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**How the Migration Process drives the establishment of a
Psychological Home: An Italian mixed methods study in the light of
Community Psychology**

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Introduction	4
Acknowledgments	8
1. People and places: a brief view over the migration processes	9
1.1 Building bridges between migration studies	13
1.2 Migration as an ecological transition	18
2 People and places: the homing processes	23
2.1 Defining home and the contribution of community psychology to home studies	27
2.2 The Psychological home	31
2.3 Sense of community and life satisfaction: a key to migrants' wellbeing	34
2.4 Resilience: migrants as active subjects	36
3 Home as migrant's life context	39
3.1 Migrants and housing policy in Italy	41
3.2 Research problems, general aims, and method	46
4 "The Meaning of Home and Community in the Context of Migration": the research project	51
4.1 Study 1. Migration and Home: A Prisma scoping review	54
4.1.1 Aim of the study	56
4.1.2 Method	56
4.1.3 Results	58
4.1.4 Discussion of the results	66
4.1.5 Conclusion and limitations	67
4.2 Study 2. Migrant's point of view on acculturation, home, and wellbeing	70
4.2.1 Aim of the study	72
4.2.2 Method	72
4.2.3 Results	79
4.2.4 Discussion of the results	127
4.2.5 Conclusions and limitations	141
4.3 Study 3. A conceptual model of the Psychological Home among migrants in Italy	145
4.3.1 Aim of the study	149
4.3.2 Method	150

4.3.3	Results	153
4.3.4	Discussion of the results	165
4.3.5	Conclusions and limitations	168
5	Conclusions	171
5.1	Integrated conclusion	171
5.2	Implications for action	184
5.3	Limitations and future research	186
5.4	Final conclusion	187
	References	188
	Appendix section	213
	Study 1: Full List of Selected Articles and Synthesis of the Results	213
	Study 2: Codebook and Structure of Categorization	220

Introduction

"Home" is a seemingly simple word that carries profound meaning and evokes distinct emotions for everyone. However, the concept of "home" can be complex and challenging to define. What happens when people undergo a change in their living environment, putting their sense of home to the test? How do individuals who have experienced migration establish a sense of home in a new context or country? These questions have guided my doctoral project, where I have endeavoured to provide a framework for understanding how migrants construct their homes and the impact this process has on their well-being. Individuals may adopt defence mechanisms such as idealization, devaluation, or withdrawal, where they align solely with their own cultural group, or they may assimilate by rapidly embracing the host culture (Akhtar, 2011). These defence mechanisms appear to play a central role in migrants' psychological sense of home, which can evolve and change over the course of their lives (Tummala-Narra, 2019). While the significance of home in migrants' lives has been recognized and studied (Ahmed et al., 2020), there is a dearth of research examining migrants' psychological sense of home. The aim of this doctoral thesis is to delve deeper into the understanding of migrants' psychological sense of home and analyse the relationship between psychological home, well-being, and migrants' interactions with the community.

The present study adopts a migration research approach based on the ecological perspective of community psychology. The community psychology approach provides a lens through which to study individuals and communities, focusing on relational aspects, context, and the interaction between micro and macro contexts, as well as the potential for building bridges between people, communities, and disciplines. Moreover, this approach enables and supports the development of interventions aimed at improving people's life experiences. This approach is additionally selected due to its utility in comprehending the present social scenario in Italy. Comparable to various other Western European societies, Italy has undergone a discernible shift towards pluralism,

encompassing diverse cultural cohorts and communities (Berry & Sam, 2014). The coexistence of different cultural groups within the same community presents complex challenges in successfully navigating cultural diversity (Ozer & Kamran, 2023). Additionally, the European Union recognizes the inclusion of migrants from third countries, as well as individuals experiencing poverty, in the housing market as a key goal. In this regard, the "Housing First" model has become widely adopted. This model prioritizes providing stable housing to individuals experiencing homelessness, regardless of their readiness for other forms of support. It has gained widespread recognition for its effectiveness in addressing homelessness. This model focuses on swiftly providing individuals with permanent housing and then offering necessary services and support to address their underlying needs. "Housing First" has been extensively developed to assist people experiencing homelessness and has garnered evidence of its efficacy. It has shown success in reducing homelessness and improving overall well-being. Additionally, it is important to consider the impacts of the "Housing First" model on migrants who are homeless, as their unique circumstances may require tailored approaches to integration and stability. In Italy, numerous projects funded by the FAMI (Asylum, Migration, and Integration Fund) have been launched, with a particular focus on housing and job placement support. The fragmented nature of these projects funded by the European Community highlights the need for constant improvement in interventions related to housing and employment, which form the foundation for promoting the integration of migrants.

Community psychology favours research through participatory approaches. The structure of this research project, designed in late 2019, included the involvement of organizations and reference groups working with individuals from migrant backgrounds. However, due to the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent constraints in March 2020, significant changes had to be made to the research instruments and methods. Data collection was conducted through an online questionnaire, which was appropriately modified and condensed compared to the original version to facilitate remote completion. Interviews with migrants were also conducted remotely. Contact with migrants was primarily established through social media and snowball sampling. Nonetheless,

the community psychology approach served as the foundation for defining migration processes and understanding the role of the psychological home in individuals' lives, allowing for the analysis and discussion of the phenomenon, as well as the hypothesis of operational effects. The use of individual measures presented a challenge in terms of integrating data evaluation more comprehensively, given the significance of life contexts for individuals. Community psychology possesses the necessary prerequisites, epistemology, and literature to help researchers paint an increasingly complex picture of the phenomenon. Providing a voice to groups of migrants, who often face significant obstacles in being heard, albeit through non-traditional methods and during a moment of great emotional concern such as the pandemic, aligns with the principles of community psychology.

The thesis is divided into five main chapters. The first two chapters serve as an initial orientation, providing a theoretical framework. The first chapter offers a concise overview of migration studies. While describing the evolution of migration studies in all its complexity may seem ambitious, it is deemed useful to provide contextualization for the present study. Given the vast range of geographical locations, meanings, and processes associated with migration, narrowing the scope of interest, and introducing the framework that community psychology offers in relation to migration processes is deemed important. The second chapter explores the concept of home from both social sciences and environmental psychology perspectives, proposing a potential definition of home within the context of community psychology. Particular attention is given to the construct of psychological home and related variables in the literature, providing a model upon which the research question is built. The third chapter encompasses the research question, literature review, a description of the Italian context, and an explanation of the methodology employed in constructing the research project. The fourth chapter focuses on the research project and its operational structure, divided into three main subchapters corresponding to the three primary studies conducted. Firstly, a literature review is conducted to examine the factors influencing the perception of psychological home among migrants. This review encompasses various social sciences, forming a solid foundation for developing an initial understanding of the meaning of home for individuals with migration

experience. Secondly, a qualitative study is conducted, involving semi-structured interviews with individuals from migrant backgrounds. The aim is to directly explore their perspectives on their migration experience, life in Italy, the acculturation process, the significance of home, their relationship with the residential community, and the impact on their well-being. Lastly, a quantitative study provides an opportunity to formulate hypotheses about the functioning of the psychological home for migrants, integrating both individual and community measures. The choice of employing both qualitative and quantitative methodologies align with the necessity of selecting the most appropriate tools to address the research questions while acknowledging that behind the numbers, there are individuals who often desire and should have the opportunity to express themselves. Finally, the last chapter serves as a space to integrate the findings from the three studies, offering a clearer description of the process of establishing a psychological home in a new country for first- and second-generation migrants. The chapter also explores how these findings can bridge the gap between individual and community-focused migration studies. Limitations of the overall study are explained, and suggestions for further research on the topic are provided. The final section highlights possible practical implications arising from the study's findings.

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Reena Saini Kallat (India), *Woven Chronicle*, 2011–16. Installation view: The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2016–17.

1. People and places: a brief view over the migration processes

Human migration is a phenomenon that has always existed and seems to be an essential aspect of human nature. Migrations are undoubtedly an ancient phenomenon, but over time, their intensity, frequency, and variety have changed considerably. According to the UN, a person who has moved to a country other than his or her country of habitual residence and has lived there for more than one year can be defined as a migrant (Kofman et al., 2000). There are many differences within this definition (Cristaldi, 2020). When considering spatiality, one should think of international migrations (i.e., between different states) and internal migrations within the same country. In the past, internal, and short-term migrations were preferred due to the difficulty of moving, while today, movements outside countries are increasingly common. If we consider the time variable, the duration of the movement becomes more important because the period of one year given in the definition, even if it includes most migrations, excludes all those short, seasonal, or temporary movements (e.g., students) that involve the international context. In addition, there is the legal issue of the children of migrants who, although they usually live in the country where they were born, very often do not acquire the citizenship of their country of birth and residence but are still considered legally foreigners. The increase in migrants in recent years is due to various factors; one phenomenon that has played a decisive role is globalization. With it, knowledge of the different realities of the world has grown, as has awareness of the differences between them and the ease of travel. The willingness to change one's place of residence to improve one's quality of life is increasing. The decision to emigrate is often the result of several factors. Sometimes, it is a decision dictated by the desire to improve one's situation (economic migrants); other times, it is forced migration due to the dangerous conditions in which one finds oneself in their country of origin (refugees, asylum seekers). The variables that lead people to flee dangerous conditions can be human (wars, religious, and political problems) but also environmental (such as droughts, floods, earthquakes). Although migrants are sometimes considered groups of poor people with few resources, migration flows are mostly composed of young and active people with moderate levels of education who have sufficient financial resources to reach their destination and who ambitiously

try to improve their quality of life. It should be emphasized that migration flows have consequences in both the country of origin and the host country. The outflow of part of the population can facilitate the labour market in the country of origin for those who stay behind and, on the other hand, meet labour needs in some sectors in the country of arrival. While migrant remittances can have a major impact on the countries of origin by improving the living conditions of those left behind the outflow of young, educated adults leads to social impoverishment and a shortage of skilled labour. Finally, from a demographic perspective, international migration is often the only contribution to active population growth in countries with low birth rates. Looking at global migration flows, there were 272 million international migrants worldwide in 2019, representing 3.5% of the world's population (DESA, 2019). The destination countries for migration are North America, Australia, some countries in the Middle East, and East Asia (IOM,2020). The Gulf States have the highest rate of migrants. Europe has gone from being a country of emigration to an important destination for migrants from all over the world, even if they represent only a small part of the total. In fact, in most cases, people prefer countries close to their homeland, where conditions are even slightly better than those at the point of origin. In fact, the largest migration flows take place between regions of the world rather than between continents (Abel & Sander, 2014). The policies of arrival countries play a fundamental role in the development of migration flows. In Europe and the United States, in addition to a climate of insecurity and fear of foreigners, increasingly strict migration policies have emerged. The gap of people's mobility has increasingly widened, leading to two main categories: on the one hand, those who can travel indefinitely and freely choose where to settle (highly skilled professionals, artists, athletes, managers, or international students); and on the other hand, people fleeing dangerous and precarious living conditions, who are often not granted freedom of movement and settlement. Although Article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights includes freedom of movement and highlights the concept of mobility, some people who migrate have fewer rights than those who are stationary. The topic of migration is constantly debated, and immigration, as it is commonly understood, is often a source of uncertainty (IOM, 2020). Politics, media, and

economic crises have contributed to creating an unwarranted fear of foreigners that often leads to the construction of sociocultural barriers. A migrant is a person with cultural and emotional baggage, human capital, and a network of relationships who moves through space, setting in motion a process that connects different places (the place of departure and arrival but also the places that are crossed) and different social systems.

This movement of people has led to an increase in cultural diversity in the contexts of people's lives (neighbourhoods and cities, education, business, local and national government). Cultural diversity raises the question of how societies can be managed to minimize hostility between groups. Diversity brings many challenges (Verkuyten & Yogeeswaran, 2020). Living with diversity can be a source of both enrichment and discomfort if not considered. Encountering other cultures is an everyday phenomenon that manifests itself in cities, workplaces, and even our own homes when interacting with people or using foreign consumer goods. There are several traditional models of integration: the segregationist model, which envisions the separation of migrants within the social environment; the assimilationist model, which views the abandonment of one's culture of origin as necessary for integrating into the new society; and the multiculturalist model, which posits equal opportunity and the recognition of diversity. These models, which have been traditionally associated with the policies of various destination countries, are now largely being challenged. One trend involves the interculturalism model, which assumes policies aimed at harmonizing differences among groups (CDADI, 2021). The guiding principles are equality, recognition of diversity, and positive interaction. The various factors that hinder the coexistence of people from different backgrounds often include a lack of knowledge about other people or cultures, stereotypes, prejudices, and different customs. Constant respect, dialogue, and exchange are ways in which people seek interculturality to reap the benefits that come from a shared and unifying sense of commitment and belonging (Meer & Modood, 2012).

All these current challenges related to migration, its interpretation, and related policies are areas that researchers explore.

1.1 Building bridges between migration studies

The study of human migration is a complex subject that encompasses several disciplines and different levels of analysis. The beginnings of the study of human migrations as a phenomenon are anchored in early 20th century sociology, and later, this field emerged with its own journals beginning in the 1960s with a focus on mainly Anglo-American studies. In the 1990s, the greatest development of migration studies occurred on a path that led to internationalization (Pisarevskaya et al. 2020). This broadening of perspective is accompanied by a broadening of the view of the contexts that affect migrants. Migrants are no longer thought of according to a linear logic that connects the country of departure to the country of arrival; instead, a transnational perspective begins to be theorized. Transnationalism assumes that migration processes can foster the creation of social fields in which geographic, cultural, and political boundaries intersect by maintaining and establishing relationships that link the society of origin and the society of settlement (Schiller et al., 1992). These are social, economic, and religious ties and practices at multiple levels that link migrants and non-migrants across borders (Levitt & Waters, 2002). This enriches the traditional view of migration as a process that implies a place of origin and a place of reception and begins to view transmigrants as those who create new spaces. Migrants can reinvent and reshape themselves and the reality that surrounds them in an overall view of migration that considers the impact that the movement of people has on the country of origin and, at the same time, on the country of arrival (Verri, 2006). According to Faist (2000), people are neither "uprooted" nor "transplanted;" instead, people "translate" and perform a continuous resignification of languages, norms, and cultures, which leads them to develop a new sense of identity and belonging, not from a loss or an attempt to replicate the past, but from something that is both new and familiar, the result of the encounter between some elements of the country of origin and others of the country of destination.

One of the most important points in the literature on transnationalism is the emphasis on the discontinuity of contemporary migration phenomena with the past; in the modern era, the "double absence" can no longer be the metaphor of migration. Transnationalism is a reading that departs

from the traditional way of looking at migration and shifts the focus from measuring the degree of integration of people in host societies to the relationships, cultural identities, social practices, and economic activities that migrants build by operating in two or more countries simultaneously.

Moreover, in recent decades, other changes have occurred in migration research. The specific interest in the geography of migration seems to have diminished and given way to the concept of mobility. Since the 2000s, the social sciences have fuelled theoretical and analytical discussions about the new mobility paradigm. Precisely to avoid treating a sedentary lifestyle as a natural state, it has been suggested that migrations should be considered a subset of the broader study of mobility. Several scholars have expressed scepticism about the notion that a sedentary lifestyle is the normality and mobility is the deviation, although this understanding is prevalent in general perceptions and studies of migration. This perspective allows us to look at migration without a linear perspective but with an understanding of migrations as a journey marked by departures, blockages, and new beginnings (Riccio, 2019). The field has shifted from a focus on issues of demography, statistics, and governance to an increasing focus on mobility, migration, gender, and health inequities. This change suggests that the focus of studies has shifted away from asking *what* constitutes migration to examining *how* this process occurs. This paradigm shift allows for a more nuanced understanding of migration processes, with greater attention to both the global and individual levels of analysis. Although there are still different understandings of what migration studies is and how interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary the various research directions are in relation to each other, according to some scholars, migration studies have taken on the characteristics of a very distinct field of research over time (Pisarevskaya et al., 2020). The various disciplinary fields from which migration studies draws include social sciences such as sociology, political science, anthropology, geography, law, and economics, which are increasingly expanding to include disciplines such as health and development studies (Scholten, et al., 2022).

Psychology is placed between the study of the processes at the individual level and those of the context. This field also examines the influences and interactions of the change across levels

(family, school, neighbourhood, media, and popular discourse). Study objects are the mental and behavioural processes that are involved in the biopsychosocial adjustment of migrants, the development of interventions to prevent or treat psychological problems, and the promotion of migrant well-being. Psychology can be a "bridge" between social fields, which focus on broader contextual processes, and biomedical disciplines, which focus on health outcomes (Schwartz et al., 2022). In particular, community psychology has been developed with a dual nature. On the one hand, American origins give it a declination in the search for the well-being of and through communities. On the other hand, South America enriches community psychology with research aimed at the political dimension, which is understood as active participation in community life (Arcidiacono et al., 2021). Community psychology is an approach that focuses on psychological processes and their articulation with social, contextual, and cultural dimensions. From this interaction arise opportunities or risks for the well-being of people, both individual and community: community psychology stands between care and social change or, as Amerio (2000) suggests, between clinical and political. Maritza Montero (2002) defines the psychology of social community as that area in which the individual constructs the same reality that shapes, informs and transforms it into social interaction. In this sense, individual and context become inseparable elements in the explanation of a phenomenon. If we think about the individual, the psychosocial perspective, to which community psychology refers, presents the person as an active subject in a context. One of the largest contributions to the reading of human development is represented by the ecological model of Bronfenbrenner (1979), which expands the analysis of the environments that affect the well-being of the subject, considering both those that are proximal to the subject and those that are distant. According to Bronfenbrenner, the ecological environment can be represented through a concentric series of levels, like a Matryoshka. The person at the centre of the model is enclosed by gradually wider levels that indicate the various contexts in which he or she is and from which his or her development is influenced. All these dimensions must be interpreted in relation to the temporal context, which is understood both as a moment of life of a person and as the historical period in

which one is placed. In light of this, as much as the active role of the person is fundamental to change, so is the context in which this person acts. Since no person is separated from a social context, the actions of individuals are determined not only by their internal characteristics (intentions, motivations, abilities) but also by the conditions of their environment (objective or subjective, micro, or macro). In recent decades, an ecological-systemic perspective has developed, with an emphasis on the importance of relationships, feedback mechanisms and interactions within and between systems. Trickett (2012) proposes a new reading of the Bronfenbrenner ecological model and highlights the interdependence of the different levels. The relationship between the individual and context is played out in terms of interdependence. Hence, it follows that the change in one cannot be separated from the change in the other. The study of phenomena is developed through the observation of complexity, considering both the structural characteristics of the levels and the dynamic processes that occur (Foster-Fishman & Behrens, 2007). System transformation permits the creation of contexts that allow the realization of people and the enhancement of their abilities. Through the structural transformations of rules that support the systems, one can make changes that have repercussions on the well-being of the system itself and the individuals who make it up. According to the community perspective, well-being is linked to the possibility of having access to material and psychosocial resources. The power dynamics that characterize human relationships constitute the preferred point of analysis in community psychology for addressing social inequalities. Well-being is the result of personal, social, and contextual processes. Meeting personal, relational, and community needs corresponds to conquering well-being (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2005). The imbalance of power between groups and the tools to bridge these differences are the subject of inquiry in community psychology (Prilleltensky, 2011). As argued by Prilleltensky and Nelson (2013), it is necessary that community interventions are inspired by the value dimension of diversity and equity. From this perspective, the term community takes on the value of "living with," and with this approach, social ties are examined as the starter of psycho-social processes to produce change. It follows that community psychologists work together with others. The recognition of the

value of the other, of difference and of common human nature are the principles that guide the community psychology perspective. In this sense, community psychology feeds on its own beliefs in terms of continuous improvement of the discipline. Thus, interdisciplinarity is seen as adding value to research especially when it is linked to cultural competencies (Mankowski, Galvez & Glass, 2011). Community psychology can complement and collaborate with other disciplines, especially cultural psychology, as both share the idea of context. If we follow the reasoning of O'Donnell & Tharp (2012) and define community as a set of shared activities and culture as shared meanings, the possibility of a theoretical integration of the concepts of community and culture becomes clear. Moreover, increasing cross-cultural contact associated with cultural exchange and the development of new cultural forms are of interest to a variety of disciplines. In this vein, community psychology has long set out to deepen the cultural component through the cultural psychology of the community (Harrel 2015; Sonn et al., 2015).

The study of migration in community psychology has developed significantly in recent decades (Perkins, Palmer & García-Ramírez, 2011). Scholars have focused on ecological processes, historical contexts, and power inequalities that are inherent in acculturation. Power and contextual factors are fundamental to the processes that affect migrant communities, and therefore, migrant research must be community-sensitive and action-oriented to positive social change. In addition, a multimethod approach is useful for capturing the structural conditions of the communities involved in acculturative transitions. The most relevant psychosocial issues seem to be related to well-being, social capital, and the reduction of discrimination (Perkins, Palmer & García-Ramírez, 2011). Community psychology can provide an understanding of migrants' experiences by focusing on opportunities rather than the individual characteristics of migrants, which are often perceived as deficits. Community psychology brings a social justice perspective to research and aims to develop different ways to intervene by giving voice and power to migrants in the research process (Birman & Bray, 2017).

Since the theoretical framework of this research has been provided, the following section develops a definition of migration in light of community psychology.

1.2 Migration as an ecological transition

Viewed through the lens of community psychology, the processes of migration can be construed as a manifestation of ecological transition within the realm of human existence. This transition is characterized by profound and extensive alterations across diverse contexts (Cushner, 2008; Esses, Hamilton & Gaucher, 2017). Although delineating the precise degree of agency inherent in an individual's decision to migrate is exceedingly intricate, the notion of ecological transition seems more fitting when considering voluntary migrations, as opposed to forced migrations, which may warrant alternative perspectives, such as the lens of trauma. An ecological transition transpires when an individual's positioning within the ecological milieu transforms due to a modified role, an altered environmental circumstance, or a combination of both (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). The ecology of human development is the scientific study of the progressive and mutual adaptation between the active development of humans and the changing characteristics of the environment in which they live. It also includes the study of the influence that the relationships between these environments and the larger contexts have. Migration processes are accompanied by changes at the social level, affecting the communities involved worldwide, but also at the individual level, leading migrants to reshape their identities. Those who experience migration first-hand may have a disorienting experience and question profound aspects of their own personal, family, and social identities. It is possible that a person has difficulty feeling present in the here and now and resents having been uprooted (Wright, 2009). Migrants' construction of new identities could be seen as the result of a continuous process of balancing and negotiating between the demands of the ethnic group to which they belong and those of the new context in which they live. Migration is associated with different experiences of the self. In fact, the different contexts in which migrants move change their identity on individual and group levels. In everyday life, the different facets of identity interact with each other and with different social representations in a reciprocal and interactive process

(Watzlawik & Brescó de Luna, 2017). This happens in a situation where people often lose the support of preexisting social and family ties while simultaneously being faced with basic needs such as learning a new language, finding a place to live, and making ends meet financially.

According to community psychology, social support is a variable that influences migrants' well-being (Novara et al., 2023). For migrants, friendship networks promote community integration and influence life satisfaction (Hombrados-Mendieta et al., 2019). Social capital illustrates how everyday interactions are embedded in social relationships structured by group membership and how these lead to specific social identities and positions. Social capital may be an important determinant of postmigration mental health among migrants (Johnson et al., 2017). Moreover, social support, particularly informal support, appears to promote migrants' adjustment in new contexts and predicts satisfaction with life, sense of community, and resilience (Novara et al., 2023). The transition to migration brings changes in the structure of relationships and the functions of the resulting social support. Moreover, the perspective of community psychology on migration is helpful for moving beyond a purely individualistic view to develop a theory of social capital (Saegert, & Carpiano, 2017; Peterson, & Zimmerman, 2004). Community psychology views social change through the development of a sense of agency and individuals' responsibility. Participation in community life allows for the development of a bottom-up pathway to social change that can lead to both the individual growth of community members and the harmonious development of the community itself (Lazarus, Seedat & Naidoo, 2017). In addition, social relationships have an impact on everyone's health. A sense of community favours adaptation to new contexts and is an element that potentially strengthens migrants' social integration and quality of life (Sonn, 2002; Hombrados-Mendieta et al., 2013).

The ecological approach offers insights that go beyond structural explanations of a social problem and individual-level outcomes to work towards community development. Thus, from the ecological perspective, multicultural coexistence is a contextual framework in which individual behaviours are inscribed (Tebes, 2005). Great importance must be given to the power inequalities

that characterize relations between social groups (García-Ramírez, Balcázar, & de Freitas, 2014) and are associated with greater wealth and privilege for those groups that wield more influence (Evans et al., 2017). In the context of this inequality, minority groups suffer from great pressures to assimilate to the culture of the dominant group on the one hand and face pervasive discrimination at the social and often institutional levels on the other (Basso, 2010). From this point of view, community psychology intervenes in relationships and processes to build competent communities that know how to deal with diversity. Multicultural coexistence is a complex phenomenon that affects individuals and groups as well as society as a whole and underscores the need to understand the cultural universe of the host context, that from which migrants come, and the interaction that results from the encounter between groups that differ in their customs, traditions, and values. Acculturation is a process that refers to the cultural change that results from continuous contact between different cultural groups (Berry, 1995). Theories of acculturation include aspects of attitudes, behaviour, and life domains from an interactive perspective (Berry, 2006; Navas et al., 2007). The acculturation process can be understood at different levels, as it has characteristics and effects that can be individual, community, or global. Traditional acculturation research in psychology views acculturation as an individual trait (Trimble, 1989) and as a decision that migrants make when considering how to adapt to a new country. The classic model of acculturation theory proposed by Berry (1997) shows how four acculturation strategies pursued by migrants emerge from the intersection between the dimensions of desire for contact with the host culture and maintenance of the culture of origin. The integration strategy involves maintaining the existing culture and integrating some features of the host culture; the marginalization strategy involves disengagement from both the culture of origin and the culture of settlement; assimilation involves the migrant rejecting the culture of origin and adopting the new cultural identity of the host country and finally, separation involves the individual rejecting the new culture in favour of the culture of origin. This categorization has promoted the idea that individuals who embrace an integrative/bicultural style are better fit (Berry, 2005). Although the integration strategy seems to be the one that is most

characterized by resource aspects for migrants to reduce acculturation stress, some critics question this position. Acculturation is one of the issues addressed by community psychology in which dialectical opposition emerged between community and diversity (Brodski 2017). The civil rights movement in American culture, concerns about social justice, disenfranchisement, and contextual influences on opportunity were the backdrop against which community psychology emerged (Sarason, 1981). In this vein, theories about the processes of acculturation have evolved, gradually increasing the complexity of the phenomenon. Community psychology acculturation research benefits from concepts such as social ecology, context, person-environment fit, adaptation, the importance of empowerment and agency for marginalized groups, and the emphasis on the strengths and assets of the culture of origin and ethnic community rather than the deficits (Birman, 2016). This view contrasts with a pathologizing current in mainstream psychology that sets ethnocentric standards for psychological adjustment (Tran & Birman, 2019). By extending the observation of the phenomenon to majority groups, Bourhis and colleagues (1997) argue that the host society may also show preferences for one of the four acculturation strategies. These two analyses cannot be considered separately because they interact when the expectations of members of the two groups clash, thus raising the issue of compatibility between them. In the interactive acculturation model (IAM, Bourhis et al., 1997), it is assumed that the outcome of acculturation and, more generally, the relations between migrant groups and the host society can be better predicted if the "fit" between the strategic preference of the migrant and the society is considered. According to Jasinskaja-Lahti et al. (2011), the current situation in the "host" country plays a key role in the development of strategies and their outcomes. Depending on the context, any strategy can be beneficial in a multicultural country, and more attention should be given to the process than to a set of different and static strategies. From the perspective of adaptation between person and environment, acculturation is not a free choice but is constrained by pressures and opportunities in the migrant's environment. From this perspective, research has found that there is no best context-independent acculturation style (Birman, Trickett & Buchanan, 2005; Salo & Birman, 2015; Birman & Bray,

2017). Nevertheless, further research suggests that the relationship between acculturation and psychological adjustment is even more complex than it was originally thought to be (Jurcik et al., 2014). If this view is extended further to include the more global aspects of interactions between cultures, it appears that an acculturation "strategy" that may be effective for one group may be problematic for another. To understand the process of acculturation more broadly, it is useful to understand how international relationships between collectively managed social and political forces can facilitate the choice of acculturation strategies and how collective practices can be resilient (Lawson, 2016). Finally, it is important to consider the political tendencies associated with hostility towards migrants that generate fear of migrants among the population (Boccagni & Baldassar, 2015). Again, community psychology can operate in the context of acculturation by bridging the different levels of understanding of the phenomenon. From an individual perspective, maintaining close ties with the group of origin allows for the consolidation of one's ethnic identity, and ties in host countries can facilitate sociocultural integration. Therefore, it seems important to act at the level of integrative processes between groups through actions that promote the participation of migrants in common activities in neighbourhoods/cities without denying or suppressing their respective differences but allowing a comparison that can be a source of enrichment for all.

In summary, community psychology defines the migration process as a transition through people's life contexts. As stated above, some basic dimensions of the migration process have been explored in community psychology. At the level of encountering different cultures, the process of acculturation plays a role in understanding the dynamics that determine the interdependent relationship between the different cultural contexts of reference and their effects at the personal and community levels. As a protective factor, community psychology can contribute to the development of social capital theory through the examination of microlevel aspects. This could enrich the meso- and macrolevel-oriented use of the social capital tradition. In this sense, it seems important to analyse the different contexts in which migration develops. The concept of home is explored in the next chapter as a micro level of analysis.



Children playing at creating a home with clothespins, bedsheets, and chairs (2023).

2 People and places: the homing processes

Over the years, various aspects of the relationship between people and places have been proposed. The concept of place is considered the theoretical basis for the study of the relationship between people and the external world that surrounds them. Sense of place is a general concept that refers to the relationship between people and places and consists of different dimensions. Indeed, people's sense of place has been studied in various disciplines, such as philosophy, human geography, sociology, environmental psychology, and social psychology (Bingley et al., 2014). Given this diversity of approaches, it is difficult to provide a unified definition of sense of place, but some important points can be distinguished regarding the relationship between people and place.

As Heidegger (1976) states, "dwelling is the way mortals are on earth" (p. 18). Habitats as places of care and support in harmony with human needs, experiences, and values are antithetical to dehumanization. Indeed, it is life itself that makes a mere "space" a true "place." Simply put, in Heideggerian thought, dwelling is the original dimension of the human being, and as an inhabitant of a space, the individual works, "builds," and cares for it. In this sense, inhabiting is thought of as a mental and affective process that is different from transiting and essentially means living in a place and feeling it as one's own (Martini and Marzana, 2021). Even in this case, the dimension of dwelling, if understood in its complexity, is so large that it cannot be grasped in all its aspects. The sphere of dwelling involves humans and their way of life; therefore, it has interested scholars throughout time and transcends disciplines. It concerns anthropologists, psychologists, ethnologists, philosophers, artists, sociologists, and designers who construct buildings in which people live (D'Urso, 2009).

Furthermore, it is possible to observe how the social sciences and psychology began to analyse this relationship from different points of view. Historically, the social sciences focused on contextual aspects related to the definition of home, such as the relationship among home, social aspects, and culture. Environmental psychology, on the other hand, has focused more on the experiential and personal aspects of home (Moore, 2000). In recent decades, the two different fields of research have attempted to broaden their scope by including contextual and experiential aspects

(Uskul & Oishi, 2020; Bonaiuto et al., 2019; Oishi & Graham, 2010; Antonsich, 2010a). The present work is situated in this line of thought, which sees enrichment in the contamination between different areas of study. Findings from both environmental psychology and sociology are referenced to outline a concept of home that includes both the relationship between the individual and place and the aspects of context that influence (and are in turn conditioned by) that relationship. The community psychology perspective provides an opportunity to connect both the experiential and contextual aspects of home to the specificity of migration. Community and environmental psychology, which emerged in the late 1960s and early 1970s, are related and promote social activism through basic and applied research on ecological factors and social outcomes (Oishi & Graham, 2010). The contribution of environmental psychology relates to several constructs, namely, place attachment and place identity. Place attachment theory, which is inspired by the attachment theory of Ainsworth and Bowlby, refers to the emotional attachment to their daily environment that individuals, groups, and communities develop (Low & Altman, 1992; Bonnes & Secchiaroli, 1995). It seems to be characterized by feelings of seeking closeness, the notion of the uniqueness and irreplaceability of the place, and the sense of loss in case of leaving. It is understandable that the construct of place attachment is mainly characterized by the affective-emotional component. However, some conceptualizations also emphasize other relevant dimensions, including cognitive and behavioural dimensions. It has been scientifically proven that place attachment is a predictor of overall well-being, self-esteem, satisfaction with place of residence, and the practice of environmentally friendly behaviours and lifestyles (Manca, Cerina & Fornara, 2020). Place identity represents a component of the identity of the self that consists of cognitions related to the physical environment in which the individual lives. It primarily captures and emphasizes the sociocognitive aspects of the connection between people and the places in which they live (Proshansky, 1978; Proshansky, Fabian, & Kaminoff, 1983). Proshansky (1978) defines place identity as "associated memories, perceptions, interpretations, ideas, and feelings about particular physical environments as well as types of environments." While Proshansky defines place identity as more of a state,

Seamon (2014) refers to place identity as a process through which people who live in or are otherwise connected to a place adopt that place as a significant part of their world. Place identity is a subconcept of personal identity and refers to the "component of identity associated with feelings about a particular place" (Clayton & Myers, 2015, p. 172). The process of creating a sense of identity begins in early childhood and is a lifelong process. Several authors have attempted to understand the relationship between place attachment and place identity (Dixon & Durrheim, 2000; Arcidiacono et al., 2007). Although the complicated development of this topic is beyond the objectives of this thesis, by simplifying it, it is possible to understand how the processes of place attachment that develop in the individual are related to the specificity of the place and how the processes of personal identity of place result from it (Bonnes et al., 2009). Various elaborations of all these constructs have been proposed in the literature, with some of these constructs proposed as components or composites of other constructs, resulting in a complex, not always consistent, hierarchical structure of various place-related constructs (Bonnes, Lee & Bonaiuto, 2003).

If we broaden the view to the social sciences, we can identify the idea of "belonging" as a concept that connects the different theories. The sense of belonging manifests itself in the individual's or group's sense of being part of a place, of feeling it as their own, and consequently of belonging to it. The connection may be stronger for some individuals than others and may be expressed differently by people of different cultures (Duncan & Duncan, 2001). Duncan and Duncan (2001) defined "modern environments without place" as responsible for feelings of alienation. Again, sense of place refers to the emotive bonds (positive or negative) and attachments to locations that people experience. It seems to be a personal and shaped feeling based on the cultural economic circumstances in which one lives (Azaryahu & Foote, 2009). The emotional connotation associated with the definition of belonging suggests a connection with notions of place attachment and place identity. Belonging has several definitions and is considered by most to be an explanatory and multidimensional term (Yuval-Davis, Anthias & Kofman, 2005). "Belonging" may be configured as an intimate and private feeling of attachment to a place (place-belongingness) that is built and

increased through daily practices. "Place-belongingness" can be defined as an expression of a "feeling at home" or in a symbolic space of familiarity, comfort, security, and emotional attachment (Antonsich, 2010b). The place to which one feels they belong is subjective and varies from individual to individual; it could be a dwelling (Walsh, 2006) or neighbourhood (Mee, 2009), or a community (Mackenzie, 2004) or national homeland (Ho, 2009). Antonosich (2010b) highlights five categories of factors that generate the feeling of belonging: autobiographical, relational, cultural, economic, and legal. Self-biographical factors refer to personal experiences, relationships and memories that bind them to a place. These factors seem to explain why the place where a person is born and grows up usually remains central in their life. Relational factors refer to the set of personal and social bonds that enrich life in a place. They include ties with family and friends, which are connoted as emotionally dense relationships, and the weakest or all occasional interactions with strangers sharing public spaces. Language is considered the most relevant cultural factor and represents a particular way of constructing and transmitting means and defining situations. Language plays a dual role in the sense of belonging, as it is a differentiator between groups but can also evoke a sense of community by promoting the feeling of being among people who understand what one says and means. In this sense, language seems to help generate a sense of home. Likewise, traditions, habits, and cultural practices promote a sense of home. Economic factors play a role in contributing to the creation of a secure and stable material condition for an individual and his or her family. There is evidence that being fully and successfully integrated into a given economy constitutes a necessary, albeit not sufficient, factor in the generation of a sense of belonging to the place (Chow, 2007). Finally, the legal factors include, for example, citizenship and residence permits, which are also fundamental to producing a sense of security and eliciting a person's active participation in his or her environment.

2.1 Defining home and the contribution of community psychology to home studies

Defining home is a complex subject of inquiry even though it is commonly used. A home could be a building, a neighbourhood or even a town. However, people have attributed other

meanings to home beyond these images. The word *home* indicates a shelter, a covered place that protects and defends from the outside and provides a boundary between an "inside" and an "outside." However, it would be simplistic to think of home exclusively as a physical place, as it has a multiplicity of meanings that go far beyond this singular understanding. The notion of "home" describes a complex and ambiguous reality. "Home" is associated with a universal human desire to be grounded, be safe and belong. According to Hart & Ben-Yoseph (2014), a single definition cannot circumscribe the home, and there are many possibilities of being at home in the world. According to the psychosocial approach, a home is a place capable of providing human beings with the satisfaction of primary needs such as identity (Scabini & Manzi, 2011), security, and stimulation of its occupants (Graham, Gosling, & Travis, 2015). Similar to sense of place, as described above, a sense of home (Hamilton, 2017) is a feeling of dwelling in comfort and security with others regardless of the physical place. However, the personalization of the home could promote identity and security, and the modification of its spaces promotes stimulation. In this sense, a home corresponds to a place in which one can feel safe. Safety is perceived thanks to the constancy in the social and material environment, the execution of daily routines, the feeling of control over one's life and the idea of home as a safe place around which one builds one's identity. It is necessary to stress that security and individuality are not always linked to the space of living. For example, the heterosexual nuclear family home may be experienced as an oppressive environment for gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth (Gorman-Murray, 2008). The environment may be encountered with fear when political violence threatens family privacy, control, and coherence (Sousa, Kemp & El-Zuhairi, 2014). Social relationships (Gerson, Stueve & Fischer, 1977) affect belonging to a place, and the entire process grows over time. Space becomes home when one attributes significance to it. Consequently, the home can be defined as a place with social, psychological, and emotional meaning for individuals and groups. The study of the relationship between people and places can be read as people's attempt to analyse and understand social relationships, psychology, emotions and lived experiences more broadly (Easthope, 2004).

In recent years, there have been new developments in the study of homing practices in community psychology. Research demonstrates that place is what people have in common beyond their differences (Martini & Marzana, 2021). Due to sharing, place can become an object of investment or conflict. Above all, culture determines the way one lives, and at the same time, the way one lives contributes to the creation of culture (Rapoport, 1980). As far as Western culture is concerned, there is a predominant way of living. An often nuclear or even one-person family lives in a rented or owned house or apartment that contains all the services useful for their independence. In Western culture, home separates people to meet the need for independence and individual freedom (Martini & Marzana, 2021). The home is an important material and psychological boundary that allows people to separate themselves from the outside world and to maintain and redefine their own identity. However, this characteristic also makes adaptation to the family life cycle more difficult, sometimes risking excessive isolation from the outside world and growing internal tensions due to the forced sharing of spaces. This type of homing affects people's lives and the community, contributing to creating situations of isolation and loneliness. It also contributes to the perception that neighbourhood is more of a nuisance than an asset (Sennett, 2018). This perception leads people to seek public services rather than informal support. Importantly, in addition to the mentioned housing solutions, others that include the sharing of spaces are being explored.

