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Vote metropolitanization after the transnational cleavage and the suburbanization of radical right populism: the cases of London and Rome

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Abstract. Voters' division into opposing territorial blocs seems to be a noticeable feature of current European politics, as traditional-left parties remain entrenched in the 'centers' and parties of the populist Right surge in the 'peripheries'. This electoral dynamic is also affecting metropolitan areas, where inner districts represent the bastions of cosmopolitanism, while the outer ones the realm of ethnonationalism. In this regard, some authors argue that advanced post-industrial democracies are affected by a 'metropolitanization of politics' process. Against this backdrop, the present contribution advances the thesis that the emergence of the 'transnational cleavage' and its strengthening during the 'long crises-decade' (2008-2019) gave a boost to the electoral metropolitanization process. This thesis is tested on two case studies: London and Rome, the capitals of two countries where populist radical right forces proliferated in the 2010s and apparently widened the division between centers and suburbs. First, I investigate whether there has really been a pattern of metropolitanization of the vote in London and Rome. Second, relying on the data collected by the British Election Study (BES) and the Italian National Election Studies (ITANES), I verify whether the presumed electoral polarization corresponds to the concentration of GAL (green/alternative/libertarian) values in inner districts and TAN (tradition/authority/national) values in the suburbs. Findings help to discern not only if the metropolitanization of politics thesis holds in the UK and in Italy, but also if the transnational cleavage has a rooted territorial dimension.

Keywords: Electoral Behavior, Territorial Cleavages, Vote Metropolitanization, Transnational Cleavage, Populism.

1. INTRODUCTION

During the last years, voters' division into opposing territorial blocs has seemed to become an increasingly prominent feature of European (and non-European) politics. Indeed, while traditional-left parties have appeared entrenched in central-urban areas, populist radical right parties and claims have appeared rampant in peripheral-rural places.

2016 sparked public attention towards this phenomenon: both Brexit and Trump's election came largely thanks to the support of rural areas and

less densely populated or peripheral metropolitan spaces. In rural areas of England, the percentage of votes to leave the European Union was 55.3%, compared to the national result of 51.9%, and the 'Leave' vote was stronger the more rural the district (Harris & Charlton, 2016, p. 2122). Beyond the polarization between cities and the countryside (Jennings & Stoker, 2019), many commentators underlined that which existed between London and the rest of the country, as the capital voted 'Remain' at 60%. This has fueled the image of a 'mutiny' against London's urban and cosmopolitan elites (Calhoun, 2016; Mandler, 2016; Toly, 2017) and, according to the sophisticated study by Johnston and colleagues (2018), among the many geographical divisions shown by Brexit, the one between the capital and the rest of the UK would be the only one that remained in the 2017 election. However, when these authors speak of a 'cosmopolitan and globalist center', they are not referring to the whole of Greater London, but to Inner London alone. And indeed, the only 5 London boroughs in favor of 'Leave' were all located in Outer London.

Later in 2016, this territorial polarization of the vote occurred also in Italy, during the constitutional referendum. The 'Yes' strongholds were cities with over 100,000 residents and the central districts of metropolises; the 'No' triumphed in small towns and suburbs (D'Alimonte & Emanuele, 2016). The same phenomenon took place in the 2018 general and 2019 European elections (YouTrend, 2019). The center-left Democratic Party stood at around its national average in communes with up to 100,000 inhabitants, while it gained much more in large cities over 300,000. Here, however, support for the party was weaker in areas farthest from the real metropolitan center. On the other hand, the right alliance, led by the populist party the *Lega*, has failed to break through in the largest urban centers, strengthening its support in the suburbs. In short, recent elections seem to have revealed the presence of two distinct 'worlds' within the largest Italian cities.

This spatial polarization of politics is the general problem I intend to explore here. However, rather than the more typical urban-rural divide, the preceding examples highlight the divisions that exist between voters within large metropolises, between their inner and outer districts. Therefore, the present work focuses on this 'sub-class' of the general phenomenon, namely on vote territorialization and polarization within major cities. The research objective is thus to give a structural explanation to the heterogeneity of electoral behavior within metropolitan areas spotlighted by recent elections.

In this regard, even before the phenomenon became of public attention, some authors argued that advanced

post-industrial democracies are affected by a 'metropolitanization of politics' process (Sellers et al., 2013; Sellers & Kübler, 2009). According to this interpretation, with the metropolitan area becoming the prevalent form of human settlement, divisions between and within metropolises are more relevant than traditional divides between regions or between cities and countryside. And, through these new divisions, the metropolitanization process would reinforce the importance of the territory in structuring national politics.

Against this backdrop, the research question is: are we now facing a strengthening of this vote metropolitanization process? if so, what sociopolitical changes and what determinants are driving this electoral dynamic?

Building on the cleavage theory approach (Lipset & Rokkan, 1967), but going beyond old analytical categories, the paper advances the thesis that the emergence of a new cleavage, namely the 'transnational cleavage' (Hooghe & Marks, 2018), gave a boost to the electoral metropolitanization process. Indeed, this process seems to have strengthened after the multiple European crises – the Great Recession and the euro and migrant crises – during what I call here the 'long crises-decade' (2008–2019). This is exactly when the transnational cleavage has begun to mold more evidently the European political competition. Furthermore, the empirical results of the authors supporting the metropolitanization thesis showed that inner metropolitan districts represent the bastions of cosmopolitanism, while the outer ones the realm of ethnonationalism (Sellers et al., 2013; Sellers & Kübler, 2009). And these are basically the same orientations characterizing the opposite poles of the transnational cleavage. In fact, at the extremes of this cleavage are the TAN (tradition/authority/national) pole and the GAL (green/alternative/libertarian) pole. On the supply side of politics, the TAN pole is occupied by the populist radical Right and the GAL pole by the Left and the Greens. On the demand side, the TAN pole is represented by voters 'who feel they have suffered transnationalism – the down and out, the culturally insecure, the unskilled, the deskilled' (Hooghe & Marks, 2018, p. 115), whereas the GAL pole by highly educated and cosmopolitan voters who have benefited from transnationalism. But if it is true that, even before the structuring of the transnational cleavage, cosmopolitan orientations were concentrated in the central metropolitan districts and ethnonationalist ones in the suburbs, then it is reasonable to hypothesize that this new cleavage has exacerbated the vote metropolitanization process.

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. The next section concerns the theoretical framework. I will emphasize two remarkable gaps in the literature

dealing with the geography of electoral behavior: the tendency to look only at individual-level explanations, overlooking the importance of places, and the still predominant focus on traditional concepts, such as the urban-rural dichotomy, which does not account for the important inner-urban divide that we know less about. Addressing these gaps offers the opportunity to illustrate the ‘metropolitanization of politics’ theory in detail and to clarify why I deem it important to explore the territorial-metropolitan dimension of new cleavages. Then, I will test the thesis of this article on two case studies: London and Rome. After describing the research design (section 3), introducing the hypotheses, the empirical analysis follows two steps. Firstly, I investigate whether there has effectively been a strengthening of vote metropolitanization during the 2010s (section 4). Secondly, relying on the British Election Study (BES) and the Italian National Election Studies (ITANES) surveys, I verify whether the presumed electoral polarization corresponded to the prevalence of GAL values in inner districts and TAN values in the suburbs (section 5). In the conclusion, I summarize the findings, detecting not only if the metropolitanization of politics thesis holds in the UK and in Italy, but also if the transnational cleavage has a rooted metropolitan dimension.

2. LOOKING AT PLACES, BEYOND CLASSIC CONCEPTS: THE METROPOLITAN VOTE AND THE TRANSNATIONAL CLEAVAGE

Most of the electoral studies that have investigated the polarized geography of voting behavior, and especially the distribution of electoral support for populist right-wing parties, has focused on individual-level determinants. Little attention has been given to territory on an aggregate level. In particular, ‘frequently age, education and income are lumped together to form the “holy trinity” of the populist voter’ (Dijkstra et al., 2020, p. 7). Therefore, although it is clear from maps that populist consensus is concentrated in certain types of places, it is mostly believed that at the root there are interpersonal, not territorial, differences and inequalities (as already stressed by Gordon, 2018; Rodríguez-Pose, 2018, pp. 200-201).

Nonetheless, in the last years there has been some renewed attention to the spatial polarization of politics and to the local context in analyses of voters’ behaviors (Fitzgerald, 2018; Hartevelde et al., 2021; Patana, 2020). For instance, Fitzgerald (2018) has unraveled the significant impact of local ties on radical right support, showing that people who are more strongly attached to their

localities (at the individual level) and the most cohesive communities (at the community level) are more likely to vote for radical right parties. Then there is the captivating explanation put forward by Rodríguez-Pose (2018), according to which the recent populist surge can be interpreted as a ‘revenge of places (not people) that don’t matter’, i.e., those places left behind by the increasing concentration of wealth and opportunities in the central districts of major urban agglomerations. The present contribution aims to continue in the wake of these studies that reaffirm the importance of not forgetting the role of places in determining politics.

Drawing on the seminal work by Lipset and Rokkan (1967) we could otherwise interpret electoral results like those provided in the introduction as a ‘revitalization’ of classic territorial cleavages, such as the center-periphery or the urban-rural cleavage. For instance, Emanuele (2018b) explained the results of the 2017 French presidential elections as a ‘reactivation’ of the ‘apparently dormant’ urban-rural cleavage. But while the use of traditional analytical categories, such as the ‘region’ or the ‘city-countryside dichotomy’, may still be useful in some cases and in some respects (Hartevelde et al., 2021), these do not adequately capture the pronounced electoral heterogeneity and polarization within metropolitan areas. Thus, I believe there is a need to shift attention from the classic urban-rural divide to the less investigated inner-urban one.

Similar statements have already been advanced by different disciplines. Since the 1990s, economic geography, urban sociology and political ecology have suggested focusing less on traditional categories and more on the new types of space that characterize our contemporary post-industrial societies. For instance, French sociologists have examined the ‘peri-urban’: an intra-metropolitan hybrid space that is neither center nor suburb nor countryside, and whose inhabitants are likely to vote for the populist Right (Damon et al., 2016). Sassen’s (1991) pioneering analysis of the ‘global city’ has instead focused on the sociopolitical and economic consequences of the expansion and the leading role of metropolises in a global world.

