THE ROLE OF LOCAL PATRIOTISM IN LOCAL ELECTIONS

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Submitted to the Graduate School of Social Sciences
in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

Sabancı University
July 2022

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Date of Approval: July 27, 2022

ABSTRACT

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POLITICAL SCIENCE M.A. THESIS, JULY 2022

Thesis Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. ÖZGE KEMAHLIOĞLU

Keywords: Hemsehrilik, Local Ties, Local Elections, Mukhtar, Hometown Associations, Descriptive Representation

This thesis examines the effect of "hemşehrilik", or local ties on political behavior. The research question is whether hemşehrilik has an effect on vote choice. My main argument is that in a formally nonpartisan election, voters are more likely to vote for a candidate with a shared hometown. Also, hometown associations are important actors in the local political socialization process with different functions. Firstly, they provide networks for people at the local level. Secondly, they work as intermediaries between political elites and voters. I am looking at muhtarlık elections to observe whether hemşehrilik has an effect on vote choice, if any, under what conditions. Unlike most studies on local politics in Turkey, I focus on neighborhood level analysis. I use data on the March 2019 Istanbul local elections and my sample includes 233 neighborhoods of Istanbul. I find that group size and group population density are two prominent factors that have an effect on the likelihood of the most populated group in the neighborhood and the mukhtar having a common hometown. I do not find strong evidence in favor of my main hypothesis which emphasizes the role of hometown associations in the local political socialization process. This thesis contributes to the descriptive representation literature by investigating hemşehrilik as a new variable of interest.

ÖZET

HEMŞEHRILIĞIN YEREL SEÇIMLERDE ROLÜ

FERIDE SALIHA TAŞPINAR

SİYASET BİLİMİ YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ, TEMMUZ 2022

Tez Danışmanı: Doç. Dr. ÖZGE KEMAHLIOĞLU

Anahtar Kelimeler: Hemşehrilik, Yerel Bağlar, Yerel Seçimler, Muhtar, Hemşehri Dernekleri, Betimsel Temsil

Bu tez, hemşehriliğin siyasi davranış üzerine etkisini incelemektedir. Araştırma sorusu, hemşehriliğin oy tercihine etkisi olup olmadığıdır. Temel argümanım, partizan olmayan bir seçimde, seçmenlerin kendileri ile aynı memlekete sahip adaya oy verme olasılığının daha yüksek olduğudur. Bunun dışında, hemşehri derneklerinin siyasal sosyalleşme sürecinde önemli aktörler olduklarını savunuyorum. Bu derneklerin, yerel düzeyde insanlar için sosyal ağ sağlama (1) ve siyasi elitler ile seçmen arasında aracı olma (2) gibi işlevleri vardır. Hemşehriliğin oy tercihine etkisi var mı, eğer varsa bu hangi koşullarda gerçekleşmektedir sorularına yanıt bulmak için muhtarlık seçimlerini inceliyorum. Türkiye'de yerel siyaset üzerine yapılan çoğu çalışmanın aksine, araştırmamda mahalle seviyesi analizlere odaklanıyorum. İstanbul'un 233 mahalesinden oluşan örneklemimde, Mart 2019 yerel seçimlerine dair veri kullanıyorum. Ampirik analizler, bir mahalledeki grup büyüklüğü ve grup nüfus yoğunluğunun, muhtar ile ortak bir memlekete sahip olma olasılığını etkileyen en büyük iki etken olduğunu gösteriyor. Hemşehri derneklerinin rolüne ilişkin ana hipotezimi destekleyen istatistiki olarak anlamlı bir kanıt bulamadım. Bu tez, hemşehriliği yeni bir değişken olarak ele alarak betimsel temsil literatürüne katkı sağlamaktadır.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In a podcast episode, artist Nishant Jain once said that "... it is empowered me to think that the things that are interesting to me are valid object to look at and it is okay to draw the things that I am interested in and to not draw the things that I am not interested in...". His words resonated with me. I thought that the things I was curious about, the questions I found interesting were "valid" even if no one cares about them, or finds them important. I am really happy and am proud of myself that I followed my initial research question to the end of the thesis process. Many people will find my research question "trivial". Nevertheless, this was what I am curious about since SICSS-Istanbul 2020. And I would like to thank Efe Başlar for sharing his data with me at the time.

I was really lucky to have Prof. Özge Kemahlıoğlu as my advisor. She is one of the kindest and patient person I know. I do not even need to mention the depth of her knowledge and her professionalism. I will always remember her approach to the students. I will try to take a leaf out of her book if I can be an academic in the future. We really need more people like her in our universities. Özge hocam, I am really grateful to you!

I would like to deeply thank Prof. Oya Yeğen for her moral support over the past two years. Especially during the Covid-19 quarantine, your lectures and Zoom chattings after the class were invaluable for me. Thanks for being my jury member!

I also would like to thank Prof. Mert Moral for his amazing courses and his guidance. There were things I never understood during my undergraduate years and I had no idea how to understand them. Thanks to his classes, I realized why I could not find answers to my questions and learned how to find answers to my questions. Your courses were the most informative ones I have ever taken in my life. I also admire your dedication.

I am thankful Elise Massicard for sharing her book with me which I benefitted much in this thesis. I would like to thank Prof. Kerem Yıldırım for accepting to be my jury member and his valuable feedbacks.

I do not know how to put it but I am proud for being a member of Sabanci University community. It is the only educational institution where I feel truly happy and

comfortable in it. Thank you for your support and giving me this opportunity.

I would like to thank my cohort but especially İnci, Nihan and Tuğçe for their friendship.

Lastly, I am grateful to my parents for raising me and always supporting me. Words are not enough to express how special and valuable you are to me... Hale, I love you so much and I am glad you are my sister!

to my family, friends and all the short-story writers I've liked

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1. INTRODUCTION

"Where are you from?" is one of the most popular questions asked in Turkey when people meet someone new. This question is beyond one's residency or her place of birth. What people want to know is where your ancestors are from because it gives "clues" about you. The accuracy of this first impression is highly dependent on people's prior observations about this hometown or region your ancestors come from. When people are from the same hometown, they are called *"hemşehri"* and this creates an invisible bond among the members of an imagined community. What I want to make in this thesis is to examine the effect of this phenomenon of *"hemşehrilik"* on political behaviour. More specifically, I am asking whether *hemşehrilik* has an effect on vote choice?

In this study, I am looking at March 2019 Istanbul local elections to observe whether voters are more likely to vote for a candidate with a shared hometown and in what conditions. I think studying this topic is important because *hemşehrilik* as a sociological concept has been very popular and there are many studies on it. On the other hand, there are very few studies within the scope of political science that concern *hemşehrilik* as a topic subject to political research. In fact, I believe that such a significant element of people's social identities should have an influence on their political identities and behaviors as well. In addition, when we think about the extensive networks created by *"hemşehri dernekleri"* (hometown associations) both in number and density all over the country, thinking about a relationship between them is inevitable.

Another significance of my research is that I focus on neighborhood level analysis. We know little about local politics in Turkey compared to national politics and our knowledge about neighborhoods as political settings is even less. While there are studies on urbanization and segregation in metropolitan neighborhoods in sociology discipline, their political impact is not studied in detail. Due to political science literature's greater focus on Turkish national politics and party politics, theories of spatial voting are commonly used while other factors that might influence voting

choice other than ideology and partisanship is rarely discussed. I intend to expand the focus of my research to voters rather than looking at only political elites, which is novel, when we consider other studies that examine the role of "locality" in Turkish politics.

I also contribute to the descriptive representation literature by investigating *hemşehrilik* as a new variable of interest other than ethnicity, race, and gender. Although my approach is very similar to the theories of racial and ethnic voting, it provides an extension to them in a different context. In the context of U.S. and European politics, neighborhood effect and bloc voting are studied by observing immigrant communities coming from different countries. On the other hand, I study domestic immigrants come from different regions of the country a few generations ago.

My main argument is that in a formally nonpartisan election, voters are more likely to vote for a candidate with a shared hometown. Also, hometown associations are important actors in the local political socialization process with different functions. First of all, they provide networks for people at the local level. Secondly, they work as intermediaries between political elites and voters. To this end, I am looking at *muhtarlık* elections to observe whether *hemşehrilik* has an effect on vote choice, if any, under what conditions.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The issue of representation has always been subject to debate in politics. Pitkin (1972) distinguishes descriptive representation from substantive representation. While the latter one is "acting for" the group by prioritizing the group's interests, the former "stands for" the group based on shared characteristics such as ethnicity, gender, and race. A voter with such motivation tends to select a representative of his own "kind" and he is more likely to vote for such a candidate (Pitkin 1972, 79).

Arguing that voters tend to select candidates with shared characteristics stands in opposition to theories of spatial voting. The dominant paradigm (Downs 1957) states that every society has cleavages reflecting the salient political issues. Political parties/or candidates make use of them and locate themselves on an issue space with respect to these cleavages where ideologies serve as a shortcut. Voters choose the candidate closest to their ideological position and vote for him. What descriptive representation offers is more similar to theories of racial voting. It predicts that voters will choose candidates based on group/identity considerations (Glazer, Grofman, and Owen 1998). On the other hand, distinguishing spatial voting from racial voting and making a clear-cut distinction between them is not easy. Boudreau, Elmendorf, and MacKenzie (2019, 2-3) find that ideology has an effect on vote choice, however, ethnic group endorsements weaken spatial voting. They state that non-partisan settings that lack a strong link between ideology and ethnicity such as local elections provide an opportunity to observe this effect. Similarly, Abrajano et al. (2003) show that voters prioritize issues and ideology in their vote choice, however, conditioned on these features descriptive characteristics of the candidate - whether she is Latino or Anglo- are decisive as well.

It is argued that descriptive representation is a viable strategy for groups only if the benefits exceed the costs of it (Mansbridge 1999). For this reason, descriptive representation takes different forms and uses different mechanisms (Swers and Rouse 2011, 246) depending on the context. For instance, electoral rules in a given election and demographic structures of the districts can be important variables to specify a

strategy. In a district where the majority of the population belongs to an ethnically minority group, it is effective to represent minority interests via descriptive representation (Swers and Rouse 2011, 248). In addition, other studies show that when the local ethnic geography is dominated by an another ethnically minority group, members of the smaller ethnic groups are more likely to support the party associated with the majority ethnic group (Ichino and Nathan 2013, 344).

These findings raise questions about the link between descriptive and substantive representation and the motivation for making a vote choice based on descriptive representation. It is claimed that supporting co-ethnic candidates is an affirmation of group membership (Horowitz 1985). On the other hand, relating ethnic or racial voting with the expressive theories of voting carries the risk to reduce the motivation for descriptive representation to an expression of group allegiance while ignoring other incentives such as agenda-setting. For instance, Campbell et al. (2019, 6) states that voters expect MPs with shared local roots to listen more when forming positions on policy. Instrumental theories of voting do better in bringing one's preference for a co- ethnic candidate and his motivations to vote for him by providing different mechanisms. Getting constituency service more easily (Campbell et al. 2019; Gottlieb and Larreguy 2016), using ethnicity to make promises more credible (Posner 2003), benefitting from patronage distribution (Auerbach 2016; Koter 2013), and solving information constraints (Ichino and Nathan 2013) are some reasons to engage with instrumentalist forms of ethnic voting.

An instrumental approach to descriptive representation discussion inevitably brings with the questions of locality and spatial element. For instance, to be able to enjoy a constituency service or patronage distribution, there should be a place for goods and services to be directed to inflow. In its simplest form, neighborhood effect is defined as the concentration of votes for a party or for a candidate in a given place (Johnston 1986, 41). Although it is argued that people's residential environments determine their political preferences and voting behavior, scholars offer different mechanisms for this relationship. Advocates of socialization approach focus on "where people live"; their interactions with other people, patterns of socialization, and networks. On the other hand, advocates of interest-based approach emphasize "who lives where". People's location in the society is more important than their spatial location (Harrop, Heath, and Openshaw 1991, 103-4).

Harrop et al. (1991) claim that people are more likely to move places where their own political views are represented. On the other hand, Johnston (1986, 49) shows the ability of political parties to produce separate partisan affiliations in localities by entering local cultures through a socialization process and being a part of continuous

restructuring of relationships. Vermeulen et al.'s (2020) study shows that even in places where people with similar backgrounds live, the socialization process plays an important role to influence voting behavior. They look at immigrant concentration at the neighborhood level and observe bloc voting patterns by which people vote for the candidates with a shared immigrant background with themselves. They find that demographic concentration at the neighborhood level indicates a strong place-based religious or ethnic network with local organizations and this form of social interaction functions as a mechanism for bloc voting (Vermeulen, Kranendonk, and Michon 2020, 784).

The difference of my study from the existing literature is that I focus on a different form of descriptive representation, the role of *hemşehrilik*, which indicates sharing a common hometown among internal migrant communities, on voting choice rather than one's ethnicity, or race. Secondly, I examine *"hemşehri dernekleri"* (hometown associations) as a part of the local political socialization process and more importantly as intermediaries in the urban setting.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND EXPECTATIONS

While a *hemşehri* is the one who shares a common hometown of origin with you, *hemşehrilik*, as an adjective, has a function of identification in daily encounters and signalizes an informal link that involves mutual assistance (Hersant and Toumarkine 2005).

The effects of rural to urban migration on individual political behavior is not unfamiliar. Until the 1950s Turkey was a predominantly rural country with isolated villages that had limited access to education, communication, and transportation facilities. Thanks to the advances in development, only then an integration of the periphery with the center was started to be observed and an ordinary citizen was more likely to have neighbors and relatives in the big, urban cities (Çarkoğlu 2007, 256).

During this process of migration and settlement, the bond of territorial linkage together with ethnicity acted as a form of associability and helped rural migrants to adapt to their new environments. This pattern of migration was not always practiced as an individual act but there were rural migrants moved to the cities as members of whole villages. There are also others who searched for migrants similar to them to settle next to. This similarity meant coming from the same province, or the same region. Such settlement patterns ended up the emergence of new neighborhoods which provided "solidarity networks based not only on blood or religion but on territory as well" (Carkoglu and Kalaycioglu 2021, 31-32).

