

Call Me Rutherford: Names and the Intergenerational Transmission of Political Preferences Over the Long Run *

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Abstract

We document that the names of newly elected politicians become more popular following their election. Their prevalence is correlated with county-level voting and with individual-level political behavior. We apply this insight to measure the political preferences of 18 million US census records and examine their intergenerational transmission from 1830 to 1940. Family and political environment account for comparable shares of variation in individual political preferences. Intergenerational persistence is 45% weaker when parental political views conflict with local political conditions. Transmission varies over time: political preferences were more mobile in the nineteenth century and became considerably more persistent between 1900 and 1940. Transmission displays similarly large spatial variation and is non-monotonic in electoral competition. These findings document how environmental factors influence the transmission of political identity across generations.

Keywords: Culture, Intergenerational Transmission, Political Socialization.

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1 Introduction

Understanding how political identity forms is central to the study of political behavior and the functioning of democracy. Existing research shows that political preferences are shaped by environmental factors (Cantoni and Pons, 2022; Brown et al., 2023). At the same time, a long tradition in political science identifies the family as the primary site of political socialization (Hyman, 1959; Campbell et al., 1960; Jennings and Niemi, 1968). Yet because this literature relies on survey and register data with limited historical depth, it offers little insight into how changes in institutional, social, and political environments influence the transmission of political preferences across generations.

To address this question, this paper develops a new approach to measuring political preferences and their intergenerational transmission at the individual level over more than a century of US history (1830–1940). The approach builds on the idea that first names can convey information about the political preferences of the parents who choose them. We argue, and empirically validate, that the name of a newly elected politician acquires political content after their election. We use this insight to construct a novel dataset that tracks revealed political preferences for the universe of native-born men observed in the full-count US censuses between 1850 and 1940. Using a methodology similar to Chetty and Hendren (2018), we show that family transmission and local political environments each explain a similar share of the variation in individual political preferences. Finally, we leverage the scale of the data to study how intergenerational persistence and mobility in political preferences evolved from the Civil War to World War 2 (WW2) and document their spatial variation across counties.

Our measure builds on the observation that the names of elected politicians (presidents and governors) experience a sizable increase in popularity immediately after their election and, on average, for up to 10 years thereafter. When Rutherford B. Hayes was elected President (1876), for example, the number of children named “Rutherford” increased from 10 to 450 between 1875 and 1877. A similar pattern emerges for all presidents and most state governors (see Figure B.1). We first establish this fact formally using an event-study design, which confirms that while “political names” show no differential trends in popularity before elections relative to other names, their frequency increases sharply thereafter. We perform, among others, two key exercises to check that this naming behavior plausibly reflects political preferences rather than mere popularity effects. First, we show that counties with a higher share of children named after Democratic (resp. Republican) politicians exhibit substantially higher Democratic (resp. Republican) vote shares. Second, we use modern-day register data for Florida and document a large, highly statistically significant correlation between party-specific political names and political preferences at the *individual* level.

We leverage this observation to identify a set of political names. A given name is Democratic (resp. Republican) in a given state and year if a Democratic (resp. Republican) president, governor, or congressman with that name was elected within the previous ten years in that state. We apply political names to the universe of the male, native-born US population.¹ The sample comprises approximately

¹We restrict the sample to men because all political names are male. Names convey the political preferences of individuals who lived in the US when the name acquired political content (i.e., the election year), which is why we exclude individuals born outside the US.

18 million parents born between 1830 and 1910 who had at least one child born between 1850 and 1940.

First, we observe that the decision to confer a political name on one's son likely signals political participation, regardless of the specific party. We find that individuals with a political name are 19.2% more likely to give their children a political name, corresponding to a 45.6% increase relative to the mean. This finding is quantitatively consistent with modern-day estimates based on register data (Lindgren and Oskarsson, 2023). Second, we estimate the intergenerational persistence of political preferences. We find that individuals with Republican (resp. Democratic) names are 7.6% (resp. 6.8%) more likely to give their children Republican (resp. Democratic) names. These estimates correspond to 66% and 56% of the mean, respectively, and are quantitatively consistent with modern survey-based estimates in the US (Jennings et al., 2009). Third, we estimate the degree of intergenerational mobility in political preferences. We find that parents with Republican (resp. Democratic) names exhibit a 6.4% (resp. 6.8%) lower likelihood of choosing Democratic (resp. Republican) names, corresponding to a 47.7% (resp. 59.1%) decrease relative to the mean, in line with evidence by Jennings and Niemi (1968).²

A major advantage of census data compared to register data is that they contain detailed, individual-level controls. Additionally, using the longitudinal links compiled by Price et al. (2021) and Buckles et al. (2025), we observe individuals who move between counties. We leverage this information to disentangle the influence of context from that of within-family transmission in the formation of political preferences, following Chetty and Hendren (2018). First, our estimates indicate that "movers" do not exhibit different intergenerational political transmission than non-movers. Second, we find that individuals who move to counties where the prevailing party is not their parents' party are 45% less likely to retain their parents' political preferences. These findings, which are qualitatively consistent with evidence from Brown et al. (2023), suggest complementarity between family and other environmental factors in shaping political preferences. Political identities persist across generations when family and context point in the same direction, and erode when they do not.

We then apply this methodology to study how intergenerational political transmission evolved over time and varied across the United States. The scale and historical depth of the census allow us to estimate persistence and mobility by cohort, party, and county, opening the door to further research on political identity formation that would be infeasible with conventional data sources.

The results reveal substantial temporal and spatial variation. Within-family transmission of political preferences, broadly speaking, has existed at least since 1850. The magnitude of parental preferences' influence on children's preferences, however, changes substantially over time. Republican-to-Republican persistence is highest during the Civil War and Reconstruction periods and declines during the Gilded Age and until 1900. Democratic-to-Democratic persistence, on the other hand, is lowest during the Civil War and Reconstruction periods. However, it increases substantially after Reconstruction and the establishment of Jim Crow. In the XX century, political preferences became

²Implicitly, these patterns speak against the possibility that parents name their children after newly elected politicians solely because of a rise in the popularity of those names. If that were the case, one would not expect to observe these marked differences depending on the concordance between the parties associated with parents' and children's names.

substantially more sticky across generations. In 1940, the son of a Democrat was approximately 40% to remain a Democrat. The increase in intergenerational persistence of Republican preferences is less pronounced but still substantial: by 1940, Republican-to-Republican persistence was approximately as common as at the end of the Civil War.

Mobility in political preferences across generations has almost always been unlikely, the only exception being Republican-to-Democrat transitions during the Civil War and Reconstruction eras. However, we estimate a substantial decline in intergenerational mobility in political preferences between 1900 and the end of our sample in 1940. This period coincides with increased persistence, indicating an overall consolidation of political identity.

Intergenerational political transmission displays similar heterogeneity across counties. Republican-to-Republican persistence is highest in the Northeast and Midwest states. Democratic-to-Democratic persistence, on the other hand, is prevalent in a few Southern states (Missouri, Texas, Louisiana) but not in the “Deep South,” where the Democratic party’s political dominance throughout the period appears to have been driven by shifting preferences from the Republican to the Democratic party. In other words, the South was an area of intergenerational mobility in political preferences. More generally, however, our evidence indicates substantial within- and between-state heterogeneity in the degree of intergenerational persistence and mobility of political preferences.

We conclude with an exploration of the relationship between the degree of competition between parties, which can be interpreted as a proxy of political salience, and the dynamics of intergenerational transmission of preferences. On the one hand, low levels of competition may embed parties in local culture, thereby facilitating the transmission of political preferences (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967). This view aligns with the broader argument that cultural persistence is more pronounced in stable environments (Giuliano and Nunn, 2021). On the other hand, competitive electoral environments may raise political salience and accentuate engagement, thereby challenging parental political views (Cox and Munger, 1989; Dinas, 2014). Our correlational evidence uncovers a non-monotonic relationship between competition and political transmission. Intergenerational persistence is lowest in counties with low electoral competition, increases in moderately competitive areas, and declines in very competitive ones. Mobility follows the opposite hump-shaped (convex) pattern. While more research is necessary to causally identify the effect of electoral competition, our evidence consistently suggests that environmental factors influence whether children adopt their parents’ political preferences.

Leveraging a novel measure of revealed political preferences, our analysis sheds new light on the evolving relationship between context and family in shaping political identity formation. Political identities persist most strongly when family and environmental factors reinforce one another, and weaken when they conflict. In doing so, the paper interprets intergenerational political socialization as a dynamic process shaped by changes in American political and social history.

Contributions to the Literature. This paper primarily contributes to the literature on the intergenerational transmission of political preferences pioneered by Campbell et al. (1960). Previous studies examine both the concordance in parent-child political attitudes (e.g., Jennings and Niemi, 1968; Westholm, 1999; Jennings et al., 2009; Healy and Malhotra, 2013; Brady et al., 2015) and participation

(Gidengil et al., 2021; Oskarsson et al., 2022; Lindgren and Oskarsson, 2023), as well as the importance of genetic factors (Alford et al., 2005; Fowler et al., 2008; Cesarini et al., 2014; Oskarsson et al., 2015). Existing approaches measure intergenerational transmission using either register data, which are only available for recent decades, or survey data, whose limited sample size limits heterogeneity analyses, and which are also only available for post-WW2 years. Our contribution is twofold. First, we develop a novel methodology to measure the intergenerational transmission of political preferences, applicable to the entire US population over more than one century, which leverages elections as shocks to political salience, following Sears and Valentino (1997). Second, we document the large temporal and spatial variation in the intensity of family transmission from the Civil War to WW2, in particular the consolidation of political identity after 1900, in line with Lipset and Rokkan (1967). In doing so, we build on Beck and Jennings (1991), who show that partisan socialization reflects both family traditions and political periods. We find that inherited political identities persist when family and local partisan environments align, weaken when they conflict, and document their spatial evolution over the long run.

More broadly, our approach to measuring political identity over time connects to the extensive literature on culture, identity, and their persistence (Guiso et al., 2006; Fernández, 2007; Fernández and Fogli, 2009; Alesina and Giuliano, 2015; Giuliano and Nunn, 2021) and change (Giavazzi et al., 2019). Previous studies document that cultural traits, norms, and preferences can persist across generations long after the disappearance of their initial causes (e.g., Algan and Cahuc, 2010; Tabellini, 2010; Nunn and Wantchekon, 2011), among others, through intergenerational transmission (Bisin and Verdier, 2001, 2011). We inform this literature along two dimensions. First, we study an important but overlooked dimension of culture, political identity, which we show to be quite volatile compared to other cultural aspects. Second, we study how the political environment, specifically electoral competition, influences political persistence. We uncover a non-monotonic relationship: persistence is lowest at very low or very high competition and highest in moderately competitive areas, whereas mobility follows the opposite pattern.

Since Gosnell (1930), several studies have examined how context shapes political behavior in both adulthood and childhood (Cantoni and Pons, 2022; Brown et al., 2023). One strand of the literature focuses on specific policies, such as changes to voter registration laws, compulsory and early voting, or voter ID requirements (Braconnier et al., 2017; Hoffman et al., 2017; Cantoni, 2020; Kaplan and Yuan, 2020; Cantoni and Pons, 2021). Another strand leverages variation in exposure to various contextual factors, such as voting technologies, neighborhood composition, media and electoral campaigns, and economic circumstances (DellaVigna and Kaplan, 2007; Gerber et al., 2010; Adena et al., 2015; Fujiwara, 2015; Perez-Truglia, 2018; Pons, 2018; Jha and Shayo, 2019). Our contribution is to bring the intergenerational transmission dimension into the picture. We document that context influences not only current political identity but also the way identity is transmitted to later generations within the family, thereby further shaping political outcomes.

2 Data

This section describes the data sources employed in the main analysis: first names (Section 2.1) and electoral outcomes (Section 2.2). Section 2.3 discusses how we construct the main analysis samples.

2.1 First Names

We compile naming behavior from US full-count population censuses between 1850 and 1940 (Ruggles et al., 2025). In both the aggregate and the individual-level analyses, we apply a minimal trimming pipeline to recorded names: we exclude initials, correct common transcription shortcuts (e.g., “Thos.” as an abbreviation for “Thomas”), and drop suffixes (e.g., “Jr.”). Moreover, as is standard in the literature, we exclude very infrequent first names, defined as those observed in less than 100 individuals in the entire sample period, which are largely coding errors (e.g., see Fouka, 2020). We also exclude the names in the top 10% of the frequency distribution. This choice is motivated by the fact that the shift induced by politicians’ elections would not be large enough to be observed for very common names. In addition, we exclude first-generation migrants because their names, by definition, cannot convey information about their parents’ political preferences, since their parents were not in the United States when they chose it. Because all elected officers in our sample are men, women cannot have a political name regardless of their parents’ political preferences and are thus excluded from the sample.

2.2 Election Results

Electoral results are from ICPSR (2025). The data include the number of votes each party received in each presidential, congressional, and gubernatorial election between 1824 and 1968. This paper focuses on the Democratic and Republican parties because they are the two largest continuously operating parties for which electoral data are consistently available between 1850 and 1940. We employ the data to construct two distinct pieces of information.

First, we assemble a dataset of first names of each elected politician, by party and state. Whenever a new president is elected, his name is considered “political” in all states. Names of congressmen and governors, on the other hand, are “political” only in the state where they are elected.

Second, we compile a dataset that includes the number of votes received by the Republican and Democratic parties at the county level and over time. Since county borders change during the sample period, we apply the method developed by Eckert et al. (2020) to construct a consistent administrative geography. We aggregate electoral data at the decade level. In the baseline analysis, the share of votes for party p in decade d and county c is the total number of votes for p across presidential, congressional, and gubernatorial elections held in c over the years $[d - 10, d)$. In robustness analyses, we break down elections by type.

In addition, we construct a measure of electoral competition as the share of elections in county c and decade d in which the margin between Democrats and Republicans was less than 10 percentage points (Cox et al., 2020).

2.3 Constructions of the Samples

We employ two types of datasets: aggregates of individual-level data into cohort-, state-cohort, and county-cohort panels, which we describe in Section 2.3.1, and individual-level datasets compiled from census records, documented in Section 2.3.2.

2.3.1 Aggregate Data

The first part of the analysis relies on data compiled from individual census records and aggregated at different geographic levels. First, we construct the number of children by first name at the cohort and state-cohort levels between 1850 and 1940. To construct both datasets, we take the census conducted in decade d and keep children born between $d - 1$ and $d - 10$. Since the 1890 census records were lost in a fire, we take children born between 1880 and 1899 from the 1900 census to obtain full coverage over the sample period. We compute the number of children by first name and cohort and by first name, state, and cohort.³ We merge the resulting datasets with the electoral data compiled as described in Section 2.2. The resulting datasets thus contain, in addition to name counts, an indicator equal to 1 if, in a given year, a president (in the cohort-level case) or a governor (in the state-cohort-level case) with a given name was elected to office, and 0 otherwise.

To validate the use of names as signals of political behavior, we compile one other dataset at the county-decade level. For each county and decade, we compute the share of “political” names given to newborns in that county and decade. We defer a thorough discussion of political names to Section 3, where we document naming choices in the aftermath of elections. A child born in the year y and county c is given a political name if he shares his name with a politician elected in c (or with the president) no more than ten years before y .⁴ Depending on the party of the elected politicians, we can compute the share of Democratic and Republican names in each county-decade. We augment this dataset with electoral returns data compiled as described in Section 2.2. For each county and decade, the dataset contains the share of votes each party received in that decade, the share of children with political names, and the share of children with Democratic and Republican names.

2.3.2 Individual-Level Data

To study the intergenerational transmission of political preferences, we assemble an individual-level cross-sectional dataset from census records. The sample consists of the universe of individuals aged 30 to 40 in each census between 1850 and 1940.⁵ An individual born in year t and in state s has a political name if he has the same name as a president elected between $t - 10$ and t or as a governor elected in state s over the same window. Depending on the elected official’s party, the name can be Democratic or Republican. In Section 3, we interpret the individual’s name as conveying information on the political preferences of his parents. Analogously, the individual’s political preferences are reflected in his children’s names. More specifically, an individual gives a political name if at least one

³We include only states observed continuously throughout the sample period, thereby creating a balanced sample.

⁴The ten-year window is motivated by the empirical results presented in Section 3.2.

⁵We take adults between 30 and 40 years old to maximize the probability that their children are recorded in their same household.

of his children born in year t' and state s' has the same name as a president elected between $t' - 10$ and t' , or as a governor elected in state s' over the same window. The child's name is classified as Democratic or Republican according to the party of the corresponding elected official. In addition to the name, the census contains multiple variables we employ as controls in some specifications: birth year and state, occupation and industry, race, literacy status, and an occupation-based income proxy.

To distinguish family-based from community-based political preference transmission, we implement a “movers” design along the lines of Chetty and Hendren (2018). In this analysis, we link individuals to the first census where they appear as children (under 10 years old) using the intergenerational links developed by Price et al. (2021) and Buckles et al. (2025). This sample comprises only individuals observed in the census years 1900 to 1940, born between 1870 and 1910. Within this sample, approximately 85% of the population is successfully linked over time. In the linked dataset, we observe both the county where individuals have children as well as the one where they were born, thus allowing us to construct an indicator for those who move between counties over their lifetime.⁶

3 Names as Signals of Political Preferences

In this section, we motivate why and when political names can serve as signals for political preferences. In Section 3.1, we lay down the empirical strategy, while Section 3.2 documents how naming choices evolve after elections. Section 3.3 discusses the correlation between naming patterns and actual voting outcomes. We conclude by commenting on the robustness of the results in Section 3.4.

3.1 Empirical Strategy

Our baseline observation is that first names *may* contain information on the political preferences of those who bestow them. Names, however, reflect a bundle of preferences and cultural values, such as, but not limited to, religiosity (Andersen and Bentzen, 2022; Berkes et al., 2023), individualism (Bazzi et al., 2020), national identity (Bazzi et al., 2019), as well as race (Fryer and Levitt, 2004) and socioeconomic background, including in intergenerational mobility studies (Olivetti and Paserman, 2015; Feigenbaum, 2018; Olivetti et al., 2018; Santavirta and Stuhler, 2024).⁷ To capture the distinctive political content of first names, we leverage shocks to the political content embedded in each name, following a methodology that is reminiscent of Coluccia et al. (2023), who exploit shocks to the saliency of the racial content of names. Our hypothesis is that a name becomes politically charged when a relevant individual with that name is elected to office. A parent calling their child “Abraham” in 1855 may not be informative about their political preferences, but the same name in 1861, just after Lincoln's election, is considerably more likely to capture their political orientation.

We employ event-study designs to explore whether naming choices respond to election episodes. As a first exercise, we employ the name-year panel described in Section 2.3.1 to evaluate how presidential elections influence naming decisions. Let n and t denote a name and a year, and let $President_t$

⁶The BPL variable in the census contains the *state* of birth, whereas the linked dataset allows us to observe the *county* of birth.

⁷Andersen et al. (2025) discuss the multiple approaches a recent literature in economics employs to use names as a quantitative measure of many unobserved characteristics.

denote the year a president with name n is elected. We estimate the following regression:

$$\text{Name Frequency}_{nt} = \alpha_n + \alpha_t + \sum_{\substack{k=-10 \\ k \neq -9}}^{10} \beta_k \cdot I(t - \text{President}_n = k) + \varepsilon_{nt}, \quad (1)$$

where $\text{Name Frequency}_{nt}$ is the number of children born in year t called n , and $I(t - \text{President}_n = k)$ code time-to-election dummies. The period $k = -9$ serves as the normalization baseline, while the periods $t < \text{President}_n - 10$ and $t > \text{President}_n + 10$ are binned into the $k = -10$ and $k = 10$ categories, respectively. The terms α_n and α_t denote name and year fixed effects. Standard errors are clustered at the name level.

Second, we repeat the exercise for governors. In this case, the term Governor_{ns} denotes the year when a governor with name n is elected in state s . Because the treatment varies at a more granular layer than in (1), this setting allows us to control for finer unobserved heterogeneity. Formally, we estimate the following specification:

$$\text{Name Frequency}_{nst} = \alpha_{ns} + \alpha_{nt} + \alpha_{st} + \sum_{\substack{k=-10 \\ k \neq -9}}^{10} \beta_k \cdot I(t - \text{Governor}_{ns} = k) + \varepsilon_{nst}, \quad (2)$$

where α_{ns} , α_{nt} , and α_{st} denote name-state, name-year, and state-year fixed effects. Name-state fixed effects control for the fact that certain names may be more common in particular areas; name-year fixed effects control for aggregate trends in name fashions; state-year fixed effects control for unobserved time-varying heterogeneity across states. As in the previous specification, the $k = -9$ period serves as the reference period. Standard errors are two-way clustered at the state and name levels.

The pre-election coefficients $\{\beta\}_{k=-10}^{-1}$ capture pre-election differences in naming frequency between the names of the elected politicians and other names. Similarly, the post-election coefficients $\{\beta\}_{k=0}^{10}$ quantify the divergence between those groups after the election takes place. The identifying assumption behind regressions (1) (resp. 2) requires that the frequency of the names of presidents (resp. governors) and other names would have followed similar trajectories if presidents (resp. governors) with other names were elected to office. We find that in both specifications, the pre-election coefficients are largely statistically insignificant and very small in magnitude, providing evidence supporting the parallel trends assumption.