Several lines of research within community psychology are helpful for understanding specific home processes. An important research field comprises a European programme of housing for homeless people (HOME-EU Consortium Study Group). There are several factors that influence the state of marginalization of homeless people. The complex combination of individual, relational, social, and economic factors can result in people having difficulty finding housing (Gaboardi et al., 2021). Some structural conditions, such as the cost and availability of public housing, social policies, and economic inequalities (Shinn, 2007; Toro, 2007), combined with individual conditions (Anderson & Christian 2003; Lee, Tyler & Wright, 2010) (stressful or traumatic experiences, lack of education, low income, alcohol or substance abuse, and mental or health problems) and lack of

social support, can lead to lives in which marginality is associated with difficulty accessing services. In addition, homeless people are often subject to social stigma that makes it difficult for them to feel capable enough to move out of a state of marginalization, which fosters a life of humiliation and hinders the social integration process (Nemiroff et al. 2011, Patterson, Moniruzzaman, & Somers, 2014). Researchers are developing several studies on the experience of homelessness and public housing programs (Marzana et al., 2023; Gaboardi, 2020; Gaboardi et al., 2022; Greenwood et al., 2020). The findings indicate that home is a foundation for people's well-being (O'Shaughnessy et al., 2021). In addition, research on housing programs examines the role of housing and neighbourhoods in the integration process (Bassi et al., 2020; Wanna et al., 2019). Another current area of research from a community psychology perspective addresses the lockdown period following the COVID-19 pandemic and the role of the home in this context. In 2020, the home took on several functions in many countries, but these functions are still poorly understood (Lima et al., 2020). The home often becomes a place of work and education, making people physically stationary but digitally more flexible. These different needs brought to light the potential and complexity of the home (Prime, Wade & Browne, 2020). On the one hand, the home is seen as a safe place to avoid exposure, although the perceived safety of the home environment is not supported by the fact that most infections occur in domestic spaces. On the other hand, internal tensions can make the home oppressive. The number of domestic violence cases has increased (Kourti et al., 2021). Moreover, home is usually a private place that protects privacy and forms a boundary between the internal and external world, and people feel their privacy is violated when this boundary is crossed. Working from home can create a sense of invasion of privacy (Walters et al., 2023), but at the same time, being at home often allows people to modify and improve their living spaces to make them more identity rich. Saving time allows people to attend more to their family relationships. The pandemic is profoundly changing people's relationships. For the first time, it encouraged people to develop a sense of emotional closeness after fear of contagion had inhibited contact with others (Marzana et al., 2021). A profound change in people's lives affected their own various frames of

reference; it seemed significant to examine people's relationship with their homes (Devine-Wright et al., 2020). In addition, the pandemic made it necessary to use new methods for examining the concept of home (Gaboardi, et al., 2022). The concept of home has been and continues to be in constant flux as relationships between people and places, as well as relationships between people, change. Recent developments in the field of home studies in community psychology underscore the interest in studies of this living context, its importance, and the possible interventions that can be implemented to improve people's well-being.

In summary, home is both a physical and a psychological place to which and through which people develop an attachment and that plays a fundamental role in the formation of people's identity, perceived sense of security, and social relationships. Community psychology is helpful for understanding how domestic space is connected to external relationships. Indeed, the characteristics of a place of residence are closely related to the formation of a sense of community (Chavis & Pretty, 1999).

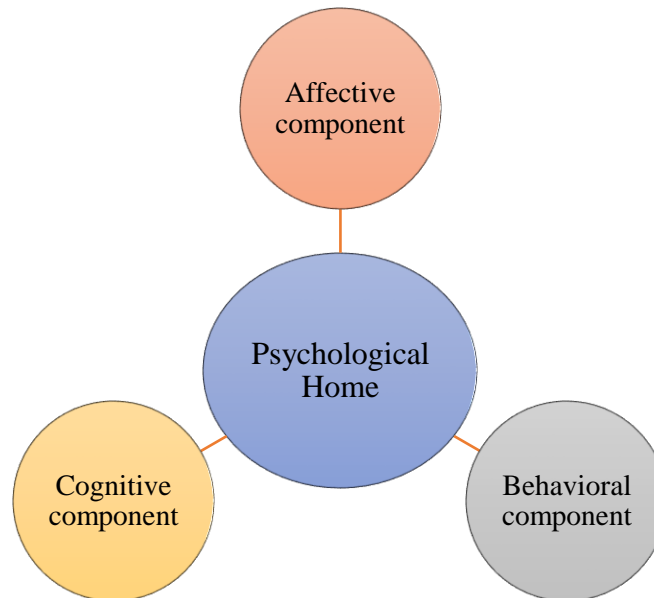
The meaning and importance that the home has in people's lives and daily routines is evident. In the next chapter, the psychological home model and the related constructs are presented.

2.2 The Psychological home

Psychological home, as defined by Sigmon, Whitcomb, and Snyder (2002), refers to a sense of belonging to others that goes beyond a physical place of residence. This underlies people's need to identify with a physical place. In a dynamic process between a psychological need and physical structures, a person manipulates their physical private space to create a home-like environment that better reflects parts of themselves and creates a sense of "home." Moreover, home represents an emotional experience in conjunction with energy expressed towards one's physical surroundings. This process transcends time and place because it spans the lifespan and is not limited to the home of origin. Moreover, psychological home appears to be cross-cultural (Sigmon et al. 2002, page 28). Once a psychological home is established, it should be stable and resilient, even if it is affected by

certain circumstances (e.g., changes in family structure, traumatic loss of physical home). Psychological home contains cognitive, affective, and behavioural components (Fig.1).

Figure 1. *Psychological home model*



The cognitive components include the ideas that people have about themselves in relation to the environment, the meaning and opinion of a home, and their self-theory in relation to home (Sigmon et al., 2002). The affective components include positive feelings such as a sense of security, warmth, attachment, and familiarity that one experiences in relation to home (Sigmon et al., 2002). The behavioural components include the actions of construction, manipulation, and personalization of one's surroundings (Sigmon et al., 2002). When a psychological home has been established, a person reports a sense of security and protection and may experience being separated from others yet still feel a sense of belonging to the group when it is together (Sigmon et al., 2002). In fact, the construct of the psychological home refers to the individual sphere. While there are studies that examine how individuals form their identity from community, Sigmon et al. (2002) focus on how individuals form their identity, which they do not share with others, by enhancing a physical environment. Sense of community and psychological home are constructs that attempt to explain and clarify our need to belong and identify with our surroundings. This process is closely related to an individual's self-concept and attachment to the physical environment. Hence, it seems to be

important to redeem what place attachment and psychological home are. Although, as already described above, research on place attachment is partially fragmented, it can be defined as a sense of belonging that emerges between individuals or groups and a place (Low & Altman, 1992). Attachment to a place is commonly considered a positive bond with a special place. In some cases (Lewicka, 2011; Manzo & Devine-Wright, 2013), this bond could become negative when people are unable to adapt to situations resulting from events that worsen the conditions of the place. Sigmon et al. (2002) suggest that the psychological home construct can be viewed as a "specific type" of place (2002, p. 32) and that attachment to place may be related to psychological home (Roster et al., 2016). The study by Moore (2000) on the relationship between territory and self-identity emphasizes the importance of home as a source of benefits, such as comfort and psychological and social needs. Moreover, well-being seems to be linked to the relationship between people and living environments (Gattino et al., 2013). In fact, people with a strong sense of psychological home experience greater well-being (Crum & Ferrari, 2019b). However, home studies have investigated the overabundance of possessions in living spaces and identified how clutter can negatively affect the psychological perception of home and subjective well-being (Crum & Ferrari, 2019a; Roster et al., 2016), particularly among older adults (Ferrari & Roster, 2018). Moreover, clutter, negative emotions and reduced social capacity predict high procrastination, which interferes with quality of life (Ferrari, Roster & Crum, 2018). In the Italian context, studies on the concept of psychological home have been conducted by Cicognani (2011), who specifically investigates the relationships among psychological home, neighbourhood attachment and sense of community, trying to capture the impact of these variables on individuals' subjective well-being. Interesting data emerge from the studies conducted by Cicognani. Higher scores for psychological home are observed among women, likely because women are more responsible for household management than men, and among older participants, most likely because they spend more time at home given their reduced independence and mobility. High psychological home scores are found among homeowners and people who live in single houses. They may have more freedom to change

their home than people who pay rent. Psychological home correlates with a sense of community, and both variables positively predict life satisfaction.

Despite the growing interest in this construct, there are no published studies that have explicitly examined perceptions of psychological home among migrants who have moved from their native country to a new community as a major construct. Only one study (Amit & Bar-Lev, 2015) used the psychological home scale as an identity component of a belongingness index among migrants. In this study, life satisfaction was related to the sense of belonging to the host country.

2.3 Sense of community and life satisfaction: a key to migrants' wellbeing

Two important relationships have been established between psychological home and sense of community and well-being. In fact, the sense of home has a social dimension. Home may go beyond the physical boundaries of the dwelling place and extend to the community. According to Sigmon et al. (2002), "*constructing a home reinforces our ability to be separate from others and yet to be a part of others*" (p. 36).

A *sense of community* refers to a feeling of belonging, a sense of being important to each other and to the group, and a shared belief that everyone's needs will be met through their responsibility to be together (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). For community psychologists, sense of community is one of the most important constructs. The sense of community seems to be related to the concept of belonging to a group or community in which people perceive themselves as similar and work in interdependence to satisfy their needs (Sarason, 1974). Belonging allows people to share a sense of connection with others and guarantees protection by establishing boundaries between those who are inside and those who are outside. Influence allows individuals to exercise power over the group in both directions and vice versa. Integration allows for the satisfaction of mutual needs among community members (McMillan and Chavis, 1986). Finally, emotional involvement allows people to experience emotions that are related to the group's history by identifying with it. Comparisons to a reference community can be both territorial and relational. Although a sense of community transcends individual relationships and behaviours, the context is

crucial for gaining a better understanding of community. Community psychology interventions could involve strategies that are aimed at strengthening the sense of community (O'Connor, 2013), as this seems to be associated with the mobilization of participatory processes (Deng et al., 2022) and with greater well-being through the development of social relationships (Taurini et al., 2017). In an Italian study, Prezza and Costantini (1998) found that the sense of community is higher in small and medium-sized cities than in large cities and is related to life satisfaction. A recent systematic review (Stewart & Townley, 2020) confirmed that a psychological sense of community may be positively and significantly associated with psychological well-being among people of many age groups in different countries and in different community settings. Specifically, the main research outcomes in community psychology are represented by measures of well-being. This idea implies the belief that well-being as an active component should take precedence over the measurement of deficits. Indeed, the principles of community psychology contributed to a revolution in the field of mental health by redefining that people's well-being, not lack thereof, should be paramount (Cowen, 2000). Life satisfaction might be an indicator of well-being (Pavot & Diener, 2008) because it determines an individual's capability to have a life that meets their needs and has a buffering effect against stressful life events (Suldo & Huebner, 2004). In addition, sense of community and life satisfaction are constructs of interest in migration research. The sense of community among migrants is examined in community psychology (Martinez-Damia et al., 2023; García-Cid et al., 2020; Salami, 2019). Migration, especially international migration, involves a transfer that can profoundly alter a person's sense of community. Thus, building a new sense of community upon arrival in a new country is one of the capabilities of migrants (Bathum & Baumann, 2007) and facilitates better settlement strategies by promoting well-being (Cicognani et al., 2008). A relationship between migrants' sense of community and life satisfaction has been found in research, but some characteristics, such as length of stay, appear to influence this relationship (Millan-Franco et al., 2019). Moreover, the sense of community in the migration context can refer to different forms related to the culture of origin and the new host society. As migrants may develop multiple identities,

they may also develop different senses of community that contribute to their well-being (Barbieri & Zani, 2015; Mannarini et al., 2018). In migration research, community psychology often considers life satisfaction to be an outcome of well-being. Economic migrants often seek to improve their life satisfaction and that of their families (Paloma et al. 2021). Life satisfaction has been used as a good indicator of positive mental health and perceived quality of life among migrants in host communities (Paparusso, 2019). Psychology with a focus on acculturation processes primarily considers the influence of individual factors on migrant well-being; these include sociodemographic variables (Fassbender & Leyendecker, 2018), specific variables related to the acculturation process (Martinet & Damásio, 2021), cultural skills (Wesołowska et al., 2018), and the development of a bicultural identity (Bae, 2020). Community psychology highlights the need to develop analyses that examine the impact of conditions in oppressive contexts on migrant well-being. These analyses go beyond the individual and culturalist level and consider migrant groups to be active agents who combat and change the context in which they live during their acculturation process but also agents who make useful suggestions to improve migrants' well-being (García-Ramírez et al., 2011). Instead, according to Paloma et al. (2016), it is necessary to reengage the context to understand the processes that determine migrants' well-being. It seems important to examine the power relations between host groups and migrants and propose changes in host societies to achieve collective well-being (Paloma & Manzano-Arrondo, 2011). Migrant well-being is composed of the dynamics of interdependence between the contextual and individual factors involved in the settlement process (Paloma, García-Ramírez, & Camacho, 2014).

2.4 Resilience: migrants as active subjects

Due to the difficulties that migrants often face during their journey, it was also hypothesized that measuring the resilience of migrants should be included in this doctoral project. *Resilience* refers to the ability to adapt, survive, or overcome stressful life events, a process that includes an ability to be flexible (Grotberg, 2003). According to the ecological model, resilience is the result of an interactive process among environmental, biological, psychological, social, and other risks;

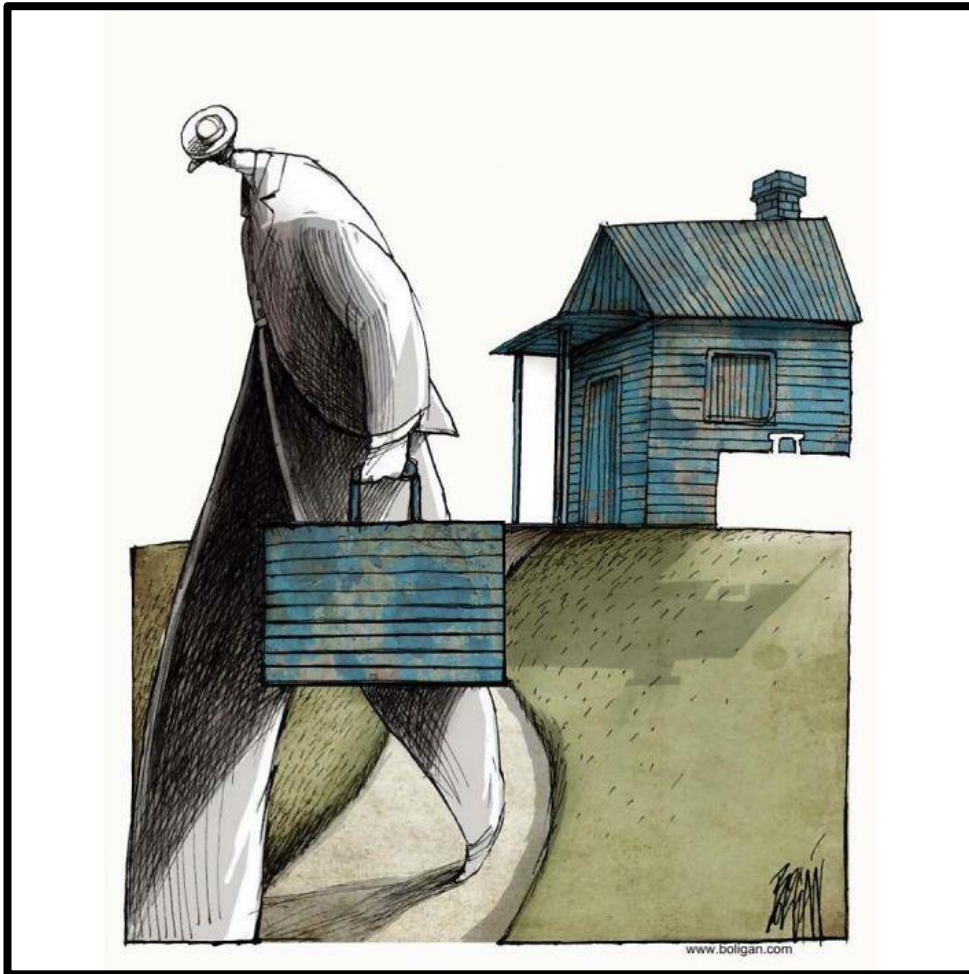
protection; and promotion factors. This resilience model includes interactions among all levels of the ecological system that require the individual to exploit resources that may be present in different areas (Jenson & Fraser, 2006). Resilience reduces the number of events that are experienced as stressful and increases overall well-being (Ong et al., 2006). Studies have suggested that resilience is not a static state but a process that results from the interaction between the subject and the environment, in which subjects direct their resources towards the maintenance of health (Southwick et al., 2014). According to the literature (Babatunde-Sowole et al., 2016), resilience is associated with the experience of migration. In the psychiatric and psychological literature, the concepts of trauma and resilience are associated with the phenomenon of migration (Gambaro et al., 2020; Gatt et al., 2020; Ventriglio & Bhugra, 2015). Although community psychology does not focus on migration from this perspective, it is interesting to see how the difficulties associated with the migration process could be the event that justifies the development of resilience in migrants. Falicov's analysis of migrant families (2015) shows how migration can be an uprooting of symbolic meanings that deserves attention. Importantly, many migrants, although not all, encounter difficult challenges during the migration process. Beginning with the reasons for migration and continuing through the journey and arrival in the host country, numerous obstacles can be encountered.

Research on resilience in acculturation processes has examined migrants' adaptation by testing their psychological resilience, which is understood as their individual ability to cope with the challenges associated with living in a new context (Castro & Murray, 2010; Motti-Stefanidi, 2019). Both risk and resource factors are implicated in the process and outcomes of resilience. Language barriers, social isolation, family conflict, parent-child acculturation gap, and marginalization policies are considered a few of the risk factors for migrants (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2018; Goforth et al., 2015). Discrimination and labour market segmentation negatively affect migrants' sociocultural integration (Fokkema & de Haas, 2011). Moreover, resilience research has highlighted migrants' intrinsic strengths and actions in the face of an inhospitable context (Sládková & Bond, 2011) and has also identified assets, resources, or protective factors. Education, social ties

and support, community organizations, and culturally responsive policies contribute to the well-being of migrants (Ciaramella, et al., 2021; Revens, et al., 2021). At the individual, family, and community levels, these factors influence the dynamic process of adjustment to a new environment (Castro & Murray, 2010). Although migrant resilience and acculturation are key constructs, their study reserves ambiguous relationships and requires interpretation that extends understanding to the national context in which resilience and acculturation take place (Verbena, Rochira, & Mannarini, 2021). In addition, community psychology has been devoted to the study of resilience at the level of the community, not just the individual. Community resilience is a process that links a network of adaptive capacities with adaptation following a collective and troubling event (Norris et al., 2008). Furthermore, it encompasses not only what happens after the critical event but also the role of community risk factors in preparation (Kendra & Wachtendorf, 2003).

In this dissertation project, individual resilience is considered a variable that testifies to one's ability to live successfully and overcome challenges, such as those in the migration project. The research, like others (Novara et al., 2022; Laverack, 2018), is part of the theoretical model of competence, according to which the person is responsible for his or her own actions in defence of his or her own well-being and is an active subject, in light of the principles of community psychology.

In summary, a possible definition of home is a place with social, psychological, and emotional significance for individuals and groups. The term 'home' is used in this thesis in its abstract sense with a variety of associations and meanings. Psychological dimensions related to home (psychological home, sense of community, life satisfaction and resilience) are explored in more detail. The next chapter presents what is known about the meaning of home for migrants and what aspects should be further explored.



9th International Contest of Caricature and Cartoon of Vianden 2016, Luxembourg – My home is my castle – 2nd place – Angel Boligan)

3 Home as migrant's life context

The need to integrate the study of migration with different levels of analysis is increasingly evident (Procentese & Migliorini, 2022). Studying micro contexts (Birman, 2011) and their interdependence with other contexts, such as relationships in communities and between cultures, seems crucial in migration. In addition, community psychology focuses on the promotion of well-being in and of life contexts where people share a physical space. Martini and Marzana (2021) emphasize how psychologists acting in living environments can be a resource in the development of community skills and the well-being of individuals. In residential contexts, the primary aim of the research is to enable people who have not chosen themselves and may not have similar needs to interact and be interdependent.

When a person migrates, the main changes occur in the life context. This is especially true in micro contexts, where the great challenge of integration is played out, and migrants need to spend an amount of energy to be supported. From an ecological perspective, migration means relating people and places. Reflecting on migration and the sense of belonging to a place, we may say that the migrant is the one who detaches himself or herself from his or her world. Migrants often must learn to live in unknown sites and face difficulties, but they can also cope dynamically and creatively with the loss of territorial references, building new ones and maintaining relationships with different places (Ralph & Staeheli, 2011). Considering the theories described above, place attachment appears to be linked to the identity of an individual or a group, and consequently, the loss of one's place can entail confusion or disorder in one's identity (Knez, 2005; Proshansky et al., 1983).

Anthropologists and sociologists have examined the vision of home through migration studies (Bendix & Lofgren 2007; Duyvendak, 2011). The notion of home is conceived as a process linked to structural aspects of dwelling and deeply influenced by the dynamism of migrants. They seem to perceive their home as a condition of mind rather than a physical location (Rapport & Dawson, 1998). Ahmed, Castada, Fortier, and Sheller (2020) consider the political, collective, and national boundary aspects of migrants' homes and suggest that building and rebuilding identity through the establishing of a home is a process that is indivisible from migration. From a

sociological view, a research project on home practice and migration was undertaken by Boccagni. The author defines "homing" as the micro practices with which people try to feel at home in their life circumstances and the moral and emotional economies that support them (Boccagni, 2017). The construct is composed of three distinct levels: a cognitive-moral level relating to how the home should be, an emotional level referring to how the person feels at home, and finally, a practical level that concerns the set of practices and routines that make up the home. Furthermore, through this construct and the choice of the verb tense, Boccagni (2017) wants to emphasize the constitution of the home as a constantly evolving process.

The preceding summary of the current state of research on homing among migrants is followed by a brief description of the Italian migration context before the research question is clarified.

3.1 Migrants and housing policy in Italy

In the 1970s, after the rise of economic prosperity, Italy went from being a country of emigration historically to a country of immigration. The 1970s and 1980s saw the first immigration movements, mainly from former African colonies (Eritrea, Somalia, Ethiopia) and some smaller ones from other countries of origin, mainly to be employed as domestic workers. The major immigrations took place in the 1990s. The first waves of immigration came mainly from Albania and from the coasts of North Africa. The Albanian community is one of the most deeply rooted communities in Italy. Immigration began in connection with the collapse of the communist regime that had ruled the country since the postwar period. From 1993 to 2014, immigration was solely responsible for the positive balance of Italy's population growth. In 2015, however, this positive balance was interrupted, although immigration to Italy continued. As of December 31, 2020, there were approximately five million foreign citizens legally living in Italy (8.45% of the total population). These data do not consider the number of irregular foreign citizens, which is estimated at 517 thousand people (I. S. M. U., 2021). Compared to Europe, Italy ranks first, together with Germany, the United Kingdom and France, in the number of foreigners living in the country. Most

foreign residents in Italy come from another European country (50.2%). The most represented origin is followed by Africans (21.7%), Asians (20.8%) and Americans (7.2%). Specifically, Romania (23%), Albania (8.4%) and Morocco (8%), China (5.7%) and Ukraine (4.6%) are the most represented countries in Italy. These data must be interpreted considering the policy that governs citizenship in Italy. The child born in Italy to foreign parents is not directly granted Italian citizenship and is therefore also a foreigner, until he or she can generally apply for Italian citizenship after ten years of continuous residence in Italy and without a criminal conviction. Although the definition of "second generation" may be ambiguous and varies widely in the literature, data (Istat, 2020) state that the number of second-generation minors living in Italy is estimated at 1.3 million (of whom 75.3% were born in Italy).

The interpretation of the migration phenomenon in Italy is complex. Immigration is a central issue in public opinion and political debate. The succession of different governments in recent years has led to changes in often conflicting immigration policies. On the one hand, positions that are strongly closed to the phenomenon have sometimes prevailed, and on the other hand, more tolerant laws have been enacted. The various regulations that have followed each other in the field of immigration in recent years have led to different and volatile results. Although media and political attention is often focused on the arrival of migrants by sea (according to UNHCR (2021) data, 67,477 refugees and migrants arrived in Italy by sea in 2021), it should be noted that the largest migration flow consists of internal migration in Europe. The reasons that lead people to migrate to Italy (even if it is not always the destination country, but rather a transit country towards Northern Europe) include mainly economic reasons, family reunification and study reasons. Asylum applications must also be considered. In 2021, there were a total of 196,641 refugees and asylum seekers in Italy (8% of the total number of applications made in all EU countries). They come mainly from citizens of the Horn of Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, and the Middle East. The territorial commissions examined about 50,000 applications in 2021, of which more than half were rejected. Even though the issue of refugees and asylum seekers is increasing and attracting a lot of media and

political attention, it is important to emphasize that they represent only a small part of the total number of migrants. Compared to the destination, the immigration flows in 2021 are mainly to the north (53.9% of the total), followed by the south (23.4%) and the center (22.7%). At the regional level, Lombardy has the highest number of foreign residents (19% of the total), followed by Lazio and Emilia-Romagna (both 10%). The settlement of foreigners in Italy seems to respond to different logics. In general, the origin of foreigners determines the region in which they will settle. Romanians, Albanians, and Moroccans occupy more jobs in the north. However, in some areas there is a concentration of certain nationalities due to the demand for certain occupations or local conditions (see the Ecuadorian community in Liguria, the Chinese in Tuscany, and the Filipinos in Lazio). In southern Italy there are also forms of immigration resulting from the return of part of the Italian emigrants of the past. The migration phenomenon in Italy, although complex to interpret, is undoubtedly present and now firmly rooted. Given the changes in regularity, origin, and policies, foreigners living in Italy represent a part of the population of interest for the study.

Regarding housing, foreigners in Italy are recognized as having the right to housing (Article 10, paragraph 2 of the Constitution; Article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, New York, 1966; and Article 6 of ILO Convention No. 97). The Italian Constitution protects the right to housing by establishing the inviolability of the home (art. 14) and by facilitating access to housing, including through social security (arts. 47, paras. 2 and 31). Moreover, the right to housing takes the form of a "fundamental social right" (Constitutional Court Judgment No. 217 of 1988). For a foreigner, the possession of a dwelling is not only a right, but also a minimum condition for the issuance of a residence permit. In this sense, the legislation establishes that foreigners (subject to legality) have access to housing like Italian citizens without discrimination (Consolidated Immigration Law). The housing issue in Italy is also complex. Data on the Italian housing market show that difficulties are increasing, especially for some vulnerable groups (Istat, 2022). The Italian state provides housing to the more vulnerable groups at favorable economic conditions thanks to Public Housing. However, this measure covers only 5 and 6% of the

housing market. Although the state is responsible for social services, the individual regions can adopt social policies that consider other requirements that take into account the differences in the rooting of foreigners in the region. In general, municipalities are the owners of public housing, and it is they who are directly involved in solving housing problems. Although the National Housing Program (Piano Casa, August 6, 2008, No. 133) has increased the supply of housing for the most disadvantaged, including regular migrants in disadvantaged economic circumstances, major difficulties remain. The criteria for accessing this form of assistance are often unfavorable to migrants (e.g., minimum length of stay). Many regional laws provide that only those who do not own a house in any country in the world, or at least in their motherland, have credentials for social housing. For these reasons, foreigners who have few economic resources rarely have access to social housing. The private market is most often used by foreigners to rent housing. Given the distribution of housing in Italy, where home ownership predominates, there are few rental properties that can be easily conveyed to small owners. Therefore, foreigners looking for housing often have to contact the respective landlord directly. Language difficulties and possible discrimination on the open market are disadvantages for migrants. Although the right to housing is enshrined, the situation in daily practice still seems far from guaranteeing housing to all those in need. Indeed, the housing shortage is particularly pronounced among migrants. Migrants now account for most of the homelessness in Italy. Two broad categories can be distinguished among foreigners suffering from housing problems. First, foreigners in emergency situations (asylum seekers, refugees, and irregular migrants) are often affected by severe poverty and social isolation. In Italy, a reception model has been developed for these people, which has been modified several times over time, providing for initial placement in emergency shelters and subsequent integration into other housing solutions. The extraordinary reception centers, originally designed for emergencies, actually receive two out of three migrants. The long-term reception systems, which accommodate a smaller number of migrants and provide for integration projects, only receive the remaining one-third. In 2018, less than 5% of refugees housed in initial reception facilities received housing assistance and less than 1% were

assisted with rental procedures when leaving reception facilities (AIDA, 2022). Moreover, the phenomenon of ghettos that have grown up around the employment of irregular migrants (but also EU citizens) in agriculture leads to migrants living in extremely precarious housing conditions. On the other hand, there are foreigners who have lived in Italy for a long time, have established a social network and want to improve their housing conditions. These families often have great difficulty finding adequate housing, even if they have relatively stable employment. It is difficult for these people to obtain sufficient collateral to take out a bank loan or rent from a private individual. In addition to economic constraints, access to housing is also hindered by forms of discrimination. An example of the difficulties in managing a home comes from the statistics on the housing situation of foreigners in Italy. In 23.4% of cases of EU citizens and in 21.3% of cases of non-EU citizens living in Italy, they live in families where the total cost of housing represents more than 40% of disposable income, while the rate for Italian citizens is 6.3% (Eurostat housing cost overload rate for 2021). 44.2% of EU citizens and 56.6% of non-EU citizens live in overcrowded conditions in Italy (EU average 32.2%). The data on housing conditions for the total population (Italian and foreign citizens) also show that a significant proportion of Italian houses are in poor condition. 19.2% live in a house with a leaky roof or damp walls/floors/foundations or rot in window frames or floors (EU average 14.8%, Eurostat data for 2020). Housing policies for foreigners, as well as for vulnerable populations in general, are inconsistent and do not always produce the expected results. Moreover, the establishment of the first reception centres, modelled on homeless shelters, has helped spread the idea of low-level housing for foreigners. The continuous evolution of migratory flows, even after war events and climatic adversities, heralds a complex evolution of housing problems in Italy. It seems necessary to develop interventions that, on the one hand, meet the criteria of emergency, but on the other hand, provide for a long-term restructuring of housing policies for migrants. The evolution of migrants' constant requests for access to housing has also led to the development of new instruments to respond to them. There are numerous examples of forms of "social housing" involving both institutions and other private entities. These instruments can be

different and have led to very different experiences of housing, such as social housing, cohabitation, reception in families. Often these instruments are based on social inclusion projects that combine housing assistance with employment and social inclusion instruments.

3.2 Research problems, general aims, and method

Based on the previous dissertation, the relevance of research on the home experience for people on the move can be assumed. Migration studies and environmental research on "home" constitute two independent research areas, but both similarly analyse the psychological significance of dwellings. These two fields overlap in the examination of structural aspects of migrant homes (Li & Liu, 2018; Salama, Wiedmann & Ibrahim, 2018) and the conceptual meaning of the home (Liu, 2014; Loddo, 2017).

Moreover, the empirical psychological literature on the role that the home might play in people's lives is still limited (Graham, Gosling & Travis, 2015). Very few studies have examined how home is experienced or understood in general (Zufferey, You & Hand, 2019), although the importance of examining people's micro contexts has been explained (Birman, 2011).

In the literature on the construct of psychological home among migrants, there is only one study (Amit & Bar-Lev, 2015) that uses the Sigmon's Psychological Home Scale as a component of a large index of sense of belonging. The meaning that the authors give to the psychological home is closed to the identity aspect. This study relates migrants' life satisfaction as an antecedent of sense of belonging (of which psychological home is a component) to the host country. Given the lack of literature on the psychological home and given the specific operationalization of the construct by the only existing study, a gap in the literature in this area is emerging. Consistent with previous studies on psychological home (Swanson & Ferrari, 2022; Rogers & Hart, 2021; Crum & Ferrari, 2019a; Crum & Ferrari, 2019b, Roster et al., 2016; Cicognani, 2011), the present research project uses Sigmon et al.'s (2002) construct in its broadest sense and as an antecedent to human well-being.

The demands that come from the territory and the needs of people in the Italian context make it increasingly important to develop intervention strategies in the field of housing. In particular, the

characteristics of migrants and the need to make the process of creating a home in Italy more equitable raise many questions about the role of homing in the integration process.

The purpose of this exploratory study is to understand the role of psychological home for people with a migration background. Some variables that may be related to the psychological home are considered. First, it is important to verify that the psychological home supports migrants' life satisfaction. Moreover, the relational factors supported by the psychological home appear to be important for migrants establishing new relationships in a new country. Given the key role that sense of community may play in migrants' well-being (Buckingham et al., 2018; García-Cid et al., 2020), it seems important to understand whether and how it is related to psychological home. Several variables related to the migration process can be considered important factors in the study of the construction of a psychological home. Investigating the acculturative dimension can reveal information on how aspects of the culture of origin and Italians intersect with the construction of the psychological home. An innovative aspect is that of the investigation of the resilience of migrants, even though in Italy, there are few studies among the migrant population (Verbena, Rochira & Mannarini, 2022; Verbena, Rochira & Mannarini, 2021; Ventriglio & Bhugra, 2015).

It seems interesting to understand how the psychological home interfaces with the development of resilience in the migration process.

Sense of community, acculturative dimensions, resilience, and life satisfaction seem to be worth studying among people with migrant backgrounds.

Although the specific reason for migration may affect how migrants rebuild a sense of home in a foreign country, only voluntary migrations are included in the present study project. Migrants often live unstable conditions, especially when migration is forced. Some events, such as displacement, asylum, and being a refugee, may influence the homing process (Kandylis, 2019; Mah & Rivers, 2016). The exploratory nature of the study encourages choosing to include people who declare voluntary migration first. Although people often may not freely choose their housing in forced migration and this could have a very strong impact on well-being, even for people who

migrate voluntarily and may choose housing, the existing housing market and policies may influence this process (Baldini & Federici, 2011; Nelson et al., 2015).

In addition, this study seeks to bridge the gap between the migration and environmental study fields of research through the framework of community psychology and to expand knowledge about the psychological meaning of home.

To address the research problem, a mixed methods approach is adopted. The use of qualitative and quantitative elements is useful for improving the breadth, depth, and complexity of the knowledge produced (Daigneault & Jacob, 2014) and facilitates overcoming the polarization between quality and quantity that is often present in the social sciences (Cordaz, 2011). According to Thashakkori and Creswell's (2007) classification, this research project uses a set of procedures to construct and implement a research design according to the practice perspective.

The choice of the research method was concentrated starting from the research objectives and considering the criterion of appropriateness between research question and methods.

A first research question can be summarized as follows: What are the main findings of social science studies that have investigated the perception of psychological home in the migrant population? The most appropriate research method was identified in a literature review.

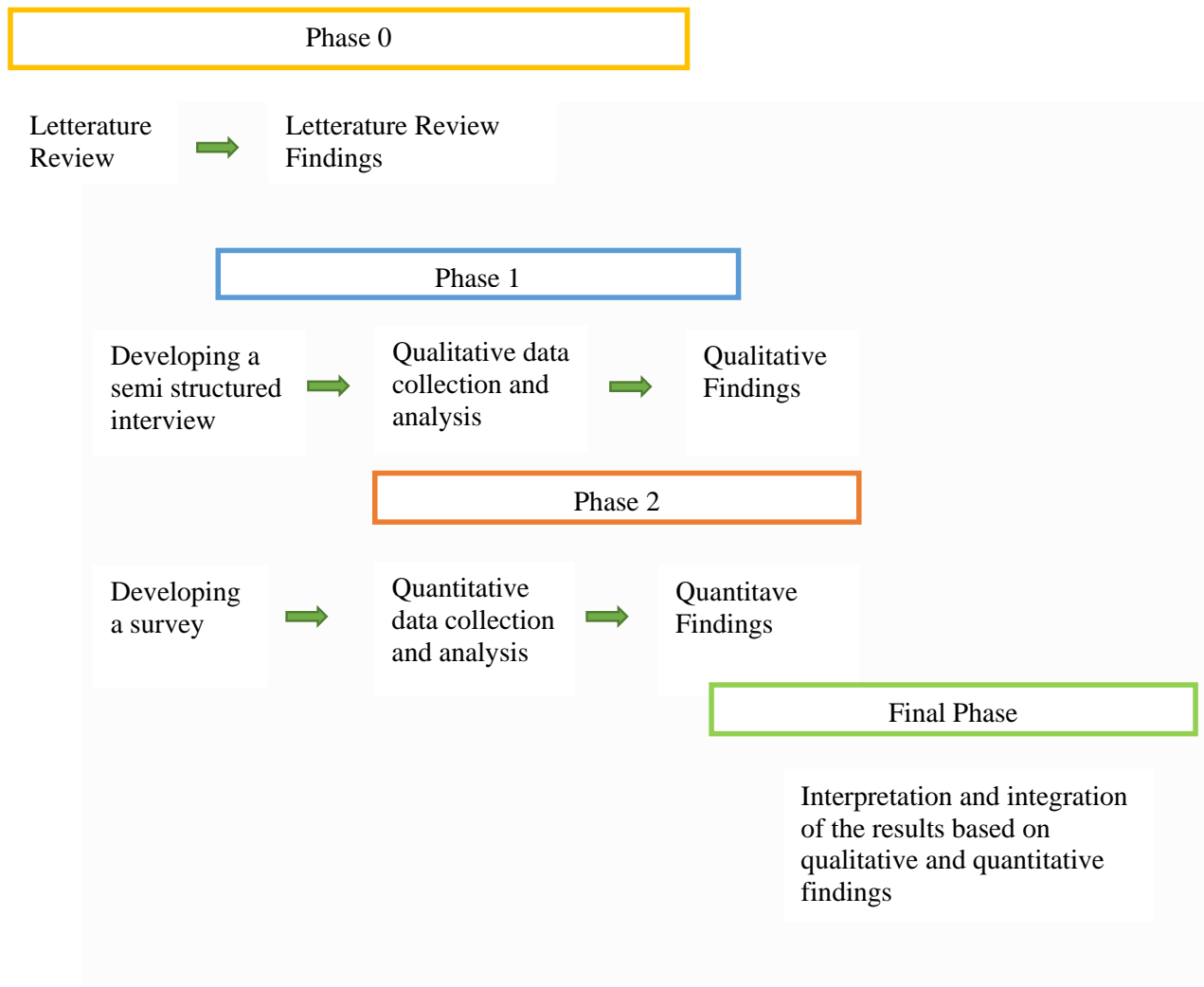
A second question can be summarized as follows: What role does the acculturation process play in the construction of the psychological home in the migrant population? How does the process of acculturation contribute to the establishment of a psychological sense of home among migrants? What are the contexts in which migrants develop resilience? What is the peculiarity of the relation between migrants and residential community? The use of a qualitative approach, specifically a semi-structured interview, has been demonstrated as the most suitable method for addressing these complex issues.

A third research question can be summarized as follows: What is the relationship between the constructs of psychological home, sense of community, resilience, and life satisfaction? The

method that proved most appropriate to determine the significance of the relationship between the constructs was the survey and statistical analysis of the collected data using a quantitative approach.

Moreover, mixed methods are used to explore an under researched topic (Fig.2). A first phase of literature review is used to answer the research questions based on previous studies and to identify areas that still need to be explored. The qualitative study allows for an initial exploration of the constructs, provides partial results, and can provide answers about how the process occurs. Quantitative studies may or may not statistically confirm the relationships among the constructs, may increase the generalizability of the findings, and may suggest new areas for research. In the last phase, the partial results are integrated. Creswell and Clark (2011) defined integration as the combination of qualitative and quantitative data within a given phase of research. Integration at the outcome level was chosen to better understand the phenomenon, provide a more complete picture, validate, or not validate the results, and explain the conclusions with more comprehensive answers. The interaction may allow a quantitative effect to be identified and the underlying process to be described qualitatively. The next chapter is divided into three sections and presents the three studies. For the literature review and qualitative and quantitative data analysis, the main results are presented and discussed. In the final, concluding chapter, the integrated results are presented and discussed.

Figure 2. *Exploratory mix method sequential design*



HOME
is where your heart is

La **casa** è fondamentale per ciascuno di noi, ci fornisce sicurezza e **protezione**. La sua importanza riflette il nostro bisogno primario di intrattenere una relazione significativa con un luogo che rappresenta una fonte di **identità** personale. Il **legame** che siamo in grado di provare per un certo ambiente può influenzare le nostre emozioni e il nostro benessere. La casa è quindi allo stesso tempo un contesto semplice, che fa parte della nostra quotidianità, e uno spazio complesso, in cui si intrecciano eventi e **relazioni** passati e presenti costitutivi dell'**esperienza umana**.

