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Political training as a pathway to power:
the impact of participation in student union councils on candidate emergence

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Political training as a pathway to power: the impact of participation in student union councils on candidate emergence[a]

by[b]

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Abstract

We test the hypothesis that political training (experiences of debates, negotiations, coalition-building, etc.) in voluntary associations increases the probability of becoming a candidate in public elections. We apply a regression discontinuity design, comparing bare winners and bare losers in student union (SU) elections, to data on 5,000 SU candidates at Swedish universities (1982–2005). This data is linked to information on all candidates in Swedish public elections (1991–2010). As hypothesized, students who were elected to the SU council, and thereby received political training, were 34 percent (6 percentage points) more likely to run for public office than SU council candidates who did not win a seat. The analysis contributes to political recruitment literature by identifying arenas outside of representative democratic institutions that facilitate the step into election processes. It also provides evidence to an increasingly contested issue within political participation research by showing that activities in associations increase political involvement.

Keywords: Political training, political recruitment, political participation, public elections, associations, regression discontinuity
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1 Introduction

Within a polity only a few will ever run for political office. A key challenge within political recruitment literature has therefore been to better understand which types of individual characteristics and experiences are required to become a candidate. Commonly, political ambition and the factors accounting for variation in ambition have been the focus (e.g., Lasswell 1948; Schlesinger 1966; Fox and Lawless 2005; Fulton et al. 2006).[1] However, not all individuals who have the desire to acquire political power end up becoming candidates. Therefore, this article addresses the question as to why some individuals, within a pool of already politically engaged and ambitious citizens, run for office and others do not. Despite the extensive focus on candidate emergence, knowledge is relatively scarce about the personal experiences that trigger individuals to take the step into representative politics (see however Lawless 2012; Moncrief et al. 2001). Here, we pay attention to one change in circumstances at the individual level that may increase the likelihood that a citizen becomes a candidate in a public election: the experience of receiving political training.

The process of becoming an active politician is likely to resemble the initial stages of a professional, artistic or athletic career: in all cases training may provide the skills, motivations and networks that are needed to pursue the desired career. In the case of a political career, these assets may be gained through political training, that is through activities in an environment without formal ties to electoral politics in which individuals "grow acquainted with political and party life" (Hooghe et al. 2004, 196).[2] Simply speaking, this includes activities such as initiating proposals, debating issues, building coalitions, negotiating agreements, compromise, crafting budgets, etc.

Political science literature has focused on the role of voluntary associations in training new political leaders (e.g., Diamond 1994; Paxton 2002; Warren 2001). Often assumed as a long-term byproduct, a democratic civil society is suggested to give individuals the knowledge, self-confidence and networks needed to qualify them well for service in government and party politics (Diamond 1994). However, the causal

[1] Political ambition is usually referred to as having the desire to acquire and hold political power through electoral means (Lawless 2012).

[2] How we define political training is in line with how the concept has been portrayed in previous research. However, there is no established terminology, although several studies have depicted similar phenomena. For instance: Hooghe et al. (2004) talk about youth organizations as "learning schools" (p. 196); Paxton (2002) suggests that civil associations are "training grounds for new political leaders" (p. 254); and Diamond (1994) uses the words "training new political leaders" (p. 9) as a role of associations.

effect of political training within civil organizations[3] on political career patterns has rarely been tested empirically for at least three reasons: Firstly, because of data limitations, analyses of political recruitment commonly focus exclusively on already elected representatives, of which a large number have been trained in civil organizations (e.g., Hooghe et al. 2004). However, by excluding individuals who do not launch a political career, these studies cannot show that experiences of political training really have an impact. Alternatively, analyses are based on survey data (e.g., Lawless 2012) that tend to include response biases and over reporting. Secondly, research on the role of associations in fostering political participation has generally not examined the impact on running for office. Instead, it focuses on outcomes such as party membership, voting and protests (e.g., Bowler et al. 2003; Van Der Meer and Van Ingen 2009; Verba et al. 1995).[4] Thirdly, these analyses usually have methodological limitations: they have rarely been able to fully take problems of self-selection bias into account. Self-selection problems arise due to the fact that individuals who participate in voluntary associations are likely to be more politically motivated and skilled than others. Therefore, it is inherently difficult to empirically separate the causal impact of organizational activities (i.e., a socialization mechanism) from the selectivity of the individuals who participate in these activities (i.e., a selection mechanism) (Theiss-Morse and Hibbing 2005; see also Van Der Meer and Van Ingen 2009; Armingeon 2007).

In an attempt to fill in the gaps, we examine the hypothesis that political training in a voluntary association increases the probability of becoming a candidate in a public election. Our empirical focus is on involvement in politically-oriented student union (SU) councils at Swedish universities. The activities in the councils include, for example, electoral campaigns, leadership practice, debates, deliberation, and bargaining. We have collected archive data on a large number of candidates to SU councils (1982–2005). This data is linked to population wide data from *Statistics Sweden* that includes information on all persons running in all public elections at all governmental levels (national, regional and local) in Sweden from 1991 to 2010.

[3] Voluntary associations and civil organizations are used synonymously.

[4] Here, political participation follows a standard definition and refers to an activity by an individual that has the intent or effect of influencing government action either directly by affecting the making or implementation of public policy or indirectly by influencing the selection of people who makes these policies (Verba et al. 1995). Running for office has sometimes been characterized as the ultimate act of political participation (Fox and Lawless 2005).

Using a regression discontinuity (RD) design, the research strategy involves estimating the causal effects of being elected to a SU council (our operationalization of political training) on the probability of later on in life becoming a candidate in a public election.[5] The RD analysis addresses self-selection problems by comparing SU council candidates who were elected with a small margin to those who just failed to be elected. It allows us to identify the causal effect of participating in SU councils on future candidacies as long as SU council candidates located just above and just below the election thresholds are not fundamentally different in terms of important individual characteristics (political ambition, civic skills, etc.). For this to hold, it is sufficient to assume that there is some randomness in the exact location of the election thresholds. This assumption is likely to be valid for the SU council context: these elections are notoriously unpredictable, making it difficult to assess before the election if a given candidate is at an electable slot or not.

To preview the results, the empirical analysis provides support for the hypothesis: Being elected to the SU council, and thus receiving political training, increases the probability of becoming a candidate in public elections with six percentage points from a baseline of around 18 percent. This equals a relative increase of 34 percent. The causal impact of political training is generally stable over time, and all findings are insensitive to model specification.

The analysis makes significant contributions to at least two interrelated research fields. Firstly, it develops political recruitment literature by showing that personal experiences of political training during the course of life, at arenas without formal links to representative democracy, triggers and enables the step from political interest to participation in electoral politics. Secondly, it provides new evidence to an increasingly contested issue within the field of political participation by showing that activities in voluntary associations indeed matter for a broader political involvement.

