

8. Robustness Tests

A natural concern with the identification of this paper is whether the candidates considered dynastic are in fact relatives of previous mayors. To address this problem, the same regressions are estimated, removing from the sample candidates with common surnames. In order to recognize which are the most common family names in Brazil, these names were ranked by the number of occurrences in the entire sample (candidates in the 1996, 2000 and 2004 elections and elected mayors in the 1988 and 1992 elections). Table 10 displays the 10 most common names in the sample. In this section, the main results of the paper are re-estimated, eliminating from the sample the top 7 most frequent surnames (i.e. up to the surname de Souza).

The first set of results is presented in Table 11. Column 1 shows that this sample restriction does not alter the results on the proportion of female mayors significantly. The effect of political dynasties on this proportion is somewhat higher, ranging between 7.7 (a 60% effect) to 12.3 percentage points (a 95% effect) across the 6 RD specifications presented. Moreover, the OLS results are also greater than the ones presented in Table 7, with the entire sample. Column 2's coefficients indicate that the negative effect of family succession on the mayor's age is robust to the same exclusion, with the point estimates ranging from 1.8 to 3.3, which correspond to negative effects from 4 to 7% on the average age of mayors. The coefficients of the RD estimations in Column 3 suggest that there is no effect of dynasties on the mayors' quality in this subsample. Finally, although the RD parametric estimations in the last column seems to contradict the positive effect of dynasties on mayor's legislative support, the narrower specifications document this positive effect. Eight out of the 12 narrower specifications are positive and significant. Furthermore, the non-parametric estimations also indicate a positive effect of family successions on the legislative support. In our preferred estimation, the effect is of 4.8 percentage points, which correspond to 15% of the average proportion of legislators in the mayor's coalition.

Table 12 presents this robustness test for the identification of the effects on the Policy Choices and on the Political Competition. The results presented in Section 7.2 are robust to this test, with two exceptions. Most of the coefficients in the RD regressions on current work on zoning law are positive and some of them are marginally significant. This supports the conclusion that dynasties do not make lower efforts due to their incumbency advantages. The second exception is on the personnel expenditure results. All the coefficients are negative (and some marginally significant) indicating that dynasties do not increase the size of the municipal apparatus, as argued before.

Finally when we restrict our sample to dynastic candidates with uncommon names to identify the effects on welfare, the results presented in Section 7.3 are confirmed. Dynasties do not affect the income per capita growth (column 1), increase the reelection campaign spending (column 2), but do not alter the reelection rate of mayors (column 3). Although these family successions do not alter the economic conditions of citizens, voters' revealed preference seems to be for non-dynastic mayors.