However, Sassen does not pay much attention to the fact that transformations of global cities and within them may lead not only to new political practices, but also to changes in the main democratic activity: voting. On the other hand, Sellers, Kübler, Walks and other scholars explored how the metropolitanization processes of advanced post-industrial democracies influence both turnout levels and voters’ preferences (Kübler et al., 2013; Sellers et al., 2013; Sellers & Kübler, 2009; Walks, 2005, 2013). Their empirical results revealed that the

willingness to vote depends on the size of the community and that there is a new electoral geography molding a different voting behavior between different metropolitan places. In particular, political orientations proved to be different especially between low-density suburbs and inner-city concentrations (Sellers et al., 2013). Thus, they came to the thesis that metropolitanization processes are causing a reterritorialization of politics.

To sum up their findings, in countries where a great share of voters lives in metropolitan areas, party competition seems to coincide with conflicts between metropolitan places. Furthermore, the specific characteristics of different types of districts¹ appear to foster distinct economic and especially cultural interests, which then affect voters' choices. Therefore, urban concentrations represent the bastions of cosmopolitanism, whereas low-density and disadvantaged suburbs are the strongholds of ethnonationalism. Consequently, each of the main party families has collected votes in different metropolitan spaces.

So, the polarization of cultural and political orientations between metropolitan places would lead parties to catch different segments of the metropolitan population. Right-wing parties have started to be predominant in low-density suburbs, former territories of the Left, due to the concentration of conservative-ethnonationalist orientations in these places. Conversely, the Left and the Greens have conquered the libertarian-cosmopolitan centers.

The main conclusion put forward by Sellers and colleagues (2013) is that due to lower turnout rates in urban concentrations than in right-wing leaning suburbs, the metropolitanization of politics has been beneficial for the conservative vote. Thus, with data relating to the 2000s, these authors stated that the patterns of vote metropolitanization contributed to pushing the Left towards neoliberal stances (so as to maintain the centers without losing the low-density suburbs), and consequently to the general shift of politics towards conservatism.

But how has this framework transformed over the 2010s, after the multiple – financial, economic, and migrant – European crises, and the transformations of cleavage politics? Indeed, many authors, although using different expressions², agree that European party systems have become increasingly structured around a value-

based cleavage (Kriesi, 2010) connected to the opening of national borders. The conception of the 'transnational cleavage', i.e., the divide between TAN and GAL values, opposing losers and winners of transnationalism, summarizes this extensive literature (Hooghe & Marks, 2018, p. 109). But a quite neglected 'dimension' of this cleavage is exactly the spatial one. Indeed, several analyses have already been carried out on how this cleavage shapes political competition at national and individual levels, but the same cannot be said for the subnational-territorial dimensions³. Therefore, only a few scholars (Kübler et al., 2013; Strebel & Kübler, 2021; Strebel, 2021) seem to have realized that there may be important connections between new globalization-related cleavages and territorial developments of politics. Among these, two recent studies have linked debates on international integration with debates on the organization of metropolitan areas, showing some implications of the transnational cleavage for citizens' perceptions within metropolises and, in particular, that the GAL-TAN divide can explain why citizens support (or not) reforms that lead to a strengthening of metropolitan governance (Strebel, 2021) or of local autonomy and inter-local cooperation (Strebel & Kübler, 2021).

Reflecting instead on the consequences of the transnational cleavage for metropolitan electoral geography and connecting with the findings of works on the metropolitanization thesis, it is straightforward to assume that the two groups mobilized by the transnational cleavage live in different places: the 'losers' of transnationalism (TAN voters) in peripheral districts and the 'winners' (GAL voters) in the central ones. This assumption entails that the new cleavage should have led to a strengthening of the vote metropolitanization process. And since winners and losers of transnationalism are defined more in a cultural than in a socio-economic sense, to confirm this interpretation we should find, in different metropolitan places, concentrations of opposite cultural orientations. Therefore, we should look for prevalence of TAN values in the suburbs and GAL values in the centers.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND HYPOTHESES

3.1 Case Selection

The paper's thesis is tested on the metropolitan cities of London and Rome. I consider the two city-regions as

¹ These are not only 'compositional' – such as the socioeconomic composition and the level of ethnic diversity of urban and suburban districts – but also 'contextual' – above all population density and homeownership – characteristics (Sellers et al., 2013; Sellers & Kübler, 2009)

² 'Integration-demarcation' cleavage (Hutter & Kriesi, 2019; Kriesi et al., 2006), 'transnational' cleavage (Hooghe & Marks, 2018), cleavage between 'libertarian-universalistic' and 'traditionalist-communitarian' values (Bornschiefer, 2010), 'cosmopolitan-communitarian' cleavage (Strijbis et al., 2020), cleavage between 'cosmopolitan liberalism' and 'populism' (Inglehart & Norris, 2016).

³ This has already been stressed by Kübler, Scheuss and Rochat (2013, p. 211), who, dealing with the Swiss case, noted that 'much has been written about the ways in which the rise of the new cleavage between globalization losers and globalization winners has affected Swiss politics. Interestingly, however, little has been said regarding the spatial patterns of this new cleavage.'

‘most different cases’. The differences in terms of European macro-region (London in Northwestern Europe and Rome in Southern Europe) and political-institutional system (London as the capital of a majoritarian democracy with a historical two-party system and Rome as the capital of a consensus democracy with a long history of multipartyism) certainly have an impact on the electoral behavior of the two countries, and therefore of the two cities. But what counts more for the paper’s argument, that is, for vote metropolitanization and for the metropolitan dimension of the transnational cleavage, is the different extent to which the two cities can be deemed ‘global’. London is a classic example of a ‘global city’ (Sassen, 1991), where transnationalism-related issues, behaviors and events have been fundamental for decades. For instance, the debate on the UK’s belonging to the European Union has often coincided with the debate on the remoteness of London’s globalist, cosmopolitan and multiculturalist elites from the rest of the country (Calhoun, 2016; Mandler, 2016; Toly, 2017). Rome, on the other hand, does not have an equivalent global dimension⁴. Therefore, we could expect transnationalism to have had a weaker impact on the Roman metropolitan vote and orientations. For all these reasons, we would not envisage the same kind of development in the two cases. Yet, in both the UK and in Italy populist radical right forces have been protagonists of an overwhelming rise during the 2010s and seem to have gained high levels of support in areas populated by ‘losers’ of transnationalism. Therefore, despite all the differences just discussed, the metropolitanization patterns may have been similar in the two cases.

As just mentioned, the British and Italian party systems are quite dissimilar. The British party system has historically been characterized by great stability and by bipolarism, which translates into the alternation of the Conservative Party (Con) and the Labour Party (Lab) between government and opposition. In the last couple of decades, alongside these two main actors, there have been the Liberal Democrats (LibDem), the Green Party (Greens), and the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP). To capture parties’ position on the GAL-TAN continuum, I use the ‘1999-2019 Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) trend file’ (Bakker et al., 2020). CHES has periodically positioned political parties on the GAL-TAN scale, where 0 corresponds to the GAL pole and 10 to the TAN pole.

Not surprisingly, the Greens have been the closest party to the GAL pole of the transnational cleavage for

⁴ For instance, the comparison between the percentages of foreign residents in the two cities according to the 2011 census data is telling: almost 37% in London; less than 10% in Rome.

Table 1. Position of UK political parties on the GAL/TAN continuum (0=GAL; 10=TAN).

	Green	LibDem	Lab	Con	UKIP
2002	N/A	2.5	4.83	8.17	N/A
2006	2.25	2.56	4.67	6	8.13
2010	1.43	2.73	4.06	6.27	7.62
2014	1	2.43	3.43	6.14	9.29
2019	0.82	1.53	2.29	6.18	8.20
Mean	1.38	2.35	3.86	6.55	8.31

the last two decades, followed by LibDem and Labour. Conservatives and especially the UKIP are instead located towards the TAN pole, and the latter is the ‘most TAN’ party (Tab. 1).

After the multipartyism of the ‘First Republic’, the Italian party system of the 2000s was also characterized by bipolarism. The two main political forces were the Center-Left, driven by the Democratic Party (PD) or its predecessors⁵, with small formations placed on its Left⁶, and the Center-Right, led by Silvio Berlusconi’s Forward Italy/The People of Freedom (FI/PDL)⁷. However, this picture was upset in the post-Recession period, firstly by the rise of the Five Star Movement (M5S) and then, more recently, by the strengthening of populist radical right parties – the transformed *Lega* and Brothers of Italy (FdI) – which changed the internal equilibrium of the right-wing field. Finally, in 2018, from an evolution of the Radical Party (which never participated in elections with its own lists), the ‘+Europa’ (+EU) party was born.

Being Europeanism its flag, +EU has been the ‘most GAL’ party since it was founded. This is followed by the Left formations, which have always been very skewed towards the GAL pole, and by the Center-Left/PD. Other research has shown that it is not really possible to place the M5S on the left-right continuum, nor on one or the

⁵ When I speak of ‘Center-Left’ before the birth of the PD (2007), I mean: the two lists ‘*Democratici di Sinistra*’ and ‘*La Margherita*’ at the 2001 general election; ‘*Uniti nell’Ulivo*’ at the 2004 European election; ‘*L’Ulivo*’ at the 2006 general election.

⁶ By ‘Left’ I mean: ‘*Rifondazione Comunista*’ (PRC) at the 2001 general, 2004 European and 2006 general elections; ‘*La Sinistra l’Arcobaleno*’ at the 2008 general election; ‘*Sinistra Ecologia Libertà*’ (SEL) and PRC at the 2009 European election; SEL at the 2013 general election; ‘*L’Altra Europa con Tsipras*’ at the 2014 European election; ‘*Liberi e Uguali*’ at the 2018 general and 2019 European elections.

⁷ ‘*Forza Italia*’ and ‘*Alleanza Nazionale*’ united to form the PDL in view of the 2008 general election. In 2013, from the dissolution of the PDL, Berlusconi’s FI was reborn.

Table 2. Position of Italian political parties on the GAL/TAN continuum (0=GAL; 10=TAN).

