

Dynastic Partisanship: Oligarchic Political Competition in Brazil

Appendix

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1 Qualitative Interview Details

We conducted six semi-structured online interviews with Brazilian local politicians in Portuguese: a city councillor on August 9, 2023; a former mayor from Ceará on October 3, 2023; a mayor from Ceará on October 5, 2023; a mayor from Bahia on October 10, 2023; two secretaries, one of whom is married to the mayor, from Pernambuco on November 7, 2023; and a mayor from Bahia on November 24, 2023. The interviews lasted approximately 30–90 minutes.

To recruit potential interviewees, we started with the 90 cities sampled for the survey, where we had done background research on local dynasties. We focused on those where there was a long-lasting relationship between a family and a single political party or where families had changed party affiliations several times, since we sought to understand both dynamics. We also used snow-ball sampling to recruit additional subjects, asking each interviewee for a referral to other former or current officials who might be willing to talk to us. Invited politicians received a letter describing the research and seeking their informed consent prior to participating.

We were especially interested in understanding the relationship between families and parties regarding electoral benefits, candidate recruitment and other aspects listed in the script below. We modified the script slightly over time, adding new questions to cover interesting dynamics that we learned about in early interviews. We also customized the script according to each politician's professional trajectory. Below is the final version of the script used in the last interview.

1.1 Script

- Thank the interviewee for their time and availability
- Confirm if they read the research cover letter
- Assurance of confidentiality and request authorization to record
- Presentation:

- Interviewers introduce themselves
 - Explain research project: Semi-arid research - the impact of policies for living in the semi-arid region and how voters perceived it
 - Study of the political context of each city (90 in total) and interest in deepening the relationship between strong family groups and political parties
- Could you tell us a bit more about your story? (childhood, adult life, entry into politics, etc.)
 - Why did you decide to enter politics? What was your motivation?
 - Why did you decide to run for the position of mayor?
 - Why did you decide to run first for the [party's acronym] party?
 - You have always run for office with the [party]. Could you talk a little about the reason for staying at the party? **or** You switched to the [acronym] party. Could you explain a bit about this change?
 - How would you define your political group today?
 - And how would you describe your relationship with your current party?
 - Did you receive any support from the [party] as a candidate? For example, any training or capacity building?
 - And in terms of funding, structural support for the campaign?
 - And political support? Could you discuss how your political group organizes to ensure your candidacy has support?
 - After being elected, did you have support from the [party] to secure resources for the municipality from deputies and senators, for example?
 - Regarding the current public policies funding format, how do you see the differences between a ministry-based model and a model based on parliamentary amendments?

- Now talking a bit more about your relationship with the [party], have you ever suggested a candidate to run in any election for your party?
- (If yes) How was this process?
- In these cases, do you prefer a specific candidate profile? For example, do you prefer to nominate someone from your family circle or close to this circle?
- Regarding elections, what do you consider the most important factor for winning an election?
- How do you connect with your electorate?
 - Do you engage in direct activities with voters, such as walks, home visits, etc.?
 - Do you have someone to help organize these actions? If so, what is that person's role? And what is their relationship with the voters? How do they access them?
- What do you see as the party's role in the election?
- And regarding other influential groups in the city, such as community leaders, religious leaders, and the local media, do you think they play an important role in the elections?
 - Have you received support from any local leader? If so, who? How was this support?
 - Was there any leader who supported the opposition or campaigned against you? [If yes] Do you think it had any influence on the election result?
 - Another point is that you come from a traditional political family, right? [Confirm family political background]. How do you think voters see this?
 - And in the case of the party, do you think that your family's political background was or still is important for the party in terms of them having more interest in nominating you for the mayoralty?
 - What do you think voters value more: the party you belong to or your political family group?