L'obiettivo del progetto di ricerca
"I significati della casa e della comunità nel contesto migratorio"
è quello di comprendere la relazione che le persone hanno con la propria casa e con il quartiere in cui vivono.

*Hai vissuto a lungo in un altro Paese?
Vuoi raccontarci la tua relazione con il luogo in cui attualmente vivi?
Abbiamo bisogno del tuo aiuto!*

Referenti scientifici del progetto


 Prof. Joseph Ferrari
 Dipartimento di Psicologia
 DePaul University
 United States


 Prof.ssa Laura Migliorini
 Dipartimento di Scienze della Formazione
 Università degli Studi di Genova
 Italia



Project dissemination materials (2020)

4 "The Meaning of Home and Community in the Context of Migration":

the research project

The project "Meaning of Home and Community in the Context of Migration" is a collaborative effort between the Department of Psychology at DePaul University (Chicago) and the Department of Education (DISFOR) at the University of Genoa. The aim of the project is to gain insights into people's relationship with their homes and the neighbourhoods they reside in. The Research Ethical Committee of the Department of Educational Sciences at the University of Genoa has reviewed the rationale and research tools, including interviews and online surveys, employed in the entire research project. In April 2020, the Ethical Committee confirmed that "The Meaning of Home and Community in the Context of Migration" adheres to ethical standards.

The project operated within the framework of community psychology, which serves as the reference framework for both departments. This scientific collaboration has fostered ongoing exchanges throughout the design process, from the development of the study, tools, and reflections on migrants' homes. Considering different perspectives has been instrumental in shaping the work. The project is actively supported by Prof. Migliorini (DISFOR), Prof. Ferrari (DePaul University), Prof. Paola Cardinali (research fellow at DISFOR), Vittoria Romoli (PhD student at DISFOR), and Andrew Camilleri (PhD student at DePaul University). DISFOR has been involved in data collection, qualitative and quantitative analysis, and article writing. Discussions with Prof. Ferrari have prompted reflections on the role of the psychological home for individuals, as well as the implications of community psychology, cultural differences, and research methodologies. Engaging with Prof. Migliorini has led to a deeper understanding of the role of community psychology in the study of migrations and the key variables involved. Additionally, as a mentor, Prof. Migliorini has fostered reflections on the role of the researcher in the inquiry process. Conversations with Paola Cardinali have facilitated an exploration of qualitative analysis techniques, as well as acculturation and relational aspects related to migration processes. Collaboration with Andrew Camilleri, an expert in political science, has allowed for the emergence of insightful suggestions to further delve into various topics, considering the diverse academic backgrounds.

This ongoing collaboration has resulted in a line of research that has yielded several studies, some of which have already been published or are in the process of publication. This paragraph provides an overview of the key characteristics of these studies, primarily authored by Camilleri (Camilleri et al., 2022) and Cardinali (Cardinali et al., 2022). In subchapters 4.2 and 4.3, the main findings are contextualized within the scope of this thesis.

4.1 Study 1. Migration and Home: A Prisma scoping review

A dwelling may be considered a micro-context in which migrants rebuild their psychological home in a foreign land and in which attachment to this new physical residence might be influenced by current and previous environmental settings (Boğaç, 2009). Moore's study (2000) on the relationship between territory and self-identity underlined the importance of home as a source of benefits, such as comfort and psychological and social needs. The connection between individuals and their living environments appears to impact well-being (Gattino, De Piccoli, Fassio, & Rollero, 2013). Indeed, those who possess a stronger sense of psychological belonging tend to experience elevated levels of well-being (Crum & Ferrari, 2019b). However, research into the concept of "home" has also explored the excessive accumulation of possessions within living spaces, uncovering how clutter can detrimentally influence the psychological perception of home and overall subjective well-being (Crum & Ferrari, 2019a; Roster et al., 2016), particularly among the elderly (Ferrari & Roster, 2018). Additionally, the presence of clutter, coupled with negative emotions and diminished social capacities, has been found to be indicative of heightened procrastination tendencies, which can impede overall quality of life (Ferrari et al., 2018). As already written above, the construct of a psychological home was investigated within Italy by Cicognani (2011), as related to life satisfaction and sense of community, and extending home to neighbourhood and community relations. Psychological home positively correlated with a sense of community, and both variables positively predicted life satisfaction. Despite a growing interest in this construct, there are no published studies explicitly investigating the psychological experience of one's physical home among migrant populations who have moved from their native country to a new community. The present study addressed these factors. A single study emerges from initial research on the psychological literature on the psychological home studied among migrants. In this study (Amit & Bar-Lev, 2015), Sigmon et al. (2002) "Psychological home" scale was used to create a sense of belonging index for people who migrated to Israel (host country). This study showed how life satisfaction, understood as a measure of well-being, acted as a mediator between some variables

related to migration and the sense of belonging to the country of arrival in a group of migrants. Although this study provided some important initial findings in the field of migration studies and sense of belonging, it assigned only a partial role to psychological home. Moreover, the psychological home in this study was understood mainly in terms of its identity function, ignoring the other possible functions related to the relational and community context.

Given the dearth of literature on the psychological home of migrants and the numerous connotations of the term "home," it seems necessary to deepen migration studies, not just the psychological literature, on home to provide an exploratory assessment of the psychological home of migrants. Migration studies and environmental research on "home" may be two important independent fields of research, but both examine the psychological meaning of homes in similar ways. The focus of our work is on the psychological perception of the physical home of migrants.

We use a scoping review to assess the published literature on the psychological perception of home among migrants (Romoli et al., 2022). The literature review process is described below.

A literature scoping review is completed instead of a traditional one to supply a more rigorous and precise methodological procedure (Munn et al., 2018; Peters et al., 2020). The complex study area, not previously thoroughly analyzed, require a scoping review exploration (Mays, Roberts, & Popay, 2001). The area of interest is circumscribed to examine the contents. Given the Psychological Home model, all the published literature about the perception of home in the country of arrival in the context of migration is searched. The psychological perception of the home related to a specific physical dwelling is the area of interest. Even if an individual can feel at home in different settings, such as workspaces, only the place of residence is the object of the study. The psychological process that happens when migrants rebuild a psychological home is the focus. Through the scoping review, the elements that may affect migrants' perception of the psychological home are individuated.

4.1.1 Aim of the study

The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of the meaning of psychological home in the context of migration. We are interested in deepening the understanding of the psychological process involved in building a psychological home, which is limited to how one interacts with and manipulates a physical home, to provide a comprehensive synthesis of studies on the key elements that might influence migrants' perceptions of the psychological home.

4.1.2 Method

PRISMA methodology (Moher et al., 2009) was used to perform the scoping review and mapping of key concepts that reflect the psychological perception of home within a migratory context. Psychological and social science journals were considered to broaden the points of view about “home”. No time restrictions were applied to accept as many studies as possible. Peer-reviewed publications and studies in English were included to ensure the data quality, given the common and complex nature of the term “home.” Whether quantitative only, qualitative only or a mixed-method design was assessed. A total of four (4) databases was explored on July 3, 2020 (the APA’s PsycInfo & PsyArticle; Isi Web of Science; Scopus; and Proquest - Psy & Social Science databases). Furthermore, additional sources were added, inspecting the references of targeted articles. The research methodology defined by the team corresponded to a query for all publications that contain the word "migration" in their title, abstract or keywords, to include all migration studies, and for the term "home" exclusively in the keywords. No restriction was set on the two terms, even when combine with other words. Thus, final search strategy for Scopus was (TITLE-ABS-KEY (migration) AND KEY (home) AND (LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA, "SOC") OR LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA, "PSYC"))) AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE, "English")). The identified studies were collected by Zotero software (Trinoskey, Brahm, & Gall, 2009) for reference management. Duplicate citations were deleted. The authors discussed the eligibility criteria before inclusion. Subsequently, a calibration exercise by two of the co-authors (PC and VR) was performed. Finally, an expert in migration studies (LM) evaluate the selection criteria. The criteria included research

involving adult migrants of different genders that mentioned a psychological perception of the home environment related to a physical dwelling. Through a double-blind fashion, the co-authors (PC and VR) evaluated the records, first by the title and the abstract and, subsequently, for the rest by full text. A third author (LM) resolved any disagreement. The authors, before the start of the evaluation, created the exclusion criteria. During the review process, the categories that appeared to be outside the focus were identified (Table 1). The iterative charting process provided a final data form. It contains the references of every eligible article and the abstracted data from the relevant article characteristics. The country object of the investigation and the field of discipline to which the study belonged (e.g., psychology or sociology), if noted overtly by the authors, were extracted from the title of the journal, the author affiliation (reported), or the design, methods or sample stated in the paper, are presented in a discursive form. Authors read the papers toward establishing conceptual links with psychological home. The purpose, methodology, demographics, and main findings of the articles were summarized (refer to Appendix). The concept analysis was used to analyse the papers (Penrod & Hupcey, 2005). The current state of knowledge of psychological home was obtained to identify characteristics for synthesis and comparison.

Table 1. *Exclusion criteria and rational explanations*

Exclusion criteria	Explanation
Study involving minors.	Population with peculiar characteristics.
Not in English.	Criterion chosen by the research team.
Study not focused on migration.	Migration study is the main area of interest of the review. Studies dealing with human movements but not with migration were excluded (ex. nomadism or tourism).
Specific migration (return migration, student migration, refugees, displacement).	Return and student migration have specific characteristics, which are beyond the interest of the review. Refugees and displaced people often live in institutional or collective dwellings that do not permit any choice of place to live.

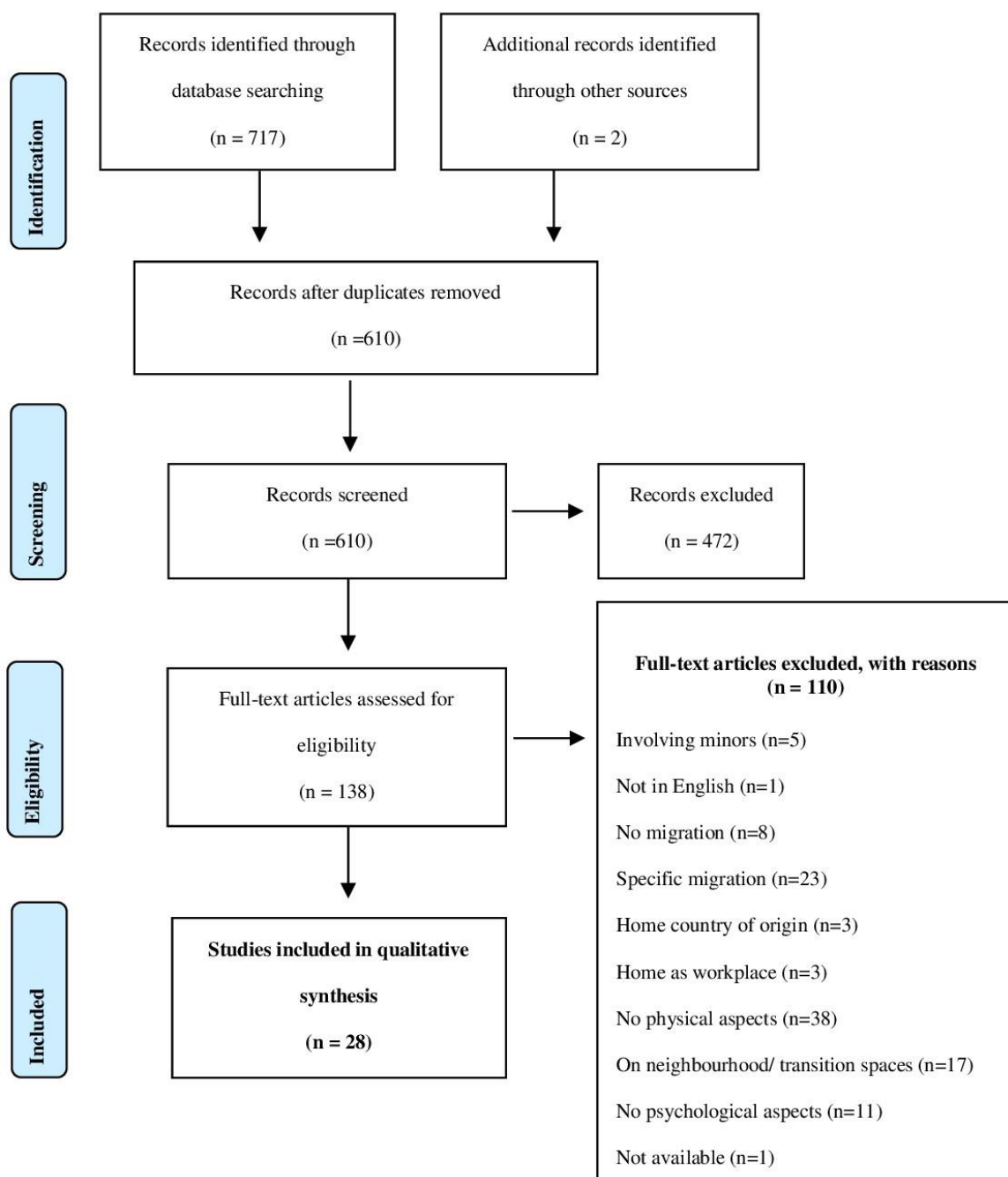
Study on home in the country of origin.	The review focus is on the home in the host country.
Study on home as a workplace.	Studies examining the home as a workplace involve more aspects about work relation than the process of homing.
Home study that does not involve the physical aspects of the home.	Home is a multi-faceted concept. The term home may often refer to the feeling of being safe, protected, and identified with a place that may not be a dwelling but rather a city or a country. The word “home” may also refer to some practices that take place at home without explicitly referring to the domestic environment. The review focuses on the psychological perception of the home as a place of residence.
Study focused on neighbourhood or transition spaces.	Neighbourhood, gardens, and other zones are transitional spaces between private and public with peculiar characteristics different from the private spaces of a house.
Study that does not include psychological aspect.	Home studies may focus only on the material aspect of the dwelling. The aim of the review is to analyse psychological aspects connected with the home.

4.1.3 Results

A flow diagram illustrates the process, as suggested by the PRISMA statement (see Fig. 3). As can be seen, the four databases returned 717 records. After the 109 duplicate records' deletion, the title and abstract of the 608 remaining records were read in light of the eligibility criteria. 136 records were viewed in full text. 110 were excluded for the following reasons: five investigated a sample of minors; one was not in English; eight were not focused on migration but rather mobility; twenty-three investigated specific types of migration, such as return migration, student migration or refugee movements or displacement, which have peculiar characteristics regarding the reasons for migration and different types of accommodations; three analysed the home in the country of origin; three considered the home environment as a workplace; and eleven did not include any psychological aspects of the perception of the home, but only structural or economic factors. The

primary reason for exclusion was that 38 studies do not involve the physical aspects of the home; 17 articles focusing on neighbourhood or transitional spaces were excluded to limit the area of investigation to the dwelling, and one was excluded because it impossible to retrieve it. The remaining 26 studies were considered eligible for this review. After reviewing the references of the eligible works, two more records were added. At the end of the selection process, a total of 28 articles were included.

Figure 3. Flow Diagram of Article Selection



The temporality of the studies ranged from 1993 to 2020. Sociology and human geography are the most represented academic fields; others are anthropology, ageing studies, housing and material culture studies, human studies, philosophy, psychology, and social work, Asian and migration studies. The United Kingdom and Australia, as well as the USA, Finland, Israel, Aotearoa (New Zealand), China, the Arabian Emirates, Ireland, Italy, Japan, and Germany, were the location of the studies by frequency order. Multi-site locations were in three studies (Canada/Portugal; Ecuador/Italy; UK/New Zealand). Study designs were qualitative methodologies, primarily ethnography, a philosophical essay, a methodological paper, and a mixed method. Adults of different genders participated in the studies. Two studies investigated elderly migrants, and two others are family research. The first generation of migrants was most present; only one study comprises the second generation. Most of the participants come from a single country of origin; the origin was mixed in five studies. Elements related to the psychological perception of home by migrants occurred from the studies. These elements were charted in the present scoping review and classified into the cognitive, affective, and behavioural components suggested by the psychological home model (Sigmon et al., 2002). Results of the classification were reported as published (Romoli et al., 2022 p.p.).

Cognitive components linked with psychological home

Several studies highlighted the complexity of the development of the meaning of home for migrants. Through qualitative research with three adult migrants from the former Soviet Union, Levin (2014a) found that they did not share a common meta-narrative that might help make sense of their migration and habitation. Rather, the individual characteristics of people seemed to be connected, according to an intersectional perspective, to the meaning of home. Therefore, gender roles seemed to impact the idea that a man needs to provide for his migrant family and to find a house as soon as possible. Although the meaning of home appeared linked to individual characteristics, other studies highlighted how more elements were involved in the home's cognition as language or cultural values. Two qualitative studies on the meaning of home for older migrants

described migrants' notion of home as a cultural notion. Liu, Maher, and Sheer (2019) defined migrants' home as "culturally rooted", both in their place of origin and arrival, regulated through migrants' socio-spatial practices and their negotiation of multiplicity. Results emphasized the language used among a dwelling's inhabitants as an important component of the idea of home. Zhan, Wang, Fawcett, Li, and Fan (2017) found that living close to people and services speaking the same language seemed to influence the idea of home; the same study suggested that the new context for living also offered new values for migrants by influencing their notion of home. Pulvirenti (2000), in a study involving Italian migrants in Australia, investigated the migration motivations born from their original context. The reason for an improvement in the quality of life seemed to create a moral imperative, affecting migrants' thoughts about home. This moral meaning was linked to employment for men and to monitoring domestic activities for women. Other studies differentiating the meaning of home regard gendered ideologies. Bilecen (2017), in a study on homes and domestic practices, attributed women a greater presence in a dwelling and an increased ability to customize it; furthermore, Sandu (2013) underlined the possibility that new rules other than those from the country of origin might develop in a new living space. However, this prerogative did not exclude that, even for migrant men, homes might have the function of representing individual identity (Walsh, 2011). Moreover, Smith (2014) investigated how Polish newcomers interpreted the home in Dublin and found three different categories. In the first group, the objects, routines, functions, and roles seemed to play a primary role in the possibility of thinking about home. A second group linked the notion to identity, nostalgia, and memory. Finally, the third showed how a possible notion of home might be conceptualized through the fluidity of space and time and found that certain types of housing were unrepresentative of a migrant's self. Additionally, Kochan (2016), exploring the concept of home through a combination of qualitative methodologies with 60 adult migrants in Beijing, found that home might be built on the concepts of mobility, flexibility, and change of dwelling. The study explained that migrants' conditions of flexibility and mobility might clash with a dominant concept of home as a fixed dwelling. In these studies, migrants conceptualized

the home through their culture of origin, theory of gender, and generally based on the motivations and conceptualization of migration experience. The fluidity with which some migrants interpreted their traveling life seemed to influence the meaning of home. Moreover, other studies found elements that contributed to the home's idea. Zufferey, Yu, and Hand (2019), through a thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews, deduced that the key elements in understanding home were associated with the material security of housing due to homeownership and neighbourhood safety; a connection to multiple homes in migration; the home as belonging to a family; and, finally, a sense of home as cultural self-expression. Wiles (2008) explored the symbolic nature of the home to affirm that the symbolic and social meaning of home for migrants was described through daily routines, practices, and social interactions with family and their extended community. These studies proposed that the relationships with past homes, relationships with family, and neighbourhood contributed to defining the home. In summary, it is possible to say that migrants possess a variety of narratives on the meaning of home that are linked to the reasons why they chose to migrate; to the expectations associated with gendered roles; to the relationship between the cultures of origin and reception; and to the social and relational context in which the migrants insert themselves. In addition, the notion of home in migrants suggested affective elements related to the home of migrants that will be presented in more detail below.

Affective components linked with psychological home

Psychological home also is composed of affective components that permit people to feel emotionally connected with home. Hirvi (2016), in a study on the relation between older and younger generations of migrants, defined the "cosmos of senses" as a specific atmosphere of a living space that affects the experience of the inhabitants, improving a sense of familiarity. However, the study of Boccagni (2014) pointed out how a poor material housing condition might permit experiencing less sense of belonging and security within dwellings in arrival countries than in migrants' homes in their country of origin. However, a dwelling in the country of arrival guaranteed a fixed point with respect to migration changes. Cain, Meares, and Read (2015) spoke about a sense

of continuity and trust in their new country that migrants experienced due to homeownership, not only from the possession per se but also from how ownership permits being rooted into place with strength and permanence. In this case, the choice of location for a new home was influenced at times by the memory of landscapes in the country of origin. Andits (2015) contributed to a study involving Australian Hungarians and found that migrants might develop emotions within a pluralistic home even if maintaining transnational ties did not necessarily translate into being double-rooted. In a study performed with a migrant family on the tangible aspects of the home, Giorgi and Fasulo (2013) highlighted how the investment of energy in the appropriation or purchase of a place in the host country seemed to result in a greater propensity to experience the affective elements that refer to psychological home, maintaining the historical and cultural identity of migrant families. Although a study (Eskel'a, 2018) in Finland with Indian professional migrants revealed that ownership of a dwelling did not always reflect attachment to it, this might be due to an economic choice rather than a psychological one. These studies found how the affective aspects related to the home could be influenced by transnational ties or by the materiality of the dwelling. Furthermore, two studies helped to understand the identity aspects elicited by the home. Gallegos (2019), in a comparative analysis on the psychological aspects of home-making, indicated that migrants might experience their homes as a source of cultural identity, even when this identity was perceived as threatening by the majority group. Vilar Rosales (2010) found that the material and cultural nature of the home permitted not only experimentation with feelings of identity but also constitutive experimentation. According to these studies, the affective components of the psychological home of migrants might consummate feelings of identity. In summary, it can be said that, from an affective point of view, home for migrants provides familiarity and protection when the external context is perceived as threatening; however, the conditions of migration and transnationalism may make it difficult to develop a sense of belonging, which seems to be associated with migrants' need to rebuild their identity. In addition to the cognitive and affective components,

following we provide an expanded description of the aspects related to behaviours in the home that emerged from the studies.

Behavioural components linked with psychological home

Several studies of home (Liu et al., 2019; Smith, 2014; Cuba & Hummon, 1993) highlighted that the modification of an environment seemed to be an element that might positively affect the sense of home. Conversely, Golovina (2019) investigated the changes that the body of a migrant underwent due to the conditions of the altered domestic environment. Very different environmental conditions from those to which migrants were accustomed, especially in terms of temperature and comfort, seemed to produce a poor commitment to home and an attitude of detachment towards other people. In different studies, the objects, and furnishings from migrants' culture of origin in the new domestic environment seemed to play a primary role in the possibility of perceiving psychological home in a new living space. Kreuzer, Mühlbacher, and von Wallpach (2018) found that certain objects were perceived to be guarantors of a memory of the past by first-generation migrants in Austria. In a study by Kochan (2016), the perception of objects might assume the function of an evocation of the migration journey. In a study on visual objects, Tolia-Kelly (2004) described them as a bridge between cultures. Levin (2014a) found that displaying tangible objects in the home might represent an element that refers to a behavioural component of the psychological home, which seems to permit sharing a collective identity with guests about the condition of migration. In a study with older migrants, Hirvi (2016) suggested that the perception of religious objects also fulfilled an informal education function for newer generations, for whom perceiving the symbolic objects of their culture helped them maintain their original membership. In a series of studies, Pechurina (2015, 2016, 2020) investigated the meanings embedded within some typical objects of Russian culture. In the earliest of these studies (Pechurina, 2015), in the UK, she found that objects did not have fixed meanings but depended on the life experience of each person. In long-term migrants, she observed that objects' dispositions represented migrants' possible attitudes towards their community of origin and that of arrival. In a methodological paper, Pechurina (2016)

examined the interest of the researcher in the study of objects. The researcher appeared to be an element capable of influencing migrant perception of domestic objects as symbols that provide an atmosphere of belonging to an entire home. In a recent study (Pechurina, 2020), an ambivalent function of typical objects on the psychological home was proposed, for example, as transpositions in the new context and activators of a feeling of loss. Other studies focused on the practices and rituals performed in everyday life inside a dwelling. Giorgi and Fasulo (2013), through an observation of a migrant family, put forth evidence of how practices with a symbolic meaning need material support to be carried out. Sandu (2013) described families' home practices as a re-activator of memory, with a function of educating the youth and the migrant community. Research on recipes (Rabikowska, 2010) explained that the rituals linked to the preparation of traditional food seemed to be a behavioural element that might encourage a sense of psychological home, even if this behavioural component of migrants' expression of identity might be relegated exclusively to their living space. These studies found that the objects and rituals typically of the migrants' culture played a role in the perception of the home, albeit with different meanings. Later, some studies discovered other elements related to the home's personalization. Some studies about migrants' personalization of their environment underlined how a relational dimension is implicated by this process. For Gallegos (2019), the relationship between the cultures of origin and destination seemed to affect the expression of migrants' belonging when the personalization of their domestic environment was perceived as threatening by the majority group. Additionally, Levin (2014b) found that Moroccans who immigrated to Israel did not always personalize the external appearance of their dwelling to re-establish a psychological home. This might be influenced by their relationship to the host community (Levin, 2014b). With regard to behavioural components, a tendency emerges in migrants to engage in new domestic traditions and practices (e.g., recipes) that refer to their culture of origin and include traditional objects of their culture in the novel environment. In this sense, psychological home appears to be the guardian of certain identity elements that find expression only in the domestic environment.

4.1.4 Discussion of the results

This scoping review revealed that the theme of home in the context of migration is present in 610 studies. 28 articles respected the eligibility criteria. The search for the elements of migrants' psychological home was completed and their classification was performed according to cognitive, affective, and behavioural components of the psychological home model. Further research is suggested by the analysis.

The identified elements were categorized and divided between the three components related to psychological home. From a cognitive point of view, migrants imagined the home as a psychological space that defined and was defined by different aspects of life. Migratory experience itself seemed to be a definition of home. Culture, relationships, and emotions had a role in the psychological home. As Al-Ali and Koser (2002) wrote, the idea of home is a process that interests different imaginative and material functions around the reconstruction of meaning and loss. Individual characteristics combine with experience of migration and contribute to a theory of home. From an affective point of view, migrants might feel at home as a psychological place characterized by security and familiarity, as evidenced by the literature on the psychological home in native populations (Crum & Ferrari, 2019b; Cicognani, 2011), in particular to ensure continuity and confidence in a new context. Nostalgic emotions during the process of establishing their new psychological home might occur in the migrant's experience. Sometimes, the stabilization process was favoured by this emotion, and sometimes feelings interfere with the process of negotiation between cultures. According to Creet (2011), memory played a crucial role within the context of migration, providing continuity to the displacement of individuals and their identities. From the behavioural perspective, migrants experienced the psychological home through concrete actions linked to symbolic meanings. Also, in this case the migratory experience and memory seemed to guide the preference for furniture and the actions carried out in domestic intimacy. Home practices had a double role to look at the past and to educate the future generation. As Blunt & Dowling (2006) wrote, routines and rituals, through familial and communal relationships, were extensions of

the concept of domestic space. Domestic practices and rituals played a very important role in everyday life (Harrist et al., 2019; Migliorini, Rania, & Cardinali, 2016), and in the home, they take on a symbolic meaning that seemed to mediate the perception of space.

Some elements are of interest for further research. The migration process itself represents, for Sandu (2013), a predominant factor in the perception of psychological home rather than the different cultural origin, even if other studies had concentrated on single countries of origin. Transnational studies should focus on how the relationships between migrant and destination cultures seem to be associated with the material and psychological homes of migrants. Studies on remittances had already underlined this interconnection (Taylor, 2011; Erdal, 2012). As expected, neighbourly or community relations emerged as characteristics involved the psychological home; the literature identified how the quality of these relationships affects the process of integration for migrants (Koelsch, Bennett, & Goldberg, 2017). Finally, the theme of language might shed light on the role played by acculturation in the perception of living space. The description of the intercultural reality became realistic (Rania et al., 2014) to bridge the gap of knowledge concerning the investigation of the acculturation process within the psychological perception of domestic space.

In summary, migration is combined with the construction of a psychological home. Memory, travel, and the reconstruction of identity and relationships seems to be crucial in migrants' perception of psychological home. Psychological home might be a point of view for observing the inner journey that the migratory experience entails.

4.1.5 Conclusion and limitations

The main finding of the previous described scoping review demonstrated that the psychological perception of the physical home gained specific characteristics in the migration context. On the one hand, establishing a psychological home in new country is driven by the quality of the contact between cultures, ideas, and practices. Part of the process involved the relationships with family members and the community. On the other hand, the psychological state related to migration experience might direct the individual to assign a symbolic meaning to "home". Migration

concerns an uprooting of the meaning system (Falicov, 2015), and home is one of the first living contexts where migrants reconstruct meanings and manage losses through concrete actions. The addressed psychological meanings give the function of symbolic container to the home. Home is the place around which migrants create and refer their identity and their relationships. The dwelling, experimented as a home, is the place where migrant plays the symbolic meanings. The psychological perception of home and the migratory experience work together in the settlement process.

Limitations

The scoping review had limitations. Some criteria might have limited the number of records, although they preserved the quality of the data. For example, limiting the data to peer-reviewed literature was generally not necessary (Peters et al., 2020), although it ensured higher quality results. Instead, the inclusion of multiple disciplines might have led to a high degree of fragmentation of the results, although this ensured a high degree of completeness. Some limitations were typical of studies included in the scoping process: The lack of quantitative methods and the preponderance of qualitative methods had led to detailed results that were highly specific but only moderately generalizable. The selection of samples, which were often small and manageable, and the regionalization of the studies contributed to the non-generalizability of the data. Participants, who in some cases were exclusively female, may be unbalanced, requiring further analysis of male or combined views.

The present scoping review provided a basis for further research on the psychological home in migrant populations. The identification of practices to increase well-being through living spaces, deserves to be investigated. The lack of quantitative studies on the psychological perception of home by migrants requires to explore this area through this design. Individual characteristics and psychological meanings are elements to be deepened. Considering the psychological home, the relationships between migrants and the destination and origin communities merit future investigation. It is interesting to deepen the migrant's home view proposed by Boccagni (2022) and

his specific conceptualization of homing as an analytical acquisition in the life and housing transitions of those who migrate.

The following chapters are dedicated to the exploration of the Psychological Home in the migrant population. The construct is assessed through different levels of analysis and with different methodologies.

4.2 Study 2. Migrant's point of view on acculturation, home, and wellbeing

Home holds a significant place in human experience and serves as a crucial source of personal identity. To describe the relationship between individuals and their homes, the concept of psychological sense of home has been introduced. This construct, initially proposed by Sigmon, Whitcomb, and Snyder (2002), refers to a sense of belonging and identity associated with a specific place. The psychological home encompasses cognitive, affective, and behavioural components. In the Italian context, Cicognani (2011) examined the interplay between psychological home, attachment to place of residence, sense of community, and subjective well-being. As expected, the study found a positive correlation among these variables, emphasizing the favourable relationship between these constructs and life satisfaction.

As part of the research project "The Meaning of Home and Community in the Context of Migration," an initial qualitative exploratory study (Cardinali et al., 2022) was conducted from a gender perspective. This study focused on the construction of psychological home in a small group of migrant men. Through grounded theory methodology, emerging themes were identified from 15 interviews. The main findings highlighted the presence of a relational component within the psychological home, in addition to the cognitive, affective, and behavioural components identified by Sigmon et al. (2002). Moreover, it was revealed that migrant men may develop multiple psychological homes associated with different locations and living relationships. Gender-specific aspects were also identified, such as men constructing a home as a domain of autonomy and the role of long-term work and family projects in building a psychological home.

Although psychological home primarily operates at the individual level, perceptions of home may be influenced by interpersonal and community factors. Home can serve as a foundation for migrants to establish connections with others and engage in their communities. Feeling safe and secure in one's environment is associated with greater satisfaction in

interpersonal relationships and community involvement. Acculturation literature highlights the possibility that people chose different strategies in different life domain, consequently the domestic space represents a significant topic of study because it might be a space where migrant people more easily manifest the customs typical of their culture of origin (Arends-Tóth & Van de Vijver, 2007; Navas et al. 2007). Moreover, studies have found that migrants who primarily manifested their culture of origin in the private domain were also more inclined to seek out contacts with persons of the same culture in the public domain (Arends-Tóth & van de Vijver, 2008; Kizgin et al., 2018). On the other hand, migrants brought into contact with the host culture may benefit from greater ease of feeling part of a new place. A recent study on Chinese rural migrant women underlines like assimilation into the modern mode of urban life involves women in the active development of a sense of home that redefines their gender roles and identities in the host society (Tang et al., 2022).

Building upon these findings, it is essential to further explore how restoring a psychological home relates to various aspects of acculturation in the migrant experience. The potential community dimension of the psychological home, as indicated by the male study, calls for an investigation into the role of the sense of community in the process of establishing a psychological home. Furthermore, the role of the neighbourhood community in the lives of individuals with migrant backgrounds in relation to the sense of home deserves attention. As previously mentioned, understanding migrants' resilience and its connection to the psychological home process is significant. Overall, the process of reconstructing a sense of home for individuals with a migrant background is an intriguing area of study. Apart from Cicognani's research, there is a scarcity of comprehensive psychological literature addressing the role and significance of home in people's lives, particularly from the perspective of those with migration experiences. Thus, there is a need to explore the role and meaning of home in the lives of individuals with migration experiences, as it remains an under-researched context. To gain insights into how individuals experience the reconstruction of their psychological

home, we employed a qualitative approach and conducted interviews. The qualitative approach was chosen to capture the richness of experiences and allow participants to express and convey the meanings they attribute to these experiences. Individuals with a migrant background were interviewed, irrespective of their age at the time of arrival in Italy or their country of birth. Given the exploratory nature of studies on migrants' psychological adjustment, it is important to understand the salient elements of the migration process rather than solely focusing on cultural differences.

4.2.1 Aim of the study

The primary aim of this study is to investigate the perspectives of individuals with migration experience regarding the establishment of a psychological home in Italy. Specific objectives include:

Examining the key issues associated with the migration process, acculturation processes, and the establishment of the psychological home.

Exploring the dimensions of the residential community, resilience, and life satisfaction.

4.2.2 Method

4.2.2.1 *Participants*

The study involved 37 adult migrants who participated in semi-structured interviews, with an average age of 34.6 years ($SD = 13.7$). Among the participants, 21 were women, and 16 were men. All participants were born outside of Italy, representing diverse origins from various parts of the world. The prevalence of Albanian participants was relatively low at 29.7%. The reasons for migration varied, with the majority (29.7%) citing the desire to improve their quality of life. Additionally, 24.3% stated that their migration decision was influenced by parental choices, 21.6% migrated for relationship reasons (marriage or voluntary family reunification), 16.2% for study purposes, two individuals mentioned limited life choices in their home country without identifying as refugees or asylum seekers, and one person sought an overseas experience.

The average age at arrival in Italy was 19 years (SD = 9), and the participants had been residing in Italy for an average of 16 years (SD = 10). The educational attainment of the participants was relatively high, with 59.4% reporting a high school degree, 18.9% having a three-year degree, 13.5% holding a master's degree, and 8.1% having completed middle school. Regarding employment status, 22 out of 37 participants were employed, 11 were students, 3 were unemployed, and one person was retired. In terms of marital status, most participants were single (59.4%), while 35.1% were married or in a partnership, one person was divorced, and one was widowed. Nearly 40% of the participants had at least one child, and over 50% were currently living with their partner and/or children.

All participants currently resided in urban apartments, whereas the type of dwelling in their home country was predominantly a single house in 60% of the cases, occasionally in a rural environment (26.7%). The main characteristics of the participants are summarized in table 2.

Table 2. *Participants' characteristics*

Gender	n	%
Males	16	43.3
Females	21	56.7
tot	37	100
Education	n	%
Middle school	3	8.1
High school	22	59.4
Bachelor's degree	7	18.9
Master's degree	5	13.5
tot	37	100
Occupation	n	%

	Employed	22	59.4
	Student	11	27.8
	Unemployed	3	8.1
	Retired	1	2.7
	tot	37	100
<hr/>			
Marital status		n	%
	Single	22	59.4
	Married/Cohabiting	13	35.2
	Widowed/Divorced	2	5.4
	tot	37	100
<hr/>			
Children		n	%
	Having children	15	40.5
	Average children (n; range)	1.6	1-3
<hr/>			
Who lives with		n	%
	Partners and/or children	20	54.1
	Parents	7	18.9
	Roommates	6	16.2
	Alone	3	8.1
	Other family members	1	2.7
	tot	37	100
<hr/>			
Current house type in Italy		n	%
	Apartment	37	100
<hr/>			
Country of Origin		n	%
	Albania	11	29.7
	Ecuador	3	8.1
	Morocco	3	8.1
	Moldova	3	8.1
	Peru	3	8.1

Congo	1	2.7
Cuba	1	2.7
Egypt	1	2.7
Haiti	1	2.7
Iran	1	2.7
Irland	1	2.7
Nigeria	1	2.7
Pakistan	1	2.7
Palestine	1	2.7
Romania	1	2.7
Syria	1	2.7
Spain	1	2.7
Switzerland	1	2.7
Ukraine	1	2.7
tot	37	100

House in the country of origin

	n	%
Single house	22	59.5
Apartment	12	32.4
Non specify type	2	5.4
University College	1	2.7
tot	37	100

Urban context	21	56.7
Rural context	10	27.1
Not specify context	6	16.2
tot	37	100

Reasons for migration

	n	%
Quality of life improvement	11	29.7
Parental decision	9	24.3

Relationships	8	21.6
Study	6	16.3
Freedom-limiting conditions in the country of origin	2	5.4
Experience abroad	1	2.7
tot	37	100

Age of arrival in the host country (years)	Mean	s.d.
	19	9
Length of stay (years)	Mean	s.d.
	16	10

4.2.2.2 Procedures and Measures

To gather qualitative data, semi-structured interviews were conducted with adult individuals of migrant background residing in Italy. The interview protocol was developed by the researchers and encompassed targeted and snowball sampling methods. Migrants affiliated with specific local associations were invited to participate, and they, in turn, referred other interested individuals to the researchers. Prior to the interview, all participants provided informed consent. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the interviews were conducted remotely using a platform chosen by the participants, which allowed for video and audio recording. This approach was implemented to safeguard the health of both the participants and the researchers. Trained interviewers conducted the interviews, which had an average duration of 37 minutes.

The interviews focused on exploring perceptions of psychological home among individuals with migration experience. The semi-structured and open-ended format allowed for a focused and in-depth conversation. Participants had the opportunity to provide detailed responses, and the interviewers had the flexibility to either move on to the next area of inquiry or delve deeper into the current question. Several dimensions of interest were explored during the interviews:

Personal migration history: Understanding the reasons behind the decision to migrate, the migration process, whether alone or with family, as well as expectations prior to departure and intentions upon arrival in the host country.

Subjective meaning of home: Asking participants to describe the first image that comes to mind when they think of "home," as well as the places and people that represent home to them.

Current home in Italy: Focusing on the choice of residence, the process of personalizing the home, and the intention to stay in that home, even if a move is imminent.

Relationship between place of origin and current residence: Examining the characteristics of the home country and identifying differences and similarities with the current home in Italy.

Acculturation: Exploring identity, such as the extent to which participants feel Italian or connected to their country of origin, and their way of life, including adopting Italian cultural habits or preserving traditions from their country of origin.

Relationship with the local community and the home country: Regarding the local community, investigating any specific areas or neighbourhoods that hold emotional significance, as well as exploring the participant's friendship network. Concerning the home country, examining the maintenance of contact with it.

Well-being: This dimension encompassed two aspects: resilience and life satisfaction. Resilience was investigated to understand how participants developed resilience and coped with challenges throughout their lives. Life satisfaction was assessed by asking participants to rate their overall satisfaction on a scale from 1 to 10 and provide explanations for their rating.

During the interviews, the interviewers also recorded important demographic data, including age, gender, marital status, occupation, education level, place of residence, country of origin, and cohabitation. Subsequently, the interviews were transcribed verbatim for further analysis.

