large cities such as Naples (Fruncillo, 2017; De Falco & Sabatino, 2019; Brancaccio & De Falco, 2019), Palermo (Emanuele, 2013), Rome (Tomassi, 2018), Turin (Cepernich et al., 2018) and Milan (Morelli et. al, 2019) have shown a huge difference between the vote expressed by 'periphery' areas compared to 'central' ones. These areas are distinguished not only by their geographical locations but also by their socioeconomic characteristics.

The first important signs of this particular electoral geography within large cities were detected both in the 2016 institutional referendum and in some mayoral elections held that year (Cattaneo, 2016). One of the main results was the loss of consensus for the Democratic Party (Partito Democratico) in the periphery. In the same period, the broad concept of "periphery", which can be used to identify the size of a city, its economic development, and its rurality, recurred several times to explain international electoral results. For example, the concept of "periphery" was used to explain the US presidential election won by Trump in 2016 (Goetz et al., 2019; Gusterson, 2017), or the referendum enacting England's exit from the European Union (Picascia et. al, 2016). On both occasions, the distribution of the vote was strongly territorialized.

In Italy's 2018 general election, the centre–periphery electoral divide substantially widened, since the Five Star Movement (Movimento Cinque Stelle) became the 'champion of the periphery', where it garners a large part of its electoral consensus, while the main left-wing formation, the democratic party, once rooted in the periphery, barricaded itself in upper-class neighbourhoods (De Sio, 2018).

The city of Naples is an example of this trend. She has always emphasized national electoral trends (D'Agostino & Mauriello, 2018). In Naples, the Five Stars Movement collected more than half of the expressed preferences, peaking at 65% on the periphery. Although with lower percentages, the rooting process of the Five Stars Movement in the periphery was also evident in the 2019 European elections and the 2020 regional election (De Falco & Sabatino, 2019). Therefore, in the capital of the south, as in other significant urban realities, marginality is positively associated with voting for the Five Stars Movement.

What characterizes the electoral behaviour of the periphery is not only voting choice, but also voter turnout. Since the 1979 elections, voter turnout has declined steadily throughout the country. However, within this general trend, it is possible to identify certain peculiarities in urban areas. In Naples, analyses of the most recent elections have shown essential differences in participation rates between the centre and the periphery (Brancaccio & De Falco, 2019). Thus, centre/periphery cleavage is a key that has proved highly fruitful for reading and interpreting election results within urban areas, such as Naples.

This study aims to analyse the results of the last mayoral elections held in Naples from a centre-periphery perspective, focusing on vote choice and voter turnout. To obtain a clearer picture of the 2021 round, the results of previous parliamentary and mayoral elections were also considered. Before moving on to the analysis of the data, however, the work briefly describes the means of the centre and periphery in the city of Naples and the type of approach that will be used.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. The Ecological Approach

Previous research on the analysis of voting within urban areas has been characterized by an ecological approach. Using this approach, territorial aggregates of administrative or non-administrative nature were chosen as the unit of analysis (Pintaldi, 2009). For example, comparing voting between neighbourhoods or urban and rural areas is an ecological analysis of voting.
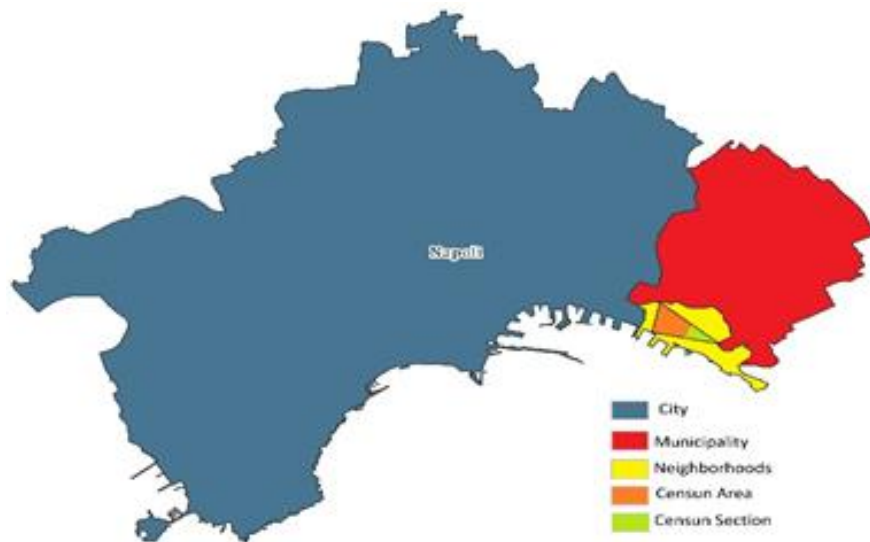

Figure 1. Sub-city ecological unit available.

An essential step in this research approach is the definition of territorial aggregates for analysis. Therefore, what is meant by periphery? When is an area defined as being rural? In this case, to analyse the centre-periphery vote, it is first necessary to operationalize the concepts of the centre and periphery and then identify the territorial units that are aligned with the adopted indicator of peripherality.

In urban areas, the choice of sub-city unit for analysis is related to the electoral and socioeconomic data available. In Naples, socio-economic information is available for four sub-city administrative units: census section, census area, neighbourhood, and municipality (Figure 1).

The first two have purely administrative significance, while the last two, and especially the neighbourhood, also have historical and cultural significance. Moreover, electoral data are available only for the "neighbourhood" and "municipality", so the choice has little room for freedom. Given their relevance to the city's social space, this study focused on the neighbourhoods.