- We are nearing the end of the interview. Is there any topic we discussed that you would like to delve deeper into, or is there something we haven't covered that you would like to point out?
- We would like to thank you for your availability to talk with me/us. This conversation will greatly contribute to our research. It would be very interesting if we could talk to other people from your political group. Would you suggest another person to whom we could talk?
- (Turn off recorder) Is there any comment you would like to make after turning off the recorder?
- Thank the interviewee again for their cooperation with the research.
- Briefly explain the next steps of the research and offer our availability in case the interviewee needs to get in touch again in the future.

1.2 Consent

All interviewees received a letter in Portuguese presenting the research and the terms of consent to participate in the research. Before each interview, we confirmed if the interviewee had read the letter and agreed with its terms. We also asked for their consent to record the interview. Here is the letter sent to each interviewee:

City, Month Date, 2023

Dear [Interviewee's position] [Politician's Name],

The [REDACTED], in partnership with the [REDACTED], the [REDACTED], the [REDACTED], and [REDACTED], conducted the research project "Breaking the curse? The politics of drought in the Brazilian Northeast."

The main objective of the project was to analyze the evolution and implementation of public policies against the effects of drought that have historically affected the region. This project was

funded by the [REDACTED] for strictly academic purposes.

At this moment, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] are conducting interviews with representatives who work or have worked in the region to understand more about their political trajectory and experience in the cities and states surveyed. Therefore, we would like to consult with Your Excellency about the possibility of granting an anonymous interview for our academic research.

No collected information will be used for commercial purposes or provided to third parties. After completion, all information will be anonymized for potential future use. We also emphasize that your participation is voluntary, and at any time, you may request the interruption of the interview and/or the elimination of any records. Likewise, copies of this interview can be requested at any time.

If you need any additional information about the project or how your data will be managed, please do not hesitate to use the contacts below:

Project Leader – [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

Sincerely

2 Surname Sensitivity Analysis

Table 2 in the main text reports that 21.6 percent of all 2020 mayoral candidates in the 16 states that we examine share a surname with a previous mayoral candidate, and 11.5 percent share a surname with a previously elected mayor. These figures excludes matches involving the 20 most common surnames among mayoral candidates, in order to reduce the rate of false positives. Figure 1 shows how these estimates would vary if we changed the threshold for excluding common surnames. Even under much more restrictive assumptions, we find that dynastic candidates are strikingly common.