	+Eu	Left	Center-Left/PD	M5S	Center-Right/FI/PDL	LN/Lega	FdI
2002		2.62	3.32		7.51	8.23	
2006		0.75	4.01		7.94	8.75	
2010		0.75	3.11		8.44	8.44	
2014		0.29	2.43	2.57	7.29	9.14	9.29
2019	0.41	0.69	2.26	3.74	6.84	9.21	9.42
Mean	0.41	1.02	3.03	3.16	7.60	8.75	9.36

other side of new political cleavages, due to the highly elusive ideological profile of this party (Mosca & Tronconi, 2019). And in fact, the M5S is the most equidistant party from the two poles, even if inclined towards the GAL one. The Center-Right has constantly been oriented towards the TAN pole, but to a lesser extent than the League and FdI, the two populist radical right parties (Tab. 2).

3.2 Data, Approach and Hypotheses

The first part of the empirical research deals with general and European elections that have taken place in London and Rome from the beginning of the 21st century to the end of the ‘long crises-decade’ (2008-19)⁸. The Great Recession of 2008 is adopted as a watershed to distinguish between pre-and post-European crises elections.

To verify whether there has been a trend towards metropolitanization of electoral behavior in the two capitals, it is first necessary to have electoral results aggregated at the level of metropolitan districts. These can be extrapolated from the Electoral Commission Office (for London) and from the Ministry of the Interior and the *Roma Capitale* website.

As for London, the territorial units of analysis are the 33 boroughs into which Greater London is divided. These are in turn grouped into Inner London boroughs, which I consider to be the core of the metropolitan area, and Outer London boroughs, which I consider to be the suburbs.

Of course, the consideration of Inner London and Outer London as inner-urban and suburban areas respectively serves analytical purposes and is approximate. Nonetheless, previous research has already convincingly

employed this division (Walks, 2005; see also Walks, 2013, p. 130; Johnston *et al.*, 2018, pp. 8–9). Furthermore, although some Outer London boroughs are ‘very urban’ (e.g., Newham), the division between Inner and Outer London is meaningful according to many criteria, beyond the obvious geographical one. Table 3 shows, for instance, the boroughs’ data related to population density, the temporal distance from the central railway station and the housing market. The means and a measure of variance (the Coefficient of Variation) within the Inner and Outer London groups are also reported (Tab. 3).

As regards Rome, the territory of the Metropolitan City is divided administratively into 121 communes (*comuni*), one of which is the huge *Roma Capitale*, the commune of Rome. This is in turn divided into 15 municipalities (*municipi*) and 155 urban zones (*zone urbanistiche*), subdivisions of the *municipi*. Therefore, I adopt the 15 municipalities⁹ and the 120 other Roman communes as units of analysis. I consider as the ‘heart’ of the Metropolitan City those municipalities that fall entirely or mainly within the ‘*Grande Raccordo Anulare*’ (GRA), the highway that surrounds the most inner urban area of Rome. The rest of the Metropolitan City, i.e., those *municipi* of *Roma Capitale* that are entirely or mainly outside of the GRA and the 120 other Roman communes, are instead considered as the ‘periphery’. Indeed, previous works have shown that the GRA constitutes a watershed between ‘two Romes’, not only in urban planning and demographic, but also in social, economic and cultural terms (Lelo *et al.*, 2019; Tomassi, 2018) (Tab. 4).

I will gauge two different aspects of the metropolitan vote: the level of metropolitan ‘*territorialization*’ of parties’ support (H1 and H2), and the level of ‘*polarization*’ between metropolitan centers and suburbs (H3 and H4). Thus, two different tools are adopted. First, I calculate the Coefficient of Variation (CV) of the voting shares obtained by each party in the territorial units. The CV is an index of variance, i.e., an index based on the dispersion of parties’ values – in our case at the level of metropolitan districts – around the mean. Variance measures have been extensively used by studies on territorial differences of electoral behavior, and in particular by the literature on the nationalization of politics (Caramani, 2004). Unlike a less solid index such as the standard deviation, the CV enables comparison between parties with different electoral strengths¹⁰.

⁸ A distinction between different types of elections (first or second-order ones), which certainly influence the vote, is not necessary for this research design. Indeed, the comparison here is about changes in the metropolitan distribution of the vote, rather than changes in parties’ strength.

⁹ To the best of my knowledge, electoral results at the urban zones level are not available for all elections and for all parties examined here. Therefore, I use municipalities as territorial units within *Roma Capitale*.

¹⁰ The literature on vote nationalization has also highlighted the limits of the CV (Bochsler, 2010, pp. 156–159; Emanuele, 2018a, pp. 24–28), which, however, do not affect this research design.

Table 3. Population density, travel time to get to the central railway station and average house prices per London Boroughs (in ascending order).

Population Density (persons per hectare)*			Travel time to get to Central Station by public transport**			Average house prices***		
Borough	<i>Inn/Out</i>	Per/hec	Borough	<i>Inn/Out</i>	Min	Borough	<i>Inn/Out</i>	£
Bromley	Out	20.6	Westminster	<i>Inn</i>	11	Barking and Dagenham	Out	269,318
Havering	Out	21.1	City of London	<i>Inn</i>	14	Bexley	Out	320,635
Hillingdon	Out	23.7	Southwark	<i>Inn</i>	19	Havering	Out	339,384
City of London	<i>Inn</i>	25.5	Kensington and Chelsea	<i>Inn</i>	24	Newham	Out	351,367
Richmond upon Thames	Out	32.6	Camden	<i>Inn</i>	25	Croydon	Out	358,488
Bexley	Out	38.3	Harrow	Out	25	Sutton	Out	369,743
Enfield	Out	38.7	Croydon	Out	32	Greenwich	<i>Inn</i>	380,772
Barnet	Out	41.1	Greenwich	<i>Inn</i>	32	Enfield	Out	384,296
Croydon	Out	42.0	Lewisham	<i>Inn</i>	33	Redbridge	Out	388,322
Kingston upon Thames	Out	43.0	Bromley	Out	34	Hounslow	Out	388,954
Sutton	Out	43.4	Hammersmith and Fulham	<i>Inn</i>	35	Hillingdon	Out	401,761
Hounslow	Out	45.4	Haringey	Out	35	Lewisham	<i>Inn</i>	404,973
Harrow	Out	47.4	Lambeth	<i>Inn</i>	35	Waltham Forest	Out	405,638
Redbridge	Out	49.5	Tower Hamlets	<i>Inn</i>	35	Bromley	Out	432,272
Barking and Dagenham	Out	51.5	Hackney	<i>Inn</i>	36	Tower Hamlets	<i>Inn</i>	439,720
Merton	Out	53.1	Islington	<i>Inn</i>	36	Harrow	Out	449,361
Greenwich	<i>Inn</i>	53.8	Barnet	Out	38	Ealing	Out	477,207
Ealing	Out	61.0	Wandsworth	<i>Inn</i>	38	Brent	Out	493,629
Waltham Forest	Out	66.5	Bexley	Out	40	Kingston upon Thames	Out	495,559
Brent	Out	72.0	Waltham Forest	Out	40	Hackney	<i>Inn</i>	500,430
Lewisham	<i>Inn</i>	78.5	Brent	Out	41	Southwark	<i>Inn</i>	503,827
Newham	Out	85.0	Ealing	Out	41	Lambeth	<i>Inn</i>	509,850
Haringey	Out	86.2	Kingston upon Thames	Out	41	Merton	Out	513,336
Wandsworth	<i>Inn</i>	89.6	Merton	Out	44	Haringey	Out	530,877
Southwark	<i>Inn</i>	99.9	Sutton	Out	45	Barnet	Out	539,830
Camden	<i>Inn</i>	101.1	Newham	Out	46	Wandsworth	<i>Inn</i>	609,995
Westminster	<i>Inn</i>	102.2	Richmond upon Thames	Out	46	Islington	<i>Inn</i>	632,660
Hammersmith and Fulham	<i>Inn</i>	111.2	Enfield	Out	48	Richmond upon Thames	Out	654,185
Lambeth	<i>Inn</i>	113.0	Hounslow	Out	52	Camden	<i>Inn</i>	770,905
Tower Hamlets	<i>Inn</i>	128.5	Redbridge	Out	53	Hammersmith and Fulham	<i>Inn</i>	778,275
Hackney	<i>Inn</i>	129.2	Barking and Dagenham	Out	67	City of London	<i>Inn</i>	907,964
Kensington and Chelsea	<i>Inn</i>	130.8	Havering	Out	67	Westminster	<i>Inn</i>	1,017,286
Islington	<i>Inn</i>	138.7	Hillingdon	Out	81	Kensington and Chelsea	<i>Inn</i>	1,246,351
Outer London Mean	48.1	Outer London Mean	46	Outer London Mean	428,208			
CV	0.39	CV	0.29	CV	0.21			
Inner London Mean	100.2	Inner London Mean	29	Inner London Mean	669,462			
CV	0.32	CV	0.32	CV	0.39			

Sources: *2011 ONS Census Data. **The amount of time was estimated using Google Maps, setting the fastest means of public transport to travel from the borough centroid to Charing Cross station between 8 and 20 on a weekday. ***2016 UK House price index.

Table 4. Population density, travel time to get to the central railway station and house prices: within and outside the GRA.

	Average population density (per/hect)*	Average travel time to get to Central Station by public transport (min) **	Average house prices (€/m ²) ***
Urban zones <i>outside the GRA</i> and other Roman communes	7.2	72	1,526
Urban zones <i>within the GRA</i>	75.4	35	3,295

Sources: *2011 Istat Census Data. **The amount of time was estimated using Google Maps, setting the fastest means of public transport to travel from the zone/commune centroid to *Roma Termini* between 8 and 20 on a weekday. ****Osservatorio Mercato Immobiliare dell'Agenzia delle Entrate* (2016).

Through the CV we can detect the level of metropolitan territorialization of electoral behavior, understood as homogeneity/heterogeneity of the vote between metropolitan districts. At the party system level, the expectation is that the mean of parties' coefficients has increased over the long crises-decade compared to the last elections held before the Great Recession. This would mean that the level of electoral territorialization within metropolitan areas has grown with the structuring of the transnational cleavage. At the parties' level, I expect the CV to be higher and growing for parties located near the poles of the transnational cleavage. This would mean that parties that most politicize the new cleavage are having a more dispersed consensus across metropolitan districts.