3.2 Naming Behavior After Elections

We begin by inspecting raw trends in naming patterns around single presidential elections. Each panel in Figure B.1 displays the number of children born with the same name as a US president elected during the period of analysis, over a 10-year window around his election.⁸ In all cases, we find a large increase in the number of children with the same name as the newly elected president. The shift already occurs in the election year, and the president’s name remains more popular than before the election for at least four years, coinciding with the president’s term. In some cases, richer dynamics emerge. The number of newborn children called “Abraham,” for example, sharply increases in

⁸As in the main analysis, we exclude the names in the top 10% of the frequency distribution. Among presidents, this discards James (Buchanan and Garfield), Chester (Arthur), and William (McKinley and Taft).

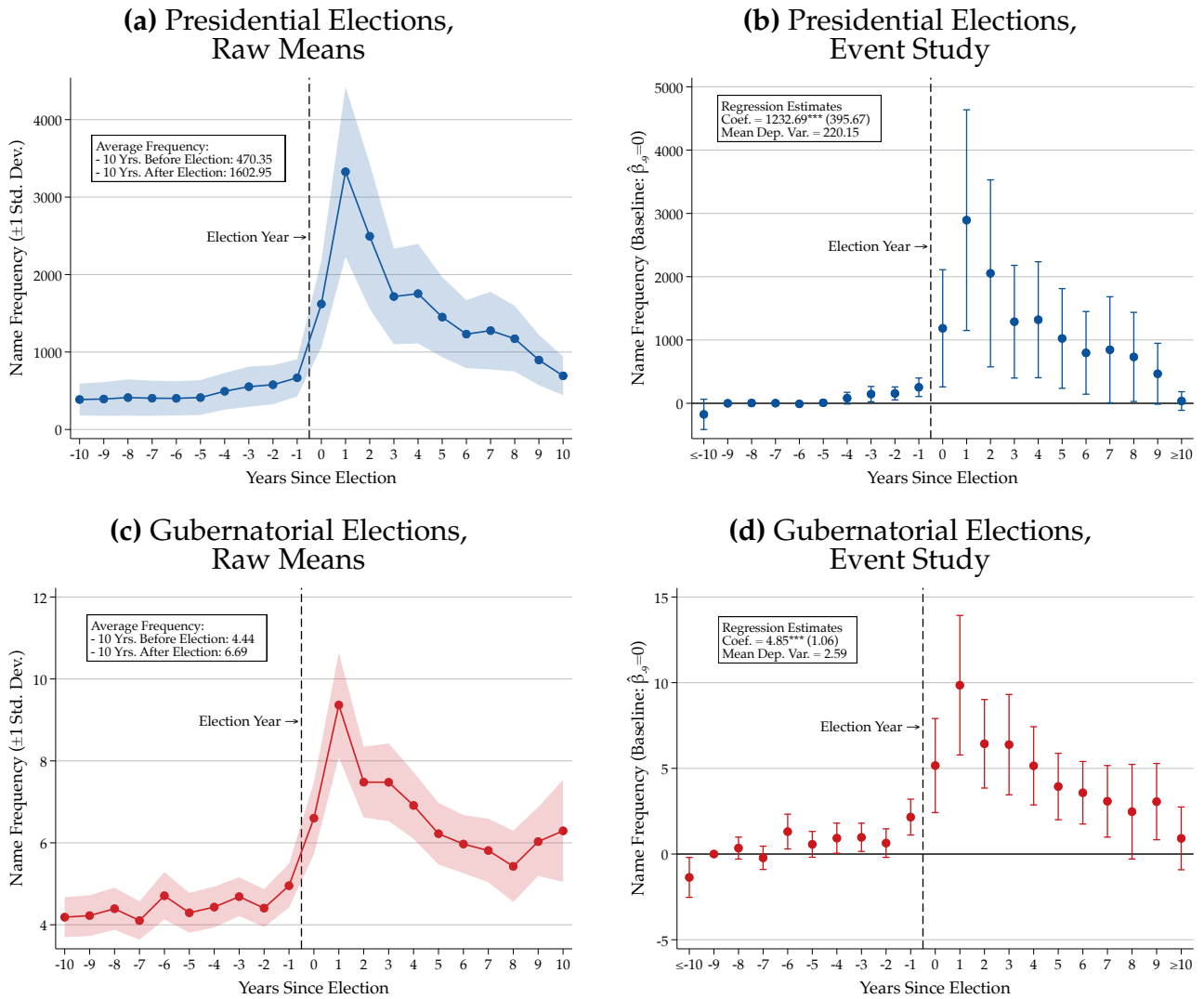
1861, when Lincoln was elected, and in 1866, after he was re-elected and subsequently murdered. More generally, the names of presidents who served for two terms, such as Calvin Coolidge (Figure B.2c), Franklin D. Roosevelt (Figure B.2d), Theodore Roosevelt (Figure B.2g), and Woodrow Wilson (Figure B.2k) enjoy a new surge in popularity, although smaller than in the first election. The name “Grover” exhibits two distinct peaks in popularity that coincide with the two non-consecutive terms Grover Cleveland served (1884 and 1892).⁹

Figure Ia takes this insight more systematically and displays the average frequency of the names of all presidents over a ten-year window around their election. Before the election, name frequencies remained relatively flat at around 470 children per year. Presidential names, however, enjoy a sudden increase in popularity the same year as the election. Over the subsequent ten years, on average, 1,600 children are named after the newly elected president each year, indicating a 400% increase in popularity. In Figure Ib, we report the estimates associated with regression (1). Consistent with the raw mean display, we find no statistically significant differences in popularity between presidential and control names before the election. By contrast, we estimate a large surge in popularity thereafter. The increase materializes immediately after the election, and the difference between treated and control names remains statistically significant for ten years after the election. On average, about 1,200 children each year after the election are named after the newly elected president, compared with control names. This corresponds to roughly 6 times the mean of the dependent variable.

Columns (1–3) of Table I replicate the exercise but report the coefficient of a post-election term that conflates the ten post-election years into a single categorical variable. Column (1) replicates baseline estimate. In columns (2) and (3), we split the sample between Democratic and Republican presidents, respectively. The election of a Democratic president increases the popularity of the president’s name by about twice as much as the election of a Republican president (2,600 children every year, compared to 1,050). This difference may reflect the limited alternation in presidential politics after Reconstruction, when Republicans dominated the presidency, and several Gilded Age presidents have traditionally been characterized as relatively ineffective (Taylor, 2021). The estimated effect, however, is highly statistically significant for both parties. Figure Ic displays the average number of children sharing the same name as the newly elected governor in their state, over a ten-year window around the governor’s election. The pattern is remarkably similar to the one documented for presidents. As in Figure Ia, we find a relatively flat pattern before the election, and a large surge in popularity after the election. Approximately 4.44 children in each state-year pair shared a name with the person who would be elected governor in the 10 years before the election. This figure increases to 6.7 over the ten years that follow the election. Figure Id report the associated event-study estimates. As for presidents, we find very small, mostly statistically insignificant, differences in popularity between governors’ names and control names before the election. By contrast, treated names enjoy increased

⁹In two cases (Theodore Roosevelt and Ulysses Grant), we find surges in popularity that predate their elections. Both cases are, however, historically plausible. Roosevelt was vice president and ran for the presidency in 1909 before being elected, likely giving him national visibility. The increase in the popularity of “Ulysses” coincides with the Civil War period, when Grant served as the Commanding General of the Union Army, a role that plausibly afforded him considerable national fame. In both cases, we *also* estimate increased popularity after Grant and Roosevelt were elected to the presidency.

Figure I. Elected Officials' Names Become More Popular After Their Election



Notes. This figure displays trends in the popularity of names of elected presidents (panels [1a–1b](#)) and governors (panels [1c–1d](#)). Panels [1a](#) and [1c](#) display the average number of children with the same name as the president and the governor born within 10 years of their election; bands report 1-standard deviation shifts around the mean. In panel [1b](#) (resp. [1d](#)), the unit of observation is a name (resp. name-state) at a yearly frequency between 1850 and 1940. The outcome is the number of children born in each year (resp. state-year) with each name. The coefficients report the dynamic treatment effects from regression (1)–(2). The regression in panel [1b](#) includes name and year fixed effects; standard errors are clustered at the name level. The regression in panel [1d](#) includes name-state, name-year, and state-year fixed effects; standard errors are clustered at the name and state levels. Bands report 95% confidence intervals. Each panel reports the static difference-in-differences estimate. Referenced on page: [9](#).

popularity from the election year until 10 years after the election.¹⁰ Quantitatively, the frequency of governors' names increases by 4.85 at the state-year level, which corresponds to a 187% increase relative to the mean.

Columns (4–6) in Table [I](#) report the static difference-in-differences results. Column (1) replicates the baseline analysis, whereas columns (2) and (3) distinguish between Democratic and Republican governors. As with presidents, the election of a Democratic governor results in a larger surge in pop-

¹⁰In Figure [1a](#) and Figure [1c](#), the last coefficient before the election is statistically significant and positive, although smaller in magnitude than the post-treatment coefficients. This may indicate that would-be presidents and governors became more popular in the years leading up to the election due to campaigning and media attention.

Table I. Elected Officials' Names and Child Naming Patterns

	Presidential Elections			Gubernatorial Elections		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Post Election	1321.581*** (423.660)			5.005*** (1.101)		
Post Election of Democrat		2558.444*** (175.936)			7.950*** (2.120)	
Post Election of Republican			1049.415** (517.759)			2.654** (1.157)
Name FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	–	–	–
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	–	–	–
Name-State FE	–	–	–	Yes	Yes	Yes
Name-Year FE	–	–	–	Yes	Yes	Yes
State-Year FE	–	–	–	Yes	Yes	Yes
# Units	1,204	1,204	1,204	515,547	515,547	515,547
# Observations	132,440	132,440	132,440	20,179,860	20,179,860	20,179,860
Mean Dep. Var.	220.149	220.149	220.149	2.592	2.592	2.592

Notes. This table displays changes in name popularity after presidential (columns 1–3) and gubernatorial (columns 4–6) elections. In (1–3), the unit of observation is a name; in (4–6), the unit of observation is a name-state pair; units are observed at yearly frequency between 1850 and 1940. The dependent variable is name frequency by cohort. Columns (1) and (4) report the average treatment effect associated with regression (1)–(2), where the event-time dummies are coded into a binary post-election treatment variable. In columns (2) and (5) (resp. 3 and 6), the treatment is active only for Democratic (resp. Republican) elected presidents and governors. Regressions in (1–3) include name and year fixed effects; standard errors are clustered at the name level. Regressions in (4–6) include name-state, name-year, and state-year fixed effects; standard errors are clustered at the name and state levels. Referenced on pages: 9, 10.

***: $p < 0.01$, **: $p < 0.05$, *: $p < 0.10$

ularity for his name than that of a Republican governor. The relative magnitudes are also similar to those documented for presidents (7.95 for Democratic governors versus 2.65 for Republican governors). Both coefficients, however, are highly statistically significant.

Estimates for presidents and governors alike indicate a large and immediate increase in the popularity of newly elected politicians' names after their election. These patterns motivate our interpretation of names as signals of parents' political preferences. Importantly, we do not claim that the name of, say, a president, carries political content permanently after the election. To discipline the analysis, we observe that in both cases the effects remain statistically significant for 10 years after the election. We employ this result and assign a name with a political connotation if it is given within ten years of the election of its bearer. Thus, a parent naming their son "Abraham" would signal that the parent is Republican if the child is born between 1861 (the year of Lincoln's first election) and 1871 (ten years thereafter), but not before or after those dates. We apply the same rule to the names of governors and congressmen, except that, in their case, their names acquire political connotation only in the state where they are elected.

3.3 Names and Voting Outcomes

There are two potential concerns with our interpretation of names as political signals. First, the decision to name one's son after a newly elected politician may capture a selected sample of the popula-

tion. This may be either that choosing a political name is so costly that only those with very strong political sentiment would choose to do so, or because it requires parents to be knowledgeable of the political arena. The second concern is plausibly attenuated by the fact that we only consider very prominent politicians: the president, state governors, and congressmen. Moreover, we limit the time window over which their name conveys a political signal to ten years after they are elected, when most of them would still be alive and publicly recognizable.

To explore the relevance of the first concern, we test whether the prevalence of Democratic and Republican names is correlated with election results. We employ the county-decade panel described in Section 2.3.1, in which we track voting and naming patterns between 1860 and 1940. We estimate the following empirical specification:

$$\text{Share Political Names}_{cd}^P = \alpha_c + \alpha_d + \beta \cdot \text{Vote Share}_{cd}^P + \varepsilon_{cd}, \quad (3)$$

where Vote Share_{cd}^P is the share of votes obtained by party P in county c and decade d .¹¹ The term $\text{Share Political Names}_{cd}^P$ denotes the share of children born in decade d with a political name belonging to party P in the given county. We control for time-invariant county-level heterogeneity (α_c) and for aggregate trends in party electoral results (α_d). Counties are weighted by population, and standard errors are clustered at the county level. We report the graphical relationship between voting and naming as well as the regression estimates associated with (3) in Figure II. The two panels show binned scatter plots of voting versus naming. Both variables are residualized against county and decade fixed effects. In both cases, we find a positive correlation between naming patterns and voting results. The correlation is quantitatively larger for Democrats, but, in both cases, the estimated $\hat{\beta}$ is highly statistically significant (p -val < 0.01). These patterns provide strong evidence that naming decisions do not reflect idiosyncratic choices by a highly selected subsample of the population, but rather exhibit substantial co-movement with aggregate electoral outcomes.

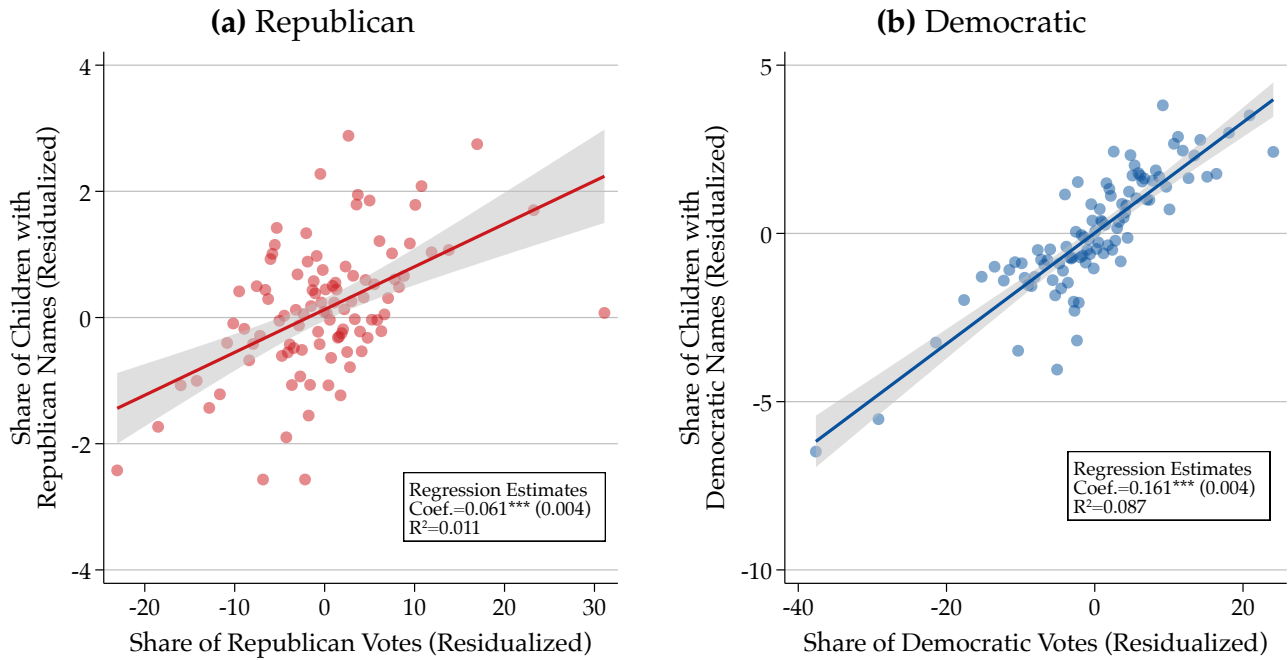
3.4 Robustness Analysis

A first concern with our measure is that names may be a noisy and imprecise proxy for political preferences, and that Figure II reflects an artifactual correlation between naming patterns and electoral results due to county-level aggregation. First, it is worth noting that we employ names to measure political preferences exclusively in the context of intergenerational transmission. As we elaborate in the next section, we show that individuals with names associated with party P are substantially more likely to select a name from party P for their children and less likely to select names from $P' \neq P$. If names only reflected the popularity of the newly elected politicians, one would not expect such marked asymmetry.

Validating the name-based measure with historical individual-level voting data is, unfortunately, infeasible due to data limitations. We thus employ contemporary, publicly available voter registration data for the state of Florida, where we observe the names and party registrations of the entire population. We construct indices of political names analogous to the historical setting, except that

¹¹A “decade” comprises the ten previous years. Hence, for example, $d = 1860$ covers the period 1850 to 1859.

Figure II. Correlation Between Voting and Share of Children with Political Names



Notes. This figure displays the association between naming and voting behavior. Panel IIa (resp. IIb) is a binned scatter between the prevalence of Republican (resp. Democratic) names among newborn children and the share of Republican (resp. Democratic) votes. The unit of observation is a county; counties are observed at a decade frequency between 1850 and 1940. The prevalence of party P names among newborn children is computed as the share of children born in a county-decade pair with the same name of a politician of party P (president, governor, or congressman) elected in the county's state within ten years of their birth year. The share of votes for party P is the average share of votes obtained by that party in presidential, gubernatorial, and congressional elections held in that county-decade pair. Counties are weighted by the number of children born in each decade. The lines superimpose a linear fit; each panel reports the estimate obtained from a linear regression between the two variables. Referenced on page: 12.

we include the names of politicians (presidents, governors, and congressmen) elected through 2026. In Figure B.2, we show the share of registered Democrats among individuals with a Democratic (in blue) and a Republican (in red) name, for the entire population (Panel A) and the subset with political names (Panel B). The prevalence of registered Democrats is approximately four times as high among individuals with Democratic names as among those with Republican names. Table A.1 displays the regression estimates. We find a positive and highly statistically significant correlation between registered Democrat status and Democratic names, and a similarly statistically significant but negative correlation with Republican names. This correlation holds in both the full and restricted samples and remains highly significant when controlling for county of residence and self-reported race. While these results are correlational, they provide support for the hypothesis that names convey political information for political preferences.¹²

A second concern is that our estimates reflect generic fluctuations in name popularity rather than their political salience. To explore this possibility, we estimate permutation tests where we select names other than those of the newly elected politicians as the “treated” ones either at random (Fig-

¹²When interpreting the magnitudes in Table A.1, it is important to note that, in our framework, a person's name is primarily informative about their parents' political preferences. Intergenerational persistence implies that parental preferences predict children's preferences, but the relationship is not one-to-one. As a result, the estimated associations are likely to be attenuated relative to the underlying relationship between own names and political preferences.

ure B.3a and Figure B.3b) or to mimic the pre-election frequency of politicians' names (Figure B.3c and Figure B.3d).¹³ The actual treatment effect lies in the extreme upper tail of each placebo distribution, indicating that the results cannot be explained by generic fluctuations in name popularity. In a similar spirit, we re-estimate (1)–(2) but shift the election time back ten years to check that the estimated effects do not reflect differential pre-existing trends in politicians' names. Figure B.4 indicates that the placebo post-election treatment is very small in magnitude and statistically insignificant for both presidential and gubernatorial elections.

It is possible that our estimates are driven by a few particularly popular presidents or governors, which would imply that the names of the remaining elected politicians would bear little political content. In Figure B.5, we report the difference-in-differences estimates obtained when excluding one president or governor at a time from the estimation sample. The treatment effects remain remarkably stable, indicating that the names of newly elected politicians acquire similar political connotation after their election. In a similar spirit, in Figure B.6, we report the estimates associated with (1)–(2) separately by party and, in all cases, we find no statistically significant difference in frequency between the names of presidents and governors and control names, and large increases in popularity following the election year. This indicates that the shocks to the political connotation of names are not specific to any single party and do not reflect pre-existing differences in naming patterns.

Name frequencies are count variables and exhibit excess skewness. In Figure B.7, we check that the results hold when employing a Poisson Quasi-Likelihood estimator in place of the linear specification in (1)–(2) Figure B.8 probes that the significance of the results is not sensitive to alternative standard error estimators.

4 Intergenerational Transmission of Political Preferences

In this section, we leverage our observation that names plausibly convey information about political preferences to study their persistence across generations at the individual level. Section 4.1 outlines the baseline empirical strategy, and Section 4.2 comments on the results we obtain. In Section 4.3, we introduce a “movers” design to disentangle family- and community-driven transmission channels. We conclude with an analysis of the robustness of the results in Section 4.4.

4.1 Empirical Strategy

Our core idea is that, because given names convey information on political preferences, one's own name reflects one's parents' preferences, whereas one's children reflect one's own preferences. We leverage this insight to estimate how preferences persist across generations. Formally, we estimate variations of the following empirical specification:

$$C_i^P = \alpha_{t(i)} + X_i' \Gamma + \beta_{P \rightarrow P'} \cdot F_i^{P'} + \varepsilon_i, \quad (4)$$

¹³More specifically, for each treated name, we select 20 placebo names that minimize the Euclidean distance in the mean name frequency and linear frequency trend over the ten years before the election.

where i denotes an individual born in year $t(i)$ in state $b(i)$. The outcome C_i^P equals one if individual i has at least one child with a political name associated with party P . Analogously, F_i^R equals one if individual i has a political name associated with party P' . For notation, we let $P, P' \in 0, R, D$, where $P = 0$ means that the name is either Republican or Democratic, whereas R and D denote, respectively, Republican and Democratic names. In all regressions, we nonparametrically control for the father's birth year ($\alpha_{b(i)}$). The term X_i includes individual-level controls, which we include sequentially in separate regressions. These include: the census wave in which individuals are recorded, the child's birth year, race, state of birth, literacy status, a dummy for individuals residing in Southern states, residence state, residence county, and occupation. Standard errors are clustered at the individual level.

