urban governance and the democratic studies traditions have long trended away from a Weberian notion of governmental authority: that hierarchical systems and societal structures give rise to individuals with power over others so that they might enact their preferred agenda. Instead, theories of a more deliberative and/or networked framework of governance dominate most scholarly debate. Importantly, this framework includes actors who are both within and outside of the state and governing is a space of negotiation between these actors (Danley, 2018: 84-5). How these actors are organized into a ruling elite has been the focus of much urban scholarship (Castells, 2016; Hunter, 1953; Dahl, 1961; Domhoff, 1967 and 1990; Sørenson and Torfing, 2005; Purcell, 2008; Mills, 1956; among many others).

At the same time, those studying changes in civil society have long addressed the shift in America from a Tocquevillean land of voluntary membership in organizations, associations and clubs to an individualized society where association in formal organizations amounts to nominal membership with minimal opportunity to interact with other members (Putnam 1995; Skocpol, 2003). In

particular, the diminished interaction and the rise in organizations taking on lobbying efforts throughout levels of government has driven a professionalization of organizations and associations. Theda Skocpol addresses the effect this has on participatory democracy:

> As long-standing popularly rooted unions and fellowship federations have faded while professionally run public interest associations—along with business and professional groups— have proliferated, avenues for citizen participation have become more constricted…Individuals from privileged families have advantages of income and education, and also tend to be regularly contacted by civic organizers or election campaigners. What is more, people in managerial and professional careers are likely to gain skills at work that can be transferred to public activities (2004: 8).

The shift of civil society from cross-class associations to professionally managed organizations with leaders beholden to donors and policy outcomes is an important piece of the technocratic puzzle. In addition, the increased complexity of modern life with sprawling cities and limited formal associational ties combine to drive a highly-specialized network of governance. The specialization requires extensive knowledge of both the city and its actors and of a particular area of expertise depending on the issue. Having sophisticated knowledge of a field which can only be obtained through professional experience and training allows experts to define their status to the public as unimpeachable. It grants them the legitimacy to function entrepreneurially in projects of the state in a partnership role. The consequence of seeing technocrats as the appropriate partners leading policy decision making is both that it diminishes direct accountability through elections and that it renders the politically contested inferior. In other words, topics which are debated publicly without mediation by experts are irrational, uninformed, and disruptive of the public good (Lowe, 2013; Cruz, Rode, McQuarrie, 2019).

The function of the partner as separate from politics has been well documented, especially in the work of Josh Pacewicz. His research of local campaigns shows a shift in the wake of neoliberalism away from partisan-managed local elections to partner-based politics more generally. He states:

> Traditional leaders participated in public life by giving gifts or receiving them, an act that factionalized the community into opposing networks maintained by largesse and reciprocal obligation. By contrast, the ideal-typical partner neither gives gifts

nor receives them; instead, she builds partnerships around win-win initiatives supported by all parties, an act that creates an unfactionalized public space ripe for future partnerships. Partners insist that the disposition required to create such partnerships clashed with partisan political displays and viewed their city's parties as foreign and ungovernable (2016: 111)

Commissions provide a placement for these partners and offer a vehicle through which they can recommend, enact, or administer policy without the constraints of bureaucratic oversight and while maintaining (or enhancing) their professional status. These commissions of experts are presented as singular in their recommendations and decision-making, as though the conclusion is forgone. Who is included in these commissions comes down to the logic of those making the appointments. When the goal of a reform is inclusion and access, one might think that an appropriate commission would be a truly 'lay' one. Some scholars have shown that random assemblies of citizens for lawmaking may be a more effective way of governing democratically (Fishkin, 2018; Gastil and Richards, 2013). Others have shown that participatory efforts are consistently coopted by elites (Lee, McQuarrie, Walker, 2015; Robinson, 2020). Still others have shown that individuals are excluded thanks to an incongruous habitus with the elected officials (Diamond, 2004; Davies, 2011). Much of this work shows how the contributions of individuals and groups are ultimately managed by technocrats with little focus on the technocrat as a contingent subject worthy of analysis. In this chapter, I aim to address this gap in literature by outlining the criteria I saw was necessary to be given authority in a state project.

CONFERRING AUTHORITY

I studied the two commissions and the San Antonio City Council through archival ethnography (Zeitlyn, 2012). In total, I observed twenty-one San Antonio City Council meetings both before and after the Charter Review Commission was formed, and twenty-two meetings of the Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission. The Charter Review Commission meetings were not recorded or made available to the public. This was also the case for the specific rulemaking in special meetings by the SEEC. I either attended meetings in person or I printed out the agenda and

watched video footage of them to mimic the experience of attending the meeting. I then went back and transcribed the meetings.

I used public records to find the professional history of the individuals speaking at the meetings, and then analyzed who was given authority. Looking initially at the originators of the reforms, and then at those who fostered and implemented them, I observed who was granted authority and under what circumstances individuals' statements were seen as appropriate and 'good' by the SEEC members or the San Antonio City Council. I based this on whether and how often the individual was interrupted, whether they were engaged in a discussion at all, and how the state actors agreed to proceed with the information presented. Through a technocratic lens, the response to these individuals demonstrates whether they are a 'good partner', one contributing to the state actors' notion of progress of the state project.

In the next two sections, I start by sourcing the political will for the reform in Seattle and the formation of the CRC in San Antonio. I then look at the makeup of the commissions and the individuals who appeared frequently to speak at meetings. Lastly, I describe several scenes from each case and analyze the role of professionalism in conferring legitimacy through authority granting. I chose the scenes based on several criteria: 1) show individuals with formal institutional roles interacting with individuals who do not have formal roles; 2) show instances where the actors clearly articulated goals of the reforms; 3) focus on instances of informal inclusion or exclusion. I am therefore able to offer an analysis which is process-oriented, empirical, and useful in understanding how avenues of participation are simultaneously created and denied depending on the individual.

I then present the two reforms in direct contrast to one another. Drawing from the same scenes in each case, I find a common set of values among authority-granted individuals in both cities: 1) consensus in rulemaking; 2) non-state partnership; 3) institutional deference. These three values combine with professional status to form a logic which determines who matters in a technocracy that is attempting to form a more representative democracy. These people who matter are what Pacewicz describes as the partner, "…one who sets divisive issues aside and builds flexible coalitions around doable, provisionally uncontroversial goals" (2016: x)

Seattle

At the same meeting where Queen Pearl and Alex Tsimerman made their fascism comparisons, Alan Durning, who had been sitting next to SEEC Executive Director, Wayne Barnett, moved to the center of the room to speak, "In the honest elections world, I was sort of the policy wonk in chief. I was very involved in the policy design." He then presented the details of the Initiative in what he described as a 101 format. The members of the SEEC listened attentively periodically asking clarifying questions for about an hour.

Durning was the Executive Director of Sightline, which is a non-profit based in Seattle that does advocacy work, usually with a focus on environmental issues. Durning himself trained as a musician and obtained a certificate in non-profit leadership from Stanford University. His career was spent in environmental advocacy organizations and writing books and articles on the subject. In 1993, he founded Sightline. Since I-122, Sightline developed a focus on election reform, with an entrepreneurial approach to 'fixing' democracy. Durning worked with political consultants, coalition partners, and campaign staff to develop the Democracy Vouchers, a concept advanced by Political Scientist Lawrence Lessig. The origin of the political will for the program, therefore, came from an academic and a non-profit director, two highly professionalized positions. The coalition to pass I-122 drew from activist and non-profit organizations as well as labor unions, who dispatched their political staff members to assist with the campaign. The campaign itself was roundly criticized for taking huge donations from private out-of-state investors and spending $1.4 million, among the most expensive campaigns in Seattle history. These private individuals were by all accounts motivated by the belief that the reform would provide better democratic representation which could then be a model in other parts of the country.

When the newly passed I-122 reached the SEEC for rulemaking and implementation, the Commission was comprised of lawyers, who Tsimerman accusing of being there to advance their careers. Why they actually volunteered for the Commission post is anyone's guess, but in order to be selected, they had to submit an application to the city council and mayor who then evaluated and appointed members based on their relative expertise in regulatory practices and election law. Therefore, I-122 was developed by experts from conceptualization to

passage to elaboration and finally to implementation. However, with the exception of the political consultants hired to pass the Initiative, campaign experts were not involved in its development despite it being a campaign reform. Clearly, there is a prevailing assumption that one need not have experience in campaigns to hold authority in reforming campaign practices. Below are three scenes from the SEEC meeting where the commission held a public hearing on the rules for the Voucher program. Those Vouchers were due to be distributed in January, 2017. The November 2016 meeting drew a relatively small crowd. Meeting regulars, Alex Tsimerman and Queen Pearl, started things off during the public comments section with their now routine complaints about the system, composition, and operations of the commission. After they spoke, with no response from the commissioners or further discussion, the commission moved on to the representatives from Sightline, followed by other individuals who signed up to speak.

Alan Durning began his statement by saying that he wanted to reiterate the purpose of I-122. He laid out the values of participation and curtailing the 'big money' interests. The members of the Commission engaged with Durning, asking questions and deferring to his judgment, especially when he presented the purpose of the reform several meetings prior. It was not by coincidence then that Durning took a slightly chastising tone when asked about what kind of timeline he was hoping for in the rollout of educational information, "I would have hoped it had been done already." Durning was asserting his professional authority as the drafter of the law, but, bureaucratically, he did not actually have authority at this point. The referendum had been passed by voters more than a year prior and it clearly put all oversight authority in the hands of the commissioners. Durning's role as an authority figure derived from his role as expert on the reform. However, he held no official role at this point with the commission despite his input being given esteem. Durning's position as drafter of the Initiative and Sightline Director made him an entrepreneurial contributor to the regulations, an ideal-type 'good partner' to the state (Davies, 2007).

Andrew Pilloud spoke next. He described himself as an "occasional candidate and frequent campaign volunteer." He was an 'outsider' running for office. Rhetorically, this was the type of candidate the Democracy Voucher program was targeting: someone without ties to large organizations and donors who, nonetheless, could somehow find viability through a numbers game of talking

to as many individual voters as possible and convincing them individually of his merit. However, Pilloud was a software engineer and had no professional political association.

Pilloud said he was there about the rules that were not yet written, "All the rules you propose today look pretty good to me. I'm just not seeing rules I was expecting to see, particularly around how a candidate qualifies for the Democracy Voucher program." He said the website describes a petition process that is above and beyond what the Initiative said, and he was wondering when the commission would explain the rules on it:

> "We're a third of the way into the qualifying period for candidates now…you add more layers onto the requirements to qualify for the program and the true grassroots campaigns are not going to be able to come up to speed, whereas some well-funded candidates that exist will be able to quickly spin up a campaign organization and go out and spend that Democracy Voucher money, so the lack of rules is making it difficult for people who are considering running in the next year to do so…"

Pilloud also argued here that "grassroots" campaigns are mutually exclusive with organized well-funded campaigns, and framed grassroots as being more virtuous or ideal. He continued with a few specific concerns, including verifying the signatures of non-voting Voucher contributors, and the following exchange took place:

> *Chair Norton: This is not an easy initiative to wrap heads around and to implement.*
> *Pilloud: And you've done a good job, it's just…*
> *Norton: And there are gaps and there are questions and initiatives always give rise to those things, so I have every faith that we will do what needs to be done, and we will do it as quickly as we can.*
> *Pilloud: Well, you've got less than two months before they mail out, so…*
> *Norton (speaking over his sentence): But thank you, you know I never even thought about that. I never even thought about how you confirm a signature…*

Pilloud was exactly the type of candidate this Initiative's authors were trying to support in the electoral reform. He was unaffiliated with any PACs and wanted to know how to verify residents who were otherwise disenfranchised but wanted to be involved in the elections. Yet, when he presented his concerns, the

commissioners seemed defensive, and instead of discussing his concerns publicly, they asked him to write them down. Had Pilloud been directly affiliated with an organization or had his own political professional influence to wield as a form a capital, he likely would have been afforded more authority in the way Durning was. Instead, he presented as an individual with little to offer to the commission from a civic entrepreneurial standpoint. While the commissioners engaged with him more than they did with someone like Tsimerman, they treated him not only dismissively, but almost in a hostile manner. They insisted that he trust in their expertise and competence a priori, and his questioning of their authority as technocrats was not acceptable. This was in direct contrast to Durning who openly scolded the commission for not working fast enough.

The last interaction I'm featuring was between the commissioners and Artie Nasrati. Nasrati was with Working Washington, an organization he described as a non-profit focused on low-wage workers. He discussed how the organization reaches out to its members and said that they want to be able to talk to them about the Vouchers. He said that his organization wanted guidance on what is allowed. Commissioner Carter commented that "It's easy to say what you're saying, that something is ambiguous and you ought to fix it. That's all in the eye of the beholder. So, if you think that a particular aspect is uncertain, you might also make a recommendation for how it might be clarified, and that would give us something more certain to deal with."

Nasrati reiterated the need for guidance, and then said "If I had a better idea on how to implement it, obviously I'd be sitting on that side of the table…" Everyone laughed, but the exchange demonstrated the power the SEEC has to define the terms of democratic participation, particularly regarding organizational activities. Here, it was made explicit that the SEEC's power derives not only from the actions of the commission, but just as much from its inaction. They reacted strongly to any kind of criticism. Nasrati asked them to define the rules more clearly, and they effectively said, 'you think you can do better?'. The commissioners were using their authority to shut down an area of contestation – but Nasrati was able to pivot their frustration by reminding them of his professional affiliation which he used to justify his need for clarity. Therefore, while the commissioners were clearly frustrated by the challenge, they did not dismiss his concerns. Unlike Pilloud, his request of the commission for clarity could be framed

as necessary for the political good. For Pilloud, it was about personal success as a candidate for election. This distinguishes Nasrati from Pilloud as a 'good' versus 'bad' partner in the state project. Nasrati has the professional association which allows him to appeal to the technocratic logic that, in Mitchell's terms, allows him to be a 'spokesperson' for the 'progress of modernity' (2002). He appealed to the normative values of the commission and the state which reinforced the SEEC's authority because of their professional expertise.

San Antonio

The Sensible Pay for SA initiative began with a streetcar project, or rather resistance to it. The city council had already passed legislation for funding a new transport system for the central part of San Antonio. The final proposal which had already consumed millions in city dollars was stopped short due to lackluster and compromised support from the downtown business community and fierce opposition from anti-spending suburbanites teamed with police and fire unions afraid of benefits cuts. The signatures gathered by the opposition, while insufficient to take to referendum, warranted a response from the city council. The city council agreed to take up the issue generally of requiring public votes on major transportation projects in the future and killed the streetcar project wholesale. This was the impetus for forming the Charter Review Commission (CRC). The resulting reform to pay city council members, therefore, came from a transportation petition drive, which then was processed through a commission of technocratic appointees and finalized for referendum by the city council. As I will show, despite the claims that this is a necessary way to create a system of better representation by empowering people from more varied economic backgrounds to hold office, the political will for the reform was not championed by grassroots community movements but by those with technocratic authority.

In September, Deputy Clerk Contreras presented on a proposed ordinance establishing the composition and structure of the CRC, confronting the transportation issue was their primary mandate – at least on paper. Contreras explained that the CRC would consist of thirteen members: seven community representatives, two former elected city officials, one former city employee, one individual with expertise in municipal law, one with expertise in human resources,

and one with expertise in municipal finance. Ultimately, the people selected were mostly lawyers, political professionals, and a university president. These individuals were appointed by the mayor's office without public input, and their meetings were mostly closed to the public. The CRC would be a permanent body and the commissioners would serve two-year terms, but the initial appointments would expire after the upcoming May election. By December, Mayor Taylor and the city council filled all but one of the CRC positions and the meetings commenced.

The people who served on the commission mostly had backgrounds in the city government: four were former or current city councilmembers, one was a former city attorney, one worked in human resources for the city, and one served on numerous planning commissions previously. Three members were leaders in local universities, and three were part of political organizations: one was the political director for Planned Parenthood, one worked in public affairs for the San Antonio Chamber of Commerce, and one was a neighborhood association president. Of the twelve members, several had advanced degrees from Harvard or other elite universities, and four had backgrounds in banking. Put simply, the commission was comprised of people with backgrounds in San Antonio city government, finance, and higher education administration. There was strong professional representation for banking, law, and construction/development as well as public administration. For a city like San Antonio where only 26% of residents have Bachelor's degrees, these individuals represented the elite. What's more, many of them served on boards together previously and worked within the same sectors. Several also had personal relationships with the mayor and city councilmembers according to several newspaper articles unrelated to the commission. These individuals were sought out and selected by the mayor's office with an obvious intent to gather people with direct experience in local governance or with a financial or academic background.

The backgrounds of people selected to serve on the commission affirms Skocpol's arguments that civic society is over-professionalized, bordering on oligarchical. She states that since the 1970s, political engagement changed "as new conceptions of leadership took hold, stressing expertise, management from centralized offices, and elites who *speak for* other citizens rather than *speaking with* them" (2004: 12-13). Except for one, the neighborhood association leader,

none of the members of the CRC spent their days working in community engagement or for political inclusion organizations. Despite this makeup, much of what the CRC members and city councilmembers went on to argue was that the purpose of the compensation reform was fairness and inclusion.

After two months of meetings, on the 18th of February 2015, the CRC made their recommendations to the city council. This was the first meeting in which the members of the CRC and city council articulated the intent behind council compensation. Dr. Charles Cotrell, a professor of political science and former President of St. Mary's University in San Antonio, was the chair of the CRC and began the presentation:

> "Concerning the compensation question, we considered understanding the work that you do and those who previously served do on a 24/7 basis. If I may, very briefly suggest to you that, things for council changed dramatically and significantly when in 1977, we adopted districts. Before that time, while we had good hard-working councilmembers, the fact is that they were more like part-time members, and today the expectations of those 140,000 constituents per district make your jobs full-time..."

Here, Dr. Cotrell explains the reasoning behind city council compensation through a managerial conceptualization of representation. This theme occurred throughout the meetings and was voiced by commission members and city councilmembers alike. Later he explained that the members of the council are professionals, and they should be paid like professionals. Cotrell also repeatedly emphasized that the CRC was unanimous in its conclusion for the recommendations, an important value in the logic of a technocracy. The notion of contestation among the experts implies that expertise can have subjective results, which undermines the supremacy of professionals. The logic is that anyone with sufficient training and rigorous study will come to the same conclusions. This is why most discussion among the experts is behind closed doors. Only upon reaching a consensus can the broader public bring input, a difficult task when facing a unified front of rationality. This isn't to say that the conclusions were wrong, but that the paradigm through which they were reached those conclusions was singular.

The city councilmembers reinforced the legitimacy of the CRC members throughout the meeting while still making clear that the purpose of council compensation was to be inclusive of traditionally marginalized people. In response

to the presentation, Councilmember Rey Saldaña stated, "…we're updating 50s language, built in a context where I think it was used to sort of prejudice who became city councilmembers, and I'm really glad that this conversation is happening at a serious level with credible folks…"

He says that the conversation is happening with "credible folks". He is referring specifically to the degree of professional expertise of the commissioners members as well as implying a reputational aspect to the legitimacy question. Therefore, by calling them credible, he contributes to legitimating their recommendations. Of course, the legitimacy of the commissioners exists outside of the city council meetings, so it is not being constructed there and then, but the acknowledgement of the legitimacy is what allows them to have authority in the arena. His statement begs the question, who would not be credible? Presumably, the people being targeted for inclusion by the reform are the same people who do not have the time or luxury to serve on a commission.

At no point during the meeting did anyone ask where those being targeted by the reform were during the deliberation process. It is as if the impediments of political access were either already understood by the CRC members due to their expertise or they were simply irrelevant. They saw themselves has solving the problem of access, but that access should come after the implementation, not as part of it.

Saldaña's reference to 1950s language implies that contemporary revision of democracy requires trust in the individuals doing the revision. We know from what Saldaña and others throughout the meetings are saying that they trust the members of the commission. This is the fundamental argument of network governance: that trust is a resource. This trust is rooted in both the network itself, but also in the professionalism shared by the councilmembers and the commission members. They are of the same habitus (Bourdieu 1977; Diamond 2004; Davies 2011). They were selected due to expertise and pedigree, which makes them trustworthy. The objectivity of their professional statuses justifies the subjective evaluation of their legitimacy. In other words, they are experts in their fields so they know best what's good for democracy. Saldaña is articulating the commission members' status as legitimate, reinforcing their authority, and socially producing power through his rhetoric of deference and elevation. Therefore, the inequality of reforming democracy is baked into the process.

At the next meeting, the city council heard from the public. Few spoke, but among them was Richard Perez, the President of the San Antonio Chamber of Commerce. He said, "I come with a mandate from the San Antonio business community saying we need a change. It makes sense. It's reasonable, and it's time." He talked about his time on city council (he had been a member several years before) and claimed he had worked up to sixty hours a week for his constituents. He said the chamber was committed to helping educate the public over the course of the campaign. The chamber did, indeed, launch an educational campaign in support of Amendment 2. Despite the fact that Perez was presenting himself and the chamber as a supportive outsider at this public hearing, it is important to note that both the chair of the board and the former vice president of public relations for the chamber were members of the CRC. The organizational support he was offering was likely always going to happen.

Even in the public arena, the "hearing" was engineered to reinforce the consensus of the commission through the professional network of political elites. This is how the integral state expands what Laclau and Mouffe would call the sacralisation of consensus. They say that "…any form of consensus is the result of a hegemonic articulation…" (1985: xviii). Anyone attending this meeting without researching the members of the commission would see Perez as a non-governmental voice passionately advocating for a more just system of government. However, his statement was thoroughly prepared and was in support of colleagues both on the commission and on the city council itself. Despite these connections, he presented himself as a spokesperson for the business community. His vested interest was as a networked professional, and his position was interwoven within and outside of the state. He was both a member of the 'public' and of the state, blurring the line between the two.

The consensus in favor of council compensation continued and in the end, only Councilman Krier voted against putting Amendment 2 on the ballot. The council unanimously supported the language of all the other amendments. The public would go on to pass Amendment 2 in May of that year thanks to significant campaign funding from the chamber of commerce.

Defining a 'good partner' to the state

The scenes from the two cases I described above featured varied individuals deliberating the nuts and bolts of democratic reforms. We can see that 'good partners' in these scenes help to fulfill the desires of bureaucrats and governors to further state projects with minimal contestation or ideologically input. Pacewicz argues, "a partner's utility is predicated on avoidance of a divisive reputation, and partnership is therefore incompatible with traditional leaders' patterns of community engagement, especially their engagement in partisan politics" (2016: 14). I will now demonstrate this utility by directly comparing individuals in one case to those in the other.

In both cities, most of the people who spoke publically in the reform process were professionals with deep ties to city government. However, the individuals differed considerably between the two cities in other ways. In Seattle, I observed exclusively unelected members of the SEEC and the individuals who spoke at their meetings. In San Antonio, I observed the leaders of the CRC and elected city council members along with the mayor in addition to the members of the public who engaged on the streetcar issue and the council compensation reform. The relative extent to which these bodies are democratic institutions was therefore a matter of degrees. Despite this, the bodies were similar in that the majority of those with state-based authority and those who set the agenda were highly professionalized: attorneys, people in the finance industry, and academics.

A key difference between the subjects in the two cities is that in Seattle, those who were not commissioners and spoke with authority were civic leaders, associated with non-profits and activist organizations. However, in San Antonio, the non-city council members were mostly academics and finance/business people from the community. If they had political experience, it was mostly as elected officials. They were purposefully assembled as a commission of experts. The SEEC was also purposely assembled, but the application process was more transparent and bureaucratized. In San Antonio, the mayor's office recruited specific individuals who were already known within the local political community.

To understand the logic of technocracy, it is important to determine what decision making recruiters for these positions believe expertise to be and what kind is most appropriate. Obviously, we see patterns related to law and finance.

However, in Seattle, the experts which were selected for the commission were all attorneys. The rules and ethics surrounding elections are thought to be entirely within the realm of legality according to the city councilmembers who selected the commissioners. It may also be the case that only lawyers apply and participate in the commission for professional advancement, as the member of the public I discussed earlier, Alex Tsimerman, stated. In Seattle, the expert who manages democracy is the attorney.

In San Antonio, it is somewhat murkier. The experts selected to rewrite the city charter had highly professionalized backgrounds, but their connections to city government were the basis of recruitment. Here an expert is someone who has a robust background specifically in San Antonio government and connections to the mayor's office. The four people on the CRC without experience in San Antonio city government were two college/university presidents and two people with finance backgrounds who did political work for non-governmental organizations (Planned Parenthood and the chamber of commerce). Compared to Seattle, the expert in San Antonio is a person with professional success in business, finance or academia who has served in city government. While the Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission specifically forbids commissioners from having been elected to city government or from running in the near future, San Antonio's culture embraces elected officials as the best experts for arbitrating democratic reform. Nonetheless, the sitting city council in both cities are seen as having too much to gain to arbitrate the system and develop the reform themselves.

Now that I have addressed the backgrounds of the commissioners in both cities, I will look more specifically at the scenes I discussed and make direct comparison between the individuals. I will highlight a specific value of technocracy I found in each comparison: 1) Consensus; 2) Non-state partnership; 3) Institutional deference. However, all three of these values appeared throughout the study and to some degree in most scenes. I'm only highlighting them in this way to explore them more thoroughly. I will come back to these values when discussing the electoral campaigns that followed these reforms to demonstrate a consistent logic of technocracy throughout the system of elections.

The first two scenes for direct comparison are the interaction with Andrew Pilloud in Seattle and the presentation by Dr. Charles Cotrell in San Antonio. To briefly remind the reader, the Seattle scene was an individual who planned to run

for office looking for clarity on the rules for the Democracy Vouchers and the San Antonio scene was the chair of the commission presenting the argument for why the city councilmembers should be compensated. In Seattle, Pilloud was questioning whether it was possible to accurately verify signatures and the SEEC chair was cutting him off in the middle of each sentence to challenge or consider what he said. The commissioner reacted with irritation to being questioned. In San Antonio, Cotrell was emphasizing how hard the job of a city councilor was and reasoned that the difficulty of the job warrants compensation. He also pointed out that the commission was unanimously in agreement on this issue. In response, city councilmembers effusively thanked the commissioners and complimented their hard work and personal credibility. The theme we see in both cases is consensus.

The two people, Pilloud and Cotrell differed considerably. Pilloud was a candidate for office who worked in software while Cotrell was a former university president and professor of political science. While they were both successful in their careers, Cotrell's legitimacy as "expert" stemmed from extensive training in academia and deep-rooted connections to city government officials while maintaining an apolitical affect. Pilloud's interest in clarifying the rules was primarily for personal political gain. He also didn't present himself as an expert. I would argue that in this case, given the purpose of the reform, he should have been treated by the commission as the ultimate expert: an individual with limited connections to political elites running for office and utilizing the reform Vouchers to do so. However, what is most important in both cases is the technocratic value of consensus. We see in Seattle that a threat to consensus is immediately met with resistance and in San Antonio, consensus is emphasized as a normative good. The debates on what is appropriate for enacting reform come down to the notion that the experts are inherently correct and that their conclusions are inevitable results of their professionalized sophisticated knowledge.

The second comparison is between Alan Durning's interaction with the commissioners at the public hearing on the Democracy Voucher rules and Richard Perez's speech at the public hearing on city charter reform. Durning had no known affiliation with the SEEC prior to I-122. This is in direct contrast to Perez who as the president of the San Antonio Chamber of Commerce had frequent political engagement with the city council and had also served as a councilmember himself. We see in these scenes that while network governance theory holds that building

trust over time through coalitions can be effective in developing authority, it is not the only way. Durning was given significant authority while Perez was only there to fawn, not recommend. Both were members of the public speaking at a public hearing on the reform, but their relative professionalism in the specific context of the reform was what mattered in terms of their legitimacy.

Some might look at Durning and Perez and assume that this is the ideal of network governance. Davies states, "Networks are 'self-organizing' and the state, now just one governance actor among many, can steer them only 'indirectly and imperfectly'. Trust therefore displaces command as the primary coordinating mechanism" (2011: 14). However, I find that the members of state hold more command in the San Antonio case than in Seattle. Therefore, in this instance, trust is not the primary mechanism of conferring authority. Instead, authority is rooted in the status of the individual which is due to political professionalism and is issue contingent. I am therefore able to affirm that individuals co-constitute their own and others' authority through institutional processes, but I find that trust through network-building is a weak explanatory factor in why some individuals hold authority while others do not. I believe that the logic of technocracy is both more complex and normatively driven than network theorists would argue.

The foundational problem is the assumption that networks are deliberative and inclusive in the first place. Both Durning and Perez are non-state actors performing as 'good partners' in the state project. Gaventa posits, "widespread engagement with issues of participation and local governance creates enormous opportunities for redefining and deepening meanings of democracy, for linking civil society and government reforms in new ways, for extending the rights of inclusive citizenship" (2004: 39). However, as I demonstrate, both existing governmental links and/or professional status with sophisticated knowledge is all but necessary for inclusion in democracy reform. Professional associations and status are critical to legitimacy throughout the political process. I find that Davies' critique of network governance theory generally holds true: it does not displace but potentially reinforces existing hierarchies. He argues that, "empowerment may depend less on enhanced network democracy than on strong independent community organisation capable of acting separately and coercively against governing institutions and elites – an exit-action strategy" (2007: 780). I will

address this idea along with the ubiquity of technocracy culture fully in the final chapter.

The last comparison is between Councilmember Saldaña in San Antonio and Artie Nasrati in Seattle. In both cases, the individuals were advocating on behalf of historically excluded communities: Saldaña explicitly articulated his belief that the city charter was designed as a prejudicial tool and Nasrati was at the hearing representing an organization advocating for low-wage workers. Both reinforced the notion that deference should be given to state institutions. Saldaña referred to the conversation as taking place at a 'serious level with credible folks', implying that despite the system being built on a prejudicial document, the existing city council is still a legitimate institution. Nasrati in saying "if I had a better idea…I'd obviously be sitting on that side of the table…" implies that being in a position of state authority must mean that the commissioners are better equipped to determine the rules of elections. Both give deference first and foremost to the institutions. Ultimately, this is how the hegemony of technocracy persists, through subtle deference to institutions and assumptions that deep flaws which prohibit inclusion are merely in need of fixing after the fact and not grounds for addressing the system as a whole.

NORMATIVE TECHNOCRACY

In this chapter, I discussed the technocrats who were critical to the election reforms in both Seattle and San Antonio. I considered the professional backgrounds of the commissioners in both cities along with the roles of members of the public when they interacted with either the Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission or the San Antonio City Council. In both cases, I found a pattern of professional bias toward specific sectors: law, finance, and academia. I also found that historic political professional expertise helped to establish authority among individuals, but that members of the institutions were the ultimate arbiters of legitimacy. My findings support some notions of network governance theory, such as long-term trust building being helpful in establishing legitimacy, but it also countered the theory, particularly by arguing that political professional status tempered with an apolitical affect was most important in convincing others of individual legitimacy. Lastly, I discussed individual cases and demonstrated a set

of cultural values endemic to technocracy that are reinforced over and over again: consensus, the inevitable rightness of expertise, institutional deference, and the civil society-state partnership.

The logic of a technocracy stands in direct contrast to the goals of the election reforms in this study. The desire for more and better public participation and more access to the flow of democratic power by the general public drove both electoral reforms in Seattle and San Antonio. Often speakers articulating the goals of the reforms attested to the universally accepted good the reforms would bring by opening democracy to all, especially to historically underrepresented communities. Nonetheless, the reforms themselves were developed and implemented by "experts" and apolitical unpaid administrators. Therefore, I focused on the actors granted positions of authority in developing and implementing electoral reforms. I am asking not who rules, as is so often the question of those studying local political systems, but rather who matters? This question put the perceived legitimacy of the individual at the center while influence and power become the outcome. This question placed my study somewhat outside of urban governance literature in that election reform is not really governance. It is political structure preceding the state. The state must develop and implement it through traditional institutions of governance, but no one is being governed in this process. I address uniquely political questions and the arena of negotiation is participatory democracy reconfiguring in real time, despite the degree to which it is fulfilled. Ultimately, I find that the technocrat is a contingent form which is ironic because the point of technocracy is to claim their expertise as universal, and that even when the entire goal of a state project is inclusion, the logic of technocracy requires broad exclusion.

Therefore, I also conclude that lay commissions should be called expert commissions. This is not new; commissions have been appointed by local governments on the basis of social connection and professional expertise for decades (Hamilton, 1982). The more general move toward a highly educated civic class has been well-documented by scholars like Skocpol, "…higher-educated Americans today are likely to see themselves as individually meritorious experts who can best contribute to national or local well-being by working with other professional specialists to tackle complex technical or social problems" (2004: 11). However, what's new is the cultural expectations of democracy. We now have an

intense focus on the equity of political voice, particularly on the left, which cannot be in harmony with the technocratic culture that ascribes preference based on professionalism and political status. Now, in Part 2 of this thesis, I look to the work of campaigns in both cities and find that these preferences permeate the process of elections, reinforcing and expanding technocratic culture outside the state and into the production of candidacy.

Part 2

Influence and Expertise

Chapter 5:

POLITICAL COMMUNITIES PRIOR TO REFORM

In the Spring of 2017, the elections in Seattle and San Antonio were heating up. In Seattle over 20 individuals had filed their paperwork and paid the city $1000 to throw their name in the ring for mayor, and in San Antonio, an average of ten individuals were running for each of the ten city council districts and mayoral seat. By all accounts, this was an extraordinary number of candidates in both cities. And yet, when the media covered the races, when fundraising numbers came in, when public event organizers invited candidates to speak, and when interviewees discussed the races with me, it was clear that only two to three contenders per race really counted as credible candidates. Those two to three candidates in each race had something in common: they all had employed paid consultants and/or staff.