H1: the electoral territorialization of party systems within metropolises – measured by the mean of the CVs of parties' support – has increased during the long crises-decade.

H2: the electoral territorialization within metropolises – measured by the CV of party's support – has been higher and growing during the long crises-decade for parties located at the poles of the transnational cleavage.

The CV, however, says nothing about how much support for a party is rooted in the heart of the metropolitan city rather than in the suburbs. In other words, it fails to grasp the polarization of party consensus between metropolitan centers and suburbs. To measure this aspect, we can calculate the ratio of a party's share of the vote in the central metropolitan districts to its share of the vote in the suburbs. This approach has already been adopted in a study on Great Britain's city-suburban electoral polarization (Walks, 2005). Following this contribution, we can define this ratio as the 'city-suburban balance index'. Quite simply, an index value of 1 indicates that the party is equally strong in central and peripheral metropolitan districts; an index value greater than 1 indicates that that party is stronger in the central districts; an index value smaller than 1 that the party is stronger in peripheral

ones. By examining how this index has varied over time, we can detect whether party support has become more 'centralized' or more 'suburbanized'. And to evaluate the level of metropolitan polarization of the entire party system we can look at the range of variation between the party with the highest index and the one with the lowest index. The expectation is that the range has widened throughout the long crises-decade. At the parties' level, I expect the index value to be higher than 1 and growing for parties located near the GAL pole and to be lower than 1 and decreasing for those located near the TAN pole. This would mean that GAL parties are polarizing their consensus in the metropolitan centers and TAN parties in the suburbs.

H3: the metropolitan polarization of the vote at party systems' level – measured by the range of the 'city-suburban balance index' – has increased during the long crises-decade.

H4: GAL parties have a 'city-suburban balance index' value higher than 1 and increasing over the period; TAN parties have an index value lower than 1 and decreasing over the period.

In the second part of the empirical research, I move on to examine metropolitan voters' orientations. I will verify whether, at the time of the elections where the highest level of metropolitan polarization was recorded, there was also a concentration of opposing orientations in different metropolitan areas, i.e., GAL values in inner districts and TAN values in the suburbs. I rely on the data collected by the BES and the ITANES. These surveys are suitable for this research because the BES reports the respondent's borough of residence, while the ITANES specifies the size of the respondent's commune, making it possible to distinguish between residents of the commune of Rome and of the other communes of the Metropolitan City¹¹. As I show in the next section, the highest

¹¹ The respondent's *municipio* is not specified, so it is not possible to distinguish between residents inside and outside of the GRA. Therefore, in the surveys' analysis, the urban/suburban distinction is made more roughly between *Roma Capitale* and the other Roman communes.

level of metropolitan polarization in London was reached at the 2015 general election. Therefore, I selected the 7th Wave of the BES, which was conducted after the 2015 election and a few months before Brexit. In Rome, on the other hand, the highest level of polarization was reached at the 2018 general election. Therefore, I used the 2018 ITANES questionnaire. Unfortunately, while the sample of respondents in London is quite large (N=3579), that of respondents in Rome is much smaller (N=426). This implies that the results of some statistical operations are not significant in the case of Rome.

In examining the orientations of central and peripheral metropolitan voters, I focus on the two issues that have become more salient after the emergence of the transnational cleavage: immigration and European Union (Hooghe & Marks, 2018, p. 123). The expectation is that

H5: at the time of the elections characterized by the highest level of metropolitan polarization, voters of the metropolitan centers were clearly more in favor of immigration and the European Union than voters of the suburbs.

To test this hypothesis, I selected five questions from both the BES and the ITANES questionnaires. Three concern voters' position on immigration, two on the EU. The questions relating to immigration are the same in both questionnaires and are listed below, preceded by the name I assigned to each variable:

- (1) 'Immigration Level': some people think that the UK/Italy should allow many more immigrants to come to the UK/Italy to live and others think that the UK/Italy should allow many fewer immigrants. Where would you place yourself on this scale?
- (2) 'Immigration and Economy': do you think immigration is good or bad for Britain's/Italy's economy?
- (3) 'Immigration and Culture': do you think that immigration undermines or enriches Britain's/Italy's cultural life?

Differentiating between these different sub-issues is useful because, as briefly illustrated, new cleavages are mostly based on cultural elements, and the populist radical Right, by virtue of its nativism (Mudde, 2007), is particularly focused on presenting immigrants as a threat to national culture, even more than to economy. Thus, since I expect populist radical right parties to have a suburbanized support, I also expect the difference between centers and suburbs to be more pronounced for the 'Immigration and Culture' variable.

The variables relating to the EU are instead slightly different in the two case studies, since the BES and the

ITANES questionnaires do not provide equivalent questions on this issue. For London, the selected questions concern the need to integrate or not with the European Union ('EU Integration' variable) and the sense of belonging to Europe ('Europeanness' variable). For Rome, the first question concerns again the 'EU integration' and the second one the euro ('EU currency' variable).

I recoded the scale of each question, so that low values correspond to TAN (anti-immigration and anti-EU) orientations and high values to GAL (pro-immigration and pro-EU) orientations. I also normalized the variables, so that they range from 0 (=most highly TAN position) to 1 (=most highly GAL position). Based on these variables, I will test hypothesis 5 through descriptive statistics and logistic regression models.

4. EVIDENCE OF VOTE METROPOLITANIZATION IN THE 'LONG CRISES-DECADE'

In this first part of the empirical research, the same analysis is conducted for both case studies in turn. First, I examine the metropolitan territorialization of the vote, testing hypothesis 1 (electoral territorialization at the party system level) and hypothesis 2 (electoral territorialization of each party individually). Second, I consider the polarization of the vote, between the metropolitan center and periphery, to test hypotheses 3 (the party system level) and 4 (the party level).

4.1 London

The average level of electoral territorialization between London boroughs during the three pre-crisis elections was 0.39¹².

Compared to this level, the mean of the Coefficients of Variation of the five parties has started to increase from 2009 on and has continued to increase until the 2015 and 2017 general elections, when it reached its peak (0.61) (H1), due to the great inhomogeneity of the vote for the LibDem (1.17) and the UKIP (0.84). The mean of the Coefficients fell, returning almost to pre-Recession levels, at the 2019 European election, and then rose again at the 2019 general election (fig. 1). To summarize, during the post-Recession period, the average level of electoral territorialization between London boroughs has

¹² The UKIP and the Greens did not run in all the districts during some general elections. Therefore, I calculated the CVs and the city-suburban balance indexes based only on the territorial units where the parties effectively participated in the elections.

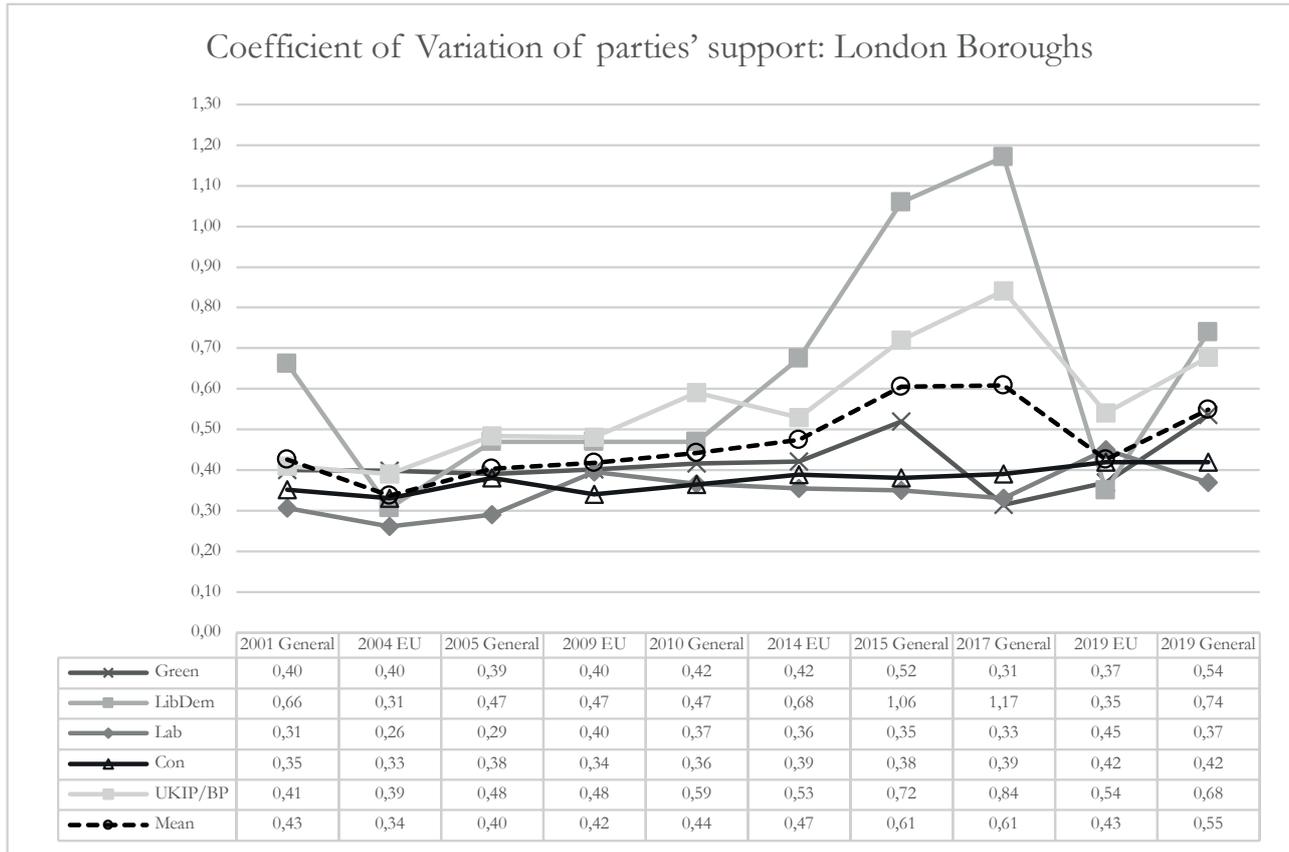


Figure 1. Coefficient of Variation of parties' support: Greater London.

been significantly higher (0.50) (fig. 5). However, a truly evident tendency towards metropolitan territorialization of the vote took place only from 2010 to 2017.