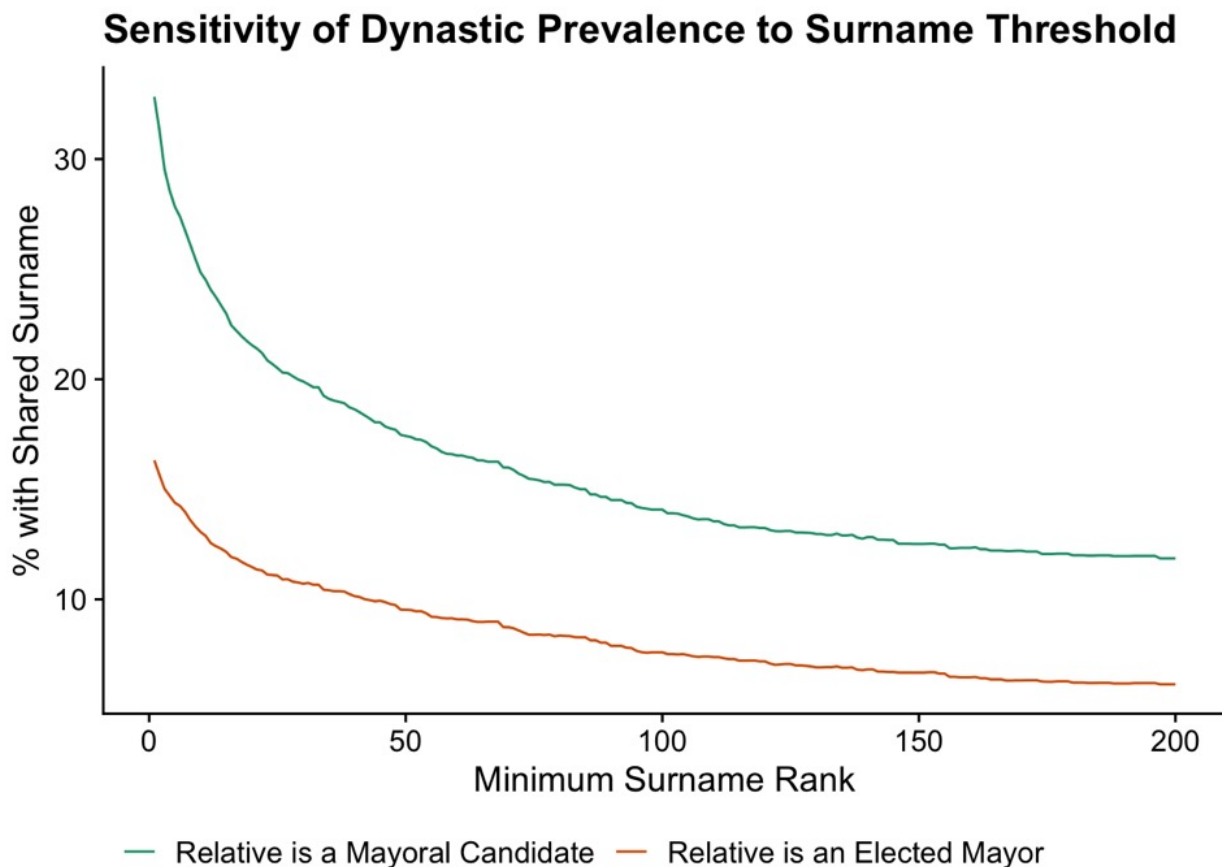


Figure 1: Sensitivity of Dynastic Prevalence to Surname Threshold

3 Experimental Treatments and Robustness

In the main text, we analyze the results of our survey experiment in which a fictional candidate was associated with either a locally competitive political party or a local political family, identified by surname. The “family” treatment in which we identified political dynasties by surname was a subset of a broader “non-party group” treatment. When conducting background research on the municipalities included in the survey, we found many instances of political dynasties but also several other types of non-party political groups which we also included in the experiment.

In most cases, local non-party political groups can be classified as political dynasties. We defined a political dynasty as a group of politicians that are relatives either by blood or by marriage. In most cases, we used only the surname to refer to these groups—for example, “the group of the Batistas.” When the group was also known by an additional moniker, we included it as well—for

example, “the group of the Peixotos, that is, the red group.” These instances in which groups are referenced by surname are analyzed as the “Family” treatment in the main text. In some cases, a dominant family had split, forming two opposing groups with the same surname, so we used individual names of current group leaders as treatments. We still consider these cases of dynastic politics, but we exclude them from the analysis in the main text because of our theoretical focus on family names, and not individual names, as political brands.

Some local non-party groups revolve around political bosses rather than constituting political dynasties. The most common example is a politician who had been mayor for two consecutive terms in the past, left office, and at the time of the survey had either returned to the mayorship, was supporting the current incumbent, or was leading the opposition to the incumbent mayor. Though political bosses lack direct relatives (that we could identify) who are involved in local politics, they are also distinct from mere incumbents due to their political history. We used individual names or nicknames to refer to groups associated with political bosses—for example, “the group of Pedro Sátiro.”

In a few municipalities, the incumbent was a relatively new politician but was identified as coming from a traditional local family that has not been directly involved in politics in recent elections. In these cases, we considered the person as the representative of an emerging political dynasty and used the politician’s full name in the treatment.

We consider the concept of non-party group to be distinct from that of incumbent, and thus we excluded from the list any group associated with an incumbent mayor who did not fall into one of the categories above. That is, to be considered the leader of a political group, the incumbent must belong to a traditional local family or political dynasty or have served a prior term as mayor before leaving office and then returning to the position.

