

In the first chapter I analyse whether electing more women to municipal councils can affect female political candidacy in the future. I use cases of close elections in Czech municipalities and a regression discontinuity design (RDD). I find that fewer female candidates run in elections following the marginal election of an additional woman in the prior electoral cycle. The effect is stronger in those municipalities where the marginal female candidate joined two or more other female candidates in the council, indicating that sufficient representation, as viewed by the politicians or the community, was a likely mechanism behind the observed effect.

In the second chapter I question whether personal characteristics of local politicians such as gender, education and occupation influence municipal budget allocation. I find no evidence that any of these characteristics matter for budget allocation, deficit or debt. These findings hold even in the smallest municipalities, where the influence of every single council member on council decisions should be larger.

In the final chapter I analyze how a temporary increase in council responsibilities, budget and interaction with the community in a municipality can affect the candidacy of local independent politicians. I take the flooding in the Czech Republic in 2002 as a trigger for the above mentioned temporary changes in council governance. I find that in the municipalities that were more damaged than others, one electoral cycle after the disaster the local independent candidates were more likely to submit their own slates instead of running on nation-wide or other parties' slates. A plausible reason behind the change is the empowerment of independent candidates and a better bond with the community.