Unlike the survey approach, the ecological approach is much cheaper and, therefore, more accessible because it is based on aggregate data that are public and free. However, the analysis of aggregated data does not allow researchers to check the relationships between individual variables, which sometimes becomes an obstacle for researchers. In other words, relationships that emerge at the ecological level are not necessarily valid at the individual level. Doing this switch from these two levels leads to the so-called ecological fallacy (Robinson, 1950).

However, it should be emphasized that if the information at the individual level is not fundamental to the aim of research, this approach is successful because aggregated data makes it possible to obtain information about the entire available population. Furthermore, ecological analysis could be useful for reading voting behaviour in neighbourhoods or areas in which there is great social segregation, areas in which the so-called concentration effects are most evident (Wilson, 1987).

From a theoretical point of view, the ecological approach assumes that the set of possible antecedents of an action/attitude/belief can be heterogeneous and connected not only to the individual sphere but also to other domains, such as the direct or extended social network in which the individual is embedded, or the material and immaterial characteristics of the environment in which they live.

Within the voting sphere, it is possible to identify at least four forms of influence: 1) personal observation: individuals are influenced by the act of voting through events and conditions related to their environment, such as the

way they assess the state of the local economy (Pattie & Johnston, 2000); and 2) informal interactions that influence voting behaviour, for example, how local minorities are persuaded to align with local majority choices (Cox, 1968); 3) direct interaction with candidates or their representatives; and (4) mass media, which are locally focused and provide politically relevant insights about events in voters' neighbourhoods.

To interpret the ecological analysis results, these four forms of influence can be used, but only in a hypothetical manner. Thus, it is necessary to control for their effects on individuals through *ad hoc* surveys. Therefore, this approach can also be used as the first step in research, in which several forms of investigation are implemented to first identify possible patterns and then control them.

2.2. The Neighbourhoods and Social Disadvantage

In line with other research on the Neapolitan vote, in this analysis, to reconstruct the geography of inequality in the city of Naples, the social advantage/disadvantage index was considered to detect the level of peripherality of the neighbourhoods analysed. This index, which is linked to the tradition of studies on poverty in the city of Naples (Morlicchio & Pratschke, 2004) is the result of the 'factorial synthesis' (Oecd, 2008) of the following indicators: Employment Rate; Percentage of residents with higher education (Graduates and Diplomates); Percentage of residents in owned housing; Percentage of students out of the total resident population. Each neighbourhood will have a score on this index, which will then be analysed together with the electoral indicators with a correlation coefficient.

It is important to discuss two aspects of the index used. The first relates to its label, whereas the second relates to the data source. With reference to the label, the term social disadvantage was chosen because it is in line with studies on poor areas. Social disadvantage describes both the socioeconomic characteristics of an area and the effect of these characteristics on the life paths of its inhabitants. In fact, disadvantaged contexts can influence the life opportunities of people living there (Coulton, 1998). Moreover, this concept was used because it has no binding spatial connotations and is more inclusive for analysis. The centre/periphery dichotomy in urban areas does not necessarily match the dichotomy of economic advantages/disadvantages. It is possible to find wealthy areas in the periphery, as in the case of Bologna, and deprived areas in the centre, as in the case of Rome or Naples. For this reason, Martinelli (2008)

discussed the concept of social peripheries. In this study, the concept of social advantage/disadvantage is adopted both for the theoretical reasons seen above and for the fact that it also helps us to identify possible "wealthy periphery."

Concerning the data sources, the election results were taken from a database made available by the City of Naples, whereas socioeconomic data were obtained from the 2011 census source. The Census source was chosen because it was the most up-to-date source for the neighbourhoods of Naples when the analysis has been conducted (early 2023). The census source has also been used in a study on the "safety and state of degradation of cities and their suburbs" (Istat, 2017) because, unlike other large cities, the Naples statistics office does not collect socioeconomic information on its own. The use of data from 2011 does not invalidate the quality of the results, because the territorial distribution of disadvantage (or advantage) tends not to vary over time (Pratschke, 2007). This is corroborated by the fact that over the decades until the 2011, the social distance between advantaged and disadvantaged areas has not changed. The social geography of the neighbourhoods in the city of Naples, built using the advantage/disadvantage index, is shown in Figure 2.
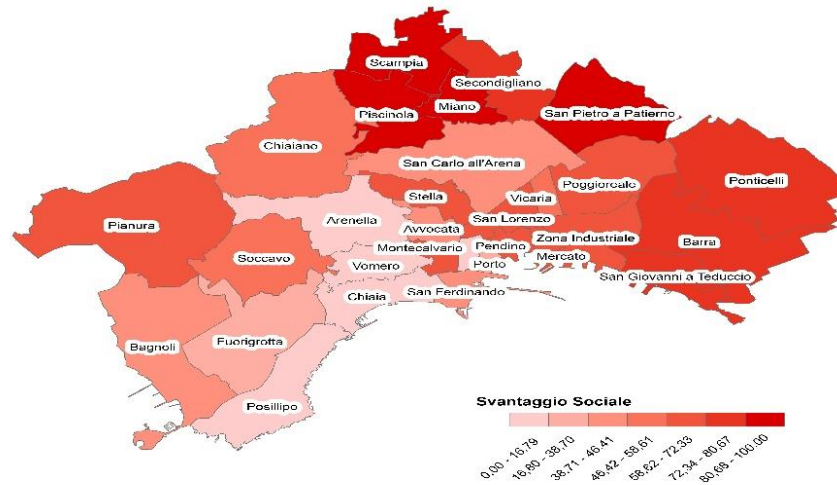

Figure 2. Neighbourhoods of Naples for social disadvantage index.