It is argued that the mobilization of those migrants (hence voters) of the "periphery" in the urban context ended the country's larger rural-urban social cleavage and their values, orientations, and attitudes became the baseline for the new conservative politics (Carkoglu and Kalaycioglu 2021, 33). In this process, the place of residence together with ethnicity became an important variable in the voting decisions of voters in addition to religiosity (Çarkoğlu 2007, 256).

To date, *hemşehrilik* has been studied as a concept that is subject to sociological

research (Bayraktar 2003). There are studies that examined the role of *hemşehrilik* ties for the city council candidacies (Kurtoğlu 2005), the importance of MPs' localism (Dorronsoro and Massicard 2005) and the role of local tribal groups in determining deputy candidates (Dorronsoro 2005). However, all of these studies focus on the political process prior to elections and voting. More specifically, they do not study voters as political actors and do not make inferences about voter behavior.

In fact, there has been extensive literature on descriptive representation which clearly states the political implications of it by emphasizing voters' tendency to vote for their own "kind" (Campbell et al. 2019; Pitkin 1972). It is believed that sharing an identity with the candidate provides "a credible signal that the candidate will in fact represent the group" (Harding and Michelitch 2019, 4). I believe that *hemşehrilik* might function as a form of descriptive representation and it can be a determinant of vote choice especially in the urban setting which is more heterogeneous in terms of one's origin of hometown due to the migration flow to big cities following the 1950s.

Similarly, Boudreau et al. (2019, 6) states that large cities tend to be more ethnically and racially heterogeneous with large blocks of minority votes. In the U.S., urban voters are inclined to embrace liberal democratic values and more likely to support and vote for Democratic candidates. However, their support for liberal democratic values in national politics gives way to racial voting in local settings. That means, in local elections, they prioritize voting for their own "kind".

On the other hand, one can question the partisan nature of Turkish politics and argue that Turkey's local politics is as highly polarized as its national politics and people continue to vote in line with partisan ideologies. For instance, Kalaycıoğlu (2014, 586) states that voters evaluate party lists on the basis of ideological positions, economic (dis)satisfaction, and party identification whether in national or local elections. However, while there is no evidence that the identity of provincial councilor candidates is taken into account, voters want to know more about mayors and headmans (mukhtars) because they vote for individual candidates rather than party lists (Kalaycıoğlu 2014, 583). Hence, their character and image can make a difference in the eyes of the electorate. Therefore, I believe that local elections can be seen as less partisan compared to national elections in Turkey and there is room for other vote choices as well.

Individuals act differently in non-partisan than in partisan contexts (Foos and de Rooij 2019) and there is evidence that voters are more likely to support candidates with shared partisan affiliations only when elections are "officially" partisan (Oliver and Ha 2007). The only instance when there is no effect of nonpartisan elec-

tions on the degree to which partisanship shapes the vote choice is when electorates get partisan clues about individual candidates through media (Holbrook 2008). If there is a lack of partisan electoral clue, other attributes such as race, ethnicity, and familiarity become more significant (Trounstine 2010, 411).

There is a purely nonpartisan electoral setting in Turkish local politics as well, at least on its face, the election of mukhtars (headmans). Unlike other elected representatives, mukhtars are not allowed to get support from political parties either materially or related to campaigns since the 1980s. On the other hand, they are no longer banned from being party members (Aytaç 2009, 161) which makes the situation more complicated than it seems. It is argued that the removal of official party labels from *muhtarlık* elections does not always mean the elimination of the use of party resources from the electoral scene especially because they are concurrent with other local elections (Massicard 2022, 65). On the other hand, thanks to the nature of this institution which is built around various localized coalitions, the non-party and nonpolitical components are more dominant (2022, 79). Their reliance on the mobilization of different groups within the neighborhood and because they are elected primarily on personal resources such as "local anchoring, kinship, involvements in the neighborhood, money, and being well-known" (2022, 57) give mukhtars their relative autonomy from the partisan political sphere. In the end, they should be primarily accountable to the individuals and groups who are supporting them because they depend on these constituents for reelection.

Massicard (2022, 121-22) defines mukhtarlık as a "familiar institution" and emphasizes the social proximity between mukhtar and the neighborhood population. Being familiar means that differently from other administrative institutions of the state, mukhtars are more accessible and less impersonal in their relationships with residents. Hence, the reason behind this social proximity is its embeddedness in local social relations and daily acquaintanceship.

On the other hand, this proximity is not limited only to the social sphere. Mukhtarlık is also the closest institution to the population in geographical terms. Even a mukhtar has to live for at least six months in a neighborhood to be eligible for being elected (2022, 123). In fact, most of them resided in their neighborhoods way longer than that and were active participants of local civil society prior to their duty in the office. In an interview with an online local newspaper[1], Ahmet R. who runs for being a mukhtar of Bahçelievler Zafer neighborhood states that he has lived in this neighborhood for nearly 25 years. He also mentions that he was the head of the

[1] Abdullah Uzun, "İstanbul'da Rizeli Muhtar Adayı," last modified February 16, 2014, https://www.kackar53.com/yoreden-haber/istanbulda-rizeli-muhtar-adayi-h3804.html

parent-teacher association in the neighborhood's primary school for 8 years and he has good communication with parents. In addition, he is an active member of the Bahçelievler City Council and is known to help neighborhood residents regarding their problems with the municipality and the neighborhood.

As mentioned above, the acquaintanceship between mukhtar and residents is built within the daily practices of local social life. However, it is not systematic and is unequally distributed. For instance, in populous neighborhoods where residential mobility is higher, it is less relevant. Similarly, in well-off neighborhoods, mukhtars are not as socially proximite as in neighborhoods with disadvantaged populations to the residents (2022, 124).

According to the Article 3 of 1944 law [2], giving poverty certificates to those in need is one of the responsibilities of mukhtars. Issuing a poverty certificate is based on the individual will of the mukhtar. It is supposed that mukhtars know the economic situations of neighborhood residents and can be trusted with their judgments. On the other hand, there is not an institutional mechanism for mukhtars to check whether the person has social insurance, assets, income or not. Hence, most of the time poverty certificates are issued based on the declaration of the person in need. Mukhtars' involvement in distribution of social assistance is one of the ways to develop proximity with residents especially in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods. Massicard (2022, 202) emphasizes the differences between the distributional practices of mukhtars; while some of them are very active, others do not prioritize it, or even neglect it.

On the other hand, the acquaintanceship and social proximity between mukhtar and residents is not limited to the physical sphere. For instance, the mukhtar of Küçükçekmece Cennet neighborhood Özdemir S. shares local job advertisements for blue-collar workers regularly on his facebook page [3]. The neighborhood has a C+ SES score and job descriptions vary from a greengrocery chef, a laundry attendee, a cashier and a cleaning staff to a biomedical technician and a customer service representative. Residents actively engage in conversations in the comment section of his posts.

Because mukhtars are elected on personal resources and they are dependent on the mobilization of different social groups within the neighborhood to be elected, they use their social proximity to establish links with several components of the neighborhood based on political, geographical, and denominational lines (2022, 77). One

[2] "Şehir ve kasabalarda mahalle muhtar ve ihtiyar heyetleri teşkiline dair kanun," T.C. Resmi Gazete, April 15, 1944. https://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/arsiv/5682.pdf

[3] Özdemir Sevinç, Facebook, Pictures https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100012559200683.

way to do this is recruiting and listing *azas* from different circles, especially those who come from different geographical provenances. *Aza* is a member of the headmanship and is like an advisor to the mukhtar who supports and assists him/her. Mukhtars are elected with a list of *azas* and they are the ones who choose their *azas*. While there is no financial benefit to being an *aza*, the first *aza* can be a substitute to the mukhtar if necessary (2022, 72). While the law on "the Establishment of Neighborhood Headman and Councils of Elders in Cities and Towns" defines the mukhtar's duties which requires the assent of the plurality of *azas* such as providing residence certificate and issuing poverty certificate [4], in practice, *azas* do not involve such processes. Therefore, one can say that *azas* have symbolic power in the headmanship and their main duties are building electoral support, transferring information, and making contact with different groups (2022, 23).

The logic behind choosing *azas* from different geographical regions and different hometown origins is to build up strong contacts and to communicate more easily with those groups of people; hence to attract their vote. It is argued that especially in neighborhoods populated by migrants, geographical provenance is seen as one of the main criteria to classify population and this strategy comes into prominence (Massicard 2022). In addition, it is worth mentioning that those who come from the largest migrant groups in the neighborhood are given priority in *aza* lists. It is believed that people vote for the candidate who shares their geographical provenance and one can attract a greater number of votes if he is able to reach one of the largest migrant groups in the neighborhood (2022, 75).

Ali Osman K. is the current mukhtar of Bahçelievler Yenibosna Merkez neighborhood. The campaign flier he posted on social media [5] includes names, pictures and professions of his list of *azas* along with their hometowns. The list consists of three women and five men who are either retired or local small business owners. Ali Osman K. is himself from Afyonkarahisar. His list of *azas* includes two people from Tokat, two from Trabzon, one person from Sivas, one from Erzurum, one member from Diyarbakır and another one from the city of Gaziantep whose population percentages in the neighborhood are 6.63, 2.42, 4.05, 2.42, 4.05, 2.71, 2.51 and 1.17 respectively. According to register information data, Sivas and Tokat are two cities with the most populations in the neighborhood. Hence, one can find Ali Osman K. 's distribution of *azas* with respect to their hometowns plausible. On the other hand, one of the comments under the post finds his choice of two *azas* from the cities of Tokat and Trabzon "exaggerated". The resident complains about the lack

[4] "Şehir ve kasabalarda mahalle muhtar ve ihtiyar heyetleri teşkiline dair kanun," T.C. Resmi Gazete, April 15, 1944. https://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/arsiv/5682.pdf

[5] Ali Osman Kayacan, Facebook, Picture, https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=213477

of *azas* from Ordu which ranked second in population in İstanbul.

It is known that prior to their duty, mukhtars have been actively involved in hometown associations along with other components of local civil society from being a member of parent-teacher association in neighborhood school to being the head of small business association. But before discussing mukhtars' involvement in and their relationships with hometown associations, it is important to understand what a hometown association is exactly and what is its place and equivalents in the broader literature.

Location is seen as critical in developing social and political contacts and facilitating one's access to informal networks (Gimpel, Lee, and Thorpe 2011). As such, scholars take attention to the importance of examining local actors that have the ability to mobilize people around certain interests including faith-based groups, business organizations, and activists but not limited to them (Doering 2020, 33). Holland and Palmer-Rubin (2015) find that organizational membership is one of the strongest predictors of vote buying in Latin America and point out the relationship between politicians/political parties and interest associations. For instance, local leaders use the votes of neighborhood association members in bargaining with political candidates for community improvements prior to elections (Rivadulla 2012). Similarly, Auerbach (2017) finds that local associations are significant features of Indian political life in slums, that such associations provide an organizational formality to residents and function as a medium between state and community for claim making. Gram sabhas of India which are deliberative bodies in villages (Kumar 2022), Chinese homeowner associations (Guan and Liu 2021), and neighborhood associations in South Asia (Auerbach 2017) are examples of local participatory organizations in non-western context. Therefore, we can see local associations as important sites of the political socialization process.

In Turkey, the importance of hometown associations in Turkish political and social life is widely discussed (Bayraktar 2003; Caymaz 2005; Çeviker Gürakar 2018; Hersant and Toumarkine 2005). The emergence of hometown associations in the 1940s was through the realization of a possible link that arises from a common geographical origin. Hence, they are basically regrouping people from the same place, or hometown origin. On the other hand, they do not only display a pre-existing communal solidarity in the urban setting, they are also places where new political and social networks emerged and interact with the greater political and institutional system (Hersant and Toumarkine 2005).

Although attributed to the migration flows of the 1950s to big cities, their sudden and continuous growth started in the 80s and the 90s points out another fact as well.

Hersant and Toumarkine (2005) argue that hometown associations are not mere consequences of the process of urbanization and are more than means of integration to a new environment. Restrictions and controls imposed upon political parties and trade unions after the 1980 coup d'Etat gave a new meaning to the creation of hometown associations of the time.

I think it can be argued that the functions of hometown associations in the socio-political context of Turkey are in line with the three arguments related to the discussion on local organizations and associations in the literature: (1) as sites of social network, (2) interest-based approach, and (3) as sites of political mobilization. Though they seem as separate titles, each of them is related to the other.

Riedl and Robinson (2019, 15) find that many urban citizens with few links to the physicality of the rural hometown construct their urban social lives around rural, village-based identities and continue to value (informal) authorities in the urban areas that are associated with their rural hometown. The spatial segregation in cities is affected by the distribution of those rural linkages as well; some urban neighborhoods experience a high concentration of rural networks while others do not (2019, 8). Most of the time, the social ties that give rise to local associations are derived from those shared identities and represent individuals from diverse socio-economic backgrounds (Auerbach 2017, 2). Participation in cultural events related to the home region, fundraisers, and hometown associations are some ways to continue rural connections and to create a social network around a rural identity in the urban area (Riedl and Robinson 2019, 8). According to the Hometown Associations Workshop Report [6] published by Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality (IBB), there are 6632 hometown associations in Istanbul and 1585 of them are active. Among 499 associations participating in the workshop, 86% of them think that hometown associations are significant hubs for meeting and cooperation. In addition, survey results show that 48% of the participants indicated that they are in close contact with local governments in their hometowns. 73% of them think that promotion days and cultural events help them to advertise and to support their hometowns.