4.2.2.3 Research design

The data analysis process was conducted using Grounded Theory (GTM) (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2019; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). This qualitative research method aims to interpret the

underlying processes of a given phenomenon, focusing on the data itself rather than pre-existing theories. The theory developed is based on reducing the collected data into mutually exclusive and exhaustive categories. The data collected from the interviews was analysed and categorized using Nvivo14 software, which aligns with GTM principles. The software facilitated organizing the interview statements into codes containing similar concepts and hierarchies of categories and subcategories.

Following GTM, a bottom-up approach was employed, and the coding process occurred in three phases: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. Open coding involved selecting relevant excerpts from the interview transcripts, while axial coding and selective coding involved grouping the codes into themes and subthemes based on participants' detailed narratives on specific topics. The coding process was performed using a data-driven codebook created by two independent researchers (refer to Appendix). Any discrepancies in coding were resolved through discussions until consensus was reached. The data analysis resulted in graphic representations of the major themes, allowing for visual exploration of the connections between themes. These thematic maps were continuously refined and adjusted through an iterative process until consensus was reached on the final representations. This approach aimed to organize and develop an understanding of the social situation being studied.

The thematic maps were utilized to conduct analyses based on gender, age, and age of migration in order to identify different patterns. When specific patterns emerged based on these attributes, they were presented in the Results section, along with examples of individuals illustrating those patterns.

Although Grounded Theory does not involve quantifying words, a frequency analysis was conducted on the adjectives used by migrants in response to the question "Name the first adjectives that come to mind when you think of your home." This analysis led to the creation of a word cloud, which provides an initial impression of how migrants describe their home. Word cloud analysis is a useful tool for preliminary analysis and involves representing the size of words based on their

frequency in the text. To create the word cloud, the corresponding query was performed in Nvivo 14 software to determine word frequencies, excluding stop words (such as conjunctions and interjections), and then visualizing the word cloud. This visual representation offers a simplified illustration of important themes, with the most frequently used words displayed in a larger font.

4.2.3 Results

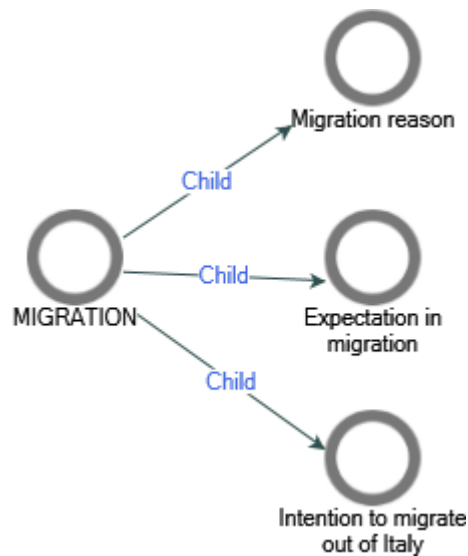
The analysis of word frequencies used by the participants in relation to the concept of home resulted in a word cloud (Fig. 4), providing an initial understanding of how migrants perceive, experience, and relate to the notion of home. The word cloud highlights the most used words, such as welcoming, beautiful, spacious, bright, large, comfortable, small, and warm. On the other hand, less frequently used words included uncomfortable, noisy, and chaotic.

Figure 4. *World cloud*



The analysis of the semi-structured interviews led to the identification of several themes and subthemes. The main themes that emerged were **Migration Experience**, **Acculturation**, **Establishing a new Psychological Home**, **Elements involved in the Psychological Home**, **Resilience**, **Sense of Community**, and **Life Satisfaction**. Each theme encompassed subthemes and subcategories that emerged from the data, forming the elements of the project maps. The descriptions provided by the interviewees were used to illustrate the various project maps.

4.2.3.1 Migration experience



One theme that emerged was the **Migration experience** that people reported. The identified subthemes were **Reason for migration**, **Expectation of migration**, and **Intention to migrate out of Italy**.

The **Reason** that motivated people **to migrate** from their country of origin was primarily the desire to improve their quality of life:

"At that time, we also worked there, but feeling that we could improve life a little, we decided to go and look around a little. At that time, we thought of coming here, working and then returning to Albania, but it did not turn out that way, you can still find us here." (Albanian man, 53 years old);

"Yes, I wanted to change, I wanted to have more, a different lifestyle, more opportunities. So, I went alone. Things are not going well in Nigeria, but even though it was not easy, I came by boat, here I am safe now." (Nigerian man, 21 years old).

Migrants spoke primarily of a decision that affects entire families who emigrate to secure a better future for their children:

"A very low lifestyle, you cannot continue there, especially as a single mother with one child. The average wage is 300, which is very little to live on. Nevertheless, I think it is a beautiful country. I made the decision primarily for my son and to guarantee him a future." (Moldovan woman, 44 years old);

"My father, to be close to my mother, decided to move here to have a better future, because first of all there is a very serious crisis here, so I came here to be with my mother and father." (Ecuadorian man, 23 years old).

Home also seemed to play an important role as an incentive for migration. More specifically, remittances from migrants' work in Italy also served to support a housing project in their country of origin:

" My home was five minutes by car from the city and a little bit outside, that is, I lived in a very small village, so ... It was a home with a garden... huge... Big, spacious, and... And it was built by my mother, who had come specially to send the money to build the home." (Ecuadorian man, 24 years old).

The desire to build a future for their children was also expressed in the words of the children who emigrated because of their parents' decision:

"For everyone in Albania it was difficult years, in 2002 my father decided to come here to Italy, but above all he did not do it for himself, he wanted to stay there in the mountains, in Albania, with his grandparents and everything... he came here mainly to give us a better future, me and my sister" (Albanian man, 20 years old);

"It was a decision guided by economic considerations, to give us a better education. A degree in Italy would have been a degree recognized throughout Europe, while a degree in Albania would not have been recognized anywhere at that time." (Albanian woman, 29 years old).

Migration also seems to have been chosen to improve one's education:

"I decided to change countries mainly because of my studies. It is true that there are postgraduate courses in Congo, but things are not yet well organized" (Congolese man, 24 years old).

In the words of migrants who came to Italy as children or adolescents, the decision was not made directly by the interviewee but by their parents and can be experienced unconsciously:

"But in reality, I did not decide, because my father was already living here, we were not yet aware with me and my little brothers that anyway you change the country to live in a place far from what until yesterday you called home, that is there at the beginning and then you are not really aware, no ... " (Pakistani man, 29 years old);

or it was taken because of the migration of a relative to be reunited with him:

"My husband decided that, because first my husband came to Italy and then we came to ... reunite the family." (Romanian woman, 53 years old).

Romantic relationships with Italians may have been the basis for the decision to emigrate:

"It was a decision that was, let us say, not easy, the reason is love. I fell in love with the person who is now my husband, and I decided to follow him because I thought it would be easier for me to come here than for him to come to Albania... I already knew Italian, that was also the main reason why I decided to come to Italy. I knew the language, but my husband did not know a single word, it would have been very difficult for him" (Albanian woman, 40 years old).

Finally, some conditions that severely limit people's freedom led them to choose the path of migration to confirm their life choices:

"To be honest, I had already started working in Syria after I graduated. I had been working since 2005, with music, concerts, arrangements, studying, all these things here. I wanted to do productions. I started, but then the war broke out and I had to do military service... So, I either stay here or I go everywhere, but I do not do the service, because when it started, I do not know if you realize that those who went to the military service could also kill everybody ... It is that kind of war. I did not want to do that, I am a musician, I am not used to that, I do not like all that. I said, "Enough, I am going away for two or three years until it calms down" and then ... it does not calm down anymore" (Syrian man, 37 years old);

"The work in the court is very hard. For me, as a twenty-four-year-old girl, it was very difficult to always wear the headscarf on my head in a country where there is not so much freedom for women... I always had to deal with people who did not get along with the law, because the law was supposed to be the same for everyone, but it was not. It bothered me so much that at one point I stopped working after two years. I was desperate and thought my brother was already working in Italy... I took the entrance exam for the Italian school in Tehran and accepted a place to study to come to Italy" (Iranian woman, 52 years old).

Expectation in migration contained sentences about the expectations that people had about the migration project before they left. On the one hand, the subcategory of fulfilled expectations had emerged in relation to the intention to migrate. From the migrants' expressions, it appeared that work

and home were also considered as the first goals for the reunification of the family and the further settlement in Italy:

"(compared to the husband who emigrated to improve his quality of life), then when he found work and housing, I also came with my first child" (Moldovan woman, 43 years old).

The expressions of those who migrated at the request of their parents also show how family expectations were flanked by migration expectations:

"As for my father, I am pretty sure he had the expectation of giving his family a better future, and he certainly succeeded in that, because the conversation we are having today is with a man who graduated in Italy and certainly would not have had the opportunity in Albania" (Albanian man, 20 years old).

On the other hand, the category of unfulfilled expectations encompasses the sentiments expressed by migrants who did not see certain expectations met regarding their perception of life in Italy. Based on their expressions, it becomes evident that the expectations some migrants had regarding technological progress and societal advancements in the host country prior to their departure were not aligned with the actual infrastructure and societal dynamics they encountered:

"My expectations were a little bit, let us say, in terms of the modernity of the country, physically, like I expected that everything would be newer, that everything would work and instead it's not like that... I had some expectations, not specifically of Italy, but of the so-called first world, that is, I imagined everything a thousand times more modern, with a much more open mentality, that is, I think that everyone in the world, at least those of our generation, grew up with the classic USA TV series, where there is a Chinese kid, a black kid and a classic American kid, that they are all friends and that there are never any problems in these societies that have been created; in real life, of course, it's not like that, but I really thought that in the first world it would be like that, that maybe things like racism would be a minority and not one party could win all the votes with racism" (Peruvian man, 21 years old).

Those who migrated due to their parents spoke of expectations that were somewhat ambiguous and evolved over time, leading to critical questions about life in Italy:

"You are small, and you think of it more as a trip and you do not think you are going to spend most of your life there. At the beginning I did not suffer from it, but with time" (Albanian man, 21 years old);

"I actually wanted to meet my mother, I did not know what she (Italy) was like, and I was expecting her to be seriously a little different. And then the country, somehow, I expected more neighbourhoods, type I does not know, the United States, you know... the separate homes, that is, here is a little bit different, Italy." (Ecuadorian man, 25 years old).

Moreover, the decision to emigrate seemed to bring some unforeseen sufferings, such as the fact of experiencing old age and the death of his relatives from afar:

"And that is another very painful point in my story, that I lost them, but I did not realize it when they left, I was separated from them, from my father and mother. So being away from home to have a dream is very expensive." (Egyptian man, 56 years old).

There is also an unexpected positive expectation of falling in love in Italy:

"What I did not expect is when you still change the place, of course you want everything to be good, something to change and actually it worked out, so we fell in love in Italy, let us say so, and so it happened and we are here" (Moldovan woman, 43 years old).

In the sub-theme **Intention to migrate out of Italy** were inserted the statements of people who have or had the desire to return to their country of origin:

*"I only came here because of you and one day I will leave you, I will go back to the mountains *laughs*, you can do what you want here, just finish your studies and get a job! When you have done all that, I can leave." You know, everybody loves his country and especially the one who grew up, worked... He grew up with the mentality of the country there... but I'll also tell you... He would rather go there, also because you want to do again the things you did when you were a kid, even when you are an adult... Nostalgia, that's nostalgia!"* (Albanian man, 30 years old);

"Since my husband was unemployed, there was little work for a while, we thought about it for a while, then we said, "Let us go home"!" All three of us went to Romania." (Romanian woman, 53 years old).

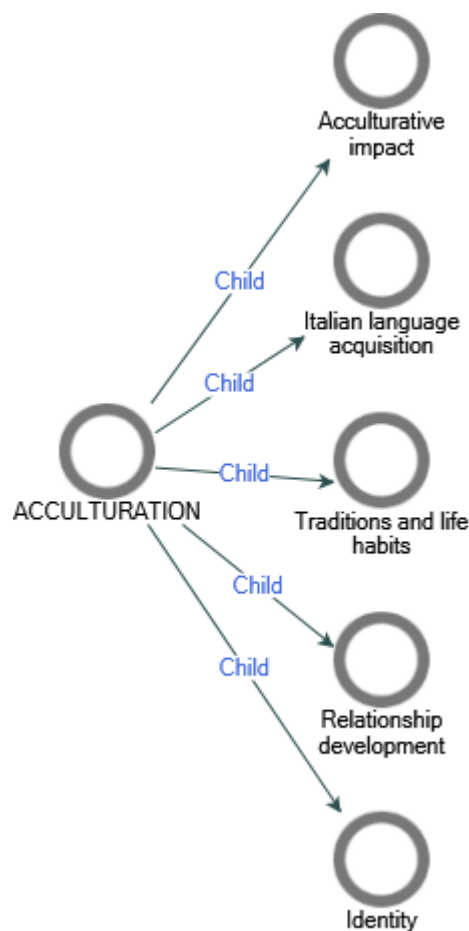
The desire to explore other countries was an element present in the younger migrants' words:

"In March I graduate from university, if everything goes well, and I am looking for a job in Amsterdam, but as a non-EU citizen I need a work contract first, for the documents, then I can do something else. now I am looking around a bit on Dutch sites, if everything goes well, I will move there in March with Stefano, my boyfriend, if not, I'll do a 6-month internship and keep looking to leave. I am leaving, yes I am

leaving, I am very sorry, but the time has come, I need to have other experiences." (Albanian woman, 25 years old);

"But I had a great time in Italy, I consider it my home now and even if in the future, let us say, I will choose to live or work in another country, mainly for professional reasons, Italy will always remain in my heart, let us say ... 50% of my heart will be dedicated to Italy, I will always wear the people, the customs and everything else with respect" (Albanian man, 24 years old).

4.2.3.2 Acculturation



One theme that emerged was statements related to the process of **Acculturation**. This central theme included the **acculturative impact** branch, which referred to the experience of living in Italy. Among the factors that facilitate the acculturation process in Italy, the migrants mentioned adhering to lifestyle as a strategy for a calmer life:

"The most important thing is to respect the rules of the place where you want to integrate and adapt to the local lifestyle" (Moldovan woman, 44 years old);

and being prepared for the changes even before the departure:

"...my approach to Italy was not only here, when I arrived in Italy I was already informed, I had already studied both the Italian language and culture, then in the city where I lived we had the opportunity to approach the Italians and their way of life, there was no drastic change from one culture to another, because this change started there years ago, even if I did not live in Italy, because we always had this influence of Italy also in Albania ... I cannot tell you what exactly changed because it was a very gradual thing, I almost did not feel it and I cannot tell you what changed because it was so natural that it did not leave any trauma, it was a very natural thing even before I came to Italy" (Albanian woman, 40 years old).

Language skills seem to accompany migrants on their path of integration in the new context, first as a useful tool to find compatriots, and then developed to be able to assert themselves in the workplace:

"Walking along the seafront in front of the restaurant, I heard a little Egyptian when I was working with Egyptian friends who gave me a place to sleep in Rapallo, and I started working with them here as a dishwasher in this restaurant. That started in '92-'93, after I came to Italy for a couple of years. From here I worked in the kitchen washing dishes for a few months. Then the owner of the restaurant, since I spoke English and learned Italian, asked me to help him in the room, even as a waiter. In fact, from that moment I went to the dining room and became a waiter at all levels." (Egyptian man, 56 years old).

The migrants also mentioned the factors that complicate the acculturation process. Being newcomers and facing language difficulties, the initial period of living in Italy appeared to be particularly challenging:

"At the beginning it was not easy because I did not know the language, but in elementary school there was the supervisor who gave you soccer, who beat you, you could not speak, you could not express yourself with the professional... with the master. So, in the beginning it was not easy, also because I did not understand the warnings." (Albanian man, 21 years old);

"At the beginning I did not like Italy - zero, we are talking about the past - when you arrived - but also after I arrived, at least three years - okay, but you had difficulties to adapt - yes, very much, that is, in

the first year I knew that I could not leave, and that was maybe the only thing that made me say that sooner or later I have to adapt, but in the first year, but in the first year, when I thought about it after a long time, I realized that maybe unconsciously, sometimes even intentionally, I was doing things to not belong - okay - that is, I did not feel part of the group, but at the same time I felt that the group was rejecting me, but let us say that I had to adapt because sooner or later I had to live here "(Peruvian man, 21 years old).

The act of leaving the family behind in the country of origin, particularly the children, was highlighted as an aspect that engendered adverse psychological impacts:

"I remember exactly the day I left my son at home. At first sight, it was very difficult because I was so far away from my son. It was psychologically stressful, a very hard time. To emigrate alone, without family, is not easy at all" (Moldovan woman, 44 years old).

The fact that they were treated differently because they were foreigners was, in the words of the migrants, a distinction that underlined their non-belonging to Italian culture as a minus point:

"I insisted on many things, never with arrogance, but I insisted on many things because when they see that you are not Italian, they often change their behaviours. When I said that (my son) was not well, they told me that I was not Italian, that I had to be less anxious..." (Irish woman, 68 years old).

The difficulty of maintaining their language of origin makes it harder for migrants to believe that they can migrate back, even if they wish to do so:

"Because sooner or later I would like to return, but now I honestly cannot remember almost anything. Sometimes I even find it difficult to talk to someone who has the same nationality because sometimes I have difficulty understanding them because I do not speak much, let us say, my language all day, I lose a little bit of 'the ability, I do not know how to say...' maybe I understand them, but I have difficulty speaking..." (Pakistani man, 29 years old).

Finally, migrants who came to Italy as children and consider themselves second generation emphasized their difficult situation as people between different cultures and different family affiliations:

"The only thing I would add is to focus on people like me, who shuttle between one generation and one culture and one generation and another culture. It's like living on a very thin thread: It's complicated to

balance, to bring everyone along and do what you want without feeling judged and getting a stick between your legs. It would be nice if this generation of "hybrids" (as my sister and I call them) had a small voice to give voice to fears, different expectations, and insecurities. I am talking about a process of cultural change that is so extensive, profound, and slow that it would be useful if there were an exchange of listening between cultures instead of living with taboos, with things that are not said and not done. (Moroccan woman, 22 years old).

The migrants also mentioned the resources used to facilitate the acculturation process, such as volunteering:

"This reality here (volunteering with children) has further improved my integration and education" (Albanian man, 30 years old);

the development of friendships:

" Life in Loano is different from life in Ferrara. We are integrated and I have all the friends here in Loano. I studied in Ferrara for two years, but maybe I am not so integrated in the community." (Albanian woman, 22 years old);

the school as an environment of integration:

"School has helped me a lot to overcome this thing (of having left part of the family in the country of origin), and in fact all the disagreements that existed within the family here in Italy, yes, yes ... that is, they then found an outlet in school, so the school environment has helped me a lot to overcome this feeling of nostalgia" (Moroccan man, 24 years old).

Within the sub-theme of **Language acquisition**, participants expressed the elements that helped them or not in the acquisition of the Italian language. The level of difficulty in learning the language often depended on the age of arrival, the native language, and the interplay between countries:

"As a child, you learn a language very quickly. In six months... In one year, I could already speak, I could communicate very well with people. But only six months. They had given me, those from the school, an Albanian teacher who helped me a lot, I must say. So, it was not complicated to learn Italian, also because my language is more difficult... Albanian is much more difficult..." (Albanian man, 20 years old).

The subtheme **Tradition and Habits** included statements about the traditions, customs, and aspects of life that respondents attributed to a particular culture. The country-of-origin subcategory included statements about maintaining elements of the culture of origin in Italy. Migrants indicated that they maintain culinary traditions, language, religious practices, and festivals, especially in the domestic sphere, also in an effort to pass them on to future generations, as well as values considered typical of their origin. Maintaining traditions has not always been easy and has sometimes been adopted primarily by those who migrated as adults:

"I keep the Christmas and New Year celebrations, even if the dates are different, and I try to teach my daughters the customs of my culture" (Ukrainian woman, 42 years old);

"Certain dishes that are prepared every Sunday, that is, it is not that we make them often, because they are definitely dishes that require certain products, and it is a bit difficult to find them ... But we eat them sometimes because we want to eat them anyway, even if after a while the body says it wants to reintroduce them." (Ecuadorian man, 25 years old);

"I want to keep the traditions of my country, I must say, especially the language ... In my home we still speak Albanian, and I can do that ... This way I can keep in touch with my relatives, otherwise I would not even be able to speak." (Albanian man, 24 years old);

"For example, we always pray, which people here in Italy do not like to do... And then we also go to church every Sunday ... I do not want to give that up, I even go every Sunday" (Haitian woman, 22 years old);

"One thing I could not give up is the feeling of being welcome, which is typical of my country" (Moroccan woman, 22 years old).

At the same time, maintaining traditional aspects of origin was not always a practice. Sometimes migrants said they adopted cultural practices not by choice, but because they lived with family members who supported them:

"... I have to say that I am more used to your culture than mine, I cannot understand mine, I feel like a foreigner in my country..." (Peruvian woman, 50 years old);

"Not because I want to, but because I live at home and my mother prepares this certain food (typical of the country of origin) and then I eat it. But... If I were not with my mother or living on my own, I probably would not do it. I like it, for heaven's sake, but I say I would do more Italian things ... I would cook more Italian food, I would continue this (Italian) tradition" (Ecuadorian man, 24 years old).

Elements of Italian culture that respondents said they have adopted include cultural aspects, food habits, and manners that respondents believe are different from those in their country of origin:

"(From Italian culture I have adopted) the appreciation of culture with a capital C, which refers to any form of art, knowledge, study, and maybe being a little more open and sociable, although we are talking about Genoa, which is par excellence one of the most closed cities in Italy." (Swiss woman, 54 years old);

"The first two or three years. To be precise, I could not kiss my girlfriend in Syria, in a restaurant. It's because of the culture. Here it is done. Here, it's normal. But there, in the culture, it's not normal... At first it seemed strange to me here, I felt ashamed, I thought, "No, you do not do that, we are in a restaurant, I do not kiss you in a restaurant in front of everybody." I was a little bit shy because it goes against my culture. Now it's not a problem for me." (Syrian man, 37 years old)

"I have adopted many Italian traditions, of course, because I grew up here for fifteen years. For example, I always send Christmas greetings to my friends, even though it's not part of my religion, but it's still always nice to do these things, a little attention. Yes, of course I took a lot of the Italian culture, I think I integrated very well." (Albanian man, 21 years old);

"Here people are a little bit simpler, and I have become so that at the beginning when I want to say or do something, I am much less ashamed, I am much less shy than at the beginning ... (it was an influence of Western culture) is not just a character thing..." (Albanian woman, 25 years old);

"We loved and still love food... We also have cows, but this kind of cows that you have here is not a cow, it's a buffalo and makes really good things that we do not have at home, then the meat, even salads, salads let us say, have come out in the last 5/10 years at my home, here from Italy I already know since Italy exists that these things exist. Here you eat, I would say, even more, healthier..." (Moldovan man, 43 years old).

Respondents also stated that it is possible for different cultural aspects to coexist and that this is a richness for themselves and for future generations:

"Let us say my mentality and way of thinking is a mixture of both cultures. I think I am very influenced by Italian culture in terms of women's independence, the fact that women do not necessarily have to get married before they are thirty... Which is normal in my culture of origin... So in that sense I feel more Italian because I do not need anyone. From my culture I inherited the value of family, I feel connected to my family, my relatives, I try to keep the traditions a little bit, but family has a very, very high value. We spend the holidays very much among ourselves, there is more emphasis on that than in Italy. I think I inherited that from my culture." (Albanian woman, 29 years old);

"I think that integration is a fundamental process, but I think that it is very important to keep the traditions of the country of origin. It is difficult to keep the language even if, as in my case, you live halfway between two very different cultures. But you have to try to take advantage of both sides." (Albanian man, 29 years old);

"I appreciate the Italian culture as much as the Egyptian and Greek cultures. I have tried very hard to preserve the three cultures ... That's why my children always have three passports, three, one Egyptian and one Italian, that's very important to me. And they are more fortunate than me. I am very proud that one day they will remember the past of my father, who built the home here in Italy, who gave them the opportunity to live with open doors and have the whole moment in front of them..." (Egyptian man, 56 years old).

The sub-theme of **Relationship Development** encompassed discussions about interpersonal connections within Italy. Participants shared their experiences of relationships with fellow compatriots in Italy, which varied in terms of depth and closeness. For migrants, interacting with compatriots could serve to alleviate feelings of loneliness and provide support in their lives in Italy. However, on the flip side, being predominantly associated with fellow compatriots might be perceived as a hindrance to acceptance by Italians, particularly regarding certain characteristics attributed to the minority group by Italians:

"Here we gather all the Cubans once a week, like I did yesterday, and they come to my home with cases of beer, we barbecue, everything starts at noon and they go to dinner, this habit bothers you, we do this from time to time ... I like a home full of people having fun, everyone brings their problems, here everyone has problems, especially us foreigners, we have a different way of life than Italians ... We are not on the same level; you must cut everything in half... But that does not take away the fun, having fun, being with my friends

in Cuba is what I like to do the most." (Cuban woman, 50 years old)

"When I become a lawyer, I am going to lock up all the Albanians! Because they really get on my nerves...Albanians are like that: they come from the mountains, before they had nothing... but even now they have nothing... come to Italy... most Albanians I see are the Albanians of the communities, they come to Italy thinking they have reached the maximum, and so they do nothing... instead of studying or finding a job... Most of the Albanians... Either they take each other, or they take with others. It does not bother me so much because they do these things because they do not do anything to me, so it does not change anything for me, it bothers me mainly because ... Come here and do not take advantage of this opportunity, and mainly disturb the people who live here, and the people who have goals and give a bad image of our country, of our people ... Because when an Albanian beat himself, they say, "Look how Albanians are". But they are not all like that, it is not true. Do you understand that? That is why it bothers me. That is why I do not visit them often, except for these two or three Albanian friends, I prefer Italians." (Albanian man, 20 years old).

In relationships with Italian friends, migrants found the opportunity to share common aspects of culture, but also the way to integrate into Italian society. At the same time, some said that they sought Italian friends because they had more contacts due to their work or because they lived in a reality where there were no large communities of their origin. Finally, even if it was desired, it did not seem easy to make friends with Italians for various reasons, including the inhomogeneity of study and professional paths:

"Most of my friends are Italian. I have more Italian friends than Moroccan friends, maybe because most of the women my age are married and have children, they have a very different mentality than I do. I, on the other hand, feel more comfortable with the mentality of Italians, who are more open." (Moroccan woman, 44 years old);

"It's not because I do not have Albanian friends, but I'll give you a trivial example, so you understand what it was like when I had to decide where to play football. I'll give you an example of a decision I made, along with other people who followed me a long time ago, to choose a football club to let us say, share my passion. The options were 2: Either you go to a reality where there were many men of Albanian nationality, or you go to a completely new reality where there were almost no Albanian men, and then I would have found them alone in quotes on this page, so maybe right away say I go to this club, where there are other people

like me with whom I can exchange a few words so that they understand me, find me better, the choice I made was not a choice against the current, no, no, this is in the sense that I had nothing against these friends of mine, because they were my friends ... I made this choice to better integrate myself, and that's how it was" (Albanian man, 30 years old);

"I tell you the truth, I have more contact with Italians than with my villagers because I work there. But I do not have problems with any of them, I always feel at home even with them. I am a person who gets along with everyone, I feel comfortable here and it feels like my home." (Albanian man, 53 years old);

"I am more Italian than with my compatriots, because living in a small town, there are no compatriots like me in the sense that Ecuadorians are counted." (Ecuadorian man, 25 years old);

"... It is very difficult. It's very easy to talk to a stranger on the bus, but it's very difficult to make a friend. After seven years at the conservatory, I have two friends among Italians. It is not that I have not tried, but I have found that it's very difficult to really make a friend... You also have to consider that my age and the age of my friends in the class... There is a big difference, I have even noticed that over time ... It's ten years difference, so I understand it..." (Syrian man, 37 years old).

Relationships with people of different origins were mentioned by younger migrants as the possibility of not creating a clear distinction with respect to origin, but also thanks to the use of social media to maintain ties with people from different parts of the world:

"I also have friends from different countries so Brazil, friends and girlfriends eh excuse me, even from different foreign countries so France, Brazil, South America, Chile ... friends who are second generation so people like me Moroccans or Tunisians, Egyptians, North Africans who were either born and raised here or just grew up here... now with social media it is also possible to create a fairly large network of even strong acquaintances with people" (Moroccan man, 24 years old).

The interviewees talked about the places where the relationships are closest in Italy. Various life contexts were reported to be conducive to relationship development (the church, volunteer groups, the workplace, school, and friendly relationships already maintained by the Italian spouse). An important context is the neighbourhood as a place where friendships develop, especially the first ones after the move:

"My best friend is also my neighbour, she lives among and between the works and we see each other often" (Albanian woman, 21 years old);

"My parents more than me, because our neighbours are all of a certain age, but I also find them very nice, even the people from the building. We have made friends." (Albanian man, 18 years old);

"There was a language problem, but slowly I was able to overcome it, because the neighbours knew that we did not speak their language and tried to talk to us in Italian or in the little French they knew, or even in English... (these neighbours are the first people we met) (Haitian woman, 22 years old).

In addition, relationships with people in the country of origin were also reported. Family relationships were maintained mainly by telephone or telematics. The intensity of the relationships varied greatly and included both very frequent calls and solid relationships that the migrants could count on, as well as more sparse and less significant contacts:

"I only have contact with family members: sister, brother-in-law - with family members and that's it... Every Sunday I talk with my sister, with my mother-in-law, we talk: each one has her opinion, her life, how things are going..." (Romanian woman, 53 years old);

"Yes, I talk every day with some friends and with my family. The relationship has remained the same despite this change." (Congolese man, 24 years old);

"I hear from some of my relatives, but only to know how they are, nothing more." (Moroccan woman, 22 years old).

Family and friendship ties in the country of origin, if any, might be perceived as fragile:

"I do not think my country of origin is distancing itself from me, but I have lost a lot of contact. In any case, contact has also been lost because many of my family have emigrated" (Moldovan woman, 44 years old);

"Because with the years even the friends do not, I do not want to say you lose them, but everyone has their own problems now, so you slowly lose this, this bond that maybe used to be there..." (Moldovan man, 43 years old).

Migrants report that their relationships with people in their country of origin could be particularly intense and nostalgic, especially for those who migrated in adulthood:

"My bond has remained for me, that is, I am not telling you the same thing, it has also become a little stronger in my opinion because I am still a person who grew up in my country, I arrived anyway, I am not telling you that I arrived as a child, but already quite old here in Italy I feel very the lack." (Ecuadorian man, 25 years old);

"Sure. Important situations, like yesterday Father's Day, I was here in the home, practically alone, because my husband was working and everyone was gathered, joking, laughing... and I was not there... unfortunately you feel sorry... because you lose certain situations, certain moments of life that will never come back... for example, when my sisters got married, I never managed to go to a wedding..." (Peruvian woman, 45 years old).

People said that whenever it was possible, especially because of the proximity of the country of origin, they organized trips to relatives. The trips to the country of origin did not seem to correspond so much to the desire to return and live there, but rather to the desire to maintain close ties with the extended family:

"I go there twice a year and I am very attached to my extended family." (Albanian woman, 29 years old);

"I usually come back every 3 years, but the last time I was here was 5 years ago. But once I am here, I cannot wait to go back because I know I have a job, a home and a family here. I feel that here." (Moldovan woman, 44 years old).

Under the sub-theme of **identity**, the considerations of feeling Italian were expressed. Developing purely Italian habits or emigrating at a very young age were defined by respondents as conditions that influenced their belonging and made them feel more Italian:

"Well, it's a bit special, in the sense that I was not born here, so I do not consider myself Italian, but it's also true that I have lived here since I was very young, so I have lived the Italian culture, the way to dress, the way to listen to music, so I will tell you ... I feel 80% Italian, 20% Ecuadorian, but also a little bit more Italian" (Ecuadorian man, 24 years old);

"I have a different mentality than my relatives and my sister: they have clearly defined ideas and principles and a very closed mentality. Having gone to school in Italy since kindergarten, I have not adopted their way of thinking; it is as if I have been transplanted. (Moroccan woman, 22 years old).

On the contrary, conformity has not always changed the perception of one's identity:

"If I am honest, I feel 90% Albanian. Without wanting to take anything away from Italy, because Italy is the country where I grew up and I am from God, but there are certain things in my mentality that always remain the same." (Albanian man, 21 years old);

"Every person remains what he is, but you have to adapt to the place where you go because you went there. But you do not become Italian or American" (Palestinian man, 29 years old).

According to the migrants, the perception of Italian belonging also goes beyond the recognition of the legal status of citizenship:

"The only thing that is still missing for me to feel fully Italian is the question of citizenship, which I still have after all these ..." (Albanian woman, 22 years old);

"Yes, now in Genoa I feel at home, now I also feel Italian because I took the citizenship years ago, but I feel great here in Genoa with all my friends, I feel great..." (Ecuadorian man, 23 years old).

From the migrants' words, it is clear how the identity process can be related to the feeling of home. Losing family in the country of origin while building a life in Italy can make it difficult to continue to identify with the country of origin:

"When I hear news about my country, be it soccer or Eurovision, I root for them, while the rest is for Italy in every way. I feel 80% Italian and 20% Moldovan. In Moldova I would stay three days at most, (if I were to go there) I see them all and I get restless, I want to come here. My father died of a heart attack when he was 56 years old, my mother died, and the home was sold so I have nowhere to go. If my mother was still there, my home would still be there, but if she is not there anymore, the home is also finished" (Moldovan woman, 54 years old)

The migrants also talked about their original identity and admitted to feeling distress or shame because they feel they belong to the Italian culture or can no longer define themselves as part of their culture of origin. It seems that these people feel a loyalty to their country of origin that is tested when they think about the Italian customs they have adopted:

"(I feel) Italian to a certain percentage, but I feel bad when I say that I feel Italian, I feel that I deny it, that I do not accept it. It's not that I feel Italian, but I definitely cannot express myself in Albanian anymore,

I like Italian food more, when they tell me focaccia, I say, oh my God, yes, these are these things, but I feel 100% Albanian." (Albanian man, 25 years old).

Having multiple identities was described as acquiring and integrating different parts of identity without leading to negative feelings:

"I feel both a bit 'sense, to say 50/50 would be a lie here; so there are times when I feel that in a sense I was given here for some things, maybe for thinking, for reasoning, in the sense that I was also given here to study etc., then maybe my behaviour towards people was given to me from there, that is, from Morocco, from the culture of Morocco "(Moroccan man, 24 years old);

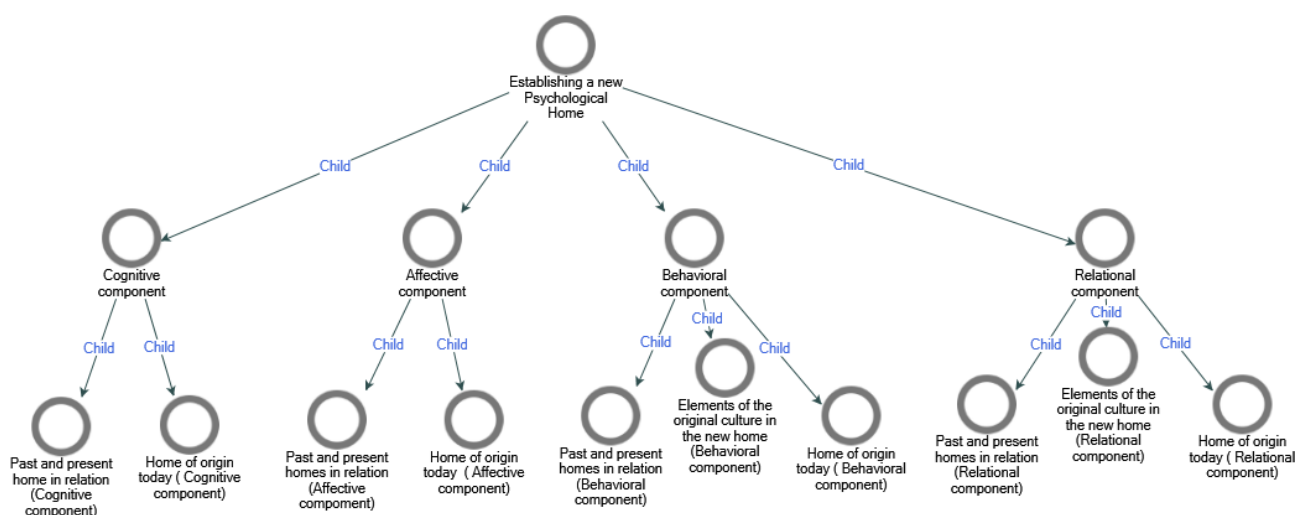
The coexistence of a dual belonging appears, in the words of the interviewee, as a complex condition to maintain, with both a sense of gratitude to one's origins and family and to the way of life in Italy at stake:

"... I am ashamed. I could be 70 percent Italian and 30 percent Irish, I am sorry. I am sorry, I dream in Italian, I think in Italian. Then I have a Welsh friend and an English friend, and they feel, maybe they are more unhappy than me, they feel like nobody. They do not feel English or Italian. But unfortunately, I found that my behaviour is Italian, I tend to criticize myself inside, when I go to Dublin, I tell you something else, when I hear foreigners, I think about it and then I tell myself that I am too, but it takes a while, I do not realize it " (Irish woman, 68 years old).

Finally, the interviews revealed that defining identity based on cultural or national affiliation can be a limiting categorization that migrants may not fully identify with:

"... I do not feel Italian or Pakistani, I feel, I have a mind, on this side I have a very open mind, I feel, for example, when I hear about borders, no, that maybe people are called by the names of nations, no, I do not understand that, for example ... I have always thought that in my opinion you should not be called Italian, we are all children, let us say children of the world, people who are still part of the world ..." (Pakistani man, 29 years old).

4.2.3.3 *Establishing a new Psychological Home*



The theme **Establishing a New Psychological Home** was very clearly stated and included the subthemes of the cognitive, affective, behavioural, and relational components of the psychological home. In the sub-theme **Cognitive Component**, migrants described their concept of home, meanings, and beliefs about home and themselves. For respondents, home was often associated with childhood memories in the country of origin:

"...the first image that comes to my mind when I think of home is maybe my childhood, when I was a child and everything was good" (Moldovan woman, 54 years old).

In general, for the interviewees, home is a specific place that is safe and that they have reached in Italy:

"Home is ... The certainty of having it, first of all. And the peace of mind when you arrive home. It's not like that for all migrants, also because in order to have a home, you have to have a job that's okay" (Moldovan woman, 44 years old).

The home was also a starting point for the life of their children:

*"... Because my father always wanted to have a place that belonged to him, where he was safe and quiet. He even wanted to put it in my name so that he could return to Albania and leave everything here for me! He wanted to leave me, like Pascoli, the nest *laughs*; he wanted to leave me this house, because as I told you, they think of their children, and Albanian parents, after a certain age, say "there are only children and that's it". So, he did it to give us a base to start from" (Albanian man 20 years old).*

Home was represented by a particular place that evoked the feeling of home, and sometimes it was linked to the country of origin:

"The first image of the home, the first image, a courtyard, yes a courtyard and a door. ... A backyard, not too big, small, to tell the truth the backyard down in Albania, the home of my relatives, my parents" (Albanian woman, 40 years old), sometimes to specific places of the current home "I think of my kitchen ... I don't know why, it's the first place I think of, it's yellow... because... I would say bright ... simple and welcoming" (Swiss woman, 54 years old).

The home for migrants was designed as a double:

"Because when I hear the word home, I think of my homeland in Albania, but I also think of my homeland where I am now, because these are the origins that I will never deny, and every time I go there, I say, let us say, I have many good memories in my mind and it is a pleasant place for me, so the word home for me means two images, here and there" (Albanian man, 30 years old).

In the narratives of male migrants, but not among women, home was represented by Italy:

"I feel at home in the home where I live now in Genoa, now I put down roots here in Italy, so I do not think only of home, I think now of Italy..." (Albanian man, 24 years old).