Under our interpretation of names as political signals, the coefficient $\beta_{P \rightarrow P'}$ captures how a father's preference for party P' influences the son's preference for party P . When $P = P'$, we refer to $\beta_{P \rightarrow P}$ as quantifying the degree of *persistence* of political preferences across generations. When $P \neq P'$, $\beta_{P \rightarrow P'}$ captures the degree of intergenerational *mobility* in political preferences. Importantly, not all parents have a political name, and not all children do. We thus estimate equation (4) both on the full sample controlling for F_i^0 (i.e., an indicator equal to one for parents with a political name and zero otherwise), as well as on the restricted sample of individuals with a political name, who also give a political name to at least one of their children. The two samples yield qualitatively similar estimates, suggesting moderate selection into the decision to give children political names.

4.2 Individual-Level Evidence of Intergenerational Transmission of Political Preferences

We present the baseline results in Table II. Panel A reports the estimates obtained on the full population of approximately 18.5 million individuals with at least one child. Panel B reports estimates from a restricted sample of 3.5 million individuals who bear a political name and give their children a political name.

Column (1) reports the regression between children with generically political names ($C_i^P = C_i^0$) and parents with generically political names ($F_i^P = F_i^0$). In this case, $\beta_{0 \rightarrow 0}$ captures the probability that a parent with a political name gives a political name to at least one of his children. Insofar as the decision to use political names captures the salience of politics within a family, then $\beta_{0 \rightarrow 0}$ quantifies whether individuals born to politically engaged parents remain politically engaged. The estimated $\hat{\beta}_{0 \rightarrow 0}$ provides strong evidence in this direction. Parents with a political name are 19.2% more likely to give their child a political name. This corresponds to a 45.6% increase relative to the mean. To put this magnitude into perspective, recent evidence from Swedish register data indicates that children born to parents who vote are approximately 40% more likely to vote (Lindgren and Oskarsson, 2023). Although political naming is a symbolic rather than behavioral measure of political engagement, the magnitude of $\hat{\beta}_{0 \rightarrow 0}$ is therefore comparable to existing estimates of intergenerational persistence in political participation.

Columns (2) and (5) report the "persistence" regressions. In these specifications, the left- and right-hand-side political name variables refer to the same party. Hence, column (2) reports the $\hat{\beta}_{R \rightarrow R}$ coef-

Table II. Intergenerational Persistence of Political Preferences by Party Affiliation

	Child's Name is:				
	(1) Political	(2) Republican	(3) Democratic	(4) Republican	(5) Democratic
Panel A. Entire Population					
Father: Political Name	0.192*** (0.006)	0.017*** (0.002)	0.042*** (0.004)	0.061*** (0.004)	0.002 (0.002)
Father: Republican Name		0.076*** (0.006)	-0.064*** (0.006)		
Father: Democratic Name				-0.068*** (0.005)	0.068*** (0.008)
# Observations	18,523,791	18,523,791	18,523,791	18,523,791	18,523,791
Mean Dep. Var.	0.420	0.115	0.134	0.115	0.134
Panel B. Parents and Children with Political Names					
Father: Republican Name		0.163*** (0.009)	-0.116*** (0.013)		
Father: Democratic Name				-0.093*** (0.007)	0.172*** (0.019)
# Observations		3,462,960	3,462,960	3,462,960	3,462,960
Mean Dep. Var.		0.247	0.276	0.247	0.276
Census-Wave FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Notes. This table reports the baseline estimates of the intergenerational persistence and mobility of political preferences. The unit of observation is an individual; the sample comprises native-born men with at least one son. Men are born between 1830 and 1910; children are born between 1850 and 1940. Panel A reports the full-population estimates; in Panel B, the sample only includes parents with a political name who give a political name to at least one of their children. The dependent variable is: in column (1), an indicator for children with a political name; in columns (2) and (4) (resp. 3 and 5), an indicator for children with a Republican (resp. Democratic) name. The coefficients report the estimates $\hat{\beta}_{P \rightarrow P'}$ coefficient from equation (4). Each regression includes fixed effects for the census wave and the father's year of birth. Standard errors are clustered at the individual level. Referenced on pages: 15, 17, 19.

: $p < 0.01$, : $p < 0.05$, : $p < 0.10$

ficient that quantifies the probability that an individual born to Republican parents remains Republican, whereas column (5) reports the $\hat{\beta}_{D \rightarrow D}$ coefficient, which quantifies the persistence of Democratic preferences. In both cases, we find large and highly statistically significant estimates. An individual with a Republican name is 7.6% more likely to confer their children a Republican name. This corresponds to approximately 66% of the mean. Similarly, an individual born to a Democratic parent is 6.8% more likely to name their child after a Democratic politician elected within 10 years of their child's birth year, which corresponds to 51% of the mean. Using a survey of approximately 1,700 high-school seniors in the US, Jennings et al. (2009) document that approximately 56% of children in their late teens identify with the same party as their parents, while this correspondence decreases to 40% for young adults in their mid-20s. Persistence, however, is higher in highly politicized families, where same-party affiliation between children and parents is approximately 70%. Since it is plausi-

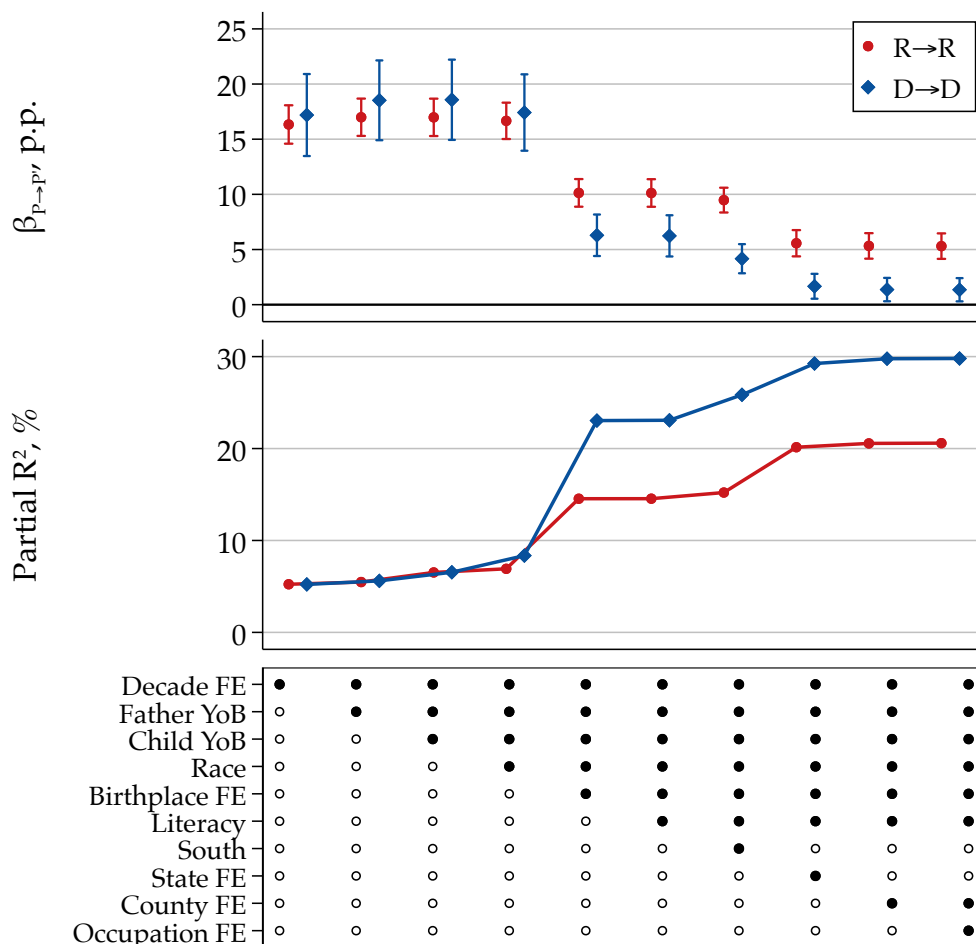
ble that individuals who choose a political name for their children are, on average, more politicized, our estimates are remarkably consistent with existing benchmarks, notwithstanding differences in measurement and sample composition.

Columns (3) and (4) move from persistence to intergenerational “mobility.” In these regressions, the child’s name’s party is the opposite of the father’s. Thus, column (3) estimates the probability that a Republican father chooses a Democratic name for his son ($\hat{\beta}_{R \rightarrow D}$), whereas column (4) estimates the opposite transition probability from Democratic to Republican ($\hat{\beta}_{D \rightarrow R}$). We find that a Republican father is approximately 6.4% less likely to name their child after a Democratic politician. This translates to a 47.7% lower likelihood of the outcome variable relative to the mean. Similarly, a Democratic father is 6.8% less likely to choose a Democratic name for his child, corresponding to a 59.1% lower likelihood relative to the mean. Using survey data, the seminal work by Jennings and Niemi (1968) implies a 12.7% probability of Republican-to-Democratic intergenerational mobility and a 7.3% probability of Democratic-to-Republican intergenerational mobility. Our estimates sit on the lower end of theirs, implying a lower degree of intergenerational mobility, although it is plausible that, if the degree of persistence in political mobility across generations varied over time, this difference is partly explained by the different periods we analyze. We return to this possibility in Section 5.1.

Panel B of Table II reports the estimates for the restricted sample of individuals with a political name who choose a political name for their children. The results, when compared with the means of the dependent variables in the two samples, are qualitatively and quantitatively consistent with the estimates obtained for the full population.

How robust is the association between parent and child political preferences? Census data contain rich individual-level information. The top panel in Figure III displays how the baseline estimate $\hat{\beta}_{P \rightarrow P}$ varies as we include these additional controls in regression (4). The second panel reports the R^2 of each regression, while the bottom panel displays the controls included in each specification. Red circles denote Republican persistence $\hat{\beta}_{R \rightarrow R}$, while the blue squares refer to Democratic persistence ($\hat{\beta}_{D \rightarrow D}$). In the baseline specification without controls, the parental political name index accounts for about 7.5% of the variation in children’s political names. Besides F_i^P , there are two factors that explain a sizeable share of the variation in C_i^P , and, consequently, affect the estimated $\hat{\beta}_{P \rightarrow P}$ term: the state of birth and the state of residence. Origin state FEs explain approximately 20% of the variation in C_i^P , with state of residence FEs accounting for an additional 5-8%, depending on the party. The persistence coefficient drops from about 0.15 in the baseline specification to 0.05–0.10 upon including origin state FEs to 0.025–0.05 when adding state of residence FEs. Even in the most saturated specification, $\hat{\beta}_{P \rightarrow P}$ remains positive and highly statistically significant for both parties. These patterns are consistent with existing evidence that political preferences are shaped by both family transmission and local environments (Tedin, 1974; Cantoni and Pons, 2022; Brown et al., 2023). They also motivate the analysis presented in the next section, which allows us to separate more directly the family component of political persistence from the influence of place.

Figure III. Intergenerational Transmission of Political Preferences: Specification Curve



Notes. This figure shows how the baseline estimates of the intergenerational persistence of political preferences vary across different regression specifications (4). The unit of observation is an individual; the sample comprises native-born men with at least one son. Men are born between 1830 and 1910; children are born between 1850 and 1940. The sample only includes parents with a political name who give a political name to at least one of their children. Blue dots report the $D \rightarrow D$ estimates; Red dots report the $R \rightarrow R$ estimates. The top panel reports the coefficient estimate $\hat{\beta}_{P \rightarrow P'}$ from equation (4) for different controls included in the regression. The middle panel reports the regression R^2 for the various specifications. The bottom panel displays the included controls and fixed effects in each regression. Standard errors are clustered at the individual level; bands report 95% confidence intervals. Referenced on page: 17.

4.3 Movers' Design

Regression (4) is useful in that it allows us to measure whether the political preferences of a given individual are aligned with their parents', but the estimates $\hat{\beta}_{P \rightarrow P'}$ cannot be interpreted as capturing the causal effect of parental political preferences on one's political preferences. Parent-child correlations may reflect direct parental socialization, but they may also capture shared social environments, parental socioeconomic status, religion, ethnicity, local political contexts, assortative mating, or stable family traits that affect both generations (see, among others, Alford et al., 2005; Jennings et al., 2009; Ojeda and Hatemi, 2015; Hatemi and Ojeda, 2021).

To partly address these challenges and provide a more plausibly-causal estimate of the influence of parental political preferences on political behavior, we leverage a movers' design along the lines of Chetty and Hendren (2018). The general idea is to exploit individuals who move between places

(henceforth, “movers”) to disentangle the effects of local factors, including local electoral outcomes and voting behavior, from the family’s effect in shaping political preferences across generations. Because individual i is born in origin county $o(i)$ and reveals his political preferences once he has settled in destination county $d(i)$, one can compare him with non-movers who are born and live in the same county to distinguish how local factors shape the formation of political preferences. A similar methodology has been employed by Brown et al. (2023) to study how childhood environment influences later-in-life political behavior. This analysis is based on the individual-level sample, in which we include only individuals whom we can link to the first census in which they appear to trace their county of origin, as discussed in Section 2.3.2.

We begin by estimating (4) on the subsample of movers. There are approximately 6.6 million movers in our full dataset, and 1 million in the restricted dataset of individuals with political names. Table III reports the result. The estimated persistence coefficients for Republicans (column 1) and Democrats (column 4) on the sample of movers are virtually indistinguishable from the estimate we obtain on the universe of the population. This pattern provides reassuring evidence that movers are not selected from the rest of the population with respect to the persistence of political preferences. To estimate how movers compare to non-movers in a more systematic way, we estimate the following empirical specification:

$$C_i^P = \alpha_{o(i) \times f(i)} + \alpha_{d(i) \times t(i)} + X_i' \Gamma + \beta_1 \cdot F_i^P + \beta_2 \cdot Mover_i + \beta_3 \cdot (Mover_i \times F_i^P) + \varepsilon_i, \quad (5)$$

where $o(i)$ and $d(i)$ respectively denote the county where individual i is born and the county where the child of i is born. The terms $f(i)$ and $t(i)$ denote the year of birth of i and of their child, while $Mover_i$ is an indicator variable equal to one when $o(i) \neq d(i)$ and zero otherwise. The baseline specification includes controls X_i for the census wave when i is observed, race, number of children, occupation, literacy status, and state of birth. By controlling for $\alpha_{o(i) \times f(i)}$ and $\alpha_{d(i) \times t(i)}$, we compare movers and non-movers born in the same county and cohort, while also holding fixed the county and year in which the child is born. The coefficient β_1 measures intergenerational persistence among non-movers, while β_3 tests whether this persistence differs for movers. Thus, $\beta_1 + \beta_3$ is the persistence coefficient among movers.

Columns (2) and (5) report the estimates for Republicans and Democrats, respectively. We find a positive and highly statistically significant estimate for β_1 for both parties and samples. Compared to the estimates displayed in Table II, the intergenerational persistence term is about one-fourth as large. The son of a Republican (resp. Democratic) is approximately 4.4% (resp. 4.1%) more likely to choose a Republican (resp. Democratic) name for their child, corresponding to a 37% (resp. 34%) higher likelihood relative to the mean. This difference is explained by the inclusion of origin-county fixed effects, which, in this specification, are further interacted with parent birth year fixed effects ($\alpha_{o(i) \times f(i)}$). By contrast, we find very small and largely insignificant estimates of β_2 and β_3 , indicating that, on the one hand, movers display a similar probability compared to non-movers to choose political names for their children ($\hat{\beta}_2 \approx 0$). On the other hand, $\hat{\beta}_3 \approx 0$ shows no differential persistence in political preferences for individuals who move to different counties.

Table III. Movers and the Intergenerational Persistence of Political Preferences

	Child's Name is:					
	(1) Republican	(2) Republican	(3) Republican	(4) Democratic	(5) Democratic	(6) Democratic
Panel A. Entire Population						
F_R	0.043*** (0.001)	0.044*** (0.001)	0.047*** (0.001)			
F_D				0.052*** (0.001)	0.041*** (0.001)	0.054*** (0.001)
Mover		0.002*** (0.000)			0.000 (0.000)	
$F_R \times \text{Mover}$		-0.000 (0.001)				
$F_D \times \text{Mover}$					0.011*** (0.001)	
Democratic County			-0.001 (0.001)			
Republican County						0.005*** (0.001)
$F_R \times \text{Democratic County}$			-0.038*** (0.001)			
$F_D \times \text{Republican County}$						-0.045*** (0.002)
# Observations	6,559,984	11,758,925	6,522,712	6,559,984	11,758,925	6,522,712
Mean Dep. Var.	0.115	0.120	0.115	0.124	0.121	0.125
Panel B. Parents and Children with Political Names						
F_R	0.046*** (0.001)	0.047*** (0.001)	0.048*** (0.001)			
F_D				0.019*** (0.001)	0.019*** (0.001)	0.020*** (0.001)
Mover		-0.000 (0.001)			-0.001** (0.001)	
$F_R \times \text{Mover}$		0.000 (0.002)				
$F_D \times \text{Mover}$					-0.002 (0.001)	
Democratic County			-0.002 (0.005)			
Republican County						-0.007** (0.003)
$F_R \times \text{Democratic County}$			-0.023*** (0.003)			
$F_D \times \text{Republican County}$						-0.012*** (0.004)
# Observations	1,017,484	1,983,016	1,017,056	1,017,484	1,983,016	1,017,056
Mean Dep. Var.	0.262	0.277	0.262	0.283	0.262	0.283
Orig. County-Cohort FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Dest. County-Cohort FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Census Wave FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Individual Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sample	Movers	Full	Movers	Movers	Full	Movers

Notes. This table reports the estimates of the intergenerational persistence of political preferences among movers. The unit of observation is an individual; the sample comprises native-born men with at least one son who are linked to the first census when they are recorded. Men are born between 1860 and 1910; children are born between 1890 and 1940. Panel A reports the full-population estimates; in Panel B, the sample only includes parents with a political name who give a political name to at least one of their children. The dependent variable is: in column (1), an indicator for children with a political name; in columns (2) and (4) (resp. 3 and 5), an indicator for children with a Republican (resp. Democratic) name. Columns (1) and (4) report the estimates for regression (4) on the sample of movers; columns (2) and (5) report the estimates for regression (5) for movers and non-movers; columns (3) and (6) report the estimates for regression (6) for the sample of movers. Each regression includes fixed effects for origin county-by-father's birth year, destination county-by-child's birth year, census wave, and individual-level controls (race, number of children, occupation, literacy status, and state of birth). Standard errors are clustered at the individual level. Referenced on pages: 19, 21.

: $p < 0.01$, : $p < 0.05$, : $p < 0.10$

These patterns point to a role for both area-level and family-level transmission. The attenuation of $\hat{\beta}_1$ relative to specification (4) indicates that a large share of the raw parent-child association reflects local environments: individuals born in the same county and cohort are exposed to similar partisan contexts and political shocks. Once these origin-cohort factors are absorbed, however, $\hat{\beta}_1$ remains positive, highly significant, and quantitatively large. This residual persistence is identified among individuals from the same origin-county-by-birth-year cell and therefore points to transmission operating within families rather than only through shared local environments. The estimates of β_2 and β_3 reinforce this interpretation. The family component of political transmission appears to be portable across places: moving to a different county does not break the association between the father’s political name and the party content of the child’s name.

To better understand how local environments shape political transmission, we exploit variation in the partisan environment of movers’ destination counties. We define $Shock_{d(i)}^P$ as an indicator equal to one if party P receives at least 65 percent of the county-level two-party vote, averaged over the decade in which the mover’s child is born. On the subsample of movers, we estimate

$$C_i^P = \alpha_{o(i) \times f(i)} + \alpha_{d(i) \times t(i)} + X_i' \Gamma + \beta_1 \cdot F_i^P + \beta_2 \cdot Shock_{d(i)}^{P'} + \beta_3 \cdot (F_i^P \times Shock_{d(i)}^{P'}) + \varepsilon_{i,,} \quad (6)$$

where $P' \neq P$. Thus, the destination shock is defined for the party opposite to the parent’s political name. In the Republican specification, for example, $Shock_{d(i)}^D$ captures exposure to a strongly Democratic destination. The coefficient β_2 measures how such exposure affects Republican naming among individuals without Republican parental names, while β_3 measures whether this effect differs for individuals with Republican parental names. This specification thus tests whether destination political environments attenuate or reinforce family transmission.

Columns (3) and (6) of Table III report the results. The coefficient on parental political naming remains positive, highly statistically significant, and comparable in magnitude to the estimates above. Destination partisan shocks have little effect on average naming behavior: $\hat{\beta}_2$ is small and mostly statistically indistinguishable from zero. However, exposure to an opposing-party environment weakens within-family persistence. Republican fathers who move to strongly Democratic counties are less likely to choose Republican names for their children; analogously, Democratic fathers who move to strongly Republican counties are less likely to choose Democratic names. Quantitatively, the implied effect, $\hat{\beta}_2 + \hat{\beta}_3$, is roughly one-half as large as the baseline association between C_i^P and F_i^P . Thus, family transmission is portable across places, but not invariant to local political environments: sufficiently strong destination shocks attenuate, though do not eliminate, inherited partisan attachments.

The magnitude of our estimates is consistent with evidence from Brown et al. (2023) that childhood exposure to local political environments explains 40–50 percent of subsequent similarity in partisanship and turnout. Within the sample of movers, we find that exposure to opposing-party environments weakens the transmission of political preferences between father and child by approximately 50%. Thus, within-family intergenerational transmission accounts for a substantial portion of the variation in political preferences even in this demanding empirical setting.