Other than their roles in the process of socialization, it is known that people rely on those informal authorities and networks related to their rural ties for a variety of economic, religious, and social reasons. For instance, such social networks can be used by individuals to facilitate migration and to provide employment opportunities (Auerbach 2017, 2). There is evidence that if there is lack of state services, or infrastructural problems outside of the reach of urban network; community associations

[6] "Hemşehri Dernekleri Çalıştayı," IBB, February 25, 2020. https://calistay.ibb.istanbul/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/HemsehriDernekleriCalistayi.

voice such demands (Post 2018, 125). Hersant and Toumarkine (2005) state that obtaining privileges and material advantages for the members of the *"hemşehri"* group is in the foreground of the relationship of hometown associations with politics and other institutions. Therefore, hometown associations can be seen as places that can meet particularistic demands and mobilize people around these demands. In fact, the institutionalization of hometown associations and being a center of attraction are related to their capacity to find "practical" solutions to the problems in public services and to provide "conveniences" to their members (Caymaz 2005).

Finally, local associations are sites of political mobilization as well. Participant-based and locally organized societal associations (e.g., neighborhood associations) play a mediating role in securing votes especially because they are heavily based on regular personal interactions (Poertner 2021). Such associations work as local intermediaries between political elites and voters to attract electoral support in exchange for goods and services (Koter 2013). Both sides expect to benefit from this clientelistic relationship in different ways. On the side of parties, they have limited budgets for campaigns and aim for selective targeting in the best possible way. Therefore, they want to target groups that have greater coordinating capacity (Gottlieb and Larreguy 2016; Hirano 2006, 2). On the side of associations, they may want to get constituency service more easily (Campbell et al. 2019), make political promises more credible (Posner 2003), and benefit from patronage distribution (Auerbach 2016; Koter 2013) for their own group.

Accordingly, Bayraktar (2003, 11-2) takes attention to the role of hometown associations as locations of political patronage. It is argued that as practical needs give way to more complicated and specific demands from a wide range of immigrant groups in the urban areas, political parties started to need intermediary actors to attract voters. In line with the literature, their stronger local networks and mobilizational capacity (Fiva, Halse, and Smith 2020, 1) make them attractive in the eyes of the political elites. Çarkoğlu and Kalaycıoğlu (2021, 33) point out that in the late 80s and during the 90s the success of major religious parties in gaining control of major municipalities was thanks to the shanty neighborhood organizations. And then, parties used the same mobilizational skills and solidarity networks for national elections as well.

What is crucial to the relationship between hometown associations and political parties is that parties have started to recruit political actors who are members of the community. Gürakar (2018, 52) gives an example of how the Justice and Development Party (AKP) has recruited members of its party organization from hometown associations at the district level and how those members are awarded public ten-

ders. On the other hand, hometown associations are very cautious to stand each and every party in equal distance. A representative of an Istanbul-based hometown organization clearly states that their main principle is “to use politics for the benefit of association without making the association an instrument for politics” (Caymaz 2005). If there is a political candidate from the *hemşehri* community, those associations make every effort to support him irrespective of their political party allegiance. In a way, *hemşehrilik* becomes a greater component of their political identities than ideological or partisan ones. On the other hand, potential material and personal benefits of highlighting this identity over others should not be overlooked.

Naturally, the role of hometown associations in political mobilization is not limited to political parties. If we go back to the relationship between mukhtars and hometown associations, we can see that a similar mobilizational attempt exists in a non-partisan context as well. As previously mentioned, often mukhtars themselves involved in hometown associations prior to their duty. Later, they use these acquaintances and contacts which are established in provenance-based solidarity groups in their future political life. For instance, apart from presenting themselves as vote intermediaries and making decisions about whom to support; hometown associations can even designate members who will be placed in *aza* lists (Massicard 2022, 76). As mukhtars are elected on personal resources and dependent on the social groups in the neighborhood, it can be an effective strategy. On the other hand, it is argued that their involvement in hometown associations are at greater levels in "peripheral" neighborhoods compared to central and better established neighborhoods (Massicard 2022, 63).

Group loyalties and intimate networks can influence voting behavior. In fact, there is evidence that organizational identities and participation in societal organizations are more effective in influencing vote choice than direct appeals (Poertner 2021, 3). The effect of local roots on voter evaluations is positively related to the strength of local attachments (Campbell et al. 2019, 7). In addition, groups with stronger organizational and political resources are “more likely to achieve population parity in descriptive representation” (Trounstine 2010, 412). I argue that being in a social network related to your hometown and maintaining this identity have an effect on voting behavior as well. Despite the initial reasons for participation such as having an active social life, getting economic benefits, or employment opportunities; hometown associations are places where individuals can develop such bonds. Hence, they can be seen as indicators of the existence of provenance-based social networks. I suppose that individuals who live in neighborhoods with strong social networks are more likely to vote for a candidate who shares their hometown. I formulate my first hypothesis as such:

H_1: The probability of having a common hometown with mukhtar increases as the hometown association ratio increases.

Riedl and Robinson (2019, 32) finds that urban-rural linkages tend to decline with generations and generational duration significantly reduces the rural connections of urban citizens. In addition, we know that generation gaps divide the electorate; young and old have different social values. Young people care more about universal and progressive values and are more likely to support candidates who share their concerns (Inglehart 2015; Norris and Inglehart 2019). Therefore, we can expect that they are less likely to vote for a candidate based on their provenance characteristics. I formulate my second hypothesis as such:

H_2: The probability of having a common hometown with mukhtar increases as the neighborhood population gets older.

Highly skilled populations that are concentrated in cities are more likely to have cosmopolitan and liberal values and exercise political behaviors in line with these values (Le Galès 2021, 17.11). Also, social networks established around rural connections are often used to revive economic opportunities and one can expect that highly skilled individuals are less likely to rely on such social connections. Similarly, Caymaz (2005) observed that people with relatively higher economic status and education level do not care about participating in hometown associations. In addition, in more established neighborhoods with educated and wealthy populations, mukhtarlık is a less used institution (Massicard 2022, 164). Therefore, I formulate my third hypothesis as such:

H_3: The probability of having a common hometown with mukhtar decreases as the level of education increases.

It is argued that while wealthier urban voters prefer major universalistic policies, poorer voters tend to prefer particularistic benefits and focus on electoral strategies that may help them to overcome poverty (Nathan 2016, 2). On the other hand, Kumar (2022, 7) claims that even wealthier citizens can participate in claim-making which operates through partisan networks, or other mediated approaches. However, she emphasizes that while claim-making can offer utility even in relatively higher income levels, the content of claims may vary with income. Massicard (2022, 164) observes that the use of mukhtarlık varies according to certain social parameters. That means, economically, socially, or culturally disadvantaged populations tend to make use of mukhtars as personalized intermediaries. I formulate my fourth hypothesis as such:

H_4: The probability of having a common hometown with mukhtar increases as the

socio-economic level decreases.

4. RESEARCH DESIGN

In this section, I present the structure of data, the dependent variable and independent variables. Logistic regression model is employed in the empirical analysis and the unit of analysis is neighborhood. To test my hypotheses, I use data on March 2019 Istanbul local elections. I use a dataset that covers the percentage of registered voters with respect to their hometowns in 961 neighborhoods of Istanbul's 39 districts. Hometown information is based on the register (kütük) information of an individual. The dataset also includes the percentage of votes gained by each political party in each neighborhood. Data about the register information is taken from TUIK (Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu) and YSK (Yüksek Seçim Kurumu) provides data on election results. Because there are missing values for neighborhoods of Adalar district, I drop Adalar from my sample. The second dataset I use is obtained from Istanbul İstatistik Ofisi (2020) [1] administered by Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality. It covers the number of *hemşehri* associations in each district of Istanbul with respect to hometowns they are attached to by the year of 2020. I use another dataset created by Istanbul Istatistik Ofisi (2020) based on the "Mahallem Istanbul Project" conducted by a group of researchers from Istanbul University that covers SES (socio-economic status) scores of 959 neighborhoods of Istanbul by the year of 2016. I use data from TUIK (Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu) that shows the percentage of old dependency at district level and the number of people over and below the age of 18 in each neighborhood by the year of 2019. Data on neighborhood size, population density, and the level of education at the neighborhood level are obtained from Istanbul İstatistik Ofisi. Lastly, I use data from the Ministry of Interior (2018) [2], a document that shows establishment dates of all cities and districts of Turkey.

Apart from the mentioned datasets, I create a dataset of my own that covers biographic information on mukhtars. My unrestricted sample includes 233 neigh-

[1] The original data are available at: https://istatistik.istanbul/bulten.html?id=51.

[2] The data are available at: https://www.icisleri.gov.tr/illeridaresi/il-ve-ilce-kurulus-tarihleri.

borhoods of Istanbul. It is based on a representative group of 124 neighborhoods which is used in the study titled "23 Haziran 2019 İstanbul Tekrar Seçimleri: Seçme Davranışı Açısından Bir Değerlendirme" (Erdogan et al. 2019). In the study, 959 neighborhoods of Istanbul were subjected to cluster analysis, so that among all neighborhoods, 6 clusters were formed from neighborhoods which were similar to each other in terms of voting behavior in the past elections. Later, these neighborhood clusters were stratified and sample sizes were determined in proportion to the total number of voters of each neighborhood cluster. Hence, a total of 125 neighborhoods were determined. However, I removed the Heybeliada neighborhood of Adalar district from my sample because of the mentioned lack of register information. In addition to those neighborhoods, I randomly select another sample of 125 neighborhoods by using STATA. There were 14 neighborhoods that are common in both groups and I removed repetitive observations from my sample. There are two other neighborhoods I removed from my sample because they are established after the 2019 local election. I will provide detailed information about my sample neighborhoods in Appendix.

To create my dataset, I made phone calls with mukhtars. I obtained their contact information and cell phone numbers from the website of "Tüm İstanbul Muhtar Dernekleri Federasyonu". I asked them the following questions: "How many years have you lived in this neighborhood?", "How many years have you been serving as a mukhtar?", and "Where are you from originally?". Based on these conversations; I coded a mukhtar's hometown, number of years lived in the neighborhood, number of years served as a mukhtar, whether he/she is an incumbent, the gender of mukhtar, and lastly whether he/she answered my phone call.

The dependent variable is having a common hometown. I operationalize it considering a mukhtar's hometown and the most populated group in a neighborhood with respect to their hometowns. It is coded as a dummy variable which equals to 1 if a mukhtar's hometown and the hometown of the most populated group in the neighborhood are the same, and 0 otherwise. For many neighborhoods, as one can expect, Istanbul has the most populated register information (kütük). Due to the purpose and the scope of this research, for these cases, I consider the second most populated group in the neighborhood while coding the dependent variable.

Rather than operationalizing the dependent variable as a binary variable, taking the vote share gained by mukhtar into account can be another strategy to follow. On the other hand, YSK (Yüksek Seçim Kurulu) does not provide mukhtarlık election results publicly on its web portal. Unfortunately, my request to obtain necessary data is declined. The second alternative might be the operationalization of the

dependent variable as the percentage of mukhtar's origin. In this case, voters whose register information belongs to Istanbul creates a problem. In most neighborhoods of Istanbul, a high majority of the population is registered to Istanbul rather than Anatolian cities.

Independent variables related to the main hypotheses are hometown association ratio, old dependency, level of education, and socio-economic status.

The first independent variable called hometown association ratio is operationalized as the ratio of the number of hometown associations that belong to the most populated group in the neighborhood to the total number of hometown associations at the district level. An alternative measurement can be the number of the most populated group's hometown association per capita. I provide the results of regression analyses with this measurement in Appendix. My second independent variable, old dependency, is operationalized as the number of people who are older than 65 per hundred people of working age which indicates ages between 15 and 64. It is a measure of population aging at the district level. Because this variable considers people older than 15, it is useful in analyzing voting-age populations. The third independent variable called the level of education is a measure of the percentage of university graduates in a neighborhood. The alternative might be the use of the percentage of high school graduates to operationalize the level of education in a neighborhood. I made alternative analyses using it as an independent variable as well which is provided in Appendix. Last independent variable is the socio-economic status of a neighborhood. Traditionally, SES variables are computed based on the indicators such as income, education, occupation/unemployment, and family size. On the other hand, neither İstanbul İstatistik Ofisi nor "Mahallem İstanbul Project" website provide a clear guideline about the operationalization process of their SES score variable. I could not get a response from authorities as well. In any case, I decided to use it because there is not any available data on socio-economic indicators at the neighborhood level. In addition, when I compare SES scores that are provided by the "Mahallem İstanbul Project" with SES scores in another dataset on neighborhood aids provided by İstanbul İstatistik Ofisi (2021), I see that they overlap. Nevertheless, I report the results of regression analyses without this variable in Appendix.

I control for different variables that may affect my dependent variable and correlate with main independent variables. They are informed by the literature on descriptive representation. There is empirical evidence that a large minority population is the most important factor in the election of a minority candidate (Trounstine and Valdini 2008). If the group is moderately sized and geographically concentrated,

descriptive representation increases (Harding and Michelitch 2019; Trounstine and Valdini 2008). In addition, candidates are more advantageous if they originate from places with larger populations because they have a larger share of the votes (Gimpel, Lee, and Thorpe 2011). Therefore, I control the group size. It is the percentage of the most populated group in the neighborhood.

Another line of the literature emphasizes the importance of population density. While some voters live in high density areas with many neighbors in close proximity, others live in low density areas. It is argued that densely populated areas are more likely to encourage political ambitions, to enable candidates to run effective campaigns, and to facilitate access to informal networks for cultivating contacts (Gimpel, Lee, and Thorpe 2011). In addition, minority candidates are more likely to succeed in urban areas relative to suburban areas because the mobilization of supporters is easier in the former one (Button, Wald, and Rienzo 1999). Also, there is a claim that poor people live in higher density than the rich (Rodden 2010) which might affect the hypothesized relationship. Hence, I control for the population density for the most populated group in the neighborhood. It is calculated as the division of group population by neighborhood size (km^2).