2 Candidate recruitment and arenas for political training

The theoretical point of departure of this article is an axiom that figures in a broad range of social theories, from Plato to Pareto, or Marx to Mosca. A few of a community's

[5] RD-based approaches are common in economics (Lee and Lemieux 2010) and they are increasingly used also by political scientists (e.g., Caughey and Sekhon 2011; Folke and Snyder 2012).

citizens are always called upon to govern the remainder (Prewitt 1970). In order to understand how representatives are recruited, a part of the political recruitment literature has focused on the emergence of candidates. This group of studies can be divided into various sub-groups. One research tradition, which is particularly strong in research on American politics, puts political ambition at the center of the analysis. Some analyses have a rational choice perspective; they see political ambition as a fixed attribute. From this perspective, the decision to run for office in a given election is based on a calculus that is related to political opportunity structures (such as term limits, the number of open seats, etc.), an assessment of risks and rewards, and personal factors (e.g., Black 1972; Canon 1993; Castro and Martins 2012; Maestas et al. 2006; Rohde 1979; Schlesinger 1966; Stone and Maisel 2003). A rational choice perspective assumes that citizens have a certain predisposition to run for office. However, most citizens will never even consider becoming a candidate in public elections (Fowler 1993). Therefore, other scholars specifically address the question why the notion of candidacy crosses only some, and not all, people's minds. They have traced the roots to political ambition, usually by focusing on socio-demographic factors or personal traits (Fox and Lawless 2004, 2005; Fulton et al. 2006; Lasswell 1948). For instance, Fox and Lawless (2005) emphasize politicized upbringing, and a strong sense of political efficacy, for having the ambition to run for office.[6]

A second sub-group, which is accentuated in European and Latin American research, uses the party as the unit of analysis to analyze the final step of the candidate emergence process.[7] These analyses concentrate on the political parties' candidate selection processes and on the priorities that party gatekeepers make when nominating some aspirants and not others, for example: what personality do they expect a suitable candidate to have? What experiences are preferable? Which networks are required? Thus, rather than asking which individuals are inclined to run for office, this research attempts to understand which aspirants, and which aspirant characteristics, are requested by party gatekeepers (e.g., Gallagher and Marsh 1988; Norris and Lovenduski 1995; Siavelis and Morgenstern 2008; c.f. Patzelt 1999).

[6] The role of the family when launching and pursuing a political career has also been highlighted in research on political dynasties (Dal Bó et al. 2009).

[7] The distinct approaches to candidate emergence in American and European research may be related to institutional factors: In the US, candidate selection processes are decentralized and electoral campaigns are candidate-centred. In Europe, candidate selection processes are fairly centralized.

Taking the different approaches of candidate recruitment together, there seems to be either a focus on the personal traits of politically ambitious citizens and their rational calculations with regard to the decision to run for office, or an emphasis on the mindsets and strategies of party gatekeepers. Less developed in the literature is a focus on how specific experiences during the course of life may change an individual's inclination and possibility to run for public office (Fox and Lawless 2011). For instance, empirical research on political recruitment has not paid sufficient attention to the different arenas located between the family and electoral institutions, on which citizens may increase, for example, their political skills, enlarge their networks, and thereby get the specific training that potentially facilitate a step into representative politics. By acquiring these important experiences, citizens' inclinations to run for public office may be boosted and they may be more attractive to electoral gatekeepers.

2.1 Training future candidates: the role of voluntary associations

There are a number of potentially important arenas outside the realm of representative democracy where citizens may acquire the kind of training that is useful for a candidacy. One arena that has been brought up in the US literature is the workplace. Some professions, such as lawyers and business leaders, are over-represented among candidates in public elections (e.g., Lawless 2012; Moncrief et al. 2001) and individuals who reach top positions within their profession are more likely than others to pursue a political career (e.g., Hain and Piereson 1975). Research has suggested that these relationships are the result of the politically relevant assets that these individuals acquire through on-the-job training.

In this study, focus is on another arena that has been held to be crucial for citizens' political involvement: voluntary associations. Already in the 19th century, Tocqueville argued that civil organizations are "schools of democracy" that provide citizens with a set of qualities that are crucial for the well-being of democracy (de Tocqueville 1969 [1848]). Tocqueville's ideas have inspired many social scientists, and associational participation has been held to generate a broad range of consequences (e.g., Paxton 2002; Putnam 2000; Verba et al. 1995). One of the suggested roles of associations is to train new political leaders. A democratic civil society is suggested to give individuals the knowledge, self-confidence and networks needed to qualify them well for service in government and party politics (Diamond 1994).

The assets that associations are likely to give individuals have been incorporated in an influential model developed by Verba et al. (1995): the Civic Voluntarism Model (CVM). The model suggests that associational involvement provides citizens with resources, motivation and recruitment possibilities that are important for a broader political involvement. As for resources, associations give individuals the chance to practice leadership in the context of a collective—how to lead a meeting or how to negotiate between different points of view—and they provide an arena for engaging in deliberation, bargaining and debates, for example. The skills citizens learn through these activities can obviously be transferred to the political realm (Paxton 2002; Warren 2001). With regard to motivation, citizens may become more inclined to broaden their civic engagement and become involved in the political sphere (e.g., Hooghe et al. 2004). Included in this asset, and interlinked with resources, is political efficacy as associational participation is suggested to increase individuals' perceived political influence. To a greater extent than others, citizens who are active in associations and take part in their decision-making processes perceive that they can also have a say in politics (c.f. Fox and Lawless 2011). As for recruitment possibilities, citizens involved in associations may enlarge their political networks and increase their possibilities to be asked to become involved in political activities (e.g., Teorell 2003).

Verba et al. (1995) apply the model to various modes of political participation, of which campaign activities are closest to political candidacy. However, the key features of the model are closely related to factors brought up in the literature on political recruitment (Norris and Lovenduski 1995), and the model has been used to link individuals' personal experiences to candidate emergence (e.g., Fox and Lawless 2011). Thus, applying the CVM to an analysis on the causal effects of political training in civil organizations on candidacy in public elections, the theoretical argument may be summarized briefly: Political training may increase individuals' actual and perceived political skills as well as their motivation, thereby increasing their aspiration for a seat. In addition, training may make individuals more attractive to electoral gatekeepers and thus increase their recruitment possibilities.

Research on the career paths of candidates commonly includes involvement in, for example, civil organizations and non-profit organizations in their analyses. For instance, Hooghe et al. (2004) stress that political training taking place within political parties'

youth branches is pivotal for a political career. However, a limitation with these analyses is their almost exclusive focus on already selected candidates, of which a large number have been trained in civil organizations. Without variation in the outcome variable (candidacy), it is not possible to separate a causal effect of political training from self-selection bias. In other words, it is possible that certain individuals are attracted to both civil organizations and involvement in public elections; thus, the former activity does not necessarily generate involvement in the latter (see also Theiss-Morse and Hibbing 2005). One study that indeed has variation in the outcome variable is Lawless (2012). She shows that serving on a non-profit board is positively associated with candidate emergence. However, the analysis is survey-based and focuses on whether respondents have been asked to run for office by electoral gatekeepers, and it does not include statistics on the very candidates in public elections. In this analysis, we address these limitations.

3 Case selection: Swedish student unions

There are several reasons for analyzing Swedish student unions. Firstly, they have clear elements of political training. Secondly, these organizations have no formal links to national political parties; the political training is not provided within the context of Swedish party organizations. Thus, we are able to make a clear separation between training and the outcome variable (c.f. Hooghe et al. 2004). Thirdly, this case enables us to take self-selection bias into account. Fourthly, we have access to official statistics rather than survey data. Fifthly, most individuals who are active in student unions are in a period of life—young adulthood—that is commonly portrayed as an ideal time "to develop civic skills and competencies, and participation in organizations may help establish social networks where members are then recruited into political activities" (Finlay et al. 2010, 278; see also Jennings and Stoker 2004). Finally, in higher education people may start to think more systematically about large political structures affecting their lives: universities provide students with the possibility to develop civic skills, political views and civic virtues, both within and outside the classroom (Pascarella and Terenzini 2005; see also McFarland and Thomas 2006).

3.1 The role of student unions in Sweden

Whilst student unions exist in a large number of countries, their features differ across context. In some countries, they are mostly involved in organizing extracurricular activities such as culture, sports and parties (i.e., they are leisure organizations; c.f. Van Der Meer and Van Ingen 2009). In others, such as in Sweden, most student unions are similar to an interest organization and they act as "labor unions" for students. Swedish student unions represent the students in every decision-making body within universities (having up to one-third of the seats in these bodies) and they provide their members with different kinds of services (judicial counseling, etc.).