4.4 Robustness Analysis

One concern with our measure is that naming conventions may confound our interpretation of names as signals of political preferences. We implement a number of exercises to verify the severity of this concern. In Table A.2, we exclude the first-born child, who may be disproportionately more likely to be named after their father or grandfather. In Table A.3, we exclude parent-child pairs with the same name. Table A.4 displays the results when controlling for parental name fixed effects, thereby comparing sons of men with the same name. Across all specifications, results remain quantitatively unchanged.

A separate issue concerns how we measure political names. First, in the baseline specification, a name could be associated with both the Republican and the Democratic parties.¹⁴ Table A.5 shows that results remain unchanged when excluding such ambiguities. Second, the census includes the year of birth, implying that some children born in the election year may have been born before it. In Table A.6, we exclude those cases from the sample and confirm the baseline results. Third, the results pool together shocks to the political connotation of names coming from presidential, gubernatorial, and congressional elections. In Table A.7, we split the estimated intergenerational transmission estimate by the office of the newly elected politician, and find that the results hold separately for all three cases.¹⁵ Fourth, in the baseline specification, a name in a given year acquires political content if a politician with the same name was elected into office in the preceding ten years. In Figure B.9, we show that the results remain quantitatively unchanged—and, if anything, the mobility coefficients increase in size—for shorter windows of 5 and 7 years.

The movers' design employs the intergenerational links developed by Price et al. (2021) and Buckles et al. (2025) to identify parents' county of origin. These links are known to cover a non-representative sample of the population (Althoff et al., 2025). In Table A.8, we re-weight the resulting sample to be representative of the entire population and find quantitatively unchanged results.¹⁶

A separate class of concerns relates to the sample composition. First, the census contains the cross-sectional household composition, implying that we do not know whether some children had already left the household when we observe them.¹⁷ Figure B.10 indicates that the results remain stable when looking at sub-samples where the probability of observing complete households would be higher. Second, our estimates may be disproportionately driven by specific (selected) areas of the United States. Figure B.11 shows evidence that, on the contrary, no single state appears to be driving the

¹⁴For example, a child called "Rutherford" born within ten years of the election of Rutherford B. Hayes in a state where, in the preceding ten years, a Democratic congressman or governor called "Rutherford" will have a name that is associated with both parties.

¹⁵The estimates using only presidential names are not significant in the full-population regression (see Panel A of Table A.7). We do not view this as concerning because very few individuals in this large sample have a political name. Results are more robust in Panel B, where we restrict the sample to parent-child pairs with political names.

¹⁶Specifically, we estimate a regression between the linkage probability and census wave, race, birthplace, literacy, father's year of birth, number of children in the household, and occupational income score. We then construct inverse-probability weights by dividing the unconditional linkage probability by the predicted linkage probability, and weight each observation by its inverse-probability weight.

¹⁷In practice, we restrict the sample to parents aged 30 to 40 to minimize this concern. Since the average age at first birth was approximately 25, most children would still reside in their father's household when their father was 40.

results. Similarly, since our dataset covers more than one century, our results may depend on specific periods rather than a meaningful “average” level of intergenerational transmission. Figure B.12 shows that the baseline estimates remain stable when excluding three distinctive periods (the Civil War, the Reconstruction, and the New Deal) from the sample.

Finally, in our baseline regressions, we cluster the standard errors by the father’s year of birth. Statistical significance, however, remains unchanged under alternative clustering approaches (see Figure B.13).

5 Stylized Facts on the Intergenerational Transmission of Political Preferences

In this section, we employ our novel measure to explore how persistent (or mobile) political preferences have evolved in time, between 1850 and 1940, in Section 5.1, and space, at the county level for the entire United States, in Section 5.2. Then, we examine the relationship between electoral competition and the stickiness of political preferences across generations in Section 5.3.

5.1 The Intergenerational Stability of Political Preferences Over the Long Run

Existing methods for estimating the intergenerational transmission of political preferences rely on either surveys or register data (Jennings and Niemi, 1968; Jennings et al., 2009; Ojeda and Hatemi, 2015; Cesarini et al., 2014). By construction, neither of those data sources allows for the study of the historical evolution of political persistence and mobility across generations. The census-based measure developed in this paper, on the other hand, is especially well suited to documenting long-run patterns.

We employ a variation of specification (4), where we interact the name index of the father with a set of categorical variables that code the birth year of their child:

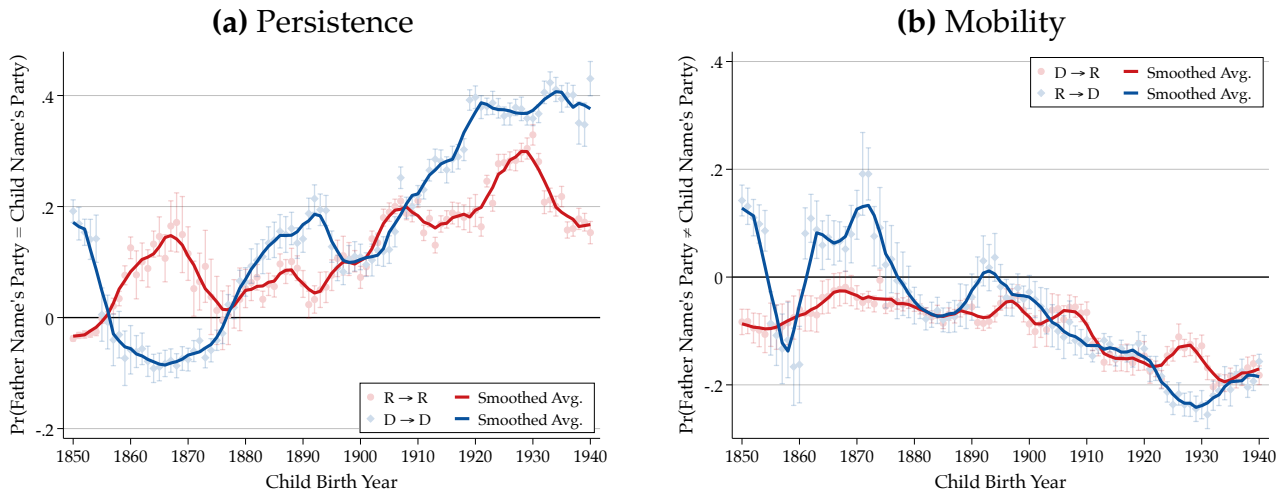
$$C_i^P = \alpha_{t(i)} + X_i' \Gamma + \sum_{\tau=1850}^{1940} \beta_{P \rightarrow P'}^\tau \cdot \left(F_i^{P'} \times I(t(i) = \tau) \right) + \varepsilon_i, \quad (7)$$

where, as in the previous analysis, $t(i)$ denotes the birth year of individual i ’s child, X_i includes a set of individual-level controls (census decade and father’s birth year), and $I(t(i) = \tau)$ is a variable equal to one if the child of i is born in year τ and zero otherwise. Coefficients $\{\beta_{P \rightarrow P'}^\tau\}_{\tau=1850}^{1940}$ capture the evolution of the intergenerational persistence (when $P = P'$) and mobility (when $P \neq P'$) over the period 1850 to 1940. Standard errors are clustered at the individual level.

Figure IV presents the results. In Figure IVa, we display the persistence estimates associated with (7) when $P = P'$ for Republicans (in red) and Democrats (in blue). In Figure IVb, we display the mobility estimates which capture the time-varying probability of Republican fathers selecting Democratic names (in blue) and Democratic fathers selecting Republican names (in red). In both panels, each dot reports a coefficient $\hat{\beta}_{P \rightarrow P'}^\tau$, while the solid lines display a five-year moving average along the estimated coefficients.

Both figures document rich dynamics over time. Persistence in Republican partisanship remains

Figure IV. Intergenerational Persistence and Mobility of Political Preferences



Notes. This figure displays the evolution of the persistence and mobility of intergenerational political preferences. The red (resp. blue) dots in panel IVa display the persistence estimates $\hat{\beta}_{R \rightarrow R}^{\tau}$ (resp. $\hat{\beta}_{D \rightarrow D}^{\tau}$) from equation (7). The red (resp. blue) dots in panel IVb display the mobility estimates $\hat{\beta}_{D \rightarrow R}^{\tau}$ (resp. $\hat{\beta}_{R \rightarrow D}^{\tau}$) from equation (7). The unit of observation is an individual; the sample comprises native-born men with at least one son. Men are born between 1830 and 1910; children are born between 1850 and 1940. The sample includes parents with a political name who give a political name to at least one of their children. Regressions include census wave and father's birth year fixed effects. Standard errors are clustered at the individual level; bands report 95% confidence intervals. The lines overlay a five-year moving average across the coefficients. Referenced on pages: 23, 24.

positive throughout the sample period (see Figure IVa). It was highest during the Civil War (1861–1865) and Reconstruction (1865–1877) periods, when political identity plausibly was most salient, and declined during the Gilded Age (Silbey, 1991; Calhoun, 2011). Persistence in Democratic partisanship was low during the Civil War and Reconstruction periods. This pattern is primarily driven by Northern Democrats, who shift toward the Republican Party during the war years. Interestingly, however, preferences for the Democratic Party became more intergenerationally persistent after Reconstruction and remained so until 1900. This pattern is consistent with the contemporaneous consolidation of the Democratic Party in Southern states and the formation of the so-called “Solid South” coalition, which ensured the dominance of Democratic candidates in presidential elections in formerly confederate states until the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Key, 1949; Kousser, 1974).

Over time, both Republican and Democratic preferences become more persistent. By 1940, individuals born to Democratic parents were about 40 percent more likely than others to choose a Democratic name for their child. Democratic partisanship, in other words, became almost twice as persistent as at the peak of the post-Reconstruction era. This rise is consistent with the consolidation of the New Deal coalition, which restructured Democratic support around Southern whites, Catholics, urban voters, Jews, African Americans, and blue-collar workers (Sundquist, 1983; Caughey et al., 2020). Republican partisanship also became more persistent over time, although the increase is less pronounced. It peaks in the years leading to the Great Depression and declines thereafter, consistent with disaffection with the Republican Party during the Hoover presidency and the partisan realignment of the early 1930s (Achen and Bartels, 2016).

Intergenerational political mobility displays less volatility (see Figure IVb). Cross-party transi-

tions remain relatively uncommon throughout the sample period. The main exception occurs during Reconstruction and its aftermath, when transitions from Republican to Democratic names become more frequent, consistent with the erosion of Republican support in the South and the consolidation of Democratic dominance in former Confederate states (Key, 1949). Mobility declines toward the end of the sample period, mirroring rising intergenerational persistence documented above.

Overall, this analysis highlights increasing “frictions” in U.S. political mobility over time. As party-specific preferences became more persistent within families, cross-party transitions became increasingly rare. These patterns are consistent with the view, originally proposed by Lipset and Rokkan (1967), that party structures were delineated around the 1920s, and that partisan identity consolidated thereafter. Our evidence indicates that a prior process of consolidation had been underway since the beginning of the century, and continued at least until WW2.

5.2 Spatial Variation in the Persistence of Political Preferences

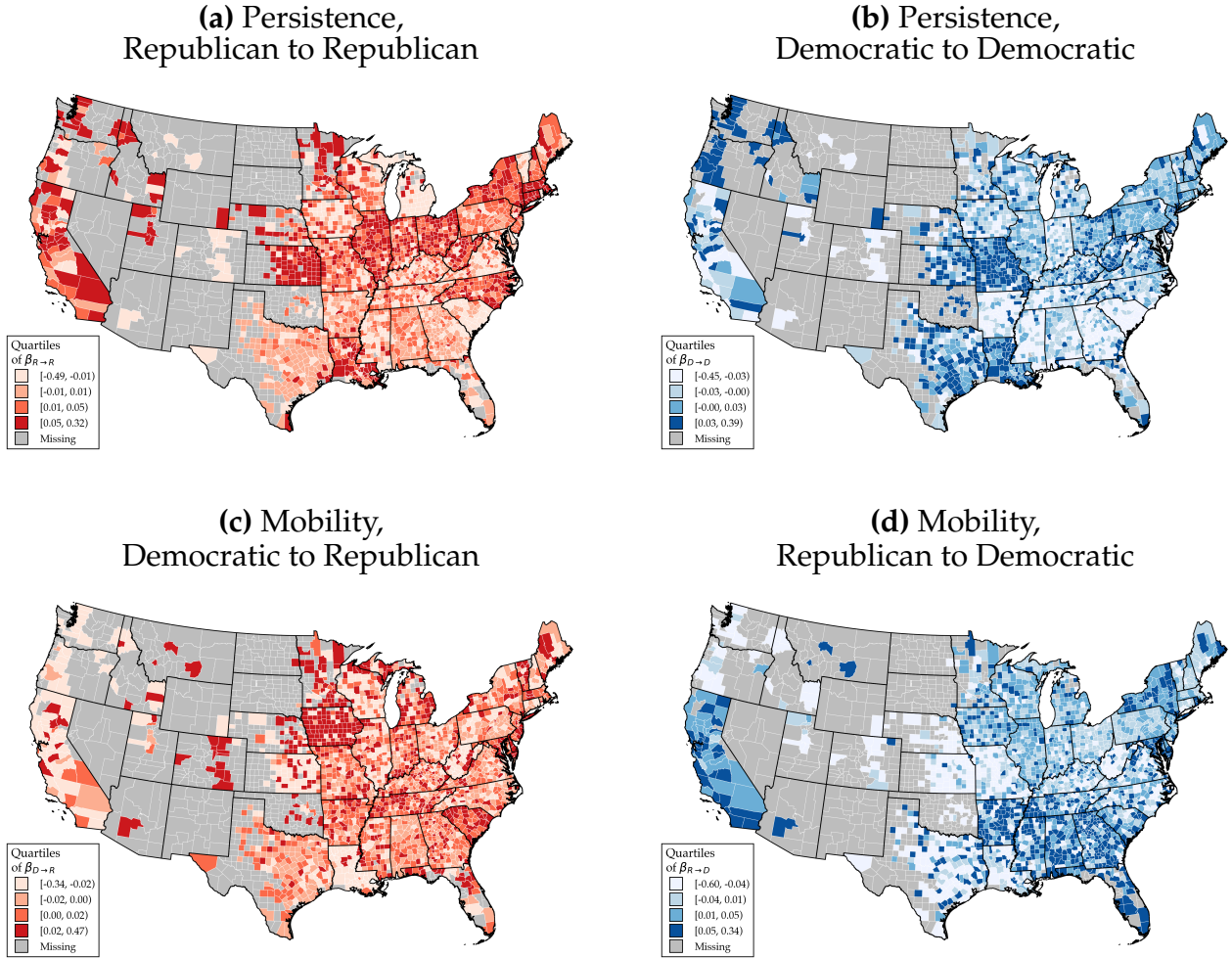
A second limitation of existing survey-based approaches to measuring the intergenerational transmission of political preferences is that the relatively small samples they rely on preclude the study of spatial heterogeneity in the persistence and mobility of political preferences across generations.

Given the large sample we employ, we can explore these patterns at a high level of spatial granularity. Formally, we estimate approximately 3,000 regressions following the specification described in (4), except that, in each regression, the sample comprises individuals living in a single county. Let $\beta_{P \rightarrow P'}^c$ denote the coefficient associated with the generic county c . In Figure V, we plot the spatial distribution of the $\hat{\beta}_{P \rightarrow P'}^c$ estimates for all counties with at least 100 individuals in our sample. Figure Va and Figure Vb respectively display Republican ($\hat{\beta}_{R \rightarrow R}^c$) and Democratic ($\hat{\beta}_{D \rightarrow D}^c$) persistence. Figure Vc and Figure Vd, instead, display the distribution of Democratic-to-Republican ($\hat{\beta}_{D \rightarrow R}^c$) and Republican-to-Democratic ($\hat{\beta}_{R \rightarrow D}^c$) mobility. Each map plots the quartiles of the distribution of $\hat{\beta}_{P \rightarrow P'}^c$ and lighter to darker shades indicate increasing values of the estimated coefficient.

We uncover substantial spatial heterogeneity in intergenerational political transmission. Republican persistence is largest in Northern states, particularly in the Midwest and the Northeast regions (see Figure Va). This is not surprising given that Union states remained solidly Republican until the Great Depression period (Kleppner, 1979; Silbey, 1991). Perhaps surprisingly, North Carolina and Louisiana display high rates of persistence in Republican-to-Republican intergenerational transmission, as does California. North Carolina had unusually durable pockets of Southern Republicanism. These were tied to three groups: Black Republican voters after Reconstruction, white Unionist/mountain Republicans, and the Republican-Populist Fusion coalition of the 1890s. Fusion politics was strong enough to win state elections in 1894 and 1896 (Edmonds, 1951). In Louisiana, Republicans drew support from freedmen, white Unionists, and urban political networks, which endowed the Party with a durable biracial Reconstruction base (Tunnell, 1992). Intergenerational mobility in favor of the Republican Party shows substantial heterogeneity but no clear spatial pattern (see Figure Vc).

Democratic persistence exhibits similarly large variation across counties, as displayed in Figure Vb. Persistence is highest in Missouri, Texas, and Louisiana, consistent with the historical strength of

Figure V. Spatial Distribution of the Persistence and Mobility of Political Preferences



Notes. This figure displays spatial variation in the persistence and mobility of intergenerational political preferences. We estimate regression (4) separately for each county and report the variation in the estimates $\hat{\beta}_{P \rightarrow P'}$. Panels Va and Vb respectively display the distribution of $\hat{\beta}_{R \rightarrow R}^c$ and $\hat{\beta}_{D \rightarrow D}^c$. Panels Vc and Vd respectively display the distribution of $\hat{\beta}_{D \rightarrow R}^c$ and $\hat{\beta}_{R \rightarrow D}^c$. In all cases, the unit of observation is an individual; the sample comprises native-born men with at least one son. Men are born between 1830 and 1910; children are born between 1850 and 1940. The sample includes parents with a political name who give a political name to at least one of their children. Regressions include census wave and father’s year of birth fixed effects. The distribution of $\hat{\beta}_{P \rightarrow P'}$ is binned into quartiles; lighter to darker shades of color indicate higher values of $\hat{\beta}_{P \rightarrow P'}$. We do not display counties with fewer than 100 individuals in the sample. Referenced on page: 25.

Democratic political identities in the South and border South. Interestingly, the “Deep South” states—Arkansas, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina—do not display marked intergenerational persistence in Democratic support. All of them, however, exhibit substantial Republican-to-Democratic mobility, as shown in Figure Vd. This pattern is consistent with the collapse of the Reconstruction-era Republican coalition and the consolidation of Democratic one-party rule through political and racial violence, and suffrage restriction (Kousser, 1974).

An additional pattern that emerges from comparing spatial patterns of persistence and mobility is that smaller counties, especially in the West and the Great Plains, exhibit, on average, higher persistence of political preferences across generations. In these smaller communities, partisan naming choices may reflect conformity and community enforcement, making deviations from inherited

political identity more costly and, therefore, less common (e.g., see Kandori, 1992).

County-level estimates may overstate spatial heterogeneity because sampling error is larger in less-populated counties. We address this concern by applying empirical Bayes shrinkage, which pulls imprecisely estimated coefficients toward the national mean. Figure B.14 displays the association between the raw and the shrunken county-level persistence and mobility estimates, while Figure B.15 reproduces the maps using the shrunken estimates. Shrinkage reduces the cross-county standard deviation by approximately one-half; however, it broadly preserves the spatial patterns we highlighted.

5.3 Political Competition and the Persistence of Political Preferences

We conclude the analysis with suggestive evidence on the relationship between political competition and the persistence of political preferences across generations. Theoretically, the relationship between these two variables is ambiguous. On the one hand, low levels of competition may allow partisan identities to become embedded in local culture, such as churches, ethnic communities, newspapers, neighborhoods, and families, thereby increasing intergenerational transmission (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967; Beck and Jennings, 1991; Green et al., 2002). On the other hand, competitive electoral episodes raise political salience, increase campaign contact, and generate more political discussion within households (Cox and Munger, 1989; Sears and Valentino, 1997). Dinas (2014), for example, shows that children of politically engaged parents are more likely to initially adopt their parents' views, but are also more likely to abandon them later as a result of their own higher political engagement.