The neighbourhood's disadvantage level is indicated by the color intensity. For ease of comprehension, the values assumed by the index were rescaled to a range of 0 to 100, where 100 represents the highest level of disadvantage. The map shows that the peripheral neighbourhoods (i.e., San Giovanni, Barra,

Ponticelli, Scampia, Secondigliano, Miano, Piscinola, and San Pietro a Patierno) are characterized by high values of social disadvantage. These neighbourhoods have very different histories; on the one hand, there is a northern area characterized by high rates of employment in agriculture; on the other hand, there is an eastern area of the city, which until the 1980s was one of the most important industrial poles in southern Italy. On the other hand, the neighbourhoods on the hill (i.e., Vomero, Arenella, Avvocata, Chiaia, and Posillipo) show high levels of social advantage; and it is possible to find professionals and the entrepreneurial bourgeoisie. The neighbourhoods in the western part of the city, near the Phlegrean area (i.e., Fuorigrotta, Bagnoli) present average levels of social advantage and are (and have been) place of residence for the white-collar middle class and for parts of the "working-class aristocracy." The neighbourhoods of the city centre show internal heterogeneity, as this area presents, in a few square kilometres, neighbourhoods with different levels of disadvantage. This heterogeneity is consistent with a consolidated representation of the "Naples's belly" (Tench, 1989), marked by the interpenetration of different social strata. Compared to the centre-periphery frame, the geography of disadvantage shows that peripheral neighbourhoods, except for Bagnoli, tend to show high levels of social disadvantage. The centre is heterogeneous, as is the coastal area.

3. MAYORAL ELECTION 2021 IN NAPLES: AN OVERVIEW

The 2021 elections in Naples were characterized by the win of candidate Manfredi, with 62.88% of the vote. Manfredi was the mayoral candidate for the centre-left list aligned with the Five Stars Movement. Manfredi beats Maresca (21.88%), who was the candidate for the centre-right, Clemente (5.58%), who was the candidate nominated by the outgoing "Orange City Council" (Cilento, 2015) and, among the others, the independent Bassolino (8.2%) who won the elections for mayor of Naples in 1993 and 1997.

Moreover, since 1993, according to Law No. 81 of March 25, the mayoral elections became direct and were no longer mediated by the city council. Therefore, the 2021 elections represent the seventh election in which the mayor is elected directly. Since 1993, Naples has held a city council in the left-wing area. From 1993 to 2011, the mayors were Bassolino and Iervolino, supported by the main centre-left parties. From 2011 to 2021, De Magistris was mayor at the head of the city council of the alternative left so-called 'orange'. In 2021, with the election of Manfredi, the centre-left won the city with excellent results.

This goal was achieved through an alliance with the Five Star Movement, which recorded positive electoral results in Naples.

In mayoral elections, it is possible to distinguish between two types of vote: a direct vote for the mayor and a direct vote for the lists supporting the mayor. These lists form a coalition. Concerning the vote's choice, this first part of the analysis identifies the territorial distribution of the votes obtained to the coalitions in support of mayoral candidates. Subsequently, an in-depth analysis of the top lists highlights the differences within the winning coalition. Moreover, to identify short-term changes in the territorial distribution of the parties, the results of the analysis of the 2021 mayoral election are compared with the current election cycle and municipal elections of previous years.

3.1. Voting for Coalition

The winning mayoral candidate, Manfredi, established its victory in the city in the first round, with 63% valid votes. To date, the second-best result in the mayor's direct election. The territorial distribution of the vote indicates that the votes garnered by the former University Minister (Manfredi) and the coalition supporting him tended to be overrepresented in disadvantaged areas. Considering the overall result, it is unnecessary to point out that he collected a significant percentage of votes from all the neighbourhoods. However, the maps in Figure 3a show interesting differences between these areas.

In particular, in wealthy neighbourhoods such as Posillipo and Chiaia, the candidate reached 50%. In contrast, in some disadvantaged neighbourhoods, such as Scampia or San Giovanni a Teduccio, he has scored 70% of the expressed votes. The differences between advantaged and disadvantaged neighbourhoods are not systematic because the candidate did not collect particularly large percentages in neighbourhoods such as Piscinola and Pianura. In other words, the geography of the vote is not fully aligned with socioeconomic geography, as shown by the correlation coefficient with the disadvantage index, which is positive and equal to 0.47.

