

Family Culture and Childcare Policies*

Francesca Carta[†]

Lorenzo De Masi[‡]

Paola Profeta[§]

March 2021

Abstract

We study whether and how the family organization shapes individual preferences on public childcare provision. Then, we investigate whether politicians' incentives reflect the family organization that prevails among their voters. To avoid reverse causality problems, we proxy the current family organization with historical family principles that regulated relationships among different generations: the family living arrangement based on cohabitation, that measures the possibility to rely on other family members to satisfy care needs, and the inheritance rule, that measures how much the offspring is dependent on parental financial help. We find that U.S. citizens whose background is based on large and cohabiting families rely less on the Government as provider for external childcare; on the contrary, traditional financial dependency on parents make individuals more prone to ask for the Government's intervention. Representatives of U.S. districts where these backgrounds are dominant, are respectively less and more prone to vote for childcare interventions. Finally, these different family principles also affect the composition of representatives: the probability that a democratic is elected is respectively lower and higher.

Keywords: Historical Family Principles, Cultural Economics, Government Expenditures, Childcare Policies, U.S. Politicians.

JEL Classification: Z10, Z13, H50, J13, D72

*The views expressed in the article are those of the authors only and do not involve the responsibility of the Bank of Italy. We thank Antonio Cabrales, Marta Lopes, Luigi Minale, Luigi Pascali for useful comments. We thank Plato Candell for outstanding assistance in data collection based on web scraping techniques from www.Congress.gov. All errors are ours.

[†]Bank of Italy; Dondena (Bocconi University). *E-mail address:* francesca.carta@bancaditalia.it.

[‡]Universidad Carlos III de Madrid. *E-mail address:* lmasi@eco.uc3m.es.

[§]Bocconi University; Axa Research Lab on Gender Equality. *E-mail address:* paola.profeta@unibocconi.it.

1 Introduction

The family is a primal institution that affects all the spheres of human society. Recent economic literature has started to focus on how its organization and relationships between different generations play a fundamental role in shaping values formation, economic outcomes and influence national institutions (Alesina and Giuliano, 2014; Galasso and Profeta, 2018).

Following this line of research, this paper focuses on how the family organization and ties shape current individual preferences over the generosity of public childcare provision. Moreover, we investigate whether the family organization prevailing among voters affect the elected politicians' legislative behaviour. Public provision of childcare is gaining attention in both the political and academic fora for its twofold role as tool for boosting maternal labour supply and as investment in children's human capital.¹ Among developed countries there is a huge heterogeneity in public provision of childcare. Understanding its determinants and historical roots is key in order to better tailor future interventions or assessing at which level childcare preferences become less relevant. Given the persistence of family values over time, we expect them to play a crucial role.

The current family organization and preferences for childcare provision might be endogenous. For example, not only the internal family structure might affect preferences towards given welfare programs, but also the design of the welfare institutions might affect itself the internal organization of the households (cohabitation, financial support within the household, care provision). To avoid these reverse causality problems, we focus on traditional values that shape, as shown in Duranton et al. (2009); Alesina et al. (2013); Galasso and Profeta (2018), the current family organization and ties. In particular, we consider the historical principles of egalitarian inheritance rule and intergenerational cohabitation as defined by Todd (1983, 1990), which affect relationships among generations in different ways. We also include the third principle introduced by Todd, *exogamy* in marriage relationships, although we expect it to be less relevant for within family intergenerational arrangements.² On the one hand, inheritance rules that guaranteed more equality among siblings establish a stronger link between all children and parents, which inspires more solidarity between generations and, outside the family, nurtures the preferences for more generous welfare state provisions. On the other hand, when different generations cohabit, the enlarged family can provide childcare internally, which is then perceived as a family and domestic duty; thus, individuals are culturally less in favour of external (public) childcare.

We empirically investigate how these traditional family values affect preferences for childcare policies and the legislative activity of politicians. As for the analysis of individual preferences, we use the General Social Survey (GSS) that collects U.S. citizens' responses to questions on the role of the government in providing assistance for childcare. Moreover, the survey contains information on the origin of respondents' ancestors. This information is key to exploit the exogenous variation in the historical family principles within the same current institutional

¹The development of childcare facilities for 0–3 year-old children is today one pillar of the Europe 2020 strategy to eradicate poverty and promote sustainable and inclusive growth.

²Todd's three principles have been used in different contexts by, among the others, Alesina et al. (2015), Bertocchi and Bozzano (2015), Galasso and Profeta (2018).

framework, an identification setting already used by [Fernández and Fogli \(2006, 2009\)](#); [Alesina and Giuliano \(2010\)](#); [Algan and Cahuc \(2010\)](#) among the others.³ In particular, we associate to each respondent the historical family principles that were prevailing in her ancestors' country of origin, and we control for a large set of individual and country of origin characteristics.

In the analysis of political behavior, we concentrate on the Members of the House of Representatives, each of whom is elected in a specific Congressional district and represents a well-identified constituency, to investigate whether their legislative behavior is consistent with the prevalent preferences for public childcare in the population, directly implied by the inherited family culture of the population represented. We evaluate whether the number of the childcare oriented bills that a Representative supports are somehow influenced by the prevailing family culture among the inhabitants' ancestors of the Congressional district in which she is elected. To this end, we set up a new and rich dataset that includes detailed information on Congress members' characteristics (gender, age, political affiliation, educational attainment, occupation, ethnicity, marital status), their legislative activity measured in terms of sponsored bills for every relevant policy area,⁴ as well as the main features of the Congressional districts. The ancestry composition of the districts is taken from the American Community Survey (ACS) provided by the U.S. Census of Bureau.⁵ In each Congressional district, we determine the dominant family principles by grouping together the estimates of the ancestry that feature a common historical family structure.

We find that individuals whose ancestors come from countries featuring egalitarian inheritance rules would prefer more generous publicly provided childcare services; on the contrary, U.S. citizens whose ancestors came from countries featuring cohabitation rules tend to rely less on public provision of childcare. Results are not driven by general preferences over redistribution: the analysed family principles have a substantial impact in shaping individual preferences over intergenerational programs and do not play any role on general preference for other social policies. We also find that U.S. Congress representatives elected in districts where the egalitarian principle dominates are more prone to sponsor bills⁶ in favor of childcare, while those elected in districts where the cohabitation principle prevails are less engaged in childcare bills. Finally, we show that in the Congressional districts where the majority of the inhabitants' ancestors come from countries featuring cohabitation rule, the probability that a Democrat is elected is substantially lower. To the contrary, the probability that a district elects a Democrat (or a female) is much higher if an egalitarian family culture is dominant in that district. None of other individual features (that is education, incumbency status, marital status, and age) is influenced by the family principles.

Our paper contributes to several strands of the economic literature. First, we speak to the literature that looks at the persistence of family culture over time ([Bisin and Verdier, 2001](#)),⁷

³Cross-country comparisons might suffer from endogeneity problems due to the fact that the current welfare institutions, differing among countries, directly affect preferences.

⁴A detailed description of the 32 policy areas in which the sponsored and co-sponsored bills of the dataset are identified is presented in Section 4.

⁵We do not use the GSS since it is not representative at the Congressional district level.

⁶We use the term "bills" to generically refer to all the bill types, e.g. bills, resolutions, concurrent resolutions, and joint resolutions. When we want to explicitly refer to a particular type of bills, we use the technical term.

⁷See [Guiso et al. \(2006, 2008\)](#); [Tabellini \(2008\)](#); [Fernández and Fogli \(2006\)](#) for common definitions of culture.

and how it affects a variety of economic outcomes, such as the rise of public institutions and organizations (Banfield, 1958; Greif, 2006), the different urbanization patterns between Europe and Asia (Greif and Tabellini, 2012), the local and regional disparities (Duranton et al., 2009), the geographical mobility (Alesina and Giuliano, 2010) and the regulation of the labor market (Alesina et al., 2015). Other studies analyze the effect that family culture has on gender equality (see Giuliano (2020) for a review) with a particular attention to female employment (Sasaki, 2002; Algan and Cahuc, 2005, 2009; Alesina and Giuliano, 2014), educational gender gap (Bertocchi and Bozzano, 2015) and domestic violence (Tur-Prats, 2019). Yet, quite surprisingly only few papers attempt to analyze the link between family principles and welfare systems. Esping-Andersen (1999) argues that differences in the evolution of welfare states are due to different family relations,⁸ whereas Pfau-Effinger (2005) claims that welfare state programs differ across countries according to the underlying familiar cultural model. Closer to our paper, Galasso and Profeta (2018) study how family culture has affected the adoption and the generosity of the public pension system, the major intergenerational welfare state program. The intergenerational program in favor of children, i.e. childcare, has instead never been studied before. Yet a large strand of literature shows the relevance of childcare policies and their effects on several socio-economic outcomes, such as female labor force participation (Del Boca et al., 2008; Goux and Maurin, 2010; Carta and Rizzica, 2018) and children’s human capital development (Fitzpatrick, 2012; Herbst, 2017; Felfe and Lalive, 2018; Drange and Havnes, 2019). Moreover, the transmission mechanism that links culture to welfare programs has so far remained unexplored. We fill this gap by investigating the political process which transforms preferences for childcare into political decisions.

Second, we relate to the literature that analyzes political behavior and how it responds to the characteristics of their voters. There is evidence in economics and political science that politicians’ individual traits play a crucial role in the selection of the political candidates when competing for elective offices (see Besley (2005) and Dal Bó and Finan (2018) for a review) and have a huge influence on their political performances once elected, both at the national (Jones and Olken, 2005; Clots-Figueras, 2012) and at the local level (Gagliarducci and Nannicini, 2013). Personal characteristics do matter for the policies they propose or implement. This is the case of gender (Baltrunaite et al., 2014; Edlund and Pande, 2002), educational attainment (Besley et al., 2011), previous occupation (Dreher et al., 2009), party affiliation and past political experience (Freier and Thomasius, 2016). For instance, women as policy-makers may act differently than men (Chattopadhyay and Duflo, 2004) as they have stronger preferences for social redistribution (Alesina et al., 2011). Moreover, democrats generally support a larger government’s intervention and more generous welfare programs. This paper shows that, in addition to the politicians’ individual characteristics and the context, family culture matters as a determinant of political decisions: politicians act in accordance with the family culture of their voters, which shape voters’ preferences.

The reminder of the paper is organized as follows: Section 2 reviews family structure and its measurement; Section 3 discusses the empirical evidence on the individual preferences using

⁸In particular, he identifies three welfare regime after World War II: the liberal welfare state, dominated by private markets, the social-democratic welfare state, based on public government’s intervention, and the familiar welfare state, provided by the family.

GSS data; Section 4 illustrates the impact that family principles have on the policymaking process of the U.S. representatives; finally, Section 5 concludes.

2 The Structure of the Family

The complexity and the variety of the relationships established among its members make the characterization of the internal organization of the family a very difficult task. In his works, Todd (1983, 1990) makes the attempt to provide a complete map of historical family types by using a combination of ethnographic data and historical monographs that go back to Medieval times or earlier.⁹ His classification of family structures hinges on two main organizational principles: the *egalitarian* principle in inheritance rules and the principle of intergenerational *cohabitation* within families.

The egalitarian principle captures the *horizontal* relationship between siblings. This relationship can be either *equal*, if all sons are treated in the same way by their parents, or *unequal*, if parents have a favorite child among their children, typically the firstborn, at the expense of the others. On the one side, equality is strong when parents are constrained by precise inheritance rules which ensure that family property is divided evenly among siblings or, more usually, among brothers (*paritable inheritance*). This family welfare context favors the emergence of the ideology of *universalism*, which recognizes the value of equality. The presence of an equal distribution of family wealth encourages the persistence of a stronger relationship between parents and children, who are inclined to stay at their parents' place until the division of the inheritance. On the other side, equality is low when only one son inherits all the land to preserve the family estate (*imparitable inheritance*). Inequality usually involves primogeniture, unigeniture or the lack of stringent inheritance rules (Bertocchi, 2006). These families, in contrast, nurture *individualism* and independence of family members.

The cohabitation principle measures the *vertical* relationship between parents and sons. The nature of this relationship is related to the concepts of *liberty* and individual independence, or *authority* and submission. When parental authority is strong, the family has a higher degree of intergenerational cohabitation. Typically, the eldest son does not leave the family home when he marries but remains under the authority of the father. Similarly, unmarried daughters remain in the family home under the authority of their father or their brothers when the father dies. Families where different generations live together are called *extended* (*stem* or *communitarian*). Instead, when parental authority is weak, and the family is more *liberal*, children leave the parental nest once they reach adulthood or after marriage to form their own household so there is no cohabitation of couples. In this case, children not only leave behind the authority that parents hold over them, but also interrupt their direct reliance on parents' resources and become independent. Families characterized by no cohabitation of parents' and adult children are named *nuclear*.

In addition to inheritance rules and residential habits, Todd (1983) identifies a third principle based on the relationship between husband and wife. In particular, he distinguishes between marriages in which the partner is chosen among the family members, such as the first cousin

⁹Some of those monographs go back to more than 500 hundred years (Duranton et al., 2009).

(*endogamy*), and marriages where the partner comes from outside the family group (*exogamy*). The choice of the marriage partner is recognized to have consequences for the concepts of authority and equality. For instance, in endogamous couples, marriage arrangements are decided by traditions and not by individuals (Arregle et al., 2019). Thus, individuals are not subject to the authority of another individual (e.g. parental authority) but rather to one of custom.