Our pre-analysis plan specified that “in addition to analyzing results of this experiment for the full sample of municipalities with local political groups, we will separately calculate estimates for a subset that excludes political bosses and a second subset that uses only family names.” The surname-only analysis is presented in the main text. Figure 2 replicates these estimates from

the main text alongside separate estimates for the sample without political bosses (but including dynastic politicians referenced by their full names) and for the full sample of non-party groups. As is evident from the figure, our results are robust to any of these alternative estimation approaches.

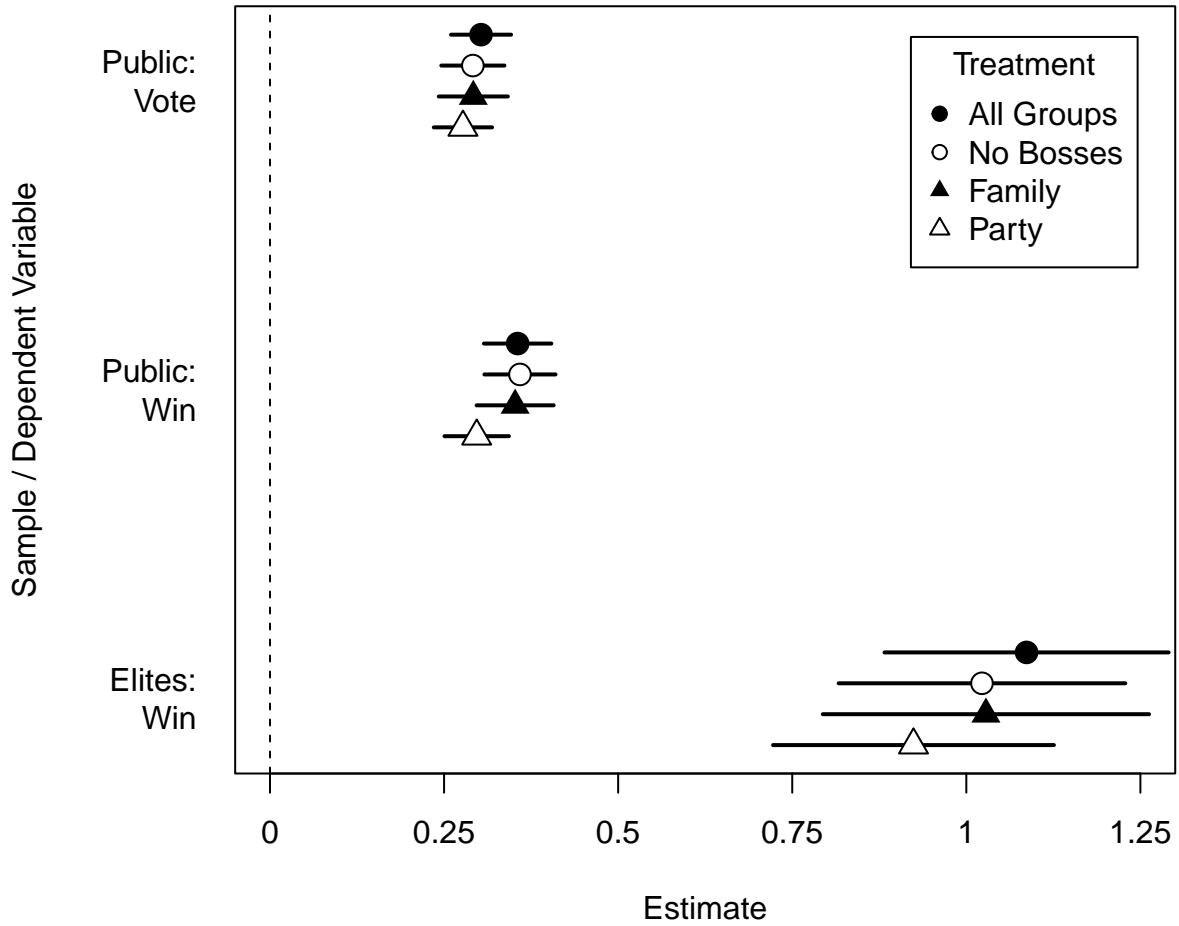


Figure 2: Vignette Experiment Average Treatment Effects