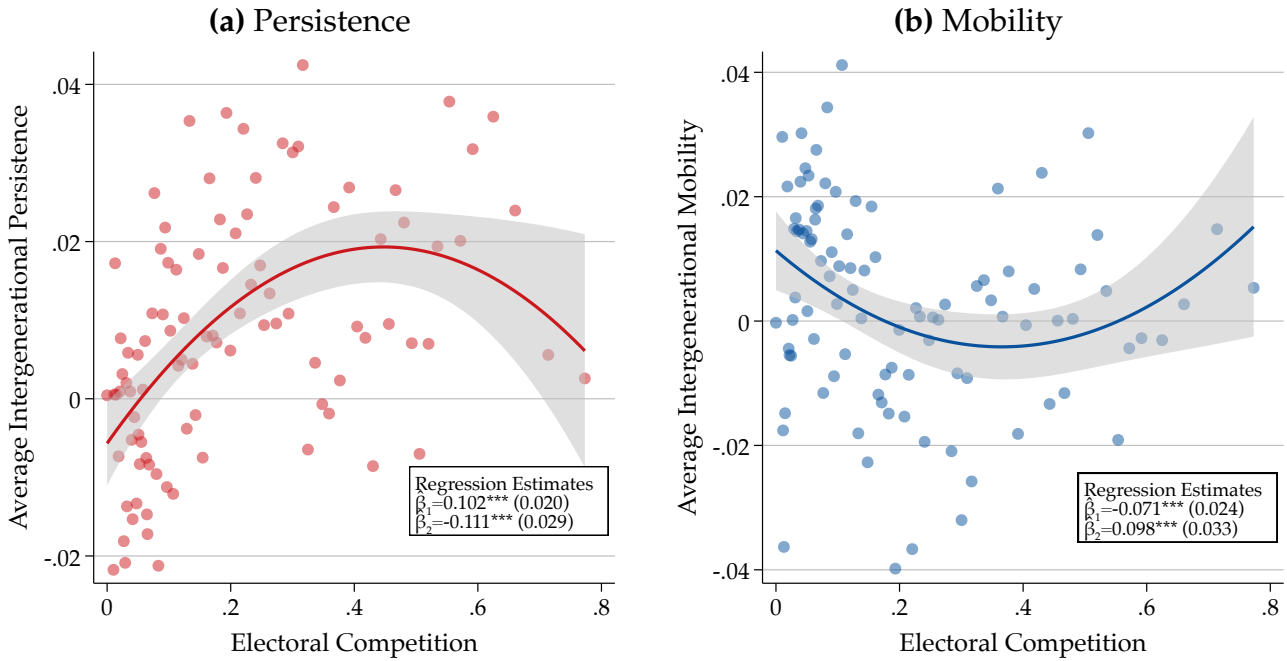
Figure VI reports the cross-sectional relationship between electoral competition and the intergenerational transmission of political preferences. Figure VIa focuses on persistence, while Figure VIb focuses on mobility. Both panels are binned scatter plots at the county level for the period 1850–1940. In Figure VIa, the y -axis reports, for each county, the average persistence coefficient, defined as $(\hat{\beta}_{R \rightarrow R}^c + \hat{\beta}_{D \rightarrow D}^c)/2$. In Figure VIb, the y -axis reports the analogous average mobility coefficient, defined as $(\hat{\beta}_{R \rightarrow D}^c + \hat{\beta}_{D \rightarrow R}^c)/2$. The x -axis reports our baseline measure of electoral competition: the share of elections in which the Republican-Democratic vote margin was below 10 percentage points. In each panel, we superimpose a quadratic fit between the two variables and report the coefficients from the associated regression.¹⁸ The estimates thus produced should be interpreted as correlations.

We find a markedly non-monotonic relationship between electoral competition and the intergenerational transmission of political preferences. Persistence follows an inverted-U pattern. At low levels of electoral competition, intergenerational persistence is limited. Persistence then increases as elections become more competitive, consistent with political competition raising the salience of partisan identities. However, this relationship reverses in the most competitive counties, where persistence declines, suggesting that highly contested environments may weaken the transmission of parental political preferences by exposing children to competing partisan cues.

Mobility displays the mirror-image pattern. It is relatively high in counties with little electoral

¹⁸Formally, we estimate the following regression: $\hat{\beta}_{P \rightarrow P'}^c = \alpha + Competition_c + Competition_c^2 + \varepsilon_c$. In Figure VIa, the dependent variable is defined as $\hat{\beta}_{P \rightarrow P'}^c = (\hat{\beta}_{R \rightarrow R}^c + \hat{\beta}_{D \rightarrow D}^c)/2$, whereas, in Figure VIb, it is $\hat{\beta}_{P \rightarrow P'}^c = (\hat{\beta}_{R \rightarrow D}^c + \hat{\beta}_{D \rightarrow R}^c)/2$.

Figure VI. Electoral Competition and the Intergenerational Transmission of Political Preferences



Notes. This figure displays a binned scatter plot between the persistence and mobility of intergenerational political preferences and the degree of electoral competition. The unit of observation is a county. The x -variable is the share of elections between 1850 and 1940 where the difference between Democratic and Republican votes was less than 10 percentage points. In panel [VIa](#), the y -variable is the average county-level estimated persistence coefficient $\hat{\beta}_{P \rightarrow P}^c = (\hat{\beta}_{R \rightarrow R}^c + \hat{\beta}_{D \rightarrow D}^c)/2$ obtained by estimating (4) separately for each county. Similarly, in panel [VIb](#), the y -variable is the average county-level estimated mobility coefficient $\hat{\beta}_{P \rightarrow P'}^c = (\hat{\beta}_{R \rightarrow D}^c + \hat{\beta}_{D \rightarrow R}^c)/2$. In both cases, the unit of observation is an individual; the sample comprises native-born men with at least one son. Men are born between 1830 and 1910; children are born between 1850 and 1940. The sample includes parents with a political name who give a political name to at least one of their children. Regressions include census wave and father's year of birth fixed effects. We discard counties with fewer than 100 individuals in the sample. Each panel overlays a quadratic fit between the two variables and the associated regression coefficient estimates. Referenced on page: [27](#).

competition, declines as competition increases, and then rises again in the most competitive environments. Thus, while moderate levels of competition are associated with stronger intergenerational persistence and lower mobility, very high levels of competition appear to reduce persistence and increase cross-party mobility across generations. ¹⁹

This pattern can be reconciled with the theoretical arguments discussed above. Moderate competition may strengthen transmission by increasing political salience. However, very high competition also exposes children to credible alternative partisan cues, weakening the influence of parental preferences. The low persistence observed in less-competitive counties instead suggests that systems dominated by a single party need not promote active intergenerational transmission, as political identity may be less relevant in such environments.

¹⁹It is worth noting that within-party persistence and mobility are not very correlated at the county level. Thus, the opposite concavity displayed in [Figure VIa](#) and [Figure VIb](#) is not a mechanical byproduct of two negatively correlated variables.

6 Conclusions

This paper develops a novel approach to measuring the intergenerational transmission of political preferences at the individual level and over the long run, and applies it to the United States between 1850 and 1940.

We first document that first names plausibly convey political signals about parents' political preferences. To do so, we show that the names of recently elected politicians (presidents and governors) enjoy large increases in popularity in the aftermath of their election. Political naming choices strongly co-move with actual voting patterns.

At the individual level, we document: (i) individuals with political names are disproportionately more likely to choose political names for their children, (ii) individuals with Republican (resp. Democratic) names are disproportionately more likely to choose Republican (resp. Democratic) names for their children, and (iii) individuals with Republican (resp. Democratic) names are disproportionately less likely to choose Democratic (resp. Republican) names for their children. To disentangle family transmission from environmental factors, we examine individuals who move between counties. Our estimates suggest that family-level and local factors each account for approximately half of the variation in intergenerational transmission of political preferences.

Finally, we use our measure to document new facts about the persistence and mobility of intergenerational political preferences over time and space, including a sustained rise in intergenerational "stickiness" between 1900 and 1940 and substantial geographic heterogeneity. These findings highlight the value of individual-level measures for studying where and when political identities persist across generations, and illustrate the broad applicability of our novel methodology.

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ONLINE APPENDIX

Call Me Rutherford: Names and the Intergenerational
Transmission of Political Preferences Over the Long Run

Davide M. COLUCCIA

June, 2026

A Additional Tables

Table A.1. Political Names and Voters’ Registration: Evidence from Contemporary Registration Data from Florida

	Democratic Name				Republican Name			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Registered Democrat	0.003*** (0.001)	0.005*** (0.000)	0.019*** (0.005)	0.041*** (0.004)	-0.002*** (0.000)	-0.004*** (0.000)	-0.014*** (0.004)	-0.034*** (0.003)
Political Name	0.740*** (0.009)	0.736*** (0.009)			0.171*** (0.008)	0.174*** (0.008)		
County FE	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Race FE	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Sample	Full	Full	Restricted	Restricted	Full	Full	Restricted	Restricted
# Individuals	5,953,304	5,953,304	852,864	852,864	5,953,304	5,953,304	852,864	852,864
Mean Dep. Var.	0.106	0.106	0.739	0.739	0.025	0.025	0.171	0.171

Notes. This table displays the association between our measure of political names and party registration data. The sample covers all male voters who appear in Florida’s voter registration data (accessed June 2026). In columns (1–4), the dependent variable is an indicator equal to one for individuals with a Democratic name; in columns (5–8), the dependent variable is one for individuals with a Republican name. The definitions of Republican and Democratic names are the same as in the main text, except that we include politicians elected through 2026. In columns (1–2) and (5–6), the sample includes the population universe, and the regressions control for a variable that equals 1 for individuals with a political name. In columns (3–4) and (7–8), the sample is restricted to individuals with a political name. The main explanatory variable “Registered Democrat” equals 1 for individuals registered as Democrats. In columns (2), (4), (6), and (8), we include fixed effects for county and self-reported race. Standard errors are clustered at the county level. Referenced on page: 12.

***: $p < 0.01$, **: $p < 0.05$, *: $p < 0.10$

Table A.2. Intergenerational Transmission of Political Preferences: Excluding Firstborn Sons

	Child's Name is:			
	(1) Republican	(2) Republican	(3) Democratic	(4) Democratic
Panel A. Entire Population				
Republican Father's Name	0.057*** (0.005)		-0.056*** (0.005)	
Democratic Father's Name		-0.057*** (0.004)		0.054*** (0.005)
# Observations	9,175,126	9,175,126	9,175,126	9,175,126
Mean Dep. Var.	0.104	0.104	0.128	0.128
Panel B. Parents and Children with Political Names				
Republican Father's Name	0.140*** (0.009)		-0.117*** (0.013)	
Democratic Father's Name		-0.091*** (0.007)		0.153*** (0.018)
# Observations	1,492,213	1,492,213	1,492,213	1,492,213
Mean Dep. Var.	0.255	0.255	0.294	0.294
Census-Wave FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Notes. This table reports estimates of the intergenerational persistence and mobility of political preferences. Compared to the baseline results, we exclude firstborn sons. The unit of observation is an individual; the sample comprises native-born men with at least one later-born son. Men are born between 1830 and 1910; children are born between 1850 and 1940. Panel A reports the full-population estimates; in Panel B, the sample only includes parents with a political name who give a political name to at least one later-born son. The dependent variable is: in columns (1) and (2), an indicator for children with a Republican name; in columns (3) and (4), an indicator for children with a Democratic name. Columns (1) and (4) report persistence estimates; columns (2) and (3) report mobility estimates. The earliest-born son in each family is excluded; when multiple sons share the earliest observed birth year, all tied sons are excluded. The coefficients report the estimates $\hat{\beta}_{P \rightarrow P'}$ from equation (4). Each regression includes census-wave fixed effects; Panel A also controls for whether the father has a political name. Standard errors are clustered by father's year of birth. Referenced on page: 21.

***: $p < 0.01$, **: $p < 0.05$, *: $p < 0.10$

Table A.3. Intergenerational Transmission of Political Preferences: Excluding Father and Sons with the Same Name

	Child's Name is:			
	(1) Republican	(2) Republican	(3) Democratic	(4) Democratic
Panel A. Entire Population				
Republican Father's Name	0.040*** (0.004)		-0.047*** (0.004)	
Democratic Father's Name		-0.048*** (0.003)		0.044*** (0.004)
# Observations	16,855,280	16,855,280	16,855,280	16,855,280
Mean Dep. Var.	0.106	0.106	0.126	0.126
Panel B. Parents and Children with Political Names				
Republican Father's Name	0.112*** (0.008)		-0.105*** (0.012)	
Democratic Father's Name		-0.087*** (0.007)		0.126*** (0.016)
# Observations	2,396,856	2,396,856	2,396,856	2,396,856
Mean Dep. Var.	0.263	0.263	0.294	0.294
Census-Wave FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Notes. This table reports estimates of the intergenerational persistence and mobility of political preferences after excluding parents and children with the same name. The unit of observation is an individual; the sample comprises native-born men with at least one son. Men are born between 1830 and 1910; children are born between 1850 and 1940. Panel A reports the full-population estimates; in Panel B, the sample only includes parents with a political name who give a political name to at least one of their children. The dependent variable is: in columns (1) and (2), an indicator for children with a Republican name; in columns (3) and (4), an indicator for children with a Democratic name. Columns (1) and (4) report persistence estimates; columns (2) and (3) report mobility estimates. Every father-son observation in which the son has exactly the same first name as his father is excluded. The coefficients report the estimates $\hat{\beta}_{P \rightarrow P'}$ from equation (4). Each regression includes census-wave fixed effects; Panel A also controls for whether the father has a political name. Standard errors are clustered by father's year of birth. Referenced on page: 21.

***: $p < 0.01$, **: $p < 0.05$, *: $p < 0.10$

Table A.4. Intergenerational Transmission of Political Preferences: Within-Parent Name Comparisons

	Child's Name is:			
	(1) Republican	(2) Republican	(3) Democratic	(4) Democratic
Panel A. Entire Population				
Republican Father's Name	0.074*** (0.006)		-0.057*** (0.006)	
Democratic Father's Name		-0.069*** (0.005)		0.070*** (0.008)
# Observations	18,311,889	18,311,889	18,311,889	18,311,889
Mean Dep. Var.	0.116	0.116	0.134	0.134
Panel B. Parents and Children with Political Names				
Republican Father's Name	0.157*** (0.009)		-0.119*** (0.014)	
Democratic Father's Name		-0.100*** (0.008)		0.186*** (0.019)
# Observations	3,462,861	3,462,861	3,462,861	3,462,861
Mean Dep. Var.	0.247	0.247	0.276	0.276
Census-Wave FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Father-Cohort FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Father-Name FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Notes. This table reports estimates of the intergenerational persistence and mobility of political preferences. Compared with the baseline results, we include fixed effects for the parents' names to compare children of parents with the same name. The unit of observation is an individual; the sample comprises native-born men with at least one son. Men are born between 1830 and 1910; children are born between 1850 and 1940. Panel A reports the full-population estimates; in Panel B, the sample only includes parents with a political name who give a political name to at least one of their children. The dependent variable is: in columns (1) and (2), an indicator for children with a Republican name; in columns (3) and (4), an indicator for children with a Democratic name. Columns (1) and (4) report persistence estimates; columns (2) and (3) report mobility estimates. The coefficients report the estimates $\hat{\beta}_{p \rightarrow p'}$ from equation (4). Each regression includes father-name, census-wave, and father's birth-year fixed effects; identification, therefore, compares fathers with the same first name whose names receive different political classifications across birth cohorts. Panel A also controls for whether the father has a political name. Standard errors are clustered by father's year of birth. Referenced on page: 21.

***: $p < 0.01$, **: $p < 0.05$, *: $p < 0.10$

Table A.5. Intergenerational Transmission of Political Preferences: Excluding Ambiguous Political Names

	Child's Name is:			
	(1) Republican	(2) Republican	(3) Democratic	(4) Democratic
Panel A. Entire Population				
Republican Father's Name	0.124*** (0.010)		-0.114*** (0.009)	
Democratic Father's Name		-0.107*** (0.010)		0.108*** (0.009)
# Observations	14,056,702	14,056,702	14,056,702	14,056,702
Mean Dep. Var.	0.131	0.131	0.157	0.157
Panel B. Parents and Children with Political Names				
Republican Father's Name	0.338*** (0.022)		-0.342*** (0.022)	
Democratic Father's Name		-0.289*** (0.023)		0.291*** (0.023)
# Observations	1,261,008	1,261,008	1,261,008	1,261,008
Mean Dep. Var.	0.444	0.444	0.532	0.532
Census-Wave FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Notes. This table reports estimates of the intergenerational persistence and mobility of political preferences. Compared to the baseline result, we exclude individuals whose names are associated with both parties. The unit of observation is an individual; the sample comprises native-born men with at least one son. Men are born between 1830 and 1910; children are born between 1850 and 1940. Panel A reports the full-population estimates; in Panel B, the sample only includes parents with a political name who give a political name to at least one of their children. The dependent variable is: in columns (1) and (2), an indicator for children with an exclusively Republican name; in columns (3) and (4), an indicator for children with an exclusively Democratic name. Columns (1) and (4) report persistence estimates; columns (2) and (3) report mobility estimates. Families are excluded when the father's or child's first name is associated with politicians from both parties during the relevant political-name exposure window. The coefficients report the estimates $\hat{\beta}_{P \rightarrow P'}$ from equation (4). Each regression includes census-wave fixed effects; Panel A also controls for whether the father has a political name. Standard errors are clustered by father's year of birth. Referenced on page: 22.

***: $p < 0.01$, **: $p < 0.05$, *: $p < 0.10$

Table A.6. Intergenerational Transmission of Political Preferences: Excluding Election-Year Births

	Child's Name is:			
	(1) Republican	(2) Republican	(3) Democratic	(4) Democratic
Panel A. Entire Population				
Republican Father's Name	0.075*** (0.006)		-0.063*** (0.006)	
Democratic Father's Name		-0.070*** (0.005)		0.067*** (0.008)
# Observations	18,523,791	18,523,791	18,523,791	18,523,791
Mean Dep. Var.	0.116	0.116	0.136	0.136
Panel B. Parents and Children with Political Names				
Republican Father's Name	0.162*** (0.009)		-0.118*** (0.013)	
Democratic Father's Name		-0.098*** (0.008)		0.174*** (0.019)
# Observations	3,339,819	3,339,819	3,339,819	3,339,819
Mean Dep. Var.	0.257	0.257	0.285	0.285
Census-Wave FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Notes. This table reports estimates of the intergenerational persistence and mobility of political preferences. Compared to the baseline result, we exclude fathers and children born in the same year as an election, because we do not know if they were born before or after the election. The unit of observation is an individual; the sample comprises native-born men with at least one son. Men are born between 1830 and 1910; children are born between 1850 and 1940. Panel A reports the full-population estimates; in Panel B, the sample only includes parents with a political name who give a political name to at least one of their children. The dependent variable is: in columns (1) and (2), an indicator for children with a Republican name; in columns (3) and (4), an indicator for children with a Democratic name. Columns (1) and (4) report persistence estimates; columns (2) and (3) report mobility estimates. A first name is classified as political only when the relevant president, governor, or member of Congress was elected between one and ten years before the individual's birth. The coefficients report the estimates $\hat{\beta}_{P \rightarrow P'}$ from equation (4). Each regression includes census-wave fixed effects; Panel A also controls for whether the father has a political name. Standard errors are clustered by father's year of birth. Referenced on page: 22.

***: $p < 0.01$, **: $p < 0.05$, *: $p < 0.10$

Table A.7. Intergenerational Transmission of Political Preferences by Political Office

	Child's Name is:			
	(1) Republican	(2) Republican	(3) Democratic	(4) Democratic
Panel A. Entire Population				
<i>Presidential Names</i>				
Republican Father's Name	-0.000 (0.001)		-0.004*** (0.001)	
Democratic Father's Name		0.009*** (0.001)		-0.002* (0.001)
# Observations	18,523,791	18,523,791	18,523,791	18,523,791
Mean Dep. Var.	0.010	0.010	0.006	0.006
<i>Gubernatorial Names</i>				
Republican Father's Name	0.027*** (0.003)		-0.017*** (0.002)	
Democratic Father's Name		-0.009*** (0.001)		0.019*** (0.003)
# Observations	18,523,791	18,523,791	18,523,791	18,523,791
Mean Dep. Var.	0.015	0.015	0.023	0.023
<i>Congressional Names</i>				
Republican Father's Name	0.075*** (0.007)		-0.063*** (0.006)	
Democratic Father's Name		-0.070*** (0.005)		0.067*** (0.007)
# Observations	18,523,791	18,523,791	18,523,791	18,523,791
Mean Dep. Var.	0.106	0.106	0.127	0.127
Panel B. Parents and Children with Political Names				
<i>Presidential Names</i>				
Republican Father's Name	0.212*** (0.020)		-0.020*** (0.007)	
Democratic Father's Name		0.022*** (0.006)		0.004 (0.009)
# Observations	55,694	55,694	55,694	55,694
Mean Dep. Var.	0.130	0.130	0.202	0.202
<i>Gubernatorial Names</i>				
Republican Father's Name	0.193*** (0.022)		-0.206*** (0.029)	
Democratic Father's Name		-0.060*** (0.009)		0.166*** (0.026)
# Observations	174,404	174,404	174,404	174,404
Mean Dep. Var.	0.128	0.128	0.251	0.251
<i>Congressional Names</i>				
Republican Father's Name	0.160*** (0.010)		-0.118*** (0.014)	
Democratic Father's Name		-0.095*** (0.007)		0.174*** (0.019)
# Observations	3,241,872	3,241,872	3,241,872	3,241,872
Mean Dep. Var.	0.239	0.239	0.267	0.267
Census-Wave FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Notes. This table reports estimates of the intergenerational persistence and mobility of political preferences separately by the political office that connotes the political content of each individual's name. The unit of observation is an individual; the sample comprises native-born men with at least one son. Men are born between 1830 and 1910; children are born between 1850 and 1940. Panel A reports the full-population estimates; in Panel B, the sample only includes parents and children with political names according to the same office-specific definition. The dependent variable is: in columns (1) and (2), an indicator for children with a Republican name; in columns (3) and (4), an indicator for children with a Democratic name. Columns (1) and (4) report persistence estimates; columns (2) and (3) report mobility estimates. The "Presidential Names," "Gubernatorial Names," and "Congressional Names" sections construct fathers' and children's political-name indicators using only elections to the corresponding office. The coefficients report the estimates $\hat{\beta}_{P \rightarrow P'}$ from equation (4). Each regression includes census-wave fixed effects; Panel A also controls for whether the father has a political name according to the relevant office-specific definition. Standard errors are clustered by father's year of birth. Referenced on page: 22.