As regards the distribution of the vote for each party (H2), the first relevant observation is that the two main parties, Labour and Conservatives, those formed along the lines of traditional cleavages and which politicize less the transnational cleavage, are also those that have kept a more homogeneous consensus between London boroughs. Among the parties located at the extremes of the transnational cleavage, the Greens also have had a fairly homogeneous electoral strength, except in some elections of the post-Recession period, such as the 2015 and 2019 general elections. Conversely, the LibDem and the UKIP have had a higher level of territorialization during almost all elections and have undergone major changes. Above all, both have registered a remarkable increase in their level of vote territorialization in the mid of the long crises-decade, reaching a peak in 2017. Their average CV during the long crises-decade has been considerably higher than their average CV of the last pre-crisis elections (0.71 versus 0.48 for the LibDem;

0.63 versus 0.43 for UKIP). Again, however, the fluctuating results of the last three elections make it difficult to detect a clear trend towards metropolitan heterogenization of the vote for these parties throughout the whole long crises-decade.

Moving to the analysis of polarization between the metropolitan center (Inner London) and the suburbs (Outer London), the range of variation of the city-suburban balance index has also climbed in the middle of the long crises-decade (H3) (fig. 2). In the post-Recession period, the average range has been 1.07, compared to the average range of 0.94 of the last pre-crisis elections. However, the difference between the two periods turned out to be not really statistically significant (fig. 5).

As can be seen from figure 2, the trend of the range is strongly determined by the score of the Greens, which have always had the most centralized vote, touching their maximum in 2015 (1.93) and their minimum in 2017 (1.40). This underscores the 'vulnerability' of the range of the city-suburban balance index, which can be driven by the results of minor parties, such as the Greens. Nonetheless, switching to the last point (H4),

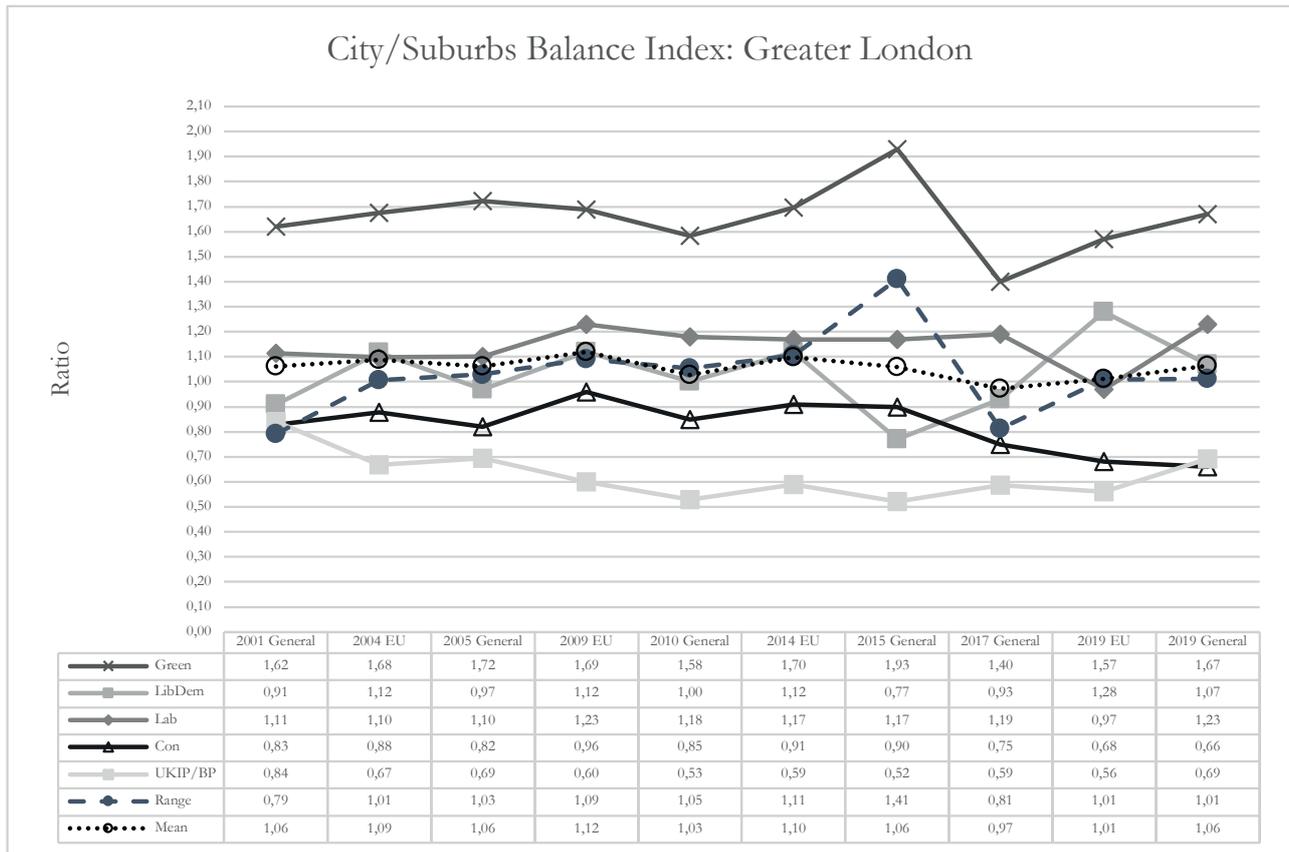


Figure 2. City-suburban balance index of parties' support: Greater London.

the values of the Greens are the first important 'half confirmation' of hypothesis 4, as the 'most GAL' party has always had a very high index. The other two parties located near the GAL pole - LibDem and Labour - have maintained a quite high city-suburban balance index throughout the time frame. LibDem, Labour and especially the Greens are, therefore, the parties with the most 'centralized' metropolitan consensus. However, the Labour's index has remained steadily above 1 (except at the 2019 European election) while the LibDem's index has been oscillating, and on more than one occasion it went below 1. The Conservatives' index has always remained below 1, and the consensus for the Tories has been very 'suburbanized' in the elections from 2017 onwards. Finally, the UKIP's index has always been very low, especially during the long crises-decade. From the 2010 general election to the 2019 European one, this party has been almost doubly strong in Outer London than in Inner London. Ultimately, GAL parties have always had a higher and usually greater than 1, but not clearly growing, city-suburban balance index; TAN parties have always had a lower and less than 1 index, with the index

of the 'most TAN' party - UKIP - significantly lower after the Great Recession¹³.

Before moving on to Rome, it is also interesting to look at the trend of the mean of the city-suburban balance indexes (fig. 2). This reveals whether the party system as a whole has become more centralized or more suburbanized. Not much has changed between the pre-crisis and the post-crisis periods in this respect: the average value of the indexes has always been around 1-1.1¹⁴.

4.2 Rome

The average level of vote territorialization in Rome during the elections of the early 2000s was 0.39¹⁵.

¹³ The t-test on the difference between the average UKIP index of the post-crisis and pre-crisis periods confirmed that the UKIP index has been significantly lower in the post-crisis elections (p-value = 0.04).

¹⁴ And indeed, the t-test on the difference between the average value of the indexes in the two periods rejected the alternative hypothesis that the difference is statistically significantly different from zero.

¹⁵ At the 2008 general election, the *Lega Nord* ran with its own lists only in the Center-North (not in Rome).

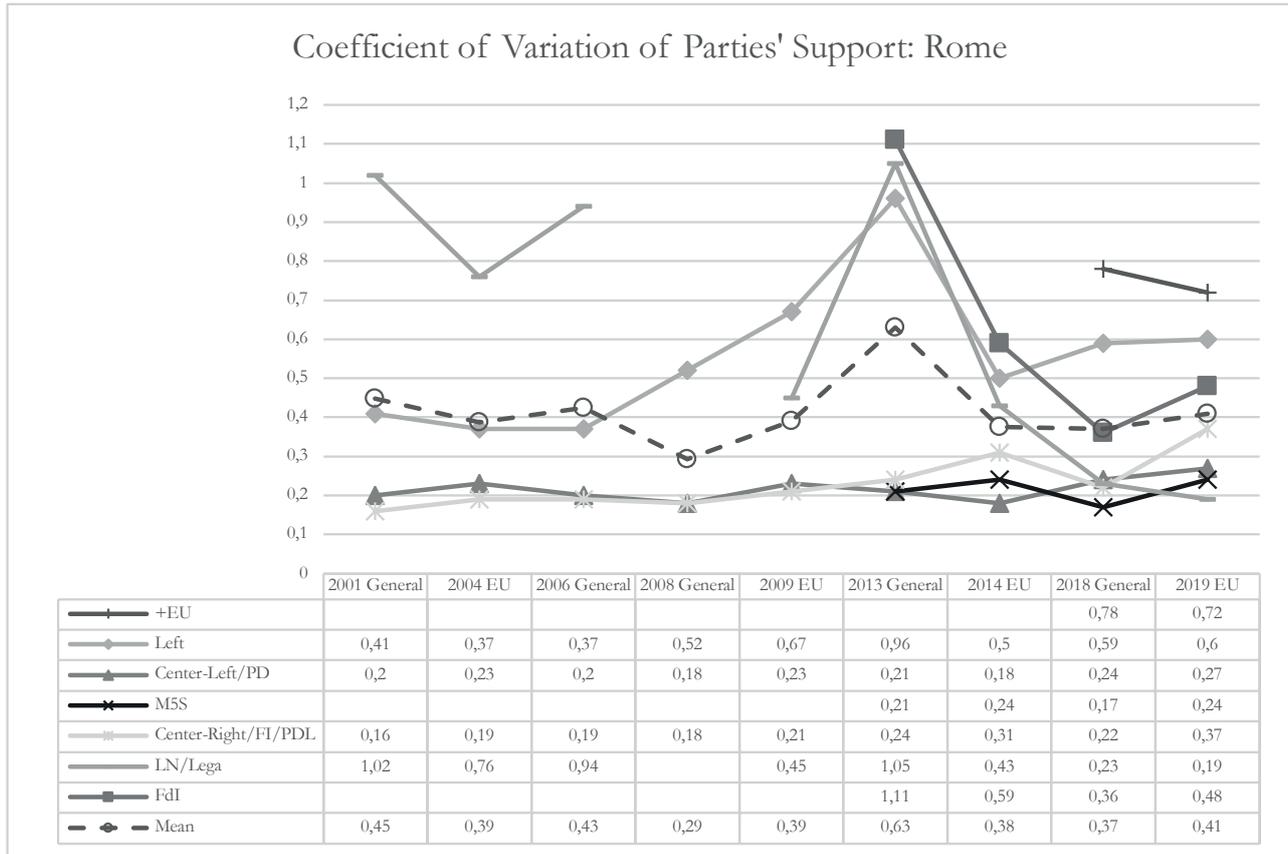


Figure 3. Coefficient of Variation of parties’ support: Metropolitan City of Rome.