Looking only at 'mayoral candidate votes', the preferences directed towards Manfredi come mainly from wealthy neighbourhoods. However, this is a false result because it is also a characteristic found in other mayor candidates since disadvantaged areas have a lower propensity to vote directly for mayor candidates.
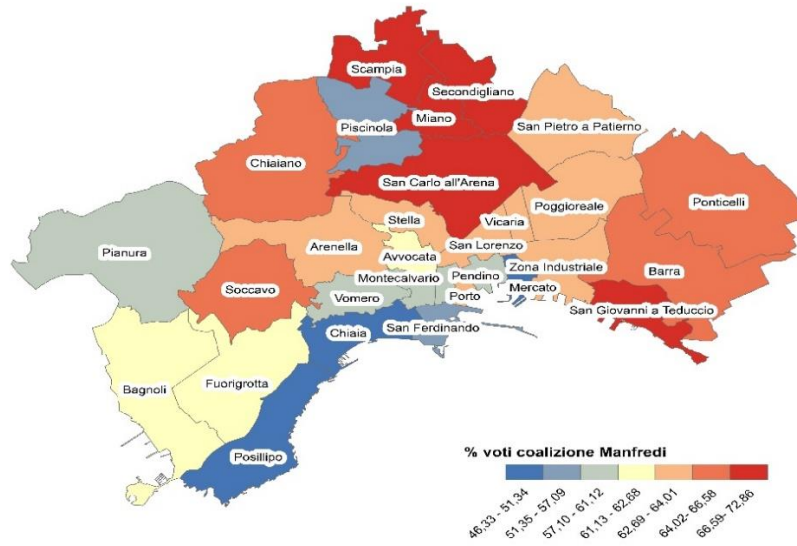
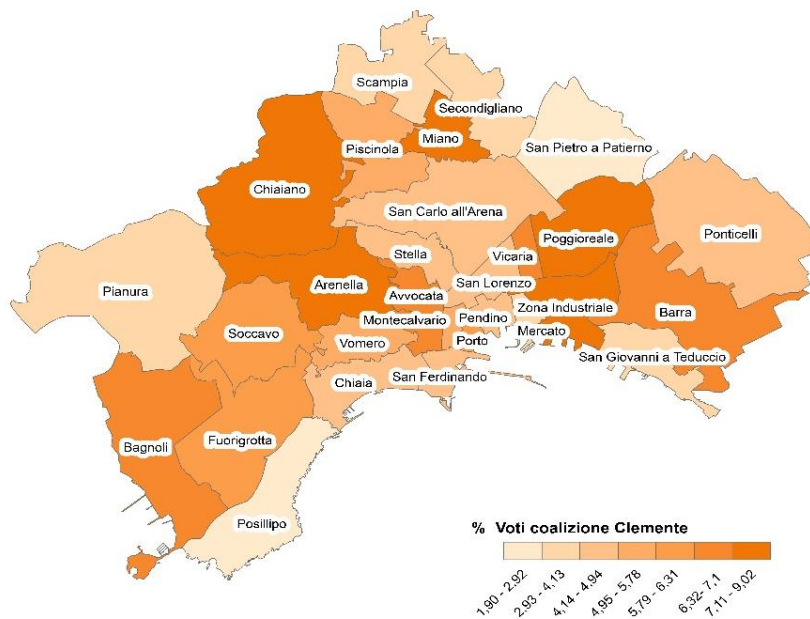Figure 3. (a). Vote to the Manfredi's coalition.

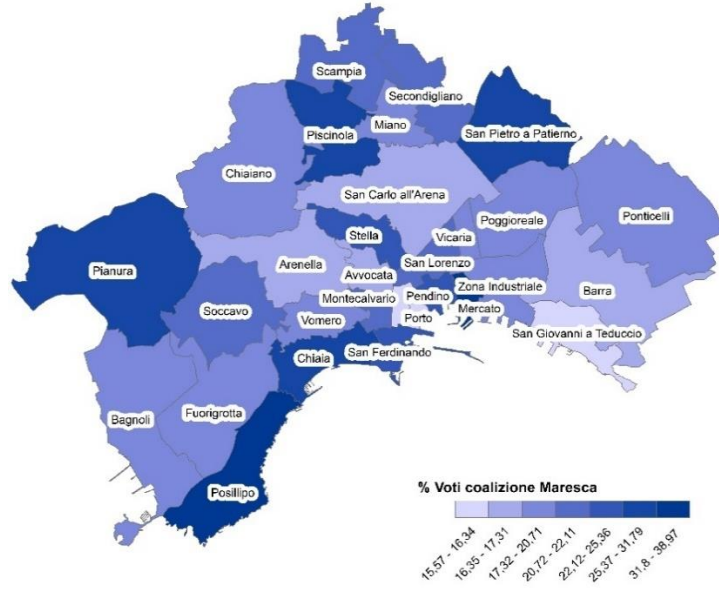Figure 3 (b). Vote to the Clemente's coalition.

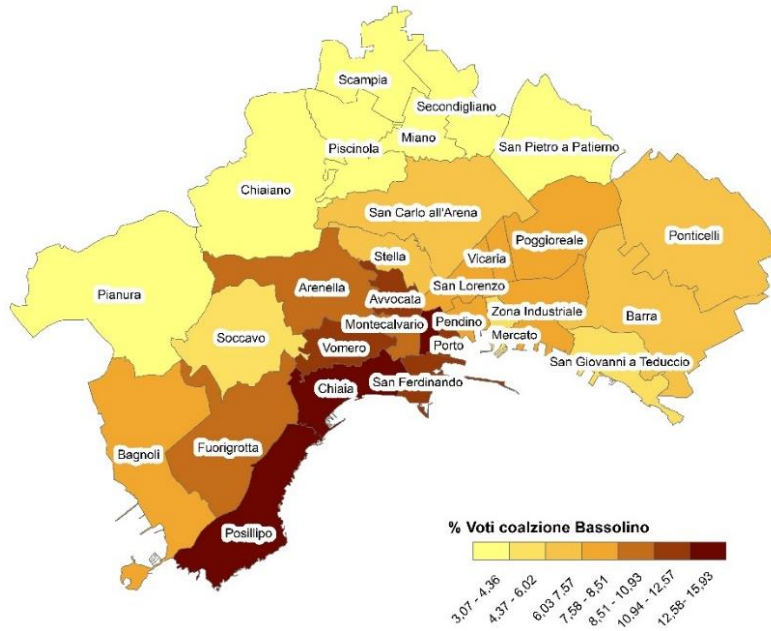Figure 3 (c). Vote to the Maresca's coalition.