Combinations of these three principles give rise to different family types with very different frequencies throughout the world: absolute nuclear families, egalitarian nuclear families, authoritarian (or stem) families, exogamous communitarian families, endogamous communitarian families, asymmetrical communitarian families and anomic families.¹⁰ The geographical distribution of each organizational principle is depicted in Figures 1, 2 and 3.

Supported by the anthropological and the historical evidence, Todd (1983, 1990) sustains that these family types present stable and long-lasting patterns, which are able to generate different family cultures. Given the persistence over time of traditional family values, we expect that they play a crucial role in shaping current individual preferences over the generosity of public childcare provision and, ultimately, in the design of different welfare programs. Our empirical analysis focuses on the first two organizing principles,¹¹ *egalitarian* inheritance rules and *cohabitation*, which are better able to characterize the relationships among different generations within the family. In particular, we expect two opposite mechanisms through which family values affect individual preferences for government’s intervention in childcare assistance. On the one hand, inheritance rules that guaranteed more equality among siblings established a stronger link between all children and parents. This would translate into a higher solidarity between generations and dependence on generous intergenerational transfers that eventually nurtures more generous welfare state provisions outside the family unit. Thus, we believe that individuals coming from countries featuring the egalitarian inheritance rule favor more government’s involvement in childcare services. On the other hand, in families where different generations used to cohabit (i.e. wife’s coresidence with her mother-in-law), childcare provision was internalized: the extended family became autarchic and child rearing was perceived as a family domestic duty. As a consequence, we predict that individuals with origins in countries featuring an authoritarian family structure are culturally less in favor of external (public) sources of childcare provision.

Durantón et al. (2009) list at least three reasons why using Todd’s historical principles is advisable when referring to family culture. First, they capture those fundamental aspects of intergenerational family organization that are crucial to understand the relations among family members and, consequently, the within-family transmission of resources. Second, they are easy to measure empirically since they seldom coexist in a particular geographical area: most of the countries fall into one of the two categories for every principle.¹² Third, they avoid the

¹⁰We also perform our analysis using the family types instead of the principles. However, considering family types instead of principles gives rise to a series of issues which entail (arbitrary) decisions on which type dominates and how to consider the concentration of each type, especially at the district level in the U.S. Congress analysis. Moreover, the three principles refer directly to the underlying cultural traits and are thus more appropriate to our analysis.

¹¹Although the third principle - *exogamous* marriage - is particularly important for the characterization of family structures, especially outside Europe, it is instead less relevant for within family intergenerational arrangements (Galasso and Profeta, 2018).

¹²That is, *egalitarian* versus *non-egalitarian* inheritance rules, *cohabitation* versus *non-cohabitation* residential

too simplistic opposition of *strong* versus *weak* family ties that might suffer of endogeneity problems when applied in empirical analyses. A recent literature (Reher, 1998; Alesina and Giuliano, 2010) has used survey data on individuals to questions on the relevance of the family, on the time spent with relatives, and on living arrangements to measure the current degree of intensity in family connections among the household’s members (see Alesina and Giuliano Alesina and Giuliano (2014) for a survey). However, although current relations within and across families are certainly shaped by cultural factors, they suffer of considerable feedback effects. As a matter of fact, family ties are largely influenced by the incentives provided by the current economic institutions, such as labor market regulations (Alesina et al., 2015) and the welfare state. Therefore, to evaluate the effect of family organization on childcare policies without incurring in endogeneity problems, it is advisable to use measurements of family organizations that date back to periods prior to the introduction of welfare state policies.

In our empirical analysis we take the three historical principles as given. Yet, the way and the reasons why a particular family structure has established in a country may depend on other geographical and economic features. For this reason, we control for several economic, political and cultural factors, which might either be related to the three cultural principles or affect the individual preferences on the generosity of the childcare programs.

3 Individual Data Analysis

In this section we test whether individuals’ preferences on the current generosity of childcare provision are affected by family culture. To proxy for family culture we rely on the above-mentioned organizing principles used by Todd (1983) to classify historical family structures: the *egalitarian* principle in the inheritance rule, *cohabitation* between parents and married children, and *exogamy* in marriage relationships. We predict that these principles become part of a stable and persistent family culture that eventually shape preferences over public childcare programs.

Following the same approach of Galasso and Profeta (2018), we perform an empirical analysis at the individual level for the United States, in which we consider individual responses to a few questions regarding the role of the government in providing support to children-oriented policies, contained in different waves of the General Social Survey (GSS). The GSS is a sociological survey created and regularly collected since 1972.¹³ Considered as one of the most important surveys in social sciences, the GSS interviews people on a board range of topics, including demographic, behavioral and attitudinal questions. We concentrate on a set of questions that permit to identify the individual preferences for government responsibility in several issues of the political agenda, from space exploration programs to mass transportation. All the questions have the following structure: “*We are faced with many problems in this country, none of which can be solved easily or inexpensively. I’m going to name some of these problems, and for each one I’d like you to name some of these problems, and for each one I’d like you to tell me whether*

habits, *exogamous* versus *endogamous* marriages.

¹³The GSS was conducted yearly during the period 1972-1994, and every other year ever since. In three years (1979, 1981, 1992) the survey was not conducted.

you think we're spending too much money on it, too little money, or about the right amount". Specifically, we are primarily interested in the one that concerns childcare programs: "*Are we spending too much, too little or about the right amount on assistance for childcare?*", where 1 identifies *too little*, 2 identifies *about the right amount*, and 3 is for *too much*. In order to obtain a better interpretation of regression coefficients, we re-code the answers so that a higher value stands for more support for government spending. The year availability of these questions depends on the item under consideration. The majority of them has been asked since 1973. Those referring to *highways and bridges*, *social security*, *mass transportation* and *parks and recreation* are available from 1984. Instead, the question on government responsibility for childcare policies is available in the following waves only: 2000, 2002, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016.

In addition to the opinions on the role of the government and the generosity of its policies, the survey contains information on the origin of respondents' ancestors. Each individual in the GSS is asked to provide her birthplace and the country of origin of her forebears by answering to the following question "*From what countries or part of the world did your ancestors come?*".¹⁴ This information allow us to exploit the exogenous variation in the historical family principles within the same current institutional framework. In particular, in line with a widely used identification strategy (see [Fernández and Fogli \(2006, 2009\)](#); [Alesina and Giuliano \(2010\)](#); [Algan and Cahuc \(2010\)](#) and many others), we associate to each respondent the historical family principles that were prevailing in her ancestors' country of origin. Besides, since countries may differ along several other dimensions, we control for a large set of legal, religious, political, economic, and demographic characteristics.¹⁵

The original GSS data set includes a total of 62,466 respondents interviewed between 1972 and 2016. The sample size of the survey varies from wave to wave. It ranges from 1,372 for 1990 to 4,510 for 2006. Since we are interested in individuals who face a constant institutional framework, we narrow our analysis to U.S. natives only. However, in order to manage enough observations, we include descendants of different generations of migrants. Due to the fact that some of the questions on government intervention entered the survey as of 1984, individuals interviewed before that year are excluded from the sample. Finally, we restrict our analysis to those countries for which the historical family principles by [Todd \(1983\)](#) are available. This induces us to drop the observations with answers non referring to any specific country of origin. Thus, we end up with a final sample of 22,977 U.S. natives surveyed between 1984 and 2016 whose ancestors come from 22 different countries.¹⁶ Unfortunately, some of the answers to the questions on the role of the government are not valid (e.g. "not applicable", "don't know", or "no answer"). Consequently, we are left with 10,279 observations for childcare (see [Table 3](#)) and 22,570 for all the other items (see [Table 5](#)). Summary statistics on the GSS data set are

¹⁴The available answers include Africa, American Indian, Arabic, Austria, Belgium, Canada, China, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, England and Wales, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Lithuania, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Puerto Rico, Romania, Russia, Scotland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, West Indies, Yugoslavia, and other to be specified. The last category includes other Spanish, other European, other Asian, or American.

¹⁵For more details, see [section 3.1](#).

¹⁶The included countries are Austria, Belgium, China, Denmark, England (with Wales and Scotland), Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Lithuania, Mexico, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain, and Sweden.

provided in Tables 1 and 2.

3.1 Empirical Specification

We estimate the following linear equation:

$$Child_{ict} - g_{ict} = \alpha + \beta_1 Egal_c + \beta_2 Cohab_c + \beta_3 Exog_c + \gamma X_{it} + \delta Z_c + \xi W_t + \epsilon_{ict} \quad (1)$$

where i indexes the individual respondent, c the country of origins of her ancestries and t the year of the interviews (or the GSS wave). The variable $Child_{ict}$ indicates the individual response to the question about childcare assistance, g_{ict} averages over the individual responses to questions about other government intervention's items, $Egal_c$ is equal to 1 if country of origin c features an egalitarian inheritance rule and 0 otherwise, $Cohab_c$ is a dummy equal to 1 if country of origin c features cohabitation rule and 0 otherwise, $Exog_c$ is a dummy equal to 1 if country of origin c features exogamous marriages and 0 otherwise, X_{it} are individual respondent's characteristics, Z_c is a set of controls for the country of origin, W_t are time (or GSS waves) dummies, ϵ_{ict} is the error term. The coefficient of interests are β_1, β_2 and β_3 . Standard errors are clustered at the country of origin level.

The dependent variable is constructed as the difference between individual i answer to the question about childcare assistance and individual i average value of responses to similar questions about government's intervention in other economic areas. Focusing on the same time frame (i.e. 2000-2016), g_{ict} averages over the answers to the usual questions: “*Are we spending too much, too little or about the right amount*” on the following items: *space explorations, environment, health, urban city, crime, drugs, education, arms, race, assistance to poor countries, welfare, roads and infrastructures, mass transportation, parks and social security*.¹⁷ This normalization ensures that individual preferences over childcare assistance do not confound with an overall preference for government's intervention in the economy. Therefore, the difference on the left-hand side actually represents the individual preference on childcare public expenditures relative to the individual average preference on overall public expenditures. For instance, a positive deviation indicates that respondent i finds U.S. spending in assistance for childcare to be relatively too low with respect to a general U.S. spending in the above-mentioned policy areas. Hence, childcare provision is considered by the respondent as a real priority for the government. With negative differences, instead, opposite conclusions apply. Finally, if the difference is zero (or very close to zero), individual preferences on assistance for childcare are meant to be in line with preferences on other government's intervention.

For respondent's individual controls X_{it} , we employ a set of personal and demographic characteristics commonly used in the literature. We include respondent's age at the moment of the interview and its squared term to control for any possible quadratic relationship. Then, we include gender, which takes value 1 for female respondents, and marital status, equal to 1 if the respondent has ever been married. Moreover, we control for educational attainment,

¹⁷We exclude *supporting scientific research* and *developing alternative energy sources* as they are asked in too few waves.

by including a dummy for those respondents who hold at least a bachelor degree, and for employment status with dummy variables for being employed, unemployed or retired. Thus, we add the total family income by maintaining the twelve brackets originally reported in the survey. Lastly, we include respondent’s religious belief (Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox, Muslim etc.), ethnicity (White, Black, Asian or Hispanic) and political affiliation (liberal or conservative), together with an indicator variable equal to 1 if the respondent has at least one descendant.

We specify Z_c using the same set of legal, economic and political characteristics used by Galasso and Profeta (2018) to control for countries’ heterogeneity. Some of these controls, such as geographical dummies and (log) current per capita GDP, are included in all the specifications, whereas some others are included one at a time: legal origin (Anglo-Saxon, Socialist, German, French and Scandinavian), dominant religions in 1900 (shares of Catholics, Muslims, Orthodox, and Protestants), and Herfindal index for religious homogeneity in 1900, Polity 2 index for the level of democracy in 1900, form of government and electoral rules in 1900, the current share of elderly in the population (2000), and current income inequality by means of the Gini coefficient (2000).

3.2 Results

Table 3 shows the results obtained by estimating equation (1). Specifically, we report the estimates of an OLS regression using a sample of U.S. natives only whose ancestors come from the previously cited country of origins. In all the columns, the three principles are included together as to rule out any possible confounding effect.

In the first column, we regress the dependent variable on the three family principles alone without adding any other control. In this raw regression, coefficient estimates anticipate some interesting results. On the one hand, respondents with roots on countries featuring egalitarian inheritance rules consider current US spending in assistance for childcare too low. On the other hand, respondents coming from countries with a tradition of familiar cohabitation and exogamous marriages, instead, seem to find the same public expenditures for childcare not too low.

In columns (2)-(9), additional controls are included. In all columns, indeed, our measure of preference for childcare is regressed on a full set of individual characteristics, the geographical and the time dummies, and on the current (log) of the per capita GDP. Moreover, from column (3) onward, we add the above-mentioned country level controls one at a time to account for countries’ heterogeneity. The results obtained seem to be in line with our theoretical predictions.