In addition to the mentioned control variables, I also created a variable called hometown fractionalization and controlled for it. It is a measure of social fragmentation introduced by (Bozcaga 2020). She uses it as an indicator of "the heterogeneity of the district population by the hometowns of its residents, calculated based on the Herfindahl-Hirschman formula" (2020, 45). Following her approach, I use the same formula to measure the heterogeneity of a neighborhood by the hometowns of its residents. If s_j is the share of people from hometown j in a neighborhood, then the hometown fractionalization variable in the neighborhood can be measured with the formula " 1- $\sum s_j^2$ ". It is a continuous variable that takes values from 0 to 1. I report models that include the hometown fractionalization variable in Appendix.

Regarding mukhtar's biographic data, I controlled for the gender of mukhtar, his/her years in the neighborhood, and his/her incumbency status. The reason for the latter is that first of all, incumbents are better known than challengers and there is name recognition. Secondly, there is evidence that in local elections characterized by limited issue priority and limited information, incumbents make use of it (Trounstine 2010). Regarding mukhtar's years in the neighborhood, it is argued that physical proximity facilitates trust because of the high probability of interaction among neighbors and local candidates are found more honest by voters (Gimpel, Lee, and Thorpe 2011, 27).

There is evidence that rural citizens tend to be partisan compared to urban citizens

and people feeling closer to traditional authorities are more likely to be partisans (Harding and Michelitch 2019, 2). Therefore, I control for the AKP vote share at the neighborhood level. I also controlled for the margin of victory (MOV) per neighborhood which is calculated as the distance between AKP vote share and CHP vote share $|\,AKP-CHP\,|$. I control for the young-old ratio in a neighborhood which is operationalized as the ratio of the population younger than 18 over the population older than 18. It helps me to control for the voting age population in a neighborhood and its population characteristics. It is also used as a proxy of the "old dependency" variable. Lastly, I control for the district's establishment date which is an indicator whether a neighborhood is located in an older and established area or not.

I employ a logistic regression model to examine the relationship, because the dependent variable is a binary variable.

5. EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

Table 5.1 Descriptive Statistics (Effective Sample)

	N	Mean	Min.	Max.	Std. Dev.	Median
Same Hometown (M-N)	136	0.21	0.00	1.00	0.41	0
Hometown Association Ratio	136	8.25	0.00	25.83	6.02	7
Gender of Mukhtar	136	0.85	0.00	1.00	0.36	1
District Establishment Date	136	1974.03	1923.00	2008.00	30.99	1987
Young-Old Ratio	136	3.24	1.66	18.32	1.69	3
Old Dependency	136	9.36	4.72	27.15	4.10	8
AKP Vote Share	136	50.22	13.61	81.40	14.52	52
CHP Vote Share	136	47.00	16.49	85.05	14.97	45
Uni Graduate (percent)	136	18.18	3.00	52.00	10.15	16
Mukhtar's years in neigh.	136	38.86	8.00	91.00	13.18	38
SES score	136	37.32	12.50	100.00	22.87	38
Margin of Victory (party)	136	23.88	0.17	71.44	17.46	20
Hometown Fractionalization	136	0.08	0.03	0.49	0.08	0
Most Populated Group Size (%)	136	9.86	1.48	33.33	5.55	8
H. Ass. Density (Group)	136	0.02	0.00	0.20	0.03	0
Group Popu. Density	136	2877.57	2.50	34106.16	4740.91	1488

In this section, I provide summary statistics and empirical analysis of this research. Table 5.1 presents descriptive statistics of dependent and independent variables in the restricted sample based on the logistic models in Table 5.2.

Before interpreting the effects of control variables on the predicted probability of having a common hometown between mukhtar and the most populated group in the neighborhood, I will focus on the main independent variables and their statistical effects on the dependent variable. For each independent variable, the predicted

probabilities of having a common hometown will be presented and their marginal effects will be discussed with an emphasis on their substantive significance.

Table 5.2 reports logistic regressions with standard errors in parentheses. As the coefficient estimates of the main independent variables indicate, the baseline model (Model 1) provides empirical support for Hypotheses 1,2, and 3 while there is no empirical support in favor of Hypothesis 4. The coefficient estimates of hometown association ratio and old dependency are statistically significant at 95% confidence level. Moreover, the coefficient estimate of university graduates is statistically significant at 99% confidence level and provides empirical support in favor of the Hypothesis 3. On the other hand, the coefficient estimate of SES score is not statistically significant and I do not find an empirical support for Hypothesis 4. That means, in neighborhoods with higher ratio of hometown associations, higher old dependency, and less percentage of university graduates; it is more likely to observe that mukhtar and the most populated group are having a common hometown.

On the other hand, when I introduce group size and group population density as control variables, neither Model 2 nor Model 3 provide empirical evidence in favor of my main hypothesis (Hypothesis 1). In other words, the coefficient estimate of hometown association ratio is not statistically significant in these models.

In Model 4, I introduced only group population density as a control variable by leaving the group size variable out. In this case, I find empirical support in favor of Hypothesis 1 which states that the probability of having a common hometown with mukhtar increases as the hometown association ratio increases. The coefficient estimates of hometown association ratio and group population density variables are statistically significant at 95% confidence level. In addition, the coefficient estimate of university graduates is statistically significant at 99% confidence level while the coefficient estimate of old dependency is statistically significant at 90% confidence level. That means, in neighborhoods with higher ratio of hometown associations, higher group population density, less percentage of university graduates, and higher old dependency; it is more likely to observe that mukhtar and the most populated group are having a common hometown. On the other hand, considering the literature that emphasizes the importance of the effect of group size in descriptive representation, I believe that we should pay more attention to models that include group size as a control variable.

In Model 2, the coefficient estimates of old dependency and group size variables are statistically significant at 95% confidence level. The former one provides empirical evidence in favor of the Hypothesis 2. The latter one implies that in neighborhoods where the most populated group's size is bigger, it is more likely to observe that

Table 5.2 Logistic Regression on Sharing Hometown

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Hometown Association Ratio	0.079**	0.053	0.060	0.090**
	(0.037)	(0.039)	(0.044)	(0.039)
Old Dependency	0.218**	0.227**	0.238**	0.196*
	(0.100)	(0.100)	(0.104)	(0.102)
Uni Graduate (percent)	-0.123***	-0.070	-0.083*	-0.126***
	(0.043)	(0.047)	(0.050)	(0.043)
SES score	-0.007	-0.004	0.003	-0.006
	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.012)	(0.011)
Young-Old Ratio	-0.035	-0.106	-0.167	0.015
	(0.225)	(0.211)	(0.251)	(0.209)
Mukhtar's years in neigh.	0.016	0.014	0.015	0.021
	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.021)	(0.019)
Gender of Mukhtar	-0.487	-0.568	-0.534	-0.443
	(0.700)	(0.713)	(0.781)	(0.745)
District Establishment Date	0.011	0.015	0.015	0.008
	(0.011)	(0.012)	(0.013)	(0.012)
AKP Vote Share	-0.021	-0.015	-0.024	-0.023
	(0.020)	(0.021)	(0.022)	(0.020)
Margin of Victory (party)	-0.005	-0.019	-0.015	0.000
	(0.014)	(0.016)	(0.017)	(0.014)
Most Populated Group Size (percent)		0.118**	0.121**	
		(0.049)	(0.054)	
H. Ass. Density (Group)			8.788	
			(7.642)	
Group Popu. Density			0.000**	0.000**
			(0.000)	(0.000)
Constant	-22.169	-32.372	-32.393	-17.702
	(22.821)	(24.158)	(26.009)	(23.907)
N	140	140	136	140
R^2	0.111	0.153	0.224	0.161
Log-likelihood	-63.527	-60.470	-53.643	-59.916

Standard errors in parentheses.

Two-tailed tests. * p<0.1, ** p<0.005, *** p<0.01

mukhtar and the most populated group are having a common hometown. Model 2 does not provide empirical support in favor of Hypotheses 1, 3, and 4 that means the coefficient estimates of hometown association ratio, university graduates, and SES score variables are not statistically significant.

In model 3, the coefficient estimate of the old dependency variable is statistically significant at 95% confidence level and provides empirical evidence in favor of Hypothesis 2. Also, the coefficient estimate of university graduates is statistically significant at 90% confidence level and there is empirical support for Hypothesis 3 differently from Model 2. That means, in neighborhoods with less percentage of university graduates, it is more likely to see that mukhtar and the most populated group has a common hometown. Moreover, both group size and group population density variables are statistically significant at 95% confidence level. In other words, as the most populated group's size and population density increase in a neighborhood, it is more likely to observe that mukhtar and the most populated group are sharing a hometown origin and there is more chance for descriptive representation. This finding is in line with the literature. Lastly, the coefficient estimate of SES score is not statistically significant and I do not find empirical support for Hypothesis 4 in Model 3.