A small-sample survey confirms the picture that Swedish student unions are politically-oriented organizations (Lundin et al. 2013): SU candidates are very politically active and they have a high level of political interest (around 90 percent are "fairly" or "very" interested in politics). They also have strong ambitions with their political engagement (about 70 percent would like to run for public office). In addition, those elected to the SU council participate in council activities such as debates and negotiations with other parties, and they initiate policy proposals, write reports and policy documents and contact external actors on behalf of the council.[8]

A special feature of Swedish student unions is the mandatory membership: until July 1, 2010, every student had to be a member of a student union. As a consequence, student unions commonly represent a fairly large number of members. In this analysis, we focus on three of the largest student unions (they all have 15,000 members or more): Uppsala Student Union (*Uppsala studentkår)*; Stockholm University Student Union *(Stockholm universitets studentkår)*; and Lund Student Union *(Lunds studentkår)*. Uppsala Student Union is the largest in Sweden with approximately 33,000 members.[9]

Whereas a fairly large number of SU members take part in the unions' daily activities, the representative democratic nature of the selected unions enables a smaller number of individuals to be involved in the student unions' internal decision-making processes. In each of the three student unions there is a "legislative" council (i.e., a

[8] This survey was conducted among candidates and members of the student union in Uppsala in 2011 and 2012. The overall response rate was 67 percent (141 students participated) and an analysis of background characteristics showed that those who participated in the survey were similar to the population (indicating no large problems with non-responses).

[9] Stockholm University Student Union has around 20,000 members. During the second half of the 1990s, Lund Student Union was split up into a large number of faculty-based student unions. Thus, this student union does no longer exist. In 1990, Lund Student Union had approximately 15,000 members.

highest decision making body) and an executive body (the board of the student union). The council has meetings about once a month. The council is directly elected by the fellow students on a yearly basis. The electorate vote on "student parties" that present lists of candidates. Some of the parties are ideologically based (e.g., "Green Students", "Social Democratic Students", etc.), whereas others are based on alternative motives (e.g., parties that represent students on a specific faculty, educational program, etc.).[10] The election system is a kind of proportional representation (the exact method differs across student unions, but they all resemble the PR system used to Swedish general elections), and seats are (proportionally) allocated to the parties, after which seats are distributed according to the candidate ranking within these lists. In most of the elections in our sample, the local student parties provide closed lists with a preset ranking of candidates.[11] Ballots are sent to the members of the student union shortly before the elections, and no registration is needed to be able to vote.

The political nature of the analyzed organizations raises the issue of generalization. It may be argued that the selected case represents a "most-likely case" for training to have an impact on candidacy in public elections as the student unions are nearly a microcosm of a state, including political party systems, elections and electoral campaigns. However, growing acquainted with political life in an environment without formal ties to electoral politics might also very well be achieved in other types of associations. In various voluntary associations, individuals get similar leadership practice in the context of a collective, by participating in, for example, coalition building, deliberation, compromise and budget crafting (e.g., Warren 2001). Thus, although Swedish student unions have their specific features, they also share many characteristics with other civic organizations. We return to the issue of generalization in the analysis and in the concluding section.

4 Data and methods

The basic empirical strategy of this paper is to compare the probability of becoming a candidate in public elections between bare winners and bare losers in SU council

[10] In the analysis we investigate whether the effects are different depending on type of party. The empirical evidence suggests that this is not the case.
[11] In the few cases (certain years in Uppsala and Lund) in which there are open lists, our statistical approach takes potential selection biases into account (see details in the section on the statistical model).

elections in Sweden. By relying on comparisons within this "pool of potential candidates" (c.f. Hibbing 1999; Lawless 2012), we are able to take many aspects of self-selection into account.[12]

Analyzing differences within a sample of students who all participated in the SU elections, reduces the risk that correlations arising from unobserved characteristics lead us to wrongfully conclude that there is a causal link from political training to candidate emergence. As a consequence, our empirical strategy (described below) is better able to estimate the causal effect of association participation on a broader political involvement than what has been the case in previous research within political recruitment literature (e.g., Hooghe et al. 2004) and within political participation research (e.g., Armingeon 2007; Bowler et al. 2003; Van Der Meer and Van Ingen 2009; Verba et al. 1995; see however McFarland and Thomas 2006).

However, two broad potential sets of concerns remain when choosing to analyze a sample of SU council candidates. Firstly, there may be systematic differences between candidates across ballot list. More specifically, the lists which gain many seats may have relatively more (or less) politically motivated candidates than other lists. To address this issue, we estimate the effects as differences between candidates that were elected and candidates who were not elected from *within* the same lists. Practically, this is achieved by including list fixed effects in the statistical model.

Secondly, there may be systematic differences in unobserved characteristics between candidates within the same lists; candidates on top of the lists may be more motivated and have more leadership skills than those positioned at the bottom of the lists. To address this issue, we use an analytic strategy—Regression Discontinuity (RD) design (e.g., Lee and Lemieux 2010)—well suited to address the potential for important, unobserved, characteristics that may be correlated with the outcome variable. A key concept here is the (election) *threshold*, which refers to the position on each ballot list that coincides with the number of seats allocated to that list. These list-specific thresholds allow some candidates to enter SU councils (with a small margin) whereas other closely placed candidates on the same ballot lists are left outside of the councils. The RD design exploits the fact that the election thresholds separates otherwise similar

[12] A small-sample survey suggests that SU council candidates who were elected and those who were not have similar political interest and ambition (Lundin et al. 2013).

SU council candidates into winners and losers. This provides us with a set of list-specific ”natural” experiments.

We now turn to a description of the data, before going into the details of the empirical method.

4.1 Data description

We have collected archive data from the selected student unions. Data comprises information from SU council elections between 1982 and 2005 and includes information on the name of the party lists, ranking of the candidates, the candidates' social security numbers (*personnummer*), election results and indicators for representation on the SU board. *Statistics Sweden* (a government agency producing official statistics) used the social security numbers to match our data onto national registers covering all candidates in all national, regional and local elections between 1991 and 2010.

We put three restrictions on the SU council data. Firstly, we exclude all lists where no one or all of the candidates were elected in the SU council election; there is no threshold to use in these cases. Secondly, we exclude candidates whose candidacy number is higher than the total number of seats in the SU council. Thirdly, in order to avoid obvious outliers and focus the analysis on a sample of reasonably inexperienced individuals, we remove those who have been elected in a public election before running in the SU council elections, as well as candidates younger than 18 or older than 40 (removing in total 60 observations, without affecting the results).

Our SU data contains information for those years where the necessary information could be found within the various SU archives. As shown in *Table 1*, the final data set is incomplete in its coverage, but fairly evenly distributed across universities and years (the average number of observations per year ranges from 126 to 295). The total number of unique university and year combinations (“cohorts”) is 30.

The register data on candidates in public elections starts in 1991 and is complete thereafter. Elections at the local, regional and national level in Sweden are coordinated in time; thus, there are no separate election days for different levels of government. Elections were held every three years until 1994, after which the interval was changed to every four years. There are no elections between these years (i.e., no midterm elections are used in Sweden) and no other offices are filled through direct elections. This leaves us with information from six rounds of elections.

Table 1. Number of observations by year, university and election years

Year	Lund	Stockholm	Uppsala	Total	Average per year	Public election years
1982	0	0	182	182	182	(1982)
1983	0	0	0	0	0	-
1984-1990	1,467	0	0	1,467	210	(1985, 1988)
1991-1993	606	0	0	606	202	1991
1994	0	0	0	0	0	1994
1995-1996	0	417	0	417	209	-
1997-2004	0	1,277	1,079	2,356	295	1998, 2002
2005	0	126	0	126	126	-
2006-2010	-	-	-	-	-	2006, 2010
Total	2,073	1,820	1,261	5,154	215	

Note: Left-side panel: number of individual candidate observations by period and university. Right-side panel: data on public elections. Election years in parentheses are not in the data. We group years when data availability was equal during multiple subsequent years. Election years in parenthesis denote election years when data on the candidate identities are missing.