Based on that commonality, it may appear that the key to candidate viability is money. However, I argue that money is important, but not in the purely transactional sense. Instead of being a starting point, campaign money is a quantitative symbol of the network of relationships each candidate has formed—both on their own and with/through their brokers. Of similar importance are the relationships between the individuals *within* the network, without regard to the candidate or consultant. For example, a candidate may never meet a high-level donor, but because a business peer (or "connection") of the donor vouches for the candidate, a large donation may be made to the campaign's political action committee without a face-to-face meeting between candidate and donor having ever occurred.

In this chapter, I study the individuals who are a part of those networks. I ask who comprises the elite political community in each city and how did they exert influence in elections prior to reform? I focus on the prerequisites for candidate success according to the relationships someone running for office might have already or need to develop to achieve viability. In doing so, I compare interviews to reveal a political logic in each city which leads to some people being welcomed into the establishment over others, and further, I note cleavages within the establishment that lead to a consistent trajectory for candidate types.

In my findings, I describe the key players in each city according to interviewees. I then draw on comments made in the interviews about culture, demography, and contribution lists to establish the political logic of local consultants and leaders in supporting candidates. While this portion is mostly descriptive, it is crucial in establishing a baseline in each city so that we can later see how political logic and key players may have shifted when the reforms were implemented.

These key players are distinct from the power elite or regime members found in urban politics literature. For one thing, who rules American cities is more about outcomes of elections than about elections themselves. As I have stated before, ultimately, regime theory and more broadly urban governance theory fail to include the role of campaigns and elections in their explanations. While many of the coalition and governing members participate in campaign management and electoral reform, there are far more distinctions than there is overlap both due to the distinct nature of campaigning as an industry and due to the state level influence of organizations and influencers (Kilburn, 2004).

However, the fact that campaigns and elections are an industry unto themselves with their own set of actors and logics might help to explain the success of regimes, growth coalitions and other forms of institutionalized urban power systems. For example, in his work on regime theory, Stephen Elkin encouraged referenda and neighborhood meet ups to democratize government and disrupt regime power (1987). However, as I show, these are now opportunities for the campaigning industry. Consultants often support candidates for free to ensure contracts to run city bond campaigns and other forms of referenda. Candidates also craft their message and campaign around the neighborhood groups which ultimately have limited, hyper-local interests that tend to be economically driven,

especially among those who vote. In fact, neighborhood groups exacerbate unequal democratic practices because attending to their needs becomes a must for a candidate and they hold the most power in wealthier neighborhoods. Part of the knowledge a political consultant offers is that of these neighborhood groups: which ones are necessary, which can be ignored and which are cohesive. In focusing on the professionalization of the campaign industry, I offer insight into the power structure at the point of entry to urban governance.

In the second part of my analysis, I make direct comparisons between the two cities' elite political communities. I focus on the professionalization of the campaign industry in Seattle and the relative lack-thereof in San Antonio. These varying levels of professionalization had direct consequences for sources of influence, political values, and logic. I find that in both cases, candidates must have relationships with establishment figures to be viable for election but for different reasons. In Seattle, establishment ties allow for credibility within a tight network of left-leaning organizations and labor unions that can then leverage funds as well as help turn out voters in large numbers. In San Antonio, connections grant access to a community of voters that has been cultivated by dynastic families or protégée relationships in each district. Access to organizational money is less of an issue in San Antonio because most candidates front their campaigns early on to become viable. Self-funding such as this is somewhat frowned upon in Seattle. The variance in professionalization also has a significant effect on the expectations for and flow of money within campaigns.

While the flow of resources in the two cities contrasts greatly, the political logic is surprisingly similar. I find that in both cases, the political community has an ideal-type candidate not based on appeal to voters a priori, but based on establishment values. In other words, it's not about electability, it's about fitting in with the elite political community. Overall, in both cities, I find that the political logic used by political leaders was technocratic: campaigns required expertise to be legitimate and this preceded strategic campaign work, deference was given to institutional ties, the community desired consensus, and candidates who had experience in the private sector were preferred. These are the same values and logics which manifested during the state-managed aspects of the electoral reforms, as I discussed in previous chapters.

My findings in this chapter are based entirely on the 65 interviews I conducted with political professionals and elites in the two cities during the 2017 election cycle. I did not distinguish between early interviews in the cycle and later ones, but during each interview I asked the individuals to speak generally about local politics and then would shift the conversation to the current cycle. These interviews certainly provide a specific point of view, that of active members of the elite political community. In later chapters, I interrogate this perspective somewhat with contribution data as well as ethnographic findings from the 2017 cycle.

STANDING COALITIONS AND IDEAL CANDIDATES

Seattle

Interviewees in Seattle describe a group called the "Allies Table": a regularly held meeting of political staff members representing their organizations. The Allies Table is not a meeting of organizations themselves, or even representatives of those organizations, in a delegate-sense. It is far less formal than that. Rather, it is a group of people each from a different organization who work together regularly and build personal relationships with one another. As one interviewee said, "We do love meetings" (SE Union 3). Members include all major labor unions, including chapters of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), the American Federation of State County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), and the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), as well as Planned Parenthood, the Sierra Club, the Trial Lawyers Association, Win-Win[3], the Washington Bus[4], and several others. Most groups have a national profile.

So, how does one join this influential Allies Table? While most interviewees simply listed the members, and said they are there "because they're the big players" or "when people can bring resources to the table, we want them to

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[3] A coalition of state-wide organizations working on the broader issue of social justice that share database information and resources

[4] A youth political engagement organization with a partner organization in San Antonio called MOVE San Antonio

have a seat and a voice", one interviewee explained it in terms of professional sophistication:

> Who has kind of a professional operation that looks like ours and operates like ours more than anything else, right? I mean, if you've got somebody who's fulltime and wants to work on politics and generally has the same end goal in mind, that's kind of who your coalition starts to look like because you show up to do the same kind of work day-in, day-out (SE Union 3).

Every organization listed as an Allies Table member had at least one full-time designated political staff member. Though not in every case, they also tend to be the organizations with significant resources. What this union representative's description leaves out is a willingness to engage with the political system as it currently exists, meaning that more radical groups with access to resources, such as the Socialist-Alternative Party, are excluded generally. Additionally, all members of the Allies Table have state-level structures, meaning that much of what happens at the meetings is related to state-level politics. All interviewees who were Allies Table members described state politics as their priority. At the state-level, partisanship simplifies things. The Allies Table functions in lock-step in support of Democratic candidates while avoiding direct coordination with the Democratic Party both for legal reasons and to evade negative associations voters have with establishment candidates.

When discussing the Allies Table, interviewees tended to see city politics as having little to no impact on coalition composition. Instead, these coalitions are determined at the state level and then various actors decide whether to coordinate for a particular local candidate or stay out of the race all together. They said that they tend to only get involved at the local level if there is an issue campaign that affects their membership or one of their causes directly, or if there is an insider running. What went unacknowledged is that there is almost always an insider running, be they an actual coalition member or a champion incumbent. This is both because consultants usually will not take on local candidates unless they have some ties to labor and because large labor organizations have their own candidate recruitment systems. Therefore, while the decision to support a city level candidate does not take up a particularly large amount of bandwidth in coalition discussions, the support is often a given. This means a candidate will receive dedicated funds

and be included in literature amongst membership campaigning. This can have a huge impact on a city council race, especially if several members of the Allies Table choose to create a political action committee in support of a candidate and spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on their behalf. They may also coordinate with other organizations to do door-knocking and "lit drops" where they inundate targeted neighborhoods with literature in support of a candidate. This literature is usually produced by members of the organizations, so it costs the candidate's campaign nothing.

There are two other resource rich coalitions that influence Seattle politics: the labor council (which heavily overlaps with the Allies Table) and the chamber of commerce. The labor council has several staff members on the Allies Table. However, when the council chooses to endorse a candidate collectively, it is handled by union leaders, not political staffers. The formality of the council requires the gravitas of elected leadership amongst the members. In that sense, one of the greatest strengths of the Allies Table is its informality. It allows staff members to coordinate to elect candidates in ways which are not scrutinized by organization members.

The chamber of commerce (COC) typically stays out of city elections unless a member of the COC is running. Instead, the COC focuses primarily on referenda and zoning debates. However, candidates will often seek out support of individual business leaders on the COC's board of directors and then utilize this support as leverage with other COC members. Importantly, the COC has its own in-house consultants who advise them on endorsements and what political action the organization should take in a campaign. Usually, this will be an independent expenditure for a television advertisement or direct mail (SE Union 3, SE Journalist 1, SE Consultants 1,3,4,6,9,13)

Ideal candidates for these coalitions are insiders. They are people who have leadership roles in Allies Table organizations or are small business owners who have ties to the COC. Coalition members will give most generously to candidates they know well and feel comfortable vouching for to other members. This is the relational aspect of running for office that so often gets missed in an outcomes-based approach to studying campaigns and elections. However, even if a candidate is a leader within a coalition organization, they still need to work with an expert to gain access to other coalition members.

Political consultants in Seattle tend to identify and focus on a key niche, be they progressive women candidates, grassroots candidates, establishment candidates, and so forth. All my interviewees commented that there are far too many political consultants in Seattle. However, most do not rely on local elections for their primary income. Many work with out-of-state clients and only occasional pick up a local race. A Seattle political consulting firm will almost always have an office with staff in addition to the consultants themselves. They frequently decorate their walls with successful direct mail designs and prominently display their "Polli" awards, which Esquire magazine called "…the Oscars of political advertising", according to the American Association of Political Consultants website (AAPC, 2018).

Seattle political consultants typically are party-affiliated in that they work for only Democrats or Republicans. In Seattle, the consultants rarely deviate from working for Democrats, and when asked how they got into the business, each one has a story of ideological commitment to tell. However, one labor representative pointed out that Seattle is generally to the left of the Democratic Party, so consultants will often advise candidates to refrain from advertising to voters that they are members of the Democratic Party as mentioning it may handicap the Party's control should the candidate lose because of Party affiliation (SE Union 2). When it comes to campaign strategy, one consultant said, "we have stats and numbers for targeting, with some input from allies, but most of the time that's why we get paid" (SE Consultant 7). Therefore, between the consultants working for candidates and organizations like the chamber of commerce along with the Allies Table, Seattle has a highly professionalized network of political actors. The Allies Table determines whether a candidate is an insider or not and a candidate must build relationships with those members in order to win. This professional network, then, is the establishment. As one local activist described them, "The purpose of consultants in Seattle politics is to 'cockblock' resources" (SE Activist 1), meaning they act as brokers between candidates and both campaign funders and organizations with lots of membership.

So, what about other candidates that do not come from the Allies Table? These candidates come from either activist groups who are not part of the Allies Table or from the business community. If they do not have ties with business or any organization, they will be unlikely to find a consultant to take them on. I

purposefully left these activist groups out of the earlier discussion of standing coalitions because they do not generally coordinate with one another. However, consultants made it clear that if one of these three communities (labor, business, community activist organizations) is not backing a candidate, that candidate will lose. They also said that at the city level, business does not count for very much unless they are allied with labor in support of a candidate in that race. When I asked how one consultant determines candidate viability, he said, "They need to be one of the cool kids, be on the right boards, and have the right friends…I will meet the candidate for the first time, then ask who *choice* is supporting and who *labor* is supporting. If it's not them, they're probably gonna lose. If they say *grassroots*, they're saying they're gonna lose" (SE Consultant 2).

Conversely, according to another consultant who specializes in grassroots candidates, that is not the case. He felt the COC and labor were the biggest kingmakers in the city and said that whether he takes on a client is about the candidate's ideology first and their organizing ability second. He felt that Seattle is unique in that, unlike other cities, it has a great number of organic activist candidates. He argued that the Seattle City Council having the only avowed Socialist elected to government in a major city demonstrates that outsider candidates can win there (SE Consultant 4). This is true; however, it seems more likely that the success of these outsider candidates are the exceptions that prove the rule: there is an insider coalition which can come much closer to guaranteeing success.

Seattle is so developed in its professional network that there are second-level fundraising specialists in addition to general consultants. One such fundraiser reiterated the importance of the outsider versus insider candidate dynamic, but instead of outsider, she used the term 'grassroots'. She said, "there are the ideological purists and the stakeholder establishment groups" (SE Fundraiser 1). This implies that there is a constant tension in Seattle between the groups with ideological interests and ones with transactional interests in local politics, and it is the transactional groups which comprise the establishment. She also said that most individual big donors fund specific referendum campaigns rather than getting involved in general local politics. While this might be true, it is impossible to know how much this is influenced by the $500 contribution limits to candidates.

Otherwise, to have referendum influence, one would need to donate to a political action committee running an independent expenditure.

When asked who consultants have their candidates reach out to first in the endorsement/fund-raising process, they made it clear that the first step is to engage the candidates' existing network *prior* to running. "If they're a teacher, I have them call teachers. If they're a lawyer, I have them call lawyers" (SE Consultant 1). Consultants, however, have relationships with labor and progressive organizations independent of their candidates. This is less true of business community members, such as members of the COC. For political professionals, the mere reputation of a consultant can be indicative of an associated candidate's viability. Some groups simply will not endorse candidates who hire the wrong consultants, much less a candidate who is trying to run their own campaign, entirely without consultants. The co-dependence of the professional network and the top tier consultants is most obvious when comparing two quotes, one from a labor representative and one from a consultant:

> *Labor representative (12): "We look and see-do they have the right consultant?"*
> *Consultant (9): "I consider whether they can get labor backing before taking them on."*

While this may seem paradoxical for a candidate at the entry point, it is really about having knowledge of the network. The consultant continued, "Politics is a relationship-driven business." He also said that the best path to winning is the Murray path (here referring to the sitting mayor). Ed Murray was able to get backing from both business and labor interests. This seems to be a very common alliance as it came up multiple times in interviews with consultants, lobbyists and political professionals. What these business-labor candidates tend to have in common with one another is that they are usually lawyers. Because lawyers are often business owners and the Trial Lawyers Association is a member of the Allies Table, this should not be surprising. However, a representative from the Trial Lawyers Association told me that they do not get involved in local politics. Perhaps that is true on an associational level, but it is certainly not true of lawyers in Seattle in general. I will discuss this further in the next chapter which specifically discusses money in municipal campaigns.

If, however, there is less consensus, how then does the network divide itself? According to the interviewees, these are the patterns:

- Labor: includes SEIUs, UFCW, Unite Here and the building trades. The building trades will sometimes split with the service unions and work with business or developers. This is significant since Seattle is a port city and the building trades represent a large population.
- Business: includes chambers of commerce, rental housing association, developers, big tech, restaurants and hospitality. Business rarely splits and includes companies like Vulcan and Amazon. However, more conservative business leaders often do not get involved at all.
- Community Groups/Activists/Grassroots/Populists[5]: includes Socialist-Alternative Party, neighborhood activists, Transport Alliance, and others who are not a part of Win-Win. They will split between their far-left groups and the activists trying to work within the system.

Additionally, if women's health advocacy groups, members of Win-Win or environmentalists groups participate, they will typically align with labor and effectively form a city level Allies Table.

San Antonio

In San Antonio, much political power resides with business leaders, former elected officials, neighborhood leaders, and to a lesser extent, professional associations such as the firefighters and the police officers' associations. These groups are not necessarily adversarial nor are they particularly cohesive. In fact, because of the relative nonpartisanship in San Antonio elections and the reliance on self-funding for candidates which limits the number of people who run, all these individuals and organizations will often find themselves backing the same candidates in multiple races. This is especially true of incumbents, who have a tremendous advantage in local elections due to low turnout. As one lobbyist stated, "Unless they've been perp-walked, you can't get them out" (SA Lobbyist 1). A reflection of its divided distribution of White and Mexican influence, the city of San Antonio has a complex mix of "old" (dynasty) powerful families and new blood that is, in fact, descendants of the old power-structure. Thus, much of the political advantage is due to name recognition. Another significant factor is that incumbents have the advantage of the use of a councilmember mailing budget,

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[5] All names used by different interviewees to denote that same groups.

which they can use to communicate with constituents—touting their accomplishments—with use of the city's budget rather than with campaign funds.

Figure 5.1: Map of San Antonio City Council Districts with Major Roadways

Altered from Source: SA2020

According to interviewees, San Antonio is mainly driven by business interests. Indeed, business was the first (and often only) interest interviewees mentioned in terms of important political actors. Business interests, by nature, are split but the division itself was interpreted differently by different people. A short geographical explanation is required to fully understand the comments of the interviewees: San Antonio is a city built with concentric circles defining the areas of the city: The interior circle (inside Loop 410) includes the original city, the downtown, the modest residential areas, and the first universities; the second circle (outside Loop 410) includes the more recent residential areas and the newer universities. In addition to this concentric configuration, the economics of the city

have stratified, with the northern part of the city gaining economic advantage while the eastern, western, and southern areas of the city have stagnated economically. The first description (articulated by roughly a third of interviewees) divided the business interests as being between those inside Loop 410 and those outside Loop 410. The interior of Loop 410 includes most of the city's tourism industry while the outside of Loop 410 mostly includes the interest of land development expansion. The other two thirds of interviewees described the division as being between the north side and the rest of the city - by far the wealthiest area of the city and the home of most of the city's expansion and development over the last several decades. This expansion is partially due to the fact that areas of the city inside Loop 410 are divided into municipalities or have strict zoning regulations to protect areas of historic significance while the (outside Loop 410) north side is less divided into municipalities and is more picturesque as it has more hills and green areas, thus, higher income residents tend to buy there (see Figure 5.1).

In fact, the reality is that both interpretations of the city's business divisions are accurate. There are two main loci of business: the north side, which includes council districts 8, 9, and 10, and downtown, which houses all of district 5 as well as the majority of districts 1, 2, and 3. I qualify the use of the term loci in that I am not intending to argue that the east, west and south sides of the city are not home to businesses leaders, but that they are not represented to the degree that the north side and downtown business leaders are in the city council and in elections. I came to this conclusion after observing both city council and zoning committee meetings and looking at the zip codes of business donors to candidates' campaigns. This division is also reflected in two separate chambers of commerce that exist in the city: The San Antonio Chamber of Commerce and the Northside Chamber of Commerce.[6] These two chambers were brought up by interviewees as being important endorsements for candidates to obtain, along with the firefighters and the police officers associations. No other citywide organizational endorsements

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[6] There are several other chambers of commerce in San Antonio, some of which participate in local elections through endorsements and fundraising. These include: Alamo Asian American Chamber of Commerce, Alamo City Black Chamber of Commerce, San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, San Antonio LGBT Chamber of Commerce, San Antonio Women's Chamber of Commerce, South San Antonio Chamber of Commerce, and West San Antonio Chamber of Commerce

were mentioned by consultants. Instead, neighborhood leaders for different districts, "dynasty" political families or leaders, and reliance on the candidate's existing relationships and profiles were listed by interviewees as most important.

Political actors who work on campaigns in San Antonio do not spend significant amounts of time together and many, if not most of them, work part-time on their campaign work. The priority is policy and bond measures rather than candidate selection. Political actors operate under the assumption that whoever is elected to municipal positions will likely be amenable to business interests either because they must be in order to get legislation passed or because they could never have raised enough funds to win in the first place without demonstrating responsiveness to business interests. As one candidate put it, "San Antonio is old school" (SA Candidate 1).

Interviewees made it clear that running a campaign in San Antonio is one of primarily name recognition, which means a major injection of cash is necessary. "A Bernie type candidate could never make it in San Antonio" (SA Staff 2), said one self-described politico referring to the small-dollar contributions model of campaign fundraising in Senator Bernie Sanders' race for president. Another said, "Without cash, it's just impossible" (SA Consultant 7). He went on to explain that it is about early money to contact voters as many times as possible. I will delve deeper into the role of money in elections in both cities in the next chapter. However, interviewees made it clear that having enough money to pay a campaign manager is often the only necessary condition to run for office. A candidate's relationships within their own industry certainly helps, but they need not be extensive to raise enough donations to run.

Most consultants taking part in San Antonio campaigns are either from cities outside of San Antonio or they are "part-time", functioning as both general consultants and as de facto campaign managers (though the title of "campaign manager" is often assigned to people under their supervision). Typically, San Antonio consultants will take on several campaigns during a cycle. While they have umbrella oversight for all campaigns, they will hire a different manager for each candidate. This person spends more of their time handling the candidate's schedule and canvassing targeted voters on their behalf by going door to door than they do making major campaign decisions or actually managing people. It is not unusual for the consultants to do this kind of canvassing, as well. Considering only

this hands-on model for campaigning, one could argue that San Antonio is achieving representation in a relatively direct way, coming closer to what the Seattle Democracy Vouchers advocates envisioned for their program; however, the reality is much more complex.

The primary role of the San Antonio based political consultant/campaign manager is creating the universe of targeted voters based on historic turnout, messaging and fundraising, as well as handling scheduling and endorsement questionnaires. What separates a desirable consultant from anyone else then is their list of potential donors and their understanding of the demographics of the likely voters, which may be quite different from the overall demographics of a particular area of the city. As an example, discussing district 3 (a majority Latinx district), one consultant/campaign manager stated, "I've walked districts on the South side and thought they were all Polish" (SE Consultant 7). The Polish population (by this I mean individuals whose last names are of Polish origin) in this district is actually quite small – representing only 1.3% of the population…but they vote. This type of information on the behavior of potential voters in an off-year local election—identifying and targeting the right individuals—is a primary value of consultants. The other main way consultants are valuable is for donor lists, which are not available publicly, at least not with details about the donors and not for very long.

Beyond business leaders, organizations and consultants, I mentioned two other major groups that have a significant impact on candidate selection in San Antonio: legacy politicians/families and neighborhood groups/activists. Cisneros, Uresti, Castro, Wolff, Hardberger; these are all names that were brought up multiple times in interviews, and it is clear that these prominent sitting and former politicians in San Antonio hold significant sway over election results. When discussing candidates, interviewees often referred to a given candidate within the context of their relationship to these major figures, with comments such as "she's Uresti's" or "he's Hardberger's". This happened with campaign staff too. One interviewee said she was introduced as being "from Castro country" when coming onto another campaign. The intention did not seem to be to imply that the candidate acted as an agent, but that the candidate is something of a political descendent of their mentor. Indeed, mentorship is probably the most appropriate word here because it describes not simply an endorsement of a peer but rather a relationship

that also may influence the policy-making of a successful candidate. These mentored individuals are selected, coached, and often funded by legacy politicians. They share voter targets (typically lists) as well as consultants and generally espouse the same policy preferences as the mentor. Often, the candidates come from the same family as the legacy politician (SA Consultants 1,3,4,5,7,9; SA Candidate 1).

Neighborhood leaders in San Antonio function in a similar way. In district 2, TC Calvert is a local leader who is considered to be a "must get" for victory in the district race each cycle and perhaps for the mayoral election. This was starkly demonstrated in interviews when, more than once, an interviewee actually stepped away to take a phone call from Calvert, giving him their undivided attention. "He pays half the neighborhood to blockwalk the other half of the neighborhood with food. And the numbers he pulls are just insane. I don't know how the fuck he does it. The truth is, there would be no [Mayor] Ivy Taylor without TC Calvert" (SA Consultant 7), said one consultant. This was the primary way in which interviewees framed the insider-outside dynamic of local candidates–rather than being associated organizationally, the emphasis was on candidates' relationships with legacy politicians and neighborhood leaders.

In San Antonio, the support that legacy politicians and neighborhood leaders provide is crucial to a campaign and their power rests in their informality. There are no endorsement forms, no public debates, no interviews with organizational members. Instead, it is an individual private relationship, built through lunches and phone calls, that determines how power will be passed down in the city. However, some people I interviewed believe this culture is changing. One person said, "People are sick of the dynasties" (SA Lobbyist 1). Another said, "the predominant reason people don't vote is because they're sick of politicians" (SA Consultant 2). Their viewpoints, however, were not supported by the results of the elections that year as I will discuss in Chapters 7 and 8.

The final group I considered in the San Antonio political landscape were the homeowners and neighborhood associations. These groups meet regularly to discuss issues like neighborhood road repair, neighborhood crime watch, and rules for what exterior home colors are allowed. The number of residents taking part in these groups varies tremendously by neighborhood with older (historic) neighborhoods and more affluent neighborhoods typically having higher

participation rates. While these groups do not typically vote as a bloc, visiting these groups and making your pitch is important as a candidate, not only because it is an opportunity to meet voters and hear their concerns, but also because not showing up is likely to lose you votes. This dynamic is well-known in the city so while it should be acknowledged, the fact that virtually every candidate makes these visits means that the group is rarely a distinguishing factor in elections. One interviewee described running for office in San Antonio less as placing oneself on the political spectrum and more like "harmonizing constituencies" (SA Staff 1).

It is difficult to determine an ideal type candidate in San Antonio when compared to Seattle. This is directly related to the lack of cohesion in political coalitions. Without a standing establishment with public goals, it is not clear what constitutes an insider running for office. That said, there are a few requirements according to interviewees: they must be well-educated, military experience is a plus, and have district level connections with legacy politicians or enough cash to self-fund. This sounds very general, and it is, but because San Antonio is not a wealthy city, these profiles are rarer than they might be in Seattle or another high socio-economic status city.

Communities in Contrast

In this section, I analyze three points of contrast between the political communities in the two cities: types of political actors, relative professionalism, and the definition of an 'insider candidate'. These three themes affect the political logic of actors in each city and have a direct influence on the flow of resources to candidates for election.

Seattle is home to political actors with organizational ties who coordinate informally to support candidates. Those candidates are typically at the state level as most organizations have scaled up operations or are satellites of national groups. These organizations have dedicated political staff. There are also less professional organizations with limited ties outside of the city. These groups have significantly less influence on elections compared to the larger groups due to reputation, network sophistication and resource access. Additionally, local business leaders sometimes give money and lend support within the business network to friendly candidates, but they do not typically coordinate with other organizations. Seattle is

a politically engaged city with a large union presence. Often business and labor will support the same candidate, but not do much coordinating with each other.

Seattle's political consultants are highly professionalized with offices, staff, clients throughout the country, and a reputation to leverage among other political actors. There is a lot of money to be made within the campaigning industry in Seattle due to its economic influence in the state and nationally. Candidates for local office regularly raise hundreds of thousands of dollars. Often, the policies that go forward once a candidate is in elected office allows them to continue to channel money to favored consultants through bond measures and referenda. As one consultant put it when discussing the pursuit of endorsements, "every organization is evaluated on utility", (SE Consultant 4) both in terms of what they can offer and what their support means for getting resources from other people and organizations.

Unlike Seattle, San Antonio is not a city full of activist groups and union leadership. It is a city without a strong labor presence in terms of money and with a lengthy political history of patronage and nepotism. In *The Illusion of Inclusion*, Rudolfo Rosales details the history of another political reform in San Antonio, the move to single-member districts from at-large seats in the 1970s. In it, he demonstrates that activist-backed representatives have not historically found success when opposing the business community. Since that time, most of the large activist organizations have fallen from city politics altogether (2000). Because of the lack of large activist organizations in San Antonio, the political actors that are there focus on city elections, not the state. This is primarily because state-level politics are dominated by conservative organizations which do not match the politics of San Antonio. Additionally, in Texas most ideological questions are settled at the state level, where state laws supersede city ordinances. Because there are not a lot of significant left-leaning apparatuses at the state level, there is little to no ability to scale professionalism to the municipal level, despite the city having a majority Democrat voting base. This is less true of other Texas cities such as Houston and Dallas where the sheer size and wealth of the metropolitan areas allow for organizational structures to be fully supported. As Rosales states when he discusses the political demise of one politician who was not amenable to the city's growth-minded coalition, "…the community could not easily maintain this same kind of representation without an organizational agenda to provide

continuity…The barrios of San Antonio remain underdeveloped. Intense poverty and lack of opportunity still plague all those areas" (158).

Like Seattle, locally grown activist organizations and interest groups do exist in San Antonio. The organizations in San Antonio just tend to be non-partisan—in effect, non-political—or they offer candidates an endorsement with minimal funds or additional support, such as Stonewall Democrats (an LGBTQ caucus within the Democratic Party). Groups such as these will often hold phone banks and block-walks on behalf of candidates they support. While contributions do allow campaigns to contact voters directly, organizations such as these can have a significant impact in an election where only a thousand or so people are voting. It is telling that political consultants and campaign staffers either did not mention them at all in interviews, or framed these interest groups as simply a nice addition to an otherwise business or legacy-dependent campaign. This could be because these organizations generally do not have dedicated political staff, but rather have staff who wear multiple hats in the organization. This lack of political professionals means that there is no professionalized network of political actors contained within the city. Instead, we see a loose network of legacy politicians who cultivate candidates in their own districts and relatively young campaign workers who hop from one position to another depending on the cycle. There was no indication of this district-based and individualistic model of recruitment in Seattle.

This is the same for the business community. Though the San Antonio Chamber of Commerce has a policy committee which handles governmental affairs, they generally do not endorse candidates as a unit but support is provided in more tangential ways. For example, the North San Antonio Chamber of Commerce (NSACC) issues a "scorecard" for the business-friendliness of each candidate based on that year's civic issues. Business leaders and lobbyists then give money as individuals to campaigns, sometimes on the behalf of the NSACC members. This is all handled through private phone calls between business leaders. It can then be concluded, for the purposes of this research, that the business community in San Antonio has limited professional political actors. This contrasts with Seattle where their chamber of commerce has political consultants on retainer and will often offer significant support to a business-friendly candidate. In San Antonio, consultants don't form these kinds of organizational relationships to the same degree.

This brings into question whether the term "professionalism" can accurately be applied to San Antonio consultants generally, even paid ones, since what they are actually selling are lists of voters and donors. That does not typify professionalism in that they do not have a body of applied knowledge and "an ideology that transcends economic interests to support established practices" (Grossman, 2009; Borchert and Zeiss, 2003). Consideration of this typical role of consultants, taken together with the previously discussed roles of organizations leads to the conclusion that, overall, San Antonio does not have a professional network of political actors. There are three main reasons for this. The first reason is lack of resources on the political left: San Antonians vote to the left of the state as a whole and without leftist organizational structures pushing an agenda, there is little organizational capacity at the city level. San Antonio is also a relatively poor city, and without major activist donors or unions, organizations struggle to build weight that can be thrown behind a candidate. The second reason is that, due to the relative weakness of city government and the city manager structure, the organizations that do exist tend to stay out of local politics, instead focusing almost entirely on policy or on state-level efforts. The third reason is that political consultants who are effective can make more money in other cities like Houston, Dallas, and Austin and do not need to rely on small-dollar city council candidates in San Antonio. By contrast, as I have described earlier, Seattle has a highly professionalized network of political actors who influence local elections through organizational resource leveraging. Because of the disparate composition of the political communities and access to resources, the definition of an insider candidate in each city is different.

In Seattle, an insider candidate is someone with ties to the Allies Table either through organizational leadership or through labor unions. Something I have not addressed is the influence of the Democratic Party. People with a history of leadership within the Party are often already tied to the Allies Table. One cannot be separated from the other because of the partisan state level candidates they support. Therefore, party experience is a stamp of insider candidate even though the local elections are non-partisan. Candidates who run for office with the backing of only business or with organizations not affiliated with the Allies Table are seen as outsider candidates. Terms used to describe these people by interviewees are: business, grassroots, radical, far-left, and conservative. Consultants then divide

into insiders and outsiders as well with more scaled up operations winning insider candidates and smaller consultancies taking on outsider candidates.

In San Antonio, an insider candidate is one cultivated by legacy politicians. This holds truer outside of the north side districts where candidates often have personal wealth to contribute to their own campaigns. Successful candidates may be on various city commissions or members of the chamber of commerce. They often have direct history with local government though rarely at a professionalized level. Instead, they are already a private partner to the state. Consultants don't divide based on candidate origins. Instead, the successful consultants are the ones with extensive donor lists they can use like a vendor and they tend to be the 'in-house' person for a legacy politician or their family. Importantly, in San Antonio, whether the campaign is heavily staffed or not does not speak to whether the candidate is an insider or outsider candidate. This is in line with literature on national level campaigns where in *Campaign Warriors*, Paul S. Herrnson describe the *insider* or the *outsider* as the two primary communication strategies utilized by consultants, but, ironically, the actual role of the consultant as an insider or outsider in the establishment is not of much importance. In fact, Herrnson says:

> Unlike incumbent and challenger campaigns, campaign professionalism does not have a systemic effect on the message focus of open-seat campaigns. There are no significant differences among the communications disseminated by open-seat campaigns that are staffed by amateurs, a moderate number of campaign professionals, or large number of professionals (2000: 81).

This is not the case in Seattle where the network of political professionals is far more closely tied and consulting careers are long.

While the community of political actors in each city is very different, there is an understanding that good candidates are ones with ties to the network, but that do not have a strong history of government work. In other words, they can't be bureaucrats. The goal is to forge a public-private partnership with the election of the right candidate. In addition, the right candidate requires expertise. In Seattle, that expertise falls onto the consultants. Getting the right one can make all the difference in candidate credibility and access to resources. In San Antonio, expertise is offered by the legacy politician who develops a mentorship roles with their successor(s). The legacy politicians are then able to funnel resources of donor

and voter target lists. Candidates who are successful in gaining insider status have access to tremendous resources, but they also are agreeing to maintain the political dynamics of the city. They give deference to the establishment as an institution.