Contrary to what found in Galasso and Profeta (2018), where the prevailing inheritance rule is the primal determinant of individual preferences for social security, the egalitarian principle seems to matter less for childcare programs. Nevertheless, in some columns, the estimated β_1 exhibits a statistically significant coefficient with a positive sign suggesting an effect in the expected direction. In egalitarian families all siblings are entitled to inherit the same portion of the family property. Therefore, all adult children develop a strong sense of family dependence on old parents’ future transfers, which in turn translates into a strong dependence on government intergenerational programs. In non egalitarian families, instead, only the male firstborn expects to inherit resources from his parents. All the other siblings, who usually

represent the majority of the heirs, learn very soon how to take care of themselves and develop a sense of independence from all kind of transfers, including those granted by the government. This indicates that individuals who inherited from their ancestries a family culture based on equality among the siblings, feels more dependent on government’s intervention in assistance for childcare.¹⁸ However, the level of significance is not robust to the introduction of different country-level controls.¹⁹

Conversely, the empirical evidence suggests that cohabitation negatively affects marginal preferences for public spending in childcare. That is, respondents whose ancestors come from countries featuring cohabitation rule think that the current U.S. spending in assistance for childcare is too high relative to the attention devoted to other public interventions. Traditionally, in families where different generations are used to live together, family welfare is available and there is no need for external provision. Therefore, a family background characterized by cohabitation of different members has a negative and statistically significant impact on individual preferences for external childcare provision. Results are strongly statistically significant and robust to the inclusion of different control variables.

Exogamy also seems to largely affect the individual preferences for spending in childcare. As a matter of fact, in all the columns, it shows a negative and statistically significant coefficient entailing that respondents with such a background express lower preferences for childcare public expenditures.

3.3 Additional Evidence

In this section we provide some robustness checks for the validity of our analysis. First, we analyze the persistence of family culture over time by controlling for different generations of migrants. Although culture is widely recognized to be an important determinant of individual actions and preferences within countries, it does not have any effect on immigrants’ descendants if cultural assimilation works rapidly (Fernández and Fogli, 2009). For example, Gordon (1964) sustains that immigrants may assimilate the culture of the *host* society by adopting the language and many other cultural symbols. Acculturation is, then, accompanied by a full integration into the core educational, occupational and economic structures of the *host* society leading, ultimately, to a decline of the old ethnic identities in favor of new assimilated hosting ones. In the U.S. this was especially true in nineteenth century for the waves of immigration coming from all Europe. However, the big racial diversity of nowadays immigrants and the cheaper way of communication with the country of origin make it more difficult to understand how the assimilation process operates in the case of more recent migrants’ descendants (Emeka and Vallejo, 2011).

To understand how the impact of family culture (egalitarian and cohabitation principles) on individual preferences for childcare expenditures varies across different generations of migrants, we slightly modify equation (1) by including an additional control for immigration status and its interactions with egalitarian and cohabitation dummies. The first term would capture the

¹⁸Or in social security programs like in Galasso and Profeta (2018).

¹⁹Specifically, the effect of the egalitarian principle disappears when we control for the historical Dominant Religion, the Religion Homogeneity, the Level of Democracy, and current Income Inequality.

potential effect that immigration status have on the individual responses on the role of the government in providing support for children. The interaction terms, instead, would detect whether the results previously found for egalitarian and cohabitation were attributable to more recent generation of migrants' descendants.

Table 4 reports the results for the individual perception on the amount of childcare expenditures after controlling for second- and third-generation immigrants. It adopts the same structure of Table 3. Despite a slight reduction in their coefficients' magnitude, cohabitation and exogamy remain highly significant in statistical terms in almost all the columns. In addition, they maintain the same signs. This suggests that their effect is robust to the inclusion of additional controls for immigrants. Also the egalitarian principle presents similar results: the coefficients remain statistically significant in the same columns as before.

The variable for the immigrant status is never statistically significant. It seems that there are no differences in preferences for childcare provision between those who are second- or third-generation immigrants and those who have American roots. Moreover, the fact that also the coefficients of the interaction terms never statistically differ from zero means that the effects of egalitarian inheritance rules and cohabitation are not driven by more recent generations of migrants.

This evidence confirms that family culture seems to be very persistent and that has been transmitted across generations very distant in time (that is, the vertical channel theorized by Bisin and Verdier (2001)). Our findings are in line with past researches, which argue that cultural values deeply root in the ethnic group to which a person belongs and evolve very slowly (Giuliano, 2020).

Second, we provide a placebo test to rule out the possibility that our results on assistance for childcare are driven by general preferences for a broader government's intervention in the economy. For this purpose, we run the same OLS regression (1) using g_{ict} as dependent variable.²⁰

Results are presented in Table 5 and confirm our expectations. The empirical strategy is the same adopted so far. In the first column, g_{ict} is regressed on the three family principles only. In all the other columns, individual characteristics, current GDP, continental dummies and time dummies are included. The same controls for the country of origin heterogeneity are added one by one in columns (2)-(9).

The coefficient of the egalitarian principle, β_1 , is positive but poorly significant across the different specifications. Also the principle of cohabitation is never statistically significant. This means that individuals, whose ancestors come from countries where parents and adult children were used to live together, are just as likely than the others to answer that, on average, there is too much spending on general policies. Lastly, exogamy rarely shows a statistically significant coefficient.

Overall, results show that, among U.S. individuals, who face a common institutional environment, even after controlling for several characteristics, the assimilated family culture shapes

²⁰Notice that g_{ict} is fashioned in the same way, with the only difference that questions considered are available from 1984 to 2016.

individual preferences over assistance for childcare, but not over a general intervention of the government in the economy.

4 U.S. Congress Political Analysis

In this section we analyze whether individual preferences over the assistance for childcare reflect into the political behavior of the U.S. Representatives. In particular, we investigate how the dominant family principles (i.e. Cohabitation, Egalitarian and Exogamy) in a given Congressional district impact on the number and the type of bills sponsored by the elected U.S. Representatives.

To this purpose, we create an innovative data set that merges information on the individual characteristics of the members of the U.S. Congress, their legislative activity, and the ancestry composition of the districts they represent, by employing different sources. Specifically, we organize our data so that all the Congressional districts in the United States are repeatedly observed for 7 legislatures²¹ (from 2005 to 2017). We then associate to each district the elected Representatives, the number of bills sponsored and co-sponsored during their mandate and the prevailing family culture among the represented population.

Consistently with our previous findings, our prediction is that in those districts that feature a cohabitation rule, which is inherited through inhabitants' ancestors, the resident population considers public spending in the care of the youngest too high and is less favorable to a government's intervention in childcare provision and family support in general. As a consequence, we expect that the elected Representatives embody these requests and sponsor a lower amount of children-oriented bills. The opposite result is expected for the egalitarian principle. In this case, we predict that the Congress members are more prone to sponsor bills in favor to childcare policies.

4.1 Data Description

U.S. federal legislative records can be found at *Congress.gov*. This website provides access to accurate, timely and complete legislative information for all the members of Congress since 1973. As a first step, we gather all the bills and resolutions²² at all legislative stages and we identify their sponsors and co-sponsors among the Congress members. Then, we classify the collected bills and resolutions into different political subjects. Legislative analysts in the Congressional Research Service identify 32 broad policy area terms²³ and assign them to every bill and resolution upon the release of the official text. The term chosen is the one that best

²¹We will sometimes refer to a generic legislature by using the official denomination "U.S. Congress."

²²We include *simple*, *concurrent*, and *joint* resolutions. *Amendements*, instead, are excluded from the analysis as they do not clearly identify with a specific policy area.

²³The 32 policy areas are the following: agriculture and food, animals, armed forces and national security, arts and culture, civil rights and minority issues, commerce, Congress, crime and law enforcement, economics and public finance, emergency management, energy, environmental protection, families, finance and financial sector, foreign trade, government operations and politics, health, housing and community development, immigration, international affairs, labor and employment, law, native Americans, public land and natural resources, science and technology, social sciences and history, social welfare, sports and recreation, taxation, transportation and public works, and water resources development. The description of each policy area can be found at the following link: <https://www.Congress.gov/help/field-values/policy-area>.

describes the focus or predominant subject matter of each measure. We keep the original classification for the vast majority of the bills. However, since we are mostly interested in bills concerning childcare policies, we conduct a further classification in order to identify two more specific policy area terms: *Children* and *Family Care*. The former includes all the bills and resolutions with a primary focus on children welfare and childcare services. The latter groups specific political measures concerning *early education*, *children*, and *family care* in general. Both categories are transversal to the policy area terms originally provided by *Congress.gov*.²⁴ For each legislative mandate of each Congressman, this classification process yields a vector of the number of sponsored and co-sponsored bills and resolutions in each policy area.

Afterward, we combine the above-mentioned legislative information with some personal characteristics of the members of Congress. The great disparities in the structure of the data sources made impossible to use web scraping software and forced us to perform a manual data gathering. Most of the politicians' personal features are taken from the *Biographical Directory of the U.S. Congress 1774-present* website. This database collects the biographies of all the members of the U.S. Congress since 1774. Among the others, these biographies provide information on date and country of birth, educational attainment, political affiliation and occupation before entering politics. Additionally, they include extensive notes on the electoral mandate and previous political experiences, both at the national and local level. The main concern of using biographical sources is the quality of the available information. For example, schooling and professional experience are characterized by contradictory and, sometimes, incomplete information. For this reason, we employ several additional sources to integrate and homogenize our data. Primarily, we rely on *U.S. Political Stats*, which collects Congressmen demographics since 1983. This website brings together personal information from different official sources (i.e. *CQ Press*) and harmonizes them into an homogeneous and comparable format, thus making their classification easier.²⁵ In addition, military status and ethnicity are also taken from *U.S. Political Stats*. To obtain information on marital status and the total number of children, we use *Ballotpedia* and *Vote Smart Facts Matter*. The former is a digital encyclopedia of U.S. politics. *Vote Smart Facts Matter*, instead, tracks thousands of American politicians at all political levels to monitor their personal characteristics, voting records and campaign contributors. Both provide a complete description of American politicians' personal life, including the date of their marriage (or their divorce), information about their spouse and details on their offspring composition. Finally, we revise and complete all these information with other unconventional sources such as *Wikipedia*, social media – *Facebook* and *Twitter* – and the official web pages of the Representatives' electoral campaigns.

The resulting data set is augmented with geographical, cultural, and socio-economic characteristics of the Congressional districts. In particular, we associate to each Congressional district the most represented historical family principles among the district population by col-

²⁴Read section 4.4, for further details.

²⁵The final classification of occupation using the instruction provided by *U.S. Political Stats* involves the following professional categories: acting, aeronautics, agriculture, business or banking, clergy, Congressional aide, construction, education, engineering, journalism, labor leader, law, law enforcement, medicine, military, misc., public service or politics, real estate, sport.

lecting information on its ancestry composition. We rely on the American Community Survey (ACS), which is the most comprehensive and largest social survey provided by the U.S. Census Bureau.²⁶

The reasons why we decide to switch from the GSS to the ACS are several. First, the GSS data are collected at the county-level. Counties represent small administrative units in which U.S. states are durably organized. Conversely, Congressional districts are drawn according to the population distribution and are periodically re-shaped as part of the decennial census to preserve a fair electoral representation. Besides, almost all of the counties' and Congressional districts' borders do not coincide. These discrepancies prevent us to use the GSS individual responses to obtain ancestries' estimates at the district level.

Second, the GSS sample is built to be nationally representative, with the so-called Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA) and non-metropolitan counties as primary sampling units (Tesei, 2017). As a matter of fact, many counties, especially the smallest ones, are only sampled in a limited number of waves and most of them include a very small number of respondents. The ACS, instead, is an ongoing survey that yearly gathers very detailed demographic, social and economic information, such as ancestry, citizenship, educational attainment, income, language proficiency, migration, disability, employment, and housing characteristics and supply them as aggregate estimates at diverse administrative levels (i.e. federal, state, county, district and, sometimes, municipal level). Unfortunately, this survey format does not provide individual information of the respondents, which are useful to control for several demographics of the population and characteristics of the countries of origin that might affect preferences for childcare policies. However, it enables us to directly consider the estimates at the district level without incurring in any representativeness issue of the sample.

To identify the dominant historical family principles in each district, we are mainly interested in outlining the ancestry composition of the U.S. Congressional districts. In the ACS, the word ancestry refers to the respondents' ethnic origin, heritage, descent, or simply roots which may reflect either her place of birth or that of her family, also several generations removed. The intent of such questions is to establish a connection between the respondents and a particular ethnic group. As in all surveys, ancestry is self-reported, thus it might suffer from bias due to problems of ethnic assimilation, especially among Hispanic people (Emeka and Vallejo, 2011).

Since respondents are allowed to report up to two ancestries, displayed ACS estimates of a given ancestry include all the individuals who report such ancestry regardless of whether it was their first or second choice. Therefore, individuals who report multiple ancestries count as twice in the aggregate estimates. Consequently, the sum of all the ancestry estimates exceed to the total population of a Congressional district. In this way, the inherited cultural principles associated to the ancestries by which the respondents feel equally represented, contribute to the same degree to the identification of the dominant family culture in the Congressional districts.

The available ancestries are American, Arab, British, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, European, French, German, Greek, Hispanic, Hungarian, Irish, Italian, Lithuanian, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Scotch-Irish, Scottish, Slovak, Sub-Saharan Africa, Swedish, Swiss,

²⁶The survey is sent to approximately 295,000 addresses monthly, which means 3.5 million per year. Source: *ACS Information Guide* at <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/about/information-guide.html>.