Figure 5.1 Predicted Probabilities of Sharing a Hometown with 95% C.I.s

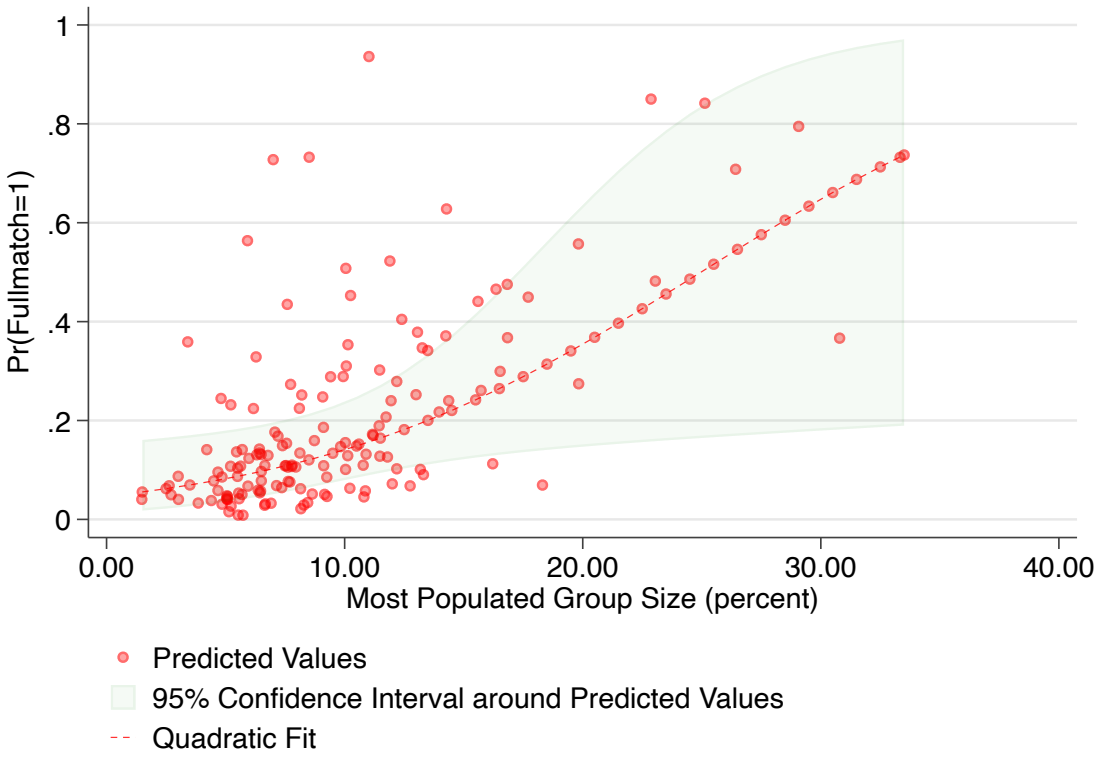


Figure 5.2 Marginal Effect of Group Size on Sharing a Hometown

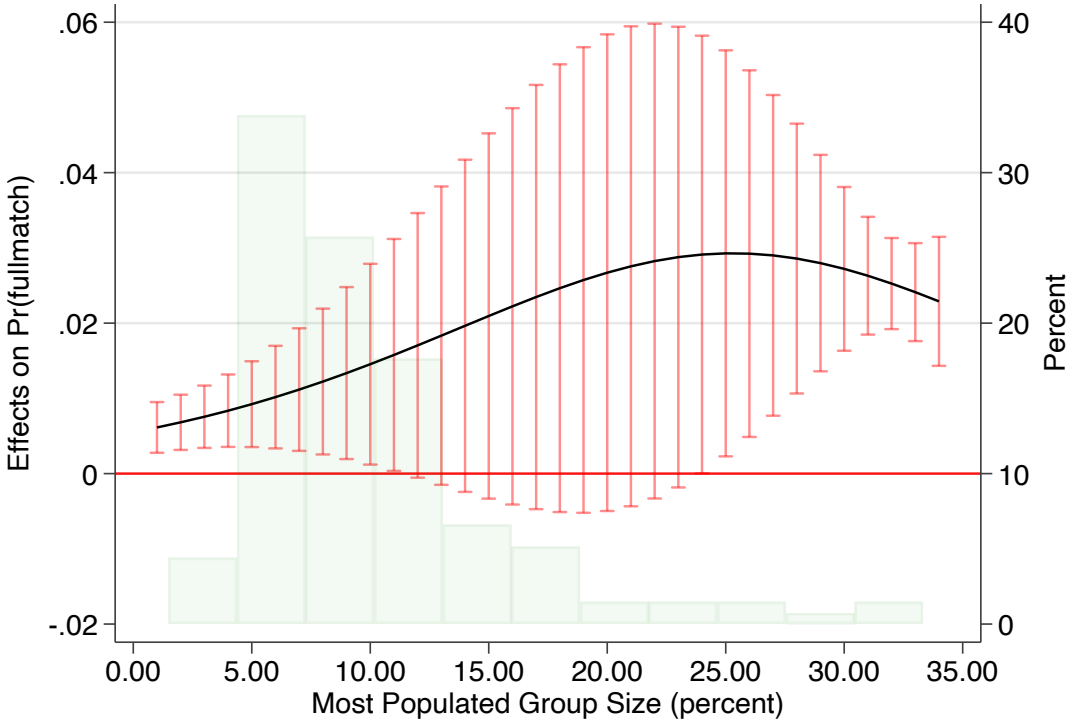


Figure 5.3 Predicted Probabilities of Sharing a Hometown with 95% C.I.s

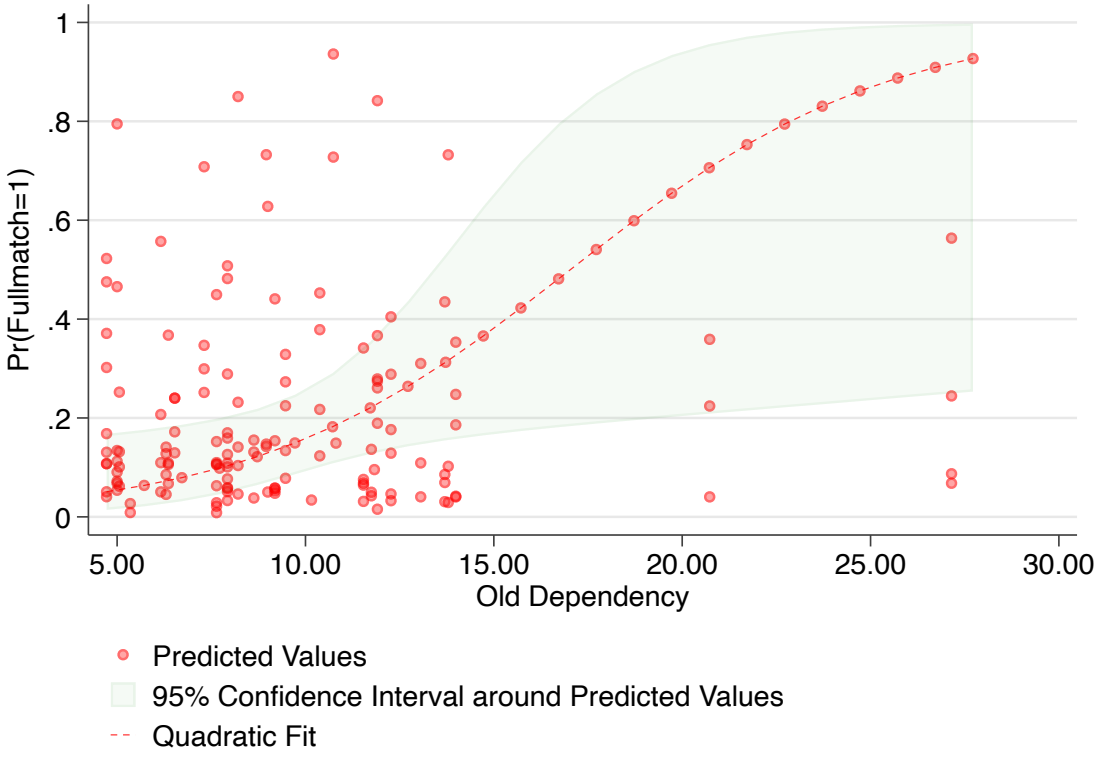


Figure 5.4 Marginal Effect of Old Dependency on Sharing a Hometown

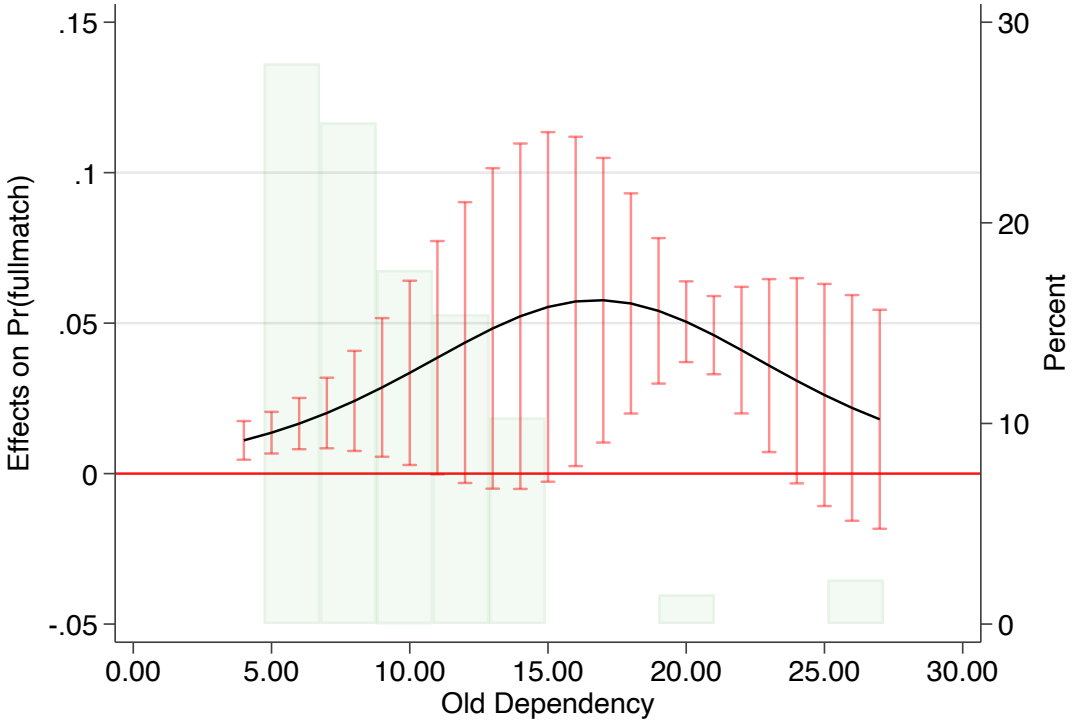


Figure 5.5 Predicted Probabilities of Sharing a Hometown with 95% C.I.s

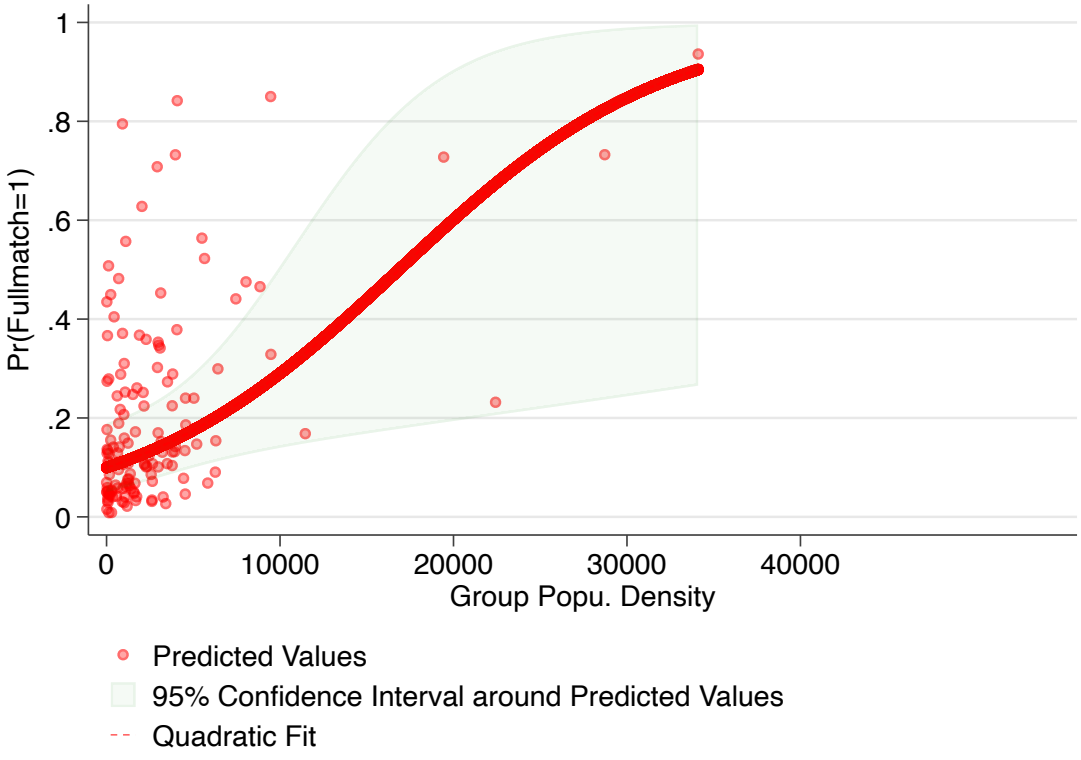


Figure 5.1 indicates the predicted probability of having a common hometown across the in-sample range of the group size variable. The predicted probabilities in Figure 5.1 are estimated based on the logistic Model 3 presented in Table 5.2. While calculating the predicted probabilities, all other covariates are set to their representative moments. For continuous variables, they are set to their mean values. If the variable is a categorical one, it sets to its median value. I computed the confidence intervals around predicted values by using the method of endpoint transformation in which the bounds cannot be smaller than 0 and greater than 1 (Xu and Long 2005). Based on the figure presented, the predicted probability of having a common hometown non-linearly increases as the group size increases.

The predicted marginal effects in Figure 5.2 are estimated based on the logistic Model 3 in Table 5.2. Figure 5.2 plots the marginal effect of group size on having a common hometown for its varying degrees with an overlaid histogram of the group size in its effective sample. Other independent variables are set to their representative moments to be able to satisfy the ceteris paribus condition for the average marginal effects. Figure 5.2 illustrates that the marginal effect of group size shows an increasing pattern for its lower to medium values, then demonstrates a decreasing pattern after the group size is around 25. In ceteris paribus condition, the marginal effect of group size on having a common hometown is statistically significant for its lower values from 1 to 11. The effect is also statistically significant when the value of group size is between 25 and 34. In other words, the marginal effect of group size on having a common hometown is positive and decreases in magnitude when the group size is at its higher values such as between 25 and 34. To note, when we look at the histogram on Figure 5.2, we can see that there are very few observations for the higher values of group size where the decreasing pattern in magnitude is about to be observed.

Figure 5.3 indicates the predicted probability of having a common hometown across the in-sample range of old dependency. The predicted probabilities in Figure 5.3 are estimated based on the logistic Model 3 presented in Table 5.2. While calculating the predicted probabilities, all other covariates are set to their representative moments and the method of endpoint transformation is used to calculate the confidence intervals around predicted values. Based on the figure presented, the predicted probability of having a common hometown non-linearly increases as the old dependency increases.

Based on the logistic Model 3 in Table 5.2, Figure 5.4 plots the average marginal effect of old dependency on having a common hometown for its varying degrees with an overlaid histogram of old dependency in its effective sample. Other independent

variables are set to their representative moments to be able to satisfy the ceteris paribus condition for the average marginal effects. Figure 5.4 illustrates that the increase in old dependency is positively associated with having a common hometown. Its effect is statistically significant for lower values of old dependency from 4 to 10. It is also significant between the values of 16 and 23. In other words, the average marginal effect of the percentage of old dependency on having a common hometown is not statistically significant and decreases in magnitude for its higher values. As we can see from the histogram on Figure 5.4, there are less observations for the values over 15 of the old dependency variable.

Figure 5.5 indicates the predicted probability of having a common hometown across the in-sample range of the group population density. The predicted probabilities in Figure 5.5 are estimated based on the logistic Model 3 presented in Table 5.2. While calculating the predicted probabilities, all other covariates are set to their representative moments and the method of endpoint transformation is used to calculate the confidence intervals around predicted values. Based on the figure presented, the predicted probability of having a common hometown non-linearly increases as the group population density increases.

Table 5.3 reports logistic regressions with standard errors in parentheses. While the interaction term of group size and old dependency is included in Model 1, Model 2 has the interaction term of group size and university graduate variables. Lastly, the interaction term of group size and SES score is included in Model 3.

Figure 5.6 plots the marginal effect of group size on sharing a hometown conditional on old dependency based on the logistic Model 1 presented in Table 5.3. The coefficient estimate of the interaction term in Model 1 is not statistically significant which does not say much by itself. According to Figure 5.6, the average marginal effect of group size on sharing a hometown is positive and statistically significant when old dependency gets values from 9 to 18. Between these values, the effect increases in magnitude as old dependency increases.

Table 5.3 Logistic Regression on Sharing Hometown (Interactive Models)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Hometown Association Ratio	0.065	0.043	0.057
	(0.045)	(0.046)	(0.044)
Most Populated Group Size (%)	0.026	-0.093	0.061
	(0.135)	(0.127)	(0.084)
Old Dependency	0.179	0.320***	0.237**
	(0.131)	(0.121)	(0.104)
Most Populated Group Size (%) × Old Dependency	0.010		
	(0.013)		
Uni Graduate (percent)	-0.088*	-0.235**	-0.078
	(0.050)	(0.104)	(0.049)
SES score	0.002	0.005	-0.019
	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.028)
Young-Old Ratio	-0.181	-0.277	-0.250
	(0.249)	(0.261)	(0.268)
H. Ass. Density (Group)	8.870	10.576	10.098
	(7.671)	(7.884)	(7.881)
Group Popu. Density	0.000**	0.000**	0.000**
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Mukhtar's years in neigh.	0.015	0.009	0.016
	(0.021)	(0.022)	(0.021)
Gender of Mukhtar	-0.497	-0.554	-0.408
	(0.788)	(0.822)	(0.797)
District Establishment Date	0.018	0.024*	0.014
	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.013)
AKP Vote Share	-0.028	-0.030	-0.027
	(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.022)
Margin of Victory (party)	-0.013	-0.006	-0.015
	(0.017)	(0.018)	(0.017)
Most Populated Group Size (%) × Uni Graduate (%)		0.018*	
		(0.010)	
Most Populated Group Size (%) × SES score			0.002
			(0.002)
Constant	-38.421	-49.004*	-30.236
	(27.507)	(28.827)	(26.364)
N	136	136	136
R^2	0.228	0.253	0.230
Log-likelihood	-53.350	-51.679	-53.246

Standard errors in parentheses.