Since then, electoral territorialization within the Metropolitan City of Rome has increased (H1), but, as in the London case, there has not been a clear trend. Indeed, just when the Italian party system underwent major changes and the transnational cleavage began to structure Italian politics in a more evident way (from 2013 onwards), the mean of the Coefficients of Variation remained rather stable (around 0.4) (fig. 3). Thus, even though during the long crises-decade the average level of territorialization has been higher (0.44) (fig. 5)¹⁶, what we detect is a ‘shock’ represented by the 2013 election, followed by a return to the normal: not an upward trend in the mean of the CVs during the long crises-decade. The one-off shock of the 2013 election reflects the fact that this vote represented an ‘electoral earthquake’ for the Italian party system in many respects (Chiaromonte & De Sio, 2013). However, what contributed most to increasing the CVs average in 2013 was the first electoral participation of FdI, the radical right-wing party born from a split of the PDL.

¹⁶ However, not statistically significantly higher.

The 2013 FdI’s CV was the highest ever recorded in the observation period (1.11).

As for H2, the same observation made for London applies to Rome: the traditional parties of the Center-Left and the Center-Right have kept a more homogeneous territorial consensus throughout the time span. The support for the M5S has also been very homogeneous since it participated for the first time in the elections. Instead, parties at the extremes of the transnational cleavage have had a higher level of territorialization in almost all elections. Nevertheless, in the last two elections, the League obtained incredibly homogeneous support across Roman territorial units, mirroring its advancement in many territories from which it had been absent so far. The trend of the Coefficients of the Left and FdI has been really fluctuating, especially during more recent years. However, from 2018 onwards, the parties with the most territorialized vote are the ‘most GAL’ ones: *Liberi e Uguali* (Left) and +EU.

Switching to the analysis of vote polarization between the center and the suburbs of the Metropolitan City, the range of the city-suburban balance index (H3)

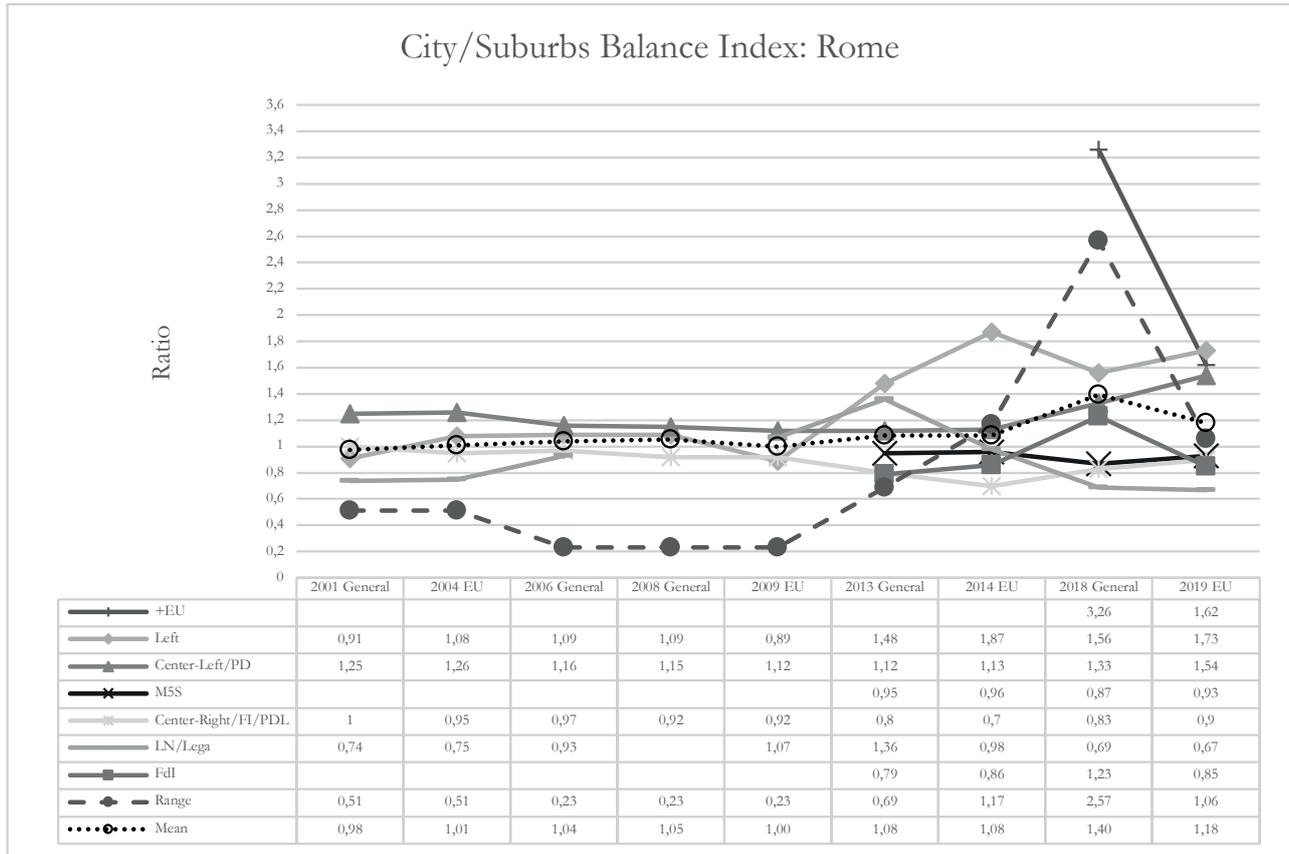


Figure 4. City-suburban balance index of parties' support: Metropolitan City of Rome.

has continuously grown during the long crises-decade and decreased only between 2018 and 2019 (strongly influenced by +EU) (fig. 4). In each election after 2009, the range was higher than the average range of the pre-crisis period (0.37), and in the post-Recession period the average range has tripled (1.14)¹⁷. In short, the level of metropolitan polarization of the vote has effectively surged during the 2010s, and the statistical test confirmed that the difference between pre- and post-crisis elections in this respect is significant (fig. 5).

Parties located near the GAL pole have almost always kept a greater than 1 city-suburban balance index, revealing themselves to be the parties of the center (H4). At its first appearance, +*Europa* has gained extremely 'centralized' support, having an index above 3. It is the presence of this party that has made the range of the city-suburban balance index rocket. The M5S has always recorded a close to 1 index. This supports H4 in a certain sense: a party that is not leaning towards any

pole of the transnational cleavage has an equally distributed consensus between the metropolitan center and suburbs. The Center-Right's index has almost always been less than 1 and it has been lower in the post-crisis period. The same goes for the FdI's index, except at the 2018 general election. The Northern League's index was below 1 at the beginning of the century, when it was still a regionalist party; it went above 1 in the first elections after the financial crisis and it remained greater than 1 until 2014; finally, in the last two elections, which marked the definite transformation of the League into a nationalist and populist radical right party, as well as its electoral success, the League's index has dropped remarkably. So much so that now the League is the party with the lowest index (0.69 in 2018 and 0.67 in 2019). In other words, the rise of the League in 2018 and 2019 went hand in hand with its 'suburbanization'.

Looking at the trend of the mean of the city-suburban balance indexes we notice that, as in the London case, there have not been major (nor statistically significant) changes between the pre- and the post-crisis periods. The mean of the indexes has been close to one in all

¹⁷ Although this result is extremely driven by the score of +*Europa*, which is after all a minor party.