Table 2 shows descriptive statistics. Statistics are reported in four columns: two for candidates above and below the election threshold when all individuals are included, and two additional columns for the seven candidates closest to the election threshold. To reiterate, the threshold is defined by the number of seats allocated to each list. Candidates are considered to be above the threshold if their rank on the list is at least as high as the number of seats allocated to the list. All analyses use the sample in the two last columns for a combination of reasons. On the one hand, candidates closer to the threshold are likely to be more similar in terms of personal traits. On the other hand, including the seven candidates closest to the threshold gives us a sufficient number of individuals to perform the RD analysis with sufficient precision. Note, however, that our findings are not sensitive to the choice of sample window (see *Table A 1* in *Appendix*).

We focus our attention on the sample that our analysis is based on. This data consists of 2,688 observations from 2,067 unique individuals (some candidates run in the SU council elections more than once). In most respects, this group is similar to the full sample. The table shows that each of the 30 election cohorts have, on average, slightly less than 10 participating lists of candidates. There are 290 lists in total. With regard to socio-demographic characteristics, candidates above and below the thresholds are basically identical in terms of sex (40 percent women) and age (on average 24 years

old), and there are very small differences when it comes to immigration background (8 vs. 7 percent).

Table 2. Descriptive statistics

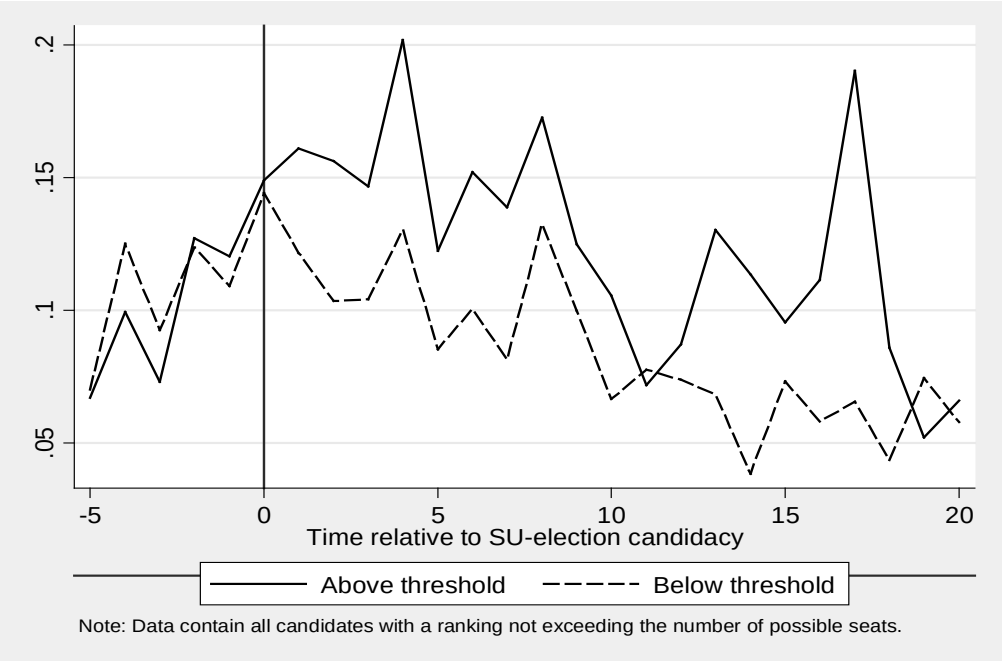
Year	All (irrespective of ranking)		Closest 7 (main sample)	
	Above Threshold	Below Threshold	Above Threshold	Below Threshold
Individual data				
Candidate age	24.4	24.7	24.4	24.4
Women	0.410	0.383	0.398	0.399
Immigrants	0.075	0.067	0.076	0.069
Elected to SU council (covariate of interest)	0.891	0.035	0.885	0.071
Candidate in regular election (outcome)	0.217	0.162	0.205	0.176
N (obs)	1,257	3,897	1,046	1,642
Number of unique individuals	843	2,731	759	1,308
Lists (parties per year and university)				
Number of included candidates per list	4.3	13.4	3.6	5.7
Total number of lists	290	290	290	290
Elections (year and university)				
Average number of lists per cohort	9.7	9.7	9.7	9.7
Number of cohorts	30	30	30	30

Note: The data on the left-hand side exclude SU-candidates with a ranking above the number of available seats in the SU council.

Due to particularities in the election process, candidates that are above the threshold do not always acquire their seat in the council. Yet, as expected, the impact of the threshold on actually acquiring the seat is very large, going from 7 percent if falling below the threshold to 89 percent if being placed above the threshold. This issue is discussed in more detail below and in *Appendix*.

With regard to the dependent variable, we see that the probability to run in a regular election is about three percentage points higher among students above the threshold than among students below it: around 21 percent of those above the threshold become political candidates, whereas approximately 18 percent of those below the threshold are nominated for political office later in life.

Figure 1. Probabilities to run in public elections: candidates above and below the thresholds, before and after the student union elections



In *Figure 1*, we present a more detailed description of the differences in our outcome variable. It shows the probability to run in a public election among those above and below the threshold over time. A non-negligible share of the SU council candidates had run as candidates in regular elections already before the SU council election. Interestingly, however, the figure indicates no differences between those above and below the threshold prior to the SU council elections, but very clear differences thereafter. This implies that students around the threshold came in to the SU council election process with similar experiences, but had very different futures depending on the election results. With a few exceptions, the magnitudes of the differences remain fairly stable over most of the 20 years' follow-up horizon. This is a first piece of evidence suggesting a causal impact of political training. However, these results do not rule out the possibility of a self-selection effect. In order to estimate the effect more "correctly" we use a formal statistical model based on a RD design, which is presented next.

4.2 The statistical model

The descriptive evidence focuses on differences between students above and below the election thresholds. Yet, the theoretical question concerns the consequences of the

political training the SU councils provide to elected candidates. Therefore, we are only interested in the election thresholds to the extent that they affect the probability to be elected into the councils. As evident from the descriptive statistics, thresholds have a large impact on the allocation of seats, but the relationship is not deterministic. Some candidates below the threshold are elected and some above the thresholds are not. Discrepancies arise for two reasons. Firstly, some elections allow votes on individual candidates alongside the votes on the lists. In these elections, candidates who received a sufficient fraction of individual votes were treated as first-ranked on their parties' lists. We only have partial information on individual votes and therefore rely on initial party ranking in our analysis (details below). Secondly, higher ranked candidates may choose to forfeit their seat, in which case the first-ranked of the remaining candidates is elected instead. Since both the frequency of individual votes and the probability of forfeiting may be correlated with important unobserved characteristics, we do not base our analysis on a direct comparison of the elected versus the unelected candidates. Instead we use a two-stage "instrumental variables" (IV) set-up. This is a standard approach to handle self-selection on the margin in a set-up such as this (e.g., Lee and Lemieux 2010).

In *Equation 1*, we show the formal regression equation. Although the discussion is rather technical in its nature, the instrumental variables method essentially boils down to a rescaling (by the first stage estimate) of the direct effect of being above the threshold on the outcome. The rescaling is equivalent to dividing the effect of the threshold on the outcome variable (i.e., on candidacy in public elections) by the thresholds' effect on the independent variable (i.e., on being elected to the SU council).[13]

In the statistical analysis, we include various variables capturing the direct effect of list rankings. In *Equation 1* we show the version that allows a linear term that differs (i.e., the slope could be different) above and below the threshold. This is standard in the RD literature. We let *Regular* denote the outcome measuring later participation in public elections for individual *i*, *Rank* is the ranking on the list in the SU council election, *T* is the list-specific threshold (defined by the number of seats allocated to the list), *Above* is a dummy variable taking the value one if the individual is placed above the list threshold, α is a fixed effect for each list (denoted by *l*), and, finally, there is an

[13] The instrumental variable in this set up (*Above* in Equation 1) is binary. The properties of the instrumental variables estimator in such a setting are very well documented in the treatment effects literature (Wooldridge 2002).