Figure 3 (d). Vote to the Bassolino's coalition.

Regarding his competitors, the neighbourhoods in which, as shown in Figure 3b and Figure 3c, Clemente (5.5% of votes) and Maresca (21.9% of votes) gained more preference are not united by similar socioeconomic conditions or by their central or peripheral location within the city. The two extreme sides of the Naples coastline, San Giovanni a Teduccio and Posillipo, for example, expressed the same votes for Clemente, which also occurred for Maresca in Pianura and Chiaia. In general, this heterogeneity of vote is confirmed by the correlation coefficient, which is close to zero for both candidates. Lastly, ex-Mayor Bassolino (Figure 3d) obtained 8.2% of the expressed votes and presented a territorial distribution in contrast to Manfredi thus collecting the majority of its votes in the advantaged neighbourhoods.

3.2. The Vote for the Lists

The main lists that supported the winning mayoral candidate are the Democratic Party (12.2% of the votes), the Five Star Movement (9.73% of the votes), and the Manfredi List (9.92% of the votes). Regarding the Democratic Party (Figure 4b), it is interesting to highlight two things: the first concerns territorial rootedness, and the second concerns differences from previous political elections. First, the Democratic Party in mayor elections does not show an overall over-representation in disadvantaged or advantaged areas (r = 0.12), but it should be emphasized that it collects votes mainly in the eastern area of the city. This characteristic in mayoral elections has been almost constant since its birth in 2008, and is in line with the vote of the preceding left-wing parties. Except for the last decade, the oriental area of Naples, in fact, used to be a sort of "red zone," always expressing important voting percentages for left-wing parties from the 1948 elections. Concerning the general elections of 2018, compared to the municipal elections, the Democratic Party showed a completely different geography of the vote; on that occasion, votes were obtained mainly in wealthy areas (r =-.90). In this mayoral election, the Democratic Party vote distribution was more similar to the previous municipal elections than to the last parliamentary election.

The Five Star Movement's vote distribution is diametrically opposed to the Democratic Party's, which in the 2021 municipal election, as well as in the 2018 political election, shows a clear rootedness in the disadvantaged areas (Municipal 2021, r = 0.83; Political 2018, r = 0.86) of the city (Figure 4c).
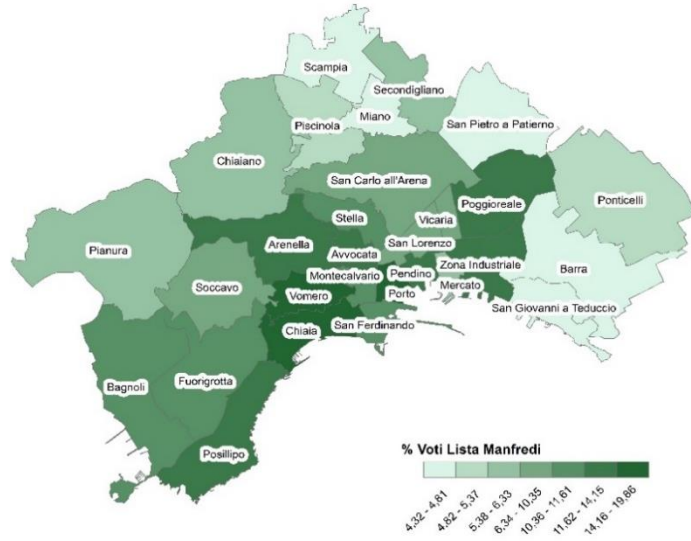
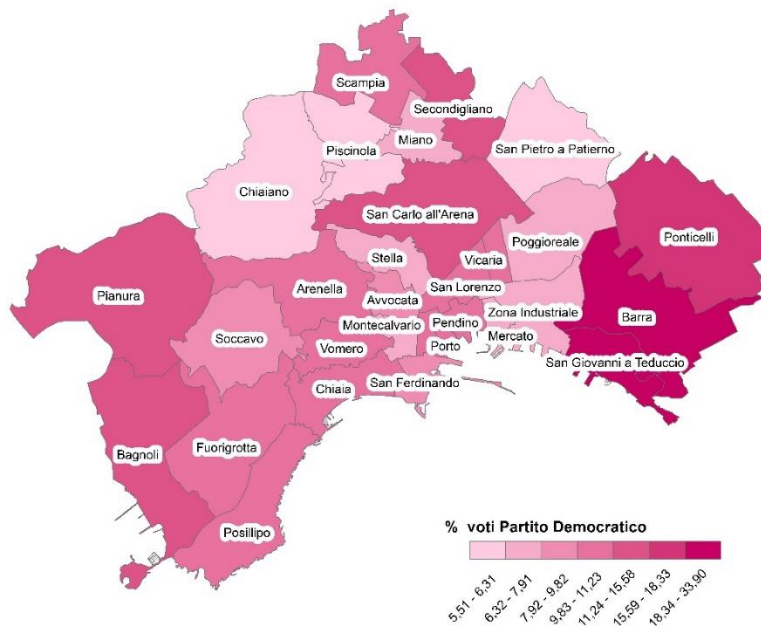Figure 4 (a). Vote for the Manfredi's list.