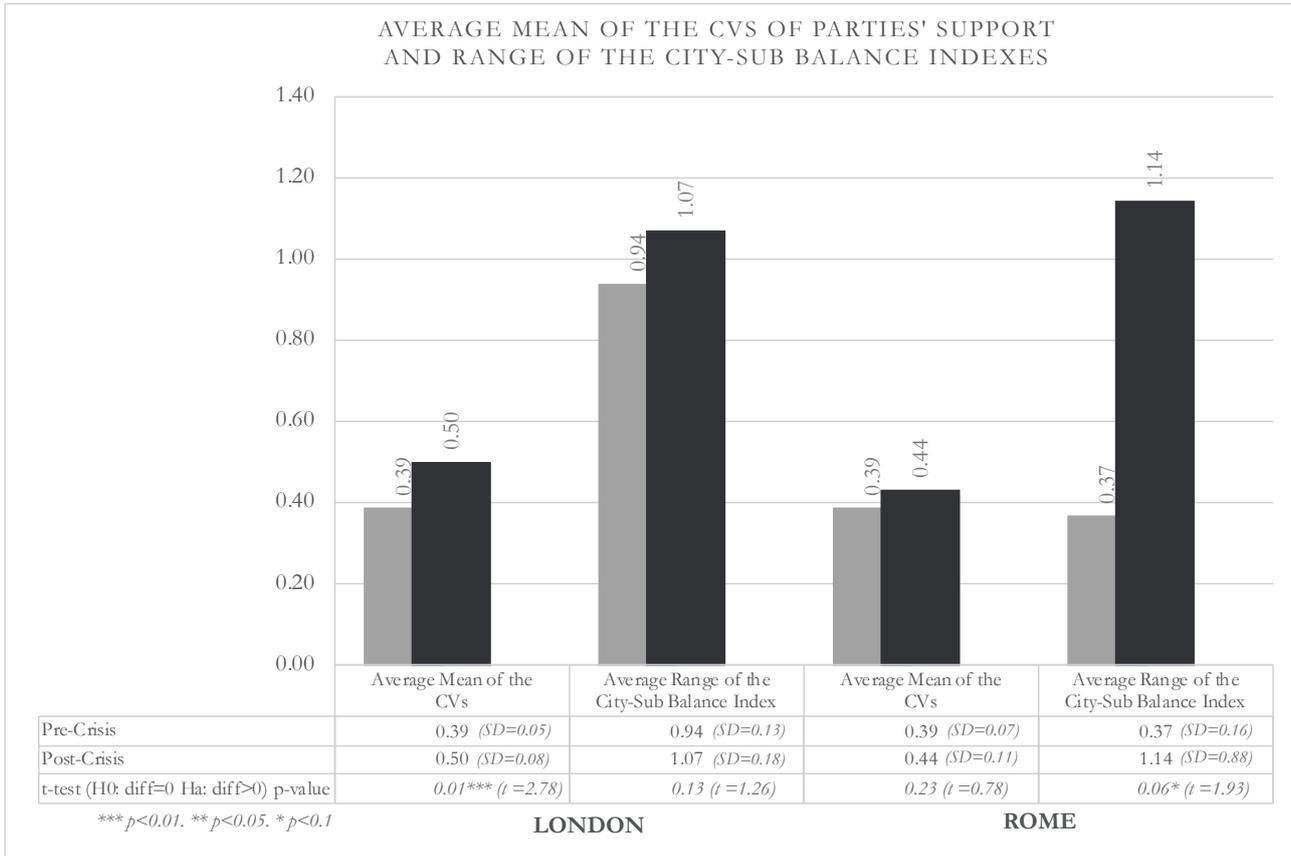


Figure 5. Territorialization and polarization of the metropolitan vote: pre- and post-crisis periods.

elections except the two most recent ones, when the party system was overall more centralized but, again, due to the +EU’s high score (fig. 4).

5. THE METROPOLITAN DIMENSION OF THE TRANSNATIONAL CLEAVAGE: EXPLORING VOTERS’ VALUES

The electoral analysis showed that, although there has not been a constant trend towards a strengthening of vote metropolitanization, the level of metropolitan territorialization and polarization has increased during the long crises-decade in London and Rome. Furthermore, GAL parties have been those with the most ‘centralized’ support and TAN parties those with the most ‘suburbanized’ one. In this section, I proceed to examine metropolitan voters’ orientations, that is, the demand side of metropolitan politics, testing Hypothesis 5: voters of the centers are clearly more in favor of immigration and the EU than voters of the suburbs.

5.1 London

I start with a simple comparison of the means of Inner and Outer London respondents on the five selected variables. The means’ comparison provides a first confirmation of H5: central Londoners are on average more favorable to both immigration and EU than suburban Londoners. The difference between the average position of the center and the suburbs is remarkable and statistically significant for all the variables, but the largest one is that of the ‘Immigration Level’ variable (33.33%) (tab. 5). It is noteworthy that, in the pre-crisis period, according to the 2005 BES survey, the percentage difference between Inner and Outer London on an equivalent question to that relating to the level of immigration was only 8.51%. The 2005 BES Survey comprised also questions on ‘immigration and economy’ and ‘European integration’. In these cases as well the percentage difference between the average stances of the city and the suburbs was relevantly weaker than the post-crisis one (e.g., 7.69% versus 32.35% for ‘European Integration’). All this seems to confirm that during the long crises-decade the

Table 5. Orientations of voters from London suburbs and center: means of the 7th Wave of the BES (2016).

Issue	Suburbs		Center		Center-Suburbs	t-test (H0: diff=0)	
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.		t	Ha: diff>0 p-value
Immigration Level	0.33	0.29	0.44	0.3	33.33 %	10.63	0.00***
Immigration and Economy	0.51	0.32	0.62	0.3	21.57 %	10.17	0.00***
Immigration and Culture	0.46	0.34	0.58	0.33	26.09 %	9.94	0.00***
EU Integration	0.34	0.31	0.45	0.31	32.35 %	9.74	0.00***
Europeanness	0.46	0.32	0.54	0.32	17.39 %	6.95	0.00***
TOTAL	2.1		2.63		25.24 %		

*** p<0.01. ** p<0.05. * p<0.1

metropolitan dimension of the transnational cleavage has become more pronounced.

Returning to Table 5, as expected, the center and the suburbs are more divided on the cultural aspect of immigration than on the economic one. Finally, a total indicator given by the sum of all the variables is also reported. The percentage difference between the center and the suburbs on the total indicator is 25.24%. It should also be noted that, while Outer London is clearly against immigrants and the EU – since on all the variables except ‘Immigration and Economy’ its average is less than 0.5 – Inner London has a mostly halfway stance, since on only two issues its value is closer to 0.6 than to 0.5.

To validate these observations, I resort to the Spearman correlation coefficient. This is a non-parametric statistical measure of correlation, whose values can range from -1 (no correlation between variables) to +1 (perfect correlation). I created a dummy variable, labelled ‘Suburbs/City’, which takes a value of 0 if the respondent resides in Outer London, and a value of 1 if the respondent resides in Inner London. Then, I correlated this variable to each of the five variables of immigration and EU (Tab. 6).

A positive Spearman coefficient signals a positive correlation between being a resident of the center and having a more GAL stance. Therefore, the examination of the Spearman correlation coefficient supports what has already been argued by comparing the means: the coefficient is statistically significant and positive for all variables. Ultimately, being Inner Londoners is correlated with a more favorable orientation to immigration and the European Union.

To complete the analysis, I verified whether being a citizen of the center rather than the suburbs of Greater London increased the probability of having a more GAL stance. To do this, I used the ordered logit model, which

Table 6. Spearman’s correlation coefficient: 7th Wave of the BES (2016).

Issue	Suburbs (0) / City (1)
Immigration Level	0.19***
Immigration and Economy	0.17***
Immigration and Culture	0.17***
EU Integration	0.17***
Europeanness	0.12***

*** p<0.01. ** p<0.05. * p<0.1

applies to ordinal dependent variables, such as the five variables relating to immigration and the EU. In this model, the independent variable is geographical belonging (0=suburbs and 1=city). As customary in this type of analysis, I also included a set of socio-demographic variables as control: gender, age, education level, occupational status. Variables related to political attitude (i.e., the Left-Right scale) and party support (i.e., the intention to vote or not for each party) are also included in the model.

Table 7 shows the results of the ordered logit model. An odds ratio of 1 implies that being a citizen of the metropolitan center rather than the suburbs does not change the probability of having a ‘more GAL’ position on the dependent variable. An odds ratio greater than 1, instead, implies that belonging to the center of the metropolis increases the probability of having a ‘more GAL’ position, whereas an odds ratio less than 1 implies that belonging to the center decreases that probability.

For all five dependent variables, being resident in the metropolitan center effectively increases the probability of having a stance closer to the GAL pole (Tab. 7). In short, it is very likely that an Inner Londoner is more favorable to immigration and the European Union than an Outer Londoner. What is more relevant is that the

Table 7. Results of the ordered logit model, reporting the odds ratios and the coefficients (in parentheses): 7th Wave of the BES (2016).

Independent variables	Immigration Level	Immigration & Economy	Immigration & Culture	EU Integration	European ness
Suburbs/City	1.21*** (0.19)	1.37*** (0.32)	1.26*** (0.23)	1.17** (0.16)	1.18** (0.17)
Male/Female	1.1 (0.09)	0.72*** (-0.33)	1.04 (0.04)	1.01 (0.01)	0.75*** (-0.29)
18-50 years/>50 years	0.63*** (-0.46)	0.77*** (-0.26)	0.7*** (-0.35)	0.62*** (-0.48)	1.39*** (0.33)
Graduated/Not Graduated	0.48*** (-0.73)	0.47*** (-0.75)	0.48*** (-0.73)	0.53*** (-0.63)	0.48*** (-0.74)
Employed, Student, Retired/Unemployed	0.72*** (-0.32)	0.82* (-0.2)	0.81* (-0.21)	0.8* (-0.22)	0.96 (-0.04)
Left/Right Scale	1*** (-0.00)	1*** (-0.00)	1*** (-0.00)	1*** (-0.00)	1*** (-0.00)
Green	2.91*** (1.07)	2.63*** (0.97)	2.85*** (1.05)	3.21*** (1.16)	1.29 (0.25)
LibDem	2.1*** (0.74)	1.69** (0.52)	1.57* (0.45)	1.97*** (0.68)	1.03 (0.03)
Lab	2.38*** (0.87)	1.95*** (0.67)	2.28*** (0.83)	2.71*** (1)	1.06 (0.06)
Con	0.56*** (-0.59)	0.52*** (-0.65)	0.49*** (-0.7)	0.52*** (-0.65)	0.35*** (-1.05)
UKIP	0.14*** (-1.95)	0.16*** (-1.81)	0.15*** (-1.88)	0.1*** (-2.31)	0.1*** (-2.26)

*** p<0.01. ** p<0.05. * p<0.1

predictive strength of the independent variable ‘Suburbs/City’ remains remarkable even controlling for socio-demographic variables and for the variables related to party support.

All the demographic variables except gender show important effects on almost all items. Above all, the probability that non-graduates are more opposed to both immigration and the EU is particularly high. These results confirm the mainstream notion that age, education and, to a lesser extent, occupational status are decisive determinants of voters’ orientations on the issues that have become more salient after the emergence of new cleavages.

Lastly, as expected, the variables on party support reveal that those who claimed to vote for the Greens, the LibDem and the Labour have a much higher probability of supporting GAL stances. The opposite is true for declared voters of the Tories and the UKIP.

5.2 Rome

The same analysis has been applied to citizens of the Metropolitan City of Rome, divided between residents of

Roma Capitale (‘center’) and residents of the other communes of the metropolitan area (‘suburbs’).

As in the London case, the means’ comparison confirms H5: Romans of the ‘center’ are on average more favorable to immigration and the EU (Tab. 8). However, the difference between the average position of the center and the suburbs is considerable for the immigration variables, whereas not so high and not statistically significant for the variables relating to the EU. The greatest percentage difference is that of the ‘Immigration and Culture’ variable: 31.58%. The cultural aspect of the immigration issue is therefore the one on which the center and the suburbs of Rome are mostly divided. In this regard, a brief comparison between the 2018 and the 2008 ITANES surveys is telling. The percentage difference between the mean stance of the center and the suburbs on ‘Immigration and Culture’ is very much stronger in 2018 than in 2008: 31.58% versus 7.02%. This supports again the idea that, since the Recession, the transnational cleavage has become increasingly decisive in structuring and polarizing metropolitan voters’ opinions.