Determining whether political consultants are professionalized or if expertise and resource brokering rests with legacy politicians is important to understanding the power dynamics in a democracy. Matt Grossman states, "if campaign consultants constitute professionals, the professionalization of other occupations suggests that a new class of actors has captured control over the choices offered to voters. If consultants do not constitute professionals, then they are better seen only as vendors of political services implementing a broader technological transformation, rather than as independent agents of change" (Grossman, 2009: 82). In Seattle, these professionals, both consultants and organizationally housed political professionals, fulfill this description of a class who predetermines which candidates will be taken seriously by endorsers, media, and eventually voted into office. In San Antonio, the structure is equally informal and equally inaccessible to most since the two paths to success are forming a special relationship with a legacy politician or funding one's own campaign.

LOOKING TOWARD REFORM

In some ways, this was the impetus for reform in both cities. In San Antonio, reformers sought to open elected office to people who did not have another form of income or independent wealth and Seattle reformers were trying to limit the influence of large businesses and organizations on local elections. They each correctly identified the point of inaccessibility to the average person and were trying to change the system in ways that would improve that specific type of access. In the next three chapters, I will show what happened within these political communities in the races in the 2017 cycle, who they supported, how they demonstrated their support, and what the results were after reform. The next chapter is a deep dive into how money works in each city's elections, historically and through the 2017 campaigns. Then in Chapters 7 and 8, I return in earnest to the interviews and campaign observation data to illuminate the political work done through relationships and address the logic applied to decide which candidate to support in each race after reform.

I asked many interviewees prior to the implementation of the reforms what they thought the effects would be. In Seattle, there were widely varying opinions on the potential outcomes of the program. To recap the basics of the Voucher program: a candidate who wishes to participate must collect 400 signatures and collect a nominal donation from each of those 400 people. Once complete, they can begin requesting Democracy Vouchers. Every Seattle resident of voting age will receive four Vouchers worth $25 each in the mail. If donated to a particular candidate, the candidate can then trade the Vouchers in through the Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission for cash, up to a cumulative value of $150,000 per race. In order to cash in the Vouchers, the candidate must agree to forego independent expenditures as a condition of participating in the program unless the SEEC releases them from this requirement.

When the referendum for the Democracy Vouchers took place, most political professionals publicly supported it. According to one person closely involved with the campaign, "The only people who were against it were corporations and the elite of the 1400 people who donate regularly to campaigns plus a handful of political consultants that benefit from the existing system" (SE Staff 1). The campaign involved many of the groups that typically decline to endorse in local elections like NARAL[7] and the Washington Bus.

The statement that only a few people were against the program is a bit misleading, however. Many political professionals felt the framing of the campaign backed them into a corner. By calling it "Honest Elections" and touting it as an anti-corporate solution to Citizens United, the initiators implicitly limited the concerns labor and other insiders believed they could voice. Regarding the impact of the reform, labor representatives told me that they believed it would diminish their ability to support candidates since they could not use independent expenditures in the same way or collect Vouchers from their members on behalf of candidates. Consultants repeated that the program is confusing, and that their candidates had to spend ten minutes explaining the program to voters before they understood it well enough to move past details of the program and onto their actual political pitch. They also complained that choosing not to participate isn't an option because as one consultant said, "…it's so lefty that people doing the 'old school

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[7] National Abortion Reproduction Rights Action League

corrupt way' [not registering for the program] will catch flack", but he continued saying "Real voters don't actually give a fuck who pays for stuff. It's really just the talkative class" (SE Consultant 1). He later revealed that his firm is probably going to 'sit-out' a couple of local cycles to watch and see how it works. Another consultant who had candidates planning to use the program emphasized that it creates *a lot* of work for consultants, candidates, and staff (SE Consultant 6).

Aside from those directly involved with the Democracy Voucher campaign, one person with whom I spoke who was in favor of the program was the consultant who specializes in grassroots campaigns. He felt it was an opportunity for outsider candidates. He said that "interest groups want nothing to do with activist candidates and so they won't work with them" (SE Consultant 4). This mindset may serve to reinforce the dynamic that an endorsement from those on the Allies Table can mean the difference between access to material resources or not in an election cycle. Perhaps the Vouchers program could change that.

In San Antonio, I asked whether city council compensation reform would significantly change dynamics in the upcoming elections. Most consultants and lobbyists agreed that it would change the dynamics by potentially increasing the number of people who run for office. "You don't need to be independently wealthy anymore. Although it still helps since you need cash to spend [to campaign]" (SA Consultant 4). However, beyond adding more names to the list of candidates for each position, most expressed the belief that the actual system of candidate selection would not change. One consultant noted, "More viable candidates means more employed consultants" (SA Consultant 1). Legacy politicians, neighborhood leaders, and business interests were still going to be vital to a successful campaign regardless of who runs. The one exception to this viewpoint was expressed by a lobbyist who said, "I predict a seismic shift in local politics. People are tired of business controlling everything" (SA Lobbyist 1). It is, however, one thing to be tired of a system and quite another to have a competing system ready to take its place. While the prediction that more individuals would run for each position turned out to be true, whether non-traditional candidates found success is a different question, one that I will answer in the following chapters.

Chapter 6:

FUNDRAISING VALUE AND TRANSPARENCY

"The first thing I ask a client is 'do you have 30 grand you can put into your campaign?' If they don't have that, they're going to have a hard time" (SA Consultant 9).

In talking about campaigning as an industry and campaign workers as professionals and vendors, we must consider the role of money in electoral politics in the United States. Luckily, this field of study has produced extensive empirical research with which we can discuss the cases in San Antonio and Seattle. In this chapter, I examine the cases using two theories derived from scholarship on campaign finance and viability: 1) Early money is highly correlated with candidate success; and 2) Funders are members of occupational coalitions which are industry-driven and coalesce around occupationally similar or industry-friendly candidates. I also address the impact of incumbency on fundraising, self-funding by candidates, and contribution transparency. The particularities of these phenomena all influence the elite political networks and coalitions present in the two cities. I consider this influence in this chapter as well as the next two, and I also consider the consequence municipal campaign finance systems might have on the culture of local democracy more generally.

According to electoral historians, John F. Kennedy's run for president in 1960 was the critical transition point in American politics. Kennedy's father was famously quoted as saying he was going to sell the candidate "like corn flakes", signally that a candidate should be treated explicitly as a product. As the advertising industry grew in size and influence, Kennedy's family wealth and political connections meant that he effectively had his own political consulting firm long before the concept officially existed. Within just twenty-five years, the

industry of selling candidates was commonplace and necessary from presidential races all the way down to city council district elections. This industry flourished and, like all industries, it required money to function.

A common mantra on election campaigns is "all we need is 50% plus 1." The consultants say it, staffers say it, and candidates say it. Implicit in the phrase is that elections come down to math, to data points, to the right targeting model. Equally, it comes down to getting one more commercial slot, one more round of direct mail, one more door knocked and voter reached. Fifty percent plus 1 makes it clear to anyone working on the campaign that rest is only for those who intend to concede. The fear of regret looms large and motivates candidates and their surrogates to sit in a room "dialing for dollars" for hours a day, weeks and months at a time. In both Seattle and San Antonio, contribution limits mean that donor quantity is critical, something increasingly seen by many as more democratically virtuous than a few individuals funding a campaign, self-funding, or receiving monetary organizational support. However, it also means that candidates who do not have these outsized resources spend most of their time trying to bring in more money rather than making an argument for why they might be a good representative. The rise of the political consulting industry has driven this commodification not only as a means of proving added value to campaigns, but also because consultants are increasingly expensive. They are now one of the most expensive budget lines of campaigns from school board to president. For example, with a month to go in the 2021 mayoral race in Seattle, the candidates spent about 10% of their total funds raised on consulting fees (Barnett, 2021). Additionally, consultants can do polling, take a percentage for direct mail and TV development, do email and web design, as well as charge for treasury and human resources work in staff hiring. All of this drives a multi-billion-dollar industry (Sheingate, 2016[8]).

The two reforms discussed in this study are in some ways a reaction to the money-driven campaigning industry. In Seattle, the logic of the Democracy Vouchers is that only a select few contribute to campaigns because only a select few have the funds to do so. If everyone had the luxury of having earmarked money for politics, participation would increase, thereby enhancing the representativeness

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[8] The industry is difficult to define and difficult to measure. Sheingate's book devotes an entire appendix to trying to determine an estimate of its size, and he only includes firms which drew more than $25,000 in a single election cycle.

of the field. In San Antonio, elected officials were unrepresentative because they were not professionalized, and therefore could not be trusted. Their motivations were always in question. The thinking was that at least if they are paid, representation might expand beyond the economically comfortable. Each of the reforms address money-based disenchantment with political participation: that wealthy donors/candidates determine the political choices and representation of the whole populace. This chapter examines the role of money in both Seattle and San Antonio elections in the context of the reforms. I also address the question of transparency in campaign finance in the two cities and role of political professionals in determining the origin of campaign contributions, the management of campaign fundraising, and, of course, the symbolic role of money in the social construction of good representation. In determining the trends of campaign finance, we can fill out the story of coalition-based power in local elections.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE IN THE SOCIOLOGICAL CONTEXT

Campaign finance in the United States is, to put it mildly, unique. In some ways, it is a direct reflection of the concept that a decentralized government begets laboratories of democracy. Each municipality has a great deal of latitude in designing their campaign finance structures. In fact, Brian E. Adams says, "Local governments are truly 'laboratories; of policy experimentation when it comes to campaign finance" (2010: 21). And thanks to these experiments, the sheer enormity of data is overwhelming:

> Of the 89,527 governmental units enumerated in 2007, 89,476 (99.9%) were local governments, with municipalities numbering 19,492 (U.S. Census Bureau 2007). Not surprisingly, the number of public officials holding elective positions in local government is also enormous—roughly half a million. In fact, 96 percent of all elected officials represent local rather than state or federal jurisdictions, and municipalities have the largest share with 27% (U.S. Census Bureau 1995) (Marschall, Shah, Ruhil, 2011: 97).

Despite this incredible opportunity for data exploration, "to say that a field of study on local elections exists would be a bit of an overstatement" (Marschall, Shah, Ruhil, 2011: 97). This is even more true for the study of local campaign finance,

where a handful of academics research municipal election funding. Part of the reason for this is the lack of a unified database or rules governing collection of donor information. Some cities require personal details about donor employment for example, while others only ask for a name and address. Some cities have contribution limits, which would skew meta-analysis results for donors. Some cities have various complex public financing systems. Many cities are regulated at the state level and therefore might not reflect the preferred system of local municipalities.

In addition to this variation in legal structures, each city is responsible for creating and maintaining its own database. Some have simple interfaces designed to be accessible to the average voter, while others have the bare minimum which are designed primarily for report-filing by the campaigns themselves. These databases also determine what information is most important. For example, some databases highlight in red contributions which come from outside the state to emphasize that the donor is not from within the community. Similarly, some have a dedicated search system for independent expenditures while others do not track them at all. These unique databases limit the kind of cross-study comparisons available to scholars. The field of study is winnowed further by the fact that 77% of the elections are non-partisan. "The reliance on nonpartisan elections has likely discouraged elections scholars from studying local elections for the simple reason that it leaves no parsimonious way to study vote choice." (Marschall, Shah, Ruhil, 2011: 98) As a result, we have very little scholarly input on the causal relationships between campaign systems, nonpartisanship and campaign costs. Brian E. Adams, who wrote the seminal book *Campaign Finance in Local Elections,* says:

> Perhaps the absence of extensive and active partisan networks makes it more difficult for candidates to raise funds, leading to less expensive campaigns. On the other hand, a candidate-centered campaign system may prompt wealthier individuals to run which in turn will push up campaign costs…Critics of the current system argue that candidates can "buy" an election by raising extensive funds from wealthy donors, essentially bypassing the will of the voters. Defenders of the status quo argue that the ability to raise funds is an indication of community support and that, ultimately, voters choose their representatives (2010: 21-22).

In this study, there are clear examples of both coalition forming and campaign "buying" by wealthy donors/candidates. But why does it matter?

Without extensive research on the election systems, it is difficult to determine the representative consequences of campaign funding sources and the oversight thereof. Money is also the most studied aspect of national and statewide elections after votes. It is used to determine candidate viability in presidential, congressional, gubernatorial races and the like. Scholars have demonstrated over and over that viability and the potential to raise money are inextricably linked at the national and state level (though causality is not clear). Without a rich field of study on local election fundraising, we have very little to determine whether many of the same phenomena present in elections for higher office exist in city elections.

Despite not having in-depth empirical analysis of these elections, scholars in sociology have produced critical work of the current system. From a national perspective, Martin Gilens' work on the influence of wealthy elites on policy outcomes is the most comprehensive to date. He draws the line between small-dollar donors and wealthy donors in total contributions pointing out that just 33 individuals contributing to both the Romney and Obama presidential campaigns in 2012 totaled more than all of the 3.7 million small dollar donors combined. He argues that the current system fails in representing the pluralist vision of democracy, and instead demonstrates that there is a direct relationship between campaign contributions and favorable policy outcomes and that those policies therefore benefit the elite (2012). Gilens calls this system 'biased pluralism'. To put it simply, empirical research shows that money buys influence, but it does not guarantee it. Instead, Adams argues that a regime politics approach is a better descriptor of the political work campaign contributions do:

> Studies of local fundraising and expenditure patterns can also illuminate aspects of coalition building and power dynamics, a central concern of the urban politics literature for the past 50 years. Campaign contributions play an important role in forming and maintaining governing coalitions: they have been identified by regime theorists as a selective incentive that forms bonds between regime partners and facilitates cooperation (Stone 1993: 9). We know little, however, about the specifics of this process (Adams, 2010: 22).

Adams went on to research coalitions across time in several US cities including Seattle, where he found three coalition groups which he labelled as Business, Working Class, and Government/non-profit. In each of the cities,

coalitions tended to be broad cross-industry groups with inconsistent contribution patterns depending upon the candidate. However, much of his research predates Citizens United[9] and the national dominance of Super PACs, which may change the dynamics between citizenry, donors, and candidates by shifting the power away from candidates to their donors. It also predates the now standard practice of hiring political consultants at the most local level, which may define both candidates and coalition members as brokers.

A critical implication that Martin Gilens addressed and that these other scholars allude to by virtue of doing this research is that money matters a lot in campaigns. It is vital to raise significant contributions, pay consultants, and most importantly, outraise one's opponent. However, while this is an important finding, it is essential to remember that this is not *always* the case. For example, it is possible for incumbency to far outweigh fundraising advantages by an opponent. Research demonstrates that in national level, partisan races, money is required to reach a threshold for campaign success, but it does not guarantee it. Only 78% of candidates who win elections also raised the most funds. However, early fundraising has significantly more impact—potentially as high as 95% of those with significant funds early in the campaign go on to win. The earlier a candidate can meet the threshold of campaign success, the more likely she is to win. There are three ways candidates might do this at the local level: by forming an early and close coalition, by self-funding, and by fundraising off incumbency. The final way provides a clear temporal and, by extension, a clear financial advantage due to incumbents having a much longer opportunity to establish a war chest before the campaigns begin in earnest. The establishment of an early and close coalition is also especially helpful in close races (Adams 2010; Bonica 2017; Gilens 2012 and 2014).

STATE OF THE RACES

Given its economic role statewide and the large amount of money flowing through the city, the political professional class in Seattle is larger relative to many other cities. There are at least a dozen political general consultants with significant

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[9] Term referring to the Supreme Court case which allows for unlimited and anonymous federal PAC contributions

experience, some of whom run million-dollar firms. This is particularly striking given the relatively small population of the municipality when compared to San Antonio. Without the requisite population to support the work of local general consultants on a full-time basis, their work often extends well beyond city borders to the state and national level.

Going into the 2017 elections, it appeared that incumbent Mayor Ed Murray would easily win re-election: that was until several scandals emerged regarding his sexual history, including allegations of underage sexual abuse. As he was the first openly gay man elected mayor of a major US city, the LGBT community felt particularly betrayed. Murray removed himself from contention only a week before the filing deadline to run for the office. As a result, individuals who had thought they would have to wait another election cycle, or who were running for other offices, rushed to meet the filing deadline to enter the mayoral primary. Ultimately, twenty-one names were placed on the ballot. Additionally, two at-large city council seats were up for election during this time. The open seat, district 8, attracted significant competition, while the seat with an incumbent, district 9, had few candidates. The primary election for each contest was held in August of 2017, with the top two finishers advancing to a run-off/general election in November of that same year.

In 2017 in San Antonio, the sitting mayor, Ivy Taylor, was running for re-election. Thirteen candidates challenged her for her seat. Unlike in Seattle, this election was not disrupted by a major scandal that shook up the candidates who ran. Instead, City Councilmember Ron Nirenberg and the Bexar County Democratic Party Chair Manuel Medina proved to be her most formidable opponents in both fundraising and votes.

At the same time, the entire city council was up for election. Typically, in San Antonio, most of the races feature an incumbent. This time, however, several incumbents happened to be retiring. This meant that not only were there open seats, but they would be paid positions for the first time in the city's history. All ten districts attracted multiple candidates regardless of whether there was an incumbent, and some numbered in the double digits, a rarity for district-based rather than at-large elections. After the May primary election, the candidates who managed to garner more than 50% of the votes in their districts won outright. If no one reached 50%, they continued to the run-off/general election in June 2017.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

In this chapter, I discuss the fundraising both historically (where possible) and during the 2017 elections in both Seattle and San Antonio. Additionally, I discuss the methods of record-keeping by the cities and how that might influence the political power structures of both cities. In my research, I find three significant trends when the two cities are compared. First, Seattle values transparency in its reporting and voter accessibility to data. This leads to highly curated reports that reflect which data the city election ethics officials and bureaucrats deem most important to voters. San Antonio's system focuses on the candidates themselves to provide a means of reporting contributions. It does not develop comprehensive reports or value data beyond the scope of the election at hand. Second, donor networks in Seattle tended to be organized by profession and industry corresponding with the candidate's own professional background. In San Antonio, only the real estate and development interests formed a clear industry coalition. And third, independent expenditures (IEs) are very influential in Seattle but do not appear greatly in San Antonio.

Most of the research done on campaign finance in local elections is in New York, Chicago, and the west coast of the US where ballot initiatives provide fruitful cases for referendum democracy. These places are not particularly representative of the US, as the east coast tends to have partisan races and the west coast has progressive roots that have determined the political culture of these cities for a hundred years. These places also have well-funded elections bureaus and a strong appetite for electoral oversight. Therefore, researchers look to them for the simple reason that the data is there. The middle and south of the United States then gets left out of most campaign finance research, and therefore go relatively unscrutinized. For this study, that means there was a tremendous imbalance in the data I was able to collect from Seattle and San Antonio. That imbalance has consequences for the role of political consultants and campaign workers in the two cities. In my analysis, I discuss this comparison.

To present my findings, I will start each time with Seattle since it is easier to see what's missing in San Antonio once I have presented what the potential might be. I then draw direct comparisons between races in Seattle and San Antonio which illuminate the three trends discussed above. I've divided the findings into

three sections. The first is a discussion of the two campaign finance tracking systems. After explaining the unequal data available, I orient my findings within the variables discussed in extant literature: coalitions in Seattle and incumbency/self-funding in San Antonio. The next section focuses exclusively on the Democracy Voucher program in Seattle. Lastly, I home in on the mayoral races in each city for direct comparison of political fundraising norms. Below is a list of terms and their definitions relating to campaign finance, which I use throughout this chapter:

Traditional Fundraising: contributions from individuals or single businesses which are given directly to a candidate's political action committee (PAC). These are limited by municipal contribution limits.
Self-Giving: Contributions a candidate has made to his own campaign. This does not need to be paid back and there is no limit.
Self-Loaning: Contributions a candidate has loaned to her own campaign. This is to be paid back through traditional fundraising or self-giving later. It does not need to be paid back during the election cycle.
Political Action Committee (PAC): Legal term for an individual, organization, or group raising funds for a political campaign purpose. This can include 1) the candidates, themselves OR 2) a single individual who would like to contribute more than the contribution limit, organizations or associations, businesses/business leaders, etc. Those in category two can collaborate and fund the same PAC or create several PACs.
Independent Expenditures (IEs): Funds spent by non-candidate PACs on behalf of a campaign. To spend these funds, the individuals, organization, or groups cannot coordinate with the campaign itself in the use of these particular funds.

Comparing Donor Tracking Systems and Initial Findings

Seattle's electorate values transparency as a core democratic value, which is reflected in their systems of campaign finance tracking and oversight. The Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission compiles and maintains all the contribution data for the City of Seattle elections. Through their website, one can search by name, year, or position and produce both in-depth csv lists and summary reports. The navigation is intuitive and the comprehensive information available online goes as far back as 2002 when records were first digitized. In addition to the dynamic online resource, the SEEC also produces reports at the end of each election cycle, the most recent of which includes total contributions to each candidate, a series of graphs showing average contributions, contribution size

distribution, the geographic distribution of donors over time, and independent expenditures on candidates' behalf. Beyond contribution totals, they also list the top twenty individual contributors to candidate PACs across all candidates and to whom they gave. Lastly, they list the top twenty employers of contributors to all candidates. The SEEC can create these reports because they ask that anyone donating to a campaign list their employer and because non-candidate PACs making independent expenditures must disclose their contributions and spending. The SEEC is not the official elections bureau for the city. Instead, it is a separate oversite entity. With a dedicated staff and budget, it can produce these comprehensive reports and track this contribution information over time. Cities without an oversight committee of some kind must rely on the elections bureaus themselves for such information.[10]

Unlike Seattle, San Antonio's system of tracking does not demonstrate an attempt to democratize knowledge of local campaign financing. In San Antonio, the city clerk maintains the campaigns and elections database. The database is searchable online. Unlike in Seattle, the City of San Antonio only requires that the contributor report his or her name and address. It also reports the date and amount of the transaction. Therefore, anyone searching would have to research each individual contributor to learn his or her employer and occupation. This severely limits research based on coalitions. However, with dedication and time it is not impossible since it is likely that the same individuals give year after year. One could develop a network model of the people over time and from there, determine the most frequent contributors, maybe even brokers. This could be an effective avenue for research if not for the fact that the City of San Antonio is required by Texas law to purge all its contribution records every two years, meaning that the only election one can analyze is the current one. San Antonio also does not produce reports at the end of each election cycle as do many other cities, like Seattle. Simply put, San Antonio's system demonstrates valuing contributor privacy and minimal record keeping over electoral transparency. They also do not report independent expenditures. Instead, this is handled at the state level, where reporting is less user-friendly and relatively obscured in that only the total amount given by a PAC in an

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[10] Alternately, a non-governmental organization could take up the task similarly to opensecrets.org which tracks national contribution data for the public.

election cycle is visible and not necessarily to which campaign it gave. San Antonio is not alone in these practices as every city in the state abides by the same requirements. Here it is important to note that Texas cities make up nearly 8% of the total US population.

Because of this unequal data in the two cases, I took very different approaches to my analysis in the two cities. In Seattle, turning first to individuals, and drawing from Adams' work on local donor coalition groups (2010), I coded each employer by industry (see Appendix A, Figure 6.1). From this, the most striking finding of the individual contributor data is that individuals who are not employed contribute the most by far to campaigns in Seattle. More than 90% of those individuals who were not employed listed themselves as retired. Of the $4,384,071 in candidate campaign contributions in 2017, not employed persons contributed more than 10%[11]. This trend exists in all the election reports produced by the SEEC since 2007, where not employed person contributions totaled more than the nineteen most common employers combined. This data demonstrates that retirees are a large donor bloc in Seattle by total contributions and total individual donors, a group largely ignored in campaign finance literature. This lack of accounting fundamentally skews research on professional and industry-based coalitions as it does not reflect to full scope, perhaps even the most powerful bloc, of contributors to local campaigns.

Looking at the total individual contributors' occupations, 74.3% of contributors chose to leave their occupation blank. However, of those who did declare their occupation, 15% were in legal professions and 4% were in real estate/development. Retirees represented 17%, which is equal to the percent of Americans nationally who are retired. Business owners represented 23%. Consultants[12] also represented a large portion of the contributor lists. Government employees represent a significant portion of donors as well. In the Seattle area, not one of these occupations falls into the top ten most common professions. That likely means that political giving is appealing to a very specific type of person— one who interacts with the law daily as part of their livelihood. However, the data

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[11] Not including the Democracy Voucher information

[12] Consultants are a difficult occupation to group as they may be attorneys, business experts, political consultants, etc. Therefore, I did not group them into any one coalition based on occupation.

on occupation is extremely limited by the fact that most contributors chose to leave their occupations blank. This makes direct comparisons with San Antonio somewhat clearer.

Despite the lack of information, the Seattle donor occupation data does tell us that attorneys are a significant contributing bloc to elections in Seattle, which affirms findings in extant literature. Lawyers tend to run for office more than any other profession nationally with the logic being that they are attracted to governance because governors legislate and execute the law. According to both interviews and extant literature, attorneys often call through lists of fellow attorneys when raising funds, starting with co-workers at their own firms, followed by graduates of their law school classes, and finally through lists of attorneys who practice a similar type of law. For them, the donor network and the professional legal network are one and the same. We see evidence of lawyers seeing electoral success all the way up to the national level: "Relative to the average citizen, lawyers are 54 times more likely to run for office and 99 times more likely to be elected member of Congress" (Bonica, 2016: 3). The United States is unique in this way. Other Western countries' legislatures have a fraction of the proportion of lawyers the US has in elected office, and their biggest advantage in running for office is their ability to draw from their professional networks.

This phenomenon is not as robust or expected in other professions. Teachers, for example, do not call through lists of fellow teachers to nearly the degree attorneys call their own, and they certainly do not call their old classmates from college. Attorneys expect that political giving is an important part of professional maintenance and career management. This may be why they voluntarily list their occupation and employers so consistently when making contributions. In addition, attorneys tend to know a lot of rich people who are consultants and business owners, "A candidate who is surrounded by affluent friends and colleagues who are seasoned donors and/or accustomed to organizing and attending fundraising events should have little trouble fundraising early on" (Bonica, 2016: 8).

As I stated earlier, fundraising is the single biggest predictor of candidate success, according to existing research. Therefore, a candidate must rely either on their close network since they do not have time to develop one during the campaign, or they must loan/donate to their own PAC. In 2017, Jenny Durkan,

Teresa Mosqueda and Lorena González received the most support from lawyers in their respective races in Seattle. Durkan and Gonzalez were both attorneys. All three also won and outraised their opponents. In the case of Jenny Durkan, a single firm (Quinn, Emanuel, Urquhart & Sullivan) gave her $32,800 in individual contributions, the most of any employer to any candidate in 2017. It is clear that having a professional network of people practiced in giving to campaigns means that checks can be written earlier than for others. Candidates without these connections need to spend more time convincing their network first to give at all, then to give to them.

In San Antonio, the lack of information was limiting from a quantitative standpoint but also informative in that it demonstrates the extraordinary value of qualitative research as a compliment to database analysis in municipal elections. Through interviews and observation, I was still able to gain a sense of which individuals and interests funded various candidates. For example, several interviewees told me that major companies request that their employees give to candidates personally to support a candidate but avoid an obvious endorsement by the company itself, a technically illegal practice. Without an employer listed by the contributors, this would be very difficult to track. Additionally, by drawing on extant literature, an important story began to emerge about San Antonio's political community just in the 2017 election cycle. Like in national campaigns, early money matters a great deal. In Seattle, that early money in 2017 came mostly from early coalition forming and drawing on one's individual professional network. In San Antonio, it came primarily from incumbency-advantage and self-financing.

Looking at the ten city council races in San Antonio generally, I drew data from six weeks prior to election day. I then compared that with fundraising totals over the course of the election cycle (see Appendix A, Figure 6.2). In general, early money was highly correlated with success. All but two candidates who advanced to a runoff or won outright in the first round of voting raised less than $10,000 from traditional contributors by March 17, 2017, and those two candidates loaned their campaigns tens of thousands of dollars to make up for the lack of traditional fundraising. However, money was not the most important factor for actually winning the seats. In half of the races, the eventual winner raised less than their opponent from traditional contributions, sometimes significantly so. Therefore, these contest findings support scholarly work that overall fundraising makes a

marginal difference, but that reaching the threshold to establish a robust campaign early is indeed critical to advancement. This can be done either through early traditional contributions or from self-giving/loaning. Either way, what is important is being able to establish a campaign infrastructure as early as possible in a race. Contrasting Seattle, in San Antonio, self-funding is widely practiced across campaigns.

Unlike overall fundraising, incumbency proved to be a strong advantage in these races. While it is pointless to try to decouple early fundraising from incumbency as the two are inextricable linked, these totals do show just how chilling an effect incumbency can have on oppositional fundraising. This may be due to poor opposition candidate quality, but as I will discuss in the next two chapters, I believe that it is more likely a result of establishment power dynamics. By this I mean that the major donors, especially business leaders, are unlikely to split their funds among opposition candidates if they believe they have a good working relationship with the incumbent. This is even true of candidates who might be more friendly to them than the incumbent because the risk of upsetting the sitting policy-maker is too great.

On the other hand, races which did not feature an incumbent attracted both more candidates and more money into the race. Races without an incumbent raised a total $181,076.61 on average as opposed to races with incumbents which raised $123,803.26 on average. Incumbent races also had fewer candidates, and in all cases, incumbents raised the most money overall. There were two races in which incumbents lost their seats: district 2 and district 7. In both races, the eventual winners raised significant funds early in the campaigns from traditional fundraising. This likely allowed both of these challengers to establish robust campaign structures early, hire staff and consultants, and begin the process of voter contact before other candidates.

Self-funding was similarly important in establishing campaigns early on, perhaps even more so. Looking at all races, any candidate who either gave or loaned themselves at least $10,000 advanced to the general election, except for one whose opponents gave themselves even more. Based on this election cycle, self-funding in San Antonio can make up for a lack of traditional fundraising and incumbency in city council contests. However, this was not the case in the mayoral race.

Obviously, the contrasting data available in each city meant that I was not able to compare variables directly between them. Instead, I chose to contextualize the findings within extant theories. In Seattle, lawyers participate heavily in campaigns, coalitions formed based on industry in support of a candidate, and despite data being publicly available, the reliance on self-reporting skews these coalition models. In San Antonio, incumbency and self-funding typically led to success, but data were only available for the 2017 cycle. In both cities, early money was heavily correlated with success demonstrating that a strong campaign apparatus is closely tied to electoral victory.

The Democracy Vouchers

As I outlined in the introduction, the question of this thesis is: how do electoral reforms affect structures of democratic influence and how do actors go about exerting that influence to determine candidate viability for electoral success? Exerting influence often takes the form of money in elections. Therefore, I'd like to address the reform in Seattle directly, on the reformers' terms. I discussed in Chapters 3 and 4 what the goals and articulated values were for the Democracy Voucher program. Those included giving access to the candidates for lower-socio-economic status individual residents, reducing the influence of corporate and organizational money in local elections, and allowing a path for "grassroots" candidates to get funding. Reformers also emphasized transparency and increased participation in general as goals of the reform. In looking at the contribution data for the 2017 cycle, I find that while there were certainly more donors to campaigns thanks to the Voucher program, the program did not provide a path to funding for "grassroots" candidates, at least not enough to win.

Instead, the same advantages of incumbency and early traditional funding led to campaign victory. This leaves Seattle after the Voucher implementation harmonious with campaign finance literature more generally and in line with San Antonio's elections that same year. There were six candidates out of eight who raised more than $5,000 during the 2017 elections for the city council district 8 seat, and each candidate's occupation appears at the top or close to the top of their donor occupation lists, affirming that the candidates in district 8 relied heavily on their professional networks for funding (see Appendix A, Figure 6.3 and 6.4). Jon

Grant and Charlene Strong were not clear beneficiaries of this intra-professional giving. However, Grant and Strong's backgrounds in civil rights advocacy meant that their political and professional networks prior to entering the race heavily featured attorneys. Additionally, professions for each candidate's donor pool were often closely related. For example, business owner Sara Nelson drew from fellow business owners, real estate professionals, consultants, and executives. These are often people with landed interests who are concerned professionally with regulations, zoning and taxes. Teresa Mosqueda, on the other hand, drew from attorneys, lobbyists and directors, people who are directly involved in politics and policy crafting. The takeaway is that candidates in the race drew primarily from their own professional circles in the 2017 race for district 8, and they fared better if that professional network was practiced in giving to campaigns historically.

With the advent of the Democracy Vouchers, these industry and occupation coalition-based findings are increasingly difficult to determine. Democracy Vouchers do not require that employer or occupation information be attached. In fact, it is impossible to include it in the Voucher's existing format. Therefore, for Grant, Mosqueda, and Strong who received most of their funds from Democracy Vouchers, this data tells us less about the full range of their support and more about who they reached out to for their initial fundraising when they were in the process of building up their campaigns. "It's who she saw as the lowest-hanging fruit at the beginning of the campaign" (SE Consultant, 6) said one consultant referring to Mosqueda. Therefore, an unexpected consequence of the Vouchers might be that those who do not have a well-developed professional and personal network are deterred from entering the race since they have little time to develop a robust coalition that would allow them to establish campaign infrastructure and hire consultants/staff early on.

The Vouchers also failed to change the influence of PACs in the district 8 race. All three of the candidates who raised the most funds, had support through independent expenditures. Sara Nelson, who chose not to participate in the Voucher program had the clearest coalition of all the candidates, relying heavily on business and real estate interests for her campaign. Her role as the business candidate became even more pronounced when looking at independent expenditures, where the Seattle Chamber, restaurants, and real estate donated $106,780 to a support PAC called People for Sara Nelson. Similarly, Mosqueda

received most of her contributions from individuals whose occupations and employers could not be identified, but the PAC, Working Families for Teresa, received $208,326.80 from unions, including $75,660.30 from the United Food and Commercial Workers and $58,666.50 from SEIU 775. All the unions which funded the PAC were members of the Washington State Labor Council for which Mosqueda had been the chief lobbyist. Jon Grant received $2,850 in independent expenditure support. All of it came from a group called Affordable Seattle, a group advocating housing reform. Again, Grant's time as a housing rights advocate was a direct link to his independent expenditures. No other candidates beyond these three had outside funding from independent expenditures in their campaigns.