Two-tailed tests. * p<0.1, ** p<0.005, *** p<0.01

Figure 5.6 Av. Marginal Effect of Group Size Conditional on Old Dependency with 95% C.I.s

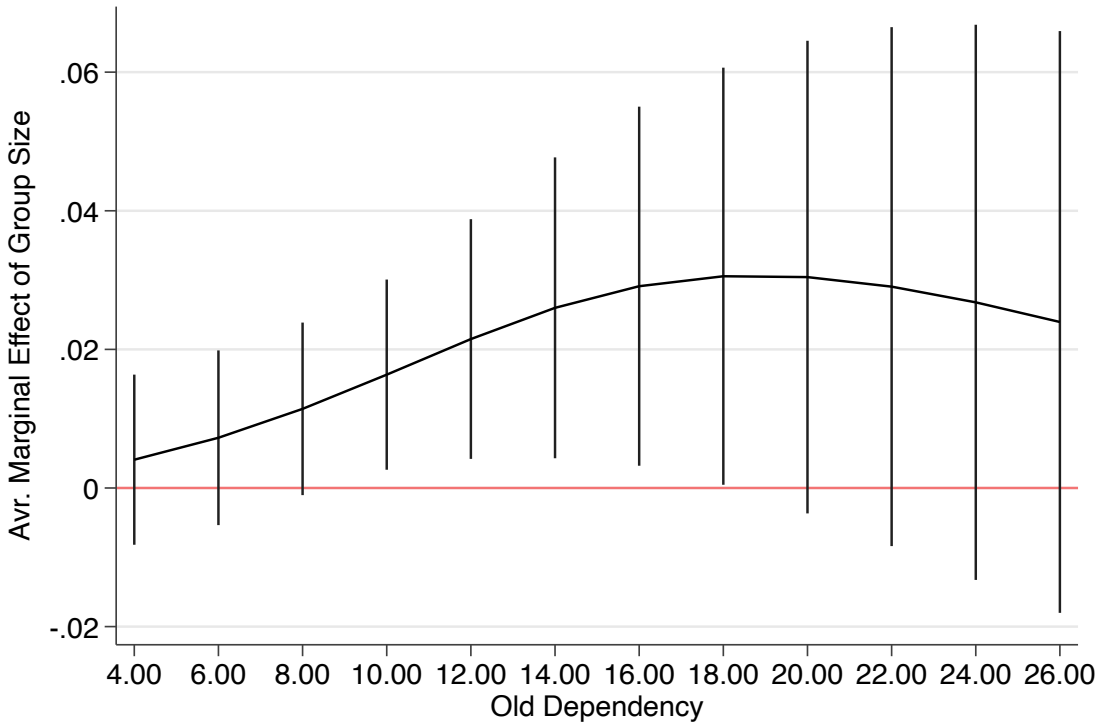
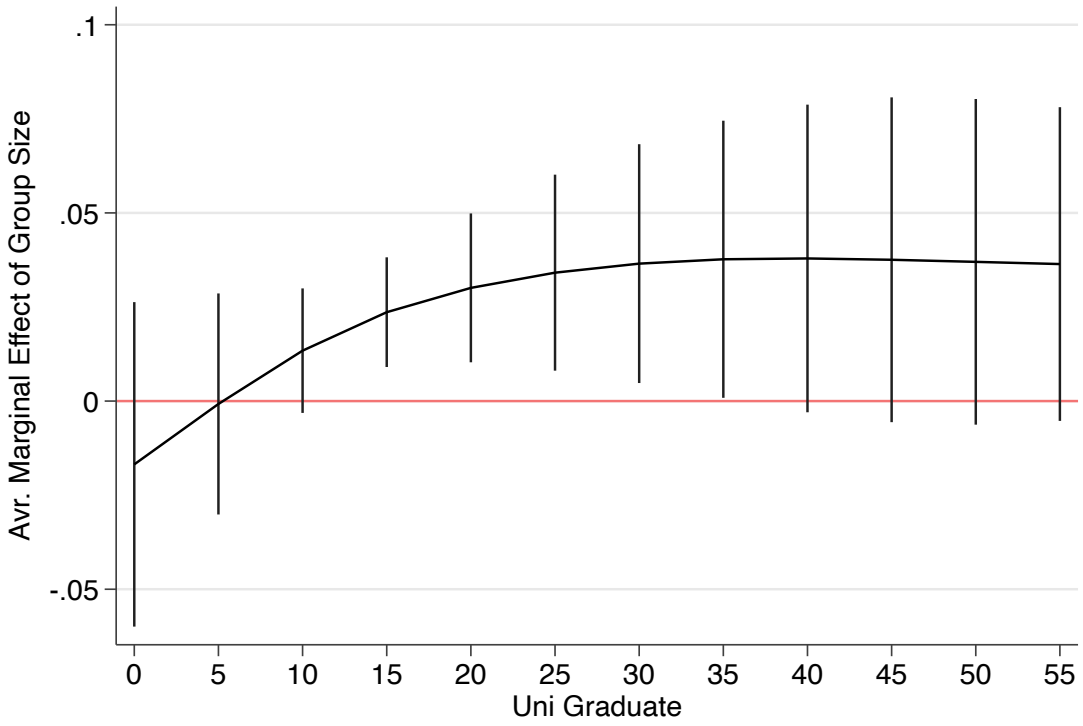


Figure 5.7 indicates the marginal effect of group size on sharing a hometown conditional on university graduates based on the logistic Model 2 presented in Table 5.3. While the coefficient estimate of the interaction term in Model 2 is statistically significant, Figure 5.7 presents its substantive significance. The average marginal effect of group size on sharing a hometown is positive and statistically significant between the values of 13 and 35 of university graduates.

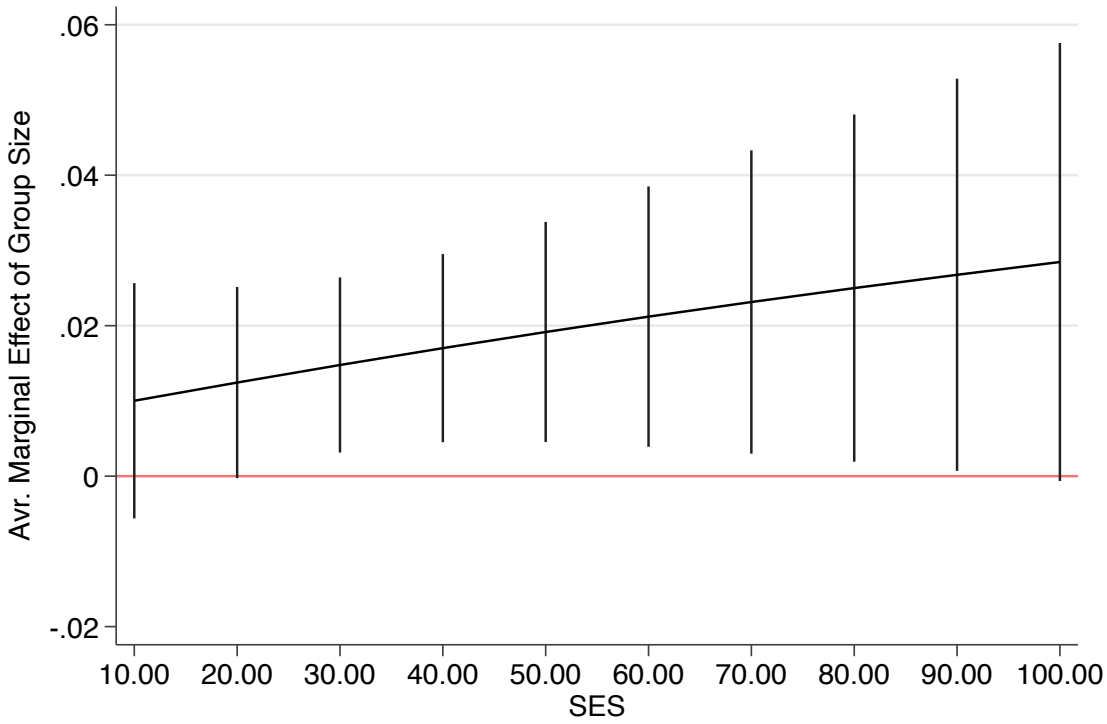
Figure 5.8 plots the marginal effect of group size on sharing a hometown conditional on SES score based on the logistic Model 3 presented in Table 5.3. While the coefficient estimate of the interaction term in Model 3 is not statistically significant, Figure 5.8 presents its substantive significance. The average marginal effect of group size on sharing a hometown is positive and statistically significant when the SES score gets values from 21 to 90. Between these values, the effect increases in magnitude as the SES score increases.

Figure 5.7 Av. Marginal Effect of Group Size Conditional on University Graduates with 95% C.I.s



To sum up, group size and group population density are two evident variables that have an effect on the likelihood of the most populated group in the neighborhood and the mukhtar having a common hometown. Despite my theoretical expectations, I do not find strong support in favor of my main hypothesis regarding the effect of hometown associations except Models 1 and 4 presented in Table 2 in which group size is not controlled. All models provide empirical evidence in favor of old dependency and Hypothesis 2 which means the probability of having a common hometown with mukhtar increases as the neighborhood population gets older. There is also empirical evidence that supports the argument that it is less likely for the most populated group and the mukhtar to share a common hometown in neighborhoods where education level is higher. Lastly, none of the models provide evidence in favor of the hypothesized relationship between the socio-economic level and having a common hometown.

Figure 5.8 Av. Marginal Effect of Group Size Conditional on SES Score with 95% C.I.s



6. CONCLUSION

Pitkin (1972) defines descriptive representation as "standing for" the group based on shared characteristics such as race, ethnicity, and gender. It is argued that people are more likely to vote for a candidate of her own kind based on those shared characteristics. Non-partisan electoral settings such as local elections are efficient to observe this relationship due to the lack of a strong link between ideology/or partisanship and group characteristics (Boudreau, Elmendorf, and MacKenzie 2019). In addition, scholars take attention to the importance of district-level demographic structures for descriptive representation (Swers and Rouse 2011).

It is known that residential environments affect people's political preferences and voting behavior. The socialization approach focuses on "where people live" and emphasizes the importance of their interactions with other people, networks, and patterns of socialization (Harrop, Heath, and Openshaw 1991). There is empirical evidence that the socialization process has a significant effect on voting behavior. It is argued that demographic concentration at the neighborhood indicates a strong place-based network with its local organizations. This kind of social interaction functions as a mechanism for bloc voting in which people are more likely to vote for a candidate with a shared immigrant background with themselves (Vermeulen, Kranendonk, and Michon 2020).

1950s onwards, Turkey experienced an internal migration flow towards big and urban cities. During this process, the bond of territorial linkage and ethnicity acted as a form of associability. The emergence of new neighborhoods that provided solidarity networks based on territory was a consequence of settlement patterns related to this associability. Overtime, the place of residence became an important variable in the voting decisions (Çarkoğlu 2007).

In this study, I examine the role of *hemşehrilik* in vote choice. I argue that *hemşehrilik* functions as a form of descriptive representation and it is a determinant of vote choice in the urban setting which is more heterogeneous in terms of one's origin

of hometown. Because individuals act differently in non-partisan than in partisan contexts (Foos and de Rooij 2019) and support candidates with shared partisan affiliations when elections are "officially" partisan (Oliver and Ha 2007), I look at the election of mukhtars which is the only nonpartisan electoral setting in Turkish local politics. I use data on the March 2019 Istanbul local elections.

I find that group size and group population density are two prominent factors that have an effect on the likelihood of the most populated group in the neighborhood and the mukhtar having a common hometown. I can say that a large minority population is the most significant factor for an increase in descriptive representation at the neighborhood level. Contrary to my theoretically driven expectations, I do not find strong evidence in favor of my main hypothesis which emphasizes the role of hometown associations in the local political socialization process. The effect disappears when I control for group size. It is important to think about why I failed to find the expected effect of hometown associations, which I can only speculate about the reasons.

Maybe hometown associations are not places where ordinary people (voters) actively engage and approach for socialization and networking anymore. The literature on hometown associations mentions the effective role played by them from the 1960s to early 2000s in the urban context. As generations passed, the role of hometown associations for ordinary citizens might start to fade. Now, they can be places where political elites, political candidates and citizens with political ambitions are more likely to engage with. But again, if there is not a significant mobilizational effect of hometown associations, why do people with political ambitions approach such places? Related to this point, the power and network of party organizations in neighborhoods can be another variable to consider in further studies.

The literature on the effect of group size and group population density on descriptive representation provides an alternative explanation. In moderately sized and high density areas, residents live in close proximity which facilitates access to informal networks, enables candidates to run effective campaigns (Gimpel, Lee, and Thorpe 2011) and makes mobilization of supporters easier (Button, Wald, and Rienzo 1999). Maybe it is not the intermediary role of hometown associations that enable political socialization and mobilization but the interaction and proximity among group members, or another place-based network arising from these relationships.

On the other hand, based on my observations on mukhtars' social media accounts, I can say that online platforms are new places where local political elites and citizens actively interact. Hence, there can be other mechanisms for political socialization and mobilization rather than intermediary roles of hometown associations.

Other than the effects of group size and group population density, I also find that in neighborhoods where the population is older and the level of education is lower, it is more likely to observe that the most populated group in the neighborhood and the mukhtar share a common hometown. Despite my expectation, I do not find empirical evidence regarding the effect of socio-economic status of neighborhoods.