Ukrainian, Welsh, West Indian, and Other. As in the GSS analysis, we keep only those ancestries for which Todd (1983) classification is available and we can unequivocally match a family principle. Hence, we drop American, Sub-Saharan Africa, Swiss, Ukrainian and European. By contrast, although not referring to single countries of origin, Arab, West Indian, and Hispanic ancestries can still contribute to establish the dominant family principles. In fact, all the countries that belong to these geographic areas feature homogeneous family culture (Todd, 1983).²⁷

All the other relevant district-level characteristics used in the estimation are also obtained from the ACS. They include the total number of resident population, the unemployment rate, the median household income and the share of the population younger than 18 years old. It is important to notice that these data are not always complete, thus potentially reducing the observations in our regressions.

While data on Representatives and their legislative activity are organized in legislatures, the Congressional district-level controls and the ancestries' estimates are provided by the ACS on a yearly basis. Every legislature of the U.S. Congress is made of a two-year session that starts on January, 3rd of each odd year. Hence, merging problems may arise. Since the ancestry composition of a Congressional district is quite stable from one year to another, it is very unlikely that the ancestry estimates change *within* a given Congress. Therefore, we choose to merge each Representative-legislature vector of bills and resolutions with the value of the district estimates corresponding to the first year in office. For instance, the 114th U.S. Congress runs from January, 3rd 2015 to January, 2nd 2017 and Representatives elected in this legislature are associated to the ACS ancestry estimates and district-level controls of 2015.

4.2 Sample Selection

Our new dataset includes 12,609 observations, which correspond to 2,258 members of the United States Congress elected between 1973 and 2017 – that is, between the 93rd and the 115th legislature, respectively.

The U.S. Congress comprises two different branches: the House of Representatives and the Senate. The U.S. House of Representative is formed by 435 voting members elected every two years, who represent as many Congressional districts. The borders of those districts are set by the states so that, within each state, they end up having approximately equal population sizes. They range from 530,000 (Rhode Island's two districts) to 1,070,000 inhabitants in Montana's state-wide district and have an average population of around 710,000 people.²⁸ In addition, there are five non-voting delegates, who represent the districts of Guam, American Samoa, U.S. Virgin Island, the Northern Mariana archipelago – the so-called *Unincorporated U.S. Territories*.

²⁷We do not include Asian origins because they relate to different estimates on respondents' ethnicity and race, which are not comparable with the standard questions about ancestries. Besides, these estimates are incomplete as they are not available for all the Congressional districts and legislatures of our analysis. In addition, the Asian community in the U.S. is not as big as the Hispanic one and, apart from a very few districts in California or in the State of New York, it is never a dominant ethnic group. We checked whether including or not Asian estimates, when available, would have changed the resulting family principles. After analyzing more than 3,000 Congressional districts over 12 years, we conclude that Asians are never pivotal to establish the dominant family culture in a district and, thus, can be excluded from the sample.

²⁸2010 Census, <https://www.census.gov/>

Every ten years, the census conducted by The Census Bureau is used to determine the number of Representatives that each state sends to Congress, and therefore the number of Congressional districts within each state. The U.S. Senate, instead, consists of a hundred members, two per state, regardless of the population size. Both Senators represent the state in its entirety and their election is staggered every 6 years.

Since we are mainly interested in a clear connection between politicians' legislative behavior and the preferences of the voters they are called to represent, we decide to focus only on the members of the House of Representatives. Indeed, these are the only federal politicians who maintain a direct link with their constituencies. Thus, we exclude the 2,333 Senators and remain with 10,267 observations.

Due to the restrictions of the ACS data, we narrow the analysis to those Members of the House of Representatives who are elected from 2005 to 2017. Moreover, we exclude the non-voting members for which the estimates of the ancestries are not provided. Therefore, our final sample is made of 3,121 observations corresponding to 888 different Members of the House of Representatives elected in 449 different Congressional districts over 7 legislatures, that is from the 109th to the 115th Congress.²⁹ Table 6 reports the summary statistics of all the included variables.

4.3 Estimation Framework

We test the link between the predominant family principles among the inhabitants of a Congressional district and the political behavior of the elected Representatives using the following linear specification:

$$y_{idt} = \alpha + \beta_1 \text{Egal}_{dt} + \beta_2 \text{Cohab}_{dt} + \beta_3 \text{Exog}_{dt} + \gamma X_{it} + \delta D_{dt} + \eta_t + \epsilon_{idt} \quad (2)$$

where y_{idt} is the dependent variable and measures the share of bills in favor of childcare policies sponsored and co-sponsored by Representative i elected in district d at time (year or legislature) t as a fraction of her entire legislative activity.³⁰ Similarly to what we did in section 3, we opt for a relative measure of our dependent variable to capture how relevant the care of the youngest is compared to the overall political activity. Egal_{dt} , Cohab_{dt} , Exog_{dt} are the dummy variables of interest that take value 1 if the Congressional district d at time t is dominated by groups of ancestry estimates pertaining to countries of origin that historically feature an egalitarian inheritance rule, a cohabitation rule, or exogamous marriages, respectively; X_{it} is a set of Representative's individual characteristics; D_{dt} is a vector of Congressional district's controls; η_t are year (or legislature) dummies and ϵ_{idt} is the error term.

To obtain our dummy variables of interest, we exploit data on ancestry estimates supplied by the ACS. As explained in section 4.1, these information allow us to identify the most repre-

²⁹The available seats in the House of Representatives are 435 and correspond to just as much Congressional districts. However, as we mentioned before, Congressional districts change every 10 years. Their borders are reshaped, some of them are dropped and some other are newly created. Hence, since we cover 7 legislatures, we end up collecting more than 435 territorial units per legislature in our sample.

³⁰Representative i 's legislative activity includes all the sponsored and co-sponsored bills and resolutions, but not the amendments. See section 4.1 for more details.

sentative ancestries in the Congressional districts at the beginning of each legislature. In this way, we are able to draw a complete picture of the ethnic origins of the district population. To establish whether those dummies take unitary value, for each one of the three family principles, we aggregate the ancestry estimates of district d at time t into two different groups. In one group, we gather all the ancestries related to those countries in which, according to [Todd \(1983\)](#), the traditional family structure was historically characterized by that particular organizational principle. In the other group, we add together the remaining ancestries. If the former cluster strictly exceeds the latter, we assign a value equal to 1 to the corresponding dummy variable. In other words, the dummy takes positive values if it turns out that the majority of the population of Congressional district d at time t reports ancestors that come from countries in which families were historically organized according to the related family principle.

The district-level controls include the resident population estimated at the beginning of the legislature, together with its squared term. Controlling for the population size can be useful as more populated districts are supposed to need a more incisive public intervention in social welfare policies, including childcare and early education. The covariates also contain some other socio-economic variables, such as the median household income, expressed in thousands euros at 2005 price level to account for inflation, the unemployment rate and the share of the young population with strictly less than 18 years old, both expressed in percentage terms.

For what concerns the individual characteristics, we include Representatives' age at the beginning of the legislature and its squared term so as to control for any possible quadratic relation. In addition, we control for the Representatives' political experience to identify their level of on-the-job know-how. Precisely, it might be that experienced politicians are more efficient and prolific in sponsoring bills as they better manage the legislative process. In fact, we include a dummy variable that takes value 1 if the Representative is an experienced incumbent who has already represented the same district in the previous legislatures.

Regarding the schooling level, we first classify the reported educational attainment according to the *U.S. Political Stats* categories. Then, we create a dummy variable that takes value 1 if the elected Representative holds at least a bachelor's degree. We follow the same strategy to control for job career before entering politics. After classifying the disclosed occupations into the above-mentioned groups, we include two dummies for the categories suspected to influence the number of sponsored bills in family care: one for politicians with a career in *education* and another for those who worked in the public sector or directly entered politics after graduation. Those who have always devoted their life to politics are more able to manage their political power and, thus, to sponsor more bills ([Bordignon et al., 2013](#)).

We control for some other individual characteristics such as gender, marital status and number of children at the beginning of the legislature. Hence, we include an indicator variable for female Representatives, a dummy equal to 1 if the Representative has ever married in her life, i.e. if he is either married, divorced or widowed, and a variable indicating the total number of children in care, including adoptions and stepchildren. Moreover, we include a dummy for serving in the military service.

Since political affiliation is well recognized to have a substantial impact on the sponsored and implemented policies, we add an indicator variable for the democratic Representatives. In

addition, we include a set of dummies for five different ethnic groups (white, Asian, Hispanic, Natives, and African) identified by the Census.³¹

Some of the Representatives in the sample did not stay in charge for the entire legislature. Hence, they could have just devoted less time to their legislative activity, thus sponsoring a lower number of bills because of their shorter mandate. To address this possibility, we insert a dummy variable equal to 1 if the Representative either resigned before the end of the term or was elected with a special election to substitute a colleague during the legislature. For these politicians, all the above-mentioned demographic controls are considered at the beginning of their mandate.

Finally, we include a set of time dummies η_t , one for each legislature starting year, to control for possible time trends. We would like to include also Congressional districts' dummies to account for all the time-invariant (unobserved) characteristics with a strong territorial component that may influence the legislative activity. However, this is not possible because these dummies would absorb our attribute of interest - that is, whether the cultural principles have a direct impact on the total number of sponsored bills by the U.S. Representatives. On the contrary, we include a full set of State dummies³² (Khawaja and Mian, 2005). Standard errors ϵ_{idt} are clustered at the Congressional district level to allow for arbitrary heteroskedasticity and serial correlation.

4.4 Results

Table 7 reports the estimates of equation (2). In column (1) and (2) we regress our dependent variable on the egalitarian and cohabitation principles alone and on the full set of year dummies. In column (3) we regress together the three principles, the district-level covariates, the year and the State dummies. Finally, column (4) displays the full specification with the individual characteristics of the Congress members.

Results show a positive and significant coefficient of the egalitarian principle and a negative and significant coefficient of the cohabitation principle. Both coefficients are robust to all the specifications. The principle of exogamy also shows a positive relationship with the share of childcare bills, though it turns negative and not significant when we include individual controls. This suggests that exogamy is less relevant in explaining the policy-making decisions.

The prevailing inheritance rule among the most represented ancestries in a district does matter for political decisions. It shows a positive and robust impact on the relative number of childcare bills that the Representatives decide to sponsor. A negative coefficient appears, instead, for the principle of cohabitation.

It is worth noticing that many of the district-level variables are not significantly different from zero. Therefore, politicians' inclination towards childcare policies is not affected by the territories they are elected in. Few exceptions need to be discussed. Firstly, the more populated districts are represented by politicians who are less devoted to support childcare bills. Secondly, the median household income's coefficient becomes positive and statistically significant when

³¹This classification of politicians' ethnicity is broadly accepted in the existing literature (Emeka and Vallejo, 2011).

³²Not shown in equation (2).

politicians' controls are included. This might be due to the fact that the district's wealth is strongly correlated with some of the above-mentioned individual characteristics. Ultimately, Representatives elected in districts with a higher level of unemployment rate are those who relatively sponsor more bills for childcare. However, the magnitude of the effect and its statistical significance disappear under the full specification.

Among the Representatives' characteristics, female, democrat and incumbency status dummy variables influence the share of childcare bills in a common direction. In particular, Representative's gender and political affiliation are very relevant both in statistical and economic terms. A female and a democrat Representative sponsor, on average, 1.491 and 3.111 percentage points more in favor of childcare. These numbers correspond, in order, to an increase of 16.8% and 35.0% with respect to the mean outcome.

Findings about gender are in line with previous research, which argues that a larger participation of women in decision making may affect the political agenda itself (see [Profeta \(2020\)](#) for a review). Causal studies in this direction are not conclusive ([Hessami and da Fonseca, 2020](#)), but several papers suggest that gender has an impact on the allocation of spending towards specific areas as a consequence of differences between men and women in political preferences and priorities. For example, [Alesina et al. \(2011\)](#) claim that women have a stronger preference for social redistribution. This is proved by the fact that female voters have a remarkable inclination in voting leftist parties, such as Democrats in the U.S. ([Edlund and Pande, 2002](#)). Other studies confirm that men are less public-oriented than female, who are more inclined to make public investments ([Chattopadhyay and Duflo, 2004](#)).

Results on political experience, which is captured by the incumbency dummy, are also in line with previous studies ([Alt et al., 2011](#); [Freier and Thomasius, 2016](#)). Politicians that have already been in office and that are re-elected for another mandate are more efficient in sponsoring bills, as they better know how to deal with the legislative procedure. Hence, the number of bills they submit is higher ([Ferraz and Finan, 2009](#)). Furthermore, as an incumbent, the Representative feels safer and, thus, is more willing to sponsor policies that do not immediately translate into votes, such as public investments in childcare and family.

Ultimately, serving as a conscript has a negative and statistically significant impact on the relative amount of sponsored childcare bills.

In order to check whether previous results are exclusively driven by a general inclination of U.S. Representatives for redistribution and welfare policies at large, we slightly modify our dependent variable. For each Representative in the sample, indeed, we divide the number of childcare oriented bills by the number of bills assigned by to the following policy area terms: health, education, labor and employment, social welfare and pensions, redistribution, public lands and natural resources, families, arts and culture, housing.

Results are showed in [Table 8](#), in which columns are arranged in the same order of [Table 7](#). The regression output does not considerably differ from the one obtained in the previous specification. The historical principles of family organization shows the same sign as before, as well as the politicians' individual characteristics. The greater magnitude of all coefficients is due to the fact that the dependent variable is expressed as a share of a more narrow set of bills.