***: $p < 0.01$, **: $p < 0.05$, *: $p < 0.10$

Table A.8. Intergenerational Transmission of Political Preferences: Reweighting for Linkage Selection

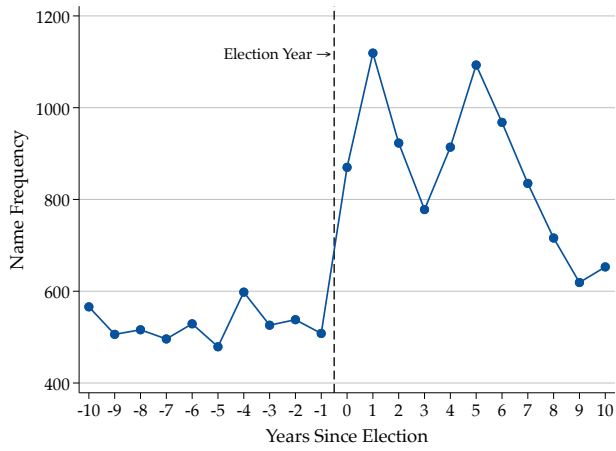
	Child's Name is:			
	(1) Republican	(2) Republican	(3) Democratic	(4) Democratic
Panel A. Entire Population				
Republican Father's Name	0.075*** (0.006)		-0.076*** (0.007)	
Democratic Father's Name		-0.072*** (0.005)		0.095*** (0.007)
# Observations	11,771,591	11,771,591	11,771,591	11,771,591
Mean Dep. Var.	0.120	0.120	0.121	0.121
Panel B. Parents and Children with Political Names				
Republican Father's Name	0.177*** (0.009)		-0.135*** (0.014)	
Democratic Father's Name		-0.108*** (0.007)		0.229*** (0.017)
# Observations	2,029,658	2,029,658	2,029,658	2,029,658
Mean Dep. Var.	0.278	0.278	0.265	0.265
Census-Wave FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Reweighted	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Notes. This table reports inverse-probability-weighted estimates of the intergenerational persistence and mobility of political preferences among fathers linked to the first census in which they are observed. This exercise ensures that the sample of parents linked to the first census where they appear is representative of the population. The unit of observation is an individual; the sample comprises native-born men with at least one son observed in the 1900–1940 census waves. Children born between 1850 and 1940. Panel A reports the full-population estimates; in Panel B, the sample only includes parents with a political name who give a political name to at least one of their children. The dependent variable is: in columns (1) and (2), an indicator for children with a Republican name; in columns (3) and (4), an indicator for children with a Democratic name. Columns (1) and (4) report persistence estimates; columns (2) and (3) report mobility estimates. The probability of successful linkage is estimated as a function of census wave, race, birthplace, literacy, father's year of birth, number of children, and occupational score. The inverse-probability weights are the unconditional linkage probability divided by the predicted linkage probability (capped to ten for stability). The coefficients report the estimates $\hat{\beta}_{P \rightarrow P'}$ from equation (4). Each regression includes census-wave fixed effects; Panel A also controls for whether the father has a political name. Standard errors are clustered by father's year of birth. Referenced on page: 22.

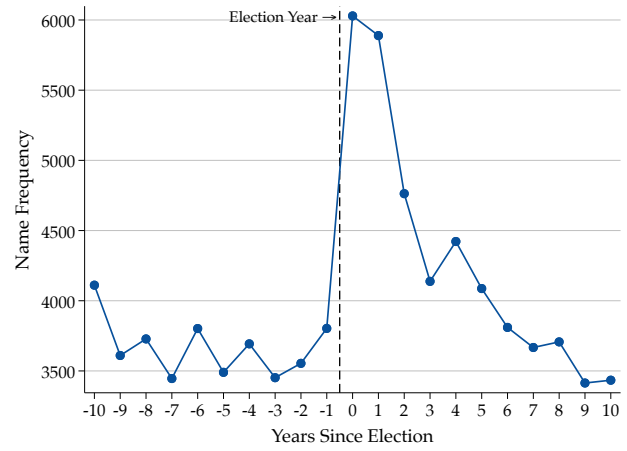
***: $p < 0.01$, **: $p < 0.05$, *: $p < 0.10$

B Additional Figures

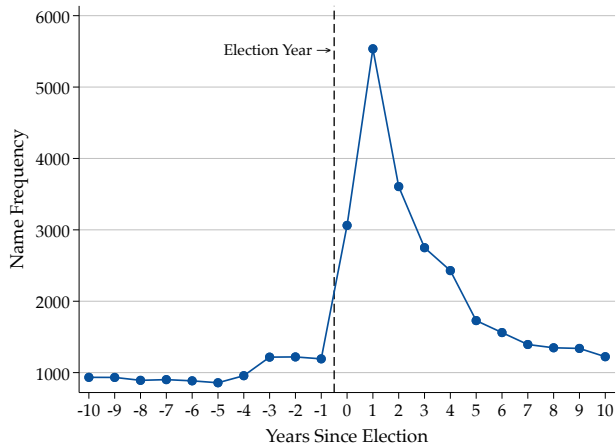
Figure B.1. Raw Frequency of Names of Presidents



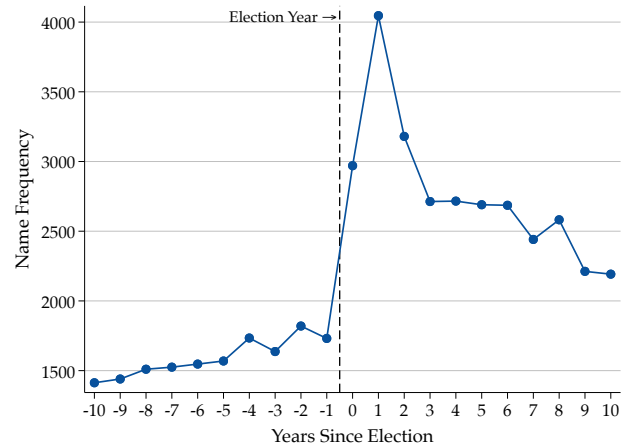
(a) Abraham



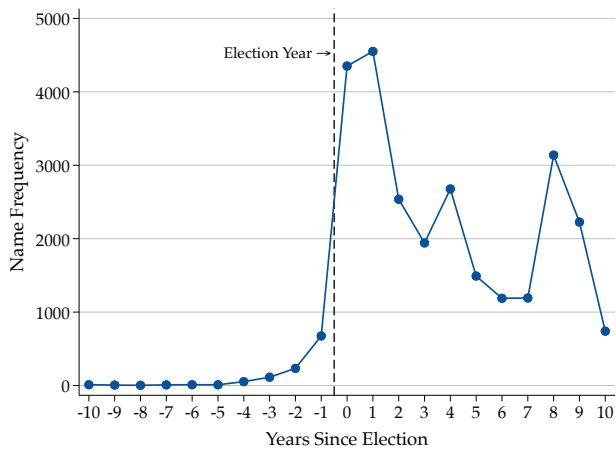
(b) Benjamin



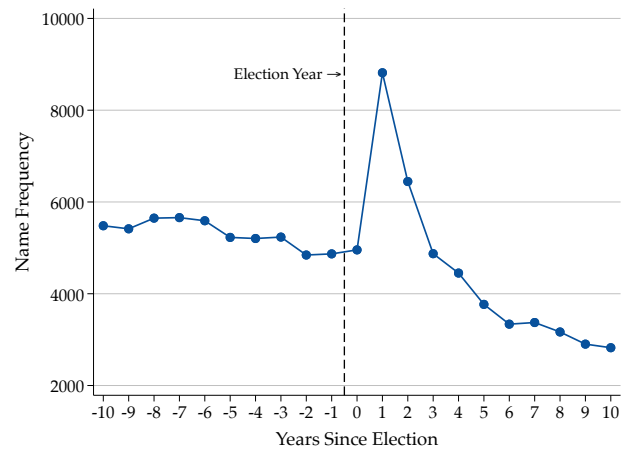
(c) Calvin



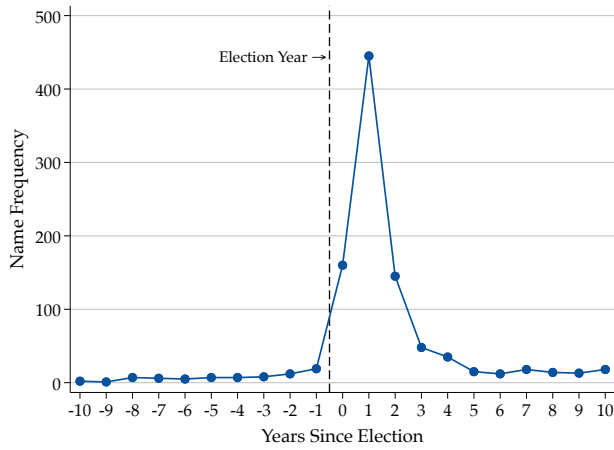
(d) Franklin



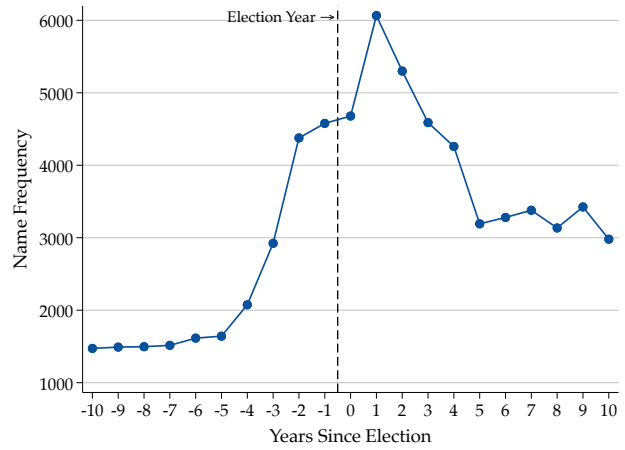
(e) Grover



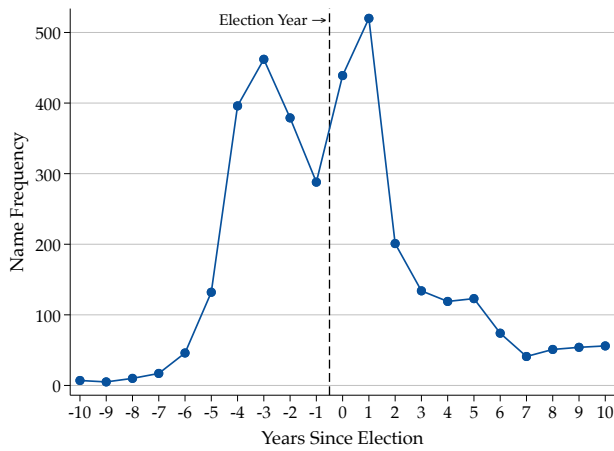
(f) Herbert



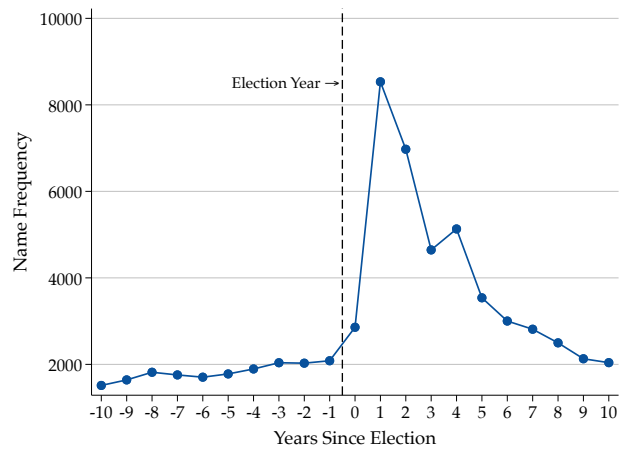
(g) Rutherford



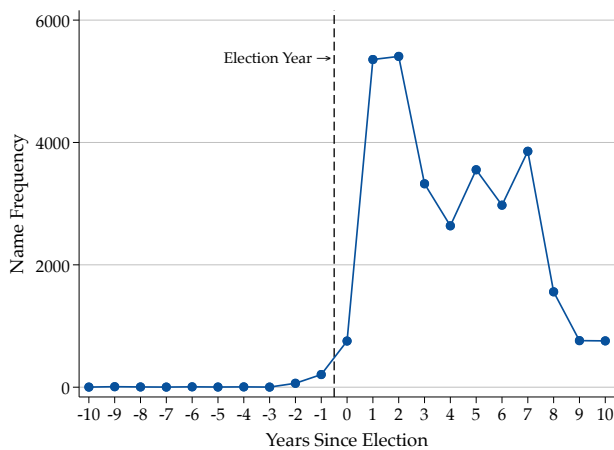
(h) Theodore



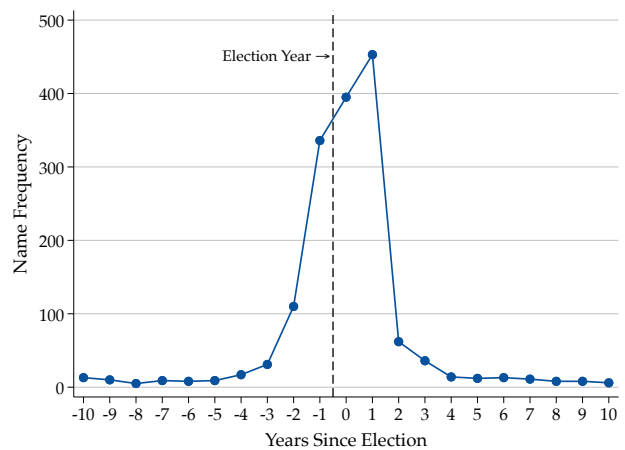
(i) Ulysses



(j) Warren



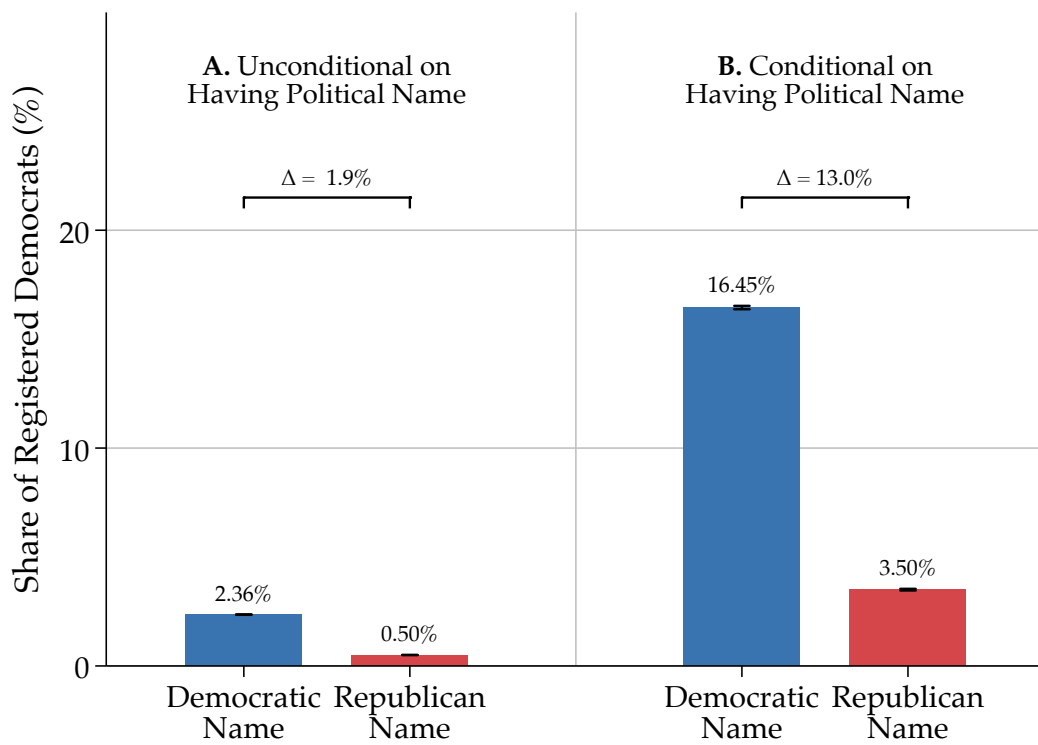
(k) Woodrow



(l) Zachary

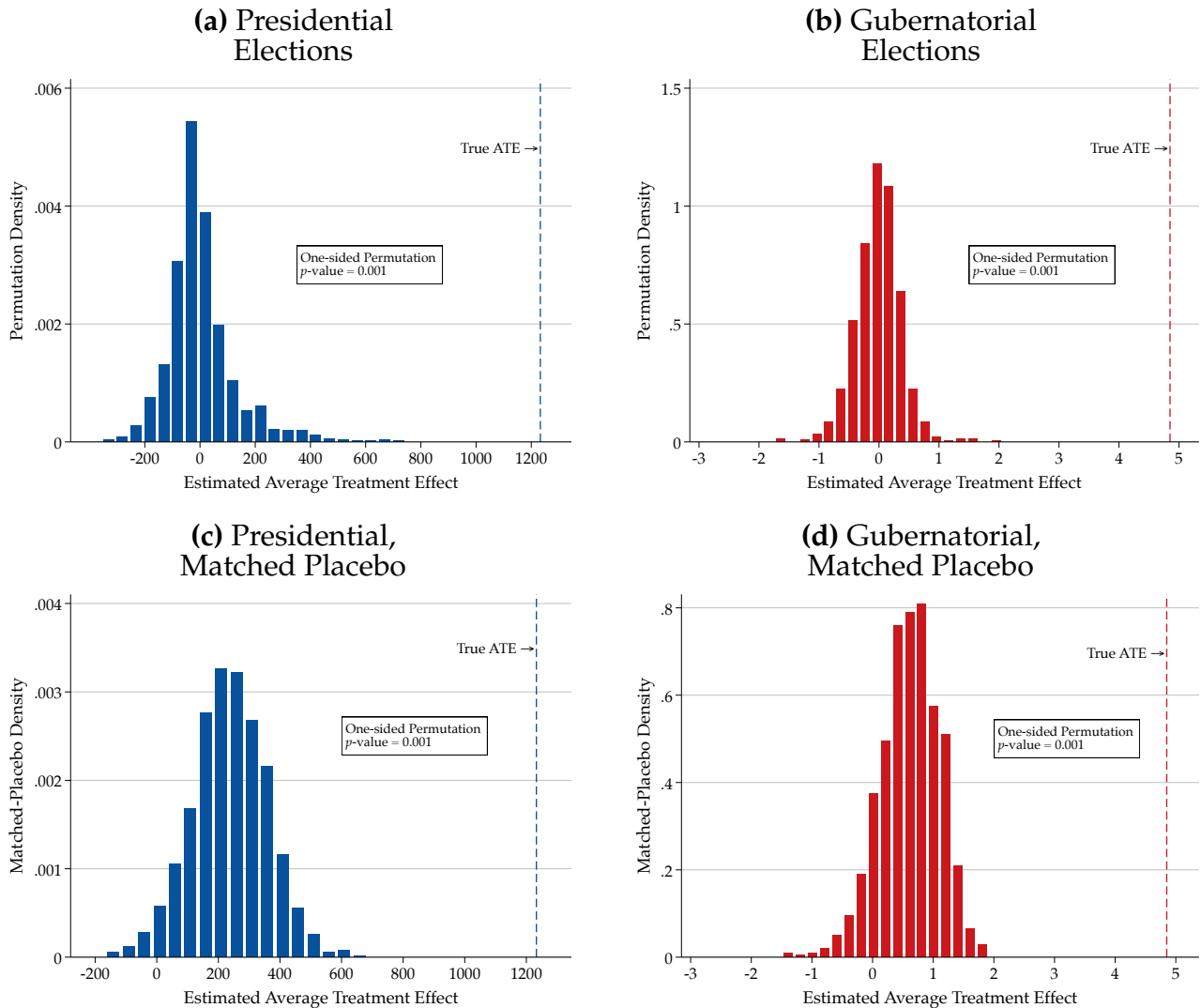
Notes. This figure displays the number of children born within a ten-year window around each presidential election who were given the same first name as the president elected between 1850 and 1940. Vertical lines mark election years. We exclude presidents whose first name falls in the top decile of the name-frequency distribution: James Buchanan, James Garfield, Chester Arthur, William McKinley, and William Taft. These presidents are also excluded from the analysis sample. Referenced on pages [1](#), [8](#).