The subcategory **Past and present homeland in relation** contained the sentences in which the respondents related the idea of home of the past, developed in the country of origin, and that of the home in the present Italy. Cultural differences in the way home are designed and inhabited were reported, highlighting how space in the host country could be perceived as confining:

*"Here (in Italy) I feel more like I am in a prison *laughs*, but there I was freer, had time to play... to be outside, that is, in the home but outside the rooms" (Haitian woman, 22 years old);*

or as a more intimate variation:

"There was room for everybody, but you know, a family of four, like we are now, it's better if they are alone, it's better if we are alone, just us, there's a little more freedom. On the other hand, when there are several families living in one home, it is a little bit more complicated because you have to be careful not to do that because the other one might do it that way, think that way... you know... it's a little bit... different. You do not really feel free, you have to be on guard all the time. If something happens, you have to think about

this and then you have to think about that... if I break a glass here, I clean it up and put it away, but my mother does not tell me... If instead I break a glass there, and maybe that was my cousin's favorite glass... You get the idea... here it is your own stuff, there it's everybody's stuff, so if you damage something here, you have damaged something of yours, if you do it there instead... So, the houses were like this, big, but with two or three families together..." (Albanian man, 20 years old).

One element with which the idea of home and freedom was associated was explained as being detached from the family of origin:

"You see it maybe a little bit different because when you grow up you see different things and then you understand that you cannot do that in your parents' home, so you throw yourself to do your thing in a different way, but in a different way you can do it when it's always just your home" (Moldovan man, 43 years old).

Among the experiences related to home in Italy after the release of parents were experiences of loneliness:

"Here I have always been alone, there always with my parents, here always alone". (Albanian woman, 25 years old);

or as the conquest of a personal space:

"... the home I lived in was everyone's home, the one I live in now is my home" (Moroccan woman, 44 years old).

The subcategory **home of origin today** contained sentences that referred to how the idea of home had changed in comparison to home in the country of origin after the migration experience. The home of origin could be a home of the past that lives in memory but to which migrant cannot return:

"For example, now when I think about my home in Peru, it is more of a memory that I know is from the past, the home is still there, but it is there and how can I say, in my head there is not the fact that one day I will return, I am aware that it was my home, but I do not feel it anymore, it belongs to a thing of the past" (Peruvian man, 21 years old).

On the contrary, the home in the country of origin could be a goal yet to be reached:

"And my home in Egypt I must rebuild now, because I would really like to return to spend my twilight years down there in my country where I went out. So, building the home is a very important thing" (Egyptian man, 56 years old).

In both cases, the notion of home in the country of origin seems to be linked to the migration intention to return or not.

The sub-theme **affective component** included phrases related to the emotional aspects associated with creating a psychological home. Home was associated with feelings of comfort and relaxation:

"I feel comfortable in my home and the moment I come back from work and relax between the walls of this home here..." (Egyptian man, 56 years old).

The tranquility that comes from having a private space where one can rest and be with others without being judged from the outside seemed to be an important dimension:

"... A quiet place where you can be, without thoughts, without... A place that is yours, where no one can disturb you, where no one can say anything to you, a place where you can rest, where you can be together, where you can talk... for me, a home means peace, a quiet place" (Romanian woman, 53 years old).

In addition, home was associated with a sense of protection:

"...A place of refuge, in fact, the feeling of home as a place of refuge and as a place of protection..." (Moroccan man, 24 years old) and reception "...home is always comfortable, it has always been the most important thing..." (Albanian man, 53 years old).

A sense of pride in having managed to buy a home was reported:

"We live in an apartment, it is our property, and we are very proud" (Moldovan man, 43 years old).

The subcategory **Past and present home in relation** contained the sentences in which the subjects related the feelings developed in the past in the country of origin to those of the present home in Italy. The feeling of freedom was mentioned with different meanings. The home in the country of origin could be lived with greater ease in terms of rules and the feeling of ownership than the home in Italy:

"... There I had the feeling of being master of everything, excuse the expression. But here, no. Here, if I want to go to the terrace, I have to get a thousand permissions because it is forbidden..." (Syrian man, 37 years old).

Or the home in the country of origin was occupied with greater difficulty due to the presence of other families:

"... A family of four, like we are here now, it's better if they are alone, it's better if we are alone, just us, there is a little more freedom. On the other hand, when there are several families living in one home, it's a little bit complicated because you have to be careful not to do that because the other one might do that... you know... it's a little bit... different. You do not really feel free, you have to be on guard all the time." (Albanian man, 20 years old).

Moreover, home in Italy was perceived as more intimate than home in the country of origin, which was livelier:

"... For sure here I have more intimacy, my own space than there, the flat is smaller, but I feel I have more corners of my own, and where I was as a child there was maybe more... Maybe it's quieter here... There was more life..." (Albanian woman, 18 years old).

The subcategory **Home of origin today** contained phrases that referred to home-related feelings in the country of origin today after migration. A strong sense of nostalgia was associated with the country of origin:

"... in my home, I find it hard to go that way when I go back to Ireland. When I look at my old home, my window, the one of the rooms, I get a moment of magic because I lived there for many years, there are strong memories ..." (Irish woman, 68 years old).

A sense of sadness was described in relation to the awareness of not wanting to return to the country of origin to live in the home built by their parents:

"... my father built it ... It feels good inside, but it still needs to be rebuilt. It's a pity that I do not know where everything ends here ... Because after all I am an only child and the home will stay, I do not think I will go back." (Moldovan man, 43 years old).

The migrants said they were aware that the home could again become an inhabited home in the country of origin:

"I built it before I came here, but we finished building and furnishing it over time. From the home downstairs, now, we miss the garden, miss the people there, but... It's not running away, it's all there and we still have everything when we come back. We go there once a year." (Albanian man, age 53).

Feelings about home seemed to change compared to home and sometimes people said they felt like guests:

"I feel more like a guest when I go back to Moldova to my parents." (Moldovan woman, 44 years old)

or they no longer feel that there is an emotional bond, even if a new one has not been established:

"...since I have been here, I do not feel like I am in my native Peru, I feel like I am in a foreign homeland there too." (Peruvian woman, 50 years old).

The sub-theme **Behavioural Component** contained sentences that referred to the actions taken to choose, personalize and maintain the home. The reasons for choosing a home were the presence of services in the neighbourhood:

"... We do not even need the car because we can find everything nearby, for shopping, for the boys' school... it's all convenient" (Iranian woman, 52 years old)

or the presence of family members in the neighbourhood:

"... When I first arrived here, I lived with my grandmother ... even when I moved, I decided to continue living in this neighbourhood to be close to my grandmother..." (Peruvian woman, 45 years old).

It seems important to find spaces that are suitable for family life, both for the rules imposed by the host country:

"I chose it so that it was old enough to carry my son. Because the law itself says that if the home is not big enough, you cannot bring other people from abroad" (Moldovan woman, 44 years old);

or out of a desire to be able to give hospitality:

"I always wanted to have an extra room...so that when a relative of mine comes, he can sleep there and not have to go to a hotel..." (Peruvian woman, 45 years old).

Economic convenience was one of the reasons for choosing the apartment:

"My father found it because it was a home that needed to be renovated, and since my father does the work, he bought it to pay less and get the work done. It was cheap." (Albanian woman, 18 years old).

The migrants said that they were supported by friends in their choice of housing:

"... by the other people who lived here in this home, who were our friends, that is Albanians, and who had informed us because they knew us that they had left it because they had found something else, and then we said we introduced ourselves after them because we knew the home and we also knew the amount of rent here, so there was a mixture of things that were good" (Albanian man, 30 years old);

or by the head of the work:

"The home is not ours, so I pay rent, but the lady of the rent, that is, the landlady is my mother's boss, so my mother pays the rent to the boss and maybe she also gave us a discount because my mother works for her ..." (Ecuadorian man, 23 years old).

Sometimes the home is not chosen because there is already a spouse's home:

"I did not choose it; it was already ready. I walked in the door without having to choose anything, it was already like that, I had no problem choosing a chair. I did not do anything, no problems" (Irish woman, 68 years old).

Respondents spoke of various housing changes because of improved housing conditions, often within the same neighbourhood.:

"... At first my father's brother, my uncle, helped him find a place to live. We found a house next to our aunt, she on the third floor and we on the second. Then we moved again and came to this street here and after 5 or 6 years to this building where we live now ... I do not know what happened, it was a company of something, here lived the owners of this company, which then went bankrupt and put the houses up for auction. My father saw everything, he saw people coming here and he was fascinated, he said, "Now I am going to see what happens!". He was interested and he took everything into his own hands, went to check everything out... These houses here are four apartments, but in one of them the owners of the bankrupt company still live ... I think they are going to send them away and put this house up for auction too, but that has nothing to do with it! Anyway, my father heard that they were going to auction these three apartments,

he got interested, contacted a real estate agent and agreed with him and we auctioned them. So, we moved 200 meters away from the house where we were living for rent" (Albanian man, 20 years old).

But obtaining housing in migrants' narratives also goes through conditions of extreme housing insecurity:

"... before, I could not rent the apartment because I did not have a contract, I did not have documents ... I worked day and night, for the first 4 years I did not have an apartment, I slept at a friend's house that I met here, she was Romanian, a good person, she let me in late at night and early in the morning I left so she did not see me ..." (Moldovan woman, 54 years old).

The personalization of the environment described by the migrants as a series of actions of the couple:

"Even if I say that she bought them, but simply because she does not work and therefore, I am always a bit away from home because I have to work at night, so then she sends me photos to ask me if this thing is good or not, that is to compare for a while, we did everything together" (Moroccan man, 24 years old)

or family:

"All together, each with his own thoughts, we managed to set up everything, there is not one person of us who decides, but we decide together, and we try to please everyone." (Moldovan man, 43 years old).

When missing, family members close to friends seemed to be replaced by help:

"Me, because I am alone, and friends, friends help me a lot to set up the flat" (Peruvian woman, 50 years old).

In both migrant women's and men's narratives, personalization was seen as a feminine competence:

"Let us put it this way, it's always more the woman's hand, right? Here it's more or less the male hand, even with my husband we worked and everything, he did a lot of tasks in the house and everything, but after the final touches it's always, it comes to us, to the women here." (Peruvian woman, 45 years old).

The precarious housing situation seemed to be a factor that influenced non-personalization by making it secondary to the purchase of the home:

"... You do not know how long you will stay here; it can happen that overnight you have to take the suitcase to leave, and then it consists of many pieces that you ... And you do not know what's going to happen tomorrow, so you cannot invest money in something that you just give up overnight. We want to buy a house

because they are renting now, and once you buy it, you can do whatever you want." (Moldovan woman, 54 years old)

or, on the contrary, constant mobility leads to adaptive measures to always feel at home, even in different contexts:

"... I made it like this, when you move so often you have to make it more welcoming, big, very bright and white, too white for me, almost looks like a hospital, but I am still looking for a few things about this house, I have six months left, then I am moving out" (Albanian woman, 25 years old).

Rented apartments by migrants that were already furnished, seemed to lead to partial adaptation:

"... We took it over almost furnished because we have plans and preferred to take it over already furnished ... The things that were missing were not essential, so only two things ... Plants ... Knickknacks, mirrors ..." (Pakistani man, 25 years old).

In addition, three subcategories were identified: **Past and present home in relation**, **Elements of origin in the new home**, and **Home of origin today**.

Past and present home in relation contained statements about the structural and behavioural elements that link the former home in the country of origin and the home in Italy in the present. For migrants, climatic conditions seem to be important factors that lead to different behaviour than at home:

"Here I am forced to stay in the rooms because you die of cold, while there it was always hot! Climate change has made such a difference" (Haitian woman, 22 years old).

Living spaces seem to be experienced very differently. In the narratives of the migrants, the apartments in the country of origin were sometimes large houses where one can live outdoors a lot, while this way of living seems to be difficult in Italy, given the type of apartments occupied by migrants:

"First of all, the house I lived in in my country was a country house with very clean air. Now, in the apartment, it's very different. Adjustment is difficult at first, because in the country apartment you can go outside much more, while in the apartment there is no such possibility." (Moldovan woman, 44 years old).

Or even if the apartments were small in the country of origin, they lived much more freely on the external borders:

"... In Romania there is more free space, you can do what you want, in the fresh air. But here you are inside, you are locked up [laughs]. Although the house in Italy is bigger, it's quite a big apartment, my parents' apartment was actually smaller, they are made smaller, narrower, so it gets warm faster." (Romanian woman, 53 years old);

"... There the apartments are very small and much lower... Here the knowledge is more difficult, the rooms are very big, each building has many floors..." (Nigerian man, 21 years old).

The type of housing seemed to be a feature in migrants' narratives that led to living the home of the past and present in a different way. Sometimes the change was experienced as an adjustment to a less prestigious home:

"And then the house in Haiti was different from the houses here in Italy. Here in Italy, you would have to spend a million euros to have a house like that! It was just... different. How can I say... It's two different worlds." (Haitian woman, 22 years old);

or on the contrary, the migrants emphasized how much the different housing conditions underlined the different lifestyles:

*"As for the conditions that the apartment in Albania could offer, of course there was no water, the bathroom was outside, the heating was not available ... Imagine this situation compared to here, where there is still light, gas, hot water, and to give you a trivial example, even if it's just for drinking water, in the winter I rode my bike alone over dirt roads, I traveled many distances, even to get water ... Here it is much more comfortable, let us say, and the other (difference) is the context, that is, what this context offers you, with which you live. Here you live from agriculture, you live from the garden, you live from the cow that you carry around and then you give milk butter and you eat that and in the summer you eat tomatoes because it's the time of tomatoes and that's why you even feel the change of seasons *laughs* Instead here you just go to the supermarket" "(Albanian man, 30 years old).*

When a mobility pathway had already started in the country of origin, the difference in conditions was less noticeable:

"In Kinshasa, I lived in a college of an Italian association. We were many students and they taught us some things about Italy, and we lived in a community of college students" (Nigerian man, 25 years old).

The subcategory **Elements of origin in the new home** contained descriptions of the elements on which people valued their origin and which were brought or sought to the new homeland of Italy. Food and its consumption seem to be an area of particular interest to which migrants entrust much of the maintenance of the cultural component of origin in their new home:

"We all get together and tell each other stories. And then there's also the African cuisine, so I feel the connection..." (Nigerian man, 21 years old);

Although in some families of people who migrated as children, the retention of typical cuisine takes on different nuances for each component:

*"My mother still cooks Albanian cuisine because my father still eats like that, some dishes I eat too, but little *laughs* I prefer more pasta and things that you eat here ..."(Albanian man, 30 years old).*

Among those who migrated as children, a subcategory also emerged that related to the possibility of experiencing home as a multicultural environment in which furnishings play a special role and reflect one's own:

"Apart from the cutting boards and the somewhat peculiar tableware, there is practically nothing Moroccan, partly because my brother-in-law is Romanian. You could say I live in a multicultural environment!" (Moroccan, age 22).

It could be difficult to maintain one's routines in the household:

"In my culture of origin, it is normal to take off your shoes before entering the house, and I wanted to keep this tradition in this house. But it is very difficult to maintain this with others when you invite them into your house." (Moroccan woman, 44 years old).

In their narratives, migrants talk about objects that have symbolic meaning and represent their culture of origin in their new home. These include paintings and photographs:

"There are paintings, a painting with a picture of my family and a painting with a picture of my country" (Spanish woman, 24 years old)

and typical objects associated with the memory of a family member:

"When my mother died, I brought a kind of carpet that they weave by hand (in Moldova)" (Moldovan woman, 54 years old)

or items associated with religious worship:

"... There is only the Koran and the carpet to pray on..." (Palestinian man, 29 years). However, the migrants do not always emphasize the presence of a specific furnishing that reminds them of their origin: "Nothing typical, it's a modern house like my house in Albania... I do not even have anything traditional in Albania..." (Albanian woman, 20 years old);

The presence of cultural objects seemed to create an environment like that of the place of origin;

"... The style and furnishings are reminiscent of Arabic and Turkish, it's nice, a nice home, warm." (Albanian woman, 29 years old).

The presence of a panorama like that of the place of origin was considered an element of remembrance of one's origin in the new home:

"... from my culture of origin at home in Italy, there is the view when I see the sea from my terrace." (Cuban woman, 50 years old).

The subcategory **Home of origin today** contained the description of behaviour in relation to the home of origin as it had changed because of the migration project. The home in the country of origin was sometimes experienced independently of the migration process as a home in whose construction and adaptation time and energy had been invested:

"The house downstairs is independent, a nice house, with a garden and everything, I built it before I came here, but we finished building and furnishing it over time." (Albanian man, 53 years old).

In the **Relational component** subtheme, migrants describe their relationship experiences in relation to home. People say that their home was where their family was:

"... Home for me is the family. Without the family, there is no home... it's just a place, but with the family in it, it becomes home" (Haitian woman, 22 years old),

"When I think of home, I think of my family, nothing material" (Irish woman, 68 years old),

"I would associate home with the word family. Because that's what it stands for ... Because I know a place where you have, let us say, emotional warmth, where you have warmth. I do not know, for me things have something to do with family anyway when I think of the word home" (Pakistani man, 29 years old).

Respondents said that, in general, trusting relationships characterized psychological home:

"... Home is a place where there is interaction with other people, a minimum of interaction, a minimum of trust" (Peruvian man, 21 years old),

And when the family was gone, because it was detached from the parental home, friendly relationships could represent a psychological home:

" Then the second home became friends, so it was enough that I always ... I always had around me the people who were dearest to me, and then I could call them my home" (Albanian man, 24 years old).

Three subcategories were also identified for the relationship component. **Past and present home in relation** described relationships with people in the previous home in the country of origin and relationships with people in the current home in Italy. Respondents spoke of more frequent and closer relationships in the country of origin with people in the neighbourhood than with the neighbourhood in Italy and of the boundaries of the homes being described as very different:

"(In the country of origin) you are one big family with the neighbours, open doors, people entering your house without even knowing them. Instead, here, except for the greeting with the neighbours, there is not this big relationship, without considering that there are many elderly people here with problems, so you cannot tell who knows what relationships..." (Albanian woman, 21 years old);

"... We were more family than neighbours and I am sorry that's not the case here. Everyone has their own culture, everyone has their own country, so they say." (Cuban woman, 50 years old);

"... we all know each other, they are common houses in Africa, sometimes there are not even exact borders. We know each other so well; we are all brothers and sisters there. We all knew each other outside the home as well, that was nice ... When you know everybody, you are like one big family... But it was not good, I still had to leave..." (Nigerian man, 21 years old).

Elements of origin in new home contained descriptions of the relational elements to which people attached value in relation to their origins and which they wished to reintroduce in the new

homeland. These included the use of the native language and traditions that influence the relational life of people living in the same home:

"I try to keep the traditions ... But the family has a very, very high value. We spend the holidays very much among ourselves, there is more emphasis on that than in Italy. I think I inherited that from my culture. Then there are other aspects, for example the food... You are 50 and 50, in my house we cook a little Italian and a lot of Albanian, maybe a little more Albanian, also that influences so much, because the holidays we celebrate, we always celebrate and cook a lot. As for the language, we kept it very much, with my relatives and family I speak only Albanian..." (Albanian woman, 29 years old).

In the words of the migrants, reference is made to the attempt to create a certain relationship climate:

"... i always try to go back a little bit to the culture I lived in Morocco ... I think of the house in Morocco that was always full of guests, the family that came from the countryside, and so on. There you always breathed this air of having people at home, but beautiful, in the sense that they were always beautiful, new news, new, that is, new acquaintances, it was always a new ..., because every time you know a person you see another facet of the person and that's what I wanted a little bit here, also we want, even in truth, then a little bit also to see new friends or even artists, so always this comparison with people ..." (Moroccan man, 24 years old).

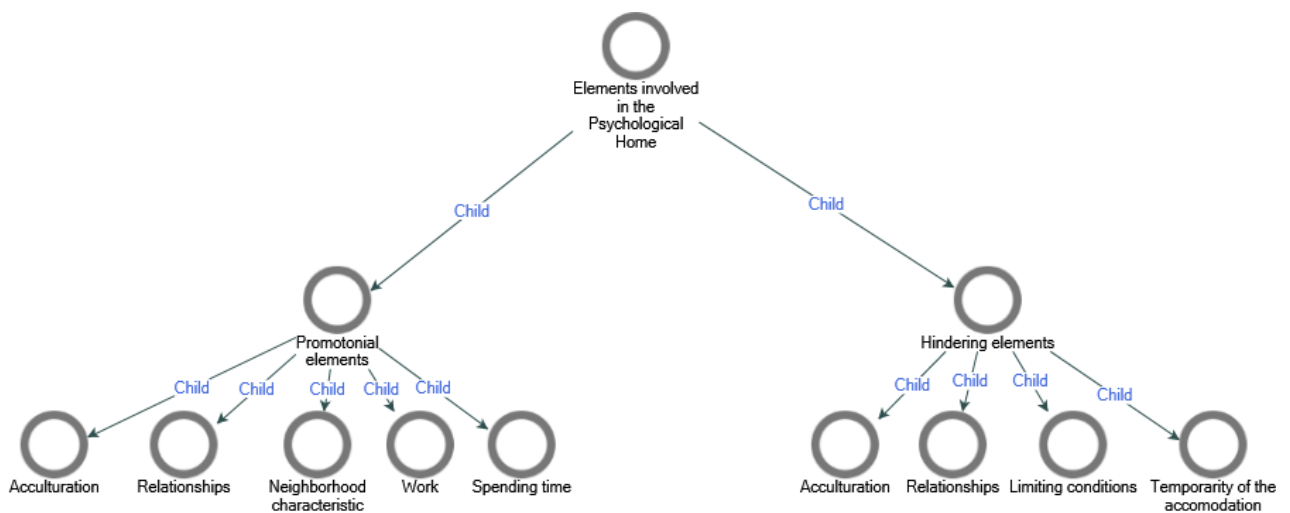
The theme of **Home of origin today** also included a description of the relationships with people in the place of origin, how they had changed because of the migration project. The migrants said that growing up far away from the country of origin and becoming an adult can lead to developing critical thinking towards the country of origin, which leads to not reconsidering relationships and the sense of home:

"...in the end, as the years go by, maybe you do not return as much because I think you build a different kind of "milieu" so that even if you do not return, you still have a sense of home... maybe my perspective on Morocco has changed too, because before you used to see it as home, where you have relatives and so on, and then when you grow up you start to see the economic situation there a little bit as it is, and you also start to develop a critical attitude towards your country of origin..." (Moroccan man, 24 years old).

The migrants who said they could return to their country of origin every time seemed to live in full relationships with the people who stayed there, but at the same time they seemed to feel Italy as their home:

"Every year when I go to Egypt, I spend all my time in my home country where I was born, I visit my parents in the cemeteries and I return with them to Italy, I tell the truth, I feel more at home now than in Egypt." (Egyptian man, 54 years old).

4.2.3.4 Elements involved in the Psychological Home



In the subthemes **Promotional elements** and **Hindering elements** the elements that were indicated as conducive or obstructive to the development of the sense of home were identified. Among the elements that promoted the psychological sense of home were aspects of acculturation. According to the migrants, feeling welcomed and not discriminated against was an element that promoted the development of a sense of home:

"The fact that I am welcomed by people who may not be from the same country as me ... in this case, Italians, who are welcomed in a very special way ... Without them having the thought that I could be different. (although) ... i can be from another nation, that's something that makes me feel, even now, that I feel at home" (Pakistani man, 29 years old);

"... I have always felt at home here in Italy, even though I was not born there, but I never had social difficulties, never. They have always welcomed me well; I have never had any negative experiences." (Ecuadorian man, 24 years old).

This also showed how much the feeling of being welcome and at home is related to respecting the rules of the host country:

"I'll tell you the truth, I even felt at home in Italy because I adapted to Italy and its rules, and I'll tell you, I am a person who adapts so much to the rules" (Ecuadorian man, 25 years old).

People talked about cultural affinity as an element that helps them feel at home in the new environment:

"When I went to Puglia for a factor, I felt at home because I do not know the people, like I felt in these quiet places." (Albanian woman, 22 years old).

Finally, migrants spoke of a mental change related to the acculturation process, which has fostered the development of a sense of home:

"... in Italy ... I so often have the feeling of being at home ... Sometimes I also think in Italian, which means for a person to have come to stay. Sometimes I hear a person speaking and I do not immediately understand if they are speaking Italian or Persian! [laughs] When someone speaks Persian, sometimes I think they are speaking a foreign language... and for example, when a German speaks badly about Italy, I feel offended when they tell me they cannot enter Germany or Austria [editor's note: when they discriminate against Italians in those countries] in these situations, I think my home has become Italy." (Persian woman, 52 years old).

The narratives of migrants who came to Italy as children said that as young people it was easier for them to feel at home here:

".... When you grow up, you realize that you are in a country that is not your own because... I feel at home however I feel, even that helped me feel at home, so you do not realize it when you are little" (Pakistani man, 29 years old).

Under the sub-theme of relationships, people who did not move here report that they have found family connections and friends with whom they feel at home:

"When I moved here, I immediately found myself because I had not seen my mom in two, three years. So, I felt at home again because I was finally with her. And not only me, finally we were all reunited in the family..." (Haitian woman, 22 years old)

"When I met my in-laws, who were too good, they were like parents, I felt at home because the way they treated me, I did not miss Cuba so much anymore." (Cuban woman, 50 years old);

"In Russia I felt at home because I was very comfortable there and had many friends. I worked and studied. Here in Italy, with friends nearby, I also feel at home." (Palestinian man, 29 years old).

In particular, the fact that an activity carried out in the country of origin was associated with a sense of belonging to a group was seen by migrants as conducive to the development of a sense of home:

"When I went to play football, when I had to play with my team, every time I went on the field and trained, I felt very much at home, because this is something I also did in Ecuador, so I also came here and felt very much at home as part of a team, I felt at home." (Ecuadorian man, 25 years old).

However, the places that people symbolize and that are emotionally charged also represent elements that have contributed to the development of a psychological home:

"There are places where something happened that influenced my developmental path and therefore has a different value than others. Yes, I think of naming the young man's house in the parish of San Pietro, where there was a very important figure for me who accompanied me on my growth path, so for me this place is another place where home symbolizes people who helped me a lot and for whom I am grateful" (Albanian man, 30 years old).

The migrants expressed that they didn't feel alone and that the ability to reminisce about their homeland alongside a loved one was a crucial factor in fostering a sense of belonging and preserving their identity:

It helped me a lot that my friend and I are here. I know some friends... A Syrian friend of ours, poor thing, is alone. She is also a musician, and she chose another city, still here in Italy... she's completely frightened... Poor thing. In all these years, she hasn't found herself... lost... Poor thing... We are very lucky compared to her because we are two... Syrians are... we manage to get through everything. Even in tough times, we are together, united, and that has helped us a lot. Our memories... if you want to let off some steam... Let's immediately go back to "Remember when we were there..." it only takes 5 or 10 minutes, then it's over"

(Siryian man, 37 years old).

Some aspects of the neighbourhood or the home itself appear to nurture a feeling of connection and belonging. For individuals, the aesthetic appeal of locations plays a significant role:

"I feel especially comfortable and at home in Castelletto (neighbourhood)... every time I go there... Castelletto! ... I love it ... just very much, I love it" (Spanish woman, 24 years old);

and the similarity with places that remind of the country of origin:

"But one thing that made me feel at home was the promenade, because I felt that it was here, even if it was bigger in Vlora ... But the sea made me feel at home." (Albanian woman, 20 years old);

"There is a place where I feel at home because it also looks a bit like the place where I work outdoors. In the area of Gavi, let us say it's close by, full of vineyards, I feel like I am at home because we have more or less many vineyards there, and when I pass by the hills there, let us say I feel like I am at home too, there's a similarity" (Moldovan man, 43 years old).

Migrants living in small towns report how living in a small community fosters a sense of home:

"When I go for a walk in Novi, I feel at home when I meet someone I know, because of course it is also my home" (Albanian man, 30 years old).

Work was mentioned by male migrants as a favorable condition for the development of the psychological home:

"I studied here, I finished my studies here, and I work ... I like it, I like it a lot, I even feel at home here..." (Ecuadorian man, 25 years old).

Having spent an extended period in a house or city and having established an affective bond was a prerequisite that favored the psychological home:

"When I arrived, I did not feel like it was my home - it took a while - now I can say it's my home here in Genoa..." (Peruvian man, 21 years old);

"The home in Loano is more emotional than the one in Ferrara because I have been living in the home in Loano for fifteen years." (Albanian woman, 22 years old);

"Where I lived the first year, in Castelletto, I feel at home because it was the first home where I had the first experience." (Albanian woman, 25 years old);

"And it was with my husband, who was my partner at the time, that is where I felt at home, my home. And where you lived before, we lived in the historical center, it was a small apartment of 60 square meters, but if you ask me now, you felt at home there, for me it was my home, my home, I lived there for seven years" (Albanian woman, 40 years old).

Under the sub-theme **Hindering Elements**, the factors that made it difficult to create or maintain a psychological home were listed. Limiting conditions in the country of origin were mentioned as hindering the maintenance of a psychological home:

"I have lost something of this home because the last time I was in Albania there was an earthquake that did not do me any good, even last year, so I cannot go home anymore. So, when I think of home, I do not think of Albania anymore and I do not see it as such" (Albanian woman, 25 years old).

People referred to aspects of life in Italy that hindered psychological home. Acculturative aspects included language and cultural barriers:

"During the first years here in Italy, I did not know anyone; for the first six months, I couldn't speak Italian... So, I did not feel secure, I was scared, but I was also young, so it was only natural. It was challenging to feel at home in a place where I didn't know either the surroundings or the people, and I didn't know how to communicate with" (Albanian man, 20 years old);

or relationship obstacles, such as problems with landlord or living with roommates, distance from family and friends:

"There are some inadequacies, let us say because the owner ... we try to also contact this person here so we can say maybe I do the work myself and then maybe we make discount with the monthly I do not know, but the problem that I do not even answer you ... I live a little bit bad in this house because so many things are not in order and that's why I am trying to move to another house ..." (Ecuadorian man, 25 years old old);

"(I want to move as soon as possible). There I could tell you better about my home ... a house of our own for us. If there is this situation (presence of a roommate) ... We are three, we are not a family, alone in his house. There may be other ideas would come up, other projects, I could be calmer..." (Syrian man, 37 years old);

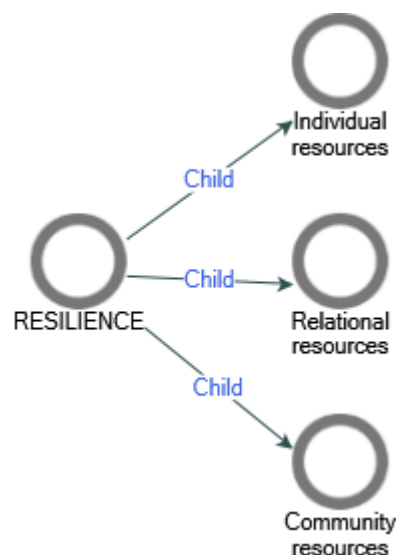
"Besides my uncle, I only had a few cousins, but my parents and my little sister were not there; so it was hard to feel at home. I did not feel comfortable and cozy." (Albanian woman, 20 years old).

The temporary nature of the shelter is also a condition that limits the possibility of establishing an emotional attachment to a new home:

"In Genoa, I have not yet been able to develop this concept (feeling at home) because I have moved seven times in seven years." (Albanian woman, 25 years old);

"Here in Italy, in Genoa, I have been living for 15 years, but I never had a permanent home, I moved 4 or 5 times. So, when I think of home, I think mostly of my home in Ecuador, where I grew up from a very young age with my cousins, my nephews and my brother" (Ecuadorian man, 23 years old).

4.2.3.5 Resilience



The theme of **resilience** encompassed people's reflections on the resources that aided them in effectively navigating the challenges they faced in their lives. Within this theme, three subcategories emerged: **Individual, Relational, and Community resources**. Under the **Individual resources** category, respondents shared accounts of relying on their own strengths and personal growth experiences. They expressed how they drew upon their own abilities and honed skills acquired over time to overcome adversity and persevere through difficult:

"... mental toughness, because I am someone who, as I said, I always try to stay calm, no and I try to say study the problem, I work a lot on my head, on self-control, that maybe helps me a lot with mental toughness ... Yes, exactly, because in my opinion everything is in the head, no, in the head, if you use it well,

maybe you can achieve important goals that maybe, I do not know, I think the head is, I do not know how to say it ... I cannot find an adjective, but I think that's the most important thing that maybe you should use more before you do something ..." (Pakistani man, 29 years old);

"The most important thing is that I have always faced them with the thought that sooner or later I will have to face them, and if I do not face them now because I feel strong, I do not know how I will feel later, then I gather the courage and face them, because I have to face them anyway, they are my problems and I am the one who solves them, so that's the motto that makes me face things, I have to face them and there's nobody else who has to face them for me, and I roll up my sleeves, to put it that way ... I do not expect anything from others... I am a person who adapts, so much so that I have different qualities that I think help me to deal with the kind of problems, I think I am brave, and I am not easily afraid of, let us say, new things, and I am always open to learning, even, let us say, from negative things" (Albanian woman, 40 years old).

The expressions of the interviewees demonstrated that individuals could rely on themselves, given their varying levels of resilience:

"... I never seek help from others. Maybe I get punished by that, I do not know. And I always try to solve things myself... And I take responsibility..." (Ecuadorian man, 24 years old).

In addition, interviewees talk about individual ways of resilience and relate them to experiences of loneliness:

"I write poems or notes, I write notes, I comment, I write, I also try to analyse myself a little bit, I write pages and pages of diaries, streams of consciousness, to understand reality a little bit and to understand myself here ... From therapy, yes in truth it was a therapy in solitude in the end it was a bit 'books to cheer me up in those years before I came to Turin, so there was always this relationship with writing, but not so much writing to publish, only intimate writing" (Moroccan man, 24 years old).

In addition, the ability to make sense of life seemed particularly important for developing resilience and self-confidence:

"I remember what I did in life to get to this point, and then I find the strength for the goals I want to pursue. I think that you cannot always be happy or serene, so there must be less happy moments, because the less happy moments make you understand and appreciate many things..." (Albanian woman, 22 years old);

"... I weight things, often I skim over them, I know what the big difficulties are and what is not important..." (Nigerian man, 21 years old).

People talked about the migration journey when reflecting on the development of their resilience and emphasized that they felt stronger and more capable because of the experience:

"I think it's good that I had the opportunity to have an experience like this, i.e.. to leave my family, my friends and my comfort zone and to try myself in a country that was, let us say, not totally unknown, but it was unknown in everything that was new, and I managed, not completely, but I managed, and this is very important for me, I managed to move forward with difficulties, because in the beginning nothing is easy, but I am very proud of myself, I did not give up and I did not retreat..."(Albanian woman, 40 years old).

Relationship resources were evident in the words of the migrants as a symbolic space of support and resilience development. Migrants pointed to family ties and history as possible factors in building resilience. While the family's mandate to make sense of family history could support migrants' skills, cultural differences within the family could lead to individual resources:

"The love of the family ... It gives me the mandate to finish what I started... Just the love of the family, because I feel what I owe them and I do not want to disappoint them, that gives me so much energy ..." (Moldovan man, 43 years old);

"I roll up my sleeves and keep going. I can say that in 36 years I have gone through everything and much more not to cry over spilled milk ... That's part of the character I inherited from my mother." (Irish woman, 68 years old);

"I have always learned to take care of myself, so the problems that affect me are related to work and university. Problems that a lot of people I know have. I have a love-hate relationship with my sister because even though she is married to a man from another country, she grew up with my parents in Morocco and has a different mentality. We often argue about topics that are completely normal for me and absolutely forbidden for her. With my parents, on the other hand, we have a platonic relationship: they do not know much about what I do in life, because since we belong to two different worlds, it's difficult to find a point of contact, a compromise, to find each other." (Moroccan woman, 22 years old).

It is clear from the words of the youngest interviewee that finding resilient skills was a journey that

was still in its infancy:

"When I have difficulties, I cannot, I always do everything at the last minute and then I get a general restlessness... then I am still very happy..." (Albanian woman, 20 years old);

"I am very positive, but on the other hand I am also very pessimistic, I have both ... as my mother says, "You are really a twin!" So, it depends on what it is... or I just throw myself down... or... it's usually a non-thinking (about difficult times)" (Spanish woman, 24 years old).

While family seemed to offer support but was also seen as an area to detach from to grow, on the other hand, friendships were defined as powerful advisors in the most difficult moments:

"When my friend suggested the home, I brought a friend who is almost like a mother to me. But the mother protects you and tries to protect you, the friend gives you the right advice. When I have difficulties, I tend to turn to my friends because I know they will tell me when I am wrong; the mother, on the other hand, always tries to prove you right." (Moldovan woman, 44 years old);

"When an obstacle appears, I do not care about everything and everyone and try to solve the problem. If I cannot do it alone, I ask for advice, but that is what I do: I do not ask the elders for advice, like my father, my mother, my uncle or my aunt... No, I ask either my grandfather or my friends for advice, because they can see things better from my point of view. Since they are not under pressure because they have a problem or an obstacle in front of them, they can argue better than I can, see things better than I can... I may not be able to see the solution to the problem because I am under pressure because of the problem, so I ask my friend, my colleague who sees things from the same point of view as me but without pressure ... or my grandfather ... who has a little more experience, I would say! So, I ask for advice when I cannot do it on my own." (Albanian man, 20 years old)

Being able to share the same cultural perspective on life and difficulties was a resource that migrants attributed to interpersonal relationships:

"I am Congolese, we Africans live on solidarity: I know some friends who have already settled here. I have not asked anyone for help yet, but it happens that they give me 200, 150 euros when I go to their house, and I keep them so they can be useful to me in the future when I need them." (Congolese man, 24 years old).

The migrants spoke of the distance from family and the conditions in their country of origin as elements of great suffering that could not be a support in overcoming the difficulties in the new

country, but at the same time urged the search for a family environment in Italy:

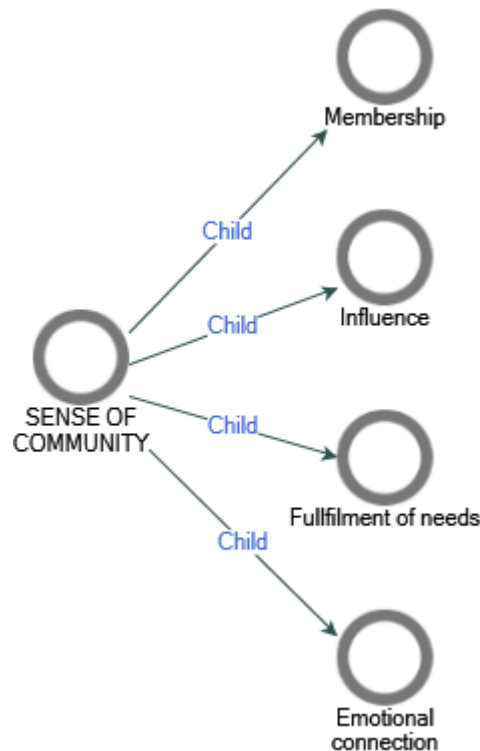
"The last time I asked him how things were going was maybe two years ago. Because. it is exhausting to know the situation, I am here with my hands (in my hands), I cannot do anything... It hurts me to hear that everything is bad... but... I talk to him every day; I call my mom every morning... I miss everything... but I avoid asking certain questions... it would be enough for me to open Facebook to know who is missing, how expensive life, gasoline, everything has become... Everything has greatly increased in price, so I avoid it... I avoid dealing with these speeches because they are not able to change the world ... Right now!... I suffer a little bit when there is a problem, to tell you the truth. I suffer a little bit. There is no one I can consult, neither my twin nor my mother, I must find a solution, so it's a bit difficult ... still, it helps me to find a family environment ... More than one person, let us say. I miss that a little bit here. It makes it even more difficult" (Syrian man, 37).

The sub-theme of **Community resources** referred to the communities that people felt they belonged to and that had helped them build resilience. Among the contexts those of volunteering, the neighbourhood and sport were mentioned.

"I immersed myself in the reality of the young man's home, where I found friends, but also people who are still part of my life ... who followed me, guided me and helped me in my decisions ... A reality that is still linked to that of the youth home, but that continued to help me become who I am today, to be the person I am today, in short, it is this thing here that we have organized as a community for 8 years ... the summer camp, and I was responsible for it..."(Albanian man, 30 years old);

"I had so much solidarity from the schools (of the country). They helped me ... I managed to pay a bill for the furniture and the chairs... So, every year our restaurant becomes part of the Italian family. I am very proud and happy because it is not only my restaurant but everyone's. This has helped to get the restaurant back on its feet..." (Egyptian man, 56 years old).