error term for each stage. We let the variable *Training* take the value one if the subject is elected into the SU council and zero otherwise. The parameter of ultimate interest is g, which measures the effect of being elected to the SU council. The outcome is binary since we use individual level data. Therefore, the model is estimated as a linear probability model following standard procedures in the RD literature. In *Appendix* (*Table A 2*) we show evidence suggesting that marginal effects from probit analysis, if anything, are likely to be somewhat larger than the effects we present in the article. Throughout we use standard errors that are robust to heteroscedasticity and clustered to account for repeated observations at the individual-level.[14] We are also able to include a set of other individual-level covariates (capturing age, gender, immigration status and previous incidences of political candidacies) denoted by *X*. Thus, our two-stage statistical model can be formulated as in *Equation 1*:

$$Training_{i,l} = \alpha_l^1 + \delta Above_i + \varphi^1(Rank_{i,l} - T_l) + \mu^1(Rank_{i,l} - T_l)Above_i + X_i\beta^1 + \varepsilon_i^1$$

$$Regular_{i,l} = \alpha_l^2 + \gamma Training_i + \varphi^2(Rank_{i,l} - T_l) + \mu^2(Rank_{i,l} - T_l)Above_i + X_i\beta^2 + \varepsilon_i^2 \quad (1)$$

If estimated jointly, the model's estimate of g will correctly capture the causal effect of participation in SU councils on candidate emergence, as long as the dummy variable for students above the threshold (*Above*) does not have an independent (i.e., on top of its effect through *Training*) effect on running for office in public elections (Wooldridge 2002).

Note that *Above* is identical to *Training* when candidates above the thresholds become trained, and when candidates below the threshold remain untrained. Hence, d would be identical to unity if this would hold in all cases, and the model would then be identical to estimation of the second stage directly.

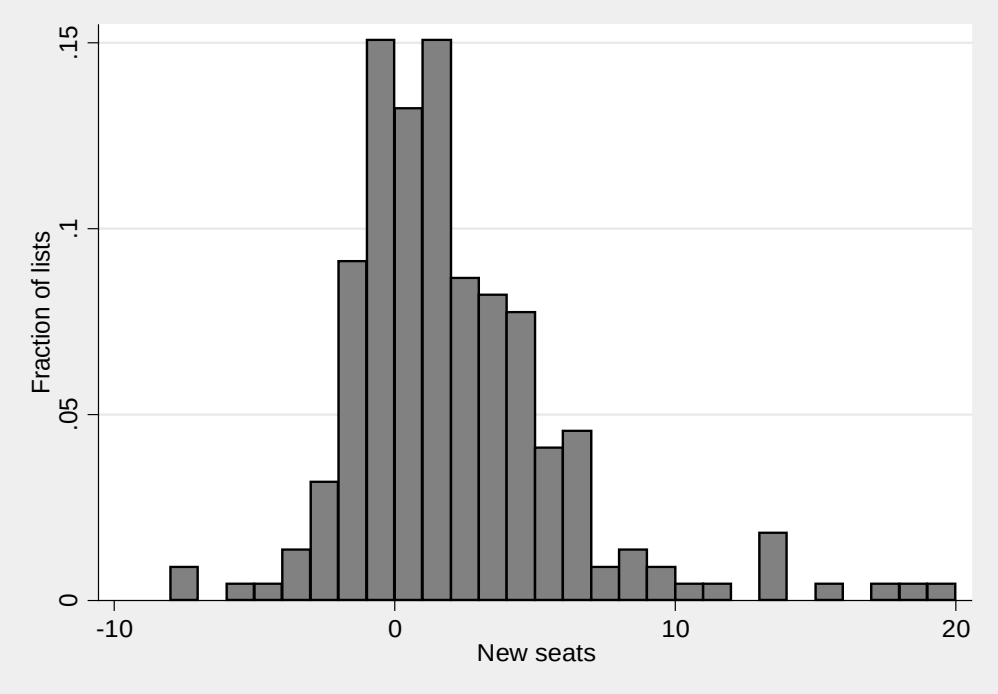
4.3 Are the election outcomes predictable?

A key assumption in our analysis is that candidates around the threshold are similar in terms of important unobserved characteristics (such as political skills, political

[14] As shown in *Table 2*, our data contains some individuals who appear in the sample during multiple years. Clustering the standard errors at the level of the individual, the statistical inference will be correct despite of repeated outcomes for the same individual.

ambition, etc.). The RD literature has shown that an important condition here is whether the threshold is predictable or not (e.g., Lee and Lemieux 2010). If the threshold is predictable, it is likely that candidates self-sort around the threshold; in other words, in these cases it is realistic to believe that there are unobserved differences between those above and below the threshold, respectively. Our interpretation of the SU council elections is that the relevant election thresholds are very difficult to predict. We base this conclusion on three pieces of evidence.

Figure 2. Distribution of new seats among lists receiving seats (excluding first years in data sequences, N=219, whereof 82 are new lists)



Firstly, we have analyzed the frequency of new seats at the list level using our data set. *Figure 2* displays the distribution of the number of new seats among the lists. As shown, there is a large amount of turbulence between years. Only around 13 percent of the lists received the same number of seats in two consecutive elections. This reflects the entry of new parties, as well as volatile voting patterns. Secondly, the elections are run without any opinion polls prior to the election; consequently, it is very difficult for the parties to monitor changes in preferences among the voting students. Thirdly, survey results presented in Lundin et al. (2013) show that it is hard for candidates to predict whether they will be elected or not prior to SU elections. If candidates at the extreme ends of the candidate lists (very top and very bottom) are excluded from the analysis,

almost as many of the candidates made the wrong prediction (or said that they could not predict their outcome) as there were candidates who made the correct prediction.

5 Results

Our main results are presented in *Table 3*. In the different columns, we show the results with and without control variables, and we vary the functional form of the variables capturing the list ranking of candidates. We find statistically significant estimates and very stable point estimates (ranging from 5.8 to 6.9 percent) across the models, both when we exclude control variables (column 1) and when we include them (column 2–3), and also when we take the list ranking into account (column 4–6). Below and in *Appendix* we return to discussions about the statistical robustness of the results.

Table 3. Regression discontinuity estimates: the effect of political training on the probability of becoming a candidate in regular elections

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Estimate	0.060***	0.060***	0.058***	0.066*	0.069*	0.066*
	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.038)	(0.038)	(0.038)
N	2,688	2,688	2,688	2,688	2,688	2,688
Sex	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Age	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Immigrant	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Running before	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ranking	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ranking, quadratic	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
Ranking*above threshold	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
P-value from joint significance test for all ranking variables	-	-	-	0.788	0.907	0.827

Notes: Estimates are unstandardized regression coefficients from instrumental variables models using the threshold as an instrument for being elected to the SU council. All models include list fixed effects. Sample consists of the seven candidates closest to the threshold (see *Appendix* for estimates based on alternative sample restrictions). Standard errors (within parentheses) are clustered for repeated observations at the individual level and robust to heteroscedasticity. * = sign. at < 0.10. ** = sign. at < 0.05. *** = sign. at < 0.01.

In a mechanical sense, the point estimates imply that SU council candidates placed on the same ballot lists have very different probabilities to become candidates in public elections if the election threshold hits between them. In more theoretical terms, the results show that those SU council candidates that are elected to the SU council, and therefore receive political training, are more likely to run for public office in the future.

The magnitude of the effect is, in our interpretation, quite substantial. Being elected to the SU council increases the probability of participating in public elections by approximately six percentage points from a baseline of about 18 percent for candidates that fail to be elected. This implies a relative increase in probability by 34 percent. As a comparison, the difference between elected and non-elected is slightly larger than the difference between men and women (results are shown in the *Appendix, Table A 1*).