Figure B.2. Prevalence of Republican and Democratic Names Among Registered Democrats in Florida: Evidence from Contemporary Register Data



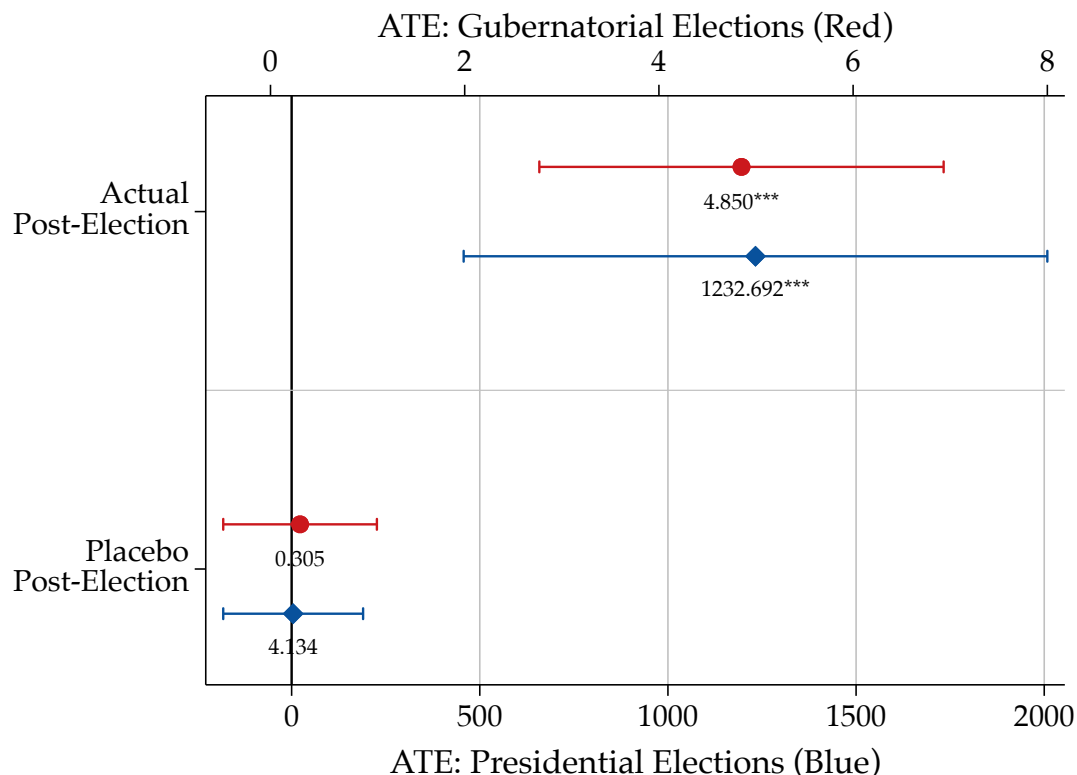
Notes. This figure displays the prevalence of political names among registered voters in Florida. The sample covers all male voters who appear in Florida’s voter registration data (accessed June 2026). In Panel A, the sample includes the population universe. In Panel B, the sample is restricted to individuals with a political name. The blue bars report the share of registered Democrats with a Democratic name; the red bars report the share of registered Democrats with a Republican name. Bands report 2-standard deviation intervals. The share of registered Democrats is expressed as a percentage. Referenced on page: 12.

Figure B.3. Permutation Distributions of the Average Treatment Effect of Presidential and Gubernatorial Elections on Name Popularity



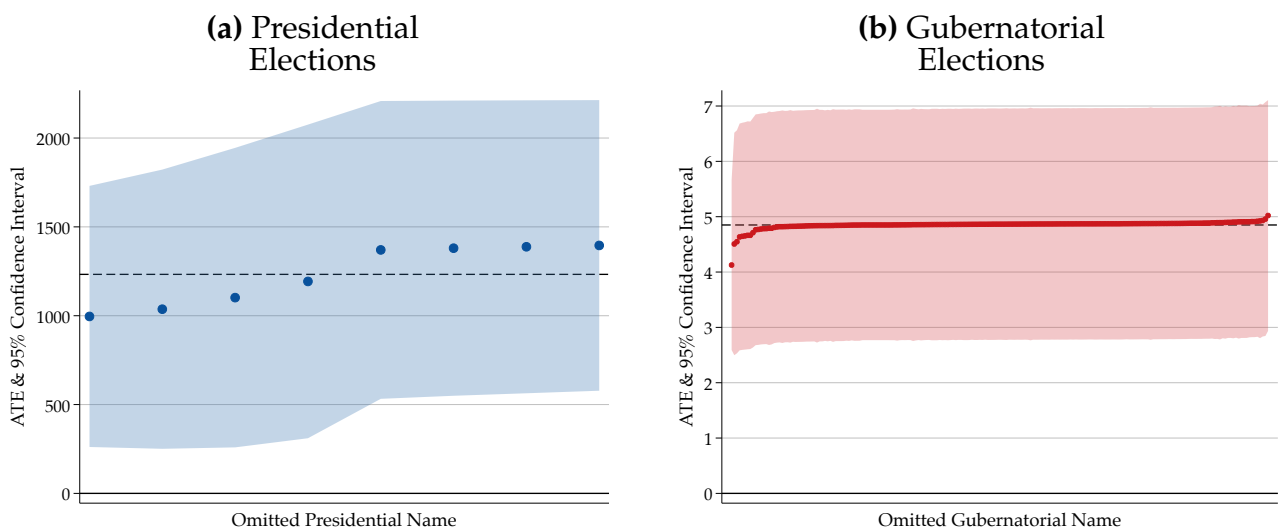
Notes. These figures display permutation tests for changes in name popularity after presidential (Panels B.3a–B.3c) and gubernatorial (Panels B.3b–B.3d) elections. In panels B.3a–B.3c, the unit of observation is a name; in panels B.3b–B.3d, the unit of observation is a name-state pair; units are observed at yearly frequency between 1850 and 1940. The dependent variable is name frequency by cohort. The histograms report the distribution of estimates from 1,000 placebo assignments of election years to non-politician names. Each permutation re-estimates regressions (1)–(2), with the event-time dummies coded into a binary post-election treatment variable, and randomly selects the name that is considered treated. The vertical dashed lines report the estimates obtained using politicians’ actual names. Regressions in panel B.3a–B.3c include name and year fixed effects. Regressions in panel B.3b–B.3d include name-state, name-year, and state-year fixed effects. In panels B.3c–B.3d, the names used as placebo treatments are chosen to be similar to actual treated names in terms of their pre-election popularity. Specifically, the placebo names are chosen to minimize the standardized Euclidean distance in the mean name frequency and linear frequency trend over the ten years before the election. One-sided permutation p -values are reported within each figure. Referenced on page: 13.

Figure B.4. Presidential and Gubernatorial Elections: Timing and Geography Placebos



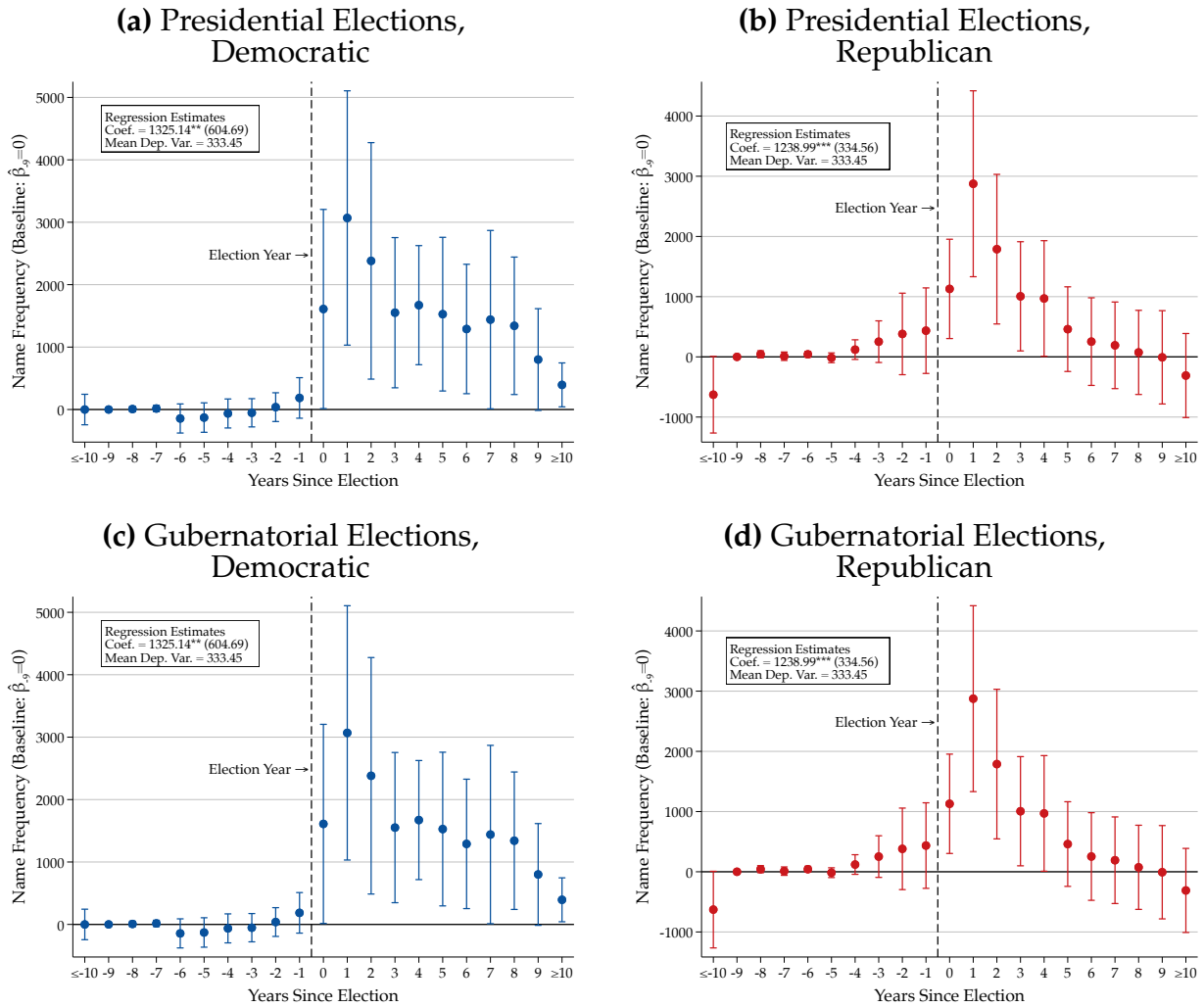
Notes. This figure displays timing and geography placebo tests for changes in name popularity after presidential (blue) and gubernatorial (red) elections. For the blue markers, the unit of observation is a name; for the red markers, the unit of observation is a name-state pair; units are observed at yearly frequency between 1850 and 1940. The dependent variable is name frequency by cohort. The markers report the static treatment effects from regressions (1)–(2). In the top panel, “Actual Post-Election” is an indicator equal to one from the presidential or gubernatorial election year through ten years thereafter; in the bottom panel, the “Placebo Post-Election” is an indicator equal to one during event years -10 through -1 from the presidential or gubernatorial election. The blue markers report the average treatment effects estimated in a regression that includes name and year fixed effects; the red markers report the average treatment effects estimated in a regression that includes name-state, name-year, and state-year fixed effects. Standard errors are clustered at the name level; bands report 95% confidence intervals. Referenced on page: 13.

Figure B.5. Elections and Name Popularity: Leave-One-Name-Out Estimates



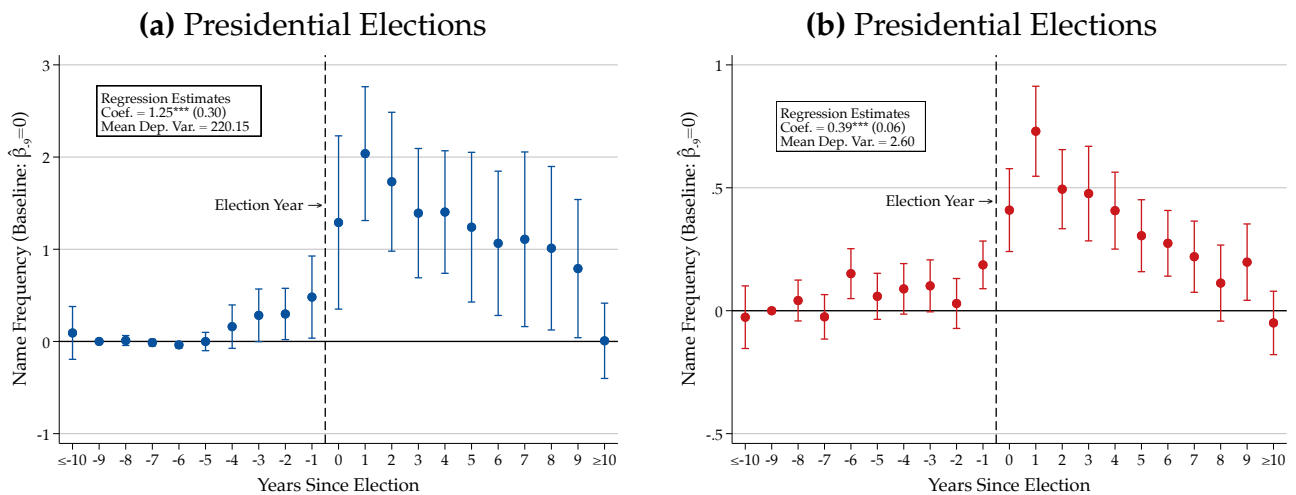
Notes. This figure displays leave-one-name-out estimates of the effect of presidential and gubernatorial elections on name popularity. In panel B.5a, the unit of observation is a name; in panel B.5b, the unit of observation is a name-state pair; units are observed at yearly frequency between 1850 and 1940. The dependent variable is name frequency by cohort. The dependent variable is name frequency by cohort. The dots report the static treatment effect from regression (1)–(2), where the post-election indicator equals one from the presidential or gubernatorial election year through ten years thereafter. Each dot reports the average treatment effect obtained when excluding one president (panel B.5a) or governor (panel B.5b) at a time from the sample. Regressions in panel B.5a include name and year fixed effects; regressions in panel B.5b include name-state, name-year, and state-year fixed effects. Standard errors are clustered at the name level. Standard errors are clustered at the name level; bands report 95% confidence intervals. The horizontal dashed line reports the estimate obtained using the full sample. Referenced on page: 14.

Figure B.6. Elected Officials' Names Become More Popular After Their Election, By Party



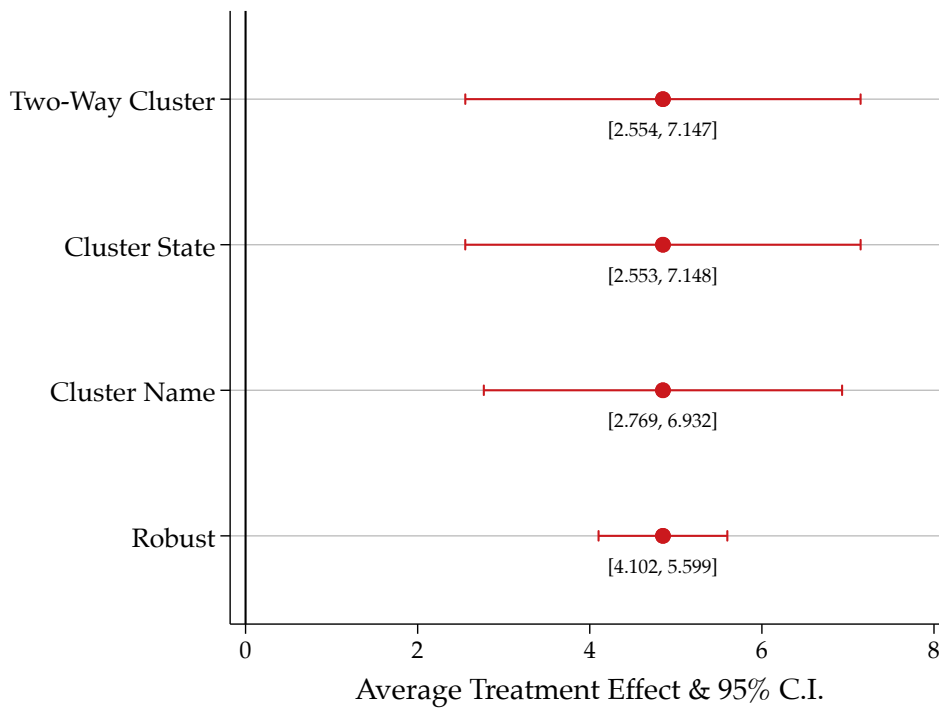
Notes. This figure displays trends in the popularity of names of elected presidents (B.6a–B.6b) and governors (B.6c–B.6d). In panels (B.6a–B.6b) (resp. B.6c–B.6d), the unit of observation is a name (resp. name-state) at a yearly frequency between 1850 and 1940. The outcome is the number of children born in each year (resp. state-year) with each name. The coefficients report the dynamic treatment effects from regression (1)–(2), where the election is active only for Democratic (panels B.6a–B.6c) or Republican (panels B.6b–B.6d) elected presidents and governors. The regressions in panels (B.6a–B.6b) include name and year fixed effects; standard errors are clustered at the name level. The regressions in panels (B.6c–B.6d) include name-state, name-year, and state-year fixed effects; standard errors are clustered at the name and state levels. Bands report 95% confidence intervals. Each panel reports the static difference-in-differences estimate. Referenced on page: 14.

Figure B.7. Elected Officials' Names Become More Popular After Their Election, Poisson Regression Estimates



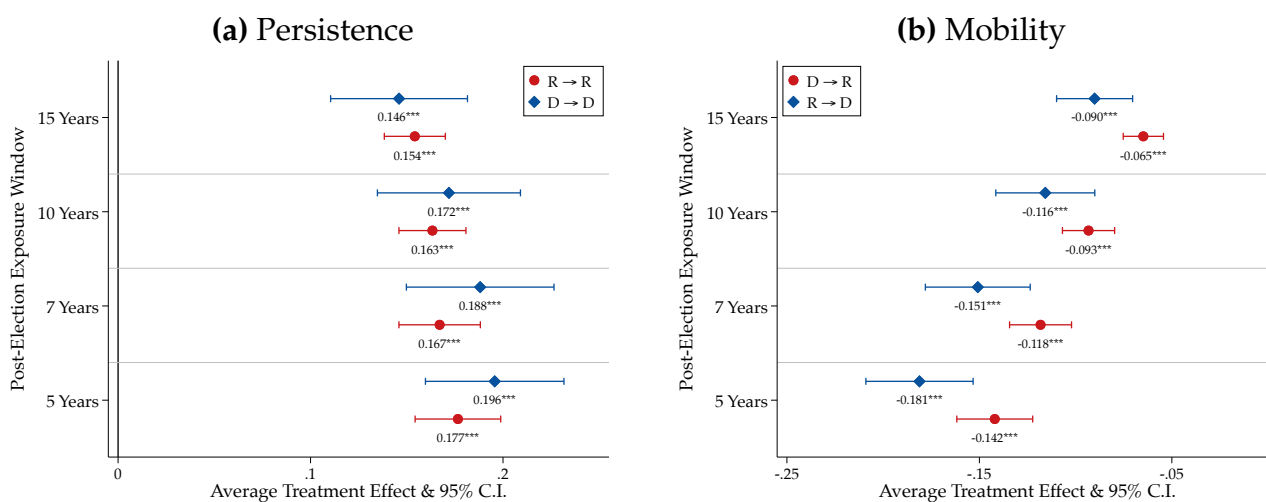
Notes. This figure displays trends in the popularity of names of elected presidents (panel B.7a) and governors (panel B.7b). In panel B.7a (resp. B.7b), the unit of observation is a name (resp. name-state) at a yearly frequency between 1850 and 1940. The outcome is the number of children born in each year (resp. state-year) with each name. The coefficients report the dynamic treatment effects from regression (1)–(2). Both regressions are estimated through Poisson Pseudo-Maximum Likelihood. The regression in panel B.7a includes name and year fixed effects; standard errors are clustered at the name level. The regression in panel B.7b includes name-state, name-year, and state-year fixed effects; standard errors are clustered at the name and state levels. Bands report 95% confidence intervals. Each panel reports the static difference-in-differences estimate. Referenced on page: 14.

Figure B.8. Gubernatorial Elections and Name Popularity: Alternative Standard Errors



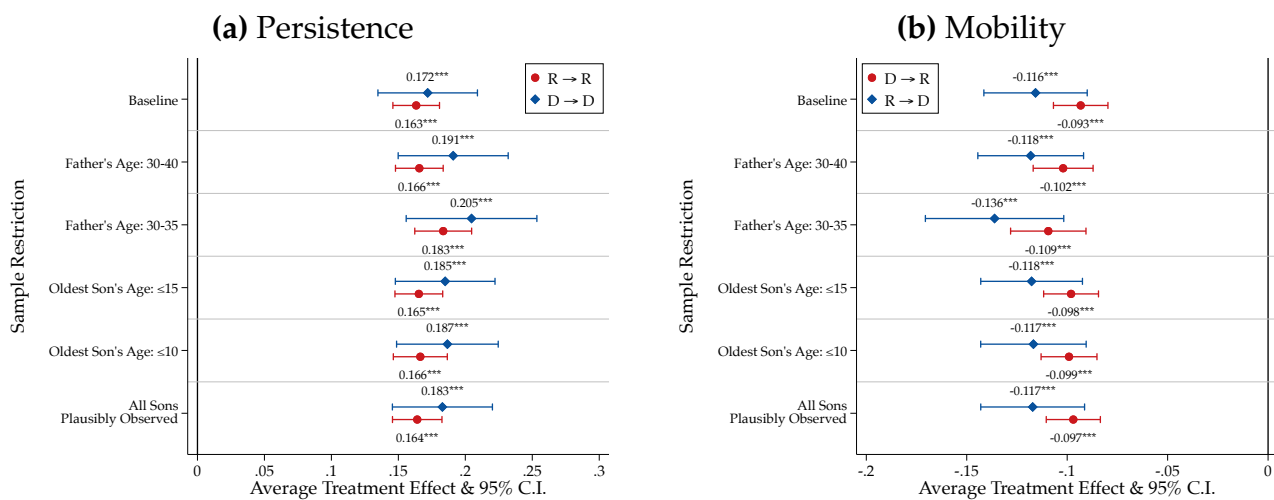
Notes. This figure displays the effect of gubernatorial elections on name popularity under alternative standard error estimators. The unit of observation is a name-state pair observed at yearly frequency between 1850 and 1940. The dependent variable is name frequency by state and cohort. The dots report the static treatment effect from regression (2), where the post-election indicator equals one in the state in which the governor was elected from the election year through ten years thereafter. Regressions include name-state, name-year, and state-year fixed effects. The four specifications respectively report heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors, standard errors clustered at the name level, standard errors clustered at the state level, and standard errors clustered at the name and state levels. The point estimate is constant across specifications; bands and bracketed terms report 95% confidence intervals. Referenced on page: 14.