However, numbers indicate a mild reduction in many of the coefficients of interest relative to the mean outcome, thus suggesting a general softening of the relative effects. For instance, being female or Democrat on average increases the share of childcare bills over welfare by 9% and 20% with respect to the mean outcome. The same mitigation occurs with the egalitarian and cohabitation principles when regressed alone, as well as with the *military* and the *incumbency* status. However, egalitarian and cohabitation slightly increase their relative effect under the full specification of column (5). On the contrary, *Principle of Exogamy* completely loses its statistical significance when included with the other principles.

Table 9 uses as dependent variable the absolute numbers of childcare bills. Results on the role of the historical family principles are confirmed.

Findings are substantiated by the use of some alternative child policy measures – *Family Care* bills – as dependent variable. This broader category includes all the sponsored and co-sponsored bills in the following policy areas: early-age education, family care and childcare policies. Tables A1, A2, and A3 in the Appendix are symmetric to those on childcare bills. The egalitarian (cohabitation) principle is associated with a higher (lower) number of *Family Care* sponsored and co-sponsored bills, either in relative or in absolute terms. Indeed, the corresponding coefficients present the same signs and statistical significance.

4.5 Political Selection

Previous results show that family values are strongly correlated with some of the elected politicians’ individual characteristics. In this section, we investigate the role that historical family principles play on U.S. Representatives’ political affiliation and gender, which may in turn have an impact on the policy areas and the type of bills that those Representatives decide to sponsor. For instance, Democrat politicians are traditionally more in favor of a larger intervention of the federal government in financing social welfare policies, such as childcare, social security, and public education. This is why it becomes crucial to investigate how family culture affects these characteristics and whether it has a direct impact on the political selection process. To this purpose, we specify the following linear probability model:

$$y_{idt} = \alpha + \beta_1 \text{Egal}_{dt} + \beta_2 \text{Cohab}_{dt} + \beta_3 \text{Exog}_{dt} + \delta D_{dt} + \eta_t + \epsilon_{idt} \quad (3)$$

where y_{idt} is an indicator variable for either a Democrat or a female elected candidate in district d at time t ; Egal_{dt} , Cohab_{dt} , and Exog_{dt} are the usual district-level dummies for the family principles; D_{dt} is a vector of Congressional district’s controls;³³ η_t are year (or legislature) dummies and ϵ_{idt} is the error term, clustered at the Congressional district level.³⁴ Results are reported in Panel A of Table 10.

The estimation outcome shows that the three family principles have a remarkable impact on the political affiliation of the elected Representatives. The egalitarian principle features

³³This set includes the same controls used in the previous analysis, that is population size, its squared term, share of individuals with 0-17 years old, unemployment rate and median household income.

³⁴As in the previous analysis, state dummies are included to control for a potential unobserved spatial heterogeneity.

a positive and statistically significant coefficient: the probability that a district will send a Democrat to the Congress is more than 40 percentage points higher if the egalitarian inheritance rule is dominant in that district. The principle of cohabitation shows a negative and statistically significant relationship: in the Congressional districts where the majority of the inhabitants' ancestors come from countries featuring a cohabitation rule, the probability that a Democrat is elected is substantially lower. The prevalence of the cohabitation rule in a district reduces the chance for a Democrat to represent that district by more than 30 percentage points, when the principle is regressed alone – column (1), and almost 15 percentage points in the full specification – column (3). A similar interpretation applies to exogamy.

By contrast, family culture seems to have less influence on the gender of the elected Representatives. We only identify a significant correlation between the egalitarian principle and the gender of the winning candidate: the districts mostly populated by residents with origins in egalitarian countries are more likely to elect a woman.

Panel B of Table 10 leads to similar conclusions for other individual characteristics. Results are obtained by running regression (3) with a different dependent variable at a time: educational attainment, incumbency status, marital status and age.³⁵ None of these features is influenced by the family principles that characterize the reference constituency. It is worth mentioning that the absence of correlation between family principles and Representatives' individual characteristics but for party affiliation, corroborates the idea that family exclusively matter for political ideology.

Overall, the empirical evidence on political selection confirms the idea that family culture is persistent and has a key role in shaping preferences over welfare policies. On the one side, individuals with origins in countries that used to feature an egalitarian principle in inheritance rules are more dependent on publicly-provided intergenerational welfare programs (Galasso and Profeta, 2018). As a consequence, the Congressional districts in which these individuals form majority are more prone to elect Democrat and female Representatives, who traditionally support more generous welfare policies. On the other side, individuals whose ancestors come from countries where households were characterized by cohabitation of parents and adult children are less in favor of a government's intervention (see section 3). Accordingly, the Congressional districts in which those individuals prevail are more inclined to send a Democrat to the House of Representatives.

5 Conclusion

We have examined the role of family culture in shaping individual preferences on the current generosity of public assistance for childcare that, in turn, influence politicians' legislative activity in promoting and implementing childcare programs and family-oriented policies.

We have established that individuals whose ancestors come from countries featuring egalitarian inheritance rules find current U.S. spending in assistance for childcare too low, thus

³⁵We specify an identical linear probability model for the first three dependent variables, which are dummies equal to 1 if the elected Representative holds at least a bachelor's degree, was already in office before the election, is married or has been at least once, and 0 otherwise. The last variable, instead, indicates the age of the Representatives at the beginning of the mandate.

preferring more generous publicly provided services. In contrast, respondents characterized by a cohabitation (or exogamous) background are less in favor of government involvement in provision of public childcare.

We have also shown that policy-makers' legislative decisions are consistent with the preferences for public childcare of the population represented, which are directly implied by the inherited family culture. The egalitarian principle positively affects the number of sponsored childcare oriented bills, while cohabitation has a negative impact. Finally, we have found supporting evidence that the link between family principles and policy decisions passes through political ideology: the probability of electing a democrat is substantially higher in those districts with dominant egalitarian principle and significantly lower in those with cohabitation.

Our study has some data limitations. Unlike the GSS analysis, we are not able to control for the characteristics of the country of origin when using ACS data aggregated at the district level. We are also not able to distinguish among multiple ancestries not to disentangle the effect on preferences for childcare due to family culture from other important effects due to dominant religion, legal origins, political settings, and historical level of inequality.³⁶

Our rich dataset, which includes both personal details of members of Congress and information on the bills they sponsored over the years, constitutes a promising source for future innovative researches. It could be used to analyze bills related to other intergenerational welfare programs, such as social security, and assess possible trade-offs between family policies and social security. More broadly, it can be used to assess the role of US politicians in dealing with climate change and the protection of the environment or the immigration policies. Moreover, our dataset provides information on the long transformation of the American political ruling class, in terms of the type and quality of the bills supported, with a particular mention to populism as one of the most relevant political phenomena of the new millennium. Finally, our dataset can be augmented with information on bills status in the legislative procedure to become a law. It can be useful to define innovative measures of political quality, alternative to the classical human capital indicators: education, occupation, experience, or political leaning, in line with a growing literature (Carnes and Lupu, 2016; Dal Bó et al., 2017; Carreri, 2019).

³⁶For instance, if a respondent's ancestries come from Egypt, her preferences for childcare might be shaped either by the family principles featured in Egypt or by the Islamic religion.

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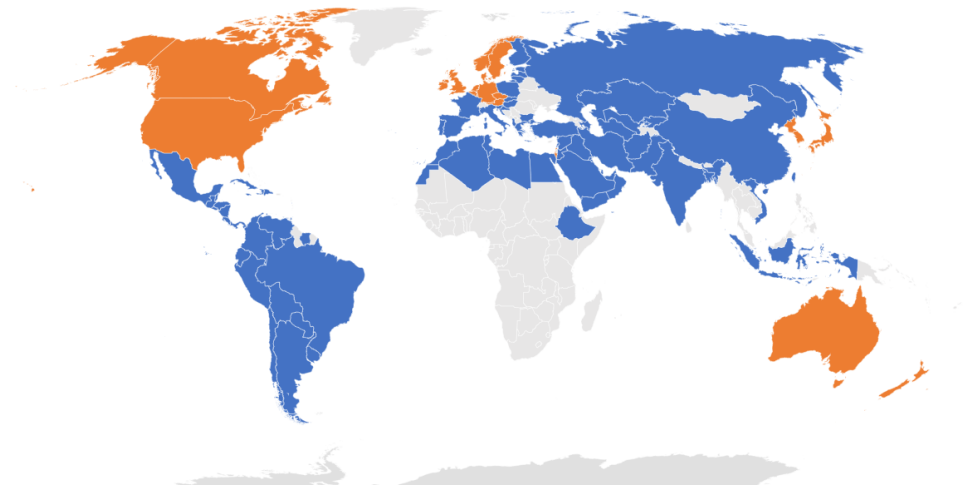
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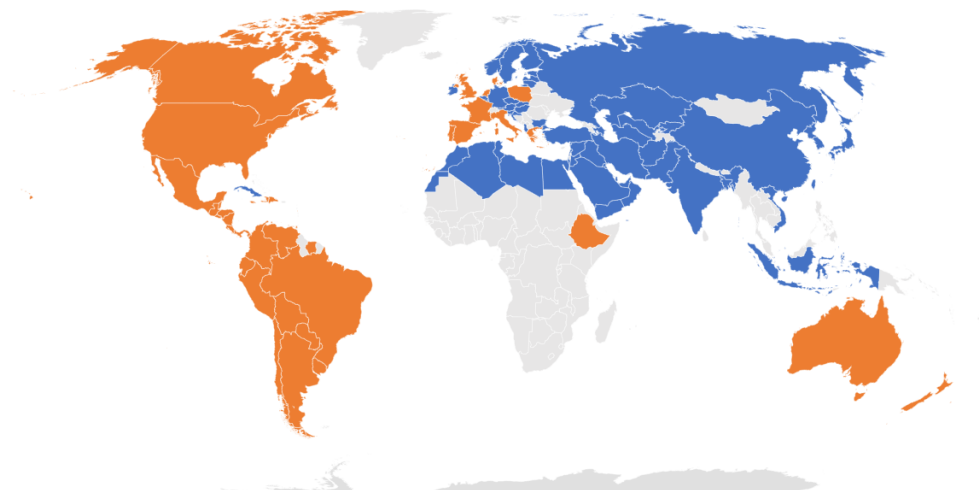
Figures and Tables

Figure 1: Diffusion of Inheritance Rule



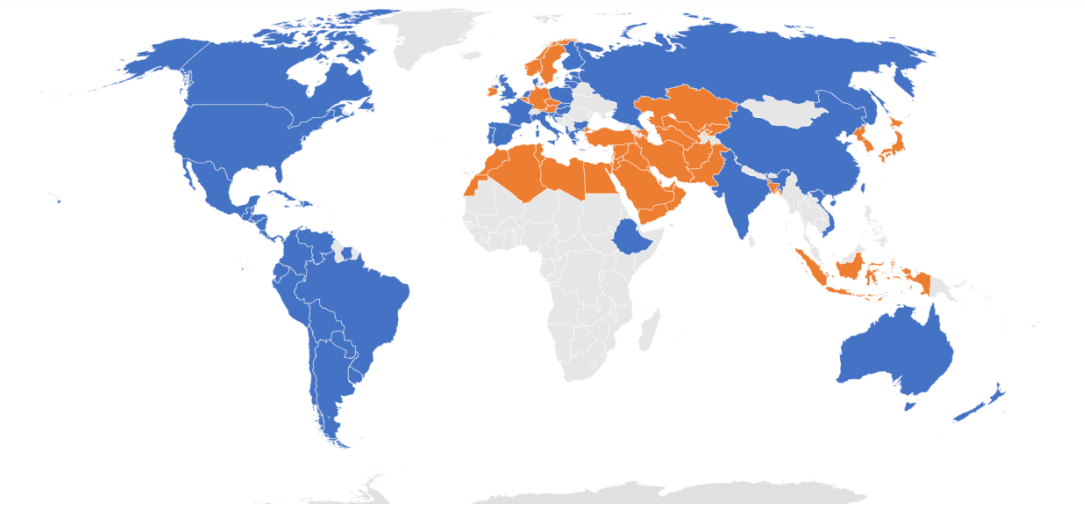
Notes. **Blue:** Egalitarian; **Orange:** Non-Egalitarian; **Grey:** Missing. Data Source: [Todd \(1983\)](#)

Figure 2: Diffusion of Cohabitation Rule



Notes. **Blue:** Cohabitation; **Orange:** Non-Cohabitation; **Grey:** Missing. Data Source: [Todd \(1983\)](#)

Figure 3: Diffusion of Exogamous Marriages



Notes. **Blue:** Exogamy; **Orange:** Endogamy; **Grey:** Missing. Data Source: [Todd \(1983\)](#)