Quite naturally, the statistical precision is reduced when we estimate more demanding models (with significance levels between 0.10 and 0.05 for the last three columns). However, the magnitudes of the point estimates are insensitive to how we specify the model in terms of handling potential innate differences between high and low ranked candidates. The ranking variables we include to capture this form of heterogeneity are also consistently insignificant as shown by the p-values at the bottom of *Table 3*.[15] This conveys the important message that candidates that are close to the threshold but on the same side of it (above or below) are, on average, as likely to run for public office as candidates that are placed farther from (but on the same side of) the threshold. That is, the last person on a list to be elected to the SU council is not significantly less likely to become a candidate in a public election than the top SU council candidate. This suggests that, apart from at the very threshold, list rankings do not predict future political participation. This finding gives us strong reasons to conclude that the impact is indeed a result of a socialization mechanism (from receiving training within the SU council) and not of a selection mechanism (c.f. Van Der Meer and Van Ingen 2009).

To further test the validity of the main analysis, we have studied to what extent predetermined characteristics differ across the threshold, as is standard in the RD literature (Lee and Lemieux 2010). The results, presented in *Table 4*, show that sex, immigration status, age, previous candidacies in regular elections (experienced), duration of studies, and work experience during the preceding year are independent of the election outcome. The fact that the covariates are balanced around the threshold

[15] We have also estimated the model to allow for a second order polynomial separately above and below the threshold (using the closest 10 instead of the closest 7 observations in order not to lose too many degrees of freedom). The results are similar to those in *Table 3* (if anything, the effect is larger).

supports the notion that bare winners and bare losers were similar before the SU elections. That is, the causal interpretation of the main analysis is strengthened.[16]

Table 4. Testing the balance of "predetermined outcomes"

	Female	Immigrant	Age	Experienced	Years since start of studies	Employed during the year before
Estimate	-0.008 (0.025)	0.009 (0.013)	-0.102 (0.143)	0.006 (0.014)	0.156 (0.116)	-0.001 (0.024)
Mean dep. variable	0.398	0.071	24.4	0.082	3.746	0.423
N	2,688	2,688	2,688	2,688	2,681	2,307

Notes: Estimates are unstandardized regression coefficients from instrumental variables models using the threshold as an instrument for being elected into the SU council. All models include list fixed effects. The model does not include any additional covariates and thus correspond to first column in *Table 3*. Sample includes the first seven candidates on each side of the threshold. The last two columns have slightly fewer observations due to missing values on the outcome variables. Standard errors s are clustered at the individual level and robust to heteroscedasticity. * = sign. at < 0.10. ** = sign. at < 0.05. *** = sign. at < 0.01.

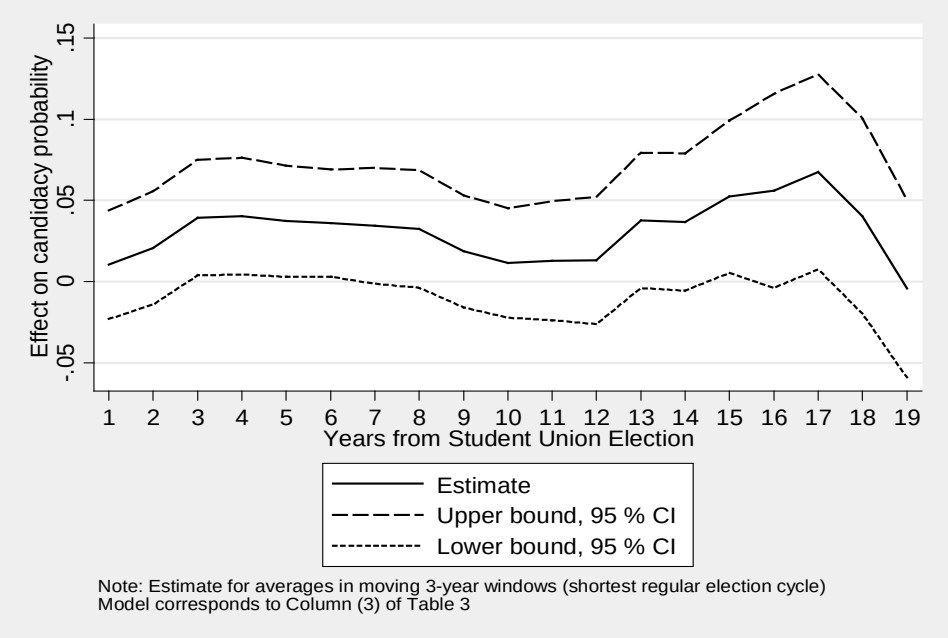
In *Appendix*, we also show that the estimated effect of being elected to the SU council is insensitive to the choice of data window (*Table A 1*). This means that we get the same regression coefficients (naturally, with lower precision) if we compare only the two truly marginal candidates as when we use a larger set of candidates on each side of the threshold. The *Appendix* also provides additional graphical evidence. *Figure A 2* displays the relationship between rankings and the outcome, showing a clear jump at the threshold, and *Figure A 3* shows that the only significant relationship between the ranking and the probability to become a candidate in a public election appears at the actual threshold. In summary, the results support the assumption that our estimates should be interpreted as causal effects of the experiences of political training provided within the SU councils.

In the literature on political participation, it has been debated as to whether any causal effect of associational involvement is temporary or more of a permanent character (e.g., Quintelier 2008). To address this issue, and get a sense of the durability of the effects, we estimate models where we use the yearly probability of running in a public election as the outcome variable and let this effect vary with the number of years since the SU election. As public elections do not take place every year, and the shortest election cycle is three years (until 1994), we analyze the data in blocks of three years. That is, the outcome variable is measured as the probability of being a candidate during

[16] An F-test for the joint significance of the variables in a regression towards the instrument shows that they also are jointly insignificant with a p-value of 0.4. Furthermore, including all the variables in the main analysis has no impact on the results.

an election year within a three-year period.[17] To gain precision, and given that the ranking variables were not statistically significant in the main analysis, we use the model of column (3) in *Table 3*.

Figure 3. The effect over time of political training on the probability to run for public office



In general, the analysis suggests that the impact is not of a transitional nature but fairly stable over time (see *Figure 3*). The effects are positive over nearly two decades after the SU election, that is, until the average SU candidate is in their 40s. However, in a number of years the positive point estimate does not reach statistical significance at the 95 percent level. The clearest positive impacts appear 3-7 years as well as approximately 15-17 years after the SU election.

We also run models in which we compare the results of different types of SU council parties. The idea here is that the effects we find in *Table 3* may be driven by council members who represent a certain kind of SU party. If this is the case, the effects are likely to be a result of some very specific skills, motivations and networks that are unlikely to be developed in a broad range of organizations. In that case the findings cannot be generalized to other types of organizations.

More specifically, we test two hypotheses. The first hypothesis is that students representing a SU party that has a clear ideological base (as defined by their names),

[17] We only use observations where an election was held within the three year period.

and thus have an ideological link to political parties represented in the national parliament, are more likely to become candidates in a public election. Informal links to the main actors in the political system may be required for political training to have an effect on candidate emergence. In that case, similar positive results are unlikely to be found in a broad range of organizational contexts. The second hypothesis is that candidates who are elected to the SU council and represent a SU party that has access to certain power within the student union are more likely than others to run for public office in the future. It is possible that political training only has an impact on those individuals who have (formal or informal) access to highly influential bodies within the organization. If this is the case, the impact of political training is likely to be limited to a very limited number of individuals.

Table 5. The effect of political training on candidacy in public elections: results divided by SU political parties' ideological links and their closeness to power within the organization

1	2
Ideological party	Party represented on SU board
0.050*	0.037*
(0.028)	(0.022)
N=1,675	N=1,365
Non-ideological party	Party *not* represented on SU board
0.071***	0.088***
(0.023)	(0.033)
N=994	N=1,323

Notes: Estimates are unstandardized regression coefficients from instrumental variables models using the threshold as an instrument for being elected into the SU council. The model specification is the same as model (3) in Table 3. Standard errors (within parentheses) are clustered for repeated observations at the individual level and robust to heteroscedasticity. * = sign. at < 0.10. ** = sign. at < 0.05. *** = sign. at < 0.01.