The total indicator finally reveals that the residents of *Roma Capitale* are about 15 percent closer to the GAL

Table 8. Orientations of voters from Roman suburbs and center: means of the 2018 ITANES Survey.

Issue	Suburbs		Center		t-test (H0: diff=0)		
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Center-Suburbs	t	Ha: diff>0 p-value
Immigration Level	0.28	0.31	0.35	0.32	25.00 %	1.88	0.03**
Immigration and Economy	0.36	0.3	0.41	0.3	13.89 %	1.47	0.07*
Immigration and Culture	0.38	0.32	0.5	0.33	31.58 %	3.04	0.00***
EU Integration	0.65	0.48	0.7	0.46	7.69 %	0.67	0.25
EU Currency	0.53	0.5	0.56	0.5	5.66 %	0.48	0.31
TOTAL	2.2		2.52		14.55 %		

*** p<0.01. ** p<0.05. * p<0.1

Table 9. Spearman's correlation coefficient: 2018 ITANES Survey.

Issue	Suburbs (0) / City (1)
Immigration Level	0.09*
Immigration and Economy	0.07
Immigration and Culture	0.15***
EU Integration	0.04
EU Currency	0.03

*** p<0.01. ** p<0.05. * p<0.1

pole than the residents of the peripheral communes. In general, the average stance of both *Roma Capitale* and the other communes is rather opposed to immigration (all immigration variables have an average of less than or equal to 0.5 for both sub-metropolitan areas) and rather favorable to the European Union (all EU variables have an average greater than 0.5 for both sub-metropolitan areas).

The Spearman's correlation coefficient supports what has just been maintained, although the results are statistically significant only for some variables. Considering only these variables, the coefficient is positive for all, and it is highest for 'Immigration and Culture' (Tab. 9).

Moving on to the ordered logit model, the only statistically significant result is that of the dependent variable 'Immigration and Culture' (Tab. 10). On this variable, being resident in the center of the Metropolitan City rather than in the suburbs greatly increases the probability of having a more 'GAL' position. In simple terms, it is more probable that immigrants are considered a resource for Italian culture in *Roma Capitale* than in the other smaller and peripheral Roman communes.

As for the demographic variables, education shows a noteworthy effect, but only on the immigration-related

questions. Finally, the variables related to political attitudes and party support lead to the expected results: those who showed intention to vote for the Center-Left (PD) and even more for +EU and the Left (LEU) have a much stronger probability of supporting 'GAL' stances. Conversely, the intention to vote for the Center-Right (FI), the populist radical Right (FdI and *Lega*) and also for the M5S predicts a much more anti-immigrant orientation. The effect of voting for FI and for the League diverges on the EU: the former increases the likelihood of supporting the EU; the latter decreases it.

6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The goal of this work was to give a structural explanation based on the established cleavage theory to the heterogeneity of electoral behavior highlighted within metropolitan areas by recent European elections. I have thus put forward the thesis that the emergence of the 'transnational cleavage', and its strengthening during the 'long crises-decade' (2008-2019), reinforced the vote metropolitanization process, already detected in advanced post-industrial democracies (Sellers et al., 2013; Sellers & Kübler, 2009). Adopting a 'most different cases' design, I have tested this thesis on two city-regions: London and Rome. In both capitals, I found 'traces' of greater vote metropolitanization after the structuring of the transnational cleavage, but the results do not point to evident trends.

Vote *territorialization* within the two metropolitan areas at the party systems' level has been on average higher during the 2010s than in the last pre-crises elections (H1). However, the difference in territorialization between pre- and post-crisis elections was statistically significant only in the London case. In both metropolises, there has not been a constant pattern towards surg-

Table 10. Results of the ordered logit model, reporting the odds ratios and the coefficients (in parentheses): 2018 ITANES Survey.

Independent variables	Immigration Level	Immigration & Economy	Immigration & Culture	EU Integration	EU Currency
Suburbs/City	1.16 (0.15)	1.04 (0.04)	1.44* (0.36)	1.06 (0.06)	1.08 (0.08)
Male/Female	0.83 (-0.19)	0.92 (-0.08)	1.19 (0.17)	1.36 (0.3)	1.03 (0.03)
18-50 years/>50 years	1.17 (0.16)	1.65*** (0.5)	1.34 (0.29)	1.09 (0.08)	1.07 (0.07)
Graduated/ Not Graduated	0.72* (-0.33)	0.64** (-0.44)	0.60*** (-0.51)	0.95 (-0.05)	0.89 (-0.12)
Employed/Unemployed	0.88 (-0.13)	0.91 (-0.09)	0.74 (-0.30)	0.73 (-0.31)	0.78 (-0.24)
Left/Right Scale	0.98*** (-0.02)	0.97*** (-0.03)	0.99** (-0.01)	0.98*** (-0.02)	0.98*** (-0.02)
+EU	2.75** (1.01)	2.91*** (1.07)	2.83** (1.04)	0.78 (-0.25)	2.49** (0.91)
LEU (Left)	3.91*** (1.36)	5.13*** (1.63)	4.85*** (1.58)	1.33 (0.28)	2.38* (0.87)
PD	1.91** (0.65)	1.67* (0.51)	1.79* (0.58)	1.03 (0.03)	2.34*** (0.85)
M5S	0.63* (-0.46)	0.58** (-0.56)	0.63** (-0.46)	0.76 (-0.27)	0.81 (-0.22)
FI	0.24*** (-1.41)	0.37*** (-1.01)	0.38*** (-0.96)	1.52 (0.42)	2.26** (0.82)
Lega	0.00 (-17.18)	0.07*** (-2.6)	0.09*** (-2.42)	0.43* (-0.85)	0.44* (-0.83)
FdI	0.24*** (-1.44)	0.34*** (-1.08)	0.28*** (-1.29)	1.09 (0.08)	0.53 (-0.63)

*** p<0.01. ** p<0.05. * p<0.1

ing territorialization. Instead, there was an increase in vote territorialization in the first half of the long crises-decade, followed by a return to normal levels and then by some tendencies of new increase during the most recent elections.

Parties located at the poles of the transnational cleavage have shown a higher level of heterogeneity of electoral consensus between metropolitan districts, compared to Center-Right and Center-Left parties, which politicize the new cleavage less. Nonetheless, the level of territorialization of 'more GAL' and 'more TAN' parties appears to fluctuate over the period, rather than grow steadily (H2).

Vote *polarization* between metropolitan centers and suburbs at party systems' level has also risen during the long crises-decade in both London and Rome, but only in the Roman case the difference between pre- and post-crisis elections is statistically significant (H3). In addition, the trend from election to election is more intel-

ligible in Rome, so it is possible to detect a clearer tendency here towards metropolitan polarization of the vote between the more 'centralized' and the more 'suburbanized' political forces.

In both metropolises, parties located near the GAL pole of the transnational cleavage have kept a greater than 1, but not always growing, city-suburban balance index. Conversely, parties located near the TAN pole have maintained a less than 1, but not always decreasing index (H4). In short, GAL parties are the parties of the metropolitan center, but they have not all become more 'centralized' over the decade. On the other hand, TAN parties are the parties of the suburbs, but they have not all become more 'suburbanized' throughout the decade. The comparison between the two 'most TAN' and main populist radical right parties of the two countries - UKIP and *Lega* - proves that other general remarks cannot be made. UKIP has maintained a very 'suburbanized' support in both elections in which it performed

well and in those in which it scored poor percentages, although its index has been even lower after the Great Recession. Conversely, in the first half of the 2010s, when it was still a marginal party, the League recorded a city-suburban balance index greater than 1. Thus, it gained higher percentages in inner Rome than in the Metropolitan City of Rome area outside of the GRA (*Grande Raccordo Anulare*). In recent elections, however, the League's surge has been accompanied by its 'suburbanization': the party has taken root in the peripheral communes of the Metropolitan City and in the *Roma Capitale* area outside of the GRA.

Linking the electoral results to the attitudes of metropolitan voters, I then verified whether, at the time of the elections where the highest metropolitan polarization was recorded, GAL values prevailed in inner districts and TAN values in the suburbs. To do this, I investigated the orientations of London and Roman voters on immigration and the European Union: the two issues mostly associated with the transnational cleavage. Findings of the statistical analyzes are more convincing in the case of London. Nonetheless, in both metropolises, central voters turned out to be considerably more in favor of immigration and European integration than peripheral voters (the difference is not statistically significant only for EU related issues in Rome). Furthermore, brief comparisons with pre-crises surveys showed that the percentage difference between metropolitan centers and suburbs on immigration and EU related issues has grown remarkably. This is additional evidence for the claim that the metropolitan dimension of the transnational cleavage has become more decisive since the Recession. It is also worth noting that, especially in Rome but also in London, centers and suburbs are more distant on the cultural aspect of immigration than on the economic one. In other words, suburbs are much more inclined to consider immigrants as a threat to national culture compared to centers. This is probably why populist radical right parties, being strongly nativist, have hoarded votes in the suburbs and have had a decidedly 'suburbanized' consensus.

In conclusion, it cannot yet be stated with certainty that the pervasiveness of the transnational cleavage during the long crises-decade gave a boost to the electoral metropolitanization process. Perhaps, other elections are necessary to understand if electoral metropolitanization is strengthening in London and Rome, or if the high polarization observed in some elections of the last decade was a coincidence or was due to other contingent factors. And, of course, the potential limitations of this research also need to be recognized. For instance, an improvement of the research design may consist in

adopting more sophisticated methods, such as spatial regression models.

Nevertheless, the research has already at this stage emphasized a notable finding. In two very different cities such as London and Rome, capitals of two very different countries in many respects, the transnational cleavage has an evident territorial-metropolitan dimension. Such similarity in two 'most different cases' supports the generalizability of the findings. However, other studies on the territorial distribution of the vote and of the orientations may shed light on additional geographical lines along which this cleavage is splitting the European electorate.

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