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

	N	mean	sd	min	p25	p50	p75	max
Outcome Variables:								
Preference for Childcare	10,279	2.442	0.640	1	2	3	3	3
Preference for Childcare (as a difference with g)	10,279	0.209	0.594	-2	-0.231	0.333	0.692	1.769
General Preference for Public Spending (g)	22,570	2.210	0.259	1	2.067	2.231	2.385	3
Individual Variables:								
Female	22,977	0.544	0.498	0	0	1	1	1
Age	22,926	47.41	17.75	18	33	45	61	89
Married	22,972	0.524	0.499	0	0	1	1	1
Employment Status: Unemployed	22,975	0.0484	0.215	0	0	0	0	1
Employment Status: Retired	22,975	0.167	0.373	0	0	0	0	1
Employment Status: Other	22,975	0.163	0.369	0	0	0	0	1
Income	20,791	10.83	2.251	1	10	12	12	12
Political View: Liberal	22,881	0.419	0.493	0	0	0	1	1
Political View: Conservative	22,881	0.434	0.496	0	0	0	1	1
Individual Religion: Protestant	22,899	0.582	0.493	0	0	1	1	1
Individual Religion: Catholic	22,899	0.337	0.473	0	0	0	1	1
Individual Religion: Muslim	22,899	0.000349	0.0187	0	0	0	0	1
Individual Religion: Orthodox	22,899	0.00131	0.0362	0	0	0	0	1
Individual Religion: No Religion	22,899	0.0542	0.226	0	0	0	0	1
Individual Religion: Other	22,899	0.0250	0.156	0	0	0	0	1
Race: White	22,977	0.962	0.190	0	1	1	1	1
Race: Black	22,977	0.00814	0.0898	0	0	0	0	1
Race: Other	22,977	0.0296	0.169	0	0	0	0	1
Immigrant Status	21,657	0.411	0.492	0	0	0	1	1
Education: Less than High School	22,951	0.122	0.328	0	0	0	0	1
Education: Graduate	22,951	0.274	0.446	0	0	0	1	1

Notes: Baseline sample of U.S. natives whose ancestors come from the following 22 countries of origin: Austria, Belgium, China, Denmark, England (Scotland included), Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Lithuania, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden. Base years: 1984-2016.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics

	N	mean	sd	min	p25	p50	p75	max
<i>Country of Origin Variables:</i>								
Geo Dummy: Latin America	22,977	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Geo Dummy: Asia	22,977	0.00509	0.0712	0	0	0	0	1
Geo Dummy: Africa	22,977	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Geo Dummy: America	22,977	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Geo Dummy: Oecd	22,977	0.992	0.0917	0	1	1	1	1
Geo Dummy: Slavi	22,977	0.00339	0.0582	0	0	0	0	1
Geo Dummy: Natives	22,977	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Egalitarian Principle	22,977	0.240	0.427	0	0	0	0	1
Principle of Cohabitation	22,977	0.514	0.500	0	0	1	1	1
Principle of Exogamous Marriage	22,977	0.506	0.500	0	0	1	1	1
Legal Origin: Anglo-Saxon	22,977	0.423	0.494	0	0	0	1	1
Legal Origin: Socialist	22,977	0.0515	0.221	0	0	0	0	1
Legal Origin: French	22,977	0.206	0.404	0	0	0	0	1
Legal Origin: German	22,977	0.256	0.436	0	0	0	1	1
Legal Origin: Scandinavian	22,977	0.0641	0.245	0	0	0	0	1
Index of Democratization Level	17,576	2.344	4.846	-9	-1	1	7	10
Herfindal Index Religion (1900)	22,860	0.743	0.173	0.446	0.501	0.787	0.831	1
Electoral Rule: Majoritarian	22,840	0.268	0.443	0	0	0	1	1
Form of Government: Presidential	22,840	0.0470	0.212	0	0	0	0	1
Share of Elderly (2000)	21,708	10.17	1.474	5.366	10.22	10.77	11.40	11.61
Gini Coefficient (2000)	22,977	45.59	9.856	23.12	33.49	49.20	53	57.50
Dominant Religion: Catholic (1900)	22,977	0.418	0.493	0	0	0	1	1
Dominant Religion: Muslim (1900)	22,977	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dominant Religion: Orthodox (1900)	22,977	0.00635	0.0795	0	0	0	0	1
Dominant Religion: Protestant (1900)	22,977	0.567	0.495	0	0	1	1	1
Dominant Religion: Other (1900)	22,977	0.00840	0.0913	0	0	0	0	1

Notes: Baseline sample of U.S. natives whose ancestors come from the following 22 countries of origin: Austria, Belgium, China, Denmark, England (Scotland included), Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Lithuania, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden. Base years: 1984-2016.

Table 3: Preferences for Spending on Assistance for Childcare

VARIABLES	(1) child-g	(2) child-g	(3) child-g	(4) child-g	(5) child-g	(6) child-g	(7) child-g	(8) child-g	(9) child-g
Egalitarian Principle	0.0916*** (0.0171)	0.0313** (0.0137)	0.0524* (0.0268)	0.00749 (0.0221)	-0.00873 (0.0125)	0.0191 (0.0170)	0.0409** (0.0193)	0.0577*** (0.0197)	0.0294 (0.0242)
Principle of Cohabitation	-0.0904* (0.0439)	-0.166*** (0.0493)	-0.180*** (0.0157)	-0.149** (0.0557)	-0.141*** (0.0355)	-0.250*** (0.0458)	-0.143*** (0.0341)	-0.147*** (0.0480)	-0.167*** (0.0505)
Principle of Exogamous Marriage	-0.128** (0.0478)	-0.176*** (0.0548)	-0.204*** (0.0161)	-0.145** (0.0612)	-0.166*** (0.0348)	-0.241*** (0.0600)	-0.168*** (0.0450)	-0.165*** (0.0529)	-0.175*** (0.0574)
Observations	10,279	9,210	9,210	9,210	9,142	6,949	9,148	8,543	9,210
R-squared	0.003	0.035	0.037	0.036	0.037	0.039	0.036	0.036	0.035
Individual Controls	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Geo Dummies and Current GDP	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Time Dummies	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Legal Origin	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Dominant Religion	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Religious Homogeneity	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO
Democracy	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO
Political Dummies	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO
Share of Elderly	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO
Income Inequality	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES

Notes. OLS estimation at the individual level. Baseline sample of US natives only. **Child:** answer to the GSS question on childcare: “Are we spending too much, too little or about the right amount on assistance for childcare?” with 1 identifies “too much” and 3 “too little”. Waves: 2000-2016. **g:** average answer over the following items: *space explorations, environment, health, urban city, crime, drugs, education, arms, race, assistance to poor countries, welfare, roads and infrastructures, mass transportation, parks and social security*. Waves: 2000-2016. **Explanatory variables:** the three family principles of individual ancestries’ country of origin (Egalitarian principle, Principle of Cohabitation, Principle of Exogamous Marriage). **Individual Controls:** age, age square, gender (equal to 1 if *female* respondent), marital status (*ever married* dummy), educational dummy for graduate respondent, employment status (unemployed, retired, employed or other), total family income (twelve brackets), religious dummies (Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox, Muslim, no religion or other), race dummies (white, black, other), political affiliation (liberal or conservative), and 9 US region dummies. **Country of Origin Controls:** geographical dummies (OECD, Asia, Latin America, Slavi, Natives), natural log of per capita current GDP (2000) and year (or GSS waves) dummies are included in all the specifications. Legal origin dummies (Anglo-Saxon, Socialist, Germany, French, and Scandinavian), the dominant religions in 1900 (Catholic, Muslim, Orthodox, Protestant), the Herfindahl index of religious homogeneity in 1900, the level of democracy in 1900 (Polity 2 indicator), political dummies (form of government and electoral rules), the current share of elderly (2000) and the current level of income inequality (2000) (Gini index). Standard errors are clustered at country of origin level. Significance at 10% level is represented by *, at the 5% level by **, and at the 1% level by ***.

Table 4: Controlling for Immigrant Status: Assistance for Childcare

VARIABLES	(1) child-g	(2) child-g	(3) child-g	(4) child-g	(5) child-g	(6) child-g	(7) child-g	(8) child-g	(9) child-g
Immigrant Status	0.0482 (0.0457)	0.0560 (0.0404)	0.0519 (0.0429)	0.0578 (0.0399)	0.0631 (0.0380)	0.0576 (0.0412)	0.0610 (0.0383)	0.0650* (0.0372)	0.0560 (0.0403)
Immigrant Status*Egalitarian	-0.0557 (0.0518)	-0.0518 (0.0425)	-0.0501 (0.0448)	-0.0513 (0.0419)	-0.0639 (0.0421)	-0.0606 (0.0458)	-0.0682 (0.0414)	-0.0662 (0.0442)	-0.0521 (0.0428)
Immigrant Status*Cohabitation	-0.0507 (0.0489)	-0.0360 (0.0410)	-0.0311 (0.0438)	-0.0327 (0.0408)	-0.0475 (0.0402)	-0.0520 (0.0424)	-0.0435 (0.0394)	-0.0425 (0.0393)	-0.0361 (0.0410)
Egalitarian Principle	0.105*** (0.0193)	0.0390* (0.0215)	0.0671** (0.0293)	0.0165 (0.0260)	0.00587 (0.0231)	0.0313 (0.0245)	0.0638** (0.0225)	0.0787*** (0.0227)	0.0400 (0.0307)
Principle of Cohabitation	-0.0378 (0.0483)	-0.123*** (0.0380)	-0.144*** (0.0348)	-0.110** (0.0433)	-0.0927*** (0.0306)	-0.173*** (0.0561)	-0.0946*** (0.0273)	-0.102** (0.0363)	-0.123*** (0.0398)
Principle of Exogamous Marriage	-0.0824 (0.0484)	-0.135*** (0.0444)	-0.168*** (0.0273)	-0.108** (0.0497)	-0.122*** (0.0254)	-0.172** (0.0664)	-0.133*** (0.0349)	-0.126*** (0.0412)	-0.136*** (0.0465)
Observations	9,752	8,753	8,753	8,753	8,686	6,617	8,694	8,115	8,753
R-squared	0.003	0.039	0.041	0.040	0.041	0.044	0.041	0.040	0.039
Individual Controls	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Geo Dummies and Current GDP	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Time Dummies	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Legal Origin	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Dominant Religion	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Religious Homogeneity	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO
Democracy	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO
Political Dummies	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO
Share of Elderly	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO
Income Inequality	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES

Notes. OLS estimation at the individual level. Baseline sample of US natives only. **Child:** answer to the GSS question on childcare: “Are we spending too much, too little or about the right amount on childcare?” with 1 identifies “too much” and 3 “too little”. Waves: 2000-2016. **g:** average answer over the following items: *space explorations, environment, health, urban city, crime, drugs, education, arms, race, assistance to poor countries, welfare, roads and infrastructures, mass transportation, parks and social security*. Waves: 2000-2016. **Explanatory variables:** Immigrant Status: dummy variable equal to 1 if at least one relative (either parents or grandparents) was born aboard. The three family principles of individual ancestries’ country of origin (Egalitarian principle, Principle of Cohabitation, Principle of Exogamous Marriage). **Individual Controls:** age, age square, gender (equal to 1 if *female* respondent), marital status (*ever married* dummy), educational dummy for graduate respondent, employment status (unemployed, retired, employed or other), total family income (twelve brackets), religious dummies (Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox, Muslim, no religion or other), race dummies (white, black, other), political affiliation (liberal or conservative), and 9 US region dummies. **Country of Origin Controls:** geographical dummies (OECD, Asia, Latin America, Slavi, Natives), natural log of per capita current GDP (2000) and year (or GSS waves) dummies are included in all the specifications. Legal origin dummies (Anglo-Saxon, Socialist, Germany, French, and Scandinavian), the dominant religions in 1900 (Catholic, Muslim, Orthodox, Protestant), the Herfindahl index of religious homogeneity in 1900, the level of democracy in 1900 (Polity 2 indicator), political dummies (form of government and electoral rules), the current share of elderly (2000) and the current level of income inequality (2000) (Gini index). Standard errors are clustered at country of origin level. Significance at 10% level is represented by *, at the 5% level by **, and at the 1% level by ***.

Table 5: General Preferences for Government's Intervention

VARIABLES	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
	g	g	g	g	g	g	g	g	g
Egalitarian Principle	0.0385*** (0.00798)	0.00200 (0.0135)	0.0615*** (0.0111)	-0.0152 (0.0125)	-0.00935 (0.0114)	0.00783 (0.0158)	0.0111 (0.0223)	0.0140 (0.0229)	-0.00502 (0.0146)
Principle of Cohabitation	0.00359 (0.0115)	-0.00238 (0.00548)	-0.0163 (0.0105)	0.00825 (0.00773)	0.00526 (0.00689)	0.0102 (0.0132)	-0.00576 (0.00998)	-0.0102 (0.0148)	-0.00737 (0.00672)
Principle of Exogamous Marriage	-0.00879 (0.0175)	-0.00297 (0.0118)	-0.0276** (0.0120)	0.0165 (0.0121)	0.000358 (0.00966)	0.0178 (0.0219)	-0.0196 (0.0231)	-0.0129 (0.0186)	0.000820 (0.0113)
Observations	22,570	20,271	20,271	20,271	20,167	15,494	20,159	19,150	20,271
R-squared	0.003	0.073	0.075	0.074	0.074	0.074	0.073	0.076	0.073
Individual Controls	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Geo Dummies and Current GDP	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Time Dummies	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Legal Origin	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Dominant Religion	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Religious Homogeneity	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO
Democracy	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO
Political Dummies	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO
Share of Elderly	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO
Income Inequality	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES

Notes. OLS estimation at the individual level. Baseline sample of US natives only. **g**: average answer over the following items: *space explorations, environment, health, urban city, crime, drugs, education, arms, race, assistance to poor countries, welfare, roads and infrastructures, mass transportation, parks and social security*. Waves: 1984-2016. **Explanatory variables**: the three family principles of individual ancestries' country of origin (Egalitarian principle, Principle of Cohabitation, Principle of Exogamous Marriage). **Individual Controls**: age, age square, gender (equal to 1 if *female* respondent), marital status (*ever married* dummy), educational dummy for graduate respondent, employment status (unemployed, retired, employed or other), total family income (twelve brackets), religious dummies (Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox, Muslim, no religion or other), race dummies (white, black, other), political affiliation (liberal or conservative), and 9 US region dummies. **Country of Origin Controls**: geographical dummies (OECD, Asia, Latin America, Slavi, Natives), natural log of per capita current GDP (2000) and year (or GSS waves) dummies are included in all the specifications. Legal origin dummies (Anglo-Saxon, Socialist, Germany, French, and Scandinavian), the dominant religions in 1900 (Catholic, Muslim, Orthodox, Protestant), the Herfindahl index of religious homogeneity in 1900, the level of democracy in 1900 (Polity 2 indicator), political dummies (form of government and electoral rules), the current share of elderly (2000) and the current level of income inequality (2000) (Gini index). Standard errors are clustered at country of origin level. Significance at 10% level is represented by *, at the 5% level by **, and at the 1% level by ***.