This study has certain limitations. First of all, I examine only one election. Time-series analysis can provide better answers to questions mentioned above. Secondly, I am trying to make inferences about individual level behavior by relying on aggregate level data which carries the risk of ecological fallacy (de Blok and van der Meer 2018). One of the solutions to the problem of ecological fallacy can be using individual level data such as survey data (Abrajano, Nagler, and Alvarez 2003; Boudreau, Elmendorf, and MacKenzie 2019; de Blok and van der Meer 2018), however, this option was not possible for me. Thirdly, because of the lack of data, I have limited options in the operationalization of some variables. For instance, I am not exactly sure about the validity of the neighborhood level socio-economic status (SES) score variable. In addition, rather than coding the dependent variable as a binary one, using a continuous variable could be a better option to assess the hypothesized relationships.

For further studies, the role of descriptive representation on substantive representation is worth studying. In other words, the motivations behind supporting a *"hemşehri"* candidate can be examined in detail. Other than that, this study can be extended by building on mentioned limitations.

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APPENDIX A

The List of District-Neighborhoods in Restricted Sample

Arnavutköy: Maraşal Fevzi Çakmak,Nene Hatun, Arnavutköy Yavuz Selim, Arnavutköy Imrahor

Ataşehir: Aşik Veysel, Ataşehir Esatpaşa, Ataşehir Ferhat Paşa, Ataşehir Içerenköy

Avcilar: Denizköşkler, Yeşilkent

Bahçelievler: Fevzi Çakmak, Hürriyet, Kocasinan, Zafer, Şirinevler

Bakirköy: Ataköy 2. 5. 6. Kisim, Osmaniye

Bayrampaşa: Yildirim

Bağcilar: Hürriyet, Kazimkarabekir, Kemalpaşa, Sancaktepe

Başakşehir: Başak, Kayabaşi

Beykoz: Fatih, Mahmutşevketpaşa, Paşamandira, Tokatköy, Çiftlik

Beyoğlu: Sütlüce

Büyükçekmece: Atatürk

Esenler: Fatih, Havaalani, Namik Kemal, Yavuz Selim

Esenyurt: Aşik Veysel, Mehmet Akif Ersoy, Mehter Çeşme, Orhan Gazi, Talatpaşa, Yeşilkent, Yunus Emre, Inönü

Eyüpsultan: Akşemsettin, Karadolap, Mimar Sinan, Mithat Paşa, Rami Cuma, Silahtaraga

Fatih: Emin Sinan, Molla Gürani, Mimar Kemalettin, Topkapi

Gaziosmanpaşa: Fevzi Çakmak, Karlitepe, Mevlana

Güngören: Maraşal Çakmak, Merkez

Kadiköy: Eğitim, Göztepe, Koşuyolu

Kartal: Cevizli, Cumhuriyet, Orhantepe, Yali, Yunus

Kağithane: Talatpaşa, Telsizler, Yahya Kemal, Yeşilce

Küçükçekmece: Atakent, Cennet, Fevzi Çakmak, Kanarya, Tevfik Bey

Maltepe: Girne, Zümrütevler, Çinar

Pendik: Ahmet Yesevi, Dumlupinar, Güllübağlar, Güzelyali, Kavakpinar, Kaynarca, Kurna, Kurtdoğmuş, Ramazanoğlu, Sapanbağlari, Yenişehir, Çamçeşme, Çinardere

Sancaktepe: Fatih, Osman Gazi, Yunus Emre, Inönü

Sariyer: Ayazağa, Baltalimani, Darüşşafaka, Garipçe, Kazim Karabekir Paşa, Poligon, Tarabya

Sultanbeyli: Abdurrahmangazi, Battal Gazi, Mehmet Akif

Sultangazi Cumhuriyet, Esentepe, Gazi, Uğur Mumcu, Yayla

Silivri: Alibey, Pirimehmet Paşa, Yenimahalle

Zeytinburnu: Sümer, Telsiz, Yeşiltepe

Çekmeköy: Cumhuriyet, Mehmet Akif, Nişantepe, Çamlik

Ümraniye: Altinşehir, Esenevler, Esenkent, Fatih Sultan Mehmet, Mehmet Akif, Tatlisu, Yenişehir, Çakmak, Istiklal

Üsküdar: Beylerbeyi, Kirazlitepe, Selamiali

Şişli: Esentepe, Mecidiyeköy, Paşa, Şişli Merkez

Tables and Figures

Table A.1 Descriptive Statistics (Unrestricted Sample)

	N	Mean	Min.	Max.	Std. Dev.	Median
Same Hometown (M-N)	156	0.21	0.00	1.00	0.41	0
Hometown Association Ratio	233	6.67	0.00	25.83	5.95	5
Gender of Mukhtar	222	0.86	0.00	1.00	0.34	1
District Establishment Date	233	1968.60	1923.00	2008.00	33.09	1987
Young-Old Ratio	231	3.67	1.65	22.38	2.46	3
Old Dependency	233	10.53	4.72	27.15	5.22	9
AKP Vote Share	227	49.48	12.95	83.57	16.04	52
CHP Vote Share	227	47.89	14.34	85.79	16.38	46
Uni Graduate (%)	230	18.13	0.00	56.00	11.81	15
High School Graduate (%t)	230	21.61	0.00	48.00	5.85	22
Mukhtar's years in neigh.	151	39.79	8.00	91.00	13.29	40
SES score	230	38.86	12.50	100.00	21.70	38
Margin of Victory (party)	227	26.14	0.17	72.84	19.15	22
Hometown Fractionalization	227	0.12	0.03	0.95	0.16	0
Most Populated Group Size (%)	219	9.68	0.96	33.33	5.68	8
H. Ass. Density (Group)	213	0.03	0.00	0.72	0.07	0
Group Popu. Density	217	2748.33	0.14	54898.18	5501.46	1156
Hometown Ass. (per capita)	213	0.03	0.00	0.72	0.07	0