In the district 8 race, the tendency of candidates to fundraise from their professional circle was true for low-fundraising candidates as well as candidates who raised hundreds of thousands of dollars. Only candidates with strong fundraising starts were able to gain enough campaign infrastructure to make use of the Democracy Voucher program. Mosqueda's professional circle of mostly political professionals gave her a jumpstart in her campaign. However, it still took a tremendous amount of independent expenditures to guarantee her overall win. This reinforces extant literature which argues that while fundraising is important, overall fundraising only predicts the winner 78% of the time (Bonica, 2017: 2).

In fundraising from personal networks, we can see that pre-existing professional relationships are critical to candidate success. Extending from that, it is not just important to be well-connected within one's profession. A candidate is at a much greater advantage if their profession happens to be one which has a habit of donating to campaigns, like attorneys, business owners and lobbyists. Being a member of a profession with a culture of political engagement means that candidates can quickly build up their campaign infrastructure. It is a similar advantage to that of incumbency, which brings us to district 9.

Only two candidates out of seven raised more than $5,000 in the district 9 race: Lorena González and Pat Murakami. González relied heavily on support from the legal community; 42% of her identifiable funds came from attorneys (see Appendix A, Figure 6.5). While the imbalance is not so clear in their specific occupations, Murakami relied heavily on her professional network, as well, as she received support from fellow business owners and software engineers (she owned a technology company). Murakami, however, anticipated significant funding from

the Democracy Voucher program, only receiving funds from fewer than 200 individuals directly to her campaign. That means that her fundraising took much longer than González's.

Despite the plurality of González's contributors being attorneys, no one law firm contributed a tremendous amount to her campaign (see Appendix A, Figure 6.6). Instead, according to interviewees, she called through lists of local attorneys with a history of giving in local elections. González's reputation within the legal community as an effective civil rights attorney was helpful in her fundraising efforts. She was also embedded in the political community, having been the legal counsel to the previous mayor before running for office in the preceding cycle. Both candidates relied heavily on the Democracy Voucher program, but González's legal network allowed her to get a head start on campaign infrastructure and she was able to collect the Vouchers far more quickly than her opponent. Neither candidate received significant support from independent expenditures.

Looking at both races, the question remains of whether the Democracy Voucher program affected fundraising in the Seattle 2017 elections. However, this is a difficult question to answer with contribution data. What we can say is that in 2015, independent expenditures to city council races totaled $784,644, but in 2017, they were only $348,894. On face, this would seem to be a huge drop. However, only two city council positions were up for election in 2017, whereas in 2015, all nine positions were on the ballot. That means the average independent expenditures per race more than doubled between 2015 and 2017 from $87,183 to $179,447. This is in tandem with the mayoral race, where the Voucher program did not exist, which jumped from $552,808 in 2013 (the last mayoral contest) to $908,448 in 2017.

Another metric we can use to determine whether the Vouchers had an effect is the average value of each contribution. In 2015, the average was $191 to city council races, but in 2017 it was $82, the lowest average in decades. However, the average contribution size in the mayoral race also dropped from $239 in 2013 to $173 in 2017. The mayoral drop was not as significant (28%), but it does indicate that contributors were giving less overall to campaigns regardless of the Voucher program.

In both the district 8 and district 9 races, we can see that the candidates who fared better participated in the Voucher program, but also raised significant funds

early on in direct donations from their professional networks. By raising early funds through traditional contributions, they then were able to hire staff and consultants to begin collecting the Vouchers themselves. Additionally, candidates who had the support of traditional coalitions practiced in giving were able to fundraise more effectively. However, this did not necessarily translate into success, as seen in Jon Grant winning out over business and real estate favorite Sara Nelson. Based, on these findings, it is clear that the Democracy Voucher reform did little to disrupt existing structures of democratic influence from a purely fundraising point of view.

Findings in the Mayoral Races

Many of the trends from the district races in both cities carried into the mayoral races as well, which shows that the political giving systems and culture might be different between cities but is not particularly contingent on the specific race. The mayoral race for Seattle in 2017 was very crowded with eight candidates out of twenty-one raising over $5,000. This race was not included in the Democracy Voucher program, so the data is far more reflective of the individual donors comprehensively. However, it still suffers from the lack of occupation and employer self-reporting by donors (see Appendix A, Figure 6.7). Attorneys were even more financially active in the mayoral race than they were in the district races, coming in as the top contributing occupation for three of the eight candidates. All those candidates were themselves attorneys. Similarly, Cary Moon, an architect, received contributions most often from fellow architects, Bob Hasegawa from fellow State Senators, Greg Hamilton from fellow business owners, and Harvey Lever from real estate investors[13]. The contribution data shows that all candidates drew first and most often from their own professional circles. A review of the donations grouped by employers can tell us how lucrative that was for the candidates' campaigns (see Appendix A, Figure 6.8).

The employment data looks very different from the occupation data. For example, retirees were a critical group for Jenny Durkan, giving her almost $200,000. She would go on to win the race. One interviewee referred to this group

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[13] Lever ran an activist group called Safe Seattle, which among other things, focused on eliminating homeless encampments. Therefore, real estate investors had a stake in that fight.

as "the old Swedes" who give consistently to moderate, business-friendly Democratic candidates (SE Staff 1). Government employees overall were the most common campaign contributors. Several of the candidates themselves were elected officials working in government already, which might account for the high rate of giving within that sector. Government employees also have direct experience with the consequences of governance, which may incentivize them to be more cognizant of their elected officials than other people might be.

Of all these candidates, the clearest coalition was that of real estate and development interests for Bob Hasegawa, but he did not receive multiple donations from the same companies. Greg Hamilton's coalition seems to be technology and companies which might be described as "pro-gun", but again, these are single donations from individuals. Except for Jenny Durkan, individuals employed by specified companies did not give to single candidates as a bloc. Durkan's success in raising funds from retirees and attorneys from two law firms meant that her funding network was very close, accounting for almost a quarter of her overall fundraising. Her next most successful opponent, Cary Moon, only raised $43,750 from retirees. This data confirms that candidates instead reach out to people they know, then industries they know, then lists of consistent donors.

To get a sense of candidate viability when it comes to fundraising, independent expenditures in Seattle are far more telling. Only three candidates benefited from independent expenditures, and they were the top three finishers: Durkan, Moon and Oliver. Nikkita Oliver received $2,850 in support from Affordable Seattle. This group also supported Jon Grant in the district 8 race. Both Oliver and Grant were viewed as the far-left, grassroots candidates in their respective races. Cary Moon received $25,699.65 in independent expenditures. These funds came entirely from individuals rather than from organizations. The individuals were mostly retired, and interviewees told me they were close friends of Cary Moon who formed the PAC to bypass the individual contribution limit. Jenny Durkan, by contrast, benefited heavily from organizational support. Her independent expenditures totaled $878,753.56. This is more that the total independent expenditures in the previous two mayoral elections combined. The bulk of her money ($608,080) came from the chamber of commerce's PAC, another $50,000 from the restaurant and hospitality PAC and an additional $142,438.68 from various individuals and unions. Therefore, in independent

expenditures, it is clear Durkan had the backing of both the business community and labor.

Figure 6.9

Candidate	Individual Direct Contributors	Self	Independent Expenditures	Total in Dollars	Total Contributors	Average Contribution[14]
Jenny Durkan	$1,043,355	$8,781.43	$878,653.56	$1,930,789.99	4327	$241.13
Cary Moon	$186,336	$383,882.61	$25,699.65	$595,918.26	1091	$170.79
Nikkita Oliver	$135,493	$0	$2,850	$138,343	1823	$74.32

While most extant literature on local elections focuses on fundraising coalitions of individual contributors, the Seattle mayor's race shows that line of inquiry presents a far more pluralistic picture of fundraising than what really exists. Durkan was the obvious favorite of both business and labor in the mayoral race. Moon was able to fund her own campaign, which was the only thing that kept her in the running. Figure 6.9 shows the top three candidates by funding source. It shows that Durkan dwarfed her opponents in both total fundraising and total contributors. Moon raised a little more than a quarter of what Durkan was able to collect but almost five times as much as Oliver. Where Nikkita Oliver drew impressive numbers was in the total individual contributors. She was able to convince 61% more people than Moon to contribute to her campaign. However, Moon's contributors were willing and able to give more than double on average than Oliver contributors. This confirms what interviewees said, that Oliver had a broad coalition of low-dollar backers who fiercely supported her. She, more than any other candidate, was receiving support from the grassroots.

The race for mayor in San Antonio was, for all intents and purposes, also a three-way race. The only candidates who raised significant funds were Ivy Taylor (the incumbent), Ron Nirenberg (the district 9 city councilmember), and Manuel Medina (the county Democratic Party chair). The race for mayor began much earlier than the city council position races according to interviewees because unlike the district races "You have to start earlier because you have to get on TV. With

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[14] Total contributors and Average Contribution refers to individual direct contributors only.

contribution limits, it takes a long time to get enough cash for a [television] spot" (SA Consultant, 3).

Between the summer and December 31, 2016, the candidates raised the following: Ivy Taylor-$325,520, Ron Nirenberg-$143,847, and Manuel Medina-$6,364. Because much of Nirenberg's contributions arrived while he was a sitting city councilmember and before he had declared his intention to run for mayor, he was limited to $500 contributions. However, Taylor could receive donations up to $1,000 per person. Medina did not declare until December, so he was able to raise only a few thousand dollars. Taylor and Nirenberg would go on to more than double their early fundraising totals, and Medina would inject his campaign with hundreds of thousands of dollars from his own account to make up the difference. These were the final fundraising totals in 2017: Ivy Taylor-$725,588.54, Ron Nirenberg-$370,758.07, and Manuel Medina-$408,205.88.

None of the other candidates raised more than $5,000 in total and none had active campaign operations. In the mayoral race in San Antonio, it is clear that the early fundraising hypothesis for electoral success proves out. Medina was unable to develop a strong campaign despite ultimately raising more than the eventual winner, Nirenberg. Nirenberg and Taylor also benefited early on from the business community, which interviewees attributed to their incumbency statuses. One candidate said, "It's clear Ron is going to be in San Antonio politics for a while. Donors want to make sure they show their support for him early" (SA Candidate 1). Medina enjoyed no such privilege.

Turning to coalitions, the most active group in the mayoral race was the real estate and development community. I will discuss this further in the next chapter which details the endorsements, activities of political elites, and funders of the 2017 elections more holistically. However, for now it is striking how active they were in the San Antonio mayoral race compared to the Seattle race. Nearly half of Taylor's contributions came from real estate and development as well as a quarter of Nirenberg's contributions. Medina, as previously stated, was primarily self-funded. He was not able to convert his self-funding into traditional fundraising support at any point in the race.

Based on online name searches conducted by journalists during the election and confirmed by me, attorneys did not contribute in large numbers nor did government employees—two of the largest groups of donors in Seattle. This held

true for city council races as well as the mayoral race. Consultants who I interviewed attributed this to the bond measures up for referendum in the 2017 cycle. "There's almost a billion dollars on the table…and uh, well as they say 'pay-to-play' (laughs), it sounds so corrupt when I say it, but that's how any city works. I mean, you have to contract with *someone*. It feels better when it's someone you know, someone you've worked with before. That starts with the election." (SA Consultant, 3).

The 2017 election in San Antonio showed that while self-funding can be effective, the most important indicator of success was early fundraising, preferably from traditional fundraising. Self-funding could make up somewhat, but it did not replace the value of a strong donor network early on. Incumbency was tied closely with this ability to raise early. While total fundraising was important, it did not guarantee overall success or even advancement to the general election. Independent expenditures also did not play a significant role in 2017 according to interviewees, which draws a strong contrast with the concurrent elections that took place in Seattle.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I used the donor databases in both Seattle and San Antonio to compare candidate fundraising primarily in the 2017 election cycle. I presented the data using variables with strong arguments for their value in extant literature: employers, occupations, organizational ties, and timing of funds as well as the source of funds (traditional contributors, self, independent expenditures). In both Seattle and San Antonio coalitions that have been identified in extant research (Business, Working Class, and Government/non-profit) do not appear to form when it comes to individual donors. Instead, the coalitions we see are that of the attorneys, developers and others. Since politicians tend to be members of the knowledge economy (attorneys), there is a distinct advantage in coming from that community in terms of early fundraising, which is critical to electoral success, especially in Seattle. While interviewees referred to various candidates as "establishment" picks, the resulting coalitions did not indicate that establishment and command positions in government are one and the same. An example of this is Bob Hasegawa's failure to raise significant funds despite receiving the most

contributions from sitting Seattle area politicians. Instead, independent expenditures and self-funding proved to be principal factors for success. This shows that scholars of community power literature are making a mistake in treating elections as secondary to existing power structures in governance.

A common question in the literature about campaign finance is whether fundraising *indicates* public support or *creates* it. The failure of Manuel Medina to make the runoff in the race for San Antonio mayor would seem to point toward the former being the case in San Antonio. He loaned himself several hundred-thousand dollars, which was more than the eventual winner, but still struggled to gain votes. By contrast, Cary Moon's self-funding in the mayoral race in Seattle had the opposite effect and allowed her to push through to the general elections. Therefore, these two cases indicate that whether funds indicate or create support is contingent upon the race. In the next chapter, I will discuss why this was the case, but for now, these findings are strong evidence that studying donor coalitions and types of fundraising is an insufficient way to understand local political opportunity structures.

Seattle's commitment to data collection shows something which is woefully understudied: the tremendous engagement of retirees in political contributions. Political scientists have endless accounts of generational and aging trends which predict political preference, but that data is limited primarily to policy outcomes and partisan contests, and it is difficult to determine if the average Seattle retiree has much in common with that of the nation as a whole. In Seattle, they were the largest fundraising group in every race, and they trended toward a single candidate in each one, forming what would otherwise be considered a fundraising coalition. Yet they are left out of most scholarly work.

Since there is so little historical information on contributions in San Antonio, consultants play a much more significant role in campaigns. Not only do they offer professional experience within the political network of the city, they are also the only people maintaining donor lists over time. These lists are detailed and personal, including information about family members and links to other donors. Without these lists, candidates would spend a tremendous amount of time calling donors from state and national level public databases, without knowing who the real local contributors are. This is further evidence that consultants in San Antonio are not necessarily political professionals, but could be vendors in the sense that

Matt Grossmann uses the term. Rather than establishing an ideology of industry and developing a closed network of craftsmanship, they are simply selling individual services on the open market (Grossmann, 2009). The fact that consultants in San Antonio have control over all the past donor data establishes their role in the local political community. I will go into detail about this role in Chapter 8.

Beyond these findings, from the data itself, there is also the fact that minimal political will exists in San Antonio to increase donor transparency. This is striking considering Seattle's reform, but it may have more to do with the overall low participation rates in the city's local elections than anything else. When only 12% of people are voting in the first place, how many of them are going to go and look at the donor files? How many of those are going to be aware that other cities report differently? And how many of those are going to take it up as a cause worthy of mounting a campaign for? The vanishingly small population of those who might be both aware of the lack of information and motivated to take action is also outweighed by a political elite who prefer the obscurity. "If it were all out there, I'd be out of a job" (SA Consultant, 4).

The analysis in this chapter contributes to closing the gap in literature on local campaign finance. In Seattle, we see coalitions form by industry that tend to favor candidates within their professional specialization. I also demonstrated that retirees play a crucial and under acknowledged role in local campaign fundraising. Beyond this, coalitions are most pronounced in independent expenditures. In San Antonio, coalition forming was difficult to determine, but the findings indicate that real estate and development interests play a huge fundraising role. This implies that some past literature on growth-coalitions might contribute to our understanding the city's power structures (Logan and Molotch, 1987). Landed interests were certainly more robust in giving than in Seattle where labor and activists groups equal or surpass business in political influence. In San Antonio, the real estate and development industry still does not account for the majority of donations. Overall, despite a bias towards business in San Antonio, the donor pool is more pluralistic than regime theorists might predict (Fleischmann and Stein 1998; Krebs 2005; Adams 2010; Stone 1989).

Even at the city council level, running for office is not cheap. Many candidates in San Antonio gave tens of thousands of dollars to their campaigns,

and one mayoral candidate in each city gave their own campaign hundreds of thousands of dollars. Additionally, candidates had to take time from their personal lives and jobs to commit to the work of running. One self-financed candidate told me, "I gave myself the cash so I could get out and knock on doors. I'm planning to raise it back though" (SA Candidate 1). The candidate was not working during this campaign. As taxing as the process is for the affluent, it is prohibitively costly for most working and middle class citizens, who might need to forgo wages or quit their jobs in order to mount a serious campaign. This basic calculus is likely to favor entry into the candidate pool by well-paid professionals who are better positioned to manage financially in cases where campaigning for office would result in reduced earnings (Bonica, 2017: 3).

The tremendous imbalance of available donor history in the two cities made comparison difficult. Instead, I tried to place the two cities within extant literature which they each spoke to most effectively: Seattle and coalition theories; San Antonio and early fundraising success. However, comparing the imbalance of data is itself useful when discussing the work that contribution reporting does both in articulating candidates to the voters and establishing roles of both consultants and coalitions in local political power structures. In Seattle, the public nature of contributions means that consultants form relationships with coalition partners and rely on professionalization for attracting clients. In San Antonio, donor lists are a significant factor in hiring a consultant, meaning that the professional relationships of the consultants themselves are less important. In the next chapter, I will discuss how those relationships affected the 2017 elections. I will also discuss specific endorsements and organizational campaign coalitions which formed in conjunction with and parallel to the donor coalitions. By adding the qualitative data I gathered to this chapter's findings on contribution patterns, I argue for a relational, mixed methods, and process-driven approach to the future study of campaigns, elections, campaign finance, and urban power.

Chapter 7:

REFORM IN THE FIRST ROUND

In previous chapters, I discussed the political reforms in both San Antonio and Seattle. I described how they were processed by government and non-government actors. I outlined the ways in which the process of reforming the system did not live up to the articulated goals and values of the reforms themselves, by failing to include opportunities for contestation and varying perspectives in the reform process. Now, I will consider whether the reforms lived up to those goals and values during their first election cycle. Reformers in both cities talked extensively about changing the type of candidate who can run for office. In San Antonio, offering a salary was supposed to allow people of varying economic means to be city council representatives. In Seattle, individuals without ties to 'big money' were offered a path to funding in the Democracy Voucher program. Implicit in these stated goals is the value of diverse economic and political representation for enhancing democracy.

In a way, each city prior to reform was evidence that the other city's reform wouldn't solve the issue of representation. 'Big money' is not a dominant force in San Antonio elections where contributions are low and independent expenditures are much less commonplace. Nonetheless, Seattle's election turnout is roughly triple that of San Antonio. If 'big money' disillusions people to politics, the disillusionment does not mean they stop voting. Conversely, Seattle City Council members were some of the highest paid in the country, making over $120,000 a year. However, the people in office were often leaving even higher paying positions to become city councilmembers, which means that a paycheck does not automatically diversify economic representation.

Nonetheless, as I described in the last two chapters, the existing political structures and communities in each city were very different, and any reform might

have very different effects on campaign industries which exist in different contexts. That means that one way to see if the reforms changed who ran for election and who won would be to look at the coalitions which formed in the races and see if they are the same coalition types that existed previously. Another variable to consider is how many people ran for office upon implementation of the reform. If it was significantly more than in previous years, this would suggest that the reform was incentivizing. Lastly, we can determine the effects of reform based on the restructuring of the campaign industry in each city. Did the Vouchers offer a path for non-establishment candidates? Did the salary reform mean that campaigns could be both explicitly anti-establishment and successful? In other words, did the reforms affect local political opportunity structures and, by extension, did they affect local election power dynamics?

To study this, I draw from literature on both elections and community power. Elections research tends to be nationalized, but the trend toward studying electoral power dynamics as a network is helpful. Recent theories suggest that there is a network of interest groups, donors, and party elites who pre-determine the success of a given candidate during primary elections (Cohen, 2008; Bawn, 2012; Masket, 2009; among others). Most of this research is done at the presidential or congressional level, and even the more locally focused work is still partisan. This means that coalitions in these studies are inherently more cohesive than in a non-partisan race. Nonetheless, the networked concept of power is helpful in getting away from the notion of 'kingmaking' as an overt process directed at voters and toward 'influence' as a covert one directed at fellow network members.

This brings us to the community power literature, which I have discussed in previous chapters. I would argue that both of these reforms come from an assumption that the focus on economic power found in much of the community power debate is a correct one. The idea that giving people public funds as an incentive to run for office might be a solution to the problem of economic representation assumes that money is the determinate of power in the first place. This is the major assumption in literature discussing growth machines (Logan and Molotch, 1987), regime theory (Stone, 1989), and power elite (Mills, 1956; Domhoff, 1967; and others). However, as I showed in the previous chapter, money and business-based coalitions are not the only determinants of electoral success. Literature on who rules American cities does not sufficiently address the

idiosyncrasies of elections or campaigning as an industry. While developers, interest groups, activist organizations and politicians are consistent fixtures around the city's policymaking efforts, they are not always active in campaigns. In fact, election campaigns have their own power structures that overlap heavily with the governing elite (both public and private), but they are not one and the same. For example, donors often give to candidates based on ideological match but do not participate in public policy forums or follow up on their political work. Additionally, many influential groups that train and support candidates don't have anything to do with the everyday governing work afterward. Lastly, political consultants don't directly campaign for policy unless contracted to do so.

The community power debate is also difficult to apply to elections because often elections are an access point to governance, making it a liminal space of power structuring. This is different from policy work where ideas and resource distribution are the units of study and their relative success, failure, or compromise offer insight into who has established power in a given system. However, what is particularly useful about the literature on community power is the way much of it defines power as being elitist in structure. Many theorists in the community power literature also emphasize the idea that power is rooted in organizations. This highlights the resource-dependent flow of power, which is useful in studying zero-sum phenomena like elections.

In this chapter, I demonstrate the way coalitions, when united, hold pre-emptive power, effectively preventing a coherent opposition from forming before the race gains momentum among the electorate. I show that the reforms in both cities did little to disrupt political opportunity structures because they did not address this pre-emptive power. Instead, savvy candidates and political consultants were able to exploit the reforms to advantage incumbents and establishment candidates. That's not to say that the reformers didn't achieve any of their goals. In San Antonio, more people ran for office than ever before, and in Seattle, more individual people gave to campaigns than ever before. Certain types of democratic participation certainly expanded. Democratic representation did not, however, become more accessible.

From interviews and archival research, I studied the primary races in both Seattle and San Antonio in 2017. In looking at the flow of resources and the network of coalition members which coalesced around candidates in the wake of

reform, I found that some incentives changed, which attracted candidates who might not have otherwise run. However, the fundamental structures of power in elections did not change. Influential people remained influential and the members of the political establishment did not change substantially due to reform. What's more, campaign industries in both cases co-opted the reforms' effects. This happened in Seattle because professional consultants were able take advantage of their knowledge of the electorate to identify people highly likely to sign over their Vouchers and because they were able to develop a campaign apparatus to deploy campaign workers to those people's homes quickly and efficiently. The co-optation happened in San Antonio more passively because the increased pool of candidates expanded the market for political work.

Because there were so many more races in San Antonio than Seattle, I moved my description of most of the district races to Appendix B. This allows me to focus on a comparative analysis between the two cases both in this chapter and the next. However, I include findings from these races in my general analysis and conclusions. In the following sections, I make comparisons between three of the races in San Antonio and the three Seattle races. I analyze the candidates' backgrounds, networks, and campaign structures to assess the nature of opportunity structures in both cities. Then, taken together, I argue why changing the role of money in both cities did not change electoral power structures in the immediate aftermath of reform.

CASH, COALITIONS, AND CHARISMA:
THE MAYORAL PRIMARY IN SEATTLE AND SAN ANTONIO'S DISTRICT 7

In this section, I compare the Seattle mayoral race to the district 7 race in San Antonio. These races are interesting in part because they both featured establishment splits. In Seattle, labor hedged by supporting multiple candidates and in San Antonio legacy politicians split in supporting the incumbent and a challenger with deep roots in the district's political kingmaking community. Through comparison, I find that even with strong roots in the community, organizing chops, and a charismatic persona, campaign staff/consultants are critical to campaign success, especially for an outsider candidate.

The race for mayor of Seattle in 2017 was extremely chaotic. At the beginning of the race, 16 candidates filed to run for office, including Nikkita Oliver, Mike McGinn, Cary Moon, and Jason Roberts. They were all up against the heavily-favored incumbent, Ed Murray. At the time, most organizations and individuals had not endorsed anyone for mayor. "Those [endorsements] come in around June or July" one union member stated (SE Union, 3). However, interviewees were already evaluating the likely success of the contenders. Political professionals at this stage mentioned only the candidates who would go on to have professional consultants and/or a public headquarters, meaning they were already known to the political community. One consultant said, "If Murray has a threat from the left, it's going to be Nikkita" (SE Consultant, 1). Oliver was an attorney, artist and activist with ties to Black Lives Matter and the Seattle People's Party[15]. Mike McGinn was Murray's predecessor in the mayoral office. Despite having already won the seat previously, he was not seen as a member of the establishment. His background was in community organizations. Similarly, Cary Moon was an urban planner and architect with community roots as a co-founder of a pedestrian-centric urban design activist group. Lastly, Jason Roberts was a small business owner with a compelling life story and a professional website. Roberts was invited to speak at major events, but he did not raise significant funds nor did he get any significant endorsements. Interviewees dismissed all the other candidates out of hand, which was telling as none of the other candidates managed to raise substantial funds going forward. Oliver's reputation among activists was what kept her in the conversation, although no one implied that she would be getting much organizational support. Many chalked this up to her refusing to hire professional political consultants. Cary Moon was brought up in three interviews and was largely dismissed by consultants as a person with too little political experience. "McGinn was the outsider candidate when he ran [the first time]" (SE Journalist, 2). Others said that he had his moment or that his success the first time was a fluke. However, he did have name recognition, which could help (SE Consultants 1, 4 and 9).

Resource distribution in urban governance is inextricably linked to the campaign industry in Seattle. Once the allegations against Ed Murray came out,

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[15] A local political Party affiliated with the national Socialist Alternative Party

the field of candidates change drastically. During the lone week between Murray's decision to drop out of the race and the filing deadline, most city councilmembers were mentioned by name in interviews as potentially running. However, there was a major problem according to one consultant, "The big firms are already contracted. Some people have the same consultants on retainer, and they would have to change" (SE Consultant, 6). Typically, if a consultant works with a candidate for city council, for example, that consultant remains on retainer with that individual for a small monthly fee. This prevents the consultant from running a campaign against the person with whom they have already developed a relationship, and whose weaknesses the consultant presumably knows. When a lot of candidates in a single municipality run for the same office, the odds of multiple candidates with the same consultant on retainer competing against one another increases. The consultants usually treat it as a first-come, first-serve system. However, if the consultant believes one candidate has a significantly better chance than another, they may be willing to burn bridges. This is a more pronounced issue in the Seattle mayoral race because, "Whoever wins [referring to consultants] gets the city bond contracts, and that's the real money" (SE Consultant, 1). Consultants will in fact do a mayoral campaign pro bono with the assumption that they will get these city contracts. Therefore, there is a greater incentive to pick the winning candidate from the beginning.

During the week between Murray's decision to drop out and the filing deadline, various politicians called their consultants and had their staff check around to get a sense of what coalition was possible. Could they create a niche? Could they get a big endorsement right off the bat? Was it worth the risk of losing their existing seat/job? One person who was brought up in every interview this week was Lorena González, the sitting councilmember for district 9. Because districts 8 and 9 were at-large seats, she had already won an election city-wide and was considered very popular. Most political professionals thought she would run for mayor, but according to three interviewees, she could not get the endorsement of Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal, who represents most of the city. Apparently, González felt that without this endorsement, she would not be successful in a crowded field, so she declined to run. In the end, three candidates dropped out before the filing deadline having failed to get any traction in the first place. However, 11 new candidates jumped in, including Jenny Durkan, Jessyn Farrell,

and Bob Hasegawa. The other candidates did not raise money and were not mentioned in interviews. Durkan, who contracted with Ed Murray's former consultant, raised $60,000 in the first four days of her candidacy. She was a US attorney appointed by the Obama administration and was seen as the most high-profile political figure in the race. She also had a long history advocating for LGBTQ+ rights. Jessyn Farrell and Bob Hasegawa (both sitting representatives in the state legislature with strong organized labor ties), also contracted with political consultants.

As unions, business leaders and community/activist organizations began to endorse in earnest after the filing deadline came, some patterns began to emerge, and traditional coalitions began to split and hedge. Endorsements and public invitations only went to the seven candidates I've mentioned here by name. Labor split their endorsements between sitting politicians who had shown support for them, environmental groups split between Oliver and McGinn (the two candidates most associated with grassroots campaigning), business backed Durkan, and Democratic Party groups supported sitting Democrats in the legislature. Many groups did dual-endorsements. The odd one out was Cary Moon, whose campaign was mostly self-funded.

The coalition which stayed united proved successful. During the mayoral primary, only Durkan benefited from independent expenditures. People for Jenny Durkan, the political action committee (PAC) which campaigned on her behalf, raised $117,853 during the primary campaign alone. $86,000 of this came from the Civic Alliance for a Sound Economy, which is the Seattle Chamber of Commerce's PAC. Another $20,000 came from Seattle Hospitality for Progress, the restaurant and hotel PAC, and the last $15,000 came from the National Association for Industrial and Office Parks Seattle PAC, a commercial real estate association. Without question, Durkan was the business-backed candidate. However, she also held support from members of the Allies Table because of her status within the Democratic Party. This meant that without fail, interviewees referred to Durkan as the "establishment" candidate. Almost immediately, other candidates and political professionals framed the campaign around her. The question was never "will she win" but "who will she go against in the general." In fact, the way interviewees talked about her was exactly how they talked about Ed Murray's incumbency

advantage before he dropped out. In the end, labor mostly did dual endorsements saying he/she "has been good to us" (SE Union, 4,5,8,11). One consultant said:

> "It's about competing interest groups coalescing around candidates, and cutting deals, which is just the normal way that it works…Somebody who came out of a community background, like McGinn comes out of an environmentalist community thing, this woman Cary Moon comes out of an architectural type thing…then the key to Oliver is the Black Lives Matter, more social justice community, so we have these folks. And the interest groups just want nothing to do with these community candidates. 'We don't know what to do with these people so we're gonna ignore them because they're not very transactional, they're very ideological about how the city should be and we can't really figure out how to deal with their ideology. We just want sort of transactional deal-cutting cause that's what we're used to'" (SE Consultant, 3).

Ultimately, the decision not to commit to a single candidate and support that person with an independent expenditure in the primary meant that the labor coalition failed to get a candidate who was from a labor background through to the general election. Similarly, the community organizations divided between the many champions they had in the race with Oliver garnering the support of identity groups and housing activists, Moon getting support for urban reformers, and McGinn splitting the environmental support with Moon. This divided support did not translate into significant funding for any candidates from leftist organizations or labor. Instead, the business-backed Jenny Durkan and the significantly self-funded community/urban planning activist Cary Moon won. Durkan raised twice as much money as Moon and Moon raised about $100,000 more than any of the remaining candidates. This allowed the two women to take out significant media buys unlike their opponents.

Just as the labor groups and other community organizations split in the primary for Seattle's mayor, the establishment split in the race for city council district 7 in San Antonio. Cris Medina was the three-term incumbent seeking re-election and was working with a well-reputed consultant/campaign manager, Colin Strother. Medina received the endorsements of the firefighters as well as some members of the city council. Nearly half of his funds came from real estate/development, showing that they consistently back incumbents who vote with them on zoning matters. He was also an Air Force Reserve member, which played

well in a military city like San Antonio. These factors might have seemed like enough ammunition to easily win him the race; however, he clearly did not see his very formidable opponent coming.

Ana Sandoval had a degree each from MIT, Harvard, Stanford and the Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México. She went to high school with the Castro brothers (Julián and Joaquin[16]) and their mother endorsed her early in the race. Rosie Castro is one of the few kingmakers within the activist community in San Antonio. Sandoval worked for government agencies for over a decade and most notably was responsible for "developing a public participation plan for the Bay Area Air Quality Management District in San Francisco" (Rivard Report, 2017). In other words, she knew exactly what she was doing when she entered the race. She hired an experienced campaign manager early, and she quickly brought together a large band of committed volunteers to knock on doors and make phone calls.

Sandoval's strategy was to increase voter turnout in her district, and it worked. While Medina targeted likely voters, based on their history of voting, Sandoval targeted new local voters, and in a race with such low turnout in the first place, this resulted in an outright win for Sandoval in the first round of voting. This race was the best example of a charismatic candidate-driven campaign that much of the literature on candidate selection theory talks about: The idea is that if the candidate is inspiring enough that they can woo the voters into turning out and overcome their opponents' establishment ties. Local elections are in some ways ideal for this sort of candidacy due to their low turnout and low costs. However, rarely does such an inspiring candidate command legitimacy to such a degree that it actually works. Sandoval's roots in the political community went back twenty years despite her youth, and she connected with experienced campaign workers who were able to bring expertise in voter outreach and fundraising to her team.

Sandoval's win may initially look like an anti-establishment victory, but it was far from that, which becomes clear when comparing her race to the Seattle mayoral contest. Sandoval was a young woman of color with a strong organizing background and significant education credentials and was in these ways like

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[16] Julián Castro was mayor of San Antonio prior to Ivy Taylor and Joaquin Castro was a sitting congressman for one of the city's districts.