4.2.3.6 Sense of community



The theme **Sense of community** contained phrases reflecting the relationship to the residential environment. In the “Membership” subtopic, migrants talked about the neighbourhood and emphasized that they feel a varying degree of belonging to the community in which they live:

"I really like the people, they are very calm, if someone needs something everyone is there. They call me a lot when they need something. I have made friends with pretty much all the residents in my neighbourhood. In the neighbourhood where I live now, there are not only Italians, but also Moroccans, Albanians, etc. It is a multicultural environment" (Moldovan man, 44 years old);

"I feel at home here in the old town of Genoa, first I lived there for a while, then I moved away and now I have returned to the old town, also for professional reasons, and I feel at home here, I know everyone, all the neighbours, all the stores ... I feel at home in this neighbourhood." (Peruvian woman, 50 years old);

"I do not like the neighbourhood where I live at all... I do not like the place, but now it's my home" (Peruvian man, 21 years old).

The **Influence** subtheme includes reflections on one's active role in the community. People reported having little or no influence on the residential community:

"I ended up here in Novi, and when we got here we had already changed apartments three times, and now that we are here we have stopped doing that because we like it here. The neighbourhood is also very nice, that is, it's quiet, because I have heard that there are neighbourhoods where that's not the case... and here we are in a good place" (Moldovan man, 43 years old):

"They must have a love for their country that I do not see, I do not see it. I am sorry I am a foreigner, but Italy is my country now [...], I want to see my city perfect. But what I see now hurts me. A road that cannot be built. The boardwalk that I cannot walk on after the storm. So many things that hurt. So many works that need to be done, and for years no one opened their eyes to do them ..." (Egyptian man, 56 years old);

"The last time I asked him how things were going was maybe two years ago. Because ... it's exhausting to know the situation, I am here with my hands (in my hands), I cannot do anything ... I avoid dealing with these discourses because they are not able to change the world..." (Syrian man, 37 years old).

Under the sub-theme of **Fulfillment of needs**, respondents indicated that the presence of services was the most important element in choosing their neighbourhood/community of residence, in addition to the fact that certain features of the community satisfied their need to feel integrated into the Italian community:

"... I like it because it is a quiet area, because it is in the center, because I think that here there is everything a person needs, at least me, everything I need, from work to family" (Albanian man, 30 years old);

"The fact that it is very quiet, very, very quiet. There are only elderly people, so maximum quiet, and then they are all Italians, which is also very important ... because foreigners ... I am not saying Moroccans, Tunisians, Bosnians ... But the Albanians. We Albanians are very noisy. Me and my family here actually not, because we do not do anything, now we have adopted the Italian mentality, so we are rather quiet ... because Italians are very quiet ... " (Albanian man, 20 years old).

For the sub-theme **Emotional Connection**, respondents reported having a positive emotional connection to places and people:

"What I like is that it's a neighbourhood, let us say it has a history, a new neighbourhood with no past, let us say I like it so much; but I like the first neighbourhood here in Italy, it was my home. The old city was my home. It was the home of my heart" (Albanian woman, 40 years old);

"... Especially now, when it's hot, I hear people walking around and singing until late at night, especially when they are drunk! They laugh and sing in a very loud voice. This makes me feel more alive, in this sense I like this neighbourhood a lot" (Iranian woman, 52 years old).

It is also clear from the migrants' narratives that the emotions associated with the neighbourhood may be related to the fear of unsafe living conditions and police checks:

"... It's a bit of a dangerous neighbourhood. We are near the main train station, and the center is the whole category of people... At any time, there are policemen doing controls. That scares me" (Congolese man, 24 years old).

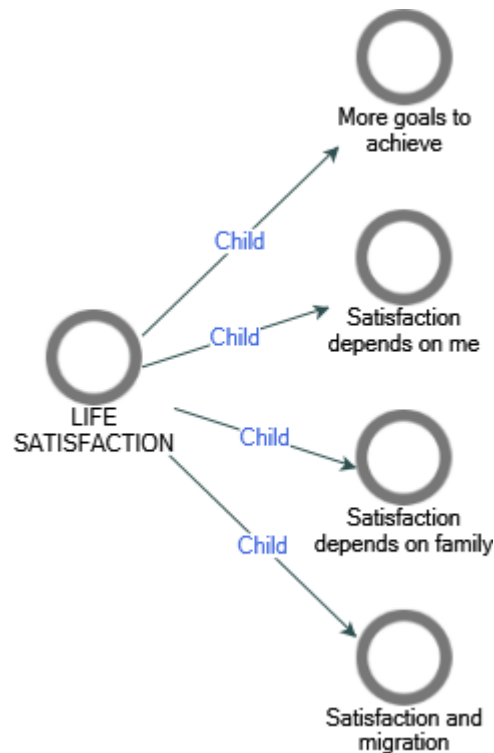
Migrants who live in the neighbourhood where they work, such as caregivers, associate a sense of familiarity with the people they work for and with the neighbourhood:

"... I have always had a good time; I have only found one bad person in 20 years that I have worked with for a short time; while with others I have stayed in family relationships ... I like the place where I live because I get along well with everyone, from the greengrocer to the people I worked with" (Moldovan woman, 54 years old).

For interviewees who had been migrants for a shorter period, emotional attachment was primarily related to the people with whom one shared the apartment, and then gradually extended to the neighbourhood:

"I have only been here a short time and I am doing well; I am starting to get to know the locals, they seem nice. And I get along well with my friends back home..." (Nigerian man, 21 years old).

4.2.3.7 Life satisfaction



Regarding the topic of **Life Satisfaction**, the discussions revolved around the nuances of assigning a score to one's overall life satisfaction. To gain a deeper understanding of the numerical ratings within the identified subcategories, respondents elaborated on the varying interpretations associated with the assigned scores. In the **More goals to achieve** category, migrants expressed a high level of life satisfaction, yet it fell short of being maximal due to the presence of remaining goals to be accomplished. According to younger migrants, life satisfaction was closely linked to personal growth, with independence, acquiring a home, and starting a family being identified as significant:

"...8 because I still have so many things missing that I need to achieve... I have been here in Italy for 9 years and I have achieved so many things that other people of mine who have been here for a lifetime have not achieved... I studied, I have a diploma, a good job, a good income, my own car... Because since I arrived here, I put in my mind that I need to achieve many things, I need to have my things without asking anyone for anything, but I still miss many things like ... My goal was to open my own business and not work as an employee all the time... also to have my home and my family..." (Ecuadorian man, 25 years old);

while for older people, family goals such as helping children with their life goals played an important role in life satisfaction. In addition, being able to afford additional goods and amenities such as a holiday home was mentioned as one of the goals yet to be achieved:

"8... I still want something. I know that I will be calm with my heart when my daughters settle down, that is, the eldest will eventually go to university, that is a test for us parents, especially because we have to help their daughters grow up, as our parents did with us ..., then in 5 years, the second daughter will go to university ... and then a house will be needed, a family house for vacations" (Moldovan man, 43 years old).

The subcategory **Satisfaction depends on family** contained the sentences in which migrants focused on family as a source of satisfaction: positive if family members had achieved stable work goals, and negative if distance had caused suffering:

"... I am satisfied because I have wonderful children, I do something for them and I see the result that interests me the most, I see my daughter going to university, my son finishing school..." (Cuban woman, age 50)

"Grade 5...because so much time has passed in which I have struggled... Because circumstances have been like this, I have lived like an ant... I have missed out on my family's and children's lives... I left my daughter when she was 3 years old and didn't see her again until she was 9... to me she is a blank slate... I did not see how the little girl grew up, I have no memories of my little ones, nothing! I have memories of leaving her..." (Moldovan woman, 54 years);

The subcategory **Satisfaction depends on me** contained sentences in which migrants emphasized that life satisfaction depends on themselves and their choices. Migrants talked about how decisions they made in life that they regret today affect their life satisfaction. This was mainly about going to university, finding a job, or getting a driver's license:

"... Grade 7... because I could have definitely made more choices... some better choices..." (Ecuadorian man, 24 years old);

"I am sure I could have done more... As a child, when I was young, I had too many distractions, I am referring to studies, because for sure I could do more, give more and maybe today I would have given not a 7 but a 9, but let us say regrets, I have it, I have always had it, for that I have always had it..." (Pakistani

man, 29 years old).

On the topic of **Satisfaction and migration**, interviewees talked about their life satisfaction by relating it to the migration path or their life in Italy:

"... For what I could have done with my life in Morocco and what I am doing now, I am absolutely satisfied, so 8/10. " (Moroccan woman, 22 years old);

"If I could go back, I would make this trip again given the situation in Iran. Here we have problems as foreigners, but as a foreigner you have both advantages and disadvantages ... Certainly we have lost many things compared to my country, but I always tell my Italian friends that I came here not because I was hungry in my country, but to have more freedom. I studied law, but here my degree was not recognised, and I had to start everything from scratch. I had small children, I did not have my parents here, I did not have family to take care of my children while I left the house or went to work, I missed many opportunities. I dedicated my youth to my children, and now we are in a bit of a bad economic situation. With this I want to say that being a stranger is not always nice or easy" (Iranian woman, 52 years old old);

"There were many difficulties and there still are. If I had not found a job after the Salvini decree, I probably would have had to return, and that would have been too painful. But now my situation is always in limbo, I do not live in real security, but I live ... I live and I believe in it, and that gives me so much strength, I know that evil exists, I have experienced it, but there are also many helps, beautiful people, and beautiful places, so I am satisfied. As a score, I tell you 8, you always grow, but now I am fine ..." (Nigerian man, 21 years old).

4.2.4 Discussion of the results

An initial examination of word frequency in relation to assigning adjectives to the term "home" indicated that migrants commonly associated it with feelings of comfort, relaxation, security, warmth, and welcome. Less frequently mentioned were words like inconvenience, noisy, and chaotic. These findings support previous studies on the concept of home, which link it to feelings of comfort and security (Putnam & Newton, 1990; Appleyard, 1979). They also align with research highlighting the challenges associated with living at home (Roster et al., 2016; Donohoe, 2011), showcasing the diverse range of contexts in which home is represented and understood.

The interviews with migrants revealed several significant themes. These themes included aspects of the migration process, the acculturation process, the restoration of a psychological home, factors that facilitate or hinder the psychological home, resilience, sense of community, and life satisfaction. For each theme, a concept map was constructed, consisting of subcategories and citations that exemplify the content of each theme.

The theme of the migration process provided insights into the characteristics of the respondents, which can help interpret the results. The interviewed migrants were either voluntary migrants or children of individuals who migrated to enhance their quality of life. There were no forced migrants, and in some cases, migration was viewed as a choice to distance oneself from practices in the country of origin that contradicted personal ideals. The expectations associated with migration were often fulfilled, with individuals attributing their success to their own efforts. When this was not the case, responsibility was attributed to the life context, which did not align with the migrant's preconceived notions. This result can be understood in the context of control theory (Rotter, 1966), which posits that the attribution of responsibility is influenced by the interaction between the individual and the environment. When individuals have an internal locus of control, they exhibit higher self-confidence and commitment to their goals (Tsai & Tsao, 2017). Conversely, an external locus of control leads to blaming others for personal success or failure (Lam & Schaubroeck, 2000). The analysis of migration-related information also indicates that Italy is not always viewed as a destination country but also as a transit country. This finding supports existing literature (Assirelli, Barone & Recchi, 2019) suggesting that the idea of mobility outside Italy is particularly prevalent among the younger and more educated migrants, who perceive it as a means to improve their working conditions.

Based on the overarching theme of acculturation, it is evident that living between different cultures necessitates adaptation to feel at home. However, this can make it challenging to maintain aspects associated with one's origin. For younger migrants, there is an opportunity to transcend the cultural contrasts and perceive themselves as individuals immersed in multiple cultures. It has been

established that learning Italian plays a pivotal role in developing a sense of belonging, and this often depends on factors such as the language of origin and the age at which individuals arrive and enroll in Italy. Proficiency in the language of the host country influences various aspects of societal integration, serving as an indicator of a broader process of social integration (Mesch, 2003). Moreover, it is closely and positively linked to migrant employment, social integration, political participation, and life satisfaction (Amit, 2010; Remennik, 2004; Dustmann & Fabbri, 2003). It is noteworthy that some migrants mentioned that being involved in volunteering had helped them feel more integrated; this is likely due to the mechanisms by which the volunteering context forms as a community of belonging (Martinez-Damia et al., 2023).

Examining the relational aspects within Italy reveals that migrants establish relationships in diverse life contexts, and the neighbourhood often serves as a space to build supportive connections irrespective of individuals' backgrounds. Although the choice between Italian friends or fellow compatriots is sometimes influenced by the need for acceptance by the Italian community or the desire for a shared origin and language, this finding can be understood in the context of studies that distinguish between bounded social capital (based on social networks within the ethnic group, which can lead to ethnic segregation) and bridging social capital (based on social networks that cross ethnic boundaries) (Putnam, 2000). Attitudes toward compatriots are characterized by ambivalence, ranging from a search for linguistic similarities, particularly in the initial stages of migration, to possible dislike of Italians or disdain for compatriots due to perceived negative traits. Some individuals desire to live in multicultural environments where differences can be minimized. In maintaining relationships with individuals in their home countries, the use of technology and travel to the country of origin appear to be significant. Additionally, having a designated space at home to host visiting relatives from the home country is deemed important, as supported by existing literature (Miah & King, 2021).

From the narratives, it can be concluded that respondents were more likely to exhibit integrative or assimilative behaviour toward Italians. Assimilation, as observed, supports a sense of

home, but its degree varies. Some individuals assimilate to local customs, while others claim to adopt Italian traditions and values. In fact, individuals can simultaneously possess two or more cultural orientations and switch between them—a process referred to as "*cultural frame-switching*". This cultural frame-switching occurs when a specific cultural pattern influences a person's behaviour and impacts multiple domains, including identity formation (Verkuyten & Pouliasi, 2006).

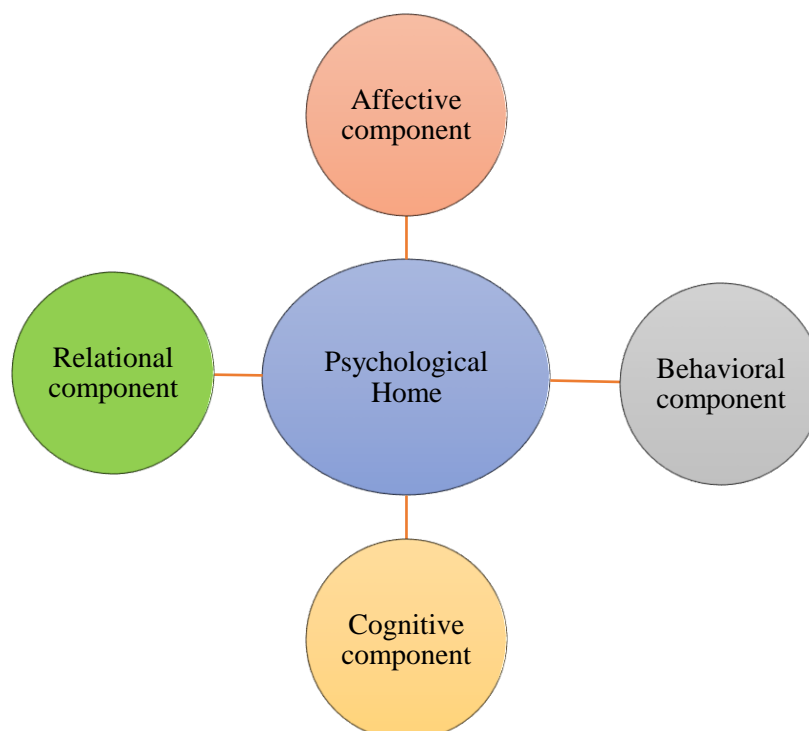
The conceptualization of movement between cultural orientations reinforces the notion that acculturation does not necessitate the complete internalization and uniform adoption of different cultures by multicultural individuals. Acculturative changes may affect different aspects of life, such as cultural identity, pride, language use or preference, cultural knowledge, beliefs, and values (Zane & Mak, 2003). Regarding identity, change for migrants does not necessarily imply a complete transformation of their identity. For instance, it is possible to maintain a core identity tied to their culture of origin while developing a sense of home in Italy. In other cases, growing up with Italian customs fosters a sense of belonging to Italy. It appears that some sense of loyalty to their home country remains important for migrants, with some associating it with family ties when describing themselves as Italian.

At times, there may be a discrepancy between expectations, actions, and emotions. Marie Rose Moro (2014) discusses the concept of "*psychological vulnerability*" when there is a conflict between "*filiation*," adherence to the cultural values of one's heritage, and "*affiliation*," belonging to the host group. Such conflicts can hinder the development of one's identity, especially when individuals are exposed to discriminatory attitudes from the majority group alongside different cultural models. Furthermore, the fact that many interviewees have adopted a lifestyle they consider Italian leads them to perceive an Italian identity rather than an identity tied to their country of origin. Combined with the challenge of representing their culture of origin within their home and external relationships, this suggests that certain aspects of their original identity may have been compromised due to assimilation pressures.

This outcome is also evident in the context of leaving the family, particularly among individuals who associate changing residence with moving away from the parental home and experiencing cultural differences. In this sense, the process of differentiation seems to intersect with aspects of migration, particularly for those who migrated as children (Bowen, 1978). The process of individuation emphasizes the gap between familial affiliations, including cultural ones, and the need to feel rooted in the world where individuals live and have made friends. This need to belong to a context different from that of their parents while maintaining loyalty to family is part of the dynamics of belonging and separation (Andolfi & Cavaleri, 2010). For younger migrants, defining identity solely within the framework of national belonging is seen as limiting and underscores the necessity of rethinking the nuanced and processual aspects of identity, rather than categorizing it (Worden & Miller-Idriss, 2016).

The theme of restoring a psychological home encompasses the three components identified by Sigmon et al. (2002) and the relationship component identified by Cardinali et al. (2021) in their study of male migrants (Figure 5).

Figure 5. *Psychological Home and its dimensions: the model in migration context*



The cognitive component subtopic explores the concept of home for migrants. When migrants speak of home, the images they associate with it often refer to memories that connect the feeling of home to specific places, such as childhood locations. This aligns with the findings of Sigmon et al. (2002, p.33), who emphasized that the feeling of home sometimes arises from memories associated with grandparents' homes. Family ties also form the foundation for the notion that owning a home is akin to securing a legacy that is passed down to future generations. The passage of time was mentioned by migrants as an important factor in developing a sense of home. The longer they have resided in Italy, the more likely it is that they consider it their psychological home. With the passage of time also comes personal growth, accompanied by an increased ability to perceive home as a symbolic place. Moreover, home was described as a special place that provides security and serves as a starting point in the new country. In some instances, even the nation itself is perceived as home when individuals feel deeply rooted in Italy and their sense of belonging to the nation surpasses the sense of home associated with their country of origin. Migrants also seem to have a sense of multiple homelands, tied to different physical locations and different cultural affiliations.

The affective component subtheme is characterized by aspects of security and comfort. For returned migrants, home primarily signifies a sense of protection and refuge. Feelings of safety, tranquillity, and comfort are consistent with the literature on psychological home (Sigmon et al., 2002). At home, individuals can truly be themselves, feel welcomed, and experience the warmth of a special relational atmosphere. Closing the door at home allows for relaxation and eliminates the possibility of being judged. The sense of relaxation associated with the home environment also facilitates the development of relationships beyond the immediate community. This is particularly important for migrants, as friendship networks foster community integration and influence life satisfaction (Hombrados-Mendieta et al., 2019). The sense of pride experienced by migrants when

they purchase a house in Italy for themselves and their children stems from the accomplishment of conquering a place, they can call their own.

The behavioural component is characterized by the significant effort migrants invest in finding housing in Italy and their ability to seek assistance in locating suitable accommodations. Friends, compatriots, non-citizens, and relatives all seem to be involved in the housing search process. Proximity to already settled relatives or neighbourhood convenience appears to play a greater role in housing choice than internal housing characteristics. This confirms that social ties serve as social capital for migrants when it comes to settling down and finding housing in their new country (Margarit et al., 2022). However, migrants also strive to continuously improve their housing conditions and devote significant energy to striking the right balance between neighbourhood characteristics and housing amenities. The personalization of the apartment involves different actors, highlighting the importance of the family unit in shaping the living space. Both the couple and the entire family contribute to the personalization of different rooms in the house, while the choice of furniture is often seen as a female responsibility. This division of domestic tasks may reflect a cultural aspect, although a study conducted among migrants in Italy (Brini, Zamberlan & Barbieri, 2022) suggests that the influence of gender equality in their country of origin tends to decrease over time spent in Italy, disappearing for families who have been away from their home country for an extended period. Despite the primary role assigned to women in home decor, a study by Walsh (2011) with migrant men highlights the importance of men's ability to express themselves through home modifications. The traditional normative model of gender identity is present in migrants' minds, but there is also evidence of the emergence of alternative domestic masculinity and femininity, which involve a revaluation of the value of domestic practices and a reassessment of traditional gender roles.

While the behavioural component plays a significant role in transforming an apartment into a home, the possibility of personalization seems to be limited by the structural and economic constraints of migration. Migrants face barriers that make it difficult to fully develop the behavioural

component of housing. Challenges in accessing the housing market and economic reasons often prevent them from initially choosing housing that they consider suitable. Additionally, the adaptation of the housing environment is hindered by frequent moves to improve housing conditions or living in rented or furnished apartments. Although there are doubts about whether residential objects alone foster a sense of home as they may not evoke ethnic or national feelings (Brujić, 2023), other literature (Pechurina, 2020; Boccagni, 2014) highlights how these objects can promote a sense of home through the manifestation of identity. The temporary nature of dwellings limits personalization, and the difficulty of bringing non-essential items from distant lands restricts access to the ethnic identity dimension of dwellings through environmental manipulation.

The relational component, which was also evident in women's narratives, is affirmed as a fundamental part of the psychological home for migrants. Relational experiences play a central and constitutive role in the sense of home. Migrants often equate home with family, emphasizing the central role of familial affection in their sense of home. This involves significant investment, as families have a mission and intention to migrate. Furthermore, home is experienced as a place of reunion after long separations. In some cases, relational experiences go beyond parental relationships, with migrants describing trusting relationships that contribute to their sense of home. It appears that for some younger migrants who have moved away from their parental home, positive connections with individuals in their home country aid in developing a sense of home in their new environment, sometimes in contrast to external relational contexts that are perceived as exhausting.

For each of the four components, subcategories were identified to illustrate how migrants relate their past and present homes and how the migration process has shaped their perception of home in their country of origin (present home). The subcategories "former and current home" (one for each component) and "country of origin" (one for each component) demonstrate that the former and current homes are not comparable in terms of cultural differences. Some migrants reject the conflict between the culture they identify with and the culture of their new environment. However, it is evident that the former home, which retains certain cultural aspects, is connected to the current

home. This confirms how migrants, in the process of restoring a psychological home, look to the past to build a new sense of belonging in the present (Levin, 2015). This is also true for individuals who migrated as children, as a strong family mandate linking their sense of belonging to both their home country and their new country shapes their development and goals.

The subcategories "past and present home" suggest that the energy with which migrants establish a home in Italy often mirrors the energy they put into building a home in their country of origin. This results in a strong sense of personal accomplishment when acquiring a home, although it can also be seen as an aspiration (Chen, 2018). The way living spaces are experienced, influenced by geographical and climatic differences, compels migrants to redefine the concept of home in terms of its functions. While the boundaries of home were generally more open in the country of origin, allowing for interaction with the neighbourhood and extended family, in Italy, home is often confined to a private space due to the absence of family and the cultural view of the domestic environment. If the home in the country of origin was seen as a space of greater freedom but also one where family members intruded and limited one's actions, the restoration of a psychological home evokes nostalgia for the more open neighbourly relationships in the home country. However, migrants also come to appreciate the value of the intimacy of the Italian home and the increased freedom in relationships due to generational changes. Nevertheless, in some cases, this is not possible, and the reduced presence of family and friends leads to experiences of loneliness. Occasionally, the perceived higher housing quality in the country of origin contributes to valuing the home in terms of the life context and the decision to migrate. These findings highlight that migrants seek similar living environments to carry out their daily activities, which reflect their culture of origin, while also adapting to new conditions.

The sub-theme "home of origin today" demonstrates how the migration process, and the development of a new psychological home can alter ideas, feelings, behaviours, and relationships with the home country today. For some migrants, it is possible to identify a stronger connection to the feeling of home. This confirms the findings of Cardinali et al. (2021), who emphasize the

possibility for migrants to develop multiple senses of home. While the home in the country of origin can become a place of memory that guides the perception of the psychological home in the current country, memory is a fundamental element for ensuring continuity during the migration process (Creet, 2011). The home in the country of origin may still be a lived-in place if migrants can return for vacations or a place of longing if it is considered a retirement destination. Maintaining contact with friends and family in the home country is an important aspect that indicates the ability to live with a sense of home in both contexts, even though maintaining relationships with family members in the home country does not necessarily lead to the development of a sense of multiple homes.

Migrants mentioned specific elements that they identified as typical of their culture of origin and that they desired to reintroduce into their homes in Italy. These could be symbolic objects or routines closely tied to their country of origin. This finding is significant in light of studies that link the construction and maintenance of a sense of home to culturally significant objects (Liu & Gallois, 2022; Liu, Maher, & Sheer 2019). Two areas had the greatest impact: typical foods, which are often readily available in Italy, and routines related to meals. These were seen as important ways to keep their cultural belonging alive at home. In some cases, the consumption of typical foods differed between the first and second generations. For the first generation, it was a way to maintain their cultural belonging, while for the second generation, it was more about respecting their parents and fostering family unity. Additionally, items associated with family members who remained in the home country were mentioned, highlighting how household objects serve as emotional links to those left behind (Marschall, 2019).

Like the model identified in Cardinali et al.'s (2021) study with male migrants, elements that facilitate or hinder the process of restoring a psychological home in a new country were identified. Consistent with previous research highlighting the influence of social support and relationships on the sense of belonging (Derrien & Stokowski, 2014; Tester et al., 2011), support from family and friendships was associated with a positive development of the sense of home. The relationship dynamics between individuals from different cultural backgrounds emphasized the crucial role of

the acculturation component in the sense of home. Migrants felt that adapting to customs was essential for feeling at home, while a welcoming society was seen as beneficial. It appears that adherence to customs helped migrants integrate into Italy, and Italians were perceived as more welcoming when migrants conformed to local customs. The interaction between these two mechanisms fostered a sense of home in Italy and a sense of belonging. While adaptive abilities are often considered individual-level processes, it is plausible to assume that they also involve cross-group dimensions. This outcome should be viewed in the context of the national and cultural intergroup dynamics (Bourhis et al., 1997; Piontkowski, Rohmann & Florack, 2002). In Italy, integration with assimilation appears to be the preferred strategy of the majority (Rania et al., 2019; Kusic, Mannetti & Sam, 2005), and accommodations in the host country often have an ethnocentric design that requires others to assimilate to the local culture (Memmott & Keys, 2015). Consequently, migrants who have more contact with the host culture may find it easier to establish a psychological home through accommodation in the new country. While home is a private space, it is possible that the responses of the majority group have also influenced how migrants' desire for cultural contact manifests in this context. Brown and Zagefka (2011) found that "the majority group felt more threatened by the combination of deviant public and private strategies when the minority's 'private' preferences seemed to conflict with their publicly recognized preferences." On the other hand, migrants mentioned that some aspects related to their home country were beneficial for maintaining memories of their past, even though this was not always easy. However, factors that hindered the development of a sense of home included difficulties stemming from a challenging acculturation process, perceived distance in family relationships, and potentially unstable housing situations in Italy. Migrants also reported that restrictive conditions in their home countries hindered their sense of home toward their country of origin. This partially explains the intention to migrate and the initial detachment of the sense of home from the home country. From another perspective (Al-Ali and Koser, 2002), it could be suggested that those who choose to migrate have ambivalent relationships with their home countries, including both positive memories and challenging

experiences. This can lead to feelings of both belonging and alienation in both the home and host countries.

Finally, the last themes related to dimensions of migrant well-being, including resilience, sense of community, and life satisfaction.

In the resilience theme, it became clear that the greatest resources for migrants are their individual characteristics, relationships with family and friends, and community resources. This aligns with developmental psychology, which identifies resilience pathways that encompass individual, relational, and community characteristics (Masten, Cutuli, Herbers, & Reed, 2009). These resources provide pathways to resilience for individuals regardless of their race, gender, culture, or social class (Guengoer & Perdu, 2017). Our model differs in part from the proposed one, as interviewees referred to broader community contexts rather than specific public resources through which they developed resilience. Among the communities they referred to was also the volunteering community, which confirms how engaging in volunteering for migrants can represent a context for personal growth (Martinez-Damia et al., 2023). In general, individuals demonstrated having developed resilient skills in the past that helped them face future difficulties. There may be a tendency for those who migrated voluntarily to embrace challenges and develop wisdom compared to those who are forced to migrate. This can occur because voluntary migrants perceive their migration as emancipation from the push factors that led them to the destination country and, therefore, may have a higher likelihood of becoming resilient in the face of migration challenges (Kutor, Raileanu & Simandan, 2021).

From the results of the study, migrants' resilience included individual components of self-efficacy that allowed them to find meaning in life, develop optimism, self-determination, perseverance, and reflective abilities. The two main themes to which migrants associated a process of meaning-making that helped them develop skills for facing subsequent difficulties were, on one hand, the migration journey as a source of resilience, and on the other hand, the ability to attribute value to family support as a driving force for coping with adversity. Family and peer relationships

represented the relational resources on which migrants relied for the growth of their resilience. This result confirms the multisystemic perspective (Masten, 2016a), wherein resilience can be present at different levels of one's social ecology. The individual, family, and community levels are interdependent, and therefore, factors that facilitate resilience at each level of the ecology can also influence other levels (Distelberg et al., 2015; Masten, 2016a).

However, from the narratives, some potential obstacles to the development of full resilience emerged. It is important to highlight how emotional and relational well-being is associated with resilience but not necessarily with self-sufficiency. In fact, more individualistic individuals may keep their emotions private, refrain from seeking help, and experience loneliness. The seminal work (Beardslee, 1989) posited a correlation between this phenomenon and a diminished probability of engaging in collaborative social interactions, which serve as a conduit for acquiring and honing adaptive coping skills, fundamental constituents in the construction of psychological resilience. While the self-attributed abilities can be associated with self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), where autonomous behaviour is linked to greater well-being, there is also a connection between migration, which involves leaving behind aspects of culture, identity, and relationships, and the development of a sense of loneliness. This result suggests a reflection on the role of potential loss of social support in migration, as such support can protect against the negative impact of isolation on the development of full resilience (Lee et al., 2020). In fact, from our results, those who relied exclusively on family support could feel lacking in resources when family or friends were no longer available after migration. Falicov (2004) describes migration as a critical event that can cause intense psychological distress related to uprooting of meaning systems, and similarly, Boss (2006) proposes the concept of *ambiguous loss* when the relational process loses physicality due to displacement. These seemingly contradictory elements can create incomplete grief. The ambiguity with which migrants sometimes have to cope, on one hand, evokes feelings of sadness and despair, while on the other hand, it creates new hopes for an improved quality of life. In this sense, the concept of ambiguous loss looks at the dimension of migration and intersects with resilience

research, where the resilience of the family and individual members is seen as interdependent and connected to the resilience of the community (Masten, 2016b). Lastly, community resources, although not always present, represented contexts of significant personal growth for migrants, facilitating a sense of belonging and the development of resilient skills.

The sense of community was the penultimate theme that emerged. The construct was investigated in relation to the neighbourhood community, with which migrants seemed to develop a sense of belonging that made them feel at home, primarily due to the people and relationships established. At the same time, it seemed possible to feel at home even if one did not feel a sense of belonging to the community in which they lived. Regarding needs satisfaction, material needs were more predominant compared to the comforts offered by the living environment, but sometimes also compared to the need for integration with the people in the community. This data seems to be partially in line with the tendency for migrants to perceive relational communities as more significant than territorial ones, which they turn to for tangible needs (Buckingham et al., 2018). Emotional connections with people were often reported as pleasant sensations, filled with affection, although there could be a fear associated with an unsafe environment. This result seems to be associated with how migrants are received or not by the people in the neighbourhood (Hombrados-Mendieta et al., 2019). From the migrants' accounts, the component of influence on the community seemed to be limited. While they perceived themselves as responsible for their own lives and well-being, thanks to their migration choice, they did not seem to feel that they had much power to bring about change in the community they lived in. Only in cases where a deep process of developing resilient skills through the community was apparent, could individuals be identified who acted towards others and became agents of improvement within the community itself. However, in general, there was a certain disillusionment with institutions and the possibility of expressing their own desires. This result can be considered in light of McMillan & Chavis' (1986) definition of influence. Influence in a community is bidirectional, as members of a group must feel empowered

to have influence on what the group does, and the group's cohesion depends on the group having some influence on its members.

The last theme revolved around life satisfaction. The interviewed migrants appeared to be moderately satisfied with their lives, especially when considering how they had managed the migration choice and settlement in Italy. Again, whether they were satisfied seemed to be attributed to their own actions or those of their family. To some extent, this finding seems to be supported by the theory that the perception of one's life situation compared to others or to what it would have been if they had not chosen to migrate appears to be crucial in determining life satisfaction. Despite expressing fairly or very satisfied with their own condition, a recurring theme was the inability to feel completely satisfied. In a way, satisfaction with one's life seemed to be closely connected to the tendency to continuously set goals for improving one's own conditions or those of their family. This finding can be partly attributed to the theory that increasing aspirations and expectations of migrants in developed countries result from their acclimation to better conditions in the host country and less comparison with the inferior conditions in their country of origin. This also explains why migrants generally do not assimilate in terms of subjective well-being, meaning that their happiness and life satisfaction do not substantially increase with the duration of their stay or across generations (Hendriks & Burger, 2020).

4.2.5 Conclusions and limitations

Migrants often strive to create a psychological home in their new country, which may involve aspects of family identification and the maintenance of long-distance relationships with relatives in their country of origin. Symbolic objects and behaviours associated with their culture of origin, such as traditional foods and the use of their native language, play an important role in preserving their sense of belonging and family ties. However, there can also be obstacles related to the acculturation process, distant family relationships, and restrictive conditions in the home country that affect migrants' sense of home in the new country. The process of restoring a psychological home seems to be influenced by the acculturation aspect, wherein the need for acceptance and

tranquillity promotes assimilative aspects and facilitates the development of a psychological home. It is important to note that maintaining an ethnic identity has a protective function for migrants' mental health and overall quality of life (Urzúa et al., 2021).

In terms of well-being, the quest to create a sense of home in a new country serves as a driving force for developing resilience, which derives its meaning precisely from the choice to migrate. The primary resources that were employed by migrants in fostering resilience encompassed their individual attributes and the support extended by their families. It was observed that the inclusion within the community was comparatively less frequently acknowledged as a contributing factor to resilience (except for family as a subset of the community); nevertheless, it remained a noteworthy component. In accordance with Novara et al. (2023), it appears that family, native born friends, and newly acquainted neighbours collaborate in a process whereby individuals strive to integrate elements from both their familiar past and their novel experiences, thereby fostering an augmentation of resilience. In the present study, the relationship between home, sense of community, and the neighbourhood highlighted how migrants seek out living environments that in still a sense of belonging and gradually foster emotional attachment over time. Although the neighbourhood often evoked a sense of home, especially when a psychological home has been successfully established through the security of a physical dwelling, migrants' ability to influence the community they live in still appeared limited. Generally, there seemed to be a tendency to adapt to living conditions or rely on one's own capabilities rather than actively working towards community-level changes. It is crucial to recognize that the Italian context, laws, and mediated information sometimes do not provide space for migrants' abilities, ideas, and actions, effectively hindering the integration of diversity within the community (Rochira, 2018). By facilitating the development of a sense of community through social structures and individual relationships, community enrichment can be achieved (Mantovan, 2017).

Lastly, life satisfaction appears to be a measure of achieving individual goals, often associated with the reasons for migration. In this sense, building a psychological home can bridge

migration motivations and expectations, the development of resilience, and overall well-being. This finding differs somewhat from the study by Amit and Bar-Lev (2015), which considers life satisfaction as a mediator between individual characteristics and the possibility of developing a sense of belonging to the host country. Several studies (Chen et al., 2020; Mosanya & Kwiatkowska, 2021) support our findings and emphasize that life satisfaction is an outcome associated with dimensions of identity and a sense of belonging.

It is worth noting that the model presented in this study is not exhaustive, and there may be additional factors and complexities involved in the process of restoring a psychological home for migrants. However, the findings shed light on important themes and subcategories that contribute to our understanding of the multifaceted nature of the concept of home for migrants. By considering the cognitive, affective, behavioural, and relational components of home, as well as the influence of past and present homeland experiences, cultural identity, and resilience, we can gain valuable insights into the challenges and experiences of migrants as they navigate the process of building a sense of home in a new country.

Limitations

This study had several limitations. The interviewed migrants had good or adequate knowledge of Italian, voluntarily participated in the study, indicating their willingness to interact with the researchers, and likely had a greater inclination to integrate or assimilate into the host culture. Consequently, the process of psychological homecoming for migrants using various acculturation strategies remains poorly understood. The sample's heterogeneity in terms of origin, age, and age at the time of migration, while intentionally selected to highlight commonalities among individuals with migrant backgrounds, did not allow for in-depth analysis or comparisons across groups. The voluntary nature of migration could be a significant motive for remaining in Italy. Only two respondents indicated that they migrated due to limitations on their freedom of choice in their home country. As such, these respondents did not identify themselves as refugees or asylum seekers. However, differences compared to economic migrants may exist. Future research should explore

the population of forced migration to deepen our understanding of psychological home. Although the snowball recruitment strategy was effective in giving voice to those who felt the need to speak up and reaching individuals who would otherwise be difficult to access, it also resulted in self-selection of individuals connected within a network of relationships. Additionally, the position of the Italian researcher, despite being trained and educated, may have imposed constraints that created a desire to please the respondents. The phrasing of certain questions might reflect a culturalist perspective. Future research should employ an emic research approach (Shweder, 1991). Lastly, there were some limitations in the analysis and categorization process. While a dual analysis was conducted to ensure comprehensive common categorization, the construct of resilience had to be inferred from the interviewees' words as a form of change and internalization. Given that resilience is a nuanced construct with overlaps in coping strategies, there may be limitations in interpretation, despite efforts to clarify discrepancies on this topic. Assessing the sense of community was complex as it can refer to different communities' individuals belong to. In this study, the focus was on the territorial community to understand the relationship between the home context and the neighbourhood community. The analysis revealed that individuals can develop a sense of community beyond the territorial scope. Future research could explore the role of different belonging contexts for migrants in the development of a sense of community and a sense of home.

After examining the role of the acculturation process and the contextual associations with well-being in the narratives of migrants, a quantitative study is presented to address the remaining research questions.

4.3 Study 3. A conceptual model of the Psychological Home among migrants in Italy

Drawing on a previous literature review conducted by Paloma et al. (2021) on economic migrants, this study examined the social and individual factors that influence life satisfaction. Additionally, various authors have emphasized the importance of adopting strength-based approaches, such as assessing resilience, to explore the experiences of migrants (Güngör & Perdu, 2017; Okeke-Ihejirika et al., 2020) and the significant role that a sense of community can play in migrant well-being (Buckingham et al., 2018; García-Cid et al., 2020). Psychological home may also contribute to an individual's level of resilience, as establishing a sense of home requires adaptive flexibility, potentially enhancing resilience (Crum & Ferrari, 2019a). This study aims to investigate whether psychological home fosters resilience. Understanding the process of resilience development among individuals living in new environments addresses a research gap in the literature on psychological home. Additionally, this study reinforces the significant connection that may exist between psychological home and the formation of a sense of community, as previously indicated by Cicognani (2011). Gaining a deeper understanding of the relationship between sense of community and psychological home enables us to comprehend their impact on the well-being of migrants.