Figure B.9. Intergenerational Transmission Under Alternative Political-Name Windows



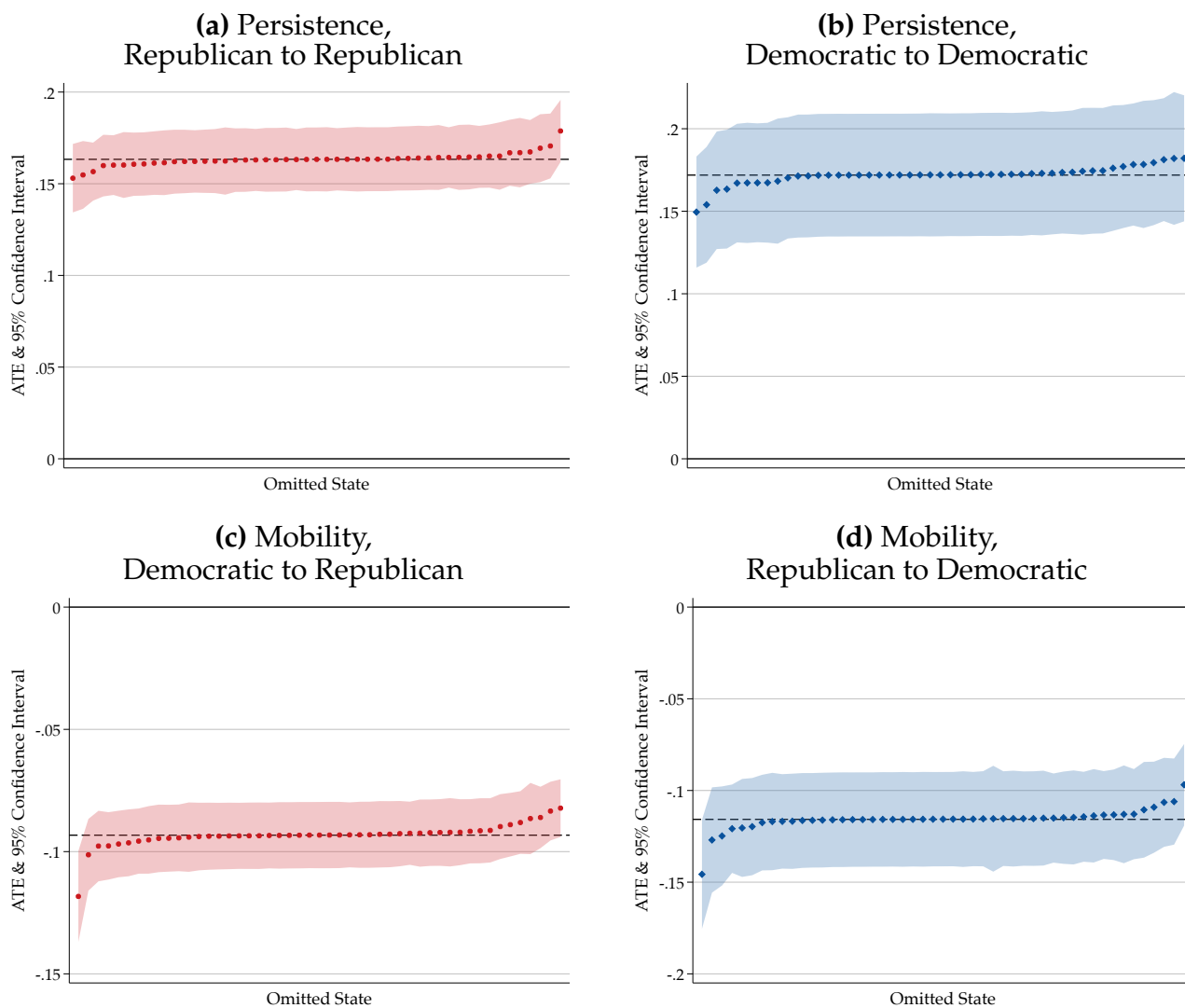
Notes. This figure displays estimates of the persistence and mobility of intergenerational political preferences using alternative windows to classify political names. The red (resp. blue) dots in panel B.9a display the persistence estimates $\hat{\beta}_{R \rightarrow R}$ (resp. $\hat{\beta}_{D \rightarrow D}$) from equation (4). The red (resp. blue) dots in panel B.9b display the mobility estimates $\hat{\beta}_{D \rightarrow R}$ (resp. $\hat{\beta}_{R \rightarrow D}$). The unit of observation is an individual; the sample comprises native-born men with at least one son. Men are born between 1830 and 1910; children are born between 1850 and 1940. The sample includes parents with a political name who give a political name to at least one of their children. A name is classified as political when the relevant politician was elected within 5, 7, 10, or 15 years before the individual's birth, depending on the specification. Regressions include census-wave fixed effects. Standard errors are clustered by father's year of birth; bands report 95% confidence intervals. Referenced on page: 22.

Figure B.10. Intergenerational Transmission Under Alternative Restrictions on Fathers' and Children's Age



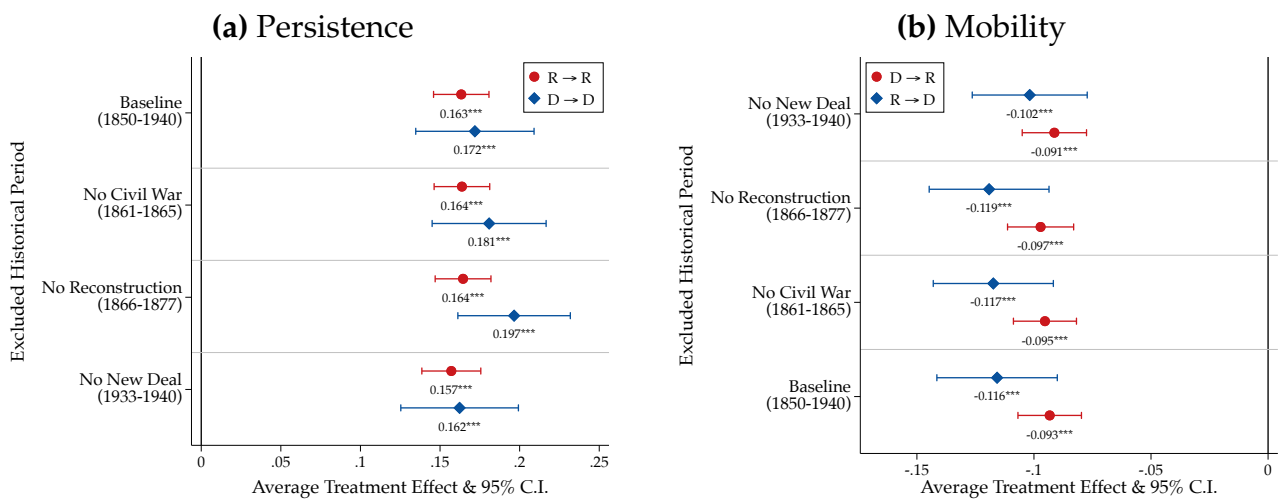
Notes. This figure displays estimates of the persistence and mobility of intergenerational political preferences under alternative age and coresidence restrictions. The red (resp. blue) dots in panel B.10a display the persistence estimates $\hat{\beta}_{R \rightarrow R}$ (resp. $\hat{\beta}_{D \rightarrow D}$) from equation (4). The red (resp. blue) dots in panel B.10b display the mobility estimates $\hat{\beta}_{D \rightarrow R}$ (resp. $\hat{\beta}_{R \rightarrow D}$). The unit of observation is an individual; the sample comprises native-born men with at least one son. Men are born between 1830 and 1910; children are born between 1850 and 1940. The sample includes parents with a political name who give a political name to at least one of their children. The six specifications respectively use the baseline sample; fathers aged 30–40; fathers aged 30–35; families whose oldest observed son is no older than 15; families whose oldest observed son is no older than 10; and families whose youngest observed son is no older than 10 and whose oldest observed son is no older than 15. Regressions include census-wave fixed effects. Standard errors are clustered by father's year of birth; bands report 95% confidence intervals. Referenced on page: 22.

Figure B.11. Intergenerational Transmission: Leave-One-State and Leave-One-Decade-Out Estimates



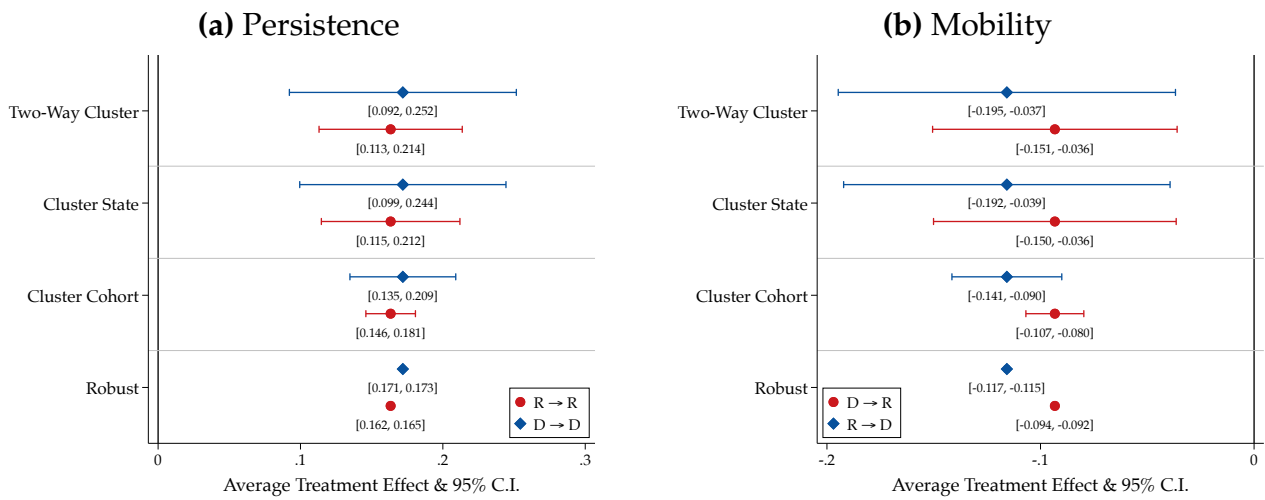
Notes. This figure displays leave-one-state-out estimates of the persistence and mobility of intergenerational political preferences. The red (resp. blue) dots in panel B.11c (resp. B.11d) display the persistence estimates $\hat{\beta}_{R \rightarrow R}$ (resp. $\hat{\beta}_{D \rightarrow D}$) from equation (4). The red (resp. blue) dots in panel ?? (resp. ??) display the mobility estimates $\hat{\beta}_{D \rightarrow R}$ (resp. $\hat{\beta}_{R \rightarrow D}$). The unit of observation is an individual; the sample comprises native-born men with at least one son. Men are born between 1830 and 1910; children are born between 1850 and 1940. The sample includes parents with a political name who give a political name to at least one of their children. Each dot represents the coefficient obtained after excluding the subsample of individuals from one state. Regressions include census-wave fixed effects. Standard errors are clustered by father's year of birth. The horizontal lines report the corresponding estimates obtained using the full sample. Referenced on page: 22.

Figure B.12. Intergenerational Transmission: Excluding Major Historical Periods



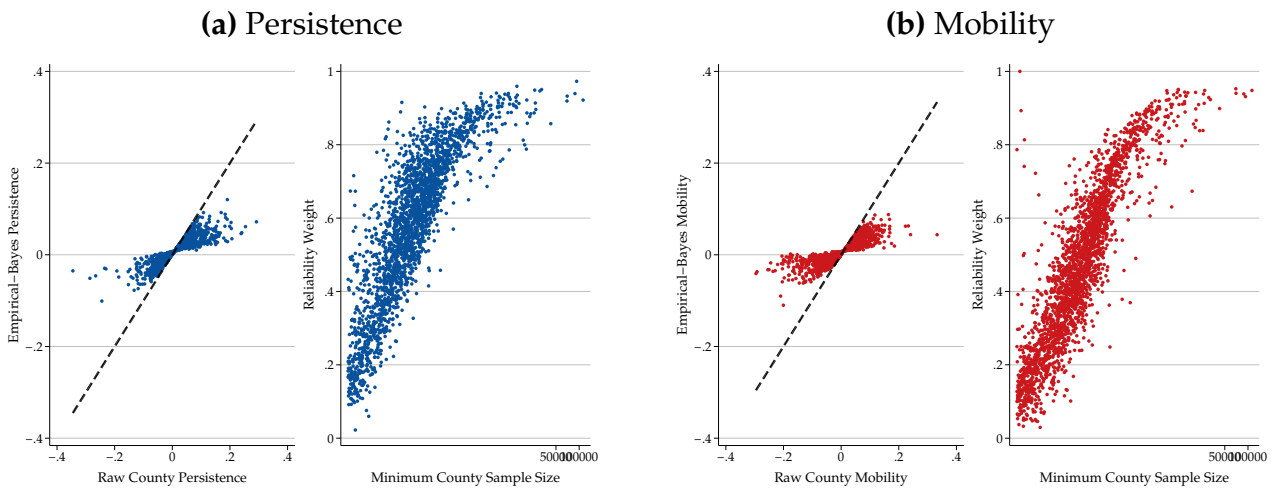
Notes. This figure displays estimates of the persistence and mobility of intergenerational political preferences when dropping specific periods from the sample. The red (resp. blue) dots in panel B.12a display the persistence estimates $\hat{\beta}_{R \rightarrow R}$ (resp. $\hat{\beta}_{D \rightarrow D}$) from equation (4). The red (resp. blue) dots in panel B.12b display the mobility estimates $\hat{\beta}_{D \rightarrow R}$ (resp. $\hat{\beta}_{R \rightarrow D}$). The unit of observation is an individual; the sample comprises native-born men with at least one son. Men are born between 1830 and 1910; children are born between 1850 and 1940. The sample includes parents with a political name who give a political name to at least one of their children. The four specifications respectively report the baseline estimates and estimates excluding families whose first observed child was born during the Civil War (1861–1865), Reconstruction (1866–1877), or the New Deal period (1933–1940). Regressions include census-wave fixed effects. Standard errors are clustered by father’s year of birth; bands report 95% confidence intervals. Referenced on page: 22.

Figure B.13. Intergenerational Transmission: Alternative Standard Errors



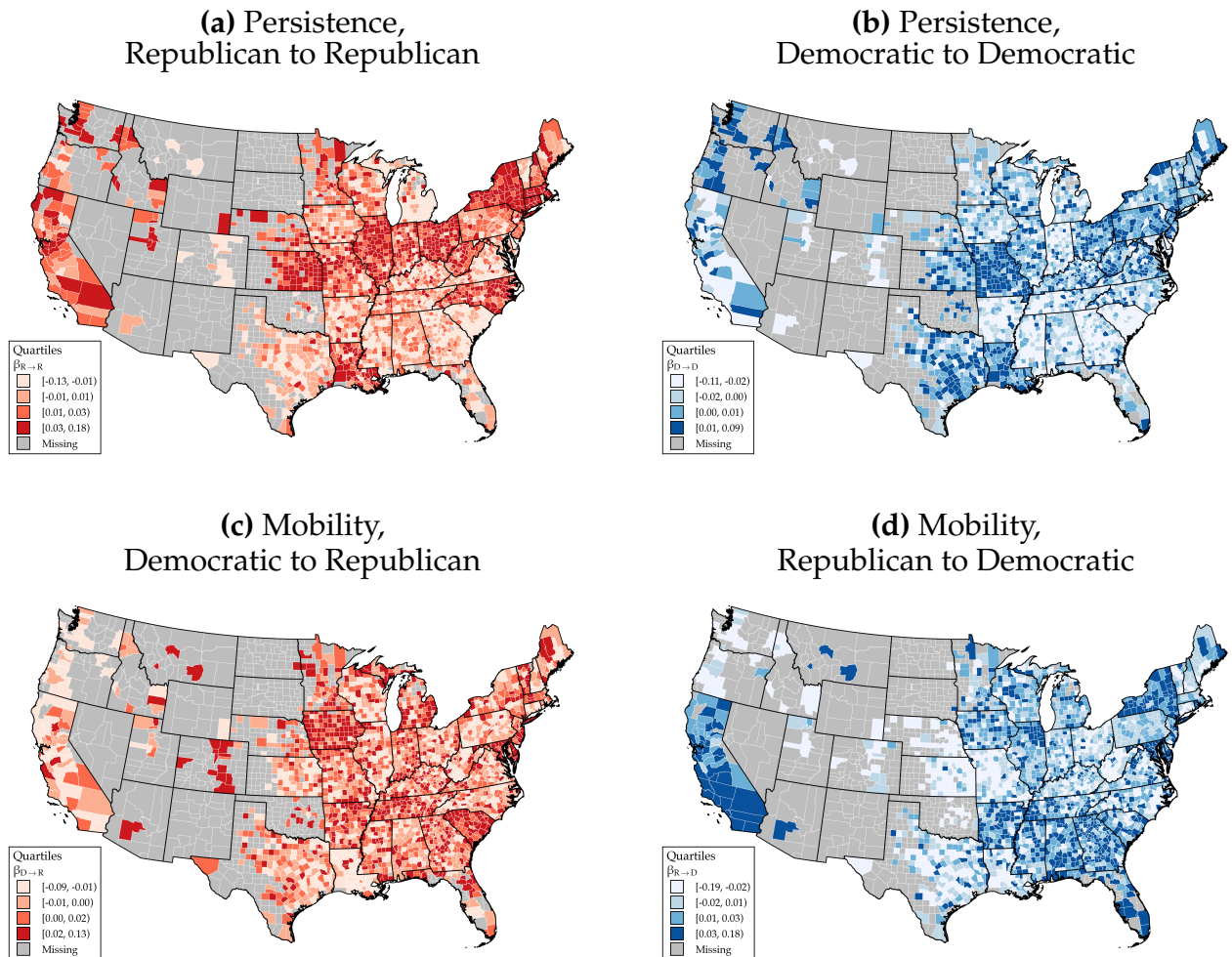
Notes. This figure displays estimates of the persistence and mobility of intergenerational political preferences under alternative standard error estimators. The red (resp. blue) dots in panel B.13a display the persistence estimates $\hat{\beta}_{R \rightarrow R}$ (resp. $\hat{\beta}_{D \rightarrow D}$) from equation (4). The red (resp. blue) dots in panel B.13b display the mobility estimates $\hat{\beta}_{D \rightarrow R}$ (resp. $\hat{\beta}_{R \rightarrow D}$). The unit of observation is an individual; the sample comprises native-born men with at least one son. Men are born between 1830 and 1910; children are born between 1850 and 1940. The sample includes parents with a political name who give a political name to at least one of their children. Regressions include census-wave fixed effects. The four specifications respectively report heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors, standard errors clustered by father's year of birth, standard errors clustered at the state level, and standard errors clustered by father's year of birth and state. The point estimates are constant across specifications; bands report 95% confidence intervals. Referenced on page: 23.

Figure B.14. County-Level Intergenerational Transmission: Empirical Bayes Shrinkage



Notes. This figure displays the relationship between raw and shrunken county-level estimates obtained by empirical Bayes shrinkage of the persistence and mobility of intergenerational political preferences. Panel B.14a displays the average persistence coefficient $\bar{\beta}_{P \rightarrow P}^c = (\hat{\beta}_{R \rightarrow R}^c + \hat{\beta}_{D \rightarrow D}^c)/2$; panel B.14b displays the average mobility coefficient $\bar{\beta}_{P \rightarrow P'}^c = (\hat{\beta}_{R \rightarrow D}^c + \hat{\beta}_{D \rightarrow R}^c)/2$. The unit of observation is a county. We estimate regression (4) separately for each county. In all cases, the underlying unit of observation is an individual; the sample comprises native-born men with at least one son. Men are born between 1830 and 1910; children are born between 1850 and 1940. The sample includes parents with a political name who give a political name to at least one of their children. Regressions include census-wave and father's birth-year fixed effects. The shrunken estimates adjust the raw county coefficients toward their precision-weighted national mean according to the ratio of between-county variance to total variance. In each panel, the left plot compares the raw and shrunken estimates; the dashed 45-degree line denotes equality. The right plot shows the relationship between shrinkage weight and minimum sample size across the two component regressions. We do not display counties with fewer than 100 individuals or missing coefficients or standard errors. Referenced on page: 27.

Figure B.15. Spatial Distribution of Empirical Bayes Estimates of Political Persistence and Mobility



Notes. This figure displays spatial variation in the persistence and mobility of intergenerational political preferences, based on Bayes-shrunk county-level estimates. We estimate regression (4) separately for each county and shrink each estimate $\hat{\beta}_{P \rightarrow P'}^c$ toward its precision-weighted national mean according to its estimated sampling variance. Panels B.15a and B.15b respectively display the distribution of the shrunk estimates $\hat{\beta}_{R \rightarrow R}^c$ and $\hat{\beta}_{D \rightarrow D}^c$. Panels B.15c and B.15d respectively display the distribution of the shrunk estimates $\hat{\beta}_{D \rightarrow R}^c$ and $\hat{\beta}_{R \rightarrow D}^c$. In all cases, the unit of observation is an individual; the sample comprises native-born men with at least one son. Men are born between 1830 and 1910; children are born between 1850 and 1940. The sample includes parents with a political name who give a political name to at least one of their children. Regressions include census-wave and father's birth-year fixed effects. The distribution of the shrunk estimates $\hat{\beta}_{P \rightarrow P'}^c$ is binned into quartiles; lighter to darker shades of color indicate higher values of $\hat{\beta}_{P \rightarrow P'}^c$. We do not display counties with fewer than 100 individuals or missing coefficient or standard-error estimates. Referenced on page: 27.