Nikkita Oliver. What was different about these two campaigns that allowed Sandoval to clear the 50% threshold in the primary in San Antonio, but Oliver was unable even to make it through to a run-off? I believe there were several things, the first being money. It simply does not require the same amount of money to run for city office in San Antonio as it does in Seattle even if one is a district seat and one is mayoral. Sandoval only needed to tap her professional network to raise the funds necessary to get a structured campaign off the ground. Sandoval also had a professional staff and consultant, which Oliver refused. Oliver did however have the support of the Seattle People's Party which helped her to have a campaign headquarters and access to some resources. Thirdly, the establishment in San Antonio is district specific and Sandoval had the right relationships with the right community figures to grant her legacy ties and build a coalition. Without something akin to the Allies Table in Seattle, this means that a candidate willing to invest in those individual relationships has a good chance of winning. Lastly, Sandoval had only one opponent, who was already supported by developers, police, and firefighters: all groups Sandoval could clearly position herself as challenging. It was a simpler narrative. Oliver, on the other hand, faced a crowded field of candidates, many of whom could make claims to similar activist organizations and labor groups that would have supported her had it been a smaller field.

While these two women on paper seemed similar, the critical differences between them were their proximity to establishment figures and the degree of professionalism in their campaigns. Nikkita Oliver came very close to beating Moon, taking third place by just 1,170 votes. Oliver's community-centered, social justice campaign resonated almost enough to overcome the overwhelming financial advantage of her opponents. In her concession speech, she said:

> I realized how impossible running for office is if you're an everyday resident. For any of us who are working people, who have jobs, especially those of us who are renters, who maybe don't have great health insurance—this is literally impossible without a network…There are people who can literally pay high-price consulting firms to run their campaign for them, who own their homes, who do have good health insurance—it does make all the difference in the world whether you can enter into public service (Seattle Weekly, 2017).

Oliver's sentiment was not mentioned in my interviews. Instead, political professionals viewed the barriers to entry as evidence that a candidate was committed to their ideas. At no point did interviewees acknowledge that the practices of political consulting and coalition building might be a barrier to entry for members of lower socio-economic status.

Crucially, Ana Sandoval had the kind of network Nikkita Oliver did not. In San Antonio, consultants were surprised by Sandoval's win. They reached out to me directly saying it should make my research interesting that an incumbent was unseated in the primary, but Sandoval's background, relationships and capacity to spend significant time doorknocking in a low-turnout district meant that her success was not particularly unexpected. However, what probably caused political consultants in San Antonio to be surprised by the outcome was the fact that she ran at all. Sandoval was a new type of candidate: someone with organizing experience who was relatively young and was not wealthy or benefiting from a separate income. She was in fact the first success story of the city council salary reform. The district 7 primary race shows that while the same connections to establishment figures and having a professional campaign matter in order to win, the people who are able to run in the first place might indeed be more varied. In Seattle, had the Voucher program applied to the mayoral race, perhaps Oliver would have fared better. We can see some indications of this by looking at the other two races in the city.

CHALLENGING POPULAR INCUMBENTS:
SEATTLE'S DISTRICT 9 AND SAN ANTONIO'S DISTRICT 3

The district 9 race in Seattle and the district 3 race in San Antonio both featured establishment incumbents fending off challengers with strong backgrounds in local advocacy organizations. They also were both impacted by the city's respective reforms. These two races show that incumbency has an even greater advantage due to the reforms for similar reasons. In Seattle, incumbency allows candidates to draw from existing donors and supporters to qualify for the Democracy Voucher program earlier than opponents, and in San Antonio the salary reform attracted more challengers which diluted the opposition. In this section, I

explain how this happened in each city and situate the findings in literature on urban power structures.

In Seattle, Lorena González was the consummate establishment candidate as demonstrated by the endorsements she received right out of the gate. Once she declined to run for mayor, she faced a field of seven other candidates for her city council position: Ian Affleck-Asch, Pauly Giuglianotti, Pat Murakami, Ty Pethe, David Preston, Marguerite Richard, and Eric Smiley. Of those, only Murakami raised more than $2,500, including from Democracy Vouchers. In fact, only Murakami and González ultimately qualified for the Vouchers at all. In terms of endorsements, González received support from nearly every labor organization in Seattle, including financial support up to $250 each (the limit within the Voucher program rules). She also was supported by the choice community, including Planned Parenthood, NARAL, and EMILY's List. Lastly, she received support from Latinx advocacy organizations. Murikami, on the other hand, did not receive any major endorsements, with the notable exception of the Seattle Times. Instead, she relied almost entirely on individual contributions through the Democracy Voucher program. Neither candidate received assistance from independent expenditures, though unions did inform their members of their endorsement for González. González also contracted with NWP, the city's largest consulting firm.

Before Murikami got into the race, everyone I interviewed took it as a given that González would hold onto her seat. She had been a strong advocate for the $15 minimum wage, one of both the labor and activist community's most important issues in the previous years. She was also an outspoken critic of Donald Trump, something that very much appealed to Seattle voters. On the other hand, the business community did not back Murikami. This is likely because she was too progressive in her policy positions. Lacking an amenable alternative, the Seattle Chamber and individual businesses chose not to participate in the district 9 race, and instead focused on the mayoral and district 8 races. Murikami only received 20% of the vote to González' 64%, which ended the race after the primary. This confirmed speculation from interviewees who prior to the results of the race did not mention any candidates beside González leading up to the primary, as though her success was a forgone conclusion.

In theory, the Democracy Voucher program could make up for lack of organizational and business support, but that did not pan out for Murikami. Instead,

it helped González in an unexpected way. Looking at the Democracy Vouchers in the district 9 race, the Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission codes collected and distributed the Vouchers in a three part process: First, they are "Received" by the SEEC; second, they are "Accepted" if the information and signatures match what is on file; third, they are "Redeemed" when a check of the equivalent amount is given to the designated campaign. Between the time when the Voucher is "Accepted" and "Redeemed" the SEEC checks to see whether the assigned campaign is qualified for the program. If not, the SEEC holds onto the Voucher until the campaign has collected enough signatures to qualify. During the primary, Lorena González qualified for the program late in the campaign. She was only able to redeem 2,527 of the Vouchers, totaling $63,175 of the possible $150,000. Murikami was only able to redeem 105 Vouchers totaling $2,625. Four other candidates either collected Vouchers or had them submitted on the candidate's behalf: Ian Affleck-Asch, Pauly Giuglianotti, Eric Smiley, and Ty Pethe. In total, they raised 389 Vouchers totaling $9,725. This money was never distributed to a campaign.

As it turns out, the impediment to the Voucher money was in the qualification process. It takes a long time to reach the minimum number of signatures, which effectively delays the start of a campaign relying on the Voucher program as a primary funding source as the money is locked up until a candidate qualifies. While candidates were able to collect Vouchers, they struggled to collect the signatures necessary to qualify for the funds. During the signature and Voucher gathering period, González was able to raise funds from her existing list of individual donors, which along with name recognition and organizational endorsements, got her through the primary. During the primary, González spent very little money except on staff wages, fundraising and political consulting. The staff and political consultants put their efforts toward gathering signatures as well as Vouchers. Without them, opponents could not compete.

It is clear that Murikami believed the Voucher program was a potential path to success for her. She had a later start, but she went all-in on the Voucher program. While González began fundraising in January, Murikami did not enter the race until May. She had paid staff and a person listed as a consultant, but they were not professionalized and had far less experience than the network of political consultants described in interviews. Almost all the money she spent was on

campaign materials such as yard signs and buttons. In total, Murikami spent $10,610. Without organizational support and with minimal staff support, Murikami (along with mostly volunteers) collected the signatures required for the Democracy Vouchers by canvassing for supporters themselves. Murikami demonstrated that with boots on the ground, it was possible to grow support without organizational or business backing in this particular primary race, at least to the point of qualifying. However, an establishment incumbent can exploit the program much more effectively and overwhelm any challengers through early campaign structuring.

District 3 in San Antonio had a similarly popular incumbent with a grassroots-aligned second-place finisher. Rebecca Viagrán was the incumbent, and had a professional consultant, Dan DeBauche who came out of Austin. She was well-known within the community and had the backing of legacy politicians, her fellow sitting politicians, and the rest of the political elite in San Antonio. Viagrán was supported by Annie's List, a program for training and funding progressive women in Texas, and she was running for her third term as city councilmember. According to three consultants (3,6,7) her name recognition and large amount of fundraising scared off serious opponents. Going into the primary, she had $87,000 on hand while her next closest rival had just under $5000. Half of Viagrán's funding came from real estate/developers. This was an incredible amount of money for the one of the poorest districts in the city. Interviewees told me that the seat should take about $27,500[17] (averaged between 4 interviews) to win.

Viagrán's war chest did not scare off all opponents (she had six total), but it did help her to victory. She won outright with 62% of the vote in the primary, meaning that she did not have to go to a runoff. The second-place finisher was Jessico O. Guerrero, a longtime community activist who had most recently worked for Fuerza Unida, a justice and community service organization helping low-income women in San Antonio's poorest areas. She was endorsed by Our Revolution, Bernie Sanders' progressive campaign organization, which gave her progressive bona fides and volunteers. Guerrero was also a co-founder of Vecinos de Mission Trails. Mission Trails refers to the Mission Trails Mobile Home

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[17] Averaged from 4 interviews: $20,000, $25,000, $40,000 "on the high end", and $25,000 (Consultants 3,6,7, Campaign 2).

Community which formed after residents were displaced when San Antonio hosted the World's Fair in 1968. Mission Trails residents set up their homes in district 3, partly assuming that this area would be an unlikely candidate for development. In 2014, Viagrán voted with five of her peers to relocate the mobile home community again to expand Mission Reach, a river adjacent park trail. "The city rezoned the Mission Trails RV Community to permit luxury apartment buildings…displacing 300 people. Priced out, three in five displaced households had to leave the South Side" (Parke, 2021). What's more, the property values rose significantly in the area, raising taxes and displacing more. While Viagrán defended her position by saying that she was supporting improved quality of life in her district and that the Mission Trails families received compensation, she was often accused of being in developers' pockets, and her fundraising demonstrated that.

Despite Guerrero's organizing chops and deep roots in the community, she could not overcome Viagrán's establishment ties and sizable war chest. It may be that the crowded field meant that opposition was not able to coalesce around a candidate. Seven candidates were in the race which is more than double the number that had run in any election cycle in the previous decade. This would be an unexpected consequence of the salary reform: that too many people would run for office, giving the incumbent an even greater advantage and reinforcing establishment power.

From these two races, we can see that incumbency in both cities generates significant funds. When taking the reforms into account, this demonstrates a resource–based model of power rooted in a cohesive network. Both González and Viagrán found political elite and organizational support led directly to funding access long before their opponents were able to mount significant challenges. A late start often means less momentum and less credibility in a campaign. Both women faced opponents with extensive grassroots organizing backgrounds who failed to make a dent in establishment support. Additionally, both González and Viagrán had professional consultants before the races began, before either even filed for the seat. Their opponents had no such professional structure to their campaigns. They were able to leverage funds early to build up campaign apparatuses and reach voters consistently for months before the election. Not only did the reforms fail to produce strong outsider candidates in these two races, but

they actually gave advantages to the incumbents because they encouraged consolidating power early through both coalition management and funding.

The district 3 race in particular, with its heavy funding from developers in opposition to a housing justice advocate, is strong evidence for the growth coalition model of power in San Antonio. In "The City as Growth Machine", Logan and Molotch state:

> "The people who use their time and money to participate in local affairs are the ones who—in vast disproportion to their representation in the population—have the most to gain or lose in land-use decisions. Local business people are the major participants in urban politics particularly business people in property investing, development, and real estate financing" (1976: 91).

While the business coalition might disagree on specifics, "because of the hegemony of the growth machine, *its* disagreements are allowable and do not challenge the belief in growth itself. Unacceptable are public attacks on the pursuit of exchange values over citizens' search for use value" (Logan and Molotch, 1976: 93). While much of urban politics literature has moved on from this model, it applies well to this particular race where developers backed a candidate with a pro-development record.

However, in the district 9 race in Seattle, the business community did not stake a position, meaning establishment power is less intertwined with economic power in the city. González's race therefore, is better placed within Clarence Stone's notion of resource-based power in which he argues that system and command power "is augmented by coalition power, through which independent organizations join forces to achieve mutually desired goals, and pre-emptive power through which coalitions…effectively prevent alternative coalitions forming" (Harding, 2009: 37 citing Stone, 1980). In district 9, labor unions along with nearly all left-leaning organizations formed a coalition of support for the incumbent who had championed their policies. Through interviews, I found that this coalition formation happened well before any other candidates were in the race, pre-empting opposition. This pattern was repeated in the district 8 race in Seattle though to a lesser degree because it was an open seat.

BECOMING THE PEOPLE'S CANDIDATE:
SAN ANTONIO'S MAYOR AND SEATTLE'S DISTRICT 8

The mayoral race in San Antonio and the district 8 race in Seattle were compositionally very similar. They had the same number of total candidates running and they each had three who were seen as competitive by interviewees. In both cities, two of those three candidates had built their careers in local politics both as sitting politicians and political professionals. The third candidate in each race relied on outsider status for funding and support. Finally, in both places, the outsider candidate lost in the primary while the two candidates with long political resumes advanced to the runoffs.

The San Antonio mayoral race was crowded with fourteen candidates, three of whom have historically run in every mayoral race and historically raise no funds. This cycle was no different. Only three of the fourteen candidates managed to raise more than $5,000: the incumbent Mayor Ivy Taylor, District 8 City Councilmember Ron Nirenberg, and Bexar County Democratic Party Chair Manuel Medina. These were also the only three invited to public forums and featured in city events leading up to the election. However, they raised their funds long before any public events began.

Medina went against expectation and hired a Republican consultant to run his campaign. This got the attention of the firefighters who were looking for an outsider as they were unhappy with city council funding decisions in the previous session. Medina used the Democratic Party headquarters as his own campaign headquarters, and was attempting to capitalize on the nation's zeitgeist of anti-establishment voter patterns. He employed populist rhetoric, saying he would address traffic issues, poverty and crime. A Mexican immigrant and son of a single mother, Medina was a trained engineer turned political consultant. Interviewees told me that business leaders felt he was "too political for San Antonio" and they didn't "trust him to keep his head down and do what needs to be done. He's looking to make a name for himself" (SA Consultants 1 and 3). Medina was often called a "spoiler candidate" because he ran an anti-city hall campaign. He managed to bring together progressive alliances with Tea Party members, but his campaign was primarily self-funded since he was unable to garner support from business or

organizations, and in the first round of voting, Medina received only 15% of the vote.

Medina's inability to get traction is evidence that the non-partisan nature of city races is indeed effective at preventing party influence in elections. Despite being elected by local Democrats to be the chair, without a partisan primary to limit the voters ideologically, the party had little influence. It also means that all three candidates in the race could be registered Democrats without needing to commit to party platforms. For his part, Ron Nirenberg ran as a pro-change left-of-center Democrat. He hired a consultant early on and slowly grew his endorsements list among legacy politicians and left-leaning organizations in the city. More than either of his opponents, Nirenberg showed up to neighborhood association meetings, and the like. He benefited from the fact that Taylor had been a divisive mayor, often siding with ideological conservatives despite San Antonio's left-leaning electorate. This made legacy politicians lukewarm toward her, but she caught the eye of state level Republicans who invested heavily in her campaign. She also had the support of the police officers' association because of her favorable support in their budget negotiations. This turned the race into a left versus right contest with Medina unable to place himself on the spectrum clearly for voters. Still, many of the coalition organizations and legacy politicians stayed out of the primary because there were two sitting officials running. With two city hall incumbents going head to head against an outsider with money to spend on himself, political leaders did not want to get caught backing a loser. The opposite was the case in Seattle's district 8, where everyone wanted in on the action.

In the race for Seattle's district 8 seat, things were somewhat more complicated. For one thing, there was no incumbent, meaning that no one had the advantage of a record to run on or name-recognition among the voters. Just like in the San Antonio mayoral race, fourteen individuals filed to run, and again just like in San Antonio, only three were given serious thought by interviewees: Teresa Mosqueda, Jon Grant, and Sara Nelson. In three individual interviews, labor representatives described Teresa Mosqueda as "one of us". With a background in healthcare advocacy, Mosqueda was the head lobbyist[18] for the Washington State

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[18] Mosqueda did not particularly like being thought of as a lobbyist, but rather considered herself an activist

Labor Council and later became its Political and Strategic Campaign Director. Mosqueda's background as a successful political professional had engendered her within the Seattle professional political community. Many labor organizations raced each other to endorse her even before other candidates got in. In fact, she received endorsements from most labor groups before the filing deadline to run, including from the labor council.

Like Mosqueda with labor, the other two candidates, Jon Grant and Sara Nelson, drew from typical Seattle coalitions. Jon Grant was a member of the local grassroots/activist organizational community. His background was primarily as a housing rights advocate and he worked in leadership roles for organizations like Solid Ground, an anti-poverty charity, and the Tenants Union. A self-described socialist, Grant received the endorsement of Kshama Sawant, the only socialist on the city council. He stated many times that he saw the Democracy Vouchers as an opportunity to change the makeup of the city council, and that it would give him a good chance of success. Sara Nelson, on the other hand, chose not to participate in the Voucher program and relied on the business coalition. She owned a well-established brewery in Seattle, Fremont Brewing. As a woman and a business leader, she quickly gained the support of the Seattle Chamber of Commerce. This is why Nelson openly stated that she would not be participating in the Voucher program at all. The chamber responded by giving her $70,000 in independent expenditures in the primary. She also received $30,000 from the restaurant and hospitality PAC and $10,000 from the developers PAC.

This race showed the full functionality of the Democracy Voucher program. Both Mosqueda and Grant maxed out on the number of Vouchers redeemed during the primary at 6,000 each ($150,000). However, there were eleven other candidates in the race, all but two of whom collected Vouchers. Grant and Mosqueda were assigned more Vouchers than they were able to redeem. Beyond those two, only Hisam Goueli collected enough signatures and $10 donations to qualify for the program. Goueli was a doctor and a theatre artist who spent time working with local activist organizations. Sheley Secrest did not qualify for the program, but collected 1,114 Vouchers. Later, she was accused of defrauding the public as she allegedly made many donations to herself while claiming they had come from other individuals all in an effort to meet the qualification threshold for the Vouchers. Altogether, $304,650 worth of Vouchers

were assigned to campaigns but never redeemed with $62,300 being held for candidates who never qualified for the program.

The ease with which the three top fundraising candidates fit into existing Seattle coalitions is compelling with Mosqueda typifying labor, Grant as the leftist/community activist, and Nelson as the business candidate. The effect of these coalitions becomes clearer when looking at a candidate like Charlene Strong in the district 8 race. Strong had spent almost two decades advocating for LGBTQ+ communities. At the time, she was serving on the Washington Human Rights Council and stood with the governor for legislative signings. She was comfortable among both establishment politicians and activist groups. However, her single-issue history along with Grant's willingness to call himself a socialist meant that she was edged out of what would have been her most natural fit, the local leftist community organizations. Instead, despite being well-respected in the community, having a professional political consultant, and bringing in nearly $50,000 without the help of Vouchers, she only came up with 4.5% of the vote and sixth place.

Sara Nelson, the business-backed candidate, decided to go for corporate donations rather than rely on Vouchers. She outraised everyone in direct donations because of this. With two months to go in the primary race out of which the top two candidates would move on to the general, Nelson had raised $155,000. According to the rules, candidates participating in the Voucher program could be released from the limits if an opponent raised a 'material amount' more than the $150,000. Mosqueda and Grant both appealed for this release. Unfortunately, neither of the campaigns sent a representative to the meeting, so the Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission spent a great deal of time speculating on what constitutes a 'material' amount and whether $5,000 should qualify. It became clear as the Commissioners debated that they really had no concept of what various aspects of campaigns cost.

This should have been a shocking moment because the consequences of the Commission's decision on realizing the goals of the Voucher program were huge. Being released from the limits could open the floodgates for independent expenditures all over again, at least until the primary was over. Tens of thousands of dollars in checks could be written in a day, media buys could go out, and the intent of the Initiative to keep 'big money' out of politics could be nullified; however, the Commissioners seemed to be oblivious to this. Instead, they

discussed whether 'material' meant consequential, substantial, or de minimis. Clearly, the "lay" commission of attorneys had more interest in debating an abstract definition rather than an operational one. Ultimately, they decided to approve the releases; however, they tabled the question of whether that opened the overall $300,000 cycle limit until the next month's meeting, which would take place *after* the primary. This left campaigns in the dark as to whether they would be allowed to spend more than $100,000 in the general election if they spent $200,000 in the primary. The campaigns took the risk, and independent expenditures flowed in from labor for Mosqueda and to a far lesser extent for Grant from local organizations.

Ultimately, all three coalitions proved powerful when unified around a candidate. The top three fundraising candidates were relatively close in the end. Mosqueda won overall with 31.7% of the vote, then Grant with 26.3% following by Nelson with 22%. This meant that Mosqueda and Grant went on to the general election. Nelson's business-based fundraising and general coolness that comes with being a woman who owns a successful brewery in a place like Seattle were not enough to get her through to the next stage. Instead, the district 8 general elections would be between a labor lobbyist and an activist organizational director. In other words, it would be a contest between two political professionals.

It is possible that Nelson's loss is an indication that the Voucher program was doing what it was designed to do: force candidates to interact directly with voters which will ultimately help them to connect on an individual level with Seattle residents rather than looking to organizations to consolidate money and people on their behalf. But that is not what happened. By having a single candidate go over the maximum fundraising limit and releasing the candidates, the organizational coalitions emerged and consolidated resources for their chosen candidates. This allowed for the same kind of pre-emptive power to emerge that we saw in the district 9 race, this time on behalf of Mosqueda. That pre-emptive power did not emerge from coalitions in the San Antonio mayoral race. Instead, Medina was simply unable to get his anti-establishment message to resonate among the very tiny (11.3% turnout) group of voters in the San Antonio primary election, and two establishment candidates won.

These two races were similar in that the two candidates with the most political establishment ties, but not the most economic ties made it into the general

election. However, that's where their similarities end. In San Antonio, the two winners were sitting elected officials and many legacy politicians waited until after the primary to throw in their support. In Seattle, organizational leadership quickly backed candidates with both money and volunteers. Political power and viability is clearest in both cases by looking at the third-place finishers. In San Antonio, Medina loaned himself cash and utilized his Democratic Party connections to reduce campaign costs, allowing him to put almost everything toward voter contact. In Seattle, Nelson chose to forego the Vouchers to give herself more time to campaign. These two well-funded candidacies show that resources in elections are about much more than money. I will discuss this much further in the next chapter which is about the power of influence and political brokers.

POWER AND REFORM

Literature on elections talks extensively about the incumbency advantage and has done so for decades. Nearly all the literature focuses on congressional races. The dataset is large, the variables are limited, and it's relevant to almost everyone in the US. However, the reasons for incumbency advantage in congressional races are specific to the office. Political scientists have shown that the advantage comes from access to Party resources that protect them through the primaries, the ability to raise funds long before the campaign begins, and the ability to rhetorically set the stakes of the campaign (Fowler, 2016; Zaller, 1998; Levitt and Wolfram, 1997; Ashworth and Bueno de Mesquita, 2018; Carson, Engstrom, and Roberts, 2007; Druckman, Kifer, Parkin, 2020). All this work focuses on the voters.

In this chapter, I showed that the power of the incumbent is socially rooted in establishment ties. Incumbents fared well because they were able to access funds earlier than their opponents, they were supported by legacy politicians, and they had campaign expertise early in the races to develop a campaign structure and coalesce organizational and influential support. Certain candidates in races for open seats had the same advantage as incumbents in this way because of their establishment ties. This applied to candidates like Jenny Durkan and Teresa Mosqueda in Seattle and to a lesser extent, Ron Nirenberg and Ana Sandoval in San Antonio. These candidates were able to leverage existing relationships with

the political establishment to develop campaign apparatuses quickly and raise funds. They all also had significant political experience and were able to bring in top city elections experts. This ability to develop coalitions quickly and raise money functions as a pre-emptive power. These races showed that while the reforms attempted to reduces barriers to entry in both cities for candidates with less access to resources, they did not address the pre-emptive power of the establishment in either case.

This kind of power analysis is found within the community power debate, specifically within regime theory, "These overlapping concepts, systemic and pre-emptive power, are the cornerstones of regime theory. If systemic power is understood as a tendency within liberal-democratic societies for politicians to accord a privileged role to controllers of productive assets (business), then the realization of this tendency is dependent upon the exercise of pre-emptive power by the controllers of productive assets (Elkin, 1994)" (Davies, 2002). However, these studies look specifically at urban governance and resource allocation rather than at elections. In fact, mention of elections as a useful means of understanding power relationships in a city is often layered with contempt. Many complain of how other scholars put too much stock in elections, but I have found that very little work has been done to bring the well-developed study of power analysis to local elections. If scholars of urban power believe as they say that governors are beholden to particular elites which dictate resource distribution (capitalists, transactional interest groups, growth-industry, a technocratic civic class, etc.), then studying elections can bring insight to how those relationships are formed and institutionalized in the first place.

In looking at the advantages of incumbents and other candidates with establishment ties, we can see that the point of entry in the system of governance is a controlled one which advantages some candidates over others before the race begins. The goal of reform in both cities was to undermine some of the economic advantages candidates hold, but they failed to challenge the much more significant advantage of establishment ties. These ties outweighed self-funding and massive business contributions in the San Antonio mayoral race and the Seattle district 8 race respectively. Ultimately, the reforms failed to address the systemic power inherent to the political communities in both cities because that power is relational, networked. To better understand this power structure, we must look at the experts

within the political system. These experts often are consultants or campaign managers, but they are also legacy politicians and established activists. These are the gatekeepers to political success, and I discuss their work and how they function in the following chapter.

Chapter 8:

THE 2017 RUN-OFFS

"…establishment I guess means people who fund these kind of candidates and who have power in so far as resource allocation…if you are friendly to them, I consider that probably establishment" (SE Consultant 4).

Campaigns run on two resources: money and people. There are only a handful of ways to get either. One way is through self-funding, which can allow a campaign to hire canvassers to knock on doors (i.e. people). Another way is through individual calls and meetings with contributors. This takes enormous time on the part of the candidate, often for very little result. The third way is through coalition-building. By creating a coalition of influencers, endorsers, and funders, much of the political work of fundraising and voter contact is delegated outside the campaign. If there is a lot of organizational money to be had, the coalition will form a PAC with its own structure that supports a candidate in parallel to the official campaign. If there is little money but a lot of people, like a local union, they can turn out members to knock on doors and make phone calls to potential voters. The coalition you build makes the difference in how many people your message can reach. It is a top-down strategy that nearly every competitive candidate attempts to navigate. The right consultant can handle that navigation for the candidate. However, the work of consulting is more than the accumulation of these two resources. As I will show, influence is a resource unto itself that directly contributes to candidate viability, and money and people are often secondary resources to that influence which functions as coalition-forming and reputation-building. In other words, it is a relational resource accumulated through an existing network.

This chapter focuses on the coalitions and brokers of the 2017 general elections in San Antonio and Seattle. I demonstrate the particular relationships

required to produce viable candidates and compare that set of relationships directly with those who lost. I find that producing a viable candidate was far more locally dependent in San Antonio than Seattle, that most races fell into an establishment versus outsider pattern in both cities, and that Seattle's high level of consultant and organizational professionalism led to more consistent viability production because they could define a candidate as an establishment pick to coalesce organizational support. I am using the original definition of establishment, first coined by Henry Fairlie, "By the 'Establishment', I do not mean only the centres of official power—though they are certainly part of it—but rather the whole matrix of official and social relations within which power is exercised" (Fairlie, 1968: 174). While this definition is from 1968, it is still very relevant today. Put simply, an establishment candidate is one with access to the network of resources and influence that exists in an institutionalized way within a city. Accessing that network takes work. In Seattle, that work has been professionalized among consultants. In San Antonio, the work is less formal, less profitable, and less transparent, but it is just as integral to candidate viability.

THE POLITICAL WORK OF CONSULTING

Most researchers see the value of a consultant to a campaign primarily in fundraising. Indeed, the rise of consultants as professionals independent of political parties was during the campaign finance reforms of the 1970s which demanded campaign transparency. Consultants offered expertise in coordinating and filing campaign contributions and expenditures to whichever legal bodies were tasked with oversight. The consultant became a legitimating conduit for campaign spending and electioneering services (Sheingate, 2016). As individuals, reputations of political consultants increased with the application of social science techniques in the practice of vote getting. This offered a professionalized quality to the work of the consultant and allowed for a niche skillset of political work over which they held an increasing monopoly. As the consulting business grew they, "diversified their client base to include advocacy groups, labor unions, and corporations. Consultants also exploited low-cost technology and specialized in products and services that contributed most to their bottom line" (174).

While Sheingate and others talk about the political work of consultants, there is still little clarity on what this really means beyond vendor-like services of media spots and direct mail. Dennis W. Johnson offers a tiered system based on degrees of professionalism. At the top are the strategists which include general consultants, campaign managers, polling firms, media firms, and direct mail firms. Then come the specialists who include the research team, telemarketing firms, fund-raising firms, media buying firms, and speech writers. The lowest level are the vendors which include website designers, printing firms, voter file firms and campaign software firms (2000: 41). However, despite the efforts by Johnson and others to define the profession of consulting, there is still a significant lack of clarity. As Medvic states, "…consultants have been understudied because there are insufficient data with which to systematically analyze their activities; the concept of 'consulting' is unclear; and political scientists interested in elections prefer, for the most part, to focus on voters" (2000: 93). This is doubly true of municipal elections where virtually no information on the activity of political consultants exists despite the fact that the majority of consultants work outside of Washington, DC specializing in state or regional elections (Johnson, 2000: 47).

Stephen Medvic argues that the campaign consultants should be viewed as a resource unto themselves, similar to money. He describes the obstacles to candidate viability, "In order to purchase professional assistance, candidates need money; yet money flows more freely to those candidates who are deemed viable; and viability can most easily be established by building a professionally run campaign" (2000: 104). The circular logic of viability is reiterated by Sheingate who says "…candidates hired consultants to signal their viability to potential donors, thereby attracting the financial contributions needed to pay for the very services that only consultants could provide (and candidates believed were necessary to win)" (2016: 175). What is clear is that these scholars agree that political consultants and a professionalized campaign are critical to electoral success because consultants provide access to resources through reputation and relationships.

By taking the value of the network one step beyond the access to funding, this begins to make the logic of campaigns clear: the consultant is a resource not because they are a vendor of services but because they consolidate cultural capital within the political network. The consultant cannot guarantee a candidate's

success, rather they offer the candidate access to the network of capital within the political class of any given governmental unit. This is often thought of as coalition building among the networks of donors, activists and political professionals.

One might think that all of this comes down to kingmaking, or the idea that individuals with exceptional reputations among the voters and well-respected by those in the network endorse their chosen candidates and that the endorsement itself is the practical definition of "viable". In other words, a candidate is viable because certain individuals say it is so, not because of any intrinsic qualities of the candidate. However, I argue that this is more of an institutional role than that of individual leadership, and that candidate viability is fundamentally driven not by individual support but by these coalitions of political actors accessed primarily through individual brokers of political influence. Of course, those individuals vary based on the locality. As I outlined in previous chapters, the people with influence in Seattle and the structure of their network is very different from San Antonio. The politically influential people in Seattle often work at a state level as well, meet with one another regularly in semi-formal settings, and are highly professionalized. They include consultants as well as political directors of organizations. The politically influential people in San Antonio are lobbyists for major industries and professional associations or they have an electoral legacy. As brokers maintain relationships over time and develop a winning record, they are eventually included in the fold of these networks, becoming establishment consultants.

My findings demonstrate that the term 'consultant' should mean both professional political consultants with firms, associational memberships, and the like, as well as the lobbyists/legacy politicians who consolidate support among other influential individuals and organizations on behalf of a candidate. 'Consulting' is the political work which gathers the resource of influence. In this chapter, I describe how this work played out in four of the races in San Antonio and Seattle in 2017. To show this, the findings and analysis of this chapter is divided into two sections, 1) 'Consolidating Influence' which focuses on coalitions and 2) 'Comparing the Brokers'. Coalitions are co-constituted with a campaign, existing both before the campaign and cohering because of it. Campaigns serve an important function in each municipality because they reinforce coalition member ties which give structure to the local political community. While this may happen in policy or referendum work, those things are invariably issue-specific, which

limits the relevant coalition partners. An election campaign, by contrast, presents a broad opportunity for coalition members to deepen organizational and individual relationships to establish a network and define its power structure. This bi-annual campaigning on behalf of a candidate produces candidate viability, but it also empowers coalition members themselves toward a more professionalized structure and coherent policy agenda.

In the first section, I describe the coalitions candidates formed during the general elections. Many of them were the same as during the primary, but as I show, the eventual winners were the ones who successfully expanded their previous coalitions. In each race that went to a runoff, the two candidates drew lines of comparison initially between their biographies and policy positions, but the more important lines were between these coalitions. In San Antonio, six of the ten city council positions went to a general election runoff, and in Seattle, one of the two positions up in the 2017 cycle did. The mayoral races in both cities went to a runoff. I begin my description and analysis by comparing the city council district 8 race in Seattle to the district 1 race in San Antonio, where similarly contrasting coalitions and campaign styles emerged 2,000 miles apart with very different results. I then compare the two mayoral races in the two cities and find that when it comes to the top of the ballot, even with significant funds all around, the two cities really are very different in crucial ways primarily due to the political professionalism disparity I've discussed throughout this thesis. I felt it was important to focus on the comparable races between the two sites in this chapter to illuminate the generalizable findings of consulting as political work. However, I also offer detailed discussion of the rest of the races in San Antonio in Appendix B, and use these findings in my concluding analysis.