Resilience: A growing resource in migration

Resilience pertains to the capacity to adjust, endure, or conquer challenging life circumstances – a progression that involves a capability to be adaptable (Grotberg, 2003). As delineated by the ecological model, resilience emerges from a dynamic interplay among environmental, biological, psychological, social, and assorted risks, as well as protective and enhancing factors. Within this resilience framework, interactions transpire across all strata of the ecological system, compelling individuals to harness available resources across diverse domains. By mitigating the impact of stress-inducing events, resilience not only bolsters overall well-being but also curtails their occurrence. The concept of psychological homeliness appears pivotal in the resilience of individuals who succeed in cultivating an environment akin to a nurturing home. A

heightened aptitude for reinstating this connection may heighten resilience levels and consequently enhance well-being (Sigmon et al., 2002; Crum & Ferrari, 2019a). The course and outcomes of resilience are intertwined with both elements of risk and resources. The well-being of migrants is fostered by factors such as education, interpersonal bonds and assistance, communal associations, and policies that are sensitive to cultural needs. Since high levels of psychological home may indicate a good ability to restore this trait as a useful resource for the individual, an evaluation of individual resilience was included in this study. It is important to understand how resilience is affected by the psychological home, as it is tied to a personal domain and strongly linked to a person's identity. Moreover, the ability to make sense of life events seems to be stimulated by the migration experience and correlated with the ability to reconstruct a psychological home. Positive psychological outcomes and life satisfaction seem to be related to the capacity for resilience (Pan et al., 2008).

Sense of community and psychological home: A strong connection

Sense of community refers to a feeling of belonging, the feeling of being important to one another and to the group, and a shared belief that everyone's needs will be met through their commitment to being together (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). A recent comprehensive analysis (Stewart & Townley, 2020) reaffirmed that the psychological experience of belongingness within a community could potentially contribute to enhanced psychological well-being across various age groups and diverse societal contexts globally. Although sense of community transcends individual relationships and behaviours, the context is crucial in gaining a better understanding of community. A social dimension belongs to the sense of home. Home may go beyond the physical boundaries of the dwelling place and extend to the community. People demonstrating high levels of psychological home seem to have a high sense of community (Cicognani, 2011). According to Sigmon et al. (2002) "*constructing a home reinforces our ability to be separate from others and yet to be a part of others*" (p. 36). In the migratory context, this notion might refer to different forms related to the culture of one's origin and the new host community. As migrants may develop multiple identities,

they may also develop different multiple sense of community, contributing to the well-being of the individual (Barbieri & Zani, 2015; Mannarini et al., 2018).

Sense of community and resilience appear as constructs of great interest in recent psychological research with migrants (Novara et al, 2023; Novara et al, 2022). The two dimensions are cited as a possible measure of the present of the relationships taking place in the context (sense of community) and a past-oriented measure of how the person was able to develop resilience given their experiences. Feeling connected and safe is one of the characteristics of people with a good sense of community and may be linked to resilience, as both are protective factors necessary for growth (Siegel, 2015; Masten, 2014). While logic suggests that sense of community may be related to resilience, it is also possible that there is no relationship between these two constructs because there are other factors that influence these outcomes. Research that views resilience as a personal trait suggests that it may not be associated with interactions (Oshio et al., 2018), although conceptualizing resilience as an individual construct has several limitations (Shaw et al., 2016; Teti et al., 2012). On the contrary, there are research highlighting that resilience depends on the interaction between the individual and the context (Perkins & Caldwell, 2005; Masten, 2014). Scarf and colleagues (2016) observed a relationship between positive feelings of belonging and resilience in an experimental study and examined how social support increased participants' resilience.

Given the still exploratory data on the relationship between Sense of community and resilience, it seems important to examine the contexts in which this relationship might exist.

Although there are several studies on psychological home (Rogers & Hart, 2021; Crum & Ferrari, 2019a,2019b; Mota et al., 2018; Roster et al. 2016; Cicognani, 2011; Sigmon et al., 2002) no psychological study has focused on the role that the home may assume for migrants, especially considering the interactions among psychological home, resilience, sense of community. A better understanding of how an individual's sense of self interacts with physical resources and the surrounding environment might provide information on what makes them more satisfied with life and contributes to general well-being (Hart & Ben-Yoseph, 2014).

As underlined by a recent scoping review (Romoli et al., 2022), there is a lack of quantitative studies in the literature on the psychological perception of home that investigate individual characteristics, community relationships and psychological meanings encompassing the home of migrants. Moreover, studies on the creation of homes are a lens for contextualizing the experience of migrant inclusion (Boccagni & Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2023).

A preliminary study by Camilleri et al. (2022), belonging to the same line of research, examined the relationship between psychological home, demographic factors, and housing typology, as well as the differences between first-generation migrants in Italy and a sample of Italian citizens. The most striking finding was that gender was a discriminating factor for Italians (women had higher psychological home), while there was no gender difference for migrants. In fact, there was a significant difference between Italian men and migrants in terms of psychological home, with male migrants having higher levels of psychological home. This might be due to the fact that migrants, regardless of gender, need to assume a sense of home in order to satisfy their need to belong. For Italians, on the other hand, respect for gender roles seemed to predominate, so that women were more devoted to developing a sense of home, while men were more focused on developing a sense of belonging to the outside world. A difference between Italians and migrants also emerged in terms of employment status, differing only between migrants with a full-time job and migrant students. This might be partly explained by the greater economic capacity and the extent of investment in a home when one's life goals (studying, finding a job) have already been partially achieved.

The present study included participants from different countries of origin and migration background to reflect on the commonalities among people with migrant experience. A clearer understanding of how to make a home in a foreign country could be a rich resource for understanding the impact that psychological perceptions of home can have on the communities in which people live (Sandu, 2013). For this reason, differences in country of origin or reasons for migration were

not examined. The only difference that was evaluated was related to migration background, i.e., whether the migrant was first or second generation.

4.3.1 Aim of the study

The primary aim of this study is to investigate the correlations between psychological home, life satisfaction, sense of community, and resilience in migrants. Due to the limited existing literature on psychological home with migrant population, this study adopted an exploratory approach.

An initial exploratory analysis was conducted to identify potential variations in psychological home, resilience, sense of community, and life satisfaction scores among participants, based on their sociodemographic characteristics and the structural aspects of their homes.

Building upon prior research, our hypotheses suggest that psychological home may have predictive value for sense of community (Cicognani, 2011), resilience (Crum & Ferrari, 2019a; Sigmon et al., 2002), and life satisfaction (Cicognani, 2011). To illustrate the mechanism of psychological home in migrants, a sequential mediation model was employed (Fig.6). Specifically, we hypothesized the following:

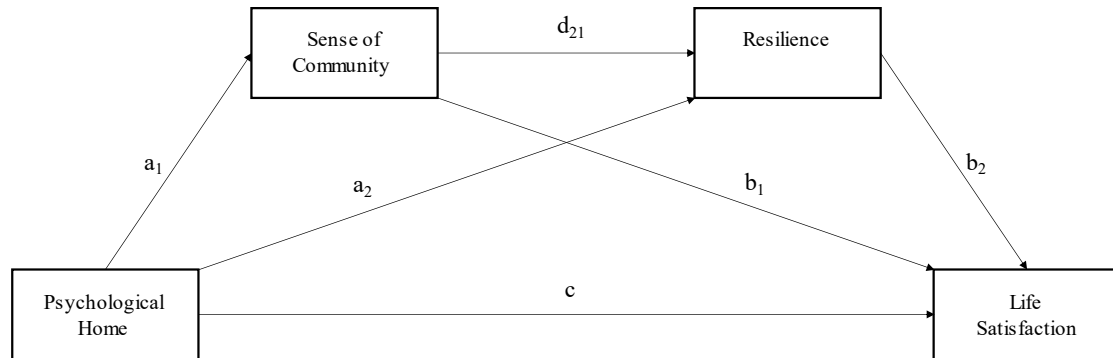
H1: There exists a direct relationship between psychological home and life satisfaction;

H2: Sense of community serves as a mediating factor between psychological home and life satisfaction;

H3: Resilience serves as a mediating factor between psychological home and life satisfaction;

H4: Sense of community and resilience act as sequential mediators between psychological home and life satisfaction.

Figure 6. *Hypothesized Mediation Model*



Note. Hypothesis 1: There is a direct effect between psychological home and life satisfaction (total effect c); Hypothesis 2: Sense of community acts as a mediator between psychological home and life satisfaction (indirect effect a_1b_1); Hypothesis 3: Resilience acts as a mediator between psychological home and life satisfaction (indirect effect a_2b_2); Hypothesis 4: Sense of community and resilience acts as sequential mediators between psychological home and life satisfaction (serial indirect effect $a_1d_{21}b_2$).

4.3.2 Method

4.3.2.1 Procedure

An online survey was conducted using the 'survio.com' application and distributed using the snowball technique. The link to the survey was shared between the embassies in Italy and the associations to which migrants turn, who in turn disseminated the survey on social media, as well as with migrants with whom the researchers had already had contact. The snowball technique is useful when interacting with hard-to-reach populations (Shaghaghi et al., 2011) and when there is an asymmetric power balance between researcher and participant. The survey is based on social trust and was the least invasive method with the greatest likelihood of response.

On average completing the questionnaire took approximately 20 minutes for all six scales (presented in counter-balanced order, to control for order effects) which was followed by the socio-demographic and housing characteristic items. The language of the questionnaire was Italian. Data

collection took place from May 2020 to December 2020, during the first pandemic period of restrictions. The objectives and the voluntary nature of the study were explained in written form, and informed consent was obtained and their eligibility with regards to age was inquired (the requirement was 18 years or older). Participants remained anonymous and the forced answer option was used on every question.

For the present study, five reliable and valid scales and sources of socio-demographic information were used. All participants completed the Italian version of the 8-item unidimensional Psychological Home scale devised by Sigmon et al. (2002), which assesses subjective experience of the home. This scale included response alternatives on a Likert-type scale (1 = “strongly disagree”, 7 = “strongly agree”). Sample items included the following: “I add personal touches to the place where I live” and “I get a sense of security from having a place of my own.” In the initial validation study, the authors Sigmon, Boulard and Snyder (1998) found a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.85.

To measure feelings of belonging to the residential community, participants also completed the 18-item unidimensional Italian Sense of Community Scale formulated by Prezza, Costantini, Chiarolanza, and Di Marco (1999). The scale, based on the theory of McMillan and Chavis (1986) as a reference frame, operationalized sense of community as a single factor at both the subjective and macro levels. The scale does not refer to a specific community, participants are invited to think to the place where they reside. Response alternatives ranged from 1 = “strongly agree” to 4 = “strongly disagree”. Sample item included the following: “I feel like I belong to this town”; “if I need help this town has many excellent services to meet my needs”. From the validation study (Prezza et al., 1999), the scale has been shown to have a satisfactory internal coherence (Cronbach’s alpha= 0.83).

In addition, the Italian Resilience Scale (a translated and validated version of the Wagnild and Young Resilience Scale developed by Girtler et al., 2010) was completed by all participants. The scale was a 24 item self-report scale with a response scale ranging from 1 = “completely disagree” to 7 = “completely agree”; from the validation study (Girtler et al., 2010), internal

consistency was evaluated at Cronbach alpha (0.84). Sample item included the following: “When I am in a difficult situation, I can usually find my way out of it”; “I feel that I can handle many things at a time; “My life has meaning”.

Finally, to assess global life satisfaction, we included the Italian version of the 5-item unidimensional Life Satisfaction Scale by Diener, Emmons, Larsen, and Griffin (1985), which was administered to all participants and included 5 items with a response scale ranging from 1 = “completely disagree” to 7 = “completely agree”. Sample item was the following: “I am satisfied with my life”. Cronbach’s alpha, as reported in the validation study, was 0.87 (Diener et al., 1985).

Socio-demographic information (gender, age, education level, employment, marital status, country of origin, length of stay in Italy and reason for migration) were also collected. In addition, we inquired about the current house characteristics of respondents, including type, tenure, years spent in the dwelling, and cohabitation.

4.3.2.2 *Data analysis*

To assess the validity of this study, an a priori analysis was conducted using G*Power software (Faul & Erdfelder, 1992). A regression equation comprising six predictor variables was employed. The recommended effect sizes for this evaluation were as follows: small ($f^2 = 0.02$), medium ($f^2 = 0.15$), and large ($f^2 = 0.35$; Cohen, 1977). The alpha level employed for this analysis was $p < 0.05$. The sample, consisting of 162 participants, proved adequate to yield a medium effect size.

Descriptive statistics were utilized to characterize the sample and the study variables. Bivariate correlations, t-tests, and ANOVA were employed to examine differences in the total scores of our variables (Psychological Home, Life Satisfaction, Sense of Community, and Resilience) based on socio-demographic variables (age, generation, gender, education level, employment, marital status), dwelling characteristics (homeownership, cohabitation, house type), and a temporal variable (time residing in the current house). No analyses were conducted concerning differences in

migration-related variables (country of origin, reason for migration, and length of stay) as they were not part of the study's objective.

Preliminary hypothesis testing was conducted through bivariate correlation analyses using Pearson's *r*. To control for confounding factors and evaluate group differences in study variables based on gender, generation, and age, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was performed.

Before conducting analyses, all continuous predictors, including control variables, were centered (Aiken, West & Reno, 1991). Following Taylor et al. (2008), a series of multiple regression analyses were estimated to ensure that the criteria for the sequential mediation model were met. The mediation hypothesis was examined using the supplementary software SPSS PROCESS. Regression analyses based on 5,000 bootstrap samples were employed to estimate path coefficients for the regression equations (Hayes, 2013). This procedure enables inferences about the presence of mediation based on the indirect effect, which represents an estimate of the total mediation model and is defined as the product of the individual regression coefficients comprising the mediation model. Significant mediation (indirect effect) is indicated by a 95% confidence interval that does not include zero, in addition to the independent variables having a significant overall effect on the dependent variable (Shrout & Bolger, 2002). Moreover, standard errors were calculated while controlling for heteroskedasticity between residuals. Finally, the PROCESS macro (Model 6), developed by Hayes (2013), was employed to test the multiple mediation model.

4.3.3 Results

4.3.3.1 *Participant's characteristics*

The study included a total of 162 migrant adults residing in Italy. Among the participants, 61.3% were women ($n = 99$) and 61.1% were men ($n = 61$) (Mean age = 35.7 years old, $SD = 12.9$). Most respondents were either full- or part-time employed (60.5%), and a significant number were single (46.3%), married (42.6%), or cohabiting (13.6%). Regarding education level, 31.5% had completed high school, 23.5% held a master's degree or a bachelor's degree (17.3%), 11.3% had a

professional qualification, and 13% had completed middle school. Only 1.9% had a primary school certificate.

In terms of housing, respondents reported owning (48.1%) or renting (50.6%) their current dwellings. The types of dwellings varied, with 87% living in apartments, 9.3% in single-family houses, 1.2% in multifamily houses, 1.2% in studio apartments, and 1.2% in university residences. Living arrangements showed that most individuals (30.9%) resided with extended family, while others lived with a partner (18.5%), with a partner and children (21.6%), with children (10.5%), with parents (6.2%), with friends (5.6%), or alone (6.8%).

Participants originated from 27 different countries worldwide. The largest self-identified ethnic groups were Albanian (24.7%), Ecuadorian (8%), Romanian (11.7%), and Peruvian (3.1%). For those not born in Italy, the average number of years residing in Italy was 17.9 (SD = 8.28), and the mean age at arrival was 19.3 years (SD = 11.0). The main reasons for migration were work (35.4%), family reunification (29.2%), and study (16.7%). Two respondents mentioned political/religious reasons, while 16.7% reported migrating for life experience purposes.

The study adopted the migrant cohort subcategories described by Rumbaut (2004; 2012) for individuals arriving in their new host country. Participants were classified as "first-generation" if their age at arrival was above 5 (including the first, 1.25, and 1.5 generations) and as "second generation" if they were native to Italy or arrived at the age of 5 or younger (including the second and 1.75 generations). This classification was based on literature regarding language acquisition stages (Krashen, Long & Scarcella, 1982) and identity renegotiation (Li, 2020). Out of the total participants, 97 were classified as first generation (60.6%), 63 as second generation (39.4%), and for two respondents, it was impossible to determine their age at arrival and consequently their generation. The participants' characteristics are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. *Participants' characteristics*

Characteristics	N (%)	Mean	SD
Age	162	35.7	12.9
Age of arrival in the host country (years)	108	19.3	11.0
Length of stay (years)	108	17.9	8.4
Generation			
First generation	97(60.6)		
Second generation	63(39.4)		
Gender			
Females	99(61.1)		
Males	61(37.7)		
Not specified	2(1.2)		
Educational level			
Primary school	3(1.9)		
Middle school	21(13.0)		
Professional qualification	21(13.0)		
High school	51(31.5)		
Bachelor's educational level	28(17.3)		
Master's educational level	38(23.5)		
Employment			
Full-Time employer	62(38.3)		
Part-Time employer	36(22.2)		
Student	36(22.2)		
Unemployed	27(16.7)		
Retired	1(.6)		
Marital status			
Single	69(42.6)		
Married	62(46.3)		

Characteristics	N (%)	Mean	SD
Cohabiting	22(13.6)		
Divorced	7(4.3)		
Widower	2(1.2)		
Cohabitation			
With Extended Family	50(30.9)		
With Partner and Children	35(21.6)		
With Partner	30(18.5)		
With Children	17(10.5)		
Alone	11(6.8)		
With Parents	10(6.2)		
With Friends	9(5.6)		
Current house type in Italy			
Apartment	141(87.0)		
Single-Family House	15(9.3)		
Two-Family Or Three Family House	2(1.2)		
University Residence	2(1.2)		
Studio Apartment	2(1.2)		
Homeownership			
Renter	82(50.6)		
Owner	78(48.1)		
Out of charge	2(2.3)		
Dwelling from time			
Less than 1 year	19(11.7)		
From 1 to 5 years	49(30.2)		
From 5 to 10 years	47(29.0)		
More than 10 years	47(29.0)		
Country of Origin			

Characteristics	N (%)	Mean	SD
Albania	40(24.7)		
Argentina	3(1.9)		
Belgium	1(.6)		
Brazil	1(.6)		
Cameroon	1(.6)		
Ivory Coast	3(1.9)		
Cuba	1(.6)		
Ecuador	13(8.0)		
Germany	1(.6)		
Israel	1(.6)		
Lebanon	1(.6)		
Morocco	3(1.9)		
Holland	1(.6)		
India	2(1.2)		
Iran	2(1.2)		
Pakistan	1(.6)		
Peru	5(3.1)		
Poland	2(1.2)		
Romania	19(11.7)		
Senegal	1(.6)		
Slovakia	1(.6)		
Spain	1(.6)		
United States	1(.6)		
Tunisia	2(1.2)		
Ukraine	3(1.9)		
Uruguay	1(.6)		
Venezuela	2(1.2)		

Characteristics	N (%)	Mean	SD
Reasons for migration			
Work	34(35.4)		
Family Reunification	28(29.2)		
Study	16(16.7)		
Life experience	16(16.7)		
Religious/Political	2(2.1)		

4.3.3.2 Bivariate Correlation

The primary findings of this study revolve around four variables (refer to Table 4). Regarding Psychological Home, participants obtained a mean score of 5.57 (SD = 1.12), which surpasses the theoretical mean and aligns with Cicognani's (2011) study conducted with an Italian population (M = 5.53; SD = .85). For the sense of community, the mean score was 2.85 (SD = .49), indicating a higher level than the theoretical mean. The mean score for the Resilience scale was 131.83 (SD = 17.2, range 70-161), which exceeded the theoretical mean. Based on standard reference scores (Girtler et al., 2010), participants were categorized as moderately resilient (low resilient score < 121; high resilient score > 146). Regarding the life satisfaction scale, participants achieved a mean score of 4.57 (SD = 1.47), surpassing the theoretical mean score. Cronbach's alpha values demonstrated acceptable reliability for all scales (refer to Table 4).

The primary objective of this study was to examine the relationships between psychological home, sense of community, resilience, and life satisfaction. Bivariate correlations revealed positive associations among all variables. The correlation coefficients are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Means Score, Alpha Values, and Correlations Between Variables

	M	1.	2.	3.	4.
1. Psychological home	5.57 (1.12)	[.823]			
2. Sense of Community	2.85 (.49)	.53***	[.881]		
3. Resilience	131.83 (17.25)	.42***	.36***	[.898]	
4. Life Satisfaction	4.57 (1.47)	.53***	.56***	.46***	[.893]

$n = 162$; * = $p < .05$; ** = $p < .01$; *** = $p < .001$ Note: Value in brackets along diagonal are

Cronbach's alpha. Values in parentheses are standard deviation.

A bivariate correlation was assessed between age and the four main variables. There were not significance correlations, except for resilience scale ($r = .276$; $p < .001$).

4.3.3.3 Differences in the total scores

The mean and standard deviation (psychological home, sense of community, resilience, and life satisfaction) for the different groups were calculated first (see table 5). The results of the t-tests that evaluated the differences in the values of the four variables of interest related to gender, belonging to the first or second generation, house tenure in Italy showed no significance.

The one-way tests ANOVA for Educational level, Dwelling from Time, and Current Type of House in Italy did not reveal differences between groups for any of the variables examined. For employment (excluding the retired category, since there is only one case), there was a significant difference between full-time employees and students in terms of psychological home ($F(3, 157) = 3.39$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2_p = .061$) and resilience ($F(3, 157) = 3.54$, $p < .05$, $c = 0.063$).

In terms of marital status, the married had higher psychological home scores than the single ($F(4, 157) = 3.84$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2_p = 0.089$). In terms of sense of community, married people also scored higher than singles ($F(4, 157) = 5.06$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2_p = 0.114$). Finally, in terms of life satisfaction, married people scored higher than singles ($F(4, 157) = 2.73$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2_p = 0.065$).

In terms of cohabitation, there is a difference between groups in resilience; those living alone had higher individual resilience scores ($M=144.09$; $SD=15.64$) than those living with extended families ($M=127.20$; $SD=17.96$) and with friends ($M=119.55$; $SD=25.20$); $F(4, 157) = 3.00$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2_p = 0.104$.

Table 5. Mean, standard deviation for variables groups

	Psychological home	Sense of community	Resilience	Life satisfaction
	M(sd)	M(sd)	M(sd)	M(sd)
Gender				
Male	5.47(1.17)	2.91(.42)	132.67(16.62)	4.59(1.48)
Female	5.65(1.10)	2.82(.53)	131.17(17.62)	4.59(1.47)
Generation				
First	5.63(1.21)	2.89(.50)	132.52(16.87)	4.63(1.46)
Second	5.49(.99)	2.81(.47)	130.54(18.07)	4.51(1.51)
Homeownership				
Owner	5.67(1.09)	2.89(.49)	130.27(16.18)	4.78(1.39)
Renter	5.46(1.16)	2.82(.49)	133.21(17.98)	4.39(1.54)
Dwelling from time				
Less than 1 year	5.37(1.31)	2.75(.49)	128.58(20.21)	4.48(1.46)
From 1 to 5 years	5.42(1.22)	2.77(.52)	132.27(17.37)	4.41(1.51)
From 5 to 10 years	5.69(1.05)	2.97(.44)	129.60(18.14)	4.67(1.44)
More than 10 years	5.70(1.01)	2.87(.48)	134.94(14.79)	4.69(1.48)

	Psychological home	Sense of community	Resilience	Life satisfaction
Current type of house				
Apartment	5.55(1.16)	2.83(.50)	132.13(17.65)	4.54(1.44)
Single-family house	5.56(.85)	3.03(.36)	127.60(11.09)	4.99(1.82)
Multi-family house	6.44(.27)	3.28(.24)	139.00(11.31)	5.50(.14)
University residence	5.69(.27)	2.83(.08)	117.50(27.58)	4.20(.57)
Studio apartment	5.94(1.50)	2.94(.31)	149.50(16.26)	3.60(1.41)
Cohabitation				
Alone	5.86(1.30)	2.97(.25)	144.09(15.64)	5.11(1.13)
With partner	5.78(.86)	2.82(.51)	130.97(13.67)	4.98(1.13)
With children	5.75(1.10)	2.90(.50)	136.18(16.55)	4.54(1.55)
With extended family	5.33(1.17)	2.73(.46)	127.20(17.97)	4.13(1.52)
With friends	5.08(1.10)	2.60(.39)	119.56(25.20)	3.87(1.36)
With parents	5.51(.85)	2.99(.57)	135.00(14.24)	5.14(1.46)
With partner and children	5.70(1.25)	3.04(.51)	135.49(15.29)	4.74(1.58)
Marital status				
Single	5.21(1.08)	2.69(.48)	127.55(19.27)	4.20(1.45)
Cohabiting	5.71(1.04)	2.79(.45)	132.73(14.55)	4.56(1.29)

	Psychological home	Sense of community	Resilience	Life satisfaction
Married	5.90(1.15)	3.05(.45)	135.71(15.17)	4.99(1.51)
Divorced	6.00(.52)	2.87(.52)	134.86(16.75)	4.40(.86)
Widower	4.88(.88)	3.03(.43)	139.00(11.31)	5.60(1.98)
Educational level				
Primary school	4.63(1.31)	2.44(.58)	129.33(11.85)	4.60(2.12)
Secondary school	5.52(1.30)	2.84(.49)	129.14(18.67)	4.10(1.75)
Professional qualification	5.72(.84)	2.95(.38)	135.05(13.68)	4.45(1.49)
High school	5.79(1.08)	2.99(.51)	133.31(20.10)	4.91(1.52)
Bachelor's Degree	5.21(1.12)	2.69(.47)	131.71(13.74)	4.39(1.26)
Master's Degree	5.57(1.17)	2.79(.47)	129.84(17.22)	4.59(1.30)
Employement				
Full-time employer	5.87(1.00)	2.89(.53)	136.18(14.39)	4.91(1.32)
Part-time employer	5.62(1.18)	2.91(.47)	130.47(18.01)	4.32(1.68)
Unemployed	5.43(1.33)	2.86(.47)	132.48(17.78)	4.28(1.58)
Student	5.16(.98)	2.74(.45)	124.81(18.87)	4.48(1.36)

4.3.3.4 Multivariate analysis of variance

A MANOVA was conducted to examine potential differences in psychological home, sense of community, resilience, and life satisfaction based on various socio-demographic characteristics, including gender, age, and generation. The results indicated that gender ($\lambda = 0.96$, $F(3,154) = 1.43$, $p = .226$), generation ($\lambda = 0.99$, $F(3,154) = 0.72$, $p = .99$), and the interaction effect between gender

and generation ($\lambda = 0.96$, $F(3,154) = 1.692$, $p = .155$) were not statistically significant. However, age demonstrated a significant effect ($\lambda = 0.92$, $F(3,154) = 3.18$, $p = .015$).

Based on these findings, socio-demographic characteristics such as gender and generation were not included as covariates in the subsequent analyses. However, age was included as a covariate in the mediation model.

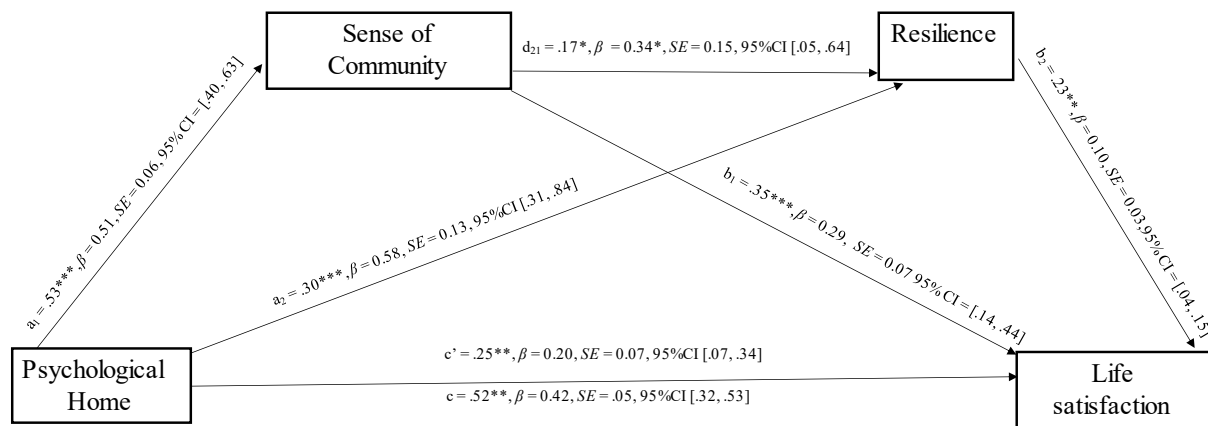
4.3.3.5 *Sequential mediation model*

The sequential mediation model, with age as a control variable, was examined to assess both direct and indirect effects. As depicted in Figure 6, the results indicated that the overall effect of psychological home on life satisfaction was significant ($c = .52$, $\beta = .42$, $SE = .05$, $t = 8.29$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.32, .53]). Additionally, the direct effect was found to be significant ($c' = .25$, $\beta = 0.20$, $SE = 0.07$, $t = 2.91$, $p < 0.01$, 95% CI [.07, .34]).

Sense of community ($b_1 = .35$, $\beta = 0.29$, $SE = 0.07$, $t = 3.90$, $p < 0.001$, 95% CI = [.14, .44]) and resilience ($b_2 = .23$, $\beta = 0.10$, $SE = 0.03$, $t = 3.24$, $p < 0.01$, 95% CI = [.04, .15]) significantly predicted life satisfaction, and the three predictors together accounted for 43% of the variance in life satisfaction. Psychological home ($a_2 = .30$, $\beta = 0.58$, $SE = 0.13$, $t = 4.22$, $p < 0.001$, 95% CI [.31, .84]) and sense of community ($d_{21} = -17$, $\beta = 0.34$, $SE = 0.15$, $t = 2.29$, $p < 0.05$, 95% CI [.05, .64]) were positively associated with resilience, explaining 25% of the variance in resilience. Psychological home was also positively associated with sense of community ($a_1 = .53$, $\beta = 0.51$, $SE = 0.06$, $t = 8.61$, $p < 0.001$, 95% CI [.40, .63]), explaining 28% of the variance in sense of community.

Significant specific indirect effects of psychological home on life satisfaction were observed through sense of community ($a_1b_1 = 0.18$, $SE = 0.48$, 95% CI = [0.89, 0.27]) and resilience ($a_2b_2 = 0.07$, $SE = 0.02$, 95% CI = [0.02, 0.12]). Therefore, Hypotheses 1, 2, and 3 were supported.

Figure 6. A Sequential Mediation Model Examining the Direct and Indirect Effects of Psychological home on Life satisfaction and Sense of community and Resilience, controlled by age



Note: c = total effect; c' = direct effect; b = unstandardized regression coefficient; SE = standard error; CI = confidence interval; * = $p < .05$; ** = $p < .01$; *** = $p < .001$.

Lastly, when examining sequential mediation, a significant indirect effect of psychological home on life satisfaction was observed when both sense of community and resilience were included in the model ($a_1d_2b_2 = .02$, $SE = .01$, $95\%CI = [.002, .5]$) (refer to table 6), thereby confirming Hypothesis 4.

Table 6. Bootstrapping point estimates and 95% CIs for all indirect effects of psychological home on Life satisfaction

	Effect	Bootstrapping 95% CI	
		Lower	Upper
a_1b_1	.1842	.0929	.2858
a_2b_2	.0732	.0292	.1260
$a_1d_2b_2$.0227	.0027	.0525

Note. N = 162. SE = standard error. CI = Confidence interval. a_1b_1 = psychological home on life satisfaction through sense of community; a_2b_2 = psychological home on life satisfaction through resilience; $a_1d_2b_2$ = psychological home on life satisfaction through sense of community and resilience.

4.3.4 Discussion of the results

The correlation analysis revealed positive associations among psychological home, sense of community, resilience, and life satisfaction in the migrant population. Specifically, the analysis indicated a positive correlation between age and resilience. This finding aligns with Lundman et al.'s (2007) study, which used the same resilience scale as the present study and observed that resilience scores increased with age. This can be explained by the understanding that resilience is a process that develops over time through life experiences, thus suggesting that older individuals have had more opportunities to develop resilience.

Regarding the influence of sociodemographic variables and home characteristics on psychological home, the analyses indicated that except for employment, marital status, and cohabitation, these factors did not significantly affect psychological home. This finding contradicts Cicognani's (2011) study but aligns with the literature on migrants' sense of home (Boccagni & Vargas-Silva, 2021) and Camilleri's (2022) study, which found that gender did not have a significant impact on psychological home. Additionally, there were no differences in psychological home based on home ownership or housing type. However, another study demonstrated that certain structural aspects of migrants' homes influenced their psychological perception of home (Golovina, 2019). Furthermore, no differences were found between first and second-generation migrants in relation to the variables of interest. This result highlights how one's migration background may be connected to the construction of a sense of home. Although the assigning of people to discrete diversity-related categories as the migration generations may be arbitrary (Bond, 2016), it follows the idea that migrants should be compared based on categories such as gender or generation, rather than country of origin (Bloemraad, 2013). This finding emphasizes that both the first and second generations experience challenges associated with the migration process. However, the process of identity formation and cross-cultural adaptation may vary across generations, which remains a subject of debate in understanding the multidimensionality of migration (Fajth & Lessard-Phillips, 2023;

Miceli, 2016). The results concerning potential differences among participants highlight the commonalities among migrants and increase the generalizability of the findings.

As previously noted by Camilleri et al. (2022), individuals with full-time employment scored higher on psychological home compared to students, potentially due to greater economic availability and investment in life goals. The same difference was observed for resilience, which could be explained by the fact that university students were generally younger and had less life experience compared to those who were employed full-time. This finding underscores the significant role of work in supporting the development of a sense of home and resilience.

In terms of marital status, married individuals exhibited higher levels of psychological home, sense of community, and life satisfaction compared to singles. These findings support the protective role of marriage in the well-being of migrants (Chen et al., 2019).

The sequential mediation model indicated that psychological home had a direct effect on migrant life satisfaction, sense of community, and individual resilience. These results align with previous research demonstrating that psychological home predicts life satisfaction and sense of community (Cicognani, 2011; Roster et al., 2016). The ability to establish a psychological home enables individuals to experience a sense of security and protection in their living environment, leading to greater engagement in communities (Crum & Ferrari, 2019a; Sigmon et al., 2002). Although the specific host community of the participants was not identified, the research demonstrated that a sense of belonging to the community contributes to life satisfaction. Feeling connected to the host community may facilitate migrant cultural adaptation and well-being (Hombrados-Mendieta et al., 2013). Migrants tend to experience higher life satisfaction when they feel a sense of belonging to a broader community that can meet their needs, suggesting that the community dimension is more influential in their life satisfaction than individual resilience.

The construct of psychological home should be regarded as a "specific type" of place (Sigmon et al., 2002, p. 32) that potentially influences resilience and acts similarly to place attachment. Existing literature has established connections between place attachment and resilience,

although the relationship can be ambivalent (Manzo, 2014; Scannell & Gifford, 2014). On one hand, place attachment can limit individual resilience by hindering lifestyle changes (Fried, 2000) or blinding individuals to the risks of remaining in a dangerous place (De Dominicis et al., 2015). On the other hand, place attachment can contribute to individual resilience, as observed in the participants of this study. Place attachment may support resilience through various mechanisms (Scannell et al., 2019). The identity component helps preserve self-esteem, while place familiarity and routines contribute to a sense of continuity. The similarity between past and present social and material aspects of places promotes a sense of continuity, which, according to a previous study on male migration, may assist individuals in adapting to a new place by referencing their past selves (Cardinali et al., 2022). Moreover, when places offer positive advantages that enhance well-being and help individuals manage stressors, people become more resilient. In line with previous research (Novara et al., 2021; 2022; 2023), our study found a statistically significant effect of resilience on life satisfaction.

Finally, the tested model revealed a sequential mediation effect between psychological home and life satisfaction, mediated by the influence of sense of community on resilience. Participants who had a stronger sense of community demonstrated higher levels of resilience, which, in turn, had a positive impact on life satisfaction. The positive relationship between sense of community and resilience has been extensively studied in the context of disasters (Scannell et al., 2019; Cheshire, 2015). However, for migrant populations, accessible physical and social spaces that can foster resilience are not always present (Fathi & Ní Laoire, 2023). A previous study by Zhang et al. (2018) demonstrated how neighbourhood characteristics improved the well-being of elderly migrants through a sense of community and highlighted the moderating role of individual resilience in the relationship between neighbourhood characteristics and well-being. Similarly, in the current study, migrants generally perceived their residential environment as a space where they could build relationships and develop a sense of belonging. Furthermore, it was observed that individuals who successfully developed a sense of community also experienced increased individual resilience and,

consequently, higher life satisfaction, with psychological home playing a contributing role. Novara et al. (2023) have already investigated the impact of social support on the resilience, sense of community, and life satisfaction of migrants in Italy. Their study specifically emphasizes the crucial role played by neighbours in providing material, emotional, and informational support, which significantly influences the development of a sense of community. Additionally, the provision of informational support contributes to the resilience of migrants. Therefore, within the scope of the present study, it is conceivable to posit that the sense of community operates as a catalyst for individual resilience, leveraging the potential offered by social support across its diverse dimensions. Anthropologist Alan Fiske (2004) proposed five motives for adapting to a new environment, including the need for belonging and trust, which are relational dimensions where cooperation and seeking help from others are fundamental for successful adaptation. Thus, individuals who have a social reference group tend to feel more resilient. The findings of this study support the notion that migrants who can establish a sense of belonging to a reference community, facilitated by the establishment of a psychological home, also experience an increase in their resilience, which contributes to their overall well-being.

4.3.5 Conclusions and limitations

When individuals migrate and change their place of residence, they often undergo the process of establishing a sense of home in their new country, which has a significant impact on their well-being. Therefore, investigating the role of resilience and sense of community in psychological home and life satisfaction becomes crucial. A strong foundation in psychological home allows individuals to develop a sense of community, which positively influences life satisfaction. Although psychological home is primarily viewed as an individual-level aspect, it is also intertwined with community-level factors. Furthermore, the relationship between psychological home and resilience highlights how the home environment enhances resilience. This exploratory study establishes an important link between sense of community and individual resilience. By examining the influence of psychological home on a person's sense of community and resilience, we can gain a better

understanding of community interactions and protective factors for migrant well-being. Resilience reflects an individual's ability to regulate their emotional responses, while sense of community pertains to their ability to engage with the community. When adequately supported, these factors place the migrant as the central figure in their personal and social development (Novara et al., 2022). Migrants who have successfully developed a psychological home in their new country can expect to experience increased community and individual factors that promote life satisfaction. Moreover, exploring the interplay between these factors holds particular interest in understanding how the micro and macro aspects of individuals' lives interact positively.

Limitations

This study is subject to several limitations. The results are preliminary and exploratory in nature due to the study's design. The sample size, although sufficient for statistical analysis, was limited. The use of an online questionnaire restricted the participant pool to individuals with internet access and potentially introduced self-selection bias. Migrants employing different acculturation strategies might have been less likely to participate in an online survey. The survey, conducted by Italian researchers, may have influenced responses to align with social desirability. Recruitment difficulties may have arisen due to data collection occurring during the early stages of the pandemic when reaching migrants was challenging. The survey's dissemination in the Italian language and through social networks may have biased the data towards individuals more inclined to engage with Italian culture and those who were younger than the average population. Although participants' diverse origins enriched the study by offering different perspectives on the migration experience, the effects of each culture and intercultural differences were not explored. Additionally, the study did not comprehend forced migration to examine how the nature of migration affects the development of psychological home. Future research should consider the specificities of migration and the nuances in psychological home development. It is also important to clarify whether participants referred to people from their own group, the host country, or both when thinking about home. Examining the community to which participants refer can address this limitation in future

studies and shed light on how psychological home contributes to a sense of belonging to a particular group.

In the final chapter of this doctoral project, the conclusions of the three studies will be summarized and integrated. The limitations of the entire project will be discussed, and implications for practical action and suggestions for future research will be provided.

5 Conclusions

5.1 Integrated conclusion

This doctoral project comprised three main studies that provided insights into how migrants develop a psychological sense of home in their new settlement country. The three distinct studies addressed different research questions.