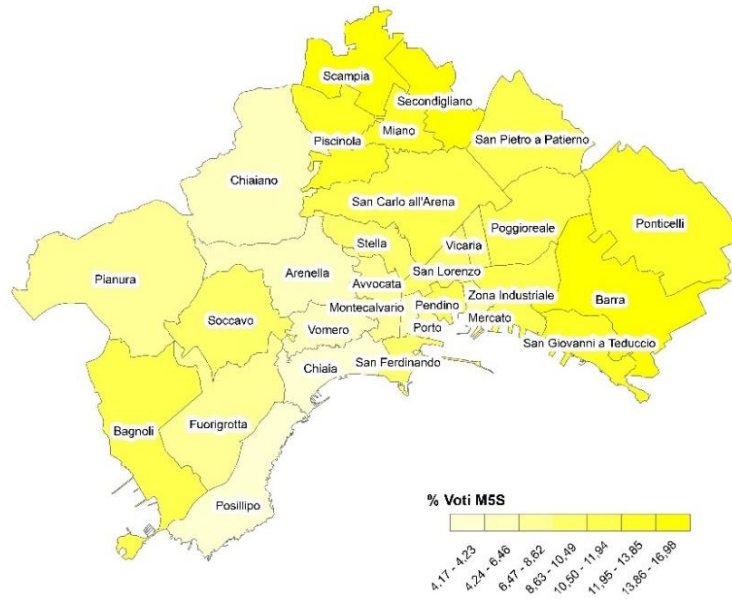Figure 4 (b). Vote for the Democratic Party's list.

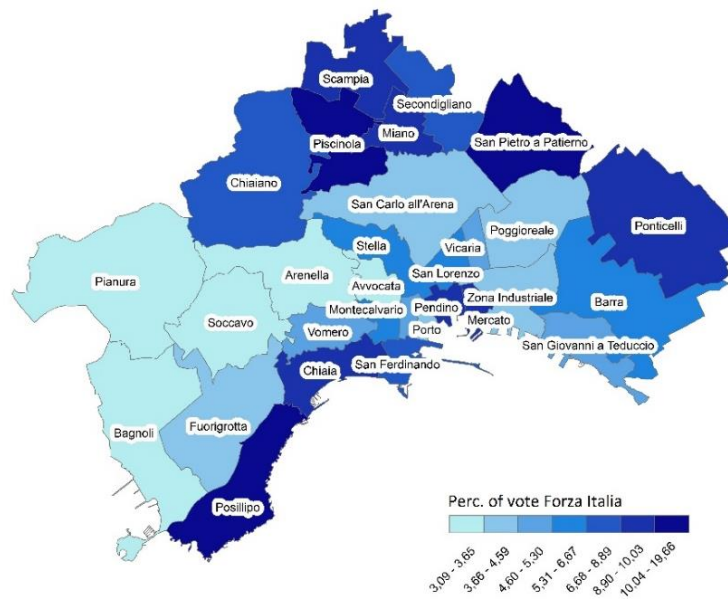Figure 4 (c). Vote for the Five Star Movement's list.

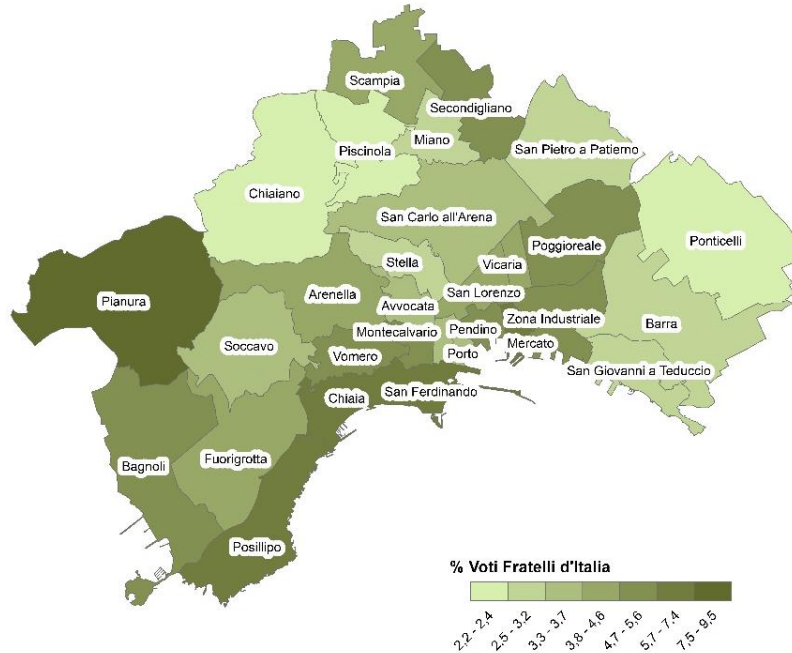Figure 4 (d). Vote for the Let's Go Italy list.

Figure 4 (e). Vote for the Brothers of Italy's list.

However, compared to the last two mayoral elections, the 2021 elections show unprecedented patterns. In fact, in 2016 (r = 0.17), the vote distribution was quite heterogeneous between neighbourhoods, whereas in 2011, when the Five Star Movement collected 2% of the votes, it was completely opposite (r = -0.89) to that of 2021. In 2011, the preferences expressed for the M5S came mainly from the west of the city and wealthy neighbourhoods.

Finally, Manfredi's List (Figure 4a) (r = -0.81) completes, in some ways, the geography of the coalition's vote by covering mainly the areas on the hill and some neighbourhoods in the historic centre.