This leads to the second part of my findings section and the brokers. In this study of the 2017 elections, I find that the individuals doing the work of consolidating support in the two cities fell into three categories: highly professionalized consultants, political patrons or mentors, and campaign workers/vendors. While the third type existed in both cities, only the professionalized consultants made it to the run-off elections in Seattle. Contrastingly, San Antonio's consultants varied drastically between professional consulting firms to former elected officials to lobbyists to campaign workers with hired fundraisers, and the different types made it through to the run-offs. I consider

why this is and what it means for each city's political community. Lastly, I discuss the consequences of these local opportunity structures for candidates in each city, and consider what work is done to produce viable candidates. I will expand much more on this in the next and final chapter.

CONSOLIDATING INFLUENCE

Coalition Formation and Defining the Establishment

Political leaders tend to be risk-averse, which limits the ability of outsider candidates to grow their campaigns through coalition forming. The district 1 race in San Antonio and the district 8 race in Seattle both went to runoffs in 2017. They also both featured one candidate with strong ties to the local political elite including resource rich individuals and organizations, and one who was further left, identifying as a grassroots candidate. The grassroots candidates spent significantly more time shoring up organizational support, while the more establishment candidates could rely on the existing network to drive funds toward the campaign. This means that the outsider candidates had to do much of their own influence work rather than outsourcing it to brokers and establishment leaders. Despite these similarities in candidates and coalition types, the results in the two cities were very different due to the contingent ways influence flows in each city.

In San Antonio's district 1, the two candidates quickly put together their strategy for coalition growth. Incumbent City Councilmember Roberto Treviño was the business-friendly candidate with endorsements from sitting officials. He relied on his consultant along with his existing lists of donors to focus on fundraising. His opponent, Michael Montaño, had the support of Unite Here, the firefighters' association, Texas Organizing Project, various activist groups and Democratic Party groups. Both candidates spent much of the campaign "doing the rounds" at local neighborhood association meetings (SA Consultant, 2). However, due to the low voter turnout, this race was primarily about name recognition. That meant that Treviño's ability to raise funds from a diverse group including elected officials and business owners allowed him to reach far more voters than Montaño. Throughout the campaign, Treviño consistently had roughly double the amount of cash on hand that Montaño did.

While Treviño decided to focus on raising as much money as possible, Montaño focused on the other major campaign resource: people. Montaño's campaign was managed by Malcolm Phalen, a technology sector friend from his time in the Bay Area. He also had a field manager[19] with experience in San Antonio and Texas campaigns, Liz McLeod. They invested heavily in field work because they were up against an incumbent and felt the best strategy would be one-on-one conversations with voters and neighborhood association meetings. They got help from labor, "the postal workers showed up with like 30 dudes to blockwalk on a Saturday morning" (SA Campaign 2). They also were supported by MOVE San Antonio and the Texas Organizing Project (TOP), two organizations which supported local progressive candidates with both funds and members who would canvas voters. The candidate and his staff spent 4-5 hours a day knocking on doors every day of the campaign. Adding the organizational and labor numbers to that helped bring Montaño very close to overcoming his opponent's crushing fundraising numbers. "We took into account a conception of small town opinion-making and decision-making, even though, if you're just looking at demographic and size of city, I would never make those assumptions about San Antonio, but that kind of opinion-making was 100 percent at work" (SA Campaign 2). Montaño and the campaign were committed to this kind of grassroots approach even when there were no real roots there. One campaigner summed up the style:

> You just show up at every neighborhood association meeting and just call the roster and be like 'oh yeah, I noticed your councilman hasn't been here in four months.' So like, I don't think that's revolutionary. I think everybody can do that, but it was neighborhood associations and…we did a lot of like grasstops, we just won over grasstops one by one…I would count the endorsement of the former treasurer of a defunct neighborhood association and put it on a mailer with every endorsement that we got. That kind of like community validation. It was definitely astroturfing. We were creating the appearance of more grassroots and community infrastructure than San Antonio ever had and will ever have, but that was the value proposition, that was the coalition (SA Campaign 2).

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[19] Field managers are in charge of direct individual voter contact meaning calls and knocking on doors. They may also decide on which neighborhood level events to attend. Good field work in federal and statewide campaigns can account for roughly 2% of the vote results. At a city council district level, it can be much more.

The incumbent, Roberto Treviño campaigned more at the city level rather than compete directly with Montaño's hyper local approach, a tactic afforded to him by his establishment ties. He also was not able to win the endorsement of his predecessor, Diego Bernal, who was a beloved city councilmember that went on to the state legislature. "We were like 'Diego's staying out, but if he actually had a shred of respect for the current councilman, he would have endorsed him.'" (SA Campaign 2). Nonetheless, Treviño raised enough money to overcome the 'scrappy' campaign of his opponent with direct mail and an inoffensive record on the city council. Most consultants, other councilmembers, and the business community were unwilling to line up against an incumbent. He managed to raise funds from the business community and the city's donor class along with some support from other electeds. Ultimately, Treviño's business-establishment coalition won out, and Montaño's community-organizational coalition lost by just two percent, or 347 votes.

The race for district 8 in Seattle had a similar dynamic with an establishment candidate competing against a grassroots opponent. In Seattle, the district 8 race featured Teresa Mosqueda and Jon Grant. The business-backed candidate, Sara Nelson, had been defeated in the primary and the two remaining candidates maintained their coalitions from the first round of voting. Mosqueda had the labor unions on lock, and Grant had the support of community organizations and activist groups, essentially anyone left-leaning who was not a part of the Allies Table. Now it was the business community's turn to decide whether to support one of the two candidates or stay out of the race altogether. In the end, they decided to stay out of the race entirely. This was partially because both candidates were participating in the Democracy Voucher program, which limits the effect business leaders can have, and because neither candidate was particularly "pro-business". Instead, the chamber of commerce members focused on the mayoral race, which is where Amazon wanted its money going.

Despite both candidates utilizing the Vouchers to the fullest extent possible, there was still tremendous disparity between them in total funds raise. While the two candidates tied in Vouchers, there were two other categories of fundraising. Grant raised $30,468.82 in traditional contributions and Mosqueda more than doubled that with $64,291.76. Most of Mosqueda's individual contributions came from employees of labor unions and people in healthcare

administration, which demonstrates that she relied heavily on her network from her work both in the healthcare industry and as a labor lobbyist. Labor also funded the bulk of Mosqueda's independent expenditures with $76,551.33, which allowed her to follow up her ad buys from the primary with more direct mail and television advertising. Jon Grant was not able to make these kinds of purchases and was unable to gain name recognition. His support from representatives of the socialist groups and his history as a community leader was not enough to deter supporters of Mosqueda whose labor background gave most coalition members a sense of confidence. Had Sara Nelson been Grant's opponent, things might have been different. However, ultimately, Grant lost to Mosqueda 59.49% to 39.91%.

What these races show is that for a campaign to be successful, not only must the candidate be appealing to a particular coalition, but the opponent must be unappealing to that coalition as well. Mosqueda did not have the support of community activists, but she did not inspire them to act strongly on behalf of Grant. These two political professionals typified divisions within the left, with Mosqueda representing the Democratic establishment and Grant representing the socialist-populist left. It is no coincidence that the Teamsters backed Mosqueda while the Transit Riders Union backed Grant. In general, Mosqueda's support cames from organizations with state-level or higher membership, while Grant's came from organizations with exclusively local membership. Both were proudly not endorsed by the police union, which they both used as evidence that they were sufficiently to the left of center. Similarly in San Antonio, while Montaño was able to build a strong neighborhood-based following, establishment figures at the city level were unwilling to line up against an incumbent with an acceptable voting record.

These two races were similar in that all candidates were left-of-center politically, but the left divided between the establishment and the outsider organizations. The races show that establishment ties are powerful both because they mean direct access to funds and because they inspire confidence in a candidate that allows other people and organizations to spend resources on their behalf. In interviews, members of the political community in San Antonio said Montaño would not have run without the salary reform in that cycle, though he was planning to run eventually. His candidacy showed that even without establishment ties or money, a strong and enthusiastic outsider coalition can come very close to winning, like it did in neighboring district 7 with Ana Sandoval during the primary race (see

Chapter 7). In Seattle, Grant ran a very similar campaign to Montaño's, but came nowhere near winning. This is further evidence that Seattle's establishment is much more coherent and influential than San Antonio's. In the district 8 race, the democracy Voucher program did little to disrupt these divisions between a cohesive establishment and outsider community groups. Further evidence of this is in the negative case of the mayoral race, where a similar dynamic occurred between the two campaigns with the absence of the Voucher program.

The Mayoral Races

The mayoral contests in both cities featured highly professionalized campaigns with very different coalitions. Seattle's Jenny Durkan consolidated big money and establishment organizations while Cary Moon relied on self-funding and a social justice message centered on housing issues. At the same time, most establishment figures in San Antonio supported Ron Nirenberg, the challenger to the incumbent mayor, Ivy Taylor. Seattle was a case of a coherent and effective establishment while San Antonio was the opposite. In comparing the two, I find that in both races the candidate with more establishment ties won, but those ties translated into higher fundraising only in Seattle. This suggests that the resource of influence can, under some circumstances, be more important than the resource of money.

After an extremely crowded primary, many organizations and groups in Seattle found themselves without a candidate going into the general election. At the end of the primary election for mayor, Cary Moon and Jenny Durkan were victorious. This was not without controversy however. While Durkan had won comfortably with 28.7% of the vote, Moon edged out Nikkita Oliver 17.4% to 16.1%. There was a brief call among activist organizations that Moon should give up her place on the ticket to a woman of color, especially given the national politics of the moment. This would mean subverting the existing democratic system in favor of social justice-based representation. Moon refused and the rest of the Seattle activist community agreed with her decision organizationally. Jessyn Farrell and Bob Hasegawa came in fourth and fifth respectively, and with their losses, the labor endorsements were once again available.

Cary Moon's signature issue was housing, which made the business community's decision simple. She wanted more public housing and a tax on real-estate speculators. These positions meant that the business community would never get behind her campaign. She was clearly positioned as a community focused leftist who also viewed the technology sector as a threat to the most marginalized people in Seattle. Nonetheless, many groups felt stung by Oliver's loss and the lack of a candidate of color and chose not to participate in the general election. This furthers the argument that the grassroots/activist coalition is the least coherent of the three Seattle groups: business, the Allies Table/labor, and grassroots/community organizations. Without any formal affiliation, the groups function less as a coalition or network and more as a nebulous series. Candidates must go to groups one by one in order to receive support, which slows the campaign process.

Durkan's experience as a high-powered lawyer and centrist positioning on issues relative to Moon meant that business went all in for her as they did during the primary. The labor coalition was therefore in a difficult position, but they made their decision quickly. My interviewees told me that the Allies Table met more regularly than usual leading up to the election, and the Washington Labor Council endorsed Durkan just two weeks after the primary ended. This was both to hedge their support of a winner who would have power over city contracts and because they saw her as more predictable than Moon thanks to her political experience. She had Democratic Party bona fides as an Obama appointee and was also the clear fundraising favorite (SE Union, 9, 11, and 12). A representative of the county labor council said in a public statement about the endorsement, "I think that Seattleites, including our members, want business and labor to mix in this city in a way that's progressive, and we're defining progressive America right now in contrast to the horror that's happening all over our country" (Seattle Met, 2017). In one interview, a representative stressed that after the $15 minimum wage increase the previous year, labor needed to repair some relations with the business community and working with them in support of a candidate was a good way to do that (SE Union, 12). This shows that the elite political community in Seattle can sometimes use candidate support to reinforce and repair network ties, demonstrating the complexity of the systemic relationships.

By consolidating support from the Allies Table members, Durkan ensured her place as the establishment candidate despite not having incumbency to rely

upon. This translated into cash. Labor ended up contributing $152,438.68 to Durkan in independent expenditures. The Seattle Chamber of Commerce gave $525,000. However, the largest chunk of that came from Amazon, which gave the chamber's PAC $350,000 to pass to Durkan's independent expenditures committee. This was the largest contribution Amazon had ever made to a local candidate, and it was done in a time when Seattle residents' chief complaint was rising housing costs brought on by the tech sector. Various smaller PACs, individuals and law firms' contributions brought the total independent expenditures on Durkan's behalf to $763,476.00 in the general election. In contrast, Cary Moon's independent expenditure's totaled $27,500, all of it from individuals. Moon's only big endorsement came from The Stranger, the local newspaper. She gave her own campaign $293,351.75 after the primary although $207,361.75 was left after the general campaign ended to pay off campaign debts. Outside of her contributions to herself and independent expenditures, Moon raised $125,538.82 in traditional contributions, and Durkan raised $484,035.24 during the general election. In total, Durkan had $1,056,544 raised in the 2017 race plus $881,604 in independent expenditures. Moon had $571,524 raised overall with $27,500 in independent expenditures.

Even with this enormous fundraising imbalance, Cary Moon's message of housing justice garnered support. A member of Cary Moon's campaign described her as being "of the community" and said that "she has paid her dues" (SE Consultant, 4). This is the best explanation I can find for why she came so close to winning despite being overtaken so handily in endorsements and fundraising by Durkan. There is a well-documented anti-elite/establishment mood to political preference in the US and around the world that was perhaps at its most potent during these elections. Cary Moon demonstrated that perhaps if an outside-the-establishment candidate has strong enough roots, she can compete with both money and expertise. It also helped that she was a millionaire who could fund her own campaign, another sign to many that she was not beholden to the whims of coalition members and establishment interests.

Interestingly, had the third-place finisher, Nikkita Oliver bested Moon in the primary, Oliver would likely have had a better chance than Moon of winning the general election. Labor/Allies Table members made clear to me that it would have been a much harder decision on who to support given Oliver's popularity

among members. It is likely that labor would have split in their coalition, giving Oliver a better chance all other things being equal. Instead, the Allies Table which I described in previous chapters fully manifested as a coalition in the mayoral election by combining professionalized activist organizations, labor, and progressive business interests in favor of a single candidate. This combined with having contracted the largest and winningest consulting firm in the city, gave Durkan an incumbent-like advantage with the establishment. Ultimately, Durkan beat Moon 55.56% to 43.22%.

Meanwhile in San Antonio, Ron Nirenberg was challenging Mayor Ivy Taylor for her position in the runoff. Nirenberg and Taylor were atypical candidates for San Antonio in that they did not fit the historical race and geographic origins for their political affiliations. Normally, White candidates for mayor are more conservative and come from the upper three (8, 9, and 10) districts, while Latinx candidates come from the lower seven and skew more liberal. Nirenberg was a representative from the north side who was known primarily as an advocate for city parks and progressive infrastructure efforts. He was young and often compared to Julián Castro, the former mayor who went to serve in the Obama administration. In fact, Castro ended up using his national platform to endorse Nirenberg. Ivy Taylor was an Black woman from district 2 who was appointed to her seat as mayor when Castro left. She was against the LGBTQ+ protection ordinance as well as the streetcar funding, which drew conservatives into her coalition. Late in the campaign, she made national news for saying that poor people are poor because they are broken and do not have a relationship with God. Despite these more conservative beliefs, she was a registered Democrat, which caused some Republicans to be suspicious of her. Taylor had a consultant who worked throughout the state and did not live in San Antonio. He chose to focus on a direct mail campaign that painted Nirenberg as the establishment pick despite him being the challenger. Nirenberg, on the other hand, hired a local consultant (though with significant statewide and national experience), and they ran a mostly positive, progressive style campaign effort.

Taylor was far and away the better fundraiser in the race. Over the course of the campaign, Taylor raised nearly double what Nirenberg raised, eventually bringing in $750,000 to Nirenberg's $350,000. Almost half of Taylor's funds came from the real estate and development industry, where employees of each company

would max-out their contributions. This means that each employee would give the maximum amount allowed by law to the campaign, in this case $500. In contrast, real estate and development funds represented only 25% of Nirenberg's funds. Instead, Nirenberg received support from the Texas Organizing Project and most activist organizations along with various individual donations. With Taylor courting statewide conservatives, the entire left, from grassroots to establishment, went with Nirenberg.

The two candidates went after the third-place finisher's coalition very differently. Without Manuel Medina in the race, police and fire associations lined up behind Taylor who had passed a favorable contract with them during the previous legislative session. Nirenberg had voted against that contract. Consultants argued however that "police and fire aren't important gets anymore. Not like they were five or ten years ago" (SA Consultant 1). It did mean independent expenditures though, which helped Taylor significantly according to interviewees. The police association ultimately spent significant money on direct mail attacking Nirenberg.

Nirenberg was able to consolidate almost all of Medina's voters into supporting his campaign by targeting the lower seven districts and driving up turnout there. On election day, Nirenberg won with 54% of the vote. The north side typically commands a majority of the turnout even despite that in past years, only one or two of the districts would go to a runoff. In 2017, more than half had runoffs for city council, including all three north side districts. Nonetheless, far more voters stayed home than usual. In fact, far from the majority, the three north side districts represented only about 43% of the vote turnout.

Three political consultants told me that Taylor lost because she was an Black woman relying on White conservative support. That is not necessarily because of racism against her personally, but rather that race is often associated with particular political leanings. The typical signals of who the conservative candidate were not there for Republican voters on the north side to identify. This, coupled with the direct reaction to the presidential race the year before driving up turnout among left-leaning voters, was too much to overcome even with an enormous fundraising advantage, several of the right endorsements, and incumbency.

Unlike in Seattle, the electoral reform applied to the mayoral race in San Antonio. It is possible one of the candidates would not have run without the salary in place, but both candidates were already on the unpaid council, Taylor as mayor and Nirenberg as city councilmember. However, it should be noted that upon Taylor's loss, she tried to collect unemployment pay. She was denied since losing an elected position is not the same as losing a regular job. It's possible, therefore, that going several more years without a salary would not have been feasible for Taylor and she would not have run. That would make her passion for reforming city council compensation, which I described in Chapters 3 and 4, much more personal in its motivation.

In both mayoral races, the establishment had a clear favorite and that candidate eventually won. In Seattle, the establishment candidate was also backed by the business community, but in San Antonio, the opposite was the case. Despite Nirenberg being the favorite of legacy politicians like former mayors Castro and Hardberger, this did not translate into raising more money. Once again, we see evidence that the establishment in Seattle is far more cohesive than in San Antonio and they can translate that cohesion into resources for their candidate. On the other hand, the San Antonio mayoral race shows that establishment ties are a crucial resource unto themselves, without the translation of these ties into campaign funds, even against an incumbent. The ability to consolidate influence as a resource is perhaps more important than money. This demonstrates that relationships among the brokers in a political community are worthy of their own research beyond the outcomes of money and votes.

COMPARING THE BROKERS

In this section, I present my findings on the role of key brokers of influence and viability in the two cities. I find that while these brokers have many different titles, they are doing the same work of coalition building and imparting candidate viability through reputation. In the four races I feature in this chapter, brokers demonstrated consistent establishment influence that affirmed the pre-reform structures of the political systems in both cities: a highly professionalized organizational network in Seattle and an informal kingmaking network in San

Antonio. Effective brokers in both cities were able to consolidate influence and win on behalf of their candidates through their existing network ties.

Seattle differs from San Antonio in that it is home to several successful and professional consulting firms. In Seattle interviews, five people or their firms were mentioned by all interviewees as being consultants in Seattle: NWP (headed by Christian Sinderman), John Wyble, Jason Bennett, Moxie Media (headed by Lisa MacLean), and CN4 Partners (headed by Dean Nielson). CN4 did not participate in the 2017 elections. Mayoral candidate Cary Moon's consultant was Moxie Media, a firm led by Lisa MacLean which touts itself as being women-owned and run. Moon also had Jason Bennett doing her treasury work. Bennett had worked in the legislature and for senators before starting his consulting business 12 years prior to this race. He was a well-established consultant in Seattle who tended to work with candidates of color, women, and LGBT candidates, but not exclusively. Both Bennett and Moxie were known for shepherding women to success. However, in a race with two women, they were not able to carve out their typical candidate story effectively. Bennett understood that relationships upon launching a campaign were critical. He listed the important people in the city to have in your pocket before launch: Adam Glickman of SEIU, Jon Scholes of the Downtown Seattle Association (a group similar to a chamber of commerce) and sitting city council members. However, the competition, NWP, already had most of those people locked in for their opponent Jenny Durkan. NWP, Christian Sinderman's operation, also had a candidate in the district 8 general elections race.

The district 8 race was a match between two well-known and professional consultants in Seattle: John Wyble and Christian Sinderman. In the 2017 mayoral race, Wyble had once again consulted for former mayor Mike McGinn, but ended up losing in the primary. However, he was successful in the district 8 race with Jon Grant and was in the runoff against Teresa Mosqueda and Sinderman's consulting firm. Wyble tended to focus on people who he felt were ideologically in line with him and of-the-community. Interviewees described him as "good", "lucky", "a true believer", and "an outsider specialist" (SE Consultant 1,6; SE Labor 2,5,7). He had a physical office, which was standard among the five well-known Seattle consulting firms, but it meant that he was successful enough to maintain a space and have staff. Several interviewees explained that because Washington, and especially Seattle, has major elections every year of some kind, there is a

significant cottage industry of political consulting. This cannot be the only reason though because San Antonio also has elections every year, and no such cottage industry has developed to such a degree. In Seattle, access to donor lists is easy to get, and the products of campaigning like direct mail, websites and TV advertisements are often handled by media consultants or PR firms. Being a general consultant on a campaign, therefore, is not simply a series of vendor-like services (Sheingate, 2016; Grossman, 2009); It is a professional position that affords status to their clients. A general consultant in Seattle functions as a broker between a political community of organizations and individuals and a candidate. A well-reputed consultant will also have access to more experienced staff, have access to good real estate for campaign offices, and utilize sophisticated software for fundraising and voter targeting. Most importantly, having the right consultant tells the large organizations and high-level donors that this candidate is a safe bet. As long as they agree with you on the issues, you can be fairly certain that the candidate will win if they invest in her. This brings us to both Bennett and Wyble's competition in 2017, Christian Sinderman and NWP.

Sinderman had successfully ferried Jenny Durkan into the mayoral runoff. "There's maybe an ecosystem developing here that has John [Wyble] specializing in the more outsider candidates and Christian Sinderman the more establishment candidates…" (SE Consultant, 4). The tone for this division was set in the previous mayoral race when Sinderman and Wyble went head to head each representing the establishment pick and the community-left pick respectively. This bore out in the interviews and the 2017 races. NWP consistently worked with candidates who interviewees described as the establishment pick: Durkan, Mosqueda and González. They all also won their races giving NWP and Sinderman a clean sweep of the 2017 races in Seattle. Another consultant said about Sinderman, "He has a lot of good relationships with funders and the deep pockets here, and he's had a lot of success for a long time, so I think there is a perception out there that he is a very powerful consultant…You know, there's sort of a mythology I think around that…" (SE Consultant, 4). The result of the 2017 elections were certainly evidence for Sinderman's outsized influence.

Think about it: between the mayoral race and two city council races, there were 36 candidates on the final ballot, and the three winners all had the same consulting operation behind them. When I interviewed political actors in Seattle,

every single one of them said getting the right consultant was important because it demonstrates a seriousness in a candidate. Looking at the Democracy Voucher reform, it would seem as though candidates would no longer need a broker to the same degree. The Vouchers significantly limit the amount of money a candidate can raise, meaning expensive consultants would be less interested. It also, theoretically, limited the power of Allies Table because they couldn't make large donations. However, the success of Sinderman and NWP in races that featured the Vouchers as well as races which did not shows that the Voucher program did little to disrupt the professional power of Seattle consultants. In fact, because they had so much experience and so many connections, they were able to deploy volunteers and staff very early on in the race to collect Vouchers quickly and get their campaign apparatus up and running. If anything, the Vouchers gave an advantage to those candidates who could sign with experienced consultants as early as possible. The necessity of a consultant with deep relationships in Seattle did not change upon implementation of the Democracy Voucher program. However, in San Antonio, the role of consultants after reform was much less clear.

The main problem with studying consultants in San Antonio elections is that they do not look like the consultants outlined in literature about the profession (Sheingate, 2016; Medvic, 2003; Grossman, 2009; Dulio, 2000 and 2004; Thurber and Nelson, 2000). Instead, the most common name mentioned in interviews as a 'consultant' was Nelson Wolff, who since 2001, has been a county judge. County judges in Texas are members of the commissioners court which serves as the managers of the county, similar to a city council. Before that, Wolff was San Antonio's mayor. He was named, along with lobbyists as part of a "crew of White dudes" who have been influential in San Antonio politics. Other consultants tend to be professionally unsophisticated, working as consultants in one cycle and as a staff member the next year, or providing another kind of service the next election cycle:

> "I mean, it's San Antonio right? It was a slippery world. You're a consultant, you get hired as chief of staff. I was a consultant, I got hired as a policy person, I came back and I was a campaign manager like 6 months from then. So, like you wear a lot of hats. I would take meetings with someone who was like 'yeah, I'm working constituent services for this council person, but I'm gonna leave in a month and go back to my gig as like a field consultant or whatever'" (SA Campaign, 2).

This bore out in interview after interview to the point where twice I interviewed individuals whose roles had changed midway through the election cycle.

We can see in greater detail the work of 'consulting' as influence consolidation in the two San Antonio races I feature in this chapter. In the district 1 race, where Michael Montaño was challenging incumbent Roberto Treviño, 'consulting' was a fairly loose term. Montaño hired a friend from his time working in California's tech industry to run his campaign, Malcolm Phelan. This was Phelan's first time as a paid campaign staffer. They then brought in an experienced field consultant/organizer to manage direct voter contact. Montaño hired independent fundraisers as well to provide local donor lists. A few longtime, out of city consultants helped with messaging as a favor, "We had some like casual advisors like that. We had some really smart people who were on our side who were like 'alright you little upstarts. We respect that. You did doors. You have no money. You're putting in the work. We're gonna help you'" (SA Campaign, 2). Montaño was not significantly mentored by any legacy politicians in this race. This is even though Montaño had long-standing ties in San Antonio politics, having gone to high school with the Castro brothers, the co-founder of the Texas Organizing Project, and his fellow 2017 candidate, Ana Sandoval. None of the people giving advice or strategizing on the campaign fulfilled the typical academic definition of a consultant. Instead, the political work fell on the shoulders of the campaign itself. That's why they focused so heavily on neighborhood association meetings and doorknocking.

As for Treviño, he hired Mohammad Rasool, who transitioned from digital strategist to campaign manager to run his operation. Rasool's background was in marketing and communications and often worked with large non-political businesses in the city. In a way, this campaign was therefore a battle between two digital strategists trying out campaign management. This is reminiscent of literature on the history of political consultants. The transition from party operative to consultant affiliated but not directly working for the party happened when marketing and communications firms began selling their services to candidates in the in the mid 20th century after the power of propaganda became clear (Sheingate, 2016). After he won, Rasool became Treviño's chief of staff and continued to work as a digital consultant/vendor.

Treviño also had the support of the lobbyists and legacy politicians, like Nelson Wolff, making him the establishment candidate. While these individuals were not paid directly, they advised his campaign. This meant that Treviño was supported by local experts with influence, while Montaño only had state level assistance. Additionally, Treviño had the advantage of incumbency, which meant he had existing donor lists to draw from. This combined with hiring professional fundraisers with their own lists meant that he could raise money much more quickly than Montaño. Given the overwhelming advantage in fundraising and establishment relationships Treviño had, it's impressive that Montaño came so close to unseating him. Ultimately, this race was a direct match between the two campaign resources. Treviño had money and Montaño had people, and the closeness of the results is evidence that both are useful in producing viability, but the winner was the candidate with closer ties to city level political brokers of influence.

This race epitomized the unprofessional nature of consulting in San Antonio which stands in direct contrast to the consultants on Seattle's general elections, all of whom exclusively work for election and initiative campaigns. Nonetheless, it demonstrates that power is consolidated among a small group of political operatives who can provide access to donors, organizations, and help to tailor messaging in both cities. These two groups, high-level consultants in Seattle and establishment operatives in San Antonio, both fulfill the broker role of the consultant within their cities and both produce viable candidates through that brokerage with the difference being professionalism. As one San Antonio consultant said, "The endorsement doesn't really matter. It's their lists, their connections…ok, I guess it does 'matter', but only because it means access to other less visible players" (SA Consultant 1).

This difference between the two cities was much less pronounced in the mayoral race. In San Antonio, both candidates hired professional political consultants along with several other firms to advise them. Ron Nirenberg worked with Kelton Morgan and his firm Campaign Services Group (CSG). Morgan was based in San Antonio but worked nationwide with candidates at every level of government, mostly from the Republican Party, but not exclusively. When I asked interviewees about consultants with influence in San Antonio, they did not mention him. Instead, he was talked about within the context of direct mail consultants in

the city, "He's a big mail guy" (SA Consultant, 1). Morgan's reputation did not overwhelm interviewees in the way his opponent's did. Despite this, Morgan worked with other candidates in the 2017 San Antonio City Council elections, as well, so he was getting a lot of work in the city. Interestingly, Nirenberg referred to Morgan as his campaign manager, not consultant. Instead, Nirenberg hired several PR firms to do much of the marketing consulting work while Morgan handled the campaign.

There are local well-reputed political consultants in San Antonio, but neither candidate hired them as their chief strategists for the general election demonstrating that local consultants are not the primary brokers of influence and viability in the city. The two local consultants most mentioned by interviewees as being very good were Christian Archer and Christian Anderson (yes, it is a strange coincidence that the most well-reputed consultants in both cities are named Christian). Archer did not have a candidate in the race, but Anderson worked as the campaign manager/consultant for incumbent Ivy Taylor in the primary. For the general election, Taylor brought in Colin Strother to be the general consultant. Strother was based between San Antonio and Austin and worked statewide as a political consultant for Democrats. He also consulted for at least two other candidates in the 2017 San Antonio City Council elections. Taylor also worked with multiple professional fundraising and PR firms. Among them were RedPrint Strategies and Red Curve Solutions, two very conservative firms. Two interviewees said that Taylor was angling for a higher career in politics within the Republican Party despite being a registered Democrat, and these hiring practices implied that she was courting Republican donors statewide.

As we can see, the mayoral race did not rely on highly professionalized political consultants at the local level. Instead, they often called themselves campaign managers and candidates relied on dedicated fundraising firms as well as marketing firms for much of the voter contact strategy. This is in stark contrast to Seattle where candidates hired general consultants with offices, often with political consulting awards displayed near the entrance, and year-round staff. These consultants then hired campaign managers for the actual day-to-day running of the campaign. Instead, San Antonio's campaign work was done by individuals often working from home with a barebones team of short-term contractors while the brokers of influence worked behind the scenes and stayed off the payroll.

As we can see, San Antonio's lack of professionalized political consultants does not imply that 'consulting' isn't a part of running for office there. San Antonio candidates still need access to the relationships with donors and influential figures required for viability. Instead of through consultants, this access comes through political figures. In Taylor's case, she was supported by County Judge Nelson Wolff and her former mayoral opponent, former State Senator Leticia Van de Putte. Nirenberg had backing from Julián Castro and well-liked State Senator Diego Bernal. Former Mayor turned city lobbyist, Phil Hardberger also endorsed him, and interviewees presumed he shared his donor connections. Overall, based on endorsements and interviewees' interpretation of his network, Nirenberg had the clear establishment advantage despite raising just half of what Taylor did. It was surprising from an academic perspective that Taylor was the incumbent, but Nirenberg was the establishment candidate. That may not have been the message conveyed to voters however, as Nirenberg ran a campaign focused on change and progress, while making the case for Taylor being the establishment pick. In this case, establishment was therefore code for conservative and being part of a sclerotic class of powerful people. The race demonstrates that "establishment" is not simply known candidates with political experience, it is an influential network which produces viability. Therefore, it is important to distinguish between the establishment candidate in practice versus an establishment candidate in performance. While they were one and the same in Seattle and in the San Antonio district 1 race, they were separate in the San Antonio mayoral race.

Taken together, these four races show that brokers of influence and viability in Seattle are well-known, professionalized, and organizationally dependent while in San Antonio, they are legacy politicians and lobbyists, who have developed individual relationships. This matches perfectly with the organizational coalitions in Seattle and the informal hyper local groups in San Antonio which I discussed in the last chapter. In both cities, brokers engaged in the work of influence with these respective networks, thereby producing candidate viability.

RESOURCE CONSOLIDATION IN THE 2017 ELECTIONS

In this chapter, I discussed my findings of the general elections in 2017 in San Antonio and Seattle through the lens of resources. I agree with the work of many academics who see the political consultant as a resource unto themselves thanks to their sophisticated understanding of relevant election rules and campaign management as well as their capacity to broker between establishment figures within the community and candidates themselves. I found that it is not necessarily campaign experience that determines the degree to which an individual can be a resource, but rather their specific role within the network of political figures and professionals. Therefore, the consultant as resource theory should be expanded to include not only consultants, but other brokers as well. This political work might be best described as 'influence work' because the viability is directly tied to the network of political figures, donors, organizations, and community activists, and because it centers the concept squarely within the discussion of power. It also distinguishes it from other types of political work, like fundraising or canvassing, which are less consistent in producing viability. San Antonio's general elections demonstrate this much more clearly than Seattle's where the professionalization of this influence work has allowed it to translate much more directly into campaign contributions.

Taking the ten city council races in San Antonio together with the mayoral race, patterns emerged (see Appendix B). First and foremost, the most significant contributors to San Antonio campaigns were from the real estate and development industry. However, they preferred to take a quiet role of donating to campaigns, not running candidates themselves and not making newsworthy endorsements. The industry funded incumbents. If there was no incumbent, they would often fund the candidate with business ties or not take part at all. No other group commanded this level of power from a fundraising perspective with the exception of the police and firefighters' associations. However, candidates backed heavily by real estate and development lost in every race which was contested except for district 10, meaning that just because an industry has money does not mean it produces political viability.