Figure A.1 Scatterplot of Sharing Hometown and Hometown Association Ratio

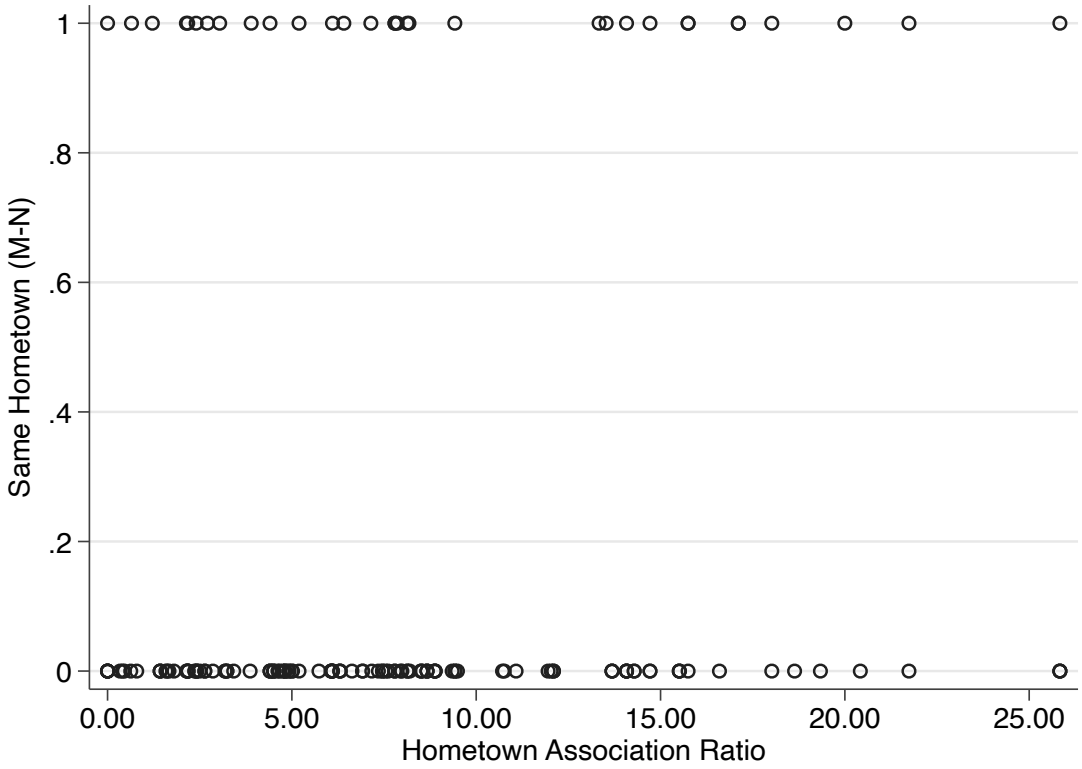

Figure A.2 Scatterplot of Sharing Hometown and Education Level

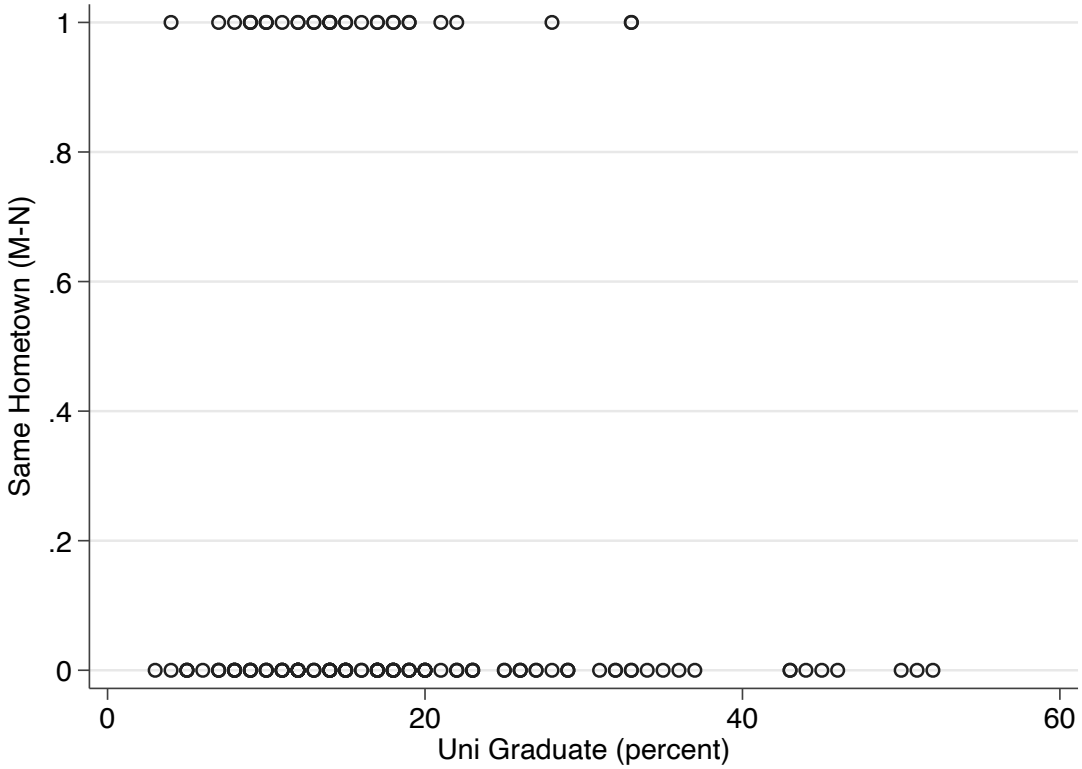

Figure A.3 Scatterplot of Sharing Hometown and Old Dependency

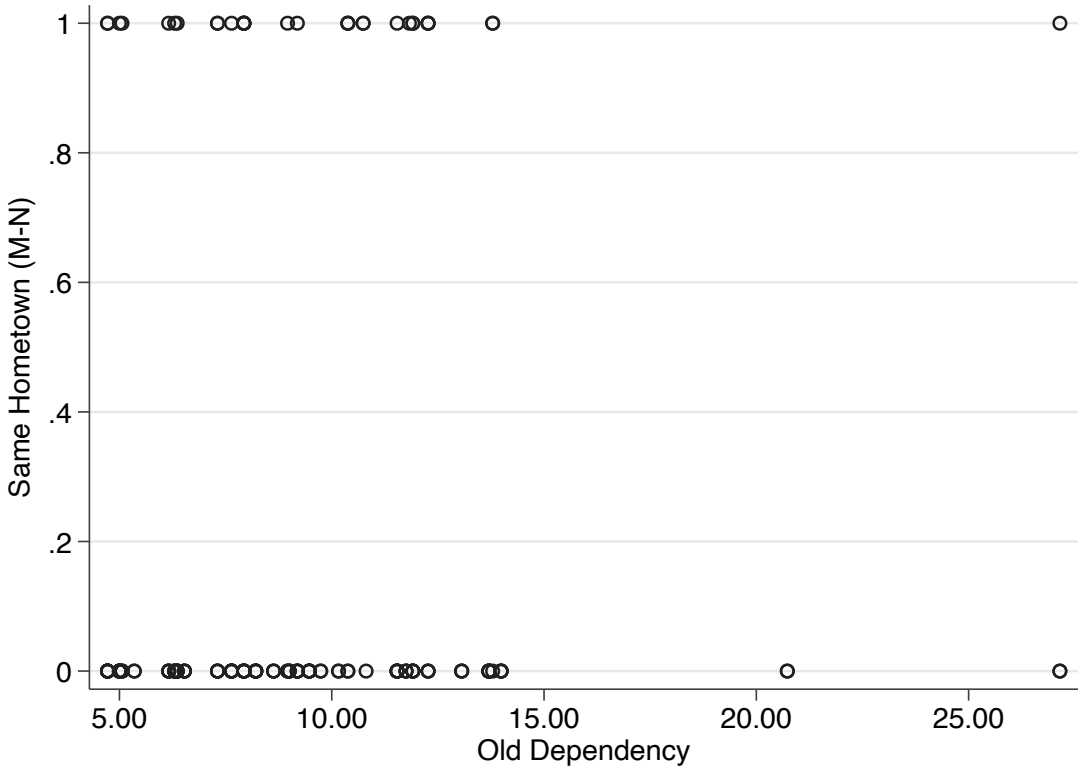

Figure A.4 Scatterplot of Sharing Hometown and SES Score

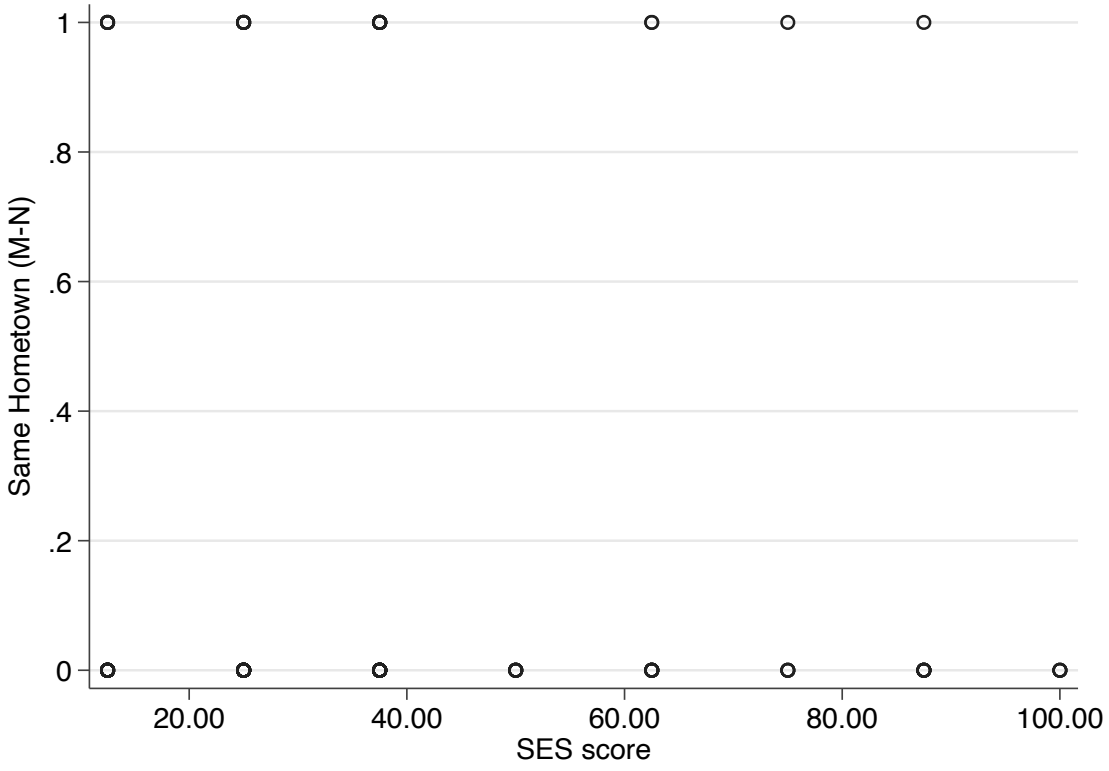

Table A.2 Logistic Regression on Sharing Hometown (Hometown Fractionalization Var.)

	Model 1	Model 2
Hometown Association Ratio	0.069*	0.082**
	(0.036)	(0.037)
Old Dependency	0.216**	0.194*
	(0.099)	(0.101)
Uni Graduate (percent)	-0.110***	-0.112***
	(0.042)	(0.042)
Young-Old Ratio	-0.146	-0.092
	(0.280)	(0.267)
Mukhtar's years in neigh.	0.019	0.024
	(0.019)	(0.019)
Gender of Mukhtar	-0.424	-0.355
	(0.691)	(0.736)
District Establishment Date	0.010	0.009
	(0.011)	(0.012)
AKP Vote Share	-0.024	-0.026
	(0.020)	(0.020)
Margin of Victory (party)	-0.009	-0.005
	(0.014)	(0.015)
Hometown Fractionalization	0.904	2.321
	(3.078)	(3.101)
Group Popu. Density		0.000**
		(0.000)
Constant	-20.528	-18.704
	(22.830)	(23.832)
N	141	141
R^2	0.098	0.152
Log-likelihood	-65.816	-61.870

Standard errors in parentheses.

Two-tailed tests. * p<0.1, ** p<0.005, *** p<0.01

Table A.3 Logistic Regression on Sharing Hometown (w/o SES Score Var.)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Hometown Association Ratio	0.068*	0.042	0.047
	(0.036)	(0.038)	(0.042)
Old Dependency	0.214**	0.226**	0.231**
	(0.099)	(0.100)	(0.105)
Uni Graduate (percent)	-0.113***	-0.057	-0.070
	(0.041)	(0.045)	(0.048)
Young-Old Ratio	-0.133	-0.172	-0.230
	(0.264)	(0.224)	(0.283)
Mukhtar's years in neigh.	0.019	0.016	0.017
	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.021)
Gender of Mukhtar	-0.424	-0.535	-0.483
	(0.691)	(0.712)	(0.774)
District Establishment Date	0.009	0.014	0.012
	(0.010)	(0.011)	(0.012)
AKP Vote Share	-0.024	-0.016	-0.024
	(0.020)	(0.021)	(0.022)
Margin of Victory (party)	-0.007	-0.023	-0.019
	(0.014)	(0.015)	(0.016)
Most Populated Group Size (percent)		0.136***	0.140***
		(0.048)	(0.052)
H. Ass. Density (Group)			9.411
			(7.626)
Group Popu. Density			0.000**
			(0.000)
Constant	-18.180	-30.511	-26.933
	(21.335)	(23.109)	(24.708)
N	141	141	137
R^2	0.098	0.159	0.228
Log-likelihood	-65.859	-61.401	-54.614

Standard errors in parentheses.

Two-tailed tests. * p<0.1, ** p<0.005, *** p<0.01

Table A.4 Logistic Regression on Sharing Hometown (High School Grads var.)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Hometown Association Ratio	0.059*	0.025	0.025
	(0.035)	(0.037)	(0.042)
Old Dependency	0.113	0.186*	0.204*
	(0.088)	(0.096)	(0.107)
High School Graduate (percent)	-0.025	0.070	0.088
	(0.064)	(0.071)	(0.080)
Young-Old Ratio	-0.268	-0.338	-0.495
	(0.348)	(0.340)	(0.434)
Mukhtar's years in neigh.	0.012	0.009	0.010
	(0.018)	(0.019)	(0.020)
Gender of Mukhtar	-0.057	-0.357	-0.247
	(0.666)	(0.701)	(0.754)
District Establishment Date	0.006	0.015	0.015
	(0.010)	(0.011)	(0.012)
AKP Vote Share	-0.001	-0.003	-0.007
	(0.019)	(0.020)	(0.020)
Margin of Victory (party)	-0.012	-0.023	-0.021
	(0.014)	(0.016)	(0.016)
Most Populated Group Size (percent)		0.183***	0.201***
		(0.049)	(0.054)
H. Ass. Density (Group)			14.050*
			(7.960)
Group Popu. Density			0.000**
			(0.000)
Constant	-13.033	-35.665	-36.457
	(20.763)	(23.590)	(25.418)
N	141	141	137
R^2	0.036	0.153	0.220
Log-likelihood	-70.355	-61.786	-55.189

Standard errors in parentheses.

Two-tailed tests. * p<0.1, ** p<0.005, *** p<0.01

Table A.5 Logistic Regression on Sharing Hometown (Hometown Ass. (per capita))

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Hometown Ass. (per capita)	2.749	8.038	10.982
	(6.838)	(7.286)	(7.466)
Old Dependency	0.211**	0.237**	0.224**
	(0.100)	(0.102)	(0.104)
Uni Graduate (percent)	-0.116***	-0.051	-0.058
	(0.042)	(0.045)	(0.046)
Young-Old Ratio	-0.219	-0.297	-0.273
	(0.312)	(0.293)	(0.286)
Mukhtar's years in neigh.	0.009	0.009	0.015
	(0.019)	(0.020)	(0.021)
Gender of Mukhtar	-0.257	-0.477	-0.387
	(0.691)	(0.720)	(0.765)
District Establishment Date	0.006	0.015	0.012
	(0.010)	(0.011)	(0.012)
AKP Vote Share	-0.033*	-0.022	-0.026
	(0.020)	(0.021)	(0.022)
Margin of Victory (party)	-0.005	-0.025	-0.019
	(0.013)	(0.016)	(0.016)
Most Populated Group Size (percent)		0.156***	0.154***
		(0.049)	(0.051)
Group Popu. Density			0.000**
			(0.000)
Constant	-11.726	-30.603	-26.129
	(21.020)	(23.519)	(24.560)
N	137	137	137
R^2	0.086	0.169	0.219
Log-likelihood	-64.627	-58.762	-55.220

Standard errors in parentheses.

Two-tailed tests. * p<0.1, ** p<0.005, *** p<0.01

Figure A.5 Marginal Effect of Hometown Association Ratio on Sharing a Hometown (based on Model 3 in Table 5.2)

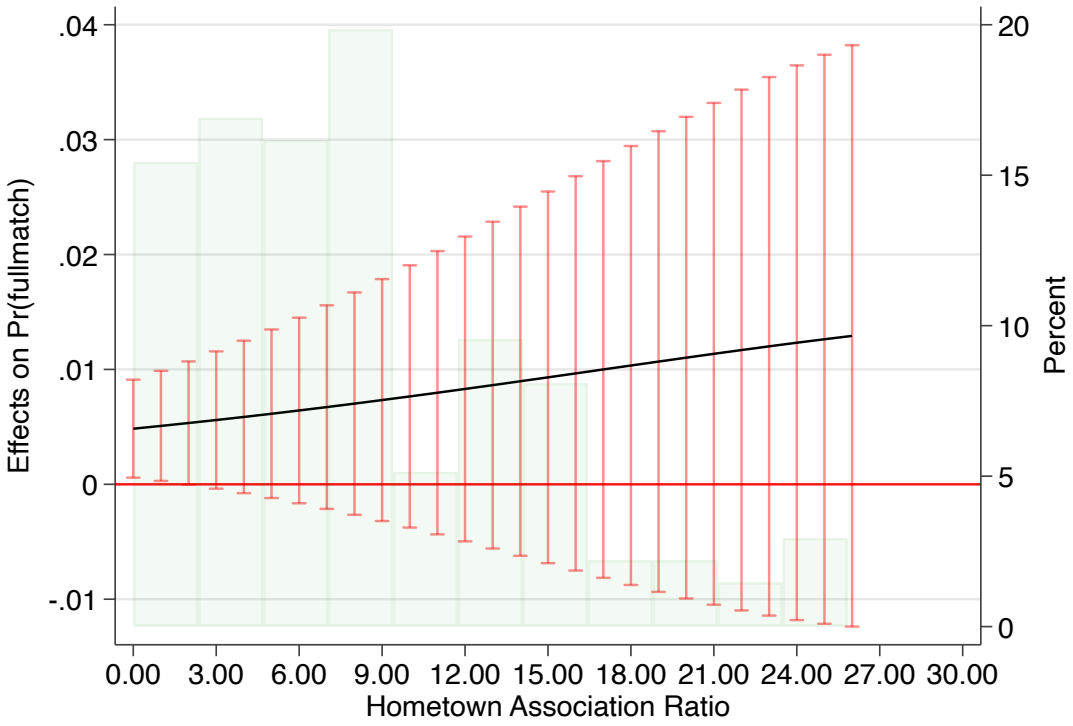

Figure A.6 Marginal Effect of Education on Sharing a Hometown (based on Model 3 in Table 5.2)

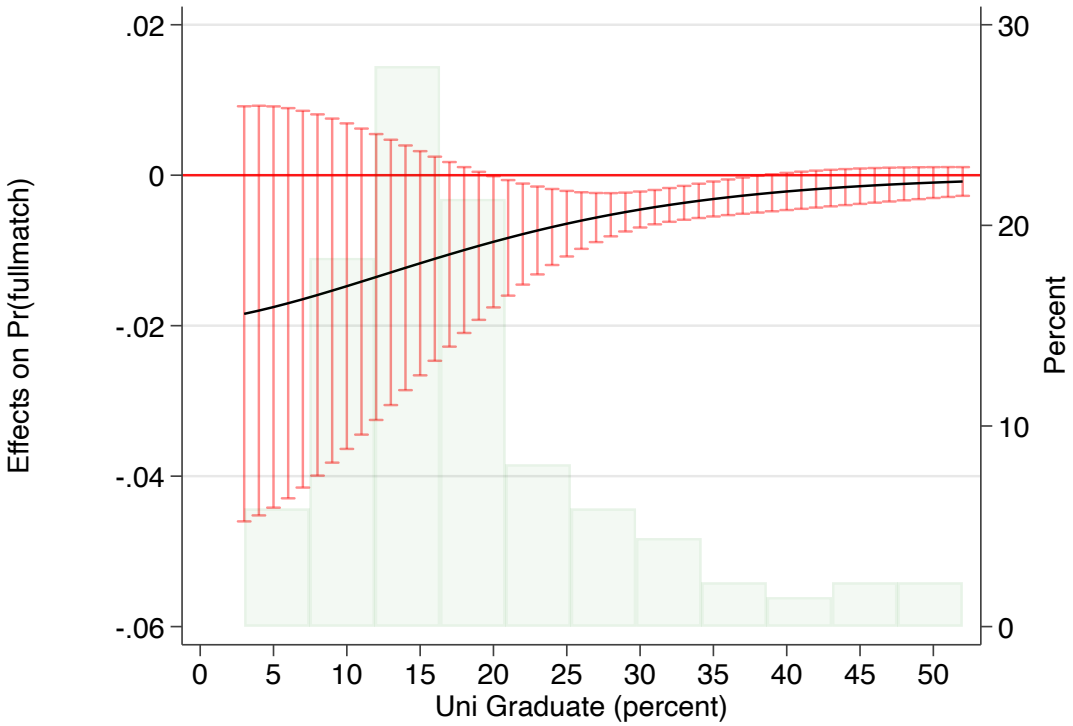

Figure A.7 Marginal Effect of SES Score on Sharing a Hometown (based on Model 3 in Table 5.2)