The other two main lists present in the elections supporting Maresca are Forza Italia (Let's Go, Italy!) (6.63% of votes) and Fratelli d'Italia (Brothers of Italy) (4.41% of votes). These lists in the 2021 elections did not show clear territorial patterns, although they covered different neighbourhoods (Figure 4d and 4e).

"Brothers of Italy" (r=-.38) has a slightly unbalanced vote distribution towards advantaged neighbourhoods, while "Let's Go, Italy!" (r=0.48) for disadvantaged individuals. As shown in Figure 4d, "Let's Go, Italy!" wins in

the northern part of the city, but also gains support in the gulf. Compared to the previous political elections, "Let's Go, Italy!" does not show any differences, as does the "Brothers of Italy", which is over-represented in advantaged neighbourhoods and especially in neighbourhoods with historical right-wing roots. Compared to the 2016 mayoral elections, no particular differences emerged with respect to the analysed frame. A comparison with the 2011 election was impossible because, at that time, the two lists were united in the PDL (Popolo della libertà, People of Freedom).

Thus, as seen from the data analysis of the territorial variable, the analysed lists behave heterogeneously. In the last municipal elections, the socio-economic conditions between the neighbourhoods were useful in explaining the differences in votes between the various lists. Social disadvantage is connected to the vote for the Five Star Party and, to a lesser extent, for "Let's Go, Italy!", whereas social advantage is connected to the vote for Manfredi's list and, to a lesser extent, for "Brothers of Italy". This relationship does not emerge for the Democratic Party, which, however, has roots in the city's eastern suburbs. Compared to the last two municipal elections, the only political force to completely change its voting geography was the Five Stars Movements, while the others, especially the Democratic Party, showed no particular change. However, looking at the last electoral cycle, particularly in the general elections of 2018, differences in the Democratic Party can be observed. In fact, in 2018, a relationship emerged between the Democratic Party and wealthy neighbourhoods, an unprecedented aspect that represented the change that occurred to the left in the last election. Moreover, in 2018, the Five Star Movement, although with completely different vote percentages, confirmed its roots in disadvantaged areas.

3.3. The Analysis of the Vote: Abstentionism

The other aspect of electoral behaviour that will now be analysed is abstentionism. Through a study of abstentionism, it is possible to obtain information on both the political system as a whole and the characteristics of the population.

There are two streams of research on individuals' electoral participation (Corbetta & Tuorto, 2005). The first is based on the theory of economic centrality, and argues that individuals who are included in the social system and thus possess social, economic, and cultural capital are more likely to go to the polls. On the other hand, the second emphasizes cultural transformations

and the spread of post-modernist values and identifies the figure of the abstainer as a central subject who does not go to the polls because he or she is dissatisfied with the political proposals and thus expresses criticism of the system. In the first case, subjects do not go to the polls because they are not mobilized by political forces, whereas in the second case, abstention is a political act.

The results of the analysis regarding the 2021 election round in Naples indicate that socio-economic centrality theory best explains the abstentionism level of Neapolitan neighbourhoods. To understand why the voter turnout and its distribution within neighbourhoods were analysed. It should be noted that for the first time in a municipal election, voting turnout was below 50% (47.2%) in 2021. This is the first time that less than half of the voters go to the polls for the election of the mayor/council. However, in 2021, this fact occurred not only in Naples, but also in other large cities, such as Milan (47.7%), Turin (48%), and Rome (48.8%).

The influence of the pandemic on voting turnout cannot be established. However, the 2021 affluence rate is not surprising since voting turnout steadily decreased from the 2001 municipal elections (68.1% affluence) to 2016 (54.1% affluence). Regarding neighbourhood voting turnout, both from the correlation coefficient (-0.77) and the map (Figure 5), it is possible to note that voting turnout geography overlaps with socioeconomic geography. There are mostly disadvantaged neighbourhoods in the suburbs and city centres that record a high rate of abstentionism. The city is practically cut into two: in disadvantaged neighbourhoods such as "Mercato" or "San Giovanni a Teduccio", the percentage of voters is around 40 percent, while in advantaged neighbourhoods such as "Posillipo" and "Vomero", it is around 55 percent. Overall, the difference between high- and low-advantage neighbourhoods was approximately ten percentage points.

Two aspects can be emphasized compared to previous election rounds. First, the difference recorded in 2021 is approximately the same as that recorded in the other rounds of the last electoral cycle (i.e., European, Regional, and Political elections), while it increased compared to the 2011 and 2016 elections, where the distance between neighbourhoods was about five percentage points. This means that voting turnout decreased throughout Naples, but more points were lost in the neighbourhoods of the suburbs. In 2021, compared to 2011, Chiaia lost 15 percentual points of its voters, while San Giovanni and Barra lost 30 percentage points. Overall, the correlation between disadvantage and the percentage of voters lost compared with 2011 was 0.75.
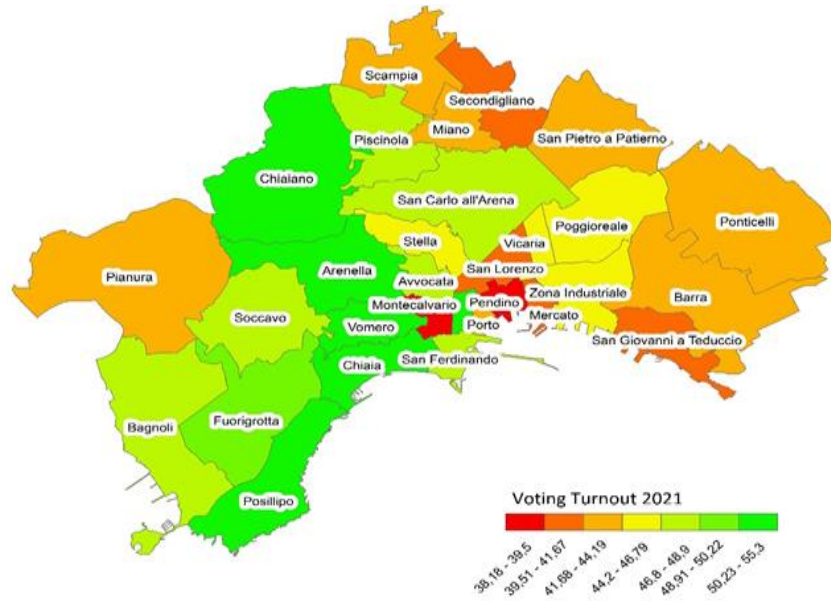
Figure 5. Voting turnout in the 2021 Mayoral Election.