As the only well-known unions in the city, police and fire could drive up visibility and run independent expenditures, which they did notably in two races: district 6 and the mayoral race. In district 6, both supported the winner, Greg Brockhouse, and in the mayoral race, fire supported Medina and later Taylor and police supported Taylor. Neither candidate won, giving credence to what political professionals told me, which was that fire and police are not particularly powerful endorsements.

In San Antonio, having the most funding or the most people canvassing did not guarantee victory. Instead, having brokers doing 'influence work' was what mattered. This is true despite the reform efforts to broaden and diversify representation in the city. That's not to say the reform didn't matter. The salary reform clearly had an impact. Several candidates said they would not have run otherwise, and it was the first time that so many candidates with professional campaigns ran for city council. The competition was strong with younger candidates and people with impressive resumes stepping up to challenge incumbents and candidates backed by traditional business coalitions. Challengers tended to lose, but they raised the level of professionalism in campaigning. San Antonio ended the 2017 election with the most leftist, most anti-development, and youngest city council in its history, perhaps getting closer in some ways to a more descriptive representation of the municipality. However, the influence resource still proved critical to success. The fact that 'influence' did not necessarily match with money is evidence of a looser, more cleaved establishment in San Antonio than what we see in Seattle, and coalitions in both cities demonstrated that.

When looked at collectively, the 2017 Seattle elections tell a consistent story. In each race, the candidate with the most political experience won. Each made it through a relatively crowded field in the primary and fended off a political outsider who engaged in populist rhetoric in the general election to emerge with a majority. All three winners of the 2017 Seattle races had the backing of labor and two also had the backing of business. When looked at over time, the support of labor in the district 8 and 9 races was determined way back in February, a full four months before the filing deadline and long before official endorsements are usually released. Political professionals from labor made clear that Mosqueda had been trained in-house to run for the district 8 seat, thereby denying any alternative candidates a chance. Similarly, Lorena González, whose race I discussed in the

previous chapter, had been instrumental on policy work during her first term, and everyone from the Allies Table I spoke with made clear from the outset that they favored her. Durkan was an exception in the primary, but her fundraising overwhelmed her opponents and labor's lack of cohesion meant that neither of their preferred candidates made it through. Most importantly, all three of these candidates signed on with NWP early in the campaigns and were able to tap into the firm's role as broker with sophisticated knowledge of the political community and election rules.

Unlike in San Antonio, more money matched consistently with winning. This is evidence of the cohesion of the establishment in Seattle driven by its professional organization-based network. That cohesion may be a major reason why political consulting is a professionalized industry there. It makes the broker role one that can sustain itself as a full-fledged industry (Grossman, 2009). To a degree, the Democracy Vouchers were meant to disrupt this by limiting the amount of money a campaign could spend, including on consultants. Altogether, the Vouchers represented 26% of donations to candidates in dollars and 45% of individual contributions. The Vouchers showed some potential to assist candidates who were less well-connected to existing political networks initially. However, the district 8 case showed that one well-funded candidate warrants a release from the program limitations and whatever leveling of the field the Vouchers provided can be gone in a matter of days. The inability to predict such an eventuality makes the campaigns which are less professionalized that much more difficult. A sophisticated campaign like Mosqueda's with deep ties to political organizations can capitalize on an opening immediately, while a less-establishment candidate relies on long-term community involvement with organizations that are far less coordinated and cannot react nearly as quickly. Ultimately, the campaign industry maintained its ability to influence voters, and the candidates who were elected after the Democracy Voucher reform looked very much like candidates who came before.

In the next chapter, I will discuss the reforms as a whole and their place within the political networks with a focus on candidate viability. I will also dive deeper into the concepts of the establishment and viability to paint a general picture of the political systems of campaigning in both cities. From there, I will discuss

avenues for future research and what other types of reforms might be available to activists seeking a more inclusive system of electing representatives.

Chapter 9:

STRUCTURES OF INFLUENCE

I began this thesis with a call to academics to focus on local elections. Given the nationalization of American politics, it is tempting to discount local races as just another subset of the ideological intractability that has beset federal and state elections over the last several decades. Local politics are also difficult to study. Data are less available, existing scholarly standards in variables are often too general or too specific for relevant comparison, and systems of elections vary widely from case to case. However, these are also the aspects that make local politics so important to research. The idiosyncrasies of each race, each district, and each set of rules and regulations mean that similar candidates can have vastly different results depending on the locality. In side-stepping the difficult and murky world of studying local elections, we miss out on crucial insights and fail to recognize the full breadth of political subjectivity and power in the United States.

A stronger emphasis on local elections is critical for two reasons. First, local governments are sites of decision-making around resource distribution that directly affects the material lives of nearly everyone. Therefore, we should strive to understand the barriers to entry into those decision-making arenas. For instance, in this thesis I discussed the case of the Mission Trails Mobile Home Community who were displaced upon a vote of the city council to expand a river adjacent park trail. The residents received a compensation of about $2,500 each even though moving a trailer can cost many times that. The park drove up housing values nearby which priced out and displaced more people while attracting others to the area. That was an example of material consequences for residents of the city on both

sides of the issue. It was hotly debated and could easily have had a different result had the city council makeup been different. Therefore, understanding not just who rules or how they rule but why particular people get into positions of authority in the first place could help future reformers to have a dramatic impact on people's lives.

The second reason we should bring more focus to local elections is because municipalities are the most frequent site of democratic experimentation. They are where reformers are asking what representation should look like and making changes to bring the system closer to those representative values. In this way, local elections can tell us more about ourselves and what our collective political values are than any other governing unit. One of my goals in this thesis was to fill the gaps in our knowledge of local elections through research that directly compared election reforms and candidate viability in Seattle and San Antonio. These were two very different cities that both undertook reforms with an eye towards widening participation, but they both ultimately addressed access in an individuated way that did not affect the networked structures of elite political power in either place.

I began at the point of government design and interpretation, through implementation, and followed the reforms into the campaigns and elections themselves. I asked the question: how do municipal electoral reforms affect structures of democratic influence and how do local political actors go about exerting that influence to determine candidate viability for electoral success? Viability is often applied retroactively when it comes to elections because it, of course, refers to an outcome: winning. However, because campaigning is a process, viability has to be produced over time leading up to election day. Therefore, when I use the term, I argue that producing viability is about convincing a network of influential people within a particular political community that a candidate is competent, qualified, and credible. It can be reflected in many ways like through contributions, endorsements, volunteers, invitations to debates and forums, and votes. However, each of these variables are ways to measure viability production without explaining the machinations behind it. Producing viability is the process whereby a particular status is socially conferred by people with power in electoral campaigns. Theoretically, the rules and regulations governing campaigns and campaign work might affect that process of viability production. Therefore, I chose to study electoral reforms to see whether this is case. By focusing on attempts to

disrupt existing political power structures, we can better understand their nature and the ways in which influence flows leading some candidates to viability while denying it to others.

My analysis of the two cases led me to the following answer to this research question. As it turns out, I need to answer the two components in reverse: Structures of democratic influence are contingent upon the city, with brokers of influence among the politically powerful having differing titles and roles within the local campaign industry. Some of that contingency is due to differences between the rules and regulations governing campaigns and elections and some of it is a result of cultural and demographic differences, including racial makeup, relative wealth and the ideological makeup of the region. However, despite being about as different as possible in all of these respects, the two cities I studied were similar in that they had an established network of political elites and a set of brokers within the city who gatekeep access to the network. Therefore, being appealing to the city's network/brokers is the critical point of access to electoral office. Candidates with relationships among this establishment and especially those with commitments from these brokers for support prior to the race were most likely to be electorally successful. Brokers are able to use their own and the candidates' relationships within the network to consolidate coalitions. The ones who can tap coalitions that exist cycle after cycle produce greater candidate viability than ones who must create new coalitions. I call this effort "influence work" and it can be done by consultants, legacy politicians, and campaign managers. The fully realized coalition of this type is the establishment, which can employ significant and varying resources in favor of candidates in several races over multiple election cycles. The electoral reforms I discussed in this study have little effect on coalitions and the role of brokers, whose sophisticated understanding of the political system and community grants them the ability to adapt and exploit reforms effectively with minimal disruption to the existing networked power structures.

In my interviews, I found that the story of candidate selection and the methods of determining candidate viability were very much determined by individuals in each city who could provide candidates with resources and who relied on one another for long-term influence. Ultimately, I found that empowerment through political participation and reforms which focus upon this issue do little to disrupt the existing political opportunity structures in each city. Some candidates can

circumvent these powerful structures through self-funding or by aligning with platform-driven organizations that have substantial membership at their disposal. I was able to offer two very different examples of how political power manifests in cities as well as how adaptable those agents of political power are in the face of reform. I also showed how those very reforms helped maintain the existing power structures in each city both because powerful individuals had sophisticated knowledge of the political culture and campaign rules and because politicians, commissioners, and other civic elites reinforced technocratic logic throughout the process of developing, administering, and implementing the reforms themselves.

The elite political networks expect a certain type of candidate: one who is well-educated, has some history of political experience, and can be trusted to help maintain the existing power structures. The last part is the most crucial, and it is most commonly generated through brokers who consolidate the network around a candidate. The brokers also signal to the network that the candidate is being given a sufficient degree of campaign expertise so that the support of network members won't go to waste. Without expertise, the network's technocratic logic of campaigning creates doubt among the members, and the reforms in Seattle and San Antonio did nothing to address the necessity of the brokers. The two reforms were attempts to widen participation and improve representation under the assumption that money was the arbiter of political success. However, they failed to have a significant impact on the existing power structures because influence is the more important campaign resource. Scholars should look to further categorize and better define the types of networks which determine candidate viability in varying cities so that public policy reformers might address the specific ways in which representation is inaccessible and consider how best to cultivate an engaged political community given the existing local political order.

While conducting this research and then doing my analysis, I was struck by just how inaccessible this information is to the average voter. In San Antonio, there is no documentation of who does consulting work for various campaigns. Even those who are put on the payroll have the record of it wiped clean after two years. In Seattle, the typical voter has no knowledge of the Allies Table or of the everyday activities of the city's multimillion dollar consulting industry. Most of the information, especially about the relationships between members of the elite political networks, is inaccessible and informal. The core industry and system

which determines the viability of a local candidate is inaccessible and relatively unremarked upon. These findings are a compelling reason why scholars should strive toward a process-oriented, qualitative approach to the study of campaigns and elections. By rooting the research in the relational, we can begin to pull back the curtain of audience democracy.

My research question placed my work in conversation with scholarship on community power, campaign professionalization, campaign finance and resource analysis, neo-institutionalism in urban governance, and theories of representation. While I drew from each of these areas of research, this study did not fit neatly into any one of them. Instead, each offered a critical component while leaving out direct comparisons for this research. Community power and urban governance research focuses on who governs without addressing campaigns and elections. Nevertheless, from this literature I derived tools for thinking about flows of power at the local level. The campaigns and elections literature focuses almost entirely on partisan national campaigns rather than local ones, but gives working definitions for political consultants, extended party networks, and theories of viability that proved useful in my study. Lastly, theories of democratic representation are limited because they focus on the most abstract elements of participation and representation with minimal ways to operationalize the concepts for case studies, but these theories also give context to the normative goals of elections and representation articulated by reform advocates.

I addressed these gaps in literature by presenting my findings and analysis in six substantive chapters. In these chapters, I concentrated on different spaces of political engagement. Chapters 3 and 4 focused on the lay commissions tasked with addressing the reforms in each city in different ways. Chapter 5 discussed the political communities in each city outside of an election cycle. Chapter 6 looked at the contributor databases managed by each city. Finally, in Chapters 7 and 8, I analyzed the political communities in each city, in the midst of their elections post-reform. By varying the spaces in which I conducted research, I was able to address the issue of political access and exclusion holistically.

REVISITING THE TAKEAWAYS

In "Chapter 3: The Value-Practice Contradiction", I outlined how both cities used lay commissions to determine the specifications of the electoral reforms. I began by discussing literature about power and institutions, which argued that governing institutions are "carriers of values" and that they have a crucial role in rules of inclusion. I then briefly outlined some of the history of depoliticizing reforms in the name of "good governance" to show how the reforms in this study are part of a long tradition of using institutional and lay commissions to change electoral structures in American cities. I then turned to the cases and the government bodies themselves.

In Seattle, the Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission was tasked with writing the specific rules and in implementing I-122, the Democracy Voucher program. This program was designed to limit the influence of individual donors and organizations in elections by offering candidates a public funding option for their campaigns. Reformers also sought to engage more Seattle residents who were not members of the "donor class" in the political process. Finally, it was believed that the reform would encourage candidates to meet people in person and spend their time interacting with a wider variety of voters instead of making calls to potential contributors. Over the course of two years, the commissioners met regularly in public meetings and privately to develop these rules. Later, they oversaw the management of the program, considered requests by candidates for special exemption, and later fined candidates and campaigns that did not follow the rules of the program. The meetings were during the workday in a conference room in a city government building, and while a few regulars attended, the rulemaking did not garner a wide audience of witnesses. An exception to this was the Sightline Institute, a left-leaning think tank/advocacy organization. The head of Sightline was the original drafter of the Democracy Voucher reform and the organization had a strong interest in insuring the original intent of the program was protected.

In San Antonio, the city council called for the creation of a charter reform commission (CRC) to address the concerns outlined in a petition asking for a referendum vote on major transportation spending allocation. Before the commission met, the councilmembers revoked the funding for a Streetcar project.

The role of the CRC was repurposed primarily to develop an amendment which would give elected officials salaries for the first time in the city's history. The CRC met several times and then presented their recommendations to the councilmembers. Members of the commission as well as city councilmembers emphasized the exclusionary nature of unpaid work as city government representatives. They argued that the work is a full-time job, and currently only those with substantial support or disposable income have the capacity to run for election. After a session of public debate, the city council voted to send Amendment 2 to a referendum vote. It passed, and upon the next election cycle, the mayor and councilmembers received salaries.

For my comparative analysis in the chapter, I looked at three values articulated by reformers and three contrasting practices of the commissioners or council members: accessibility/inaccessibility of meetings, inclusion/exclusion from agenda setting, and equality/inequality in speech. By limiting how, when, and where the general public could participate in election rulemaking, these lay commissions and the city council created layers of government which separate the electorate from the institutions representing their democratic interests. Most of the specifics of the reforms were fleshed out in meetings only accessible to certain people who were either serving in an official capacity or were known to those officials. I found that the more nuanced the rulemaking, the less accessible these commissions became. Both the commissioners in Seattle and city councilmembers in San Antonio expressed an explicit desire to not politicize the reform. In Seattle, commissioners refused to be explicit in defining the goals of their regulations, presumably in case a particular group might be targeted, and in San Antonio, the mayor said that the city charter should no longer be seen as a political document. These arenas limited who had the right to comment on the reforms and they also established an expectation, once codified, that the rules of elections are objective and apolitical. The opportunities for contestation were limited and values of participatory democracy were co-opted to justify depoliticizing practices. In presenting the work of these commissions and city council, I demonstrated that these practices of exclusion set the rules of the game and structured the election reforms.

In "Chapter 4: "The Technocrats", I went a step further and discussed exactly *who* was included and excluded from the reform process. I demonstrated that the

ideal good representation has severe limits when developed among government bodies comprised of only experts and people with existing connections to sitting elected officials. Just as the previous chapter showed that government practices failed to realize the reform values of access and participation, this chapter demonstrated that the people allowed to articulate participatory values in the first place are elite. In Seattle, the chief writer of the original reform was a head of a think tank and in San Antonio, the chairperson was a former university professor: both highly educated professionals who are not demographically representative of most people in their respective cities nor of the less-advantaged targets of these reforms. By assuming that unelected representatives selected for their professional status are more trustworthy in setting the terms of representation, we saw the irony of these inclusivity-minded reforms on full display. I outlined the criteria for who an expert is considered to be in the process of electoral reform: someone who is a professional in the knowledge economy, has a civic-oriented background connecting them to existing politicians and bureaucrats, and upholds the technocratic principles of expertise as a normative good that preserves institutional deference.

By analyzing specific interactions between commissioners, city councilmembers, and members of the public who came to advocate, I showed the systematic exclusion of people who did not fit within the state ideal of a 'good partner' (Davies, 2011) or who could not make the case that they 'speak for' (Skocpol, 2004) the unrepresented. I then compared scenes from the two cities to one another to develop a logic of technocracy that promotes the legitimating values of consensus, non-state partnerships, and institutional deference. These values limit who can have authority in crafting systems of representation, thereby standing in direct contrast to the expanded democracy values laid out by the experts themselves.

In Part 2, and the next chapter, "Chapter 5: Political Communities Prior to Reform", I used interviews and ethnographic data to attempt to define nature of the political communities in each city. In Seattle, union leaders along with some progressive business leaders and activist organizations with large-scale structures and paid professional staff make up the primary interest groups. At times this network splits, especially during primaries, but it tends to coalesce around a candidate for each of the general elections. Functionally, they are similar to

Deegan-Krause and Enyedi's description of structure, "The elements in Alexander Calder's kinetic sculptures, for example, offer a striking example of components that remain connected to one another even as the nature of their relationship shifts" (2010: 688). Importantly, despite these shifts, each element maintains the balance of the overall structure for the long term. This network represents the most influential and politically engaged members of three groups: business, labor and largescale activists organizations. The political staff members and executive directors of these groups have outsized influence in elections due to resource access. Political consultants in Seattle are also highly professionalized with the most successful having year-round offices and staff. Existing outside of the structure are the local community groups and organizations. Candidates supported primarily by these more leftist groups are "outsider" or "grassroots" candidates.

In San Antonio, there is no equivalent to Seattle's professional political network. Organizations, activists and professional associations either focus their work on state-level politics or do not coordinate to a significant degree. Instead, business leaders and wealthy individuals do most of the funding for campaigns, and candidates rely on volunteers and hired campaign staff to knock on doors. The lack of resources means that, depending upon the district, candidates frequently self-finance, and consultants will sometimes use this as a prerequisite before taking on a client. The ten districts are divided between the upper three and the lower seven with different strategies and expectations for each of the two categories: the upper three are more affluent and politically conservative (Kofler and Piedad, 2018). They also see much higher turnout than the rest of the city meaning more resources are needed to reach more voters. The lower seven are less affluent and the majority of the residents are people of color. The also tend to be more left-leaning, and candidates need less funding and rely more on door knocking to reach voters since turnout is very low. Political consultants in the city provide highly targeted voting lists as well as fundraising lists. If they are a full-time consultant, they tend to make their money in direct mail rather than strategic consulting.

This chapter not only laid out the political ecosystem of each city, but also crystallized who had the potential to be a member of 'the establishment' in each case. Based on interviews, in Seattle, an establishment candidate was a professional with ties to the 'Allies Table' and a left-of-center Democrat who was not too radical to alienate business interests entirely. In San Antonio, an

establishment candidate was a person with deep roots in the political community who could claim authenticity through legacy politicians. They were also often self-funded and usually growth-oriented to attract money from business and development sectors. For the next chapter, I looked to contributions lists to see if the claims interviewees made bore out in the financial disclosures.

In "Chapter 6: Fundraising Value and Transparency", which focused on money in the 2017 elections, I found that the coalitions described by interviewees were substantiated by campaign contribution data. In the district 8 race, labor and organizations spent significant funds to help Teresa Mosqueda, a labor lobbyist, with her election. In the mayoral race, the establishment coalesced around Jenny Durkan after a divisive primary. I found that in Seattle, professional networks were critical to candidate success, and that being an attorney afforded candidates a network which was practiced in giving to candidates. Others were slower to raise funds, but they also mostly began with their personal professional networks and worked outward from there. Only one candidate relied heavily on self-funding, Cary Moon, and she was able to make it to the run-off demonstrating that interviewees were perhaps mistaken that self-funding was too taboo for the Seattle electorate. Despite the statements by interviewees about the factional nature of Seattle politics, I did not find much evidence for coalition forming regarding traditional contributions beyond those of the professional networks of the candidates. This finding contrasts to those of scholarly work arguing that occupational coalitions form consistently over time in municipal elections (Adams, 2010). I also found that the Democracy Voucher reform further limited the information available to scholars about who gives to campaigns. Without any occupational or employment data in Seattle, coalitions and giving patterns will be increasingly difficult to identify. Lastly, one group in particular has been left out of scholarly work: retirees. I found that retirees were the largest group of traditional campaign contributors in Seattle. While I am sure that many of these individuals can be considered members of professional networks, such as attorneys and teachers, it is surprising that so little acknowledgement of their presence exists in the study of campaign finance.

In San Antonio, I found that coalition tracking using the contribution database is extremely difficult since occupational and employment data is not collected by the elections authorities in the city. Instead, by researching names, it was clear that

individuals from specific firms would give to a single candidate in a race. Those firms were generally in the real estate and development industry. However, while they did tend to support incumbents, they did not give exclusively to one candidate or another as a bloc, meaning they did not form a coalition. The one glaring exception to this was the real estate and development industry. It was also widely practiced in San Antonio to loan or give funds to one's own campaign. This was truer for the more affluent north side districts than the south, east or west side districts. In the north side districts, rather than becoming a race of who could raise funds from traditional contributors, it became one of who could give enough to their own campaigns. In San Antonio, the most significant indicator of success was early money. This could come from traditional fundraising or self-funding. This is in line with other scholarly work which argues that this is the case in national level campaigns, as well (Bonica, 2017). This did not mean that having the most money was the decisive factor in electoral success. In fact, that was only true about half the time, but the early money allowed candidates to hire consultants and staff early and helped them to contact voters as early as possible. This helped those candidates define the terms of the race quickly and establish name identification within the electorate.

In both cities, I found that running for election is not cheap. To mount a competitive campaign takes significant resources. Much of those funds go to staff and consultants, but also to direct mail and sometimes television advertisements. A candidate who wishes to forgo focusing on money early in the race is not taken seriously by the political elites and excluded from campaign venues. They are also limited in their ability to reach voters. Without leisure time to make calls and knock on doors or disposable funds to give to one's own campaign, establishing the campaign infrastructure to win election is almost impossible. Despite the fact that one of the stated goals of each reform was to include individuals of varying economic means in elected government, the campaign process itself continued to be an impediment to that end.

In "Chapter 7: Reform in the First Round", I took the findings on contributions from Chapter 6 and the descriptions of the political communities from Chapter 5 to study the reforms in San Antonio and Seattle in their very first round of elections: the 2017 primaries. I focused on the coalitions which formed around candidates. In doing so, I found that establishment ties manifested through funding

which produced candidate viability, and that funding alone without these ties was insufficient. This was demonstrated in the district 8 race in Seattle, where the third-place candidate received more contributions than the second-place finisher through business ties, and the mayoral race in San Antonio, where the third-place finisher self-funded more than the second-place finisher's total contributions. The fact that both third-place finishers attempted to circumvent establishment influence monetarily and failed, shows that campaign finance literature, which uses fundraising as an indicator of political support, risks being reductive.

In both cities, I showed that candidates with establishment ties were able to leverage the pre-emptive power of the coalition to limit oppositional support. This pre-emptive power exists before most candidates have declared their intent to run, and functions to limit access to representation and governance. Both reforms were intended to expand access to the electoral seats in question either by democratizing who funds campaigns or by removing the barrier of unpaid positions. However, because establishment ties predate the elections, these reforms have little effect on the results. Reforms which do not target this pre-campaign system of elite deliberation will have minimal impact on the type of people who, ultimately, get elected to office.

Finally, in "Chapter 8: The 2017 Run-off Elections", I discussed the work of the campaign industry during the runoff elections. I did this through resource analysis and a review of consulting work in both Seattle and San Antonio. I find that in both cities, the core of consulting is influence consolidation. By gatekeeping organizations and individuals with resources, brokers can maintain political power over time. They are also perfectly positioned within the network to take advantage of electoral reforms as an opportunity to further their influence. In both cities, these brokers fulfill the role of campaign expert with sophisticated knowledge of the local political structures and relationships with elites. To demonstrate how these brokers function within the network, I compared two races in San Antonio to the only two races in Seattle that went to a runoff.

Through this direct comparison, I found that in Seattle, local professionalized political consultants fulfilled the role of broker on all campaigns that made the runoff or won outright. The reputation of the consultant was critical to coalition building and a single firm ultimately dominated the 2017 elections. The fact that candidates contracted very early with these consultants showed that

they are a necessary component of candidate viability production in Seattle. They give credibility to candidates and confidence to members of the political elite in their resource allocation. In the wake of the reform, the consultants-as-experts used their sophisticated knowledge of the electoral system, voters, and donors to fully exploit the Democracy Voucher program. Therefore, ultimately, the reform amplified the advantage of establishment candidates thanks to the influence and expertise of highly reputed political consultants.

While in Seattle this role was professionalized in a consultant industry, in San Antonio, the brokers of influence were legacy politicians/lobbyists who helped gain support for candidates through private networks. Political consultants and campaign managers still brought expertise to campaigns, but that expertise was not coupled with the relationships necessary to produce candidate viability alone. Instead, political professionals handled the day-to-day of voter contact and messaging, while the brokers handled influence consolidation among the city's political elite. This is part of the reason why San Antonio is not home to a cottage industry of political consultants like Seattle. It is also why simply hiring an experienced consultant or self-funding is not enough to ensure electoral success there. Money as a resource proved far less useful in San Antonio than in Seattle, which showed that the network of influence is not the same as the network of campaign funders. In both cities, outsourcing the work of influence consolidation is critical to candidate viability and in the future, this influence should be studied as a resource in the same way money and people are in campaign literature on local elections.

CAMPAIGNS AND POWER

The 2017 elections in Seattle and San Antonio offer strong evidence for the biased pluralism model of American democracy, which states that organized interest groups exert influence through factions, but preference is given to business interests (Gilens, 2012). In Seattle, these groups split during the primary somewhat, but coalesced in the general election. We saw sophisticated organizations align with business interests in support of the winning candidates. Coalitions which supported the losing candidates were less sophisticated, less coherent and less formally structured. In San Antonio, candidates without any business support

struggled. Out-of-town groups like Our Revolution showed that a well-organized, sophisticated group can exert influence, but it takes a tremendous amount of resources which would be difficult to scale to an endogenous organization within the city. Additionally, candidates used indicators of cultural authenticity, which indicated community roots in the center and southern parts of the city as well as the anti-crime/police supporter in the Whiter and more affluent parts. Without a pluralist network, especially a professionalized one, business interests continue to be the most influential factor in elections. Hence, we see the bias in the pluralism.

The two cases in this study offer clear differences in their political systems, but something they had in common was that the hiring of a campaign consultant was seen as critical to success. Incumbents held consultants on retainer. Challengers then became dependent upon consultants to not only provide services, but also to signal viability to potential coalition members. Hiring a therefore became a necessity for viability. This is supportive of existing literature. As Sean Cain states:

> For a candidate with long odds of winning, a shot at victory would then depend on whether she could erase the perception in the political news media, among campaign contributors, party leaders, and activists that she was incapable of mounting a competitive race or, at the very least, destined to lose. Signing up with a political consultant might then hold the potential for signaling that the candidate was viable and could conceivably enhance the consultant's win-loss record or, at the very least, run a competitive race. Consultants contracting with such a candidate could, in turn, signal the candidate's viability, attracting resources and thereby improving the candidate's election prospects, to the financial and reputational benefit of the consultant (2011: 378).

While Cain and others who subscribe to the theory of elite-driven campaigning models mostly address national electoral races, Seattle and San Antonio's municipal elections were no different: Hiring a campaign consultant was a prerequisite to electoral success. In Seattle, those consultants signaled viability to the establishment organizations and led to coalescence around the candidate. In San Antonio, those consultants offered access to lists of donors, which were critical to early fundraising and eventual electoral success.

The evidence I presented throughout the substantive chapters revealed a theme of elitism and exclusion in the electoral process–even perpetuated by the

very reforms meant to break it down. This exclusion was consistent throughout the process of both reforms, but the specific characteristics of that exclusion were unique to each city. The Democracy Voucher program in Seattle was directed by a coalition of civic leaders and then administratively handled by a standing lay commission. Seattle's influential brokers of candidate viability, political consultants, were able to shore up establishment power using the functions of the reform. All of this happened relatively openly. By contrast, San Antonio's reform was conceived of by sitting politicians, who then called for a commission to handle its development. They then recruited individuals known to the officials who could claim a field of expertise to apply. Then, after passing the reform, political elites continued to gatekeep access to funds leading to little change in the process of campaigning.

A systematized culture of political exclusion, whether formalized like in Seattle through professionalism or maintained through old-fashioned and opaque kingmaking like in San Antonio, speaks directly to our understanding of 'good governance' and effective representation. The logic of technocracy carried throughout the reform process. Expertise as a pre-requisite for legitimacy was a constant presence, first through lay commissions and then through political brokers. Institutional changes which create pools of public funds, while incentivizing, do nothing to counter the accepted wisdom that campaigning should be an industry and that candidate viability is a product. In fact, the way the reforms are developed and administered reinforces nepotism within a network of sophisticated political elites.

The layers of access to these networks of power are proof positive of the primary concern sociologists have with political representation. Andrew J. Perrin and Katherine McFarland discuss the concept of the 'democratic ladder', which symbolizes the process by which private citizens' desires become public policy. They argue that the modern democratic ladder is "…made up of institutions that serve both to represent each end of the ladder to the other *and* to distort that representation" (2008: 1232). Mediated democracy is unavoidable. Even direct democracy assumes that the citizenries' opinions are fully formed and fixed. They call for an embrace of the distorting nature of the democratic ladder and consider ways to encourage "…creativity as the essence of democratic representation…" (1240). Reforms, especially ones created to increase access to representation, are

examples of creativity. However, these particular reforms did little to address the intractability of the campaign industry because they did nothing to establish an alternative system of deliberation. The reforms were individualistic rather than collective. Therefore, they were ineffective at fostering and nurturing a reflexive political community where citizens could engage in the process of selecting their representation through deliberative means in arenas of contestation.

Going forward, academics interested in these elite networks and brokers at all levels of government should devote considerable time to forming an alternative vision of electoral deliberation. The system we have today is that campaigning is an industry. Reforms focused on individuated engagement incentives don't do anything to challenge that industry's existence. It is my hope that by exposing the power structures of mediated representation in these two cities along with the technocratic logic endemic to the process of electoral reform, others might be moved to conceptualize alternative structures that are genuinely more inclusive of the electorate in deliberation, not just in their individual vote outcomes or money spent.

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APPENDIX A

Figures built from contribution records in the Seattle and San Antonio 2017 local elections

Figure 6.1 details the top twenty contributors by industry in Seattle, and the percent of total monetary contributions these employers represent in the amount given to candidates in 2017 excluding independent expenditures and Democracy Vouchers. It also excludes the amount given from other candidate PACs.

Figure 6.1

Industry	Employers	Contribution	Percent of Total
Architecture	LOSCHKY MARQUARDT & NESHOLM (LMN) ARCHITECTS	$6,020	0.23%
Consulting	CEIS BAYNE EAST (CBE) STRATEGIC	$6,200	0.23%
Government	STATE OF WASHINGTON	$59,142	5.44%
	CITY OF SEATTLE	$53,086	
	KING COUNTY	$19,425	
	FEDERAL GOVERNMENT	$13,279	
Healthcare	PROVIDENCE ST JOSEPH HEALTH	$11,110	0.42%
Legal	QUINN EMANUEL URQUHART & SULLIVAN, LLP	$32,800	2.63%
	PERKINS COIE LLP	$11,750	
	FOSTER PEPPER PLLC	$9,350	
	K&L GATES LLP	$9,127	
	PACIFICA LAW GROUP	$7,100	
Manufacturing	THE BOEING COMPANY	$8,360	0.31%
Nonprofit	BILL & MELINDA GATES FOUNDATION	$6,163	0.23%
Not Employed	NOT EMPLOYED	$452,272	16.97%
Real Estate & Development	VULCAN NORTHWEST	$14,130	1.17%
	WINDERMERE REAL ESTATE	$9,410	
	HILLIS CLARK MARTIN & PETERSON, P.S.	$7,680	
Technology	AMAZON.COM / AWS	$30,277	1.93%
	MICROSOFT	$21,119	
	Top 20 Contributors by Employer Total	**$787,800**	**29.56%**
	Total Monetary Contributions	*$2,665,043*	*100.00%*

Figure 6.2 Shows a comparison of money raised early, given to self, loaned to self, and total money raised in the San Antonio 2017 city council races. Those who won but raised less early money than their opponents from traditional contributions are in bold.