Table 6: U.S. Congress Descriptive Statistics

VARIABLES	(1) N	(2) mean	(3) sd	(4) min	(5) p25	(6) p50	(7) p75	(8) max
<i>Outcome Variables:</i>								
(Co-)Sponsored Bills: Children	3,121	30.49	23.57	0	14	23	40	169
(Co-)Sponsored Bills: Family Care	3,121	42.49	34.56	0	18	31	57	276
(Co-)Sponsored Bills: Total	3,121	323.1	166.0	1	213	294	401	1,474
(Co-)Sponsored Bills: Welfare	3,121	121.3	74.29	0	70	105	153	603
Share Bills: Children over Total	3,121	8.801	3.520	0	6.154	8.491	11.19	50
Share Bills: Children over Welfare	3,110	24.06	7.505	0	18.99	24.10	28.77	100
Share Bills: Family Care over Total	3,121	12.02	5.034	0	8.115	11.34	15.52	50
Share Bills: Family Care over Welfare	3,110	32.59	9.939	0	25.45	32.43	39.73	100
<i>Congressmen Variables:</i>								
Female	3,121	0.176	0.381	0	0	0	0	1
Age	3,121	56.23	10.40	27	49	57	63	89
Married	3,121	0.937	0.243	0	1	1	1	1
Number of Children	3,121	2.450	1.585	0	2	2	3	12
Education: Graduate	3,121	0.931	0.253	0	1	1	1	1
Political View: Democratic	3,121	0.485	0.500	0	0	0	1	1
Political View: Republican	3,121	0.515	0.500	0	0	1	1	1
Military Service	3,121	0.177	0.382	0	0	0	0	1
Ethnicity: African	3,121	0.0958	0.294	0	0	0	0	1
Ethnicity: Asian	3,121	0.0179	0.133	0	0	0	0	1
Ethnicity: Hispanic	3,121	0.0689	0.253	0	0	0	0	1
Ethnicity: Native American	3,121	0.00320	0.0565	0	0	0	0	1
Ethnicity: White	3,121	0.814	0.389	0	1	1	1	1
Occupation: Education	3,121	0.0705	0.256	0	0	0	0	1
Occupation: Public Service/Politics	3,121	0.237	0.425	0	0	0	0	1
Short Legislature: Resignation	3,121	0.0215	0.145	0	0	0	0	1
Short Legislature: Substitution	3,121	0.0192	0.137	0	0	0	0	1
Incumbency Status	3,121	0.800	0.400	0	1	1	1	1
<i>Congressional District Variables:</i>								
Egalitarian Principle	3,101	0.312	0.463	0	0	0	1	1
Principle of Cohabitation	3,101	0.389	0.488	0	0	0	1	1
Principle of Exogamous Marriage	3,101	0.693	0.461	0	0	1	1	1
Population	3,120	718,445	156,494	395,592	667,401	713,968	748,485	3.967e+06
Young Population 0-17 (%)	2,678	23.54	3.289	11.50	21.70	23.40	25.09	98.33
Unemployment Rate (%)	2,676	7.924	3.758	2.600	5.600	7.400	9.600	113.6
Median Household Income	2,678	47.33	12.93	4.642	38.48	44.42	53.71	106.8

Notes: Baseline sample of Members of the U.S. House of Representatives only. Included districts: 435 Congressional districts distributed among 50 states, Washington D.C., and Puerto Rico. Excluded districts: American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Virgin Islands. Ancestries considered: Arab, Canadian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English (UK), French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Irish, Italian, Lithuanian, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Scottish, Slovak, Swedish, Welsh, Hispanic (Mexico, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Central America, South America, Spaniards). Base years: 2005-2017.

Table 7: Share of Childcare Bills over Total

VARIABLES	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Childcare Share Total	Childcare Share Total	Childcare Share Total	Childcare Share Total
Mean Outcome	8.80	8.80	8.90	8.90
Egalitarian Principle	2.373*** (0.219)		2.619*** (0.277)	0.704*** (0.211)
Principle of Cohabitation		-1.210*** (0.217)	-0.907** (0.361)	-0.480* (0.283)
Principle of Exogamy			0.830** (0.357)	-0.101 (0.272)
Population			-0.000*** (0.000)	-0.000*** (0.000)
Unemployment Rate (%)			0.091** (0.044)	0.001 (0.014)
Median Household Income			-0.015 (0.011)	0.013** (0.006)
Young Population (%)			-0.074 (0.048)	-0.035 (0.028)
Female				1.491*** (0.234)
Democrat				3.111*** (0.191)
Age				-0.012 (0.066)
University Degree				0.139 (0.292)
Military Service				-0.699*** (0.177)
Married Politician				-0.160 (0.407)
Number of Children				0.045 (0.051)
Incumbency Status				0.505*** (0.162)
Observations	3,101	3,101	2,664	2,664
R-squared	0.130	0.061	0.265	0.491
Year dummies	YES	YES	YES	YES
State dummies	NO	NO	YES	YES
District controls	NO	NO	YES	YES
Politician controls	NO	NO	NO	YES

Notes. OLS estimates. All Members of the House of Representatives: from 2005 (session 109th) to 2017 (session 115th) in columns (1)-(2); from 2007 (session 110th) to 2017 (session 115th) in columns (3)-(4) due to lack of Congressional district-level data. Included districts: 435 Congressional districts distributed among 50 states, Washington D.C., and Puerto Rico. Excluded districts: American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Virgin Islands. **Childcare Share Total:** share of sponsored and cosponsored bills and resolutions on *childcare* policies over the total amount bills and resolutions (in %). **Explanatory Variables:** the three family principles (*Egalitarian Principle*, *Principle of Cohabitation*, *Principle of Exogamous Marriage*) featured by the countries of origin of the dominant ancestries in the Congressional districts. Ancestries taken into account: Arab, Canadian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English (UK), French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Irish, Italian, Lithuanian, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Scottish, Slovak, Swedish, Welsh, Hispanic (Mexico, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Central America, South America, Spaniards). **Congressional District Controls:** population, population squared, young population (share of resident inhabitants with strictly less than 18 years old, in %), unemployment rate (in %), median household income in thousand dollars (inflation adjusted: 2005 equivalents). All the district-level variables refer to the starting year of the legislature. **Representatives' Personal Characteristics:** age, age squared (both at the beginning of the term), gender dummy, party dummies (democrat, republican, independent), ethnicity dummies (African, Asian, Hispanic, native American, white), university degree (dummy for holding at least bachelor's degree), military service dummy, total number of children (including biological, adopted and stepchildren), ever married politicians dummy, incumbency status dummy. Full set of years (or legislatures) and states dummies. Standard errors are clustered at the Congressional district level. Significance at 10% level is represented by *, at the 5% level by **, and at the 1% level by ***.

Table 8: Share of Childcare Bills over Welfare

VARIABLES	(1) Childcare Share Welfare	(2) Childcare Share Welfare	(3) Childcare Share Welfare	(4) Childcare Share Welfare
Mean Outcome	24.07	24.07	23.76	23.76
Egalitarian Principle	4.722*** (0.411)		5.046*** (0.518)	2.048*** (0.432)
Principle of Cohabitation		-2.922*** (0.410)	-2.221*** (0.732)	-1.526** (0.647)
Principle of Exogamy			1.155 (0.755)	-0.333 (0.621)
Population			-0.000*** (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)
Unemployment Rate (%)			0.139* (0.081)	-0.014 (0.034)
Median Household Income			0.010 (0.020)	0.059*** (0.015)
Young Population (%)			-0.178* (0.095)	-0.123** (0.062)
Female				2.146*** (0.433)
Democrat				4.744*** (0.426)
Age				0.090 (0.121)
University Degree				0.450 (0.587)
Military Service				-1.410*** (0.370)
Married Politician				-0.755 (0.837)
Number of Children				0.159 (0.106)
Incumbency Status				0.689** (0.341)
Observations	3,090	3,090	2,654	2,654
R-squared	0.188	0.140	0.302	0.434
Year dummies	YES	YES	YES	YES
State dummies	NO	NO	YES	YES
District controls	NO	NO	YES	YES
Politician controls	NO	NO	NO	YES

Notes. OLS estimates. All Members of the House of Representatives: from 2005 (session 109th) to 2017 (session 115th) in columns (1)-(2); from 2007 (session 110th) to 2017 (session 115th) in columns (3)-(4) due to lack of Congressional district-level data. Included districts: 435 Congressional districts distributed among 50 states, Washington D.C., and Puerto Rico. Excluded districts: American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Virgin Islands. **Childcare Share Welfare:** share of sponsored and cosponsored bills and resolutions on *childcare* policies over the total amount of bills and resolutions assigned by *Congress.gov* to the following policy areas: health, education, labor and employment, social welfare and pensions, redistribution, public lands and natural resources, families, arts and culture, housing (in %). **Explanatory Variables:** the three family principles (*Egalitarian Principle*, *Principle of Cohabitation*, *Principle of Exogamous Marriage*) featured by the countries of origin of the dominant ancestries in the Congressional districts. Ancestries taken into account: Arab, Canadian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English (UK), French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Irish, Italian, Lithuanian, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Scottish, Slovak, Swedish, Welsh, Hispanic (Mexico, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Central America, South America, Spaniards). **Congressional District Controls:** population, population squared, young population (share of resident inhabitants with strictly less than 18 years old, in %), unemployment rate (in %), median household income in thousand dollars (inflation adjusted: 2005 equivalents). All the district-level variables refer to the starting year of the legislature. **Representatives' Personal Characteristics:** age, age squared (both at the beginning of the term), gender dummy, party dummies (democrat, republican, independent), ethnicity dummies (African, Asian, Hispanic, native American, white), university degree (dummy for holding at least bachelor's degree), military service dummy, total number of children (either biological, adopted or stepchildren), (ever) married politicians dummy, incumbency status dummy. Full set of years (or legislatures) and states dummies. Standard errors are clustered at the Congressional district level. Significance at 10% level is represented by *, at the 5% level by **, and at the 1% level by ***.

Table 9: Absolute Number of Childcare Bills

VARIABLES	(1) Childcare Bills	(2) Childcare Bills	(3) Childcare Bills	(4) Childcare Bills
Mean Outcome	30.53	30.53	30.99	30.99
Egalitarian Principle	16.942*** (1.708)		16.043*** (2.056)	4.338** (1.734)
Principle of Cohabitation		-10.030*** (1.557)	-5.364** (2.123)	-1.824 (1.881)
Principle of Exogamy			4.613** (2.330)	-0.929 (1.933)
Population			-0.000*** (0.000)	-0.000** (0.000)
Unemployment Rate (%)			0.816** (0.333)	0.105 (0.107)
Median Household Income			-0.017 (0.084)	0.166*** (0.055)
Young Population (%)			-0.527 (0.424)	-0.238 (0.316)
Female				6.098*** (1.854)
Democrat				18.769*** (1.335)
Age				-0.008 (0.416)
University Degree				0.346 (1.409)
Military Service				-1.027 (1.320)
Married Politician				-5.595* (3.259)
Number of Children				0.467 (0.373)
Incumbency Status				3.321*** (0.769)
Observations	3,101	3,101	2,664	2,664
R-squared	0.175	0.108	0.332	0.535
Year dummies	YES	YES	YES	YES
State dummies	NO	NO	YES	YES
District controls	NO	NO	YES	YES
Politician controls	NO	NO	NO	YES

Notes. OLS estimates. All Members of the House of Representatives: from 2005 (session 109th) to 2017 (session 115th) in columns (1)-(2); from 2007 (session 110th) to 2017 (session 115th) in columns (3)-(4) due to lack of Congressional district-level data. Included districts: 435 Congressional districts distributed among 50 states, Washington D.C., and Puerto Rico. Excluded districts: American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Virgin Islands. **Childcare Bills:** absolute number of sponsored and cosponsored bills and resolutions on *childcare* policies. **Explanatory Variables:** the three family principles (*Egalitarian Principle*, *Principle of Cohabitation*, *Principle of Exogamous Marriage*) featured by the countries of origin of the dominant ancestries in the Congressional districts. Ancestries taken into account: Arab, Canadian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English (UK), French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Irish, Italian, Lithuanian, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Scottish, Slovak, Swedish, Welsh, Hispanic (Mexico, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Central America, South America, Spaniards). **Congressional District Controls:** population, population squared, young population (share of resident inhabitants with strictly less than 18 years old, in %), unemployment rate (in %), median household income in thousand dollars (inflation adjusted: 2005 equivalents). All the district-level variables refer to the starting year of the legislature. **Representatives' Personal Characteristics:** age, age squared (both at the beginning of the term), gender dummy, party dummies (democrat, republican, independent), ethnicity dummies (African, Asian, Hispanic, native American, white), university degree (dummy for holding at least bachelor's degree), military service dummy, total number of children (either biological, adopted or stepchildren), (ever) married politicians dummy, incumbency status dummy. Full set of years (or legislatures) and states dummies. Standard errors are clustered at the Congressional district level. Significance at 10% level is represented by *, at the 5% level by **, and at the 1% level by ***.