Table 1. Voting turnout for kind of neighbourhood in the recent elections

Election	High Disadvantaged Neighbourhood	High Advantaged Neighbourhood
P-2001	69,27	68,74
E-2004	56,05	60,27
P-2006	70,84	78,69
M-2006	66,02	69,44
P-2008	65,14	73,56
E-2009	52,27	56,18
R-2010	52,73	59,13
M-2011	59,15	64,56
P-2013	54,65	69,61
E-2014	38,85	50,37
R-2015	40,69	42,55
M-2016	52,04	57,5
P-2018	56,23	68,03
E-2019	36,68	49,11
R-2020	43,28	50,74
M-2021	43,63	53,97

P = Parliamentary; E = European; M = Mayor; R = Regional.

**Table 2. Difference in voting turnout between mayoral and other types
of elections by election cycle**

Disadvantaged neighbourhood			
	Cycle 19-22	Cycle 14-18	Cycle 09-13	Differences mean
Regional	0,34	11,3	6,42	6,04
Parliamentary	-1,42	-4,19	4,5	-0,37
European	6,95	13,2	6,88	9,01
Advantaged neighbourhood			
	Cycle 19-22	Cycle 14-18	Cycle 09-13	Differences mean
Regional	3,23	14,95	5,43	7,87
Parliamentary	-6+,42	-12,11	-5,05	-7,86
European	4,86	7,13	8,38	6,79

Second, comparing the turnout in the different elections between wealthy
and disadvantaged neighbourhoods, it is possible to see that in disadvantaged
neighbourhoods, the percentage of voting turnout in Mayoral elections is very
similar to that recorded in Parliamentary elections, and far from that recorded in
European and Municipal elections. In wealthy neighbourhoods, the distance
between Parliamentary and Mayoral elections exists and is equal to the distance
between Regional and European elections (Table 1 and Table 2).

4. ANALYSIS OF VOTE: CONCLUSION

At the beginning of this paper, it was pointed out that the socio-economic
differences between territorial aggregates were extremely useful in interpreting
the differences in electoral behaviour. The frame adopted in this research was
twofold, in addition to the classic 'centre-periphery' frame, it also used the
social advantage - disadvantage frame to be more consistent with the socio-
economic reality of Naples.

The results indicate that socioeconomic conditions play a relevant role in
both vote choice and turnout. With reference to the overall vote collected by the
mayoral candidates, it emerges that both Manfredi and Bassolino are linked to
the socioeconomic geography of the city, with the former being stronger in
disadvantaged areas and the latter in wealthy areas. These findings may have
major implications for future city management. One of the criticisms levelled at
the previous administration was the lack of attention to disadvantaged
neighbourhoods and the suburbs in general. Regardless of the political
judgment, what emerges from the analysis is that the electoral base of the De
Magistris junta was mainly in wealthy neighbourhoods; hence, the possible

explanation for the carelessness of the other neighbourhoods. The percentage of expressed votes from disadvantaged neighbourhoods for Manfredi was high, thus contributing to his victory, which could, perhaps, lead to greater attention than in the past to the important issues affecting these neighbourhoods. For example, the east coast of Naples has always been the object of redevelopment promises that have never been fulfilled.

Within the coalition, the list that most represents these areas is the Five Star Movement, which was considered the champion of disadvantaged neighbourhoods in the last election cycle. The Democratic Party does not have a territorial distribution of votes like the Five Star Movement, but it is rooted in the disadvantaged neighbourhoods of the eastern suburbs. The Manfredi list gained more votes in the central neighbourhoods.

Moreover, the last aspect that emerged from the analysis concerns voting turnout, which can be interpreted through the centrality frame, since the lowest turnout rates are registered in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, and the distance to wealthy neighbourhoods, which has remained more or less stable in the last electoral cycle, has doubled compared to the 2016 and 2011 municipal elections.

This scenario certainly plays a key role: 1) the mobilization capacity of the lists that has declined over the last few years, and 2) the mistrust towards the institutions, which could be a direct consequence of institutional abandonment perceived by the inhabitants of these areas.

Another result on participation levels concerns the similar turnout percentages between mayoral elections and parliamentary elections in deprived neighbourhoods, highlighting that in some areas, the distinction between first- and second-order elections is much more blurred and may even be reversed in the future. These hypotheses should be corroborated in further studies. It would be interesting to interview citizens in different areas to understand their approaches to politics, ideas, and motivations.

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