Figure 6.2
I=Incumbent; A=Advanced to runoff; W=Won the seat

District 1							
Candidate	Raised Early	Given to Self	Loaned to Self	Total Raised	I	A	W
Roberto C. Treviño	93,559.54	0	0	114,819.54	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lauro A. Bustamante	0	0	0	0	No	No	No
Robert Feria	4,715.10	60.00	0	4,715.10	No	No	No
Adrian Flores	2,000.00	0	0	2,000.00	No	No	No
Michael Montano	33,511.01	0	0	55,109.32	No	Yes	No
Ross A. Trevino	0	0	0	0	No	No	No
Total	133,785.65	60.00	0	176,643.96			
District 2							
Candidate	Raised Early	Given to Self	Loaned to Self	Total Raised	I	A	W
Alan E. Warrick, II	47,000.77	10,000.00	0	75,940.77	Yes	Yes	No
Dori L. Brown	0	0	0	0	No	No	No
William "Cruz" Shaw	**18,180.00**	**0**	**10,000.00**	**32,554.00**	**No**	**Yes**	**Yes**
Keith A. Toney	2,802.00	452.00	0	5,247.00	No	No	No
Gerald F. Scott-W*	0	0	0	0	No	No	No
Total	67,982.77	10,452.00	10,000.00	113,741.77			
District 3							
Candidate	Raised Early	Given to Self	Loaned to Self	Total Raised	I	A	W
Nathan Carrizales	4,066.27	0	0	4,366.27	No	NA	No
Rebecca J. Viagran	87,630.00	0	0	115,185.00	Yes	NA	Yes
Sylvia E. Don	0	0	0	0	No	NA	No
Ralph E. Gerber	0	0	0	0	No	NA	No
Ismael Reyes	1,352.00	0	0	1,250.00	No	NA	No
Jerome C. Durham	1,060.00	860.00	0	1,060.00	No	NA	No
Jessica O. Guerrero	4,918.47	0	0	8,058.72	No	NA	No
Total	99026.74	860.00	0	129,919.99			
District 4							
Candidate	Raised Early	Given to Self	Loaned to Self	Total Raised	I	A	W
Rey Guevara	0	0	0	0	No	NA	No
Rey Saldana	70,635.00	0	0	77,075.00	Yes	NA	Yes
Johnny Arredondo	229.98	0	0	200.00	No	NA	No
Total	70864.98	0	0	77,275			
District 5							
Candidate	Raised Early	Given to Self	Loaned to Self	Total Raised	I	A	W
Shirley Gonzales	37,715.00	0	0	67,011.00	Yes	NA	Yes
Cynthia T. Cavazos	250.00	250.00	0	250.00	No	NA	No
David C. Yanez	3,550.00	1,500.00	0	6,727.81	No	NA	No

Candidate	Raised Early	Given to Self	Loaned to Self	Total Raised	I	A	W
Richard Montez	1,361.60	0	0	1,361.60	No	NA	No
Daniel Lopez	300.00	300.00	0	300.00	No	NA	No
Dolores Sotomayor	0	0	0	0	No	NA	No
Total	43,176.60	2,050.00	0	75,650.41			

District 6

Candidate	Raised Early	Given to Self	Loaned to Self	Total Raised	I	A	W
Eric Gosset	2,525.00	0	0	2,525.00	NA	No	No
Ricardo "Rick" Trevino	10,989.97	500.00	0	15,734.07	NA	No	No
Melissa Cabello Havrda	23,127.96	500.00	0	41,916.10	NA	Yes	No
Joseph Cortez	39,149.71	0	0	48,749.71	NA	No	No
Ropal Anderson	0	0	0	0	NA	No	No
Greg Brockhouse	**9,435.00**	**0**	**20,410.00**	**30,795.00**	**NA**	**Yes**	**Yes**
Robert Castaneda	0	0	0	0	NA	No	No
Don Page	400.00	0	200.00	1,010.00	NA	No	No
Total	85,627.64	1,000.00	20,610.00	140,729.88			

District 7

Candidate	Raised Early	Given to Self	Loaned to Self	Total Raised	I	A	W
Michele Dalbis-Robledo	3,865.00	0	8,334.09	15,961.61	No	NA	No
Cris Medina	61,845.83	0	0	86,595.83	Yes	NA	No
Marco Reyes	0	0	0	0	No	NA	No
Ana Sandoval	**36,232.52**	**396.30**	**0**	**67,030.97**	**No**	**NA**	**Yes**
Alfredo Esparza Colunga	0	0	0	0	No	NA	No
Total	101,943.35	396.30	8,334.09	169,588.41			

District 8

Candidate	Raised Early	Given to Self	Loaned to Self	Total Raised	I	A	W
Shane A. Hinze	960.00	500.00	0	1,010.00	NA	No	No
Cynthia Brehm	650.00	0	30,988.39	31,985.19	NA	Yes	No
Manny Pelaez	41,010.00	0	8,000.00	64,809.99	NA	Yes	Yes
Pat Stout	13,788.01	450.00	8,000.00	28,223.01	NA	No	No
Tony Valdivia	2,615.01	500.00	1,500.00	8,165.01	NA	No	No
Paul Martin	140.00	0	2,010.00	4,835.00	NA	No	No
Total	59,163.02	1,450.00	50,498.39	139,028.20			

District 9

Candidate	Raised Early	Given to Self	Loaned to Self	Total Raised	I	A	W
John Courage	**11,835.09**	**70.10**	**14,000.00**	**34,830.09**	**NA**	**Yes**	**Yes**
David "Doc" Cohen	2,375.00	0	8,792.90	15,410.68	NA	No	No
Patty Gibbons	6,130.00	500.00	0	8,940.00	NA	No	No
Lynlie Wallace	59,655.00	0	0	68,330.00	NA	No	No
Matt Pina	890.00	0	0	1,215.00	NA	No	No
Marco Barros	50,926.00	500.00	14,000.00	85,593.00	NA	Yes	No
Patrick Von Dohlen	17,828.00	500.00	0	28,843.50	NA	No	No
Adam Goodman	0	0	0	0	NA	No	No
Bert T. Cecconi	0	0	0	0	NA	No	No
Sandra Martinez-Deyarmond	0	0	0	0	NA	No	No

	Raised Early	Given to Self	Loaned to Self	Total Raised	I	A	W
Total	149,639.09	1,570.10	36,792.90	243,162.27			
District 10							
Candidate	Raised Early	Given to Self	Loaned to Self	Total Raised	I	A	W
Andrew J. Padilla	0	0	0	0	NA	No	No
Clayton Perry	**11,260.00**	**0**	**50,000.00**	**64,410.00**	**NA**	**Yes**	**Yes**
Jonathan Delmer	34,185.00	0	10,000.00	60,540.00	NA	No	No
Ezra A. Johnson	14,256.82	4756.82	25,000.00	50,651.82	NA	Yes	No
Reinette King	11,591.70	0	0	15,484.25	NA	No	No
Lon Jett IV	400.00	0	0	400.00.00	NA	No	No
Diana Kenny	6,240.00	200.00	0	6,775.00	NA	No	No
John Alvarez	3,125.00	25.00	1,000.00	3,125.00	NA	No	No
Eric Robert Morse	0	0	0	0	NA	No	No
Celeste Montez-Tidwell	0	0	0	0	NA	No	No
Total	81,058.52	4,981.82	86,000.00	201,386.07			

*Withdrew by 17 March

Figure 6.3 is a list of the top candidates in the Seattle district 8 race, their occupation(s) and the top five occupations of their donor pools[20].

Figure 6.3

Hisam Goueli-Physician/Actor (129)	John Grant-Housing Advocate (647)	Teresa Mosqueda-Union Lobbyist (754)	Sara Nelson-Brewery Owner (360)	Shelley Seacrest-Attorney (24)	Charlene Strong-Activist/Advocate (272)
Physicians (28)*	Attorneys (34)	Attorneys (81)	Attorneys (29)	Attorneys (5)	Attorneys (12)
Artists (8)	Software Engineers (30)	Consultants (65)	Real Estate (24)	Business Owners (5)	Engineers (9)
Producers (5)	Engineers (16)	Executive Directors (40)	Business Owners (22)	Sales Managers (2)	Business Owners (7)
Consultants (4)	Social Workers (16)	Lobbyists (27)	Consultants (21)	Geographers (2)	Managers (6)
Actors (4)	Analysts (13)	Directors (23)	Executives (13)	N/A**	Marketing (6)

*Total number within occupational grouping
**Fewer than 2 within an occupation category

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[20] Donors sometimes listed industry in lieu of specific occupation, these are included. Excludes retired persons who are better reflected in the employer data than the occupation data.

Figure 6.4 is a list of the top candidates in the Seattle district 8 race, their occupation(s) and the top five occupations of their donor pools[21]. Shaded boxes indicate that the donor occupation matches the candidate's occupation.

Figure 6.4

Hisam Goueli	Jon Grant	Teresa Mosqueda	Sara Nelson	Sheley Secrest	Charlene Strong
Not Employed ($1,515.00)	Not Employed ($17,786.86)	Not Employed ($15,086)	Not Employed ($18,135)	B&B Strategies ($2,950)	Not Employed ($6,964)
State of Washington ($952)	State of Washington ($5,114.12)	State of Washington ($7,700)	Vulcan Northwest ($3,700)	Not Employed ($1,000)	Amazon.com /Whole Foods ($1,650)
Parker Services ($680)	Amazon.com /Whole Foods ($2,372)	City of Seattle ($4,925)	Foster Pepper PLLC/Foster Garvey PC ($1,750)		Emerald Harbor Marine, INC ($1,000)
Northwest Hospital ($650)	Federal Government ($1,447)	SEIU ($2,330)	Holland Partner Group ($1,750)		Markey Machine Co. ($750)
Federal Government ($500)	King County ($1,200)	King County ($2,150)	Shelter Holdings LLC ($1,500)		DBA Elizabeth G Lefebre BCBA ($600)
Kaiser Permanente/ Group Health ($500)	Google LLC ($1,080)	WA State Labor Council ($1,880)	Stanford, Munko and Co PLLC ($1,500)		Microsoft ($585)

Figure 6.5 is a list of the top candidates in the Seattle district 9 race, their occupation(s) and the top five occupations of their donor pools[22].

Figure 6.5

Lorena González (Incumbent/Attorney)	Pat Murakami (Business Owner/Neighborhood Activist)
Attorneys (372)	Business Owners (16)
Consultants (50)	Attorneys (8)
Executive Directors (28)	Software Engineers (5)
President (19)	Realtors (4)
Business Owner (16)	Administrators (3)
Total contributions with identified occupations: 876	Total contributions with identified occupations: 176

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[21] Donors sometimes listed industry in lieu of specific occupation, these are included. Excludes retired persons who are better reflected in the employer data than the occupation data.

[22] Donors sometimes listed industry in lieu of specific occupation, these are included. Excludes retired persons who are better reflected in the employer data than the occupation data.

Figure 6.6 is a list of the top candidates in the Seattle district 9 race, their occupation(s) and the top five occupations of their donor pools[23].

Figure 6.6

Lorena González	Pat Murakami
Not Employed ($7,865)	Not Employed ($7,580)
Schroeter Goldmark and Bender ($2,400)	Markey Machinery Co ($700)
City of Seattle ($2,190)	King County ($650)
State of Washington ($1,750)	Fremont Dock Co ($500)
King County ($1,325)	The Bath Store ($500)
Pacifica Law Group ($1,250)	N/A*
Vulcan Northwest ($1,250)	N/A

*Less than one contributor by employer

Figure 6.7 is a list of the top candidates in the Seattle mayoral race, their occupation(s) and the top five occupations of their donor pools[24]. Shaded boxes indicate that the donor occupation matches the candidate's occupation.

Figure 6.7*

Jenny Durkan	Jessyn Farrell	Greg Hamilton	Bob Hasegawa	Harvey Lever	Mike McGinn	Cary Moon	Nikkita Oliver
Attorneys (514)	Attorneys (24)	Business Owners (4)	State Senators (8)	Real Estate Investors (3)	Consultants (13)	Architects (55)	Attorneys (24)
Consultants (123)	Consultants (13)	Directors (2)	Attorneys (3)	Dentists (2)	Attorneys (9)	Consultants (42)	Self-employed (12)
Presidents (64)	Construction Mngmt (13)		Realtors (3)	Notary Publics (2)	Business Owners (9)	Attorneys (31)	Software Engineers (10)
Business Owner (60)	Software Engineers (9)		Business Owners (2)	Property Managers (2)	Producers (3)	Software Engineers (25)	Consultants (9)
CEOs (59)	Presidents (9)		CEOs (2)		Project Managers (3)	Writers (22)	Teachers (7)
			Consultants (2)		Sales (3)		
Total: 2618	Total: 308	Total: 30	Total: 46	Total: 34	Total: 94	Total: 1140	Total :269

*All totals are only for occupations listed

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[23] Donors sometimes listed industry in lieu of specific occupation, these are included. Excludes retired persons who are better reflected in the employer data than the occupation data.
[24] Donors sometimes listed industry in lieu of specific occupation, these are included. Excludes retired persons who are better reflected in the employer data than the occupation data.

Figure 6.8 shows the top five employers of donors by candidate for Seattle mayor. Shading indicates contribution totaled less than $500 and was not be ranked in the analysis.

Figure 6.8

Jenny Durkan	Jessyn Farrell	Greg Hamilton	Bob Hasegawa	Harvey Lever	Mike McGinn	Cary Moon	Nikkita Oliver
Not Employed $199,118.13	Not Employed $12,086.97	Not Employed $1,450	Not Employed $9,800	Not Employed $3,525	Not Employed $4,650	Not Employed $43,750	Not Employed $3,665
Quinn, …LLP $32,800	State of Washington $8,124	Active Investment Co	Windermere Real Estate $700	Markey Machinery Co $1,000	City of Seattle $1,350	State of Washington $5,981	City of Seattle $2,980
State of Washington $16,141.07	Amazon.com/Whole Foods $2,250	Firearms Law Group	State of Washington $600	Calfox Inc	First National Autos $1,000	Loschky Marquardt & Nesholm Architects $5,020	King County $2,925
City of Seattle $12,234.50	Providence St. Joseph Health $1,250	Medivators	CA James Const.	Calvary Chapel	The Mercury Group $1,000	Self-employed $4,165	State of Washington $2,815
Amazon.com/Whole Foods $10,835	Dorse and Company $1,000	Monnin Communications	Cris Marr Government Affairs	CISCO	Windermere Real Estate $1,000	Amazon.com/Whole Foods $3,235	Social Justice Fund Northwest $1,590
Perkins Coie LLP $9,000	NW Passage Consulting LLC $1,000	Oracle Corporation	Class A Properties	Electronic Marine Systems	Microsoft $850	City of Seattle $2,891	Amazon.com/Whole Foods $1,500
	Seattle Childrens Hospital $1,000	Pantel Tactical Rind Int'l	DBA Pixatel Systems $500	Eva Freeman			Google LLC $1,500
		Soldier Systems	Harborview Medical Center	Flow Int'l			
		Sourcecode Technology Holdings	J.P. Comerford and Co	John Lowrance			
		The Boeing Company	Kingston James LLC	Mak Mngmt LLC			
		Uptown Espresso	Pacific Realty First LLC	United Parcel Service			
		West Coast Armory	Seattle School District				
			Yamaguchi Family Dentistry				

APPENDIX B

Description and Comparison of Additional San Antonio 2017 Races

Comparisons within San Antonio's First Round Races

Incumbents with Serious Challengers: Districts 1 and 2

In district 1, architect, Robert Treviño was seeking re-election. Treviño entered the race with a massive amount of cash, nearly $100,000, nearly half of which came from real estate/development. His next biggest rival, Michael Montaño, had roughly a third of that, but he did have the endorsement of the firefighters. Four other candidates ran for the seat, but none managed to raise significant funds. Montaño was a relatively young lawyer from the technology sector who built a core group of mostly millennial-aged volunteers. Montaño also had the support of the Stonewall Democrats, an LGBTQ+ rights organization. District 1 probably has the largest population of LGBTQ+ identifying residents, so this endorsement carried weight with the constituents (SA Consultant 3, SA Activist 2). Nonetheless, developers in San Antonio felt they had a sure bet in Treviño and sided with him in the race (SA Consultant 3). When the election came, Treviño fell just 113 votes shy of winning outright, sending him and Montaño to a runoff. I discuss this race at greater length in Chapter 8.

District 2 was a very different race. Violent crime in the area had spiked the previous year, and locals were frustrated. That opened the door for someone to take on incumbent Alan Warrick. This district had previously been represented by the city's sitting mayor, Ivy Taylor. A close political adviser to Taylor from the Zoning Commission, William "Cruz" Shaw, challenged Warrick for the seat. Keith Toney, another former city councilmember from the district also challenged Warrick. Warrick had nearly $50,000 on hand to Shaw's $18,000 going into the

first round. Shaw claimed he was supported by local activists who were unsatisfied with Warrick's performance. Almost half of Warrick's funds came from real estate/development, a fact which may have hurt him in a district of mostly renters with large areas of public housing. Toney got the support of citywide groups, but did not have the funds to run a more targeted campaign. In the end, Warrick failed to clear the 50% threshold to win outright and headed to June in the runoff against Shaw.

These two races contrast one another in several ways. The first race featured a candidate supported by most political actors in the city along with the largest donor industry while his opponent drew support from neighborhood organizations and community activist groups as well as progressive statewide organizations. By contrast, district 2 was a race between three men all with extensive ties to city hall and establishment support. That meant that the district 1 race candidates were highly differentiated, while the district 2 candidates overlapped heavily in their coalitions. All five of these candidates had establishment ties, which is likely why neither of the incumbents managed to win outright in the first round.

Incumbents with Weak Challengers: Districts 4 and 5

In district 4, incumbent Rey Saldaña ran for his fourth term. He had two opponents, one who raised zero dollars and one who raised less than $500. Saldaña was well-liked, an incumbent, and had a lot of cash on hand: over $70,000, with 30% coming from real estate/developers. He won in the first round of the election with 78% of the vote.

In district 5, incumbent Shirley Gonzales ran against five challengers, none of whom received major endorsements or raised more than $5,000. She had nearly $40,000 going into the race, and in San Antonio's lowest income district, that was sufficient to scare off any serious challengers. Again, nearly 30% of her fundraising came from real estate/developers. She won in the first round with 66% of the vote.

These two races told a similar story of an incumbent with a large war chest who did not attract serious challengers. They are also two of the four districts with the lowest turnout. This could be due to the races being less competitive, but they

are also some of the lowest income and lowest educated population districts in the city. The result is that few candidates which consultants might deem "serious" and be willing to take on as clients have actually established residency in the districts. What became clear is that consultants only believe that Latinx members of the professional class can win these seats. The result is that these seats are almost always held by the same candidate for the full four terms allowed by law, and these candidates do not need to run robust campaigns in the district. Cycle after cycle, these constituents fail to make a habit of voting. For example turnout in district 4 was 4,409 individuals total, bringing it to 6.5%. With numbers that low, being an incumbent with a city-funded mailing budget yields a huge advantage (SA Consultant, 6). Since these were incumbents, the salary reform did not affect who could mount a serious campaign in this cycle in these two districts. District 3, which I detailed in Chapter 7, had a similar dynamic to districts 4 and 5.

Open Seats: Districts 6, 8, 9, and 10

The next four races I will discuss were open seats. They therefore attracted more candidates, which meant more funds overall. They also happened to include the three north side districts (8, 9, and 10), which are the predominantly White and wealthy districts in San Antonio. Traditionally, turnout in these districts can be as much as three or four times that of their south, east or west side counterparts. While one candidate can knock on several thousand doors in a cycle, they cannot knock on tens of thousands. As such, one would expect to see higher degrees of professionalism at least among consultants and staff in these races simply because the scale of the races are increased.

In district 6, four candidates raised significant funds. A high school history teacher, Rick Treviño's campaign was being run by Kelton Morgan who was also running a major mayoral campaign. Treviño was very active in Democratic Party work, and he was endorsed by the AFL-CIO Labor Council as well as Our Revolution. Joseph Cortez was the brother of Congressman Phil Cortez, a well-liked long-time local politician. Joseph was also an advisor to the outgoing City Councilmember Ray Lopez. Lopez was termed out and endorsed his friend, Cortez. As a result, developers funded more than half of his campaign. Melissa Cabello Havrda was also a political worker having served under former mayor Ed Garza.

She was a lawyer specializing in disability services, and she had deep ties to the San Antonio Chamber of Commerce, but not real estate. Lastly, Greg Brockhouse was a political consultant and lobbyist who ran several campaigns in town and represented both the police and firefighter unions at city hall. Both organizations endorsed him early in the race. Brockhouse moved to the district just a few months before the race, arguably for the express purpose of running for office there. Going into the first round, Treviño raised about $11,000, Cortez raised almost $40,000, Havrda raised nearly $25,000 and Brockhouse raised about $10,000. Brockhouse also loaned his campaign $20,000. If San Antonians were at all wary of insider politicians, it did not manifest in this race. With three candidates with significant ties to city hall, one might expect the only "outsider" to be successful. However, the results of the first round were Brockhouse with 36.09%, Havrda with 20.57%, Trevino with 20.24%, and Cortez with 17.83%. Havrda beat Treviño by just 28 votes and made it into the runoff. The sitting councilmember's anointed successor was fourth and lost out in the first round.

District 8 was the fastest growing district in San Antonio. Developers had been effectively pushing the city further and further out without significant coordination or infrastructure planning. There were three candidates who were able to raise significant funds, Cynthia Brehm, Manny Pelaez, and Pat Stout. Going into the first round, Brehm had raised less than $1,000 but loaned herself almost $31,000. Pelaez raised over $40,000 and loaned himself an additional $8,000, and Stout had raised almost $15,000 and also loaned herself an additional $8,000.

Consultants told me that in these north side districts, loaning to one's own campaign was standard practice. In fact, they often did not take on clients here who were unable to kick off the campaign with a five-figure loan. "It's just too many votes to get in too little time" (SA Consultant 4). Pat Stout was a business owner (Alamo Travel Group), and at one point she chaired the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. Her ties to business won her several endorsements, including from the city's only daily newspaper–the San Antonio Express-News. Manny Pelaez was a labor and housing attorney who worked for a time at the local Toyota car plant. He had a consulting team as well as staff, which he connected with during his time working with city councilmembers on various city boards and committees. Palaez was effectively already an insider in San Antonio politics, winning the endorsement of several legacy politicians, and came off as charismatic on the

campaign trail. Cynthia Brehm was a deeply conservative perennial candidate. She did have a staff member, but no consultants. When the first round of voting took place, Palaez and Brehm won out with roughly a third of the vote each. According to interviews, Brehm was successful in reaching the White conservatives of the district which were mostly concentrated outside Loop 410, while Palaez won the left-leaning votes as well as the people of color in this very diverse district mostly concentrated inside Loop 410. Developers did not have a favorite among the top three candidates. Brehm was too extreme and Palaez and Stout were not interested in further expansion without infrastructure investment. Due to the transient and growing nature of the district, neighborhood groups and activists were not a priority for the candidates who instead focused on mailers targeting likely voters.

District 9 was the wealthiest and most populated district. Here turnout would be the highest, and the most money would be spent. It also attracted the most candidates: ten. Of the ten, five raised more than $10,000. Political professionals told me that district 9 was the most conservative in the city, and that whoever represents it is usually White and very budget conscious. Still, anything can happen when turnout is low and name recognition is the most important factor (SA Staffer, 1 and Consultant, 2). The first-place finisher was Marco Barros, a tourism lobbyist who was the CEO of the San Antonio Area Tourism Council. He was also the establishment pick with legacy politician endorsements. He raised about $85,000 primarily through his chamber of commerce ties and also with a $14,000 loan to his campaign. He was expected to make it into the run-off election by most political actors in the city. The big question was who would face him in the run-off election.

Patrick Von Dohlen, who raised nearly $30,000, centered his candidacy morality, which did not win him the support of the establishment. He did however, sue one of his opponents. Lynlie Wallace was the Chief of Staff to Lyle Larson, a member of the Texas House of Representatives. She was also romantically involved with Congressman Will Hurd, a Republican. During the campaign, Congressman Hurd used his connections to throw fundraising parties for Wallace, and would also make surrogate calls on her behalf to donors. She was able to quickly raise nearly $70,000. Most people expected her to make to the runoff and possibly win the seat. However, Von Dohlen filed a complaint that she did not in fact live in San Antonio. Documents and interviews revealed that while she rented a home in the district, she never stayed there or kept any belongings there. This

sunk her campaign, and, with only two weeks left to go, the race for the second spot in the runoff became frenzied. The ultimately winner was John Courage, with 22% of the vote to Von Dohlen's 19%. Courage was undoubtedly the furthest left candidate in the race with a background working in community colleges. Courage only raised about $12,000 in the first round, meaning he did not garner support from the local business community. He loaned himself $14,000, and that was enough to win a place in the runoff since Wallace wasn't a resident and Van Dohlen was simply too ideological.

In district 10, there were also ten candidates vying for the seat. Four of the ten raised significant funds. Reinette King, an engineer and real estate investor with neighborhood association ties, and Jonathan Delmer, a local firearms dealer and neighborhood association leader who raised cash but had an arrest record, both lost in the first round of voting. The two who did make it typified the left-right ideological split in the district. Ezra Johnson was an attorney and a musician with limited community ties and little business support. Leading up to the first round of voting, Johnson lent his campaign $25,000 and raised an additional $15,000. This allowed him to drive up his name recognition and run a professionalized campaign. He also received the endorsement of the local newspaper, which may have been enough to carry him out of the crowded field. Johnson ultimately came in second with 22% of the vote. Lastly, the first-place finisher was Clayton Perry. When I first mentioned Perry in an interview, I also mentioned that he had loaned his campaign $50,000 right out of the gate. "I don't know who that is, but that is exactly the right amount of money to buy that seat" (SA Consultant 3). Perry, it turned out, was a retired Air Force Lieutenant Colonel who spent time in the private sector as a defense contractor. Business leaders liked Perry enough to add to his fundraising and he ultimately won the first round of voting with 22% of the vote, taking him to the runoff just 18 votes ahead of Johnson.

All these races featured more candidates than ever before. This is partly due to the fact that there were no incumbents, but previous open seat cycles saw roughly half the number of candidates as in 2017. Therefore, interviewees believed and empirical evidence suggests that the salary reform had a huge impact on the ability and desire of many people to run for office. The new candidates with campaign experience and establishment ties, but who hadn't run before, had a tremendous advantage. Looking at candidates like Marco Barros, Greg

Brockhouse, and Manny Palaez, all of whom leveraged their establishment relationships to build up their campaign quickly, were able to make the runoff in their respective races. Openly ideological candidates faired poorly in these districts where coalition building is less valuable than amassing cash to reach likely voters. Perhaps most telling is that candidates from the business community did not consistently translate those relationships into money or influence, meaning political network relationships and economic network relationships are not one and the same in San Antonio city elections.

Run-off Elections in San Antonio

Fighting for the Same Coalition in San Antonio

San Antonio's districts 2 and 6 in the run-off election featured candidates competing for the same coalitions. In district 2, the incumbent, Warrick, looked strong going into the runoff election, but video footage of him asleep on a park bench in the middle of the night surfaced, and he was forced to admit he had been drunk publicly. Despite the fact that both candidates had DWIs in their backgrounds, this very public shaming sunk his campaign in the culturally conservative and religious district 2. Activist groups lined up behind Shaw, and he won the run-off earning 56% of the vote with a total of 6,659 votes cast.

District 2 was the only raced marred by significant personal scandal, which makes it a difficult race to generalize. However, it was clear that Shaw's consultant counted on a visceral reaction to the park bench incident. "There's a feeling in the black community that only good, upstanding folks can represent you. Otherwise, it taints the whole community" (SA Activist, 1). As with the other lower seven districts, the district 2 race was relatively siloed to the very local community. This meant that relationships, not signaling to national issues, were critical to winning votes. In interviews, political actors consistently talked about the candidates' ties to the community and their personal characters and did not focus on the ideological issues of the day.

District 6 also featured candidates competing for the same type of support, but with a key difference: they divided themselves geographically. Greg

Brockhouse and Melissa Cabello Havrda were in the runoff. The police and firefighter associations went all in for Brockhouse with mailers and yard signs because he had been their in-house consultant/lobbyist. Additionally, Brockhouse's flexibility as a political consultant/lobbyist allowed him to canvass voters daily. Indeed, I called him several times during the campaign, and he was always "block-walking". Havrda did not have the same flexibility to dedicate that kind of time. She did however receive the endorsement of Chamber of Commerce President Ray Lopez, and she used her ties to the chamber of commerce to get the support of local business leaders. Notably the chamber itself does not endorse candidates. Instead, they must fill out a questionnaire, and the answers are then distributed to members. Brockhouse did not bother to do this, assuming his opponent's network was a given.

Despite her ties, Havrda was not explicitly the business-backed candidate. Brockhouse had led the fight against the streetcar plan downtown, and was vocally anti-business taxes in the city. Of all the major candidates running in San Antonio, Brockhouse was probably the most conservative in the lower seven districts. Three interviewees referred to the two candidates as the "inside the loop" candidate and the "outside the loop" candidate referring to Havrda and Brockhouse respectively. (SA Activists 2 and 4, SA Consultant 3). Both were business-friendly, but Havrda focused on rehabilitation and infrastructure projects in mostly Latinx neighborhoods inside Loop 410, while Brockhouse appealed to developers and planners in the more suburban neighborhoods, and the fundraising bore this out. In the June runoff, Brockhouse beat Havrda 52% to 48%, which amounted to 435 votes. The low turnout meant that a strong canvassing effort could make a significant difference, and Brockhouse found success in that. Additionally, precincts outside the Loop had a much higher rate of voting than inside, which heavily advantaged Brockhouse. Lastly, Brockhouse's experience as a political consultant meant that he did not have to pay a consulting firm, which is often one of the biggest campaign expenses, meaning he had more money to spend on voter contact, and, crucially, he had his own donor lists.

These two races would never have played out this way in Seattle, where business tends to form a coalition in support of a single candidate per race. Additionally, labor unions there would have likely chosen a candidate to support in each race giving them an insurmountable advantage in funding. Each of these

candidates tried to exploit very specific and demographic idiosyncrasies of the city and the district. While these tactics cannot be generalized, they can be repeated, and none of the political actors I interviewed were surprised by the candidate's tactics, targeting or the results of the elections. Nonetheless, several people told me that if it had not been for the salary reform, these people would not have run, except for the incumbent, Warrick. Additionally, all four of these candidates were well-known within the political community and had built relationships over many years with major funders, organizations, and legacy politicians. Therefore, like in the first round of elections, we see that while the political opportunity structures did not change with the reform, the people who ran and were successful did change.

San Antonio's Upper Three Districts

In San Antonio's three wealthiest districts, a similar pattern of self-funded candidates appealing to national politics played out in the 2017 cycle. In a way, each was a careful dance to make the race about cultural issues, while eschewing the toxicity of national partisan politics. In district 8, this was an easy path. With Pat Stout out of the race, the political community and organizations lined up behind Manny Pelaez. Cynthia Brehm's outspoken conservatism was seen as toxic, not because it did not match the voters, but because traditional left-right politics were seen by most as out of place in San Antonio. That meant that Paleaz had roughly double the funding of Brehm. However, Brehm's background in marketing allowed her to maintain a robust campaign. She also received endorsements from several local religious organizations–something that did not come up in other races. Ultimately, Palaez, with nearly every legacy politician in the city behind him, won the race by 55% to Brehm's 45%.

The mirror image of this campaign and results played out next door in district 9, where the month long run-off election period saw Marco Barros win most of the support of business, organizations, and media. Political professionals were in agreement that he would be the clear winner. John Courage was only able to raise about $10,000 more in the run-off and continued to rely heavily on signage. Yet, on election day, Courage beat Barros 53% to 47%. This was the most baffling race. According to two political consultants, the voters chose their candidate based upon their names and race identification. District 9 has always had a White

representative, and it was assumed by voters that the candidate with the White sounding name would be more conservative of the two. Follow up research revealed that Courage's campaign was helped by Texas Organizing Project, a left-leaning political organization. They targeted Courage's race, and dispatched their members to knock on doors on Courage's behalf daily. Because of this, I am hesitant to believe this argument that the main reason Courage won was due to race bias among the electorate. I think it is more likely that this was the race most affected by the mayoral race up-ticket diminishing White conservative turnout generally, and by the support of large scale progressive groups organizing on Courage's behalf. It also helped that he had bright red signs, so many voters who were new to the district or weren't paying much attention probably assumed he was a Republican. This was a favorite theory of his campaign staff.

Lastly, in district 10, Ezra Johnson ran a campaign centered around livability and got the endorsements of transportation and housing groups. Perry focused on crime and got the endorsements of the police and firefighters. However, political professionals told me that the race was really about trying to prove partisan identity without being explicit. The goal in this heavily divided district would be to signal to voters that Johnson was a Democrat and that Perry was a Republican. Vying for a district experiencing some of the highest crime rates in the city also meant that Perry's support from police was a significant advantage, unlike in other races. Ultimately, Perry paired well with a district on crime issues and won 53% to 47%.

These races were all very expensive and felt truly partisan to San Antonio's political community. It is telling that when there is a lot of money to spend, politics quickly become more nationalized. These districts are also home to the neighborhoods with the most new people to San Antonio, which may mean the voters there are not as tuned in to city politics as voters in the lower seven. These districts had something else in common, political consultants told me that the salary reform probably did not significantly affect who ran. This is supported by the fact that many of the candidates had run in previous cycles before the reform took place. Additionally, the fact that several candidates were able to contribute tens of thousands of dollars to their own campaigns meant that they had another source of income. These three races demonstrate that in wealthier neighborhoods, the incentive of salary is not sufficient to change who runs.

The upper three districts are also noteworthy for the lack of district-level coalition-building. Most candidates self-funded and relied on signs and direct mail. Even John Courage, who didn't self-fund very much and came closest to forming an actual coalition of organizations to knock on doors, drew support primarily from state level organizations and funders. The focus on nationalized politics in these races makes perfect sense when we consider that these are the three wealthiest districts as well as the three fastest growing. Many of the voters were new to the city and unaware of local issues. Additionally, these are not districts that rely heavily on city services. Few residents use public transportation, policing is less of an issue because there is less crime and many people live in private communities with hired policing, and social services are less needed due to high SES. In other words, voters there had the luxury of focusing on ideological and nationalized political concerns, and candidates played to that. The consequence of this focus on ideology is that the candidates did not need to develop local coalitions and candidate viability was more about the basic resources of money and people than about relationships and having an established consultant.