The results presented in *Table 5* do not support the two hypotheses. There is an effect both on SU candidates representing a clearly ideologically-based SU party and on those representing a non-ideological party (e.g. a faculty-organized party) (column 1). Equally, there is a causal effect on candidates representing SU parties that have representation on the SU executive board and on candidates for other SU parties (column 2). If anything, the effect is larger where we expected a smaller effect: on candidates representing a non-ideological party and on those representing a party that has no representation on the SU board. In summary, the analysis suggests that the effect of political training on candidacy in public elections is fairly universal within our

sample.[18] As a consequence, we have reasons to believe that the findings are not unique to our specific case.

6 Conclusion

The overall intention of this article has been to increase our knowledge of why some politically engaged individuals participate as candidates in electoral races and others do not. Our suggestion is that the process of becoming an active politician could be analyzed as the starting phase of a career. As in the initial stages of any career, it is likely that training serves as a key ingredient. Training is likely to provide skills, spur ambition and enlarge networks that are useful in the early stages of career progressions in politics as in any other field.

We have focused on political training on one specific arena: voluntary associations. By collecting archive data on candidates to Swedish SU councils, we have tested the hypothesis that political training has a positive causal effect on the probability to become a candidate in public elections. The data was linked to data on all candidates in all public elections in Sweden from 1991 to 2010. We compared students who are on the margin of being elected to the SU councils to those who are elected by a small margin, using a RD design. We conclude that the evidence supports the hypothesis: the probability of becoming a candidate in public elections increases with six percentage points, from a baseline of approximately 18 percent, once an SU candidate is elected to the SU council and receives political training. Thus, there is a relative increase of 34 percent. The results are robust to several model specifications and to various methodological choices.

The analysis provides new insights to the political recruitment literature by presenting evidence that there are arenas located between the family and representative institutions on which politically engaged citizens may get useful political and leadership skills, increase their political ambitions and/or enlarge their networks, and thus be triggered to become involved in candidate selection processes. Thereby, the analysis nuances existing theories on personality traits, political ambition and candidate

[18] We have also tried to estimate the model for different subsets of individuals; however, the precision is usually too poor for us to infer anything useful. If anything, the effects appear to be larger for males than for females (not presented here).

emergence that rarely take specific events and experiences over the life course into account.

By identifying the role of voluntary associations when running for office, our study builds on research that depict candidate emergence as a more process-oriented and dynamic phenomenon (e.g., Fox and Lawless 2011). More specifically, we follow the path of those scholars who have identified the training potential of another arena: the professional (Lawless 2012; Moncrief et al. 2001). These arenas together represent opportunity structures for citizens who may consider aspiring for public office—the acquaintance that individuals grow with political life in these spheres of society provides them with useful tools to launch a political career.

In addition to the political recruitment literature, the analysis contributes to an increasingly contested issue within the literature on political participation. By using a novel methodological approach, it provides new evidence that activities in voluntary associations foster a broader political involvement (Verba et al. 1995; Putnam et al. 1992; Bowler et al. 2003; Teorell 2003; c.f. Armingeon 2007; Van Der Meer and Van Ingen 2009; Newton 1997). The analysis also adds to this literature by showing that the impact of political training in these kinds of organizations is not of a temporary nature but rather of a fairly stable character.

A few questions, however, remain to be answered and should be addressed in future research. Firstly, there are various possible mechanisms through which an acquaintance with political and party life outside of the realm of representative democracy may increase the probability to run for public office. Here, we lean towards the CVM's focus on resources, motivation and recruitment possibilities (Verba et al. 1995). Yet, empirical assessments are called for in order to get a more comprehensive picture of the relationship.

Secondly, we touch on the issue of generalization. The analysis on subsamples within our data (*Table 5*) shows that the effects are similarly positive across different SU parties: those with and without a well-defined ideological base, and SU parties with and without access to the executive power within the student unions. This suggests that the findings are not necessarily unique to interest organizations such as the Swedish student unions we analyze. However, there has been no consensus in the literature as to whether these ("elite-oriented") interest organizations are more or less likely than other

types of organizations (such as leisure organizations, activist organizations, etc.) to provide their active members with the skills, motivation and networks needed to broaden their political involvement (e.g., Bowler et al. 2003; Van Der Meer and Van Ingen 2009; Verba et al. 1995). On a similar note, our empirical focus on SU councils (i.e. the student unions' highest decision making body) raises the question whether only certain *activities* within an organization—those involving internal decision making—provide individuals with political training and are beneficial for future candidacy in public elections. Additional research is pivotal to shed light on these issues.

To push candidate emergence literature further, a first-order priority should be to document the various arenas located between the family and representative institutions that provide political training for citizens who may consider running for office. When estimating the effects of political training, scholars should use adequate methodological approaches that take self-selection problems into account. This avenue of research is of central importance also from a more policy-oriented perspective. It enables a focus on how political inequalities in candidacy and representation are overcome, maintained or reinforced, by shifting focus away from predetermined factors such as family background (e.g., Dal Bó et al. 2009; Fox and Lawless 2005) to issues that could be changed over the course of a lifetime.

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Appendix

We provide a set of robustness checks that validates the assumptions underlying the RD design in *Appendix*. In order to test the robustness of the results, *Table A 1* presents estimates from different models in which we gradually concentrate the analysis to candidates that are positioned closer to the election threshold. Thereby, we are able to further minimize the risk that candidates on the two sides of the threshold differ in important unobserved traits.

Table A 1. Robustness to choice of sample window

Not accounting for ranking (as in column 3, table 3)							
		Maximum number of candidates on each side of the threshold					
	All on list	10	7	5	3	2	1
Training (γ)	0.090***	0.083***	0.058***	0.063***	0.064**	0.085***	0.062*
	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.019)	(0.021)	(0.025)	(0.029)	(0.037)
Female	-0.036**	-0.048***	-0.052***	-0.057***	-0.046*	-0.036	0.006
	(0.016)	(0.018)	(0.019)	(0.020)	(0.024)	(0.027)	(0.031)
Age	0.003	0.006*	0.007*	0.008**	0.009**	0.009*	0.018***
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.007)
Immigrant	-0.070***	-0.082***	-0.069**	-0.078**	-0.065	-0.107**	-0.035
	(0.024)	(0.029)	(0.032)	(0.036)	(0.044)	(0.049)	(0.082)
Experienced	0.241***	0.194***	0.207***	0.193***	0.224***	0.216***	0.208*
	(0.039)	(0.047)	(0.051)	(0.055)	(0.062)	(0.070)	(0.083)
First stage (δ)	0.844***	0.816***	0.803***	0.787***	0.740***	0.703***	0.618***
	(0.0102)	(0.0120)	(0.0132)	(0.0149)	(0.0195)	(0.0252)	(0.0435)
N	5,154	3,270	2,688	2,172	1,459	1,026	496

Notes: Estimates are unstandardized regression coefficients from instrumental variables models using the threshold as an instrument for being elected into the SU council. First stage estimates refer to the effect of the threshold on receiving and accepting a SU council seat. All models include list fixed effects. Standard errors (within parentheses) are clustered for repeated observations at the individual level and robust to heteroscedasticity. * = sign. at < 0.10. ** = sign. at < 0.05. *** = sign. at < 0.01.

The clear conclusion emerging from this exercise is that the point estimates are insensitive to the choice of sample window. Naturally, precision is gradually reduced as the averages are taken over fewer individual candidates. However, estimates are significant even when using the two truly marginal candidates on each list. It is worth emphasizing that the sample window used in the main analysis is the one that derives the smallest point estimates.

The lower part of *Table A 1* presents the first stage estimates, that is, δ of *Equation 1*. The first stage drops further from unity when focusing on the marginal candidates. This is consistent with the notion that marginal candidates above the threshold are those that

are most likely to lose the seat due to other candidates' personal votes, and that marginal candidates below the threshold are most likely to acquire seats if anyone above them forfeits their seat.