Table 10: Family Culture and Transmission Mechanisms

Panel A: Party Affiliation, Gender and Educational Attainment									
VARIABLES	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
	Democrat	Democrat	Democrat	Female	Female	Female	Graduate	Graduate	Graduate
Egalitarian Principle	0.418*** (0.0366)		0.385*** (0.0362)	0.162*** (0.0345)		0.160*** (0.0345)	0.0335 (0.0260)		0.0308 (0.0258)
Principle of Cohabitation		-0.316*** (0.0454)	-0.144*** (0.0487)		-0.0493 (0.0379)	0.0260 (0.0432)		-0.0260 (0.0323)	-0.0292 (0.0347)
Principle of Exogamy			0.175*** (0.0535)			0.0799 (0.0495)			-0.0157 (0.0290)
Observations	2,664	2,664	2,664	2,664	2,664	2,664	2,664	2,664	2,664
R-squared	0.356	0.309	0.380	0.159	0.140	0.161	0.063	0.062	0.064
Year dummies	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
State dummies	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
District controls	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

Panel B: Incumbency Status, Marital Status, Age									
VARIABLES	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
	Incumbent	Incumbent	Incumbent	Married	Married	Married	Age	Age	Age
Egalitarian Principle	0.0228 (0.0200)		0.0205 (0.0201)	-0.0283 (0.0207)		-0.0278 (0.0209)	0.696 (0.894)		0.428 (0.895)
Principle of Cohabitation		-0.0214 (0.0272)	0.0323 (0.0324)		0.00876 (0.0263)	-0.0292 (0.0278)		-2.085* (1.130)	-0.957 (1.230)
Principle of Exogamy			0.0871*** (0.0310)			-0.0573 (0.0375)			1.834 (1.257)
Observations	2,664	2,664	2,664	2,664	2,664	2,664	2,664	2,664	2,664
R-squared	0.133	0.133	0.135	0.124	0.122	0.127	0.118	0.120	0.122
Year dummies	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
State dummies	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
District controls	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

Notes. All Members of the House of Representatives from 2007-2017. Included districts: 435 Congressional districts distributed among 50 states, Washington D.C., and Puerto Rico. Excluded districts: American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Virgin Islands. **Democrat:** dummy for being an elected Representative for the Democratic Party. **Female:** dummy for being a female Representative. **Graduate:** dummy equal to 1 if the Representative holds at least a bachelor's degree and 0 otherwise. **Incumbent:** dummy for being an experienced incumbent. **Married:** dummy for being married. **Age:** Representative's age at the beginning of the mandate. **Explanatory Variables:** the three family principles (*Egalitarian Principle*, *Principle of Cohabitation*, *Principle of Exogamous Marriage*) featured by the countries of origin of the dominant ancestries in the Congressional districts. Ancestries taken into account: Arab, Canadian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English (UK), French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Irish, Italian, Lithuanian, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Scottish, Slovak, Swedish, Welsh, Hispanic (Mexico, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Central America, South America). **Congressional District Controls:** population, population squared, young population (share of resident inhabitants with strictly less than 18 years old, in %), unemployment rate (in %), median household income in thousand dollars (inflation adjusted: 2005 equivalents). All the district-level variables refer to the starting year of the legislature. Full set of years (or legislatures) and states dummies. Standard errors are clustered at the Congressional district level. Significance at 10% level is represented by *, at the 5% level by **, and at the 1% level by ***.

Appendix

Table A1: Share of Family Care Bills over Total

VARIABLES	(1) Family Care Share Total	(2) Family Care Share Total	(3) Family Care Share Total	(4) Family Care Share Total
Mean Outcome	12.02	12.02	12.16	12.16
Egalitarian Principle	3.653*** (0.330)		3.779*** (0.386)	0.691** (0.272)
Principle of Cohabitation		-1.874*** (0.326)	-1.124** (0.507)	-0.377 (0.364)
Principle of Exogamy			1.293** (0.543)	-0.154 (0.396)
Population			-0.000*** (0.000)	-0.000*** (0.000)
Unemployment Rate (%)			0.154** (0.075)	0.006 (0.016)
Median Household Income			-0.032* (0.017)	0.017* (0.009)
Young Population (%)			-0.085 (0.063)	-0.022 (0.034)
Female				1.668*** (0.304)
Democrat				5.297*** (0.278)
Age				-0.034 (0.085)
University Degree				0.261 (0.360)
Military Service				-0.775*** (0.267)
Married Politician				-0.624 (0.548)
Number of Children				0.080 (0.072)
Incumbency Status				0.452** (0.208)
Observations	3,101	3,101	2,664	2,664
R-squared	0.156	0.077	0.293	0.571
Year dummies	YES	YES	YES	YES
State dummies	NO	NO	YES	YES
District controls	NO	NO	YES	YES
Politician controls	NO	NO	NO	YES

Notes. OLS estimates. All Members of the House of Representatives: from 2005 (session 109th) to 2017 (session 115th) in columns (1)-(2); from 2007 (session 110th) to 2017 (session 115th) in columns (3)-(4) due to lack of Congressional district-level data. Included districts: 435 Congressional districts distributed among 50 states, Washington D.C., and Puerto Rico. Excluded districts: American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Virgin Islands. **Family Care Share Total:** share of sponsored and cosponsored bills and resolutions on *early education, family and childcare* policies over the total amount of sponsored and cosponsored bills and resolutions (in %). **Explanatory Variables:** the three family principles (*Egalitarian Principle, Principle of Cohabitation, Principle of Exogamous Marriage*) featured by the countries of origin of the dominant ancestries in the Congressional districts. Ancestries taken into account: Arab, Canadian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English (UK), French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Irish, Italian, Lithuanian, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Scottish, Slovak, Swedish, Welsh, Hispanic (Mexico, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Central America, South America, Spaniards). **Congressional District Controls:** population, population squared, young population (share of resident inhabitants with strictly less than 18 years old, in %), unemployment rate (in %), median household income in thousand dollars (inflation adjusted: 2005 equivalents). All the district-level variables refer to the starting year of the legislature. **Representatives' Personal Characteristics:** age, age squared (both at the beginning of the term), gender dummy, party dummies (democrat, republican, independent), ethnicity dummies (African, Asian, Hispanic, native American, white), university degree (dummy for holding at least bachelor's degree), military service dummy, total number of children (either biological, adopted or stepchildren), (ever) married politicians dummy, incumbency status dummy. Full set of years (or legislatures) and states dummies. Standard errors are clustered at the Congressional district level. Significance at 10% level is represented by *, at the 5% level by **, and at the 1% level by ***.

Table A2: Share of Family Care Bills over Welfare

VARIABLES	(1) Family Care Share Welfare	(2) Family Care Share Welfare	(3) Family Care Share Welfare	(4) Family Care Share Welfare
Mean Outcome	32.59	32.59	32.23	32.23
Egalitarian Principle	7.512*** (0.607)		7.419*** (0.717)	2.094*** (0.542)
Principle of Cohabitation		-4.540*** (0.602)	-2.773*** (0.992)	-1.408* (0.794)
Principle of Exogamy			1.963* (1.124)	-0.504 (0.857)
Population			-0.000*** (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)
Unemployment Rate (%)			0.274* (0.145)	0.003 (0.038)
Median Household Income			-0.018 (0.032)	0.072*** (0.019)
Young Population (%)			-0.206* (0.119)	-0.105 (0.068)
Female				2.213*** (0.559)
Democrat				9.155*** (0.562)
Age				0.047 (0.158)
University Degree				0.696 (0.724)
Military Service				-1.437** (0.564)
Married Politician				-1.917* (1.098)
Number of Children				0.247* (0.141)
Incumbency Status				0.324 (0.408)
Observations	3,090	3,090	2,654	2,654
R-squared	0.190	0.118	0.307	0.523
Year Dummies	YES	YES	YES	YES
State Dummies	NO	NO	YES	YES
District controls	NO	NO	YES	YES
Politician controls	NO	NO	NO	YES

Notes. OLS estimates. All Members of the House of Representatives: from 2005 (session 109th) to 2017 (session 115th) in columns (1)-(2); from 2007 (session 110th) to 2017 (session 115th) in columns (3)-(4) due to lack of Congressional district-level data. Included districts: 435 Congressional districts distributed among 50 states, Washington D.C., and Puerto Rico. Excluded districts: American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Virgin Islands. **Family Care Share Welfare:** share of sponsored and cosponsored bills and resolutions on *early education*, *family* and *childcare* policies over the total amount of sponsored and cosponsored bills and resolutions assigned by *Congress.gov* to the following policy areas: health, education, labor and employment, social welfare and pensions, redistribution, public lands and natural resources, families, arts and culture, housing (in %). (in %). **Explanatory Variables:** the three family principles (*Egalitarian Principle*, *Principle of Cohabitation*, *Principle of Exogamous Marriage*) featured by the countries of origin of the dominant ancestries in the Congressional districts. Ancestries taken into account: Arab, Canadian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English (UK), French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Irish, Italian, Lithuanian, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Scottish, Slovak, Swedish, Welsh, Hispanic (Mexico, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Central America, South America, Spaniards). **Congressional District Controls:** population, population squared, young population (share of resident inhabitants with strictly less than 18 years old, in %), unemployment rate (in %), median household income in thousand dollars (inflation adjusted: 2005 equivalents). All the district-level variables refer to the starting year of the legislature. **Representatives' Personal Characteristics:** age, age squared (both at the beginning of the term), gender dummy, party dummies (democrat, republican, independent), ethnicity dummies (African, Asian, Hispanic, native American, white), university degree (dummy for holding at least bachelor's degree), military service dummy, total number of children (either biological, adopted or stepchildren), (ever) married politicians dummy, incumbency status dummy. Full set of years (or legislatures) and states dummies. Standard errors are clustered at the Congressional district level. Significance at 10% level is represented by *, at the 5% level by **, and at the 1% level by ***.

Table A3: Absolute Number of Family Care Bills

VARIABLES	(1) Family Care Bills	(2) Family Care Bills	(3) Family Care Bills	(4) Family Care Bills
Mean Outcome	42.55	42.55	43.12	43.12
Egalitarian Principle	25.012*** (2.541)		23.148*** (3.006)	5.474** (2.479)
Principle of Cohabitation		-14.692*** (2.277)	-7.124** (3.038)	-1.780 (2.652)
Principle of Exogamy			6.672* (3.476)	-1.614 (2.868)
Population			-0.000*** (0.000)	-0.000** (0.000)
Unemployment Rate (%)			1.252** (0.533)	0.177 (0.150)
Median Household Income			-0.049 (0.131)	0.235*** (0.082)
Young Population (%)			-0.683 (0.554)	-0.259 (0.398)
Female				6.684** (2.641)
Democrat				28.962*** (1.986)
Age				-0.082 (0.630)
University Degree				0.210 (2.167)
Military Service				-1.412 (1.900)
Married Politician				-10.326** (4.887)
Number of Children				0.700 (0.515)
Incumbency Status				3.946*** (1.128)
Observations	3,101	3,101	2,664	2,664
R-squared	0.175	0.106	0.324	0.539
Year dummies	YES	YES	YES	YES
State dummies	NO	NO	YES	YES
District controls	NO	NO	YES	YES
Politician controls	NO	NO	NO	YES

Notes. OLS estimates. All Members of the House of Representatives: from 2005 (session 109th) to 2017 (session 115th) in columns (1)-(2); from 2007 (session 110th) to 2017 (session 115th) in columns (3)-(4) due to lack of Congressional district-level data. Included districts: 435 Congressional districts distributed among 50 states, Washington D.C., and Puerto Rico. Excluded districts: American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Virgin Islands. **Family Care Bills:** absolute number of sponsored and cosponsored bills and resolutions on *early education, family and childcare* policies. **Explanatory Variables:** the three family principles (*Egalitarian Principle, Principle of Cohabitation, Principle of Exogamous Marriage*) featured by the countries of origin of the dominant ancestries in the Congressional districts. Ancestries taken into account: Arab, Canadian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English (UK), French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Irish, Italian, Lithuanian, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Scottish, Slovak, Swedish, Welsh, Hispanic (Mexico, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Central America, South America, Spaniards). **Congressional District Controls:** population, population squared, young population (share of resident inhabitants with strictly less than 18 years old, in %), unemployment rate (in %), median household income in thousand dollars (inflation adjusted: 2005 equivalents). All the district-level variables refer to the starting year of the legislature. **Representatives' Personal Characteristics:** age, age squared (both at the beginning of the term), gender dummy, party dummies (democrat, republican, independent), ethnicity dummies (African, Asian, Hispanic, native American, white), university degree (dummy for holding at least bachelor's degree), military service dummy, total number of children (either biological, adopted or stepchildren), (ever) married politicians dummy, incumbency status dummy. Full set of years (or legislatures) and states dummies. Standard errors are clustered at the Congressional district level. Significance at 10% level is represented by *, at the 5% level by **, and at the 1% level by ***.