

## Name-based and other indirect estimators of intergenerational mobility

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**Abstract:** In this lecture, we discuss a growing literature on *name-based and other indirect estimators of intergenerational mobility*, which are increasingly used when direct parent–child income links are unavailable or when researchers aim to capture deeper dimensions of intergenerational persistence. We consider a simple framework in which socioeconomic status is transmitted through multiple channels – such as education, skills, and cultural traits – each characterized by different degrees of persistence. Within this framework, direct and indirect mobility estimators are shown to identify differently weighted combinations of transmission processes with varying persistence. Indirect approaches—including IV-based imputations, surname-based estimators, and extended-kin designs—tend to place greater weight on highly persistent traits, helping to explain why they often imply higher persistence than conventional intergenerational measures. We also examine why name-based estimates are sensitive to sampling properties and tend to increase with the size of name groups. Overall, we argue that direct and indirect estimators should be viewed as complementary tools that capture distinct dimensions of short- and long-run persistence.

### Reading list:

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