Figure A 1. Treatment as a function of rankings above and below the threshold

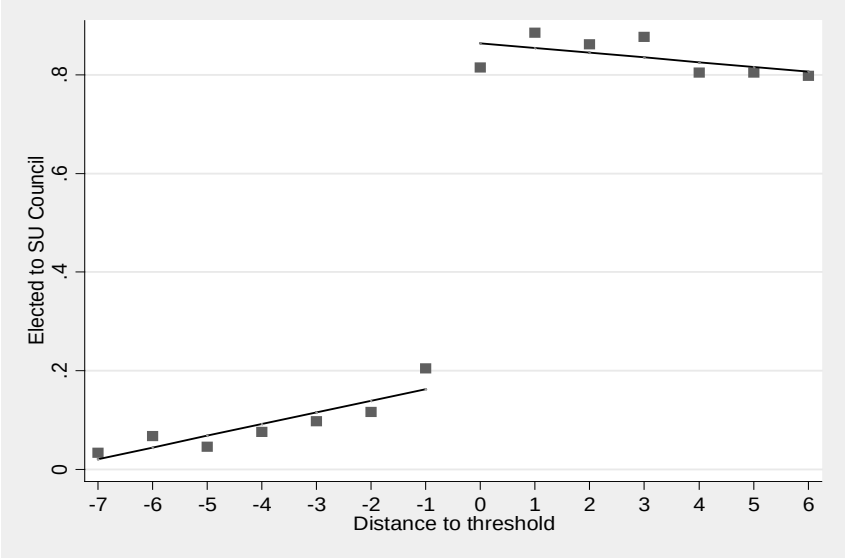

Figure A 2. The outcome as a function of rankings above and below the threshold

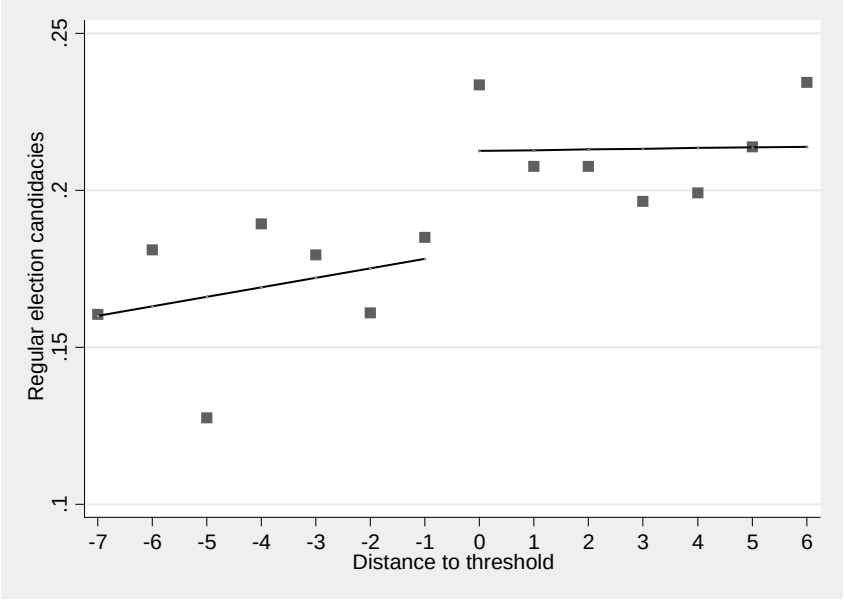

Figure A 1 portrays the treatment as a function of rankings above and below the threshold, showing a distinct difference in treatment intensity at the threshold (as

expected). *Figure A 2* depicts the outcome by list ranking and (in line with the results of *Table A 1*) shows a similar picture for the actual outcome.

The insignificance of the rank-terms (*Table 3*) and the fact that the results are insensitive to the choice of data window (*Table A 1*), suggests that the propensity to run in a public election is not systematically related to the list ranking. To make this last point more precise, *Figure A 3* shows the differences in the probability of running in a public election depending on list rankings below, on, and above the actual threshold. We use two observations on each side of the pseudo-thresholds to gain precision and hence exclude the estimates for thresholds at plus/minus unity.[19] The estimates, save for the actual threshold (zero), are tests for whether the ranking of candidates matters at other places on the list rather than at the threshold.

Figure A 3. Differences in probabilities to run in public elections below (negative values), at (zero) and above (positive values) the actual threshold

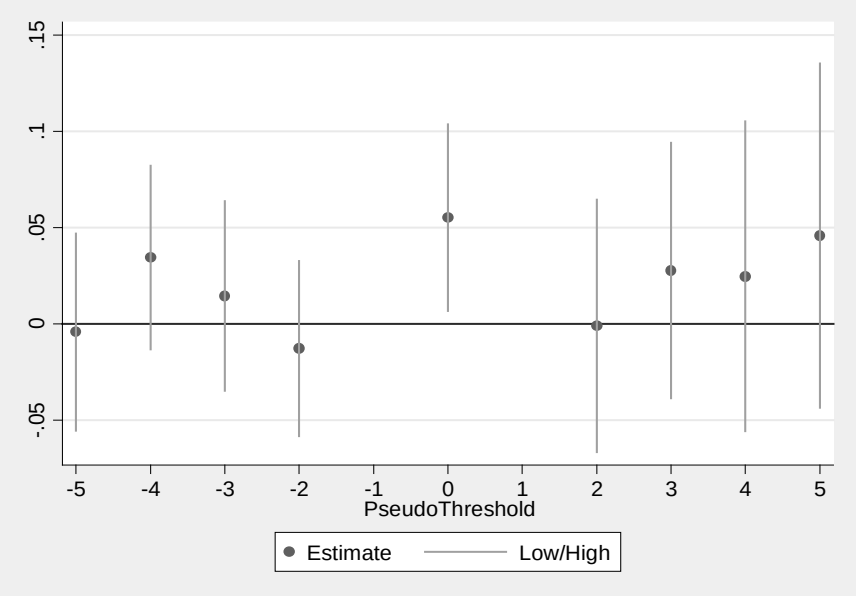

Figure A 3 reveals that the only significant relationship between the ranking and the probability to become a candidate in a public election appears at the actual threshold. This suggests that the ranking above and below the threshold does not have an important independent effect on the outcome. These findings provide additional support for our interpretation of the main results.

[19] We exclude the values just below and above the actual threshold, since the actual threshold affects the data in the middle of one of the two groups in these cases (which complicates the interpretation). The excluded estimates are, however, as they should be, positive but smaller than at the actual threshold.

As a final exercise, we perform regressions using probit analysis instead of linear probability models. When doing so, we are confined to analyzing the direct effect of the threshold whilst ignoring the noncompliance of (mainly) marginal individuals. To facilitate comparison, we re-estimate the linear probability model under the same conditions. *Table A 2* shows that the results from the probit analysis are somewhat larger than estimates from linear probability models. These findings suggest that the estimated causal effect presented in the main analysis is not an artifact of the chosen estimation technique.

Table A 2. "Threshold effects" with OLS and probit (marginal effects)

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Estimate	0.047*** (0.016)	0.071*** (0.022)	0.045* (0.027)	0.071*** (0.022)	0.044* (0.027)	0.066* (0.038)
N	2,688	2,688	2,688	2,688	2,688	2,688
Model	OLS	Probit	OLS	Probit	OLS	Probit
Sex	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Age	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Immigrant	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Running before	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ranking	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ranking*above threshold	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes

Notes: The table shows estimates of the direct effect of the threshold on the outcome, without adjusting for non-compliance, in order to get comparable estimates for the probit model. Estimates are therefore smaller than in the IV-analysis. All models include list fixed effects. Marginal effects are evaluated when other control variables are held at their means. Standard errors (within parenthesis) are clustered for repeated observations at the individual level and robust to heteroscedasticity. * = sign. at < 0.10. ** = sign. at < 0.05. *** = sign. at < 0.01.

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