The first study involved a literature review, which served to map the knowledge on the psychological home among migrants. All social sciences were consulted to gain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon from various perspectives. Studying home in migration contains contradictions within and between the notions of home and migration itself. Moreover, research on the home in migration reaches the tension towards belonging and recognition (Fathi, 2021). A commonality that connects research on the theme in different social sciences is the fundamental role of the process of home in migration. The results of the present study seem to support different strands of the social sciences. The findings were organized according to Sigmon et al.'s (2002) model of the psychological sense of home. In summary, what we have learned is that culture, relationships, and emotions are integral to the process of reconstructing a sense of home. Memory, the need for meaning-making, loss, and nostalgia are prevalent among migrants as they navigate the process of settlement and reconstruct a new identity through the psychological perception of a physical home. Indeed, concrete actions are linked to symbolic meanings. Domestic practices play a dual role in reflecting on the past and educating future generations. Moreover, acculturation factors influence the perception of home, as it seems to be driven by the quality of intercultural contact, ideas, and practices. Language also plays a role in the perception of living space, particularly in fostering relationships with neighbours and the community. Home represents both a physical and symbolic place around which migrants create and define their identity and relationships.

In a second qualitative study, interviews were conducted with individuals who migrated to Italy, focusing on the process of reestablishing a sense of home and exploring aspects of

acculturation and well-being. The purpose of this study was to understand migrants' perspectives on what home meant to them and what factors helped or hindered their reconstruction process. Home was seen as a desired place, a necessary and tangible foundation from which they could begin their lives in Italy. Moreover, home symbolized a space in which they could construct and shape their identity through their behaviour and the influence of their surroundings. This process sometimes allowed them to preserve ethnic aspects of identity but was also often hindered by material constraints and the acculturative positions taken by the host society. For migrants, home not only encompassed emotional aspects, but was also an important finding of this study, confirming Cardinali et al.'s (2022) findings that psychological home for migrants may include a relational component. On the one hand, home for migrants could be equated with family; on the other hand, external relationships seemed to play a crucial role in the development of psychological home.

Around the psychological home, the theme of the family seems to emerge as transversal. The dimension of generational evolution seems to intersect with the migratory process and the establishment of a new home. The re-establishment of a psychological home can become the theatre in which the process of individuation from the family of origin is staged. In fact, the migratory experience among adults is characterized both by its search for mediation with the external environment, and by the enormous work of redefining relations with the family of origin. Moreover, the children of migrant families must make a creative synthesis of "dual belonging" to avoid the risk of not recognizing themselves either in the culture of origin or in the host one (Scabini & Rossi, 2008). Cultural psychology supports the idea that the construction of identity is a process that allows to open possible spaces in which the various dimensions of identity, intertwine, confront, and give rise to new meanings. Reflecting on the possibility of maintaining a component of the culture of origin at the identity level, it emerged that the personalization of the home cannot always restore to the migrant his belonging to the culture of origin. It is here that behaviours, especially relational ones, take on prominence as guardians of ethnic, family and therefore identity aspects. In this sense, the substantial results on food consumption and routines related to cooking seem to suggest an

important line of study in migration studies. It emerged how the family relationships that nourish the psychological home develop for the children of first-generation migrant families through the awareness and acceptance of the difficulties encountered by parents in the migratory choice. Migrants seem to develop feelings of loyalty and solidarity towards the well-being of the family as they cope with migration-related changes (Oznobishin & Kurman, 2016). The cohesion that migrant families demonstrate may partly explain why age-based analyses at the time of migration in this study do not highlight important differences in psychological perception of home. What emerges as a possible difference with respect to age, however, is that younger migrants seem to be more inclined to orient themselves towards the most innovative aspects of reading migration, such as the concept of multiculturalism and mobility. It is confirmed that in families where migration is seen more as repeated geographical mobility it is possible to recreate spheres of experience, transformation of relationships into objects and construction of a continuum of social relations extended outwards but remaining focused on the quality of relationships within the family. Migrant families bring into play new ways of establishing a sense of continuity that implies a complete reconfiguration of investments to embrace the complexity of adapting to a new country while maintaining a certain degree of mobility (Levitan, 2019). The aspects of acculturation related to relations between groups and countries, as well as the construction of a new identity, play a fundamental role in how home is conceived and experienced. Indeed, for migrants, the psychological home seems to be built on two axes that connect in a continuum the past with the present and the culture of origin with the host culture, in a connection that can be understood in the light of a transnational perspective on migration (Boccagni et al., 2020; Wiles, 2008). Evidence of this can be seen in the changes that ideas, feelings, behaviours, and relationships associated with home in the country of origin undergo in light of the migration process. The construction of a sense of home always occurs between cultures and involves a continuous reintegration of the individual and place in both the old country of origin and the new country of settlement (Liu & Gallois, 2022). Moreover, migrants have the opportunity to feel at home in different places at the same time. It seems that the sense of home that

is repeatedly tested by migration can evolve into an increasing ability to detach from the physical place, even if it remains present in memory, and to search for a sense of security and tranquillity in different contexts. The recovery of a psychological home can also be understood as the construction of a boundary between inside and outside. This boundary does not guarantee identity by excluding strangers, but rather serves to establish relationships of proximity and distance that require those who are strangers to the home to position themselves (Ahmed, 1999). In this regard, home in migration represents an opportunity for the development of resources that allow individuals to change their perspective and perception of what home is. The study of resources related to the psychological home has made it clear that the residential community is a context from which migrants seem to draw resources and which gives them a sense of belonging. In terms of developing resilience, migrants show a strong belief in their own abilities to cope with life, and they cite their personal skills and family environment as the main sources from which they draw resources. Community aspects also represent a resource context, although this appears to be underdeveloped when considering their perspective on the residential community. In particular, migrants' perceptions of the impact they had on the community seemed limited. For the psychological home to truly reach its full potential, it is important to recognize how the ecological levels at which resilience develops influence each other and are influenced by context. Processes that focus solely on individual resilience can be risky and insufficient. Therefore, it seems important to support and promote processes of family and community resilience (Garabiles, Mayawati & Hall, 2022).

The third study, a quantitative study, was conducted through an online survey. The results made it possible to test a hypothesis about the functioning of the psychological home in relation to the dimensions of resources and well-being of migrants and to investigate whether there are differences between groups. The main result is illustrated by a sequential mediation model that relates psychological home as a mediator of sense of community, individual resilience, and, through each of these factors, life satisfaction. In addition, an interesting relationship was confirmed by the data, indicating the presence of a sequential mediation relationship between psychological home

and life satisfaction through sense of community and resilience. This highlights that while psychological home can be interpreted as an individual-level aspect, it is also related to community-level factors and, more importantly, how the interaction between community and individual factors can support migrants' life satisfaction. The analysis of group differences did not yield significant results. Two aspects seem to be important: Psychological home does not differ by gender or migrant generation. Let us start with these data to integrate the results of the studies. Contrary to what Cicognani (2011) found, there were no gender differences in the extent and ability to create a psychological home in the host country, although the way in which the psychological home is reconstructed may differ, as the qualitative study found. On the one hand, it appears that women are more dedicated to personalizing and maintaining home, while men prioritize the need to find suitable housing, including through work. Similarly, psychological home did not differ between first and second generation and did not correlate with age, as previous study has found. From the literature review and the qualitative study, we can hypothesize that although the opportunity to create a psychological home is similar among voluntary migrant individuals, the manner and motivations associated with first or second generation may be different. The role of the home within the family, as noted earlier, appears to be critical to the transmission of values and culture across generations. Through furniture, domestic practices, and language, generations share aspects of the culture of origin and negotiate how everyone can express their individuality inside and outside the home. On the one hand, the migrants' perspective offers us the opportunity to understand how family and generational ties, given the decision to migrate, highlight commonalities in terms of the value and importance migrants place on their homes rather than differences. While the first generation seemed to prioritize the need for a stable home as a foundation for settlement and moments of peace and tranquility, the second generation saw their home primarily as a place of familial affection, traditions, socialization, and individualization.

Moving forward, it now seems possible to summarize how community psychology serves as a producer of connections rather than barriers between psychology and the social sciences in

general. A community psychology perspective can offer a comprehensive understanding of migrants' experiences and consider the stresses and opportunities in the context of resettlement (Birman & Bray, 2017). Several themes emerge in discussions of migrants' sense of home that can be explored using community psychology principles, such as adopting an ecological perspective and multilevel analysis, recognizing, and embracing diversity in its various forms, supporting empowerment processes, and promoting social justice, equity, and social change (Bond, Serrano-García & Keys, 2017).

Home, multiple homes, mobility and transnationalism: adopting an ecological perspective and multilevel analysis

People enter a relationship with a place, and the dwelling appears as a particular physical one. Understanding how individuals make homely a new house represents a possible context for the investigation of the migration process. The idea of home should not be exclusively a fixed, delimited, and confined place, but on the contrary, the idea of the home should comprehend a mobile meaning. This dual conception, which sees the home as "dynamic" and "anchored", becomes particularly salient and central in the migratory context, reflecting all the complexity and ambivalence of this construct. Indeed, migration and the biographical condition of migrants constitute a privileged field of observation for the analysis of the home's meanings, functions, and transformations. If the home is generally considered a place characterized by a certain degree of security, familiarity, and control, constituting an obvious starting point for those who live permanently in a place, the same concept could not apply to migrant people. The migrant's home assumes the connotations of a point of arrival and embodies the basis of settlement, inclusion, and recognition. Migration involves leaving one's home in the country of origin, looking for a new one in the host country and sometimes hoping to find a better one in the future. Despite the physical distance from their daily living environment, migrants, usually implement a whole series of ways of remembering and attempting to reproduce their home. The opportunities provided by technology have brought places and people closer together. From this perspective, the focus of migration is no

longer rupture, but growth. One might elucidate a concept of dual rootedness, facilitating the integration of migrants into the host society (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004). A "bifocality" of the individual's identity orientation or the possibility of maintaining contacts with compatriots seems to allow the development or maintenance of social practices towards the communities of the countries of origin (Boccagni, 2009). Already in 2011 Carr introduced a special issue on the importance of progressing research on global migration through the analysis of the interaction between psychology and social/community structures and how to connect psychological research and evidence with social policymaking.

In recent years, research on the concept of home has become interested in the "mobile geographies of dwelling," examining the meaning of domesticity, intimacy, and privacy. It has also looked at how the notion of home creates a sense of place, belonging, or alienation that is closely linked to an individual's sense of self (Blunt & Varley, 2004). Although physical home often has and is influenced by a fixed geographic location, migration demonstrates how psychological home accompanies the migration process and can be a home on the move. Psychological home is influenced not only by the physical aspects of a place, but also by its symbolic and relational dimensions, both on an individual and community level, as well as by politics. Attachment to place emerges and is dynamically linked to increasingly frequent mobility practices. Mobility does not negate the importance of places, but rather changes our understanding of places and the habitual ways in which we connect to them, challenging notions of place attachment based on fixity and stability. Research on place attachment has led to a critique of "sedentary" assumptions and spawned the "mobility turn" in the social sciences (Di Masso et al., 2019). Bailey et al. (2021) aimed to bridge environmental psychology, community psychology, and human geography in their study of place attachment, emphasizing that the development of attachment to a place and the decision to move depend on several factors. First, experiences in artificial places contribute to attachment development. Second, interpersonal and community relationships within and around networks formed by individuals who embrace the needs, desires, and life trajectories of their partners, as well

as the rootedness and well-being of their children and deep connections with extended family, friends, and community, influence the possibility of developing attachment to place. On the other hand, the dissolution of interpersonal ties due to relationship breakdowns has been shown to disrupt attachment to place by removing the obligation to stay in one place and opening potential alternative options for residential mobility and attachment formation. Third, broader socioeconomic and political processes also influence relocation and attachment decisions.

The findings of the current study shed light on how the notion of mobility, the ability to develop multiple homes, and transnational practices, as expressed by the interviewed migrants, aim to transcend the concept of borders. Furthermore, the results that considered both the individual and community levels of the psychological home demonstrated that, for migrants, the private realm of the home is intricately linked to the communal aspect, which, in turn, appears to impact the development of individual resilience. This raises the issue of how social policies in countries shape individuals' experiences of migration and home. The role of community psychology, in fact, entails fostering a discourse on mobility that transcends various barriers-be they material, social, or symbolic-while concurrently recognizing the value of borders as places that facilitate the convergence of differences and enable the comprehension of the processes involved in community building from a perspective of multiplicity. Indeed, both the material and symbolic aspects of space constitute the essence of individuals' lives and their interdependent relationships, through which the common is formed.

Home, identity, and community: embracing diversity in its various forms

Throughout life, individuals may find themselves needing to relocate for various reasons. Moving from one place to another, whether across different countries, cultures, or languages, is not simply a physical transition but also an inner journey. Different places give rise to distinct experiences that shape memories and contribute to identity formation. Moving homes is never a neutral event for individuals who must adapt to a new environment for themselves and their

belongings. New spaces are unfamiliar and lack symbolic meanings. In this context, personalizing the home becomes crucial.

The findings of this study have shed light on how identity processes related to the psychological home can be influenced by factors such as unequal access to the housing market and limitations on the physical movement of symbolic objects. Simultaneously, the study has also shifted the focus towards the role of acculturation processes in reestablishing a psychological home in the new country. Assimilative aspects are encouraged by the host context, both at the micro level and at the macro level, and these aspects have implications for the psychological home. In fact, migrants who tend to assimilate more easily find a psychological home in Italy, albeit potentially at the expense of a comprehensive definition of ethnocultural identity that embraces diversity. Acculturation processes appear to bring about changes at the individual level in terms of cultural identification (Schwartz et al., 2006), which intersects with the social networks of individuals (Repke & Benet-Martínez, 2020). Previous studies have emphasized that intergroup contact significantly increases the perceived social distance between migrants and Italians, particularly for migrants with stronger intra-ethnic social support (Migliorini et al., 2016). Ethnic identity explains feelings, behaviours, and perceptions of belonging to an ethnic group, as well as attitudes towards intergroup interactions (Ting-Toomey et al., 2000). Facilitating inclusive acculturation processes that allow the preservation of one's cultural heritage through the physical environment supports well-being and the maintenance of ethnic identity (Memmott and Keys, 2015). Therefore, it is important to reflect on the impact of the host society on migrants' private lives. Expressions of ethnicity do not seem to have a negative impact on the host country; rather, they promote multiculturalism. Previous research has confirmed that supporting migrants in maintaining connections to their ethnic and racial heritage enhances individuals' attachment to the nation (Wu & So, 2020). The complex relationship between psychological home and acculturation reflects one of the possible processes individuals go through to develop a sense of home. Living in a community entails awareness of the aspects of separateness, and in this sense, it is difference that makes

commonality possible (Ferreya et al., 2023). As suggested by Mannarini and Salvatore (2019), it seems useful to observe not only the socio-cognitive but also the symbolic processes in order to understand how the processes of community formation are related to those of diversity integration. In our study, it appears that the ability to develop an identity through the psychological home in Italy is in some cases based on the dynamics of bonding social capital, which typically reinforces exclusive identities and community homogeneity (Putnam, 2000). Interpersonal ties and niche affiliations appear to support meaningful identities within primary networks and reference groups, but often have difficulty extending to the broader community. As a result, diversity is perceived as insignificant or even hostile. It is the role of institutions to regulate social life and integrate diverse interests and identities through community interventions that recognize both the need for belonging and identity and the need for diversity. Policies should support a community environment in which individuals can experience and become aware of their interdependence. In this sense, territorial communities provide a material environment that is not subordinate to social relationships, but rather enables them. The role of space in identity formation operates through the construction of a social identity that unfolds in the mechanisms of comparison between groups. While our study suggests that some groups have adopted the strategy of assimilation, it is important to emphasize that majority and minority groups may take different approaches to reducing prejudice (Dovidio et al., 2008). While majority members tend to favour homogeneity, members of minority groups may adopt the "dual identity model," which focuses on recognizing shared and distinctive characteristics to enhance the status of their culture and identity in society (Birman, 2022). It is critical to understand that the absence of conflict in intra-group relationships is not always a positive sign but can be problematic if the perspectives of individuals in the minority group are silenced (Saguy et al., 2009).

In this sense, the psychological home of migrants is strongly linked to the external environment and the residential community. Community psychology is called to reflect on the conceptualization of sense of community (Townley et al., 2011) to implement interventions that

create conditions in which experiencing a sense of community is possible and that balance individual needs with group goals (Sarason, 1974).

Home, community, and resilience: supporting empowerment processes

The results of this doctoral study highlight the role of the psychological home, sense of community, and resilience in migrants' well-being processes. Of particular interest are the results examining the relationship between these constructs.

The psychological home predicted the sense of community in the migrant population. This finding is consistent with the idea that a strong psychological home allows individuals to be more open to external experiences and to develop a sense of belonging within the residential community. Furthermore, for migrants, it seems that re-establishing a psychological home also allows them to identify with the community in which they live. This is because the community dimension seems to be particularly important in the choice of housing. This finding is consistent with the findings of Novara et al. (2023), who found that social support plays a fundamental role for migrants in Italy not only in developing a sense of community but also in resilience and life satisfaction. Our findings suggest that migrants in the residential community may experience a lack of empowerment when they perceive low levels of influence within the community. Community psychology can actively intervene to create opportunities to promote empowerment and community advocacy. However, such community interventions should also include policy changes to counter racial bias (Hinton & Cook, 2021) and move beyond a helpless perspective in which migrants are seen solely as recipients, adopting a perspective in which migrants are seen as activators of resources (Novara et al., 2022).

Consistent with the introduction in the Journal of Prevention & Intervention in the Community (Di Napoli, Scioli & Arcidiacono, 2022), resilience and factors that promote engagement within a community play a critical role in migrant well-being. For migrants, being able to identify with their living space seems to increase resilience. Research on attachment to real and imagined elements of place shows the impact on migrants' lives (Hoey, 2010). Places continue to shape the construction of individuals. It is important to shed light on the mechanism responsible for

the expression of identity and the experience of continuity to unravel the potential coexistence of belonging and alienation in destinations and its impact on resilience.

Returning to the discussion of acculturation processes that permeate the development of all other processes, Verbena, Rochira, and Mannarini (2021) emphasize that the pursuit of homogeneity in communities may be key to understanding why entrepreneurial communities are more likely to support acculturation expectations that focus on eliminating diversity and absorbing differences. Our findings seem to explain that migrants can develop resilience through the construction of an individual psychological home and through the mediation of a sense of community. Resilience may be sufficient to overcome the challenges of settling in a new country but is unlikely to promote adequate integration on its own (Verbena, Rochira & Mannarini, 2022). Examining the contexts in which resilience develops may increase our understanding of how the community can support the development of resilience in migrants, leading to integration. A study (Taggart et al., 2023) involving young black adults living in urban shelters found that social relationships and community-based spaces enabled these individuals to develop resilience capacities in dealing with difficulties associated with sociostructurally stressors in their lives. Furthermore, a preliminary study conducted by Marzana et al. (2020) substantiated young migrant residing in Italy who actively participated in a community exhibited enhanced levels of integration and a facilitated process of identity formation, encompassing ethnic dimensions as well. These studies emphasized the importance of developing community initiatives that facilitate an active participation and a maintenance of positive and affirming family and peer networks. However, we must not overlook the findings of Novara et al. (2023) regarding Italian migrants, which highlight how emotional support from the family may conflict with the development of a sense of community, creating tensions between old and new ties.

Based on the findings of this study, we believe that the definition of resilience for migrants should include "an individual's ability, in conjunction with family and community resources, to overcome serious threats to development and health" (Dulin et al., 2018, p.8).

Home as aspiration: promoting social justice, equity, and social change

Although home is something that is shared in the human experience and makes no distinction between migrants and non-migrants (Boccagni & Bonfanti, 2023), migrants may face numerous challenges in finding a place to live in their destination country. Post-migration life can be accompanied by potentially stressful events (Fanfan & Stacciarini, 2020), and the process of turning a new house into a home can present several problems. The quality and accessibility of housing and the absence of inequalities are factors that contribute to successful integration (Ager & Strang, 2008). Home can serve as a foundation for migrant settlement and is an important indicator of their successful social integration. People's relationship with their home environment plays a critical role in their well-being, and evidence suggests that formal housing increases social integration (Lin, Wu, & Li, 2020).

Home is a symbolic place anchored to a physical location that provides individuals with a sense of protection from an inherent vulnerability. This vulnerability is often tested at various levels in migrants' country of origin before they decide to migrate. For migrants, home is something they aspire to (Chen, 2018), and it is a process that often involves continuous improvement, as well as degradation and reconstruction. The search for home is an individual process that unfolds within a community structure. Feeling at home in migration highlights inequalities but can also empower individuals to creatively change (Bonfanti, Chen & Massa, 2022).

For migrants, home primarily means family. Family serves as a support system and source of resilience, as well as a connection to their past origins and a perspective for the future in their new country. Home provides the foundation from which migrants can engage in the broader residential community they have chosen for its convenience and opportunity to build relationships in a peaceful environment. Feeling at home in one's own dwelling, feeling part of the neighbourhood, often means feeling part of a nation. Feeling a sense of belonging to a community, feeling at home, feeling competent, and realizing that the sacrifices made during migration have meaning can lead to a sense of satisfaction. However, the potential of the psychological home seems

to be partially untapped when it comes to embracing diversity and mitigating inequities. Community psychology has great scope for inquiry and work in this regard.

5.2 Implications for action

Community psychology advocates for the implementation of its findings, so it is important to conclude this dissertation project with implications for action. To act in the world is to bring about change. This raises new questions that research will seek to answer in an ongoing process in which knowledge grows in parallel with action.

What has emerged about the psychological home focuses attention on the problem of inequalities. Psychological and social research has looked in depth at processes at different levels (individual, community, institutional, etc.) that maintain differences, especially in the case of migrant integration (Mannarini & Arcidiacono, 2022). In this regard, sharing space with others offers the possibility of finding ways to change community relationships that sustain processes of inequality. Community psychology can intervene by addressing the mechanisms that produce inequalities, as embracing the diversity of differences would enable individuals to make the most of the community's potential. In addition, community psychology can help strengthen civic engagement by providing knowledge about the negative effects of an unjust environment and developing interventions to help communities address the effects of oppression and injustice (Taggart et al., 2023). Recent studies have highlighted the need to operationalize research findings by developing policies and programs that impact people's lives (Altinay et al., 2023). On January 17, 2023, the European Commission published a new call for proposals for actions under the Asylum, Migration, and Integration Fund (AMIF). Initiatives have been developed to support the reception of Ukrainian refugees, including both individual accommodation contexts and community reception. The European Parliament (EU, 2020), in its Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, and the Committee of the Regions (Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027), set out guidelines including:

- Access to adequate and affordable housing for migrants and EU citizens with a migrant background, including social housing.
- Access by Member States, local and regional authorities to a wide range of tools and best practices to combat discrimination in the housing market.
- Widespread use of innovative housing solutions across the EU that promote integration and combat segregation.

Several programs are in place to help migrants find housing. For example, the experience of “LGnet Autonomia Abitativa” in Liguria region, supported by FAMI funds (2014-2020), helps asylum seekers in finding and maintaining housing as a basis for developing autonomy and taking responsibility for their own lives. The findings of the present study are consistent with the guidance provided by the European Parliament and provide additional insights on how to advance the integration of migrants into the housing market. It is important to emphasize that while emergencies prompt institutions to develop interventions that promote changes in the regulation of these phenomena, it is equally important to plan long-term interventions that engage and include all migrants in housing support.

The study's findings have important implications for government agencies concerned with migration and housing policy. Overall, the psychological home has a positive impact on migrants' well-being. Therefore, the pursuit of a home through housing support programs should be viewed as a tool to enhance a sense of community and resilience, which are prerequisites for well-being. The findings of this study should reinforce the validity and usefulness of policy efforts aimed at harnessing the power of housing programs as influential tools in addressing social challenges related to integration. Thus, it is important to continue to invest in housing programs through various incentives. As Camilleri et al. (2022) found, full-time employment appears to predict psychological home; therefore, job search assistance and fair access to the labor market can help build a sense of home. Fair access to housing appears to be essential in creating a sense of home, because psychological home, while symbolic, is also firmly anchored in material terms. In addition,

programs that include neighbourhood housing and the individuals who make up the community seem to allow for a fuller expression of psychological home.

5.3 Limitations and future research

The present research project has several limitations. The specific limitations of the individual studies have already been described. The overall design of the project also has general limitations. The study was conducted during the initial phase of the coronavirus pandemic, when people had to stay in their homes for an extended period. Migrants are particularly vulnerable to isolation caused by COVID -19 due to their low socioeconomic status (Ratha et al., 2020). Further research could clarify how pandemic-related restrictions may have affected home environment studies.

Only voluntary migrants or second-generation migrants were included in the studies. The exclusion of forced migrants prevents generalization of results to all migrants. The reason for migration may affect the ability to develop a psychological home, which should be explored in future studies. Recruitment methods and the use of the Italian language may have biased contact with individuals who are more integrated into the Italian context, making the results less generalizable. Future research should seek opportunities to contact migrants who have used other acculturation strategies to understand how psychological home restoration works for them. Despite limitations related to participants involvement, where individuals likely had more resources than the average migrant in Italy, this did not prevent the identification of certain critical aspects of the psychological home process.

Moreover, the findings on the effects of individual resilience and sense of community on life satisfaction suggest the possibility of examining migrants' community resilience as a potentially powerful resource influencing migrants' well-being. Community resilience reflects people's perceptions of their community and their coping mechanisms in the face of external pressures and disruptions from social, political, and environmental change (Berkes & Ross, 2013). The study of migrants' community resilience is valuable for understanding their experiences in dealing with life-

changing challenges such as migration to and resettlement in new countries (Mwanri, Anderson & Gatwiri, 2021).

Despite efforts to include relevant literature from the social sciences on the topic of home in migration, some work may not have been included in this study. The goal of bridging the social sciences and psychology was pursued by drawing from both literatures and making connections and parallels between findings. There are obvious differences in the approaches of the various disciplines that have not always made this task easy. In addition, interdisciplinary approaches tend to challenge and be challenged by the regulative, cognitive, and normative dimensions of the various disciplines (Buanes & Jentoft, 2009). Conducting research from an interdisciplinary perspective means crossing boundaries, which often requires breaking rules.

5.4 Final conclusion

The concept of psychological home for individuals who have undergone a migratory experience holds immense significance. Migrants can find a sense of belonging in various locations, spanning both their countries of origin and their destinations. The notion of a psychological home acts as a connecting thread throughout their mobility, linking places and people. It serves as a wellspring of well-being and resilience for individuals, necessitating substantial effort and evolving over time alongside the journey of migration. While the material aspects of a physical home and its belongings do influence one's perception of home, the relational aspects take on even greater prominence among migrants. These relational aspects serve a dual purpose, influencing how one feels at home and how they establish their own sense of home.

Consequently, the process of psychological home unfolds from international and national policies to group dynamics, down to community and familial relationships. These insights offer a compelling opportunity to actively engage in the process, wherein migrants navigate the intricate interplay between their individual and communal dimensions. The transformations that arise from the encounters between individuals, cultures, and their psychological homes have far-reaching implications for all, giving birth to a new place, both physical and symbolic.

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Appendix section

Study 1: Full List of Selected Articles and Synthesis of the Results

Reference	Purpose	Methodology/demographics	Main findings
Andits (2015)	How first-generation Australian-Hungarians' physical and social conceptions of home changed after the fall of the Berlin Wall.	Qualitative design. Participant observation and semi-structured interviews with 45 Australian/Hungarians.	The possibility for transnational connectivity did not certainly produce dual embeddedness for migrants; Australian-Hungarians negotiated plural notions of home.
Bilecen (2017)	The ways in which migrants made their homes (across borders), the practices they were engaged in, and the meanings they gave to such practices.	Qualitative design. Semi-structured interviews and observation with 20 migrants from Turkey, equal genders, and ages between 25 and 85 years.	Homes were made through daily routines as transnational symbolic and material expressions. The home was supported by the socializing process. The gender ideologies were intertwined in daily practices.
Boccagni (2014)	How "home" was experienced by migrants and how its material basis was affected by migration.	Qualitative design. In-depth biographical interviews with 35 migrants in Italy and 23 of their family members in Ecuador.	There was a relationship between the home in the country of origin and host. Migrants experienced homes in host countries with less sense of belonging and security. The physical environment influenced the ability to feel it as home; it guaranteed a fixed-point for migration changes.

Reference	Purpose	Methodology/demographics	Main findings
Cain, Meares & Read (2015)	To analyse the affective processes involved in migrants' active recreation of home through the home ownership.	Qualitative design. Interviews with 45 South African migrants living in either Auckland or Hamilton.	Home ownership might develop a sense of continuity and trust in a new country. The location of the dwelling was often made according to memories, regardless of economic reasons.
Cuba & Hummon (1993)	To examine place identification among mobile Americans by situating it within the processes of a life cycle change and migration.	Qualitative design. Interviews with 432 migrants to Cape Cod, Massachusetts.	Elderly people felt at home in their new location through modification of the home environment; younger people felt at home due to friends, family, and self-related motifs.
Eskelä (2018)	To understand the choices and experiences of the individuals and households.	Qualitative design. Semi-structured interviews with 15 Skilled Indian migrants.	For skilled migrants, home ownership seemed related to economic and social factors and was not a sign of an emotional attachment to the new country.
Giorgi & Fasulo (2013)	To analyse two aspects of the tangible home that played a role in the experience of the migrant family.	Qualitative design. Interviews, audio, and video tours with 1 Moroccan family living in a squat in Rome.	The materiality of the home and the work done to ensure and transform it gave a sense of connection with the new environment. Practices and routines required the anchor of a stable outdoor environment to become effective.
Golovina (2019)	How perceived attributes of Japanese houses affected the bodies of inhabitants and how they affected the modes of being in the host country.	Qualitative study. Home visit and interview with a Russian woman who migrated to Japan.	The sensory characteristics of the home shaped and modified the bodies and minds of migrants who, in turn, acted in relation to others.

Reference	Purpose	Methodology/demographics	Main findings
Hirvi (2016)	To explore how the domestic site of the home was involved in the process through which young Sikhs growing up in Finland were made familiar with their parents' religion.	Qualitative design. Interviews and observation with 16 Sikhs men and 13 women living in Helsinki.	The home atmosphere contributed in a tacit way to familiarization with the religion and cultural background of the parents. Older generations passed on religious teachings to younger members and exposed them to tangible religious objects.
Kochan (2016)	How migrants constructed a sense of home through three interrelated lenses: the ancestral home (laojia), the urban home, and the materiality of migrants' urban dwellings.	Qualitative design. A combination of qualitative methodologies with 60 adult migrants in Beijing.	The dominant concept of the home in migrant-oriented housing solutions was far from the needs of the migrants and their idea of home. The flexibility and mobility of migrants were expressed by some evocative objects.
Kreuzer, Mühlbacher & von Wallpach (2018)	An in-depth understanding of first-generation migrants' subjective transcultural experiencing of home.	Qualitative design. Phenomenological interviews and a projective technique with 17 first-generation migrants from 13 different countries living in Austria.	Three ways to live in the home: the desire for the past (maintaining rituals of traditional practices, showing national symbols in their homes); transcultural mixing of social/consumer relations; and experience the home within itself.

Reference	Purpose	Methodology/demographics	Main findings
Levin (2014a)	Use of an intersectional analysis to understand the meaning of the physical form of the house and its materiality for migrants.	Qualitative design. Interviews and visual data involved three adult migrants from the Former Soviet Union.	The group did not share a metanarrative that helped them to give a sense of their migration and habitation. Individual characteristics seemed to play a dominant role in the meaning of the home.
Levin (2014b)	To explore the former houses of participants in Morocco and then their current houses in Tel Aviv, Israel, to establish links between the two housing forms and reveal the meanings of objects.	Qualitative design. Interviews included a tour of a house with 12 Moroccans who migrated to Israel between 1948 and 1962.	In “communities”, perspective migrants did not always express their cultural origin through the external aspect of the home; in “materiality”, migrants' homes represented national identity and migration narratives.
Liu, Maher & Sheer (2019)	To understand the processes through which older Chinese migrants attached meaning to the home and built a sense of home in Australia.	Qualitative design. A set of semi-structured and open questions with 20 first-generation Chinese migrants ageing from 56 to 86 years of age.	The migrants' home was cultural: the language, familiarity with the physical environment and Chinese home decorations were important components to build a sense of home among older migrants.
Gallegos (2019)	To illuminate some of the psychological aspects of the homemaking practices of two groups.	Essay. Comparative analysis between ‘Assimilationists’ and Latin ‘Outsiders’.	Relationships between host and migrant groups seemed to explain the perception of the home.

Reference	Purpose	Methodology/demographics	Main findings
Pechurina (2015)	To focus on the material culture of the home and to 'see' whether there were any objects that helped Russians feel at home while in the UK.	Qualitative design. Interviews and home tour with 30 adult migrants from Russia to the UK.	Objects from the home country might have different and not fixed meanings given by the history of each. The disposition and presence might indicate the attitude towards origin or host communities.
Pechurina (2016)	To explore the perception of both the researcher and the participants in the home-based interview.	Methodological paper. Previous research on Russian migrants' homes in the UK.	The interest and observation of the researcher might bring out the meaning of the iconic objects of a culture present in the home.
Pechurina (2020)	To understand how the meanings and use of objects and foods were involved in the process of feeling at home in a diasporic community.	Qualitative design. Self-reflexive approach on home-based interviews with 32 Russian migrants in the UK over a span of 5–40 years.	Typical objects assumed the ambivalent function of transposition in the new context and the memory of nostalgia. Objects took on meaning within the physical context in which they were presented, in the community and how they belong to migrants.
Pulvirenti (2000)	To demonstrate how homeownership was influenced by the immigration process.	Qualitative design. In-depth interviews with 20 Italian-Australian man and woman.	Home ownership in the host country was tied to the reasons for migration. The moral imperative satisfied by possession was different for men and women.
Rabikowska (2010)	To examine food rituals and the construction of the meaning of the home as both a space and nationality and the attitude to the host culture.	Qualitative design. Interviews and visual ethnography with 32 Polish migrants.	Rituals of the preparation and consumption of typical food transformed the physical place into home.

Reference	Purpose	Methodology/demographics	Main findings
Sandu (2013)	To understand the home and homemaking in relation to the private worlds and the public participation of transnational migrants.	Qualitative design. Biographical visual narratives with five European or African transnational families.	Home practices acted as a re-activator of memory and educated of the youth and the community. Home might be the place to re-establish new gender rules.
Smith (2014)	To investigate how that group of newcomers interpreted the home since they left Poland.	Qualitative design. Narrative interviews with 31 newcomers; Polish people living in Dublin.	"Home" might be interpreted as a fixed location where objects, routines, functions, and defined roles create a feeling of home; a concept focused on identity and nostalgia; or a notion in which fluidity is conceptualized space and time.
Tolia-Kelly (2004)	To explore the landscapes in the form of visual cultures within the British Asian home.	Qualitative design. Group and individual interviews with British South Asian women.	Visual objects in the everyday spaces operated to incorporate memories of past landscapes and relationships with pre-migratory lives in colonial territories.
Rosales (2010)	To explore the ways in which the home and homemaking as a social and cultural process might work as a significant site.	Qualitative design. Interviews and observations with migrants from Portugal/Mozambique.	Material and domestic home were expressive and constitutive of the tensions that mark the migratory movements.
Walsh (2011)	To explore the significance of the domestic space, practices, objects, and relations in the constitution of migrant masculinities.	Qualitative design. In-depth interviews with British people in Dubai and observations of 10 homes	The domestic space and the practices that took place there were highly significant in the fulfilment of men's participation in migration.

Reference	Purpose	Methodology/demographics	Main findings
Wiles (2008)	To explore the symbolic nature of the home, the importance of family and familiarity, and the role of physical objects and places.	Qualitative design. In-depth interviews with 15 New Zealanders in London and 11 who returned from London.	Home was described as tangible daily routines, practices, and social interactions. The symbolic and social meaning of material things or places gave a sense of home.
Zhan, Wang, Fawcett, Li & Fan (2017)	Do Chinese migrant seniors find a sense of home while living in the United States? What factors influenced their sense of home and life satisfaction?	Mixed methods including 107 Chinese Americans, from 59 to 93 included in the survey (composite scales). Interviews with 21 Chinese American seniors.	The family relationship seemed to prevail in promoting sense of home, although some values of the host country influenced the dwelling choice. Living close to and speaking Chinese with familiar people increased the sense of home.
Zufferey, Yu & Hand (2019)	To explore how intersecting identifications and diversities shaped understandings of the home.	Qualitative design. Thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews with 13 migrant people, (age from 21 to 84 years).	Migration, social boundaries, access to employment, income levels, age, gender, racism experiences and home ownership intersected and influenced the meanings of home.

Study 2: Codebook and Structure of Categorization

Theme	Subtheme 1st level	Subtheme 2nd level	Description
Migration experience	Expectation in migration	Disappointed expectations in migration Satisfied expectations	<i>Statements relating to the expectations that migrants had placed in their choice to migrate to Italy.</i>
	Intention to migrate out of Italy	Want to come back homeland Explore other countries	<i>Statements related to the desire to leave Italy.</i>
	Migration reason		<i>Statements relating to the reasons to which migrants attribute their or their parents' choice to migrate.</i>
Acculturation	Acculturative impact	Difficult integration	<i>Statements relating to the impact that life in Italy has had in the beginning and over time.</i>
		Facilitated integration	
	Italian language acquisition		<i>Statements relating to how the process of acquiring the Italian language took place</i>
		Coexistence	<i>Claims relating to the maintenance, acquisition, coexistence of traditions or habits that migrants trace back to Italy or to their country of origin.</i>
	Traditions and habits	Italian	
		Country of origin	
	Relationship development		Relationships with people in country of origin
Relationships with people in Italy			<i>Statements on how and in which contexts family and friendship relationships develop in Italy.</i>
Identity		Country of origin identity Italian identity Multiple identity Out of a cultural definition of identity	<i>Statements related to how and how much migrants identify with the culture or country of origin or with the Italian culture</i>

Theme	Subtheme 1st level	Subtheme 2nd level	Description	
Establishing a new psychological home	Affective component	Home of origin today (affective component)	<i>Referred to home-related feelings in the country of origin today after migration</i>	
		Past and present homes in relation (affective component)	<i>Sentences in which the subjects related the feelings developed in the past in the country of origin to those of the present home in Italy</i>	
		Behavioral component	<i>Referred actions taken to choose, personalize and maintain the home.</i>	
	Behavioral component	Elements of the original culture in the new home (behavioral component)	<i>Descriptions of the elements on which people valued their origin and which were brought or sought to the new homeland of Italy</i>	
		Home of origin today (behavioral component)	<i>Description of behavior in relation to the home of origin as it had changed because of the migration project</i>	
		Past and present homes in relation (behavioral component)	<i>Statements about the structural and behavioral elements that link the former home in the country of origin and the home in Italy in the present.</i>	
	Cognitive component			<i>Affirmations about concept of home, meanings, and beliefs about home and themselves.</i>
		Past and present home in relation (cognitive component)		<i>Affirmations where migrants related the idea of home of the past, developed in the country of origin, and that of the home in the present Italy.</i>
		Home of origin today (cognitive component)		<i>Affirmations referred to how the idea of home had changed in comparison to home in the country of origin after the migration experience</i>

Theme	Subtheme 1st level	Subtheme 2nd level	Description
	Relational component		<i>Migrants describe their relationship experiences in relation to home.</i>
		Elements of the original culture in the new home (relational component)	<i>Descriptions of the relational elements to which people attached value in relation to their origins and which they wished to reintroduce in the new homeland</i>
		Home of origin today (relational component)	<i>Relationships related to the home environment with people in the place of origin and how they had changed because of the migration project</i>
		Past and present home in relation (relational component)	<i>Affirmations where migrants compared relationships with people in the previous home in the country of origin and relationships with people in the current home in Italy</i>
Elements involved in the psychological home	Hindering		<i>Elements that were indicated as conducive or obstructive to the development of the sense of home</i>
	Promotional		
Resilience	Individual resources		<i>People's reflections on the resources that aided them in effectively navigating the challenges they faced in their lives</i>
	Relational resources		
	Community resources		
Sense of community	Emotional connection		<i>Phrases reflecting the relationship to the residential environment, focusing on membership development, influence on neighbourhood, emotion connected with residential community and needs addressed by the community.</i>
	Fullfilment of needs		
	Influence Membership		
Life satisfaction	More goals to achieve		<i>Phrases that contain the explanation of the reasons why a certain value is attributed to one's own life satisfaction</i>
	Satisfaction and migration		
	Satisfaction depends on family Satisfaction depends on me		