

## Abstract

In the first chapter, we study the role of political parties in the selection of candidates in Czech municipal elections. Using over 20,000 electoral slates, we document that political parties rank candidates on the slates according to their valence and intra-party value. Valence, measured by education level, captures the public value of the candidates, while intra-party value, measured by political donations and membership, represents the value of the candidate to the party. The patterns we observe are consistent with market mechanisms between candidates and party leaders where the party leaders benefit from the valence and intra-party value of candidates and offer slate positions (i.e. the probability of winning a mandate) in exchange. We show that candidates with high valence and those who possess more intra-party value are placed in better ranked positions, despite the fact that candidates with more intra-party value, conditional on observables, tend to receive relatively fewer votes than candidates with low intra-party value. We also show that as a party expects to hold more council seats, the share of their candidates with higher intra-party value increases.

In the second chapter, we study the implications of a structure of the criminal justice system on sentencing decisions. To limit sentencing disparities, offenses are typically divided into subsections with specific sentencing ranges. The classification into corresponding subsections often depends on exceeding a given quantity threshold, such as drug amount. We study the consequences of these quantity thresholds on sentencing decisions and argue that the threshold effect can be decomposed into two opposing mechanisms: the severity mechanism and the reference one. An experiment with Czech prosecutors shows that thresholds cause an enormous increase in harshness of sentencing, leading to sentencing disparities. We further introduce empirical measures of (in)justice and quantify the consequences of quantity thresholds on the probability of imposing a just sentence.

In the third chapter, I explore consequences of publishing inconvenient information about the performance of public institutions. To understand how citizens would respond to such information, I conducted a survey experiment in which respondents were informed about sentencing disparity in the Czech Republic caused by different practices of imposing sentences among judges, i.e. information that likely questions the competence of the criminal justice system to deliver on its responsibility. The results suggest that such information does not lead to distrust and avoidance of the formal judicial system. Instead, the treated respondents became more likely to sign a petition that invites politicians to address the underlying issue, and respondents found fairness of the judicial system as a more important policy issue. I found sizeable heterogeneity in the treatment effect. The increase in the willingness to sign a petition was driven by mothers, who are arguably more sensitive to the particular treatment information in the presented case of a failure to pay alimony.